LIT

EIKE HABERLAND
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WOLFGANG KULS

THE WOLAITA

EDITED BY SOPHIA THUBAUVILLE

4
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AT THE FROBENIUS INSTITUTE



Eike Haberland, Elisabeth Pauli, Wolfgang Kuls

The Wolaita

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edited by

Sophia Thubauville

Volume 4

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Eike Haberland, Elisabeth Pauli,
Wolfgang Kuls

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With a preface by Bosha Bombe

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Frankfurt am Main, October 2023
Sophia Thubauville

Preface

by Bosha Bombe[1]

This preface is about the research that Eike Haberland and his colleagues Wolfgang Kuls and Elisabeth Pauli conducted on Wolaita nearly more than half a century ago. In this prelude, I will first explore the gap in knowledge of the history of south and southwestern Ethiopia before the beginning of the twentieth century and the role played by the Frobenius expedition team in documenting southwestern Ethiopia. Second, I will present earlier reviews of and reflections on Haberland's field notes stored at Frobenius Institute before sharing my own reflections on the following volume, his ethnography of the Wolaita.

It is a commonly known fact that while central, northern and eastern Ethiopia served as major destinations for European scientific explorers, missionaries, and diplomatic and commercial agents in the nineteenth century, south and southwestern Ethiopia remained isolated and unexposed to such agents until the beginning of the twentieth century (Bahru 2002; Clapham 2002). Among the southwestern polities, only Jimma and Kaffa and some parts of the former Sidaama people[2] were visited by European travellers who documented the history and culture of these societies (Borelli 1890; Cecchi 1885). These records later served as a major reference for the expedition teams from the Frobenius Institute who pioneered documenting the Omotic-speaking societies and the eastern Cushitic clusters in southern Ethiopia.

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[1] Bosha Bombe holds a BA in History and an MA in Social Anthropology. He did his PhD at the University of Pavia, Italy. His PhD thesis was on the *Historical anthropology of slavery and* gabbar *servitude system in Wolaita from 1894–1975*. He has published several articles and book chapters on slavery, the tributary status of peasants, and marriage practices among the Omotic societies of southern Ethiopia. Currently, he is head of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, at Arba Minch University, Ethiopia.

[2] Back in the sixteenth century, before the Oromo migration and their conquests in southern and southwestern Ethiopia, the people of southern and southwestern Ethiopia were generally mentioned as the Sidaama people – a generic name given to a number of groups who inhabited the region (for more see, Beckingham and Huntingford 1954: iii; Cerulli 1956:96; Trimingham 1952:179–185).

The Omotic-speaking people to whom the Wolaita belong live in the catchment areas of the Omo River. They are oral societies whose history and culture have not only received little attention in the historiography and anthropology of Ethiopia but have also been maltreated by the modern history of the country (Data 2017; Abbink 2017). Wolaita is not an exception in this. The German ethnologist Haberland Eike pioneered in the documentation and interpretation of Wolaita society in the 1950s and in the following years (Abbink 2006). A native historian, Bogale Walelu, followed him in producing a brief history of Wolaita in 1964. Bogale's account makes much use of Haberland's work, especially on the influence of the northern Semitic people on the history and culture of the Wolaita people, even though Bogale never mentions Haberland (Bogale 1964). More than two decades later, other foreign scholars researched Wolaita. The Austrian ethnologist Friedrich Klausberger studied the feudal production system (Klausberger 1976), the Italian missionary teacher and ethnographer Remo Chiatti worked on the political history of Wolaita (Chiatti 1984), and the French scholar Jacques Bureau on the pattern of kingship, especially among the Tigre ruling classes (Bureau 1990). These scholars' works differed from Haberland's account interpreting Wolaita society from a contemporary perspective (Abbink 2006). Among them, it seems that Remo Chiatti was most influenced by the work of Haberland. In his six years stay in Wolaita, both as Catholic missionary teacher and a PhD student of anthropology, Chiatti produced a huge account of Wolaita society reaching nearly 600 pages. It focused on the history, war and territorial expansion of the Tigre dynasty, and the class and structure of the government, slavery and material culture of Wolaita. Given the topics he covers, it is unsurprising that Chiatti was influenced by Haberland (Chiatti 1984). Since the 1980s, Wolaita has been studied by a number of Ethiopian young scholars who have focused on the political history of Wolaita (Altaye 1982), on the Tigre dynasty (Afework 2001), on religious history (Deressa 1996), on social change (Haileyesus 1996), on production practices (Berhanu 1995), on material culture (Teshome 1984), on social stratification and marginalization (Akalework 2011; Santime 2012), and on the slavery and *gabbar* system (Bosha 2022). In addition, there are many who have published valuable books on the history and culture of Wolaita in Amharic (Elias, Shiferaw and Abebech, 1999; Fancho and Eyob 2014; Wana 1998). None of them have referred to the valuable and pioneering works of Haberland because they were available only in German until now. This means Haberland's work has had little impact on both international and domestic scholars of Ethiopia and Africa (Abbink 2006).

However, some scholars have reviewed the field data of Haberland stored in the Frobenius Institute (Abbink 2006, 2017; Fleming 1995; Data 2017). Here I will briefly focus on the reflections of Jon Abbink and Data Dea, because in some ways their thoughts relate to my own reflections on this volume. In his article "Re-

constructing Haberland and reconstructing the Wolaita: Writing the history and society of a former Ethiopian kingdom"', Abbink states that Haberland's work provided fresh data and new insights on southwestern Ethiopia that stimulated many scholars and produced scholarly debates in the western world, but that his impact in Ethiopia and Africa was limited due to the fact that he published his work almost exclusively in German (Abbink 2006:2–6). Abbink argues that the material Haberland collected was substantial but it was patchy, incomplete and fragmented, and gathered without any thought to an organizing theme. His theoretical and methodological approach had also several limitations (Abbink 2006:9). Nevertheless, Abbink identifies the ethnologist as a student of two schools: the "diffusionist school" and the "Rankean historical epistemology". Taking a "diffusionist" perspective, according to Abbink, Haberland emphasized how the northern highland Christian culture influenced the spiritual and material culture of the Wolaita people in his reconstruction of the cultural history of Wolaita (Abbink 2017). As a follower of the Rankean historical tradition, the ethnologist followed the desire to reconstruct southwestern Ethiopian societies as "they really were", hence he ignored several dramatic forces that affected and transformed the history and culture of those people in his time (Abbink 2017:157–8). In doing so, Haberland paid more attention to oral history and closely worked with older male informants and elites (Abbink 2006:8; Abbink 2017:159).

Abbink also critiques the Eurocentrism of Haberland's approach. He argues that Haberland's "preoccupation with the relation between the northern Ethiopian high culture (*Hochkultur*) and the ancient, less elaborate, southern Ethiopian political tradition, is best abandoned, or at least reformulated" (Abbink 2006:14). Despite these critiques, however, Abbink appreciates Haberland for being a groundbreaking empiricist and for his deep-rooted interest and commitment to the uniqueness and values of local culture and the people he met and studied (Abbink 2006, 2017).

It seems sensible here to support Abbink's charge of Eurocentrism, because in this volume, the reader will find terms such as "ancient peoples" (for Ari people), "lesser" or "primitive culture" (for Wolaita), and "high culture" (for the highland Semitic people). Such expressions endorse the idea of the South Arabian origin of the highland Ethiopian civilization, that the northern highland people after being transformed by the advanced Semitic culture took the burden to "civilize" the culture and history of people wherever they moved (Messay 2003; Data 2017:242). In reality, the concept of the one directional diffusion of ideas discounts the deep-rooted internal historical dynamism of state formation in Ethiopia (Levine 1974).

Data Dea also took the opportunity to visit Haberland's records on Wolaita at the Frobenius Institute at the University of Frankfurt am Main. Being a native anthropologist, he was overwhelmed with the "treasure trove of empirical ma-

terial" that Haberland collected in Wolaita. Unlike Abbink, however, Data was selective in his review of the material, and only focused on the most important themes that still affect the politics and social life of contemporary Wolaita society. His critique of Haberland's account focused mainly on his methodology and on the issues of inequality. Data regrets Haberland's total silence on Menelik's onslaught of Wolaita in 1894 and its aftermath, particularly since Haberland relied on oral history and worked closely with older men, some of whom might have witnessed the devastation brought upon the Wolaita people by the 1894 conquest (Data 2017:238). Data further argues that Haberland's account of Wolaita history relied on what he was told by the dominant group and lacked real representation from various strata, thus it did not differ substantially from the usual oral or conventional history offered (Data 2017:238). On the issue of social inequality, however, Data does appreciate Haberland's detailed documentation and taxonomy on slavery in Wolaita. He states "[slavery] is the best written of all his materials on Wolaita" (Data 2017:244).

Here, my own reflections on Haberland's work focus only on this volume but, as I mentioned above, what I will present here relates to the general reviews of Haberland already discussed. The introduction to this volume and other sources indicate that Haberland collected the bulk of his ethnographic material on the trips he made to Wolaita in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (Data 2017; Abbink 2006, 2017). This volume also clearly shows that Haberland shared much field data with his expedition colleagues, Wolfgang Kuls and Elisabeth Pauli.

I first came across Haberland in his review on "A new history of Ethiopia" (Haberland 1981), his article "The influence of the Christian Ethiopian empire on southern Ethiopia" (Haberland 1964), and in the bibliography of Remo Chiatti, whose PhD work on Wolaita was mainly influenced by Haberland. When doing field work in Wolaita for my PhD study, I often searched for Haberland's Wolaita account, but I couldn't find it (now I realize that this was because it was only available in German). The good news about an English translation came when I was attending the 2023 IES conference in Addis Ababa, where I met Sophia Thubauville. She told me that she was working on the translation of Haberland's account on Wolaita and asked me to write the preface of the current volume. I accepted her invitation with great pleasure, because I was curious to read his account. It took me a long time to go through his ethnography, partly because the volume is huge and partly because of commitments at the department of SOAS in Arba Minch University. The first thing that struck me about this volume was the historical significance of Haberland's work. From the perspective of history, southern Ethiopia has two problems. First, almost all of the region's societies are oral societies and the older men who are the repositories of past knowledge are disappearing today. Second, southern Ethiopia has not been given equal attention

in the modern historiography of the country. Thus, Haberland's account is an invaluable resource in making sense of the history of these little studied societies.

Nevertheless, his account has limitations. Confusions and distortions are overtly stated in his work. The confusions are often related to his understanding of the ancient period, the time before 1600. The original inhabitants, whom Haberland called the Aroge (seven houses), their destruction by the Oromo invasion, and the destruction of ancient churches by Ahmad Gragn are not historically grounded (Beckingham and Huntingford 1954). Equally, the origin of the Wolaita Malla clan from Kucha contradicts the established historical records (Chiatti 1984; Fancho and Eyob 2014; Wana 1998). Further historical distortions in this volume relate to the post-occupation period of Wolaita, and were due perhaps to a lack of information or to Haberland's methodology, which involved mainly Tigre informants. For example, Haberland categorizes the period from the Amhara conquest of Wolaita in 1894 to the arrival of Fascist Italians in Wolaita in 1937 as the era of *madbet*. Other sources indicate that the *madbet* period ran, in practice, from the conquest to 1903, when *kawo* Tona was removed from his vassalage. This era was followed by the period of the *gabbar* system in Wolaita (1903–1937) (Altaye 1982; Bosha 2022; Adane 2016).

Another limitation of Haberland's work is the ethnographic present used in his account. Haberland often used present tenses to describe the culture he was studying, but in reality, the elements he described had already disappeared or were in the process of disappearing. Wolaita had already been in contact with the western world; both Catholicism and Protestantism had arrived in Wolaita three decades before Haberland started his field work (Balisky 2009; Kaleb 2022). The Wolaita also experienced colonial administration under the Italian Fascists from 1937 to 1941 (Bosha 2022). What Haberland emphasized and described was the highland Semitic influence on Wolaita culture in the pre-conquest period. Yet, even in this, Haberland was selective. He said almost nothing about the post-occupation experience of the Wolaita people, the issues of the *gabbar* system, or the ethnic, political and social domination that the Wolaita people underwent since 1894 (Data 2017; Bosha 2022).

Haberland also ignored the multi-social origin of the Wolaita society. He often dichotomized the Wolaita culture into higher (the Semitic Tigre culture) and lesser (the Wolaita indigenous culture). He argued that state formation in Wolaita was the result of continuous contacts and interactions between the Wolaita and the civilized Christian highlanders. This interpretation is true in some ways. But what Haberland missed was the other historically grounded fact that Wolaita history and culture is also the product of the continuous immigration of numerous clans from a range of ethnic groups (Altaye 1982; Bisrat 2016; Wana 1998). Recent oral sources suggest that seven clans were supposed to be aboriginal to the Wolaita

country. With the passage of time, several ethnic groups with diverse backgrounds immigrated into Wolaita for a number of reasons, and they integrated and assimilated into the existing social order (Abraham 1979; Altaye 1982). In Haberland's time, the total number of different clans in Wolaita was 120 (see this volume). As I wrote this preface, the Wolaita clans were reported as 205, indicating the continuing immigration and assimilation of numerous ethnic groups into the Wolaita culture. Altaye once commented that this multi-social origin of Wolaita was a "melting point of people" (Altaye 1982:12). The heterogeneous background of the Wolaita people later came to represent the name of the country itself. The name Wolaita derived from the term *-walaheta*, whose meaning got mixed and integrated into the Wolaita culture, history and language (Altaye 1982:12). Given all this, it makes no sense to dichotomize the intermingled Wolaita culture into ‚civilized' and ‚savage'.

Finally, Haberland extensively used local terms, many of which are corrupted Wolaita terms i.e. Amharic terms that were later shaped into Wolaita language. This is perhaps due to two reasons. First, Haberland was preoccupied with understanding the northern Christian influence on Wolaita culture. Second, he mainly worked with Tigre informants, who spoke Amharic well (Haberland himself spoke and understood Amharic). The other minor problem is that the location of some ancient places and their names especially in the introduction part are not clear.

Despite these drawbacks, Haberland's account of Wolaita has many contributions to make. Haberand's comparative approach, for example, is valuable. He compares the Wolaita culture with the neighbouring Ometo groups, such as Dawuro, Konta, and Gamo; and with the Cushitic clusters – Kambata, Hadiya, Konso, Gedeo and Sidaama. Despite deep historical affinity among the Ometo groups, Haberland states that, in their physical appearance, the Wolaita more resemble the Cushitic Hadiya, Kambata and Sidaama, and they stand out from the Ometo groups. The cattle-herding rituals and killing ceremonies were not common among the Ometo groups, thus the Wolaita borrowed those elements from eastern Cushitic groups, he argues. He further states that the Wolaita culture stands out as higher and more organized and sophisticated than that of the neighbouring Ometo groups and eastern Cushitic clusters, but it remained less complex than the highland Christian culture. Regarding the kinship organization, Haberland explains that, unlike in eastern Cushitic clusters, the Wolaita clans lacked kinship affiliation, unity and solidarity due to their large number. Generally, his detailed and elaborative description and comparative analysis provides the reader not only with a deeper understanding of the former Wolaita kingdom but also gives a good insight into the culture-history of the people of southwestern Ethiopia and beyond.

Haberland's account on slavery in pre-conquest Wolaita is another significant contribution both from the historical point of view and as it relates to contem-

porary social fabrics, citizenship and identity. His detailed description of slavery, slave status and the role slavery played in the agrarian economy of Wolaita disproves contemporary arguments that slavery in southern Ethiopia was introduced during Emperor Menelik's expansion and conquest of the region (Donham and James 1986). His account also shows that the practice and forms of slavery in southern Ethiopia differed from what was commonly known as domestic or household slavery in northern and central Ethiopia (Pankhurst 1968). The forms of slavery Wolaita practised served as bridges in the move toward tenancy in the post-abolition period. The legal abolition of slavery was not accompanied by a change in land tenure, or that is to say, because the ex-slaves were not in a position to become owner occupiers, their ex-masters (or any landlord) gave them usufruct right over small areas of land in return for monopoly of their labour. In general, the detailed documentation and careful analysis of this subject sheds light on how the past continues to affect the social relationship, citizenship and identity in contemporary Wolaita (Bosha 2022; Data 2017).

In general, Haberland's account is a most valuable resource. I personally believe that the current version will serve as the most important source for those who want to understand the history and culture of pre-conquest Wolaita in particular and of the people of southern Ethiopia in general.

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Editor's preface

by Sophia Thubauville

Research of the Frobenius Institute in Wolaita

This ethnography on the Wolaita of southern Ethiopia is the first publication on the outcome of research trips made by members of the Frobenius Institute to Wolaita in the years 1955, 1967, 1970/71 and 1972. It presents the manuscripts written following the trips by the ethnographers Eike Haberland,[3] Wolfgang Kuls,[4] and Elisabeth Pauli.[5]

[3] Eike Friedrich Georg Haberland (1924–1992) studied anthropology, ancient philology, ancient history and oriental studies at the Goethe University in Frankfurt due to his interest in non-European countries. In addition, he attended courses on religious studies and African linguistics. In 1950, under the supervision of Professor Adolf Ellegard Jensen, Haberland completed his PhD thesis, *Das Gada-System der südabessinischen Völker* [The Gada system of south Abyssinian people]. In the following years he was employed as a research assistant at the Frobenius Institute. Throughout his appointment at the Frobenius Institute, he carried out intensive field research, especially on the ethno-history of southern Ethiopia. He completed his habilitation thesis in 1962 and was appointed as professor in the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at the University of Mainz in 1965. Three years later he returned to Frankfurt where he took up a professorship in the Department of Historical Anthropology and became the director of the Frobenius Institute. In the early 1970s he continued to carry out research on Ethiopia and received the Haile Selassie prize for Ethiopian Studies in 1971. When the socialist regime took power in Ethiopia shortly after, he shifted more and more of his attention to Burkina Faso, its loam architecture and its material culture.

