MOVEMENTS IN ETHIOPIA ETHIOPIA IN MOVEMENT

VOLUME 1

Edited by Eloi Ficquet | Ahmed Hassen | Thomas Osmond

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Movements in Ethiopia, Ethiopia in Movement. Volume 1

Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies

Éloi Ficquet, Ahmed Hassen Omer and Thomas Osmond (ed.)

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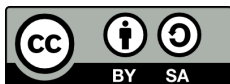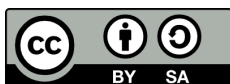
ABSTRACT

In November 2012, the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies was convened in Dire Dawa, a cosmopolitan city in the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia. This event gathered more than 300 international scholars from all disciplines of the humanities and social social sciences. Under the general theme of 'movement' these two volumes gather a collection of 70 papers that reflect recent trends in the field of Ethiopian studies. From local studies to regional and international perspectives, these studies question long term historical processes and current social and economic transformations. A number of contributions explore and give access to fresh sources of knowledge from unpublished or rediscovered texts and documents, from recordings of oral information, or from ethnographic observation. They also review literature, challenge conventional ideas and propose critical investigations on past and present issues, such as interethnic relations, women's role, development policies and their impact.

EDITOR'S NOTE

"This volume marks a new generation of thinking about Ethiopia, its cultures, its histories, and its modernities. Held for the first time in Dire Dawa and on its university campus, this international conference and its papers signifies the arrival of new scholars and new topics alongside venerable themes from the long tradition of Ethiopian studies. "Movement" is the right word and this volume reflects that meeting of the new and the traditions of scholarship. A most valuable read."
James C. McCann, Professor, Boston University and Fellow of the Ethiopian Academy of Science

"This is a welcoming addition to the expanding scholarly work in Ethiopian Studies. Organized around thmes that reflect its guiding idea of "movement," the 71 articles in the Proceedings bring to light new trends and raise new questions in Ethiopian studies that capture th multi-dimensional transformations taking place in contemporary Ethiopia. The editors have rendered, with their judicious choices and careful editing of the articles, an invaluable service to the scholars and the educated public interested in Ethiopian studies."
Maimire Mennasemay, Resident Scholar, Dawson College, Montreal

ÉLOI FICQUET (ED.)

Éloi Ficquet, PhD, is an anthropologist and historian with research interest in religions, ethnicities and powers in Ethiopia. He is assistant professor at the School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris. He co-edited with Gérard Prunier *Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia* (2015).

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ETHIOPIA IN MOVEMENT

Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies

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A Country in Change as Reflected by an Academic Event

Eloi Ficquet, Ahmed Hassen Omer, Thomas Osmond
Editors of the Proceedings of the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian udies

By producing a rhetorical mirror effect in which the various facets of the past and present of Ethiopia are reflected, the word of 'movement' has defined the central theme of the Eighteenth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (ICES 18 in abbreviation). This major academic event took place from Monday 29 October to Friday 2 November 2012 in the Chartered City of Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. It gathered 286 registered participants on the basis of the 335 papers selected by the organizing committee. The presentations were dispatched in 41 thematic panels (see the full list in the annex of the second volume). Any international conference of this kind and size has to do in practice with the notion of 'movement', for it involves the displacement of all participants from their homes or working places to the meeting place, but this edition represented a particular move in the flow of an established tradition.

After the first ICES that was held in Rome in 1959, the Conference has been organized five times in Addis Ababa. The third, eighth, eleventh, and fourteenth were held in the central campus of Addis Ababa University in Siddist Kilo. The seventeenth, in 2009, was displaced to the Akaki campus on the outskirts of the city, on the road leading to the southern and eastern regions of the country, thus opening new horizons for the next venue. In this line, the ICES 18 presented two particularities and innovations. On the one hand, it was moved outside the capital city, to be convened in a regional city, Dire Dawa, a major town of past and present Ethiopia. On the other hand, it was organized in Ethiopia by a foreign country, France, through the involvement of the French Center of Ethiopian Studies (CFEE) based in Addis Ababa, with the financial support of the cooperation service of the French Embassy in Ethiopia. The requirements of this project, from its scientific foundations to its logistical implementation were fulfilled through the close partnership with two Ethiopian academic institutions: the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and Dire Dawa University.

This evolution in the principles of organization of the conference towards a more decentralized and multipartite approach was approved by the International Organizing Committee and was recognized by all participants as an encouraging step forward, as it introduced the possibility for future conferences to take place in Ethiopian regional universities. Since 2002 more than 30 universities have been established, most of them

directly out of the ground, in all regional states and in many of the administrative zones of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. By rethinking the scope of its institutionalized tradition, the worldwide community of scholars specialized in Ethiopian studies has acknowledged the considerable transformation of the country's academic landscape as well as the improvement of transport infrastructures, urban services and accommodation capacities.

Beyond these formal and organizational changes, the main purpose of the Conference was to take stock of the recent trends of investigation in the various fields of study of the Ethiopian past and present. Instead of the conventional division into disciplines, the topics proposed by the panel organizers introduced new transversal perspectives, interdisciplinary debates as well as theoretical and methodological issues, corresponding more or less closely to the programmatic idea of 'movement'. Thereby, in the perspective of departing from static views of societies, notions like 'transition', 'dynamics', or 'change' were applied by paper presenters to a wide range of questions whether on prehistorical and ancient times, contacts between languages and cultural groups, local and international processes of modern political history, or on the factors and consequences ot contemporary economic and social transformations. Some significant turns were also taken by initiating scholarly discussion on topics that were sparsely discussed in previous conferences like cartography; food; history of slavery; internal and outward migrations; representations of rivers; relations to the Ottoman world; the study of the textual traditions of the Ethiopian Muslims. There was also a noticeable amount of papers which considered gender issues and womanhood in various contexts of questioning.

From the 409 papers submitted after the call for papers, 335 were selected by the Ethio-French organizing committee, after having consulted the panel organizers, and 286 participants could eventually confirm their attendance. The full list of panels and selected papers is given in the annex of the second volume of these proceedings, as a testimony of the extent and the diversity of the 'food for thought' gathered and shared in Dire Dawa. Due to limitation of financial and human resources, howevern it was not possible to collect all papers into a comprehensive set of proceedings. Therefore, after having secured the funds for publication, found an agreement with the publishers and defined with them the technical specifications and maximum size of the printed output, a call for completed papers was launched. As a consequence of these limitations a number of topics are not represented in the present two volumes, for the organizers of some panels have been allowed the papers for publication as special issue in specialized journals.[1] A collection of 71 articles was selected and edited carefully by the editorial

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[1]   **Panel 2.01**: A selection of papers on manuscript studies from this panel will be published as a special section in a forthcoming issue of the journal *Aethiopica* (18, 2015) edited by Alessandro Bausi and Denis Nosnitsin.

Panel 3.01: A selection of papers from this panel has been published as a special issue of the journal *PentecoStudies* (12/2, 2012) edited by Jörg Haustein and Emanuel Fantini under the title "The Ethiopian Pentecostal Movement: History Identity and Current Socio-Political Dynamics".

team with the cooperation of all contributors. The transcription could not be homogeneized and it was left to each author to make it consistent with the system he/she had opted for. The distribution of papers into the two volumes has been completely reorganized in comparison with the original thematic structure of the conference. We have not attempted at redefining thematic or disciplinary sections by putting together papers that were initially presented and discussed in different panel sessions.

Despite these constraints and limitations, this collection of essays reflects the wide and creative diversity of the research undertaken internationally on the past and the present of Ethiopian societies in all fields of social sciences and humanities. This strong multidisciplinary blend has characterized the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies as a major academic event, unique among the traditions of knowledge on African nations. By avoiding peremptory judgements on the national destiny through keen descriptions of local situations, the research outcomes exposed in these volumes will encourage the renewal of the already rich tradition of Ethiopian studies, with the perspective of establishing knowledge as one of the bases for a peaceful and sustainable development of the country.

The first volume of the proceedings consists mostly of historical or ethno-historical studies based on different textual sources (manuscripts, archives, newspapers), or other kinds of material like oral traditions, music, heritage items, maps, coins, photographs, and so on. This volume is opened by the contributions of two of the keynote speakers of the conference. Prof. Bahru Zewde, the author of major works on the economic and intellectual actors and factors of the Ethiopian contemporary history, reviews the long evolution of the Ethiopian polity through the question of political succession from the medieval period to the present time. The Conference was held in the wake of the period of national mourning and political transition after the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in August 2012. In such a particular context, where the present meets history, the academic observers of Ethiopia's past, present and future had to adapt their grids of analysis to an unprecedented situation of political transition. The other keynote address of the conference also questions, through the cultural scene, the link between variable institutional provisions and the resilience of the social and cultural assets of the Ethiopian population. Mr Francis Falceto, the curator of the celebrated *Ethiopiques* disc

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Panel 4.05: Some of the papers of this panel will be included in a volume edited by Dirk Bustorf, Sophia Dege and Alexander Meckelburg, entitled "Oral Traditions in Ethiopia", which will be the number 4 of the collection "Supplement to *Aethiopica*" published by Harrassowitz in 2016.

Panel 4.07: Selected papers from the panel 4.07 have been published as a special issue of the journal *African Diaspora* (8/1, 2015) edited by Giulia Bonacci under the title: "In and Out of Ethiopia: Migrations, Diasporas and Contemporary Ethiopia".

Panels 6.01, 6.03 and 6.04: these three panels on linguistics were merged into one volume: *Explorations in Ethiopian Linguistics: Complex Predicates, Finiteness and Interrogativity*, edited by Ronny Meyer, Yvonne Treis and Azeb Amha (Harrassowitz, 2014).

We wish we could have gathered the bibliographical references for all papers presented at Dire Dawa and published in other publications than these proceedings, but it has not been possible to keep track systematically of all authors. The list of papers selected for the Conference, published in the annex of the second volume might provide helpful indications to find references through online search engines.

series and indefatigable finder of historical records of Ethiopian music, deplores the lingering misconceptions on popular culture and considers that the preservation of the plural traditions and modern expressions of Ethiopian music as a cultural heritage, as precious and valuable as any other heritage, would contribute to a better recognition of the ordinary voices.

In the same perspective of deviating from a top-down approach to privilege observations made on the local levels, the second volume gathers studies on contemporary issues in the context of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia through various information gathered from situations observed at the local level in the eleven regional states. The fast and significant changes all over the country that have emerged from the implementation of proactive state-led development policies deserve thorough academic investigation in all fields of activity to trace and analyse the deployment of these processes and measure their impact.

We believe that the wide range of studies gathered in these proceedings will address the curiosity and the needs of a large public of readers, ranging from Ethiopian or foreign students and scholars, to journalists, NGO workers, governmental cadres or international organizations.

Our first acknowledgements go to the population of Dire Dawa and the local authorities for their hospitality and support. By their situation at the crossroads of regional and international trade and migration routes, the inhabitants of this city have been the promoters of modernity and change and the heirs of traditions of tolerance between religions and cultures. Born out of the French-Ethiopian railway in the beginning of the 20th century, Dire Dawa was the place of the first industrial development in Ethiopia, which attracted a cosmopolitan blend of communities of traders, entrepreneurs and workers. In the 21st century, Dire Dawa, as other Ethiopian regions, has undergone fast economic and social transformations. An international event like the ICES 18 could not be convened in this city if it had not been equipped with the appropriate infrastructure and facilities, in particular hotels of international standard. However the necessary transformation of the urban landscape involved by economic growth is often undertaken at the expense of the local architectural and immaterial heritage. By their different styles of houses, their lively streets under the shade of majestic trees, and the living traditions of local knowledge found behind the doors of each house, the historical areas of Kazira and Magaala and Ganda Core charm the visitors by their unique and attracting atmosphere that, we hope, will be preserved.

The involvement of a number of local stakeholders was essential to meet the challenge of hosting a great number of international participants. The Municipality and the University of Dire Dawa kindly offered conference rooms transportation means, logistic support and permanent attention to insure the success of the Conference. From the very beginning of the project, Dr. Wagayehu Bekele, the President of Dire Dawa University, and his team brought an enthusiastic and efficient support to provide the venue of the conference in the growing fast-transforming campus of Dire Dawa University. All participants unanimously appreciated the tasty lunch buffets prepared under the supervision of *Weyzero* Mima, the owner of Paradiso Restaurant. The

managers of the hotels of Dire Dawa kindly offered discount fares and their staff did their utmost to make every guest confortable. The opening dinner at the Ras Hotel offered by the Municipality will long be remembered as an outstanding moment. The evening cultural events took place in the spacious and welcoming courtyard of the Ethio-French Alliance of Dire Dawa, thanks to the remarkable involvement of the Director, Mr. Joseph Petros, the Deputy Director, Mr Vincent Frontczyk, Mr Soufiane Nouh and all other staff members. Among the local partners, we have also to remember the efficient and (almost!) punctual transportation services provided by the *Bajaj* drivers, and the medical assistance provided by the Dilchora Public Hospital and the Railway Hospital.

We also express our gratitude to all members of the Organizing Committee for their commitment in reviewing panels, abstracts and papers and their support at each stage, from the first call for panels to the editorial work on these proceedings. Throughout each phase of implementation of the project the teams of the French Centre for Ethiopian Studies and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies have developed an excellent and exemplary collaboration. We owe a lot to Prof. Gebru Tareke, who, as the former Director of the IES, brought his immense knowledge and experience to the conception of the intellectual outlook of the Conference in its early phase. The key task of the secreteriat was carried out by Mrs Marie Coutant, Dr Céline Lesourd, Mr Jean-Gabriel Leturcq, and Mrs Tamirua Fantahun. They paid attention to all requests and even made miracles to solve some last minute issues.

Finally, we are particularly grateful to our partners and sponsors. Within the framework of cooperation programs for the development of post-graduate education and research, the French Embassy in Ethiopia allocated a grant that was both substantial and essential to set the basis of the organization and confirm the Conference could take place in the best conditions. The German Embassy in Ethiopia contributed to the concert performed by Munit & Jörg. Thanks to Ethiopian Airlines a special flight could be chartered. Selam Bus provided also an excellent service to the participants who travelled by road. Jonathan Le Péchon was very helpful for the design and printing of the communication materials (see pictures 2 and 3 in the annex of volume 2). The leather bags were designed and produced by Chic Sega in Addis Ababa. For the publication of the proceedings, the editors benefited from the managerial assistance of Dr Jean-François Breton and Dr David Ambrosetti, successively directors of the French Center for Ethiopian Studies. Dr Kofi Ababio, a former faculty member of the Sociology and Social Anthropology Department, Addis Ababa University, collaborated to the copy-editing of papers. Finally this book could not have come to existence without the care, patience and inspirational thoughts of Elias Wondimu and the staff of Tsehay Publishers.

The logo and other visual materials of the conference were designed on the basis of the picture of an anonymous man walking in a street of Dire Dawa. This stylized silhouette was aimed at referring to the most basic signification of 'movement', understood as a step-by-step process. The initial impulsion by which a human being stands up and proceeds to somewhere, wherever this movement leads to, is fundamental

in the approach of any kind of activity. The work of researchers in the humanities and social science is to describe the contexts in which human activities take place, and their motivations at different levels, from the individual to the social. Even the most far-reaching ambitions rely on pedestrian perspectives and slow movements. For the design of these two volumes of proceedings the picture of the single man has been completed with the silhouette of a child holding the man's hand. The Conference 'gave birth' to a new set of knowledge on Ethiopia and Ethiopians, and by holding this book, the reader is invited to take part in this chain of knowledge.

Dire Dawa – Addis Ababa – Paris, 2013-2015
The Editors

Bibliographic Abbreviations

In the bibliography of each contribution, references to the proceedings of the previous international conferences of Ethiopian studies are abbreviated as *PICES* followed by the conference number. References to articles in the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* are given as *EAE* followed volume number. The full bibliographic descriptions are given below:

PICES - Proceedings of the International Conferences of Ethiopian Studies

PICES 1:

[CERULLI, Enrico (ed.)], *Atti del Convegno Internationale di Studi Etiopici (Roma 2-4 aprile, 1959)*, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960.

PICES 2

BECKINGHAM, Charles F. and ULLENDORF, Edward (eds.), *Ethiopian Studies. Papers read at the Second International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Manchester, July [8-11] 1963)*, Manchester, Manchester University Press [*Journal of Semitic Studies* 9 (1)], 1964.

PICES 3

PANKHURST, Richard and CHOJNACKI, Stanislaw (eds.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa *[3-7 April] 1966*, Addis Abeba, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 3 vols, 1969-70.

PICES 4

IV Congresso Internationale di Studi Etiopici (Roma, 10-15 aprile 1972), Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1974.

PICES 5a

TUBIANA, Joseph (ed.), *Modern Ethiopia from the Accession of Menelik II to the Present (Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* [*session A*]*, Nice* [*France*] *19-22 December1977*, Rotterdam, Balkema, 1980.

PICES 5b

HESS, Robert L. (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies*, *Session B,* [*Chicago*]*, April 13-16, 1978*, Chicago, University of Illinois, 1975.

PICES 6

GOLDENBERG, Gideon (ed.), *Ethiopian Studies. Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference, Tel Aviv 14-17 April 1980,* Rotterdam, Balkema, 1986.

PICES 7

RUBENSON, Sven (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Addis Abeba, Uppsala, East Lansing (Michigan), 1984.

PICES 8

TADDESSE BEYENE (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies. University of Addis Ababa, [26-30 November] 1984,* Addis Abeba, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 2 vols., 1988-89.

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PICES 12

MARCUS, H.G. (ed.), *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies. Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Michigan State University, 5-10 September 1994*. Lawrenceville, NJ, Africa World Press, 2 vols., 1994

PICES 13

FUKUI, Katsuyoshi; KURIMOTO, Eisei; SHIGETA, Masayoshi (eds), *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective. Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Kyoto, 12-17 December 1997*, Kyoto, Shokado Book Sellers, 3 vols., 1997.

PICES 14

BAYE YIMAM; PANKHURST, Richard; CHAPPLE, David; YONAS ADMASSU; PANKHURST, Alula and BIRHANU TEFERRA (eds.), *Ethiopian Studies at the End of the Second Millenium, Proceedings of the XIVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies,*

November 6-11 2000, Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 3 vols., 2002.

PICES 15

UHLIG, Siegbert (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg 21-25 July 2003*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 2005.

PICES 16a [online version]

EGE, Svein, ASPEN, Harald, BIRHANU TEFERRA and SHIFERAW BEKELE (eds.), *Proceedings of the 16ᵗʰ International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 4 vols [pdf format], Trondheim, Department of Social Anthropology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2009 (available online: http://portal.svt.ntnu.no/sites/ices16/Proceedings/Forms/AllItems.aspx, last consulted November 2015)

PICES 16b [printed version]

ASPEN, Harald; BIRHANU TEFERRA; SHIFERAW BEKELE and EGE, Svein (eds.), *Research in Ethiopian Studies: Selected papers of the 16ᵗʰ International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Trondheim July 2007, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 2010.

EAE - Encyplopaedia Aethiopica

EAE 1

UHLIG, Siegbert (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A-C, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003.

EAE 2

UHLIG, Siegbert (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* II: D-Ha, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.

EAE 3

UHLIG, Siegbert (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* III: He-N, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007

EAE 4

UHLIG, Siegbert in cooperation with BAUSI, Alessandro (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* IV: O–X, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010

EAE 5

BAUSI, Alessandro in cooperation with UHLIG, Siegbert (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* V: Y–Z. Supplementa. Addenda et Corrigenda. Maps. Index*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014.

The Dynamics of Political Succession in Ethiopian History

Bahru Zewde[*]

More than once, the history of the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies has been intertwined with the vagaries of the country's political fortune. My most vivid recollection in this respect is the Eleventh Conference held in Addis in April 1991, about a month before the change of regime. As a member of the National Organizing Committee, I recall the sense of surrealism that pervaded our preparations. I distinctly remember in particular the foreboding felt by our Chairman, the Director of IES at the time, whose refrain after the end of each committee meeting was that we were all toiling in vain, the conference was never going to take place, given the turbulent political change that was on the horizon. As it turned out, the conference went on without a hitch, even as EPRDF forces were knocking on the gates of the capital. The only jarring note was the noticeable absence of the American constituency. Heeding a US State Department advisory, most American scholars had thought it prudent not to travel to Ethiopia at such an uncertain time.

This particular conference has also been preceded by a period of some uncertainty in the wake of the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. It would of course be far-fetched to compare the situation in 1991 with the current one. The former represented a change of regime, the latter succession within a ruling party. Nonetheless, although not to the same degree as in 1991, organizers of the current conference must have been assailed by some doubt as to whether the conference was going to take place as planned. Yet, once again, we are assembled here to commune on this unique experience called Ethiopian studies, which is marking its fifty-third anniversary.

What these two experiences indicate is the remarkable resilience of the Ethiopian polity. This has been witnessed more than once in Ethiopian history. The decline of Aksum culminated in the turmoil that is associated with the name Gudit. Yet, it was followed by the splendor of the monolithic churches of Lalibala and the might and glory of the medieval empire. In the sixteenth century, the Wars of Ahmad Grañ and the Oromo population movement appeared to signal the end of the Ethiopian polity as it was known. Yet, that polity, albeit in truncated fashion, was able to show remarkable resurgence and register the flourishing of art and urban culture that we know as the Gonderine period. The *Zamana Masafent* that followed it, conventionally depicted as a period of unmitigated anarchy, nonetheless exhibited remarkable institutional

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continuity. It lasted barely seven decades before full monarchical power was restored with the accession of Tewodros to the throne in 1855. The death of the powerful Menilek was followed by a period of struggle for succession that attained its resolution in two stages, first in 1916 and finally and more definitively in 1930. The long reign of Emperor Haile Sellassie raised the question of what would happen to the country after his departure. Yet, traumatic as the revolutionary years were, Ethiopia did not experience the political disintegration that so many pundits had predicted. Finally, in May 1991, Ethiopia was effectively without a government for an entire week and the capital was inundated with tens of thousands of fleeing but armed soldiers. Yet, to the surprise of many foreign observers, business went on as usual: international telephone service continued, Ethiopian Airlines went on operating from its new base in neighbouring Kenya.

What makes this resilience of the Ethiopian polity all the more remarkable is the fact that it came about notwithstanding the inadequacy of the institutional provisions for such political continuity. Even where elaborate provisions were made for political succession, as in the case of the 1955 imperial constitution, they were not strictly implemented. Thus, it is safe to conclude that it is the residual social assets of the country, much more than the institutional arrangements in place, that have ensured relatively smooth transitions and political continuity. With these preliminary remarks, we shall now proceed to examine in closer detail some of the landmark events in the history of political succession in the country.

The Kebra Nagast

The first important document that was designed to ensure political continuity is the *Kebra Nagast*, believed to have first been composed in Arabic and subsequently translated into Ethiopic at the beginning of the reign of Amda Seyon (r. 1314-44). The centerpiece of the document is the story of King Solomon and Queen Sheba, the offspring of whose illicit union, christened Menilek I, came to be regarded as the founder of the Ethiopian royal dynasty. Also intricately linked to this story of inadvertent matrimony is the equally powerful narrative of the advent of the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia and its permanent location at the Church of Mary of Zion in Aksum.

The *Kebra Nagast* achieved two things: it delegitimized the Zagwe rulers as usurpers and legitimized the new dynasty that came to power in 1270 as the true heirs of Solomon and Sheba. Thus, the continuity of Aksum and the medieval empire was established; correspondingly, the centrality of Aksum in Ethiopian monarchical tradition came to endure. This centrality was first asserted emphatically when the most powerful of the medieval Ethiopian monarchs, Zar'a Ya'eqob, held his formal coronation ceremony in that city, setting a precedent that was followed by so many of his successors, up to Emperor Menilek in the nineteenth century (TADDESSE 1972: 249-50). The Kebra Nagast heralded the birth of a dynasty that lasted nearly a millennium, until it was swept away by the 1974 revolution. In the meantime, every monarch tried to ensure his legitimacy by establishing a "Solomonic" lineage for himself. Even Tewodros,

notwithstanding his constant refrain of having been raised from the dust by the power of God, had this lineage established for him by over-enthusiastic biographers.

The royal prison of Amba Gishen

While the *Kebra Nagast* set the rules for dynastic succession for nearly a millennium, there was still no mechanism for ensuring smooth royal succession. In theory, the principle of male primogeniture appears to have solved this problem. But, the question of what to do with the younger brothers of a reigning monarch remained an issue of serious concern. Another complicating factor was the habit of kings marrying several wives, as was the case with King Dawit (r. 1380-1412), with each queen plotting for the succession of her son. The institution that was deemed essential to avoid the succession strife that was likely to ensue was a rather heinous one: the royal prison at Amba Gishen, rather flatteringly called "Dabra Nagast" (TADDESSE 1974: 533). All younger brothers of a reigning monarch and sometimes other close male relatives as well were kept there until his death. The number of these unfortunate creatures confined, sometimes for life, in that stronghold had reached nearly six hundred by the time of Zar'a Ya'eqob (*ibid*.). On the death of the reigning monarch, what one would call members of the crown council would visit the *amba* to summon the next candidate to assume royal power. This did not always work perfectly well as, by then, the suitable candidate might be dead or physically too crippled to be fit to govern. In other cases, the sons of the dead monarch would put forward their own bid for the throne, complicating things even further (TADDESSE 1972.: 221, 275ff). The uncertainty of the process of transition was a fertile ground for the rise of powerful individuals who made decisive interventions. One such individual was the intriguing character of Amda-Mika'el (alias Amdu or Amdo), who became a king-maker after the death of King Ba'eda Maryam in 1478, in a style that was to create a precedent for *Ras* Mika'el Sehul in the 18th century. He deposed Ba'eda Maryam's successor, Naod, twice. When the latter finally managed to seize the throne for the third time in 1494, one of the first things he did was to have Amdu killed by having him buried alive and trampled to death by animals that were driven on him (TADDESSE 1974: 527-28).

The case of the above-mentioned Zar'a Ya'eqob clearly illustrates the medieval dilemma of political succession. As the youngest, even if arguably the brightest, son of King Dawit, he had no right of immediate succession to the throne. He was thus confined to the royal prison. Fortunately for him, his confinement was not overly long, his three eldest brothers (Tewodros, Yeshaq and Hezba-Nagn) ruling in succession for a total of some twenty-two years only, the first one for only nine months and the last for only three years. Thus, he could inaugurate the longest (thirty-four years) and most successful – if arguably most despotic – reign in the medieval history of Ethiopia (*ibid*: 221, 280). While the royal prison was terminated towards the end of the medieval period, the significance of Amba Geshen endured in two important ways. It inspired the famous novel by the English writer, Samuel Johnson, entitled *Rasselas* (subsequently translated into Amharic by Sirak Heruy). By virtue of the tradition that Amba Geshen is also the seat of the True Cross found by Queen Helena of Consantinople, it became an important

shrine for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The feast of St. Mary on 21 Maskaram in particular has become the occasion for a pilgrimage equivalent to that of St. Gabriel in Qulubi.

Might is right

The post-medieval period, while it witnessed the flourishing of the Gonderine civilization, also saw the decline of the monarchy and the ascendancy of regional lords. Nothing illustrated this change of power relations more than the dramatic intervention of *Ras* Mika'el Sehul in Gonderine politics in 1769. Within the space of a year, he killed the reigning monarch, Iyoas, and deposed the person he had chosen to replace him, Yohannes. Subsequent regional lords, while they exercised much greater power than the reigning monarchs, stopped short of influencing royal succession in such bloody fashion. As the common adage has it, the Gonderine kings reigned while the regional lords ruled.

The rise of Kasa-Tewodros is significant, among others, for terminating this divorce of power and authority. The last of the *masafent*, he also became the first of Ethiopia's modern emperors. At the same time, he inaugurated a tradition of acquisition of ultimate political power not through hereditary succession but by force of arms. A great deal of the aura and charisma that has surrounded that emperor has revolved around his plebian background, something that he was always keen to emphasize himself in so much of his correspondence. Engrossed in his domestic woes and threatened by foreign invasion of his own making, he never had much time to provide for hereditary succession, even if he was inclined to do so. When he died at Maqdala in April 1868, imperial power was there for grabs. The two major contenders turned out to be Wagshum Gobeze of Lasta and Bazbez Kasa of Tegray. Although the former managed to seize power first with the throne name of Takla-Giyorgis, his tenure lasted barely three years. He was defeated at the Battle of Assem on 11 July 1871 by his rival Bazbez Kasa, who ruled Ethiopia for the next eighteen years as Yohannes IV.

But Yohannes's ascendancy did not go entirely unchallenged. This was particularly the case with Menilek of Shawa, who continued to arrogate to himself the supreme imperial title, *negusa nagast*. He abandoned that pretension only after Yohannes had emerged with enhanced powers and prestige after his two brilliant victories over the Egyptians in 1875 and 1876. The Leche agreement of 1878, whereby Menilek formally acknowledged Yohannes's suzerainty in return for being recognized as the *negus* of Shawa, is generally regarded as the end of this struggle for supreme power. The other regional lord, *Ras* Adal of Gojjam, proved generally more respectful of Yohannes's imperial prerogative and was duly recognized by the emperor as *negus* of Gojjam and Kafa in 1881. Yohannes, however, had no illusion as to which of his two vassals was the more powerful one. That was why he tried unsuccessfully to ensure that the imperial throne will remain in his family by arranging the marriage of his son, Ar'aya Sellase, to the daughter of Menilek, Zawditu.

The delicate political equilibrium that Yohannes had crafted began to unravel around 1888. The defeat of Takla-Haymanot by the Mahdists at the Battle of Sar Weha early in that year was attended by the falling into captivity of so many of his people, including

his daughter, and was followed by the sacking of the city of Gondar. Feeling that he had been left to face alone the full fury of the Mahdist onslaught, he sulked. Yohannes's own inconclusive campaign to dislodge the Italians from their stronghold at Sa'ati underscored his inability to eliminate the danger coming from the sea. Menilek, on the other hand, used the opportunity offered by the advent of the Italians to strengthen his military power with a view to emerging triumphant in the impending struggle for imperial power. He also exploited Takla-Haymanot's disgruntlement to create a common front of rebellious vassals against the emperor, leading the emperor to devastate the nearby Gojjam with a fury that surprised even himself.

Turning in frustration to deal with the third threat to his power, i.e. the Mahdists, he fell at the Battle of Matamma on 9 March 1889. Just as his predecessor Tewodros had attained iconic status through his dramatic act of suicide, Yohannes attained martyrdom in popular imagination by dying in battle against the Mahdists. On his deathbed, he designated his son Mangasha as his heir. But that remained a pious wish. For the power equation on the ground had made it perfectly clear that Menilek was the unchallenged contender for the throne. Much as the frustrated Mangasha coveted at the very least the title of *negus* of Tegray, Menilek did not oblige. Notwithstanding, the initial signs of disaffection among the princes of Tegray evaporated as the Italian menace loomed larger and larger. Thus, Menilek was able to lead a remarkably united Ethiopia at the Battle of Adwa. The Adwa victory enhanced his power and prestige, much more than the Gundat and Gura victories had done for his predecessor, for the former had also an international dimension.

Menilek's provisions

For about a decade after Adwa, Menilek enjoyed an unprecedented degree of power and fame. He had succeeded in this to such a degree that both nationals and foreigners began to worry about what would happen to the country if and when he passed away. Foreign powers began to make contingency arrangements ranging from strengthening the fences of their legations to drawing elaborate plans for the partition of the country. Ethiopians began to view his possible demise with considerable foreboding, which explains why his eventual death in 1913 was a kept a secret for something like four years.

Menilek himself appeared to share this concern, particularly after he realized the seriousness of the stroke that eventually claimed his life. In 1907 and 1909, he made two important provisions for the smooth transfer of power after his disappearance from the political scene. The first was the establishment of ministries. Whatever the inadequacies of the ministerial system that Menilek introduced, there is no denying the fact that it represented an important step towards institutionalizing government and ensuring continuity. Then, in 1909, in a document loaded with historical precedent, the emperor formally designated his grandson, Iyyasu, as his heir to the throne. He reminded his subjects of the tribulations that the country experienced following the death of Tewodros and Yohannes and urged them to avoid such an eventuality by curbing their ambitions and respecting each other. Internal strife, he warned them, can only lead to foreign intrusion (MARS'E HAZAN 2000 EC: 55-56).

These thoughtful provisions of the ailing emperor did not, however, avert the opening of a chapter of political succession struggle that was finally resolved only in 1930, with the coronation of Emperor Haile Sellassie. First, Empress Taytu, who did not find her spouse's designated heir to her taste, tried to exploit the political vacuum to promote her own political agenda. No sooner was she removed from the political scene in 1910 than the person chosen to act as regent to the minor prince, *Ras* Tasamma Nadaw, died, thereby ushering in a new period of political tension. The high point of this tension was the confrontation between palace guards loyal to the young heir and the Adwa veteran, *Ras* Abate Bwayalew, who was believed to have harboured his own ambition of being Ethiopia's overlord by marrying Princess Zawditu Menilek. His bid was thwarted by the combined might of the Shawan lords and Iyasu's father, *Ras* Mikael of Wollo. Iyyasu was now finally free to exercise the power that his designation as Menilek's heir had given him. But his rather unorthodox policies, particularly in the religious sphere, gave ammunition to his rivals. They conspired with the limitrophe colonial powers, who were also apprehensive of Iyasu's subversive influence over their colonial subjects, to depose him in 1916 on faked up charges of apostasy.

The 1916 coup, for it was little short of that, far from resolving the crisis of succession, introduced a new period of uncertainty by establishing an unprecedented system of dual rule – of Zawditu as empress and Tafari as heir to the throne and ultimately as regent. This formed the background to the series of power struggles that unfolded in the following decade and a half. Paradoxically, the first casualty of these struggles was the ministerial system that Menilek had introduced in 1907 to ensure institutional continuity. A public rally against the incumbents in 1918 led to their dismissal en masse (with the notable exception of the war minister, *Fitawrari* Habta-Giyorgis). The move not only removed the incumbents but also dispensed with the ministries for some time to come. The struggle for power peaked in the second half of the 1920s, when Tafari's inexorable rise to absolute power was challenged by one Zawditu loyalist after another, culminating in the Battle of Anchem on 31 March 1930, at which Tafari's forces defeated those of Zawditu's husband, *Ras* Gugsa Wale of Bagemder.

The Era of Constitutions

The coronation of Emperor Haile Sellassie in 1930 not only terminated some two decades of struggle for succession but was also followed by a move that tried to avert the recurrence of such struggle in the future. The emperor ushered in a new era of attempting to institutionalize political succession by promulgating Ethiopia's first modern constitution in 1931. The first fourteen articles of that constitution described in elaborate fashion the rules of royal succession. The first article reaffirmed the incontestable legitimacy of the Solomonic dynasty, more specifically that of the family of *Negus* Sahla-Sellase, who was declared the direct descendant of Menilek I, offspring of King Solomon and Queen Sheba. The second article stipulated that, subsequent to the death of Empress Zawditu, royal succession would remain within the family of Haile Sellassie I. Subsequent articles laid down the rules of succession to him. The cardinal

principle underpinning those rules was that of male primogeniture. The convolutions that the authors of the constitution performed to avert female succession was little short of comical. Rather than envisage the succession of one of the emperor's daughters, they were prepared to entertain the idea of any close male relative of the emperor descended from *Negus* Haile Sellassie ascending the throne. The emperor's daughters were given a remote chance of indirect access to the throne only through their sons, who were fifth in line of succession after the eldest son, his sons, his grandsons, and the second eldest male. The search for a male successor could go on down two generations of the royal family, failing which uncles or other male relatives could ascend the throne. Articles 10-14 dealt specifically with the prerogatives and obligations of the crown prince. Already in 1930, the emperor's eldest son, Asfa Wasan, had been designated as Crown Prince after formally swearing an oath of loyalty to the sovereign. It was clearly laid down that the Crown Prince could only ascend the throne on the death of the emperor, exercising the power of regent only if the emperor could not perform his duties through illness or old age (MAHTAMA-SELLASE 1962 EC: 777-79).

The revised constitution of 1955 reiterated the sole legitimacy of the Haile Sellassie family to the imperial throne as lineal descendants of the Solomonic dynasty through *Negus* Sahla-Sellasse. While male primogeniture was once again underscored, the rules for succession were not as elaborate as in the 1931 constitution. Instead, a number of articles were dedicated to the provisions for regency in circumstances where either the king or the crown prince was a minor or invalid, including the setting up of a regency council presided by the queen mother (*Matshafa Hegegat*: 457-59). Why such elaborate provisions for a regency council were deemed necessary remains a mystery, as neither the king was invalid nor the crown prince was a minor at the time. As it turned out, the queen mother who was selected to preside over the regency council also died a few years after the promulgation of the constitution. The abortive 1960 coup, whose mouthpiece the crown prince became, drove the last wedge between sovereign and heir, making the question of succession an open issue.

In retrospect, the reign of Haile Sellassie represented a major step forward in the institutionalization of governance. In addition to the two constitutions discussed above, it gave the country the three major legal codes which remained in force long after the end of the imperial regime – the civil, the commercial and the penal. The two constitutions also appeared to define the rules of royal succession much more precisely than had been the case thitherto by limiting it to the Haile Sellassie family. But, the emperor failed to do the things that were necessary to perpetuate his dynasty, as distinct from the rather open-ended Solomonic dynasty. That was primarily converting the monarchy into a constitutional one, along the lines of the family of Windsor in England, for instance. Curiously enough, the prime minister was made a member of the regency council in the 1955 constitution. What was actually needed was to make him the real head of government and answerable to parliament, thereby at the same time elevating the monarchy above the tussle of day-to-day politics. Failure to do that meant that when the revolution came in 1974, it was not only the Aklilu government that was forced to resign but also the monarchy and the dynasty that was consigned to oblivion.

Revolutionary legitimacy

The 1974 revolution shifted the yardstick of legitimacy from dynastic purity to revolutionary authenticity. The popular demand at the outbreak of the revolution was for a "people's government". Sensing the inadequacy of the country's preparation for such a government, the popular forces subsequently modified their slogan to that of a "provisional people's government". But, real power resided in the group of junior military officers and NCO's who deposed the long-reigning emperor on 12 September and, taking a leaf from the popular demands, christened themselves the "Provisional Military Administrative Council". That became the formal name for the Darg that was set up on 28 June 1974.

True, at the beginning, the Darg had made a half-hearted concession to dynastic succession by designating the crown prince as a constitutional monarch in the proclamation that deposed Emperor Haile Sellassie and set up the PMAC. But, this was an empty gesture, as the prince was out of the country and could not assume his assigned role. Also a casualty of the ongoing political process was the new constitution that had been drafted by the commission set up in early 1974, notwithstanding the Darg's commitment in September 1974 to ensure its speedy adoption. As the initially "bloodless" change so loudly proclaimed by the Darg turned bloody, particularly after the executions of November 1974, the idea of the provisional nature of the Darg evaporated into thin air. United in blood, the Darg members can no longer contemplate giving up power. Returning to the barracks, however so often it was solemnly reiterated in the Darg's various pronouncements, became an unthinkable option. The sweeping reforms of early 1975 reinforced the permanence of the Darg's tenure. The Darg was now catapulted from the organized leader of the revolutionary movement to jealous guardian of the "gains of the revolution". The military, which had evolved as a professional force during the imperial regime, was thoroughly politicized, the political commissars gaining ascendancy over the generals. In April 1976, the Darg capped its long process of ideological schooling with the proclamation of the National Democratic Revolution as its credo, thereby taking a major step towards its ideologization and civilianization. The military officers became Marxist-Leninist cadres. The colonels became comrades (BAHRU 2008: 291-92).

Yet the consolidation of power by the Darg, or more accurately its strongman, Mengistu Haile Mariam, proved a rather protracted affair. The year 1977 proved a turning point in this respect. In that year, Mengistu not only eliminated his main challengers within the Darg but also liquidated the two major leftist parties – EPRP and *Ma'ison* – that had vied for revolutionary legitimacy. The next decade was devoted to the creation of the apparatus for total political control. This was first achieved in 1984 when that apparatus was born in the form of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), painstakingly forged by the commission set up for its organization (COPWE) in 1979. Then, three years later, a new constitution was adopted setting up the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The constitution established WPE as the sole legitimate political force in the country. The president, who was also secretary-general of the party, concentrated enormous powers in his hands. Even if not so starkly

articulated, "one country, one party, one man" became the motto. The country was expected to exist in its entire territorial integrity. The party was expected to rule for ever. The man was to remain permanently on the helm.

Ethno-Nationalist legitimacy

As it turned out, the PDRE did not last even four years. The country lost the northern province that it had tried to keep for the preceding thirty years. The party expired with PDRE. The man sought refuge in Zimbabwe. Such is the spellbinding character of one-man rule and the power of the personality cult that goes with it that the announcement of his departure left a sense of void and uncertainty, albeit for only a week. I still recall vividly the cry of desperation of a lady who, when she heard the announcement of Mengistu's departure over the radio, lamented: "Is he gone, leaving us at the mercy of daylight hyenas?"

In the last days of the Darg, there were some tentative talks of a transitional arrangement whereby the government and the insurgent opposition would share power until a permanent structure was formed. But, the total defeat of the Darg rendered such compromise solutions irrelevant, leaving the way to the ascendancy of ethno-nationalist organizations spearheaded by the EPRDF. In the first year of the new regime, power appeared to be delicately poised between the EPRDF and the OLF. But the exit of the latter following the controversial 1992 elections consolidated EPRDF's hegemony – hegemony that has remained more or less intact to this day.

The fundamental document that has shaped the post-1991 political regime has been the 1994 constitution that set up the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The governing principle of that constitution is "ethnic federalism". Just as the 1987 constitution began with "We the workers of Ethiopia ...", the 1994 one began with "We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia ...". On paper at least, the FDRE constitution initiated multi-party politics for the first time in Ethiopian history. Article 56 of that constitution ruled that "A political party, or a coalition of political parties, that has the greatest number of seats in the House of Peoples' Representatives shall form the Executive and lead it". In a situation where there exists a level playing field, that provision would have ensured genuine multi-party politics. But where state and party structures tend to merge, there is hardly anything that checks the ruling party from perpetuating itself. As it happened, multi-party politics received a rude shock in 2005. It was buried in 2010.

Instead, what we saw in the past decade is a replay of Ethiopian history with the growing emergence of one-man rule. The turning point in this regard is the split within the TPLF that occurred in 2001. That event marked the end of the collective leadership that had been a distinctive feature of the TPLF and EPRDF and led to the gradual concentration of powers in the hands of one person. This trend was accelerated with the total rout of the political opposition in 2005 and the host of legislations aimed at silencing all forms of dissent or independent opinion that was introduced in its wake.

Ultimately, one-man rule proved costly both to the nation and the individual concerned. Meles's unexpected passing away in August 2012 at a relatively young age was a tragic event even viewed in personal terms. It also left both the nation and the ruling party bewildered. So much so that the party had to initiate an all-pervasive personality cult that still continues unabated. Haile Sellassie and Mengistu were celebrated in life; Meles is being celebrated in death.

The rationale for this rather curious posthumous personality cult appears to be the determination to ensure that the party continues to ride on. Some years back, EPRDF initiated the principle of staggered succession (or *matakakat*, as the distinctly untranslatable Amharic word has it). This principle is predicated on continued EPRDF rule for an indefinite period of time and only provides for the changing of guards or the infusion of new (young) blood within the ruling party. Rather belatedly (after its leader had paid the price for over-extended tenure), it has also recently imposed a two-term limit on the post of prime minister. After some confusion over the rules of succession, the deputy prime minister has stepped in the shoes of the deceased prime minister. The assumption of what is theoretically supreme power by a southerner for the first time in Ethiopian history and the election of a person with Islamic religious background to be his deputy is not entirely bereft of historical significance. It remains to be seen whether this interim arrangement will endure.

Conclusions

What the above historical survey has shown is the lack of adequate institutions in Ethiopian history to ensure smooth political succession. The medieval rulers relied on a far from authentic story and a heinous penal institution to ensure dynastic and royal succession. In the modern era, political authority derived from military might. That was the case with all three emperors associated with the beginning of that era: Tewodros, Yohannes and Menilek. Haile Sellassie gave dynastic succession a more elaborate and focused constitutional basis by limiting it to his own family. But he stopped short of inaugurating the constitutional monarchy that would have guaranteed the continuation of his dynasty. After 1974, *the* party – be it of revolutionary or ethno-nationalist vintage – has held sway. In both cases, too, the party has been subsumed within the strongman, giving rise to a lot of confusion and uncertainty in times of his departure – in flight or in death.

What one can therefore conclude from the above survey is that Ethiopia is still in search of the robust, democratic institutions that can ensure change of governments rather than of regimes and of smooth succession within regimes. Such institutions would be above the dynasty, the family, the party or the strongman. Such institutional arrangements would save the nation from tribulation in times of transition and the individual political actors from undue deification or vilification, as no individual would be deemed so indispensable that his exit from power would inaugurate a period of political anarchy. These institutions would include: genuine multi-party, or at the very least two-party, politics; separation of party and state structures; an independent

judiciary that holds all persons – irrespective of their political or social status – accountable; a robust civil society, including a truly independent but responsible media.

Only then can Ethiopia have leaders rather than rulers. Only then can we envisage a situation where political leaders, after they have served their limited terms in office, could brush shoulders with the average citizen, sipping macchiato or relishing beer. For, at the end of the day, we are all ordinary mortals.

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About Ethiopian Music(s) and their Heritage

Francis Falceto[*]

The reasons why I titled this keynote lecture "About the Heritage of Ethiopian music(s)" come from afar. But let me clarify first how I came to wonder about this plurality of heritages, and primarily how I came to be interested in Ethiopian music. Sometimes the fate of the researchers is strangely the result of mere chance.

A record of Mahmoud Ahmed, *Ere mela mela*, was more than enough for the music lover I was. I wanted to find out more about such an amazing music, unknown to me and totally unknown outside the borders of its country of origin. This was in April 1984. A friend had brought this disc from Ethiopia a few years before, when he was touring Africa with a French theatre troupe. The disc itself dated back to 1975. A year later, in April 1985, I landed in Addis Ababa to meet and invite Mahmoud Ahmed, Mulatu Astatqé and the Wallias Band to perform concerts in Europe. Of course, given the then appalling political situation, this was in vain. Nevertheless, eventually and against all odds, I returned several dozens of times to Ethiopia in order to try to know and understand this music, its origins, its history, and its role in the Ethiopian society. I started from scratch.

Initially interested in modern urban music of the late imperial era, I quickly realized how much modern music owed to the tradition of *azmari* as well as to other musical cultures that had long been marginalized (Gurage, Oromo, Tigrigna, etc.), which prompted me to greatly expand my field of research (and which also significantly increased my delight).

I'll discuss later how the idea of heritage touched me decisively, even though it had hardly crossed my mind at the beginning of my research – and it took a few years to realize that my work could actually deal with a national heritage.

What about the meaning and origin of the words *heritage*? From the French 12th century, the words *héritage* or *patrimoine* of Latin origin mean *a good or a right transferred to heirs*. From the early 19th century, it also means by extension "*what is transmitted to a person or a community by ancestors, by previous generations*, or a *material and intellectual property inherited by a community*" (REY 1992).

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[*] Francis Falceto is an independent researcher in Ethiopian music. He is the curator of the acclaimed *éthiopiques* disc series published by Buda Musique. This text was delivered as a keynote speech at the 18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Dire Dawa, Oct-Nov 2012).

Are the music(s) of Ethiopia concerned by this definition? Incidentally, by raising this question, I would like to underline the lexical oddity of the English language that requests, unlike Romance languages, that the word *music* is invariable and does not take a final *s* to notify the plural. A real impediment when one wants to emphasize in English on the abundance and the richness of music in Ethiopia, a country of impressive musical diversity. Still it is necessary to leave Addis Ababa to get a real sense of this abundance, for much of these music(s) cannot be found in urban areas – they are either unknown in the capital and the major cities, or restricted to internal diaspora communities, and in any case they are not available in music shops. They are never or very rarely broadcast on national radio or television, and are pretty absent from the official stages. The folklore shows sometimes performed at the National Theatre or Agher Feqer Theatre cannot seriously do them justice. It must be admitted that many of these cultural expressions are ignored when they are not simply despised, or even opposed.

Heritage and administration

When it comes to heritage, in Ethiopia as anywhere else, the question of preservation and control of preservation arises inevitably. This is obviously a legitimate question. As for practical answers to this question, there is surely much to say. It should be noted that the idea of heritage is relatively new to Ethiopia, and it is difficult to say exactly when the concept gained acceptance.

We know that in 1952 an Imperial proclamation about the preservation of national antiquities was enacted *to protect monuments and other relics which are witnesses of the Empire and its heritage*.[1] A *Section d'Archéologie* (Department of Archaeology) was then established at the *Institut éthiopien d'Études et de Recherches* (Ethiopian Institute for Studies and Research), and attached to the National Library. These first steps of heritage policy, essentially limited to palaeontology and archaeology, were formalized at a governmental level in the 1960s, especially through the *Ethiopian Antiquities Administration* (1966).

Until the Revolution, the ministries of Education and of Information shared responsibility for cultural matters. In the early years of the *Derg*, specifically 1977, the Ministry of Culture and Sports was created; its proclaimed goal was *building a socialist culture in Ethiopia*. A *Department for the Study and Preservation of the Cultural Heritage* was put in charge of continuing the work started twenty years before by the Department of Archaeology. The "Cultural Heritage" in question was still strictly limited to paleontological and archaeological collections. The discovery of Lucy / Dinqnèsh in November 1974, although baptized in honour of a famous song of a British pop band, did not lead this Department to broaden the scope of its preservation policy. The newly created ministry also included a *Department of Arts and Theatre* supposed to supervise music, painting, theatre, cinema and creative writing.[2] There was no real patrimonial

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[1] See KEBBEDE MIKAEL and LECLANT 1955: 1.

[2] See ALEME ESHETE 1982: 37-38, and ELLENE MOCRIA, MESFIN MESSELE and ALEMAYEHU GEBRE-HIWOT 2003: 23.

concern regarding these arts, but the emphasis was put on the necessary control and supervision of artistic creation in a socialist-realist style borrowed from the USSR and North Korea. Nonetheless, Ethiopia has a long history of inequality between populations, an issue which is still sensitive today, and it should be noted there was a considerable step forward then in the active recognition of the many southern cultures previously neglected – undoubtedly one of the very few progress to the credit of the *Derg*.

In 2001, music, and the arts in general, were transferred from the Ministry of Culture and Communication, and placed under the authority of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Culture. Among its *Powers and Duties*, a lot of youth, a lot of sports, very little culture. In the field of culture the then new *Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage* continued its missions of preservation for the classical disciplines. If its official *Powers and Duties* repeatedly emphasized concern for "cultural heritages" in the plural, music was not even mentioned.[3] For a couple of years, music fell under the purview of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. If one refers to the Ministry's website, presented as the "Official Portal of Tourism in Ethiopia", culture is recognized only with respect to tourism development of the country:

> **Mission**: To study, preserve, develop and promote the cultural wealth and the national tourism attractions of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and to build the positive images of Ethiopia with a view to adding a sustainable socio-economic and political values with popular and stakeholder's participation.
> **Vision**: To make Ethiopia one of the top five tourist destinations of Africa in 2020 through the development of its cultural wealth and natural attraction.
> **Values**: Respect diversity, Hospitality, Transparency, Accountability, Commitment to change, Excellent Service, Participations.[4]

Yet, concern for the safeguarding of cultural heritage exists as expressed in the Proclamation 209 issued in 2000 by the Federal Government that gives a clear definition of intangible cultural heritage:

> Intangible Cultural Heritage means *any cultural heritage* that cannot be felt by hands but can be seen or heard and includes different kinds of performances and show, folklore, religious, belief, wedding and mourning ceremonies, music, drama, literature and similar other cultural values, traditions and customs of nations, nationalities and peoples (Report January 2007).

Such a clear statement should unanimously reassure all stakeholders – people, performers and artists, regulatory authorities and researchers. Not sure...

Last but not least, Ethiopia has ratified the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" of 2003 initiated by UNESCO, a new and important step forward in the stated position of Ethiopia, including notably a four years program (2005-

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3   http://www.mysc.gov.et/ARCCH.html
4   http://www.tourismethiopia.gov.et/English/Pages/Home.aspx

2008) in conjunction with UNESCO and with particular attention to traditional music (*Ethiopia - Traditional Music, Dance and Instruments*) (OHINATA 2009).

Are music(s) a heritage?

There are reasons to doubt this, particularly if we look at the *Mission, Vision and Values* issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Hence, shouldn't we consider the first place given to Culture in the Ministry's name as a *trompe l'œil*?

In many ways, we must acknowledge that music, particularly secular music, can not be compared to other recognized Ethiopian heritages, more or less protected, more or less long-valued, such as those already mentioned, or of other kinds such as archives, manuscripts, or biodiversity. There are at least two reasons for this exclusion: first, music is often seen as a commercial activity and not of lasting artistic value, which definitely invalidates patrimonial claims – and claims of national significance; secondly, in the Amhara dominant national culture, music is a matter of *azmari*, often seen as people of low virtue.

The ostracism traditionally suffered by *azmari* or *wata* (and by extension all kinds of musicians, including confirmed modern stars) has started to change in recent decades. Distrust of the society towards them can sometimes be tempered by fame and financial success. Their poetic genius, vindicatory and singularly libertarian, does the rest. These artists that one disparages or defames easily are, at the end of the day, a great source of pleasure and comfort – one would say "the Salt of the Earth" (*Matthew* 5:13) to mean that they are essential to the society.

For many Ethiopians, it may seem strange, even inappropriate, to talk about heritage when it comes to music. This ambivalence towards all musical art is deeply rooted as well as discriminating. This perception also depends on from where one observes and from where one speaks. The musician, the music lover, the Ethiopian musicologist or historian, the *ferenj* researcher, a mother or the Minister of Culture may not have the same approaches, the same perceptions nor the same "interests" – not to mention the religious variants, depending on whether one is Muslim, Christian, Animist or Atheist. Moreover, the cleavage between religious and secular music (both plural forms) is so crucial that one often observes a true exclusion of the latter by the former. A Protestant missionary and a Coptic priest cast the same virulent curses on music and dance which they consider as impious and backward, when instead they can carry and transmit the memory of peoples. From the late 1990s, I could witness in Gurageland the slow but irresistible rise of prohibitions by the Coptic Church. The senior Gurage men and women who agreed to sing and record *bedra*, *wèyèg* and other *yèwèjè étchèhu* (respectively praise-songs to *Waq* the Gurage God of War, heroic chants, and songs in honour of *Bʷèja* the Thunder God to ward off lightning) have become increasingly reluctant to interpret and record this traditional music, due to the frightening threats of damnation casted by the Church or the missions.[5] Other researchers can testify about blackmailing

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5 See STEINHOVDEN 2012. Through extensive interviews, the author gives a clear account of the devastating hostility of the churches towards traditional cultures.

and other "evangelical" methods used by the Pentecostal missionaries: access to school and medical care are weighed against renunciation to music and dance traditions. And what happened to the annual Festival of a thousand Stars in Arba Minch that used to gather fifty Nations, Nationalities and Peoples from the Omo Valley? It was inexplicably cancelled in 2009 after few successful years, while local people used to enjoy it unanimously.

Sic transit the remnants of historical cultures. That's the way traditions die, they are just as mortal as civilizations – as we are supposed to know.

By the way, are these "traditions" fixed forms for all eternity? Or should we consider them as living organisms subject to dynamic changes? Do they die of entropy because they no longer reflect the societies which have generated them? Do they die natural or violent death?

Most agree that musical traditions used to remain unchanged for centuries. Some, like European musical traditions, have been studied and documented very closely, sometimes over several centuries. Concerning Ethiopian secular music, much less documented than church music, old written sources are not very numerous nor so ancient – and not so documenting... For long I thought Abba Bahrey had been the first writer mentioning the *azmaris,* in the late 16th century (GUIDI 1907: 230, line 13). Actually, earlier mentions of *azmaris* are found by the mid-15th in a juridical and administrative text dealing with food regulations at the royal court of Zärä Yaqob (reign 1434-1468) (KROPP 2005).[6] Portuguese catholic missionaries of the 16th-17th gave us also some informations about secular music. While there is no doubt that the traditions are dynamic and not static (and not eternal, as too often local prides would have us believe), it is also clear that the changes they have experienced were extremely slow, and that they have developed over generations. Since the late nineteenth century and especially since the invention of the "talking machine", it is clear that mutations are phenomenal. It also became possible to compare recordings of a musical tradition over more than one century. If we consider recordings of *azmari* and *wata* music, which were probably the most documented in Ethiopia over the twentieth century, and if we listen successively to Tessemma Eshètè (of 1908-1910), to Ferede Golla or Negatwa Kelkay (of 1939), to Assefa Abate or Shishig Tchèkol of the 1950s, to Ketema Mekonnen or Fréw Haylou of the 1960s, we clearly see that they all belong to the same kin, beyond the intonations of each of them.

After more than a quarter of a century of intensive survey of the Ethiopian *azmari* scene, there is a lot to be said about evolution and changes in their culture, starting from the pretty recent invention of the neologism *azmaribét* (literally *house of azmari*, a contradiction in the term itself since *azmari* are supposed to be wandering minstrels, and not attached to any cabaret or theatre). This new word appeared in the late *Derg* time, and most probably in the early 1990s. The massive settlement of these wandering minstrels in the cities, especially in Addis Ababa, the impressive evolution of the public

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[6] Mentions of *azmari ras* and *zan azmari* (as well as of *bäalä bägäna*) are found pp. 120, 125 and 135. I am very grateful to Bertrand Hirsch for having conveyed this important information.

in the recent past, and of course the great talent of entertainers of these new look *azmari* has significantly affected the "*azmari* tradition".

The evolution of the audience (or rather the various audiences) is of paramount importance in this transformation. While in the early 1990s you would rarely meet *ferenji* in *azmaribét*, they now constitute a large part of their customers. It is clear that the art of *azmari* being mostly an art of words, it *de facto* excludes non-Amharic speakers. To keep these customers, often seen as a potential goldmine, it is necessary to meet their expectations, which can be summarized as beautiful shows, lively melodies, great voices, skilled musicians, spectacular choreography, joyful atmosphere – and possibly beautiful women. In fact most *ferenji* customers are more sensitive to the rhythms of southern regions than to the heart-breaking Amhara ballads supposed to break the mood. In terms of dance, which has continuously grown in importance, if it is a universal language that anybody can appreciate, *eskesta* is now systematically associated with all kinds of choreographies more or less pan-Ethiopian, the most important being that they have to be spectacular. On another hand, one of the great universal laws of bars, cabarets, nightclubs, dance halls and other recreational places prescribes that the louder the sound or the livelier the atmosphere, the more the sale of beverages increases, for the benefit of the cash register. The poignant and bluesy melancholy of *Ambassel* and *Bati* has evaporated to give way to loosely Gurage or Welayta bedlam. One considers now that the Ethiopian blues beats down the atmosphere and gets rid of customers. And *Tezeta* becomes often a silly and automatic refrain, a sort of patriotic and binding obligatory hymn, devoid of any lyricism. So *exit* the killjoy archetypes in favour of a permanent incitement to dance and dizziness. The same could be said about the customers belonging to the Ethiopian diaspora in Europe and the United States.

Some observers would speak about *acculturation* to comment on the evolution of *azmari* tradition. Again, these rapid transformations point out to the necessity of preserving vanishing musical forms and related documents.

Heritage and memory

If I have developed this example at length, it is to show that nowadays the single human lifetime of a musician or a listener is enough to face the evidence that huge processes of evolution, transformation or revolution have overturned the sonic landscape of musical cultures – as opposed to the very slow evolution of the previous centuries. For better or worse, it is also a worldwide phenomenon. Modern recording and broadcasting technologies, internet, as well as easy transcontinental travels have heavily affected "the nature of cultures". Today's touristification of otherness[7] seems to have replaced the nineteenth century taste for exoticism.

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[7] *Touristification* is a French word used in a pejorative way to denounce the growing abuse of everything and anything, but especially culture, in the tourism industry, whether by public officers or private companies. Touristification of otherness designates the present trend to consume the discovery of other cultures, peoples, music, etc., as a vulgar market, in the same way that one would go to the supermarket to buy a fashion item advertised on TV adds. Symptomatically, it is mostly consumers from the North who go shopping to the South, not the reverse. Is there a sustainable tourism, seriously?

Whatever one thinks of these developments, be they considered as happy or unhappy, it is always culture, for better or for worse. But this should strengthen our desire to preserve what has disappeared yesterday and what is still possible to save. That's what heritage is. It is dead or vanishing, but it is part of our memory and has to be passed on to the coming generations to let them know from which sense of beauty they are proceeding, to which grandeur they belong.

As I indicated in my introduction, at the beginning of my research, I had not envisioned that I would have to tackle the question of national heritage. I just wanted to share this exciting music with a wider audience. It should be remembered that only fifteen years ago, while virtually all African music, both modern and traditional, was available in music shops all around the world, none of the classic recordings of Tilahun Gessesse, Mahmoud Ahmed, Mulatu Astatke or Bizunesh Bekele were available in the northern hemisphere. The only available Ethiopian discs were the traditional recordings made by pioneers such as Harold Courlander, Wolf Leslau, Joseph Tubiana, Jean Jenkins, Ashenafi Kebede, Cynthia Tse Kimberlin, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, among others, and even those were only known by a happy few and dedicated music lovers. I was the first to be surprised by the unanimous welcome for the sonic remains of "Swinging Addis".

It soon became obvious to me that there was no relationship anymore between the big bands of the imperial era and the music of the *Derg* time (I made four trips to Ethiopia during the last six years of the *Derg*). On the one hand the *Derg* had disbanded institutional orchestras that were at the heart of musical creativity (Imperial Bodyguard, Police, Army, etc.), and on the other hand two other major technological innovations, exactly contemporary to the early *Derg*, marked the end of a musical as well as a political era: the emergence of electronic keyboards and of cassettes. The former were supposed to replace the big bands, and in any case nobody, institution or private, was able to continue sponsoring large music ensembles. As for tapes, they soon became a cause of widespread piracy, further weakening the economic situation of musicians, and discouraging their creativity since they scarcely got financial reward – not to mention other constraints they were facing such as censorship and propaganda. These are major factors necessary to understand the brutal break between the two musical eras.

The *Derg* put a brutal end to the golden age of "Ethiopian Groove" and urban high life.

The fall of the *Derg* and the twenty following years allow us to take the full measure of the breaks between the three eras: Empire, *Derg*, and post-*Derg*. The generation of Ethiopians who had known the first two regimes knew what was missing and had vivid memories of it. However, imagine a youngster starting "nightclubbing", let's say at the age of 17, at the time when the revolution was brewing. In 1974, this was prohibited, or in any case his desires were severely restricted because of the curfew. And the curfew lasted 18 endless years, killing the nightlife, which is a key moment for festive time as well as a space for musical expression and creativity. At the end of the *Derg* and the abolition of this barbaric curfew, this young man or young woman is 35 years old. Now in 2012 they are 56 years old. In other words, this sadly means that Ethiopians below

this age, meaning the vast majority of the population, have no direct or personal idea of what had happened musically before the *Derg*, during the so-called "Swinging Addis".

Musically speaking, these 18 years are like a blank in the memory of Ethiopians, especially for the then young ones. We should also consider the impact of the *Derg* on the memory of Ethiopians living in the many diasporic communities around the world, particularly with regard to generations born under this regime or in exile.

From some informal surveys conducted in various Ethiopian diaspora communities (France, England, Italy, Sweden, Washington DC, Denver Colorado, Houston Texas, Minneapolis Minnesota, Australia...), I could see how music is an important vector of memory, and how it contributes to the strength of social ties, especially between generations. If I stay with the example of "Swinging Addis", the sense of modernity and fun expressed by the music of these "Roaring Sixties" was adopted with gusto by the young "*diasporas*" – as the Ethiopians of Ethiopia call them. It turns out that they love the music of their parents' generation. Sharing common musical tastes has surprisingly contributed to reset the memories, and mitigate significantly the negative views about the country associated with the *Derg*. This is not anything.

All of this is not about amnesia, but about prohibition, amputation, dictatorship on memories, and the censorship of History. Shouldn't it alert us on the structuring capacity of musical cultures in the lives of individuals and societies? And on the necessity to fully recognize these expressions of folk and popular art as heritage that should be safeguarded? Still one would have to stop looking at all these *azmari* as belonging to a subculture unworthy of being preserved.

The reduction of this memorial discontinuity itself should be enough to justify the work of researchers on the music(s) of Ethiopia, be they Ethiopian or *ferenj*. Ethiopian researchers have of course their own agenda; foreign researchers can share it and also bring useful comparative perspectives. An external eye is always useful and the insights it brings are worthy of discussion – whether it is a *ferenj* eye watching Ethiopia or an Ethiopian eye observing any foreign culture. As an example, the case of 1970s Cambodia is very comparable to Ethiopia's case – with the same time frame, similar music influences, similar political turmoil, and a similar memorial disaster...

Provisional conclusion

Over the past twenty years, the need for a sound archive for Ethiopia has often been mentioned. It makes sense. This could certainly be one of the solutions to the conservation, protection, research, development and promotion efforts for the musical heritages of Ethiopia.

Should we not consider pooling the various musical deposits scattered between institutions such as IES, ARCCH, National Radio and Television, the Yared School, as well as the collections of Ethiopian recordings languishing for almost a century in many international museums and private collections? This is without mentioning the intense work of collecting done by researchers (mainly non-Ethiopian) for half a century.

Financial issues aside, why have no attempts to create a Sound Archive been successful until now? On a purely technical level, digitization could easily help create a nearly encyclopaedic sonic database of the musical heritages of Ethiopia. However, an issue that deserves to be addressed first is building a coherent understanding of the purpose of such a project and the criteria to be used in selecting materials. Of course this could lead to what is known in France and ironically as *une usine à gaz* ('gas-works'), a further challenge by creating another level of bureaucracy in the attempt to simplify matters.

I noted earlier the contradictions inherent to Ethiopian society when it comes to defining and recognizing what is cultural heritage and disqualifying what does not count. No music of Ethiopia deserves to be (mis)treated as a Cindirella of this national ambition. A particular tact is needed to solve these societal equations that should not affect or hinder research in any way.

To his or her dismay, more than one researcher, whether Ethiopian or foreign, has one day faced with the hostility of either ordinary Ethiopians or officials on the pretext that his or her research might project a negative image of the country. A recurrent suspicion towards researchers consists in accusing them of wanting to give a negative image of incurable poverty and overall backwardness. Shall we recall that propaganda or malevolence are not part of the premises of research? Critical thinking, especially with regard to sensitive or controversial issues, is often suspected of feeding a deliberate hostility. Linking critical thinking to denigration is an insult to the spirit of research.[8]

It goes without saying that research must go beyond these taboos, curses and other contradictions, to systematically observe, without limitation and equally, all musical cultures of the country – secular or religious (Christian, Muslim or related to other traditional beliefs). Certainly the role of the political and administrative authorities on culture is of primary importance in the definition of heritage and its active preservation, but isn't it also the role of everyone, wherever one is, to preserve their own memories as well as collective memory? Much remains to be done for a genuine harmonization of perspectives.

Museology often certifies the death of cultures that it preserves and exhibits. But flat encephalograms of vanished or endangered worlds as presented by museums have

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[8] For example, see in particular the edifying experience of Itsushi Kawase, a visual anthropologist documenting music-related expressions in northern Ethiopia. "I showed the film [When Spirits Ride Their Horses, 2011, 28'] at where I taught the visual anthropology block course, to a group including graduate students of social anthropology and heritage management at Mekelle University in northern Ethiopia in August 2011. During the viewing, some students were uncomfortable and irritated to see the film. I found that these students consider the subject of the film, Zar, too provocative because for them, the Zar ceremony resonated with the image of Ethiopia as 'backward civilization', and thus, was inappropriate to be the subject of the research. My other audio-visual documentation of Ethiopian mendicant singers, Hamina (or Lalibela) [Lalibalocc – Living in the Endless Blessing, 2005, 24'] met with harsh criticism. The film was labeled as a 'strong projection of poverty' during the meeting on inventorying of the intangible cultural heritage of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and UNESCO Addis Ababa Office in October 2006. Later, I tried explaining to the officers of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), who attended the screening and got particularly irritated by my film, the academic intention of my film and research projects. I found that the people from ARCCH consider the subject of the film too challenging because for them, Hamina resonated with beggars and not singers, and thus, were inappropriate to be the subjects of a film related with cultural heritage." (KAWASE 2012: 77-78.)

the virtue of mirrors. They remind us of our origins and question our memory. It is all about the memory of cultures, our cultures, and the people's memory. Ethiopia is not only Ethiopian, it is also universal – and possibly more than it thinks.

This is often the memory of beauty too.

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From Hamar Ethnography to Rhetoric Culture Theory [*]

Ivo Strecker[**]

The interaction of rhetoric and culture

Before I went to the Hamar in southern Ethiopia, I had studied at the London School of Economics (LSE) where social anthropology was taught in the tradition of Malinowki, Radcliffe-Brown, Firth and others, emphasising concepts of structure, function, and the satisfaction of human needs afforded by the social 'system', but as I conducted fieldwork, I discovered something that had been completely missing in my previous anthropological training: the insight that human culture emerges and is shaped and constantly re-shaped through rhetoric.

True, during the Sixties a new direction in anthropology developed, which stressed the fact that all culture is based on communication (Bateson), which in turn is thoroughly symbolic (Geertz). Also, this was the time when the ethnography of speaking (Hymes) and pragmatic linguistics (Levinson) began to flourish, which led to the awareness of culture specific forms of rhetoric (Brenneis). But at that time no one argued (at least not in writing) that just as rhetoric is grounded in culture, culture is grounded in rhetoric. It was the Hamar people – and above all my host and mentor Baldambe - who first opened my mind to this fundamental truth, and here I will trace how my fieldwork with the Hamar let me appreciate the relevance of rhetoric for the study of culture.

In what follows I first demonstrate how some striking characteristics of Hamar society guided my research towards a study of speech, and then I go on to show how this in turn led me to embark together with Stephen Tyler and others on an interdisciplinary study of the interaction and interdependence of culture and rhetoric (www.rhetoricculture.org).

Impressed by speech

When conducting fieldwork among the Hamar, I was struck again and again by their amazing speech competence. My work journal is full with observations and comments

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[*] A revised an enlarged version of this paper will appear in: LEE, J. (ed.), 2014*), Keeping Eastern Indonesia in Mind: on the Work of E. Douglas Lewis*, under the title "Convergence with E.D. Lewis".

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about the prominence of speaking in their life, and also with reflections on the theoretical and methodological implications of this feature. Here I provide examples of my first encounters with Hamar speech competence.

At the cattle camps

During the early days in the field, I observed the ubiquity of speaking in Hamar as just one part of the new situation in which I found myself. I did not understand what was said, but obviously the Hamar liked to talk and talk:

> "We arrive in the camp as night falls … There is a full moon and as the cattle, bathed in its light, arrive, I am struck by the lightness of their colouration: yellow, grey, a grey that is almost blue, light red, white… and their movement is so relaxed and careful. We sit or lie on cow hides and the men, all of them young, talk and talk. They use their hands a lot; speak almost with their whole bodies. I wish I could understand what they are saying. Later, when it is almost midnight, we are served milk and blood mixed in huge calabashes. … At dawn we awake and the men start talking again. After the sun has risen, little boys bring us fresh milk, which we drink and depart…" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 16-17).

Silence, gesture and words in ritual

As the first example shows, early on I also noticed that silences, gestures and bodily postures were an important part of speech, even though I did not understand, as the following case shows:

> "Old Muga, being the ritual leader of Gabo, went this morning together with Irlu, who is his assistant, into the bush to collect sacred plants: *lazi, gumaza, karko* and *gali.* I don't know where Muga spent all day, but in the evening, just before sunset, I see him approach the village with his arms full of magical plants. His assistant Irlu is with him. They put down the plants at the door of every house and at the gateway of every kraal. They also place some plants in the middle of the cattle kraal and - what a friendly gesture - in front of our tent! They do their work in a quiet matter-of-fact way, yet somewhat intensely and in a hurry. No words, no prayers. On the contrary: a pervasive silence, only the plants are allowed to 'speak'. But when all the plants have been distributed, both men stop beneath a tree and Irlu raises his right arm and shouts a few sentences, which I do not understand" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 22).

Impact of speech (1): domination

Also, although I could not yet grasp what was said, I soon began to notice the social impact of speech like when on the 9th of October 1970 I observed that speaking was a means of social domination in Hamar:

> "Early in the morning, the men have coffee in Gemarro's house and then move over to Aike where I join them. Aike is the one who talks the most. His older brother Surrambe quietly sits, looks depressed and moves his lips as if talking to himself. Nor does Gemarro say anything. He wears a dark expression and spits

occasionally. Zinu, the old Kara man, speaks at times, but Aike, who addresses himself mostly to Zinu, dominates him completely" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 28).

Forceful performance and speech as fighting

As fieldwork continued and I occasionally took a break, the speech competence of the Hamar would almost immediately astound me upon my return, as at the following occasion:

"We drive through the dry river bed of the Woito and on the savannah close to the mountains we meet the first Hamar-speaking herdsman, a Tsamai. Baldambe converses with him and I watch. The Tsamai not only speaks Hamar, he speaks *like* a Hamar. I am struck by the forcefulness of his speech, the decisiveness of his gestures, and the distinct rhythm in the flow of his talk. This fresh impression supports my old finding that speaking and the ability to speak are here more highly valued than in other parts of the world that I have seen. There is even an excitement which goes with such speech encounters, an excitement which has to do not so much with the content of the speech but with the talking itself, or rather content and form merge and the excitement of the speaker consists in anticipating *how* he will say certain things. Watching the two men I have the feeling that I am watching two fighters, there are even movements and stances, which remind me of fighting. Well, a kind of playful fighting" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 87).

Delight in the recreation of speech

As time went by, and as I began to understand the language better, I came to realize the complexity of Hamar conversations, which at times also included repeating and imitating the speech and gestures of people, like in the following case:

"It is still night when Baldambe and Sago rise to settle down again for coffee and conversation. Baldambe tells Sago what was said during the big public meetings at Kizo where he and the other spokesmen of Kadja stopped the fighting with the Galeba. This is my favourite theme again: sociolinguistic awareness, speaking about speaking, and the intellectual background of the use and manipulation of language in politically important situations. Both Baldambe's and Sago's command of the language is great. They delight in recreating all the single features of an argument which they have heard about, re-enacting the situation so that you can visualise them listening, answering, shouting, rising, sitting down, corning to conclusions, leaving something in the air... (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 205-206).

Impact of speech (2): intimidation and exclusion

I often noticed in Hamar that speech competence was not only used to dominate as in the example given above, but that it was also used to exclude and intimate others:

"Last night a travelling Amhara trader arrived in Dambaiti, hoping to get Baldambe to pay back an old debt. It is obvious during the morning conversation by the coffee pot that Baldambe does not want to talk to the trader and he embarks upon a violent and serious conversation with Wadu. Wadu 'echoes' more than usual and Baldambe frowns and complains and laments to an almost grotesque degree. When the trader tries to get a word in, Wadu tells him to keep quiet because their talk is so very serious. Baldambe is clearly in a weak position since he is the debtor. But he plays this down by creating an atmosphere in which something else, of which obviously only he and Wadu know, is infinitely more important than this small, momentary debt. It needs at least two people to play such a game and both partners have to know each other's style of speaking well so that they can understand the implicit meanings of what is said and what is not said, of allusions, of metaphors and so on. Thus, a tight dialogue in which a third party has no place has a double effect: it makes the aspirant participant aware of his impotence whilst at the same time it creates and enhances a feeling of omnipotence in the speakers (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 207-208).

Impact of speech (3): therapy

Speaking, I began to realize, is also an important means in Hamar to alleviate personal affliction, as in the case of Maiza, the older sister of Baldambe:

"The conversation moves from strictly male talk to talk that includes women and as usual, the talk of the women includes jokes, laughter and ridicule. True to form, Maiza is given a hard time of it. Suddenly it's obvious: the talking has a therapeutic value, it creates order and calm, it satisfies. A well spoken and well acted speech sets things right for the speaker, not only mentally but also physically, for he uses his breath, his limbs and much of his body as he talks. Moreover, the social drama around the coffee pot plays an important part in social control. Look at Maiza who is so often stopped from speaking. When she finds an audience, she is one of the greatest and most violent speakers that I have ever heard. And what a great deal of damage she has to repair! She is the oldest daughter of the famed Berinas and yet she is barren. But when she is in full flood, speaking to an audience, she becomes her own therapist speaking out and acting out her condition until she feels better, for the time being at least " (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 209-210).

Resonance and Echoing

I was also impressed by the large register of tone and the high degree of resonance in Hamar conversations. Speakers and listeners would tune in with one another by repeating each other's words, even anticipating them. So at times the listener becomes speaker, and the speaker becomes listener, each completing and emphasizing the thoughts and words of the other. Jean Lydall and I have come to call this conversational practice 'echoing'. Here is an example of how I was impressed by this:

"Raised voices in Aikenda's house wake me before sunrise. The abbreviations, the pauses, the pace, the quick echoing responses, the varying levels of tone - all these

tell me that great speakers have arrived. I can also tell where they come from, for only the men of southern Hamar speak so powerfully... Animated by the good oratory of our guests, I talk with Baldambe about speaking. He remarks that the Bume are great orators because they always repeat what the other has said. In this way they never forget what has been said to them. I reply that I thought the 'echoing' was a typical Hamar custom. No, this is not so, traditionally the Hamar answered the speaker only with a repeated 'hm', 'hm'..., the 'echoing' they have learnt from the Bume. This means oratorical customs travel just like any other customs and manners!" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 236-237).

Fluid Speech

I end this short review of my first perception of speech competence in Hamar with an example of my first – stumbling – attempt to enact a Hamar custom that is meant to improve speech competence:

> "When we drive into Dambaiti only the smallest children, those, born during our period of fieldwork, welcome us by standing on a little ant-hill and waving their hands: Aike, Sardo, Ivo, Assi, Natal. I am so touched by this little new generation that immediately after we have moved our gear into the house, I feed all of them with the water we have brought from the Omo River. I know that it is a Hamar custom to feed children who are slow in speaking, with waters of a running river so that their talk may become fluid and clear. So I feed the children according to my understanding - and this shows itself once again to be limited, because one has to feed the children early in the morning to make the cure really effective. I should have anticipated this, because I ought to know by now that it is always the few hours of dawn and of sunset which are thought to have the greatest ritual power in Hamar" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 261).

Supported by the tape recorder

Amplified ability to speak

Like the French anthropologist and filmmaker Jean Rouch – who spoke of *ciné-transe* ('cinematographic trance' in English) when he found that the camera did not inhibit but rather enhanced people's ability to express themselves, I found that my use of the tape recorder amplified rather than diminished the ability of the Hamar to speak. Here is the example of Ginonda:

> "In the evening, I record Ginonda's description of Dube's ritual. She talks in a gentle manner and yet she is forceful and articulate at the same time. The longer I watch and listen to her, the more I like her. This is a mad, delicious and intimate 'interview-theatre', a form of entertainment and an art of which I have never dreamt before. It is as if the tape recorder, the microphones, the wiring, my earphones amplify the Hamar's ability to speak" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 102).

Maxulo's speech

Sound recordings document both content and form of performance and therefore they provide a means by which we can better appreciate people's expressive competence. Some of my recordings of the spoken word were to me like music. Therefore I included them in my double album *Music of the Hamar* (STRECKER 1979b), for example Arbala's (Lomotor's) account of Maxulo's speech:

> "Countless guests arrive and many pots of coffee are consumed in the various houses. Baldambe has a large audience and enjoys talking. Among the guests is Baldambe's affine Arbala from the southern-most region of Hamar. I ask him to tell me of the recent peace-making among the Hamar and the Galeba and as Arbala is a great speaker, I record his descriptions on tape. His talk is pure poetry at times and I envisage publishing it sometime as an example of 'analytic poetry'..." (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 91).

Baldambe explains

Once the tape recorder had become an integral tool of my ethnographic work, I embarked on recordings that were meant to find their way later on into books. The first was a text by Baldambe in which he provided a normative account of social life in Hamar, published as *Baldambe Explains* (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979b). Here is how I envisioned the project:

> "In the evening, as Baldambe and I talk and I record his narratives, the project of our first possible Hamar book takes shape in my head: Baldambe describing his country, his people, his family, his father and himself. There is so much poetry and expression in his descriptions. These and the rhythm of his speech should be reproduced in a book: the fast passages and interludes, the accelerations, the lingering of his voice. What a job it would be to translate such tapes! But if we were able to manage the translation without losing the quality of the actual speech, then something beautiful could result" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 52-53)

Berimba's Resistance

History is indispensible for an understanding of people's present situation, cultural conventions and social life. Therefore during fieldwork I aimed to record a sustained account of Hamar history. Again this was eventually provided by Baldambe and materialized in the book *Berimba's Resistance. The Life and Times of a Great Hamar Spokesman* (STRECKER 2013). Here is how I conceived the project:

> "Baldambe talks and talks and talks; the sun goes down, a thunderstorm passes over-head and still he talks, of the history of Hamar after the arrival of Menelik's troops, of the myth of the exodus and the return of the Hamar, of the background to the rise of his great father Berimba. I try to grasp what is being said but at times my mind wanders to the question of the ethnographic value of this kind of recordings. Will they be as great on paper as they sound live?" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 241).

Conversations in Dambaiti

Eventually I reached a stage where I began to look for 'live' talk and situations that Victor Turner had termed 'social drama'. Literary criticism had been my forte at school, and I thought that much of my writing-up would later be in the same vein. First I would record, translate and publish *Baldambe Explains* and *Berimba's Resistance*, as well as a full social drama, and only then would I embark on exegesis. Because it would be based on live conversations, the social drama would be published under the title *Conversations in Dambaiti* (STRECKER 1979a). This is how I anticipated the project in the field:

> "The time spent around the coffee pot continues to be my most informative hour. This morning Berhane addresses himself to Nyakurumba, his mother's brother and a perfect listener. Berhane tells him how the fighting started in the Marle fields a year and a half ago. A wealth of detail turns up, together with a number of generalisations, which put the Arbore-Hamar conflict into a new light for me. The description is given from a strictly individual point of view, and spontaneous and lively as it is, it will hopefully find its way into the planned book, 'Conversations in Dambaiti'. I like to listen to a conversation and know at the same time that it is being recorded. This allows me to anticipate its analytic and documentary importance and to evaluate the insight it gives into the hearts of the speakers and the listeners" (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979a: 189-190).

The creative power of speech

Up to this point, I have only recalled how the expressive competence of the Hamar astounded me, and how the tape recorder allowed me to document and study in detail the products of Hamar expressiveness. My work was, therefore, not much different from the then worldwide emerging 'ethnography of speaking' and various forms of discourse analysis (studying formal features like turn-taking, or contents like social control), which were made possible by the invention of small, portable recording equipment. Although I knew that I had begun a study and documentation of culture specific rhetoric, I only gradually began to realize that this rhetoric played a *creative* role in Hamar, that Hamar culture was in fact created rhetorically, along with the manifold forms of figuration and symbolization which rhetoric affords. And yet the rhetorical foundation of Hamar culture, embodied in the Hamar *barjo aela* (calling forth *barjo* - fate, good fortune) had been there plainly to see in my work journal and in Baldambe's description of Hamar culture, where *barjo* is mentioned and explained again and again.

In order to be brief I won't quote the original sources anymore, but use a text where I have described the *barjo* and its relation to speech and the person:

'Apho Barjo Ne': speech is fate, good fortune

In Hamar, the most important aspect of the persona is its *barjo*. *Barjo* may be defined as a concept of continuous creation. According to the Hamar, creation goes on continuously in the world, and human beings have an active part to play in it. Every living being needs *barjo* to exist and achieve its natural state of well-being. Even such

phenomena as clouds, rain, the stars, etc. need to have their *barjo* to appear in a regular and ordered way.

People can actively engage in producing and augmenting the *barjo* of people, animals, plants, the soil, the seasons, etc., by calling *barjo*. Here is an abridged version of such a *barjo aela*:

> Eh-eh! The herds are carrying sickness.
> May the sickness go beyond Labur, may it go,
> Cattle owners you have enemies,
> May the Korre who looks at our cattle, die, die,
> May his heart get speared, get speared,
> Eh-eh! My herds which are at Mello,
> May my herds come lowing, come,
> May the girls blow the flutes, blow,
> May the women dance, dance
> May the men rest, rest (LYDALL and STRECKER 1979b: 14-15).

Both men and women have *barjo*, but only the *donza* call *barjo* in the emphatic and stylized way of the example given above. Women call *barjo* in a quiet and unobtrusive way, for example, by sweeping the entrance to their goat enclosure and by putting on a belt that is decorated with cowry shells. As one old woman once told me, she causes others to be well (have *barjo*) simply by wishing them well; she does not need any words for this.

The Hamar elders, on the other hand, stress that they need to meet and chant together in order to call forth *barjo*. They carry their own *barjo* with them wherever they go, and whenever it seems necessary to cause well-being, they get together and call *barjo*. Often they delegate the leading part of the chanting to men who act in a specific office, for example, as *gudili* (guardian of the fields), *kogo* (guardian of the fires of the homesteads) or *bitta* (guardian of all of Hamar country). When older and younger brothers are present, it is always the older one who leads the chanting.

By means of the *barjo aela* the elders try to exercise control over each other and especially over women and children. It is the old who call *barjo* for the young, and it is the men who call *barjo* for the women, not vice versa. But having said this, one needs to stress that the concept of *barjo* and the practices associated with it lack any competitive or aggressive element. People never do anything great and outrageous to achieve *barjo*, nor do they boast about their *barjo*. In fact, the concept is of such a kind that the greater anyone's *barjo* is, the more that person will be harmonious, non-aggressive, non-competitive and non-problematic. Anyone who has great *barjo* will be able to act well, will not collide with others and will be agreeable in the eyes of others and his (or her) own (STRECKER 2010: 51-52).

From the rhetoric of ritual and symbolism to the rhetoric culture project

The creation of *barjo* is, of course, not only a matter of personal interest but pertains to society as a whole. The Hamar use an abundance of rituals, which are based on an

imaginative use of symbolism, in an attempt to provide social life with *barjo* - good fortune. After my first long spell of fieldwork, when I began to write up my research results, the question of how to explain ritual and symbolism in Hamar culture became prominent in my mind. Also, Dan Sperber - who like me had studied in southern Ethiopia – had just published *Rethinking Symbolism*, which stimulated me to do some "rethinking" of my own. Eventually I ended up with a book entitled *The Social Practice of Symbolisation* (1988) in which I proposed a rhetorical theory of ritual and symbolism:

Symbolization

The study not only drew on the work of anthropologist (Victor Turner and Dan Sperber), but also on surrealism (René Magritte) and speech act theory (Paul Grice), in order to develop a new approach to symbolic production and ritual action, in which symbolization is seen as an act of displacement or 'conversational implicature'. People, I argued, conduct their social life not only by means of plain, univocal modes of communication but also by means of figurative, multi-vocal forms of expression. Why, I asked, do people in certain situations choose multi-vocal symbols rather than univocal signs? To answer this question I re-examined the work on politeness theory by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, showing that it provides a key to an understanding of the rhetorical nature of symbolization in social life. At the end of the book I extended the theory of politeness into a general theory of ritual, and applied it to an analysis of the leap across the cattle, a Hamar rite of transition.

Discovery of "The Said and the Unsaid"

Prepared by my ethnographic work and the first phase of writing up results, my *eureka*, that is the discovery that anthropology and rhetoric are in fact inseparable, occurred when I first read *The Said and the Unsaid* by Stephen Tyler. As I have written elsewhere, this occurred "one winter day of 1981 in the Haddon library at Cambridge University. Some rare rays of the sun were playing on the books on the shelves and made me forget what I had come for. Then, suddenly, the title of Stephen's green book caught my eyes: *The Said and the Unsaid*. What a fitting title, I thought, for it evoked all the problems I was then encountering in my study of symbolism, later to be published as *The Social Practice of Symbolization* (1988). There and then I began to read and found that in his preface Stephen had outlined a vision of research that was very much in tune with my own, a "rhetorical and hermeneutical vision of language that returns language to its proper context of everyday uses and understandings" (TYLER 1978: xii; STRECKER and TYLER 2009: vii).

Work with Stephen Tyler and the Rhetoric Culture Group

After I had discovered Stephen Tyler, I invited him to lecture at Mainz University, and subsequently embarked with him on a project dedicated to a marriage of anthropology and rhetoric, which has lasted until today. Our aim was, as we then said, "to overcome the state of limbo in which cognitive, symbolic, dialogic, and all sorts of discursive anthropologies had left us, and that we aimed at a new direction in the study of culture

by making full use of the ancient insight that, just as rhetoric is founded in culture, culture is founded in rhetoric."

Over the years I prepared four major conferences that were conducted at Mainz University, and Robert Harriman prepared a fifth one recently at Northwestern University (Evanston). The results of these conferences – four volumes are already published, two are in press, and two more in preparation – are being published in the new Berghahn Books series, *Studies in Rhetoric and Culture*. The description of the series runs as follows:

> "Our minds are filled with images and ideas, but these remain unstable and incomplete as long as we do not manage to persuade both ourselves and others of their meanings. It is this inward and outward rhetoric which allows us to give some kind of shape and structure to our understanding of the world and which becomes central to the formation of individual and collective consciousness. This series is dedicated to the study of the interaction of rhetoric and culture and focuses on the concrete practices of discourse in which and through which the diverse and often also fantastic patterns of culture - including our own - are created, maintained and contested".

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Rethinking the Anthropology of Ethiopia through Culture and Ritual: From Ethnography to Explanation

Jon Abbink[*]

This text is a *reprise* of the question of what African, specifically Ethiopian, studies has contributed to 'the disciplines' (see BATES *et al.*1993), and how Ethiopian empirical studies can be used to enlarge that wider impact.[1] The question is relevant in the light of a) Ethiopia's ongoing integration into global political economies as well as academic discourses notably since the regime change in 1991; b) the emergence since 1990 of a well-trained, productive generation of Ethiopian anthropologists which made impressive contributions to the study of Ethiopian societies and cultural traditions; and c) the challenge of evaluating important changes in the field of study – especially among ethno-cultural groups in peripheral areas that are not part of the power core of the country and have weak social and political representation.

Regardless of the need for a problem-oriented, general social science, the 'disciplinary question' is posed here because an anthropological approach can offer deeper theoretical insights in the nature of human cultural experience, the impact of cognitive processes and their relation to culture, the society-culture interface, and also on developmental efforts that bring together discourses that clash.

Anthropology studies the socio-cultural life of humans in a comparative perspective and attempts explanations of behavioural patterns in the widest sense, be they shaped by social, economic or political processes. Cultural scripts or repertoires underlie behaviour and are impossible to ignore. This has proven to be the case also in studies of the recent global financial-economic crisis, which has elicited sociological and anthropological studies of the (sub-) culture of financial professionals and economic elites (cf. G. TETT 2009). In contrast to received opinion in some circles of development assistance and policy making, culture is not an expendable quantity but an essential dimension of human life and meaning creation that co-defines people's livelihoods and social engagements, and cannot easily be transformed by imposition. The underlying assumption in an approach to culture as 'residue', *i.e.,* that cultural values are arbitrary and amenable to change on command, has been refuted frequently in general anthropology and social science (cf. SAHLINS 2004, SHORE 1997). Many recent theorists

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[1]   Cf. also ABBINK 1992. A restatement after 20 years may be instructive.

and even economic and environmental management scholars plead for consideration and inclusion of the social-cultural dimension in developmental efforts (see ATIENO 2002, LEIGH 2005, VICTOR 2011; STIGLITZ & FITOUSSI 2009). Interesting is also that state documents in Ethiopia subscribe to the view that culture is important, for instance in the 1997 *Cultural Policy* document of the FDRE government (1997). In addition, cultural diversities and processes in Ethiopian history and society offer a rich ground to (re)consider general issues of societal evolution, as a recent paper by Levine (LEVINE 2012) shows. The many contradictions involved - regarding 'national development' vs. incorporating or even tolerating cultural diversity (see EPPLE & THUBAUVILLE 2012) - are obviously not yet solved.

Anthropological studies of Ethiopian/African societies have yielded an impressive body of ethnographic knowledge on existing social-cultural diversity and contributed to the understanding of the inner workings and processes of change in these societies. But, as suggested, the use that such studies have for *general* understandings of human socio-cultural life is often left underexposed. There is some puzzle as to the *relative* lack of impact that Ethiopian ethnology/anthropology has had in the wider discipline, both via the work of foreign researchers and Ethiopians. Rather than seeking the reasons for this (cf. PANKHURST 2002: 34-35), my plea here is that the ethnography-focused tradition should refocus and be more embedded in theoretical efforts that go beyond 'Ethiopian Studies'. It is of course a legitimate and necessary task of social science, *i.e.,* anthropology in this case, to describe in detail the nature and dynamics of new or changing manifestations of cultural diversity, but it is not enough. Anthropology/ethnology in and on Ethiopia has, however, interacted with other disciplines and has addressed some other fields, like drought and famine studies, rural development, pastoralism, land questions, and conflict and political culture. As A. Pankhurst has rightly remarked (2002: 35), this 'interface' of Ethiopian anthropology with such other scholarly domains has generated real impacts.

Preceded by a few further remarks below on the anthropological themes that are 'missing', I will discuss a topic derived from my own research where I think disciplinary advances can be or should have been made with the help of Ethiopian data. As the theme to illustrate this I will take the study of *ritual*, allowing me an opportunity for 'auto-critique' as well.

The anthropological challenge of Ethiopian cases and their (lack of) appearance in global thematic debates

A quick glance through overview papers on anthropology, such as in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (e.g., KELLY & KAPLAN 1990; STASCH 2011 on ritual), reveals that Ethiopian data are rarely if at all referred to, certainly when compared to Melanesian, Middle Eastern, Asian, or even other African cases. However, Ethiopian anthropology is not theory-poor, as it is often used in an explanatory fashion. Sustained efforts in theory-building or testing on the basis of Ethiopian data are nevertheless not many. The exception is some work in the field of political anthropology, as Pankhurst said (2002: 18-19). Here, Ethiopian examples had an impact in studies of revolution and socio-

political change (DONHAM 1999 on the Maale), of age organization (cf. S. TORNAY 2001 on the Nyangatom), or of ethnic relations and conflict. Also in the development of colour cognition studies (in the work of S. Tornay, D. Turton, and K. Fukui, notably his magnificent 1996 paper), of a critique on symbolist approaches (SPERBER 1975, based partly on Dorze ethnography), of rhetoric theory by I. Strecker and several of his students; of work on ritual and social change, as in the study by D. Freeman on Gamo (2002), and in recent contributions to urban anthropology, e.g. by D. Mains (2012 a,b).

One reason for the relatively limited wider impact of anthropology in and on Ethiopia over the past 30 years is obviously that it was closely connected to the pervasive *area studies* approach of 'Ethiopian Studies'. This approach has emerged for particular historical reasons, and has its own institute, its own journal since 1963, and since c. 2007 there was even an MA-programme Ethiopian Studies at AAU.[2] This specialization within African studies itself has both advantages (often superb and original ethnography, rare in-depth study of Ethiopia) and drawbacks (dominance of the idea of the historical uniqueness of Ethiopia, focus on parochial issues, no aim for wider impact and general knowledge). In–depth country studies have their value, but the question is whether in a globalizing academic world the growth of ideographic or sub-area studies approaches is still desirable.

The Ethiopian ethnographic record is nevertheless one of the most rich and versatile in African studies and always holds promise for theoretical and comparative evaluations, notably in view of the many challenges or threats to local societies and ethnic groups that emerge (cf. EPPLE & THUBAUVILLE 2012, ELLISON 2012).

The main topics addressed so far in anthropological, or rather ethnographic, work on Ethiopia (see PANKHURST 2002; ABBINK 1992, 2013) are the ten fields of: economic anthropology; political anthropology; social organization, age groups and gender; religion and worldviews; cultural-ecological studies; ethnicity; pastoral society and economy; migration-refugees-displacement; orature and folklore studies; and (popular in the last few years) conflict studies and local conflict mediation procedures. This latter subject has been studied in countless recent BA and MA theses in Ethiopia. In much work on these topics there is a growing fixation on issues of 'development', by which authors usually seem to mean externally induced change processes geared to economic, material growth and 'modernization'.

In all the above fields of study, Ethiopian case studies by both Ethiopian and foreign scholars (not only anthropologists) have made many empirical contributions. Where such Ethiopian case studies and practitioners could make more general theoretical and comparative impact is specifically in religious studies, kinship studies, cognitive studies, comparative African history and social history, and political anthropology, including the (comparative) study of power and inequality formations in Africa.

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[2] This MA programme was, however, closed again in 2012.

Reconsidering ritual

The domain that I single out here is that of *ritual*. Even on this topic, important and well-studied in Ethiopian ethnology, there is relatively little that found its way into general social studies and anthropology outside the areas studies domain. The potential of the ethnographic material has perhaps not yet been realized here either. I take this domain of ritual studies only as one example among many that can illustrate the point on the lack of wider impact.

As Stasch recently noted (2011: 160), "[a]mid anthropology's dramatic reorientations, ritual has remained a core subject". The anthropology of ritual has gone through major advances in the past two decades, with contributions by, e.g., BELL (1997), HOUSEMAN & SEVERI (1998), RAPPOPORT (1999), ROBBINS (2001), and others (cf. the overview in STASCH 2011). Remarkable here is the synergy with cognitive approaches that has occurred in recent years (cf. also JONES 2012).

Of course, a precise *definition of ritual* is not easy, but I see it as: a focused ensemble of embodied, and only partly verbal, structured actions by a defined group of people, creating relatedness on one or more criteria and revealing core ideas about their place in society and *vis-à-vis* the cosmos.[3] A reference to supernatural agents[4] is often present, but need not be, as many forms of secular ritual also exist. In short: ritual is human behaviour to build or (re-)enact 'community', on any scale or intensity, either in dramatic or routine fashion. As the works of recent years have demonstrated, shared cognitive patterns and processes underlie ritual activity, constraining its course and expression. The cognitive predispositions of humans to a large part shape ritual as a behavioural action structure where in crucial stages action takes over from words, so as to 'deflect' statements in the overt, verbal domain to the indirect, 'implicational' domain. There are also many different *kinds* of ritual, and these have been analyzed well in the general literature: from age initiation rites to name-giving, calendarical rites and funerals or memorials (see BELL 1997), and I will not repeat this information here.

In some earlier work, I also referred to general anthropological theory regarding the interpretation of ritual among the Me'en and Suri peoples of Southwest Ethiopia (ABBINK 1992, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2003), with some forays into cognitive theory (1993) and evolutionary psychology (1998). But one reason for this paper was that I saw I did not do this enough; I also was 'captivated' by ethnography, *i.e.*, by the richness and diversity of Ethiopian ethnic cultures as an autonomous subject of study.

After briefly considering whether the *anthropology of ritual* has attracted theoretical and comparative efforts of researchers working on and in Ethiopia, I will mention how some current theory on ritual from an anthropological perspective can help to lift the

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[3] Cp. also Stasch's formal definition (2011: 160): "Ritual involves exceptionally dense representation of spatiotemporally wider categories and principles in an interactional here-now". In ritual action, he says, there is a link between a microcosmic spacetime and a larger macrocosmic spacetime, requiring a great density of links between different elements within the microcosm of concrete ritual actions (ibid.).

[4] Or as Lawson & McCauley said (2002: 153): "culturally postulated superhuman agents" (CPAs).

analysis of rituals observed in Ethiopia to a somewhat more general plan, taking as cases some of my earlier work on the Me'en and Suri peoples. Part of this reconsideration will be whether a theory of ritual can or must account for the 'intrusion' of change and transformation induced by actors or agents outside the local cultural systems in place.

Descriptions of rituals abound in the ethnographic work on Ethiopia, both by foreign and Ethiopian researchers until today.[5] Since the early contributions in the *Ethnological Society Bulletins* of the 1950s-60s, a very extensive and rich body of knowledge was produced on how various ethno-linguistic groups organize and delineate (*vis-à-vis* others) their community life via ritual.

Among the theoretical approaches in the anthropology of ritual are the (neo-) functionalist ones, the neo-Tylorian ('intellectualist'), the symbolic, and more recently the performative and cognitive ones. The first one, going back to E. Durkheim's early work and Radcliffe-Brown, stressed the socially integrative effects of ritual activities and saw the reason for their existence in this very effect. The ritual formulae, words and action sequences were seen as secondary and derivative. Little analysis was made of the intrinsic nature of human ritual action in itself; nor of its relational complexity. Symbolic and also semiotic approaches emphasized the ways rituals were held to express and enact pre-existing worldviews and specific cultural meaning patterns of a society, and neglected both action patterns and the wider social 'embeddedness' of ritual. There was rather little eye for the related transformative aspects that ritual might have. Much work on the anthropology of ritual in Ethiopia until today had a strong descriptive emphasis and followed the neo-functionalist and symbolic perspectives (excepting the early work by Sperber, the cited study by Freeman 2002 on Gamo initiatory and sacrificial systems and on their associated rituals and transformation trajectories, and Strecker's 1988 study on Hamar discourse using 'politeness theory', with a chapter on ritual as a specific strategy of avoiding 'loss of face' in situations of social risk.

Rituals among Me'en and Suri

My earlier work among the Suri and Me'en was also on community rituals, which had to do with expressing and 'transmitting' an ontological cultural frame related to values of protection, initiation, transition, community support and role learning. Such rituals could be seen to uphold shared values or organizing notions and were 'integrative', or 'foundational', in their grounding a community and expressing or appealing to a sense of internal symbolic order *connecting* people.[6]

In these papers on Me'en and Suri ritual I grappled with the challenge to do justice to this inner logic and consistency of the rituals and their 'narrative' basis, as well as to show the way the enacted rituals positioned the relevant group in regard to others, towards challenges due to the dynamics of change and the wider world.

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[5] For a recent example, see POISSONNIER 2010.

[6] A link with René Girard's fascinating theory of sacrificial ritual as foundational in human culture (cf. his recent 2007 book) will not be pursued here, although the key role played by sacrificial rites in many Southern Ethiopian traditions (e.g., in homicide compensation rituals) is of obvious importance.

I now take up the themes that I addressed *and* those I failed to address, to end with some notes on how to integrate the findings in a new theoretical interpretation that could do justice to the specific nature of ritual as human socio-cultural performance and to contexts and factors of change.

What struck me every day when living among the Me'en and Suri people was the high level of ritualization of life in these seemingly 'simple', egalitarian societies. Next to the predicable life-cycle rituals, many social interactions, meetings, public debates, conflict mediation efforts, etc. were clothed in ritual acts, often imperceptible ones at first sight, that reflected the social position (gender, marital status, descent group membership) and status of the people in each social situation. This may show indeed the exercise of *tact* in social life, which is so important in egalitarian societies, but can also refer to a concern with establishing/maintaining relationships, *i.e.,* to express 'relationality' in itself (cf. HOUSEMAN 2006). Ritual can primarily be seen as a relational action structure and shows cultural enactment on a naturalist basis (*i.e.*, the human cognitive apparatus), be it in discursive form. Like other researchers, I hope to have contributed, in previous work, to showing the value and variety of human cultural expression, but this in itself is not enough to test or advance general notions on ritual as a feature of human cultural functioning in the sense above.

What were the main features of ritual among the Me'en and Suri, and what do they tell us about their social organization and their relations with neighbouring groups or wider political contexts? I first discuss some **Me'en** rituals: funerals, intestine reading, and a protective agrarian ritual.

The Me'en are a people of shifting cultivators in the Southern Regional State and live in the hilly areas north of the Dizi highlands, counting ca. 150,000 people (in 2012). They were originally an agro-pastoralist base and have gradually moved into highland areas in the past 150 years. They were a clan-based, decentralized society with ritual priests (*komorut*) and clan/lineage heads as leaders, and fought major battles with representatives of the expanding imperial state since the 1910s, to resist inclusion in the *näft'änya-gäbbar* system. Their traditional leadership structure is gone, although descent group membership is still important. More recently, they developed a thriving agrarian economy, and have experienced rapid population growth in the past two decades.

In a brief 1992 study on **Me'en funeral ritual,** I gave new ethnographic information and also argued that the culturally very important ritual of burial was enacted within a symbolism derived from 'fertility' metaphors and a cattle-idiom. But more important was the nature of the relations of those engaged in the ceremony: the specific sequence of actions by the widow and the consanguineal and affinal relatives was strict and showed a configuration of groups reconstituting themselves via ritual action that allowed for expressing their latent (or real) tension in a playful, scripted manner. This led to an affirmation of the 'master metaphor' of lineage continuity and fertility through cattle (which was sacrificed in the ritual), because the latter (in the form of bride wealth) had been and still was, a precondition of marriage and procreation of the lineage members on both sides.

I later found this latter argument unsatisfactory, because it is quite functionalist, and I went to use the more cognitive theory of Sperber and Wilson (in *Relevance*, 1986) to explain another Me'en ritual, their remarkable **intestine reading** for divination purposes (ABBINK 1993). Ethnographically again it was new because never written about, but as a theoretical explanation of how such a divination reading from cattle intestines works – by metaphorically drawing an analogy between the 'map' of the laid-out intestines with the map of the country - I aimed for a better explanation that was not functionalist, but was framed in terms of a cognitively constrained communicative strategy pursued on the basis of cultural 'relevance'. I combined a discursive analysis with a social-relational one, based on tracing the 'conversational implicatures' of the divination discourse and taking into account the relations among those present. A close analysis of this discourse revealed the pattern of relationality that the speaker(s) and the audience of such a reading outline or construct. It is in fact strongly tuned to mutual social expectations, roles, and community tasks formulated or hinted at within a local Me'en community, and expressed within the constraints of a 'relevance' structure. The same structure of discourse and action I found with comparable divination readings among the neighbouring Dizi and Suri peoples.

Subsequently, in a 1995 study of the *mósit* **ceremony**, a major agrarian ritual among the Me'en ostensibly held to 'protect' the crops against natural pests, I moved further into cognitive theory to explain the proceedings of this *mósit* as an effort at mediation between the socio-cognitive system and the natural environment of the Me'en. It was inspired by the religious competence approach of Lawson and McCauley, who favoured a cognitive approach to ritual and culture (LAWSON & MCCAULEY 1990). The *mósit* ritual is a collective protective ritual 'asking' a number of superhuman agents or forces to make sure that the maturing crops in the field are left alone and might provide for the yearly staple food for the local community. In my study I showed that the action structure of the *mósit* ritual – while set in the local cultural, symbolic context - obeyed to basic cognitive principles of human discourse, notably the representations of connection of disparate conceptual domains and the location of causality. These principles could be seen to operate *on* the cultural material. For instance, the variability of the rhetorical clauses and expressions used in the ritual was very limited. As a conclusion, I emphasized (1995: 187) the *sociality* enacted/revived in the ritual proceedings, but one that was closely geared to the localized community of Me'en.

As for the **Suri**, they are an ethnographically quite interesting group, showing a much more developed ritual life than the Me'en – perhaps because they were capable of maintaining their group autonomy much longer. This egalitarian agro-pastoral people (ca. 34,000) lives in the extreme southwest of Ethiopia near the Sudan border, and have been there at least for 4 to 500 years, successfully surviving without state interference. In the past two, three decades they were faced with multiple challenges, among them new forms of conflict, top-down government policies, and being one of the prime destinations of exotic tourism. The Suri ritual spectrum includes next to the usual life-cycle rituals, intestine reading, sacrifices, age group initiation, homicide compensation rituals, chief's inaugurations, and ceremonial duelling.

In all rituals, a *sacrificial* element was strong: functioning, as it were, to deflect human conflict, or 'anger' for that matter (as in the case of homicides), towards non-human agents as substitutes or mediator forces. In the majority of cases the sacrificed object was one of more heads of cattle, killed vicariously and in various ways, some of them quite harsh or cruel (ABBINK 2003). I discuss three core rituals.

The first is Suri **ceremonial duelling** (ABBINK 1999). This twice-yearly event is one of a class of staged male duelling matches found across the world, and is the setting for a ritualized, regulated contest between individuals as representatives of clearly defined social/territorial groups within Suri society.[7] While I described the cultural representations around male competitiveness, status acquisition and mock combat training, I followed a more or less neo-Darwinian approach to test whether success in male duelling conferred additional advantages (sexual, or reproductive) on the winners of these day-long-contests. My explanation for the existence of the duels tended towards functionalism in its explication of the reproductive and prestige-making connection achieved: young men were 'on display' for young unmarried females who flock en masse to the duel arena and try to approach the duellers afterwards. But there is more to it: in the entire set-up and rule structure of the duelling a clear relational pattern is visible, in that only certain groups and persons may do battle with each other, referees are of a certain age and community, and onlooker women of clan- and territorial groups are separated. There is no sacrifice of any kind, but the flowing of blood from wounds of the combatants is 'appreciated'. Suri, by participating, watching and refereeing the event, thus socially situate themselves *vis-à-vis* each other and (re)define local community relations, often in a very specific sense (e.g., referring to or even pursuing disputes in and around the duelling arena). This aspect - and not the cultural meanings of the objects used (such as the phallic-tipped fighting poles, the protective gear and dress items of the duellers) – is paramount, and corroborates the point made above that the web of social relations established and enacted by the participants' is crucial in producing the meaning and the social importance of this ritual.

A second ritual of the Suri deserving attention was the **sacrificial killing** of cattle or sheep. It is perhaps not a ritual in itself but an essential part of more encompassing ritual events, like a funeral or a post-homicide purification. The killing of an animal is the condensed core of these rituals, and in theoretical anthropological studies on sacrifice the point was often made that the animal stands for (or is identified with) the deceased person or the killer to be purified, and therefore is vicariously killed. In a 2003 paper on the role of such animal killing in certain Suri rituals, I focused too much on the cultural symbolism and 'meaning' of this killing (the use of the blood and the stomach chime, and the 'status' of the sheep as inferior to that of cattle), instead of on the action structure and interactions that would reveal the relational pattern of the participants and the audience at these rituals. My analysis thus emphasized the *ethnographic* interest (the manner of killing, the paraphernalia, the 'uniqueness' of the Suri way of doing it), rather

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[7] Cf. the study by TURTON (2002) on Mursi duelling.

than sacrificial action in itself as a generative feature of ritual behaviour, *i.e.*, as (indirectly) visualizing and enacting relationships in the community.

A final social institution with ritual overtones is that of Suri **public debates** (*mèthi*). I mention this because here we see how external events and factors of socio-political change are reflected upon within Suri society and become the issue of debate and adaptive behaviour (see ABBINK 1998). These debates are held in localized communities, near the homestead of ritual leaders or important age-grade elders. Women and young men cannot speak but are keenly interested in what is said. In such public debates we see many ritual aspects (in the manner of presentation, the rhetorical formulae, the closure), although by virtue of its eminently discursive and rhetorical character and its limited action structure it cannot be called a full-fledged 'ritual'. However, it is a genre of action that most directly allows for references to community values and problems, and to the need for discussing and determining courses of action to be taken. Immediately raised in public debates are questions of group conflict, drought, violent clashes with neighbouring groups, and governmental plans and activities.[8]

Overseeing past work on Suri and Me'en, I thus found that these analyses of their rituals, next to illustrating cognitive features of representational and symbolic action as well as underlining the importance of the creative rhetorical features of discourse, substantiated some key points made by Houseman & Severi in their influential and path-breaking book on ritual, *Naven or the Other Self* (1998). As said, they advocated a relational theory, focused on the specific nature of ritual behaviour itself, *i.e.,* seeing its form as a 'special system of relationships acted out in performance (*ibid.*: xiii). Houseman (2006: 9) also described it as a 'distinctive way of enacting relationships'. Recognizing this aspect in fact comes *before* the analysis of the 'meanings' and 'functions' of a ritual. Ritual is constructing, (en)acting and using a script that is only partly discursively explicit, and creates action sequences that show or create the relational positioning and aims of people in that community. For the participants, rituals provide a major personal experience with extra-ordinary realities, cultural idioms of their society, and self-referent means to get access to or absorb the meanings of the relationships that make up their world (cf. HOUSEMAN 2006: 425). They provide an experience of belonging and cultural transmission that is not afforded by discursive/verbal means.

I did not address data on Me'en and Suri ritual in the light of such a more general theory like that of Houseman/Severi, which appeared in 1998, but the understanding of the data would in principle profit much from such an approach. I would contend that data on rituals among other ethnic groups in Ethiopia, such as the Gamo, Mursi, Boran, Konso, etc., might also support this relational theory. An aspect I would elaborate, *with regard to* the relational action structure visible in the rituals, is the cognitive-discursive one, because this may be more liable to reflect changes than Houseman and Severi

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[8]   In the past two years, for instance, the Suri have been reflecting much in the *mèzi*s on the state policy to confiscate their grazing lands, to coerce them into abandoning their pastoral ways and make them 'settle', to prohibit their body culture, and on violent repression. See also: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tY3UkSW0BV6EV_FbSrThNxr7dZGAeuNVp4ukt4AmCUw/edit?hl=en_US&pli=1# (16 September 2011).

suggest. Rituals are not cultural or cognitive isolates, and can sometimes rapidly absorb change. This does not necessarily mean that the relational action structure of rituals immediately or entirely changes, but only that new elements are addressed and improvised *within* it. In addition, rituals can of course also be radically suppressed due to the introduction of new ideologies and prohibitive policies, as the discussion in the final paragraphs will indicate.

Challenges to ritual: Evangelical beliefs and state encroachment as game ghangers

As said, while rituals are embodied codes of cultural meaning and organize/enact social relations, they are not impervious to change. Change occurs internally, in every enactment of the rituals despite the culturally prescribed rules to performing them, *and* because of a reflection of the performers' engagement with outside forces of change. There are several sources of change (including environmental-ecological decline, or population growth in relation to 'resource use'), but the two most salient ones today are the following.

- *Evangelical (and Pentecostal) Christianity* has made serious inroads into Ethiopian life by leading to significant conversion from Orthodox Christianity and notably from traditional religions in the South towards a strict and purist New Testament form of belief, based on personal transformation and 'other-worldly' devotion. Some 19% of Ethiopians are now Evangelical Christians, and their attitude toward the traditional religious and ritual heritage is negative. Such traditional-religious rituals are discarded and even declared 'superstitious' (or 'devilish') by a new elite of converts. Incidents of clashes – even violent – have been reported. The effects of this 'iconoclastic' approach are serious pressure on and decline of traditional rituals. Evangelical Christianity, despite generating community tension and, in the eyes of many local opponents, new forms of religious dogmatism and intolerance, allows people also to forge wider bonds with groups outside their own community and towards foreign partners. This more universalist aspect thus has a certain 'empowering' function. The new religious discourse also provides an alternative sphere of community action and solidarity *vis-à-vis* the closed political sphere in Ethiopia, and people accordingly rearrange their social relations and personal orientation in a more trans-local fashion. Still, in everyday ritual practice, this meeting of new Christianity – originally Western-imported – and tradition means confrontation and controversy, not smooth adaptation and transition.

- *State developmental action* continues the transformational approach of the Evangelicals in 'secular' form: in the name of a civilizational-developmental discourse, the state has often tried to discourage or forbid customs and rituals that are on their criteria 'backward' or 'harmful'.[9] This approach is informed by selective cultural ideas from Ethiopian highland society, around criteria of aesthetics, and honour and shame (regarding 'backwardness' in clothing customs, body decoration, ceremonial customs of animal sacrifice, etc.), and by an only partially absorbed and opportunistically used

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[9] The current policies are basically a continuation of imperial policies; cf. ELLISON 2012.

'scientistic' discourse around presumed adverse health effects (the 'harmful customs' discourse). This civilizational offensive has parallels with 18th-19th century Western European efforts to combat 'uncivilized customs and habits' of lower class people. In addition, the state approach is meant to create homogenous citizens with a predictable social profile: this reveals a basic problem with accepting culture difference, despite the state's *Cultural Policy* document promulgated in 1997. In practice, the state approach often means disagreement and confrontation, and the incapacity to accept *local* response and adaptation to new political-economic developments. Local rituals and customs – in fact most of the cultural discourse of Me'en and Suri - are often declared irrelevant and put on hold. It is useful to study how state policies interact with and *affect* local ritual culture.

As noted, pervasive external changes or pressures often lead to a gradual decline in ritual performance, or to strategies of deflection and dissimulation. For instance, Suri ceremonial stick duelling was prohibited several times by the authorities as being 'too violent'. But it is seen as irreplaceable by Suri – as we saw, it is not only about ritual combat but about values, gender relations and exploring potential marriage partners from other social groups, and they try to continue them in some modified form.

In similar vein, the key elements of funeral customs (e.g., cattle sacrifice) and intestine reading ritual among Me'en (and Suri) were strongly discouraged or prohibited by authorities as 'wasting valuable cattle', and as 'superstitious'. Again, the point about the ritual was - purposely - missed, and the society was not allowed the opportunity to develop its own response to the challenges of change, e.g., via the education system, or via internal, public debate.

Both peoples do show efforts to gradually adapt the actual performances and the sequence of actions in the rituals described, to either modify 'controversial' acts, symbols and meanings, or to rearrange their relatedness to the agents within and without their society in the face of the new socio-political conditions. To study this ongoing process is a task to come.

Conclusions and prospect

Re-readings of one's own work on ritual reveal what could be added and elaborated to reach a more sustained theoretical interpretation of the empirical data. Inevitably, theoretical insights were used selectively and I do not claim to have achieved a comprehensive contribution to 'anthropological theory' (ELLEN 2011) in earlier work. But the material from the Ethiopian cases shows that such a contribution to theories of ritual is possible.

Ethiopia has been a crucial locus of anthropological work, and objectively speaking, ethnographic studies on/in the country should be of growing importance for the development of the disciple as a comparative social science. Not only on classic themes in anthropology, such as ethnicity, kinship, age organization, religion or ritual - as treated here-, but also the topics of migration, trans-nationalism, conflict studies, social change, livelihood studies, material culture, and gender have this potential. In this

respect, much has of course already happened, and in the widening field of study of Ethiopian anthropology, the contribution of scholars from Ethiopia itself has been pivotal during the last 20 years. Despite this, comparative work and sustained theorizing has remained rare (cf. PANKHURST 2002: 23-24). But if anthropology is more than development studies and ethnography, it has to continue to engage with basic and general questions about human cultural functioning, the nature of culture, societal evolution, inequality, and the relation between natural predispositions (including cognitive processes) and actual social and political life (cf. ELLEN 2011).

Apart from theoretical challenges, the anthropology of Ethiopia is now also facing those of rapid transformation of 'the field', problems among minority communities because of processes of forced change, subversion of life-styles, lack of mutual respect for cultural diversity, lack of public debate and dialogue on policy choices (the question of 'harmful customs' comes to mind), and several institutional and funding constraints. As suggested by the Me'en and Suri examples above, which could be multiplied with many more, the minority communities are caught in processes of accelerated change due to global and state policies, with accompanying livelihood challenges.[10] There is also environmental decline and growing scarcity, the impact of which is often underestimated. New policies of agrarian exploitation and massive investment schemes cause serious problems. They lead to the local, culture-based management procedures being declared irrelevant and 'backward', and to alienation or denial of the rights of access and use of customary lands or natural habitats. This of course also results in the forced abandonment of sound community practices,[11] if not in breakdown of social-cultural integrity, including of rituals that had a cohesive and relational role. Large-scale, imposed schemes that do not have enough resonance among the people directly involved not only subvert customary ways of dispute resolution and ceremonial-ritual life, but may be disruptive on the local level and create dependent subjects who will lose adaptive and survival skills in their livelihood systems, generating resentment. Change of this nature also fuels transformation and the abolishing of existing rituals.

