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Gudina Tumsa Foundation, Finfine, Ethiopia, 1995 400p Hard Cover. Edited by Claude Sumner and reviewed by Ron Bombardi.

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Historical and Anthropological Inquiries Published Nordika Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, 1996, 310pp Paper, Edited by P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin, and Alessandaro Triulzi and reviewed by Mohammed Hassen.

The Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS) is an international scholarly publication of the Oromo Studies Association which serves as a vehicle of expression for its members and others. It is a peer reviewed journal that is published biannually. The JOS seeks to promote and facilitate rigorous analysis, synthesis, and policy recommendations of scholars on any interdisciplinary issues pertaining to Oromo nation. As such, the journal welcomes scientific research findings of scholars on the Oromo history, culture, society, politics, system of government, science and technology, law, medicine, agriculture, and regional political and economic cooperation. The JOS will also consider other topics not listed above. The major criterion for acceptance of articles is that they demonstrate high academic and practical quality research which broadens the knowledge base of its readers, primarily the Oromo people.

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Editor's Note

Volume III of the Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS) is finally in print JOS is committed to the production of scholarly articles which promote a profound understanding of Oromo history, culture, society, economy, governance, literature, science and technology, law and justice, language, philosophy, and many other aspects of the Oromo people. The journal strives to maintain a high standard in terms of its content, objectivity, readability, and currency through rigorous peer review and continuous improvement in the solicitation of quality papers The members of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) and friends of OSA have the shared responsibilities in terms of their: 1) personal subscription to JOS, 2) promotion of institutional subscriptions of JOS at universities and colleges in their particular place of residence, 3) own paper contribution and/or solicitation of quality papers related to all aspects of Oromo studies, and 4) timely review of articles as requested by the editor These efforts will not only serve JOS to be a classic source of objective research information on the Oromo, but they will also enable the journal to eventually become a self supporting organ of OSA. As you know fully well, the Oromo are currently confronted with significant challenges and great opportunities in the pursuit of their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and happiness This bill of rights does not just happen; it requires some sacrifice from each and everyone of us We simply can not afford to go back to the days when Oromo-centered knowledge was considered as a crime rather than being a positive cumulative addition to the betterment of mankind Following is a synopsis of each of the articles included in this volume

In "Historical and Cultural Interaction, Symbiosis and Clientage: Waso Boorana and Somali in Eastern Kenya," Dr. Aguilar attempts to document and isolate those historical events and general trends of the interaction between the Waso Boorana and the Somali, with reference to Garba Tulla town focusing on four historical periods He concludes that the relation between the Waso Boorana and the Somali has been their usual symbiosis, expressed through cooperation at times and a constant increase of conflict at other times. Throughout their history in Northern Kenya, the Boorana and Somali have gone through a process of symbiosis and conflict. Both groups have cooperated and fought each other according to their responses to situations concerning grazing, water for their animals, trade possibilities, the imposition of colonial boundaries, historical processes related to religious affiliation, and post-colonial expectations concerning ethnic status, education, and future prosperity throughout the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods.

Dr. Feyisa Demie's article entitled, "Historical Challenges in the Development of Oromo Language and Some Agenda for Future Research," traces the factors that impeded the development of the Oromo language With supporting evidence, he attributes the underdevelopment of the Oromo language (Affan Oromo) to: 1) the prohibition of learning and writing by the Ethiopian legal system, 2) the lack of trained linguists in Oromiffa (Oromo language), and and 3) the lack of an Oromiffa training Academy or Institute. In addition, Dr. Demie also states that the lack of suitable scripts posed an impediment to the development of the Oromo language until a decision was reached to adopt the Latin script by mid 1970. In his conclusion, he notes that the Oromo have struggled long for the right to speak, read, and write their language. The result was the flowering of Oromo literature against all odds since the 1970s. He cautions that anyone interested in Oromiffa and concerned about the Oromo people must not neglect the task of enriching Oromo literature.

Based on his recently published book of Oromo grammar entitled, Seera Afaan Oromo 1995, Dr Tilahun Gamta provides a preliminary survey of some of the elements of Oromo verbs primarily designed to benefit teachers and learners of Afaan Oromo. The phonological/ grammatical features of the book are based on the analysis of the endings of some 2000 verbs. The knowledge of these features are expected to facilitate the teaching/learning and especially the production of Oromo literature. Dr Gamta, however, cautions future writers to brace themselves up for a great and difficult task ahead due to the complex nature of Oromo grammar.

In his article "Aspects Oromo Cultural Endowments and Their Implications for Economic Development," Professor Fayissa analyzes some aspects of Oromo cultural endowments (political, social, religious, and linguistic values) and their implications for economic development By examining the interrelationships of culture, institutional change, and development, he finds that the democratic institution of gada recognizes the importance of cooperative work arrangements which facilitate division of labor and specialization, property rights, private ownership, and incentives that are conducive for economic growth and development in Oromia Professor Fayissa then proposes a number of strategies such as the ability of the Oromo to have control over their resources, the implementation of people-friendly land tenure system, investment in human capital, agro-industrial development, and export-led industrialization as some of the antecedents for economic development in Oromia.

Dr. Gobena Huluka examines the state of environmental health in Oromia He observes that lack of environmental education, basic human rights, and democracy coupled with war and land ownership uncertainty in Oromia are accelerating environmental degradation at an alarming rate. He suggests that comprehensive, integrated long and short term conservation plans are needed to counterbalance the factors contributing to an environmental degradation to avert the complete depletion of Oromia's natural resources through the formation of Oromia National Environmental Protection Action Plan

In "Conquest and Resistance in the Gibe Region, 1881-1900," Dr. Guluma Gemeda provides an analysis of the process of Menilek's conquest of the Oromo and their resistance to the Abyssinian expansion of the late nineteenth century. More specifically, the paper attempts to outline the political circumstances of the western (Macha) Oromo in the Gibe region during the conquest and the internal conditions that shaped the resistance to the imperial domination He finds that Menilek's conquest of western Oromo took place for two reasons: 1) the zamacha destroyed Oromo defense systems and exposed them to more attacks, and 2) internal strife and rivalry among western Oromo leaders also undermined the resistance to both Gojam and Shewa in the 1880s Dr Gemeda observes that the disastrous consequences of disunity is probably a lesson that the present generation could not afford to ignore The study also indicates how resistance even when it failed to avert the imposition of imperial rule, mitigated the economic exploitation and repressive imperial administration

Finally, Dr Mario Aguilar raises a number of issues related to the link between Oromia as an independent state and the Boorana of Northeastern Kenya with a particular focus on the Boorana who live in the Waso Nyiro area Some of the issues revolve around such questions as: are those Boorana still part of that pre-colonial oromo nation? Are they still related to Oromia in some way? Should they be considered as part of the Oromo diaspora? He concludes that even through many social and cultural changes, the Waso Boorana in Kenya have not ceased to consider themselves Oromo, and they have kept their kinship connections with the Boorana in Oromia.

Bichaka Fayissa
Professor of Economics
June 1996

Historical and Cultural Interaction, Symbiosis and Clientage: Waso Boorana and Somali in Eastern Kenya (1932–1992)

*by Mario I. Aguilar**

Introduction

The history of the Oromo speaking peoples of Kenya has been one of conflict with their neighbours In the case of the Boorana of the Waso area of Eastern Kenya, a conflict with the Somali has been a constant feature since the setting of colonial boundaries in the 1930s. However, that constant fight for resources has also been a pointer towards their sense of identity. After all, and in the words of the Boorana, "we are Boorana, not Somali"

During the 1980s and 1990s the Boorana of Eastern Kenya have become more conscious of their wider identity as Oromo and they have certainly increased their connections and exchange with the Oromo residing north of the Kenyan border with Ethiopia. This essay surveys that conflict between Boorana and Somali in Eastern Kenya, over a period of sixty years, the period before the recent celebration of the *gada* festivals in Northern Kenya and their re-enactment of integration to the rest of the Oromo nation. It is an attempt to document and to isolate those historical events and general trends of interaction by the Waso Boorana and the Somali in the Waso area, with reference to Garba Tulla town. I focus particularly on four historical periods: (i) the British administration in the Northern Frontier Province (N.F.P.) and the "Muslim-Pagan feud," (ii) the settlement of the Waso Boorana in colonial times, (iii) the post-independence emergency and (iv) the post-emergency period and more recent events in Garba Tulla.

Boorana in the Waso Area of Kenya

The town of Garba Tulla is located 420 kilometres north-east of Nairobi in the Eastern Province of Kenya.[1] As a town it provides the administrative centre of the Garba Tulla Division. Therefore, while only 120 kilometres east of Meru and 116 kilometres away from Isiolo, it constitutes one of the centres for administration and commerce of the Waso area. The Waso Nyiro river and its surrounding area have for the last sixty years been the location of a group of Boorana people who in their historical processes have been influenced by a strong Somali presence in the North-eastern and Eastern provinces of Kenya.

As suggested by E.R. Turton, "relations between the Boran and Somali appear to have been unduly complex and they were far from conforming to a pattern of simple hostility,"[2] "nor was it a matter of the Somali versus the Boran"[3] Throughout their history in Northern Kenya, the Waso area and particularly Garba Tulla, the Boorana and the Somali have gone through what I have described as a process of symbiosis and conflict.[4] Both groups have cooperated with each other, or have fought each other according to their responses to situations concerning grazing, water for their animals, trade possibilities, the imposition of colonial boundaries, historical processes related to religious affiliation and post-colonial expectations concerning ethnic status, education and future prosperity

It was in 1932 that the Boorana agreed to leave the wells at Wajir and settled in the Waso area. The Waso area refers to the particular geographical area near the Waso Nyiro river,[5] particularly Garba Tulla and Merti administrative divisions and, therefore, does not include the town of Isiolo.[6]

Boorana Migrations

During the last part of the 19th Century, groups of Boorana were already present in the area and Somali were known for raiding the area Somali and Boorana migrations into Kenya had been triggered by the expansion of the Ethiopian forces of emperor Menelik II,[7] the trade routes and caravans exploited by the Somali and the Boorana, and the search for richer grazing areas and water for their herds.

The Somali push into Northeastern Kenya was forwarded by different family-clans, who in most cases used a traditional way of creating an alliance with another group present in a particular area. the *shegat* Through the *shegat*, a Somali group could ask for protection by another group with the understanding that if they were allowed to remain in the area occupied by that particular group, they would support their hosts in case of war[8] As a result of the implementation of that Somali institution of clientage, the host group in most cases strengthened their geographical control through the immediate availability of extra men, women, and herds. The visitors remained under the local classification of foreigners, but became "clients" of the stronger group originally occupying that particular territory[9] This clientage institution was put into effect whenever non-agnates (people who are not related by blood) had to cross through the land occupied by other groups Therefore, Somali traders and camel caravans in transit were particularly protected from bandits by requesting the protection of localized groups Asian traders and non-Somali living in Somaliland also appointed "a salaried *abbaan* to represent them and to protect their general interests" [10]

It is in that climate of migration and change that the clientage became an important part of the symbiosis between Boorana and Somali,[11] not only during this first historical period but throughout the colonial period in Kenya [12] While it has been suggested that the *shegat* as a vehicle of Somali assimilation of Boorana was halted in the Isiolo District,[13] it is a fact that throughout the colonial period the colonial officers tried to understand that Somali institution and its implication for their administrative purposes [14] Therefore, even when the Somali at large were concerned with a constant movement of expansion, their strategy was not confrontational for the most part, but was based on cooperation and the Boorana acceptance of their presence at wells and rivers [15] From the Boorana point of view, wells were not the property of particular clans or groups of individuals, but were open to communal use by Boorana and non-Boorana alike That understanding created the necessary conditions for Somali clans as the Ajuran and the Gurre who became so attached as clients to the Boorana that they adopted Boorana language and customs [16] As a result even before Kenya's independence, the British administration viewed the Ajuran as having undergone a long process of "Boranisation" and as "half-Somali" "who began to re-assume the Somali culture with the arrival of the pure Somalis" [17]

Through the *shegat*, different Somali clans gained territory and never returned to their original grazing areas. As they became more numerous than their hosts, they ceased to be clients and gained their own status in a shared territory For example, while the Gurre were clients of the Boorana, they were also known for raiding Boorana camps during the last century [18] In that sense, the *shegat* was a very effective instrument of land conquest by the Somali. As different Somali groups gained territory during the 19th Century, groups of Boorana advanced in search of grazing from Southern Ethiopia towards Wajir. As a result, in the years 1870 to 1890 groups of Boorana and Somali began to concentrate around the wells of El-Wak and Wajir. The Orma who had been at the wells before, crossed the Tana river escaping from the Somali[19] till in 1909 the British Government finally moved the Orma and the Wardei[20] across the river to the south-west corner of Garissa District.[21]

Wajir and the Colonial Boundaries

There were only few wells in Kenya able to provide water for large numbers of stock among them those at El Wak and Wajir. Wajir had one hundred wells in a seventy mile area, while the

other semi-permanent wells were located around the Waso Nyiro river in areas which were dependent on a low average rain fall and that posed security risks due to the absence of a large contingent of British police and security patrols. Therefore, during the first quarter of this century the Somali and Boorana headed in large numbers for Wajir. That migration eventually created conflict and constant disputes related not only to watering procedures, but also to the religious practices of the Somali, who being Muslims considered the Boorana as "pagans."

For the British administration the Somali resistance to the imposition of colonial administration posed problems of personnel and resources while the stereotyped image of the Somali as "resisters par excellence" was the result of the violent attempt to unify the Somali family-clans by Sheik Muhammad Abdille Hassan[22] and the customary age-grade raids by the Somali on the Boorana.[23] Colonial administrators did not understand the periodical need of some pastoralists to raid other pastoralists, an activity that in the case of the Boorana (who raided at every cyclical festival of adulthood) included the cutting of the genitals of an enemy (any non-Boorana) as a trophy.[24] That the Boorana "share a ritualized killer complex with other Eastern Cushitic societies"[25] meant for colonial administrative purposes that apart from the Boorana, several other ethnic groups were periodically attacking their own "enemies" and creating a chaotic climate for the colonial officers.

Therefore, it is clear that the arrival of the British in Kenya and the setting of administrative districts imposed boundaries and restrictions on the customs and movements of the Somali and Boorana. In 1909 Jubaland (transferred to Italy in 1925), Moyale, Wajir, Gurre (Mandera), Telemugger (Garissa) and Isiolo were set as administrative districts. The goal of the British administration was to pacify the administrative areas, to "disarm the tribes," to establish centres of trade, to support the administration and to halt any Ethiopian expansion into the Kenya colony.

The British decided to impose a "Somali-Galla line" in order to prevent more raids and fighting, and to halt the Somali expansion towards the west. The line remained a problem throughout the colonial administration because it did not allow for natural contingencies as rain in a particular territory. Some colonial officers allowed for circumstantial changes (and inter-district stock movements)[26] especially in times of drought; others as Glenday, did not, stating that "this is a hard country and if God does not send rain to a particular tribe it must be accepted as God's will that they perish."[27]

It is in that historical colonial context that the Waso Boorana agreed to leave Wajir and lost their control over the largest complex of wells in Kenya. In 1930, the Rer Mohamed Liban (a Somali) clan worked out an agreement with the Ajuran and the Boorana. They promised to depart from Boorana controlled territory around the wells, if they would be allowed to own five wells at Arbo.[28] As a matter of fact, they never left that particular territory controlled by the Boorana, who as a result complained to the colonial administration. While negotiations were taking place, and because of the drought of 1931, the Dagodia Somali also arrived in the area. After a series of incidents whereby Somali and Boorana were killed, the administration feared a general outbreak of violence. Those views were supported by the killing of 21 Somali by a force of Sakuye and Boorana horsemen, and the booty taken of 4,500 sheep and goats taken by them.

What the British coined as the "Muslim-Pagan" feud, meant that they feared that the "Muslim" Somali would begin a holy war against the "pagan" Boorana. That never happened, but the result of that fear was the forced movement of the Boorana into the Waso area in 1932 and the Somali agreement to remain east of a line comprising Takabba-Buna-Wajir District Western boundary and Arbajahan-Habbaswein-Garissa District Western boundary-Tana river. In 1934 the Ajuran (Somali) left the Waso area and a definite Waso Boorana-Somali line was implemented, coinciding with the introduction in 1934 of the Special Districts (Administration) Ordinance, which gave the Provincial Commissioner "power to define grazing boundaries and to control the movement of tribes."[29] That line did not change much till independence, even when Somali incursions into the Waso area could never be stopped by a line on a map.

Pastoralism and Trading Centres

Throughout the colonial administrative period in the Northern Frontier Province, the place of pastoralism somehow changed.[30] While before 1932 the Boorana and Somali underwent constant geographical changes, settlement provided a new change in economic relations.

The British administration encouraged the development of the trading centres, where goods could be sold. Many places as Merti, Sericho and Garba Tulla became small centres for trade, where due to the British presence, nomads and merchants would bring their products. While merchants and nomads used those centres in order to trade with the colonial forces, the British encouraged the development of those centres in order to help the process of sedentarization of peoples, by providing opportunities for trading in an orderly manner. The British perception of African societies was that of socially organized groups with clear tribal borders and with a traditional ("rigid") outlook, but with no central places for the exchange of goods. Therefore, the creation of trading centres was perceived as necessary in order to keep the different ethnic groups ("tribes") in peace. On the other hand, colonial officers suggested that an orderly way of being had to be protected and any prospect of "detribalization" discouraged.

One of those colonially created trading centres was Garba Tulla, a place that offered good grazing and water even during the dry season, and therefore, was a point of encounter, not always peaceful of Boorana, Somali, Rendille and Samburu. At the beginning of the century, the area of the Waso Nyiro river was not regularly occupied, as there was always a fear of the Somali incursions that had taken place as late as 1915, when the Somali reached the Meru District.[31] The inhabitants of Meru, while having a strong tradition of warriors, never attempted to advance towards the Waso area, mainly because of their attachment to the hills of Meru and their ritual man, the *mugwe*.[32] By 1909 nevertheless, the administration of the Northern Frontier District (at that time centred in Marsabit and Moyale)[33] had opened a police station at Waso Nyiro, later to be called Archer's Post.[34] While there were only one Arab, one Indian and one Swahili merchant in Garba Tulla by 1919, the actual relocation of the British administration in 1917/1918 from Bulesa into Garba Tulla helped the growth of the trading centre. By 1921-1925 the military forces controlled the administration of the Northern Frontier Province, and the headquarters for the Waso area were located in Garba Tulla, a settlement that in 1928 had seven shops (*duka*), 24 residential plots and a traffic of 15 cars per week passing through the town.[36] When in 1929, British headquarters moved from Garba Tulla to Isiolo, after the merging of Garba Tulla and Samburu Districts, Garba Tulla still remained as a police post. Thereafter, and with the arrival of groups of Boorana from Wajir in 1932, Garba Tulla became a strategic point from which the British could exercise some control over the Waso Boorana.

Following the colonial policy of tribal sedentarization, some Isaq Somali acquired *duka* (shops) in Garba Tulla, while others served in the police or enrolled as clerks in the new British administration. Those shop owners still had cattle in the area, but for the administration they were seen as shop owners and traders rather than nomads.[37]

Despite the fact that even after 1934 the Somali trespassed into the Garba Tulla area, the events of Wajir had created some cohesion among the Boorana. It is during those years of British administration that the Waso Boorana were gradually converted to Islam. The new boundaries of 1934 created an isolated group of Boorana, the Waso Boorana, who lost all their contacts with their traditional religious system and their religious leaders (the *Kallu*) in Ethiopia.[38] Isolated from Ethiopia and the celebration of initiation and ritual life with the rest of the Boorana, the Waso Boorana adopted Muslim practices.

Somalization and Conversion

Historically, I would suggest, that process of "somalization"[39] had already begun in Wajir,[40] due to the contact between the Boorana with the Ajuran and Gurre. By 1939, the colonial records

report "an appreciable part of the tribe already islamized."[41] By 1952, 75 per cent of the Waso Boorana and Sakuye are reported as Muslims.[42] By the end of the colonial period in Garba Tulla, they were considered by the administration as a Muslim community. The Waso Boorana not only adopted Islam, but also Somali ways of dressing.[43]

The Somali did not attempt to convert the Waso Boorana, but the Waso Boorana were influenced by the Somali, who were perceived by the Waso Boorana as successful people,[44] appreciated by the local British administration as traders, and in the eyes of the Boorana able to cope with many changes and new developments.[45] In the case of the Somali, they were reluctant to start trading partnerships with non-Muslims who at the same time were non-European. As a result, people who settled in Garba Tulla as traders understood the convenience of accepting Muslim practices. That was the case of a trader from Goa, Willy Perera,[46] who being a Catholic, is supposed to have converted to Islam while in Garba Tulla.[47]

The image of the Somali in the colonial records changed after the violent clashes that occurred in the Waso area between the Waso Boorana and the Somali. Till the boundary settlement of 1934, the Somali were portrayed by the colonial administration as raiders of a violent kind, while the Boorana were perceived as quiet pastoralists. The reasons for those clashes were similar to those that triggered the Wajir incident, and related to the influence that the Somali being Muslim tried to exercise on the Waso Boorana and their traditional religious practices. Those clashes had already begun during the 1920s and they continued even after the setting of boundaries in 1934. With the setting of boundaries, the Boorana wanted full control of the area that had been assigned to them and therefore tried consistently to prevent any Somali movement into the area and certainly into their grazing areas. The British had created the institution of headmen among the Boorana,[48] while they had incorporated Somali into the police and the army. Those colonial images and division of labour meant that when the clashes intensified, the Somali had to their advantage some influence in the opinion and interpretation of the clashes by the police.

The oral tradition concerning the clashes speak of the Waso Boorana as trying to keep their traditional way of practising religion, and the despise by the Somali of those practices and beliefs. For individual Waso Boorana who have recalled those stories, that was the time when their fathers were abused by the Somali, and because they wanted to keep their traditions, they had also to suffer arrest and abuse by the colonial administration. In oral history, those events explained their conversion to Islam, their dislike of the Somali and their experience of oppression during the colonial period; in the colonial reports those events made the administrators concerned about a possible escalation of violence in religious terms as it had happened at the wells in Wajir in 1931. In Garba Tulla in particular and in the N.D.F. in general, there was a pressing need for the administrators to implement peace between the different tribes by the use of force.[49]

Any of those Waso Boorana oral historical accounts is very much like the following,

> When the Boorana came into the area they were not Muslim. After coming to this area they became Muslim. Those who first converted, around the Merti area, were dumped into the river, where the crocodiles were. Those people died, but the crocodiles did not eat all of their bodies. People reported to the District Officer [Bwana Res],[50] who decided to take action and punished some Boorana. The whites implemented peace through force. No Somali was supposed to be touched. Little by little our fathers began to join prayers with the Somali and they became very serious Muslims.[51]

The enforced peace at the wells and grazing areas meant that gradually the Waso Boorana joined the Somali in their practice and acceptance of Islam. After twenty years of settlement in the Waso area, three Sheiks were already providing religious instruction in the Waso Boorana settlements of Garba Tulla town,[52] and the Somali had been accepted as good helpers by the administrative police. Through symbiosis and conflict, the Somali had managed once again to gain

privileges and rights to grazing and water at the expense of the Boorana, who in turn became clients of the Somali in their particular dealings with the colonial administration.

Colonial Attitudes Towards the Boorana

Between the settlement of boundaries in 1934 and the end of the Second World War, the Waso area had become non-important in the wider colonial concerns. The administration was already settled in Isiolo and Wajir, while the military concerns about Ethiopia and Somalia were being dealt with kilometres away from the Waso area.[53] The Somali strengthened their trading control, and they acted as intermediaries between the Waso Boorana and the colonial administration, while at the same time gaining a key role in the meat trade that the Boorana needed in order to sell and transport stock within the N.F.D.

By 1954 Garba Tulla had become a key place to manage the trading concerns of the Waso Boorana through the centrality of the road Meru-Kinna-Garba Tulla-Wajir. By that time a government African school had begun,[54] that in 1956 had 29 students.[55] By 1956 a District Officer had been requested for Garba Tulla, in order to manage the affairs of the Waso Boorana and the Somali and with the unspoken fear that the cause of the Mau Mau for self-determination would also spread to the Waso area.

In a historical perspective, the violence between Waso Boorana and Somali had been isolated over a period of twenty years. Nevertheless, the fact that an unmarried District Officer was requested for Garba Tulla in 1954,[56] spoke of the uncertainty that the British had so far concerning a long lasting understanding between Waso Boorana and Somali, especially during times when the rest of Kenya was facing violence and uncertainty. It is in that sense that the relations between Waso Boorana and Somali during the colonial period can be interpreted as a symbiosis. The Waso Boorana were influenced by the Somali in their religious sphere, and also became clients of the Isaq Somali, while the Somali who attempted to cross the "Somali-Galla-line" had to resort to their traditional system of *shegat*. Therefore, the British administration did not manage to understand the fact that during the dry season, Somali herders would ask the Waso Boorana for protection, so as to water their herds at the Waso Nyiro river.[57] The Waso Boorana had a strong allegiance with the Somali, who in their turn stressed their common religious affiliation with the Waso Boorana, rather than the British administrative boundaries politically imposed on them.

From Colony to Nation

At the time of Kenya's independence from Britain, there was concern about the future of the Northern Frontier District. The main question was if the N.F.D. should be allocated to Kenya after independence. The problem arose because of the expectations by the Somali population which was living in the N.F.D. at that time, who thought and wished that the people of the N.F.D. would be given the possibility of remaining autonomous from the rest of Kenya, and that eventually that region would join the Somali union that had taken place in 1960.[58] One of the main reasons for that secession and independence from Kenya was related to the ethnic background of the population of the N.F.D., where almost half of the people were Somali, and 62 per cent of the total population were Somali or half-Somali. The Boorana constituted only 22 per cent of the population, while the remaining 16 per cent were people from other small tribal groupings.[59] The exact figures have to be taken with caution, as those statistics were provided through the list of tax payers declaring their tribal affiliation in a particular area of the district.[60] Nevertheless, it is a fact that the majority of the inhabitants of the N.F.D. were Somali or of Somali origin, and that the geographical terrain in which they lived was very similar to those of the arid Northern Region of the Somali Republic. Therefore, while they shared a common language,

their livelihood on nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralism (with the husbandry of camels, sheep and goats) made any political boundaries difficult to implement.

