A Remarkable Chapter of German Research History
The Protestant Mission and the Oromo in the Nineteenth Century[1]

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Oromo–German relations: First steps

A crucial period for the creation of the traditional and special relationship between Germans and the Oromo were the 1840s, when many Oromo areas were still located outside the traditional Ethiopian state. Two parallel undertakings of two South Germans – Tutschek and Krapf – led to a permanent public interest in Germany into these people and to the establishment of the first serious Oromo Studies.

The first was the young Bavarian Karl Tutschek[2], who was nominated teacher of several Africans, freed slaves, who were brought to Germany by south German nobles – and a few of them were Oromo from different Oromo states. Learning to speak their language from them, he wrote the first existing Oromo dictionary and grammar (published in 1844 and 1845). Particularly important for research history were Akkafedhee (also known as 'Osman') and Amaan (also called 'Karl Habasch'),[3] whose letters in German and Oromo and records of oral traditions of 1840 are important witnesses for Oromo culture and history. This extraordinary cultural encounter is to be seen in the context of the traditional interest of German courts for 'curiosities' and their wish for the accumulation of entertaining and 'instructive' knowledge about the world. It was in fact mainly through nobles, that several Oromo were freed and later brought to German states in that period. The prince Pückler-Muskau, an adventurer at the court of Muhammad Ali of Egypt, purchased and later lived together with 'Machbuba' (Bilillee), a kidnapped Oromo.[4] Also another noble traveller, John von Müller, brought a former Oromo slave from Egypt to Germany, Ganamee from Guummaa (later called 'Pauline Fathme'), who became a key figure for the first Protestant German Oromo mission. From 1855 to 1927 the short biography of this pious young lady was reprinted several times, together with calls to open a mission in 'Ormania', as the Oromo regions were called by German missionaries.[5]

The consequences: An Oromo mission begins

The first one to try was Johann Ludwig Krapf, who was convinced that the Oromo were similar to the ancient Germanic tribes. He hoped, that a Christian reform movement could start with them and later encompass whole Africa, similar to Germany, from where Protestantism had originated. He constructed the idea of a unified country 'Ormania', as a new centre of Protestantism in analogy to 'Germania', where the Protestant reformation had been initiated three centuries before. Krapf started to translate the New Testament together with his assistant Barkii during his stay in Ankober in Shawa (1840), but could not finalize the work. Much later in 1866, after the establishment of a mission in Ethiopia and the Sudan, he could retake this work: His colleagues sent a former Oromo slave, Ruufoo from Gombotaa in the kingdom of Guummaa, to the south German kingdom of Württemberg, whom they had purchased at the Ethiopian–Sudanese border town Metemma. In fact both were successful in completing the New Testament's translations, which were immediately sent to Ethiopia after its first portions were printed in 1871.

After the failure to open an Oromo mission in Beni Shangul and Gubbe in 1867, in 1871 the missionary Johannes Mayer got the permis-

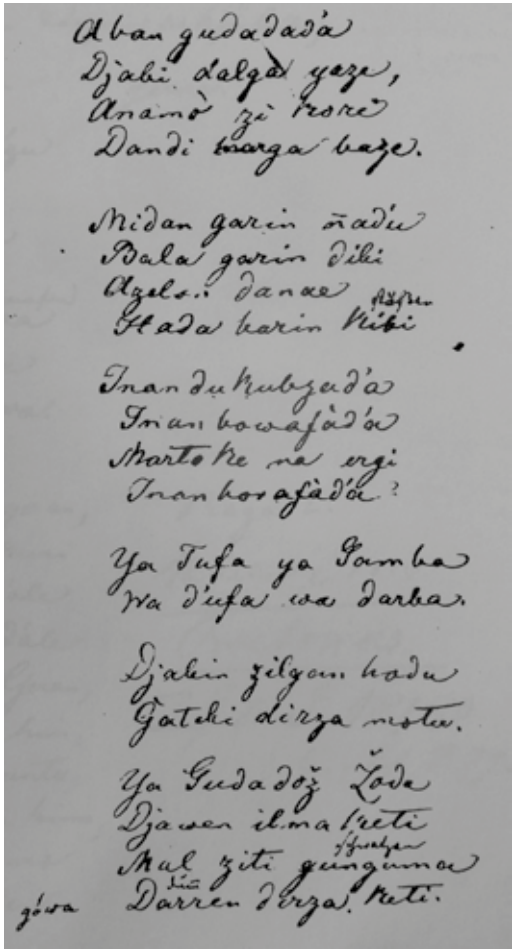


Fig. 1: Oromo poem documented by Amaan in 1841

sion by *nigus* Mïnilïk to establish an Oromo mission in Shewa, Mïnilïk wishing the Christianisation of his Oromo subjects. Helped by other missionaries, including the German-speaking Gobbaw Desta (the well-known diplomat and intellectual later known as *kentiba* Gebru[6]), they could stay in their missionary station 'Balli' until 1886. This small Protestant Oromo settlement was located nearby the Awash southeast of Finfinnee, as the Addis Ababa region was known at that time. Another German Oromo mission was established again in 1927 by the Hermannsburg Mission in Wollega.[7] This was facilitated by the close relationship between the regent *ras* Teferi and the missionary family Flad.

Craftsmen and missionaries in Christian Ethiopia starting from 1855

Besides the Oromo, Christian Ethiopia itself and the 'Jewish' Béte-Isra'él attracted German missionaries. The British- and Swiss-funded Protestant mission in Ethiopia was mainly carried out by Germans, the first being Isenberg, Blumhardt and Krapf in the 1830s in Tigray and Shawa. Isenberg, however, caused disputes about questions of doctrine, following which the mission was closed down. An invitation of *atsé* Téwodros II to the mission to send craftsmen, in order to introduce European technical know-how, led to the re-opening of the mission in 1856. This mission was based on the idea that Christian craftsmen reading and preaching the Bible in their free time to their neighbours, co-workers, soldiers and eventually students would be better suited to the situation in Ethiopia than priests. Their aim was primarily the promotion of a reform of the Orthodox Church from within. German lay missionaries then founded a German artisans' colony in Gefat, and also settled in Jenda among the Béte-Isra'él.[8] Emperor Téwodros II even married two of his grand-nieces to the missionaries Theophil Waldmeier and Karl Saalmüller. They set up schools, at which even German was taught, as German letters written by Ethiopians show. The so-called 'Falasha Mission' there was directed by Martin Flad. Starting from 1865, however, Téwodros' discontent with European politics resulted into the closure of the schools and the mission and the subsequent arrest of all Europeans. Most of them were Germans. This led to the 1867/68 British military intervention, under the leadership of General Napier from Bombay, which, as is well-known led to the assault of Meqdela and the suicide of *atsé* Téwodros II. After the end of the campaign, all Europeans were expelled by the British.

