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# Harlots and whores but not lovers

## Dressing down the pronoun for a female addressee in a Basque Old Testament

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Using a historical sociolinguistic theoretical approach (Conde-Silvestre and Hernandez-Campoy 2012, 1), this paper shows that a mid-19th century Catholic Old Testament utilizes the second-person singular pronoun for a female addressee (*noka*) to construct sexual and/or violent imagery, which contributed to *noka*'s loss and "semantic derogation" (Schulz 1975) over time. Focus is placed on *noka* for several reasons: (1) it is the only place in the Basque language (*Euskera*) where female gender is marked, as *Euskera* has no natural or grammatical gender; (2) my previous ethnographic and archival research suggests that the use of *noka* is considered disrespectful, "looked badly upon" and associated with "dangerous" women like witches; (3) my previous research on Catholic texts in particular shows that familiar pronouns are used sparingly, and almost always to condemn, castigate or cast out demons; (4) *noka* has historically been a key marker of solidarity, *konfiantza* ('trust') and 'authentic' Basque identity; but the negative cast upon *noka*, I suggest, discourages its use for such solidarity-building purposes.

**Keywords:** Basque, historical sociolinguistics, pronouns, gender, religion

### 1. Introduction

The Basque language (*Euskera*) differs from its surrounding languages as it is an isolate and has no grammatical or referential gender. Further, formal V (*zu*) rather than informal T (*hi*) is the "pragmatically unmarked" (Errington 1985) second person singular pronoun (see Tables 1 and 2 below).<sup>1</sup> That is, it is *zu* rather than

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1. There are two other single-person pronouns in *Euskera*. *Berori* was used historically in some western dialects to address high status interlocutors such as priests. *Xu* is used in some eastern dialects in France; it is between *hi* and *zu* in terms of its level of formality (Alberdi 1995). Neither pronoun, however, appears in the Duvoisin text discussed here.

*hi* that is usually used in addressing a single addressee. I have shown elsewhere that this preference for V can be partially attributed to religious wars that raged in France – including the Basque region in the South – between the 16th and 19th centuries. Specifically, the T form (*hi*) was associated with the losing, Protestant side of the battle against the Catholics, whose opposing pronominal preferences (for *zu*) subsequently prevailed (Echeverría 2006).

In this paper, I take on the gendered legacy of this pronominal shift. Drawing on a 19th-century Old Testament translated by Jean Duvoisin and commissioned by Louis Lucien Bonaparte, I show that the second-person pronoun for a female addressee (*noka*) is used for negative interactional functions and almost exclusively for metaphorical rather than referential purposes.<sup>2</sup> That is, *noka* is used to castigate the inanimate addressee (usually a city or country) that is metaphorically cast as female. With only once exception, however, *noka* is not used to address an actually human female referent.

To contextualize my argument, the next section briefly reviews the pronominal system in *Euskera*, in particular the gender distinctions it makes.

## 2. The pronominal system in Basque

In the Basque language, it is only the second-person singular pronoun, *hi*, that marks gender. Specifically, “the use of the 2nd person singular form, ‘*hi*’ [sometimes] requires a gender marker on its accompanying verb forms” (Aulestia 1989, 49). As we see in Table 1, when the addressee is the subject of an intransitive verb (absolutive case), the verb does not carry a gender marker. In this sense, *hi* is like its formal counterpart, *zu*: both are gender-neutral with regard to speaker and addressee.

However, when the addressee is the subject of a transitive verb (ergative case) or is the indirect object (dative case), then the auxiliary verb marks the addressee’s gender when using *hi*: *-n* for a female addressee (called *noka*); *-k* for a male addressee (called *toka*).

But Table 2 shows a more complicated aspect of how *hi* marks the gender’s addressee, called allocutivity: we see that ‘you’ is not an argument in the sentence. Even so, when using *hi*, the auxiliary verb indicates (or ‘allocates’ the addressee’s gender (*-n* for female, and *-k* for male).

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2. For an analysis of pronominal use in the Duvoisin New Testament (among other biblical texts), see Echeverría 2006.

Table 1. The second person singular pronouns *zu* and *hi*

<i>zu</i> (formal)	<i>hi</i> (informal)
<i>Zu z-a-ra</i>	<i>hi h-a-iz</i>
You-2sg-Pres-AUX (f/m)	You-2sg-Pres-AUX (f/m)
'you are'	'you are'
<i>Lan egin du-zu</i>	<i>Lan egin du-n</i> [female addressee]
Work do AUX-2SgErg (f/m)	work do AUX-2sgFemErg
'you have done work'	'you have done work'
	<i>Lan egin du-k</i> [male addressee]
	work do AUX-2sgMascErg
	'you have done work'
<i>gertatu ø-zai-zu</i>	<i>gertatu ø-zai-n</i> [female addressee]
happen 3Abs-AUX-2SgDat (f/m)	happen 3Abs-AUX-2SgFemDat
'it happened to you'	'it happened to you'
	<i>gertatu ø-zai-k</i> [male addressee]
	happen 3Abs-AUX-2SgMascDat
	'it happened to you'

Table 2. Allocutivity

<i>Zu</i>	<i>laguna-k ikusten n-a-u-ø</i>
	Friend-Erg sees 1SgAbs-pres-root-3SgErg (f/m)
	'a friend sees me'
<i>Hi</i>	<i>laguna-k ikusten n-a-i-n-ø</i>
	Friend-Erg sees 1SgAbs-pres-root-ALLOCFem-3SgErg
	'a friend sees me'
	<i>laguna-k ikusten n-a-i-k-ø</i>
	Friend-Erg sees 1SgAbs-pres-root-ALLOCMasc-3SgErg
	'a friend sees me'

(Oyharcabal 1993, 91)

Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate as well that *noka* and *toka* (gender mark for the pronoun *hi*) occupy the same place in the Basque grammar and function the same way. However as compared to formal *zu*, informal *hi* is considered the pronoun of familiarity to be used between family members or friends (see Echeverria 2003; Urla 1997).

Historically, *hi* used to be the only pronoun for a single addressee, while *zu* was the second person plural pronoun (Alberdi 1995, 280). Thus, *noka* would have been used habitually with one girl or one woman; *toka* would have been used with one boy or one man for all interactional purposes. In their ability to carry out grammatical and pragmatic functions, then, *noka* and *toka* are "linguistically equal".

However, as Bourdieu (1977) cautions, linguistic equivalence does not necessarily social equality make. *Noka* is disappearing at a much faster rate than *toka* and its use is more greatly disparaged (Echeverria 2003). My ethnographic research in the Basque Country and the diaspora shows that nowadays *noka* is “looked badly upon” or considered disrespectful; my archival research demonstrated *noka* to be most commonly used with Basque mythological figures – associations that are not necessarily positive.

In this paper, I examine biblical texts – which constitute a large portion of the Basque written tradition until the early 20th century – to further investigate *noka*’s “semantic derogation” (Schulz 1975) and disuse, vis a vis *toka*. I claim that such can be attributed, at least in part, to the negative connotations ascribed to *noka* in Catholic texts. Indeed, in the first Catholic Bible published, between 1859–1865, the New Testament never uses *noka* to address a woman or girl (Echeverria 2006); the Old Testament uses it sparingly and only to condemn or curse. These biblical texts evince few positive – or even neutral – uses of *noka* to counter these negative connotations. Nor are unambiguously positive uses of *noka* found elsewhere in the archival record or cultural domains. This contrasts with *toka*’s use in positively-valued male-dominated domains such as *bertsolaritza* (ritual verbal improvisation) and rural sports like handball and rock-lifting (Echeverria 2003) – indexing, in short, a rugged kind of hegemonic masculinity. Cognizant of the negative cast of *noka*, in this chapter I suggest that speakers avoided its use, contributing to its greater loss vis a vis *toka* over time.

