INVISIBLE ACTORS: THE OROMO AND THE CREATION OF MODERN ETHIOPIA (1855-1913)

BY

BRIAN JAMES YATES

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Emeritus Donald Crummey, Chair
Assistant Professor James Brennan
Associate Professor Mohammed Hassen Ali, Georgia State University
Swanlund Professor Fred Hoxie

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Brian J. Yates, Ph.D.
Department of History
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Donald Crummey, Adviser

This is a comprehensive study of key Oromo actors in the central Ethiopia traditional provinces of Wällo and Shäwa, specifically the Mammadoch of Wällo and the Tulama of Shäwa during the reigns of Emperors Téwodros II (r.1855-68), Yohannes IV (1872-1888) and Menilek II (1889-1913). The Oromo entered the political arena in the highlands of Ethiopia in the aftermath of Ahmed Grañ's 16th century invasion, and this work aims to trace not only their roles in the creation of Ethiopia, but also the significant shifts in ethnic identity due to many local and national cultural practices used to endear ethnic groups to each other during the reigns of the aforementioned Emperors. Dominant scholarship generally ignores these Oromo actors and focus on the relationship between the Church and State or on Oromo state construction. I argue that after being cast as *Häbäsha*, elite Oromo actors, such as *Ras* Gobana (192?-1888), *Fit.* Häbtä Giyorgis (184? – 1926) and *Ras* Mikaél (later *Negus* r.1914-1916) played key roles in the state and brought it into the modern age during the reign of Menilek, and after when they put one of their own, Iyasu Mikaél, on the throne through an alliance of the Shäwan and Wällo Oromo elites in 1913.

To my Mother, who did not buy me the book, but taught me how to read.

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"History lost, is History not sought"
Oromo Proverb[2]

Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual nation, and perhaps its most diverse ethnic group is the approximately 35 million Oromo, who historically spoke a variety of languages and dialects, practiced many religions and have been employed in a multitude of professions. Dominant Ethiopian and Western scholarship has viewed them as uncivilized and barbaric, evidenced by two views: Ethiopia's "decline" during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* ("Age of Princes" 1786-1853) when northern Oromo groups began to obtain political dominance and the expansion of Emperor Menilek's (r.1889-1913) state at the expense of the southern Oromo.[3] Beginning with Mohammed Hassen's 1990 text, Oromo historiography attempts to challenge this view, which, in turn, challenges many notions of the Ethiopian state. However, both dominant Semitist scholarship and Oromocentric scholarship obscure understandings of major Oromo political actors, especially those of the central provinces of Wällo and Shäwa in the 18th and 19th century, who played key roles in constructing the modern state. The fundamental issue of this work is how did groups defined as outsiders become an integral part of a reconstituted Ethiopian state?

I came to be interested in the relationship of the Oromo with the Ethiopian state after reading the classic works of the canon, and I noticed that there were occasional references to the "Galla[4]," but nothing substantive on their role in Ethiopia.[5] I began to

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[1] For the purposes of this work, I am defining any study that focuses on groups within the current territory of the nation of Ethiopia as Ethiopianist.

[2] George Cotter, *Proverbs and Saying of the Oromo People of Ethiopia and Kenya with English Translation*, African Studies #25 (Ontario: The Edwin Mullen Press, 1992), 6.

[3] There is some disagreement in regards to the beginning of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, some argue for it beginning in the death of Emperor Iyoas in 1769, and ending it with Tewodros coronation in 1855. I agree with Shiferaw Bekele and date it according to his article Shiferaw Bekele, "The State in the Zamana Masafent (1786-1853): An Essay in Reinterpretation in Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurst, and Shiferaw Bekele, *Kasa and Kasa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1855-1889)* (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1990).

[4] The "Galla" is a difficult term to accurately define due to its shift in meaning. Generally, it is a derogatory term created by the Häbäshä to describe the Oromo. During the *Zämäna Mäsafent* this term described the migrating Oromo groups, but in the time of Menelik II, this term acquired a class distinction due to the Shäwans, who were Gurage, Amhara or Oromo, who conquered the southern Oromos. Generally, these Shäwans were called Amhara and the conquered subjects were called "Galla," regardless of ethnicity. I

read further in the Ethiopian historical canon and found works on individual Oromo leaders, but nothing significant on the relationship of Oromo groups in relation to the Ethiopian state. As I continued my search, I found works focused on the Oromo, but they ignored Oromo relations with Ethiopia before the late 19th century. My goal is to describe the role of Northern Oromo groups within the Ethiopian state during the 19th century. This project will give a more complex view of not only the Oromo, but also the Ethiopian state.

This dissertation will describe the role of the Oromo in current Ethiopian meta-narratives and examine the ways in which they have been left out of Ethiopia's history, which generally has been the history of the Abyssinians (Amharas, Tigrés and Agaws).[6] These meta-narratives produce a lens which is blind to the contributions of non-Abyssinians to the Ethiopian state.[7] In relation to this trend in Ethiopianist literature, many Oromo and Westerners have attempted to put the Oromo back into the Ethiopianist discourse by examining Ethiopian history, generally in the modern era, from an Oromocentric perspective. This lens perceives two separate nations, Oromia and Ethiopia, and recasts Ethiopia as a pawn in Europe's scramble for Africa.[8] While these

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prefer not to use the term, other than in direct quotations. For a discussion of the various meanings of the term see Begna F. Dugassa, "Knowledge, Identity and Power: The Case of Ethiopia and Ethiopianess," *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 13, no. 1 & 2 (2006), 70-1.

[5] The Classic works of the canon are listed in the next footnote and make up the school I define as the Semitist school.

[6] Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes, the Challenges of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire (1769-1855)* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968); Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, The Peoples of Africa. (Oxford; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998) and Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians; an Introduction to Country and People*, 3d ed. (London, New York,: Oxford University Press, 1973). This tradition is summed up particularly well in Christopher Clapham, "Rewriting Ethiopian History" (paper presented at the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg, July 2003), 3-5 and Alessandro Triulzi, "Battling with the Past: New Frameworks for Ethiopian Historiography," in *Remapping Ethiopia : Socialism & After*, ed. Wendy James, et al. (Oxford, England; Addis Ababa; Athens: J. Currey, Addis Ababa University Press, Ohio University Press, 2002), 277-8. Triulzi refers to this school as the "Church and State" Tradition.

[7] The Ethiopian state has had many incarnations. It has been led by a variety of ethnic groups and the various incarnations are linked by hoe agriculture, Semitic religions and it is generally centered in the highland plateau of the Horn of Africa. On more on issues of Ethiopia and Ethiopianity see Negussay Ayele, "Reflections on Ethiopia and Ethiopianity: Ethiopia in Perspective," *Ethiopian Review* 7, no. 2 (1997); Begna F. Dugassa, "Knowledge, Identity and Power: The Case of Ethiopia and Ethiopianess"

[8] Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1990); Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia : State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict, 1868-1992* (Boulder: L. Rienner, 1993); ———, *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse : The Search for Freedom and Democracy* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1998); ———, *Fighting against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

lenses have produced a degree of knowledge about the nature of the interactions between the Oromo and the Amhara, the Semitist[9] (works that focus solely on those who speak Semitic languages) approaches (Pankhurst, Ullendorf and Marcus) leave out the Oromo and the Oromocentric (Jalata, Holcomb and Ibssa) approaches focus heavily on the Southern Oromos and essentialize both the Oromo and the Amhara ethnic categories. There is a third lens that has been used mainly by anthropologists, but it fails to focus the Oromo within the Ethiopian nation due to its production of ethnographies and micro-histories that lack contextualization within the larger nation.[10]

Although these lenses in the Ethiopian canon are generally distorting, they are examples of works that succeed in presenting insightful and elucidating scholarship that contributes to a more productive picture of the Oromo. These works, among which the present work is an example, will eventually be a part of a fourth lens, a lens that views the Oromo as leaders of the late 18th and early 19th century Ethiopian state, and complicates Oromo experiences in Ethiopia by removing essentialist ethnic categories and singular conceptions of the state that are prevalent in current Ethiopianist works. It will challenge notions of these essentialist ethnic categories and incorporate the contributions of Oromo actors in understandings of a modernizing multi-ethnic Ethiopian state.

The Status of the Oromo in Ethiopian Historiography

Perhaps Paul Thomas' blurb on the back of the book jacket of Marcus' *A History of Ethiopia* sums up the view of the Semitist scholars on the Ethiopian state the best,

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In addition, works in the *Journal of Oromo Studies* and a recent issue of the *Journal of Northeast African Studies*, which were reprinted in Ezekiel Gebissa ed. *Contested Terrain: Essays on Oromo Studies, Ethiopianist Discourses, and Politically Engaged Scholarship* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2009) are also part of this canon.

[9] I define Semitist scholars as those who study groups in Ethiopia that they believe to have Middle Eastern descent, speak a Semitic language, practice hoe agriculture and Christianity.

[10] P. T. W. Baxter, Jan Hultin, and Alessandro Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries* (Lawrenceville, N.J.; Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996); Donald L. Donham and Wendy James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia : Essays in History & Social Anthropology* (Oxford; Athens; Addis Ababa: J. Currey; Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa University Press, 2002); Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860*, African Studies Series ; 66. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). The Donham and James text addresses the issue of the incorporation of Southern groups, including the Oromo, which it does well. However, the general lack of studies on the incorporation of Northern groups gives the impression that the North conquered the South, instead of the center (Shäwa) conquering both the Northern and Southern areas. For example, see James McCann, "The Political Economy of Rural Rebellion in Ethiopia: Northern Resistance to Imperial Expansion, 1928 - 1935," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18, no. 4 (1985).

"Marcus views Ethiopian history as a series of cyclical expansion from its component parts to empire and back again: he argues that the idea of the greater Ethiopian nation will always cause the state to reunify despite its current disintegration . . ."[11] This quote describes a concept of the Ethiopian nation that dates back to Aksumite times and that its component parts are just as old. In addition, the Semitist scholars suggest that the Semitic people are the natural inheritors and propagators of this idea of the greater Ethiopian nation. Another factor is the focus on the emperors of the late 19th century, at the expense of both earlier emperors and provincial rulers.[12] The Semitist focus on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the fact that it is the traditional archive of Ethiopia has led many scholars to reproduce many of the ethnocentric views of the Church.[13] These combine to form a "Great Tradition" school which views the Amharas/Tigrés as the natural leaders of millennia old state in highlands that declines both intellectually and politically when the Oromo gain prominence and view Menilek's late 19th century expansion as a reunification of a Semitic state.

Harold Marcus' view of Ethiopia does not go beyond the Amhara-Tigrinyan-Agaw[14] people, which leaves out the accomplishments of the Oromo people and defines their reign during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* as that of usurpers. He writes, discussing the decline of the Yäjju Oromo state and the rise of Tigré power in 1828, "Seeing the Yeju dynasty weakened, Sabagadis [a Tigré ruler] turned to Dej. Wolde Sellassie's old goal of building a coalition to restore the Amhara-Tigray to their rightful place in Gonder."[15] He ends his chapter stating that the Oromo leaders of "Ethiopia's disunity" were defeated by Tewodros and names the next chapter "Imperial Resurrection."[16] In addition, according

[11] Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, n.p.
[12] T. O. Ranger, "Towards a Usable African Past" in *African Studies since 1945: A Tribute to Basil Davidson*, ed. Christopher Fyfe (London: Longman, 1976), 18. Ranger labels this as "culture heroes" and lists it as a major weakness of African studies in the 1960s and 70s.
[13] These views include defining all non Christians as inferior and finding religious rationale for important developments in Ethiopian history, such as the Oromo migrations of the 16th century.
[14] I understand that Agaw people are defined as Kushitic; however during their period of ascendancy 9th century - 13th century they became *Häbäsha*. Also see Taddesse Tamrat, "Processes of Ethnic Integration and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Agaw," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988).
[15] Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, 57.
[16] Ibid., 62.

to Ezekiel Gebissa, he views Oromo studies in general as equally disastrous to the continued existence of the Ethiopian state.[17]

Mordechai Abir's *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes*, the canonical text of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, a period where central authority declined and the Oromo were dominant, takes a Semitist approach to the period, which ignores extensive interactions between the groups and the role of the Oromo as leaders of the state. He writes, describing the Oromo migrations ". . . the Galla who invaded Ethiopia in the sixteenth century were deeply disunited, had no 'ideology' and were only seeking a better land to settle in . . ."[18] Jan Hultin likens their view to the flowing of water. He writes, "A river has no flow of its own volition and its direction has no purpose."[19] Abir also denigrates Oromo rule during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*. He writes, "It was evident that the Galla nobility was not able to bring peace and unity to the country. The Galla were far too disunited among themselves and too deeply hated by the Amhara and Tigreans to be able to take advantage of their temporary dominance."[20] This account is simplistic and ignores, for example, the extensive intermarriage between Oromo and Amharas and Tigrinyans as a result of which many Ethiopian political leaders during the period had Oromo descent.

Pankhurst presents the Oromo during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* in a more positive manner, but still works from assumptions similar to those of Marcus. He states, during the reign of Iyo'as (r.1755-69) and quoting the 18th century Scottish traveler James Bruce, "'nothing was heard at the palace but Galla,' and the emperor 'affected to speak nothing else.' The Oromos, who two centuries earlier had been fighting on the empire's periphery, had gained very considerable influence at the capital of the realm."[21] He claims that the Oromo were "integrated or re-integrated" into the Ethiopian empire during

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[17] Ezekiel Gebissa, *Contested Terrain*, viii. He relates a personal story where Marcus said to him "Why do you want to destroy this country, why don't you take it over." As my work will show the Oromo have already partly taken over the country, becoming integral to not only the politics of this nation, but also in understandings of this country.

[18] Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes*, xxii.

[19] Jan Hultin, "Perceiving Oromo: 'Galla' in the Great Narrative of Ethiopia" in Baxter, Hultin, and Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo*, 86. In addition, the Haitian scholar, Michel-Rolph Trouillot describes this type of thinking as taking the humanity away from groups deemed inferior. Thus, these views cast the Oromo and in his case study, enslaved Africans, as only reacting to outside stimuli. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past : Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995), 83-95. It is also echoed in Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia : The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 79-80.

[20] Abir, *Ethiopia*, 137.

[21] Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, 126.

this Gondarine kingdom, (which again presupposes the existence of the Ethiopian empire before it existed.)[22] Ullendorf's work, *The Ethiopians* has been largely discredited in Ethiopianists circles, but it remains a good example of Semitist scholarship that not only attributes all civilization in Ethiopia to Semitic peoples, but also locates its source outside of the African continent in South Arabia.[23] He writes, concerning the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, "the Gallas continued their penetration, and material progress or intellectual development was virtually unknown."[24] He views the "Galla" and Muslim presence as solely detrimental to Ethiopian civilization and posits them as the leading cause of disunity and civil unrest during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*.[25]

The crux of the Semitist case for the superiority of Semitic civilization is found in the connection between the modern Ethiopian and the Ancient Aksumite Empire. Crummey writes, "A founding assumption, then, was that there was continuity between modern Ethiopia and the Ethiopian kingdom which traced its past back to Aksum."[26] And, the Ethiopian Historian Bahru Zewde writes, "The story of the Queen of Sheba, *which no self respecting historian could take seriously, was a cardinal element of that* legitimacy. Ethiopian history could only be the story of the *Semitic* north, with the peoples of the south as objects rather than subjects of history."[27] (emphasis mine) Thus, the Kushitic Oromo have been objects of history in both the North and South because they did not have a legitimate source of authority.

Messay Kebbede is generally more Pro-Ethiopian than anti-Semitic and argues that Western historians have over-emphasized connections with Southern Arabia and its

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[22] In terms of the Ethiopian empire, I use this term to describe Menelik's state. Earlier polities are defined as the Abyssinian Empire. I draw this distinction primarily due to territory. Shäwa generally has been understood as the southernmost point of Abyssinia, however, the states of the early Solomid period (1270-1527) have extended further south, but Shäwa is the center of the Ethiopian empire. In addition many Oromo territories are part of Ethiopia, but not part of Abyssinia. Lastly, I am not arguing that these states are necessarily different culturally or religiously, this distinction is solely territorial.

[23] Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, 45-52. It is also interesting to point out that *Häbäsha* scholars before the modern era argued that the Oromo originated from Asia, discrediting their claims to lands in Southern Ethiopia.

[24] Ibid., 75.

[25] Carlo Conti Rossini echoes this point arguing that the period after Grañ is defined by the Abyssinian reaction to the Oromo. See Carlo Conti Rossini, *Etiopia E Genti D'Etiopie*. (Firenze: R. Bemporad, 1937), 63.

[26] Donald Crummey, "Ethiopian Historiography in the Latter Half of the Twentieth Century: A North American Perspective," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2001): 7-24, 9.

[27] Bahru Zewde, "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2000): 1-26, 4.

corresponding civilization. The main question that Messay attempts to address is how connected the modern Ethiopian state is to ancient Aksumite civilization, which some argue is a Middle Eastern civilization.[28] In other words, is Ethiopian civilization just an adoption of Middle Eastern political norms? The answer could add further evidence to the thesis that Africans cannot develop civilizations. This line of thinking implies, if Ethiopian civilization was borrowed from Semitic people, then the only ones who could promote this civilization would be Semitic people. He presents linguistic evidence for the innate "Ethiopianness" of many elements of Ethiopian social systems.[29] He states that the societal distinctions, such as way of life, language and organizing structure of society of Semitic and Cushitic are not rigid as presented in the historical record, rather he refers to Menelik's subjugation of the Southern territories as "a reunification of two component parts that went separately as a result of a divergent evolution,"[30] but meaning that the 19th century expansion of the empire was a reunification, not of Christian Abyssinia, but rather of a people with a common source who had taken different paths centuries ago.

Continuing the critique of Semitist scholarship, another Ethiopianist, the sociologist Teshale Tibebu, describes the various images of Ethiopia that have been produced by Western scholars in order to fit this nation into preconceived world views.[31] Africa was/is defined by its perceived lack of civilization, thus many images were used to rationalize Ethiopia's independence in Africa during the late 19th and early 20th century. Of these views, the Semitic lens most closely aligns with the Civilized Image and the Oromocentric lens aligns with the Black Colonialism image. Teshale writes on the Western Civilized image, which holds, "that Ethiopians are Semitic, not Negroid; civilized, not barbaric; beautiful, not ugly; and so on all are images of Orientalist *Semiticism in the Western paradigm of knowledge.*"[32] Generally, this view has been

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[28] The issue of the "Africanness" of the Semitic languages in Ethiopia is a hotly debated issue, generally the Semitists argue it is rooted in the Middle East, while more recent scholarship posits it in the African side. See Ayele Bekerie, *Ethiopic: An African Writing System, Its History and Principles* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997), 18-22.

[29] Massay Kebede, "Eurocentrism and Ethiopian Historiography: Deconstructing Semitization," *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2003): 15-6. "Ethiopianness" in this sense means any culture living within the present boundaries of Ethiopia. Dugassa, "Knowledge, Identity and Power" 61.

[30] Massay, "Eurocentrism and Ethiopian Historiography: Deconstructing Semitization," 17.

[31] Teshale Tibebu, "Ethiopia: The "Anomaly" And "Paradox" Of Africa," *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 4 (1996): 414-30.

[32] Ibid., 427.

perpetuated implicitly by the *Häbäsha* focus of many Ethiopianist studies and the presentation of the Oromo during the *Zämänä Mäsafent*. The Western Semitist scholars have been criticized for their conceptions of Ethiopia, but their legacy still continues to influence many Oromo scholars who in reaction give the Oromo people not only a homogeneous culture, but also a country, Oromia.[33]

The Semitic school is linked by three main trends. One, the Semitic speaking peoples of the Horn are partly derived from Middle Eastern stock and are the most civilized of the people in the highlands. Two, the Oromo and Amhara are eternal enemies due to mutual hatred and immutable cultural traditions. Three, due to the innate inferiority of the Oromo, they not only cannot rule Ethiopia, but they should not rule Ethiopia. The Oromocentric lens agrees with two of the Semitic tenets, that the *Häbäsha* are from the Middle East and are the eternal enemies of the Oromo. However they argue that the Oromo are in fact superior, present in all of the traditional Abyssinian provinces for several centuries and a unified nation linked by culture and descent. The Oromocentric lens also silences the Northern Oromo groups who played a role in the creation of modern Ethiopia, because their presence simultaneously erases the immutable differences between the Oromo and the Amhara and decreases the ethnic component of the conquests of Menilek II in the late 19th century.[34]

Using the Oromocentric lens, scholars have sketched out the boundaries of Oromia and argued that the Amharas, with the help of European colonial powers, colonized the Oromo nation.[35] A key element of their philosophy is that, they, as Oromo, have unique access to the collective consciousness of all Oromo at all times.[36] They argue that the Ethiopian nation is not three thousand years old; but rather barely one hundred

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[33] See Asafa Jalata, "The Struggle for Knowledge" in Asafa Jalata, ed., *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, 253-7.

[34] Trouillot makes a similar point relative to the memory of Haitian slave rebellions, where conflicts within the rebel groups are ignored so that the glorious images of its heroes would remain unscathed see Chapter 2 of Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.

[35] Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*. Maimire Mennasemay refers to this school as the "Colonial Thesis" and presents a strong criticism of its tenets writing ". . . with a borrowed theory, that of colonialism, that ontologizes ethnic identity and falsely represents Ethiopia as a collection of discrete, ethnic communities, bought together by "Amhara Colonialism" in Maimire Mennasemay "Ethiopian History and Critical Theory: The Case of Adowa" in Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia eds. *The Battle of Adowa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory Against European Colonialism*. (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005).

[36] Ezekial Gebissa, "Introduction: The Oromo in Ethiopian Studies" in Gebissa, *Contested Terrain*, 10.

years old and it was created using the mechanisms that created the vast European empires in Africa during the late 19th century.[37] They continue to state that over 75 percent of present day Ethiopia is land conquered from the Oromo, and that the Oromo did not migrate to the Horn of Africa after the 16th century invasion of Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al-Grazi[38] (r.1529-43), but that the Oromo, have been in the Horn, "as far as their history is known."[39] Oromo conversions to Islam and Christianity are described as forced, unnatural and ephemeral.[40] They argue against the view that the Oromo are intellectually inferior to the *Häbäsha*. A final element of their works is an emphasis on the hierarchal *Häbäsha* political systems in comparison with the egalitarian systems of the Oromo and the lack of cultural similarities and shared history between the Oromo and the *Häbäsha*.[41] These elements work to refashion modern Ethiopian history to be the result of European intervention that gave an oppressive foreign power (the *Häbäsha)* the means to conquer powerful, but peaceful Oromo groups. This reformulation of Ethiopian history involves presenting alternate views of two key periods in modern Ethiopian history, such as the *Zämäna Mäsafent* and Menilek's conquest of the Southern territories.

Asafa Jalata describes the period of the *Zämäna Mäsafent* as a battle between the Oromo and Ethiopians (the term he uses to describe Tigrés and Amharas) that was decided and won by the Ethiopians because they had greater access to firearms. He writes, "The relative weakness of the Ethiopians, their readiness to ally with imperialism, the geopolitical location of Ethiopia, and Christianity helped them build a bridge connecting them to European powers."[42] His analysis, however, is skewed by his view of the Oromo as a nation unified in culture and direction and not as a diverse ethnic group

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[37] Gemetchu Megerssa, "The Oromo and the Ethiopian State Ideology in a Historical Perspective," in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Kyoto, 12-17 December 1997*, ed. Katsuyoshi Fukui, Eisei Kurimoto, and Masayoshi Shigeta (Kyoto, Japan: Shokado Book Sellers, 1997), 479-81. In this article he calls not only then late 19th conquest, Zionist, but also the 20 century Semitist scholars as Zionists.

[38] Better known as Ahmad Grañ (the left handed) which has the connotation of wickedness.

[39] Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia, 1868-1992*, 17. This claim is an especially controversial one due the fact that he also argues that the *Häbäsha* are in fact newcomers.

[40] ———, ed., *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse*, 258.

[41] See Charles Schafer "Reflections on Oromo Studies" in Gebissa, *Contested Terrain*, 242, Jalata, ed., *Oromo Nationalism*, 258. This view is also see in Levine, *Greater Ethiopia*, 113-45.

[42] Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia*, 37.

with a variety of cultural, political and economic practices.[43] This view perceives the Oromo not as autonomous groups that act in according to their needs, which at times means speaking a different language, adopting Islam or Christianity, or fighting each other, but as a single nation with a singular identity, goals and culture.[44] He takes an analysis of the fate of one Oromo group, such as Menilek II's late 19th century subjugation of the Oromo Arsi territory and applies it to all of the Oromo. He states that Ethiopia was created through an alliance with the imperialist powers. He writes, "To avoid war among themselves and protect their respective interests, these imperialist powers later preferred that Ethiopia stay under the technologically dependent Ethiopian ruling class."[45] In sum, Jalata's work posits that Ethiopia's military strength was due to European firearms paid for by the colonization of the Oromo people.[46]

In an earlier work, Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa argued that both Abyssinia and Ethiopia are complete inventions of European Imperialism, differing from Jalata who argues that it is only Ethiopia which is a colonial invention, not Abyssinia. Some productive aspects of their work are the deracialization of colonialism, an examination of the impact of capitalism on African societies and an exploration of the effects of European Imperialism on Ethiopia's domestic policies. Although they attempt to challenge current views of Ethiopia's independence during Europe's Age of Imperialism, they use secondary sources that work from opposite assumptions. The main sources for their argument that Europe created Ethiopia are Harold Marcus, Richard Pankhurst and Kofi Darkwah, all scholars who argue for the existence of an Ethiopian nation. What is especially surprising is, even when they are quoting 19th and 20th century travelers and explorers, they quote them through the aforementioned scholars.[47] While their conclusion

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[43] I draw this distinction not to argue that the *Häbäsha* represent a nation and the Oromo an ethnic group, but rather to state that both are ethnic groups. However, which will be argued later there are four main practices that link the *Häbäsha* identity, while the Oromo have aside from common descent, and especially during the period of study, little that links them.

[44] Again, I am not arguing here that the *Häbäsha* do act as a single nation and the Oromo do not; rather, neither have a set of unified goals.

[45] Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia,* 61.

[46] Dugassa, "Knowledge," 67.

[47] This amateur historical research is not limited to the Oromocentric canon John Sorenson also practices this type of scholarship with Eritrean nationalist leanings, in his book, where among many unfounded assertions, he argues that Tewodros II (r. 1855-68) was a Tigré, although all other sources indicate he was from Qwarra, [a Northwestern Amhara territory]. John Sorenson, *Imagining Ethiopia: Struggles for History and Identity in the Horn of Africa* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 64.

that modern Ethiopia was dependent on European colonial powers is debatable, the argument is based almost solely on their readings of secondary sources.

More recently, the *Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS)* has placed the Oromo at its center and is the main publishing organ of the Oromo Studies Association (OSA). This journal combines the efforts of scholars in Africa, Europe and United States and it attempts to address the lack of academic work on the Oromo. This journal was initially an organ of Oromo nationalism, but increasingly has furthered understandings of the diversity of the Oromo people.[48] One of my main critiques of this journal is its lack of internal criticisms of works of the "Oromocentric" canon.[49] For example, works like Jalata's *Oromia and Ethiopia* and Holcombe and Ibbsa's *The Invention of Ethiopia,* which are highly criticized in Ethiopianist circles due to its challenge to previous conceptions of the state, are accepted unquestionably in this journal.[50] However, some of its productive elements are the articles that examine elements of the Oromo that have not been explored in other journals.[51] In addition, it has published English translations of primary sources.[52]

Also, it has printed two literature reviews, one by Paul Baxter and the other by Tesemma Ta'a. Baxter's lauds almost all of the authors and presents a celebratory view of the various works, with very little criticism of any of them.[53] He correctly observes that the Oromo are diverse and works on them have displayed this element. However, the

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[48] World Cat Search "Journal of Oromo Studies" Accessed on Dec. 8th, 2008 http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org.proxy2.library.uiuc.edu/WebZ/FSFETCH?fetchtype=fullrecord:sessionid=fsapp652382fohnv9v0em359j:entitypagenum=17:0:recno=1 resultset=5:format=FI:next=html/record.html:bad=error/badfetch.html:entitytoprecno=1:entitycurrecno=1:numrecs=1; Internet

[49] There are, however, a series of book reviews in the back of the journal, for example see Mohammed Hassen. "Book Review of Asafa Jalata's *Oromummaa: Oromo Culture, Identity and Nationalism*" *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008): 255-61.

[50] Bahru, "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography," 16.

[51] For example, Feyisa Demie, "The Origin of the Oromo: A Reconsideration of the Theory of the Cushitic Roots," *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 5, no. 1 & 2 (1998); Mohammed Hassen, "Pilgrimage to the *Abbaa Muudaa*," *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 12, no. 1 & 2 (2005); ———, "A Short History of Oromo Colonial Experience 1870's - 1990's: Part One, 1870s to 1935 " *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 6, no. 1 & 2 (1999).

[52] See Antoine D'Abbadie, "On the Oromo: Great African Nation Often Designated under the Name "Galla," translated by Ayalew Kanno" *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 14, no. 1 (2007). He also translated another work on the Oromo, P. Martial de Salviac, *Un Peuple Antique Au Pays De Ménélik: Les Galla (Dit D'origine Gauloise) Grand Nation Africaine* trans. Ayalew Kanno (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2005).

[53] P.T.W. Baxter, "Changes and Continuities in Oromo Studies," *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 5, no. 1 & 2 (1998).

perspectives have remained similar since his last article in 1986.[54] Tesemma Ta'a's article, similar to other works in this journal accepts the conclusions of other Oromocentric works. On the other hand, unlike most other Oromocentric works, Tesemma mentions Northern Oromo groups, and calls for more work to be done on them. However, the Oromo homeland of Borana (Southern Ethiopia/ Northern Kenya) continues to be the standard for "Oromoness." He writes, concerning the Northern Oromo, "This group by no means represented the Oromo as some scholars claim."[55] He does not specify which scholars claim this or why they are not considered Oromo. In addition, in his listing of Oromo groups he does not mention any Muslim Oromo groups in Wällo. Lastly, in his section "Oromo Studies: Problems and Prospects" he does not list any problems of Oromo studies, instead rehashing a critique of Semitic scholars, which he labels Abyssinocenteric. This journal could become a productive avenue for expanding knowledge of the Oromo if it would begin to embrace new perspectives on the Oromo, to conduct internal critiques and to temper its nationalist ideology.

Lastly, a special edition of the journal *Northeast African Studies* was dedicated to the Oromo and edited by Ezekial Gebissa, who is also the current editor of the *JOS*.[56] Articles in this issue explore various aspects of Oromo experiences in the Horn and include many of the authors who have published extensively in the *JOS*. Due to the overlap in authors this edition takes on a similar tone to the *JOS*. This edition's highlights include Asafa Jalata continuing his comparison of the Oromo struggles for freedom to the Black American struggle, Martha Kuwee Kumsa taking John Sorenson to task for his views of both Oromo identity and its Nationalist struggle and Guluma Gemeda examining the experiences of centralization during the early Twentieth century.[57]

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[54] P.T.W. Baxter, "The Present State of Oromo Studies: A Resume," *Bulletin des Etudes Africaine de l'Inalco* VI, no. 11 (1986).

[55] Tesema Ta'a, "The Place of the Oromo in Ethiopian History: 2003 OSA Conference Keynote Address," *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 11, no. 1 & 2 (2004): 3.

[56] He is also author of an excellent tome, Ezekiel Gebissa, *Leaf of Allah : Khat & Agricultural Transformation in Harerge, Ethiopia 1875-1991* (Oxford; Athens: James Currey, Ohio University Press, 2004). These articles were reprinted, with a revised Introduction and a new Afterword in Gebissa, *Contested Terrain*.

[57] Guluma Gemeda, "The Rise of Coffee and the Demise of Colonial Autonomy: The Oromo Kingdom of Jimma and Political Centralization in Ethiopia " *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (New Series) (2002); Asafa Jalata, "The Place of the Oromo Diaspora in the Oromo National Movement: Lessons from the Agency of The "Old" African Diaspora in the United States," *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (New

For the purposes of this chapter, Ezekiel Gebissa's introduction is the most useful. He entitled his introduction, "Rendering Audible the Voices of the Powerless," which, again, implies that the Oromo are powerless and do not have a voice in history. His introduction argues that the Oromo continue to be ignored or obscured in the historical record. He specifically denounces the department of History at Addis Ababa University, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and one of its most celebrated historians, Bahru Zewde. He writes, in response to Bahru criticizing Oromocentric scholars for inventing history, "In a way, Bahru's admonition was the climax of attacks on Oromo-centered scholarship, not for any scholarly deficiency it exhibited, but for the political consequence it might have entailed."[58] This quote not only displays a misunderstanding of Bahru's comments but also shows the lack of delineation between writing a book and creating a nation. Bahru was pointing out that many of the books that make up the Oromocentric canon do not qualify as scholarly works not because of what they are arguing, but rather how they argue it. In my view, the institutions in Addis Ababa discount these works not because *they are not sanctioned by this institution, but because they are done by individuals who* have not been trained by any institution in the writing of history and it is seen in the methodology of these works.[59]

Many Ethiopianists disregard Oromocentric scholarship as subjective, biased and propaganda.[60] I see their main flaw as a failure to make use of primary sources, which forces Oromocentric scholars to re-read secondary sources and limits the potential of their scholarship. Its reliance on secondary sources is most likely due to the fact that many of them are in political exile. This exile also limits the use of oral sources, a key aspect of recreating the history of the historically illiterate Oromo. Fortunately, for those

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Series) (2002); Martha Kuwee Kumsa, "At Issue: Learning Not to Become Oromo - Chasing the Ghosts Chasing John Sorenson," *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (New Series) (2002).

[58] Ezekiel Gebissa, "Introduction: Rendering Audible the Voices of the Powerless," *Northeast African Studies* 9, no. 3 (New Series) (2002): 4.

[59] For example, Asafa Jalata has a PhD in Sociology, Bonnie Holcombe has a degree in Anthropology and Sisai Ibsa does not hold any advanced degrees. While many of Oromo scholars have obtained PhD's in history, ironically, generally at Michigan State University under one of the Great Semitist scholars, Harold Marcus, there is a significant difference in the quality of their historical works and those of the non-historians

[60] See Harold G. Marcus, "The Corruption of Ethiopian History" (paper presented at the Sixth MSU Conference on Northeast Africa, East Lansing, MI, April 23-25, 1992). Notable exceptions include Mohammed Hassen, Ezekiel Gebissa, Tesemma Ta'a, Guluma Gemeda and Daniel Ayana.

interested in the Oromo, there are works that explore aspects of Oromo history, culture and society that are not affected by these types of shortcomings.

The next group of works that explore aspects of Oromo culture are not limited by preconceptions of Oromia or Abyssinian subjugation, rather by scope. I have named these works Oromo-centered.[61] Generally, their creators are anthropologists, although there are a few historians among them.[62] These exceptional works provide productive insights into Oromo culture, but they lack context, especially relative to the experience of Northern Oromo groups. While it is not their intent to understand Oromo groups within the Northern Ethiopian context, this weakens the relevance of their work for understanding the Oromo as Ethiopians or as a separate nation. In addition, some of these works posit some Oromo groups as the standard to judge the "Oromoness" of other Oromo groups.[63]

Asmarom Legesse's work, although published in the early 1970s, is still often quoted and remains the canonical text on the *Gada* system, a complex age grade system which governed Oromo society for centuries. His work attempts to complicate anthropological understandings of African societies and augment Western social theory to explain an Oromo cultural practice. He uses the Borana Oromo as his standard in his analysis of the *Gada* system. He writes, "There is a direct and thoroughly instructive connection between the contemporary social organization of the Borana and organization of the Oromo as a whole in the sixteenth century."[64] In addition, he argues that the Amhara-Tigré civilization is an oriental one and the Oromo civilization is an African one.[65] Chapter three is his most productive one and it explains in great detail the Gada system of the Borana Oromos. He follows his chapter on the Gada with three frameworks to understand this system: Claude Lévi-Strauss' concept of structure; a generative model, through which he attempts to create the original *Gada* system; and an equilibrium analysis that attempts to challenge the American tradition of empirical anthropology.

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[61] See Donald Crummey, "Society, State and Nationality in the Recent Historiography of Ethiopia," *The Journal of African History* 31, no. 1 (1990): 115-6.
[62] Baxter, Hultin, and Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo*; Donham and James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*; Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia*; Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: Free Press, 1973); Jan Hultin, *The Long Journey: Essays on History, Descent and Land among the Macha Oromo* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1987).
[63] Clapham, "Rewriting Ethiopian History", 7.
[64] Asmarom, *Gada*, 11.
[65] It is also interesting to note that Asmarom is Tigré and emphasizes the "Africanness" of the Gada at the expense of the political system of Ethiopia, the one he grew up in.

Asmarom's work is illuminating in many aspects, but it does not historicize that forces that impact and shape people and social systems. The major questions that his work leaves unanswered are: how did the northern Oromos change the *Gada* system? How did the system change over time? What internal and external historical forces impact the *Gada* system? How did Shäwan subjugation impact the *Gada* system? To what extent may the Borana be taken as representative of the Oromo assembly? His analysis of the *Gada* system brings new insights into this system, and, in turn, some Oromo people, but it does not bring much to an understanding of the status of the *Gada* today or its changes among the Oromo today.

Mohammed Hassen's *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860* is a remarkable work that takes the Oromo from the frontiers of Ethiopian history to the center. His work is respected by Semitist, Oromocentric and Oromo centered scholars alike. It represents a productive rereading of primary sources that attempts to put the Oromo back into Ethiopian history. He presents a different understanding of the Borana category stating, "To this day, Borana signifies to Oromo speakers a "cultural and linguistic purity" which is more apparent than real."[66] If his text is lacking it is in scope, his analysis of pre- Menelik "Oromia" is exceptional, but he generally does not discuss relations between the Oromo and Ethiopian state after 1860. Jalata and others have cast the Oromo solely as victims. I would argue that Hassen's broad appeal among Oromo, Ethiopian and Western scholars is due to the fact that he does not critique the modern Ethiopian state in his work by ending it 1860, before Menilek's southern conquests of the late 19th century.[67] Moreover, while he challenges beliefs that Oromos are without history, culture and civilization, he presents an analysis that does not explore in any significant manner the northern Oromo of Wällo and Shäwa, thus weaving a narrative that should be more aptly titled the *Southern Oromo of Ethiopia.*

The two edited collections both have groundbreaking and nuanced views of the Oromo people and other southern Ethiopian groups, on whom they give varied perspectives on little known ethnic groups and areas of Ethiopia. Donham and James'

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[66] Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia*, 6.

[67] The response has not been unanimous, see Clapham, "Rewriting Ethiopian History" and Harold G. Marcus, "The Corruption of Ethiopian History". Hassen does take up this issue in more recent articles see Mohammad Hassen, "A Short History of Oromo Colonial Experience 1870's - 1990's: Part One, 1870s to 1935 " *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 6, no. 1 & 2 (1999).

collection examines the impact of Abyssinian rule on the periphery of Ethiopia.[68] The first chapter is the most useful in terms of understanding the Oromos, at least during the reigns of Menelik and Haile Sellassie. In it, Donham argues that Abyssinian conquest involved at least three processes: "the spread of the *rist* system of land tenure, the adoption of Amharic, and the expansion of the Orthodox church."[69] The key framework that ties the essays together is what Donham calls "the center periphery" relationship. This center is relative. At times it is the center of a province, sometimes it is Shewa and at other times Addis Ababa.

In terms of understanding the ethnic groups of Ethiopia, Donham sees race where it does not exist. He writes, "The category 'Amhara' denoted rather a particular position at the centre of the core-periphery structure, which I have described. Amhara were, first of all, Orthodox Christians. Second, they spoke Amharic. And, an aspect that I have not mentioned so far, they were not markedly negroid in racial features."[70] He describes the Amharas as the center, the *Shanqälla* (an ethnic group that inhabits the North Western borderlands between Ethiopia and Sudan) as the periphery and the Galla as between the center and periphery. He then imposes a common Euro-American racial hierarchy with *Shanqällas* as blacks on the bottom, the "Gallas" representing the hybrid group between the center and the periphery and the Amharas, the non-blacks, representing the center.[71] Donham writes, "the category Galla seems to find its semantic centre of gravity in the middle of the opposition between Amhara and Shankilla."[72] He traces the hybridity of the Galla to a myth that the Gallas were derived from the union of a noble Amhara lady and a slave and he bases the (un)negroness of the Amhara on his own interpretations.[73]

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[68] Guluma Gemeda takes up this issue in the era before Menilek II and argues that these areas were a part of global economic systems before the late 19th century. See Guluma Gemeda, "Land, Agriculture and Society in the Gibe Region Southwestern Ethiopia, C. 1850-1974." (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1996).

[69] Donham and James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, 11. I agree with Donham on these forces; however, he leaves out a belief in the descendents of Solomon as the legitimate leaders of Ethiopia. The extensive intermarriage between Shäwans and all ethnic groups in the empire resulted in almost all the nobility of all ethnicities of Ethiopia being connected to Solomon. This practice separates Ethiopian colonialism from European colonialism. This idea is furthered in Maimire Mennasemay "Ethiopian History and Critical Theory" in Milkias and Getachew eds. *The Battle of Adowa,* 274-5.

[70] Ibid., 12.

[71] See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States : From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[72] Donham and James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, 13.

[73] Donham bases the blackness of the *Shanqälla* on I. Guidi's dictionary. In addition Wolf Leslau's dictionary defines *Shanqälla* as Negro. I Guidi, *Vocabolario Amarico-Italino* (Roma: Instituto per

Donham argues that the *Shanqälla* and the "Galla" are distinct religious/racial/cultural groups, but he does not explain the difference between these groups, aside from the fact the unions between the *Häbäsha* and the "Galla" were acceptable and those with the *Shanqälla* were not. In addition the inclusion of race in the discussion obscures the fact that ethnicity is quite fluid, and even Donham himself argues that religion is the much more powerful divider in society.

A few decades of Oromo studies had successfully debunked the Oromo as unthinking barbarians, many social scientists began to ask the question of who, in fact, are the Oromo. Baxter, Hultin and Truilzi's *Being and Becoming Oromo* begins stating,

> But at the same time, Janus like, they [Oromo intellectuals who originate from Ethiopia] and other Oromo intellectuals remain robustly confident of the vigour and strength and essential *oneness* of Oromo culture. They see local variations in cultural practice, dialect, religion and historical experience as perhaps interesting but essentially diversionary and even irrelevant to their cause. The existence of a distinct, culturally homogeneous and autonomous Oromo nation with its own distinctive common culture is assumed as an unquestioned given.[74]

The center, again, is the Borana Oromo of Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia because they best fit into the singular oneness of Oromo culture. While the aforementioned quote reflects mainly the Oromocentric position, authors in the collection do not all agree. Gemetchu Megerssa, Mekuria Bulcha and Mohammed Hassen believe that there is a singular identity among Oromo. Alessandro Triulzi, however, draws attention to the existence of a group known as *gabaro*, low persons, which helped undermine the Gada system and they supported powerful noblemen, which took control of some Oromo societies, such as Jimma and Wälläga.[75] Jan Hultin and Thomas Zitelmann explore the Galla category, outlining its roots and lived experience.

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l'Orient, 1935); Wolf Leslau, *Concise Amharic Dictionary: Amharic - English and English - Amharic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1976).

[74] Baxter et al, *Being and Becoming Oromo*, 9.

[75] This issue was also taken up earlier in Negaso Gidada, "History of the Sayyoo Oromoo of Southwestern Wallaga, Ethiopia, from about 1730 to 1886 " (Ph.D. diss., Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, 1984). More recently there is debate regarding the origins of the Gäbra (another groups that were marginalized in Oromo communities) in Southern Ethiopia see Günther Schlee and Abdullahi A. Shongolo. "Local War and Its Impact on Ethnic and Religious Identification in Southern Ethiopia." *GeoJournal* 36, no. 1 (1995): 7 – 17; Aneesa Kassam. "The People of the Five "Drums": Gabra Ethnohistorical Origins." *Ethnohistory* 53, no. 1 (2006): 173-93; Gunther Schlee. "The "Five Drums," Proto-Rendille-Somali, and Oromo Nationalism: A Response to Aneesa Kassam." *Ethnohistory* 55, no. 2 (2008): 321-30.

Articles by Odd Eirik Arnesen and Hector Blackhurt are especially productive in the collection due to the fact that they challenge ethnic categories and complicate the Oromo ethnic category. Arnesen's article in Baxter's *Being and Becoming Oromo* is a groundbreaking beginning to the complexities of ethnicity in central Ethiopia. He argues against understandings of Shewa that use ethnicity as entailing fixed borders between groups. Using Derra as a case study, he uses a "place based" approach as a way to understand ethnicity in Shewa. He argues that ethnicity was constantly reconstructed between the 16th century and the present day. He argues that the Tulama-Oromo region due to its unique socio-political climate caused the Bacho Oromo ethnic group to split into three distinct groups: Christian Oromo (Bacho), Muslim Oromo (Derra) and Muslim Amhara (Borana (Northern Shäwa/ Southern Wällo).[76] Due to these distinctions, a unique frontier was created, part religious (Islam, Christianity and traditionalists) and part linguistic (Afan Oromo and Amharic). Concluding, he writes, "The core hypothesis is that the subsequent overlapping spheres of influences or social boundaries, that we have placed as "overlays" over Derra, were both contained and contested within the locality, creating multiple identities . . ."[77] His essay serves as an effective way to both complicate and provide an understanding of identity in an ethnically diverse area.

In addition to these works, Addis Ababa University (formerly Haile Sellassie University) has produced a number of MA and BA theses which explore a wide array of Oromo historical experiences in Ethiopia. They take on many issues that have not been a subject of research in the West, such as biographies of Oromo figures,[78] who do not figure largely in Ethiopianist literature and histories of provinces and cities which also

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[76] Odd Eirik Arnesen "The Becoming of Place: A Tulama-Oromo Region in Northern Showa" in Baxter et al. *Being and Becoming Oromo,* 223-232.

[77] Ibid., 238.

[78] Terfassa Digga, "A Short Biography of Onesimos Nesib Oromo Bible Translator, Evangelist and Teacher " (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973); Tsehaie Dimitsu, "A Short Biography of Empress Taitu Bitul " (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1983); Kebede Kejela, "A Biography of Dejazmach *Habtemariam Gebregziabher*" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1989); Bizualem Birhane, "*Adal Abba* Tänna - Nigus of Gojjam and of Kaffa (1850-1902)" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1971); Wakene Frew, "The Family of Rās Dārge and the Church in Salale" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973); Awoke Asmare, "The Career of Ras Gugsa Wale C.A. 1877-1930" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1996); Haile Mariam Goshu, "The Kingdom of Abba Jiffar Ii, 1861-1934" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1970); Tsehaye Haile, "A Short Biography of Dajjazmāch Gabirasellāssie Bāriyā Gabira, 1873-1930" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1972); Bahru Zewde, "Dej. Jote Tolu (1855-1918) " (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1970).

fall out of Ethiopianist literature,[79] because of the fact that they were not the political centers of important leaders or they have not piqued the interest of anthropologists who seem to ignore highlanders. The province of Wällo, especially, exemplifies this trend with many works that discuss the internal dynamics, leaders and social structures of this province.[80] As stated earlier, the issue with these works is not a matter of quality, as many of these works are exceptional; rather it is in scope. These works rarely go beyond the people or provinces of study, but they do shed light on many areas that too often fall out of the historical record.[81] For example three theses remain the canonical texts on the history of Wällo. In addition, the Institute of Ethiopia Studies' (IES) decision in forbidding the photocopying of any part of these works further hampers the infusion of these works into the canon of Ethiopian studies.

Lastly, *the International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* provides key new avenues for the distribution of scholarly work on Ethiopia. Here, it is important to point out that the main outlet for the publication of research on Ethiopia, has been, and is currently the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*. This journal is housed at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa, in the former palace of Haile Sellassie and has been impacted by recent political events in the country. This journal is published in the United States and does not

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[79] Assefa Tolera, "Ethnic Integration and Conflict: The Case of Indigenious Oromo and Amhara Settlers in Aaroo Addis Alem, Kiramu Area, Northwestern Wälläga" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1995); Mekonnen Berhanu, "A Political History of Tigray: Shewan Centralism Versus Tigrean Regionalism (1889-1910)" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa Univeristy, 1994); Wudu Tafete, "A Political History of Wag and Lasta " (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1995); Oljira Tujuba, "Oromo-Amhara Relations in Horro Guduru Awraja (Northeastern Wellaga) C. 1840-1941" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1994); Tsega Endalew, "The Oromo of Wanbara: A Historical Survey to 1941" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1997); Ahmed Hassen Omer, "A Historical Survey of Ethnic Relations in Yefat and Temmuga, Northeastern Shewa (1889-1974) " (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1994).

[80] Tekeste Melake, "The Early History of Dasse, 1886-1941" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1984); Amsalu Aklilu and Habte M. Marcos, "The Dialect of Wello," (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, unknown year); Assefa Balcha, "The Court of 'Negus' Mikael: An Analysis of Its Structure and a Desription of the Role of 'Ayteyete' Hall" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1984); Assefa Balcha, "*Traditional Medicine in Wello: Its Nature and History*" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1992); Asnake Ali, "Aspects of the Political History of Wallo, 1872-1916 " (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1983); Asnake Ali, "Survey of Social and Economic Conditions in Wallo, 1872-1917 " (paper presented at the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, 1984); Abdu Mohammed Ali, "A History of Dase Town, 1941-1991" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa Univeristy, 1997); Kaklachew Ali, "Religion, Rituals and Mutual Tolerance in Wollo: The Case of Kaba South West Wello" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1997); Zergaw Asfera, "Some Apsects of Historical Development in Amhārā/Wallo" (MA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973); Fekadu Begna, "A Tentative History of Wello 1855-1908" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University 1972); Workwoha Makonnen, "Marriage Practice among the Muslims of Dessie" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1986); Abdul Mohammed, "A Biography of Ras Gabraheywat Mikael" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1990).

[81] Bahru, "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography," 10.

have the same political limitations of the *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* and uses this outlet to write on current issues. While these voices are needed, the lack of historical articles make this journal only of limited utility for those who study the nineteenth century.[82]

In the last few decades, there has been a plodding redefinition of Oromo political roles in the Ethiopian state, beginning with a more nuanced understanding of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*. The historian Donald Crummey presents a contradictory account of ethnicity during *Zämäna Mäsafent* and argues that ethnicity was not a large factor in the conflicts at this time. He states that many of opinions expressed in Ethiopianist discourse are based on the accounts of James Bruce, who only had contact with a group, the Qwarrana (Northwest Ethiopia), who disliked the "Galla." He writes, "In any case, the details of his [Bruce's] account of the outbreak of strife do not bear close examination, and the possible implication that feelings of ethnic rivalry sustained and complicated subsequent struggles among the nobility lacks confirmation from the Ethiopian documents."[83] In addition, he argues that not only were the Oromo not discriminated against in politics, but there were very few leaders without Oromo descent.[84]

Later scholars have continued this trend and due to their focus on non-Semitic people and the fact that they contextualize their works with the larger Ethiopian state have displayed a more ethnically and religiously complex history of Ethiopia. In addition, articles on Wällo and Bägémder by Mohammed Hassen and Shiferaw Bekele and a full length tome by Hussein Ahmad are also very productive in reconstructing Ethiopian history.[85] These works put Oromo actors at the forefront but contextualize their subjects

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[82] However, the Organization that publishes these journals has published books which deal with the time period, such as reprinting Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann, 1976); Donald Crummey, *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia, 1830-1868* (Oxford,: Clarendon Press, 1972); Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism: The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 180. (Sweden: Uppsala University, 1996); Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965; reprint, 5th). Also, both the *JOS* and Northeast African Studies are both published in the USA.

[83] Donald Crummey, "Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia During the Zemana Masafent," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8, no. 2 (1975): 266-87, 73.

[84] Ibid., 278. Maimire also makes the point that many the Amhara who were not partly descended from the Oromo did not have a problem in serving Oromo officials. See Maimire "Ethiopian History and Critical Theory: The Case of Adowa," 274-5.

[85] Hussein Ahmad, "Trends and Issues in the History of Islam in Ethiopia," in *Islam in Africa: Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993); ———, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia : Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2001); Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia : A History, 1570-*

on a national political landscape, which allows the reader to see the effects of their actions on a larger scale. These works and mine represent a bridge between the Great tradition of the Semitic scholars and the Oromocentric canon. This bridge acknowledges that there is a link between the states of the highlands over the last three thousand years, but not a continuous manifestation of one state. This bridge also recognizes the diversity of the highlands that led to the integration of many ethnic groups, of which the Oromo are just one of the latest. And, finally, a school that argues that the *Zämäna Mäsafent* was not a period of the destruction of Ethiopia, just a structurally different increasingly religiously and ethnically diverse polity and that Menilek (r.1888-1913) did not solely reunify or solely conquer territories into empire, rather both took place with significant local variance that transcended ethnic differences.

General Themes in African Ethnicity

Ethnicity in Ethiopia, like many other African countries, is both complicated and politicized. Views of African ethnicity vary from unchangeable remnants of the past to inventions of colonial officials to the inventions of African elites. Ethiopian ethnicity, due to its lack of a period of European colonialism, in some aspects falls out of the discussion on African ethnicities. Given this, in many ways, it still gives us insight into the fluidity of African identities before the Colonial period due to the fact that, unlike many African societies, Ethiopia provides us with a written record of identity construction. In order to see how Ethiopian ethnicity construction relates to African ethnic construction it is necessary to summarize general themes in African ethnicity.

Early colonial understandings of ethnicity, those employed by the colonial powers, especially in the African context, defined "tribes" as immutable, primordial ways of identifying and behaving. Richard Jenkins writes, describing anthropological thinking on "tribe,"

> First, such a group is biologically self-perpetuating; second, members of the group (tribesmen and, of course, women) share basic cultural values, manifest in overt cultural forms; third the group is a bounded social field

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1860; Shiferaw Bekele, "Reflections of the Power Elite of the Wara Seh Masfenate," *Annales d'Ethiopie* 15, no. 1 (1991) and ———, "The State in the Zamana Masafent (1786-1853): An Essay in Reinterpretation in Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurst, and Shiferaw Bekele, *Kasa and Kasa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1855-1889)* (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1990).

> of communication and interaction; and, forth, its members identify themselves, and are identified by others, as belonging to that tribe.[86]

Clifford Geertz states that common race, region, custom, language, religion and assumed blood ties are the characteristics of primordial ethnicity, ethnic identities that have not changed over time.[87] So, an early anthropologist or colonial official observed an individual or group acting a certain way in the late 19th or early 20th century and he or she described the stagnant culture as if it had always been this way. In this case, a dispute over land between two individuals who happen to be of two different "tribes" turns into an eternal struggle that has lasted for centuries. In addition to this fact, both "tribes" and "chiefs" were created in many African territories. Ronald Atkinson writes, "basic tribal identities are 'regarded as ancient and powerful, and not open to amelioration, so that animosity and tension arise whenever and wherever members of different 'tribes' come into contact with each other.'"[88]

In the Ethiopian context the territorial acquisition of Oromo lands during the reign of Menilek II is seen by some Oromo nationalists as an expression of an internal Amhara cultural or psychological drive to expand as opposed to a reaction to a changing world, and the battles between Amharas and Oromos during this time are used as further evidence of the unceasing struggles between these two groups. This approach obscures the fact that the Oromo have fought on both sides of every important internal battle in Ethiopia since the reign of Susenyos during the early 17th century. It also takes agency from African actors and views them as unthinking slaves to tradition and bloodlines.

Another approach to African ethnicity is the view that ethnic groups are a product of colonial officials' divide and rule policy.[89] Generally these views fall under the constructivist approach.[90] So, in this view, a Tutsi did not know he was a Tutsi until a

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[86] Richard Jenkins "Social anthropological models of inter-ethnic relations" in John Rex and David Mason, *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 170-85.
[87] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 262.
[88] Ronald Raymond Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 13.
[89] For the creation of ethnic groups by Africans in response to colonial officials see John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
[90] For an excellent synthesis of the various works on ethnicity see the introduction in Crawford Young, *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 21-25. The author splits the works into three categories, instrumental, primordialist and constructionist.

colonial official informed him of his identity. Therefore, the current ethnic situation in Africa is another remnant of decades of colonial rule. Max Gluckman, writing during the last years of the colonial era, describes British Central Africa during the 1960s as,

> In the rural areas, under British rule, each tribe is an organized political unit, with a complex internal structure. At its head, in Central Africa, at least, there is usually a traditional chief, with a traditional council of elders, and a system of villages and other political units. For here it has been Government policy to rule through the tribal organization. Government has thus lent its powerful support to continued working of the African tribal political systems, as systems.[91]

An extreme example of the creation or edification of ethnic identity would be the case of Rwanda, where the culturally similar Hutu and Tutsi were pitted against each other during colonial occupation. The Rwandan genocide during independence was understood by scholars and laypeople alike as the result of Belgian divide and rule policy, which favored a minority ethnic group over a majority, resulting, decades later in a majority revolt, which committed genocide on those who had dominated them. Crawford Young writes, "'Tribe' of course, was central to the sociology of colonial hegemony, 'Native administration' was administration erected upon a division of the African population into units of presumed relative homogeneity, and their rule through intermediaries."[92] The lack of a written tradition in many parts of the continent further fuels this colonial invention theory. The concentration and value of written sources by historians has given precedence to the colonial record. It, being one of the only written sources of the time, has a disproportionate presence in the studies on African ethnicities. This theory, again, takes away agency from Africans and emphasizes the role of colonial officials in redefining the lives of, in their view, easily shaped African subjects.

A few Oromocentric scholars have redefined Ethiopia, a nation without a colonial legacy as a colonial nation in two ways. Firstly, they view the Amhara as colonizing other groups of the Horn of Africa, including the Oromo, Tigré, Omotic and Somali.[93] Thus, the Amhara take the place of the Western colonial powers and defined and created

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[91] Max Gluckman, "Tribalism in Modern Brittish Central Africa," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 1, no. 1 (1960): 65.
[92] M. Crawford Young, "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 26, no. 3 (1986): 442.
[93] See Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia, 1868-1992.*

each of these ethnic groups. The second more radical view casts Ethiopia as a colonial nation, like most of Africa and directly controlled by Britain and France, who made the Amhara powerful and gave them the means to control the other ethnic groups in their newly created territory.[94] Ethiopia's written record contests these points by documenting the existence of ethnic groups before the scramble for Africa, and that the recreation of the Ethiopian Empire began decades before European involvement.[95] However, when one uses the response to colonialism as a unifying force for the creation of nations, there are more parallels in Africa generally and Ethiopia specifically.[96] Historically, the roots of most if not all modern African nations are found in the very recent mid 20th century, while even the staunchest anti-*Häbäsha* theorist would argue that the Ethiopian nation has roots at the very least in Tewodros' unification of the *Häbäsha* provinces in the mid 19th century. Oromocentric literature is based on these two conceptions of Ethiopia, which contributes to the rise of Oromo nationalism. This ideology is built on a singular conception of the Oromo and that the Oromo entrance into Ethiopia began with Menilek's colonial expansion in the mid to late 19th century.[97]

Beginning in the late 20th century, social scientists began to rethink these views and started to look at internal factors, which continually shifted ethnic identities. One such social scientist, Edward H. Spicer, argues that outlining persistent cultural and identity systems are the avenues for understanding cultural change relative to identity.[98] He defines a persistent system as "a cumulative cultural phenomenon, an open ended system that defines a course of action for the people believing in it."[99] In terms of identity, he outlines "three spheres of participation," as language, a moral community and a political structure. Also, he adds to these elements the importance and belief in

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[94] See Holcomb and Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia.*
[95] See Manuel de Almeida et al., *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646, Being Extracts from the History of High Ethiopia or Abassia, by Manoel De Almeida, Together with Bahrey's History of the Galla* (London,: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1954); Bairu Tafla, trans. and ed. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, Èathiopistische Forschungen ; Bd. 18. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987).
[96] Specifically Clifford Geertz "After the Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays*, 234-54.
[97] For an presentation of the interactions between the primordial and the new relative to nationalism see Geertz "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New State" in Ibid., 327-44.
[98] Edward H. Spicer, "Persistent Cultural Systems," *Science* 174, no. 4011 (Nov 1971).
[99] Ibid., 799.

symbols (cultural and/or historic) in these systems. Later, another anthropologist, Frederick Barth, emphasized ever-shifting ethnic boundaries as a lens through which to understand ethnic identity.[100] The boundaries could be profession, religion, language or a myriad of other factors. These boundaries become the dividing line between two groups and become important identity markers. Due to the elasticity of these two theories, they have been the most flexible in their interpretations and bring agency back to African research subjects. Recent works have disputed some of its tenets, but for the purposes of this project they are the most useful of the ethnic lenses. These theories will be applied in chapter 3 to the Ethiopian context.

More recently, Terrance Ranger, E.J. Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson have argued for a top down approach to ethnic identity, in which ethnicity becomes a tool of an elite to mobilize the masses to acquire resources.[101] Similar to the colonial lens it falls under the constructionist approach, takes away agency from the masses and casts them as a kind of clay that is easily shaped through slogans, speeches and public displays. J.D.Y. Peel's work on the Yoruba makes a similar argument for the constructed nature of Yoruba, arguing it was created through the missionary efforts of African returnees in the early 19th century.[102] These elements are paralleled in present day Ethiopia. The present Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi has divided Ethiopia into ethnic provinces in order to split provincial loyalties and allow for a leader of a minority group to manipulate the ethnic fears of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia to maintain his authority. However, for the period of this study, the modern vehicles for the dispensing of information, such as the radio, television and, currently, the internet were not present therefore the national elite had no way to effectively influence the masses on the national scale.[103] However, in the late 19th

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[100] Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference. (Results of a Symposium Held at the University of Bergen, 23rd to 26th February 1967.)* (Bergen; London: Universitetsforlaget; Allen & Unwin, 1969), 9 - 38.

[101] E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London ; New York: Verso, 1991); Thomas T. Spear and Richard Waller, *Being Maasai : Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa* (London; Athens: Ohio University Press,: J. Currey;, 1993)

[102] J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, African Systems of Thought. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[103] The closest thing that Menelik possessed was the *Awaj*, messages, generally oral, from the Emperor were sent by messengers throughout the empire by horseback and presented at the center of villages, the pace was slow and there was no way to control accuracy. However, the call for the battle for Adwa was sent by *Awaj* and it was able to mobilize soldiers from all over the empire. For an extended view of this

century the emperors attempted to influence the masses through controlling the provincial elite.

In later years, scholars including the Isaacmans and Ronald Atkinson have argued that ethnicity is neither modern nor primordial, rather it is in constant flux due to an ever changing environment.[104] This new approach falls under the instrumental ethnic formation category, which Young defines as, "'instrumentalism' nurtured the notion that ethnic groups were calculating, self-interested collective actors, maximizing material values through the vehicle of community identity . . ."[105] They look at the shifting 18th and 19th century central African landscape and the response by African populations and, in both cases, ethnic groups were created. Travelers at this time believed these ethnic groups to be centuries old. In addition to describing ethnic construction, Atkinson writes,

> Note the sequences of change being argued here. The acceptance or rejection of a set of sociopolitical structures and ideas came first. Ethnic, linguistic, and societal determination - and boundaries – followed. These boundaries did not exist previously to serve as a determinant of who accepted or rejected the model. Similarly, preexisting ethnolinguistic origins or affiliations did not determine which group accepted the models and which did not.[106]

This approach is utilized in Chapter three in understanding ethnicity and its historical shifts and complexities because it focuses on the period before European colonialism and explores the rationale of ethnic change. This approach displays the fluidity of boundaries between the Oromo and Amhara in Ethiopia in the last few centuries.

Another model for understanding ethnicity is "rational choice." Sandra Wallman and Michael Banton developed a rational choice paradigm for shifts in ethnicity identity. They write,

1. Men act to maximize their own advantage.

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institution see Bairu Tafla, "The Awaj: An Institution of Political Culture in Traditional Ethiopia," *Ethiopian Journal of African Studies* 3, no. 1 (1983). In addition, names with political significance were often taken on by claimants, examples include most of the late 19th century emperors. For the names and their significance see Donald Crummey, "Imperial Legitimacy and the Creation of Neo-Solomonic Ideology in 19th Century Ethiopia," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 109 no. 28 (1988).

[104] Ronald R. Atkinson, "The Evolution of Ethnicity among the Acholi of Uganda: The Precolonial Phase," *Ethnohistory* 36, no. 1 (1989); Allen F. and Barbara Isaacman, *Slavery and Beyond : The Making of Men and Chikunda Ethnic Identities in the Unstable World of South-Central Africa, 1750-1920* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004).

[105] Young, *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?*, 22.

[106] Atkinson, "The Evolution of Ethnicity among the Acholi of Uganda: The Precolonial Phase," 26.

2. Action has a cumulative effect, in as much as present actions limit or constrain subsequent actions.
3. Actors utilize physical or cultural differences to create categories.
4. Imbalance of power = 'racial' groups[107]

In this new view, Northern Oromo can be envisioned as an Oromo or a *Häbäsha* ethnic group because of the actions of elite northern Oromo in relation to the Ethiopian state during the last few centuries[108], while Southern Oromos are redefined as an Oromo racial group because of the imbalance of power and that the state defined them as such. Jenkins writes, "Thus ethnicity is largely a matter of group identification, and 'race' or racism one of categorisation, although the possibility of categorisation on the basis of putative ethnic or cultural criteria should not be overlooked."[109]

Another burgeoning field is that of understanding ethnic conflict. A leader in this field, David Horowitz, discusses ethnic conflict in terms of ranked and unranked systems.[110] While many Ethiopianists argue that Ethiopia has always been a ranked system, Semitic people on top and all other groups below them. I argue that after the conquests of Grañ in the 16th century, Ethiopia went from a ranked system to an unranked system due to the military dominance and incorporation of Oromo groups, who spoke both Amharic and Afan Oromo, practiced a variety of religions and related to the land in a variety of ways. However, during Menelik's conquest and subsequent centralization Ethiopia returned to a ranked system, with many elites from a variety of ethnicities rising to the top of these systems.

Taking all of these ethnic schools of thought into consideration, I will be combining Spicer's Persistent Identity System, Barth's social boundaries, Banton's rational choice with a view of identity similar to the one in Tesfaye Wolde Medhin's dissertation, who argues, " . . . identity, including 'ethnic identity,' is a social construct and a matter of self-identification, an assumption of a social locus from which social agents speak and otherwise act. As such, it is a relational and, thus, a historical and

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[107] Summarized in Jenkins, "Social Anthropological Models" in Rex and Mason, *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*. The original idea is in Michael Banton, *Racial and Ethnic Competition*, Comparative Ethnic and Race Relations Series (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[108] This shift will be discussed later in this chapter.
[109] Jenkins, "Social" in Rex and Mason, *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*, 177.
[110] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 22.

situational fluid construct."[111] He combines the historical and cultural significance of place with self identification to display the local and individual aspects of identity that often fall out when discussing ethnicity, especially politicized ethnicity.[112] Given that identity is a fluid historically and situational construct, the persistent cultural system is, in the Abyssinian context, Semitic language, Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, belief in the descendents of Solomon as the rightful rulers of the land and practicing *Häbäsha* land tenure norms. Elite Oromo political actors, starting from the late 18th century chose to cross these social identity boundaries in order to exercise political control in the highlands. This work focuses on two of these Oromo groups and examines the ways in which they became accepted political figures in the highlands and contributed to bringing Ethiopia into the modern age during the late 19th century and early 20th century

A note on the Oral Interviews

My research colleagues and I conducted over sixty interviews in Wällo's capital, Dessé, and Oromo areas outside of Addis Ababa. I relied on my colleagues to locate appropriate informants.[113] We attempted to interview both genders and a variety ages and educational experiences; however, the informants who were educated during the reign of Haile Sellassie were extremely valuable due to their exceptional knowledge of oral traditions and their ambivalence towards late 20th century Oromocentric understandings of identity; therefore, are disproportionally represented. These interviews were used to fill in the gaps left by the travel narratives, royal chronicles and diplomatic correspondence. The gaps include how non-elite experienced the larger Ethiopia state, defined ethnicity and remembered key Ethiopian actors. Another key gap was the early lives of Oromo figures, such as *Ras* Gobana (d.1888) and *Ras* Mikaél (d.1916). Sample interview questions and information about the informants is listed in Appendix C and D. Copies of these interviews will be deposited at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Ababa.

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[111] Tesfaye Wolde-Medhin, "Highland Farmers and the "Modernizing" State in Ethiopia: Conjuctures and Disjunctures" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2004), 46.

[112] The ways in which politicized ethnicity affects identity in the Ethiopian context is summed up well in Tsegaye Tegenu, "Ethiopia: What Is in a Name?," in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective*, ed. Katsuyoshi Fukui, vol. 2, 158-70.

[113] I interviewed these informants using the guidelines set in Chapter 4 of Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005), 92-120.

Oral interviews are not used extensively in this work, and if there is a discrepancy between oral and textual sources, I have sided with the textual sources, but have noted what was reflected in the Oral material. Its main use was in exploring Oromo identity in Shäwa and Wällo in the late 19th and early 20th century, where it had minimal results due to present politicized notions of ethnicity in Ethiopia and the fact that is almost a century later. Thus, the present work utilizes oral sources to fill in gaps in historic record and not to challenge written texts.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter one explores the term "Galla" (a pejorative term for the Oromo, lit. "he (God) rejected") in Ethiopian chronicles and travelers narratives. After Grañ's invasion, Abyssinia was vulnerable on multiple fronts, one of these was cultural, and, in an effort to strengthen cultural unity, the *Häbäsha* examined what they were not in order in to understand what they were. At times, the "Galla" term had cultural, moral, social, political and religious connotations. With such an ambiguous definition, it seems to have little utility in terms of describing this group. The "Galla" term is more of a reflection of the perceptions of the *Häbäsha* (a term used to describe Ethiopia's Semitic speaking people lit. "Mixed") and Europeans, than the Oromo. The "Galla" were individuals or groups that were a threat, perceived or real, to the *Häbäsha*. The "Galla" term was employed in three ways, one, to describe uncivilized barbaric people, two, innocent victims of *Häbäsha* oppression and, three, as eternal enemies of the *Häbäsha*.

Chapter two explores the internal dynamics within Oromo groups, such as increased wealth, changes in political systems, conversions to Christianity or Islam and subsequent connections to these communities, adoptions and the ability to integrate into other societies helped the Oromo to enter into *Häbäsha* society. Channels for doing so opened, partly due to the social and political legacy of Ahmad Grañ and partly due to cultural practices developed over the centuries to integrate subjects into the Abyssinian empire. Cultural institutions, such as godparentage, adoption, Solomonic descent, dynastic marriages and *wondnät* (masculinity) gave elite Oromo opportunities to exercise political authority in Ethiopia. These shifts display the fluidity of ethnicity in Ethiopia during the 19th century and resulted in a ruling class so ethnically mixed one cannot determine ethnicity due to descent. These shifts are built upon in chapter three, which

argues that the *Häbäsha* identity drew from the varied highland Ethiopian cultures, and, I argue, it involved four main cultural traits: knowledge of the Amharic language, settled agriculture, Semitic religions and extensive noble intermarriage. The main problem in delineating a *Häbäsha* identity is that it must be vague enough to include Amhara from Bägémder, Gojjam, Shäwa and Wällo, the Tigré from Tigray and groups like the Agaw and the Northern Oromo, but, at the same time specific enough to have meaning. I argue that by taking on these four characteristics, Northern Oromo elites became *Häbäsha* in the late 19th century.

Chapter four traces the entrance of Mammadoch as one of the disparate factions of the Gondarine (1636-1755) kingdom to dominance in Wällo under Amadé (d.1803) and Liban (d.1815) during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* to a low point of destruction and instability under the reign of Téwodros (r.1855-68) to, finally, stable Christian brothers of the Ethiopian empire under Yohannes (r.1871-1888). These alliances further embroiled Wällo in the various struggles for power in the highlands. Seeing the value in attaching themselves to the Ethiopian state, the rivals switched back and forth between the princes while these rivals were cementing authority, beginning the process of integrating Wällo into a stable empire, which increasingly was developing along the lines of trade, military and political unity.

Chapter five shifts to Shäwa and argues that starting in 18th century, Nägassi's (a Shäwan leader from Mänz) dynasty went from marginal upstarts who solely desired to be recognized by the emperor to the head of an empire many times the size of Shäwa. Initially they just raided Oromo and Muslim frontier territories; however, after decades of raiding, these areas became allied territories through various inclusionary practices outlined in Chapter 2. These allies provided a stable base to expand to countries beyond the established frontiers. Loyal Oromo were key in Menilek's expansion; *Ras* Gobana was able to unite the Oromo groups of Shäwa and increased the Shäwan frontier to the Gibe states in the West.

Chapter six will detail Shäwa and the larger Ethiopian empire. This chapter will focus on changes in land tenure and in tribute, the role of Menilek in attempting to unify his kingdom in defense against the Italians, and an examination of ethnicity during the power struggle for the throne during the early 20th century. This chapter argues that

during the process of institutionalizing personal relationships with local leaders, the Oromo were integrated into Menilek's bureaucratic class at the highest levels, like the head of the nobility *Fit.* Häbtä Giyorgis (d.1926). This work concludes with Chapter seven, which examines similar themes to those of Chapter six and will focus on the economic, military and religious policies of the now Christian Mikaél and his majority Muslim province of Wällo. The main elements of the chapter will outline Mikaél's ability to balance national and local religious practices, political and economic interests, the role of Wällo in the crowning achievement of Ethiopian nationalism, the battle of Adwa and the position of Wällo vis-à-vis the Ethiopian empire. This chapter concludes with the union of Wällo and Shäwa with the ascension of Menilek's grandson and Mikaél's son, Lij Iyasu (r.1913-6) to the Ethiopian throne.

In summary, the Oromos have first been put out of Ethiopian discourse by Semitist scholars and presented as barbarous outsiders who brought nothing positive to the Ethiopian nation. Oromocentric scholars attempt to put the Oromos back into Ethiopian discourse by creating a country called Oromia and by arguing for the "inventedness" of the modern Ethiopian state. Oromo-centered works have produced varied and elucidating essays on aspects of the Oromo, but they do not provide a productive lens to understand the diversity of Oromo groups within the Ethiopian state. There has been an increasing number of works on the Oromo; however there has been a divide in the canons to the degree, that they rarely cite the same works, and when they do it is to criticize them. The continued separation of the two canons, competing views of the Ethiopian state, the politicization of both sides and the lack of studies that contextualize Oromo experiences in the larger Ethiopian context do not bode well for understanding the Oromo as Ethiopians. The present study will hopefully begin the process of understanding the diversity of Oromo groups, the complexity of the construction of the modern Ethiopian state and the contribution of Oromo political actors to it.

Chapter One:

Invisibility: "Galla" in the Ethiopian and European Imagination During the 17th Century to the Early 20th Century

"I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like bodiless heads you see sometimes at circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination – indeed, everything and anything except me."[1]

Ethiopia, even before the time of Christ, was a multi-ethnic territory. It has been argued that the original habitants mixed with conquerors from across the Red Sea and the result was the ethnic group that the Arabs called *Häbäsha,* which in one interpretation means "mixed people."[2] These groups controlled the highlands of Abyssinia and later established two institutions, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Solomonic dynasty which promoted an ideology which stated that all leaders of Ethiopia had to be direct male descendents of Solomon, practice *Häbäsha* land tenure and Ethiopian orthodox Christianity. Their dominance in the highlands was not significantly challenged from 1270 until the time of Lebna Dengal (r. 1508-40), when Muslim groups on the periphery of the Abyssinian empire successfully defeated and overran the highlands of Ethiopia, under the leadership of Ahmad ibn Ibrihim al-Ghazi (Ahmad Grañ) (1506-1543).

After the Somali jihadist Ahmad Grañ's invasion in the mid 16th century, Oromo groups began to migrate and conquer lands of Northern Abyssinia. These groups were given the term the "Galla" by the *Häbäsha.*[3] There is no Oromo interpretation of the term "Galla" and its use and definition displays the invisibility of the Oromo in the highlands of the Horn in both the Häbäsha chronicles and travelers narratives from the 16th century to the early 20th century.[4] Galla is generally understood to mean individuals who were

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[1] Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: The Modern Library 1994 [1947]), 3.

[2] For example see P. Martial de Salviac, *Un Peuple Antique Au Pays De Ménélik: Les Galla (Dit D'origine Gauloise) Grand Nation Africaine* trans. Ayalew Kanno (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2005), 13.

[3] Herbert Joseph Weld-Blundell, *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1840, with Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922); Bairu Tafla trans. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa,* Èathiopistische Forschungen; Bd. 18. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987). The term *Häbäsha* refers to the Semitic speaking Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The term is derived from Arabic and it means "mixed people."

[4] Mohammed writes ". . . the Christian literature of Abyssinia, the Muslim literature from Harar and European traveler' accounts make considerable reference to the Galla. This was a name, applied by

rejected by God.[5] I argue that interpretations of the "Galla" term stemmed from both *Häbäsha* and European travelers' belief that the Oromo were uncivilized barbarous usurpers of Ethiopian authority due to the fact historically they did not practice Christianity or settled agriculture. However, this belief led to two distinct approaches towards the Oromo and these beliefs reinforced previously conceived notions of the Ethiopian state.

The first philosophy, generally held by the *Häbäsha* and sixteenth through the mid eighteenth century European travelers, posits that due to the fact that the "Galla" are uncivilized they should be feared and despised. A conclusion to this belief is that the *Häbäsha* and the "Galla" are and will continue to be natural enemies. Thus, the hated and feared "Galla" could not successfully govern the Ethiopian state, and brought civilization down. The second philosophy generally held by dissident 19th century Ethiopian scholars and European travelers argues that while the "Galla" are uncivilized, it is due to the actions of the *Häbäsha*, and can only be redressed through European involvement (religious and/or political). Therefore, an Amhara led Ethiopia is uncivilized and the evidence is the condition of the "Galla." Both of the views cast the Oromo as "invisible" and many of the accounts of them during the last few centuries do not detail the actions of the Oromo as much as they display internal *Häbäsha* and Europeans feelings.[6]

In the 13th century a new dynasty was founded in Ethiopia by Yekunno Amlak (d. 1285). This dynasty couched its authority in Christianity and descent from Solomon. One of its most important leaders was Za'ra Ya'iqob (r.1434-68), an exceptional man of many talents. In addition to his political position, he wrote religious and philosophical texts. He was a devout Christian who increased proselytization within the state, which now included varied "houses" of Christians, which did not practice the religion according to

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outsiders, by which the Oromo were known until recently [1970s]. The term is loaded with negative connotations. The Oromo do not call themselves Galla and they resist being so called." Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860*, African Studies Series ; 66. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xi.

[5] Among other interpretations, which include Martial de Salviac's "Sons of Galla" and Antoine d'Abbadie "Go Home (for the war is over)" see de Salviac, *Un Peuple Antique Au Pays De Ménélik: Les Galla (Dit D'origine Gauloise) Grand Nation Africaine*, 13 and fn. 3

[6] Hultin also describes the "Galla" as the invisible men of Ethiopia, but he uses the term in the literal sense. Jan Hultin "Perceiving Oromo: 'Galla' in the Great Narrative of Ethiopia" in P. T. W. Baxter, Jan Hultin, and Alessandro Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo : Historical and Anthropological Enquiries* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1996), 82-3.

Za'ra Ya'iqob's norms.[7] Tadesse writes, "he attributed the religious imperfections of his own people to the bad influence of their non-Christian environment."[8] He attempted to strengthen "proper" religious sentiment by ordaining more priests with the use of two bishops newly arrived from Egypt. The penalty for not practicing Za'ra' Ya'iqob's preferred form of Christianity was death, which caused massive political unrest in his kingdom which he put down with an iron fist.[9]

In addition to an increasingly diverse Abyssinian empire, there were also significant changes in the power dynamics in the Horn of Africa. Due to the military successes of the Solomid emperors, access to the Red Sea was finally achieved, and with it, a window to Christian Europe and lucrative trade routes. While Europe was enthralled by myths of the land of Prester John[10], Islamic dominance in the Mediterranean region blocked them from making direct and enduring contact with their Christian brothers. Grañ, ironically provided the setting for the introduction of pre-modern Europe to Ethiopia. Ahmad led armies from Adal (a neighboring Islamic state) through the unassimilated areas of Eastern and Southern Ethiopia to the highlands of Abyssinia. He established the Sultanate of Häbäsha, which lasted from 1531-43. The emperor Lebna Dengal (r. 1508-1540) could do little to stop the invasion, but through established contacts in Europe asked for Portuguese assistance in 1535. Six years later, Portugal responded with 400 musketeers who changed the tide of the war. Grañ quickly sent word to Ottoman Turkey, a powerful Muslim state dominant in the Red Sea, for assistance and a war which started over tribute, became a full fledged religious war.[11]

In perhaps a sign of events to come, the Ethio-Portuguese alliance overcame the Muslim forces. However, Grañ's reign was not without consequence, His assault on Abyssinia was not solely political, but also an attack on its religion and culture. Taddesse writes,

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[7] Various schools of Christianity developed during the reign of the Solomids and most arguments revolved around either the nature of Christ, which day to observe the Sabbath or the necessity for ordained priests. Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 205-47.
[8] Ibid., 231.
[9] Ibid., 240.
[10] Medieval Europeans believe that a rich Christian King from a far off land would be able to finally defeat Islam and unite his far off land with Christian Europe
[11] Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 30-4.

> The Muslim occupation of the Christian highlands under Ahmad Gragn lasted for a little more than ten years, between 1531 and 1543. But the amount of destruction brought about in these years can only be estimated in centuries . . . the rich material and spiritual culture attained by medieval Ethiopia was almost completely destroyed in not more than a decade.[12]

Additional effects of Grañ's invasion were an opening for European proselytizers who threatened the very nature of Ethiopian Orthodoxy, Muslims, newly converted to Islam by Grañ's Sultanate of *Häbäsha* and migrating groups unchecked by the now broken frontier defenses. The largest migrating group was the Oromo, who came from southern parts of the horn of Africa, but infiltrated not only the highlands but eventually the highest levels of political authority.[13]

Three long lasting effects of Grañ's rule may be seen in the reign of Emperor Susenyos (r. 1607-1632). Susenyos was captured by the Oromo as a child of noble parentage, but returned to the land of his ancestors after a failed Oromo campaign. He fought his way to power after the death of Sarsa Dengel and became emperor in 1607.[14] He attempted to bring the Oromo into the empire by using them in his army and court and also married an Oromo.[15] Early in his reign, Portuguese missionaries converted him to Catholicism. Although he kept it secret until 1622, when he attempted to convert his county to Catholicism, which resulted in unrest similar to that of Za'ra Ya'iqob's reign.