Ethiopian students in Germany starting from 1866

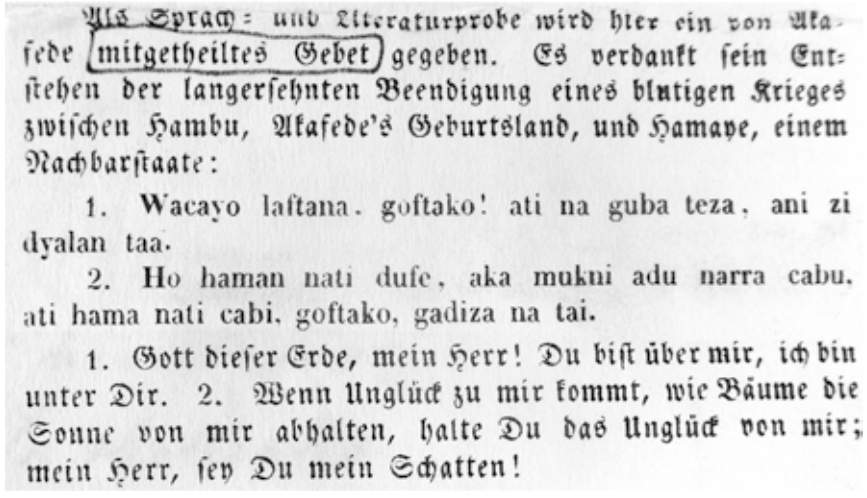
Several Ethiopian students were then brought to Jerusalem to stay at a German-directed school ('Das Syrische Waisenhaus'). Later, a number of them continued their education in St. Chrischona near Basle and also in Württemberg (see Smidt 2004). Among the most prominent of these students was Mika'él Aregawi,[9] who in 1873 continued the Béte-Isra'él mission in Ethiopia under the direction of Flad, who remained in Germany. Also another historical figure, the above-mentioned *kentiba* Gebru Desta, was a student of St. Chrischona. Starting from 1877 he was working as a German missionary. From the late 1880s he acted as a diplomat and administrator in Mïnilïk's services, and after the establishment of the

German Legation in Addis Ababa in 1905 as their official interpreter. The Ḥamasén priest qeshi Welde-Sillasé Kinfu, attended the theological courses at St. Chrischona in the 1870s. Then he worked on the Amharic Bible translation together with Krapf in southwestern Germany and was then in 1874 sent as a missionary to Tse`azzega in today's Eritrea.[10] 'Scholarship programmes' for Ethiopian students thus started very early, even if interrupted again after 1877. The first Ethiopian studying in Germany in the early 20th century was the artist, poet and singer Tesemma Eshete, later an influential minister of the Ethiopian ruler *lij* Iyasu.

Ethiopians appear at German universities at a comparatively early stage. The first academic of Ethiopian origin, who studied in Germany, was Ingdashet, also known as Wilhelm Schimper junior, the son of the above-mentioned German immigrant to Tigray. After visiting theological courses in St. Chrischona in 1872–73, he studied at the Polytechnicum at Karlsruhe until 1877. Later he worked as an engineer in Eritrea and then served, among others, as the interpreter of the scholarly important Deutsche Aksum-Expedition to Eritrea and Tigray in 1906, at the Legation and at the court of *atsé* Mïnilïk II in 1907.[11] When Germany formally established permanent diplomatic relations with Ethiopia in 1905, *atsé* Mïnilïk II also sent a university teacher to the Oriental Seminar at Berlin University, the Protestant aleqa Tayye Gebre-Maryam. His only student, Lorenz Jensen, later served as German diplomat in Addis Abeba, Harer and Desé. He was then the only European diplomat residing at the court of *nigus* Mika'él and *lij* Iyasu in Desé. The Africanist chair of Hamburg University also employed Ethiopian lecturers already starting from the 1920s.

The first Oromo research assistant and translator of the Bible, Ruufoo[12]

Ruufoo, the translator of the Holy Bible from the Oromo state of Guummaa, was part of the second generation of the few Oromo who lived in Germany in the nineteenth century (1866–1869). The first Oromo had begun arriving in Germany during the previous generation, and had stimulated important research on the language and culture of the Oromo. About 25 years had by now passed, and particularly German



Als Sprach- und Literaturprobe wird hier ein von Akafede mitgetheiltes Gebet gegeben. Es verdankt sein Entstehen der langersehnten Beendigung eines blutigen Krieges zwischen Hambu, Akafede's Geburtsland, und Hamaye, einem Nachbarstaate:

1. Wacayo laftana. goftako! ati na guba teza, ani zi dyalan taa.

2. Ho haman nati dufe, aka mukni adu narra cabu. ati hama nati cabi. goftako, gadiza na tai.

1. Gott dieser Erde, mein Herr! Du bist über mir, ich bin unter Dir. 2. Wenn Unglück zu mir kommt, wie Bäume die Sonne von mir abhalten, halte Du das Unglück von mir; mein Herr, sey Du mein Schatten!

Fig. 2: Oromo prayer from Hambo reproduced in a German newspaper in 1846, in an article on the Oromo in Germany, reported by Akkafedhee to Tutschek

missionaries had been harbouring growing hopes for the Oromo to one day become a culturally and politically important people in the Horn of Africa (and even as far as central Africa), if only they converted to the Protestant faith. The life of Ruufoo is a product of these aspirations.

Ruufoo was born around the year 1849 in the village of Gombootaa in Guummaa, to the south of the Christian Ethiopian kingdoms (not yet united at the time), and to the east of the Muslim sultanates of the Sudan. The geographical position of the Oromo states of this region (known as the Gibe states) attracted numerous expeditions of slave hunters from the Sudan. Especially Guummaa, located in the west of the region, lost a considerable part of its population in this manner, as an efficient system of self-defence was non-existent. The commercial interests of the political élite of Guummaa – the king (*mootii*) himself was implicated in the slave trade – exacerbated this problem. In 1860 or 1861, the then 11 or 12-year-old Ruufoo became a slave under these circumstances. Because his parents owed the king taxes, Ruufoo was taken away from them. According to him, *mootii* Onchoo (but in fact



Fig. 3: Portrait of Amaan Gondaa, also known as 'Karl Habasch' or 'Aman Almas', ca 1840

his successor) decreed the sale of their son to Ethiopian slave traders. In the history of the greater Ethiopian region, and especially of its western parts, several cases are historically documented in which tax obligations were settled through the forcible enslavement and sale of children. Ruufoo was taken to the western Ethiopian kingdom of Gojjam, where he worked as a domestic servant for a number of years. Once, however, he managed to escape, and found employment as a shepherd elsewhere. When he was finally recognised, he was returned to his previous owner. This was to crucially influence the direction his life was about to take, as his owner now opted to sell him into the Sudan (1865).