To follow and analyze the mutations of ritual action can be a way to understand the implications of wider processes of social change in a society. Via changing ritual performances, groups (can) create new bonds with others – i.e., redefine or widen their relational network - and seek their gradual insertion/connection into a new national order. The Ethiopian legal framework is nominally in place to allow this. In some state-led conflict mediation procedures between certain ethnic communities in recent years there was an interesting move to let the parties involved carry out elements of their own traditional conflict regulation rituals, as part of the ceremony, or as 'sealing' it. This is

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[10] Indicative of a wider trend redefining local society from above and constraining social and cultural space via a rhetoric and process of modernization which have several dubious premises and that contradict the respect for basic rights accorded in national law (cf. EPPLE & THUBAUVILLE2012).

[11] Cf. Leigh 2005, with a plea for 'community-based restoration' of the relations between human communities and their environment.

one way to use ritual constructively. Its decline is, however, presently visible among many groups in southern Ethiopia, and in fact the people themselves mention it.

Nevertheless, ritual does not disappear from human life. As a cognitively shaped feature of human functioning and relational positioning in any society, it provides an action frame that does what words or rhetoric perhaps cannot do (although ritual *uses* words and rhetoric as part of the proceedings). Also on the state level there are frequent celebrations in Ethiopia[12] that show ritual-like action structures and an over-communication of meaning for defined communities (although in such a state-ordained event there is a coercive aspect, prescribing meaning and precluding 'deviations'). There is a need to develop a new cognitive political anthropology of ritual, combining an analysis of its rhetorical/discursive aspects and action structure with that of its relational 'embeddedness' in wider socio-political contexts, both 'traditional and state-orchestrated. This also means crossing the boundaries between traditional domains of study and, as this paper has shown, inevitably redefining anthropology as a by definition inter-disciplinary endeavour. The rich Ethiopian case material can decisively contribute to this.

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[12] E.g., the 'Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Day', a public event celebrating ethnic diversity under the umbrella of the federal unity idea, performed in a highly scripted and invariant manner.

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Restoration, Research and Heritage Preservation:
Politics and Ethics

Claire Bosc-Tiessé[*]

Restoration is not only a technical act. It is above all a gesture with numerous implications and meanings that is set in time, involving a before and an after.[1] The act of restoration takes part in a historical process and comes within the scope of the history of practices and methods, to the history of the idea of heritage, in relation with different kinds of policies. The awareness of heritage and its definition, related to issues concerning identity in relation with our personal and national past, are changing throughout centuries and are always under construction. The means chosen to ensure its preservation are intimately linked to this definition. It is also one of the reasons why restoration is a political gesture, and this gesture is often strongly debated in society, depending on our cultural, religious, and aesthetic approach to the object.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the elements that underlie the decision processes employed by managers or technicians. For this purpose, we will examine different ideas of heritage and restoration, and question the restoration works that have been done on Ethiopian heritage for a century in order:

- to measure the evolution of projects and practices;

- to question the suitability of international criteria in Ethiopia;

- to examine the potentials as well as the limits and legitimacy of the stakeholders;

- to consider the scientific project in which operations are conducted, what knowledge is needed and in return what new knowledge these operations may bring;

- to ask what tools are or should be available to decision makers for deciding which operations to conduct as well as the methodology to follow.

From different tangible cases coming from my work experience in Ethiopia, my introduction to this panel intends to open the discussion raising the following questions:

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[1] On this issue, see BRANDI 1963.

are the criteria applied worldwide made by Westerners for western cases? Is the Ethiopian case a specific one? What are the differences between repairs and restoration? What is specific to religious items? How do we decide which epoch to foreground? Are restoration projects opposed to research projects and how could the two complement each another?

The current ethical principles

Every restoration or preservation process has to be considered in its historical context. The idea of what restoration must be, which principles it must follow, depends on the epoch we are living in, as shown by numerous studies[2]. If we only look at the cases of restoration made on Ethiopian objects, either in Ethiopia or elsewhere, some restoration made since the 1930's would never be done nowadays because we would judge them inappropriate for technical, ethical, or aesthetic reasons. We can mention haphazardly the restoration of Abba Entonios mural paintings made with wax in the 1930's in Paris,[3] the varnishing of Konso sculptures in Addis Ababa, and so on.

Even if the idea of what restoration must be depends on the place where we are, international organizations write charts describing principles to be internationally applied. There are two main international organizations defining the norms today in use. ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the conservation of cultural heritage.[4] It exists to serve the international community as represented by its Member States, which currently number 132. Ethiopia has been one of them since 1975. ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places.[5] It is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques to the conservation of architectural and archaeological heritage. Its work is based on the principles enshrined in the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter). ICOMOS is a network of experts that benefit from the interdisciplinary exchange of its members, among whom are architects, historians, archaeologists, art historians, geographers, anthropologists, engineers, and town planners. The members of ICOMOS contribute to improving the preservation of heritage, the standards, and the techniques for each type of cultural heritage property: buildings, historical cities, cultural landscapes, and archaeological sites. Since the 1960's, the international ethics of the restoration are based on the following principles:

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[2] Cp. for instance Boulting 1976; *Geschichte der Restaurierung in Europa*, 1991 / 1993, Falser 2010.

[3] See Bosc-Tiessé and Wion 2005, Miguirditchian 2008.

[4] http://www.iccrom.org/ (last access on July 2013). See also Guichen 2012, a chemist who worked at ICCROM and launched several programs for the preservation of African heritage. He came back on these experiences in his paper.

[5] http://www.international.icomos.org/ (last access on July 2013).

- Every intervention is based on a full preliminary examination and diagnosis not only of the deteriorations but also of the cultural specificity of the object. Historic and scientific knowledge of the object is the basis of any intervention.
- Stability and compatibility (of the original materials as well as the materials used for restoration: we must be sure they are not going to move and affect, or interact with the original materials).
- Reversibility of the products and of the intervention: all that has been done must be undone without affecting the item.
- Clearness of the interventions, additions, restorations: the stakeholder must not make up a new object, the visual examination must allow us to understand what is the part of the restorer, or, if failing, a precise documentation.

Criteria worked out by Westerners for Westerners or repairs vs. restoration for religious items? The case of religious heritage still in use

It was sometimes said, or it could be asked, if these criteria were worked out by Westerners for Westerners. The case of Japan was often put forward as an example of a non-Western country where international principles concerning the restoration-conservation of cultural properties were adapted, and where the regular and traditional re-building is emphasized, with some variations. Shinto temples are particularly concerned, being re-built or re-adorned every twenty years. It appears justified by religious meanings: temples are renewed as nature renews every year. Quite the opposite, Buddhist temples are preserved or restored with respect to the original material, the new parts being signed (JOKILEHTO 1991: 29). Furthermore, when we compare with the restorations made in China, where the Cultural Revolution contributed to breaking off religious traditions, we can observe that restorations are deprived of their traditional content. Cultural properties are indeed recognized as cultural relics, that is, as fragments of a disappeared past which are restored as dead museum pieces (JOKILEHTO 1991).

The question should be raised in different ways when it is paintings or architecture, to talk only about that. When it is a matter of architecture, the use shall be taken into consideration, buildings being often made of elements of different epochs.[6] For paintings, questions could seem simpler: the idea is often to rediscover what is authentic, that is to say, to render the time of creation and the hand of the master painter. The principle – without talking of the practice – could seem clear when it concerns the work of a well-identified master. It does not apply to all kinds of paintings, especially for icons, as it was well studied for Russian icons.

What is most important, in the case of Russian icons, is to preserve their material and visual appearance so that they keep their lustre.[7] That is why they have been

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[6] On the history of restoration especially concerning architecture, the different definitions of authenticity between theory and practice, see PÉRIER D'IETEREN 1993.

[7] On the issues affecting the restoration of Russian icons, see for instance BEAVER-BRICKEN ESPINOLA, 1992.

constantly re-painted throughout the centuries. Therefore we have to deal with two kinds of questions when we have to restore them:

1. In the painting of Russian or Byzantine icons, the painter has to stay in the background behind the image he is making. In this context, what is the meaning of the search for the original hand?

2. According to the Russian culture of icons, they have been constantly re-painted for centuries. Can we put aside this point? It would mean denying one part of their identity.

As for Ethiopian icons, a research project has been undertaken since 2009 on the analysis of the painting materials of icons belonging to the collections of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University and the Authority for Research and Conservation of the Cultural Heritage[8]. The first results of the analyses proved that the same conceptions of painting and repairing by repainting exist in Ethiopia, at least for some periods, even if this point was not theorized neither by the religious authorities nor by theologians.

Some icons have been repaired as it can be observed on the icon of the Dormition attributed to Brancaleon between the last third of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century.[9] The upper part was partially destroyed[10] and was replaced and repainted, imitating the style of the original painter (Fig. 1 and 2).

The icon of Saint George (IESMus 4191) signed by the same painter, Marqorewos the *Faranj* alias Brancaleon, allows us to see how the damaged areas have been constantly touched up since the sixteenth century. The most important reparation concerns the head of Saint George: a piece of cloth was glued on the original, surely seriously damaged, and painted again. According to the style of the painting, we can guess that it was in the seventeenth century.[11] If we follow the principle of turning back to the original condition of the object, it would require to remove the head and to leave the painting without it. Thus, to go back to the said authenticity of the work shall not be appropriate in each case.

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[8] This project is led by Ms. Méliné Miguirditchian, restorator-conservator, Dr. Sigrid Mirabaud, chemist (head of the laboratory, Inp – National Institute for Heritage, Paris, France) and myself, in cooperation with the following Ethiopian and French institutions: CFEE (French Centre for Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa), IES (Institute of Ethiopian Studies), ARCCH (Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage), C2RMF (Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France), CNRS, ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche), Inp. This project is based on the analysis of sixteen icons of the IES dated from the fifteenth to the 18th century and of the paintings of the rock-hewn church of Qorqor Maryam, dated from the 13th century, see: http://www.cfee.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article230.

[9] This icon is not included in our program on the analysis of the materials.

[10] Considering that the damage is symmetrical on the main panel and on the left wing, we can guess that it happened when the triptych was closed.

[11] BOSC-TIESSE *et al.* 2010, MIRABAUD *et al.* 2011.

Repaired and repainted area

Fig. 1: The Icon of the Dormition of the Virgin, attributed to Brancaleon, IES 10309
(Photo C.Bosc-Tiessé, 2011, courtesy of the IES)

Repainted areas   Original painted area

Staples to fasten old and new
wooden boards together
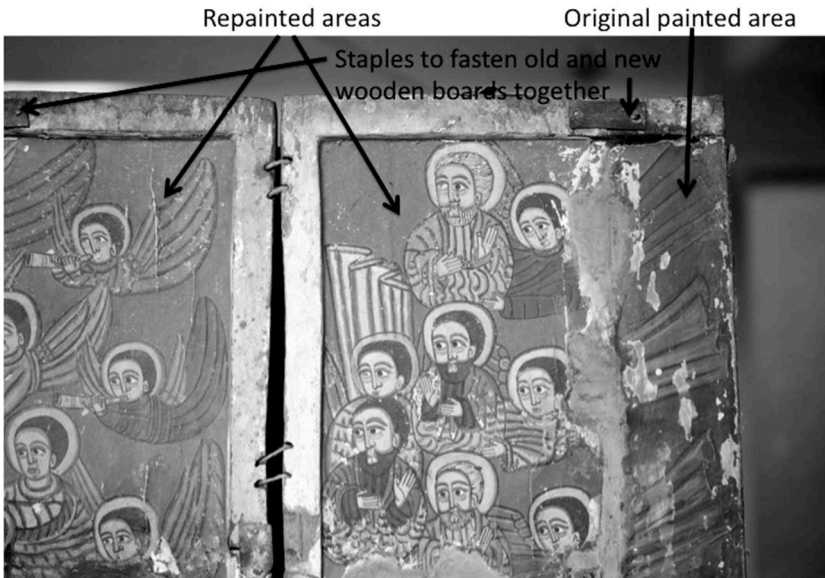
Fig. 2: The Icon of the Dormition of the Virgin, IESMus 10309, detail of the upper left part
(Photo M.H.Chordi, courtesy of the IES)

Finally, distinctions do not seem to be made between Western ideas and non-Western ideas but it concerns two specific points:

- What is done and what could be done on inherited properties, but no more in use strictly speaking, and what could be done on a living heritage, specifically religious, case for which the question is more delicate? What comes closer to being repair works than restoration? Repair works aim to make again an object in order for it to be functional.

- Repairs have been practised throughout centuries and still today, whatever the country. For instance, in 2012 there was a scandal in Spain, in the village of Borja, where local elderly parishioner decided on her own to *repair* a 19th century mural painting – a portrait of Jesus crowned with thorns - by Elias Garcia Martinez. The old women, who was upset by the degradation of the painting because of moisture, painted over the original work, by distorting it considerably [12] Contray to repairing, restoration is an intervention on damaged cultural property in order to ensure its preservation and to facilitate its understanding, respecting at the same time its historical, physical, and aesthetical integrity.

As we can see, to make decisions raises a lot of questions of different kinds; the first one being: who is making the decision and according to which criteria? As everywhere, various persons and institutions (private, religious, and state) are involved at different levels (local, regional, national, international).[13]

Restoration vs. Research?

Restorators-conservators and researchers do not often meet and some examples show the problems coming from this lack of collaboration. At Lalibela, there are Italian research missions since the 1930's (Monti della Corte 1940) and, in parallel, repairing works since the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1960's, to improve the situation and the works made on the site, an international committee was formed for the restoration of the site. With the funding of the World Monuments Fund, the restoration and the development of the site was left with the Italian architect Alessandro Angelini (Angelini 1967). Very complete maps and drawings were made but without taking into consideration archaeological matters. People were interested in knowing better the site but they were more worried about its preservation.

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[12] See for example the article dedicated to this case in the New York Times, dated on August, 23rd: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/24/world/europe/botched-restoration-of-ecce-homo-fresco-shocks-spain.html?_r=0 (last access on July 2013).

[13] Cp. Périer D'ieteren 1993 and Chaizemartin 2011 for the history of similar issues in Europe.
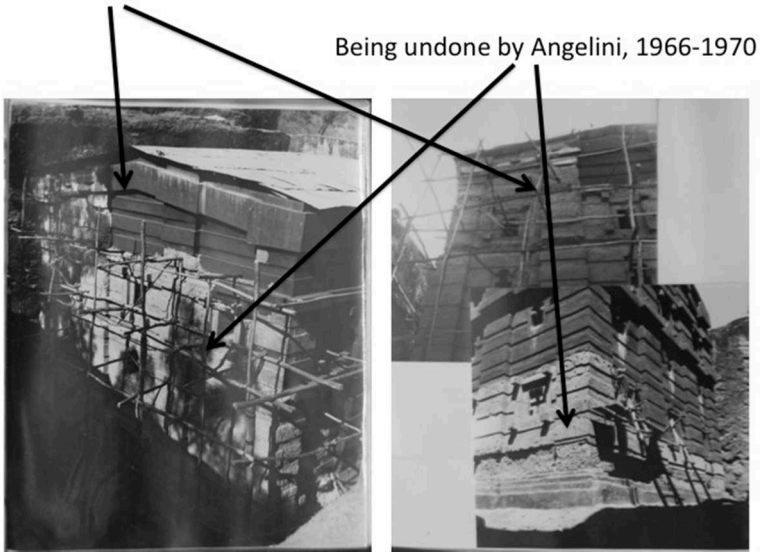
Fig. 4: Church of Amanuel, Lalibela
(Photo Sandro Angelini, courtesy of Civica Biblioteca A. Mai de Bergame and World Monuments Fund)

As a result, they did restoration works but the priority to give a better access to the site without really considering that research could allow more appropriate restorations. The restoration included undoing previous and abusive repair works of the first half of the 20th century (Fig. 4), cleaning trenches and rock surfaces, destroying at the same time much archaeological information (Fig. 5)[14].

This cleaning was justified by the idea of emptying the trenches in order to facilitate the draining of the water and to stop, or at least to limit, the erosion of the rock. However, emptying hundreds of graves was aimed at giving an easier access to the site. But, whereas the specificity of Lalibela was to be a holy place, sought-after burial place for believers for centuries, this information was destroyed on a large scale.

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[14] A complete study on the history of restorations in Lalibela will be presented in a forthcoming article. On the present archaeological mission lead in Lalibela under the auspices of the ARCCH, the Church of Lalibela and the CFEE, see http://www.cfee.cnrs.fr/spip.php?rubrique63 (last access on July 2013).

Area cleaned by Angelini without archaeological investigations, 1966-1970

Area still covered with the original deblais coming from the excavation of the churches

Fig. 5: Lalibela, Southern part of the Northern group
(Photo Claire Bosc-Tiessé, 2011, Lalibela mission)

The situation is similar in Gondar and its surroundings. The same sequence as in Lalibela can be observed: repair works until the 1940's; architectural research made by Italian occupation authorities (MONTI DELLA CORTE 1938); and a restoration mission in 1969 by the World Monuments Fund and UNESCO (ANGELINI 1971). Since then, restoration works made by the Ethiopian government are sometimes supported by Western embassies, especially in the *gebbi* (the so-called Fasiladas' bath), and the palace of Qwesqwam, without any real archaeological program. The ground was turned over and all potential information disappeared. This is a great loss for Ethiopian history.

The case is the same on Guzara's site some kilometres southeast of Gondar, on a hill beside the road from Gondar to Baher Dar. This site could be the ancient Gubae's castle, that is to say the oldest building in the area, described in texts from the 1570's, typical of what is called "Gondarine" architecture (ANNEQUIN 1965, PANKHURST 1979, BOSC-TIESSÉ 2005). Excavations could have provided information on the beginning of the royal settlement in this area, the different levels of human occupation on the site, and if the present castle – considered being the first of the Gondarine type – was really the first one. But the place was repaired over the course of the last ten years, and it is too late.

To avoid repeating this situation, the team of the French Centre for Ethiopian Studies, who lead the research part of a project of twinning cities, between Gondar and Vincennes, focussing on Ras Ghimb castle in Gondar, asked for an archaeological examination of the places not yet too disturbed (Mensan 2011). However, test pits have still to be done.

In the cases of Lalibela and Gondar, both sites were first considered under the architectural monumental aspect and the development of tourism. Restoration works were undertaken for this purpose, neglecting archaeological researches that could have provided a different view on built and rock-hewn monuments, and more generally, on the society in which they were made.

Concerning paintings, the case of Saint George's icon shows that the in-depth study of an artwork is necessary to have in hand all elements in order to be aware of the questions raised by the different alternatives of restoration. The purpose of the project on the analysis of the materials constituting paintings is to improve our knowledge not only of the materials, but also to better understand how they were used as preliminaries of any operation of restoration.

As a matter of fact, it highlights several important points to keep in mind for the restoration of Ethiopian paintings in general. For instance, thanks to the examination of the paintings under UV, and then with analysis of samples (materials identification without forgetting the stratigraphic study of the different layers usually never made), we know that, unlike preconceived ideas, some icons of the fifteenth century were originally varnished (Bosc-Tiessé et al. 2010, Mirabaud et al. 2011). Therefore, cleaning, as it is sometimes practiced, can be harmful and can rub out important elements of the paintings. Cleaning can affect the varnish and using chemical solvents can damage the paint layer, which is often very thin.[15] A preliminary structural and chemical analysis can be helpful to show the thickness of the paint layer, the presence of a varnish, its composition, and its age.

Cleaning can also be dangerous for other kinds of painting. In the case of the rock-hewn church of Qorqor Maryam in Geralta, every visitor of the site can see that its present state of preservation is a cause for concern. The analyses done on the materials used for painting, as well as on the deteriorations, point out that the paintings were done directly on the rock without any preparatory layer.[16] We can observe several kinds of deterioration and especially a white veil that covers the paint layer: they are salts from the sandstone carried with water infiltration to the surface, crystallising there. A black, pulverulent (dusty) layer also appears on some areas as well as some fatty-looking brown spots. By capillary forces, water carries organic matter and brings them near the surface. It constitutes a breeding ground favourable to the development of microorganisms, which are going to cover all the paintings bit by bit. Without going into the details of the results, the infiltration of water inside the rock alters dissolves the cement of the sandstone, oxidising the irons, and carrying the iron-oxides and the salts to the surface.

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[15] See the work done by Berelowitsch 2008 on a Russian icon, which has the same kind of problems.

[16] For the whole results of the analysis, see Mirabaud et al. (forthcoming).

During the dry season, the salts crystallise, causing moves of the grains of quartz inside the rock, leading to the crumbling of the outer parts of the walls. The materials are then less and less cohesive and the colours do not stick any more to their support. However, if the cement linking the grains of the sandstone disappeared, and the salts and pigments took its place, this would ensure some cohesion to the rock. The carbonation on the surface (white veil) also acts as a protective layer that coats the pigments and fixes them. Rock and painting are for the moment stabilised, even if delicate, and touching them even only for cleaning will definitely destroy them. The church must not be treated in any manner before elaborating a precise protocol of conservation.

Conclusion and recommendations

Researchers and managers of cultural and tourism development are often not working on the same timescale and have different requirements, goals, and deadlines. Let us wish that this conference could help to improve collaboration between professionals and let us wish that the project of Qorqor Maryam, for example, would help to protect this monument. Nowadays, more and more projects need to be coordinated, it could be important to gather all the archives describing what work has been done on a certain object, and make the resulting information accessible.

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The Reinstallation of the Second Largest Aksumite Stela

Tekle Hagos [*]

This article deals with the archaeological impact assessment carried out at the town of Aksum in the 1990's by David Phillipson and the Ethiopian archaeologists at the original location of the second largest Aksumite stela before its return from Rome and the result of its reinstallation on its original location in 2008.

The author was an assistant excavation supervisor in the large-scale archaeological excavations conducted at the original location of stela 2 in 1997 under the direction of Professor David Phillipson. He also directed most of the excavations conducted after 1997 in the same site that was sponsored by the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Stela. Thus, this article contains the results of the archaeological rescue excavations conducted in the original location of the second largest Aksumite stela under the direction of the author in the late 1990's and the impact of the reinstallation of the same stela.

Previous investigations

It seems appropriate to highlight in brief as to when and how the second largest Aksumite stela was taken to Italy and returned to Aksum before the presentation of the result of archaeological rescue excavations undertaken in the same site in the 1990s.

An indigenous Ethiopian highland civilization characterized by the erection of distinctive decorated stone monuments flourished at Aksum in the highland of northern Ethiopia and Eritrea in what is today Tigray in the first seven centuries AD (MUNRO-HAY, 1989). The second largest Aksumite monolithic stela, which is the authentication of the same civilization, was taken from Aksum to Rome by the order of the Italian fascist leader, Benito Mussolini, in 1937, during the Italian-Ethiopian wars. The five broken pieces of the same stela which were laid down in the main stelae field were transported by truck from the town of Aksum to the port of Massawa (Eritrea) by ship and train to Napoli and Rome in Italy, respectively. These pieces were reassembled and erected in Rome at Piazza di Porta Capena in October 1937 in front of Mussolini's Ministry of Italian Africa (PHILLIPSON 1997).

Stela 2 was returned to Aksum in 2005 and reinstalled in its original location in 2008. The operation to return and reinstall was the first major UNESCO cultural heritage project since the Abu Simbel Operation in the Sudan during the construction of the Aswan high dam in the middle of the 1960's (UNESCO 2005).

It seems proper to present the archaeological investigations that were undertaken at around stela 2 site and the results of the excavations to discover its original location prior to its return and reinstallation.

The Deutsche-Aksum Expedition (D.A.E.), under the direction of Enno Littmann, carried out the first preliminary archaeological documentation at the original location of the second largest Aksumite stela in 1906 (Littmann 1906).

The objective of these excavations was documentation; to clear and expose the broken parts of the stela and make an accurate plan and photographic record. Accordingly, the team exposed the five broken pieces of stela 2 and made an accurate planning and photographic recording. Furthermore, at that time, the D.A.E. team uncovered and documented the foot of stela 2 that was 2.9 m long. Moreover, in 1906, the foot of stela 2 was lying in front of its base plate (Phillipson 1997).

According to the report and plan of the team, the second largest Aksumite stela was laid in five pieces, from north-west to the north-east, with the uppermost back part located between the first largest stela (stela-1) and the third largest stela (stela-3) (Phillipson 1997).

Thus, the result of the German researchers was the basis for successive archaeological excavations carried out at the original location of stela 2 in particular and in Aksum in general, as discussed in what follows.

Excavations in the 1990's

In 1994, the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH) and the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Obelisk requested the Cambridge-based British archaeologist, Professor David Phillipson, to identify the original location of stela 2 and to assess any associated underground structure. In the same year, based on the plan of 1906, Phillipson discovered the original location of stela 2 by conducting several test pit excavations at the main stelae field.

Phillipson and his colleagues excavated giant blocks of stone monuments at a depth of 2.2 m to 2.4 m below the present surface level that indicated the original location of the second largest Aksumite stela. This evidence shows that stela 2 originally stood on a straight line between the first and third largest stela, 26 m and 31.5 m away from stela 3 and 1, respectively (Poissonnier et al.1999, Phillipson 2000).

Moreover, Phillipson uncovered the backfill of the Italians who conducted test excavations under the direction of Monnerret De Villard at the original location of stela 2 to ease its removal to Italy (De Villard, 1938). Monneret and his colleagues did not leave any document in reference to the original location of the stela as they were in a rush to remove it. They also conducted test excavations in other areas of the town

of Aksum and provided information about the topography of Aksum in the book "Aksum Ricerche di topografia Generale," (DE VILLARD 1938).

Phillipson (2000) and the Ethiopian archaeologists revealed Italian backfills that consisted of modern Italian bottle beers at the original location of stela 2 in the 1990's. Besides, Phillipson's team retrieved red Aksumite pottery in the lowest levels of the excavated trenches at the original location of the same stela that provided an indication for supplementary excavation. For the same reason, Phillipson suggested that there would be a strong possibility of a major tomb associated with the second largest Aksumite stela. He, therefore, recommended that large-scale archaeological excavations to be conducted at the site before any attempt was made to re-erect the second largest Aksumite stela at its original location (PHILLIPSON 2000).

In 1997, Phillipson conducted large-scale excavations and documented the substructure, known as the footing slab or the basalt slab (fig. 4) of the second largest Aksumite stela. The footing slab where the stela originally stood was discovered at the centre of the deepest excavations. Two huge boulders characterized by Aksumite tool marks supported the slab on the southern side of the foundation (PHILLIPSON 2000).

In January 1998 and 1999, archaeological excavations were conducted on the original location of the second largest Aksumite stela under the direction of the author and Yonas Beyene on behalf of the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum stela (POISSONNIER et al. 1999). Furthermore, the Ethiopian archaeologists together with the French archaeologist named Poissonnier enlarged the previous excavations and unearthed an enormous mass masonry (POISSONNIER 2012). These excavations revealed that the footing slab measured 4.6 m long and 4.3 m wide. It has a chiselled groove measuring 2.74 m from east to west in its northern section and 2.4 m from east to west in its southern section, as it was found in the excavated trench. The width of the groove measures 1.6 m. The same groove is located at the centre of the footing slab, 1.5 m far away from its two outer edges. This suggests that the second Aksumite stela originally stood on this flattened embossed middle part of the same slab between the two grooves. The slab was placed on top of the built-up stone platform (podium) that is at least 7.3 m long from north-west to north-east and at least 6 m wide from north-west to south-east (POISSONNIER et al. 1999).

The northern limit of the podium was consolidated by masonry resting on top of sticky white mortar. A wall more than four meters deep supported the foundation of the stela to the west. A meter-deep wall supported the south-western side of the foundation.

The foundation of the stela is 4.5 m thick (fig.1). It is made of packed stones, boulders and small-sized stone packing mixed with white mortar, medium-sized stone packing and layers of boulders resting on top of massive hard bedrock, from top to bottom, respectively.

The preceding section has outlined the results of the excavations carried out at the original location of stela 2 and the techniques of Aksumite stelae foundations and provided a clue as to how Aksumite stelae were erected on the foot of Betegiorgis hill.

I now present the significance of the second largest Aksumite stela based on the archaeological investigations carried out so far at Aksum and its surroundings.

Function and chronology

The second largest Aksumite stela was erected on the foot of Betegiorgis hill facing south-east to the urban centre of Aksum. The stela is 24 m long and weights at present about 152 tons after its return to its original location. It was carved from intrusive igneous rock known as nepheline syenite with course-grained felspathic minerals. It was probably transported from the quarry sites of Gual Gobo Dura or Gobo Dura about 5 km far away to the west of the town of Aksum, in an unfinished state. Aksumite stelae quarry sites and a slipway (ancient Aksumite road to transport stelae) was documented at Gual Gobo Dura by Phillipson in 2000, showing that such a stela was probably originally quarried from the granite blocks in that location (PHILLIPSON 1997, 2000).

It appears that the final carving, decorating and smoothing of the stela took place where it originally stood. The unfinished stelae that are located in the main stelae field where this stela is currently standing, confirms this assumption.

The decorations that are depicted on stela 2 give us a clue as to the style or the architecture of the Aksumite buildings in the early first millennium AD. Such decorations also demonstrate the sophistication of stone workmanship and artistic skills of the local Aksumite engineers and artists.

The stela is decorated on its four sides, representing multi-Aksumite storey buildings that prevailed at the time of its erection at about the 4th century AD. It depicts 11 storeys that consist of doors, windows and walls. False doors with locks and ring handles representing wooden doors of the Aksumites are depicted on the front and back of the foot of the stela. Furthermore, parallel rows of rectangular windows with internal divisions are also portrayed on the upper storeys of the stela representing the style of fourth-century Aksumite windows (MUNRO-HAY 1989, PHILLIPSON 2003).

The walls of the stela present recessed horizontal bands representing wooden beams with projecting ends known as "monkey heads" or binders. Such styles are distinctive Aksumite construction techniques that can be seen today in the post-Aksumite monasteries of Debre Damo and Abune Aftse located about 80 and 50 km to the east of Aksum, respectively. Moreover, Aksumite building ground plans also show architecture similar to those depicted on the stela. Furthermore, the 6th century AD traveler, Cosmas, reports that he saw a "four-towered" Aksumite palace at Aksum, at least confirms Aksumite storeys depicted on stela 2 (TEKLE HAGOS 2008).

Archaeological excavations conducted at Aksum and its surroundings show that stelae were erected as marker of tombs of Aksumite elites and kings before the introduction of Christianity to Aksum in the middle of the 4th century AD. Existing archaeological evidence shows that the smallest and most crudely executed stelae that are found at Aksum were probably erected before the 4th century AD at the peak of the Aksumite civilizations as tomb marker for the middle class of the Aksumite population.

The largest and most unique Aksumite decorated stela might have been erected as royal tomb marker during the 4th century AD (PHILLIPSON 1995).

Archaeological excavations conducted at the original location of the first largest Aksumite stela show that stela 1, was intended as a double royal tomb marker known as the mausoleum and the east tomb in the 4th century AD (PHILLIPSON 2000).

Thus, it is tacit that stela 2 was erected as tomb marker of an Aksumite king of the 4th century AD. Archaeological excavations undertaken at the original location of stela 2 yielded red Aksumite ware dating to the 4th century AD, confirming the same antiquity.

It appears that stela 2 was toppled over about three or four centuries after its erection. Archaeological excavations conducted beneath the footing slab by the Ethiopian and the French archaeologist, Bertrand Poissonnier, in 1999 yielded Aksumite coins issued by the 7th century Aksumite King, Gersem (POISSONNIER et al.1999).

Excavations conducted at this site uncovered a large trench to the south of the podium of the stela suggesting that it was probably deliberately destabilized around the 7th century AD, when Aksum was at wars with internal and external enemies. Furthermore, an Aksumite inscription of *Hatsani* Daniel dating possibly to the 7th century AD states that the Welkait people from the west came to Aksum and destroyed its beauty. This evidence indicates that the same people probably destabilized this stela, as they rebelled against the Aksumite king. Tradition also confirms that Queen Gudit toppled some of the largest Aksumite stelae (TEKLE HAGOS 2008).

Archaeological investigations were undertaken in the 1990's by Phillipson and by Ethiopians and Bertrand Poissonnier at the original location of this stela to uncover any associated tomb. This research that was concentrated to the west, south, south-west and south-east of the stela podium did not locate any major tomb associated to stela 2 (POISSONNIER et al. 1999). In 1997, Phillipson located a shaft 7.65 m below ground surface level to the east of the stela 2 podium. However, Phillipson did not continue excavations in the same shaft due to time constraints. The Ethiopian archaeologists together with Bertrand Poissonnier did not excavate this shaft in 1998 or 1999 as it was located beyond the foundation limit of the proposed plan for the reinstallation of stela 2. For the same reason, it is not known whether this shaft is an entrance to a major tomb associated with stela 2 or whether it is connected to the catacombs excavated by Chittick in 1974 (CHITTICK 1974), and detected using geo-radar by the UNESCO Mission in 2005, to the north-west of stela 3. Furthermore, the Ethiopian and the French archaeologists uncovered a narrow cylindrical rock-cut pit tomb to the north of the podium of stela 2 (POISSONNIER et al. 1999). However, such a tomb cannot be associated with the second largest Aksumite stela as it can be understood from its small size and relatively poor workmanship in comparison to the sophisticated technology of this stela. We can only speculate that the associated tomb is probably located to the north, north-east and north-west of the podium of this stela.

Consequences of reinstallation

In accordance to the bilateral agreement of the Ethiopian and Italian governments, stela 2 was returned to Aksum in three pieces in three successive Ukrainian made Antonov flights between 19 and 23 April 2005. The Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage requested the World Heritage Centre in Paris for the reinstallation of stela 2 on its original location. The then Minister of Culture and Tourism and the then Director General of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage went to Paris to convince the UNESCO officials for its reinstallation on its original location. In spite of the opposition of archaeologists to reinstall it on its original location, it was finally decided by the Ethiopian authorities and the leaders of the World Heritage Center of UNESCO to erect it on its original location.

Accordingly, the three pieces of the same stela were successfully reinstalled in the original location of stela 2 between June and July 2008. The first piece was reinstalled on 12 June while the second and the last ones were reinstalled on 25 and 31 July 2008, respectively. On 4 September 2008, the reinstallation of stela 2 was inaugurated in the presence of a public gathering about 100,000 people, high ranking Ethiopian and Italian government officials including the President and the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, UNESCO officials and member of the international communities.

Prior to the reinstallation of stela 2, there was a debate among scholars and the members of the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Stela as to where to reinstall it. Archaeologists, both foreigners and Ethiopians opposed the reinstallation of the stela 2 in its original location. Phillipson was the first archaeologist to oppose the reinstallation of the same stela in its original location. He circulated his report to the pertinent cultural heritage and other Ethiopian authorities both federal and regional and expressed his concern about the risk of the reinstallation of stela 2 in its original location and that it would destabilize the largest surviving standing stela 3. Ethiopian archaeologists were also in favour of the same idea. They expressed their concern about the negative impact of the reinstallation of the same stela in many meetings with the members of the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Stela particularly with the Techniques and Logistics Sub-Committee and with the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Stela in a meeting conducted in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The issue was debated on Ethiopian Television, Ethiopian Radio and on several local news papers. The rational with this argument was that any attempt to re-erect it in its original position would destabilize the only surviving and standing Aksumite stela 3; destroy any tombs associated to stela 2 and other fragile underground structures in the main stelae field. An alternative was proposed either to lay it down as it was before 1937 or to re-erect it outside the main stelae field so that it would not cause any destruction to the underground structures in the main stelae field and would not destabilize the only surviving largest Aksumite standing stela 3. Members of National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Stela and Ethiopian officials, on the other

hand, were in favour for the reinstallation of stela 2 in its original location. They argued that the reinstallation of the same stela in its original location would keep the architectural harmony, context, integrity and authenticity of the main stelae field. They also argued that its reinstallation outside its original location would be meaningless. However, this argument is not plausible as there are many options of mitigations (safeguarding) of outstanding universal of cultural heritages. A good example to look at is the UNESCO Operation of the Abu Simbel Temple that was dismantled from its original location and reinstalled outside its context to protect it from being flooded by the Aswan high dam in the late 1960's.

At last, the recommendations and the result of the impact assessments that were carried out at the original location of stela 2 by Phillipson, Ethiopian archaeologists and the UNESCO (2005) experts were not accepted and the leaders of the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of Aksum Stela 2, the then Minister of Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the then Director General of the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage convinced the heads of the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO in Paris and finally the stela was reinstalled in its original location with the following consequences as feared by the archaeologists.

The operation to install the same stela in the main stelae field at its original location was very complex operations involving heavy machine movements (cranes) around stela 3, which is the largest and the only standing Aksumite stela. Stela 2 was successfully reinstalled. 'Zero Risk Engineering Operation' was the motto for the reinstallation process of stela 2 (BANDARIN 2009). However, such operation did not go in line with this motto and resulted with the destabilization of stela 3 from east to west towards the direction of stela 2. For the same reason, the same monument is still tied with cables against the ground to prevent it from collapse. No action has been taken to consolidate the foundation of the same stela since its reinstallation in September 2008 and it is terrifying that the same stela may fall down if an urgent action is not taken by the Ethiopian government and the UNESCO. The World Heritage committee requested the State Party to secure funding for the consolidation of the foundation of stela 3 and to report before February 1, 2012. However, the State Party has not taken any fruitful action to address this request.

Furthermore, the unique foundation of stela 2 (fig.1) and other archaeological evidence underneath were destroyed on the course of digging for concrete foundation for the reinstallation of stela 2. No archaeologist was invited to supervise the digging and to document the archaeological evidence in the foundation of stela 2.

In addition, the slab or foot slab where stela 2 originally stood and its supporting boulders that show how the stela was originally erected (figs. 3 and 4) were removed from their original context by crane by the decision and order of the National Coordinating Committee for the Return of the Aksum Stela. At present, these removed foundation boulders became meaningless as they were discarded and placed out of their contexts in the main stelae field (figs. 3 and 4).

Furthermore, there is an evidence of widening cracks in the massive granite roof slabs of the side chambers of the 4th century AD mausoleum probably due to the effect of the reinstallation of stela 2 as observed by the author in February 2012.

Discussion and conclusion

It appears that the second largest Aksumite stela had variable contextual meanings in space and time from its erection in about the 4th century AD up to its reinstallation in 2008 at its original location. This variable signification fits very well with the school of thoughts of contextual archaeology (HODDER and HUTSON 2003) as explained below.

Stela 2 was probably erected as a marker for a single or multiple tombs of an Akusmite king and his families in the beginning at about the 4th century AD. However, so far such associated tombs have never been located by archaeological investigations carried out at the original location of this stela. Moreover, it was also probably intended to signify authority, prosperity, and stability that prevailed in Aksum at the time of its erection.

At the end of the Aksumite period, after the end of 7th century AD, it appears that stela 2 became a symbol of opposition to the Aksumite authority when internal opposition forces seem to have toppled it intentionally as it can be inferred from the archaeological evidence and legendary sources.

During the Second World War, in the short-lived Italian occupation of Ethiopia, its prior signification changed to symbolize colonial victory of the Italians over the Ethiopians when it was removed from its original location, taken to Italy and reinstalled in Rome in 1937.

At last, it became a symbol of confidence and national pride of the Ethiopian in particular and African peoples in general, respectively after its return from 2005 and its reinstallation on its original location in 2008.

It also became an exemplary lesson for many countries all over the world to stimulate and to return their looted heritages during the colonial era. However, such a historical success should be followed by taking an urgent united action by the Ethiopian government and the UNESCO to secure and preserve the largest existing and standing Aksumite monumental stela which was undermined by the reinstallation of stela 2 in 2008.

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Figures

foundation surface

reinforcing walls

footing slab location

Fig.1: Foundation of Stela 2, excavates in 1998-1999
(Photo by Tekle Hagos)

Fig.2: Stela 3 tied with cables during 2008 during reinstallation process.
(Photo by Tekle Hagos)

Fig.3: Discarded foundation boulders of Stela 2
(Photo by Tekle Hagos)

Fig.4: Discarded upside-down basal of Stela 2
(Photo by Tekle Hagos)

Fig.5: Crack on a roof lintel of the mausoleum as observed in 2012
(Photo by Tekle Hagos)

Lesser-known Features of the Ethiopian Codex

Denis Nosnitsin [*]

Despite the recent increase of attention to the Ethiopian manuscript culture, our knowledge of the historical features of the Ethiopian codex remains limited. It is confined to the information gathered in a few publications that treat the topic in a concise way, or it excludes features that appear non-typical or uncommon, or it sticks to the description of the manuscript culture as it appears today without attempts to obtain a historical picture. The items preserved in the manuscript collections outside Ethiopia are not always helpful in reconstructing the historical appearance of the Ethiopian codex. A substantial number of manuscripts preserved in collections outside Ethiopia were repaired and due to that lost many (or all) remnants of their historical bindings. The catalogues of the collections usually treat the bindings very briefly and do not concentrate on single details. In the 19th and the most part of the 20th centuries, the scholars were interested primarily in texts and philological elaborations.

In the indigenous context of Ethiopian ecclesiastic libraries, it is still possible to find a few original bindings, preserved at least in part or nearly in full. Also here, they are gradually perishing insofar as old manuscripts disappear, or their bindings get repaired and "renovated".

Here below, after providing some generalities on the topic, I will briefly refer to a few codicological features of the books that I observed during several years of field research in North Ethiopia (East, South, Central Tigray), where I was able to see and check scores of codices.[1] Those features have not been much attended in the scholarly literature; not necessarily spectacular, ancient or unknown, they are reminiscent of the local manuscript-making practices of the past on one hand, and of the history of individual manuscripts on the other hand, and should be taken in consideration for evaluation of each individual codex.

Common Type of Binding

Boards

The main type of binding of the Ethiopian codex is relatively simple:[2] the quires containing the text are sewn between two wooden boards (fig. 1).
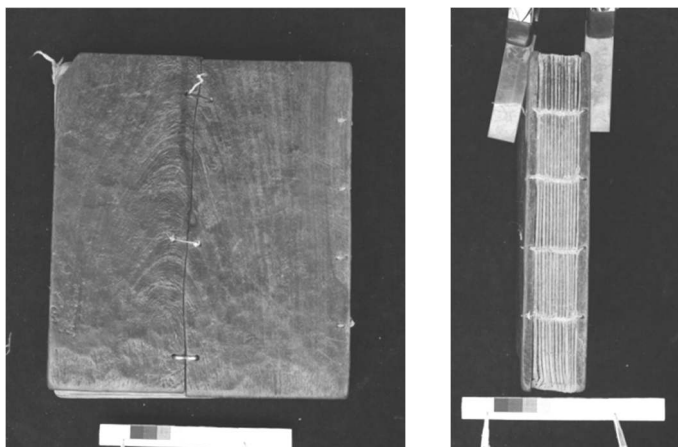
Fig. 1a-b: Typical binding: two wooden boards, two pairs of sewing stations (Tägoga Yoḥannǝs, Central Tigray).

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The boards are commonly made of *Cordia africana* (*wanza*), *Olea africana* (*wäyra*), or cedar, though other kinds of wood are also used. They are cut with an adze (not with axe), and rarely have a perfect (square or rectangular) form. The size of the boards ranges from small, ca. 10 cm in height, to quite big, more than 40 cm. The boards are usually not more than 3 cm thick.[3] In many codices that I examined one or both boards were broken along the grain and repaired, sometimes very skilfully, with cords or leather strings, or with wire. One has to wonder, though, if such a board is always the product of repair, and whether it is possible that a board for very big or even average codex could be manufactured of two smaller pieces of wood joined. This could be more practical for many areas in Ethiopia where wood is not plentiful. To accommodate the threads of the sewing, sets of holes are made in the boards, close to the edges (s. fig. 2), by means of awl or similar instrument. Re-use of boards through making new sets of holes is quite common.

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2   The traditional process of manufacturing the Ethiopian codex has been described several times, in more or less detailed way; e.g., ASÄFFA LIBÄN 1958, SERGEW HABLE SELASSIE 1981, FÄQADÄ ŚƎLLASE TÄFÄRRA 2002 a.m., BALICKA-WITAKOWSKA 2007: 749a-52a. For a more analytical and comparative approach, see, e.g., SZIRMAI 1999, BOZZACCHI 2001, and AGATI 2009: 356.

3   On the books which I examined in East Tigray it was not possible to ascertain whether the outer sides of the boards received any additional treatment (cp. SERGEW HABLE SELASSIE 1981: 24, who reports that "wax is used to smooth both sides of the boards, but the outside is treated further by rubbing with a piece of cloth"; FÄQADÄ ŚƎLLASE TÄFÄRRA 2002 A.M.: 205 reports even "exotic" ways of treating the boards).

Sewing

Sewing is carried out on pairs of sewing stations: one pair for a small codex, two pairs is the most wide-spread type (s. fig. 1, above), and big-size codices are sewn on two or three pairs.[4] For each pair of sewing stations, one single thread is used.

It is said that threads were made out of guts and sinews in the past; vegetal threads made out of linen, cotton string or twine were and are still in use.[5] Today strong synthetic threads, very cheap and accessible, are also widely used.
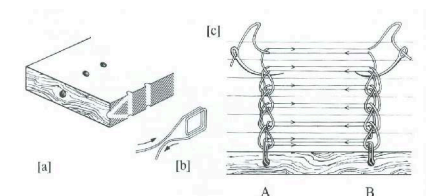
Figure 4.1 Board attachment and link-stitch sewing common to the Ethiopian codex: [a], disposition of holes in the board for anchoring the sewing thread; [b], anchoring loop of the sewing thread; [c] link-stitch sewing on a pair of sewing stations employing one piece of thread and two needles.
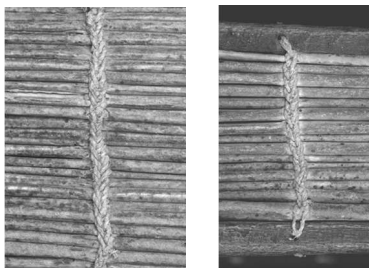
Fig. 2: Set of holes; Ethiopian link-stitch sewing (after Szirmai 1999: 46, fig. 4.1)

Fig. 3: Chains of link-stitches.

For each pair of sewing stations, one long thread and two needles are needed (fig. 2). A thread is led through the set of holes in the front board. Both ends of the thread are of equal length. Two needles moves in opposite directions: they enter the quires from the spine fold at different holes of the same sewing station; each passes in the centrefold in the direction against the other, and exits at the opposite hole. At this point, a link at the previous stitch is to be made, and the needles enter the holes in the spine fold of the next quire. The sewing of this type is sometimes called (Ethiopian) link-stitch sewing.[6] The result is solid, dense chains of stitches which are visible on the spine of the codex (fig. 3), and two threads are visible in the centrefolds of the quires. The sewing is executed at all quires one by one, and the threads are led though the back board; then they are led one or more quire back, and get knotted in the centrefold. The same pieces of thread are used for both sewing the text-block and attaching the boards.

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[4] The existence of other types (four pairs, or three sewing stations) has been reported; cp. Sergew Hable Selassie 1981: 24, Bozzacchi 2001, Paterson 2008.

[5] Vegetal threads are reported to be impregnated with wax (Fäqadä Śəllase Täfärra 2002 a.m.: 214), but at least in the areas that I was visiting, this practice appears to be uncommon.

[6] One of the main features of this type of sewing is that it is carried out as chain stitching only, without the so-called "sewing support" (an additional cord or strip of leather around which the sewing threads can be wrapped). This feature is akin to the way in which the late Coptic codices are sewn (Szirmai 1999: 32-34), and is sometime referred to as an indication to the considerable age and conservatism of the Ethiopian manuscript making tradition (cp. Shailor 1991: 55).

Covering

The commonly known feature of the Ethiopian codex is that many codices are covered with roughly processed leather, locally produced or sometimes of foreign (Middle East) origin. The leather cover is decorated, sometime very finely, with blind tooled ornaments.[7] Other types of embellishment are rare.[8]

   The leather cover is glued to the boards, and the turn-ins are folded and glued upon the inner sides of the boards. The open rectangular spot in the middle is usually covered with textile,[9] and the area between the turn-ins, along the boards' inner edge, is frequently covered with a separate leather patch. The leather cover is an additional means stabilizing the codex and protecting the sewing. Most of the codices, including those very modest, have full leather cover. Many codices originally bound on two boards could receive a leather cover later.[10] But quite a number of codices have only part-cover, the type of binding which is sometimes called "quarter cover" (fig. 4).[11]
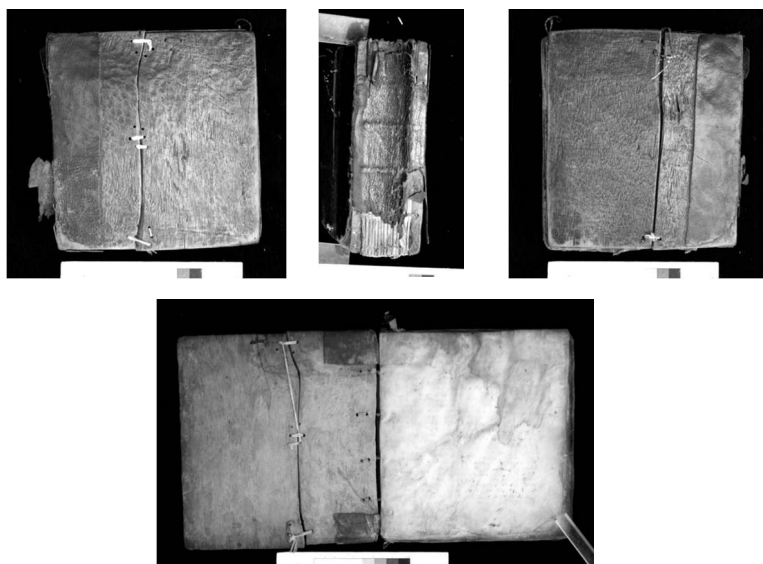
Fig. 4: Two wooden boards, leather "quarter cover" (May Raza Täklä Haymanot, East Tigray).

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[7]   Cp. PANKHURST 1983-84.

[8]   A few codices are decorated with metal (silver) studs or plaques (cp. PANKHURST 1983-84; PANKHURST 1999); or may even have lavish silver covers (cp. BAUSI 2010: 1130b-1132a).

[9]   SERGEW HABLE SELASSIE 1981: 25, PANKHURST 1980, 1981, SZIRMAI 1999: 48; cp. FÄQADÄ ŚƏLLASE TÄFÄRRA 2002 a.m.: 222-223.

[10] I observed a few large-size manuscripts with the cover made out of two separate pieces of leather, sewn together along the middle of the spine.

[11] Cp., e.g., CLEMENS and GRAHAM 2007: 268 (cp. also JUEL-JENSEN 1994). In some cases, the leather cover extends more onto the boards (the so-called half cover).

"Quarter cover" is thought to be a sign of scarcity of leather or the commissioner's limited financial capacity; but in many cases (esp. when the leather extends a bit more onto the boards) it is difficult to define whether the covering is original or it represents remnants of the former "full cover". In some cases a few hints may be obtained, for instance, from the traces of adhesives or leather remains visible on the inner sides of the wooden boards.

Endbands

Most of the Ethiopian codices covered in leather have two endbands: headband and tailband.[12] An Ethiopian endband is usually slit-braid, made of two narrow strips of leather; in rare cases it is composed of two pieces of leather of different colours (fig. 6). The endbands are sewn to the edges of the leather cover at the top (headband) and bottom (tailband), with the extremities placed between the boards and quires. The sewing of the endbands is sophisticated (fig. 5), with the thread going through the centrefold of the quires ("tiedowns"), endband itself and leather cover on the spine.
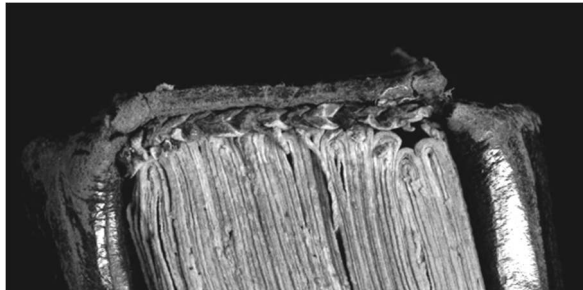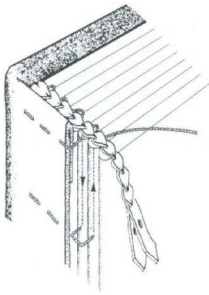
Fig. 5: Ethiopian endband (after Szirmai 1999: 49, fig. 4.3); Fig. 6: Two-colour endband.

Thought to strengthen and stabilize the book, in the indigenous context this part of binding has been particularly vulnerable. Lots of codices have only reminiscence of the endbands: rows of holes in the back cover or in the spine folds of the quires, sometimes with remains of threads.

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[12] Cp. Szirmai 1999: 49-50.

Textblock

Textblock is the major part of the codex distinct from the binding, which is composed of quires accommodating the written text (figs. 7, 8). The size of the textblock varies greatly: it can be very thin or it can be very thick, and in many cases embraces more than 20 quires.[13]

Fig. 7: Textblock of a Four Gospels book, 35 quires (ʿUra Mäsqäl, East Tigray).

Fig. 8: Textblock of a "Miracles of Mary", 33 quires (Qärsäbär Mikaʾel, East Tigray).

The textblock is always sewn as one unity; no case has been observed when the sewing would be carried out, e.g., on halves of a textblock, from two opposite directions. It is commonly said that the Ethiopian codex includes the so-called "protective quires", or "end-leaf quires". They include a smaller number of leaves and are placed between the boards and the text quires, to protect written pages from the direct contact with wooden boards.[14] The boards and the textblock are normally of approximately the same size, or the size difference between them is small. Formerly it was assumed that the textblock was never trimmed, but in some older codices the indications ("cues") for rubricators, written in the margins in small script (numerals, titles, incipits), are half-cut, showing that the edges of the leaves were processed.

Lesser Common Features and Practices

Leather Boards

Usually the Ethiopian binding is based on two wooden boards, but in some cases a different material, namely thick and stiff roughly processed (ox) leather was used for that purpose. The information on this type of binding is scanty[15] as such books have not

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[13] It is unclear why Sergew Hable Selassie (1981: 23) indicates that "...a volume of a book should not exceed fifteen quires, otherwise the book will disintegrate easily and quickly". It is true that big books are more fragile, but "15 quires" is of course not the limit (cp. also below, fig. 18).

[14] These leaves (sometimes un-ruled) could be frequently used for writing marginalia; also they have been an unstable part of the codex (could be frequently cut or taken out). Many codices never had any protective quires.

[15] This feature is not mentioned in Szirmai 1999 (cp. 48-49 "Boards and covering"), but cp. already D'Abbadie 1859: xii ("Par économie, les planches sont quelquefois en mas ou peau de vache épaissie, plutôt que tanneé, par un long séjour dans le lait caillé"). Cp. Sergew Hable Selassie 1981: 24, "As a rule the covers of manuscripts in Ethiopia are wooden and rarely leather"; some more information is provided by Fäqadä Śəllase Täfärra 2002 a.m.: 205-206 ("*yä-qoda gäbäta*"; he reports that both ox or hippo leather, cleaned and dried, could be used for boards).

been considered a fine product of the Ethiopian manuscript makers. One may think that leather was considered to be of inferior status than wood; however, in Ethiopia leather is available in great quantities, and in some areas is certainly more affordable and easier to procure than wood. To a certain extent, binding on leather might be a sign of limited financial capability of the manuscript commissioner.

Usually leather covers were used only for small-size, or in a very few cases, for mid-size codices. I observed two types of leather-bound codices (the first being more common, the second one by far less common):

1) Two covers cut out of very thick, stiff leather are laid upon the text block in the way similar to the binding made of regular wooden boards (fig. 9, 10).
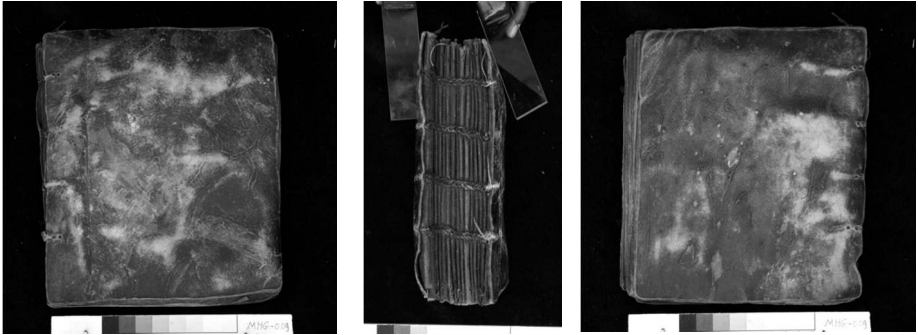
Fig. 9a-c: Himnary book (Ḥarənnät Gäbäzäyti Maryam, East Tigray).

Leather boards are attached to the textblock by means of sewing threads, through pairs of holes which are made in a simplified way, since leather boards are less thick and solid than the wooden ones:
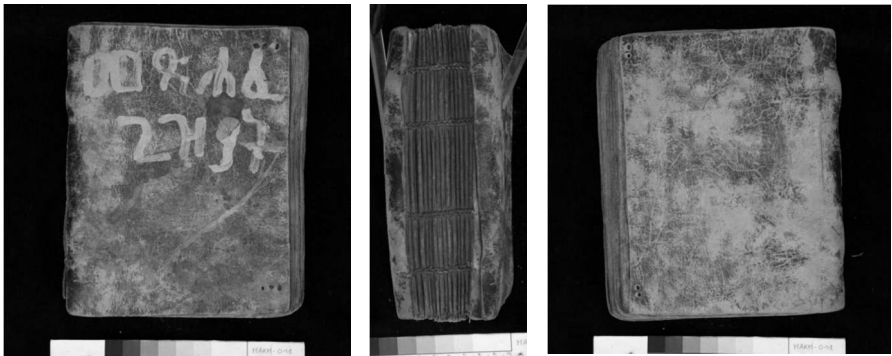
Fig. 10a-c: Collection of prayers (May Anbäsa Kidanä Məḥrät, South Tigray).

2) An oblong piece of thin leather embraces a small textblock (up to 50 folios) consisting of few quires or even of one single quire of bigger size. In this case, the leather is thin and flexible. The long-stitch sewing which seems to have been applied for such a binding (fig. 11) is different from the usual link-stitch sewing.
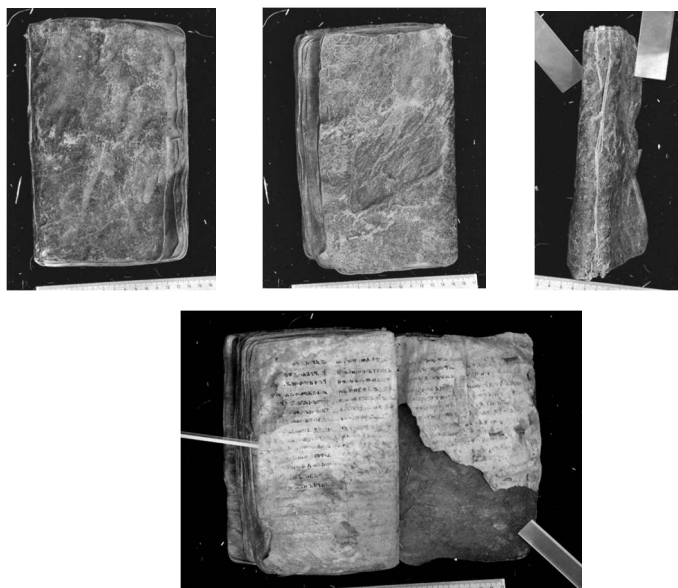
Fig. 11a–d: Missal (Ma'ṣo Yoḥannəs, East Tigray).

Sometimes leather boards obviously serve as substitution for the original wooden boards, one or both, if they went lost. Some bindings on leather boards are manufactured in a very rough way; in some other cases the codices show more decent craftsmanship, and can embrace a substantial number of quires (see above, figs. 9-10). However, even though such codices look neat and elegant, they show some problems. For instance, one problem is a greater vulnerability of the sewing on the spine which remains unprotected, because the use of the common leather covering is hardly possible with leather boards. The second is the progressing concavity of the spine (fig. 12), which developed even in thin codices and hampered their normal use.

Fig. 12a–b: Leather-bound codices: distortion of the spine.

These features rendered bindings on leather boards lesser practical, even for small-size and thin manuscripts. The practice of using leather boards has not disappeared, but remained quite limited.[16]

Spine Treatment

Some codices bound on wooden boards and covered with leather have an additional rectangular piece of leather on the spine, which is sometimes described with the term "overback". It embraces the codex over the spine (fig. 13); its lateral parts are glued onto the boards, outside and inside (cp. fig. 13d). The overback is frequently decorated with blind tooling, like the leather cover.
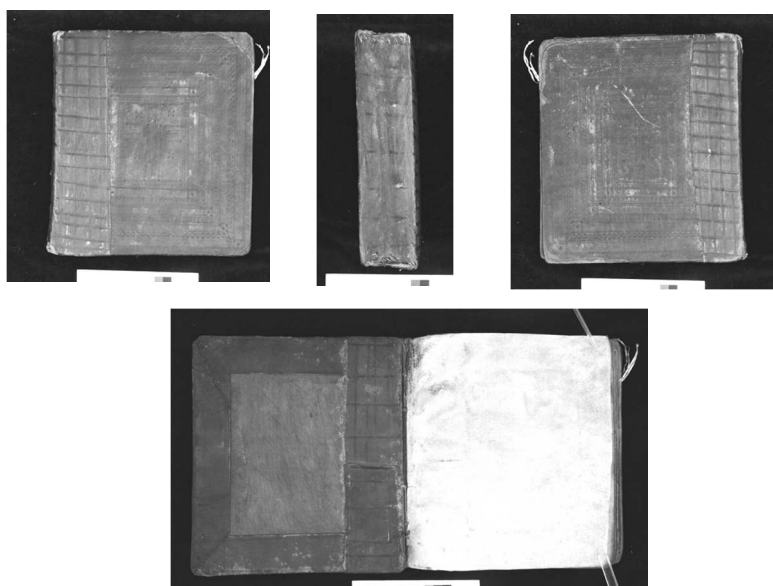
Fig. 13a–d: Boards covered with leather, blind-tooled overback (Ḥangoda Mikaʾel, East Tigray).

It was common to repair the codex in such a way, e.g., when its leather cover on the spine was worn or damaged or when it had to be re-sewn (for which purpose the leather on the spine area was to be cut). Since it was done some time after the codex was manufactured, leather of the main cover and that used for the overback are not identical, but show some difference in colour and quality.

There are also other, less common ways of protecting the spine area. On some codices recorded, a rectangular piece of thin leather or parchment has been brought upon the

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[16] Other problems of such structure are indicated in FÄQADÄ ŚƏLLASE TÄFÄRRA 2002 A.M.: 206: if not thick enough, the leather boards are too feeble for holding the quires; being stiff enough, thick (hippo's) leather is susceptible to humidity and easily gets deformed.

spine (fig. 14), embracing the textblock under the boards, and held by the threads of the sewing.

Fig. 14a-c: Piece of parchment as spine protection (Säbäya Maryam, East Tigray).

While examples of such a treatment are singular, at least in one collection of North Ethiopia I observed some five codices treated in this way, apparently by the same craftsman[17]. Though not very solid and durable, the thin strip of parchment does provide a certain protection for the spine and is effective enough for codices which are not overstrained and kept in decent conditions.

Pastedowns

In today's practice, "protective quires" or "end-leaf quires", placed before and after the textblock, are usually composed of some two to six folios. These quires are not intended for receiving the writing, but otherwise they are included into the codex as regular text quires. In some older (pre-17th-cent.?) codices, they show traces of a special treatment. The outer leaves of the protective quires, located next to the boards, were originally used as "pastedowns": they were glued, or "pasted down" onto the boards, and turn-ins of the leather cover were glued upon them. The pastedowns covered the opening in the middle between the turn-ins (what was later occupied by textile inlays), and also the sets of holes in the boards and threads anchored in them.

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[17] At May Wäyni (South Tigray). Cp. a sample in DELAMARTER and MELAKU TEREFE 2009: 134-135, plate 85 (description in GETATCHEW HAILE et al. 2009: 206-209, Ms. EMIP 78). The authors speak of 5% of the manuscripts having such a device ("spine strap"). I could only record a very few occurrences in the areas which I studied, but the technique may be not as recent and rare as it looks like at the first glance; cp. a large 15th-cent. manuscript from the church of Yoḥannəs Käma (Central Tigray) treated in the same way (fig. 3, BAUSI and UHLIG 2007: 742).
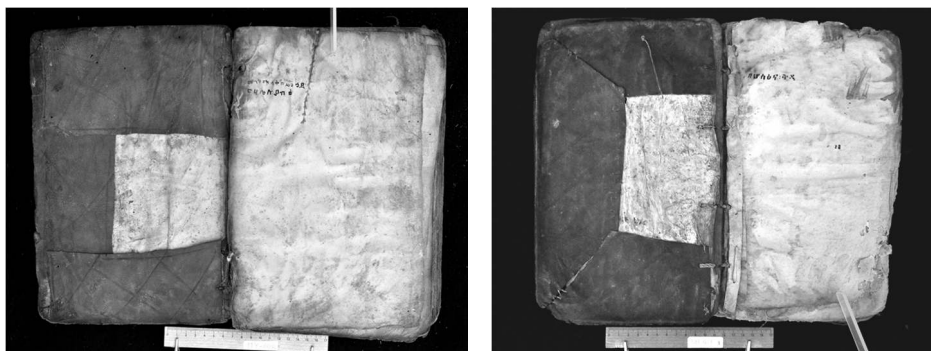
Fig. 15: Four Gospels book: pastedown (Ma'ṣo Yoḥannəs, East Tigray).

Fig. 16: Four Gospels book: pastedown (ʿUra Mäsqäl, East Tigray).

Today, this structure has been preserved in its integrity in nearly no case. It appears that the adhesive became ineffective at a certain point, and the parchment pastedowns fell off the boards. In many cases the leaves pasted down to the boards were later severed from their counterparts and remained under turn-ins (figs. 15, 16). But the composition of the protective quires, and especially typical traces of the glue visible on the parchment leaves and boards let us guess what the original structure of the codex might look like. The technique of pastedowns did provide an additional stabilisation for the codex, but seems to have been dropped at least by the 17th cent.

Guards

Due to different reasons, some books could be discarded, occasionally dismantled and re-cycled in different ways for repairing other, damaged or worn codices still in use. In particular, narrow strips could be cut out of the dispersed leaves and re-used as the so-called "guards", for reinforcing quires and leaves along the fold or around sewing stations. A guard is frequently held on the spine fold of the quire by threads of the main sewing only (fig. 17a, b). Otherwise it can be attached to the parchment leaves through "side stitches", i.e. by means of thin leather strips led through slits, through one or more leaves on each side of the quire (fig. 17 c).

Fig. 17a-d: Parchment guards in different manuscripts (East Tigray).

Besides, a short guard can be inserted in the centerfold of a quire (fig. 17d), to reinforce the parchment leaf around the sewing stations. The Ethiopian craftsmen applied guards to repair worn textblocks and hold together disintegrating quires. The use of such a technique has been recorded in the famous Ǝnda Abba Gärima Four Gospels[18]. Also there are cases in which ancient text leaves were cut and re-used as guards. Interventions to introduce guards did not always end with satisfactory results, as we can see, e.g., from the cases when the volume cannot be opened well after repair, or when quires of the codex remain unconnected. But in some cases the craftsmen indeed carried out a good job with guards, saving the quires from dispersion and giving the codex a good chance to survive (fig. 18).
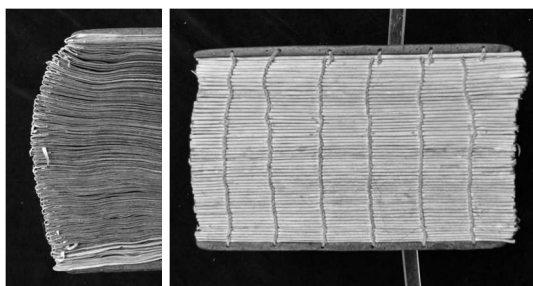
Fig. 18: Big textblock of ca. 50 quires strengthened with parchment guards (Qorrar Maryam, Central Tigray)

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[18] See photos in CAPON 2008 and MERCIER and DANIEL SEIFEMICHAEL 2009: 110.

Fastenings

It was tacitly assumed that fastenings, i.e. devices to keep the book constantly closed, are very rare or nearly non-existent on Ethiopian codices.[19] However, a few of them do show remains of what might have been fastenings. In one of the cases, the manuscript (the same as depicted on figs. 7 and 16, above) has symmetrical pairs of holes in the front board, and metal pegs inserted in the outer edge of the back board (fig. 19a-b). The holes might have been used for fixing (leather?) straps which were somehow pinned on the metal pegs in the opposite boards.[20]

Fig. 19a-b: Remains of fastenings? Pairs of holes in the front board, pegs in the edge of the back board (see arrows) (ʿUra Mäsqäl, East Tigray)

Fig. 20: Remains of fastenings? Sets of holes in the front and back boards (Tänsəḥe Kidanä Məḥrät, Central Tigray)

Fig. 21: Book with fastenings and cross in the hands of a saint (exterior side of a triptych), after ANNEQUIN 1975:83.

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[19] Instead, the codex was secured by means of the traditional slip-case (the so-called *maḥdär*) or textile wrappings.

[20] The holes and pegs might not necessarily be original, but the example doesn't seem to be a single, unique case. One more codex was discovered in the same collection, with the back board equipped with pegs (the front board is missing).

In another case, a late 14th- or 15th-cent. Four Gospels book has sets of four holes in the front and back boards, made at different levels (fig. 20). They could be used for long leather straps or bands wrapping the volume.[21] More indications, this time from the Gondärine period, are provided by murals and icons of the famous church of Kəbran Gäbrəʾel, where several representations of the codices with fastenings have been attested (fig. 21).[22]

On the whole, the feature was apparently more common than one might think.[23] However, being fragile, the fastenings got lost very quickly in the course of the "life" of the book. Scholars dealing with manuscripts should pay attention to possible traces and remains of the fastenings and record them, for getting more comprehensive picture of the history of the Ethiopian codex.

Conclusion

The short communication is not aimed at reaching a comprehensive conclusion, but rather highlights a few selected features of the Ethiopian codex, to be considered by those who work with this type of the material.

However, at least two considerations can be raised from what is reported above. One concerns the dating of the manuscripts. A notion of the "composite manuscript" has already been widely accepted in the manuscript studies, which takes into account a possibility that a codex (texblock) can be composed of different parts produced at different points of time (called "production units"), and united into one codex in several stages. The same idea can be easily extended upon the binding. The features and practices described above implicate that nearly each binding was exposed to modifications and interventions, and a quick look at a certain number of historical codices is enough to see that only very few bindings could preserve their original condition. That means: 1) many bindings are composite structures and contain elements introduced (sometimes in more than one stage) after the codex was manufactured; 2) in many cases, the dating of the binding is by far not the same as that of the textblock. This fact will not always drastically change the conclusions concerning the manuscript and its text, but rather should be taken into consideration, as a contribution for a better understanding of each manuscript's history.

Another consideration concerns the people in Ethiopia who deal with manuscripts in real life, mostly church servants, in particular keepers of the books and other liturgical items in individual churches and monasteries. In the recent years, the Orthodox community has come to better understanding of the value of the manuscript heritage it possesses; we wish to hope the consciousness will reach a point when those responsible

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[21] It cannot be excluded that the holes were used for fixing metal decorations, now lost.

[22] A few of them have been printed in ANNEQUIN 1975 (figs. on pp. 83, 84, 114). On Kəbran, s. BOSC-TIESSÉ 2007.

[23] More information should be collected for any conclusion, but the structure on fig. 21, above, looks like a simplified and modified variant of the "peg and strap" fastenings of the Byzantine codex, s. AGATI 2009:358, SZIRMAI 1999:81-83.

will exercise utmost care and will not rush ahead with dismantling "shabby and worn" historical binding to renovate them, even if this is meant for saving the text quires.

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Conversion and Proselytisation in Southern Ethiopia.
A Historical and Comparative Perspective

Finn Aaseboe Roenne [*]

Ethiopia is a very exciting and fruitful setting for the study of conversion and proselytisation. The three major religious traditions are represented and have had many instances of conversions from one tradition to the other: Traditional African religion, Islam and Christianity – the last with many different branches. We also have the possibilities of studying the phenomenon over a longer time-span than in any other part of sub-Saharan Africa. This gives us excellent opportunities for a historical and comparative study of conversion and proselytisation. For the purpose of this study I define conversion as a change of affiliation from one of the three religious traditions, traditional African religion, Islam and Christianity, to another[1] – regardless of the degree of change in conviction the change of affiliation involves. And proselytisation is then a shift from one branch of Christianity to another, notably from Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity (EOC) to either Catholic or Protestant Christianity.[2]

At the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in 1997, I delivered a paper on religious dynamics in Southern Ethiopia, which was a presentation of preliminary results from a forthcoming doctoral dissertation, *Continuity and Change. The Rise and Development of Protestant Christianity in Kambaataa-Hadiyya, Ethiopia, 1928 to 1974*.[3] In the present paper I will bring up more material from the now completed dissertation when I deal with conversion and religious change in Southern Ethiopia during the 20th Century, especially the development in the Kambaataa-Hadiyya area. At the same time I will carry the discussion about conversion in Ethiopia further on, taking into consideration scholarly contributions in recent years, and at the same time exploring the possibilities of gaining new insights from a comparative study of conversion and proselytisation. We will especially consider the insights that can be gained from a

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[1] In other studies it is relevant to use different definitions of conversion, cf. RØNNE 1997.

[2] The definition used for the purpose of this study differs from a common definition of 'proselytisation' as "sheep stealing" and the corruption of witness and conversion, "when cajolery, bribery, undue pressure or intimidation is used." LAUNHARDT 2005: 196f.

[3] Due to a very tight time schedule I had to write and publish the dissertation in Danish (Kontinuitet og forandring. Opkomsten og udviklingen af protestantisk kristendom i Kambaataa-Hadiyya, Etiopien, 1928 til 1974, København, Akademisk Forlag, 2002), but I hope in the near future to raise funds for a translation and publishing of the dissertation in English.

comparison with conversions from traditional religions to Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity when Christianity was first introduced to Northern Ethiopia and later expanded to the Southern part of present day Ethiopia. As space is limited we will have to save a comparison with conversions to Islam in different parts of Ethiopia, both earlier and in the 20th century, to another occasion.

Of recent studies dealing with conversion in an Ethiopian context I will especially pay attention to the works of Abbebe Kifleyesus, Alexander Naty, Susanne Epple, Christiane Falge, John H. Hamer, O.M. Eide, Arne Tolo, Tibebe Eshete and Steven Kaplan.[4] The last has, in addition to his work on King Ezana's conversion in the fourth century (KAPLAN 1982) and the conversions to Christianity in the early Solomonic Ethiopia, i.e. c 1270-1468 (KAPLAN 1984), started to synthesize the existing studies and summarize their findings in order to introduce a more comparative and thematic approach when dealing with conversion and religious change in Ethiopia. It is my hope that this paper will contribute to the comparative discussions Kaplan has launched.

Horton's theory and conversions in Ethiopia

In addition to that, and in order to give the discussion about conversion in Ethiopia a broader African perspective, we will on relevant points refer to the extensive debate on conversion and religious change in Africa that was in a special way stimulated through a theory developed by Robin Horton (1971 and 1975). The latter, in his so-called intellectualist explanation of conversion, argues that what happened when Africans turned from traditional religion to Christianity (or Islam) should be seen primarily as a development of traditional religion in response to the enlargement of scale, to the transformation of the narrow, local viewpoints of the so-called 'small-scale' societies by the wider horizons brought to Africa by the introduction of the modern world, not least through the development of commerce, nation states and communications. When people were seeing the boundary of the microcosm weakening or dissolving, the logical response was to reduce the importance of the lesser spirits, underpinners of the microcosm, and to develop the concept of the High God to meet the challenges of the macrocosm where they consider the High God ruling.

In my contribution to the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in 1997, I established as a frame of reference the theory developed by Robin Horton and the extensive debate it triggered. However, after a study of the religious changes in Southern Ethiopia I concluded that, considering the very comprehensive and diverse picture we have got of conversions to Christianity in Kambaataa-Hadiyya, Horton's theory seems not capable of explaining the complex phenomenon. In particular two aspects of Horton's theory make it less useful in explaining the processes of religious changes in Southern Ethiopia. Firstly, the theory is determined by a rationalistic understanding of religion, meaning that it is quite unsuited and unable to contain the

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[4] See the bibliography.

religious dynamism of the South Ethiopian setting and to include the religious factors which apparently were of decisive importance in many conversions to Christianity in Southern Ethiopia.[5] Secondly, the theory does not consider the specific conditions in Ethiopia, as Horton did not use any Ethiopian material at all when he developed it. This means that Horton's model has been unable to include some of the factors which have had the greatest influence also on the religious development in Southern Ethiopia, more specifically those related to the presence of an African colonial power and an African national church in close connection thereto. We will also in the present paper consider several cases that support these points. However, this doesn't mean that Horton's theory is of no use when studying conversions in an Ethiopian setting. It is possible to use it in a more heuristic way in that we employ elements from the theory to raise questions and discover aspects and patterns. And as Horton's theory is developed on the basis of social, economic, cultural and religious circumstances in other parts of Africa, especially in West Africa, we can use his theory to give the discussion an all-African perspective and make a comparison with conversions and religious change in other parts of Africa.

It could be argued that it is not scholarly consistent to apply Horton's theory to conversions and religious changes in the 4th and in the 13th to 15th centuries Ethiopia as the theory is specifically related to the social development in Africa in modern time. However, I think that for example Kaplan is on firm scholarly ground when he uses Horton's theory both in dealing with Ezana's conversion in the 4th century and in his treatment of the religious development in the so-called Early Solomonic Ethiopia. For the decisive elements in Horton's theory, the widening of horizons and the development from a small-scale society with a so-called enlargement of scale, was not confined to modern Africa. It also happened for certain groups – in a way or another – at different points in the course of history. The same could be said about the basic cosmology Horton relates to – with both a number of so-called lesser spirits and a supreme being. Particularly relevant for an Ethiopian setting is Donald N. Levine's presentation of the social development in Ethiopia (Levine 1974: 25ff). When it comes to the South Ethiopian people, he talks about a great number of diverse, historically autonomous societies of small scale which were original units in the complex socio-cultural system Ethiopia has formed. And it seems clear from his description that not only in modern time but also through many centuries earlier we have had a tension between the microcosm of the local small-scale societies on the one hand and the macrocosm of the large-scale society in 'Greater Ethiopia' on the other. For many people life was almost entirely confined to the local small-scale society. But simultaneously several factors contributed to an enlargement of scale for other groups, not least the conquest and the subsequent incorporation of the South Ethiopian peoples into the sphere of influence of a Central or North Ethiopian State.

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[5] This is a weakness of Horton's theory that for instance Richard Gray has called attention to in the debate following the launching of Horton's theory, cf. Gray 1990.

Ezana's conversion reconsidered

The heading is the title of an article where Steven Kaplan examines the conversion to Christianity of this fourth century Ethiopian ruler (KAPLAN 1982) and first of all focuses on the question: What were the motives behind King Ezana's adoption of Christianity?

Ezana's conversion is clearly witnessed in a series of three inscriptions executed after important military victories. In the earliest inscription Ezana dedicates his victories to several of the gods worshipped in the Aksumite pantheon, among them the God of Heaven, Astar, who could be regarded as the 'High God' or the 'Supreme Being' of the old Aksumite religion. The next inscription, written in the local language Ge'ez, omits any reference to most of the deities in the Aksumite religion but attributes the victory exclusively to "the might of the Lord of Heaven, who has created me, of the Lord of all by whom the King is beloved." And the third inscription, which is in Greek, begins: "In the faith of God and the Power of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost who have saved my kingdom. I believe in your son Jesus Christ who has saved me."

The third inscription undoubtedly shows that political considerations must have influenced Ezana's attitude toward Christianity. The text expresses a clear Christian confession and is at the same time written in Greek and thus clearly composed with a foreign audience in mind. This fits in with the common political explanation of Ezana's conversion that he converted in order to win the favour of the pro-Christian Roman emperor Constantine. However, as Kaplan states, to concede this "is not the same as to agree that the primary motivation behind the king's conversion was political." The whole series of inscriptional evidence cannot be sufficiently explained only through reference to political factors. To begin with, a purely political explanation does not give a satisfactory answer to the questions raised by the second inscription. Contrary to the Graeco-Roman world where Christianity began among the lower classes and only gradually spread upward until finally also gaining converts among members of the royal family, at the time of Ezana's conversion the majority of his subjects were still faithful to their traditional religion. How could we then explain that Ezana writes an inscription in Ge'ez, which although a bit ambiguous also reflects a considerable change in his religious world-view? Written in Ge'ez the inscription was unintelligible to those, he allegedly wanted to impress whereas at the same time he ran the risk of offending and losing support from his Ge'ez speaking, and still non-Christian, subjects. The only plausible explanation is that the inscription reflects a genuine religious conversion. But what has caused this important religious change if it is not only a result of expedient political manoeuvring?

In order to explain this change Kaplan employs Horton's theory on conversion and religious change in Africa. That is, in fact, remarkable since Kaplan wants to use the theory in order to get "a religious understanding of Ezana's conversion" whereas Horton both in his theory itself and in the debate following the launching of the theory has stressed the socio-economic rather than the religious factors in the conversion process. Therefore, it is worth noticing how Kaplan uses Horton's theory. In doing so we will see how we in a scholarly work can benefit from a model like Horton's, even if it is not

used as an overall model of explanation. At the same time we will have exhibited some of the model's weaknesses.

It is obvious that Horton's theory suggests a focusing on the development in Ezana's religious view. And Kaplan clearly demonstrates how that development can be explained by Horton's theory: Several factors have contributed to an enlargement of scale in the case of Ezana, which has caused a gradual change in his cosmology with a still more elaborated concept of the High God, Astar. And this eventually paved the way for his acceptance of a monotheistic religion, Christianity. I will comment on two aspects of Kaplan's application of Horton's theory:

First, there is obviously a *possible* connection between Ezana's greater involvement with the macrocosm and the elaboration of his concept of the Supreme Being, as Kaplan suggests in accordance with Horton's theory. But is it possible to point to circumstances around the described development in Ezana's cosmology, which can only be explained by a causal connection to the enlargement of scale? Could not the elaborated concept of the High God as part of a conversion process just as well be explained by the Christian influence Ezana has been exposed to through Christian traders, advisers etc. who were in growing number present in Aksum?[6] Secondly, I think that Kaplan uses the model slightly differently than Horton himself. For Horton the conversion consists by and large in the cosmological change itself and Christianity thus only functions as a catalyst of a process already on the way as a result of a socio-cultural development. Whereas Kaplan considers the change in cosmology as something that eventually results in a genuine conversion to Christianity – thus attaching greater importance to Christianity itself and leaving more room for the religious dynamic.

Finally, I think that one more question needs to be addressed in relation to the three inscriptions. Given that the second inscription just as the third reflects Ezana's conversion to Christianity, how could we then explain the fact that the second inscription, contrary to the third, does not use an explicit Christian terminology, but the more vague or ambiguous phrase 'the Lord of Heaven'? We can explain it by making the supposition that Ezana, while still expressing his new religious orientation, at the same time tried to describe it in terms understandable within the frame of traditional cosmology. This endeavour of Ezana is worth keeping in mind when we turn to the conversions which took place when Christianity later expanded to the southern part of present day Ethiopia, especially in the period from 1300 to 1600.

Conversions in the 14th to 16th centuries in Southern Ethiopia

Taddesse Tamrat describes the religious landscape where Christianity was introduced primarily by monks who followed in the footstep of the North Ethiopian conquerors, as follows:

> "The general features of Kushitic pagan worship seem to be based on a sky god,
> with numerous good and bad spirits inhabiting the mountains, trees, rivers, and

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6 TIBEBE ESHETE (2009:16) seems to support this view.

lakes. Prayers and sacrifices were offered to these spirits, through hereditary priestly families which seem to have shared much of the sanctity of the gods of which they were the intermediaries, and, as such, they seem to have wielded much power over their peoples... The smallest details of the daily life of the people were presumed to be under the control of these spirits" (TADESSE TAMRAT 1972: 234).

When we relate this description to Levine's presentation of the social development in Ethiopia mentioned above, it seems relevant, as Kaplan does (1984: 124), to use Horton's theory also in the study of conversions to Christianity in Southern Ethiopia during this period.

It looks as if the common people in Southern Ethiopia were attracted to Christianity and welcomed the monks because they experienced repression and exploitation by the local religious leaders. And the monks shared the view of the local people with regard to the reality and power of the spirits whom the local religious leaders represented and at the same time the monks appeared to represent an even stronger religious power. In view of Horton's theory nothing indicates an enlargement of scale in the case of the common people. Neither was their attraction to Christianity connected to a development in their cosmology. On the contrary, deeply immersed in the local small-scale society and within the frame of traditional cosmology, they joined the religious experts with most religious power (KAPLAN 2004: 384).

Similarly many of the local political rulers also accepted the introduction of Christianity and supported the monks. There were probable two reasons for this acceptance and support: Firstly, in some places a power struggle was going on between the local political rulers and the religious leaders which gave rise to a kind of unholy alliance between the monks and the local rulers in order to overcome their common rival. Secondly, through their links with neighbouring rulers and the incorporation into the North Ethiopian state, the local rulers increased their involvement in the world outside their local microcosm. "In response, [they] may have begun to seek a religion which showed a greater concern with events in the wider world and yet did not require them to abandon their belief in forces which affected their local society", Kaplan concludes (1984: 124). And Ethiopian Christianity as presented by the monks was just such a religion, being on the one hand a universal religion and on the other having a clear relevance to the concerns and problems of daily life in the local society. Apparently Kaplan again considers this to be an affirmation of Horton's theory. However, as argued in connection with Kaplan's discussion of Ezana's conversion, Kaplan has an approach different from Horton's. Kaplan regards conversion to Christianity not only as a development of the cosmology in reaction to socio-cultural changes, but attaches much more importance to the role Christianity itself has in the conversion process. This role Christianity acquired as a religion which covered both microcosm and macrocosm and thus for the political rulers being a religion more suited for their situation.

When he discusses the question to what extent conversion to Christianity caused the South Ethiopian people to change their religious beliefs and practices, Taddesse Tamrat refers to a subject that is of relevance for a comparison with conversions to Christianity in the 20th century Southern Ethiopia, namely the conception of evil and

how it is handled (TADESSE TAMRAT 1972: 234f). All sorts of evils were ascribed to the activities of spirits. And people sought to placate the evil forces through the agency of their religious leaders. The turning to Christianity then happened only because they here found an even stronger power to combat the evil spirits. However, the basic cosmology remained unchanged. As discussed above, from the beginning Ezana likewise endeavoured to communicate his new belief to his subjects within the frame of traditional cosmology.

Conversion and proselytisation in Southern Ethiopia during the 20th Century

In the study of conversion and protelytisation in Southern Ethiopia we will especially focus on the Kambaataa-Hadiyya area, where I carried out field research during several periods from 1992 to 1994. We will look at the most important reasons for conversions and proselytisation to Protestant Christianity from traditional religion, Islam and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity.

At the same time it is interesting to compare the situation in Kambaataa-Hadiyya with Hamer's study of conversions to Protestant Christianity in Sidamo (HAMER 2002), since Sidamo and Kambaataa and Hadiyya are closely related, ethnically, culturally and linguistically. The most striking difference is about the receptiveness in relation to Protestant Christianity. While the Protestant Churches in Kambaataa-Hadiyya experienced a large growth, according to Hamer the vast majority of people in Sidamo were unresponsive to Christianity. Further studies need to be done in order to affirm and explain this difference. In a short paper like this we can only give small hints at possible reasons.

Conversion and the spirits

The most frequent reason for conversions to Protestant Christianity seems to have been the opportunity to be liberated from the repression and exploitation by the leaders of the possession cult. In the years following the Amharic conquest, spirit possession cults seem to have sprung up all over Kambaataa-Hadiyya, probably in response to the social stress and lack of cultural orientation that was a consequence of the Amharic conquest (BRAUKÄMPER 1983: 304). Supposedly they also filled a leadership vacuum that came, not least at the local level, as a result of the replacement of the old traditional ruling system with the new Amharic. Particularly important as a background for the conversions to Protestant Christianity is the fact that this spirit possession cult, as experienced by common people, developed into a repressive and exploitive institution. The result was that people were attracted to Protestant Christianity. First, they received help to interpret the repression they felt, because it was identified with Satan and his demonic spirits. Secondly, they got a tool for overcoming the evil, as Christ through the narratives of the New Testament was presented as the one who had power over Satan and the evil spirits.[7] Based on that, people dared to oppose the possession cult and to

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[7] Cf. also TIBEBE ESHETE 2009: 89f.

refuse to obey the demands of the so-called Jaaraa men (Jaaraa was the spirit in the possession cult). Finally, this process was reinforced by a conversion formula widely used by the Protestant churches both in Kambaataa-Hadiyya and in other parts of Southern Ethiopia. The new converts were instructed to raise their left hand and deny Satan and his works, and then raise their right hand expressing their belief in Jesus Christ.

Among the converts we also find some of the former leaders in the possession cult, the Jaaraa men. According to Horton, these religious experts could be expected sometimes even to take the lead in turning to the new belief because they, just as experts, were among the first to be aware of the inadequacy of the old cosmology when confronted with drastic social and cultural changes (HORTON 1971: 103). But is that what we see in Kambaataa-Hadiyya in case of the Jaaraa men? First, they were not taking the lead in turning to Protestant Christianity. Rather they were reluctantly following their former followers. Secondly, they were not doing so because they realized the "interpretative challenges" to the old cosmology. We will let one of them tell his story:

> "I was a man of Jaaraa in my family, and people used to give me some offerings. Meanwhile, some of my family members became believers. So I was expecting that my Jaaraa would punish them for deserting it, but I noticed that it couldn't punish. Finally through my observation I realized that the power of Jaaraa is less than the power of God. Then I stayed for some time thinking on this issue and eventually I became a Christian."[8]

From his own emic perspective, it is a question of power and control, of who is the strongest. He experiences that his followers are turning to another religious authority and he can't prevent it by the means he is used to employing. Therefore, he concludes that the new religious authority is stronger than his. He interprets it as if God, as He is preached in Protestant Christianity, is stronger than the power he himself possesses. So he surrenders – reluctantly. However, could these circumstances be described also with an etic model like Horton´s? I don't think so. The Jaaraa man doesn't seem to be aware of any challenge from a modern situation, deeply immersed as he is in the local small-scale society. Here he meets representatives from another religion, and then he is, on a very concrete level, challenged by them with the question of religious power (KAPLAN 2004: 384). So, when we thus relate this type of conversion to Horton's theory it is evidently not the socio-economic but the religious factors that are decisive.

When we relate to conversions in Sidamo, the most frequently mentioned reason for accepting Christianity was also "disillusionment with possession spirits" and "the superior power of the Christian deity over possession spirits." (HAMER 2002: 607) However, there seems to be the difference, that in Sidamo – according to Hamer – the spirits were not generally considered repressing, exploiting or, in an absolute sense, evil. Therefore people tended to turn to Protestant Christianity only if they found the Christian god *better* at fulfilling their needs and the old spirits *less* satisfying in this respect. This may partly explain the difference between the growth of the Protestant church in Sidamo and in Kambaataa-Hadiyya. However, it should be noted, that Tolo,

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[8]   Interview with Milkeebo Otochcho, Olloolichcho, 1993.07.06.

in a study preceding that of Hamer, has a completely different point of view concerning the success of Protestant Christianity in Sidamo. He describes how "the awakening movement took off and spread like wildfire all over Sidama" (TOLO 1998: 246). And he states that one of the main reasons was just a feeling of being dominated and exploited by Satan represented by the leaders of the possession cult (TOLO 1998: 255). It is outside the scope of this paper to deal in depth with this important difference between the results of Tolo and Hamer.

If we compare this kind of conversion to Protestant Christianity with conversions to Orthodox Christianity for similar reasons centuries earlier, we do have examples of Protestant Christians, who in same way as the converts earlier have retained the traditional cosmology when it comes to the conception of spirits. However, in general the Protestant converts, to a larger extent than the earlier ones, have obtained what Gray in the debate on conversion and religious change in Africa calls "a theocratic reorganization of the cosmos." (GRAY 1990: 111) In particular through the Protestant preaching and teaching the evil coming from the spirits was interpreted in relation to the dichotomy between God and his adversary Satan. And the remedy was not just a stronger power from other religious experts, but the power of God himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

Conversions and the Amhara authorities

> "On the one hand Jaaraa was threatening us, on other hand authorities were threatening us. When we were converted, the situation was so dark that there were no human sights and no alternatives"[9].

When a good deal of the elderly people in Kambaataa-Hadiyya explain why they turned to Protestant Christianity, in addition to the possession cult they point to the repression and exploitation from the Amhara authorities.[10] This is not just a post-rationalization owing to more recent attitudes and sentiments. First, it is confirmed by contemporary written sources, including reports from foreign observers (RØNNE 2002). Secondly, if a Protestant Christian's memory in this respect was distorted by his present view he would rather point to a religious factor than to a socio-economic one. And thirdly, the influences people in the meantime have got through the Protestant churches tend to give them a more positive attitude to the Amhara state and culture (RØNNE 1997).

Some of those who give the repression and exploitation from the Amhara authorities as their reason for turning to Protestant Christianity were formal members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as they were baptized into the EOC during the massive campaigns just after World War II. So formally speaking we are dealing with proselytisation according to our definition. However, from the point of view of the

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[9] Interview with Caffaamo Adago, Hommeechcho, 1993.06.26.

[10] In his recent study of Protestant Christianity in Western Ethiopia, Øyvind EIDE, too, points to this conflict in relation to the Amharic rulers as an important factor in both the rise of Protestant Christianity and in the life of the church. Cf. also NATY 2005: 148, 150.

South Ethiopian converts they do not consider it a shift from one Christian tradition to another – with all the problems involved in the relation between the EOC and the Protestant churches. The converts themselves experienced the shift as a conversion from traditional religion to Christianity as their religious beliefs and practices were totally within the frame of traditional religion – in spite of their formal membership of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. And besides, many of them had a feeling of being forced into the EOC by the mass-baptisms carried out during the campaigns[11]. This shows the difficulties in dealing with proselytisation from the EOC to Protestant Christianity in a South Ethiopian context.

Proselytisation and literacy

Closely connected to the role of the Amhara authorities is another important factor in the rise and growth of Protestant Christianity in Kambaataa-Hadiyya, the introduction of literacy by the Protestant missions and churches[12]. One of the converts expounds the connection this way:

> "You know we were their tenants. We were paying taxes to them (Amhara people). We were ignorant and they were learned. Maybe they were threatened that once we become literate we will rebel against them. They know that Christianity will introduce many things to the people. It is true that Christianity introduces wisdom and knowledge. It is better than everything in the world. Amhara know that. That was why they persecuted Christians"[13].

The Amharas, especially the Orthodox clergy, were regarded as literate people, and that was part of the superiority they were ascribed. At the same time, literacy was an aspect of and a symbol of the modern world that the local people had scented after the Amharic conquest and the incorporation of Kambaataa-Hadiyya into the Ethiopian state. Then, there was a feeling that the Amharic rulers, as part of their suppression, were preventing the local people from having a share in literacy and other modern goods. In that situation the offer from the Protestant missions and churches of literacy teaching had an enormous impact. By the offer of literacy, people were drawn into the Protestant church and got a share of something they felt they were withheld by their oppressors. It was probably experienced as liberation and a lifting up from an inferior position. People were given a new sense of self-esteem and pride[14]. And it became an opening to the modern world – with far reaching consequences.

Similarly, Hamer mentions the possibility of gaining power and status through formal education as one of the major reasons people in Sidamo had for turning to Protestant Christianity. He links it to what he calls "the secret of the book," i.e. the Bible, a secret the Ethiopian Orthodox priests were considered unwilling to reveal (HAMER 2002: 608). When now the Protestant missionaries were eager to teach people

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[11] Cf. also NATY 2005: 150f.

[12] Cf. also KAPLAN 2004: 383; KAPLAN 2005: 100f.; FALGE 2005: 178.

[13] Interview with Jifaaro Abbiyyo, Boosho'anna, 1993.06.25.

[14] Cf. also FALGE 2005: 179.

to read 'the Book', the elder generation in Sidamo took it as a sign that "their children would gain power from the secrets that had been kept from them in the colonial past" (HAMER 2002: 609).

Also from some of the groups, who had more lately emigrated from Northern Ethiopia and were conscious members of EOC, people turned to Protestant Christianity because of the offer of literacy teaching. However, for them the shift was not connected to a feeling of suppression from the Amhara authorities. On the other hand, we here have a clear instance of proselytisation that is not without problems for the EOC – to put it mildly – because the Protestant churches were in a position to offer modern education primarily because of resources from Western missions to which the EOC did not have access. This was one of many causes of severe tensions between Protestant Christians, both nationals and expatriates, on the one hand and representatives of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on the other – these tensions being an important issue in discussions about proselytisation.

Conclusion

Ethiopia is a fruitful setting for a historical and comparative study of conversion and proselytisation and this paper has highlighted some of the insights that can be gained from this approach. On the one hand the paper confirms the conclusion of the paper I presented at the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies in 1997 that conversion is a multi-causal phenomenon and that, as a socio-religious phenomenon, conversion has both social and religious causes. On the other the historical and comparative study presented in this paper has shown the importance of religious factors in many conversions to Christianity in Ethiopia and also pointed to the important part Christianity itself often played in the process. And this has thrown new light on the religious dynamics in the Ethiopian setting.

Moreover, the benefits we can have from a comparative study of conversions in Ethiopia are far from exhausted. I have already mentioned comparison with conversions to Islam in different parts of Ethiopia as a subject that should be further explored. Other themes in relation to conversion where a comparative study can give new insights are for example 'patterns for the spreading of Christianity' and 'conversion as the assumption of new identities'. I plan to return to some of these themes on another occasion. And it is my hope that I have stimulated others to explore how fruitful a comparative study of conversion can be.

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"Remapping Paradise": Manuscript Evidences of Ethiopian Cosmological Models and of Visualizations of the Paradisiacal Garden, or the Quest to Find Examples of Early Ethiopian Mapmaking

Sophia Dege [*]

The outline of a map

"What is a map? We will use a fairly broad definition: a map is a spatial representation of a place, thing, or concept, actual or imagined. Note that the subject of the map is not restricted. A map can chart the path to a neighbouring village, to a successful endeavour or a fortuitous event, or even to the next life; it can illuminate relationships between various levels of existence or consciousness, or between a previous or future age of the earth. Whether a monk charting a metaphysical, a king illustrating the divine link he shares with the gods, or an ordinary person inspired to scratch out a plan of her paddy in the moist earth for sheer pleasure of doing so, our definition lays down no parameter for the medium used; a map need not even be of material nature" (SUAREZ 1999: 24). Despite the vagueness of the aforementioned there are constant general rules. Two of these general elements of importance for any map are the centre and the orientation. Both are usually expressions of special significance to the composer of the map.[1]

Much was written about the number of cardinal directions known to different cultures, yet one can say that almost all people of the world know four major cardinal

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[1] Probably the most known examples are the "T-O maps" (famous examples following this scheme are the Mappa Mundi by Isidor of Seville [6/7th cent.], the Eberstorf Map or the Hereford Mappa Mundi [both 13th cent]) of the Middle Ages (for a general study on medieval maps s. ENGLISCH 2002) with Jerusalem (or more rare Rome) in the centre and an orientation towards the east. This layout applies of course only to maps from the Christian West. The majority of Islamic maps centre on Mecca, and are orientated towards the east. A minority is orientated towards the south however, for example the maps by Muhammad al-Idrisi (12th cent.), which also centre on Mecca; cp. CONTI ROSSINI 1943, 167f.; S. MAQBUL AḤMAD 1992. Also Hindu or Jain maps from southeast Asia are orientated towards the east, as the centre of the universe is equalled by the mythical Mt. Meru; cp. SCHWARZBERG 1992, 714; SUÁREZ 1999, 20.

directions. In earlier times those were often distinguished by celestial bodies (the sun during the day and the moon and stars at night), specific geographic landmarks ("towards the mountain", or "towards the sea") or climatic measures (temperatures, humidity, winds). Geographical and climatic features tend to lose their function for moving/migrating people, or during times of great territorial expansion.[2] Even though the position of sunrise and sunset differ with the season of the year, those major directions are easy to distinguish and therefore prevailed in most cultures. Far distance trade was one way of spreading and adapting the names for the cardinal directions (THOMPSON 1914: 4-6). In particular for navigators and agriculturists winds played an important role, and also since antiquity it is attested that the directions for the cardinal points and the major winds equate (THOMPSON 1914: 5). For the Ethiopian context the total number of cardinal directions can vary from four up to twelve. The *Book of Enoch* describes twelve directions addressed to as "four to the west... four to the east, etc." However there are independent names for at least four intermediate directions: *mäsˁ*, *azeb*, *baḥər* and *liba* yet their exact meaning remains unclear.[3]

The East, as the direction of the rising sun is understandably of special significance for most cultures and or religions. In the Christian context the East is the direction from where Christ will resurrect, but already in the Old Testament, the East is the region of highest esteem, since it was there that the paradisiacal garden was created. The significance of the East is also often seen in the orientation of Church buildings. It applies for most of the Christian regions, in particular also for Ethiopia, where the altar table should be directed to the eastern end of the building.[4] It was therefore essential to know the cardinal directions in order to correctly orientate the sacred architecture. As in medieval times a clear distinction between the religious and the scientific research did not exist, this task was performed by monks and other religiously learned men.[5]

Ethiopian mapmaking before the Modern Age?

Conti Rossini states in his *Geographica* "the literature of Ethiopia is lacking geographical writings [...] likewise an Ethiopian cartography is inexistent" (CONTI ROSSINI 1943: 5-6). The truth of this statement has been debated. There is a broad consensus that the number of indigenous Ethiopian maps of landscapes is rather limited. However, a number of maps illustrating the setting of the royal court (TADESSE TAMRAT 1972: 269-275) exist, but those

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[2] The perfect example for this case is found in Ethiopian history. The term Sämen, nowadays addressing the North was in earlier times referring to the South. Most possibly it was just the name for the Semien mountains, and as the centre of the Christian realm was situated in the highlands north to it the South was equalled with this word. As the centre of power shifted towards the south also the names shifted, Sämen now being in the north; cp. DILLMANN 1865, 334 and 1105; NÖLDEKE 1910, 82. Already Cosmas Indicopleustes mentions the Semien area, s. MCCRINDLE 2010, 61-62.

[3] See NÖLDEKE 1910: 60, 62, 63, 81, 82 and NEUGEBAUER 1979: 198-200.

[4] The same is true, at least in the Western world, where the Qibla, the direction of prayer towards Mecca for Muslims, lies towards the East. In Ethiopian manuscripts we find diagrams with explanations concerning the orientation and architecture of churches, s. for example EMML no. 39, fol. 3r.

[5] As in medieval Europe this accounted for the pre-modern Ethiopia. The ability to read and write was limited to a small number of learned clerics and members of the royal elite.

are much later, often influenced by, or even written by foreigners. Only from Mənilək II's time on a systematic cartography was carried out in Ethiopia.

For maps from the pre-modern times a certain divergence in the opinion as to what is and what is not a map is observed. The maps in question here, round shaped diagrams of the Təgray region with Aksum at its centre, have been well studied.[6] There are those like Pankhurst and Bassett, who clearly consider them as maps, others tend to deny this status. Heldman argues that those "maps" are sheer diagrams and do not stand in any contextual relationship with the texts contained in the manuscripts, thus they do not illuminated the written word in any sense. Still, even if one follows her assumption that a map within a manuscript cannot be seen outside its contextual surrounding, it might lead to a different conclusion. Most manuscripts which carry the "Map of Təgray"[7] contain texts which are either related in some way to Aksum[8] or are treaties entitled *Baḥrä ḥassab*.[9] The connection to Aksum might not always be a strong one, yet it exists.[10] Heldman continues her argument stating that these diagrams are no maps since they miss such features as rivers, mountains, etc (HELDMAN 2011: 188). The reason why this paper started with the definition by Suárez was to point out that a map can be more than the reproduction of actual landscapes but can also show something theoretical, non-factual.[11] The Ethiopian "maps" in the following are more of a hybrid nature, somewhere in the state between maps and cosmologies.

Ethiopian maps or diagrams? An overview

Writings dedicated to philosophy or the natural sciences from Greek antiquity – and to a lesser extent from Roman antiquity – had little impact on the Ethiopian (natural) sciences. The heated discussions of ancient philosophers, concerning a geocentric or a heliocentric model, which lingered throughout the centuries, had never really reached Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, a deeply religious area, the (pseudo-) scientific facts given in the

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[6] HEUGLIN 1863; CONTI ROSSINI 1943; NEUGEBAUER 1979; PANKHURST 1989; BASSETT 1998; HELDMANN 2011. See also GETACHEW HAILE 2000: 226-229.

[7] Cf. HELDMANN 2011 for the list of manuscripts

[8] Three different texts are found: a) the *Kəbrä Nägäśt* (Glory of the Kings) composed to manifest the claim to power of the Solomonic dynasty with Aksum as its Holy city; b) the *Mäṣḥafä Aksum* (Liber Axumae or Book of Aksum) a compendium of accounts focusing among other things on the historical topography of Aksum and its surroundings; c) the so called "Short Chronicles", a selection of historiographic texts which often starts at the legendary beginnings of Ethiopia, thus also covering Aksum.

[9] The Sea of Computation, is used as a collective term for a number of calendar or astronomical treaties. In such manuscripts one often finds other diagrams, tables and charts, such as the "wheel of winds" or drawings of cosmological models (which will be discussed below), or in fact, the map of Aksum. If any manuscript is predestined to contain map-like drawings it surely is a *Baḥrä ḥassab*. The *Baḥrä ḥassab* presents a very complex collection of texts, GETATCHEW HAILE (2000) dedicated a lengthy analysis to them.

[10] This connection should definitely not be overestimated, parchment was a valuable good and blank pages were often used for additional texts or drawings, however, it seems unlikely that all these coincidences happened by chance.

[11] Any map, which is not a photograph, is already something conceptual. As soon as we start to choose elements which should be included in the map, we enter theoretical ground.

Holy Scriptures had a stronger influence. When it came to explaining constitutional phenomena it was the job of an exegete rather than a philosopher or "scientist". In order to accompany the written explanations diagrams and charts were created. It is thereby of great interest that both translated text as well as texts created in Ethiopia had played an important part in creation of such drawings. For the moment three kinds of drawings shall be examined: a cosmological model of the heavens, drawings of the seasonal movement of the heavenly lights and a map of paradise (or the universe?).

Cosmological models in texts and diagrams

For the creation of the world and the universe (or the heavens) around it we find different descriptions in Christian Ethiopian literature:[12]

a) the *Genesis* itself gives the following account:

"1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 1:4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 1:5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. 1:6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 1:7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 1:8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day".

b) in *The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth*[13] we read:

"And on the first day our God created the heaven which is called GÊRGÊRL [...] And on the Second Day God created a firmament, and a pillar for the wind. For beneath the earth God created four storehouses for the winds, with little openings therein [...]" (BUDGE 2004: 8, 14).

c) in the *Aksimaros*[14] we read the following:

"[The first day...] And God took only from the fire and made the first heaven. He spread it and made it like a tent, and he made a curtain out of light beneath it and closed it from all four sides [...] And God took white plates of light and made the second heaven, and he made a curtain out of light beneath it and closed it from all four sides, and attached it below the first heaven [...] And God took white plates of light and made the third heaven, and he made a curtain out of light beneath it and closed it from all four sides, and attached it below the second heaven [...] And God spread a little dust and made it melt [above the earth] and made a firmament to surround it like a stronghold."

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[12] This is just a selection of accounts; the actual number is much higher.

[13] *Mäṣḥafä məśṭirä sämay wämədər*, for a brief discussion see LUSINI & FIACCADORI 2007.

[14] An enlarged account on the six days of creation, a Hexaemeron. For a brief explanation refer to WENINGER 2003. The author of this paper is currently studying *Aksimaros* manuscripts, the following translation is taken from the draft translation; cp. TRUMPP 1882, 217-18.

d) the *Book of Jubilees*[15] says:

> "For on the first day he created the heavens that are above the earth, the waters, and all the spirits [...] On the second day he made a firmament between the waters, and the waters were divided on that day. Half of them went up above and half of them went down below the firmament (which was) in the middle above the surface of the whole earth".

All those descriptions are more or less detailed and do not give away any clear description as to how the order should look like. This confusion is mirrored in the commentary texts:

a) The *Beginning of the Faith*[16] states:

> "The Firmament shall be between the water, so that it divides between the one water and the other water, so that it reaches from the earth to the bright heaven."

b) in the *Andəmta* tradition (i.e. commentary tradition) we find explanations as such:

> "And God made a firmament between the water, which is beneath the firmament, and the water which is above the firmament – *abənnät* reads, in the likeness of a scabbard. In this night, ocean and *ḥanos* [the sphere above the sky which is one third water] got like a scabbard, and the firmament like a sword" (MERSHA ALEHEGNE 2011: 391).

c) finally in a manuscript containing the *Five Pillars of Mystery*[17] it reads on fol. 69v:

> "And God said 'let there be a Firmament between the water which is beneath the heaven, and between the water which is above the earth'. And he named the Firmament "heaven". *Explanation* because on the first day the Creator created an abyss. And it reaches from the earth to the upper sky [...] And on the second day God made out of it [the abyss] three parts, which are the lower, the middle and the upper [parts] and they were arranged in this order."

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[15] *Mäṣḥafä kufale*, see VANDERKAM 1989, 7, 9.

[16] *Ṭəntä Haymanot*, a commentary-like text also covering the six days of creation. It is closely related to the *Aksimaros*, the *Book of Enoch* and other writings. For a brief discussion refer to WENINGER 2010. The author of this paper is currently studying *Ṭəntä Haymanot* manuscripts, the following translation is taken from the draft translation.

[17] *Amməstu aʿəmadä məṣṭir*, another commentary-like collection of theological treaties, refer to BÖLL 2003 for detailed information. The text version is taken from manuscript May Raza, May Raza Täklä Haymanot, THMR-018 (ETHIO-SPARE). The author wishes to acknowledge the generous permission by the ETHIO-SPARE project to quote from it.
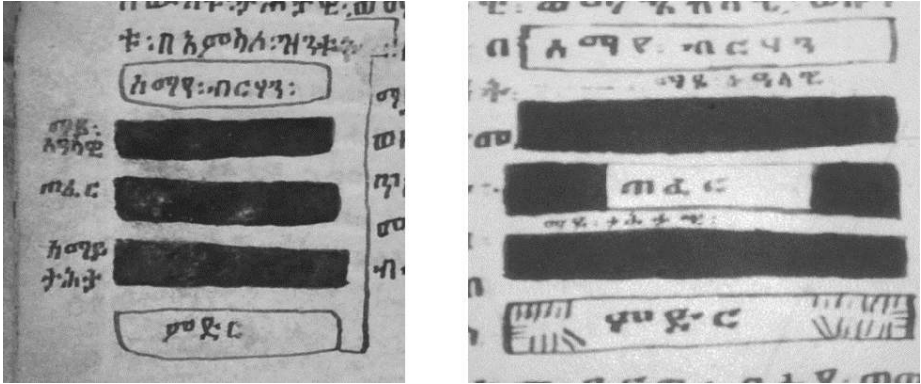
Illustration 1: 1.1 (left: ms.): May Raza, May Raza Täklä Haymanot, THMR-018 (ETHIO-SPARE), fol. 69v;

1.2 (right: ms.): BritLib. Orient 503, fol. 2v[18]

What is shown in the two examples in illustration 1 is the interpretation of a cosmological model according to the words in the commentary. They are both drawn by the same hand as the text. Also the way they are incorporated into the written area supports this suggestion. Yet it is not possible to say if the scribe was also the author (i.e. the commentator) or if he was instructed by someone else. The design is most simple, consisting of two boarder regions at the outer ends, namely the bright sky and the earth, both terms marked in boxes; and three thick, black horizontal beams representing the three parts, the firmament in the middle dividing between the upper water and lower water.[19]

According to the traditional church teachings the earth is flat, therefore, unlike the common cosmologies, the illustrations do not show a circular setting of the globe in the middle with the heavens layered around it. The design is very plain, but still efficient. It is surely not a map in the sense that it would give directions on where to go. But since it sets several areas into mutual relation it might be even a map, in the most abstract way. Besides that, all the important elements are shown which qualify it as a cosmology.

The seasonal movement of the heavenly lights

When speaking of "light" not only the sun but also the stars and the moon are meant, as it is said in different accounts. The following passages show that the sun and the moon (and stars) strongly depend on each other, one giving its light to the other:

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[18] The author would like to thank the British Library for granting permission to quote from ms. BritLib Orient 503.

[19] There is a confusion in manuscript May Raza, May Raza Täklä Haymanot, THMR-018 (ETHIO-SPARE) in the words, as it should be the upper water and lower water, as can be observed in ms. BritLib Orient 503.

a) in the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth* it says:

> "And on the Fourth Day God created the sun, the moon, and the stars. [As the light of the sun was too bright] God diminished the intensity thereof somewhat, viz. a half; [He withdrew from the sun] six parts [and left] six parts. With four parts He made the moon, one part He added to the stars, and one to the water, and one to the clouds, and one to the lightning" (BUDGE 2004: 15).

b) a different account is found in the *Aksimaros*: on the third day

> "God took [...] three special qualities from the light and combined the dry and burning to one body. Then it broke into light, brilliance and rays and God called it *sun*. Thereupon God took some water, compressed it [...] and drove some of the sun's light into it [creating the moon...] Thereupon God took from the water and made stars out of it. He [...] gave them beauty and took some of the moon's light to fill up the stars with it".[20]

c) the *Beginning of the Faith* contains:

> "And God took a measure of light and anointed the sun with it. [...] and God took five hands full of light from the sun and anointed the moon with it [...] And God took five hands full of light from the sun and anointed the stars with it".[21]

d) the shortest report is found in the *Andəmta*:

> "If enquired what their apportionment of light is, saying, "*Let there be light,*" He brought seven portions of light, and gave three to the sun, two to the moon, one to the stars, and one to the cloud [...]" (MERSHA ALEHEGNE 2011: 397).

All heavenly lights are connected and do not stand alone, in their ability to shed light they depend on each other. Further information is found about their movement across the firmament (sky or heaven). The following passage makes clear that the sun is the maker of time, the moon and the stars only follow the sun. The movement of the heavenly lights has been object of many studies, not only their daily and nightly travel but also their seasonally conditioned movement. This movement which is visible for the eye has also been debated in the scriptures, in the attempt to explain why the lights move and where they go. In Ethiopian manuscripts several different "maps" or rather tables and charts are found which are used for the calculation of the length of light (i.e. day). One tradition was created about gates and storehouses, where the winds, waters and the lights are kept and from where they are send out in their time:

a) the shortest account is found in the *Book of Jubilees*:

> "On the fourth day the Lord made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He placed them in the heavenly firmament to shine on the whole earth, to rule over day and night, and to separate between light and darkness. [2:9] The Lord appointed the

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[20] Taken from draft translation; cp. TRUMPP 1882: 236-37.
[21] Taken from draft translation.

sun as a great sign above the earth for days, Sabbath, months, festivals, years, Sabbaths of years, jubilees, and all times of the years" (VANDERKAM 1989: 10-11).

b) a lengthy passage in the *Book of Enoch* goes further into detail on the actual way the lights take on their journey across the firmament.

"And I [Enoch] saw six gates from which the sun rises, and six gates in which the sun sets, and the moon (also) rises and sets in those gates, and the leaders of the stars [...] six [gates] are in the east and six in the west, all exactly in place, one next to each other; and (there are) many windows to the south and the north of those gates [... The sun rises] in the first month in the large gate, namely it rises through the fourth of those six gates which (are) towards the east [...] When the sun rises in heaven, it goes out through that fourth gate for thirty days, and exactly in the fourth gate in the west of heaven it goes down. And in those days the day grows daily longer, and the night grows nightly shorter, until the thirtieth morning. And on that day the day becomes longer than the night by a double (part), and the day amounts in exactly ten parts, and the night amounts to eight parts. And the sun rises from that fourth gate, and sets in the fifth gate..." (KNIBB 1978: 167-168).

This passage, from the so called *Astronomical chapters*, continues for pages as it describes many decades of transition for the sun, the moon and the stars.[22]

c) the *Genesis* remains silent about the movement of the lights, thus in the *Andəmta* to the *Genesis* we find an additional explanation which has clearly been influenced by the *Book of Enoch* and other scriptures:

"On this day, He created three created entities – sun, moon, and stars. The sun, having been created in the window of the east and remained shining in the fourth *kekros* and set down. [And] the moon, having been created in the window of the west and remained shining in the fourth *kekros* and set down" (MERSHA ALEHEGNE 2011: 396).

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[22] Cp. NEUGEBAUER 1981. In the Astronomical chapters it is further stated that all heavenly lights are blown across the firmament in their chariot by the winds. This means that the winds must "use" the same gates in the firmament as entrance and exit as the lights. As stated above the winds stay in close connection to the cardinal (and intermediate) direction. The map of Aksum is often accompanied by a wheel of winds (or wind rose; the *Särägälä zänäfas*, lit. "Chariot of the winds"; both were mostly studied together, cf. NEUGEBAUER 1979, PANKHURST 1989, HELDMAN 2011; cp. GETATCHEW HAILE 2000, 101). In Jewish writings (but also found in Ethiopian translations, such as the *Aksimaros* or the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth*, cp. BUDGE 2004, 14) like the *Book of Enoch*, we find explanations on the whereabouts of the winds; chapter 41: "And after this I saw all the secrets of heaven, and how the kingdom is divided [...] And there my eyes saw [...] the secrets of the winds, how they are distributed in order to blow over the earth [...] And there I saw closed storehouses from which the winds are distributed," KNIBB 1978, 128-29. The most explicit explanation of the four cardinal directions, and the winds coming out of their direction, can be found in the *Book of Enoch* chapters 76-77, here each wind is associated with certain qualities, e.g. cold, rain, hot wind, for a list cf. NEUGEBAUER 1981, 23-25 and UHLIG 1984, 653-54.

