MAJOR EVENTS OF THE 16TH CENTURY IN THE ETHIOPIAN REGION AND THE HORN AND THEIR IMPACTS

BELAY STOTAW

Portuguese and Ottoman Turkish Rivalries in the Ethiopian Region and the Horn

- The legend of ***Prester John*** revived the relation between and the Christian Europe.
- It developed when the European forces were defeated by Muslim force in the Holy Lands.
- ***The legend was about wealthy and powerful Christian king in the east.***
- The Europeans wanted ally but didn't know where the kingdom was found ruled by ***Prester John.***

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- In the 14th century the Europeans identified CHK of Ethiopia as they got information other Christian communities and Arab merchants.
- In 1400 ***King Henry IV*** of England sent letter to the Christian king addressing as ***Prester John***.
- He requested military help to liberate the Holy Lands from the Muslim forces.
- ***Portuguese***, Christian superpower of the world, sent delegation to Ethiopia in 1494.

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- The CHK rulers (***Yisihaq*** and ***Zerayacob***) wanted to establish contact with Christian Europeans but blocked by ***Mamluk Egypt***.
- Egypt didn't want to see the rise of powerful Christian state in the Horn.
- ***Venetians*** were conductors of Far East trade in European markets.
- The ***Portuguese*** monopolized the Far East trade after they discovered the route to India by ***Vasco de Gamma*** since 1498.
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- The Arab, Indians and Chinese merchants were pushed out of the trade.
- The dominance of Portuguese affected the economy of Egypt and Turkey.
- Turkey controlled Egypt since 1517 and blocked Portuguese.
- Both Turkey and Portuguese wanted Ethiopian allies in cover of religion.

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- ***Queen Elleni*** realized the support of Arabs and Turks would threat the CHK and sent letter to Portugal in 1512.
- The mission of Elleni was led by an Armenian merchant called ***Mathew.***
- The Portuguese sent diplomatic mission in 1520.
- The mission went back to Portugal in 1526, because ***Lbne Dingel*** ignored them due to his temporary victory over ***Emir Mahfuz*** in 1517.

Conflict Between the Sultanate of Adal and the Christian Highland Kingdom

- ***Zerayacob*** made Adal tributary to the Christian Kingdom since 1445.
- Various emirs, imams, shayks and powerful merchants forced ***Sultan Mohammed*** (successor of Sultan Ahmed Badlay) but he continued paying annual tribute to the CHK until his death in 1470.
- The Afar began to make incursion to the highland agricultural regions.

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- ***Emir Mahfuz*** attacked the Christian Kingdom mainly ***Eskindir*** and ***Naod***.
- In 1517 ***Libne Dingel*** killed ***Mahfuz*** in battle.
- ***Imam Ahmed*** united the quarrelling ethnic groups to fight against the CHK.
- He strengthened his army by instilling the spirit of ***Jihad***.
- In 1527 he attacked and looted ***Dawaro, Fatagar*** and ***Bali***.
- He also killed ***Degelham*** (govenor of Bali).

Who was Imam Ahmed

- Ahmed Gragn was born to a clan called ***Balaw*** in ***Hubat***, near present day ***Babille.***
- Ahmed Gragn served as a cavalry officer of ***Mahfouz*** and married to his daughter, ***Bati Dil Wanbera.***
- ***He bring the Afar, Somali and Harari, together against the CH k.***
- ***He restored peace in the lowland region and recruited soldiers from peoples the area.***

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- ***Imam Ahmed*** supported by 200 ***Turkish*** and ***Yemenise*** force defeated ***Libne Dingel*** in 1529 at the battle of ***Shinbra Kurie*** near ***Mojo***.
- In 1531 the imam annexed ***Dwaroa*** nd ***Bali***.
- He used ***Dbre Birhan, Dawaro*** and ***Waji*** as center of command.
- In1533 he controlled the southern states except ***Wolayta***.
- ***Welayta resisted the Adal force led by Wazir ibn Mujahid.***

Libne-Dingel



Contd.