The slave market of Metemma (in the Sudanese province of Gallabat) was located on the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. Mostly young women and men from the peoples of the Oromo, Dinka, Berta, and others were sold here by Ethiopian and Arab traders. Ruufoo was by now around sixteen years of age and attracted the interest of a German missionary, who purchased him for 80 Thalers, in order 'to set him free' and become a mission worker. Only a few years ago, a small Protestant mission, dispatched from Switzerland, had been established here: The Saint Paul's Station of Metemma was being led by missionary Eipperle and his wife. It constituted the last missionary station on the so-called 'Street of the Apostles', which traversed Ethiopia and the Sudan and thus connected the north via loosely affiliated missionary stations with Ethiopia. One goal of this project was the supply and expansion of the mission in Ethiopia, but also the establishment of local schools (especially for non-Muslim children and youths, often former slaves), and – where possible – of local missions. But where did the mission's interest in Ruufoo originate? Krapf had never given up his hope to one day be able to continue and complete the translations, which he had started in 1840 with his Oromo assistant Barkii in Ankober, as mentioned above. The establishment of the 'Street of the Apostles' and the granting of funds from the London committee gave his hopes new foundations, and Krapf thus sent a purchase order – quite exceptional even within the context of the period – to the missionary station of Saint Paul's: they were to purchase an Oromo slave for him and send him to Württemberg, where he was to translate the New Testament with Krapf.

Ruufoo seemed to fulfil all the necessary requirements: he was young (and thus 'malleable'), and spoke Oromo as well as Amharic and a little Arabic. Though the missionary Eipperle had difficulties communicating with him, he began giving him some basic lessons in Christianity, in rudimentary Amharic (Eipperle) and bad Arabic (Ruufoo). In 1866, after a few months of lessons, the missionary Bühler departed from Metemma and took Ruufoo along with him to Egypt. Here, they met the well-known missionary Martin Flad. Accompanied by his foster son Mika'él Aregawi (who according to his biography stemmed from a family of converted Beté Isra'él), Flad was on the way to England, where he was to negotiate with Queen Victoria on behalf of the Ethiopian King of Kings Téwodros II. Flad continued the journey to London, and Ruufoo and Aregawi, roughly of the same age, travelled together via Marseilles and Basel to Württemberg, home of Flad and Krapf.

Aregawi, who already spoke German, became a pupil at the institution for the salvation of children at Weinheim near Heidelberg. Ruufoo was taken to Krapf's home in the pietistical settlement of Kornthal. While Krapf communicated with Ruufoo in Amharic, he also had a command of Oromo. He made Ruufoo take up the work on the New Testament immediately, but their cooperation was not free of conflict. Ruufoo seems to have complained that he was put to work, fulfilling several chores in the household, carrying water, etc., while the missionaries had claimed to have 'freed' him when buying him. Krapf retorted that he needed to reimburse him for his purchasing price (which in fact the London committee had paid) and for the travel costs by working – and threatened to sell him back into slavery if his resistance continued. In letters to missionary colleagues, Krapf pointed out that the headstrong character of Ruufoo must be broken if he was to ever become a good and useful Christian. As a matter of fact, Ruufoo had until then not even been christened. He did, however, develop a certain passion for the Christian stories he heard in the religious classes he attended in Kornthal beside other subjects. The translation made progress in the meantime. Ruufoo revised the translations of the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Matthew by Krapf and Barkii (printed in 1874) and translated – based on the Amharic translation of the Holy Bible – the Acts



Fig. 4: The St Chrischona hill with church, where the missionary students lived

of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans (printed in 1876) and the Gospel of Luke (printed in 1871). He even began working on the Old Testament, but his achievements did not outlast.

In the year 1867 Krapf became an interpreter in the service of the British-Indian Army, thus supporting the intervention against *atsé* Téwodros II. In this time, Ruufoo became a Ge^{c}ez assistant in the printing house at Saint Chrischona mission near Basel, near the German border, where the reprinting of Amharic Bibles was being prepared. After Krapf's return he continued the translation work with him (1868), but Krapf aborted them in the following summer. The majority if not all of the New Testament had by now been translated. At the same time *aleqa* Zenneb, *atsé* Téwodros II's former secretary, sent a translation of the New Testament from Tigray that he himself had written with the support of Oromo assistants and independently of Krapf. Unfortunately, both Ruufoo's and Zenneb's manuscripts are not preserved today any more, but we know that Krapf used Ruufoo's manuscript, written in Latin script, as a basis, and then created a new version written entirely in the Ge^{c}ez script. Where Zenneb's manuscript deviated,



Fig. 5: Photo from the period around the Christian baptism of the Oromo Bible translator Ruufoo (sitting on the left) in May 1869, with the Tigrayan-German missionary student Ingdashet alias Wilhelm Schimper in the centre and Mika'él Aregawi on the right, and other African missionary students of St Chrischona standing behind (from left: Samuel "of the White Nile", David Cornelius of the "Gold Coast", Abdala Dostum from Kordofan and a yet unidentified student)

Krapf used brackets.

The Gospel of Luke was printed in 1871, and the change in script is quite meaningful historically: the first manuscripts in the Oromo language had all been written in the Latin script, thus starting a writing tradition, which re-appeared much later in the 20th century. In the meantime, however, *nigus* Mïnelïk of Shawa had proposed the opening of an Oromo mission in his kingdom to the German missionaries Johannes Mayer and Friedrich Bender, who were waiting in Tigray, which now rendered the change in script sensible. Those few Oromo in Shewa who were literate used the Geᶜez script, and to introduce a new script would have posed an additional challenge. The year 1871 thus also marks a turning point in Oromo literary history. Previously, the missionaries had adhered to the general rule according to which all non-Christian peoples of Africa had received their own orthography in the Latin script. This rule was used in the case of the Oromo, too, a majority of whom at the time still lived outside of the Ethiopian empire. Mïnelïk's interest in the Christianisation of his Oromo subjects by foreign missionaries led to this rule being done away with. Since then, a Geᶜez orthography was being developed for the Oromo language.

Ruufoo himself was supposed to play an important role in this Oromo mission, but his life led him in a different direction. After the cooperation with Krapf had been aborted, he became a pupil at Weinheim near Heidelberg, just like Aregawi. He became an important source – and thus an early research assistant – for a small pamphlet about the Oromo, written by headmaster Ledderhose,[13] who was interested in the culture of the Oromo. His work is, however, just a minor contribution to Oromo research history, but this made Ruufoo also one of the first research assistants in the history of research on the Oromo.

But Ruufoo asked to be allowed to continue his education at Saint Chrischona mission near Basel in the following year. He had long reached the appropriate age to become a pupil of the mission. Krapf, however, advised his missionary colleagues to not be fooled by Ruufoo's friendly character, and to make his acceptance dependent on a stay in the agricultural 'penitentiary' of the mission: property of the farmer Christoffel in Riehen, who was known for his harsh treatment of mission pupils. To this advice Krapf added a comment according to which corporal punishment would surely help better the 'selfish' character of Ruufoo, which shows the mind-set of Krapf rather than the one of Ruufoo. Ruufoo became a farm hand, but soon fell ill in the winter and began to suffer from a lung condition. Around the turn of the year 1868/69 he was taken into the house of the mission's founder Christian Friedrich Spittler in Basel, the so-called 'Fälkli' (today part of the natural history museum), where Spittler's West African foster daughter Anjama cared for him.