### 3. Source and methods

Even though Basques have been Catholic since their conversion to Christianity in the 10th century (Trask 1997), Protestants produced the first Bibles i.e. a New Testament commissioned by Navarre’s Queen Jeanne d’Albret in 1571, and an Old Testament fragment written by Pierre d’Urte around 1700. Consonant with Protestants elsewhere, those in the Basque region sought to make God’s word accessible to the common people by translating it into the vernacular. As I have previously discussed (Echeverria 2006), Basque Protestants’ theological emphasis on a direct relationship between God and believer was reflected not only in their use of *Euskera* instead of Latin, but also in their use of the T (*hi*) over V (*zu*) form. The Catholic Church, with its theological emphasis on hierarchy and intermediaries between God and believer, not only did not bother to publish the Bible until the mid-19th century, but used primarily *zu* when it did so. It reserved *hi* to show disdain. For example, Luke 23:39 uses *hi* when the mob mocks Jesus on the cross: “*Hi bahaiz Kristo, salba zak hire burua, eta gu ere-bai*” (‘If thou art Christ, save

thyself, and us as well'). Christ also uses *hi* in Mark 9:24 when exorcising a demon from a mute boy: “*Izpiritu gor eta mutua, nik dayat manatzan, haur hortarik ilkhi hadi, eta gehiago ez sar horren baithan*” (‘Stubborn mute spirit, I command thee to leave that child, and never enter him again’).<sup>3</sup> We shall see that *noka* usage in the Old Testament follows, even extends, this negative vein.

### 3.1 Duvoisin’s Bible (1859–1965)

To contextualize the *noka* usage in Duvoisin’s Bible, this section provides a brief foray into the circumstances of its production. No Catholic translation of the Bible was published until the mid-19th century, even though Catholic prayer books, catechisms and other religious materials had been produced since the 17th century. The Old Testament discussed here was commissioned by Louis Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon’s nephew. Though a devout Catholic, Bonaparte was drawn to this task

neither by love of religion, as in the case of the Queen of Navarre, nor by the purposes of benefitting or helping the Basque Country ... his intention was not to spread the word of God in Euskal Herria [the Basque Country], but rather to obtain materials for research and deeper knowledge of the Basque language.

(Duvoisin 1972, 2)

*Euskera* likely came to him as an object of study because of his long relationship with Clémence Richard, a Basque woman with whom he had a child. He focused on capturing the “living Basque of his own day, in all its local diversity” (*op. cit.*, 3).

Towards those ends, he commissioned biblical verses and individual books to be translated into the various Basque dialects, but only had the entirety of the Bible rendered into two: the dialect of Gipuzkoa and Lapurdi. The latter is the focus here; I have been unable to locate a complete copy of the former. To translate the Bible into the dialect of Lapurdi, Bonaparte hired Jean Baptiste Duvoisin. A native of Ainhoa who had already written three books in Basque, Duvoisin quit his job as a customs official, holed up with Bibles in Latin and modern languages and “a manifold collection of commentaries on the Holy Scriptures” (*op. cit.*, 4) – for six years. After completing the five-volume work, he wrote to a friend:

This Bible has been translated into Basque in order to promote knowledge. My work is for scientists, for specialists who go to great lengths to study languages...  
This work has been performed for the sake of science. (*op. cit.*, 5)

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3. My translation.

### 3.2 Methods

In examining this text, I take a historical sociolinguistic approach that considers “the reconstruction of the history of a given language in its socio-cultural contexts” (Conde-Silvestre and Hernandez-Campoy 2012, 1). Specifically, I conducted “[a]n intra-textual investigation examin[ing] the frequency and range of variants in one text or a corpus of texts” (Auer and Voeste 2012, 259). Put another way, I systematically examined the entirety of the Duvoisin Bible – 1374 pages – to provide a snapshot of its pronominal use and variation.

### 3.3 A note on translation

Before we examine the interactional uses to which *noka* is put in these passages, a word regarding translation is in order. It is important to note that L. L. Bonaparte gave Duvoisin strict instructions to render the Basque translation only from the Latin. To carry out this task, Duvoisin “acquired Bibles: Latin Bibles and Bibles in modern languages, especially French Bibles. Then he gathered together in his study a manifold collection of commentaries on the Holy Scriptures” (*op. cit.*, xii). But we have no indication that Duvoisin used Bibles written in ancient languages other than Latin, e.g. Hebrew or Greek, in translating the Bible into Basque.

Neither Latin nor French, however, are exact equivalents to *Euskera* when it comes to pronominal use. While Latin has different second-person pronouns for singular and plural addressees, it does not have allocutives as in *Euskera* (which, as we saw in Tables 1 and 2, distinguish between female and male addressees). Similarly, while French has formal (*vous*) and informal (*tu*) pronouns for a single addressee, they are gender neutral. Gender can be marked on dependant adjectives and participles through syntactical concordance, in agreement with the grammatical gender of the noun which the pronoun stands for, but the pronoun itself remains unmarked. Thus, when it came to translating the Latin (or French) Bibles into Basque, Duvoisin had to make decisions when it came to utterances made to a single addressee: should he use the gender-neutral formal (*zu*) or the gender-specific familiar (*hi*)? While we do not know the rationale behind his choices, we can document what they were and examine their effects.

#### 4. Findings

Table 3 provides a summary of my findings in this regard. (“Female T” includes both use of *noka* – ergative and dative cases – and the familiar pronoun to a female addressee in the absolutive case, where no gender distinction is made):

**Table 3.** *Noka* usage in Duvoisin’s Old Testament: Female-addressee informal 2nd person pronoun usage

Book		Female T (token)	Addressee
Numbers		3	Donkey
Kings		14	Woman
Psalms	137	3	Babylon
Isaiah	1	5	Jerusalem
	22	9	Jerusalem
	23	10	Sidon and Tyre
	47	52	Babylon
	51	1	Jerusalem
	57	40	Jerusalem
Jeremiah	11	3	Judah/Jerusalem
	46	12	Egypt
	48	6	Didon
	49	15	Heshbon/maiden
	50	5	Babylon
	51	5	Babylon
Ezekiel	5	31	Jerusalem
	6	27	Jerusalem
	16	268	Jerusalem
	20	4	Forest of the South
	22	45	Jerusalem
	23	67	Jerusalem
	25	13	Jerusalem
	26	49	Jerusalem
Micah	6	18	Israel/Judah
Total		724	

In all, Duvoisin’s Old Testament uses *noka* in one book each in Numbers, Kings, Psalms and Micah, with the bulk being used in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. For which interactional uses is *noka* put in these contexts? Let us take a look at the historical context in which each book was written. As all but 17 of the uses of *noka* are metaphorical rather than referential, I begin with the context for those usages below.



#### 4.1 The Book of Psalms

The first metaphorical usage of *noka* in Duvoisin's Old Testament occurs in Psalm 137. Composed of lamentation and curse, it resembles a funeral dirge (Stuhlmüller 1988, 422). Verses 1–4 “lament the impossibility of chanting songs honouring Jerusalem in enemy lands” (*id.*); Verses 5–9 cry out as Babylon burns Jerusalem down. (In Basque and English, **bolded** words are *noka* in the ergative or dative case; *italicized* words are *hika* to a female addressee in the absolutive case):

Text 1 – Psalm 136:8

8: Babilonako alaba zorigaichtokoa, dohatsu *hiri* bihurturen **dainana** *hik* guri egin gaizkiak!

‘Wretched daughter of Babylon, to whom will be **returned** happily the ills *thou* didst us!’<sup>4</sup>

9: Dohatsu hartuko dituen *hire* haur cheheak eta harriaren gainean phorroskatuko dituen!

‘Happy the one who shall take *thy* little children and shall dash them on a stone!’

Harsh words indeed. As we shall see below, however, this mean-spirited use of *noka* occurs throughout this text.

#### 4.2 The Latter Prophets

Most of the *noka* usage in the Duvoisin text occurs in the Latter Prophets, part of the fifteen books in the central section of the Hebrew Bible (Blenkinsopp 1988, 480). Prophets could be men or women, come from every social class and profession (Matthews 2012, 19); their purpose was

to challenge the establishment and the social order, to remind the leadership and the people of their obligation to the covenant with Yahweh, and to warn the people of the punishment that would surely ensue if they violated this covenantal agreement. (Matthews 2012, 33)

Like other texts, the Prophetic Books reflect the cultural and historical times in which they were written and have been (re)interpreted in many ways (*op. cit.*, 17 and 33). The particular process used to write the Prophetic Books have not been definitely determined, but “it is safe to say that it took place over many years and reflected shifting theological agendas as the fortunes of the nation changed” (*op. cit.*, 34).