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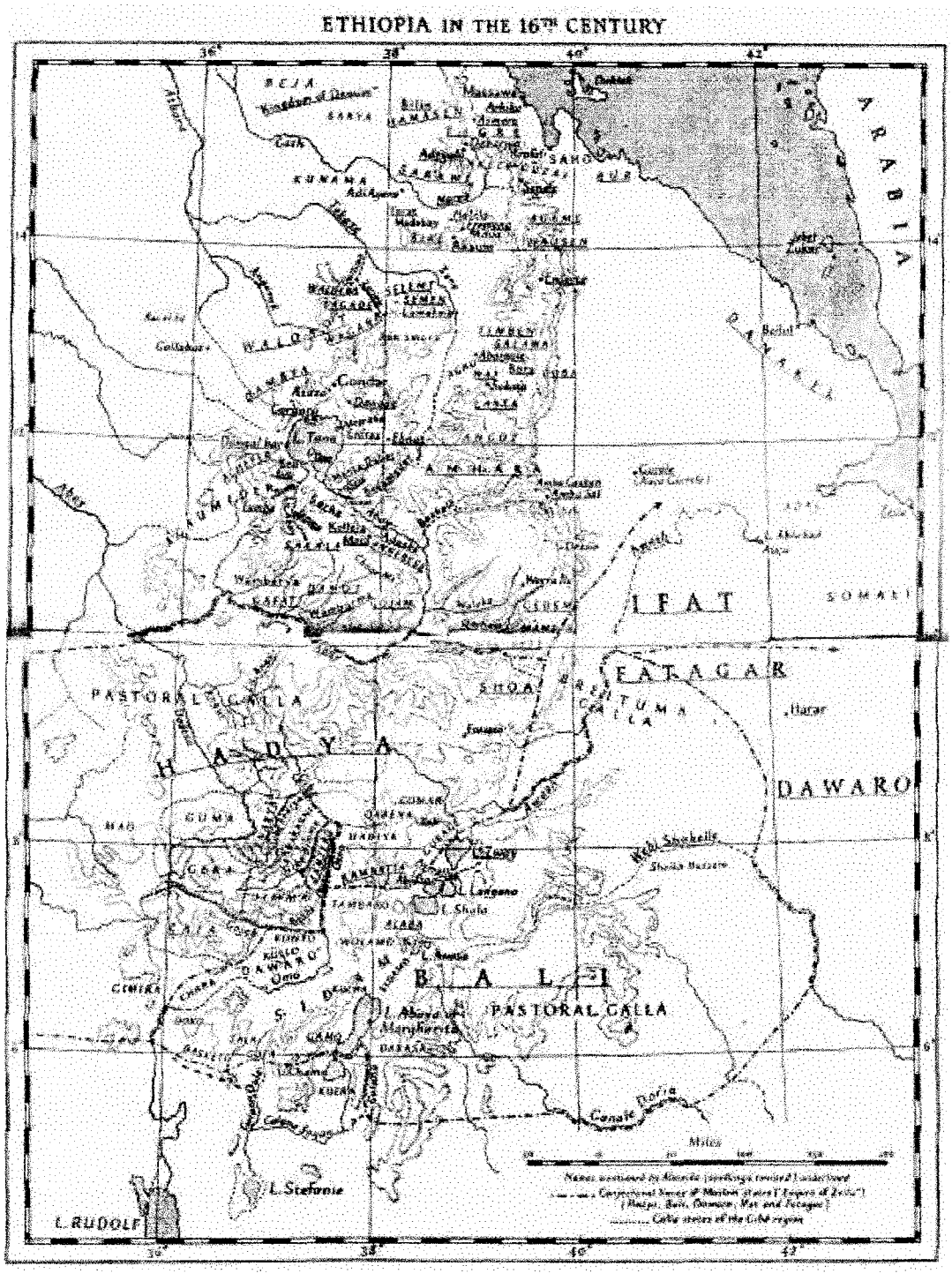
[12] Tadesse, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527*, 301.

[13] See Figure 1, and at that time they were known as "Galla"

[14] Richard Pankhurst, ed., *The Ethiopian Royal Chronicles* (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1967), 93-7. Negasso relates another story where Susenyos, after his release from captivity in 1585, voluntarily rejoined the Oromo in 1593 and became a Gada leader and raided Gojjam, Shäwa, as well as Gurage and other Oromo groups, eventually marching the imperial center and taking the throne in 1607. Negaso Gidada, "History of the Sayyoo Oromoo of Southwestern Wallaga, Ethiopia, from about 1730 to 1886 " (Ph.D. diss., Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University 1984), 47-8. Most of his analysis is taking from Bairu trans. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 187 – 281. As'mé states that the return to the Oromo was not voluntary, rather forced by the death of the emperor and he, being one of the three potential heirs (Yaq'ob, the half *Beta Israelite* (Ethiopian Jewish Person), (1603-7) and Zädängel (r.1597-1603 (as a child) 1604), would be imprisoned. Susenyos had the support of many Oromo groups, especially the Borana and Mäch'a and after Yaq'ob was deposed, he attacked Zädengel, but was defeated. The nobility then plotted against Zädängel, who died in a minor battle, and the nobility attempted to create a republic. After hearing about the vacancy Susenyos campaigned and took the throne. Also see Eloi Fiquet, "L'intervention des Oromo-Wällo dans la dynastie étiopienne salominide sous les règnes de Bakaffa, Iyasu et Iyo'as" *Annales d'Éthiopie* XVII (2000), 137-9 and Tsega Etefa, "Pan-Oromo Confederations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008), 25-8.

[15] Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, Updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 39. He also settled Oromo in areas of Gojjam (Mäch'a, Bäso, Jawi and Ilmäna Densa) which are still named after them: see Bairu trans. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, fn. 479. For more on the Oromo experience in Gondar during this time see Eloi Fiquet, "L'intervention des Oromo-Wällo," 139-42.

Figure 1: 16th Century Ethiopia[16]



[16] From Bahrey, Alemeida, Huntingford and Beckingham. *History of the Galla (Oromo) of Ethiopia : With Ethnology and History of South-West Ethiopia.* Oakland, CA: African Sun, 1993, xi-xii

Instead of involving his country in another costly civil war, he rescinded his new faith and died three months later and his successor expelled the Portuguese Jesuits from his country.[17] Susenyos' reign displays two major factors facing the survival of the Abyssinian state, varying Christian ideologies and unassimilated subjects. An essential policy was integrating the empire's various people, who were increasingly becoming more heterogeneous, into a "homogenous" nation. While "Galla" military prowess was respected, this respect was not extended to other spheres. The following decades saw large numbers of Oromos becoming Christians or Muslims and influential political figures in the North, and Muslims and significant traders in the South.[18] In reaction to the demographic situation, many *Häbäsha* fostered the creation of a distinct identity that was seen as superior to that of the "Galla" in order to protect one of the last vestiges of the "pure" Abyssinian state. This reaction led to the militarily and politically "Galla" to be rendered invisible because, to the *Häbäsha* and the European travelers they influenced, they could only represent the weakness of Ethiopia and its institutions.

The "Galla" as Uncivilized Barbarians

The earliest substantial text on the Oromo in the Ethiopian highlands is Abba Bahrey's work, *History of the Galla*, written during the Oromo migrations of the 16th century.[19] He wrote this text out of the fear in his home in Gamo (Southern Ethiopia) of the pastoral Oromo migrations that were encroaching on the Amhara highlands of Shäwa, Gojjam, Wällo and Bägémder.[20] The Oromo pillaged Bahrey's house and forced him to

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[17] Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, The Peoples of Africa. (Oxford ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 102-8; Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, 39-40; Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 164.

[18] Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes, the Challenges of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire (1769-1855)* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 73-90; Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia : A History, 1570-1860*, 84-162.

[19] Alemeida, Bahrey, Huntingford and Beckingham, *History of the Galla (Oromo) of Ethiopia*. Originally published in C. F. Beckingham and George Wynn Brereton Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646, Being Extracts from the History of High Ethiopia or Abassia, by Manoel De Almeida, Together with Bahrey's History of the Galla* (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1954). For more on *Abba* Bahrey see Mohammed Hassen, "The Significance of Abba Bahrey in Oromo Studies: A Commentary on the Works of Abba Bahriy and other Documents Concerning the Oromo." *The Journal of Oromo Studies 14*, no. 2 (July 2007): 131-155.

[20] There is a debate between Ethiopian and Oromo scholars relative to defining the Oromo movements as migration or expansion, I use migration due to fact that I am examining Abyssinian understandings of the "Galla," and their view of the movements, is, undoubtedly, a migration. For more on this issue see Herbert Lewis, "The Origins of the Galla and Somali." *Journal of African History* 7, no. 1 (1966), 32-4.

seek refuge with the emperor.[21] Compared with the two religious/cultural challenges (European Christian missions and the Islamic legacy of Grañ), the Oromo migrations, although not seen as enduring in Bahrey's time due to his belief that *Häbäsha* "superiority" would eventually prevail are the longest lasting consequence of Grañ's conquest. The initial waves of the Oromo migration, once felt in the heartlands of Abyssinia, called for an understanding of Oromo cultural and social practices.[22] Bahrey writes, "I have begun to write the history of the Galla in order to make known the number of their tribes, their readiness to kill people, and the brutality of their manners."[23] Using Jan Hultin's analogy, Bahrey was attempting to find the direction and nature of the Oromo flood. His work presents an early Amhara understanding of the Oromo. He views the Oromo and the *Häbäsha* as homogeneous groups with analogous cultural practices and social organization. The relating of perceived group cultural characteristics to their state of civilization is an important connection which will be repeated many times in the next few centuries.

In his presentation of the Oromo, Bahrey describes a group that is organized in a very different way from the *Häbäsha*. Bahrey states that the Oromo are organized by the *Gada* system, which separated males according to age grades, in which the warrior grade, called *luba* was the leading grade. He organizes his text by *luba*, and describes the accomplishments of each in succession with an ethnocentric and religious tone that denies a "civilized" nature to the militarily dominant Oromo. Due to the ramifications of military loss, Bahrey attempts to rationalize Amhara military inferiority in terms of culture. Bahrey writes,

> The wise men often discuss these matters ["Galla" dominance] and say, "How is it that the Galla defeat us, though we are numerous and well supplied with arms?" Some of us have said that God has allowed it because of our sins; others, that it is because our nation is divided into ten classes, nine of which take no part whatever in war, and make no shame of displaying their fear; only the tenth class makes war and fights to the best of its ability.[24]

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[21] Hassen, "The Significance of Abba Bahrey in Oromo Studies," 132-4.
[22] The Oromo migrations or expansions, initially, went to Abyssinia for raiding and finding pastures for their cattle. Only later, did they permanently settle in Abyssinian highlands.
[23] Bahrey, *History of the Galla (Oromo) of Ethiopia*, 44.
[24] Ibid., 52.

He sees two reasons for Oromo victory, both of which are direct reflections of *Häbäsha* culture. The first is the distinctions in society, which include monks, scribes and farmers, who do not fight. The second is that the "Galla" were sent by God to punish the Häbäsha for their arrogance and decadence.[25] Ultimately, he points to the numbers of Oromo troops as irrelevant in relation to victory. He states,

> And if those who are numerous always conquer those who are few, the words of the Holy Scripture which say 'One man shall put a thousand to flight, and two shall pursue ten thousand', would be found to be vain. However, you wise men, you can judge if the claim of the first [religious punishment] of these arguers is right, or that of the second [numbers of troops]."[26]

This statement alludes to the belief that a small number of soldiers with the will of God could take on any force, regardless of size. In sum, Bahrey argues that the "Galla" appeared due to a punishment by God; however, the *Häbäsha* losses are due to unproductive aspects of *Häbäsha* culture. Therefore, this curse of God can be cured only through God's will.[27]

This image of the "Galla" as an uncivilized barbarian is more fully developed by both European contemporaries of Abba Bahrey and travelers until the mid 19th century, who viewed the increasing "Galla" presence as the cause of Abyssinia's backwardness. Generally, these travelers, who occasionally were also missionaries, aligned themselves with Christian leaders of Ethiopia, mimicked their philosophies and saw the Oromo leaders as usurpers. [28] For example, a contemporary of Abba Bahrey, Manoel de Almeida's *History of High Ethiopia* displays critiques of both Oromo and *Häbäsha*

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[25] According to legend an Abyssinian emperor asked God for enemies to fight, so God sent Grañ to punish his arrogance.

[26] Bahrey, *History of the Galla (Oromo) of Ethiopia*, 54.

[27] Psalm 33:17 is often cited in the chronicles, as a way to make this point. "A Prince is not saved by many men, and a horse is a vain thing for safety, and he will not escape by great strength"

[28] Charles Beke, "Abyssinia, Being a Continuation of Routes in that Country " *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 14, no. 1 (1844): 1-76; James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773* (Edinburgh,: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1790); J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years'residence in Eastern Africa, Together with Journeys to Jagga, Usambara, Ukambani, Shoa, Abessinia; and Khartum and a Coasting Voyage from Mombaz to Cape Delgado*, 2d ed. ([London]: F. Cass, 1968); Mansfield Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia; Being Notes Collected During Three Years' Residence and Travels in That Country* (New York,: Appleton, 1856); J. L. Krapf and Ernest George Ravenstein, *Travels, Researches, and Misssionary Labours, During an Eighteen Year's Residence in Eastern Africa. Together with Journeys to Jagga, Usambara, Ukambani, Shoa, Abessinia, and Khartum; and a Coasting Voyage from Mombaz to Cape Delgado* (Boston,: Ticknor and Fields, 1860).

culture relative to the religions they practice and views the Oromo presence as a sickness in Ethiopia. He writes,

> "Thence first came this plague and scourge of God in the days of Emperor Dawit, who was first called by his baptismal name, Lebna Dengal [r.1508-40], and was called Wonag Sagad afterwards. They emerged at the same time as the Moor Grañ of Adal had invaded and already conquered a large of the empires. . . for the Gallas were scourge, not only of the Abyssinians, but also of the Moors of Adal."[29]

He continues to state that their presence is God's punishment for the Abyssinians' rejection of the only "true" Christian faith, the Roman Catholic faith. He tells us, "So the Patriarch [Dom Joao Bermudez, was in Ethiopia from 1541-1543], as he came on his way, pronounced many curses of the lands through which he passed, and said many times that there were certain black ants invading the kingdoms and provinces of the empire, destroying and wholly devastating it."[30] Almeida not only racializes the Oromo people, but also argues that their presence is not due to the disunity or decadence of the *Häbäsha, rather it is their lack of Catholic faith.*[31] Three other qualities he observed about the Oromo are pastoralist occupation, an aversion to cultivating and utter fearlessness in warfare.

In the mid 18th century, James Bruce came to Ethiopia attempting to find the source of the Nile, but found himself in the middle of a complex political battle for control of the country. He fell in with the Qwara, a group that, while it was culturally anti-Oromo, did not refuse political marriages to Oromo elites. Bruce internalized many of their beliefs. He used the royal chronicles to reconstruct Abyssinian history prior to his visit. He described the "Galla" as ". . . a barbarous and stranger nation, hostile to the Abyssinians, and differing in language and religion."[32] He states that the Oromo entered Ethiopia in 1559 through Dawaro. In his synthesis of Ethiopian history, he argues that the "Galla" did some good for the Abyssinians, specifically completely destroying the former

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[29] Manoel de Almeida "The Galla, from the History of High Ethiopia of Abassia" in Bahrey, *History of the Galla (Oromo) of Ethiopia* 56-61, 57. A reprint of Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646.*

[30] Ibid., 58.

[31] The notation further explains the idea of Oromo "blackness" by stating that they have darker skin because they are Hamites and have had greater mixture with "negroes." See Ibid., 84.

[32] Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile,* vol.3, 54

state of Grañ, Adal.[33] Generally, he presents the "Galla" as Abyssinia's greatest enemy. He writes, "this nation [the "Galla" nation], which has contributed more to weakening and reducing the Abyssinian empire, than all its civil wars and foreign enemies put together. [sic]"[34]

A main thread that runs through his description of the country is the connection made between physical appearance and leadership skills. He writes, describing the Shäwan king Amha Yasous and the emperor, "I have thought, when I have seen them together, that the king, Engedan, and himself, were three of the handsomest men I had ever beheld in any country; besides this, all three had fine understandings, noble sentiments and courage superior to the greatest danger."[35] He continues his description of the land with descriptions of these leaders in glowing terms. However, his gaze takes a different turn, when he describes the "Galla," especially a leader at the time Gwangul (founder of the Yäjju Dynasty[36] (d. 1779)). Bruce writes, "He was a little, thin, cross made man, of no apparent strength or swiftness, as far as could be conjectured . . . he seemed to be about fifty years of age, with a confident and insolent superiority painted in his face."[37] Bruce continues with an unreliable story of the emperor laughing at Gwangul and then running from Gwangul's stench, which furthers his point that the Oromo were ridiculed at the court due to their inferior culture.[38]

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[33] Ibid., 236-256.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile,* vol. 6, 39.

[36] An early mention in the *Futūḥ Al-Ḥabaša*, a 16th century chronicle of Ahmed Grañ, states that a group called the Yäjju spoke a distinct language, which could have been Oromo or Amharic, were Christian but had knowledge of the language of the Muslims (Pankhurst notes this would have been Harari or Adare). *Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Qaadir ' bin 'Utman, also known as 'Arab Faqih, The Conquest of Abyssinia: 16th Century*, trans. Paul Stenhouse with annotations by Richard Pankhurst, 1st ed. (Hollywood, CA: Tsehai Publishers & Distributors, 2003), 236. However, Yäjju is also the name of a clan of the Oromo, which increased their authority to Wällo after Grañ's defeat. They also converted to Islam and were considered Muslims and "Galla" in sources of the time. Perhaps they are a result of a mixture of the existing group in Yäjju and the migrating Yäjju Oromo, but possessing the same name seems to be too much of a coincidence. It could also mean that some Oromo groups were in the highlands before the time of Grañ.

[37] Ibid., 43-4.

[38] Henry Salt, a British traveler, who came thirty years after Bruce, makes extended efforts to correct Bruce's account and to discredit his accuracy as an observer. He argues that Bruce did not have the language abilities to understand what was going on, which brings further insight into Bruce's reliance on physical appearances. Henry Salt asks his main protector, *Ras* Wäldä Sellassé (d. 1817) about Gwangul, and got the following answer, ""but the Ras assured me this could not be correct, as he knew Guangoul well, who was very respectable in his appearance, and when he visited the court, received great attention." Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia, and Travels into the Interior of That Country, Executed under the*

Bruce adds another story of an Amhara, who impersonated Gwangul, which resulted in significant laughter. In a previous volume, he describes a "Galla," whom he called "Jumper," "he resembled very much a lean keen greyhound; there was no sterness (sic) nor command in his countenance, but a certain look that seemed to express a vacancy of mind, like that of an idiot."[39] Bruce tied physical appearance to personality, thus, since the "Galla" looked inferior, in Bruce's view they also were inferior culturally, morally and intellectually.[40] Other travelers made similar connections using the popular sciences of the day. Well over a century later the French traveller Jean Duchesne-Fournet in the early 20th century similarly connected the physical to the mental by measuring various body parts and classifying Abyssinians into three types and extracting mental qualities from these measurements.[41]

A final episode in Bruce's account of his encounter with Jumper's brother Roo brings further understanding of the meaning of the "Galla" term in the late 18th century. Bruce, Shalaqa Waldu and Roo are discussing the aftermath of the battle of Fagidä (1757), when Ras Mikael returned to Gondar and purportedly blinded 44 "Gallas," who were then killed by Woldo's master, and their own leader, Waragna Fasil. Bruce writes, quoting Woldo's response to Bruce's disbelief at the events,

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Orders of the British Government in the Years 1809 and 1810, [1st ed., Cass Library of African Studies Travels and Narratives No. 16. (London,: Cass, 1967), 301. See Figure 3 for an Oromo with a similar appearance. Also, the Ethiopian scribe, Aläqa Tayyä (1860-1924) presents another view of Gwangul, which further clarifies this issue. He writes, "Abba Seru Gwangul's appearance was very pleasing and handsome. He became a strong and daring horseman. His daring and strength became known in the palace. He was baptized a Christian and married Wäyzäro Gäläba . . . There are those who say that while he was still Muslim and not converted to Christianity he went to Lasta and kidnapped her. But this is not true - - it is a lie." አባ ስሩ ጓንጉል መልኩ እጅግ ያማረ የተዋበ ነበረ። ኃይለኛ ጀግና ፈረሰኛ ሆነ። ጅግንነቱ ኃይሉም በቤት መንግሥት የታወቀ ሆነ።ክርስትና ተነሥቶ የላስታንና የሰለዋን ባለበት የራስ ፋሬስን እት ወይዘሮ ገለቡን አገባ። ክርስትናም አልተነሣ በእስልምና እንዳለ ላስታ ሂዶ ዘርፎ አምጥቶ አገባት የሚሉም አሉ። ነገር ግን ይህ አውኔት አይደለም ሐሰት ነገር ነው::"), Aläqa Tayyä Gäbrä Maryam, Grover Hudson, and Tekeste Negash, *History of the People of Ethiopia* (Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University, Faculty of Arts, 1987), 82-3. An interesting aspect of this description of Gwangul is that the author uses the verb "ämärä" (the Amharic verb for beautiful), which could render the description as Gwangul as an Amhara.

[39] Bruce, *Travels*, vol. 5, 212.

[40] C.F. Rey writing almost two centuries later makes a similar argument relative to physical appearance and goes to the extent that Shäwan Oromo are more civilized than other Oromo due to their proximity to the *Häbäsha*. This work, however, seems to be part of a propaganda campaign to support the fascist occupation of Ethiopia. C.F. Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley Service and Co, 1935), 47.

[41] Jean Duchesne-Fournet et al., *Mission En Éthiopie (1901-1903)* (Paris: Masson et cie, 1908), vol. 2, 251-88.

Figure 2: Berilla, an Edjow (Yäjju) Galla[42]

> 'O ho', says he, 'but it is true; your Galla are not like other men, they do not talk about what is cruel and what is not; they do just what is for their own good, what is reasonable, and think no more of the matter, Ras Michael,' says he, 'would make an excellent Galla; and do you believe that he would do any cruel actionwhich my master Fasil would not perpetrate on the same provocation, and to answer the same purpose.[43]

Here the term "Galla" term takes on the additional element of senselessness and cruelty.

Relative to the position of the "Galla" in the court of Gondar in the mid 18th century, Bruce, again, sees them as uncivilized usurpers to the throne. Ironically, he

[42] Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, 336.
[43] Ibid, 228.

begins the account with a positive description of the Oromo leader. For example, he writes, when describing Kasmati Waragna [Qäñazmach Waräññä], the Oromo governor of Damot during the reign of Iyoas (r. 1753-1769), "He is almost a single example in Abyssinian history, that never was in rebellion, and a remarkable instance of Bacuffa's [Bäkaffa] penetration, who, from a mean condition, chose him as capable of the greatest offices . . ."[44] In the reign of Iyoas, the "Gallas" were central in the court and according to Bruce, nothing but the Galla language was heard in the castle.[45] He concludes, ". . . the Abyssinian saw, with the utmost detestation and abhorrence, a Gallan and inimical government erected in the very heart or metropolis of their country." However, he ends the account of Iyoas with an episode where the emperor views a rival, YäMaryam Bariyé (an Amhara and political rival of Fasil, Iyoas' Oromo ally) as a greater threat than the "Galla" in the court.[46] Also, although Henry Salt presents early 19th century leaders Oromo leaders like Liban and Gojee in a positive light, he also views their presence as detrimental to the region.[47] Similar to other travelers, Salt confuses alliances with Oromo groups with Oromo descent and conflates different Oromo dynasties.[48] Due to these misunderstandings, Salt's view of the Galla decades after Bruce, while nuanced, still holds this group as culturally inferior usurpers of the throne.[49]

The issue of an Oromo presence in the upper echelons of Häbäsha political society was a feature of the chronicles of the Ethiopian emperors the Amhara Téwodros II (r.1855-1868) and the Tigré Yohannes IV (r.1871-1888), which viewed the Oromo in the court and in the highlands as a hindrance to Ethiopia returning to its former glory.[50] These trends include arguing that "Galla" political dominance during the *Zämäna*

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[44] Ibid., vol. 4, 150. Qäñazmach is a political military title that literally meant the leader of the right flank. See Appendix B.
[45] Iyoas, himself was a product of a Wällo Oromo mother and he also married an Oromo.
[46] Ibid., 186.
[47] Ibid., 460 and he, again, uses Wäldä Sellassé, who knew the Oromo language, as the source. He writes, "As far as I could ascertain from the *Ras*, who spoke the language of the Galla and seemed to be intimately acquainted with their history, it appeared that no common bond of union subsists between the different tribes, except that of their speaking the same language; twenty tribes, at least, being known perfectly independent of one another, each ruled by its peculiar chief, respectively at enmity among themselves, and the character essentially varying, according to the districts in which they have settled." Ibid., 300.
[48] See also, Samuel Gobat who argues that the Oromo *Ras* Gugsa allied with Oromo groups to the detriment of Ethiopia. Samuel Gobat and Robert Baird, *Journal of Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1850), 50.
[49] Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia and Travels into the Interior of That Country*, 277, 362.
[50] See Figure 3 for the locations of these two areas.

Figure 3: Ethiopia in the First Half of the 19th Century[51]

[51] From Richard Pankhurst *The Ethiopians: A History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002, xvi.

Mäsafent was a curse from God due to the decadence of the Gondarine period (1636-1769), viewing the "Galla" and/or Muslims as a threat to Ethiopia's sovereignty, and understanding present *Häbäsha* political dominance as the inevitable result of religious and cultural superiority.

Zänäb's chronicle of Téwodros starts and ends abruptly, but still gives interesting snapshots of the early part of Téwodros' reign. His chronicle, like Walda Maryam's is quite critical of the Wära Shék, *Ras* Ali (1818-66) and *Etégé* Mänän (d.1853).[52] Zänäb writes,

> Ras Ali inconveniently [to the wishes of his country] behaved according to the words of St. Paul: "The males commit ignominies with the males"; his relatives became strong, the poor men [became] oppressed; he neglected to give justice to all the Abyssinians and to do good, [he] didn't fear God; *a Christian only in name, not subject to the Gospel of Jesus Christ* . . . [53]

Accounts of *Ras* Ali's commitment to Christianity vary, but this quote makes Téwodros' ascension not only preordained, but righteous. Zänäb continues, "In the year 71 (1853) from the disappearance of the king, God aroused the King Téwodros; and he ended the empire of the Galla in Begemder, in Gojjam, in Lasta, in Yajju and in Wallo."[54] He uses the verb "ጠፋ" (lit. lost) to describe the status of Ethiopia during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* which completely discredits the legitimacy of the Wära Shék's.[55] Lastly, the chronicler even uses Muslim clerics to discredit the Muslim Mammadoch dynasty in Wällo. He relays a story that a cleric had a dream that an "angel would not allow this dynasty to rule." He told it to the present leader Wärqitu, and she fled before Téwodros arrived in the province.[56] Lastly, Téwodros' brutality towards the Oromo was not described in a negative light. He writes without moral judgment, "One day, Negus Tewodros

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[52] This dynasty is also called the Yäjju, after an Oromo sub-clan, which is also a territory North East of Wällo (see Figure 3) and begun with rise of the aforementioned Gwangul. See figure 16 for their position in the Yäjju Dynasty.
[53] Martino Mario Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 2, no. 1 (1942): 149.
[54] Ibid.: 158.
[55] Debtera Zaneb and Enno Littmann, *The Chronicle of King Theodore of Abyssinia* (Princeton, N.J.: University Library, 1902), 15.
[56] Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," 161.

exterminated all of the Galla from Dabra Berhan to Angolola[57]; the dead bodies appeared [on the ground] like a carpet."[58]

Yohannes IV was an emperor who held religion central to his identity and that of his country. His chronicle reflects this and presents the "Gallas" as a threat to the Ethiopian nation due to their non-Christian beliefs and uncivilized culture. Before he became emperor, Yohannes IV was a powerful *Däjazmach* in the Northern Ethiopian highlands. His chronicle states,

> He [Yohannes IV] marched rapidly and reached the region of the Galla the name of which was Azabo[59], for the inhabitants of the country had become rebellious in every place and killed passers-by for this was their custom. Any man who had not killed a man and never took the trophy of the dead would not butter the hair of his head, and his wife would not be able to draw water (from a well) except after all the women, whose husbands have killed, had done so.[60]

This event continues with the leaders of Azabo begging for mercy from Yohannes and him giving it on Christian grounds, after installing leaders to pay him tribute. This passage marks the beginnings of Yohannes' 1870s drive to purify Ethiopia of pagans and the "Galla" and to unify the Ethiopian highlands by subduing Muslim and Oromo Wällo.

Later in the chronicle he visited Azabo again, this time as emperor. The chronicler claims that the population of Azabo continued to kill innocent people, Yohannes purportedly made the following rallying cry to his army,

> This land of Azabo was formerly a holy country for a long time and many churches were erected in it. In each church were many priests and deacons, men and women, old and young. After a long time, the Galla prevailed and killed them with blades sparing none, for killing a soul is bravery in their view. Thus, after the extermination of the children of Baptism, they burnt down churches and set up idol temples in which they offered frankincense for their demons.[61]

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[57] See the Figure 3, Däbra Berhan and Angolala are both located in present day Shewa. Däbra Berhan is located near Dima and Angolala is on the map, and also a garrison city of the Shäwan leader Sahlä Sellasé (1814-47).
[58] Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," 163.
[59] See Figure 3, Azabo is a neighboring area to Tigray populated by the Raya Oromo, for the most part they spoke Tigrinya, but, generally did not give tribute to the rulers of Tigray. This territory and the Yäjju territory separated eastern Tigray from Amhara areas of Abyssinia.
[60] Bairu Tafla, *A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV: (1872-89)* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 117; M. Chaine, "Histoire Du Règne De Iohannes IV Roi D'éthiopie (1868-1889)," *Revue semitique et d'histoire ancienne* 21 (1913): 180.
[61] Ibid., 145.

This passage speaks to the perceived destruction brought by the "Gallas" to the country and the Christian religion. The chronicle continues,

> "penetrate this country fast and receive them with sharp spears so that their injustice may turn on their heads for blood cannot be purified without blood. Anyone who does not kill one of these rebels is not a strong man, but a timid and a fearful one like all women . . . He is not to be numbered among the perfect man, my servants."[62]

Ultimately, the crimes against Christianity and Christians had to be punished by death, and it was a *Häbäsha* duty to take part in the killing. Ironically, this masculine bloodlust endeared Yohannes culturally to some Oromo groups.[63] Overall Yohannes' chronicle is explicitly anti-"Galla," whom it defined as culturally and religiously inferior and a threat to the Ethiopian nation, religion and its people. These chronicles, in a sense, extended arguments for the legitimacy of a ruler through a description of their actions, and in these works one could not be an effective ruler (or teacher) without defeating the uncivilized barbarians who usurped the throne (or existed in your community).

Another *History of the Galla*, written by the Catholic Shäwan, Ato As'mé Giyorgis in the late 19th century, give an especially illuminating view of the term "Galla." As'mé Giyorgis (1821-1914) was born of a highly educated and religious family. His father and uncle had high positions in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Also, his father was a close friend and agent of a merchant of the Harar – Ankober trade route.[64] As'mé was educated in monasteries, but was converted to Catholicism by Monsignors Massaja and De Jacobis. He performed many services for Menelik's state, including passing on secret messages between Menelik and his generals as well as reconnaissance work in surveying Harar.[65] In addition, he warned Menelik of the infamous Article 17 of the

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[62] Ibid.; Chaine, "Histoire Du Règne De Iohannes IV Roi D'éthiopie (1868-1889)," 182, 4. Chaine's chronicle also indicates that he gave the spoils obtained from the Muslims as tithe to the Virgin Mary at the Church at Axum.

[63] The Oromo had a tradition called *wäfa wegiya*, which required killing a non-Oromo in order to become a man. For the *Häbäsha* equivalent see Donald Levine, "The Concept of Masculinity in Ethiopian Culture," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 12, no. 1 (1966): 16-22.

[64] See Ahmed Hassen Omer, "Some Notes of Harar and the Local Trade Routes: A Report on the View of Ex-Merchants of Shäwa (1839-1935)," *Annales d'Éthiopie* XVII (2001): 142. According to oral traditions collected by this scholar, As'mé gained knowledge of Arabic and Oromo traditions in areas around Harar due to this connection. His father was referred to as "érgäma" (an Afan Oromo term for agent).

[65] Harar is a Muslim city-state, east of Shäwa and its significance lies in its place in Red Sea trade routes, which Zaylä was used by Menilek to import firearms. See Figure 4, it is located in the province of Harerge.

Treaty of Wach'ale, but was seen as traitor and fined.[66] When the truth came out, he was offered the title of *Näggadras*, but he rejected it.[67] He was author of many works, but only two remain due to an Italian bombing of his house during the occupation of 1935.[68]

A key difference between other Ethiopian works and his text is that As'mé was not beholden to any institution or political leader which allowed him the freedom to write what he desired. As'mé gives us a nuanced view of the term Galla, which is based and centered neither on Abyssinian nor Oromo culture or class nor ethnicity. His work still echoes many of *Abba* Bahrey's ethnocentric beliefs. He writes, "Thus, they [the Galla] increased their efforts to kill the Amhara. They do not say, 'We will govern the country,' neither do they say, 'We shall till the soil." They rove[69] about, driving the cattle, killing, plundering, capturing women and children, enslaving the captives and selling them off."[70] This passage displays the lack of settled agriculture, the practice of slavery (something the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is against) and the arguing that the Oromo have only base desires (killing, enslaving and robbing)

The first part of his book outlines and describes Abyssinian myths on the origins of the "Galla." A main theme of the myths is that the "Galla" derived either from the devil or from slaves. As'mé successfully criticizes the logic of these myths and posits the origin of the "Galla" in Asia.[71] After this section, he describes law in "Galla" societies and states that it is better than Amhara law. We have seen how As'mé's forerunner Bahrey argued that the "Gallas" were a punishment from God. As'mé complicates this view, by arguing that the "Gallas" were able to defeat only certain Abyssinian groups, specifically those of Wällo and Gondar. Conversely, he argues that the Tigrés and

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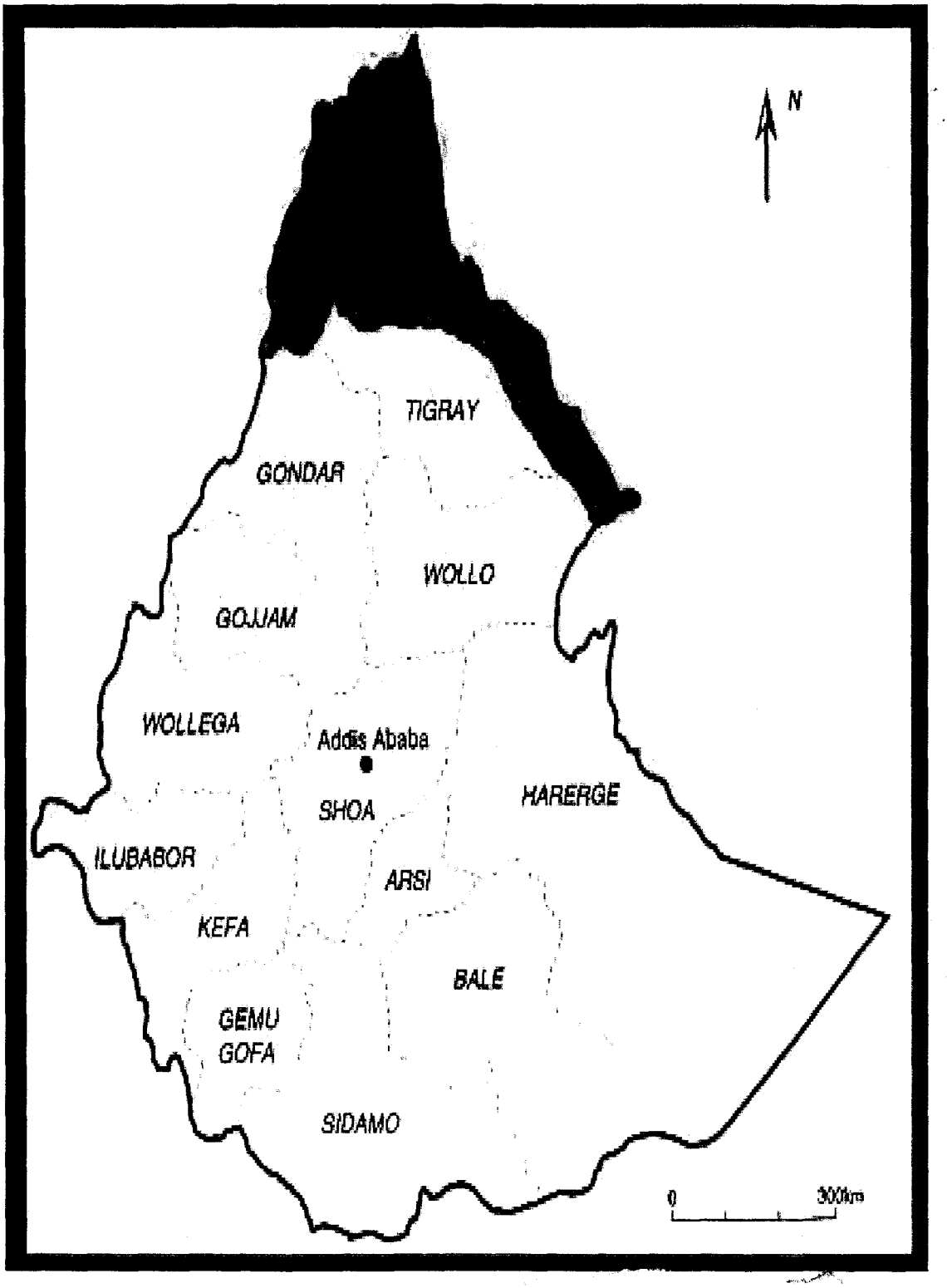
[66] This treaty was the point of contention between Italy and Ethiopia that caused the Battle of Adwa. The Amharic version stated that Ethiopia could use Italy for foreign policy, but the Italian version stated that Ethiopia had to use Italy for all foreign policy, which effectively made Ethiopia an Italian protectorate.
[67] Bahru Zewde defines *Näggadras* as "'head of merchants', originally leader of a merchant caravan, later chief customs officer" I believe Menelik offered him the last incarnation of the term. Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia : The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford; Athens; Addis Ababa: James Currey; Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa University, 2002), x..
[68] Bairu Tafla, "Three Ethiopian Portraits: Ato Asma Giyorgis, Ras Gobana Daci and Sahafi Tezaz Gabra Selasse " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 133-50, 39 - 44.
[69] Bairu, although generally an excellent translator, translates (ኦየለ) as "rove," which gives the impression that the Oromo are without direction while Wolf Leslau defines it as "to overpower, to overwhelm, to get the upper-hand," which makes more sense due to the fact that all of the actions it describes are things that military dominance made possible.
[70] Ibid., 185.
[71] Another interesting note is the importance of place in the origins of both "Galla" and *Häbäsha*.

Figure 4: Ethiopia in the Early 20th Century[72]



[72] From Baxter, *Being and Becoming Oromo*, 311

Shäwans remained culturally superior, and thus were able to defeat the "Gallas." He writes, describing the Tigrés,

> But the people of Tegrē were sincere. Religion means two things. First, it means observing carefully the Ten Commandments that God prescribed, and believing in Christ. Secondly, faith is loving one's country and people and obeying the leader of the people. Because they [the people of Tegrē] loved their country and the leader of their people, they (the "Galla") fell like leaves. Hence, the Galla have not until this day penetrated their country.[73]

As'mé's understanding of the term "Galla" seems retroactive, in the sense that once something, someone, or someplace has been discredited, then, and not before that time, it established it is labeled as "Galla" directly or indirectly.[74] Thus, it was believed that Tigray was "Galla" free.

The rationale, for the condition relative to ethnic thought, is culture. Superior cultures never lose to inferior cultures, and if such loss occurs it is due to deviation from the superior culture, as in the case of the decadence of the Gondar religious elite in Ethiopian history during the *Zämäna Mäsafent.* Debra Sanders' recent dissertation presents another interpretation and argues, " . . . Tigre were primary 'intellectual' architects of 'Ethiopia' and the Ethiopian imperial system that nurtured the perception of the supremacy of Tigre-Amhara cultural values while justifying the subjugation of others."[75] If they created the system by which to rule they must remain "pure" in order to protect the sanctity of this system. This ideology is displayed throughout nationalist rhetoric, including both American and South African cases.[76]

In sum, As'mé gives a complicated view of the "Galla." While he presents "Galla" culture as inferior, they are not the main targets of his criticism. His main targets were the Ethiopian clerics and scribes, whom he blamed for the lack of unity during the

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[73] Ibid., 313

[74] This belief is rooted in *Häbäsha* culture, especially during the 19th century see Donald Crummey, "Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia During the Zemana Masafent," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8, no. 2 (1975).

[75] Debra Sanders, "Identities in Ethiopia: The Role of Images, Symbols, Myths and Stereotypes in Imperial and Post-Imperial Systems" (George Mason University, 2002), 165-6.

[76] For South African see Gerhard Schutte, "Afrikaneer Historiography and the Decline of Apartheid: ethnic reconstruction in times of crises" in Elizabeth Tonkin, Malcolm Chapman, and Maryon McDonald, *History and Ethnicity*, A.S.A. Monographs 27 (London; New York: Routledge, 1989). For an example of American nativism see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860 – 1925, 2nd ed.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988 [1955])

Zämäna Masafint. In addition, he does not espouse a singular "Galla" culture, and views certain Oromo groups as superior to others.[77] His standard for culture is not Ethiopian, rather it is European. Thus, the superior people in As'mé's view are those who are highly influenced by Western forms of culture. As As'mé writes, "The Galla, however do not have religion, obedience was unknown to them they lived in ignorance, but they put their hope only in the next Luba [ruling Gada grade]. Where would he lead them? Nobody knew! They did not know it!"[78]

The "Galla" as Uncivilized Victims of *Häbäsha* Exploitation

As the *Zämäna Masafent* came to a close, *Häbäsha* dominance in highlands returned the power of the Solomonic dynasty and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which were used to extend political control in independent Oromo lands. These developments led to a view reflected in late 19th century chronicles and travel narratives of the Ethiopian state as returning to its former glory due to legitimate Ethiopian leadership. However, this new leadership was still African, and therefore inferior, European travelers used views of the Oromo to evidence this claim.[79] European travelers, while agreeing with barbaric image of the "Galla," argue that their inferiority was not a result of innate characteristics; rather due to *Häbäsha* oppression and only the "benevolent" hand of European missionaries and governments would allow them to reach their potential.

During the *Zämäna Mäsafent* and in the decades before, the "Galla" were undoubtedly political players on the Amhara highlands. While the Northern territories were engulfed in battles for supremacy, in Shäwa, Sahlä Sellassé (r.1813-1847), created a buffer zone of "Galla" provinces around his province in order to insulate himself against Amhara highland rivals. Beginning in the 1840s and continuing into the 20th century, a growing number of missionaries arrived in Abyssinia, who observed the growing *Häbäsha* presence in the previously independent Oromo lands. Travelers during reigns of Téwodros II, Yohannes IV, Menilek II as emperor were generally very sympathetic to the condition of the Oromo for several reasons.[80] Ignoring the descent of Northern Oromo

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[77] His translator also notices this, see Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 201, fn. 327
[78] Ibid., 195.
[79] Occasionally the travelers referred to them as "Oriental"
[80] Henri Blanc, "From Metemma to Damot, Along the Western Shores of the Tana Sea," *Geographic Journal* 39, no. 1 (1869): 36-50; Herbert Weld and Reginald Koettlitz Blundell, "A Journey through

leaders, severe criticism of *Häbäsha* leadership, culture and religion and the ideology of the white man's burden led these writers to see themselves as the ones that would save the Oromo from "Oriental" exploitation, especially in the newly conquered areas of Southern Ethiopia.

Antoine Abbadie writes a particularly detailed account of the Oromo in Ethiopia. He states that Oromo were God's gift to Ethiopia in order to prepare it for Christianity. He writes,

> Perhaps God had wished, in His own time to bring forward His foresight from far, to throw a new blood into the anemic old nations in order to prepare them to receive the Christian faith by the infusion of this durable energy, which although wild at first, made up the strength of these barbaric peoples.[81]

Mansfield Parkyns was one of the last British travelers of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, and traveled extensively in Tigray during the last years of the reign of Téwodros II. His narrative is anti-Tigrinyan, but pro-Amhara and "Galla." Specifically he argues that unproductive elements of Ethiopian society began with the nobles of Tigray. He ends his narrative with "Anecdotes of character" and in these anecdotes the heroes, save one, are always Amhara or "Galla"[82] The travelers, almost universally, display a belief that Abyssinian domination of the Oromos retards their development and that of their agriculturally rich land. Herbert Blundell writes,

> The Gallas were probably the aboriginal inhabitants of the country prior to the advent of the Abyssinians; they are said, however, also to be immigrants. They have been conquered, and are held in subjection by the help of firearms, which their conquers take care they shall not obtain, and

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Abyssinia to the Nile (Continued) " *Geographic Journal* 15, no. 3 (1900): 264-72; Oscar T. Crosby, "Abyssinia - the Country and People," *National Geographic Magazine* 12, no. 3 (1901): 91-102; Edward Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menelik, 1897* ([Farnborough]: Gregg International, 1971); Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia; Being Notes Collected During Three Years' Residence and Travels in That Country*, C.F. Rey, "Abyssinia and Abyssinia of to-Day," *Geographic Journal* 60, no. 3 (1922); Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day; an Account of the First Mission Sent by the American Government to the Court of the King of Kings, 1903-1904*; Herbert Vivian, *Abyssinia; through the Lion-Land to the Court of the Lion of Judah* (New York,: Negro Universities Press, 1969); M.S. Wellby, "King Menelek's Dominions and the Country between Lake Gallop (Rudolf) and the Nile Valley " *Geographic Journal* 16, no. 3 (1900): 292-304; Herbert Vivian, *Abyssinia; through the Lion-Land to the Court of the Lion of Judah* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1901).

[81] Antoine D'Abbadie, "On the Oromo: Great African Nation Often Designated under the Name "Galla", translated by Ayalew Kanno" *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 14, no. 1 (2007): 119.

[82] Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia*, 327-56.

> by this device they are kept in a position of distinct inferiority and abject servitude.[83]

Blundell continues, "As we moved along our route it was often pitiable to see the servile manner in which the Galla bowed and did homage to us or to our Abyssinian escort, and points to a savage oppression which does no honour to the Abyssinian."[84] An interesting observation is that Blundell had no problem with the deference shown to the European members of the party, but similar deference to Abyssinians reflected harsh treatment.

Another group which wrote similar accounts of the "Galla" were the European prisoners of Téwodros during the last years of his reign, who harbored significant ill will towards their captor and the ethnic group he represented and wrote in glowing terms of the Oromo who surrounded their prison in Maqdäla. Blanc writes, "The Wallo Gallas are a fine race, far superior to the Abyssinian in elegance, manliness and courage . . . they excelled so greatly the Amharas in horsemanship and in courage, that not only did they overrun the land, but lived for years on the resources of the country in imprudent security."[85] Henry Stern writes,

> The Gallas – by their prowess far more than by their Mahomedan creed – had incurred the resentment of the implacable tyrant, and to annihilate these martial tribes was the longing ambition of his fiendish heart. Animated by a corresponding passion, blended in the present instance, with an innate desire for rapine and bloodshed, the fanatical Amhara, avalanche-like, descended on the unsuspecting foe, spreading far and wide ruin and desolation, misery and death."[86]

These writings view military dominance in completely different terms. The Oromo conquest of the Wällo highlands is seen as a sign of superiority, while Téwodros' conquest of those same highlands is seen as a sign of pettiness, vengefulness and lack of civility.

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[83] Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile (Continued) ": 270.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Henry Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia, with Some Account of the Late Emperor Theodore, His Country and People* (London: F. Cass, 1970 [1868]), 290.
[86] Henry Aaron Stern, *The Captive Missionary: Being an Account of the Country and People of Abyssinia. Embracing a Narrative of King Theodore's Life, and His Treatment of Political and Religious Missions* (New York: Cassell Petter and Galpin, 1869), 212.

Even Italian travelers in the last decades of the 20th century in Southern parts of Menilek's expanding Empire, espouse similar views, while looking at a completely different Oromo groups. Jules Borelli, writes,

> However, the importance of strength is tantamount in a country where friendship and the recognition [of higher authority] are unknown. Of the Oromo I met, [there were] individuals capable of good feelings. They are less civilized than the Amharas; but, in my sense, they could be more efficiently [governed]. Some are simple and deprived of all pretension; others are proud and silly. [87]

This thought is echoed by Bianchi, who writes, "A better government would get good results among the Galla, that they are the most honest, hard-working tribe, [and] nicer than [those] of the whole plateau."[88] The Oromo are seen, as the preferred colonial subject for everyone but the Amhara. This is certainly a different picture of the Oromo, but still not one which attributes with them the ability to control their own destiny.

As Menilek's reign came to an end, another group of travelers from France, Georgia and Russia continued this belief. These travelers also criticized Abyssinian rule and sought to uplift the Oromo people. Reginald Koettlitz was a companion of Blundell in his earlier travels, but returning on his own, he wrote,

> All portion of our route lay through the Galla country – beautiful, diversity, and fertile. The Gallas here have comparatively lately been subjugated by the Abyssinians; they are a fine featured, well formed race, who are kept in abject subjugation to their conquerers by means of not allowing them to have firearms. The Abyssinians rob, ill-treat, and tax their produce without mercy, and they are evidently in a very unhappy state.[89]

Not only do the Abyssinians take immense quantities of produce and tribute, but they also have changed the way of life of the Oromo people. In the opinion of Koettlitz, this change has caused an unnatural subjugation of a superior race. The Russian traveler Bulatovich, agreed, "The Galla is a beggar, sooner generous than stingy, sooner good

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[87] Jules Borelli, *Ethiopia Meridonionale: Journal De Mon Voyage Aux Pays Amhara, Oromo Et Sidama Septembre 1885 a Novembre 1888*, vol. Deuxième Partie (Paris: 1890), 210. Unless otherwise noted all translations are done by the author.

[88] Gustavo Bianchi, *Alla Terra Die Galla: Narratzione Della Spedizione Bianchi in Africa Nel 1879-80* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1886), 290.

[89] Reginald Koettlitz, "A Journey through Somali Land and Southern Abyssinia to the Shangalla or Berta Country and the Blue Nile and through the Sudan to Egypt," *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* 16, no. 1 (1900): 1-30, 28.

than bad. You can only believe him with caution. Formerly, there was almost no thievery among the Galla, but this was not due to principled honesty, but rather to the absence of want – all the more so because the distribution of property was very equal. But now, theft has become very common"[90] Bulatovich argues that not only do the Abyssinians rob the Oromos of their land, produce and tribute, but also they contribute to the increasing moral depravity of these people.[91] A French traveler of the 19th century writes, ""The Gallas are certainly the most hard-working [in Ethiopia]; contrary to the Abyssinians, they are loyal to Europeans, to which they are attached . . ."[92] In the early 20th century Menilek's doctor Mérab writes referring to one of key Oromo figures of this dissertation, *Fit.* Häbtä Giyorgis (1842-1927),

> He [Habte Giyorgis] seems to foresee that the future of his country depends on the European civilization . . . he knows, among others, that the soft, patient, laborious and brave Galla, that bends the head under the fire arm of the Amhara, will be the master of the destiny of the country the day when liberty and the equality occurs in the morality [of the country] with European influence.[93]

The majority of travelers reported that the Southern "Gallas" did not have a high status economically or politically, and according to these travelers, it is due to *Häbäsha* domination, while a *Häbäsha* might say it is the natural order of things.

This belief is also seen in As'mé's text. He attributes their pagan condition on their Abyssinian neighbors, not a sign of barbarism. He states that the Bible commands Christians to teach the word of God to non-Christians, but the Abyssinian priests and monks have not done this. Instead, he writes,

> They have expropriated their land by the Qalad system: a Qalad for the priesthood, a Qalad for the deaconship . . . they induced the Negus [to allot] a Qalad for himself, a Qalad for a tenant farmer, a Qalad for a

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[90] A. K. Bulatovich, Richard Seltzer, *Ethiopia through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition, 1896-1898*, 1st Red Seal Press ed. (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2000), 66. For more on this traveler see Czelslaw Jesmen, *The Russians in Ethiopia: An Essay in Futility*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1958, 95-6.

[91] Herbert Vivian presents a traveler's understanding of Abyssinian conceptions of property. He writes, "Land is not for sale. It may be leased but only with difficulty and at an undue rent. An Abyssinian prefers to make nothing out of his property rather them to alienate it to foreigner." I guess in this case the foreigner was both the European and the Oromo. Vivian, *Abyssinia*, 122.

[92] J.G. Vanderheym, *Une Expédition Avec Le Négus Ménélik: Vingt Mois En Abyssinie* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1896), 93.

[93] Paul Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie (L'abyssinie Sous Ménélik Ii)*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1929), 79. Häbtä Giyorgis is a key figure in chapter 6, for the definition of *Fitawrari* see Appendix B.

> soldier [and a Qalad for a] Saqala. Having thus divided the land among themselves they ruled the Galla like slaves, and they have not shown them the path of Christ. They [the clergy] are not educated, and they do not allow other teachers to come.[94]

This critique of Abyssinian colonization mirrors European travelers at the time and the connection they made between the Ethiopian church and Shäwan expansion. As'mé was heavily influenced by Cardinal Massaia and his experience reflects many of the new converts to Ethiopia.[95] Generally, Ethiopians religious teachers did not travel to pagan areas; rather, European missionaries came, but they had been expelled from the country many times over the last four hundred years. While As'mé concedes that the "Galla" are uncivilized; he blames this on the barbaric practices of the Abyssinians and argues that Europeans are the ones who can bring the "Galla" out of a primitive condition.

Of the European travelers, no one exceeded the fin de siècle traveler Martial de Salviac in his simultaneous praise of and paternalism toward the "Galla" He describes the Oromo as African conservers of the environment and the land that they populate as ". . . *the one from all of Ethiopia which best preserves the gracefulness of nature.*"[96] He describes the *Häbäsha* as natural destroyers of the environment, who, after destroying their own lands, force the "Galla" to deliver the fruits of their own lands.[97] Like many missionaries, he discredits the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, but believes the Oromo are not only capable of becoming good Christians, but also moral men. He argues that the "Galla" are similar to the Romans and Gauls of ancient time, especially when it comes to cultural practices.[98] In a similar vein, he, unlike many of his European counterparts speaks well of the reign of Yäjju Wära Shék's.[99] Due to his belief of the natural nobility of the "Galla," he views their subjugation in the late 19th century as especially horrendous. He writes,

> The conduct of the Abyssinian armies invading a land is simply barbaric. They contrive a sudden irruption, more often at night. At daybreak, the fire begins; surprised men in the huts or in the fields are three quarter

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[94] Ibid., 125. For a definition of *Qalad* see Appendix B.
[95] See Terfassa Digga, "A Short Biography of Onesimos Nesib Oromo Bible Translator, Evangelist and Teacher " (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973).
[96] de Salviac, *Un Peuple Antique Au Pays De Ménélik*, 20.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 200.
[99] Ibid., 39-53, 345-7.

> massacred and horribly mutilated; the women and the children and many men are reduced to captivity; the soldiers lead the frightened herd toward the camp, take away the grain and the flour which they load on the shoulders of their prisoners spurred on by blows of the whip, destroy the harvest, then, glutted with booty and intoxicated with blood, go to walk a bit further from the devastation, that is what they call "civilizing a land." – "If the first time, they say, the people are not crushed, they rebel, and that must be followed by a great expedition *to civilize* them entirely."[100]

While these statements may be true of any army of the late 19th century, the important parts of this quote speak to the brutality and the focus of the conquering army. The objective was to maximize what could be taken from the land, including people, livestock and agriculture while simultaneously frightening the "Galla" into unquestioned submission.[101]

Concluding Remarks

Similar to the various images given to the protagonist in Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the "Galla" term had different cultural, moral, social, political and religious connotations. Such ambiguity seems to have little utility in terms of describing a group. The "Galla" term is more a reflection of the perceptions of *Häbäsha* nation and European political motivations, than of Oromo identities. After Grañ's invasion, Abyssinia was vulnerable on multiple fronts, one of these was cultural, and, in an effort to strengthen cultural unity, *Häbäshas* looked for reason why their state was declining, and the recently arriving Oromo were an easy target. As opposed to seeing their military and political success as reinvigorating the Abyssinian empire, these actors became invisible and were only seen for what they represented. For many travelers and chroniclers, they represented barbarian and/or Muslim rule. Whether or not they were either of these was not important. The "Galla" were individuals or groups that were a threat, perceived or real, to *Häbäsha* nationalism or nations. As C.W. Isenberg writes, "They seem to be hating all, and hated by all."[102]

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[100] Ibid., 349.

[101] This style worked best among the more decentralized agrarian groups. More centralized polities either put up stiff resistance or peacefully submitted. Relative to the Somali and Afar pastoralists, the *Häbäsha* did not require a large tribute; rather, secure trade routes as routes to the coast went through Afar and Somali territories. See Chapters six and seven.

[102] J.L. Krapf, *An Imperfect Outline of the Elements of the Galla Language Preceded by a Few Remarks Concerning the Nation of the Gallas and an Evengelical Mission among Them by the Rev. C.W. Isenberg* (London: The Church Missionary Society, 1840), xi.

However, after the *Zämäna Masafent*, the *Häbäsha* leaders attempted to force their culture and religion on the newly conquered peripheral groups of the Ethiopian empire. This acculturation added new dimensions to group definitions. In the late 19th century, "Galla" began to be used as a term that conveyed political inferiority due to cultural inferiority in case of the royal chroniclers; therefore, power became attached to a perception of superior culture. Again, the "Galla" were rendered invisible, they continued to represent the uncivilized, but changes in the socio-political climate made their presence incompatible with notions of the Ethiopian state. At the end of the 19th century Shäwan Amharas achieved political dominance over both the northern highland *Häbäsha* provinces and Southern Oromo lowland provinces. For the European travelers in the 18th and 19th century, the "Galla" term was used initially to endear them to *Häbäsha* elites. However, when motivations shifted from Christian solidarity to colonialism and missionary endeavors as the 19th century came to an end, the "Galla" label discredited *Häbäsha* rulers in Ethiopia. In sum, the ambiguity in the term "Galla" is due to the changing representations of the Oromo people in Ethiopia, and had little do with the changes within Oromo societies. Chapter 2 examines the ways in which elite Oromo moved from the "Galla" category to social acceptance and political dominance in the Ethiopian highlands.

Chapter Two:

Beyond the Metanarratives: Local Negotiations in Amhara/Oromo Relations

"There is no such thing as a 'pure' Oromo tribe derived from a single founding father . . . the history of the Oromo people is . . . a story of fusion and interaction by which all tribes and groups had altered and been transformed constantly."[1]

"The courage and ferocity of the Gallas is notorious; and, from the circumstances of many of the inhabitants and most of the actual rulers of the various provinces of Abessinia being of Galla extraction, the two people may in the present day be considered as one. In fact, in the event of a national rising, the greater portion of the fighting men would unquestionably be Galla or their immediate descendents.[2]

". . . Tigre provincialism thrives on the conviction that it represents purity and continuity in Ethiopian culture, in contrast to the admixture that has diluted this tradition in the region south of the Takkaze [a river south of the Tigré province]; the Tigre are apt to refer to the Amhara contemptuously as half-Galla."[3]

As outlined in the previous chapter the European and *Häbäsha* views of the "Galla" fall into three categories: uncivilized barbarians, victims of the Amhara and as eternal enemies of the Amhara. While in royal chronicles and travel narratives the boundary between the *Häbäsha* and "Galla" ethnic categories is not fluid and is generally constant throughout the empire, there are differences in the ethnic makeup of the provinces of Shäwa and Wällo on the one hand and the provinces of Gojjam and Tigray on the other hand. These sources define Shäwa and Wällo as provinces infected by the "stain" of the "Galla," while they describe Bägémder and Gojjam as pure *Häbäsha* provinces.[4] With the provincialism of the *Zämäna Mäsafent* (Age of Princes, 1786-1855),

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[1] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860*, African Studies Series; 66. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.
[2] Charles Tilstone Beke, *Letters on the Commerce and Politics of Abessinia and Other Parts of Eastern Africa, Addressed to the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade*, 3 vols. (London: 1852), vol. 1, 35.
[3] John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974, 48.
[4] There was also a significant Oromo presence in Bägémder and Gojjam. During the late 18th and 19th century the Yäjju controlled Gondar and even moved the capital to the south to Däbrä Tabor in the late 18th century. See among others Richard Pankhurst, "The History of Däbrä Tabor (Ethiopia)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* XL, no. 2 (1977); Carlo Conti Rossini, *Etiopia E Genti D'Etiopia.* Firenze: R. Bemporad, 1937, 77. There is also a significant Oromo presence in Gojjam, although there is less secondary literature on this issue. See the theses on both settlements in South Gojjam and intermarriage into the Gojjame provincial nobility. Bizualem Birhane, "Adal Abba Tänna - Nigus of Gojjam and of Kaffa (1850-1902)" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1971); Oljira Tujuba, "Oromo-Amhara Relations in Horro Guduru Awraja (Northeastern Wellaga) C. 1840-1941" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1994). In addition, there is a district Southeast of Baher Dahr (Gojjam, and

the central institutions of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and the Solomid dynasty declined in significance, especially in the provinces of Shäwa, which became independent, and Wällo, which was dominated by mostly Muslim Oromo dynasties. These territories became a "Middle Ground" where no one group was completely dominant culturally, politically or militarily. I argue that ethnicity was renegotiated in the provinces of Wällo and Shäwa due to the diversity of these areas and the increased wealth and military power of Oromo groups who were integrated into elite political systems through cultural practices, such as godparentage, religious conversions and marriage alliances. These negotiations resulted in an ethnically diverse elite class of Amhara and Oromo who led these territories throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Place became increasingly important due to regional battles that transcended ethnic lines, cosmology based on local experiences and phenomena which were particular to certain provinces. Religion played a variety of roles relative to identity. In Shäwa, local populations used Christianity and local religious leaders to unify a multi-ethnic province. However, in Wällo, powerful nobles used Islam as an alternative power source to increase the authority of the local dynasties in Christian Ethiopia.[5] Cultural institutions, such as class, conversion, adoption, godparentage and, as the 19th century ended, nationalism, were employed by the local populations to bring individuals or groups into existing communities. Often, especially in respect to elite political figures, transition was generally smooth and helped minority groups (whether they were Amhara or Oromo) to integrate into the dominant society. Lastly, the manipulation of the weakened central institutions and its manipulation led a more diverse group of regional leaders to obtain imperial power. The Yäjju dynasty (1786-1928) mentioned in the last chapter manipulated the Gondar political system by marrying into the imperial family and establishing puppet emperors.

Due to the local elite control over local resources, these elites had to be integrated into the empire and, generally, this was done through marriages or political alliances. Generally, it was the Oromo who attached themselves to the court of a local leader

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current capital of the Amhara Regional State) called Mäch'a whose inhabitants today solely speak Amharic.

[5] See Hussein Ahmed, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia: Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001).

through military assistance. Once they were attached authority became legitimate through conversion and marriage ties, which usually led to their ethnically mixed progeny becoming the territories' rulers.[6] These counter narratives of difference (place, religion, and cultural institutions) point to the fluidity of ethnic boundaries apparent during the 18th and 19th century which provincialism, migration and negotiation had brought a variety of ethnic groups to play a role in the construction of the modern state of Ethiopia.

In order to understand the diversity of the various provinces and their responses to difference, we must revisit the aftermath of Ahmed Grañ's conquest. The Oromo migrations and the period of the *Zämäna Mäsafent* must both be concisely outlined. During the 16th century, Ahmed Grañ had broken the frontier defense of Ethiopia, and this, even after his defeat, allowed the migrating Oromo to settle on significant portions of the highlands, especially in the provinces of Wällo and Shäwa.[7] Successive Ethiopian emperors attempted to integrate the Oromo into the existing political systems, especially Susenyos[8] and Iyasu I; however, throughout the 18th century the position of the emperor was losing power, ushering in the period of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, which was marked by increased provincialism and allowed different territories the autonomy to negotiate ethnic difference on their own terms. These negotiations brought about the rise of dynasties that practiced marriage alliances which transcended ethnic boundaries.

The Oromo made up the majority of the population of both of the historic provinces Wällo and Shäwa, but these provinces had distinctly different trajectories. Wällo, much closer to the provinces of Bägémder and Tigray, remained tied to the center of Ethiopian politics and increased its power to an apogee in the early 19th century. Also, Wällo was initially called Amhara, but was renamed after the Oromo sub-clan that dominated it after Grañ's invasion. In Wällo, many elites spoke Amharic exclusively, but had at the same time converted to Islam. In addition, the Oromo dominance of Wällo

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[6] A key example occurred on the national level and begun with the reign of Bakaffa (1721-30), whose son Iyasu married the Yäjju Oromo Wabit and their child Iyoas took the throne in 1755. Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, The Peoples of Africa. (Oxford ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 123-6 and ——, "Dynastic Intermarriage in Medieval and Post-Medieval Ethiopia," in *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective : Papers of the Xiiith International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Kyoto, 12-17 December 1997*, ed. Katsuyoshi Fukui, Eisei Kurimoto, and Masayoshi Shigeta (Kyoto, Japan: Shokado Book Sellers, 1997), 216-8.

[7] See Figure 5.

[8] He was not the oldest son of Zädengel and was an Oromo prisoner of war and, upon his ascension, he brought many of his adopted brothers into the imperial center.

separated Shäwa from the rest of the Ethiopian provinces.[9] As mentioned earlier, Shäwa had an Oromo majority, but Menilek's Mänzé dynasty began to assert their dominance in the region.[10] In unifying the province of Shäwa under one banner, alliances were made between Oromo and Amhara rulers, especially during the reign of Sahlä Sellasé (r. 1814-47) which brought Oromo elites into Shäwan Amhara political systems. Generally, these Oromo converted to Christianity and became fluent in Amharic. The general lack of central state authority over Wällo and Shäwa allowed for unique demographic, political and religious situations that produced an equally distinctive response to human difference.

Place

As earlier stated, the central provinces of Shäwa and Wällo represented a "Middle Ground" a space where due to need for survival ethnic groups combined cultures, values, identities and religious practices.[11] Therefore, in order to grasp the importance of the cultural practices that will be described in this chapter it is essential to contextualize these practices by using place. *Agär*, or place in Amharic, only recently has been used as a lens into Ethiopian society.[12] In interviews I have conducted with many Ethiopians, they refer to themselves by place. For example, they state, "I am Gojame", "Shäwan" or "a Southerner."[13] In essence, in my view nationwide ethnic identities did not exist until, perhaps, the post-1991 regime of Meles Zenawi, if then. In fact, the term Amhara often appears synonymously with Ethiopian Orthodox Christian. Many of the Semitist and Oromocentric scholars do not take into account the importance of place in identity. One who does is Donald Levine, who, in his monograph, *Wax and Gold*, indicates differences

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[9] See Figure 4, Nothern Amhara leaders did not go South of Wällo in the 18th and 19th centuries leading to the rise of an independent kingdom of Shäwa during this time.

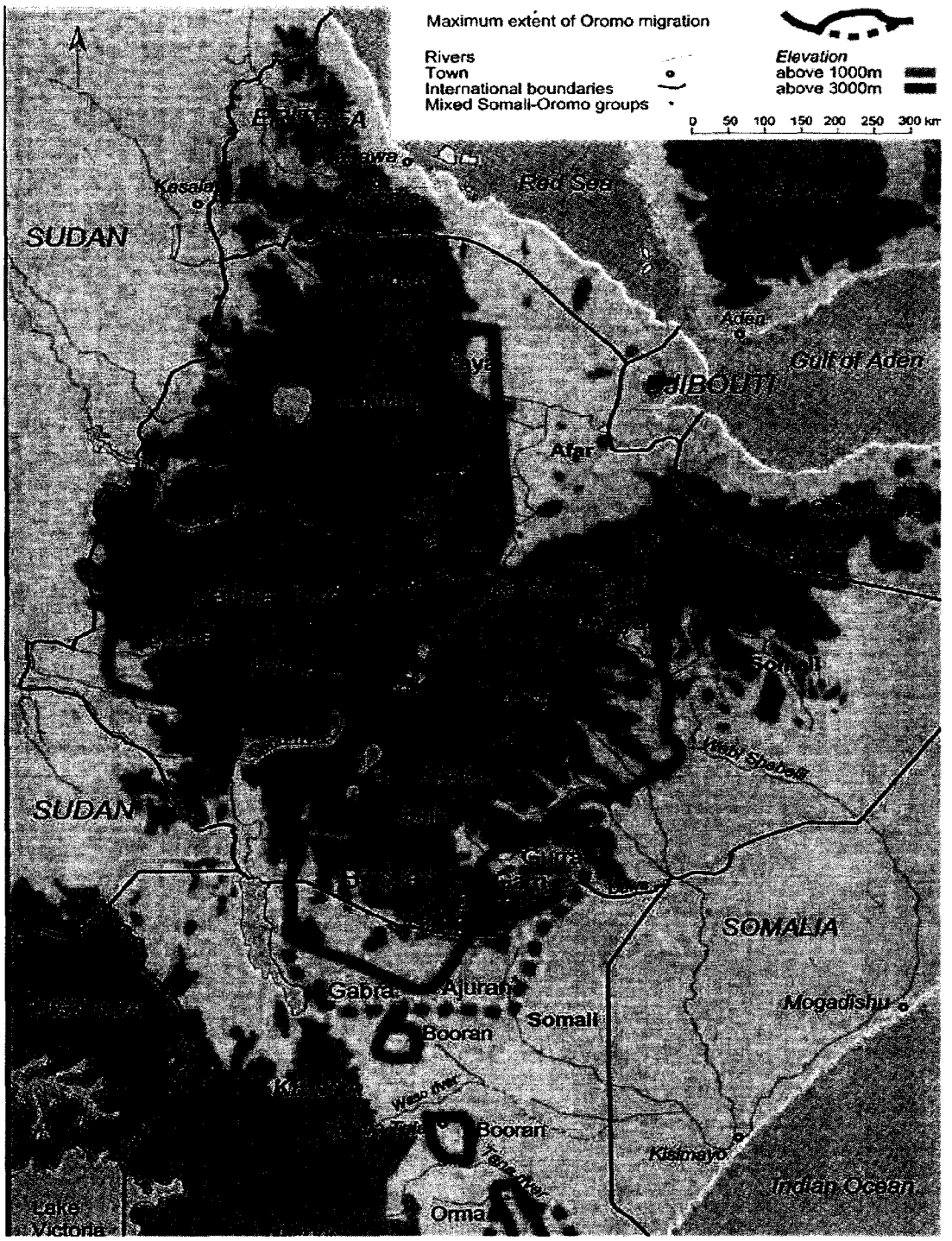
[10] This dynasty will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5

[11] For more on Middle Ground see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

[12] Odd Eirik Arnesen "The Becoming of Place: A Tulamaa-Oromo Region of Northern Shoa" in P. T. W. Baxter, Jan Hultin, and Alessandro Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries* (Lawrenceville, N.J.; Asmara, Eritrea: Red Sea Press, 1996); Tesfaye Wolde-Medhin, "Highland Farmers and the "Modernizing" State in Ethiopia: Conjuctures and Disjunctures" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2004).

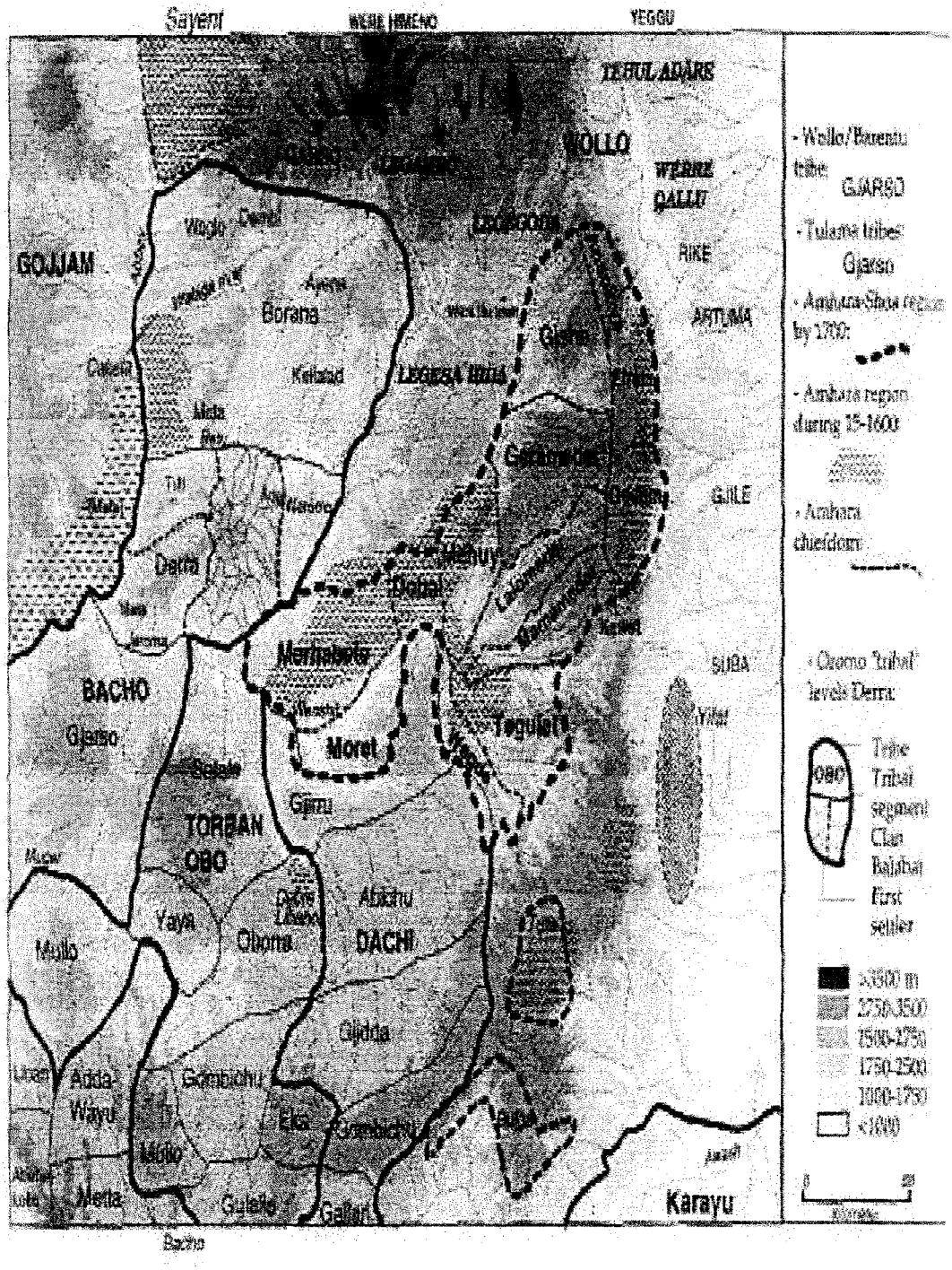
[13] See References and Appendices C for more on these informants and sample interview questions. This view is echoed in Maimire Mennasemay "Ethiopian History and Critical Theory: The Case of Adowa" in Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia eds. *The Battle of Adowa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory Against European Colonialism*. (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 281.

Figure 5: Oromo Settlements in Ethiopia[14]



[14] Baxter, P.T.W., Jan Hultin, Alessandro Triulzi eds. *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries* Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1996, backcover.

Figure 6: A Generalized Overview of the Distribution of Oromo Clans and Amhara Cheifdoms in Northern Shäwa and Wällo in the Period 1600-1850[15]



[15] Odd Eirik Arnesen "The Becoming of Place: A Tulamaa-Oromo Region of Northern Shoa" in Baxter, Hultin, and Triulzi eds. *Being and Becoming Oromo*, 222.

due to place within Amharic speaking groups.[16] The lack of long distance travel for most peasants as well as the increased provincialism of the *Zämäna Mäsafent* fostered various cultural practices rooted in local experiences.

Tesfaye Wolde Medhin complicates the notion of *agär* by adding to it both moral and religious connotations, defining *agär* as homogenous cultural space within a specific territory. In the second chapter of his dissertation, he argues that during Solomonic times (1270-1529) non-Christians (Muslims, Jews and traditionalists) occupied a place outside of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian moral domain.[17] Similar to other Ethiopian central institutions, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church lost absolute authority during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*. Former central areas of the Ethiopian state, like Wällo and Shäwa fell further outside imperial control. Tesfaye writes, "King Särs'ä Dengal [r.1563-1597] never once visited Amhara."[18] This increased provincialism hastened the process of primarily identifying oneself regionally and not ethnically. Maimire writes, "This was because each 'region' had its distinctive historical configuration and its unique 'personality' of which ethnicity was only one of many strands making regional identification rather than ethnicity the dominant mode of expressing one's identity."[19]

Tesfaye's area of focus is South Wällo and he agrees with J.S. Trimingham when he argues that instead of Amhara groups integrating into Oromo society, the Oromo in South Wällo integrated into Amhara society, taking up almost exclusively Amhara cultural norms, aside from converting to Islam.[20] The 19th century European missionary Isenberg explains this change by stating, "The continual intercourse of the Wollo Gallas with the Abyssinians in the north, and the Shoans in the south seems to me to the cause of

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[16] Levine argues that Shewan Amharas (Mänzé) developed a warrior culture due to the fact that they were surrounded by Oromo groups and lead simple dark lives due to the climate of the region while Begemder Amharas (Gondar) lived subtle religious lives due to the historic Christian heritage of the region. Donald Nathan Levine, *Wax & Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[17] Tesfaye, "Highland Farmers", 14.

[18] *Ibid.*, 40. It is also important to point out that generally Ethiopian emperors traveled personally to each provinces to collect taxes. Thus, lack of an imperial presence in a province displayed the autonomy of this province.

[19] Maimire, "Ethiopian History and Critical Theory: The Case of Adowa" in Milkias and Getachew eds. *The Battle of Adowa*, 281.

[20] See J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (New York,: Barnes & Noble, 1965). The general view is that militarily weaker groups assimilated into the stronger groups. In Wällo, the opposite happened.

this general reception of the Amharic among the Wollo tribes."[21] However, in other areas of Wällo and Shäwa the Oromo did not integrate into Amhara cultural systems until the late 19th and early 20th century.

In Shäwa, the ethnic situation was distinctly different from Wällo. For decades during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* there was no clear dominant group and divisions in society were both linguistic and religious. Amesen's article is a groundbreaking beginning to understanding the complexities of ethnicity in central Ethiopia. He argues against understandings of Shäwa that use ethnicity as a fixed border between groups. Using the Northern Shäwa territory of Derra (see Figure 6), as a case study, he uses a "place based" approach as a way to understand ethnicity. He argues that it was constantly reconstructed between the 16th century and the present day. He argues that due to the unique socio-political climate of the Tulama-Oromo region (see figure 11 in Chapter 3), the Bacho Oromo ethnic group split into three distinct groups: Christian Oromo (Bacho), Muslim Oromo (Derra) and Muslim Amhara (Borana).[22] These distinctions created a unique frontier, part religious and part linguistic. Concluding, he writes, "The core hypothesis is that the subsequent overlapping spheres of influences or social boundaries, that we have placed as "overlays" over Derra, were both contained and contested within the locality, creating multiple identities . . ."[23] His essay serves as an effective way both to complicate and provide an understanding of identity in an ethnically diverse area.

Another article which seems to have been forgotten by recent Ethiopianists dares to ask the question, "Who are the Shoans?"[24] Gerry Salole argued that the Shäwans did not think of themselves as and were not considered *Häbäsha* by many Northern Ethiopians until the modern era. He continues to state that modern Shäwans crafted a *Häbäsha* identity for three reasons: endearing themselves to Europeans, claiming ties to Northern Ethiopians so their expansion would not be interrupted, and fashioning a

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[21] Karl Wilhelm Isenberg, J. L. Krapf, and James MacQueen, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf Detailing Their Proceedings in the Kingdom of Shoa and Journeys in Other Parts of Abyssinia in the Years 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842, to Which Is Prefixed a Geographical Memoir of Abyssinia and South Eastern-Africa by James M'queen, Grounded on the Missionaries' Journals and the Expedition of the Pacha of Egypt up the Nile, with Two Maps Constructed by James M'queen*, 1st ed. (London,: Cass, 1968), 346.

[22] Odd Eirik Arnesen "The Becoming of Place: A Tulama-Oromo Region in Northern Showa," Baxter, Hultin, and Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo*, 223-32.

[23] Ibid., 238.

[24] Gerry Salole, "Who Are the Shoans," *Horn of Africa* 2, no. 3 (1979): 20-30.

Häbäsha identity, which would allows them to claim the Ethiopian Imperial crown.[25] While outwardly attempting to foster a *Häbäsha* identity, Shäwans had a perspective on territory and historical heritage different from their northern neighbors. Actions that evidence this perspective are Menelik's treaty with the Italians that gave the Italians Eritrea and his Imperial coronation that occurred in Ent'ot'o (Menilek's capital before Addis Ababa), rather than the traditional sites of Axum or Gondar. He argues that instead of a process of assimilation (one group incorporating another), acculturation (two or more cultures sharing practices) took place in Shäwa between the Gurage (an ethnic group mostly located in Shäwa who generally spoke a Semitic language, Gurage, and were employed by weaving, cattle raising, trading and farming *Ensete* (false banana)), Oromo and Amhara. He further complicates this process by including urbanization and modernity, both of which occurred during the mid twentieth century, as phenomena that also affected identity in Shäwan. His work complicates any notion of putting anything other than a Shäwan "ethnic" identity on the population of Shäwa, due to lack of differentiation between Shäwan groups, Shäwan hatred by both Northern and Southern Ethiopians and distinctiveness of their historical legacy. This legacy, according to Salole, allowed for fluid boundaries within Shäwa that are more fluid than ethnic boundaries outside of the region. For example, Soddo Gurage can more easily become Soddo Oromo than any other Gurage group or Shäwan Oromo can more easily become Shäwan Amharas than Tulama or Mecha Oromo.

Lastly, the decline of the monarchy during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* did not mean that the Oromo controlled center did not have any effect on the provinces. Powerful regional leaders recreated imperial courts within their own territories.[26] The significance of this political structure is two fold. One, the provincial leader could promote anyone he or she wanted to, avoiding larger national narratives.[27] The Yäjju leaders, Gugsa and Ali

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[25] Ibid., 21.

[26] Shiferaw Bekele, "The State in the Zemana Masafint (1786-1853): An Essay in Reinterpretation" in Taddese Beyene, Richard Pankhurst, and Shiferaw Bekele, *Kasa and Kasa: Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohannes IV (1855-1889)* (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1990), 48.

[27] These narratives are not as significant for the purposes of this project due to the fact the two leading dynasties of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*; the Yäjju (Wärä Shék) and the Mammadoch were both, at least partly, Oromo.

exerted considerable political influence.[28] The early 19th century French traveler Arnauld D'Abbadie states describing the structure of Gugsa's state, "The first year, he [Ras Gugsa] maintained the status quo, by confirming the property to the holders; then, every year, under some pretext, taking the property of a certain number, and, at the end of its reign, he had ruined or dispersed the noble families of his provinces."[29] Thus, Gugsa checked local elites powers in an attempt to centralize resources and increase his own authority.

Moreover, membership in the court of influential provincial leaders brought greater access to imperial authority. Simply put, if an Oromo became an influential member of the court of any province, especially Wällo or Shäwa, then the authority of the provincial leader in Ethiopian politics legitimated those in his court. Again, D'Abbadie notes that the Yäjju dynasty installed the leader of Wära Himano, a key district in Wällo. he writes, "Wora-Himano [Wära Himano,], a Muslim province [that was] ruled by a Dedjazmatch [Amadé], [it was] due to the nomination of the Ras."[30] These studies point to not only a fluidity of identity, but also to a multitude of factors that shape it, creating a unique Wälloye and Shäwan identities, which were distinct from Amhara and Oromo ethnic identities in other areas.