[4] Wolfgang Kuls (1920–2022) was drafted into the military to fight in the Second World War and was taken prisoner. After his release in 1946, he studied biology, botany, chemistry, geology, philosophy and zoology at the University in Frankfurt am Main. His PhD in geography secured him employment as a scientific assistant at the Geographical Institute at the Goethe University in Frankfurt. In 1954 he participated in the Frobenius Institute's expedition to southern Ethiopia to undertake cultural geographic and phyto-sociological research, especially on the cultivation of ensete. During this trip he met Adolf Ellegard Jensen, Eike Haberland, Helmut Straube and Elisabeth Pauli, with whom he collaborated and conducted joint research. He habilitated in 1958 with a study on the cultural geography of the southern Ethiopian lake region. In 1963 he took up a professorship at the Department of Geology in Bonn, where he continued his agricultural geographic studies in southern Ethiopia.

[5] Elisabeth Pauli (1906–1984) joined the Frobenius Institute in1933 as a painter. During the Second World War, she undertook literature research in preparation for the post-war expeditions

Haberland and Pauli had already participated in a Frobenius Institute research expedition to southern Ethiopia in 1950–52. Both expeditions in 1950–52 and 1954/55 were led by Ad. E. Jensen, the then director of the Frobenius Institute, who was Haberland's supervisor in his PhD and PostDoc research and who had married Elisabeth Pauli in 1952 as his second wife. While the research trip in 1950–52 focused mainly on the ethnic groups of today's South Omo Region, the research in 1954/55 was mainly concerned with the people living around the lakes along the Ethiopian Rift Valley. Back in the 1950s, the research of the Frobenius Institute members was organized in the form of expeditions, during which researchers travelled in a group and then split up to collect as much data as possible on the ethnography of the various groups visited. The research in the 1960s and 1970s, on the other hand, took place much like today: individually and following individual research questions. Wolfgang Kuls and Elisabeth Pauli participated in the expedition-like research trip to Wolaita in 1955, and Kuls joined Haberland a second time in 1967. Haberland went on the following trips on his own, sometimes partly accompanied by other researchers or PhD students of the Frobenius Institute (among them Ulrich Braukämper, Siegfried Seyfarth, Karl Heinz Striedter, and Werner Jürgen Lange).



Fig. 1: Map of Wolaita, its districts and neighbouring ethnic groups drawn by Haberland

to Ethiopia. She played a central role in each of these and wrote, among other things, the unpublished expedition reports, from which we learn a lot about the expedition circumstances and methods of the anthropologists. In 1952 Elisabeth Pauli married Ad. E. Jensen after a previous joint expedition to Ethiopia.

Looking at Haberland's notebook (reg. no. EH-127–001), we can date his first visit to Wolaita to 8 May 1955. On one of the first days he spent in Wolaita, 13 May 1955, he met two people who were to form the cornerstones and constants of his future research stays. He first had an audience with *fitaurari* Desta Fesseha Tona, grandson of the last reigning Wolaita king, who was at that time government governor and chief of Wolaita. After the audience, *fitaurari* Desta took Haberland to the homestead of an elderly Protestant, Tilge Gatiso. Tilge's homestead, two hours' walk east of the town of Soddo, was, from his first to his last visit, Haberland's central camp site in Wolaita. In 1955 Haberland stayed in Wolaita with short interruptions until 10 August of the same year (compare notebook, reg. no. EH-127–001). As I only had access to Haberland's notebooks, I am unfortunately unable to make any statements about the stays of Kuls and Pauli.



Fig. 2: Kuls with two companions near the former church in Guyo Sere in Offa

After his return to Germany, Haberland, like so many anthropologists, looked out for new research areas, so he went on two extended research trips to Papua New Guinea. However, he found his way back to Ethiopia in 1967, when he visited Wolaita for a short visit from 8 to 26 September (compare notebook reg. no. EH 129), on which he was partly accompanied by his colleague Siegfried Seyfarth and by Kuls, then a professor of geography at the University of Bonn. At that time, Haberland was a professor of anthropology at the University of Mainz. Back in Germany, Haberland became director of the Frobenius Institute and successor of his teacher Ad. E. Jensen. In several ways, he carried on Jensen's legacy and continued to advance Southern Ethiopian Studies at the Frobenius Institute. On two further research trips to Ethiopia, in 1970/71 and 1982, he spent again time in Wolaita. However, his stays on site cannot be dated precisely during those years, and the published travel report (Haberland 1971) also does not help here.

Wolaita was one of the places where Haberland spent most of his time during his many years of research in Ethiopia and, above all, one of the places to which he returned most often. Still, in his introduction (see below), he regrets not having worked in Wolaita for longer. This regret can be explained, on the one hand, by his research interests, as he saw Wolaita as situated at the crossroads of many cultural streams and therefore of high importance for Ethiopian cultural history and his own research. On the other hand, his regret stems from a more personal level. In the draft of an introduction (reg. no. EH 253), he wrote that 1955 was his happiest time in Ethiopia as he lived amongst friendly people and had the best interview partners, and he also praised the historical awareness of the Wolaita.

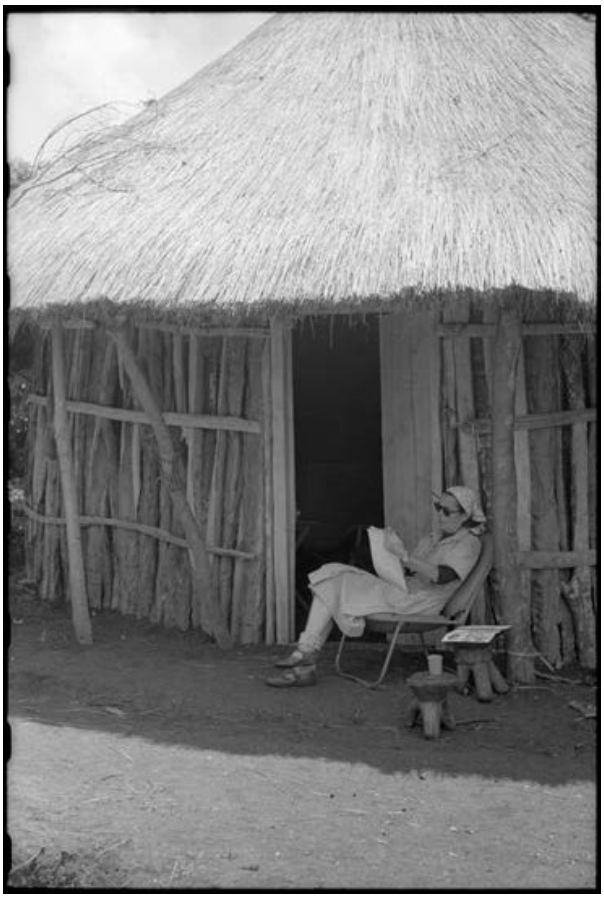


Fig. 3: Pauli drawing in front of the expedition camp in Gedeo, 1955

The most important and determining factor for the results of the research was of course the informants with whom the researchers worked on site, whom Haberland names in his own introduction (see page 35f). He noted in his notebooks on which day he worked with which informant, and the informants appear, sometimes together with their families, in the photographs of the research trip. Unfortunately, we have again hardly any information on the informants of Kuls and Pauli.

Looking at Haberland's own introduction and the notes in his notebooks, the name that appears most often is that of Kaba Debo. Haberland writes himself

that without this knowledgeable informant, he could not have done such extensive work in a relatively short time. He himself describes Kaba Debo as a respected farmer of the former royal clan Tigre who spoke fluent Amharic. He accompanied Haberland on many trips through Wolaita.



Fig. 4: Informant Kaba of the clan Tigre



Fig. 5: Family of Kaba Debo

The name that Haberland mentions second most frequently is Tilge Gatiso. As mentioned above, Haberland was introduced to Tilge on his first day of his first visit to Wolaita in 1955. If he was not visiting other parts of the region, he would always stay at Tilge's homestead until his last visit in 1974. Tilge was not only his host, but also his cook during his stays in Wolaita. He and his whole clan were members of the Protestant Interior Mission.

Another important person for Haberland was *fitaurari* Desta Fesseha Tona. He was not only the grandson of the last reigning king, but also the current governor and chief of Wolaita during Haberland's visits. Haberland wrote in his introduction that *fitaurari* Desta gave the researchers extraordinary support. For example, he provided them with a car and made it possible for them to visit many sites in Wolaita.

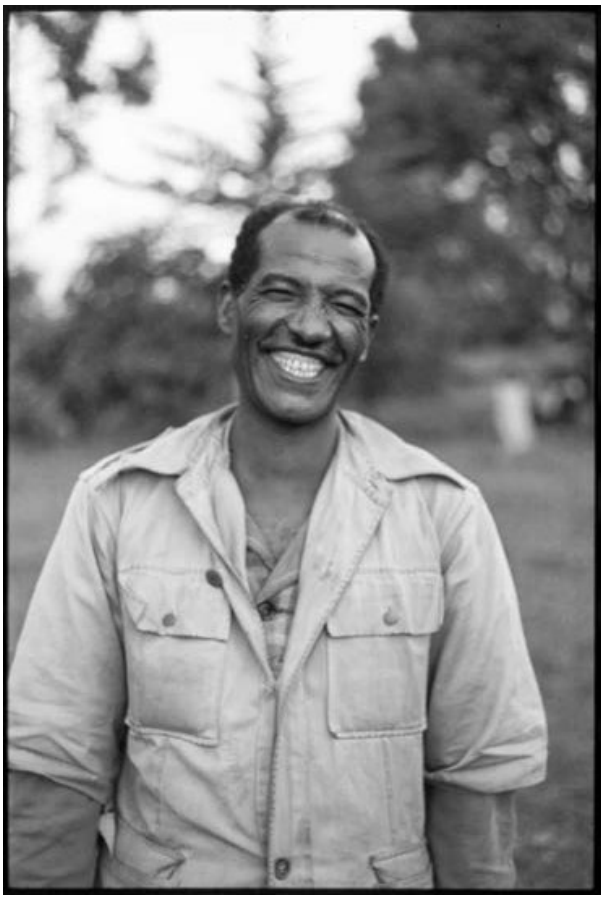


Fig. 6: Cook and long-time assistant Tilge, 1970/71



Fig. 7: Family of Tilge Gatiso, 1967

Other informants who are mentioned rather briefly in Haberland's introduction and do not appear frequently in his notebooks are: *fitaurari* Bakalo, whose father had been the "house steward" of the last king, Otango from the clan Wolaytamala from Lintala in the south of the country; Gadabo; Kuse Woliso of the Tigre clan; Workase Saga; and Koyra Dagaga.

The above-mentioned key informants are typical of those the researchers of the Frobenius Institute worked with: they were "wise old men" (Dinslage and Thubauville 2017). Most of their informants in southern Ethiopia held ritual or

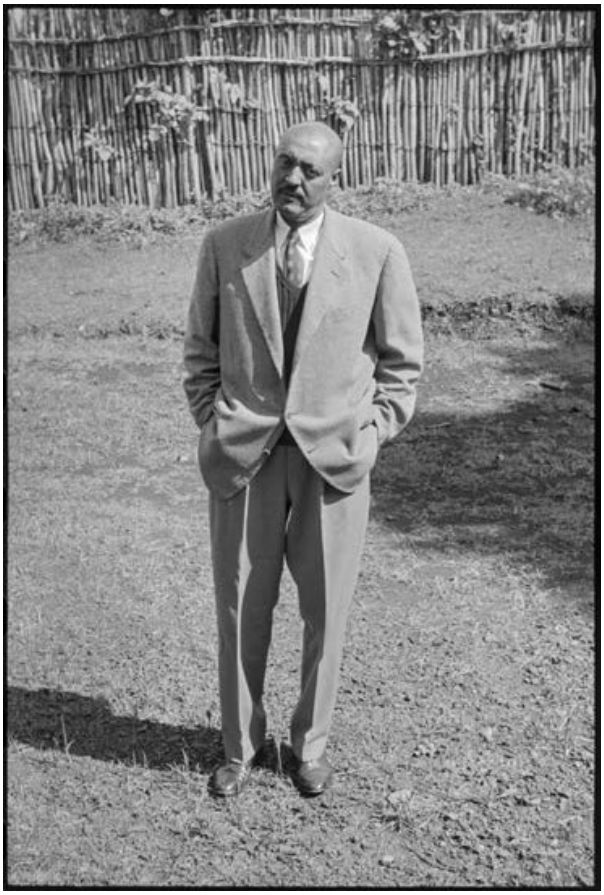


Fig. 8: Fitaurari Desta Fesseha, 1955

political offices, very few were ordinary people, and no female informants at all are mentioned. Haberland was aware that this was a shortcoming, but still stuck to his style of work. In his own introduction (see below), he writes:

> I must not fail to point out that in the following description of the individual areas of Wolaita life, too, the chivalric-feudal aspect comes to the fore and that almost exclusively the life of the upper class and the free peasants is described, not that of the poor, craftsmen and slaves. Quite apart from the fact that all my informants came from the upper class.

However, he and other researchers of the Frobenius Institute knowingly chose such informants. They saw these old and privileged men as carriers of an older knowledge and, therefore, not as individuals but as representatives of their culture (Bustorf 2017:147). This might also explain – but not justify – why the individual names of the informants are mentioned in the introduction but only rarely within the ethnography below to clarify the source of information. Another reason that may lie behind this shortcoming is that, measured against the terms of today's field research, Haberland, Kuls and Pauli did not stay in Wolaita for long, and most of their time in Wolaita was spend in Tilge's homestead. Thus, relations with informants in other parts of Wolaita had to remain superficial.

Another limitation in the search for suitable informants was the researchers' language skills. Haberland spoke Amharic and worked in the rest of southern Ethiopia with translators who translated from English, French or Amharic into the local languages. Unfortunately, there is no information about the language skills of Kuls and Pauli. The two main informants in Wolaita, Kaba and Tilge, both spoke Amharic. Since Haberland does not name any translators and none of the translators that worked for him in other parts of Ethiopia are to be found in the pictures from Wolaita, I assume that Haberland worked in Wolaita without translators and was therefore only able to talk to informants who spoke Amharic, which very much limited his choice. Since Kaba usually accompanied him on his travels through Wolaita, it can be assumed that he then also acted as a translator when Haberland entered into conversation with people who did not speak Amharic.

A lively exchange of letters

Between and after his visits to Wolaita, Haberland kept in contact with a few individuals in Wolaita through letters. The letters that are now in his legacy show, for example, the expectations these people had of him, such as a timely return to Wolaita or questions about financial support and concerning his publications on Wolaita.

The most extensive exchange of letters took place between Haberland and Zebdewos Chemma, a son-in-law of Haberland's host Tilge, a young and educated Protestant. Zebdewos first wrote to Haberland in 1962, and his last letter is dated 1978. From this exchange, which spanned 16 years, 88 documents can be found in Haberland's legacy. In 1962 Zebdewos was working in Wolaita for the Soddo Christian Mission and asked Haberland for financial assistance. Haberland gladly accepted this exchange with an educated Wolaita and from then on exchanged money for information and translations with Zebdewos (reg. no. EH-246–002). Sometimes, he asked for the meaning of certain words like the prefix "mala-", at other times Zebdewos translated whole texts for Haberland, like the article by Bogala Walalu, "The history of Wolamo people and slavery how it had been abolished" (reg. no. EH-316–003). Furthermore, Zebdewos seems to have been involved in collecting ethnographic objects from Wolaita. In 1967 he wrote to Haberland that he had collected a shield from his grandfather (reg. no. EH-313–011). After sending single sums of money, Haberland organized funds via his Rotary Club to finance Zebdewos' education at a teaching college in Addis Ababa. Zebdewos wrote to Haberland regularly about his personal and family life and, after finishing college, asked him for advice about which job offer he should accept. But, after the socialist regime took over in 1974, things slowly seemed to

turn bad for him. In 1976 he wrote to Haberland about the student revolts and told him that he had lost his job (reg. no. VA-AE-0031–053). Things had not improved by the time of his last letter in 1978 (reg. no. VA-AE-0029–002), to which Haberland answered that he unfortunately could not continue supporting him financially. After this long exchange of letters, information and money, it is astonishing that no pictures or notes in Haberland's notebooks from his field research between 1967 and 1972 point to Zebdewos. In one letter Haberland asked Zebdewos if he would like to assist him during his research trip to Wolaita in 1972. Zebdewos' education probably did not allow this, and his absence from Haberland's notes or photos from the field is probably explained by the fact that the two men only met briefly in Addis Ababa during Haberland's visits.

A second exchange of letters, much shorter and different, took place between Haberland and Tilge's nephew Yohannes Godana. It only consists of eight letters and spans the years 1971 to 1980. In 1971 Yohannes wrote to Haberland that he was working in the Ministry of Education and would like to get a copy of his book on Wolaita (reg. no. VA-AE-0010–002). Again, in 1977 he wrote to ask for a copy of the book. Haberland answered vaguely that the book was not yet ready and instead sent him a copy of a family picture that he had taken in Wolaita in 1967, in which Yohannes is depicted as a teenager (see figure 9). After further letters from Yohannes, Haberland answered in January 1979 that his Wolaita book would be finished in summer and would have more than 1,000 pages. Only a few months later, in October, he admitted in a further letter that his book was making slow progress (reg. no. VA-AE-0010–006). The exchange of letters ends with a message from Yohannes in 1980 that he was on a visit to the Netherlands and would love to meet Haberland. Haberland answered immediately, but it seems that they missed each other, because Yohannes' visit to Europe was too short to arrange a meeting (reg. no. VA-AE-0010–007).