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4. I am indebted to Alan R. King for his elegant translations of the Texts discussed here.

### The books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Micah

are set in periods ranging from the eighth century [BCE] which saw the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the exile, and finally through the sixth and fifth centuries, which saw the Persian-period restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple.  
(Sweeney 2012, 266)

In keeping with such events, in every case we see that *noka* is used as “prosopopeia” (or “apostrophe”), addressing an inanimate object as if it were a living (in this case, female) entity. In fifteen of the nineteen books, *noka* is used to address an entity symbolic of the Jewish people: eleven times, the addressee is Jerusalem; another three, Israel or Judah.

#### 4.2.1 *The Book of Isaiah*

The longest and most complex of the prophetic books, Isaiah, was composed in three historical periods: Chapters 1–39 were written between 740–697 BCE; Chapters 40–55 (Second Isaiah), between 539–535; and Chapters 56–66, between 515–500 (Matthews 2012, 99). While Isaiah 1:1 claims the author as Isaiah ben Amoz, modern scholars contend it must have been written by later authors as well; the various books mention the Assyrian invasions of Judah and Jerusalem, the end of the Babylonian exile, and the projected restoration events which took place from a period beginning at the latter part of the 8th to the beginning of the 5th centuries BCE (Sweeney 2012, 270).

Regardless of its authorship, Isaiah proclaims a message from an educated man of high status (Matthews 2012, 99–100), or an advisor to kings (Sweeney 2012, 270), who

grapples with the theological problem of evil – expressed through the historical realities of Assyrian invasion and Babylonian exile – by positing that such an experience was necessary for the revelation of YHWH’s sovereignty to the entire world.  
(Sweeney 2012, 274)

It sounds “the familiar themes of social justice, the obligation to aid and not oppress the weak, and the obligation to worship only Yahweh” (Matthews 2012, 101). Table 4 provides a summary of *noka* usage in Isaiah.

Table 4 shows that the most common interlocutor of the *noka* passages is Jerusalem: four of the six books. Isaiah 1:22 tells the “faithful city” (understood to be Jerusalem) that “[*t*hy silver has become slag and *thy* wine has been mixed with water.” Its leaders are called “faithless” (v 22), castigated as “friends of thieves ... running after profit” (v 23). Isaiah 22:1–3 and 7 address Jerusalem “the valley of vision” (according to Sweeney 2012, 281, “a designation for Jerusalem”) whose leaders “have fled as one;” she is told: “*thy* choice valleys shall be filled with chariots, and horsemen will be placed in *thy* gate” (v 7).

Table 4. Female-addressee informal 2nd person pronoun usage in Isaiah

Chapter	Addressee	<i>Noka</i>	<i>hika to female</i>
1	“faithful city”	5	0
22	Jerusalem	6	3
23	Sidon, Tyre	5	5
47	Babylon	27	27
51	Jerusalem	1	0
57	Jerusalem	21	19
TOTAL (118)		65	53

Isaiah 57 uses *noka* to address not just Jerusalem per se, but a “post-exilic Israel ... addressing the past, present and future people of God, including God-fearing foreigners” (Sheppard 1988, 527–568). Specifically, *noka* is used to castigate the addressee for “offer[ing] sacrifices” (v 6), “immolat[ing] victims” (v 7), “receiv[ing] to *thysel*f the obscene man” (v 8), “adorn[ing] *thy* head with ointment... humiliat[ing] *thysel*f all the way to hell ... [for] with *thy* deeds thou **didst** find a living, and **didst** not say any prayers” (v 10). In verse 11, Isaiah chides Israel for “forget[ting] me because I did not remain quiet and as if I could not see.” Even the “righteousness” (v 12) of the few (Sheppard 1988, 531) “**will** not benefit thee.” But, in the future, God proclaims that “whoever trusts in me will inherit the earth, and will exalt my sacred mountain” (v 13).

Isaiah also uses *noka* in the “oracles against the nations” 52 times – out of the total 118 tokens. Isaiah 23:12, for example, addresses the “daughter of Sidon” as a “dishonored maiden” (v 15), who is told to “[t]ake the guitar, go round the city, whore who has been forgotten about; **sing** well, repeat the song, so that someone remembers *thee*” (v 16).

But by far the greatest vitriol is reserved to “humiliate” Babylon (Sweeney 2012, 286; Sheppard 1988, 522), as we see in Text 2 (see Appendix 1 for an exhaustive statement of Basque excerpts):

Text 2 – Isaiah 47:1–15

1: Jauts *hadi*, jar *hadi* herrautsean, dontzeila, Babilonako alaba; jar *hadi* lurrean; ez **dun** tronurik gehiago Kaldearren alabarentzat; ezen ez *haiz* guria eta samurra deithuren gehiago.

‘DESCEND, sit in the dust, damsel, daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground; there is no longer a throne for the daughter of the Chaldean; for thou *shalt* no longer be called soft and tender.’

2: Har **zan** ihara, eta eho **zan** irina; ager **zan** *hire* itsuseria, ager sorbalda, ager ichterrak, iragan hibayak.

‘Take the millstone, and **grind** the flour; **show** *thy* ugliness, show *thy* shoulder, show *thy* thighs, cross the rivers.’

3: Agertua izanen **dun** *hire* hidoya; ikhusiko **diten** *hire* laidoa: harturen dut asperkunde, eta ez da gizonik niri itchikiko darotanik.

‘*Thy* indecency **shall** be revealed; they **shall** see *thy* dishonour: I will take revenge, and no man shall retain me.’

5: Jar *hadi* ichil-ichila, ea ilhumbleetan sar *hadi*, Kaldearren alaba; ezen ez *haute* gehiago deithuren erresumetako erregina.

‘Sit in silence, and *enter* in darkness, Chaldean’s daughter; for they *shall* call *thee* no longer queen of realms.’<sup>5</sup>

9: Agortasuna eta alhaguntasuna, horiek biak terrepentean eta egun batez ethorriren **zaizkin** gainera. Oro gainera eroriko zaizkin, *hire* gaizkinkerien elementia gatik, eta *hire* charma-egileen gogortasun gaitza gatik.

‘Sterility and widowhood, both will **come** upon thee suddenly, in one day. Everything will **fall** upon thee, because of the abundance of *thy* misdeeds, and because of the great severity of *thy* spells.’

10: Hire tzarkerietan *bahuen* sinheste; erran **dun**: ez da nihor ikhusten nauenik. *Hire* zuhurtziak eta jakitateak, horiek *haute* enganatu. Eta *hire* bihotzean erran **dun**: Ni banaiz, ea nitaz landan ez da bertze bat.

‘Thou *trustedst* in *thy* evil deeds; thou **saidst**: There is no one that sees me. *Thy* wisdom and knowledge, they **deceive** thee. And in *thy* heart thou hast **said**: I am, and aside from me there is no other.’

11: Gaitza ethorriren **zain** gainera, eta ez **dun** jakinen nondik ilkhitzen den; eta gainera eroriko **zain** ezin jabalduko **dunan** zorigaitza; terrepentean ethorriko **zain**, ezagutu ez **dunan** erromeseria.

‘Evil will fall upon **thee**, and thou shalt not **know** where it comes from; and on thee will **fall** a misfortune that thou canst not **undo**; an unknown misery will suddenly afflict *thee*.’

12: Athera *hadi* *hire* charma-egileekin eta *hire* gaizkinkeria gaztedanik erabili **ditunan** guziekin, ikhusteko *hean* zerbait baliatuko **zaizkinan**, edo *hean* hazkarrago egin *haitakeen*.

‘Come out with *thy* spells and with all *thy* sorceries which thou **hast** employed since [thy] youth, to see whether they are of any use to **thee**, or whether thou *may* be strengthened.’

This passage from Second Isaiah was composed between 539–535 BCE, soon after Persia’s King Cyrus captured Babylon; “[w]ith that change in political control the opportunity now arises for the exiles to be released from their captivity and, if they wish, to return to their own land” (Matthews 2012, 127). Having thus used Cyrus to conquer Babylon, God (through Isaiah) spouts such invective at her. But the

5. This extract is left for context.

extent to which this invective utilizes sexualized, violent imagery is worthy of note. Babylon is brutally punished for her arrogance, for considering herself “queen of the realms” (v 5), thinking to herself that “there is none but me” (v 8). Her impending sterility, widowhood and misfortune (v 8–10) are her comeuppance. The “sorceries” and “sky-diviners” on which she relied will do her no good; her gods will not save her when her “indecency,” “dishonour” and “ugliness” are revealed. The once-mighty Babylon has been humiliated as if she were some lowly, errant young woman – worse, an adulteress whom no one tries to save (Sheppard 1988, 522).