Religion

In the chronicles, travel narratives and secondary material, religion is generally represented as the greatest source of division in Ethiopian society and it continues to be a primary factor in identity construction. This phenomenon is most likely due to the fact of the centrality of Ethiopian Orthodox Church and a Christian world view, which uses religious rationalization for such historical events as Ahmed Grañ's conquest, the ascent of Téwodros II and the victory at Adwa in 1896. According the Kebrä Nägäst, God ordained the male descendents of Maksheda and Solomon to rule Ethiopia.[31] Christianity

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[28] See Figure 16 (Chapter 4) for the Genealogy chart of the Yäjju.

[29] Arnauld d'Abbadie and edited by Jeanne-Marie Allier, *Douze Ans De Séjour Dans La Haute-Éthiopie (Abyssinie)* (Cittá del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), 151.

[30] Ibid., vol. 2, 54. Also, see Figure 8, for the position of Ahmade (Abba Mujjo).

[31] Miguel F. Brooks, *A Modern Translation of the Kebra Nagast : The Glory of Kings*, 1st Red Sea Press ed. (Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1996), 121-3. Also see Steven Kaplan and Hagar Solomon, "The Legitimacy of the Solomonic Line: Ethiopian Dynastic Change between Structure and History" in *Ethiopian Studies at the End of the Second Millennium*, ed. Baye Yimam (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 2002), 384-8.

linked groups separated by language, mountains or rivers, while Islam and Judaism marked minority groups in Ethiopia. However, conversion to Christianity of Oromo elites, traditions of local monastic holy men (MHM) and pan-religious/ethnic ceremonies helped to foster place based identities that transcended religious differences and helped to unite the province of Shäwa numerically dominated by the Oromo. However, in the late 18th and early 19th century, a different process occurred in Wällo. It was increasingly unified under the banner of Islam and powerful Imams.

In her dissertation, Earnestine Jenkins presents Shäwa as a multi-ethnic/religious province with many religious practices that transcend both religion and ethnicity. Her first argument is that Christianity in Shäwa was laid over a "pagan" foundation and that these elements can be seen in the ways in which Shäwans practiced Christianity. She writes,

> They [Shäwans] believed whole heartedly in evil and daemonic forces with their powerful curses. So amulets or charms were worn by everyone as protection against magic. People seemed to reason that if the miraculous was present in the world, then so was its opposite evil. These belief patterns were generally held by the Shewan population at all levels of society; noble and peasant, rich and poor, Christian and non-Christian.[32]

Examples of these practices are the wearing of charms or amulets and the worship of nature (stones, trees and bodies of water) and are not solely limited to the province of Shäwa[33] Not only did they have similar "pagan" roots, but also the aforementioned process of acculturation allowed for the combination of the religious practices of various ethnic groups. Jenkins gives examples of both the kings of Wällo and Shäwa desiring "magic sentences" and "amulets" to protect them from sickness.[34] Charles Isenberg observed, "The people of Shoa attempted to convert these heathens [the Oromo in Shäwa] by means of war and magic sentences; but they refused to accept the Christian

[32] Earnestine Lovelle Jenkins, "A Kingly Craft: Manuscripts, Ideology, and Society in 18th and 19th Century Ethiopia " (Michigan State University, 1997), 207-8.
[33] Ibid., 211-4.
[34] Ibid., 211.

faith."[35] While aspects of this passage describe Oromo resistance to conversion, for this work, the importance is the utilization of transcendent highland cultural practices.[36]

This acculturation is not exclusive to these provinces. For example, in Tigray, Lij Wude, uncle and rival of *Däj*. Wube (one of the last powerful nobles of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*), possessed an amulet with a text in Arabic. He asked the European traveler Rev. Samuel Gobat to translate the amulet for him because Wude did not know what it said. The traveler stated, ""This is a Mohammedan amulet, and consequently you ought by no means to carry it about you; but even were it a Christian amulet, it could not be of the least service to you.""[37] The possession of such an amulet displayed not only belief in the power of amulets, but also the value of amulets to other religions.

In another instance, the mother of Sahlä Sellassé (Shäwan Ruler, r. 1813-1847) is said to have gone to the Shäwan mountaintop of Dalacha to enlist the help of the Wato, an ethnic group, who defined themselves as ancestors of the Oromo, in order to get pregnant. She was successful, and thereafter this ethnic group was not bothered by the entire population of Shäwa.[38] Isenberg states, "With this view, they [the Wato] go from tribe to tribe, and neither Gallas nor Christians will touch them; being convinced, they say, that whom the Watos bless are blessed, and whom they curse are cursed; and they are not wanting on their parts to relate a number of instances to show the success of their blessings."[39] Shäwan peasants were able to affect Shäwan Christianity from the bottom up. Jenkins writes, ". . . the Shewan peasantry forced the guardians of the dominant religion and ideology, to incorporate certain pagan, pre-Christian elements into everyday religious ritual and culture if they expected to attract, and maintain a following."[40] Again, Isenberg detailed,

> To-day the Shoans each kill a hen. They say that they thus prevent sickness or other calamity coming upon them or their country. The Mahomedans do the same. They consider this as a means of reconciliation

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[35] Isenberg, Krapf, and MacQueen, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf*, 112.
[36] Another instance is the joint celebration of Mäsqäl (a holiday celebrating the finding of the "true" cross) see Antoine D'Abbadie, "On the Oromo: Great African Nation Often Designated under the Name "Galla", traslated by Ayalew Kanno" *The Journal of Oromo Studies* 14, no. 1 (2007): 133.
[37] Samuel Gobat and Robert Baird, *Journal of Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1850), 228.
[38] Jenkins, "A Kingly Craft: Manuscripts, Ideology, and Society in 18th and 19th Century Ethiopia", 227.
[39] Isenberg, Krapf, and MacQueen, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf*, 236-7.
[40] *Jenkins, "A Kingly Craft", 217.*

> with God. Such is the darkness of this people! It is evident that they have adopted this custom from the Gallas. Such things always lead me to think that there is but little hope of a reformation of this fallen Church.[41]

Therefore, it was not solely Christianity, rather the specific type of Christianity that unified Shäwa in certain beliefs.

Two additional religious phenomena, the monastic holy man (MHM), most notably seen in Shäwa, and the religious ceremony at Zeqwala, a mountain south of Addis Ababa in Shäwa are also important to many religious groups and provide insights into the religious landscape of the province.[42] The social conditions that produced the MHM in 13th century Shäwa were the increased presence of imperial authority (which came with the establishment of the Solomonic dynasty in 1270, a respect for the religious power of outsiders and the belief in the distance of God and Emperor. Steven Kaplan claims that the essential qualities of the MHM included the responsibilities of a local ruler, and at the same time occupying a unique religious position as a stranger, healer, mediator, and intercessor.[43] In response to imperial authority's attack on local rights, the MHM refused royal gifts, authority and ways of living, which endeared him to local populations. A main source of authority was his role as mediator between the local populations and both God and the Imperial authorities. Lastly, his position as a "stranger" in Ethiopia allowed for further influence over all populations of Shäwa. Generally, the MHM went through a monk's passage and resurfaced as a "new social being" or came from a foreign land like Egypt. Due to the MHM's position as a stranger he could spread Christianity without being seen as a representative of the Emperor and without the accompanying *Häbäsha* social norms.[44]

The MHM was a local power, whose authority was drawn from allegiances of local populations, who resented imperial authority and respected the position of a religious stranger who could protect them from both malicious spirits and central control.

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[41] Isenberg, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf*, 241. The view of the many "pagan" practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is echoed in Beke's narrative. Charles Beke, "Abyssinia, Being a Continuation of Roots in That Country" *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 14, no. 1 (1844): 34-5.
[42] See Carlo Conti Rossini, *Etiopia E Genti D'Etiopie*. Firenze: R. Bemporad, 1937, 329.
[43] Steven Kaplan, *The Monastic Holy Man and the Christianization of Early Solomonic Ethiopia* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1984), 126-7.
[44] Ibid., 126-132.

Figure 7: St. Gäbra Mänfäs Qeddus[45]

[45] From Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, [1965] 1972, 110-111.

An example of a MHM, who was able to transcend religious and ethnic ties and is still revered today is *Qeddus* (Saint) Gäbrä-Mänfäs-Qeddus.[46] Arriving in Shäwa from Egypt during the 13th century, Saint Gäbrä-Mänfäs-Qeddus, established a monastery, at Zeqwala on top of an extinct volcano. According to legend, he lived in the wilderness for 363 years, living an ascetic life in order to earn the salvation of all the people of Shäwa, including Muslims, pagans and Christians.[47] While he had importance during his own time, his legacy is more significant to this project. During the 19th century, Zeqwala was on the frontier of Sahlä Sellassé's Shäwan kingdom and, then and now, is predominately an Oromo area. However, Gäbra-Menfus' legacy appealed to the Oromo because of his Egyptian origin (another type of social "stranger") and a legacy of Christian acculturation of Oromo religious beliefs, such as a continued worship of nature and the performance of certain rituals. Other examples of the MHM's syncretic religious practices include combining deities like Ateti, a fertility God and the Christian Virgin Mary[48] An important religious ceremony occurs in his honor in Zeqwala to this day and many Shäwan groups participate.[49]

Mt. Zeqwala has religious significance for many ethnic and religious groups in Shäwa. There are biannual rituals celebrating St. Gäbrä-Mänfäs-Qeddus and Dalaga (an Oromo religious festival). These ceremonies occur at the same time and all groups participate in the various rituals. The Christian ceremony occurs during the afternoon and the Oromo festival, Dalaga, occurs during the evening. Jenkins writes, "During Dalaga, you can hear people speak or sing in Oromo, Amharic, and Arabic. God is called upon in all three languages: the Oromo *Waqa*; the Amharic *Egziabeher*; and Islam's [the Arabic] Allah."[50] The popularity of Gäbra-Menfus and this festival is due to its appeal to the overlapping cultural practices in Shäwa of all three religious traditions, such as the social position of the holy man, reverence for nature, belief in amulets and charms and the use

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[46] See Figure 7. An interesting aspect of the picture is the leopard and lion along side the Saint. The Monastic Holy Man was also known to control, and in exceptional cases, communicate with animals. Local populations depended upon the MHM to protect them from wild animals. According to legend, this saint brought 30 leopards and 30 lions with him to Shäwa.

[47] Jenkins, "A Kingly Craft", 222-3.

[48] E. Cerulli, *Etiopia Occidentale*, 2 vols. (Roma: Sindacato Italiano Antigrafiche, 1933), vol. 1, 59.

[49] Ibid., 226-7.

[50] Ibid., 232. Jenkins took part in a research trip with members of the faculty of Addis Ababa University in 1990 to observe this festival. However, her account also uses the work of Ethiopian anthropologists Alula Pankhurst and Gezahegn Petros.

of intermediaries between man and God. Enrico Cerulli describes Zeqwala during the 20th century as,

> . . . he, the Ethiopian [Amhara and Oromo], celebrates it [Zeqwala] with ancient oriental pomp, they [the Amhara] had to have had a great effect on the Barbaric Galla which they [the Oromo] adopted revering the hermit Ethiopian saint [St. Gäbrä-Mänfäs-Qeddus] with the name of "Abbat" [lit. "father" in Amharic] . . . it was a [an Oromo] custom to sacrifice a billy goat annually and to scatter in the running water [the] milk of [a] goat in honor of the Abbat. Naturally, after the adoption of Christianity the veneration for Abbat increased and, as the pagans sing [their] ancient ritual[s] they [still] invoked "Abbat of Finfinni" [Oromo settlement where Addis Ababa is located currently] together with the God of the Sky [*Waqa*] and the Goddess Atetè. Still today, the Gallas honor [the "Abbat"] who [is] also for them a true Christian saint with the ancient sacrifices of paganism.[51]

Cerulli thickly describes the rituals, their meaning and the deities being honored during this religious festival. In his account, different religions combine to the extent that there is no clear demarcation between religious ideas, and the Shäwan Oromo are simultaneously honoring their traditional religion, Christianity and their Oromo ancestors. Borelli gives another description, describing the position of each ethnic group on the mountain, he writes,

> Zekwala is a holy place for the Oromos as for the Amharas. The feast of Abo is common to the two peoples. During the most fierce and cruel wars, the Oromos saved the Amharas who lived in this venerated mountain. It is a binding pilgrimage for both of these groups. The Amhara himself celebrates on the northern part, toward the church next to the sanctuary . . . The Oromos assemble toward the southeast, in the forest. They smear butter [on] a few sacred stones, and walk around them a certain number of times."[52]

These two passages display the temporary unity in diversity of this religious ceremony, which proves mutual tolerance of the respective religious cultures.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Solomonic dynasty have provided the traditional lenses into highland *Häbäsha* culture and Islam has until recently been seen as foreign or marginal to Ethiopian culture. However, Wällo, as both literally and figuratively central to Ethiopia, possesses a centuries long Islamic heritage. The Oromo migrations of the 16th and 17th century to the highlands of Wällo and the subsequent

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[51] Cerulli, *Etiopie Occidentale*, vol. 1, 59-60; Jules Borelli, *Ethiopia Meridionale: Journal De Mon Voyage Aux Pays Amhara, Oromo Et Sidama Septembre 1885 a Novembre 1888*, vol. Deuxième Partie (Paris: 1890), 114.

[52] Borelli, *Ethiopia Meridionale*, 209-10.

conversions of many of the Oromo to Islam created a Muslim province in the center of Christian Ethiopia. While Islam separated Wällo from the rest of Ethiopia, political and religious leaders attempted to use it to galvanize unity in order to forward their political interests. This unity, in turn, Wällo leaders used to become king makers and to control many aspects of politics in Ethiopia during from the late 18th century to the coronation of Téwodros II in 1855.[53] Later in the 19th century, Islam's version of the Monastic Holy Man led resistance to religious oppression by Emperors Téwodros and Yohannes IV.[54]

Almost all scholars of Islam in Ethiopia argue that Islam was spread through the efforts of religious scholars, at first foreign scholars and later indigenous Ethiopian scholars.[55] Rashid Motem notes as early as the 9th century, Muslim Arab families established a Sultanate of Shäwa. However, significant conversions to Islam did not occur until after the time of Ahmad ibn Ibrahim's conquest of Ethiopia during the 16th century.[56] Ahmad broke the frontier defenses of Ethiopia allowing for Oromo migrations into the highlands. After Ahmad's defeat, the Wällo subclan of the Oromo began to take significant portions of the Wällo highlands, but disunity within the clan tipped the balance of power to the beleaguered Ethiopians. During these turbulent decades, Islam was spread by *Ulama* and Islamic education.

Using this Islamic base, one dynasty, the Warra Himano in the early 18th century, began to obtain political authority through shrewd political decisions and a carefully crafted connection to Islam.[57] Hussein writes, ". . . the Warra Himano dynasty (see Figure 8) represents a hereditary principality which consistently employed Islam, rather than

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[53] Two examples are Amadé (d.1838) being the leader of a regency council during the reign of *Ras* Ali Alula (r.1831-53) and his mother, Mänän (r.1840-53) was also a Mammadoch, who married Yäjju *Ras* Alula and the puppet Emperor Yohannes III in 1840.

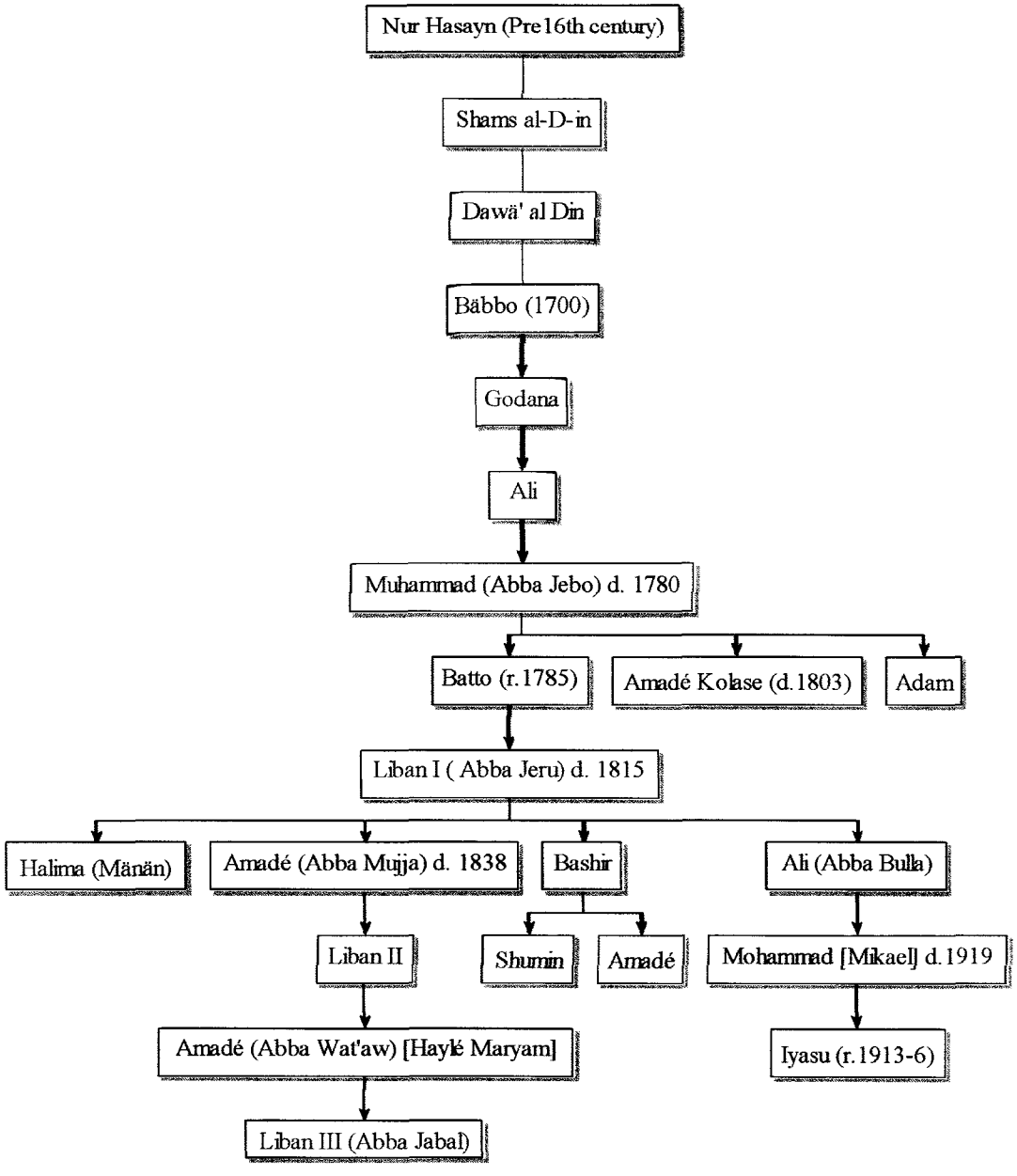
[54] See R. A. Caulk, "Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 10, no. 1 (1972); Donald Crummey, "The Violence of Téwodros," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1971).

[55] See Hussein Ahmad, "Trends and Issues in the History of Islam in Ethiopia" and Rashid Motem, "Islam in Ethiopia: An Analytical Survey" in Nur Alkali, *Islam in Africa : Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference* (Ibadan; St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands, UK: Spectrum Books; Safari Books, 1993).

[56] Rashid Motem, "Islam in Ethiopia: An Analytical Survey" in Ibid. For more on Medieval Muslims societies in the higlands see Mohammed Hassen, "The Oromo in Medieval Muslim States of Southern Ethiopian." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008): 203-214.

[57] See Mohammed Hassen, "Islam as Resistance Ideology among the Oromo of Ethiopia: The Wallo Case,1700-1900" in Said S. Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest : Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1992), 86-9.

Figure 8: Genealogy of the Mammadoch Dynasty of Wära Himano (1700-1916)[58]



[= non-direct descent or unknown connection
↓ = direct descent
Italics = traditional horse name
[Brackets] = name after conversion to Christianity

[58]Adapted from: Hussein, *Islam*, 203; Fekadu Begna, "A Tentative History of Wello 1855-1908" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University 1972), v; Zergaw Asfera, "Some Apsects of Historical Development in Amhārā/Wallo" (MA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973), Appendix A, 70-2.

ethnic identity, as an ideology of political legitimacy and territorial expansion."[59] Later leaders would take on Christianity in a similar manner as a way to transcend ethnic differences in Yohannes' and Menilek's state. Godänä Bäbbo, an early 18th century Muslim cleric began to use Islam to unite the disparate Wällo Oromo clans.[60] His son Ali I established an independent kingdom, which Ali's son Muhammad used to challenge imperial authority in Gondar to become a kingmaker. Mohammad lost his war, but his charge was taken up by his grandson, Amadé "the Elder" who received the title of *Imam* from Mecca, conquered the rest of Wällo (Amhara) and successfully marched on Gondar. The reigns of Amadé and Liban were the apex of the Warra Himano dynasty. The 19th century observer Krapf agrees arguing, "The Imam [Liban II] is considered as defender of the Mahomedan faith, and Head of the Mahomedan party; and this is the reason of the attachment which all these tribes entertain toward him. He is the Representative of the Mahomedan power in Abyssinia. He is the Muhamedo, as they significantly call him."[61]In 1841, Liban was deposed by another Wällo Oromo leader, Ali Alula.[62] Ali Alula led Wällo until Téwodros conquered the province in the early 1850s.

The unification of the Northern Amhara provinces resulted in hard times for Wällo Muslims. The Council of Boru Meda in 1878 decreed that all Muslims had to convert to Christianity or face death. Muslims either had to accept forced conversion to Christianity, practice Islam in secret, or resist conversion and leave Wällo for south and southwest Ethiopia or the Sudan. Islam served as unifier for the masses, even when elite political leaders were ordered to convert all Muslims to Christianity. During the late 19th century, two grandsons of Liban, Muhammad and Amadé, converted to Christianity becoming vassals of Yohannes IV and Menelik II, taking the names Mikaél and Haylä Maryam, respectively. With its most powerful members under the authority of Yohannes IV and Menelik II, resistance to Christian policies was led by local religious leaders. Mohammed states, ". . . the resistance continued under militant clerics with much more

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[59] Hussein Ahmad, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia*, 127.
[60] To ease confusion all of these figures are present in the chart on the following page.
[61] Isenberg, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf*, 347.
[62] The recollection of this dynasty mainly is derived from Hussein, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia*, 115-39. See the preceding page for a chart partly derived from this source.

vigor, vitality, and intensity."[63] After Haylä Maryam's death in 1880, Mikaél began to unite all of the provinces of Wällo first as a vassal of Yohannes IV and later as a vassal of Menilek II, using his genealogy and political acumen. Menilek's proclamation of 1889 established religious freedom throughout the empire and allowed Mikaél, now a steadfast Christian, to relax his enforcement of Yohannes' decree at Boru Meda to Christianize all Muslims and pagans. His position in Menilek's court resulted in a marriage between him and one of Menilek's daughters, Shäwarägga, producing Menilek's eventual heir, Iyasu (r.1916-1919).

Political leaders used Islam to bring the distinct Oromo clans and Amhara populations of Wällo together producing a power base that controlled Ethiopia for decades. While Muslim traders and populations in other areas of Ethiopia were segregated to special quarters of large towns, marginalized members of the Ethiopian community focused solely on survival, Islam was central to life in Wällo.[64] Hassen writes, "From the beginning [mid 17th century], Islam for the Oromo in Wallo was part of their cultural life and a mark of their independence. It was a powerful symbol of their identity . . ."[65] Earlier Semitist works have considered Muslims foreign to Ethiopia. Many of Ethiopian Islam's internal dynamics and the significance of its developments have been overlooked. Scholars of Ethiopian Islam have noted that Semitist scholars of Ethiopia promoted the idea that the Muslims of Ethiopia attempted alliances with Muslim powers, especially Egypt.[66] However, there is slight evidence to support this claim and most evidence indicated that the Muslim dynasties used their energies to control the Ethiopian state, not to undermine its existence.[67] Thus, Wällo Oromo dynasts used Islam

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[63] Mohammed Hassen, "Islam as a Resistance Ideology among the Oromo of Ethiopia" in Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest*, 93.

[64] Adbusamad Ahmad, "Popular Islam in Twentieth-Century Africa" Ibid., 102-116.

[65] Hassen, "Islam as a Resistance Ideology among the Oromo of Ethiopia" Ibid, 84.

[66] Both Hassen and Hussein cite Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes, the Challenges of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire (1769-1855)* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968); Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, Zewde Gabre-Sellassie and *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia : A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

[67] The most direct evidence that I have found is the French traveler Coulbeaux, who argued that *Ras* Ali attempted to obtain an alliance with Egypt against *Däj*. Kenfu Haylu (d.1839), he states, "Ses espérances dans ces contrées éteint fondées sur de secrètes ententes que lui avaient ménageés, auprès des parents du ras Ali, ses agents, déguisés en commerçants mussulmans et répandus dans toute l'Ethiopie . . . La maison de Ras Ali demandait l'alliance de l'Egypt pour lutter contre les provinces occidentales, en particulier contre le governeur du Koura." Jean Baptiste Coulbeaux and Joseph Baeteman, *Histoire Politique Et Religieuse D'abyssinie Depuis Les Temps Les Plus Recules Jusqu'á L'avenement De Menelick II* (Paris,:

as an alternate power source and a path to integrate, contribute and control the Ethiopian state from Wällo and Gondar.

Even among the Wära Shék, a multiethnic nominally Christian dynasty rooted in Yäjju, located Northeast of Wära Himano, adherence to the sensibilities of their Muslim subjects was important. Governing from Gondar, this dynasty had to walk a tightrope due to their status as formerly Muslim outsiders, who could not name themselves emperors, rather putting puppet Emperors on the throne. *Ras* Ali II (1819-66) is variously described as a steadfast Christian, a Muslim or nominally Christian and Muslim. It seems that he left his status intentionally vague not to upset either base. The chronicles describe him as Christian, but the travelers are split.[68] The traveler, Rev. Samuel Gobat writes, "The Ras, Ali Mariam, seeing the horror that the people had of the name Mariam, has retained that of Ali only, which is Mussulman name; his mother, before her marriage, having been a Mussulman of Gooderou [Gudru]."[69] The ambivalence of *Ras* Ali's religious affiliation is best put by two British supported travelers, Walter Plowden and Charles Isenberg. Plowden wrote, "A Galla by birth, Ras Ali is now the highest ruler in the kingdom, who, having adopted Christianity in deference of his subjects, and from policy more than faith,"[70] This passage suggests that Ali had adopted Christianity out of political experience and that he had an implicit alliance with Muslim powers to the detriment of the survival of the Ethiopian state. As earlier stated, the Church and the central State had a mutually beneficial relationship, which could not exist without both parties supporting each other. Thus, even though he originated from a Muslim Oromo dynasty and was nominally Christian it was still in the interest of the Church to support him, and, in turn, the inclusion of Oromos into the central state. The manipulating of religion, specifically

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Geuthner, 1929), vol. 2, 397. It is also hinted at when Ali Alula writes to Mohammad Ali "I said to myself, 'If an enemy should come to me, your soldiers would die with me, and also if an enemy should comes to you, my soldiers are your soldiers ; they would die with you, and I too.'" This letter is in a series of letters that generally consisted of an exchange of gifts, but nothing materialized from these exchanges. Sven Rubenson, Getatchew Haile, and John O Hunwick eds., *Acta Ethiopica: Correspondence and Treaties 1800-54* (Evanston, IL; Addis Ababa: Northwestern University Press; Addis Ababa University Press, 1987).

[68] Herbert Joseph Weld-Blundell, *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1840, with Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922).

[69] Gobat and Baird, *Journal of Three Years'*, 429. Mänän was in fact a Mammadoch by birth.

[70] Walter Chichele Plowden and Trevor Chichele Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country, with an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848* (London,: Longmans, Green, and co., 1868), 16; Dimoteos Sabrijian, *Deux Ans De Séjour En Abyssinie; Ou, Vie Morale, Politique Et Religieuse Des Abyssiniens* (Jerusalem: Couvent de Saint Jacques, 1871), 130.

Islam and Christianity, in the provinces of Wällo and Shäwa, brought both unity and disunity, both of which were skillfully used by powerful nobles of many ethnicities to legitimize their authority and increase their territories.

Cultural Institutions

Ethiopia, due to its multi-ethnic heritage has developed many processes by which outsiders can integrate into *Häbäsha* society. The best example is the Agaw populations who were completely integrated into the state, mainly by the Solomid emperors, Sarsa Dengel (r.1563-1597) and Fasilidas (1632-1667).[71] This process was hastened by the historic connections between the two groups, the position between the central state and the hinterlands of Gumuz and the decline in the power of the state during the 17th and 18th centuries and the agricultural wealth of their lands.[72] As for the Oromo, as argued in chapter 1, they were hated and despised from the moment they came into contact with the Solomid state.[73] However, I argue Ethiopian society did provide several paths by which the Oromo could integrate into Ethiopian society: connecting with a leader, who displayed a personal type of leadership which was common to the highlands; becoming a part of the nobility through acquisition of land or marriage, godparentage, conversion or banditry; and "buying into" Ethiopian nationalism and accumulating wealth, political or military power. All of these methods were employed especially by Oromo elites who desired to exercise authority in the highlands and many of these processes were negotiated by *Häbäsha* leaders who encourage certain Oromo to acquire power, either due to self-interest, force, familial ties or internal rivalries.

Aside from the Solomonic dynasty and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, highland Ethiopians were linked by plow agriculture, which supported a wealthy class of nobles. The nobility was united in its desire to extract surplus resources from the peasants. Both Shäwan and Wälloye Oromo nobles quickly assimilated to *Häbäsha* class practices. As Donald Crummey notes, during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, the weakness of centralized

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[71] See Tamrat Taddesse, "Processes of Ethnic Interaction and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of Agaw," *Journal of African History* 29, no. 1 (1988): 5-18.

[72] Ibid., 17. Gumuz is an area formerly inhabited by Shanquella, but now is populated by the Agaw, near present day Agawmeder, North-Central Gojjam.

[73] Susenyos and Mentewwab are notable exceptions.

authority was supplemented by provincial monarchies located throughout Ethiopia.[74] This development further encouraged the Oromo, especially in Shäwa, Wällo, Bägémder and Gojjam, to internalize *Häbäsha* conceptions of nobility and increased access to land and political titles for the Oromo, whose society at the time of their initial encounter with the *Häbäsha* state was organized in the democratic and egalitarian *Gada* system.[75]

Alliances with the church allowed many Oromo leaders to obtain *gult* (church controlled land distributed by nobles) through fictive church titles.[76] While conversion to Christianity endeared the Oromo to the Christian nobility it brought further obligations, which included regular attendance at church, as well as the construction of churches and material support of the clergy. Another important obligation was the giving of *geber* or feasts, which normally occurred on religious holidays. The more the noble gave to the feast, the more fondly he was remembered and the greater number of followers he possessed.[77] This entrance into the Ethiopian elite and subsequent acculturation further eroded a traditional Oromo way of organizing society, the Gada system, a process which occurred earliest among the Northern Oromo during 17th century.[78]

Asmarom Legesse's anthropological text on the *Gada* system defines it as " . . . a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities." In essence, every eight years a new age-set takes control of the society.[79] In addition, originally each *Gada* class has to engage in war against a non-Oromo group that has not been fought in previous years. In regards to

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[74] Donald Crummey, "State and Society: 19th century Ethiopia" in Donald Crummey and C. C. Stewart, *Modes of Production in Africa : The Precolonial Era* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), 237-8. Also see Shiferaw Bekele, "Reflections of the Power Elite of the Wara Seh Masfenate," *Annales d'Ethiopie* 15, no. 1 (1991) for the relationship between these rulers and the central state.

[75] See Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York,: Free Press, 1973) For a very interesting Native American example see the discussion of Alexander McGillivray in Claudio Saunt *A New Order of Things: Property, Power and the Transformation of the Creek Indian, 1733-1816* (Cambridge: University of Press, 1999), 73; Gregory Evans Dowd *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 91.

[76] Donald Crummey and Shumet Sishagne, "Land Tenure and the Social Accumulation of Wealth in Eighteenth-Century Ethiopia: Evidence from the Qwesqwam Land Register," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24, no. 2 (1991): 241-58, 52.

[77] Bairu Tafla, "Some Components of Political Power of the Ethiopian Nobles, 1865-1917 " (paper presented at the International Congress of Africanists, 3rd Session Addis Ababa, Dec. 9-19 1973), 10-1.

[78] For the destruction of the *Gada* among the Southern Oromo groups, see chapter 4 of Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia : A History, 1570-1860*; chapters 7-9 of Negaso Gidada, *History of the Sayyoo Oromoo of Southwestern Wallaga, Ethiopia from About 1730 to 1886*, 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Enterprise, 2001).

[79] Asmarom, *Gada*, 8.

the expansion, the sixth age-grade, also called *Gada* was responsible for finding new land for their pastoral lifestyle and played a key role in Oromo expansion into the highlands. As a result of this lifestyle, wooded lands and mountains were avoided, thus allowing the *Häbäsha* in these areas respite. The internal organization of the age grade is described by Asmarom as parliamentary. However, its members do not have specific functions.[80]

Ownership and inheritance of land on an individual basis, gradually disintegrated the *Gada* system. During the mid 17th century, however, the accumulation of wealth allowed Oromo leaders to become powerful political and military figures.[81] In Wällo, Oromo leaders took on Amhara land tenure patterns. In Shäwa, there was increasing diversity of land tenure patterns, but as Shäwan Amharas began to dominate the province in the 18th and 19th centuries, they would form alliances with non-*Gada* Oromo rulers.[82] These non-*Gada* Oromo leaders, who were generally backed by the Shäwan dynasty through personal relationships with the *Negus* (king) of Shäwa, paid tribute to the *Negus* in exchange for increased power or a free hand in their territories.[83] Svein Ege defines the political situation in Shäwa as, ". . . based on allegiance, which implies the definition of relative status. The fact that the king was the centre of allegiance implied that royalty was the apex of that status structure."[84] In essence, one's status was defined by one's personal relationship with the King. Ege continues, arguing that the leaders of annexed provinces defeated in war were bribed with gifts and additional authority until convinced to form an alliance, which was cemented by conversion to Christianity and marriage.[85]

Military prowess was another way for all Ethiopians to advance their social position. Examples include Emperor Téwodros II (Kasa Haylu) (r.1855-68) and *Ras* Alula, a general of Yohannes (r. 1872-1888). Donald Levine provides a framework for understanding why military experience is a strong aspect of Ethiopian culture. He argues

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[80] Ibid., 85.
[81] See Tesema Ta'a, "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia : From the Mid-16th to the Early-20th Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1986).
[82] Svein Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa : A Case Study of the Kingdom of Shäwa (Ethiopia) About 1840*, Äthiopistische Forschungen ; (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 94.
[83] A later example is *Abba* Jimma Jiffar (d.1932), whose province, Jimma, negotiated with Menelik and *Ras* Gobana (d.1888) in the late 19th century, remained autonomous until his death in 1932. See Herbert S. Lewis, *A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia, 1830-1932* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).
[84] Ibid., 127.
[85] Ibid., 197. The significance of political marriages will be discussed later in this chapter.

that soldiers exemplify every quality of Amhara masculinity.[86] Using the term *wändnät* (lit. the institution of malehood), he states that these qualities include courage, stamina, aggressive and (un)female behavior. Killing man or animals, eating spicy foods, drinking strong alcohol and enduring lack of food or water are examples of performing maleness.[87] From their first appearance on the highlands, the Oromo were renowned for their prowess in war. Starting with the reign of Susenyos, their cavalries came to serve the Ethiopian imperial state since the time and continued to play key roles in the armies of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, thus fulfilling all of main qualities of *wändnät*. Charles Beke's quote presented at the beginning of the chapter attests to the military prowess of the Oromo, but also their integration into *Häbäsha* society through this prowess and intermarriage.

These values allow for individuals of poor or peripheral ethnic groups not only to contribute to the Ethiopian state, but also to take leading positions in society. Haggai Erlich writes,

> Due to socio-political flexibility, talented individuals, coming from whatever background, were encouraged instead of blocked by traditional values to do their utmost and make their way to the various leading positions. Thus young princes were seldom born into power. They had to compete for positions and titles, occasionally losing – in what might be considered a free political game – to more talented members of leading families, or less frequently even to ambitious sons of poor peasants.[88]

Thus, political/military positions were, at least in theory, open to all. Another example of highland cultural sharing is the utilization of Horse names.[89] Generally a leader has his given name, a baptismal name and a horse name. For example, Sahlä Maryam, was baptized as Menilek II and had the horse name of Abba Dañäw (Justice) or Kasa took the throne name of Yohannes IV and had the horse name of Abba Bäzbez (taker of booty day

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[86] Levine uses the terms Amhara and Ethiopian interchangeably. Donald Levine, "The Concept of Masculinity in Ethiopian Culture," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 12, no. 1 (1966): 21..

[87] Ibid., 20. As'mé also gives examples of Oromo having similar practices see Bairu Tafla. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, Èathiopistische Forschungen ; Bd. 18. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987, 165, 85.

[88] Haggai Erlich, *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa: A Political Biography: Ethiopia & Eritrea, 1875-1897* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1996), 4.

[89] As'mé also notes the military decorations of the highlands also are derived from the Oromo. See Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 171.

after day).[90] A path that many ambitious nobles, including the aforementioned Yohannes IV, took was *Sheftanät.*

Sheftanät, or Banditry, another way to enter the Ethiopian political elite, was a practice of discontented nobles who either were passed over for an inherited title or were never in a position to receive one. Bandits went to the wilderness disrupting trade routes and plundering nearby districts, in doing so, attracting followers, generally peasants, based on distributing their stolen goods.[91] This alternate source of power frightened local nobles who either fought the bandits or attempted to bribe them with political titles. If they obtained a political title, the process resulted in entrance into the political system. An additional factor is the general lack of hereditary titles in Ethiopia, without the passing of power from father to son, generally power passed to those most qualified (possessing a large amount of land or soldiers), furthering allowing "new comers" to claim authority in the highlands. The Oromo entered the noble class through these various devices in the highlands; however, the most common way Oromo elites and their descendents entered and maintained their noble status was by political marriage ties.

An essential element for understanding Ethiopian society is the fact that there is no concept of "pure" blood. As long as an individual can connect one of his ancestors to Solomon, he has legitimacy to become an emperor, while any other political position can be achieved from almost any ethnic background.[92] For example, Haylä Sellassé (r.1916-1974) had Amhara, Gurage and Oromo ancestry.[93] With this type of social situation, marriages between dynastic houses were fairly common. For example, Téwodros was married to Täwabäch, the daughter of his strongest Oromo rival, *Ras* Ali II. Menilek was promised Téwodros' daughter in marriage and Menelik's daughter Zäwditu was a child bride for the Tigré Yohannes IV's son. Marriages brought together the two houses and

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[90] For more on Horse names see *Belatén Géta* Mahtämä Selasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, *Ché Beläw (Yäfäräs Sem) Horse Names* (Addis Ababa: Neged Matämiya Bet, 1951 E.C.), 5-11. This work also presents short biographies and horse names on most of the leaders of the 19th and 20th centuries.

[91] For additional elements of social phenomenon of banditry (*sheftanät*) in Ethiopia, see Donald Crummey, *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa* (London; Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, James Currey, 1986), chapters 1,6,7 and 13.

[92] *Beta Israelites* and *Shanqällas* remain outsiders and generally have not been able to achieve political ascendance for centuries in Ethiopia. An exception is Susenyos's rival, Yaq'ob (r. 1603-7) whose mother was *Beta Israelite*. In regards to the Solomonic descent, generally it was patrilineal, but in a few instances, Yohannes IV is an example, it was through the mother's line.

[93] Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia; a New Political History*, Praeger Library of African Affairs (New York,: F. A. Praeger, 1965), 147.

cemented alliances between political leaders. For instance, the marriage between Menelik's daughter, Shäwarägga and *Ras* Mikaél of Wällo led to the brief unification the provinces of Wällo and Shäwa during the reign of their son Iyasu (r.1913-6). Marriages were arranged to ensure they continued the various dynastic lines of those in power, thus, the progeny of two rivals, generally would not be challenged by those rivals. In other words, the coming of Menelik's and Yohannes' grandson would not be challenged by either the houses of Shäwa or Tigray.

Another way individuals were brought into political houses was the institution of godparentage. The Oromo form was known as Mogäsa. Isenberg defines it as,

> If a Galla likes a stranger, he makes him his Mogäsa, or favorite, declaring before the Abadūla, the governor of a small district, that he has made him his friend, and that no man should touch him. This ceremony is performed before the whole people, and sacrifices are offered. If any one should kill or offend the Mogäsa, he is obliged to pay 100 kum or 100 oxen, which is the price paid by a murderer. If you have become the Mogäsa of a Galla, you can go through the whole tribe; but if you have not, the Gallas would kill you immediately.[94]

Mérab, one of Menelik's doctors, published a book in the early 20th century detailing many aspects of Ethiopia culture. He writes, describing Oromo adoptions,

> The Gallas also know the practice of the adoptions, not only by a family, but also by a tribe, of a child of another family, or of another tribe (naturalization, as it is called by the civilized nations). The adoptions of orphans are extremely frequent. A barren family asks for a neighbor's child to raise and to later make the heir of its fields and its cattle. One slaughters cattle at this opportunity, to celebrate so happy event. In all this, the Ethiopian world is the living picture of the ancient world: one knows how much adoption was usual in Roman law. . . One could even adopt a person more aged than oneself."[95]

Also, in his description of adoption, he details the extent to which those who are adopted feel towards their new ethnic group. He writes, "The child is [initially] raised by his natural parents, but spends more years with his new family, becomes heir of it, and tells himself [that he is] Galla, instead of asking for himself of his nobler Amhara origin. Naturalization follows adoption."[96] Adoption shows the fluid borders that existed within

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[94] Isenberg, Krapf, and MacQueen, *The Journals of C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf*, 256.
[95] Paul Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie (L'abyssinie Sous Ménélik II)*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1929), 71.
[96] Ibid., 72.

Oromo and the Shäwan Amhara, who possessed similar institutions, godparentage and dynastic marriage by which political leaders formed alliances with leaders of other ethnic groups.

Another culturally binding practice is *t'oot lej* (literally breast child). Godparentage was used both to endear notables to each other and to bring in talented but ethnically or religiously different individuals into the Ethiopian elite.[97] The initiation of the *t'oot lej* is described by the Ethiopian historian Bairu Tafla as ". . . a brief ceremony in which the would-be son would suck the right-hand thumb of the would-be parent dipped in honeycomb."[98] These practices accomplished two things, they strengthened the solidarity of the noble class and they brought a number of Oromo, Gurage and Muslims into the Ethiopian elite.

The extensive intermarriage dating back centuries to the decades after Téwodros' ascendancy had two main results. One, all the important provincial dynasties in Ethiopia were, directly or indirectly related to each other.[99] Heran Sereke-Brhan provides an interesting insight into the new socio-political culture of these related Northern families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, arguing, "The religious homogeneity maintained to a large degree among the elite in the preceding or subsequent era was here reconfigured to accommodate the hybrid reality. This strengthens the observation that the driving force behind the union of elite families may well be the converging of interests and values in relation to power."[100] According to Heran these families' desire for power superseded their desires for ethnic/religious unity and non-*Häbäsha* and Muslims were accepted parts of the highest echelons of political authority during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*. Another result of these extended kinship ties was the connection of major ruling houses of Ethiopia to Solomon, thus giving all descendents a legitimate claim to the throne.[101] Lastly, on the national level, intermarriages, especially during the reign of Menilek II, helped to bring together centrifugal elements of the empire. Essentially, Shäwa had direct

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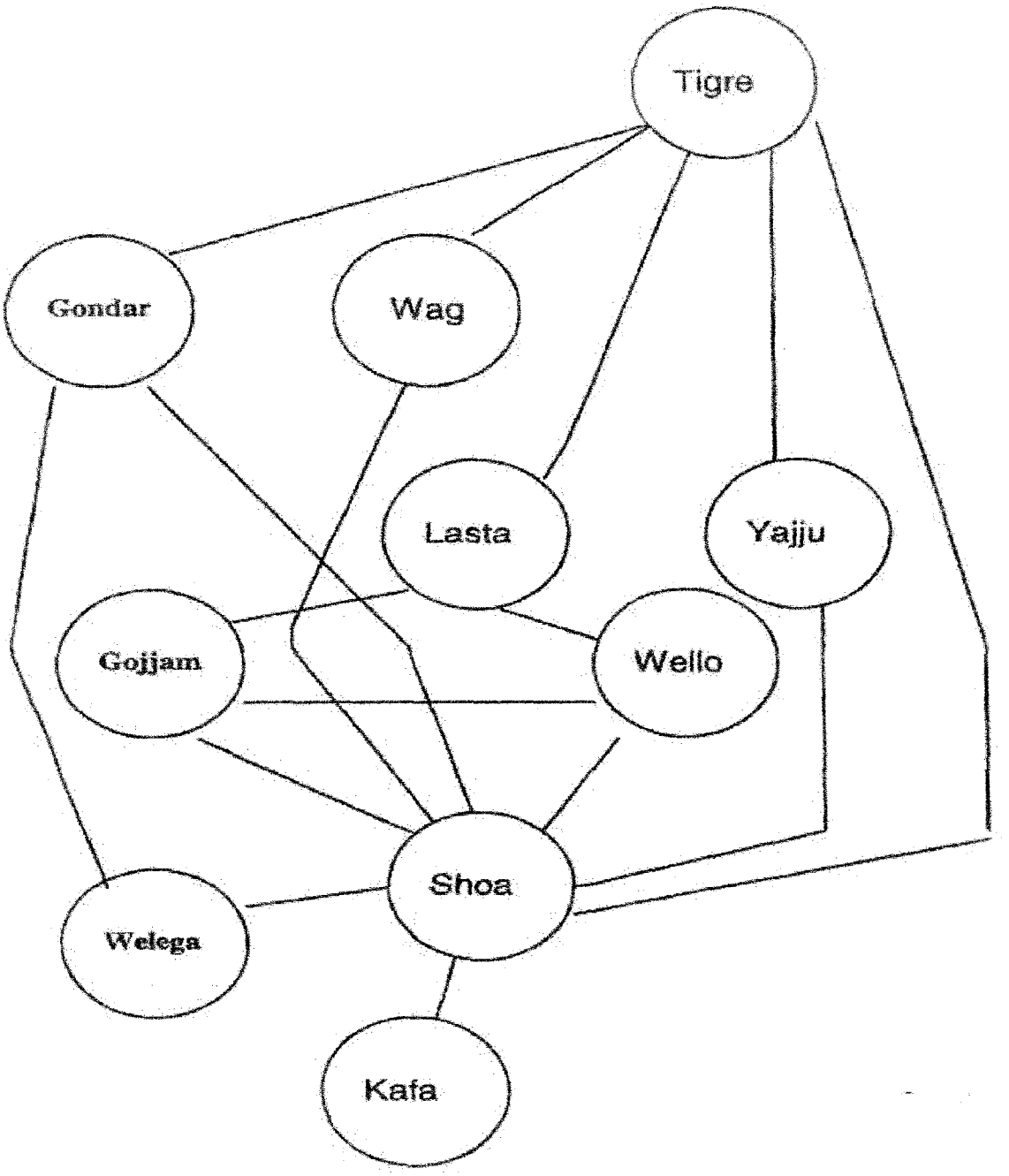
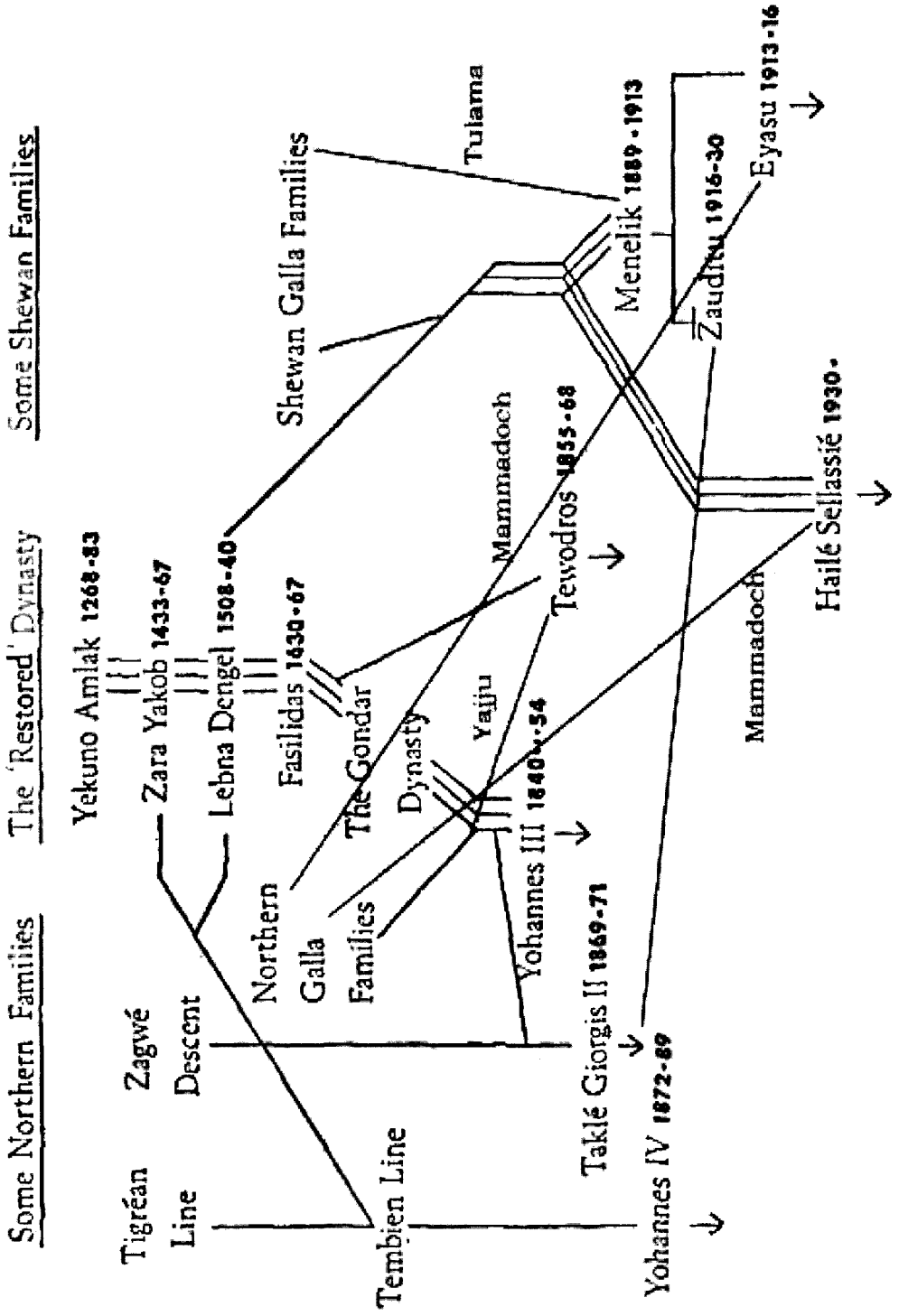
[97] The practice rendered in Amharic as (የክርስቲያን ልጅ) *YäKrestiyan Lej* or Christian child.
[98] Bairu, "Some Components of Political Power of the Ethiopian Nobles, 1865-1917 ", 10.
[99] See Figure 8, an interesting note is that the Yäjju and Wällo (Mammadoch) dynasties have no direct connections during the late 19th century period. The last one resulted in *Etégé* Mänän in the mid 19th century.
[100] Heran Sereke-Brhan, "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2002), 87.
[101] See Figure 10

Figure 9: Menilek's and T'aytu's Ruling House Alliances[102]



[102] From Heren Sereke-Brhan, "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia." Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2002, 220. The connection to Kafa is the most tenuous due to the fact that it particularly rebellious region. Most likely the connection is indirect through a marriage of the royalty of Kafa and a southern Oromo group, the product of which married into the Shäwan elite. For Kafa's marriage practices see Ibid., 71-4.

Figure 10: A Simplified Version of Ethnic/Provincial Ties to Solomonic Legitimacy[103]



[103] Richard Greenfield. *Ethiopia: A New Political History*. New York; Washington and London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965, 127. I have added the red text to further emphasize Oromo integration into the Solomonic line. For more details on both the Tulama and Mammadoch line see Figures 16, 17, 26, 37, 45 and 64.

familial connections to every powerful family in Ethiopia, either by intermarriage or by appointing their relatives to these posts.[104] Also, imperial authority brought together ethnic groups, who had for lived for centuries in conflict over land. An example of this is the Shäwan Muslim Argobba, who did not marry outside their ethnic group until annexation by Menilek.[105] This process was not new. Menelik and his wife T'aytu simply continued the practice of Menelik's grandfather Sahlä Sellassé, which included marrying rivals and his style of personal relational rule.[106] This process brought Shäwa, its relaxed ethnic/religious policies and its many high ranking Oromo figures, to the center of Ethiopian politics.

A final counternarrative is that of nationalism. Shiferaw Bekele's article in *Kasa and Kasa* argues that the 18th and 19th century travelers correctly reported that the monarchial state had disintegrated, but overlooked that it had been replaced by a structurally different state, that of the Wära Shék, a partly Oromo dynasty. Thus, during the 18th and 19th century, Ethiopia was led by a multi-ethnic ostensibly non *Häbäsha* dynasty. Shiferaw draws on French travelers the D'Abbadie brothers to examine the structure of this state, through the lens of the power elite. The Power Elite was an ethnically diverse group of high ranking political figures connected by kinship ties, ways of living, value systems and self-perceptions.[107] Previous historians had argued that the nearly autonomous leaders of *Zämäna Mäsafent* had a centrifugal effect on the state, but Shiferaw argues the opposite, that the structure of the state motivated regional leaders to stay close to the capital. Their relationship to the center was the largest factor in their

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[104] This practice cost T'aytu's family dearly after the death of Menilek. In the power struggles of the early 20th century, most of her relatives lost their posts and her nephew, Gugsa, was forced to divorce Menilek's daughter Zäwditu because of fears of revolts against Menilek's successors.

[105] Abebe Kifleyesus, "The Dynamics of Ethnicity in a Plural Polity: Transformation of Argobba Social Identity" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1992), 134.

[106] Another factor was restructuring and centralizing the empire Gene Ellis writes, "Menelik created no kings, reversed the tradition of granting *Rases* only to loyal followers as a sign of imperial weakness, ignored the claims of families with "hereditary" claims on titles, and raised slaves and loyal Galla (Oromo) to exalted positions in the Government." Gene Ellis, "The Feudal Paradigm as a Hindurance to Understanding Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 14, no. 2 (1976): 288; Erlich, *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa*, 186-200; Lewis, *A Galla Monarchy*, 24; Harold G. Marcus, "The End of the Reign of Menelik II," *Journal of African History* 11, no. 4 (1970): 571-89.

[107] Shiferaw Bekele, "Reflections of the Power Elite of the Wara Seh Masfenate," *Annales d'Ethiopie* 15, no. 1 (1991): 165.

success as leaders.[108] The regional leaders had a double responsibility to the regional and national state. So, these leaders spent significant time both in their own provinces and in the capital. While provincialism ruled during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, it was never to the extent that challenged the existence of Ethiopia.

Additional evidence of proto-Ethiopian nationalism may be found in the actions of discontented Ethiopians in Menelik's empire during the late 19th century.[109] Former followers of Yohannes, Menilek's newly conquered subjects and pretenders to the throne all fought at Adwa for preservation of Ethiopia's integrity.[110] Sven Rubenson's canonical text on foreign relations during this period makes precisely this argument relative to understanding how Ethiopians remained independent.[111] A strategy for establishing this unity was to emphasize the foreignness of the Italian invaders. Berkeley writes, quoting the loser at Adwa, Gen. Baratieri,

> . . . this time there was growing up throughout the length and breadth of Ethiopia a kind of negative patriotism such as he had never seen before; founded on a general hatred of the white men. He relates that a song had spread amongst the people of Shoa in the south, even up to the northern province of Okule Kusia [Akalä Guzay], of which the principal refrain was: "Of a black snake's bite you may be cured, but from the bite of a white snake you will never recover.[112]

Berkeley recognizes that these Tigrés simultaneously displayed dissatisfaction with Menelik's rule and support for his defense against the Italians by calling Menilek a snake, but stating that his rule would be better than the Italy's.

Irma Taddia forwards another view of nationalism in Ethiopia which sheds additional light on the integration of non-*Häbäsha* ethnic groups. She argues that during

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[108] In addition, moving the capital from Gondar (the early modern capital of Ethiopia) located in the Amhara province of Begemder south to Debra Tabor closer to Oromo Wällo displays further Oromo influence on this state.

[109] I define this type of nationalism as one characterized by strong aversion to foreign domination, but dnot necessarily entailing support of a state's leader or a singular conception of the state.

[110] However, many of these individuals were undecided on which side to fight on until Menelik won some preliminary skirmishes against the Italians. See George Fitz-Hardinge Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, New ed. (London: Constable and co., 1935), 110-43.

[111] Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 407-10.

[112] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, 61. Richard Caulk also uses this proverb, "'Black snake, white snake': Bāhta Hagos and his revolt against Italian overrule in Eritrea, 1984" in Crummey, *Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa.*

the late 19th century national identity shifted from a religious identity to a secular identity.[113] Taddia states

> In spite of the existence of some cases of regionalism and the persistence of local power, a clear new ideology was beginning in Ethiopia, based on the importance of autonomy of the entire country and this ideology had nothing in common with ethnic claims and regional allegiances. It was a new ideology considering a different concept of identity being created in the superior form of an autonomous secular institution[114]

In essence, what she is arguing is that a unity of Church and State was replaced by powerful secular political figures. In this new ideology, Menelik was the state and allegiance to him was significantly more important than speaking Amharic or professing Ethiopian Orthodox religion.

In sum, internal dynamics within Oromo groups, such as increased wealth, changes in political systems, conversions to Christianity or Islam and subsequent connections to these communities, adoptions and the ability to integrate into other societies, helped the Oromo to enter *Häbäsha* society. Channels for doing so opened partly due to the social and political legacy of Ahmad Grañ and partly due to cultural practices developed over the centuries to integrate subjects into the empire. The legacy of Grañ led to massive provincialism, the decline of both the monarchy and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and unprotected borders and cultural institutions, such as godparentage, adoption, Solomonic descent, dynastic marriages and *wändnät* gave elite Oromo opportunities to exercise political authority in Ethiopia. These shifts display the fluidity of ethnicity in Ethiopia during the 19th century and resulted in a ruling class so ethnically mixed that ethnicity was no longer recognizable according to descent. Rather it was determined by behavior, which will be explored further in the following chapter.

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[113] Irma Taddia, "In Search of an Identity: Amhara/ Tegrean Relations in the Late 19th Century," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, April 1-6, 1991,* ed. Bahru Zewde, Richard Pankhurst, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1991), 277.
[114] Ibid., 267.

Chapter Three:

"From Hated to *Häbäsha*: Late 19th century Northern Oromo Identity"

"ጋሊ ብየ ኣሊ ፈካት"
The Camel assumes the appearance of its surroundings.
Oromo Proverb[1]

"To the South and south-east of Lasta are the countries of Aijjo [Yäjju], Worroheimano [Wära Himano], Tehaladerree [Tähulädaré], and Ambassil [Ambassäl]. These are Gallas, but having all become acquainted with the Amharic tongue, and being subject to the sway of the Ras [Ali II], they are more properly included under the head of Abyssinia."[2]

As previous chapters have shown, the Oromo in general were feared and despised by the *Häbäsha* after their arrival in the Highlands in 16th century.[3] The following centuries saw the Oromo, especially the Northern Oromo of Yäjju[4], take control of a state whose power had diminished. In addition to the Yäjju, other Northern Oromo groups occupied significant parts of all the provinces in the Northern highlands, including Wällo, Shäwa, Gojjam and Tigray. Two groups, in particular, The Mammadoch Oromo of Wällo and elite Tulama Oromo[5] during the late 19th century were able to change their ethnic identities from Oromo to *Häbäsha* due to proximity to the imperial center, 18th and 19th century historic linkages, population size and conversions to Christianity. This shift led to an active role in modernizing the state, which included marrying into the families of Shäwan political elites and administering newly incorporated parts of the Menilek's *Ethiopian Empire*.[6] The question that arises is the extent of the shift and how did shift

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[1] Abdurahman Mohamed Korram, "Oromo Proverbs (Part 2)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 10, no. 2 (1972): 106.
[2] Walter Chichele Plowden and Trevor Chichele Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country, with an Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848* (London: Longmans, Green, and co., 1868), 311. For the location of many of the areas in the quote see Figure 12.
[3] See Figure 5 for the locations of Oromo groups in Ethiopia. They were notable exemptions including Emperor Susenyos and *Etégé* Mentewwab
[4] See Figure 2. Also, see Eloi Fiquet, "L'intervention des Oromo-Wällo dans la dynastie étiopienne salominide sous les règnes de Bakaffa, Iyasu et Iyo'as *Annales d'Éthiopie* XVII (2000).
[5] Most of the Tulama Oromo areas were incorporated into Shäwa during the 19th century. In this chapter I use the terms Tulama Oromo and Shäwa Oromo interchangeably. I am aware that many Tulama Oromo did not consider themselves Shäwan; however, before the present government reorganized the country along ethnic lines in 1991, the lands were in Shäwa (see Figure 4). There are also other Oromo groups in Shäwa
[6] The active role they played in the construction of the state will be discussed more fully in Chapters 4-7. These elements make the Northern Oromo different from not only other Oromo groups, but also other ethnic groups in Ethiopia, such as the Afar and the Somali, who had neither the population size nor military strength to play a significant role in the politics of the state.

affected how the *Häbäsha* saw the Oromo. The following paragraphs will define both the Northern Oromo and *Häbäsha* ethnic groups and describe the effects of the categories on understandings of ethnicity.

Brief Historic Sketch

The highlands in the Horn of Africa, have been multi-ethnic since its appearance in the historic record. Whether the nation of Ethiopia began 3,000 or 130 years ago it includes people who speak a variety of languages, profess a multitude of religious faiths and have very different relationships with the land.[7] An eminent Ethiopian historian, Taddesse Tamrat writes, "Ever since its emergence into the annals of history, Ethiopian society has been a rich conglomeration of different ethnic and linguistic communities."[8] However, since the beginnings of the Ethiopian church, there has been a close relationship between it and political elites.[9] Over the centuries, this relationship fostered a fear of Islam, encouraged the predominance of Semitic languages (Tigrinya, Amharic and Ge'ez) and controlled the land and its people. As earlier stated, during the 16th century, in the wake of the Islamic invasion of Ahmed Grañ, the Oromo entered the northern highlands of Ethiopia.[10] In the following decades the Oromo came to control major portions of the provinces of Gojjam, Amhara (which they renamed Wällo), Bägémder and Shäwa. They first entered the province of Bägémder as invited guests of Susenyos, and later received important offices under Bakaffa (r.1719-29)[11], his royal companion Mentawwab[12] (a king maker who ruled through her male relatives), their son Iyasu II

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[7] For a discussion of this issue see Bahru Zewde. "Yäsost Shi ways yäMäto Amät Tarik? (Three Thousand or 100 years of [Ethiopian] History?)" *Weyeyet*, 3rd Series, I, 1 (1992).

[8] Taddesse Tamrat, "Processes of Ethnic Integration and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Agaw," *Journal of African History* 29 (1988): 5.

[9] For a history of this relationship during the Solomid period see ———, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). For a longer period see Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia : From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

[10] There is much historical debate relative to their origin, but most evidence points to their homeland being near the Borana area of Southern Ethiopia.

[11] He grew up with the Yäjju Oromo. See Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, The Peoples of Africa. (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 125.

[12] There is also some controversy relative to Mentawwab's descent and relationship with Bakaffa. Marcus and his student Heran Sereke-Brhan argue that she was a wife and a Oromo see Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, Updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 46. And Heran Sereke-Brhan, "Ethiopia: A Historical Consideration of Amhara Ethnicity" (paper presented at the Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Vol. 1 Humanities and Human Resources, Michigan State University, 1994). While, both Pankhurst and Ullendorf state that she is a wife, but not necessarily an

(1730-55) and his grandson, Iyoas I (1755-69).[13] These Oromo were promised lands in exchange for loyal military service. In the following decades, descendants of these soldiers, generally of the Yäjju, rose to highest levels of political authority and in the late 18th century according to James Bruce, nothing was heard in the royal compound but the Afan Oromo language.[14] While the Yäjju were cementing authority at the imperial center, Oromo groups in Wällo and Shäwa increased their authority, but remained outsiders in *Häbäsha* society.

James Bruce's visit to Ethiopia coincided with the beginnings of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, a period where provincial authority increased at the expense of the Oromo influenced central authority.[15] Many scholars have seen this as evidence of deep hatred of the Oromo, by the provincial leaders, but what they miss is that many of the provincial leaders were Oromo themselves.[16] After the powerful Yäjju ruler *Ras* Gugsa (r.1803-1825) died, central authority simply did not have the resources to control the various provinces in the empire directly.[17] While Shiferaw Bekele's "Power Elite" article describes the relationship between the center and periphery as essential to the success or failure of a provincial leader, central authority continued to decline under the particularly weak leadership of *Ras* Ali II (nicknamed ተነሱ"the lesser, lit. the small"). However in 1855, Téwodros II wrested control of the state from the Yäjju and began to make

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Oromo, Ullendorf states that she is partly Portuguese and Pankhurst is silent on the issue of ethnicity. See Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians; an Introduction to Country and People* (London, New York,: Oxford University Press, 1960), 77; Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians*, 124-6. While Crummey challenges the belief, and provides the most evidence to support the claim that while Iyasu II was the son of Bäkaffa and Mentewwab's son, it was her relatives who put her in power and not her relationship with Bäkaffa as hia consort and not his wife. See Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia*, 94-99.

[13] See Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes, the Challenges of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire (1769-1855)* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968); Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopian Borderlands : Essays in Regional History from Ancient Times to the End of the 18th Century* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1997), 292-300, 17-23 and George Wynn Brereton Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kafa and Janjero* (London,: International African Institute, 1969), 21-22. Also Iyasu married a Wällo Oromo woman and produced the half-Oromo Iyoas.

[14] James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773* (Edinburgh: G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1790), vol. 2, 667. While Bruce is not the most reliable source, he was one of the few travelers of the period.

[15] Bruce became very close to *Etégé* Mentawwab, *Ras* Mikaél Sihul (Tigray) and *As'é* Iyasu II.

[16] Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes*, Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*. See Figure 16 for the Yäjju Oromo Leaders.

[17] Gugsa's peaceful reign was marked by significant changes in land tenure and marriage alliances. See Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 86; Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press, 1968), 74-84.

changes which took power away from both the provincial leaders of Gojjam, Tigray, Shäwa and Wällo and the church.[18]

The Oromo in the mid-19th century, especially those who espoused Islam, were seen as enemies to the state, and were harshly oppressed during his reign. Téwodros' state was teetering soon after his coronation due to his acts of violence against his perceived enemies, provincial ties that were still strong and mishandling affairs with the Ethiopian Orthodox church. Due to the fact that Téwodros was a brilliant military strategist, it took his own shrinking army, Ethiopian enemies and a foreign army to bring about his demise. However, a leader with similar goals, but different means to achieve them arose from Tigray, becoming emperor in 1872. Yohannes IV, worked quickly to repair the relationship with the church and the provincial leaders.

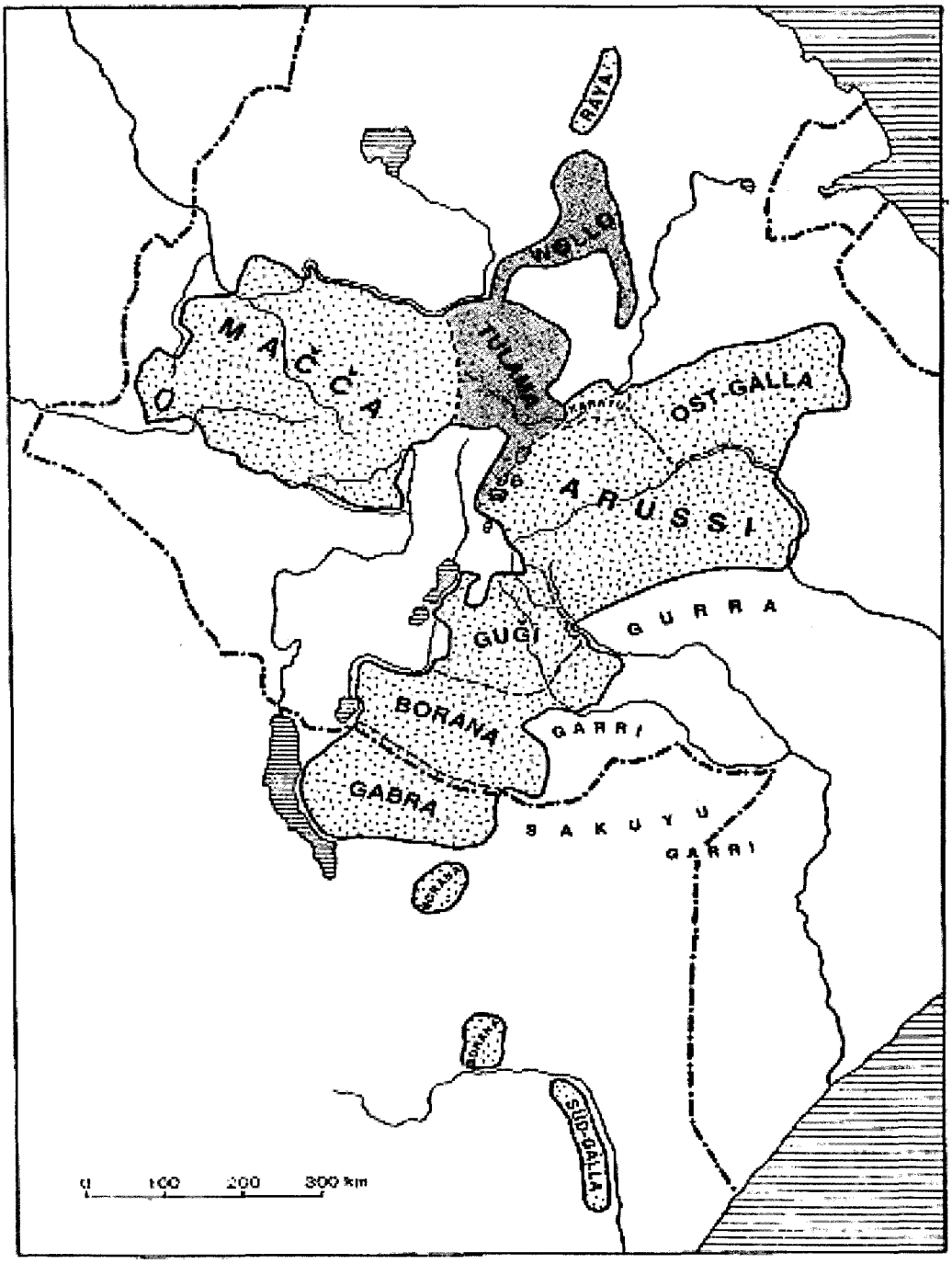
The Oromo dominated provinces Wällo and Shäwa were key in Yohannes' national unification due their geographic centrality and wealth, and in order to further incorporate these province he used the cultural practice of godparentage, to turn the hated "Galla" elites to *Häbäsha.* He used his military strength to keep peace as opposed to making war. His council of Boru Meda accomplished two goals, it politically and religiously unified the state, specifically giving the state one Orthodox interpretation in its religion and one Emperor to loyally follow. These steps laid the framework for powerful Oromo to contribute to the state and rise, unchecked, into the highest levels of political authority in Ethiopia. After Yohannes' untimely death in 1888, Menilek II of Shäwa, a leader with an understanding of the importance of the relationship between church and state, but not a strong adherence to any particular sect nor any ethnic group took the throne and made an already ethnic and religious diverse place increasingly so, and in doing this, increased territory, authority and prestige of his country to the present day.

How do you Define the Northern Oromo?

This next section attempts to define Northern Oromo groups using the major approaches to ethnicity (primordial, modern invention, colonial invention, ethnic boundaries) and argues that due to the diversity of Oromo groups, there are no unifying

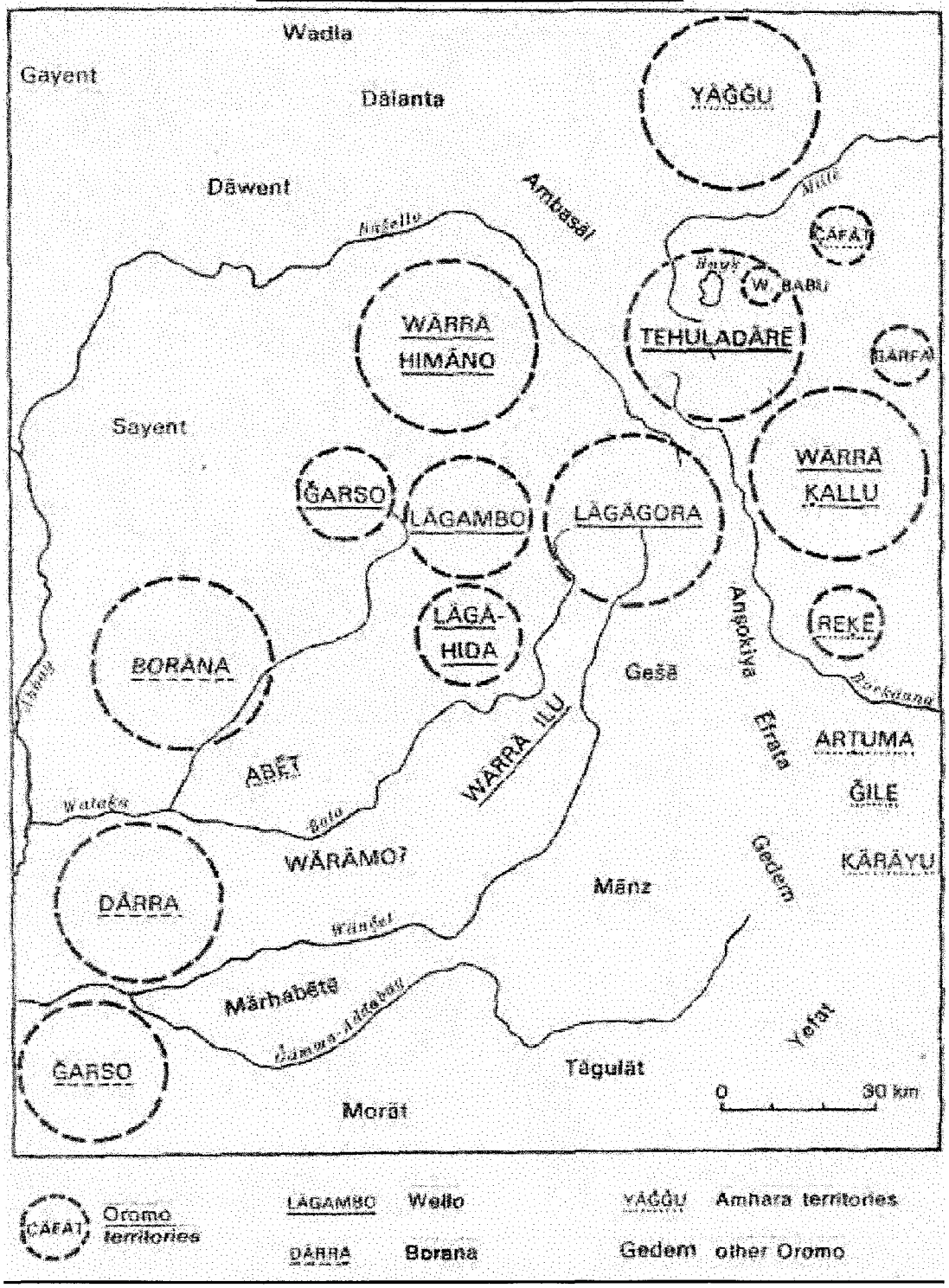
[18] An interesting note, Haylä Malekot, father of Menelik II was killed in Téwodros' wars to revitalize central authority, but *Ras* Ali II, leader of Gondar and Yejju, and his long standing enemy *Ras* Wube of Tigray united in an unsuccessful rebellion against Téwodros after they had lost separately.

Figure 11: Research Sites[19]



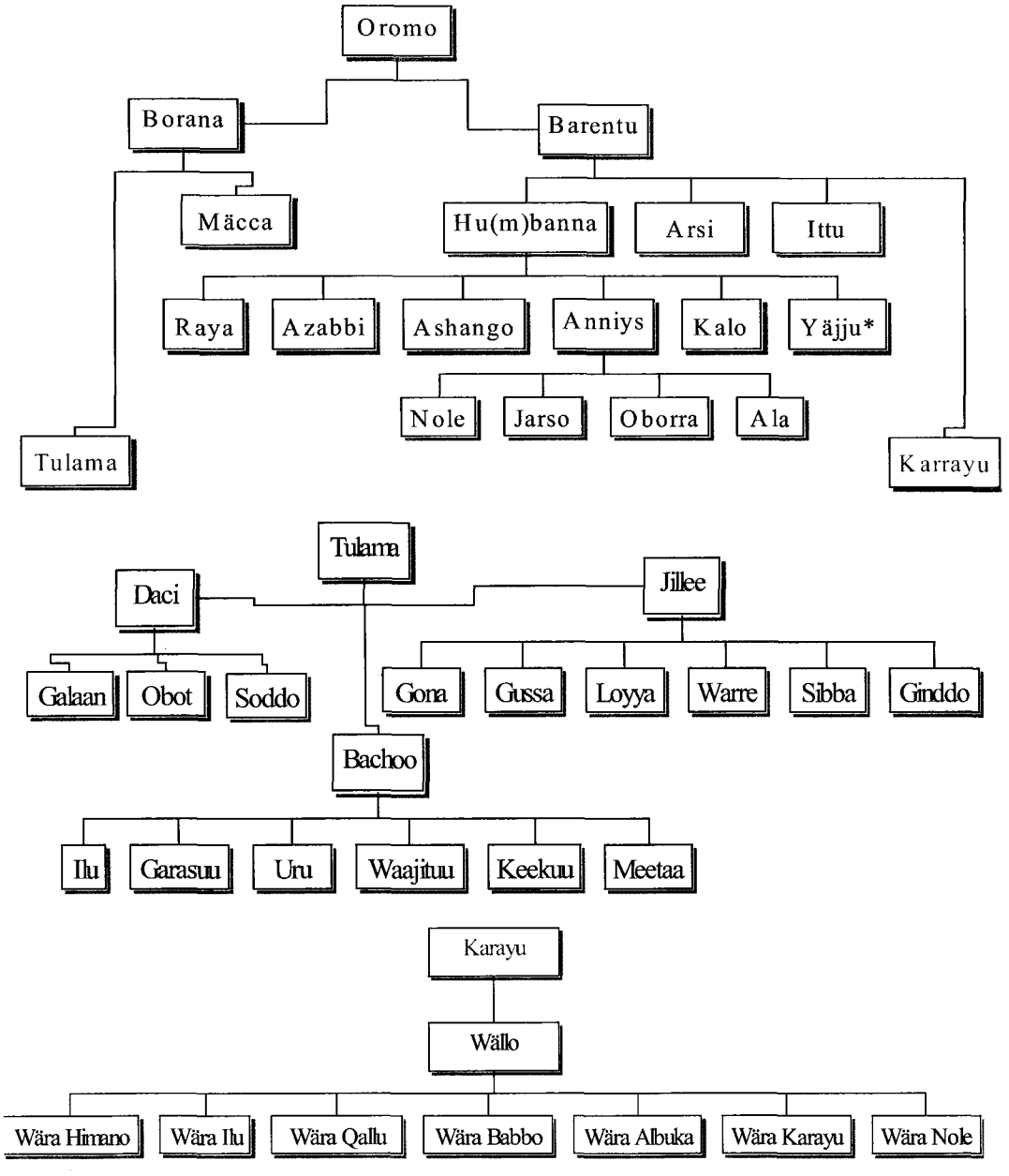
[19] From Trudnos, A. *Oromo Documentation, Bibliography and Maps* Warsaw: Dept. of African Languages and Cultures; Institute of Oriental Studies;Warsaw University, 1984, 55, Purple denotes research area.

Figure 12: Oromo Groups in the 19th Century[20]



[20] This map is a selection from areas of North Shäwa and Wällo. The Mamadoch are from Wära Himano, Tähuladé and Menilek's dynasty is from Mänz. From A. Trudnos, *Oromo Documentation* , 77.

Figure 13: Oromo clan genealogy[21]



[21] This chart is from a combination of the following three sources. The red text denotes the Shäwan Oromo groups and the green text defines the Wällo Oromo groups under study. *The origins of the Yäjju Oromo ethnic group are highly contested, I put them in the same sub clan as the Raya and Azabo because they migrated to similar areas at approximately the same time. Chart derived from Tsegaye Zeleke, "The Oromo of Salaalee: A History (C.1840-1936)" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2003); Ulrich Braukämper, "Oromo Country of Origin: A Reconsideration of Hypotheses," in *Sixth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Tel Aviv: A.A. Balkema/Rotterdam/Boston, 1980); Boshi Gonfa Alemayehu Haile, Daniel Deressa, Dr. Sanbeto Busha and Umer Nure, *History of the Oromo until the 16th Century* (Addis Ababa: Oromia Culture and Tourism Commission, 1996 E.C.).

trends. According to the historiographical trinity presented in the introduction; both the Semitist and Oromocentric schools support the theory of the immutability of ethnic behavior. However, an important criticism of these works is that they ignore change and local dynamics. In the Wällo case, one sees conversion to Islam in the decades following their settlement in this area as a key shift which not only connects them to the Islamic world, but also becomes an important factor in legitimacy, exemplified by the leaders of one of its most powerful dynasties, the Mammadoch,[22] calling themselves Imams. This goes to the extent of many of these groups, including both the Wära Shék of Bägémder and the Wällo dynasties claiming descent from the Arab World. Urlich Braukämper writes, "It is the land from where their ancestors came and is usually located in Arabia, the heartland of Islam. The descendents of early Muslim missionaries who came to Bale between the 13th and 16th centuries, are still called '*Warra Baher.*'"[23] In addition to shifts in religion, these Oromo also adopted Amharic and *Häbäsha* land tenure norms. The shifts in ethnic behavior are essential in understanding this group.

In respect to the colonial invention interpretations of the Oromo ethnicity, while aspects of what it is considered to be Oromo were developed during the late 19th century expansion of Menilek's state, such as the view of the Oromo as poor, uneducated, powerless and landless and the view of the Amhara as educated, rich, powerful and landowning, to argue that the Oromo ethnic identity began to develop at this time ignores the aforementioned centuries of interaction. The view of the dispossessed Oromo and the wealthy Amhara is due to the fact that during Menilek's expansion many Northerners took lands away from the Southerners and did little to educate them or improve their lives. However, this view does not take into consideration that many Southerners are not Oromo, some Northerners lost their lands, and many Northerners are Oromo. During this expansion, many of the views of the Oromo developed. However, since the conquerors and the conquered both transcended ethnic boundaries, it is difficult to base ethnic designations on the experiences and categories formed during this period. The

[22] See figure 11 and 12, also fn. 20 for the Mammadoch heartlands.
[23] Braukämper, "Oromo Country of Origin: A Reconsideration of Hypotheses," 28. Also *Warra* is "used as an expression of the unity/ community of a group or an organization" and *Baher* means sea, so literally it means "people beyond the sea." The definition of *Warra* comes from Ton Leus and Cynthia Salvadori, *Aadaa Boraanaa: A Dictionary of Borana Culture* (Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2006). While *Baher* is an Amharic term.