The following diagrams (Illustration 2) closely orientate themselves on the accounts given above. Sometimes there are called "calculation for lunar phases", sometimes *awdä qämär* ('the circle of the firmament'), or *awdä ṣähay* ('circle of the sun').[23]
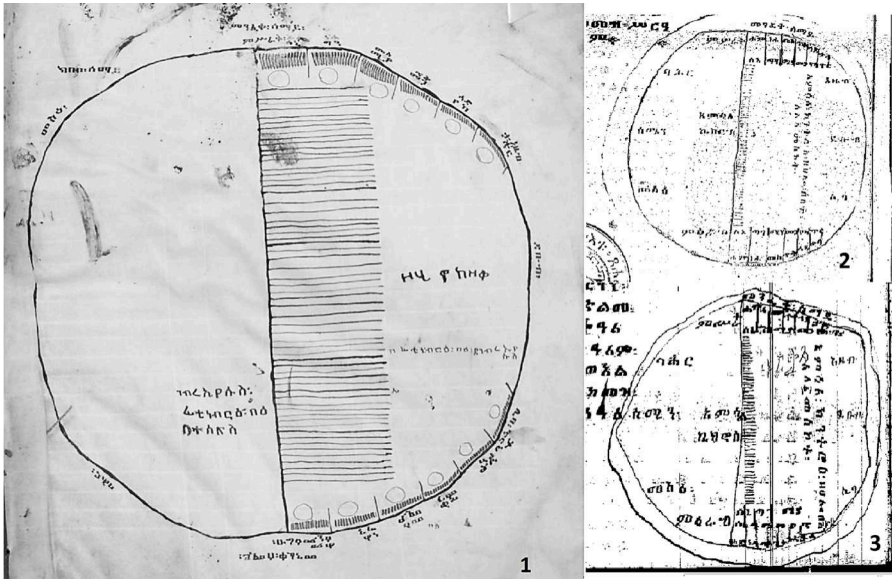
Illustration 2: 2.1 ms. Tägoga, Tägoga Däbrä Nazret Qəddus Yoḥannəs TNY-008 (ETHIO-SPARE), fol. 1v;

2.2 ms. EMML no. 49, fol. 27v;

2.3 ms. EMML no. 215, fol. 31v

In illustration 2.2 and 2.3 we can read *amsalä kekros*, and *amsalä kentros*,[24] which could be summarized as "example of time measurements". On the top and bottom ends it says "part of the sky" (*mänfäqä säma*y), and the circle itself is called "roundness (firmament) of the sky" (*kəbäbä sämay*). All diagrams are orientated towards the East and in total eight cardinal and intermediate directions are given. On the right half of the circle, again at top and bottom, there are six boxes,[25] labelled with the names of the months.[26] Illustration 2.2 and 2.3 are very limited in any further explanations. But

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[23] Many such diagrams are preserved in Ethiopian manuscripts, such as BritLib. Orient. 816, fol. 16v, this diagram is more elaborate than illustration 2, it has been reproduced by NEUGEBAUER 1979, pl.3 and Uhlig 2003, 736. The author would like to thank the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library for granting permission to quote from the manuscripts used in the following. Moreover, the thorough study of the microfilms in the collections was made possible through the most generous Heckman stipend.

[24] *Kekros* and *kentros* are measures of time. Both terms are in close relation to the sun and the moon, s. NEUGEBAUER 1979, 175-78; cf. Lourié 2012.

[25] The six gates mentioned above in *Enoch*, cp. KNIBB 1978, 167.

[26] In illustration 2 the names are abbreviated; only in BritLib ms. Orient. 816 the full names are written.

illustration 2.1 and BritLib ms. Orient. 816 offer more information. Namely the phases of the waning and waxing of the moon.[27]

In general this type of diagram is found in manuscripts containing the *Book of Enoch* (ill. 2.1), or computational texts (BritLib ms. Orient. 816, text without title) and *Baḥrä ḥassab* (illus. 2.2, 2.3).[28] Again the combination of texts and drawn diagrams to illustrate the written word becomes obvious. Such texts, as those mentioned ones with a computational character, are of complex nature. They also transport thoughts that did not originate in Ethiopia. In order to simplify the information they contain, and to make the access easier, they were combined with these conceptualized maps.

Map of Paradise or Map of the Universe?

When the world and the universe were created, God started to furnish the empty space not only with heavenly stars and winds but also with living creatures, especially Adam and Eve. As their dwelling place he had created the paradise. The last diagrams in question are dedicated to illustrating the setting of the paradisiacal garden:

a) the *Genesis* reads:

> "(2:8) And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (9) And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (10) And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. (11) The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; [...] (13) And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land Ethiopia. (14) And the name of the third river is Hiddekel [Tigris]: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates."

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[27] In illustration 2.1 they are however less obvious, the size of the moon (the circles) is indicated by the shrinking size of lines in the same box.

[28] Actually two different reproductions of the type of diagram are found in manuscripts. They can either be round, as presented here, or also simple "straight" tables, cp. ms. EMML no. 36 fol. 1v, or ms. UNESCO 3.1, fol. 23v (Catalogue of Manuscripts Microfilmed by the UNESCO Mobile Microfilm Unit in Addis Ababa and Gojjam Province [Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Department of Fine Arts and Culture, 1970], no pages). The information they provide is basically the same. The number of manuscripts containing such drawings is high. Unfortunately diagrams in general are mentioned in manuscript catalogues insufficiently, and especially the works on the *Book of Enoch*, never mention anything on diagrams, drawings and the like. The manuscripts EMML nos. 941, 942, 3869, 1056 and 5014 contain a large number of related and similar diagrams, cp. also the Ethiopian manuscript UNESCO 5.5., fol. 5v (Catalogue of Manuscripts Microfilmed by the UNESCO Mobile Microfilm Unit in Addis Ababa and Gojjam Province [Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, Department of Fine Arts and Culture, 1970], no pages). The mentioned manuscripts are not only Enoch manuscripts, the drawings are even more often found in *Baḥrä ḥassab*.

b) the *Aksimaros* reads:

> "Thereupon God created a garden in the East of the world, but this garden is
> hidden to the eyes of men because of its distance, but the Torah says that the
> garden is in the land of Edom [...] At that time God commanded the tree of life
> to stand in the middle of the garden, and he commanded four trees to sprout
> around it, in a distance about ten cubits, and god made them mother-trees [...]
> Afterwards God commanded that water should spring out from underneath the
> roots of the tree of life, and it happened accordingly and the water rose up and
> came out and watered the whole surface of the garden, and it streamed to the
> southern side of the garden, and it separated into four rivers which are the Pison
> and Gihon and Tigris and Euphrates".[29]

c) the position of the garden, and the planting of the tree are less interesting for the
Andəmta commentary, it focuses more on the four rivers:

> "The four rivers are the examples for the four Evangelists. As the four rivers went
> out from the root of the *tree of life*, and compasseth the whole world and produced
> the plants of this world, the four Evangelists, learning from the One Lord,
> compasseth this world and evangelize the peoples [...] and preached to the four
> corners of the world" (MERSHA ALEHEGNE 2011: 407).

d) the preceding passage corresponds to the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and
the Earth*:

> "The four rivers are to be interpreted by the four Evangelists. The first river is
> ʾÊPHÊSÔN [...] The first river is a symbol of the country of the Gospel which
> Matthew wrote [...] And the second river GEYÔN mentioned by him is a symbol
> of the second country of the Gospel which Mark wrote in a place on the borders
> of Egypt and Ethiopia. And the third river mentioned by him, the TIGRIS, is a
> symbol for the country of the Gospel which Luke wrote, and it bordereth on the
> country of Fares [...] And the fourth river, the EUPHRATES which bordereth
> YÔRDÂNÔS, is the symbol of the Gospel of John" (BUDGE 2004: 132-133).

When these descriptions are compared with the "map of Paradise" (illustration 3) a
lot of aspects will be recognized.[30] The diagram is divided into thirty-one boxes of
different size, and all are filled with explanations. Eighteen boxes represent different
kinds of gates. In the top row appear six gates "through which [the months or winds]
will rise". The names of the months are loanwords of Hebrew, Syrian and Coptic months

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[29] Transliteration: *Fison, Giyon. Ṭegros*, and *Efraṭos*. Cp. TRUMPP 1882 233-34. The idea that the water from
which the four rivers stem arises from underneath the tree of life is also found in the *Beginning of the Faith*,
the whole passage on the paradise and the planting of the tree of life there follows closely the passage in
the *Aksimaros*.

[30] DILLMANN 1902: 385-85, reproduced illustration 3, calling it „this strange map". The same images, with
only slight changes, are also found in the manuscripts EMML nos. 49, fol. 28r; 215, fol. 32r; 2114, fol.
51v; 5014, fol. 81r. all in company with the *Baḥrä ḥassab*. The manuscript Jerusalem JE699E contains a
number of texts concerning the creation, among them the *Beauty of Creation*.

and not the Ethiopian terms. Twelve other gates, arranged in the four cardinal directions, classify the winds/months above according to their qualities.[31] The very centre of the diagram is the box representing the sun, it is surrounded by eight boxes for the cardinal and intermediate directions. Finally there are four boxes, in the corners, designated to the four rivers and the four Evangelists. It is interesting to see that there is a small divergence to the description found in the *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth*, Efeson is attributed to John and Efraṭos is attributed to Matthew. The most important of course, Evangelist Mark is "correctly" attributed to the Giyon, and thus to Ethiopia.
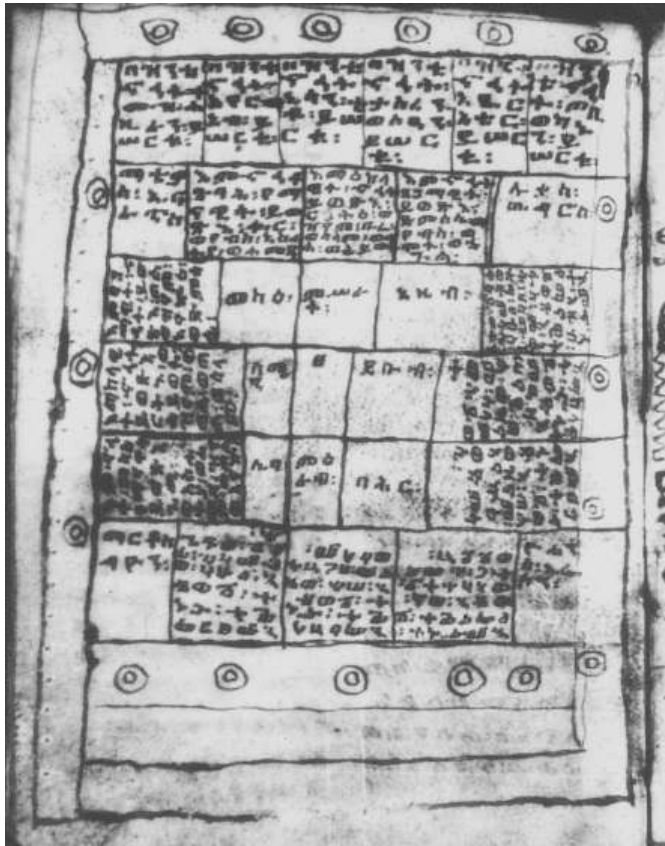
Illustration 3: ms. JE 699, fol. 3v

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[31] Following (more or less) the descriptions in the *Book of Enoch*, s. above. From those twelve gates the four in the middle of each group bring the winds of peace and harmony, the other eight bring the winds of plague.

Conclusion

If this drawing is actually a map of the paradise or of the universe remains unclear. It probably functions for both, the universe (with all the gates for the winds and the heavenly lights, the cardinal and intermediary directions) as well as the paradise (with the four rivers). Leaving the question aside what the drawing actually displays, it should be clear, that the image is a map. As the other examples before, we have the visual reproduction of places (or areas) set into mutual relation.

What should be mentioned in closing is that more attention should be paid to the indigenous conception which is mirrored in Ethiopian traditional scholarship. Just because a "map of Tegray" does not show rivers and mountains, it should not be devaluated. More awareness has to prevail in general when manuscripts are studied, and catalogues are prepared.[32] The maps discussed here deliver valuable information on Ethiopian philosophical interpretations of ancient "Western" concepts. Further attention should be paid to such matters in the future.

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[32] Many catalogues focus on the texts in the manuscripts. Drawings and other additional information tends to get lost. As an appeal to all people involved in cataloguing and describing manuscripts, the existence of additional information should at least be indicated.

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Shaykh *Aḥmad* Shaykh *Sirāj (d.1935) and his Contribution to the Muslim Literary Tradition in Ethiopia: A Study of the* Birillee-Ṣafã, *a Manuscript of* Manẓūmah *in* ʿAjamī-*Oromoo*

Mohammed Hakim

Ethiopia has several scholars of traditional Islamic schools that have contributed a lot to the development of the nation's languages, history, literature and religion. Many of these scholars and their legacies have been unknown to the present generation.

One of these scholars is *Shaykh* Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj of Dawwee who was a popular *Sufi* poet, *mādiḥ* (panegyrist), and linguist as well. He was born at Qorii locality, and lived and died in Harṭummaa. He has produced and left several *manẓūmāt* and litany manuscripts for posterity.

This article will introduce *Shaykh* Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj and his literary works focusing particularly on his ʿAjamī-Oromoo *manẓūmah* manuscrip, the *Birillee-Ṣafã*. It will discuss the linguistic, literary, religious and traditional significance of the poet's work and indicate the place the poet should have in Ethiopian Islamic literature and culture. To this end, the paper will present the biography of the *Shaykh* first and then discuss his works, and finally close the discussion with conclusion and remarks.

Hagiography of *Shaykh* Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj (d.1935)

Birth and linage

Shaykh Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj was born to his father *Shaykh* Sirāj Muḥammad and his mother Fāṭimah *Ḥājji* Imām. He was born at a village known as Sokokkee-Qorii in Fursii district about 38 km south of Khamisee, the capital of Oromiyaa Zone in the Amhara National Regional State. His exact birth date was not recorded. However, informants *secretly*[1] told this writer that he belongs to the Maaruutayyaa sub-clan of the Oromoo.[2] The Maaruutayyaa were engaged in the business of blacksmith to win life. Because of this they are assumed as *ḥaddād* (blacksmith in Arabic) or named after their business

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[1] *Secretly* because of social segregation that was introduced and promoted by the feudal systems in Ethiopia against people with blacksmith as well as other professions.

[2] To know the Sub-divisions of the Oromoo in the area, see የኦሮሞ ታሪክ እስከ አስራ ስድስተኛው መቶ ክፍለ ዘመን፤ በኦሮሚያ ባህልና ቱሪዝም ኮሚ ሽን፣ አዳማ ፤ 1996/2004፤ ቅጽ 1፣ ገጽ 295. It discusses the different Sub-divisions of the Oromoo that settled in the region, and the Maaruutayyaa as one of their sub-clans.

engagements. Moreover, the following precise but important expression was made to describe *Shaykh* Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj. It is a testimony to the fact that the *Shaykh* belongs to this group of people and/ or at least his parents were engaged in the profession.

<div dir="rtl">

..الشيخ الكامل، الولي الصالح الشيخ أحمد بن الشيخ سراج الدويّ الأشعري الشافعي،
الحدادى ....

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"The whole (perfect) *Shaykh*, the virtuous *Walīyyi*, al-*Shaykh* Aḥmad *bin al-Shaykh* Sirāj, the Dawwéan[3] in origin, the 'Ash'arian in thought, the Shāfi'ian in Maḍihab, the blacksmith in profession"[4].

Education

Constructing *Shaykh* Aḥmad Sirāj's biography on his early life has been a difficult task during this study. Particularly details of his life as a student, the centers where he joined to study, the scholars who instructed him and the fields of study that he mastered are not clearly known. The reason was not only that it had not been written before but also that much of it was obscure. Most of the informant also mix his early life with or tell it as a legend. The say that he studied a few but became scholar by God's gift than by arduous study. They tell that *Shaykh* Aḥmad was first instructed at home by his parents who taught him Arabic alphabet and Islam. At teen age, however, he went to different places in the region to pursue his career. One of these places, according to Ahmed Hassen, was *Ṭijjā-mawč'ā* in Efrata[5]. But most of the informants claimed that he did not learn much (except *fiqh* and *naḥw*) and that he obtained the ability by gift. Some of them also narrate that Aḥmad had wondered in the region to search and to study under a certain most reputed and celebrated cleric. But, as informants said, all the *'ulamā'* he visited and requested to study under them did not accepted him. Rather, they advised

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[3] In the Muslim dominated parts of Ethiopia, particularly in the Oromiyaa Region, Muslims customarily used the name Dawwee in the past as a general traditional name that designated the seats of Islamic learning and scholarship that fall east of the mountain chains of northeastern Shawaa, (the previous Yifãtinnã Timmūgã Awrãjjã) and the Dawwee district of south Wallo itself, which is now Oromiyaa Zone. The fabulous name Dawwee seems to have sounded beyond the names of the other districts in the area or used as such may be due to its past prominence as a market destination as well as its most famous learning center in Gaddo (since the times of Mujāhidū and *Muftī* Dāwud). When students of religion from Oromiyaa Region come to the area to study, parents generally used to say "Qaraatiif Biyya-Dawwee deeme"/ *He went to Dawwee country to study* though the student might have gone to and studied in Dawwee district itself or in any other district in the region. That seems to be the reason why *Shaykh* Aḥmad's place of origin is generally referred to as *al-Dawwiyyi* (the Dawwéan) in the colophon instead of Sokokkee-Qorii, the specific place he was born which is in Hartummaa-Fursii district of the Zone.

[4] Colophon of a variant copy of Birillee-*Zafã Manzūmah* manuscript (nd), (n. p.no.) possessed by *Hājj* Mustafã Tufaa, a resident of Arsii Zone of Oromiyaa Region, Shirkaa district (around Asihāb ʿAlī historical site) obtained from him in 2006.

[5] Dr Ahmed Hassen Omer's suggestion comes from a manuscript in Amharic he collected in 2013 for the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, though the specific name of the centre and the topics (probably *fiqh* and *naḥw*, the next theological step after the reading of the Qur'an) *Shaykh* Aḥmad studied were not clearly known.

him[6] to go to and join *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Hādī *Shaykh* Muḥammad Amān of Harṭummaa (nicknamed as Abū-Jamāl) who was living in Mūz-ambā village of Ifat (around Aṭaayyee town) at that time. When all the options guided him to that same person, Aḥmad returned home till, later on, his mother took him to the *Shaykh* and requested him to foster for her.

As he began studying under *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Hadī, Aḥmad even had faced difficulty in grasping education for which the *Shaykh* had sought solution[7]. They say that *Shaykh* prepared a mystically journey for Aḥmad and sent him to the Anaajina of *Shaykh* Husayn of Baalee. They believe that in this single night mystical journey which was undertaken by the *barakah* of *Shaykh* ʿAbdul-Hadī, Aḥmad became a scholar by the *karāmah* of *Shaykh* Husayn. After the journey, he showed a special ability of grasping knowledge and studied under the *Shaykh* where he became a distinguished disciple of a remarkable command and mastership in Arabic language as well as gift in *madḥ* (panegyric poem). He showed these abilities during the *ḥaḍrā* (religious gathering to pray, praise or invocate God in Arabic) that brought him respect among the students and before the clerics. Then, he continued producing poetry by which he won greater admiration and appreciation from all.

First he authored *manẓūmah* in Arabic language and then in *ʿAjamī*-Oromoo, although his first *manẓūmah* could not be known during this study. As he went on producing and chanting one impressing *manẓūmah* after another, the students and the clerics, including his *Shaykh*, realized his giftedness in poetry as well as in singing it. Particularly, his eloquence, absolute command in Arabic language and confidence brought him distinction. He went on demonstrating these abilities both as a gifted rhymester and soloist as well with a quite sonorous and attractive voice. Then he managed to be the centre of gravity of the entire cotemporary *mādiḥīn* (those who say *madḥ*) and the leading enlivener of the Mawlid and the *ḥaḍrā* ceremonies in his time.[8]Thus, he came to be assumed as the one honored to lead in reciting the *Rāmsā*[9]*,* the *Takrāra*[10]*,* the *qiṣṣah* (anecdote, story narrations in Arabic) as well as the *manẓūmah* during celebrations in Harṭummaa. Later on, his fame diffused in the whole area and beyond as a powerful poet who was born to compose impressive panegyrics and to sing with sonorous and melodic voice. Hence, people everywhere recognized him as the born leader and enlivener of the *Ḥaḍrā*, the *Mawlid* and *ʿĪd* celebrations until without him

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6   Informant: *Shaykh* Muhammad Jamāl of Čaffaa. He said that one of the scholars that Aḥmad had gone to was the most prominent scholar of the time, *Shaykh* Muhammad Jamāl al-Din al-Ānnī of Raayyaa, who advised Aḥmad to go back to home and join *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Hādī who was his (Jamāl al-Din's) own novice.

7   Ibid.

8   Informant: *Hājji* Muammad Būṣayrī (the poet's friend and admirer): 2007, Huusoo.

9   Informant: *Shaykh* Aḥmad Ibrāhim Hasan, 2010, Addis Ababa: *Raamsaa* (*raabsaa*) or *ḥiraa* (*eegalaa, jalqabaa*: beginning or distributing in Oromo language). It is used to name or call the starting recitation of a *mawlid* or a *Ḥaḍrā* ceremony.

10 Informant; *Ibid*. In Arabic, *Takrāra* means repetition of a collective recitation intermittently chanted to collect attention to the ongoing procedure. *Shaykh* Aḥmad was always the beginner and leader of both *raamsaa* and *takrāra*.

these events seemed to be boring and lifeless. With these qualities, he progressed to the next level of prominence.

Recognition (ʾijāzah) and recruitment as a novice

Considering these developments and achievements *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Hādī appointed him the organizer and leader of the grand *Ḥaḍrā* conducted on the *Shaykh*'s compound. Then, approving further Aḥmad's enormous gift and quality in poetry, the *Shaykh* gave him *ʾIjāzah* (permission) to compose and to recite *manẓūmah* and litanies in the honor of the Prophet [PBUH]. Finally, he also nominated and initiated him into the *Qādiriyyah* order.

   Shaykh Aḥmad tells us the situation in which the *ʾIjāzah* was given to him. That was how he felt when the celebrated *Shaykh* suddenly ordered him one day to do a special assignment: producing an original book of litany which would be recited on the occasions of Mawlid ceremonies instead of reciting those which were old and produced by other far authors. *Shaykh* Aḥmad tells that the order astonished and induced in him mixed feelings: confidence and fear, hope and despair, strength and weakness etc. Having had battled with these feelings in himself, he finally carried out the command of the celebrated and obeyed *Shaykh* by composing the book. He entitled it *Al-mashrab-al-rāʾiq, fi-mawlid ashraf al-khalāʾiq / the quenching fountain on the birthday [stories] of the master of the creation.* In the introduction of this book (pages 11-12) he described those feelings poetically by his splendid pen that show his absolute command, elevated rhetoric and prosody in Arabic language. Thus, he said:

فلما كان يوم الإثنين أمرني من امتثال أمره في واجب لي والتأسي في الابتلاء في أخبار مولد سيد الطيبين فأطرقت نفسي حياء وتلعثمت خجالا،وقمت من عنده وقد داخلني رعب إذ لم أكن لذلك أهلا فوجهت أقدام عزمي وأضع ها إلى أخرى،إلى أن جاد سحاب الفضل والتفت أمرا، فجمعت شيئا من طرف قصة المولد الشريف مع ما أنا عليه من القصور والتقصير، وأرجو إن شاء الله أن ينفعني بها في علي الخير، وسميته المشرب الرائق في مولد أشرف الخلائق السلام على علمه وعلى آله أولى المعارف في الحقائق، عندك كل صامت ناطق ... [11]

When it came to be Monday, ordered me he who obeying his order is incumbent upon me[12] to author a book that would be recited as the news about the birthday of the master of the lovers [Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]. Certainly I kept myself musing over of shyness and filled with shame; and I left from his presence and surely terror has already interlaced with me for I was not fit for that. And I made the foot of my resolution to take-off high forward and then low down till the clouds of the favor [of Allah] became generous to me to author it and execute the order. I compiled some of the pieces of the story of the celebrated birthday (of the noble Prophet) together with (all) that I have of inherent laziness and

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[11] *Shaykh* ʾAḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj (nd), *Al-mashrab al-rāʾiqi fi-mawlid sayyid-al-khalāʾiq*. An (unprinted) Arabic rhyming prose (Manuscript) in the possession of *Shaykh* Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Qarṣā, Hartummaa (a copy obtained in October 2007): 11-12.

[12] That is *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Hādī who is his teacher, foster and *Shaykh al-Tarīqah* or line of benediction whom the novices must obey according to the rite of orders.

negligence. And I wish, Allah willing, that He would benefit (people) with it a lot of benefits. And I named it as *Al-mashrab al-rā'iq fī-mawlid sayyid-al-khalā'iq/ The quenching fountain on the birthday (stories) of the master of the creation*, may Allah send down blessings and peace upon him and upon his families (who are) the possessors of the mysterious knowledge and truths, as much (peace and blessings) as the number of all the (creation) that are silent and speaking; ...

This time onward, Aḥmad became a full-fledged *Shaykh* who graduated from 'Abū-Jamāl's center with this book as his "Thesis". Of course he graduated, but the influence, love and affection of and the *Sufism* he inherited from the *Shaykh* completely conquered him throughout the rest of his life. Without knowing that part, we cannot fully know and understand *Shaykh Aḥmad* himself. Therefore, who is 'Abū-Jamāl and what role did he play in *Shaykh* Aḥmad 's life? 'Abū-Jamāl or *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Hādī was the teacher, the foster, the trainer and the spiritual father of the poet *Shaykh* Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj. Moreover, he is known by the society as the hero for he was an uncompromising fighter for right and freedom and lived defeating the troops of despotic feudal landlords in the region. *Shaykh* Aḥmad inherited many of the attributes of his spiritual father to a great deal: dedication and sincerity in belief, devotion in worship and purity in life and behavior. He was, therefore, accepted by the society as "the perfect cleric, the virtuous *walīyyi* (saint)" a man of *kashf* (telepathy) and many apparent *karamat* that people ascribed to him.

Social life and manners

Shaykh Aḥmad lived practicing the social life and culture Islamically. Informants[13]say that he often tried to reform the existing tradition, traditional belief, culture, identity and practice of his contemporary society to conform them to Islamic spirit. He often called to and cared most for both internal and external sincerity in belief, purity and cleanness in both spirit and body. He often used to be clean, proud and confident in both feeling and appearance. He often showed these and many other Islamic manners among the youth and the society at large, particularly on the Mawlid and the *ḥadrah* occasions.

During these events, he is said to often appear in his own style: wore a fashion dress known as *gurroo* and a special *'ijja-ṭabbāb* fashion dress that he sewed by hands. He cared much for his *goofaree* (long bushy hair that hangs down over forehead), which he left to grow freely and cleanly. He oiled it with fresh butter mixed with musk to give it a pleasant smell, and often washed, combed and handled it with a good care. He decorated it with feathers and managed it by tying with a *hiint*ee (a decorated fringe of garment in Oromo language) round his forehead. He used *kuhul* (eye powder in Arabic) and carried *siwāk* (a wooden toothbrush in Arabic) in his hand, and a sewing needle, a blade, musk and a comb in his folder. He had been trying to preserve and propagate these among the youth and the society at large.

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[13] Informants: *Shaykh* Aḥmad Ibrāḥim.

Shaykh Aḥmad was accepted by the people and loved as an ideal person. The folk songs that the people, particularly the youth, have rhymed for him would tell us both the beauties of the *Shaykh* and how far he was popular and loved. He is described as *magaala-jaannee,* a chocolate colored handsome man, whose intimacy, even in the Hereafter, everybody had ever sought as in these rhymes:[14]

> *Yaa 'Aḥmad Shaykh Siraaj!*
> *Yaa magaala jaannee!*
> *Chaffee Jannat keessa*
> *Odoo wajjin yaanee!*
>
> O 'Aḥmad *Shaykh* Sirāj!
> O the chocolate colored handsome man!
> Would that we flock together
> In the gardens of Heaven!

Shaykh Aḥmad was also a "Saint"[15] who lived caring for the permissions and prohibitions of the *Sharī'ah, w*hich made him to be considered as a just man who strictly observed the law. He also used to divide his nights into four quarters: for referring, writing, reciting the Holy *Qur'ān,* and chanting *dikr*. He is said to have passed most of his daytime copying what he had authored during the night. Without any exception and slightest hesitation, all informants have said that *Shaykh* Aḥmad was a renowned *Ḥāfiẓ-al-Qur'ān* (one who recites the whole of the *Qur'ān* from memory). *Shaykh* Aḥmad did not marry any woman. When his mother urged and pushed him to marry and beget child, he politely told her that he had already begotten children for her: his book, *Al-Mashrab al-rā'iq* and his manẓūmah, *Mukarramu 'alaykum Salāmu*! He requested her to chant or listen to these works while people sing them in choir[16], whenever she wanted to see his children.

Shaykh Aḥmad got sick and died in A.H. 1353[1935]. Because he suffered from a wound on his bosom, people customarily say that his heart exploded from the pains of the love of the Prophet [PBUH] that captivated him and burnt his heart over the years and gradually finished him. He is buried at the symmetry of Huusoo village adjacent to his *Shaykh*, the place where he lived and learned. The site is about 20 km east of the capital of Harṭummaa-Fursii District, Čaffaa-Roobii, which is on the asphalt road to Dase'.

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[14] Informant: *Ibid*.

[15] Informants: *Shaykh* 'Aḥmad 'Aliyyi (a renowned *Muḥaddith* (teacher of the Prophetic Tradition) and *Shaykh* 'Aḥmad *Shaykh* Tayyib in Khamisee *et al.*, 2007.

[16] Informants: *Shaykh* 'Muhammad Jamāl (a resident of Chaffaa town), 2010.

Works in the Arabic language

First of all, *Shaykh* Aḥmad began writing by producing various prose and *manẓūmah* poems in the Arabic language and compiled them in three different volumes. The volumes of the Arabic collections are *Al-La'ālī al-thamīna fī-madḥi shams al-Madīnah* which means *"The Invaluable Pearls on the Panegyrics of the Sun of Al-Madīnah."* The poems are written in a very high style of classical Arabic and a beautiful calligraphy of the poet[17]. *Shaykh* 'Aḥmad is also considered as the author of other collections of manuscripts, like *Al-mashrab al-rā'iq fī- mawlidi 'ashraf al-khalā'iq (The Clear (Drinking) Fountain on the Birthday [Ceremony] of the master of the creations)[18]* and *Al-Misk al-'Abīq (The Fragrant Musk),* a humming or moaning lyric that the poet composed after his separation with *Shaykh 'Abū Jamāl.*

In addition, *Shaykh* Aḥmad remains famous for his production of poetic panegyrics (*manẓūmah*) on Prophet Mohammed and his Companions, as well as the most devoted regional actors of the Islamic tradition. Though these literary collections of poetic songs were often in Arabic language, many of them were also in 'Ajamī-Oromoo – i.e. in Oromo language, but written with the Arabic alphabet.

Birillee Ṣafā: Shaykh Aḥmad's Famous Manuscript of *Manẓūmah* in 'Ajamī-Oromoo

Birillee-Ṣafā is an 'Ajamī-Oromoo *Manẓūmah* Manuscript. This title of the text is contained in the eighth line of the third page of the text. But the text has also an optional title, *Zujājat al-Ṣafā.* This is a rendering of the original title into Arabic. Literally *Brillee* is a flask, a glass; and *Ṣafā* is an Arabic term which means clean, pure. Therefore, *Birillee-Ṣafā* or *Zujājat al-Ṣafā* means *the cleanest glass*, or *the perfect and beautiful glass*, or the *cup* containing the *Sīra* and the love of the Prophet [PBUH] – described in the text as the most delicious and "insatiable hydromel" –, sipped along the public recitations of *manẓūmah.*

An Oromo poetic epic rooted in Prophet Muḥammad's literary tradition

Birillee-Ṣafā has 342 pages (including cover page) with a total paper size of about 18.5 cm x 26 cm and a written size: 13.5 cm x 19 cm. It is written in two rhyming columns separated by caesura at the middle. Each column has 13, and both columns contain 26

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[17] *Al-la'ālī al-thamīna* is an encyclopedia of almost all of the Arabic *manẓūmah* of the poet including two *'Ajamī-Oromoo manẓūmah* that are at about the end of the volume. It contains 35 different refrains (titles) out of which 33 are fully in Arabic, one is half Arabic and half 'Ajamī-Oromoo, and another is fully in 'Ajamī-Oromoo, sharing the same refrain with the 17th Arabic *manẓūmah* on page 80-84.

[18] This collection of manuscripts is a long rhyming prose in a high standard classical Arabic, recited by a leader with a musical tune. The chorus repeats the refrain wherever the leader pauses. It is an indigenous *Mawlid* litany produced in Hartumṭmaa parallel to the exotic ones that were imported and used. This is another witness that the Ethiopian *'ulamā'* were not receivers only of the litanies or books that were composed in the external Muslim worlds, rather, composers as well. This text is considered as the witness to the poet's ability of composition in elevated classical Arabic. He produced it immediately after he had been acknowledged by his *Shaykh* as an efficient cleric and given the *'ijāzah* to compose. The order was given by Abī al-Jamāl as a recognition of *Shaykh* 'Aḥmad's highest composition ability, gift and quality.

rhyming lines. Totally, the epic contains 8646 lines of poems, grouped under about 595 stanzas, each with perfect rhyme scheme. It is written in an excellent *naskhī* hand in bold, by homemade thick traditional fountain pen and black ink. The verses are fully vocalized and very accurate. *'Ajamī*-Oromoo sounds are represented by modified Arabic scripts with diacritic dots. Nevertheless, due to the lack of proper equivalents in Oromo language or to keep their Arabic scholastic legitimacy, the poems compiled in this manscript also contain a lot of Arabic words and phrases.

The *Birillee-Ṣafā* is divided into four sections – *Al-Wilādah* (The Birth), *Al-Mu'jizāt* (The Miracles), *Al-Nubuwwah* (The Prophethood) and *Al-Ṣaḥābah* (The Companions) – whose poetic panegyrics contextually narrates the *Sīrah* of the Holy Prophet of Islam [PBUH] and of the pioneering heroes who were around him, in an elevated, attractive and very inspiring *'ajami*-Oromoo language style. It presents Islam to all classes of people and tries to instill it through the chanting of the verses that narrate stories, anecdotes, extraordinary miracle/ of the Prophet [PBUH], Supernatural interventions, facts, dedications, including the sacrifices of the followers, exemplary lives, admonitions, advices and elaborations, etc.

The *Birillee-Ṣafā* could be easily defined as "a long narrative poem in which the language, characters, plot and style are of grand, dignified and elevated, and has heroic dimensions" (JACKSON 1996: 155). Indeed, this series of *manẓūmah* fulfills the main characteristics of the classical epic conventions – including universally important hero(es) like the Prophet of Islam and his companions, vast geographical setting (Makkah, Madinah, Quds, Heaven, Earth), actions of superhuman valor and courage (the miraculous deeds, the trip to Heaven), divine interventions (Great miracles, the Angel Jibril, the revelation /Qur'ān) or high style of writing.[19]

The writer begins the epic by invoking Allah (instead of the Muse in other epics) and then requesting the support of the subordinates who are the "brothers" or the choir of the *ḥadrā*. It also states the subject matter, which is the *madḥ* of the Prophet, and mentions the main heroes of the story, the Prophet [PBUH] and the companions. The formula of beginning by praising and thanking, or invoking Allah, praying for peace and blessing to be upon the Prophet [PBUH] and then his folks before proceeding to the body of the poem are used at the beginning of all section of the epic.

The author introduces the *madḥ* and the Prophet [PBUH] alternatively in all sections but extensively in the first section. He narrates what he believed to be the moral significance and benefits of the Prophet's *madḥ* in a number of different expressions (lines 13-96). He says that the Prophet's *madḥ* purifies a believer from sin, enlightens the insight, sharpens the tongue and the heart, guides a believer to bliss in both this and the next worlds, etc. He also describes the Prophet [PBUH] as the most handsome person in both form and spirit whose charisma and grace put off fires of prolonged chronic wars and ranchore; and whose patience, tolerance and smiling face dissolved enmity and hopelessness in the souls of human beings, etc. With such alternate

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[19] The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1995, Volume V: 520.

expressions he elaborates the greatness, superiority or magnanimity of the Prophet's personality to the audience, and the importance of following and praising him as well.

Bismillaahi rrahmaani rrahiim jedheeti
Jala qabuu kootii faaruu Musxafaati
Obboleeyyan irraa madad kadhadheeti
Of bichaan abdadhuu beeka likkii kooti
Alhamdu liaahi kan Rabbii galanni
Kan nugodhe cirfaa Muhammad 'Amiini
Nugus dachii-samii mootii insii-jinni
Galaa hardhaa-boruu birkoo duniyaa-diini
Rahmanni haa bu'uu ammo nageenyini
Jaalallee keenyattii 'Asihabaa wajjini
Warra takattales faana daandii saani
Kan likkiisaa nbeeknee namni lakkooksaani
Faaruun jaalalleedhaa Xaahaa Khayra-l-waraa
Minaanin hunda rraa bar nama xaaharaa
Gubbaa nama faayee keessammoo nawwaraa
Arraba qajeelchee qalbii nama qaraa
Hulaa namaa bane nama buusa karaa
Tidaar-duniyaa-diinii hunda namaa xaaraa
Assalaamu 'alaykum Xaahaa Mukarramuu
Malkii fuula saatiin kan ibiddi dhaamuu
Nuura fuula saatiin dukkanni kan deemuu
Bokkeenyi musiibah kan isaaniin caamu
Nuura qalbii jedhee kan hundumti waamuu
Daandii hula saanii kan hundi walsaamuu; ….
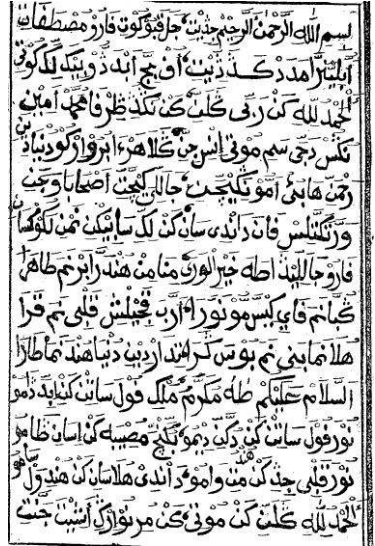
In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Companionate
I begin the *madḥ* of the Chosen[20] Prophet
Begging my brothers[21] a help and support
I rely not on myself only for I know my limit
Praise be to Allah, thanks be to the Lord
Who made us the supporters of the Trustworthy Prophet!
King of Earth and Sky, Ruler of human and jinn
The provision of today and tomorrow[22], the support of *duniyā* and *dīn*[23]
Blessing be up on him, and so also peace
Upon our beloved one and his companions
Upon those who followed in the track of their footsteps
Whose number cannot be exactly known (by humans)

---

[20] *Al-Mustafā* ('the Chosen' in Arabic) is a common epithet of the Prophet.

[21] The choir or the audience.

[22] The Hereafter World.

[23] The Arabic word *duniyā* and *dīn* designate here 'this worldly life and Islamic (religious) way of life'.

The *madḥ* of the beloved one, the best of this creation
Know that it purifies a human from all vices
It decorates the form and enlightens the insight
It corrects the tongue and sharpens the heart
It opens the way and leads to guidance
Strives for this life and the next, to fulfill and to enhance
Peace upon you Prophet, O *Ṭāha* the honoured!
By whose handsome appearance fire was extinguished
By whose shining face, darkness was evaded
The storm of misfortunes by him turned bright
The light of the heart, as all so call him
The path to his door all struggle to obtain

In this progress, the poet tell us, in section one (lines 57-78 of the text), his main aim of composing a *manẓūmah*, his impression about himself and what he believes the audience should do with what he would accomplish. In lines 57-70 of the text, he says:

Mee xinnoon dubbadhaa hamma barakaatii
Akkeessamaa jedhee warra naduraati
Jara itti bu'e roobni 'inayaati
Akka nuqaqqabu karfaffiun isaati
Gabaabseetan godhaa 'ajamiin manzuumaa
Beekumsa waan qabuu mee funaaneetumaa
Bakka bade tolchaa mindaan keessanumaa
Namakka kiyyaatiif mucucuun danbumaa
Dirreessaa dagalee kankoo wallaalumaa
An kajeeltuu malee bakkan qabu armaa
Maqaashee yoo feetan Birillee Safaatii
Kan itti dhugamu birziin mahabbaatii
Dhugeetan obaasaa dheebotaa kka kootii
Daadhii faaruu nabii kuullee 'Aaminaatii

Just for the sake of blessing, let me speak a bit
Just for imitating the forefathers, the past
Whom the sprays of the rain of Allah's care made wet
So that will reach us, that rain's current!
I write a *manẓūmah* in *'ajamī* and I make it shorter
By picking knowledge from here and there
Correct it where it is wrong; your reward is sure!
For a layman like me, mistaking is just normal
Make it broad and coherent, mine is (just) ignorance
I am but covetous, with no knowledge and place!
If you need the title, it is *Birillee-Ṣafā*
From which is sipped the hydromel of love
I drink, and others who are thirsty, I make them drink as I do
The wine of the *madḥ* of the most handsome son of Āminah

In these lines, the poet states that he wanted to contribute a humble work which he called it a mere imitation: "Just for imitating the forefathers," the pious *'ulamā'* or forefathers who, he said, were blessed by Allah. Following their example, he tells that he wanted to produce these panegyrics in *'ajamī oromoo* to spread Prophet Mohammed's Tradition among the Ethiopians. He also lowered his status by saying that he would do it by picking knowledge (information) from here and there and considered himself as a layman who was suffering from lack of knowledge and reference materials. Therefore, while producing the poem, he knew that as a layman he would make mistakes. Hence, he calls the scholars to correct and enrich it and get reward from Allah by doing that. Moreover, he invites the scholars to develop and correct the *madḥ* and make it consistent. In these statements, he also denies himself any status and place among the ranks of the scholars, by stressing that he is lower than many scholars – and even compared himself to the "ignorant" coveting knowledge from the clerics.

Regarding the poem, he says: "If you need its name, it is *Birillee-Ṣafā*". It is from this line that the epic got its title. The poet indicated also that the meaning of the title is a clean glass, a cup: "From which is sipped the hydromel of love" of the Prophet [PBUH]. He added that he drinks this special "wine" or hydromel of the Prophet's *madḥ* by the "glass" and also invites other thirsty lovers of the Prophet [PBUH] to drink by this glass as well:

> "O you who truly love the beloved one!
> If you would drink it, here, I brewed for you 'wine'!"

Hence, through the "wine", "pure honey" or "hydromel" metaphors, the poet claims that the *madḥ* of the *Birillee-Ṣafā* narrates the perfect beauties and taste incarnated in the Prophet's teachings of Islam to his people.

The thematic aspects of the epic

The themes of the epic are many. But they can be divided into four major themes. In Section One of the epic, *Al-Wilādah* (The Birth), the most central one and particular to the section is the story about the origin of the Prophet [PBUH], i. e. he came from a metaphysical world and was born in this physical world. The story is basically ideological thought that considered the Prophet [PBUH] as the first *nūr* (light) that Allah created before anything; and a huge period of time ago. Then the light transferred through Adam to his children till finally it came to be born as a Prophet. The argument is that the Prophet is a superior creation of Allah and the powerful Messenger in this universe, whose mission and teachings have to be believed and obeyed among the human beings and the jinn as well.

To utterly convince people about the prophethood of Muhammad [PBHU], the poet supports this argument with several historical phenomena that took place in Arabia before and after the Prophet's advent, during his childhood and Messengerhood. One of these is the campaign of Abraha to demolish the Ka'bah, which is believed that Allah intervened and aborted his plan. Others include miracles and prophecies such as the prophecies of priests, the coming of prophets, angels, and women from heaven to congratulate his mother when she born him, etc. The abundance of light is expressed

through the whole night[24] in which he was born, that light issued from his mother's pudendum and lit the palaces of Syria[25]. He also adds that the castle of Rome were divinely made to be seen from Makkah, the Palace of Caesar[26] shook and cracked, or that the fire of Persia worshiped for one thousand years was extinguished[27], or that the Furāt (Euphrates) River which was dried up has overflown its course. The other significant event discussed in this section is the *Mir'āj*, the night journey or ascension of the Prophet [PBUH] into the skies, the splitting of the Moon (*al-Qur'an*, 54:1), the delaying of the sun to set on that day, the episode of raising a man from dead ('ABĪ BAKR 'AḤMAD BIN ḤUSAYN AL-BAYHAQĪ 1985: 126-130) and the gushing of water from his palms. These significant events are described in a very attractive stanzas and grand ways respectively.

In Section Two or the *Mu'jizāt* (Ultimate Miracles), the poet focuses on the *Mu'jizāt* (the ultimate miracles) of the Prophet. He defines the *Mu'jizāt*, presents, discusses and describes them deeply. With this he tries to strengthen the belief he preached in the first section and crash the doubt that might remain in the minds of the choir. The following stanzas describe this:

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[24]"Uthmān bin 'Abī-al-'Āṣ related from his mother, Fāṭimah the daughter of 'Abd-'Allāh, saying: "I was present there when the Messenger of Allah–Peace be upon him- was born and I saw that the house was full of light and the stars had become very close down till I suspected that they would fall down upon me." ('ABDU-AL-RAḤMĀN BIN 'ABDU-ALLAH, 1978: 181)).

[25] Safi-ur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri 1996: 56.

[26] See Ibn Kathīr's hermeneutic (*tafsîr*) in SĀMĪ BIN MUḤAMMAD SALĀMAH, 1999.

[27] Ibid.

Waan Mu'jizah Nabii meemmoo haa dubbannu
Geetichi Tolaanis madad nuu haa kennu
Mu'jizaalleen guddaa dubbannee waan fixnu
Hammuma barakaa mee irraa haa tuqnu
Akka qadirii isaanii xinnoo rraa hubannu
Isaaniin nufaayee Geetaan akka beeknu
Akka qalbiin isaan rogumaan jaal'annu
Xinnumaa guddaadhaan akka tti rarraanu
Nuti Rasuulumaa bar namni eeggannu
Maqaa saanii malee gala biraan qabnuu
Mu'jizama jechaa silaa kuuni beektu
Warrin beekne ma'naa isaa haa hubatuu!
Geetaan namaa jedhee baasuu durinjirtu
Akka dhagaa mukni namatti dubbatuu
Akka bahaaimfaan namatti watwaatuu
Akka mukni gogaan harkaan tuqnaan latu
Akka chintuun tokko middhaan barakatu
Hamma kuma guutuu beelawaa quubsitu
Dubbiin zabazzabuu 'amrii akkanaatuu
Kan Rasuulli jedhe Geetaan godhe guutu
  Kanaan duuba silaan kajeelle dubbatuu
Jik jedhellee garaan odoo nasodaatuu

Let us now speak about the *mu'jizah* of the Prophet
May The Kind Allah give us a hand as well
His miracles are so much we can't speak all
Just for the sake of blessing, let us, some of it, tell
So that we learn a bit of his exalted rank
Allah rewarded us the Prophet; we should know and be frank
So we have to love him well and also heartily
And also we all adhere to him, the young and the old
It is the Messenger whom we wait hopefully
We have no other provision except mentioning his name
And *mu'jizah* means, some of you already know
Those who do not know its meaning let them know it now
That Allah, for the sake of human being, shows an ultimate challenge, an unusual event
Like everything speaks to a man, even the stone and the tree
That the beasts speak to a man, and cry and appeal
That a dry wood when touched by hand turns to be verdant and green
That a handful of grain becomes quite a lot of food
And hungry men eat it and satisfy who are up to one thousand
Let me not dwell on the matter, and not list us this kind
Shortly, whatever the Messenger said, Allah ever fulfilled
One thing that I want to speak after this is
Though I am afraid that it will be boring news

The Third Section talks about the teachings of the Prophet. Some of these are:

Asihaabahn jedhanii Rasuul gaafatani
"Nama akkam jiruu qawiyyi?" jechaani
"Sitti amanuutti keessumaa gubbaani?
"Mee kkaataa haala saa odoo nutti himtani?"
Nabiyyich jawaab deebisan jedhani
"Nama natty amanee odoo nan argini
"Kan bakkuma jiruu nayaadu qalbiini
"Kan dhugaan gubatuu mahabbaa kiyyaani
"jarri haala kkanaa milikkinni isaani
"Wanni tamanya'an dhiirumaa nadhooni
"Wama qaban hundaa odoo fixatani
"Fuuluma koo argaaf mattaayaa kennani
"Gaafuma tokkicha duuba na'argani
"Kanuma dheebotan kanuma hawwani"
Kunoo gaa dhageessee hubadhuu rogaani
Maḥabbaan qalbiidhaa 'alaamah iimaani!
Dhageesseen dhiisinii ilaali miijjani
Wal siigaxxame kaan haala sa keenyaani!
Sayyidiin dubbatan "Awaaj!" jedhaniiti
"Yaa jam'ah ummataa yaa warri shaadaati
"Takkoon keessanileen waan amanne natti!
"Iimaan sobaan jennee isa dhugumaatii
"Hamma ruuhii saarra ana jaalatuttii
"Hamma dhalee saarra ana dabarsuttii
"Hamma duniyaasaa rra ana gaarfatutti
"Yookaan waan taane gaa beekaa akkanatti
"Awaaj namnin qabnee hixaa mahabbaati
"Iimaanis hinqabuu dhagahaa kunooti!"
Takkaaniulleen dhiifnee hubadhummoo gaa ati!
Wagguu sadih hunda deddeebihan itti
Maḥbbaan hundi ree waa mahabbaa miti
Inni saan baananii isa kka kanaati!
Herregii laali gaa human iimaan keeti!
Kana ta'uu baannaan "Yaqiin!" jedhii kuti!
Afaan inhoodadhuu maddee ishii teeti
Guyyaan mijjee malee Rasuul hafuu saati
Malli keenya maalii silaa gaa badhaannne?
Nulleen silaa jennee afaaniin "Amanne!"
Iimaan abdiin qabuu odoon miijjanamne!
Cinqiifii chiggiriin odoon mokkoramne!
Dhiirummaan qa'eedhaa bar in'Abdatamne!
Odoo malkaa bu'ee hundi wal indhaabne!

Dhiira aṣiḥaabotaa bar Geetaan miijjane!
Suni raga guutee jarri waan dhommoqne!
Adduniyaan sassannee ruuḥiin dinigganne
Qara sayfii jalaa waa boquun dabsanne
Jireenyaan dheebonnee du'a waan sodaanne
Bu'ee Nabii godhee ofduuban mil'annee
Nuti ihi jennaan mokkorri nuntuqne
Gadaan sayfii sugne sayfiittin waamamnee!

ذَرَأَصَعَابَاتُوْبَرْكِتَانْمِجِنْمَسْنْ رَكَاكُوْنِجَرَّوَاذَمَمْنِجْ
أَدْبْيَاسَسْنِّ رَجِ دِ يكْنْ قَرَسِيْفِ جَلاَ وَابْقُوْدَبَسْنِّ
جِرِنْجَانْبِينَّ دِء وَاسَدَانِجْ بَنُجِ بَيِكَذَ أَنْ دِ وَبَامْلَدَنِّ
نِّا اهِي جَنَانْ مَكَرَنَّ نَقْنِجْ كَدَ اسِيْفَ كَلِ سَيْفِتْ وَامَّنْ

Companions asked the Messenger a question:
"What kind of man is a strong man?
"In believing in you from both out and in?
"Would you please tell us how his character is?"
The Prophet replied saying as follows:
"Who believes in me without having seen
"Whose heart thinks about me where ever he has been!
"And who is truly burnt by my love!
"This kind of people such would be their sign
"What they ever wish whether men or women
"Even if they may spend all that they own
"Who wish to pay any cost to see the face of mine
"If they see me just once only, and then,
"That is their thirst; that is their ambition!"
Now you are hearing, but understand it well
A heartily love for him is a faith's is symbol
Don't listen and leave it but you should weigh it
Do you think it is fitting to our usual conduct?
The Master has declared saying as follows:
"O you all people; O who testified the faith
"No one of you would believe in me in truth
"I mean a true faith and not that which is false
"Until he would love me more than his life
"Until he would prefer me to his children
"Until he would choose me before his property"
Know you who we are then; as we are otherwise!
Listen; who lacks an omen for the Prophet's love
"Faith"; and listen this, "he doesn't also have!"
Behold, he did not say it just only once
But he repeated it all three times
And all kinds of love are not his love, of course
The kind he said is like the above ones
Calculate and see, then, the strength of your faith
If it is not equal to this, believe me, leave the space!
And make your mouth reserved to speak even a bit
Except when you feel comfort that the Messenger is left
What means do we have then, though we have been prized?
Though by word of the mouth, we said that we have believed?

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A hopeful (reliable) faith, if we were to be weighed
By worries and problems, if we were to be tested
Be brave just from the beginning, and we would be those for which are hoped
Before we reach the field (the river) and make a crowd[28]
Even the Prophet's companions Allah had tested
That is my witness, and they were never moved
They did not deny their money or their life in this world
They never bent their necks from a directed sword
They were not thirsty to live or fearing to face death
And to give the Prophet anything, they did never hesitate
And if we ask ourselves, we have not faced any test
The age of the sword has passed; we are not called to fight

The last section praises the companions of the Prophet [PBUH], their sincerity of faith, their love for the Truth and the Messenger [PBUH], their dedications to the faith and sacrifices, etc. If we try to see the coherence between these parts of the epic, we can see that part one tells a worldview, i. e. the existence of God and that he created and sent a king for mankind and jinn in who they have to believe and obey. Part two instills the belief by supporting with more and convincing evidences. Having tried to establish faith in the hearts of the audience with these parts, part three tells what the belied ones should do sincerely and how they have to act, live and obey. The last part shows the people, the true students who are the fruits of the teachings and are best models for the Muslims.

Oduun 'asihaabota Xaaha Mukarramuu
Zalaalam asheeta laddaan irraan deemuu
Alaqix mi'aawaa dammumaafii daamuu
Imam isaa baldhaa dubbatameen dhumuu
Mataa mataa buta hundin qaqqabamuu
Ammumaa dheerate kan jedhun dhabamuu
'Subḥaana Rabbika …' darbee wamaan himuu
Armumatti dhaabu 'ayyuha-l-qalamuu!
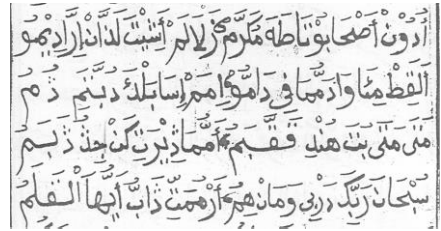
The story of the companions of Ṭāha the honored Prophet
Is a ripe fruit of eternal sweet taste
Extremely delicious that won't cease to be sweet
It is quite deep and special, no discourse could finish it
All picked the tips only, no one reached the root
Even now someone may say that this is too long to chant!"
Praise to God, I won't pass beyond this, then;
Stop it; stop it here, stop it, O you pen!

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[28] Before going to the battlefield or before being tested in faith.

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Conclusion

No doubt Ethiopia's indigenous *'ajamī*-Islamic literature show the rich religious, poetic, linguistic or social contributions of Ethiopian Muslim authors to the national history and culture. In the historical Islamic centres of Dawwee, within the present Oromiya Zone of the Amhara Regional State, the *Birillee-Ṣafā* manuscript in *'ajamī*-Oromoo of *Shaykh* Aḥmad *Shaykh Sirāj* constitutes one of those dynamic works in a regional language, transcribed with the Arabic script.

Three most important factors have helped the epic to be a successful monument to this end. The first is its topic- the *Sīrah*, which is one of the best and living ways of propagating Islam in the history of the religion. The second is its medium, *'ajamī*-Oromoo language, which broke the hitherto linguistic (literary) barriers and addressed the masses in their vernacular on common platforms and occasions, and in individual houses rather than on a specific learning groups of clerics on narrow learning *zāwiyā*s (circles). It addressed the vast illiterate population who considered the epic and the medium as wonderful achievements in the history of their language and existence. The third is the literary genre or form and style of the book, which is an Epic produced in a very attractive, powerful and inspiring verses rather than a boring prose. Using these tools, it taught, called, advised and warned, etc the nation to embrace and adhere to Islam. These made the book to be one of the tools that have contributed to the peaceful historical development of Islam among the Oromo populations.

Morally, this Oromo Muslim epic is not only centred on the testominies and deeds of the Prophet and his Companions. It also teachs all aspects of life and concrete behaviours promoted by the Muslim religion. Besides teaching the values of having strong faith and piety, it narrates Islamic discipline and ethics that the generation should observe and keep. Culturally, the book also has many benefits. Because it was chanted on Islamic events such as the *Mawlid* Ceremony, the *Ḥaḍrah,* the *ḏikr* and the *du'ā'* gatherings and occasions, it used to promote the events and the culture of religious rites. In this regard, it was not only the literary tool that promoted holydays and vents but also an instrument of propagating *Sufi* rites and orders that were disseminated and strengthened through these gatherings and ceremonies as well. Besides the moral training they exercise on these occasions, both the wrong doer and the righteous, the ruler and the ruled, the illiterate and the cleric gather together on one cultural platform, beyond their different social statuses in the local society.

Though the history and the achievements of the Ethiopian Muslim savants – like *Shaykh* Aḥmad – have been neglected for a long time in academic research, there are many such precious *'ajamī*-Oromoo manuscripts that remain almost unknown. In this perspective, the multiplication of studies on the rich legacies of such local *'ajamī* manuscripts and their erudite authors has to be encouraged to provide a better understanding of the Islamic tradition and history, in the Horn of Africa.

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Tigrinya ʿAjamī *on Najāšī*

Amira Abdulkadir

Though the early Arab Muslim followers of Prophet Muḥammad were welcomed by a Christian King of Abyssinia in 615 AD, it is still commonly assumed that the history of Islam in northern Ethiopia is rather rooted in the almost continuous resistance of the Christian kingdoms, against its successive attempts to develop locally (ABRAHAM DEMOZ 1972:1). Many people are often surprised when they come across a Muslim, let alone a clerical scholar of merit, from Tigray, a traditional Christian region. Nevertheless, twenty-one inscriptions found in Tigray show that there existed a Muslim community, since the eleventh century (GORI 2007:166). Hence, present in the northern Ethiopian highlands from the very beginning of Hegira, Islam has also there a long history of its own (HUSSEIN 1982:2-3, 2001:58).

As mentioned above, although promoting Islam in northern Ethiopia had been difficult, there were individuals who shouldered the responsibility of spreading the faith and cultivating the Islamic culture in their community. One such heroic personality was Šayḵ ʿUmar Abrār or, as he is popularly known by the Muslims of Tigray, Shäḵna Šayḵ ʿUmar "Our teacher Šayḵ ʿUmar". Apart from upholding the Islamic faith during difficult days, the fact that he left us manuscripts that are of paramount importance for studying the history of Islam in Tigray and generally in Ethiopia, makes him one of those erudite traditional Muslim scholars of Ethiopia.

Most of the manuscripts of Šayḵ ʿUmar Abrār are in his native language, Tigrinya, written in the Arabic script, that is, in ʿajamī – a local language written in the Arabic script. The etymology of the word indicates that it is an Arabic term used by the Arabs to refer to the Persians or Iranians. The Arabs used to call the Persians either ʿajamī or *Furs*. The word ʿajamī means 'foreigner' or 'non Arab' (ELIAS A. ELIAS n.d: 293). Later on the meaning of the word was extended to include the sense of a foreign language written in the Arabic script. Although most of Šayḵ ʿUmar's manuscripts are in the genre of ʿajamī he has also written in Arabic.

Ethiopian Muslim clerics teach about Islam mostly through the indigenous languages written in the ʿajamī fashion. Apart from its religious use the ʿajamī literature is important as it embodies aspects of Ethiopian history in general, and particularly that of Islam in Ethiopia. However, as many indispensable Arabic sources on Ethiopia were not given due consideration, the contributions of the Ethiopian Muslim scholars, especially their ʿajamī works, have also remained for long unnoticed (ENDRIS 2007: 4). In addition to manuscripts, information on the tombs of local saints (*awliyāʾ*) – which

could be a subject of inscriptional philology – also constitutes an important but neglected written heritage. In the same way as manuscripts are studied, the examination of the tombs of saints and the inquiry into the literature and oral traditions about shrines would give clues for the lacunae in the history of Islam in Ethiopia (HUSSEIN 1984:52-53).

Šayḵ ʿUmar's manuscripts, which are among the contributions of Muslim clerical scholars, are an aspect of the Ethiopian literary tradition. Among the literary collections written by Šayḵ ʿUmar, the focus of the present study is on the manuscripts concerning the ancient Ethiopian king, popularly called Najāšī, who welcomed the then contemporary Companions of the Prophet, fleeing the persecution in Medina since 615 AD. Thus, the name Najāšī and the early coming of Prophet Muḥammad's close Companions in Tigray and its vicinity, during the reign of this King, probably constitute the senior historical development of Islam in Ethiopia. As it is widely known, Islam reached Ethiopia almost immediately after its emergence during the reign of King Aṣhama ibn Abjar (Ella Ṣaḥam (SERGEW 1972: 185) in 615A.D. This Ethiopian king is still popularly known as Najāšī. The name is an Arabized version of the Ethiopic word *nägasi* meaning one who is anointed as a king. The word has gradually become an appellation by which King Aṣhama is known.

Najāšī's hospitality to the emigrant followers of the Prophet Muḥammad is a milestone in the relationship between the Ethiopian state and Islam. According to Muslim scholars such as Samia (2001) the king embraced Islam. But, for instance, Trimingham (1952: 46) represents the historical narration as a legend. However, the introduction of Islam into Ethiopia by the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad has not been questioned.

The tomb of Najāšī is found in Tigray, in the town of Nägaš which is 10 kilometers from the town of Wukro, along the Mekelle-Adigrat Road, which itself is 55 km east of Mekelle, the capital of the Tigray region. According to Gori (2007), the number of inhabitants of the town of Nägaš was about 1500, divided into two Christian/Muslim equal moieties. In addition to bearing the name of the King, the town is the burial place of some of Prophet Muḥammad's followers, who came and lived in Ethiopia (at the time Abyssinia) for about sixteen years. It is also the established tradition of the Muslims of Tigray to bury their notables in Nägaš.

Biography of Šayḵ ʿUmar Abrār

Family background

Šayḵ ʿUmar was born to his father Abrār Ḵayr Aḥmad and his mother Dästa Muḥammad Ḵyar in Addərgud, a district in Adwa, Tigray region. The exact date of his birth could not be identified but it is believed to be in 1871 E.C. His family, through his father, claims that they are descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad through the Prophet's grandson Ḥasan. Such a claim is common in the biography of many famous Šayḵs in Ethiopia (ENDRIS 2007). Šayḵ ʿUmar's father and uncles were personalities who are

considered and venerated as saints in the society. Some of their descendants are also respected and visited.

It is believed that the birth of the future Šayḵ ʿUmar had been foretold by a saint called Šayḵ Ḵalifa. The story goes that Šayḵ ʿUmar's mother dreamed of eating honey. She was told by this saint that she would give birth to a son who would become knowledgeable but would not stay long in life. The mother died some years after she gave birth to the promised child. The father died later. The young ʿUmar became an orphan who was brought up under his uncles' care (source: Šayḵ Aḥmad, Šayḵ ʿUmar's son, and Šayḵ Juhar).

It was during the intolerant reign of Emperor Yohannes that the young ʿUmar lost his father who refused to be converted to Christianity. One day officers of Alula Aba Nägga, the highest official of the Emperor, came and took the father, Šayḵ Abrār, from his house. Two other Muslims were also taken with him. Later, the bodies of the two other individuals were found while that of Šayḵ Abrār was lost. It is believed that since he was a saint, God took him away (source: Šayḵ Aḥmad, Šayḵ Kedir and Šayḵ Juhar). This kind of explanation was common in those times in the Muslim society of Tigray. This might be the way they explain their steadfastness in their belief. Another case is the death of a saint named Šayḵ ʿUkaša, Šayḵ Abrār's brother. The story is told that while the priests were trying to bury the dead body in the grave yard of the Christians, it spontaneously disappeared.

At that time, the act of forcing Muslims to become Christians was not practiced by all the common Christians of Tigray. Surprisingly, some of my informants reported that the Christians of Tigray used to help their Muslim compatriots by testifying that they had become Christians though they knew that they were practicing Islam. It is also interesting to learn that a Christian friend of Šayḵ Abrār avenged his death, by killing those who revealed that the Šayḵ was a Muslim follower.

During his childhood ʿUmar lived with his uncles serving as a shepherd. He had no chance of getting religious training at that time because of the oppressive nature of the situation. However, as he was approaching adolescence, he found it difficult to accept being ignorant about his religion. Hence, he left for Wollo at the age of fifteen and changed his name for Kaḥsay, to avoid being tracked. That was in fact, a common practice by religious lads of the time. After fifteen years studying in Wollo, he went back home to Tigray (source: Šayḵ Aḥmed and Šayḵ Juhar).

Religious training

Little is known about Šayḵ ʿUmar's religious schooling. In the colophon of one of his Arabic manuscripts the Šayḵ indicates that he copied it and that it belonged to his teacher Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Madanī. Informants also identify one of his teachers as Šayḵ Muḥammad Nur Bigiddo of Wollo who came to Tigray with the intention of taking Šayḵ ʿUmar back to Wollo to assign him as a teacher. But the Šayḵ refused. His teacher Muḥammad Nur Bigiddo argued that he would not find as many students in Tigray as in Wollo. But Šayḵ ʿUmar said he would knock at each door in Tigray to get students. The path of knowledge Šayḵ ʿUmar took can be identified from the

manuscripts he produced. His manuscripts deal with such topics as the biography of King Najāšī, Islamic inheritance system, Unity of God (*Tawḥīd*), praise of saints, glorification of the Prophets, rights of parents and Islamic jurisprudence.

Šayk ʿUmar was not limited to writing; he was also active in teaching. According to my informants, when he returned from Wollo, he preferred to remain solitary in a room. The Šayk did not, however, want to remain in solitude when the society was in need of overhauling. The concerned members of the society felt that Muslim identity was lost, moral laxity was rampant, Islamic jurisprudence was neglected; the faith was corrupted by superstition and local attitudes. So he campaigned hard and succeeded in reforming the society. He was instrumental for the rebirth of the society he lived in. Šayk ʿUmar thus commanded respect and he is remembered as a practical and pious teacher, or *murabbi a*s it is written on the colophon of the manuscript on inheritance, written by his student.

Livelihood and family

According to Šayk Aḥmed, Šayk ʿUmar's son, their livelihood was essentially dependant on the agricultural land they had. Nevertheless, the merchant cousin of the Šayk, Azmač Muḥammad ʿAbdu, also used to help the family. Šayk ʿUmar married a Tigriyan woman named Maryam, and had twelve children: Ruqiyya, Ḥajji Muḥammad, Muṣṭafā, Fāṭima, Kadīja, Abrār, Aḥmad, Ṭuha, Yasin, Zaynab, Mardiyya, Hadi. Among his children the following are alive: Muṣṭafa, Aḥmed, Yasin and Mardiyya.

Contribution to society

Šayk ʿUmar was also engaged in social activities. A shrine to the seventh-century king of Aksum, Aṣḥama Ibn Abjar (Ella ṣaḥam) and popularly known as Najāšī, was erected at his initiative. A clever trick was involved. According to Šayk Aḥmed, the local people sent some notables to Emperor Hailesellasie, to request the permission to build the shrine at the tomb of Najāšī. However, the Emperor refused. Then, the Šayk proposed to Azmač Muḥammad ʿAbdu, his cousin, to ask the governor of Tigray, Ras Səyyum, to allow them to build the tomb of his (the cousin's) father. Ras Səyyum agreed. But, instead it was the tomb of Najāšī that was built. Regarding the tomb, Bušrā Šayk Yaḥyā (2011:65-66) states that it was constructed "with the permission" of Ras Səyyum.

The local Muslim community then announced that the shrine of Najāšī was built. Buses belonging to the well-known merchant Azmač Muḥammad ʿAbdu brought people from different parts of the country to visit the newly built shrine. But there were Muslims who were against the construction of the shrine. They argued that the money could have been better spent on matters related to the teaching of the laity. However, Šayk ʿUmar responded that his intention in building the shrine was to transmit the history of the Just and Friendly King of Abyssinia.

Šayk ʿUmar also served as *Qāḍī*, or 'judge', during the Italian occupation and after the return of Emperor Hailesellasie. Later he resigned, partly for fear that he might be tempted to do something that would displease God. Justice administration required much time and that did not suit the Šayk, who was committed to teaching and writing.

It is also worth mentioning that Šayḵ ʿUmar was politically sensitive and knowledgeable. The divide-and-rule policy of Italy lured some sections of the Muslim population and innocent Šayḵ-s, with false promises. Šayḵ ʿUmar stood against that policy and advised his people not to do anything that might displease and hurt their Christian brothers and sisters, as that would have bad consequences in the future. He challenged the seemingly benevolent gesture of the Italians by inviting them to come to the fold of Islam, if they were sympathetic to it (source: Šayḵ Aḥmed, Šayḵ Ali).

Linguistic skill

It has been mentioned that Šayḵ ʿUmar produced *manẓūmas* in Tigrinya. In recognition of his valuable contributions to the development of elevating Tigrinya literature, a certificate was posthumously awarded to Šayḵ ʿUmar, by the Association of Tigray Artists and the Regional State of Tigray, the 8 of November 2008. The Arabic and Amharic knowledge of the Šayḵ was also profound, as can be observed from his Arabic and Amharic texts. Moreover, members of his family and students testify that the Šayḵ used to communicate with the Italians in Italian, both in speech and in writing.

Analysis of the manuscript on Najāšī

Šayḵ ʿUmar Abrār wrote an important number of manuscripts. Most of them are in Tigrinya ʿajamī; some are in Arabic and a few in Amharic *ajamī*. Other than the manuscript on Najāšī, the other manuscripts deal with topics such as inheritance, jurisprudence Mawlid (birthday of the Prophet) Ḵadīja's impression by the prophet, saints of Tigray, genealogy of Abādir of Harär. Since the focus of this paper is on manuscript on Najāšī, in the proceeding parts I provide the analysis of some of its contents.

In the transcriptions below, I have made use of the following conventions:

[ ] indicates that the oral text which I am familiar with disagrees with the written text; I put the oral text in brackets. Also, there are cases where the written text seems not to make sense; here I add a correction in [ ].

( ) indicates a dittography (unnecessary repetition) in the written text.

In transcribing Tigrinya, the vowel-letters ي, و and ا do not indicate length as in Arabic but only vowel quality – Tigrinya has no vowel length.

As indicated above, the chapter is concerned with a descriptive analysis of the contents of ms. 1. As to the linguistic and transcriptional features of the manuscript, you can refer to (AMIRA 2011).

Aṣḥama al-Najašī

In Šayḵ ʿUmar's manuscript on Najāšī, MS 1, two Ethiopian kings are mentioned. The first is King Abḥur, who was in power before the advent of Islam, while the second is King Aṣḥama ibn Abḥur, later better known as Najāšī. The latter was a contemporary of Prophet Muḥammad.

King Aṣḥama is referred to by various names by different authors. Šayḵ ʿUmar's manuscript mentions Aṣḥama apart from Najāšī (3):

> *Aṣḥama malät nasayyid Najāšī , ʾəyyu səmu*
> *Wəhbät malät ʾəyyu bəʿArab turgumu*
> *Ḵämzi ʾilu kitāb ʾaṣäbbiqu torgimu*
> *ʾAḥmed Najāšī, malät ləʿaddi ʾəyyu səmu Ǧawāhir al-Ḥisān bərgəṣ fassāri*

> Aṣḥama is the name of Lord Najāšī
> Whose meaning in Arabic is 'gift'
> A book has translated this well
> ʾAḥmed Najāšī is a name of a locality; *Ǧawāhir al-Ḥisan* explains this well

Aṣḥama is the name more commonly used by Islamic sources. On the other hand, Ethiopian (Christian) sources recognize him as Adriaz (Sergew 1972:185). Many Muslims in Ethiopia consider Aḥmed Najāšī as the king's name, but the Šayḵ notes that this is actually the name of a place, citing the book known as *Ǧawāhir al-Ḥisan.*

In this thesis, the name Najāšī – by which the king is generally known – was adopted to emphasize his fairness and the hospitality he extended to the Muslim emigrants, persecuted by the Quraysh. This major theme of the manuscript under discussion, provided him with a broad recognition in the Muslim world. Consequently, he has become a source of pride to Ethiopia.

Enthronement: from his father's succession to his personal merit and competence

In the long history of Ethiopia, leaders used to assume power in two ways. Conventionally, a royal family, used to assign the eligible individual to the throne purely on the basis of its rules of succession. However, a capable individual who subdued all his competitors could also assume leadership by himself based on his own merit. The manuscript under examination considers that the enthronement of Najāšī took place both in the former manner, that is, through the rules of succession, and also due to his merit and skills.

According to Šayḵ ʿUmar the succession of the monarchic power passed from Abḥur, the father, to the son, Najāšī. The Šayḵ describes the lineage in verse in the following manner (2):

> *Sayyid Najāšī ṭəntä mäsäräti*
> *Nəgusat ʾəyyom nəgusä mängəsti*
> *Wäladiʾom ʾAbḥur yəbbähal gäzaʾi märyäti.*

> Lord Najāšī has origin from time immemorial
> His royal ancestors
> His father Abḥur, ruler of the land

The Šayḵ also describes how the nobility plotted to overthrow king Abḥur to replace him with his brother for the simple reason that king Abḥur had only one son, Najāšī, while Abḥur's brother had twelve sons. The nobility were worried that the succession

of Najāšī would not last long if they let it happen, since he had no sibling to take over after his death. So, they decided to kill and depose Abḥur, to deny Aṣḥama, Najāšī, his right to the throne. The nobility went ahead with their plot: they killed Abḥur and brought his brother to power. They did this assuming the country would be guaranteed peace for a long time, when the twelve sons of Abḥur's brother succeeded each other. Šayḵ ʿUmar describes the scenario as follows (3):

> Ḥaw ʾabḥur näyru bäʿal ʿassärtä kəltä wuludi
> ʾAbḥur bəläy Najāši yänäbäroy wuludi
> Ministər mäkäru ləṭäkʾkʾəm ʾ ilom ləʾddi
> Nəqtällo bälu ləzu bäʿal ḥadä wuludi
> Ləḥawu nəšum bälu bäʿal ʿassärtä kəllətä wuludi
> Šumät ʾənkabaʾu [ʾənkabʾu] kəḥalləf lab däkʾkʾu kərrämamädi
> Bəsälam (Bəsälam) ḵətqəmmät ʾəyya ḥabäša ʿaddi kəšaʿ ʿassärtä kəltä ləzzazuri
> Ministər ḵullom bəzuy nägärzuy gäṭämu
> ʾAbḥur qätilom sayyid Aṣḥama gäbäruwwom yatimu

> The brother of Abḥur had twelve children
> While Abḥur had no other son than Najāšī
> The ministers discussed the future of the nation
> To kill the one with only one son
> And replace him with the one who had twelve sons
> So that succession can pass to the sons
> Abyssinia will then be peaceful till the twelve sons get their turn to rule
> All the ministers agreed on this idea
> They thus killed Abḥur and left Najāšī an orphan

Nevertheless, the situation was not favorable to the ministers as Najāšī continued to impress. He even outdid the king, his uncle, not only in matters of knowledge, but also in the art of speech and conversation. The Šayḵ depicts this in the following lines (3):

> Sayyid Najāšī məs däqqi ḥawəbboʾom ʾatäwu lab məʾəllami
> Nəssom konu ʾənkabʾatom ʾaläqəṭ läbbami
> Bəʿilmi ḵullu ḵonu täqäddami
> Ḥadä täsʾinu kämʾom ləʿəllämi minisətrat taʿlīm riʾom ʾatäwom šəbbəri

> Lord Najāšī entered training together with his cousins
> He was found to be the wisest among them
> He excelled in all aspects
> None was even close to his knowledge. The ministers started getting worried

The courtiers were determined to do whatever it took to ensure that Najāšī was not a source of danger. So, they came up with a plan to get rid of him, as they were afraid he would make his own move. They brought the idea to the King, Najāšī's uncle. The King agreed to their proposal and banished Najāšī, selling him as a slave. The following citation from the manuscript briefly relates how the banishment was carried out (4):

Lab ḫawəbbo'om käydom ḵəfu' 'asmä'u wäy ḵənqätlo bälu wäy kənäbbarəri
Məḵlaf färiḥu nayatom 'amri
Yätəqtälu dä'a 'ənbäy 'arḥə[q]əwwo 'ənkab hagäri
Ləḥadä šäṭəwwom ləḥadä musäfiri
Bəšuddə[š]tä mi'ti dirham dirham bururi
'Ɨnkəyyow 'aššagärom lab 'aräb mədri häzi täfäṣimullom məḵri ministiri

The ministers visited his uncle to propose either to kill him or banish him
Fearing to differ
(The King) chose to have him exiled
They sold him to a traveler
For six hundred dirham of silver
He was taken to the land of the Arabs, to the satisfaction of the ministers

But the plot of the courtiers and the decision of the King did not hold for long. After a short time, as indicated in subsequent sections, the status quo changed and Najāšī was brought back from slavery and enthroned.

According to the manuscript, the king (Najāšī's uncle) died of a thunderbolt. To make matters worse, none of his sons proved to be competent enough to replace the King. The country was thrown into political turmoil. The Šayḵ describes the episode as follows (4):

Nägoda mäṣi'a ləḥawəbbo'om qätälät
'Ɨnkab däqqu täs'anä lətəḫz šumät
Märyät täč'č'ännäk'[q]ät märyät ṣälmätät
Bäzḥä mänkära bäzḥä həwkät lə'ayyuwwo sä'anu wäyyom ministri

A thunderbolt killed the uncle
None of the sons proved capable of assuming power
There was huge turmoil and chaos
The ministers did not know what to do

Submitting to Najāšī became inevitable. The search for him is portrayed in the citation below (5):

Nämṣä'äyyo bälu läṭfa'nayyo wäddi
Gäbä'om[gäli'om] täl'ilom 'atäwu mägäddi
Bəḵəndäy məfəttaš tägänäyä 'ab 'aräb 'addi
'Ɨkab bäräḵa särik'[q]om 'amṣ'uwom qorişom mägäddi
'Ɨnkəyyow täšomu 'atḥazuwwom 'addi märyät rägi'a [q]äräyä šəggəri

Let's bring the one whom we banished
Some of them (ministers) set off on the road
He (Najāšī) was found after a long search
They stole him from the desert and brought him back, cutting the road short

He was immediately enthroned to rule the land; things went back to normal and
there was no more suffering

Despite his father's killing and the several attempts to damage his legitimate
authority, Najāšī was finally enthroned. The Šayk considers the latter event as an
outcome of his fairness and wisdom. He deserved to be a king for his qualities, more
than his mere descent from a royal family.

Welcoming the Prophet's companions

Not long after that event the Prophet Muḥammad sent a group of emigrants to seek
asylum in Abyssinia. The following is a citation from Šayk ʿUmar's narration about the
initiation of the emigration (6).

> ʿĀdil məkwanom mäskiromullom nabi Muḥammadi
> ʾAb makka šəggər ʾagnəyom näyrom nayom jundi
> ʾAtyom ʾilom lab ʾəsləmənna mägäddi
> Gäbaʾu[Gäliʾu] yəqəttäl gäbaʾu[Gäliʾu] ḥawwi yənäddədi
> Kämkädkum bäluwwom lab kaliʾ ʿaddi
> ʾAmru kəšaʿ ləzəhər rabbunā ṣamadi
> Labäy ʾina lənəkäd bälu lə-nabi Muḥammadi
> Ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi ʾabad al-ʾabadi
> Lab Ḥäbäša ʾišara gäbäru zärgiḥom ʾidi
> Fa-ʾinna bihā malikan lā-yazlimu walā-yuzlamu ʿindahu ʾaḥadun kättari yälläy
> ʿammaṣi yälläy Malät ʾəyyu ʾab Ḥäbäša ʿaddi bəṣəbbuq nəgus maḥmud al-kabari

> The Prophet Muḥammad witnessed Najāšī's fairness
> When his followers were persecuted in Mecca
> For accepting Islam
> Some of them were killed and others burnt
> He advised them to leave for another land
> Until the Lord makes it safe
> Where to? they asked the Prophet Muḥammad,
> May Allah's mercy be upon him forever
> He pointed to the land of Abyssinia
> There is a king under whose rule no one either oppresses or is oppressed there is
> neither robber nor rebellion.

Regarding the persecution the followers of Muhammad underwent and their
emigration to Abyssinia, Endris (2010) describes as follows:

> According to Ibn Jariral-Tabari (839-923), there came a trial which severely shook
> the people of Islam; some were seduced. The messenger of God commanded them
> to immigrate to Abyssinia. He told them that there was a righteous king in
> Abyssinia in whose land no one was oppressed and who was praised for his
> righteousness. The messenger of God commanded them to do this. A batch of

refugees went to Abyssinia because of the coercion they were being subjected to.
His fear was that they would be seduced from their religion.

Šayk ʿUmar mentioned with admiration some of the names of the emigrants as follows (6):

ʾƎn kab makka tälʿalu ʾəzom gotät ʾasyādi
ʾƎnbäytäy ruqiyya bint nabi Muḥammadi
Zawjuhā ʿUṯman saḵiyy al-yadi
ʿUṯman ʾibn Mazʿun ʾaḵi riḍāʿ lənabi Muḥammadi
Məsʾom mäṣyom bəzuḥat ʾasyādi bəṣəbbuq nəgus matluw al-ḵabari

The honorable emigrants began their journey from Mecca
Ruqiyya, the Prophet Muḥammaḍ's daughter,
Her husband Uthman, the generous
Uthman Mazun, "nurse-brother" of the Prophet Muḥammad,
More dignitaries were also in the group that came to the good and famous King.

The Quraysh, on learning that King Najāšī offered his hospitality to the emigrants, sent their own emissaries to Najāšī for the handing over of the Muslim emigrants. The emissaries came with gifts to Najāšī's ministers and servants so as to win their hearts. But the scheme would not be effective under the straight, logical and fair King as discussed below (7).

According to Šayk Umar, the emissaries appearing before Najāšī presented their case as follows (8):

Lab Najāšī ʾatäwu wäyyom kəltä säbati
Labaḵa mäṣiʾəna bälu sädidomuna ʿabbäyti
Nayna säbat mäṣiʾom ʾalläwu ʾabzu nayka märyäti
Hawwäkti ʾəyyom həzbi mäbbälašäwti
Käyäṭməmu ʾəyyu lətälʾaḵnayyo mälʾḵti
Kəthəbänna nədälli bäluwom ʾəzom säbat
Habbatom bälu ləbälʿu mäkwanənti šaʾa ḥaggizom ləbälʿu ḥašaḵəri

The two men entered Najāšī's court
They said, we came to you, sent by noble people
A few dissidents have come to your land
They are disobedient, corrupting people
We have been sent to prevent this
We request you to hand them over to us
The ministers who took gifts supported the request
The servants too who took gifts supported it

Through these gifts, the emissaries tried to convince the King that the emigrants professed a strange and corrupt religion. The ministers also supported the claim and pressured the King to turn the emigrants over to the Meccan Quraysh.

King Najāšī, however, did not succumb to the pressure. As a wise leader and, above all, a just king, he had to listen to what the emigrants had to say. He gave them a chance to present and defend their case (8):

Habbatom dä'a bälu 'əzom hadiyyā ləbäl'u
Sayyid Najāšī raḍiyallahu 'anhu läyzəng'u
Yäsäddədəy bälu märişom labay lətäşäggə'u
Zäräbä'om k̲əsəmma' bäluwwom yəṣṣäwwu'u ṣäwwa'i sädädu labzom 'akābiri

Turn them over, said those who took gifts
Yet King Najāšī, may Allah be pleased with him, refused
I am not to turn over those who seek protection by trusting me
Call them, and let's hear what they say

One can imagine the emotional tension rising in the court, while King Najāšī maintained his composure trying to reach the truth, behind the rift between the Quraysh delegates and the Muslim emigrants (11):

Säyyid Najāšī ṭäyyik'[q]u lətom 'asyādi
Ləmntay [läqiqkum] bäluwwom nawälädk̲um mägäddi

King Najāšī asked the noble ones (emigrants)
Why did you abandon the path of your forefathers?

Ja'far declared why they chose to follow Muḥammad. He explained that the religion they decided to embrace had values that would not accept the 'established' customs of Meccan society, no matter how popular such customs might be.

The manuscript briefly provides the argument of Ja'far at the court, which has been reported by many historians (12):

Ḥəmmak'[q] 'əyyu bälä nawäläddəna mägäddi
Nasäb gänzäb yəwəssäd näyru bəgəddi
Bəzuḥ näyruwwo našäyṭan mägäddi
Ləşəbbuq 'əntədälyälna rabbunā ṣamadi
Rasūl sädidulna nabi Muḥammadi märaḥi bəkayri mägdäfi ləšärri
Ṣəruy 'alyät 'əyyu ṭəntä mäsäräti
Ḥaqqäňňa 'əyyu yäbəlluy ḥəšoti
'Amin 'yyu yäbəlluy k̲əd'ati
'Ɛnkab bəqol 'a'u ḥizu kəša' lə'abbi 'əbyät k̲ämziy 'ilu mälisu sayyid Ja'fari

Our forefathers' path was an evil one
It was normal to usurp peoples' money
It was full of devilish acts
But when the Lord chose for us a better path
He sent us a messenger; the Prophet Muḥammad, Who guides to the good and forbids the bad

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He has a fine genealogy
He is truthful and knows no lies
He is trustworthy with no deception
From his childhood to adulthood. In such a manner did Master Jaʿfar present his
reply

The Šayḵ emphasizes in the manuscript that King Najāšī called his officials and clergy
to listen to what Jaʿfar had to say (12):

ʾƎnkyyow ləyyow naqus täwäqiʿu
ʿUlamā mäṣu nanaqus dəmṣi ləsämʿu
Sayyid Jaʿfar nagoytay waṣfi ʾasmʿu
Maʿnāʾu bärbiru lələbbatom wäqiʿu wušṭom bärbiru ləsämʿuwwo sirri

Immediately a bell rang
The clergy came in upon hearing the bell
Master Jaʿfar presented the attributes of the Lord
Which touched their hearts and minds
It was a new enlightenment
The King was touched by the teachings of Islam presented by Jaʿfar.

Najāšī's dedication to protecting the emigrants is expressed in the manuscript as
follows (13):

ʾAbširu bäluwwom ʾab ʿaddäy täqämmäṭu bəʾaman
Ləzom säbat ləräʾäyä bəkəfuʾ ʿayni
Ləllə sayyid ʿUthman ʾibn ʿAfan
ʾAmräy ḵälifu faqad ʿaṣāni raḍiyallahu ʿanhu maʿdin al-ḵayri

Be glad and live in peace in my country
Whoever looks at these people maliciously
At the group of Uṯman ibn Afan (one of the emigrants)
He has disobeyed me; (may Allah be pleased with him, as he is a mine of
goodness).

This was the final blow to the Meccan envoys, as King Najāšī affirmed his continuous
protection of the emigrants.

According to Šayḵ Umar's writings, King Najāšī was not only a source of peace for
his country, but also for the emigrants who sought his protection. In fact, this was a
milestone in setting a crucial example to the rest of the world. The singularity of this
regional legacy of Islam around King Najāšī has also been a model of inspiration, from
the end of the 19th century to the present times (ENDRIS 2010).

Conclusion

Despite the widespread putative assumption that he history of the northern Ethiopian highlands would be strictly embedded into Christian legacies, this study unfolds the existence of diverse and rich Islamic traditions, dating back to the emigration of Prophet Muḥammad's companions to Abyssinia, in 615A.D. Written in Arabic, Amhara and mostly in his native language, Tigriniya, the manuscripts produced by Šayḵ Umar unveil the active role of this local promoter of the Islamic revival, initiated since the end of the 19th century. His initiative was determinant for the construction of the shrine of Najāšī, the King of Abyssinia at the time of Prophet Muḥammad.

Further investigations into the various manuscripts of Šayḵ ʿUmar and other local Muslim clerics could bring important findings and reveal several hidden parts of the Ethiopian history, especially those related to the Ethiopian Muslims. In this perspective, the in-depth studies of ʿajamī manuscripts should be strengthened to learn more about the regional history of these local missionaries of Islam – and the plural knowledge they have transmitted along the centuries.

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Rethinking the Royal Matrimonial Practices in the 16th Century and its Consequences on the Status of Queen

Margaux Herman[*]

A major change in the 16th century's Ethiopian monarchy is the modification of the royal matrimonial practices: the medieval polygamous monarchs attempt to become monogamous. Therefore, this research proposes an investigation on the reasons of this evolution and on its consequences on the status of the queens at the royal court.

In the Ethiopian Christian kingdom, from the 15th century until the 20th century, only kings legally inherited to the Crown and reigned in their owns names.[1] Thus, one has to recognize that without king there is no queen. A queen is then, by definition, a king's spouse. The king is called *nəguś* (pl. *nagaśt*) and the female form of this title is *nəgəśt* (pl. *nəgəśtat*). Most of the medieval *nagaśt* are known to have many spouses, all queens, and, next to them, concubines. They practiced a customary polygyny and used a specific organization to differentiate the multiple queens at court. Indeed, each of them had an individual title and a specific location within the royal camp, which reflected the existence of a codified organization and characterized their particular role in the monarchy. Although royal polygyny remains in practice until the end of the 18th century, sovereigns tried to impose, in theory, the principle of monogamy as soon as the beginning of the 16th century. The result of this was that it changed radically the arrangement, the roles and the status of the queens in the monarchy. This evolution affected the method used to choose the kings' spouses, the ceremonial of royal alliances, the attribution of the queen's title (*nəgəśt*) and the different individual titles reserved to this rank.

Studying the matrimonial practices of Ethiopian kings also permits a deeper understanding of the strategies used by the monarchy to control the kingdom, it gives a better knowledge of the king's court and above all, it highlights some of the major changes that happened in the 16th century Christian kingdom.[2]

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[1]   *Nəgəśt* Zawditu (1916-1930) was the only ruling queen known in the monarchy.

[2]   This discussion is an excerpt of the researches I fulfilled for my Ph.D. dissertation on the Ethiopian Queens from the 15th century to the 17th century (HERMAN 2012).

The matrimonial practices of the kings during the second half of the 15th century

King Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468), A polygamous king and his five co-spouses

Due to the lack of sources, it is, until now, impossible to make any reliable statement on the organization of the different queens at court for the reigns preceding the one of King Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468). Compare to his predecessors, this reign is well documented for the king wrote, or made write, many religious and legislative texts (DERAT 2006: n. 13). The discussion under debates is mainly based on statements found in Zär'ä Ya'əqob and Bä'ədä Maryam's Chronicles[3] and in two legislative texts; in the *śər'atä gəbr*, which is related to the annual royal banquet[4] and in a legislative text written in 1448/1449 which gives clues about the food supply of the clergy of the royal camp's church dedicated to Mary.[5] According to these sources, in the second half of the 15th century, kings were polygamous, had five co-spouses, who all got the status of queen (*nəgəśt*), a title equivalent at that time to the one of *itē*.[6] The five co-spouses (*nəgəśtat* or *ite*) also received an individual title, which distinguished them one from each other's. Thus, there were five different titles that defined their rank at the royal court: a queen of the right called *ite qañ bä'altəḫat*, a queen of the left called *ite gəra bä'altəḫat*, the youngest queen called *ite bä'altä šəḫəna* and two other queens, which titles were *ite yägälagəl gäzäyt* and *ite yäwäsärbat gäzäyt*.[7]

By crossing different types of information, a hierarchy amongst the five co-wives of King Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468) has been highlighted. Due to the lack of information in comparison with the other queens, two queens can be qualified as "minor queens": *ite yägälagəl gäzäyt* and *ite yäwäsärbat gäzäyt*. First of all, their names are unknown. Secondly, the only reliable information about them, except their titles, is related to their implication in the annual banquet and in the food supply of the clergy of the camp's church dedicated to Mary. On the opposite, the reigning names of three other queens are known and, therefore, they can be qualified as the three "major" spouses of King Zär'ä Ya'əqob. The queen of the right (*itē qañ bä'altəḫat)* received the reigning name of Žan Zēla,[8] the queen of the left (*itē gəra bä'altəḫat*) the one of Žan Ḫayla,[9] while the

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[3] PERRUCHON 1893. (On these Chronicles, see DERAT 2002: 3; 2006: 7, n. 13; KROPP 1983-84: 58-59).

[4] It is a composite text written during the second half of the 15th century, which gives us useful information about the annual banquet (*śər'atä ma'ed*), the organization of the royal camp and others various subjects. It was published in 1988(2) by Manfred Kropp. On the annual banquet, see DERAT 2001; DERAT 2002; DERESE AYENACHEW 2009: 34-38.

[5] It is issued from the folios 154rv. of the manuscript BL. Or. 481. It was published in 2005 by Manfred Kropp.

[6] PERRUCHON 1893: 16, 38-39, 54, 59, 86-87, 105-107; KROPP 1988b: 54-55, 66; KROPP 2005: 132-133, 135-136.

[7] Next to the co-wives of the king, another queen was present at court, the mother of of the king, Ǝgzi'ə Kəbra who was called *atsé ənnat*.

[8] She is also known under the baptismal name of Ǝlēni. (PERRUCHON 1893: 16, 59).

[9] She is also known under the baptismal name of Frē Maryam (PERRUCHON 1893: 54, 87).

"youngest"[10] queen (*itē bä'altä šəḥəna*) was called by her reigning name Žan Kälälä.[11] One can noticed that these three queens all received a reigning name based on the prefix *Žan*, a word used to qualify the king himself and that can be translated by "his Majesty" (KROPP 2005: 56; BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1954: 6).

As these reigning names are all based on the same prefix and as they remain hard to translate literally (HERMAN 2012: 87-88), the hierarchy between Zär'ä Ya'əqob's queens seems not to be expressed in their names in comparison of those of his successors. However, two different elements point out that the main wife of the king and the highest queen in the hierarchy of the court was the queen of the right, *nəgəśt qañ bä'altəhat*. The first point is to be related to the Ethiopian culture that attributes more respect and credit to the right than to the left. The second is given by some relevant information found in the *śər'atä gəbr*. This legislative text gives the location within the royal camp of the king and of the dignitaries's tents, a position that reflected their status at court. Thus, comparing the position of the tents attributed to each queen, the queen of the right, *nəgəśt qañ bä'altəhat*, lived closest to the king than the queen of the left, *nəgəśt gəra bä'altəhat*. Moreover, the tents of the queen of the right are, in the *śər'atä gəbr,* presented in first place, just after the monarch's tents. They were located on the right and closest to the king's tents, while the other queen was settled a bit further and on the left side of the camp. Therefore, the queen of the right was given more respect and probably more duties than the queen of the left. Following the same demonstration, it is also possible to conclude that the queen of the right was a kind of guardian for the "youngest" queen, because the latter was assigned to live below the tents of the first within the royal camp (see Annex 1) (KROPP, 1988b; DERESE AYENACHEW 2009: 34-37).

First modifications of the queen's organization during the reign of King Bä'ədä Maryam (1468-1478)

The organization of the different queens at King Zär'ä Ya'əqob's court was followed during the reigns of his successors Bä'ədä Maryam (1468-1478), Ǝskəndər (1478-1495) and Na'od (1495-1508). However, some adaptations began as soon as the reign of his successor, King Bä'ədä Maryam.

The main difference is linked with the title of the queen of the right (*nəgəśt qañ bä'altəhat*) which remained the exclusive right of one of Zär'ä Ya'əqob's widow, *Nəgəśt Žan Zēla*, also called Ǝlēni, who stayed at the kings' courts until she died in 1524 (HERMAN 2012: 216), keeping her title and position at court.

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[10] According to Tadesse Tamrat, *itē bä'altä šəḥəna* was the youngest queen at court (TADESSE TAMRAT 1972: 272). This hypothesis is confirmed by an hagiographical tradition stating that she was only seventeen years old when she got married to King Zär'ä Ya'əqob who was in an advanced age (*Gädlä Zēna Marqos* from Däbrä Sigē Church, f. 109-110, *in* Tadesse Tamrat, 1974). Moreover, in Ba'eda Maryam's Chronicle, *itē bä'altä šəḥəna* was the last queen to join the court (PERRUCHON 1893: 149). We might thus assumed that *itē bä'altä šəḥəna* was the "youngest" queen, at least in terms of court's experience.

[11] She is also known under the baptismal name of Ṣəyon Mogäsa, the mother of King Bä'ədä Maryam (1468-1478) (HERMAN 2012: 18-19; PERRUCHON 1893: 105-107, KROPP 2005: 132-133; DERAT 2004: 221-222).

The second adaptation is related to the queens' reigning names. At first, King Bä'ədä Maryam (1468-1478) followed the custom established by his predecessor by giving to his first wife, the queen of the left (*itē gǝra bä'altǝḥat*), the reigning name of Žan Säyfa (PERRUCHON 1893: 125, 173-174). But, few years later, he introduced a novelty by giving to his last wife the reigning name of Dawit Ǝra (*Ibid.*: 149), a name which was not formed with the prefix *Žan* but on the basis of his own reigning name, Dāwit ((*Ibid.*: 125). Considering that she was the last queen arrived at court and that she received a reigning name based on her husband's one, it might be assumed that the king decided to distinguish her as his favorite wife.[12] This novelty was then followed by his successors; Ǝskǝndǝr (1478-1495) called his favorite wife Ǝskǝndǝr Mogäsa (EMML 3879: f. 1ab) and Na'od (1495-1508) named his favorite wife Na'od Mogäsa (KROPP 1988a: 3).

The question of the ceremony of the royal union

Until today, it is impossible to know if, during those times, it exists (or not) a distinction between a civil (or politic) ceremony of royal union and a religious ceremony. Indeed, the only detailed ritual related to a queen's ceremonial is given in Bä'ədä Maryam's Chronicle, but the nature and the details of this practice are unclear (PERRUCHON 1893: 173-174; HERMAN 2012: 204-207). Moreover, considering that the religious ceremony of marriage is a unique sacrament conferred by the religious authority, the religious ceremony must probably have been omitted during those days. However, the official nature of the customary polygyny is authenticating by the fact that all royal alliances were sealed with the co-wives during a ceremonial where they received the title of *nǝgǝśt,* an individual title and a reigning name. All these attributions sat the co-wives apart from the concubines (*ǝqubat*) who got none.

Being a polygamous king, a way to control the kingdom

It is worth now analyzing the elements that bring into play in this customary multiple royal alliances. Until the beginning of the 18th century, no marriage contracts have been found which would have been helpful to understand the politic strategies which infer in the choice of the king's wives. From the 15th century until the 18th century, the portrait of the royal spouse drew up in the royal chronicles remains the same. They present an archetype of the "good queen", an idealistic spouse having all the qualities required for the wife of a Christian king: a queen with a perfect physical appearance and who possesses Christian spiritual virtues beyond reproach. Manuel de Almeida, a Jesuit Portuguese who came at the Ethiopian court in 1624, relayed this archetype noting that:

> "[...]though sometimes they [kings] paid no attention to noble birth but only to good character and charm, for they say that the King gains nothing from his wife's noble birth while her great fortune in being chosen to be the Emperor's wife is sufficient nobility for her" (BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1954: 69).

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[12] Even if it cannot be excluded that she received this name for other reasons based on her personal references or familial background and influence, the fact that she appeared dependent on the queen of the right for the location of her tents in the royal camp leads us to believe that she was the favorite spouse of the king.

Even though, he remarked that "the Emperor [were] marrying daughters of Moorish and heathen kings and lords after baptizing them first", ((BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1961: 69) he never pointed out the meanings of such kind of multiple alliances. A century before, Francisco Alvares, a Portuguese who stayed in Ethiopia from 1521 to 1526 during King Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign (1508-1540), tried to explain the process and the reasons of the royal polygyny. He stated that Ethiopian Kings commonly married women born into powerful regional families, both Christian and Muslim:

> "The preceding Presters [kings], until the father of this one who now reigns, always had five or six wives, and they had them from the daughters of the neighboring Moorish Kings, and [not] from the pagans; and from the Captains of these lordships or Captaincies they had one or two, if they found them suitable; and from the King of Dancali another; and from the King of Adel and the King of Adea" (BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1961: 193).

The chaplain Alvares continued stating that King Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508-1540) refused to marry the princess from the Ḥädya region, the result of this was that he did not received the customary tributes he was supposed to get from the lords of Ḥädya:

> "He [Lebna Dengel] asks for the tribute from these Kings, his tributaries, which their predecessors were obliged to pay him. They used not to bring him this tribute on account of the marriage and, for that reason, make this war which is being continually waged". (*Ibid.*)

Thus, following his demonstration, dynastic alliances were concluded by the King as a way to keep peace and to collect tributes from neighboring areas.

The most-well known case of an alliance with a Muslim neighboring kingdom is the union of King Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468) with Ǝlēni, a daughter of the *Gärad* of the Ḥädya (PERRUCHON 1893: 16-18). Before the alliance was sealed, she converted to Christianity and received the baptismal name of Ǝlēni. As stated by the chaplain Alvares, Zär'ä Ya'əqob's Chronicle also mentioned the episode of the collect of the Ḥädya tribute (*Ibid.*). All these examples confirm that the Ḥädya region was, for the Christian Kings, a strategic area to have under relative control and which gave to the kingdom some sizeable incomes.

Alliances with the Northern Provinces, like the region of Tigre and Ḥamasen, were also concluded. According to Manuel de Almeida, the mother of King Zär'ä Ya'əqob, Ǝgzi'ə Kəbra, as well as many others queens,[13] was native from Tigre (BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1961: 69). The Northern Provinces were essential for the kingdom economic expansion. Indeed, the commercial road from the ports of Mässäwa and Arqiqo leading to the Christian kingdom passed necessarily through Ḥamasen (Dəbarwa), then Tigre.[14] Francisco Alvares also testified that the *baḥr nägaš*, the lord of the Ḥamasen, paid off a tax in

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[13] For example, a wife of Amdä Ṣəyon(1314-1344), Bəlen Saba, was probably native from Endärta in Tigre (TOUBKIS 2004: 773), as well as Na'od Mogäsa came from Tigre (BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1954: 107-108).

[14] TOUBKIS 2004: 806; and on the territory of the *baḥr nagäš*, pp.776-777.

horses and in silk and cotton garments imported from the Indies (BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD 1961: 173; TOUBKIS 2004: 781).

Other reasons motivated the policy of multiple alliances. If it is still difficult to trace the native region of the five co-spouses of King Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468), we therefore know the native region of another of them. According to his chronicle, Žan Ḥayla,[15] the queen of the left, was native of Iba (in Šäwa), a region that the king took, or received, from her to build his capital, which he later called Däbrä Bərḫan.[16]

Finally, more often than not, the multiple dynastic alliances, which medieval kings entered into with governors, aims at extending the frontier of the kingdom and consolidating their power over economically strategic areas.

Rethinking the customary royal polygyny in the 16th century

The 16th century's monogamous kings

In the beginning of the 17th century, Manuel de Almeida notes that:

> "[...] the custom the Emperors of Ethiopia have always followed of having many wives, who are held and considered to be legitimate, besides others who had no better title than concubine.[...] So it has happened that till this day they know no Emperor who abandoned the custom of having many wives".[17]

Although this statement cannot be cast doubt on, Manuel de Almeida, as a foreigner witness, missed some relevant details connected to the evolution of the royal court's organization that happened during the 16th century. Indeed, a century before, his predecessor, Francisco Alvares, proposed another picture and presented King Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508-1540) as a monogamous King in order to respect the religious law.

> "The preceding Presters [kings], until the father of this one who now reigns, always had five or six wives. [...] And at the present time known to us, [...] this David [...] married the daughter of a Christian, and would not have more than one wife, saying that he would follow the law of the Gospel".[18]

According to the royal Chronicles of the 16th century's kings,[19] his two sons, Gälawdewos (1540-1559) and Minas (1559-1563), and his grand-son Śärḍä Dəngəl (1563-1597) followed his example. Though nothing is known about his wife, King

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[15] She is also known under the baptismal name of Frë Maryam. (PERRUCHON 1893: 54)

[16] "Zär'ä Ya'əqob, who received the land of Iba from the queen *gəra bä'altəḫat* made vow to give it to the church for the priest and for the mass. He resolved to fix on this place his residence" (PERRUCHON 1893: 72). We can therefore remarks that the exact ge'ez text gives: "ምድረ፡ኢባ፡ኅሥኣ፡እምኒ፡ግራ፡በእልቴሐት " and, as Jules Perruchon already points out, the verb ኅሥኣ possesses a double meanings; on one hand it means "to take" and on the other "to received" (LESLAU 1991: 404; DILLMANN 1884: 25).

[17] BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD, 1954, ch. 16, p. 68-69.

[18] BECKINGHAM & HUNTINGFORD, 1961, p. 193. We will not discuss in this paper on the debates that happened, a century later, about Ləbna Dəngəl's matrimonial situation.

[19] KROPP, 1988(1); CONZELMAN, 1895; CONTI ROSSINI, 1907.

Gälawdewos laid down an edict on monogamy in 1544.[20] Minas marry only one wife, Səllus Ḫayla (KROPP 1988a: 51). As for Śärḍä Dəngəl, he married Maryam Səna.[21] If he finally took a concubine called Ḫargo,[22] it was only to insure him an heir apparent to the throne as Maryam Səna gave him only daughters (HERMAN 2012: 33-34) (See Annex 2)

Facing to these arguments, it can be assumed that the kings of the 16th century were attending to respect monogamy and changed the matrimonial practice of their predecessors.

A systematic religious ceremony of wedding

The religious ceremony of marriage became to be the rule starting from Ləbnä Dəngəl's reign (1508-1540). Indeed, the religious ceremony of the wedding of King Ləbnä Dəngəl with Säblä Wangel is attested by two sources: the account of Francisco Alvares and the Chronicle of his son. The chronicler of King Gälawdewos (1540-1559) remarked, concerning the father of this king, that:

> "[...] he [Ləbnä Dəngəl] won God's blessing, which inspired him the love of the holy marriage, which consist to marry only one wife in order to respect the Canons of the Christian Church.[23] He shows in in his palace a lady who was beautiful and who took all her pride in obeying her husband and who was submissive to him like Sara to Abraham. He made her Queen, sat her on his right and covered her with golden garments so as she was so richly adorn that she forgot her people and her family" (CONZELMAN 1895: 122-123).

It cannot be attested if King Gälawdewos (1540-1559) received this sacrament or not. Nevertheless, the edict that he wrote down in 1544 to regulate the matrimonial policies asserted the principle of monogamy and laid down the rules of the degree of the relationship between the married couple. This royal edict also insisted on the importance to conform oneself to the religious ceremony:

> "At the time of the matrimony, you will proceed according to the law of the apostle,[24] in front of the church, by reading the Holy Scriptures, and with a pure wedding" (CONTI ROSSINI 1909-1910: 86).

The religious ceremony of Minas (1559-1563)'s wedding is attested by his chronicle:

> "Some years after his return, the queen [his mother] made proceed to *mar* Minas and his wife to the celebration of the religious wedding, as prescribed by the

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[20] CONTI ROSSINI, 1909-1910, p. 86.

[21] CONTI ROSSINI, 1907, p. 111 (text.)/p. 126-127 (trad.)

[22] PERRUCHON 1896: 356. She is not mentioned in the royal chronicle.

[23] እግዚአብሔር፡ ወደደየት፡ ውስተ፡ ልቡ፡ አፍቅሮተ፡ ቅድስት፡ ሰብሳብ፡ እንተ፡ ይእቲ፡ ከዊነ፡ ፩መርዓዊ፡ ለአሐቲ፡ መርዓት፡ በአምጣነ፡ ቀኖናየ፡ ቤተ፡ ክርስቲያን፡ እንተ፡ አሕዛብ። (CONZELMAN 1895: 2)

[24] *Apostle Acts* (ch. 18, 19) and *Epistle to Ephesiens* (5,21-33).

doctors of the Church for the fiancé [bridegroom] and the fiancée [bride]; thanks
to this ceremony they become one flesh" (KROPP 1988a: 51-52).

The systematic practice of the religious ceremony of wedding during the 16th century
both supports the thesis of the change of the royal matrimonial customs and the drift
toward monogamy.[25] The importance given to the religious union is that it united the
king and his wife in a sacral way (one flesh) which authorized the king to transmit to
the queen his dignity and all the privileges that he owned. Thus, the wife (or the queen)
became more legitimate with regard to the people, a legitimacy that was reflected on the
heirs who were intended to reign.

Only one queen is consecrate per reign

In opposition to the 15th century's kings, who were, as it has been demonstrated, giving
the title of queen (*nəgəśt*), an individual title and a reigning name to each of their five
wives, the introduction of monogamy is also expressed by the fact that only the woman
who received the religious sacrament of marriage could receive these attributes. In plus,
instead of giving a name based on the customary base of *Žan*, they re-used the way of
naming the favored wife. For example, Ləbnä Dəngəl, called Wänag Sägäd, got married
to Säblä Wängel and gave her the reigning name of Wänag Mogäsa. Minas called Admas
Sägäd marry Səllus Ḥayla who took the reigning name of Admas Mogäsa. And Śärḍä
Dəngəl called Mäläk Sägäd got married to Maryam Sena then called Mäläk Mogäsa.

Thus, comparing to the preceding century, only one queen was made per reign. The
spouse, who became one flesh with her husband, was then the only queen to be linked
to the king by her reigning name. (See Annex 2)

The transition from an official customary polygyny to an official monogamy in the 16th century

Causes

The first factor of the change of the kings' matrimonial practices has to be linked with
the *Imam* Ahmad's successful occupation of Ethiopia between 1529 and 1543 which
drastically reduced the power and prestige of Ethiopian kings. As a consequence, the
Christian King did not appear anymore as a potential allied for the Muslim neighboring
kingdoms, as it was the case of the kings of Ḥädya (BASSET 1897: 372). For instance,
the Arab chronicler stated that, in 1531, the *Gärad* of the Ḥädya gave his daughters in
marriage to the *Imam* changing the custom of alliance which was in used since King
Amdä Ṣəyon (1314-1344):

"The *imam* left the lake and went to the Ḥädya region. The chief of the land
arrived; he was a Muslim and paid a tribute to the Abyssinian King, to whom he

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[25] If the name of the ceremonial evolves more or less during this period, it always called the same references.
Ləbna Dəngəl (1508-1540) concluded the *qedest sabsāb* ("ቅድስት፡ሰብሳብ "or "Holy wedding") and Minās
(1559-1563), the *ṣalota taklil* (ጸሎተ፡ተክሊል) which literally means "the prayer (or vow) of the Crowning"
which is the religious sacrament of the wedding.

gave every year a young girl who was then baptize; this was a custom of the country. [...] He [the *imam*] questioned them about this annual gift that they were given to the King of Abyssinia, one of their daughters chosen among all for her personal beauty, her grace and her nobility, as they were themselves Muslims. They answered him: 'He imposed it to our fathers; He was stronger than them [...] He imposed us the obligation to give him every year a young girl." (*Ibid.*)

Continuing his discourses, the *Imam's* chronicler finally stated that: "The chief of the Ḥädya gave his own daughter to the *imam*, she was called Mourias" (*Ibid.*: 378). Thus, one has to admit that the introduction of the monogamy can probably be related to the war which diminished Lebna Dengel's influence over the neighboring kingdoms.

The second factor is related with one consequence of the war which brought the question of faith into the limelight. After the death of the imam in 1543, the matrimonial practices of the king were raised and discussed in the context of the Christian and Islamic conflicts of this period. Monogamy was then followed and used as an argument by the kings in order to show their respect of the Ethiopian religious law and their respect to the leaders of the Ethiopian faith. Indeed, during the conflict many Christian were turned into Muslim's faith. So when the kingdom found back a kind of peace after the death of the Imam, the King had to represent an idealistic Christian sovereign. He wanted to make the converted ones coming back under his leadership, but also to rebuild the kingdom with the help of the religious leaders. The faith and the practices of the Christian King were also put in debates by the Portuguese who came for helping the Christian kingdom during the war. These debates were then pursued by the Jesuits led by André de Oviedo who arrived a decade after them to convert the Kings to the Catholic faith. They highly critiqued the kings' polygyny and their religious practices. Thus, in answer to both internal troubles and external debates, King Gälawdewos (1540-1559) decided to pursue the monogamist principle launched by his father (CONTI ROSSINI 1909-1910: 86). From these proceedings, a conclusion was drowned: monogamy is necessary in order to respect the Ethiopian religious law. Kings are thus shown, especially in the royal Chronicle, following the principle of monogamy and using systematically the religious ceremony.

Consequences

First of all, the modification of the royal matrimonial practices changed the modalities used by the kings to choose their wives. They began to marry only daughters of Christian lords. Therefore, it appears that the multiple dynastic alliances contracted by the previous kings seem to have been substituted during the 16th century by the matrimonial alliances of the princesses (HERMAN 2012: 58-65). Secondly, considering the new matrimonial practice, the previous organization between the queens of the court became useless and the former titles disappeared. Kings had to create a new organization amongst the different queens at the court.

From the reign of Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468) to her death in 1524, Ǝleni, the queen of the right (*nəgəśt qañ bä'altəḥat*) legally detained the highest position in the queens' hierarchy and succeeded to control the regency of her great-grand son Ləbnä Dəngəl

(1508-1540) over his uterine mother, Nā'od Mogäsa (KROPP 1988a: 3). It might be assumed that her rank at court, as well as her influence and supporters, helped her to gain such power. Yet, during the 16ᵗʰ century, considering the change of the royal matrimonial practices, the former codification of the queens' statuses became inappropriate. Indeed, even if there was only one queen made by reign (the wife of the king), there was a lack of rules concerning the position of the old queens still at court, the widows of the previous kings. Thus, between the reign of Gälawdewos (1540-1559) and the one of Śärḍä Dǝngǝl (1563-1597), a new distinction was created for Queen Säblä Wängel, the widow of Lǝbnä Dǝngǝl (1508-1540). She was first called the *abbay nǝgǝśt* (*Ibid.*: 48; CONTI ROSSINI, 1907: 8, 31, 103), the "tall queen" or "major queen" and *nǝgǝśt Ityopya*, the "queen of Ethiopia". Indeed, she had been designated as Queen Regent for the beginning of both the reigns of Gälawdewos and Śärḍä Dǝngǝl (1563-1597) (HERMAN 2012: 290-304, 316-322). A new title was then created and given to her to sanction her status of main queen at court and that placed her directly after the king in the kingdom's hierarchy. She was rewarded with the new title of *Itege,* a rank that she kept until she died.

The influence of two queens, Ǝleni and Säblä Wängel, modeled the rank of *Itege*. Their longevity at court, their involvement on the monarchy as regents and their dominant position over the other queens at court, co-spouses or widows, renders their career quite similar. Indeed, the queen *Itege* became, at the end of the 16ᵗʰ century, the main queen at the court and the designated regent in case of royal minority. Therefore, the change of the kings' matrimonial practices imposed the creation of new distinctive titles to codify the statuses of the queens at the royal court. It also permits the queen to gain more power and influence by becoming the second personage in the monarchy after the king.

Conclusion

In contrast to the preceding centuries, starting with the reign of Lǝbnä Dǝngǝl (1508-1540), only one wife, who received the religious sacrament of marriage, could become *negeśt* (queen) and receive a reigning name, a fact that attests the drift towards monogamy. If the king had other women, they were all restricted to the lower status of concubine though their children could still be potential heirs to the throne. The change of the royal matrimonial practices that started at the very beginning of the 16ᵗʰ century continued to be used after the death of the *imam* in 1543 as an argument used by the royal chroniclers to raise the King as a model of perfection, a King who follows the rules of the Christian Ethiopian faith. These new matrimonial customs modified both the organization of the queens at royal court and the way the monarch chose his wife. The intense competition between the wives of the polygamous king in former times was now replaced by the rivalry between the unique wife of the reigning monarch and the widows of his predecessor who were still present at his court. In response of this new political order, the status of the Queen Mother bearing the title of *Itege* was created which gave to the queens the possibility of gaining more power and authority over the kingdom than in the previous centuries.

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Annexes:

Figure 1: Location of the dignitaries' tents in the royal camp (DERESE AYENACHEW 2009)

Annex 2:

KING'S BAPTISMAL NAME	KING'S REIGNING NAME	QUEEN'S BAPTISMAL NAME*	QUEEN'S REIGNING NAME*
Zär'ä Ya'əqob (1434-1468)	Qosṭanṭinos	1- Ǝlēni 2- Frē Maryam 3- Ṣəyon Mogäsa	1- Žan Zēla 2- Žan Ḥayla 3- Žan Kälälä
Bä'edä Maryam (1468-1478)	Dāwit	? ? Romna	Žan Sayfa Dawit Ēra ?
Ǝskəndər (1478-1494)	Qosṭanṭinos	?	Ǝskəndər Mogäsa
Na'od (1495-1508)	?	?	Na'od Mogäsa
Ləbnä Dəngəl (1508-1540)	Wänag Sägäd	Säblä Wängel	Wänag Mogäsa
Gälawdēwos (1540-1559)	Aṣnaf Sägäd	?	?
Minas (1559-1563)	Admas Sägäd	Səllus Ḥayla	Admas Mogäsa
Śärḍä Dəngəl (1563-1597)	Malak Sägäd	Maryam Sənna	Malak Mogäsa

Figure 2: Kings and Queens' names (M. Herman, 2012)

*Here are just mentioned the names of the known spouses.

Ottomans, Yemenis and the "Conquest of Abyssinia" (1531-1543)

Amélie Chekroun[*]

The conquest of the Ethiopian Christian Kingdom by the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn Sultanate during the first half of the 16th century has often been considered as a peripheral consequence of the struggle opposing the Portuguese and the Ottoman Empire for the control of the Red Sea. The Ethiopian conquest (1531-1543) was preceded by several Muslim expeditions along the Christian borders, which started in 1525-1527. During those wars, and especially the conquest of the Christian Kingdom, it is generally assumed that the Ottoman Empire gave its support to the Muslim military coalitions led by one of the Harar's emirs, Imām Aḥmad. At the same time, several historical records indicate that the Portuguese actively helped the Christian army to contain the progression of Imām Aḥmad's troops in the northern territories of present Ethiopia. The Portuguese and Ottoman interventions in this Ethiopian conquest would reflect their competing political ambitions around the Red Sea. Though the intervention of the Portuguese is well documented and studied, the Ottoman involvement in these conflicts remains more controversial.

According to several Turkish historians, the Ottoman intervention neither needs to be more investigated, nor even debated. As for Cengiz Orhonlu, it is clear that every soldier or material coming from Yemen to help the army of the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn Sultanate was sent by the Ottoman Empire. In the history of the Ottoman province of Abyssinia (1554 - 20th century) he published in 1974, Orhonlu explains that the Ottoman Empire provided Imām Aḥmad with military equipment from Yemen (ORHONLU 1974:26-27). Encouraged by the promising military victories of the Imām's troops, the Ottoman Sultan promised to grant him with the title of 'king of Ethiopia', if the Imām achieved the total conquest of the Christian Kingdom. In addition, Orhonlu indicates that it is only after Imām Aḥmad's death in 1543 that the Ottoman Empire privileged a direct intervention to counter the decline of Islam in this strategic region. However, Orhonlu's argumentation is based on controversial sources, like Evliya Celebi's narrative on his 40 year long journey across the Ottoman Empire (1611-1681?). Though Celebi's voluminous book contains very interesting information to understand the mentality of the Ottoman era at the beginning of the 17th century, his narrative is also

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known for the unreliable data it provided on the historical descriptions of the several territories he crosses during his journey (DANKOFF 2004).

As Orhonlu probably overestimated the length of the Ottoman intervention in East Africa before the creation of the *Eyalet Habeš* ('The Abyssinian Province' in Turkish) in 1554 around the town of Massawa, other Turkish authors – like Salih Özbaran (ÖZBARAN 1994 and 2009) – but also several Ethiopian and Western historians largely followed Orhonlu's views. For example, Mordechai Abir writes that the Ottomans assisted Imām Aḥmad in the end of the conquest to fight the Portuguese (ABIR 1980:99). Moreover, except the Turkish historiographical tradition, the other academic works do not mention the presence of the Ottomans in Ethiopia before the last years of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia' – from 1540 to 1543 – and generally relate it to the Portuguese presence.[1]

Since the medieval period, the Sultanate of Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn had contacts with the Muslim world and Yemen in particular. During the military campaigns waged by Imām Aḥmad from 1525 to 1543, the Yemeni sovereigns provided him with material assistance but also human support. Nevertheless, this Yemeni assistance should not be assimilated to an Ottoman intervention. Indeed, the first Ottoman occupation of the Yemeni coasts began between August 1538 and February 1539, with the occupation of the port of Aden and the submission of the emir of Zabīd. Launched in 1527, the conquest of Sana'a was not fully effective before 1556. Initially considered as a separate minor province of the Ottoman Empire, Yemen was gradually integrated into the Ottoman administration.[2] Therefore, during almost of the years when Imām Aḥmad's troops waged war against the Ethiopian Christian kingdom, Yemen was not yet under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, there is no formal evidence to assume that the Ottoman Empire actively participated to these Ethiopian conflicts, before the conquest of Yemen in 1538-1539. Moreover, the direct or indirect role of the Ottoman Empire remains largely unknown since the beginning of the 1540s.