#### 4.2.2 *The Book of Jeremiah*

The book of Jeremiah relates events beginning with Judah’s loss of independence after the death of King Josiah in 609 BCE to Jerusalem’s destruction by Babylon and the subsequent exile of its people in 587 BCE (Sweeney 2012, 293). Jeremiah 1:1–3 claims the book contains “the words of Jeremiah be Hilkiyah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin” (Sweeney 2012, 293), the community of priests descended from those exiled by Solomon for supporting his brother Adonijah for the throne (Matthews 2012, 142). However, some scholars argue that after being prohibited from speaking at the Temple, Jeremiah was likely assisted in his writing by the scribe Baruch ben Neriah (Sweeney 2012, 293; Matthews 2012, 143). The book argues that:

the destruction of Jerusalem was caused, not by YHWH’s lack of power or commitment to the kingdom of Judah, but by the failure of the people to observe YHWH’s Torah.<sup>6</sup> (Sweeney 2012, 297)

*Noka* usage in Jeremiah is outlined in Table 5:

**Table 5.** Female-addressee informal 2nd person pronoun usage in Jeremiah

Chapter	Addressee	<i>Noka</i>	<i>hika</i> to female
11	Judah/Jerusalem	1	2
46	Egyptian maiden	8	4
48	daughter of Didon	1	5
49	Heshbon/maid	3	12
50	Babylon	1	4
51	Babylon	1	4
TOTAL (46)		15	31

Table 5 shows, in contrast to Isaiah, that only one chapter in Jeremiah uses *noka* in addressing the Jewish people. Chapter 11 condemns Judah for “thou **hadst** as

6. YHWH stands for Yahweh in Jewish scholarship.

many gods as cities; and *thou*, Jerusalem, for each road set up altars of shame, altars for sacrifice to Baal” (v 13). But this constitutes only 3 of the 46 uses of the familiar to a female addressee in all of Jeremiah; mostly, *noka* addresses an enemy of the Jewish people. Jeremiah 48:18 tells the daughter of Didon to “[d]escend from *thy* glory, and *sit* in thirst, dwelling of the daughter of Dibon; for Moab’s vanquisher is coming up to *thee* and will rip asunder *thy* strongholds” (v 18). The 49th chapter tells Heshbon to wait in the face of some destruction and chides the “sensitive maid” for “showing off in *thy* valleys” (v 2–3). Jeremiah 50 uses *noka* to chastise Babylon for “provok[ing] the Lord” after God has caught her in a trap he set (v 24). The familiar *hika* is used four more times to Babylon in Chapter 51. Though she “*dwellest* on great waters, smothered with wealth” (v 13), the “Lord of armies has made this vow upon himself: By my word, I will cover *thee* with men like locusts, and a song of war shall be sung about *thee*” (v 14).

However, the addressee with whom *noka* is used most is Egypt. One oracle (v 2–12, see text 3 below, v 11–12) claims that Egypt’s defeat (described therein) is Yahweh’s revenge for Pharaoh’s killing of King Josiah in 609 BCE (Overholt 1988, 574). Similarly, a second oracle (v 13–24) interprets Babylon’s imminent defeat of Egypt (circa 586 BCE) as punishment from Yahweh. The Duvoisin text uses *noka* in the latter, behind which “we can imagine members of the exilic community gloating that Egypt, the failed ally of the old nationalist party, was itself now succumbing to the Babylonians” (*op. cit.*, 575).

Text 3 – Jeremiah 46:11–12

11: Galaadera igan *hadi* eta har **zan** baltsamua, Egiptoar nesatcha gaztea; alferretan erabiliren **ditun** asko sendakari; sendatzerik *hiretzat ez dun*.

‘Go up to Galead and **take** balsam, young Egyptian maiden; in vain **wilt** thou try many medicines; there **is** no healing for *thee*.’

12: Jendayek entzun **dine** *hire* laidoa eta *hire* orrobiek bethe **dine** lurra; zeren hazkarrak hazkarrari jazarri baitio eta biek batean jo baitute lurra.

‘The nations have **heard** of *thy* dishonour, and *thy* howls have **filled** the land; for the strong has assailed the strong and both have fallen together.’

#### 4.2.3 *The Book of Ezekiel*

In 597 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar and King Johoiachin of Judah took Ezekiel, along with other priests and royal family members, with them into exile in Babylonia (Sweeney 2012, 319). God’s presence is the book’s main theme:

[d]espite the people’s assumption that God would never abandon them or the Jerusalem temple, Ezekiel, in a startling vision, describes the departure of God’s ‘glory’ from the temple (Ezek. 10). (Matthews 2012, 160)

Only after the nation has been cleansed may its members return to the temple – the restoration of which Ezekiel provides detail in his vision (*ibid.*). Table 6 lays out how *noka* is used in Ezekiel:

**Table 6.** Female-addressee informal 2nd person pronoun usage in the Book of Ezekiel

Chapter	Addressee	<i>Noka</i>	<i>hika</i> to female
5	Jerusalem	15	16
6	Israel [temple of Jerusalem]	13	14
16	Jerusalem	99	268
20	forest of the South	3	1
22	Jerusalem	20	25
23	Oholibah/Oholah [Jerusalem]	31	36
25	Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philisita	2	11
26	Tyre	17	32
TOTAL (522)		180	342

As we can see, Ezekiel uses *noka* primarily to address Jerusalem. The imagery used in Ezekiel is the most virulent and graphically sexual we have seen thus far.

Ezekiel 5:16 admonishes Jerusalem for her “abominations” (v 9); “wickedness and evil doings” (v 11); vowing to punish her through cannibalism: “fathers will eat their sons in *thy* midst, and sons their fathers” (v 10); by “break[ing] thee; and my eyes will not spare thee, and I will not take pity” (v 11); “blight[ing] [Jerusalem] by famine ... scatter[ing] ... to all the winds ... [and] draw[ing] the sword” (v 12); and sending “famine and the fiercest of beasts ... pestilence and blood” (v 29). All this will transpire so that Jerusalem will serve as a “reproach and a blasphemy, a spectacle and a horror among the nations around *thee*, when I shall implement my rulings in my fit of indignation, anger and fury” (v 8).

The vitriol continues in Chapter 7, directed at the temple of Jerusalem in Israel. The God of Israel promises to “pour my anger upon *thee* ... judge thee according to *thy* path, and burden thee with all *thy* wicked deeds” (v 3). The Lord God vows “not to take pity [but] cause thy bad ways to fall upon *thee* [so that] thy abominations will remain in *thy* midst” (v 4). Chapter 20 continues along this vein. God enjoins the Son of Man to tell the “forest of the south” (v 46) that he will “light a fire in *thy* midst ... burn all *thy* trees ... and all the faces shall be charred in it, from south to north” (v 47).

In just a few passages, Ezekiel 5 uses the terms “evil” and “abomination” twice to discuss Jerusalem’s behavior, for which he calls for severe punishments by beast, burning, famine and cannibalism. The vitriol against Jerusalem is elaborated further in Chapters 16 and 23 of Ezekiel – related in that they both use marriage as a metaphor for the relationship between God and the Jewish people – that its

sexual images are most elaborated. Ezekiel 16 intends to make Jerusalem aware of its “horrible deeds” (v 1). It reminds her that her “Amorite father and a Hittite mother” (v 2) “*did* not purify thee with water for *thy* salvation, nor salt thee with salt, nor swaddle thee in cloths” (v 4). Upon her birth, Jerusalem was “cast ... on the ground” (v 5); God found her “trampled under foot in *thy* blood” (v 6) and took pity, “rais[ing] *thee* like a herb in the fields ... [until] thou *camest* of age and to a womanly shape” (v 7). Yet God covered Jerusalem’s “dishonor” with a cloak (v 8) so that “thou *didst* become mine” (8). After washing her of blood, anointing her with oil (v 8), dressing her in “colorful dress and purple shoes” (v 10), adorning her with jewels (v 11), including a “gold ornament” (v 12), a “beautiful diadem” (v 12), “gold and silver” (v 13) and “raised [her] on wheat flour, honey and oil” (v 14).