Ethiopianist historians Mohammed Hassen and Richard Greenfield both note the *näftäñas* (soldiers with guns) of Oromo descent as parallel to African colonial armies in the French and British empire. However, the extensive elite intermarriage and authority between the *näftäñas* and the local population make this comparison untenable.[24]

Ethnic identity as a modern creation is a recent approach in defining an Oromo identity. In addition to the many works mentioned in the introduction, many scholars of this school place the birth of the Oromo nation during the 1960s, in response to Haile Sellassie's ethnocentric policies.[25] These scholars, generally more affluent exiles, define the Oromo people as essentially similar. Using an idealized understanding of the Oromo past, their focus is on in retaining the traditions most evident in the Oromo from the Borana area of Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia. Their view of identity omits many of the Christianized Shäwan Oromo and Islamicized Wällo Oromo. This modern Oromo ethnic identity was not created to reflect reality, but rather as the basis of a singular national culture of an imagined state, "Oromia." This modern definition of Oromo identity as similar to colonial ones is unable to contain the diversity of the Oromo people and illuminates little of Oromo diversity

Another paradigm of understanding ethnic identity began with the anthropologists Edward Spicer and Fredrik Barth, and influenced the field for decades. Employing Barth's varied social boundaries to understand the position of the Northern Oromo is the most productive way. In the historiography of Ethiopia, religion, land, descent and language emerge as the most significant boundaries. However, as will be argued later in this chapter, these boundaries link some Oromo groups with their *Häbäsha* neighbors while simultaneously separating Northern Oromo groups from each other and their *Häbäsha* neighbors. Similar to the previous three frameworks it cannot be used to define the exceedingly diverse Northern Oromo groups, but it and Spicer's conception of persistent identity systems does help define the *Häbäsha* identity. They can be used to determine the boundaries that stopped relative newcomers to the highlands and other

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[24] Richard Greenfield and Mohammed Hassen, "Interpretation of Oromo Nationality," *Horn of Africa* 3, no. 3 (1980): 10.

[25] See Edmond J. Keller, "The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and Its Implication for Politics in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 4 (1995). Also Chapters 1,2,8 and 9 in Asafa Jalata, ed., *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse: The Search for Freedom and Democracy* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1998).

outsiders from complete inclusion into *Häbäsha* society and the shared beliefs that link the *Häbäsha* and those who will become *Häbäsha*.

Who are the Häbäsha?

Some scholars have argued that *Häbäsha*, which means mixed, was a term given to the people of the highlands by Arabs. This view holds that a *Häbäsha* is from both Arab and African descent.[26] The question that arises is what makes one *Häbäsha* aside from claiming descent from both sides of the Red Sea? Donald Levine in defining Abyssinian culture in *Wax and Gold*, argues that the term *Häbäsha* is from the South Arabian tribe Häbäshat, who migrated to the highlands centuries before the birth of Christ. The two main historical groups that comprise the Häbäsha are the Tigré and the Amhara.[27] In the 16th century, due to Oromo expansion, the Amhara split into two groups, The House of Mänz (an mountainous Amhara enclave in Shäwa) and the House of Gondär. Mänzé are supposed to value defending one's ancestral land and religion and the House of Gondär are not as violent or as concerned with land as the Mänzé, but they value Amharic, honor, vanity and religious positions.[28] Unfortunately his version of Ethiopian history is greatly influenced by the Semitic scholars and he flatly refuses to see changes in ethnic identity, holding on to cultural traits which seem to reach back several centuries. His *Greater Ethiopia* attempts to wed the various ethnic groups of Ethiopia, but does not employ the *Häbäsha* category. He uses the term Amhara-Tigre and defines some Muslims in this category as long as they were Amhara or Tigré.[29] Due to the fact that there was extensive intermarriage throughout the centuries I argue that a "pure" descent component must be removed and replaced by solely a performative one to delineate the *Häbäsha* identity among the ethnically mixed highlands.

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[26] While this claim may not have substantial evidence, many Ethiopians believe that it is true due to the fact that both Christianity and Islam are rooted in the Middle East and I have heard it in both formal and informal environments. Most Semitic scholars share a similar view of this term. However other scholars note that it is simply the name of one ethnic group which was present in the northern highlands since pre-Christian times. For a explanation of the varying interpretations of the *Häbäsha* term see E. A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia & Abyssinia. According to the Hieroglyphic Inscriptions of Egypt and Nubia, and the Ethiopian Chronicles* (Oosterhout N.B.: Anthropological Publications, 1966), vol. 1, 120-1.

[27] The Agaw and, as I argue in this chapter, Northern Oromo groups also became *Häbäsha*.

[28] Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965; reprint, 5th), 38, 44.

[29] ———, *Greater Ethiopia : The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 37.

I argue that *Häbäsha* identity was exemplified by four characteristics, which at different times in history have taken on different degrees of importance. First is the ability to speak a Semitic language, presently the main language of politics is Amharic, but at earlier times it was Ge'ez. Knowledge of these languages is essential for communication not only with political entities, but also conversations with church officials. It is important to note every leader since the 13th century has had knowledge of at least one of these languages.[30] Second, one has to participate fully in Ethiopia's complex land tenure system. Land is essential in understandings of Ethiopia, its importance seen in all aspects of Ethiopian life. An outsider, in Ethiopia's case, a *Buda* (evil eye), a Muslim or *Beta Israelite*, cannot own land and this lack of land ownership further perpetuates their outsider status.

Third, an *Häbäsha* cannot practice any religion aside from Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, a non-Christian who exercises any authority challenges the preexisting relationship between the Church and State, which affects the status of land granted to the Church and, in turn, the support that the church gives to the leader through its members. Susenyos (r.1607-32) had to abdicate because he favored Catholicism, Haile Sellassie suffered from continuous fears of a similar nature, Yäjju Oromo leaders, while outwardly professing Christianity, were often accused of favoring Islam, and *Abéto* Iyasu, who did many things viewed as detrimental to the state, was deposed, according to his chronicle due to his apparent conversion to Islam.[31] Lastly, in order to rise unchecked up the political ranks, one must claim partial descent from Solomon. This process was made easier due to the fact there was no obstacles to emperors having many concubines and wives of different ethnic backgrounds as long as they converted to Christianity. More importantly, the children of such unions had no social stigma. Many of the ruling elite, such as *Ras* Mikaél (born Mohammad Ali) of Wällo (r.1876-1916), and even Emperor Menilek (r.1888-1913) himself were products of these unions. Thus, if servant descent or

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[30] The Zague (lit. "of the Agaw" in Ge'ez) dynasty controlled the State from Lasta, in Wällo from the decline of the Axumite state (about 1137) to the rise of the Solomid state in 1270. For an argument describing their inclusion into Ethiopian society see Taddesse, "Processes of Ethnic Integration and Integration in Ethiopian History: The Case of the Agaw."

[31] See Elyas Gebre-Igziabiher and Reidulf Knut Molvaer, *Prowess, Piety, and Politics : The Chronicle of Abeto Iyasu and Empress Zewditu of Ethiopia (1909-1930)*, Studien Zur Kulturkunde ; (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1994). Also, in the highly contested Ethiopian political sphere accusing someone of leanings towards Islam was a common tool used to discredit rivals.

descent from other ethnic groups does not matter, then how would partial Oromo descent have any significance?[32]

Can the Northern Oromo be *Häbäsha?*

The *Häbäsha* identity has always been multi-ethnic, so can anyone become *Häbäsha*? In this section I will examine the four characteristics of *Häbäsha* identity and address both the Wälloye and Shäwan Oromo. The Wälloye migrated to the Amhara homeland after Grañ's defeat and began to take control of portions of the territory. While the Oromo conquered most of Wällo, the Amhara in the area never fled completely, and their cultural forms are still seen in areas that have been controlled by the Oromo for centuries. The Amhara greatly influenced two areas of Wälloye life, language and land tenure. The 19th century European traveler Blanc writes,

> Though retaining most of the characteristics of their race, they [the Wällo Oromo] adopted many of the customs of the people they conquered. They lost in great measure their predatory and pastoral habits, tilled the soil, built permanent dwellings, and to a certain extent adopted in their dress, food, and mode of life the usages of the former inhabitants . . Their dress is in many respects identical.[33]

As stated earlier, land is extremely important in Ethiopian life, as evidenced by Wällo Muslims skillful manipulation of the *Sha'ria* in order to utilize Amhara land tenure norms.[34] The Wälloye defined Rist land (land owned by families, as opposed to *Gult* land owned by the state and granted to local political and church officials) as "community" land so the *Sha'ria*, which had specific rules for individual possessions could exist side-by-side with Amhara land tenure norms.[35] The Wällo Oromos fit the first qualification of "*Häbäsha*ness." In addition to land tenure, the Wällo Oromo also adopted Amharic which further endeared them to the *Häbäsha*. Another traveler writes, "They are under the immediate control of the Ras [Ali], and speak the language of both the Amharas and

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[32] Donald Crummey, "Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia During the Zemana Masafent," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8, no. 2 (1975).

[33] Henry Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia, with Some Account of the Late Emperor Theodore, His Country and People* (London: F. Cass, 1970 [1868]), 290-1.

[34] *Häbäsha* land tenure norms allowed for all children to have an equal stake in inheritance, while Qu'ran favors males over females. *Qu'ran* 4:11 "The share of the males is that of two females" Generally, women (wives, daughters or sisters) inherit one half of what males inherit. *Al-Qu'ran: A Contemporary Translation*, trans. Ahmed Ali (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). The Muslims in Wällo defined *Rist* land as communal land, which is not specifically outlined in the *Qu'ran*.

[35] See Abdurahman Mohammed Saney, "Laws of Successions among Families in Ethiopia" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973).?

Tegray, in addition a barbarous dialect of their own, the most harsh and dissonant I ever heard and hopeless to a stranger [to understand].[36] However, their Amharic is heavily influenced by Afan Oromo, but not to the extent that they could be understood by Afan Oromo speakers.[37] Therefore, the Wällo Oromo fit one half of the *Häbäsha* qualifications.

The last two qualifications are descent and religion. Similar to many powerful families, the Wällo Oromo married into *Häbäsha* families, which legitimized their rule and connected them to the Solomonic dynasty.[38] At this point, ostensibly, the Wällo Oromo have fulfilled these first three qualifications. However, their Islamic faith opposes the *Häbäsha* religious category of the qualification and affects both land tenure and descent.[39] The leading dynasties of Wällo strongly professed their faith, developed a literate tradition in Arabic and Amharic and attempted to connect themselves to the prophet Muhammad.[40] The fact that they followed the *Sha'ria*, even if it did not affect land tenure still changed the way they lived. Moreover, due to both *Häbäsha* and Islamic influences adherence to the *Gada* System (traditional Oromo way of organizing their society) is not seen in most areas of Wällo, although some informants claim that elements are seen in the Southern tip of Borana [Southern Wällo].[41] In respect to descent, marriage

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[36] Plowden and Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country*, 74. Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia and Travels into the Interior of That Country Executed under the Orders of the British Government in the Years 1809 and 1810* (New York: Frank Cass & Co. LTD., 1967), 300.

[37] See Amsalu Aklilu and Habte M. Marcos, "The Dialect of Wello," (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, unknown year).

[38] See Chapter 4 and Figures 10, 17 and 25 for specific examples.

[39] The Church was a major landowner, but since the most of Wälloye were Muslim, it did not hold as much land in this province as it did in other provinces.

[40] See Hussein Ahmed, "The Life and Career of Shaykh B. Ja'far (C. 1853 - 1936)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1989); ———, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia : Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. (Leiden ; Boston; Brill, 2001); ———, "Introducing a Arabic Hagiography from Wello" (paper presented at the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, Nov. 26-30 1984); ———, "Trends and Issues in the History of Islam in Ethiopia," in *Islam in Africa: Proceedings of the Ilam in Africa Conference* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993). For a Wära Shék's views of similar Islamic descent see Molla Tikuye, "The Rise and Fall of the Yejju (1784 - 1980) " in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, April 1-6, 1991*, ed. Bahru Zewde, Richard Pankhurst and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1991).

[41] Esayä Fasiha Mäkonen Äsefaw Zämäd, interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 18 Hedar 2000 E.C. (28 November 2007 Gregorian Calendar). For more information on the *Gada* system see Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*. New York: Free Press, 1973. The early 19th century British traveler Salt remarks that Islam makes them more civilized than their traditionalist Oromo brothers. Salt, *A Voyage*, 300.

ties to the ruling elites were necessary and due to these ties many Wällo elites could connect themselves to Solomon; however, they also connected themselves, due to their religion, to Muhammad.

Due to the fact that, especially in the time before the 20th century, textual sources generally are skewed towards understanding the experiences of the elite, I conducted interviews among non-elite Wälloye to see if the experiences of the elite transcended class.[42] As argued later in this chapter elite Oromo Northern actors were increasingly part of an ethnically diverse ruling class, their presence in this class did not necessarily entail acceptance of Northern Oromo peasants.[43] Oral interviews presented a few common threads: they include that the Amhara, Oromo, Christians and Muslims were completely intermixed and one finds them in almost all Wällo families. As an informant states, "Wällo is an Amhara, Oromo, Muslim and Christian all together."[44] The intermixture is not limited to simply marriages, holidays are celebrated jointly and religious items and people are jointly venerated. For example, another informant states that both Christians and Muslims pray to the *Tabots* (Arks) of Churches and both Christians and Muslims chew *Ch'at* during religious ceremonies.[45] In addition, there were many stories of people who have (re)converted to Islam or Christianity many times in their lives. The informants state that there is no ethnic chauvinism in Wällo and wished it to be true for Ethiopia. An informant states, "Ethiopia is diversity in diversity, while Wällo is diversity in unity."[46] All of them agree that Wällo "proper" is characterized by religious tolerance, an Afan

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[42] My research assistant and I conducted 30 interviews among learned elders in and around the provincial capital of Dessé. (see Figure 39) We asked identity and historical questions aimed at understanding late 19th century ethnic identity, events and historical figures. The results were uneven due to the time that has lapsed (around a 100 years) and a political climate that favors one primarily identifying with an ethnic group.

[43] A similar argument in regards to the ethnic diversity of the upper class during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* see Shiferaw Bekele, "Reflections of the Power Elite of the Wara Seh Masfenate." *Annales d'Ethiopie* 15, no. 1 (1991).

[44] Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, interviewed by author, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, Ethiopia 17 T'ir 2000 E.C. (26 January 2008, Gregorian Calendar). As you can tell by the combination of Amharic, Islamic and Afan Oromo names ("Gashaw" an Amhara name, "Mohamed" an Islamic name, and the last three names seemingly Afan Oromo) of this man, who was also my research colleague, the intermarriage and diversity is not limited to the elite. The diversity of this name was brought to my attention by both Prof. Donald Crummey and Ato Gashaw himself.

[45] Sayid Kamel, interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, Ethiopia 19 Hedar 2000 E.C. (29 November 2007 Gregorian Calendar).

[46] Hussein Adal, interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, Ethiopia 22 Hedar 2000 E.C. (02 December 2007 Gregorian Calendar).

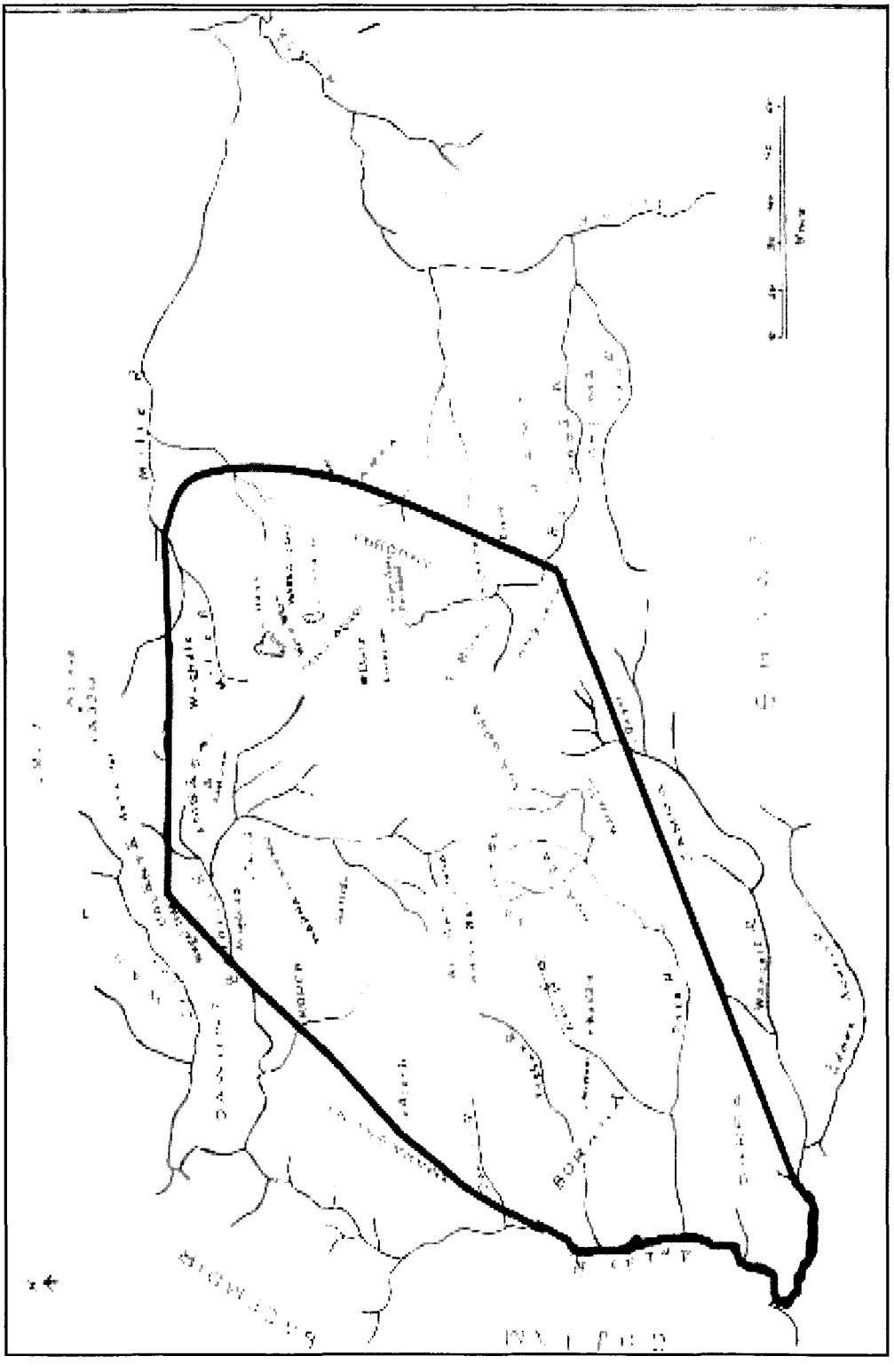
Oromo influenced Amharic language and a combination of Oromo and Amhara cultural practices.[47] A place based identity is so important to many of the Wälloye that I interviewed did not believe in a national ethnic identity. One informant states, "If someone said to me that I was an Amhara I am disappointed because I want to be an Ethiopian."[48] Other informants who gave their identity state that they are an Amharicized Oromo or a "Pure" Oromo, but these responses were not common.

Ethnic identity within Wällo gives us a picture slightly different from the picture generally given when discussing national ethnic identities. The informants clearly demarcate Wällo "proper" from the historic province of Wällo, which resulted from *Ras* (later) *Negus* Mikaél's expansion.[49] They view the territories of Amhara Sayint, Wag, Lasta and Dalanta as "pure" Amhara districts and Borana as a pure "Oromo" district. All other areas of Wällo lying between these two geographical extremes exhibit the aforementioned admixture with areas near "pure" Oromo or Amhara areas and Muslim and Christian areas exhibiting a higher degree of these elements. In addition to these elements, the province of Wällo bordered five different provinces and the areas near the other provinces are also influenced by these province. For example an informant states, "People who live near Tigray are close to Tigray's culture and the people in the Southwestern part of Wällo are similar to the Muslims to Shäwa."[50] Another one states, "The people of Wära Ilu [a town founded by Menilek II] want to be Shäwan and the people of Dälantä want to be Begemderine."[51] Thus the distinction is between those who are clearly singularly influenced and those who are a complete mixture.

To the author, the province of Wällo is like a sponge which takes in all the cultural practices of the areas. Like a sponge when it becomes saturated it overflows into areas around it, it affects cultural practices in the borderland areas. While the Wälloye

[47] Wällo Proper is the land North of Wara Ilu, Southwest of Garado, East of Borana, South of Dalanta according to informant Esayä Faseha Mäkonen Äsefaw Zämäd, interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, Ethiopia 18 Hedar 2000 (28 November, 2007). See Figure 14 for its approximate boundaries, Wällo gained territories as *Ras* Mikaél became increasingly powerful, and these new territories did not have the same beliefs as the older ones.
[48] Dämäse Mälaku Äbäbä interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, Ethiopia 28 Hedar 2000 E.C.), 08 December 2007 Gregorian Calendar).
[49] See Figure 14
[50] Dämäse Mälaku Äbäbä, interview
[51] Yimam Ädem Haylu Äsän, interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, Ethiopia 18 Hedar 2000 (28 November, 2007)

Figure 14: Wällo "Proper"[52]



[52] From Asfera Zergaw. "Some Apsects of Historical Development in Amhārā/Wallo." MA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973, 69. Wällo "Proper" boundaries added by author, based on oral evidence

share many of the cultural traits of the *Häbäsha*, Islam is the only boundary that keeps them from being a *Häbäsha*. In the 19th century the nobles of Wällo chose, invoking Branton's rational choice model, to convert to Christianity and this choice earned them *Häbäsha* status.[53] This issue was at the forefront during both the reigns of the Téwodros II and Yohannes IV and resulted in violence or exile for the strict adherents and success and power for the converts, who, without any obstacles to becoming *Häbäsha*, did so.[54] The Oromo in Shäwa dominated the province in a similar way to the Wällo Oromo; however, they lived lives significantly different from their *Häbäsha* neighbors.[55]

While both provinces were dominated by the Oromo, Some historians have argued for a much earlier (9th century) Oromo presence in the Shäwa.[56]After Grañ's invasion, the migrating Oromo relegated the Amhara to a small cold mountainous area called Mänz in addition to undesirable lowland areas. It is in Mänz that Menilek's dynasty is rooted. In the mid 18th century, this dynasty began to make political alliances cemented with marriages with many of the Oromo groups in the immediate vicinity. These alliances affected the elite but changed little for the masses of the Oromo. In regards to language, the Oromo in Shäwa generally speak *Afan Oromo* (lit. "mouth of the Oromo.") However, sprinkled throughout the travel narratives are reports of native Amharic speakers ridiculing *Afan Oromo* speakers, who were attempting to speak Amharic.[57] Land tenure was mixed, some of it was communally owned, but there is a increasing element of private ownership; however all land in theory belonged to the community leader.[58] However, similar to many Oromo groups at that time land was in the process of becoming privatized in the hands of a few landowners.

Shäwan Oromo, like many other Oromo, claim descent from the Borana area of Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia and from the Borana branch of the Oromo. And

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[53] See the Introduction for a further explanation of Banton's model.
[54] These converts include the most powerful nobles of Wällo, including *Abba* Wat'aw (Haylä Maryam Menilek) and Mohammad Ali (Mikaél Yohannes) these figure will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.
[55] See Figure 15 for the Tulama area, also note three of Menilek's capitals are located in Tulama lands, Ankober, Ent'ot'o and Addis Ababa.
[56] See Alemayehu Haile, *History of the Oromo until the 16th Century*.
[57] This is also an experience I had when I was in Ethiopia.
[58] The Tulama Oromo were formally governed by the *Gada* system; however external and internal factors led to the rise of leaders sometimes called *Moti*. These leaders would create mutually beneficial alliances with the Mänz dynasty. These events are detailed in Chapter 5.

due to this fact, they claim no connection to Solomon and must marry into *Häbäsha* families to do so. Also, while most Oromo do not consider the Wälloye Oromo, as pure Oromo, there is no such distinction for the Shäwan Oromo.[59] Relative to religion, due to the fact that *Häbäsha* influences in the area were indirect, there was not a significant Christian population in the Oromo areas of Shäwa, prior to Menelik's expansion. In addition, Menilek banned the various Oromo pilgrimages of both Islamic and traditionalist religions.[60] Later Ethiopian leaders banned religious texts in non-Semitic languages.[61] In Shäwa, during the late 19th century, identity was split between those "who act like Amhara" and those who act as an Oromo. Those "who act like Amhara" spoke Amharic almost exclusively, married noble *Häbäsha* wives, became extensive land owners and converted to Christianity, founding many churches in the areas. Marrying Amhara wives tied their children to the Solomonic dynasty. Land tenure was along *Häbäsha* lines and generally it was of newly conquered land. Establishing churches in these areas further converted these territories to *Häbäsha* norms because *Gult* lands were granted to support these churches, many in the area were converted to Christianity and nearly all correspondence was in Amharic. Creating *Häbäsha* out of Shäwan Oromo was a top down process that was never completed; however, those at the top were, generally, considered completely *Häbäsha* due to their extensive land holdings, performance of Christianity, speaking Amharic exclusively and marriage ties to the highest born *Häbäsha*. The masses of Shäwan Oromo were limited in their shifts in identity due to the lack of access to elite marriages and the general confiscation of land that accompanied Shäwan conquest.[62]

Similar to the Wälloye research site, I attempted to move beyond the experiences of political elites and interviewed elders in the Tulama Oromo communities outside of

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[59] Ato Asafa, interviewed by author and translated by Melaku Abera, tape recording, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 February 2008.

[60] Most notably the pan Oromo pilgrimage to the *Oddaa* tree, formally it was a place where all Oromo met, but even before Menilek's edict, it significantly decreased in popularity See P. Martial de Salviac, *Un Peuple Antique Au Pays De Ménélik: Les Galla (Dit D'origine Gauloise) Grand Nation Africaine* trans. Ayalew Kanno (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2005), 177-87.

[61] Greenfield, "Interpretation of Oromo Nationality," 8-11.

[62] This is not to argue that their lands went to the Amhara, rather it was split between Shäwan nobles (some Oromo some Amhara) and local Oromo *balabats*. The point here is that this new situation did not produce significant avenues for Oromo peasants to acquire large stretches of land.

Figure 15: Tulama Oromo Region[63]

Addis Ababa.[64] The oral interviews conducted in areas of historic Shäwa presented four general themes, with only a few exemptions. One, generally Shäwan Oromo do not see

[63] From a larger map Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kafa and Janjero*, 1969
[64] See figure 15, areas near Jidda.

themselves as Ethiopian or Shäwan.[65] An informant states, "The name Ethiopia has nothing to do with the Oromo."[66] Another says, "The history of Shäwa is the history of the Amhara and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church."[67] In addition to this belief there is a view that all Oromo are essentially the same and that the Amhara have no significant differences. Their belief is that the Amhara are only colonizers, who took Oromo land, culture and lives. One informant goes to the extent of saying, "[the] Oromo see themselves as [an] African group. Amhara sees themselves as "Falasha-Jewish (from Gondar) [and are of a] different in physical color."[68] However, there are two cultural practices that are exhibited in many of the Tulama Oromo populations: they have knowledge of Amharic and profess the Ethiopian Orthodox Faith, both of which endear them to the Amhara and separate them from other Oromo. These cultural practices contradict many of the statements that they make, but the previous statements are due to a recent higher ethnic consciousness of many of these informants, which had little to do with the 19th century.[69]

Concerning their connection with Ethiopia, the Oromo had many interesting things to say. An Oromo Christian remarks, because of the fact that his grandfather fought at Adwa, "Ethiopia is our country, our mother."[70] Two other informants use body

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[65] A key problem with the interviews was that many of the informants associated the name "Shäwa" with only the Amhara inhabitants of this province, thus one cannot be Oromo and Shäwan. Therefore, my research colleague and I substituted Tulama for Shäwan in the interviews.

[66] Ato Asafa, interviewed by author and translated by Melaku Abera, tape recording, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22 February 2008.

[67] Dariso Hunde, interviewed by author and translated by Melaku Abera, tape recording, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 29 Fenruary 2008.

[68] Teshoma Leta, interviewed by author and translated by Melaku Abera, tape recording, Sulunta District, Oromia Ethnic Region, Ethiopia, 10 March 2008. Another informant states that Amhara have different noses than the Oromo. Historical sources contradict this claim see C.F. Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1935), 47,53. Also even, Menilek himself viewed Amhara, Oromos and Somalis to be all "ጥቁር" lit. black, (but it also means pagan) and their features to be all the same. See Menilek to Victoria (6 Dec. 1878) Doc. 209 in Sven Rubenson et al., *Acta Ethiopica: Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, vol. 3 (Addis Ababa; New Brunswick, NJ: Addis Ababa University Press, Transaction Pub., 2000), 296-300.

[69] For more on the ethnic reimagining of Ethiopia see Sandra Fullerton Joireman, "Opposition Politics and Ethnicity in Ethiopia: We Will All Go Down Together " *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 3 (1997); Kidane Mengisteab, "New Approaches to State Building in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia's Ethnic-Based Federalism," *African Studies Review* 40, no. 3 (1997); Terrence Lyons, "Closing the Transition: The May 1995 Elections in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 1 (1996) and the more recent edited collection Wendy James et al., eds., *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism & After* (Oxford, England; Addis Ababa; Athens: J. Currey, Addis Ababa University Press, Ohio University Press, 2002).

[70] Bacha Ordifa, interviewed by author and translated by Melaku Abera, tape recording, Sulunta District, Oromia Ethnic Region, Ethiopia, 10 March 2008.

metaphors to describe their relationship to Ethiopia, one stated that Ethiopia is their stomach and another states that it is like a milk to a breast.[71] A constant theme is celebrating past Ethiopian unity and striving for Oromo unity. The informants view Oromo defeats as a sign of Oromo disunity, but take pride in a sign of Ethiopia's unity when they defeated the Italians at Adwa. Lastly, they take extreme pride in their Christianity. One informant states,

> Differences between Oromo groups [is that] they [some Oromo] do not eat meat on Wednesday and Friday (Orthodox Fasting days) [they do not] Fast during fasting season, get buried in the Church, go to Church. Oromo Christians celebrate the Sundays of Saints . . . We don't eat dead animals [meat that was not slaughtered by Christians], do not eat horses, donkeys or the milk of camel. We eat animals according to the rules of the Church. Other Oromos [non-Christians] do not follow rules. We arrange marriages according to Oromo culture and not with Muslims.[72]

This informant prides himself on his Christianity and this pride connects him to *Häbäsha* culture.

Returning to the earlier delineated elements of *Häbäsha* ethnicity, Orthodox Christianity, descent, land tenure and Amharic language, the interviews and texts confirm that Amharic language and Orthodox Christianity were widespread, albeit disproportionately, among the elite, with all of these social boundaries erased due to the "rational choice" of Shäwan Oromo elites to adopt *Häbäsha* norms in order to increase their own authority. Land tenure was definitely practiced according to *Häbäsha* norms, with almost direct control by *Ras* Gobana (d.1888), Menilek's uncle *Ras* Dargé (d. 1901) and later Fit. Häbté Giyorgis (d. 1926).[73] Their extensive intermarriage also makes them, however begrudgingly, *Häbäsha*; and, different from the Oromo groups south, west and east of them.

The Impact of Northern Oromo *Häbäsha* on Understandings of Ethiopian History

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, Ethiopian historiography generally neglects to differentiate between Oromo groups. The question is how does presenting the Oromo elite in the 19th and 20th century as *Häbäsha* or as something other than solely

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Abere Täklä, interviewed by author and translated by his son Melaku Abera, tape recording, Sulunta District, Oromia Ethnic Region, Ethiopia, 10 March 2008.
[73] These figures will be discussed in more detail in later chapters

conquered subjects or usurpers change Ethiopian history? In my view, the 19th century promotions of Gobana and Mikaél as *Ras* mark pivotal moments Ethiopian history, a moment when the Oromo of Wällo and Shäwa became *Häbäsha*, but past historians still generally see them as outsiders. When Täklä Giyorgis II (of the Agaw) took the throne in 1868 or Yohannes IV (from Tigray) did the same three years later, the population, the chroniclers or the travelers did not see them as outsiders. Even Téwodros II, the unifier of the Northern provinces,had questionable Solomonic ties and he did not even claim them until several years into his reign.

Many Ethiopianists on both sides of the ideological spectrum, attribute success or failures in reigns simply to ethnicity.[74] For example, historians view the reigns of the *Rases* of the Wära Shék, especially *Ras* Ali the lesser, as unsuccessful because of the *Häbäsha* ethnic hate of the Oromo or religious hate of this speciously Muslim dynasty. Unfortunately, this is where the argument ends. Shiferaw's groundbreaking articles on the Wära Shék discuss the structure of the state, but do little in describing the successes and failures of these leaders. Téwodros is also seen by these same historians as taking advantage of the population's belief in him as putting an end to the reign of outside usurpers. However, if one examines the weakness of *Ras* Ali II, the lesser, they see that Téwodros' success comes as much from the weakness of local leaders of the time as from his military genius. Henry Blanc writes,

> Ras Ali was a weak-minded debauchee; all he asked for was to be left alone, and on the same principle he allowed every one around him to do pretty much as they like. One day [Walter] Plowden asked permission to erect a flagstaff. Ras Ali gave a willing consent, but added, "Do not ask me to protect it, I do not care for such things; but I fear the people will not like it." Plowden hoisted the Union Jack above his consulate; a few hours afterwards it was torn to pieces by the mob. "Did not I tell you so?" was all the satisfaction he could obtain from the ruler of the land.[75]

The description makes one wonder how *Ras* Ali kept control of his country for as long as he did and it also speaks to the strength of the political structures of central authority during this time period.

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[74] Abir, *Ethiopia;* Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians.*

[75] Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, 28.

Seeing the northern Oromo groups, especially those of Wällo and Yejju in the 18th –20th centuries and of Shäwa in the 19th and 20th centuries as *Häbäsha* helps historians understand the process of territorial expansion as not simply one ethnic group obtaining firearms and annihilating less armed people, but also as entailing the negotiations and compromises made in the central provinces of Shäwa and Wällo. The negotiations included the inclusion of both the Wällo Oromo and Shäwa Oromo elite into the highest realms of power. This stability increased the power of Wällo immensely, unifying its armies, which resulted in more than ten thousand of soldiers at the battle of Adwa.[76] A unified Shäwa produced another large contingent at Adwa as well as providing the armies and its Oromo generals, *Ras* Gobana and *Fit.* Häbté Giyorgis, with the fruits of newly conquered lands. Also, differentiation between Oromo groups allows the researcher not only to see more fully the complex conquest of the Southern groups, but also the type of oppression that occurred in the North during the 19th and 20th century process of centralization. In addition, complicating the Amhara identity also will bring further understanding of the various conflicts in the Northern provinces.[77] For example, the Amhara did not act as a single force, thus provincialism was quite strong. The sociologist Solomon Gashaw writes,

> Most Amharic speaking individuals identify themselves by the place of their birth. For instance, a person is first a Gojjami, a Wolloye, a Gondari, a Menze, then he is an Amhara . . . There is a strong sense of localism, a tradition of looking down on another 'Amhara. For instance an Amhara from Gojjam rarely considers marriage with a Shoan Amhara or vice versa.[78]

Lastly, it also sheds further light on how the Tigrinyans fit into the Ethiopian state. While they were a component of the *Häbäsha* due to religious and historic ties, many historians note the mutual Shäwan hatred, especially during the late nineteenth century.[79] In

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[76] Occurred in 1896, against Italian troops and Ethiopia's victory ensured its independence.

[77] I hope soon that there will be a companion to Donham and James *Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, that examines the Northern marches of these same armies as a way to further knowledge on Ethiopia's modern state construction.

[78] Solomon Gashaw, "Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia," in *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism : The Nation-State at Bay?*, ed. Crawford Young (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 144.

[79] See Irma Taddia, "In Search of an Identity Amhara/ Tegrean Relations in the Late 19th Century," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 269; Alema Eshate, "Struggle for Power Tigrai (Ras Mengesha) Versus Shoa (King Menelik) 1889-98," in *Miscellanea 2* (Addis Ababa:

addition to linguistic differences, during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, Tigray, like Shäwa, was an independent state that was brought under central authority by Téwodros II. The Tigré believe themselves superior to the Shäwans due to their belief that the Southern Amhara mixed with the Oromo, both literally and culturally. Due in part to this fact, after the death of Yohannes they stayed in constant rebellion against the growing Shäwan Empire.[80] However, they were never viewed as anything but *Häbäsha*. This phenomenon allows for differentiation within the *Häbäsha* ethnic identity, which has yet to be fully explored. The Wära Shék's of Gondar have been Christian Amharic speakers throughout the *Zämäna Mäsafent* and the elite Shäwan and Wällo Oromo converted to Christianity, spoke Amharic, married into Amhara families and used *Häbäsha* land tenure norms. So, in what way are they not *Häbäsha,* while the Tigré are? I argue that they were *Häbäsha* due to the fact that the Wälloye were, aside from their practice of Islam, performing *Häbäsha* norms since the 18th century, and that the Shäwan Oromo, especially those in areas that were influenced by generations of contact with the Mänz dynasty since the late 18th century were uniquely placed to become *Häbäsha* and take leading roles in the construction of the modern Ethiopian state.

Conclusion

Becoming *Häbäsha* involved performing four main cultural traits: speaking a Semitic language, practicing *Häbäsha* land tenure norms, professing Christianity and extensive noble intermarriage.[81] Many nationalists take an essentialist and politicized view of both Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups that obscures historic linkages and shifts in the last few centuries, while other scholars from a different perspective, argue that the groups of the Horn of Africa have one source and the unification of Ethiopia is a reunification of these ethnic groups.[82] My argument does not go as far as Messay

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Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1978); Mekonnen Berhanu, "A Political History of Tigray: Shewan Centralism Versus Tigrean Regionalism (1889-1910)" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa Univeristy, 1994).

[80] They did, however, assist Menilek II at Adwa against the Italians. See Chapter 6.

[81] For a very interesting parallel see Sarah Gualtieri. "Becoming "White": Race, Religion and the Foundations of Syrian/Lebanese Ethnicity in the United States" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 4 (2001): 29-57. She argues that being Semitic, Christian, not extensively marrying western European Americans, deemed "moral" and English speakers, Syrian Christians obtained a white identity and citizen rights in the early 20th century.

[82] See Massay Kebede, "Eurocentrism and Ethiopian Historiography: Deconstructing Semitization," *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2003); Levine, *Greater Ethiopia*, 40-68.

Kebede's, but I do agree with his view that there are cultural practices that link ethnic groups in the Horn that transcend ethnicity.

The main problem in delineating a *Häbäsha* identity is that it must be vague enough to include Amhara from Bägémder, Gojjam, Shäwa and Wällo, the Tigré from Tigray and groups like the Agaw and the Northern Oromo, but, at the same time specific enough to have meaning. The external borders on the outside of *Häbäsha* society have been more fluid than those of many societies in the world. The expanding empire incorporated elites from different groups at a pace that far surpassed many European empires at that time. The following chapters will expand on earlier sketches on integration and focus on the central provinces of Wällo and Shäwa as a way to understand the changes in the Ethiopian Empire during the late nineteenth century as it struggled to deal with both external and internal threats. Simultaneously it will examine the changes in the lives of northern Oromo groups, this time tracing the uneven incorporation of their political elites into the Ethiopian state.

Chapter Four:

The Rise and Integration of Wällo, 1855-1888

"The King you appoint must be one of your brethren. It is not proper for you to appoint over yourself an alien and an infidel."[1]

This Chapter will focus on the events in Wällo during the two periods prior to the ascension of Téwodros II, the Gondarine and the *Zämäna Mäsafent*. This background will be used to examine the ways in which religion, marriage and the political situation was manipulated by two mid 19th century Mammadoch dynastic rivals, initially two powerful women Mas'ewot and Wärqitu and finally, their sons, *Abba* Wat'aw (the future *Däj.* Haylä Maryam) and Mohammad Ali (*Ras* Mikaél Yohannes), respectively. Continuing from the previous chapter, I argue that these actors understood the existing *Häbäsha* political systems and used them to increase their power through godparentage, land acquisitions and military support. Initially using Islam and an independent power source to fight invaders from other provinces, they increasingly attached themselves to their neighboring provincial rulers until the Council of Boru Méda in 1878 when they joined the Yäjju as *Häbäsha* "brethren" and assumed integral roles in the Ethiopian political, military and economic systems in the late 19th century.

Ras Mikaél accomplished this feat by combining a religious policy that demonstrated to the central authorities his commitment to Christianity, while not completely alienating his Muslim roots or province, with a shrewd political program that maximized Wällo's central position in the growing Ethiopian empire. In much of the secondary literature on modern Ethiopia, the internal events of Wällo are ignored due to a focus on the national relationship between the Church and State or national foreign policy. The Oromocentric view that Abyssinia and Oromia are separate also ignored Wällo, an undoubtedly Oromo province and part of Abyssinia.[2] Thus, this chapter will

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[1] *The Fetha Negast: The Law of the Kings*, ed. Peter C. Straus, trans. Abba Paulos Tzadua (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Faculty of Law, 1968), 271.

[2] For example see Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; Athens; Addis Ababa: James Curry; Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa University Press, 2001); Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann, 1976); R. A. Caulk edited and with an introduction by Bahru Zewde, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas": A Diplomatic History of Ethiopia (1876-1896)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002); Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia : State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict, 1868-1992* (Boulder: L. Rienner, 1993).

put Wälloyé Oromo at the center of the analysis and examine the events of Téwodros II's and Yohannes IV's reign from their eyes,

The Gondarine Legacy and the *Zämäna Mäsafent*

The Gondarine period (1600-1755) was marked by the slow decline of central authority and the rise in prominence of four separate provincial units, Gojjam, Tigray, Shäwa and Wällo, the former Amhara. Central authority was permanently housed in the city of Gondar and later, after the rise of the Yäjju, at Däbra Tabor, with emperors exercising varying levels of authority. Semitist scholars have argued that the decline of central authority occurred when the Yäjju (Wära Shék) Oromo dynasty became kingmakers ushering in the *Zämäna Mäsafent*. Another historian, LeVerle Berry, in his dissertation and conference papers argues that the provincialism that marks the *Zämäna Mäsafent* has its roots in the Gondarine period.[3] He highlights three main features of the Gondarine period that started and exacerbated the fall of central authority: continued sectarian strife, independent territory acquisition by provincial nobles and the rise in authority of the *Ras Bitwäddäd* ("the most loved one"), all elements implicitly devoid of ethnicity.

Sectarian conflict arose for two reasons. One, due to polygamous practice, nobles and emperors of this period had many children by many different mothers and there was no distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children.[4] This phenomenon produced rebellion after any important leader died, not only between those who wanted his territory but also from those groups who had been forced to pay tribute to the now dead leader. The second factor was differing interpretations of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. The two main religious sects at this time were *Q'ebat* and *Täwahedo*, who backed various

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[3] See Laverle Berry, "The Solomonic Monarchy at Gonder, 1630-1755: An Institutional Analysis of Kingship in the Christian Kingship of Ethiopia " (PhD Thesis, Boston University, 1976); ———, "Factions and Coalitions During the Gonder Period, 1630 - 1755," in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Robert Hess (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); ———, "Ras Welde Li'ul and the Establishment of Qwaran Ascendance in Mid-Eighteenth Century Ethiopia," in *Personality and Political Culture in Modern Africa : Studies Presented to Professor Harold G. Marcus*, ed. Melvin E. Page, Stephanie F. Beswick, Tim Carmichael, and Jay Spaulding (Boston, MA: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1998).

[4] Berry, "The Solomonic Monarchy at Gonder, 1630-1755 ", 86. The Emperors during the late 19th century changed the cultural practice of polygamy, but, generally, did little to curtail their sexual activity, especially when they were young. See Donald Crummey, "Imperial Legitimacy and the Creation of Neo-Solomonic Ideology in 19th Century Ethiopia," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 109 no. 28 (1988): 15.

regional and central powers and were used to rationalize rebellion.[5] The rise in these sects was due to the declining power of the central authority of both the Church and State.[6] In former times, Grañ's chronicler writes,

> For the Christians derive their religion only from a patriarch who comes from Egypt. They pay the ruler of Egypt one-thousand ounces of gold to purchase him, and this Christian then becomes their chief and they call him abun. The king does nothing except at his word and the Christians, the priests and the monks, all pay him honour, and do nothing except at his command. If he becomes angry at them he will say: "I take away your religion from you," "I annul your marriage to your wife," "I forbid you to drink wine." If he speaks thus to them they never cease to belittle themselves to him, and to ingratiate themselves with him by valuable gifts, and to fast, until he says to them: 'I restore to you your religion, your wives, and your wine.' And in that case they rejoice.[7]

While this chronicler cannot be completely accurate in describing the structure of Ethiopian society, this quotation does describe the power of the central authority, which, especially after the time of Grañ was represented by the emperor, his decline in authority is also seen in the decline in the authority of the central church.[8] If a regional lord wanted to rebel he simply adopted the opposite religious sect, which instantly legitimized the rebellion, then he attacked his rival on the battlefield under the banner of his sect. Most of this analysis is based on Berry's dissertation, but here is where I would like to add another religion, that of Islam, which was used by both Wällo Oromo powers, the Yäjju and the Mammadoch to legitimize their rule, maintain troops and rebel.

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[5] Berry defines *Täwahédo* as "The 'Unionist view of the Holy Trinity and the doctrine of the politico-religious coalition of the same name. The unionists emphasized strict monophysitism, holding that the two natures of Christ, the human and the divine, had been perfectly joined through 'union' of the Word with the Flesh and *Qebat* as "The 'Unctionist' view of the Holy trinity, and the designation of the politico-religious coalition of that name. Theologically, the unctionists argued that by means of unction Christ became Son consubstantial with the Father, introducing a degree of subordination unto Trinity. Their stance was: the Father is the Anointer, the Son is the Anointed, the Holy Spirit is the Ungent." Berry, "The Solomonic Monarchy," xvii-xix.

[6] Many of the Emperors, especially of Solomid and the Gondarine period were able to control the *Abuna* (the Egyptian head of the Ethiopian church) and, therefore, able to control the Church. Thus, the decline in authority of the emperor also affected the authority of the central church. For more on the relationship of Church and States see Donald Crummey, "Church and Nation: The Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahedo Church (from the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth Century)," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Micheal Angold (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[7] Shihab ad-Din Ahmad ibn Abd al-Qadir bin Utman, also known as Arab Faqih, *The Conquest of Abyssinia : 16th Century*, trans. Paul Stenhouse with annotations by Richard Pankhurst, 1st ed. (Hollywood, CA: Tsehai Publishers & Distributors, 2003), 167.

[8] Crummey, "Church and Nation: The Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahedo Church (from the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth Century)," 464-7, 74-5.

The second factor was the rise of provincial authority. During the Gonderine period, regional leaders maintained large armies through campaigns against non-*Häbäsha* lands. They extacted tribute independent of royal authority and their armies grew larger than any force the emperor could muster. The Oromo were disproportionately present in both the regional and the imperial armies. Their presence further endeared them to *Häbäsha* and separated them from Oromo groups south of the Abbay.[9] They were rewarded with lands and titles and became embroiled with the political and religious struggles for authority in the Ethiopian state.

However, the rise in Begemder of the Yäjju descendents of Gwangul to the lofty title of *Ras Bitwäddäd* and the kingmakers of the country and the Mammadoch becoming the power in Wällo signals a key difference between the relative unity under the banner of Islam and the sectarian strife of their Christian neighbors. A main source of authority of the *Ras Bitwäddäd* was his control over who succeeded the emperor. During the Gondarine period he set up the council, was its most powerful member, but did not have absolute authority. Generally, his choice was accepted; however not without reservations.[10] A shift during the end of the Gondarine period was the *Ras Bitwäddäd* choosing and installing the emperor himself and keeping all of emperor's authority.

During the Gondarine period the leaders of Wällo gave only nominal tribute to the imperial center at Gondar.[11] After the ushering in of the *Zämäna Mäsafent* there were several marriage connections between members of the Mammadoch and Wära Shék dynasties.[12] These ties were mutually beneficial. The Mammadoch were further endeared to the Yäjju controlled central state and the Yäjju were able to appoint leaders in parts of Wällo.[13] Generally, the progeny of the Wära Shék and Mammadoch did not exercise control at Gondar, but *Ras* Ali II, son of Gugsa's nephew Alula and the daughter of Liban

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[9] Berry, "The Solomonic Monarchy," 260-1. It is also here where I disagree with Tsega Etefa, who argues that even with the destruction of the Gada system there was still pan Oromo unity. See Tsega Etefa, "Pan-Oromo Confederations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008): 20-2.

[10] For a longer discussion of this position see Ibid., 71-3.

[11] Domenico Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo Con Note Di C.Conti Rossini," *Studi Etiopici (Raccolta da C. Conti Rossini)* (1945): 91.

[12] Ibid., 102. Also see Figure 17 for the most important example.

[13] Ibid., fn. 103. In addition, the two dynasties seem to be so unified that a careful observer like Henry Salt puts them under the same Yäjju category see Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia and Travels into the Interior of That Country Executed under the Orders of the British Government in the Years 1809 and 1810* (New York: Frank Cass & Co. LTD., 1967), 300.

took the title of *Ras* as a child with his mother as Regent to control the state and conduct foreign policy.[14]

The *Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia* treats the Yäjju like any other dynasty, it details the various coalitions that were cemented by marriage alliances and it would be difficult to differentiate the Yäjju, aside from their Muslim or Oromo names.[15] They mention *Ras* Ali, the Great, leaving the Muslim faith and "the laws of his father" and regard him as a son of Abraham and steadfast Christian.[16] The chronicle displays the rise of the Yäjju as a good and praiseworthy ascension. It describes *Ras* Ali's role as an alliance cementer to the strengthening of the central state and for this he was given the daughter of the then Emperor Täklä Giyorgis, Princess Altash.[17] The Chronicler describes him as "Ras Ali was like Musē [Moses] the chief of Isra'el. For Musē [Moses] when he stretched out his hand, his enemies were vanquished, and like him he (Rās Ali) when he spread out his couch his enemies were defeated."[18] The presentation changes when it comes to *Ras* Gugsa, the one, according to the chronicler, who wrested authority from the King.[19] Not only did he strike at the established central authority, but he also attempted to weaken provincial authority by taking the primary source of wealth, land.[20]

In this task he backed a third Christian sect, the *Sost Lidat* (three birth) and imprisoned the patriarch and *Däj.* Kenfu, (Téwodros' uncle). As to his legitimacy, a

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[14] See Document no. 135 Treaty between Ethiopia and Great Britain, 2 Nov. 1849 for aspects of *Ras* Ali's Foreign policy and Document 103 Selama (the *Abuna* at the time) to Butrus VII (patriarch of Alexandria) for some examples of Mammadoch and Yäjju cooperation and for an excellent account of Téwodros' early rise to power. Both are in Sven Rubenson, Getatchew Haile, John O Hunwick. *Acta Ethiopica: Correspondence and Treaties 1800-54* (Evanston, Ill.; Addis Ababa: Northwestern University Press ; Addis Ababa University Press, 1987), 134-7,78-87. Also for an Oromocentric view of Mänän see Belletech Deressa, *Oromtitti: The Forgotten Women in Ethiopian History.* (Raleigh, NC: Ivy House Books, 2003), 37-41.

[15] For example see Herbert Joseph Weld-Blundell, *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1840, with Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), 357. Also see Figure 16 for the Genealogy of this dynasty. Also, due to extremely short reigns of the emperor during the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, this chronicler covers 18 different changes in the position of emperor. The various unnamed authors put the entire period in one chronicle. For more information on the construction see Ibid., vii-xiii. This manuscript generally focuses on the powers behind the throne, beginning with *Ras* Mikaél Sehul (Tigray, r. 1748-1779) and ending with *Ras* Ali II (r.1831-1853). For the rulers in between see Figure 16 page.

[16] Ibid., 359.

[17] Ibid., 376.

[18] Ibid., 381.

[19] Ibid., 476, 8.

[20] Richard Pankhurst and Institute of Ethiopian Studies Haile Sellassie I University, *State and Land in Ethiopian History*, Monographs in Ethiopian Land Tenure, (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1966), 74.

chronicler writes, "How is it that the kingdom, us [Ethiopians] a laughing stock to the Galla and the uncircumcised, how is it that the kingdom is a derision to the children and servants? Why was the kingdom snatched away to other families, of whom it cannot be said, 'They are such and such a race.' We however do not know the reason of this usurpation of the kingdom . . ."[21] This passage views the Yäjju as usurpers, but not different by descent. After Gugsa's death, the chronicle treats the Yäjju rulers after Gugsa as the power controlling the throne, but does not describe their actions in a detailed way, thus, this chronicle is useful primarily in determining the varying coalitions.

The relationship between both the Yäjju and Mammadoch and both with the imperial center underscores not only Oromo inclusion, but of Muslims into the upper echelons of imperial authority. Islam and Oromo leaders were intimately involved in the varying coalitions of the period. After the period of Gugsa and his sons, Ali II, the product of both the Yäjju and Mammadoch dynasties, gave Muslim lands of Wällo to its Muslim leaders, but after his release from prison and the return of his lands Amadé, son of Liban, began to propagate Islam and burned many churches.[22] Another Oromo, Ali Faragas of Raya captured him, but *Ras* Ali intervened and Amadé was released. After this, Ali Faragas rebelled against *Ras* Ali, but was defeated and retreated to Raya. "After a time" Amadé also rebelled, but died soon after.[23] *Ras* Ali returned the lands that he confiscated to Kenfu, and had little trouble aside from his fellow Oromo lords until the Chronicles' ending in 1840, and described as "acted not friendly to Christ, though he acted friendly towards men."[24] Figure 18, a picture of Ali and his mother with a Muslim religious leader shows the relationship between Ali's family and Islam is still very close, even though Ali was, at least, nominally Christian. Overall, the Yäjju rulers are described as an outside family and not as an outside group or "race"[25] In the next decade a *shefta*

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[21] Weld-Blundell, *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769-1840*, 477.

[22] See Figure 8, for the positions of these leaders, Liban a contemporary of the Yäjju leader Gojjee, was said to have controlled parts of Bägémder, and the whole of Wällo and Angot. Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, 294. See Figure 18 for a picture of the young Ali with his mother and a Muslim Cleric.

[23] Weld-Blundell, *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia, 1769*-1840, 487-8.

[24] Ibid., 488.

[25] I use the term race here in quotations due to the translator's translation; however, it is difficult to believe that the original text uses such a term is used in the western sense due to the fact that all people in the highlands would be defined as black. But "black" in the Ethiopian sense means non-Christian. The Chronicler uses the Ge'ez phrase, "ካልዓት፡ ንዑሳት," which means "little fellows" and gives a class not a racial dimension. The sentence is more correctly rendered as "How is it, o you kingdom, that you have

Figure 16: Yäjju Dynasty[26]

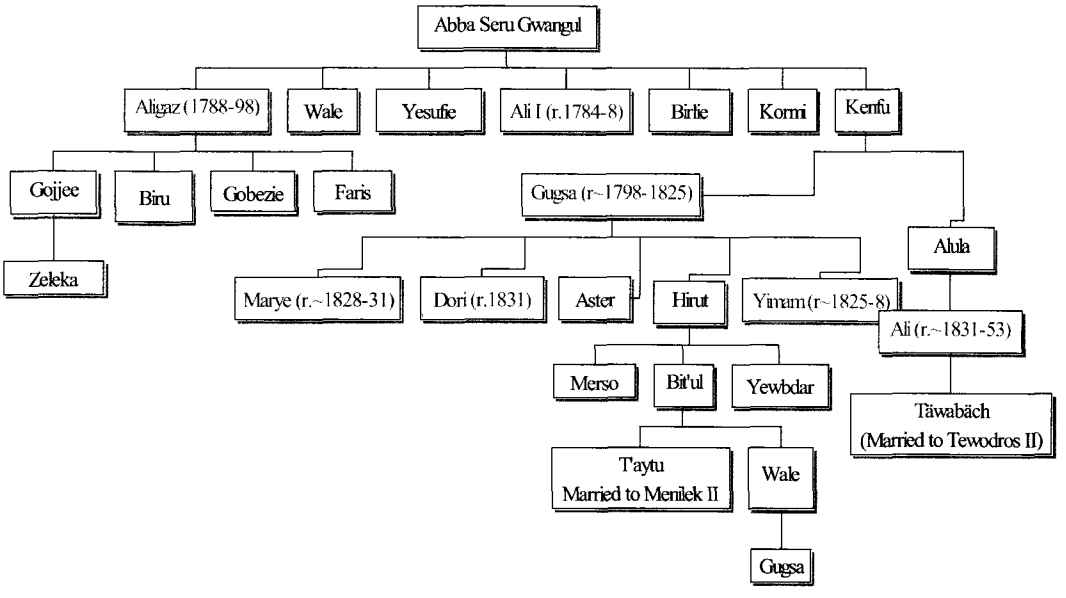
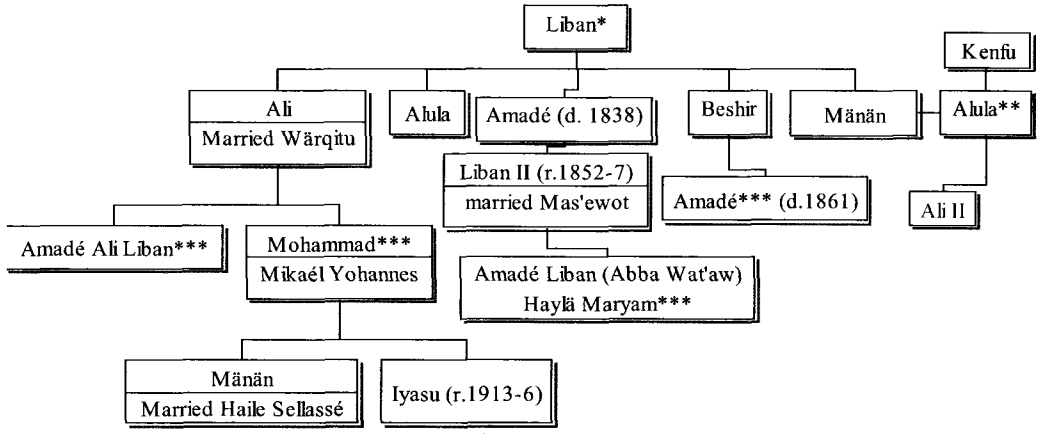


Figure 17: Uniting the Yäjju and Mammadoch Dynasties



* For his position in the Mammadoch dynasty see Figure 3
** For his position in the Yäjju dynasty see Figure 8
*** Indicates rival claimants to leadership of the Mammadoch
Red indicates Yäjju who were kingmakers in Gondar

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become the playground/ridicule of lowly servants/slaves? Why has the kingdom been forcibly taken to [by] the little fellows [others, friends] who are nobody/insignificant?" I would like to thank Prof. Haile M. Larebo of Morehouse College for the translation and interpretation of this Ge'ez sentence. He also mentions that they are significant grammatical issues even with the Ge'ez text of this chronicler.

[26] Taken from a larger chart in Molla Tikuye, "The Rise and Fall of the Yejju (1784 - 1980)" in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, April 1-6, 1991*, eds. Bahru Zewde, Richard Pankhurst, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1991), 198; Hussein Ahmed, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia: Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001); Fekadu Begna, "A Tentative History of Wello 1855-1908" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University 1972). The Yäjju dates of rule added by author

Figure 18: The Queen [Mänän Liban] of the Galla Country with her youngest son [*Ras* Ali II] and a Muslim Priest [27]

[27] From Henry Aaron Stern. *The Captive Missionary: Being an Account of the Country and People of Abyssinia. Embracing a Narrative of King Theodore's Life, and His Treatment of Political and Religious Missions*. London: Cassell Petter and Galpin, 1869. 219.

(political bandit) from Qwara, a territory to the west of Lake T'ana bordering the Sudan challenged the hegemony of the Yäjju. Kasa Haylu, as he was known at the time, was placated at first by receiving a small territory and then the territory of his uncle Kenfu and, finally, the daughter of *Ras* Ali II, Täwabäch. Kasa was not appeased and he defeated both the armies of Mänän and *Ras* Ali II at the battle of Ayshal in 1853. After this battle, the rule of the Yäjju dynasty was effectively ended, while its members were still seen as high born, evidenced by a number of marriages to emperors.[28] After this defeat, this dynasty drew their power from these alliances, but not from independent control of territory. The Mammadoch dynasty was also declining due to the conflicts for succession following the deaths of Amadé Liban and Wärqitu's young son.[29] As will be shown later in this chapter, another factor, religious intolerance against Islam caused Wällo, due to its geographical proximity to the Northern Abyssinian provinces, to be targeted for violent suppressions by both Téwodros II and Yohannes IV. Analysis will begin with the deaths of the Yäjju leader *Ras* Ali, the lesser and the Mammadoch *Imam* Liban Amadé and trace the rebuilding of the Mammadoch dynasty during the construction of the modern state under the emperors Téwodros II and Yohannes IV. It will end with the effects of the council of Boru Méda on the makeup of Ethiopia generally and the Wällo Oromo specifically.

Wällo during the *Zämäna Mäs'afent*

While the Mammadoch and Yäjju dynasties were briefly united through Ali II, the progeny of Mänän (Mammadoch) and Alula (Yäjju), the mid 19th century brought disunity after Ali II's fall in 1853 and the death of Ali Liban in 1855. Due to the instability of the region and the lack of powerful males of the Mammadoch, two women, wives of Liban's sons, rose to prominence under the guise of acting as regents for their young sons. Wärqitu acted as Regent for both Amadé Liban Ali and Mohammad Ali and Mas'ewot did the same for *Abba* Wat'aw.[30] Throughout Téwodros' reign of terror in Wällo, power was split between these two women and various religious figures inspired

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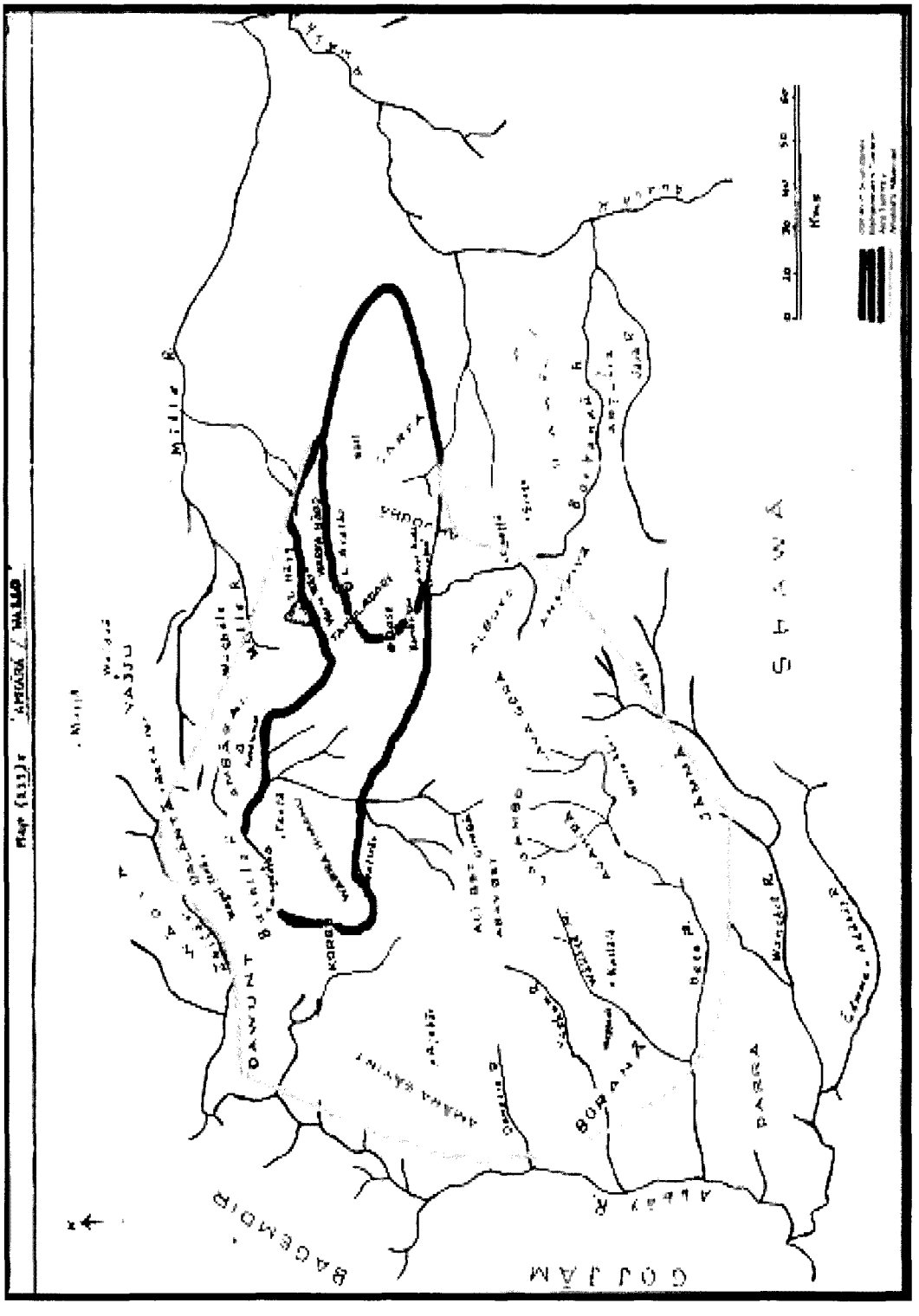
[28] See Figure 8

[29] See Figure 17, for their position in the dynasty. According to Debtära (scribe) Fenta, *Ras* Ali's famil surrendered to Tewodros for feat of getting their hands and feet cut off Doc. no. 186 Fenta to Antoine d'Abbadie (Sept. 1854) Rubenson, *Acta Ethiopica: Correspondence and Treaties 1800-54*, 249.

[30] Due to the lack of the concept of legitimacy in Ethiopia it is difficult to determine the biological mothers of these children. Oral and textual evidence points to Mohammad Ali being the child of Ali and a servant

Figure 19: Approximate Territories of Wällo Leaders during the early 19th Century[31]



named Geté and; therefore, a step child of Wärqitu, but not her child. For *Abba* Wat'aw's geneaology see Figure 17. For an Oromocentric perspective on Wärqitu see Deressa. *Oromtitti*, 41-4. This author, however, confuses Mänän with Mas'ewot and does not mention this other powerful woman in her monograph.

by Téwodros' oppressive anti-Islamic religious policies. Furthering these centrifugal forces, the claimants used the language of Islam to gain adherents and authority. The leaders of the Mammadoch had used the title *Imam* for decades in order to legitimize their rule.[32] This move, similar to Christian rulers' professing a sect of Ethiopian Orthodox Church, endeared these leaders to local populations and gave them powerful local bases from which to spread their influence.

The Mammadoch dynasty originated in the settlement of Garfa in the early 17th century, a process begun by Godäna, who moved its center to Wära Himano and his son, Ali, who was able to supplant the Arloch, the dominant dynasty in Wällo.[33] He also married the daughter of a Christian noble, and some have argued that he also converted to Christianity.[34] His policies of unifying the disparate settlements of Wällo, forwarding trade and supporting Islamic revivals were further expanded by his son Mohammad Ali (r. 1771-85). Mohammad, similar to the other rulers of the Gondarine era, combined independent religious legitimacy and independent economic sources (specifically control of the strategic Tajura trading route) to obtain the capital and adherents to challenge imperial authority. While he was unsuccessful in this challenge, he did obtain more territory which he passed on to his son Batto in 1785.[35] Batto converted to Christianity and received the title of *Ras*. He died after ruling for five years and was succeeded by Amadé. Amadé formed alliances with all of the major leaders of Wällo. Due to these alliances, he exercised authority beyond Wällo, put two of his own nominees on the throne and began to refer to himself as *Imam*.[36]

Ahmad's son Liban (*Abba* Jerru, d. 1815) carried out Amadé's religious programs to the extent that he desecrated churches and died during a forced conversion of

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[31] From Zergaw Asfera. "Some Apsects of Historical Development in Amhārā/Wallo." BA Thesis, Haylé Sellassé I University, 1973, 69. Data taken from Hussein Ahmed. *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia: Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001. Red denotes Mohammad's lands, Blue denotes Ali's lands and Yellow denotes the alliances of Amadé. Purple denotes the common Eastern boundary surrounding Garfa

[32] An interest note, in the royal chronicles, the leaders are only referred to as Däjazmach, whether the chronicler was unaware of their self given title or refused to acknowledge it is unclear.

[33] See Hussein, *Islam*, 14-29. These places names are shown in Figure 19.

[34] See Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo.", 91-2. However, an expert on Islam and Wällo has questioned this claim, see Hussein, *Islam*, 188.

[35] Hussein, *Islam*, 117-22.

[36] *Ibid.*, 122. These were Täklä Giyorgis I and Dimetros See Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo Con Note Di C.Conti Rossini.", 96 n. 42

Christians to Islam.[37] Liban's three sons are the source of the three rival Mammadoch claimants in the late 19th century: they were his sons Amadé (*Abba* Mujja), Ali (*Abba* Bulla) and Bashir, the fathers of *Abba* Wat'aw, Amadé Bashir and Mohammad Ali.[38] Amadé Liban succeeded his father and continued his policies until he died in 1838. He was accused by many of colluding with Muhammad Ali of Egypt and was head of the regent council of the very young *Ras* Ali II. His own son, Liban Amadé, increased the territory of the Mammadoch, and acted as a major prince during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* along with Goje of Yäjju and Wäldä Sellassé of Tegray. He was deposed by *Ras* Ali II, in favor of Ali (*Abba* Bulla), the father of Mohammad, (later *Negus* Mikaél). While *Abba* Bulla was the legitimate ruler of the Mammadoch, he was challenged by Liban's (*Abba* Jerru) progeny, which further contributed to instability in Wällo during the reign of Téwodros II of Qwara.

Téwodros II and Wällo: Putting out the Fire (1855-68)

To Téwodros "'the slave of Christ'", as Rubeson writes, "political supremacy was a means of Christianizing and rechristianizing the population, and the growing moral and spiritual strength of the Christian population a guarantee against a relapse into the rule of the country by the largely Muslim Galla faction."[39] In addition to imposing Christianity on his subjects he attempted to unify Ethiopia under one Christian doctrine.[40] Wällo represented two important issues within the Ethiopian state. First, it was centrally located and touched all of the major provinces of the state; which is the principal reason why Téwodros put his capital there to be close to all of the rebellious subjects in Wag, Tigray, Shäwa and Wällo. Second, the province was predominately Muslim and Oromo and he

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[37] Weld-Blundell, *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia*, 487-8. All of these figures are listed in Figure 8.

[38] There are many Ali's, Amadé's and Liban's, To differentiate between them, I have listed their horse names in parentheses. Generally, Ethiopian leaders had many names, including a given name, a baptismal name and horse name. The horse name is the name used in battle and it is often used in war songs and generally meant to inspire fear. They begin with "*Abba*," an Afan Oromo term, in this context means "leader of." Also, see figure 17 for a chart of these leaders.

[39] Sven Rubenson, *King of Kings: Tewodros of Ethiopia* (Addis Abeba,: Published by Haile Sellassie I University in association with Oxford University Press, 1966), 59. However, early in his reign he attempted to develop good relations with Muslim rulers see Tewodros to Muhammad Sa'id, 13 Nov. 1857 and 24 Nov. 1857 Document 22-3 in Sven Rubenson et al., *Tewodros and His Contemporaries, 1855-1868*, Acta Ethiopica vol. 2. (Addis Abeba, Ethiopia; Lund, Sweden: Addis Ababa University Press; Lund University Press, 1994), 36-9.

[40] Nägussé Wälde Mikaél to Napoleon III (Oct.? 1858) Doc. 37 in Rubenson et al., *Tewodros and His Contemporaries, 1855-1868*, 60.

viewed both as scourges to Abyssinia.[41] Téwodros writing to Victoria, states, "It was when the Gallas were ruling, when the Son of Israel had disappeared, and when people were begging and scratching around . . ."[42]

Téwodros' efforts to subdue them were hampered by many factors. One, Wällo did not have a single leader. As we have seen all the sons of Liban believed they had legitimate claims to the throne. Two, these claimants had alliances in neighboring provinces. For example, soon after the ascent of Téwodros, Wärqitu fled to the region just north of Shäwa, with the Yäjju leader *Ras* Ali II in order to gain the assistance of the then Shäwan leader Haylä Mälekot.[43] However, Téwodros' chronicler, Zänäb, claims that Téwodros desired and accomplished the feat of having "'Gallas' and Amharas eating at the same table."[44] Many later scholars have taken this phrase and used it as evidence for Téwodros' struggle for unity. However, Oromos and Amharas had already been sharing the same lands, beds, cities, provinces and tables for decades before the birth of Téwodros. As we have seen in Chapter 2, they were many cultural practices in place to bring the two ethnic groups together, especially in Wällo and Shäwa. What Téwodros wanted was all Oromos and Amharas as loyal subjects sitting at *his* table. Generally, Téwodros appointed local leaders loyal to him in his unified Abyssinia and Wällo was no exception. Téwodros appointed Liban II as his representative, but another claimant Amadé Bashir was in constant rebellion. The continued Oromo and Amhara rebellions in Shäwa, Gojjam and Tigray infuriated Téwodros and he soon turned to violence in all provinces, especially in Wällo, to accomplish his goals.[45]

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[41] For example see Ibid., Doc. 90 Tewodros to Hasan Salama 17 May 1861; Asfaw Girma-Selassie, *The Amharic Letters of Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and Her Special Envoy Preserved in the India Office Library and the Public Record Office, Together with an Appendix* (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1979). FO 95/721, fol. 126, Theodore to Victoria 29 October 1862 and FO 1/26 fol. 210, Theodore to Victoria, 29 January 1866.

[42] Theodore to Victoria, 29 January 1866, in Ibid., 5. FO 1/26, fol. 210.

[43] Martino Mario Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 2, no. 1 (1942): 161.

[44] Ibid., 162. An important thing to point out is that a key boundary until the present time is that Christians cannot eat meat slaughtered by any other religious group and vice versa. Thus, having the people eat the same food at the same table implied that all groups would be eating food slaughtered by Christians. Decades later a compromise was found during a meal between Menilek's court and the Mahdist State in the Sudan. The livestock was split and slaughtered separately by Muslims and Christians, but served at the same table. See P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898: A Study of Its Origins, Development and Overthrow*, 2nd ed. (Oxford,: Clarendon P., 1970), 209.

[45] For examples see Donald Crummey, "The Violence of Téwodros," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1971).

The 19th century Ethiopian historian As'mé Giyorgis describes the Oromo as eternal enemies of Téwodros. He provides very little on the events in Wällo at this time. However, he tells one story that clearly displays Téwodros' attitude towards this province. As'me begins the account with Wärqitu (the wife of Liban's son Ali) burning down a church in Gärägärä. In response, Téwodros led a campaign into Wällo, and was able to take the natural fortress of Maqdäla.[46] Due to the constant rebellions and its centrality to Abyssinia, Téwodros made the natural fortress of Maqdäla in Wällo as his main residence. In this camp he kept various elite prisoners, including the named heir of the Mammadoch, Amadé Ali Liban, the named heir of Shäwa, Menelik and the brothers of the eventual Empress T'aytu among other individuals whom Téwodros deemed dangerous. Soon after, Oromo troops surrounded Téwodros on three sides. Téwodros sent out troops from Gojjam and Lasta, who returned unsuccessfully. Then, after receiving a horse's mane from a soldier of Yäjju, he charged alone stating that he would not be the slave of Christ if he was not successful in repelling all three sides.[47] As'mé writes,

> The Neguś galloped. True to his word he scattered all three encirclements. The Wallo Galla turned tail before one man. They were routed. On his return he uttered this Fukkura [customary boasting]: "People of Gožžam, Qwārā, Bagemder, Lāstā and Tegrē, am I not your husband"? Then the army replied, "Yes, you are our husband."[48]

This presentation displays Téwodros fulfilling a Biblical maxim, that it is not the size of an army; rather the will of God and the purity of the soldier which wins battles. It is also very interesting that he did not ask the people of Shäwa, Wällo or Yäjju if he was their husband, especially considering that his wife was from Yäjju and he was in Wällo. By husband, I believe he means that he is their protector, also implying that he should be unquestionably followed. As'mé concludes this account by stating that Wälloyé did not

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[46] See figures 20 and 21.
[47] Bairu Tafla trans. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work: History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, Èathiopistische Forschungen ; Bd. 18. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987), 456-7; Wälda Mariyam and C. Mondon-Vidailhet trans., *Chronique De Theodoros II, Roi Des Rois D'Ethiopie (1853-1868) D'apres Un Manuscrit Original*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Guilmoto, 1905), vol. 1, 9. This source mentions that the Church was one of many that Wärqitu burned down.
[48] Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 457.

Figure 20: Maqdäla from the North[49]

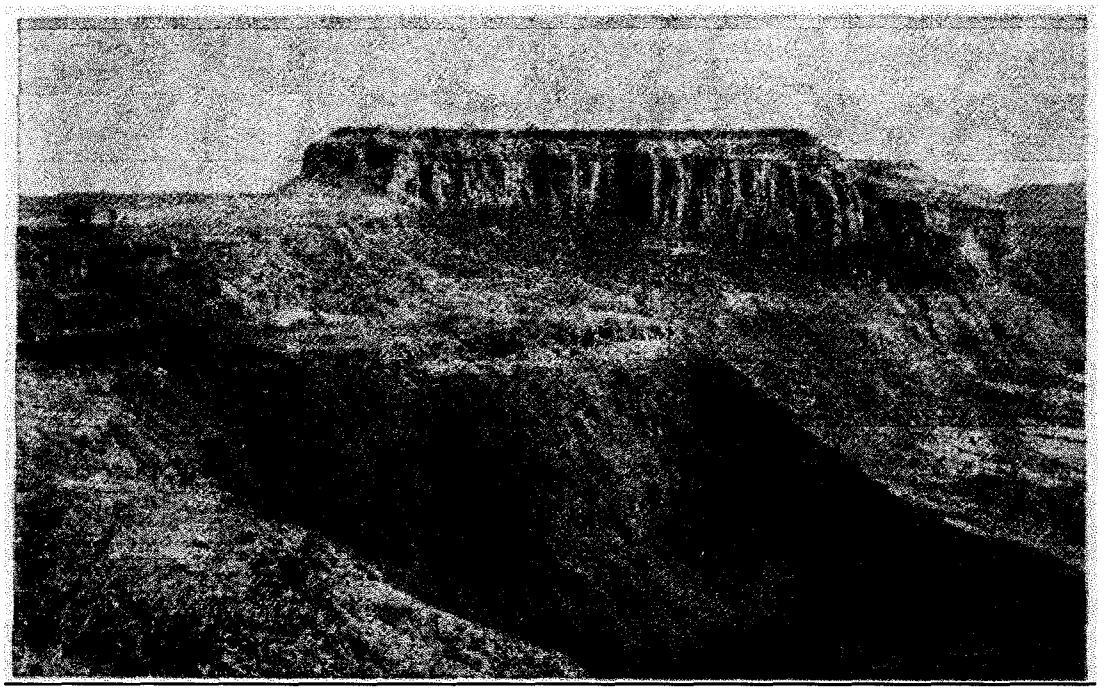
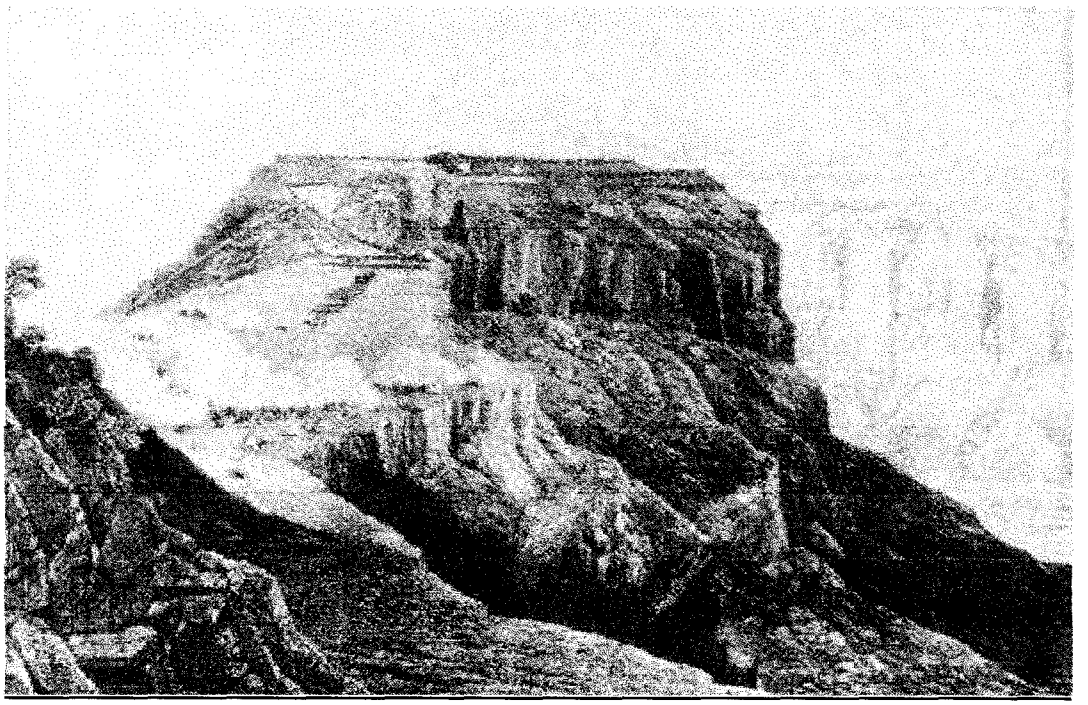


Figure 21: Maqdäla from the South[50]



[49] From Rubenson, *King of Kings: Tewodros of Ethiopia*, 72.
[50] Ibid., 88.

cease rebellion during the entire reign of Téwodros.[51] Henry Stern, a captive at Maqdäla, furthers this view in describing another campaign in Wällo, which occurred years later. He writes describing Téwodros' call to war, "he called out, 'My father [the Abun who accompanied the soldiers] is right. Let us crush the infidels at home, before we precipitate ourselves on those abroad.'"[52] This call to war combined two of the most important parts of Téwodros' plan for Ethiopia: to Christianize and to unify the highlands by force.