All those points were assumed as a political agenda with the formation of the Northern Province People's Progressive Party (NPPPP) in 1960, after the announcement of constitutional changes (April 1960) and the call for elections in the Kenya Colony, that effectively meant the lifting of restrictions on the formation of parties in the N.F.D. and the so-called tribal parties in the whole of Kenya. The NPPPP gained support among Rendille and Boorana, and a Muslim Boorana, Mr. Wako Happi, became one of its leaders.[61] The Somali had been concerned about the unification of all Somali people and the advancement of Islam since the creation of the Somali Youth League branch in Isiolo in 1947.[62] Part of the original manifesto of the S.Y.L. had stated that "union with the other Somalilands is our greatest demand which must take priority over all other considerations".[63] At that time (1948), the British had banned the S.Y.L. due to the threats that its members posed against headmen and chiefs appointed by the British. In 1957 and after rumours that the British were going to leave the N.F.D. in the hands of the Somali, there were attempts to revive the S.Y.L. in Isiolo through a club to be called the Somali Young Association. Permission for the creation of a Somali association was denied by the British, but nevertheless two other associations appeared at Garissa and Isiolo, and there was even a short period in which Qur'anic oathing was carried out in Isiolo. Their concern was also carried to the governor in Nairobi (August 1960) and to the British secretary for colonial affairs, Reginald Maudling in Nairobi (September 1961). By March 1962, the political parties of the N.F.D. had issued a strong declaration stating "we are members of a single Somali nation. Somali is our language, spoken from the Gulf of Aden to the NFD. Islam is our culture, pastoralism our way".[64]

After representatives of the political parties of the N.F.D. attended the second Lancaster House Conference in London (February 1962),[65] a commission of enquiry was appointed by the British Government in October 1962,[66] in order "to ascertain and report on public opinion in the Northern Frontier District" regarding the unification of the Somali people and, therefore, the annexation of the N.F.D. to the new Somali republic.[67] By December 1962, the commission reported that five of the six Northern Frontier Districts favoured secession and union with the Somali republic. It was clear from the report that opinions between the inhabitants of the N.F.D. were divided along religious lines, "between Muslims who desired union with Somalia and Christian and pagan tribesmen who wished to remain in Kenya."[68] By March 1963, Britain announced that the N.F.D. was to become the seventh province of Kenya, a decision that helped "to safeguard its economic interests in the colony"[69] and helped consolidate the centralized political model of president Kenyatta. After a boycott by the secessionist leaders of the general elections in May 1963, there was no solution to the Somali problem.

The Somali government wanted the whole N.F.D. annexed to the Somali Republic, while the British government was ready to allocate only certain parts of it to Somalia, namely Wajir, Mandera and the Somali portions of Moyale and Garissa. In that sense, while the dispute was locally assumed in Kenya by a particular region, its population and their own future, the Somali republic pushed at international level to unify all the Somali people, supported the claims of the Somali in the N.F.D. and therefore took part in an international incident which eventually involved Kenya and Ethiopia.[70]

Local Responses to Independence

The Isiolo District and the Waso area were certainly out of any consideration for secession by the British, but the Waso Boorana in Garba Tulla who have always kept strong links with relatives and friends in Isiolo were once again influenced by the Somali. The decision by Britain to create a new province of Kenya created a violent climate,[71] that was triggered by calls to civil disobedience, and continued with clashes between residents of the eastern part of the N.F.D. and police

forces that were supported by members of the para-military General Service Unit (G S U.)[72] The boycott of the 1963 elections (24 May) led to Somali crowds violently preventing the Meru and Turkana from voting in Isiolo

In Isiolo town and the Waso area, the Somali convinced the Waso Boorana that a defeat on the hands of the Kenya Government would mean that all the pastoralists would be slaves of the Bantu people from other parts of Kenya The Waso Boorana feared that possibility, and at the same time had hopes that the presence of Wako Happi in the NPPPP would give them back their voice in the future running of the Kenya Colony That idea was finally discarded by the Garba Tulla Waso Boorana community, after they were reminded by the D.C Daudi Dabaso Wawera that the NPPPP was after all a Somali party[73] Thereafter, the emphasis given by Boorana leaders as to gather support for the Somali cause was given to the practical solidarity and support that the Waso Boorana as Muslims should offer to the Somali as fellow Muslim brothers. It cannot therefore be ignored that Islam acted as a unifying factor between the Somali and the Waso Boorana, as the Waso Boorana were also told by public speakers of Somali origin who visited Garba Tulla, that Bantu Christians from the south would come, they would baptize all of them and take away their children to schools in Nairobi.

All those factors made the Waso Boorana ready to fight for their traditions, their religion and their way of life along with the Somali, who distributed arms to the Waso Boorana in Garba Tulla and other places in the District In 1963 (28 December), an emergency was declared by the first Kenya Government in the N F.D. (North Eastern Province),[74] that in its initial communication included "the declaration of a five mile wide prohibited zone along the whole of the Kenya side of the frontier with Somalia."[75] The Waso Boorana were provided with arms by the new Kenya Government in order to protect themselves from the bandits,[76] and they were requested to inform the police about the identities of suspected bandits in the area Between 1964-5 the British Army supported the Kenya Army[77] that at that time did not have enough resources as to deal with an internal emergency situation.[78] With the generalized mining of roads in 1965, especially on the road from Garba Tulla and Mado Gashi to Isiolo, army and police reprisals affected the daily life of the Waso Boorana population, because in order to control the situation Waso Boorana were executed every time a bomb exploded on the roads. More troops were sent into the area, as to protect the sovereignty of Kenya and in order to control the movements of the Waso Boorana, suspected of protecting and helping the Somali bandits[79] The emergency ended in 1967 with the signing of the Arusha memorandum between Kenya and Somalia,[80] even when the area was not completely safe to travel till 1969.

Violence and the *Shifta* War

That time of emergency, known as "the *shifta* war"[81] by the Waso Boorana, created poverty and famine in Garba Tulla. It is clear that the (Waso) Boorana initially supported the Somali, but even when they withdrew some support for the Somali cause, they were caught in the middle of a conflict that involved Somali guerrillas and the Kenya Army. The crucial incident that had triggered the Waso Boorana involvement in the Somali cause was the assassination of the District Commissioner Daudi Dabaso Wawera and Chief Hajji Galma Diida in an ambush near Mado Gashi, fifty kilometres from Garba Tulla in 1963 The shooting was carried out by Somali gunmen at a time when both men had been addressing the Boorana and trying to make them understand that the Kenya Government was not going to agree with the wishes of the Somali, and that any possible conflict would mean the suffering of the Boorana rather than the Somali. The assassination and the ambush poses an interesting fact, both of them were killed while their companions and escorts were not touched.[82] After that incident, even when some Waso Boorana wanted to withdraw support for the Somali, violence spread throughout the Waso area, as the Boorana felt that they were also under attack as two of their well-liked political leaders had been eliminated

As the Kenya government tried to enforce law and order in the Waso area in the context of a systematic disruption of peace through attacks on vehicles, the planting of mines on the roads and the firing at the police and military, the Waso Boorana also faced the raids of the guerrillas, who had to get their provisions from the local population. During 1966-7, and due to the emergency situation, the Waso Boorana were located in camps, the *daba* and a policy of sedentarization was enforced, whereby they could not graze more than five miles radius away from each centre,[83] including Garba Tulla, where the Waso Boorana were kept in a settlement known as *manyatta* prison. This period during the *shifta* war is known as *Gaaf Daaba*—the time of stop. During that particular time, thousands of animals died as they could not be brought out for grazing, others were confiscated and exported outside the district, while thousands of animals were killed by the army, in a desperate attempt to control movement and therefore guerrilla activities in the area.[84] As a result of those law-enforcement actions the Garba Tulla stock market that since the 1920s had been flourishing, and that in the 1950s was the major auction centre of the N F D, was never active again.[85] The old and the young suffered due to the spread of disease in the crowded camps, and there was a general state of malnutrition. While the Kenya Government portrayed the need to restore order and to keep Kenya's border secure, the history of this period in Garba Tulla is that of constant fear by the Waso Boorana, as in many cases interrogation by the army meant the disappearance of people, and abuses included rape and pillage.[86]

During this post-colonial period, 1963 till the end of violence in 1969, the Waso Boorana remained in Garba Tulla, while the Somali retreated to their own locations in Wajir and Garissa, where they also were labelled as bandits.[87] As a result of this armed conflict, the Waso Boorana express the opinion that the Somali were responsible for their loss of animals and their animosity towards the first government of the Republic of Kenya. This post-independence conflict in a historical and sociological reading once again portrays the long standing cooperation and conflict between the Waso Boorana and the Somali; nevertheless while the Waso Boorana remained in their area, the Somali had the possibility of moving out towards the east asking to be protected by other Somali.

Famine and Hunger

After the *shifta* war the Waso Boorana suffered years of famine, that were not helped by the new competition for water and grazing that they faced once again from the Somali, who after 1969 were allowed to enter the Waso area (the first time since the colonial boundaries of 1934 were demarcated).[88] Garba Tulla remained an administrative post for the Kenya Government and a central place for the army and the police, that took charge of an air strip already used by the army during the emergency. During the *shifta* war, the Somali population had retreated towards the east and their movements had also been prevented by the emergency restrictions. With the lifting of those restrictions, the Somali returned to the Waso area, responding to messages sent by Somali merchants and shop owners telling them that this was the time to secure trade routes and grazing areas, as the Waso Boorana did not have animals or economic resources as to compete with them.

When the Somali returned to Garba Tulla as from 1969, relations with the Waso Boorana resembled those of colonial times, whereby the Somali kept moving east with their animals, and as the Waso Boorana did not believe in the private ownership of wells, they readily accepted the fact that the Somali could also use those few water holes that existed in the river bank of Garba Tulla. That side of history did not change till 1988, when the police forbade the use of wells by the Somali. Nevertheless, what had changed in the local context of Garba Tulla since colonial times was the fact that the Somali were coming into the area with animals,[89] while the Waso Boorana did not have animals and were surviving on food from international relief operations. In some way, the Somali had managed to keep a certain continuity in their way of life,

while the Waso Boorana had interrupted their semi-nomadic and stock oriented life. Food relief and later on restocking and ranching programs were new aspects in Waso Boorana life, while drought and famine had been part of their historical patterns and daily life.[90] A new period of symbiosis began that led slowly to a new period of conflict and cooperation.

The relief operation began already in 1968, and as the International Red Cross continued helping with food and medicines, there was an invitation to the Christian Churches of Kenya by the Isiolo District Commissioner requesting them to be involved in alleviating famine in the area.[91] The figures of people on famine relief speak of most of the Isiolo District, around 55,000 people.[92] Churches such as the Methodist, who were not present in the area before the *shifta* war,[93] opened a "Mission to Northern Kenya" under the auspices of the newly formed Conference Missionary Committee, approved by the third Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Kenya.[94] The Catholic Church present in Isiolo since the 1960s, began a program of food relief in 1968, directed mainly to people in Garba Tulla and Merti.[95] By 1969, agricultural projects by two field workers and three V.S.O. workers sponsored by the Methodist Church had been initiated in Kinna, with a total of 39.4 acres ploughed, 29 bags of Katumani maize seed and 400 pounds of millet and quantities of other seeds distributed for planting to the Boorana settlers.[96] Another V.S.O. was paying monthly visits into the area in order to look after the medical needs of the Boorana population, complementing the medical aid that had been carried out from the Methodist hospital at Maua. At that time it had been estimated by the D.C. that already five hundred families had moved into the new settlement at Kinna.[97] The relief operation extended throughout the former N.F.D. and even in Dabel (near Moyale), abandoned children were being fed.[98]

In Garba Tulla, a children's home for orphan children was opened on 12 May 1970, under the auspices of the Methodist Church.[99] The fact that those children had been selected from different relief camps meant that at the end of the emergency, only few families had rebuilt their huts and consequently had returned to their places of origin. On the whole, around 10,000 people who were staying in Garba Tulla were encouraged by the administration to move to other places where agriculture was possible, first to Kinna and later to Kula Mawe, where a number of policemen and their families were stationed.[100] The forced settling in camps at the time of the emergency had also meant that children who became orphans could not be integrated into the households of other Boorana, as most families did not have a hut or food to feed those children.[101]

It was also during that post-emergency time that Somali shepherds managed to regain some sort of control over the Waso Boorana areas of grazing and water. Further droughts meant that those few animals that the Waso Boorana had in the area perished or had to be consumed in order to survive. Also during the 1970s and as a product of the war situation and the subsequent famine, the Waso Boorana became dependent on food relief,[102] a fact that in practice meant that groups of Boorana became residents of particular areas where food was being distributed, and were subsequently recognized by others as Garba Tulla Boorana, Merti Boorana or Malka Daka Boorana. The Somali also settled their own families in particular places as Banane, south of Garba Tulla, whereby it is possible since then to identify Banane as a Somali town and Garba Tulla as a Boorana town.

Insecurity: From the 1970s to the 1990s

The security situation in the Waso area did not improve tremendously from the 1970s to the 1990s, as bandits continued raiding villages and stealing animals. By the 1980s several restocking programs had been implemented and there was a certain increase in animal stock in the Waso area. That increase in Waso Boorana stock meant that more conflicts took place at places for watering, and also meant an increase in banditry. Boorana home guards had to accompany the herds that were transported outside the trading centres for grazing. Nevertheless, while the original term associated with *shifta* was that of a Somali secessionist, the bandits of the 1980s and 1990s were

of a different nature. Among those bandits there were Somali who wanted to steal because of their own survival in the area, some of them run away ex-soldiers of the defeated factions in the different armed conflicts in Somalia, and lately Boorana *shifta* who were unschooled and unemployed Boorana youth who got arms and put the blame of their actions on the Somali.[103] There were in the late 1980s and in the past few years, several attacks on trucks and on military vehicles that have created a constant tension for the local population, events that have also influenced the Somali presence in the Waso area, that has varied according to the orders given by the police and the military. For example, in 1988 there were thousands of camels in Garba Tulla, while in 1992 there was none, a reflection of the local policy implemented by those in charge of security in the Waso area, and the lack of constancy of the central administration in Nairobi regarding the security of this remote part of Kenya.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that throughout the years since the end of the *shifta* war, the relation between the Waso Boorana and the Somali has been their usual symbiosis, expressed through cooperation at times and a constant increase of conflict between them. While both groups have shared wells and grazing areas, the Waso Boorana have been less reluctant to show the same strong Muslim religious affiliation and, therefore, the former closeness to the Somali that they had shown before the emergency. In the last twenty years, a few hundred Merti Boorana have converted to Christianity and Waso Boorana children have also been sent to the Catholic sponsored school in Garba Tulla. There has been a process of diversification in their own understanding of the possible religious practices that a Waso Boorana can have, and as a result, a revival of their traditional ways of practising religion,[104] that has been forwarded especially by those young Waso Boorana who were born during and after the emergency. They have had an antagonistic attitude towards the Somali, especially towards those who became bandits after the political collapse of Somalia in 1991,[105] crossed from Somalia into Kenya,[106] and have contributed to a widespread situation of violence in the Waso area.[107] For example, during 1992 there were two attacks on Garba Tulla town, including the administrative headquarters and the Catholic Mission, carried out by bandits in military uniforms.

One can finally remark that the interaction between Somali and Waso Boorana in Garba Tulla as a trading, administrative and military centre, has been historically shaped not only by external decisions on local boundaries, but also by processes of alliance and symbiosis undertaken by local Waso Boorana and Somali groups. Those processes have been the result of their localized social efforts to graze, water their animals, and attain prosperity throughout the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period, periods in which the Kenya colonial and independent administrations have been unable to deal with the needs of Boorana pastoralism, still consider today as closer to the Somali, and foreign to the economic and political interests of the nation of Kenya.

End Notes

1 Parts of the National Archives of Kenya were consulted at the Seely Library, Cambridge, while the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (London) Archives (WMMSA), and the Christian Aid Archives (CA, first deposit [I] 1985, second deposit [II] 1990) were consulted at the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. I also consulted the archives of the Catholic Mission Development Office (MDO) in Garba Tulla, while conducting interviews thereafter organized as Garba Tulla Historical Texts (GTHT). I am grateful to David Anderson, Douglas Johnson, Andrew Roberts and Paul Spencer who have made fruitful comments on parts of this material and to Paul Baxter who shared some of his impressions concerning the Waso

Boorana and the Somali in Garba Tulla. The map of Kenya appeared in my unpublished PhD Thesis "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla. Kenya," London University 1993, 14.

2. "The Pastoral Tribes of Northern Kenya, 1800-1916," unpublished PhD Thesis, London University 1970, 278.

3. P.T. Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism: Economic Factors in the History of the Somali of North-eastern Kenya, 1892-1948," PhD Thesis, Syracuse University 1975, 79.

4. M.I. Aguilar, "The role of the *sarki* dance in Waso Boorana/Somali symbiosis and conflict," *Anthropos*, 88(1993), 184-90.

5. M.I. Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices" (1993), 17-8.

6. G. Dahl, *Suffering Grass: Subsistence and Society of Waso Borana* (Stockholm, 1979), 25. Other studies of the area have included Isiolo town: R.S. Hogg, unpublished PhD Thesis, "The Social and Economic Organization of the Boran of Isiolo District, Kenya," Manchester University 1981, and "The politics of changing property rights among Isiolo Boran pastoralists in Northern Kenya," *Property, Poverty and People: Changing Rights in Property and Problems of Pastoral Development*, eds P.T.W. Baxter and R. Hogg (Manchester, 1990).

7. For a comprehensive account of Menelik's conquest, see R.H. Kofi Darwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire 1813-1889* (London, 1975).

8. I.M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho* (I.A.I., London, 1955), 116.

9. I.M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa* (O.U.P. London, 1961), 186-7.

10. *Idem*, 187.

11. See B.W. Andrzejewski, P.T.W. Baxter and I.M. Lewis, "Memorandum on the background of the Northern Province of Kenya," prepared for the British Government (1962), 13.

12. The actual administrative period of Kenya by the British Government begins in 1895 when the Imperial British East Africa Company transfers its charter and the administration of its territory to Her Majesty's Government under the authority of the Foreign Office. The colonial period ends with the proclamation of Kenya's independence in December, 1963. See "Administrative chronology, Kenya and East Africa," in A. Thurston, *Guide to Archives and Manuscripts Relating to Kenya and East Africa in the United Kingdom* (London, 1991), vol. 1, xiii.

13. R.S. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 27.

14. For example, P.H. Brown (D.O. Isiolo), "Payment of *Dia* and wound compensation," Isiolo District Political Record Book (IDPRB), 18/12/44; "*Shegats*" (IDPRB), 12/2/58.

15. That Somali expansion was not a "concerted operation under a single direction," rather the movement of groups in search for grazing. See B.W. Andrzejewski, P.T.W. Baxter and I.M. Lewis, "Memorandum" (1962), 12.

16. P.T. Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism" (1975), 31.

17. "Kenya: Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission" (London, December 1962), 7.

18. D.C. Mandera 4/3; P. Goto, "The Boran of Northern Kenya: Origins, Migrations and Settlements in the 19th Century," BA Thesis (Nairobi University 1972), 52; Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism," 31-2.

19. I.M. Lewis, "The Somali conquest of the Horn of Africa," *J. Afr. Hist.*, I, no. 2 (1960); J. Ensminger, *Making a Market: The Institutional Transformation of an African Society* (C.U.P., 1992), 45.

20. The wardei of the British colonial reports are known by anthropologists as Warra Dai. See R.S. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 22.

21. "Kenya: Report" (1962), 7.

22. For an analysis of those campaigns see E.R. Turton, "The impact of Mohammad Abdille Hassan on the East Africa Protectorate," *J. Afr. Hist.*, XI, no. 4 (1970).

23 E.R. Turton, "Somali resistance to colonial rule and the development of Somali political activity in Kenya 1893-1960," *J. Afr. Hist.* XIII, no. 1 (1972).

24 P.T.W. Baxter, "Boran age-sets and warfare," *Warfare among East African Herders*, eds K. Fukui and D. Turton (Osaka, 1979), 88; G. Schlee, *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenya* (Manchester, 1989), 38, 89-90, 125-6.

25 G. Schlee and A.A. Shongolo, "Oromo and Somali ethnicity and the concept of nationhood," (University of Bielefeld, Sociology of Development Research Centre, 1993), Working Paper no 194, 5

26 R.S. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 26.

27 D.C. N.F.D. to Chief Secretary, March 15, 1925, P.C. N.F.D. 4/1/7. Cf. P.T. Dalleo, "Trade and Pastoralism" (1975), 261

28 "History of administration," Wajir Provincial Record Book (I), K.N.A., 2082, 81.

29 "Kenya: Report" (1962), 7.

30 On this point see the analysis by J. Middleton in "Kenya: changes in African life, 1912-1945," *History of East Africa* II, ed. V. Harlow and E.M. Chilver (Oxford, 1965), 333-92.

31 R.S. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 22-3. While the Meru had a strong tradition of warriors, being attached to the hills of Meru they never attempted to advance towards the Waso area.

32 See J.A. Fadiman, *An Oral History of Tribal Warfare: The Meru of Mt. Kenya* (Athens, Ohio, 1982), 10-1

33 The N.F.D. was officially opened in 1910 with headquarters in Moyale.

34 R.G. Gregory, R.M. Maxon and L.P. Spencer, *A Guide to the Kenya National Archives* (Syracuse, New York, 1968), 13

35 Bulesa Annual Report 1918/1919 P.C. N.F.D. 1/4/1

36 Isiolo Handing Over Report (H.O.R.), Garba Tulla District, 5/11/28.

37 N.F.D. H.O.R. 1930. P.C. N.F.D. 2/1/1. For an analysis of these changes, G. Dahl, *Suffering Grass*, 192-95

38 K.E. Knutsson, *Authority and Change: A Study of the Kallu Institution among the Macha Galla of Ethiopia* (Gothenburg, 1967).

39 P.T.W. Baxter, "Acceptance and rejection of Islam among the Boran of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya," *Islam in Tropical Africa*, ed. I.M. Lewis (London, 1966), 249.

40 K.N.A., D.C. Wajir [Gailey], 2, 1; R.S. Hogg, "Social and Economic Organization," 28

41 K.N.A. D.C. Isiolo, 1939, 1

42 K.N.A., D.C. Isiolo, 1952, 1.

43 The photographs of Somali ways of dressing in J. Bucholzer, *The Horn of Africa: Travels in British Somaliland* (London, 1955), 80, 144 could be pictures of the Waso Boorana as those published by M. Reyes-Cortez, "Tracing the lost path of *Wagga*," *The Photographic Journal*, 134 (1994), 102-5; "The lost path of *Wagga*," *New African*, no. 317 (1994), 38-41; "Drought without frontiers: the Waso Booranas of Kenya," *Divine Word Missionaries* (spring, 1994), 6-9.

44 See G. Dahl, *Suffering Grass* (1979), 243-4.

45 On the issue of the Waso Boorana conversion to Islam, see M.I. Aguilar, "*Nagaa*: the forgotten quest for peace in modern Kenya," *The Month* 26 (May, 1993), 184-5 and "African conversion from a world religion: religious diversification by the Waso Boorana in Kenya" (forthcoming).

46 Mentioned in the archives from the 1920s onwards, for example Isiolo H.O.R., Garba Tulla District, 18/1/29, 2.

47 While his family (who are Muslims) asserts that he converted to Islam (e.g. GTHRT/TOW/TP/1992), P.T.W. Baxter has suggested that Perera died a Catholic and "his conversion to Islam was post mortem (oral communication).

48 Already in 1928 there is evidence that the British had appointed headmen in Sericho, Banane,

Merti and Garba Tulla. See, Isiolo H.O.R., Garba Tulla District, 5/11/28

49. "General policy for the N.F.D.," Government House, Mombasa, 23/8/45.

50. Bwana Res was the nickname given by the Boorana to G. Reece.

51. Godana Boru, GTHT/MAI/f.n./1992/67.

52. Isiolo H.O.R., R.G. Brayne-Nichols to K.P. Shaw, 6/3/54.

53. Major Grant, "Notes on patrols in the N.F.D.," Isiolo 13/9/45

54. The school had in 1954 18 pupils attending, see Isiolo H.O.R. 6/3/54, cf. June 1954, K.P. Shaw to J.R. Nimmo. The first school of the N.F.D. did not begin till 1946, see J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (C.U.P., 1987), 184.

55. Isiolo H.O.R., 24/7/56. J.R. Nimmo to C.P. Chenevix-Trench.

56. Isiolo H.O.R., June 1954, K.P. Shaw to J.R. Nimmo.

57. While the colonial officers did not understand the intricasies of cultural patterns, they were in some case eager to have everything cut and clear in paper. In 1954, the colonial officer reports that an anthropologist called Paul Baxter "has not yet published his detailed thesis." See Isiolo H.O.R. 6/3/54, 10. As a matter of fact, an abridged version of Baxter's thesis ws produced in cyclostyled form by the Colonial Office in December 1954, File no. res. 88/7/01, Kenya Ref. S/F ADM 34/1/10/11. Cf. B.W. Andrzejewski, P.T.W. Baxter and I.M. Lewis, "Memorandum" (1962), footnotes 17.

58. In July 1960, British Somaliland and Italian Somalia were united, and became independent as the Northern and Southern Regions of the Somali Republic. Cf. C. Hoskyns, *The Ethiopia-Somali-Kenya Dispute 1960-67* (Dar Es Salaam, 1969), x.

59. R.S. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 45 and R.C. Perkins, "Independence for Kenya: A Study in the Development of British Colonial Policy, 1955-1963," PhD Thesis, South Carolina University, 1968, 250. For the figures concerning the distribution of Somali in the Horn of Africa, see S. Touval, *Somali Nationalism* (Harvard, 1963), 12.

60. Numbers of Somali in the District were suggested as ca. 100,000 while ca. 30,000 were "Galla Boran" as suggested in Appendix I of B.W. Andrzejewski, P.T.W. Baxter and I.M. Lewis, "Memorandum" (1962).

61. Its secretary-general was Dego Stambul Abdi, the son of Sultan Maalim Stambul of the Abd Wak and Alex Kholkhole (a Rendille), its vice-president, J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict* (1987). 185.

62. E.R. Turton, "Somali resistance" (1972), 136.

63. "Somali Youth League Memorandum to the Fourth Power Commission" (1948), quoted in S. Healy, "The changing idiom of self-determination in the Horn of Africa," *Nationalism and Self Determination in the Horn of Africa*, ed. I.M. Lewis (London, 1983), 97.

64. "A people in isolation: statement by the Somalis of the Kenya Northern Frontier District" (March, 1962), in Somali Government, *The Somali Republic and African Unity* (1962), appendix 2, 33-5.

65. In general, history text books have ignored the fact that the N.F.D. had delegates in the round talks in London, and have also ignored the fact that Kenyatta had to deal with this problem, even before independence was granted to Kenya. For example, no mention of any Somali problem appears in W.R. Ochieng," *A History of Kenya* (London/Nairobi, 1985), while a brief mention of the Kenya-Somali problem after Kenya's independence is made by K. Orwa, "Foreign policy, 1963-1986," in *A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980*, ed. W.R. Ochieng" (London/Nairobi, 1989), 232-3.

66. R.C. Perkins, "Independence for Kenya," 254.

67. Experts on the area did also submit their own research, that while considered by the commission, at the end was ignored by the British Government. See for example, B.W. Andrzejewski, P.T.W. Baxter and I.M. Lewis, "Memorandum" (London, 1962).