While this description of Jerusalem could be read in positive terms – God cloaks ‘her’ dishonour with fine jewelry and vestments – this reading is quickly turned on its head. God berates Jerusalem for misusing the beauty and gifts he bestowed on her: “*Thy* name **circulated** among the nations on account of the attractiveness of *thy* face, because thou *wert* truly beautiful” (v 14).” But she grew “conceited about *thy* beauty, thou **didst** sully *thy* name; and thou **didst** show *thy* indecency to all the passers-by” (v 15); “sew[ing] obscene coverings” to wear (v 15) ... [and] profan[ing] thyself as nobody has ever done before or ever will” (v 16). She made “human shapes” (v 17) from the gold and silver God gave her, “plac[ing] ... before them” (v18, 19) the perfumes, oil, [and] honey; sacrificed her children to them “to be devoured” (v 20); immolating her children “consecrating them to them” (v 21). Finally, “after all those horrors and defilements, thou *didst* not remember *thy* days of youth, when thou *wert* naked, covered with shame, trampled in *thy* blood” (v 22).

Not only does Jerusalem “profane” the beauty and gifts God has given her by exploiting them for her own pleasure, she becomes a child-sacrificing image-worshipper as well. The sexual nature of Jerusalem’s inequities becomes more explicit as Ezekiel 16 continues: by setting up a “house of debauchery” (v 24), “thou **hast** opened *thy* legs to any passer-by, and *thy* acts of debauchery **have** piled up” (v 25). God will punish Jerusalem by “leav[ing] thee to the mercy of the Palestinian girls who *detest thee*” (v 27). Yet Jerusalem continues to “commit debauchery” with Assyrian boys (v 20), Canaanites (v 20), begging the question: “How **am** I to clean *thy* heart ... when thou **dost** perform all the acts of a slutty, shameless woman?” (v 30). Indeed, “in offering and declining with disgust, thou **hast** now become like a whore who raises her price” (v 31), akin to a prostitute (v 32–33); “in giving rather than receiving a price, what **happens** in *thy* case is unlike anywhere else” (v 34). God will punish Jerusalem for her misdeeds by “revea[ing] *thy* dishonour [so that all] **shall** see how repugnant *thou art*” (v 37), “cause *thy* blood to be shed” (v 38), and thrown to her enemies, who will demolish



her “place of lewdness” (v 39), strip her of her jewels, clothes (v 39), bring forth a crowd that will stone her (v 40) and set her house afire (v 41). After these things come to pass, God’s “rage will cease” (v 42).

Yet the diatribe against Jerusalem – and her family – continues in the meantime. Jerusalem is reminded (again) that her mother left her father and abandoned her children (v 45), that she is on the brink of exceeding the licentiousness of her notorious sisters, Samaria and Sodon (v 47–49), whom God “wiped... out” for their “conceit” and the “horrors [they committed] in my presence” (v 50). Ezekiel 16 concludes by reminding Jerusalem (yet again) of her birth in “disgrace” (v 58), of God’s coming to her rescue (v 59–60), and tells Jerusalem: “remember *thy* wrong steps and *shalt* be ashamed,” (v 61) he will make another pact with her.

Thus, the image of Jerusalem that emerges from Ezekiel 16 is unambiguously negative: ‘she’ is portrayed as an ungrateful rescued orphan who squandered her gifts to lead a life of sexual license and debauchery – all the while worshipping graven images rather than the God who saved her and gave her gifts in the first place. And *noka* is used throughout these passages, casting aspersions on it as well.

Ezekiel 23 elaborates upon the long list of atrocities and abominations in Ezekiel 16. *Noka* is used in all dialogue in the “Allegory of the Two Sisters” Ohola and Ohilabah, who symbolize Samaria and Jerusalem, respectively. Verses 1–10 detail the “dirty embraces” (v 7) and “scandalous [sexual] behavior” engaged in by the two sisters. Verse 11 directs attention to Oholibah “shamelessly offer[ing] greater debaucheries than her sister” (v 11). Text 4 provides an excerpt from this passage:

Text 4 – Ezekiel 23:21–34

21: Eta berritu **ditun** *hire* gaztaroko tzarkeriak, *hire* bulharrak Egipton zaphatuak, eta *hire* lorea histua izan zirenekoak.

‘And thou **hast** repeated the evils of *thy* youth, *thy* breasts squashed in Egypt, when *thy* flower was withered.’

25: Eta ezarriren **dinat** *hire* kontra ene kharra, zainari errabian emanen baitiote *hire* gainean bide; ebakiren **darozkine** sudurra eta beharriak; eta *hitarik* gelditzen dena arthikiren **dine** ezpataren azpira; harturen **ditine** *hire* seme-alabak; eta suaz iretsiak izanen dire *hire* azken ondarrak.

‘And I **will** set my zeal against *thee*, whom they shall deal with angrily; they **shall** cut *thy* nose and ears off; and what remains of *thee*, they **shall** cast under the sword; they **shall** take away *thy* children; and *thy* last residue will be consumed by fire.’

26: Biluziren *haute* *hire* soinekoetarik, eta eramanen **ditine** *hire* sendagilazko edergailuak.

‘They **shall** strip off *thy* clothes, and they **shall** carry away *thy* beautiful jewels.’

27: Eta *hire* ganik geldiaraziren **ditinat** *hire* tzarkeria, eta Egiptoko lurretikako *hire* lohikeriak; eta ez **ditun** gehiago hekien gainera goitituren *hire* begiak, eta ez *haiz* gehiago Egiptoaz orhoituren.

‘And I **will** cause your bad behaviour to cease from *thee*, and *thy* fornication from the land of Egypt; and thou **shalt** no longer lift up *thy* eyes upon them, and **shalt** not remember Egypt any more.’

29: Eta gaitzirizkorekin lothuko **zaizkin**, eta eramanen **ditine** *hire* onak, eta igorriren *haute* biluzik eta laidoz estalia; eta agertuak izanen **ditun** *hire* lohikeria ahalkagarriak, *hire* tzarkeria eta *hire* lizunkeriak.

‘And they **shall** set to work on thee with hatred, and **shall** take away *thy* goods, and *shall* send thee off naked and covered with shame; and *thy* shameful fornications, *thy* wicked ways and *thy* disgraceful behaviour **will** be exposed.’

34: Eta hartarik edanen **dun**, eta ondakineraino hustuko **dun**, eta iretsiko **ditun** haren puskak, eta aztaparka larrutuko **ditun** *hire* bulharrak; ezen ni **naun** mintzatu, dio Jainko Jaunak.

‘And thou **shalt** drink from it, and thou **shalt** drain it to the dregs, and thou **shalt** swallow its pieces, and thou **shalt** claw the skin off *thy* breasts; for I **have** spoken, says the Lord God.’

After a litany of other indictments in the third person (where *noka* cannot be used), Ezekiel 21 concludes by castigating Jerusalem for forgetting God, for her “wrongdoing” and “fornication” (v 35); for “paint[ing] *thy* eyebrows with antimony;” (v 49); and setting “sweet balms and fragrances” before other men (v 41).

The graphic language in this *Allegory of the Two Sisters* intends “to shock [the] reader into realizing how drastically they have violated their covenant relationship with God” (Wilson 1988, 610). Ohilabah (Jerusalem) should have heeded the poor example of her older sister, Samaria, whom the Assyrians destroyed (*ibid.*). Instead, Jerusalem has also “committed adultery with the Assyrians and compounded that sin by inviting the Babylonians to commit adultery with her, even while she was still seeing her Egyptian lovers” (*id.*, 611) – a not-too-subtle allusion to Judah’s history of forging alliances with worshippers of other gods in Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. Having fled into the arms of her lovers, Ohilabah is at their mercy for her punishment. No longer sheltered by God’s law – which would have “merely” stoned her to death – this adulterous wife’s lovers will “rise against” her (v 22), strip her (v 26), squash her breasts (v 21), attack her with belts and shovels (v 24), cut off her nose and ears, and take away her children (v 25). No less a fate is due Jerusalem for betraying her God with foreign gods (v 30) and forgetting their covenant (v 3): “[t]he importation of other gods is the equivalent of adultery” (*ibid.*) (see Appendix 2).<sup>7</sup>

7. For the particular threat posed by sisters in the Hebrew Bible, see Kalmanofsky 2011.

Thus, Jerusalem has received her comeuppance by the end of Ezekiel 23: her lovers (and other nations) have set against her with their judgment and weaponry, robbed her of her finery and her children, dismembered her and will burn what little remains. It is clear that these horrific punishments have been meted out because of her sexual promiscuity, taken as a metaphor for her disloyalty to God. All of this hatred is spat upon Jerusalem in *noka*, casting the pronoun itself in a negative light.