The preceding paragraphs are generally echoed in the relevant secondary material; however, it gives the impression that Wällo was only acted upon. The nobility of Wällo did not sit idly by when Téwodros's committed his most well-known atrocities.[53] *Ras* Ali's appointee in Wällo, Ali Liban, had been not able to create unity and his nephew Liban Amadé was appointed by Téwodros in 1855. Liban's death in 1857 left the Imamate of Wällo open to his five sons.[54] One claimant, Amadé Bashir, rebelled against Téwodros II, so Téwodros named another claimant Amadé Ali (Wärqitu's son) commander of his capital Maqdäla.[55] Soon after, he imprisoned this claimant for little reason in the fortress.[56] After that, another claimant, Liban ran away from his appointed post.[57] Amadé Bashir continued to rebel for several years until his death.[58] A few sources indicate that the Wärqitu was the most powerful leader in Wällo.[59] Many Oromo leaders continued to rebel but escaped when Téwodros came to suppress them, and Téwodros ransacked the land in anger.[60] Page after page of Zänäb's chronicle describes Téwodros' atrocities committed against the Oromo in an attempt to gain control of this region. None

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[51] This view in echoed in the letters contained in Luigi Fusella, "Le Lettere Del *Dabtara* Assaggakhan," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 7, no. 1 (1952). Especially in the first and third letters.
[52] Henry Aaron Stern, *The Captive Missionary*, 211.
[53] For example, the best survey of the period only mentions that Wällo rebelled, but never the reasons. Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 40. However, they are some examples of scholars examining Wälloye resistance through the lens of Islam see Hussein, *Islam* and Mohammed Hassen "Islam as Resistance Ideology among the Oromo of Ethiopia: The Wallo Case, 1700-1900" in Said S. Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest : Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1992.
[54] Again, see Figure 17 for more information on these individuals.
[55] Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo," 106.
[56] Henry Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia, with Some Account of the Late Emperor Theodore, His Country and People* (London: F. Cass, 1970), 214.
[57] Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," 168.
[58] Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo," 106 and Rubenson, *King of Kings: Tewodros of Ethiopia*, 75-8. In addition, he was also suspected of colluding with the ostensibly loyal Haylé Mikaél of Shäwa against Téwodros II. Bahru also mentions that he also allowed his followers to sell Muslims soldiers into slavery
[59] Assäggahén to Antoine Abbadie, 10 Oct. 1864 Document no. 148 in Rubenson et al., *Tewodros and His Contemporaries, 1855-1868*, 40-1.
[60] For example see Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," 172.

of these actions secured his dominance. All throughout these tragedies, Wärqitu was doing everything she could to secure the release of her son, including bribery, tribute and friendship. However, the other leaders of Wällo refused to allow her to give back Amhara prisoners of war, and she was unable to regain her son.[61]

Finally, things came to a head, when the future king of Shäwa, Menelik, escaped from the prison at Maqdäla.[62] A fellow captive writes that Téwodros using a telescope saw Wärqitu helping Menilek escape.[63] In response to this event, Téwodros killed Amäde Ali (Wärqitu's Son) and his entourage, stating, "'Worket [Wärqitu] has found a son who is free [Menilek]; she can dispense with the one who is chained [Amadé]."[64] Blanc writes describing the massacre,

> All were killed – some thirty-two, I believe – and their still breathing bodies hurled over the precipice. It is probable that shortly afterwards Theodore regretted having allowed himself to be guided by passion . . . However, Theodore soon consoled himself. The rains were late, and water scarce on the amba: the next day it rained. Theodore, full of smiles, addressed his soldiers, saying, "See the rain; God is pleased with me because I have killed the infidels."[65]

However, the Oromo were not the only ones massacred at this time. When Téwodros ran out of Oromo to kill, he turned to his Christian captives, one of whom, Liqamaquas Haylä, calmly stated, "You have executed the Gallas . . . because they and their tribes are your enemies; but what reason can you allege for the butchery of a mass of people, whose only misfortune is that you are strong and they weak; you the master and they slaves; you free and they captives."[66]

After hearing of the death of her son, Wärqitu freed Menilek, who she had imprisoned, gave him an additional entourage to escort him to the boundaries of Shäwa

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[61] Generally, prisoners were exchanged for each other, ransomed or put into slavery. Due to the deep hatred of Téwodros the Wällo leaders did not offer any negotiations for these prisoners. Stern, *The Captive Missionary*, 218.
[62] Menilek will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.
[63] Menilek was born Sahlä Maryam. Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, 215.
[64] Stern, *The Captive Missionary*, 220 and Herbert Weld Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," *Geographic Journal* 15, no. 2 (1900): 104.
[65] Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, 215-6. Also see Stern, *The Captive Missionary*, 221; Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo," 106; P'awelos Ñoño, *At'é Menilek (Emperor Menilek)* (London: Percy Brothers Limited, 1984 (E.C.)), 12.
[66] Stern, *The Captive Missionary*, 221.

but set up his capture by sending him to his Shäwan rival, Bäzabäh's, camp.[67] However, according to the chronicler, the people of Shäwa rejoiced upon his arrival. The death of Amäde Ali (Wärqitu's son) not only robbed Wällo of its legitimate ruler, but also Wärqitu lost any ties to the Mammadoch dynasty. Her husband Ali was dead and she had no more sons. With no options left she fled to Shäwa and the protection of the Shäwan prince.[68]

In the power vacuum, another woman, Mas'ewot, wife of Téwodros' dead appointee, Liban, claimed the throne on behalf of her young son, Amadé Liban (1852-1880), later known as *Abba* Wat'aw and he was recognized as *Imam*.[69] However, after more than a year in Shäwa, Wärqitu returned with Menilek and soon found a solution by presenting to the public a child purportedly her grandson as a way to legitimize her claims.[70] Women throughout Ethiopian history have acted as regents for their young sons or male relatives, generally it was the only way for them to legitimize their rule.[71] It seems likely that after her son's death she "adopted" this boy and used him to gain authority. With Menilek's backing, the Wällo elite, save Mas'ewot, recognized Wärqitu's authority. Mas'ewot avoided direct contact with the larger Shäwan force and bided her time until Menilek's return to Shäwa. The fact that both of these lines were now heavily

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[67] The chronicler mentions that Bäzabäh gave Wärqitu 5000 thalers to betray Menilek. However, the chronicler states that she "was unable to imprison to imprison Negus Menilek because God had forbidden her to do so." Hussein Ahmad, "The Chronicle of Shawā: A Partial Translation and Annotation" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1981), 27; Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa: Viaggi Di Antonio Cecchi Nel'africa Equatoriale, 1876-1881*, 3 vols. (Rome: Ermanno Loescher & Co., 1886), vol. 1, 261. According to Bairu, the Shäwan escort included *Däj*. Germame, Menilek's mother and Ato Habté Sellasé Dästa Bairu Tafla, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 7, no. 2 (1969): 4-5. The relationship between Menilek and Bäzäbäh will be discussed in Chapter 5.

[68] Guèbrè Sellassié, Tèsfa Selassie trans. and Maurice de Coppet, *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik Ii, Roi Des Rois D'éthiopie* (Paris,: Maisonneuve, 1930), 118.

[69] Brielli, 106. Assäggahén to Antoine Abbadie, 21 Sept. 1867 Document no. 220 in Rubenson et al., *Tewodros and His Contemporaries, 1855-1868*, 330-2.

[70] Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, 298. Blanc writes, "She was accompanied by a young lad who, she asserted, was her grandson, the child of the prince who had been killed more than two years before at Maqdäla. She stated that he had been born in Wällo country before her departure for Shoa, the result of one of those frequent casual unions so common in the country, and that she had taken him away when she sought refuge in the land of the man whom she had saved. To avoid any attempt being made by her rival to secure the person of her grandchild, she until then kept the matter secret. However, her story was but little credited: I know on the Amba the soldiers laughed at it; still it offered an excuse to many of her former adherents for again joining her cause, and if they did not credit her tale they pretended at least to do so." Also, see Brielli, 107.

[71] Examples include Mänän Alula (discussed earlier in this chapter), *Etégé* Mentawwab (r.1730-69) and T'aytu Bet'ul (discussed in the Chapter 5 and 7). In addition, these women were, debatably of Oromo descent, both Mänän and T'aytu were Yäjju and Mentawwab has been argued to be of Oromo origin see Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, Updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 46.

involved with powers in other provinces, foreshadows the state of the leadership of Wällo until the death of Menilek II. Their two young sons would lead Wällo by allying themselves with the emperors of the late 19th century and put one of their own on the throne at the opening of the 20th century.

Although Téwodros' capital was in Wällo, at the end of his reign, like most of Abyssinia, he controlled very little of it.[72] Many sources indicate that in the early 1860s Téwodros began to lose any semblance of control over the state and began to burn churches, including the prestigious ones in Gondar, which he burned in December of 1866.[73] Blanc writes, " . . . [the rebels] joined in anathematizing the sacrilegious monarch who had not hesitated to destroy churches that even the Mussulman Gallas had respected."[74] After this point, the populations of Wällo were joined by the clergy and most of the population of Bägémder, Gojjam, Shäwa, Tigray, Lasta and Wällo in rebelling against Téwodros.[75] The northern Abyssinian provinces, all in open revolt in the 1860s, created in Abyssinia, arguably, a worse position relative to unity than when Téwodros came to power in 1855. The idea of the northern provinces unified under one leader remained, but there were many claimants for the throne.

After Téwodros' last stand and suicide at Maqdäla in 1868, *Wagshum* Gobazé of the province of Wag proclaimed himself emperor Täklä Giyorgis II and moved quickly to make alliances with the provinces of northern Abyssinia. He worked with two rising nobles, Kasa Mercha (the future Emperor Yohannes) in Tigray and Mas'ewot and *Abba* Wät'aw in Wällo.[76] In Shäwa, Menilek began to tip the balance to the side of Mohammad Ali (1850-1918) and was able briefly to reconcile him with *Abba* Wat'aw during his first

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[72] Assäggahén to Antoine Abbadie, 14 Jan. 1866 Document no. 160 in Rubenson et al., *Tewodros and His Contemporaries, 1855-1868*, 256-63.

[73] At least one source indicated a state of disarray as early as late 1860 see Imnete Maryam Gibretu to Antoine d'Abbadie (7 Oct. 1860) Doc. 72 in Ibid., 128-9.

[74] Donald Crummey and Getatchew Haile, "*Abunä* Sälama: Metropolitan of Ethiopia, 1841-1867: A New Gə'əz Biography," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* XXXVII, no. 1 (June 2004): 40; Rubenson, *King of Kings: Tewodros of Ethiopia*, 71; Dimoteos Sabrijian, *Deux Ans De Séjour En Abyssinie; Ou, Vie Morale, Politique Et Religieuse Des Abyssiniens* (Jerusalem,: Couvent de Saint Jacques, 1871), 107.

[75] Stern, *The Captive Missionary*, 320.

[76] Menilek's activities in Wällo backing Wärqitu drove Mas'ewot into an alliance with Täklä Giyorgis. Who seemingly gave Täklä Giyorgis tribute in 1868 and 69 Täklä Giyorgis to Victoria (1868) Document 247 in Rubenson et al., *Tewodros and His Contemporaries, 1855-1868*, 361; Täklä Giyorgis to Victoria (March 1869) Document no. 8 in Sven Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, Acta Ethiopica ; V. 3. (Addis Ababa; New Brunswick, NJ: Addis Ababa University Press, Transaction Pub., 2000), 11. This document also indicates that Shäwa also was paying tribute.

expedition to Wällo to return Wärqitu to her throne.[77] This alliance did not last long, and Mas'ewot quickly rebelled against Wärqitu.[78] Not much is known of their experiences during Täklä Giyorgis' short reign; however it is safe to say that they did not distinguish themselves as enemies of Yohannes IV, then known as Kasa Bezbaz. However, as early as 1870 Wällo and Yäjju were paying tribute directly to Menilek and not Täklä *Giyorgis.*[79] *In 1871, Mohammad was released from prison due to his involvement in a* battle as an ally of Täklä Giyorgis against Yohannes and named vassal of Yohannes in Wällo and *Abba* Wat'aw (who escaped from prison) submitted to Menilek.[80]

The Monk and the Muslims: Yohannes and stabilizing Wällo (1871-86)

While Téwodros and Yohannes had similar religious and political goals they had slightly different ways of pursuing them. They both wanted an Ethiopian Orthodox Church that united Abyssinia's population in support of the emperor. However, Téwodros' continued myopic policies strained his relationship with the church and his sacking of churches and imprisonment of *Abuna* Salama ruined any chance of successful partnership. Téwodros' attempts to modernize the country generally fell on deaf ears especially in regards to the church.[81] Yohannes' policies were a return to the past. He pursued a more focused conservative policy that resulted in the incorporation of Wällo, Shäwa and Gojjam, their elites and, most importantly for Yohannes, a single state Christian ideology that was in complete support of secular authority.[82] Yohannes' approach was top down.

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[77] Brielli, 107. Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik II*, 118. Menilek's chronicler estimates the campaign took about six weeks. Assäggahén to Antoine Abbadie, 27 Nov. 1869, Document 24 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, 29-32.

[78] Afä Worq and Wäldä Mäsqäl to Alämayyähu Téwodros, (21 Aug. 1869), Document 18 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, 20-3.

[79] Täklä Giyorgis to Hormuzd Rassam, (24 Jan. 1870), Document 32 in Ibid., 43. This document does not shed on light on which rulers of Wällo were paying the tribute, but most likely it was both Mas'ewot and Wärqitu due to the fact the Wärqitu was an appointee of Menilek's and Mas'ewot was attempting to set up a marriage alliance between her son *Abba* Wat'aw and Menilek's daughter. This attempt was unsuccessful, but Menilek kept all of Mas'ewot's gifts. See Assäggahén to Antoine Abbadie,(27 Dec. 1870), Document 60 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries*, 75.

[80] A rival of Menilek's, Mäshasha Sayfu released him during a rebellion in the late 1860s. Further details of this event will be discussed in the next chapter. However, Menilek tells Victoria that as of late 1872, he had all of the Wällo nobles in chains and controlled the province of Wällo. See Menilek to Victoria (31 May 1872) Document 83 in Rubenson et al., *Internal*, 104-8.

[81] See among others Donald Crummey, *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia, 1830-1868* (Oxford,: Clarendon Press, 1972); Rubenson, *King of Kings*, 61-6.

[82] For an excellent account of the religious policies of Yohannes see R. A. Caulk, "Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 10, no. 1 (1972);Gabira Madihin Kīdāna,

He attempted to make loyal vassals out of local leaders like Menilek of Shäwa or *Ras* Adal (later *Negus* Täklä Haymanot) and use them as the tools of conversion for their local populations. Yohannes rarely used force against other Abyssinians, but the threat of it kept his subordinates, especially Menilek, loyal.[83] Like most of Ethiopia, Wällo was in shambles after Téwodros' suicide. The uncertainty led to many claimants to the throne. In the early 1870s, both *Abba* Wat'aw and Mohammad Ali were allied with the then emperor Täklä Giyorgis. According to correspondence, religious tolerance was the law of the land in Wällo and both Yohannes and Menilek decreed it.[84]

According to oral evidence, Mohammad Ali was a child of Ali Liban and a servant name Gété, who was either an Oromo from the Borana district in Wällo or a Christian from Amhara Sayint.[85] An aged informant relays a story which prophesizes Mohammad's rise. He states, "The Lady [Wärqitu] made coffee for a local sheik who was a wizard, but did not finish the ceremony. A maid servant [Gété] did [finish the ceremony] and the sheik said this to the maid servant 'A boy from a Maid, will be named Mohammed, and he will be strong as a mountain.'"[86] At this time Wärqitu still had a living son, but due to *Häbäsha* inheritance norms, Mohammad still could claim his

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"Yohānis IV: Religious Aspects of His Internal Policy" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I Univeristy, 1972). The account of Zewde Gebra Sellassie is skewed by several biases including viewing Islam as a natural enemy to Ethiopia and Yohannes' actions, especially towards Muslims are rarely critiqued by his grandson, the author. Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 84-100.

[83] Yohannes' was definitely less violent than Téwodros, but he did use violence, especially against Muslims. See Yohannes IV to Alexander II (13 Aug. 1872) , Document 91 in Rubenson et al., *Internal*, 122-3. The Azabo Oromo event is also retold in Documents 89-93.

[84] Relative to Menilek II see Assäggahén to Antoine Abbadie, (27 Nov. 1869), Document 24 in Ibid. In regards to Yohannes see Yohannes IV to Kerillus V, (28 April 1879); Document 218 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries*, 314-5. However, Yohannes' claim is difficult to accept due to the fact that he wrote to other European that Muslims flocked to him to be baptized. See Documents 231-3 in the same source.

[85] Ato Dämaqä Ädänä interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 12 Tahases 2000 E.C. (22 December 2007 Gregorian Calender). The Borana district considered by the Wälloye as the Oromo cultural center of Wällo and Amhara Sayint is considered the Amhara cultural hub in Wällo.

[86] Ato Asafä Gäräd Nägäsh interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 11 Tahases 2000 E.C. (21 December 2007 Gregorian Calender). A similar story was also collected in Asnake Ali, "Aspects of the Political History of Wallo, 1872-1916" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1983), fn. 31, 122. His story adds both an ethnic and religious component, stating that the child would come from an Oromo maid and would become a Christian.

father's territories. One informant states that Wärqitu went back to that sheik in order to get a blessing, the sheik refused, and she decided to hunt down Mohammad.[87]

As stated earlier in this chapter, Wärqitu arrived in Wällo with another child after Ahmäde's death. It is possible that this child was Mohammad, but the name of the child does not show up in the primary sources. Regardless of his relationship with the wife of his father, he claimed the position of his father and initially took advantage of an alliance with Menilek of Shäwa. In his late teens, Mohammad was unable to defeat *Abba* Wat'aw, but always escaped to Dälanta (a region in Wällo).[88] His weakness forced him into an unbalanced alliance with Täklä Giyorgis.[89] During this time Wällo was acted upon and did little independently to control its own destiny. Menilek, due to his obligation to Wärqitu for her role in his escape and an attempt to exercise his authority on the central highlands, led campaigns from 1868 to 1876 in Wällo, which led him to control Wällo south of Maqdäla.[90]

When *Abba* Wat'aw rebelled, Menilek again backed Wärqitu and put her "son" Mohammad Ali on the throne in the early 1870s, stating "I give all this country [Wällo] to my son and friend the *Imam* Mohammad Ali."[91] After which, the chronicle states he issued these words, "In spite of the fact that the Wallo people are Muslim today, they are our potential coreligionists who will collaborate with us in baptism and the Holy communion in a year's time, if possible, or if not, in two years. They will rule with us the world which God now gave us, and later will enter the Kingdom of Heaven with us by His benevolence."[92] Menilek erected a town at Wära Ilu and he used this town as a springboard for further forays into Wällo after 1871.[93] He captured Maqdäla in 1876 and

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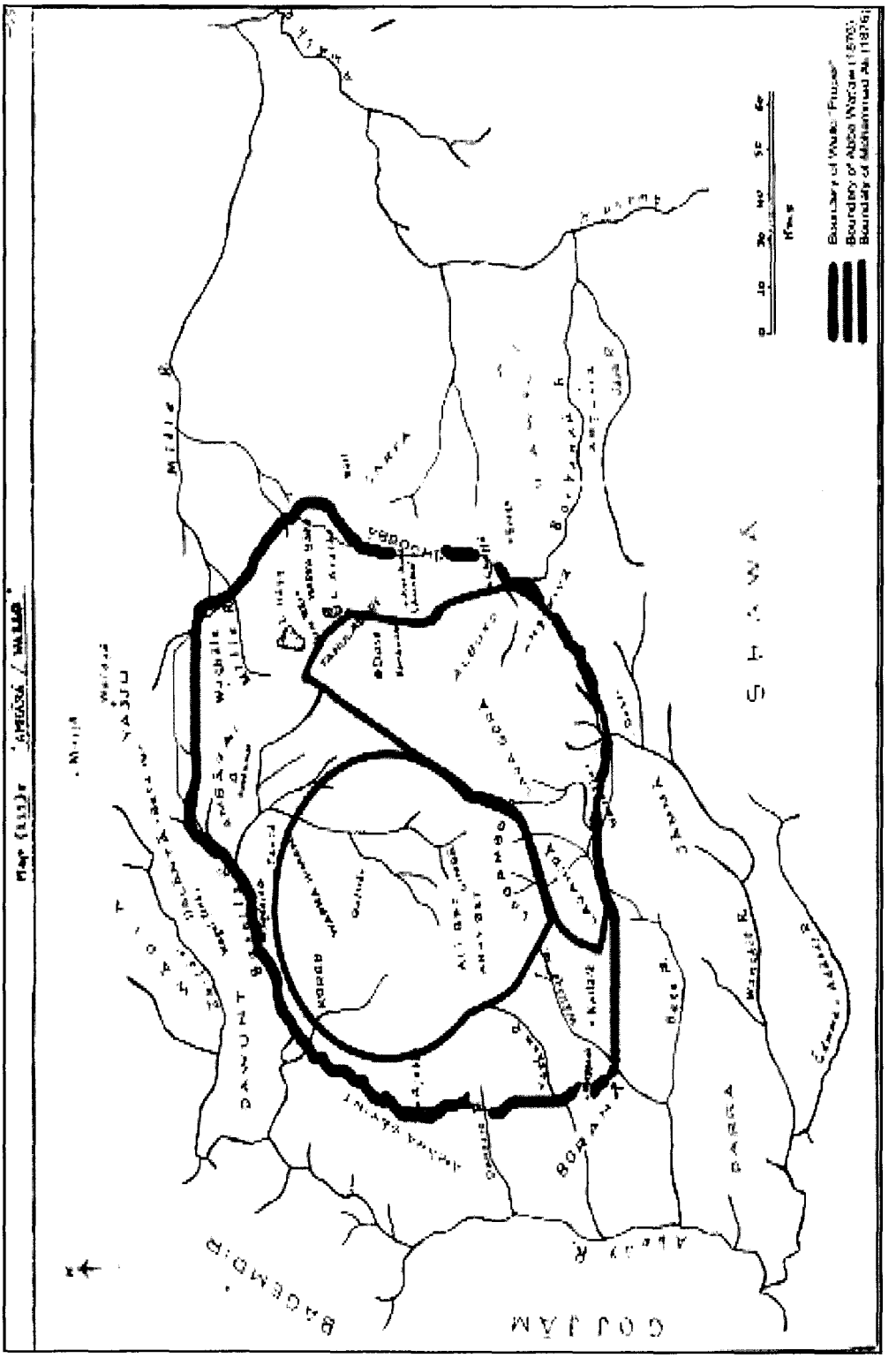
[87] Ato Yämär Wäraqi interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 18 Hedar 2000 E.C. (28 November 2007 Gregorian Calender).
[88] See Figure 22 for location.
[89] Ali, "Aspects of the Political History of Wallo, 1872-1916 ", 11-14.
[90] R. H. Kofi Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire 1815-1889* (London: Heinemann, 1975), 87. Darkwah incorrectly notes that Mohammad Ali is *Abba* Wat'aw's brother, they are cousins. Ibid., 90. Also, Bahru in his Modern History of Ethiopia does not note any alliance between Menilek and Wärqitu, even though the alliance lasted longer than a decade.
[91] Guèbrè Sellassié, 127; Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā", 34; Brielli, 106; Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa*, vol. 1, 269. Brielli also states that Wärqitu acted as a regent for *Abba* Wat'aw, but this makes little sense due to the fact that the two families were rivals. When Mohammad became of age, he was appointed Governor of these lands, upsetting *Abba* Wa'taw, who was imprisoned by Menilek.
[92] Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā", 34.
[93] Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," 104.

Figure 22: Territories of Mohammad Ali and *Abba* Wat'aw in 1878[94]



[94] From Zergaw Asfera, "Some Apsects", 69. Data taken from Assefa Balcha. "The Court of 'Nägus'

had control over Wällo until Yohannes succeeded in defeating foreign threats and could deal directly with Wällo.

Another account based on oral evidence states that Mohammad's rise to power was Wällo's reaction to Menilek's rule in this province. According to this account the nobility brought Mohammad from a cave in the Legahid district, where he was an Islamic cleric and recognized him as their leader. These nobles and Mohammad Ali killed Menilek's appointee in Wära Himano and burned Menilek's city of Wära Ilu. Following this act, he went to Yohannes desiring the land of his father, converting to Christianity, and also taking the lead in converting his own people.[95] However, this story, while recasting Mikaél as the choice of the Wällo people does not seem completely reliable due to the fact that other sources have Mikaél meeting Menilek earlier and argue that the burning down of Wära Ilu was due to an alliance with his mother-in-law, Bafana.

In the accounts of the time, both *Abba* Wat'aw and Mohammad Ali allied with Täklä Giyorgis, Menilek and Yohannes. They often shifted alliances and rebelled against both Menilek and Yohannes. In 1871, Mohammad was Yohannes' vassal, but later in that year he shifted to Menelik, cementing his alliance with a marriage to Menelik's and Bafana's (Menilek's much older companion) daughter, Mänälabish. In 1875, Mohammad captured *Abba* Wat'aw and handed him to Menilek.[96] However in 1877, Mohammad became embroiled in a Shäwan coup plot and burned Menilek's city, Wära Ilu, due to the involvement of his mother-in-law Bafana.[97] This rebellion led to the release of the former rebel, *Abba* Wat'aw.[98] *Abba* Wat'aw and Mohammad fought to a stalemate, which led to Mohammad asking for Yohannes' help, which he received in exchange for military assistance for Yohannes' campaign to Shäwa to obtain the submission of Menilek who

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Mikael: An Analysis of Its Structure and a Desription of the Role of 'Ayteyete' Hall." BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1984; Brielli. "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo," 78-110

[95] Qäñazmach Tadäsä Zäwälde, *Fitawrari Häbtä Giyorgis (Aba Mäla), 1844-1919* (Addis Abäba: Neged Matämiya Derejet, 1997), 55-6.

[96] Asnake, "Aspects", 18.

[97] Brielli, 108. Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā: n", 46. Luigi Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 1)," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 12, no. 1 (1961): 29.

[98] Brielli, 108. Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā: ", 46-8. Further details of this plot will be revealed in the next chapter, Mohammad's actions also include kidnapping Menelik II's daughter Mänälabish. See Asnake, "Aspects", 13.

had taken the title *Negusä Nägäst* (King of Kings).[99] Yohannes was able to obtain Menilek's submission peacefully and it led to the calling to Council of Boru Méda to solidify political and religious situation in the unstable Abyssinian highlands.

The Creation of a Unified "Ethiopia": The Council of Boru Méda (1878)

"Different Religions in one land only cause difficulties for the ruler."[100]

As many scholars have noted, the Ethiopia that Yohannes desired was one without the various Christian sects that had been the bane of unity and stability at least since the 17th century. In Wällo, he planned to stem conversions to Islam, while in Shäwa he wanted to destroy the Sost Ledat sect that dominated the religious scene there.[101] The importance of the Council of Boru Méda cannot be underestimated; however, there are very few first-hand accounts of this event.[102] Lasting for two months, the Council was designed to settle doctrinal conflicts in the Christian areas by designating one national religious sect of Christianity for all the population to follow. This edict included Muslims, members of the Jewish faith, traditionalists and adherents to other denominations of Christianity. According to Menelik's chronicler, the edict issued at the Council's conclusion declared,

> ...we are your apostles. All this used to be Christian land until Grañ ruined and misled it. Now let all, whether Muslim or Galla [pagan] believe on the

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[99] Brielli, 108.

[100] A maxim of Yohannes as reported in Gerhard Rohlfs, *Meine Mission Nach Abessinien. Auf Befehl Sr. Maj. Des Deutschen Kaisers Unternommen* (Leipzig,: F.A. Brockhaus, 1882), 215. Translated by Richard Caulk.

[101] The effects of Boru Meda in Shäwa, especially relative to the various orthodox doctrines will be discussed in the next chapter.

[102] Much of this analysis is pieced together from secondary sources such as Hussein, *Islam*; Zewde, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia*; Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, and unpublished works like Seltene Siyoum, "Yohanis IV: Rise and Consolidation " (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie University, 1972); Gabira Madihin, "Yohānis IV ". Yohannes' published chronicle does not even mention it. Bairu Tafla, *A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV: (1872-89)* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977). The relevant primary sources give only a peripheral analysis Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work* and Sellassié and Coppet, *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik II*. Chaine describes that event as, "In the twelfth year of his reign, he left from Zahel, went in the country of Wällo and there made its camp at Boru Meda. This year, it appeared a star, that had fringes of light and it was a big event in the sky. Another time, in the middle of the night, in the tent of Yohannes a column of light came down from the sky; it was marvelous and surprising. All soldiers met to see this prodigy and all were delighted some. In this place, Yohannes built a church Bét Sellasé (House of the Trinity) and renamed it [the church] Dessé." M Chaine, "Histoire Du Règne De Iohannes IV Roi D'éthiopie (1868-1889)," *Revue semitique et d'histoire ancienne* 21 (1913): 188. Yohannes, himself only briefly mentions it to the European heads, Queen Victoria, King Wilhelm and Pres. Jules Grevy to show that he did not force the Muslims to convert and to describe why he expelled the Catholics from Ethiopia. See Yohannes to Victoria, (20 Nov. 1879); Yohannes IV to Wilhelm I, (20 Nov. 1879); Yohannes IV to Jules Grevy (20 Nov. 1879, Documents 231-3 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries*, 332-6.

name of Jesus Christ! Be baptized! If you wish to live in peace preserving your belongings become Christians . . . Thereby you will govern in this world and inherit the one to come.[103]

Figure 23: *Ras* Mikaél in the late 19th Century[104]

[103] The "Galla" term in this statement refers solely to traditionalists due to the fact that many Oromo were Muslim and Christian. Guèbrè Sellasé, 156. The translation is by Richard Caulk. Also see Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā", 68-9. for a simliar edict which gives the consequences of not converting to Christianity and the conversion of Haile Maryam.

[104] Gäbrä Selassé, *Tarik Zämän Zä Dagmawi Menilek Negus Nägäst Zäitwpop'eya (the History of Menilek II King of Kings of Ethiopia)* (Addis Ababa: Berhanna Selam Press, 1949 (E.C.)), 191, Cecchi, *Da Zeila*, vol. 1, 276. Bäblaten Geta Heruy WäldäSellasé, *Yäityop'eya Tarik Kenegest Saba Eskä Talaqu Yädewa Del (Ethiopian History from Queen Saba until the Adwa Victory)* (Addes Abäba: Sentral Matämiya Bet, 1950 E.C.), 111.

This edict did not threaten natural death, rather a social death of sorts. As earlier stated most Ethiopians measured their wealth in terms of land, and to lose this land would cost unconverted Muslims dearly. Second, it stated that the converted will govern in this world, which simultaneously endears those who convert to the central state and severs independent sources of legitimacy, such as Islam. Therefore, the two *Imam*s of Wällo, *Abba* Wa'taw and Mohammad Ali, whose legitimacy had been evidenced by descent and Islam, were baptized and refashioned into *Däj*. Haylä Maryam Menilek and *Ras* Mikaél Yohannes.[105] As mentioned in Chapter 2, when a non-Christian was baptized he also received a godparent. Haylä Maryam (*Abba* Wat'aw) had Menilek as a godparent, while Mikaél's was Yohannes IV.[106] This strategy tied these Wällo princes to the central state, religiously, politically and familiarly.[107]

After the council of Boru Méda, I argue that the seeds of modern Ethiopia, separate from Abyssinia, began to sprout through a continuation of some of Téwodros' modernizing policies and re-evaluation of some of his unproductive ones.[108] Yohannes fostered a positive relationship with the church, provincial leaders and the population and was able to defend the country against all foreign invaders.[109] Wällo was central in this strategy, which began as Yohannes enticed Wälloyé leaders to submit to him and convert to Christianity. Menilek's chronicler states,

> King Menilek, having announced to all the people of Wällo, spoke to them in a friendly way in these terms: "Now, by baptism and by communion, you became similar to me, you will govern this terrestrial world, and, by the mercy of Jesus Christ, you will be worthy of kingdom of the heavens. Use all of your strength for Christianity."[110]

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[105] Guèbrè Sellassié, 157-8. Also see Caulk, "Religion and the State," 24. Caulk describes *Abba* Wat'aw's conversion as solely politically. Also note that *Abba* Wat'aw was named a *Däjazmach* and not a *Ras*, in my view, because Yohannes allowed Menilek to name only two *Rases*, (his uncle Dargé and the powerful Oromo general Gobana), while Yohannes could create as many as he desired.

[106] Brielli, 108. Guèbrè Sellassié, 157-8.

[107] One additional note, Godparentage was taken seriously to the extent that one could not marry between the families of godparent and godson. In hindsight, it worked out great for Mikaél who was not allowed to marry within Yohannes' family but was allowed to marry into Menilek's family and did, producing Menilek's heir, Iyasu II. Also, see figure 13 for their territories

[108] For some of these policies see Donald Crummey, "Téwodros as Reformer and Modernizer," *Journal of African History* 10, no. 3 (1969).

[109] See Zewde, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia*.

[110] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 158.

Politically, Wällo was still split. Menilek's rights to Wällo were recognized through his vassal Haylä Maryam, but *Ras* Mikaél was first a vassal of Yohannes and indirectly of Menilek. In the years after the Council, Mikaél continued to be further endeared to Yohannes. He accompanied Yohannes on a few campaigns and was rewarded for his loyalty and accomplishments with title of *Ras* in Gondär several months later.[111] Mikaél was not the only Wälloyé leader who converted, Caulk mentions leaders of the Wällo trading centers of Dawway and Gerfa as new, but loyal converts to Christianity.[112] Haylä Maryam established his capital at Dessé (lit. my happiness).[113] In addition to his actions in regards to Yohannes, Haylä Maryam's premature death at 28 also helped Mohammad. Haylä Maryam was succeeded by his young son Liban (*Abba* Jebbal) and his brother Ali Mas'ewot acted as regent.[114] While Liban inherited his father's domain, events south of Wällo in the 1880s greatly affected the political environment of the province.[115]

The Battle of Embabo in 1882 was between Gobana and Täkla Haymanot, the vassals of Menilek and Yohannes, Gobana and Täklä Haymanot over the agriculturally rich Omotic speaking province of Kafa. After Täklä Haymanot was captured, Yohannes interceded, freed him and punished Menilek by taking Wällo. The province was given to Yohannes' young son Araya Sellassé (d.1888), already promised in marraige to Menelik's daughter Zawditu (d.1930).[116] *Abba* Jebbal, age twelve (his uncle Ali Mas'ewot acted as regent), was put under the authority of Araya Sellassé, who took over the former's capital.[117] However, Mikaél was directly under the authority of the emperor and did not have to report to his son. These changes increased the importance of Mikaél not only as an increasingly autonomous authority, but also as the most powerful indigenous leader in Wällo. The Northern Wälloyé soon rebelled against the outsider Tigré government's religious policies, which, ironically, were peacefully administered in

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[111] Brielli, 108. Mohammad accompanied Yohannes in Shewa, Tigray and Shewa He also bestowed *Ras* on the hereditary leader of Gojjam, Adal, who also had Oromo descent.
[112] Caulk, "Religion and the State," 32-3.
[113] See Figure 39.
[114] Brielli, 108.
[115] These events will be further detailed in the next chapter.
[116] See Figure 23 for one of few photographs of Yohannes and Araya.
[117] Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā", 95, Caulk, "Religion and the State," 39.

Mikaél's territories, Yohannes successfully quelled the revolt.[118] In Wällo, Menilek joined them and renewed his ties of loyalty.

Figure 24: Yohannes IV and his son Araya Sellassé[119]

Unlike Bahru who argues that it was solely Mikaél's political opportunism, which led to him receiving the province,[120] I argue that it was Mikaél's ability to administer unpopular religious policies in his region and his loyalty to Yohannes that led to his becoming the leader of all of Wällo after Yohannes' son's death at 20.[121] His elevation as leader of all of Wällo was questioned by Menilek who said,

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[118] Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 759. I am defining "outsider" as anyone not from the district irrespective of ethnicity. Rebellion due to the rule of "outsiders" is a constant theme in Ethiopian history and has both helped and hurt stability: helped in the sense that it caused a very diverse group of people to unite at Adwa and hurt when a central government attempted to appoint outsiders to regional posts. Shäwan examples of this phenomenon are discussed in the next chapter. Also, the rebellions were due to an unpopular property confiscation and overtaxing. Caulk, "Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia," 33.

[119] Heruy, *Yäityop'eya Tarik*, 165.

[120] Bahu, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 46, 9.

[121] Brielli presents another scenario where *Abba* Wat'aw's son, *Abba* Jabbal, was involved in a rebellion that killed Dej. Ahmade Sadich and he fled Dessé to the lowlands where he later received the post of Legambo from Menilek. *Abba* Jabbal, died young, at 17, and his territories were given to *Ras* Mikaél.

> Soon again, when you said, "I have taken Wollo and wish to be its Apostle," I said that I would only be sorry if you were to give it to Ras Mikael, while I would be pleased to hand over the province to Your Majesty. When it was given to Ras Araya, I told myself it had gone into the family [Menilek's daughter was married to him], as the saying goes, "When the calf milks the cow it only returns to the stomach," and was therefore pleased. However, soon you gave it to Ras Mikael[122] while I had requested Your Majesty not to do so. I am only saddened by the fact that the love which binds us together grew cooler rather than warmer as time went by."[123]

His letter not only outlines the importance of Wällo, but also the significance of *Ras Mikaél governing it. In that, Mikaél was not solely one of Yohannes'* vassals, rather a man who needed to be respected as the sole leader of a politically, economically and militarily important province.

Conclusions

This chapter began with, "no one shall be appointed that is not one of my [*Häbäsha*] brethren," and traced the rise of one of the numerous factions of the *Gondarine kingdom, the Mammadoch, to dominance in Wällo under Amadé and Liban* during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* to a low point of destruction and instability under the reign of Téwodros to, finally, stable Christian brothers of the Ethiopian empire under *Yohannes. During the Gondarine period, Islam was another local source of legitimacy* used to counter central authority. This local source of authority increased proportionately with the decrease of central power. In addition, the ruling Wära Shék family, ostensibly *Christian, had ties to both Islam and the Mammadoch dynasty. The descendants of Liban,* who once based their legitimacy in Islam and converted thousands during the decades of their dominance in Wällo and threatened Christianity in the region during the *Zämäna Mäsafent, were nearly destroyed by Téwodros' excesses and frustrated rage. However,* after his death, Wällo rebounded, first under two powerful wives of Liban's dead sons

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Brielli, "Ricordi Storici Dei Uollo Con Note Di C.Conti Rossini," 109.Also, there is some discrepancy for the age of *Ras* Araya when he died, Marcus gives 18, M. Chaine in his translation of Yohannes' chronicle gives 15, and Bairu Tafla gives 20. Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 80; Chaine, "Histoire Du Règne" 186; Bairu, *Chronicle*, 155. Caulk gives the date of March 1886 for Mikaél's promotion in Caulk and Bahru, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 84.

[122] Ironically Mikaél would marry another of Menilek's daughters. Also, Menilek was saved by his "mother" Wärqitu.

[123] King Menilek to Emperor Yohannes, Ent'ot'o, 10 T'ir 1881 (17 January 1889) found translated in Appendix C in Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV*, 269.

and later under their sons who began to reconsolidate the Mammadoch dynasty. The two main claimants reached a stalemate and they turned to external allies to gain the upper hand.

This turn to external non-Muslim powers marked a profound shift in the dynamics of Wällo due to the fact that they reached across both ethnic and religious lines. This process culminated in widespread conversions to Christianity, and, more importantly, the Wälloyé overcoming the last obstacle to become *Häbäsha*. Understanding Wällo's importance, the three princes (Yohannes, Menilek and Täklä Giyorgis) who dominated after the death of Téwodros also sought to gain mutually beneficial partnerships. These alliances further embroiled Wällo in the various struggles for power in the highlands. Seeing the value in attaching themselves to the Ethiopian state, the rivals switched back and forth between the princes at the same time as they cemented their local authority. When complete authority was gained by Yohannes in the late 19th century, he recognized Wällo as Menelik's territory. Like the rulers before him, he understood its importance and called the nobles of Ethiopia to Boru Méda, in Wällo to solidify the political and religious identity of his nation. The Wällo nobles rejected Islam, became Christians and submitted to the Christian emperor, beginning the process of integrating Wällo into a *stable empire. Wällo's leaders used this process as a springboard to exercising authority* like their ancestors during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* and Gondarine periods, but this time not as a militarily dominant, and therefore, tolerated. Rather, as a military necessity, and, *accepted brother.*

Chapter Five:

From Cold Mountains to the Imperial *Alga*: Menilek, Gobäna and Shäwa, 1855-1888

እንኮበር ንብ ሃር ጻፈ ኤርግሲ፤
ስወጃጃ ቀበ ምቴና ምስሲ።

Lend me your horse I have a journey to make to Ankober [Sahlä Sellassé's capital]:
To plead for [the appointment of] an Administrator;
To protect me from my enemies[1]

Amharic couplet composed by a Shäwan Oromo in early 19th century

Shäwa, internally a peaceful province during the wars of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, developed a political system initially drawing on Gondarine norms, and was marked by centralization and widespread negotiations, which eventually expanded the authority of its leaders to the largest empire Ethiopia has seen. This chapter examines key Oromo actors and the changes in Shäwan and Ethiopian political organization which led to Shäwan control over both the Northern Abyssinian provinces and territories to the South, South East and South West. This expansion was by no means solely an Amhara enterprise and this chapter details the important experiences of Oromo historical actors during the 18th and 19th centuries, who began as enemies of the Amhara, to Oromo leaders of a quickly disintegrating *Gada* system negotiating power with the Amhara to, finally, key players, fully incorporated into *Häbäsha* norms, in Menilek's modernizing state. This process had two related results. One, the Shäwan Amhara became more culturally Oromo, especially in the eyes of their Northern *Häbäsha*. Two, the elite Shäwan Oromo, who played roles in the Mänzé government, became *Häbäsha* and equal partners in what may be more accurately rendered as Shäwan expansion.

According to legend, during the Zägue dynasty (1137-1270), the surviving Solomids escaped to Shäwa and resurfaced in the successful *coup d'état* of Yekunno Amlak, who established the Solomonic dynasty in the 13th century.[2] Centuries later, following the invasion of Grañ, his descendents were separated from the rest of the

[1] Ahmed Hassen Omer, "A Historical Survey of Ethnic Relations in Yefat and Temmuga, Northeastern Shewa (1889-1974)" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1994), 28-9.
[2] R. H. Kofi Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire 1815-1889* (London: Heinemann, 1975), 4-5.

Abyssinian provinces by migrating Oromo, who occupied most of Gojjam, Amhara (Wällo), Shäwa and Bägémder. In Shäwa, Oromo settled in most of the preferred lands, relegating the Amhara to the frigid mountaintops or the sweltering lowlands. From the mountainous area of Mänz, an Amhara dynasty arose in the early 18th century through the efforts of its initial architect Nägassi Kristos, who died returning from Gondar after receiving official recognition by the Emperor in 1703.[3] This dynasty is generally referred to as the Shäwan dynasty. However since it arose from a small part of Shäwa, it is more accurate to refer to it as the Mänzé dynasty.

Nägassi was succeeded by his son Sebestyanos (d.1720), who took the title *Märedäzmach* (a title lower than *Negus*, but higher than *Ato*[4]) and was killed in turn by his son Abiye (d. 1743), who defeated an imperial army, and learned court etiquette from his captives.[5] As'mé, author of one of canonical 19th century historical tomes *YäGalla Tarik*, states that Abiye exclusively employed Amharas and *Beta Israelites* in his court. His son, Ammeha Iyasus (d. 1774), succeeded him and constantly raided Oromo lands until he died of old age after ruling for thirty years. He was followed by his son, Asfa Wässän (d. 1808), who was able to defeat both the imperial powers and the Mammadoch, ruling for 32 years and 7 months.[6]

His son, Wässän Säggäd, was the first of this line to take the title of *Ras* and attempted a variety of reforms, but was assassinated in 1812 before any significant change was realized. Darkwah argues that this assassination was due to the *Ras*'s social reforms which promoted ethnic and religious tolerance.[7] While As'mé states that he threatened to go to Gondar and defeat the Yäjju ruler, Gugsa and was assassinated in

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[3] At least one historian, Kofi Darkwah, argues that he was half Oromo, but this argument does not have many adherents. Cornwallis Harris is the most explicit of the sources, he writes "Prior to the conquest [that of Mänz] province, which was followed by the gradual subjugation of Shoa and its present dependencies, this prince [Nägassi Kristos] occupied a lofty fortress in the Yedjow [Yäjju] [an Oromo area] country, where some of his descendents still remain." William Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (New York: J. Winchester, 1844), vol. 3, 7. However, there was not a European or Ethiopian source created during his lifetime that speaks directly to this issue.

[4] Literally "Mr.," but this term took on additional importance due to Shäwa's separation from the rest of Abyssinia which led to the development of another set of political/military titles in this province.

[5] Bairu Tafla ed. and trans. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, Èathiopistische Forschungen; Bd. 18. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987), 511.

[6] Ibid., 525 and Guèbrè Sellassié, Tèsfa Selassie trans. and Maurice de Coppet ed., *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik Ii, Roi Des Rois D'éthiopie* (Paris,: Maisonneuve, 1930), 64.

[7] Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire 1815-1889*, 19.

1814 by the Shäwan nobility did not desire war with Gondar.[8] Whatever the reason, his very young son Sahlä Sellassé inherited an ethnically and religiously diverse kingdom that was tenuously held together by alliances along ethnic, religious and political lines, force and fear of the Mänzé Dynasty.

After the death of a ruler, the conquered subjects generally rebelled and the new king would spend years campaigning to return these territories to Mänzé authority. Due to decades of interaction, the Tulama Oromo and Ifat territories increasingly were tied to Mänz. The Ifat and Tulama regions are extremely important due to the fact that these regions would connect the Mänzé through Tulama to the agriculturally rich lands to the southwest, and the historically Muslim state of Ifat would increase in importance due to its place along the Zayla and Harar trade routes.[9] The raids that were very common in the beginnings of the Mänz Dynasty were replaced by tribute and participation in the army in many regions that border Mänz. The peaceful rule of Sahlä Sellassé in the beginning of the 19th century solidified many of the policies of earlier rulers and realized two of the main goals of the Mänz Dynasty, independence from Gondar and expansion and integration of the diverse groups around them.

The Legacy of Sahlä Sellassé

Sahlä Sellassé realized the ambitions of his forefathers by obtaining independence from central authority, conducting separate foreign affairs, integrating diverse religious and ethnic groups and preserving peace in his territory. Nearly all European travelers saw him as independent and he increased trade outside of his province and relied less on his northern neighbors for firearms.[10] He created many marriage alliances with neighboring Oromo groups, which proved important for the success of his son and grandson. Relations with both the Abichu and Tulama Oromo would prove extremely fruitful during the 19th century. While these groups occasionally rebelled against the Mänzé, they were also helpful in subduing other Oromo rebellions and conquering lands in all directions of Shäwa.

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[8] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, 531.
[9] This trade route will be Menilek II's lifeline for firearms in the late 19th century, For its importance in the early 19th century see Charles Beke, "Abyssinia, Being a Continuation of Roots in That Country" *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 14, no. 1 (1844).
[10] Mission Scientifique Du Bourg de Bozas, *De La Mer Rouge En L'Atlentique Á Travers L'Afrique Tropicale (Octobre 1900 - Mai 1903)* (Paris: Rue Antoine Dubois, 1906), 158-9.

The successful passing of authority from father to son continued throughout the 19th century for the Mänz dynasty; and a similar consolidation of power occurred in neighboring Oromo areas due to increasing privation that contributed to the fractioning *Gada* system and Oromo alliances with the Mänzé dynasty.[11] Svein Ege argues that three different processes occurred when the *Gada* system disintegrated: one, a traditional war leader took control of the *Gada* system making himself permanent chief; two, a larger group split into smaller groups each led by a petty leader; and, three, a clan leader rose and took over a larger area.[12] The strength of the *Gada* was directly related to the diversity of the area. Areas that had many Gabaro (adopted non-Oromo) developed rigid class systems which generally hastened the disintegration of the *Gada* system.[13] These new permanent leaders of the Oromo groups were at the frontlines of Sahlä Sällassé's expansion and integration of Shäwa's Oromo, Gurage and Muslim populations.[14]

The disintegration of the *Gada* was by no means exclusive to those living near Mänz, other Oromo groups to the West and South had leaders take control of their respective societies and create monarchies during the same time.[15] Generally these new Oromo leaders submitted to the Mänzé elite, which now included the Oromo, during the late 19th century. While an Oromocentric scholar may call these individuals who submitted to *Häbäsha* leaders traitors to "Oromia," their actions can also been seen as path to increasing the wealth of their territories. Although lacking in firearms, the militarily dominant Mänzé put Oromo leaders in these areas in a tenuous position. They

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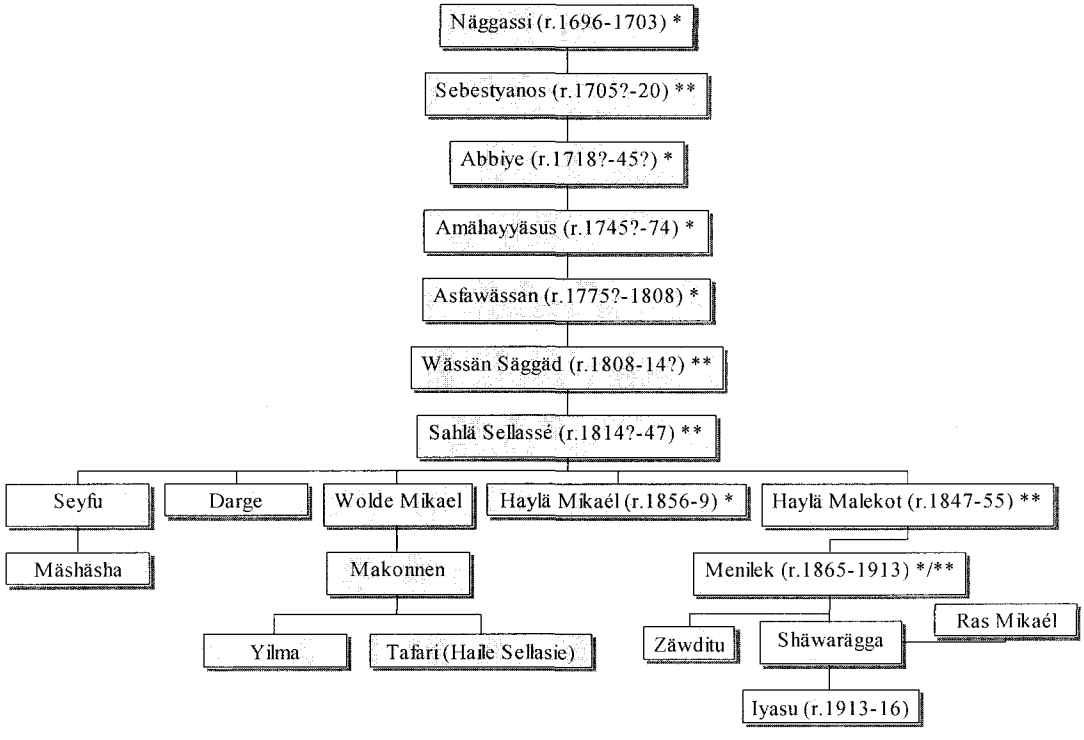
[11] This organizing system is summarized in earlier chapters and the Borana variant of it is fully explained in Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*. New York: Free Press, 1973.
[12] Svein Ege, "Chiefs and Peasants: The Socio-Political Structures of the Kingdon of Shewa About 1840" (PhD Thesis, Universitetet of Bergen, 1978), 86.
[13] This is not always the case see the debate on the origin of Gabaro in the Borana territory in Southern Ethiopia. Aneesa Kassam, "The People of the Five "Drums": Gabra Ethnohistorical Origins," *Ethnohistory* 53, no. 1 (2006); Gunther Schlee, "The "Five Drums," Proto-Rendille-Somali, and Oromo Nationalism: A Response to Aneesa Kassam," *Ethnohistory* 55, no. 2 (2008); Günther and Abdullahi A. Shongolo Schlee, "Local War and Its Impact on Ethnic and Religious Identification in Southern Ethiopia " *GeoJournal* 36, no. 1 (1995).
[14] Edmond Combes and Maurice Tamisier, *Voyage En Abyssinie Dans Le Pays Des Galla, De Choa Et D'ifat: Précédé D'une Excursion Dans L'arabie-Heureuse: 1835-1837*, 4 vols. (Paris: L. Desessart, 1838), vol. 3, 18.
[15] See Negaso Gidada, *History of the Sayyoo Oromoo of Southwestern Wallaga, Ethiopia from About 1730 to 1886*, 2nd ed. (Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Enterprise, 2001); Guluma Gemeda, "Land, Agriculture and Society in the Gibe Region Southwestern Ethiopia, C. 1850-1974" (Ph.D., Michigan State University., 1996); Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860*, African Studies Series ; 66. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255-7; Charles T. Beke, "On the Countries South of Abyssinia," *Journal of Royal Geographical Society* 13, no. 1 (1843).

Figure 25: King Sahlä Sellassé[16]

Figure 26: Mänzé Dynastic Chart[17]



* paid tribute to the Imperial Center
** did not pay tribute to the Imperial Center
*/** Menilek did not initially pay tribute to the Center, but did from 1876 to 1888, and then became the Imperial center in 1889.

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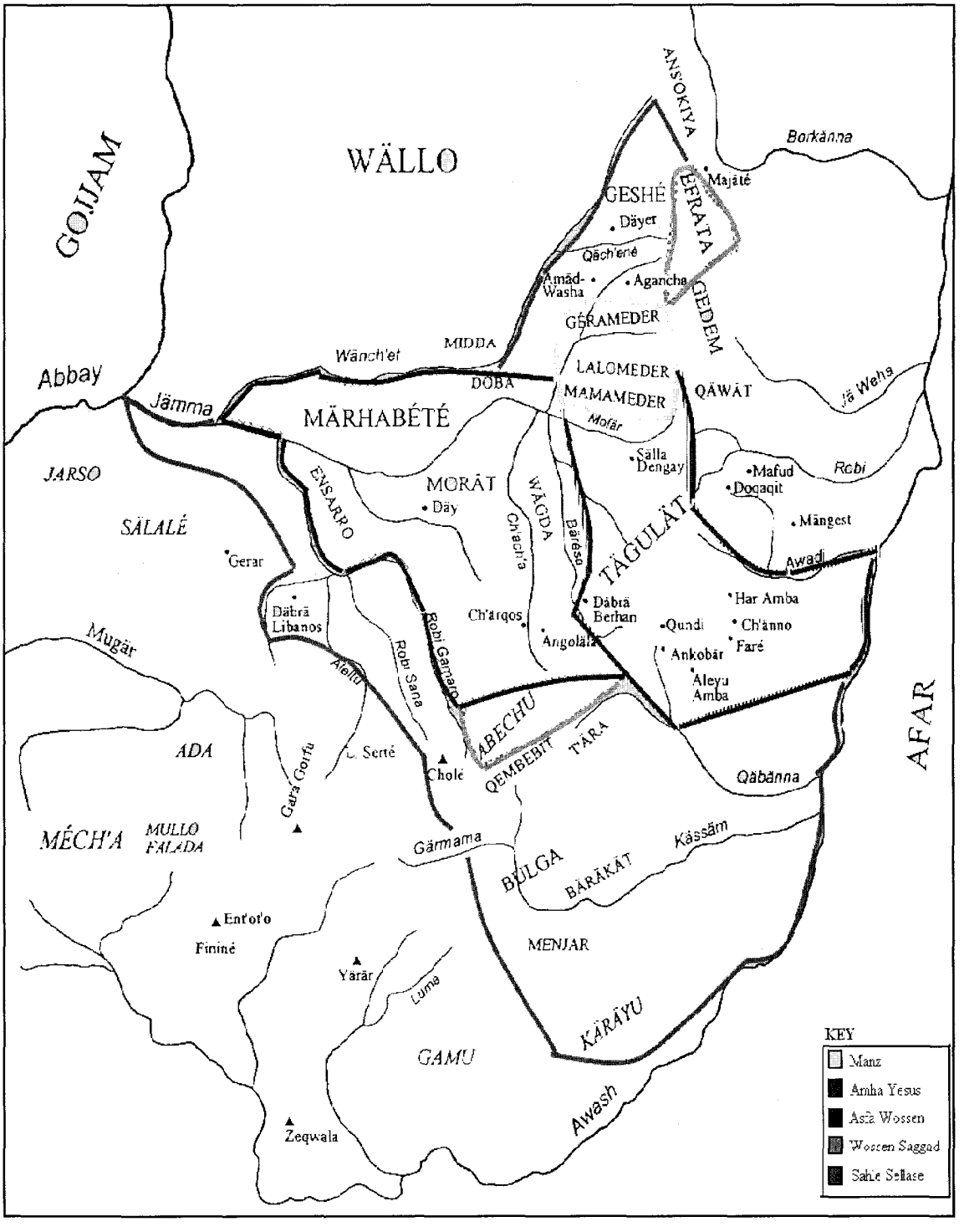
[16] Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, iii.

[17] Here note that *Ras* Mikaél of Wällo married Shäwarägga, which produced Menilek's heir Iyasu. Also, due to the fact that there are no existing royal chronicles of the Shäwan leaders up until the time of Menilek II, it is difficult to determine the exact dates of rule.

Figure 27: Shäwa in about 1840[18]



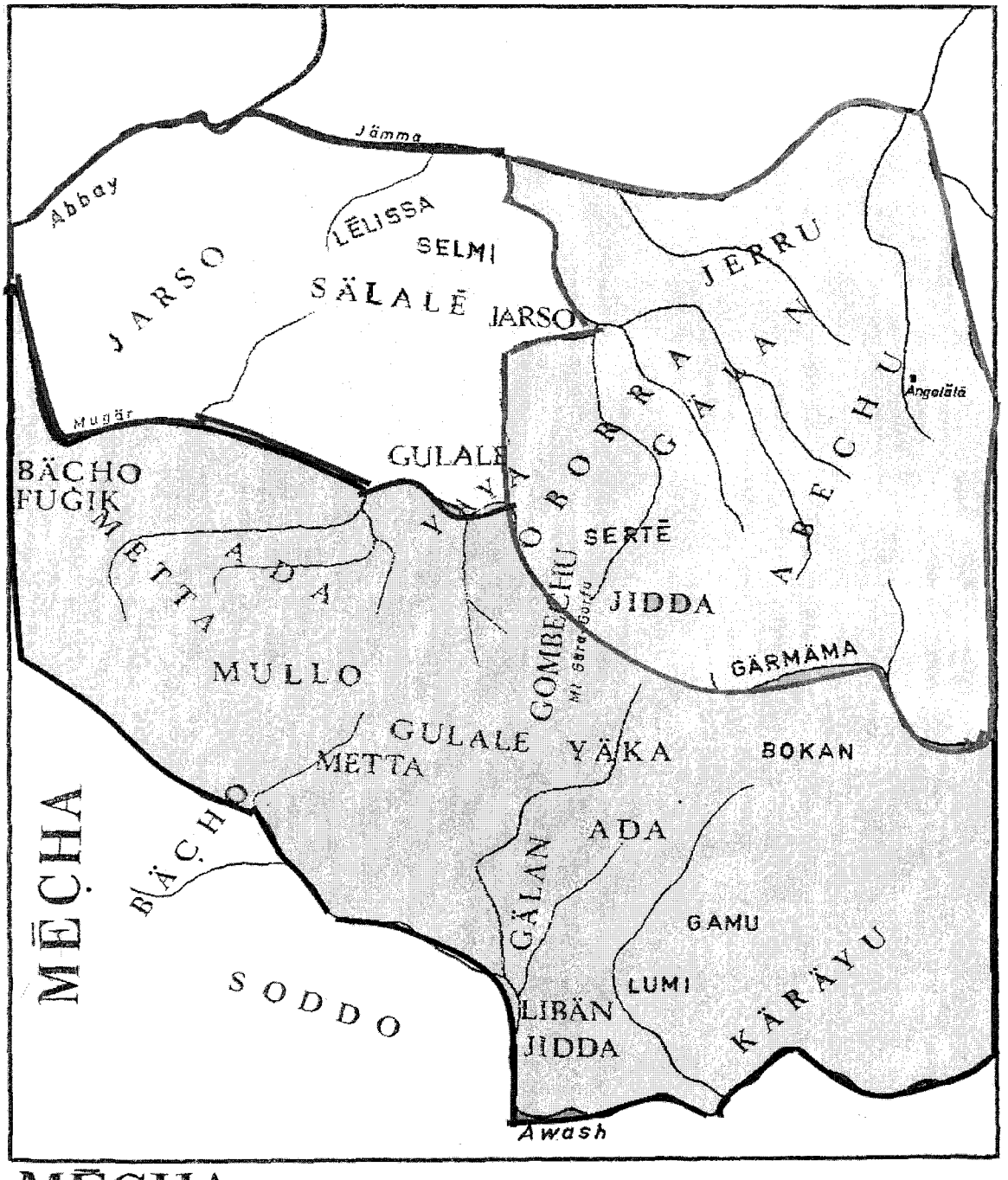
[18] Svein Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa: A Case Study of the Kingdom of Shäwa (Ethiopia) About 1840*, Äthiopistische Forschungen; (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 261. Boundaries added by author. Mänz represents the conquests of the first three rulers of the Nägassi line, which unified the territory under one leader and the rest of the boundaries are the approximate expansions of the next four rulers of the dynasty. Based on Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire*, 7-34.

would either fight and continue to be raided or join the Mänzé, administer a larger area that would not be subject to plunder and guarantee the continuation of their families' dominance through marriage ties directly to the Emperor.[19] By and large, these Oromo figures chose to increase their own authority and stability in their territories by paying tribute to Mänzé, especially during the reign of Sahlä Sellassé, and, more importantly as the 19th century comes to a close providing safe trade passage through their territories.

The issue of identity and the position of the Oromo in Sahlä Sellassé's state was seen in a contemporary of Sahlä Sellassé, Modoko, an example of a process of *Gada* disintegration that occurred in the district of Mullo Falada. Cornwallis Harris, an English traveler during the 1840s, gives an extended account of its ruler at the time, Modoko. He was an extremely proud and powerful man, who was given the post of governor of all the Oromo groups subjected by Sahlä Sellassé.[20] Due to his pride, he was fooled into demanding the daughter of Sahlä Sellassé, and was put into jail, but soon escaped. After his flight, he had a council and decided with Oromo throughout Shäwa to rebel against Sahlä Sellassé. They fought at Angolala (Sahlä Sellassé's Western capital and settlement closest to Oromo lands), Sahlä Sellassé's forces were victorious, but Modoko and his young son, Chara escaped with their lives.[21] Soon after Modoko was assassinated in his sleep, and his wife (Chamé) took his power and assumed authority under the guise of regent under her young son, Chara.[22] The Queen, in addition to the Abichu Oromo (under Abagaz Märäch)[23] and Abba Moalla of Mugär created strong alliances with the Mänzé, and unlike many of the other Oromo, Muslim and Gurage groups in the area, gave more than token tribute and were loyal to Sahlä Sellassé when he was not directly in their vicinity. Of these three leaders, Abba Moalla, was the most powerful. He converted to Christianity, married the sister of Sahlä Sellassé, who became his godfather. Chamé initially refused a marriage alliance, stating, "that if he [Sahlä Sellassé] would spread the entire road from Angollala with rich carpets, she might perhaps listen to the proposal, but upon no other conditions," but soon had to agree due to force, giving her daughter in

[19] A similar choice was given to the leaders of Wälläga see Tesema Ta'a, "Defending Regional Autonomy and Cultural Identity: The Case of Leeqa Naqamtee and Leeqa Qellem (1882-1937)." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008): 41-77.
[20] Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, vol. 2, 106.
[21] Ibid., vol. 2, 119-36.
[22] Ibid., vol. 3,17. Also see the Purple areas of Figure 27 for her approximate territories.
[23] Ibid., vol. 3, 40.

Figure 28: Oromo Leaders' Territories in about 1840 [24]



MĒCHA	Tribal group
METTA	Tribe
LUMI	Oromo group referred to by place name

[24] Ege, "Chiefs and Peasants: The Socio-Political Structures of the Kingdon of Shewa About 1840", 45. The Purple territories denote the Areas ruled by the rulers of Mullo Falada Chamé and Chara; Red territories are under Abagaz Maretch; and Green territories are under *Abba* Moala. The boundaries are approximate and have been added by author.

marriage. Her son, Chara was given lands far as the source of the Awash river, expanding the power of this tributary Oromo territory. Sahlä Sellassé continued his expansion until his death in 1847, and Oromo rebellion renewed due to the belief that their loyalty was to a man and not to a state. During his long life he established an independent kingdom, had extended relations with European powers and more fully integrated his diverse province under Mänzé rule using techniques, including god parentage, marriage alliances, conversion and force.[25] Rochet D'Hericourt writes,

> He knew how to make himself respected among the Oromo; he understood that his main strength had to reside in the union of [him with] his subjects; and, although the populations that he governed were divided by three different religions, he granted his favors indifferently [to] Muslims, pagans and Christians. He gave several [positions in] the government of the province of Ifat [a Muslim province] to the Muslims, and he raised Oromos to the position of chiefs: as [he] spread his empire well beyond the limits which his father had left it to him. . .[26]

So, in other words, in order to increase his own authority and stability in the region, he worked with established leaders of all religions and ethnicities, who he brought into his court. As a result, there was relative religious tolerance, the sharing of power between ethnic groups and stability. Future leaders of Ethiopia, including the *Häbäsha*, but especially the Oromo, followed this pattern under the Shäwan rulers. One of the key tests of future Shäwan leaders was to craft loyalty to a specific leader into loyalty to a state. Accomplishing this goal would further stabilize the passing of power and also craft supra-ethnic identities.

Shäwa under Téwodros II (1855-1868)

When Sahlä Sellassé died, only the aforementioned loyal Oromo subjects did not rebel, and his named heir Haylä Mäläkot took several years putting down the rebellions of other Oromo groups.[27] He was beginning to consolidate his rule beyond his father's boundaries, when a new threat appeared on the highlands, Kasa Haylu.[28] Kasa, the future

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[25] *Bälaten Geta* Heruy WäldäSellassé, *Yäityop'eya Tarik Kenegest Saba Eskä Talaqu Yädewa Del (Ethiopian History from Queen Saba until the Adwa Victory)* (Addis Abäba: Sentral Matämiya Bet, 1950 E.C.), 65-7.

[26] C. E. X. Rochet d'Héricourt, *Second Voyage Sur Les Deux Rives De La Mer Rouge, Dans Le Pays Des Adels, Et Le Royaune De Choa* (Paris,: A. Bertrand, 1846), 243.

[27] Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa: Viaggi Di Antonio Cecchi Nel'africa Equatoriale, 1876-1881*, 3 vols. (Rome: Ermanno Loescher & Co., 1886), vol. 1 252-3; Bairu Tafla, "Ras Dargé Sahlä-Sellasé, C. 1827-1900 " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 13, no. 2 (1975): 19. According to another source,

emperor Téwodros, turned to the independent kingdom of Shäwa as the final piece in his unification of the northern *Häbäsha* provinces. His intervention saw a break in the line of Nägasi, forced dependence on central authority, an interruption of foreign affairs, devastation of the province and imprisonment of significant members of the nobility.

After defeating *Ras* Wubé, *Ras* Ali II and *Däj.* Goshu, Téwodros turned south, first to Wällo and following the submission of this province, in October 1855, he had his first battle in Shäwa.[29] Téwodros was victorious in this battle, defeating two Shäwan governors, Häbtä Maryam and *Ato* Sämmu Negus. The Shäwans, while numerically superior, could not compete with Téwodros' well-armed and disciplined force. Due to Shäwan isolation during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* and the brief nature of their campaigns against the Oromo, the Shäwan military was overmatched by Téwodros.[30]

After the submission of Mänz to Téwodros and the death of Haylä Malekot, complete conquest of the province looked imminent. *Ato* Dargé, Haylä Malekot's brother, and *Ato* Andärgachäw assumed control and moved to hide Haylä Malekot's 11 year old heir, Sahlä Maryam (Menilek II) from Téwodros.[31] Realizing that they were surrounded by Téwodros and his general, *Ras* Engeda, they surrendered Menilek to Téwodros around February 1856.[32] He went with members of the nobility including his uncle Dargé to

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Däj Garmame quelled the rebellions with little resistance due to informing the Oromo that it was God's will. Bairu Tafla, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 7, no. 2 (1969): 3.

[28] Täklä S'adiq Mäkuriya, *Yäitiyop'eya Tarik Kas'é Tewodros Eskä Qädamawi Haylä Selase (Ethiopian History from Emperor Tewodros to Haylä Sellassé the First)* (Addis Ababa: Berhanna Sälam, 1963 E.C.), 11. This author notes that Haylä Malekot had designs on adding Wällo to his territories. His father listed these territories as part of his domain in a letter to Queen Victoria Doc. No. 64 Sahlä Sellassé to Victoria, *16 Jan. 1843* in Sven Rubenson, Getatchew Haile and John O. Hunwick, *Correspondence and Treaties 1800-54*, Acta Ethiopica (Evanston, IL; Addis Ababa: Northwestern University Press, Addis Ababa University Press, 1987), 80-1.

[29] Wäldä Mariyam and C Mondon-Vidailhet trans., *Chronique De Theodoros II, Roi Des Rois D'âethiopie (1853-1868) D'aprés Un Manuscrit Original*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Guilmoto, 1905), 10.

[30] Some sources note that Haile Malekot made an agreement to unite with the Wällo leader Wärqitu to defeat Téwodros. Täklä, *Yäitiyop'eya Tarik*, 12; Bairu, "Ras Dargé Sahlä-Sellasé," 20. Also, his father Sahlä Sellassé claimed Wällo as one of his territories.

[31] Ibid., 87,9. Heruy also notes that Oromo in Shäwa rebelled after the death of Haylä Malekot, which further weakened Shäwan resistance to Tewodros. According to the relevant sources, Menilek was born from a servant named Ejegayähu, and Haylä Malekot was reluctant to claim him, but when Menilek looked very similar to his father, he claimed him and married his mother, whom he divorced soon after a few months. Chris Prouty, *A Chronology of Menilek II of Ethiopia, 1844-1913, Emperor of Ethiopia, 1889-1913* (East Lansing, Mich.: African Studies Center, 1976), 2-3.. Also see P'awelos Ñoño, *At'é Menilek* (London: Percy Brothers Limited, 1984 (E.C.)), 12.

[32] Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik*, 42. According to Afeworq Gebra Iyasus, he was under the custody of Tewodros' main rival Wubé. Luigi Fusella, "Menilek E L'etiopia in Un Testo Amarico Del Baykadañ,"

Maqdala, where he was to stay for almost a decade, until his escape in June of 1865. According to some sources Menilek was well treated in the court of Téwodros and was offered a daughter of Téwodros in marriage.[33]

Figure 29: *Negus* Haylä Malekot[34]

After obtaining submission from both the Shäwan Army and clergy, Téwodros appointed the brother of Haylä Malekot, Haylä Mikael, as *Märädazmach* of the province of Shäwa.[35] Kofi Darkwah notes that appointing a member of Sahlä Sellassé's family and not a loyal follower was a significant error and contributed to Téwodros' loss of control of the province.[36] He also combined the four *Abogaz* (frontier governor) into one position, giving it to *Ato* Andärgachäw.[37] Soon after Téwodros left Shäwa in July of 1856, another son of Sahlä Sellassé, Sayfu, rebelled against the appointed governors, was captured, but escaped and successfully held out for four years. Due to the constant rebellions, in December of 1858, Téwodros imprisoned Haylä Mikael and handled Säyfu personally, defeating his army and taking his family prisoner.[38] On his way out of the province, Téwodros ravaged Säyfu's territory of Merhabété, which resulted in Säyfu

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Universitario Orientale di Napoli 4, no. 1 (1952): 121, Luigi Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 1)," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 12, no. 1 (1961): 22.

[33] Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 1)," 23.

[34] Heruy WäldäSelasé, *Yäityop'eya Tarik*, 85.

[35] Martino Mario Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro Attribuita Al Dabtarà "Zanab"," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 2, no. 1 (1942): 165. It is important to point out that he stripped the titles of *Negus* and *Ras* from the Shewans, and forced the governor to take the lesser title, that had not been used since the time Asfa Wässän.

[36] Darkwah, 42-3. While Tewodros also did this in other provinces, it may display the differences between Shäwa and the other provinces.

[37] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 92-3.

[38] Moreno, "La Cronaca Di Re Teodoro," 180.

dying attempting to pacify this province.[39] Téwodros appointed *Ato* Aboye as *Märädazmach* and *Ato* Bäzabäh as *Abogaz*. The destruction and instability brought about by Téwodros was not unique to Wällo and as shown above, Téwodros brought these elements of the *Zämäna Mäsafent* to Shäwa and it resulted in many claimants to the throne and even more appointed governors.

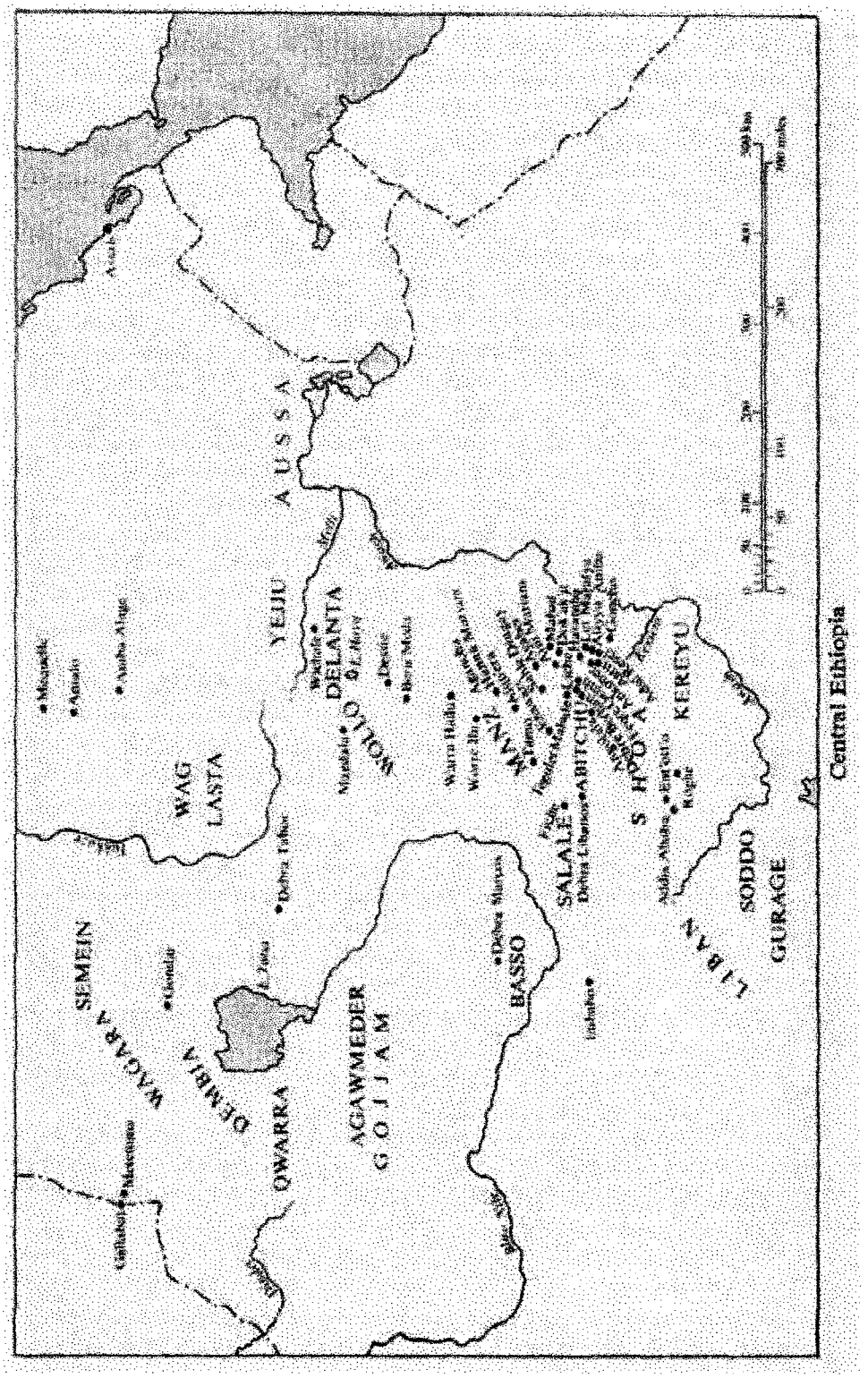
There was relative peace in the region for a few years, until Märädazmach Abogaz went to Maqdäla to give Téwodros his tribute and Abagaz Bäzabäh seized the opportunity to reawaken memories of independence and declare himself *Negus* in 1863.[40] Téwodros had too many problems to focus on Bäzabäh and only briefly appeared in Shäwa, for the last time in January of 1865, before returning North.[41] Thus, Shäwa was in the hands of the rebel Bäzabäh until the escape of Menelik in 1865. The Shäwan Oromo at this time, aside from those closest to Mänzé strongholds, took the opportunity to declare their independence. However one of the members of the group allied with the Mänzé, Gobäna Dach'é of Abdälla, joined Bäzabäh's army and began to make himself into the most powerful Shäwan general of the late 19th century.[42] Soon after Menilek's escape, Téwodros' power continued to dwindle and was limited to small parts of Wällo. Kassa Mercha, Wagshum Gobazé and Menilek II (r. 1888-1913) rebelled and controlled significant parts of the highlands.[43]

The Return of Menilek and the Revitalization of Shäwa (1868-1888)

Menilek's return to the throne of Shäwa was not unchallenged.[44] After some initial submissions in the north of the country, Menelik met slight resistance from Bäzabäh, but many of his troops, including Gobäna, fled upon hearing of the presence of

[39] Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa*, 258-9.
[40] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique,* 93-4.
[41] Henry Aaron Stern, *The Captive Missionary: Being an Account of the Country and People of Abyssinia. Embracing a Narrative of King Theodore's Life, and His Treatment of Political and Religious Missions* (London, New York,: Cassell Petter and Galpin, 1869), 215.
[42] Paul Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie (L'abyssinie Sous Ménélik II)*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1929), 32.
[43] After Menilek escaped, Taytu's brothers' Wälé and Alula also escaped and joined Menelik.
[44] Mondon-Vidailhet, *Chronique De Theodoros II*, 55-8.

Figure 30: Settlements in Central Ethiopia[45]



[45] Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II: Ethiopia 1844-1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 292.

Haylä Malekot's heir.[46] According to Menilek's chronicler, Bäzabäh threatened deserters with excommunication, but was unsuccessful in obtaining widespread support, and was defeated by *Däj*. Garmame (1810-89).[47] After Menilek began to obtain submissions from territories within Shäwa, Bäzabäh fled to Amba Afqara. He later begged for forgiveness, and Menilek gave him a small post to govern. After obtaining the throne of Shäwa, Menilek moved cautiously to establish authority without causing those loyal to Bäzabäh or his appointed officials to rebel. Generally, his policy was to reestablish the order as it had been prior to Téwodros. He also brought religious tolerance in his province.[48] More important for this work, he continued the policies of his grandfather by including loyal individuals of all the ethnic groups of Shäwa into the ruling class and further endeared many of the newly Oromo and Gurage groups by offering vassalage through only a token tribute.[49]

Menilek broke from the tradition by changing the policy of isolation from the wars of the northern provinces. One of his first campaigns after executing Bäzabäh in 1865 for treason was to go to Wällo.[50] He subdued the province in an effort to claim the throne himself and free its nobility, to one of its members Menilek owed his life, from the yoke of Téwodros.[51] He and *Wagshum* Gobazé began to form alliances with both of the queens of Wällo, Wärqitu and Mas'ewot.[52] In 1867, Menilek arrived in Wällo, allied with Wärqitu, and marched throughout Wällo as its liberator, not as a conqueror,

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[46] Paul Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie (L'abyssinie Sous Ménélik II)*, 3 vols., vol. 3, 45; Luigi Fusella, "Le Lettere Del *Dabtara* Assaggakhan," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 7, no. 1 (1952): 84. For an extended account of the dealings between Bäzabäh and Menilek see Hussein Ahmad, "The Chronicle of Shawā: A Partial Translation and Annotation" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1981), 26-9. It is also important to point out that Menilek offered the crown to his uncle Dargé, but he refused noting that Menilek was the true heir. Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa*, vol. 1, 253-4, 60. Gäbrä Iyasus also notes Menilek's uncle Haylä was an enemy and that it less than two years to completely subdue the areas that paid his father tribute. see Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 1)," 25.

[47] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 97-8; Bairu, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," 6-7. This same Germamé was Gobäna's initial commander.

[48] Assäggahañ to Antoine D'Abbadie (27 Nov. 1869), Document 24 in Sven Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, vol. 3, Acta Ethiopica (Addis Ababa; New Brunswick, NJ: Addis Ababa University Press, Transaction Pub., 2000), 29-32.

[49] Henry Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia, with Some Account of the Late Emperor Theodore, His Country and People* (London: F. Cass, 1970 [1868]), 297.

[50] As further evidence of Gobäna's meteoric rise to power or past loyalty, Bäzabäh used Gobäna to ask Menilek for forgiveness. See Prouty, *A Chronology of Menilek II*, 32. She also states that Gobäna became a *Däjazmach* at around the same time.

[51] See the previous chapter. Also, it is important to point out that his uncle, Dargé, was still in prison at Maqdäla and was spared, according to Stern, due to his Christianity and "*Häbäshaness*"

[52] Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, 269-71.

supported Wärqitu's territorial claims and proceeded to Maqdäla.[53] While he had a considerable force and a weakened foe, he did not proceed any further, soon retreating due to lack of supplies.[54] However, even though Menilek did not take Maqdäla, by backing Wärqitu he gave her claims merit and split the province of Wällo between her and Mas'ewot and created fertile ground for his own control of the province. This move evidences two shifts in Mänzé policy. One, Menilek reached out to Wällo not as the means to conquer Tigray or Gondar, rather as an end on its own. Two, he realized the route to independence from the Northern provinces patterned after his forefathers would limit the potential of Shäwa relative to obtaining firearms.

After leaving Wällo, Menilek turned his attention to Oromo areas outside his territories. In these campaigns, he went beyond the occasional plundering that marked his predecessors' campaigns, both establishing *kätämas* (permanent frontier settlements) and attempting to create good relations with his neighbors. In addition, he broke from the tradition of ruling from semi-permanent settlements to permanent capitals. He reestablished settlements at Lich'e, Angolala, Wära Ilu (Wällo) and Ankober, finally deciding on Ankober as a permanent base in the 1870s.[55] In this reorganization, Oromo political leaders were essential. Due to the fact that the Menilek was simultaneously incorporating frontier areas and subduing new areas, he needed a class of loyal local leaders to maintain his empire, and no one was more powerful or important than *Ato* Gobäna Dach'é, an Oromo warrior who was to later conquer and govern Oromo areas throughout Menilek's domain.[56]

According to Enrico Cerulli, who gathered oral Oromo sources in the early 20th century, Gobäna was the son of the king of Tulama, who was exiled after his father's death.[57] Here, again, it is important to note that the *Gada* system had already

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[53] Ibid., 298-300. Blanc estimates Menilek's troops at 40,000 to 50,000 men of which 30,000 were cavalry and a few thousand were musketeers and the rest held spears. Cecchi, *Da Zeila*, vol. 1, 266-7

[54] Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia*, 304-5. However, Blanc does not believe this claim and does not hide his disdain of Menilek, referring to him for the rest of text as the "fat boy."

[55] See Figure 29 for the locations of all these towns. Also see Figure 30 for a picture of Ankober.