68. R.C. Perkins, "Independence for Kenya" (South Carolina University, 1968), 254.

69. J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict* (1987), 186.

70. See for example the following reports by the Ministry of Information of the Somali Republic, "N.F.D. frontier problem planted by Britain between Kenya and Somali Republic" (Mogadishu, n.d.), "British public opinion on the Northern Frontier District N.F.D." (Mogadishu, May 1963) and "White paper on N.F.D." (Mogadishu, December 1964), and Ahmed el-Obeid Ibrahim, unpublished MSc Thesis, "The Somali-Kenya Border Dispute: A Study of Somalia's Foreign Policy, 1961-1969," University of Khartoum 1973.

71. The same violent conflicts took place in the Ogaden (1963) and in Bale and Sidamo (1963-8), see J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict* (1987), 169-81, 191-201.

72. At that time there were two companies of the G.S.U. and one hundred policemen in the northern region, see J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict* (1987), 187.

73. GTHT/MAT/f.n./68, interview with Godana Boru, 18/6/92.

74. The N.F.D. was renamed in December 1963.

75. Kenya Government, "Emergency in North Eastern Region of Kenya," *Kenya Calling*, 28 December 1963.

76. GTHT/MAT/f.n./68.

77. British troops were withdrawn by the end of October 1964, as the security situation improved. J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict* (1987), 188.

78. "British air transport was pressed into service to carry troops and supplies to the north, British communication specialists maintained contact within the N.F.D. and with Nairobi, while British army engineers carried out road repairs, and medical units evacuated casualties, J. Markakis, *National and Class Conflict* (1987), 187.

79. By September 1966, the death sentence was decreed for those who endangered the security of the state, and a security zone of 24 kilometres from the border was implemented. Any person found in that area could be shot by the soldiers.

80. The Arusha Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the President of Kenya and the Somali Prime Minister on 28 October in Arusha, Tanzania. Among the most important points of the declaration, point 4 c stated "the gradual suspension of any emergency regulations imposed on either side of the border" and point 4 d declared "the reopening of diplomatic relations between the two countries." The Arusha Memorandum followed the Kinshasa Declaration made by the Government of Kenya and Somalia at the O.A.U. Heads of State meeting in Zaire, 11-14 September 1967.

81. The word *shifta* means bandit and it is derived from the Amharic language, see R. Hogg, "The politics of changing property" (1990), 30 and G. Schlee, *Identities on the Move* (1989), 51.

82. P.T.W. Baxter, written communication.

83. There were three centres in the Waso area (Garba Tulla, Merti and Mado Gashi), while 15 of them were reported on the whole of the former N.F.D. In the case of Isiolo town, nobody could move without a permit, and a curfew was declared from 7 PM to 6 AM, see A. Hjort, *Savanna Town. Rural Ties and Urban Opportunities in Northern Kenya* (Stockholm, 1979), 36.

84. 5,000 heads of cattle were machine-gunned in Isiolo in one day of 1967, see A. Hjort, *Savanna Town* (1979), 36. Available statistics from R. Hogg, "The politics of changing property," 22, suggest that between 1963 and 1970, the camel population of the district declined by over nine five per cent, the small stock population by over ninety per cent and the cattle population by about seven per cent.

85. Already in 1920-1, 13,000 small stock had been exported from Garba Tulla, see R. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 38.

86. R.S. Hogg, "The Social and Economic" (1981), 47 and interviews with people who remained in Garba Tulla during the conflict, e.g. GTHT/KOR/f.n./33 [Abdi Koropu, 5/6/92], GTHT/MAT/f.n./57 [Qabale Wario, 11/6/92], GTHT/MAT/f.n./68 [Godana Boru, 18/6/92].

87. M.K. Ibrahim, "The checkered history of the Somali in Kenya," *Wajibu* (Nairobi), VII,

no 3 (1992), 16.

88 As a matter of fact, the whole colonial restriction of Somali movements to the West was lifted R Hogg reports that between 1970 and 1979 the number of camels (owned by the Somali) increased from 6,000 in 1970, to 14,000 in 1973, to 49,000 in 1979, "The politics of changing property" (1990), 22

89 It has been suggested that around 40,000 cattle came into the Isiolo District between 1969-70, see R Hogg, *ibid*.

90 Those changes took place in more or less every pastoral society in Kenya For a general assessment of those concerns in the 1980s, see J.G Galaty, D Aronson and P.C Salzman. *The Future of Pastoral Peoples*. Proceedings of a conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, 4-8 August 1980 (Ottawa, Ontario. 1981)

91 The Methodist Missionary Society, "Together: The annual report and accounts of the Methodist Missionary Society, general fund and women's work for 1968" (London, 1969), 69

92 The figure of 55,000 was the figure given for the Isiolo District population in the 1962 census While any figure concerning nomadic populations cannot be exact, a realistic figure for both the rural and urban areas of Isiolo can be estimated between 30,000 and 70,000 people For a full discussion of population figures available, see G Dahl and S Sanford, "Which way to go: a study of people and pastoralism in the Isiolo District of Kenya," a joint study commissioned by the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Livestock Centre for Kenya (1978), 2.01-2.03 93 Meru had become over the years the centre for the Methodist Church in Kenya. In the words of the missionaries, "at Meru we are not far from the Boran country. which had been and is claimed by the Council of Missions as the objective of our Mission," see B J Wolfendale, "Extracts from the annual reports of the United Methodist Missionary Society concerning the Meru Mission," WMMSA, Notes and Transcript, 6, 1913, 2. The conversion of the Galla (Oromo, Boorana) had been one of the objectives of the first Methodist incursion into East Africa in 1861, but it was discarded after all the difficulties encountered by the first missionaries For a history of events in Meru and among the Galla see Z.J Nthamburi, *A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1982). appendix A

94 The Methodist Church in Kenya was inaugurated as an independent church on 7 January 1967, after 105 years of being an overseas district of the British converence, see "Open doors: the annual report and accounts of the Methodist Missionary Society, general fund and women's work for 1966" (London, 1967), 59

95 See M.I Aguilar, "Dialogue with Waso Boorana traditional religious practices," *African Ecclesial Review*, 35, 106.

96 "New community: the annual report and accounts of the Methodist Missionary society general fund and women's work for 1969" (London, 1970), 67.

97 D.L Matthews (Kenya N.C.C.K) to V H K Littlewood (Christian Aid London), CA 2/A/12/5, 1

98 D Linde (Kenya N.C.C.K.) to Christian Aid London (1969), CA 2/A/12/5, 3.

99 The home was opened by the P.C. of the Eastern Province, and had a warden (J K. Kamau), N.C.C.K. "Progress report on Northern Kenya projects, Isiolo District, Boran rehabilitation and rural development" (July, 1970), CA 2/A/12/5.

100 British Council of Churches Christian Aid Kenya, "Boran rural training centre" (15/9/69), CA 2/A/12/5, 1.

101 By 1971 there were 80 orphaned or abandoned children staying at the Garba Tulla children's home, see N.C.C.K. Department of relief, rehabilitation and rural development, "Annual report for 1971," CA 2/A/8/2, 67.

102 R. Hogg has suggested that "poverty and dependence is becoming a permanent way of life to many pastoralists" in the "The new pastoralism: poverty and dependence in Northern Kenya," *Africa*, 56, 319-33 (1986), 319

103 For the historical development of different categories of *shifta*, see M.I Aguilar, "*Nagaa*" (1993), 183-7, also A. Hotchkiss, "From where comes the strength of the Boran community?," MDO, 30/9/93, 1-4

104 See M.I. Aguilar, "Keeping the Peace of the Waso Boorana: becoming Oromo through religious diversification," in *Being and Becoming Oromo*, eds P.T.W Baxter, J Hultin and A. Triulzi (forthcoming).

105 I have assumed that date to be 27 January 1991, that marks the day when President Barre left his office and the country For an account of those historical events, see M I Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices" (1993), footnote 28.

106 There were already some ex-soldiers crossing into Kenya after the collapsing of political authority in Somalia, that for authors such as J A. Lefebvre, took place already in 1989 See, *Arms for the Horn: U.S. Security Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia 1953-1991* (Pittsburgh, 1991), 257

107 Some families of those Somali soldiers who were killed or captured by the police settled as refugees in Garba Tulla during 1992, in what became known as the Somali *manyatta*

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Historical Challenges in the Development of Oromo Language and Some Agenda for Future Research

*by Feyisa Demie**

1. Introduction

The Oromo language has a well developed oral literature which has been transmitted from mouth to mouth and preserved in the memories of the people. This oral literature is rich in folk tales, stories, songs, vocabularies proverbs and poems and are passed from one generation to another by elders. Parents teach their children songs, proverbs, games and riddles to encourage these skills. Poetry is practically a national past time in the Oromo nation. Leaders and elders are expected to quote lines of poetry in their speeches, or to make up a poem spontaneously to suit an important occasion. Most Oromo adults know a number of songs, poems and riddles. However, in spite of a great oral tradition and a heir to a culture millennia old its written literature is not more than one hundred fifty years old. There are not many books written in Oromiffa.

Oromiffa is the mother tongue of about 25 million people. In addition an estimated 4 million non-Oromo may speak Oromiffa as their second language. Oromiffa is spoken by members of many nationalities such as Harari, Anuak, Sidama, Gurage, Amhara settlers in Oromia and Somali in Kenya. Therefore, because the number of its speakers, Oromiffa may be third most widely spoken language in Africa. Although some authors have underestimated Oromiffa by considering it as one of the five most widely spoken languages of Africa (Gragg 1982), it is widely accepted now that only Arabic and Hausa have more speakers than this language (see Melaba 1991; Jalata 1993). Despite its size of speakers, Oromiffa is the least studied language in the region. This may seem somewhat surprising, but a number of factors were responsible for impeding the progress of the language.

The first factor was the prohibition of learning and writing in Oromiffa by law in Ethiopia. The lands of the Oromo people were occupied by the Abyssinians over a century ago and prevented from learning to read and write in their languages. The Ethiopian Government as a matter of *Amharization* policy promoted only Amharic as the sole national language while suppressing other nationalities' languages. The purpose of *Amharization* was to create a homogenous Ethiopian society and to destroy the Oromo and the other conquered peoples' identities. The suppression of the Oromo language was officially started in 1942 and the prohibition was further strengthened by the enforcement of an Imperial Decree, No. 3 of 1944 which made Amharic the medium of instruction through out the empire. Furthermore, to strengthen its suppression of the Oromo language, in 1955 the Ethiopian government declared another constitution which recognized Amharic as the official and national language of Ethiopia. The suppression policy of the Oromo language was in operation until 1991 and the nature of this policy was summarized by Paul Baxter as follows:

> " . . . Oromo was denied any official status and it was not permissible to publish, preach, teach, or broadcast in any Oromo dialect. In court or before an official an Oromo had to speak Amharinya or use an interpreter. Even a case between two Oromo, before an Oromo-speaking magistrate had to be heard in Amharic. I sat through a mission church service at which the preacher and all the congregation were Oromo by at which the sermon, as well as the service, was given in Amharinya, which few of the congregation understood at all, and then translated into Oromo. The farce had to be played out in case a Juda informed and the district . . . officer (who would have) fined or imprisoned the preacher."

The second factor that impeded the growth and development of written Oromo language was the lack of trained linguists in Oromiffa. Given that the Oromo language was banned and Amharic was the sole official language in Ethiopia, many Oromo intellectuals wrote and published in Amharic. The Oromos such as Shaykh Bakri Saplo and Onesimos Nasib (Hayward and Hassan 1981) who attempted to write in Oromiffa were imprisoned or exiled.

The third factor was the lack of an Oromiffa training Academy or Institute. The most important steps towards developing this language is to train a group of Oromo speakers and then to give them the opportunity to conduct research into the language. Until now, there is no Oromo language Academy that will be able to train Oromos for this important task.

In addition to the above factors, the lack of suitable scripts was also a problem for a long time for Oromos who were interested to develop Oromiffa. Different scripts such as Geez, Arabic and Latin scripts (used for writing English, German and Italian language) were used by a number of authors to write in Oromiffa until the Oromo students Study Group in Europe adapted Latin alphabet in 1972.

Yet despite this, the distinctive language, culture and the ways of life of the Oromo people have been maintained for centuries in the face of political repression, cultural assimilation and economic deprivation. Various attempts have been made by the Oromos and their supporters to overcome these problems and to write in Oromiffa. The main purpose of this study, therefore, is to trace the history of written Oromo language and draw some implications for further research.

2. Background to the Oromo People and Oromo Language

The Oromo language is mainly spoken in Oromia and in Kenya in parts of Marsabit, Moyale and Garba Tula Districts and in the lower Tana river regions. Oromia extends over an area of about 600,000 square kilometers, and is located in the Horn of Africa between 2 degrees and 12 degrees north latitude and between 34 degrees and 44 degrees East longitude. It is bordered in the East by Somali and Afar lands and Djibouti, in the West by the Sudan and the Nilotic peoples of the Gambela lowlands, in the South by Kenya and a constellation of peoples belonging to the Sidama groups of nations and in the north by Amhara and Tigrai whose land in history is known as Abyssina. Oromia is almost the size of the Federal Republic of Germany and larger than France and Britain.

Oromia was referred to in the past by Oromos as Biyya Oromo (Oromo Country), by the British as Oromoland, by the Abyssinians as Gallaland to designate the nationality or the country of the Oromo people or areas where Oromiffa is spoken. Oromia was one of the free nations of Horn of Africa until its occupation by Abyssinia at the end of the nineteenth century during the scrabble for Africa.

The Oromo People belong to the family of Cushitic speaking peoples. The original family of the Cushitic speaking peoples lived in the North-Eastern and Eastern Africa and the central highlands of the area which is known today as "Ethiopia" for thousands of years. The land Cush, Nubia or the ancient "Ethiopia" in the middle and the lower Nile is the home of the Cushitic speakers. ' It was from here that they subsequently dispersed and became differentiated into separate linguistic and cultural groups. The Oromo from one of those groups which spread Southwards and then east and west and occupied a large part of the Horn of Africa" (Gada Melbaa 1988).

The Cushitic civilization has flourished in the Horn of Africa for thousands of years. Archaeologists have found the remains of a Cushitic people, the ancestors of the Oromo, who lived along the banks of the Nile river, possibly over seven thousand years ago. Historians also attest that the Cushites were rich and powerful and that they built one of the greatest Kingdoms of ancient Africa. Ruins of the Cushities Temples and Pyramids still stands in Nubia. Furthermore, the Cushites developed their own religion, laws, army and writing and the main cities of the Cushites, Meroe, became a center for trade from Africa to the Red Sea (Davidson 1991).

The Cushitic speaking family started to be differentiated into different groups some five thousand years ago may be due to the increase in population. They broke up into four different language speaking groups known as the Northern Cushitic represented by the Beja, the Central Cushitic represented by the Agaw, the lower Eastern Cushitic represented by the Oromo, the Afar. the Saho. the Somali, the Konso and some others and the highland Eastern Cushitic represented by Kambatta. Haddiya, Walayitta and others The Southern Cushitic speakers are found in Tanzania. There are forty different Cushitic linguistic and cultural groups in Africa The Oromo language speakers are considered as one of the largest in terms of population and their language Oromiffa is the most extensive of the Cushitic languages.

3. Oromo Literature

The history of written Oromiffa extends back to the first part of the 19th century and earliest records of the language are found in the accounts of missionaries Oromiffa studies were started one hundred fifty years ago by the Europeans who learned the language from the Oromo slaves bought in the Middle East and Africa and then taken to Europe.

The first book in Oromiffa was written around 1840, but its publication appeared in 1842. In this year Dr. J.C. Krapf, an European missionary who lived and travelled extensively among the Oromo people, published and ***English-Oromo dictionary***

There were some other dictionaries published in the same century The most important of these is ***The Dictionary of the Galla Language by Karl, Tutschek in 1844*** which was published by his brother because Tutschek died tragically at the age of 28 Other works include ***Grammatica E Dizionario della Lengua Oromoica (Galla) by professor E. Viterbo in 1892; Galla-English and English-Galla Dictionary in 1913 by E.C. Foot;*** the dictionary of the Oromo and French entitled ***Vocabularire Francais-Oromo by Imprimerie Saint Lazare in 1928*** and the dictionary of the Oromo language ***Galla-Italiano and Italiano-Galla by P. Gaetano in 1939***

The first written grammar of the Oromo language was written by Karl Tustchek in 1844. Tustchek learned Oromiffa from three Oromos who were sold as slaves and taken to Germany He also wrote a book entitled ***A Grammar of the Galla Language*** and published it in 1845 in Munich. Germany. Other grammar books include a big Amharic and Oromo grammar ***Lectionai Grammatcatic Promissionaries Qui Addiscere Volunt Linguam Amharicam Necnom et Linguam Oromonicam*** by a popular priest Guglielmo Massaja in 1867; ***Zur Grammatik De Galla*** by Franz Praetorius in 1893; ***An Elementary and Practical Grammar of the Galla or Oromo Language*** by A.W. Hodson and Walker in 1922; ***Grammatica di lingua Galla (Oromo)*** by M. Borella in 1939; ***Grammatica Teorica-practica della Lingua Galla*** in 1939 by M.M. Moreno; ***A Grammar of the Galla*** by W. Arnold in 1922 and ***A Galla Grammar*** by M. Nordfeldt in 1947.

In the field of translation and religious books, Onesimus Nasib made a major contribution. He translated to Oromiffa the ***New Testament*** in 1893, the ***Holy Bible*** in 1899 and wrote a Prayer book in 1887 and ***A Galla Spelling Book*** in 1894.

The British and Foreign Bible Society also undertook translation of the ***Gospels of St. Luke, St. John and The Acts*** in 1945. The Gospel according to St. John was first translated to Oromiffa by Dr. L. Krapf at the request of the British and Foreign Bible Society. These books were further reproduced by the Bible Society of Ethiopia in 1976.

Furthermore, in the field of literature Enrico Cerulli wrote "***The Folk-literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssia***" which was published in 1922. The important collection in Cerulli's folk-literature includes a large number of songs, providing examples of the Oromo modes of rhyme and scansion of great interest that are the historical traditions of the oral chronicles of the Kingdom of Guma, and an account of the Holy war of Hasan Injamo during the reign of Minelik II. This book, with a wealth of notes, is a valuable source of information for Oromo language studies Moreno, an Italian historian, who served in the Oromo country during the Italian occupation

had also written in 1935 a book entitled "***Favole e Rime Galla***," in which he gave explanation about Showa Oromo songs and proverbs.

In 1972 an Oromo student study group in Europe published an Oromo Grammar book entitled ***Hirmataa Dubbi Afaan Oromo*** using the adapted Latin alphabet. The major writing and research work on this book was done by the late Haile Fida in cooperation with the study Group. The book was a result of the long time study of the Oromo language and problems of Oromo Orthography and solved some of the major weaknesses in the Oromo grammar books published before 1972. The authors adapted the Latin alphabet to the phonology of the Oromo language by modifying some of the shapes of the letters and adding subscript and superscript diacritics; they made the distinction between short and long vowels by using single vowel letters for the former and double ones for the latter. The book brought a debate within Ethiopian and Oromo student movements abroad on language issues in Ethiopia.

Since the publication of the Oromo grammar book with the adapted Latin alphabet, there are a number of major works in the area of Oromo grammar. A drama literature "***Barra Birraan Barie***" was published by the same authors; ***A Short Course of the Oromo Language*** by Bitema Borru in 1976; Oromo Dictionary by Gene B. Gragg in 1982; ***Oromo-English Dictionary*** by Tilahun Gamta in 1989; Three books—***Oromo Folk Tales For A New Generation, Oromo Oral Treasure For New Generation, and How to Read Oromiffa and Use Its Grammar***—all by Mengesha Rikitu between 1992 and 1993.

4. Different Scripts Used for Writing in Oromiffa

This section is intended to discuss the merits and demerits of different scripts used to write in Oromiffa.

The first European to collect a few words and to make some attempts to develop sentence structure in Oromiffa was the Scottish traveller James Bruce who used the Latin alphabet in his book "***Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile***" in 1805. As with all African languages, growth of knowledge about written Oromiffa started in the nineteenth century and the Arabic alphabet was the first to be used for writing Oromiffa by the Oromos themselves. The Oromo of Wallo are known to have used the Arabic alphabet to write religious poetry in their own language since the 17th century and in the Muslim Oromo states of the Gibe region-Jimma, Gera, Gomma, Gumma, and Limmu-Ennarya, since the beginning of the 19th century. Oromiffa was the language of correspondence for all the Oromo kings and it was also the language of education in the Jimma kingdom of the state of Gera, Gomma, Gumma, and Limmu and in northern Oromia, generally known as Wallo.

The Muslim Oromos in Harar, Bale and Arssi also used the Arabic alphabet to write Oromiffa by modifying a few diacritical points. The Arabic script was used mainly to transcribe the Oromo texts of the religious poems and to write praise poems for the Muslim Saints and other religious educational and instruction materials used in the area (Andrzejewski, 1976). However, Muslim Oromo scholars produced only a very limited literature in Oromiffa for two main reasons. First, it is very difficult to read Oromiffa written in the Arabic alphabet. This is because the Arabic alphabet consists of only consonants compared to Oromiffa which has five basic vowel qualities. The importance of vowels in Oromiffa and their absence from the Arabic alphabet explains the limited scope for the expansion of written Oromiffa literature in the 19th century. The lack of vowels in Arabic also explains some of the reasons why Arabic alphabet is not suitable to be adapted for writing in Oromiffa. Secondly, the Muslim Oromo scholars had exceptionally exaggerated relevance for Arabic because Arabic is the language of the Quran. As a result, most of their religious poetry was written in Arabic instead of Oromiffa. Even some of the Oromo texts written using Oromiffa did not have a wide circulation and were restricted to the use and possession of Oromo religious leaders, preachers and Sufi masters.

A number of European also attempted to write in Oromiffa using Geez and Latin alphabet The first European who seriously tried to use Geez alphabet was a protestant missionary, Dr. J.L. Krapf. Krapf, who knew both Amharic and Oromiffa, tried to prepare religious literature using the Geez alphabet. However, he observed a number of problems with the use of Geez scripts to write in Oromiffa. Through trial and error, he discovered that Geez was unsuitable for writing Oromiffa He noted that the Geez alphabet does not include some of the major phonological distinctions in Oromiffa and fails to express some particular sounds in it. His findings was further supported by a number of studies on the writing of the Oromo languages (Cerulli, 1922; Andrzejewski noted that the Geez alphabet does not show the gemination of consonants and it is ill-fitted to represent the vowel system In the Oromo language, he argued that there are "six basic vowel qualities and in five of them three degrees of length are distinguished, thus requiring either 16 vowel symbols or six vowel symbols together with special devices for indicating three degrees of length in five of them." Cerulli (1922) who attempted to write in Oromiffa using both the Geez and Latin alphabets, expressed the shortcomings of the Geez script as follows:

> *"To express the sounds of Galla language with letters of the Ethiopic (Geez) alphabet, which express very imperfectly even the sounds of the Ethiopian language, is very near impossible. Reading Galla language written in Ethiopic alphabet is very like deciphering a secret writing."*

As a result of the weakness of the Geez alphabet Krapf (1842). Cerulli (1919) and Andrzejewski (1957) decided to use the Latin alphabet for writing in Oromiffa Apart from them Tutschek (1844), Borello (1939), Moreno (1939) Nordfeldt (1947), Foot (1913), Viterbo (1892), Gaetano (1939) Hodson and Walker (1922) all wrote their works in the adapted Latin letters.

In addition to European scholars listed above, a number of Oromo scholars also attempted to discover scripts suited for writing in the Oromo language. Outstanding among these was an Oromo national, Onesimos Nasib (popularly known as Abba Gamachis) who translated the Bible into Oromo and wrote his famous book., "The Galla Spelling Book" In his writing Onesimos used the Geez alphabet. Onesimos used the Geez alphabet while he was a protestant missionary. He lived in the Italian colony of Eritrea for many years, where he engaged himself making translation of the New Testament into Oromiffa. He was a real pioneer in Oromiffa literature His translation using the Geez alphabet with an additional glottal letter for dh is still the standard work in the field, and without doubt he was a father of Oromiffa literature.

Another Oromo national who made a tremendous contribution in the field of Oromiffa orthography and literature was Shaykh's Bakri Saphalo (see Hayward and Hassan 1981). He devised an ingenious and original system of writing as part of his attempt to overcome problems of orthography in writing Oromiffa He devised scripts which were different in forms but followed the symbol-sounds forming patterns of the Geez system Even though his scripts had serious shortcomings, which were inherited from the weakness of the Geez alphabet, it is fair to conclude from his work that the Shaykh's orthography was not a copy of one of orthographies of the area. Rather, it is a unique piece of work containing much evidence of perceptive and independent thinking (Hayward and Hassan, 1981). His invention of the Oromo orthography in 1956 was a remarkable achievement.

Other Oromo nationals who made a tremendous contribution in the field of Oromo orthography and grammar were the Oromo Students who organized themselves as the Oromo Students Study Group in Europe in 1968. The main purpose of the formation of the study group, as noted in the Groups documents was to study Oromo history, culture and language and to raise debate on Oromo issues The first task of the study Group was to study the Oromo language and develop an Oromo Orthography. The Study Group's active members were Oromo students in France, Germany, Sweden, Soviet Union, Hungary, and Yugoslavia The Group carried out intensive research on the growth and development of written Oromiffa, different scripts used in writing

Oromo and Cushitic languages, characteristics and special features of the Oromo languages, the advantages and disadvantages of using Latin and Geez alphabets, languages and language policy in Ethiopia. The study Group met regularly at branch level and an yearly annual conference to discuss the results of the research. The results of the study were later compiled and published by the Ethiopian Students Union in Europe (ESUE) for wider debate within the students movement under two titles, namely "Languages in Ethiopia" and "The growth of written Oromiffa and its implication for the development of Oromo orthography" (see Tatek, Journal of ESUE, February, 1972). The research findings in these papers concluded with supportive evidence the disadvantages of using Geez scripts and recommended the use of Latin alphabet for writing in Oromiffa. It also suggested 34 Latin letters that may be considered for adaption to write in Oromiffa. Details of this alphabet are discussed in the next section.

Following the publication of the work of the Oromo students Study Group, Oromo Students abroad started using the recommended alphabet and a number of the research reports published in ***Tatek*** were smuggled into Ethiopia to raise consciousness among Oromo scholars and nationalists. The news of the new adapted Oromiffa alphabet spread like a bush fire in Ethiopia and among the Oromos in Europe, America and Middle East. The Group further published in 1973 an Oromo Grammar Book using the recommended Latin alphabet to implement the findings of the research report and to help users of the Latin alphabet. A number of the copies were again smuggled to Oromia and thousands of copies were sold in Europe, North America and the Middle East. This development alarmed the Ethiopian Government that the new adapted alphabet and Grammar book were banned. The Haile Selassie regime and later the Mengistu regime worked hard to prevent the new adapted Latin alphabet from taking deep root among the Oromo masses in Oromia. However, the policy was challenged by the OLF throughout Oromia. The OLF declared and published its programme on October, 1974, stating as one of its objectives ' to develop the Oromo language and bring it out of the neglect that colonialism has imposed on it." To implement its programme the OLF made knowledge of Oromiffa a requirement; OLF cadres, peoples militia and the army were given lesson in Oromiffa. Latin script was adapted to write in Oromiffa and teach in the liberated areas and among Oromo in diaspora in Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia. Various educational materials were also published using the Latin alphabet and distributed in Oromia and abroad.