In this perspective, this paper proposes to re-examine the classical historical interpretations that shaped this so-called 'Ottoman intervention' and their controversial relevance to unveil the regional dynamics around the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'.

The Yemeni intervention in the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'

In the long account of his stay in Ethiopia from 1520 to 1526, Francisco Álvares reports that the Portuguese clashed with the Ottomans around the Red Sea (BECKINGHAM and HUNTINGFORD 1961: 416). Though the chaplain of the Portuguese Embassy in 'Abyssinia' never mention the presence of Ottoman troops in Ethiopia, the Christian dignitaries were probably aware of the competing Portuguese and Ottoman ambitions in the region. Sent by King Manoel I to the court of the Ethiopian 'King of kings'

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[1] See for example TRIMINGHAM 1965: 76 *sq.*

[2] SOUDAN 1999: 252-256, TUCHSCHERER 2000; BLACKBURN 1979:119. See also the communication of N. Melis during the *18th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Dire Dawa Nov-Dec 2012)*, "Some remarks on the Turkish historiography on the making of Ottoman Africa".

(*negusa negast* in Amharic), Álvares had crossed the Red Sea during his journey to reach the Ethiopian highlands. His famous narrative suggests that he regularly met the Ethiopian dignitaries and probably informed them about the conflicts near the Red Sea.

Nevertheless, the Ethiopian sources of this time do not mention the presence of the Ottomans around the Red Sea before the last years of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia', except the few letters allegedly written and sent by Queen Eleni to the Portuguese King.[3] In the opposite, the relations between the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn in present Eastern Ethiopia and Yemen are attested through numerous written sources, since the medieval times. The exploration of these sources related to the first half of the 16th century shows that the early involvement of the Ottoman authorities in the *ğihād* launched by Imām Aḥmad against the Christian kingdoms of Abyssinia is rather an academic prejudice, than an objective historical fact.

Slaves and firearms: the war economy linking Harar to Yemen

Before 1540, the Muslim populations of the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn and the Ottoman Empire were indirectly connected through the slave and firearm trade networks that bind together the two banks of the Red Sea, a long time before the beginning of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'. In the first decade of the 16th century, the Italian traveller Ludovico di Warthema (WINTER 1863) noted in Aden that the Sultan's bodyguards and army consisted of 300 riders, whom he designated as the "sons of Christian, black", originating "from the land of Prester John" (WINTER 1863:63-64). In his brief description of Zaylaʿ, Warthema explains that many of slaves for sale he saw in this African port were former Christian soldiers who belonged to the "people of Prester John", before their capture during the battles against the Muslim warriors who sent them to Zaylaʿ – and from there to Persia, Arabia Felix, Mecca, Cairo and India (WINTER 1863:86-88). After the beginning of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia' in 1531, the troops of Imām Aḥmad continued to sell their Christian war prisoners as slaves to regional traders, who sent them from the port of Zaylaʿ to Yemen, where they were often sold again and then sent almost all over the Muslim World. Some of them ended up in Gujarat,[4] while others remained in the Arabian Peninsula and finally joined the Yemeni army. This slave trade of Christian captives sent to Aden or Zabīd is also frequently mentioned in ʿArab Faqīh's historical account of the mid-16th century, *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* ('The Conquest of Abyssinia' in Arabic),[5] narrating the rise of Imām Aḥmad from the perspective of the Harar city-dwellers.[6] Thus, in the beginning of the 'Conquest', the Muslim elites of the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn already knew that Sulaīman Rais, the ruler of Zabīd, had previously

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[3] See WINTER 1863, AUBIN 1976: 9 and BARRETO 1988: 45.

[4] See ROSS 1910 and LOKHANDWALA 1970-1974.

[5] On several occasions, this text mentions that Christian prisoners were sent as slaves to Aden or Zabīd. Thus, after the battle of Dīr against Dağalhān in 1527, Imām Aḥmad sent prisoners to "Sulaīmān, the Emir and Governor of Zabīd. They were enslaved to the Emir of Zabīd. Some others of them he had killed. Others of them simply died" (STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003: 26).

[6] After the conquest of Egypt by the Ottomans, Sulaīman Rais submitted to Selim I and Zabīd began to be administered under the Ottoman rule in 1539. See CHEKROUN 2013.

conquered the town on the order of the last Mamluk Sultan.[7] Though the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* ends before the Ottoman Empire annexed Yemen, it never mentions the Ottomans. During the last years of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia', several sources indicate that Imām Aḥmad occasionally sent war prisoners to Yemen – including Minas, the son of the Christian king Lebna Dengel (r. 1508-1540)[8] – as gifts to the Emir of Zabīd or "the Lord of Aden"[9] – but never to any Ottoman dignitaries.

Regarding firearm trade, Salih Özbaran seems to point out the role of the Ottomans in its regional development (ÖZBARAN 1994:61-66). However, his work does neither mobilize nor quote any Ottoman source. Indeed, Salih Özbaran exclusively refers to the study of Cengiz Orhonlu, based on Portuguese sources too. Several elements presented in *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* also suggest that the Ottoman authorities were not involved in the firearm trade that fostered the military equipment of Imām Aḥmad's army. This historical account reports several times that the Imām sent his men to the port of Zaylaʿ in order to buy weapons – swords, guns or cannons – that mostly originated from the regional markets of the Arabian Peninsula, before the integration of Yemen into the Ottoman Empire in 1539.[10]

Thus, though the Yemeni rulers knew about the war launched by Imām Aḥmad in Abyssinia, they simply indirectly participated to the 'Conquest' through the slave and firearm trade that already bind Harar and the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn to the eastern banks of the Red Sea. Above all, the total absence of the Ottomans in the non-Portuguese sources and the regional narratives on these trade networks suggests that their involvement in the 'Conquest of Abyssinia' was probably limited to the last years of the conflict.

Foreign soldiers in Imām Aḥmad's army

The *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* mentions the presence of foreign – and especially Yemeni – troops within the military forces led by Imām Aḥmad, at least before 1541. In order to conquer the Ethiopian Christian kingdom, 'Arab Faqīh reports that the Imām sent messengers across the Muslim countries to recruit troops. However, the early Yemeni presence should not be interpreted as an Ottoman intervention, as their involvement in the Imām's army never appears inside the detailed descriptions, presented in this unique historical account on the first years of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'. Among these foreign Muslim troops that converged to Harar, 'Arab Faqīh notes the arrival of soldiers from Mahra, a coastal southern region of the Arabian Peninsula:

> Around seventy men came up from Mahra, attracted by the idea of the ǧihād. Their leaders were Saʿīd b. Ṣaʿbān al-Mahrī and Aḥmad b. Sulaīmān al-Mahrī [...]. The Mahra party and the sharif Muḥammad reached the imām who feted their coming on account of the ǧihād'. (STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003:123)

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[7] See TUCHSCHERER 2000, SOUDAN 1999:252.

[8] See PEREIRA 1888: 37, KROPP 1988:42 (Mi §4).

[9] See SOUDAN 1999:250, STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003: 112.

[10] STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003: 122, 344. 'Arab Faqīh also mentions some servants arriving from India or Yemen with weapons and taught the soldiers of Imām Aḥmad how to use them.

The Mahra contingent was remarkable because its soldiers integrated Imām Aḥmad's army since the beginning of the war and were well skilled in using firearms and cannons (STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003:136). According to ʿArab Faqīh, there were also "Arabs", like al-Ḥaǧǧ Muḥāmmad who originated from Maghreb, or two archers from the Moroccan Rif, named ʿAbd as-Salām and Hasb an-Nabī ʿ(STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003: 136, 229) – and probably mercenaries, attracted by the Imām's call for ǧihād and the looting opportunity it entailed. In addition, other strangers whom ʿArab Faqīh considered as "Arabs", arrived in the eastern territories of present Ethiopia with the firearms they bought in Zaylaʿ (STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003: 267-268) like these two soldiers from India who joined Imām Aḥmad's troops with seven cannons whose use was probably unknown in the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn:

> "The Imām had sent Warajār Abūn to Zaylaʿ to buy cannon for him so that he could take his fort. He bought a large bronze cannon, and two little ones made of iron and carried them by camel as far as the city of Gendebelo. [...] Accompanying the cannon were two skilled handlers – Indians – to whom the imām paid a hundred ounces of gold." (STENHOUSE and PANKHURST 2003:344)

Though ʿArab Faqīh often overestimated their total number, the in-depth study of the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* seems to indicate that there were certainly less than one hundred foreign soldiers in the army of the Imām. Thus, though Aḥmad welcomed their coming to strengthen the 'Conquest of Abyssinia' he was about to launch, his call for ǧihād did not manage to federate a large part of the military men from the Arabian Peninsula and the Muslim world in general.

Meanwhile, the presence of these foreign – and mostly Yemeni – soldiers probably remained constant until the last years of the 'Conquest', between 1540 and 1543. For example, in 1542, the Portuguese Castanhoso, member of the military expedition of Dom Christovão da Gama which began in 1541 to free Ethiopia from the Muslim conquest, mentions the intervention of a small number of foreign troops:

> "Many Arabs also joined him, sent by his friend, an Arabian lord; among them, there were twenty Turkish horsemen with gilt stirrups and their horses shod with iron, whereas the horses found in the Preste's country went unshod" (WHITEWAY 1902:55).

Few years before the end of the war, the historical sources rather designate these 'Arabs' as 'Turks'. As Yemen only became an Ottoman province in 1539, does it mean that the soldiers from Zabīd or other parts of the Arabian Peninsula were considered as 'Turks' and 'Ottoman' during the last years of the 'Conquest'?

The 'Turks' and the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'

According to the Portuguese and Ethiopian Christian sources, the so-called 'Turks' are presented as the soldiers sent by the Ottomans to strengthen Imām Aḥmad's weakened army, a couple of years before his death. However, as the origin of these 'Turks' within the wide Ottoman Empire, the involvement of the central Turkish authorities in the military campaigns launched by the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn Sultanate remains quite blurry.

The 'Turks' mentioned in the Portuguese and Ethiopian sources between 1540 and 1543

In their narratives on the coming of the Portuguese contingent to assist the Christian troops since 1540,[11] Bermudez and Castanhoso both emphasize that a messenger urged the Pasha of Zabīd to inform the Grand Turk – to whom the Yemeni Pasha was already the vassal – about their recent defeats and implore the human and material assistance of the Ottoman authorities (WHITEWAY 1902: 161). Whereas Bermudez notes that the Pasha of Zabīd later sent six hundred soldiers to Imām Aḥmad (WHITEWAY 1902: 162-163), Castanhoso reports that:

> "(the Pasha of Zabīd) sent him a lot of money, both from himself and from the Turks" and obtained from the Grand Turk "nine hundred, all harquebusiers, (...) ten field bombards" and "many Arabs, sent by an Arabian lord who was (the Ottoman Sultan's) friend, among these were twenty Turkish horsemen, with gilt stirrups, and their horses shod with iron, for in the Preste's country the horses go unshod" (WHITEWAY 1902: 55).

Bermudez and Castanhoso's accounts on the battle of August 1542 – and the death of the Portuguese captain, Dom Christovão – stress the important military consequences of this Yemeni and Ottoman assistance.[12] After this famous defeat, Castanhoso notes that the 'Turks' returned to Zabīd, except two hundred men who stayed in Imām Aḥmad's army (WHITEWAY 1902:69). When the Imām was killed during the final battle of February-March 1543, the two Portuguese authors also underline of the 'Turks'. Castanhoso argues that only forty of these two hundred 'Turks' – armed with rifles – survived this battle (WHITEWAY 1902: 81). After the victory of the Portuguese, Bermudez describes the numerous dead bodies of the 'Turks', "who had just come off a march, sacks of bread and cooked fowls, and others lay dead with the food in their mouths" (WHITEWAY 1902: 193). In spite of the different numbers given on these foreign 'Turkish' contingent that joined Imām Aḥmad's army in the end of the war (1541-1542), these Portuguese historical narratives both clearly mention this late intervention of the Ottomans in the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'.

Moreover, three Christian Ethiopian sources tend to suggest the same Ottoman intervention within the three last years of the 'Conquest'. Indeed, the episode of Imām Aḥmad asking the assistance of the 'Turks' neither appears in the chronicle of the reign of Galāwdéwos (r. 1540-1559), nor in the *Maṣḥafa Seddāt* included in the "short chronicle".[13] But, the third chapter of the chronicle of the reign of Śarṣa Dengel – about the reign of Minas (r. 1559-1563), the son of Lebna Dengel (r. 1508-1540) – explains that the Imām sent a diplomatic delegation to Zabīd. This delegation offered Minas – recently captured by the Imām's soldiers – to the Pasha of the city, in order to incite him to obtain the assistance of the 'Turks'.[14] The shipment of Minas to the Pacha of

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[11] BERMUDES 2010. See the introduction by H. Pennec.

[12] Bermudez writes that Imām Aḥmad beheaded the Portuguese captain and sent his body into pieces to the Pasha of Zabīd and to several Ottoman dignitaries in Cairo, Jeddah or Aden (see WHITEWAY 1902: 174).

[13] On this point, see CHEKROUN 2013, Chapter 2.

[14] PEREIRA 1888: 37, KROPP 1988: 41-42 (Mi §4).

Zabīd is also indicated in the chronicle of the reign of Galāwdéwos, but without relating it to the 'Turks' assistance or any date (CONZELMAN 1895: 142). This chronicle also asserts that a large number of warriors from the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn and the Ottoman Empire were killed during the last battle of 1543 (CONZELMAN 1895: 137). In the *Maṣḥafa Seddāt*, Imām Aḥmad is simply described with "his cannons, his guns and his *Turks*" (BASSET 1888: 112).

Though briefly mentioned in the Christian Ethiopian sources – and even absent in the *Tārīkh al-muluk* (CERULLI 1931: 52-62), the existence of this 'Turkish' contingent described in the Portuguese narratives on Imām Aḥmad's army seems confirmed during the last years of the 'Conquest'. However, due to the lack of detailed descriptions in the Christian or Muslim Ethiopian sources, the presence of these 'Turks' in the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn does not allow to clearly determine the nature and the extent of the Ottoman intervention. In addition, according to all the available sources, the 'Turkish' warriors who joined the troops of Imām Aḥmad were almost exclusively stationed in Zabīd or Aden. Despite their recent submission to the Ottoman Empire, a couple of years before, these two Yemeni cities largely remained autonomous. No local document of that time mentions any specific request addressed to the Ottoman authorities, neither that the Yemeni rulers informed the Grand Turk on this issue.

Were the Ottomans aware of the Ethiopian war?

In the same perspective, the 'Turks' who appear in the texts on the Ethiopian wars that occurred during the first half of the 16th century cannot be assimilated with the Ottomans. In the sources, the word "Turks" refers to all the Muslims inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, whether or not actually Turks or Turcoman, and "Turks" and "Ottoman" were usually confused whenever sources spoke of the administration, the army or other aspect of the Ottoman Empire. Though in the end of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia', Yemen became a province of the Ottoman Empire, the Yemeni intervention in the Ethiopian war cannot be considered as an Ottoman active intervention. Nevertheless, we should not deny the fact that the central Ottoman government was aware of the Ethiopian war. Even though Constantinople did not directly participate to the Ethiopian conquest, it seems that the Ottoman authorities knew the situation in Ethiopia and the struggles between the Christian Kingdoms and the Muslim Sultanate.

One Ottoman archive mentions this knowledge. A report dated June 2, 1525, describes the situation in Yemen and the neighbouring countries around the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. This report, preserved in the archives of the Topkapi Palace,[15] is anonymous although it was registered in the inventory records as coming from the Turkish Admiral Salman Reis. The content of the report leaves no doubt on this specific point, but it is unclear in what circumstances it was delivered to the recipient, or if it was spontaneously presented by Selman Reis or prepared at the request of the grand Vizier. Salman Reis was an Ottoman Captain, sent by Sulaīman II (r. 1520-1566) in 1525 to take control of Aden and Yemen. This report deals with the Ottoman guns and ships

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[15] Reference No. E 6455. For a transcription and a French translation of this report, see LESURE 1976b: 137-160. For an English translation, see ÖZBARAN, 2009 (first version published in 1978): 330-335.

in the port of Jeddah, the description of the Red Sea and adjacent countries together with the Portuguese presence in the Indian Ocean. The third part of the report is a discussion about the situation in Yemen, which is followed by a description of the ports on the African coast of the Red Sea and the inlands of the Horn of Africa. In this report, Salman Reis also expresses his desire to conquer the Funj Kingdom (Nubia). Shortly after the redaction of this report, Salman Reis is sent to appoint Hayreddin Hamza as the governor of Zabīd and to submit Yemen. This expedition, which he had sought with such conviction, was an event of great importance: for the first time, an Ottoman fleet was entering the Indian Ocean, in order to control the naval traffic through Bab al-Mandab.

In this report, Salman Reis also describes the ports of Suakin, Dahlak and Zaylaʿ and highlights their strategic importance to control the Bab al-Mandab. The situation of the Muslims in Ethiopia is also described:

> "Above the afore-said port of Dahlak and near a port which is known as Zaila stands a city called Janāsir (Cinasir). They call its rulers Mujahidin, and they are all very pious. Most learned books are distributed from Zaila. That province is the frontier of Islam. Every year raids are carried out against the infidel Habeș, on the path of Allah, by way of holy war, and they fight hard. [...] In the land of Abyssinia, near Zayla there are many Muslims. This land of Abyssinia also has a port called Baylul with Muslim inhabitants, who are extremely weak. In addition to the annual tribute they pay to the Abyssinian infidels, they are forced to give a beautiful virgin girl." (ÖZBARAN, 2009: 335)

To our knowledge, this report is the only Ottoman archive of the sixteenth century that mentions Muslim Ethiopian wars against the Christian Kingdom. But at that time the attempt to install or send help to the Muslims Ethiopian is not yet on the Ottoman agenda. Their focus is more directly on Yemen and the Indian Ocean, although the strategic importance of the African ports along the Red Sea is always underlined.

Only one other archive mentions the situation of the Ethiopian Muslims. It is a letter written in Arabic and stored in a collection of a library of Istanbul (Veliyüddin Efendi Library, n.°1970, p. 39a). This letter is known thanks to the work of Cengiz Orhonlu (1974a), central for the study of the Ottoman presence in Ethiopia. In a long introduction of his book, Orhonlu recalls the main events that preceded and prepared the creation of the Ottoman province in the Horn of Africa, the *Eyalet Habeš* ('Abyssinian Province') in 1554 (ORHONLU 1974a: 1-30). Orhonlu did not base his introduction on new sources, beyond the Ethiopian and Portuguese historiography. Nevertheless, in the following chapters, Orhonlu presents a considerable literature review and reveals a lot of documents found in the Ottoman archives. The first five chapters describe the implementation of the *Eyalet Habeš* between 1554 and 1560; then, the analysis focuses on the development of the political relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Ethiopia until the First World War.[16] The Ottoman

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[16] His work is in Turkish. See also the studies of its content in ORHONLU 1974, OLSON 1978, LESURE 1976 and ÖZBARAN 1994.

archives start to mention Ethiopia after Özdemir Pasha's attempt to conquer the country in 1552-1553. Only one letter from earlier periods can be found in the Ottoman archives.

This letter is not dated, but according to Orhonlu, who compared it to letters dating from before and after this letter, we can assume that it was written in 1541 (948 of the Hegira). It is addressed to "Sultan Ahmed al-Hākim be Vilāyet-I Habesh" ("Sultan Aḥmad, leader of the Abyssinian Province"). We can interpret this formula as a proof that the Ottomans recognized Aḥmad as the legitimate ruler of Ethiopia. If this letter was effectively written in 1541, it corresponds to the period when Imām Aḥmad asked the Yemeni rulers to help him fight the Portuguese, who had just arrived to help the Ethiopian Christian King. Unfortunately, this letter was not translated or reproduced by Orhonlu, which superficially develops its content. It would be interesting to know more precisely its content.

If this letter confirms the fact that since 1541 the Ottoman central government was aware of the existence of Imām Aḥmad and recognized him as the legitimate leader of Ethiopia, it is not enough to determinate to what extent the Ottomans really knew and followed the Ethiopian political situation before the beginning of the *Eyalet Habeš* in 1554. However, the very limited number of Ottoman documents on the present Ethiopian territories until the middle of the 16th century suggests that the Ottoman interests or ambitions were quite limited in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, though Bab al-Mandab was already a strategic point, the trade routes from the Indian Ocean to the Turkish centre of the Ottoman Empire followed the Yemeni ports, not the African coasts. Therefore, all these different elements tend to show that the so-called 'Ottoman intervention' in the 'Conquest of Abyssinia' has probably never really involved the Grand Turk and the dignitaries of Constantinople.

Conclusion

Diverse historical sources clearly indicate that the Muslims of the Barr Saʿd Ad-dīn and their Yemeni neighbours in Aden and Zabīd were closely connected during the first half of the sixteenth century. These contacts were established through slave and firearm trade, but also through the presence of warriors from Zabīd, Aden and Mahra in the army of Imām Aḥmad, whose number seems to increase during the last years of the 'Conquest of Abyssinia'. Designated as 'Turks' in the Portuguese and Christian sources, these warriors have often been interpreted as the evidence of the Ottoman intervention within the 'Conquest', at least from 1541 to 1543.

Nevertheless, far from originating from the geographical Turkish centre and obeying to the order of the Ottoman Sultan, these 'Turks' were rather sent from the Yemeni cities of Zabīd and Aden in the initiative of the then highly autonomous Yemeni rulers. Indeed, these two cities came under Ottoman rules in 1538-1539, few years before the arrival of an important contingent in Ethiopia. In addition, the 'Turks' described in the conflicts opposing the Portuguese to the Ottomans for the control of the Red Sea are probably not related to those mentioned during the 'Conquest of Abyssinia', as these two conflicts were not linked to each other. And the Ottomans of Constantinople considered the situation in Ethiopia as peripheral and even if some few archives mention

Imām Aḥmad, it was less important than controlling of the Yemeni ports to protect the trade networks from the Indian Ocean.

Thus, the foreign intervention issue along the 'Conquest of Abyssinia' rather concerns the relations between Ethiopia and Yemen, than those involving the Ottoman Empire. In this perspective, there was certainly no major intervention of the Ottomans in the territories of present Ethiopia until the second half of the 16th century.

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Encountering the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the Pre-Ecumenical Age: Some Remarks on the First Protestant Missionaries in Ethiopia (1829–1843)

Stanislau Paulau[*]

Investigating encounters between the Western Christianity and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) one, of course, cannot by-pass the beginnings of the Protestant missionary endeavour in Ethiopia. The first established Protestant mission in Ethiopia was sent by the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) and worked there from 1829 till 1843. This mission is interesting not only because it was the first one[1], but also due to its ambitious long-range objective – to reform the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The traces of this first long-term encounter between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Protestantism are still to be found in the published diaries, journals and memoirs of the missionaries. As there were two main attempts of the Anglican missionaries to work in Ethiopia, we will analyze two main sources relating to each of these periods respectively:

1) *Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia, in Furtherance of the Objects of the Church Missionary Society* by the Rev. Samuel Gobat, one of the society's missionaries. This book was first published in 1834 and right away in three languages: in London in English, in Paris and Geneva in French and in Basel in German[2]. Due to the popularity of the English version, a second edition was prepared London in 1847 and then a third

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[1] As far as it is known the first Protestant who visited Ethiopia was Peter Heyling (ca. 1607–1652), a German Lutheran from Lübeck. Although some Protestant scholars tend to call him the first Protestant missionary in Ethiopia and even maintain that "there is apparently a direct line from Peter Heyling to the founders of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus" (AREN 1978: 37), we should rather agree with Donald Crummey that Heyling's activities are shrouded in mystery and "there is no evidence that he made any impact as a missionary, nor is there anything to suggest continuity with subsequent Protestant involvement" (CRUMMEY 1972: 10).

[2] The respective titles of these French and German versions are 'Journal d'un séjour en Abyssinie, pendant les années 1830, 1831 et 1832 par Samuel Gobat, missionaire de l'evangile au service de la société épiscopale d'angleterre' and 'Tagebuch des Missionars S. Gobat, von seinem dreijährigen Aufenthalte und seinen Reisen in Abyssinien'.

one in 1850, published in New York, while Samuel Gobat was the bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland in Jerusalem.

2) *Journals of the Rev. Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf, missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, detailing their proceedings in the kingdom of Shoa, and journeys in other parts of Abyssinia, in the years 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842*. In contrast to Gobat's, these journals were not so popular and consequently they were not republished so many times.

As at that time there were almost no profound descriptions of life and belief of Ethiopian Christians[3], these journals shaped the European image of African Orthodoxy for the next several generations. And later on, they became "textbooks" or – as stated by the author of the Preface to the journal of Samuel Gobat – "guide and model for other Missionaries" (GOBAT 1834: xvii).

Two approaches: Samuel Gobat and Charles Isenberg

The Church Missionary Society was founded in 1799 by the Church of England and its Ethiopian mission grew out of its interest in the Orthodox churches of the eastern Mediterranean. As it stated, "the evangelizing of the nations adjacent to that inland sea was a work intimately connected with the revival and reformation of the Oriental Churches; and among these, the Christian Church of Abyssinia presents a very conspicuous and essential object" (GOBAT 1834: vii). The CMS's goal was to effect a reformation within Orthodox churches, which would then renew their own missionary activities among the region's non-Christian peoples. The society believed that if these churches were "awakened from their lethargy" and revived, they would be reactivated and challenge Islam with "the Christian message of reconciliation" (STOCK 1899: 222). Officially, it did not intend to convert Orthodox Christians to Protestantism (see CRUMMEY 2003: 740) and the primarily strategy of CMS was simple: the distribution of Scriptures in vernacular language and explorations.

We need to distinguish two periods in this Protestant mission in Orthodox Ethiopia in the first half of the 19th century – under the leadership of Samuel Gobat (1829–1834) and Charles Isenberg (1834–1839) respectively. Let us compare their attitudes towards the Ethiopian culture and its correlation with European one.

Samuel Gobat, a French-speaking Swiss with Reformed background, was a very prominent personality. In spite of his Lutheran ordination he was employed by the Anglican CMS for mission in Ethiopia and later on (1846) became the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem. He graduated from Basel mission school and CMS institute in Islington. Although Samuel Gobat told Ethiopians about "the superiority of Europe" (GOBAT 1834: 120) – in which he sincerely believed and assumed European Protestants

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[3] At that time, the European image of Ethiopia was shaped first of all by the works of famous German Orientalist Job Ludolf (1624-1704), the founder of Ethiopian philology in Europe. The most of his knowledge about the country he gathered from Abba Gorgorios (d. 1658), an Ethiopian converted to Catholicism, who spent several months with Ludolf at Gotha in 1652. For Ludolf's contacts with Gorgorios, see HAMMERSCHMIDT 1963: 33-34. Another important source of information about Ethiopia at that time was James Bruce "Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile", published in 1790.

as a reference for them (*ibid*: 225) –, he appreciated the indigenous culture and tried to accept it. As historian Bengt Sundkler writes, "his effort at identification made him dress, eat, and live like an Ethiopian. He furthered what he regarded as Ethiopian interests" (SUNDKLER 2001: 155). Nevertheless, this cultural sensibility was perceived by Samuel Gobat first of all as a tool for evangelization. As he wrote in one of the first days after the entering Ethiopia: "I think it is very important for a Missionary to follow the customs of the country where he is placed, as far as he can do so without sin" (GOBAT 1834: 122). As a central feature of missionary interventionism within cultural issues, this notion of "sin" played an enormous role in the history of CMS work in Ethiopia with regard to some Church traditions and practices, as we will show it later by the example of fasting.

Charles Isenberg, also graduated from Basel mission school and CMS institute in Islington, who was sent in the year 1834 to help Samuel Gobat, also considered European civilization as the superior one, but contrary to the opinion of Samuel Gobat, he was against usage of any parts of non-European cultures or, as he calls them, "savages":

> "I think that the natives should conform to us, and not we to them. What I mean is this, that many travellers appear to be very proud of being able to live like an Arab or an Abyssinian, eating with the hands, and doing away with all rules of civilized nations. But in this they are mistaken, as savages must also see in these indifferent and temporal respects the superiority of civilized Christian nations" (ISENBERG 1843: 389).

In addition, the attitudes of both missionaries towards Ethiopian culture also found its expression in their strategies.

Constructing the Ethiopian Orthodoxy through its features: a Christian Church or a mixture of religions?

Analyzing the journals we can see that some features of Ethiopian Christianity were distinguished and highlighted by the missionaries as something specially alien and peculiar for them – fasting, priesthood, monasticism, some liturgical practices, usage of icons and veneration of saints, especially of the Virgin Mary. Therefore we can assert that for the European missionaries first of all these features constituted the image of the Ethiopian Church as the other.

Initially Samuel Gobat in accordance with his strategy of identification with indigenous customs was intended to observe the fast with the Ethiopians, but "reflecting on all the abuses which it brings in its trains" he resolved "neither to observe nor to condemn it" (GOBAT 1834: 52). But later on, he took a much more rigorous position on that question, which became a topic of many disputes. Gobat perceived the practice of fasting as an attempt to become righteous before God by the means of men, which in that case would totally contradict the Protestant principle of *sola gratia*. Therefore, he started to condemn Ethiopians saying that fasting is a sin, because it is made a meritorious work before God. Because of that Samuel Gobat came to the conclusion that "the fasts of Abyssinia are usually criminal before God" (GOBAT 1834: 148).

In the beginning Isenberg also preached in accord with Gobat that: "if we seek our justification before God by fasting and other exercises, Christ would not then be our complete Saviour" (ISENBERG 1843: 69). But then having considered that the omission of fasting had been a continual stumbling-block in the eyes of the Ethiopians since the commencement of the mission and recognized that "fasting is not sinful in itself, and hence not against the principles of the Bible, nor the Church of England" (ISENBERG 1843: 139), he resolved to fast. Making this decision he also referred to the example of Apostle Paul (*Ibid*), who condescended of his own accord to the weakness of his brothers.

It is not surprisingly that blaming fasting practices Samuel Gobat mentioned also priests, because in his opinion "it is the priests who are the cause of the corruption and misery of the people" (GOBAT 1834: 232). According to Gobat's judgment Ethiopian priests "have their minds much more perverted, and are infinitely inferior in discernment to the most clownish peasants", they "at the same time cunning enough to hide their ignorance from the more simple, and, by a shrewd effrontery, maintain their credit among a small number of idiots who keep acquaintance with them" (*Ibid*: 137). Therefore, Gobat felt it his duty to show all people the ignorance of priests and the injustice of their "tyrannical authority", regarding the confession and absolution of sins (*Ibid*: 62, 204). Such harsh words and attitudes towards the Ethiopian priesthood could be explained also from the context of the mission, because it was priests who built the main opposition to the missionary work and attempts at reformation. Therefore it was strategically important for the mission either to make friends with clergy or, if that did not work, to humiliate them in the eyes of the people.

Not less than the priests Samuel Gobat opposed the traditional Ethiopian Orthodox monasticism. He argued that "the vow of celibacy is of itself a sin, and consequently unlawful, because it is based on man's own power, and not on the grace of God" (GOBAT 1834: 197). When asked, if some monks could be saved, he answered: "I believe, that, among them, some will be saved, even as other true Christians; and that many will be lost" (GOBAT 1834: 198). Due to this principled position, Samuel Gobat had to decline a proposal of prince Sabagadis to build for him a church, where he could freely preach according to his wishes, but under the condition that he would not marry (CRUMMEY 1972: 30). Isenberg also was of the opinion that monasticism is inconsistent with "the original institution of matrimony" (ISENBERG 1843: 105). Visiting famous Debra Libanos monastery he wrote about the monks that they are "complete hypocrites; being a proud, ignorant, beggar-like, raving, and worldly-minded people, who cannot be *the salt of the earth*" (*Ibid*: 415). We also find the following notice: "It may be expected that the most celebrated Abyssinian Saint, Tecla Haimanot, cannot be missing in a place where the ignorant, superstitious, and cunning priesthood wants his miracles to give some additional holiness to the place, to deceive the simple layman, and to cover their hypocrisy with the cowl of an odd fellow like Tecla Haimanot" (*Ibid*: 412).

European missionaries showed also not much understanding towards indigenous liturgical traditions. What Samuel Gobat writes about his impression of observing priests during the ceremony on Holy Saturday before Easter: "The sight of them, at first, gave

me great pain; because their vestments much more resembled carnival masquerade dresses, than the decent clothing of the servants of God" (GOBAT 1834: 118). Quite close reaction we find in the Isenberg's journal, where he describes celebration of the feast of Theophany as a "spectacle" and writes: "I then expressed my grief at seeing such ceremonies in a Christian country" (ISENBERG 1843: 184). It is interesting that missionaries perceived worship of the Ethiopian Church not only in terms of "carnival masquerade", "spectacle", but also as a "play". That is Isenberg's description of the Ethiopian Liturgy:

> "All that they do in church, is to make a terrible bawling, which they call singing. Their hymns are contained in a book called Degua, which book is composed by an ancient teacher of their church, whose name is Fared, from Samien. In singing, they frisk and dance, beat together with their sticks, then with cymbals and drums. Their bawling is interrupted by reading a portion of Scripture. In fact, the whole seems to be rather a play than worship" (ISENBERG 1843: 139).

Another feature of the Ethiopian worship which struck the missionaries was its length. As Isenberg confesses in his journal, he entered sometimes church, in order to witness the rite, but as it lasted too long for him, he could not persuade himself to stay to the close (*Ibid*: 157). The Ethiopian Church music was unusual for Europeans to such extent, that Isenberg even writes in his journal about "the terrible noise of the singing priests" (*Ibid*: 498). Also the Ethiopian custom of reciting psalms did not find his understanding (*Ibid*: 166). Another unacceptable feature of the Ethiopian piety – prayer for dead people, according to Isenberg, "instead of being answered, would be counted as an addition to numberless sins" (*Ibid*: 130). And Samuel Gobat proved himself also as an adversary of pilgrimages which according to him bring "only trouble and no profit" (GOBAT 1834: 107). And in general Gobat described the ceremonies of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church as "more or less vain and prejudicial" (*Ibid*: 206) and Isenberg states that: "the Abyssinians ensnared with numberless forms and ceremonies – fetters of self-righteousness; lost in darkness, and separated from the life of God" (ISENBERG 1843: 259-260). This attitude proved itself also when Gobat wanted to bury his fallen friend Kugler. He refused to have any Ethiopian Orthodox rituals – that he called "superstitious ceremonies" – and told the priests that he wishes "neither mass, nor absolution, nor *Tescar*, nor any of your ceremonies, which are not founded on the Word of God" (GOBAT 1834: 277).

According to the missionaries, one of the greatest sins Ethiopians committed was "worshipping images, and invoking the saints" (*Ibid*: 195). As Samuel Gobat told one of the priests: "Your very churches have become temples of idols, since you have filled them with images, to which you pray, and before which you fall down" (*Ibid*: 186). It is important that the Ethiopians did not simply listen to accusations of the missionaries, but tried to engage in dialogue and explain their theology of icons. An interesting note concerning this fact could be found in Gobat's journal:

> "Idolatry, which is, and ever has been, so seducing to the natural man, has made but too much progress in Abyssinia. The Abyssinians are not, indeed, at a loss for sophisms; saying, that they do not prostrate themselves before images to worship

them; but, that they do it in order to honour the Saints, the names of which the images bear: and that the honour paid to the Saints in only a natural way of serving God" (GOBAT 1834: 351).

Missionaries laid particular stress on this point – that every honour paid to the creature, which ascribed to it some share in the working out our salvation, and implied a separation of Christ from His Church, or any imperfection of His work, was an offence against Christ (ISENBERG 1843: 121). An especially problematic point was the question about the Virgin Mary. Samuel Gobat always tried to emphasize his view that Mary was a sinner (GOBAT 1834: 86) as all other people. But Isenberg didn't manage to conduct such conversations with the same success as Gobat and provoked dislike of people, also due to his notion of "vain fables and stories of saints" and the opinion that Mary had other children from Joseph (ISENBERG 1843: 119, 170).

We have shown the attitudes of the missionaries towards some aspects of life and theology of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and now we would like to find out what was their general opinion of the Church. Samuel Gobat used Gospel's parable and compared the Ethiopian Church with a tree which has some sound roots and some beautiful-looking branches, but which brings no fruit or only bad fruits. And this state of the tree Gobat connected with "the bad tree of their creed" (GOBAT 1834: 191, 231). According to Gobat, the Ethiopians are Christians only in name and in order to be brought up from their ignorance and misery they urgently need to be converted, and to become true Christians (*Ibid*: 195, 202, 242). A more positive – though still humiliating – account of the Ethiopian Church appears in a report sent by Samuel Gobat to CMS:

> "Although the Christian Religion has entirely degenerated into superstition, yet there is still sufficient of it to attach us to the Christians of that country, and to engage us to consider them as brethren, though they have alienated themselves from our common Father, and have reaped misery and degradation as the fruit of their errors. We may still congratulate them for the little they have preserved of Christianity" (GOBAT 1834: 341).

Opinion of Isenberg about the Ethiopian Church was not better then Gobat's one. He believed that in no other country was there so little of true Christianity as in Ethiopia (ISENBERG 1843: 125). Here is his description of Ethiopian Christianity:

> "The Abyssinians, who have not Christ by faith, mourn as if He were far off, crucifying their flesh, not knowing the joy and peace of Christ; and as if, by the mortification of their flesh, they would produce their reconciliation with God, which Christ had fully effected; that the Abyssinians connect their own righteousness with that of Christ, unite Christ with Moses, grace with the law, and the Spirit with the flesh; and that they are like those who put new wine into old bottles, and new cloth on an old garment, where the rent is made worse; as we see with the Abyssinians, who, though they mortify their flesh by fasting, are living in all the sins of the flesh – in all fornication and lasciviousness" (ISENBERG 1843: 70-71).

As we see also from this quotation an important feature in missionaries' description of the Ethiopian Church is its assumed "mixture with Judaism", which, according to them, could be seen first of all in distinctions of clean and unclean food and in the use of circumcision (ISENBERG 1843: 118-119).

Witness or proselytism?

Besides the distribution of Scriptures in Amharic, missionaries tried to communicate to the people and first of all to the clergy the idea of the necessity to reform the Church. And Samuel Gobat did it with the help of connecting the idea of reformation with "worldly blessings" – promise of the future prosperity of Ethiopia. So, Samuel Gobat taught Ethiopian priests history of the Reformation in Europe, as he writes, "showing them that our forefathers were in as much darkness as the Abyssinians are at present", and telling "about the worldly blessings which we have enjoyed since the time of the Reformation of our churches" (GOBAT 1834: 104). He narrated about the various arts of Europe, and referring to 1 Tim 4:8 he tried to prove that the pure knowledge of the Gospel enlightens the understanding of man, and who, if he does the will of God, is blessed in all that he undertakes. Hereby, Samuel Gobat tried to convince his listeners that "the reception of the Gospel is the real cause of the flourishing state of the arts in our country – and that the love which our Christians prove in propagating God's Word is the cause of the power which England possesses in all parts of the world" (*Ibid*: 206).

Before leaving Ethiopia Samuel Gobat proposed his plans for the reformation of the Ethiopian Church as "the only means of raising the people from their degraded state" (GOBAT 1884: 129). As he knew that people were not prepared to make essential changes in the more difficult and weighty points of doctrine, he suggested just primary steps. First of all it is the establishment of superior schools or colleges for the training of a new class of clergy, as Samuel Gobat "considered the ignorance and corruption of the priests to be at the root of all the evils under which the country had gone to ruin" (*Ibid*: 130). He also proposed that thenceforth no man should be ordained who was not thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the New Testament and part of the Old. And for that Gobat proposed to send teachers from England.

The second proposed step of reformation was to stop sending a few boys to the monasteries to learn to read in a dead language and to establish schools everywhere, in order that children of both sexes might learn to read the Word of God in their own vernacular and promised that England should supply them with books, especially Bibles. The next step according to Samuel Gobat should be indigenization of bishops. He proposed to have several learned native bishops, instead of having one Coptic bishop, and that they should have less pomp and power than that enjoyed by the present prelate. He also added that the bishops should be free to marry. And eventually Gobat proposed to remove all the pictures from the churches and to abolish the invocation of the Virgin Mary, the Archangel Michael, as well as any other angels or saints (GOBAT 1884: 130-131). Some of these proposals – including better education for clergy and people, especially native bishops – were received animatedly by the audience. Others – like the marriage of the bishops, the removal of icons and the abolishment of saints' invocation

– provoked dissatisfaction. In spite of the promised assistance that was supposed to insure the future prosperity of Ethiopia, no immediate reaction followed and Samuel Gobat's plan of reformation failed.

After Gobat's failure, probably understanding that the reformation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church from within is hardly possible, Isenberg decided to act more resolutely in the direction of proselytism. First of all he put into question the strategy of the CMS of just distributing the Scriptures and stressed the need to publish a book of Introduction to the Holy Scriptures in Amharic, which would contain Protestant doctrines. As he writes: "It is not sufficient to put the Bible only into the hands of the people; they are in want of books to illustrate its doctrines, else they read it only in the false light of their traditions" (ISENBERG 1843: 75). As this book was not written, he translated Heidelberg Catechism into Amharic and started to distribute it to the priests together with the Scriptures (*Ibid*: 101). He also opened a Church in his house, translated Anglican liturgy into Amharic and started to use it (GUNDERT 1885: 26).

As we see Isenberg intended to convert Ethiopians into Protestantism. He also developed a plan to work more effectively with newly converted people and to prevent their return to Orthodoxy. A school staffed by lay converts was to be the centre of a "Christian colony" where neophytes might be "removed from the manifold and almost insurmountable difficulties to which they would else be exposed everywhere except in the missionary houses" (CRUMMEY 1972: 39). However, this plan was never realized.

After Gobat's attempt to reconstruct Ethiopian Orthodoxy through some organizational and outer changes, Isenberg was in favour of deconstructing it and spreading Protestantism, or according to a pointed remark of Friedrich Heyer, "to reduce the Ethiopian Christianity to Biblicism and thereby to release it from passed on 'errors'" (HEYER 1971: S. 310).

It is noticeable that in modern historiography these proselytizing attempts don't play any role. Both more or less larger and influential works on this mission, of Donald Crummey (1972) and of Gustav Aren (1978), do not mention this kind of development in the relationships between the CMS mission and the Ethiopian Orthodoxy at all.

Conclusion

As it has been stated, we need to distinguish two periods in the CMS mission in Orthodox Ethiopia in the first half of the 19th century – under the leadership of Samuel Gobat (1829–1834) and Charles Isenberg (1834–1839) respectively. Although both of them had the same goal, they had different strategies concerning the way of achieving their goal and therefore differing approaches to constructing the image of the Ethiopian Church.

Theology, traditions and piety patterns of the Ethiopian Church were far from the ideals and sometimes even understanding of European missionaries. Therefore almost all features of the Ethiopian Orthodoxy, those which are common for all Orthodox Churches as well as those unique Ethiopian ones, were perceived as downright sinful or, in the best case, as ridiculous ("clownish" "masquerade"). Evidently negative features

prevail in the image of the Ethiopian Orthodoxy constructed by the missionaries and transmitted through their publications. And the main reason for this is that the missionaries failed to recognize in the Ethiopians their fellow-Christians.

Such attitudes towards the Ethiopian Church stimulated attempts of the missionaries to reconstruct its structure and beliefs. Trying to promote reforms in the Church, missionaries not only distributed Scriptures in Amharic, but also promised material prosperity and flourishing of arts in Ethiopia in the case of accepting proposed changes in the doctrine and practices of the Church. But as this strategy failed, Isenberg, understanding the impossibility of convincing the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians of the necessity of reforms and not recognizing them as his brothers and sisters in Christ, started to show tendencies towards proselytism. That not only contradicted the initial plan of CMS, but also destroyed the mission. As it could be seen from the given paper, at the later period CMS missionaries actually not just wanted to assist in the revival of the Ethiopian Church with distribution of Scriptures, but make from it a new European-like community with an orthodox Protestant dogmatic (Cf. distribution of the Heidelberg Catechism in Amharic).

So, there is a certain dynamic in the Anglican mission paradigm from witness to proselytism. We can therefore agree with Samuel Rubenson:

> "It is generally claimed that the Protestant missionaries came to Ethiopia to initiate a reform within the Orthodox Church, to revitalize a genuine Christian tradition. Looking beyond European claims into the primary sources for the acts and attitudes of the missionaries, their own letters as well as those by their Ethiopian disciples, this statement must, however, be, if not questioned, at least qualified. The evidence shows that it was more important for the Protestant missionaries to keep clear from and even attack the Ethiopian ecclesiastical traditions than to identify with the Orthodox Christians" (RUBENSON 1998: 72).

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Basel and Abyssinia, 1830-1855. Protestant Mission and Jewish identity in Abyssinia

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The notion of the possible existence of Black African Jews intrigued Rabbinical Jewry in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, fed by reports and rumours such as the travel descriptions of the 9th Century Jewish traveller Eldad Ha-Dani. Knowledge of the geography of the African continent however remained very scant, not allowing any precise identification of who or where these Jews (sometimes termed „Israelites") were; before the modern period no permanent channels of communication existed that would have integrated such a group in a web of interconnected Jewish communities.

A significant eyewitness report by a European came in 1790, when the Scottish traveller James Bruce published an account of his encounters in the 1770s with the Beta Israel, in the Highlands of Ethiopia (BRUCE 1790). Corroborated by Henry Salt, who travelled to the area more than two decades later, Bruce's account gave substance to the earlier accounts and rumours about the Beta Israel (VALENTIA and SALT 1811). From the first decade of the 19th century the pace of visitors arriving in Ethiopia picked up and with it the flow of information spreading in Europe about the peoples of Ethiopia, including the Beta Israel. Given the comparative lack of contemporary publications, the interest of the Jewish public is difficult to gauge; the record does however indicate that by 1812 they had begun to express some, admittedly marginal, interest.[1]

Research usually identifies the starting point of the entry of the Beta Israel into Western Jewish consciousness, with the appearance of the German-Jewish missionary and convert to Protestantism, Henry Aaron Stern. In 1860 Stern arrived in Ethiopia as a missionary for the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews (LJS).[2] The presence of Stern amongst the Beta Israel might indeed be described as the tipping point occasioning Western Jewry to support their Beta Israel brethren to withstand the missionary efforts of the the LJS, hence bringing them closer to

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[1] An anonymous author noted in *Sulamit* — the only Jewish periodical of the time — that according to Salt the Jews of Abyssinia, who were called *Falassa,* were no longer ruled by their own king, and almost exclusively occupied the craft of masonry. *Sulamit* 1812.

[2] Stern published his account *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia* in 1862.

Rabbinical Judaism.[3] Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer, of Eisenstadt, Germany and one of the leading Ashkenazi rabbis of the period, was vocal in his support of those he deemed his co-religionists. In 1864 he declared that the Beta Israel were fully Jewish and called for their rescue from the threat of Christian missions. Hildesheimer based his argument inter alia on missionary reports. His manifesto was published in many leading Jewish newspapers around the world.[4] The Jewish orientalist, Joseph Halévy, responded to Hildesheimer's call, travelling to Ethiopia in 1867-1868 in partnership with the French Jewish Philanthropic Society, the Alliance Israelite Universelle. Contrary to an apparent earlier Jewish visitor to Ethiopia in the first half of the 1850s, who had come to the conclusion that the Beta Israel were not Jewish, Halévy proclaimed the Beta Israel to be a true Jewish community and advocated their cause amongst Western Jewry.[5]

Stern's appearance in Ethiopia, and the consequent perception of the Beta Israel as a lost group of Jews or Israelites in the consciousness of Rabbinical Jewry must however be seen as the continuation of an ongoing process, one which had evolved most significantly in the city of Basel in Switzerland.[6] The construction of a Beta Israel identity meeting Jewish and non-Jewish European definitions of Jewishness, was influenced to a considerable degree by the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel which was founded in 1815, and from the 1850s onwards by the St. Chrischona Pilgrim Mission institution. The present article tries to show the role, which has been widely neglected, of Basel, in the shaping of a Jewish identity of the Beta Israel.

Basel - A city of no Jews in the early Modern period

Jews were largely absent from the city of Basel after part of the community was burnt alive on an island in the River Rhine by an enraged Christian mob during anti Jewish disturbances in 1349 and the dissolution of the second community in 1389. In 1501 Basel became part of the Swiss confederation and in 1529 opted for the Reformation. As the 16th century progressed the city of Basel attracted renown for its Hebrew Printing Press; and with the presence of Sebastian Münster, Johannes Buxtorf and other Christian Hebraists became recognised as an important centre to learn about Judaism and Jews.[7] It is interesting to postulate whether any of these gentlemen realised the

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[3] ELIAV 1965; KAPLAN 1987; CORINALDI 1998; SEEMAN 2000; SUMMERFIELD 2003; PARFITT and TREVISAN SEMI (eds.) 2005; LIPMAN 2006.

[4] *Der Israelit* in Germany, the *Jewish Chronicle* in England, *HaLevanon* in France, *HaMaggid* in Prussia, and *HaMevassser* in Galicia.

[5] MINIATI 2007; BIANCHI 2007.

[6] This process has since led to the migration of almost the complete Beta Israel community to Israel, where today around 135,000 citizens are estimated to be of Ethiopian Jewish origin.

[7] Sebastian Münster, who was also an influential cartographer of his time, seems to have studied the travel accounts of Eldad Ha-Dani most intensely for the compilation of a map of the African continent on which he placed Prester John's kingdom in the area of Ethiopia. Münster's annotations can be found all over the 1519 Constantinopel edition of the *Sefer Eldad Ha-Dani* in the University Library of Basel.

irony that by now hardly any Jews were living there.[8] This situation began to change slowly after the French revolution as the old Swiss Federation of loosely connected small states was reshaped into the Helvetic Republic. The French Revolution not only improved the situation for the Jews in France and many other European countries, it also improved their situation in Switzerland; from 1800 onwards a small number of Jews with French citizenship who had been living in the city's environs settled in Basel. They were however not naturalised and would remain French citizens for several generations. Their numbers were insignificant; in the period between 1800 and 1860 the number of Jewish residents never exceeded two hundred individuals, and only towards 1870 did they constitute around one percent of Basel's population. The presence of Jews in Basel was fragile; when France retracted some of the civil rights of Jews in 1808, the city of Basel eagerly followed suit.[9] The period following the French Revolution was one of considerable political uncertainty; the grip of the old political order was loosened but not wholly destroyed and the political system veered back and forth between the influences of Revolution and Restoration. In such times of general anxiety biblical prophecies and visions of the world at the End of Days gained prominence inside the biblical message. In these visions, Jews naturally had a place, and their conversion to Christianity at some stage a necessity. While discriminatory legislation remained in Basel until 1874, strong religious currents present amongst Protestant Christianity in the city started to target Jews as objects of their mission – including the small number of French Jews in the city. Even if Jews had rejected Jesus, it was argued, they were still witnesses to the Christian Bible and therefore also to the prophecies therein. The mission amongst the Jews was hardly successful; only five conversions of Jews between 1782 and 1842 resulted in Basel out of the efforts of the Christian mission. Regardless of the tiny number of Jews living in the city, occasionally diminished by a conversion, Basel became a global centre for the mission amongst the Jews, providing the institutional framework and theology standing behind it (JANNER 2004, 2012).

Basel likewise became significant in the missionary effort to Africa, gathering pace at the same time. As had their counterparts in other cities engaged in global trade, many of Basel's leading aristocratic families had profited from the slave trade in Black Africans (FÄSSLER 2006). In Basel the discussion on the abolition of the slave trade coincided with a religious evangelical revivalist movement. In a mission to the Black Africans this saw a solution to their misery and a form of compensation set within a broader agenda to stop the growth of Islam and bring about the return of Jesus Christ (HUPPENBAUER 2010). The Basel missionaries later frequently expressed the idea that return of Jesus Christ could be accelerated through a Protestant mission in Africa by quoting Psalm 68:31 from the Bible (LIS 2009).

As in many other centres from where the Christian Mission would set out, those in Basel calling for a mission to the "heathen of Africa" were often also vocal in their efforts

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[8] This was also true for later Jewish scholars of Jewish Studies (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) as has been exemplified with Moritz Steinschneider who drew on Buxdorf. BURNETT 2002.

[9] The peak was reached in 1815/1816 at the end of the Mediation period and a low was reached in 1847. In 1870 Jews constituted one percent of Basel's population (BENNEWITZ 2008).

to proselytise the Jews. As we will see in Basel they would bring both discourses together in a call for a mission to the Beta Israel.

The founding of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel

Adolf Steinkopf (1773-1859) was one such person in favour of missions to both Jews and Black Africans. Coming from Germany to Basel in 1793 he took the position as a pastor of the German Lutheran community in London in 1801; there he became linked to the Religious Tract Society, the Missionary Society and British and Foreign Bible Society. Steinkopf was also instrumental in the establishment of the London Society for the Propagation of Christianity amongst Jews (LJS thereafter) in 1808. Meanwhile back in Basel two of Steinkopf's friends, Christian Friedrich Spittler (1782-1867) and Christian Gottlieb Blumhardt (1779-1838), continued Steinkopf's projects. Spittler in 1812 founded his first missionary institution - a school for Jewish children in Basel. Three years later, in 1815 Spittler, together with others founded the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel (EMS hereafter). Blumhardt, Steinkopf's other collaborator, was elected inspector of the 1816 opened Basel Seminary of the EMS. Steinkopf role in setting this organisation was pivotal, providing the necessary international contacts and funds. Steinkopf facilitated co-operation between the British Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the EMS, the latter providing missionaries to several CMS missionary projects in Africa and other places. The Basel missionaries had however to further their education, especially their language skills in Islington, London. The Basel Seminary was not explicitly directed towards Jews, but soon became recognised for its work in this field. 1819 the Scottish Mission amongst the Jews requested the admission of new missionaries to the Basel seminary and took two Basel missionaries into their services in 1820. Spittler and Blumhardt were both active members of the committee and both favoured missions to the Jews. The majority of the committee was however less enthusiastic and opined that the heathen had to be converted before the Jews. The committee's reluctance to engage in an area so dear to Spittler may have been the deciding factor in his founding of the Gesellschaft zur Verbreitung des Christentums unter den Juden (Society for the Propagation of Christianity amongst Jews) in 1820 independently of the EMS (JANNER 2004). The personal links to the EMS remained however strong with Pastor Niklaus von Brunn as the president of the new society while being at the same time a long time board member of the EMS. Pastor von Brunn conducted one of the highlights in the history of the society: the 1823 baptism of the Jew, Ferdinand Ewald (1800-1873) in the Basel cathedral. Now belonging to the Christian faith, Ewald fruitlessly applied for residentship in Basel and had to leave the city. He would become one of the most famous missionaries of the LJS of his time, missionizing for many years amongst Jewish communities along the Northern Coast of Africa (JANNER 2004). In addition to theological concerns, the difficulty in obtaining residency for Jews in Basel, even if it be for the sake of a (Christian) missionary education at the Basel seminary, dissuaded the committee admitting further Jews to its institution. Blumhardt was disappointed; he was much in favour of a mission to the Jews and had also noticed that this rejection came at a time when the majority of the missionaries at

the institution had not yet a secured space in a missionary field for their missionary endeavours. Two of the early generation of students at the Basel Seminary, Christian Kugler (1800-1830) and Theodore Müller (born in 1799), expressed their desire in 1823 to be sent on a mission to Africa. To the same generation belonged also Samuel Gobat (1799-1897). Hailing from the French speaking part of the Jura, he had taken a lively interest in the conversion of Jews since his youth (ROLLIER 1885). He arrived in Basel in 1820 and entered the Basel Missionary institution in 1821 together with twelve others from Switzerland, Württemberg and other German states. He regularly attended the Sunday sermons of Pastor von Brunn (*Ibid.*). From late 1823 until October 1824 Gobat was in Paris, where he became involved with missionary activity amongst Jews. Back in Basel, Gobat together with Müller and Kugler were selected for London (Islington) to improve their language skills. Before leaving for London in the spring of 1825, Gobat mentioned to von Brunn his wish to go to Ethiopia. While in London he was much surprised to learn that he had already been selected for a CMS Mission to Ethiopia together with Christian Kugler, yet another fellow colleague from Basel. In London Gobat was in close touch with Edward Bickersteth (1786-1850), from Norwich, England, secretary of the CMS from 1824 until 1830. Bickersteth had been pivotal to both building up the CMS' missionary efforts in Black Africa (especially in Sierra Leone) and in the organisation's relationship with the LJS, of which he had himself been a member since 1814.[10] The relationship between the LJS and the CMS were very close at the time. Although Gobat's mission was intended to concentrate on encouraging a revival of the old Ethiopian Christian Church, the idea for a Protestant mission to the Beta Israel was slowly gaining ground. Joseph Wolf(f) (1795-1862) a German Jewish convert to Christianity, and member of the LJS, might have thought about a mission to the Beta Israel already in 1822 after having met a Jew in Alexandria, Egypt, who told him about earlier visits to the city by Jews from Ethiopia (WOLF 1824).

Zunz's circle of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Beta Israel

Increased interest in the Beta Israel seems to have been aroused amongst German-speaking Jews. Some eight years after the first publication of a short note about the Beta Israel in Sulamit, a more wide ranging article, drawing on the accounts of Bruce and Salt was published in the same journal in 1820. Somehow misinterpreting Salt, Sulamit reported that the Beta Israel had their own king and were to a large extent autonomous (*Sulamit* 1820). It was most probably this article that inspired Eliezer Sinai Kirschbaum (1798-1870), at the time a Jewish Medical student in Berlin, to apply to the *Verein für Kultur* und *Wissenschaft des Judentums* for the funding of an expedition to the Beta Israel, who (as he believed) still had their own king. Providing the Beta Israel with a European Culture would bring about a revival of the whole Jewish Nation. The proposed expedition held the promise of other benefits; travelling through Palestine and visiting

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[10] See for instance BICKERSTETH 1841.

other Jewish communities, would raise awareness amongst the different sects in Judaism about their common identity. In a final stage this would lead to the unity of all Jews.[11]

The Society to which the request was addressed to in Berlin in 1821 had been founded two years earlier by Eduard Gans; Leopold Zunz; Moses Moser; Isaac Markus Jost; Imanuel Wohlwill (Wolff) and Solomon Judah Loeb Rapoport. Other personalities that engaged in this small circle of German speaking Jewish intellectuals were Ludwig Markus (or Louis Markus) (1798- 1843) and Heinrich Heine. The establishment of the society might have been a response to the anti-Semitic Hep-Hep riots of 1819 in Germany, which presented a backlash for German Jewry at the time emerging from the Ghettos and towards emancipation. The society represented an attempt to provide a construct of the Jews as a people in their own right, with valid cultural traditions, equal to those of the German people (ELON 2002). Although Kirschbaum's project was rejected, the society gave it some consideration with Moses Moser and Immanuel Wolff's reviewing it.[12] Even as Kirschbaum's proposal was rejected, it seems to have inspired some of the members of the society to make their own inquiries. In 1823 Solomon Judah Cohen Rapaport (1790-1867), later Chief Rabbi of Prague and also one of the societies' earliest members published an essay on the Beta Israel (RAPAPORT 1823). In 1828 Isaac Markus Jost, the first modern day Jewish historian published one of the several volumes of his long work Geschichte der Israeliten (History of the Israelites), in which he covered the Beta Israel at length (JOST 1828). For Ludwig Markus (1798-1843) the Jews of Abyssinia became his lifelong object of inquiry. Although his manuscript was never published as a book, parts of it appeared in the Journal Asiatique in 1829. Upon meeting Markus again in Paris around ten years later, Heinrich Heine, called him "King of Abyssinia" referring to their earlier times in Berlin when they were members of the society (ELBOGEN 1937).

None of these people had ever travelled to Ethiopia, they all must have been aware that such an endeavour was desirable in order to gather first hand information. Had Kirschbaum proposed his travel to Jews some three years earlier his proposal would have been met with greater support. The Beta Israel were integral part of an awakening Jewish Nationalism, a living proof that Jews, regardless of location were a nation, and enquiry about them part of the Jewish auto-emancipatory process. This position was contrary to views of certain other Jews who perceived reports of non-European Jewish communities as a threat to their quest for acceptance and assimilation into the emerging European Nations.[13]

New missionary efforts

In this period the status of the Jews in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East remained sensitive to the major political changes occurring in Europe. Basel was no

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[11] Reprinted in UCKO 1935. Alfred Bodenheimer has drawn my attention on Ucko's essay.
[12] See UCKO 1935.
[13] BAR-CHEN 2003, quoted in JANKOWSKI 2007.

exception; following the July revolution in 1830, France pressed the Swiss cantons to introduce legislation that would be less hostile to Jews. The situation for the few French Jews in Basel remained however volatile.[14] In 1831 the city of Basel witnessed the establishment of the Society of the Friends of Israel. The society's aims where however less concerned with the civil rights of the city's Jews than with their conversion to Protestant Christianity. The links between the new society and the LJS were strong (SMITH 1981). In 1834 the society began to publish its own journal Der Freund Israels (Friend of Israel), which regularly featured reports from missionaries in the service of the LJS. Ewald's reports from his North African mission were frequently quoted at length. This journal together with the journal of the EMS, Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der evangelischen Missions und Bibelgesellschaften, would certainly have found a receptive readership amongst the students of the Basel Seminary who could read the exploits of the earlier generation of Basel missionaries.

Gobat and Kugler were forced to wait until 1830 to enter their missionary field, when a measure of political stability returned to Ethiopia. While waiting in Egypt, Kugler took the opportunity to visit Henry Salt, now the British Consul-General for Egypt, who was on his death-bed (ROLLIER 1885). Salt at the time was one of the few living Europeans who had personally encountered Beta Israel. Gobat and Kugler finally began their missionary work in Ethiopia; Gobat travelled to the Gondar area, where he had several encounters with Beta Israel.[15] Gobat was active as a missionary in Ethiopia for some three years and published part of his account in the 1834 issue of the EMS journal.[16] In the same year Gobat tried to re-establish the mission in Ethiopia together with another missionary Carl Wilhelm Isenberg (1806-1864). Isenberg yet one more alumnas of the Basel Seminary, was close associate of Spittler and had been strongly associated with the latter's missionary efforts amongst the Jews in Basel. The mission in Ethiopia was hampered by Gobat's poor health, which forced him to leave Isenberg alone in the field. In 1836 Gobat's condition prevented the LJS missionary Wolff from reaching the Beta Israel in Gondar. Instead of the mission that he had considered for more than a decade Wolff was compelled to manage Gobat's safe return (WOLFF 1839).

Soon more missionaries from the Basel Mission in the service of the CMS began to arrive in Ethiopia. Karl Heinrich Blumhardt (1805-1880), a nephew of the Basel Seminary's inspector Blumhardt arrived in Ethiopia in 1837 as Gobat's replacement. Heinrich Knoth, set out from Basel around the same time for Ethiopia only to die en route in Cairo. Knoth's place was then taken over by Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810-1881), who joined Isenberg in 1837. Isenberg and Krapf would remain active in this missionary field in the years to come.

Meanwhile back in Europe Gobat called for a mission to the Jews in Ethiopia at a gathering of the LJS in London, in 1838. This appeal drew considerable attention, and was considered worthy enough to be reported in the journal of the Friends of Israel in

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[14] New legislation was introduced in 1849 that enabled the Jewish community in Basel finally to grow. A synagogue was inaugurated in 1850.

[15] Kugler however died early on due to an accident.

[16] It appeared in the same year as a book in French (GOBAT 1834).

Basel (GOBAT 1839). Undaunted by his failure to reach Gondar, Wolff had lost none of his interest in the subject. In the French issue of the same journal, L'amie d'Israel, it is reported that at this gathering in London, Wolff outlined his plan for a mission in Ethiopia that would open up the possibility to penetrate into the interior of Africa in search of other lost Israelites (*L'Amie d'Israel* 1838).

Thus far none of these Basel missionaries had been sent on a mission to the Beta Israel, but Black African Jews were of great interest to all of them. It is also noteworthy that Krapf and his colleagues interacted with both the Ethiopian authorities and the increasing number of travellers who were now visiting Ethiopia such as the British geographer Charles Beke in 1840 and in the following year another Briton William Coffin, a member of the 1810 Salt expedition. In 1838 Krapf and Isenberg were forced to leave Northern Ethiopia. They suspicioned the machinations of their rival Catholic missionaries. The mission then moved to the southern province of Shwa. In late 1839 Isenberg returned to Europe to organise further support for their mission, returning to Ethiopia with the intention to prepare the ground for two new missionaries from Basel in Ethiopia: Johannes Mühleisen and Johann Christian Müller. The mission however failed again and in 1843 the CMS finally gave up on a mission in Ethiopia in favour of other missionary fields that were opening up.

However, one by-product of the failed CMS mission had been to raise awareness of the Beta Israel amongst Jews and non-Jews in Europe. An increasing output of literature on the Beta Israel not only by the Basel Missionaries but also by other travellers started to create a web of information and narratives about the Beta Israel, that integrated them into existing Jewish and Christian historiographical narratives.[17] Zunz, the influential figure of Jewish Studies, by 1841 was firmly convinced that the Beta Israel where Jews and contributed with an Essay on the geographical literature of the Jews, from the remotest times, to the year 1841, to Adolf Ascher's Book The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela. While Zunz was careful to note only Jewish sources in connection with Ethiopia, the writings of the Basel educated missionaries about the Beta Israel certainly did not escape the attention of European Jewry as Jewish journals frequently printed or reprinted non-Jewish contemporary sources about the Beta Israel.[18]

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[17] VON KATTE 1838; RÜPPELL 1840. ISENBERG and KRAPF 1843; D'ABBADIE 1851.

[18] The Damascus affair of 1840, in which the accusation of ritual murder was brought against members of the Jewish community in that city, resulted in the creation of an international Jewish solidarity network for the accused and stimulated public Jewish debate. Not a few Jewish newspapers such as Britain's Jewish Chronicle were founded in this period. These new organs proved an effective forum for the discussion of many issues, including the Jewish identity of the Beta Israel and the activities of Protestant Missionaries. Charles Beke, the English geographer and bible critic, was another heavyweight contributor. Drawing on his experiences in Ethiopia during his three years sojourn (1840-1843), he started to write about the Beta Israel for the Jewish Chronicle in 1847.

From Basel via Jerusalem to Ethiopia

Lately, millenarian views were enforced by the establishment of an Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841 (Matar 1990). Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury, one of the most prominent British politicians of the time, a Member of Parliament and president of the LJS, convinced the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston to clear the way for the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land. In return for Britain's support of the Ottoman Empire, Britain demanded that an Anglican bishop in Jerusalem would act as the head of the Protestant community, a community that was ought to be made up of Jewish converts to Protestantism. When Shaftesbury obtained the appointment of a Jewish convert, the Rev. Michael Solomon Alexander to the Jerusalem Bishopric in 1841, the joy of men like Bickersteth and others from the LJS knew no bounds.[19]

The Basel connection was not lost either and Christian Friedrich Ewald, the former Jew baptised in Basel by Spittler's associate von Brunn, became a close associate of Alexander in Jerusalem. Ewald witnesses when Alexander in Jerusalem ordained Johannes Mühleisen in 1842, who was thought for the mission in Abyssinia together with Johann Christian Müller. This was the first ordination in Jerusalem under the new Bishop, who was also responsible for Ethiopia (EWALD 1846). Alexander in 1844 also ordained Henry Aaron Stern, the later famous missionary of the Beta Israel mission. Alexander's tenure was however cut short by his death in 1845. In the ensuing search for Alexander's successor, both Wolff and Gobat were considered. Apparently Gobat's missionary reports about Ethiopia gave him the edge over Wolff. It is likely that the Archbishop Canterbury, in his function as president of the LJS had been present at that 1838 LJS meeting at which both Gobat and Wolff had presented. It seems that the archbishop was particularly fond of Gobat's account of Ethiopia (LÜCKHOFF 1998; VAN DER LEEST 2008). Wolff, not unreasonably, felt cheated when Gobat was elected as the new Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem in 1846. Only ten years earlier Wolff had sacrificed his own plans for Ethiopia in order to save Gobat's life. Wolff was said to have been responsible for some of the criticism that was later directed against Gobat. Gobat, in opposition to Alexander was less concentrating on the mission to the Jews but sought also to win over Muslims as well as Christians from other churches. By travelling to Basel in 1852, Gobat might have hoped to receive some moral support from a city that now had a presence in Jerusalem in the form of the graduates of Spittler's new project, the St. Chrischona Pilgrim Mission. Founded in 1840 by Spittler in Basel, this Mission House soon attracted a number of former missionaries of the EMS Mission Seminary. Isenberg had started to work at St. Chrischona as a teacher soon after his return from Ethiopia as had other former students of the Basel Seminary. Spittler in 1846 dispatched the first missionaries from this institution to Jerusalem. He certainly greeted Gobat's appointment to the city's Bishopric as a positive development. At their meeting in Basel, Gobat and Spittler discussed plans for the mission in Ethiopia and the so-called

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[19] STOCK 1899. Bickersteth also published that very same year a book dedicated to the event (BICKERSTETH 1841).

Apostelstrasse project, — a line of twelve missionary stations from Jerusalem to Gondar. These stations would open up the continent for the Protestant Mission. The idea of Ethiopia as a highway for the Christian message in Africa, had already been proposed by Krapf to the CMS in London in 1850.[20] Missionaries educated at the St. Chrischona Pilgrim Mission, by teachers such as Isenberg (in Amharic) would then be sent first to Jerusalem, and from there to Ethiopia.[21] Krapf was won over for the idea and it was decided by Gobat and Spittler to send him, together with Johann Martin Flad — alumnus of both the Basel seminary and St. Chrischona institution — to Ethiopia to lay the ground in advance of the arrival of more missionaries. There is yet no evidence to suggest that the Gobatt / Spittler discussions focused on the Beta Israel, yet the later long-time engagement of Flad for the LJS amongst the Beta Israel and Krapf's theological elaborations about the theological importance of a mission to the Beta Israel is however intriguing. In his foreword to the German edition of Johann Martin Flad's Abessinische Juden (Falascha), published in 1869, Krapf outlines a pronounced theology containing as it does a clearly formulated role for Black Jews in the "Days to Come". Krapf, respected as a geographer and Mission strategist, was integrating the Jews in the East of Africa in his divine plan for the worldwide dispersion of the Jews. To this plan the Jews represented mines, whence the fire of the pentecostal spirit would in the "Coming Days" spread for the mission to the peoples. The plan envisaged a final stage, during which a state would be established for the Jews according to biblical outline.[22] It becomes clear then that the mission to the Beta Israel was more than a by-product of the Protestant Mission to Ethiopia.

Krapf and Flad arrived in Ethiopia in 1855. After their return from Ethiopia four alumni of the Chrischona institution were sent to Ethiopia. Under the guidance of Flad, Christian Bender, Johannes Kienzle and Johannes Maier (Mayer) began their missionary work in 1856, which already reached many Beta Israel. Flad had to leave the missionary field for Jerusalem because of his health and only returned in 1859 together with Theophil Waldmeier and Carl Saalmüller to new allumni of St. Chrischona. Meanwhile Krapf teached at St. Chrischona in 1859 until 1860. While in Jerusalem, Flad spoke to Gobat favourably about a mission to the Beta Israel. This woke the interest of the LJS, which decided in 1859 to send its own missionary to the Beta Israel. The man chosen for the task was none other than Henry Aaron Stern. Stern finally arrived in Ethiopia in 1860. He soon convinced Flad to work for him. The appearance of Stern has somehow diverted attention away from the role the Basel educated missionaries played among the early missions to the Beta Israel and led to the presentation of their encounter with the

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[20] It might be that Spittler had corresponded about this idea with Krapf, who travelled through Basel in 1850 and had originally intended to visit Spittler while in the city (EBER 2006).

[21] For instance STREBEL 1999; 2001.

[22] FLAD 1866; 1869a; 1869b; 1922.

Beta Israel as merely incidental aspect of their mission to Ethiopia.[23] In 1862 a third missionary enterprise was started amongst the Beta Israel on behalf of the Scottish Mission amongst the Jews. Again two alumni of the St. Chrischona institution were engaged for the project: Willhelm Staiger and Eleazar Friedrich Wilhelm Brandeis (1835-1920); the latter a Jewish convert to Protestantism and most probably also a student of Krapf at the Chrischona Pilgrim Mission.[24] Together with the original missionary group that was much in favour of working amongst the Beta Israel three groups of missionaries that were all – in part at least – constituted out of Chrishona alumni.

Conclusion

It is astonishing that past scholarship has overlooked the role that "Basel Missionaries" played in the conceptual conversion of the Beta Israel. This becomes even more apparent when one considers that later generations of missionaries like Friedrich Flad, Mikael Aragawi and a number of converted Beta Israel missionaries were educated in Basel as well,[25] – a process that continued until the 1970s.[26] The missionary institutions of the EMS and St. Chrischona then present themselves as a significant node in the web of knowledge and ideas about Jews and Judaism that provided an educational framework for the conceptual conversion of the Beta Israel into mainstream Jewry.

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[23] The Activities of the Basel educated missionaries has recently attracted some interest by Alex Carmel and Yaron Perry. Both of them have focused on the activities of the LJS in the Holy Land (CARMEL 1981; PERRY 2003).

[24] GREMINGER, 1929; PERRY 2008.

[25] SMIDT 2007; WEIL 2011.

[26] Sources from the *Staatsarchive Basel* indicate that the Mission continued until the year 1977. BaStabs PA 946a K7-6-1, Äthiopien: Falaschamission, 1974-1977.

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The regions of Adwa and Aksum, Qʷälla and Bägemdər on the manuscript maps by Georg Wilhelm Schimper, 1864/65 and 1868

Dorothea McEwan[*]

Within the framework of the ICES 18 conference topic of 'movements' a closer look at the role that maps, charts and textual descriptions of landscapes play, serves a particular important point: as mirrors of reality, as finding aids and as guiding aids. Human endeavour to orientate itself in the cosmos has led to important intellectual disciplines like astronomy on the one hand and religion on the other. To orientate oneself in the environment has led to equally important disciplines like geology, mineralogy, meteorology on the one hand and geography, botany and zoology on the other, as ways of learning to live with and inside a given environment.

These finding aids are known today as maps and charts. Maps present an overarching view of spatial information and carry information like an illustrated or shorthand version of a text. Maps and mapping have developed to show not only the landscape, the rivers, seashores and mountain ranges in general, but also in particular the natural growth of human interference on the landscape. Maps give a picture of the situation on the ground and allow an interpretation of that situation. Thus, river systems and road systems become the vehicles on which movement becomes possible, movement of people, of goods and most importantly of ideas. Maps, therefore, are not static records; a map is a record of one point in time, the time of the mapmaker, and new developments were charted and will be charted by every new cartographical record taking.

For the first time in its existence, the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies has established a History of Cartography Panel. This is a very welcome development as it draws attention to the history of maps, mapping and map making. It brings with it a pluridisciplinary approach involving scholars in the arts, sciences, and humanities. The Panel thus presents a broad view of what is called maps, integrated existing scholarship with new research and examined a range of manuscript and printed maps.

The manuscript maps of the German scientist Georg Wilhelm Schimper are the topic of this paper. Although he is celebrated for his botanical research, little is known of Schimper's mapmaking activities. A recent find in the manuscript department of the

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British Library in London brought to light two manuscript books. One, called *Observations,* is a detailed description of the flora of Northern Ethiopia. The other, called *Maps*, contains four manuscript maps; the Adwa and Aksum region [fig. 2],[1] Kolla Noari or Qʷälla, the area between the hot and dry lowlands and the highlands in western, north-eastern and south-eastern Ethiopia,[2] Bägemdər [fig. 3], the area to the east of Lake Ṭana as well as the map of the shoreline of Lake Ṭana.[3] These maps are accompanied by a number of sectional drawings of mountain ranges and river systems and copious captions, comments and descriptions.

The two volumes complement each other. The first deals mainly with Schimper's observations on the flora of Ethiopia, the geographical spread of plants and the landscape sustaining life. It is also an explanation of the subsoil, the geological substratum of the landscape. He continues this topic in the second volume, presenting detailed descriptions of the composition of the rocks supporting the ecosystem on the surface, and of the sectional drawings and maps. Through his long and extensive botanical collecting expeditions in the country, Schimper gained first-hand knowledge of the flora of Northern Ethiopia. The resulting maps and, in particular, the sectional drawings were an attempt to show the geological building blocks below ground, so to say, which shaped the landscapes above.

The life of Georg Whilhem Schimper (1804-1878)

Georg Wilhelm Schimper spent more than 40 years in Abyssinia collecting specimens of plants hitherto unknown to Europeans, mainly in the Tigray, Semen and the Täkkäze regions of what is now known as the Ethiopian highlands and Eritrea. Schimper is now universally considered to be the single greatest contributor to the knowledge of the flora and fauna of the Horn of Africa.[4] His specimens were in great demand and still form substantial parts of the collections of the major research centers of Europe such as the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, the Botanisches Museum in Berlin, and the Herbarium at Kew Gardens in London. The Kew Herbarium catalogue alone reveals some 2,400 *Schimperi* or *Schimperiana* entries for Ethiopia and the countries he visited in the Middle East.[5]

Schimper, born in 1804, studied Natural Sciences at Munich University from 1828 to 1829 and in 1830 he met Eduard Rüppell, the first naturalist to travel in Ethiopia. In 1831, in the service of a scientific collection society in Germany, Schimper left for his first botanical collection expedition to Algiers and in 1835 for a second expedition to Egypt, the Sinai and the Arabian Peninsula. From there he moved to Massawa in January 1837 and travelled to Tigray where he was received by the local ruler, Dädjazmach Wəbe

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[1]   BL, Add Ms 28506, 17.

[2]   BL, Add Ms 28506, 16.

[3]   BL, Add Ms 28506, 14.

[4]   HEDBERG *et al.* 1989-2009.

[5]   The Kew Herbarium Catalogue is accessible at: http://apps.kew.org/herbcat/navigator.do

Haile Maryam, who allowed him to settle in Adwa. Between October 1837 and May 1855 Schimper undertook various expeditions as far north as the Märäb River and south into the Täkkäze and Səmen mountain regions, the prolific results of which made him the famous botanist.[6]

Financial problems of his European sponsors in 1842 meant that he was no longer supported by them but, thanks to Wəbe, he was granted the governorship of the small province of Enticho which provided him with an income. A compatriot of Schimper, the artist Eduard Zander, arrived in Ethiopia in late 1847 and over the years the two Germans went together on collection trips. In late 1849 Schimper and Zander were asked by Wəbe to build a limestone tower in the church compound of the new church of Däräsge Maryam, near the village of Däräsge, in Wəbe's home region of Semen (MCEWAN 2011: 32-47 and MCEWAN 2013b). The new church was finished and dedicated in 1852, and the project to complete the limestone tower or house of refuge, as the church had asylum status, was completed by 1855. During the battle of Däräsge, the young leader, Kasa Hailu, defeated Wəbe and was crowned Emperor Tewodros II in Däräsge Maryam church on 11th February 1855. Schimper, as a former protégé of Wəbe, lost his governorship of Enticho and retreated to Adwa where he lived in greatly reduced circumstances for several years during which he found it very difficult to carry out any scientific work.

In 1861 the German Protestant missionary, Christian Friedrich Bender, married Schimper's eldest daughter, Yäshimmäbet, in Adwa and in 1863 Schimper took his youngest daughter, Sähaytu, to Gafat to get married to another missionary, Gottlieb Kienzlen. On the orders of Tewodros II, Schimper had to stay in Gafat under house arrest, but in 1864-65 he was able to spend time working on his topographical map of Bägemdər, a very large map measuring 132cm x 130 cm.

In the autumn of 1867 Schimper and his family, together with the whole Gafat community of European and Indian hostages, were forced to march to Mäqdäla where they were finally rescued on 12th April 1868 by the British military expedition under the leadership of General Sir Robert Napier [fig 1: The European hostages]. After his release, Schimper returned to Adwa and worked on two more maps of Adwa and Aksum and 'Kolla Noari' or Q[w]älla. A printed version of the Tigray map, albeit with only a selection of mountain profiles, was published in Germany by Alexander Sadebeck in 1869 (SADEBECK 1869: 347-352).

Schimper spent the last ten years of his life in Adwa. He continued to write reports on Ethiopia, such as one to the German Consulate in Alexandria about the coronation ceremony of the new Emperor Yohannes IV. In another, he described the maltreatment by Yohannes of his daughter Sähaytu who had married the pretender-to-the-throne, Kasa Golǧa, in 1868 after the death of Gottlieb Kienzlen in 1865. Schimper's last reports were published in 1877. In his last known letter of 8th May 1878, he described the misery of hunger in Tigray. He died in Adwa on 10th October 1878.

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6   For a detailed biography see BETTS and BETTS 2011, GRÄBER 1999: 47-68; for an overview of his life see GRÄBER 2010; for specialist publications see MCEWAN 2013a: 55-84; MCEWAN 2015.

Mapmaking under Tewodros

Schimper's maps of the Adwa region, Qʷälla or Kolla Noari, as Schimper called the low lying plain on the stretch of the Täkkäze between Səmen, Lasta and Abärgälle, and of Bägemdər are all geological and geographical records in which he tried to make visible what shaped the three areas which he crisscrossed over the decades.[7] By explaining the rock formation and conglomerate rock deposits beneath the surface, he could show how the underlying geological facts influenced and determined the geography, which in turn presented the key to understanding the flora and fauna of the country and ultimately its agriculture and life-supporting systems. Schimper sent rock samples with the maps and sectional drawings to Europe; to this day they are kept in the Natural History Museum in London and in the Museum für Naturkunde, Mineraliensammlung, in Berlin.

The sectional drawings with their captions on the composition of the substructure, the rocks, might no longer be acceptable to geologists, mineralogists and soil researchers today, but they were a first attempt at presenting an evolutionary account of the making of the land, from its volcanic eruptions to solidification and weathering and the ensuing changes in the landscape due to erosion and human interference.

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[7] BL Add Ms 28506 is a large size volume. Writing in black and red ink, maps in grey, blue, red, yellow paint. The outside cover, in brown leather, measures 50 x 74.5 cm. Inside, the cream coloured paper measures from middle fold to edge 48 x 73 cm.

- Folios 1r to 2v: cream coloured ruled paper: *Place names of the map of Bägemder*, 40 x 26 cm.
- Folios 3 and 4: cream coloured ruled paper: *Place names of the map of Aksum and Adwa*, 38 x 47.5 cm.
- Folios 5r to 12v: blue ruled paper: *Notes on the sectional drawings of the map of Aksum and Adwa,* 23 x 2.7 cm. Tables 1 to 15, with Tables 4 and 13 not listed.
- Fol. 13r: *Memorandum*, in English, cream coloured paper, 26 x 20 cm.
- Fol. 14: *Map of Bägemder* and *The shore of Lake Tana*. Papers stuck together, overall size 132 x 130 cm. Dated 1864/65. The *Bägemder* part measures 80 x 105 cm. Bottom right: *The Lake Tana* part measures 58.5 x 28.5 cm. The land in between has not been drawn. Bottom left: Notes on the bridge over the Ereb river, 71 x 19.5 cm. Scale: 'Popular scale: 8 cm = soldiers marching one hour in straight line on level ground'.
- Fol. 15: Tabula A*, Bägemder*, 89 x 14.5 cm; Tabula B*, Tigray*, 89 x 11.5 cm; Tabula C, region between Tigray and Tsälamt, 89 x 9.5 cm.
- Fol. 16: *Qʷälla* or *Kolla Noari*, also called *Tabula D*. From left edge to middle fold 45 x 35.5 cm, with the explanation that the original map had been sent to his cousin Wilhelm Schimper in Strasbourg some time beforehand. From middle fold to right edge: two *Tables,* overall size 45 x 35.5. Table E: 45 x 16 cm, Table F: 4 x 16 cm.
- Fol. 17: Aksum and Adwa. From left edge to middle fold, sectional drawings of mountain ranges, 44 x 46 cm. Parts 1 and 2. *Outline of the mountain range near Adwa*, and further 8 *sectional drawings* of individual mountains, not numbered, one of them the *Outline* sectional drawing again. From middle fold to right edge, map *Outline of the mountain range near Adwa*, 41 x 46 cm, with red lines numbered 1 to 15. On the same folio, below the sectional drawings and the map: *Tables 1 to 15*, corresponding to the red lines 1 to 15 on map, 89 x 27cm.
- Fol. 18: 86 x 28 cm. From left edge to half way of page: *Aksum*, 18 x 16 cm. From half way of this page to right edge, again: *Outline of the mountain range near Adwa* (practically three times the same sectional drawings, once on f. 18, twice on f. 17).
- Fol. 19: 7 *Tables* showing the mountains ranges on the *Bägemder* map; geological drawings with numbers corresponding to the numbered rock samples sent with the maps.

Schimper himself wrote about the making of the maps. During his work overseeing the construction of the limestone tower at Däräsge Maryam in the early 1850s, he went on field trips to explore the mountain ranges of the area and make notes on its geology, geography, mineralogy and botany. He made similar records during his travels in Tigray and Bägemdər from 1862 to 1865.

> "[I] was lucky, but subsequently lost part by looting and thereby also the geological collection, which I had hidden away in triplicate in two different villages, including 4 large parcels full of plants, the loss of which is less regrettable as they usually only contained duplicates... I have kept the geological, geographical maps with the associated plan drawings, both of Tigray as well as of Begemder, with me up till now".[8]

He is silent about the years 1866 and 1867, only hinting that times were difficult. During this time he was kept as a hostage of Tewodros II together with the other Europeans at Gafat. He is more explicit about the time from November 1867 to the end of January 1868 whilst on the long march to Mäqdäla:

> "...what did happen is something I cannot write about today. For more than three months, I have found myself in a soldiers' camp, without anything to do there. I am in my tent without being allowed free movement. Usually you travel in the morning and rest in the afternoon, and I make use of this time to jot down my botanical memories. I am surrounded by highly revolting, bad and dangerous thieves. I am disturbed by the talking and shouting, the noise and frequent tumult and I need to keep my tent closed, so as not to be seen writing. I languish in the trapped heat without any air blowing through. Writing, for me, was difficult in this situation, but I thought I should not defer it much longer: I fear that the circumstances might force me to leave what I have to do for another day, which would really mean abolishing my work altogether... What most constricted me when writing these notes was the lack of materials".[9]

The observation that he had to work in his tent with the doors firmly closed, keeping prying eyes out, is a comment on the incredibly difficult conditions he endured.

The colour scheme of the large map of *Bägemdər* and the two smaller maps of *Adwa,* 41 x 46 cm, and *Qwälla*, 45 x 35.5 cm, is grey, green, yellow and, very sparingly, red for sectional lines and blue for rivers. Although he does not say so, it is obvious that he had to make the paint himself. In his botanical description he mentions the recipe for making ink.[10] In addition to the maps Schimper made sectional drawings of the mountain ranges of the mapped areas around the three regions mentioned. The result is as much a triumph over adversity as it is a very accurate record of the three regions.

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[8] BL, Add. Ms 28505, 5v. This and all following translations from Schimper's manuscript books are by the author. Place names are kept in Schimper's transliteration.

[9] BL, Add. Ms 28505, 6r. Schimper's alludes to his march to Mäqdäla 1867-1868, as a hostage of Tewodros II.

[10] BL, Add Ms 28505, 95r.

Schimper presented in his two manuscript books three major topics; first, the geology of the country, secondly, the geography as shown by his maps and thirdly, the vegetation supported by the soil conditions.

On the geology of the Adwa area Schimper wrote:

> "You can observe on the horizontal clay plateaux in Tigray and in Talamt a dolerite, trachytic conglomerate, which usually covers this plateau only very lightly, even the stones are scattered about, and everywhere in the gaps of the same, you can see the clay rock exposed. This is not only visible in the vicinity of dolerite mountains but also on those odd island-like clay plateaux. Because they form one whole mass and the fact that they are all at the same height they look like one vast plain, which it would take many hours to cross. They are neither dolerite, nor trachyte, nor basaltic mountain formations to be found. Hence the volcanic conglomerate cannot have been flung up by volcanic eruptions into a neighbouring area, but it was formed on the spot itself. Of these areas, the clay plateaux in Tigray and Kolla-Noari serve, in particular, as evidence".[11]

A word on the use of the terms 'trachyte' and 'dolerite': Trachyte, from the Greek 'trachys', meaning rough, is a volcanic rock. It is a light coloured, very fine-grained extrusive igneous rock, commonly associated with other lavas in volcanic regions and thought to have been formed by the crystallization and abstraction of magnesium, iron and calcium minerals from basaltic lava. The term dolerite is no longer in use. In earlier times, dolerite was described as a dark basic intrusive igneous rock, the composition of which could not be determined with the naked eye, hence the name's derivation via the French *dolérite,* from the original Greek *doleros,* deceitful; it was so called because of the difficulty in determining its composition. It is a coarse-grained basaltic rock, now understood to include alkali-olivine basalts. Schimper uses the term to describe a hard conglomerate rock.[12]

> West and northwest of the centre of Semien, in Kolla Wogara and in T'alamt (Tigraic: Zalamti), the … red iron clay forms a lot of larger and smaller plateaux 5,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, that, with a very horizontal surface, all have one same apparent level. Since these plateaux are close together, when viewed from a distance that area will appear as a very widely extended, broken up plain, with a dolerite hill rising from it here and there, or even a basaltic form. The valleys, which emerge at the foot of the Semien Mountains, cross this plain in numerous directions with intersecting curves, are narrow and deep, … the clay is elevated horizontally, drops vertically, as already said, and is stored on an independent formation of primitive slate which, though undulating, drops very steeply there.

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[11] BL, Add Ms 28505, 168v.
[12] cf. Dietrich and Skinner 1979.
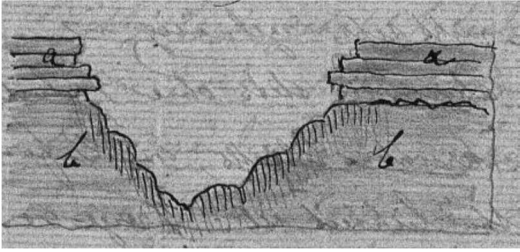
Sketch 1: a. Red clay, often ferrous, with intermediate layers of white and yellow clay ; b. Independent formation of primitive slate.[13]

In comparison to this generic drawing in his manuscript text Schimper's drawing of a specific region was accompanied by lines and captions on his geographical maps. The biographers of Schimper, Annie and Tony Betts, used the *Adwa and Aksum* map to find the Gässa Schimper estate near the village of Amba Sea in Enticho when doing research in the area. They commented that Schimper's map was so accurate, that they found the estate and the remnants of the stone built houses with its help.[14]

Another example of Schimper's detailed mapmaking is the drawing of river courses. A region is determined by its natural borders, usually mountain ranges, but also river beds and coast lines:

> Nothing makes the structure of a region apparent to the naked eye more quickly and correctly than the course of the waters flowing through it. The strange turns of the waters in Abyssinia give testimony at first glance to the volcanic formation of this country, even without a special closer look.[15]

> The valleys between these mountain massifs often change directions, hence the waters often travel a very long way in a small area and sometimes seem to flow towards the highest mountains, then turn away from them again and through the principal rivers into which they run, they flow roughly in a north-westerly direction. You will not be very much mistaken, if you assume the direction of the principal rivers, including the larger valleys, as being approximately parallel with the direction of the Red Sea.[16]

> The wide bed of the river Märäb, approximately 4,000 feet above sea level, lies dry for the largest part of the year and is surrounded on both sides with dense tree cover, so that when walking on the sandy river bed, you walk as though along a pleasant shady avenue.[17]

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[13] BL, Add Ms 28505, 169r.

[14] I am indebted to Annie and Tony Betts for this information. They used the Schimper maps on their trips in 2009; see BETTS 2011: 45.

[15] BL, Add Ms 28505, 173r.

[16] BL, Add Ms 28505, 172v.

[17] BL, Add Ms 28505, 8r.

In the discussion of the vegetation and cultivation of the land he mentions figs, hibiscus, bay trees, dates, mushrooms, Eleusine or millet, lilies, onions and crocus, to name but a few.[18]

The second region, Qʷälla or Kolla Noari, the lowland area dipping down to the Täkkäzze, is marked by clay plateaux with deep ravines. The terrain on the Qwälla map is explained on Table E and Table F.[19] Vegetation mentioned consists of euphorbia or spurge, any number of vegetables, cucumber, beans and echinops or globe thistle.

The third region, represented by the biggest map, is Bägemdər. Schimper describes the geology of Bägemdər in the following words:

> "This conglomerate covers the ground in Begemder so thick in many places that cultivation there is more difficult. Usually, however, there is topsoil located between these rocks, a product of rock weathering, and while this topsoil is very fertile, during about 3 months – June to mid-September, the rainy season – it does also transform the area into a kind of swamp. ... The mountain elevation on which such a basalt group can be found, in the Magandi district that belongs to Begemder, consists of a mixture of white and yellow clay and dolerite soil. Nodular limestone is found scattered at the foot of the mountain, and on the plain in masses, a sign of the dolerite formation of the terrain".[20]

He explained this stratification by illustrating it with a little sketch, in which he shows Giyorgis church in Mägändi, Bägemdər. The sketch shows a cross for the church on top of a basalt column, further scattered basalt columns, boulders, nodular limestone and different clays mixed with dolerite and basalt conglomerate; on the right, the original shape of the basalt column:
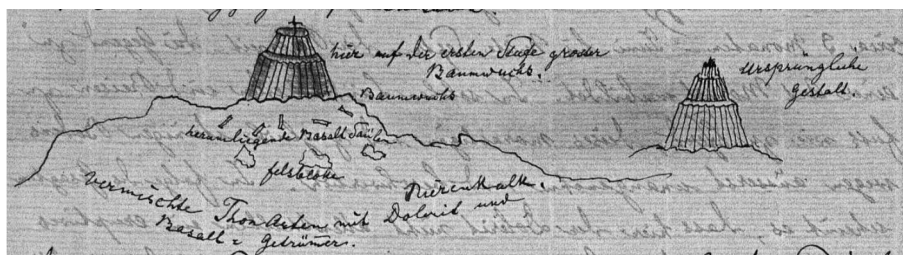
Sketch 2: Example for nodular limestone and basalt columns.

> "The lower columns are about 3 times the height of a man. On the south side, this steep elevation has a break, which allows the worshippers to climb up to the church without having to be pulled up using ropes... It seems that the yellow clay

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[18] BL, Add Ms 28505, 24r-27r.
[19] BL, Add Ms 28506, 16.
[20] BL, Add Ms 28505, 169r.

frequently occurring in Begemder is a volcanic metamorphosis of the massively occurring white clay; the red clay is a metamorphosis of the yellow clay, which is something my collections show clearly. These three types of clay partly merge into each other, sometimes, however, each of them also makes a transition to that type of dark-coloured hard, crystalline rock, which I call here dolerite and trachyte types".[21]

Because of the geology, '...a wonderful mixture of volcanic metamorphoses...',[22] he conjectures that coal seams are extant in the Bägemdər area. The pointer to these are the occurrence of sulphur pyrite, clay and salty and warm springs, even ferrous ones, to wit the hot springs in Wansagjé and Guramba.[23] The volcanic action produced diversity in the shapes of mountains in the Bägemdər area but there are no cone hills with plugs of extinct craters, as shown on the following profile, an example for volcanic action producing rock diversity in Bägemdər:[24]
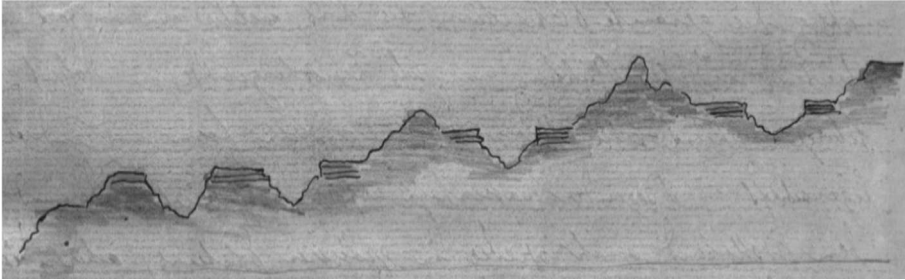
Sketch 3: Example for stepwise descent of mountains in Tigray.

The big map of Bägemdər is somewhat difficult to read, as the colours are browns, and greys and the hundreds of names of villages, rivers, mountains are not easily legible. The exception is the shoreline of Lake Ṭana, picked out in blue. This is a historic record, the expedition by Annie and Tony Betts, who were trying to find the location of the town of Korota on the lake shore, used the Schimper map once again and found the shoreline as drawn by Schimper.[25] Such records will be useful in future for climatological studies on the changing level of the lake due to rain or drought.

As to vegetation, Bägemdər, a high plateau region, is described as a region with rich cultivation of teff, sorghum, vegetables, trees for construction and firewood.

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[21] BL, Add Ms 28505, 169v. Mägändi is also entered in BL, Add Ms 28506, 14.

[22] BL, Add Ms 28505, 167r, '...ein wunderbares Gemenge vulkanischer Metamorphosen..'

[23] BL, Add Ms 28505, 170r.

[24] BL, Add, Ms 28505, 171v.

[25] I am indebted to Annie and Tony Betts for supplying this information, 20.8.2012.

Finally, Schimper makes mention of a 'special deviation' of the magnetic needle on the mountains of Bägemdər. There, the more crystalline the volcanic rocks are, the more magnetic they are:

> "... the magnetic needle deviates to the west, but there are lines of unknown length and of small width, where the deviation is to the east instead, these lines consistently have the direction towards 10 on the geological compass,[26] so they form a right angle with the direction 2 approximately southeast to northwest, which is the main direction of the Red Sea and the larger valleys of this region of the world; - and the frequent earthquakes have almost the same directional course, especially those appearing in the month of February... The prominence of the deviation is locally different, the strongest I have noticed is 10¼ hours towards the east, the magnetic needle therefore points to the south there instead of to the north".[27]

This is typical of Schimper's observations of natural phenomena. His descriptions are meticulous, backed up by sketches, copious captions and cross references to his very detailed register of plants, both cultivated and uncultivated. In such a way he presents an ecosystem from the bottom up, as it were; the geological givens determining the skin, the landscape above with its soil conditions for cultivation.

A list of towns and villages accompanies the maps of Adwa and Aksum and Bägemdər and the shoreline of Lake Ṭana. This is linguistically interesting, because Schimper transcribed the Tigrayan and Amharic names according to sounds in his mother tongue, German. It will be left to detailed future research to track down the villages and locate them on modern maps. So far, only the major towns on the four maps by Schimper have been geo-referenced.[28]

Schimper, having sent his third plant collection of 1847-1848 to the Herbarium at Kew Gardens in London, handed his manuscripts, not yet bound up in two books, and the

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[26] The numbers on the compass dial ascend in an anticlockwise direction.

[27] BL, Add Ms 28505, 201v.

[28] 1. For *Karte von dem wichtigsten Theil derProvinz Begemder, trigonometrisch aufgenommen von W. Schimper, 1864, 1865* (The Bägemder part). See http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/maps/africa/addumsu28506ufl4u04. html. The geo-referenced map: http://britishlibrary.georeferencer-com/map/188WkRFVqEB3TYcxp fWCmh/ 201306122151-XyxKFl/georeference.

2. For *Karte von dem wichtigsten Theil derProvinz Begemder, trigonometrisch aufgenommen von W. Schimper, 1864, 1865* (The Shoreline of Lake Tana part). See http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/maps/africa/ addumsu28506ufl4upanoram1.html. The geo-reference map: http://britishlibrary.georeferencer.com/ map/qwCSNNyzl5Z8WCWi38cKzB/201306122203-Xv9nrK/visualize.

3. For *The low lying flat land called Kolla Noari or Qwälla, Western Ethiopia*. See http://www.bl.uk/ onlinegallery/onlineex/maps/africa/adduu28506ufl6ukollauno.html. The geo-referenced map: http://brtislibrary.georeferencer.com/map/83MJ1vIyz38fRZBstqpbvY/201306130633-r3huZ/georeference

4. For *The Aksum and Adwa region in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia*.see http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ onlineex/maps/africa/addumsu28506ufl7r.html. The geo-referenced map: http://britishlibrary. georeferencer.com/map/qlSzrvSLok4XuwtD4yTSwk/201303221705-LqpJAi/visualize

large map of Bägemdər to the British officers in 1868.[29] He had asked them to take his material to London, as he had decided to sell the papers for £ 50.00 to the British Museum, which indeed purchased them. The papers had been accessioned into the holdings of the Museum in 1870 and bound into two volumes, the first the large manuscript book *Observations*, dated 1868, the second the collection of the four maps and numerous sectional drawings, *Maps,* dated 1864/65. However, the two maps of Adwa and Aksum and Qʷälla or 'Kolla Noari', now in the second volume, were only finished by Schimper after the British left Ethiopia.[30] It is as yet unknown who took them to Europe; they were already published by Sadebeck in Berlin in 1869.

Schimper often strayed into a variety of disciplines, meteorology, climatology, and mineralogy to make a point. Not all of his findings have stood the test of time, but as an attempt to present as accurate a record as possible of the land, his manuscripts are of great importance in measuring the effects of erosion, land improvement, settlement, deforestation, abandonment of some areas and overpopulation of others on the land over the last 150 years. Schimper, a natural scientist, has provided maps, sectional drawings, exhaustive observations on the soil conditions and plant life in Ethiopia, which have stood the test of time. With no formal training in the science of surveying and map making he can aptly be called a genius in the way he observed and described the world around him.

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[29] He made use of the occasion and requested that his scientific records should be sent from London to Berlin to his friend Alexander Braun, Director of the Herbarium, for correction. After all, Schimper has done his research from memory. Braun should then send back the records to London to be presented to the Bʀɪᴛɪsʜ Museum in the hope of receiving further collecting commissions. See BL, Add Ms 28505, 7r and Bᴇᴛᴛs 2011: 231.

[30] Gɪʀᴀʀᴅ 1873: 229 and 235.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: 'The European Hostages. © Rheinisches Bildarchiv. Theodore's Artisans and their Wives. WRM/PH/SL888/52.

Fig. 2: Schimper's Map of the Adwa and Aksum region. London, BL, Add Ms 28506, 17. © The British Library Board.

Fig. 3: A section of Schimper's map of Bägemder. London, BL, Add Ms 28506, 14. © The British Library Board. London.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3
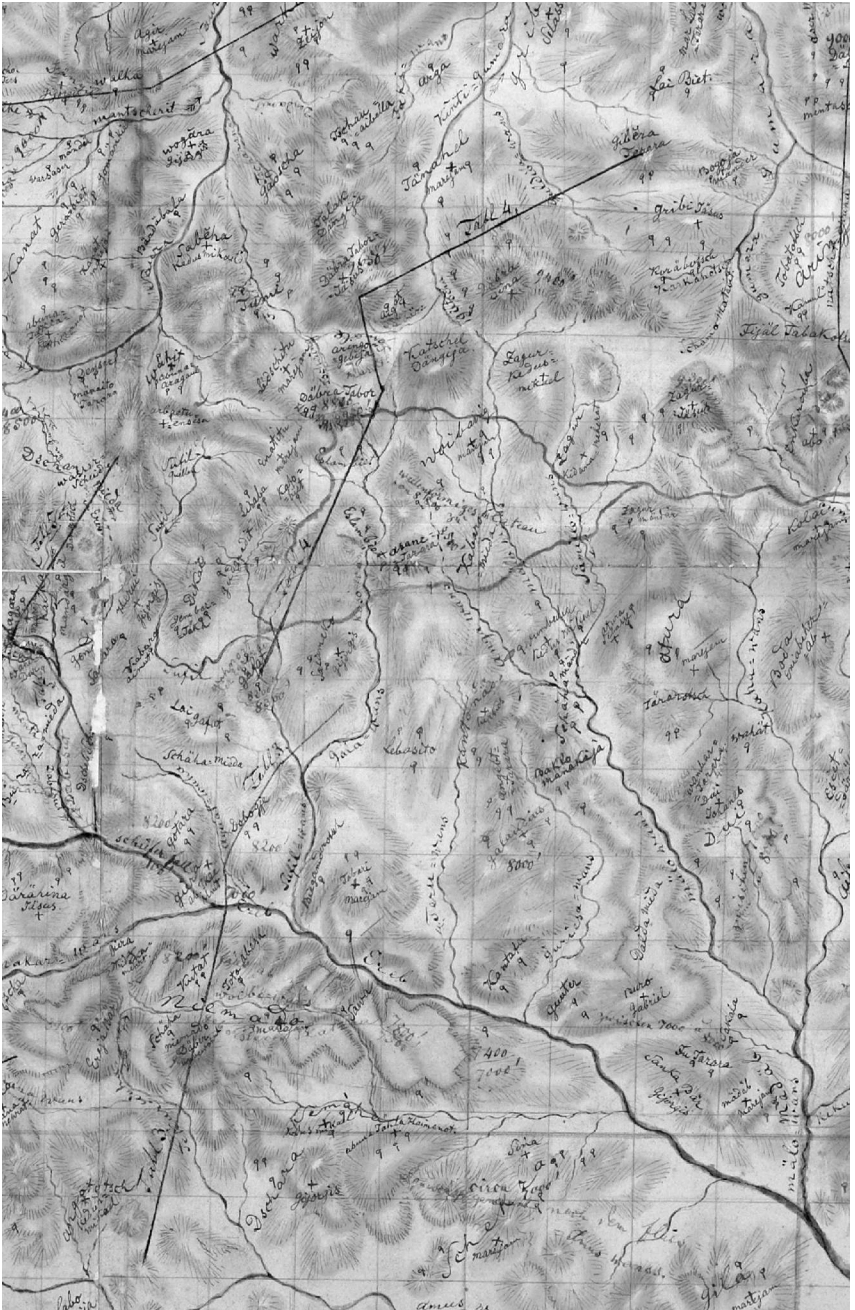
Rethinking the Reign of ʿAbdullāhi Muhammad b. ʿAlī Abdaššakūr: Harär at the Dawn of the 'Glocal' Era during the Latter Part of the 19th Century

Avishai Ben-Dror[*]

This article[1] examines the short-lived reign of ʿAbdullāhi Muhammad b. ʿAlī Abdaššakūr, the last emir of Harär, through the prism of globalization. Harär, one of the most ancient cities in East Africa, is located east of Addis Ababa, on the south-eastern tip of the plateau that extends from the Rift Valley to the plains of the Ogaden Desert.[2] The historical events that happened in the latter part of the 19th century turned the town into a cultural and religious intersection which brought together global powers and their 'agents' – Muslims and Christians from Africa, as well as Europeans.

ʿAbdullāhi was appointed to the position of emir by Great Britain in May of 1885, after the withdrawal of the Egyptian occupation force that had taken control of Harär a decade earlier. He quickly became enmeshed in a series of political imbroglios, both inside and outside the emirate that hastened the conclusion of his rule. In January 1887, an army led by Menelik, the sovereign of the Ethiopian kingdom of Shewa, defeated the Emir's army. Harär was annexed by Ethiopia, and has since maintained its status as one of the country's political and economic centres. The ʿAbdullāhi Emirate period occupies a place of relatively minor significance in historical research on Harär. The period from 1885-1887 is generally thought of as a brief interim between the "large" events – the Egyptian and Ethiopian occupations of Harär – and the Emir's name often goes unmentioned.[3]

When the literature does mention him, ʿAbdullāhi is often referred to in negative terms. He has been described in some current research as "weak" and "fanatic", and as an "obsessive reactionary".[4] A more balanced approach portrays ʿAbdullāhi as "someone who tried to revert to Harär's old system of government, which relied on a closed-door policy by limiting the presence and influence of foreigners in the city" (AHMED ZAKARIA 2003:38-39). The traits ascribed to ʿAbdullāhi, and his religious Muslim "fanaticism"

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[*]   The Open University of Israel and the Harry S. Truman Institute, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
[1]   This article is an early version of: BEN-DROR 2015.
[2]   See ASANTE 2005:1012-1013.
[3]   See, for instance, a review of major periods in the history of the city in an album published in the last decade in REVAULT and SANTELLI 2004:17.
[4]   See, for instance, CAULK 1967-1968:6, FOUCHER 1988:370- 371; MUHAMMAD HASSAN 1973: 33-35.

were mostly based on a corpus of literature produced by European travellers – merchants and missionaries – who resided in Harär in the late nineteenth century. These documents were part of the Orientalist discourse in Western and Ethiopian Christian research, which also came to bear on Harär and the Muslim communities that resided in and around the city. Some of the studies that adopted this approach often couched encounters between the city's Muslims and Christians in strictly polarized religious and cultural terms, disregarding the actual events that took place in Harär at the time. They also focused on "local" history and tended to artificially sever Harär from the regional structures that tied it to the coastal cities of Zeila and Berbera on the Somali coast, as well as to the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

In fact, ʿAbdullāhi ʾs story is a reflection of the first time in the history of Harär that a dialogue took place between the local and the global. The globalization processes discussed here are connected to African and European colonialism and its 'agents' (such as Muslim Egyptian officers and preachers, European merchants and missionaries). The globalization trends, brought by the colonial agents, deeply influenced the political, social and economic alignments in Harär and along the Somali coast from 1875.

ʿAbdullāhi , as this paper suggests, conceived Harär and its relationships with its African and Somali coast's surroundings solely on a 'local' level. To ʿAbdullāhi ʾs great regret, the political and economic conditions that were valid for his predecessors until 1875 were no longer relevant a decade later, and he was forced to deal with globalization 'agents' in Harär and along the Somali coast. His misreading of the changes and the import of forces that came from 'the sea' led to his political fall and to the emirate sovereignty's final destruction in 1887.

From October 1875, the Egyptians linked Harär to the global system of commerce and transport that rapidly developed in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean over the last three decades of the 19th century. The Egyptians introduced a new era in the history of Harär, instituting new standards of government, society and religion. One aspect of the new global era was the influx of European merchants and missionaries who settled in Harär. Furthermore, the Egyptians aspired to convert the Oromo people to Islam and to spread what they called 'the right Islam' among the town's Muslim denizens. The Egyptians identified the re-Islamization with modernization and with their vision of a 'civilizing mission', merging a hybrid message of 'cultured' Muslim colonialism, part of the late 19th century Ottoman colonial ideas.[5] The Egyptian occupation, which was the first phase in the process of Harär's loss of sovereignty, had come to an end by 1885. The second phase was the Ethiopian occupation of the town during January 1887, followed by the assimilation of Harär's political and economic elites into the Ethiopian empire.

Fredrick Cooper discusses the role played by globalization in the historical study of African societies. He maintained that such research must focus on something that is "more than local and less than global" (COOPER 2001:208-211). In this article, I wish to draw on Cooper's assumption and weave Harär's local history into the history of global

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[5] For further details see DERINGIL 2003:311-342.

developments, in a region to which the city was linked since its founding in the 13th century – the Somali coast and the cities of Zeila and Berbera. A focus on the interaction between the Somali coast – the portal for globalization trends that seeped in from "the sea" – and the Muslim community of Harär can give an additional dimension to our understanding of ʿAbdullāhi 's reign and his struggle with "the sea" and its agents of change.

Globalization trends in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, 1865-1885

The advancement of maritime transportation, and the subsequent development of trade and transport routes in the Red Sea, gave rise to a rapid increase in trade both along the coasts of the Horn of Africa and in the north-western regions of the Indian Ocean. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 expedited the development of trade routes between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea and between the European empires and their colonies along the coasts of Sudan, the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. As one researcher who studied the Sudanese port city of Sawákin put it, the Red Sea, once a "side street of maritime commerce", quickly became the "highway to the East" (BLOSS 1937:247).

The Red Sea and the north-western regions of the Indian Ocean became centres for the movement of capital, workers and merchants, as well as for service providers who settled in the port cities of the Red Sea. Some of these cities were assimilated into the new transport and trade system and became hubs for immigrants and various types of trade, including human trafficking, throughout the Red Sea and the western Indian Ocean.[6]

These developments are consistent with the definition of globalization as an amalgamation of economic, technological, political, social, cultural and behavioural processes along with increased participation in global commerce and an accelerated "flow of capital" (DODGE and HIGGOTT 2002:14-15). Globalization also impacted the region discussed in this article, appearing as a diverse phenomenon that "involve[d] both capitalist markets and sets of social relations and flows of commodities, capital, technology, ideas, forms of culture, and people across national boundaries" (KELLNER 2002:287).

Globalization phenomena were linked to increasingly acute colonial rivalries in the Gulf of Aden and the southern Red Sea, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. Britain had been in control of Aden since 1839, France aspired to gain power in areas of Djibouti, and in 1869 Italy consolidated its hold on the port city of Assab. Another factor was Khedive Ismāʿil, the ruler of Egypt between 1863 and 1879, who harboured his own imperial ambitions in Africa. Ismāʿil's armies deepened their control via Sudan towards the Red Sea, occupying the port cities of Sawákin in Sudan and Massawa (located in present Eritrea) in 1865. In 1875, Ismāʿil also took control of the port cities of Zeila, Berbera, Tadjoura, and Bulhar, as far as Cape Guardafui. Egyptian

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[6] See for instance, the case of the city of Massawa in MIRAN 2009:33-65.

sovereignty over the ports of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden was ratified in an agreement signed between the British government and the Khedivate in 1877, and became a feature of the colonial map of the region.[7] Two months after the takeover of Zeila, an Egyptian force numbering 1,200 soldiers departed from the city to occupy the Emirate of Harär.

The first modern 'global agents' in Harär: the Egyptian occupation (1875-1885)

Since its founding as an urban centre in the thirteenth century, Harär has enjoyed a unique political and religious status in the Horn of Africa. The city is considered a centre of Islamic learning, combining a Shafi'i educational system with Shariʿa courts and rituals associated with the graves of saints. From the fifteenth century onward, Harär ruled its environs, and especially its neighbours, the Oromo. The establishment of a dynasty of emirs in the seventeenth century, and Harär's location in the centre of the triangle formed by the Somali coast, the Nile Valley and the mountain kingdom of Christian Ethiopia, caused trade in coffee, *khat* leaves, skins, arms, and slaves to gravitate towards the city. Thus Harär became one of the most important cities in North-Eastern Africa.[8]

The occupation of the Harär Emirate by the Egyptians in October 1875 was a defining historical moment that ushered in the era of globalization in the city. It was the "flattening" agent that linked Harär to regional and global economic circles in the late 19th century.[9] The Egyptian occupiers exhibited military might and technological superiority on a scale that had hitherto been unknown in Harär and among the nearby Oromo and Somali communities. They murdered Emir Muhammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdaššakūr (ʿAbdullāhi 's father), took the local "Mahlak" currency out of circulation, initiated the rapid construction of public buildings and mosques, launched a cartographical project and took censuses in and around the city in order to take optimal economic advantage of the region and the communities that populated it. The Egyptians also replaced the mutual relationship between the city's emirs and the Oromo elites, which had existed since the mid-seventeenth century, with political oppression, economic enslavement and a process of consolidation into easily controllable groups of towns.

Another important dimension in the role of the Egyptians as agents of globalization was the religious one. The Egyptians coerced many Oromo into converting to Islam as part of an effort to create a 'new,' 'cultured' Oromo psyche that conformed to their 'modern' vision. The Egyptian *mission civilisatrice* aspirations included, however, the creation of new pattern of 'civilized' Muslims in Harär and its surrounding peoples. It demonstrates once again the flexibility of the terms of globalization and colonialism as trans-cultural and trans-religious phenomena. Thus globalization, which is almost

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[7] See FO 78/3189: Draft (March 1877).

[8] For more on various aspects of the political, historical, cultural and religious development of Harär, see BRAUKÄMPER 2004:106-128, DESPLAT 2005:483-505, GIBB 1999:88-108.

[9] For more on history as a "flattening" agent that brings about the second – cultural and political – "flattening" agent in the globalization process, see FRIEDMAN 2005.

instinctively associated with the 'West' and 'White Europe', is expressed here as inter-African and inter-Islamic.

Egypt's regime of political and economic oppression in the city began to decline in 1878 with the dismissal of Raūf bāšā, the city's first governor, by Charles George Gordon, the then Governor General of Sudan. Once the British occupied Egypt in 1882, the removal of the Egyptians from Harär became merely a matter of time (MIRAN 2005:1019-1021).

The Egyptians encouraged European merchants to operate in the city, thus linking Harär's economy to circles of global commerce. Since its inception, Harär was never isolated and played an important role in the Red Sea and North-Eastern Indian Ocean trade and cultural networks, as well as in the inter-African trade networks.[10] The Egyptians 'contributed' the 'modern' dimension by seizing the sphere between the town and the Somali coast and securing its trade routes under their oppressive regime, which almost totally subjugated the Oromo and the Somali peoples. Furthermore, the Egyptians were the first in the history of the region to use telegraph lines and to improve the quality of the winding trade routes that linked Berbera and Zeila with the hinterland.

Muhammad Nādī bāšā, the third Egyptian governor of Harär (1880-1882), was of the opinion that the city's economic and political future would be determined by Europeans, particularly the French and Italian merchants who operated along the Somali coast, and the British merchants in Aden (BEN-DROR 2008:188-192). In order to make it easier for European merchants to settle in the city, he installed a telegraph line between Harär and the Somali coastal cities of Zeila and Berbera. In August 1880, French merchants Alfred Bardey and Henry Lucereau arrived in Harär from Zeila.[11] Bardey, who had opened a coffee trading company in Aden, was invited to settle in Harär under the auspices of the Egyptian occupying force. It was the first time in the history of Harär that foreigners had settled in the city to trade. On the heels of the merchants, missionaries from the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin arrived in the city from Zeila in April 1881 (ALEME ESHETE 1975:2).

The success of the Egyptian initiative was reported in an article in the Italian *L'Esploratore* newspaper in May 1883. "The Egyptian government is inviting European travellers and merchants to a place where the fine weather, the fertile soil and the intelligence of the local residents bode well for the future" (*L'Esploratore* 1883:432). Nādī bāšā reported to his superiors that "Currently, Harär has twenty Greek shopkeepers, French Jesuits, and salesmen representing a French company and an Italian company. We are happy to welcome travellers to Harär and assist them as we've assisted

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[10] For further details see HUSSEIN AHMED 2010:111-117, BRAUKÄMPER 2002:12-38, AHMED HASSAN 2001:135-147.

[11] Alfred Bardey (1854-1934) was a merchant in the French city of Lyon. In early 1880 he opened a coffee import company in the cities of Aden and Zeila. Henry Lucereau was appointed French consul in Zeila in 1879. He arrived in Harär in September of 1880 before moving on to the Oromo areas, where he was murdered in October of 1880. For more on Bardey and Lucereau, see MIRAN 2003:476 and PERRET 1981:194-201.

their predecessors: merchants and priests who've settled in the city" (*Bulletin de la Société Khédiviale de Géographie du Caire* 1886:464).