Fig. 9: Family of Godana Gatiso, 1967

Wolaita in the collections of the Frobenius Institute

As can be seen, the research among the Wolaita left its mark in the archives of the Frobenius Institute: scientific legacies – mainly generated by Haberland – include Haberland's field diaries and notebooks, travel reports, lists of local plants and vocabulary, letters from the field and from Germany to Wolaita informants, scripts for lectures, and hand-drawn maps. As the Frobenius Institute has always placed great emphasis on visual documentation and the collection of material culture, 460 photographs and 137 ethnographic objects, mostly everyday objects (pots, calabashes, knives, etc.) but also clothing, jewellery, musical instruments and items made of leather like shields and horse harnesses from the research in Wolaita can be found in the Institute's various archives. A further 117 ethnographic objects from Wolaita collected by the Frobenius researchers can be found today in the Weltkulturenmuseum in Frankfurt.



Fig. 10: Shelf with ethnographic objects in the Ethnographic Collection of the Frobenius Institute

Between 2014 and 2017 the Indexing and Digitizing of the Archival Material on Ethiopian Studies of the Frobenius Institute project, financed by the German Research Foundation, indexed and sustainably archived all written documents, selected materials and audio and video material from the Frobenius Institute's expeditions to Ethiopia, with the aim of facilitating public access to them through an open-access database. The digitized material, as well as biographies and bibliographies of the researchers can be accessed today under this link: https://www.frobenius-institut.de/en/datenbanken/aethiopien-datenbank.

Wolaita in Haberland's publications[6]

[6] This chapter focuses only on the publications of Haberland after his research in Wolaita, as his publications were comprehensive and are already well discussed. Kuls published his findings concerning the geography of Ethiopia's lake region in two articles (1956, 1968) and his PhD

Although Haberland never published his Wolaita ethnography, he published some of his data from Wolaita in articles and book chapters during his lifetime.

Like many members of the Frobenius Institute, he was fascinated by the meritorious complex. According to his and his colleagues' findings, the "meritorious complex" consisted of three elements: honorary rewards for the killing of wild game or enemies, feasts of merit associated with such honorary positions, and lavish funeral ceremonies during which memorial monuments were erected (Braukämper 2015:205). This complex, which is spread over the whole globe (Haberland 1957), was also found in other parts of southern Ethiopia, especially among the Oromo, the Highland East Cushitic-speaking and the Omotic-speaking peoples. In comparison with other places, in southern Ethiopia the act of killing wild game or enemies was particularly important (Haberland 1957:331). In contrast to the neighbouring groups, where the main focus of that complex was on killing enemies and big game, the Wolaita added the feast for 1,000 cattle, a typical feast of merit, to their repertoire (Haberland 1988a).

One of Haberland's favourite topics, which is also dealt with in detail in the following ethnography, was the northern Ethiopian kingdoms and their connection to southern Ethiopia. According to Haberland, the kings of the Solomonic dynasty in northern Ethiopia followed many traditions similar to the "sacred kingship" which was spread in southern Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. Haberland showed these parallels by referring to regalia, rituals, and beliefs surrounding the king's powers. He states that "sacred kingship" was spread all over Ethiopia before the Semitic incursions in the north, which, at first sight, gave the kingdoms a different character and distinguished them from the rest of the African kingdoms. The case of Wolaita is especially interesting as it was a southern Ethiopian kingdom influenced by the north at an early stage (from 1270). In Wolaita, the arrival and influence of immigrants from northern Ethiopia is extremely well attested by mythical narratives that can be historically proven by sequences of kings (Haberland 1983) but also by artifacts which illustrate the changes in the material culture. According to Haberland, after the migration of Tigre from northern Ethiopia to Wolaita around 1600, the imported Christianity, writing and language died out by 1700. However, new structures of the political constitution, new forms of technology and material culture, such as silver and goldsmithing, finer leatherwork, such as bridles and saddles for horses, as well as the entire "horse complex", cotton cultivation, weaving and cloth clothing, and a whole range of useful plants, were preserved and a reminder of the earlier cultural contact with northern Ethiopia (Haberland 1988). Haberland published his thoughts on the similarities and differences between the southern and northern Ethiopian kingdoms and their mutual

dissertation (1958). Pauli never published anything on her work in Wolaita.

influence in several articles (Haberland 1964a, 1964b, 1976, 1978, 1984) and a book (1965), in which a whole chapter is dedicated to the case of Wolaita.

Furthermore, Haberland was very much interested in the question of the social stratification of the peoples of southern Ethiopia. To explain his findings, he preferred terms like pariah, special castes or despised castes to terms like occupational castes. In these societies, in which he described the social ideal to be a free independent farmer, there was and still is a certain kind of aversion to and disregard for all kind of hired and paid labour. Haberland found that the social stratification was not only reflected in specialization in a profession, like being a craftsmen, but that it was preordained with religious, ritual or even mythological meaning. This led to the interesting contradiction that craftspeople were, on the one hand, despised and considered impure but, on the other, had central ritual functions as circumcisers, embalmers, executioners, policemen. Above all, in kingdoms like Wolaita, craftspeople had close contact with the king. According to Haberland, such special functions could only develop in hierarchic societies like Wolaita (1978:132). Haberland also described slavery, which was very common among the Wolaita as a consequence and, at the same time, a precondition of the hierarchic society that he described as almost feudal. Only with a large number of slaves – an estimated third of the population of the Wolaita – was the warrior class able to concentrate on warfare and enlarge the empire tenfold between 1700 and 1894 (Haberland 1992). Also related to the high social differentiation of the society are the negotiations and ceremonies concerning weddings among the Wolaita, which Haberland describes in an article (Haberland 1985). According to Haberland, marriage in the Wolaita landowner class was a legal transaction between families and clans, preceded by months, sometimes years of negotiations, following a specific ceremonial.



Fig.11: Haberland in Wolaita, 1955

During Haberland's lifetime his book on Ethiopian kingships was particularly discussed and reviewed by colleagues (Hirschberg 1967; Irvine 1966; O. 1966).

While Irvine (1966) congratulated Haberland for linking southern and northern Ethiopia, R. O. emphasized the chapter on Wolaita in his review and concluded that the northern immigrants were able to transmit their political and economic skills in a durable way but were unable to do the same for their religion. He reasoned that this happened because of the complexity of their religious ideas, which required literate expression (O. 1966).

Many years after Haberland's work in Wolaita and his death, Jon Abbink and Data Dea Barata, both social anthropologists who specialized in the region, wrote reviews of his then still unpublished manuscript on Wolaita. Abbink (2006) accessed Haberland's files at the beginning of the millennium. At that time the files were only available as hand-written notes in German in the archives of the Frobenius Institute. Abbink lists the following points as Haberland's achievements: 1) a detailed, even if fragmented, ethno-historical and ethnographic record from an understudied Ethiopian region; 2) photographic documentation of Wolaita society before the devastation of the Derg period; and 3) an interesting description of premodern indigenous African state formation on the margins of a larger empire (Abbink 2006:7f). However, Abbink also has several criticisms of Haberland's manuscript: 1) more generally Haberland followed a kind of salvage ethnology and therefore concentrated on narratives about the past; 2) information on the present situation (kinship relations in their social context, religion in action, especially the spread of the SIM mission) was largely missing; 3) a lot of the vocabulary and concepts used (e.g. "high culture" (*"Hochkultur"*), ancient peoples (*"altertümliche Stämme"*), estates (*"Stände"*)) should have been reformulated given the time in which the manuscript was written (in the 1970s); and 4) Haberland applied outdated theory to his original ethnographic data such as the theory of interacting layers, of historical development and of culture loss (Abbink 2017:168).

Barata visited the Frobenius Institute in 2016. At that time Haberland's handwritten notes had already been typed up by Astrid Hünlich. The notes were orally translated for him from German into English. Barata highlights the interesting and detailed description of the last three Wolaita kings in Haberland's manuscript: the mad Damote, the good Gobe and the unwise Tona (Barata 2017:240). However, his criticisms of Haberland's manuscript are similar to Abbink's. He finds it troubling that Haberland's material gave the impression that this was how things really were in the past. At the same time, the material left out an important period of the past, namely Menelik's 1894 onslaught of the Wolaita, which lay only six decades back by the time Haberland was in the field. Furthermore, Barata critizises the selection of informants, especially considering the themes of Haberland's research. Haberland seemed to be concerned with inequalities and placed a strong emphasis on the issue of slavery, but none of his informants was a person of slave background (Barata 2017:238–244).

Seeing what Haberland had already published on Wolaita during his lifetime and comparing it to his manuscript, one might think that one of the reasons for Haberland not to publish the ethnography in the end was that he had actually already published all his main arguments in articles and book chapters. Another reason might be that Haberland saw his ethnography being overtaken by new research (Abbink 2006:11) such as the royal history of Wolaita by Klausberger (1978) and publications on the history of the Wolaita by Bureau (1980/82, 1990) and Chiatti (1984).

Notes on the editorial process

While Haberland published the above-described articles and book chapters on his research on Wolaita, his planned major ethnography remained unfinished in the archives of the Frobenius Institute. But this was not the only unpublished ethnography from the research done by Frobenius Institute members in southern Ethiopia. Three more ethnographies were planned and prepared but were not published, for reasons we can only speculate on today. The other three unpublished manuscripts comprised ethnographies of the Gedeo, Sidaama and Konso written by Jensen and his team following expeditions to Ethiopia in the 1930s and 1950s. This book is the only ethnography by Haberland that remained unfinished.

These ethnographies – all written in German – have so far only been accessible via the archives of the Frobenius Institute in their original German. To make them available to a wider circle, they are now being translated into English and published in the book series *Southern Ethiopian Studies at the Frobenius Institute*. The first three books in the series – *The Gedeo* (2020), *The Konso* (2021), and *The Sidaama* (2022) – are already available. The ethnography presented here is the fourth publication in this series.

The three unpublished ethnographies by Jensen already existed as typewritten manuscripts and could thus be edited comparatively easily. The present ethnography by Haberland, Kuls and Pauli, on the other hand, was composed of various handwritten documents that first had to be typed out by our former secretary Astrid Hünlich in a tedious process. Haberland did, however, leave a table of contents (reg. no. EH-247–001) for his planned book after which the composition of the manuscript could be transposed without gaps on the basis of the existing handwritten chapters. The manuscript parts are undated. From Haberland's letter exchange with Yohannes Godana (reg. no. VA-AE-0010–006), we learn that he wanted to finish his Wolaita book by the summer of 1979. Therefore, we can guess that the manuscript parts date from around that time. We have no information about when the chapters by Kuls and Pauli were written.

Several changes had to be made in editing the unpublished manuscript. First of all, the language was changed from German into English. Some repetitions were omitted, cumbersome sentences were simplified, and some obsolete expressions reformulated. Paragraphs on race and racial characteristics have been cut out as they are scientifically and historically irrelevant and outdated.

Nevertheless, I have stayed as close as possible to the text and have not changed, for example, the researchers' frequent use of subjective expressions. Due to the limited changes to the text, the ethnography is also a historical document showing how German anthropologists in those days worked, thought and wrote. Since the manuscript was in an uncorrected raw form, spellings had to be standardized. In doing so, I have adhered to the spellings recommended by my colleague Bosha Bombe. Some of the terms used for the various ethnic groups at that time, are today considered derogatory and no longer used. They have been replaced by the terms commonly used today. Value has been added to the manuscript by providing translations of local terms in brackets, including some of the photos taken by the researchers, and adding a glossary and index of names. The subtitles of the pictures are the original ones given by the researchers, corrected and/or amended by me if needed.

I have not changed outdated or inappropriate theoretical terms such as ‚caste', which was used by Haberland to describe the social stratification in many southern Ethiopian societies. Nor have I added references to more current debates on such topics. In addition, adding references to more current research among the Wolaita would have been beyond the scope of this project. Even though much research has been done in Wolaita since the Frobenius expeditions by international (Abbink 2006, 2017; Bureau 1980/82, 1990; Chiatti 1984; Klausberger 1978) and Ethiopian (Barata 2017; Desalegn 2013; Elias et. al. 1999; Tsehai 1994; Wanna 2005) researchers, I will have to leave it up to others to compare their findings.

A gap in the report of Ethiopian history

Finally, one might ask, why we are publishing Jensen, Kuls and Pauli's ethnographic account of the Wolaita now, several decades after their deaths and their research took place. Well, the ethnographic accounts of the Frobenius Institute members from the mid-1950s to the beginning of the 1970s offer the first extensive ethnographic descriptions of the Wolaita. Even though their visits to Wolaita seem rather short by today's standards, they span a period of nearly two decades. Because many findings have been published in German, their international impact has been very limited so far (Abbink 2006:2).

Since the Frobenius expedition to the area, many other researchers have studied the Wolaita, with more and more Ethiopians among them in the last decades, especially since the expansion in the number of universities in Ethiopia from the turn of the millennium. Many of the places where Frobenius Institute researchers did their fieldwork now have their own universities, including Wolaita, which has a thriving university in Soddo. Today, most studies in the Wolaita area are conducted by Ethiopian researchers, for whom historical data stored abroad, such as that presented here, should be made available in English. This translation and publication of Jensen, Kuls and Pauli's ethnographic account of the Wolaita can therefore be considered a small contribution toward returning to the peoples of southern Ethiopia elements of their identity and history that are not part of public accounts of Ethiopian history (Abbink 2017:172–173).

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The Wolaita

by Eike Haberland, Wolfgang Kuls and Elisabeth Pauli

Introduction

by Eike Haberland

My stays in Wolaita lasted from 7 May to 18 June 1955 and from 22 July to 10 August of the same year. During the first period, I worked together with Wolfgang Kuls, who, apart from general geographical questions, dealt in depth with the agriculture of Wolaita. His findings form a special section of the book. That is why the chapter on the economy of Wolaita within this monograph is kept short. Looking back, I have to say that I very much regret not having worked longer in Wolaita. The general plans of the expedition and the need to continue my work among the Oromo weighed against it. Next to Kaffa, which unfortunately did not receive the scientifically reliable description it deserved, and Dawuro (Kullo), about which almost nothing is known to this day, Wolaita is the third largest of the ancient southern Ethiopian kingdoms that survived the Oromo assaults. Thanks to its location at the crossroads of various cultural streams, it occupies an important position in Ethiopian cultural history. In this country, which despite the rapidly progressing acculturation process has kept its feudal culture fairly intact up to the present day, the circle of personalities who know about the past is still large. Above all, the leading men of the Wolaita have a historical awareness, the lack of which in other groups of southern Ethiopia often makes ethnological work very difficult. So, I am sure that many questions that could not be dealt with or answered in this work would be answered in a future study.

The fact that I received such extensive work results despite the relatively short time of my stay in Wolaita is due in particular to a man whose name I would like to mention with gratitude: Kaba Debo. I set up my temporary quarters about two hours‘ walk east of the town of Soddo, in the homestead of my informant Tilge Gatiso, who, like his whole clan, was a member of the Protestant Sudan Interior Mission; this connection removed the inhibitions of first contact between a native and a European that otherwise easily occur in Ethiopia. Through his mediation, I met Kaba Debo, a respected farmer living nearby who belonged to the former royal clan (Tigre). He soon proved to be an authority not only of above-average intelligence but also of astonishing knowledge, who also had the invaluable advantage of speaking fluent Amharic, so that I no longer had to rely on interpreters.

He was with me almost constantly during my stay and also accompanied me on all my trips. Some problems he was not familiar with could be solved with the help of wise men and old people, especially the wise judge (*dana*) Otango from the clan Wolaitamala from Lintala in the south of the country, who supplemented Kaba's information in the happiest way. Of the others who helped me with their advice, I may mention old Gadabo, Kuse Woliso of the Tigre clan, and Workase Saga and Koyra Dagaga of the Aroge clan faction. I would like to emphasise that never in Ethiopia, not even among the so lovable Oromo, did I come into such close and intimate relations with natives as with the members of this open-minded and talented people. With special gratitude, however, I want to remember the *fitawrari* Desta Fesseha Tona, the grandson of the last reigning king, who was the government governor and tribal chief of Wolaita during our stay and who extraordinarily supported us through his help and his interest in ethnographic work, which is not common in Ethiopia. Not only do I owe him valuable information about his dynasty that was unknown to the other informants, but he also provided us with the opportunity to visit almost all the sites of Wolaita that would otherwise have been closed to us. He had the car road to Yakima in Oysa repaired, gave us a historically knowledgeable guide in the person of *qegnazmach* Fere Halala, and had mules provided for us to travel to the highlands of Koysha and Kindo and to the Omo so that we could get to know this most remote part of Wolaita with its ancient churches and royal palaces. He took me in his jeep on several trips to Poloso and to the areas north and east of Mount Damota to show me the remains of the royal palaces and other important sites, so that with my own trips (to Gamo, Alaba and Mount Damota) I thereby got to know almost all of Wolaita. It was he who drew my attention to the country's Christian past and made me aware of the old churches and their remains. I regretted very much not being able to work with the ancient *fitawrari* Bakalo, whose father had been the "house steward" of the last king and who was said – certainly rightly – to have a great knowledge of royalty and court ceremonial. He was almost permanently in Addis Ababa because of a trial, so I only met the awe-inspiring old man once, by chance, on a trip in the countryside. Finally, I received valuable information from my expedition companions Wolfgang Kuls and Helmut Straube, who, on their journeys to Lake Abaya and the Bilate River, entered areas that remained unknown to me.