Finally, the Swiss missionaries let themselves be convinced of Ruufoo's 'inner conversion' and accepted him into their educational institution, where he was taught in preparation of his christening. On 23 May 1869, in an event which attracted great public interest among the population of Basel, he was christened at Saint Chrischona. During the ceremony he received German baptismal names. He was now called 'Christian Paulus Ludwig Rufo', or Christian Rufo in short, Rufo thus becoming his German surname. The other names were given him after the most important events and persons in his life: Christian after the founder of the mission in Basle, Christian Spittler, Paulus (evoking the convert Paul, formerly Saul) after the mission of Saint Paul's in Metemma, where he had been purchased and thus freed from slavery, and Ludwig after his exigent instructor Johann Ludwig Krapf.

A photograph exists of this day, showing him together with other African mission pupils, some of them stemming from Ethiopia like him. At the same time it was decided that Ruufoo ought to continue his missionary education in the warmer climes of Jerusalem soon, before the coming winter and immediately after the beginning of his education in Saint Chrischona. A photograph from the summer of 1869 shows him along with the newly accepted missionary pupils of Saint Chrischona, with whom he now spent the remainder of his time. He must have spoken about the Oromo at great lengths and impressed the other pupils with his accounts – around the time of his departure, one of the missionary pupils, Niels Petersen from northern Germany, declared that he too wanted to travel and be among the Oromo as soon as possible. He was determined to suspend his education for the purpose of helping them and preaching among them. The mission's leadership strongly advised him against his plan, and pleaded with him to not put his education at risk, but he remained steadfast and left nonetheless, following his friend Ruufoo. The group photograph shows the two of them together; what became of Petersen remains unknown.

Ruufoo himself left for Jerusalem in the autumn of 1869, towards the German-led Syrian orphanage. In his letters, however, he continues to lament his ill health and, it seems, his solitude. In response to this Krapf suggested that he should become a missionary in the Oromo mission pre-

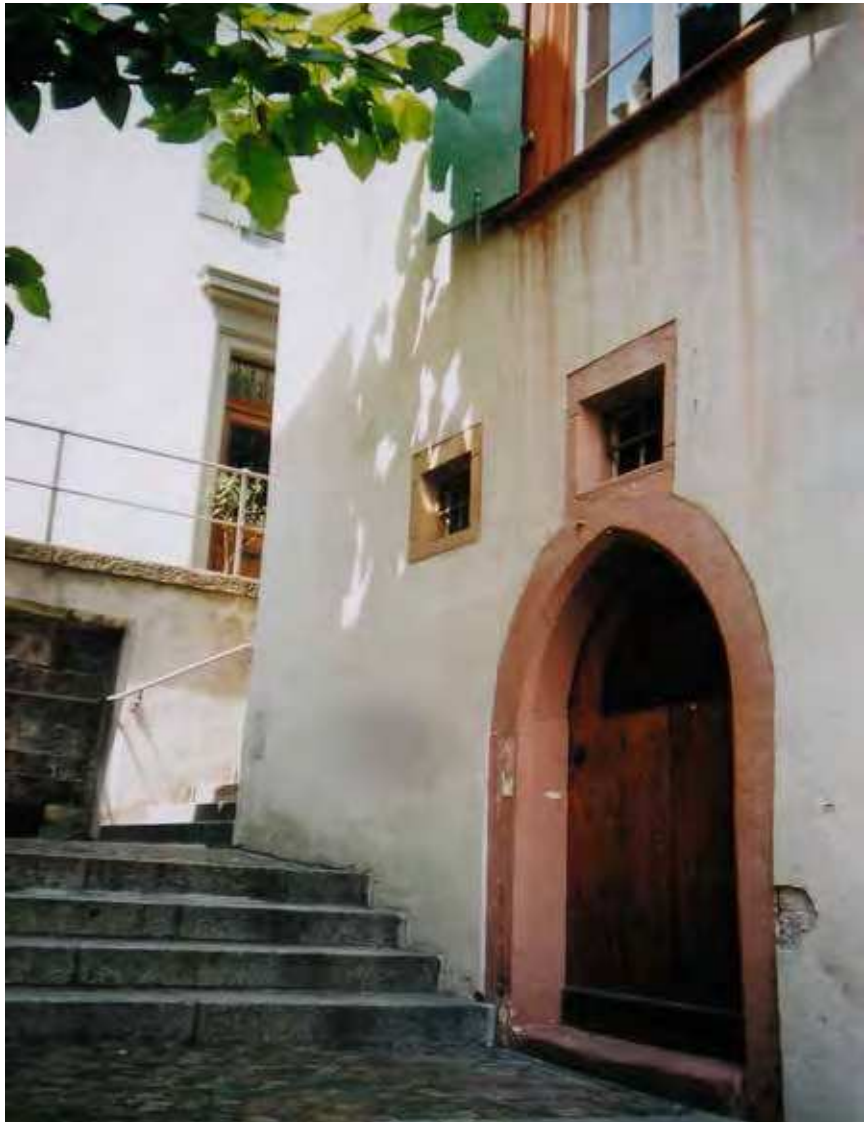


Fig. 6: The 'Fälkli', Spittler's house in the old town of Basle, where Ruufoo stayed in late 1868



Fig. 7: Ruufoo (second row, second from right) in 1869 as missionary student at St Chrischona, with other missionary students

pared by groups in the Canton de Vaud in French-speaking Switzerland. This was to avoid him being enticed away by the Catholics, who were also interested in the Oromo. Not much is known about this phase of his education. In the following year, 1870, Ruufoo moved from Jerusalem to Cairo, into the house of the German pastor Stamm. In his letters, Ruufoo describes Cairo as a metropolis devoted to the mundane the 'Kingdom of God is not as fast as a locomotive', he adds in a letter. But he does not manage to realize his dream of returning to the Oromo and of seeing his parents again. In January 1871, aged 21 or 22, he dies from the ensuing complications of the pulmonary disease he had contracted back in Europe.

Several aspects of his biography are remarkable. Ruufoo made the dream of the creation of an Oromo Bible possible. The complete translation of the Holy Bible into the Oromo language, which was written a generation later by a pupil of the Swedish mission, Onesimos Nesib, was based on Ruufoo's translation (Onesimos mentions having used it, but decided to rework the whole translation), as edited and published by Krapf. This makes Ruufoo – paradoxically not Christian himself while producing the translation – a pioneer of the later exceptionally successful Protestant mission among the Oromo. His New Testament was being widely circulated among the Shawan Oromo (1871–1886) by the mission, which now flourished for the first time. However, it also makes him a pioneer of the early Oromo literature. His translation of the Holy Bible is one of the earliest written examples of the Oromo language and hence an important part of the language's history: as has been seen, the history of the script especially is an important chapter here. During Ruufoo's lifetime, the Latin script, which had already been developed for the Oromo language, was being replaced with a Ge^{c}ez orthography, mainly for political reasons. The fate of Ruufoo can overall be seen as an especially striking illustration of the positive as well as the negative aspects of the mission's relation to Ethiopia, which was built up on the first results of linguistic and cultural research on the Oromo, started by Tutschek, and continued by Krapf, Ledderhose and others. In a certain sense he was both a victim and an active proponent of the notion of a new role for the Oromo in the Horn of Africa.[14]