[56] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 483. Gäbrä Iyasus notes that Menilek gave Gobäna many horses and mules as friendship to endear the Oromo general. Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek (Part 1)," 25-6. Also see Qäñazmach Tadäsä Zäwälde, *Fitawrari Häbtä Giyorgis (Aba Mäla), 1844-1919* (Addis Abäba: Neged Matämiya Derejet, 1997), 14-23.

[57] An informant states another origin, he says, "*Ras* Gobäna was the son of Dach'é and his mother was an Ethiopian Orthodox Church nun, who converted to Christianity. One day, the lady met Dach'é and

Figure 31: Ankober[58]

Figure 32: *Ras* Gobäna Dach'é (1821?-1889)[59]

conceived Gobäna the same day. His mother broke her vows and Dach'é was killed by another nun. Gobäna's birth was unorthodox and special and he was different." (the informant was told this story by an old lady (now dead) who was a relative of Gobäna's family). Another informant gives this story, "After the death of his father, *Ras* Gobäna, asked his mother why his father died, she gave a truthful response and Gobäna destroyed many churches." Teshoma Leta and *Abba* Tafara interviewed by author and Mälaku Abära, translated by Mälaku Abära, tape recording, Sulunta town, Sulunta district, 9-10 March 08. Another informant indicates that Gobäna was an Amhara who was adopted by Dach'é. Asfara Megede interviewed by author and Mälaku Abära, translated by Mälaku Abära, tape recording, Dubrä, Sulunta District, Oromo Regional State, Ethiopia, 10 March 2008.

[58] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 2nd ed. (Oxford [England]; Athens; Addis Ababa: James Curry; Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa University Press, 2001), 69.

[59] Heruy, *Yäityop'eya Tarik*, 127. Caption is *Ras* Gobäna Dach'é (*Abba* T'egu) Found at Däbra Libanos Church. However, Cerulli writes that his horse name is *Abba* Damtow. E. Cerulli, *Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia*, Harvard African Studies III (Cambridge: 1922), Poem 39.

disintegrated in this area. Cerulli relates that Gobäna was forced to work at a plantation of Negus Menilek. One year later at the feast of Mäsqäl (finding of the true cross)[60], Gobäna defined himself by besting all of his competitors, Menilek was impressed and appointed him *Ato* and *Ligaba* (a minor military title).[61] However, as earlier stated, travelers of the time reported that Menilek met Gobäna when the latter defected from Bäzabäh's army. As'mé also writes that he was the son of the king Dach'é; however, it is unlikely that a farmer would have the horsemanship to defeat all of the rivals at the competition.[62] The fact that Gobäna's descent was so important to Ethiopians, underscores that in this multi-ethnic empire, it was acceptable to be from a militarily weak ethnic group, but not acceptable to be low-born.[63]

Gobäna was given the task of subduing the Oromo and Gurage groups within Shäwa, albeit with only several dozen outdated guns.[64] He was successful in this task, and soon brought most surrounding Oromo areas under his control.[65] He was able to obtain some peaceful submissions by allowing many Oromo *balabats* to keep their lands

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[60] See chapter 2 for the joint celebration of this important religious holiday.

[61] Cerulli, *Folk-Literature*, Poem 39.

[62] Bairu Tafla writes that Gobäna saw the strength of Menilek in the late 1860s and gave all his treasure to him and received the title *Däjazmach*. Bairu Tafla, "Three Ethiopian Portraits: Ato Asma Giyorgis, Ras Gobana Daci and Sahafi Tezaz Gabra Selasse" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 145. Another source indicates that Gobäna was a *shefta* or an *abbaa gadaa* (senior gada official) before making his alliance with Menilek. Marco Bassi and Gemetchu Megerssa. "Failed Modernization of the Ethiopian State; Oromo Perspectives on Ethiopian Political Culture." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008), 95. Unfortunately, the only known copy of Gobäna's chronicle begins at page 3, this work undoubtedly would have shed light on this issue.

[63] This belief will also be displayed later in Chapter 7, with *Fitawrari* Habte Giyorgis, Menilek's most powerful general after the death of *Ras* Gobäna and, even, Menilek himself, whose mother (Ejegayähu) was a humble servant in the court of Sahlä Sellassé was reinvented as a noble women in Menilek's chronicles see Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 74-5. *Ras* Alula is a notable exception see Haggai Erlich, "Alula, 'the Son of Qubi': A 'King's Man' in Ethiopia, 1875 - 1897," *The Journal of African History* 15, no. 2 (1974); ———, "A Contemporary Biography of Ras Alula: A Ge'ez Manuscript from Mänäwe, Tamben," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 39, no. 1 (1976); ——, *Ras Alula and the Scramble for Africa: A Political Biography: Ethiopia & Eritrea, 1875-1897* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1996). Also Gobäna's wife is also cast as a member of the Oromo nobility see Ñoño, *At'é Menilek*, 27.

[64] In both my interviews and earlier interviews by Marco Bassi and Gemetchu, the informants emphasized that only through Gobäna could the Amhara defeat the Oromo. Marco Bassi and Gemetchu Megerssa. "Failed Modernization of the Ethiopian State: Oromo Perspectives on Ethiopian Political Culture," 90-1.

[65] These areas include Jiru, Wayu Abdela Wegda, T'io, Gela, Weberi, Gedeup, Selale, Rufa, Yaya Golele, Meta Holeta, Yaee Geldas, Mech'a Anegere and Soklee and accepted submission from Gembitchu, Mulu, Adea Berga, Meta, Begee, Mene Abichu, Golele Hora. Nägädä, "Yä Ras Gobäna Tarik," (Addis Ababa IES), 3. Also see Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 715 - 25; Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa*, vol 1. 267, 511-2. The Georgian Doctor Paul Mérab describes his actions as literally the right arm of Menilek Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie*, 61,70; Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 1)," 31; Cerulli, *Folk-Literature*, Poems 39-40.

and just pay tribute to Menilek.[66] He and Menilek's uncle, *Ras* Dargé, became Menilek's most trusted and powerful nobles. He gave them both the title of *Däjazmach*[67] They both set up smaller versions of Menilek's political structures, created their own *Fitawraris* and converted their newly conquered land to *Häbäsha* land tenure practices.[68] According to Bairu, Gobäna raided the better armed Tigrés when they were stationed in Shäwa in order to obtain a greater supply of firearms. He used this supply to spread Menilek's territories to the North, South, East and West.[69]

Many of these new lands paid their tribute to Gobäna directly and he is often referred to as the King of the "Galla."[70] Informants indicate that Gobäna was able to unite all of the various Oromo groups under him, stating, "Amhara of Shäwa could not conquer Oromo, but used Gobäna to conquer Oromo, [Menilek], promised to make him leader and gave him equal status."[71] In addition, during many of these campaigns young prisoners of war were taken as slaves and trained in the arts of warfare. Two of the most important were the Gurage *Däj.* Balcha and the half Oromo and half Gurage *Fit.* Habte Giyorgis.[72] Also, many Europeans visited *Ras* Gobäna and spoke of him in glowing terms as one who understood what would develop his Oromo lands.[73]

The Council of Boru Méda

Menilek gave only token tribute to Téwodros' successor, Täklä Giyorgis, and styled himself King of Kings during the early years of Yohannes' reign. In addition to

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[66] Ñoño, *At'é Menilek*, 27.
[67] Nägädä, "Yä Ras Gobäna Tarik," 4.
[68] Marco Bassi and Gemetchu Megerssa. "Failed Modernization of the Ethiopian State," 92-3.
[69] Bairu, "Three Ethiopian Portraits," 146.
[70] Ato Asäfä nterviewed by author and Mälaku Abära, translated by Mälaku Abära, tape recording, Addis Ababa, 22 February 08. Also, his father and grandfather lost their lands in Shäwa due to the actions of Dargé. The Italian traveler Borelli, who met with Gobäna notes that he provided Menilek the largest tribute and established the second largest compound. Jules Borelli, *Ethiopia Meridonionale: Journal De Mon Voyage Aux Pays Amhara, Oromo Et Sidama Septembre 1885 a Novembre 1888*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1890), 166.
[71] Ibid.
[72] See Mislu Gugsa, "Estate Administration in Part of Present Day Jibat and Mecha under Fit. Habte Giyorgis" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1974); Bäqqäla Wäldä-Mikaél, "Selä Kebur Fitawerari Häbtä-Giyorgis Acher Yähewät Tarik (About the Life of the Honourable General Häbtä Giyorgis)," (Found in Appendix A of Mislu "Estate Administration");Tsehai Brhaneselassie, "The Life and Career of Dajazmac Balca Aba Näfso," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1971). These warriors were too young to have much of an impact before the death of Yohannes, but will be central figures in chapter 7. However, Habte Giyorgis did play a key role in some campaigns under the leadership of *Ras* Gobäna. See Cerulli, *Folk-Literature*, Poems 42-3.
[73] For two clear examples see Gustavo Bianchi, *Alla Terra Die Galla: Narrazione Della Spedizione Bianchi in Africa Nel 1879-80* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1886), 286-300; Borelli, *Etiopia Meridionale*, 166-200.

this claim, he decreed religious tolerance in his realm.[74] As outlined in Chapter 4, the Council of Boru Méda in the Muslim dominated province of Wällo was organized by Yohannes to promote both political and religious unity. At this time, Yohannes was still significantly better armed than Menilek, and after some initial negotiations Menilek submitted to Yohannes bearing a stone and Yohannes crowned him *Negus* of Shäwa on March 16, 1878.[75] Gäbra Sellassé writes that Yohannes in his edict stated, "I am now reconciled with my brother, Negus Menilek," and continues,

> The 18 of Magabit, As'é gave his crown to As'e Menilek. . . we are one and we reign under the same crown, it is necessary to agree that this crown did not bring hopelessness to King Menilek. In addition to the glory and honor since it [the crown] came down divinely and without interruption from Menilek I to Menilek II, besides, it seems that As'é Yohannes did not have anything else to give him that was worthy of him, because the king's house overflowed with horse, mules, gold and money. King Menilek having given abundantly all these things to As'é Yohannes, the army and the people said that this one [Menilek] not having anything to give had made him [Yohannes] present his [Menilek's] crown. Finally, it was a gesture that appeared to mean: one day it is you that will take my crown.[76]

Later, Yohannes made *Ras* Adal of Gojjam, Negus Täklä Haymanot[77] and gave him the right to make two *Ras*es. Menilek was allowed to keep parts of Wällo, but Mikael (Mohammad Ali), in charge of the other part, reported directly to Yohannes. Menilek then named two *Rases*, his uncle Dargé and Gobäna.[78] Also, Menilek had to convert the significant Muslim population (in the Ifat, Argobba and Abichu areas) in his territories,

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[74] Shäwa was a center of the three births doctrine, while Yohannes favored the Täwahedo doctrine. See *Abuna* Selama to Patriarch But'rus, (15 Jan. 1848), Document 103 in Rubenson, *Correspondence and Treaties 1800-54*, 134-7.

[75] See Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 655-73. According to Gäbra Iyasus *Ras* Darge, *Ras* Gobäna and *Däj*. Garmame wanted to fight Yohannes instead of paying tribute. Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 1)," 27. It also important to note that Yohannes was significantly better armed due to his defeat of the Egyptians at Gundat (1875) and Gura (1876), which gave him a significant amount of firearms to add to amount that the British gave him in 1868. See Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 42,52-3; R. A. Caulk, "Firearms and Princely Power in Ethiopia in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 4 (1972): 614,9.

[76] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 143, 57-8.

[77] The House of Gojjam is also partly Oromo due to the late 18th century marriage of the half daughter of Mentewwab, Walata Israel to *Däj*. Yosédéq an Oromo from Mecha. The descendents of this union would rule Gojjam until the mid 20th century. Bairu Tafla, "Two of the Last Provincial Kings of Ethiopia," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 11, no. 1 (1973): 29.

[78] Bairu notes that Gobäna was the first without royal blood to obtain the title of *Ras*. Bairu, "Ras Dargé," 27. Cerulli, *Folk-Literature*, Poem 49.

which led to mass conversions in these areas.[79] The importance of the political restructuring for Yohannes cannot be underestimated. In addition to Menilek's submission, he empowered the nobles of Wällo and Gojjam, endearing them to him which further cemented his authority throughout the empire.

After this initial political restructuring, Yohannes called a council for political and religious notables in May of the same year. As discussed earlier in Chapter 4 relative to the Muslims of Wällo, this council would also determine which doctrine of Christianity would be the one true interpretation. In this council, all the Christian sects were heard, but Yohannes had "stacked the deck" by providing a letter from Alexander translated into Amharic, which denounced all doctrines other than *Täwahédo*.[80] Purportedly Yohannes stated, "You know in my country in Ethiopia, all are united by God's grace. The monasteries, which are in Tamibiyan, Dabira Abay, Inidaba Garima, beginning from Tigure to Shiwa . . . have come into harmony."[81] This interpretation of Christianity was the only accepted religion and land for anyone or institution who did not practice it could be confiscated. As'mé writes,

> Immediately on the same day, without any extra minute all the clergy, including the Alaqoč [scribes] of Debra Libanos [proponents of the Three births doctrine] were arrested and excommunicated. The words of the oath were as followed: "The Son in His humanity kows [sic] as much as the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is divine in His humanity. Furthermore, the Son is the Anointed". All were arrested and forced to accept this tenet. . . Many are until this day in exile.[82]

Of the three paths to power mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 4, this council shut off two. No longer could a rebel use religion or provincial sources to legitimize his rebellion, due to the fact that they derived their titles from the emperor, and there was now only one doctrine in the land.[83] Also, this council did much to discourage European missions in

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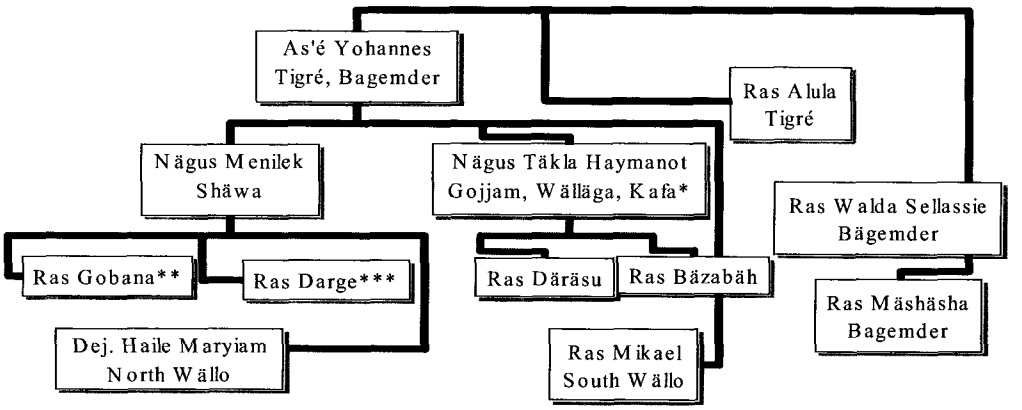
[79] Heruy, 121.
[80] Gabira Madihin Kedäna, "Yohänes IV: Religious Aspects of His Internal Policy" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I Univeristy, 1972), 33; Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā," 63.
[81] qtd. in Gabira Madihin, "Yohänes IV," 35.
[82] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 679.
[83] It is important to point out that many Muslims used Islam to legitimize rebellion against Yohannes. Generally, these rebellions were unsuccessful, but some of the leaders were among the very few Ethiopians who allied with the Italians at Adwa. See Hussein Ahmed, "The Life and Career of Shaykh B. Ja'far (C. 1853 - 1936)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1989);———, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia : Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001).

Ethiopia, which was intended to derail his vassals' plans to obtain firearms from the countries that sent these missionaries.[84] It, however, did leave one path of empowerment, that of conquering new territories and extracting wealth to obtain followers.

Figure 33: Political Structure of Ethiopia, post Boru Méda[85]



Yohannes believed he was curtailing this path by enacting a high tribute on Menilek, and, here Yohannes made a key error.[86] He underestimated the wealth of the Oromo lands to the South and West of Shäwa and the alliances Menilek II was building with both Oromo and Muslim territories to secure not only the capital to buy the firearms but secure the safety of the trading routes. Gobäna brought many of the lands to the South under Menilek and under the sway of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Gobäna's chronicler writes, relaying a letter from Gobäna to his wife, Wy. Ayelech,

> Because God gave us Nigus Menilek and enables us to do this, it has been possible to re-establish the Christian country that had been destroyed in the reign of Atse Libne Dengel. There is no church below the Chacha.

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[84] While missionaries did exist their movements were curtailed by Yohannes see Zewde Gabre-Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia : A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 98.

[85] Red lines indicate governors directly controlled by Yohannes, green lines, Täkla Haymanot, purple lines Menilek.* While Täkla Haymanot did not control them, but he had good relations with Wälläga and Jimma and used these neighboring lands as a base to conquer Kafa. Bairu, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," 12. Chaine notes that he had married an Oromo woman of the area see M Chaine, "Histoire Du Règne De Iohannes IV Roi D'éthiopie (1868-1889)," *Revue semitique et d'histoire ancienne* 21 (1913): 186, fn. 2. Also later, *Abba* Jimma Jeffar was imprisoned in the late 19th century partly due to his affinity for the Gojjames. E. Cerulli, *Etiopia Occidentale*, 2 vols. (Roma: Sindacato Italiano Antigrafiche, 1933), vol. 1, 105. ** At this time, the Oromo territories under Shäwan rule paid him their tribute directly *** He played a role as an advisor and land owner to his nephew and controlled the subdistrict of Sälale see Bairu , "Ras Dargé".

[86] Tsegaye estimates Menilek tribute at 80,000 Maria Theresa Thalers (MT), eight times the amount that Täklä Haymanot paid. Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism : The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, 2nd ed. (Hollwood, CA: Tsehai Publishers, 2007), 141. For other estimates see Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twenieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 3) " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1968): 103.

> Rebuild the house of God that had been destroyed in an earlier period; this would please our king, we can benefit temporarily and spiritually . . . I am going to various pagan countries and forests to enforce the orders of my master. I am making settlements in different areas.[87]

And, again the establishment of *kätämas* and churches changed land tenure in these areas, where the former owners of the land either had their lands confiscated to feed the church or the army or put up for sale or rented out. These practices brought significant wealth to the *näftaña* (lit. those with guns) and generals and attracted many soldiers to the province of Shäwa. The military was organized under the *Häbäsha* norms, but provided the Oromo with one of the most direct paths to power. Gäbrä Iyasus writes,

> In the Past, the dominion of Abba Danaw [Menelik II] had for its feet Wällo and for its navel Shewa; then it began to expand itself and to stretch its left wing toward Kaffa. The horse of Abba Danaw aiming its head toward Charchar [Eastern Harar], it didn't sweat, the sun didn't burn him, the desert didn't cause him to sweat, the descents didn't tire him, the slopes didn't hold him back and he started to fly, to thunder and to pass saying: "the land is not enough for me, the lowlands are narrow."[88]

Gobäna's only major defeat was in the wealthy country of Kafa, and the battle over this rich land would bring structural changes to the Empire.

The Battle of Embabo and the Restructuring of the Ethiopian State

The Battle of Embabo took place in 1882.[89] It was the climax of the rivalry between *Negus* Täklä Haymanot and *Negus* Menilek over who had the right to subdue the wealthy Kafa area. Both kings had recently submitted to Yohannes, considered each other equals, but acted as had the provincial rulers of the Gondarine period who tried to increase their wealth by adding tribute paying territories. Täklä Haymanot used a previous history of beneficial contact to solidify his claim on the South Western Ethiopian territories. His *Ras*, Däräso, had become a godfather of a baptized Wälläga leader Moroda.[90] The situation leading up to the battle began when the Kings sent their respective generals, *Ras* Gobäna and *Ras* Däräsu, to the frontiers of the wealthy Omotic speaking province of Kafa. Gobäna's army was able to peacefully force Däräsu to give

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[87] Nägädä, 8.
[88] Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek (Part 1)," 30.
[89] See Figure 36 for location of Embabo
[90] Bairu, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," 12.

up his plunder and to leave the area.[91] Gobäna continued to follow Däräsu, who was scolded by his master Täklä Haymanot for retreating from Gobäna. Another chronicle states that Menilek gave a letter to Täklä Haymanot's *Fitawrari* Yemar, which stated,

> I [Menilek] do not wish to fight with you. [Täklä Haymanot] However, you always seek quarrel. Earlier Ras Gubana had sent you away after having made you swear on pain of excommunication not to cross your frontier [but] you broke the oath and [disregarded the] threat of excommunication, and with additional troops, you came to attack me. Henceforth, if the oath and threat of excommunication cannot restrain you, until I and Negus Takla Hāymānot present our case before the Janhoy and discuss [our differences], cross the Abbay and go back to your land. . .[92]

Täklä Haymanot sent reinforcements, but did not become directly involved because *Ras Gobäna was not a Negus*. However he laid a trap for Gobäna on his return route.[93]

After receiving word from his master, Däräsu prepared to fight Gobäna, but Gobäna had sent word to Menilek, who interceded quickly, thinking, according to As'mé, "If Ras Gobana is defeated, my weapons will be taken; if he wins that person [Täklä Haymanot] is cunning and will entail me in a quarrel with the Janhoy [Emperor Yohannes]."[94] Menilek brought with him Wäyzero Mas'ewot of Wällo and left *Ras* Dargé in Ent'ot'o (not yet his capital, but an important royal camp), and arrived in Embabo in early June of 1882.[95] Täklä Haymanot arrived later and gave a verbal message meant to embarrass Menilek in front of his nobles.[96]

They fought a decisive battle on June 6th.[97] Gobäna and Menilek were victorious and Täklä Haymanot and *Ras* Däräsu were taken captive along with 300 Gojjame soldiers.[98] Cerulli writes,

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[91] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 173; Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā", 83; Fusella, "Il Dagmawi (Part 1)," 31. In addition to Däräso's booty, Gobäna collected tribute from *Abba* Jimma Jeffar (Jimma), *Abba* Gamol (Limmu), *Abba* Dulla (Guma), *Abba* Rafo (Goma) Gumiti Géné regeant for *Abba* Räsa (Géra) Bairu, "Three Ethiopian Portraits," 147.

[92] Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā", 86.

[93] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis*, 729.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Fusella, "Il Dagmawi (Part 1)," 34. He also included *Ras* Walé Bit'ul in this battle. Also, at this time, as outlined in the last chapter *Ras* Mikaél was a direct vassal of Yohannes IV and, therefore, not aligned with Menilek, and he did not take part in the battle.

[96] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis*. According to this work, Menilek did not believe this message, but prepared for battle when he heard the Gojjames were approaching him.

[97] Sources do not agree on this date, the date used in text is from Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia* and R. A. Caulk and edited and with an introduction by Bahru Zewde, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas" : A Diplomatic History of Ethiopia (1876-1896)* (Wiesbaden [Germany]: Harrassowitz, 2002), 171. While

> The Shoans won a great victory. Takla Haymanot was taken prisoner by a negro [Shänqela?] slave named Sambato who, therefore, was freed, and appointed fitawrari. Ras Mangasa Atikam recognizing that the prisoner taken by Sambato was the king of Gağğam, bought him for ten thalers, and led him to Gobana's tent. Gobana, seeing the king, cried to him (in Amharic), "Gağğaie, wacit aswargin," "O Godjamian, bring to me the plate!" answering thus a boast of Takla Haymanot, who had said that "After the battle Ras Gobana will bear my mitad during the return journey to Goggam!" The mitad is a plate of iron used by the Abyssinians to bake bread.[99]

Aware of these developments, Yohannes sent a letter to Menilek ordering him to send him the captive King.[100] According to As'mé, Yohannes and Menilek nearly came to war, but Menilek submitted and was punished by losing the province of Wällo, which Yohannes gave to his son. He appointed his general *Ras* Alula (r.1875-97) over Agawmeder, which was removed from Täklä Haymanot's control.[101] Lastly, he joined the Tigré and Shäwan lines by marrying his son Araya Sellassé to Menilek's daughter Zäwditu in 1883.[102] After this submission, Yohannes' son was given Wällo and Menilek ensured that Wällo was peaceful before returning to Shäwa.[103]

One of Yohannes' chronicles gives an alternative account of events and states that he pushed Täklä Haymanot into war, stating,

> At this time, the king of the Shäwa [Menilek] had successively conquered Harar, Kafa the country of the Gallas, [In order to] to become as powerful as Yohannes, he excited his people and Yohannes pushed Ras Adal [Täklä Haymanot] to make him [go into] war [with Menilek] But Ras Adal

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Nägäda gives June 8th. Gobäna's choronicler also places the council of Boru Meda after the battle of Embabo. As'mé gives a much earlier date, March 31st. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 729.

[98] Nägädä, "Yä Ras Gobäna Tarik," 6. As'mé estimates it at 411 and says that seven eights of the Gojjamé soldiers died. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 739. Another interesting note is that Gobäna was able to obtain the allegiance of Oromo allies of Täkla Haymanot by promising autonomy for Morodo (184?-1888) who was given the title of *Däjazmach* .Bairu, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," 12.

[99] Cerulli, *Folk-Literature*, Poem 40.

[100] For another especially good account of these events see Caulk, "Firearms and Princely Power," 620-1.

[101] Älaqä Täklä Iyasus, "Yä Nägus Täklä Haymanot Tarik," (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES Manuscript #684)); 16. Bairu, "Two of the Last" 38. For more on the life of *Ras* Alula see Erlich, *Ras Alula* or for a critique of this work see Merid Wolde Aregay, "Alula, Dogali and Ethiopian Unity," in *The Centenary of Dogali: Proceedings of the International Symposium* eds. Tadesse Tamrat, Richard Pankhurst and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1988).

[102] Bairu Tafla, *A Chronicle of Emperor Yohannes IV: (1872-89)* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 155. Guèbrè Sellassié, 185-6. The footnotes on this page also indicate that the mother of Zäwditu was named Abich'u and was from Wära Ilu (Wällo) she was most likely an Oromo because Abich'u is an Oromo name and Wära Ilu is an Oromo town.

[103] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis*, 749.

was beaten and made prisoner and Yohannes [who was] the instigator of the war brokered the resolution. Menilek preserved all his belongings [except for Wällo], Ras Adal, (Täklä Haymanot) became again simply Ras of the Gojjam and Yohannes' succession went to the king of the Shäwa.[104]

Figure 34: *Negus* Täklä Haymanot of Gojjam (r.1874 - 1901) [105]

This chronicle also indicates that Yohannes gave the country of Kafa to Täklä Haymanot, which displays his view of the importance and wealth of the province. In addition, earlier in this chapter, we saw that the Gondarine and *Zämäna Mäsafent* leaders were allowed to conquer and incorporate new lands, but in this case it is the emperor who breaks from this tradition. Lastly, it could be seen as a calculated risk to send Täklä Haymanot after Menilek. If Täklä Haymanot won, Kafa's wealth would go to Gojjam and if Menilek won, he could punish Menilek for his disobedience. Despite the historical inaccuracies of the chronicler, his recollection of events points to Yohannes actively working to limit the wealth of Menilek and bring further light into the rationale behind this battle and the resolution.

[104] Also, the chronicler defines Kafa as an Oromo Land, and it is not, in fact, it is the land of the Kaficho, an Omotic people. Chaine, "Histoire Du Règne De Iohannes IV," 188.
[105] Bahru, *A History*, 44.

The battle of Embabo restructured Ethiopia in profound ways. First, Yohannes took direct control of Wällo, which increased his strength and, more importantly, he took this Northern province from Menilek. At this point, Menilek continued to conquer to the South, West and East, but played a limited role in events in the North. While in the Ethiopian political structure, Täklä Haymanot and Menilek were equals, Menilek had significantly more wealth, firearms and territories. In addition, his victory at Embabo swayed the balance of power in the western Oromo territories bringing most of Wälläga, Illubabor and Jimma under Menilek's control. Gobäna continually pushed West past the lands of the Gurage, and the Mäch'a Oromo into the Gibe States, and obtained tribute from many of these territories. From these territories he pushed into Kafa meeting Täklä Haymanot. The Gojjamés took a separate path into Kafa through Wälläga. The defeat at Embabo, checked their progress and Gobäna claimed the Oromo territories under the Gojjamé Negus' control. Bahru writes, "It ensured Menilek a steady source of revenue to strengthen his political and military position in his ultimate bid for the throne. In short, the Battle of Embabo made Menilek the only serious candidate for the succession to Emperor Yohannes IV."[106]

The Shäwans had their "*Häbäsha* purity" questioned throughout the *Zämäna Mäsafent* due to their extensive intermarriage and cultural sharing with the Oromo and their relative isolation. Menilek forwarded his imperial claims by conquering Wällo, which he lost due to his actions at Embabo. However, Yohannes solved this problem by marrying the partly Semén and Yäjju Oromo T'aytu Be'tul to Menilek II as a Northern spy.[107] T'aytu and Menilek proved to be the perfect match in re-centering the empire in Shäwa, while keeping the Northern Amhara connected to the imperial center. Also, talks began to join the houses of Tigray and Shäwa in the marriage of Menilek's daughter, Zäwditu to Yohannes' son Araya Sellassé.[108]

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[106] Ibid., 62. It is also important to point out that this historian is not considering Araya Sellassé as a successor due to his premature death. Bairu Tafla notes that Täklä Haymanot's loss to the Mahdists at Sarwäha and his subsequent desertion to Menilek's side also contributed to this fact. Bairu, "Two of the Last," 40-1.

[107] This marriage also speaks to the complete integration of the Yäjju as *Häbäsha*.

[108] Hussein, "The Chronicle of Shawā," 95. She also had descent from Semén (between the provinces of Tigray and Bägémder), and according to some sources did not consider herself an Oromo, even though many of her ancestors were, in fact, Oromo. Guèbrè Sellassié,193-207. Also Marcus notes Yohannes imposed the marriage so he could have a spy at his court. Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times*, 72.

The importance of these two marriage alliances cannot be overemphasized. First, T'aytu had earlier marriages to attach herself to previous emperors, was highly born on both her mother's and father's side and her northern roots gave Menilek instant legitimacy in these areas.[109] Her former secretary eloquently puts her role in the success of Menilek's Ethiopia, when he wrote,

> . . . the kingdom of Abba Danaw [Menilek's horse name] from when Taytu entered it was large and it became wider, it was rich and it became richer, it became more prosperous. Wayzero Bafana lived rebelling and striving to demolish and discredit the kingdom of Menilek. Instead Taytu Bet'ul lived and she will [continue to] live sustaining him with her suggestions and strengthen him with her own strength.[110]

The importance of marriage alliances was also seen in the marriages between Menilek's and Yohannes' children. Thus, Menilek was tied to the houses of Wällo, Tigray, Bägémder and Semén through these alliances. After conquering the territories West of Shäwa, he undertook successful, but costly campaigns to Kafa and Arsi, creating solid buffer zones of territories around Shäwa and wealth to exchange for firearms. These developments would be instrumental in his becoming emperor after Yohannes' death.

The Fall of Gobäna and Yohannes and Menilek's Ascent

Menilek's territorial gains led to a restructuring of his domain and his philosophy towards ruling territories. Previously, he ruled the conquered Oromo through his loyal general *Ras* Gobäna. However, for reasons which remain obscure he split Gobäna's lands between other nobles.[111] Bairu Tafla and Allesandro Triulzi give the most reasonable and evidenced view, Menilek began to fear the powers of Gobäna, when the territories that gave tribute to Gobäna saw him as their sole master and not Menilek.[112] As'mé writes,

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[109] See Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 283. He argues that Menilek used her ties and generosity to the priests of these areas (Gondar, Semén and Bägémder) as a way to stop rebellions.

[110] Fusella, "Il Dagmawi (Part 1)," 35.

[111] Gobäna's chronicle is completely silent about it. Guèbrè Sellassé's work also does not deal with the issue. As'mé implicitly states that it was due to Gobäna's cruelty in Wällo against the men of *Ras* Mikaél during the reconciliation after Embabo. See Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 751-55. Chris Prouty, however, interviewed the son of the Armenian trader, Sakis Terzian, Avendis Terzian who relayed a story, which states, "After Menilek return from Harar, Gobena was accused unjustly by certain chiefs of planning a *coup*. Avedis Terzian said Gobena's 'nerves gave way' and he crawled on his hands and knees before Menilek and confessed. Menilek refused to dishonor him saying it had taken him 30 years to 'make him.'" Prouty, *A Chronology of Menilek II*, 56.

[112] Bairu, "Three Ethiopian Portraits, 149; 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, Michigan State University, 2-5 May 1973*, ed. Harold G.

Figure 35: Political Structure of Ethiopia, 1883[113]

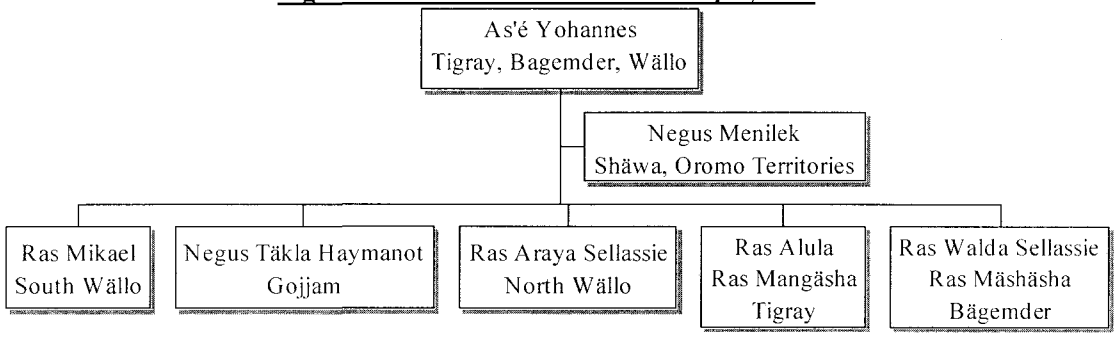
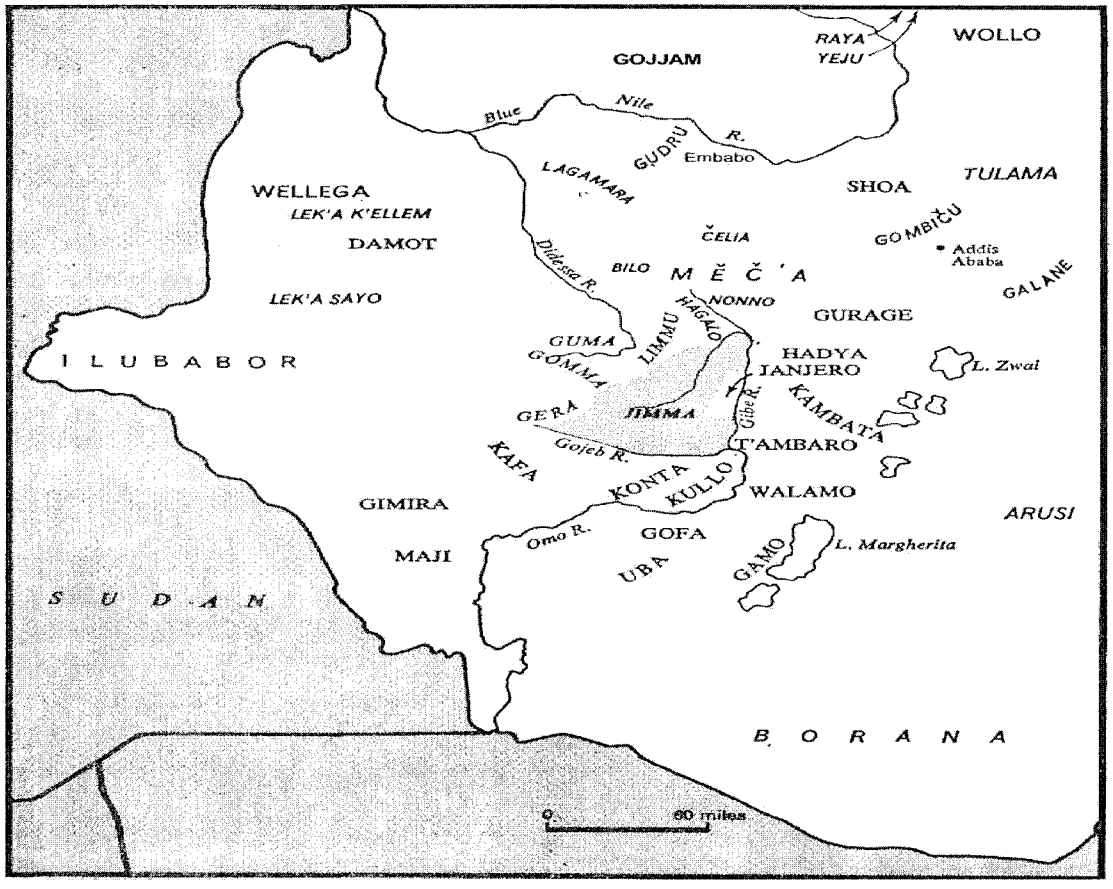


Figure 36: South Western Ethiopia[114]



Marcus (East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1975), 144-5. Bairu gives the examples of both Mäch'a and Kafa not giving tribute to Menilek's officials. In addition, Gobäna's troops clashed with Mikaél's in Wära Ilu, causing the deaths of two of Gobäna's men. In response Gobäna destroyed the town, as punishment Gobäna was relegated to Wälläga.

[113] Menilek's victory at Embabo opened the Southwest to Shäwa and in the next four years he conquered all of the Gibe states in Southern Ethiopia. Kafa and South East Ethiopia was significantly more difficult and they did not submit until the 1890's, also he split up *Ras* Gobäna's Oromo territories. Lastly, Menilek's upward movement in the chart is intentional and he is unquestionably the most powerful of Yohannes' vassals.

[114] Herbert S. Lewis, *A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia (1830-1932)* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 36. The place names "Gojjam" and "Embabo" have been added by author.

"Having returned from there, [Selte and Maraqo], he divided the Galla country and appointed governors to each [district]. Until that time, no Amhara had been appointed over Galla country and tribute had been collected through *Ras* Gobäna."[115] These appointments were not well received and the Oromo immediately rebelled, but Menilek personally put the rebellions down with the help of Gobäna and redistributed land according to *Häbäsha* norms.[116]

Gobäna remained a military leader, but with a more diminished role.[117] He remained in royal favor and was trusted to guard Shäwa when Menilek left to go on campaigns in the years, 1886, 1887, 1888. Some scholars also indicate that Gobäna was instrumental in ending Mahdist forays in areas of Western Wälläga.[118] His family, moreover, was still considered noble and married into the various royal houses.[119] Many informants suggested reasons why Gobäna was demoted. These reasons include the possibility that Gobäna started to conduct his own foreign policy and that Menilek feared his growing power.[120] The Oromo lands also had to support Menilek's growing army, which were stationed all over his territories.[121] These change brought a decline in the power of the Shäwan Oromo leaders, such as the descendents of the leaders in Figure 27, who had derived their power locally due to the fact that these leaders could not derive wealth through their lands.

However, Oromo did not lose all power in Shäwa. The Oromo who drew their authority through an attachment to Menilek flourished[122] and Oromo outside of Shäwa also kept their authority.[123] What changed was that Shäwan lands, like those of Wällo or

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[115] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis*, 755. Another indicates that he received an additional title of King of Kafa qtd. in Margery Freda Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948) using F.J. Bieber *Kaffa, ein altkuschitisches Volkstum in Inner Afrika.* Münster: 1920, vol. 1, 93.

[116] Triulzi, "The Background to Ras Gobäna's Expeditions" 145.Generally land was split into three parts. One part for the crown, one part for the church and the last part for the local ballabat. Before the conquest, Oromo land was increasingly in the hands of local warlords. After the conquest many local rulers actually increased their lands.

[117] These duties included leading various campaigns and guarding the capital when Menilek was elsewhere. And, according to oral information he kept his lands in Mäch'a but lost the the governship of Mäch'a and Bacho, both of which would be later given to Häbtä Giyorgis. Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1995), 103.

[118] Triulzi, "The Background to Ras Gobäna's Expeditions" 146-53.

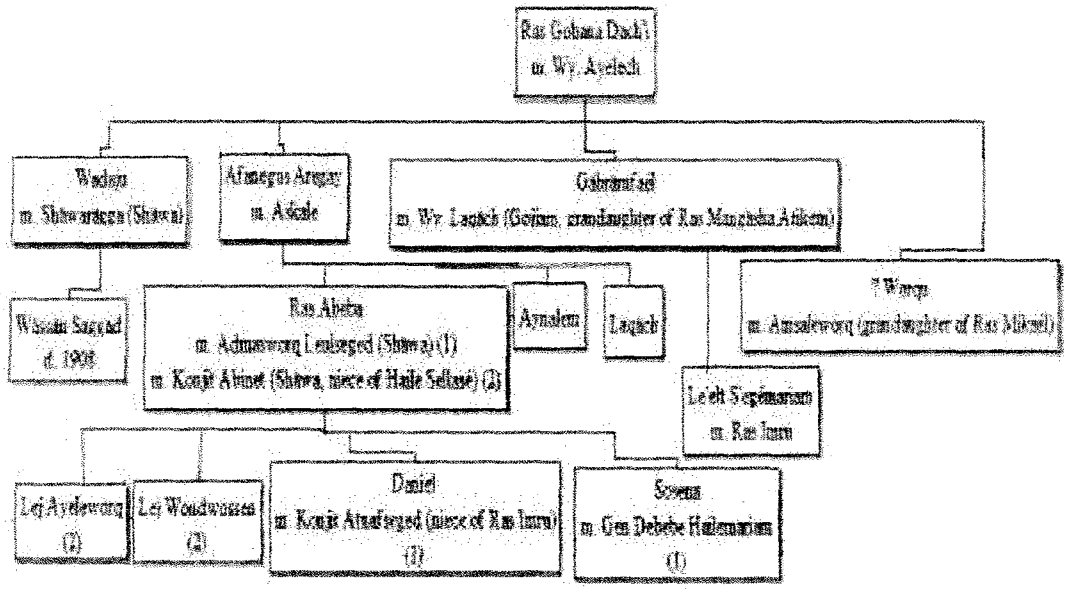
[119] See Figure 36.

[120] Cerulli, *Folk-Literature*, 23-7, 51.

[121] Bairu. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work,* 755 - 81.

[122] For example, Häbtä Giyorgis

Figure 37: *Ras* Gobäna's Genealogical Tree[124]



Key: m = married, (#) corresponds with the number of given with the parent to distinguish children of different marriages.

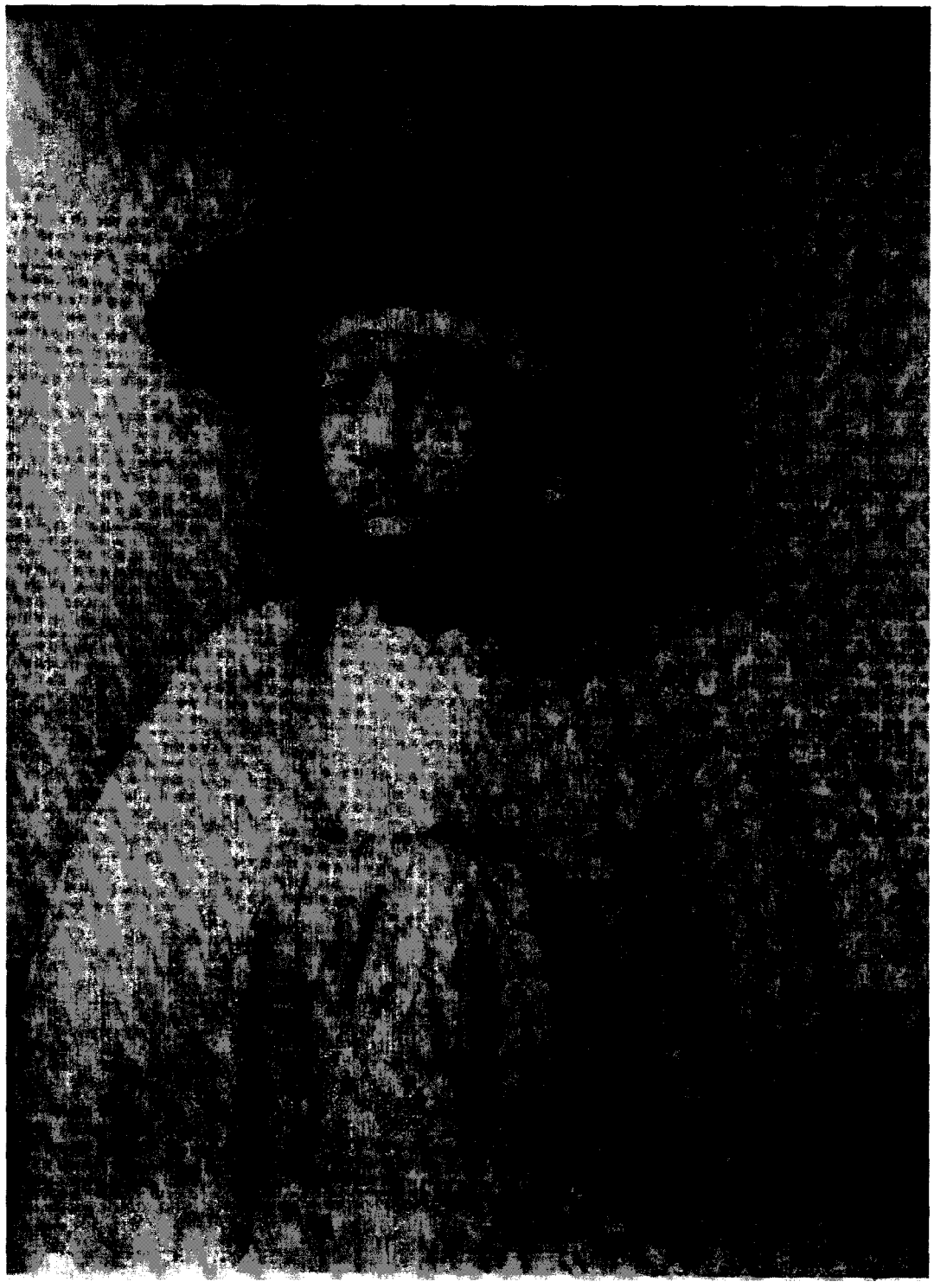
Figure 38: Menilek's and Gobäna's Grandson, Wässän Säggäd[125]

[123] For example, *Abba* Jimma Jiffar of Jimma and Dej. Jote of Wälläga

[124] Heran Sereke-Brhan, "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2002), 215-6; Ababa Kiflayasus, "The Career of Liul Rās Imru Häyla Silläse" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie University, 1973), n.p, Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie* 32-3. In addition, Cecchi notes that Gobäna, when he was *Däj.*, was married to a daughter of Mäshäsha Sayfu. Cecchi, *Da Zeila Alle Frontiere Del Kaffa*, 271.

[125] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 541.

Figure 39: Menilek, *Negus* of Shäwa, circa 1880[126]



[126] From *Bitweded Alfred Ilg and Emperor Menilek II: Pictures of a Unique Friendship and a Common Dream: The Modernization of Ethiopia.* Exhibition Catalogue of Photographs from the Ilg Collection at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, 2000, 41.

Gojjam were now organized according to *Häbäsha* norms, allowing Menilek to have a stronger base to build his country.[127] In addition he needed the support of Yohannes increasingly less, while at the same time Yohannes was distracted dealing with three different threats to his empire.[128] The most direct threat to Ethiopia in Yohannes mind, were the Muslim Mahdists located in the northern half of present day Sudan who proclaimed a holy war against Christian Ethiopia. In 1881, they defeated British and Egyptian troops and created their own state.[129]

This state encroached on the Western border of Ethiopia in 1888 and the Mahdists succeeded in defeating Täklä Haymanot's Gojjamé army, sacking Gondar and making inroads in Wälläga. Gobäna was able to turn back the Mahdists in Gojjam and Wälläga, but they remained nearby at Matämma (in between Gondar and Sudan). Yohannes decided to deal with them directly, but he was killed in battle at Matämma in 1888, which scattered his troops and left only two regiments (*Ras* Mikael's and *Ras* Alula) intact. Menilek was informed of Yohannes' death and moved quickly not only to gain the recognition of the foreign community but also important Ethiopians. He obtained submissions over all of the important nobles aside from Yohannes' general Alula and named heir, Mängäsha.[130]For the first time in at least several decades there was a peaceful transfer of power. The positions of Täklä Haymanot and *Ras* Mikael remained the same, provincial rulers under Menilek. The newly conquered territories were split under the jurisdiction of various Shäwan military leaders. The only province that was not under Shäwan control was Tigray. Weeks before Menilek's coronation, Gobäna died of a sudden illness, but his descendents continued to play a role in the state.[131]

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[127] These changes will be discussed in Chapter 7 also see Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism : The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 180. (Sweden: Uppsala University, 1996).

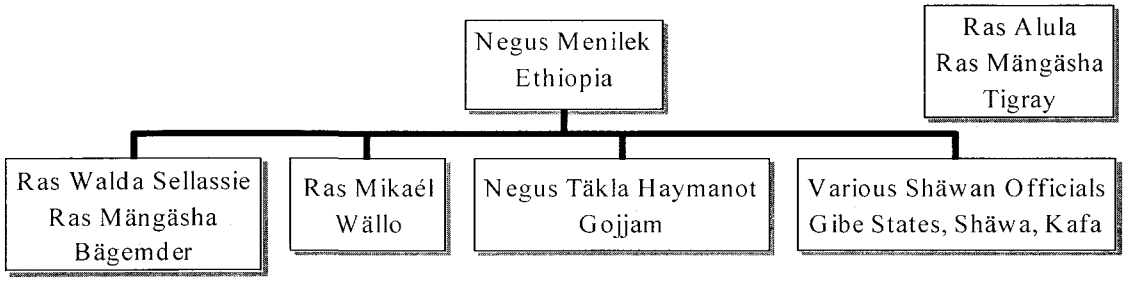
[128] These include Egypt, Italy, the Mahdists and, at least according to rumor, Menilek himself. For an extended view of these accounts see Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*; Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann, 1976).

[129] For an extended account see P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898: A Study of Its Origins, Development and Overthrow*, 2nd ed. (Oxford,: Clarendon P., 1970).

[130]As'mé states that *Ras* Mikaél (Wällo), *Negus* Täklä Haymanot (Gojjam), *Ras* Wäldä Giyorgis (Bägémder, also Menilek's cousin) *Wagshum* Beru (Wag), *Ras* Mäshäsha (Bägémder) all submitted. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis and His Work*, 799.

[131] Oral sources claim that Gobäna was killed by either poisoned *T'éj* (Ethiopian Honey Wine) or by poisoned medicine given to him by Amharas who were jealous of his power. Ato Germa Täsäma interviewed by author and Mälaku Abära, translated by Mälaku Abära, tape recording, Addis Ababa, 15 February 08; Ato Asäfä interviewed by author and Mälaku Abära, translated by Mälaku Abära, tape

Figure 40: Political Structure of Ethiopia, After the Death of Yohannes IV [132]



Conclusion

In the 19th century, Nägassi's dynasty went from marginal upstarts who only desired to be recognized by the emperor to the head of an empire many times the size of Shäwa. This expansion, in many ways was the result of a mutually beneficial alliance between Oromo and Mänzé leaders throughout the 19th century. The various inclusionary practices outlined in Chapter 2 cemented these alliances, which provided a stable base from which to expand to countries beyond the established frontiers. Extensive conversions and marriage alliances took place over the decades of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The beginning of 19th century brought the long standing and stable rule of Sahlä Sellassé. The decades long Oromo alliances remained strong and supported his named successor, Haylä Malekot, although he succumbed to the fury of Téwodros, but all was not lost as his brothers survived and rebelled against Téwodros during his unstable reign.

Haylä Malekot's heir, Menilek, escaped from captivity and resumed Negassi's line. He continued his grandfather's policies and moved quickly to stabilize his kingdom. In order to increase his power, he made alliances with both the Oromo of Wällo and Shäwa. He was able to control Wällo and defeated the ruler of Gojjam, opening his path to the South West, which brought him increased wealth. In this task, loyal Oromo were key. *Ras* Gobäna was able to unite the Oromo groups of Shäwa and extend the frontier of Shäwa to the Gibe states in the West, while others conquered to the east past Arsi to Harar, to the South and to what many consider the source of the Oromo, Borana, on the

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recording, Addis Ababa, 22 February 08. Also see Bassi and Megerssa. "Failed Modernization," 96-7, these authors emphasize that marriage alliances were set up before the murder. Finally, see Figure 36 for *Ras* Gobäna's Family Tree.

[132] Note that Tigray is not under Menilek's authority.

border of modern day Kenya. Similar to his grandfather he acted as an autonomous ruler, even while under the sway of *A'sé* Yohannes. After the Emperor's death, Menilek's policies within Ethiopia, relative to land and political structure, ushered it into the 20th century and made major inroads in modernizing the country, The Oromo continued to play a key role in this process. Actors, such as Häbtä Giyorgis, like Gobäna, defined themselves on the battlefield. However, as Ethiopia pushed towards modernity they became etched in the memory of Ethiopians due to successfully governing parts of Ethiopia, and not just exploits during battle.

Chapter Six:

Institutionalizing Personal Alliances: Shäwa, (1889-1913)

"The war with the Galla was completed by Negus Menilek 400 years after Ade [sic] Galawdewos commenced it. All the Galla became tributary to Ade [sic] Menilek . . . In the same year he appointed his kinsmen and the Amaroč over the Galla; and he billeted his soldiers on the Galla. He divided the land of the Galla by Qalad among the Amara."[1]

". . . the victory at Adowa created a sense of belonging to a much wider, more complex and intricate community. Other speech communities that used to be perceived as alien were gradually seen as being linked to one's own group by profoundly similar traits that transcended geographic and lingua-cultural barriers. Localism slowly began giving way to Ethiopianism. The monarchy, in the person of the sovereign, became the symbol of this unity and its concrete manifestation."[2]

After his ascent to the throne in the late nineteenth century, Menilek faced two main dilemmas: the growing Italian menace at the coast and holding his new and exceedingly large empire together. Menilek, true to form, worked to solve both at the same time. However, this solution created a separation between Oromo groups in the South and North not only in defending the country, but also in the administrative differences between Northern Oromo provinces and Southern Oromo provinces. Menilek used participation at Adwa as an enticing opportunity for rebels to submit, provincial lords to prove their loyalty and for his loyal generals to display their talents. All ethnic groups, especially the Oromo, took advantage of the victory at Adwa to increase their lands or authority.

After the victory at Adwa, Menilek brought further lands under his authority and another Oromo, Häbtä Giyorgis, followed the pattern set by Gobäna and became an extensive landholder, head of Menilek's nobles and of his Imperial armies. While individual Oromo, especially those of Wällo and Shäwa, increased their authority the measuring of the lands of the empire led to the oppression of some Southern and Shäwan Oromo peasants under Northern *balabats* of all ethnic groups. In the late nineteenth century, Menilek introduced polices which began to centralize authority and modernize his country. The style of rule inherited from his grandfather was a personal one, where

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[1] Bairu Tafla ed. and trans. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, Èathiopistische Forschungen ; Bd. 18. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987), 777-9.
[2] Hailu Fullas, "The Significance of Adwa: Personal Perspective," in *Adwa Victory Conference Proceedings*, eds. Tamrat Taddese, G. Begashaw, A Engeda (East Lansing, MI: MSU, 1996).

alliances were cemented by tying leaders of all ethnic groups to him through marriage alliance, godparentage and mutual beneficial political and economic relationships, the success at Adwa is proof of the strength of these alliances Menilek understood that these alliances would not outlast him, and he worked to institutionalize the personal alliances through the creation of a Shäwan national bureaucracy that gave men loyal to him powers that historically were held by the emperor. In addition to the new national posts, land tenure and taxation policies aimed at stifling provincialism supported the imperial center.

Adwa: The Shining Example of Ethiopian Unity

The enemy has come trespassing the coast which God gave us for our frontier, destroyed the country, and changed our religion. I did nothing up until now because the people were exhausted, herds exterminated. But again these enemies advanced digging like moles. With God's help, I will not surrender my country to them. Those who are fit, lend me your strong arm; let the weak aid me by their prayers. Think of your children, your wives, and the faith. As the Virgin is my witness, he who fails to come will not be heard for pardon. We leave in Teqemt [11October-9November 1895].[3]

Menilek's Adwa *Awaj* (Proclamation)

This edict eloquently puts Menilek's internal policy in regards to his newly conquered subjects, rebellious and loyal provincial nobles and their people. He begins with "the enemy", "our frontier" and "our religion" as a way to bring people from a variety of ways of life into the Imperial fold. He continues with "my country," but ends with a plea and a threat, a plea for all Ethiopians to think of their families and their religions, but a threat of punishment for those who did not come.[4] This *Awaj* successfully brought soldiers from all throughout the empire first to Shäwa and later to Wära Ilu. Menelik's army at Shäwa included troops under *Abba* Jiffar (Jimma), *Däj.* Gäbrä-

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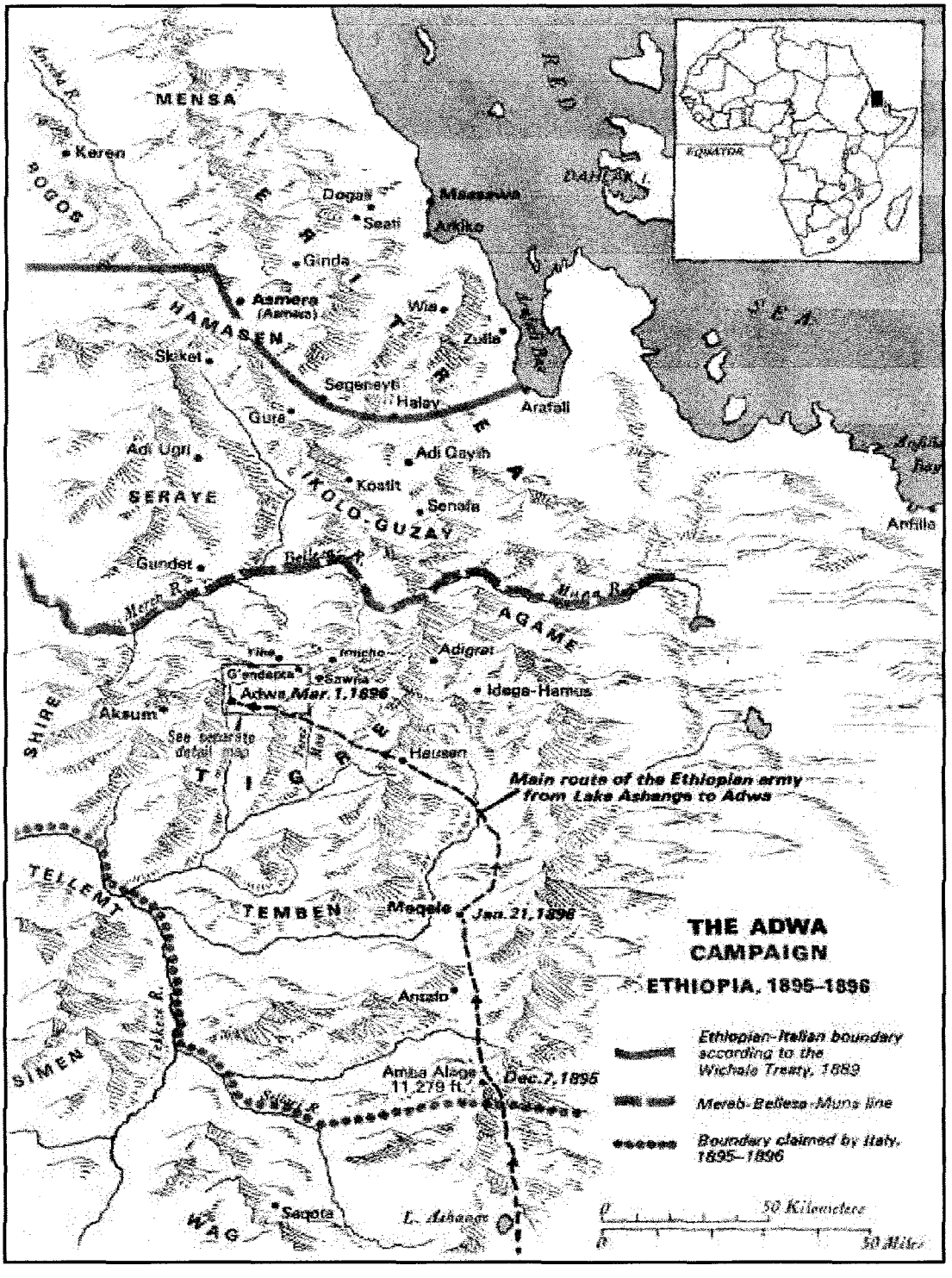
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, Tèsfa Selassie trans and Maurice de Coppet ed., *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik II, Roi Des Rois D'éthiopie* (Paris,: Maisonneuve, 1930), 374. translated by R. A. Caulk edited and with an introduction by Bahru Zewde, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas" : A Diplomatic History of Ethiopia (1876-1896)* (Wiesbaden [Germany]: Harrassowitz, 2002), 486. The second sentence of this quote is referring to the Great Famine which lasted from 1888-92. For more on this famine see Richard Pankhurst, "The Great Ethiopian Famine of 1888-92: A New Assessment" *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 21*, no. 2 and 3 (1996).

[4] In the Amharic text, the term *Haymanot* (religion) and not Christianity is used, but the name Maryam (Mary) is used for the Virgin, which speaks to his own Christianity. In addition the "We" is split between Campaigners (*Zämächa*) and the Shäwan people. See Gäbrä Sellassé, *Tarik Zämän Zä Dagmawi Menilek Negus Nägäst Zäitwpop'eya (the History of Menilek II King of Kings of Ethiopia)* (Addis Ababa: Berhanna Selam Press, 1949 (E.C.)), 225. The punishment for not going on campaigns, according to the Italian engineer Luigi Capucci was generally 20 lashes, but during the Adwa the penalty was death. See Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 486.

Figure 41: The Adwa Campaign[5]



[5] From Sven Rubenson, "Adwa 1896: The Resounding Protest," in *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Ali A. Mazrui (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 114.

Figure 42: Quantity and Location of Ethiopian Soldiers at Adwa (1896)[6]

Leader	Infantry	Cavalry	Location
As'é Menilek	30,000	1,200	Adwa
Etégé T'aytu	3,000	6,000	Adwa
Ras Mäkonnen	15,000		Adwa
Ras Mängesha Yohannes	12,000		Adwa
Ras Mikaél	6,000	12,000	Adwa
Ras Alula	3,000		Adwa
Ras Atikem	6,000		Adwa
Ras Wale	10,000		Adwa
Ras Wolde Giyorgis, *Azaj* Wolde S'adiq *Däj*. Tessema Nadaw	8,000 3,000 4,000		Awsa
Ras Dargé, *Grazmach* Benti and *Qänazmach* Mäkonnen	20,0000		Southern Territories
Totals	90,000	19,200	Adwa

Figure 43: Italian Soldiers with Rifles at Adwa[7]

Dabormida (Right)	About 4,000 guns	0	Mariyam Savito (Spur and Hill of Bälah)
Albertone (Left)	About 4,000 guns	0	Mt. Raio
Arimondi (Center)	About 2,500 guns	0	Mt. Bälah
Ellena (Reserves)	About 4,100 guns	0	Rebbi Arienni
Italian totals	17700, (10,596 Italian and 7,104 *Askaris*[8])	0	Mareb

[6] The Red text denotes forces that were predominately Oromo. Taken from charts in the back insert of Abebe Hailemelekot, *The Victory of Adowa: The 1st Victory of Africa over Colonialists*, ed. Getachew Zicke, trans. Yohannes G. Sellassie, Ethiopian Millennium ed. (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Enterprise 2007; reprint, 3rd), 200,5;Täklä S'adiq Mäkuriya, *As'é Menilek Ena Yäitiyop'eya Ändenät (Emperor Menilek and Ethiopian Unity)* (Addis Abäba: Kuraz Esatami Derejet, 1983 E.C.).; Milkias and Metaferia, eds., *The Battle of Adwa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory against European Colonialism*, 77-8. which are based on Carlo Conti Rossini, *Italia Ed Etiopia Dal Trattato D'uccialli Alla Battaglia Di Adua* (Roma,: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1935); Angelo Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale* (Roma ; Bari: Laterza, 1976), vol. 1 no. 2, 656, 62. The last two sources are based on Italian sources and Augustus Blandy Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (Westport, CT.: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 200-5 is based on Ethiopian ones.

[7] George Fitz-Hardinge Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, New ed. (London,: Constable and co., 1935), 191-207; Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, vol. 1 no. 2, 656.

Egziabehér Moroda (born Kumsa) and *Däj.* Jote (both from Wälläga, a Western Oromo Province) and the ex-king of Wallayta (Tona Gaga) with Täklä Haymanot. This force met with the rest of the Northern armies in Wära Illu (Menilek's former frontier capital) in Wällo.[9]

Even at the beginning of the Adwa campaign there was a growing distinction between Northern and Southern groups. At Wära Ilu, these provincial armies met, and were split into three parts, One, the Southern Oromo contingent were sent back to their territories with the order, "'Guard my country,' viz to be on guard against rebellions in the absence of the garrison troops" and joined Menilek's uncle *Ras* Dargé and the long time ally, the former Muslim *Azazh* Wäldä S'adeq of Ifat.[10] An advance guard under the leadership of *Ras* Mäkonnen Wolde Mikael (Menilek's cousin) and a main imperial force under the direction of Menilek remained at Wära Ilu.[11] Täklä Haymanot (Gojjam) Mängäsha Atikam (Bägémder/Gojjam) and Tewodros' son *Ras* Mäshäsha (Qwara) met Menilek's northward marching army at a settlement south of Lake Ashängé. Other northern armies met them at Makallé.[12] This military expedition was unprecedented due to its size and the fact that instead of acting as several independent armies it was expected to act as one. The last large scale battle involving Ethiopian armies had been between Yohannes and the Mahdists at Matämma. These three armies had been split under the *Negus* Täklä Haymanot, Menilek and *As'é* Yohannes (his army did include forces of *Rases* Mikaél, Mängäsha and Alula) and stationed at different parts of the empire.[13] Menilek's army unified all of the Northern provinces all of the ethnic groups and brought pan ethnic army to Adwa to fight in defense of his empire.

Obtaining the support of all of the Northern nobility would be a deciding factor on the outcome at Adwa, but more importantly, it provides insight into a brand of nationalism which led the diverse groups, including the Oromo, to not only believe

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[8] Tigrinyan speaking soldiers who fought for Italy.
[9] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 486.
[10] Gäbra Sellassé, *Tarik Zämän Zä Dagmawi Menilek*, 497 However, some of men from these provinces acted in auxiliary roles at Adwa see Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia, eds., *The Battle of Adwa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory against European Colonialism* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 75.
[11] See Chapter 7, for more on the advance guard.
[12] See Figure 39
[13] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 489.

themselves to be Ethiopian, but also to fight in its defense.[14] The Tigrinyans were split between loyalties to Menilek and the Italians, however, early victories brought about increasing Tigré support for Menilek.[15] Sickness slowed down the Imperial forces who were a few days behind the vanguard led by Mäkonnen. He was assisted by Yohannes IV's former right hand man the Tigré Alula, who knew the land, was well supported by the surrounding population and a fantastic warrior, who, purportedly said to captured, Ethiopian traitors "You have a *Negus*, an emperor, yet go looking for another in the king of Italy, and so fight your brother" and killed or mutilated many of them.[16] The Tigré unlike many of the coastal Africans during the Scramble for Africa sided with the hinterland empire and were well received and rewarded by Menilek.[17] The actions of these brave Ethiopians, as well as the fact that all of the battles leading up to and including Adwa occurred on Tigrinyan speaking territory all contributed to the importance of the Tigré. In addition, the presence of the Tigré in Menilek's force had an especially profound effect on the Italian *Askaris* (Eritrean troops), causing some to defect and interrupted a few caravans intended for the Italian camp.

While Salsa was still at Menilek's camp, the Italian commander Baratieri pushed forward, within range of the Ethiopian force in February 11-3.[18] Unlike at Amba Alagi, the Ethiopians were disciplined, warned by two recent Tigré deserters to the Ethiopian cause, *Ras* Sebhat and Hagos Tafari, not to pursue the Italians further and went back to their camp at Yéha.[19] On the 22nd of February Menilek stealthily began to move his camp

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[14] Mesfin combines the ethos of the Ethiopian nobility and soldiers to argue that the victory at Adwa was the result of a coalition of Ethiopia's nobles and not necessarily its people. See Mesfin Araya "Contemporary Ethiopia in the Context of the Battle of Adowa, 1896 in Milkias and Getachew Metaferia, eds., *The Battle of Adwa,* 243.

[15] Augustus Blandy Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 200. Also split themselves after the death of Yohannes into three camps. They were descended from rival royal houses of Tigray.

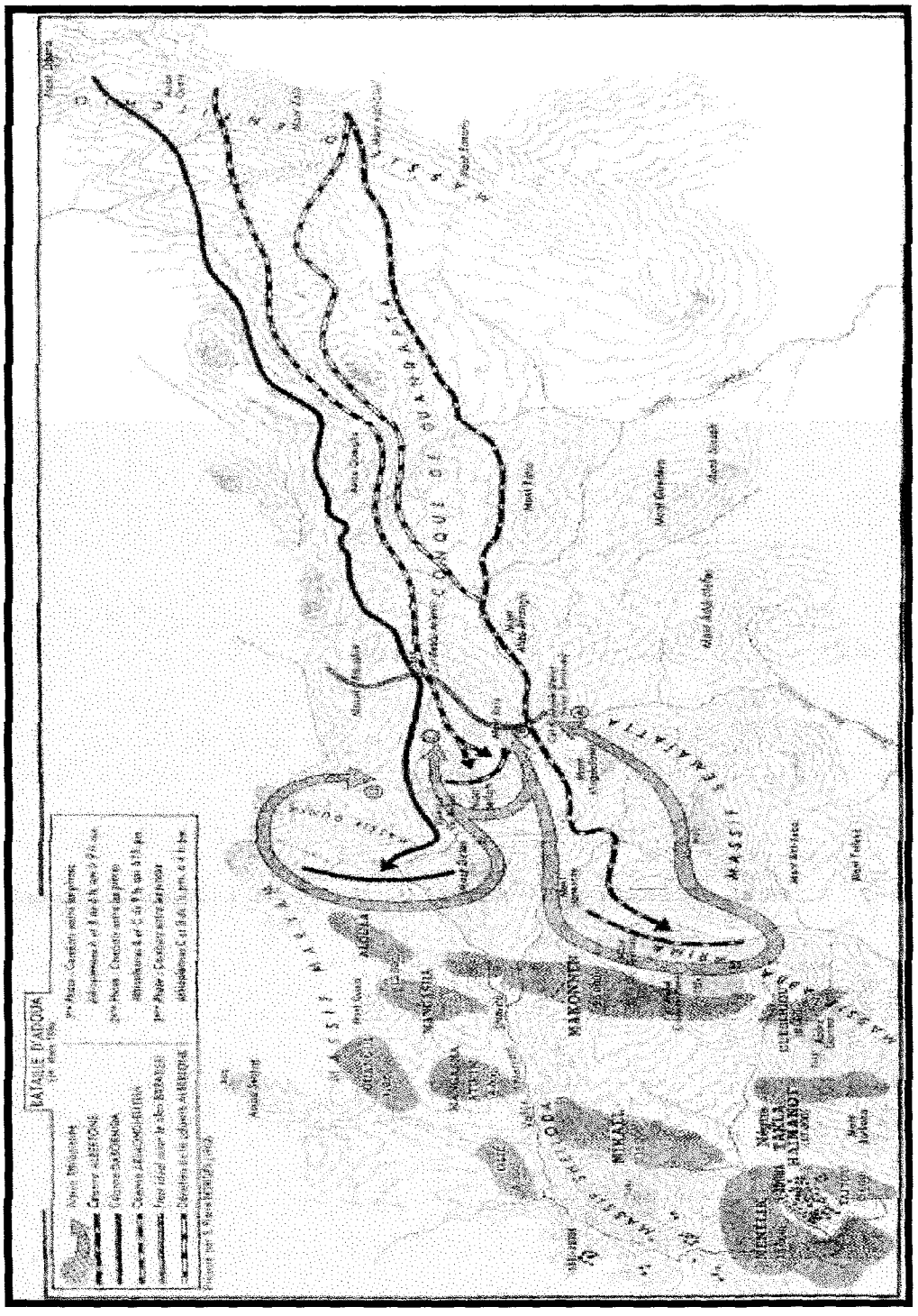
[16] Qtd. in Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 516.

[17] A few accounts argue that Mängäsha was involved in a plot to help the Italians and in return would be named King of Kings of Ethiopia. Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 233-5; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 200. This seems unlikely due to the fact that, for the most part, Mängäsha desired to be *Negus* of Tigray, not Ethiopia.

[18] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas,"* 533-4.

[19] See Yosef Nägussé to Mondon 21 February 1896 in Fessahaie Abraham, "The Campaign of Adowa According to Some Ethiopians" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1971), 14. They also cut Italian telegraph lines and prevented the arrival of Italian food supplies through their territories. At Amba Alagi, Italy was able to repel Ethiopia's troops using superior firepower, for its location see Figure 44.

Figure 44: Approximate Positions of Armies During the Battle of Adwa[20]



[20] S. Pierre Pétridès, *Le Héros D'adowa: Ras Makonnen, Prince D' Éthiopie* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1963), back insert.

from Yéha to Adwa, a tactic to force the Italians to leave their fortification to fight. In Menilek's move to Adwa in preparation to fight the Italians he split his forces in three, the advanced guard shielded the imperial forces while another advance guard under the command of the Shäwan generals Mäkonnen, Gäbayähu, *Fit.* Täkle and *Liqä Makwas* Adenäw and guided by the Tigré Mängäshä marched North to the Mareb.[21] Menilek II expected the men to return to the camp on a Sunday, March 1st, the monthly feast of St. Giyorgis.[22] Luckily for him, the Tigré *Ras* Mängäshä was on guard on Saturday night and he was able to see the advancing Italian force.[23] At 5am, the battle began among one of advance regiments (the right flank under the command of Dabormida), who abandoned their position after observing the Italian troops and *Askaris* and these troops advanced unmolested.[24] During this time Menilek and most of his nobility were in Church led by *Abuna* Matewos. Soon after they began the service, they heard gunshots and left, but not before kissing the cross of the *Abuna.*[25]

Italy attacked in three main columns, the first attacked the Tigrinyans (some sources indicate that Mikaél and *Wagshum* Gwangul were also there) to the left of the Emperor, but the Italian attack was met and stalled through most of the mid morning.[26] The second column (left flank) led by General Matteo Albertone attacked the Shäwan front under *Däj.* Bäshah Aboye and *Fit.* Gäbäyahu during the midmorning and was met by the largest contingent of the Emperor's forces as well as those of Mäkonnen and *Fit.* Täklé of Wälläga. This force was backed up by the troops of *Negus* Täklä Haymanot, *Ras* Walé, *Ras Bitwäddäd* Mängäsha Atikäm, *Et'égé* T'aytu and the cavalry of *Ras* Mikaél

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[21] For a linear and concise account of the battle of Adwa see Milkias and Getachew, eds., *The Battle of Adwa*, 57-63. Also see Yoséf Nägusé to Alfred Ilg and Leon Chefneux (31 March 1896) Document 152 in Bairu Tafla, ed., *Ethiopian Records of the Menilek Era: Selected Amharic Documents from the Nachlass of Alfred Ilg, 1884-1900* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 458-64.

[22] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 543-6. Also, St. Giyorgis is pictured in many of the paintings describing warfare. For more on his depiction see Girma Fisseha, "Ethiopian Paintings on Adwa," in *Adwa Victory Centenary Conference Proceedings : March 1 & 2, 1996, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan*, eds. Abdussamad H Ahmad and Richard Pankhurst (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1996), 692.

[23] There are a few different stories for why the Italians attacked for more on these rumors, which include spies, misinformation, and betrayal of Italian spies Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 547-8. Yosef relates, "A spy from Aksum told Gen. Baratieri 'The army of Menilek had gone to steal grain, so if you swiftly carry out a surprise attack against him today, you will be able to defeat him, for he is alone.'" Yosef Nägussé to Mondon 11 March 1896 presented in Abraham, "The Campaign of Adowa", 19.

[24] Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 263.

[25] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 550.

[26] Yosef Nägussé to Mondon 11 March 1896 presented in Abraham, "The Campaign of Adowa," 19.

who, according to most sources, were led through the darkness by the smoke of bullets.[27] After the fall of their field leader, *Fit.* Gäbäyahu, the troops were encouraged by T'aytu and pushed on.[28] At 10:45 Albertone's column collapsed due to lack of ammunition and the *Askaris* saw the writing on the wall and deserted their posts regardless of the gunfire directed at them by the Italians.[29] The battle stretched on for hours and took the lives of *Fit.* Gäbäyahu and the Oromo *Däj.* Ch'aCh'a. Menilek's central forces pursued them and captured their commander, Albertone, while the battle still raged on the right and central wings.

Ras Mikael moved left to join *Ras* Alula and began to fight the right wing, where the fighting started, of the Italian command, which like the rest of the Italian contingents had little contact with each other due to misinformation from Tigré spies and inaccurate maps.[30] A smaller battalion sent to reset communications between the columns was annihilated by Mängäsha and Mikaél, who were sent to the center to decimate the fleeing troops of Albertone. Menilek continued his push at the center and soon the third column, under Arimondi came into view and their combined forces including the smaller Gojjamé force led by *Negus* Täklä Haymanot, met Albertone's and Arimodi's forces.[31] While it was not planned, Ethiopia's forces utilized the traditional patterns of warfare and encircled the Italian force which by noon was in retreat and by 3 pm three of the four Italian columns were defeated, with reserve force under General Elena in retreat.[32]

The right wing, where the battle had been raging since mid-morning, was made up of the men of Wag, Lasta, and Tigray and later assisted by the forces of Mängäsha, Mikaél and Mäkonnen forces.[33] With a smaller force the Italians under the direction of Gen. Dabormida, they held the Ethiopians column at bay and the battle raged until

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[27] Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 206-7, Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 667;Yosef Nägussé to Mondon 30 March 1896 presented in Abraham, "The Campaign of Adowa ", 23. It seems unlikely that smoke can lead one through darkness but this is the phrase used in the relevent source material.
[28] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 292; Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 668; Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 555-9;Yosef Nägussé to Mondon 30 March 1896 presented in Abraham, "The Campaign of Adowa", 24; Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik II*, 441, 6.
[29] Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 207; Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 300.
[30] Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 676; Milkias and Getachew, eds., *The Battle of Adwa*, 57-61.
[31] Rubenson, "Adwa 1896: The Resounding Protest," 123; Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, 280; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 208-9.
[32] Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 208-9.
[33] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 321; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 209-10; Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 675, 86.

nightfall. The Ethiopians forces led by the cavalry of both Wällo and Shäwa surrounded the beleaguered Italian column, which they outnumbered five to one.[34] This column was never given new troops and their last desperate attack against most of the Ethiopian forces, who again encircled their enemy, was unsuccessful and led to a disorderly retreat, which took the life of its commander Dabormida.[35] Two of his generals, Cols. Airaghi and De Amici attempted to save some of the larger guns and hold out, but both died in the process.[36] As the sunset arrived so also did Ethiopian victory and it only remained to capture the surrendered army to divvy up the booty and prisoners.

This battle displayed a unified empire, which succeeded despite significant differences in culture, religion and language. Throughout the narratives of the event various ethnic groups were highlighted and contributed to Ethiopia's victory. For example, the Tigré used their knowledge of land, the Shäwan and Wällo Oromo provided cavalry and the Amhara of Shäwa, Gojjam and Bägémder brought experienced soldiers and firearms. In addition, the *Häbäsha* of all ethnic origins provided leadership of their territories soldiers. However, this unity could not be sustained without efforts to centralize authority, which entailed a careful practice of balancing foreign, national and local interests.

Maintaining European Trade during the "Scramble of Africa"

Winning the battle of Adwa, took the bravery and unity of the Empire, but it also took a well armed army, supplied with European firearms. Continued independence was partly reliant on stable trade routes, which generally exchanged raw materials such as honey, coffee, cotton, ivory and animal skins for manufactured goods such as firearms, salt and textiles.[37] In this process, the growth of cities along the construction of the railroad, which connected Menilek's relatively young capital Addis Ababa to the coast was essential.[38] Menilek had a number of "capitals" including Ankober, Liche, Däbra

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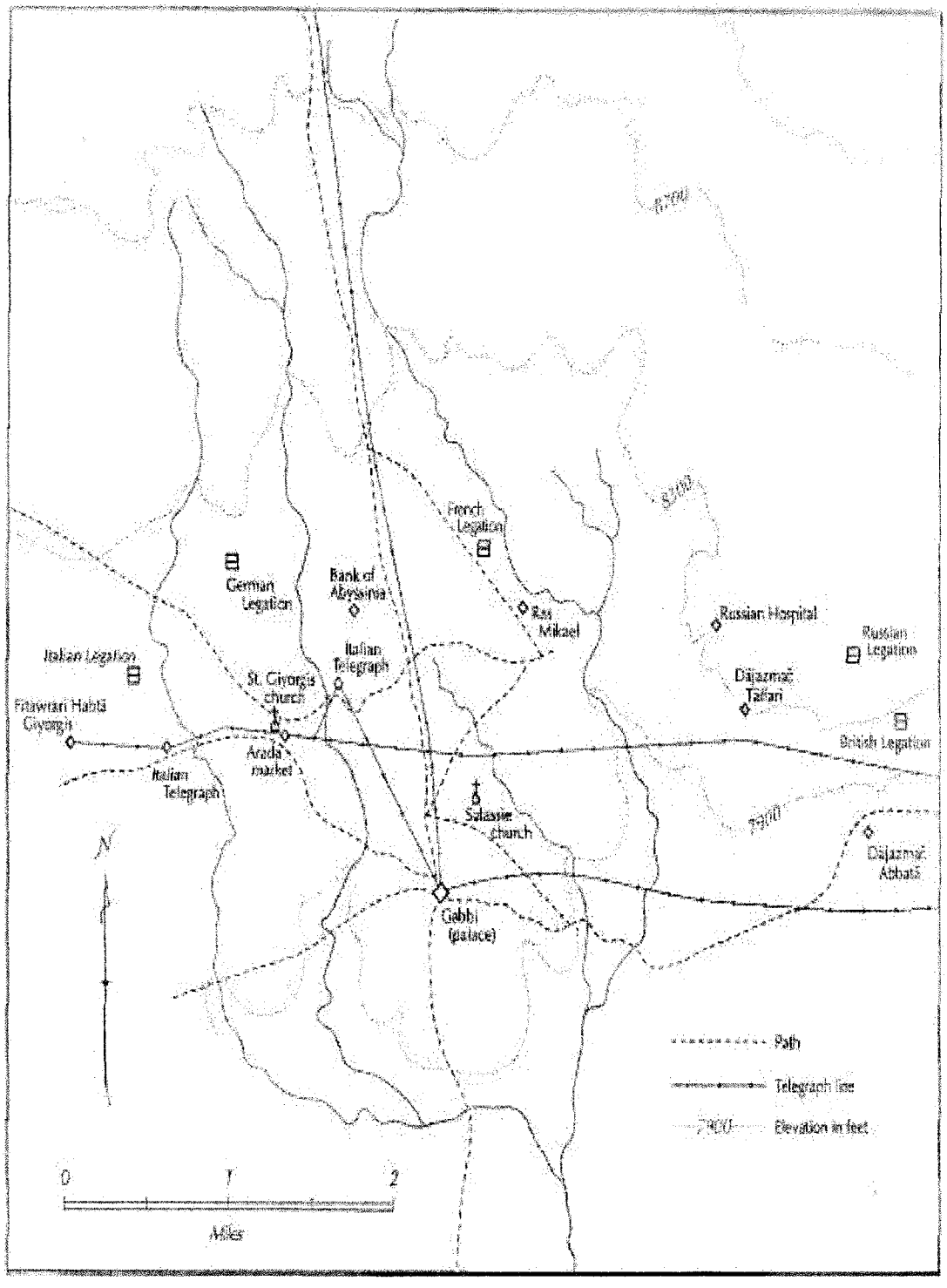
[34] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 332-3; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 210.
[35] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 322; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 210; Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 688.
[36] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 342-3.
[37] Robert Peet Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day; an Account of the First Mission Sent by the American Government to the Court of the King of Kings, 1903-1904* (New York,: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 185-8.
[38] For the development of Dire Dawa, a railway city, and currently second populous city in Ethiopia see C.F. Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1935), 21.