The land and the people

by Wolfgang Kuls

The country

The heart of today's Wolaita is a wide, undulating, densely populated plain (between 1,800 and 2,100 m), which surrounds the characteristic volcanic cone of Damota Mountain (3,100 m). In the name of this mountain there is still a memory of that semi-mythical empire to which other peoples such as the Yem and the Damot on the Blue Nile west of Gojjam claim to have belonged. Only the two alpine landscapes of High Koysha and Kindo between the Omo and Deme, which are far to the west, differ and resemble the Gamo Mountains with whom they share the altitude. To the south, southeast, east and northwest, four small but distinctive mountain ranges, presumably of volcanic origin, are located in front of the plain: Humbo, Wanche-Hibicha, Duguna and Afama.



Fig. 1: Landscape in northern Wolaita

The borders of Wolaita are determined by natural features, except in the north. In the west, the deep trench of the Omo (called Uma by the Wolaita), which is impassable in the rainy season, forms a prominent border divide with the Dawuro, who are related to the Wolaita, but this has never prevented wars and lively trade between the two peoples. In the southwest, the equally deeply incised valley of the lower Deme River marks the border between Wolaita and Kucha, while in

the south, the eroded plain of Manuka, many hours wide and covered only with sparse bush, separates Wolaita from the lowlands of Shochora and Boroda, the northernmost foothills of the Gamo Highlands. To the southeast, Wolaita borders Lake Abaya, which the Wolaita call Abba, also Ochollo-Abba (as distinct from Ganta-Abba, Lake Chamo). The eastern border opposite the Sidaama, Belo-Guji and Arsi is the shallow valley of the Bilate. In the north, the border of the country runs parallel with the large mountain range stretching from west to east, inhabited by the Tambaro, Donga and Kambata. At the foot of the mountain range, the Badawacho group of the Hadiya live in a narrow corridor – the pitiful remnant of their once large tribal territory, which extended to Koysha. Even at the time of the Amhara conquest, a wide uninhabited border strip lay between the Wolaita in the south and the mountain dwellers and the Badawacho in the north that, according to a prophecy of King Kote, was not to be crossed. Only in recent times have the Wolaita advanced northwards, and today they sit in large groups on the land at the foot of the mountains, which, however, is still officially considered the tribal territory of the Kambata or Badawacho, although they are already outnumbered there. Today, the jurisdictional areas of the indigenous chiefs are generally determined by the boundaries that the Amhara found when they invaded at the turn of the century. Thus, members of foreign peoples living in their territory are also subject to the chiefs' jurisdiction. Exceptions are the towns, Amhara peasant settlements and Amhara large estates (*qalad*, Jensen 1959:238).

The highlands of Koysha and Kindo, a rugged rocky mountain range whose main ridge slowly descends west-northwest towards the confluence of the Deme and Omo rivers, open up to the north and south into densely populated high valleys. In the lowlands along the Omo and on the Didaye peninsula, where the remains of the first palace of the dynasty originating from Tigre and the tombs of the first kings are located, hardly any agriculture is practised. On the Omo, dense gallery forests occupy the riparian margin, while the steeply rising terrain behind is covered with acacia bush and *combretaceae*. The lowlands are only rarely entered by the natives. Apart from the members of the despised potter-hunter caste, who hunt the numerous hippos, the only people who go there are hikers who cross the river on foot at the well-known fords in the dry season or who lie on inflated tubes to be ferried across. Above this strip of wasteland, one can see quite clearly the course of the old imperial walls, which have been preserved in this uninhabited area in a similar way to those at Lake Abaya. Then the first terraced fields appear, where the typical plants of this zone are cultivated, such as millet (sorghum), eleusine, cotton and cabbage trees. A few hundred metres higher, one finds the first settlements, beautiful individual farms built on the slopes on long terrace platforms and surrounded by "false" terraces. In addition, there are extensive real terraces, which – as can be seen with the naked eye – are also found on the slopes of

Dawuro and Kucha, facing Wolaita. Although a large market is held every week in the village of Halale (Kindo town), to which people from Dawuro and Kucha also come, the whole area makes a very untouched and backward impression compared to the flatter eastern Wolaita. There are no Amhara or foreign merchants except for the market visitors. The natives do not show the open-mindedness and impartiality towards strangers that is usual among the Wolaita, but are shy and reserved.



Fig. 2: Large house with pile storage, coffee plantations, ensete groves, house forecourt and terraces in Kindo

From Kindo to the east, the crest of the mountain range, along whose highest points the old royal road runs, gradually rises to reach its highest point on Bolola Mountain. At this point, the mountain range turns north and drops steeply to the east. From Sidaama or Gedeo, you can clearly see the peaks on the drop: the quadrangle of Bolola, which supported one of the early royal palaces; the steep cliff of Holozo, which served as an execution site; and the pointed triangle of Eka, the ancient sacrificial site of the kings. From here there is an incomparable view over the vast Wolaita plain in the east, with the cone of Damota in the middle, and over parts of western Arsi and Sidaama and Lake Abaya. The alpine mountains of Kambata, High Sidaama, Guji and Gamo border this wide panorama. Here, on the edge of the mountains, was the centre of the Wolaita Empire for a long time, with royal palaces, marketplaces and the burial places of the kings. Not far from Bolola, in the southern part of the Sere district, on a steep southern spur of the mountain, rises a dense forest of giant trees, in the centre of which once stood the famous church of St. George, the patron saint of the formerly Christian Wolaita Empire. In this forest and in other conspicuous groves on hills and mountaintops, the old tree population has still survived, which has otherwise completely disappeared (Juniperus, Cordia, Croton, Haguenia, also Pygeum and Schefflera; on the other hand, Erithryna and Podocarpus prefer the lower regions on the slopes of the mountains). Palm trees (*Phoenix reclinata*) occur as solitary trees, and bamboo occurs mainly in humid places in dense, often planted groves. Above 2,600

m, the tree growth virtually ceases. The wide grassy areas or mountain slopes bear the character of the Gamo highlands with isolated occurrences of *Hypericum* and *Erica arborea*.



Fig. 3: Jungle on the hill of the former Guyo Sere church in Offa

Settlement and agriculture are almost completely absent on the ridges and heights, but the more sheltered valleys and mountain slopes are intensively used, so that the population here has a similar density as in central Wolaita. In addition to ensete, which is not lacking even in the drier areas of Kindo, barley, wheat, taro and yams (including several species with above-ground tubers) are cultivated here, as well as coffee and ginger in sheltered places. Lawn terraces often replace the stone walls of the fields, which are protected from cattle by woven bamboo fences. The administrative centre of Koysha and the adjoining Offa district to the south is the small village of Yakima, which has a few houses and two large churches (Maria and Georg), of which Georg's church is officially considered the successor to the old shrine in Sere (see above). The northern part of Offa bears a similar scenic character to Koysha, its southern half already belonging to the broad savannah belt that follows the course of the two great rivers Deme and Maze and wraps around Kucha on three sides. This lowland, which forms most of the small country of Shochora and is inhabited by the ethnic group of the same name, is known as

Sambara (or Sambala) and is still considered a game paradise. It was the main destination of the great hunting expeditions of the Wolaita kings.

The actual heart of Wolaita is the vast plain around Mount Damota, which encompasses most of the district of the same name, as well as Lower Koysha and parts of the Humbo, Sore, Boloso and Duguna districts. Similar to Middle Sidaama, the country gives the impression of a large, green garden with countless individual homesteads half-hidden in their ensete groves and intensively cultivated fields. Almost all crops known in Ethiopia are cultivated here. The population density is about 300–400 people per square kilometre. Apart from a few acacias and sycamores, which are mostly found in the community squares, the tree population consists exclusively of planted eucalypthus.

Fallow land, wasteland or pastures are rare, except in the southwestern part of Damota. Livestock kept indoors, which cannot be sent to more distant pastures, have to make do with the lawns that are in front of every doorstep or the few steep slopes along the streams, which are overgrazed and heavily eroded. A special feature of southern Wolaita are the large cattle pastures (*dembba*), also known in Sidaama, where they are called *chaffe*. There, however, these pastures are not comparable in extent to those of Wolaita, which have a diameter of many kilometres on the sterile, drainless weathered soils south of Mount Damota. They were not settled at first when the land was taken because of their poor soil, and were later deliberately left out as the population grew and were used as general pastures, accessible to all. Two such pastures are also said to lie north of the Damota.[7] These pastures do not include the bush-covered wasteland of the Boloso district on the Omo, where large plains spread out in the districts of Bale and Matale, as well as the lowlands around Lake Abaya and Bilate.

The steep craggy slopes of Damota Mountain are hardly populated and are only used for pasture. Strangely enough, despite the fertile soil and the countless streams flowing down from the mountain in all directions, no terraces have been built. Only the hilly summit area (the former crater) measuring several square kilometres is cultivated.

Before the Amhara conquest, the centre of the Wolaita Empire lay at the eastern foot of the Damota. Several palaces rose here, and the great imperial roads crossed here. On the royal meadow near the Dalbo marketplace, the great festivals were solemnly celebrated and the heroes honoured; here the people gathered on all important political occasions.

Today, the town of Soddo is the centre of Wolaita, the seat of the governor of the sub-province and the site of two large weekly markets. Soddo is also one of the most important trading centres in southwest Ethiopia and is therefore home to

7 On the management of the pastures cf. p. 200f

major trading houses whose owners are Muslim Jimma and Wollo Oromo, Indians and Greeks. The city has a perimeter of several square kilometres and spreads out over hills and valleys without regard for the terrain. With the large marketplace surrounded by corrugated iron shacks and the residential huts disappearing between ensete and eucalypthus, it is no different from any other southern Ethiopian colonial town.

The history of the main town of Wolaita is an interesting example of the less permanent character of the towns founded by the Amhara after the conquest of southern Ethiopia. Initially, the seat of the Amhara governors was located near the destroyed palace of King Tona at the eastern foot of Mount Damota. It was moved to the top of the mountain a few years later. A *dajjach* then built his residence in the southeast of present-day Soddo, at a place then known as Alami Damota (today an insignificant marketplace between Soddo and Dalbo), which was the seat of government for a long time. Finally, *dajjach* Makonnen, who ruled before the Italian conquest, moved his seat to present-day Soddo, after his predecessor had already set up camp in the south of the town. The town was named after the two stelae on a hill in the southwest. As in many areas of Ethiopia, this settlement only acquired a permanent character when the Italians erected stone houses after their invasion and included the place in their road network (see below).



Fig. 4: Two stele on Menelik Hill above the town of Soddo

The stony wasteland south of the Wanche and Hobicha mountains slopes slowly down to Lake Abaya and is virtually uninhabited. The arable land has been cultivated exclusively with cotton for a long time. Large herds, guarded only by a few shepherds, graze in the bush. According to a report by Wolfgang Kuls, the Sidaama also drive their cattle across the Bilate on the basis of agreements with the Wolaita and graze them on Wolaita soil. In ancient times, the Guji and Arsi drove their cattle through here when they went in search of good grazing land around Lake Abaya until the mighty walls of the Wolaita kings prevented them from doing so. The Bilate River pushes its reedy delta far out into the lake. Not

far from the shore of the lake, a number of hot springs (Bilbo Gasara) spring up, which have been visited by the sick of the area since ancient times. In its vicinity is a large salt mine, which has also been used for a long time.



Fig. 5: Imperial walls southeast of the village of Abala

Climate

The middle regions of Wolaita are characterised by a mild and uniformly humid climate, as is the middle Sidaama, which is at the same altitude. The lowlands around Lake Abaya, Bilate and Omo are hot and dry, while the mountainous regions (Koysha, Kindo and Mount Damota) share the cold, windy and very rainy climate of Gamo. However, despite abundant rainfall in the central zone, there is a marked difference between the rainy and dry seasons, although the ensete groves and tree plantations help to retain moisture in the soil and give the landscape an evergreen appearance. Mount Damota in the centre of Wolaita receives so much moisture all year round that the streams and rivers flowing from its summit in all directions never run dry. Smaller springs at the foot of the mountain and on the plain often dry up in summer. The beginning of the Big Rain at the beginning of July marks a noticeable growth of the plants. The euphorbias, vernonias and laburnum bushes planted everywhere as hedges shoot up tremendously and the ensete perennials unfurl their large leaves. Similar to Shoa and Sidaama, the end of the rains at the time of the Feast of the Cross, and the following flowering and harvesting period, marks the most striking break in the year, which the Wolaita celebrate as their New Year with a whole week of festivities. The official New Year's festival of the Ethiopian as well as the other Oriental Christians is 17 days earlier on l0th or 11th September. During the rainy season – from the onset of the Little Rain in April – a cold wind blows regularly from the south and southeast across Lake Abaya. The arrival of thunderstorm fronts from the south can be felt hours before. The peak of the dry season (December and January) is known as a

time of cold nights, during which temperatures drop below zero even in central Wolaita.

Transport and administration

The roads built by the Italians, which mostly had the character of provisional tracks, are now often dilapidated or can only be used in the dry season. This is partly due to the fact that there was a reorientation of administration and traffic after the collapse of Italian rule. The Italians had incorporated Wolaita, as well as today's Gamo-Gofa Province and the neighbouring areas of the Rift Valley to the east, into a governorate called Galla-Sidama, whose centre was Jimma. The entire road network was oriented towards Jimma. A newly completed road connected Soddo with this town. The crossing of the Omo was managed by a wagon ferry – the only permanent connection between the northern and southern halves of the governorate separated by the Omo. A bridge was planned.[8] On the road, which was equipped with many concrete bridges and whose excellent gravelling is still preserved in remnants, one could travel from Jimma to Soddo in a few hours – a route that today takes several days as the Omo is no longer passable for vehicles and the northern section of the road in Bosha is completely destroyed. Soddo was at the centre of a centrifugally radiating road network. To the west was the road to Gofa, to the south the road to Gamo-Konso-Borana and to the north the road to Hosanna in Kambata – all of them can still be used today in the dry season.

The road from Soddo to Yirgalem in Sidaama, which crossed the Bilate at Dinto, has disappeared today. In addition, a number of shorter tracks existed, e.g. to Yakima at the foot of the Koysha highlands, to Sore, to the hot springs at Lake Abaya and a connecting route north of Damota Mountain between the one leading to Jimma and the one to Shashamane in Arsi. Only the road to Arsi, which crosses the Bilate at Kolito (Alaba) on an iron bridge, is of great importance today. All traffic to Addis Ababa and Yirgalem travels on it. During the dry season, an Ethiopian Airlines plane flies once a week from Addis Ababa via Hosanna to Soddo.

Since the country was subjugated by a campaign led by Menelik himself, Wolaita formed a special province directly subordinate to the Ethiopian emperor until the Italian War. Except for the maintenance of the Amhara troops stationed in Wolaita, the tribute of the country was destined for the imperial budget. Therefore, Wolaita belonged to the category of the so-called *mad bet* ("kitchen"). In the reorganisation of the Ethiopian empire after 1941, Wolaita was, for reasons I do not know, included in the Sidamo-Borana province east of the Lakes region, al-

[8] The old arterial roads connecting Wolaita with the Christian north were deliberately neglected in order to favour Islam and the tribal cultures and to set back the Amhara.

though economically, culturally and in terms of transport, it would have belonged much more to the Gamo-Gofa province west of the Lakes. Although I often heard about the government's plan to annex Wolaita to Gamo-Gofa and make Soddo the capital of this province, I was informed by letter from Wolaita as late as 1958 that everything had remained the same.

Thus, during my stay, Wolaita formed a sub-province (*awurajaa*) of the province (*taklay gezat*) Sidamo-Borana. The capital and seat of the governor was Soddo. This governor – the *fitawrari* Desta Feseha – was also the indigenous chief (*balabat*). He was transferred to northern Ethiopia in 1956. In many cases, Wolaita were employed as administrative officials. The authorities, mostly made up of Amhara, generally only took care of tax collection, criminal justice and policing, while civil jurisdiction was exercised by the tribal representatives, who held the title *abagaz* in Wolaita, and whose districts partly corresponded to the old districts. The following administrative districts existed, named after the main towns: Humbo (comprising the old districts Humbo and Offa), Boditi (northern part of Damota disctrict), Bakelo (Koysha and Kindo; three sub-districts: Bakelo, Koysha with seat in Yakima, Kindo with seat in Halale), Anchucho (districts Sore and Boloso), Woliso (eastern and southern half of Damota district; the governor and *abagaz* there was the old *fitawrari* Bakalo). The town of Soddo formed a special district and was directly administered by the governor.

Culture and people

The popular culture

The culture and folklore of the Wolaita reflect the geographical location of their country, which lies at a crossroads of different cultural streams. Therefore, one finds here almost all the cultural elements characteristic of central and southern Ethiopia, which have been formed into a unity among this people during a long and happy history and under the influence of a strong and exemplary kingship, so that today the Wolaita culture appears as a homogeneous whole. Without doubt, the last immigrant group coming from Tigre around 1600 had the strongest impact and left an indelible mark on the hitherto purely peasant people. The adoption of the highland Ethiopian chivalric–feudal ideal of life and other ideas, which will be discussed later, clearly sets the Wolaita apart from their southern and eastern neighbours. Although there are enough cultural similarities between the Wolaita and their neighbours, all expressions of life have a tendency towards the more differentiated, more developed. This distinguishes, for example, the chivalrous heroism of the Wolaita, who received their highest reward from the hand of the king, from the killing and hunting of the Oromo or Konso. In this chivalry, it still

shines through that a religious, mythically based commandment of the world order was fulfilled.