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Photo credits

Fig. 1: Oromo poem documented by Amaan in 1841, from the collection of Tutschek; courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München

Fig. 2: Oromo prayer from Hambo reproduced in a German newspaper in 1846, in an article on the Oromo in Germany, reported by Akkafedhee to Tutschek, from *Das Ausland*, *Ein Tagblatt für Kunde des geistigen und sittlichen Lebens der Völker*, No. 229, 17 August 1846, pp. 913–915, here 914

Fig. 3: Portrait of Amaan Gondaa, also known as 'Karl Habasch' or 'Aman Almas', ca 1840 (from Firla 2001: 83, from the collections of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, Cod. hist. fol. 1012)

Fig. 4: The St Chrischona hill with church, where the missionary students lived, photo by Martin Goll, August 2014

Fig. 5: Photo from the period around the Christian baptism of the Oromo Bible translator Ruufoo (sitting on the left) in May 1869, with the Tigrayan-German missionary student Ingdashet alias Wilhelm Schimper in the centre and Mika'él Aregawi on the right, and other African missionary students of St Chrischona standing behind (from left: Samuel 'of the White Nile', David Cornelius of the 'Gold Coast', Abdala Dostum from Kordofan and a yet unidentified student), photo from the archive of St Chrischona (PM Archiv)

Fig. 6: The 'Fälkli', Spittler's house in the old town of Basle, where Ruufoo stayed in late 1868, photo by the author

Fig. 7: Ruufoo (second row, second from right) in 1869 as missionary student at St Chrischona, with other missionary students, photo from the archive of St Chrischona (PM Archiv)

Endnotes

1 This text has been written in two parts in 2004 and 2005. Its first part has been published as part of a longer text on the history of German-Ethiopian relations, which, however, is not accessible in libraries; the second part on the Oromo Bible translator Ruufoo has not been published yet. The first part is an extract of the short history of German–Ethiopian relations: Wolbert Smidt: „Five centuries of Ethio-German relations", in: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany (ed.): *Ethio-German Relations*. Addis Ababa 2004, pp. 6–14 (reworked version, Id.: „Germany, relations with [Ethiopia]", in: Siegbert Uhlig (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 2: *D–Ha*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2005, pp. 768–771). – For the purposes of this publication, bibliographic references were added and some editing was done. One version of the text was published in English and German electronically in the online exhibition of the Goethe-Institut Addis Abeba 'German-Ethiopian Relations' and also appeared on internet pages of Addis Tribune und The Ethiopian American, but the text is not available any more on any of them.

2 On his contribution to the foundation of Oromo Studies, see: Wolbert Smidt: 'Tutschek, Karl', in: Siegbert Uhlig in cooperation with Alessandro Bausi (eds.): *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 4: *O–X*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2010, p. 1008f.

3 Monika Firla: *Exotisch – höfisch – bürgerlich. Afrikaner in Württemberg vom 15. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Hauptstaatsarchivs Stuttgart*, Stuttgart 2001.

4 See on this story the most recent detailed study: Kerstin Volker-Saad: 'Machbuba: 'Die treueste Copie einer Venus von Tizian, nur in schwarzer Manier'', in: Kerstin Volker-Saad – Anna Greve (eds.): *Äthiopien und Deutschland. Sehnsucht nach der Ferne Ausstellung Grassi-Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, 28. April bis 16. Juli 2006*, München - Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag 2006.

5 See the following study of the far-reaching historical consequences of Ganamee's conversion and contact with the missionaries: Wolbert Smidt: „The Role of the Former Oromo Slave Pauline Fathme in the Foundation of the Protestant Oromo Mission", in: Verena Böll - Andreu Martínez d'Alòs-Moner - Steven Kaplan - Evgenia Sokolinskaia (eds.), Ethiopia and the Missions: Historical and Anthropological Insights into the Missionary Activities in Ethiopia, Münster: Lit 2005, pp. 77-98

6 See for example Bahru Zewde: Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia. The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century, Oxford – Athens, Ohio – Addis Ababa 2002; Bairu Tafla: "Four Ethiopian Biographies", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 7, 2, 1969, 22–31.

7 See Ernst Bauerochse: A vision finds fulfillment: Hermannsburg Mission in Ethiopia, Münster: Lit 2008 (Quellen und Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hermannsburger Mission und des Ev.-luth. Missionswerkes in Niedersachsen, Bd. 15); Id.: 'Die Arbeit der Hermannsburger Mission unter den Oromo und anderen Völkern in Äthiopien', in: *Land, Argrarwirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Zeitschrift für Land- und Agrarsoziologie* 14, 2/2000, S. 45–82; Id.: *Ihr Ziel war das Oromoland: Die Anfänge der Hermannsburger Mission in Äthiopien*, Münster: LIT 2006.

8 On the background see: Donald Crummey: *Priests and Politicians, Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia 1830–1868*, Oxford 1972; Gustav Arén: *Envoys of the Gospel in Ethiopia in the Steps of the Evangelical Pioneers*, Stockholm – Addis Ababa 1999; Wolbert Smidt: 'St. Chrischona-Pilgermission', in: Siegbert Uhlig in cooperation with Alessandro Bausi (eds.): *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 4: *O–X*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2010, pp. 730–732.

9 A biography of him was published in missionary circles: Friedrich Flad: *Michael Argawi. Ein mutiger Bekenner und Zeuge unter den Falascha in Abessinien, bearbeitet von Werner Sidler*, Basel 1952. – There is a great number of documents and source material on him and on some of the other Ethiopian co-missionaries and converts, among other letters written by Mika'él Aregawi himself in German, which have been published recently: Wolbert Smidt: 'Deutsche Briefe von Äthiopiern aus der Protestantischen Mission: Von der Reichseinigung unter Yohannis IV. bis zur großen Hungersnot (1879 bis 1889)', *Orientalia Parthenopea* 9, 2009 [2010], 9–52; Id.: 'Deutsche Briefe von Äthiopiern aus der Protestantischen Mission: Vom Fall des Téwodros bis zur Unterwerfung des Königs Minílik (1869 bis 1878)', *Orientalia Parthenopea* 8, 2008, 9–56; Id.: 'Deutsche Briefe von Äthiopiern 1855-1869 aus dem Umkreis der protestantischen Mission zur Regierungszeit von Tewodros II.', in: Denis Nosnitsin in collaboration with Sergei Frantsousoff – Leonid Kogan – Basil Lourié (eds.): *Varia Aethiopica. In Memory of Sevir Chernetsov (1943–2005)*, Saint-Pétersbourg: Byzantinorossica 2005 (= Scrinium, Revue de patrologie, d'hagiographie critiqueet d'histoire ecclésiastique, tome 1), 287–316.

10 On him see: Wolbert Smidt: "Wäldä Səllase Kənfu", in: Siegbert Uhlig in cooperation with Alessandro Bausi (eds.): *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 4: *O–X*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2010, p. 1110.