In general, from the materials reviewed and the observation made one can conclude that the Geez, Arabic and Latin alphabets (developed to write English, German, French and Italian Languages) were used to write in Oromiffa until Oromo Students study Group in Europe published a first class Grammar book called ***Hirmaata Dubbi Afaan Oromo*** and research reports on the Oromo orthography. None of them fit well the peculiar features of the sounds (phonology) in Oromiffa. The main deficiency of the Arabic script is the problem of vowel differentiation. The Geez scripts do not differentiate gemination of consonants and glottal stops. More over it has only seven vowels against ten for Oromiffa. Hence, it is not surprising that a number of scholars used the adapted Latin Alphabet for writing in Oromo Language.

5. What is to be Done?

The major purpose of this study is to state the present status of the written Oromo language and then suggest the task to be done in the development of the language. As shown in the previous discussion, various systems of writing were used by different authors to write the Oromo dictionaries, grammar books, Oromo literature, and to translate into Oromiffa.

It is reasonable to conclude from the above discussion written Oromiffa is of recent origin and young. As far as we know from the early work in Oromo writing, no complete convincing writing scripts and grammar handbook had been produced or published before 1972 until the Oromo Students study Group in Europe took the task to design and adapt the Latin Alphabet that is suitable

for writing in Oromiffa Their work on the Oromo alphabet and Oromo grammar demonstrated an excellent example of a piece of original work that Oromo intellectuals can achieve and opened a debate on writing in Oromiffa within Ethiopian society, Oromo organizations and individuals

We think that the study and description of any language is never complete and there is still plenty of scope for any linguist to increase our knowledge of the structure of the Oromo language, its phonetic characteristics, and dialects differences. There are very few studies on the various Oromo dialects, the characteristics of the language and the development of Oromiffa words In this field, in addition to the study of the various Oromo dialects and its distinctive features such as accent, idioms (turns of phrase), intonation (patterns of rise and fall in the speech), syntax (grammatical constructions) and other characteristics of the Oromo language, the socio-linguist might be attracted by the interaction between other Cushitic languages and Oromiffa. A lexicographer, could further probe the obviously vast resources of the language, especially the archaic vocabulary of the proverbs and poetry, or could deal with the borrowing from other languages of the region A historian could assess the Oromo manuscripts written on the Oromo Kingdoms of Jimma, Gera, Gomma, Gumma, and Limmu-Ennayra; on Bale, Harar, Arsi, Wallo regions and the Western Oromo Confederation during the Italian occupation From the point of view of history it might be rewarding to examine early Oromiffa publications listed in the bibliography for any Oromiffa words which are recorded in them This task would require a thorough knowledge of Oromiffa, German, Italian, French, Arabic, Amharic and Somali on the part of the investigator A political scientist or sociologist, can also assess the impact of the Amharanisation policy on the Oromo language in the last hundred years and he could contribute much by suggesting the way to overcome these problems The study of the Oral literature of the Oromo people and their historical traditions would also be a worthwhile pursuit with vast opportunities for research The Oromo people are known to have wealth of knowledge of Oral literature including folk tales, stories, songs and poems. Oral literature is passed on from one generation to another by elders An old man or woman in Oromia is like a library with vast wealth of books on Oromo history, culture and Oromo ways of life. However, this vast knowledge of the Oromo Oral literature which was kept and passed by elders is a very fragile treasure unless it is compiled and written down on paper. There are now many threats to the succession of memories of the people to the next generation which has been unbroken for many thousands of years War, famine, political persecution, urbanization, influence of Ethiopian education systems and Western culture, influence of different religions such as the Ethiopian Orthodox church, the Protestant religion and the adoption of Islam by some Oromos have to some extent disrupted traditional ways of life and prevented the passing-on of stories and proverbs to the next generation. There is therefore an urgent need to gather Oral literature preserved by Oromo elders from all over Oromia

There are in fact vast opportunities for research into this language, one could easily draw specific projects in any of the fields mentioned above. There is no doubt that research efforts would meet with recognition and acceptance. Millions of Oromos want to see many books on science, language, literature, history, anthropology, economics, politics, sociology, novels, religion, geography, etc produced in their language; they also want Journals and Newspapers published in Oromiffa. Oromo national dictionary, Oromo grammar books, Simple reading and educational books are urgently needed and highly demanded by the public The Oromo people are also interested to see a translation of many books to their language Added to this, there are growing interests all over the world in the cultural heritage of the Oromo people. Well edited collections of Oral literature, history of the Oromo people, science, economics, geography and religious books would certainly find an appreciative public.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the Oromo people have struggled long for the right to speak, read and write in their language. This struggle was a huge impetus for the growth of a large Oromo literature since the early 1970s. We believe the independence of Oromia and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Oromia will open the flood-gate of revolution of the

literature in Oromiffa The point that has been made in the last two decades is that what has been done so far is just the beginning and the first step in a long and tortuous journey Anyone interested in Oromiffa and concerned about the Oromo people must not neglect the task of enriching the Oromo literature

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The author is chairman of Oromo Community (U.K.). This paper contains the substance of a lecture given by the author to the members of the Union of Oromo Students in Europe (UOSE) in August 1976 and 1978 on the history of written Oromiffa and the Oromo National Orthography. A summary of the research report by the language committee, chaired by the author was published in Berlin on* ***Sagallee Oromo, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 31-35, August, 1978.* The author would like to thank Teferi Degneh, Workneh Dechassa, Asafa Jalato, Paul Baxter, and Vergina Luling for their helpful comments and suggestions on the draft version of this paper. Responsibility for the contents of the paper, however, rests entirely with the author.

A Preliminary Survey of Some of the Elements of Oromo Verbs

*by Tilahun Gamta**

In the second person, singular, imperative, in Afaan Oromo the verb sometimes ends in "-u," and sometimes in "-i."

Examples

Ammaaf deemi. Bor asumatti dhiyaahu. Go for now Report here tomorrow

A native speaker, though may not be able to explain it, unconsciously knows when an imperative ends in "-u" or in "-i." But to non-native speakers, the rule that explains this grammatical fact may not be so obvious. So he has to be made aware of this as an item for a teaching point.

The writer has carried out a research into this and other phonological/grammatical phenomena primarily for the benefit of the teachers and learners of Afaan Oromo. The entire findings are presented in Seera Afaan Oromo (SAO), a 304-page Oromo pedagogical grammar published in Finfinne in June 1995.

In this paper only a summary of the findings reported in Chapter 1 of SAO is presented. The findings are based on the analysis of the endings[1] of some 2000 verbs listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Verb Ending	No. of Verbs (example)	%	Veb (example)	Gloss
-achu	405	20.25	dubbachu	speak
-bu	47	2.35	dhabu/jibbu	lack/hate
-chu	40	2.00	____/butuchchu	exhaust
-cu	17	0.85	wacu/miiccu	shout/wash
-dhu	11	0.55	fedhu/hodhdhu	want/sew
-du	43	2.15	badu/sardu	be lost/hurry
-fu	42	2.10	rafu/kolfu	sleep/laugh
-gu	38	1.90	gogu/ergu	dry/send
-ju	11	0.55	jaju/ejju	praise/stand
-ku	18	0.90	hiiku/dhorku	untie/ban
-lu	75	3.75	lolu/____	fight/____
-mu	146	7.30	tumu/elmu	hit/milk
-nu	35	1.75	banu/kennu	open/give
-nyu	—	—	—	—
-phu	6	0.30	riphu/suphphu	hide/patch
-qu	65	3.25	maqu/dafqu	deviate/sweat
-ru	81	4.05	muru/qorru	cut/be cold
-shu	6	0.30	shishu/tolshu	fear/make
-su	645	32.25	raasu/cabsu	stir/break
-tu	28	1.40	hatu/____	steal/____
-?u	112	5.60	ka?u/rom?u	get up/shake
-wu	111	5.55	buwu/dhowwu	pick/forbid
-xu	16	0.80	fixu/____	finish/____
-yu	2	0.10	____/fayyu	____/recover
TOTAL	2000	100.00		

As can be seen in Table 1, the infinitive endings "--chu" and "-yu"[2] are never preceded by a vowel. On the other hand the infinitive endings "-lu, -tu, "xu" are never receded by a consonant. All other endings, except "-achu" and "-nyu," are preceded, in some verbs, by consonants, and in others, by vowels.

A careful observation of infinitive endings and what precedes them is very essential for predicting certain phonological and grammatical behavior of the language as discussed below.

1. "-achu" ending See SAO, pp. 96-103 for examples of verbs that end in "-achu").

Verbs that take the form "-achu" are subject to the following rules:

1.1 In the 2nd person imperative:

1.1.1 singular (sing.) positive, the "-chu" in "-achu" changes to "-dhu," i.e. "dh" geminated;

1.1.2 plural/honorific (pl.hon.), positive, the "-chu" in "achu" changes to "dhaa," i.e. "dh" geminated;

1.1.3 sing., negative, the "-chu" in "-achu" changes to "-tin"; and

1.1.4 in the 2nd person imperative pl /hon., negative, the "-chu" in "-achu" changes to "-tinaa."

Examples: taphachu to play

Positive

Ati taphadhu	Isin taphadhaa
You. sing., play	You, pl./hon., play

Negative

Ati hintaphatin	Isin hintaphatinaa
You. sing., don't play.	You, pl /hon., don't play

1.2 In the 1st person sing., declarative, the verb forms with "- achu" change the "-chu" to geminated "-dh-" in all tenses except in the present and progressive and the past progressive.

Examples:

An nan/	nin taphaadha	// taphadhe
I play/	will play	// I played

An taphadhenjira//ture. I have// had played
An taphadheera I have played

An taphachaan[4]jira//ture OR

An taphachuuttan/taphachuuttin jira//ture.
I am//was playing

1.3 In any:

1.3.1. 2nd person, sing. pronoun;

1.3.2. 2nd person pl hon.; and

1.3.3. in any 3rd person, sing., pron/noun, feminine (fem.), the "-chu" changes to geminated "-tt-" in all tenses except in the progressive tenses See SAO, pp 31-35 for the various forms of "bitachu" and "bitu."

Example: taphachu to play.

TABLE 2

Ati **you, sing.**	**Isin** **You, pl./hon.**	**Iseen/Caaltuun** **She/Mary**
ni taphatta play /will play.	ni taphattu. play/will play.	ni taphatti. plays/will play.
ni taphatte, played	ni taphattan. played.	ni taphatte played.
taphatte jirta//turte have/had played	taphattani jirtu//turtan have //had played	taphatte jirti//turte. is//was playing
OR	OR	OR
taphateeta have played.	taphattanittu. have played.	taphatteetti has played.
taphachaa jirta//turte. are//were playing	taphachaa jirtu// turtan. are//were playing	taphachaa jirti// turte. is//was playing
OR	OR	OR
taphachuutti jirta//turte. are//were playing	taphachuutti jirtu//turtan. are//were playing.	taphachuutti jirti// turte. is//was playing.

2. Verbs that have their infinitives in forms other than "-achu" can be divided into three types.
   Type A: Those that end in "-bu, -cu, -du, -gu, -ju -phu, -qu, -tu, -xu"
   Type B: Those that end in "-chu, -dhu, -fu, -ku, -lu, -mu, -nu, -ru, -shu, -su, -yu"
   Type C: Those that end in "-ʔu, -wu"

In type A, in the 2nd person, sing /pl /hon ; and in the 3rd person, sing , fem , pron /noun, the declarative, interrogative, and the negative of, for instance.

2.1 "-b adds 'd" and becomes "-bd" in all tenses except in the progressives. This rule obtains only when type a endings are preceded by a vowel. See Table 2 below for the different forms of "sobu ' to lie.

TABLE 3
Illustration of Type A using "sobu"

Ati you, sing.	Isin you, pl./hon.	Iseen/Caaltuun She/Mary
ni sobda//sobde lie/will lie//lied	ni sobdu//sobdan lie/will lie//lied	ni sobddi//sobde lied/will lie//lied
sobde jirta//turte have//had lied	sobdani jirtu/turtan have//had lied	sobdee jirti//turte has//had lied
sobdeetta have lied	sobdaniittu have lied	sobdeetti has lied
sobaa jirta//turte sobuutti jirta//turte are//were lying	sobaa jirtu//turtan sobuuttii jirtu//turtan are//were lying	sobaa jirti//turte sobuutti jirti//turte is//was lying
Negative **a. Declarative**		
hinsobdu//hinsobn e[6] don't/won't//didn't lie	hinsobdanu//hinsobne don't/won't//didn't lie	hinsobdu//hinsobne doesn't/won't//didn't lie
sobaa hinjirtu//hinturre Sobuutti hinjirtu/hinturre are/were not lying	sobaa hinjirtanu//hinturre sobuutti hinjirtanu/hinturre are//were not lying	sobaa hinjirtu//hinturre sobuutti hinjirtu hinturre isn't//wasn't lying
Interrogative For the interrogative double the final vowel and in writing put the question mark In speech, the same thing is indicated by rising intonation.		

Similarly, i.e Similar to "-bu,"	Example
"-cu" adds "c" and becomes "cc"	wacca/waccu/wacci
"-du" adds "d" and becomes "dd"	badda/baddu/baddi
"-gu" adds "d" and becomes "gd"	gogde/gogdu/gogde
"-ju" adds "j" and becomes "jj"	jajja/jajju/jajji
"-ph" adds "x" and becomes "phx"	riphxa/riphxu/riphxi
"-qu" adds "x" and becomes "qx"	naqxa/naqxu/naqxi
"-tu" adds "t" and becomes "tt"	hatta/hattu/hatti
"-xu" adds "x" and becomes "xx"	fixxe/fixxu/fixxi

As already stated, the rules applying here obtain when Type A endings are preceded by a vowel only. The validity of this statement can be checked by substituting each of the examples given above (i.e wacu - fixu) for "sobu," conjugated in detail in Table 3.

2.2. When the endings in Type B,
i.e. -chu, -dhu,-fu, -ku, -lu, -mu, nu, -ru, -shu, -su[7]

2.2.1 A vowel, the 2nd person sing./pl /hon.; and the 3rd person, sing. fem., noun/pron. take "-t-" in all tenses except in the progressive tenses.

2.2.2 A consonant, the 2nd person, sing /pl /hon ; and the 3rd person, sing., fem , noun/pron take "-it-" in all tenses, except in the progressive tenses, and in all the types of verb endings.

Two verbs—rafu sleep and kolfu laugh—are conjugated in Table 4 to illustrate rules 2.2.1. and 2.2.2. Also, see SAO, pp. 48-71 for examples of verb endings that are preceded, in some verbs by a vowel and, in others, by a consonant.

TABLE 4
Conjugation of rafu/kolfu to Illustrate Rules 2.2.1 & 2.2.2.

Ati **you, sing**	**Isin** **You, pl./hon.**	**Iseen/Caaltuun** **She/Mary**
ni rafta/kolfita sleep/laugh//will sleep/laugh	ni raftu/kolfitu sleep/laugh//will sleep/laugh	ni rafti/kolfiti sleeps/laughts//will sleep/laugh
ni rafte/kolfite slept/laughed	ni raftan/kolfitan slept/laughed	ni rafte/kolfite slept/laughed
rafte/kolfite//jirta//turte have//had slept/laughed	raftani/kolfitani jirtu//turtan have//had slept/laughed	rafte/kolfite jirti//turte have//had slept/laugh
rafteetta/kolfiteetta have slept/laughed	raftanittu/kolfitaniittu have slept/laughed	rafteetti/kolfiteetti has slept laughed
rafaa/kolfaa jirta//turte rafuutti/kolfuutt i jirta//turte are//were sleeping laughing	rafaa/kolfaa jirtu//turtan rafuutti//kolfuutti jirtu//turtan are//were sleeping/laughing	rafaa/kolfaa jirti//turte rafuutti/kolfuutti jirti//turte is//was sleeping/laughing.

INTERROGATIVE

For the interrogative double the final vowel and put the question mark, in writing. In speech the same thing is indicated by rising intonation, e g. ni raftaa/kolfitaa?

NEGATIVE

a. Declarative

hinraftu/hinkolfitu hinraftanu/hinkolfitanu/hinraftu/hinkolfitu
don t/won't//sleep/laugh//don't/won t//sleep/laugh//
doesn't/won t sleep/laugh

b. Interrogative

for the interrogative, double the final vowel and put the question mark in writing. In speech, the same thing is indicated by rising intonation. e g hinraftanuu/hinkolfitannu?

3 In all the three types (i.e Types A, B, C) in the 2nd person imperative, the endings take:
- 3.1. "-i ' in the sing., positive;
- 3.2. "-aa" in the pl./hon., positive;
- 3.3. "in" in the sing., negative; and
- 3.4 they take "-inaa" in the pl. hon., negative.

Example: gatu throw away; dhiisu leave it; bu?u get down.

Ati You, sing	Isin You, pl/hon
Positive	
gati dhiisi bu?i	gataa dhiisaa bu?aa
Negative	
hingatin hindhiisin hinbu?in	hingatinaa hindhiisinaa hinbu?inaa

So far the verbs having various endings have been conjugated in the 2nd person, sing/pl/hon; and in the 3rd person sing , fem., noun/pron.; and shown to be regular and consistent. Now the rules for conjugation of all verbs (i.e. marked by all types of endings) with the remaining personal pronouns/nouns in all tenses, except in the progressives, will be presented.

4. When a verb takes the form "-achu" in the:

4.1. 1st person, pl/hon[8], declarative the "-chu" in "-achu" changes to "-nn-/-tn-";

4.2 3rd person sing., noun/pron , masc. declarative, the "-chu" changes to "-t-"; and in the

4.3 3rd person noun/pron , pl/hon, declarative, the "-chu" changes to "-tan" in the past tense and to "-tu" in the present and future tenses.

Example: fudachu take for self

Nuyi ni fudhanna/fudhatna
we take/will take

Nuyi ni fudhanne/fudhatne
We took

Nuyi fudhanne/fudhatne jirra//turre
We have//had taken

Nuyi fudhanneerra/fudhatneerra
We have taken

Inni ni fudhata//fudhate
He takes/will take//took

Inni fudhate jira//ture
He has/had taken

Inni fudhateera
He has taken

Isaan/jerri ni fudhatan/fudhatan
They take/will take//took

Isaan/jerri fudhatani jiru/turan
They have//had taken

Isaan/jerri fudhataniiru.
They have taken.

5. Verbs that have their endings in forms other than "-achu," drop their final "-u" and add:

5.1. "-a/-e/-eera" in the 1st person, sing., and 3rd person, sing. masc. declarative;

5.2. "-na/-ne-neerra"[9] in the 1st person, pl., declarative;

This rule, i.e. rule 5.2 obtains when the verb ending is preceded by a vowel only. If the ending is preceded by a consonant, however, "-ina/-ine/-ineerra" is added.

5.3 "-a/-e/-eera" in the 3rd person, sing., masc., declarative; and

5.4. "-u/an/-aniiru" in the 3rd person, noun/pron, pl/hon, declarative.

Example:[10] rafu / to sleep; mormu / to oppose

An nan/nin rafa/rafe
An nan/nin morma/morme
An rafneerra/mormineerra

Nuyi ni rafna/rafne
Nuyi ni mormina/mormine
Nuyi rafneerra/mormineerra

Inni ni rafa/rafe
Inni ni morma/morme
Inni rafeera/mormeera

Issan/jerri ni rafu/rafan
Issan/jerri ni mormu/morman
Issan/jerri rafaniiru/mormaniiru

6 Type C verbs, i.e. those with "-/u/-wu" endings, are irregular in most cases. For instance, it is difficult to state, with certainty, the rules for "-awu" ending. A conugation of:

bawu get out
dawu give birth
dhawu hit
gawu reach
nawu be scared

In the 2nd person, sing., declarative, clearly illustrates the problem:

Ati ni baata / baate Ati baateetta
Ati ni deessa / deesse. Ati deesseetta
Ati ni dhoofa / dhoofte Ati dhofteetta
Ati ni geessa / geesse. Ati geesseetta
Ati ni naata / naate. Ati naateetta

No generalization is at all possible for "-?u" ending. See SAQ, pp. 66-69. The only Type C ending that warrants generalization is "aawu." If a verb ends in "-aawn" the "-aa-" in "aawu" changes to "-of-/-oyi" in the 2nd person, sing /pl/hon; 3rd person, sing., fem., and in the 1st person, plural.[11] This rule is very stable indeed. See SAQ, p. 69 for example of verbs that end in "aawu."

Example: dhibaawu / drag one's feet

Ati ni dhiboofta / dhiboofte
Ati ni dhiboyita / dhiboyite
Ati dhiboofteetta / dhiboyiteetta

Isin ni dhiboftu / dhibooftan
Isin ni dhiboyitu / dhiboyitan
Isin dhiboftaniittu / dhiboyitaniittu

Iseen ni dhiboofti / dhiboofte
Iseen ni dhiboyiti / dhiboyite
Iseen dhiboofteetti / dhiboyiteetti

Nuyi ni dhiboofna / dhiboofne
Nuyi ni dhiboyina / dhiboyine
Nuyi dhiboofneera / dhiboyineerra

7 Another form of "an, nuyi..." which also functions as a subject in a sentence is "anatu/natu, nuyitu/nutu..." which roughly means "It is I who / It is we who..." Here is the entire list of such:

an ... Natu/Anatu	"It is I who"
nuyi ... Nutu/Nuyitu	"It" we who"
ati ... Situ	"It" you, sing who"
isin ... Isintu	"It" you, pl/hon." who"
isa/noun ... Isatu/sangaatu	"It" he/the ox" who which"
isee/noun ... Iseetu/intalatu	"It" she the girl" who"
Isaan/noun ... Isaantu/Caalaa fi Caaltutu	"It" they/Caalaa and Caaltu who"
(jera)/noun Jeratu /	

When the above (Natu - Jeratu) are used:

7.1 The "-achu" forms take "-t-" in all persons in the declarative and interrogative

Example:

Anatu/Natu
Nutu
Situ
Isintu (i) taphaṭa (ii) taphaṭe
Iseetu (iii) taphaṭaa/taphachaa jira/ture[12]
Isatu (iv) taphaṭaa (v) taphaṭee?
Isaantu (vi) taphaṭaa jiraa//turee?

7.2 In the negative, the "-achu" forms change to "-nne/-tne" in the present/future tense, and to "-tin" in the past tense

Example:

Natu
Nutu
Situ
Isintu (i) hintaphanne (ii) hintaphatin

Iseetu
Isatu e.g. Isatu hintaphanne male, an nin taphadha.
Isatu hintaphatin male iseen taphatteetti
(He hasn't/didn't play/played but she has/did.)

7 3 All infinitives drop their final "-u" and add "-a/-aa/-e/-uutti,"

Example:

deemu / to go

Positive

Natu
Nutu
Situ
Isintu (i) deema (ii) deeme.
Iseetu (iii) deemaa jira (iv) deemaa ture.
Isatu deemuutti jira deemuutti ture.
Isaantu
(Jeratur)

Negative

In the negative, the final "-u" of the infinitives are replaced by "-ne ' in the present/future tenses, and by "-in" in the past tense. This rule obtains if the ending is preceded by a vowel only When an ending is preceded by a consonant, "-ine" replaces the final "-u" in the present/future tenses and in the past tense it is "-in" that replaces the final "-u."

Example: deemu / to go; sirbu / to dance
Isatu hindeemne/hinsirbine male, iseen ni deemti/sirbiti
He doesn't won't go/dance, but she does/will.

Isatu hindeemin/hinsirbin male, iseen deemteetti/sirbiteetti
He hasn't/didn't gone/go/danced/dance, but she has/did.

In conclusion, this preliminary survey has highlighted certain phonological features, which will help facilitate the teaching/learning and the writing of the language. The latter is all the more important as Afaan Oromo had, until recently, remained primarily an unwritten language. The writer hopes that future Oromo scholars would benefit from the findings of this phonological aspect of the survey and produce literature in the language. The study gives also insight into the complex nature of Oromo grammar and serves to caution future writers of it to brace themselves up for a great and difficult task ahead. In short, the findings of this survey and SAQ should not be construed as either final or complete.

End Notes

1. Thanks to qube, an Oromo alphabet adapted from Latin, it is now possible to make a phonological study of Afaan Oromo scientifically because the vowels and consonants, unlike in syllabic writing, can be easily indicated separately and distinctly.
2. Only two verbs, namely, "fayyu" and "iyyu" end in "-yu."
3 There are no verbs that end in "-nyu."

4. "-ch" is always geminated except when it is preceded by "l-." Say "bulchu" and "duuchu" in which word is "-ch" geminated?

5. Obviously, "taphatte jirta" is synocpated to "taphatteetta."

6. Not possible to say "hinsobdne" because this language does not allow the occurrence of three consonants in succession.

7. When "-su" is preceded by a vowel, the "-s" in "-su" usually changes to "-f-." For example, let us conjugate "dhiisu" and see:

Ati ni dhiifta / dhiife
Isin ni dhiiftan / dhiiftu
Iseen ni dhiifti / dhiifte.

In some dialects, the "s" is retained, e.g. ni dhiista.

8. See 1.2 for the 1st person, sing.

9. If the endings are "lu/ru, however, "-la/-le/-leerra" and "-ra/-re/reerra" are added respectively. e.g. bulu/baru; ni bulla/bulle/barra/barre/Nuyi bulleera/barreera.

10. Let the reader translate these examples into English.

11. In the 1st person, sing., in the 3rd person, masc., sing.; and in the 3rd person, pl/hon, the "w-" in "-aawu" usually changes to "-y-." Example: An nan/nin dhibaaya/dhibaaye; Isaan/Jerri ni dhibaayan. In some dialects the "-w-" is retained. Example: An nan/nin dhibaawa/dhibaawe; Inni ni dhibaawa/dhibaawe...

12. Syncopation is not possible with forms like "Anatu. Jeratu." Example: "Nutu taphateera" us ungrammatical!

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Aspects of Oromo Cultural Endowments and Their Implications for Economic Development

*Bichaka Fayissa**

1. Introduction

Numerous development studies have examined the role of economic factors including resource endowments (skilled labor, capital, entrepreneurship), technology (advances in natural sciences which reduce cost), and institutions (political and economic policies such as the system of government and property rights) in economic growth and social change (Harrod, 1939; Domar, 1946; Nurkse, 1953; Lewis, 1954; Solow, 1957; and Fei and Ranis, 1964). Almost no attention has been given by economists to the role of cultural endowments before WWII (Ruttan, 1988) Even when cultural endowments were considered, they were regarded as tastes which neither change capriciously nor differ importantly among people (Stigler and Becker, 1977) This argument was based on the notion that such an assumption permits economists to explain any differences or changes in behavior through differences in prices and income For instance, the consumption of music appreciation rises with exposure not because tastes shift in favor of music, but because its shadow price falls as skills and experience in the appreciation of music are acquired through exposure.