The Wolaita, at least the ruling class, were well aware of this difference and, like the Amhara, looked down on their culturally lower neighbours with a feeling of superiority and contempt, as if they were barbarians. Even though the Arsi were admired for their bravery, they remained savages in the eyes of the Wolaita. If the Wolaita king took the daughter of a famous *gada* leader as his wife, which happened frequently, she was first instructed by the ladies of the royal palace in matters of fashion and courtly etiquette for a long time before the marriage was consummated, "so that she would not be too wild".

The great importance of ensete, can be regarded as a guide fossil for the existence of older cultural strata like everywhere in Ethiopia (Straube 1963). Although the diet of the Wolaita is the most varied of all Ethiopians – alongside many cereals and vegetables, taro, yams, coleus, and more recently also tomatoes, potatoes and manioc are cultivated – the ensete is considered the most important food crop. Every Wolaita will confirm this.

It is known from history that during the last 300 years there has been close peaceful and hostile contact between the Wolaita and Hadiya, that the Wolaita kings preferred to marry Hadiya women and that many clans are of Hadiya origin, as their names already reveal. Also, the centre of present-day Wolaita, around Mount Damota, was long inhabited by Hadiya, who could only be driven out of there gradually. It cannot be assumed that they were completely exterminated. Certainly, a considerable part of the blood of the Wolaita people comes from them. But it is not only in terms of blood that the members of the Hadiya-Sidaama group have contributed to the emergence of the Wolaita; their influence is also noticeable culturally. Thus, it is probable that the cattle-herding ritual, which is not as pronounced among the Ometo as it is among the Eastern Cushites, was adopted by them. Killing is also not present in this pronounced form among the other Ometo. The term *gaddauwa* for the leader of killing campaigns has been adopted by the Wolaita from the Eastern Cushites, as has the *hayu,* who is not a dignitary of the *gada* (age class) system but a sage. Finally, I would like to point out the coincidence of the tribal name of the Wolaita with the *wola-wicha*, as the free farmers of the Sidaama are called in contrast to the craftsmen. The word *wala-bicchoa*, which Cerulli (1925:665) has handed down from the Kambata and which he translates as noble, also points to this connection.

However, despite these influences and mixtures with the rest of the Ometo, the Wolaita form not only a linguistic but also a cultural community (this is proven by the monographs of the Gamo and Amarro cited in this volume). This would become even clearer if one had more information about the Kucha, Dawuro and Konta, with whom the Wolaita used to be in close contact and whose cultural

image – large kingdoms with chivalrous lordship – is most similar to that of the Wolaita. The most important cultural elements of the Wolaita also coincide with those of the other Ometo: intensive field cultivation with the use of animal manure, the clan names, similar forms of sacred royal ritual, centralistic and regional division of the groups with the relegation of the clans as a body politic, annually elected officials who usually come from a privileged class ("merit" nobility), the great importance of the marketplaces as centres of public life, etc.

There is no question that the Wolaita, like many other southern Ethiopian peoples, were influenced by the Christian Amhara empire at an early stage. Already in the Kebra Nagast (i.e. around 1300) (Bezold 1905), the neighbours of the Wolaita, the Hadiya, are mentioned as enemies of Ethiopia. I will go into more detail in the section on history about the land of Damot and King Motolomi, who, as is well known, played a major role in the life story of Saint Tekle Haymanot and who was transferred to Wolaita by today's Wolaita, most of whom are unfamiliar with the Amhara legend. Even in the imperial songs dating from the fifteenth century, Wolaita is referred to as a land subject to the empire (Dittman 1914). Whether there were already Christian churches at that time, as the Wolaita claim, and whether a pagan epoch crept in under the Wolaitamala dynasty before 1600 may be left open. It seems certain to me that many elements of Christian central and northern Ethiopia had already found their way into Wolaita before the coming of the Tigre dynasty.

The most decisive influence was exerted by the Tigre, according to tradition a band of noble horsemen from Agame, who invaded Wolaita around 1600, eliminated the hitherto ruling pagan Wolaitamala dynasty and gave the Wolaita decisive inspiration that profoundly influenced the historical and cultural development of this people. In view of this historical process, it seems inappropriate to speak of the "unconscious creation of the people's spirit". Here is an example of how a numerically weak group, fully aware of its cultural elevation, changed the ways of life of an entire people that readily recognised its superiority. (Similar developments must have taken place in the other kingdoms, like Kaffa and Dawuro). But this newly emerging folk culture cannot be called a mere offshoot of north Ethiopia. It goes without saying that the culture of the substratum layer did not remain without influence on the mindset of the immigrants. The fusion of the two cultures had to be all the more intimate because, until 1894, the Wolaita Empire, similar to the other southern Ethiopian kingdoms, led a Sleeping Beauty existence behind its walls and ramparts and, apart from some contact with Kaffa and Jimma, had no contact with the outside world. Although the Tigre could no longer maintain relations with highland Ethiopia soon after their invasion, and Christianity disappeared after a few generations, as did knowledge of the Tigray language and

writing, most of the ideas they brought to the country remain alive to this day, so that the Wolaita are already on the threshold of high culture.

A particularly significant element is the idea of the state, which replaces the clans or groups linked by blood with a sacred empire that embodies the claim to be a power of order established by God. This state consciousness, based on the institution of eternal kingship, is linked to a historical sensibility to which any mythical reshaping of history is alien and which allows the past of the Wolaita to be traced back to the year 1600. This imperial order includes the centralised structure of the administration, headed by heads elected by the individual communities or districts, the grandiose installations of roads, defences and markets maintained by the state, regulated taxes for the royal household, abstract money, a judicial system with courts of appeal, police, prisons and executioners. Another striking element is the developed system of estates, which divides the people into different classes, which are also distinguished by their clothing or house facilities. The great difference between rich and poor in social evaluation is also an institution foreign to southern Ethiopia, as is the formation of a personal nobility not based on birth ("the privileged").

Thanks to the rapid expansion of the Wolaita Empire through victorious wars that brought booty and land to the ruling class, thanks to the intensive cultivation of fields mainly by slaves, a chivalric-patriarchal culture of great style as in northern Ethiopia could develop. However, a special feudal system did not advance. The lifestyle of the upper class, compared to that of the Amhara, remained relatively peasant, but it also exerted a strong influence on the material culture and customs of the entire people and raised them above the level of their neighbours, whose material cultural inventory does not remotely approach the multitude of beautifully designed luxury and utilitarian objects of the Wolaita, and whose behaviour and manners know little of the trained etiquette of the Wolaita.

However, the Wolaita culture lacks a whole series of elements that first constitute the essence of a high culture and which were partly not present in the Ethiopian empire either, such as: solid cities as living cultural centres in the sense of a polis,[9] differentiated professions that are not distinguished according to their caste but according to their actual activity, a specialisation of crafts, a merchant class with long-distance trade, lively circulation of money, etc.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Wolaita must have come into closer contact with Jimma and Kaffa, perhaps in connection with the expansion of the southern Ethiopian slave trade. A whole series of new cultural elements, such as

[9] The rest of southern Ethiopia also lacks towns. The large megalithic settlements of the Konso can only be described as villages. Bieber (1920:171 f.) does call Bonga and Andaracca in Kaffa towns, but it is clear from his description that they consisted only of a cluster of homesteads around a palace and marketplace.

silversmithing, luxury objects and various useful plants, found their way into the Oromo kingdoms in the wake of Arab merchants and from there reached Wolaita.

In view of this fragmentary outline of the emergence of the Wolaita culture and the repeatedly emphasised importance of the highland Ethiopian influence. I must not fail to point out that in the following description of the individual areas of Wolaita life, too, the chivalric-feudal aspect comes to the fore and that, almost exclusively, the life of the upper class and the free peasants is described, not that of the poor, craftsmen and slaves. Quite apart from the fact that all my informants came from the upper class, I also consciously attached importance to this portrayal. It was this upper class that formed out of individual peasant peoples and groups the admirable higher culture that is the essence of the Wolaita people.

Character and special customs

A brief characterisation of the Wolaita and a list of their most striking features can only be superficial in view of my relatively short stay. I gained the same favourable impression of the Wolaita, i.e. of the members of the important clans that form the upper class, as the Jesuit Father Fernandez did of the Enarya more than 300 years ago. He not only admired their pleasant appearance, but particularly emphasised that they kept their word and were not "liars and hypocrites like the Amhara" (Fernandez 1707). If the last condemnation of the Amhara seems too harsh, Fernandez is nevertheless right when he draws attention to such traits, which could, however, be paraphrased more kindly. It can be said that the Wolaita hold the middle ground between Amhara and Oromo in their disposition and nature and possess the positive characteristics of both peoples. What they have in common with the Oromo is their amiable and open nature, which distinguishes them from the Amhara, who, despite all their politeness, are often not very obliging, and sharp-suited. The cheerful nature must be a common characteristic of all Ometo, because Mylius also described this trait of the Konta, which he noticed all the more because he came from the area of the serious and closed Kaffa (Mylius 1906; Bieber 1920:165). Helmut Straube (1963) reported something similar about the Dorze. The few stories I have recorded also show the workings of a more harmless humour, while similar short stories or anecdotes of the Amhara have much wittier but also more vicious punchlines. The enjoyment of perceptive parables or verse is completely alien to the Wolaita.

Like the Gojjami in northern Ethiopia, the Wolaita in the south have a reputation for being sorcerers, rogues and werewolves (*buda*). They are also said to have a penchant for arson and burglary. It is said to be their speciality to dig a passage from the outside under the wall into the house when breaking in. The many slaves freed after 1936, not always the best elements, who emigrated as far as Addis

Ababa and now form the proletariat in their new homeland, may have contributed to giving the Wolaita a bad name.

The model of the Wolaita is the figure of the "great man", whose whole appearance shows that such a figure could only arise in the realm of a feudal culture. Affiliation to an old family is not decisive for the reputation of a great man among the Amhara as among the Wolaita, where – apart from the royal family – there never existed an aristocracy of birth. The successful can easily rise to the status of the privileged. This is roughly equivalent to the *makwannent* of the Amhara. However, he should come from a clan of good repute and a decent family. Above all, the "big man" had to be a brave hero and successful killer. Furthermore, he had to have wealth, be it through inheritance or conquests or royal gifts, in order to show his gentleness through grand gifts and festivities and to bind his retinue and clientele to him. The more he gave away of his wealth, the more respected he became, and the richer he was, the greater his obligation to give away his possessions, such as a hundred or a thousand cattle, at waste festivals.[10]

The great man is polite, measured, a wise judge to whom his community entrusts the presidency of the council, a faithful helper of his relatives and friends. Even today, he receives visits from relatives, clients and those seeking help during the day. In the morning he supervises the work of the former slaves and family members in the fields, in the afternoon he sits smoking a pipe in the circle of the other worthies under a shady tree on the communal meadow and discusses the affairs of the community with them, as in the old days. In the past, he used to supervise the dressage of his horses or smooth spear shafts – the only physical work he was allowed to do. He always displays a calm and sedate demeanour and walks with gravitas, with his upper body bent backwards, in front of him a slave carrying his pipe, his leather blanket or his cloak. When quarrels or war came, however, the dignitary turned into a raging berserker, under whose footsteps the earth trembled and who stood there trembling, senseless with eagerness to fight, until he could swing himself onto his horse and, screaming, chase away the enemy.

The great man owed his reputation solely to his abilities, which he had to prove again and again if his reputation was not to decline. He was not allowed to "lie down", but had to remain active, otherwise he would not be thought much of. As naturally as arrogance was recognised as a trait of the hero, so ridiculous did he appear in the eyes of his fellow citizens who only insisted on his inherited wealth or the name of his father without having collected "merits" himself. A special

[10] Hospitality is taken for granted, just as all Ethiopians are extraordinarily hospitable. He also has to help the beggars and the oppressed, although in their insignificant position they can contribute little to the increase of his fame –but everyone fears the curse of the poor, who can no longer lose anything and can therefore show their hatred.

section of this ethnography deals with the system of merit as a cultural element peculiar to the Ethiopians that developed very expressively among the Wolaita. A presumption of rights soon finds its punishment in the opinion of the Wolaita. My informant Kaba reported that after the division of the inheritance, after his father retired to his old age quite early, he had a house of the first (best) kind, built in spite of his youth and despite of being warned against it by the elders of the community. Soon afterwards the house burnt down, and all the world saw in it the punishment of heaven for the arrogant one. It was similar with the dress code. It would have been completely out of the question that, for example, a successful slayer, who was not distinguished by wealth or special reputation, would have worn trousers of the first kind.



Fig. 6: Trousers of the first kind

The good manners of the Wolaita also set them apart from their coarse and rustic neighbours, and they are much more polite in conversation than the Oromo, with whom one often waits in vain for a please or thank you. But like everywhere else in Ethiopia, it is not considered unseemly to whisper in the presence of others or to smack one's lips while eating. On the contrary, those who chew quietly with their mouths closed, like Europeans, must have a secretive and insidious character, according to Ethiopians. The assertion by Bieber (1923:451) that the Kaffa let off wind "always without shyness" is, in my opinion, a gross exaggeration. Perhaps it applies to the riff-raff who hang around in the colonial towns and on the caravan roads. I have never experienced such things in Ethiopia. To the Wolaita and Amhara, it is considered inexcusable lack of good form. The sense of shame is also very well developed. Even little girls of one and a half years who can just walk are dressed in a pubic apron and are told never to show themselves without clothes. Adults would rather die than appear naked. But among the Wolaita, as among the Amhara, I had the impression that the covering of the female breast is

dictated more by dress fashion than by a sense of shame. Breastfeeding mothers and adult women are not afraid to show themselves with their upper body half uncovered. Among the Oromo, the women of several groups, for example, the southern Guji, always walk with their upper bodies exposed.



Fig. 7: Two sisters

Urination and defecation are performed with the utmost secrecy, usually in the ensete grove, and the excrement is buried immediately. In sexual matters, too, they are very discreet and, outwardly, almost prudish. Peculiar – hardly used today – and difficult to understand in their blatant sexuality among such a discreet people are the dances, which, for example, depict coitus in a pantomimic manner (cf. Bieber 1920, 1923; Jensen 1936). I have never seen them.

The Wolaita are a clean people who washed their white clothes with the fruits of the soap bush (*Phytolacca dodecandra*) before they knew about soap. They are also purer in personal hygiene than the surrounding ethnic groups. It was consistently reported that even the simple farmer washed his arms and legs every evening after working in the fields and bathed once a week in the stream. Noble people often wash themselves with warm water and have their feet washed every evening by a servant. Etiquette dictates that the servant kisses the back of the gentleman's foot at the end. Butter rubbing – so beloved by the Oromo – is now frowned upon among the Wolaita, but it is said to have been common in the past. All body hair is removed regularly.[11] It is important to have pleasant breath, and ginger is chewed. Speaking with an onion- or garlic-scented mouth or spitting out a lot is the sign of the rough peasant.

Another element of the higher culture of the Wolaita is the very developed way of greeting. The Oromo, who inquires about the health of his counterpart and the well-being of his wives, children and livestock a dozen times or more at a meeting, knows no differentiations or norms that regulate greetings. Among

[11] The women perfume themselves and their clothes over a small clay bowl with the wood of the *ocha* (*syzygium guineense*) and with incense.

the Wolaita, as among the Amhara, there are precisely graduated forms. How one behaves towards a visitor or an encounter is of great importance for one's self-worth and for the assessment of the other person. Consideration is given to how far one will go to meet the guest, whether one will receive him at the front door on the lawn or in the house, whether sitting or standing, or which of two people meeting will get off their horse first. As with legal transactions or marriage proposals, one must carefully weigh up not giving up one's own dignity but also not injuring the other person's dignity and making him an enemy. Although it is the right of the noble and great to greet lower people coldly and dismissively, dignified politeness does not harm one's reputation as long as one does not forgo oneself and keeps the other person in check.

In ancient times, the rule of exposing the lower before the higher and the covering of the superior applied, culminating in the disguising of the king and the exposing of his subjects before him.[12] The Wolaita generally prostrated themselves before the king, as one was expected to shy away from raising one's eyes to him. In front of the members of the royal clan (Tigre), the other members of the people also had to half expose their upper bodies, bow deeply with outstretched hands and call out "*kushiya*" ("my hand") or "*aga"* ("bless you"). Even today, it is a sign of nobility in Ethiopia to pull the cloak up to the tip of the nose when talking to a lower person.

The Wolaita greeting is "*Sarro, sarro*?" ("Good, good"), also "S*arro, deadi?*" and "*Lo'o deadi?*" ("Are you well?") or "*Lo'o deydeti*?" ("Are you well?"), which is usually followed by questions like: "*Ne natu lo'o*?" ("Are your children well?") or "*Assay ubbay sarro*?" ("Are all the people [your family] well?"). There are also other exclamations, such as "*Ashama*!" or "*Aka*!", which are used to call the person arriving.

Handshakes or lip kisses were originally unknown (even to the Amhara); the kiss was exclusively a greeting. Peers kiss each other on the shoulders. The younger man kisses the older man –even if the latter is only a few years ahead of him – on the palm of the hand, whereupon the older man kisses his cheek. Old men kiss the foreheads of children. In the past, when a slave from the lowlands, where he had been planting cotton, returned to his master in the highlands after a long absence, he would throw himself on the ground as a ceremonial greeting, touch the earth with his lips, kiss the sole of his master's foot and then kiss his master's children's bellies above the navel.