- In n1535 Imam Ahmed controlled most parts the northern Ethiopia.
- He used ***Debre Birhan, Axum*** and later ***Dembia*** as command centers.
- In 1535 ***Libne Dingel*** sent Bermudez with letter to Pope of Rome and king of Portugal for military help.
- The Portuguese force led by ***Christopher de Gamma*** reached Ethiopia fro Goa, India in 1541.

Measures of Imam Ahmed over the Occupied Regions

- He appointed his own Muslim officials over the occupied regions.
- He burnt Churches and Monasteries.
- He converted the people of newly occupied regions in to Islam.
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Factors for the Victory of Imam Ahmed

- His effective leadership (the most decisive factor)
- The arrival of the Turkish and Arab forces with their latest weapons (Turkish aid)
- The Christian rulers underestimation towards the Adal Muslim force.
- False propaganda among the Christian forces about the Imam.

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- The Portuguese force defeated Imam Ahmed at ***Agame*** and went back to ***Debarwa*** on the Red Sea Coast.
- Imam Ahmed moved his center to ***Deresge*** to attack the Portuguese force.
- They defeated and wounded him at ***Seharti***.
- The wounded imam retreated to ***Lake Ashenge*** (southern Tigray).

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- ***The Ottoman Turks sent 900 infantry with muskets and canons.***
- The Adal and Otoman force defeated and captured ***Christopher de Gamma*** at ***Wofla***.
- In 1542 the victorious Imam went to his former center ***Dembia***.
- He organized his army for another battle.

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- ***Queen Seble Wongel*** and ***Gelawdewos*** reorganized the remaining Portuguese and Christian forces.
- in 1543 ***Gelawdewos*** defeated and killed Imam Ahmed at the battle of ***Woina Dega.***
- ***The battle of Woina Dega ended the dominance of Adal Sultante in the Horn.***
- ***The war weakened both fighting sides and exhausted both CHK and Muslim Sultantes.***

Shihab al Din

- ***Shihab al-Din*** was a Yemene chronicler of Imam Ahmeb.
- Hi wrote a book entitled ***Futuh al Habesha*** (the Campaign to colonize Habesha).
- He stated the looting of Ethiopian wealth by the Turkish force.

Bati Dil Wanbera

- ***Bati Dil Wanbera*** was the daughter of the ***Emir Mahfuz*** and the wife of Imam Ahmed.
- She helped her husband to win the battle against the Christian Highland Kingdom.
- After the Ahmed's defeat Bati Dil Wanbera the leadership position over the dispersed army of Adal.

Consequence of the Wars of Imam Ahmed

I. Death of large number of men on both sides.

II. Burning and looting of Churches, monasteries and mosques.

III. Destruction of documents and valuable heritages.

IV. Weakening power of the CHK due to losing of professional soldiers.

V. Challenge kings of the CHK from the powerful regional lords (emergence of Zemene Mesafint).

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VI. ***Population movement and dislocation of settlements.***

VII. ***Inter-mixing of different ethnic and religious groups in the region.***

VIII. ***Decline of trade of Zeila trade route.***

IX. ***Shift of political centers of both CHK (from Shewa plateau to Lake Tana region and later to Gonder) and Adal Sultante (from Harar to Ausa).***

X. ***Catholicism and religious chaos in the Gonder***.

The Oromo Population Movement

- The population movement of ***Somalis*** and ***Afars*** was earlier than the Oromos.
- ***The Oromos are indigenous and oldest people of Ethiopia and the Horn.***
- The Oromo population movement is the greatest event in the 16th century.

Original Homeland of the Oromos

- According to the Oromo oral tradition, the original homeland of the Oromos is the present ***Bale*** and ***Sidamo*** Highlands.
- all of the Oromo clans attributed their origin to ***Harro Walabu, Tullu Walal, Tullu Qurqur*** and ***Harro Girja*** (all are located in ***Bale*** and ***Sidamo***).
- Before the 16th century the region had been part of Bali Muslim Sultanate.