Postwar development economists have, however, given a prominent role to cultural endowments (social customs and beliefs, religion, language, music, art and artifacts, literature, attitudes towards work, life and change, etc.) in facilitating or constraining economic growth (Ruttan, 1988) They have accepted the body of scholarship in history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and political science which has realized that cultural endowments do exert major impacts on behavior and hence on the response in traditional societies to the opportunities associated with the modernization of community life and the possibilities of a national economic development (Hagen, 1962; Rogers, 1969; Ruttan, 1988) The purpose of this paper is to analyze some aspects of Oromo Cultural endowments (political, social, religious, and linguistic values) and their implications for economic development. The paper is divided into four parts Section one describes the meanings of three interrelated concepts: culture, economic development, and institutional change The importance of culture in shaping economic growth and development is explained in section two. Section three gives a survey of some of the aspects of Oromo culture which may facilitate its economic growth and development. The last section presents a summary and conclusion of the paper by considering some alternative strategies for speeding the pace of economic development in Oromia.

2. Cultural Endowments, Institutional Change, and Development

The anthropological meanings of culture have changed over time very little. Taylor (1871) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society. Kroeber (1948) provided similar definition of culture as Taylor (1871) which included speech, technologies, ideals, and rules, what has been learned from other people, elders, and what is added to it. Kroeber and Parsons (1958) further described culture as the totality of the human social behavior which comprises the inherited artifacts, material goods, technical processes, social customs (marriage, the work ethic), language, religious beliefs, political culture (system of government), music, arts,

and literature. These cultural variables can be expected to influence the pace of development in one way or another.

The role of culture in socio-economic development was, however, not well understood until recently. McClelland's (1961) study indicated that the variation in the economic growth of nations was closely related to the variation in the psychological attribute of the need for achievement present among members. This need for achievement motivated a person to do something better than was done before, more efficiently and quickly which contributed to economic development.

Among a number of scholars who emphasized the cognitive aspect of culture, Lewis (1957) observed that the accumulation of knowledge was an important cause of economic growth. He observed that technical knowledge about human relations, social knowledge for administering large organizations, and the creation of institutions which favor economic effort made significant contributions to development. Harbison and Myers (1964) and Schultz (1963) emphasized that education plays a key role in the improvements of skills, capacity, productivity, and economic development. They argued that education improves the quality of the human resource which is the ultimate source of the wealth of nations through increased capital accumulation, the exploitation of natural resources, and the building of social, economic and political organizations.

The importance of changes in attitudes and values for economic development was also considered by Leibenstein (1978). He indicated that a transformation in the outlook of a significant proportion of people in society from a traditional outlook (where economic actions were evaluated by non-economic criteria) to an evaluation of them in economic terms (more or less income, profit or loss) was an essential condition for economic development (Alexander and Kumaran, 1992).

At this juncture, it is important that we distinguish between economic growth and economic development. Economic growth refers to a continuous rise in the national income without any consideration of how it is divided among the citizens of a country. In other words, the national income of a country can rise without the majority of the population being affected by the increase. Clower (1967) referred to the rise in the Liberian national income in the 1960s mainly due to the production and export of cocoa by foreign plantation owners as a case of growth without development. Myrdal (1968) defines economic development as an upward transformation of the whole social system without leaving out and leaving behind any segment of society. This may be interpreted as the attainment of a number of the "modernization ideals" such as increased productivity, social and economic equalization, modern knowledge, improved institutions and attitudes, and a rationally coordinated policy measures that can remove the host of undesirable conditions in the social system that have perpetuated a state of underdevelopment (Black, 1966). In more concrete terms, economic development implies the improvement in the well being of people beyond meeting basic needs (food, shelter, clothing), improved health, nutrition, education, equitable distribution of wealth to the majority of the citizens, access to economic and political opportunities, and the empowerment of the people. We can also simply define economic development as an economic growth as measured by the rise in income plus equitable income distribution among the citizens of a country (Chenery and Syrquin (1975). We now turn our focus to the discussion of some aspects of the Oromo culture which may be conducive for the economic development of Oromia.

3. Some Economic Development Enhancing Oromo Cultural Practices

The Political Culture. Without being exhaustive, *Gada* is an Oromo democratic system of government in which people were elected to leadership positions for a limited time period, usually an eight-year term. The political and legal components of *Gada* provide for the Oromo: the right to participate in democratic self-rule at all levels, the respect for basic rights and liberties including freedom of speech the to right own private and collective property, the liberty to debate

public issues and reach consensus solutions, the procedures for elections and peaceful change of leaders every eight years, the accountability of leaders and the right to recall (bukisu) those who fail in their responsibilities, the concept of law (sera-tuma chaffe), a balanced representation of clans and lineages in gada offices, the right to make laws and regulations through their own elected officials, the resolution of conflicts according to the law by neutral and impartial bodies, and the concept of pluralism in participating in public affairs through the five *Missensa*, or parties (Legesse, 1973; Holcomb, 1993; Baissa, 1994). After the colonization of Oromia, *Gada* was publicly banned by the Ethiopian rulers despite the fact that it was practiced in varying degrees and in different parts of Oromia. Why is it necessary to refer to the gada system? It is because Gada as a Oromo political culture provides many features which are conducive for economic growth and development.

First, the right to own private property such as land will empower Oromo farmers to be more productive by ending their tenant relationship with the Ethiopian state. Although the *gebbar* system which subjected Oromos to surplus extraction by the unscrupulous *neftagnas*, or armed settlers officially ended in the 1970s, the government ownership of land policy presently adopted by the Ethiopian state will severely hamper their economic progress. The surplus can be invested to increase production, consumption, export and an improvement in the standard of living. Oromo poverty and the destitution of other groups in the Empire State of Ethiopia are, to a large extent, directly linked with the cultural deprivation resulting from legacy of the Abyssinian colonial rule (Bulcha, 1994). Thus, a system which guarantees individual liberties and choices results not only in the expansion of the productive capacity of the people, but it also broadens the horizons of individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities In other words, the *Gada* democracy (system) reduces the insecurity of Oromo peasants.

The revival of Oromo democracy can also serve as a challenge to the generalized contention of some scholars who argue that democracy and economic growth cannot be sustained in Africa because of the production crisis which arises due to the lack of adequate entrepreneurs (Chaval, 1994). This argument is far from the reality in the context of the Oromo people. The entrepreneurial qualities of the Oromo people can be demonstrated in many ways. For centuries, the Oromo people produced their own farming tools, manufactured their own clothing, respected the rule law and property rights, and engaged in the internal and external trade all of which are desirable features a democratic institution In this connection, it is interesting to note that Oromia was a prosperous country before its colonization and the suppression of its political system (*Gada*) at the turn of the 19th century as observed by the British traveller and fortune seeker, Darley (1926). Given the above facts, the prevailing poverty in Oromia today may primarily be attributed to the most repressive and backward colonial rule of the successive Abyssinian regimes.

Second, one of the most basic social values of Oromos is that of the concept of "oneness" or "*Tokumma*" (unity in aim, purpose and action), a concept for the identification of the individual with the group. This means being a part of, participating in, and obeying the group of which the individual is a part. *Tokumma* derives from and is supported by the *Gada* political system (Lipsky, 1962). *Tokumma* promotes highly developed cooperative work arrangements which may be reciprocated (the receiver supplies tools and animals or these are bought) and unreciprocated (house raising and aid to the sick or to a family that has suffered death).

In a co-operative work sharing arrangement known as "dabboo," members of the community pool their human resources to plant, harvest, erect a house for an individual by taking turns. The fact that many people assemble to perform different activities rather than an individual doing different activities alone allows for the division of labor and promotes production efficiency. Such Oromo social values of cooperation are conducive for its economic development and institutional change. In this vein, Ruttan (1988) observes that the traditional moral obligation in the Japanese village community to co-operate in a communal infrastructure maintenance has made it less costly to implement rural development programs than in societies lacking such traditions.

The mobilization of the community to build irrigation systems and other forms of overhead capital in the Peoples Republic of China is another such example.

Third, the *Gada* culture has an inherent mechanism which tends to slow down the rapid population growth reminiscent of Third World economies. Most first marriages in the Oromo family during the *Gada* era took place considerably later than those of the other ethnic groups (Lipsky, 1962, p. 83). Evidently, the late marriage derives from the *Gada*, or the age-grade system in which males prolong marriage until they had passed through the third of five eight-year grades or at about the age of twenty-four. This Oromo social culture which is rooted in its political culture has some implication for Oromo economic development in terms of slowing the rapid population growth rate. One of the major policy issues in developing countries today relates to the choice of strategies for slowing down rapid population growth. Delayed marriages which were aspects of the *Gada* system might provide a much less controversial means of reproductive control mechanism for reducing the rapid rate of population growth reminiscent of an emerging economy such as Oromia (Hartmann, 1987; Bongaarts, 1992).

Is the Oromo culture (political, economic, social, religious beliefs and outlook towards life and work) opposed to ideologies which give priority either to market forces or central planning? In his recent paper, Baxter (1993) appears to suggest that the Oromo do not have distinct property rights demarcation which is an essential aspect of a market driven economy owing to their religious background. His generalization about the Oromo economic orientation is based on his observation of a very small segment of the pastoral Borana Oromo on both the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders. He argues that the Oromos do not classify land and water, and hence territory, as material resources which people can control or use because the utilization of all natural resources has a religious dimension across all Oromos since *Waaka* is involved in them. He further asserts that the proper allocation and use of natural resources in bound by ritual activities rather than by political or territorial boundary. This statement hints at the notion that somehow the Oromo culture is not conducive for economic development based on free enterprise system in which resource allocation decisions are dependent upon the interactions of supply and demand. To quote his own words: "if an effective community is delimited by its members' participation in its ritual and social activities, then access to its common resources must be dependent on that participation, rather than simply by a member's wealth or other individual attributes. This has obvious consequences for development, in that such a mode of thought must be opposed to ideologies which give priority either to market forces or to central planning." There are a number of factors which render this generalization to be incorrect.

First, agriculture has always been the backbone of the Oromian economy for centuries. Almeida (1954) and Cecchi (1886), for instance, describe Limmu-Ennarya Jimma and Gera as the most advanced agricultural centers of the Gibe states (Oromoland). The highlands were very rich in wheat and barley while the lowlands produced cotton, coffee, maize, sorghum, lentils, teff, finger millet, and various species of plants and vegetables. Agricultural production in the Gibe states as well as the other Oromo regions in the center, west, east, and south of the empire state of Ethiopia is the main source of livelihood of the Oromo and other people. The Gibe region is also known as the most bustling center for coffee and gold trade with Saqaa as the capital. The trade routes extended from Illubabor in the west, Aleyu Amba in Shoa to Charcher in Harar. Hassen (1990) lists four reasons why Limmu-Ennarya played a dominating and decisive role in trade in the first half of the 19th century. These include: the strategic position of Limmu-Ennarya in the trade of the Gibe region, the emergence of a dynamic Oromo merchant class (Afkala), the organization of trade, and the abundance of trading goods in the region. For centuries, production and distribution of goods and services in Oromia were based on free market principles as well as on social policy. For instance, Oromos exchanged grain, farm implements and production inputs, gold and silver, hand crafts, local medicine, and means of transportation in competitive markets. These activities combine entrepreneurship as well as the practice of property rights

both of which are conducive for economic growth (Goldsmith, 1995). The less fortunate Oromos are also protected by social policy in terms of having access to the bare essentials of life such as food, clothing, and shelter. Consequently, street begging is extremely rare in Oromo culture. Second, the percent of pastoral Oromos relative to those who practice sedentary agriculture is significantly small. The present reality is also that the agricultural produce from Oromia is the major source of revenue of "Ethiopia." Therefore, to regard pastoral practices as a general characterization for the great majority Oromos somehow lacking the concepts of free markets and private ownership of valuable resources as land and water is far from the reality. Certainly, the increasing pastoral human and livestock population in the face of limited water, grazing areas, and the ensuing environmental degradation in the south and southeast pose real concern for the Oromos. Through effective programs of pasture and range management, however, the pastoral Oromos can be assisted to diversify their activities into livestock and food production for domestic consumption and export (Banja, 1994) just as the highland Fulbe in Nigeria and the Moors in North Africa (Salzman, 1982) have done.

The Oromo Language

The Oromo language known as, *Afaan Oromo*, is the second widely spoken indigenous language in Africa South of the Sahara. Only Hausa in Nigeria has a larger number of speakers (Bulcha, 1994). Despite such a stark reality, the *Amharic* language was imposed on the Oromo people as a means of cultural and economic domination. Oromos were forced to use *Amharic* in schools as a medium of instruction and in the conduct of routine administrative functions at all levels of the colonial government inside Oromia. As a result of such a policy, 1) the Oromo language, *Afaan Oromo*, remains least developed, 2) Oromo students have been disadvantaged by the requirement of the *Amharic* language for matriculation at all levels of education (elementary, secondary, and college), and 3) Oromos are subjected to the undue burden of using the *Amharic* language for administrative and legal purposes in Oromia. The Ethiopian language policy has literally reduced the Oromo culture to oral history and literature. At the expense of the development of the Oromo language which the majority of the people of the Horn speak, the Amharic language and literature have been promoted by the successive Abyssinian regimes.

Inspite of these difficulties, *Afaan Oromo* continues to be the most significant symbol of Oromo unity and identity. The restoration of the Oromo language (written, spoken, and read) is, therefore, a necessary condition for sustainable cultural and economic survival of the Oromo people. The recent adoption of *Qube afaan Oromo* (Latin script for developing Oromo alphabet), the publications of books, journals, newsletters and newspapers on Oromo are important steps in the cultural reconstruction for liberation and Development.

Oromo Religion and Oromo Economic Development.

In the economic development literature, religion can have positive or retarding effects on the economic progress and social change of a nation. In some countries where the citizens widely share the same religion, it may rally them to save, invest, work hard, become productive, and enjoy economic prosperity (Weber, 1952). In other cases where religion is the driving force behind the political and economic life of the people, or the politically dominant religion is committed to the reinforcement and promotion of the status quo, the effect of religion on economic development has been very negative (Ethiopia and Middle Eastern countries). Religious fanaticism, whatever form it takes, results in economic isolation, repression of dissenting groups and voices, wars, and in many instances, results in the excessive misallocation of human and physical resources.

In the case of Ethiopia, the Coptic Orthodox Church (the established church of the Abyssinian

empire) served the monarchy by "providing a link between the people and the king, teaching obedience to kings and authority figures, ex-communicating the kings' enemies, providing the institution of kingship with the aura of divinity (Lipsky, 1962)." In return, the Church received grants of tax free lands and other gifts as well as royal support in the establishment of new churches in the colonized territories. Unlike the highland Christians, or on occasion the lowland Muslims, the Oromo were not concerned with establishing an empire, or imposing a religious system (Ofcansky and Berry, 1993).

The fact that Oromos practice different religions suggests that their tolerance for religious pluralism. Regardless of what religion they practice, the Oromos agree on the existence of a higher being, Waqaa, whose literal meaning is God. From an economic development vantage point, religious pluralism is of an important social value and cultural endowment in that the Oromo people expend less precious human and physical resources by disengaging themselves from religious competition.

The relative success of foreign missionaries in Oromia is one illustration of Oromo openness and tolerance towards others. In addition to their religious needs, Oromo regions where missionaries operated benefited from the education and vocational training programs they were denied from the Ethiopian government. In fact, the harassment of missionaries by the Orthodox priests and the government's requirement that only *Amharic* be used as the medium of religious and academic instruction except in the initial stage of the missionary activities has greatly reduced their success in reaching more people.

Similarly, the introduction of the Green Revolution packages of improved seeds, fertilizers, farm implements, and extension services with the objective of increasing farm productivity in Oromo regions in the early 1970s was no accident. Even though the projects in Ada and Arsi were selected to benefit Amhara commercial farmers and landlords, it was also with the clear realization of the receptiveness of the Oromo people to try new ideas within the confines of a calculated risk taking. Clearly, the experiment had a smashing success in terms of increased production. However, because of the crucial missing supporting services such as an effective land tenure system, grain storage facility, rural transportation, and marketing services, the living conditions of Oromo farmers actually worsened because of their eviction by the absentee landlord *neftegnas* or armed settlers and commercial farmers.

4. Conclusion and Some Policy Implications

In this paper, we have surveyed some Oromo cultures which encompass their political, social, economic, religious beliefs, and the general Oromo way of life and their effects on the economic development prospects. The Oromo political culture encourages individual choices and ownership of private property such that resource allocation decisions, the production and distribution of goods and services are based on the market forces of demand and supply in conjunction with government intervention in the provision of social services beyond the mandate of the private sector. The traditional patterns of cooperation among the Oromo also serve as vital cultural resources on which to erect modern forms of cooperative marketing and joint farming activities. These fundamental Oromo cultural resources have been suppressed by the successive Ethiopian rulers for more than a century. In their place, only the Abyssinian history, language, art and artifacts, literature, and popular culture (music, drama, films, museums, etc.) have been developed into high culture (written).

The Oromo people are acutely aware of the importance of their cultural heritage. For instance, the Metcha Tulama Association leaders struggled for the revival of Oromo language and culture as part of their agenda (Bulcha, 1993). It is incumbent upon Oromos, especially the educated ones, to preserve and encourage the Oromo culture through planning, documentation, maintenance, publication, public events, and other educational programs.

The question now is what avenues are available to Oromos for the preservation of their culture and economic development? While there are no easy solutions, we can consider alternative strategies in order to tackle some of the problems

First and foremost, Oromos should be able to have control over their own economic resources including their land and labor. To achieve this objective, Oromos should not rule out the pursuit of peaceful and democratic means. Given the deep rooted rent seeking behavior of the old as well as the new Abyssinian rulers, however, this avenue appears to be a less effective possibility That offers the Oromos no other option than armed struggle to restore their human rights and end the vicious cycle of cultural and economic domination.

Second, the implementation of a system of land tenure in which individual farmers are entitled to an economical size landholding becomes of paramount importance for increasing agricultural productivity, income, and the standard of living of the great majority of Oromo farmers. Such landholding rights must, however, be accompanied by agricultural support services including improved seeds, fertilizers, farm implements, rural credits, and an environmentally friendly technique of production. Effective marketing services and transportation systems must also be provided to ensure that farmers rather than the middlemen enjoy the benefits of their production. The establishment of production and marketing co-operatives may be one such an alternative strategy. Oromo policy makers must, however, be cautious not to repeat the wrong policies of other Third World countries, often characterized by an urban bias and rural neglect (high farm taxes and low food prices through subsidies).

Third, investment in the human capital (education) of Oromos is the most fundamental development strategy because its impacts are multi-dimensional. Education increases the ability of individuals to demand for their rights. it enables the citizens to understand the importance of health and nutrition, it provides women with the information that will enable them to make informed decisions about their reproductive choices (population control), and it increases an individual's earnings and other opportunities. The education of women must especially be given top priority in order for the Oromos to be able to tap their least utilized scarce resource in all phases of the economic development agenda. All citizens in Oromia must have access to free universal education at the elementary and secondary levels and to a two-track curriculum (academic and vocational). Access to basic health services and adequate nutritional standards are necessary to make the nation productive.

Fourth, as critical as agricultural development is to the Oromo economy, it alone can not be sufficient to improve the standard of living. Oromia must have some industrial base to meet its domestic demands for light manufactured products. The initial emphasis may be to increase the productivity of the cottage industries along with the development of light industries such as textiles, footwear, printing, publishing, and others. Industrial expansion can help generate jobs as sectoral shifts occur from agricultural to industry. In this respect, Oromia may consider to adopt an industrial policy which promotes the indigenous ones while providing incentives for foreign direct investment without losing sight of its national interest.

Fifth, like the rest of the Horn of African states, Oromia's exports are primarily agricultural products with some mineral products. The fluctuations in the price of primary export goods has caused its terms to deteriorate. Thus, its commercial policy has to consider both import substitution and export promotion strategies for improving its exchange earnings position. Its trade policy has to also consider the removal of trade barriers and some degree of free flow of labor and capital among the Horn of African states on a reciprocal basis. Oromia, as a land locked country has to continue to cultivate good relations with its neighbors in order to find outlets for its products.

Finally, the challenges that are confronting Oromia in its efforts for political liberation, economic development, and nation building are significant. On the other hand, its potential for economic development and its market significance in the Horn of Africa are great. Oromia's neighbors and the international peace brokers will commit a grave error if they knowingly or otherwise

dismiss the cardinal fact that the peace, reconstruction, and development efforts in the Horn of Africa will not be achieved unless the Oromo issue is resolved. To provide economic, political, and moral support to the present government in the Empire state which has consistently violated the Oromo human rights is to repeat the past unpleasant history of that country. In the final analysis, Oromia can realize its development potential only by harnessing its own scarce resources and being poised and steadfast in articulating its determination to stay the course for its political and economic survival.

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Protecting Environmental Resources of Oromia

*By Gobena Huluka**

Introduction

The impact of the physical environment we all dwell in is very complex The air we breath, the water we drink, the land we raise crops and livestock on, the trees we use for buildings and firewood are the major components of our environmental resources. Our existence and well-being are dependent on the abundance and quality of these resources which are unfortunately finite and, thus, can be completely exhausted in time unless appropriate conservation measures are taken. Probably, it was the recognition of the importance and finite nature of the soil resource which prompted F D Roosevelt, one of the greatest former United States presidents to say, "The history of every nation is eventually written in the way in which it cares for its soil" during the signing of the Soil Conservation Act, on March 1, 19368. This statement was a stern warning to many nations, especially to those who abuse their soils. Past and present great world civilizations have been associated with availability of fertile soils and so will be the trends of the future.

There is no simple formula to address the complex issue of poverty alleviation and sustainable development which will protect the quality of the environment. Any formula which does not address the sustainability of resources and quality of the environment with parallel development is only a prescription for disaster Environmental-friendly sustainable development should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the well-being of the future. Many, however, doubt if the present industrial development system and environmental protection can easily reconcile That is why in 1992 the Union of Concerned Scientists has issued a "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity," signed by more than 1,600 leading scientists from more than 70 different countries including 102 Noble laureates. Their warning states that:

> "Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in a manner that we know Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about"[18]

The world has already witnessed deforestation, desertification, extinction of species and loss of biological diversity, ecosystem destruction, depletion of natural resources, rapid population growth and many other commonly recognized environmental problems. If there is to be a future without poverty and misery, a better quality of life where there will be no hunger, the contradiction of depleting natural resources without amalgamating with appropriate methods of replenishing them must be resolved very soon.

Oromia

Oromia is one of the regions in the present day Ethiopia It is located in a tropical ecosystem (2 °N to 12 °N and 34 °E to 44 °E) which is naturally very fragile The majority of crop and forest lands of the empire state of Ethiopia are located in Oromia which is about 54 percent of total area of the empire.[13] Most people of Oromia are subsistence farmers who practice various types of farming systems depending on their location and the suitability of the environment.

An Oromo farmer's right to food is, thus, dependent on the quality and sustainability of the farming physical environment and the highly unpredictable political weather map of the Ethiopian empire state. Both political stability and productive environment are essential components for a stable existence of a farmer. Natural calamities were not the only causes for much of the large scale starvation observed in the last decade in Ethiopia [12] The causes of the civil-war should be addressed by all interested parties rather than treating only the symptoms for seeking humanitarian aid as a temporary relief.

What is presented in this paper about the environment in Oromia can be true for other similar ecosystems anywhere in the world. One factor is, however, unique and sets Oromia apart from some of the other similar locations. It is the political condition of this land during the last hundred years. The Oromos have been under the yoke of feudo-colonial system since the 1890s,[5] [6] and are still fighting a protracted war for self- determination against the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) dictatorial regime that has been ruling the country since 1991.[7] This factor will probably dominate all the other commonly recognized environmental problems Oromia is facing today and the years to come.

Soil erosion, deforestation, and diminishing water availability in Oromia are environmental problems that are as universal as the forces that cause these problems. Some environmental problems can be global in nature, unlimited and unregulated by national and international boundaries. Oromia can be affected by environmental deterioration created somewhere else, and can also similarly affect others through its activities. Assume, for example, that the deforestation in most parts of the Ethiopian empire is responsible for much of the recent frequent droughts. This problem can easily spill over to countries which depend on rivers affected by the droughts. The Nile river for Egyptians, Wabi river for Somalis, the Awash river for Afars, and many others. We live in a global community and our environmental misfortunes unfortunately may spill over to the neighbors. Therefore, nations need to participate in finding acceptable common solutions to sustain the basic environmental resources before all are overwhelmed by the problems.

One of the "official" reasons for the resettlement of many northern peasants in the south and west in Ethiopia during the military regime seventeen years dictatorship was the inability of the north to provide basic resources for existence due to deforestation and severe land erosion.[12] This government sponsored resettlement program added to the increasing population of the regions and has resulted in an accelerated environmental degradation by cutting trees for housing, fuel, and farming practices which resulted in the destruction and mismanagement of the forest and soil resources.[6]

Durning (1989) noted:

> "poverty can drive ecological deterioration when desperate people over exploit their resource base, sacrificing the future to salvage the present. The cruel logic of critical short-term needs forces landless families to put rain forest plots to the torch and mountain slopes to the plow. Environmental decline, in turn, perpetuates poverty as degraded ecosystems offer diminishing yields to the poor inhabitants. A self-feeding downward spiral of economic deprivation and ecological degradation take hold"[5].

This observation can not be refuted in Oromia at present, where only a minimal or negligible improvement has been made to the farming technology, however, population growth has accelerated. Under this stressful conditions, farmers will be forced to clear forests and plough mountain slopes by violating their long held traditions.[14]

A farming system should maintain acceptable soil quality for a sustainable agricultural production through adopting good management practices and fertilization. Farming should neither be like mining, nor robbing and taxing this and the future generation their finite natural resources by depleting and deteriorating farm lands. Farming should be a sustainable business in which favorable food production and environmental protection equilibrium or harmony is maintained.

The agriculture Oromos have been practicing by balancing vegetation cover and cropping is a farming system that reflects the accumulated wisdom of the past generation.[4] It has been an agriculture where trees are preserved not only for their shade, majestic look, but for their conservation impact on their environment. It is not uncommon to see Oromos gather under a designated tree for discussions and worship. Oromia without its forests and trees will never be Oromia as we know it at present. Environmental degradation indicators such as depleted soil fertility, reduction of natural forests, waters, springs, drying of seasonal lakes, disappearance of wild animals, and the increased poverty and malnutrition of the majority of the population are too evident to awaken Oromos to do something before it is too late.