11 On his biography, which has only been researched recently, see among others: Wolbert Smidt: „Die äthiopischen und eritreischen Mittler", in: Stef-

fen Wenig (hrsg. in Zusammenarbeit mit Wolbert Smidt, Kerstin Volker-Saad und Burkhard Vogt): *In kaiserlichem Auftrag*: *Die Deutsche Aksum-Expedition 1906 unter Enno Littmann*, vol. 1, Aichwald: Verlag Lindensoft 2006 (Forschungen zur Archäologie Außereuropäischer Kulturen [FAAK], Band 3.1), 145–57, and the article already mentioned above, Id.: 'Annäherung Deutschlands und Aethiopiens' (2005/06). – See also a first study on him and the other Ethiopians, who had been educated in Germany since 1866: Wolbert Smidt: 'Les Africains de Bâle du 19ème siècle', in: Thomas David et al. (eds.): *De la traite des Noirs à la fin du régime de l'Apartheid*: *trois siècles de relations entre la Suisse et l'Afrique* (XVIII^{e}–XXI^{e} siècles), Münster: LIT-Verlag 2005, pp. 209–225.

12 This passage had been written in 2005 for a collection of German-Ethiopian biographies, planned by the Goethe-Institut, but which could not be realized. I express my gratitude to Jörg Weinerth and Dieter Klucke for their support and initiative in that time.

13 Karl Friedrich Ledderhose: Galla-Büchlein, Aus dem Leben der Galla-Negerin Pauline Johanne Fathme: ein Ruf zur Mission unter den Galla, Basel 1855.

14 The reader can find more details on Ruufoo's biography in the following publications: Wolbert Smidt, 'The unknown first Oromo bible translator Christian Rufo: Some insights from private missionary archives', in: *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, vol. 1, Addis Ababa 2002, pp. 634–650; Id., 'Quellenübersicht zur Biographie des ehemaligen Sklaven und ersten Oromo-Bibelübersetzers Christian Rufo', *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* (*AAP*) 67, 2001, pp. 181–97; Richard Pankhurst, 'The Beginnings of Oromo Studies in Europe', *Africa*. *Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto Italo-Africano* 31, 2, 1976, pp. 199–205 (in that time only the British documents mentioning him were known, without any details; it was unknown where he came from, and even unknown that he lived in Europe).

Annex:

Early Examples of Oromo Writing from the Tutschek Nachlass in Munich: Two Letters by the Oromo Ochuu Agaa and Akkafedhee from October 1840

The following two documents, translated for this publication by Ezekiel Gebissa,[1] are examples from the early collections of Oromo texts, which date from the 1840s, kept in the personal papers (Nachlass) of Karl Tutschek in the Bavarian State Library of Munich.[2] These letters are important accounts on the life situation of these two first informants on Oromo language and culture. They are among the first texts written in Oromo language and also mark the beginning of Oromo studies. But much more important than this, these two letters are important historical witnesses of the history of slavery in northeastern Africa and touching examples of what they had experienced after they were uprooted and how they had perceived what happened to them.

These two letters were followed by a number of other letters, many of which are still preserved in the same collection. Most letters have not been preserved in original, but in handwritten copies of that time, executed by Karl Tutschek, the teacher of the two Oromo, Ochuu Agaa and Akkafedhee. However, the first letter bears the original signature of Ochuu Agaa (inserted from the original letter). Some of them, such as the two reproduced here, have also been translated into German by Karl Tutschek, for his own language studies. Tutschek and his sponsors actively encouraged the exchange of views and experiences between the young Oromo in exile. Most letters are written in Oromo language, but also a few in German.

1. Letter by Ochuu Agaa to Akkafedhee (document entitled 'Aga Akafédef', numbered '1')

Peace, peace! Are you well? I had a plan to come but illness prevented me. Oh my friend, I cannot come now. If I am unable to come at all, I like you to come and visit me one day. In any event, how was your day today? What are you up to these days? How about these young people who are with you, brother? Are they helping you in any way? Dear brother, how is your health since you arrived in this country? Are the people of this country nice toward you? Do you feel comfortable in this country with all your heart? Personally, I like this country. But, my brother, I miss my sister a lot and feel quite depressed. Dear brother, I always remember that, since you left your country, you have been scared of being devoured by a monster. That fear turns my stomach. Are you not scared? Are the niger seeds[3] in your body giving you strength? I was quite terrified of being devoured by a monster. I left my country with some nourishment and I played with those who left with me. But we were always frightened. We were brought here with other slaves, [and as such] we don't have the stamina to eat food. How can we eat when the flames in our stomach eat us from the inside out? We felt like we've lost a lot of weight. We could not sleep, we could not stay still, my feet were itching with anticipation, not knowing whether today or tomorrow is the day we depart this country. Walking on this

land had burned the sole of my feet. This crooked country is wicked, this twisted country is vicious. The first time since I came to that destitute place,[4] I sleep well, I eat fine, and drink fine. Following the death of his bride, my master sold me to a well-known person.[5] He is a fine gentleman, he gives me money. After a while, he passed me on to another good man. Now I stay with this man. When you reply to this letter, I will send you another. I will send it to you in the hands of the person who taught me how to write.[6] Stay well.

München, 19 October 1840

[Signature: 'Oku Aaga Faraghk']

2. Letter by Akkafedhee to Ochuu Agaa (document entitled 'Akafede Agaf', numbered '2')

My dear brother, I say may all be pleasing to God for everything he has done for me today. He brought me to a nice place. Upon my departure, I said to myself: 'God snatched me away from the hands of my father and mother to punish me'. Oh no, it isn't like that. He led me to a nice place. Oh my brother, don't obsess anymore on the thought that you would be able to see your parents again. As they say, 'butter that had fallen into fire never gets back'. Everyone leaves their mother and father and live with tears of longing. You're not going to be united with your father and mother. You just have to persevere. Rather pray for them for God to provide them what they need to live well. If we continue to live in your kind of situation, even what we eat will not be nutritious to our bodies. We live in hope that what we do today will get us somewhere tomorrow. Just because you live in fear, you will not be able to flee this place in the middle of the night. When we are in the grips of fear, we are unable to think that we are on our way to somewhere more pleasant, somewhere we can sleep well at night. But God is gracious, he will send as in that direction. Who knows some day when you have grown up to go places on your own, your master will send you back to your country. Oh my brother, what would your mother say that day when you tell her: 'The stranger that sold me (into slavery) took me to a land I never knew. There, someone took me home and raised me. When I grew up, he counseled me to go back and look for my mother and father'. That day, your siblings and kinfolk will come out in droves and welcome you. Here my friends and I always talk about how our mothers and fathers are doing. We just talk about them but never get to see them. The four of us talk about this all the time. Because you're alone, you ruminate over how your mother and father are doing. Pray to God. May he be gracious toward you. Live in peace, until we meet again under happier circumstances.

München, 21 October 1840.

Endnotes

[1] Professor at the Department of Liberal Studies, Kettering University, Flint, MI, USA. We thank Monika Firla for her information on these documents and her support. A critical translation and re-translation of all Oromo documents in this collection, to make them available to the wider public in Ethiopia and beyond, is an important desideratum.