However, a semblance of openness to the world and economic initiative could not save the Egyptian administration in Harär. In March 1884, the Egyptian government first offered to withdraw its forces from Harär. The British considered this a positive development and appointed a military envoy, arriving in Harär and Zeila from Aden in order to oversee the evacuation. The British representative, Major Hunter, concluded that the great admiration the city's Muslims harboured towards the dynasty of emirs that had been in power before the Egyptian occupation was further cause to appoint a local to rule after the Egyptians withdrew (FO 403/82 5 April 1884). He suggested that the independence of the emirate in Harär be preserved "under the previous Ameer's son. Each Gala (Oromo) and Somali tribe should keep within his own limits, acknowledging British supremacy, and protect routes to the coast, denying passage to slavers" (FO 403/82 4 September 1884).

The British saw Ibrahim and ʿAbdullāhi , two of the sons of Emir Muhammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdaššakūr, as potential candidates for the post of emir (FO 403/82 5 September 1884).

ʿAbdullāhi and the Pasha of Zeila: localism versus glocalism

ʿAbdullāhi 's subservience to the British was one more stage in the process wherein Harär and its emirs lost their independence. ʿAbdullāhi never wielded any actual political power. After the murder of his father at the hands of the Egyptians in October 1875, ʿAbdullāhi relocated to Zeila, where he was sheltered by the governor of the city, Abu Bakr Ibrahim Shahim. The governor became ʿAbdullāhi 's sponsor in Zeila, paying him a monthly stipend and maintaining his servants (ATTALA SHAUKI 1959:307). Abu Bakr even mediated between the government of Khedive and ʿAbdullāhi , who travelled to Cairo and was promised that upon his return to Zeila, the Egyptians would show consideration for his status and take care of his family's assets in Harär (ATTALA SHAUKI 1974:214).

The comparison between Abu Bakr and ʿAbdullāhi sheds new light on the global processes that began in the Red Sea, as well as on the various ways in which they impacted Zeila on the coastline and Harär further inland. Abu Bakr Ibrahim Shahim, a member of the Afar people and a slave trader in the Zeila region, was the epitome of survival in the region from the early 1860s through his death in 1885. Abu Bakr's personality, political acumen and knack for manoeuvring between global forces in the Red Sea and the Somali tribes – all these made him a serious player upon whom the superpowers of Europe, Egypt and Ethiopia relied in their activities along the Somali coast. Despite the fact that his involvement in human trafficking was common knowledge, Abu Bakr was given French citizenship in the early 1860s in exchange for granting special privileges to French merchants in the Zeila region. When the Egyptians arrived in the area, Abu Bakr quickly became an integral part of their colonial enterprise, earning the title of "pasha" in exchange for maintaining quiet along the coastal plain.

He consented on condition that the Egyptians respected Zeila's sovereignty and did not get involved in his personal appointments and the

in government, and adhere to Shariʿa law (ATTALA SHAUKI 1974:249).

The prospect of returning to Shariʿa rule was a source of profound anxiety for the slave trade, a business he pursued until his death. When he noticed that Egypt's control was flagging, he began to reinforce his political connections with the British, the Italians, the French and Menelik of Ethiopia, becoming an object of political courtship (FONTRIER 2003:52).[12]

Abu Bakr's status was earned not only by virtue of his political skill, but also due to the nature of the city he ruled. Unlike the inland city of Harär, the port of Zeila became a transportation hub for the global political and economic forces drawn to the southern Red Sea region. The tension felt in Zeila between 'regional' and 'global' may have contributed to the perception of Abu Bakr as a 'cosmopolitan,' an embodiment both of influences from 'the sea' (the imperial powers and global economic and commercial transformations) and of local influences from 'the land' (Somali tribal politics and Ethiopia). Furthermore, Abu Bakr mediated between political-imperial circles and local forces. His status as arbiter between 'land' and 'sea' lent him power on both the 'local' and global stages.[13] One could say that, in early twenty-first-century terms, Abu Bakr was a personification of the process known as 'glocalization.' He succeeded in adopting various aspects of globalization in the second half of the nineteenth century in the southern Red Sea – especially the regional imperial discourse and its influences of flow of capital and the rapid maritime traffic revolution – without forsaking his local distinction as a tribal leader and slave trader.

ʿAbdullāhi , on the other hand, embodied the exact opposite of Abu Bakr. As a scion of the emirs of Harär, he had to shoulder the independent political heritage of his city, while dealing with an urban Muslim society that was still very much under the influence of the Egyptian occupation at the time of his appointment. He lacked any prior political experience and was essentially 'parachuted' into a position he was not qualified to fill. ʿAbdullāhi grew up in Harär, which had not been exposed to foreign powers and the political, economic and commercial aspects of global processes until 1875. He was not versed in the esoterics of the new discourse between the imperialist forces, and did not comprehend the regional globalization processes. The sovereign dynasty of the Harär emirs built its political and economic strength over the centuries through interactions with 'the land' – the Oromo and the Somali on the Somali coastal plain and the Ogaden Desert, who controlled the trade routes between Harär and the coast. ʿAbdullāhi was the first emir required, as a *protégé* of the British, to build ties with forces from both 'the land' and 'the sea'.

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[12] For an extensive political biography of Abu Bakr Ibrahim, see FONTRIER 2003.

[13] For more on merchants as "mediators" between occupiers and occupied see COHEN 1971:266-281.

The 'resurgence of radical Islamism' in Harär: a re-examination

On the eve of his official coronation, ʿAbdullāhi informed the British that Shariʿa – Islamic law – would be the sole law in Harär, and the basis for the treatment of the city's residents, both Muslim and foreign. He affirmed his commitment to the wellbeing of foreigners and vowed to refrain from taxing them in manners that he deemed "superfluous", due to "their importance to commerce in the city" (FO 403/83 22 March 1885). The Egyptians, who officially handed over control of the city to ʿAbdullāhi , received promises to the effect that he would guarantee safety on the road from Harär to Zeila, shun the slave trade, include the Ulama city's European merchants, who had become accustomed to freedom of religious expression and special trade privileges during the Egyptian occupation. They saw the Emir as a reactionary who "made it his goal to reintroduce Islam to the residents of Harär", dangerous because "he scorned any possibility of a European occupation of Harär" (PAULITSCHKE 1981:335). The Capuchin missionaries saw in ʿAbdullāhi an "Islamic resurgence" that harmed their conversion enterprise and threatened their life in the city (ALEME ESHETE 1975:9). The import of such statements in the writings of foreign merchants was also adopted in descriptions of the ʿAbdullāhi era in the works of some present-day researchers.[14]

This picture is de-contextualized in that it neglects the fact that deteriorating relations were the result of economic tensions and the merchants' failure to respect the Emir's sovereignty in the city. Still, testimonies of residents of Harär from that period can teach us something about the implementation of ʿAbdullāhi 's policy. The new Emir put himself in charge of the city's Shariʿa courts and commanded local women to dress modestly and wear veils. New mosques were built at his behest both inside and outside the city. ʿAbdullāhi also mandated the closure of the *cafés* that had catered to the foreign residents and banned the consumption of alcohol in public spaces and in the home. All of Harär's residents were enjoined to pray in the mosques during the day and adhere to the edicts of Islam. These were the practical manifestations of what ʿAbdullāhi termed a "war against [the] wantonness" that, he believed, had characterized the Egyptian occupation.[15] It seems that the policy of the new emir was a reaction to the global trends, brought about by the Egyptians and their European *protégés* and not necessarily a direct result of a policy of religious allegiance.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the new policy marked the deterioration in the conditions of the Europeans, who had been accustomed to doing whatever they pleased in their religious and political activities. However, ʿAbdullāhi did not directly target the foreigners in the name of some religious or cultural motive. Rather, although he conceived of them as symptoms of the "ailments" of the Egyptian period, he had no intention of confronting them in the name of a religious "holy war". ʿAbdullāhi wished to redefine Harär as a regional religious and political Muslim centre, restoring its pre-1875 status and undoing the effects of the Egyptian occupation. Presumably, it was lack of political experience that caused him to ignore the various global forces the Egyptians

[14] See, for instance, FOUCHER 1988:370-371, MUHAMMAD HASSAN 1973:34.
[15] Undated Arabic manuscript, page 1, in MUHAMMAD HASSAN 1973:34.

had introduced into the city and assume he could restore Harär's independence through religious policies.

Basing themselves on ʿAbdullāhi 's struggle with the merchants, modern scholars have portrayed him as "a weak and indecisive man, almost fully controlled by his advisors, who advocated a strict Islam" (CAULK 1967-1968:6). However, the attempt to impose a new-old currency, associated with Harär's independent past, can rather be seen more as a part of ʿAbdullāhi 's attempt to restore the city following the Egyptian occupation, than as a systematic policy aimed at harassing the foreign merchants. It was only after the merchants flouted his new policy that he penalized them. The religious and cultural biases that cropped up in the writings of the merchants stemmed from their apprehension of the events in Harär through the prism of an inter-religious struggle. Although these views were adopted by some scholars of the period, the facts appear to disprove them. Furthermore, in order to fully understand this development, one must examine ʿAbdullāhi 's policy as the work of someone who was under pressure from both 'the land' and 'the sea,' insisting on full sovereignty and yet unable to grasp that the changes – which were brought about when merchants settled in Harär, linking the city to the global economy – precluded the possibility of such exclusive control.

The end of ʿAbdullāhi 's reign, January 1887

Despite ʿAbdullāhi 's fear that the European superpowers would attack and remove him from power, his political demise was actually brought about by a Christian African imperial force that came from the "land".

King Menelik of Shewa resolved to take control of Harär as soon as the Egyptians withdrew from the city. After Egypt pulled out of Harär and the coastal cities, and Italy occupied Massawa in February 1885, Menelik tried to convince the Italians to sign a pact that would guarantee an Italian takeover of Berbera and Zeila along with the occupation of Harär by the Shewans. The Porro incident had highlighted the issue of Berbera and Zeila, and Menelik was afraid that the Italians would use the incident as a pretext to gain control of the coast. Therefore, as early as the summer of 1886, he acted to bolster his military presence in the Oromo regions outlying Harär, his final objective being the occupation of the city (CAULK 1971:6-8).

ʿAbdullāhi was aware of the concrete Shewan threat to his city. Testimonials of Haräri residents show that it was not until December of 1886 that ʿAbdullāhi began to employ religious rhetoric, calling for a holy war in an effort to rally the city to face the Ethiopians in battle. When his advisors entreated him to consider yielding to Menelik, ʿAbdullāhi replied, "Does the Koran permit us to surrender to the infidel?". Some of the Oromo from the areas surrounding Harär did not join the Emir's army in the name of a holy war but rather out of mercenary motives, having been promised large portions of the loot that would be taken from the Ethiopians – and due to their wish to capture Ethiopian soldiers and sell them into slavery.[16]

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[16] See the testimonials of Haräri and Oromo, regarding ʿAbdullāhi 's efforts to recruit soldiers for a war against Menelik (CAULK 1971:13, MUHAMMAD HASSAN 1973:42-43).

On January 1st, 1887, ʿAbdullāhi massed his forces next to the town of Čällänqo, some eighty kilometres west of Harär (CHERNETSOV 2003:676-677). In a series of battles that began on January 3rd and lasted until the 7th, the Ethiopian armies routed the Emir's forces. The Ethiopians enjoyed an overwhelming numerical advantage. ʿAbdullāhi 's army numbered some 4,000 men, only half of whom were armed with guns and properly trained. Menelik, on the other handed, commanded a force of between 20,000 and 25,000, 8,000 of whom carried firearms. The Emir's hasty flight from the battlefield to the Ogaden Desert following the death of many of his troops, and the failure to rally groups of Oromo fighters that could make it to Čällänqo in time, were among the factors that demoralized ʿAbdullāhi 's remaining soldiers. They finally surrendered on January 6, 1887.[17]

The battle of Čällänqo was a watershed event in the history of Harär, which had now become part of Menelik's expanding Shewan kingdom.[18]

Conclusion

ʿAbdullāhi ruled in Harär for a total of nineteen and a half months. As soon as he entered office in May of 1885, he was forced to deal with difficult conditions. The population of Harär and its satellite communities were still reeling from the blows the Egyptian occupation had inflicted on their military, social and economic systems. The Egyptian occupation of Harär and the Somali coast heralded the coming of the "agents of globalization" – the European merchants and Capuchin missionaries – who were active in the area even after Egypt withdrew. ʿAbdullāhi , lacking any real-world political experience, was "parachuted" into the position of emir, and was unable to grasp the fact that the economic and political conditions that had prevailed in Harär on the eve of the Egyptian campaign had changed. ʿAbdullāhi ignored Harär's enmeshment in broad global circles during the Egyptian occupation, and was not fluent in the new "language" required in order to converse with these forces.

ʿAbdullāhi conceived of Harär and its relationships with its surroundings solely on a "local" level. But things that were true for his predecessors until 1875 were no longer relevant a decade later. His political failures, and the misreading of the changes and the import of forces that came from "the sea", are especially salient in light of the survival and political success of Abu Bakr of Zeila. In contrast to ʿAbdullāhi and his "local" conceptions, Abu Bakr represented the process that came to be known in the late 20th and early 21st centuries as 'glocalization' – a fusion of 'global' and 'local'. Abu Bakr's awareness of this trend allowed him not only to survive the currents of globalization, but to actually increase his political power while maintaining his human trafficking activities.

ʿAbdullāhi 's bleak personal story is a brief but tempestuous episode in the rich annals of Harär. After ʿAbdullāhi 's departure, Harär's adaptable political, economic and religious elite spearheaded the city's integration into Christian Ethiopia. This elite succeeded in adopting

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[17] For more on the battle of Čällänqo and its progression, see CAULK 1971:14-17 and MUHAMMAD HASSAN 1973:43-44.

[18] For more on the cooperation between the Haräri elites and Mäkonnen at the outset of the Ethiopian occupation, see CAULK 1975:1-15.

the glocal discourse, and towards the turn of the century, Harär became a powerful centre in a country rife with ethnicities and religions. It kept this status throughout the political turmoil of the twentieth century, and maintains it to this day.

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Ḥabeš Siyāḥatnāmesi: *The Journey of al-Mu'ayyad al-'Azm in Ethiopia (1904)*

Jean-Charles Ducène[*]

Several historical sources and studies have revealed the five hundred year long relations between the Ottoman authorities and the Horn of Africa. During the 16th century war opposing the coalition of sultanates led by Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhim al-Ġāzī ("Grañ"), to the Christian kingdoms located in present Northern Ethiopia, the Ottoman empire provided the Emir of Harar with military assistance. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Ottoman *Habasha* province (*Ḥabeš eyaleti*) was implemented on the Western shore of the Red Sea (SMIDT and GORI 2010:74-81). For a long time, the Ottoman regional presence remained limited to the ports of Suwakin and Massawa.[1] In the middle of the 19th century, in spite of the presence of Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem (ERLICH 1994:75-77), the political relations between the territories of the current Ethiopian state and the Ottoman Empire were rare and primarily marked by the Egyptian colonial enterprise on the coasts of the Red Sea.[2]

However, the evolution of the international situation in the end of the 19th century set out a new deal (ORHONLU 1974:164-166). In Istanbul, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II was aware of the Italian views on Libya and the European projects of colonizing the Horn of Africa. There, since the 1870s, the Christian King of Shäwa and later Emperor Menelik II transformed the former margins of the Ethiopian territories into international boundaries. He defeated the Italian troops during the famous Battle of 'Adwa in 1896 and initiated the modernization of the country (MARCUS 2002). A couple of years later, Sultan Abdul Hamid II decided to send a delegation in Ethiopia to contain the regional ambitions of the European governments. The mission of this Ottoman delegation consisted in developing the relations with the powerful Ethiopian ruler and fostering pan-Islamism on the other bank of the Red Sea (ERLICH 1994:78). By warning the Muslim populations threatened by European colonialism, Abdul Hamid II intended to take advantage of the situation to strengthen his Caliph authority among the *umma*

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[1] Until the 19th century, the Turkish narrative of Evliyā Çelebi (1611 – 1684?) was the only one to mention these north-eastern territories of Africa, through his journey from North Sudan up to Suwakin, and then down to Zayla' along the Red Sea (see PROKOSH 1994).

[2] See BAHRU 1992:49-54 and KAVAS 2006:109-127.

al-islamiyya, the worldwide Community of the Muslim Believers (GEORGEON 2003:207-212).

The Sultan appointed Al-Mu'ayyad al-'Azam Ṣādiq *Paša* to lead this Ottoman delegation in Ethiopia. Born in Damascus in 1858, Al-Mu'ayyad belonged to a well-known family of Syrian notables, closely related to the former Syrian Ottoman leaders. Through his education in Damascus, Beirut, Istanbul and Berlin, he learnt Arabic, Turkish, German and French languages. From Libya, Hijaz to Bulgaria, his brilliant diplomatic career followed the decision of the Turkish Ottoman authorities to involve the representatives of the Arab elites in the modernisation of the Ottoman Empire. He died in Damascus in 1911.[3]

Published in Turkish in 1904, the *Ḥabeš Siyāḥatnāmesi* ('The Habasha Journey') is the title of Al-Mu'yyad's detailed narrative of his journey in Ethiopia.[4] Edited in Cairo in 1908, the more exhaustive Arabic translation (*Riḥlat al-Ḥabaša*) associates the full report on the diplomatic aspects investigated by his delegation with a wide range of geographical and cultural descriptions, presenting the different peoples and customs of Ethiopia, from Djibouti to Addis Ababa[5]. Apart from the European sources and Ethiopian chronicles on this key period in the Horn of Africa, this narrative offers a remarkable historical account on the contemporary emergence of modern Ethiopia, along the regional stakes of the European and Ottoman policies implemented in the beginning of the 20th century.[6]

A diplomatic account on economic, religious and political issues

A large part of Al-Mu'ayyad al-'Azam Ṣādiq *Paša*'s narrative focuses on the numerous Ethiopian and foreign notables he met throughout his journey, and the diplomatic activities he carried as the head of the Ottoman Embassy in Ethiopia, from mid-April to mid-July 1904.

Foreign diplomats, entrepreneurs, imperial notables and local rulers: a journey portraying the plural political scene of 1900s Ethiopia

Al-Mu'ayyad and the several officials of the delegation he led – like the *bakbaši* Talib Bey, the *çavuš* Yasin Efendi, Ibrahim Bakr Efendi and Šawkat Efendi – left Istanbul on a ship of the *Messageries Maritimes* French company, the 15th of April 1904. From Izmir, Pirea and Napoli, he reached Marseilles the 22nd of April. Then, the delegation arrived in Port Said, from where they boarded the French armour-plated cruiser, called "La foudre", the 5th of May, and joined Djibouti the day after. From Djibouti, they took the

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[3] For more information on Al-Mu'ayyad, see İSANOĞLU 2000:423-427, BOSTAN 2008:399-400, DETLEV 2010, OCHSENWALD, 1980:23, EKREM and OSMAN, 1327:216

[4] See SÂDIK EL-MÜEYYED, 1999.

[5] See ṢĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001 and DUCENE 2008. The author of this article is working on a French translation of Al-Mu'ayyad's 'Habasha Journey'.

[6] See O'FAHEY 2003:59-60, HUSSEIN AHMED 1992:40 and KAHHĀLA 1993:825.

train – the *Chemin de fer franco-éthiopien* – to reach Dire Dawa, before entering the city of Harar by mules. Then, the delegation followed the west and passed by the towns of Haramaya, Kulubi, Chelenko and Gelemso, before crossing the Awash River. Finally, they arrived in Addis Ababa on the 4th of June, where they stayed until the 15th of June.[7]

Through the diverse personalities he met during his journey, Ṣādiq *Paša* often stresses the respectful honours he benefited as the official representative of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II. For example, he stresses that the French boat that conducted him to Djibouti raised the Ottoman flag and fired its cannon when the delegation reached the French colonial port. He relates the cordial welcoming ceremony and dinner, organized by the French governor of Djibouti, Adrien Bonhoure, in his palace. He also reports his meeting with *Ato* Youssef, the Ethiopian consul in Djibouti, and the reception of the European consuls he attended in Harar. When the delegation arrived in Addis Ababa, Ṣādiq *Paša* describes his meeting with Alfred Ilg, the Swiss Menelik's counsellor; *Ras* Wäldä Giyorgis Abboye, the Governor of Käfa and one of the most powerful regional lords; Martin Ducaen, the *attaché* of the French Embassy, John Harrington, the British Ambassador, and Léonce Lagarde, the French Ambassador, who treated him as an equal.

Before living Djibouti, Al-Mu'ayyad talks about the final dinner organized by the governor of French Somaliland, Albert Dubarry. He also mentions the warm and respectful way the native Muslim populations welcome him. He explains that the Danákil, 'Issa or Somalian Muslim (Ṣādiq Bāšā 2001:44, 56). delegations that spontaneously met him in Djibouti – or along the train stations he passed by on his way to Dire Dawa – considered him as the delegate of the Ottoman Caliph. He was also impressed by the excitement of the Harar and later Addis Ababa dwellers for his arrival. He was touched by his meeting in the Ethiopian capital city with Abbaa Ǧifaar (r. 1878-1932), the Muslim ruler of Jimma, who left his province to introduce himself to him. He also mentioned the different Ottoman citizens – Albanians, Syrians and Kurds (Ṣādiq Bāšā 2001:44, 73) – who were glad to see an official messenger of the Ottoman Empire. On this matter, he notes that the Armenians established in Ethiopia often regretted their departure from the Ottoman territories. He also met a Syrian (Ṣādiq Bāšā 2001:187) who ran a local gold mine, after prospecting in Transvaal for several years.

Economic development, Muslim solidarities and the ambivalent European partners of Menelik II

Among the diplomatic activities he conducted during his journey in Ethiopia, Ṣādiq *Paša* emphasizes the importance of the economic networks linking the region to the Ottoman Empire. He gives detailed information on the various companies that connect Djibouti to Istanbul (Madrolle 1902:18). He also underlines that the development of

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[7] After completing their mission in Addis Ababa, the delegation went back to Dire Dawa and Djibouti. In the end of June, Al-Mu'ayyad and the notables who accompanied him reached Suez on a British ship named "The Peninsular". Then, they took the train to Alexandria, where they embarked on a Russian ship to Istanbul, where they arrived on the 16th of July 1904.

commercial relations between Addis Ababa and Istanbul could be easily implemented and profitable for both.[8] To strengthen this aspect, he quotes the story of the two Lebanese Ottoman citizens – Iskandar Efendi Ghâlib and Bishâra Efendi Ghâlib – he met in Djibouti. After completing their studies in Beirut, they became traders in Africa and particularly succeeded in Dahomey. Then, they moved to Ethiopia where they set up a successful business by developing and maintaining good relations with Menelik II.

Al-Mu'ayyad seemed aware of the Ethiopian Emperor's efforts to strengthen the economic assets of the country and promote its modernization. For instance, he describes the metal bridge built on the Awash River and the diverse telegraphic lines that connected Addis Ababa to the world (ESHETE 1975). He notes that the recent completion of the Ethio-French railway – *le chemin de fer franco-éthiopien* – between Djibouti and Dire Dawa could really improve the economic prosperity of the country. Several pages of the 'Habasha Journey' are also dedicated to the Ethiopian army, its weapons, organization, as well as its savagery. Indeed, Ṣādiq *Paša* points out the relative failure of Menelik II's decision to forbid the tradition of castrating enemies. In the same perspective, he implicitly shows that the Ethiopian populations were poor and almost totally disconnected from the basic items of what he defines as modernity. Thus, he stresses that many Ethiopians did not know the modern footwear's or their stupor in front of a phonograph.

Apart from economic development, Al-Mu'ayyad also reports the religious issues he discussed with the highest personalities of the country. According to his account, his two official audiences with Menelik were formal but cordial.[9] He insists on the founding narratives on King Aṣḥam (ṢĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001: 189-191) – buried in Tigray – welcoming the early Muslims in the region (CONTI ROSSINI 1938: 402). After reminding the ancient relations binding together the Muslim world and the Negus since the time of Prophet Muhammad, he assumes that Menelik II still supported the peaceful political legacies that united the history of Ethiopia and Islam. By promoting a very positive description of the Ethiopian political regime, Al-Mu'ayyad even formulates few critical remarks on the internal and foreign Muslim movements that attempted to oppose its historical Christian rulers. Thus, he both condemns the violence of the military campaigns waged by the Emir of Harar in the 16th century and the Sudanese Mahdist attack on the northern Ethiopian kingdoms in 1889, culminating with the death of *Negus* Yohannes IV during the battle of Gallabat – or Metemma (9th-10th Marsh 1889).[10] Throughout the several Muslim troubles of the regional history, Al-Mu'ayyad always emphasizes the fairness of the Ethiopian authorities.

In the same perspective, he writes that Menelik II tended to positively accept the requests of the Muslims and illustrates his assumption by quoting the example of the

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[8]   As a probable consequence of Ṣādiq Paša's mission, the Harari trader ʿAbdullahi ʿAlī Ṣādiq was the first Ethiopian official to be sent to Istanbul in 1904 to discuss the question of the Ethiopian cloister in Jerusalem. In 1905, a second delegation was led by *Däǧǧazmač* Mäšäsa Wärqe.

[9]   Menelik II awarded al-Mu'ayyad with the 'Order of Salomon'.

[10] He clarifies, surely with his Ottoman public in mind, that this was an Egyptian army that re-conquered Sudan, omitting mention of the British command!

senior mosque in Addis Ababa, built in 1898 on the initiative of an Indian Muslim mason. Moreover, during his stay in the Ethiopian capital city, Ṣādiq *Paša* indicates that he himself submitted the idea of constructing a large mosque in Addis Ababa to Alfred Ilg. After informing the Emperor, Ilg told him that Menelik agreed to give him a plot of land in the city, in order to build a mosque and organize a Muslim cemetery (ṢĀDIQ BĀšĀ 2001:192). Despite Menelik's agreement, this project was never achieved.

Ṣādiq *Paša* was very impressed by Menelik and Empress Taytu's personalities. Their strength of character particularly fascinated him during the diplomatic struggle that opposed them to the Italians, after the signature of the Ucciali/Wechale Treaty. In his narrative, Ṣādiq *Paša* stresses the determination of the imperial couple to firmly counter Antonelli's claims. His long presentation of the war between the two countries in the end of the 19th century, portrays the Ethiopian authorities as the victims of the dishonest and unfair Italian 'aggression'. After several attempts to reach a peaceful agreement, Ṣādiq *Paša* seems to legitimate the Ethiopian military riposte to defend the national integrity of the country.

In other parts of his 'Habasha Journey', the head of the Ottoman delegation does not hesitate to report the position of an European diplomat established in Ethiopia, regarding the relations between the imperial authorities and the European powers: the Europeans are only tolerated in the country. This remark well fits with the several pages Ṣādiq *Paša* dedicated to the detailed presentation of the war between the Italians and Menelik II, from their initial conquest of Massawa in 1885, to their defeat during the Battle of 'Adwa in 1896 (ṢĀDIQ BĀšĀ 2001: 253-286).

A travelogue presenting diverse descriptions of the Ethiopian peoples and customs

In spite of its chronological pattern, the literary gender of al-Mu'ayyad's narrative is rather a travelogue than a journal. One detail particularly shows that we are reading a travelogue and not a banal diplomatic report: the Turkish title of 'The Habasha Journey' uses the word *siyāhatnāmeh* and not *sefernāmeh*. While these two terms are both Arabic, the latter designates a travel account, while the former is rooted into politics. Moreover, the first edition of this remarkable book of the Ottoman literature on Africa, was illustrated by many photographs, taken by al-Mu'ayyad himself (HERZOG and MOTIKA 2000: 178). In a vivid style, the author both narrates the diplomatic aspects of his official stay in Ethiopia and report the difficulties he concretely experienced during his journey – like the harshness of climatic conditions or the long excursions, exhausting the animals and the individuals accompanying the Ottoman delegation.

These detailed descriptions suggest that al-Mu'ayyad had developed an important knowledge on the territories he crossed, through interviews with local informants and academic readings. He spent a long time discussing in French with *Ato* Ḫaylä Maryam Śärabyon, the translator of *Ras* Makonnen. His writings on the Ethiopian languages and their relations with the other Semitic groups mention the major works of the European philologists in Ethiopia – like Ludolf, Isenberg, Mondon-Vidaillet, Guidi, Praetorius,

and Dilmann (ŞĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001:193). By quoting Ethiopian words to designate indigenous realities, he considered that his account could serve as a guide. Sometimes, a situation that occurred in Ethiopia reminded him a similar event from a previous travel in Anatolia, Lybia, Syria or Arabia. One might add that Şādiq *Paša* had the real ability to observe and describe the natural features and landscapes. The different threats he had to face – wild animals, hyenas, dangerous snakes – are reported without exaggeration. He paid attention to the various life stages, from the different types of marriage to the funerals. He mentioned endemic diseases and discussed traditional medicine – like *koso* leaves (*Hagenia abyssinica*) decoctions (MERCIER 1992: 32). In addition, his writings contain several elements on Ethiopian music, currency and calendar.

He challenges the reader through the frequent digressions he operates from the narration of these concrete difficulties, to the detailed historical presentation of specific Ethiopian customs or religious practices – as in the Somali case discussed in the first part of his journey or the several pages during his stay in Djibouti, on the history of the French presence from Obock to the then *Territoires français des côtes somalies*, or the urbanization process of the city. The same urban economic accounts are given for the Ethiopian towns of Dire Dawa, Harar and, of course, Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian Empire appears as a multiethnic state where he meets 'Issa, Danákil, Argobba, Oromo, Somali and Amhara. For each of them, he gives a historical overview based on his academic readings.[11]

Through his journey, he had the opportunity to observe the geographical and natural characteristics of several Ethiopian territories, as well as the diversity of their endemic animals, like the dik-dik antelopes or the various monkeys and baboons. In his narrative, he writes on the regional euphorbia tree – that he calls with the Ethiopian name *qwäläqqwät* – and the yellow latex it produces. However, as soon as he left Djibouti, he mostly focused on to description of the various peoples he met. For instance, around Holl-Holl, he examines the habitat of the Somali sedentary tribes. When the Somali girls gave him milk in one train station between Djibouti and Dire Dawa, he describes the vegetal containers and their impermeable quality, obtained through a smoking process. He was also impressed by the cylindrical Somali well and the goat skin bucket to fetch water. He also paid attention to the rural life and its difficulties, like the slash-and-burn or threshing yard agricultural practices. On many occasions, al-Mu'ayyad presents the traditional ways of building the circular hut. Through his caravan journeys, he observed how the beasts were harnessed or which types of saddles and packs were privileged. He describes how the Somali tied up the loads on the mules' backs and was outraged by the general lack of care for the animals.

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[11] For example, he describes the breadth of the Somali territories in Eastern Africa and their division within the three European colonies. Through the linguistic evidence brought by British researchers, Şādiq *Paša* traces their origins from the mythical Indian conquerors who entered the region during the 11th century. Two hundred years later, the Emir of Masqat submitted the Somali territories to his authority and they converted these populations to Islam. Şādiq *Paša* also argues that the hard character of the Somali is related to the rush environment of these nomadic breeders. See ŞĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001:44, 64.

Among the Ethiopian customs he points out in his narrative, al-Mu'ayyad mentions the *dərgo* – the common contribution for an official travel – or the traditional dresses – *šämma*. He provides the reader with a detailed presentation of the different Ethiopian dishes (for instance the *ənğära* for the bread), spices (*bärbäre*), cereals (*ṭef*) and beverages – like *ṭälla*, *ṭäğğ* and *borde (*ṢĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001:116 and 157-165). He also carefully observes the everyday life of the Ethiopians, the social separation between Christians and Muslims, the nuances of greetings, coffee ceremonies (as honouring guests by salting their coffee) or the parasols hold in the Christian Orthodox churches.

During three months, the head of the Ottoman delegation examined the structure and administrative divisions of the Ethiopian State (ṢĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001: 144-153). Many pages of his narrative present the judicial system – the sanctions, the role of the *Afä nəguś* (literally the 'mouth of the *negus*') and the functioning of the legal courts (ṢĀDIQ BĀŠĀ 2001:163 and 177-180). Though he understood that the Ethiopian legal code was mainly based on the *Fətḥa Nägäśt* – 'The Law of the Kings', a 13th century historical compilation of founding religious and dynastic principles –, Ṣādiq *Paša* also exposes the *leba šay* system (GARRETSON, 2003), which consists in trusting a young man in an altered state of mind to identify a criminal. Similarly, he studied the organization of the Ethiopian Church and also investigated the *zar* cults.

Conclusion

The narrative of al-Mu'ayyad al-'Azm Ṣādiq *Paša* constitutes an exceptional written source to explore the history of Ethiopia in the beginning of the 20th century. This travelogue associates the report of the Ottoman delegation headed by this well-educated Arab diplomat, with the concrete difficulties he experienced during his journey and the rich descriptions of the different Ethiopian peoples and customs he discovered in the Horn of Africa.

Above all, this narrative brings important information regarding the Turkish Ottoman policies in a region targeted by the European colonial ambitions. Beyond the cultural aspects presented in al-Mu'ayyad's detailed account, these writings also explicitly perform the diplomatic strategy implemented through this delegation by the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid II. By encouraging the modernization of the country conducted by Menelik II and emphasizing his respect for the ancient Muslim legacies in Ethiopia, the delegation attempted to marginalize the controversial Italian presence and seduce the Ethiopian authorities to foster the economic networks with the Ottoman Empire.

However, al-Mu'ayyad's narrative on the ancient Muslim Ethiopian heritage does not mention its historical roots into the well-known *husayni* and *qadîri* legacies, related to Baghdad and current Iraq. In the opposite, by stressing the backward religious and cultural practices in Eastern Ethiopia and promoting the legitimacy of the Turkish Ottoman Caliph, this narrative seems to reveal the regional revival of Muslim reformist trends, initiated since the end of the 20th century.

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How Menelik came to have a mint

Wolfgang Hahn[*]

It is well known that the innovations introduced by Emperor Menelik II brought into existence a national coinage based on the widely accepted Maria Theresa taler, which had constituted the currency in Abyssinia since the middle of the 19th century.[1] He had been convinced by his European advisors that having his own coins (together with postal stamps) would be a strong sign of sovereignty. Besides, they speculated with the international scene of collectors from the beginnings.

Talers and silver coins

An additional convention to the treaty of Ucciali (1889) had already provided for Ethiopian coins to be struck in future by the mint of Rome, but after the cancellation of the treaty (1893) and the war with Italy (1896), Menelik became more and more orientated towards France. So, his advisor Leon Chefneux (1853-1927) managed to direct the order of producing the first set of coins to the Paris mint, quite to his personal interests. The original set[2] consisted of seven denominations: the taler (*birr*), its half (*alad*), quarter (*rub*), eight (*tamun*) in silver and three fractions in copper. Of these, only the silver quarters gained considerable importance in the circulation of money. Soon, they were joined by pieces in the weight of 1/20 taler, called *gersh* (*mahallak*, piaster) which was an Egyptian denomination, a most common coin on the Harar market from the time of the Egyptian dominance; it had afterwards been locally manufactured, shortly before the installation of Menelik's new system.[3] Because there was more demand than supply these small silvers were overvalued and became officially established as 1/16 of the taler.[4]

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[1]   PANKHURST 1963/1; HAHN 2007.

[2]   FOVILLE 1898. For a recent catalogue see GILL 1991.

[3]   ATAS 1980; HAHN 2006/2.

[4]   This overvaluation was facilitated by the fact that only the name of the denomination was written on this coin, but not a value number; the place of the projected 1/16 taler as a large copper coin (of which only trial pieces had been struck by the Paris mint in 1896) was thus filled by a small (underweight) silver coin. On the bargaining with it see also HAHN 2003.

All the silver coins showed the image of the emperor looking right on the obverse and the lion of Juda with the flag on a cross-staff which, by contrast, is walking left on the reverse; thus by turning the coin, they face each other. The model of the obverse die was prepared in Paris from photos of the emperor. The drawing of the lion on the reverse proved to be unfortunate as he is holding the cross in his left paw that is, of course, indecent. This was corrected on a later, more expressive model made by another Parisian engraver, but resulting in a second unsatisfactory composition that shows the staff of the cross behind the lion. This iconographic problem was only solved much later, in Haile Selassie's time when the direction of the pictures were interchanged by having the emperor looking to the left and the lion walking to the right. The Paris coin production for Menelik is not to be followed up here.[5]

By the peace treaty with Italy, Menelik was paid an indemnity of 10 million Lire, which he could use partly for buying technical equipment in Europe. As is well known he was fond of mechanical toys and the influential Armenian faction at the court persuaded him to wish for a mint of his own so that he would be able to produce coins cheaper than by ordering them from Paris and to be independent from commission work in France. We have to keep in mind that there was not a single mint operating on the African continent[6] at that time, when the different governments ordered all coins from European mints, which disposed of the most modern equipment. Thus the idea of creating a mint in Addis Ababa was somewhat outdated. The obvious step for this undertaking was to turn to Vienna whence the Maria Teresa talers originated and where the mint was also experienced in performing foreign orders. Information on what happened can be reconstructed from sources preserved in Austrian archives[7] and from personal memories,[8] bringing more light into the events than one can read in the literature on Menelik II, which is inaccurate in some relevant details.[9]

The negotiations with European partners

Menelik's emissary who went to Vienna in September 1902 was a certain Mr. Hagop Baghdassarian (1873-1932) who later became notorious as a very versatile businessman engaged in jewellery, engraving, printing and even fabrication of alcohol.[10] Like many other Armenians, he had come to Ethiopia in the last quarter of the 19th century as a fugitive from the Ottoman Empire. Now he saw a chance to gain himself a position as director of the future mint. In Austria he looked for other industrial products too, like rifles, knives and textiles. So he turned to one of Austria' leading industrialists of the time, Arthur Krupp (1858-1938), who owned a metal ware factory near Vienna, where he produced metal planchets for the mint. He must not be mistaken as a member of the

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[5] For a review on the different aspects of these coins see HAHN 2013.

[6] The South African mint of Pretoria was suspended between 1900 and 1923.

[7] On the files in the archives of the Austrian mint see HAHN 2006/1. A few other files are kept in the Austrian State archives.

[8] Bequest of Billy Hentze's daughter Marcelline.

[9] E.g. PANKHURST 1963/2.

[10] On Baghdassarian see also HAHN 2003.

famous Krupp clan in Essen to whom he was only a distant relative. Arthur Krupp liked to pave connections with foreign countries and he did help Baghdassarian along by recommending him to the director of Vienna's imperial mint, Demeter Petrovic (1858-1936). This man cared for the permissions of his superior ministry, given in October 1902, not only to have dies made for the new coins, but also to train a technician in handling the machines. This was another Armenian in Baghdassarian's company, a man called Michael Topjian (1870-?). For the construction of the machinery Petrovic recommended a Viennese factory specialized in coin presses and all other necessary mechanical equipments, a firm by name Vulkan, former Fernau's iron-foundry. The contract was concluded on 11 October 1902.[11] The machinery was expensive as it was to be built in parts for the transport. Its price - the installation included - was 228,000 Francs (c. 100,000 talers), which may be compared with a locomotive for the new railway company ordered from Switzerland for 49,000 Francs.

Following up the ongoing action we can look at its different stages: The engraving of the dies, the training of the technician, the construction of the machines, the transport to Ethiopia via Djibouti and Dire Dawa, and the installation in Addis Ababa, inclusive building a special edifice for it.

The model for the engraving of the obverse dies was made by Antony Scharff (1845-1903), the chief engraver of the Viennese mint; when he got sick his assistant Francis Pawlik (1865-1906) took over the work for the reverse die. The design followed the Paris pattern (for which the Armenians had brought coins) – but combined the reverse of the corrected lion with the earlier obverse on which the old date 1889 = 1896/97 was kept in memory of the Italian war and the peace treaty of October 1896. It looks as if it was intended to have the new coins ready for the Adua day-celebration in 1903 (though this proved to be too optimistic).

Such pairs of dies were prepared for eight denominations: the already established five in silver were augmented by three in gold, but no more copper coins were thought necessary at that time. Originally, the gold coins were designed to be struck on the French standard (i.e. that of the Latin Monetary Union) as pieces of 5, 10 and 20 Francs; however, for practical reasons they were somewhat reduced becoming fractions of the ounce weight (*wakat*). Apparently Menelik wanted gold coins as noble pieces for presentation purposes. To avoid forging (gilding of silver coins) the golden pieces were differentiated on the obverse by branches added under the emperor's bust - perhaps inspired by Ottoman coins, but their position under the bust and over the date might also be taken as a reference to the victory of Adwa.

Whilst all the Paris dies are signed by small symbols of the administration and of the designers this kind of mint marks was not customary in Vienna and they were omitted from the new dies. But the most striking difference between the two mint traditions is the so called die-position which was the way of fixing the dies in the presses: the rotation of French coins was upside down, in the German habit it was horizontal and therefore better suited to the use of coins to be worn as jewellery.

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[11] For the full text of the contract see HAHN 2006/1, no.4, pp.144f.

The expenses for the dies to be paid to the Vienna mint amounted to 8000 Crowns = 7620 Francs/Lire (this would have been c.3300 talers). The mother dies are still extant in the Vienna mint.[12] Sometimes one can read that Vienna provided Addis Ababa also with dies for the striking of Maria Theresa talers, but this is a misunderstanding and was definitely not the case.

Meanwhile Michael Topjian, the technician, was trained at the mint in Vienna and he was joined by an engineer of the Vulkan machine factory, a certain Billy Hentze (1876-1944) who had been chosen to escort the machinery to Addis Ababa and install it there. In Vienna he could also serve as interpreter for Topjian, probably in French. Hentze is a very interesting person, an adventurer by nature, who was in the late 20s of his life. Of Northern-German origin he had found an employment in Vienna, but now he saw his chance for a career overseas. This in mind he married a young Austrian girl who was to go with him.

When the coin press and the dies were ready a trial run was made at the Vulkan factory on 11 March 1903. Then the Hentzes and Topjian with the machines could start their journey to Ethiopia. In Trieste they took a steamer of the Austro-Hungarian Lloyd, which maintained a regular service on the Red Sea route to India. The ship was the freighter "Tyrol"; later, in the 1st World War, it was turned into a hospital ship and survived a mine-explosion. For the unloading of the special cargo it was probably moored in Djibouti whereas the normal stop on its route was Aden. The newly built railway line from Djibouti had been opened as far as Dire Dawa a few months ago, in December 1902, so that the transport on the first 310 km overland was less wearisome.

It was June 1903 when the caravan was organized in Dire Dawa for the remaining 470 km to Addis Ababa. In the meantime Hentze had been useful by repairing the telegraph line. Finally, in July, the party reached Addis Ababa. The news of a forthcoming coin production rapidly spread.[13]

The challenges of coin production in Ethiopia

Afterwards, Hentze wrote a book on the experiences he underwent during his twenty months' stay in Ethiopia under the title "At the court of emperor Menelik of Abyssinia", of course in German.[14] It is full of episodes describing his struggle against the intrigues of the Armenian clique. Because of Hentze's negative attitude it was not accepted into the books that were presented by the German government to an Ethiopian delegation visiting Germany in 1907.

Hentze's next task was the erection of a building to house the mint on the palace grounds, in its northern parts, which are, regrettably, nowadays inaccessible, because

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[12] STEMPELSAMMLUNG 1904: 963-5 (nos 7066-7116). One die is illustrated in: HAHN 2001, ill.9.

[13] To quote a newspaper message (*San Francisco Call* vol.94, 31 July 1903): "King Menelik of Abyssinia is to have his own mint, and it will be in full operation at his capital, Addis Ababa, by the first of the coming year … It is understood that the king has more than 110.230 pounds of gold bullion on hand, besides a large amount of silver."

[14] HENTZE 1905 (a second edition was published in 1908); HENTZE 1928.

there are military barracks. For the steam-powered engines solid foundations and a high chimney were necessary, a difficult task as there was no concrete know in Ethiopia at that time. The preparations lasted until February 1904 when Hentze was able to start a trial phase of operation. In his book he portrays the emperor himself playfully handling the coining press.

It is well known that Menelik was fond of all kinds of technical toys and Hentze tried to win his favour by repairing a lot of what had got out of function. His aim was to be indispensable for running the mint and to stay longer than the contracted half year, possibly as permanent manager of the mint. This brought him into conflict with the Armenians, especially Baghdassarian, who demanded another engineer to be sent from Vienna, however in vain. The intrigues were aided by Hentze's brusqueness and in February 1905 his adversaries succeeded in having him and his wife expelled from Ethiopia. In revenge he left the mint inoperable. Baghdassarian and his novice, Topjian, seem to have been unable to cope with the situation, but then Menelik's Swiss councillor Alfred Ilg (1854-1916) asked the Austrian government for help.

The opportunity was right because an Austro-Hungarian delegation was expected coming to Ethiopia for the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and commerce. It was led by Rear-Admiral Lewis von Hoehnel (1857-1942) who was regarded to be an expert, because he had visited Ethiopia earlier as an explorer. The party arrived in Addis Ababa during March 1905. In Hoehnel's entourage there was a navy engineer, Francis Jina (1871-1919?), who had got a fast training at the Vienna mint and at the Vulkan factory for this purpose. Together with an aid he stayed behind when Hoehnel left and they were able to get the mint working by May 1905. The emperor compensated them only by three elephant's teeth, so that they had to borrow money from Ilg for the return to Austria.

Until its end in 1936, the following history of the Addis Ababa mint can only be sketched.[15] Contrary to what had been expected the mint was less and less able to meet the demands. Due to bad maintenance and the difficulties in preparing the metal planchets there were frequent breakdowns so that new orders in Paris became necessary from 1910 onwards. Unfortunately the mint records did not survive, but certainly after 1915 (at the latest) production was discontinued and Topjian left the country (allegedly with the mint records). Judging from the frequency of their occurrence, mainly quarter talers[16] were struck during this first period of operation in the Addis Ababa mint, with less *gershes* and only rare half talers (20,000 were reported in 1912). It has wrongly been maintained that the coin press was too weak for striking the one taler piece (*birr*); in reality the technical difficulty laid in the rim of the coin with raised letters (as was required) - besides the fact that an intention to replace the Maria Theresa talers would have been a hopeless undertaking. Thus only trial pieces are extant from the taler dies – and later mint sports in gold, a speciality of Baghdassarian.

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[15] HAHN 2001-02.

[16] Without reason they were suspected of containing less silver than the Paris made "turru rub" (as discerned by the details of the reverse picture, in particular by the curling of the lion's tail), HAHN 2003.

Conclusion

Then there was a long gap in the Addis Ababa minting activity until it was revived under Ras Tafari in the late 1920s for a second period of activity until the Italian conquest in 1936. After the war, the British administration – keen on introducing the British East Africa Shilling into Ethiopia – in 1941 prevented the resuming of coin production in Addis Ababa, which Haile Selassie had wished for.[17]

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[17] PANKHURST 1974: 250f.

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Menelik's coins struck in the Addis Ababa mint

Silver

Birr
(pattern)

$^1/_2$ B.

$^1/_4$ B.

$^1/_8$ B.
(pattern)

Gersch

Gold

Wark

$^1/_2$ W.

$^1/_4$ W.

Ingenieur **Willy Hentze**
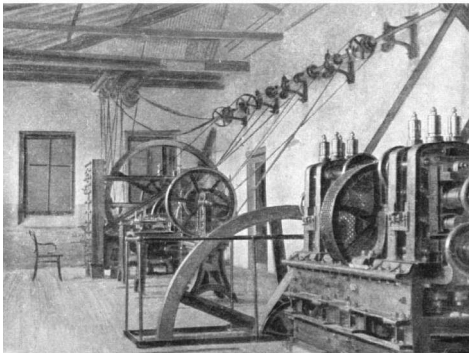
Hagop M. Baghdassarian

DIRECTEUR DE L'HOTEL DE LA MONNAIE IMPÉRIAL ETHIOPIEN

ADDIS-ABEBA
(ETHIOPIE)

Notes sur quelques documents cinématographiques tournés en Éthiopie au début du XXᵉ siècle[*]

Hugues Fontaine [**]

Les précurseurs (1897)

Deux ans à peine après son « invention » devant la porte des usines Lumière à Lyon[1], le cinématographe est utilisé en Éthiopie[2]. **Charles Michel**, qui s'est joint *in extremis* à l'expédition Bonvalot-de Bonchamps, a emporté un appareil dans son bagage. Il précise, parlant de Ménélik : « Le cinématographe que MM. Lumière m'avaient confié[3] l'intéresse étrangement ; il s'en fait donner une explication détaillée[4] ». À peu près au même moment, à Djibouti, **Henri d'Orléans** s'essaye au cinématographe. « Avec les Somalis, écrit-il, je fais des essais de cinématographe ; je fais fonctionner l'appareil pendant qu'ils concourent à la sagaie en tirant sur une caisse ; ils semblent prendre grand goût à cet exercice[5]. »

Malheureusement, s'il existe bien des photographies de la mission de Bonchamps comme de l'expédition d'Henri Orléans, toutes deux parties de Djibouti en février 1897, je ne connais pas d'image – ni film ni pictogramme – témoignant des essais cinématographiques faits par Michel ou d'Orléans. Il eût été intéressant pourtant de voir ce que l'un et l'autre avaient choisi de filmer.

AU HARRAR. — Le prince Henri d'Orléans cinématographiant les danses somalis.

(Photographie de notre envoyé M. Bavelacr.)

Figure 1 — « Le Monde illustré », 22 mai 1897.

Le cinéma, rédempteur du réel

Dans son ouvrage *Theory of Film: the redemption of physical reality*, Siegfried Kracauer (Oxford University Press, 1960) oppose, à travers les deux illustres précurseurs que furent Lumière et Méliès, deux voies qu'explore, dès son invention, le cinématographe. L'une vise à reproduire strictement la réalité ; l'autre s'aventure dans les sphères de l'imagination créatrice avec, notamment, l'utilisation de trucages. Considérant les productions de Lumière, qualifié de « *strict réaliste* », Kracauer fait remarquer que « *leurs thèmes de prédilection étaient des lieux publics fréquentés par un grand nombre de personnes qui se déplaçaient dans toutes les directions*[6] ». Ce motif des foules, poursuit-il, convenait particulièrement bien – comme d'ailleurs « *l'agitation des feuilles dans le vent, l'ondulation des vagues, le mouvement des nuages, les expressions changeantes d'un visage* » – à ce nouvel instrument qui, mieux que l'appareil photographique, pouvait en saisir les mouvements et en révéler la nature. « *Tous ces thèmes,* écrit Kracauer, *portaient ensemble l'attente d'un instrument capable de capturer les moindres événements du monde qui nous entoure – des scènes impliquant souvent des foules, dont les mouvements infinis ressemblent, en quelque sorte, à ceux des vagues ou des feuilles*[7]. » Le dernier film de Pascale Ferran, *Bird People*[8], s'ouvre sur des plans de foules filmés dans la gare du Nord, comme si la cinéaste se prêtait à un examen documentaire objectif de la multitude des personnes qui traversent le hall de la gare, avant de choisir parmi elles, presque comme par hasard, une jeune femme qui devient la protagoniste de sa fiction.

L'Abyssinie au temps de Ménélick (1909)

Une quinzaine d'années après les célèbres séquences tournées par les frères Lumière (*Sortie des usines Lumière, L'Arrivée d'un train, La Place des Cordeliers…*), ce sont précisément des mouvements de foules qui captivent **Charles Martel**, cinématographe français venu filmer l'Éthiopie en 1909 pour le compte des productions *Le Lion*. Nous connaissons de ce séjour, qui dura un an[9], un montage de 24 minutes diffusé sous le titre : *L'Abyssinie au temps de Ménélick*[10].

On sait toutefois d'après le compte-rendu d'une conférence donnée à la Société de Géographie par Charles Martel le 17 juin 1910[11] que celui-ci tourna d'autres images qui ne font pas toutes partie de ce montage des Productions *Le Lion* (« 3400 mètres de vues cinématographiques »). Une scène notamment, qui n'est pas comprise dans ce montage, est évoquée dans une lettre de Brice[12] datée du 24 septembre 1909[13]. Il y est question d'une présentation publique de l'empereur Ménélik II « destinée à dissimuler sa maladie » à l'occasion de la fête de Masqal célébrée le 20 septembre 1909 dans l'enceinte du *gebbi*[14] :

> « Toutes les portes étaient ouvertes et le peuple fut admis en foule à contempler
> son empereur. Le Négus, entouré du corps diplomatique et des hauts dignitaires
> de la Cour, avait pris place sous l'auvent qui abrite d'ordinaire le tribunal suprême
> […] deux heures durant il est resté là, sans manifester la moindre fatigue […] à
> l'issue de la cérémonie même, un de nos compatriotes, M. Charles Martel, venu
> en Abyssinie pour le compte d'un établissement de cinématographie, fit connaître

par notre premier drogman son désir de pouvoir prendre une vue du cortège impérial à son retour vers l'*elfigne*. Sa Majesté s'y est prêtée de la meilleure grâce [...]. »

Une publicité parue dans les éditions de *Ciné-Journal* au premier semestre 1910 annonce parmi les « vues sensationnelles » que vient d'envoyer à Paris « son Explorateur » une séquence d'environ 67 mètres intitulée : *La Dernière Sortie du Négus Ménélick*. Y sont également annoncées : *Sortie du Cortège de Lji-Yeassu* [sic] *; Le Ras Tessama se rendant à l'Ambassade de France pour traiter de la question des Chemins de fer d'Éthiopie ; l'Armée du Dedjaz Balcha, Gouverneur du Harrar, allant châtier les Tribus rebelles.*

On apprend sur cette annonce que le mètre pour ces vues documentaires était vendu 2 francs. La Compagnie du Cinématographe *Le Lion*, fondée en septembre 1908 et qui avait son siège 15 rue Grange-Batelière à Paris, produisait et commercialisait des films de court-métrage (fiction et documentaires) pour répondre à l'engouement des foules pour le cinéma au début du siècle dernier. Ils étaient diffusés en première partie de programme. Il se pourrait que l'on retrouve à l'avenir d'autres bobines des « vues » tournées par Charles Martel en Éthiopie[15].

Le montage conservé par les Archives du film français présente quant à lui une vingtaine de séquences précédées chacune d'un intertitre[16].

Ce sont des déplacements de foules qui rendent particulièrement fascinants ces enregistrements filmés. Un siècle plus tard, ils nous sidèrent à double titre. Une première fois, en tant que « rédemption du réel » au sens où l'entend Kracauer, par le fait même des propriétés du médium cinématographique ; une deuxième fois, en tant que réincarnation d'une réalité qui serait autrement révolue, enfouie dans le passé.

Les scènes les plus frappantes du montage montrent des centaines d'hommes en armes, nu-pieds, accompagnant des dignitaires à cheval. Filmés à partir d'un point fixe pendant de longues minutes, ces vues constituent non seulement le temps le plus spectaculaire du film – comme dans un péplum, une scène de bataille qui réunit des centaines de figurants – mais elles offrent surtout un moment exceptionnel en ce que se manifeste et s'incarne aux yeux du spectateur une réalité complexe, faite d'infiniment de détails et de mouvements – au point qu'il est impossible de tout embrasser dans un même regard. À n'en pas douter, la qualité cinématographique du document fait de longs plans-séquences, et de surcroît l'absence de son (le film est muet), concourent à captiver ainsi l'attention du spectateur.

Leur intérêt documentaire et historique est également remarquable. Si l'on en croit les descriptions dans la littérature de voyage[17] et les nombreuses cartes postales publiées sur le sujet, les scènes de défilés ou de rassemblements de troupes armées, qui se déroulaient dans les plaines aux alentours des villes d'Harar et d'Addis Abeba notamment, et les cortèges d'hommes armés accompagnant les notabilités dans leurs sorties publiques, impressionnaient considérablement les voyageurs occidentaux de l'époque. En témoignent notamment des photographies prises par Arnold Holtz, dans les années 1909-1912 et, à la même époque, par le photographe d'origine indienne JG Mody ou le suisse Jean Adolphe Michel.
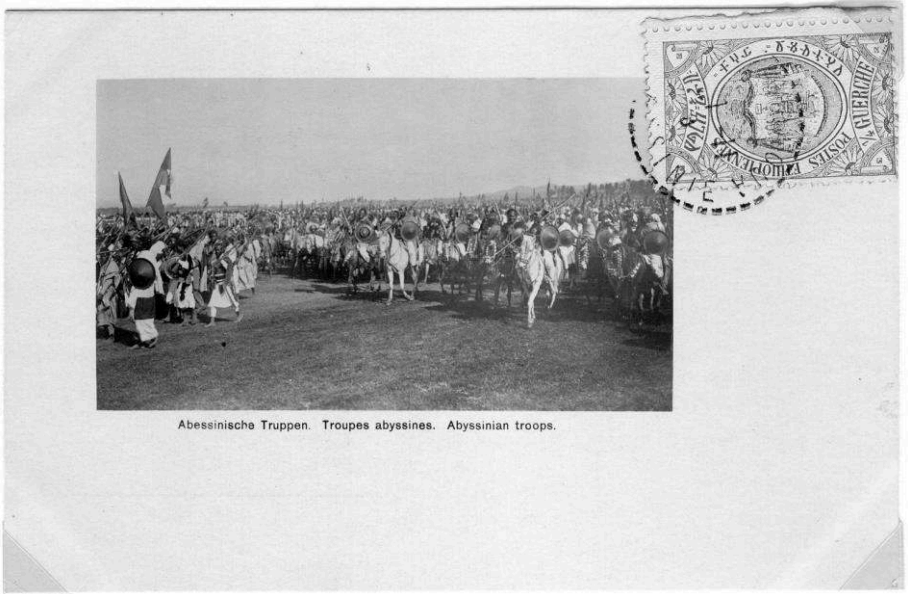
Figure 2 — Troupes abyssines. Carte postale éditée par Arnold Holtz.

Figure 3 — Carte postale éditée par Jean Adolphe Michel vers 1905.

Figure 4 — extrait de la séquence « Cortège ».

Figure 5 — extrait de la séquence : « Dedjaz Balcha, Gouverneur de Harrar sort au-devant de l'ambassadeur ».

année – N° 90   14 Mai 1910.

CINÉ-JOURNAL

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Le Record

du MONDE CINEMATOGRAPHIQUE

La Compagnie des Cinématographes

"LE LION"

a le plaisir d'informer ses très aimables Clients qu'elle vient de recevoir un télé-gramme de son Explorateur, l'avisant ø qu'il vient d'expédier à Paris, les ø

Vues Sensationnelles suivantes :

LA DERNIÈRE SORTIE DU NÉGUS MÉNÉLICK

Empereur d'Abyssinie, se rendant à la Fête de la Maskal.

SORTIE DU CORTÈGE DE LJI-YEASSU

Le Nouvel Empereur Abyssin, le jour de sa Proclamation.

LE RAS TESSAMA

Se rendant à l'Ambassade de France pour traiter la question des Chemins de Fer d'Éthiopie

L'ARMÉE DU DEDJAZ BALCHA

Gouverneur du Harrar, allant châtier les Tribus rebelles.

À Addis-Abbeba, le 25 Mars 1910

Ces *Vues* formant un ensemble *UNIQUE AU MONDE* et constituant un record imbattable, feront l'objet d'une Conférence à la *SOCIÉTÉ DE GÉOGRAPHIE DE PARIS*, dès le retour de notre Explorateur et seront éditées dans l'ordre ci-dessus lorsqu'elles seront arrivées à Paris.

S'inscrire dès à présent et adresser toutes demandes de renseignements relatives à ces *Vues*, à la COMPAGNIE DES CINÉMATOGRAPHES "LE LION", 15, rue Grange-Batelière, PARIS.

Figure 6 – annonce parue dans « Ciné Journal » du 14 mai 1910.

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Figure 7 – annonce parue dans « Ciné Journal » du 18 juin 1910.

Outre ces scènes de *cortèges* et de *concentration des troupes dans la plaine*, le montage est également remarquable pour un panoramique sur la ville de Harar et ses murailles et une séquence intitulée : *Dedjaz Abrana Gouverneur du Tigré révolté à la tête de 18 000 hommes, vaincu et fait prisonnier, est amené devant le tribunal impérial*. On y voit les vaincus s'avancer en s'inclinant à plusieurs reprises sur le sol en signe de soumission, avec en toile de fond la ville d'Addis Abeba vue depuis les hauteurs du palais.

Fêtes du couronnement de la Reine Zaoditou et Addis Abeba (1917)

Ce sont encore des images de cortège et de foules qui occupent l'essentiel de deux autres montages datant de 1917[18]. Ces images ont été tournées par un opérateur français, **Amédée Eywinger,** qui travaillait pour la Section Photographique et Cinématographique des Armées (SPCA). Eywinger fut missionné par le ministère des Colonies afin de photographier et filmer le voyage des délégations diplomatiques européennes partis à Addis Abeba pour assister au couronnement de l'impératrice Zaoditou, le 11 février 1917. Eywinger filme le gouverneur de France en Côte française des Somalis accompagné de ses hôtes à bord du train qui les conduit de Djibouti à la capitale éthiopienne. Le long des voies et dans les haltes, il filme et photographie les villageois qui font commerce au passage du convoi : vendeuses de lait ou marchands de grains chargeant des sacs à bord du train. Mais arrivé au terme du voyage, après avoir filmé le marché de la capitale où se pressent les habitants, c'est le cortège des dignitaires abyssins et des légations étrangères, mêlant cavaliers, piétons, chars et pièces d'artillerie, qui retient toute l'attention de l'opérateur. Et ce sont à nouveau des images de foules qui produisent sur nous le même effet de sidération. Occupant toute la largeur de la rue, dans un beau désordre qui accentue encore l'effet de nombre, des rangées d'hommes défilent devant la caméra : fantassins équipés de fusils, cavaliers arborant leurs lances ou jouant des timbales, vêtus de peaux de panthère. La séquence s'intitule : *Le cortège se rendant au couronnement*. Se succèdent 19 plans du cortège entrecoupés de 3 autres cartons (*Salves, Les légations, Le char de la Reine*) et de deux plans présentant des salves d'artillerie. Le tout dure quatre minutes et cinquante secondes pendant lesquels l'opérateur, qui a fixé la caméra sur un pied, ne modifie quasiment pas son cadrage, délimité par un arc de triomphe de toile tendue. Les seuls mouvements sont ceux de la foule qui défile. Le plan le plus long, d'une durée d'une minute et dix secondes, s'attarde sur le défilé des cavaliers armés de boucliers et de lances, dont plusieurs chevaux frôlent dangereusement l'appareil. Viennent ensuite : *La foule devant l'église Saint-Georges attendant la sortie de la reine après le couronnement*, puis la sortie des prêtres et de la reine (flanquée du *ras* Tafari Makonnen, le prince héritier), les danses et chants sacrés et les hommages. Et pour finir, une scène extrêmement intéressante montrant un *guébeur*, banquet offert par la souveraine au peuple. La séquence s'ouvre par un long panoramique. Mieux que les photographies que nous connaissons de pareilles manifestations, ce mouvement de caméra permet de se rendre compte des dimensions de l'endroit préparé pour l'occasion : un vaste espace protégé du soleil par des voiles tendus sur des piquets de bois, sous lesquels s'alignent des tables où est servie la viande crue pimentée, que des servants couvrent de linges. Au milieu des participants au banquet, une fanfare – ainsi que l'annonce un carton – joue *La Marseillaise*. Dans un plan suivant, d'autres musiciens battent de grands tambours (*kèbèro*). Le film se termine sur cette scène de musiciens.

Figure 8 — extrait de « Le cortège se rendant au couronnement ».

Figure 9 — extrait de « Le Guébeur ».

La Mission Charles Michel-Côte. Éthiopie-Soudan (1920)

Le Musée Albert Kahn à Boulogne-Billancourt conserve ce qui semble bien être l'unique copie du film *La Mission Charles Michel-Côte. Éthiopie-Soudan, 1920* (29'), produit par le Ministère des Affaires étrangères et réalisé par le photographe-cinématographe **Edmond AM Famechon.** Le film a été tourné entre décembre 1919 et avril 1920 au cours du mandat diplomatique, économique et politique que le ministre des Affaires étrangères a confié à Charles Michel-Côte[19] en Côte des Somalis, Éthiopie, et au Soudan anglo-égyptien. C'est vraisemblablement par l'intermédiaire de la Société de Géographie et de Jean Brunhes, directeur des Archives de la Planète, que ce témoignage a rejoint le fonds Albert Kahn[20]. 7 à 8000 m de film ont été tournés, selon le rapport que fait Michel-Côte de sa mission. Certaines séquences ont été perdues.

Le film s'ouvre sur plusieurs plans de Djibouti (ville européenne, palais du gouverneur, place du marché et ville « indigène », salines - six minutes). Certaines séquences tournées, notamment avec la population de Djibouti, ont été manifestement préparées par l'opérateur, avec une certaine complaisance. Suivent différents plans filmés à bord du train (*Dans le désert somali ; Dans les scories volcaniques des Monts Bossettes ; Station d'Aïcha ; Pont de l'Aouache ; Arrivée à Addis Abeba ; Gare* - huit minutes). Puis s'enchaînent différentes séquences filmées dans la capitale (*Fêtes de l'Epiphanie ; Hailé Sellasié ; L'Abouna ; Danses sacrées ; Un guerrier abyssin, tueur d'éléphants, vient conter ses exploits au roi ; La foule s'achemine à travers la campagne vers l'Eglise ; Le Marché ; Tisserand abyssin ; Les abattoirs ; Le palais impérial ; Le ras rendant un jugement ; Fabrique impériale des tapis ; Un jugement à la gare*). Le reste du film illustre l'expédition conduite par Michel d'Addis Abeba à Schellal, via Kharthoum.

Ce même musée conserve aussi un bref document des *Actualités Gaumont* de 1928 (durée : 1'46), dans lequel on voit le *negus* Haïlé Selassié I déambulant à pied dans les rues de la capitale, peu après son couronnement. Il est suivi d'une foule de courtisans qui se disputent le privilège de tenir une ombrelle au-dessus de la tête royale. Le plan suivant montre la souveraine soustraite en revanche aux regards de la foule par un voile qui délimite un espace réservé autour d'elle.

La Voie sans disque (1932)

En 1933, **Léon Poirier** adapte pour le cinéma *La Voie sans disque,* roman éponyme d'André Armandy, publié un an plus tôt. L'œuvre est une « comédie dramatique », qui ressort à ce titre des œuvres d'imagination, pour reprendre les catégories de Kracauer. Elle comporte néanmoins une dimension documentaire en ce qu'une partie des scènes est tournée en décors naturels en Côte française des Somalis (Djibouti, Ali Sabiet) et en Éthiopie (Aouache, Addis Abeba), avec des figurants recrutés localement[21]. Poirier revendique dans son autobiographie[22] ainsi que dans plusieurs interviews ce *cinéma-vérité* qu'il pratiqua en Afrique, notamment en Éthiopie, à Madagascar et au Congo[23].

L'action se passe au début de la Première Guerre mondiale. Jean Carlier, inspecteur de la Compagnie du franco-éthiopien, joué par un jeune premier, Marcel Lutrand, doit empêcher les mercenaires afars manipulés par la légation turque à Addis Abeba, de

saboter le pont de l'Aouache. Dinah (Gina Manès[24]), la maîtresse d'Ephraïm Bey (Camille Bert), ministre de la légation turque, s'éprend de l'inspecteur du Chemin de fer, espérant trouver dans l'amour la rédemption. Poirier a sensiblement modifié le scénario d'Armandy, pour le rendre probablement plus accessible au public français : dans le roman, la ténébreuse Dina est la maîtresse de *Lij* Iyassu. Armandy s'était basé sur certains faits réels mais sans véritable respect de la chronologie pour écrire son œuvre et notamment sur l'histoire d'un étrange personnage, Arnold Holtz (déjà mentionné plus haut comme éditeur de cartes postales), conseiller à la légation d'Allemagne, qui fut arrêté pour espionnage à Djibouti en septembre 1917 par les autorités coloniales françaises, condamné et emprisonné en France jusqu'à la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale[25].

Figure 10 – Tournage de « La Voie sans disque ». Photo extraite de l'autobiographie « *24 images à la seconde* ».

Notes

* En effectuant des recherches pour l'iconographie du livre : *Un Train en Afrique. Djibouti – Éthiopie. African Train,* CFEE/Shama Books, 2012, j'ai identifié dans les collections de trois institutions parisiennes plusieurs films documentaires ainsi qu'un film de fiction, tournés en Côte française des Somalis et en Éthiopie entre 1909 et 1933. À l'invitation d'Éloi Ficquet, ces films ont été montrés à Diré-Daoua lors des 18ᵉ ICES, avec l'aimable autorisation des institutions détentrices des éléments et, pour le film de Léon Poirier, avec celle de son distributeur.

** Photographe, réalisateur.

1 Si l'on suit Henri Langlois, le cinématographe a été « inventé » le 19 mars 1895 : « La découverte du cinéma date très exactement du jour où Louis Lumière dresse sa caméra devant l'usine de son père, invente et cadre son image, ajoute quelques éléments au groupe des ouvriers dont le travail va bientôt s'achever, afin de l'animer sans en briser le naturel, et filme *Sortie d'usine* ». L'invention de l'appareil remonte à l'été 1894.

2 Estelle Sohier note que le souverain Ménélick II et son entourage étaient familiers « d'une pratique photographique banalisée, désormais parfois assortie du cinématographe importé en Éthiopie deux ans à peine après l'invention des frères Lumière ». Elle ajoute : « Henri d'Orléans ainsi que Charles Michel enregistrent des images de la cour dès 1897. D'autres opérateurs de cinéma suivent, comme Charles Martel en 1909, envoyé en Éthiopie pour le compte d'un établissement de cinématographie et autorisé à filmer la fête de Mäsqäl célébrée au *gebbi* du roi. » Estelle Sohier, *Le roi des rois et la photographie. Politique de l'image et pouvoir royal en Éthiopie sous le règne de Ménélick II*, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012.

3 Rappelons que Michel est lyonnais.

4 Charles Michel. Mission de Bonchamps : Vers Fachoda à la rencontre de la mission Marchand à travers l'Éthiopie. Avec une carte et des gravures d'après les photographies de l'auteur et les dessins de Maurice Potter. Paris : Plon-Nourrit, 1900, 560 p. La mission commence à Djibouti en début 1897 et se termine un an plus tard à Alexandrie. Un album de photographies est conservé par la Société de Géographie, Bibliothèque nationale de France. « Album de la Mission Charles Michel-Côte en Éthiopie et au Soudan anglo-égyptien en 1919-1920 », 220 phot. et une carte. Cote : SG WE- 213.

5 H d'Orléans, *Une visite à l'empereur Ménélik*, Paris, 1897, p. 17. La mission se déroule de janvier à juillet 1897. L'auteur écrit p. 34 : « Devant nous s'échelonnent les missions Bonvalot, Léontieff, Lagarde, ayant chacune des arrières-projets ignorés des autres ».

6 "Their theme were public places, with throngs of people moving in diverse directions", Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 1960, p. 31.

7 "All of them, conveyed the longing of such an instrument which would capture the slightest incidents of the world about us – scenes that often would involve crowds, whose incalculable movements resemble, somehow, those of waves or leaves." Kracauer, *Theory of Film,* 1960, p. 27.

8 Réalisation : Pascale Ferran ; scénario : Pascale Ferran et Guillaume Bréaud ; production : Denis Freyd, 2014.

9 « Le séjour et les marches sur le territoire abyssin ont duré une année, pendant laquelle j'ai pris 3400 mètres de pellicule. » Causeries sur l'Abyssinie, avec vues cinématographiques par Charles Martel. Société de géographie (France). *La Géographie* 32 (2), 15 août 1910.

10 Ce film est conservé à Bois-d'Arcy par les Archives du film français, Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée. Il peut être visionné à la Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

11 Information aimablement communiquée par Francis Falceto.

12 Charles-Édouard Brice, ministre de France de 1908 à 1912.

13 MAE, NS, Éthiopie, politique intérieure, vol. 2, cité par Estelle Sohier *in* « Le corps des rois des rois dans la ville : Ménélik II et Haylé Sellasé à Addis Abeba », *Afriques* [En ligne], 03 | 2011, mis en ligne le 27 décembre 2011, consulté le 1ᵉʳ juillet 2014. URL : http://afriques.revues.org/1015.

14 Cette apparition publique est également mentionnée par Martel dans sa causerie à la Société de Géographie : « La cinématographie de la dernière sortie de Ménélik marque une date. En la faisant passer sous les yeux du public, Ch. Martel a rendu hommage à la bonté comme à la noblesse du souverain. « Invité la cour, mangeant parfois aux côtés de l'Empereur, j'ai assisté à la fin de son règne : Cela n'a pas été sans grandeur. »

15 Je n'ai trouvé aux Archives du film français aucune indication de l'existence d'autres images que le montage qui y est conservé. Le gérant qui détient aujourd'hui les droits des Productions *Le Lion* ignore également

où pourraient se trouver les rushes ou d'autres montages réalisés à partir des images tournées par Martel lors de sa mission en Éthiopie. Rappelons que les pellicules fabriquées à l'époque étaient couchées sur un support en nitrate de cellulose hautement inflammable.

16 Liste des 21 cartons : Danse de guerriers Afars ou Issas simulant la mise à mort d'un ennemi. Chargement de mulets. La marche vers Addis-Abeba. Danse d'hommes et de femmes Oronos [sic] (alias Gallas). Lions d'Éthiopie. Un maître d'école devant sa toukoul (case ronde). Consultation du docteur. Pileuses de doura. Cortège. L'empereur Ménélik et l'impératrice Taïtu (photographie). Travaux publics avec un chemin de fer Decauville. Un camp. L'octroi abyssin vérifiant si l'on ne passe pas de marchandise en fraude. Dedjaz Balcha Gouverneur de Harrar sort au-devant de l'ambassadeur. Concentration des troupes dans la plaine. Réception d'un ambassadeur. Dedjaz Abrana Gouverneur du Tigré révolté à la tête de 18 000 hommes, vaincu et fait prisonnier, est amené devant le tribunal impérial. Une rivière à sec puis en crue. Exercices d'ensemble de l'armée du Soudan anglo-égyptien. En selle formation de route. Pied-à-terre/Formation du carré/Défilé.

17 Voir par exemple Orléans, 1897, p. 71, 73, 77.

18 Deux montages existent : l'un conservé par l'Établissement de Communication et de Production Audiovisuelle de la Défense [ECPAD] à Ivry-sur-Seine, intitulé *Addis Abeba* [7'], l'autre *Fêtes du couronnement de la Reine Zaoditou* [13'] par le Musée Albert Kahn, à Boulogne-Billancourt. Si le premier document présente l'avantage de montrer des images du chemin de fer qui relie Djibouti à Addis Abeba, avec notamment une vue de la gare de Diré-Daoua nouvellement construite, le deuxième offre les images les plus intéressantes du cortège ainsi que la séquence consacrée au *guébeur*.

19 C'est le même Charles Michel dont nous avons parlé plus haut qui accompagna la Mission Bonvalot-de Bonchamps en 1897. Il a entre-temps ajouté à son nom celui de son épouse, Mlle Côte.

20 Informations communiquées par Martine Balard.

21 Une copie restaurée et numérisée est consultable aux Archives du film français (Bois-d'Arcy) et à la Bibliothèque nationale de France. Durée : 109', langue française, noir et blanc, format : 1.37, production : Comptoir Français Cinématographique.

22 24 images à la seconde. Du studio au désert, journal d'un cinéaste pendant quarante-cinq années de voyages à travers les pays, les évènements, les idées, 1907-1952 Mame, 1953, 156 p.

23 *Caïn, aventures des mers exotiques*, 1930 (tourné à Madagascar) et *Brazza ou l'épopée du Congo*, 1939.

24 Gina Manès a joué dans *L'Homme sans visage* (1919) de Louis Feuillade, *L'Auberge rouge* et *Cœur fidèle* (1923) de Jean Epstein… Elle est Joséphine de Beauharnais dans le *Napoléon* d'Abel Gance (1927).

25 Voir le chapitre XV des *Récits de la Mer Rouge et de l'océan Indien* de l'amiral Henri Labrousse, Economica, 1992, aimablement signalé par Francis Falceto. Voir également *La Croix* du vendredi 19 octobre 1917, « Les manigances allemandes. À la côte des Somalis » : « Il y a quatre mois, M. Sybourg, ministre d'Allemagne à Addis Ababa, envoya le nommé Holtz, aventurier allemand, qui résida en Abyssinie pendant quelques années et l'Autrichien Carmelitch porter à l'armée turque, en Arabie [Yémen], des dépêches demandant au commandant allemand de ces forces des armes et des officiers pour aider Lidj Jassu, empereur déposé, à reprendre son trône. Holtz et Carmelitch, accompagnés d'Arabes et de Somalis, arrivèrent à la frontière de la Somalie française et de l'Abyssinie, vers le milieu de septembre. Leur objectif était de s'emparer d'un petit poste frontière où généralement il y avait seulement dix hommes stationnés, et de détruire ensuite la voie ferrée ; ils espéraient ainsi créer une révolte et des désordres ».

Ethiopia's Elusive Quest for an Outlet to the Sea: The Case of the Haud-Zeila Exchange from the 1920s to the 1950s

Samuel Negash[*]

For more than a decade, the dramatic deterioration of the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea has fostered passionate debates around the controversial re-conquest of Assab, to provide Ethiopia with a direct access to the Red Sea. Though the ports of Djibouti and Berbera are today often considered as the only credible alternatives to cope with the land isolation of the country, their access raises several economic and political challenges. However, from the Ottoman views on Zeila since the 1650s, to the construction of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway in the beginning of the 20th century, the issue of the Ethiopian access to the sea has crystallized several regional and international stakes for a long time.

Mainly based on the diplomatic archives of the British Foreign Office and several unpublished documents, this article aims to present the failed attempt of the Ethiopian authorities to abandon their control over the eastern Haud territory, in exchange for a privileged access to the port of Zeila. Through the involvement of different regional and European actors, these Haud-Zeila negotiations reveal the plural historical legacies of the Ethiopian access to the banks of the Red Sea and the trade networks of Bab el-Manded.

The significance of the Haud and Zeila

The Ottoman Turks seized Massawa and the Red Sea coast in the early 16th century making Ethiopia a landlocked country. After Emperor Tewodros (1955-1968) began the process of unification of Ethiopia, however, successive rulers attempted to acquire an outlet to the sea. Of course, the quest for an outlet proved elusive until Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. One area of interest was the Haud-Zeila exchange. A serious attempt to gain access to the sea via Zeila was initiated in the late 1920s by Ras Teferi, later Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974).

Zeila

Zeila is a port city on the Gulf of Aden coast, situated in the north-western Awdal region of Somalia. Located near the Djibouti border, the town sits on a sandy spit surrounded

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by the sea. Berbera is 270 km to southeast, while the Ethiopian city of Harar is 320 km to the west. Zeila is a very old city and, according to Richard Pankhurst, the city first appears under its own name at least as early as 891. Dependent on trade with southern Abyssinia, Zeila flourished in the 14th century. It sold incense, myrrh, slaves, gold, silver, camels, and much more. It grew into a huge multicultural metropolis with Arab, Somali, Afar, Oromo and even Persian inhabitants. It was part of the Ifat, and later, Adal, Sultanate (PANKHURST 1968; ABIR 1980).

In 1548, Zeila was annexed by the Ottoman Empire. In 1875 the Egyptians obtained a *firman* from their Ottoman overlords by which Zeila and Harar became Egyptian. In the 1880s, Zeila and Berbera came to be part of British Somaliland. Zeila was one of the main ports of access to landlocked Ethiopia in mediaeval times. The trade items from Jimma, Kaffa and Gurageland found their way to Zeila and Tajura via Alyu Amba and Ankober in Shewa. By the first half of the 19th century, however, Zeila was a mere shadow of its former self, "a large village surrounded by a low mud wall, with a population that varied according to the season from 1,000 to 3,000 people" (ABIR 1968). Although Zeila was frequented by Arab sailing crafts, the lack of proper port facilities prevented them from anchoring too close to the shore (RUBENSON 1976; CAULK 2002; HARRIS 1844).

There were a number of factors for the decline of Zeila as a major port. Zeila is known for its coral reef. The unfavourable nature of Zeila as a port was described by Burton in the mid-19th century: "No craft larger than a canoe can ride near Zayla ...There is no harbour: a vessel of 250 tons cannot approach within a mile of the landing-place" (BURTON 1856: 10-15). As more convenient ports including Tajura, Obock and Berbera emerged, Zeila declined further (CAULK 2000). The most important weakness of the city-port was water, "drawn from the wells of Takosha, about three miles distant...".[1] Landward, the terrain is unbroken desert for some 80 km. The British gave greater attention to the port of Berbera than Zeila. It was, however, the construction of a railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa in the late 19th century that hastened the decline of Zeila (RUBENSON 1976; HARRIS 1844; SHIFERAW BEKELE 1982).

Menelik made, like his predecessors, vigorous efforts but failed to obtain an outlet to the sea. The railway concession which was meant to facilitate external trade was agreed during the reign of Emperor Menelik (1989-1913). The French were granted by Menelik in 1894 a concession to construct a railway from the Red Sea coast to Addis Ababa, the official capital, and to Harar, the commercial capital. A company called "Le Compagnie Imperiale des Chemnis de Fer Ethiopienne" began the construction from Djibouti. The British voiced opposition fearing that the railway would destroy the trade of Zeila. They exerted efforts to purchase the existing Company and transfer the terminus from Djibouti to Zeila, or else build a competing line from the latter port to Harar. When the Railway Company encountered financial difficulties, English capitalists bought a significant share and proposed to build a branch line from Zeila to join the Djibouti line. The scheme was thwarted due to strong French opposition (FO/41/1902; PANKHURST 1968).

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[1] See www.1911encyclopedia.org, consulted in August 2013.

Haud

Haud was a huge grazing land that stretched along the border between Ethiopia and the Protectorate. Taken in its broader extent, "the Haud" according to Laitin, "extends from Hargeisa in the northwest to Galkayo in the northeast; from the Ogaden Dollo plains in the west to the Nugaal valley in the east and; form the bulk of Somalia pasturelands." A high undulating plateau, the Haud had two rainy seasons i.e. the main rain called '*dayr*', which came in October and November and a generalized rain called '*gu*' in March and April. The dry seasons were '*hagaa*' from May to July and '*jilal*' from December to February. During the wet season the Haud would turn green with plentiful vegetation that included thorn bush and aloes (MERSIE HAZEN WOLDE-QIRQOS 2003; LAITIN and SAMATAR 1987).

Providing the largest grazing area in the region, the Haud attracted various Somali clans including sections of the Ishaq and the Dolbahante from the Protectorate, sections of the Marehan and Mijertein from Italian Somaliland and sections of the Ogaden clan from the south-west. In all, more than 700,000 pastoralists visited the area to share the pasture. The Haud, however, was called "waterless Haud" because it was devoid of any permanent source of water. As long as the pasture was plenty, grazing animals needed no water. As soon as the pasture turned dry, however, livestock such as cattle, sheep and goats, and camels had to leave the Haud and return to the dry season water sources (BARNES 2000; JENNINGS 1905; LAITIN and SAMATAR 1987; MARKAKIS 1989).

Following Egyptian evacuation, Menelik conquered Harar in 1887 and *Dejazmatch* (later *Ras*) Mekonnen was appointed the first Governor. Mekonnen's army extended its control to the Haud and the Ogaden. The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897 delimited the boundary between Ethiopia and British Somaliland. The British agreed that the largest proportion of the Haud, about 40,000 square km grazing land, lay within Ethiopia's jurisdiction (KELLER 1995; BROWN 1961). Nevertheless, the following provision was incorporated in the Treaty: "The tribes occupying either side of the line shall have the right to use the grazing grounds on the other side...Free access to the nearest wells is equally reserved to the tribes occupying either side of the line" (see Treaty Series n°27 1908, in HERTSLET 1967).

Thus, almost half of the Protectorate's population used for centuries to migrate seasonally to the Haud in the Ogaden with an estimated two million flocks and herds and stayed there for about six months. Before the Italian Occupation (1936-1941), the Ethiopians never really administered the Ogaden, except sending once a year a body of troops to collect tribute. Owing to British protection, since the 1940s, some of these migratory clans began to stay for nine months or more in the Haud. Some lineages of the Dolbahante and the Warsenglie clans permanently occupied southern Haud of Warder *Awraja* (District). Still others, particularly the Ishaq (spearheaded by the Habr Awel) and the Gadabursi clans started to engage in cultivation staying in the Haud throughout the year. The Ishaq clans who were the most dependent on the Haud pastureland for their livelihood came to regard the Haud as their own territory (WATERFIELD 1958; MARKAKIS 1989).

The tendency to stay long in the Haud affected the ecological balance as a result of overgrazing. The main victims of such phenomena were the Ogaden clans. Lineages of the Ogaden clan depended on the Haud for grazing throughout the year concentrating mainly around (and having possession over nearly all) the water wells of Aware, Danot and Warder. These lineages were, therefore, partially displaced from the rich pastureland as well as from the string of wells along the border. On their part, the Ogaden clansmen considered the Haud as belonging to them since time immemorial (RODD 1948; JAENEN 1974; DEMISSIE TEFERRA 1977; FO/371/113528, 1955).

In the meantime, between 1931 and 1934 a Boundary Commission successfully demarcated the border between Ethiopia and British Somaliland. Because they shared the prized pasture of the Haud, there was an age-long traditional conflict between the Ishaq and the Ogaden. Scarcity of water was also another source for Ishaq-Ogaden rivalry. During the British Military Administration (B.M.A.) lineages of the Ogaden appealed to the Ethiopian authorities that the Ishaq were trespassing into Ogaden territory and were depriving them of their pastureland and water wells (MARCUS 1983; PANKHURST 1951)[2].

Negotiations for the Haud-Zeila exchange: Ethiopia's generous offer and British procrastination

Discussions potentially favourable to Ethiopia's quest for an outlet to the sea appeared as early as the 1920s. The Italians had offered Abyssinia a port at Assab on the Eritrean coast, but they wanted too much in return. Since the Italians sought an electric railway from the port to Addis Ababa, the Ethiopians refused to concede. In 1926, H. Kittermaster advised his government's cessation of Zeila to Ethiopia and recognition of the latter's sovereignty over the Gadabursi permanently resident in Abyssinia. Although some sections of the Gadabursi and the Habr Awel of Ishaq came under Ethiopian jurisdiction by the 1897 Treaty, most lineages only crossed the border as seasonal migrants. Consul Plowman even suggested, "...the transfer to Abyssinia of a piece of Esa country which we could afford to sacrifice, in return for a piece of Isahq country which we should value." Such considerations might have prompted the initiative for exchange that soon came from Ethiopia (PANKHURST 1968; FO/371/13110, 1927; 13111, 1928).

During a conversation with British officials in 1927 in Addis Ababa, Ras Kassa, enquired as to the possibility of some arrangement being made for cession or lease of Zeila to Abyssina. Kassa specifically expressed Ethiopia's desire to come to some arrangement about Zeila port. The British at that time were trying to negotiate a water storage facility on Lake Tana and some officials saw no harm in granting lease on certain conditions in exchange for Tana agreement. (FO/371/13110, 1927) Due to constant squabbles over the status of the Gadabursi along the border, an Anglo-Ethiopian Boundary Commission demarcated from 1931 to 1934 the boundary between Ethiopia and British Somaliland. (MERSIE HAZEN WOLDE-QIRQOS 2003) In 1931, the Emperor

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[2] See also Harar Archives: ቁ.357/ħ54/ħ5, 20.12.52/26.8.60; MOD [Ministry of Defense] Archives: ħበ/3400, 4.11.65/117.73; FO/371/115354/1957

once again raised the issue of the lease or establishment of an Ethiopian free port at Zeila with a corridor in exchange for the concession of the Tana scheme. The British, however, coolly reacted when Sir S. Barton stated that the question was being 'explored but it is unlikely that any reply can be given for some months' (FO/371/16099, 1932).

In 1936 Italy invaded Ethiopia and, during WWII, dislodged in 1940 the British from the Somaliland Protectorate. It then merged the Ogaden and the Protectorate with Somalia to create the Province of Somalia giving rise to the vague term of 'Somalia Grande'. Within months, however, the British ousted the Italians from the Horn including Ethiopia in 1941 and, adding the NFD (the Northern Frontier District of Kenya), continued to administer the Province of Somalia as a unit giving definite shape to the concept of "Greater Somalia." In 1942, Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement was concluded in which the British agreed to hand over administration of Ethiopia to Emperor Haile Selassie except for the Ogaden and a strip of land 40 km wide encircling French Somaliland known as the "Reserved Area" (TIBEBE ESHETE 1988; RAHJI ABDELLA 1964; BEREKET HABTE SELASSIE 1980; FO/371/31598, 1942; FO/371/35623, 1942).

Concerning outlet to the sea the Emperor's eyes mainly focused on Eritrea. He had laid claim to Eritrea on the ground that this territory was filched from Ethiopia by the Italians between 1869 and 1889. The British had also in mind the possibility of affecting a general rectification of Anglo-Ethiopian frontiers and to give Ethiopia a seaboard as part of a general settlement. On his return from the San Francisco Conference in 1945, Bitwaded Makonnen Indalkachew, the Prime Minister, expressed optimism on Ethiopia having its own ports on the seaside. But no decision was possible until the end of the war and the Peace Conference (FO /371/35631, 1942; FO/371/46092, 1945).

While Ethiopia demanded the return of the Ogaden and the Reserved Areas in the negotiations of 1944, the British nourished a secret agenda of creating "Greater Somalia." In December 1944, a new Agreement provided for continuation of the B.M.A. in the Ogaden and the Reserved Area (which was, however, limited to areas adjacent to British Somaliland including Jigjiga and the Haud). The British were, however, taking actions that were inimical to Ethiopia's sovereignty. With the intention of obtaining the Reserved Area and the Haud the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, in 1946 proposed the infamous "Bevin Plan." He argued the enormous benefit the Somalis would gain if the British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the adjacent part of Ethiopia (Ogaden), were brought together under British Trusteeship. Thanks to the rivalry of the Four Big Powers and Ethiopia's strong protest, the idea was quickly neutralized (AMANUEL ABRAHAM 1992; FO/371/69291, 1949; FO/371/41448, 1944; MOI [Ministry of Information] 1961; CASTAGNO 1970).

With the failure of the 'Bevin Plan' the British concentrated their energy on securing the Haud permanently for their Protectorate clansmen. The Reserved Area proper was largely occupied by a section of the sedentary Gadabursi lineages that had adopted mixed farming. The Issa lineages of Ethiopia also shared the territory. The main interest of the British, however, lay in the Haud where almost half the population of the Protectorate used to migrate seasonally. Ethiopia, on the other hand, was ready to go to great lengths

to get an outlet to the sea. Ethiopia's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Aklilu Habte-Wolde, met Bevin in London in 1946 and presented the following generous offer. Ethiopia would cede the greater part of the Ogaden to Great Britain, if in return Great Britain would cede to Ethiopia the corridor to Zeila. Aklilu outlined the land to be ceded on the map as follows. The eastern border of the Zeila corridor would run in more or less a straight line from the coast to join the then Ethiopian frontier outside the Ogaden near Segeg in the far west. British Somaliland would have all the territory to the east of that line and to the north of the Webbi Shebelle and to the west of ex-Italian Somaliland (WATERFIELD 1958; FO/371/53467, 1946; FO/371/53467, 1946).

The radical nature of the offer could probably be explained by the fact that the Ethiopians felt uncertain about the future of the Italian colonies. The offer astounded the British authorities and Bevin even said, "it would be exaggerated for us to take so much of the Ogaden" (FO/371/53467,19.6.46). He also suggested putting off the suggested exchange until the settlement of the future of the ex-Italian colonies, since it might prejudice Ethiopia's prospects of receiving Eritrea. But other factors also prompted the British to procrastinate. They regarded the proposed corridor much wider than was necessary to Ethiopia for the purpose of access to the sea at Zeila. It was also inhabited by the Issa, the Gadabursi and the Ishaq (Habr Awel) clans. They were prepared to withdraw protection to the small section of the Issa in the Protectorate. They thought it difficult, however, to justify the transfer of the Gadabursi and the Habr Awel who were among the most important of the British Somali clans. Therefore, the British preferred to cede a narrow corridor limited to the road to Zeila and the territory of the Issa clan (FO/371/53467, 1946).

For the British it would be sufficient to only take the Haud and the Reserved Area, as the proposed area of the Ogaden was an arid land inhabited by a number of Somali clans with whom the British had no previous connection. The British would accept the wider Ogaden proposal only in the unlikely event of Italian Somaliland coming under British Administration. They thought it unwise, however, to refuse altogether the Ethiopian offer. They handed to the Emperor a Memorandum appreciating Ethiopia's offer, but expressing willingness to cede only a narrower strip of territory as a corridor (FO/371/53467, 1946; CASTAGNO 1970; FO/371/73688, 1949).

In the meantime, Emperor Haile Selassie demanded in September 1947 immediate restoration of the Ogaden and the Reserved Area in a draft proposal for an Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship. The British, however, insisted that they should keep the territory until the United Nations (U.N.) passed a resolution on the future of ex-Italian Somaliland. Finally a compromise agreement was reached when Ethiopia presented the Anglo-Ethiopian Protocol on 29th May 1948. Ethiopia agreed that the Grazing Area and the Haud should continue for some time under the B.M.A. pending a final agreement on the Zeila-Haud exchange. The rest of the Ogaden was restored to Ethiopia (JAENEN 1974; FO/371/69296, 1948; COLLINS 1960; FO/371/69296/1948; FO/371/69292, 1948).

The prospect of Eritrea's restoration to Ethiopia

Ethiopia's reduced interest on the exchange

Ethiopia's interest on Eritrea went as far back as 1942. During the Paris Peace Settlement in 1946 Ethiopia's claim over Eritrea was accorded favourable reception. Bevin indicated that the right course of action was to support Ethiopia's demand for the restoration of Eritrea. The British were interested to reach agreement with Ethiopia in a number of issues including Tana Project, Baro Salient, Kenya-Moyale, and Haud-Zeila exchange. Cognizant of Ethiopia's anxiety of acquiring an outlet to the sea, the British emphasized that their support to Ethiopia's claim over Eritrea would depend on Ethiopia's reply to the aforementioned issues. In 1946, the French and Russians proposed that Italy should have trusteeship of all her former colonies in the Council of Foreign Ministers (C.F.M.). With a desire of attaching western lowlands of Eritrea to the Sudan, the British wanted Ethiopia to acquire Eritrea and the Italians to return to Somalia. They thought that Ethiopia would not oppose such an arrangement as long as it got the eastern portion with Asmara and the ports (FO/371/53467, 1946).

Although Ethiopia could abrogate the 1944 Agreement on three months' notice after 1946, it did not insist on British withdrawal. The reason for Ethiopia's reservation was that it desperately needed Britain's diplomatic muscle to regain Eritrea. Beginning from early 1947, however, the British began to suspect that the Ethiopians were dragging their feet concerning the frontier rectifications. Farquhar, the British Consul in Ethiopia, reminded the Emperor that it was nearly a year since this matter had been raised and hinted that the British might perhaps be a little disappointed at the slow progress made. The Emperor said he should await the return of Aklilu and his Private Secretary, Taffese-Worq, before making reply to the British Memorandum. But Aklilu avoided seeing the Consul for five weeks after his return. Due to Ethiopia's discernable procrastination, the British contemplated to make a threat including withdrawal of their support for Eritrea's claim and to revive a United Somalia policy that should include a portion of the Ogaden. When Aklilu finally met the Consul he said that he was working hard on the matter and promised to produce something concrete in a fortnight (FO/371/102642, 1953; FO/371/69296, 1948; FO/371/102642, 1952; FO/371/63134, 1947; FO/371/63133, 1947).

The British found the delay for more than six months a little discouraging. They even thought that the Ethiopian Government no longer wished, for some reason, to proceed with their idea of a territorial exchange. At long last Ethiopia's counter-proposal on Zeila-Ogaden exchange came on July 20, 1947. The Ethiopian Government accepted the proposed narrow Zeila corridor and gave the whole grazing ground of Gadabursi clan. But for the British it was less satisfactory regarding the territory of the Habr Awel clan to the east of the Reserved Area. The withdrawal of a large extent of the Ogaden from Ethiopia's previous offer confirmed what the British had been suspecting for some time, i.e. Sinclair's prospect of discovering oil. It was thought that the smell of oil had permeated the negotiations and was responsible for the Ethiopian's continued prevarication (FO/371/63134, 1947; FO/371/63136, 1947).

The British were, however, anxious not to reject the proposal outright. They informed the Ethiopians that the counter-proposal was not satisfactory regarding the grazing lands of the Habr Awel. They stated, however, that the territorial exchange would be without prejudice to the rights of Ethiopia or Britain over oil in the respective areas they agreed to cede. If oil was discovered the British believed that Ethiopia would be more interested in Zeila and Berbera as they were the only two ports from which oil could economically be shipped. If no oil was discovered the Ethiopians might well lose all interest in the proposed exchange. In this event the British should seek a new Ethiopian agreement for grazing rights of the British Somaliland clans and some form of jurisdiction over these clans while in the grazing areas (FO/371/63136, 1947).

Ethiopia's diminishing interest in the exchange was also vaguely manifested when Aklilu handed in September 1947 the British Consul draft of a "Treaty of Friendship and Commerce". That priority was given to the Treaty, not the exchange, became clear when he stated that the Reserved Area and Ogaden should be considered as having been "blocked" or put into a suspense context. They would again become "negotiable" only if no oil were found. Nonetheless, Ato Aklilu soothed the British by indicating that frontier rectifications and the new Treaty should be concluded concurrently. In November the Vice-Minister presented Ethiopia's case regarding Eritrea in detail and that of Italian Somaliland briefly to the Deputies for Italian colonies. On the whole he was satisfied with the manner in which the Ethiopian case had been received (FO/371/63216, 1947).

The desperate efforts of the British

The British preferred to dispose of various outstanding questions such as division of Baro Salient, Lake Tana, and modification of British Somaliland- Ethiopian frontier before attempting to negotiate a treaty. The British were anxious to press ahead with these negotiations while the Eritrean card was still in their hand. They knew that once the future of Eritrea had been decided, their position for securing satisfactory settlements would be much weaker. But the British were compelled to delay particularly the Haud-Zeila exchange due to French opposition. For almost a year they were unable to put forward their counter-draft due to French objection (FO/371/63158, 1947; FO/371/73688, 1948).

In the Ethiopians' mind there was a very definite connection between the Zeila-Haud exchange and the disposal of Eritrea, though the British idea was quite the opposite. For the British it would be awkward to have the Zeila exchange suspended until the fate of Eritrea was settled. The problem in the final analysis boiled down to the supposed Ethiopian policy of stalling negotiations until the question of Eritrea was decided one way or another. The British thought that even minor pretexts were employed to stall negotiations for both the Treaty and the Haud-Zeila exchange. Discussions were, for instance, delayed till January 1949 because Ato Aklilu had fallen sick. The British resolved to take the initiative as the Ethiopians prevaricated to reopen the discussion on the Haud-Zeila after the return of Aklilu from treatment abroad. It was becoming quite obvious in 1949 that with the prospect of Eritrea's federation and the acquisition of Assab as an ideal outlet, Ethiopia was reversing its commitment and

losing interest in the exchange (FO/371/69290B, 1948; FO/371/69291, 1948; FO/371/73688, 1949).

The French and the Issa challenges

Meanwhile, French opposition to the Haud-Zeila exchange compromised the bargaining power of the British. This opposition forced the British to delay negotiation and miss opportunities favourable to conclude satisfactory agreements. When the Haud-Zeila exchange with a corridor was initiated in November 1946, it was feared to arouse the susceptibilities of the French and lead to difficulties with Issa clan. The proposed corridor lay on the eastern frontier of French Somaliland. Moreover, the whole object of Ethiopia's proposal was to obtain direct access to the sea, thereby bypassing the French port of Djibouti and the French controlled railway. The Ethiopians and the British agreed to refrain from informing the French until the point of reaching final agreement on the exchange (FO/371/53467, 1946).

The exchange came to be entangled with other international problems including the discussions on the disposal of Libya, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. As discussions about the disposal of Italian colonies started, the British could no longer keep the exchange secret. They felt that to flout French views would make it even more difficult to get agreement with them on the really important question of Tripolitania and Eritrea. The British needed the French support in thwarting the return of Italy to both Libya and Ethiopia (FO/371/69290B, 1948; FO/371/73688, 1948).

The issue between the British and the French was a legal one, i.e. validity of certain provisions of the Tripartite Treaty of 1906 between France, Italy and Britain. The British held that all the provisions except Article 10 of the railway servitude had lapsed when Great Britain and France recognized the annexation of Ethiopia by Italy. This Article prohibited the British from constructing a railway without French consent from British Somaliland to Ethiopia because it would compete directly with the Franco-Ethiopian Railway. The French argued, on the other hand, that Article 4 was also still valid. This Article indicated that "in any case" the three powers concert together the interests of France as regards the hinterland of French Somaliland (FO371/69290B, 1948; FO371/69291, 1948).

When the British disclosed to the French the negotiation for exchange in 1948, the French wrote an unsatisfactory Note. It declared that the French Government could not consider British proposals until after decision regarding the disposal of Eritrea had been taken. Fearing the establishment of a competitive railway line, the French opposed the exchange. The French also expressed fear of encirclement in light of Ethiopia's possible acquisition of Eritrea with Assab port in the proxy. It took more than a year for the British to persuade the French change their position. When the French finally abandoned their opposition in 1949, they attached unfavourable conditions. These conditions included the railway servitude of 1906. The majority of the Issa clansmen lived in Ethiopia and Djibouti. Only a small section of this clan inhabited the northern tip of the Somaliland on the Zeila corridor. Although the Issa had concluded a protectorate treaty with the British, the latter intended to hand over the corridor after

withdrawal of their protection. The Ethiopians were apprehensive of the 1906 Tripartite Treaty and wanted freedom of action in the corridor (FO/371/69290B, 1948; FO/371/73688, 1948; FO/371/63133, 1948).

Negotiation on Haud-Zeila exchange was suspended in July 1949 and was only resumed in January 1950 as Ethiopia's claim to Eritrea was disputed by Italy. Still, however, the tendency of the Ethiopian Government was to spin matters out until the Eritrean question had been disposed of once and for all. As Ethiopia felt pretty certain that she would get Assab or Massawa, the value of Zeila Port had further diminished. Moreover, the servitude attached to the Zeila Corridor detracted greatly from its value. In the event of failure of the Haud-Zeila exchange the British envisaged the following course of actions: (a) a lease of the Haud – considered comparatively feasible, (b) a new grazing agreement – rated less feasible, (c) outright purchase – regarded highly impracticable (FO/371/73688, 1949).

The Four Powers failed to reach agreement over Eritrea in 1949 and the case was transferred to the United Nations, while Somalia became an Italian trusteeship. In 1951, the U.N. passed a resolution and Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in 1952. After more than 500 year Ethiopia's elusive quest for an outlet to the sea was solved. The resolution delivered a heavy blow to the Haud-Zeila exchange. In 1953 Ethiopia re-raised the return of the Haud and the Reserved Area through a formal proposal for a Treaty of Friendship. Talks were initiated in March 1953 and experts from both sides examined the issues (FO/371/73688, 1950).

The tactic of the British was to begin negotiation by a proposal to keep the status quo and, failing this, to suggest an exchange of the Haud with a corridor to Zeila, plus an additional sum of money, ranging from £ 250,000 to a maximum of £500,000. On the insistence of Ethiopia, however, negotiations focused on a new grazing agreement. Here, the main difference boiled down to the question of who would control the Protectorate clans during their stay in the Haud. Aklilou suggested establishing liaison office and social (medical) services to accompany the clans that migrated seasonally, but for these services to be administered by Ethiopia (FO/371/102642, 1953; FO/371/108209, 1954; FO/371/108208, 1954).

The British refused to subordinate the accompanying British officers to Ethiopian administration. As a last resort, the British, in the face of Ethiopia's strong position to dictate terms, began to negotiate the status of the 'accompanying officers'. Accordingly, the British delegates met Aklilu formally on September 14, 1954, in Addis Ababa. In return for recognition of Ethiopia's sovereignty in the Haud, they demanded administration of protectorate clans in the area under Somaliland laws and customs by British Somali courts. Due to outstanding differences the high level negotiation was abruptly adjourned. Due to the grand European tour of the Emperor in October 1954, however, the delegates agreed to continue the negotiations in London (FO/371/108209, 1954; FO/371/108210, 1954; FO/371/108213, 1954).

At long last, the arduous negotiations that began in Addis Ababa finally led to the agreement over the Reserved and the Ogaden – generally known as the Haud Agreement – that Aklilu and Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, signed in

London the 29th of November 1954. The Agreement recognized Ethiopia's full sovereignty over the two "territories" and stipulated that transfer of power be completed by the end of February 1955. The right of clans from both countries to cross the frontier for the purpose of grazing was reaffirmed. Cases involving only the "tribes" would be tried in the Protectorate, and cases involving Ethiopian and Protectorate clans would be tried in Ethiopian courts. A British Liaison Officer would reside in the Grazing Areas (later at Jijiga), practically administering "the tribes". The Agreement was to remain in force for a period of fifteen years and replaced the 1944 and 1948 Agreements (FO/371/108213, 1954; FO/371/108215, 1954; BROWNLIE 1979).

The British continued with their desperate moves and tried to appease their Somali subjects by supporting 'Greater Somalia' or 'United Somalia' with the hope that independent Somalia would be member of the Common Wealth. Deputy Foreign Minister, Dodds-Parker, visited the Protectorate in 1955 and pledged that Britain would support the unity of the Somalis. He also came to Ethiopia and blatantly asked for the Haud and the Reserved Area to be detached from Ethiopia and be merged with the Protectorate. Lenox-Boyed, Minister of the Colonies, visited Hargeisa in 1959 and proposed the unification of the two Somali territories that would include the Ogaden, the Haud and the Reserved Areas. The fate of Haud-Zeila exchange was sealed forever when Somalia became independent in 1960 and began to work towards annexing the whole of the Ogaden (AMANUEL ABRAHAM 1992).

Conclusion

Since the independence of Eritrea in 1992, Ethiopia has once again become a landlocked country. Beyond nationalist nostalgia and the current tensions around the border between the two countries, the Ethiopian concerns regarding the secession of Eritrea are also largely related to the loss of Assab, preventing Ethiopia from this strategic port, as well as any direct access to the Red Sea. Nowadays, several intellectuals and politicians assume that the Ethiopian State has the legitimate right to re-conquer Assab, to break with the territorial isolation of the country. As many Ethiopians, these national elites seem to have forgotten the long-drawn out negotiations around the Haud-Zeila exchange. Had this exchange succeeded, an international treaty would have provided Ethiopia with a legal access to the Red Sea. In the past as in the present, the sea access issue in Ethiopia remains embedded in complex regional and international stakes.

It is sometimes argued that the success of the Haud-Zeila negotiation would have created a great deal of resentment among the Ogaden clansmen and fostered conflicts with the Somali territories in general. However, nine decades after the failure of these tough negotiations, the historical trajectories of the international and regional interests in the Horn of Africa tend to moderate this interpretation. There is no doubt that the implementation of the Haud-Zeila exchange would have strongly impacted the then French colony of Djibouti on the African bank of the Red Sea. Encircled by Zeila and Assab, this port and the railway linking Djibouti to the Ethiopian capital city would have faced important economic difficulties. Under such circumstances, the leaders of the Djiboutian independence might have opted for a federal arrangement with Ethiopia in

1977. Moreover, by accepting to give up their authority on Haud, the Ethiopian authorities might have elicited sympathy from the Ogaden clansmen and strengthened their position to negotiate a sustainable access to the sea – as they now are attempting to achieve, through the discussions around the port of Berbera with the present government of Somaliland.

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The Korean War (1950-1953) and the Kagnew Battalion: Music, War, and the Concept of Collective Security

Cynthia Tse Kimberlin[*]

Greek war correspondent Kimon Skordiles covered the first armed clash of the Cold War — the Korean War of 1950-1953. He wrote about a group of Ethiopian soldiers he previously knew nothing about. They were volunteers recruited from Ethiopia's elite Imperial Bodyguard known as the Kagnew Battalion. They were part of the 1.94 million troops from 16 nations who participated in the Korean War and 21 nations under the United Nations' (UN) flag who pledged support by sending combat and medical troops, and provided South Korea postwar reconstruction aid (JUNG 2010).

Skordiles writes in Kagnew: The Story of Ethiopian Fighters in Korea that the Ethiopians won their battles against North Korean forces in the vicinity of Ch'orwon, Kumhwa, and Mundungni (1954: 122); not one of the 6,037 Ethiopians went missing or became prisoner of war. The Kagnew battalion was the subject of a 1993 B.A. thesis by Dereje Tekle, Addis Ababa University. A 2007 book by Begashaw Derese was published in Amharic with additional material. A fourth book *Kagnew beKoera* (Kagnew in Korea) published in 2007 was written anonymously by the son of one of the guardsmen. But the early account by Skordiles was translated from English to Korean by Korea Times journalist and writer David In-yeup Song. It was published in 2010 commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War.

Song served two years in Ethiopia as chief representative of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The book introduces how Ethiopia became involved in the Korean War. In it he says:

> I came across the book a couple months after I arrived in Ethiopia. I knew Ethiopia had sent troops but I was surprised to learn about their amazing achievements....I spent sleepless nights reading the book. I decided to translate it because it passes on an important lesson to the younger generation.

It is against this background this study will explore music and other connections between Ethiopia and Eritrea and Korea accompanied by photographs and music examples1 excerpted from recordings made by myself and others. Topics discussed

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[1] Illustrations and recordings are not included in this version.

include: (1) the principle of collective security as exemplified by the Kagnew Battalion, (2) origin of the word Kagnew, (3) the Imperial Bodyguard, (4) the Imperial Bodyguard Band, (5) music in the context of the Korean War and it aftermath, (6) reciprocity, and (7) final observations.
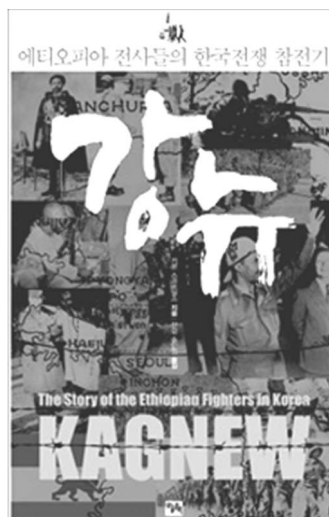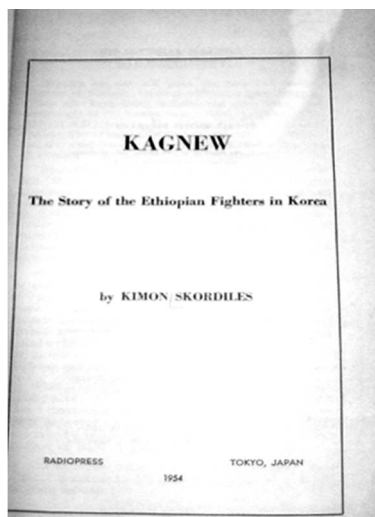
*Figures 1 and 2: Kagnew: The Story of Ethiopian Fighters in Korea by Kimmon Skordiles in English (1954)
and Kimon Skordiles' book translated into Korean by David In-yeup Song (2010)*

Collective security as exemplified by the Kagnew battalion

Collective security is an arrangement in which all countries cooperate collectively to provide security for all by the actions of all against any country within the group which might challenge the existing order by using force. And that its failure lay not in the principle but in its members' commitment to honor its tenets. An example of this failure by the League of Nations occurred in 1935 when Italy invaded Ethiopia. Benito Mussolini ordered the Italian army to invade Ethiopia but the League refused to act despite a desperate plea from Emperor Haile Selassie I in his famous address to the League of Nations in June of 1936 in Geneva, Switzerland. Sixteen years later a similar invasion took place when North Korea invaded South Korea. The Emperor recognized the similarity of this crisis to that of his country's crisis in 1935 and so he responded quickly, demonstrating Ethiopia's continued support for collective security.

Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the UN and Organization of African Unity (OAU) established in 1963 in Addis Ababa and now called the African Union (AU). It has endorsed the principle of collective security in the context of the UN and OAU/AU. Although the slave trade allegedly existed in Ethiopia until 1941, Ethiopia

accepted the Emancipation Convention in 1924 in order to join the League of Nations. As a result, 120 slaves were freed from Gambela and Benishangul and arrived in Addis Ababa the following year. Many were members of the first marching band of the Imperial Bodyguard (SIMENEH 2009: 46). As a result, Ethiopian forces engaged in UN peace-keeping missions and humanitarian operations to assist in political transitions, build institutions, foster the spread of rule of law, support economic reconstruction efforts, supervise elections, disarm militias and former combatants, facilitate humanitarian aid programs and re-settle refugees and internally displaced persons (KINFE ABRAHAM 2008: 181).

Implementing this policy contributed to the UN peacekeeping forces in Korea (1951-1954) and in the Congo (1960-64). In 1951, led by Lieutenant Colonel Teshome Irgetu some 3518 members of the Kagnew Battalion, known as Qañäw Shaläqa to the United Nations forces, plus non-combatants were sent to Korea to fight with the UN forces as part of the United States-led seventh division. In fact, Ethiopia's ground force and South Africa's Flying Cheetas airforce were the only African nations to intervene in the Korean crisis. Ethiopia was the only non-NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization consisting of 28 member countries) state in the area to contribute a contingent of UN forces in South Korea under United States command. The Ethiopian unit's eight months intensive training in Ethiopia's mountains stood them in good stead when they encountered the hilly Korean terrain. The Ethiopian troops drawn from three successive battalions from the 1st Division Imperial Bodyguard between June 1951 and April 1954 participated in 253 battle fields; 120 men were killed in action and 536 men were wounded in action (Unpublished Documents of the Ministry of Defense, July 2005). The Kagnew Battalion gained a reputation as one of the toughest and most aggressive infantry units in Korea, particularly in guerrilla warfare and nighttime fighting maneuvers. The Korean War ended in a truce, not a permanent peace treaty. Hence, the two Koreas remain technically at war.

Origin of the word Kagnew

The name Kagnew in military parlance refers to the reconnaissance position.[2] It was also the name of the warhorse of Emperor Haile Selassie's father, Leul Ras Makonnen. Military units from Imperial times often adopted a name of a favored military commander. In the past Ethiopian Warriors were often interchangeably referred to by the names of their war chargers. Emperor Menelik was referred to as Aba Dagnew. These nom's de guerre or "Saddle names", Yekoricha Sim were also used by the nobility and renown warriors. Modern day Ethiopian commanders and leaders abandoned the Koricha Sim tradition though individual instances of Saddle names did survive. The best known example was HIM Emperor Haile Selassie "Aba Tekil" (SANDLER 1995: 109).

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[2] In Amharic Kagnew means "to bring order out of chaos" and was important during the 1896 Battle of Adwa "when a riderless horse named *Kagnew* galloped towards the attacking Italians, heartening the Ethiopians into repulsing them" (VESTAL 2011: 40-42).

Imperial Bodyguard

Established in 1917 (PANKHURST 1968: 562) *kəbur zäbäññya* or "Honour Guard" was the Ethiopian Imperial Guard, also known as the First Division. Based in Addis Ababa, it served to provide security for the Emperor of Ethiopia and as an elite infantry division that was not part of the organizational structure of the regular Ethiopian army.

The Emperor, then known as Regent Ras Tafari, assembled a unit under his direct control from men who had trained in the British army in Kenya and others who served under the Italians in Tripoli. In 1930 as Emperor he invited a Belgian military mission to train and modernize the Ethiopian military which included the Imperial Bodyguard. After Emperor Haile Selassie returned to Ethiopia after his exile in 1941, the military was reconstituted and men of the Kagnew Battalion were recruited from the Imperial Bodyguard. "It remained the elite force of the empire" (BAHRU ZEWDE 2001: 148), "until discredited in the wake of the attempted coup of 1960". In 1969 it had some 7,000 men. Around the mid-1970s the Imperial Bodyguard was disbanded after the Derg consolidated their hold on Ethiopia.

Imperial Bodyguard Band

Musical ensembles in Ethiopia have been organized to represent the polity and unify the country. Indigenous and Western-styled modern musical groups in Ethiopia were pioneered by the military that helped introduce new genres and styles of popular music. These institutions were state sanctioned established primarily for the purpose of serving the government's interests (SIMENEH 2009: 46, 65).

The group that paved the way for the establishment of the Imperial Bodyguard Band was known as the Arba Lijoch (forty children)[3.] The Imperial Bodyguard Band founded in 1929 performed Western music at state events and welcomed visiting dignitaries (FALCETO 2001).

During its heyday the Imperial Bodyguard Band had an enormous impact inspiring others in its practical organization and training procedures. In the early 1960s it supplied a number of musicians to many independent developing bands. The Band influenced the bands of other branches of the military including the Ground Force, Air Force, and Navy (*ibid*: 49). In essence, the Imperial Bodyguard Band combined the best musical personnel with the best facilities available. In addition to its local popularity, the expeditionary missions to Korea (1950-1953) gained the members enormous recognition and cultural and political exposure. A number of musicians from the Band who composed and performed music about the war included Tilahun Gessesee and Nuru Ghebrewondafrash.

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[3] It was comprised of a 40-member Armenian group of orphans who escaped the Armenian genocide in Turkey, came to Addis Ababa in 1924, and was adopted by Crown Prince Ras Tafari who arranged for them to receive musical instruction. Along with their bandleader Kevork Nalbandian, they became the first official orchestra of Ethiopia. The original Imperial Bodyguard Band was trained by the Swiss musician Andre Nicod, who replaced Kevork Nalbandian in 1929 (AMANI, 1975: 85; SIMINEH 2009:39).

Music Examples in the context of the Korean War and aftermath

On board the ship going to South Korea were the crew of the troopship and the soldiers of the other nations traveling on the same ship with the Ethiopians. Many were impressed by the popular songs and dances the Kagnew Battalion performed during the long ocean voyage such as the songs Tizita, Ganzebie, Ambassel, Anchilige, and Aman Baman (SKORDILES 1954: 120).

Tizita

The first music example is the song Tizita. In Amharic, *tizita* has three related meanings. It can mean memory and the act of memory. Some dictionaries add nostalgia, or the memory of loss and longing in its melancholy. Secondly, tizita refers to one of the *qəññət* (mode) in secular Ethiopian music. And third, tizita refers to a ballad expressing lost and memory of love lost. The possessive *tizitaye* (my tizita), refers not only to the singer's own melancholy memory but also to the absent lover. The longing in tizita is without resolution, since the possibility of restoration or return is always thwarted. Tizita is lyrical and haunting in this vocal interpretation by Asnachesh Worku who accompanies herself on the kerar (lyre) in a 1996 recording made in Germany ("The First Lady of Ethiopian Music", May 25, 2008, Horizon Ethiopia). The text reads:

> Nostalgia, memories
> He has gone away from me, far away
> All that is left is his love
> The memory of him tears my soul apart
> Ask my eyes, they will tell you
> How much my heart longs for him

Bale Gariw

During military leave some Ethiopian soldiers went to Tokyo. While five were at the Hotel Yurako drinking beer, the hotel manager suddenly asked them if they would sing an Ethiopian song. So in an ad hoc manner they were taken to a hall where people were attending a music show. In the middle of the show they were introduced by the show's leader to sing. Of the many versions, here are two music examples 2a and 2b by Abera Mulat[4] in 2009 from Dire Dawa and Aster Aweke in 1993. Known as "Bale Gariw" (the man with [the] chariot), it was originally known as "Shimbra [chickpea] Dube [pumpkin] Aygegnm Bedubie". The soldiers sang it during the war as recalled by Major Tefera Woldetensae (DEREJE 1993: 48). The song is about a youth in love with another. The youth is riding in a *gari* to meet this person but is nervous that the *gari* will not make it in time. One text reads in English translation:

> Keep away, by any means
> From my lovely, stay away
> If you want to reach
> Enough for your survival
> Stay away till morning brings
> The need for me to come
> Keep away, for some will surely die

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4   At the time, Abera was seated in a small park in the Kezira in front of the Greek Church amidst the sounds of ongoing traffic.