Environmental Education

There is lack of information in general and public education in particular about Oromia's environment. Basic knowledge is laking in how the environment is impacted by human activities and how a healthy environment and economic growth can be sustained. Primarily, we need to educate ourselves about our environment, its importance, finite nature, and fragility. Seasoned solutions and actions of our environmental problems demand knowledge (formal and/or informal) which comes from experience and education. The goal of Oromia's environmental education should be to increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues, and provide the public with the skills needed to make informed decisions and take responsible actions.

Oromia's environmental education should enhance critical-thinking, problem-solving, and effective decision-making skills. It should also teach individuals to weigh various sides of an environmental issue to make informed and responsible decisions. The experiences passed from generation to generation in dealing with environmental care should be taught, appreciated and refined to meet the challenges of the day. Cultural knowledge of plants, soils, and food should be made part of the Oromia environmental education. Environmental education should build and strength Oromia's human capacity to address environmental issues through training. It should also focus on more detailed and understandable national and local issues that can be communicated forcefully and frequently to arouse deep sentiments for an extended time. Environmental education should increase scientific understanding of the environment through credible research to address the urgent problems of the day. We can then design the necessary short and long term action plans and take measures which are doable, culturally acceptable, and economically viable. This creativity and multi-directional education to plan for the common good requires democratic participation of all in the community, and as such, should be their legitimate right.

Environmental Protection and Democracy

Oromia has environmental resources which are adequate for the health and well-being of its habitats, which Oromos are entitled to use. For Oromos, this right can not be seen separately from universal human rights issues. Oromos expect environmental resources which provide adequate conditions to live a quality of life with dignity and well-being. Oromos are, however, marginalized and robbed of their natural resources by exploiting Ethiopian regimes in the past and at present.

Taking appropriate actions can only happen much faster if those who will be affected by the environmental degradation have full control over the environmental resources. An Oromo who collects firewood will be the first to notice the state of the wood supply in the village, and that is also true for other related subsistence relationships. A person who is not engaged in these kinds of associations with nature should not have any right to cut a tree and/or disturb the harmony of ecosystem which probably has existed for centuries. Those who know the problem well also have a better solution than any government bureaucrat, a developer and/or a cadre, upon

the preservation of their inalienable rights. The Oromo people who have lived for centuries in harmony with their environment with minimum destruction are the most suitable to maximize any conservation effort. Oromos have a rich culture of natural resource conservation which can be optimized to meet the challenges of the day[4]

Empowering local Oromos will indubitably help to sustain the likelihood of ecological balance because they have a lot at stake with what is happening to their environment. Their quality of life today and tomorrow will be affected by the decisions and actions on their resources today. The right to make that fundamental decision is a basic democratic right which should not be denied to any Oromo. This democratic right also carries the responsibility of taking environmental-friendly actions, accountability at an individual level, and a commitment to be a good steward to the environment. The freedom to choose to care for natural resources by the present and future generations is inseparable from our own right to exist. The uncertainty of the land-owner system in Oromia is one of the factors which is contributing to the environmental degradation. Long-term planning and meaningful investment of any kind is possible only if the future of land ownership is known. The land should be given to farmers who till and care for it. That is a farmer's basic human and democratic right which will also result in a better environmental protection, than otherwise. Nothing could be more important and more noble for this generation of Oromos than to shoulder the responsibility of protecting these finite resources now and in the future. Unfortunately, protecting these basic resources may require the ultimate human sacrifice especially under undemocratic and parasitic regimes.

Warfare and Environmental Degradation

The presence of thousands of the TPLF militia in Oromia is undoubtedly accelerating the environmental degradation since they did not come to protect Oromia's environment. They were the result of war themselves and brought destruction and war to Oromia. The action of the TPLF in Oromia is not different from the environmental injustice committed by the army of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan,[7] the United states in Vietnam,[16] the Iraqi in Kuwait,[3] and the Derg in Eritrea.[17] The TPLF militia considers trees and forests in Oromia as cooperators with the Oromo liberation front guerrillas because they provide cover and camouflage during battles and shelter them during other times. Therefore, the uninvited government militia in this hostile circumstances cuts trees, burns forests and villages for military operations and provide charcoal and lumber for ethnic Tigrees.[15] The above phenomenon is very similar to Shaw's (1993) comments:

> "A more subtle and virtually invisible facet of silent-war phenomenon is "biased" allocation of natural development expenditures. By favoring groups that hold state power (often distinct ethnic groups) such biased practices foster a concentration of financial and human resources at the center, at the expense of the periphery. Over time the concentration of power takes on geographical dimensions such as the locations of hospitals, universities, and wealth, in major cities where the power and the elite prevail."[16]

Thus, it is not difficult to understand why Oromia's environmental resources have been depleting at a very alarming rate since the beginning of this century. More than 75 percent of Oromia was covered by forest before it was forcefully incorporated to the Ethiopian empire state, but it is less than 4 percent at present.[13] The values of soils eroded, springs dried, and bio-extinction as the result of this rampage and abuse of Oromia's forest by the government and feudal lords is immeasurable. Oromos have witnessed the silence death of their forests day after day at the cruel hands of abusive Ethiopian governments. What should be noted is that the destruction of forest can take place at a very fast rate. For example, clearing a hectare of a forest land can happen in few hours with modern wood cutters. When a forest is cleared, it is not only the tree

which is lost. The soil the tree roots hold together will be exposed to sun and erosion. Soil organic matter content which is a very important index of soil fertility will decrease because of tree removal. The complex rhizosphere soil microbial organisms which feed on the tree roots and its debris will die. The forest transpiration which would have modernized the local climate will expose the area to extreme weather conditions. It takes years and decades to grow indigenous forest to maturity and almost impossible to recover the multi-dimensional losses associated with its destruction.

Oromia is raped brutally both its human and environmental resources by the occupation of the TPLF whose parasitic nature is impacting every part of Oromia. It will also be naive to expect any environmental care from an occupying militia whose government is known for its unparalleled human rights violations.[1] [19] The extraction, degradation, and fragmentation of Oromia's natural resources by the TPLF government is one of the biggest losses of our time. The present situation calls for an urgent and consistent actions for conservation and sustenance of our forest resources. The destruction of forests not only destroys our environment at present, but can ecologically turn the whole region into an unhabitable barren land and will eventually accelerate desertification. We should maintain existing forests through conservation, protection, forest rehabilitation, regeneration, afforestation, and tree planting. The benefit we can harvest from ecological, biological, climatic, socio-culture and economic contribution of our forest can be immense if we act before it is too late.

Conclusion

Oromia faces very serious environmental problems. Protracted war, deforestation, soil erosion, rampage of contagious diseases and pest manifestation, loss of biodiversity, resource depletion, and rapid population growth are among the most critical and complex environmental problems of our day. The lack of environmental education, basic human rights, and democracy coupled with war and land ownership uncertainty in Oromia are accelerating environmental degradation at an alarming rate. The root causes of environmental problems in Oromia are many, and that will demand more than a single solution. Comprehensive, integrated long and short term conservation plans are needed to counterbalance the factors contributing to environmental degradations to avert the complete depletion of Oromia's natural resources.

It is time to formulate an Oromia national environmental protection action plan (ONEPAP) and reverse the deliberate destruction and neglect of our natural resources by adopting conservation measures which are both appropriate and acceptable to the people. Our people's welfare and even survival is dependent on the preservation of the environment which is under assault from all direction. The struggle for environmental protection and justice should go hand in hand with the struggle for self-determination, and democracy. Our soils, forests, water resources, and in general all our environmental resources deserve all the necessary conservation measures. Without them, our souls will be empty and our material being will disappear. Without them, we will face the inevitable realty of ecological disaster that can lead to abject poverty, human misery and catastrophe of the highest degree. This is one battle front that all should fight to win because environmental protection and justice are a must for our survival as a nation. Only and only then, will we be spared from hopelessly and helplessly witnessing the silent death of our trees, the disappearance of our springs, and the erosion of our fertile soils.

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Conquest and Resistance in the Gibe Region, 1881-1900

*by Guluma Gemeda**

Introduction

The process of Menilek's conquest of the Oromo and their resistance to the Abyssinian expansion of the late nineteenth century are not yet fully analyzed. Abbas Haji has recently outlined some of the salient features of the conquest and resistance of Arsi.[1] As far as the western (Macha) Oromo are concerned, however, scholars have so far focused more on the activities of the conquerors rather on the plight the victims of expansion.[2] The political predicament of the Oromo at the time of conquest and the nature of their response to the expansion of Shewan hegemony still need to be documented. In this regard, this paper attempts to outline the political circumstances in the Gibe region during the conquest and the internal conditions that shaped the resistance to imperial domination.

Recently, some scholars have emphasized Menilek's collaboration with the European agents and his acquisition of modern firearms to subjugate the Oromo and other communities in the south.[3] Collaboration and acquisition of European firearms have, no doubt, facilitated Menilek's expansion during the last nineteenth century. Yet, the emphasis on firearms and the collaboration with Europeans conceal the role of numerous frontier raids that the Shewans had perpetrated and the internal political situation that circumscribed the resistance of the Oromo. Besides the firearms, the Gibe Oromo were defeated as a result of repeated frontier raids and the internal leadership crisis they were faced with at the time of conquest.[4] This paper argues that the Oromo the Gibe region, who were relatively well organized by the mid-nineteenth century, fell victim to the Shewan expansion very easily because they were politically divided when they were confronted by Shewan and Gojame armies in the early 1880s.

After the initial setbacks, however, the Gibe Oromo fiercely resisted the imperial rule. Despite the collaboration of some leaders and lack of firearms, many chiefs and peasants participated in the resistance to avoid colonial domination. Besides the lack of modern firearms, the resistance was also undermined by internal leadership crisis and the nature of imperial administration thereafter. Although the major focus of the paper is the Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe valley, references are made to all the Oromo between the Gudar and the Dhidhessa rivers.

The Process of Conquest

Menilek's conquest of the Oromo and the Omotic communities—south of the Blue Nile and the Awash rivers during the last quarter of the nineteenth century followed two main patterns of colonization. In most cases, colonization was preceded by several years of raiding where the Shewan army killed women and children, and took captives, plundered domestic animals and crops. Such raids did not lead to immediate occupation of the territory, however. The soldiers often retired to their strongholds after several days of raiding. Traditionally, the raids were organized by the Shewan kings at least three times a year to obtain cattle and other resources for trade and domestic consumption.[5] Yet, the *zamacha* was not always a highly centralized operation. Some times field commanders acted with greater autonomy from the king; while individual soldiers were largely free in their treatment of the war captives. All raids, however, served the empire's general strategy. Through raiding, Shewan soldiers accumulated wealth and consolidated their power whereas the people on the frontiers of the kingdom were impoverished and weakened, and became vulnerable for more attacks.

In areas where resistance was stronger, the raids continued for several years. Where resistance was weaker and initial plundering was completed, however, permanent military garrisons (*katamas*) were established at strategic places to minimize future rebellion and to ensure continued tribute collection. Thus, disrupting social and economic life of the Oromo and the Omotic peoples, the *zamacha* facilitated the conquest and cleared the way for permanent occupation of the conquered territories by settler soldiers. Most of Menilek's conquests were accomplished in this way.

Another pattern of colonization involved total mobilization of the imperial army. In a few cases, where resistance was fierce, Menilek himself took part in the campaigns to subdue the defiant population. It was, for example, through such total mobilization that the Arsi, Harar, Kafa and Walaita were conquered.

The conquest of the Gibe region and the western Oromo territories followed largely first pattern. By the end of the 1870s, the Oromo in the Gibe valley were threatened from two directions: from the north (Gojam) and the east (Shewa). By 1880, two rival Abyssinian leaders encroached upon the Oromo lands of the Gibe valley. The king of Gojam, Takle Haimanot, dispatched his soldiers to the Gibe region in 1881. Shortly after, the Shewan king, Menilek, also sent a huge army to the same area to counter Takle Haimanot's claims.

Gojam and Shewa had long coveted the rich and fertile lands of the Gibe valley and the western Oromo territories. Holding a strategic position between the Gibe region and the ports of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, both Gojam and Shewa had benefitted from long distance trade of the nineteenth century.[6] The economic attraction of the Gibe region became more stronger with the expanding commercial networks of the late nineteenth century. Access to the trade of the Gibe valley enabled the Christian monarchs to accumulate wealth and to pay for European firearms that they needed for the military expansions to the south.

The first Oromo victims were those who lived adjacent Gojam and Shewa. The Guduru and Liban Ormo, who lived on southern edges of the Blue Nile, had long encounter with the lords of Gojam. In the nineteenth century, they occasionally faced assaults from the rulers of Gojam whose military campaigns were motivated mainly by the desire to feed their army, to scape from the ravages of rival Christian lords in the north and to secure the trade route leading to the Gibe valley.[7] Although Gojam's lords hoped to subjugate Guduru, their efforts were frustrated by the strong resistance they encountered until the 1870s.[8] Both *Dajazmach* Goshu who became a powerful chief of Gojam in the 1830s, and his son, *Dajazmach* Birru, failed to conquer the Oromo lands south of the Blue Nile. In the 1870s, however, *Ras* Adal (later King Takle Haimanot) took advantage of the political rivalry between two Oromo chiefs, Jibat Bulsho and Galata Gama, in Guduru. Adal's army first entered into Guduru by supporting Jibat's claims to power.[9]

Thus, by exploiting the rivalry between the two chief in Gudru, *Ras* Adal consolidated his power over the Oromo south of the Blue Nile. His soldiers established a series of garrisons in Guduru and carried out military expeditions into Gendeberet, Amuru, Gidda, Horo and Jimma-Rare. The ultimate goal of controlling the Gibe region was, however, delayed due to the continued resistance by the Oromo throughout the region. Nearly a decade after his army crossed the Blue Nile, *Ras* Adal was unable move beyond Guduru. Even in Guduru, the domination of Gojam remained precarious. When Antonio Cecchi, an Italian explorer, passed through the region in 1880, Adal's soldiers were largely confined only their garrisons in Guduru.[10]

Yet, Gojam was not alone in the drive to conquer the Gibe valley. At the same time, the Gibe Oromo were threatened from the east by Menilek's Shewan army. Like the kings of Gojam, Shewan monarchs had a long ambition to dominate the Oromo lands west of the upper Awash river. They, however, faced the same kind of the resistance that those from Gojam experienced in Guduru. For more than two decades after the death of Sahle Sellassie in 1847, Shewan control over the Tulama Oromo remained nominal.[11] The situation changed only after Menilek came to power in 1865.

Shortly after he came to power, Menilek renewed the expansionist policy of his grandfather.

Determined to acquire the imperial throne, he initially focused more on the control of Wollo. Then, the conquest of the southern territories was entrusted to *Ras* Gobana, a high ranking Oromo general who joined the Shewan king at a very early stage. Acting on Menilek's behalf, Gobana began his campaigns west of the upper Awash river in the late 1860s. With twenty to thirty thousand relatively well armed soldiers, and using his Oromo identity, the general fought the Oromo between the Upper Awash and the Gibe rivers and forced them to pay tribute to the Shewan king. Yet, despite his advantages in firearms, his movement towards the Gibe region was very slow. By the end of the 1870s, Gobana's advance guard under the leadership of *Fitawrari* Garedew, was seriously challenged by the Nonno, Amaya and Liban Oromos around the head waters of the Guder and Walga rivers.

Thus, by the end of the 1870s, neither Menilek nor Takle Haimanot was able to conquer the Gibe region. The situation changed dramatically after 1880. The breakthrough came in 1881 when Emperor Yohannes IV crowned *Ras* Adal as the "King Takle Haimanot of Gojam and Kafa." Takle Haimanot then knew that his title to Kafa could be realized only if he had conquered the Gibe region. For this reason, he took a new initiative to conquer the region immediately after his coronation. Early in 1881, he dispatched his general, *Ras* Darassu, to the Gibe valley. Together with the soldiers already stationed in Guduru, Darassu then marched towards Kafa. And on his way to the south, he forced the leaders of the Leqqa-Billo and Nonno to pay tribute before he entered Jimma through Abalti.

Takle Haimanot's decision to conquer and occupy the Gibe region short-cut Menilek's plan for the same area. Upon learning Darassu's campaign in the Gibe valley, Menilek ordered *Ras* Gobana to march to Kafa immediately to take over the territory which was claimed by the king of Gojam. The rivalry between the two Abyssinian lords over the western Oromo lands was finally resolved at the battle of Embabo on June 6, 1882, when Menilek defeated and took Takle Haimanot prisoner. The Shewan king then directly annexed the western Oromo lands.

Internal Politics

Oromo kings of the Gibe valley were very well aware of the imminent invasion from both Gojam and Shewa by the end of the 1870s. Yet, they were not adequately prepared to halt the enemy's advance. Their reaction to the conquest of Gojam and Shewa was circumscribed by internal politics that prevailed in the region in the 1860s and 1870s. First, on the eve of the conquest, all Oromo chiefs were engaged in internal rivalry over the control of agricultural lands, local market centers, trade and trade routes.[12] According to Cardinal Massaia, a Catholic missionary who lived in Guduru in the 1850s, instead of forming a united front "against the enemy, the various [Oromo] kingdoms began to fight among themselves. . . . Their disunity not only undermined their strength, but also invited and facilitated the coming of the invaders who devastated their land."[13]

Secondly, the Gibe kingdoms faced a crisis of leadership throughout the 1860s and 1870s. As Gojam and Shewa converged upon the region, the Gibe kingdoms were unable to overcome internal political strife. The case of Gera, for example, reveals a major political problem facing other kingdoms at the time. Gera, one of the Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe region, was then ruled by a queen mother. After 1870, when she acted on behalf of her young son, the queen alienated court officials and warriors who refused to endorse her decisions. The disagreement between her and the state council led to the flight of some warriors to the neighboring kingdoms. Similarly, Gomma, another kingdom, had the same problem in the early 1880s. After Abba Boqa, a young prince, came to power in 1878, actual political decisions were made by his mother, *Genne* Dagoyitti. The queen mother was, however, unpopular with the *qoppo* (state council). For this reason, she and her son were exiled to Kafa in 1882. The council then selected Abba Dula, a popular warrior, as a king. Abba Dula was son of Abba Qerreppe who advised three kings of Gomma from the 1850s to the 1870s. By selecting such popular warrior, the council

hoped to reinvigorate the leadership. Contrary to the council's expectations, Abba Dula failed to provide a decisive leadership when the kingdom was attacked by Meneilek's army. Instead of defending the kingdom, he quarreled with the council and joined the Shewan army during the final stage of the conquest of the kingdom in 1886.[14]

The kingdom of Limmu, too, faced leadership crisis in the 1860s and 1870s. After the death of Abba Bogibo I in 1861, Limmu did not have a leader of his caliber. The successor, Abba Bulgu was rather "inept, superstitious and fanatical" king. Lacking a wise and balanced judgement like his father, Abba Bulgu alienated large number of his subjects who were not converted to Islam. By declaring himself as the "father of the Muslims," he offended the mass of non-Muslim population. Abba Bogibo II, who came to power at a critical moment in 1882, did very little to change the weakened leadership. Instead of reconciling the internal differences, he further antagonized some warriors and influential families. To maintain royal monopoly over the coffee trade, he attacked some farmers who grew coffee successfully. Accusing them of plotting against him, Abba Bogibo removed some families from Sappa in the southwest and settled them in the northern lowlands of Limmu. Thus, according to Cardinal Massaia, Limmu "possessed no glory, no importance, either material or commercial, nor [did it] enjoy prosperity" after the death of Abba Bogibo I.[15] The kingdom lost control of some fertile lands to Jimma in the south; and was harassed by Nonno and Hanna tribes in the east and northwest.[16]

Among the Gibe kingdoms, only Jimma and Guma were relatively successful in the 1860s and 1870s. In Jimma, the warriors rallied around Sultan Abba Jifar II (r 1878-1930) during the period of crisis. Internally more united, Jimma fought successful wars in the 1870s and acquired more fertile lands and important trading centers in the Gibe valley. Abba Jifar II was assisted by influential and experienced councilors at his Jiran court.

Like Jimma, Guma also remained a strong kingdom in the 1870s. Situated in a strategic location between the gold bearing region of the Birbir valley, the coffee forests of the Gabba, the ivory rich lowlands of the Baro in the west, and the major market centers of the Gibe valley in the east, Guma profited from the expanding commercial networks of the second half of the nineteenth century. Both Jimma and Guma were relatively in a better position to put up a strong challenge to Abyssinian conquest of the 1880s.

Despite their military strength in the 1870s, however, Guma and Jimma had many potential enemies in the area. Gera and Gomma feared the consolidation of Jimma's power. Indeed, Jimma was at war with Gera in 1880.[17] Guma too had its own problems. The chiefs who controlled the territory between the Dhidhessa and the Birbir rivers feared Guma's ambitions over the coffee forests of the Gabba valley and the gold market of Dappo. For this reason, they rallied around Hanna when it was attacked by Guma in the early 1880s. Such internal rivalry among the Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe region, undermined their unity and military effectiveness when they were all confronted by the Abyssinian army.

Resistance

Despite the internal dissensions, however, they all attempted to halt the invasion of Gojam and Shewa in 1881-82. Nevertheless, their efforts were uncoordinated. For example, expecting assistance from the rest of the Gibe kingdoms, Sultan Abba Jifar of Jimma was initially determined to fought Takle Haimanot's soldiers. He collected some soldiers and marched towards the eastern borders of Jimma to fight the Gojam army. The elders of Jimma were, however, opposed to the sultan's plan. Thus, Abba Jifar was forced to surrender and pay tribute to Takle Haimanot. Besides the internal opposition, his decision was influenced by the slow response of Jimma's neighbors. Although they had previously made a pact to assist each other in the event of attack from Gojam or Shewa, Jimma's neighbors were reluctant to come to her rescue. Only Guma responded positively mainly because of her own political ambitions and the marriage alliance with Jimma.

Unfortunately, even Guma's assistance came too late.[18]

Assessing the kingdom's weaker position and the opposition of the elders, Abba Jifar had decided to submit to *Ras* Darassu shortly before the arrival of Guma's forces. The submission of Jimma was a serious blow to the rest of the Gibe kingdoms. The king of Gumma, Abba Jobir, and his brother, Abba Digga, were reportedly upset by Abba Jifar's decision to submit. Even after he learned Jimma's submission, Abba Digga urged his brother to mobilize Guma's army to block *Ras* Darassu's advance to the west. Unfortunately, poorly armed and lacking support from its neighbors, Guma too failed to stop the tide of conquest. After a fierce battle at Bakkee Ganji, Guma was defeated; Abba Jobir and Abba Digga were killed in the battle and the kingdom was briefly occupied by Takle Haimanot's army. Similarly, the other Gibe states put up uncoordinated resistance before they were defeated by the Gojam and the Shewan army. After Menilek's victory at Embabo, all the Gibe kingdoms were forced to pay tribute to the Shewan king.

By peaceful submission to Menilek, Abba Jifar negotiated obtained a special autonomy for Jimma. The details of his agreement with were not clear. It is, however, widely believed that Menilek allowed Abba Jifar to retain his position as king of Jimma as far as the sultan paid annual tribute directly to the imperial court. Menilek also assured Abba Jifar that no imperial soldiers would be garrisoned in Jimma. He further promised the sultan to respect Jimma's Islamic religion and refrain from building churches and sending priests to the kingdom. Jimma remained an autonomous kingdom until 1932 when Haile Sellassie revoked the agreement and directly annexed it.

Elsewhere in the Gibe region the conquest led to the imposition of the *gabbar* system.[19] Yet, the conquered population continued to challenge the imperial system. The resistance in the 1880s and 1890s took different forms: ranging from uncoordinated, isolated assault on the imperial soldiers to organized, large scale rebellion.[20] In 1882, immediately after Embabo, the Oromo harassed Menilek's soldiers throughout the Gibe region. The Chabo Oromo, for example, repulsed *Ras* Gobana army in July-August 1882. The rebellion of Chabo was still active in 1883 when Gobana campaigned there with the assistance of Habte Giorgis.[21] In 1884, Limmu and Nonno threatened to cut-off the communication to Entoto. Nonno fought bravely until their leader, Dambi Jiga, was taken prisoner. In the same year, more Oromo chiefs joined the rebellion.[22] By the end of 1884, the resistance movement was spreading to the neighboring areas. Although poorly armed and loosely organized, the rebellion almost paralyzed the Shewan administration in the region.

Thus, Gobana was obviously frustrated by the widespread resistance. In 1884 he returned to the eastern Leqqa and the Sibu territories where his forces, led by three Nadew bothers: Tessema, Dasta and Dilnessa, were besieged. The three brothers were defeated in a battle near the Wamma river. Dasta died in the battle, while Tessema and Dilnessa retreated to the east towards the Gudar river. The retreating Shewan forces were attacked by the Nonno.

The widespread rebellion of 1883-4 disrupted the imperial administration and the collection of tributes. Menilek's soldiers lost control of the labor and surpluses of the indigenous people. And without regular tribute Menilek's soldiers were threatened by famine. The situation was so serious that Menelik himself was forced take the field against the rebellious communities in October 1885.[23]

It was only when they were overwhelmed by the huge Shewan reinforcement and weakened by internal dissension that the Oromo surrendered by the end of 1885. Yet, the resistance did not end without some consequences. The restructuring of the administration of the region and the appointment of new Shewan governors were obviously related to the resistance of 1883-84.

After returning to Entoto in 1885, Menilek summoned Gobana to a meeting and declared his appointment of new governors over the newly conquered Gibe region.[24] Besides the desire to subdue the Oromo, the restructured imperial administration of 1886 was partly aimed at curbing the growing influence of *Ras* Gobana. By the middle of the 1880s, the *Ras* was regarded as the

richest and the most powerful person in the empire. His court at Falle, about 35 kilometers west of Entoto, was as large as that of Menilek. Although converted to Christianity, Gobana remained loyal to traditional religion of the Oromo. Thus, Menilek was probably worried about the general's growing power particularly after he conquered the Gibe region.[25] Also it was not unlikely that Menilek feared that the *ras* could forge an alliance with the conquered Oromo chiefs and defy his position. Moreover, as Gobana's wealth and political fortune expanded, his Amhara subordinates became envious of his power. Thus, according to the new arrangement, Gobana lost control of part of the territory that he had helped Menilek to conquer. By taking away some provinces that the *ras* had conquered for him, Menilek obviously undercut Gobana's political power and chances of rebellion.

After 1885, Gobana was clearly less interested in the military campaigns west of Dhidhessa.[26] Although the references are not quite clear, Triulzi has argued that Gobana campaigned west of the Dhidhessa in 1886. Yet, he was mostly assigned to guard the palace between early 1886 and late 1888. Thus, it is not clear how often Gobana visited the Gibe region after 1885. It was only when the Mahadist forces penetrated into western Wollega in 1888 that he marched to the west of the Dhidessa.[27]

Besides the administrative changes, Menilek attempted to minimize the resistance of western Oromo through effective utilization dissensions among the Oromo chiefs. By coopting and rewarding the collaborators and fighting and punishing the defiant leaders, he weakened the resistance. It is no surprise that some chiefs seized the opportunity to settle old scores vis- a-vis their immediate rivals. It was, however, on the garrisoned army that Menilek relied most. Anticipating further challenges, the new Amhara governors arrived with huge armies in 1886.