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- ***Mada Walabu*** was the ritual and political center of the Oromos before the 16th century.
- Sedentary Oromos existed in the Sultanate of ***Sharka*** and ***Dawaro***.
- Some of them existed in ***Adal Sultanate***, in the middle course of ***Awash river***.
- Some pastoralists lived in the ***rift valley low lands*** and ***Genale river***.

Oromo Institutions and Social Organization

- The economy of the Oromo people was based on ***mixed farming***.
- There are two confederacies of the Oromo namely ***Borana*** and ***Barentu*** (***Baraytuma***).
- Each confederacy has different clans.
- ***Borana*** included the clans of ***Mecha, Tullema, Guji*** and ***Southern Borana***.
- ***Barentu*** included ***Karrayyu, Ittu, Marwa, Akkachu, Warantisha*** and ***Humbana***.



Religion

- The Oromos believed in a supreme God called ***Waqa*** (refers to both ***Sky and Sky God***).
- Waqa is manifested by spirits called ***Ayana***.
- ***Qallu is the high priest served as intermediary between Waqa and the Oromo people.***
- ***Children, young men and adults visited qallu to get his blessing.***
- ***Abba Qallu (Abba Muda) is responsible for Muda ceremony of anointment of newly elected Gada officials every eight years.***



The Gada System

- ***The Gada system** is an egalitarian democratic socio-political structure of the Oromo people.*
- ***Gada is arrangement of***

I. Social categories (grades).

II. Men in to groups or "sets".

III. Task or work to be performed.

IV. Ideas, principles and rules.

The group of men are called classes or age-"sets".

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- The Oromo word for classes or age-”sets” is ***misensa*** or ***gogesa***.
- The stages, categories or eight year long period is called ***grades***.

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- *Each group (party) passes through specific responsibilities and works.*
- ***At the luba party the responsibility is governing nation.***
- ***Yuba celebrated as chaffe of completion called Gada Moji.***
- The division of men in to grade is division of labor.

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- The five commonly used parties (group names in the gada system) are

Bermaji, Hrata, Bichile, Duuloand Roballe.

A man and his brothers are in the same party regardless of the differences in age.

They moved through hierarchy of grades a complete gada cycles of a forty years.

The Gada Age-Grade Classes

- There were different gada age grade systems
- We used the most common age grade system.
- It- Mako → 0-8 years (age 8-16)
- Debale → 9-16 years (age 16-24)
- Folle → 17-24 years (age 24-32)
- Qondala → 25- 32 years (age 32-40)
- Luba → 33- 40 years (age 40-48)

Responsibilities of Gada grades

- ***It-mako** serve as messengers, looking for calves, doing errands close to home.*
- ***Deballe** hreding locating new trading opportunitiesmaking decision on safeguarding local resources, livestock.*
- ***Folle** were warriors by electing leaders (abb dulas) from their ranks.*
- ***Qondala** was a transition grade and acted as reserve army to assist folle.*
- ***Luba** was the ruling grade with political authority for eight years.*

Various Gada Grade Names

Central Oromia

- *0-8 Dabballe*
- *8-16 Ittimako*
- *16-24 Folle*
- *24-32 Qondala*
- *32-40 Raba-dori*
- *40-48 Gada*
- *48-56 Luba*
- *56-64 2nd Gada*
- *64-72 3rd Gada*
- *72-80 4th Gada*
- *80- 88 Gadamoji*

Borana

- *0-8 Dabale*
- *8-16 Gamme-didiqa*
- *16-24 Gamme- guguda*
- *24-32 kussa*
- *32-40 Raba-dori*
- *40-48 Gada*
- *48-56 1st Yuba*
- *56-64 2nd Yuba*
- *64-72 3rd Yuba*
- *72- 80 4th Yuba*
- *80-88 Gadamoji*

Contd.

- All male Oromos joined gada system ***at birth***.
- The gada politico-military structure actively excluded women.
- ***Women welded power in domestic sense with the de facto control over the most important resources.***
- Oromo women had a parallel institution called ***Siqqe***, functioned hand in hand with gada system.