Figure 45: Addis Ababa, 1907[39]



[39] Peter P. Garretson, *A History of Addis Abäba from Its Foundation in 1886 to 1910*, Äthiopistische Forschungen; (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), xi.

Berhan and Ent'ot'o, but these capitals and their buildings remained half built.[40] Addis Ababa, founded in 1886, represents Menilek's first attempt at a permanent capital.[41] Oromocentric historians view Addis Ababa as a *kätämma*[42] (garrison city) stolen from the Oromo and built on top of Finfinneen to monitor and oppress the Oromo nation.[43] However, it is important to point out key differences between Addis Ababa and the *kätämma*. First, Addis Ababa was built in a valley and not on an *Amba* (plateau), like other garrison cities, which makes it difficult to use to monitor areas around it. Two, it is the economic, political and religious center of Ethiopia, something that no *kätämma* could ever claim. Lastly, due to the fact many of the compounds of Addis Ababa were built for Oromo leaders, it is difficult to claim that Addis Ababa was built to oppress the Oromo.[44] Addis Ababa like most of Shäwa is a result of a multi-ethnic project to centralize resources and put to an end the centrifugal provincialism of Ethiopia through its centrality in politics, administration and economics.[45]

Previously mentioned, much of the long distance trade had been handled by Muslims. During the 1870s Menilek made significant efforts to endear himself to the Muslim leaders in the Northeastern part of the Horn in order to ensure the connection

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[40] Herbert Weld Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," *Geographic Journal* 15, no. 2 (1900): 103.

[41] For some descriptions of the towns see Gustavo Bianchi, *Alla Terra Die Galla: Narratzione Della Spedizione Bianchi in Africa Nel 1879-80* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1886), 202, 63-67.

[42] See glossary for full definition.

[43] See, among others, Getahun Benti, "A Blind [Man] without a Cane, A Nation without a City: The Oromo Struggle for Addis Ababa" in Ezekiel Gebissa, *Contested Terrain : Essays on Oromo Studies, Ethiopianist Discourses, and Politically Engaged Scholarship* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2009). The spelling of the Oromo city based on Benti's spelling of the term. An exception is Ent'ot'o, which was built on an Amba, but the move to Addis Ababa due the cold climate and lack of firewood displays the fact that it could not sustain its position as the capital of Ethiopia.

[44] See Figure 44, for the location of both Häbtä Giyorgis and Mikaél's compounds. Also, Benti writes relative to Addis Ababa, "Given the centrality of cities to modern human existence, the lack of control over Addis Ababa denies the Oromo the benefits that are concentrated in the city. During a century of Amhara, the Oromo were not allowed to open schools of their own to disseminate their culture and promote Oromo studies. To this day, there is no cultural center in Addis Ababa that promotes Oromo values and culture. Oromo artists are not completely free to show off their talents and abilities. Today, there are no major business establishments in Addis Ababa owned by Oromo nationals to contribute to the development if Oromia. Economically excluded and culturally dominated, the Oromo have been made a nation without a city comparable to a blind [man] with a cane." Getahun Benti "A Blind [Man] without a Cane," 160-1.

[45] For more on this issue see Charles W. McClellan, "State Transformation and Social Reconstitution in Ethiopia: The Allure of the South." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies 17*, no. 4 *(1984): 657-75.*

between himself and the coast.[46] However, after the battle of Adwa, European traders took the most significant role in trade of the Empire through the decline of both the Mätäma and Harar trading posts due to the unrest in these areas before the battle of Adwa as well as Menilek' directing long distance trade to his capital.[47] Also, in the years before Adwa, Massawa, the Italian port, was not effective for the transport of goods as result of impending conflict between Ethiopia and Italy.[48] However, many Europeans had already been playing key roles in the sale of firearms since the 1870s, as well as various projects in Menilek's previous capitals.[49] The foundation of a permanent capital resulted in a further decline of local provincial traders and the centralization of the proceeds of trade.[50]

One of Menilek's early efforts was collecting the production of the lands from the South and West to Addis Ababa, which would bring those with products to sell or buy to the markets, which he could then tax.[51] This move was a departure from previous systems of taxation of trade, which slowed down trade due to multiple points of taxation in the territories from the coast to the hinterlands,[52] He also granted monopolies to various

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[46] See Menilek to Isma'él Ibrähem (16 June 1876), Document 172 in Sven Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, vol. 3, Acta Ethiopica (Addis Ababa; New Brunswick, NJ: Addis Ababa University Press, Transaction Pub., 2000), 244-5. In this letter, Menilek begs the Egyptian ruler to allow firearms through his ports. In the same year Menilek writes directly to the ruler of Zayla, Abu Bakr during the same year. See Menilek to Abu Bakr Ibrähem (14 Oct. 1876), Document 186 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*. Also, for the importance of this route even in its infancy see Ahmed Hassen Omer, "Some Notes of Harar and the Local Trade Routes: A Report on the View of Ex-Merchants of Shäwa (1839-1935)," *Annales d'Éthiopie* XVII (2001): 145; Carlo Conti Rossini *Italia Ed Etiopia Dal Trattato D'uccialli Alla Battaglia Di Adua*.(Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1935), 12.

[47] Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day*, 95; Richard Pankhurst, "The Trade of Northern Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1964): 61-8.

[48] Alfred Ilg to Menilek II (11 July 1891), Document 66 in Bairu, ed., *Ethiopian Records of the Menilek Era*, 402.

[49] In regards to the French merchant, Pierre Arnoux, see Documents 165-171 in Rubenson et al., *Internal Rivalries and Foreign Threats 1869-1879*, 237-43. The editor is skeptical of the authenticity of these documents. For the British side see Document 204 Menilek to Victoria (9 Nov. 1878), Document 204 in Ibid., 288. During this time Ethiopia had a difficulty even getting letters to European powers, and there is little evidence that these letters were received by any of the European leaders.

[50] See Akalou Wolde-Mikael, "Urban Development in Ethiopia (1889-1925): Early Phase," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 11, no. 1 (1973).

[51] Montandon notes that of some of these rich Southern territories possessed more than one road to Addis Ababa. George Montandon, "A Journey in South-Western Abyssinia " *Geographic Journal* 40, no. 4 (1912): 373; Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," 118; Reginald Koettlitz, "A Journey through Somali Land and Southern Abyssinia to the Shangalla or Berta Country and the Blue Nile and through the Sudan to Egypt," *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* 16, no. 1 (1900): 23.

[52] Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twenieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 2)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 6, no. 1 (1968): 21-35.

foreign firms over salt, coffee and ivory.[53] These Europeans were given monopolies over certain trade, and paid the Emperor directly for these privileges.[54] In addition there is evidence that they were joint economic ventures between European companies and the Emperor.[55] He encouraged the activities of a number of European merchants and those exposed to European culture, such as his *Näggrädas* (chief of traders) Haylä Giyorgis.[56] However, the various European powers were not able significantly to influence policy.[57] By simultaneously pushing trade to Addis Ababa and beginning to take measures to control it, Menilek displayed his view of the importance of trade on his terms. The use of Europeans was just one of Menilek's tools, He also continued to strengthen his relations at the coast, which would prove helpful to him during Adwa.

In the early 20th century, he continued to empower the Imperial *Näggrädas* by allowing him to collect taxes directly and also to set up custom houses in every province to collect taxes.[58] Another activity which helped him centralize political authority was lending provincial and Shäwan nobles money to build houses in Addis Ababa, which gave the nobles in the capital as well as a way for Menilek to keep them close.[59] In addition, Menilek's Imperial *gibbi* acted as a microcosm of Addis Ababa, housing many of the important officials including the Minister of the Pen.[60] He also introduced his own

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[53] Garretson, *A History of Addis Abäba*, 119; Richard Pankhurst, "The Trade of Central Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1964): 50.

[54] Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day*, 196. Generally these concessions were for the extraction of minerals from areas like Beni Shangul and Gambella, however a few years later in 1910 agricultural concessions in the Awash, Harar, Afar were granted see Richard Pankhurst, "Economic Change in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethiopia: A Period of Accelerated Innovation," *Annales d'Ethiopie* 20, no. 1 (2005): 215. For a list of prominent traders see Pankhurst, "The Trade of Central Ethiopia," 55. ———,"Menilek and the Utilisation of Foreign Skills in Ethiopia," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1967): 69-75. Menilek even desired to have Europeans pay him tribute like his nobles see Menilek II to Count Leontiev (9 June 1897), Document 192 and Mining Concession Contract of C.W. Lane (26 December 1899), Document 278 in Bairu, ed., *Ethiopian Records of the Menilek Era*, 487, 531-2.

[55] Koettlitz, "A Journey through Somali Land and Southern Abyssinia," 19.

[56] Luigi Fusella, "Menilek E L'etiopia in Un Testo Amarico Del Baykadañ," *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 4, no. 1 (1952): 136.

[57] Pankhurst, "Menilek and the Utilisation of Foreign Skills in Ethiopia," 49.

[58] These custom house were called *Qälla*. Montandon, "A Journey in South-Western Abyssinia," 374. In the early 20th Näggrädas Haylä Giyorgis had a estimated fortune of 3,000,000 (MT) Garretson, *A History of Addis Abäba*, 152.

[59] See Figure 43 for Addis Ababa in 1907, Note the locations of both *Ras* Mikaél'a and Habtä Giyorgis' property. Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day*, 81.

[60] For a particularly good account of the occurrences in the palace based almost exclusively on oral evidence see Harold G. Marcus, "The Organization of Menilek II's Palace and Imperial Hospitality (after 1896)," *Rural Africana: Current Research in the Social Sciences*, no. 11 Ethiopia Land and History (1969);

currency, the Menilek Thaler, made from the silver obtained through the Italian Adwa indemnity.[61] In addition to loaning money to nobles, he lent money all throughout Ethiopia and this partly led to the creation of the Bank of Abyssinia. This British controlled bank had very little support, and most of the royal treasury was in the hands of the Bäjerond (Royal Treasurer) displaying that modernity would not be left in the hands of foreigners. The combination of increasing centralization, imports and exports came to a little over two million dollars in 1903.[62]

Lastly, two final steps were undertaken to further centralize the state in Addis and to connect it with the province. The introduction of the telegraph and telephone, which first connected Menilek directly with the Northern leaders and, later, connected him to important figures in the Southern territories was an important for communicating with political figures and important traders.[63] The second was beginning the construction of the railroad which connected Addis Ababa directly to the coast.[64] These moves made Addis Ababa the unquestioned center of trade and the various stopping points along the way created important trading towns, such as Dire Dawa.[65] Also, according to many it made Djibouti the entrance of Ethiopia in the 1920s.[66] It also ended the dominance of Zayla, which according to some accounts previously had ten times the trade of Djibouti.[67] While trade is not the focus of this work, this brief outline allows us to see the ways in which Menilek used the control of economic resources to centralize authority, fight

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Bairu Tafla, "Three Ethiopian Portraits: Ato Asma Giyorgis, Ras Gobana Daci and Sahafi Tezaz Gabra Selasse " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967).

[61] Garretson, *A History of Addis Abäba,* 138-40; Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day*, 68-9.

[62] Ibid; Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 3)" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1968): 93 - 118.: 108-9.

[63] Garretson, *A History of Addis Abäba*, 145. The telephone as well as the road system starting from within Addis Ababa helped communication and travel in his capital. Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day;* 76-7; Pankhurst, "Economic Change in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethiopia:," 205.

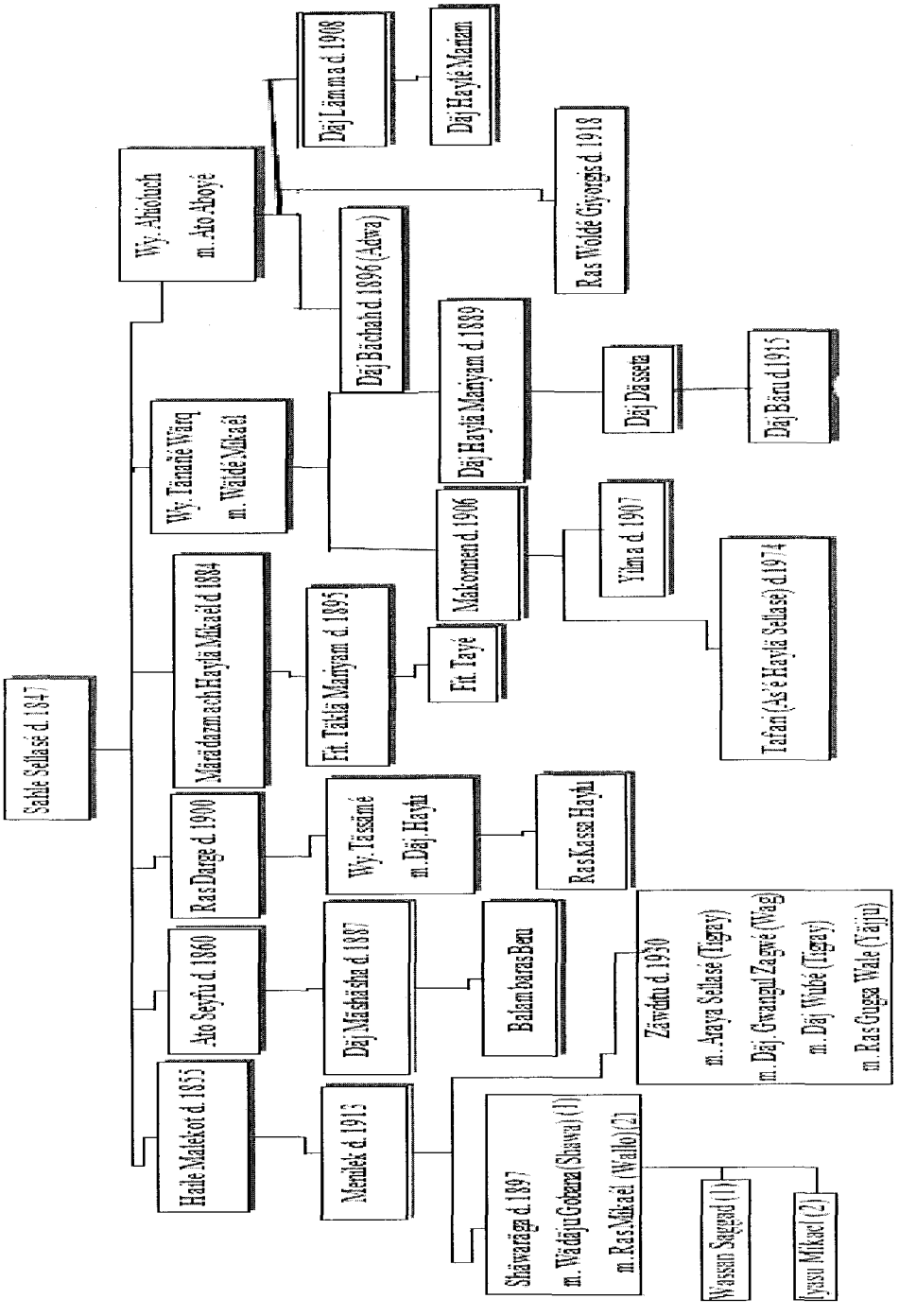
[64] According to the American traveler, Skinner, the idea was of Menilek's two European advisors, the Swiss Alfred Ilg and the Frenchmen MM Chefneux. Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day*, 99. Skinner provides an extended analysis for the rationale behind the many delays in construction, Ibid., 104-12. Also see Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 143-8. It also increased the speed of local trade see Ezekiel Gebissa, *Leaf of Allah : Khat & Agricultural Transformation in Harerge, Ethiopia 1875-1991*. Oxford; Athens: James Currey: Ohio University Press, 2004, 13.

[65] Skinner, *Abyssinia of to-Day*, 86. In addition many foreign embassies were also housed in Addis Ababa.

[66] Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 20.

[67] Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," 97. Also, C.F. Rey lists 1,611,000£'s of 1,865,000£'s of total imports and exports in 1912. Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 224.

Figure 46: Sahlä Sellassé Tree[68]



Key: m = married, (#) corresponds with the number given with the parent to distinguish children of different marriages.

[68] Extracted from Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik II,* 376.and Heran Sereke-Brhan, "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2002), 213-21. For the children of Haylä Sellasé see the figure at the end of this chapter.

Figure 47: *Ras* Mäkonnen and Lej Tafari Mäkonnen (the future Haylä Sellassé)[69]

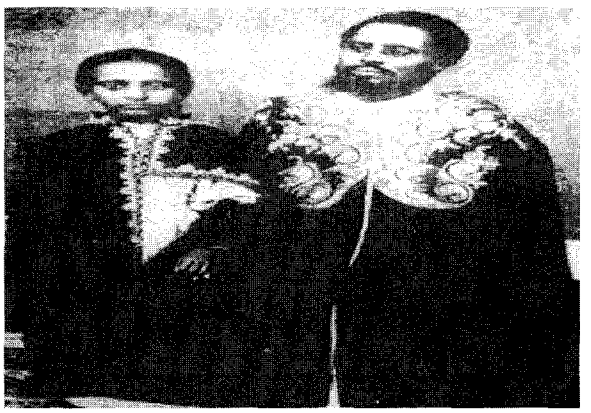


Figure 48: Häbtä Giyorgis[70]

provincialism and to empower a class of civil servants, not military men, to begin to modernize his empire's administration.

Administering the Empire:

While controlling and expanding trade not only ensured Ethiopia's independence, it also cemented the supremacy of Menilek in his Empire. Not one to rest on his laurels, he quickly moved to centralize resources to modernize his country. This task included finalizing territorial borders, measuring all of the unmeasured land, opening and developing trade routes and solidifying provincial alliances. These developments re-

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[69] Zäwde Rota, *Täfäri Mäkonen: Räzämu Yäselt'an Guzo (Täfäri Mäkonnen: The Long Journey for Power)* (Addis Ababa: Bäsentral Matämiya Bet, 1998 E.C.), 39.

[70] From the front cover of Qäñazmach Tadäsä Zäwälde, *Fitawrari Häbtä Giyorgis (Aba Mäla), 1844-1919* (Addis Abäba: Neged Matämiya Derejet, 1997); Zäwde, *Täfäri Mäkonen: Räzämu Yäselt'an Guzo*, 315.

centered the empire on Shäwa under an ethnically diverse class of officials. Two distinct types of administrations developed: one for the Northern provinces, another for the Southern provinces. Menilek, like his Mänzé predecessors, developed a personal style of leadership that incorporated provinces on a case by case basis and in many ways devoid of specific policy towards an ethnic group.[71] Generally, if a leader submitted peacefully or with little struggle he was able to keep control of his province and paid tribute directly to Menilek, albeit with a significant presence of Shäwan governors,[72] while if the struggle was long and violent, all lands were confiscated and the leader was put in prison or killed.[73] These provinces were directly governed by loyal Shäwan governors; this style was also seen in Oromo areas of Shäwa, and increasingly in the Northern provinces.[74] There was another way of ruling, most common in the North, which represented a compromise between the Federalist policies of Yohannes and Menilek's own centralized rule, seen in the provinces of Wällo and Gojjam and entailed respecting land tenure rights

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[71] M.S. Wellby, "King Menelek's Dominions and the Country between Lake Gallop (Rudolf) and the Nile Valley " *Geographic Journal* 16, no. 3 (1900): 295.

[72] Generally this was the case for Wälläga, Wolamo and Jimma, whose leaders went to Wära Ilu to fight the Italians, but were sent back to ensure peace in the Southern territories. For Wälläga see Alessandro Truilzi and Tässäma Ta'a, *Yäwälläga Yätarik Sändoch Kä1880woch Eskä 1920woch (A.M.) (Documents for Wälläga History from 1880-1920 (E.C.)* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1996 (E.C.)); Ta'a, Tesema. "Defending Regional Autonomy and Cultural Identity: The Case of Leeqa Naqamtee and Leeqa Qellem (1882-1937)." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15,* no. 1 (March 2008): 41-77; Bahru Zewde, "Dej. Jote Tolu (1855-1918)" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1970); Tesemma Ta'a, "The Oromo of Wallaga: A Historical Survey to 1910" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1980); Terrefe Woldetsadik, "The Unification of Ethiopia (1880-1935) Wälläga," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 6, no. 1 (1968). For other Oromo southern provinces see Guluma Gemeda, "Land, Agriculture and Society in the Gibe Region Southwestern Ethiopia, C. 1850-1974" (Ph.D., Michigan State University., 1996); Haile Mariam Goshu, "The Kingdom of Abba Jiffar II, 1861-1934" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1970); Herbert S. Lewis, *A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia (1830-1932)* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965). For the best example of Oromia nation building see the sociologist Asafa Jalata, *Oromia & Ethiopia : State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict, 1868-1992* (Boulder: L. Rienner, 1993). And for Abyssinian nation building see another sociologist Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia: 1896-1974,* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1995).

[73] The quintessential example of resistance is Kafa see Legesse Gebeyehu, "Conquest of the Kingdom of Kaffa " *(BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie University, 1971);* Kochito Wolde Mariam, *"Historical Survey of* Kaffa: 1897-1935" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1979); Teshome Tafesse, "The Political System of Kafa (Prior to 1897)" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1998). However Orent challenges the existence of a large Shäwan presence in Kafa see Amnon Orent, "Refocusing on the History of Kafa Priot to 1897: A Discussion of Political Processes " *African Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (1970): 291.

[74] See Mislu Gugsa, "Estate Administration in Part of Present Day Jibat and Mecha under Fit. Habte Giyorgis" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1974); Wakene Frew, "The Family of Räs Därge and the Church in Salale" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1973); Tsegaye Zeleke, "The Oromo of Salaalee: A History (C.1840-1936)" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2003). Rey, *The Real Abyssinia,* 123.

and previous political agreements, but even this style was dying out and only lasted as long as the lives of provincial elite in power during the time of Menilek.[75]

The Oromo were involved all of these styles of rule. In the first style, the Oromos *Däj.* Jote and Kumsaa Moroda of Wällaga and *Abba* Jiffar of Jimma negotiated terms of their submission, which for *Abba* Jiffar solely meant a flat rate tribute payment every year.[76] The second way was most notably seen in the rulers of Oromo Arsi and Omo Kafa, who were the most difficult to subdue and eventually put under the rule of Menilek's family members *Ras* Dargé and *Ras* Wäldä Giyorgis and loyal Shäwan subjects like *Fit.* Häbtä Giyorgis.[77] The third style was seen with *Ras* Mikaél and *Negus* Täklä Haymanot, who were given gifts and marriage ties to maintain their loyalty.[78] The final style occurred in the territories of Harar and Tigray and was the least effective and led to constant dismissals and appointments of various officials to these posts, which were occasionally given to high born Oromo, especially those related to T'aytu.[79] Thus, it is the diversity of the Oromo that make it impossible to argue that Menilek's rule was even partially inspired by ethnocentrism. The Northern Oromo were treated like other Northerners, while the Southern Oromo were treated like other Southerners.

Menilek gave government posts to either extended family members or trusted, and generally low born, military men. His cousin, Mäkonnen is an example of former, while Häbtä Giyorgis is an example of the later. These low born men were the backbone of Menilek's administration. They rose through the ranks and proved their loyalty and talent in Menilek's service. They made up the bulk of Menilek's initial cabinet and supported him even after his death.[80] No one displays the self made man in Menilek's regime better than *Fit.* Häbtä Giyoris. Häbtä Giyorgis was captured as a child prisoner of war by *Ras*

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[75] The Wällo case is discussed in Chapter 7. For Gojjam see Bizualem Birhane, "Adal Abba Tänna - Nigus of Gojjam and of Kaffa (1850-1902)" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1971); Abel Kassahun, "Dabra Marqos: Foundatio Growth and Development" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1984); Abdussamad Hajj Ahmad, "Trade and Politics in Gojjam, 1882-1935" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1980); Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 381.

[76] C.W. Gwynn, "A Journey in Southern Abyssinia," *Geographic Journal* 38, no. 2 (1911): 132-3. B.H. Jensen, "South-Western Abyssinia," *Geographic Journal* 25, no. 2 (1905): 162.

[77] See Figure 43

[78] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 381.

[79] In an especially horrible appointment was the former governor of Harar, Mäkonnen was given the post of Tigray with disastrous results. See Figure 45.

[80] George Montandon, *Au Pays Ghimirra Récit De Mon Voyage À Travers Le Massif Éthiopien, 1909-1911* (Neuchâtel: Attinger Freres,1913), 21.

Gobäna in 1863. Instead of returning him to his people, *Azazh* (minor military commander) *Abba* Tessema, part of Gobäna's force, adopted him and raised him as a son, teaching him horse riding, throwing spears and using shields. This training was interrupted by a *rist* dispute in which the disputer brought to light, on a unrelated matter, that in keeping Häbtä Giyorgis, this *Azazh* disobeyed Menilek's law regarding keeping prisoners of war. At this time, Häbtä Giyorgis was taken to the court of Menilek so that the *Azazh* could ask for pardon. He was given the pardon and Menilek took Häbtä Giyorgis to his horse stables as the new trainer of horses.[81]

Häbtä Giyorgis proved his worth as the emperor's trainer of horses and was made his chief *Elfiñ Ashkelay* (keeper of royal inner chamber) after only a year of employment. In addition he was given an infant child of Menilek's to raise. Unfortunately the child died at five, but the child's territories (areas around Lake Wech'i, Gurage areas of Shäwa) remained in the hands of Häbtä Giyorgis. Due to the fact that these lands also were where his mother was born, he was able to peacefully administer them and was also given the Gurage area of Ch'abo.[82] After proving to be a successful governor he proved his military ability during a particulary bloody campaign against the Walayta in 1894 and took part in the battle of Adwa.[83] As described earlier the battle took the lives of two high ranking generals, and Häbtä Giyorgis became Menilek's highest ranking General.[84]

His advice was sought out by Ethiopians and foreigners and when Menilek created his council of chiefs he appointed the former prisoner of war as its head. Oral sources relay an interesting story concerning the wisdom of the *Fitawrari*. A British official desired to have the territory where a British citizen had died and went to

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[81] Bäqqäla Wäldä-Mikaél, "Selä Kebur Fitawrari Habtä-Giyorgis Acher Yähewät Tarik (About the Life of the Honourable General Häbtä Giyorgis)," (Found in Appendix A of Mislu "Estate Administration"), 67-8. Oral evidence collected by Tekalign Wolde Mariam claims that he was captured after the battle of Gafarsa. Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1995), 90; Paul Mérab, *Impressions D'éthiopie (L'abyssinie Sous Ménélik II)*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1929), 79.

[82] His father was an Oromo from the Mächa subclan Denegde, who according to the writer of his short chronicler was a common man, but his great grandfather was a governor in Woliso. Bäqqäla, "Selä Kebur Fitawerari Habtä-Giyorgis," 70.

[83] Wolama case is another example of resistance, but unlike the king of Kafa,, Tato Gaki Sherocho, Kawa Tona became a part of Menilek's noble class. Häbtä Giyorgis was accompanied by a number of Menilek's nobles including *Ras* Mikaél.

[84] Bäqqäla, "Selä Kebur Fitawerari Habtä-Giyorgis," 70. His chronicler also states that *Fit* Gäbrähayu and Däj. Aboye died at Amba Alagi, but they died at the battle of Adwa.

Menilek's court to ask for the lands. Menilek did not know what to do, and he sent the official to Häbtä Giyorgis, who responded to him, "Téwodros's son died in India, so when you give us India we will give you Borana."[85] In addition to being an example of a self made man, he also displays the ways in which the Oromo, or other ethnic groups became important parts of the empire. He first was adopted, then proved his worth in both the areas of government and the military and was given various provinces to govern and led the army until his death.

While Häbtä Giyorgis was a powerful member of the council of chiefs, the creation of this council was also quite profound in its reorganization of the empire. Under the previous system the empire was administered by a small number of traditional officials, *Afä Negus* (Mouth of the King), *Ligaba* (Royal Chamberlain), T'or Abägaz (Frontier General), *Liqämäkwas* (Royal Lookalike), *Bäjerond* (Treasurer), *Näggrädas* (Minister of Trade), *Ras Bitwäddäd* ((lit. most loved), advisor) and *S'ähafé Te'ezaz* (Minister of the Pen).[86] In 1907 Menilek named *Afa Negus* Nasibu as the minister of justice and also appointed 12 regional judges, Häbtä Giyorgis as the minister of War, *Liqamakwas* Kätäma as the Minister of the Interior, *Näggrädas* Haylä Giyorgis as the Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs, *Bäjerond* Mulugeta as Minister of Finance[87], *Kantiba* ("Mayor" of a town) Wäldä S'adiq as the minister of Agriculture, Gäbrä Sellasé as Minister of the Pen, *Qänazmach* Mäkonnen as Minister of Public affairs and *Azazh* Mättafäria as Minister of the Palace.[88]

Later in 1909 he named Häbtä Giyorgis as president of the Council.[89] The changes that took place were due to the fact that Menilek desired a European style

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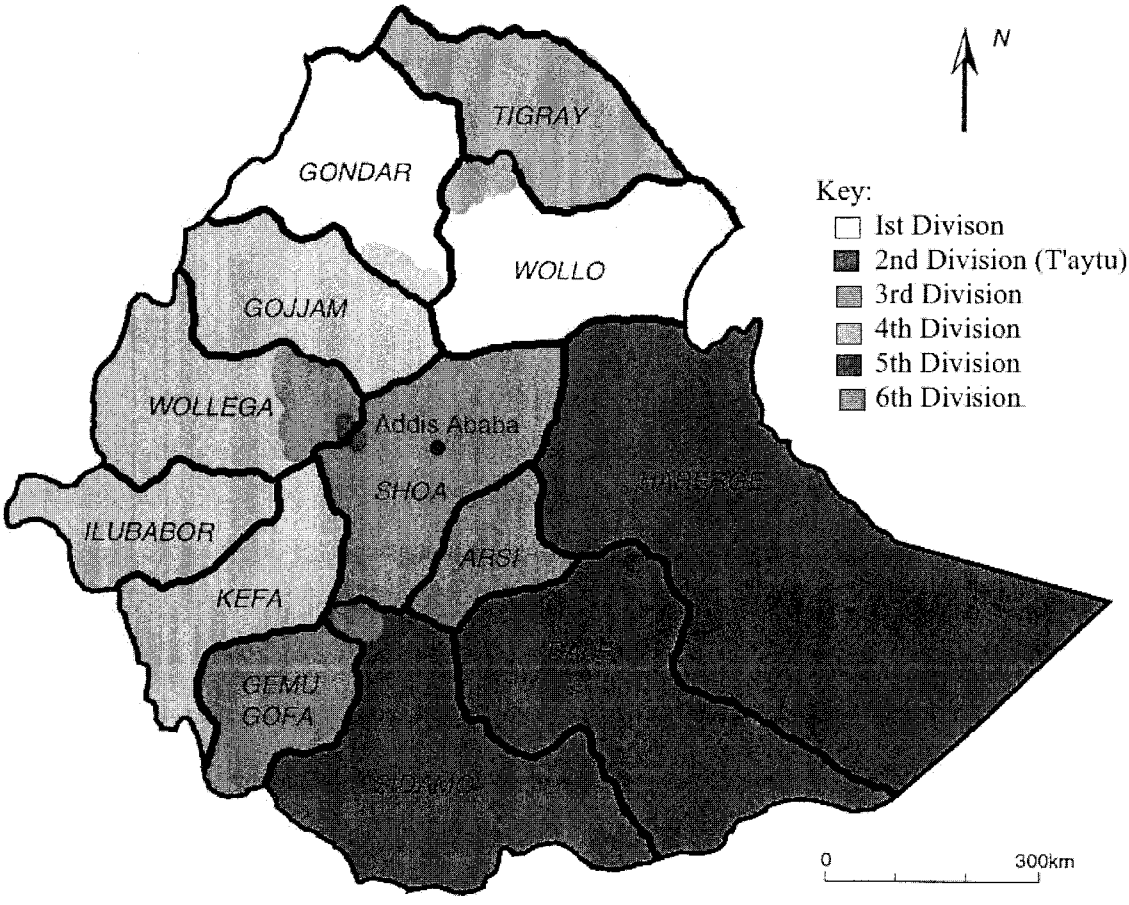
[85] Ato Asäfä interviewed by author and Mälaku Abära, translated by Mälaku Abära, tape recording, Addis Ababa, 22 February 08.
[86] Bairu Tafla, "Civil Titles and Offices in the Reign of Emperor Menilek II, 1889-1913," in *IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei, 1974), 597, 605.
[87] A precursor to this position was held by *Däj.* Balch'a. Balch'a was a eunuch of Gurage descent his service at Adwa and later on was rewarded by extensive lands and a promotion to *Däjazmach.* He was killed by the Italians in the early 1930s after bravely shooting Italian army leaders. For more on him see Tsehai Brhaneselassie, "The Life and Career of Dajazmac Balca Aba Näfso," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1971); Bairu Tafla, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 7, no. 2 (1969). Mulugeta later became the Minister of War. Bairu, "Civil Titles and Offices," 608.
[88] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 527-8. Also Bairu, "Civil Titles", 605-12.
[89] After Menilek's 1st round of strokes Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique, 527*; Mérab, *Impressions*, 79.

Figure 49: New Divisions of the Empire 1907[90]



administration and standardization of many regional political titles.[91] The role of his council of ministers was to check the authority of provincial nobles and to sustain centralization efforts after his death. In addition, Menilek was at the height of his power, many of the leaders of the *ancien regime* were dead and could make drastic changes to the political order to strengthen his own authority.[92] This step led to increased

[90] Divisions put in by author with information taken from Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 532-3; Herbert S. Mann, *Land Tenure in Chora (Shoa): A Pilot Study* Monographs in Ethiopian Land Tenure (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies; Faculty of Law Haile Sellassie University; Oxford University Press, 1965), 227-8. The map is taken from P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin, Alessandro Triulzi eds. *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries.* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1996), 311.

[91] As'é Yohannes and *Ras* Gobana died in 1888, *Negus* Täkla Haymanot died in 1901, *Ras* Mäkonnen died in 1905, *Azazh* Woldé S'adiq (Ifat) died in 1909, *Ras* Darge died in 1900.

[92] It is here where Perham is incorrect in asserting that the council of ministers was a threat to centralization. A close examination of the members of the council shows that there were no provincial powers on the council. Margery Freda Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London,: Faber and Faber, 1948), 90. While almost the entire council was Shäwan it is difficult to determine ethnicity. See *Belatén Géta* Mahtämä Selasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, *Ché Beläw (Yäfäräs Sem) Horse Names* (Addis Ababa: Neged

centralization of the empire, but left the various provinces in a tenuous situation. Some provinces, like the main components of Abyssinia, Gojjam, Wällo, Bägémder and Tigray (the 1st and 3rd divisions) did not have a high tax burden. While others, such as the newly conquered territories of Jimma and Wälläga had high and fixed tax burdens which further enriched the empire.[93] In the former provinces of Abyssinia, land had been previously allocated to Churches, peasants and local *balabats* on local terms.[94] Generally, in the Northern province, one third was given to the peasants and the remaining two thirds was given to the Church and the nobility.[95] Taxes ranged from 1/5 of crops produced in Bägémder and Gojjam to lower fixed and hereditary payments in salt or cereal in Wag, Lasta, Tigray and Yäjju.[96] In addition, in 1892 Menilek introduced a nationwide tax of ten percent to support the soldiers, which was directed at centralizing the army to be solely reliant on imperial revenues.[97] Lastly, some labor obligations such as carrying military supplies or participating in campaigns would exclude the peasant from paying taxes.

These new divisions in Ethiopian territories crossed ethnic boundaries and produced taxation and land tenure based on how a territory was incorporated into the state and not on ethnicity. Traditionally, taxes were collected by local provincial rulers, who gave the central government a part of what they received. In Menilek's Ethiopia, the situation was reversed, and with a few exceptions, the central government gave the local rulers a part of what they collected. Similarly, land tenure in the South was changed by

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[93] Mahtämä Śellasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times: The Land System of Ethiopia," *Ethiopian Observer* 1 (1957): 288. He also lists the lands of Beni Shangul, Awsa and Goba.

[94] While in real terms much of this land has not been measured. For an example see Allan Hoben, *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia; the Dynamics of Cognatic Descent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 29-30. Hoben's main problem of was determining who owned which land.

[95] Mahtämä Śellasé, "Land Tenure and Taxation," 288; Gabra-Wold-Ingida Worq, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation, Translated by Mengesha Gessesse," *Ethiopian Observer* 1962, 316-7. The later author lists 1/10 for Wag, Lasta and Bägémder, while Yäjju had a minimal land tax like Tigray. In Tigray, taxes were minimal, but labor, like in all of the other areas, in terms of military service or many other services to the ruler was expected. For examples of this labor see Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twenieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 1) " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 58.

[96] Mahtämä Śellasé, "Land Tenure and Taxation," 288-91.

[97] Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twenieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 1)," 44. Also the main thesis of Tsegaye's monograph *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism : The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, 2nd ed. (Hollwood, CA: Tsehai Publishers, 2007).

defining all land (either communal or privately owned) as state lands, thus creating a class of tenants who are taxed individually by the central government.[98] Tsegaye Tegenu makes a particularly well researched argument about the nature of the state and its role in controlling resources to maintain its army. I combine his research with other pertinent sources and argue that Menilek II's reformulation of land tenure brought *Häbäsha* land tenure norms, without, of course respecting the rights of the Southern tribute payers, throughout the empire and made personal relationships with the rulers of the provinces or the Shäwan appointed governors institutional through the differing land tenure and taxation policies.

Taxation in the lands to the South (divisions 4, 5 and 6) varied as well and represented a range from complete autonomy of local rulers, a mix of the local and Shäwan taxation to solely Shäwan taxation. The province of Hararge (in the 5th division) represented a mix between the former taxation policies set forth by Egyptian, Harari policies and Shäwan policies. This was accomplished by the central government which appointed their own leaders from Harari society (called Demina) into the previous system and taxing them 300 thalers per year as well as giving them three *gäbbars*.[99] Taxes varied according to the quality of the land and proximity to the city of Harar.[100] Jimma (annexed in 1881) and Wälläga (1885) were given autonomy with internal lands policy, but their leaders still had to pay a fixed annual rate, the equivalent of 40,000 Maria Theresa in gold in the case of Wälläga.[101] Also, they had to collect taxes at many of the

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[98] Mann, *Land Tenure in Chora (Shoa): A Pilot Study*, 225.

[99] Mahtämä Śellasé, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times," 293-5.

[100] For more on Harar's incorporation see Mohammed Hassen, "Menelik's Conquest of Harar, 1887, and Its Effect on the Political Organization of the Surrounding Oromo up to 1900," in *Working Papers on Society and History in Imperial Ethiopia: The Southern Periphery from the 1880s to 1974*, ed. Donald L. and Wendy James Donham (1980).

[101] Gabra-Wold-Ingida, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation," 321. The author does not give not amount for Jimma, but gives the amount that each citizen paid to the ruler at 5 thalers per year, 5 thalers for each married son, 2 thalers for every servant and various other collars amounts according to the amount of cattle and all evidence points to a substantial sum. Pankhurst synthesizing various eyewitness accounts writes that *Abba* Jimma Jiffar paid his tribute solely in kind and brought as much as 60 to 80 tents to Addis Ababa. Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government, (Part 3)" Marcus estimates in 1904, 350,000 MT, 15 kg. of Gold, 10 -20 Horses, 100-120 mule loads, 200-260 rugs and gifts of gold and silver for the Empress. Harold G. Marcus, "Some Reflections of the Development of Government and Taxation in Southern Ethiopia around the Turn of the Century" (paper presented at the IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici, Rome, April 10-15 1972), 634-5.

trading posts around their provinces, and often were interfered with by Shäwan traders.[102] Here, it is important to point out that the Northern provinces were endeared to central authority through gifts and lower taxes which were made up through exploiting Southern areas, furthering the division between the Northern and Southern territories.[103] However, unlike the Oromocentric claim, all Oromo are not Southerners. An additional point is that these personal Northern alliances died with Menilek and land tenure was increasingly centralized during the time of Haylä Sellassé.

A third type of taxation occurred in rebellious areas that were administered directly by Shäwan administrators, such as *Ras* Dargé, *Däj* Balch'a, *Ras* Woldä Giyorgis and *Fit.* Häbtä Giyorgis and was seen in areas of Shäwa, Illubabor, Wälläga, Sidamo, Kafa and Arsi. The land was measured in the late 19th century or early 20th century and the vast majority of the Oromo peasants were dispossessed and these lands were taxed according to the wishes of Central government and collected by a Shäwan official.[104] Measurement does not imply that this land had not been measured before, rather that it was not measured according to Shäwan norms. In many of the Southern Oromo states private land accumulation was common and partly contributed to the destruction of the *Gada* system and the rise of powerful Oromo figures.[105] In addition to the *Asrat* tax and rent, *gäbbars* in these areas also had to pay tax in specie or crops, which were based on both size of land and number of livestock.[106] Estimations of tax collection in Sidamo and Borana are 180,000 and 240,000 thalers per year.[107] According to Gabra-Wold-Ingida per Gasha of Qalad land, Kafa paid 15 thalers, Gamo Gofa and Arsi paid 12 thalers, and

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[102] See Allessandro Triulzi "Nekempte and Addis Abeba : The Dilemmas of Provincial Rule" in Donald L. Donham and Wendy James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia : Essays in History and Social Anthropology*, African Studies Series ; (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1986). This research is based on many of the documents in Truilzi, *Yäwälläga Yätarik*

[103] For an extended example of Menilek's gift giving to Northern Rulers, in this case Nägus Täkla Haymanot see Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 339-49.

[104] Berhanou Abbebe, *Evolution De La Properiete Fonciere Au Choa (Ethiopie) Du Regne De Menelik a La Constitution De 1931* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, Librarie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, 1971), 44.

[105] See Chapter four of Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860*, African Studies Series ; 66. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Gemeda, "Land, Agriculture and Society", 38-91.

[106] Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues, (Part 1)": 48-50. Also see glossary for further definitions of this terms *Asrat* and *gäbbars*.

[107] Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twenieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 2)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 40.

Sidamo paid 26.5 thalers.[108] Some interesting things about Figure 50 is that although a good amount of land in these territories had not been measured, the tribute payers were still taxed due to the fact that their lands were redefined as government lands under the administration of civil servants and soldiers. Also, due to the fact that all land was state land, there is a separate category of *balabat* land tenure, unlike in the Northern provinces and a few territories near to the imperial center.[109] This distinction brings a greater proportion of wealth produced in these lands directly to the imperial center without the traditional "buffer" of a provincial leader.

Figure 50: Early 20th Century Land Taxation in the Southern Territories[110]

Region	Wälläga	Illubabor	Kafa	Gomu Gofa	Sidamo	Harar
Quter Gabbar	15,943		48,889	3,930	75,108	70,000
Qalad Gabbar	2,757	36,818	14,648		21,134	
Total	18,700	36,818	63,547	3,930	96,242	70,000

Units are in *Gashas*

Figure 51: Taxation in Arsi and Shäwa[111]

	|-------*Balabats*-----|	|------ Tribute Payers----|		|-----Tenants-----|	
Region	*Siso & Dasta*	*Wäräda Gendäbal*	*Gäbar Gendabal*	*Qutr Gäbar*	*Qalad Gäbar*	*Madariya*	*Samon*	*Total*
Shäwa	11,483	754	14,677	39,216	25,838	32,536	10,922	135,427
Arsi	3,641				7,275	10,266	494	21,676

Units are Maria Theresa Thalers

The tax system in Shäwa mirrors Arsi the closest, due to their proximity and sharing *Ras* Dargé as a governor.[112] The landowner was put under the authority of a

[108] Gabra-Wold-Ingida, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation," 321-4.

[109] For a concise and clear discussion of the differences between the land tenure in the North and South see Chapter 5 in Janet Hoard Sanchez, "Political Incorporation in Ethiopia, 1875-1900" (MA Thesis, California State University at Long Beach, 1974).

[110] Tsegaye, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism*, 253. *Quter Gabbar* refers to peasants who have not had their individual lands measured and *Qalad Gabbar* are those who have had their lands measured. Bairu notes that *Ras* Wolde Giyorgis had a standard one thaler tax on citizens of Kafa. Bairu Tafla, "Two of the Last Provincial Kings of Ethiopia," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 11, no. 1 (1973): 52.

[111] Tsegaye, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism*, 253. *Wäräda Gendäbal* are lands that support cavalry and *Gabar Gendabal* are lands that support military auxiliaries.

governor appointed by Imperial authority called a *Mislane*, collected the taxes and administered the land.[113] Also, in regards to Shäwa, there are a variety of taxes aimed at directly supporting the households of Shäwan administrators and military as well as the Emperor.[114] Similar to the Southern regions wealth in these areas was brought into the imperial center without a traditional buffer.

Generally, in the North land was split between *rest* and *gult*.[115] Regions further to south, such as Sidamo and Borana, administered directly by the Shäwan administrators, the former prisoners of war, *Fit.* Häbtä Giyorgis and *Däj.* Balch'a land was measured and split between these governors, the government, *balabats* (landowners) and peasants.[116] Community or private lands were redefined as *Siso* and split into two parts, two thirds becoming the property of the state and the one third that is left given to the Oromo *balabats.*[117] In addition, even this one-third was technically under the domain of the state and was administered by a Shäwan civil servant, who replaced the *balabat* in not only being the largest landholder, but also being the sole authority in the area.[118] Berhanu writes,

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[112] See Wakene, "The Family of Rās Dārge and the Church in Salale"; Zeleke, "The Oromo of Salaalee: A History (C.1840-1936)". The aging Dargé appointed two Shäwan Oromos, *Fit.* Demqu Magraqu and *Fit.* Täsämma Guch'i as governors of Arrusi in 1887. Bairu Tafla, "Ras Dargé Sahlä-Sellasé, C. 1827-1900 " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 13, no. 2 (1975): 30.

[113] Berhanou, *Evolution De La Properiete Fonciere Au Choa (Ethiopie)*, 118-224. He also lists many of the officials under the landowner. See the figure on the next page for specific information.

[114] Also, the 2nd division directly supported the Empress, providing her with an important and independent capital base. See Figure 43.

[115] See Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia : From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000). and Hoben, *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia.* They are other types of land tenure such as *rim* (loosely defined as sharecropping) and *äläqa* (inheriting estates in one piece as opposed to the splitting that occurs during rest inheritance), and research has uncovered that land was in fact bought and sold, but these practice were not the norm. See Habtamu Mengistie, *Lord, Zéga and Peasant: A Study of Property and Agrarian Relations in Rural Eastern Gojjam*, FSS Special Monograph Series No. 1 (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2004). And for a excellent summary of the literature on land tenure see Shiferaw Bekele, "A Historical Outline of Land Tenure Studies," in *Anthropological and Historical Documents on <<Rim>> in Ethiopia and Eritrea*, ed. Alessandro Bausi, Gianni Dore, and Irma Taddia (Torino, Italy: L'Harmattan, 2001).

[116] Gabra-Wold-Ingida, 321-4.

[117] Berhanu Abebe has developed a pan-ethnic definition of *balabat* and writes, "A Person of a good family, descended of noble race, that, of right follows his father. Native, indigenous, this Title designated in the regions of the South and the West the local notables, non Abyssinians (Galla, Sidama, etc.) while others [Northerners] known Abyssinian Šum or to all other chiefs of the feudal hierarchy of Abyssinia. In all provinces and regions, chiefs of the "subjects ", of the gebbār,; or born of a civilized family; descended of notables; whose father is big; chief of tribe in every district - bālābbāt of the Gāllā." Berhanou, *Evolution De La Properiete Fonciere Au Choa (Ethiopie)*, 34.

[118] Ibid., 40-4.

> In the Gällä regions, where the measuring has not been done, the malkañña, a soldier or the Government's civil servant, is the one who collects property taxes and determines the quota to which the owners of the rest are subjugated . . . The foundation of his [Malkaña] rights is his functions as a collector of the levied taxes of a district. [In regards] to the tax department [it] must be widely defined here, since these consist in farming and military obligations [in addition to crops or specie] (according to the circumstances and the statute of the parcels that compose the district), and in contributions of that nature."[119]

The other two thirds became state lands and were split into four different categories. The first category, *hudad*, was reserved for local civil servants and was taken either from peasant lands or fallow lands and was cultivated by landed and dispossessed peasants and paid servants. The second category, *Mätäkiya Mänqäya,* is reserved for soldiers. The third category, *shum shir* is set aside for government officials and the last category, Mängest (lit. government) was kept fallow and controlled by the government.[120]

Figure 52: Early 20th Century Arsi and Shäwan categories of Land[121]

Region	*Siso* *(Balabat)*	*Dästa* *(Balabat)*	*Qalad* *Gebär* (Peasants)	*Samon* (Church)	*Mängest* *Mätäkiya* (Gov't)	Total
Shäwa	8,629 (13%)	911 (1%)	25,838 (39%)	4,030 (6%)	13,863 (21%)	66,819
Arsi	3,528 (13%)	113 (.4%)	5,493 (21%)	494 (2%)	10,266 (39%)	26,329

Units are *Gashas*

At this juncture it is important to highlight in the above chart. First, about one-sixth of Shäwan lands are in the hands of *balabats*, while only one-eighth is in the hands of *balabats* in Arsi. In addition, less that one fifth of the land of Arsi is in the hands of the peasant, while about two fifth is in the hands of the peasants in Shäwa. Land controlled by the government is nearly double the percentage in Arsi than it is in Shäwa. Lastly,

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[119] Ibid., 44-5.

[120] Tsegaye, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism : The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, 90.

[121] Taken from a larger chart in Ibid., 251. 8 percent of the land of Shäwa is in the category of Unknown or Extra, 12 percent is in other categories of exclusively Shäwan land tenureand 24 percent of the land Arsi are in the category Unknown or Extra

Church lands in Arsi are barely a third of that of Shäwa. An examination of the chart below displays the lack of a diversity of categories in land tenure, in many of these territories. In this new system many Southern peasants lost their lands, so much so that in 1890, Menilek decreed to give them their lands back. Gäbrä Sellasé writes, "As so decreed Menilek: 'While I govern my father's country, it is not necessary that the children of the Galla balabats stay disinherited.'" And he ordered henceforth, the children of the Galla balabats would share their paternal lands with the Amharas."[122] While it is difficult to determine how he is defining the "Galla," but this statement speaks to the confiscation of lands in the South and in Shäwa, and Menilek's desire to return lands to them. This redistribution empowered the former landowners at the expense of the governors, who had less land to charge rent.[123]

Figure 53: Early 20th Century *Qalad* Lands in the Southern Territories[124]

Region	Shewa	Illubabor	Wälläga	Arsi	Kafa	Sidamo
Qalad Lands	25,838	36,816	2,757	5,493	14,684	21,134
Total	66,819	36,816	2,757	26,329	14,684	21,134

Units are *Gashas*

In the chart directly above, Wälläga has the least amount of *Qalad* land due to the fact that it kept regional autonomy.[125] A last point I desire to make concerning the Imperial treasury is the ways in which it was used as a final safeguard against periodic famine. During the famine in the late 19th century tens of thousands of starving Ethiopians were fed from royal reserves of food crops.[126] All of these measures began the

[122] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 590; Gabra-Wold-Ingida, 311. This source gives a more complete view of the edict takes the lands taken by Governors as *Siso* and gave one *gasha* of land is the Governor has four to six *gashas*, one half a *gasha* when he has two to three, and a quarter when he has one.
[123] Berhanou, *Evolution De La Properiete Fonciere Au Choa* This author also notes that the previous system retarded the development of capitalistic agricultural advances.
[124] Ibid.
[125] For more Wälläga's incorporation see Tesema Ta'a,. "Defending Regional Autonomy and Cultural Identity: The Case of Leeqa Naqamtee and Leeqa Qellem (1882-1937)." *Journal of Oromo Studies 15*, no. 1 (March 2008): 41-77.
[126] Also the traveler Charles Johnston notes a similar instance in the 1820s with Menilek's grandfather distributing the grain. See Charles Johnston, *Travels in Southern Abyssinia* (Franborough,: Gregg, 1972), vol. 2, 158.

process of the centralization of all of the country's resources, the fruits of which Menilek used to loan money, buy modern technology and ensure a large surplus.

Figure 54: The Imperial Treasury[127]

Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Surplus
1902	3,642,929	1,927,515	1,715,414
1903	2,430,970	1,545,785	885,185
1904	3,131,428	1,674,499	1,456,929

Some 20th century Oromocentric scholars have argued that differences between land tenure in the North and South are due to the ethnocentric policies of the Emperor, while I argue it has more to do with place and history, than ethnicity. The late 19th century was a time of great wars, disease and famine in the North and due to such these provinces could give very little tribute. While in the South, lands were rich and relatively disease free. Also, land tenure was remarkably different in the South, where confiscated land was generally in the hands of Shäwan Oromo and Amhara *balabats* from the North, where *rest* and *gult* solidified the rights for the Church, local governors and the Oromo, Amhara and Tigré peasants to keep their lands. Tsegaye connects the conquest of the South to that of Gondarine system as simply a matter of expanding the number of tribute payers as a way to centralize military resources.[128] However, the treatment of the Northern provinces in this manner would end as the 20th century arrived, due to the fact that many of the old guard died or rebelled against the state, and the regions were either split and given to loyal local figures, such as in Gojjam or given new Shäwan leadership, such as in Tigray, Harar, Bägémder, and later Gojjam.[129] The sole exception is Wällo whose leader *Ras* Mikaél kept his autonomy throughout the reign of Menilek and increased the size of province, eventually becoming the *Negus* of Wällo, Amhara and Tigray and was crowned by his son, the successor to Menilek.[130]

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[127] The units are (MT). Taken from four charts in Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation , (Part 3)," 108-9. In addition to the Imperial treasury, both Menilek and T'aytu had their own treasuries. T'aytu's were 154,880, 219,916 and 253,626. While Menilek's treasury was valued at around 1,000,000 for the same period. Ibid.
[128] Tsegaye, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism*, 53. And I make a similar argument in Chapter 5.
[129] For *Qalad* policies in Harar see Ezekiel Gebissa, *Leaf of Allah*, 42-5.
[130] Wällo will be discussed in the next chapter. And for more on Mikaél's coronation see Wolbert G.C. Smidt, "The Coronation of Negus Mikael in Desse in May 1914: A Photograph from Nachlass Jensen and Its Historical Background," *Annales d'Éthiopie* XVII, no. 1 (2001), Wolbert G.C. Smidt, "The Coronation of Negus Mikaél King of Wällo and Tegray, in May 1914 New Findings," *Annales d'Éthiopie* XXIII, no. 1 (2007-8).

Conclusion

Menilek took the upstart Nägassi line from mountains of Mänz to the largest empire in Ethiopia's long history. Using, as his guide, the legacy of his coalition-building grandfather, Sähla Sellassé to gain and centralize authority. Menilek did this by first centralizing the resources of Shäwa gained through alliances with Shäwan Oromo and Muslim powers. Using this foundation he expanded his authority into the areas to the East, West and South of his province. Events in the northern part of the country, brought this king these provinces, which submitted to him due to his strength and his skillful diplomacy. He ruled each territory differently, simultaneously respecting old agreements, negotiating others and creating new ones. His empire dealt with famines and foreign threats successfully by recentering the empire to the South which maximized both sides of the increasingly lucrative long distance trade. He did this by taxing local products, creating his own currency, issuing loans, establishing a bank and, perhaps most importantly creating a group of loyal civil servants who reportedly directly to him to administer his new policies.

The other side of this trade was to control European access to Ethiopia's resources. He granted concessions and monopolies to companies that he favored and established a railroad to get the products which generally were kept in Addis Ababa to the coast. In addition to controlling trade, he brought the remnants of Yohannes' generally highborn ruling elite together with his family and his low born elite through marriage ties, mutually beneficial alliances and a low tax burden. The success of the policies would be put to the test as his health declined during the first decade of the 20th century incapacitating him and centrifugal forces in his large empire threatened to pull it apart. Similar to the last few centuries, the Oromo would be intimately involved in this new variant of the Ethiopian state after Menilek's death. As the next chapter demonstrates, Wällo was essential in Ethiopian developments of the late 19th and early 20th century.

Chapter Seven:

Cementing the Bond with Shäwa and the Creation of Modern Ethiopia: Wällo, 1889-1913

"When therefore the political condition of Abessinia shall become more settled, - which it may be reasonably be expected to become, seeing the savage Galla, whose inroads caused the devastation of the country, are every generation becoming more civilized, those who have not amalgamated with the Christian Abessinans having adopted the Mohammedan religion and formed independent States in the very heart of the country, namely the portion of it through which the road in question [Tadjurrah trade route] leads, we shall doubtless see this road resume its pristine importance, and the commerce from the coast to the interior in great party pass by this channel."[1]

"I [Menilek II] have come in order to bring the Wallo people close to me through politeness and amity and to teach them, so that I will enable them to enjoy the rule of this world and later [to inherit] the Kingdom of Heaven, by Christ's benevolence."[2]

The latter quote brings us back to the central themes of this dissertation, simultaneously shifting identities of non-*Häbäsha* elites, stabilizing war ravaged regions and, re-integrating former *Häbäsha* strongholds in the context of creating a modern state. The previous chapter argued that Menilek desired to have his personal alliances outlive him, and Wällo was key to the successful passing of authority. As mentioned in chapter seven trade routes into the central parts of the country were becoming dominant and access to the rest of the world was not restricted to the Northern parts of the country. Wällo bordered all of the northern *Häbäsha* provinces and was viewed by the 19th century Emperors as central to national unity. Tewodros ravaged this rebellious region, while both Yohannes and Menilek used the remnants of its nobility to administer the province, gradually integrating the region's majority Muslim Amharic speaking population into the growing empire. This chapter will trace the Mammadoch line from

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[1]Charles Tilstone Beke, *Letters on the Commerce and Politics of Abessinia and Other Parts of Eastern Africa, Addressed to the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade*, 3 vols. (London: 1852), vol. 1, 8. He also correctly predicted that Shäwa and Wällo would replace the northern provinces of Tigray and Bägémder in importance relative to trade. See Ibid., vol. 3, 7 His view is echoed in Charles William Isenberg, J. L. Krapf, and James MacQueen, *Journals of the Rev. Messrs. Isenberg and Krapf : Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, Detailing Their Proceedings in the Kingdom of Shoa, and Journeys in Other Parts of Abyssinia, in the Years 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842 : To Which Is Prefixed, a Geographical Memoir of Abyssinia and South-Eastern Africa, by James M'queen* (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1843), 358-9.

[2] Hussein Ahmad, "The Chronicle of Shawā: A Partial Translation and Annotation" (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1981), 34-5.

controlling parts of Wällo to controlling the state, through stable loyal policies, marriage ties and Shewan support.

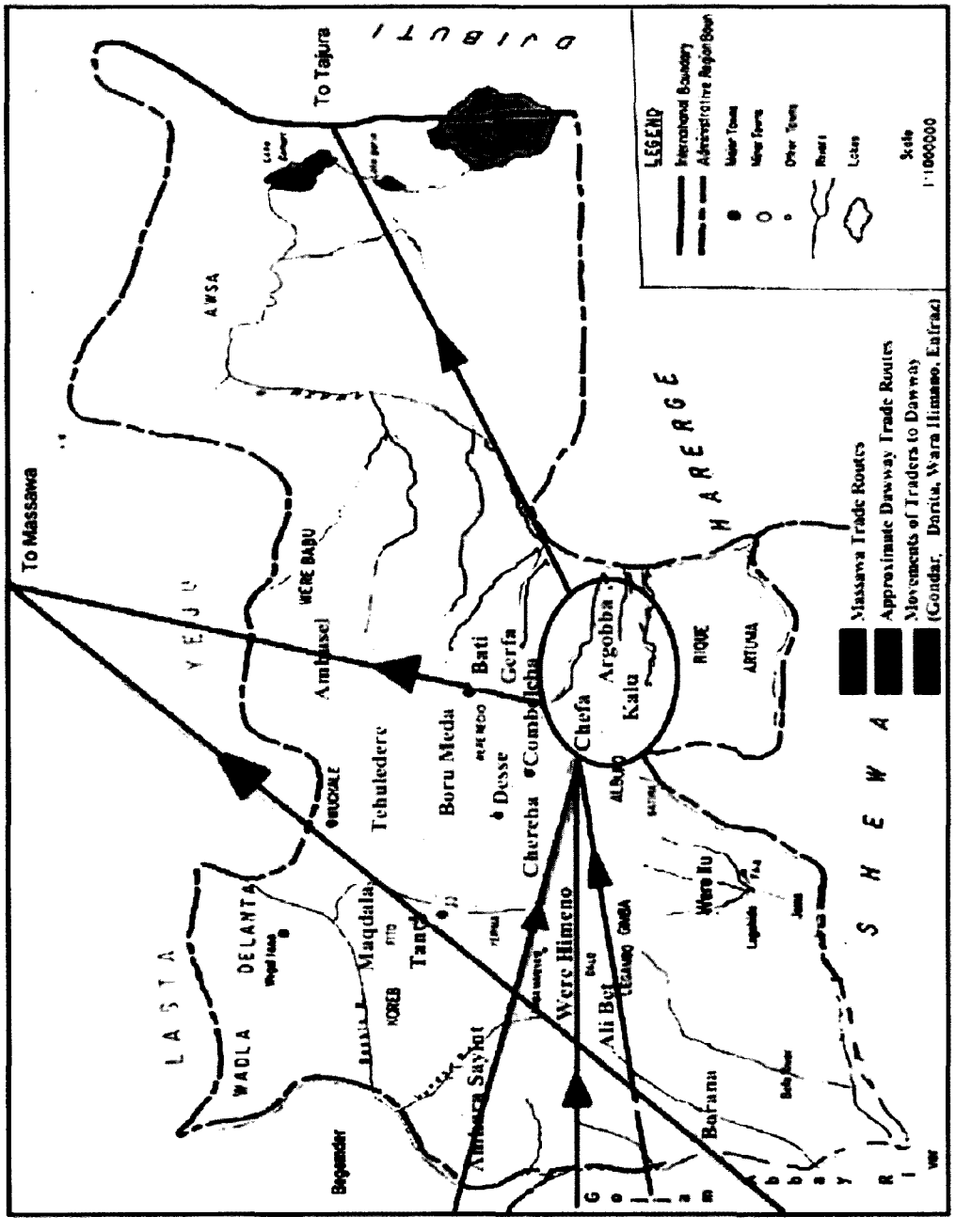
After Yohannes took complete control of the province in 1882, direct authority was nominally given to his young son, Araya, and later to Mikaél. Soon after Araya took control, the territory rebelled against his application of Yohannes' religious policies. Mikaél's support in putting down the rebellion and successfully governing his own territories were important to Mikaél regaining the throne of his father after the death of Araya. In this chapter, I detail the three most important aspects of his rule. First, he opened up Wällo for increasing trade. Second, he maintained a balance between Christianity and Islam, while ruling a majority Muslim province in an increasingly Muslim country. Three, he increased the political importance of Wällo in the context of an Empire that was increasingly centered in Shäwa, which shifted Wällo's overall strategic position from the center to the North. Here, again, it is important to point out the remarkable silences within Ethiopian scholarship concerning political and economic developments in Wällo. It falls out of both the Semitist and Oromocentric schools for the same reason, it is an important majority Oromo Muslim province at the center of Ethiopian politics. This phenomenon challenges the Semitist assumptions of the solely Amhara Tigré controlled state and the Oromocentric separation of the Abyssinian and Oromo nations due to its integration into the Empire, while possessing a Muslim Oromo majority.

Finding Wällo's New Trade

In the 18th and 19th centuries Wällo was known as a center for local trade in Abyssinia and played a key role in long distance trade as a stopping point on the route leading to the prominent trading ports of Massawa and, later, Tajura.[3] Locally, it was mainly a source of horses, this province being known for its breeding and horsemanship. In addition, the trading center located at Dawway was important because it was a focal point for the exchange of highland and lowland crops.[4] This center replaced the town of Bati, situated along the Massawa trade route. Generally the trade was handled by

[3] Richard Pankhurst, "The Trade of Northern Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1964): 78, 88.
[4] Highland Crops included Coffee, Cotton, Pepper, Tobacco and Fruits and Lowland trade items included Salt and animal skins. See Figure 39 for location of Dawway (the circled area).

Figure 55: Wällo Trade Routes in the mid 19th century[5]



[5] Asnake Ali, "Aspects of the Political History of Wallo, 1872-1916 " (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1983). Information for trade routes obtained from Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of Princes, the Challenges of Islam and the Re-Unification of the Christian Empire (1769-1855)* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 45; Hussein Ahmed, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia : Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia, V. 74. (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2001), 142; Ahmed Hassen Omer, "Some Notes on Harar and the Local Trade Routes: A Report on the View of Ex-Merchants of Shäwa (1839-1935)," *Annales d'Éthiopie* XVII (2001): 149; C.F. Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1935), 228-9.

Muslims in the area, in addition to Muslim traders of Gondar, Darita and Wära Himano.[6] However, this area was the site of devastations by *Ras* Mikaél, Yohannes and Menilek due to the fact that it was often where rebels escaped.[7] However, with Shäwan ascendancy in the late 19th century, Massawa and Dawway declined in importance due to founding of a new capital, Addis Ababa in 1886, and more importantly the fact that Menilek imported goods to the south of Massawa through Tajura (present day Djibouti) and Zayla instead of Massawa (Tigray) made Wällo just north of the new principal route.

As leader of a province that was losing its role in long distance trade and attempting to find its economic position in the Empire, *Ras* Mikaél stabilized the war torn region to increase local trade and find new outlets for export. Wällo's value was in its position between Shäwa and Tigray. His province was along the Addis Ababa to Massawa caravan routes, and in addition to Dessé, Wära Ilu and Boru Méda became important loci for internal trade.[8] In the late 19th century Menilek favored Obok and even later Djibouti where he began the construction of a railroad that connected it to Addis Ababa.[9] Mikaél hired new traders and encouraged even more to come to his base at Dessé from the Tajura trade route.[10] In addition to this, the lands of Awsa were largely controlled by Muslims, it is here that Mikaél's Muslim background was tantamount and he acted as a buffer between these coastal Muslim powers and the inland Christian Ethiopians in trade and diplomacy. In addition, in Menilek's reorganization of various civil posts, the provincial customs was put under the authority of *Näggrädas* Täsfay in Mikaél's capital Dessé.[11]

The territories of the Awsa and Afar had acknowledged Shäwan authority since the times of Sähla Sellassé, but a rogue agent of Abu Bakr, an Afar at Tajura (d.1889)

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[6] see Hussein, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia : Revival, Reform, and Reaction*, 143-59; Abdussamad H. Ahmad, "Darita, Bagemder: An Historic Town and Its Muslim Population, 1830 - 1889," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22, no. 3 (1989).

[7] Hussein, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo, Ethiopia*, 159.

[8] Richard Pankhurst, "The Trade of Central Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1964): 73-4.

[9] For details of the trade conducted through the port in the late 19th and early 20th century see ———, "The Trade of the Gulf of Aden Ports of Africa in the Nineteenth and Early Centuries " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 3, no. 1 (1965).

[10] Abdu Mohammed Ali, "A History of Dase Town, 1941-1991" (MA Thesis, Addis Ababa Univeristy, 1997), 8. Also see Jules Borelli, *Ethiopia Meridonionale: Journal De Mon Voyage Aux Pays Amhara, Oromo Et Sidama Septembre 1885 a Novembre 1888*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1890), vol. 1, 1-45.

[11] Adrien Zervos, *L'empire D'ethiopie* (Athens: La Bibliothèque Nationale d'Athens, 1936), 153.

sold the lands to the French in 1862, when Menilek was still in Tewodros' prison.[12] These lands became important for Wällo and Shäwa for two reasons, their ports and hinterlands were essential in Shäwan (and later Imperial Ethiopian) trade and, as the pace of "The Scramble for Africa" increased, these lands could be used by the European powers (France, Italy and Britain) as springboards for conquest, as their colonial possessions bordered these territories. For Ethiopia to remain independent the ties between the Shäwan center and the Muslim hinterlands must continue to be strong.

Religion in Wällo: The Christian Island in the Sea of Islam

As stated earlier, the Mammadoch dynasty used Islam as a source of legitimacy throughout the 18th and 19th centuries; however, in the late 19th century the leaders of this dynasty converted to Christianity and used ties to the central state to legitimize their rule. As we have already seen, the territories governed by *Abba* Wat'aw (Haylä Maryam) had already rebelled against religious policies oppressive to Islam. Some oral information indicates that while *Abba* Wat'aw was headquartered in Dessé he ordered the new post-*Boru Meda converts to Christianity to burn Qu'rans on the top of a hill.*[13] Thus, one of Mikaél's main challenges was performing his duties as a Christian ruler, but, unlike *Abba* Wat'aw, not completely alienating his majority Muslim population.[14] In addition, the existing structures that the Mammadoch employed to mobilize troops and resources under an Islamic banner could no longer be utilized as they were representatives of the Christian state. These structures were now utilized by Muslim clerics in order to organize for rebellion. Mikaél held his splintering province together by outwardly practicing Christianity, separating religious rebellions from their political motivations and never completely severing ties with the Islamic legacy of his predecessors.[15]

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[12] R. A. Caulk edited and with an introduction by Bahru Zewde, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas": A Diplomatic History of Ethiopia (1876-1896)* (Wiesbaden [Germany]: Harrassowitz, 2002), 87.

[13] Shék Dowed Ahmäd interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 26 Hädar 2000 E.C. (06 December 2007 Gregorian Calender).

[14] These Christian duties include the foundation of Churches, which required not only the confiscation of lands and the creation of new taxes for its maintenance but also *corvée* labor for its construction.

[15] An interesting note is that Mikaél kept this balance throughout his life as displayed by the Muslim and Christian language in his seal after becoming a King. For more on this issue see Wolbert G.C. Smidt, "Annex: The Seals of Negus Mika'él as Published by Tornay & Sohier, 2007 66-9." *Annales d'Éthiopie* XXIII, no. 1 (2007-8): 436-8; "The Coronation of Negus Mikaél King of Wällo and Tegray, in May 1914 New Findings." *Annales d'Éthiopie* XXIII, no. 1 (2007-8), 418.

During his reign, *Ras* Mikaél established churches and spread Christianity throughout his province. Oral informants indicate that he founded Tanta Mikaél (Wära Himano), Mädhané Alem (Dessé), Qedest Maryam (Dessé), among many other churches.[16] In this task he alienated many Muslims because in order to maintain these churches he granted them Madariya land.[17] Wällo had a relatively dense population, thus, this process involved disposing the lands of, for the most part, Muslim peasants. Oral evidence also points to Madariya lands being granted to Mosques as well, and this is logical due to the fact that it would tie both religions to Mikaél and also establishing churches demonstrated to Menilek his commitment to Christianity.[18] In addition to supporting both religions, he had a diverse court of both Muslims and Christians, native Wälloyé and Northerners. In addition he is remembered, unlike *Abba* Wat'aw, as one who remained respectful to his upbringing as a Koranic student by not burning the book like his rival and even keeping his first *Qu'ran*, which some informants have seen and read from.[19] In addition, after Menilek's edict enforcing religious tolerance, Mikaél prudently advised his Muslim population, "while they can carry their daily provisions in public, they should keep their personal convictions to themselves."[20]

The conflicts that arose from this diversity and the handling of it by *Ras* Mikaél display not only his ability to deal with a complicated situation, but also the commitment to adhering to both political and religious national sentiments. An especially verbose informant relates a story that occurred before the death of Yohannes IV,

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[16] See figure 41 for a picture of Qedest Mariyam church. Ato Asafä Gäräd Nägäsh interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 11 Tahases 2000 E.C. (22 December 2007 Gregorian Calender); Ato Täfärä Mäläku interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 25 Hädar 2000 E.C. (04 December 2007 Gregorian Calender) Textual sources also include Giyorgis Bilan, Sel Bet Mariyam and Mikaél at Wära Himano Assefa Balcha, "The Court of 'Negus' Mikael: An Analysis of Its Structure and a Desription of the Role of 'Ayteyefe' Hall" (BA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1984); Asnake, "Aspects of the Political History of Wallo, 1872-1916 ".

[17] Usufruct right of land given to either government employees (especially in the Southern territories) or Church officials (Wällo)

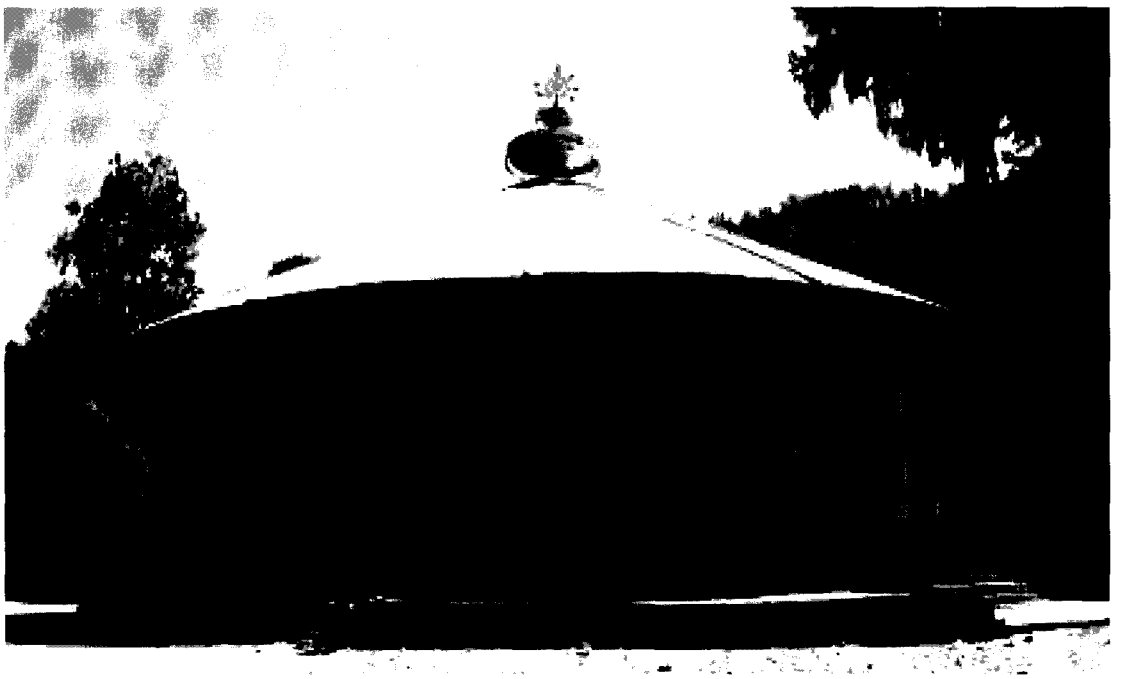
[18] Ato Täfärä Mäläku interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 25 Hädar 2000 E.C. (04 December 2007 Gregorian Calender)

[19] Shék Dowed Ahmäd interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 26 Hädar 2000 E.C. (06 December 2007 Gregorian Calender); Sayed Kamal interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 19 Hädar 2000 E.C. (11 November 2007 Gregorian Calender)

[20] Asnake, "Aspects", 39. The translation of the Amharic couplet ስንቱህን በእሀይዝ፡ በመልክን በጉያ፡ is provided in the thesis.

Many Tigré priests were sent by Yohannes IV to Desse, [One day] on the way to the center of the city a member of *Ras* Mikaél's entourage insulted the Prophet Mohammed by calling him a simple man incapable of having the word of God. *Ras* Mikaél's uncle [an umbrella holder[21]] got mad and went to the marketplace [now a Mosque in Dessé][22] and then went to Mädhané Aläm[23] and massacred many priests and then went to *Ras* Mikaél's hall (Ayät'ayef Hall)[24] and attempted to kill him, but was arrested by his bodyguards and hung and later burned because of his body doing strange things, but his clothes were not burned.[25]

Figure 56: Qedest Mariyam Church, Dessé[26]



[21] Nobility generally did not go outside uncovered and therefore they required umbrellas called Jant'ella to be put over them.

[22] See Figure 55, Oral evidence indicates that this site was originally supposed to have a statue of Mikaél. This event caused many of Dessé's Muslim to become upset and instead a Mosque was built on that site. Shimäles Hasen Aragaw Häshim Ali T'aher Ambsa Gädäro interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 26 Hädar 2000 E.C. (9 December 2007 Gregorian Calender).

[23] See Figure 54 for a similar structure in Dessé. I went to Mädhané Aläm Church but the head priest did not allow me to take a picture of this church.

[24] See Figure 56.

[25] Wäyzäro Arägäsh Dämäsé Arefo interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 27 Hädar 2000 E.C. (02 December 2007 Gregorian Calender) and the same story was also recounted by Sayed Kamal interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 19 Hädar 2000 E.C. (11 November 2007 Gregorian Calender)

[26] Picture taken by author 16 Jan 2008

Figure 57: Dessé Mosque[27]

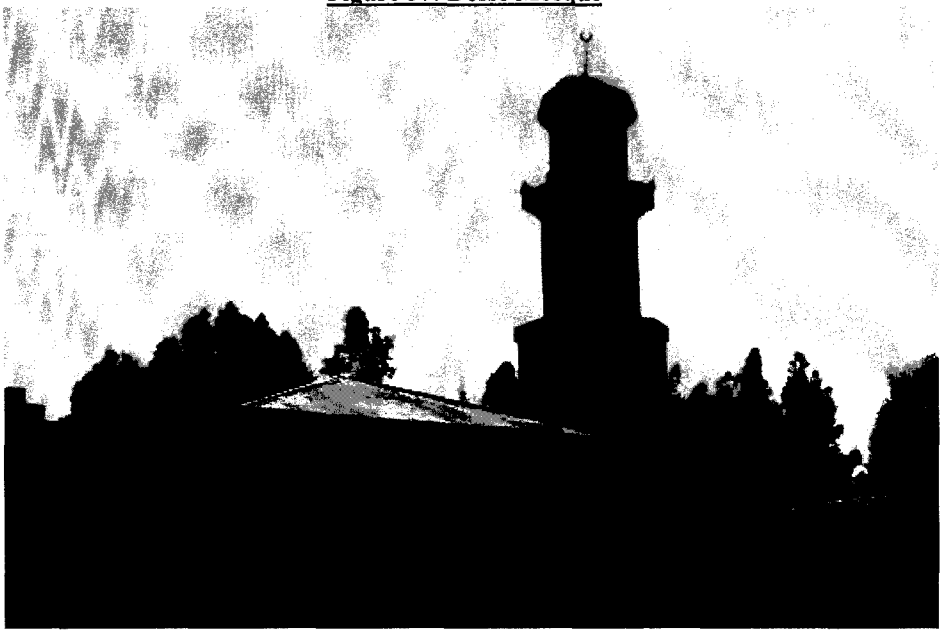
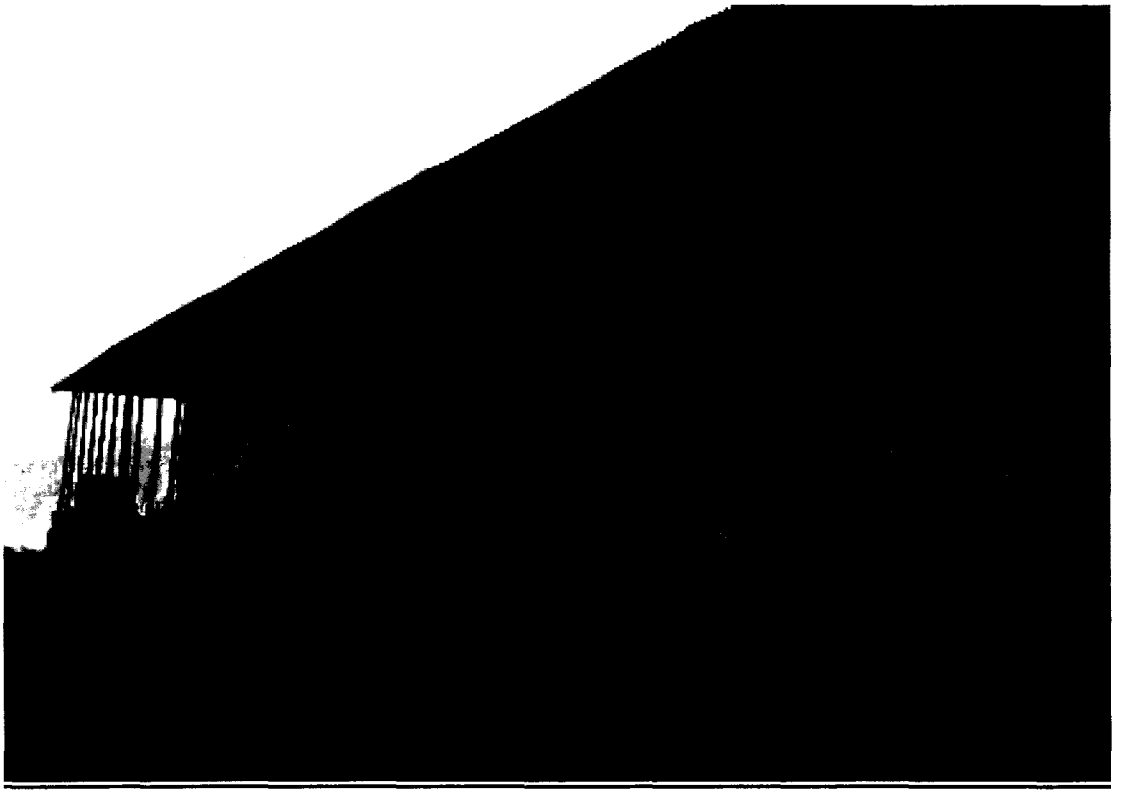


Figure 58: Ayt'äyaf Hall[28]



[27] Picture taken by author 16 Jan 2008
[28] Picture taken by author 16 Jan 2008

Beyond the fact that this is an interesting story, it speaks to many aspects of the complications of Mikaél's administration. Being both a patron and a client, he had to not only follow national policies of his Christian patron, but also had to be mindful not to alienated his Muslim clients. First, there were many Muslims in his immediate family, who he generally did not disown. Second, he had many Northern spies in his court who kept a watchful eye on his actions.[29] Third, the majority of his province was Muslim and he could not afford to alienate them or Christian imperial authority. *Ras* Mikaél's handling of the affair displayed his willingness to kill even his family (given the fact that his uncle did try to kill him), if they had a major transgression against the state or church. This action displayed to the Tigrinyans his willingness to serve the needs of the empire while simultaneously showing the population of Dessé the consequences of attacking church or state officials.