The Wolaita belong to the few Ethiopian peoples with a non-Semitic language who, in addition to the informal address "you" (mas. *neni,* fem. *bi*, small children

[12] The Amhara developed a complicated ceremonial in the wearing of their cloaks (cf. Tilahun 1956:27 f.).

la), also knew a formal "you" (*intena*) and spoke of high-ranking personalities in the third plural: "*kawo maridosona*" ("the king have mercy"). Like the Amhara, they address distinguished people as "sir" (*goda*) and even know a "madame" (*godate, godiyo*) for fine ladies.[13] The hero is also called "Lord" with his horse's name, e.g. Moyzo *godo* (Lord of Moyzo, his horse's name).

A gesture peculiar to the Wolaita, the clapping of hands together in front of the face, is seen very often. Even the myth tells of the legendary aborigines (Aroge) gathering in a square and clapping their hands after a long deliberation, then leaving or disappearing into the earth. This gesture can indicate surprise or joy or that a decision has been made or that someone has come to the end of his wisdom. When someone has nothing left in their hands at a sale, or has spent everything and has nothing, they clap their hands together and then rub their palms together. Often the Wolaita also shout "*hashu*" as they clap their hands together as an expression of joy or gloating.[14] At festivals, the women trill the high-pitched female call *ililta* ("ililili"), as they do everywhere in Ethiopia. "No" is often expressed by clicking the tongue and throwing the head back.

Population

No definite information could be obtained about the population, as no census had been carried out so far and the tax registers were no longer a useful source. However, *fitawrari* Desta told us that a superficial estimate or census during the Italian period had found about three quarters of a million people, which is quite probable according to the even more superficial estimates of Wolfgand Kuls and myself. Apart from the town of Soddo, Wolaita is one of the most densely populated rural areas not only in Ethiopia but in the world. As far as I know, similar population masses can only be found in a few other areas in Ethiopia, for example among the Sidaama, who may have the same number, as well as among smaller groups such as the Gedeo, Konso, Dorze, Basketto and some groups of the Gurage. A good impression of this garden landscape dotted with houses is given by the illustration below.

We arrived at a figure comparable to the Italian one based on our own estimates. According to various older people, Wolaita was divided into 25,000 tax units (*shama*) before Italian rule. A varying number of peasants were grouped together and had to pay certain contributions in kind, labour and money. Of these tax units, 9,000, i.e. about two-fifths, fell to the Damota region, while the remaining three-fifths were distributed among the other seven regions, which were therefore only

[13] The Kaffa also know "*done*" or "*donichi*"(the gentleman).

[14] The Arsi and Shoa Oromo say "*isu*".



Fig. 8: Aerial view. Landscape and homestead around Soddo-Wolaita

one-fifth larger than Damota, not only in terms of area (as can be seen from the map) but also in terms of population. The average population of one of these regions, which all have approximately the same size, may, according to our estimates, amount to about 50,000 or 60,000. For example, Koysha, where I received quite precise information, has eight districts (*huduga*), each of which is divided into five to seven communities (*aduna*). The Wamura district of Koysha, for example, has six communities, each of which has 300–500 houses or homesteads. If one takes a figure of five to six inhabitants per house as a basis – which is rather too low since the Wolaita have a lot of children – the estimated figures are 2,000 inhabitants in the community, 12,000 in the district and over 50,000 in the region. The seven regions except Damota would therefore have 350,000 inhabitants and, based on the ratio of two-fifths to three-fifths, Damota, 26,000, i.e. the whole of Wolaita would have over 600,000.

Another calculation yielded similar values. The average population in the densely populated areas of the Damota region around the mountain of the same name is about 300–400 people per square kilometre, according to the quite accurate records of Kuls. A similarly dense population can be found in large parts of Koysha, Offa and Duguna. If one assumes only half this number for the whole of Wolaita – although the uninhabited or sparsely populated areas form only a small part of the total area – one also arrives at a population figure that far exceeds half a million.

Although Wolaita has lost many inhabitants, mainly former slaves, through emigration in the last decades, all reporters agreed that the population has grown a lot in the last two generations and, at the time of the Amhara conquest, was perhaps half of what it is today. Today, Wolaita is on the verge of being overpopulated. The soil is just enough to provide the food needed for the population with

the methods used so far, which are very intensive by Ethiopian standards. For very many families, there is already only just enough food, while the means to pay for the mostly ridiculously low land tax, for clothing, firewood, fat and meat have to be procured through the migrant labour of a family"s father and younger sons, who today can be found working as kuli, day labourers or tenants in many towns of southern Ethiopia alongside the proverbial Gurage. Because of their reliability and intelligence, they are readily recruited by the missions as evangelists and healing assistants. If the population continues to increase at the same rate as before, without other farming methods or work opportunities being found, mass emigration will set in within a generation at the latest. Already today, many Wolaita live permanently outside their homeland, as their land lots became smaller and smaller during inheritance divisions and are no longer sufficient for subsistence. Land that only a generation ago supported a man and his family now has to suffice for the families of his three sons, who build their houses on the three corners of the very truncated grass plot. What their sons will do one day remains an unsolved problem. The American Protestant Sudan Interior Mission – which has been working among the Wolaita for more than thirty years, maintains a very large station and many Bible schools, in which biblical geography is even taught – has not taken care of this vital question. Only Pere Pascal de Luchon, a French Capuchin who lived for many years until World War II at his remote station at Anchucho in Sore, where he established a famous garden and experimental fields, introduced cassava and papaya to Wolaita.

History

by Eike Haberland

When the people first arrived, they lived in a cave, Wayo, in western Kindo, because they knew no other dwelling and because they were afraid of the evil King Miza of Gomara (Kaffa). He was a cruel and mad ruler who killed people for pleasure and exterminated the Wolaita wherever he found them. His empire stretched east to the Bilate River. To prove his power, he also wanted to destroy the flies; he had carrion thrown into deep holes and filled them up with earth when the flies had gathered there.

Kaffa is often known in its vicinity by the name of Gomara or the like; it is probably identical with the Goma of Ethiopian history, which together with Enarya and Bosha was converted to Christianity before Emperor Sarsa Dengel (Schleicher 1893:31). Incidentally, this is one of the names that has many parallels in southern Ethiopia, like Yem south of Kaffa or Gumar in Gurage. Unfortunately, one is very often in doubt in the Ethiopian chronicle as to which country is really meant.

The Wolaita have relatively few ideas about Kaffa, whose sovereignty was once, as Bieber (1920) also states, recognised by the Wolaita. However, according to their information, the Wolaita had relatively quickly freed themselves from this sovereignty. Dawuro supposedly only freed itself from Kaffa hegemony in in the 19th century (cf. Bieber 1920, 1923). But the Wolaita are still aware today that before the advent of Jimma, from the first half of the last century onwards, Kaffa was the great cultural centre of the South, whose goods reached Wolaita via Dawuro. An example of an old contact is perhaps also the Wolaita word for the crown prince, *bushasha*, which is identical with the name of the royal house of Kaffa. It is also possible that it is a common West Cushitic word derived from *busho* (son) (cf. *godobusho*). The first Wolaita did not have proper clothes either, but covered themselves with loosely plucked cotton or with skins, ensete leaves and ensete bast. Cotton clothes came from Dawuro much later. Their food consisted of the herbs *bido* and *kefo* (rosemary), which are still eaten by the shepherd boys today. Since the first people did not know fire, they put the herbs under their armpits until they were cooked. They stayed in their cave like this for seven years

and then built themselves small houses, of which there were two different kinds, just as, in general, everything was twofold in ancient times, even the colours of the birds and the cattle.[15]

The first thing the people stole was the fire from Boroda. The thief took only a very small piece and hid it in his cloak. At home he wrapped it in cloth and put it in a pot; it started to burn and consumed the whole house. But all the people came and got some of it.

The cattle came out of a large crack in the ground in the Woshasha district in the Offa region. Anyone who needed an animal went there, waited until a cow came out and took it home. But more and more people came, they began to fight and beat each other until a shaman (*sharecho*) from the Urgana clan came and struck the earth with his staff, saying "Close!" Then the cleft closed and peace returned among the people. Even today there is a sacred place with tall trees, and pious people have made a fence around the place of the cattle's origin.

With these details, the Wolaita's knowledge of mythical prehistory is exhausted. Very sober details are given about the origin of the other cultural goods. Only the fantastic story about the origin of the cattle from the underworld is an exception and represents a motif very foreign to the Ethiopian spirit. Characteristic is the effort to place the origin of other things in as historical a time as possible, such as the horse and goat brought by the Tigre immigrants – the goat by the sorcerers (*kolecha*) who were part of their entourage. Others associate the goat with the first Amhara immigration. The first sheep was brought by a Gamo man called Desse Fote from the land of lsirir, who was keen to live among the Tigre. The very late adoption of the donkey by the Arsi has a lot going for it; further west, in Gofa for example, it has remained an animal asscoiated with foreign merchants to this day and has not been adopted by the natives. The dog is said to have come from the hippo hunters in Lake Abaya.

Early Christian influence

An important element of the Wolaita culture, which also has significance for the lower, larger kingdoms of southern Ethiopia, is the historical consciousness that this scriptless people give quite an amazing overview of their past and also of the becoming of their own culture. Other peoples further west, such as the Basketto, have their king lists, which include up to fifteen names – the memory of normal people is rarely good enough for more. However, with the exception of the founder

[15] Living in caves probably points to the Athonian origin of the first humans (cf. also Jensen 1959). It is also possible that there is a confusion here with the stone house cave of the Arose (see below).

of the dynasty, they do not associate any historical facts with these names –not entirely without reason, because in the eternal repetition of sowing, harvesting and small wars with neighbours, there were probably few events that made a deep impression on the natives, who continued to retain their history-free world view. Among the Wolaita, many people, even simple peasants, are not only familiar with the names of kings up to Libana or Kote (1710–1722), they also know how to associate events with these names. The "educated" have a full overview of the entire Tigre dynasty, i.e. up to about 1600, and also know the names of the six kings who reigned before that, although, like Mohammad "Gran", they are semi-mythical kings of the Wolaitamola dynasty. But the knowledge of the sages is still valid beyond this time, and it was known to them all that Wolaita had already been a Christian country in close contact with highland Ethiopia before the coming of the Tigre, who reintroduced Christianity. The influence of Christian northern Ethiopia on the south is very old and can probably be dated to the time of the last Aksumite rulers. Thus, according to tradition, the last king of the Aksumite Solomonids fled after the Zague usurpation to Shoa, which subsequently appeared as part of the Christian empire. Hadiya, also later an ever-rebellious land under Ethiopian souverainty, is already referred to in the Kebra Nagast as the "hereditary enemy" of the Ethiopians (Bezold 1905:100) while other areas were the target of Christian missionaries, the most famous of which are Saints Gebre Menfes Kidus and Tekle Haymanot.

However, the Wolaita traditions about these saints are very fragmentary, so that one can only put them into context with the help of Ethiopian historical sources. I have not been able to determine with certainty whether the story of Saint Tekle Haymanot, whom the Wolaita now regard as their apostle and missionary, was known before the Amhara conquest in 1894, or whether it has only been familiar to them since 1894. After the conquest, many Wolaita, especially the upper class, for understandable political reasons, emphasised their ancient Christianity and their origins in Tigre and eagerly embraced anything that could support their cultural ties to highland Ethiopia. But I would like to assume that the equating of Damot with Wolaita and the identification of King Motolomi with a Wolaita ruler was a widespread legend in southern and central Ethiopia. Why would the Christian court of Menilek Gabra Sellassie, who himself took part in the latter's campaign to Wolaita, have equated this country with Damot with such great matter-of-factness and called Wolaita-Damot the capital of the Motolomi (Simon 1885:360 f.)? It is no longer possible today to determine where the ancient kingdom of Damot, which the saint proselytised, lay –the limits of its extent are roughly given by the province of Damot, west of Gojjam in the country of Yem, which according to its inhabitants was once called Damot, and Mount Damot in Wolaita. Throughout southern Ethiopia, the former existence of this semi-mystical king-

dom is known. The Wolaita equate Damot with their fatherland. A main proof of this for them is the name Motolomi, who is known to appear as the ruler (*sayum*) of Damot in the legend of Tekle Haymanot and also in the ancient Amharic imperial songs (Littmann 1914). Some overlook the fact that their King Motolomi of the Wolaitamala dynasty had to live as a contemporary of Ahmed Gran, who ruled at the beginning of the sixteenth century, while the existence of Motolomi of Damot is transferred to the second half of the thirteenth century through his contact with Tekle Haymanot. However, since the Motolomi or Metalammi of Damot is furthermore mentioned in the Old Amharic imperial songs at the time of Amda Siyon (1314–1344) and Zar'a Yaqob (1434–1468) (Littmann 1914:26, 30), it can be seen that Motolomi - is not a proper name but a ruler's title, which may have originated from a proper name, as some examples prove (Abbu Gifar), and that the later kingdom of Wolaita once formed part of Damot.[16] In any case, the many internal Ethiopian migrations have caused many tribal or landscape names to occur more than once. Incidentally, in the enumeration of the southern Ethiopian lands subject to Emperor Isaac (1414–1429), Wolaita are also mentioned, as are a whole series of southern Ethiopian peoples still in existence today, while it is clear that many others later merged into larger units, such as the Zirgo (or Zargo) (Littmann 1914:18) and Puto, which survive only in a clan name. A similar example is the likewise disappeared country of Kogo near Wolaita, whose name still survives in Kogo, a clan of the Wolaita (Caquot 1955:113) (Cf. my remarks on the -mala clans).

The Gadla Takla Haymanot [a hagiography of Tekle Haymanot], which exists in different versions, reports that at the time of the Zagwe, the Motolomi freed the chief (*segun*) of Damot, so that he invaded and came as far as the river Zenum (today Gamo). He killed all the priests and burned the church. There lived Saga Za'ab, from the family of priests who "illuminate Ethiopia with their belief" (Dillmann 1884:36). His wife Egyi'e Haraya was captured by the soldiers of Motolomi, who wanted to marry her because of her great beauty. However, in response to her prayers, the Archangel Michael freed her and carried her home on his wings, where she was united with her husband. She gave birth to a son with the name Fesseha Seyon. The latter, under the name of Tekle Haymanot, became the most famous priest and missionary of the Ethiopian south. He was eager to convert the cruel Motolomi to the right faith and therefore moved to Damot. There he performed many miracles in the countryside and converted the governor of the area and many other pagans. When Motolomi heard this, he had the governor and the

[16] From the enumeration of the lands in a geographical order, one could conclude that Damot (or its core area) lay further north than present-day Wolaita. Once it appears in the order Gojjam-Gefat-Damot (Littmann 1914:26), the other time Waq-Damot-Gafat. Wolaita, on the other hand, appears clearly localised by its enumeration between Kria (Kwatcha) and Amarro (Kwera).

saint brought to him and thrown in a locked basket into the deep abyss Tama Gerär, but the basket was immediately caught by an angel, so that the two appeared again before the astonished Motolomi. Likewise, the tree on which the saint was hanged bowed. A series of miracles followed, the soldiers who had executed Motolomi were brought back to life, and so on. Finally, there was a trial by fire between the magicians of Motolomi and the saint. By virtue of their magical arts, the latter stayed in the fire, but when the saint uttered the words of Moses, "Lord arise! Let Your enemies be scattered", they were engulfed in the flames, which could not harm the saint. In the face of these miracles, Motolomi was converted and baptised. Not far from the king's capital, Tekle Haymanot built the first Christian church, which was named Gararya Maryam, presumably after the acacias (*gerar*) growing nearby, as the Amhara like to name their churches after conspicuous trees (cf., for example, Berber Maryam in Gamo). The further history of Tekle Haymanot, to whom the later legend ascribes the merit of the peaceful restoration of the Solomonic dynasties, is no longer of interest to Wolaita. It is noteworthy that all the places mentioned in the legend are identified by the Wolaita, with great matter-of-factness, with sites in their country, so that there is the possibility that there is a historically true core behind the mythical surface after all. According to the Wolaita, Malbarade, the capital of the Motolomi, was not far from the later royal palace of Dalbo, not far from where the centre of the Wolaita Empire was also located in more recent times. Simon also names Wolaita-Damot as the capital of the Damot empire (Simon 1885:360f).

I was shown this site, where there are still remnants of old ramparts (though they could also date from much later times) by *fitawrari* Desta. To the southeast of it is said to have been the Gerarya Maryam church built by Tekle Haymanot, which bears the same name as a church in Shoa also built by Tekle Haymanot. This name means "acacia".

These similarites may be of later origin, although it seems difficult to believe that they merely belong to the realm of legend. But the execution site of Tomagia has so many similarities with a place in northern Wolaita that one can no longer believe in coincidence. As described in the legend, today's Holozo is a deep crevice in the earth, which is flowed through by a river below, which plunges into the abyss with a waterfall on one side, and like Tekle Haymanot and his followers, criminals were also thrown down there until 1894. In Wolaita, the Tigre (royal clan) were drowned in the Omo; in Yem, the same fate befell human sacrifices and criminals; and also in Jimma, the successor of the old Bosha kingdom, as well as in Wollaga, drowning at a waterfall is handed down (Mylius 1906).