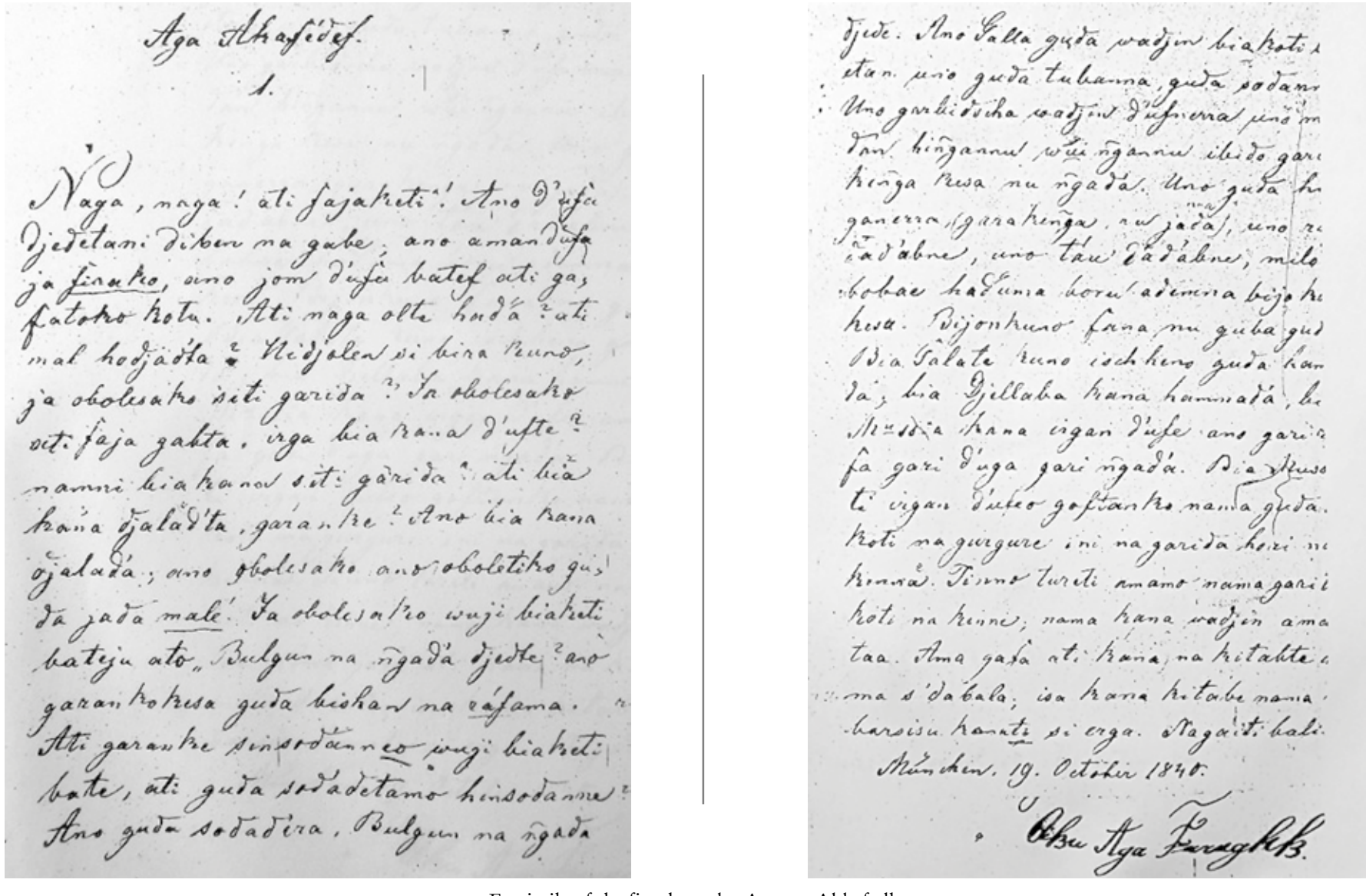
[2] Collection 'Tutschekiana', Nr. 28: Collection of letters ('Hafuri kan Aga'f Akafede'f Amana'ti').

[3] *Noogii* in Oromo. The writer means to ask 'is the food you ate when your were young and back home giving you strength to withstand the pain of being homesick'.

[4] This seems a reference to the place in northeastern Africa he arrived in after a new person purchased him, before leaving to Germany, where his life improved according to his narrative ('I sleep well').

[5] This shows, that despite the fact that the young man was officially considered free already, he himself perceived the continued master-relationship as a continuation of his former status as slave.

[6] Evidently his teacher Karl Tutschek, whom he, in return, taught the Oromo language.



Aga Akafedef.

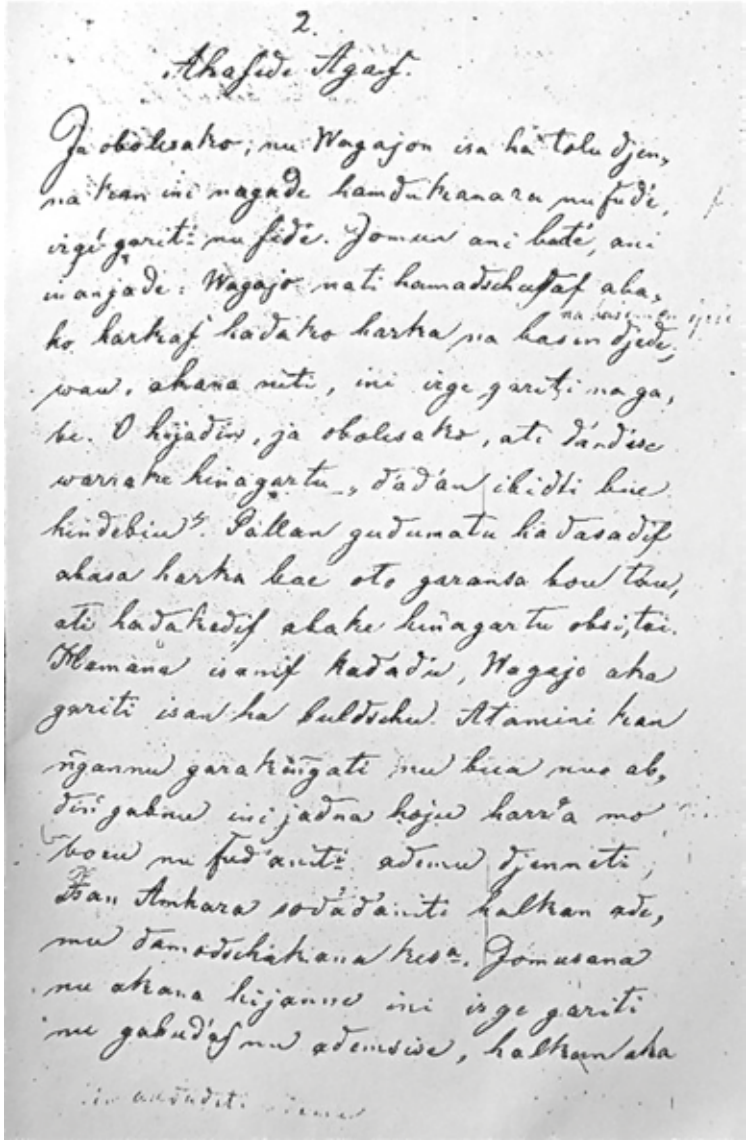
1.