#### 4.2.4 *Book of Micah*

The final usages of *noka* in Duvoisin's Old Testament occur in the Book of Micah, whose life spanned the reign of three Judean Kings: Jothan (742–735 BCE), Ahaz (735–715 BCE), and Heziah (715–687 BCE) (Sweeney 2012, 357). Hailing from a rural area outside Jerusalem, in contrast to Isaiah's base in the city itself, Micah "represents the feelings and concerns of the rural farmers and villagers who lived to bear the brunt of the Assyrian army's rape and pillaging" (Matthews 2012, 117). The first part of Micah (1:2–5:15) is a series of prophecies of destruction; the second part (6:1–7:20) foretells deliverance and hope if God's people would only return to living by his covenant. *Noka* is used in the latter part, specifically with regard to "'God's Intention to Punish' ... [that] a series of terrible things will befall the people" (March 1988, 664), if they do not mend their ways. Addressed to "my people," God states "I **began** to strike thee with destruction on account of *thy* sins" (v 13), declaring that Jerusalem will eat without being sated, lose what she attempts to save, will fail to harvest what she sows and to drink wine from the grapes she tread (v 14). Despite Micah's purported messages of hope, then, we see that it, too, uses *noka* to portend punishment.

## 5. Conclusion

I have shown that Duvoisin's mid-19th century Catholic Old Testament utilizes female T almost exclusively (see exception below) with inanimate interlocutors, metaphorically cast as female, for exclusively negative interactional purposes: to prophesize punishment against the Jewish people, to castigate them for violating God's covenant and laws, or to curse Israel's enemies. The imagery used to do so is violent and sexual – often, both. Indeed, in these biblical texts, God (usually, through the prophets) uses *noka* to foretell violent punishment upon a female addressee (standing in for God's people) for adulterous and treacherous behaviour – a punishment "deserved," given the gravity of the sins.

However, the archival record – both religious and otherwise – suggests that *noka* can also be used for more quotidian purposes. An 1873 Bible uses *noka* in

John 11:28 in the passage about Jesus' visit to the sisters, Martha and Mary. Her brother Lazarus having died just a few days before, Martha nonetheless affirms her faith in Jesus and fetches Mary: "Nausia heben **dun**, eta *hire* galthoz **dun**" (The Lord is here and is asking for *thee*).<sup>8</sup> Thus, Martha uses *noka* with Mary as most languages use T versus V forms – as an informal mode of address with a family member. However, in Duvoisin's version, this exchange is rendered instead the formal pronoun *zu*.

Indeed, while there are relatively few (human) female addressees in the Bible, the Duvoisin text does not avail itself of any of these few opportunities to use *noka* in addressing women or girls as a matter of course (i.e. as the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth visit with one another, when Jesus speaks to the Samaritan woman or Mary Magdalen, etc). In fact, the Duvoisin Old Testament uses *noka* with women or girls only for the infamous exchange between King Solomon and the two women who argue over a baby (see Appendix 3):<sup>9</sup>

Text 5 – III Kings 3:22

22: Bertze emaztekiak ihardesi zuen: Ez **dun** *hik* **dionan** bezala, bainan *hire* semea hil **dun**, eta enea bizi. Bertzeak bertze aldera zioen: Gezurra **dion**, ezen ene semea **dun** bizi, eta *hirea* hila **dun**. Eta horreletan hizkatzen ziren erregeren aintzinean. 'The other woman replied: It is not as *thou* sayst, but *thy* son died, and mine lives. The other, for her part, said: **That's** a lie, **it's** my son that lives, and *thine* is dead. And so they gabbled on in front of the king.'

23: Orduan erregek erran zuen: Hunek dio: Ene semea bizi da, ea *hirea* hila **dun**. Eta horrek ihardesten du: Ez, *hire* semea hila **dun**; enea, berriz, bizi. 'Then the king said: This one says: My son is alive, and *thine* is dead. And that one answers: No, *thy* son is dead; mine lives.'

Consistent with the argument I make here, the Duvoisin text makes clear that both of the women involved in this dispute – even the one with noble ends willing to give up her son to save his life – are "loose women." They are referred to as *emazteki lilitcho*; while literally meaning 'little flower' this term is commonly used as a euphemism for 'prostitute' (Lhande 2001 [1926], 678). As indicated above, we do not know why Duvoisin made the pronominal choices that he did, but we can see their interactional effects: *noka* is never used as "simply" a familiar pronoun in

8. My translation.

9. The only other use of *noka* in the Old Testament is Numbers 23:29, whilst Balaam beats a donkey to get it (her) out of the road. After the "Lord opened the donkey's mouth" and demanded to know why she was being beaten, Balaam replied: "Merezi **baitun**, eta trufatu *bai-haiz* nitaz: ochala marrauz bat banu *hire* jotzeko!" (Because you **deserve** it, and you **are** making fun of me: too bad I don't have a cutlass to hit *thee* with!).

addressing a woman or a girl. Its use is always negative; that it is used thus between prostitutes in Text 5, moreover, echoes the negative use of *noka* when used metaphorically to address cities or countries. With regard to such metaphorical “feminizing,” Duvoisin may have been following the textual tradition that preceded him: in the source languages he used (i.e. Latin, French), names of countries and cities are feminine.<sup>10</sup>

However, this still does not explain why *noka* is not also used when addressing referents that are actually female – i.e. girls and women – for neutral or positive purposes. There is some (albeit sparse) evidence of such usage elsewhere in the archival record. First, Satrustegui (1977, 110) uncovered wedding vows from 1547 that used the familiar between bride and groom. Second, the 17th century poet from the northern Basque province of Zuberoa, Arnaud d’Oihenart, used the familiar in some of his romantic poetry. Text 6 provides one such example:

Text 6 – “Beltxaranari” (‘To the dark-skinned one’)		
Nik hanbatetan errana		That which I’ve said so often
Nahi <b>eztuna</b> sinhetsi		<b>Wilst</b> thou not believe?
<i>Aizel’</i> ohhetsi		That thou <i>art</i> loved
Nitzaz, anitz, Beltxarana		much, Dark One, by me.
Bada dela hori egia		And that it’s true
Prest <b>nun</b> erakustera		I <b>am</b> ready to show,
Et’egitera		And to do whatever
Mana <b>nezana</b> guzia		Thou <b>commandeth</b> me
		(Urkizu 2003, 126)

Finally, a contemporary of Duvoisin’s, Jose Antonio Uriarte (whose work was also commissioned by L. L. Bonaparte and presumably under the guidelines about translation) did use the familiar – alongside the formal *zu* – in rendering the Song of Songs into the Gipuzkoan and Bizkaian dialects (1858). A glimpse of this is provided in Text 7, rendered into English from the Gipuzkoan dialect:

Text 7 – Song of Songs 4:11  
 Zure/ire ezpañak, ezkongaya, abaraska jarioa dutenak/**ditenak**, ezta ta esnea  
 zure/ire soñekoen usaya intzentzoaren usaya bezelakoa.  
 ‘Your/Thy lips, betrothed, [are like] a honeycomb **dripping** honey and milk under your/thy tongue: and the smell of your/thy clothes, like the smell of incense.’

The choice to include the familiar here at all is interesting. While often interpreted as a metaphor for God’s relationship to his people during the latter’s exodus from

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10. I thank Alan R. King for these observations about the source languages as well as for bringing the Llande reference to my attention. Any oversights or missteps with regard to translation issues are my own.