Wolde Giorgis went to Limmu with about 16-20,000 soldiers while Tessema and Basha went to Guma and Gommma, respectively, with about 15,000 each. Limmu which was already exhausted by the border raids in the early 1880s appeared calm when Wolde Giorgis arrived. The establishment of a garrison at Kossa proceeded with less violence. In Gomma, however, the challenge was fierce. Although the leadership was divided, Gomma was still able to put up strong resistance to Basha's army. The crisis gave rise to new leadership. Abba Bora, who had been living in exile in Kafa for a long time, emerged as a popular leader in Gomma. He appealed to the young warriors of the kingdom to stop the Shewan advance. With a relatively small army, Goma fought *Dajazmach* Basha's near the town of Agaro. The outcome of the encounter was disastrous for both sides. *Dajazmach* Basha is reported to have lost about one thousand dead while Gomma lost about four hundred, including Abba Bora. After heavy losses Basha retreated towards Limmu. He returned some months later with more reinforcements. The second time around, Basha defeated Gomma's small army and established an administrative center at Sayo (renamed Managasha).

Far from being subservient, the conquered people continued the resistance even after the administrative changes of 1886 and the arrival of more reinforcements. The harsh and repressive rule of the Shewan army very often provoked rebellion in many places. Encouraged probably by the imminent departure of the Shewan army for a campaign in the north in 1888,[28] the Oromo throughout the Gibe region tried to end the occupation. Jules Borelli, French explorer who travelled throughout the Gibe region in 1887-8, observed the widespread disturbances in Gomma, Hagalo, Nonno and Limmu. The skirmishes between the Shewan army and Nonno Oromo in March 1888 had again threatened to cut off the communication between the imperial court at Entoto and the Gibe region.[29] It was in Gomma that the rebellion seriously threatened the Shewan army. Here, a rebellion broke-out in 1888 after a Shewan soldier mistreated a warrior called Abba Bosso. The people of Gomma, who had a good reason to rebel, responded to Abba Bosso's call to arms. They attacked Basha's army everywhere and confined them into their camps. The Shewans were rescued a few months later by a reinforcement of Wolde Giorgis's soldiers from Limmu. Then, Basha was replaced by Demissew Mekonnen, another Shewan general who finally subdued the

rebellion and ruled the province for the next twelve years.

Realizing the failure of the previous governor, Demissew tried to coopt Gomma's elite into the administration of the region. Subsequently, although the resistance failed to achieve its larger objectives, the exploitation of the peasants in Gomma was relatively weakened by the events of the late 1880s.

Rebellion also took place in Limmu in 1888-90. The revolt broke-out in February 1888, shortly after Wolde Giorgis left the area for a campaign in the north.[30] Yet, the situation was still unsettled long after the governor returned to the province with more reinforcement in the late 1889 or early 1890.

Unfortunately, the resistance in Limmu was eventually crushed when the agricultural productivity was disrupted by the occupation of overwhelming army. Limmu was later on used as base by Wolde Giorgis to conquer the kingdom of Kafa in 1897.

It was, however, rebellion in Guma that relatively well organized and utilized Islam as unifying ideology. The resistance in Guma was led Firrisa Abba Foggii, a member of the pre-conquest ruling dynasty. When Guma was occupied in the 1880s, Firrisa went into exile. Together with Shaikh Abdulrehman, a native of Gomma, Firrisa lived at Massawa for a long time. During the late 1890s, however, he organized a small army and returned to Guma to carry out the resistance against the settlers.

Immediately on his arrival in Guma, Firrisa called upon the people of Guma to rise against the imperial soldiers. To isolate the Christian army, he emphasized the religious nature of the resistance movement. To attracted the islamized peasants, he characterized the movement as a *jihad*, religious holy war.[32] Thus using Islam as an ideology, Firrisa tried to drive the Christian soldiers away from Guma. Not surprising, the strategy helped him to win some victories during the initial engagements. In the long run, however, the resistance failed mainly for two reasons. First, Islam appealed only to islamized peasants in the Gibe region, while the majority of the non-Muslim population remained reluctant to join the rebellion. Secondly, even the elites of Guma were not totally united behind Firrisa's leadership. Some joined the resistance enthusiastically while others remained uncommitted.[33]

Obviously, it was the limited appeal of Islam as an unifying ideology and the dissension among the elites that undermined Firrisa's courageous effort. After about three years of fighting, Firrisa was finally captured and his army dispersed. He was reported killed by *Ras* Tessema's order. Then, with consolidation of the imperial administration, open armed resistance was largely weakened. Yet, no doubt, resistance continued in less dramatic forms throughout the early twentieth century.

Conclusion

This study has emphasized the role of the frontier raids during Meneilek's conquest of the western Oromo. The *zamacha* destroyed Oromo defense systems and exposed them to more attacks. Secondly, internal strife and rivalry among western Oromo leaders also undermined the resistance to both Gojam and Shewa in the 1880s. The disasterous consequences of disunity is probably a lesson that the present generation of Oromo leaders could not afford to ignore.

Moreover, this study has indicated how resistance, even when it failed to avert the imposition of imperial rule, has mitigated the economic exploitation and repressive imperial administration. In Gomma, for example, where the rebellion led to the removal of the first Shewan governor, the indigenous elite remained strong and acted as important intermediaries between the settler soldiers and the peasantry. In Limmu, on the other hand, the suppression of the resistance in the 1890s and the heavy concentration of the *naftagna* almost wiped out the indigenous elite. Obviously, the exploitation of the peasantry was harsher in Limmu than in the neighboring areas.

End Notes

1. Abbas Haji, "Arsi Oromo Political and Military Resistance Against the Shoan Colonial Conquest (1881-6)," *Journal of Oromo Studies, II*: 1&2 (Winter & Summer), pp.1-21; see also his doctoral dissertation: "Les Oromo Arsi: continuité et évolution des institutions d'une société éthiopienne," University of Paris, 1990.

2. See R.A. Caulk, "Territorial Competition and the Battle of Embabo, 1882" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, XIII:1 (1975), pp. 64-88; Alessandro Triulzi, "The Background to Ras Gobäna's Expeditions to Western Wällägga in 1886-1888: A Review of the Evidence," in *Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies, 1973*, ed. by Harold G. Marcus (East Lansing: African Studies Center, 1975), pp. 143-156; Harold G. Marcus, "Motives, Methods and Some Results of Unification of Ethiopia during the Reign of Menelik II," in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Abada, 1966* (Addis Ababa, 1969), pp.269-280; Terrefe Wold Tsadik, "The Unification of Ethiopia (1880-1935)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, VI: 1 (1968), 73-86.

3. Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa* (Trenton, The Red Sea Press, 1990); Asafa Jalata, *Oromia and Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethno-National Conflict, 1868-1992* (London, Lynne Reimer, 1993); idem., "The Modern World Economy, Ethiopian Settler Colonialism and the Oromos, 1880s-1930s," *Horn of Africa* XIII:3&4, XIV:1&2 (1991), pp.59-80;

4. In the case of the European colonization of African communities in the late nineteenth century, some Africanists have pointed how the conquest took mostly through "a slow process of infiltration" rather than crushing military victories with superior firearms. Roland Oliver, *The African Experience* (New York, Harper Collins, 1992) p.188.

5. Ed Simone, "The Amhara Military Expeditions against the Shawa Galla (1800-1850): A Reappraisal," in *Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies*, pp.135-141

6. On the long distance trade of the nineteenth century and the share of Gojam and Shewa from this trade, see Charles T. Beke, *Letters on the Commerce and Politics of Abyssinia and Other parts of Eastern Africa* (London, 1852); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa*, 2vols (Rome, 1886).

7. Arnuald d'Abbadie, *Douz Ans de Sejour dans le Haute-Ethiopie* (Abyssinie) (Vatican City, 1980); Alessandro Triulzi, "The Gurdu Oromo and Their Neighbors in the two Generations before the Battle of Embado," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, XIII:1 (175), 47-63.

8. Alessandro Triulzi, "The Gudru Oromo."

9. On the political situation in Guduru during the third quarter of the 19th century, see Guglielmo Massaia, *I miei trantacenque anni di missione nell' alta Etiopia*, 12 vols. (Rome: Tipografica Manuzio, 1921-27; see also, A. Triulzi, "The Gudru Oromo," pp. 47-63.

10. Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila*.

11. Most of the Tulama (central) Oromo were conquered by Sahle Sellassie in the 1820s and 1830s. See W.C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, 3 vols (London, 1844); Rochet d'Héricourt, *Voyage sur la côte de la Mer Rouge, dans le pays d'Adel et le royaume de Choa* (Paris, 1841).

12. See Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia, A History, 1570-1861* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 162-195; Guluma Gemeda, "Land, Agriculture and Society in the Gibe Region: Southwestern Ethiopia, c.1850-1974," Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1996, pp. 141-144.

13. G. Massaia, *I Miei*, IV, p.17.

14. Interview: *Fitawrari* Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, 8.29.82. It is not clear whether Abba Dula voluntarily joined the Shewan army or detained by Menilek in 1886 when he went to Entoto to pay tribute. Henry Audon, French explorer, met Abba Dula and his party at Entoto in 1886. Henry Audon, "Voyage au Choa (Abyssinie méridionale)," *Le Tour de Monde*, 58 (1889), pp.146-147.

15. G. Massaia, *I Miei*, VI, p.13.

16. Enrico Cerulli, "Folk Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia." *Harvard African Studies*, III (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), p.35.

17. Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila;* Jules Borelli, Éthiopie Méridionale (Paris, 1890).

18. See my M.A. thesis, "Gomma and Limmu: The Process of State Formation Among the Oromo in the Gibe Region, c.1750-1889," Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1984.

19. The *Gabbar system, see Charles McClellan, "Perspectives on the Neftenya-Gabbar System: The Darasa, Ethiopia," Africa*, 33 (1978), 426-440.

20. The details of such resistance still need be analyzed. It is only through careful collection and analysis oral traditions that we may be able to draw some general conclusions and appreciate the immediate and long term impact of the resistance on the western Oromo society and on the imperial administration. Based partly on oral sources, this paper outlines only the major cases of resistance between 1882 and 1900.

21. Habte Giorgis was a former captive who was taken prisoner from the Chabo area probably in the early 1860s. Later he became a canny politician and trusted officer at Menilek's court. He served as Minister of War from 1907 to 1926.

22. Oromo chiefs who joined the resistance were Garbi Jillo of Leqqa-Billo, Tucho Danno of Leqqa-Arjo, Genda Bushen of Sibu-Sire and Ligdi Bakare of Leqa-Naqamte. Ligdi's bother, Moreda remained loyal to Menilek mainly due to his rivalry with the other chiefs. The Nonno were led by Mardasa Konche and Turi Jagan.

23. A. Triulzi, "Ras Gobäna's Expeditions," p. 145.

24. After the restructuring, Gobana was allowed to retain only a portion of the territory. The rest the conquered territory was distributed to Menilek's closest relatives: *Fitawrari* Takle Mariam, *Dejazmach* Haile Miriam (Nonno), *Dajazmach* Wold Giorgis (Limmu), *Dejazmach* Basha (Gomma and Gera).

25. Jules Borelli, *Ethiopie Méridionale*, p. 150.

26. A. Triulzi, "Ras Gobäna's Expeditions," pp.145-146.

27. Ibid.

28. In 1888, Menilek called most of his soldiers from the south for a campaign to Gondar. For the departure of Shewan army from Gomma and Limmu in December 1887, see Jules Borelli, Éthiopie Méridionale, pp.280-282.

29. Ibid., p.433; FO.402/7, "M. Borelli's Travel's in the Countries South of Abyssinia and Shoa," December 16, 1890.

30. Jules Borelli, Éthiopie Méridionale, pp.322-323.

31. For more details see Ernico Cerulli, "Folk Literature," pp.45-51.

32. Ibid.

33. The divided leadership is clear, for example, from the position taken by two of Firrisa's brothers. One, called Wayessa, fought in the resistance and died in battle; while another, called Imama, fled to Menelik's court. Contributing to the dissension within the ruling family was probably the marriage of *Genne*Alima (Beletschachew) Abba Foggi (Abba Jobir?) to Ras Tessema. Alima was the daughter of the last king of Guma before the conquest.

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Symbolic Integration to Oromia: Boorana Traditional Practice, Language and God in Eastern Kenya[1]

*by Mario I. Aguilar**

Introduction

In a recent publication, I have suggested that "the concept Oromia and its political implications portrays a positive movement towards the national and ethnical identity of the Oromo [due to the fact that] the actual existence of Oromia did not in the past depend on the existence of a flag, but it expressed the unity and communion of a large group of ethnic Oromo that lived in a particular territory, and sporadically expanded their cultural and social influence to other peoples[2]." Therefore it can be assumed that in the past, and before the arrival of the colonial powers, Oromia did not have to be defined in terms of geographically fixed boundaries, because the political and cultural relations between different Oromo peoples were quite fluid.[3]

By the end of the 19th Century however, the expansion of the Abyssinian empire and the arrival of the European colonial powers in Africa meant that part of the self-assumed colonial task was to create order, in those lands where in the perception of the colonizers "disorder" existed To that effect, to put order had also the consequences of rapid social change and transformation, whereby "it can be admitted that the colonists (those settling a region), as well as the colonialists (those exploiting a territory by dominating a local majority) have all tended to organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs[4]."

In the case of Ethiopia, the European powers encouraged the expansion of Ethiopia, a group of small kingdoms that aided by European firearms occupied the territories and homelands of other independent nations such as Oromia. They established "a collective agreement among themselves to recognize and assist the resultant entity as a dependent colonial empire, claiming that an ancient 'neutral' sovereign state existed there[5]." However, other factors such as a monarchy and an ancient Christian ideology in the case of Ethiopia also meant an imposition of an "orderly" and oppressive way of running the country, whereby a centralized and normative discourse provided a certain unity of purpose for the territory known as the Ethiopian empire.

While those political changes were taking place in Ethiopia, and affecting the daily lives and existence of the Oromo, the same phenomenon took place in Northern Kenya with the arrival of the British colonial power By the 1930s, "disorder" had been controlled and properly ordered through the administrative colonial imposition of tribal areas and the fixing of boundaries between different peoples[6]. In the case of the British though, their reasons for administrative intervention were, among others, the abilitation of orderly trading centres, the exercise of political control, and the improvement of internal and external security especially in the areas bordering with Ethiopia and Somalia[7].

As a result of that colonial imposition of boundaries, the Oromo speaking peoples residing in the area of Northern Kenya at the beginning of this Century became politically and ritually separated from Oromia. That was the case of the Boorana of Marsabit and Moyale, the Orma of the Tana river[8], and the Boorana of the Waso area[9], who were all integrated into the British administration of the Kenya colony[10]. That colonial process created a political rupture in a geographically and spatially unified territory of Oromia, and advanced rapid cultural changes that in the case of the Waso Boorana also responded to a localized interaction with the Somali, a topic I have dealt with somewhere else[11].

My concern in this paper is to raise questions and possible suggestions related to the possible

links between Oromia as an independent Oromo state and the Boorana of Northeastern Kenya, with a particular focus on the Boorana who live in the area of the Waso Nyiro river. Some of those questions are the following: are those Boorana still part of that pre-colonial Oromo nation?; if not, are they still related to Oromia in some way?, or should they be considered part of the Oromo diaspora?

"Somalization" of the Boorana

Baxter recorded in the 1950s the social and ritual practices of the Boorana in Marsabit[12], and he stressed their connections with the rest of the Boorana through the fact that the *gada* festivals were celebrated at particular time intervals[13]. On the other hand, he also stressed the union and communion of all Boorana through the keeping of the *Nagaa Boorana* (the Peace of the Boorana), an ethno-philosophy that permeates the actions and beliefs of every Boorana[14]. While that was his appreciation of Marsabit in the 1950s, his experience of the Waso area of Kenya was different. He described the effects of a process of massive conversion to Islam in terms of a process of "somalization," whereby the Boorana of the Isiolo District were totally influenced and absorbed in their cultural manifestations by the Somali[15].

That process took place between the 1930s and the 1950s, and in reality meant that the Waso Boorana (as I have called them) developed a particular identity, social and religious, and distanced themselves completely from the Boorana of Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia. That particular process of conversion responded to particular phenomena such as: (a) their isolation from the *gada* festivals and the *Kallu*, (b) the need to be recognized by the British colonial administration as adherents of a world religion rather than members of a traditionally localized system of ritual and social construction, and (c) the process of symbiosis and social interaction with the Somali through competition for grazing and water[16]. As a result of those processes by the 1950s most of the Boorana in the Waso area were recognized by the colonial administration as Muslims[17]. However, that complete state of isolation from other Oromo began to change during the late 1960s as a result of drastic events that took place during the first years of Kenya's independent life.

War, Famine and Reconversion

On the eve of Kenya's independence there were debates at international, national and local level on the future of the former Northern Frontier District of Kenya (N.F.D.). Already several years before the Somali Youth League (S.Y.L.) had begun a campaign to re-integrate the ethnic Somali peoples of Kenya to the new republic of Somalia[18], a political and ideological campaign that had created some uncertainty in Britain about the future of the Kenya colony as an independent nation. However, the British Government eventually decided to keep the already established colonial boundaries, with the immediate implication that all Boorana and Somali of Northern Kenya became *ipso facto* Kenyans, a change from their former colonial status as nomads or pastoralists of a particular ethnic origin with the right to move to and from Ethiopia or Somalia.

The Boorana of the Waso area sided with the Somali in a violent conflict for secession known as the *shifta* war. The conflict lasted from 1963 to 1967, and sporadic hostilities continued till 1969. The impact of that conflict on the life of the Waso Boorana was immense, as on the one hand they lost their herds and therefore their means of subsistence, and on the other hand they lost their enthusiasm for Islam and for the Somali. They finally realized that they had been politically used when during the final advance of the Kenyan army they were left to face the defeat and humiliation imposed by the army of Kenyatta, while the Somali had crossed the border into Somalia as to avoid further trouble.

As a result, the Waso Boorana underwent a process of rethinking their identity, their place in the new republic of Kenya and their terms of kinship and affinity in relation to the rest of

the Boorana and the Oromo in general. Already in 1971 a delegation of Boorana and Sakuye went to Oromia and brought greetings to the *Kallu*, who in return encouraged them to keep their Boorana traditions even when they were Muslims[19]. Years later the arrival of messengers from the *Kallu* marked the beginning of a more fluid communication and exchange between the Waso area and Southern Oromia, whereby traditional councillors (*jalaba*) were appointed.

In political terms there has been a fresh appreciation of Boorana traditional structures, whereby more importance has been given to elders and their role in the Boorana settlements, especially with respect to their knowledge of tradition and dispute solving processes[20]. In that sense the authority given by the Waso Boorana to the politically appointed chiefs, a category favoured by the British colonial administration, and later assumed by the government of Kenyatta and Moi, has decreased. In the social spheres of the Boorana settlements, a new identity has also been pragmatically assumed, whereby the Waso Boorana have defined themselves in a more localized way as Merti Boorana, Garba Tulla Boorana or Gafarsa Boorana[21]. That has been a positive development from previous decades whereby a Waso Boorana was identified more closely with a Somali by outsiders, and primarily as a Muslim by the Waso Boorana themselves. In daily life then, a Waso Boorana can currently describe himself as a Boorana of a particular area rather than as a displaced person who is neither Boorana proper nor Somali, neither Kenyan nor Christian.

Whatever changes have taken place, the most important change has been related to their daily religious or ritual practices, whereby the Waso Boorana in the last twenty years have reincorporated some of their traditional ritual practices, through a continuous process of religious "diversification."

Diversifying the Herds, Diversifying Ritual

It has been my suggestion before that in the case of the Waso Boorana theories of conversion that assume a habitual change from an African religion to a world religion due to military conquest do not apply. In this particular case the colonial power in Northern Kenya was Christian and the Waso Boorana converted largely to Islam. It is only in the case of Merti, where a few hundred Boorana have converted to Christianity, they have become Catholics through a period of Catholic presence in the area that began after the colonial period[22].

Therefore, rather than to ground any social analysis of their conversion to Islam on the assumption that the Waso Boorana had to convert to a world religion, I would suggest that the roots of their process of conversion and religious diversification come from their own traditional ways of responding to change in order to maintain processes of continuity. In the case of their economic processes in recent history, Hogg has correctly suggested that the Waso Boorana have incorporated "new components, to meet changed circumstances[23]." And while new components in their social and economic outlook have been incorporated, the ownership and communal care of animals has been the constant base not only for their economic subsistence but also for their social, cultural and religious identity[24].

It is traditionally assumed by the Boorana that the herds are to be divided into *fora* and *hawicha*, so that if a Boorana is asked why is that so, he would answer that "this is our custom." However localized that answer may be, it is possible to suggest that there are advantages and practicalities in following this particular fragmentary method in a society that relies in stock not only for subsistence, but also for reasons of prestige and cultural survival.

In terms of Waso Boorana herding practices, the *hawicha* animals are those milking animals being kept near the *manyatta*, that provide milk for children and can be slaughtered if the immediate need arises. That *hawicha* herd leaves the *manyatta* for nearby watering and grazing in the morning, and returns to the *manyatta* in the evening, where it is kept inside an enclosure. The *fora* herd on the other hand consists of dry stock-cows currently out of milk, aged and immature stock and is constantly on the move. It nevertheless has some milking cows in order to

provide food for the herdsmen who remain far from the *manyatta*.

Apart from moments of complete disaster such as the war and famine of the 1960s and 1970s, the Waso Boorana have managed (through this localized strategy) to secure several herds grazing in different locations of the Waso area, henceforth preventing the loss of all the animals at one given moment in time. At the same time and as a consequence of that diversification of herds, the Boorana have also managed to secure kinship ties across territories as "adult siblings are likely to be distributed widely across the land[25]." This division of the herds has provided a concrete response to the uncertain security situation in the Waso area where Somali raiders have constantly stolen animals and incorporated them into their herds crossing the border into Somalia[26].

That process of "diversification as a strategy," outlined in economic terms by Gudrun Dahl[27], is the base I would use in order to understand the Waso Boorana current process of religious diversification. That division of the herds responds to a pattern of Oromo thought and philosophy, and those patterns also permeate how people respond to religious influences and their own construction of a cosmological and social order[28].

In the case of the Waso Boorana then, their response to changes from a microcosm to a macrocosm was to assume a receptive attitude towards the world religions such as Islam and Christianity[29]. In all those changes traditional Boorana religious practices were kept, especially through rituals associated with women, such as the *buna qalla*, and the constant invocation of God as *Waqqa*[30]. Therefore the current situation in the Waso area suggests a strong presence of Islam and Christianity in the public sphere and the crucial importance of traditional Oromo practices in the domestic sphere

Ritual and Symbolic Connections with Oromia

In those current social, religious and cultural circumstances in the Waso area, one must ask what are the parameters by which the Boorana of that area are still linked to Oromia as one must accept that the Boorana of the Waso area are not geographically located in Oromia. If at any particular moment in history the geographical parameters of Oromia could have been flexible, its current understanding seem to be clear and in a sense politically and therefore geographically fixed. While Oromia corresponds to territories internationally related to Ethiopia, its parameters of expansion have been clearly limited by authors such as Assefu Kuru, who has asserted that "Oromo land or Oromia is located in the Horn of Africa stretching between 2 N and 12 N latitude and between 34 E and 44 E longitude. It covers about 600,000 Km2 surface area and constitutes some 54 percent of the total area of the empire[31]."

Therefore, there are three crucial areas by which one can argue that the Boorana of the Waso area are definitely Oromo and a constitutive part of an Oromo diaspora, located outside the geographical boundaries of Oromia, but in relation to the community of Oromia as perceived by Oromo themselves. Those areas are language, tradition and ritual.

To that effect, Melkuria Bulcha has argued two important points concerning the ties of Oromo speaking peoples. The first one is that "Oromo speakers are spread over a wide geographic area not only in Ethiopia, but also in Kenya and Somalia"; the second one is that "language remains the most important factor for the maintenance of their unity and identity[32]." That is the case of the Waso Boorana, who not only keep their Oromo identity through the daily use of the Oromo language, but also keep the *Nagaa Boorana* (Peace of the Boorana) and feel united with their homelands in Dirre and Liban (Oromia). That keeping of their traditions is being currently expressed in the revival of traditional Boorana practices such as the *ayyaana* cult, the traditional prayers and the "sacrifice" of coffee-beans in the Waso area during the late 1980s and 1990s.

In conclusion, I have argued that even through many social and cultural changes the Boorana of the Waso area of Kenya have not ceased to consider themselves Oromo, and they have certainly kept their ritual and kinship connections with the Boorana in Oromia.

End Notes

1. Paper presented at the IX Conference of the Oromo Studies Association, "The Quest for Self-Determination, Human Rights and Democracy: The Case of Oromia," Washington, D.C., 22-24 July 1995.

2. M.I. Aguilar, "Expanding the concept of Oromia: The Waso Boorana case," *The Oromo Commentary* V (1995/1), p. 18.

3. See A. Legesse, *Gada: Three approaches to the study of African society* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), "Introduction" and for the Gibe region of Oromia, M. Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A history 1570-1860* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990).

4. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy and the order of knowledge* (London: James Currey, 1988), p. 1

5. B.K. Holcomb and S. Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia: The making of a dependent colonial state in Northeast Africa* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1990), "Introduction."

6. Despite the Outlying District Ordinance (1902) and the Special Districts Ordinance (1934) for the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and the Turkana region, it was the task of the District Commissioner to dictate the proper rules in order to keep order and to prevent the fighting of the "tribes." See C. Chenevix-Trench, *Men Who Ruled Kenya: The Kenya administration 1892-1963* (London: The Radcliffe Press, 1993), pp. 122-5.

7. Even in the 1960s those developments were praised by G.C.M. Onyiuke and M.P. Bogert who wrote "The introduction in 1934 of the Special Districts (Administration) Ordinance, which gave the Provincial Commissioner power to define grazing boundaries and to control the movement of tribes, has greatly helped to stabilise the various tribes of the Northern Frontier District," *Kenya: Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission* (London: HMSO, 1962), n. 21.

8. On the Gadole Orma, see J. Ensminger, *Making a Market: The institutional transformation of an African society* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992) and the favourable reviews by M.I. Aguilar in *Anthropos* 89 (1994/2), pp. 599-600; and Bichaka Fayissa in *The Journal of Oromo Studies* II (1995/1&2), pp. 73-5.

9. See G. Dahl, *Suffering Grass: subsistence and society of Waso Borana* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1979), and R.S. Hogg (1981), "The social and economic organization of the Boran of the Isiolo District, Kenya," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester.

10. The Boorana have played a more predominant role in Northern Kenya while the Gabbra and the Tana Orma have had less impact on their neighbours. See G. Schlee, "The Oromo expansion and its impact on ethnogenesis in Northern Kenya." In: Taddese Beyene (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eight International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* II (Addis Abbeba: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1989), p. 711.