Although there is some confusion in the Wolaita tradition, the wise are aware that there must have been two kings Motolomi: the one under whom Christianity was introduced and the founder of the Wolaitamala dynasty, under whom Chris-

tianity perished and almost disappeared among the Wolaita. In general, it is recognised that a "colonisation" and Christianisation of Wolaita had already taken place from highland Ethiopia before the coming of the Tigre, and that the Tigre only revived the Christian elements. It would also be difficult to imagine that such a small group could have exerted such a cultural influence.

This Amhara influence can be seen in a number of elements that should be listed here, as they are proof of the power of the highland Ethiopian cultural radiation. First of all, Christianity itself. The special form of the Ethiopian Church constitution, which recognises only one bishop, originating from Egypt, who alone can confer priestly ordination, has been mainly to blame for the fact that the great missionary successes of the emperors of the late Middle Ages often did not last long. Although the priesthood in Ethiopia is inherited from father to son, the great difficulty of attaining master ordination during political turmoil or long vacancies in the metropolitan see was to blame for the fact that whole peoples sank back into paganism and became, as the Ethiopians put it, "Christians without churches" or "Christians without priests". Particularly devastating of all were the great Oromo migrations, which not only made all contact with northern Ethiopia impossible for a long time, but also pushed the peoples who resisted their first onslaught ever more strongly southwards or gradually destroyed them. The Enarya, Bosha, Yem or Gurage are telling examples. In the beginning, Christian rites may have continued to be performed despite the separation from the north by a population that willingly accepted the superiority of the new religion and the highland Ethiopian culture. But Christian worship had to cease when the last priest who had the right to perform the holy mass died, even if – as with the Zway – the churches and books were kept by the priests' descendants. This was no longer even the case with the Wolaita; when the others arrived, none of the many churches were still standing, only the sacred groves surrounding them had become places of worship for the descendants of the former Christian priests, who had transformed themselves from *qes* (priests) into the pagan clan Qesiya. Their descendants have preserved a whole series of customs up to the present day, which still show very Christian traits, such as their special celebration of the Feast of the Cross and the Purification of the Virgin Mary, the observance of fasting, which has long since been abandoned by the rest of the Wolaita. Also their way of counting time, which was still alive in Amhara times, and which, like the Amhara priests, determined how to celebrate the great festivals and the beginning of the year in an otherwise scriptless community. The Qesiya are discussed in detail in the chapter on religion, as are the old Christian celebrations, of which Easter and the finding of the cross have remained the main festivals of the Wolaita to this day. With the Christian festivals, the Amharic calendar also penetrated the Wolaita, who – at least today – only know the Amharic names for the months and the seven days of the

week and, like the highland Ethiopians, have the year begin on 11th September, although in the popular consciousness, the Feast of the Cross is still regarded as the actual beginning of the year. The old names of the months, which were presumably connected with the phases of the moon as everywhere else in southern Ethiopia, and some of which Cerulli (1925, 1929/30) was still able to note, were no longer known to anyone in my time. But this way of reckoning time never caught on among the people at large, who today still determine the months, which are often counted through, according to the phases of the moon. In the section on the major festivals, one can read how strongly the phases of the moon are taken into account.

When the Amhara invaded the country, none of the eight churches that, according to the Wolaita, were built during the great missionary period and later renewed by the Tigre, were still standing. However, despite the perishable material from which Ethiopian churches are built, some remains of them have survived, and excavations carried out have brought to light a number of objects that prove that there really were churches there. The most famous and oldest of all the churches is said to be St George's Church in the Sere district of Offa (known in Wolaita as Sere Guyo). The site can be considered a beautiful example of an Ethiopian church. Set on a high foothill of the Koysha Mountains, which drops steeply to the south into the plain of Offa, rises a dense grove of huge trees, many hundreds of years old, which fell victim to the axe all around. In a small clearing in the middle of the forest, firmly overgrown by tall grass and creepers, one can still make out the outer walls of the church, in the form of posts made of the iron-hard Juniperus wood driven into the ground, which in this form probably date from the beginning of the 18th century. The wood could not have survived the annual rainy seasons any longer. The church, like all other churches, had fallen into disrepair since the extinction of Christianity, but in 1898, when it was visited by the first Amhara priests, it was said to be still standing. Some years ago, around 1950,a Wolaita priest trained in Tigre, whose attention was drawn there to the ancient Christian shrines in southern Ethiopia, dug around the site of the church and unearthed a whole series of objects which have since been kept in a church in Soddo and which I was able to see thanks to the kindness of *fitawrari* Desta (see figure 8 in the editor's preface). They are of the usual highland Ethiopian type and difficult to determine chronologically. I myself was able to see a chalice with carved images of the twelve apostles, a spoon used during mass and two iron crosses as held by the priests – all very roughly crafted objects. In addition, the altar stone (*manbar*) on which the Blessed Sacrament (*tabot*) rested, incense burners and crosses are said to have been found. The Church of St. George was

the most famous church during the Christian period of the Tigre dynasty, and it is said that the early kings swore to uphold the laws there when they took office.[17]



Fig. 9: Remains of the church Sere Guyo

Today, St George's Church in Yakima, the capital of Koysha, has officially taken over the site of the old church in Sere. The Blessed Sacrament is raised above the altar stone of the Sere church, and various other items found during the excavations are also to be kept there. Through the mediation of the district chief, the priest allowed me to have a look at the book of the life story of St. George belonging to the church, in which a whole series of details, not only about church life, but also about the church in Guyo and the finds were recorded, apparently written by the excavators. Unfortunately, I was not allowed to copy this section. Incidentally, not far from the old St George's Church was the site from which the myth and the priests came. Close to the present George Church in Yakima rises another dense grove, in which stands the church of Makana Maryam (Place of Mary), safely built by the Amhara. In Ofu-Hira, on the eastern slope of the Ofu Mountains was the unrebuilt church of Kidana Mehrat (Legacy of Grace). Its site, like that of all other churches, is still recognisable by the large grove.

A very famous church in the Tigre period was that of Saint Gebre Menfes Kidus (popularly Abo) at the stone precipice of the Koysha Mountains towards the Omo, also known as Dole Abo, after the parish. The same priest who dug at St George's Church also brought out crosses there, which are said to be in Soddo today. Furthermore, there is said to have been a church or monastery Dabra Sina in Koysha in Wamura-Mogisa County, the name of the church's saint was not known to my informants.

[17] However, the question arises as to where the kings swore before they conquered eastern Koysha and Offa, that is, where the Church of George is located.

On the eastern slope of Mount Damota, above the royal palace of Dalbo, stands the church of the Archangel Gabriel (or is it called "Saviour of the World"?), rebuilt by the Amhara. Motolomi is said to have taken the holy of holies (*tabot*, which has the shape of a flat board among the Ethiopians) from a church on his campaign to Shoa and used it as a pillow at home in his capital Malbarade until Saint Tekle Haymanot came, sealed the *tabot* and built a church for it. There was no agreement about the site of the Church of Mary built by Tekle Haymanot and Motolomi; it is said to have stood one or two hours southeast of Dalbo. Finally, there is the Church of Mary, also built by Tekle Haymanot, on the northern slope of Wanche Mountain; I have not seen this site.

As evidence of early Amhara influence, the Wolaita also cite a number of place names transplanted to Wolaita by the immigrants, such as Gojjam (in Koysha), Dabra Sian (in Koysha and Kindo), Fate (supposedly an abbreviation of Fategar, near Boditi), Gerara or Gerarya (either after the landscape of Dabra Libanos Monastery in Shoa or after an area in Amhara Saint), Kote or Kart (landscape in Amhara Saint).

Another element of highland Ethiopian influence are the "Amara" clans, also represented in Dorze, which prove their origin from the north by their names and also by the professions of their members. I already mentioned that silversmiths and weavers – two crafts that are young in the Ethiopian south – are very common in these clans. Fatigara needs no further explanation. Indigaua and Innigara probably belong to those landscape names that are frequent in Tigre and Gurage and begin with Enda and Enna respectively, such as Enda Mokanni in Tigre, Enda Gabtan in western Shoa (now inhabited by Oromo), Ennakor in Gurage (probably identical with Innigara). In general, many migratory waves seem to have come via Gurage, if not having originated there. Wure Kuraawa may refer to the Islamic past of the same clan. According to tradition, the Tigre also came to Wolaita via Gurage. The names of the other clans – Hihi, Hihatro, Hahaha, Huwaca etc. – defy all interpretation for the time being.

It is noteworthy that the names of the great Ethiopian emperors who have survived in the memory of the natives in the rest of the Ethiopian south to this day, such as Zar'a Ya'qob among the Sidaama, Kaffa and Madji, Fasulle among the Dorze, etc., are completely unknown among the Wolaita; the glorious renaissance of Christianity and highland Ethiopian cultural influence has eclipsed all that.

It can be considered quite certain that the influence of Wolaita, as well as the rest of southern Ethiopia, by the Christian north did not happen in a few large waves, but in the form of rarely interrupted contact. Unfortunately, the Ethiopian chronicles are often very vague and pass over important events for random reasons. Thus, there is no mention that Zar'a Ya'qob also made moves toward Sidaama and Kaffa. Yet it seems justified to assume that he did, for how

else could his name have survived to the present day anywhere in the south? For the Wolaita, too, it was not just a one-off missionary work by Tekle Haymanot, occasional tribute payments to later emperors and immigration. A legend from Adua, for example, tells of a migration of the Tigre during the reign of Emperor Isaac (1414–1429). Since the text is difficult to access (Tilahun 1956:19), I will reproduce it here:

This happened during the reign of Emperor Yeshak of Akäläguzay: The Emperor wanted a new home and ordered the Bahri Nägasi (Governor of the Northern Provinces) to see to the construction of a house. Then he went to war. The Bahri Nägasi passed on the order to the people and accompanied the emperor on his venture: the inhabitants of the area who were ordered to build the house held a consultation and after agreeing, they built a house without windows and doors. When the emperor returned and saw the house, he became very angry and asked the Bahri Nägasi why he had ordered the house to be built without windows and doors. He replied, "O Majesty – you ordered me to have a house built. I gave the necessary orders to the people of this area and went with you into the field. I was not here when the people built the house, nor did I tell them to build it in this way. "Then the emperor asked the builders why they had built the house in this way. Then all the people gathered before him and said, "O ruler, the builders are not alone to be held accountable for this – we all agreed to build you a house without entrances. We did it because we waited in your capital for three years for justice and righteousness without obtaining it. So we had to assume that you, Your Majesty, knew neither the entrance nor the exit of justice. But now, if you wish, you can have a gate broken. " The emperor became very angry and ordered the people to leave the country and go into exile. To confirm that he would never pardon them, he said, "Walamo", meaning "never!". This is how this people got its name Wolaita.

Aroge, Wolaitamala and Gran

From the dark centuries after the work of Tekle Haymanot (around 1250) and before the coming of the Tigre (1600), only these three names linked to events are familiar to the Wolaita. Who the legendary Aroge, the original inhabitants of Wolaita, actually were cannot be determined with any clarity. On the one hand, the "autochthonous" clans are referred to as the seven "houses" of the Aroge; they are said to have been Christians. On the other hand, it is said of them that they disappeared, namely that they gathered in a square, clapped their hands there like a man and moved away or disappeared into the earth. Others again reported that they had been completely decimated by the large moves of the "Borana" (i.e. Oromo). The Oromo would have come to Wolaita via Dawuro and Tambaro and left only a few people alive there. As the Hadiya offered them stubborn resistance at Shone, they moved on to the east, via the Bilate. The few surviving Wolaita (i.e. Aroge) would have built stone houses half sunk into the ground or moved

into caves to have a little more protection. This is why they are also called Aroge-Gongolo (cave Aroge). Such stone houses are said to be frequently found even now in Koysha and Kindo by farmers while ploughing, and shepherd boys, while herding in lonely areas, sometimes stumble into the caves, where fire sites and large piles of dung indicate that they were once inhabited. Incidentally, the clan name Woge is widely used in Ethiopia, but especially among the Oromo. Mostly, these are clans that stand out from the rest because of their peculiarities. Among the Harar Oromo (Ala) it is said that the Aroge wanted to build a tower to kill God, but he destroyed the structure and killed most of them (Azais and Chambard 1931:52).

Thus the Aroge gradually perished until the Wolaitamala came, eradicated the remnants of Christianity and established a new "pagan" empire, which even then encompassed the borders only regained much later by the Tigre: to the west the Omo, to the southwest the Daue, to the south Lake Abaya, to the east the Bilate River and to the north before Kambata. According to the traditions I have collected, the Wolaitamala came from Konta or Gofa; a third tradition gives them, like so many ancient dynasties in the Ethiopian southwest, an Athonian origin (cf. Jensen 1959) and lets them emerge from the Bosase crevice in Offa, where all the cattle also came up. Gavrilov (1930:1072) also knows the legend that seventeen horsemen, led by Wolaitamala, emerged from a crevice in Mount Damota (presumably this is a connection with the horsemen of the Tigre). Both the traditions recorded by Gavrilov and myself agree that with the Wolaitamala, who gave the name Wolaita to the land they occupied, came a number of other clans who moved into the neighbouring lands, gave them their names and became rulers. These were the Zirgo-Mala, Zontomala, Mishi-Mala, Lonto-Mala, Golomala, Gamo-Mala, Kogomala, Hilimala, Boroda-Mala. Some of them are still the royal clans in the countries named after them; some of the clans still exist in different areas, but the countries have disappeared or have been given different names. Kogo is mentioned in a document on the Birbir Maryam church (Caquot 1955:113) as an independent land in Gamo; Zirgo or Yirgo appears frequently in d'Abbadie (1890) and must thereafter have been either in the territory of present-day Wolaita, if not a synonym for Wolaita itself. Sazo or Soze or Wolaita was the first king of the new dynasty who built his palace in Woysa and on Mount Damota and exterminated the Christians.

The Wolaita place the invasion of their land by Mohammed Gran in the reign of his brave son Motolomi (also Botolomi Mosollo or Tulami). After a terrible battle at Woro in the Hobicha district, in which the Wolaita were defeated, Gran went all over the country and completed the work of the destruction of the Wolaitamala by burning the remaining churches. In truth, however, assuming that the source is correct, in 1532 a detachment of Muslim troops under the command of the Mu-

gahid passed through "a muddy land called the Wolaita" on their way back from Suf Gamo and Bahir Gamo. "The inhabitants first pretended to pay tribute, then attacked the Mohammedans and killed a number of them. After some fighting, the Gran's troops, who had great difficulties in providing food, finally departed" (Basset 1897:396–398). At least this event – always assuming that this Motolomi was a historical figure – gives the possibility of a temporal fixing point for the Wolaitamala. If one also takes into account that four kings – Anse, Bure, Oche and Lache – still reigned after Motolomi and that the Tigre were around 1600, the connection of Motolomi with the Gran Wars does not seem at all improbable. The fact that the Wolaitamala nevertheless only ruled since about 1500, since the reign of Sazo, does not, however, agree with the historical facts, since Wolaita, which undoubtedly received its name from this dynasty, is already mentioned by name before 1500, at the time of Emperor Isaac (1414–1429) (Littmann 1914:14).

According to Wolaita tradition, the power of the empire declined more and more under the later Wolaitamala, despite their bravery. A group of the Hadiya, called by the Wolaita the Badawacho, penetrated deeper and deeper into Wolaita from their dwellings at the foot of the Kambata Mountains and occupied all the land around the Damot, so that already in the latter years of Motolomi's life the Wolaita were only in the highlands of Koysha, Kindo and Offa, from where they were gradually pushed back until, under the last king, Olay Lache (the Brave Lache), they only inhabited the Didaye peninsula between the Omo and Deme rivers, which they surrounded with ramparts and moats. The Hadiya only sat in small groups in the territory they had conquered, planted some ensete and lived mainly from their cattle, which found grazing opportunities in abundance in the depopulated land. The great plain at Bilate, Lake Abaya and Humbo was occupied by wandering Oromo (Guji and Arsi), whose migrations took them as far as Dawuro and Kucha and the islands of Lake Abaya. All these groups lived in a perpetual petty war among themselves.

The foundation of the Tigre empire

During the reign of the last Wolaitamala king, around 1600, a very adventurous Tigray appeared at the gates of Wolaita. The Wolaita report that they came from Dembe (i.e. Temben) or Agame and passed through Gurage and Gomara (Kaffa), where many of them settled, until they reached Dawuro. However, this group must have stayed for a long time in Amhara territory on the way from Tigre to the south or had reinforcements from Amhara, since most of the words they transmitted to the Wolaita language are of Amharic origin.

In Dawuro, the leader of the band, Tankala (the diviner, the sorcerer in Geez) stayed behind with many of his people and died. His son Mikhala (Mikael in Amharic), whose sister had married the king of Wolaita Lache, later went to his brother-in-law's land with 150 horsemen. These followers belonged to five clans, which are still considered the most noble and privileged of Wolaita: the king's family, later called *kawo naa* (king's children) after their country of origin; the Woshesha, also from Dembe, who were the king's body servants; the Qesiya (Amharic: *qes*, priest); the *kalicha*; and the Agauwa, who came from Agau. There is a wide range of versions about this procession to Wolaita, which differ depending on who they come from. When the horsemen set out from Dawuro and came to the highly swollen Omo, the sorcerer (*kalicha*) struck the water with his staff and divided the stream in such a way that they passed through dry-footed.[18] On the other bank, they settled on the slope of Mount Didaye, on the other side of which lay the royal palace of Lache. When Lache died childless after some time, the people decided to let his wife rule, and when she died too, they elected Mikael, who had bribed the great ones with gifts, as king and invested him with all the symbols of the rightful king.