Egypt (Sweeney 2012, 426) – in line with the marriage metaphors we saw in books of the Latter Prophets above – the text contains sexually explicit dialogue between unmarried adolescents. Indeed,

the couple's relationship is strikingly egalitarian, as if bracketed out for the moment from the assumptions of patriarchal society... their possession is mutual (2:16), their desires indistinguishable, and the description of each other of much the same sort. (Fox 1988, 473)

Here, then, are linguistically and socially equal uses of *noka* and *toka*; the familiar is addressed reciprocally to construct the interlocutors as social equals. Had Duvoisin included such *noka-toka* usage in his Bible, it could have mitigated the violent and sexualized usages of *noka* elsewhere. Alas, he did not. His Song of Songs uses mutual *zu*, the “pragmatically unmarked” (Errington 1985) mode of address.

The pronominal uses discussed here are important aspects of *noka*'s “semantic derogation” (Schulz 1975) that have been overlooked. Given the hegemonic religious role Catholicism has played in Basque culture, the pronominal models provided in – or excluded from – its texts matter. Rather than a familiar mode of address that can be used for a range of interactional purposes, *noka* is “heard” (or read) as appropriate only for the most denigrated of women, adulteresses and harlots – metaphorically, traitors to God and nation. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Basque speakers avoided using the pronoun associated with such accusations.

Why should any of this matter? One might argue that to the extent that *noka* has such negative connotations for the female addressee, perhaps it is not such a bad thing – good riddance, one might say, to the pronoun that has cast such aspersions upon the female addressee, whether human or metaphorical. However, it is unlikely that in so doing we would rid Basque culture and society of all gender bias. As many scholars have shown, gender differentiation or androcentrism is not limited to its familiar forms of address (see Bullen 1999; Echeverria 2003; Esteban and Amurrio 2010; del Valle 1985, 2000; Ott 1981; White 1999). Despite the gains women and girls have made, they (we) remain on the periphery in Basque cultural domains such as ritual verbal dueling (*bertsolaritza*), sports, arts, literature and religion (recall that most Basque remain at least nominally Catholic where only men can become priests).<sup>11</sup> When *noka* finally disappears from every day speech – the most likely scenario, given its limited use even now – chances are that some other linguistic resource will come to the fore to mark the gender distinctions

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11. That nuns are not accorded the same respect as priests is suggested in the story “Serora bat ethorki handikoa” (“A nun of great character”). When a nun asks for alms for a destitute woman who has just given birth to twins, a potentate barks at her in *noka* – not for her the high-status *berori* used with priests.

deemed important in Basque society and by Basque speakers. It is an interesting bit of irony that while women continue to do the bulk of the daily labour of passing on *Euskerera*, the one linguistic feature uniquely equipped to address them as individuals is increasingly unavailable.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates the roles religion and language have played in (re)creating the peripheral roles women and girls have been allotted in Basque society, as compared to boys and men. But little research on other languages simultaneously examines how ideologies of religion and language are concerned (among other things) with constructing moral distinctions between and among peoples – often along gender lines. I hope I have provided a useful approach by which such studies can be carried out.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1 – Text 2 – Isaiah 47:1–15

1: Jauts *hadi*, jar *hadi* herrautsean, dontzeila, Babilonako alaba; jar *hadi* lurtean; ez **dun** tronurik gehiago Kaldearren alabarentzat; ezen ez *haiz* guria eta samurra deithuren gehiago.

‘DESCEND, sit in the dust, damsel, daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground; there is no longer a throne for the daughter of the Chaldean; for thou shalt no longer be called soft and tender.’

2: Har **zan** ihara, eta eho **zan** irina; ager **zan** *hire* itsuseria, ager sorbalda, ager ichterrak, iragan hibayak.

‘Take the millstone, and grind the flour; show thy ugliness, show thy shoulder, show thy thighs, cross the rivers.’

3: Agertua izanen **dun** *hire* hidoya; ikhusiko **diten** *hire* laidoa: harturen dut asperkunde, eta ez da gizonik niri itchikiko darotanik.

‘Thy indecency shall be revealed; they shall see thy dishonour: I will take revenge, and no man shall retain me.’

4: Gure berreroslea deitzen da armadetako Jauna, Israeleko saildua.

‘Our redeemer is called the Lord of armies, the sacred of Israel.’

5: Jar *hadi* ichil-ichila, ea ilhumbetan sar *hadi*, Kaldearren alaba; ezen ez *haute* gehiago deithuren erresumetako erregina.

‘Sit in silence, and enter in darkness, Chaldean’s daughter; for they shall call thee no longer queen of realms.’

6: Hasarretu izan naiz ene populuaren kontra; gaitzetsi dut ene primantza lohitua; arthiki **ditinat** *hire* eskuetara: ez **ditun** izan urrikari; zaharren gainean gogorki dorphetu **dun** *hire* uztarria.

‘I have been angered against my people; I have disdained my sullied inheritance; I have tossed it into thy hands: thou hadst no compassion for them; thou hast burdened the elderly with thy yoke.’

7: Eta erran **dun**: Erreginaturen naiz egun eta bethi; ez **ditun** *hire* bihotzari eman gauza haukiek, eta ez *haiz* orhoitu *hire* azken urhatsaz.

‘And thou hast said: I shall be queen today and always; thou didst not give these things to thy heart, and didst not remember thy last steps.’

8: Eta orai hau adi **zan**, mimbera, eta gogoia zabalik bizi *hintzena*, *hire* bihotzari erraten *huena*: Banaiz, eta nitaz bertzerik ez da; ez naiz alhargun jarriko, eta agortusuna ez dut ezaguturen.

‘And now hear this, delicate one, who lived confidently, and said to thyself: I am, and there is none but me; I shall not be widowed, and shall not know sterility.’

9: Agortasuna eta alhaguntasuna, horiek biak terrepentean eta egun batez ethorriren **zaizkin** gainera. Oro gainera eroriko zaizkin, *hire* gaizkinkerien elemenia gatik, eta *hire* charma-egileen gogortasun gaitza gatik.

‘Sterility and widowhood, both will come upon thee suddenly, in one day. Everything will fall upon thee, because of the abundance of thy misdeeds, and because of the great severity of thy spells.’

10: Hire tzarkerietan *bahuen* sinheste; erran **dun**: ez da nihor ikhusten nauenik. *Hire* zuhurtziak eta jakitateak, horiek *haute* enganatu. Eta *hire* bihotzean erran **dun**: Ni banaiz, ea nitaz landan ez da bertze bat.

‘Thou *trustedst* in *thy* evil deeds; thou **saidst**: There is no one that sees me. *Thy* wisdom and knowledge, they **deceive** thee. And in *thy* heart thou hast **said**: I am, and aside from me there is no other.’

11: Gaitza ethorriren **zain** gainera, eta ez **dun** jakinen nondik ilkhitzen den; eta gainera eroriko **zain** ezin jabalduko **dunan** zorigaitza; terrepentean ethorriko **zain**, ezagutu ez **dunan** erromeseria. ‘Evil will fall upon **thee**, and thou shalt not **know** where it comes from; and on thee will **fall** a misfortune that thou canst not **undo**; an unknown misery will suddenly afflict *thee*.’

12: Athera *hadi hire* charma-egileekin eta *hire* gaizkinkeria gaztedanik erabili **ditunan** guziekin, ikhusteko *hean* zerbait baliatuko **zaizkinan**, edo *hean* hazkarrago egin *haitakeen*. ‘*Come* out with *thy* spells and with all *thy* sorceries which thou **hast** employed since [thy] youth, to see whether they are of any use to **thee**, or whether thou *may* be strengthened.’

13: *Hire* kontseilu murruaren azpian erori *haiz*; ager beitez eta salba behezate zeru-usnaginek, zeinak izarrei begira baitzauden eta hilabeteak khondatzen baitzituzten, hekien bidez errateko zer gerthatuko **zitzaunan**.

‘Thou hast *fallen* under *thy* multitude of counsels; let the sky-diviners come and save *thee* who watched the stars and counted the months, to tell through them what will become of **thee**.’

14: Huna non eginak diren lastoa iduri; suak erre ditu; beren arima ezen itzurrazaziko diote garrei, ez dira ikhatzak, hekiez berotzeko, ez su bat, haren aitzinean jartzeko.