11. See my unpublished paper "Waso Boorana-Somali interaction in Garba Tulla, Kenya (1932-1992), presented to the North-East Africa Seminar, University of Oxford, 20 January 1995.

12. See P.T.W. Baxter (1954), "The social organization of the Galla of Northern Kenya," unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Lincoln College, University of Oxford.

13. However, Baxter noted that in Kenya "the preliminary ceremonies are either not performed at all or only hazily so, because there are no officers of descent sets resident in that country, to activate or instruct." See "The social organization of the Galla of Northern Kenya," p. 357.

14. P.T.W. Baxter, "Oromo blessings and greetings." In: A. Jacobson-Widding and W. van Beek (eds.), *The Creative Communion: African models of fertility and the regeneration of life* (Uppsala: Academiae Uppsaliensis), pp. 235-50.

15. P.T.W. Baxter, "Acceptance and rejection of Islam among the Boran of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya," in I.M. Lewis (ed.), *Islam in Tropical Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 249.

16. There has also been a symbiosis of cultural traits, see for example M.I. Aguilar, "The role

of the *sarki* dance in Waso Boorana/Somali symbiosis and conflict," *Anthropos* 88 (1993), pp. 184-90.

17. On the general issues of Waso Boorana conversion see M.I. Aguilar, "African conversion from a world religion: religious diversification by the Waso Boorana of Kenya," *Africa* 64 (1995/4).

18. See for example, P.T. Dalleo (1975), "Trade and pastoralism: economic factors in the history of the Somali of Northeastern Kenya, 1892-1948," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Syracuse University, and E.R. Turton, "Somali resistance to colonial rule and the development of Somali political activity in Kenya 1893-1960," *Journal of African History* XIII (1972), pp. 117-43.

19. See R.S. Hogg, "The social and economic," p. 21, and my interview with a member of that delegation, GTHT/KOR/1992/f.n./46.

20. See M.I. Aguilar and L. Birch de Aguilar, *Women's Organizing Abilities: Two Case Studies in Kenya and Malawi* (Women's Organizing Abilities: Two Case Studies in Kenya and Malawi (Washington, D.C.: Organizing for Development International Institute, 1993).

21. See R. Hogg, "The politics of changing property rights among Isiolo Boran pastoralists in Northern Kenya," in P.T.W. Baxter and R. Hogg (eds.), *Property, Poverty and People: Changing rights in property and problems of pastoral development* (Manchester: Department of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester, 1990), p. 25.

2. See P. Tablino, "An ignored Church of northern Kenya," *The Seed* 4 (1992/6), pp. 23-4 and M.I. Aguilar, "A path of the gospel in Garba Tulla: an experience of dialogue with Boorana religion," *The Seed* 4 (1992/10), pp. 10-1.

23. R.S. Hogg, "The social and economic organization of the Boran of Isiolo District, Kenya," Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester (1981), p. 371.

24. However that construction of social realities, they have been greatly affected by a larger political economy. See the case of the Obbu Boorana in Gugu Oba, "Changing property rights among settling pastoralists: an adaptive strategy to declining pastoral resources." In: P.T.W. Baxter and R. Hogg, *Property, Poverty and People,* pp. 38-44.

25. P.T.W. Baxter, "Boran age-sets and generation-sets—*gada*: a puzzle or a maze?" In: P.T.W. Baxter and U. Almagor (eds.), *Age, Generation and Time: Some features of East African age organisations* (London: Christopher Hurst, 1978), p. 164.

26. See M.I. Aguilar, "*Nagaa*: the forgotten quest for peace in modern Kenya," *The Month* 26 (1993/5), pp. 183-7.

27. G. Dahl, *Suffering Grass: Subsistence and society of Waso Borana* (Stockholm: University Press, 1979), p. 216.

28. See for example, Gemetchu Megerssa Ruda (1993), "Knowledge, identity and the colonizing structure: the case of the Oromo in East and Northeast Africa," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

29. This terminology has been used by Robin Horton so as to describe the changes in African society since the arrival of the European colonial powers, in "African conversion," *Africa* 41 (1971), pp. 85-108, and "On the rationality of conversion," *Africa* 45 (1975), pp. 219-35 and 373-99.

30. See M.I. Aguilar, "The Eagle talks to a *kallu*": Waso Boorana ritual perceptions of Ethiopia," in H.G. Marcus (ed.), *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies* (Volume II: Social Sciences, Lawrenceville, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1994), pp. 756-72; "Waso Boorana women's theology: a silent journey," *Feminist Theology* n. 5 (1994), pp. 40-57; and, "Recreating a religious past in a Muslim setting: "sacrificing" coffee-beans among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tulla, Kenya," *Ethnos* 60 (1995/1-2): 41-58.

31. See "The conquest and environmental degradation of Oromia," *Journal of Oromo Studies,* II (1995/1-2), p. 30.

32. "The language policies of Ethiopian regimes and the history of written *Afaan Oromoo*: 1844-1994," *The Journal of Oromo Studies,* I (1994/2), p. 91.

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Book Reviews

Oromo Wisdom Literature: Volume I, Proverbs: Collection and Analyses. Addis Ababa: Gudina Tumsa Foundation, 1995, xxix + 482 pp. Claude Sumner reviewed by Ron Bombardi*

In this thorough, penetrating, and highly stimulating book, Claude Sumner, a professor of philosophy at Addis Ababa University, has systematically organized and interpreted an extensive collection of traditional Oromo proverbs, riddles, and puzzles in English translation. Intended primarily as a contribution to the preservation and development of Oromo culture, the book additionally presents an impressive range of contemporary philosophical reflections on the existence and nature of African philosophy generally, the specific character and content of modern Ethiopian thought, the overall problem of interpreting oral traditions, and the semiotics of figurative language.

Throughout the work of collecting, translating, classifying, and interpreting Oromo oral literature, Sumner maintains impeccable scholarly standards; his philosophical arguments and analyses are likewise well-considered and tightly reasoned. Accordingly, the book should prove of considerable interest both to readers concerned with the conceptual fabric of traditional Oromo culture, as well as to those focused on the problems and controversies around which African philosophical thought is centered at the present time.

Besides a brief methodological introduction, the book is divided into four main parts, three of which explore exclusively contemporary philosophical landscapes; only the second part (although it accounts for roughly half the book) is devoted the classification and analysis of traditional Oromo wisdom.

In Part One, Sumner proposes to take three distinct approaches toward the study of Cushitic Oromo proverbs which he terms "sapiential," "cultural," and "paroemiological." Although each approach stems from a unique set of questions and concerns, the sapiential approach, clearly drives and informs the other two, for Sumner. The central concern associated with this first approach is consequently quite broad: To what degree do Oromo proverbs represent an Ethiopian ethnophilosophy? To answer this question, fraught with a recent history of heated intellectual debate, Sumner draws an especially helpful distinction between what he calls the "strict" and "broad" senses of doing philosophy. In the strict sense, philosophy is understood as a form of reflective, systematic, and self-critical knowledge. In the broad sense, however, philosophy embodies wisdom—not knowledge per se, but "the steady purpose of putting knowledge to good use" (p. 22). From the vantage provided by this distinction, Sumner is able to contextualize his own philosophical work alongside the ancient proverbs of the Oromo people. In taking up the cultural and paroemiological approaches, he is also able to shed a particularly clear light on how proverbial wisdom has shaped, and continues to shape, the development of Oromo culture. Throughout this project, Sumner never loses sight of his distinction between knowledge and wisdom; he sees himself as writing a philosophical work in the strict sense, but as deriving his materials from a sapiential literature, an inherited wisdom, that is not strictly philosophical.

Part Two of Oromo Wisdom Literature is devoted to the exhibits: proverbs, riddles, and puzzles. In classifying these exhibits, Sumner rejects the use of formal linguistic criteria, opting instead for a scheme that organizes the texts according to shared content. A total of 1,057 proverbs are thus collected under 162 alphabetically ordered heads (such as: abundance, crime, drinking, friendship, gossip, happiness, hypocrisy, justice, luck, marriage, poverty, power, shame, virtue, woman, work, to name a few). Because the Oromo language has but one term, *makmaksa*, for translating English "sayings," "proverbs," and "maxims," Sumner introduces a further analytical distinction to his scheme: only those utterances, collected in the field under actual conditions of use as proverbs, are included. A typical entry comprises the proverb itself, preceded by a reference number, followed by any interpretations additionally collected in the field. For example, under

the heading, *association*, entry fifty-five reads, "When the grandfather dies, the grandmother stumbles," to which is appended the interpretation, "... however experienced a man may be, he always needs the moral help of his neighbour" (p 83).

Part Three, "Thematic Structure and Notion of Oromo Wisdom Literature," initiates the turn, adumbrated in the book's title, from collection to analysis. Here Sumner attempts to derive from the entire body of Oromo oral literature, recorded in situ, a slim core of abstract philosophical notions that, he argues, can be analyzed into three recurrent, underlying, thematic patterns. He identifies these patterns as follows: "prevalence of the moral concern," "moral dualism," and "the world of man, life and matter" (see pp 287-295). In each case, Sumner's analyses proceed by way of comparison or contrast with Western philosophical traditions. This approach is at once illuminating and problematic. On the one hand, Sumner is able to thread several disparate arrays of Oromo proverbs together so as to articulate, in contemporary terms, a set of philosophical doctrines commensurate with canonical elements in the history of Western philosophy. For example, from the observation that "All, absolutely all Oromo proverbs are axiological" (p. 288), Sumner can conclude that "Ethiopian Wisdom Philosophy is "existentialist," ... concerned with the right way of acting in given situations" (p. 289). On the other hand, however, this effort to locate abstract principles within sapiential utterances tends not only to narrow the paroemiological scope of each utterance, but to import conceptual baggage from an alien tradition. For instance, to read the proverb, "One man's clothes do not cover someone else's nakedness" as exemplifying an existentialist principle of authenticity (p.324) requires attributing existentialist problems (like those stemming from Kierkegaard's concept of dread or Sartre's notion of living in *mauvaise foi*) to Oromo culture. There is a further weakness in Sumner's comparative approach, one that lies not so much with his inclination to interpret African proverbs in Western terms, as with his superficial portrayal of Western thought per se. Sumner poses the Western world as "the world of the senses and of matter; its instrument in the last analysis will become geometrically rigid reason" (p. 289); Ethiopian philosophy, however, eschews this rigidity according to Sumner, preferring instead "to apply thought to the art of living" (p. 289). The contrast is both misleading and inaccurate; Spinoza's *Ethics* or Plato's *Republic* serve as stunning counterexamples: in both cases, philosophies emerge precisely by way of applying rigorous methods of geometrical reason directly to the art of living.

In Part Four, Sumner stands on firmer ground. Relying on perspectives provided by European structuralism and semiotics, he moves into the sphere of philosophizing in the strict sense and in his own right. Entitled "The Problematique of Orality," this part of *Oromo Wisdom Literature* is thoroughly contemporary; Sumner presents, in effect, a series of increasingly sophisticated conceptual guides (rendered both discursively and in the form of clear if abstract diagrams) that serve to map what he takes to be the cognitive forms that structure "all orality" (p. 343). At the most fundamental level, oral communication, according to Sumner, necessarily involves a sender and a receiver who must both be present to one another at the same time. From this initial, elementary principle, he develops the view that in all oral communication, "Everything takes place as if, to remedy the transitory nature of the oral discourse, tradition came along to support certain words, to underline them, to give them weight, and thereby to make of these landmarks in social experience" (p.344).

In turn, this view supports Sumner's understanding of oral texts as junctures where two distinct "axes of meaning" meet: "a horizontal axis, social in character, where the message passes from a sender to a receiver, ... [and] a vertical axis, of cultural semantics, where the message starts from tradition and aims at an actual situation" (p. 344). Understanding orality in this way enables Sumner further to develop a rigorous methodology for the systematic interpretation of any culture's proverbial wisdom. It is, to be sure, just the methodology Sumner himself adopts in his treatment of the thematic structures implicit in Oromo *makmaksa*. It is not, however, an entirely unproblematic methodology. In order to serve as a general interpretive framework, Sumner's

twin-axes model presupposes that senders and receivers "are fully aware of not being alone in the world: they perceive themselves as being part of a human group that has a common past and a certain type of adaptation to environment and human situation" (p. 343). This view cannot itself be found as an explicit element in any Oromo proverb; it is rather a contemporary philosophical reflection on the social character of human discourse, so that it remains unclear whether or not senders or receivers of traditional wisdom are indeed fully aware of their socio-linguistic situations in the relevant respect: understanding their traditions as adaptations-as temporary and provisional forms of life, subject to revision as environments and human situations evolve over time

Despite this worry, Sumner's model bears considerable fruit when applied to the semiotics of figurative language. Because proverbs articulate figurative rather than conceptual thought. a general understanding of their semiosis must precede every particular interpretation of any given proverb At first, Sumner presents this duality between the conceptual and the figurative as little more than a recapitulation of the more fundamental duality that separates literal from metaphorical meanings On further elaboration, however, his account becomes fully metaphysical in character: he endeavors to show that the linguistic relation between concepts and images ultimately reflects a primordial dialectical tension between general and particular things While Sumner does not propose to resolve this tension outright, his inclinations are decidedly nominalist: concepts refer generally, but name nothing real, while individuals, though real, lack meaning in and of themselves; but the image, Sumner contends, "lies half-way between reality and the concept" (p. 399) In other words, it is by way of images, not concepts. that meanings enter the world.

Taken as a whole, this is an important book Anyone interested in African philosophy, whether its traditional roots or its contemporary branches, will find the study of Sumner's work richly rewarding.

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Being and Becoming Oromo Historical and Anthropological Enquiries, ed. by P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin and Alessandro Truiulzi, (Uppsala: Nordissa Afrika Institutet, 1996), pp. 310. Price: $29.00. Reviewed by Mohammed Hassen*

Since the 1970s, there has been an expanding amount of literature on Oromo Studies, which is slowly, but surely, coming of age. A glance at the bibliography of the book under review demonstrates the progress Oromo studies has made within a decade or so.

Being and Becoming Oromo is the latest addition to the rapidly expanding literature on Oromo studies. This highly valuable book grew out of a Workshop which was held at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden in October 1994. The purpose of the Workshop was to ..."identify the elements from which an Oromo ethnic consciousness and sense of national identity have been and are being molded" (p. 7) It is a tribute to the editors, who not only pressured the contributors to submit their final papers on time, but also for having done an excellent job of editing. The contributors to the volume range from those who embarked on the Oromo studies in the 1950s to those in the 1980s. All of these contributors are well-read students of Oromo culture and history who express their ideas with clarity, charm, eloquence, and honesty.

Being and Becoming Oromo is an interesting and valuable book—interesting because it combines Oromo voice with those who understand and sympathize in various degree with the condition of the Oromo and because it is based on good data to a very large extent. The book consists of eighteen contributions (essays) preceded by an introduction by the editors and concludes by

the poetics of Nationalism which depict Oromo unity. In the introduction, the editors among others, state that: (1) it was the colonial experience which shaped Oromo national consciousness; (2) Oromo contributors to the volume "... remain confident of the vigor, strength, and the essentials of oneness of the Oromo culture (p. 9); (3) nearly half of the papers in this volume are on the Borana; and (4) "The essays in this volume are individual explorations, but they are interconnected and complement each other" (p. 13).

The first essay by Hawani Debella and Anessa Kassam deals with the incredible suffering which the young Hawani endured. It epitomizes "the shared understanding of being Oromo." The story depicts the nightmare of torture under the Ethiopian military dictatorship which Oromo prisoners suffered while in jail and the psychological torture which their relatives, who were not physically jailed suffered (p.33). What makes Hawani Debella's suffering a poignant shared understanding of being Oromo is the fact that Oromo suffering has increased more than ever before. Consequently, hidden from the international community, arbitrary arrests, long detentions without being charged, open assassinations, disappearance (a euphemism for secret killings), cruel and inhuman treatment of Oromo nationalists. Business, cultural, and political elites have literally engulfed every corner of Oromia. If the goal of the Ethiopian government terror is to demoralize the Oromo and destroy Oromo nationalism, the TPLF leaders have failed to learn any lesson from the mistakes of the military regime which they replaced in 1991. In the words of Hawani, "... the more they tried to force us to give up all that was Oromo, the more we wanted to be Oromo" (p. 33). The more the TPLF regime suppresses Oromo nationalism, the more it strengthens Oromo aspiration for self-determination." Hawani also voices the patient sufferings which Oromo women have endured as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters of imprisoned Oromo men (p. 13).

The second essay is by Herbert Lewis which deals with "The Development of Oromo Political Consciousness from 1958 to 1994." Although Oromo opponents "... believe that they [the Ethiopian government] can divide, destroy, or perhaps, wish away Oromo nationalism (p. 38), the author has seen the natural development, a kind of trajectory, in the growth of Oromo political consciousness during four decades of unstructured observation (p. 32). Oromo consciousness encompasses their involvement in the modern urban sector economy, the spread of modern education among the Oromo, and the assimilation of educated Oromo into the "general culture and ideology of most young Ethiopians," the marginalization of educated Oromo, their disillusionment and return to their Oromo root (p. 43).

Mekuria Bulcha's "The Survival and Reconstruction of Oromo National Identity" is an impressive essay. It traces the development of Oromo nationalism while demolishing myths about Oromo eagerness to kill each other which simply not true. It was invented by the ideologues of the Ethiopian state.

Traditionally, there were strong ideas in the Oromo culture which declared it improper for members of one Oromo group to wage war against another. Mekuria convincingly argues that "the Oromo rarely formed alliances with non-Oromos to fight against other Oromo groups" (p. 51). He goes on stressing that Nagaa Oromo ("Oromo Peace") which is a universal principle characterizing the inner rhythm of Oromo life, and thus deterring violence and bloodshed among the people. Like other peoples in different parts of the world, the Oromo too, were not free from conflict over scarce resources. However, conflict over resources was generally settled through a dialogue in the chaffee assembly (Oromo Parliament) rather than through bloodshed on the battlefield. "The myth of common descent, the concepts of gada (egalitarianism) and Naga (peace and co-operation) together express some deep sense of solidarity and feeling of peoplehood/nationhood that existed" (p. 51). Mekuria rightly argues that the colonization of Oromia exposed Oromo institutions to unmitigated attack, destroyed Oromo leadership, and deprived them of power and status those leaders who survived the conquests. Oromo political offices and laws were abolished and replaced by the colonial administration and law (p. 55); the tree of disunity

was planted and watered with blood and intrigue all of which undermined the Oromo identity. It was Oromo resistance both active (armed struggle) and passive resistance (the use of religion and culture) to maintain boundaries between the Oromo and their colonizers which sustained and maintained Oromo identity. Mekuria succinctly discusses the role the educated elites played in the articulation and consolidation of Oromo nationalism and concludes his piece with a poignant observation.

> If the recognition of the Oromo as a people (nation) was the most important achievement in 1974, the geographical demarcation of the Oromo territory and the official and popular recognition of Oromia as the name designating that specific territory is one of the significant landmarks in the revival of Oromo national identity. Together with [the use of qubee and] the adoption of the Oromo language as a medium of administration, law, education, the mass media in Oromia has brought about the crystallization of Oromo identity" (p. 66).

Mohammed Hassen's "Development of Oromo Nationalism" discusses the factors which delayed the growth of Oromo nationalism. The first relates to the attack on Oromo identity by both the Amhara and Somali ruling elites.

> The Amhara ruling elites undermined Oromo national identity and unity on the grounds that the development of Oromo nationalism would lead to the disintegration of the Ethiopian Empire. The Somali ruling elites undermined Oromo national identity on the grounds that the growth of Oromo nationalism would abort the realization of the dream of Greater Somalia (p. 67).

Second, the Oromo lacked access to modern education, communications, mass media and the press, higher standards of literacy and the growth of literature and intensive interaction among themselves all of which were crucial environment for the spread of Oromo national consciousness and the lack of the latter delayed the consolidation of Oromo nationalism. Although Oromo nationalism developed in the 1960s and 1970s, it became a mass movement only since 1991. The consolidation of Oromo nationalism, not only invigorated Oromo political thought with the yearning for the self-determination of Oromia, but it also led to a remarkable flowering of literacy in the Afaan Oromoo.

> The rapidly growing Oromo literature reflects the joy and sorrow, the strength and weakness, conflict and harmony, unity in diversity, and greatness of the soul and spirit of Oromo unity. It cultivates a feeling of pride and a sense of belonging to a great nation. The new literature ... articulates Oromo aspirations for self-determination and nourishes their determination to achieve that goal. The new literature reflects the Oromo mind, the Oromo soul, the Oromo spirit, the Oromo view of the universe and their place in that universe (p. 79).

The fifth essay is Jan Hultin's "Perceiving Oromo 'Galla' in the Great Narrative of Ethiopia" examines how the Oromo were depicted in the Ethiopian historiography as "barbarians" who were a "... hindrance to Ethiopia's renaissance and subsequent entry into the modern era" (p. 89). In the Ethiopian ruling elites' narrative, the Amhara and the Oromo whom they called Galla are depicted in sets of interlocking images built up out of the victory of the former and the defeat of the latter. Whereas the Amhara are civilized, the Oromo are "barbarians." Whereas the Amhara are a nation, the Oromo are tribal groups. Whereas the Amhara have a historic mission (building Empire), the Oromo have to be ruled. From Jan Hultin's discussion, it is clear that Galla was the term which expressed the Abyssinian (Amhara and Tigray) perception of and prejudice against the Oromo. However, the author did not mention that after the Oromo were conquered during and after the 1880s, Galla became the term of insult and abuse. That conquest solidified

Abyssinian cultural chauvinism which distorted Oromo democratic heritage. That distortion was crude and became an article of faith which helped to freeze the Ethiopian ruling elites' mind in understanding and appreciating the richness, the depth, and vitality of Oromo democratic heritage

Gemetchu Megersa's "Oromumma: Tradition, Consciousness and Identity" discusses Oromo personality, cultural identity, belief system, and world view. According to Gemetchu, Oromo personality " ...is shaped by all those features of the internal and external environment that bind the Oromo with their land, mountains, rivers, plants and animals, climate, seasonal patterns and other cultures with which they interact" (p. 92). In his discussion, Gemetechu introduces a number of *important* concepts such as (1) *ayyaana* (God's creative part in any individual, thing or circumstance, p. 16) which " ...systematizes the Oromo religious and philosophical thought and oral tradition" (p. 93); (2) the *hayyuu* ("legal experts); (3) the *wayyuu* ("experts of belief systems and moral values"); (4) *finna* ("heritage"; (5) *uumaa* ("creation"); (6) *waaqa* (God); (7) *saffu* (mutual relationships between elements of the social and cosmic orders, and; (8) the five *yaayaa*, ("five founding principles") developed by *raaga* (Oromo prophets) and men of wisdom (pp. 96-96). These concepts express the Oromo view of the universe and they underpin the Oromo religious and philosophical system.

> Unlike other peoples who have adopted religions which were not indigenous to their societies, in the case of the Oromo, the people and the belief system have evolved together. The religion, not only proclaims beliefs and dictates behavior, but it also imposes itself on the minds of the people as a vocation, life-giving purpose and guarantee of existence (p. 94).

Finally, Gemetechu makes an interesting observation about Oromo and the Abyssinian differing views of the world. The Oromo conception of themselves is rooted in the African world view based in the belief in *Waaqa Guraacha* ("The black God). "Borrowing their faith from the Judeo-Christian tradition, Abyssinians come to revere a white God and reduced the Oromo belief in *Waaqa Garaacha* to a form of devil worship" (p. 97). In the Abyssinian conception, black is regarded as "evil." For the Oromo, "black stands... for more than a colour; it represents the notion of purity, truth, originality, and divine mystery"

In his "Re-Examining the Galla/Oromo-Relationship: The Stranger as a Structural Topic," Thomas Zitelmann stresses that Galla was an Amhara name for the Oromo. However, he does not indicate when the term "Galla" was first used as the Amhara name for the Oromo. From available evidence, it is clear that the term Galla was in the Abyssinian literature either before or during the fourth century. It appeared in European literature in the 15th century. Thomas argues that the word "Galla" has constantly been associated with the idea of the "stranger" as opposed to a "neighbour" and has been utilized to close ethnic boundaries that had previously been opened" (p. 16 and 106). It is clear that the origin of the word Galla is uncertain. "Etymological speculation about the "Galla" was, by and large, a product of European linguistic romanticism" (p. 107).

In his "Shifting Identities along Resource Borders: Becoming and Continuing to be Boorana Oromo," Gufu Oba discusses the concept of *Naga* Borana "The Peace of the Borana" and their relation with their neighbours. The peace of the borana was " ...was open both to individuals and to groups, non-Oromo as well as Oromo who accepted Gada Seera and recognized the gallu (p. 120). Gufu's piece demonstrates, not only the vitality of the Borana society, their mode of production, their political, cultural and religious institutions, but also the essential unity of the Oromo people.

Johan Helland's "The Political Viability of Boorana Pastoralism..." is interesting and tragic at the same time. It is interesting because the author adequately discusses the Borana Gada system and their political economy. It is tragic because the extraordinary efficient method of water

management and their pastoral production is collapsing. They "...almost lost the central areas of Dirre, the heartland of Borana pastoralism containing the great well complexes" (p. 148). The Borana lost Dirre, their sacred land, to the Somali Nomads because of the pressure of the Somali state in the 1970s and 1980s. Recently, Borana lost Liban, their sacred land by its inclusion "...within the boundaries of the newly defined Somali region of Ethiopia" (p. 149). This means the Borana lost twice because of the pressure from the Somali state. More recently, they lost because of the policy of the TPLF government. What this proves is that the OPDO, who are part of the TPLF government are unable to defend any Oromo interest.

The next eight essays by Marco Basse, Gudrun Dahl, P.T.W. Baxter, Mario Aguilar, Tesema Ta'a, ODD Erik Arnesen, Hector Blackhurst, and Alessandro Triulzi are all interesting and add to our understanding of the Oromo society.

> "The final contribution is a long poem composed by a young Boorana patriot named Jarso, who was killed on the 21st of September in the Oromo Liberation struggle. The poem is contextualized by Abdullahi A. Shongolo...[Jarso]. It articulates Oromo demands for recognition of the dignity of Oromo culture by developing the traditional poetic genre known as *geerarsa*, praise songs for heroes, into a form of contemporary political discourse (p. 24 and see also pp. 270-290)

Jarso definitely was an Oromo Nationalist whose martyrdom waters the tree of Oromo liberation. He called for Oromo unity with these words:

> Then let us join hands,
> To acquaint ourselves with each other,
> To rejuvenate our laws,
> To rejoin our shoulders together,
> To please our broad masses,
> To astonish our enemies (p. 284)

Finally, there are a number of errors and weak points in a number of essays, especially in two that have not been mentioned owing to limitation of space. Despite this, *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries* is a very good book. It shows the intellectual maturity of the contributors and reveals the coming of age of Oromo studies.

**Mohammed Hassen, Ph.D and Professor of African History, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.*

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