Shilela

Shilela is an umbrella word for all types of war chants. Etymology of the word *shilela* is derived from the infinitive Meshelel, which means to boast with exaggerated body expression and melismatic singing (SIMENEH 2009: 30). The caption for a photograph reads: "During the cease-fire period in Korea, the men of the Kagnew Battalion displayed their dramatic talents in a native Ethiopian drama". This photograph depicts an enactment of a drama where the soldiers are preparing for battle exhibiting their patriotism. (*op.cit*: 150) Music example 3 is a 1972 rendition of a shilela Kimberlin recorded and performed by Alemayehu Fantay accompanying himself on the *masinqo*. The text reads:

> Hunger after harvest, missing after shooting
> They burn you like fire under your feet.
> Let a hero die and a cowardly person live because his shoulders like carrying dirt.
> My home country Ethiopia, the sign of freedom
> I do not want to lose your life while I am alive.
> Not shooting a bullet to shoot a person,
> Even if you tie it around your waist, it makes you respected and feared.
> Bring my "dimot four", I do like to put it away
> It is after blood is shed that a brother comes to fight
> Kill me with a "dimot four;" and kill him with "bulie"
> Let the enemy send people who ask for peace
> Tell that person to take care for his life, I think he has no advisor.
> A bullet has no brain if you pull the trigger.
> Please kill our enemy, to kill him is the best thing to do,
> Otherwise if you say tomorrow, and after tomorrow, the enemy will be ready.
> Heroic general who marches heroes to crush against each other at the battlefield.

My Strong Will

Lieutenant Nuru Wondafrash was a member of the Imperial Bodyguard Band who served in the Korean war.[5] In music example 4 you will hear Girma Yifrashewa performing a quartet he arranged in the style of classical or art music based on a song titled "Tenkaraw Menfese" (My Strong Will) composed by Nuru. As a member of the Imperial Body Guard Band, Nuru often travelled for extended periods.

This quartet is based on Nuru's song. The music itself was based on a familiar Ethiopian wedding song "Yemaibegerew Tenikaraw Semete". Apart form rearranging the song in a classical style, Girma felt the emotions generated by the music also elicited memories about the difficulties he had to overcome in order to become a musician. Musicians heard in the quartet include Girma Yifrashewa (piano) with members of the UCLA Philharmonia: Luke Santonastaso (violin), Jonathan Sacdalan (clarinet), and

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[5] He was the first husband of the famous Ethiopian vocalist Bizunesh Bekele. While he was away Bizunesh Bekele was known to sing songs she composed of how much she missed him. Unfortunately, they were never recorded or released and only survive in the memory of those who knew her and heard her humming them.

Jennifer Li (cello) in a performance in Los Angeles October 24, 2009 in Schoenberg Hall at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

Figure 3: My Strong Will, composed by Lieutenant Nuru Wondafrash, member Imperial Bodyguard Band. Girma Yifrashewa (arranger, pianist) with members of the UCLA Philharmonia Jonathan Sacdalan (clarinet), Luke Santonastaso (violin), Jennifer Li (cello) (Photo: Kimberlin 2009).

Japanwun Wädəjä (aka Eruke mesrak salehu Japanwan wodije)

The influence of the melodic contours and musical arrangements of East Asian music heard in Korea and Japan was noticeable (*Nazaret News*), as well as the influence, not of the azmari's traditional songs, but by Western-style musical bands. For example 5, the song *Japanwun wädəjä* was composed and sung by Tilahun Gessesse who served with the Imperial Body Guard Band from 1955 to 1985 and in the National Theater from 1985 to 1989. His popularity, however, reached a climax in the 30 years he served in the Bodyguard. He has sung over 400 songs revolving around issues of love to patriotism, from money to locales, and from friendship to the 1985 famine in Ethiopia. He even sang about punctuality and is said to have left almost no reality of life unsung. ("Obituary", Addis Fortune, April 26, 2009). *Japanwun wädəjä* (I fell in love with a Japanese) is about a love affair with a Japanese woman while an Ethiopian was on tour of duty in Korea. During their service, Ethiopian soldiers, especially members of the Officer corps, were periodically granted leaves for a couple of weeks, which they spent in Japan (SOLOMON 2006; NEGA 2000; MILKIE 2004).

> While I was in the Far East, I loved a Japanese [woman]
> I remember burning in her love
> She resembles a flower hanging from the vine
> Her beauty is stunning when one looks.
> There is no one that matches her beauty

She is the fountain of humbleness and beauty is her culture.
While I was in the Far East, I loved a Japanese [woman]
I remember burning in her love
Respecting parents is her custom
She is built with love, look at her personality
When will I quench my longing for her love
She will remain in my heart as long as I am alive.
While I was in the Far East, I loved a Japanese [woman]
I remember burning in her love
Excursion on a yacht which is suitable for her
Dinner in Tokyo, lunch at Yokohama
I liked my campaign in Korea
I tasted a sweet love while in the Far East.

"War: A Prophetic Speech Turned into a Song" - Rastafarian Bob Marley's "War"

A broader view of war reveals sentiments and songs that were composed in opposition to the Ethiopian political system and its leaders during the course of a number of political upheavals beginning in the late 1950s. According to informants, significant expression of political dissent in popular music began with the Imperial Bodyguard Band. One protest centred around sending an Ethiopian armed force, the Kagnew Battalion to Korea (DEREJE 1993: 1). In opposition to the Kagnew Battalion's prolonged involvement in Korea, a song of protest was transmitted over the radio for a short period (Getachew Debalke, interview, 12/01/08). The song's refrain was:

> The Kagnew Battalion, the Kagnew Battalion
> It is enough, come back!

Despite this protest, the Imperial Bodyguard Band was the most favoured and privileged of all military units. Both its musical and non-musical personnel took initiatives to urge social and political reforms for the country, culminating in the unsuccessful coup of 1960 (SIMENEH 2008: 108-109). One example of how these reforms were viewed outside Ethiopia is the Africa-centric movement called Rastafarianism (or Rastafari) in which the late Emperor Haile-Selassie is revered as the black Messiah. Its name is derived from Ras Tefari Makonnen, the pre-coronation name of Emperor Haile Selassie.

Rastafarianism emerged in Jamaica in the 1930s. Since the advent of Reggae music in the 1960s and 1970s led by charismatic spokesman and musician Bob Marley, the movement has become an international phenomenon, especially among disaffected youth and minority groups. The failure by mainstream church groups to address the fundamentals of modern-day racial and economic woes, the ever-increasing polarization of the world between the haves and the have-nots, the pervasive nature of Western neo-colonialism, the violent urban backlash against third world immigrants and, finally, Bob Marley's powerful lyrics on behalf of the voiceless, can be cited as some of the reasons responsible for the transformation of Rastafari into a worldwide protest movement.

Lyrics for one of Bob Marley's most famous songs entitled, "War" was actually taken verbatim from an October 1963 speech Emperor Haile Selassie gave at the United Nations. It was then that Haile Selassie warned the world of the dangers associated with inequalities throughout the world and the injustices suffered by many. The speech was prophetic, as wars have become almost a constant around the globe. (Dec 2004 issue, *Esprit de Corps*. Magazine of the Korean War Veterans Association of Ethiopia) Here is the song "War" in music example 6.

> Until the philosophy which hold one race superior
> And another
> Inferior
> Is finally
> And permanently
> Discredited
> And abandoned –
> Everywhere is war –
> Me say war.
> That until there no longer
> First class and second class citizens of any nation
> Until the colour of a man's skin
> Is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes –
> Me say war.
> That until the basic human rights
> Are equally guaranteed to all,
> Without regard to race –
> Dis a war.
> That until that day
> The dream of lasting peace,
> World citizenship
> Rule of international morality
> Will remain in but a fleeting illusion to be pursued,
> But never attained –
> Now everywhere is war - war.
> And until the ignoble and unhappy regimes
> that hold our brothers in Angola,
> In Mozambique,
> South Africa
> Sub-human bondage
> Have been toppled,
> Utterly destroyed –
> Well, everywhere is war –
> Me say war.
> War in the east,
> War in the west,
> War up north,

War down south –
War - war –
Rumours of war.
And until that day,
The African continent
Will not know peace,
We Africans will fight - we find it necessary –
And we know we shall win
As we are confident
In the victory
Of good over evil –
Good over evil, yeah!
Good over evil –
Good over evil, yeah!
Good over evil –
Good over evil, yeah!

Reciprocity

During and after the war there have been many examples of reciprocity on both sides.

Bowha Orphanage, Dongducheon, Gyeonggi province

During the Korean war, the Ethiopian soldiers founded an orphanage for Korean children who lost their parents. After fighting in the war, the Ethiopians established the Bowha Orphanage in April 1953 that took care of the children. The facility operated from funds Ethiopian soldiers gathered by donating part of their pay. The orphanage offered shelter to 60 to 70 children. Since that time Ethiopian veterans have expressed hopes of meeting the children that were raised in the orphanage they established and maintained during the war. The children they supported were raised at the orphanage. Shin Kwang-chul, general secretary at the Supporters Association for the Ethiopian Veterans of the Korean war said: "We have been visiting Ethiopia in the past few years to provide aid to Korean War veterans and every time we went, they asked about the children from the orphanage... They want to meet the former orphans while they are still healthy enough to come to Korea," he said. What happened to the children after the Ethiopian troops went home in 1956 is unclear for there is little documentation (2004).[6]

During the 1990s to the present, South Korea has reciprocated by building eight new schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a new residential complex in Sembel, Eritrea, and continues to provide educational scholarships to Ethiopian descendents of soldiers who served in the Kagnew Battalion. Twenty-first century contributions include a medical college and a memorial church.

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[6] http://ethiopundit.blogspot.com/2004/07/ethiopians-seek-lost-orphans.html (consulted Nov. 2013).

Japan and South Korea Build Schools in Ethiopia's Capital (By Binyam Tamene)

The Japanese and South Korean governments are building eight new schools in Addis Ababa with 100 million birr (Addis Ababa Bureau of Education). The Japanese government allocated over 72 million birr to construct six elementary and one high school in different sub-cities of the capital city. The Korean government is constructing schools modeled after the schools in Korea. A Korean-style high school is being built in Akaki Kaliti sub-city costing around 28 million birr. Mayor Kuma Demkesa says there are plans to establish more schools, colleges and universities with modern facilities to improve the educational standard.[7]

Sembel Residentional Complex Asmara

Asmara, Eritrea is developing at a dramatic pace in the housing sector. The Sembel Residential Complex built in 1996 is one of Africa's biggest housing complexes housing about 1250 families. It was built by Keangnam Enterprises, Korea's first contractor, also known as Corea. The complex situated South-west of Asmara includes shops, a hospital, a kindergarten, an elementary school, a gymnasium, playgrounds, sport facilities, a theatre in the round, offices, and public squares.[8]

Miyungsang Hospital/Medical College and Memorial Church

Founded in 2004, a medical college and memorial church in Addis Ababa share a compound. and was completed on March 23, 2010. The college has the capacity to train around 180 medical students. This will improve the quality of health services of the country and reduce the number of Ethiopians who travel abroad seeking better medical services according to Reverend Sam Hwan Kim, founder of the hospital, which began neuro-surgery for the first time. The church was built in remembrance of the Ethiopian soldiers and to thank the Ethiopian people who helped during the war said Kim.

60th Anniversary Celebration

The Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs launched a Revisit Program for overseas veterans from nine nations from June 21 to 28, 2010. About 300 veterans and family members from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Greece, Ethiopia and Luxembourg took part in attending the ceremony, visiting monuments, paying respects at the National Cemetery and touring a folk village. Ethiopian Veterans of the Kagnew Battalion attending their memorial in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia included Corp. Girma Mola (80); Lt. Tadesse Kerstos (82); and Capt. Semare Mekele (79).

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[7] http://nazret.com/blog/index.php?title=japan_and_south_korea_build_schools_in_e&more=1&c=1&tb=1&pb=1 (consulted Nov. 2013).

[8] http://www.asmera.nl/sembel-residentional.htm (consulted Nov. 2013).

Final observations

The Korean version of "Kagnew" places Skordiles' work into a contemporary context by tracing the legacy of the Ethiopian warriors, through interviews with some of the 400 veterans who are alive today. Facts, figures and anecdotes are provided in both Korean and English.

Among them, Haile Giorgis, who served as 2nd lieutenant during the war, became promoted as military protocol chief to the emperor in 1972. Ironically, the emperor was overthrown in a communist coup, and during a spell of red terror through the 1980s, the Korean War veterans, once honored heroes, were forced to conceal the fact that they had fought against communist forces. Giorgis lived a reclusive life until the early 1990s.

In 2010, 40 members of the Korean War Veterans Association of Ethiopia visited Seoul to witness what had become of the impoverished country they fought in as young men. "Ethiopians took note of Korea's rapid economic development as a model for their country's own growth. Today KOICA continues to help build schools, drinking water facilities and welfare centres for women and children. Song urged Koreans to learn more about Ethiopia's rich history. Although the younger generation of South Koreans today enjoy a rich life materially and intellectually, still, many do not even know when the Korean War broke out.

Ethiopia's participation in the War transformed its action from a specific conflict on a specific terrain to a global arena involving other nations. Ethiopia confronted them to take a stand and whose response today echoes within the public's consciousness. For Emperor Haile Selassie the Korean War was a "holy" mission for world peace and collective security to stop the further spread of ideological conflict.

The six music examples capture this conflict through its subject matter, commentary, and quintessential musicality. Although their essence is encapsulated succinctly, the music itself is not limited in scope but widely diversified in terms of genre, form, style, and historical placement in time. To help facilitate the inclusion of new musical idioms, the concept of intercultural music is utilized where elements from two or more cultures are integrated (KIMBERLIN and EUBA 1995: 2-5). It illustrates how Ethiopia has expanded its influence beyond its borders into a broader realm, infusing it with modified forms and styles from different eras coupled with new possibilities. For example, Tilahun Gessessee in "*Japanwun wädəjä*" captures the essence of East Asia's aesthetics in terms of melodic contour, music textures, and ambience. Haile Selassie's text set to Bob Marley's Jamaican reggae style in "War" essentially parlays a belief that is usurped by others, capturing the political, social, and the artistic component in a single song with a universal message. The instrumental quartet "My Strong Will" framed by Ethiopian and Western art traditions conveys the travails of both the Ethiopian Korean War veteran of the past and concert pianist's life in the present. The composition shows music can poignantly convey meaning and emotion without an accompanying text. Contrast it with the traditional Ethiopian iconic song that crosses time and place in the very personal and lyrical "Tizita" and the boisterous call to arms in that category of song known as "Shilela". And finally, the classic "Bale Gariw" that portrays the public and

ubiquitous transport of the gari that moves quickly, but never in a straight line but rather zigzagging down the road, hurrying to its destination and carrying its passenger who waits in anticipation and hope.

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The Amharic Letters and Articles of Šayḫ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādīq (1897-1977)

Endris Mohammed[*]

Šayḫ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādīq is an Ethiopian scholar with some academic background as he was a teacher at elementary school in Däsʸe, Wäyzäro Səhin School, from 1938-1950. So far, the researcher has found a document that confirms his training as a teacher.[1] Otherwise, he is a man who thought himself with various modern subjects and European languages (ENDRIS 2007: 19-20). His legacy on Ethiopian history, astrology, geography, ethnography and politics attest that he was a versatile scholar (GORI 2005: 83-85). He is among the leading Muslim scholars of Ethiopia with tangible leadership and literary contributions in the annals of the Muslims of Ethiopia.

The present researcher has collected thirty nine letters and nine unpublished articles and eight published articles produced by Šayḫ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādīq written since early 1930s until the last days of his eventful life as part of his MA thesis preparation (ENDRIS 2007). However, only a few letters and articles were included in the previous studies so far produced by the same researcher except casual quotations and an eye bird's view of their contents. The present study is a humble attempt to introduce some of his Amharic letters and an article aiming at diversifying the record and documentation of his legacy thereby demonstrating the contribution of the scholar in the development of Amharic literature,[2] the evolution of Muslim political consciousness and issues of national integration.[3]

The letters the article selected here are written in the 1960s in which the Ethiopian new generation especially radical students emerged in the autocratic system of Haylä Səllase. However, little is known about the contribution of Ethiopian Muslim scholars in this important preamble to the Ethiopian Revolution in addressing some of the problems facing the nation at the time. This is an attempt to address some of the heretofore letters and articles of Šayḫ Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādīq in this regard too (ENDRIS 2007: 172-174).

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[1] He scored a high grade although he attended very few classes as mentioned in his grade report.

[2] Šayḫ Sayyid is one of the translators who played a key role in the translation of the Holy Qurʾān into Amharic published in 1969.

[3] The writer has so far written his MA thesis (2007) reviewing the textual legacy of Šayḫ Sayyid and made his doctoral dissertation (2012) on one of his Arabic work.

It is to be noted that the author, unlike most of his contemporaries, used to write in Amharic extensively and contributes to the development of Amharic literacy. The space allowed is limited and we are here to introduce two letters and an article. The letters are fully produced with English translations and annotations wherever necessary.

The texts: description and analysis

A. Letter to the Crown Prince Asfaw Wäsän

The letter (see Fig. 1 in annex) is written by handwriting of the author which is written in what is called at the time *qum ṣəhəfät* (erect writing). It is dated, duly signed and is written in a modern paper. There are marginal notes written below the end of the letter which are not related to the subject matter but only show a list of names that notes persons probably settled in a plot of land in Wärrä-Babbo.

> To the Imperial Ethiopia Crown Prince,
>
> The Beloved Prince, Asfaw Wäsän Haylä Səllase.
>
> His Excellency, the Prince,
>
> Qādi Muhaǧab is made currently the President of the Supreme Šariʿa court. He is seated in such high position by chance though he does not know the Amharic language which is the tradition of the country; he is not respecting the trust of the government and does not have the spirit of judgment and administration claiming to be the prince of Muslims without restricting himself either by the law or the Šariʿa, giving verdicts according to his own whims; punching a table against the petitioners and forcing them to leave by guards is confirmed; the Ethiopian Muslim mass is in great disaster with regard to the Šariʿa court verdict. Therefore, since I am the first person to assume the responsibility before and hope that I can accomplish the duty in good faith I humbly apply so that you bring me the permission from his majesty to assume the responsibility.[4]
>
> 2 Hədar 1950 (11 November 1957)
>
> Your servant,
>
> Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādīq.

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[4] Other letters written by the author substantiate his claim as the foremost man to introduce a modern Šariʿa court in Däse after the restoration of the monarchy (ENDRIS 2007: 24). It is an issue of grievance until today that the Šariʿa court is mishandled both in its organization and efficiency although it has a long history of pious arbitration long before the attempt to forge a modern seat for it especially in the rural Ethiopia by the pious leadership of the ʿUlama.

B. Letter to the Security Chief, Lt. Col. Wärqənäh Gäbäyyähu

This is a two page Amharic letter, a kind of summary report, hand written with a pencil and dated of 17 Säne 1952 EC (24 June 1960) (see. Fig. 2 in annex). It bears the name of the writer at the end. It is addressed to the head of Security, Lt. Col. Wärqənäh Gäbäyyähu. The author was an employee of the security department from September 1958 to May 8, 1964 as an analyst and translator of Arabic productions that concerns Ethiopia, particularly documents of national concern written in the Arab Press (ENDRIS 2007: 25). The letter shows how a Muslim security officer manages to balance between his Islamic identity and cause vis-à-vis with his political role as an Ethiopian in a country where Christian ethos prevail. It hints on the religious and political climate in Mecca, Mina and Jeddah of Saudi Arabia during the Ḥaǧǧ season in 1960. Šayḫ Sayyid conducted his pilgrimage in the same year. The letter is important as it reviews a full report written to the key person in the private cabinet of the Emperor and Chief of the Security Department, about the very issues of national concern to Ethiopia by a learned devout Muslim and yet a nationalist, who does not compromise the political interest of his country. The speech allowed to Šayḫ Sayyid at the Saudi Royal palace in Mina (5 km from Mecca) before King Saʿūd bin ʿAbdul ʿAzīz demonstrates his key role in the Ethiopian Muslim affair of his time (ENDRIS 2007: 104). On the other hand, it shows how the Imperial regime was anxious to get an insider view of the situation in the Arab and Islamic world. The researcher keeps a photocopy of the original Amharic letter that is here carefully typed for clarity.

17 Säne 1952 EC (June 24, 1960)
To His Excellency Lt. Colonel Wärqənäh Gäbäyyähu
Deputy Chief of Staff, Private Cabinet of His Majesty and Chief of the General Security

Addis Ababa

Your Excellency,
I explain that the enclosed report herewith has the following major ideas:

1. Since it is the first time, it guides the performances of the pilgrimage and the precincts in which the pilgrimage is made as well the places in which a political assembly is made.
2. It mentions the high ranking politicians who participated in the performance of the pilgrimage in the year such as the Secretary general of the Arab League ʿAbdul Ḫāliq Ḥasuna, the permanent resident representative of the Arab diplomats: Mr. Kāmil ʿAbduraḥīm, the Minster of Endowments of the Arab League, Mr. Aḥmad ʿAbdallāh Ṭadima who headed the 380 men constituted from different countries funded by the league as scheduled. The Eritrean leader ʿUtmān Ṣalih ʿUmar and the Somali leader Ḥassan ʿAbdallāh Farāḫ were among the group. The report also addresses that Al-Azhar University has sponsored 150 pilgrims.

In addition, it tells that the interior Minister of the Sudan, Amīr Allay Aḥmad Al Maǧzūb Al Bahārī came as the head of pilgrims; the Nigerian paramount ruler came with 15 thousand pilgrims; the Muslim missionary Ustāḏ Sayyid Ramaḍān and the Syrian Minister Dr. Maʿruf al Dawālī have also attended. It also mentions the presence of a senior member of the Indian Islamic Daʿwa Committee, Šayḫ ʿUbaydullāh Al Bilyāwī.

3. It also elaborates that 750,000 men gathered at ʿArafāt Mountain and the highest temperature was 52 degree centigrade. The death toll does not exceed 665, which means one in every thousand. There were 98 thousand [pilgrims] from Iran, 50 thousand from United Arab, 33 thousand from Yemen, 20 thousand from India, 15.5 thousand from Nigeria, 9 thousand from Pakistan, 345 from Ethiopia, 425 from Somalia. There were 565 on board from the airline at Addis Ababa, for the purpose of pilgrimage.[5]

4. In 1955 it was under the custody of the king Saʿūd that Islamic Unity Conference was held. This year the first meeting was called by the Ambassador of Pakistan in Jeddah, Mr. Akbar ʿAlī Ḫan. He held a dinner invitation in his place at Mina on 10/12/ 1379.[6] He reminded that since the religion of Islam does not exclude politics, we should utilize such a gathering and reinstate the honor of Islam when we go back home. The Nigerian Prime Minister also made a speech through his translator and was applauded after each sentence he uttered.

5. It [the report] elaborates that King Saʿūd welcomes the Ḥaǧǧī missions from his palace at Mina on 11/12/[13]79 but since we do not have head of the Ḥaǧǧī missions the liaison officer of the Embassy could not present us officially. However, the Ambassador, his secretary and all in all seven men approached his Majesty King Saʿūd and I made a speech in his presence that has got a great applause from the audience as the report details.

6. The heads of the Ḥaǧǧī missions of the Sudan and the Arab League have made a dinner and tea reception in Jeddah followed by the Šayḫ ʿAbdallāh Madanī[7] who organized a big reception in Mecca in which the third Secretary, Riḍwān ʿAbdallāh, asserted that the Ethiopian King during the time of the prophet, welcomed the Muslim refugees and refused to deliver them to their enemies shows that not to repatriate refugees is a secular law introduced by Ethiopia. The visit of his majesty Haylä Səllase I to the Arab League, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia; and currently the visit of the king of Jordan, his Majesty Ḥusayn, to Ethiopia all shows that the incumbent Ethiopian Emperor has a spirit emanated from the great Naǧāšī.

7. There was also a leaflet that agitates to boycott the commodities of France and avoid any transaction with its banks as the country was oppressing Algerian Muslims; there appears also a flyer disseminated without a signature that blames Ethiopia for abusing the UN mandated federal state of Eritrea and the Ethiopian

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5   See also ERLICH 1994.

6   4 June 1960.

7   He was an Ambassador of Ethiopia to the Saudi Kingdom.

Muslims. The Ethiopian Information Department has distributed a magazine that asserts the situation of Ethiopia holding the picture of the His Majesty at the back which shows how we were aware of each other on the issue.

8. It indicates the situation of Saudi Arabia, Jeddah, Mecca and Medina and how the princes of the family of Saʿūd are intending to monopolize the eastern trade to their country after they secure finance because they have three companies that extract what is called black gold, petroleum, and make in their custody the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

9. Although not according to geographical standards [the report holds] a map that indicated the topography of Mecca and Medina as well as the following suggestions:

1. Mecca is a site of gathering for many nations. Even non-Muslim governments like India, China and Germany have their own health corps and it is recommendable that Ethiopia also sends a health mission as it builds its heroic image.

2. Many Kingdoms erect large tents at Mina to welcome their citizens. If the Ethiopian Embassy too erects big tents and hospitalizes [its pilgrims]; in such a way the compatriots will be immune from the propaganda of foreign nationals.

3. It is said that since the Eritrean immigrants could not get any support as [countries] responded not to meddle into the internal affairs of a country, they are to mobilize people and attempt demand the United Nations claiming that they had been federated unfairly. Thus, it is advisable to be cautious so that the people move into a walkout.

4. It also explains that in order to counterbalance the opposition abroad, the officials in each governorate should call and tell Muslim notables so that to refute the propaganda.

<div align="center">S/M/S</div>

C. Opinion

This is a 4 page letter (see. Fig. 3 in annex), a kind of article, written in Amharic and is type written entitled: አስተያየት 'Opinion'. It is dated, 12/02/54 EC, corresponding to 22/10/1961 AD, and the name of the author is clearly mentioned, with signature, at the end. The paper (modern) is 29.6 x 21 cm, single column, 12-29 lines. It is paginated and in good condition. The article is a response to anti-government media protests abroad concerning the government's relationship with Islam and Ethiopian Muslims.

October 2, 1961

Opinion

I have seen the attached 12 pages herewith. In the last two years, leaflets that accuse Šayḫ ʿAbdallāh Madanī and the Ethiopian government for mistreating the Ethiopian Muslims have been here translated. Their sources are not certainly known: [it might be] from Eritrean immigrants, students exiled in Cairo and Arab countries or from the political men of the Somali government who intend to defile the image of the Ethiopian government.

The Ministry of Information has responded, in the presence of Šayḫ ʿAbdallāh Madanī himself, to the paper released in the first year. A leaflet circulated last year entitled as *Oppressions against the Muslims of Habaša* is translated and a copy is preserved at the Security Department. I do not know what measures are taken then after. It was much wider than the previous leaflet. It states that the King of kings of Ethiopia has formulated 14 programs to destroy the religion of Islam; Muslim schools are being closed while the endowments of the Mosques are discredited; it supported various missionaries, established a radio station named the Voice of the Gospel to disseminate the religion; he has translated booklets defiling Islam. It also elaborates that he [the Emperor] has brought teachers known for their hatred of Islam. In addition, the families of Amīr ʿAbdullah, Amīr Yūsuf and his son, as well as his nephew were poisoned and pushed to death within fifteen days in 1941 and 42 by Däǧǧazmač Ṭassäw, by mere fear of the Muslim gentry would instigate appraisal of the Muslim mass.

Ras Mäsfin Səläši has also killed the spirit of the families of Abba Ǧifar. Abba Dulla is made to salute him in public letting him to stand in front of him in dry sunlight and rain. The inheritor of the throne, ʿAbdullah Abba Ǧobir, is imprisoned and faced harassment. At last he is forced to remain at home and is severely under surveillance. They have segregated the Muslims from the Christians by alleged charge of being an enemy of the country. They have christened many Muslims. It states that the minority Christians are able to rule the majority Muslims following a colonial custom of a minority rule by getting a financial and armament support from the crusader governments. Emperor Mənilək, in alliance with Portugal, Italy and French has militarily conquered Muslim regions since 1886. It [the leaflet] agitates to separate the regions in

which the [Emperors] were able to be called king of kings, Harär, Arusi, Bale, Gurage, Wällo, Gǐmma, from Ethiopia. It also predicts that France will evacuate from Djibouti; British from Kenya and Aden. What I think to be important is the following:

1. According to the study made in twelve pages, there should be a response in radio and the press.

2. If it is not written before, the Saʿudi government should be reminded to be cautious so that a place of worship shall not be a political field.

3. Closing the door of grievance is much better than anything else. That is, the Muslims here, the immigrants and the students abroad too feel that they do not get their right properly. Thus it is incumbent to address such sentiments in actions. I do not think that the response in words could bring any benefit.

From what I read of the grievances in newspapers and magazines, I remember one that states the Ethiopian administration do not endorse any overt law that discriminates the Christians against the Muslims, however, the Muslims of the world believe that there is such a law covertly. A weekly newspaper published in Hargeysa blames His Majesty (Haylä Səllase) as a priest king. During the Italian times, two journalists argue each other in that the first one said that there is a law that accepts religious discrimination in Ethiopia while the other argues that this is the claim of none other than you. He responded that we have a document disseminated by Ethiopians themselves in which they claim to have overthrown the king who lived in 1916 because he has accepted Islam. This shows that being a Muslim is a crime that could claim a throne. Here are the details of the grievances:

1. Though it is known that the Muslims comprise 60 or 70 % of the population, it is only from Eritrea and Ogaden Muslims that a puppet and idle office holders are appointed for political consumption. They criticize that adhering by the pretext of Muslims illiteracy; the names of the Muslims are not seen from the list of officials.

2. It is the Muslims that contribute much of the education tax, and yet their children are barred from the main educational training, if not with special arrangement. They criticize also that only few Muslim students name is included among those who are sent abroad.

3. The missionary may proselytize in countries where there is no religion whereas in Harär, Wällo and Gǐmma various missionaries are allowed to be disseminated. On the other hand, scholarly missions from Al-Azhar and others are banned from entering into Ethiopia and are not allowed to open schools. The certificate of the Al Azhar University is considered as insufficient. However, as observers comment the religion of Islam inflames like a fire or melts like butter when it is provoked and resulting its wide dissemination.

4. Christians were assigned to live in the fertile lands of Härär, Wällo, Gǐmma and other Muslim regions. In Wällo, in particular, because of a land tenure known

as *Yä Galla märet* [the land of the Oromo], priests and officials coming from other governorates are assigned and made us tenants in our own region of birth. People appeal for being taxed in the name of the gentry and in Gïmma when Ras Mäsfïn Səläši entered Gïmma 90% of the land was at the hand of the Muslims, while he left Gïmma being a millionaire, holding 5000 *gaša* and only 25 % of the land remained in the hands of the Muslims. If the oppression burdened on Gïmma, the confiscation of land and the fatigue during the harvest time of coffee, were distributed to all Africa, it would have been a continent of tears and drought.

5. They criticize that the Italians were able to transfer the wealth of the country to the compatriots in three years whereas the Ethiopian government, ministers and officials impoverished us by trading in collaboration with the Arabs, Indians and Europeans.

6. The government being led by priests is closing the doors of government offices against the Muslims. As a result many Muslims remove their headdress, which is a symbol of being a Muslim. There are people who murmur that we are forced to build a church that we do not confess.

7. During the holidays of *ʿAīd al-Fiṭr*, *ʿAīd al-Aḏa* and *Mawlīd* since the government offices are not closed, courts penalize us [in case of absence at court appointment].

8. It is only incapable *Qaḍis* that are deliberately appointed in every office who are at the same time few in numbers. In terms of allocating sufficient salary, the *Qaḍi* at province is not like the judge at province; the *Qaḍi* at district is not like the judge at district. Reshuffling of judges is a rule but the *Qaḍis* of the Supreme Šariʿa Court are not reshuffled for fifteen years.

The emigrants of Harär wrote that in a village called Qul(u)bi, located 45 km away from Harär live very innocent people and believe that the Holy Spirit of Gäbrəʿel has shown itself there. As a result, Christians gather there every year and make a holy oath to annihilate the Muslims. Lest the Härärge people stand to oppose, a fund of 3 million birr is collected every year in order to fight them.

Conclusion

The letters and articles discuss issues of national concern, the dilemma of being a Muslim in a staunchly non-Muslim political and social environment. The problems that caused social crises, the author believes, were the result of inept administration and bureaucratic maneuvers. The author emphasizes the multi facets of the problems of the Ethiopian society giving emphasis to the class nature of exploitation and religious discrimination. He suggests that only a just and competent system could solve the inherent problem of the country rather than a system that utters mere and hallow flattery words.

Linguistically, the author uses what can be described by the time as a refined Amharic literature. He uses short and powerful sentences with their own melodies, although there are instances in which the sentences are not fully constructed. It is also observable that the language of the author is probably edited more carefully when it is

typed as compared to the hand written letter. The letters and pieces of articles are useful contributions to Amharic literature, by an author who was an expert on Arabic literature. He came from a Muslim community that used to observe Amharic literacy, as a liability to its identity and cultural future.

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Fig. 1: Hand-written letter to the Crown Prince Asfaw Wäsän, dated 2 Hədar 1950 (11 November 1957).

Fig. 2: Page 2 (of 2) of a hand-written letter to the Security Chief, dated 17 Säne 1952 EC (24 June 1960)

አስተያየት

በዚህ ጋር ተያይዞ በ12 ገጽ የተጻፈውን ፅሑፍ አስፍሳለሁ ። በሬት ሁሳት ዓመት ወስዶ የኢትዮጵያን አስፀፍ በልዩ ፀሳት በሽ አካደሳሁ መጿር _በኢትዮጵያ መገኘት ላይ የጠብቶ ወረተኝ ጀርባ ተፈፐም ፀለ ። አቀት አገ፦ ሞ፦ ካኮረደያ ከተበደተ ስፍ ወም በክፀርና በሬበ አገር ከተብረረት ተመፈፍ ወም የኢትዮጵያን ሱ ለስከረት ከሬፈአት ከስሳ መ ነገም የፓስኪ ስያፍ አገሆኝ ጠፈርዉ አፈፀም ።

በመቐ፲ም ዓመት ለተበተዉ ወረተት ከሳስፀ ደያ ፈኮስር ፈኮተ ሽ አበዳሁ መፈ በሰቀ መሳስ ተስፈለ ። በሰሬ ዓመ ት በሽኝ አስ ለፍ ፤ ላይ የደረሱ በደለፍ በዉ አርኮሳኮ በካ የተበተ ም ተኮ ፦ ተ ርኮስ ። በፀተ ተነያ አፍራ ተበነፍ አገፈ ሩ አገ ፦ ፀ ተረስ ። ም፲ አኮፍ አገደ ተበደ ፍ አስ ፦ ። በሬተ ዓመ ፦ ከተበተ ም በ ም ፀተስ ለ ንሮ ። በ ፀ የ ።

Fig. 3: 1st page of a 4-page type-written article entitled አስተያየት *'Opinion', dated 12/02/54 EC (22/10/1961)*

Mäzmur and Zäfän – Within and eyond the Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia

Jan Magne Steinhovden[*]

Music has played a key role in the rapid growth and development of the evangelical movement in Ethiopia. Solo singers, choirs and congregational singing occupy a major part of the gatherings. In this setting, among these churches, there is a controversial debate around two Amharic expressions; *mäzmur* [መዝሙር] and *zäfän* [ዘፈን].

At first glance *mäzmur* is often classified as church music and *zäfän* as secular music. Many would say that *mäzmur* is the acceptable and *zäfän* the unacceptable music. A common argument for this classification is connected to how these words, especially *zäfän*, are used in Amharic Bible translations. From experience living in Ethiopia I realized that the issue of *mäzmur* and *zäfän* is complex and it creates tensions where the consequences seem to be extensive.

In my research I have examined the history, the reason and the impact of the dichotomy *mäzmur/zäfän*. I have studied dictionaries and Bible translations, and I have conducted several interviews. In this paper I will illuminate how *mäzmur* and *zäfän* are understood and what impact they have among people within and beyond the evangelical movement in Ethiopia.

A reference book approach

Amharic Dictionaries

Leslau – The Amharic-English, English-Amharic dictionary that I was introduced to during my Amharic studies was written by Wolf Leslau. He translates *zämmärä*, which is the root word of *mäzmur*, with 'sing (of birds)', 'sing a song', 'chant' and 'intone' (1976:179). He gives no specific explanation of the form *mäzmur*. *Zäffänä*, which is the root word of *zäfän*, is translated with 'sing', 'dance and sing' and *zäfän* itself with 'melody', 'song' and 'dance' (1976:185). These explanations do not point towards a religious – secular dichotomy. However, searching the other way around, when Leslau translates the word 'song' from English to Amharic he points towards a dichotomy between *zäfän* and another word that is related to *mäzmur*, namely the word *zēma* (1976:482). The word 'song' is translated to *zēma*, 'of church', and to *zäfän*, 'secular'. In

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other words, searching from Amharic to English, there is no clear religious – secular distinction between the words *mäzmur* and *zäfän*, but it is possible to see glimpses of this thinking when Leslau translates the word 'song' into Amharic. He does, however, highlight the related word *zēma* as the opposite in meaning to the term *zäfän* (rather than using *mäzmur*).

Täsämma Habtä Mika'el – According to Dr Ralph Lee, one of the best available Amharic dictionaries is the one by Täsämma Habtä Mika'el. This dictionary is often referred to as the *Käsate Bərhan Täsämma* [ከሣቴ፡ ብርሃን፡ ተሰማ]. *Käsate Bərhan* is a title meaning 'the one who releases the light' and the author's first name is Täsämma. The dictionary was originally prepared by Haylä Səllase to be used in all high schools, and a copy was deposited in every school in Ethiopia. It is quite thorough and gives a broad explanation of the words.

   Mäzmur (*zämmärä*) is explained with words like *məsgana* [ምስጋና], 'praise', and *amäsägänä* [አመሰገነ], 'thanks' (TÄSÄMMA HABTÄ MIKA'EL 1959:1018-1019). It explains how the *däbtära* [ደብተራ][1] praises and gives thanks with *gə'əz* [ግዕዝ], *araray* [ዐራራይ] and *əzəl* [ዕዝል][2]. It continues to describe how the *azmari* [አዝማሪ][3] greets and praises his master with *bägäna* [በገና][4] and *mäsinqo* [መሲንቆ][5]. It also describes how the aerophones *ənbilta,* [እንቢልታ][6] and *wašənt* [ዋሽንት][7] are used to convey messages by producing different sounds. All this connects *mäzmur* both to church music and to secular music. *Däbtära*, *gə'əz*, *araray*, *əzəl* and *bägäna* are clearly connected to the church. *Azmari, mäsinqo, ənbilta* and *wašənt* are all connected with secular music outside the church. So according to Täsämma Habtä Mika'el, the word *mäzmur* is used both in church and in secular settings. The word itself seems to appear neutral; the mention of the *mäsinqo* and the *azmari* ensure that it is not a word used only for religious settings.

   Zäfän (*zäffänä*) is explained with *dästa* [ደስታ], 'joy/happiness' and *čiwata* [ጨዋታ], 'playing' (1959: 1046). Specifically mentioned are weddings and festivals. *Zäfän* does not seem to in any way be connected to church music.

Dästa Täklä Wäld – Another dictionary promoted by Haylä Səllase is the one written by Dästa Täklä Wäld. When I compare his explanation of *mäzmur* with the one by Täsämma Habtä Mika'el, it is interesting to see that there is an omission of instruments that often are regarded as secular instruments. *Mäsinqo*, *ənbilta* and *wašənt* are not

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[1] *Däbtära* is the name of the un-ordained members of the clergy in the Orthodox Church.

[2] *Gə'əz*, *araray* and *əzəl* are the three styles of chant in Orthodox Church music.

[3] *Azmari* is the name given to the wandering musicians that are almost exclusively connected with secular music.

[4] *Bägäna* is the harp-like musical instrument which is almost exclusively used for religious music, but outside the liturgy.

[5] *Mäsinqo* is a one-stringed violin that is closely linked to the *azmari* and secular music.

[6] *Ənbilta* (or *əmbilta*) is a large bamboo flute without finger-holes used for ceremonies praising the master.

[7] *Wašənt* is a four-holed flute only used in a secular setting.

mentioned whereas *bägäna*, considered to be sacred, is mentioned (DÄSTA TÄKLÄ WÄLD 1970: 496). Is this, in the eleven year gap since *Käsate Bərhan Täsämma,* reflecting a social change in the use of the word? It is, however, maybe dangerous to read too much into this omission. Generally speaking, compared to Tesemma, the definitions are shorter here, so that might be the explanation of this omission.

Dästa Täklä Wäld describes the word *zäfän* (*zäffänä*) with: *awärrädä* [አወረደ], 'recite (verses)'; *gəṭəm* [ግጥም], 'poetry'; *gäṭämä* [ገጠመ], 'write poetry'; *angoragorä* [አንጎራጎረ], 'recite poems of sorrow' and *zällälä* [ዘለለ], 'jump' (1970:504). *Zäfän* appears to be a neutral thing. There is nothing particularly negative connected to it. It is also worth noting that Dästa Täklä Wäld in his explanation of *zäfän* is referring to the *tabot* [ታቦት], the ark, in the context of King David in the book of Psalms. The *tabot* is the ultimate sacred object within the Orthodox Church, so if *zäfän* was considered secular in *contrast* to *mäzmur* as sacred, then it is very unlikely to see the word *tabot* mentioned in this setting.

Gə'əz Dictionaries

Leslau – Wolf Leslau has also written a Gə'əz-English/English-Gə'əz dictionary. There he explains *mäzmur* in this way: 'psalm, hymn, song, psaltery, music, chorus' (Leslau 2006: 639). This shows a trend towards Church Music, although not exclusively. *Zäfän* is explained with 'dancing, choir, chant' (2006: 632). It is interesting to see that the word "chant" which is in Leslau's Amharic dictionary used to explain *zämmärä* (*mäzmur)* is in his Gə'əz dictionary used to explain *zäfän*. 'Chant' is more often used in a religious setting, but not always. So the inclusion of the word 'chant' here may show that *zäfän* seems not to be limited only to a secular setting. Anyhow, again we cannot see any clear secular – sacred distinction in the use of the two words.

Kidanä Wäld Kəfle – According to Dr Ralph Lee, the Kidanä Wäld Kəfle Dictionary from Gə'əz to Amharic, is superior to Leslau, in particular when it comes to the spiritual interpretation of a word.

> All the Gə'əz scholars that I know, they look at Leslau, and they say: 'He only did half the job'. The real stuff is Kidanä Wäld Kəfle. Although Kidanä by some was thought of as a bit liberal, nevertheless he is regarded as an authority (interview 21 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa).

Like Täsämma Habtä Mika'el, Kidanä also uses words like *məsgana*, praise, and *amäsägänä*, thanks, when he explains the word *mäzmur* (KIDANÄ WÄLD KƎFLE 1956: 582). He also mentions many musical instruments that are related to Church Music, for instance: *bägäna, käbäro* [ከበሮ][8] and *ṣänaṣəl* [ጸናጽል][9]. In addition he talks about King David and *ṣälot* [ጸሎት], 'prayers'. But he also refers to *mäsinqo*, which as I said before is connected to music outside the church, in other words to secular music. Kidanä also

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[8] Mainly liturgical drums
[9] Sistrum used in Orthodox Services

includes illustrations in his dictionary, and *mäzmur* is illustrated with the drawing of the sacred instrument *bägäna.* So like Leslau, Kidanä Wäld Kəfle explains *mäzmur* with words mainly referring towards Church Music, but not exclusively.

According to librarian Mehret-Ab-Bereke, Kidanä explains *zäfän* as 'body movement accompanied by jumping and standing' (mail received 11 Nov., 2011). More interesting perhaps, is Kidanä's surprising inclusion of three references to the Bible (1956: 427) when explaining *zäfän.* According to Dr Lee this is an example of his spiritual interpretation of a word.

> All Gə'əz literature has until very recently effectively been Christian. Whether it
> has been history or something else, it has been written from a Church perspective.
> Therefore it is very appropriate to include, like Kidanä is doing, the spiritual
> meaning of a word (interview 21 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa).

The first biblical reference is to *Kufalē* [ኩፋሌ]. *Kufalē* is the Gə'əz name of the Book of Jubilees or The Little Genesis. This book is considered canonical by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The reference is to chapter seventeen where the Gə'əz translation says *yəzäfan* [ይዘፋን] (Dillmann 1859: 66). The English translation of Jubilees puts it this way: 'Sarah saw Ishmael *playing and dancing* and Abraham rejoicing with great joy' (Charles, 1902: 119). The context is neutral. The dancing here is not condemned, neither is it specifically spiritual.

The second reference is to 1 *Corinthians* 10.7. Here the author of *Corinthians* is quoting *Exodus* 32.6. The setting is when the Israelites are opposing their God and worshipping a golden calf. The Gə'əz translation says *yəzəfənu* [ይዘፍኑ] (Platt 1830). The English NRSV- translation says: 'The people sat down to eat and drink and they rose up to *play*' (Anonymous 1995). The context is negative, but the word itself, *zäfän*, is not negative. This is confirmed by notes from New English Translation: 'The term 'play' may refer to idolatrous, sexual play here, although that is determined by the context rather than the meaning of the word itself' (https://net.bible.org).

The third reference is to *Hēnok* [ሄኖክ] 51:4. *Hēnok* is the Gə'əz name for *Enoch*, another book that is regarded as canonical by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Gə'əz word is again *yəzəfənu* [ይዘፍኑ] (Dillmann 1851). The English translation is: 'And in those days shall the mountains *leap* like rams' (Charles 1917: 69). This text is eschatological and the word is used in a clearly positive setting.

From reading the three biblical references that Kidanä Wäld Kəfle is referring to, we can see that he has been very thoughtful about his examples. There are three references, a neutral, a negative and a positive, all using the verb *zäfän.* This certainly debunks the idea that *zäfän* is only used in negative settings.

To summarize Kidanä we could say that *mäzmur* leans towards Church Music, but not exclusively. *Zäfän* is used in different settings: neutrally, negatively and positively. Neither word has only one meaning, nor are they exclusively connected to a religious or a secular setting. It is the context that determines their representation.

Lexicon – Dillmann has written a lexicon based on a reproduction of a Gǝ'ǝz 1865 edition. This is, according to Dr Ralph Lee, 'probably the greatest work on Gǝ'ǝz language' (interview 21 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa). Dillmann gives the word, and then he gives a set of examples. It is interesting to see that when explaining the word *zäfän,* Dillmann *also* refers to a list of Bible verses (1970: 1070), including the same as Kidanä refers to: *Kufalē* 17, 1 *Corinthians* 10.7 and *Hēnok* 51.4. This underlines the importance of the spiritual interpretation of Gǝ'ǝz words.

Encyclopaedia Aethiopica – A more recent Reference Book is the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. In volume three, Kay Kaufman Shelemay describes the word 'music' like this:

> "M[usic] is perceived according to a sacred/secular dichotomy: M. of everyday life, *zäfän* (Songs), is contrasted to *zema*, the sacred M. of the Ethiopian Orthodox (Täwahedo) Church or Beta Israel liturgy' (Shelemay 2007:1082).

In volume five, under Zema, we find the same dichotomy: "traditionally, it is contrasted with *zäfän*, secular music" (SHELEMAY 2014: 174) These explanations are similar to the dichotomy that Leslau pointed to when translating the English word 'song' into Amharic. But again, the opposite of *zäfän* is not *mäzmur*, but the related word *zēma*. The words *mäzmur* and *zäfän* are not included in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*.

Wax and Gold – When searching for the meaning of Amharic/Gǝ'ǝz words, it is useful to mention the tradition of *sämna wärq* [ሰምና ወርቅ], wax and gold. Donald Levine describes this as a 'poetic form which is built on two semantic layers' (LEVINE 1965:5). A word has an obvious meaning, the wax, as well as the deeper, more hidden meaning, the gold. This has a long tradition, especially among the *azmari*, the singers of *zäfän*. This tradition is another clue strengthening the idea that an Amharic/Gǝ'ǝz word very seldom only has one specific meaning. This is also in line with this statement of Dr Ralph Lee:

> I always get very suspicious when people say to me that this word is used exclusively for one thing. A lot of ancient Ethiopian literature, the whole idea of wax and gold, relies on not pinning down the meaning of a word to one thing, but rather it relies on letting it have a spectrum of meanings (interview 21 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa).

Conclusion – To summarize this part it is clear that there are no exclusive lexical meaning of the words *mäzmur* and *zäfän*. In line with the tradition of Gǝ'ǝz and Amharic language the meaning is very contextual. So the meaning of the words is ambiguous, but it seems like *mäzmur* is more often used in a sacred setting, and that *zäfän* is more often referring to a secular setting. *Mäzmur* is used both in a positive and in a neutral way, but I have not seen it used in a negative context. *Zäfän* is used in three settings: neutrally, negatively and positively.

Zäfän in Gə'əz and Amharic Bible translations

During my time in Ethiopia I met several people who when they were discussing the issue of *mäzmur* and *zäfän* referred to some specific Bible verses. The controversial topic was the word *zäfän*. Based upon this experience and an article by Yonas Gorfe (2005), I have therefore done a study of the following specific Bible verses: *Exodus* 32.6, *Luke* 15.25, *Romans* 13.13, 1 *Corinthians* 10.7, *Galatians* 5.21 and 1 *Peter* 4.3. I have found that *zäfän* is in these passages translated from three different Greek words: *ko'-mos* [κομοσ], *khor-os'* [χηροσσ] and *paheed'-zo* [παιζο] - and one Hebrew word: *tsaw-khak'* [לצחק]. In the following I will explore the meaning of the root words. Then I will look at how Gə'əz and Amharic Bible translations have chosen to translate these words. Finally I will compare my findings with several English translations of the Bible. The data in my discussion is summarized in two tables (see appendix 1 & 2).

Ko'-mos [κομοσ] – The Greek word *ko'-mos* is used three times in the New Testament: *Romans* 13.13, *Galatians* 5.21 and 1 *Peter* 4.3 (BLACK 2011). The context is always concerning living Godly lives. The English NIV translation says in Romans 'Let us live decently as in daytime...', and then comes a list of undesirable behaviour which *ko'-mos* is part of. In Galatians the context is 'love your neighbour as yourself. The word *ko'-mos* appears in a list of 'sinful nature' that should be avoided. In 1 Peter the word appears in a list of 'what pagans choose to do', and what the believers should stop doing (ANONYMOUS 1984).

The meaning of the word *ko'-mos* is explained in this way:

> A revel, carousal; a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry (https://net.bible.org).

The oldest translation in Ethiopia, the Gə'əz Bible translation, has chosen to translate *ko'-mos* with *säkkärä* [ስክረ] (PLATT 1830), a word meaning 'become drunk' or 'intoxicated' (LESLAU 1976). This translation contains a lot of the explanation given by NET Bible (see above), and it is also in line with what the NET gives as synonyms to *ko'-mos*, namely 'drunkenness' and 'drinking' (https://net.bible.org).

The oldest available Amharic translation (ANONYMOUS 1886) translates *ko'-mos* twice with *zäfän* (*Romans* and 1 *Peter*) and once with *mäsolsol* [መሶልሶል] (*Galatians*). According to philologist Nebeyou Alemu, *mäsolsol* is a Gə'əz word describing people worshipping an idol (which includes ritual sacrifice, dance and immoral sex). The content of *mäsolsol* seems therefore very much to be in line with the meaning of the original Greek word. I wonder therefore why this translation has not used *mäsolsol* every time it translates *ko'-mos*? By using *zäfän* in *Romans* and 1 *Peter* it introduced a translation that thereafter has created a lot of confusion. It is worth a note though, that *zäfän* in this translation is always appearing in connection with *säkkärä*, the word chosen

by the Gəʼəz translation of *koʼ-mos*. So it is no doubt the negative meaning of *zäfän* that appears in these verses.

The next Amharic translation, the Haylä Səllase Bible (ANONYMOUS 1962) has dropped using *mäsolsol* in *Galatians*, and uses therefore *zäfän* in relation with *säkkärä* every time a translation of *koʼ-mos* is done. The *Addis Tərgum* (ANONYMOUS 1997/2005) does not use *zäfän* at any of these three passages. It has chosen to translate *koʼ-mos* with another word, *fänṭäzəya* [ፈንጣዜያ], a word which can be translated with 'make merry, hold revels' (LESLAU 1976). The *Addisu Mädäbägna Tərgum* (ANONYMOUS 2001) uses *zäfän* together with *säkkärä* in *Galatians*, but yet another word, *čəffära* [ጭፈራ] in *Romans* and 1 *Peter*. *Čəffära* can be translated with 'dance' and is considered a neutral word which does not include the clearly negative connotations of *koʼ-mos*. The Ethiopian Millennium Bible (ANONYMOUS 2007) has in *Romans* done the same choice as the Amharic 1886 translation, using *zäfän* together with *säkkärä*, but in *Galatians* and 1 *Peter* it has done the same choice as the Gəʼəz translation, using only *säkkärä*, not including *zäfän*.

This study shows that Gəʼəz and Amharic Bible translations have used five different words in their attempt to translate *koʼ-mos*. *Mäsolsol, säkkärä* and *fänṭäzəya* seem to contain a lot of the content of the root word. *Zäfän* and *čəffära* seem to contain less of the original meaning. In addition we have seen that several Amharic translations are not consistent when translating *koʼ-mos*. In the same Bible translation they have chosen different Amharic words to represent one Greek word.

English Bibles use three different words to translate *koʼ-mos*. However, most of the translations are consistent and use only this chosen English word to represent one Greek word. 'Orgies' is used by NIV (ANONYMOUS 1984) and ESV (ANONYMOUS 2001), 'carousing' by NASB (ANONYMOUS 1995) and NET (https://net.bible.org), and 'revelry' by NKJV (ANONYMOUS 1982). KJV (ANONYMOUS 1611/1769) says 'revellings' in *Galatians* and 1 *Peter*, but the slightly different word 'rioting' in *Romans*. NRSV (ANONYMOUS 1989) says 'reveling/revels' in *Romans* and 1 *Peter*, but 'carousing' in *Galatians*. All the English translations seem to translate *koʼ-mos* with words that convey the from a biblical point of view clearly negative meaning of the word *koʼ-mos*.

Khor-os' [χηορος] – Another Greek word that is sometimes translated into *zäfän* is *khor-os'*. The meaning of *khor-os'* can be explained in this way:

> A band (of dancers and singers), circular dance, a dance, dancing of uncertain
> derivation; a ring, i.e. round dance "choir":-dancing. (https://net.bible.org).

The commonly discussed Biblical passage is *Luke* 15.25. The context is the celebration of the prodigal son coming home. *Khor-os'* is used to describe this celebration.

The oldest Ethiopian translation, the Gəʼəz Bible (PLATT 1830), translates *khor-os'* with *mahəlēt* [ማህሌት]. Dictionary tells me that *mahəlēt* means 'a kind of Church song' or 'religious hymn' (www.amharicdictionary.com). Since both the context and the explanation of the word *khor-os'* point simply towards a traditional dance, and nothing

specifically religious, it is therefore surprising that this translation uses a word that is so clearly referring towards a religious setting. Maybe *mahǝlēt* is another word with no specific meaning, or a meaning that is determined by the context? Anyhow, that is beyond the focus point of this paper.

The two oldest Amharic Bible translations, the Abu Rumi (ANONYMOUS 1886) and the Haylä Sǝllase Bible (ANONYMOUS 1962) choose to translate *khor-os'* with exactly the same Amharic word as they have used to translate *ko'-mos*. This is very surprising, for as we have seen, *khor-os'* and *ko'-mos* do convey quite different meanings. This choice is also followed by the newest Amharic translation, the Millennium translation (ANONYMOUS 2007).

The *Addis Tǝrgum* (ANONYMOUS 1997/2005) seems to have understood this problem and have therefore used different Amharic words to translate different Greek words. It says *fänṭäzǝya* for *ko'-mos* and *čǝffära* for *khor-os'*. Later on the *Addisu Mǝdǝbǝgña Tǝrgum* (ANONYMOUS 2001) also chooses *čǝffära* to represent *khor*-os', but the problem is that it also uses *čǝffära* to represent *ko'-mos*. This creates once again the problem of letting one Amharic word represent different Greek words, words with clearly different meanings.

In contrast to Amharic Bibles, English Bibles always translate *khor-os'* with a very different word than their translation of *ko'-mos*. *Khor-os'* is in all translations that I have looked into translated with *dancing* (NRSV, ESV, KJV, NIV, NKJV, NASB, NET). In addition to be more consequent in their choices, the meaning of the English words seem also to be, more than the Amharic translations, in line with the original content of the Greek words

Paheed'-zo [παιζο] and *tsaw-khak'* [לצחק] – Two more Bible verses that also often are discussed in relation to the issue of *mäzmur* and *zäfän* are 1 *Corinthians* 10.7 and *Exodus* 32.6. These verses should convey the same meaning since the verse from the New Testament (*Corinthians*) quotes the verse from the Old Testament (*Exodus*). The context is the Israelites waiting for Moses to come down from Mount Sinai after he has received the Ten Commandments. The people are getting impatient, so Aaron makes an idol in the shape of a calf which the Israelites then start worshipping. 1 *Corinthians* warns against idolatry and uses this as an example of what not to do. As the NT is written in Greek and the OT in Hebrew, what we find here, is actually a translation from Hebrew to Greek. The Hebrew word in *Exodus* 32.6 is *tsaw-khak'* and the Greek translation of it is *paheed'-zo*.

The Hebrew word *tsaw-khak'* [לצחק] is defined as:

> To laugh, mock, play; to jest; to sport, toy with, to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn) (https://net.bible.org).

The Greek word *paheed'-zo* is explained:

> to play like a child; to play, sport, jest; to give way to hilarity, esp. by joking singing, dancing' (https://net.bible.org).

In my discussion of Kidanä Wäld Kəfle we have already seen that the word used in *Exodus* 32:6 (*tsaw-khak'*) *may* refer to "idolatrous, sexual play", but it is "determined by the context rather than the meaning of the word itself (https://net.bible.org). This is also underlined in the explanation of *tsaw-khak':*

> On the surface it would seem that with the festival there would be singing and dancing, so that the people were celebrating even though they did not know the reason. W. C. Kaiser says the word means "drunken immoral orgies and sexual play" ("*Exodus,*" *EBC* 2:478). That is quite an assumption for this word, but is reflected in some recent English versions (e.g., NCV "got up and sinned sexually"; TEV "an orgy of drinking and sex"). The word means "to play, trifle." It can have other meanings, depending on its contexts. It is used of Lot when he warned his sons-in-law and appeared as one who "mocked" them; it is also used of Ishmael "playing" with Isaac, which Paul interprets as mocking; it is used of Isaac "playing" with his wife in a manner that revealed to Abimelech that they were not brother and sister, and it is used by Potiphar's wife to say that her husband brought this slave Joseph in to "mock" them. The most that can be gathered from these is that it is playful teasing, serious mocking, or playful caresses. It might fit with wild orgies, but there is no indication of that in this passage, and *the word does not mean it*. The fact that they were festive and playing before an idol was sufficient (https://net.bible.org, my emphasize).

So both explanations and comments on the Hebrew *tsaw-khak'* and the Greek *paheed'-zo* show that the words themselves do not contain negative meaning.

All Gə'əz and Amharic Bibles translate *tsaw-khak'* and *paheed'-zo* with *zäfän*. The exception is *Addis Tərgum* (ANONYMOUS 1997/2005) which uses *lifänätẓsu* [ሊፈናትዙ]. This is a different form of the already mentioned word *fäntäzəya*, to 'make merry, hold revels' which we have already seen is also used by the same translation to translate *ko'-mos* in Romans, Galatians and 1 Peter. Again we see that an Amharic translation uses *one* Amharic word to translate different Greek/Hebrew words, words that convey different meanings.

Most English Bible translations do take care of the fact that these two words themselves do not contain negative meaning. They translate *tsaw-khak'* and *paheed'-zo* with *to play* (KJV, NKJV, NRSV, NASB, ESV, NET). The exception is the New International Version which include the contextual interpretation in its translation when it chooses to translate *tsaw-khak'* with *indulge in revelry* and *paheed'-zo* with *pagan revelry* (ANONYMOUS 1984).

Confusion and misunderstandings

In this part, we have seen that *ko'-mos, khor-os'* and *paheed'-zo/tsaw-khak'* all have been translated with the word *zäfän*. This is understandable from the point of view that Gə'əz/Amharic are contextual languages which means that a word can convey several different meanings. The challenge with doing this was maybe not so great as long as it was only theologians, the preachers and the teachers of the Church, who read and taught the Bible. With the knowledge of root words they maybe were able to understand the

different meanings. With the coming of missionaries and the establishment of evangelical churches, ordinary people, laypeople, started to read and study the Bible. In addition, the new churches became part of a tradition that significantly emphasizes the importance of the Bible, and a tradition that very often reads every verse in the Bible quite literally. In this context it is not hard to understand that when people read the word *zäfän*, and they are exposed to translations that are not consistent and do not convey the exact meaning of the translated words, then this creates a breeding ground for confusion and misunderstandings.

A focus on people's thinking

In February 2012 I spent two intensive weeks in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. Many people were willing to share their experiences, and to me these weeks confirmed my thoughts about the importance of the discussion of *mäzmur* and *zäfän*, especially within the evangelical circles, but also beyond.

The Individual Definition of Mäzmur and Zäfän

Mäzmur – All the people I spoke to defined *mäzmur* with words like 'sacred', 'spiritual', 'church music', 'songs used to praise God'. Some said that *mäzmur* was exclusively this, but others said it also might have additional content. Many mentioned the national anthem, and some also 'children's songs', as examples of not necessarily religious songs, which still would be defined as *mäzmur*. Others mentioned that during the time of Emperor Haylä Səllase, it was common to glorify the king and his family with *mäzmur*. Some mentioned that *mäzmur* also has the meaning of group songs, in contrast to solo singing.

Zäfän – This term was defined in neutral terms as 'secular music', 'music outside the church', but also with strongly negative expressions like 'music that is not respecting God' and 'devilish music'. Many said that *zäfän* means praising the creation and not the creator and that this often means a focus on love for the opposite sex, or as Ezra Abate at the Yared music school at Addis Abeba University puts it: 'praising the individual, the human body, talking about a very beautiful woman, her eyes, her teeth etc… (interview 24 February 2012). *Zäfän* is in people's mind connected with immorality, especially sex outside marriage. Let me also quote the mature musician, serving many years in the Kale Hiwot Church, Bekele Arsedi: 'The Church teaches that when the world produces *zäfän*, it is about the beauty of a woman, etc…, and it leads to sexual intercourse, so it is "sin"' (interview 17 February 2012). The Church leader from the Mekane Yesus Church, Paulos Shune, underlined the negative connotations of the word *zäfän* in this way:

> You see, in the church when you say *zäfän*, people don't like it, even the word. I remember once, a pastor was teaching and he used the connotation word *zäfanj*[10].

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[10] The singer of *zäfän*.

He was just explaining the value of eyes. Eyes are very important in our bodies and while explaining this he used the words 'one *zäfanj* said this and that about his eyes'. The listeners, the audience, they were offended. 'From the pulpit, how can the pastor use this word *zäfän*?' (interview 19 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa).

The young female musician, Emnet Gezahegn, told me that she was brought up to believe that *zäfän* is unacceptable music and *mäzmur* is acceptable music: 'Do not be part of the *zäfän* world. Stay at this side. You are a good person as long as you stay away from *zäfän*.' (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa).

Categories

The disagreement seemed to become clear when attempting to categorize different kinds of music. I therefore asked people to categorize some types of music using the dichotomy of *mäzmur* and *zäfän*. Here are some of the answers regarding 'Children's Songs' and 'the National Anthem':

Children's Songs:

I have different categories for those kinds of songs. I don't put them in *mäzmur* and I don't put them in *zäfän*, because if it is *zäfän* then it is completely contradicting God's word. It doesn't respect God. It is not Christ-centred, that is *zäfän*. If it is *mäzmur* it is the other way. It gives respect to God. It tells you the work of Jesus Christ, what he has done for us, so these things they don't; they are not saying anything about both things. They don't mention anything from *zäfän* or *mäzmur*, so I call them neutrals, so I don't put them in the two categories (interview 15 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Adane Asnake, musician and choir leader).

It depends on the message, the content. It can be both. Sometimes it is hard to say whether it is *mäzmur* or *zäfän*. We can maybe say it is a kind of positive *zäfän* (referring to the example of a song that is about teaching children how to read, interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Bereket Melese, Director of EECMY School of Jazz Music).

Actually you can't say it is *mäzmur* or *zäfän*. It is just 'normal' educational song... It is far from *zäfän* and not spiritual (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Dawit Getachew, popular contemporary singer of mäzmur).

That is considered as *mäzmur*, I think it is because it has got moral values (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Emnet Gezahegn, music student).

Children's songs are called both, and a song classified as *zäfän* is not necessarily about anything bad. There is for example a song (singing the song) about clay that was broken, then the moon got angry and asked: 'Why don't you child take care of the clay?' It is just a story, playing, and it is called *zäfän* (interview 20 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Yonas Gorfe, musician and film music producer).

To me it is *mäzmur*, because children's songs are good. It is about culture, it is our tradition (interview 17 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa, translated from Amharic to

English by Dereje Mulugeta; Bekele Arsedi, experienced musician from the Kale Hiwot Church).

The National Anthem:

> I don't consider it as *mäzmur*. *Mäzmur* refers only to sacred music, not to secular music. So the National Anthem cannot be called *mäzmur*. I would categorize it as 'neutral' (interview 15 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Adane Asnake, musician and Choir leader).

> It is *mäzmur*. In Amharic it says *bəhērawi mäzmur* [በሔራዊ መዝሙር], the National Anthem. Even the government says so. This was the case during Haylä Səllase, during the Därg regime and under the current government. So even under a government that denied that there is any God (the communistic Dergue regime) the National Anthem was called *mäzmur* (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Bereket Melese, Director of School of Jazz Music)

> I can't say it is *zäfän,* I can't say it is *mäzmur*. It is the same category as 'children's songs' (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Dawit Getachew, popular contemporary singer of *mäzmur*).

> That is considered a *mäzmur* (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Emnet Gezahegn, music student.)

> Also with *mäzmur*, in Amharic, there is confusion. They do for example categorize the National Anthem as *mäzmur* (interview 20 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Yonas Gorfe, musician and film music producer).

> That is a really big question; I can't really answer that (laughing). It is really hard to say whether the National Anthem is a sin, whether it is *mäzmur* or *zäfän*. For me the National Anthem is *zäfän*, because it is not glorifying God, it is glorifying your country (interview 24 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Choir member from Joyful Sound).

As we can see from these quotations, the understanding of *mäzmur* and *zäfän* differs a lot from person to person. Some argue that there are only two categories of music, either *mäzmur* or *zäfän*. Others would say that there are three kinds of categories, *mäzmur*, *zäfän* and 'neutral' music. Some will categorize *mäzmur* as all acceptable music and *zäfän* as all unacceptable music. Some will say that mäzmur includes only religious music, but others would say that there are some *mäzmur* that do not necessarily have a religious content. Some would say that all *zäfän* is unacceptable music while others would say that there are different groups of *zäfän*, some of it is acceptable and some is unacceptable. The answers create a picture of no consistency in the understanding of *mäzmur* and *zäfän*.

The impact of *mäzmur* and *zäfän*

All the people I met confirmed to me that the issue of *mäzmur* and *zäfän* is huge in Ethiopia, especially among the evangelicals. This was my impression from living in Ethiopia, and has been confirmed by talking to people. It can be illustrated by the following quotations:

> The issue of *mäzmur* and *zäfän* is a huge issue which people discuss every day. They do for example discuss: 'Why do the evangelicals forbid *zäfän*, while they can read secular literature, isn't that self-contradictory? (interview 16 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Nebeyou Alemu, Bible College Teacher).

> The *mäzmur* / *zäfän* issue is tense and it is discussed a lot, both among our staff and our students (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Bereket Melese, Director of EECMY School of Jazz Music).

> The *mäzmur* / *zäfän* issue is an everyday conversation (interview 22 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Emnet Gezahegn, Student at EECMY School of Jazz Music).

> Last year there was a student who made some arrangements on a song by Tlahoun Gessesse (*zäfän*) and played it in a concert. The leaders of the church they got angry and punished him. He was detained from the school for a year, just because he played Tlahoun Gessesse in a Jazz concert (interview 24 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa).

> If people see me playing in a night club or playing secular music in the TV, then my life is finished in the church (interview 24 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Abraham Tesfaye, Music teacher at EECMY School of Jazz Music and Yared Music School (Addis Ababa University).

> Believers, when they see somebody playing in a secular orchestra, although they see the same person in church, they consider him as not a Christian (interview 19 Feb. 2012, Addis Ababa; Paulos Shune, Associate General Secretary of EECMY).

Conclusion

This study has shown that historically both *mäzmur* and *zäfän* are contextual words that convey different meanings in different settings. The dictionary meaning of the words is ambiguous, but *mäzmur* tends to be more often used in a sacred setting while *zäfän* refers more often to a secular setting. Among people the understanding of these words differ a lot, but for evangelical Christians *mäzmur* and *zäfän* have become words representing acceptable and unacceptable music. An important reason for this is the way *zäfän* has been used in different Amharic Bible translations. By letting *zäfän* represent Greek and Hebrew words, which convey different meanings, the translations have created confusion and misunderstandings. This has made a huge impact on how evangelical believers think about music and the consequences are many.

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Appendix 1: Gə'əz and Amharic Translations

	Ko'-mos [κομοσ] (Rom. 13.13, Gal. 5.21, 1 Pet. 4.3)	Khor-os' [χηοροσ] (Luke 15.25)	Paheed'-zo [παιζo] and tsaw-khak' [לצחק] (Exodus 32.6 and 1 Cor. 10.7)
Gə'əz translation	Säkkärä (Rom) Säkkärä (Gal) Säkkärä (1 Pet)	Mahələt	Zäfän
The 1886 Amharic translation	Zäfän (Rom) Masolso (Gal) Zäfän (1 Pet)	Zäfän	Zäfän
Haile Selassie Bible (1962)	Zäfän Zäfän Zäfän	Zäfän	Zäfän
***Addis Tərgum* (1997/2005)**	Fänṭäzəya (Rom) Fänṭäzəya (Gal) Fänṭäzəya (1 Pet)	Čəffära	Lifänäṭṭäsu (Fänṭäzəya)
***Addisu Mədəbəgña Tərgum* (2001)**	Čəffära (Rom) Zäfän (Gal) Čəffära (1 Pet)	Čəffära	Zäfän
Ethiopian Millennium Bible (2007)	Zäfän (Rom) Säkkärä (Gal) Säkkära (1 Pet)	Zäfän	Zäfän

Appendix 2: English Translations

	Ko'-mos [κομοσ] (Rom. 13.13, Gal. 5.21, 1 Pet. 4.3)	Khor-os' [χηοροσ] (Luke 15.25)	Paheed'-zo [παιζο] and tsaw-khak' [לְצַחֵק] (Exodus 32.6 and 1 Cor. 10.7)
KJ (1611/1769)	Rioting (Rom) Revellings (Gal) Revellings (1 Pet)	Dancing	To play
NKJ (1982)	Revelry (Rom) Revelries (Gal) Revelries (1 Pet)	Dancing	To play
NIV (1984)	Orgies (Rom) Orgies (Gal) Orgies (1 Pet)	Dancing	Indulge in revelry (Exodus) Pagan revelry (1 Cor)
NRSV (1989)	Reveling (Rom) Carousing (Gal) Revels (1 Pet)	Dancing	To play
NASB (1995)	Carousing (Rom) Carousing (Gal) Carousing (1 Pet)	Dancing	To play
ESV (2001)	Orgies (Rom) Orgies (Gal) Orgies (Gal)	Dancing	To play
NET (https://net.bible.org)	Carousing (Rom) Carousing (Gal) Carousing (1 Pet)	Dancing	To play

Oromo orthographies in the 19th and 20th centuries

Rainer Voigt *

Oromo orthographic history

In my contribution to Marcello Lamberti's festschrift (VOIGT 2011), I referred to the early Oromo literature that was written in the Latin and Ethiopic scripts. The earliest written documents are owed to the indefatigable endeavour of Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810-1881), who also rendered outstanding services to other languages spoken in the Horn of Africa. Initially Krapf used the Latin script, but he later changed over to the Ethiopic script, which consequently was adopted as the normal system of writing for a long time to come, to be precise up to the nineties of the twentieth century.

A sample of the older Oromo orthography should be given from the *Evangelium Matthæi, translatum in linguam Gallarum* (KRAPF 1841):

> *Tshenāni Jāsus tshedde: Isini hamma arda gauti henillaltăniho?* (*Mt* 15$_{16}$)

This verse appears in the edition of 1876 as:

> የሱሲኔስ፡ ጀዼ። ኢሲኔስ፡ አሞ፡ ሐግ፡ ሐርዳ፡ ገኡቲ፡ ሂኑብኔሬ።

Cf. the newer versions (1995 and 1979):

> *Yesus immo deebisee, Isinumtuu hamma ammaatti bin hubatin jirtuu?*
> ዬሱስስ ዼብሴ፡ አስኑምቱ ህመ አማት ህንሁበትን ጀርቱ?
> 'And Jesus said: Are you also still without understanding?'

The change from writing Oromo into a modified Latin script to various Fidäl orthographies and then to *qubee* within the short span of 150 years is an occasion to compare the different writing systems with each other. While in the early Latin spellings an attempt was made to create language specific extra characters, modern *qubee* seeks guidance almost exclusively in the English orthography. The peculiarities of *qubee* orthography, i.e. double writing of long vowels and digraphs with *h*, will be investigated comparative-linguistically.

The early Oromo script with Ethiopic letters later sank into oblivion and does not seem to have influenced the modern political decision of the OLF and other political groupings of the 1970s and 1980s. Since these groups were mainly of a leftist persuasion

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they were by their very nature not very familiar with Bible translations or early religious pamphlets.

The final decision for the introduction of *qubee* seems to have been made in a meeting of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Addis Abeba, in November 1991 (see TILAHUN 1993:17). A conscious decision was made to distance themselves from a script that was seen as Amharic and to affiliate themselves with the Latin-based script of the more developed industrial countries. "Global functional considerations suggest putting the Latin alphabet at the top of the list" (TILAHUN 1993: 20). Following along the lines of this argument in a modern context it would just as well be reasonable to plead for the introduction of Chinese characters. However, one has to keep in mind that the Ethiopic script is seen as the colonial script of the Amharic people, contrary to the Latin script which is not felt to be the colonial script of the Anglo-American world. But in a practical sense it was not the Latin script as such that was adopted but the Latin derived English script with its orthographic idiosyncrasies. Thus Tilahun (1993: 18) speaks of "the form of the English script" that can be learned "in a relatively short period of time".

The Letter *h*

The use of the letter *h* as a combinatorial auxiliary is taken from the English orthography (in the case of *sh*, *ch* und *th*).

The digraph *sh* (= German *sch*) stands for the post-alveolar fricative (*š*).

In Middle-English old /*sk*/ of Old English changed via palatalized *skj* into [ʃ], OE *fisc*, OHG *fisc* > *fish*, German *Fisch*; OE *sc(e)amu*, OHG *skama* > *shame*, G. *Scham*; OE *scearpian*, OHG *scurfen* > *sharp(en)*, G. *schärfen*. Besides these, there are also many words of Romance origin where [ʃ] occurs, but here [ʃ] developed from *sj*, as in mission [mɪʃən], or < *tj*, as in *patient* [peɪʃnt].

The Old English spelling <*sk*> when pronounced [ʃ] was replaced by <*sh*>, with <*h*> being seen as very similar to <*k*> in a phonetic and a graphemic sense. This change in orthography was very sensible since there were plenty of words where the [sk] pronunciation was preserved, words of Scandinavian or North French origin, e.g. *scarf* [skɑːf], OFr *escherpe* (modern *écharpe*), German *Schärpe*, ask [ɑːsk] OE *āscian, ācsian, āxian*. To insure a palatal pronunciation a "mute" letter *e* of purely orthographic function was often inserted: *sc(e)acan* 'shake', *bisc(e)op* 'bishop'.

The spelling with *h* (in *sh*) does therefore reflect the genesis of this sound in those words in which it occurs. However, besides these cases English [ʃ] developed from other sources as well.

We are dealing therefore with a particular Germanic sound development that was in no way something that had to be adopted. For none of the other European languages except for Modern English writes the sound [ʃ] with *sh*. In fact in Europe orthographies fell back on a variety of means to express this sound:

Representation with three letters (trigraph)

   - *sch* in German;

- *sci* before back vowels in Italian (v.i.) : *sciàbola* ['ʃa:bola] 'sabre', *sciòpero* ['ʃɔ:pero] 'strike'.

Representation with two letters (digraph)

- *sc* before palatal vowels in Italian: *scimmia* [ʃimmia] 'monkey', *ascensore* [aʃʃen'so:re] 'lift';

- *ch* in French: *écharpe* [eʃarp] 'scarf';

- *sz* in Polish: *szkoła* [ʃkowa] 'school';

- *sj* in Dutch and older Indonesian: *sjirpen* [ʃirpə] 'chirp', *meisje* [məiʃə] 'girl' - this is seen from a phonetic point of view the most phonetically correct digraph, since ʃ is indeed the palatalised form of *s*: *sj* > ʃ -,

- *sy* in Modern Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia): *syukur* (< Arab. *šukr*) 'thanks', *asyik* (< Arab. *ʿāšiq*) 'in love, busy';

- *sj, sk* et al. in Swedish for the sound [ɧ] that is so similar to [ʃ] : *själ* 'soul', *sjö* 'see', *skepp* 'ship';

Representation with one letter

- *š* in Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian: Cz. *šlechta* [ʃlɛxta] 'eagle';

- *s* in Hungarian and *sz* for [s]: *Sékeszfehérvár* [ʃe:kɛsvɛ'he:rva:r] 'town of Alba Regia; Stuhlweißenburg';

- *ş* in Rumanian and Turkish: *şerbet* 'drink', *şef* 'chief';

- *x* in Portuguese: *xedrez* [ʃɐ'ðreʃ] 'chess', *oxalá* [oʃɐ'la] 'let's hope!';

- ш in the Cyrillic alphabet, used in Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Serbian.

Concerning *ch* [č], which was adopted from the English *ch*, it is necessary to go back to Old English. Then *c* was used to represent [tʃ] as well as [k]: *cēne* (dat. sg.) [tʃe:ne] 'pine chip', *cēne* [ke:ne] 'keen'. But there are also runic inscriptions that use different characters for each of the two sounds. As said before, a purely orthographic *e* or *i* can be inserted before back vowels to assure a palatal realization, e.g. *cearu* [tʃaru] 'grief', *cēosan* 'choose', German *kiesen*, *cēse* 'cheese', German *Käse*. In analogy with *sh* the letter *h* was also introduced in the digraph *c + h* for the affricate sound [tʃ].

Apart from *sh* and *ch* the marking of the special sounds *dh* [ɗ] and *ph* [p'] written with added *h* is also taken from English. Beside *th* - and other combinations with *h* - that occur in words of foreign origin - English adds the letter *h* commonly as documented with *th-* (in OE written without distinction either as þ or ð). But *th-* represents two phonemes, voiceless [þ] (e.g. þing, *thought*) and voiced [ð] (e.g. *that*, *whether*). The graphic combination *th* became established at the end of the Middle English period.

Using *h* as a graphic auxiliary in digraphs is insofar awkward as *h* does also occur as a separate phoneme in Oromo, though with restricted distribution. All individual elements of the digraphs can also occur separately: *s, c* [t'], *d, p* [p'], *h*, as well as *n* and *y* in *ny* [ɲ].

When comparing the English orthography with the Oromo orthography, one can say concerning *h*, that in English *h* is used to represent the following sounds:

- palatal sounds *sh* and *ch*,
- *th* for older *þ*,
- *ph, th* in Greek words,
- *h* as a phoneme.

In Oromo *h* is used in very similar cases:

- palatal sounds *sh* and *ch*,
- implosive *dh*,
- glottalized *ph* [p'],
- *h* as a phoneme.

A decisive difference lies in the fact that Oromo uses the fore-mentioned graphic combinations uniquely for the sounds in question, whereas in English there is no consequent 1 : 1 correlation between graphic representation and pronunciation. There are e.g. numerous cases where [ʃ] is expressed by other letters (v.s.), and some cases where <sh> stands for two phonemes (as in *mishap* [ˈmɪshæp]) - a similar situation could occur in Oromo.

Vowel representation

A particular feature of the *qubee* orthography is the double writing or geminate writing of long vowels. The practice has probably been adopted from Finnish or Estonian, which is related to it. Finnish knows eight vowels that are either short or long: *a - e - i - o - u - y (ü) - ä - ö*. It is however questionable whether there ever was an Oromo speaker who occupied himself with Finnish.

A glance at a Finnish text like the *Uusi Testamentti* ('New Testament') written in the old alphabet from 1889 (𝔘𝔲𝔰𝔦 𝔗𝔢𝔰𝔱𝔞𝔪𝔢𝔫𝔱𝔱𝔦) reveals straightforwardly the long vowels. In the first two verses of the gospel of St. John (𝔍𝔬𝔥𝔞𝔫𝔫𝔢𝔨𝔰𝔢𝔫 𝔈𝔴𝔞𝔫𝔨𝔢𝔩𝔦𝔲𝔪𝔦) there are, however, no long vowels at all.

> 1 Alusfa oli Sana, je fe Sana oli Jumalan tykönä, ja Jumala oli fe Sana.
> 2 Tämä oli alusfa Jumalan tykonä.

A more recent Bible translation from 1992 (*Uusi Testamentti*) puts the verses from the St. John's gospel (*Evankeliumi Johanneksen mukaan*), again without long vowels, like this:

> [1]Alussa oli Sana. Sana oli Jumalan luona, ja Sana oli Jumala.
> [2]Jo alussa Sana oli Jumalan luona.

In the following verses 3-5 the older translation has only two occurrences of long vowels (*mitään, paistaa*), in the more recent translation only four occurrences are encountered (*mikään, loistaa, saanut, valtaansa*).

In order to count the frequency of long vowels in an Oromo text, I have chosen the same text (*Macaafa Qulqulluu* 1997). It contains in total 24 long vowels. It must be taken into consideration that on the one hand the Oromo text contains more words (57 as opposed to 47 or 51 words respectively in Finnish), and on the other hand Oromo words are on average longer. We are faced with a long vowel frequency in Oromo that is 4 to 5 times the one encountered in Finnish. Perhaps this should have been taken into consideration when the Oromo orthography was being developed, even though from a purely linguistic point of view double spelling of long vowels can be justified. Orthographies are primarily supposed to make reading easy and only secondarily writing. This is not the case with over-long words, which often contain several long vowels in a single word.

Thus we find on one page of an Oromo primer *Barnoota Afaan Oromoo - Kitaaba barataa: Kutaa 5ffaa* (2003: 19) numerous words with two long vowels, like *keessaa* (ኬሳ፥), *Baaroo* (ባሮ፥), *duriitiis* (ዱሪቲስ፥), *isaanii* (እሳኒ፥), and some with three long vowels like *ooluudhaan* (ኦሉዳን፥), *yaa'uudhaan* (የኡዳን፥), *burqisiisuudhaan* (ቡርቅሲሱዳን፥), *keenyaatiif* (ኬኛቲፍ፥), *sooruudhaan* (ሶሩዳን፥), *sooromsuudhaan* (ሶሮምሱዳን፥).

Another possibility for marking long vowels is known from Czech (and Slovak), similar in Hungarian. Here vowel length is marked by an (acute) accent. Besides short *a, e, i, o, u* and *y* there are the long vowels *á, é, í, ó, ú* and *ý*, e.g. *dání* [da:ni:] 'give', *přikázání* [pr̝ka:za:ni:] 'religious commandment', *lkání* [lka:ni:] 'complain', *úkladník* [u:kladni:k] 'insidious man'. Applied to Oromo this practice would yield the following substantially shorter words: *durítís, isání, Báró, kéňátíf* (if we also adopt the Czech custom of writing *ň* for [ɲ]).

The argument raised against the introduction of special symbols (like *š* for *sh*) that cannot be replicated on a normal type-writer is invalid as far as marking length with the acute accent is concerned – this can easily be done on any type-writer. The 'adaptability to computer technology' mentioned in (TILAHUN 1993: 18) nowadays permits the reproduction of any writing system.

Arguments by the orthographic reformer

The Oromo orthographic reform was in a somewhat obvious way politically motivated. However for this decision, which breaks with a century-long tradition of writing Oromo, only linguistic reasons were mentioned.

The main argument of the reformers' is that the Gəʿəz script, called somewhat inappropriately "Sabean syllabary" (TILAHUN 1993), is not suitable for writing Oromo. Here one could reciprocate that the Latin script as it was used for Latin was/is at first just as unsuitable for writing other languages until by applying the appropriate modifications it was/is made suitable for the new purpose. Thus long vowels were not at all marked in Latin – cf. *vīnum* 'wine', *mēnsa* 'table' as opposed to *viola* 'violet', *mendāx* 'liar'. Similarly Latin did not have the sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ] nor [æ] or [ø] and therefore had not developed any means of expressing them, but other languages that have some or all of these sounds did later invent ways to represent them satisfactorily. Just as on

the basis of Latin a large number of new symbols can be invented, similarly new symbols can be created on the basis of the Gəʕəz alphabet, just as a new vocalised (near) syllabary was designed on the basis of the Sabaean alphabet, which itself had no vowel symbols.

The following developments have occurred since the vocalisation of the Sabaean script in the 4th century:

- in Amharic the palatal consonants were developed by modifying the non-palatalised consonant symbols:

ተ - *tä* > ቸ - *čä*

ደ - *dä* > ጀ - *ǧä*

ጠ - *ṭä* > ጨ - *č̣ä*

ሰ - *sä* > ሸ - *šä*

ዘ - *zä* > ዠ - *žä*

ነ - *nä* > ኘ - *ñä*

- in Tigrinya the spirantised sounds $\underline{k}$, $\underline{k}^w$, $\underline{ḳ}$ and $\underline{ḳ}^w$ are written with the modified sign k, k^w and $ḳ$, $ḳ^w$:

ከ - *kä* > ኸ - *ǩä*

ኰ - *k^wä* > ዀ - *ǩ^wä*

ቀ - *ḳä* > ቐ - *ǩä*

ቈ - *ḳ^wä* > ቔ - *ǩ^wä*

- in Gurage there are additional symbols for the labialisation of other consonants like ሞ - *m^wä*, ቦ - *b^wä*, ፞ - *p^wä*, and the palatalisation of consonants like ጒ - *g^yä*, ኰ - *k^yä*.

- in Oromo the alveolar implosive *ɗ* was developed on the basis of the alveolar plosive: ደ - *da* > ዸ - *dha*

In this spirit one could easily develop a system for marking long vowels by e.g. adding an additional dash.

That the Latin alphabet is "the most highly developed and the most convenient system of writing" (TILAHUN 1993: 18) is an argument not easy to follow. What in the Latin script is supposedly so "highly developed"? Its letters were taken over almost unchanged from the Greek alphabet, and those were in turn adopted with some modifications from the Phoenician script. The Latin script is "most convenient" only for those who grew up with it but not for speakers of other languages. Apparently, expressing vowel length by writing the vowel sign twice is said to be found in "many languages in Africa and Asia" (TILAHUN 1993: 18). This is quite right in relation to Somali, but in a Somali text the number of long vowels is considerably less than in Oromo (v. John 1$_{1-2}$):

[1]*Bilowgii waxaa jiray Hadalka, Hadalkuna wuxuu la jiray Ilaah, Hadalkuna wuxuu ahaa Ilaah.*
[2]*Isagu Ilaah buu la jiray bilowgii.*

In these two verses there are ten long vowels, three of which appear in the loan word *Ilaah*.

The geminate writing of vowels in Oromo is obviously taken over from Somali, whose Latin script was officially introduced in 1972.

As for the languages in Africa, it has to be said that Hausa, one of the most widely used African languages, has not adopted geminate writing and Swahili has no long vowel. As for Vietnamese, Indonesian or F/Pilipino, the most widely spoken Latin script-based Asian languages, they do not have long vowels.

Admittedly there are some West African languages that have, but there we find also languages that have introduced special symbols, as e.g. in Wolof, which has ñ for *ny*.

In the meantime, geminate writing of long vowels has entered the orthography of Ethiopian languages, as e.g. ᶜAfar. Here are for comparison's sake the first two verses of the gospel of John:

> [1]*Adduna takkeemik dumal elle, Qangaradeqsittam ten. A Qangara Yalla lih ten; a Qangara kee Yalla inkiimiiy inki Yalla.*
> [2]*Ta Qangara dumal elle akah sugte'nnah Yalla lih tan.*

In the whole of this text no more than four long vowels occur. This means that when one compares orthographies of different languages, the frequency of a sound/letter must be taken into account.

Conclusion

In this presentation, I have tried to examine the history of the Oromo orthographies, in order to evaluate the arguments brought forward for the adoption of the *qubee* orthography. I hope this contribution will foster the linguistic studies conducted on the spelling systems of the different Ethiopian languages. For a scientific appraisal of any orthographic reform it will prove extremely useful to compare the spelling systems of other comparable languages.

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Movement along the Wadis and Rivers of Uwwa Woreda Afar Region

Loren F. Bliese [*]

It is commonly said that the Afar often consider as their land, any area where the jujube tree (*kusra*), bearing red cherry-like fruits, is found. Two of these trees grow on the knoll where the first school was built in 1965 at Bilu, in the Uwwa Woreda, on behalf of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus – and formerly headed by the author of this article. Apart from the famous *kusra* tree, this paper shows that rivers and wadis still actively condition the past and present social dynamics of the local Afar coalitions.

Among the several Afar federations living in Uwwa Woreda, Bilu constitutes the main settlement of the *Carsu* clan. It is 11+ 45' 45.28"N and 39+ 56' 23.68"E, with an elevation of 3414 ft. Its territory borders on the no-man's land between the Afar and the Amharic speaking Oromo in the western foothills. The territory controlled by the *Gaydarru* federation begins at the wadi located three kilometres east of Bilu. Its central location is the Ragden Oasis another two kilometres to the northeast as the crow flies, but five kilometres winding on the path between the lava hills. The Gaydarru territory extends from the Uwwa River, into the grasslands to the south. They are related to the *Arabta* clan, along the Mille River. The *Aggini* clan is located in the area north of Bilu, around Alalesubla on the Uwwa River, and the northern side of the Uwwa Woreda, toward the Awra Wadi, is traditionally inhabited by the *Henkebba* clan.

Nevertheless, these rivers and wadis do not only delimitate the several Afar territories present in the Uwwa Woreda. Indeed, they also perform the different geographical paths, binding together the economic and religious networks among these Afar federations, as well as with their Amhara or Oromo neighbours. From the seasonal migrations, rooted in the cattle herding tradition, to the social movements emerging from the recent implementation of irrigation and education projects, the rivers and wadis of the Uwwa Woreda tend to reveal the plural nomadic dynamics of the local Afar federations.

Interethnic movement through wadis

Wadis flowing from the foothills to the Afar lowlands are the pathways through the buffer no-man's land that separates the Afar from their highland neighbours. For

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example, the Mormor Wadi serves as the pathway for exchange between the Uwwa area Afar nomads and the sedentary Amharic-speaking farmers in the foothills. It connects the Afar with Hara market in the foothills. From there they have vehicle access to district government offices, shops, and medical services in Waldia. The Imperial government used the Mormor Wadi to send hated tax collectors with police escorts into the area. The first vehicles of government (and missionaries beginning in 1963) to come through this no-man's land were able to use the Mormor during the dry season. During the 1973-5 famine a dirt road was constructed along the Mormor Wadi as a food-for-work project of the Lutheran World Federation. Foot travellers use it, and highland traders with four-wheel drive vehicles continue to use it to go down to the Afar market at Alalesubla.

On the Afar end, the Mormor Wadi joins the Uwwa River at 11+ 48' 41.79"N and 39+ 52' 49.25"E at 3,673 feet. The road crosses the Uwwa and continues 5 kilometres east to the Amhara-Afar regional border, which runs north-south. It is marked by a pile of rocks, around six feet high beside the old road. The road then continues another 3.5 kilometres to the Uwwa Woreda center at Alalesubla. Alalesubla has been settled during the last twenty years, after the Afar Regional Government was established. The first buildings there were a clinic and a residence, built by the Lutheran World Federation in 1974 during the famine. Now there are many shops and government buildings.

Around 2004, a graded road was opened between Hara and Chifra, which is south of the Mille River in the Afar Region. This now gives access for Afar who go up the Mormor Wadi to board commercial vehicles at Haro on the foothills bluff (11+ 48'40.89"N, 39.48"E, elevation 4,920 feet). Previously they had to walk 4.3 kilometres on to Hara for transportation. The no-man's land is about six kilometres wide beginning near the regional border, and continues westward to below the bluff east in the foothills.

The Uwwa River is called 'Chireti' by the highlanders. It originates in the mountains west of Sirinqa. The Awra Wadi is the next to the north and joins the Uwwa 670 meters east of Alalesubla. Going north the Uwwa is the last river draining into the Awash River. Beyond it the rivers drain to the north-northeast and dry up in the Tigray Afar basin.

To the southeast Gura-Qale Mountain makes a divide between the Uwwa River and the Mille River. Gura-Qale's peak is 2,800 feet high and its crater descends to 2716 feet. It stands out as the tallest mountain in the north-central Afar. In former days clan elders went to pray for rain on the mountain. Thirty-five kilometres south of Chifra is the Waqaama River that flows northeast into the Mille on its way to the Awash River.

People from the area around Bilu, a village 10 kilometres south of Alalesubla, also go to the Hara market. They used to go on foot 5.8 kilometres northwest on the old Crown Road and then another 1.6 kilometres on a road to the confluence of the Uwwa River and the Mormor Wadi, then up the wadi 8.7 kilometres as the crow flies (15 kilometres following the meandering wadi) to Haro and on to Hara. The Crown Road was a dirt road built by the Imperial Government from Chifra through Bilu and on to the north. Several wadi crossings are no longer passable for vehicles.

Some Afar from the whole area go to the Hara market every Thursday of the dry season if there is peace between them and the Amharic speaking Oromo of the foothills.

They bring butter, hides and animals for sale or barter, and formerly brought rope, which they made from wild sisal. They purchase grain, salt, coffee and clothing. The Afar were formerly distinguished by the camels used to transport their goods, but now the foothills' people also have camels. Afar that know Amharic are more likely to go, but women who do not speak Amharic will also go and barter by hand motions.

Movement also goes in the other direction. Women traders from the foothills go down to the Afar villages and buy butter, which they carry back to their markets to sell for a profit. When grass runs out in the foothills the men will go down to the Afar and negotiate for them to keep their cattle. They keep connections open for future negotiations by occasional visits even when they do not have cattle with the Afar. Wadis serve as footpaths for these interethnic activities.

Afar men who want to train as Islamic scholars go to Dana Mosque on a hill between Haro and Hara. In the 20th Century this was one of the best Islamic training centers in Ethiopia. This has helped to provide negotiators when there are blood feuds between the Afar and the Amharic speakers of the foothills, who are also almost all Muslim. The negotiators and cattle move through the wadis. When a cattle raid from one side or the other results in bloodshed, movement is terminated, sometimes for years. Women are sometimes allowed to go to the markets before men dare to go into the other ethnic area.

Afar women are not normally allowed to marry an outsider, but Afar men will marry women from the foothills in addition to their cousin brides.[1] There are several non-Afar women in most villages of the area. They live the same way as their Afar co-wives. These marriages give contacts for visits in both directions. In-laws and friends in the foothills provide a place for the Afar to stay when going to and from markets.

The Afar village of Bilu also connects to the highlands through a series of paths and wadis to get to the Qorqora Wadi in the Amhara Region. The regional border begins 5.7 kilometres west of Bilu and is 5.8 kilometres from the new highway at Dirre Roqa (also known as Kombolti), a village at the edge of the no-man's land. It is 11+44N and 39+ 51' 27"E at 4659 feet. From there the wadi goes on up to the Arerit market in the Chore-Sodoma foothills. It is frequented by Afar from Bilu and clans east of them. Arerit is 11+ 40.91'N and 39+ 48.3'E with an elevation of 5,362 feet. A footpath goes on from Arerit to Mersa on the highway giving access to the Habiru Woreda offices, market, shops, and clinics. The same types of interchange described for the Mormor Wadi are carried on along the path of the Qorqora and parallel wadis connecting Bilu with the highlands.

One significant movement was when Acmad Qali, the present leader of the Gaydarru Afar attended elementary school in Mersa for a few years in the early 1960s. This gave him a privileged position of being literate and knowing Amharic. After returning to his area he served as negotiator with the government for years working together with his father, who was the leader before him.

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[1] See BLIESE 2009 for Afar marriage customs.

The new road from Hara to Chifra goes through Dirre Roqa, so this has now become the point of access for vehicle transportation to Hara and the highlands for the Bilu and Gaydarru Afar. They can also get transportation at Alalesubla, or at Karawayu ten kilometers south of Alaesubla on a road to Chifra built in 2004. This road continues south to Qel Wuha on the Baati Road. It also connects to the Zone Four offices at Kalwan north of Alalesubla.

Intra-ethnic movement along rivers

Whereas wadis facilitate movement, rivers in the Afar region tend to be barriers hindering movement across the water, especially during the rainy season. The Uwwa and Mille Rivers, which begin in the mountains to the west, form the northern and southern boundaries of Uwwa Woreda. Rivers, which have a permanent flow of water like the Mille coming from the Ambasel Mountains west of Haick and Wuchale, are not used for foot traffic into the highlands like the wadis. They also flow through deep gorges making travel along them in the foothills difficult. However, to the east the Uwwa River loses its surface water in the dry season about seven kilometres south of Alalesubla near Farangi Faage (which means 'Foreigners' Crossing', referring to the Italian military crossing in the 1930s occupation). After the surface water is gone, holes are dug in the sand to get water for cattle and people. Both the dry riverbed and the south bank of the Uwwa River are used in movement going east and west within the Afar. A railway line from Djibouti to Waldia is now being surveyed along the south bank. When completed, this will make interethnic movement along the Uwwa possible.

The new 'Chinese' asphalt road going east from Chifra follows the south side of the Mille River on its 100 kilometres to the highway at the confluence with the Awash at Mille. This road is the main connector to the regional offices in Samara, for all the Afar living north of the Mille. It also serves those living south of Chifra on the first half of the road going to the highway at Qel Wuha.

Rivers often determine clan boundaries. Movements across the rivers are common during droughts to access grazing areas. Afar clans recognize open pasture for all clans suffering from drought, but also recognize territorial rights to grass and water. For example, since the Ragden Oasis is within the Gaydarru clan's area, herders moving cattle from one area to another need to get permission from the head of the clan to water their animals in one of the 100 wells. Each well is dug and maintained by one family within the clan.

Marriage alliances on both sides of the rivers facilitate movement. The *absuma* cousin-marriage custom often requires families of the cousins in different clans or subclans to cross the rivers to negotiate and celebrate marriages. They may locate near a cousin's place for many months while making arrangements. These alliances preserve for ongoing generations a source of brides and options for grazing cattle. An example of this is with Acmad Ali, the Gaydarru clan leader. His first wife was a cousin from the Awra area north of the Uwwa River. His second wife was from the Chifra area across the Mille River. His third wife is a cousin from the Gaydarru clan. The male children of these three wives have mostly married Acmad's sister's daughters within the clan.

However, one son's bride died, and another son's was divorced. The two men then married wives from their mother's Chifra area clan. They occasionally live within that area, maintaining close connections with the in-laws there. Similarly Acmad's female children have married their mothers' brothers' sons according to custom, thereby reinforcing the connections with those clans. This assures access into the in-laws' traditional pastoral areas beyond the Uwwa River to the north and beyond the Mille River to the south.

Herding during the dry season requires a regular pattern of movement. Camels can go for a week without water, so they can go farther into the desert before returning to water. Cattle need water every third day, so the pattern is to go for a day and a half into the desert grasslands while grazing, and then return a day and a half. The grass nearest the water sources is quickly gone. This requires spreading out into the desert to find edible dry grass. Sheep and goats don't require as much food, and can't travel so far, so they are normally kept within a day's distance from water. Goats and camels eat brush and tree leaves besides grass, so they are able to survive better in a drought.

The western Afar have a seasonal migration where they move into the drier eastern meadows during the rainy season in order to make use of the more distant grasslands. The grass near the permanent water sources is thereby preserved for the dry season. This movement brings members of the various clans closer since they share the same large pasture area, and interact socially with games and dances. During the dry season when the grassland ponds dry up, they move back to the rivers and western villages. The following is an account of the rainy season migration in the Uwwa Woreda of zone four.

Arrayi or rainy season migration

In times of drought cattle are moved to areas where there is grass on either side of the Uwwa River, or even farther north or south in the desert. When there is a severe drought, the Afar also make agreements to move cattle into the highland Chefa swamp formed by the Borkanna River, flowing south of Dessie along the highway in southern Wallo.

Movement from Bilu is typical of the seasonal migration for semi-permanent villages (*gub*) along the western edge of zone four. When the monsoon rains begin in late June or July, almost the whole village moves to the eastern grass fields. Only those who cannot travel, such as the elderly, are left behind. Only a few animals are left with them for milk. There are biting flies in Bilu during the rains. This encourages all who can leave to do so. The portable house (*ayyunta*) is broken down and loaded on a camel, or donkey if camels are not available. The curved poles of the house frame usually stick up on each side. The rolled-up palm mats and the bed with its four long poles and rolled-up mat made of narrow poles tied with hide, are balanced on the two sides. Other household things are put on top, and a child who is too young to walk may be tied around the waist to the front crossbars of the packing poles. Most houses in Bilu have a second larger house (*goli*) made of bent poles with thatching. These are abandoned, and the family will squeeze into the small portable house until they return after the

rains. The time of return will be October, or whenever the ponds from the rains dry up in the grasslands.

The 88 year-old Carsu clan leader (*makaaban*), Wade Qali, no longer goes on migration. He supervises planting of three kinds of sorghum grain around the village during the rainy season. The 63-year old Gaydarru clan leader Acmad Qali always goes with all of his family. He normally returns to the ancestral location at Megloxxa, where the second school in the area was built around 1974. He has also spent the dry seasons in various other locations in his area.

The destination of the migration is the plain around an extinct volcanic crater, around 40 kilometres east of Bilu. It is called Manda, which means 'lava flow'. It is 45+ 53' 67"N and 40+ 13' 13.20"E. The rim of the crater is 2,782 feet above sea level, and the bottom of the crater is at 2,746 feet. It is considered the abode of demons (*ginni*). The Manda grasslands extend east along the Uwwa River, west toward Ragden, and south to the Mille River. They vary in elevation from 2590 to 2650 feet. The various clans migrate to their same traditional areas in the eastern grasslands each year. These places have names. Family groups normally stay together, and each group takes care of its own cattle. Large herds of cattle from the Aysaqiita area to the east also come to the Manda grasslands during the rainy season. They follow the Uwwa River bottom if it is dry, or the paths along its banks. They stay together in an area south of the Uwwa towards the Mille River.

For entertainment, a ball game (*koqiso*) like soccer is played by the male youth. Teams from different clans compete with each other in order to determine which team is the champion. The games are usually in the late afternoon. There are occasional cattle races. On an average, eight groups of cattle participate from various clans. The Aysaqiita cattle provide many groups since they are numerous. Strong, fast cattle are chosen and chased from behind while shooting guns. Judges stand at the end of the track and decide the winner. Whichever animal crosses the line first determines the winning group even if the other cattle in its group are slower. Winners celebrate by shooting more shots with their guns.

In the evening dancing is popular. People come together from all clans to the area just west of Manda Crater. Children from seven years on may go along with siblings and neighbours, and watch and sing along on the choruses. Dancers are mainly from early teens to 30 years of age. Unmarried men and divorcees use this as a chance to court. Some participants go off alone for sex, which brings criticism of the dancing by the religious leaders. If a couple wants to marry, this will be arranged after returning to the main villages. Young married women also attend if they can escape their husbands. One informant said they would be questioned and advised by their husbands afterwards, but probably not punished. Traditional songs from earlier generations are sung, especially *saxxaq*, which is a line dance of males and females facing each other and moving in their respective lines toward, and then away from each other. The singing is antiphonal, and is led by those with singing and spontaneous composition skills. It includes sexual

flirtation and playful slander of the opposite sex.[2] The dancing begins when the people gather after finishing the evening chores, and often goes on to midnight. Moonlight gives opportunity to continue even all night.

The following description of seasonal migration comes from an interview with Assiya Kaadir from Bilu. Her father died while she was a baby. As a child she always went with her mother and siblings to the Manda grasslands during the rainy season. After arrival the women set up the portable houses, and the men go to the river and cut thorn branches to make a fenced compound (*daala*), which encloses the houses and the pens for the young sheep and goats. The pens are made of branches or lava rocks. The branches are brought to the compound by camel. Calves and young camels are tied to stakes outside the compound while their mothers are grazing. The stakes are driven all the way into the ground to prevent the animals from pulling them out.

Work is divided between everyone. The men herd the camels and cattle. The children are responsible to herd the sheep and goats. Women with babies stay in the compound and care for the nursing calves, lambs and kids, which are kept there. Jackals are a danger for the young animals, and sometimes hyenas come at night. The people sleep lightly and get up and protect their animals when they hear predators coming. Only a minority of men strictly observe the prescribed daily five times Muslim prayers (*salat*). Women generally do not join the men, but may do so in a row behind them. They may also perform the prayer ritual alone or with other women. Women and men both participate in Friday and festival prayers.

Water is available in ponds when it rains. If these dry up, the herders must take the animals to the Uwwa River. Milking the camels, cows, sheep and goats takes place the first thing every morning and at dusk when the animals return from the pasture. The men milk the camels, either men or women milk the cows, although it is usually the women, and the women milk the sheep and goats. Young animals are allowed to nurse after the people get what they want. The women gather wood for cooking, and bring water from the ponds or river. If the distance isn't too great, they carry the wood and goat-skin water bags on their backs. Assiya's enclosure had two or three donkeys and around five camels for distant transport.

Each married Afar woman has a portable house. The children stay with their mother. After her mother stopped going to Manda, Assiya stayed with one of her older brother's wives, and their three children. Each wife had come with her children. If a man has more than one wife he spends the night with each in turn. Four wives is the maximum allowed. The wives' houses are together in the same compound of their husband. Assiya's unmarried brother slept on a cowhide beside the hut. When it rained he got under the hide for shelter. Other occasional visitors also slept on the hide. One night Assiya got up during a storm. A strong wind pushed the hut over and pulled the poles of the frame out of the ground. Those sleeping on the bed were not harmed, but since Assiya was standing, she was carried away rolling with the hut. Two visitors ran and rescued her.

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2   See an analysis and examples of various types including *saxxaq* in BLIESE 1982-83. Reference is also made to *saxxaq* in BLIESE 1994.

Malaria is common, especially at the end of the rainy season when they return to Bilu. Assiya got it every year. Some itinerant medical practitioners came to the Manda area. If necessary, people are sent to the pharmacy at Alalesubla to bring medicine. Pregnant women expecting to deliver during the rainy season would often stay in Bilu. If a midwife (*ullatina*) was going to spend the rainy season in the grasslands, pregnant women could choose to go and deliver there.

Milk is so plentiful during the rainy season that no other food is needed. Milk is put in a carved wooden pot (*koora*) with a lid made of woven grass that is covered with hide and decorated with cowry shells. After fermenting, the curds are eaten with a wooden spoon. Fresh milk is also drunk. Extra milk is churned by sloshing it back and forth in small goatskins. Women and girls from five years old on do the churning. They may also hang the skin from a tree or pole and tie another rope to the end of the skin bag to pull it back and forth. Buttermilk is normally used, but there is so much during the rainy season that it is poured out. This time of migration to the grasslands is considered the happiest time of the year with so much milk and added social activities. The churned butter (*mutuk*) is added to the yogurt when eating. Extra butter is kept in a larger goatskin (*koxxa*) for future use and sharing back at the main village, or for sale in the highland markets. The butter may also be cooked into a clear liquid (*subac*) before storage. It is sometimes taken to Chifra, the Afar market to the south, for sale. If there is a drought, and milk is short, grain is purchased in the markets. Animals are sold to get money for grain or other needs, but generally the rural Afar do not sell their animals as a money-making business.[3]

To show a typical family's participation in seasonal migration, Assiya gave the following account of her living siblings – as several others died. She is the youngest of six with the same father and mother. Her mother also bore two children by her father's brother after her father died. The oldest sibling is a woman who continued to go on migration sometimes after marriage, but whose husband stayed and ploughed. When she went, he would come and go. The next was a man who always goes. The third was woman who always goes with her family. The fourth was the brother who slept outside. He later married and then divorced a cousin bride, who always went. He is now married again. The fifth is a sister who lost her first husband in an accident. Her second husband, a brother of the deceased, divorced her. She went with a child from each, and now goes regularly with the third brother who married her. She takes her five children. Assiya's two siblings by her father's brother are students, who both go regularly when school is not in session. The first is a boy, and the youngest is a girl who is also married to a cousin.

Though this seasonal migration is the most significant intraethnic movement pattern of the Uwwa area Afar, new movement patterns have recently emerged along with the development of irrigation and education projects.

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[3] KASSA (2001:37) differentiates this "subsistence pastoralism" from modern capitalistic ranching.

Social movement generated by irrigation and education projects

Since the late 1960's the rivers and wadis of the Afar provide water for irrigation during the rainy season. Large areas along the Awash River from Malka-Saddi to Aysaqiita have been cleared, levelled and ploughed to serve as sugar, cotton, and sorghum plantations. The workers for these projects are mainly from the highlands. The movement of people from other ethnic groups into the Afar culture disrupts their previous homogenous status. This is seen as a threat by many Afar. The loss of grazing along the Awash cuts away the backup of animal food for the nomads. This loss is devastating during drought, since the Afar depend on the vegetation along the rivers when there is no grass.[4]

Development projects are building diversion dams to irrigate other rivers coming out of the highlands with the intent to get the Afar to settle and raise crops. For example, the Awra northern branch of the Uwwa River has had a diversion dam for four years. There is also a gravity canal on the southern side of the Uwwa west of Manda with irrigated plots. Plans are also being made to pump ground water for irrigation in this area. The need for a grain supplement especially during drought is recognized by the Afar, so many have added ploughing during the rainy seasons to their traditional grazing economy. The manual labour required for these projects also provides income for the Afar who are hired to dig. The Uwwa River banks are still kept with their natural trees and vegetation, so the devastation seen along the Awash is not found here. The Uwwa has a limited supply of water, so the use for irrigation will need to be watched to insure sufficient water for the traditional wells in the river sand, which provide water for the people and cattle downstream. At this point, most Afar do not see irrigation farming as a way to give up their traditional nomadic grazing, but as a supplement to it. However, the movement toward sedentary farming, which restricts open pasture, is a significant new social dimension for Afar along rivers and wadis.

Government schools have been built in Bilu and Ragden through eighth grade, and in Alalesubla through tenth grade. Although a few teachers come from the Afar Region, most of them originate from the highlands. They get a bus to Alalesubla and usually walk the ten kilometres to Bilu, or five from Karawayu to Ragden. They are a mixture of Muslims and Christians. Socially this is a big change for the Uwwa Afar to have highlanders living among them with a different culture.

Students are also moving because of their education. If they pass to eleventh grade they must go to the school at Kalwan fifty kilometres to the north, or to the school at Chifra thirty-five kilometres south. A stipend is given to them by the government, but some students drop out when it does not cover their expenses. Others get help from relatives. Even going to a local school interrupts the normal pastoral life of a young person, and requires adjustments for the family to cover herding responsibilities. These changes are new to the traditional pastoral culture, where everyone was involved with caring for the stock.

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[4] KASSA (2001:89-117) gives a detailed account of the development of irrigation and consequences for the Afar.

One young woman from the area was educated through sixth grade. She married two cousins in succession, but had miscarriages with both and was divorced. Divorcees who have not produced children are often not required to marry a third *absuma*, but are left to do what they want. She went to Awash and joined the police academy. After returning, she became the first policewoman in Alalesubla, where she served for three years. Now she has left the country and become a worker in Saudi Arabia. Her education opened doors of movement unthinkable before the schools were started.

Conclusion

The rivers and wadis crossing the Uwwa Woreda and its vicinity seem to perform a kind of cartographic representation of the local Afar political and economic federations. From the inter- to the intraethnic levels, these waterway networks reveal the multiple movement patterns of the Afar nomadic tradition.

Though the *Arrayi* rainy season migrations still constitute one of its major social expressions, the recent implementation of irrigations projects and the construction of several schools in the Uwwa Woreda are entailing the emergence of new migration logics. These innovations are carrying important economic and cultural challenges, as these development projects tend to be closely related to the rivers and wadis, which shaped the social dynamics of these local Afar federations for several centuries.

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The Awash River in Oromo Historical Narratives

Thomas Osmond[*]

In the continuity of the research on the Oromo initiated by the Western Christian missionaries since the nineteenth century, most of the academic studies published in the last decades have attempted to reveal the 'authentic' version of the Oromo culture and religion (OSMOND 2014b). Beyond the holistic approach of classical anthropology privileged in these works, this exploratory study of the Oromo historical narratives on the Awash River aims at highlighting the value of questioning the plurality of local memorial legacies, through transversal research objects and more dynamic epistemological perspectives.

At the Ethiopian national level, the Awash River incarnates to some extent the controversial position of the Oromo in the historiography. Indeed, the contemporary promoters of the Oromo traditional culture generally consider that rivers and lakes are major cultural and philosophical pillars of the Oromo 'indigenous' tradition,[1] whereas the Ethiopian historical narratives associate the Awash with the sixteenth century conquests of the southern peripheries the Christian highlands led by the Oromo 'invaders'.[2] However, these two general discourses hide the existence of many other local historical narratives, which shed light on the diverse political and religious dynamics that have federated – or cleaved – the territories connected to the lower and upper banks on the Awash River.

The sources of the Awash are found in the north-western hills of Ginshi town, in the Western Shewa Zone of the present Oromiya Region. The river flows to the southeast in the direction of the former Bacho and Chabo districts, until the vicinity of Soddo Gurage, close to the current boundary between the two Regional States of Oromiya and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples. In the local historical memories, the populations inhabiting these territories are often called *warra awash oli*, 'the family/people of Upper Awash' in Oromo language. Then, the Awash follows the northeast along the northern boundaries of the Arsi territories, crossing the Karayyu territory, before entering the Afar Region in the western fringes of Harerge, to finally end in the Afambo and Abhe Lakes at the Djiboutian border. The inhabitants of these eastern and lower territories of the Awash River are generally named *warra awash gamaa*, 'the family/people living beyond the Awash'.

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[1] See BAXTER 1978; DAHL and GEMETCHU MEGERSSA 1990; DAHL 1996 or BROKENSHA 1998; for the Western academic scholars.

[2] For an English translation of Bahrey's account written in the late sixteenth century see BECKINGHAM and HUNTINGFORD (1954: 111-129), BAIRU TAFLA (1987) and D'ABBADIE (1880: 172) who consider that crossing the Awash River was the first step of the Oromo invasions inside the Christian territories.

The Awash River
In the Regional States
Of the Ethiopian Federation

The Awash River
In the Oromiya Region
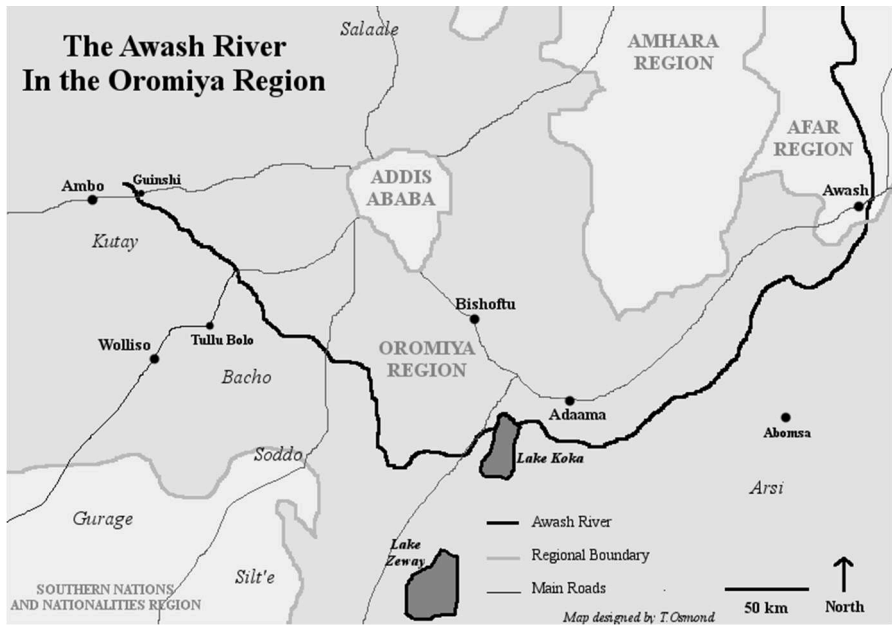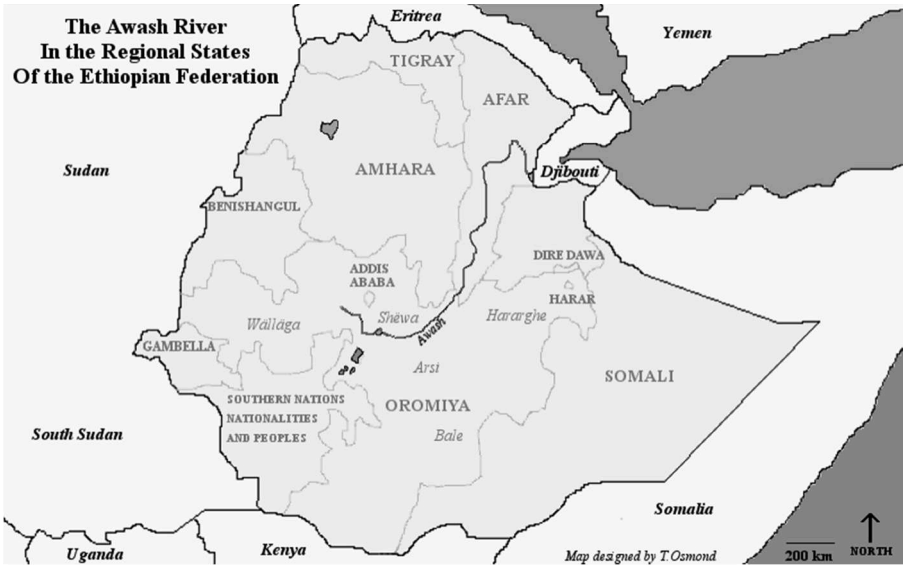
To offer a panoramic perspective of the plural historical memories linked to the Awash River, this exploratory article will discuss three different cases. In the first case, the artisitic works composed in the 1970s by the poet Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin and the singer Ali Birra represent two opposite political imaginary frameworks that both depicted the Awash as an historical hyphen binding together the different populations connected to its course and tributaries. The second case examines the founding political divide between the Oromo populations of the Upper and Lower Awash. The diverging evolution of the Oromo national sentiment between the western-Christian and the eastern-Muslim movements has followed the fault lines of the building of the modern Ethiopian state since the end of the nineteenth century. The third case will show that, despite these historical divisions, several religious traditions and local historical narratives on the Awash still exist and share similar patterns that can be referred to the teachings of Ṣūfī Persian mystics which were spread throughout the different populations of the Awash River basin.