‘Behold they have become like straw; the fire has burnt them up; they will be unable to rescue their soul from the flames, there are not coals with which to warm themselves, nor a fire to sit in front of.’

15: Horra zer bilhakatu **zaizkinan** bermatu *haizen* gauza guziak; gaztedanik lakhet *hintuen* tratulari hekiek, errebelatu **ditun** zein bere bidean; bat ez **dun** *hire* salbatezeko.

‘Behold what **has** become of all the things thou *trusted*; those traders who pleased *thee* since *thy* youth, **have** each gone off on their way; there is none to save *thee*.’

## Appendix 2 – Text 4 – Ezekiel 23:21–34

21: Eta berritu **ditun** *hire* gaztaroko tzarkeriak, *hire* bulharrak Egipton zaphatuak, eta *hire* lorea histua izan zirenekoak.

‘And thou **hast** repeated the evils of *thy* youth, *thy* breasts squashed in Egypt, when thy flower was withered.’

22: Aria hortaz, Ooliba, hau zion Jainko Jaunak: Huna non *hire* kontra jauzaraziren **ditudan** *hire* galai guziak, zeinetaz ase baita *hire* arima, eta *hire* kontra inguruan bilduren **ditinat** oro.

‘Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Lord God said: Behold I will cause to rise up against *thee* all *thy* lovers, with whom *thy* soul has been satiated, and I **will** gather them all against *thee*.’

23: Babilonako umeak, eta Kaldear guziak, aitorensemeak, erregeak eta buruzagiak, Asiriako ume guziak, irazki ederreko gizon-gazteak, aitzindariak eta kargudun guziak, aitzindarien buruzagiak eta zaldun aiphatuak.

‘The children of Babylon, and all the Chaldeans, the noblemen, kings and leaders, all the children of Assyria, the young men of handsome figure, all the leaders and officials, the leading figures and the renowned horsemen.’

24: Eta popula oste handia ethorriren **zain** orga-laster eta arrodekin; alde orotarik *hire* kontra harturen **ditine** gerruntzeak, erredolak eta kaskak; eta ahala emanen **ziotenat** *hire* gainean, eta berei zayoten bezala *haute* juyaturen.

‘And the nation of great fame shall come upon **thee** with chariots and wagons; everyone **will** pick up their belts, shields and helmets; and I **will** give them power over *thee*, and as they themselves are judged they **will** judge thee.’

25: Eta ezarriren **dinat** *hire* kontra ene kharra, zeinari errabian emanen baitiote *hire* gainean bide; ebakiren **darozkine** sudurra eta beharriak; eta *hitarik* gelditzen dena arthikiren **dine** ezpataren azpira; harturen **ditine** *hire* seme-alabak; eta suaz iretsiak izanen dire *hire* azken ondarrak.

‘And I **will** set my zeal against *thee*, whom they shall deal with angrily; they **shall** cut *thy* nose and ears off; and what remains of *thee*, they **shall** cast under the sword; they **shall** take away *thy* children; and *thy* last residue will be consumed by fire.’

26: Biluziren *haute* *hire* soinekoetarik, eta eramanen **ditine** *hire* sendagilazko edergailuak.

‘They **shall** strip off thy clothes, and they **shall** carry away *thy* beautiful jewels.’

27: Eta *hire* ganik geldiaraziren **ditinat** *hire* tzarkeria, eta Egiptoko lurretikako *hire* lohikeriak; eta ez **ditun** gehiago hekien gainera goitituren *hire* begiak, eta ez *haiz* gehiago Egiptoaz orhoituren.

‘And I **will** cause your bad behaviour to cease from *thee*, and *thy* fornication from the land of Egypt; and thou **shalt** no longer lift up *thy* eyes upon them, and **shalt** not remember Egypt any more.’

28: Ezen hau dio Jainko Jaunak: Huna non arthikitza *hoaten* higuin **ditunanen** eskuetara, haien eskuetara, zeinetaz asea baita *hire* arima.

‘For this is what the Lord God says: Behold I **shall** cast thee into the hands of those thou **hatest**, the hands of such as *thy* soul has been satiated with.’

29: Eta gaitzirizkorekin lothuko **zaizkin**, eta eramanen **ditine** *hire* onak, eta igorriren *haute* buluzik eta laidoz estalia; eta agertuak izanen **ditun** *hire* lohikeria ahalkagarriak, *hire* tzarkeria eta *hire* lizunkeriak.

‘And they **shall** set to work on thee with hatred, and **shall** take away *thy* goods, and **shall** send thee off naked and covered with shame; and *thy* shameful fornications, *thy* wicked ways and *thy* disgraceful behaviour **will** be exposed.’

30: Hori eginen **daine**, zeren *haizen* lohitu jendayen arara, zeinen erdian *hire* burua khutsatu **baitun** hekien jainkomoldeetan.

‘This they **will** do to thee, since thou *hast* defiled thyself in the manner of the nations, in the midst of which thou **didst** taint thyself in their carved gods.’

31: *Hire* ahizparen bidez *haiz* ibili, eta haren edateko untzia **dainat** eskua emanen.

‘Thou *hast* gone the way of *thy* sister, and I **will** give thee her cup to drink from.’

32: Hau zion Jainko Jaunak: *Hire* ahizparen untzi zabal eta barnatik **dun** edanen; irrigarri eta erdeinagarri ibiliko *haiz*; ezen gaitza **dun** untzia.

‘This is what the Lord God says: Thou **shalt** drink from *thy* sister’s wide, deep cup; thou **shalt** be held in ridicule and contempt; for the cup **is** huge.’

33: Hordituren *haiz* eta oinhazez betheko, atsekabezko eta hiradurazko untzitik, *hire* ahizpa Samariaren untzitik.

‘Thou **shalt** become intoxicated and filled with pain, from the cup of misfortune and misery, from the cup of *thy* sister Samaria.’

34: Eta hartarik edanen **dun**, eta ondakineraino hustuko **dun**, eta iretsiko **ditun** haren puskak, eta aztaparka larrutuko **ditun hire** bulharrak; ezen ni **naun** mintzatu, dio Jainko Jaunak.  
 ‘And thou **shalt** drink from it, and thou **shalt** drain it to the dregs, and thou **shalt** swallow its pieces, and thou **shalt** claw the skin off *thy* breasts; for I **have** spoken, says the Lord God.’

### Appendix 3 – Text 5 – III Kings 3:22

22: Bertze emaztekiak ihardesi zuen: Ez **dun hik dionan** bezala, bainan *hire* semea hil **dun**, eta enea bizi. Bertzeak bertze aldera zioen: Gezurra **dion**, ezen ene semea **dun** bizi, eta *hira* hila **dun**. Eta horreletan hizkatzen ziren erregeren aintzinean.

‘The other woman replied: It is not as *thou sayst*, but *thy* son **died**, and mine lives. The other, for her part, said: **That’s** a lie, it’s my son that lives, and *thine is* dead. And so they gabbled on in front of the king.’

23: Orduan erregek erran zuen: Hunek dio: Ene semea bizi da, ea *hira* hila **dun**. Eta horrek ihardesten du: Ez, *hire* semea hila **dun**; enea, berriz, bizi.

‘Then the king said: This one says: My son is alive, and *thine is* dead. And that one answers: No, *thy* son is dead; mine lives.’

24: Erregek erran zuen beraz: Ekhar darotazue marrauza bat. Eta marrauza ekharri zutenean erregeren aintzina,

‘So the king said: Bring me a knife. And when they had brought a knife to the king,’

25: Erran zuen: Haur bizia bi zathi egizue; emozuete batari erdi bat, eta bertzeari bertze erdia.

‘He said: Divide the living child in two; give one half to one, and the other half to the other.’

26: Bainan semea bizi zuen emaztekiak erregeri erran zaroen (ezen barnea laztu zitzaioen bere semearen gainean): Othoi, jauna, haurra bizirik emozue horri, eta etzazuela hil. Bertzeak zioen aitzitik: ez bedi izan ez *hirezat*, ez enetzat, baina zathi bedi

‘But the woman whose son was alive said to the king (for she suffered inside on account of her son): Please, sir, give her the child alive, and don’t kill it. The other said: Let it be neither for *thee* nor for me, let it be divided.’