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- The gada government was based on democratic system.
- The ***Chaffe*** (assembly) was held by elected gada officials.
- The main qualification for election included ***bravery, knowledge, honesty, demonstrating ability*** and ***courage***.

Gada Officials

- **Abba Boku(Abba Gada)** → head of ***Chaffe***.

(He acted as the ***spokesman*** of the chaffe).

- **Abba Dula** → war commander
- **Abba Sera** → traditional judge
- **Abba Lafa** → father of land
- **Abba Qallu** → ritual father
- All the gada officials served for eight years.
- In gada system political power was held by elected group of elders.

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- A council called ***shanee*** or ***salgee*** and retired gada officials also helped the ***Abba Boku*** to run the government.
- The political philosophy of gada was embodied in three main principles.

I. ***Terms of eight years,***
II. ***Balanced opposition between parties and***
III. ***Power sharing between higher and lower levels.***

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- The checks and balances were created to prevent misuse of power.
- Corrupt and dictatorial leaders would be removed through a process called ***buqisu***.

Causes of the Oromo Population Movement

- *Population pressure (increasing Oromo people).*
- *Conflict between Muslim sultante and Christian kingdom (accelerated their movement).*
- *In search of pastureland for their cattle.*
- *In search of breathing space from pressure*
- *The gada system itself (eg. Butta War).*

Arsi- Bale cultural drressing



Direction of the Oromo Movement

- The population movement was initiated by ***Tullema*** and ***Mecha*** pastoralists.
- According to ***Abba Bahrey*** (an Orthodox monk lived in Gamo, near Lake Abbaya), the ***Tullema*** and ***Mecha*** movement began in 1522 from ***Harro Walabu***.
- ***Arsi*** from ***Bali*** N.west to ***Lake Zeway***.
- ***Southern Borana*** from ***N.W. Bali*** to the ***present Borana*** area and even to ***kenyaa***.

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- ***Karrayyu*** from the upper course of ***Wabi Shabale*** easwards to the present area.
- ***Ittu*** and ***Huambana*** from highlands of Bali to ***Harar Plateau***.
- ***The Guji Oromo*** moved to northward earlier but were hit by ***Zerayacob***.

Challenges and Occupation of the Oromo Movement

- The Oromos launched swift attacks on ***Hadya, Bali, Sharka, Dawaro*** and ***Fatagar***.
- ***Gelawdewos*** tried to stop the Oromos but was failed.
- ***Kafa*** (in S.W.) and ***Welayta*** (in the south) resisted the Oromo population movement.
- ***Enarya*** resisted for a century until its failure in 1710 by ***Limu*** Oromo.

Contd.

- In 1560 the Oromos established a new center at ***Oda Nabi*** in ***Dukem*** in ***Fatagar***.
- They launched attack ***on Waji, Bizamo, Damot*** and ***Gafat*** from ***Oda Nabi.***
- ***King Sertse Dingel*** got temporary victory over the Oromos but was failed.
- The population of ***Bizamo*** and ***Damot*** fled to ***Gojam*** and the remains are assimilated by the Oromo sttlers.



Factors for the Success of the Oromo Population Movement and Expansion

- *Gada System*
- *Participation of all members of society in war*
- *Assimilation policy*
- *Gorilla warfare (attack and runaway warfare)*
- *Good skill of horse riding and warrior training.*
- *Weakening of both Muslim and Christian forces in the long (15 years) war.*

Consequence of the Oromo Population Movement and Expansion

- *Settlement in new areas of Ethiopian Region and Kenya.*
- *Giving Oromo names for the occupied areas.*
- *Ethnic and cultural inter-mingling of peoples.*
- *Weakening of the CHK (restricted to N. of Abbay rver) & Adal Muslim Sultanate.*
- *Destroying of Damot Kingdom, Bizamo and Enarya.*

Contd.

- ***Decline and fall of Gada system.***
- ***Adoption of (pastoralist Oromos) sedentary mixed farming.***
- ***Emergence of Gibe Oromo monarchial states.***