From Ethiopian Africanism to Oromo national uprising: The Awash River in the poetic narratives of Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin and Ali Birra

Among the many narratives on the Awash River, the famous song by Ali Birra is still the most popular in contemporary Ethiopia. Though *Awash* remains a standard of Ethiopian music of the 1960s-1970s, the historical genesis and the political implications of this masterpiece of modern Oromo culture are today almost totally forgotten by the young generations. Indeed, before it became the artistic symbol of Oromo nationalism through Ali Birra's song, the Awash River had been the Ethio-Afrocentrist symbol of the 1950s, as depicted in a poem by Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin.

An Afro-centric Description of the Awash River by Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin

Born in a local Christian aristocratic family near the town of Ginshi, Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin grew up among the agro-pastoral Oromo communities of the upper stream of the Awash River in Western Shewa. In his poem entitled "Awash", published in 1971, Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin personifies the river and directly talks to it. [3] His creative speech emphasizes the central position of the Awash among the several rivers and watersheds of Ethiopia. Contrary to the other great rivers of the world – ending in the sea or crossing different countries, the poet underlines that the course of the Awash is strictly limited to the Ethiopian national territory, from its source in the West to the Abhe Lake in the East. Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin interprets this geographic particularity as the evidence of the river's significance in patriotic terms for the territorial extension of the holy Ethiopian land and the realm of the Christian imperial dynasty descending from the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon.

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[3] For an online edition and comments of this poem see: http://tgindex.blogspot.fr/2015/01/owa.html (consulted in March 2015)

Nevertheless, the poet also values the rich legacy of African cultures carried by the Awash River, through the use of Afro-traditionalist metaphors. The flow of the Awash is portrayed as a mother carrying her children on her back, providing life to the successive natural landscapes and human communities distributed along the river's banks.[4] This mystical maternal character seems to refer to the same kind of 'African mother' that was used at the same period by Leopold Sedar Senghor in his poetic writings, where he magnified the Sine River of his Sereer homeland in Senegal (OSMOND 2009). Though Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin recognized the political legitimacy of the Christian Amhara elites over the Oromo 'peasants', he was also fascinated by the cultural tradition of the Oromo as an 'African people'. Indeed, the renowned Ethiopian poet believed that the Oromo traditional religion was the indigenous African expression of the original monotheism, inherited from ancient Egypt.[5] In his poem dedicated to the Awash, he quotes the names of the successive Oromo – and non-Oromo – regional leaders and religious figures (*Alaaba Tafaa*, *Sabat Bet Gurage*, *Wasan Gaala*, *Adal Mooti* or *Sheikh Hussein Bale*), associated with the different territories crossed by the river.

As a central geographical feature of imperial Ethiopia, the Awash River depicted in Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin's poem tends to incarnate the Ethiopian African heritage that he attempted to promote all his life long, through the numerous poems and theatre plays he wrote in Ethiopia and North America. However, written in Amharic language and embedded into this Ethio-/Afro-centrist imaginary, Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin's vision of the Awash proposes a very different perspective than the song composed a decade later, by the Oromo artist Ali Birra.

A popular song calling for the Oromo national uprising: Ali Birra's poetic journey along the banks of the Awash River

Born in the mid-1940s in Dire Dawa town, in the present Eastern Hararghe Zone of the Oromiya Region – where he started his musical career –, Ali Birra is still considered as the 'king of the Oromo singers' (*mooti walisoota Oromoo*). Before he joined the celebrated Imperial Body Guard Orchestra in Addis Ababa, Ali Birra was an employee of the then French-Ethiopian railway company. In the 1960s, Ali Birra worked in the town of Awash, where he composed the first versions of the song dedicated to the river. Contrary to Tsegay Gebre-Medhin's Pan-African vision centered on Ethiopia, this song by an Oromo artist is a call for the uprising and the national (re-)unification of the Oromo regional groups established in the upper and lower basins of the river. Recorded

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[4] He writes: For how long have you been flowing alone, along the curves and the lands of the country, from your sources in Shewa to the desert areas of Afar (...). You are like a pregnant woman, your children were born in the sand and you carry them on your back like a dolly (...). You gives life to the lands and the mountains you cross, but why do you finally finish your course and die by eating yourself in the desert, instead of flowing into the ocean like the other rivers? (my own translation from Tsegay Gebre-Medhin's poem on Awash).

[5] Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin claimed that the etymological root of the term *Waaqa*, used to designate the unique almighty God of the Oromo ancestral traditions, originated from *Ka*, meaning 'the name of God' in the hieroglyphic alphabet used by "the old black Kamitic or black Egyptian language" (OSMOND 2004).

before the Revolution, the early versions of Ali Birra's song are masterpieces of the Ethiopian art of double meaning art in Oromo language.[6]

Almost all the versions of *Awash* begin with the evocation of the river as a 'memorial boundary' between the different components of the Oromo people.[7] Through the metaphor of relatives and companions separated by the river's flow, Ali Birra's song is an invitation to travel from Addis Ababa to different areas of the Oromo country: Dire Dawa, Northern Shewa (Salaale), Jimma and Wallaggaa. Throughout his imaginary journey along the course of the river, the artist uses poetic images to represent the historical cleavages that hampered the national unification of the Oromo. Nevertheless, he crosses them over by transforming the Awash from a boundary to a link. From an unbridgeable memorial frontier, the Awash River is turned into a central connection that holds together the Oromo territories. Through this link represented by the Awash, the several Oromo coalitions are associated in the song on the basis of their shared kin relationship and historical experience of state oppression.

Salaaleti ningulufa	I am galloping to reach Salaale
Jimmatu na basa karan kuni	And this road will take me to Jimma
Nu laccu alaagumaa	Though you and I do not originate from the same place,
Ma walittin nu boyaa garan kuni	Yet our bowels cry together.

By using the picture of a woman selling traditional toothbrush sticks, Ali Birra promotes regional reconciliation by making use of the register of intimacy. The bitter taste of the stick represents the historical rancour shared by the Oromo populations – but it is progressively dissipated through their national reunification:

Rigga na muri rigga	Cut a piece of the wooden stick you use to brush your teeth
Na muri rigga kee na marari	Share your wooden stick with me so that I can brush my teeth too
Waan na muru batte	I know it would be bitter at the beginning
In dhufee sani, kana barare	But this bitterness would not last long

Whereas Tsegay Gebre-Medhin's poem was reflecting the Pan-African ambitions of the Ethiopian imperial regime, Ali Birra's song reflects the revolutionary aspiration that emerged from the 1960s peasant uprising in Bale and the student movements in Addis Abeba. By comparing the Oromo who collaborated with the imperial regime to 'sleeping children', Ali Birra stresses that they are neither aware of the imminent Oromo revolt, nor the coming of the 1974 Socialist Revolution:

Sila Shagaritti ninba'a	On my way out of Addis Ababa,
Shagaritti koora fannisani	I saw the saddles of our riders, hanged in their households.
Sila si bira nindhufa	On my way to join you,

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[6] This double meaning art (*qené* in Amharic and *ciigoo* in Oromo) was regularly used by Ethiopian singers to bypass the state censorship of the imperial regime.

[7] For more information on the several versions of Awash before and during the *Derg* regime, see the booklet included in the CD compilation (FALCETO and OSMOND 2013).

Si birati ijolle rafisaani	I won't wake up the children sleeping near you
Ijolle indubbatu	They won't notice anything,
Shurubba lash goti na dhungatu	So release your long hair and kiss me.

Though Ali Birra's song also refers to female characters, they neither symbolize the river, nor the Afrocentrist maternal archetypes used by Tsegay Gebre-Medhin in his poem. The singer concludes his poetic journey on the course of the Awash by depicting a woman whom he is about to join in her bed. In the topographical symbolism of the song, this woman represent the town of Dire Dawa and more generally the Oromo populations of Hararge, who are preparing their uprising against the Christian imperial authorities.

In addition to the pan-Oromo nationalist project it called up when it was released on the eve of the Ethiopian Socialist Revolution, Ali Birra's song also reflected the internal cleavages that have historically divided the Oromo political consciousness between the lower to the upper territories of the Awash River.

Lower Awash vs. upper Awash: the founding political cleavage of Oromo nationalism in contemporary Ethiopia

For more than a century, the local historical discourses associated to the Awash River have opposed two situations: the collaboration of the western Oromo entities with the Christian kingdom of Shewa, on the one hand, and the resistance of the eastern Oromo, on the other (ZITELMANN 1993). The historical grounds on which this clear cut distinction relies are highly equivocal, however.

Muslim resistants and Christian collaborators?

In the local historical traditions told among the populations of the upper and lower basins of the Awash River, the expression *Awash Oli* ('the upper stream of the Awash') is often used to designate the Oromo of Shewa – and also Wallaga to some extent, who are predominantly Christians. These populations of *Awash Oli* are generally presented as those who have collaborated with the Christian state authorities since the nineteenth century. Throughout this close collaboration, these Oromo would have abandoned most of their ancestral practices and almost adopted the language, the culture and the religion of the Christian Amhara 'colonizers'.[8] In Jimma, Arsi, Bale or Hararghe, the local historical traditions generally that Shewa and the upper territories of the Awash River represent the established centre of the Ethiopian state oppression, from the reigns of Menelik, Hayle Selassie to the military socialist regime of Mengistu Hayle Maryam. In the opposite, from Jimma to Hararghe, the Oromo of Lower Awash (*Awash Gamaa*, 'beyond the Awash') claim their faithfulness to Islam and their historical implication in several rebellion movements (ZITELMANN 1993).

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[8] On the social expressions of this so-called 'acculturation process', see KNUTSSON 1967 and BLACKHURST 1978.

This opposition between the Muslim 'resistants' of the *Awash Gamaa* territories, on the one hand, and the Christian 'collaborators' of the *Awash Oli*, on the other, appear in almost all historical narratives, both in rural and urban contexts. In this perspective, Muslim saints like Shibbash Karama or Ayyoo Mommina in Arsi or Shaykh Husayn in Bale, or rulers like Sultan Abba Jifar in Jimma or Emir Nur in Hararge are often mentioned as leading and inspiring figures in this continuous resistance against the colonial conquests and policies of the Christian Amhara kings.[9] We also find more ordinary expressions of this Upper/Lower Awash distinction, for example in Hargé to differentiate the Oromo groups who recently came from Shewa, like the horse cart drivers (*balegari*) established in Dire Dawa (OSMOND 2005a). This political opposition between the western and eastern Oromo coalitions also appears in Ali Birra's song on the Awash River, through several bird metaphors. Indeed, the singer quotes the 'Eagle' (*allatin*) of Dire Dawa, advising the inhabitants of Hargé to eat meat instead of bones. Through this allegory, Ali Birra means that they should stop satisfying themselves with the leftovers, while the representatives of the imperial regime established in Hargé keep the largest portion of the local wealth for themselves.

Unlike the call for rebellion carried by the eagle's message 'beyond the Awash' (*Awash Gamaa*), the large and elegant endemic bird of Wallagga (*harrageessa* in Oromo) symbolizes the natural wealth of this territory, related to the 'upper territories of the Awash' (*Awash Oli*). As the beauty of the elegant *harrageessa* hides its selfishness, the wonders of Wallagga hide the historical tendency of its ruling elites to weaken the Oromo national struggle, by privileging their relations with the Christian Amhara authorities:[10]

Harrageessa Wallaga	The Great Black Buzzard of Wällaga,
Wallaga teessa si ninbarbadu	How could I miss you, as this region is your territory?
Atu bareedu tanan, namu si dawata	You might be venerated for your beauty
Si inabdadhu akkanan	But I will never become your slave.

Despite its recurrent expressions within the diverse religious, economic and artistic registers of the local historical memories, the Lower/Upper Awash cleavage of Oromo national identity remains highly ideological and does not fairly represent the meanders of the local history, from Shewa to Hargé.

Inadequacies of the Lower/Upper Awash historiographical cleavage

Beyond the contemporary controversies of the Oromo national sentiment, the historiographical opposition between the upstream and the downstream of the Awash River entails wider regional issues that involve other populations such as the Afar, Somali, Gurgura and Harari. From Awash town to Asayta, Dire Dawa, Harar, Jigjiga,

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[9] See LEWIS 1965 and ABBAS HAJI 1991.

[10] See TRIULZI 1986 for the historical relations between the rulers of Nekemte and those of the Christian Shewa kingdom.

Galamso or Gode, the political projects promoted by these populations inhabiting 'beyond the Awash River' were mainly aimed at thwarting the Christian Amhara hegemonic practices. The local historical narratives mainly draw attention to the significant role played by Islamic ideas and proselytization movements and their involvement in local autonomous organizations, from the coalition led by Emir Nur – the ruler of Harar after Imam Aḥmad's death, who defeated the Christian emperor Galawdewos in the 16th century, to the contemporary organizations like Hanollaato or the Western Somali Liberation Front[11].

Moreover, the Lower/Upper Awash divide does not fairly reflect the historical dynamics of local politics in the present Oromiya Region, since the nineteenth century. Indeed, the history of Hararge cannot be reduced to the movements of resistance against the Christian kingdom. During the reigns of Menelik and Hayle Sellassie, it is true that the Amharization policies and the building of churches had a lesser impact in the regions linked to the Lower Awash course than in the Upper Awash. However, except for a few scattered revolt movements, the major trend in Hararge was to collaborate with the Ethiopian imperial regime rather than oppose it systematically. Until the 1974 Revolution, the local leaders of the Muslim Oromo communities in Lower Awash acted as the privileged interlocutors of the Ethiopian authorities – though they neither converted to Christianity, nor received Amhara aristocratic titles (OSMOND 2014).

In the same perspective, the observation of the local history of Shewa also tempers the commonly presumed collusion between the Oromo polities in Upper Awash and the Christian Amhara rulers. Indeed, several academic studies and local narratives have highlighted the significance of the historical uprisings against Menelik's army, like the battles of *Sagaalee* and *Bacho* in Northern and Western Shewa in the second half of the 19th century (TRIULZI 1990, ARNESEN 1996, MOHAMMED HASSEN 1996). In the 1960s, the rise of the Macha Tulama Association and the aborted coup d'état prepared by its president, General Tadesse Biru, are well-known examples of the Oromo political activism in Shewa (GAMMACCUU TAYE 1993, OSMOND 2004). Moreover, the putatively massive Oromo conversions to Orthodox Christianity in Shewa after Menelik's conquests were mostly formal, especially in rural areas[12].

Beyond the contemporary eastern-Muslim/western-Christian divide within the Oromo national identity, the local narratives spread all over the territories on the watershed of the Awash River tend to reveal the historical Muslim legacies that have been shared from Hararge to Shewa for centuries.

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[11] These two organizations gathered different Somali, Oromo and Gurgura militants, respectively in the 1940s and 1980s against the imperial and socialist Ethiopian regimes (see ZITELMANN 1993).

[12] In many cases, the local populations rarely went to the churches built in the then newly established garrison towns (*ketema* in Amharic). Until now, most of them have rather attended the social gatherings held among the local *Gadaa* assemblies or the religious ceremonies performed in the shrines of the *Qalluu*. Through the smart mediation policies and syncretic works they conducted, these *Qalluu* managed to maintain the relative autonomy of the Oromo agro-pastoral communities, and the coexistence of the local religious traditions with those of the Christian rulers (see LEWIS 1970).

Regional networks of saints and historical Ṣūfī legacies in Upper and Lower Awash

In his poem on the Awash, Tsegay Gebre-Medhin already mentioned some of the religious solidarities that link the various populations of Upper and Lower Awash. The third and last part of this paper will examine these historical Ṣūfī Muslim connections through local networks involved in celebrating saintly figures in Shewa and in the south-eastern territories located beyond the Awash.

Linking the Oromo and Gurage banks of the Awash River in Western Shewa: the case of the Mo'aata / Me'wet communities

In the present Western Shewa Zone, *Mo'aata* is the name for the religious communities devoted to the female saint *Demamiti*, established in the rural vicinity of Ambo and Tullu Bolo towns. These communities are mainly formed by marginal individuals – like widows, unmarried girls, sick persons or homosexuals – who belong to the local Kutay territorial coalition. This coalition assembles different levels of the Oromo social organization: kin groups; federations of farmers or cattle herders; *Gadaa* customary assemblies. All these levels respect the overarching spiritual authority of the *Qaalluu* leaders.[13] In this religious political order, *Demamiti* is formally recognized as one of the several religious entities subordinated to the *Qaalluu*. Thus, in spite of their marginal or deviant position, the *Mo'aata* communities are recognized an official ritual role. They are even closely involved in the celebration of the peaceful relations between the several constituencies of the Kutay coalition, and between their non-Oromo partners of the southern Sebat Bet Gurage federations, beyond the Awash River.

Like the Oromo *Mo'aata*, the Gurage *Me'wet* communities found among the Gurage territories from Chaha to Kistane worship *Demwe'wit*, the patron saint of unmarried female teenagers and marginalized handicraft workers, homosexuals or asocial persons in general.[14] Together with the Oromo *Mo'aata* believers the Gurage *Me'wet* communities also participate in the yearly ceremonies held in the major religious shrines of the Kutay coalition in Western Shewa, as well as in ceremonies of the Gurage Sabat Bet in the present Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (OSMOND 2005b).

Shaalo Magarsa, the current leader of the *Mo'aata* communities in the rural area of Ambo town, puts in words these translocal linkages through collective prayers that proclaim the extension of *Demamiti*'s authority from the sources of the Awash, to the southern Gurage Zone:

Ya bahar demamiti	Demamiti of the Sea
Ya awash demamiti	Demamiti of Awash
Shewa, Soddo	From Shewa, Soddo,

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[13] The Kutay coalition is led by the two respective *Qaalluu* – and *Mooti* military leaders – of the *Dhadha* and *Abebe* agricultural federations, who still are the main landowners in the vicinity of Ambo town (see OSMOND 2005b).

[14] See BAHRU ZEWDE 1972 and FECADU GADAMU 1986.

Ennamor, Ennacor	Ennamor and Ennacor,
Hullum tantarafa	She provides us with all we need
Sebirayu!	Rejoice! (Be patient because she is coming to rescue us!)[15]

Contrary to the division between Lower and Upper Awash that has structured the Oromo national sentiment, the *Mo'aata/Me'wet* translocal networks highlight the historical partnerships and religious solidarities that have associated the political organizations of the Upper Awash (*Awash Oli*), to the polities located beyond the southern course of the river (*Awash Gamaa*). Shaalo Magarsa also uses the territorial designation of *Awash Gamaa* to introduce a song evoking the shared historical legacies between Oromo and Gurage coalitions, geaographically and symbolically interconnected through the Awash River. Performed in Oromo language, this song also stresses the seniority and spiritual authority of the religious orders established on the south-eastern banks of the Awash:

Awash Gamaa	Beyond the Awash River
Harera kan kooti	(On the northern banks) I was given creamy milk
Ya bareedhu soddoo	(On the southern banks) The girls of Soddo (Gurage) are beautiful
Bachotti na gallee	Take me back to Bacho
Ganda Wayo Fuga	To the neighbourhood of Wayo Fuga
Ganda Abba Yadessaa	To the household of Abba Yadessaa
Ya jarsaa qalbi	You are a well inspired elder
Na galccika qalbi	Take me back to reason.[16]

Though scholars often classify the Oromo and Gurage *Me'wet/Mo'aata* communities into the unspecified and controversial category of 'traditional religions', these networks of wisdom claim their historical proximity with the major Muslim Ṣūfī orders of south-eastern Ethiopia, like the shrines of Ayyoo Mommina in Arsi or Shaykh Husayn in Bale. In Western Shewa, Shaalo Magarsa and the main *Mo'aata* dignitaries often associate *Demamiti* with the term *arshi*, borrowed from the Arabic word *ʿarsh*, designating the 'Celeste Throne of Allah' in the Qur'ān. Furthermore, in the regional hierarchy of the female Muslim saints, *Demamiti arshi* is often presented as the spiritual daughter or heir of Ayyoo Mommina, herself positioned under the authority of Emmet Fatuma, 'Mother

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[15] I collected this prayer of Shaalo Magarsa – in Oromo and Gurage languages – near Ambo in 2002. From Western Shewa to *Innamor* and *Innacor* in the Gurage Sabat Bet coalition, the Awash River symbolically corresponds to the northwestern and southeastern boundaries of the territories associated with *Demamiti* (or *Demwawit* in Gurage).

[16] Wayo Fuga and Abba Yadessa are the names the famous *Me'wet/Mo'aata* leaders of the *Jimadhobe* groups, located in the southern vicinity of Tullu Bolo town in the former Bacho/Soddo Gurage district, in the south of the Awash River.

Fāṭima', the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad and ʿAlī's wife – whose descendants founded the illustrious Husayni and Hasani communities[17].

In the ceremonial blessings and epic songs performed by the *Mo'aata* and the charismatic *Qaalluu* leaders, the expressions *Awash Gamaa* and *Bahar Gamaa*, 'beyond the Awash' and 'beyond the sea' tend to refer to this historical fluvial connection between these religious communities of Western Shewa and the Muslim Ṣūfī shrines of Arsi, Bale or Hararge.[18] Though this dichotomy between *Awash Gamaa* and *Bahar Gamaa* has remained almost unexplored in academic studies, the common appearance of these expressions throughout the local narratives on the Awash seem to indicate the inroads Islamic Ṣūfī ideas and practices in the territories of the Upper Awash basin, and their historical links with the sultanates located to the south of the river.

From Hawash to Gīlān: the mystic Qādirī flood in the local Oromo narratives

Before the war waged by *Imām* Aḥmad ibn Ibrahīm, alias 'Gragn', and the Oromo conquests of the sixteenth century, several sources suggest that the territories of the present Shewa, Bale and Hararge zones were mainly ruled by local sultanates, established since the thirteenth century and linked to the Qādirī networks that spread from the Middle East (SIHAB AD-DIN AHMAD 2003, AHMED HASSAN 2007). Recent studies on the historical background and dynamics of the Oromo religious traditions have revealed theological and ceremonial features they shared with some Persian elements of religious thought as reinterpreted and incorporated in Islam by the Qādirī Ṣūfī spiritual literature that was developed in the territories of present Iraq and Iran since the eleventh and twelfth centuries (OSMOND 2014). In this perspective, the accounts of the miraculous deeds performed by Persian saints, who faced the floods of the Tigris River, present close similarities with stories from the south-eastern territories of the Awash basin.

The Awash is not a *wadi*, but its watershed is fed by a number of tributary rivers and wadis. The local traditions have kept the record of brutal floods provoked by heavy rains.[19] In many cases, these stories involve Muslim saints (*Awliyāʾ*) who stand in the middle of the wadis or riverbeds, beat the ground with their wooden stick to divert the heavy stream. Instead of being wept instantaneously, the holy men are bypassed by the tidal-wave, for they are under the protection of the divine grace (*baraqaa* in Oromo or *baraka* in Arabic). These historical narratives found in Lower Awash tend to be very close to those found in the wide set of regional Ṣūfī traditions, presenting the miracle

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[17] The religious songs performed by the leaders of the *Mo'aata* communities in Western Shewa also mention *Khadir Wali* (al-Khiḍr), the mystic master of the isolated and marginalised Muslim saints. See LORY 2003, and the meeting of Prophet Moses with al-Khiḍr in the Qurʾān, Sūrat ul-Kahf (18: 66-82) and AL-BUKHARI (hadith n°124).

[18] See also LEWIS 1984.

[19] As Tsegay Gebre-Medhin wrote in his poem, the Awash generally flows in a peaceful ways, close to the sand. However, the Ethiopian poet also noticed that its flow could brutally become huge and violent.

ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlānī accomplished to stop the terrible flood of the Tigris River that threatened Baghdad around the eleventh century[20].

These similarities between Muslim hagiographic narratives related to the Tigris and the Awash are reinforced by some linguistic similarities between Arabic and Oromo words referring to 'river', 'wadi' or 'flood'. Indeed, whereas the name of the river is today generally spelled Awash, most of the present Oromo populations of the Lower Awash basin pronounce it *Hawash*. This is particularly clear in Ali Birra's song. In Arabic, the verbal root *hawasha* refers to a state of 'agitation', 'confusion' (e.g. of a crowd), while the semantic field derived from *hawasa* means 'violent agition', 'sexual excitation', 'destruction' (KAZIMIRSKI 1860, vol.2 : 1457-1458). In Oromo language, *laga* – like *lugga* in Kenya – is often used to designate "a normally dry riverbed, one that has water only during the rains" (LEUS and SALVADORI 2006). Similarly, in Arabic *lujja* means 'abyss', 'gorge' or 'a very wide water container', and *lajja*, 'tumult' or 'a long and very strong noise'.[21] Finally, the Oromo word *galaana*, meaning 'flood' or 'river with permanent running water' (LEUS and SALVADORI 2006), might be homophonically associated to the plains of Jīlān (pronounced 'Gīlān' in Farsi) in northern Iran, the birthplace of ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlānī, which is known for its heavy rainfalls and violent floods. From Western Shewa to Hararge, *galaana* is also used during blessings to symbolize the divine assistance or protection over the local communities:

Galaani isin aga'u	May God provide you with all His assistance or protection

Moreover, the Qādirī traditions seem to provide a very similar divine interpretation of the river flood. Indeed, the terms *jallāʾ* ('brightness', 'clarity', 'truth') and *jalayān* ('apparition', 'vision', 'apocalypse') are related to the same *jalawa* Arabic root and the connotations of the bright expressions of the Divine. Through its homophonical closeness to the emblematic region of Jīlān (or Gīlān) and the 'Flood of Light'[22] valued in the Ṣūfi Qādirī traditions, the Oromo word *galaana* is metaphorically charged with the same manifestation of the Holy Revelation. Thus, from the Persian plateau of Jīlān across the present Irania-Iraqi border, to the Awash basin, the local historical narratives share similar semantic patterns related to the river flood. For pastoral populations this natural phenomenon has a powerful meaning in a metaphorical and mystical perspective. The high symbolical value of rivers in Oromo traditions might have been the vehicle for an early diffusion of lexical and patterns borrowed from the Qādirī hagiographic literature. Additional studies on this hypothetical dissemination of Islamic ideas in the local narratives on the Awash River have to be conducted to confirm the existence of

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[20] Some Qādirī traditions report that a great flood of the Tigris was about to cause serious damages in Baghdad and its vicinity. A delegation of the city approached ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlānī to ask for his advices. The Sheikh decided to accompany them to the bank of the Tigris River. ʿAbdul Qadir put his stick in the water and said: "O Tigris, stop by Allah's Command and go back on your way". Then, the flood stopped and the flow of the Tigris River returned to its normal water level (see http://www.rehmani.net/Personalities/ Ghouse_Aazam/miracles.php, consulted in September 2013).

[21] In the Horn of Africa, like in Yemen, the Arabic letter *djim* is pronounced 'ghe' like in 'gum'.

[22] In the Oromo language of Hararghe, the term *faydha* is frequently used to say 'profit' and 'care', in the both economic and religious fields. It is borrowed from *fāʾida(t)* in Arabic.

religious bridges between the Persian world and the history of Islam in the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, the networks which bind together the communities worshipping the local saints of *Awash Oli/Awash Gamaa* in Upper Awash, and the narratives on the Qādirī mystic floods of the Awash and its tributary rivers tend to suggest that the Awash and its basin probably constituted an important historical relay of these Muslim missionaries, from Hararge to the present Western Shewa Zone.

In Ali Birra's song, the flood of the Awash on Addis Ababa does not implicitly carry any religious connotations and seems rather a poetic metaphor of the revolutionary context of the 1960s-1970s:

Bishaan Addis Ababa	The water (or the Awash and its northern affluent river) of Addis Ababa;
Ya galaana kottu, na dabarsi	Oh flood, come and pass through me;
Indu'u nangaggabe	I won't die, but just a bit shocked;
Ya magaalee kottu, shashi na afarsi	Oh woman of the city, dry me with your scarf.

Alhough this revolutionary tidal-wave symbolizes the Oromo national uprising in the Ethiopian capital city, it implies the same brutal manifestation of a universal justice as the expression of the Divine Truth, formulated in the Ṣūfī theology. As violent and legitimate as the Qādirī 'Flood of Light', the Oromo uprising from the banks of the Awash to Addis Ababa is supposed to triumph and overcome the historical cleavages of Oromo nationalism.

Conclusion

This preliminary exploration of the Oromo historical narratives on the Awash River reveals a wide and rich set of materials, from local and transnational religious expressions, to modern artistic depictions making the river as a symbol of national unification. By the combination of various types of knowledge and actors with different landscapes and physical phenomena at the local, national and regional scales, the memorial and symbolical patterns associated to the Awash River offer a potentially large and original field of research that might contribute to (re)discover the plural history of Ethiopia. The development of further comparative and interdisciplinary research on creative traditions and historical memories related to rivers and river basins in the Horn of Africa could make a very promising field in Ethiopian and north-eastern African studies.

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Invisible Diversity: Exploring the Historical Dynamics of the Saho Muslim Settlements in Təgray

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The classical academic literature generally defines the Saho populations as a non-homogenous 'ethno-linguistic' group, found mainly in Eritrea but also in some parts of Təgray (Ethiopia), and the Sudan. Though the use of the Saho language is almost always considered as their major identity marker, these populations are often associated with the ʿAfar communities, with whom they would share the same geographical origins in the eastern lowlands, and transhumant animal herding tradition.[1]

However, few studies moderate these classical clichés on the Saho 'ethno-linguistic' groups, by revealing the diversity of their geographical origins, and their ancient symbiotic relations with the representatives of the Təgriñña speaking Christian highland communities, throughout the regional history.[2] Nevertheless, these studies have still been unable to clearly explain the historical process that led to the geographical dissemination of the Saho populations, along the two sides of the Ethio-Eritrean borders. Besides, it is still commonly assumed that the Saho settlements in Təgray is limited to the Irob of north east Təgray.[3] Last but not the least, the Saho seem to be more and more considered as 'wanderers' and 'foreigners' in some parts of the present Təgray Region. To fill this academic gap, this article proposes to explore the historical trajectories of the different Saho Muslim groups, in the present Təgray Regional State.[4]

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[1] See LEWIS 1969, NADEL 1944, POLLERA 1935, TRIMINGHAM 1965, ULLENDORFF 1973. The *Irob* groups, despite the fact that they speak Saho language, do not consider themselves as Saho (TESFAY MEDHIN, 1993 E.C, TSEGAY BERHE 2006, VOIGT 2007, ZIGTA Berhe 2000 E.C.).

[2] See BRUCE 1790; WILKINS 1870; PARKYNS 1868; DE COSSON 1877; GABRA IYASUS 1954 E.C. However, GASCON (2003) states that there were land-use feuds between the Saho and Təgriñña speaking Christians in Akkälä Guzay area.

[3] Even recent works such as HUDSON 2012, SMIDT 2010, VOIGT 2007 confine the Saho in Təgray to the Irob people only. While others such as ABDULKADER SALEH 2009, 2013, ABDULKADER SALEH and MORIN D. 2010, BANTI and VERGARI 2010a, BANTI and VERGARI 2010b include the Ḥazo, Minifärä and the Irob but they still geographical limit the Saho in Təgray to the ʿAgamä area only.

[4] This paper has benefited from a survey research entitled "Exploring Islamic Heritages in Təgray: The case of Eastern and Southern Zones of Təgray" carried out between April and September 2011, which was generously funded by Mekelle University. The author expresses its sincere gratitude to the University for

Contrary to the static and mainly functionalist approaches privileged in most of these studies on the Saho populations, this work mobilizes more diachronic perspectives.

Through the collection of local – and mostly oral – historical narratives, this study explores the historical dynamics of the several Saho Muslim settlements, in the different zones of present Təgray. This study shows that the existence of the Saho in Təgray is far wide and significant contrary to what was previously thought. Besides the Irob (relatively well studied and thus well known Saho group), there are Saho Muslim communities in various localities in Təgray stretching over four zones and twelve districts of the region[5]. From the reign of Iyasu II, the reign of Yoḥannəs IV, to the Italian occupation and the current federal regime, this exploration of the local trajectories of these Saho groups provides another historical reading of the centre/periphery dichotomy, in the southern vicinity of the controversial Ethio-Eritrean border.
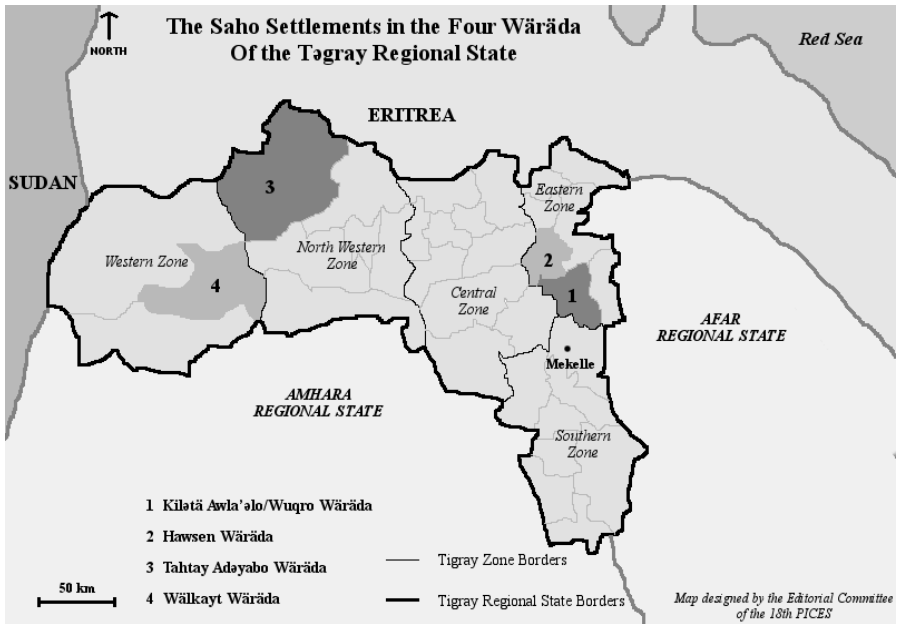
The Saho Settlements in the Four Wärädä Of the Təgray Regional State

1 Kilətä Awlaʾəlo/Wuqro Wärädä
2 Hawsen Wärädä
3 Tahtay Adəyabo Wärädä
4 Wälkayt Wärädä

Tigray Zone Borders
Tigray Regional State Borders

Map designed by the Editorial Committee of the 18th PICES

50 km

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[5] Of the six zones in the Regional National State of Təgray, the Southern and South-Eastern Zones are the only Zones where we do not find the Saho.

Muslim descent, caravan trade networks and local representatives of the Christian kingdom: The Saho settlements of the Eastern Təgray Zone

The Saho settlements established in the Eastern zone seem to perform the long history of the Muslim caravan networks that used to link the banks of the Red Sea to the highlands of Təgray and beyond in addition to their agro-pastoral economic activities.

Šäḵ Bäkeri and the Ḥidaro in the qušät of Mätəkäl ʾꟻlama

The *qušät*[6] of Mätəkäl ʾꟻlama is part of the Wuqro – or today rather called Kilətä Awlaʿəlo – district (*wäräda*), in the Eastern Zone of the present Təgray Regional State. An ancient trade route used to cross this plain district, close to the Afar lowlands. In addition, Mätəkäl ʾꟻlama is located near the senior Nägaš Mosque in this district, where the Companions of Prophet Mohammad settled in the 7th century, after fleeing from Mecca-Medina. The local historical narratives on the numerous Saho Muslim communities, inhabiting the *qušät* of Mätəkäl ꟻlama associate themselves with those living in Atsəbi-Wonbärta *wäräda* who suggest that they could be one of the oldest Saho groups established in Təgray.[7]

The local memories on these Saho Muslim groups often legitimate their presence in Mätəkäl ʾꟻlama by connecting its history with a certain *Šäḵ* Bäkri. According to the local narratives, this *Šäḵ* obtained the control of this territory – through a *gult* concession – to reward him and his people, from the assistance he provided to an important notable, who was probably the royal ruler (*Šum*) of Ṣəraʿə, Täklä Mika'el. In addition, as his *gult* permitted to his relatives and religious companions to legally settle in Mätəkäl ʾꟻlama, *Šäḵ* Bäkri would have to facilitate the coming of the Ḥidaro populations on this eastern territory of the Eastern Təgray Zone. Eight or nine generations ago, during the time of *Šum* Ṣəraʿə Täklä Mika'el,[8] the oral tradition argues that the *Šäḵ* asked the Ḥidaro living in the neighbouring Dägabur, Wonbärta territories to bestow him a reliable man who would assist him in establishing his *gult* in Mätəkäl ʾꟻlama. Pleased by this proposal, the Ḥidaro sent a certain *Šum* Muḥammad, whose daughter (Asəgädu) – a Ḥidaro from Wonbärta – married *Šum* Ara ʿAli, a Jäbärti and son of *Šäḵ* Bäkri.

However, the local historical narratives still perform the matrimonial alliances binding together the descendants of *Šäḵ* Bäkri and the Ḥidaro of Wonbärta. The Ḥidaro,[9] who speak Saho language, live in different districts of eastern Təgray. The name 'Ḥidaro', according to my informants, was given to this group eight-nine generations ago during the time of *Šum* Ṣəraʿə Täkəlä Mika'él. According to their local accounts, drought had forced their ancestors to migrate to Wonbärta by abandoning their original settlements in the vicinity of Sänʿafä in today's Eritrea. They asked *Šum* Ṣəraʿə Täkəlä Mika'él to allow them to settle in the area. The term 'Ḥidaro' is often related to the

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[6] It is like a parish or 'village' and it is not part of the official government/administrative structure.

[7] See Fɪssᴇʜᴀ Gɪᴏʀɢɪs 1993 E.C.

[8] According to some oral sources he was in a position sometime during the reign of *Aṣé* Iyasu II (r.1730-1755).

[9] Was Munzinger referring to this group in the description of the 'Doga' people in his 1869 narrative?

decision of *Šum* Ṣəraˁə Täklä Mika'el' to warn the ˁAfar – and the other groups living in the adjacent territories – not to 'touch' the new comers, whom he considered as his *ḥidri*, meaning 'guests' in Təgriñña. Thanks to the protection of the *Šum*, these Ḥidaro populations of Dägabur spread across the districts of Wonbärta, Däsəˀa, Gärˁalta and Ṣəraˁə including Mätəkäl ˀⱢlama.

Until the 1974 Socialist Revolution, the *gult* of *Šäḵ* Bäkri in Mätəkäl ˀⱢlama provided his descendants with the exclusive right to use these lands of Mätəkäl ˀⱢlama. Though they remain Muslim and well-known for their involvement in the *Arho* salt trade, the Ḥidaro found in Mätəkäl ˀⱢlama are today mostly based on sedentary farming production. Since the last few decades migration particularly irregular migration to the Middle East seems one of the copying strategies that these people have been applying.[10] Whereas the number of Christian households is still very limited in this *qušät* of the eastern Təgray zone, their cultural influence seems to keep growing.

The Saho Agro-Pastoralist Federations of Ḥawəzen

Beyond the north-western boundaries of Wuqro/Kilətä Awlaˁəlo, other Saho communities inhabit the densely populated highlands of the Ḥawəzen *wäräda*. Though the oral tradition does not clearly report when these Saho first settled in this ancient political centre of Təgray, the local historical narratives argue that they arrived before the reign of *Aṣe* Yoḥannəs IV.[11] Among the different Saho groups established in the ˀⱢnko, Dängar, and ˁAdi Gäfah *qušät* of Ḥawəzen, the Muslim *Ḥazo* federations[12] are presented as the founders of the first local settlements.

Like in Mätəkäl ˀⱢlama, the local narratives on the Saho communities of Ḥawəzén assume that they were nomadic herders. Originating from Bur[13] (near Bada), these Muslim Saho pastoralists used to move around the northern ˁAgamä and ˀⱢmba Sinäyeti-Näbälät areas, in search of suitable grazing areas for their cattle. When they learned that the locale which was by then covered by forest is vacant they decided to make a permanent settlement. The local historical narratives portray the founding Ḥazo Saho federations in Ḥawəzen as courageous pioneers, establishing their permanent settlements in these forest territories, infested by malaria. With respect to their local memory, when the Saho came to that area, it was forsaken. Sometime before their arrival the former residents were wiped out as a result of malaria epidemic. Oral tradition has it that the pandemic left only one person alive. ˀⱢnko (the name of one of the *qušät*), meaning 'one' in Təgriñña, is associated with this tragic incident because only one of the early settlers survived this epidemic.

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[10] On the irregular migration in Təgray to the Middle East see FESSEHA BERHE 2013.

[11] During the time of *Aṣe* Yoḥannəs IV the Saho seem well established in the area. In the course of the discussion, all the informants tell how *Aṣe* Yoḥannəs IV had forced their ancestors to convert to Christianity. From this we can tentatively conclude that the Saho settled in the area some time before mid 19th century or even earlier.

[12] The sub-clans of Ḥazo who first settled in the area were: 1. ˀⱢronaba in ˀⱢnko, 2. ˀⱢnda ˁUmär Gayəsa in ˁAdi Gäfaḥ, and ˀⱢnda ˁAssa ˁAbdälla in Dängar.

[13] See NOSNITSIN 2003.

During the Italian occupation, the Italian administration had acknowledged land owned by the Muslims. According to the local oral tradition, it was at that time that the Saho groups started to focus on farming activities. In the three *qušät-s* of ʾƐnko, Dängar, and ʿAdi Gäfah, the Saho settlers had to pay a tribute to the *gult* owner, a certain *Däjäč* Sahlä. Nevertheless, until the land reforms implemented by the *Derg* and the TPLF, the land in Dängar and ʿAdi Gäfah was exclusively in the hands of the Muslim Saho. Contrary to these two other *qušät-s*, the Saho who settled in ʾƐnko were quickly confronted to the arrival of Christian Highlanders, some of them claiming *rist* rights on the area. Moreover, with the establishment of Giyorǝgis church in the 1940s, one thrid of the land of the locality (ʾƐnko) was given to the church. All these have aggravated the territorial competition with the Christian Highlanders and reduced the size of land that the Saho previously held.

Land pioneers or foreign wanderers? The controversial status of the Saho settlements in the North-Western Zones

The Saho settlements are not limited to the eastern part of the present Tǝgray Regional State. The fieldworks conducted in the north-western and western zones reveal the presence of other Saho communities.

The Saho of Shäraro in the north-western zone

In the Šäraro area of the Gǝrat Räda *qušät*, within the Tahtay Adǝyabo *wäräda*, the local narratives suggest that the first Saho settlers arrived there before the invasion of the country by the Italians in 1935. The Saho did not settle in the area directly from their original homeland in Eritrea. These Saho groups were nomadic herders, engaged in seasonal migrations in search of better grazing land for their herds across the eastern or central Tǝgray and Asǝgädä Ṣǝmǝbǝla area prior to their settlement in Adyabo lowlands including Gǝrat Räda.

Nowadays, there are twenty five Saho households (extended families) in Gǝrat Räda, divided into different clans and sub-clans, the majority being the ʿAsawǝrta 'clan'– which is also the common name generally ascribed on all the Saho speaking groups living in these western lowlands of Tǝgray.

According to the local oral tradition, the Šäraro territory was mainly covered with a dense forest, except for the areas inhabited by the Kunama, when the senior Saho groups decided to settle in the area. As in the Ḥawǝzen *wäräda*, the Saho settlers of Šäraro were later followed by the arrival of the Christian Highlanders, coming mainly from the Naʿǝder, Zana, and Čǝlla districts of Tǝgray, as well as the today's Eritrean plateaux of Hamasen. Though the Saho Muslim communities often decided to move to the untenanted lowlands of the current North-Western Zone, they were finally joined by the increasing number of Christian settlements. Within few decades, land competition entailed growing tensions between the Christian Highlanders and the Saho settlers.

Today, the two communities seem to co-exist in a 'relative harmony' – to quote one of the current inhabitants of this area. Though the Saho also speak Tǝgriñña, it seems

that there is minimal interaction with the Christian settlers. The term *Şärago*, meaning 'sweepers' in the Təgriñña language, given to the local Saho groups by the Highlanders, concretely illustrate these historical tensions mainly expressed through land competitions. Indeed, this 'sweepers' label expresses the aptitude of the Saho pioneers to enter and settle in uninhabited areas. The Saho of this locality are still following a semi nomadic way of life. Except during the rainy season, they often send their cattle to the Wälkayt and Täkkäzä districts, in the lowlands of the Western Təgray Zone.

The local narratives collected in Gərat Räda indicate that the Təgrayan Highlanders often point out the allegedly strong relations of the Saho inhabiting this *qušät* with the Italian Administration and with the Eritrean liberation movements (the Eritrean Liberation Front, ELF and the Eritrean People Liberation Front, EPLF), through their participation in the military and other campaigns waged by the Fronts between the 1960s and 1980s.[14] Moreover, it is commonly argued that a large majority of the local Saho communities took part in the 1993 referendum, whose result inaugurated the secession from Ethiopia, through the recognition of the independent Eritrean State. However, the Saho tend to categorically reject these allegations. They rather claim their Ethiopian identity and continuous support for the military and political agendas of the Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF).[15] Some informants even tell stories of the involvement of several Saho Muslims of Western Təgray in the resistance movement waged by Ethiopian patriots against the Italian invasion. Very recently, the Federal and Təgray Regional Governments have attempted to end the insisting rumours on the putative 'Eritrean' identity of these local Saho communities, by officially recognizing their Ethiopian citizenship – though few of them still remain 'stateless' in the Gərat Räda *qušät*.

The Saho of Mäzäga in the Western Zone

To complete this introductory overview of the different Saho settlements in the present Təgray Regional State, the approximately eighty households found in the Mugu'e *qušät* of the Wälqayt *wäräda*, within the Western Təgray Zone, have to be mentioned here. Mugu'ə is an interesting case because it was almost uninhabited until the 1970s except for the Şälim Bét[16]. Established around 1997 (1990 in the Ethiopian Julian calendar), this Saho settlement is probably the latest one in all Təgray. Mugu'e is a clear illustration that the Saho are in constant move even after they entered into Təgray. My informants

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[14] This may have some grain of truth as many Saho left to the Bärka lowlands in Eritrea when the ELF was forced to leave the Western lowlands of Təgray in 1974 E.C.

[15] Regarding the 1993 referendum on the Eritrean independence, the different Saho individuals interviewed for this study in Gərat Räda unanimously argue that the TPLF cadres ordered them to participate and positively vote for the independence of Eritrea.

[16] See HABTOM and SMIDT 2010, SMIDT 2011.

and/or their parents were in three-four different areas in Təgray before they finally settled in Muguʾe[17].

As in Gərat Räda, these communities settled in the Mäzäga plain of the Muguʾe *qušät* because of the growing coming of the Christian populations from the Təgray highlands in the North-Western Zone. But contrary to the three configurations exposed in this article, this recent Saho settlement in Muguʾe was achieved with the permission of the present local authorities. Though the Mäzäga territory is also inhabited by Christian Highlanders, the local authorities largely moderate the potential land competition between the two communities, by controlling the location and the size of the lands where they successively settled[18]. The citizenship problem as seen in Gərat Räda also existed to limited extent in the *qušät* as well.

In the Muguʾe *qušät*, all the Saho Muslim populations belong to the *Ṭorəʾa* 'clan' specifically the *Bet Muse*, 'sub-clan'. However, they seem to follow the same socio-economic pattern than the other Saho populations in Təgray. Indeed, these local communities are also engaged in mixed agro-pastoral activities, and send their herds to the Täkäzzä lowlands during the dry season. In addition, the local historical narratives report that these *Ṭorəʾa* federations used to be involved in the regional Saho networks, through the seasonal migrations of these nomadic herders, across the territories of the north-western zone.

Thus, behind the unique *Ṭorəʾa* federations present in the Muguʾe *qušät*, their current members still have relatives living in different locations of the North-Western Zone.[19] Like the several groups today disseminated from the Eritrean lowlands, to the Eastern and Western Təgray Zones, the Saho of Mäzäga are also connected to the other Saho communities, through Muslim legacies matrimonial alliances, descent and pastoral federations.[20]

Conclusion

Across the Ethio-Eritrean lowlands surrounding the plateau of Təgray, this introductory study of these several Saho settlements unveils the plural social declensions of their almost unknown history. Beyond the static – and sometimes pejorative – portray, depicted through the current 'ethno-linguistic' models, the local historical narratives on

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[17] In the family history of one of my informants, we see continuous movement from Eritrea to Zagir (ʿAdi Hageray) and then from Zagir to Azho (ʿAdi Hageray) and finally from Azho to Muguʾe. We have five generations from the one who entered to Təgray from Eritrea and his great- great- great son who lives in Muguʾe. We find similar five-four-three generations migration story in this area.

[18] One former civil servant of the Wälqayt *wäräda* told me that there were cattle raiding related conflicts between the Saho, the new comers and the Ṣällim Bét during the 1990s. However, this data was not confirmed through the interviews conducted elsewhere for this study.

[19] Before their settlement in Muguʾə, they were living in various localities such as Mäy Ḥaramus, ʾƎləmi and ʾAzəho in ʿAdi Hagäray, Widak in ʿAdi Daʿero, Hohoye in ʿAdi Näbərʾed, Gərat Räda in Šäraro, Mäyli and May ʾƎbara in Šəräro.

[20] Even after the border conflict, they have been communicating with their relatives in Eritrea through letters under the auspices of the ICRC. This also seems to be the case for those living in Gərat Räda – and probably for the other Saho communities, established in the western lowlands of Təgray.

the different Saho settlements rather reveal the religious, economic and political dynamics of the centre/periphery device in past and present Təgray. The first finding of this study suggests that the Saho identity may be rooted into the long history of the Muslim caravan networks of this North-Eastern African region. In the four configurations explored in this article, the local historical memories report the presence of Saho settlers in Təgray, since the 18th century – and probably before, in the Eastern Zone of Təgray.

Along the dense forests and inhabited escarpments, linking the Afar lowlands to the Təgray plateau, the senior Saho settlements were generally established on the caravan trade routes, used by the regional pastoralists during their seasonal migrations. In the local narratives, the *Šäḵ*-s who founded these early settlements are portrayed as influent Saho notables, sometimes integrated into the administration of the Təgray Christian kingdom. Rewarded for their services with *gult* land privileges, these respected Muslim partners of the Christian Highlanders were the legal owners of the founding Saho territories, located in the Eastern and North-Eastern Zones of present Təgray.

The history of Saho Muslims of Təgray has been the history of migration and integration but also that of marginalization. The Saho has been courageous pioneers, establishing permanent settlements in various untenanted territories and later whereby entered into competition with later highland setters (Təgriñña speaking Christians). There are evidences that show that some lands in Təgray were exclusively in the hands of the Saho Muslims; even in some cases the Saho were *rəsti* land owners. Contrary to this, the Saho Muslims of Təgray have been also subject of marginalization, in which in some cases even their 'Ethiopianess' was put in question.

However, particularly since the 1940s, this study suggests that several historical dynamics have affected the status of the Saho Muslims of Təgray. From the Italian occupation, the growing land competition, to the decline of caravan trade, the 1974 Revolution and the subsequent land reforms introduced by the Derg, the political and military activities of the ELF, EPLF, and the TPLF, the radical land reforms of the TPLF, the independence of Eritrea and the subsequent border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the resettlement programmes of the EPRDF government, tend to have great effect on the Saho federations in contemporary Təgray.

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*Protracted Rural Protests in North-Eastern Shäwa and Southern Wällo (Ethiopia): Towards a History of Social Movement, 1941-1974 **

Ahmed Hassen Omer [**]

This article deals with protracted rural protests in the vast region of North-eastern Shäwa and Southern Wällo during the period 1941-1974. Four major protracted protests have made their appearance in this vast region during the period covered by this study. These were the one led by Muhammed Ibrahim in1947- 1949, the Conflict of Arbawayyu and the Waylaying against Crown Prince Asfawäsän in January and April 1949, the April 1949 Siege and Hassen Ammé Zerraf and his Colleagues. They will be treated on the basis of available and reliable historical sources. Before directly dealing with the subject it would be advisable to carefully identify the basic factors behind such inveterate rural protests.

Factors behind rural protests (1941-1974)

It is reported that revolt against the Ethiopian feudal court had become such a prominent feature of the life of the people in Ethiopia between the Imperial restoration in 1941 and its demise in 1974. There are works of grand quality in this regard. Gebru Tareke's work treating the peasant revolts in the twentieth century is a solid work in this field of study. His work carefully deals with the uprising in Tigray (1943), that of Balé (1963-1970) and Gojjam in 1968. By putting these three peasant revolts in the wider theoretical and socio-historical context, he has come up with a pioneering study providing a deep insight for both the general readers and researchers interested to follow in his footstep.[1] It was after reading his work in mid 1990s that undertaking an extensive research in the vast region of North-Eastern Shawa and Southern Wällo has come to the mind of the present researcher. No serious research has been undertaken in this vast

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[1] See GEBRU TAREKE 1991: 1-11, 89-124, 125-159, 160-203; mass sufferings also characterized the Eastern Ethiopian region as well treated in the account by NEGA MEZLEKIA (2000).

region on the rural protests against the central power covering almost throughout the Twentieth Century. The particular Italian time and the nature of the Italian relations with the particular communities of this vast region had also been quite dynamic.[2]

The rather more dynamic one is the subject which this article tries to carefully look into based on historical evidences collected at various times from this vast region. It should be underlined that rural protests all over the world have their own historical contexts. It is the social environment in which they nucleated which could decisively matter. There is no doubt that rural protests had not been uniform and vary both in time and space. However, it is difficult to reduce most rural protests in history to their apparent immediate causes. Nor are most protests as sporadic as they might appear at first sight. A careful historical investigation usually proves that most have widespread networks and radical objectives with messianic overtones.[3] The Northeast Shawan and the Southern Wällo case can be seen in this light, although some exceptions will not be ruled out. Although one can generally attribute the root cause of such protests, in the then rural parts of Ethiopia, to the rather coercive and heavy-handed imperial treatment, their interethnic and ideological background still await a systematic and thorough investigation.

The interethnic conflicts which the study area had witnessed may not just be treated within this time bracket alone. This is for the highly charged and explosive atmosphere which the Italians left behind among different ethnic, linguistic and religious communities in the country, and particularly in the region understudy, greatly endangered the stability of the reestablished power of Haylä Sellasé's government. There were great fears among all concerned that a series of hostile actions to revenge unfriendly deeds by groups and individuals during the Italian Occupation might be staged in the various corners of the country.[4] This was indeed what happened in the vast region of our study area in August 1941. This was at a time when the general policies of Haylä Sellasé's government were not yet clearly formulated regarding such possibilities. *Djjazmach* Damtäw Mäshäsha, one of the leading patriots in the region throughout the occupation, began to undertake punitive campaigns, particularly against the Oromo. He rallied large members of the Amhara troops aimed at revenging the great devastations of 1937 inspired and organized by the Italians with the Oromo and other Muslim communities in the region. Many people were killed and the Amhara tried to regain the livestock they had lost during the Italian Occupation. This had naturally further aggravated interethnic conflicts in the area. Again in February 1942, the district governor of Efrata (by then including Jillé, Fursi, and Buri Modayto) a certain Mäshäsha Zä Wäldé mobilized his local Amhara forces and marched against the Oromo and Afar. He wrought great havoc in the area so much so that the year is identified by Oromo

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[2] For my earlier related studies to the present theme but with particular focus on North-east Shäwa, see among others, AHMED HASSEN OMER 1997, 2000.

[3] Informants: *Al-Haj* Ali Mohammed Aliyyé, Qorro (Yifat), December, 1993; Ato Ibrahim Hassen, Addis Ababa, August, 2012. AHMED HASSEN OMER 1987.

[4] TADDESSE ZEWELDE 1955 E.C.

informants as *Baraa Mashshaa* or *Dulaa Mashashaa* (literally Year or the campaign of Mäshäsha). He is specially noted for having destroyed several Oromo settlements and raided large numbers of heads of cattle which were later distributed among the Amhara of Gedem, Efrata, Gämza, Mänz and Bätäho. In fact, Mäshäsha's actions contradicted the Emperor's own general assurances made on his return from exile that all his peoples would henceforth "live together in equality peace and freedom".[5]

The ideological and religious background of rural protests should not also be underestimated. Even prior to the advent of the Italians, the Sheikhs of Bätté but originally from Tähuladäré (Southern Wällo) were associated with the radical Islamic positions; and strong sentiments towards an all-out "Jihad" had developed within their leadership as a response to the repeated ethnic confrontation in the area. It was with this leadership that the Italians clearly cultivated an effective alliance in the first years of their occupation. The Italians knew of the strong anti-Christian aspiration of this community and encouraged them to stage their "Jihad" with the Italian support. However, the cruel attack against even the most established Argobba of the region made a charade of the Italian backed "Jihad".[6]

Nevertheless, the impact it had left on the interethnic and cultural as well as religious relations of this vast study area should not be underestimated. This trend had created two parallel developments. The first one was from the Christian Amhara point of view which had underlined that the Oromo armed during the Italian times should be disarmed. They further insisted that not only their guns disarmed their abundant livestock should be confiscated. They were of the opinion that it was difficult for them to govern unless the Oromo were disarmed. The Muslim Oromo and Argobba inhabitants had, however, forged an alliance to denounce this Amhara allegation and desire not by confronting the case on the administrative and legal fronts but by intensively organizing a few preachers, who could secretly disseminate on their turn the anti Amhara positions in which religion served as instrument. These preachers even demonstrated messianic and prophetic manners by reaching the extent that that time was the end of the world and that Muslims should inherit paradise by joining hand against the Imperial order and its Christian Amhara hardcore. "What did the Christian rule for us they asked themselves? And they argued that anti-Islamic trend matured at Boru-Méda (1878) and negatively acted against Muslims by further Christianizing Oromo and Argobba Muslims of the region and by alienating them from rich lands.[7] It was above all widely preached that the Muslim Oromo of the region should not be disarmed for firearms are the best means through which they would guarantee the well being of both their religion of Islam and their domestic beasts.[8] Moreover, conflicts among different social groups

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[5] *Ibid*, p.96.

[6] Informants: *Ato* Esähäté Garrädäw; Sheikh Hando Sadiq; *Ato* Hassen Omer.

[7] It should be noted that prophetic expressions attributed to Sheikh Hussein Jibril associated to this story in Southern Wällo partially shared this trend. See ASNAKE ALI 1983: 29-32; Informant: *Ato* Ibrahim Hassen, Addis Ababa, August, 2012.

[8] Communication from *Ato* Abdu Omer Doyyo, Atayyé,July 2001; with *Ato* Ibrahim Hassen, Addis Ababa, August, 2012.

persisted had taken the form of ambushes which the Oromo call it as *gaadaa*[9] or *gaadu* and entered also into Amharic as an Oromo loanword. While the ambush is identified with this term, the actors of the ambush are known as *gaaddilee*.[10] It is, therefore, not surprising in this volatile region that going to kill through an ambush or *gaadaa* is considered as "Jihad". This being one of "slogans" was in those days secretly circulated by underlining that one who kills any Amhara is going to inherit heaven in the world hereafter. It is only after carefully exploiting the already indicated complex socio-economic, cultural and ideological factors behind these rural protests that the following themes can possibly be treated. After thorough investigation, however, this study proves that all these factors had reinforced each other to only finally reduce the vast region of North-east Shawa and Southern Wällo which has always been a homeland of both social and religious diversity to a platform of grave social discord even after the Imperial restoration.[11]

Muhammad Ibrahim and his followers (1947-1949)

Within the consecutive three years of 1947, 1948, and 1949, a group of Afar-speaking Oromo brigands from Wajirat in Southern Tigray are said to have led a series of cattle raids in the districts of Däwwäy Rahmado in which the Afar inhabitants suffered considerably. The raiders also emasculated the male killed people and burnt down everything they came across. They did this not only to the Afar but also to the Oromo of Artumma and Fursi. It was, however, the Alimmäddo Afar clan who suffered most; and, some of them fled in 1949 to Artumma where, however, they were again similarly attacked, this time by the local Oromo and others from Fursi who are closely related to them. The Afar are said to have lost here large numbers of cattle. The leader of the Oromo who thus victimized them is remembered in the tradition as a young man called Muhammed Ibrahim from Qori, Fursi.[12]

Mohamed Ibrahim apparently had a number of young Oromo adventurers following his lead and coming from the neighboring areas of Däwwäy, Artumma, Fursi, Dugugguru and Jillé. He is pictured as a good orator and a man who could convince and organize people. He impressed his followers so much so that he was nicknamed by them as "*Ras* Toboké".[13] He daringly led his followers in a series of raids which took innocent herds men by surprise. He even appeared in market places where he is said to have proclaimed his own decrees on rates of exchange of important commodities which he insisted that people follow strictly. He and his young adventurers had become very notorious in the region and they and they intimidated the countryside. The fact that he is said to have proclaimed his decrees on rates of exchanges in a number of market places,

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[9] This term should not be confused with the egalitarian Oromo socio-political organization of gada.

[10] Ahmed Hassen Omer 1987: 24.

[11] Informant: *Ato* Ibrahim Hassen.

[12] Informants: *Ato* Hassen Omer Hassen; Sheikh Sa'id Hussein Musa.

[13] Informants: *Ato* Abdu Omer; *Ato* Hassen Omer Hassen. The term *Toboké* is not clear, both to me and my informants.

such as Burqa, Eddo Mädiné, Kämisé, Jimäté, Karraqori and Sänbäté- his renown was widely spread among the Oromo throughout the region.[14]

"*Ras* Toboké's" raids on the Alimmaddo Afar greatly disturbed the Afar governor and *balabbat* of the Sub-district of Rahmado (Southern Wällo), *Qägnnazmach* Muhammed Boddayya (d. c. 1977), who appealed to the Crown Prince Asfa Wässän, the titular governor of Wällo. The Crown Prince passed orders to the relevant local governors for the capture of "Ras Toboké" and his gang and the immediate return of the cattle taken from the Afar. The difficult task of capturing these gangsters fell on the Hénna Oromo clan chief and *balabbat* of Chaffa, Qägnnazmach Hassan Mohammad Yasin. "Ras Toboké" and one of his followers Abbahisho, were apprehended, sometime, in March 1949, at a village called Karraluté in Chaffa and kept at Eddo Mädiné for a short period of time. Later, "Ras Toboké" was taken to Karraqori and handed over to *Qägnnazmach* Muhammed Boddayya, the Governor of the Afar group whose cattle had been taken in large number during the Oromo raids. The wise *Qägnnazmach* did not want to press charges which could cause protracted blood feuds between the two ethnic groups. He just wanted to recover the cattle his people had lost through the direct negotiation. It is reported that the *Qägnnazmach* took "Ras Toboké" with him to the Artumma Oromo settlements where they restored thousands of Afar cattle. "Ras Toboké" was also invited to the Afar villages where he too was given a few heads of cattle by the Afar as a reward which was considered as a credit for identifying the Afar cattle taken by raid. This was done within a short period of time and "Ras Toboké" was secretly sent back to his folk in Fursi where his fame and his news simply melted away, as it were, with no more traditions about what happened to him afterwards.[15]

Among the well established Oromo leadership, there is a general tendency to dismiss "Ras Toboké" as a mere adventurer surrounded by a number of innocent young admirers who produced a lot of havoc in the neighboring districts. The Oromo traditional elite also laugh at his reported "decrees" proclaimed in market places and at the title of "*Ras*" he assumed. They say with derision that the self assumed title of *Ras* caused no ripples beyond the Ṭärma-Bär pass; and that it was only conferred upon him by a bunch of admirers during one of their acts of brigandage. When closely considered, however, the activities of "Ras Toboké", despite appearances, seem to have had at least some elements of political and cultural protest against the *Wäynadäga* and *Däga* agricultural society. At the time when his followers conferred on him the title, they are said to have done it with an open feeling of contempt by saying, "since the Amhara do not have a *Ras* for the region, let us nominate an Oromo *Ras* ourselves".[16] Moreover, the song which "*Ras* Toboké" is said to have been chanting at the time of his capture contains lines in Afaan Oromo which reflect the basic grievances of the semi-pastoralist Oromo against the local

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Informants: Ato Hassen Omer; Ato Hasen Omer Hassen.

[16] Informants: *Ato* Abdu Omer; *Ato* Hassen Omer Hassen; *Ato* Hassen Omer.

Amhara agriculturalists who, in their insatiable and unquenchable hunger for land, progressively transformed the fertile pasture lands of the *Qolla* into farmlands.

> Caffaa Keessaa Bishee Biyya Sa'a Namaa,
> Yoggaan Bishee Jedhu Inan dadarbama
> Olmeenyi Bishee bultiin Jaaliyaatii
> Ammaan demee lolaa biyya isaanittii[17]

A rough rendering of the above lines runs as follows:

> Beshé in Chaffa is really good land both for man and the beast,
> Oh! I am wild with anger when I even think about it,
> They [the Amhara highlanders] spend the day at Beshé and sleep at Jaliyyatii,
> But I shall go and attack them in their own land!

The conflict of Arbawayyu and the waylaying against the Crown Prince Asfawäsän (Jan/April 1949)

It seems to the present researcher that "*Ras* Toboké's" chant are rather weighty words to be associated with an individual who is traditionally dismissed by the local establishment as just good-for-nothing. It may also be that his final capture with the special order of the Crown Prince Asfawäsän may have had some repercussions on later events which culminated with some unknown persons shooting at the Crown Prince himself, on his way back from a short visit to Addis Ababa, at about the same area where "Ras Toboké" was caught and only a few weeks after the capture,[18] as we shall see below.

Many incidents of similar nature erupted in different areas and the local government sent its armed agents to hunt for the culprits who were not easily exposed by the local people. This again led to the usual brutalities committed by the local militia sent to capture the original "wrong doers." They looted the countryside, burning down houses and molesting women and young girls. All this seriously shock public confidence in the Imperial order in the area.[19] One such incident in January 1949 resulted in considerable loss of human life and property in the district of Efrata-Jillé. It started with unknown individuals killing three policemen who were on their routine inspection tour of the old route between Sanbäté and Karraqori in North-East Shawa. This route is to the east of the modern motor road and commonly known as Haylä Sellasé's highway for it was used in the Pre-Italian days. It traversed a very difficult terrain which was often infected with highway men who easily ambushed merchants and travelers and endangered the general security of the area. There was a very crucial police station on this road at a place called Arbawayyu which was a commanding site between Sanbäté and Karraqori where five

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[17] Informant: *Ato* Hassen Omer; *Ato* Adämé Ousé. This is a reference to the Amhara farmers who spend the day working in their Qolla farms and have their residence in the foothills above.

[18] Informants: *Ato* Hassen Omer; *Ato* Hassen Omer Hassen.

[19] MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ARCHIVES, "A letter from Mänz and Yefat Awrajja Police to the Ethiopian Police Headquarters".

policemen were always assigned. It was precisely this police located in the predominantly Dugugguru Oromo and a few Argobba area which was attacked and three policemen killed.[20]

The two surviving policemen fled in the direction of Karraqori near which place they began shooting at random to ask for help. This scared the Amhara settlements nearby; and the district Governor, *Qägnnazmach* Kätäma Dämessé, soon mobilized his local troops and all other Amhara farmers who had arms to assist the policemen. They all marched towards the station and the Governor sent messangers from Gubba Annani, on the borderland between the Amhara and Oromo settlements, asking the Dugugguru Oromo to send him the bodies of the policemen. The whole incident had incited the Oromo settlers in the area and they had gathered on the road in large numbers. Tempers easily rose to a high pitch with the Amhara perching on the hilly ground and the Oromo seething in the lower ground at a very sight of the concentration of armed Amhara above them. Thus, what should have been a routine Government administrative measure easily deteriorated into ethnic confrontation, largely because the Amhara governor, *Qägnnazmach* Kätäma, impetuously resorted to what already looked like a punitive expedition without even trying to make consultations with the local Oromo *balabbats*. One of these, *Balambaras* Umar Bätté, belonging to the old Hénna Dugugguru family of Gunjo, was raised to his titel by the Emperor at Mähalméda in 1942, at the important meeting organized by the royal court.[21]

The *Balambaras* was actually at the spot where the confrontation was beginning to take place; and he apparently did not have a clear idea of why the governor had allowed the situation to get out of hand in this manner. The atmosphere between the two groups had heated up so much so that the *Balambaras* could do nothing. The Oromo simply refused to hand over the bodies of the policemen and a bloody shootout started with large numbers of people killed on both sides. The shooting and killing lasted for a whole day and the casualties were so heavy on both sides that the news of the conflict reverberated at once via Däbrä Sina (a small town bellow the Tarmabär Pass) all the way to Däbrä Berhan. This was despite the efforts of *Qägnnazmach* Kätäma Dämessé, the district governor to cover up the whole incident which he avoided reporting even to his immediate supervisors in Däbrä Sina.[22]

A small government force was sent from Täbasé military base near Däbrä Berhan (the so called *Yä Mägäzäz Tor*), under Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Täsämma Azzänä. This was also reinforced by small police force from Däbrä Sina and local militia known as *Näch Läbash*. This government force tried hard to pacify the situation and to collect information about the background of the incidents. They found out that it was started by a group of three Oromo youths killing the policemen; and that the district

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[20] Efrata-Jillé Wäräda Archives, "Yä Arbawayyu Yä Oromonna Yä Amara Getchit"; Informant: *Ato* Tseggayé Wäldä Sämayät.

[21] Informants: *Ato* Hassen Omer; *Ato* Tseggayé Wäldä Sämayät.

[22] *Ibid*.

governor had unwisely mobilized the local Amhara without bringing the local Oromo chiefs and *balabbats* into the picture and trying to resolve the matter in an orderly manner. Rather than functioning as a governor of the whole district with its Amhara, Oromo and Argobba population, he had acted as a mere Amhara chief, thus inciting much ethnic bias and confrontation on the side of the Oromo.[23]

It was the governor's hasty decision that led the incident to deteriorate into an ethnic conflict affecting large numbers of families on both sides, thus opening the way for endless blood feuds for many years to come. Major Täsämma Azzänä entreated leading members of the two communities to avoid further violence; promised the Oromo chiefs that he will at once report his findings to Addis Ababa and asked them to keep the situation under control in the meantime.[24]

His report to Addis Ababa was taken so seriously that General Abiy Abbäbä and General Mär'ed Mängäsha were sent to investigate the matter. The two Generals are said to have called a large meeting at Arbawayyu which both the Amhara and Oromo were summoned to attend. In the public discussions, it was again reported by the Oromo that it was the district governor, his assistant and their immediate staff who had unwisely aggravated the incident; that the Oromo had later allowed the local Amhara to collect the remains of the dead policemen through the good offices of their chiefs; and that that it was generally the local administrators who fan troubles among the Amhara and the Oromo settlers who are otherwise capable of living as good neighbors under normal circumstances. The Oromo handed over two of the three young men who had killed the policemen. These two, Mohammed Omer Wedaho and Musé Adem Jelo of Bli and Walladhu Oromo clans, respectively, were taken to Addis Ababa and executed. Nevertheless, the third energetic man, Ahmed Omer Alisha of the relatively more influential Hénna clan could not be found anywhere. His very powerful mother, Hawwa Abakkar (d.1985), belonged to one of the well-known families of respected Argobba Sheikhs; and it is reported that she had long spirited him away to her relatives in Dewway, Southern Wällo. The fact that he could not be found, all his kinsmen, up to the seventh generation, were penalized and ordered to pay a cow or an ox or fifty Tägära (Maria Theresa thaller) each.[25]

The high level delegation was satisfied that the district governor and his assistant were responsible for not only inciting the Amhara into a bloody confrontation; but also for failing to report the situation to higher authorities and attempting to cover up the heavy casualties. Both the *Qägnnazmach* and his assistant *Ato* (Mr.) Bäqqälä Gäbrä Egziabiher, were dismissed from office and later taken to court for this and sentenced to 15and 17 years of imprisonment, respectively. The delegation also told the Oromo that their community in general was to blame for the three young men, who killed the policemen thus initiating the conflict, belonged to them. As a result, the delegation

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Informants: Ato Abdu Omer; Ato Hassen Omer; Wäyzäro Momina Ali; *Ato* Tseggayé Wäldä Sämayät.

decided that if, in future, a similar incident was initiated by the Oromo individuals the whole community was to pay 1000 cows and birr 50,000. If, however, the Amhara initiated it they would be required to pay only birr 50,000. The Oromo were very unhappy with this partial treatment; and they felt that the delegation's decision was definitely pro-Amhara and anti-Oromo.[26]

It is apparent that this dissatisfaction among the Oromo seriously shook their confidence in the central Government. The leading Oromo chiefs told the delegation itself that its decision was unfair and they later sent representations to the provincial capital of Däbrä Sina asking for a review of the case which was never done. This feeling of distrust and sense of injustice spread widely among the Oromo in the region; and it was while they were still nursing their hurt feelings that the case of "*Ras* Toboké" which we considered earlier began to incite Oromo rural society from Timmuga country in the south, through Jillé, Dugugguru, Fursi and all the way to Chaffa in Gamza Qolla (North-Eastern Shawa), and to Artumma and Dewway (Southern Wällo) by making Chaffa, his center of activities, as it had been a place where all of them took their cattle for grazing for much of the year. At such moments where all the Oromo of this vast region brought their news to Chaffa, there was always a lot of excitement among them and the slightest bad feeling could easily erupt into major conflicts. It is apparent that the incident involving the Crown Prince in late April 1949 was a result of such a phenomenon.[27]

In fact, it has never really been established who exactly initiated the attack on the Crown Prince and why. However, it must have had at least some connection with many of the events we have been reviewing over last few pages. Two particular incidents seem to have contributed to the conspiracy against the Crown Prince. In the first place, there was the great dissatisfaction of the Oromo with what they believed to be a biased, pro-Amhara ruling of Generals: Abiy Abbäbä and Mär'ed Mängäsha regarding the assassination of the policemen in Arbawayyu and the resultant bloodshed in January, 1949. Secondly, the Crown Prince had personally ordered the capture of the so-called "*Ras* Toboké" and the immediate return of the livestock he and his followers had taken from the Alimmäddo Afar of Dawway Rahmado in Southern Wällo, as we saw earlier.[28]

It also appears that the attack on the second highest personality of Imperial Government was well planned. The local Oromo had quietly watched him being driven to Addis Ababa only a few days earlier; and a few determined individuals probably decided to stage the attack on the return trip. It was often the restive young elements who were involved in such adventures. Although they tend to be dismissed by the traditions of the established chiefly families as aimless and impulsive youths, they seem to have constituted a crucial sector of the society who articulated with little inhibition, the deeply felt frustrations and popular protests of their people which their elders feared to express. In many ways, their activities could be considered as the rural equivalent of

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[26] Informants: *Ato* Hassen Omer; *Ato* Tseggayé Wäldä Sämayät.

[27] Informants: Ato Hassen Omer; Ato Hassen Omer Hassen.

[28] Ibid.

the student movement of the 1960s, in which sons of noblemen, Generals and other officials of the government took part in daring public demonstrations against the monarchy, to the great embarrassment of their families.[29] Whoever the perpetrators of the incident, however, the attack on the Crown Prince shocked the Imperial Government and the local Amhara community in the region in particular.[30]

The April 1949 siege

The immediate reaction of the officials of the local government to the Crown prince's assassination attempt was to mobilize armed groups from the Amhara inhabited area of Mafud, Qäwät, Gedem, Efrata, Gämza, Gesshé (North-east Shawa), and from the Southern Wällo side Borkanna Valley to march against the Oromo who had gathered in the Chaffa area, where the attack took place, for seasonal grazing of their livestock. It is said that, besides bringing the culprits to justice, the mobilization had additional objectives. Oromo cattle rustlers had taken away large number of livestock from nearby Amhara settlements over last years, and the Amhara had intentions to use this opportunity to regain their cattle. Secondly, the government had been convinced that the main reason for the frequent breakdown of security in the region was the large number of firearms in the possession of the semi-pastoral Oromo. Thus one of the objectives of the campaign was to disarm the Oromo as much as possible. The news of the government preparations had reached the Oromo who became even more defiant and ready for a heavy confrontation from Jillé, Dugugguru, Fursi and Qori in North-east Shawa all the way to Artumma, Essoyyé Gula and Dewway Rhamado in Southern Wällo. The situation had now become rather heated up that reinforcements were sent again from the Mägäzäz Tor regiments in Däbrä Berhan under the command of Colonel Täsämma Azzänä whom we have seen earlier leading a similar force a few months earlier. Some of the local commanding officers specially remembered by the traditions as having participated in the campaign are *Grazmach* Asamenäw, governor of Gesshé; *Grazmach* Yegebberu, governor of Wayra Amba; *Balambaras* Bälachäw, governor of Mängst and the acting governor of Wägama.[31]

The initial thrust came from the local troops under the governor of Wägama who moved swiftly into Chaffa ransacking on their way, the Oromo and Argobba villages of Gélo, Därénsa and Jarra areas. The other forces marched on to the same area from other directions, thus practically besieging the Oromo in Chaffa. The Däbrä Berhan regiment under Colonel Täsämma Azzänä lined up on the right side of the main road blocking the only major outlet of the Oromo from Chaffa grazing land to their respective areas. This meant that the Oromo and their live-stock were almost completely surrounded by government and the regional Amhara forces; and because of this the conflict is called in the traditions *Lolaa/ baraa Marsaa* (literally War/ Year of siege) by the Oromo and *Yä*

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[29] On this issue, see BALSVIK 2005.

[30] Informants: *Ato* Aklilu Yefru; *Ato* Asäffa Tämtimé; *Ato* Hassen Omer Hassen; *Ato* Mäsärät Täsämma.

[31] MÄNZ-ENNA YEFAT AWRAJJA ARCHIVES, "Yä Chaffa Torennät Gudday".

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Märsa Amät/ Yä Märsa Torennät or the year of *Märsa* or the war of *Märsa* by the Amhara. *Märsa* in the case of the Amhara is just using the Oromo loan word.[32]

   Colonel Täsämma had passed order to the Oromo not to cross the main motor road to the east or to the south, except through the several check points he had set up. The checkpoints were apparently established to apprehend possible culprits; to disarm the Oromo who were reported to have been heavily armed since Italian times; and also, at least the Oromo suspected, to take away as much of their livestock as possible. This created a very explosive situation as the Oromo obviously could not accept the Colonel's orders; and they were determined to break the siege imposed on them. The well-armed Oromo, however, to a very large extent achieved their objective of breaking the siege by wisely moving their women and children as well as their livestock on the western side of the motor road. They after doing this lined up in front of their women and children but behind their livestock. They did this in all check points. It is reported that nothing was clear both for the Colonel and other Amhara regional and local force commanders as to why the Oromo warriors were doing this. The Oromo suddenly fired to the sky from all check point areas with an intention to incite their livestock jump over the regiment members who lined up along the main road. This highly damaged the regiment forces and paved the way for the Oromo women, children and their livestock to almost successfully quit the Chaffa area. This resulted in a bloody battle between them and the government and the regional and local Amhara forces, with very heavy casualties on both sides. The Oromo in that way achieved their objective of breaking the siege with much of their arms and livestock intact. But there was the danger of more protracted rural conflict spreading throughout the region. It was about this time that the Empress Mänän is said to have intervened.[33]

   The traditions report that the Emperor himself was travelling in Harar when news of besiege at Chaffa and the resultant conflict reached Addis Ababa. The Empress held consultations at Court and sent the high- level delegation to investigate the matter and bring about the return of law and order in the region. The delegation consisted of Generals Abiy Abbäbä and Mär'ed Mängäsha (these were also sent in an earlier conflict), Deräsé Dubbalä and Yilma Shibäshi. Just as in the earlier occasion, they called a general meeting of the major local government officials and leading representatives of the Amhara and Oromo communities. Once again, the Oromo chiefs complained that the local government officials had always resorted unilateral military action without involving them in peaceful consultations whenever disturbance took place in some corners of the region. The results were considerable losses of human life and property as well as continuous feeling of mutual suspicion among the local Amhara and Oromo inhabitants. The blame fell squarely, once again on the district and sub-district governors who were to be dismissed and brought to justice for any criminal acts. One of

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[32] Informants: *Ato* Abdu Omer; *Ato* Asäffa Tämtemé; *Ato* Hassen Omer; *Ato* Hassen Omer Hassen; *Ato* Tseggayé Wäldä Sämayät.
[33] Informants: *Ato* Aklilu Yefru; *Ato* Hassen Omer.

the local governors deeply involved in the conflict at the time was *Qägnnazmach* Käbbädä Dämessé, governor of Gämza district who was a renowned patriotic leader during the Italian Occupation and brother of *Qägnnazmach* Kätäma, governor of Efrat-Jillé and convicted, as we saw earlier, of criminal acts in the earlier Arbawayyu incident. Käbbädä was also dismissed, taken to Addis Ababa and placed under house arrest there for next ten years.[34]

Here again, the high-level delegation returned to Addis Ababa with a superficial understanding of the basic problems and with no effective arrangements to resolve them in a more permanent manner. The biggest failure of these delegations was that they always functioned within the existing and narrow structure of the local government. They did not try to initiate, for example, a broader framework in which highly respected local chiefs and religious leaders could be incorporated into the regular administrative process so that they could always positively contribute towards the effective prevention and resolution of interethnic, economic, politico-administrative or social conflicts. There were a number of such highly respected, particularly religious leaders; but the agents of the Central Government neither sought for them nor tried to use them with respect and integrity, even in times of great conflict.[35]

An excellent example of religious leader who had much influence on multi-ethnic communities was *Muftī* Muhammad Aman Ibn Sheikh Abdullah. He was a highly respected Muslim Argobba scholar moving from place to place among Muslim Amhara, Argobba, Oromo and Afar communities in both Northern Shawa and Southern Wällo and had great spiritual power over all these people. One particular case in which he had shown considerable successful efforts was in the year 1952 when a major incident broke out between the Oromo and the Afar in the then district of Buri Modayto. A group of Alimmäddo Afar young men just drove away a large number of heads of cattle belonging to a Henna Dugugguru Oromo, *Ato* Aliyyi Doyyo. They took the cattle from the areas of Jäldi and Dhakaadhabaa to the distant Afar site of Afétakarro near Handalé, a remote corner of Northeastern Buri Modayto. The Dugugguru rallied a lot of support from various Oromo clans and sent group of warriors to pursue the Afar cattle rustlers and regain the stolen livestock. A bloody confrontation took place between the Oromo and the Afar groups. The Afar defeated the Oromo and kept the cattle. Distinguished Dugugguru Oromo warriors such as Hassan Ali Kilaa had been killed. The intervention of the local government was weak and ineffective. In the end, it was only the intervention of Muftī Muhammad Aman which could bring about the reconciliation between the two communities with much of the cattle returned to their original owners. No systematic and respectful use of such influential personalities was made by the local government representatives, and the result was the recurrence of conflicts with heavy casualties on life and property.[36]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Informants: *Ato* Wäldä Semayät Wäldä Mariam; *Mämeré* Asäffa Yemam.

[36] Informants: *Balambaras* Ali Murado; *Wäyzäro* Momina Ali.

The 1958 local revolt of Hassen Ammé Zärraf and his colleagues

About a decade after the attack on the Crown Prince, which is almost completely dismissed by the official documents, another serious chain of incidents took place which called for much tougher action. Sometimes in late March 1958, an Italian driving to Asmara was killed by unknown persons at Hora Méda. An *afrsata* (Traditional get-together to investigation wrong acts) was held to discover who made the attack. The traditional meeting failed to identify the criminal(s). A few days later a message was received from a leading Fursi Oromo highwayman, Hassen Ammé Zärraf, who teased to the local government: "Do not mistreat my subject people on my account. I killed the Italian. Come and capture me, if you can! " The Commander of the Provincial Police, Captain Seyoum Wäldä Iyyäsus personally led a small force and went to Muddhi Haroo where Hassen Ammé Zärraf was reported to be hiding. There was a shot-out in which Hassen escaped after killing a policeman and fled to Dawway Uchurruu in Southern Wällo. He was followed there by the police; but there again, he moved to another location after killing the Artumma Oromo chief, Omer Ali Abba Magaal, who was guiding the police to the hiding place. The police intensified the search and they continued to peruse the criminal. On April 6, 1958, there was another shoot-out in which 45 policemen were together with the Provincial and District Police commanders, Captains Seyoum Wäldä Iyyäsus and Täklu Wondemagagnehu, respectively. The situation had gotten out of control at local level; and a report was sent to the Central Government.[37]

A small force was sent to the area; and Colonel (latter Lieutenant General) Abbäbä Gammada (d.1974) was commissioned to pacify the area and to propose a more permanent solution. After some field work on the spot, the colonel reported that most of the serious incidents took place in the few districts on both sides of the frontier between Shawa and Wällo Administrative regions. He proposed that these districts of Efrata-Jillé, Gämza, and Fursi from Shawa and Artumma, Essoyyé Gula and Dawway Rahmado from Wällo should be brought together to form a separate *Awrajja* (Province) and placed under a state of emergency for a few years. The new administrative unit was to be called *Yä Järra Awrajja Yä Tor Aggäzaz* (Military Administration of Jarra Awrajja), after Jarra being one of the major Awash tributaries which flows in the midst of these districts. The small town of Qichicho, in Artumma, was made the capital of the Military Administration. The proposal was adopted by the Central Government; and Colonel Abbäbä himself was promoted to head the New Military Administration, reporting on many things, directly to Addis Ababa.[38]

An important mission of the new administration was to hunt for the criminals who apparently used the difficult terrain in this part of the country to challenge the Imperial order and disturb the security of the region. Abbäbä started to work hard in this regard. He perceptively sought for influential local leaders to help him. He got in touch with one of the highly respected local religious leaders, *Al-Hajj* Ali Dullatii who was a well

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[37] Ibid.
[38] *Ibid*; Cf. AHMED HASSEN OMER 1987: 38-39.

known Muslim scholar in Dawway, Southern Wällo. *Al-Hajj* Ali was invited to Addis Ababa for an audience with the Emperor who asked for his contribution in the reestablishment of peace and security in the region. The Emperor is said to have promised *Al-Hajj* Ali that all criminals who gave their hands to the Government through him would be given amnesty. On his return to Jarra, the Muslim scholar summoned the criminals to give their hands to the Government through him. All of them are said to have rushed to his temporary residence near Qichicho and submitted peacefully. Among those who submitted Hassen Ammé Zärraf, Siraju Abdallah and Tächan Ahmed are still remembered by the living memory. However, both Abbäbä and the Emperor are accused by the local tradition for having broken their solemn promise to pardon the culprits. They were all taken by Abbäbä and executed by public hanging in various administrative and market centers in the region: the leader Hassen Ammé Zärraf, was hanged at Kämissé in the immediate neighborhood of which most of the incidents had taken place; and his other colleagues were hanged at Karraqoré, Sänbäté and other smaller market places in Jarra *Awrajja* (Province).[39]

With its most important mission thus accomplished, the Military Administration was repealed in 1964. The various districts that constituted it went back to their original administrative units in Shawa and Wällo. Minor conflicts however continued to flare-up now and then until the outbreak of the Ethiopian revolution in 1974. One basic question is why such crimes were so widespread in the area during the period covered by this study. Although the reports thus made by the government officials attributed the prevailing security problems to ethno-cultural, religious and political factors, the various archival and oral sources which this study has attempted to examine largely indicate that the key problems among the local communities on the one hand and the local authorities of the Imperial rule on the other since 1941 were due more to economic and political factors than what the Imperial authorities had tried to justify. Seen in a wider context, this was part and parcel of the general reality of the 1960s Ethiopia, a decade which significantly created a great shadow between the monarchic rule and the society at large.[40]

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[39] *Ibid*; My informant Sheikh Muhabba Imam also shares the same view.

[40] AHMED HASSEN OMER 1987: 38-39; for the very recent work which treats the gap created by that time in Ethiopia at large between the Ethiopian society and the absolutist order, see GEBRU TAREKE 2009: 11-45.

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The Road to Wello: A Historical Study of the Nineteenth Century Horse Markets in Northern Shewa

Yves-Marie Stranger

This paper presents some elements towards an attempt to understand Ethiopia using horses as a vehicle of understanding. Ethiopia is experiencing rapid change at ever increased speed, with globalization, modernization, and economic and population growth together with increased communications and an opening onto the world and the African continent of a long 'remote' land. We propose that the country's long standing equine culture and the continued use of horses (and mules and donkeys) for transport, and the dissemination of horses along ancestral trade routes such as the 'Wello Road' linking the north-western region to the capital Addis Ababa, together with other routes, linking donkey, horse and mule producing areas to other regions in need of animal power, can be ways to penetrate and understand Ethiopian culture.

From 'eternal Ethiopia' to the irruption of modernity in rural areas

Ethiopia had seemingly changed little over the centuries, with a feudal society based on agriculture and caravan taxation. Ethiopia's unchanged nature has been a common trope at least since Gibbon (1788) – 'Aethiopia slept for a thousand years...' - and has been perhaps overused. Nevertheless, in such a country the irruption of modernity in all of its forms is provoking change that sometimes seems to happen too quickly to even be recorded. In 'traditional' markets, you can observe side by side the Isuzu trucks loading grain for the city and cattle for the booming export market, and mules and horses covered in silver harnesses and red pompoms which are tied up outside mud hut bars where their riders are drinking their gains. Yesterday – a couple of years ago, that is to eons ago – they drank home brewed ale and mead, today they guzzle bottled beer, watching satellite TV programs from the Gulf and pause to answer their mobile phones. The mobile phone that earlier enabled them to know the town price of the grain they were selling.

The Ethiopian space is experiencing a complete social and economic upheaval, and has changed more in twenty years than in twenty centuries – perhaps Gibbon had got something right. Life styles, ways of transport and the understanding of a country long divided by difficult or impossible travel during long periods of the year, the aspirations and desires of the country's inhabitants: no tradition is left unturned by modernity's restless foray into Ethiopia. The rapidity of the change is so tremendous that it can be

seen with a 'naked eye,' as if a fast forward film was being played out in front of us. *Eternal Ethiopia* – legendary Ethiopia – that was believed to be unchangeable and classical, is no more, and a new country and people are being born. The country of the queen of Sheba with highways, tenement housing allotments in all regional capitals and hydroelectric dams to produce surpluses to sell to neighbouring countries. A country that sometimes seems to be one huge building site. A 'Chinese' development model, very far indeed from the images – now also legendary – of the biblical like famines of the 1970s and 1980s.

And then there is the other Ethiopia of course, the one where people continue to live 'as before,' like their forbears. This is a deeply rural world – in a country where agriculture still keeps 80 % of the workforce busy – in which people's lives continue to be rhymed by seasons and religious festivals, and that one could believe to be immutable. But in reality there is only one country of course, and this rural world is changing too: chemical fertilizers distributed by peasant associations, schools and health centres that are built including in the most remote areas. If the oxen continue to plough a furrow that goes all the way back to the civilization of Axum, it would be foolish to believe that the man who cracks the whips is not different, if only in the new aspirations born from the wave of modernization engulfing the table top mountain. In the flotsam and jetsam of this globalizing tsunami, there are mobile phone masts and television networks and fast changing mores.

Donald Levine's *Wax and Gold*, published more than fifty years ago (LEVINE 1965), is a study of a popular culture in Menz, and posited that the wax and gold form of speech in which people say one thing and mean another (from the lost wax technique of moulding jewellery, in which the wax form is melted away to reveal the golden jewel underneath), was a central and revealing figure not just of speech but underpinned the inner working of society at large. He used the wax and gold trope to try to understand what he came to see as an inherently conservative society which valued form over content, secrecy over openness and was fussy and obsessed with protocol, rather than with essence. Indeed, Levine went on to say that Ethiopian 'culture' – or at the least, the Ethiopian culture he had chosen to study and took to represent the whole – was by its very nature antithetical to modernity, with its stress on openness, a level playing field and adaptability and constant change. Perhaps this was true back in the 1960s, and part wishful thinking on the part of Levine, a self-professed *ethiophile*, a group for whom *Eternal Ethiopia* is often a *gabi* clad, traditionalist gripping the handle of a plough for eternity, and then some. It rests that Levine's cultural analysis was, and still is, relevant, even in today's Ethiopia with its mobile masts and fast roads.

A relevant aside here would be the story of starting a horse riding enterprise in Ethiopia, the bureaucratic struggles inherent to this process and the daily vexations of working with people who indeed may display an immoderate use of the famed wax and gold figure of speech – even for the most simple operations and subjects. Form is paramount and forms will indeed be filled, for every purpose possible and imaginable – I remember once having to fill in a form in order to remove horse manure from my own yard, and an operation which was straightforward and simple ended us requiring five

times the time and energy it should have done. And so it sometimes seems that working in Ethiopia amounts to cleaning the famed Augean Stables...

Prestige, trade and farming: the plural equine legacies in Ethiopian history

Ethiopia has a million and a half of horses and mules. From time immemorial, horses – and mules – have been both prestige and power symbols, as well as one of the main actors in the conquests, wars and comings and goings inside the Ethiopian theatre. One cannot imagine an Ethiopian culture, civilization, without equines. Marco Polo evokes the famed horsemen of the king of Ethiopia, and Prester John's missive to the Pope in the 12th century tells of the Prester's 100 000 strong cavalry, ready to storm Jerusalem and give the Turk a lesson (RAMOS 2006)... Alvares in the 16th century relates that the horse of Ethiopia are innumerable (ALVARES 1540) and later on, the Scot James Bruce will mention that the 'black' cavalrymen of Gondar are the best read men in the realm (BRUCE 1790)... Nevertheless, this equestrian culture is an unknown side of the country, even and more so today, when just two generations ago, a ruling dynasty and an aristocracy that saw itself as having held the reins of power by god granted fiat for millennia was rudely taken down from its high horse and deposed.

The horse, long a preserve of the military and of the aristocracy and of tantamount importance in a country of little roads and frequent uprisings – until well into the second half of the twentieth century – suddenly becomes an object of backwardness. Motor worthy roads, become the development mantra and the economic – and symbolic - worth of equines starts a long decline. If Theodoros, Yohannes, Menelik, and even Haile Selassie, all have horse names, to sing their praises, one cannot imagine except as a facetious joke to give a Mengistu Haile Mariam or a Meles Zenawi a horse name. The imperial stables, once full of Lipizzaner and Arab stallions are now so ill kept one could see sabotage rather than animal husbandry, and horses now acquire the pungent smell of the country bumpkin who ride them. The horse, and even more so the mule and the donkey have now been relegated in the imagination of the country to the very lowest rung of prestige.

However, if new ribbons of asphalt now festoon the land, and if monumental dams are being erected on all rivers, it nevertheless remains that huge swathes of the population go on foot, on horseback, by mule, and if they use chemical fertilizers to increase the production of their fields, the bags will have made it from the brand new Isuzu parked at the local market to the field on the back of their animals.

And it is these markets and the trade routes that link them, that interest me. To buy horses for my stables, I had to visit these markets of the Gimbichu, Guddu, Jidda or Kottu towns in Northern Shewa. I would buy horses and ride them back over several days, following the routes that link the markets to other regions that don't produce equines. I met there horse traders, mobile traders that take these mounts of Shewa over several hundred kilometres, to the west, to the north, and this on foot, or perched precariously on their wooden saddles. They are following trade routes that I imagine to be well established routes, of trade, transhumance and conquest.

This equestrian culture has been very strong in Ethiopia, and this until very recently. There are poems dedicated to horses, legends and stories, and, as noted earlier, men of valour were known under the name of their best horse – Aba Tatek for example for Emperor Theodoros, Aba Dagna for Menelik (PANKHURST 1989). D'Abbadie – the famous French explorer of the 19th century – speaks of horses only fed from the hand of their master, 'as in Hejjaz,' and Theodoros having rhetorically asked: "where is the horse's country found?" goes on to give the answer: "in the eye of his master!" that is to say loved, protected and esteemed (D'ABBADIE 1868). And in the widespread *zar* possession cult, let us not forget that the possessed is said to be the horses of the demon that then rides them (LEWIS 1984).

In the time of Emperor Haile Selassie, the imperial stables are full of beautiful mounts, the princely gifts to the *negus* from the world's rulers. The stable master in an Armenian captain and the parades are sumptuous. The Emperor holds the country on a tight rein and the aristocratic and feudal system, with its regional courts, and its *balabat* land owners live in simple luxury: a plethora of foot servants, while the lord rides high on his horse, or better still, as in the first propaganda pictures of the twentieth century, on the back of a richly decked mule – the first pictures of Haile Selassie on a horse are a decade later. They show him on a white horse and are a piece of propaganda aimed at westerners and show that 'globalization' started a long time ago. Where an European would have seen a conquering monarch, one of Levine's peasants from Menz would have exclaimed: "Where is the man's mule?!".

The 1974 Revolution takes the emperor down from his pedestal and off his high horse, and with him the aristocracy. A bizarre 'Marxist' program is put in the driving seat, progress is the order of the day and the horse, the mule and the humble donkey become contradictory symbols: they represent both the backward aristocracy and the bumpkin peasant. Not a good time for equines – not a good time for people either, in an animal farm kind of communist revolution. A rich equestrian tradition is just about lost in one generation, and horse breeding – now deprived it its aristocratic patrons – becomes a poor man's pursuit. Breeding programs are abandoned, the horses of the imperial stables allowed to go to seed. The copper and aluminium plated tack of yesteryear no longer shine and martial equestrian games are seen at best as useless pastimes at worst as counter revolutionary activities. This happens at a time of rapid population growth and the extension of cultivated areas over grasslands and an increase in motor transport that renders going to town cheaper and easier. In a couple of generations, a millennia old equestrian tradition is nearly lost.

Exploring the horse market networks from Shewa to Wello

I want to attempt to rediscover this rich equestrian past, by collecting testimonials from people who experience the pre-revolutionary times and exploring and following the routes that link the horse, mule and donkey markets to each other and to other regions. These routes are of special interest as they must be characterized by traditions and traditional bylaws to ensure their function. There must be pasturing rights, 'hostels' for the drovers, and 'stables' for the animals as they traverse the high plateau for sometimes

several weeks. What are the traditions still present here? And for how long – as motor roads expand at lightening speed, and Isuzus take over, and young men no longer desire to run along for ten hours a day to ferry donkeys and mules from one end of the country to the other.

In June 2012 I took a trip on horseback, from Ankober (120 kilometres north east of Addis Ababa) to Sululta (just behind Addis Ababa and Entoto). The trip then continued from Sululta to the forest of Menegesha Suba, 40 kilometres to the west of the capital, on the flanks of Mount Wuchacha. This trip had two objectives in mind: the first was to establish a highland equine trekking route between the eastern escarpment forest of Wof Washa near Ankober and the mountain forest of Suba. Not only are these two forests some of the only indigenous mountain forests left standing in central Ethiopia, but they are also linked by a strong indigenous story of conservation as the early 15th century emperor Zara Yacob is said to have not only forbidden the further clearing of the forest of Suba, but also to have brought seedlings to restore it from the forest of Wof Washa in Ankober. The new equestrian trekking route, baptized of course the Zara Yacob trail traverses the highlands north of Addis Ababa, running west from Debre Berhan into the grasslands found between the Entoto range and the river gorge of the Jemma River. These grasslands were the second objective of the June exploratory trip. The area forms a vast triangle with a base of some 100 kilometres running along the Jemma gorge, from Debre Libanos to Debre Berhan, and the point found some 70 kilometres to the south, just behind Addis Ababa.

There are only two roads in this vast area – and a few mobile phone masts! – and not only is the horse one the main ways of locomotion – the main form of transport rests of course, like in most of Ethiopia, walking – this has also long been a main centre for horse, donkey and mule breeding and possesses many markets. Sirti (on Thursdays), Rob (on Wednesdays as its name in indicates), Arb (on a Saturday unlike what its name indicates as Arb means Friday), and just outside of the boundaries of our triangle, Gimbichu, Kottu, and further afield, Guddu. All of these markets are 'horse' markets, and do a brisk trade in equines, cattle, and they all also have a market place for all sorts of commodities, from the teff cereal required to make *injera* to mobile phone batteries. People sell donkeys, drink mead and bottled beer, watch satellite TV, recharge their phones and have their pictures taken by itinerant photographers. There is life here, and an exchange of ideas is fermenting like never before in 'eternal Ethiopia.' One can remember and contrast this ferment and this colour with the drab and bleached pictures from Levine's *Wax and Gold* of markets in Menz in the 60s, where everyone is dressed in gray and everyone sits in front of a colourless and tiny heap of surplus they are selling. It is as if, in today's Ethiopia, colour photography had finally made it to market.

As I progressed toward the south from the Jemma gorge between these market villages, asking my way as I went, peasants would wave me to the south. They kept saying: "Just keep to the Wello Road and you'll be fine", or "The Wello Road lies behind that hill, follow it". Although I had no time to stop here to enquire further as the rains were coming, and we had to make it to Addis Ababa, their talk greatly excited me as it seemed to confirm the hypothesis I had made of a constellation of trade routes linking

the country's different regions to one and other. And behind the hill, indeed a 'traditional' route lay, making its way straight through the fields and sometimes delimitated by rocks, sometimes not, it ran, the farmers and traders told me, all the way from the cattle producing areas of the north eastern region of Wello, to the markets of Addis Ababa. From here, near Addis Ababa, they would walk mules, donkeys and horses north. How long did it take? Weeks, they opined vaguely. Where did it run? Yonder, and behind that hill they muttered...

Conclusion

The theme of horses and the equine markets of northern Shewa, and the routes that link them to each other and to outlying regions of the country, could well be a vehicle for a better understanding of the change that Ethiopia has experienced and continues to experience, in the last forty years, from a country with millennia old 'traditions' into something else than no one yet seems to quite understand. If modernity were a *zar*, we would say that it was riding the country at a quick gallop towards a fast receding and as yet undefined new horizon.

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Sūfism and Syncretism in North-Eastern Šäwa

Abbebe Kifleyesus[*]

Sūfism in north-eastern Šäwa, as in Sunni Islam elsewhere, is a mystical movement that emphasises the intermediary role of holy men or saints and is aimed at gaining a closer connection to and higher knowledge of Allāh by its male adherents who perform rituals collectively in brotherhoods or fraternities. Moreover, the *shari'ā*-minded Islam is concerned primarily with the well being of the Islamic body politic while Sūfism in the abstract represents concerns that are typical of the social and spiritual life of the individual. Yet the various manifestations of Sūfism are not best seen as an alternative to *shari'ā*-minded Islam. Rather mysticism shrouded in syncretism is understood as an intense personal complement to the more formal Islamic doctrines (ABBEBE KIFLEYESUS 1995:31). It appeals to the desire of the pious for withdrawal from the world in order to achieve higher forms of religious knowledge and mystical union with Allāh through common *ḍikr* or meditative recitations or prayers. It is the piety, healing ability, and perceived power of holy men and saints to make miracles that makes saint worship appealing to peasant commoners (DESPLAT 2005:498).

North-eastern Šäwa, as Berhanu Gebeyehu (1998:8) shows for Wällo and Solomon Getahun (1997:5-12) does the same with Gondar of the past and present, is a religiously and culturally plural polity whose underlying local cultural commonalities allowed the exchange, accommodation, and tolerance of diverse traditions and belief systems. These spiritual traditions have always had a space for non-Muslim religious influences including zar cults and exorcist practices whose festering spirits are treated by holy men in these rural retreats. Saint veneration and the cult of saints (*bā awliyā māmmāêān*) is thus, in this sense, at present central to the religious life of Muslim Ethiopians in north-eastern Šäwa. It includes prescribed prayers or recitations (*du'ā*) performed ceremonially but always individually or communally (*ḫādrāh*), involves several sermons (*khuṭbā*) pertaining to Qur'ānic traditions, and often, as Ishihara (2010:253) shows for western Oromia, entails syncretic emanations, which together may induce exorcist experiences and altered states of consciousness, to use the phrase of Bourguignon (1973:29), among the disciplined performers. These spiritual exercises feature a Sūfi ritual (*ḍikr*) which, as Taristani (2005:158-159, 2008:183) shows using a Harari field experience, combines bodily movements with chants and drum beats aimed at inducing a state of mind that is

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both mystic and syncretic. Thus, the gap between the *ulamā* and the *awliyā* is narrower than what is normally presented in recent studies.

In north-eastern Šäwa, the oral literature involving litanies and panegyrical or didactic verses or poems called *mänzumat* is replete with references to local and foreign Sūfi saints and their loci of shrines including those of Abbayä Géta (*Soṭän*), *shayh* Muhammad Adem (*Tač Mäṭäqläya*), Emmayyä Radiya (*Lay Mäṭäqläya*). shayh Jemil (Qoraré), *shayh* Muhammad Amin or *Ṭoriqa* (Embokarra), *shayh* Áli Däwwé (Aliyyu Amba), Faqi Ahmed (ʿAbdrasul), Emmäkälsumé (Dinki), *shayh* Nur Hussen (Cänno), *sayyəd* Áli (Kher Amba), *Gäbäroč yyā* or *shayh* Yusuf (Gäbäroč), *shayh* Yəmam (Gussa) and *shayh* Swadiq (Wəsiso/Rasa) and are yearly visited by several thousand Muslim and non-Muslim pilgrims from far and near (Abbebe Kifleyesus 2006:181-182). However, among many northern Šäwa Muslim fundamentalists, Sūfism is an untolerated target of extreme suspicion and considered as a violation of Islamic tradition and a kind of syncretic and heretic nounces (*bid'ā*). But there are also those who belong to no saint cults and yet tolerate their practices as in Gäläbunna and Gussa surroundings. The latter, as depicted in the expression *wəqabén lämasaggäs gussa mälläsmälläs*, is well known for exorcising spirits during saintly shrine visitations. Thus the kind of Islam assumed in north-eastern Šäwa is both orthodox and popular in context.

Ethnography of the Sūfi Shrines

Like most other Sūfi shrines and Islamic teaching sites in Ethiopia, the ones in north-eastern Šäwa are located on a summit of mountain ranges reached through strenuous walks. These Sūfi shrines are usually found near springs and groves and are surrounded by a fence and sometimes enclosed by low walls or other types of enclosures that are considered as ritually clean and sacred. Such saintly shrines are most of the time white washed and rock-domed structures constructed of dressed stone, and as monumental edifices frequently rise high from fields in order to signal a stopping place for itinerants. Again typical of other similar Sūfi shrines throughout northern Ethiopia, they have a dome where the remains of the saint rest, a place of residence for the *khālifä* or custodian of the shrine, and a mosque. Almost all of them are remote rural retreats far away from noisy town roads and markets, and this makes them ideal places for meditation and religious education. They are by and large founded by family lineage members (*silsila*); they annually attract several thousand pilgrims from both Šäwa and Wällo and beyond, serve as the principal Sūfi sites for higher Islamic learning and training, and the initiation of individuals into a mystical order, and act as special spaces for collective religious experience and social interaction. In this respect, saint worship or the cult of saints serves as focal points of Islamic localism and as centres of mysticism and syncretism.

Such Sūfi sanctuaries have caretakers (*khalifä*) to take charge of visitors and to collect prestations and offerings. The keeper of the shrine received pilgrims' gifts in cash or in kind as an expression of humility and in search of thee saint's blessings (*barakā*) and miraculous manifestations (*karamāt*). They also organise yearly shrine visits, accommodate pilgrims in lodges, and distribute foods for guests. The *khalifä*, usually a descendant of the Sūfi saint, as a guardian of the shrine also takes care of those who

come for instruction (HUSSEIN AHMED 1988:98). The fact that these Sūfi shrines were relatively within each others' reach allowed a regional network and affinal relations between saintly families and their descendants or successors, and students or disciples. In these centres, pilgrims congregate in order to celebrate the *mawlid* or birth of the Prophet Muhammad and offer votive sacrifices (*nazri*) within the premises of the shrines. Most of the time, pilgrims come on foot, as part of a vow for fulfilled wishes, while few travel using mules but for those who come from distant lands journeys, usually considered religious experiences, may take up to two days. The large majority of pilgrims arrived two or three days before the commencement of the momentous occasion and with patience pitched in place temporary shelters and tents in the open space surrounding the shrine.

In these same surroundings, itinerant petty traders set stalls to sell ceremonial necessities such as coffee, *čat* (*Catha edulis* or *qât* in Arabic), sugar, matches, incense, perfumes, candles and other daily needs. Most of the pilgrims are peasant cultivators and craft workers including weavers and basket makers, rural itinerant students, urban traders and merchants as well as unemployed individuals, civil servants, women housewives, a small but growing number of Christians from all walks of life, some beggars and physically handicapped persons who perform the pilgrimage to primarily partake in the immediate redistribution of food and to collect charity. Although only men are active participants of the cults of saints, women provide the audiences for ritual and figure prominently in the backgrounds. In fact, more women than men seek out the blessings (*barakā*) of the Sūfi sanctuaries. Women seek the intercession of saintly power in order to break the burden of barrenness and have children or to they or other family members recover from festering illnesses while men usually look for success in business and restoration of health. Moreover, because they are barred from participating in formal mosque prayers, women find special meaning in their relationship with the aura and charisma of the *awliyā*. That is perhaps why many women and their children often pass the time at the local shrines socialising with others. In this respect, pilgrimage is a both a religious journey or movement and entertainment.

On arrival at the shrine, pilgrims circumbolate the shrine of the Sūfi saint three times, prostrate at the entrance of the tomb of the saint, kiss the walls of the dome, pray and meditate, and many press bits of butter or honey, pieces of cloth or beads and pebbles on the walls of the chamber to signify special pleas to the saint. This act represents the most intimate and emotionally charged moment of the entire event in which pilgrims made supplications in search of the saint's intercession and blessings (*barakā*). The possessed, the mentally deranged and most emotionally involved devotees shouted and fell in some sort of trance dance until taken care of by their own companions and shrine attendants. This is an indication that shrines also accommodate manifestations of syncretism and exorcism in which the possessed person is freed from the evil spirit by the invisible power of the dead or living saint (ABBEBE KIFLEYESUS 2010:714).

Pilgrims normally take alone their food that they may share with fellow shrine visitors as part of the function of *sadaqā* during religious rituals. On the eve of the event, a large number of oxen or sheep or goats, depending on the degree of importance of the shrine, brought by those who are participating in the pilgrimage (*ziyārāh*) are

slaughtered separately for Muslims and Christians and the meat is shared accordingly by all those present in the occasion because for the former it is the very act of slaughtering that marks the distinction between *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl* (FICQUET 2006:40). During successive days, pilgrims who happen to be family members, friends, companions and acquaintances formed small circles and earnestly took part in the collective worship through the conspicuous consumption of cat and the recitation of litanies in Amharic or *ʿajamī*, as observed by Pankhurst (1994a: 257) in Wällo, in honour of the local saint. As the days progressed, pilgrims become frenzy with ecstasy and are absorbed fully by the act of utter devotion and meditation in order to achieve a mystical path to collective salvation. In the meantime, peasants in the surroundings of the saintly shrines stopped agricultural engagements and instead contributed labour that facilitated the festive rituals of the annual occasion.

Mänzumā chants that extol or glorify the virtues of local saints in the form of recollection of memorised lines accompanied by musical intonations, the outburst sounds of the overzealous pilgrims, the fragrance of incense and other aromatics, and the odour of perfumes gave a special aura to the surroundings of the shrine. The harmony between bodily movements and chanting of these praise-lyrics and songs induces the highest stage of spiritual elation and excitement in the most devoted pilgrims. The infinity of time and space allowed a focus on the unfolding of the ceremonious events and in the meantime barefoot pilgrims moved back and forth to either as first time visitors make vows to return with gifts if wishes are fulfilled or make vows to saints based on needs and desires (*haja*), give tokens (*ğabātā*) and gifts (*hādiyyā*) in the name of shrine sites (*dārih*), take errands, fetch items or to simply salute fellow pilgrimage participants in these sacred grounds. In Sūfi sanctuaries, pilgrims thus find a means of worship in an ambience in which they enjoy a feeling of friendship not available in any form of fellowship.

Such Sūfi physical locus of pilgrimages and the shrines of dead saints are places for various spiritual and social activities. They are, as observed earlier, also a scene for various miraculous manifestations, and a setting for the telling of stories describing these occurrences. Northern Šāwa saintly shrines as Islamic hubs thus attract large numbers of pilgrims including Christians, provide a platform to perform mystical blessings and miracles, and inherently serve the major needs for Muslim religious activity and sanctity. The Sūfi *zāwiyā* which normally is found in the surroundings of the shrine and which in some cases can have several compartments is a place for education, social entertainment and recreation through *ḍikr* circles and *mawlid* recitations. It is usually a settlement around the home of the saint's descendant or successor (*khalifā*) where religious students and devotees live, and where people from all walks of life come on pilgrimage on certain days of the year in order to pay respects, pray, receive blessings or advices or still to ask favours.

Sometime *zawāyā* become so big that they even consist of classrooms, libraries, dormitories, kitchens, repositories, granaries and a mosque. In deed while some as spiritual space and places of religious learning draw large crowds, others are small study spaces for devote followers. But the prestige of all depends on the popularity of the

quality of their religious education or most importantly, on the efficiency in answering or fulfilling the requests or wishes of pilgrims. Moreover, a *zāwiya* may due to the strength of a *shayh* possess a strong influence and act as an intercessor and mediator in contentions and conflicts among the faithful and between the state and its subjects. As in Wəsiso/Rasa, they can also become so influential that they attract donations and gifts (*waqf*) from followers, devotees, and well wishers who visit for purposes of spiritual instruction, moral guidance and consolation. Several of these Sūfi shrines are also supported by the surrounding peasants who also may take turn to repair fences and engage in various daily tasks.

Sūfi shrines in north-eastern Šāwa provide shelter for the homeless and food for the penniless and, through their *zāwiyā* or *khalawā*, they functioned as popular instructional institutions for Qur'ānic and post Qur'ānic education bearing the stamp of Sūfis and mystics. In other words, Sūfi shrines contributed a great deal to the development of literacy and scholarship not only as retreats for spiritual insights and reflections and as venues for religious gatherings but also as educational establishments. It is true that they are places for rituals and popular festivals but in addition to piety and sanctity they also defended orthodoxy by offering standard Islamic education to the mass of pilgrims or ordinary peasant folks in simple non dogmatic but dramatic terms in order to fill the hearts and minds of the pious gatherings with a strong sense of devotion to the basic tenets of Islam. In turn, pilgrims express deep feelings of brotherhood, exchange information concerning the founder Sūfi saint, and create occasions for sharing saints' legends.

Most shrines have separate quarters for men and women, houses for students and teachers, and reception and ritual halls for *ziyārāh* participants. However, since Sūfi shrines are open to any pilgrim, they manage to bring together Sūfi followers and thus break socioeconomic differences through the creation of spiritual bonds. More importantly, Sūfi shrines of northeastern Šäwa offered an ambience of friendship and comfortable fellowship which made Islam more meaningful and palatable to peasant participants. In this sense, Sūfism and its interpretation of religious law and texts shapes the Islamic character and breathes life into the dogmatic framework of Muslim religion in rural north-eastern Šäwa by deemphasising canon lawyers' interpretation of *shari'ā* and highlighting the expression of religious emotion or *māhābbā* that links humankind to the divine. In *Sūfiyyā*, therefore, the *awliyā* complement the *ulamā* and *shari'ā* is seen in light of knowledge or *mā'rifā* and truth or *hāqiqāh*. Even if northern Šäwa is caught up by the process of social transformation, such a transformation has led to a traditionalist retrenchment perhaps as a medium of changing to old beliefs and past experiences and as a way of returning to saintly authority and mystic religious supremacy.

Ziyārāh or *Wärra* of Sūfi Saints

Every year, particularly, around the third month of the Muslim calendar, *rabi'al Awwal*, Šäwa Muslim Ethiopians celebrate the *ziyārāh* or *wärra* of the shrines of important saints and great mystics. Saintly days throughout these shrines are marked by prayer and study sessions and discussions of Qur'ānic texts and performance of litanies of the Sūfi order

(*wird*). The reasons for *ziyārāh* or *wärra* may differ from individual to individual, but many visit shrines in search of protection against the dangers of life crisis events, to recover lost things, cure illnesses, exorcise festering spirits, seek mediation and arbitration in resolving family disputes and social conflicts, arrest fertility difficulties, cure mental derangements and other personal problems, and regain lost self confidences and moral stances. Many Muslim religious leaders also visited saintly shrines to renew and revise their license as spiritual advisers. Such incumbent seasonal tomb visitations thus involve the search for protection and purification, health and wealth, fertility and productivity of people and land, and renewal of knowledge and statuses. Sūfi saints also act as mediators and intercessors between pilgrims and their creator.

Their efficacious power of intercession with the creator is the hallmark of their saintly character. They are visited for their folk curing and healing abilities and honoured and respected for their blessings (*barakā*) and miraculous manifestations (*karāmāt*). As such pilgrims firmly believe that Sūfi saints, at least the living ones, are prominent in these functions because they are knowledgeable about the past and present domains of families and their communities. They are aware of most disputes, marriages, divorces, misfortunes and interpersonal relations. In this regard, they have a clientele and a sphere of influence. Pilgrims name their children after them, value their 'divine' words as much as they can, seek their help and advice in various matters and marvel at their miraculous deeds. Thus by virtue of their piety and spiritual authority, they as spiritual, social and moral mentors occupy a significant position of leadership in their community. In this sense, they are endowed with sacred aura and charisma.

These Sūfi saints are referred to as *fuqrā*, to denote living saints, and *awliyā* to indicate dead ones. Saints in Muslim societies in north-eastern Šäwa are therefore persons who may be alive or dead, but who are always idealised and do not have to await death to be canonised. Unlike their Christian counterparts, the career of Muslim saints does not begin only or end with death. Their reputation as Sūfi saints may even increase after death and they would then be viewed as more fully endowed with spiritual strength. In Muslim traditions of the region under consideration, a dead saint can appear to the living in visions and dreams. His canonisation is accomplished during his life time by his followers and disciples whose obedience to him as a saint and as a temporal leader is undisputed. Indeed, the recognition of saintly sanctity is in Islam invariably local (PANKHURST 1994b: 943). In fact, there is, as in Christianity, no formal body for deciding who the pious ones are. Sometimes a person is considered to be a saint on the basis of descent from religious leaders, uncanny acts or feats of scholarship or achieving social success. However, the influence of Sūfi saints does not entirely depend on their saintly families' standing or their personal laurels, instead they must constantly successfully intervene in community affairs in order to maintain their positions.

Sūfi lodges of these leaders accommodated the local beliefs and customs of their adherents, and this led to their sustained popularity. But *barakā* may also be acquired by individuals favoured by Allāh. Since Allāh given capabilities as well as individual characters vary, there are different kinds of Sūfi saints in north-eastern Šäwa. Some are ascetics leading a relatively impoverished existence amongst their books and thinking about the next world (*akhirā*) rather than this world (*dunyā*), while others can become quite wealthy through their clients' gifts or their involvement in various trades. In other

words, some live luxuriously while others exist in poor material conditions renouncing worldly life in order to devote themselves fully to Allāh.

Some are highly outspoken, while others speak out only when invited or provoked. But all are extremely respected and closely consulted. These individuals became living saints who in their lives exemplify extreme piety and simplicity. Saints' cults may also develop around individuals whose only distinction is to die under unusual circumstances, with their *barakā* becoming apparent post-mortem Lewis (1991: 56). Unlike Christian saints, Muslim saints, as observed earlier, are usually recognised in their lifetime and their designation does not derive from a formal declaration or canonisation by any religious institution. Instead it results from communal claim concerning community consensus among followers and disciples.