More generally, Mikaél's response reminded all involved parties of his commitment to Christianity, the only debatable element of his *Häbäshaness*. It is also showed to his province that while Islam would be accepted, actions against Christianity would not. Lastly, it is important to point out that had this event occurred two decades earlier, Mikaél's uncle would have been honored as a hero, not as an enemy of the state. He also did not hesitate to punish Christian clerics who violated societal rules. Another informant relates a story of a lady who was married to a priest, this lady had an affair with another priest, who was blind. They were caught and punished. Mikaél ordered castration for the blind priest and the woman's nose was cut off.[30] His commitment to the proper practice of Christianity does not end there and he was known as a true Christian who did not begin eating breakfast until he was informed by one of the five priests at the nearby Mädhané Alem church that morning Mass was completed.[31] Mikaél strongly

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[29] Yohannes obtained four bishops from Egypt and used these bishops and their subordinates to not only enforce uniform religious doctrine, but also to keep his eyes on his most powerful vassals, Täkla Haymanot, Menilek II and Mikaél.

[30] Ato Yämär Wärqi interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 18 Hädar 2000 E.C. (28 November 2007 Gregorian Calender)

[31] Mämeré Gäbäré Mariyam interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 26 Hädar 2000 E.C. (06 December 2007 Gregorian Calender); Ato Dämäqä Adänä interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 12 Tahesas 2000 E.C. (22 December 2007 Gregorian Calender). My requests to take a picture of this church were denied by the priest. Ayt'ayef Hall is located on a hill above the church and it can easily be seen from there.

professed his Christianity; however, as earlier argued he never went away from his Muslim heritage as evidenced by having as one of his leading advisors, the Muslim *Shék* Hussein Jebrel.

When Yohannes died, Mikaél was still allied with him and his successor, *Ras* Mängäsha Yohannes, even camping with Mängäsha after the death of the Emperor.[32] Power dynamics had changed in the Empire and Menilek was undoubtedly the most powerful force, but as noted earlier Mikaél had previously kidnapped Menilek's daughter, burned his garrison city and rebelled against him. Mikaél was worried about the repercussions of his past actions and was hesitant to meet Menilek after he was called to Addis Ababa. He only came on the advice of his trusted advisor *Shék* Hussein, who not only guaranteed his safety but also promised a reward for his submission. This reward, which according to the prophecy was a "heifer" which some would argue was Menilek's daughter, Shäwarägga.[33] Mikaél followed the advice, submitted to Menilek and solidified his position as leader of Wällo and trusted vassal of Menilek.[34]

Another Muslim cleric did not agree with Mikaél's choices and spent the greater part the last few decades of the 19th century in rebellion against both Menilek II and *Ras* Mikaél. His name was *Shék* Talha bin Ja'far (1853-1936) and he was born the grandson of a Muslim saint in the declining trading center of Dawwey.[35] Among his contributions to Islamic theology, he wrote *Tawhid enna Fiqh (Theology and Law)* in Amharic using the Arabic script, an unpublished biography of the Prophet Mohammad and an Amharic

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[32] Most of this paragraph is derived from Asnake, "Aspects", 39-42. This scholar collected oral histories from around the area. An interesting account of Matamma is found in Luigi Fusella, "Abissinia E Metemma in Uno Scritto Di Belatta Heruy," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 3, no. 2 (1943). While Mikaél is mentioned in this piece, nothing of note, aside from his presence is presented.

[33] Asnake, 40. This poem again is in Amharic and is translated by Asnake. The Amharic is "በአዳራሽ ገብተህ በአልፍኑ ብትወጣ፡ አንዳች ነገር ብትሆን እኔ በጉድ ልውጣ፡ ላንዲያውም ሂዱና ላንዲት ጊደር ላምሉ::

[34] Menilek's chronicler does not relate this story and states that after leaving Yohannes' camp at Mätäma he went south through the town of Lalibela and after kissing all of its churches and feeding the poor met Menilek at Wädäla and was officially given Wällo at Menilek's coronation in Ent'ot'o. Guèbrè Sellassié Tèsfa Selassie trans. and Maurice de Coppet ed., *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik Ii, Roi Des Rois D'éthiopie* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1930), 261,7. Lastly, the feud between *Abba* Wat'aw and Mikaél, continued even after *Abba* Wat'aw's death through his son *Abba* Jabbal, who was placated with a share of province, and eventually rebelled again both Menilek and Mikaél, dying quietly in 1891.

[35] For more on this figure see Hussein Ahmed, "The Life and Career of Shaykh B. Ja'far (C. 1853 - 1936)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1989); ———, *Islam in Nineteenth-Century Wallo*, 137,77-81.

translation of the Qu'ran.[36] He began his armed struggle in the early 1880s, and used methods most common in the Gondarine and *Zämäna Mäsafent* periods to mobilize resources and was centered in the eastern districts of Wällo near Qallu.[37] He rebelled continuously for the next decade, pestering Yohannes, Menilek II, Mikaél, and, more importantly, devastating the areas where he was based.[38] As a result, he lost support in many of these areas in 1895, where a very different phenomenon took place.

Shék Tahla began to make alliances with forces in the Mahdist state in Sudan and with the Italians in the Merab Malash (present day Eritrea). However, these alliances did not bring the desired benefits and soon after Adwa he submitted to Menilek and was under the control of Menilek's loyal Muslim Ifat governor Wäldé S'adiq.[39] He lived out the rest of his days as a cleric and purportedly assisted both Menilek and his successor, Iyasu on international relations with Muslim powers.[40]

The experiences of *Shék* Tahla underscore a point outlined by an expert on Islam and Wällo, Hussein Ahmad, which I would like to take even further. He argues that while many Muslim had ties to foreign powers, they did so out of self interest, and made or broke their agreements due to these interests. While an Oromocentric and Semitist scholar may view this event as a nationalistic rebellious act against an ethnocentric state, with a goal of a separate Muslim State carved from boundaries of Ethiopia, I believe there is something more profound occurring. The rebellions and factions of this period or any other period after the Gondarine period, had one Ethiopian force fighting another for the *control* of the Ethiopian state or an aspect of it, but not for its *demise* (emphasis mine).[41] Thus, *Shék* Tahla did not desire to establish an independent state, rather he

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[36] Hussein, *Islam*, 13-4. The document being written in the Arabic script allowed for a greater audience for his work, due to the fact that literate Ethiopia Muslims generally had knowledge of the Arabic script and not necessarily the Ethiopic script.

[37] These methods include using a specific religious interpretation to rationalize rule and finding both discontented local religious (at times included Mas'ewot and *Abba* Jabal) and political leaders to support his revolt.

[38] These areas include the districts Ifat, Gärfa, Wärra Babbo and towns like Argobba, Bäq'e, Mänäkusé and Qallu

[39] He did, however, lead a contingent of men during in initial skirmishes before Adwa. Augustus Blandy Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 132, George Fitz-Hardinge Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, New ed. (London,: Constable and co., 1935), 142.Berkeley notes that after Tahla's loss at Amba Alagi, he and his men deserted the Italians.

[40] Hussein, "The Life and Career of Shaykh B. Ja'far," 22-3.

[41] This theme is argued implicitly in Shiferaw Bekele, "Reflections of the Power Elite of the Wara Seh Masfenate." *Annales d'Ethiopie*15, no. 1 (1991).

wanted a revitalization of his view of Islam among the Muslim population and to end the religious oppression of Muslims in Ethiopia.

Balancing National and Local Interests in Wällo

Wällo's place in the Ethiopian context has been largely determined by the relationships between the nobles of Wällo and the ruler of Ethiopia. In the early 19th century, Wällo's Amadé and *Ras* Ali II had a good relationship and Wällo was prosperous and unified under a single leader. However, in the mid to late 19th century Wällo was in disarray due to Amadé's death and the unification of Abyssinia under Téwodros and Yohannes. As indicated in Chapter 4, two rivals endeared themselves to the state and after the deaths of *Abba* Wat'aw and Araya Sellassé, *Ras* Mikaél was the unquestioned governor of this province, which he received during the Menilek's coronation in 1889.[42] In the past decade, the relationship between Mikaél and Menilek had gone from a united front during the 1860s, through rebellion in the 1870s, to a stalemate until the death of Yohannes IV. Ultimately, endearing Wällo and Mikaél to Menilek would be a major test for failure or success of both Mikaél's and Menilek's reigns. In the decades after 1889, Wällo was bonded with Shäwa through marriage ties, performance of national loyalty and mutually beneficial practices to extract resources.

After Menilek's ascent to power in 1889, and subsequent submissions by most of the provincial nobles, a reorganization and centralization of authority was necessary. In this reorganization, instead of paying tribute to Yohannes, the provinces paid their tribute to Menilek. At that time, most of the nation's wealth was measured in the amount of land from which taxes could be collected. At this time, according to the two most influential primary texts on land tenure in the early 20th century, Wällo was split into *Gäbbar* (tribute payers), *Qwami Galla* (lands taken from larger estates to take care of the Wälloyé soldiers), *Tänäqay Galla* (government lands administered by *Gäbbars*), *Gendäbäl* (lit. transporter of tents)and *Zämächa* (lit. campaign soldier) holdings.[43] *Gäbbar* is private

[42] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 267.

[43] Gabra-Wold-Ingida Worq, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation, Translated by Mengesha Gessesse," *Ethiopian Observer* 1962; Mahtämä Śellasē Wäldä Mäsqäl, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times: The Land System of Ethiopia," *Ethiopian Observer* 1 (1957); *Balaten Geta* Mahtämä Selassé Wäldä Mäsq'äl, *Zekerä Nägär* (Addis Ababa: Ertistik Matämiya Bet, 1962), 155. Also in early 20th century other areas were incorporated into Wällo, most notably Wag, Lasta and Yäjju and the land tenure in these areas are very different and are explained in texts in this footnote, pgs.316-7 and 291 respectively.

property that obligates its owner to pay a third to the local chief and a tenth to the Government.[44] In regards to *Qwami Galla* lands, the larger estate holders could negotiate with the local chief and use the produce of the lands for the army, which also added another tax, two thalers and service as domestics to the local chief, while in other instances soldiers administered the lands and collected the taxes themselves from the *Gäbbar*, which included two thalers and a tenth to the government.[45] Relative to *Tänäqay Galla*, the amount of lands corresponded with the importance of the individual and had four *Galla Maret* categories, *Mulu* (lit. full), a half or *Gimash*, a third or *Siso* and a fourth or *irbo* and land less than these was considered uncultivated. Also, it did not seem to have any tax responsibilities, but could be confiscated by the governor at any time.[46] The last classification was *Gendäbäl* and *Zämacha*, private property that was taxed through military service and the transportation of tents.[47]

In Menilek's Ethiopia, each province had its own land tenure norms, and Wällo is most similar to the Northern provinces like Tigray (mostly *Rist*) and Gojjam (where land is mixed between *Gult and Rist*) where lands had been previously measured.[48] Most lands in the highlands fell under two categories *Rist* and *Gult*, which seem to be split into two categories in Wällo.[49] *Gendäbäl* and *Zämach* are closest to *Rist* and *Qwami Galla*, *Tänäqay Galla* are closest to *Gult* lands.[50] The vast majority of the land was in Gäbbar and Galla lands, with about an eighth of the land in support of the church and smaller amounts given in military service category. Also, Wällo lacked *Qalad* (measured confiscated land) lands that marked many of the conquered Southern and Oromo territories.[51] This arrangement reveals that the province of Wällo similar to Gojjam, Tigre, and Bägémder was treated like a *Häbäshä* province, unlike many Oromo areas of

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[44] Mahtämä Selassé, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times," 290.
[45] Ibid.; Gabra-Wold-Ingida, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation, " 316.
[46] Gabra-Wold-Ingida, "Ethiopia's Traditional," 316; Mahtämä Selassé, "Land Tenure," 290.
[47] Ibid., 291. and Gabra-Wold-Ingida, 316.
[48] Land tenure is other province was discussed more fully in the last chapter. For Gojjam see Allan Hoben, *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia; the Dynamics of Cognatic Descent* (Chicago,: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 93. See glossary for definitions of *Rest* and *Gult*.
[49] See glossary for definitions of these terms.
[50] Mahtämä Selassé's chart that most of this analysis combines these categories, making it quite difficult to delineate the two categories. Mahtämä Selassé, *Zekerä Nägär*, 154. See figure 59.
[51] See Figure 53, and Figure 52 in Chapter 6 for Arsi and Shäwa.

Shäwa and provinces to the South of Shäwa.[52] In addition, the fact that most of the land was controlled by the Wälloyé, and not *balabats* from other regions allowed Mikaél to reward those loyal to him personally and not necessarily those faithful Menilek. This fact gave Mikaél complete authority in the province due to the fact that he had total control over land distribution.

Figure 59: Land Tenure Distributions for Wällo and non-*Rist* Shäwa[53]

	|----*Balabats*--|	|----------*Gäbar*----------|		|----Tenants---|	
Regions	*Siso/ Dästa*	*Wäräda Gendäbal*	*Gendäbal*	*Qutr*	*Qalad*	*Madariya*	Clergy Land	Total
Wällo			1489	64244		2242	7262	75237
Shäwa	11483	754	14677	39216	25838	32536	10922	135427

Units are *Gashas*. (44.2 Hectares of Land)

A little explanation is needed for the above chart. The first subsection is *Balabats* (landowners), meaning landowners appointed by the central government to govern over newly conquered lands. The *Gäbar* category includes all privately owned lands that pay taxes. And Tenants are lands confiscated to support the Church, generally as long as they paid tribute they could not be alienated from the land. In addition to controlling who gets to collect tribute in Wällo, Mikaél due to his position as a Yohannes appointee (like Gojjam's Täklä Haymanot) had very different tax obligations to Emperor Menilek.

In many ways, Mikaél was an independent ruler, beholden to Menilek for nothing, but still militarily weaker. Mikaél's province was self sufficient, he had indirect access to the sea, enough soldiers to defend his region, and, perhaps, most importantly he had sufficient sources of local legitimacy. Due to these factors, Mikaél was reliant on Menilek for nothing, but Menilek II was significantly better armed.[54] While the Northern vassals did not have an annual tribute payment, they still were obligated to pay a token Extraordinary Land Tax or *Asrat* whenever they met Menilek in person.[55] They collected

[52] A notable exception is Jimma, whose governor paid Menilek and later Haylä Sellassé a fixed yearly tribute until his death in the early 1930s.

[53] This chart is taken from a larger chart in Tsegaye Tegenu, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism : The Genesis and the Making of the Fiscal Military State, 1696-1913*, 2nd ed. (Hollwood, CA: Tsehai Publishers, 2007), 253.

[54] See R. A. Caulk, "Firearms and Princely Power in Ethiopia in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 4 (1972): 628. Mikaél surprised much of the nobility when he mustered a few thousand rifles at Adwa in 1896, but did not have machine guns until his son was in power in the 1910s.

[55] See footnote d in Tsegaye, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism*, 149. Also, they were occasions when this tax was not collected immediately. In the years before the battle of Adwa, Menilek purposely did not collect this tax in order to be able to feed his army which was going to be campaigning through Wällo. The definition of *Asrat* in the South was an additional one tenth tax on crops.

taxes for their own treasuries and had fortunes that were comparable to that of the imperial treasury.[56] Relative to the specific peasant burden, they paid a third of produce to the local governor, one tenth to the government as well as various payments in honey, grain and livestock. In addition, like the *Rist* of the Ethiopian peasants they had to provide 1 MT or a sheep for annual religious holidays.[57]

Figure 60: Tax collection in Wällo and Shäwa[58]

No. of Taxes Unit and Obligation		Ordinary Annual Land Tax				Extraordinary Land Tax (*Asrat*)
Region	Types	Cloth	Honey	Grain	Birr	
Wällo	1,489 (GG) 64,244 (QG)	264	4,288	4,288 g 1,593 q butter		106,287 g of Grain
Shäwa	12,237 *Balabats* 14,677 GG 39,216 QG 25,838 QaG 45,045 M		18,979 25,838 45,045	29,354 117,641 64,595 135,135	80,948	256,500

GG = *Gendäbäl* GQ = *Gäbar* QaG = *Qalad* M = *Madäriya*
g =*Gundo* (unit for measuring grain) q = *Quna* (unit for measuring honey)

In addition to a free hand in the collection of taxes and distribution of land, Menilek also used other means to endear the powerful members of his mobility to him. One such way was marrying Menilek's daughters to powerful members of the nobility. The two most notable examples include the Yäjju *Ras* Gugsa Wale (T'aytu's nephew) and the Mammadoch *Ras* Mikaél. They were married to Zäwditu and Shäwarägga, respectively.[59] In regards to Mikaél, Taytu was central in marrying him to Shäwarägga.

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[56] See Ibid., 148, fn. 78. And Wylde notes that the tax was 10 percent Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 400. This traveler spent a few weeks in Wällo after the battle of Adwa, but Mikaél was in Addis Ababa and the two never met. Also Gäbrä Heyewät Bayekadañ notes that that tax burdens were significantly less in the north because they were not "rich" lands. See Luigi Fusella, "Menilek E L'etiopia in Un Testo Amarico Del Baykadañ," *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 4, no. 1 (1952): 140.

[57] Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twenieth Century Ethiopia, (Part 1) " *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1967): 77.

[58] From a larger chart in Tsegaye, *The Evolution of Ethiopian Absolutism*, 149.

[59] A few notes, Zäwditu and Shäwarägga were not T'aytu's daughters, and both daughters of Oromo and Gurage women. Zäwditu was also previously married to Araya Sellassé (Tigray) Gwangul Zagwe (Wag)

According to his chronicle, Menilek was reluctant to have Mikaél as a son in law due to the fact he already considered him a son.[60] Using a proverb and a historic allusion, Taytu convinced him, stating "Didn't your forebears of Israel get married with the girls of their aunts and their uncles? Why would you see ill that that these two children who are not related, made so? There is a proverb that says: 'Add of the water to milk, it will increase and clarify."[61]

This marriage was extremely fruitful, producing a son, Iyasu Mikaél, born in February 1898 and a daughter.[62] This move further empowered both the Mammadoch and Bit'ul families and gave them a stake in the success of the state. In addition, Menilek had no living sons and thus succession was undecided.[63] Since his 1877 rebellion against Menilek, Mikaél was a perfect vassal and supported Yohannes even late in his rule when it was rumored that Täklä Haymanot was colluding with Menilek against Yohannes.[64] Mikaél stayed loyal to Yohannes until his death and submitted to Menilek soon after. His loyalty was central in Ethiopia's defense due not only to the fact that he controlled a significant amount of territory and troops, but also due to the place that Wällo occupied between the province of Shäwa and the three areas most likely to side with Italians, Tigray, the Afar and the Awsa regions. A key moment to prove to Menilek that the candidate was worthy was success on the battle field, and the growing Italian threat at the coast would provide the opportunity.[65]

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and Webe Atenaf Seged (Tigray). Shäwarägga, whom he married on February 5th 1892, of diminutive size and previously married to *Ras* Gobana's son Wadajo , produced Menilek's heir Iyasu (See Figure 59). Mikaél was previous married to another one of Menilek's daughters, Mänänalbäsh and a cousin of Emperor Yohannes, Alatash Wendé. See Chris Prouty and Eugene Rosenfeld, *Historical Dictionary of Ethiopia* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1981), 132,91; Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 290,322.

[60] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 317.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] See Figure 61.

[63] In addition, there was a prophecy that that the next emperor would come from a Gurage woman, thus the half Gurage Shäwarägga fulfilled this prophecy. Coincidentally, Tafari Mäkonnen, the future Emperor Haylä Sellassé also had a Gurage mother, Yäshimabét. Succession to the throne will be discussed later in the chapter, but according to custom it had to be a male descendent of Solomon. Also, in Shäwa for close to two hundred years power passed peacefully from father to son.

[64] See Appendix C Yohannes to Ras Darge (18 Hedar 1881) 26 November 1888 in Zewde Gabre Sellassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia : A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 263-4; Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 121-2.

[65] It is outside of the focus of this work to detail the foreign affairs of Ethiopia, for such detail see the two best accounts Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann, 1976). and Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*.

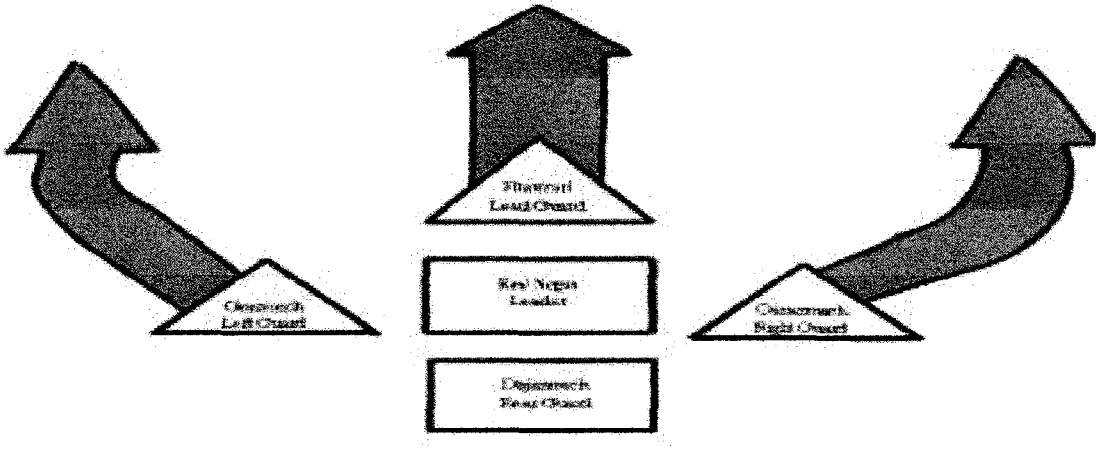
Figure 61: Menilek's Grandson and Mikaél's Son *Lej* Iyasu[66]

[66] *Bitweded Alfred Ilg and Emperor Menilek Ii : Pictures of a Unique Friendship and a Common Dream, the Modernization of Ethiopia : Exhibition Catalogue of Photographs from the Ilg Collection at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich Switzerland [Held at the] Embassy of Switzerland, Addis Ababa.*, (Addis Ababa: Embassy of Switzerland in Ethiopia, 2000), 200.

Wällo and Adwa: Displaying the Fruits of Ethiopian Unity:

The victory of Adwa was not only a victory of the Ethiopian army, but also of Ethiopian nationalism. When many of the 19th century African empires were defeated by European colonial powers, Ethiopia stood alone as successful due to the fact that it stood united. In the late 19th century Menilek tenuously held together his empire through force, fear and diplomacy.[67] In Wällo, Menilek used marriage ties and diplomacy to endear this province to him. Mikaél welcomed this development and by most accounts was an ideal vassal.[68] In addition, Wällo also remained as an important place for Adwa related developments. For example, the infamous treaty of Wech'alé was signed in Wällo and Menilek's army first gathered in Wära Ilu.[69]

Figure 62: Ethiopian Style of Warfare[70]



Generally, the Ethiopian style of warfare generally used two interrelated principles in its practice. It used superiority in numbers to overwhelm the opponent from the center and encircled them from the left and right flanks. The Rear guard was used to

[67] These developments will be discussed in the next chapter.

[68] An informant states that he saw a letter from Menilek to other vassals stating that Menilek desired to have his other vassals to behave like Mikaél, Ato Esayä Faseha Mäkonen Asefaw Zäwde interviewed and translated by Ato Gashaw Mohamed Motema Däq'u Järu, tape recording, Dessé, Amhara province, 18 Hädar 2000 E.C. (28 November 2007 Gregorian Calender)

[69] This treaty was signed between Italy and Ethiopia, where article 17 was purposely mistranslated in the Italian version and made Ethiopia an Italian protectorate. See Sven Rubenson, *Wichale XVII: The Attempt to Establish a Protectorate over Ethiopia* (Addis Abeba: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1964).

[70] Extracted from S. Pierre Pétridès, "Alula and Dogali Their Place in Ethiopia's History " in *The Centenary of Dogali: Proceedings of the International Symposium*, ed. Tadesse Tamrat and Richard Pankhurst Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1988), 61. *Azmach* was replaced by *Ras*/Leader and *Däjazmach* replaced *Abo*.

defend against a similar attack and support the central flank. This type of warfare was common throughout Ethiopian history; however both Adwa and Mätamma were exceptions due to the Italian firearm superiority and Mahdist numerical superiority. In addition, every province had its own army, so similar to the make-up of the empire, the army was patchwork and had little cohesion. As discussed in the last chapter, Menilek involved his Shäwan generals in all three Ethiopian flanks; however, these soldiers were led primarily by their provincial leaders under the coordination of Menilek. In this situation, loyal troops and leaders were essential; Wällo had both and played a significant role in the victory at Adwa,

The Italians attempted to sow seeds of discontent with both non-*Häbäsha* and non-Christian populations, while elite Northern Oromo were neither, many Oromo, Afar or Somali areas around them were.[71] The Afar in the Awsa area were given firearms by both the French and Italians and instructed to fight against the Ethiopian state, *Ras* Mikaél, whose province bordered on these areas, was directly affected.[72] He instructed his former coreligionist, Sultan Muhammad Hanfari, to not only stay loyal to Ethiopia, but also to continue to pay tribute to Shäwa. The Sultan ignored Mikaél's advice and became an Italian ally in 1895, unlike the Tigré forces under *Ras* Mangäsha Yohannes, who sided with the Ethiopians, but had to withdraw completely from Tigray in 1895. However, the Italians believed that they could influence Menilek's vassals, including Mikaél to betray their country.[73]

The Italians attempted to turn *Rases* Mäkonnen, Mikaél, Alula and Mängäsha against Menilek through bribes and promise of increased authority. Centered in what is now known as Eritrea, they secretly had correspondence with the various provincial leaders of Ethiopia, especially with those of Tigray, which at this time Menilek had very

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[71] This tactic was utilized in Italy's occupation in 1936-41 see James Dugan and Laurence Davis Lafore, *Days of Emperor and Clown; the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1936*, [1st ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973); Haile M. Larebo, *The Building of an Empire : Italian Land Policy and Practice in Ethiopia, 1935-1941*, Oxford Studies in African Affairs. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Alberto Sbacchi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini: Fascism and the Colonial Experience* (London: Zed, 1985); ———, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1997).

[72] See Figure 55, for location of Awsa.

[73] Czelslaw Jesmen, *The Russians in Ethiopia: An Essay in Futility*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1958, 72.

little control over.[74] While the Italians believed that they were secretly destroying the Ethiopian state from the inside, Menilek was informed by his vassals of many of the Italian promises.[75] Even as the Italians approached Ethiopia, Menilek, Mikaél and Mäkonnen (Menilek's cousin, governor of Harar and father of Haile Sellassé) desired reconciliation with Italy due to many factors, including the Great Famine, which broke out in 1888 and affected Wällo among other province.[76] Mäkonnen had significant contact with foreigners at Harar, and was accused of not only being a traitor but also as one afraid to fight.[77] In addition, the Italians had good relations with many of the leading Muslims traders in the Awsa and Afar regions. These regions bordered on Wällo, and partly due to these threats Menilek stationed his army in Wära Ilu.

On his march towards Tigray, Wällo was an important base not only due to its northern position but also for its supplies and troops. By almost all accounts Mikaél's was the largest of the provincial forces and Wällo's renown cavalry was greatly needed due to the fact that The Great Famine of 1888-92 ruined most of the cattle population of Northern Ethiopia and pack animals were needed to transport supplies.[78] In addition, Menilek did not collect grain tribute from Wällo for the previous four years just in case he had to go back to Tigray. This grain was used to feed the Army, pack animals and auxiliaries during their time in Wällo.[79] While in Wällo, he sent three Shäwan commanders to Awsa to force submission of both the Sultan of Afar Muhammad Hanfari and the Sultan of Awsa, Abd al-Rahman both of whom had seemingly sided with the Italians.[80] This force was successful, and Ethiopia had nothing to fear from the Muslim

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[74] See General O Baratieri, *Mémoires D'afrique (1892-1896)* (Paris: Charles Delagrave, 190?), 31-51; Luigi Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 2)," *Rassegna Di Studi Etiopic* 19, no. 1 (1963): 137.

[75] See Menilek to Mondon 1 December 1895 presented in Fessahaie Abraham, "The Campaign of Adowa According to Some Ethiopians" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, 1971), 1. Menilek wrote he attempted to use disinformation about a bad relationship between him and *Ras* Mikaél to distract the Italians.

[76] Bairu Tafla trans. and ed. *Asma Giyorgis and His Work : History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Shawa*, Èathiopistische Forschungen ; Bd. 18. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987), 833. The author seems to connect famine and drought with the lack of European missionaries. And Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 518.

[77] Ibid., 243.

[78] Ethiopia's armies traveled by foot, which took a long time and required a sizable number of auxiliaries to take of the needs of the army. For more on this event see fn. 3 in Chapter 6.

[79] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 498.

[80] Fusella, "Il Dagmawi Menilek Di Afawarq Gabra Iyasus (Part 2)," 135.

forces at the coast.[81] Also, he used the curtailing of their slave trading activities to raise his prestige among the European community.

At Wära Ilu, Mikaél's forces were part of the front guard and here, again, *Ras* Mikaél displayed both his military prowess and his utility for relations with the Tigrinyans.[82] Here, it is important to reiterate that due to his *Häbäsha* identity, Mikaél was not treated any differently from any other leader. And, if he had significant issues with the state, or if Menilek II had any suspicions of disloyalty Mikaél would not have been at the vanguard in control of more than ten thousand of his own men. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the provincial patron client relationship was still very strong in Ethiopia. So, the Welloye fought primarily for Mikaél, and not necessarily for Menilek. Therefore, all Mikaél and Menilek had to do was convince *Ras* Alula and *Ras* Mängäsha (1856-1906), and their men would follow.[83]

After meeting in Wära Ilu, Menilek formed an advance guard which contained about 30,000 men and was led by *Rases* Mikaél, Mängesha (Yohannes' named heir), Mäkonnen, Wale, Gäbäyähu and Alula.[84] This advanced guard battled the Italians, who were flanked by Muslim and Tigré allies, at Amba Alage, who surprised them at 5 am on 7 December 1895.[85] Menilek's General Gäbäyähu, who was camped significantly far ahead of the rest of the vanguard and rushed Italian troops, due to his actions the rest of force joined in, against the orders of Menilek to advance without bloodshed. This advance guard was victorious, with the Italians fleeing at around noon. This victory displayed to the Ethiopians that they could in fact defeat a European army, and Mikaél among others in this predominately Oromo force played a significant role in this event.[86]

The coming weeks were not good for the advance guard as a cattle epidemic went through the camp. Eventually after delays the rest of the army met at Ende Yähu,

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[81] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 403-6; Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 142-3, 62. In addition to stopping this Muslim force he secured an alliance with the Madhist state and had 5,000 of their soldiers stationed at Gädaräf. Ibid.

[82] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 561.

[83] See Chapter 6, however, for Menilek's efforts to make the Imperial center the only patron in the land during the early 20th century.

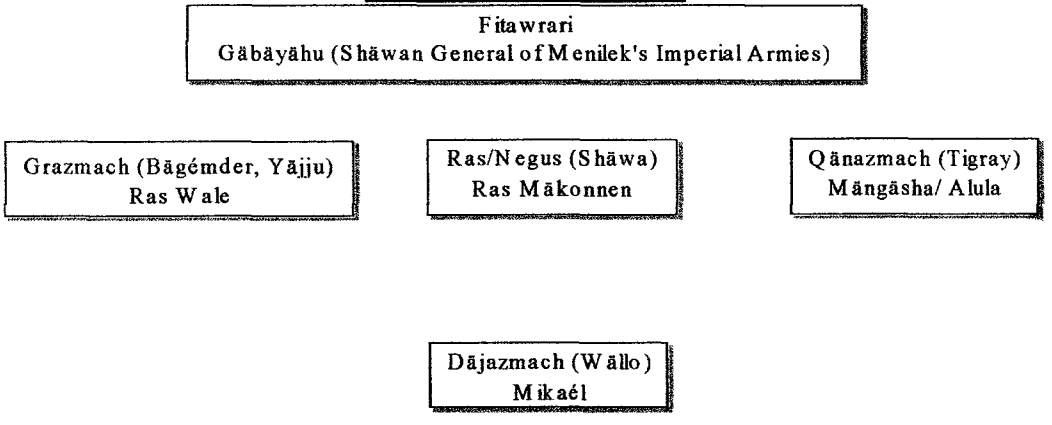
[84] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 434; Eyayu Lulseged, "Ras Wale Bitul and the Campaign of Adwa," in *Adwa Victory Centenary Conference Proceedings : March 1 & 2, 1996, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan*, eds. Abdussamad H Ahmad and Richard Pankhurst (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1996), 84; Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, 402.

[85] See Figure 41 for location of this battle site.

[86] Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, 402.

and were able to secure the submission of the fort.[87] After this submission Mäkonnen and Mikaél at this time had the largest contingents of men; however, Mäkonnen, Menilek's cousin, was heavily involved in negotiations and there is little evidence that Mikaél played any role. He, after Menilek's move to Adwa in the last week of February, was placed in camp with the rest of the members of the advanced guard a few miles away to protect the imperial camp.[88] Negotiations continued for several days, but with no results and both sides prepared for war.

Figure 63: Vanguard of Adwa[89]



At Adwa, a few weeks later, Mikaél was camped in the left guard with *Ras* Mäkonnen and *Fit.* Gäbäyähu on the left and *Afa Negus* Näsib and Ato Habte Giyorgis on the right.[90] This left guard included between 20,000 – 25,000 men and was led by *Ras* Mikaél, *Wagshum* Gwangul Berru and *Ras* Mängäsha[91] Mängäsha was on guard during the night on the last day of February and before the sun rose on the first day of March his scouts observed the Italians advance guard. They stayed back to lure the Italians out of their forts. While Mikaél was in church, the central flank forces attacked the Italian

[87] For more on the actions of the Imperial Army see the first part of Chapter 6, also see Figure 43 for locations.
[88] Lulseged, "Ras Wale Bitul and the Campaign of Adwa," 88. Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas*, 543.
[89] Chart derived from information from Lulseged, "Ras Wale Bitul and the Campaign of Adwa," 84. Abebe Hailemelekot, *The Victory of Adowa: The 1st Victory of Africa over Colonialists*, ed. Getachew Zicke, trans. Yohannes G. Sellassie, Ethiopian Millennium ed. (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Enterprise 2007; reprint, 3rd), 113 - 19; Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 497-8.
[90] Qäñazmach Tadäsä Zäwälde, *Fitawrari Häbtä Giyorgis (Aba Mäla), 1844-1919* (Addis Abäba: Neged Matämiya Derejet, 1997), 44. See Figure 49.
[91] Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 561; Pétridès, "Alula," 61. Also, Mangesha was not Yohannes' son, rather the son of his brother, Gugsa. The Yäjju names of these rulers also speak to the cultural integration of this group and widespread acknowledgement of their military and political accomplishments.

column led by Albertone and were soon joined by Mikaél's cavalry, which more completely ended communications between Italian columns. With the central Italian force in retreat, Mikaél and Mängäsha joined the left flank which had been fighting since midmorning under *Ras* Alula.[92]

As argued in the earlier paragraphs Ethiopian armies had to adjust tactics in order to repel larger or better armed opponents; however, partly due to the tenacity and swiftness of the Wällo cavalry, the Ethiopians first were able to separate the forces and due to this they were able to surround the opponent scoring a decisive victory[93], which even Menilek acknowledged when he said to the Italian Major Salsa, "[We won because] I had cavalry [two thirds of which were Mikaél's] that day . . . Not even you [Salsa] would have saved yourself."[94] With his Empire preserved, things moved along smoothly in most parts of Ethiopia, however Menilek's health would begin to deteriorate and the power struggle that ensued would put to the test the unity and identity of the newly built Ethiopian Empire.

One last test, however, was the constant rebellions of the Tigré *Ras* Mängäsha Yohannes who considered himself the heir of Yohannes and rightful ruler of Ethiopia. After Adwa he desired the title *Negus*, but Menilek would not give him or anyone else that title and Mängäsha rebelled.[95] Due to the fact that Tigray was his neighbor, Menilek warned him about the rebellions and directed him to put them down. According to Gäbrä Sellasé, Mikaél attempted to use peaceful means to reconcile the two, he writes,

> Ras Mikaél, who was the godchild of As'e Yohannes and who had with him [his "son" Mängäsha[96]] friendly relations, often wrote to the Ras Mängäsha telling him: "I implore you, let me reconcile you with As'é Menilek. What do you have? One [the Italians] won't give your country to another and you won't be linked [with Ethiopia]. Abandoning your father

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[92] Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik*, 280-1, 321.
[93] Ibid., 283, 9, 300.
[94] qtd. from Caulk, *"Between the Jaws of Hyenas"*, 563. he cites a Russian source I.L. Eltes *Imperator Menilek I voini ego s Italiei: po dokumentm I pokhodnym dnevnikam* St. Petersburg: N.S. Leont'eva, 1898, 211-29. See Figure 40 for the numbers of cavalry, which Mikaél provided two thirds of the total number. The other one third was Menilek's cavalry. which, again, was dominated by the Oromo. Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 154. Berkeley, *The Campaign of Adowa*, 280. And Wylde notes that if the Tigré had any significant cavalry the victory would have been complete. A Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 211. Cavalry was generally drawn from provincial powers. See Tsegaye, *Absolutism*, 83.
[95] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 477.
[96] Mängäsha was actually the son of Yohannes' brother Gugsa, but after the death of his natural son Araya, Yohannes on his death designated him as his heir, hence, the name Mängäsha Yohannes, and not Mängäsha Gugsa.

> Menilek and your mother T'aytu, do you want to save [the Italians to leave you with] the desert like a wild beast?' Such were the words that the Ras Mikael addressed to him, but he refused to hear this advice.[97]

Finally, when peaceful means proved unsuccessful in 1899, Mikaél and Mäkonnen, the newly appointed governor of Tigray, campaigned to this territory to capture Mängäsha and bring him back to Menilek.[98] Mängäsha was captured and brought back to Shäwa and put into prison where he died in 1901.[99]

The Search for the New Ethiopian Leader

In the early 20th century, Menilek was continually incapacitated by a series of strokes, his health in addition to the fact that he had no living sons, left succession in question. In the vacuum of power, T'aytu handled the affairs of the state.[100] A woman holding power was not unheard of in Ethiopian history, and she had many relatives in positions of power which would bolster her position in the Empire. She, however, was not well liked by the Shäwan elite, partially due to the fact that she had descent from the northern territories of Semén and Yäjju and many had negative personal dealings with her.[101] Menilek, in one of his increasingly few moments of clarity after 1908, named his grandson *Lej* Iyasu Mikaél as his successor with one of his most trusted Shäwan officials *Ras Bitwäddäd* Tässäma Nädaw (d.1911) as regent.[102] Even with this edict, succession was not guaranteed, even though he went to the lengths of threatening excommunication by the *Abuna* and described the day of its announcement as one of the happiest of his life.[103]

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[97] Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 481.

[98] For more on this event see Menilek II's Decree Concerning Tigray (18 November 1898), Document 254 in Bairu Tafla, ed., *Ethiopian Records of the Menilek Era : Selected Amharic Documents from the Nachlass of Alfred Ilg, 1884-1900* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 519-20.

[99] Herbert Weld Blundell, "A Journey through Abyssinia to the Nile," *Geographic Journal* 15, no. 2 (1900): 102. Sellassié and Coppet, *Chronique Du Règne De Ménélik Ii, Roi Des Rois D'éthiopie*, 483.

[100] See Chris Prouty, *Empress Taytu and Menilek Ii : Ethiopia, 1883-1910* (Trenton, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1986), 305-21.

[101] She especially hated and was hated by Ras Mäkonnen and both she and her brother Wälé also disliked Ras Mikaél. See Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II: Ethiopia 1844-1913* (Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1995), 226-7, 30. And Prouty, *Empress Taytu*, 281.

[102] See Figure 45 Gäbrä Selassé, *Tarikä Zämän Zä Dagmawi Menilek Negus Nägäst Zäitwpop'eya (the History of Menilek II King of Kings of Ethiopia)* (Addis Ababa: Berhanna Selam Press, 1949 (E.C.)), 341-7, S. Pierre Pétridès, *Le Héros D'adowa: Ras Makonnen, Prince D' Éthiopie* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1963), 296.

[103] The translation I am using of the Amharic is by Abbebe Fissiha and appears in Donald Crummey "The Horn of Africa: Nationalism and Revolution Document Reader," 2004, 21-2.

They were three forces vying for authority, T'aytu's northern camp, the Shäwan old guard and the Wällo camp of the official successor, Iyasu. The old guard were self made men who rose through the ranks, but they generally were not from prominent Shäwan families; therefore, they could not put one of their own on the throne, and even if they could it is unlikely that they would have gone against the wishes of Menilek.[104] T'aytu's camp was well born, but supporting her would mean supporting an increasingly powerful Northern matriarch who would challenge Shäwan authority.[105] In addition, she began replacing governors with those who would support her rule, including a teenage Haylä Sellassé.[106] Backing Mikaél's camp would mean supporting a former Muslim Oromo from Wällo, which could also challenge the Shäwan status quo.

In 1907, Menilek had three choices for succession, Zäwditu (his only living daughter) and the two half Oromo sons of Shäwarägga, Wässän Sagad (son of Gobäna's son) and Iyasu Mikaél. Wässän Säggäd's deformity and death and Zäwditu's gender and marriage to T'aytu's nephew, *Ras* Gugsa Wälé, made Iyasu the best choice. After he announced Iyasu as successor, he named Fit. Häbtä Giyorgis as chief of the Prime ministers, a position he kept until his death in 1926. Menilek's health continued to deteriorate as he prepared the country for succession when he appointed another loyal high born Shäwan Tassama Nädow (the son of the man who acted as his regent) as regent for Iyasu.[107]

At this time T'aytu made her move. The plan was to rule through the nephew who was married to Zawditu, whom she would name as heir to the throne. Her brother would be the king of the North and her nephew *Ras* Gugsa Wale would be controlled by her at the center. She would use her Tigré and Yäjju allies to control the North, which

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[104] This court was derived almost completely from low born Shäwans and consisted of *Afa Negus* Nasibu, the Oromo/ Gurage *Fit.* Häbta Giyorgis, *Liqa Makwas* Katama, *Näggrädas* Haylä Giyorgis, *Bajerond* Mulugeta, the son of the Muslim Wolda S'adeq, Katama became minister of Agriculture, Minister of Public Works, Mäkonnen (Not Täfari's Father), Minister of the Court, Mattafariya and Minister of the Pen, Gäbra Sellasé see Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique*, 527-8.

[105] Female leadership is not unheard of in Ethiopia, Wärqitu and Mas'ewot led Wällo, and both Mänän and Mentewwab led from the imperial centers; however they were directly related to the official heirs, which once Menilek died Taytu would not be.

[106] Prouty, *Empress Taytu*, 323-4.

[107] Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, 235. Tassama is described by some as inept uneducated man Prouty, *Empress Taytu*, 318-23. In addition, Tassama was married to the daughter of the Oromo king of Guma (Southern Ethiopia), Wy. Bäläs'achäw *Abba* Jobir. Heran Sereke-Brhan, "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood: Elite Marriages, Politics and Ethnicity in 19th and 20th Century Imperial Ethiopia" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 2002), 116-7.

would also represent a profound power shift to the North. This fear reveals a shift in Ethiopia, where having noble roots in the Northern Abyssinia highlands would hurt one's ability to exercise national authority. As a way to appease her and connect her family to his successor, Menilek married Iyasu to T'aytu's grand niece.[108] This effort did not work, and as his health decreased, Taytu took control of the government.

She began to appoint and dismiss officials at will as a way to cement her authority, which upset much of the Ethiopian population.[109] Things finally came to a head when a victorious governor of Tigré, *Däj.* Abate, came back to Addis Ababa, and was met by a force including troops of the Imperial army, led by *Ras* Gugsa.[110] This forced many of the Shäwan nobles to act quickly and in a few days they surrounded the Palace and gave T'aytu two choices: live out her life in a monastery or care for her dying husband. Initially they sent *Abuna* Matéwos, who was berated by T'aytu and was finally seen when he threatened to bring in the army. In response to the committee of nobles she purportedly responded,

> Who, other than myself has fought beside Menilek and listened to all affairs of state? Was it the regent, Tessema? That old peasant! He is good only for disputing with farmers and reaping fields of grain and coffee. Was it that vulgar Galla, Habte Giyorgis? I warn you. If they attack me, I shall know how to defend myself.[111]

She chose to care for the Emperor and was completely powerless.[112] Fearing Northern rebellion the council appointed the rapidly declining *Ras* Wälda Giyorgis as Governor of all of the Northern provinces.[113] The alliance between him and Mikaél would bring *Ras*

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[108] Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, 238. According to the American delegation he divorced her soon after see Gary R. Love, Vice Consul General to the Honorable Secretary of State, No. 27 and 33 (3 June 1910 and 12 April 1911) in Borg G. Steffanson and Ronald K. Starret, eds., *Documents on Ethiopian Politics: Volume 1, the Decline of Menilek Ii to the Emergence of Ras Tafari, Later Known as Haile Sellasie. 1910-9* (Salisbury, NC: Documentary Publications, 1976), 47-9.

[109] American Legation to the Honorable Secretary of State, Document 71 (24 Feb 1910) Steffanson and Starret, eds., *Documents on Ethiopian Politics:*, 1-3.

[110] Marcus argues that this event was preceded by reports of 2000 rifles and several machine guns transferred by Taytu to the Northern provinces. Harold G. Marcus, "The End of the Reign of Menilek II," *The Journal of African History* 11, no. 4 (1970): 582.

[111] Qtd. in Prouty, *Empress Taytu and Menilek II*, 328-9. Also see Fusella, "Menilek E L'etiopia in Un Testo Amarico Del Baykadañ," 136-7.

[112] Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, 242-6. Also see Gary R. Love, Vice Consul General to the Honorable Secretary of State, No. 19 (March 26, 1910) in Steffanson and Starret, eds., *Documents on Ethiopian Politics*, 13-4.

[113] See Figure 46.

Wälé to compromise, which he did at Boru Méda (again in Wällo) in 1910, giving the infant regency control of the Northern portions of Ethiopia.[114]

The Northern provinces were under Imperial authority; however many of the Southern provinces had a personal alliance with Menilek, which did not automatically extend to his successor. Häbtä Giyorgis put the view of the Shäwan towards themselves, the new emperor and the Southern territories eloquently when he relayed,

> Lij Iyasu is the designated and recognized inheritor of the Ethiopian throne. The Wellos and Amharas have agreed to conform to the desire of the king, to accept and support Iyassu. The pact between the mekwannint is sufficient to maintain the present dynasty on the throne; as for the people, there is no need to worry about them; they will follow. The Gojjamis, men of Kafa, Tigreans, inhabitants of Jimma, the Arussi, the people of Sidamo, Borena, Harar, and Gondar, in a word those [in the] conquered regions are not to be feared. If they arouse themselves, which is likely, we, the true Ethiopians . . . we will be strong enough to reduce them to silence and to restore to our domination. . . if it takes ten years for that, we will take ten years; but at the moment we are assured that the real Abyssinians would never recognize any master other than the one designated by the Emperor; we do not doubt final success.[115]

The fact that a half Gurage, half Oromo prisoner of war could not only consider himself a *true Ethiopian (or real Abyssinian) but also all he and his other true Ethiopians, which he* defines as Wellos and Amharas, would be used to put a member of a former Muslim Oromo dynasty on the throne truly speaks as an testament to the elasticity of the *Häbäsha identity and the inclusion of key Oromo actors in it. Also, the fact that he considers the* Northern provinces of Gondar (Bägémder), Gojjam and Tigré as conquered territory also speaks to the reconfiguration of the state now centered in the conjoining provinces of Wällo and Shäwa.

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[114] Often accused of being an alcoholic, both his sister and son were under a form of arrest, and even he in 1910 was also imprisoned in the July 1911 Prouty, *Empress Taytu,* 332-7. Gary R. Love, Vice Consul General to the Honorable Secretary of State, No 59 (19 July 1911) in Steffanson and Starret, eds., *Documents on Ethiopian Politics* 55-8.American sources, however, state there was many skirmishes and does not mention a reconciliation between the two throughout the time of Menilek's incapacitation. See Gary R. Love, Vice Consul General to the Honorable Secretary of State, No. 22, 29, 31, 33 (25 April 1910, *25 June 1910, 18 July 1910, 8 Aug 1910,*) in Steffanson and Starret, eds., *Documents on Ethiopian Politics:* 17-9,24-9, 30-2.

[115] Qtd. in Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II,* 237 from Brice to Minister, Addis Ababa, 25 Mar. 1909, French Archives, Ethiopie, Politique Interieur, II, sepetembre 1908 – mars 1910

Figure 64: *Ras* Mikaél and *Lej* Iyasu[116]

Figure 65: *Ras* Wäldä Giyorgis, *Ras* Mikaél and *Lej* Iyasu[117]

[116] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; Athens; Addis Ababa: James Curry; Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa University Press, 2001), 116.
[117] Gäbra Selassé, *Tarik Zämän*, 337.

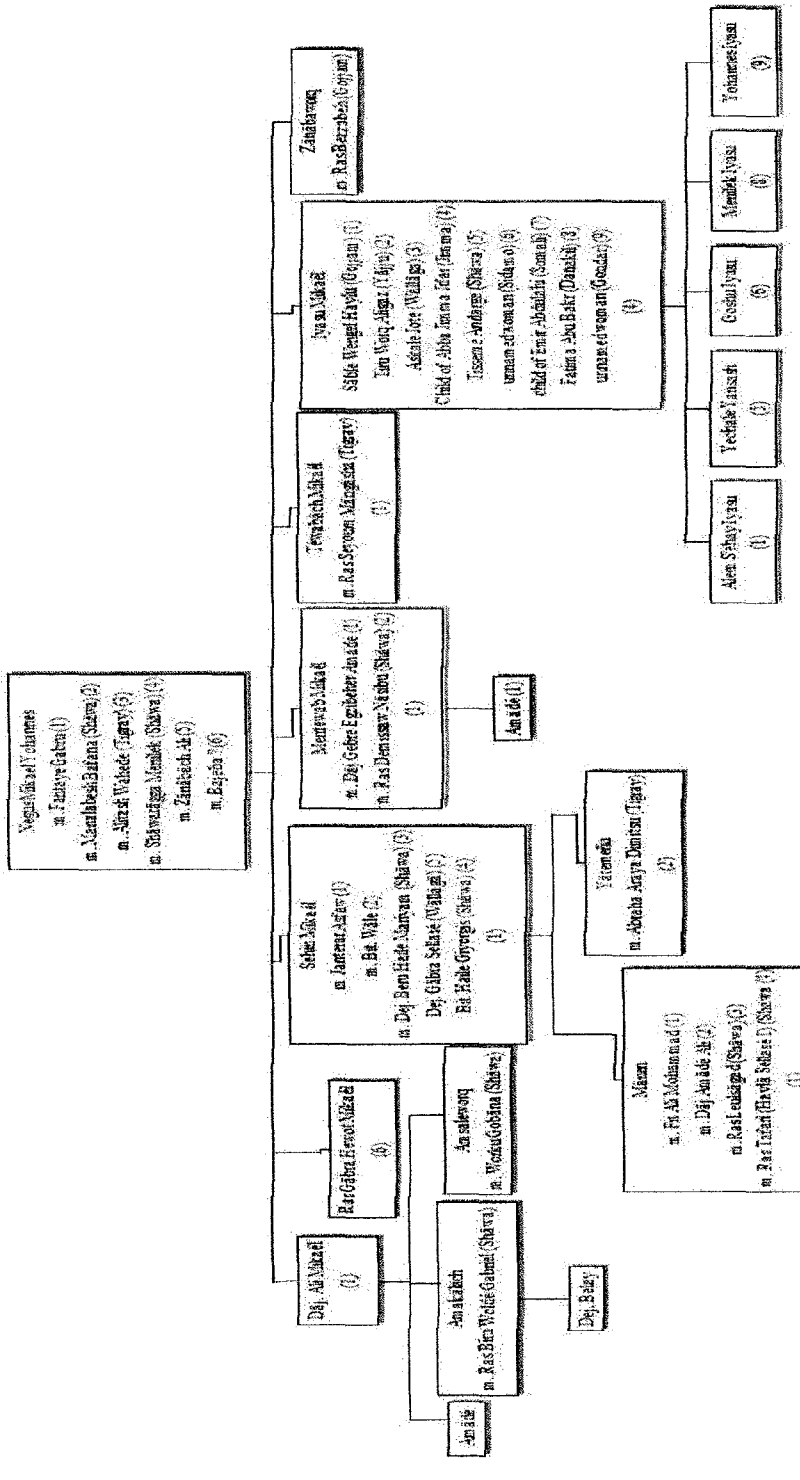
Conclusion

This chapter traced the province of Wällo as it navigated through the last tumultuous decade of the 19th to the first of the 20th century. Through the loyal and stable leadership of *Ras* Mikaél, Wällo flourished. He opened new and maintained old trade routes. Wällo's position between the Islamic merchants at the coast and the Christian center of Shäwa allowed it to act as cultural mediator between the two as well as reaping the economic benefits of being along the trade route. Mikaél also kept the delicate balance between Christian central authority and his Muslim dominated province. He also used existing integrating cultural practices, such as godparentage, conversion and marriage to become part of the Ethiopian royalty.[118] Along with many other Oromo, his performance at Adwa proved his worth to the empire in addition to the birth of Iyasu two years later. In the Power struggle of the early 20th century, as a true sign of Oromo integration into Ethiopia politics, there were three separate parties led by Oromo leaders; Fit. Häbtä Giyorgis, T'aytu Bet'ul and *Ras* Mikaél all desiring to put their candidate on the throne. Fortunately for Wällo, Häbtä Giyorgis ousted T'aytu and supported Menilek's succession choice.

[118] See Genealogical chart on the next page. Figure 64

[119] Extracted from Heran Sereke-Brhan, "Building Bridges, Drying Bad Blood, 216-24; Ababa Kiflayasus, "The Career of Liul Rās Imru Häyla Sillāse" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie University, 1973), n.p.; Bairu Tafla, "Marriage as a Political Device: A Appraisel of an Social Aspect of the Menelik II Period (1889-

Figure 66: *Negus* Mikaël's Genealogical Tree[118]



Key: m = **married**, (#) **corresponds with** the number **given with** the parent **to distinguish children** of **different** marriages.

1916)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* X, no. 1 (1972); and Aleme Eshete, "Political Marriage and Divorce in Ethiopian History (Late 19th and Early 20th Century)" (Addis Ababa: paper read at the Italian Cultural Institute, 1984), 19-43; Rey, *The Real Abyssinia*, 220.

Conclusion: The Oromo as *Häbäsha* in the Early 20th Century

This dissertation has argued that the Northern Oromo groups, specifically the Mammadoch and Tulama, became another of the many ethnic groups under the umbrella of *Häbäsha.* This ethnic shift made the Oromo, already major political players in the provinces of Wällo and Shäwa, key actors on the national stage as the 19th century came to a close. While both schools of thought on the nature of the Abyssinian (Ethiopian) state argue that this state has been solely created and properly maintained by the Amhara and the Tigré, the Oromo, especially after the time of Ahmed Grañ and even more so in the late 19th century, are integral to an understanding of the Ethiopian state, not as enemies or usurpers, rather as partners. 20th century nationalist scholars have ignored Oromo actors due to the fact that detailing their role contradicts the Semitist view that state construction was solely an Amhara or Tigré enterprise and the Oromocentric view that the Oromo were only victims of Amhara and Tigré expansion.

The secondary source material mirrors the invisibility of the Oromo in the primary literature which uses the Oromo to evidence their own views of the Ethiopian state. Views of the Ethiopian state after the 16th century explicitly state that the decline in the power, material culture and civilization of the state is due to the presence of a uncivilized barbarian group, which they refer to as the "Galla" Moreover, after the reunification of the Northern provinces in the 19th century, these same "Galla" became evidence not for their own lack of civilization, but rather for that of the dominant Amhara. Both Ethiopian and European writers detailed not only the poverty of Oromo groups, but also their lack of conversion to Christianity. Both of these problems could only be solved by spiritual and political control by European powers.

The continued separation of the Oromo and the *Häbäsha* in the secondary literature ignores many of the locally developed culturally practices that endeared different ethnic groups to each other, especially in the ethnically diverse provinces of Wällo and Shäwa. The practices such as god-parentage, adoption and marriage alliances were utilized by both Oromo groups, especially those who were high born in their own lineages or displayed military talent to blur the categories of Oromo and Amhara, to the degree that, during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* (1786-1855), the ruling class was so ethnically diverse that it is exceedingly difficult to determine who is Amhara and who was Oromo.

After the *Zämana Mäsafent*, two Oromo groups, the Mammadoch of Wällo and the Tulama of Shäwa chose to hold land according to *Häbäsha* norms, convert to Christianity, speak Amharic and marry into leading *Häbäsha* families and were able to become *Häbäsha.* For the Tulama Oromo, due to their proximity to Mänz, especially after the time of Sahlä Selassé (r.1814-47), the main ethnic boundaries of language and religion could be crossed with reasonable ease. Military men and local nobility who adopted these *Häbäshä* cultural norms were rewarded with marriage alliances and extensive tracts of land which solidified their *Häbäsha* status. In Wällo, the process was significantly different due to the fact that the central institutions of Ethiopia used Christianity as a source of legitimacy. Although they had already adopted Häbäsha land tenure, language, and some had married into royal families, the Wälloye practice of Islam barred them from a *Häbäsha* identity. The Wälloye nobility converted to Christianity and became *Häbäsha* in the late 19th century.

Mohammed Ali (later *Negus* Mikaél, r.1914-1916) epitomizes this shift and his experiences in Ethiopia evidence many elements of Ethiopian ethnic identity and state construction. First, he, like many other nobles, was born to a high born father and a low born mother. Due to this fact, and to historic circumstances that ousted many of his rivals, he was able to claim his father's territory only with the help of outside powers. Initially, his Islamic beliefs were tolerated, but during the reign of an especially religious emperor, Yohannes IV (r.1872-1888), he became the emperor's godson and converted to Christianity, taking the name Mikaél. His rival, *Abba* Wat'aw (d.1884) did the same and the two stalemated in their quest to control the entire province. Mikaél's loyalty and ability to administer unpopular policies in his provinces lifted him to governing the entire province upon the deaths of Yohannes' son and his rival.

There rose in Shäwa, a province that was isolated from the wars of the *Zämäna Mäsafent*, a dynasty that combined organized military might with alliance building provinces to carve out an independent kingdom from both Abyssinian and Oromo territories. These alliances brought both Muslim groups and Oromo groups into the Mänzé aristocracy through godparentage, marriage and religious conversion. Another path was taken by *Ras* Gobana Dach'é (182?-1888). He used his ability as a soldier to bring himself into the Mänzé fold to become in 1878 the first Shäwan *Ras* not of royal

blood. Due to his abilities, Shäwa was able to expand, under Menilek, initially to Wällo and later to various territories to the South and Southwest. These conquests allowed for the purchase of firearms which led to Menilek being the only true candidate for the throne after Yohannes' death in 1888.

During the same year, *Ras* Gobana died, but his position was soon filled by another Oromo, Häbtä Giyorgis. In a ministry created by Menilek in an attempt to make his various political and economic alliances survive him, Häbtä Giyorigis was its head. In addition to these nonmilitary positions, Menilek created a permanent capital and a railroad in addition to stabilizing trade routes. These ventures were not to project Semitist civilization to the rest of the Ethiopia, as some scholars suggest, rather it was to maintain Menilek's loosely held together empire through centralized taxation and administration, which checked all provincial authority.

Mikaél of Wällo was one of the last provincial nobles in Ethiopia, but due to a marriage alliance and his loyalty, he was posed to benefit significantly in the new order that Menilek attempted to bring about after his death. Due to the fact that his marriage to Menilek's daughter produced an heir, he was now father to a contender to the throne. In the infighting during one of Menilek's many debilitating strokes in the early 20th century, the cause of Mikaél's son Iyasu (r.1913-6), was victorious due to the support of Menilek's new ministerial class. The Oromo were on all sides of this power struggle, truly a testament to their inclusion into the Ethiopian state.

The Oromo are just another example of successful ethnic integration into the Ethiopian state, an inclusion which is silenced by the political movements of the late 20th century. These silences render a multi-ethnic state homogenous, and ignore Oromo actors, especially those of Wällo and Shäwa. These actors utilized cultural practices developed to endear ethnic groups to each others, culminating in the Northern Oromo becoming another subset of the *Häbäsha*. After becoming *Häbäsha*, these actors improved their status and that of the state, bringing Ethiopia into the modern age as wealthy and powerful figures. Due to these developments, Abyssinia (Ethiopia) is not solely the product of Semitic civilization and the Oromo are a significant part of this state at all levels.

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Oral Informants[1]

Name	Identity	Travels	Profession	Age	Knowledge Base
Dämäqä Adänä	Wälloye	Wällo	Ministry of Finance (ret.)	n/a	*Ras* Mikaél
Asafä Gärad Nägäsh	Amhara with Oromo descent	Wällo	Ministry of Finance, Secretary of Ethiopian Orthodox Church	70	Ethiopian History/ Early Oromo History
Malaku Alämu Wäldé	Ethiopian Orthodox Christian (EOC) Father Gojjamé Mother Shäwan	Jimma, Goma Gofa, Gondar Gojjam, Shäwa, Wällo	Worker?	50	Oromo and Amhara cultural practices

[1] The Informants are organized based upon the order I interviewed them. Travels are listed in order to give the reader a better idea of the informants knowledge base relative to the cultural practices outside of his or her hometown.

Dämäsé Mälaku Abäbä	Ethiopian, states that all ancestors are Amhara	Wällo	Ministry of Education	68	Provincial differences
Abäbu Fäqé *Mähamäd*	Amhara, *but can* speak Harari, Somali, Tigrinya, Amharic	Wällo, Shäwa, Gojjam, Harar, Bägémder	Teacher	56	Muslim and *Christian* cultural practices
Arägäsh Dämäsé Arefo	EOC, but family members are Muslim, Christians, Amhara and Oromo	All over Ethiopia	Orator	44	Wällo culture, *Ras* Mikéal
Hussein Adal	Muslim	Wällo	Worker?	n/a	Wällo History
Captain Adäres Ali	Muslim Oromo	Wällo, Illubabor, Jimma	Worker?	46	Wällo History
Täfärä Mälaku	Amhara	All districts of Wällo	Teacher	82	*Ras* Mikaél, *Lej* Iyasu
Shék Dowed Ahmäd	Muslim	Bägémder Wällo	Koranic Education	83	Early Wällo History, Abba Wat'aw and *Ras* Mikaél
Gashaw Mohhamed Motema Däqu Järu	90 % Oromo	Wällo, Shäwa	Professor	n/a	Wällo cultural practices, history
Makonnen Bäqälä Nuregi	Oromo (EOC)	Wällo, Wällägä	Assistant Lecturer	42	Wällo cultural practices
Meteku Asfaw Gari Bulcho	Oromo	Tigray, Jimma, Wällo	Lecturer	39	Wällo cultural practices
Ayu Hassen Mohamäd Bäyan	Amhara?	Wälläga Arusi Bale Wällo	Lecturer	36	Wällo cultural practices

Mämere Gäbära Mariyam	Amhara	Wällo, Dire Dawa, Addis Ababa	Priest	n/a	Wällo cultural practices
Wändemu Nägusé Wäldé	Amhara	Afar, Ilubabor, Harar, Dire Dawa, Gondar, Sidamo Shäwa	Worker?	54	Christian and Muslim Practices in *Wällo*
Yämam	Muslim Oromo	Southern Ethiopia, Wällo	Trader, Policeman	45	Wällo cultural practices
Yemar Abäbä	Muslim	Wällo	Retired	91	Iyasu's Reign
Arogow Nuryé	Muslim	Wällo	Local Judge	93	Iyasu's Reign
Esayä Faseha Mäkonnen Asfaw Zämäd	EOC	Wällo	NGO Worker	44	Wällo cultural practices, history, *Ras* Mikaél, Iyasu
Sayid Ahmed Aleya	Oromo	Tigray, Wällo	Worker?	49	Wällo cultural practices
Shimäles Hassen Araqaw Häshim Ali T'aher Ambsa Gädäfo	Ethiopian Muslim	Wällo	Worker?	44	Wällo cultural practices, *Ras* Mikaél
Yemam Adem Haylu Asän	Muslim "Pure" Amhara forgets Tigré and Somali ancestors	Wällo, Goma Gofa, Addis Ababa,	Expert in non-formal education	62	Iyasu's reign, Wällo cultural practices
Shimales Ali	EOC, but parents are Muslim	All places in Ethiopia except Gambella	Education supervisor	49	Wällo cultural practices, Iyasu's Reign and *Ras* Mikaél
Sayid Kamal	Amharized Oromo	Wällo, Addis Ababa	Historian, Teacher	51	Wällo cultural practices and *Ras* Mikaél

Germa Tässäma	Oromo EOC	Tulama, Wälläga, Harar, Dire Dawa, Addis Ababa	Educator	66	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Häbtä Giyorgis
Ato Asafa	Oromo EOC	Dire Dawa, Harar, Arsi, Asmara, Wällo, Bägémder	Educator	70	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Häbtä Giyorgis
Dariso Hunde	Oromo EOC	Asmara, Addis Ababa, Däbra Zayt, Fiché, Ambo, Nazareth	Educator	48	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Häbtä Giyorgis
Mulgeta Asendew	Did not answer identity question, but EOC, interview conducted in Amharic	Shäwa, Addis Ababa	Worker		Shäwan cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Häbtä Giyorgis
Teshoma Leta	Oromo	Arussi, Shäwa	Educator	37	Shäwan cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana
Abba Tafara	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	80	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana
Fayissa Badane	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	80	cultural practices, Menilek II
Bach'a Ordifa	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	61	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Menilek II, Häbtä Giyorgis
Ayälä Asfa	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	62	Oromo cultural practices

Galanch Gersa	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	?	Oromo cultural practices
Regassa Sanai	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	70	Oromo cultural practices, Häbtä Giyorgis, *Ras* Gobana
Tafra *Nadreresu*	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	80	Oromo cultural practices, History, Häbtä Giyorgis and *Ras* Gobana
Asfara Megede	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	87	Oromo cultural practices, History, Häbtä Giyorgis and *Ras* Gobana
Sine Adala	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	78	Oromo cultural practices
Gizaw Beru	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	78	Oromo cultural practices
Mergussa Anora	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	72	Oromo cultural practices
Galata Täklä	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	80	Oromo cultural practices
Abärä Täklä	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	62	Oromo cultural practices, History and *Ras* Gobana
Andumet Täklä	Oromo	Shäwa	Farmer	67	Oromo cultural practices
Zelalem Nemera	Oromo	Shäwa	Student	27	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Menilek II, Häbtä Giyorgis
Zelalem Temesgen	Oromo	Shäwa	Student	33	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Menilek II
Makonnen Jimdi	Oromo	Shäwa	Student	32	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Menilek II, Häbtä Giyorgis

Jebesse Fit'e	Oromo	Shäwa	Educator	41	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Menilek II, Häbtä Giyorgis
Asselfech Merhawu	Oromo	Shäwa	Student	?	Oromo cultural practices, *Ras* Gobana, Menilek II

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Appendix A: Guide To The Transliteration of the Ethiopic Script To the Latin Script

This system was developed through consulting a variety of transliteration systems including the Department of History at Addis Ababa and the systems used by past Ethiopianists, most notably Sven Rubenson and Wolf Leslau. The Ethiopic script has 33 consonants and seven vowels. Each consonant has seven orders corresponding to each vowel sound.

Vowel	Symbol	Example
1st Order (the "u" in huh)	ä	ወደ wädä
2nd Order (the "u" in Luke)	u	ንጉስ negus
3rd Order (the "ee" in see)	i	ሰሪ seri
4th Order (the "a" in rat)	a	ሃይማኖት haymanot
5th Order (the "a" in ray)	é	ሴት sét
6th Order (the "a" in state)	e	እሱ esu
or		
6th Order (the "e" in roses)	(simply the consonant)	ሪስት rist
7th Order (the "o" in rogue)	o	ሆነ honä

Several consonants symbols do not have equivalents in the Latin script, they will be represented as follows:

Symbol	Consonant	Sound
q	ቀ	explosive k
t'	ጠ	explosive t
ch'	ጨ	explosive ch
p'	ጰ	explosive p
s'	ጸ, ፀ	explosive s
ch	ቸ	"ch", like in church
sh	ሸ	"sh" like in shiny
ñ	ኘ	"ñ" like in mañana
ž	ዠ	"g" like in gen(French)

Every consonant can be changed through the addition of "wa" to the consonant creating a different Ethiopic symbol, I will represent this change through adding "wa" to the consonant, for example, ጧት is rendered as t'wat, and ቋራ is rendered as Qwara. In more recent texts this construction is gradually replaced by splitting the character into a sixth order consonant and a fourth order w, so ጧት (t'wat) is now rendered as ጥዋት tewat.

Labiovelars are rounded sounds using the ቀ, ከ, ገ, ጎ, (q,k,g,h) characters, they will be rendered by putting a "w" between the consonant and the vowel.

ቈ q'wä	ቍ q'wi	ቋ q'wa	ቌ q'wé	ቍ q'we
ጐ hwä	ጒ hwi	ጓ hwa	ጔ hwé	ጒ hwe
ኰ kwä	ኲ kwi	ኳ kwa	ኴ kwé	ኲ kwe
ጐ gwä	ጕ gwi	ጓ gwa	ጔ gwé	ጕ gwe

Also, a few consonant sounds are repeated: ጸ, ፀ both have the "s'" sound; ሀ, ሐ, ኸ,ኀ, all have the "h" sound; ሰ,ሠ both have the "s" sound and ዐ ኣ both have the "a" sound.

Additional notes: Due to the fact that Ethiopia was not colonized there is no universally recognized way to transliterate the script; therefore, place and personal names have a variety of spellings. For example, Menilek (ምኒልክ or in older manuscripts ምንይልክ) has been spelled in a variety of ways including Menelik, Menilek, Manelik and Mīnīlik. These spellings are relatively similar, therefore when directly citing individuals I will keep their spellings. However, in my main body of text I will utilize my own transliteration system. In addition, Ethiopian authors spell their own names in a variety of ways. I have kept their spellings when citing them. Also, Western and Ethiopian authors using their own transliteration systems in the titles of their works and have rendered the spelling of Ethiopian words in a variety of ways. For example "Addis Ababa" is often spelled "Addis Abeba." I have also kept their spellings when referencing their works.

Also, words, personal names or place names originating from the Latin script and later rendered into the Ethiopic script, such as ካፕትን ሃሪስ or ጂቡቲ, which, according to my system, would be rendered "Kapten Harris" and "Jibuti," respectively. I will spell them in the manner that they were originally spelled in the Latin script, so they will be spelled "Captain Harris" and "Djibouti"

Appendix B: Glossary of Ethiopian Terms

*The Amharic or Afan Oromo spelling in parentheses after the term[2]

Amharic Terms

Abagaz (አባጋዝ) – War General.

Abuna (አቡና) – Archbishop and head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and until the time of Haylä Selassé was Egyptian and needed to officially crown an emperor.

Abéto (አቤቶ) – Uncrowned Emperor.

As'e (አፄ) – "Emperor" sometimes referred to as *Negus Nägust* ("King of Kings").

Askari (አስካሪ) – Eritrean troops in the employ of the Italians.

Ato (አቶ) – "Mr.", however in Shäwa during the *Zämäna Mäsafent* it was considered a title of importance.

Aworaja (አምራጃ) – Subdistrict.

Awaj (አዋጅ) – Official proclamation given by a King.

Azazh (አዛዥ) – minor military commander.

Azmari (አዝማሪ) – Singers who often make up songs reflecting how an average Ethiopian feels about or views an event or individual.

Balabat (ባላባት) – landowning noble lit. "One who has a father."

Bäjirond (በጅሮንድ) – State treasurer.

Däga (ደጋ) – Highlands.

Däjazmach (ደጃዝማች) – political/ military title below Ras, but above *Grazmach* and *Qäñzamach*, lit. "leader of the rear guard."

Fitwarari (ፊትዋራሪ) – Main War General lit. "leader of the front guard."

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[2] The Amharic terms are spelled according to the manner that they are spelled in the pertinent Amharic royal chronicles and scholarly text. Any discrepancies are cleared up by referencing Wolf Leslau, *Concise Amharic Dictionary: Amharic - English and English - Amharic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1976). The Oromo terms are spelled based on Ton Leus and Cynthia Salvadori, *Aadaa Boraanaa: A Dictionary of Borana Culture* (Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2006).

Häbäsha (ሀበሻ or አበሻ) – A term used by Arabs to describe the highland people of Ethiopia lit. "mixed people."

Hudad ሁዳድ – Land either taken from peasant cultivators or fallow land and given to tax collectors and was cultivated by peasants, tenants or paid civil servants.

Galla (ጋላ) – A pejorative term for the Oromo, no longer in use, but was extensively used from the 16th century until the 20th century.

Gäbbar (ገባር)– In *Häbäsha* culture it means "tribute payer." In Wällo, it denotes private property that obligates its owner to pay a third to the local chief and a tenth to the Government.[3] Later, in the southern regions, it signified a conquered subject who lost ownership of land.

Gäsha (ገሽ) – 44.2 Hectares of Land lit. "shield."[4]

Gäsha Märet – (ገሽ መሬት) – about 40 hectares of conquered and redistributed land.

Gendäbäl (ግንደበል) and Zämach (ዘማች) - private property that was taxed through military service and the transportation of tents.[5]

Grazmach (ግራዝማች) – political/ military title below Ras lit. "Leader of the left guard."

Gult (ጉልት) – Land given to Churches and Political figures for the purposes of collecting tribute, generally given to loyal subjects or to ensure loyalty.

Hudad (ሁዳድ) – Land which is set aside for royal followers, worked on by landowning tenants; it is also used to describe the labor on these lands.[6]

Iddir (እድር) – Cooperative Work Associations seen in Oromo Areas, including Wello "proper."

Kätämma (ከተማ) – Frontier city constructed to monitor conquered territories.

Kantiba (ካንቲባ) – Mayor of a town.

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[3] Mahtämä Śellasé Wäldä Mäsqäl, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times: The Land System of Ethiopia," *Ethiopian Observer* 1 (1957): 290.
[4] Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1995), Taken from his Glossary.
[5] Mahtämä Śellasé , "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times: The Land System of Ethiopia," 291. and Gabra-Wold-Ingida Worq, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation, Translated by Mengesha Gessesse," *Ethiopian Observer* 1962, 316.
[6] Tekalign, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia", Taken from his Glossary.

Liqamäkwas (ሊቃመኳስ) – a look-alike for the Emperor.

Mädbet (መደቤት) – Land used to feed a political figure and his followers, lit. "Kitchen."

Madariya (ማዳሪያ) – Usufruct right of land given to either government employees (especially in the Southern territories) or Church officials (Wällo).

Mäkwannent (መኳንንት) – Nobility, ones born into the noble class.

Malkañya (ማልካኛ) – local governor.

Mäs'fin (መጽፈን) – Princes, ones who are in important political/military positions.

Mätäkiya Mänqäya (መተኪያ መንቀያ) – State lands, generally in the Southern territories reserved for soldiers.

Mislane (ምስላኔ) – official in charge of tax collecting and the royal farms, later it connoted a districted Governor.[7]

Näftäña (ነፍተኛ) – soldiers of Menelik's Army who conquered the southern territories, lit. "one with a gun."

Nagradas ነገራዳስ – Leading trade official.

Negus (ንጉሥ) – "King" nearly autonomous (only answerable to the *As'é*) provincial leader.

Qälad (ቀላድ) – a tool used for the measurement of Land often used interchangeably with *Gäsha Märet* to describe land taken by the state.[8]

Qäñazmach (ቀኛዝማች) – political/ military title below the position of *Ras* "Leader of the right guard."

Qéné (ቄኔ) – wax and gold poetry, poetry that has two meanings, often used to criticize political figures.

Qés (ቄስ) – Ethiopian Orthodox Reverend.

Qwami Galla (ቋሚ ጋላ) - lands taken from larger estates to take care of the Wälloyé soldiers. The larger estate holders could negotiate with the local chief and use the produce of the lands for the army, which also added another tax, two thalers and

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

service as domestics to the local chief, while in other instances soldiers administered the lands and collected the taxes themselves from the *gäbbar*, which included two thalers and a tenth to the government.[9]

Qolla (ቆላ) – Lowlands.

Ras (ራስ) – political/ military title under *Negus* lit. "Head" Harold Marcus defines it as a title equivalent to an English Duke.

Rim (ሪም) – Land that the owner usufructuary (right to use, but not to own) rights temporarily or permanently.[10]

Rist (ሪስት) – Landowning rights for peasants, illegal to sell to non Häbäsha and passed from Father to son and daughter and Husband to Wife.

Siso (ሲሶ) – property that was given to a local *balabat* to ensure that he obtained 1/3 of the total output of the land that he governed, lit. "1/3."[11]

Täwahédo (ተዋሄዶ) – A denomination of Monophysite Christianity that emphasizes the dual nature of Christ

Tänäqay Galla (ተነቃይ ጋላ) - are government lands administered by Gäbbars (tribute payers) and the amount of lands corresponded with the importance of the individual and had four *Galla Maret* categories, *Mulu* (lit. full), a half or *Gimash* (lit. half), a third or *Siso* (lit. a third) and a fourth *irbo* (lit. a fourth) and land less than than these was considered uncultivated. Also, it did not seem to have any tax responsibilities, but could be confiscated by the governor at any time.[12]

Wagshum (ዋግሹም) – traditional leader of the territory of Wag.

Wäyna Däga (ወይና ደጋ) – Moderate highlands.

Zämächä (ዘመቻ) – Campaigners.

Zämäna Mäs'afint (ዘመና መሳፍንት) – "Age of Princes" (approx. 1786-1855) at time where the Oromo of Yejju took control of the capital city, named puppet emperors and ruled over an increasingly provincial empire.

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[9] Mahtämä Śellasé, "Land Tenure and Taxation from Ancient to Modern Times," 290; Gabra-Wold-Ingida, "Ethiopia's Traditional System," 316.
[10] Tekalign, "A City and Its Hinterlands", Taken from his Glossary.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Gabra-Wold-Ingida, "Ethiopia's Traditional System," 316; Mahtämä Śellasé, "Land Tenure," 290.

Afan Oromo Terms

Abba Dula – War leaders in Oromo societies that gradually gained authority, property and followers, eroding the republican Gada system and granting themselves despotic authority. Also called "Moti."

Alagaa – Outsiders, the term is Fälasha (ፈላሻ) in Amharic (borrowed from Ge'ez)

Borana (Boorana) – In Oromo culture an individual solely descended from Oromo clans

Gada (gaada) – a political democratic system that is defined by eight year cycles where a lubo (age grade) took power and was replaced every eight years by a new lubo. Decisions were made democratically, where all pure Oromo males had an equal voice. It was previously seen in all Oromo societies, however, after 16th century internal and external factors gradually eroded the system leading to Despotic kings or assimilation into Häbäsha norms in many areas.

Gabaro – In Oromo culture it signifies one of only partly Oromo descent. It has its roots in a Muslim group in Northern Kenya who initially despised and were enslaved by the Oromo.[13]

Mogasa – A non Oromo adopted into an Oromo clan

Siiqqee – The system that Oromo women used to ensure basic rights and worked side-by-side with the Gada System

[13] Leus and Salvadori, *Aadaa Boraanaa: A Dictionary of Borana Culture*, 240.

Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions for Shäwa and Wällo

Wällo Informant Interview Questions

Identity questions

1. How do you identify yourself? Why?
2. What does this identity (religious, ethnic, national) mean to you?
3. How did your parents/grandparents identify themselves, what does this identity mean to you?
4. What do you know about the history of Wällo?
5. What do you know about the history of [the answer to question number 3] in Ethiopia?
6. What things (cultural, spiritual, political) link the people of Wällo?
7. What things (cultural, spiritual, political) link the people of Ethiopia?
8. How do you think the people of Wällo differ from the people of Shäwa, Begemder and Gojjam?
9. How do you think the people of Wällo differ from the people of the Southern areas of Ethiopia?
10. How do the Amhara of Wällo differ from the Amhara of other areas in Ethiopia?
11. How do the Oromo of Wällo differ from the Oromo of other areas in Ethiopia?
12. Is there a difference between the Amhara and the Oromo of Wällo?
13. Within Wällo are their significant differences between the sub-districts?
14. What does being an Ethiopian mean to you? Parents? Grandparents?
15. What does being a Wälloyé mean to you? Parents? Grandparents?

Historical Questions

16. What do you know about *Ras (Negus)* Mika'el?
17. How was he seen by the people of Wällo?
18. How was he seen by the people of Ethiopia?
19. What important events occurred during his time?
20. How is his rule remembered by the people of Wällo?
21. What do you know about *As'é* Menelik?

22. How was he seen by the people of Wällo?
23. How was he seen by the people of Ethiopia?
24. What important events occurred during his time?
25. How is his rule remembered by the people of Wällo?
26. What do you know about *Lej* Iyasu?
27. How was he seen by the people of Wällo?
28. How was he seen by the people of Ethiopia?
29. What important events occurred during his time?
30. How is his rule remembered by the people of Wällo?
31. Describe some memorable events that happened in the past in Wällo

Shäwa Informant Questions

Identity questions

1. How do you identify yourself? Why?
2. What does this identity (religious, ethnic, national) mean to you?
3. How did your parents/grandparents identify themselves, what does this identity mean to you?
4. What do you know about the history of Shäwa?
5. What do you know about the history of [the answer to question number 3] in Ethiopia?
6. What things (cultural, spiritual, political) link the people of Shäwa?
7. What things (cultural, spiritual, political) link the people of Ethiopia?
8. How do you think the people of Shäwa differ from the people of Wällo, Bägémder and Gojjam?
9. How do you think the people of Shäwa differ from the people of the Southern areas of Ethiopia?
10. How do the Amhara of Shäwa differ from the Amhara of other areas in Ethiopia?
11. How do the Oromo of Shäwa differ from the Oromo of other areas in Ethiopia?
12. Is there a difference between the Amhara and the Oromo of Shäwa?
13. Within Shäwa are their significant differences between the sub-districts?

14. What does being an Ethiopian mean to you? Your parents? Your grandparents?
15. What does being an Oromo mean to you? Your parents? Your grandparents?

Historical Questions

32. What do you know about *Ras* Gobana?
33. How was he seen by the people of Shäwa?
34. How was he seen by the people of Ethiopia?
35. What important events occurred during his time?
36. How is his accomplishments remembered by the people of Shäwa?
37. What do you know about *As'é* Menelik?
38. How was he seen by the people of Shäwa?
39. How was he seen by the people of Ethiopia?
40. What important events occurred during his time?
41. How is his rule remembered by the people of Shäwa?
42. What do you know about *Fit.* Habte Giyorgis?
43. How was he seen by the people of Shäwa?
44. How was he seen by the people of Ethiopia?
45. What important events occurred during his time?
46. How is his rule remembered by the people of Shäwa?
47. Describe some memorable events that happened in the past in Shäwa?
48. What other important Oromo lived during the reign of Menelik?

Author's Biography

Brian James Yates was born in Long Island, New York on October 6th 1980. He graduated from Morehouse College, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa with a major in History and a minor in African American studies in 2002. He began graduate work at Michigan State University and transferred to the University of Illinois in 2003 to pursue a doctorate in Ethiopian history. Yates has also studied at the University of Ghana at Legon and Addis Ababa University. Following the completion of his Ph.D., Yates will begin a two year Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Oberlin College.