Naga, naga! ati fajakeli? Ano d'ufu djedetani diben na gabe, ano amandufa ja finaho, ano jom d'ufu batef ati gafatoko koto. Ati naga olte hod'a? ati mal hodjad'ta? Nidjalen si bira kuno, ja obolesako iti garida? Ja obolesako oti faja gakta, irga bia kana d'ufte? nammi bia kano siti garida? ati bia kana djalad'ta, garanke? Ano bia kana djalad'a; ano obolesako ano obolotiko gu da jada male. Ja obolesako wuji biakeli bateju ato, Bulgun na ngad'a djedte? ano garanko kesa guda bishan na safama. Ati garanke sinsodanneo jugi biakeli bate, ati guda sodadetamo hinsodanne? Ano guda sodadira, Bulgun na ngada djede. Ano falla guda wadjin biakoti etan. ano guda tubanna, guda sodanno Ano garbidiha wadjin d'ufnera, ano m dan. hinganna, wuji nganna ibeido gare hinga kesa nu ngad'a. Ano guda ha ganerra, garahinga, nu jad'a, ano ra ad'abne, ano tau d'ad'abne, milo bobae hadunna boru adimna bijo ku kesa. Bijonkuno fana nu guba gud Bia Salate kuno ischkino guda han da, bia Djillaba kana hammad'a, bi Mesbia kana igan d'ufe ano gari fa gari d'uga gari ngad'a. Bia Mus ti igan d'uteo gostanko nama guda. koti na gurgure ini na garida koni n kinna? Tinno tureti amano nama gari koti na kinne, nama kana wadjin ama taa. Ama gafa ati kana, na kitabte ma s'dabala; isa kana kitabe nama barsisu kanate si erga. Nagaiti bali.

München, 19. October 1840.

Obu Aga Farogleb.

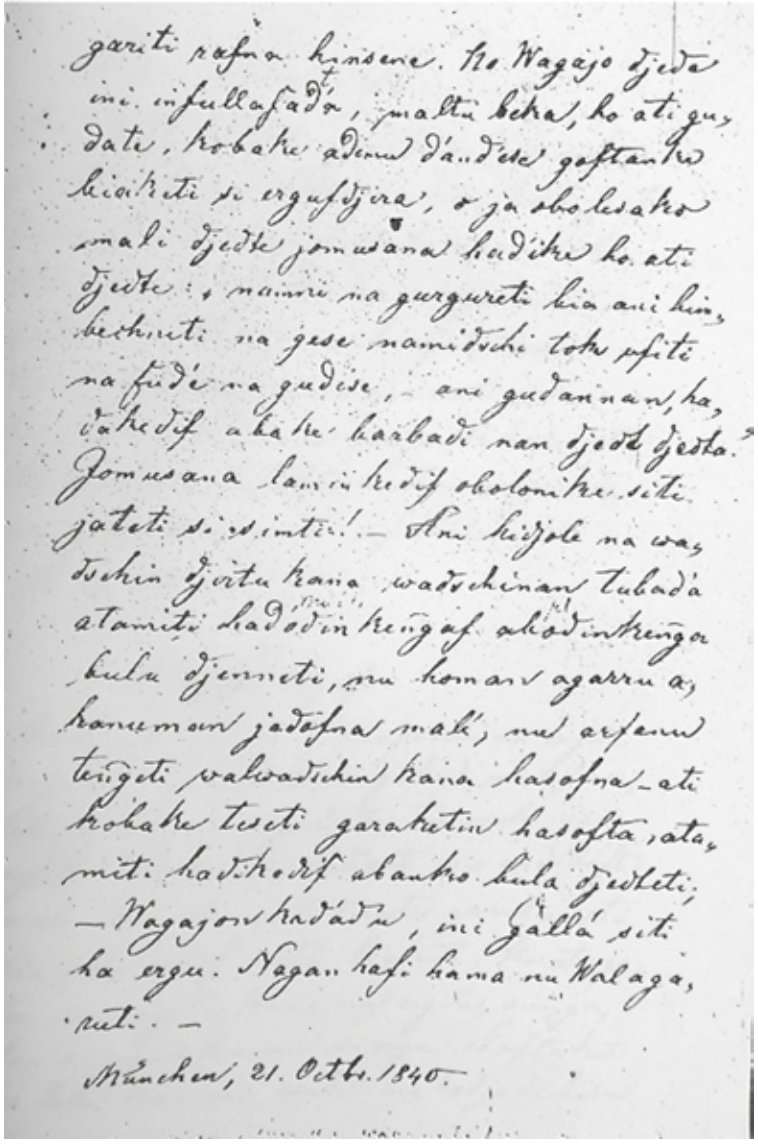
Facsimile of the first letter by Agaa to Akkafedhee



2.

Akafude Agaf.

Ja obolesako; nu Wagajon isa ha tolu djen, na kan ini nagade hamdukanaaru nufudi, irgu gariti nufide. Jomun ani bade, ani inanjade: Wagajo nati hamadschufaf aba, ko harkaf hadako harka pa kasun djede, paw, akana nuti, ini irge gariti naga, be. O hijadin, ja obolesako, ati dandise warrake kinagartu, dadan ikidli kine kindebin. Pallan gudumatu ka dasadif akasa harka kac ote garansa kon tau, ati kadakedif akake kinagartu obsitai. Kamana isanif kadadu, Wagajo aka gariti isan ka Guldschu. Atamini kan ngannu garakungati nu kica nus ab, dini jadnu ini jadna kojo karra mo bow nu fudanuti ademu djenneti, dan Amkara 10 dadainti kalkan ade, nu damodschiakana kesa. Jomusana nu akana kijannu ini irge gariti nu gabudaf nu ademsise, kalkan aka



gariti pafna kinsene. Ko Wagajo djede ini infullafadu, gnaltu beka, ko ati gu, date, kobake ademu dandede gaftan ko kicikuti si erguf jira, o ja obolesako mali djede jomusana kadike ko ati djede: naanni na gurguruti kia ani kin, bechuti na gese namidschi tok pfiti na fudi na gudise, ani gudannan, ka, dakedif akake karbadi nan djede djeka. Jomusana lamin kedif obolonike siti jateti si sinti! — Ani kijole na wa, dschin djetu kana wadschinan tubada atamiti kadodin kungaf akodinkungo kulu djenneti, nu konan agarru a, kanemun jadafna mali, nu arfannu tenguti walwadschin kana kasofna ati kokake tseti garaketin kasofta, ata, miti kadikedif akantko kula djeketi. — Wagajon kadadu, ini Galla siti ka ergu. Nagan kafi kama nu Walaga, ruti. —

München, 21. Octbr. 1840.

Facsimile of the first letter by Akkafedhee to Agaa