Ziyārāh, Zāwiyā and Zar

Over the years Muslims and Christians of north-eastern Šäwa and other parts of Ethiopia have taken beliefs and practices centred around, but not restricted to, spirits (PELIZZARI 1993: 383). These beliefs, as shown by Setargew Kenaw (2000: 996) using other field experiences, concern the proliferation, elaboration and accommodation of zar cult or spirit possession trances of Muslim and Christian women whose participation in such collective chanting and communal dancing in search of exorcist resolutions stimulates the manifestation and permutation of their emotions. They also are about the search for resolution for women who, as Pili (2010: 159) shows using an urban field experience, are thought to have *wəqabé* and *aynä ṭəla* or have been afflicted by the evil eye or *buda* mostly during mealtimes, pregnancy, breastfeeding, and livestock herding, or still are known for been out of favour of the *adbar* of their village surroundings.

Although the ritualistic, thaumaturgic and para-liturgical aspects of saint veneration are, as Reminick (1975: 34) shows for northern Šāwa and Hussein Ahmed (2004:48) does t e same for south Wällo, conspicuously visible in all the Sūfi shrines of north-eastern Šäwa, the ritual of reciting and studying *ḍikr*, both individually and collectively, as a way to salvation inspired a high standard of Islamic morality and imparted a sense of fraternity and solidarity among pilgrims through regularly held religious gatherings (*hādrā*) that disregard ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The *ḍikr* and other esoteric rituals that won the hearts and souls of the ordinary folk faithful made the spiritual exercises more durable and perceptible because they stressed rigorous and intense prayers and Qur'ānic readings as well as intercessory reflection and meditation without disturbing the deep roots of traditional values and beliefs. For example, individuals possessed by spirits and attacked by evil eyes, mostly women, are brought to the attention of holy men to be exorcised, as observed by Aspen (1994: 794) in northern Šäwa, and not to be appeased or reasoned with in order to give temporary respite as Lewis (1984: 421) claims using *Mačča* Oromo field experience. This is because spirits (jinn) may return regularly during pilgrimage periods in order to extract promises and material rewards from possessed individuals and continue their evil deeds on human lives and belongings.

Possessed patients are brought before the *fuqra* or the *khalifā* who attended them through human mediums and treated the ill by magical means and sometimes by

communicating with the spirits (jinn) themselves. The former summoned the harmful spirit, forced it to identify itself, and then expelled it. But if the spirit is useful to the patient, the medium advices the patient to meet the demands of the spirit usually gifts ranging from small livestock to perfumes that are offered during public séance performances and always in the presence of the living saint or the descendant of the dead saint who in turn makes supplications (*du'ā*) on behalf of the patients. In the meantime, the possessed person is an altered state of consciousness but continues to communicate with the medium and the saint simultaneously. During séance sessions, all participants are required to be free of contamination from menstruation or sexual interaction which necessitate ablution and purification. Moreover the burning of incense and sprinkling of perfumes adds to the cleanliness and sacredness of the séance ambiance while the chewing of at symbolically adumbrates the tuning with the invisible world of the supernatural forces.

The climax, as observed by Tubiana (1981: 20) in northern Ethiopia and by Lewis (1997: 54) in Somalia, is reached when women shout and utter esoteric words and phrases incomprehensible to others and eventually cool down and lose consciousness as a result of sheer physical exhaustion. In these contexts, the holy men act as soothsayers and curers or healers of those suffering from various forms of physical and mental ailments all of which may be well known signs and symptoms of mystical afflictions emanating from festering spirits or evil eye powers which are all confirmed during *ḍikr* and *ḥādrā* sessions that are conducted y saints' assistants responsible for required sacrificial rites in the form of regular coffee boiling and serving, some at chewing, which prevents patients from falling asleep in the midst of religious rites and because it is regarded as a sacred vehicle through which divine grace is distributed and ingested, and chicken slaughtering in order to appease spirits. At the end, such patients gave gifts in the form of either cash, coffee, or cat to the shrine representatives in order to receive the blessing (*barakā*) of the *awliyā* and to somehow also economically maintain the day to day activities of the *ziyarāh*.

The fact that such pre-Islamic beliefs and ritualised sacrificial practices are exercised parallel to the Sunni Islamic *mawlid* celebrations indicates that the former still continue to exert influence on the life of the ordinary people. The coexistence of traditional beliefs or non-Islamic survivals and formal Islamic practices shows the syncretic nature of the Muslim religion in northern Šāwa. The popular character of Islam in these rural communities does not pronounce condemnation due to kissing of stones, circumbolation of shrines and exorcising of spirit possessions and other deviations, and all forms of reprehensible innovation contradicting Islamic orthodoxy or lapse into infidelity or idolatry within a Muslim community, instead pilgrims are comfortable with such acts because *ziyārāh* events provided social interaction and engendered a sense of communal cohesion among participants. The fulcrum and form of saint veneration in north-eastern Šäwa therefore provides platforms for *barakā* and *karāmā*, enunciates the link of the human with the divine, holds out to the pilgrim population an assurance of the continuity of the traditional Islamic communion, encompasses the gnosis of the *'ulamā* and the warmth of the followers of the *awliyā*, and holds sessions in order to exorcise possessed persons and cure individuals suffering from malefic 'glances'. This indicates that Sūfi mediation between *shari'ā* and *ṭariqāt* has a strong place in the rural

Muslim communities of north-eastern Šäwa. It is here that *ziyārāh* is woven into the stable social world where it has become a source of emotional gratification and spiritual inspiration for peasant pilgrims through the ossification of the calcium of mysticism and religious syncretism beyond the range of *ḏikr* composition, chain of blessing and divine vision. Sūfi sanctuaries thus provide psychological security in a fraternal circle built on communal cooperation or consensus expressed by collective identity.

Conclusion

The mundane events relevant to the daily lives of Muslims in north-eastern Šäwa reflect patterns of relationship that are all the more important to peasant pilgrims precisely because they fall within the underlying conceptions of the workings of cosmos in this particular region. Such local spiritual stance places these Sūfi shrines in a powerful position revolving around a divinely ordered cosmological tradition based on pilgrims' shared understanding of the authority of local holy men or saints and mystics that promoted believers' inner religious feelings and senses and relieved them from festering spirits and rankling malefic powers. That is perhaps why the Sūfi shrines of north-eastern Šäwa and their mystical traditions continue to give true meaning to pilgrims' lives and to their sense of identity as Muslims in which the propagation of social and spiritual solidarity of shrine visitors is an effective means for upholding a meaningful Muslim community based on prescribed prayers and constant remembrance of the creator through the mediation of saints and shrines.

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The Extraordinary Journey of Sherefedin*: Exploring an Amharic Epic by a Female Poet, Janoye*

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Though Ethiopia is well-known for its ancient literary tradition, the diversity of this rich historical and cultural heritage remains under-investigated. In this perspective, the purpose of this paper is to analyze a poem of the *Menzuma* genre about a Muslim hero called Sherefedin, who performed extraordinary and miraculous deeds in the regions of eastern Gojjam and south-western Wollo. These epic poems were composed in Amharic and sung by a female poet named Janoye, whom I recorded for my MA thesis in 1987. Janoye died in 2010.

The analysis, in passing, is aimed at contending two remarks by the historian of poetry Maurice Bowra, who considered there was no epic poetry in Ethiopia. The first remark based on a six line verse, perhaps cut out from a longer one, about Sab'a Gadis, a fallen 19th century Ethiopian warrior, says:

> "Though these poems and many others like them, show a real admiration for active and generous manhood, they come from peoples who have no heroic poetry and have never advanced beyond panegyric and lament." (BOWRA,1952: 11).

The second remark considers that:

> "...panegyrics exist not merely among peoples who have heroic poetry, like the Greeks but among others who have never seem to have had such poetry like the Polynesians, the Zulus, the Abyssinians, the Tuaregs, ..." (BOWRA, 1952: 9).

The analysis of Janoye's poem of Serefedin will highlight its epic qualities. This text was found to be a song which was sung in a ceremonious, religious Muslim gathering called *Hadra* and was, therefore, prepared for public performance. Even though there are many songs of this type, the content and form of the song selected for the study had features of a heroic poem, following conventional parameters of epic poetry as defined by several classical studies like BOWRA (1952), ABRAMS (1964, 1999), HARMON and HOLMAN (2006) or ALLINGHAM (2005).

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The characteristics of the epic style

Repetitions are characteristics of heroic epic:

> "There are a great many kinds of repetition in folk epic, which can be divided into two basic types: the so called nucleus repetition and the frame repetition." (OINAS in DORSON 1972:107).

Nucleus repetition is when an order is given by an authority and the orders are repeated word for word by any one while executing the orders like the following instance in Janoye's song. In the example cited earlier, we get the chick of the Guinea fowl whose mother is caught in a trap appealing to Sherefedin to get its mother released. Sherefedin summons one of his subjects and orders him, saying:

> *This chick implored in front of us*
> *Follow it; go forth, and*
> *Release its mother from the trap*
> *He followed it; he went forth, and*
> *Released its mother from the trap* (lines 331-335)

In the above verse we get Sherefedin ordering his servant whose obedience is accounted by the singer repeating the words of Sherefedin without changing the sequence of the words to indicate the degree of the strictness of carrying out the orders of his master.

The reason why the poet uses such kind of repetition is that the repeated orders which the singer repeats word to "show that the details are important and intended to he noticed" (BOWRA 1952: 255). The repetition makes the orders notable because it has two significant things attached to the event. First, the audience is made to notice that Sherfedin can understand the language of other creatures and therefore possesses extraordinary or superhuman qualities. Secondly, the event that follows after the orders are executed strictly, that in the coming of the guinea fowl with its four chicks to thank Sherefedin, attests to all, Christians, Muslims, or pagans, that Sherefedin is most reliable and warrant his acceptance.

The second type of repetition or "the frame repetition, is especially suited for epic retardation". (OINAS in DORSON 1972: 107) In the song, we get many kinds of repetition in the form of single words, phrases, or even whole verse lines. The most frequently repeated lines in this song are the shortest of all lines. The couplet below is repeated twenty four times in the poem.

> ሰዓቱ ጀነት፣
> ፊቱ ራህመት::
>
> *The Time is Heavenly*
> *His face is bountiful*

This couplet is interpolated between ideas in continuum in the song. They have various uses one of which is for retarding the poem so that the singer will have time to improvise. Another importance of repetition is when "The poet has something out of

the way to say and feels that it must be repeated if it is to make its full impression" (CHADWICK 1912:255).

One enticing factor for the reverence of the hero is the high quality language in the form of similes, epithets included to highlight the hero and his deeds. These decisive factors will keep the story alive.

Epic similes are abundant in this song especially made to exalt the personality of Sherfedin. Epic similes are conventionally lengthy comparisons between two highly complex objects, actions, or relations. The use of epic similes is integral to the structure and tradition of the epic.

In her song, Janoye uses simile effectively when she suggests that Sherefedin is a model of a man which raises ones desire to have a male child like him. In her song she says:

> ከወለዱ እማይቀር ይወልዳሉ ወንድ፣
> እንደ ቀዊው ጌታ በርሃ እሚጋርድ፣
> እንደሸረፈዲን ለዑመቱ ማድ።

> *Let it be male if you have to bear a child,*
> *Who like the lord of Kewi becomes a shield against the desert,*
> *Like Sherfedin who is a bounty to the people.* (line 9-11)

The effect of the Light on its subjects is related as a "ray in the morning". She sings:

> ተገለጠላቸው የሰማይ የምድሩ፣
> ሲታያቸው ጊዜ ተጦይባ ላይ ኑሩ፣
> እንደ ጡሃ ጀምበር ሲያበራ ግምባሩ።

> *What is in Heaven or Earth became clear,*
> *When they saw the light over Toyba*
> *Radiating from his forehead like a ray at dawn.* (lines 127-129)

The purpose of similes is not only to illustrate but also create a special effect because it is drawn from reality not closely related to that in which the action itself takes place (BOWRA 1952: 267). Such similes in the song are used to verify actions and personalities, and to entice the emotion of the listener.

Epithets, if they are effectively manipulated, are so essential in such narrative poems because they illuminate the characters' values, attitudes, and beliefs as well as actions and situations. In this story, Shrefedin is referred to as the Kohl-hue Eyed of Mersa, King of Deger, Lord of Deger, The Groom of Deger, The Sun of Borena, The Light of the World, The Light of Deger, The King of Borena, The Groom of Toyba, The Miraculous, The Sheriff of Deger, The Groom of Mersa, The Dawn of Mersa, The Dawn of Borena, The Cornucopia of the Masses, The Shelter of the Masses, and The Highlight of the Kings.

The epithets above are so important to exalt the hero's personality and increase the acceptability of the story. In addition to the above, there are many allusions and symbolisms not included here with the understanding that the reader can come across them in the above verses in this text.

The Invocation

One important aspect for heroic epic is that it has to be sung. In Ethiopia, though it is performed as a poetic song, such epic must primarily be composed in verses. The song under discussion here follows one of the most common traditional Amharic verse forms, known as the *Yewol Bet*, which is mainly produced in iambic hexameter form. Here it is possible to suggest that this iambic hexameter verse from can be convenient for producing and presenting similar lays in Ethiopia.

In this song the opening lines show that the singer is inspired by a "light" as we can see in the following verse.

> እንግዲህ ጀመረኝ ልቤን ሊማርከው፤
> ቢላልን ካበሻ ወዶ የማረከው ፤
> እንግዲህ ጀመረኝ ልቤን በረበረው፤
> ገና ተአደም ፊት ኑሩ የነበረው፤
> አደም ሳይሰራ ጭቃው ሳይደበር፤
> ኑሩ በሕዋ ላይ ይጥበለበል ነበር።።

> *Thenceforth it started to captivate my heart*
> *He who in love captured Bilal from Habesha*
> *Thenceforth it started to fetch into my heart*
> *The Light that existed long before Adam*
> *Long before Adam was molded from the mound*
> *The Light was blazing in space* (lines 105-108).

In the above verse, which is the actual beginning, we get the light, which is repeated twenty one times in the whole song, whose rays hunt for those who are chosen starting from Adam, the light whose rays select the beloved ones turn by turn.

In the first three lines of the above six line verse we can understand that the female Menzuma performer is under the control of something in the form of light.

In the remaining three lines it becomes clear to us that it is the light that inspires her. The light is also the source of inspiration for the hero – Sherefedin. The light is the guiding force that controls his deeds, struggles and victories. Her inspiration is expressed in the following way:

> በመዲና በኩል ዘለቀ ጀንበሩ፤
> እነሰይድ አደምን ወጋው ጨረሩ፤
> ከመዲና በኩል ቢወረወር ጥሩ፤
> መርስዬ የኔን ጌታ ወሰደው በስፍሩ።።
> በመዲና በኩል ዘለቀ ጀምበሩ፤
> የዳናን ሙሽራ ወጋቸው ጨረሩ፤

የዳና አህመድን ወጋቸው ጨረሩ፤
በራያም ቀበሌ ሰው ፈጀ ጨረሩ፤
እነሰይድ ጫሊን ወጋቸው ጨረሩ፤
መርሳ አባ አይከልን ወጋቸው ጨረሩ፤
የጋቲራን ሳዳት ወጋቸው ጨረሩ፤
ያበሻን ሳዳቶች እንዲሁ በሙሉ
ተገለጠላቸው የሰማይ የምድሩ፤
ሲታያቸው ጊዜ በጦይሳ ላይ ኑሩ፤
እንደ ጡሀ ጀንበር ሲያበራ ግምባሩ፡፡

The Light impelled past Medina,
The ray struck at men like Seyid Adam,
When the spear was thrown from Medina,
It scooped my lord Mersi with its hands.
The Light impelled past Medina,
The ray struck at The Groom of Dahna,
The ray struck at Ahmed of Dahna,
In the Rayya area also the ray affected people,
The ray struck at men like Seyid Challe,
The ray struck at Mersa, the father of Aykel.
The ray struck at the blessed in Gatira,
And all the blessed in Habesha,
Revealing for them the secrets of Heaven and Earth.
When they saw the Light upon Ethiopia,
Radiating from his forehead like a ray at dawn. (lines 127-141)

It is implied in the story that the "light" has different decisive roles that, according to the poet, will continue to influence its chosen subjects even in the future. Linked to the tradition of Prophet Mohammed,[1] this divine "Light" could be also associated with the order and guidance of ancient Greek gods and goddesses, whose messages reached the heroes in the epics via Hermes, the messenger god.

This is a very controversial issue and it is not easy to put a cut line since they vary. According to OINAS (1972), Finish epic songs are rather short, averaging from 50-400 lines. Russian songs are from 100 or fewer lines to 1,000 lines and over. The average length of Yugoslav epics songs is 300-500 lines although songs of 800-1000 and even over 2,000 lines are not rarity. The longest Yugoslav epic songs recorded ran over 13,000 lines. (OINAS in DORSON 1972:106).

One version of the song about Sherefedin is just above 500 lines whereas another version is about 700 lines. The obvious reason is that it is oral performance. The singer can be selective of some issues which are significant to her and her audience because she

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[1] In the Islamic – and especially Sufi – tradition, the metaphoric expressions like 'the Light of Mohammad' (*nur mohammad*), 'the Light of Religion' (*nur al-dîn*) or 'the Light of the Divine Creation' (*nur al-barî*) perform the pure and bright manifestation of the Divine through Creation or the revelations carried by the Prophets (see GORI 2010).

sings the song in a Hadra, a Muslim religious gathering of men or women separately, who sit usually for about half a day. If the Hadra is after sun set, it usually extends into the morning in which case there will be ample time for the singer to include many things she might think relevant. The important parts like the long journey, speeches that account for the preparation of the battle, or the battle itself are presented in microcosm. For instance, the singer tells us that there were numerous people in the battle who came in support of Sherefedin, but in the end the enemy were wiped out and we get only the victorious Sharefedin upon whom the singer focuses.

The reason why a poet magnifies one action more than another depends on the focus of the poet. The selection of importance is in the authority of the poet. "The heroic poet keeps his eye on his characters and their doings and does not waste energy on irrelevant details, but details to the point he likes and provides in abundance." (BOWRA 1952:132). For instance, had Janoye given the details for the preparation of the battle, the file of names in the military leadership, the speeches made, and of the battle itself, it is obvious that the poem would have been very long.

Another decisive factor for such a story is that it must be sung because "musical, oral performance is so essential to it that works not meant to be sung do not qualify as epic" (PROPP 1984:150). The *menzuma*, which is sung in a religious gathering known as Hadra, follows the melody of the Hayye type, implying that the audience to sit and listen quietly and attentively when the singer sings (ASSEFA 1987). Sung by the female poet named Janoye, this particular type of *menzuma* is not accompanied by any kind of musical instrument, which is the singular characteristic of Hayye. The melody is her own which she herself has adopted and harmonized from folk melodies.

However, from her deep imagination, we get the particular kind of "Light" she is referring to. She puts it in the song thus.

> ኑሩን ተኑሩ ላይ አጥሎ የኸለቀው፤
> ሲሩን ከሱ በቀር ማንም አላወቀው።

> *He created light sieving it from another light,*
> *Except for Him, it was a secrete known by none.* (lines 150-151)

In her inspirational mood, the singer makes a plea to the "Light' because it seems that it is imperative to do it before she starts mentioning the name and the deeds of a highly respected person. In her plea, she asks whatever power is controlling her in the following way singing:

> እስቲ ልነሳና ሃድራውን ልዙረው፤
> እስቲ ልነሳና ሃድራውን ላግባባው፤
> ላኪን ሰው አለበት የከበደ ሃይባው፤
> ላኪን ሰው አለበት የከበደ ሃይባው፤
> እስቲ ልነሳና ሃድራውን ልዙረው፤
> በዚያ በኔ ጌታ እዚያ በነበረው፤

> *Let me make the round of the Hadra,*

Let me make a plea to the Hadra,
But there is a highly respected person in it,
But there is a highly respected person in it,
In the name of My Lord who is inside it. (lines 60-65)

Then, to show us that the hero in this story is extraordinary. She adds:

አጅግ የ� ነው ተዘመን በፊት፤
ውሸት ነው በፍጹም የሱ አዲስነት፡፡

He is of the ancient who lived before time,
It is false to say that he is new. (lines 132-133)

It is after she puts him on this highly respectful background that she gradually tells us about his deeds.

The extraordinary journey of Sherefedin

The beginning of the story

One of the most important features of epic poetry is that the content must have heroic characteristics. This poem has a central character who, because of his deeds, is a hero. The heroic nature of this character is signified by his devotion to struggle and become victorious, in addition to his service he renders as a leader and as a member of the society.

The narrative in this story – like every heroic poetry – begins at a striking point, traditionally known as in-medias res. This is when Sherefedin, the hero in the story, urgently orders the people in an area in Gojjam to pass the night vigilant in prayer for there will be something very important to happen that night. After this initial part in the story the listener is hustled by the singer to follow the events. In this part of the song the singer does not include what provoked Sherefedin to decree the ensuing arduous journey, the inevitable struggle in due course, and the final result. So, the story begins dramatically at a significant point followed by other episodes.

The setting in Sherefedin's story covers an area that stretches from Eastern Gojjam area in northern Ethiopia, via the Gurage area in west central Shoa, to the western part of Ethiopia. Sherefedin starts his long journey from Eastern Gojjam and goes northwards to Southern Gondar. Then, he turns east to reach Mersa, in Northern Wollo, follows the south and ultimately leads his people towards the west, until the journey ends in the destined land of Deger, in the South - Eastern Wollo Borena Zone. He also tours the Gurage land in the South Western tip of Shoa, and reaches Jimma and Gomma, which covers the south and south eastern part of Illubabor, to finally return to south-western Wollo. By foot, the total round trip may take more than four years.

In her song, Janoye focuses more on the primary part of the journey in which she indicates that it takes ninety one days for Sherefedin and his followers to cover, though it is perhaps a tenth of the total journey. When we take the physical setting of the area which took ninety one days for the journey, it is simple to discern that a foot journey across it at that time must have been extremely arduous, because it is part of the major

mountainous parts of the Northern Ethiopian highlands. It is also an area crossed by many rivers, flowing eventually into the notorious Abbay River (The Blue Nile River).

In addition, the total journey from Mertule Mariyam in East Gojjam, to Mersa in South Wollo is about 400 kilometers. Though nowadays this trip by foot could be achieved within two weeks, the journey of Sherefedin and his followers took three months. According to Janoye's poetic narratives, this is because they intended to tour all around the main localities of these local territories.

ተጎጃም እመርሳ የተረማመደው፣
ተመርሳ ግሽነት የተረማመደው፣
በውራጌም በኩል የተረማመደው፣
ባቀሎና መርሳ ሰዉን አስረጊደው፡፡
አይርቃቸውም ጂማና ጉማ፣
ተጎልቻለሁ ሸዋ ከተማ፡፡

He who traversed from Gojjam to Mersa,
He who traversed from Mersa to Gishinet'
He who traversed across the Guragie area,
Made people in Mersa and Baqelo kneel in supplication.
Jimma and Guma are not distant places for them,
I have squat in a town in Shoa. (lines 195-200)

The references to Jimma and Guma suggest that these western territories were probably within the influence of Sherefedin. The farthest of these places is Goma, where a small town called Gatira – one of the famous Muslim centre before reaching Gambella in the west – is mentioned as an inset narrative near the end of the poem.

One main characteristic of heroic poetry is that its setting must be broad. In this setting there is often a long journey which the hero must accomplish even if it continues into the underworld. Another feature is a battle with dire enemies in which the hero has to fight and win. Struggle and victory are not the only features of heroic epic poetry.

The story in the epic must begin on an important point in the middle of a big story or in medias res as it is classically known. In epic poetry, the language in which the story has to be presented should be heightened. The major character in the story has to have superhuman qualities in order to struggle and become victorious.

In every epic the presence of the supernatural whose intervention at decisive issues is important is a must. The hero and the supernatural have very close relationship for the beginning, development and successful end of the story.

Sherefedin the hero: a popular leader, a warrior and a saint

Sherefedin is an embodiment of the values of a particular society mentioned above. Otherwise, Sherefedin could not have so many followers who obeyed him without demur. There could be two main reasons for this. One of the reasons can be the trust that must have come as a result of several solutions he gave to the problems of the people. This is sure to win him dependability. Another reason can be the long time of

bitterness, affecting the people for which Sherefedin vehemently found a lasting solution. His dependability can as well be because of the piety of Sherefedin and his lineage who have been safeguarding the values of the people before him and afterwards.

In a flashback, which is one of the characteristics in the epic style, he is given an extraordinary quality as shown in the two lines below:

አጅጓ የኖረ ነው ተዘመን በ6ት፤
ውሽት ነው በፍጹም የሱ አዲስነት።።

He is of the ancient who lived before time,
It is false to say that he is new. (lines 132-133)

Her generalization and regard above is so extreme that he equals some numinous phenomenon. But it is possible for the society to accept it depending on what they have heard about him through the years. PROPP (1984:152) says, "Epic poetry portrays an ideal reality and ideal heroes. It generalizes the vast historical experience of the people in extremely powerful artistic images, and the generalization is one of its most essential features."

Without denying that he is human, she tells us that he is a model of a man and the most reliable by human standards. She sings:

የቦረና መሬት አትባልም በደው፤
ሳለ ሸረፈዲንን በርሀ እሚጋርደው።።
ከወለዱ እማይቀር ይወልዳሉ ወንድ፤
እንደ ቀዊው ጌታ በርሀ እሚጋርድ፤
እንደሸረፈዲን ለዑመቱ ማድ።።

Borena cannot be regarded as barren,
As there is Sherefedin to shield it from the desert.
Let it be male if you have to bear a child,
Who like the Lord of Kewi becomes a shield against the desert,
Like Sherfedin who is a bounty to the people. (lines 7-11)

The above verse shows that the name Sherefedin by itself is a guarantee for the availability of everything for the people in Borena, an area in South Wollo, need. She also tells us the other reasons why he is so passionately loved as we get in the following two lines.

አላህ ያኑራቸው በማእረጉ ከሊ፤
የአገR ገላጋይ የደም ሸማግሌ።።

May Allah give him long life on the throne,
The mediator of the land, who settles blood feud. (lines 18-19)

The above two lines are repeated also on lines 24 and 25 in the poem to add to the telling effect it will have on the listener or reader. According to BOWRA, (1952: 257), "The repetition serves to make perfectly clear what is implied".

Thus, these verses intimately bind the high respect and praises of the people for Sherefedin, to the glorious achievements of their great regional leader.

A great leader guiding his people on the path of good

Epics, just like any literature, are concerned with the conflict between good and evil whose ultimate solutions account to the improvement of human life. Stories have often tangible foundations, since nothing is farther from truth. Imaginativeness changes such truths into stories that give us pleasure and knowledge.

The story of Sherefedin is prepared in a grand scale and presented ceremoniously which show the high regard the audience has for the hero. Though the story is long, people sit down patiently and listen to it, just as listeners of such lays in many countries in the past have done over the centuries.

The hero in this story is bestowed with his capacity to communicate with deities who, according to the believers, know everything beforehand. These deities have also the solution to any kind of problem. The hero, as long as he is obedient to the deities, it is believed, can have extraordinary power of knowledge and skill which he discharges for the benefit of the people whenever necessary. As a result, it is discernible that people's regard to him will increase to the extent that he continues to be revered even into the future. From far and near there is a pilgrimage to Deger to celebrate Sherefedin's anniversary every year on October 15th.

As seen above, the hero, Sherefedin, has qualities larger than life, because his deeds depend on virtues that have been upheld for centuries by the society. He is revered because he fulfills the needs of mankind in general in a way that nobody can and preserves the ideals of the people. These qualities are decisive for the birth, development, and existence of such poetry. In the words of BOWRA (1952: 19):

> "Heroic poetry comes into existence when popular attention concentrates not on a main's magical power but on his specifically human virtues, and, though the conception of him may keep some relics of an earlier outlook, he is admired because he satisfies new standards which set a high value on anyone who surpasses other men in qualities which all posses to some degree."

The presence of such qualities alone in a story will make the hero detached from the people from whom he gets acceptance for his reverence. And this affects the quality of the story as an epic. We have to know that "...no poem can be regarded as truly heroic unless the major successes of the hero are achieved by more or less human means" (BOWRA 1952: 8). Even though the hero has superhuman qualities, he can win the regard of the people if he embodies the highest ideals of his culture such as loyalty, justice, dignity, compassion, valour, courage, perseverance. If he has these qualities, he does not only overcome great obstacles, as he also maintains his devotion for humanity. Sherefedin goes down into the problems of the poor in order to relieve them. These are the actions that create a strong bond people and the hero. Sherefedin's devotion for humanity urges him to act in several occasions along Janoye's narratives.

One of them is related to a singer called Chechebsie. An account of this famous singer and her charming voice that Sheferdein often loved to listen is presented. Janoye, the poet, recounts about an instance, which, according to her, is done by some spirit to show to the public the extraordinary power bestowed on Sherefedin.

አዝማሪ ነበረች ጨጨብሴ እሚሷት ፤
ድምፁ እንደበና አቅል የሚያስት፤
የመሃባዉ ኪታብ የደቀቀላት ፤
ቃልቾች እያሉ ኢልሙን የሚያዉቁት ፤
አሷን ይጠራሉ የደገር መብራት ፤
አድሩሱን አጭሶዉ ቆመዉ ጠበቋት፤
አበሉ አጠጡና አንጎራጉሪ አሷት፤
ቃልቾች እያሉ ኢልሙን የሚያዉቁት፤
በሷ ላይ ዘወረ የርስዖ ሲፈት፤
ለማስታወቅ ብሎ የርስዖን ጉልበት ፤
ወጥታ ተመልሳ ስትል ገባ እቤት ፤
በጣም የጠበቀ ህመም አገኛት፤
ከላዩዋ ረገፈ የፎ አስሩም ጣት፤
ይህንን ሲሰሙ የደገር መብራት፤
ደራሳ ላኩና አሁን አስጠV ት፤
ተንደርድራ መጣች ሳታጉመተም፤
አወጡና ስዉት የጣት ቀለበት፤
ምን ያደርግልኛል የጣት ቀለበት
ጣት ባገኝ ነበር እጅ እሚያምርበት፤
በጃኖ ጠቅልለዉ ወስደዉ አስተጀት፤
የሆነ ጊዜና እኩለ ሌሊት፤
ቀስቀሱዋትና ከተኛችበት፤
አባክሽ ጨጨብሴ አንጎራጉሪ አሉዋት፤
ስትነሳ ጊዜ ተተኛችበት፤
ሆኖ እንዳለ በቅሉዋል የጁዋ አስሩም ጣት፤
ወስዳ ከተተችዉ ያንን ቀለበት፡፡
ብላ አለቾዋት ሸሪፍ የደገሩ፤
አወይ የኔ ጌታ ካሚሉ ካሚሉ፤
የፈረስ ገላ ትሰራለሁ አሉ፡፡

There was a minstrel named Chechebsie;
Whose voice was so captivating,
And well versed in the scriptures.
While there are his disciples,
Who are knowledgeable of the verses.
Your preference was on her,
As a chance to reveal your power.
She fell severely ill when she came in,
All her ten fingers fell out.
When the Light of Deger heard this,

He sent a person to behest her,
Upon which she came soon without hesitation.
And he gave her a finger ring.
"What do I do with a ring?" she asked,
"It would have been beautiful if I had fingers."
He draped her with a "Jano" and made her sleep.
When it was midnight he waked her up,
"Would you please come and sing", he said.
On waking up she noticed,
That all her fingers were intact as before.
Then she put on the ring,
And started to sing saying,
"You the Sherif of Deger,
"You are, my lord, all-rounded,
"You can rebuild a body fallen apart". (lines 252-286)

Another significant situation that carries unbelievable qualities is the following.

ደግሞ አንድ ሰዉ ነበር አይቻል መሬት ፤
ጃግራዋን ባሽከላ አጥምዶ ያዘት ፤
አስሯ ነበሩ አራት ጫጩት ፤
አንዴ. በርራ ሄደች ፈፈዲን ፊት፡፡
አንቱ የደገሩ የገሙ መብራት ፤
አዛኝ ነዋት ቢሉኝ ነዉ የመጣሁት ፤
አንድ ሰዉ ባሽከላ እናቴን ያዘት ፡፡

There was a man who lived in a place called Ayichal
Who caught a guinea fowl in a snare
That had four chicks
One of which flew to Sherefedin and said
"You are for Deger, the Light of the land
"I came here for I heard that you were compassionate
"A man has ensnared my mother
"Whom we four of us depended upon". (lines 320-327)

Sheferedin sends one of his obedient men to follow the chick that leads him to where the trap is. He then releases the guinea fowl. The story continues:

አሰከተለቸና አራቱን ጫጩት፤
ሰተት ብላ መጣች እሸህዬ ፊት ፤
የደገር ሙሽራ የጋኑ መብራት፤
ይውረድበሁና የአላህ ራህመት፤
አወጣሁኝ በቃ ከዛሬዉ መዓት ፡፡

Accompanied by its four chicks
Directly it went to the Sheik and said

"You, The Groom of Deger, The Light of Deger
May Allah's blessings be on you
You saved me from today's peril". (lines 339-343)

Another instance of a similar nature is about an octogenarian barren woman. The story is related in the following way.

ተቤገምድር አገር መጣች አንዲት ሴት፣
ከሆናት በኋላ ሰማኒያ አመት፣
ልጅ ስጡኝ ጌቶቹ ብላ አለችዋት::
ልጅ ስጡኝ ጌቶቹ ብላ አለቻቸው፣
እንጀ ልጅ ነው አሲት ጫቱን አላምጠው፣
መቸም አይጠቀም ሲረቅ የሌለው ሰው፣
በሩን ወጣ ስትል ወዲያው ጣለቺው::
ባመት ተመልሳ ቆማ ፊታቸው፣
ልጅ አላገኘሁም ብላ አለቻቸው::
ዘወር ብለው አዩት በራሄመት አይናቸው፣
ብለው አሉዋትና ልጇን የት ጣልሽው::
ሰብስበው ተነሱ የሃድራዉን ሰው፣
አድኗይ ስር ኖራል ያስቀመጠቻው::
ድኳይን ፈንቅለው ልጃን አነስተው፣
እከላዋ ገቡ ሰው እንዳያየው::

A woman from Begemidir came,
After she was eighty years old,
And said, "Give me a child".
She asked him to give her a child.
He took out the qat he has been chewing
"Take it. This is a child". He said.
But a suspicious man never prospers,
She threw it away just as she got out.
A year later she stood in front of him,
And complained she didn't have a child.
He glanced at her with his generous eyes,
Accompanied by the people in the Hadra.
"Where have you thrown away my child?" So he spoke,
She had put it under a rock.
He lifted up the stone and took the child,
And went into his seclusion to avoid intrusion. (lines 236-251)

Just like the above situations, Janoye the poet relates the following dialogue between Sherefedin and a poor man who lived nearby. The donkey of this poor man goes to Sherefedin and complains of the burdensome work it always had, and begs Sherefedin to call its owner and tell him not to either harness it or to hire it to other people. When Sherefedin summoned and told the poor man not to harness it anymore or hire it. The poor man replied that he had no property other than the donkey. Then the story goes on in the following manner:

እኔ ሸረፈዲን ያገሩ መብራት፤
እጅ አይደርስ–ም ዎይ ለላም ባዞራት።
እከላዋ ገቡ ቆመው አላህ ፊት፤
የሆነ ጊዜና ወደ አስር ወቅት፤
በራህመት ዐይንም ብቅ ብለው ቢያዩዋት፤
አሁኑ ለውጠው ላምአደረት።
ስምንት ወለዶች እዛው አሰው ፊት፤
ይኸው ባለቤቲ አልቦ እየጠጣት፤
ከበረ ነሰረ አመረተ ምርት።

I Sherefedin the Light of Deger,
Can't I have a hand to change it into a cow?"
In his enclosure he stood in prayer to Allah,
When it was about ten of the clock,
He came out and saw it with his merciful eyes,
Soon changed it into a cow,
And delivered eight in front of the people.
The owner enjoyed its milk,
And became a rich farmer. (lines 310-318)

The above instance shows us that he is not only responsive to the problem of humans and other creatures but it also shows his being impartial to all and signifies his fairness in justice.

The broad setting and the supernatural realms

The setting in this song is even cosmic because Sherefedin's journey extends also to Heaven. One of the major episodes related to Sherefedin's heroic deeds stages his meeting with Uzrael, the Angel of Death:

ኡዝራኤል ቢልዎት ሠላም አሊይኩም፤
እነህህን ልወስድ መጣሁ ወዳንተም፤
በላ አሉት ታዲያ ሸህ አደም ጉዳም፤
አንተ ባሪያ ብትሆን ባሪያ ነን እኛም፤
ባሪያ በባሪያ እጅ ተይዞ አይሄድም፤
እርስዎ ሲያበርሩት እየሸሽ እሱም፤
ተያይዘው ወጡ ወደ ላይ ዓለም፤
ወደ ዱንያ መሬት አልተመለሱም፤

When Uzrael saluted you and said,
"I have came to take away also your soul,"
"Then do it" Thus spoke Seyide Adem.
"You are a slave, and I am a slave too.
"A slave should not give hands to another slave",
And you took out your sword,
And chasing him while he in flight,
Both ascended into the world on high,
And never returned to this mundane world. (lines 48-57)

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In these verses, the meeting between Sherefedin and Uzrael starts with a brief dialogue and then turns into a mystic combat in the air, until Sherefedin manages to expel the Angel of Death from the human world. According to BOWRA (1952:94), "the greatest heroes are thought to be so wonderful that they cannot be wholly human, but must have something divine about them". By overcoming both human and divine threats, Sharefedin is presented as an accomplished hero.

In these great actions, we get the supernatural taking part and accomplishing things in a way totally impossible for any human being. The most important part of all the actions in this story is the order that Sherefedin gives to his followers. Subsequent actions indicate the active participation of the supernatural whose actions are revealed by the deeds of Sherefedin. But it must be noticed that this first move has a binding capacity on all the other actions that ultimately form an organic whole. According to FRYE (1957: 119), "the discovery of the epic action is the sense of the end of the total action as like the beginning, and hence of a consistent order and balance running through the whole. The consistent order is not a divine fiat or fatalistic causation, but a stability in nature controlled by the gods, and extended to human beings if they accept it."

There are at least eight instances that seem to justify this claim. The first instance is Sherefedin's decree to the people around the area where he lives. The obedience of the people to Sherefedin is complete seems total in Janoye's song. Moreover, it was not only the people that started to move out, but also the land itself that started to move with Sherefedin.

ተመጿለሱና በከሚ ስ ሌሊት፤
አዋጅ አረጉና ሑልቁን ነገሩት፤
ኢያል ስራ አለብን በዛሬዉ ሌሊት፤
አንድ እንኳ ተኛ ሰው እንዳይደርስ ሴት።።

After his prayer on a Thursday night
He proclaimed to all the people saying
"We have a huge duty tonight
So, no man shall pass the night with a woman". (lines 373-376)

In this song, just like what happens in epics, the supranational plays a decisive role in determining the directions the hero should follow and the actions he should take especially at critical moments.

His order was particularly to the Muslims inhabiting the area where he lived in Gojjam, to keep an all night vigil and warned the men to pass the night alone. So, in the morning of the next day, all those who obeyed his orders (by passing the night alone) started the long journey with Sherefedin, except a disobedient Muslim, or locally known as Fuqra, who complained and passed the night with his wife. Consequently, when Sherefedin and his obedient followers started the long journey, the disobedient Muslim was left behind. Surprisingly, however, a Christian priest who was a friend of Sherefedin joined him and his followers for this journey. Beyond Sherefedin's authority

and fame among the people, the presence of this Christian priest tends to underline the sacred nature of this journey and the blessing it provides to those who accomplish it.

The singer tells us that when the land and the people reached the Abbay River, the river knew early on that Sherefedin was a person of great respect. Therefore, the river lifted itself up to make an archway to give a free passage for Sherefedin and his followers.

ከጎጃም ላይ መጥተው አባይ ዳር ሲደርሱ፣
ከኋላ ዞረና አገዝ ነፋሱ።።
ላባይ እንኳ ውሃ ልቅናው ታወቀ፤
በሰማይ እንደጉም ሄዶ ተሰቀለ።።
መቸም ይሰራሉ ጉድ አጃኢበት፣
መሬቱን በውሃ ስር አሳለፋት።።

When he came from Gojjam and reached the Abbay River,
The wind assisted from behind,
His leadership was even identified by the river,
It lifted itself up like a cloud.
It is known that he does miracles,
He made the land pass under the water. (lines 392-397)

In this part of the song, just like what happens in similar epics, the supernatural assists the hero in his actions especially at crucial moments.

Then, in the journey between Mersa and the destined land Deger, a battle involving numerous people is mentioned. According to Janoye's narrative, Sherefedin won this battle, thanks to his special weapons.

የደገር ሙሽራ መሐመድ ሸሪፍ፣
በጅዋ ላይ ነበር ሰማኒያ ሺ ክንፍ፣
ሲሻቸው መዘርጋት ሲሻቸው ማጠፍ፣
ደግሞም ነበራቸው ሰማኒያ ሺ ሠይፍ፣
ተመዘ ይኖራል የለውም ሸፋ።።

Mohammed Sharif the Groom of Deger
Had eighty thousand wings on your arms
Which spread or shut as you wish
Had also eight thousand swords
Always at the ready, unsheathed. (lines 202-206)

In the story, beyond his endurance, success and invulnerability in war, Sherefedin accomplished several miracles, culminating with his meeting with Uzrael, the Angel of Death, who attempted to captures his soul.

In the following verses we see that he has qualities beyond human conception. It shows that he has not died and, therefore, he is still alive like a deity. As a justification to the above she sings:

የመርሳው ዘንፋላ ሞቱ ያለው ማነው፣
የመርሳው ዘንፋላ ሞቱ ያለው ማነው፣
ሳዳት መቀመጫው ቤቱ መዐርሽ ነው።።

Who said the Charisma of Mersa has died,
Who said the Charisma of Mersa has died,
The residence of the blessed is in Heaven. (lines 542-544)

The intention of Janoye in the above lines is to confirm that the hero is a being equal to a deity.

እስቲ ልነሳና ሃድራውን ልዙረው፣
እስቲ ልነሳና ሃድራውን ላግባባው፣
ላኪን ሰው አለበት የከበደ ሃይባው፣
ላኪን ሰው አለበት የከበደ ሃይባው፣
እስቲ ልነሳና ሃድራውን ልዙረው፣
በዚያ በኔ ጌታ እዚያ በነበረው፣

Let me make the round of the Hadra,
Let me make a plea to the Hadra,
But there is a highly respected person in it,
But there is a highly respected person in it,
Let me make the round of the Hadra,
In the name of my lord who is inside it. (lines 60-65)

The above six lines the unchallengeable importance of Sherefedin even in a highly respected place like the Hadra. This implies that the whole poem is devoted to the importance of the hero than to the religious occasion. Thus does she testify the magnificence of Sherefedin or his solemn grandeur in proportion to the setting. This shows that the poem's focus is more on the mundane than on the religious as it should be in epics. In addition, to show us that he is extraordinary, she adds the following:

እጅግ የኖረ ነው ተዘመን በፊት፣
ውሸት ነው በፍጹም የሱ አዲስነት።።

He is of the ancient who lived before time,
It is false to say that he is new. (lines 132-133)

Conclusion

As seen above the hero, Sherefedin, has qualities larger than life, because his deeds depend on virtues that have been upheld for centuries by the society. He is revered because he preserves the ideals of the people and fulfills the needs of mankind in general in a way that nobody can. These qualities are decisive for the birth, development, and

existence of heroic poetry. However, this is not to attest the functionality of the seemingly magical aspect, but which does not exist as such in the story. In the end of the battle there were only Sherefedin and a few of his followers who survived. This shows the prowess of the hero in his determination for struggle and victory.

The struggle is waged not for personal interest but for the highest ideals of the people. The long journey and the battle show the endurance, the skill, and leadership quality of Sherefedin, all qualities, that are beyond the capabilities of a normal human individual, that an epic hero must have.

After they settled in the destined land called Deger, he continues to serve his people by his extraordinary deeds. This shows that the struggle in all its forms was for a popular cause that became successful, because of the devotion and service of Sherfedin to his followers.

From the above discussion we get that the song about Sherfedin applies epic conventions which include *in medias res*, the invocation, the epic question, the epic style, the long journey, the bitter confrontation between dire enemies, and the final victory culminating in his combat against Uzrael, the Death Angel. Without any doubt, this poetic narrative is an original epic, since it fulfils almost all of the features that any heroic epic requires.

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A Handlist of Amharic-ʿAjamī Manuscripts of
Šayḫ Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar (c. 1853-1936)

Kemal Abdulwehab[1]

The manuscripts of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa are the country's earliest *Ajäm*-Amharic manuscripts that we manage to trace so far. Half of the collected and described manuscripts are original works of the author. Different versions of a manuscript are incorporated in this list as this helps future further philological studies on these texts. Especially, for some original manuscripts which missed some of their parts, it will be helpful for crosschecking. Although the language is Amharic, these texts are written by Arabic letters. All of these manuscripts (except one text which is included here in number 21.2) are written in verse. These collected manuscripts range from the small *Madḥ* manuscript which has only 17 folios to the voluminous *Siyär* manuscript having 255 folios in its second volume. Though most of the texts bear their title somewhere inside, some of them do not. In the latter case the texts will be referred in this article by the name of their owner from which they are photocopied.

List of the manuscripts

Some informants claimed that the total number of texts the *Šayḫ* had produced are 314 (three hundred fourteen) which equates the number of *Rasūl* 'messengers' sent to human kind and the number of fighters who participated in the battle of Badr during the time of the Prophet.[2] Strengthening the above claim, other informants also said that after his death only two of his sons and three daughters had a total of 7 full boxes of his manuscripts to share among themselves.[3] In this article thirty *ʿAjamī* manuscripts of the *Šayḫ* are collected from different places of Addis Ababa, Western Hararghe (Mieso and Asäbot), Mätähara, Awash, North Shäwa (Aləyyu Amba, Mäṭäqläya, Chebṭe and Shäwa Robit) and Kämise.[4] These places are where Argobbas live in good number. This by itself is suggestive the fact that the legacy and memory of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar is stronger than in other areas. The photos of these manuscripts were given to the Manuscript

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[1] (kabdulwehab@gmail.com; Institute of Ethiopian studies, Addis Ababa University)
[2] Informant*: Šayḫ* Bushra al-karīm.
[3] Informant: *Šayḫ* Man al-karīm.
[4] An intensive and very tiresome field work, which mostly involved traveling on foot and on horseback to different remote villages, was carried out in 2009.

section of the Library of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa Universiy where they can be consulted by researchers.

There are manuscripts which are identified by name only and hence could not be traced easily. Among these untraced manuscripts of the *Šayḫ* is the Amharic translation of the Qurʿān. What has been identified so far is only the translation and the comment in Amharic of the opening chapter of the Qurʿān, usually known as the Fātiḥa, named here *Sab al-Maṯānī* "The seven repeated verses". But if we take into consideration the author's prolific production, coupled with the bad management and conservation habit and different unfortunate incidences whereby Ethiopian Islamic manuscripts were passed through,[5] still there should be many of his manuscripts which are not yet (and will not be in the future) identified even by name. In my field work, I should confess, though I was told that a collection of his original manuscripts are found in a village called Mäṭäqläya, I could not go due to its remoteness and security problem. I was told that this collection was under the courtesy of Ṭalḥa Musā who lives in Dulächa (Afar) by then. The following are the list of the collected manuscripts in this project:

1. Muḥammad Aräbu's Manuscript

The title is not clearly mentioned in the text. I secured it from the hands of Muḥammad Aräbu in Addis Ababa. The owner had received it as a gift from *Šayḫ* Manul Karīm (the son of the author). It is a combination of loosely attached texts which are on the verge of separation. As it could be understood from the catch word ليت(f.16v), some texts are lost and some others are added randomly (for instance the last 3 folios). It is an original manuscript having 43 folios. The ink, from 13v-16v, is sky blue which interchanges with red ink. Then following folios are written in black ink. There are six different *Mašrab-s* "entries" in the text on the following places: on f.1v, f.8r, f.8v, f.13v, f.20v and f.26r).

It is the combination of *Taṣawuf* (Sufi) and *Madḥ* (praise) texts. Among these texts, a couple of prayers which are widely believed as good prayers to start a *Duʿāʾ* in order to get acceptance from Allah are found in its first part. This belief is drawn from the author's own claim that the Prophet had promised to him the acceptance of his supplication by coming in his dream if he made supplication using the supplication in this text. That is why many people have only the photo copy of this part of the text.

2. Dalīl aṣ-ṣibyān, "a guide for the youth"

It is photographed from Mätähara. This manuscript is a hand-book which is an instruction manual prepared for the youngsters – for it is *Dalīl aṣ-ṣibyān* signifying "a guide for the youth". It mainly deals with *Tawḥīd* and *Fiqh*. It starts and ends perfectly. Its name is mentioned on f.2r. It has 48 loose and detached folios. Its physical condition is not in good status. The binding which is too old is detached from the main text. The first folio is the blank and has a pen trial. The hand writing seems that it is written by one of his earlier copyists, ʿAbidat. The first two and half folios are dedicated to the

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5 Emperor Yohanes, for instance, in October 1879 (Ṭiqimt 17, 1872) wrote a letter to Neburä Ed Iyasu in Samara, that no Muslim should be allowed to remain in Axum and added that "books as the Muslims had should be taken and burned." (CAULK 1972:28).

importance of knowledge and to his advice. From f. 2r to 11r analyzes the meaning and philosophy of the Islamic statement of faith الله الهللا محمد رسملهللا "There is no God but Allah". Then (F.11r – 24r) the explanation for *Arkān al-'Imān* "Pillars of belief" is given. F.24r - f.26r is the explanation broadly speaking for *Arkān al- Islām* "Pillars of Islam".

This text must be a manuscript of the book which is printed in 1951 EC by the name *Täwhidǝnna Fiqh* whose original title was *Hadiyyat Aṣ-ṣibyān or Tuḥfa Al-Iḫwān.*[6] It is the first Islamic work to be printed in Ethiopia using the Amharic letters.

3. *Naṣiḥ Aṣ-ṣaliḥīn*[7]

It is 24x17.5cm having 98 folios. I was photographed from *Šayḫ* Nūr Aḥmad's home, in Aləyyu Amba. The binding is a detached hard cardboard whose partial parts are glued by recent leather. Two yellow hard papers are inserted between the binding and the text for protection. The first two folios are newly inserted copies in order to replace the original (lost) folios. The copyist sometimes makes an orthographic error as evidenced in the 8th line of the first folio when he wrote "አላህ: ገኘ: ነው፡፡" instead of "አላህ: ከኘ: ነው፡፡" It combines three different texts. The first part is the original handwriting of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. It occupies from f. 1v to f35v. It is a *Dhikr* text as he mentioned in f.2v "ዚክሩን: ልጀምረው: ብዬ: ቢስሚላሄ፡" It ends perfectly with *Ṣalawāt*.

The following two parts are not written by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar own handwriting. The second part which extends from f.36r to 41v is a *Takbirā* which is recited during the two major Islamic holy days. There is no clue whether this *Takbirā* text is inserted by someone arbitrarily or *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar himself copied (composed) it. It is written in Arabic. Its catchwords are written in red ink. The third text is *Nāsik aṣ-ṣaliḥīn* (colophon f. 43r). It is from f. 43r to f. 94.v. It generally deals with the fundamentals Islam and Iman together with their explanations "እኝህን: ካወራሁ: አስራ: አንዶቾነ፤ ተርትሬ: ልንገርሀ: ፍሳሪያቸውን፡፡" It ends imperfectly.

4. *Ṭahir's Manuscript*

It is photographed from Metehara, Western Harär. The owner is Nuryye Ṭahir (f.1 r) from whose son I able to secure it. The hand writing suggests that it is written by one of the author's earlier copyists, i.e. ʿAbidat (his granddaughter), Ruqyā (his daughter)

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[6] This is the general problem of this and other Ethiopian Islamic manuscripts. The authors usually compile different texts which deal with different subjects together and name them as a whole. Hence, as the boundary between "text" and "book/manuscript" is not clearly drawn, a text out of the whole bounded manuscript may take the group name of the whole manuscript. The other problem is that even if the authors gave a name for a manuscript the people may also give another name by looking especially at its incipit. Or some time, a text (a manuscript) may not have a definite title. So, different people call it using different names. So, in the later case, I am obliged to use the name of the person from which I photographed to designate them in this study.

[7] My informant Samiya ʿAbduṣamad (in Kämise) informed me that her daughter took the original version of this manuscript to Saudi Arabia. This manuscript is printed in 1999 EC by ʿAbduraḥmān ʿAḥmad Ṭayib. He printed this text by changing the letters into Amharic.

and Asiyā (his granddaughter). It is copied in 1351 AH/1932GC (f.68r). The first part (f.1-f.30v) is an advice; whereas the following texts are *Tawaṣulāt*. The binding is a recently new attached yellow hard cardboard. It has 69 folios; the first two folios being a recently added white papers. These recently added papers could be for substituting the (lost) original folios (texts). The text starts with " ‏بالله السم جمركيعالفطاري‏ "and ends perfectly with " ‏تمت‏

5. *Kašf al-Ġummā*, "uncovering the distress, anxiety"

Two versions of this text are found from Mieso and Kämise.[8] It is polemical text in many regards. *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar prepared this inspiring polemic text aiming at advising his Muslim brethren of his area to mobilize them to join him in his rebellion against the Christian monarchs under the leadership of Mahdi *al-Muntaẓr* "the expected Mahdi" of the Sudan. To this end, he urged them to lead a very ascetic life.

5.1 *Kašf al-Ġummā*: It is a copy manuscript photographed from the collection of *Šayḫ* Man al-Karīm, the son of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa, in Mieso, Western Harar. The copyist is Muḥamad Ḥassen. It starts with ‏ملسألابجاه طه وستلفضعلعينب جاجب- والتحملنا وليلاجالله للملة‏ ‏لمحملنالا ما‏. It ends perfectly with ‏تمت‏. This name of the manuscript is mentioned in folio 2r: "*səmunəm alkut Kä̈šf al-Ġummā.*" It has (1) 28 (1) folios having 25.2 x 17.7 cm dimension. The binding is a hard cardboard, upon which a blue cloth measuring 17x2.2 cm is glued along the spine to attach the covers together. To attach the pages together, a black and white cloth (17x1 cm) is used. Both sides of the internal part of the cover are laminated with white paper. Just inside the left cover and just inside the right cover, there is one recently added piece of paper.

5.2 *Kašf al-Ġummā*: It is another version which is photographed from Kämise. It has 130 folios and 20x15cm dimensions. The papers are disordered. It is a combination of three different texts. The first two parts are *Tawḥīd* and *Tawassul*. The last text is *Kashf al-Ġummā*. At the end of this text the name of the copyist, Ibrāhim Junayd Araj, is written.

6. *Čärnätəh* "Your Mercy"

Three versions are traced from Mieso, Kämise and Čəbṭe, around Aləyyu Amba one of which is an original one written by the *Šayḫ* himself.

6.1 *Čärnätəh*: It has 131 folios and has 30x18.7 cm dimensions. The copyist of the Čärnätəh part of this manuscript is ʿAbidat, who is the granddaughter of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa and one of his copyists. It was found from a village around Mieso in the possession of Ṭalḥa Muḥammad Saʿīd. In f.43v the name of this man`s father is written in the following sentence "*hāda al-kitāb milk Muḥammad Saʿīd ibn Aḥmad Saʿīd*" [This book belongs to Muḥammad Saʿīd ibn Aḥmad Saʿīd].

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[8] Now I am writing an article on a thematic analysis of this manuscript which is to be published in a Proceedings of *Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts: the Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa* held at Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies (Hamburg University, Germany), in July 17-19,2014. Though my informants told me that the original version of this manuscript is found in Meteqleya, Argoba, I could not go due to remoteness and security problem of the region.

Like the above manuscript this name is given to the manuscript as a whole, although only part of it (f.61v-74r) is *čärnätəh* proper. It is *madḥ*. Bound together with this *madḥ*, there are also other texts comprising f.76r-94r. Though it starts similarly with following two versions, it ends imperfectly as folio 131 is seriously torn. The binding is a recently added and unattached cardboard (30x18.7 cm) which is on the verge of detachment at its bottom. Part of the original binding – though no longer functional – is preserved on the right side.

6.2 *Čärənätəh*: This is an original text[9] which was photographed in a village called Chəbṭe, around Aləyyu Amba in the hands of a man called Bushra al-karīm. He got it from his grand-mother ʿAyša Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar. He was actually was also given other original manuscripts. But except this, the remaining manuscripts were destroyed by termite.

Unlike the above version, this one is more complete manuscript. It has 2 main parts; A text which is written in *Ajäm* is Čärənätəh which is found from f. 1 to f.78. And the other one is a text (f.78-99) written in Arabic dealing with participants of battle of *Badr*. The hand for the last part is different suggesting that other scribe was also involved.

6.3 *Čärənätəh*: It is photographed from Kämise. It is 22x14.5cm. It has 34 folios. The first five folios are not the part of the main Čärənätəh text. The main text rather begins with f.6v. The binding is a hard card board which its bottom edges are attached by leather. The hand writing looks like the hand writing of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. This text starts and ends in the same way as the other version from Chebte ends.

7. Al-ʾAley Al-Kabīr[10]

I photographed it from Chəbṭe village, near Aləyyu Amba from the hands of *Šayḫ* Bushra al-Karīm. It has 80 folios. It is copied manuscript by *Šayḫ* Ibrāhīm *Šayḫ* Muḥammad Raʾūf (colophon). The handwriting is relatively a magnified one. In this manuscript, among other things, he discussed the importance of intelligence, the existence of God and the concept of God in Islam in a very philosophical manner. He also criticized and condemned evil practices like horoscopes, magic and slaughtering in grave yards. His frequently quoted maxim with regard to slaughtering in grave yards is found in this text in folio 36v:

ለኢሳም ብታርደው ለኛ መሐመድ፤
አይቀርም መብከቱ ሳይሆን ለወሂድ፤
በሰላሳ ገዘቶ ቀብር ተማገድ፤
ደስ ያሰኝ ነበረ ለሰላሳ ዘመድ።።

Whether you slaughter it for Jusus or for prophet Muḥammad
It (the animal) will inevitably be dead [which has not been ritually slaughtered and hence unfit to eat] instead of being (slaughtered) to Allah

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9 Though different informants claim that this is the original text written by the author, the hand writing has a slight difference from other author's original works.

10 My informant Asiyā ʿAbduṣamad claimed that she had Al-ʿAly al-kabīr before. But a person who borrowed took it to Wälläggaa, western Oromiya.

Instead of slaughtering (cattle) bought for thirty [birr] at a grave,
it is more pleasing [to feed the meat] to thirty relatives.

8. Aṣḥāb al-Futūḥ[11]

This name is mentioned on f.1v: *"yalya ṣaḥaboču̇n aṣḥabal futuḥ."* It discusses the victory of the companions. The owner is Ṭayib *Šayḫ* Muḥammad Yäju (the brother of Ḥadijā of Asäbot). This is written in the inside front cover. I was allowed to photograph it by his wife, Siti, in Mieso. The scribe is *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa himself. The copied version of this manuscript is also included in the voluminous manuscript of Aminā (20.2). It has 59 folios having 24x18 cm dimensions. This manuscript deals with stories of the sacrifice, struggle and patience of the companions of the prophet Muḥammad during the first years of the Prophet's advent. This text is mostly praise of the prophet.

Unlike most of the other manuscripts, the manuscript is not divided into clearly differentiated topics and sub-topics, but presents the praise of the prophet and the deeds of the companions with no break. It starts and ends perfectly.[12] The cover is of a hard cardboard, with the outer upper right and left edges covered with two different cloth wrappers (measuring 23x7.2 cm and 23x4 cm respectively). The inner part is covered with stiff paper which has a pen trial on it.

9. Sabʾ al-Maṯāni: *"The seven repeated verses"*

This manuscript was found at Asäbot (around 14 km from Mieso, Western Harar) from Ḥadijā *Šayḫ* Muḥammad Yäju (the great-granddaughter of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa). On the last folio, her name is written as the owner of the manuscript. It is an Amharic translation and commentary of the first chapter of the Qurʾān (*Surat al-Fātiḥa*, which has seven verses). It explains the mystery and message which this part of the Qurʾan possesses. The name of this manuscript is mentioned in f.12r *"yä-wärädäl-äwot sabʿ al-Maṯani."* It is composed of badly sequenced separate sheets. It has 44 folios having 25x17.5 cm dimensions. The scribe for the most part is *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa.

The binding is a detached hard cardboard. This cover has a double cloth at its bottom edge, one of white fabric (30x9 cm) and the other of old white fabric (23.5x5 cm); on the second of these another torn black-and-white fabric (19.5x5.5 cm) is sewn. The thread which was originally used to attach the manuscript to the cloth is detached and is now sewn only on the cloth. The manuscript ends imperfectly. The sections of this manuscript are even composed of loose folios, most of which are seriously damaged. Hence, it is difficult to describe their contents systematically.

10. Šililā Muṣṭafā

10.1 *Šilila Muṣṭafā* – I got the manuscript at Asäbot from Ḥadijā. On f.11r, there appears (in recent red ink) the name of her husband as the owner of this manuscript. [*ḫaḏ al-*

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[11] The copied version of this text is also found in Amīna's manuscript [22.3] discussed below.

[12] It is a regret that the photos of last twenty folios of this manuscript is not functional to be seen as it became a shortcut file. But it is good as we have, at least, the full copied version included in other text. Or one can go to the place it was photographed and photograph it again.

kitāb milku ḫ(?)amza ibn Aḥmad]. It end: فيرك عن غناء كالحرينا سماء الفيتوسلهيتﻪ -----. It has 42 folios with a dimension of 49x24.3 cm. The binding is vellum which is not attached to the manuscript. The scribe is *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. He composed it while he was imprisoned for 6 months by Emperor Haile Selassie in Addis Ababa. That is why he says in this text: "*min šari Abäba*" f.12r "(I take) refuge from what is in (Addis) Ababa" implying any sort of the monarchs harm.

Muṣṭafā is another name of the prophet Muḥammad. Hence, *Šilila Muṣṭafā* signifies a praise about prophet Muḥammad. This manuscript is a Tawaṣul text. From f.1r to f.11v and from 23r to 42r *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa beseeches Allah through his beloved Prophet Muḥammad; from11v to 22v, this beseeching is presented together with tawaṣuf (describing Allah's behavior and glory).

10.2 *Shilila Muṣṭafā*: It is photographed from Kämise. It has 22 folios. The binding is glued by skin. The papers are loosely attached together. The hand-writing is not *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa's; but it was copied by *Šayḫ* Muḥammad *Šayḫ* to ʿAbidat (colophon 12v). As informants confirmed, he copied it while he went to Čärčär, Western Harär to visit his friend *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. The name of the copyist is written in such away that each letter was written separately as follows: خ ش م ح م

11. Allāh Ẓul ʿulalī "Allah the most Excelted"

It is photographed from Kämise. Its *Mašrab* (meaning) is *Allāh Ẓul ʿulalī*. So, it is known by this name. The binding is a detached hard card board from the main text. It has 47 folios having a dimension of 25x18cm. From f.1v to f.5v is the *Tawaṣūl*, f.6v to f. 15r praises the prophet; and from f. 15v to f.45r praises the prophet and is again a *Tawaṣūl* through him. The *Tawaṣūl* part of this manuscript is written by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar himself.

He wrote it after he went to Harär and an epidemic was broke out. He did not specify what kind of epidemic it was. But he generally begs Allah to get ride of this problem through His pious slaves and servants. It has also some Arabic *Tawaṣūl* poems (f.4r-f.4v) which are written in Arabic.

12. Madḥ, "Praise".

12.1 Madḥ – It has no specific name. But it is a *Madḥ* text which glorifies and praises the prophet Muḥammad's generosity, patience, and truthfulness. It has 63 folios with a dimension of 24.2x18.5 cm. This *Madḥ* contains three separately bound *Madḥ* texts. None of these three texts shows any logical order in the arrangement. Of these, the first text is original text. The third text presents the prophet Muḥammad's various miracles (*muʿjizā*). The colophon of the second text states who wrote it, for whom it was written, and when it was completed (1361- AH; 1943), includes a Duʿāʾ for *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa and the Muslims at large. This colophon is written in a mixture of black and yellow ink. The binding is a hard cardboard; its bottom edge has an old, torn and mostly detached cloth. The manuscript is now in the hands of *Šayḫ* Man al-Karīm (the son of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa.) It ends perfectly.

12.2 Madḥ Rasūl Al-karīm: It is an original manuscript which is photographed from Kämise. The binding is an old hard cardboard which is glued by skin at its four edges

and bottom part. It is relatively well preserved manuscript. Hence, it stars and ends perfectly without any lose of folios. The name of the owner ('Abidat) is written on folio 1r. Totally it has around 50 folios.

It glorifies and praises prophet Muḥammad. It praises in such away that it repeats one Arabic phrase in each interval. At the end, there is a short poem in praise of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa by his friend Muḥammad Abre which is written while *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa was alive.[13]

12.3 *Madḥ / Yägetoč getoč...* – It is the original work of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. It is photographed from Mätähara. It is a *Madḥ* manuscript. It has two main parts having totally 44 folios. The first being starching from f.1r to 32v starting and ending perfectly الحمدهللخلقوءرجلن نشاشچونو هل مہددون respectively. The مجہمدون هل ونچشاشن and ولہوصحہوسلم محمد واليسيفا عالطلا وصلاهلوصلم second part starches from f.33v to f.44r. From f.36r to f.41v it is an inserted text written by a different hand. As it could be judged from the catchword رججن(on f.35v), this inserted text is not a substitution (the exact substitution) of the missed original folios.

On the last folio, there are two short notes: on f.44r the Ninety- nine names of Allah by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa himself; and f.44v the five mountains (, چہلشام , چہل طور , چہل مكہ) are mentioned. This manuscript is informative about *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Ja'far sources for his writings (f.1 r). He said that he took different ideas from different scholars. Its cover is a modern hard card board which is attached relatively well with the main text.

12.4 *Madḥ* – It is a *Madḥ* text. It is photographed from Shäwa-Robit from *Šayḫ* Ibrāhim Muḥammad Raʾūfʾs house. The name of the copyist is not written. It is copied in 1353 AH/1934GC. It has two texts. The second text is written on modern paper. The binding is a well attached hard-cardboard. It has 48 folios and 23x18cm dimension. It praises the prophet by repeating the Arabic phrase after some verses.

12.5 *Madḥ* – It was photographed from Addis Ababa, from Aminaʾs house. Like the preceding four manuscripts, this manuscript is a *Madḥ* text. This is his smallest manuscript among the collected manuscripts in this project having only 17 folios. As it stats incompletely, some folios might have been lost. The name of the copyist, the name of the manuscript and the date it was copied are not mentioned. The calligraphy of the first part of this text is different from the second text.

13. Waʿaẓ, "admonition, sermon"

It has no specific name. But it is a *Waʿaẓ* "admonition, sermon". It is recited to give advice and to make the gathered people remember Allah and his commandments. Its final section includes a duʿa. It has 21 folios. 24x16cm dimensions. It is an original work by the author *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. I got the manuscript at Asäbot from Ḫadijā. The Binding is a hard cardboard, with the upper edges of both sides torn out. Some of the pages are detached from the rest of the manuscript. It ends imperfectly.

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[13] In this poem he depicted *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa as an indispensable brave solider of Al-Mahdi who fought for nineteen (?) consecutive years and as a prolific *Ajäm* writer who by so doing educated his compatriots.

14. The First Siyär "Biography"

It has (2) 133 (3) folios having 35.8x24.3 cm dimension. It is the original version. It starts directly with the main topic in the following way: أقرأن القرسالي يبيI photographed it from Yasin Ismāʿīl's hand in Mätähara. He bought it from a distant relative of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. In f.1r another name (though not easily readable) is written in a recent and unclear hand with modern red ink ending by اللهي أردان ه فنويوشنّسيا اطالفأ نيعملبتلكى ىفي و

It is the first part of two manuscript volumes containing around 25 *abwāb* (sections).[14] The present volume begins with the events that took place when the prophet was encircled by his enemies and the actions he took to break out of this encirclement. The binding is a hard cardboard, upon which a skin (25.8x9.3 cm) is attached to the outside bottom edge as protection. The inside bottom edge of the binding is held together with a striped cloth (35.5x10 cm). Another striped cloth (almost detached) is attached to the bottom edge of the papers to hold them together. The volume's right cover has a skin (35.8x22 cm) as a protection both for the edge and for the manuscript as a whole. At the beginning, right after the cover, two modern white lined papers are inserted, on the second of which there is recent handwriting. At the end, before the cover, there are also one recently added white lined paper and one other old paper (*shubāk*)

15. The Second Siyär "Biography"

It deals with the second part of the Prophet Muḥammad's life and career until his death. It is 36x24cm. Like the preceding manuscript, this is also an original version written by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa.

It is covered by a hard cardboard, which is faded on both sides. On the inside of the covers a red folder of thin cardboard is attached, and a green cloth measuring 36x4.4 cm is attached on the upper edges for protection. At the beginning, immediately after the covers, there are recently added blank pages (among which the damaged first folio is attached to the back of the fifth page). Similarly, the last folio is attached to one of the four extra blank papers. It has (5) 255 (3) folios having around 100 *bāb*-s, which is 4 times as many as in the first Siyär. One can even get 3-5 *bāb*-s in a single folio. The second Siyär is thus much larger than the preceding volume. At the top of each folio the manuscript has been recently numbered in modern red ink. Though it belongs to *Šayḫ* Man al-Karīm, the manuscript is now in Awash in the hands of his daughter, Jamilāh *Šayḫ* Man al-karīm. It end وسلم وصحهب وله محمد سيدنا على اللهيهصول

16.1 Bässu Täbaräkä "Blessed by it"

16.1 Bässu Täbaräkä - It is acquired from Addis Ababa from *Šayḫ* Ibrāhim Muḥammad Raʿūf's son (Ṭānī Ibrāhim) hand. As it is well preserved, the overall physical condition of this manuscript is relatively good; and the main text is well attached to the binding. The bottom and upper side of the binding are covered by skin. It has also an extra

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[14] Informants told me that the copy of the manuscript which holds the whole volume together is found in Shäwa Robit in the hand`s of Dawūd Muḥammad who bought it for 800 birr.

binding to cover and protect the upper part of the text. It is one of the larger manuscript having140 folios and having 24.5x18cm dimension. It narrates the Prophet Muḥammad's life story starting from his pre-birth miracles and "stories" up to post-prophetic life. Together with narrating the prophet's story, he praises and glorifies Him.

16.2 Bässu Täbaräkä - I got it from Sharīf Ḥasan's home- in Aləyyu Amba. I saw other version of this manuscript in the house of the fore-mentioned *Šayḫ* Nūr Aḥmad.[15] It seems older than the present version. But all of its folios are detached; and it lacks some folios at its end when it compared to this manuscript. That is why I opted for this manuscript to photograph it. It has 142 folios. It is 24x8.5dimension. The binding is hard leather which is detached from the main text. It is copied in AH 1373 (1954 GC). It has around 140 folios.

17. Subḫān Allāh,"Allah,the Excalted"

It is obtained from Kämise. It is also known as *Lā 'ilāhā ill allāh*. It is big having 25x19cm dimension and 170 folios. The binding is totally skin. Some papers are detached from the main text. Except the last part which is copied by ʿAbidat, most of the rest ones are written by him.

The first four folios are supplications. In these supplications he alternatively used the different Arabic name of Allāh with his own Amharic verses in such away that they could create a taste rhyme. The remaining ones are *Ḏikr* which are divided into different entries.

18. Asmaʿ Al-Ḥusnā, "the beautiful names (of Allah)"

It is photographed from Kämise. It has 61 folios and 18.5 x 13cm dimension. Its binding is detached from the main part. It mentions the 99 different names of Allah and 201 names of the prophet. It is written by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar. It starts with the supplication using Allah's 99 names which is also used in previous manuscript. Then the praise of the prophet is presented by different entries. The first of these *Madḥ* entries, praises the prophet by mentioning his different names.

19. Šayḫ Ibrāhim's manuscript

It was photographed from Shäwa Robit from *Šayḫ* Ibrāhim Muḥammad Raʾūf's house. The name of the manuscript, the copyist and the date it was copied are not written. It has 25 folios. The dimension is 21.5 x 16 cm. He mentioned the six pillars of Imān and the five pillars of Islam in brief (f. 3v). The binding which is a hard-cardboard is a well attached to the main text. The text is complete. The papers are modern papers.

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[15] Another earliest copy of this manuscript was at the hands of Assiya, Kämise. But as one borrowed it and too it to an area called Dodota I could not photographed it.

20.1 Amīna's manuscript

It is photographed from Addis Ababa from Amīna`s house. It has 27 folios. As it is a badly preserved manuscript, unless a quick restoration work is done, the binding and the papers will be collapsed totally.

It is exceptionally a text written in prose form. For the time being, the rationale for this exceptionality is not clear. But while reconsidering this exceptionality, one has to question the authenticity of text to be written really by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. The name of the copyist, the name of the text and the date it was copied are not mentioned. It deals with the six pillars of Imān and the five pillars of Islam.

20.2 Amīna's Manuscript

It is photographed from Addis Ababa from Amīna's house. It is very huge manuscript having around 250 folios. It is also the most decorated and illuminated manuscript. It is the combination of different independent texts. Among the texts included in this manuscript is *Aṣḥāb al-Futūḥ*.

As indicated in the colophon, most of these texts are copied by Ibrāhim Junayd. In one of the colophon of theses texts, the death of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa mistakably is dated as 1335 AH which actually, as mentioned on the short note of the tomb and as confirmed by different primary and secondary sources, is 1354 AH. The binding which is glued by a skin is detached from the main text. The papers are also loosely attached together. The hand for some texts at the end is different suggesting the involvement of other scribe as well.

List of the manuscript owners

No	Name	Place of interview	Remarks
1	Man al-karīm	Mieso	He is the only surviving children of Šayḫ Ṭalḥa Jaʿfar.
2	Assiyā Abdusomed	Kämisse, Southern Wallo	At her home I found many manuscripts collection copied by her mother ʿAbidat and the writing materials which were used by *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa.
3	Abdureḥmān Aḥmad Ṭayib	Addis Ababa	He is a distant relative of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa. He published the Nasiku Ṣalikīn manuscript of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa in Amharic script.
4	Aminā Muḥammed Sirāj	Addis Ababa	She is the great grand-daughter of *Šayḫ* Ṭalḥa

5	Aḥmad Sirāj (Täqəl)	Aləyyu Amba	He was a key person who facilitated my journey to Chəbṭe and Musa-Hagär villages.
6	Bushra al-Karīm	Chəbṭe, Aləyyu Amba	Though he is in 70s he had the fresh memories of events. He was exceptionally helpful in identifying and investigating manuscripts.
7	Ṭāhīr Nurye Ṭāhīr	Mätähara	
8	Ṭānī Ibrāhim	Addis Ababa	He claimed that at his father's home, in Shäwa-Robit, there are other many manuscript collections.

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The Complexities of Conversion among the "Felesmura"

Shalva Weil[*]

This paper will discuss the complexities of conversion in the context of the so-called "Felesmura", Beta Israel (Falashas)[1] who converted to Christianity from Ethiopic Judaism. The paper will focus on conversion which took place from the nineteenth century on among groups of Beta Israel, who are today converting "back" to Judaism.

The Study of Conversion

Religious conversion implies accepting a set of beliefs and practices which is different from a system of truth and religious commitment previously experienced (HEIRICH 1977). Conversion can be individual familial, or communal. The study of conversion from one religion to another has been a traditional subject of interest for anthropologists and historians alike, and has been a central theme in general Ethiopian studies.[2] However, it has suffered from some major limitations. It has characteristically been discussed in relation to Christianity, "conversion" often being synonymous with "conversion to Christianity" (PAUW 1975). In addition, research has tried to don the mask of objectivity, while in practice actually supporting conversion, the researcher at times being the proselytizer. Lienhardt, whose studies of the Dinka tribe constitute classic reading in Ethiopian studies, is probably the best example of this kind. (LIENHARDT 1961)

In Ethiopian studies, it has become recognized that conversion to Christianity is not an exclusive field, while conversion to Islam is increasingly being scrutinized. Scholars have become aware of the influences of external polemics and global connections in which Christian and Muslim identities are being contested in the public sphere (ABBINK 2011). Within Islam itself, conversion has been taking place from Sufi mystical Islam to reformist movements labeled as "Wuhhabi" or "Salafi" (ERLICH 2007; MARCUS 2008). Conversion to Judaism, traditionally a non-proselytizing world religion,[3] has been a relatively unexplored field, although there is now more general academic interest in this trend too,

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[1] The group once known as "Falashas" call themselves "Ethiopian Jews" in Israel, but the scientific literature tends to refer to them as "Beta Israel" in their Ethiopian context. For a discussion of designations of this group, see WEIL 1995.

[2] KAPLAN 2004 has reviewed the literature prior to 2004.

[3] There are, however, strands in Judaism that believe in Jewish missionary activity in order to speed up the Redemption.

particularly in Africa, among groups who claim to be "Black Jews".[4] Nor have the conversions of the Beta Israel of Ethiopia escaped the gaze of researchers. Based on 86 record cards reporting on the conversion of Falasha men and women in the Dabat Protestant mission during the years 1955-1960, Trevisan Semi also examined the reversibility of these conversions (TREVISAN SEMI 2002).

The reasons for group conversion are often intriguing and encompass such searching questions as why one group in a particular culture area might be reluctant to convert to a world religion while another group might endorse it (RIGBY 1981); why conversion movements gain sudden popularity; and why people convert at all (KAMMERER 1990). In Ethiopia, not only the Felesmura are interested in converting to Judaism, but also a group calling themselves the Bete Abraham are interested in aligning themselves with Judaism,[5] although to date this group so far has not succeeded in persuading world Jewry of the authenticity of their claims. Ideas about the millennium are often associated with conversion, and sometimes account for periods of intense religious fervor (Cf. WILSON 1973).

Globally, research into proselytization has tended to focus upon a single conversion movement, irrespective of the fact that adherents to one religion may have undergone multiple transformations. In the case of indigenous religions, believers may adapt basic elements of traditional religion with a more dominant religion; in the case of world religions, adherents may convert to a second, or even third, world religion in the course of one life-span.

I have noted the complexities of dual or multiple conversion in my previous writings, notably with reference to issues of conversion among a collection of different tribal peoples claiming Israelite descent who lived in the Indo-Burmese borderlands, and some of whom today live in the State of Israel. In India, they were known by a variety of appellations, but collectively as the Shinlung (WEIL 2003), or variously as the Chikim, a combination of Chin-Kuki-Mizo (SAMRA 2009) or the Zo (SAMRA 2012). In Israel, they are known as "Bnei Menasseh", linking them with the Biblical tribe of Menasseh. Instead of describing a single conversion movement, which is the usual focus of articles on religious conversion, I highlighted the phenomenon of dual conversion. The conversion of the Bnei Menasseh took place in two stages: the first was from different types of animistic religions to Christianity, and the second stage of the conversion was from Christianity to Judaism. While in the first stage, the conversion was from indigenous religions to a world religion, in the second stage, the conversion was from one world religion (Christianity) to another (Judaism), although admittedly Judaism is relatively insignificant in India and Burma (WEIL 2003). Through the process of "replacement" (KAMMERER 1990:287) by which the tribal peoples abandon one set of norms and customs and change their religious

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[4] In June 2012, I presented a paper at a conference organised by ISSAJ, the International Society for the Study of African Jewry, which took place at Pietermaritzburg, South Africa on "Black Jews in Africa". My paper on the Ethiopian Jews was the only paper on a group of Jews formally recognised as such by the State of Israel and by most Rabbinical authorities. The other papers were on diverse groups in Africa claiming either Israelite or Judaic connections, some of which have converted formally to Judaism with the aid of Western Rabbis.

[5] By 2012, they called themselves the "Bet Abraham Jewish Community". BRUDER 2011 designated them "Beit Avraham".

identification and participation, the Shinlung converted to a second world religion, while retaining the connection between traditional religious beliefs and the new religious cognitive order.

In this paper, I will delve further into the processes of "double conversion" to Judaism, but this time in an Ethiopian context in relation to the Felesmura, whose ancestors were Beta Israel (or Falashas). A discussion of their double conversion is virtually impossible without an initial explanation of the history and identity of members of this group.

The Falashas/Beta Israel in Ethiopia[6]

The Beta Israel lived in hundreds of villages in North-West Ethiopia, scattered throughout the provinces of Simien, Dembeya, Begemder, Tigray, Lasta and Qwara. They spoke two principal local languages, Amharic and Tigrinya, mixed with some Agau.

The Beta Israel were monotheistic, practising a Torah-based Judaism, without observing the Oral Law, as other Jewish communities. They followed both the lunar and solar calendar, and observed a complex cycle of fasts, and festivals, circumcising their boys on the eighth day, and refraining from work on the Sabbath. Their religious practices were influenced by Ethiopic Christians and many elements were in common to both religions, such as praying to Jerusalem, the common liturgical language of Geez, and the longing for Zion.

According to many authorities, the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Aksum were Jewish before the advent of Christianity in the third to fourth century. A popular Ethiopian belief is that the Beta Israel are descendants of Israelite henchmen, who arrived with Menelik, the son of the union of King Solomon and Queen Sheba. Another theory is that they are descendants of the "lost" Israelite tribe of Dan. Some posit that the Beta Israel emerged as an identifiable Jewish group between the 14th and 16th centuries.

Travelers reported the presence of Jews in Ethiopia, from Eldad Ha-Dani in the ninth century, to Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth. Documentary evidence of a Judaized group opposing the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is found in a royal chronicle from the reign of Emperor Amde Zion (1314-1344). During the reigns of Emperors Ishaq (1413-1438) and Susenyos (1607-1632), there are reports of "Ayhud", who resisted conversion to Christianity. They were defeated, lost their rights to land (rist), and became a subjugated people, employed in low-class occupations as blacksmiths, weavers and potters, and accused of possessing *buda*, or magical evil eye powers. During the reign of Emperor Sarsa Dengel (1563-97), a belligerent attempt in Wogera ended in the captivity, massacre and enslavement of hundreds of Beta Israel. During the reign of Emperor Fasilades (1632-7), Gondar became the political metropolis of the empire, and the situation of the Beta Israel improved. They were employed in higher-ranking professions, as carpenters and masons in the churches and royal castles; this practice was continued by Emperors Yohannes I and Iyasu I. Although the economic position of the Beta Israel subsequently deteriorated, they continued in their roles as craftsmen well into the twentieth century.

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[6] This section is based upon WEIL 2011a, which provides a succinct overview. Important studies of this community include KAPLAN 1992; QUIRIN 1992; PARFITT and TREVISAN SEMI 1999.

The encounter with the Western world broadly began in the nineteenth century. Protestant missionaries succeeded in converting some Beta Israel, while challenging their beliefs and religious practices, such as monasticism, sacrifices, and strict code of purity laws. At the same time, a "counter-mission" led by Jacques Faitlovitch (1881-1953), the Jewish student of the French Semiticist Joseph Halévy (1827-1917) who had met with Beta Israel in Ethiopia in 1867, began in 1904-5. Until 1935, Dr. Faitlovitch brought 25 young males to different Jewish communities in Palestine and Europe with the idea that they would study normative Judaism and then return and educate other Ethiopian Jews in Ethiopia. In 1923, Dr. Faitlovitch established a "Falasha school" in Addis Abeba, which operated until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1935-6.

There was no mass emigration from Ethiopia by the Beta Israel after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Indeed, their "Jewishness" was also brought into question in that they had been cut off from mainstream Judaism and did not know the Oral Law. From the Ethiopian side, there was also resistance to their emigration. In the 1950s, Emperor Haile Selassie allowed two groups of young Beta Israel pupils to study in a dormitory school in Israel, on condition that they return. A breakthrough occurred in 1973 and in 1975 respectively when Israel's two Chief Rabbis declared that the "Falashas" could be recognized as descendants of the "lost" tribe of Dan and thereby return to their historic homeland, Israel. In 1986, Ethiopian Jews in Israel staged a strike opposite the offices of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem objecting to the symbolic conversion they had to undergo in order to be accepted as "full" Jews. Today, there are still minor obstacles in registering Ethiopian Jewish marriages. *Qesoch* (Ethiopian priests) act as spiritual leaders for the older generation, alongside young modern orthodox Ethiopian *rabbis*, who have been ordained in Israel.

Until 1984, several hundred Beta Israel managed to reach Israel. Eventually, in 1984-5, Operation Moses took place, in which 7,700 Beta Israel were airlifted from the refugee camps in the Sudan to Israel; an estimated 4,000 died on the way. The Operation was terminated suddenly by the embarrassed Sudanese government, once knowledge of it had reached the press. In 1989, diplomatic relations were restored between Ethiopia and Israel. In May 1991, after international pressure demanded the rescue and emigration of the Beta Israel, Operation Solomon took place. 14,310 Jews were airlifted of Ethiopia to Israel in 36 hours, as the future of the Ethiopian government headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam hung in balance.

During the 1990s, different groups in Ethiopia began claiming the right to immigrate to Israel, which resulted in the airlift of a few thousand Beta Israel from the remote area of Qwara. In addition, thousands of "Felesmura", claiming descent from Beta Israel who converted to Christianity from the nineteenth century on, have since migrated to Israel and converted to Judaism; more are still waiting in Ethiopia. Today, there are over 130,000 people of Ethiopian descent living in Israel, making it the second largest Ethiopian diaspora globally. Approximately half of these belong to the category "Felesmura". Over 20% of the Ethiopian Jewish community is born in Israel.

Dual Conversion in Ethiopia

While dual conversion in the Western world may be unusual, the fluidity of Christianity and Judaism in Ethiopia has been well documented (PANKHURST 1992). To begin with, the two religions are remarkably similar in many respects. In addition, throughout Ethiopian history, famous personalities converted one way or the other. The process began when the Axumite king Ezana purportedly of Judaic origin, converted to Christianity (KAPLAN 1982). Yet, at the same time, some people resisted his decree and converted to Judaism.

Conversion to Christianity

The focus of our paper, however, is the conversion from Ethiopic Judaism to Christianity in modern times. This was largely effected by foreign missionary activity in Ethiopia. The missionaries came from a variety of European countries, and their proliferation can be attributed to colonialism, on the one hand, and the interests of some Ethiopian rulers in Europe, (in particular, the need to acquire firearms from the West to wage local wars), on the other. One of the first missionaries who set foot in Ethiopia in the new era was Rev. Samuel Gobat of the Church Missionary Society, who encouraged the establishment of the Pilgrim Mission from St Chrischona Institute at Basel in 1856 (GOBAT 1850),[7] and the Falasha Mission under the auspices of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews in 1859 (GIDNEY 1899). In 1862, the Church of Scotland also set up a short-lived Falasha Mission in Ethiopia. The attitude of different Ethiopian rulers to the foreign missionaries vacillated and even the same ruler changed his mind during his own lifetime. Tewodros II at first tolerated European missionaries, but later imprisoned them, culminating in his own suicide in 1868.

The Beta Israel were a common target for all the missionaries, both because of their lowly status in Ethiopia and because of the belief that by converting members of the "Chosen People" wherever they be, the Christians could hasten the Redemption. In addition, the missionaries hoped that by proselytizing among the Beta Israel, they could penetrate and revive the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. This was the attitude of the major missionary for the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, Henry Aaron Stern (1820-1885), himself a converted Jew from Germany (STERN 1862). In Gondar, Stern held disputations with Beta Israel leaders, in which he challenged their disbelief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and scorned their rudimentary knowledge of the Bible (SEEMAN 2000).

In 1863 Emperor Tewodros, insulted that he had never received a reply to his letter to Queen Victoria, imprisoned Stern along with nine fellow missionaries and British diplomatic staff (WEIL 2010). A British expeditionary force, led by Sir Robert Napier, commander-in-chief of the Bombay army, with 12,000 soldiers, looted the imperial capital, and killed 700 Ethiopian defenders, freed Stern and the others. Tewodros, defeated, committed suicide. Yohannes IV (1871-89) of Tigray province attempted to eradicate the missions with a view to establishing doctrinal unity within the Orthodox Church. He was particularly preoccupied with the Catholics in the north (QUIRIN 1991:174-5).

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[7]   See also the paper by LIS 2015, also published in these proceedings.

Under Menelik 11 (1889-1913), the mission returned. During Haile Selassie's regime, missionaries were only allowed to proselytize among non-Christian ethnic groups, and the Beta Israel thus became "favourite" targets.There were several missions to the Beta Israel, not least the mission headed by Eric Payne (PAYNE 1972). Throughout, the missionaries trained local Ethiopians, known as 'native agents', who could carry on their work, particularly during the periods that they were expelled from Ethiopia and worked from abroad (SMIDT 2005). One of these native agents was the Falasha-born missionary Berru Webe (QUIRIN 2003: 545-6).

Perhaps the best known was Mikael Aragawi (1848-1931), who worked among the Beta Israel population on behalf of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews during the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (WEIL 2008, 2011b.). Aragawi was born in Dembya to a father, who was the servant of Reverend J. Nicholayson, the Protestant missionary Martin Flad's cook, who accompanied Flad on his first mission from Jerusalem to Ethiopia in 1855 (FLAD 1866). Aragawi's mother died when he was three and his father gave him to Flad and his wife to raise. Flad facilitated Aragawi's education in Europe, first at an orphanage in Germany. In 1873, Aragawi was dedicated as a missionary at the St Chrischona Institute in Switzerland. Due to Flad's huge influence over the Beta Israel, the converts were known colloquially as *Ye-Ato Flad Lejoch* ("Children (adherents) of Mr. Flad"), as well as "Falasha Christians" and *Ye-Miryam woded* ("lovers of Mary").[8] They were a liminal group, "betwixt and between", as Victor Turner would call it, having abandoned Falasha Judaism but not accepted by Ethiopic Christianity. Harman called this the "blurred identity" of the Falas Mura (sic) in that "they were ethnically, socially, culturally and socio-economically Falasha, but religiously Christian" (HARMAN 2008:12).

Despite the prominence of the subject of proselytisation among the Beta Israel and the vast scientific literature on this subject (Cf. QUIRIN 1991:198-200), which is disproportionate to the size of the Beta Israel community in Ethiopia, the number of actual converts in the nineteenth century was trifling: 65 souls converted until 1868, 1470 by 1894 and 1513 by 1908 (SUMMERFIELD 2003: 32). The number of converts in a single year rarely exceeded forty, although caution must be applied when discussing these numbers (Cf. KAPLAN 1991:127.). The fact is that since 1991 some 65,000 people so far have claimed that they are descendants of the "Falasha Christians" who converted to Christianity, and have been allowed to immigrate to the Jewish state of Israel through that country's Law of Return, which recognizes the right of immigration for people descended from Jews.

b. Conversion to Judaism

Conversion to the Judaism of the Beta Israel in Ethiopia had been taking place for generations, usually on the part of Christians, but also by animists and members of other religions. Some of the converts were *barya* or slaves from the Sudan. These converts had to isolate themselves for a week, only eating chickpeas and drinking water. During the conversion ceremony itself, which is not dissimilar to orthodox conversion ceremonies in other Jewish communities today, the converts shaved their head, immersed themselves in

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[8] For designations of the converts, see QUIRIN 1991: 185-6.

water, washed their garments and were given a new name. They learned about the new religion and if uncircumcised, had to undergo the circumcision ceremony.[9]

The process of conversion to Judaism among the Felesmura began some 20 years ago, after the termination of Operation Solomon (1991). Their link to Judaism was based on the claim that they had converted to Christianity through necessity and now wished to "return" to Judaism, albeit a new form of the Jewish religion with little in common with their indigenous religious beliefs. The dual conversion appealed to ancient ties, as well as creating new identities of ethnicity and nationalism in a new location – Israel.

Until their mass emigration to the state of Israel, as mentioned, the Beta Israel observed a Torah-based type of religion without keeping the Jewish Oral Law. Those proselytized, *Ye-Miryam Woded*, were also rejected by the *Oritawi* (Torah-abiding) Beta Israel. Today, these same people, who re-emerged as Felesmura, are converting in formal ceremonies supervised by Israeli Rabbis to mainstream Judaism. This brand of Rabbinic Judaism is quite different from ancient "Falasha Judaism" in which sacrifices were performed, where there was no separation between meat and milk food products and where purity laws were observed in conjunction with Biblical exhortations.

In Israel, the Rubinstein committee (1991), the Tsaban committee (1992) established by the Minister of Absorption by that name, and the Handel committee (2001), set up commissions of enquiry to understand the history and demography of the Felesmura and to decide their fate in relation to the State of Israel. According to Harman, between 1991 and 2007 alone, the Knesset (Parliament) Committee for Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs conducted over one hundred sessions about the Falash Mura (HARMAN 2008: 14 fn 31). The consensus was that in order to qualify for the Israeli Law of Return, these Felesmura had to agree to "return to Judaism".

The "return to Judaism" is an official orthodox conversion embraced by the State of Israel. According to the official Israeli Government Portal,[10] the conversion process consists of the five following steps:

1. Presenting documents and enrolling to conversion process

2. Judaism studies in a conversion course

3. Applying to a conversion court

4. A ceremony in the Rabbinical court which includes an immersion in a *Mikveh* i.e. ritual bath (women and men) and performing a *Brit Mila* i.e. circumcision ceremony (men).

5. Getting a conversion certificate and updating religion status in the Ministry of Interior.

In the case of the Felesmura, since circumcision had already been carried out in Ethiopia, the ceremony included a symbolic "shedding of blood". According to the government website, any person who successfully completes the conversion process then becomes a "Jew for all intents and purposes" and his status is identical to that of any other Jew, born to a Jewish mother. It is significant that the site writes: "The process is

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[9] Interviews carried out with informants in Israel during 2011

[10] http://www.gov.il/FirstGov/TopNavEng/EngSituations/ESConversion/ESCNewProcess/

irreversible and once you have been declared Jewish, you will not be able to convert back to your previous religion". However, this is neither necessarily factually nor *halachi*cally (Jewish legally) correct.

In Israel, the new immigrants, as converts to Judaism from Ethiopia, are entitled to subsidized public housing, free Hebrew tuition, an initial cash payment for "absorption", and special educational advantages. They serve in the Israel Defence Forces. The majority of Ethiopian Jewish adults in Israel live beneath the poverty line. The seven-generation Ethiopian kinship unit, *zemed*, is beginning to break down. The laws of ritual impurity observed in Ethiopia, are being modified. Married women are encouraged to go out to work in order to assist with the family income.

In practice, some Felesmura continue to attend Christian prayer houses in Israel or re-convert to Pentecostalism or other denominations. The vast majority, however, are recognized and consider themselves as Jewish citizens in the state of Israel; some are more religious and others become what Israelis call "secular".

Conclusion

This paper has documented the two-pronged conversion of the Felesmura, from Ethiopic Judaism to Protestant Christianity, on the one hand, and from Christianity to Rabbinic Judaism, on the other. The double conversion has taken place over a period of 150 years, the heyday of the conversion to Christianity taking place in the mid-nineteenth century and the heyday of the conversion to Judaism taking place in the past 20 years. The double conversion has resulted in the Felesmura "returning" to a form of Judaism that was totally foreign to them yet appropriate in the Jewish homeland and pertinent to their new identity as part of the Jewish people.

The reasons why the Beta Israel converted to Christianity in the nineteenth century appear to be similar to the reasons why these same people designated Felesmura, are today converting to Judaism. They appear to relate to the economic attractiveness of the proselytising or new religion, as well as the structure and belief of indigenous religion which is being evoked. The transformations appealed and appeal to a modern, yet traditional identity of ethnic autonomy found in a cultural identity which produces common membership irrespective of divisive aspirations. In practice, the conversion to Christianity offered the Beta Israel/Falasha better propsects such as education and land rights, while the so-called "return to Judaism" offers a new future, also with education, housing and social mobility, for the newly proclaimed Ethiopian Jews in a modern, Western state. While Christianity and Judaism are divided over the belief in Jesus Christ, on a practical level the conversions offer an innovative style of life while wiping the slate clear of previous statuses. The conversion to a completely new form of Judaism is also a form of "re-traditionalisation" associated with the emergence of a new identity with the Jewish people. The current transformation on the part of the Felesmura and the emergence of new religious forms are linked to the quest to bypass Christianity and the search for ethnic salience in novel form.

The moulding of the new identity in Israel as members of the Jewish people turns to a "felt" or even "imagined" antiquity of ethnicity, and the endorsement of a new ethno-history. For Israelis, Felesmura and Ethiopian Jews (whom they remember as "Falasha")

are one and both are called by outsiders "Ethiopian Jews". The new affiliations crystallize the "Falasha Christians" and Oritawi Beta Israel as a new ethnic group, by re- constructing for them an ethno-history which can create the new "community of history and destiny" (SMITH 1990). The process is aided by the compatibility of the indigenous religion, which contained the rudiments of Judaism, Judaic festivals, and messianic elements and beliefs.In this, they are not too different from the Shinlung the Indo-Burmese borderlands, who retained their connection between traditional religion and the new cognitive order.

Encouraged by the hope of Redemption as expounded in eschatological texts, such as in Ezekiel 37, and brought to life in contemporary times by messianic right-wing groups in Israel, the Falasha Christians, transformed into the Felesmura and then into Ethiopian Jews, are seeking the dovetailing of past and future, ethnos and nation in a formulation which defines a new community of history and destiny. This year, several thousand Felesmura, who were waiting in a compound in Gondar in the hopes of reenacting that community in Israel, succeeded in emigrating. The Jewish authorities, who were manning the Gondar camp, closed it officially. However, newspaper articles and informants are already reporting that more Felesmura are lying in wait in order to revive their old-new dream of reuniting with Israel and the Jewish people.

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Ethnomathematics in Ethiopia: Out-of-School Mathematical Practices Recognized by Teachers and Students

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Education is the basic building block of every society and is the entryway to learning the skills, facts and values necessary to fulfill the career aspirations related to the future economic affairs of children (WINCH, 2002). It is necessary, thus, education be relevant to the learners' needs and their backgrounds so that they can accept it as crucial necessity for their development. Moreover, education becomes relevant to the learners when the school curriculum and instruction are contextualized to their learning preferences and with what they have from their home and community (MALLOY & MALLOY, 1998). That is why integrating indigenous knowledge and practices in to the formal education of specific knowledge domains or subjects is becoming common goal for nations regardless of their developmental level (LEU & WU, 2004). Having such goals and other recommendations of empirical studies on the relationship of culture and education, many developing African countries have been restructuring their education systems since their independence so that to relate education to their peoples' cultural values (HICKLING-HUDSON, 2006; SHIZHA, 2006; WOOLMAN, 2001).

One of the types/forms of education, formal education, is standardized and structured education given in school situations with a rigid curriculum framework (HAMADACHE, 1991). Out-of-school mathematical practices referred in this paper, on the other hand, are practices that take place everywhere in the familiar apprenticeship setting excluding the school compound (MASINGILA, 1993). These social, cultural, and historical conditions that exist in the students' out-of-school environment define and shape students and their mathematics related experiences (MALLOY & MALLOY, 1998). These conditions that can affect the classroom teaching and learning are extensively investigated in the past few decades in many countries of the world (BISHOP, 1997; CHIKODZI & NYOTA, 2010; MASINGILA, 1993; SAXE, 1992; GERDES, 2007; ZHANG and ZHANG, 2010).

While the importance of ethnomathematics is recognized and investigations are done for further understanding of its educational implications in the world as noted above, unfortunately, there is hardly empirical research of ethnomathematics in general and

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out-of-school mathematical practices in particular studied in Ethiopia. Particularly, the issue of how teachers and students recognize the influence of socio-cultural context on the classroom teaching-learning process is not well examined. This scarcity of research based recommendations is identified as one of the reasons that school teachers do not contextualize their mathematics instruction. Cherinet (2008) supports this idea that the low achievement and dislike of the subject mathematics in most Ethiopian schools is due to the lack of relevance of the mathematics instruction in schools. These gaps motivated the researcher to study the current topic.

To this end, with the purpose of examining awareness of teachers and students about the out-of-school indigenous mathematical practices in relation to their school mathematical activities, the following research questions were investigated in this study: What mathematical knowledge and practices do teachers and students recognize from the out-of-school setting? How can mathematics education use out-of-school mathematical ideas and practices in improving mathematics teaching and learning?

Ethnomathematics

Mathematics is related to counting, measurements, calculations, discovering relationships, designing, and locating in which critical thinking, researching and problem solving are central tasks (CHIKODZI & NYOTA, 2010; BISHOP, 1997). On top of this definition, studies reveal that the public image of mathematics is an objective and abstract body of knowledge (BISHOP, 1997; PINXTEN,1994). This means that mathematics deals about universally accepted absolute truths. However, anthropologists' research shows that daily or cultural mathematics is not exactly the same as the universally standardized mathematics that is taught in general school systems (ZHANG and ZHANG, 2010). Accordingly, Bishop (1997) defines mathematics as culture driven symbolic technology that relates man to its environment. This debate between culture free and culture dependent mathematics led mathematicians and mathematics educators to see alternative ways of mathematical thinking which in turn helped the field called ethnomathematics to emerge in 1980s.

According to D'Ambrosio (1985), ethnomathematics is the mathematics practiced in identifiable cultural groups. Many other mathematics educators defined ethnomathematics in many ways since the first definition given by D'Ambrosio. For example, Bishop (1997) defined ethnomathematics as the study of the mathematics developed and used by different cultural groups across the world i.e. the relationship between mathematics and culture (BISHOP, 1997).

The intension of ethnomathematics movement is to improve the school mathematics curriculum and instruction by incorporating cultural aspects of mathematics (D'AMBROSIO, 1985). Supporting this goal of ethnomathematics, Katz (1994) claimed that using ethnomathematics in the mathematics curriculum and instruction increased the relevance of mathematics to the learners. The way this could be done, however, varies because from the research point of view, ethnomathematics covers wider areas of study. Bishop (1997) identifies three main focus areas among the many: (1) mathematics in the traditional societies which includes the mathematical

activities of different indigenous peoples of the world such as counting, adding, subtracting, house building, games, plays, and so forth; (2) studying the different histories of mathematics; and (3) studying children's outside school mathematical knowledge which deals with the purpose of understanding whether students who have mathematical background at home succeed in school mathematics more or not.

Out-of-School Mathematical Practices

Mathematics is important in everyday life, home, workplace, play/game, science and technology, medicine, economy, education and so on. This importance can be a good reason for teaching mathematics in schools. Regardless of this importance, research on the use of mathematics in out-of-school activities shows that in school and out-of-school mathematical practices are different (MASINGILA, 1993). Lave (1988) argues that this is a consequence of the fact that learning in and out of school are two different social practices. This is to mean that learning in school is mostly receiving theoretically organized body of mathematical knowledge from a teacher whereas learning in out-of-school setting is apprentice based and practice oriented in which the master shows the trainer/learner by doing contextually situated and life related task (LAVE, 1988).

Although these two settings are different, they can affect each other. This complementing nature can happen when school mathematics instruction utilizes out-of-school mathematical practices and when everyday life activities at home or workplaces make use of school learnt mathematical knowledge (SAXE, 1992). To this end, school mathematics curricula and instruction should include rich problems that build upon the out-of-school mathematical understandings of the students in order to engage them in such mathematics practices (MASINGILA, 1993). But this is not enough because many students tend to exclude out-of-school real-life mathematical ideas from their classroom learning (BONOTTO, 2005). Teachers and students need to have the awareness about the interaction of in school mathematical practices and out-of-school mathematical ideas.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology was employed to investigate the out-of-school mathematical practices in relation to Mathematics education in selected primary Schools. In this study, the researcher has made an attempt to explore and understand interpretatively the mathematical practices of indigenous peoples in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, from the perspectives of teachers and students. So, interview and observation were employed to get information from teachers and students.

The study covers primary schools (grade 1-8) in Addis Ababa City. Participants of this study were students and mathematics teachers of two primary schools in Addis Ababa. The sample for the study was drawn from all Mathematics teachers of grade one to eight and students of similar grades. But as reported, rather than looking at the representativeness of the study sample so as to make sound generalization, it is important to focus on its ability to meet specific criteria (CRESWELL, 2007; YIN, 2003). Thus, teacher participants for this study were selected purposefully based on their willingness

to participate in the study, gender, and subjects they are teaching. Accordingly, a total of 4 teachers, where female participant was only one, participated in the study. Similarly, a purposive sampling technique was used to select students for interview from grade 5-8 based on the merits of their academic achievement according to the recommendation of the respective teachers. The logic behind picking only best students from each grade was that these outstanding students would be better in explaining themselves, and understanding the relation between their culture and school mathematics.

Qualitative data were collected using interviews of mathematics teachers and students, and observations of students' plays and games as well as school compound and pedagogical centers. The teacher and student informants participated in a 30-minute interview followed by classroom observations. There were direct interviews with individual students of the second cycle (grade 5-8) students. The first cycle (grade 1-4) students were observed while playing the games and at the same time they were asked about the aims, rules and procedures of each game or play they were involved in.

According to Yin (2003) qualitative data analysis involves categorization and interpretation of data in terms of common themes in the way it serves the overall description of the data. For the present study, themes for analysis were identified from re-reading of the interviews and observation scripts. In other words, data collected with the help of interviews and observations were transcribed verbatim and categorized into the corresponding theme. In general, data were analyzed in terms of the following major themes: Mathematical objects and thinking practiced by the indigenous peoples; Traditional games that have embedded mathematical practices; and Implications to mathematics curriculum and instruction. After analyzing data from each data source, further analysis was also done from combinations of sources to strengthen the inferences.

According to Creswell (2007) quality of qualitative research can be ensured via employing combinations of methods that enable researchers see the phenomena from different angles or perspectives. To this end, combination of methods (interview and observation) and sources (students and teachers) were utilized. Triangulation of data sources such as students, teachers, and observation field notes was also considered to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data. Also the literature is used as a supporting pillar to validate the data (Ibid).

The consent of school directors of the respective schools was secured first by explaining objectives of the study by submitting clearance letter from the Department of Science and Mathematics Education of Addis Ababa University. Similarly, willingness of teacher and student participants was ensured before each interview and observation. Moreover, in qualitative data analysis, participants' viewpoints shouldn't be represented in a manner that might jeopardize their status among their colleagues or administrators (BERG, 2001). For this reason, the researcher chose to present the data in a general way than showing in the way it implies the identity of respondents.

Results and Discussion

In analyzing and presenting the results of this study, attention was given to the views expressed by the individual participant while trying to connect these individual perspectives by situating them in the context of unifying themes recognized by the researcher. Accordingly, three themes were identified as discussed below.

(1) Mathematical objects and thinking practiced by the indigenous peoples

Research studies reveal that different indigenous peoples in various parts of the world have developed their own indigenous mathematical concepts to solve their life problems (ZASLAVSKY, 1970). The participants in this study have the same belief as what is in the literature and expressed their views on the existence of indigenous mathematical objects (including counting, numeracy, geometry, measurement) in Ethiopia. Here is an example of extract reported during in-depth interview with teachers:

> Mathematical ideas and practices in Ethiopia...!..um.... yes there are (shaking his head) for example counting using sand or crop seeds, measuring length/distance using hands '*Kind*' or footsteps '*Ermijja*' ; and using the sun and position of shadow to know the time ...

The idea here is that the indigenous people use their own culture embedded mathematics in their everyday life activities. Mathematical objects such as numbers and numeration systems are cited here. This mathematics is not learnt from school rather it is part of their ongoing life activities that came into being as part of their civilization. Another participant from different school also has similar idea with respect to the existence of cultural mathematical practices:

> ... no (Pause)...Aha! Yes there is some kind of mathematics such as "Ge'ez" numbers, but they have nothing to do with math because it is impossible to do calculations with these numbers except counting, can we say this is mathematics?

He put the question to me but answered it himself saying:

> ...I don't think, because mathematics includes calculations, fractions, and decimals and so on.

This respondent noticed the existence of "Ge'ez"[1] numbers and numerals (in the sense of Saxe's (1979) definition of numbers and numerals) which were traditionally used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. His doubt is whether or not these can be classified as mathematics because (as he reasoned out) the number zero is not included in this numeral system and it is difficult to form fractions and complex calculations using these numerals. However, Some Ethiopian researchers tried to introduce a symbol for

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[1] Ge'ez is a language traditionally used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church and one of the languag courses in Addis Ababa University. It has its own alphabets and numerals.

zero and show how to make digit numerals and complex calculations using these Ge'ez numbers[2] (For example, YITBAREK, 2009).

Although some of the teacher participants have doubt on the existence of indigenous mathematical practices outside the school system, the others confirm that such mathematics is really practiced in the everyday cultural activities of the indigenous peoples, except they have problems on how to integrate these in their classroom teaching. The pictures and video-recordings in the pedagogical centers that the researcher recorded during his visit also show such mathematical practices.

As to the respondents, indigenous peoples have developed their own mathematical thinking and reasoning resulted from their own life experiences. Such mathematical experiences among the many are: money management (how much to save, how much to pay, how much for buying oxen, how much for buying goats, etc.); exchange of goods in markets (knowing the equivalence to be exchanged); how to build houses (circular or rectangular base, etc.); and craft making such as *Eje-tibeb*, *Sifet* on clothes and cultural trays that resemble to fractal geometry like the Julia set, Mandelbrot set, fractals and so on(FALCONER, 2003) obtained from computers (See figure 1 in annex 1).

A grade 8 student participant also supported the existence of culturally practiced mathematical ideas in Ethiopia by saying:

> Our parents send us to buy some goods from the shop by allocating the money into the goods to be bought...and this shows they have their own mathematical thinking....and if we take geometry, our mothers construct circular materials such as 'Tiftif' from cow/ox feces.

Therefore, what we can notice from these respondents is that even the illiterate farmers have their own calculation techniques in their mind related to their day to day life activities (buying, selling, saving, constructing, and so forth). In the actual classroom observations, there were found no such indigenous mathematical knowledge and practices used in the teaching except mere citation of the text book. This is because the teachers either don't believe the relevance of such practices (for example, the second extract above) or don't know how to use them in the classroom.

The overall idea here is that some teachers do not recognize the relevance of out-of-school mathematical practices to use in school instruction where as the students believe that if such connections are made by their teachers, they could understand mathematics better. Masingila (1993) also describes this as,

> ...students try to make connections between the in-school and out-of-school worlds, but the mathematics practice in school often discourages or prevents such connection.

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[2]   Ge'ez numbers are the numbers in the Ge'ez language. The Ge'ez numeral system looks like: ፩ ፪ ፫ ፬ ፭ for the five first numbers. Recently published books show that the symbol '፲' is introduced to represent the number zero (0) in the system.

(2) Traditional games that have embedded mathematical practices

All teacher participants did not notice that there are traditional games that we can relate with mathematics except one game called *Gebeta* (See (b) of Figure 2 in annex 2) which is played by making 12 holes on a flat stone (6 on one side and 6 on the other side) and putting in each hole 4 sand seeds (of course, there are varieties from place to place). This game is played (as the respondents said) between two opponent persons with the purpose of emptying the opponent player's sand seeds from his holes. These respondents explained that this game can be related to mathematics in counting, adding, subtracting, and in some degree with sets because when one player picks the sand seeds and puts in each hole one sand, then there is subtraction from the first hole and adding sands to the successive holes. There are other important games played by children that we can relate to mathematics. These games are collected by asking first cycle (grades 1-4) students to play in groups and explain the procedures of each game.

These traditional games frequently played by children include: *Kare* or *Segno Maksegno*, *Gemedguteta*, *Akukulu*, and so on. Although Gemedguteta was not played at the time of the observation (but the children cited when they were asked to list other types of games), *Kare* and *Akukulu* were observed on the ground. *Kare* or *Segno Maksegno* (See (a) of Figure 2 in annex 2) is played by balancing whole body on one leg and pushing a flat stone using this leg). In this game, the players first create larger rectangular shape which is then partitioned into six to eight parts. The boundaries of the rectangle and its parts are called 'fire' because when the stone rests on any marked boundary, then the turn of that player is said to end or over. *Akukulu* (hide and seek), is another play where one or more child counts up to 10 while others hide. When they ensure that they are hid in a safe place by clapping their hands, the counter starts to search them.

(3) Implications to mathematics curriculum and instruction

After discussing the existence of culture embedded mathematics and the relationship between mathematics and culture, it is time to clarify what cultural mathematics can be used, why and how it can be integrated in to the mathematics curriculum, classroom, and teaching in the Ethiopian context. Learning takes place everywhere - at home, the fields, the gathering places, the marketplace, the forest, caves, or shrines, by the lake or riverside, at weddings and festivities and funerals (ELLENI, 1992). If this is so, what the mathematics teachers, policymakers, curriculum specialists, and text book writers should do is making exhaustive research to identify which cultural objects are relevant to which mathematical concept or topic, putting procedures how to use these cultural objects, and giving the rationale behind integrating these traditional mathematics with the school mathematics. Here is again an example of extract reported by two teacher participants each of whom agreed by saying:

> Rather than saying the teachers should use that and this cultural objects or make connections to the students real life, it is better to make a study on this issue, collect mathematics related objects and thought from all the nations and nationalities of the country then put these results in the text books and curriculum on their appropriate places so that we teachers and students can use them...

This witnesses that teacher are bored of recommendations that claim teachers should contextualize their instruction while no concrete answers are given to the questions what and how. One very experienced elementary school mathematics teacher participant explains what cultural objects to use in teaching various mathematical concepts as follows:

> ...in teaching counting the teacher can use games such as *Gebeta*, in teaching solid geometry teachers can use *Ensira* (a traditional water container made of clay mud), and *Kil* (a traditional water drinking cup made of clay mud) for volume measurement, *Kib-sefied* (a traditional circular tray) to show circles...

Some of these objects exist in the pedagogical centers as observed during the visit but their purpose was not to use in mathematics (like *Kebero* (drum) for teaching music) but which can be used in teaching cylinders. Here is another extract reported by grade 8 student participants regarding the use of informal (experience-based) calculations in teaching mathematics in formal classrooms:

> ... our parents send us to shops to buy goods allocating the money as: 2 *birr* for coffee, 2 *birr* for sugar, 1 *birr* for salt, 5 *birr* for soap and we know the changes after buying each of the goods and we report back to our parents...this is I think a good example for our teachers to try to make the school mathematics related to our lives

Here *birr* means the Ethiopian currency or money like the US dollar. The teacher can use such real life problems for teaching mathematics in the classroom and the text books also can integrate such problems to contextualize the subject with the students' cultures. Chikodzi & Nyota (2010) studied about the interplay between mathematics and culture. They identified many cultural objects, games and activities which can be used in mathematics teaching and explained how and when to use such objects and activities in the classroom. I took the following games and activities which agree with my results and the Ethiopian context by changing the names to the Ethiopian Amharic names:

• *Kare* or *Segnomaksegno* -A game where a child balances on one foot and uses it to push a stone from one drawn rectangular box to the other. It can be used in the teaching of the concepts of balancing and counting.

• *Yechika-chawata* - where children use clay/mud to bake cakes using different shapes of containers help in the teaching of shapes. Problem solving can be learnt when they do role plays as family members such as fathers and mothers, children and the extended family members. Problems of money, food, buying and selling can be role played and the skills can be transferred into solving mathematical problems in class. Mathematical skills are developed when they count, measure lengths, capacity and volume during their role play.

• *Dibikbikosh* or *Akukulu* - hide and seek games, learners count and memorize. They are made to remember what they have been instructed to look for. As they play hide and seek, some children hide in different places and those who remain must count to (10) before they run around looking for those in hiding.

- *Gebeta* - encourages pupils to divide and share when they give each other the playing stones, seeds and allocate each other into groups. Sets and addition is also learnt during the game.

- *Kiliblibosh* - helps children to add and subtract. During the game, stones are placed on a flat ground. The first player throws a stone in the air and quickly tries to scoop all stones from the ground before catching the stone again. The player then scoops one stone at a time back into the ground. During the second round, two stones are scooped back at a time and so forth until the player comes to a point where the player scoops all the stones on the ground.

Some attempts are done to incorporate cultural mathematical practices in to the school mathematics; they are not exhaustively put in a way that enriches the curricula and instruction in Ethiopia. However, the integration and use of cultural mathematics in the mathematics curriculum and instruction is becoming common in other countries' educational systems. For example Taiwan has launched New Elementary Mathematics curriculum (NEMC) which has the goal of guiding children to obtain mathematics knowledge from their daily life experiences and to develop the attitudes and abilities to apply mathematics effectively to solve problems they encounter in real life (Leu & Wu, 2004).

Conclusion

The field of ethnomathematics links students' diverse ways of knowing and learning through the use of culturally embedded knowledge along with school mathematics curriculum and instruction. This paper intended to explore qualitatively the out-of-school mathematical ideas and practices from the perspectives of teachers and students. To this end, interviews and observations were used to collect the data. The collected data and the results were discussed in the previous sections. Thus, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the discussion are presented in this section.

The results in this study showed that Ethiopia has plenty of cultural activities that can be related to the mathematics teaching activities in schools by researching and incorporating in the mathematics curriculum and materials. Both teacher and student participants recognize that there are many out-of-school mathematical practices in the everyday life activities of the community including market (buying and selling), house building (circular or rectangular base), games such as *Gebeta*, measurement, time, and other mathematical concepts.

The results also reveal that teachers and students know the educational implications of the out-of-school mathematical practices. However, the question "what practices to integrate and how to use them?" is the problem that the teachers are facing. And they recommended to make exhaustive investigations of out-of-school mathematical ideas and practices and to put the results in an organized and accessible manner so that teachers and students can refer. According to Rosa and Orey (2011), it is important to explore academic and culturally rich ways to provide more inclusive developmental programs for the diverse populations served at educational institutions.

Therefore, from the above discussions we can say that there are indigenous mathematical practices that can be used in the mathematics curriculum, text books, classroom, the mathematics pedagogy and didactics so as to improve the mathematics understanding and achievement of students. In this regard, ethnomathematics is a program that includes curricular relevance and builds knowledge around the local interests, needs and culture of students. In other words, ethnomathematics devises teaching methodologies that fit the school culture of the students as the basis for helping them to understand themselves and their peers, develop and structure social interactions, and conceptualize mathematical knowledge. Teaching mathematics through cultural relevance and personal experiences helps students to know more about reality, culture, society, environmental issues, and themselves by providing them with mathematics content and approaches which enable them to successfully master academic mathematics.

Thus, since the field of ethnomathematics is new to the context of Ethiopia, the researcher suggests that it is important to explore the cultural aspects of mathematics in different areas of the country and use the outcomes in the mathematics education in all levels. Another issue is that the teachers should be aware of the students' out-of-school mathematics knowledge and backgrounds. This means that research should focus on this awareness creating issue and teacher educations should be planned in congruence with socio-cultural research findings.

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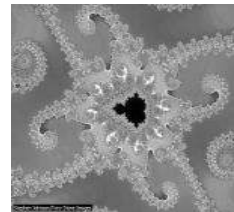
Annex 1: Resemblance of cultural objects and computer drawn mathematical set

a. *Eje-tibeb:* artistic works of indigenous peoples on clothes

b. *Sefiet*: cultural tray

c. Mandelbrot set formed in a computer program by iterating the complex function $f(z)=z^2+c$, where c is a constant.

Annex 2: Traditional games that involve mathematical thinking

a. *Kare*

b. *Gebeta*