The Tigre report thus: Mikael – of whose affinity with the Wolaita king they want to know nothing – crossed the Omo without declaring war and settled on the banks of Didaye. On the same day, when there were still no hostilities, he invited the Wolaita, who had flocked to see the strange strangers, to a feast, entertained them lavishly and gave them clothes. When it came to battle the next day, the few Wolaita who were ready to fight were soon defeated by the better weapons of Mikael's warriors. The horsemen, unknown to the Wolaita until then, spread great terror before all, so that the bravest warriors fled in confusion and were cut down together with the king. At the start of the battle, most of the people had in any case defected to the Tigre, from whom they expected more than from their previous dynasty, so that Mikael was able to seize power without difficulty.

Not so pleasant for the Tigre was the version reported to me by an old Wolaitamala, which is very similar to the tradition handed down by Gavrilov (1930:1002–1073). Ousted from their former position as a royal clan, the Wolaitamala have to this day retained an enmity towards the Tigre that is often expressed in jest; they occasionally dubb themselves "hereditary enemies" for fun. Mikael's sister was a "whore" who moved from Dawuro to Wolaita and ensnared the king there, so that he elevated her to his rightful wife and allowed her brother Mikael to settle in the country with his entourage. When the king fell ill, she had herself installed as regent and then killed him, either by poisoning him or by making him sit on a chair over a hole hidden by a leather ceiling. Those who fell were scalded to

[18] The division of the river is a common mythical motif throughout Ethiopia.

death in boiling water.[19] Her brother assisted her in the murder and then took the insignia, with the possession of which is also associated rulership. When a kitchen slave who witnessed the crime brought the crime to public attention, the Wolaita rallied to a fight which remained undecided despite their great superiority. Perhaps the Tigre were outnumbered but resorted to trickery and threw pieces of meat and pearl necklaces at the Wolaita instead of chaff, so that the latter, deeply impressed by the cavalry, the beautiful clothes and weapons of the foreigners, said to themselves: since these heroes are so rich and powerful, it is better for us if they rule us and are not our enemies. Thus, the Tigre came to rule through crime and deceit. However pejorative this version is meant to be, it cannot conceal that the Tigre, with their numerical inferiority, came to rule with the consent of the Wolaita people, not through victory at gunpoint but through their cultural superiority. This is not the only example from Ethiopia of a primitive people entrusting rule to a group from a "better" country without a fight because of their lighter skin colour and higher culture. Among the Basketto, it is even said that the dynasty now ruling was specially brought in from Gamo because the people could not govern themselves (Jensen 1959). The Wolaita have remained loyal to the Tigre to this day, and even the reign of terror of the mad Damot, against whom the people rose up, was unable to bring another dynasty to power.

In the chapter on folk culture, it was described in detail what impulses the Wolaita people received from the Tigre, impulses that had such a strong effect that even today the Wolaita stand out from the neighbouring peoples because of their completely different culture, especially their social constitution. It can be assumed that similar developments also took place in the other, larger, Ometo kingdom: Kaffa. In describing Kaffa, one unfortunately still has to rely on the very confused work of Bieber (1920, 1923), from which one also gets the impression that a feudal social order similar to that of the Wolaita developed there under the influence of the highland Ethiopian culture – just as in the Oromo kingdoms, where the populations of the old Enarya and Bosha kingdoms, only superficially assimilated by the Oromo, completely determined the face of these new states. Compare the report by Cerulli (1925, 1929/30) and *Poetry of the Western Oromo* recorded by Cerulli in 1923. There are, as yet, no adequate reports from Dawuro and the other peoples.

What unmistakably set the kingship of the Tigre in Wolaita (like that of the Kaffa) apart from the other kingdoms, including those of the Oromo, was its conception as a power of order. Although still far removed from the idea of the kingdom of God of the highland Ethiopian emperors, this conception of kingship nevertheless clearly shows in its basic features from where it received its fundamental

[19] This is a very popular way of death in Ethiopian legend.

ideas. However, the kingship of the Wolaita not only differs from the older southern Ethiopian kingdoms, where the concept of the state is based less on rational considerations than on mystique, it also stands out from the Christian Amhara empire through its very sober idea of the state and tradition, which until modern times was still strongly attached to a mythical conception that had its source both in African kingship and in biblical legend.

The new Wolaita dynasty came from an area of Ethiopia (Temben and Agame) that by 1600 had already been outside the political centre of gravity of the Christian empire for many hundreds of years and therefore had few ties to kingship and royal symbolism. The centres of the empire were Shoa and Amhara until the reign of Sersa Degel (1563–1597), and later the areas around Lake Tana. Although the immigrants to Wolaita could boast of noble ancestry – either the family of the hereditary chiefs of Agame or Temben (*shum agame* or *shum temben*) – they lacked, similar to the Kaffa kings, connection to the house of the godly Solomonids, the holy rulers of the empire. They [the Kaffa kings] surrounded themselves with the same grandiose and mysterious ceremonial as the Amhara emperors, whereas in the case of the Wolaita, a certain sobriety betrays the fact that the dynasty founders were just noblemen from Tigre who were not familiar with the ritual and mythical concept of holy kingship. Leaving aside Aksum, which had retained some of the character of the legendary capital, the Tigre – as Ethiopian history teaches us – were the most inclined of all the Christian peoples to rise up against emperor and empire. Of course, this is not to be understood to mean that the royal ritual was weakly developed. In the treatment of kingship in the next chapter, one will see what a lot of elements of their predecessors the Tigre adopted, to which they added a number of highland Ethiopian traits. But, for example, a moment common to the other Ethiopian kingdoms is missing: the invisibility of the king as well as the appointment of the successor by a divine judgement or miracle. The later unspoken idea that God alone chose the king and endowed him with special powers prevented the establishment of an order of succession in the highland Ethiopian empire until modern times, and in practice, the eldest son was usually appointed. Among the Wolaita, kingship had already become a hereditary matter and the succession of the eldest a fundamental law of the empire. The election of the new king, as the centre and symbol of a tribal community, which in other peoples depended so much on chance, in Wolaita, through the rational right of primogeniture, gave the structure of the state a stability unheard of by African standards. This principle has been adhered to by the Wolaita people, often against resistance from the kings themselves. This sober, amythic view of kingship and the world is linked to a highly developed historical consciousness that allows the Wolaita to view the course of their history with an objective eye. Although the names of twelve or more kings are often known among other Ometo

peoples, no real historical events are linked to their existence. The line of succession sinks into mythical darkness shortly before the Amhara conquest (between 1830 and 1900), from which only the figure of the hero and founder who was supernaturally created to become the progenitor of the dynasty rises. In addition to the Kaffa, the Wolaita are famous throughout the South for their knowledge of history, which makes it possible to place the beginning of the Tigre reign in 1600 and allows each king to be linked to the stages of political and cultural history. Although the data on the reigns of the individual kings vary somewhat, I was able to draw up an accurate list by consulting a large number of ancients and sages, the accuracy of which I was able to verify through the data of d'Abbadie (1890), Cecchi (1885, 1886, 1887, 1888), Borelli (1890), and Plazikowsky-Brauner and Haberland (1970). Even among the Sidaama – as Ad. E. Jensen informed me – the names of the Wolaita kings were known from 1800. However, relatively few details are known about the reign of the first kings from about 1600–1650, while from Kote (1710–1722) onwards the sources flow more abundantly. The great conquests that followed later are known in full detail, so that I have been able to establish the growth of the Wolaita Empire on the map.

The dates of the reigns of the individual kings are, of course, only approximate values, average values, as I determined them from the information provided by my sources, which, by the way, never varied considerably. Finally, no information could be obtained on the reigns of the first two kings, apart from one old man who gave the figures of 46 and 58 years, which were certainly much too high. I have arbitrarily used 25 years each so that, counting backwards from 1694, we arrive at the year 1600.

Through the Tigre, Christianity and a number of other highland Ethiopian cultural elements were once again brought to Wolaita. But the great migrations that finally broke the link from northern to southern Ethiopia in the second half of the seventeenth century caused isolation here, as in many countries, so that the Christian kingdoms, separated from the roots of their strength, soon fell back into paganism, and many of the elements introduced were forgotten. Thus, the plough brought by a Tigre never caught on, the long northern Ethiopian trousers disappeared, the porcelain and glass brought with them gradually broke down, and mules were no longer bred. Already the seventh king (Adayo, 1679–1710) no longer bore an Amharic-Tigrian name, and by his time, knowledge of the Tigray language was said to have died out. The last Bible was buried on the chest of one of the last Christian priests also during Adayo's time. The churches fell into disrepair and the descendants of the priests became a pagan clan. But the elements that remained prevailed, whether as the prerogatives and special customs of the nobility, who were proud of their special origins, or as the common property of the whole people, under which roots took root and contributed to the special formation

of the Wolaita culture. Linguistically, too, the highland Ethiopian influence was preserved in a large number of words of both material and spiritual culture.

A unique trait of the Wolaita Empire, which in its grandiose execution remained alien even to the Ethiopian empires and which became the decisive driving force for the empire's entire political history, is the deliberate expansion of the empire and the planned settlement and colonisation of the conquered territories. Land grabbing and colonisation are not alien to Ethiopian history; for example, the Sidaama gradually colonised back the vast territory of their original homeland: the Garamba Mountains and the Bilate River. But this is the gradual infiltration of clan groups from an overpopulated periphery into virtually deserted territories, whose beneficiaries (the Guji) could easily move to other deserted areas. The situation is similar with the Gedeo. The other kingdoms – with the exception of Kaffa, which is still very similar to Wolaita in this respect (nothing is known about Dawuro) – exhausted their forces in traditional feuds against traditional enemies whose only purpose was war glory and booty. Apparently, it was only the chivalrous nobility who proved their mettle in the no man's land between the border ramparts of the individual ranks or who dared to raid into the enemy's territory. Occasional conquests of a border district were only ephemeral in character as alliances between previous enemies prevented the victor from gaining the upper hand. Cecchi (1885, 1886, 1887, 1888) gives a vivid picture of these small wars, comparable to medieval European feuds. The war campaigns of peoples whose social order was determined by the *gada* (age grade) system and who retreated home after obtaining the booty had an even more unregulated character. In all these undertakings, the intention to gain more than booty and glory was absent, while the Wolaita kings, from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, not only systematically enlarged their territory from generation to generation, but – in the middle of southern Ethiopia too – also ensured the settlement of the new region through a precisely regulated colonisation, often carried out under duress. In addition, emigrants from all neighbouring countries, including from those of the traditional enemies, flocked to Wolaita in increasing numbers, having heard of the favourable living conditions in the fertile land around Mount Damota and wanting "to live under the Wolaita kings". The Wolaita culture was powerful enough to completely assimilate the immigrants, so that their sons later made no conscience of taking up arms against their former relatives in wars.[20]

[20] The process of such a land search is described in the chapter "Imperial Order".

History of Wolaita (1600–1894)

The territory of the first nine kings of the Tigre dynasty comprised only the Kindo district, on the peninsula formed by the Omo and Deme, and it was not until the reign of Tube (1742–1762) that the empire began to expand. Until then, according to tradition, half of the rulers exhausted themselves in fending off the constant attacks of the Dawuro and Kucha. The relationship with Kaffa remains unclear; it almost seems as if Bieber's (1920, 1923) statement that Kaffa exercised a kind of hegemony over the surrounding lands is correct, for according to one version, the first two kings are said to have died and been buried in Kaffa or in its vassal lands of Konta or Dawuro, where they were summoned by "Miza" or "Tato", the Kaffa kings.[21] It was only under the powerful and warlike Sana (1762–1790) that Wolaita became fully independent and ceased to pay the tribute regularly sent to Kaffa up to that time, as the Kaffa king, a friend of Sana, had told him "to eat his wealth alone". Presumably, the end of Kaffa rule over Wolaita is connected with the separation of Dawuro from Kaffa, also at the beginning of the nineteenth century (cf. Bieber 1920, 1923; Mylius 1906). I will first follow the Wolaita tradition again. Mikhala (Michael), the first king of the Tigre dynasty had great difficulty in consolidating his rule in the conquered territory because the king of Dawuro incited his new subjects against him, and there was a lack of firm order in his kingdom. So, he went to learn the "law" (*serata* – an Amharic word!) from the king of Kaffa, who was superior to all others in wisdom and power, and asked him what he should do to strengthen his rule. He gave him the following instruction, unparalleled in magical fertility and hard political thinking:

Create for yourself the king's gold and the king's silver [the two most sacred insignia of kingship: a gold and a silver finger ring], furthermore ostrich feather, kalachu of gold [the phallic forehead jewellery, see figure 47] as well as pitya and amba besa of silver [the form of these ornaments, which no longer exist today, was unknown to the reporters]. Clothed with this insignia, assemble all the people in the square before your palace. Slaughter a bull, cut off its forelegs and lay the fat of its stomach beside it. Then have everyone present circle around it four times from right to left and then step over it from top to bottom [the place was on a mountain slope]. Then let all the people swear by these offerings to obey you in all things and to always appoint only the eldest son of each king as successor. Slaughter another bull and let the people again walk four times around the sacrificial blood and step with their right foot into the blood: "Our blood shall be shed like the bull's if we do not keep our oath!" You say to them: "The oath shall strike you like the blood." Then dip the sacred finger rings into the blood, put them on, dab your forehead and that of all the swearers with the blood and say together with them: "This oath (caquwa) shall rest on all the coming generations of the Wolaita people!" If any of

[21] According to other reporters, however, the first kings were buried at the palace of Didaye in Kinda.

your brothers quarrel with you or even seek to rule, let him be bound and thrown into the Omo. (The blood of the royal family must not be forgotten.) Whoever of your people disobeys you, lock him up in the block, whoever is not converted by this or whoever rebels against you, have his neck cut off by the potters or banish him from the land!

Mikhala followed this advice and became great and powerful. He is said to have died in Kaffa. Mikhala was succeeded by his son Shuba or Shubaguma (1600–1620). His name is a mutilation of the Tigray title *shum agame*, as the governors of the Temben neighbouring province of Agame are called. The title belonged to those ancient ranks of northern Ethiopia, which were usually hereditary within the same family for a long time and were conferred on the various members of the family at the discretion of the Ethiopian emperor at certain intervals. The last literary reference to a *shum agame* I know of is by Cerulli (1916:605), writing of Tasfay, who lived until 1910. The title, which is no longer linked to any sovereign rights, is said to still exist today. Presumably, not the son of Mikhala is said to have come from Temben, but another noble member of the Fortune Knight clan. He is said to have surrounded the then kingdom (i.e. Kindo) with walls and repelled heavy attacks by the Dawuro. He took the first census of the clans and established that everyone, including immigrants and slaves, had a certain place in the tribal order and had to belong to a Wolaita clan. Like his predecessor, he died in Kaffa.

Shubaguma's son Chifra (Amharic: *cifra*, the army) died just one year after he began his reign. As he was childless, he was succeeded by his next eldest brother Azena (probably derived from Amharic: *azene*, the compassionate, sad) who ruled from 1620 to 1629 and also died in Kaffa. Azena's son Girma (Amharic: *germa*, majesty, greatness) died after a 21-year reign in Konta, where he was summoned by the governor of the Kaffa king.

His son Katama (Amharic: *katama*, the army camp) fought against the Dawuro and Marako (Hadiya). He ruled from 1650 to 1679 and also died in Kaffa.

Adayo or Aday (Amharic: *aday*, the distributor) (1679–1710) was the first to assert himself with great success against external enemies. In a war fought jointly by Dawuro and Kucha against his small country, he was able to hold his own through the support of the Kaffa king, who sent him good weapons after Adayo had given him many slaves (reportedly over 1,000). He is also said to have died in Konta or Gomara.

Kote (1710 – 1722), the son of Adayo, is remembered by the people above all for his prophecy, which earned him the nickname of the sage or seer (*kagu*, *kayuwa*). This gift, unusual for a king, is also matched by the fact that he was not a warrior and is said never to have touched a woman. As is often the case, the various traditions seem to contradict each other, as it is said that he had a son. This son was born after his death under such strange circumstances that it seems

obvious to think it a virgin birth, which is common in southern Ethiopian myth. Kote was the first king to bear a Wolaita name. Before he died, Kote uttered a great prophecy about the future of his country and people:

My son [Tube] will no longer rule such a small country as I do; he will drive other peoples before him and conquer many territories. His son [Sana] will add to the empire, but the third after me [Ogato] will conquer the most of all my descendants, and his son [Anado] will also add to it. His son [Damot] will add little to the empire and his reign will not last long. The one who follows him [Gobe] will reign in peace for a long time and "knowledge" will come into the country [an allusion to the cultural influences from Jimma]. His son [Gaga] will die before he reigns and his grandson [Tona] will snatch the rule from a foreign people with a foreign language [Amhara].

I give you one piece of advice for all the future: when you conquer a territory and establish a new border, make a desolation in front of it, do not build a house and do not graze your cattle there. For just as your bulls go over the border and mix with your neighbours' cows and throw them from them, so you too will go to and fro – the foreign influence will come and other peoples will rule here. Therefore, remember my word: if you drive the foreign peoples before you, you will one day come to a solitary very large palm tree, called Ladusa Zumba, which stands northwest of Boditi. Then move no further, but make a perpetual border there, if evil is not to come upon you.

Whatever one may think of this prophecy, it illustrates quite revealingly the historical knowledge among the Wolaita, where even the simple peasants have a quite clear idea of the course of their history and the expansion of their empire. What the reasons might have been that commanded a cessation of conquest at the palm tree remains unclear. One ancient thought that the righteous Kote had ordered this because that was where the original border of the Wolaita Empire lay, before the Hadiya were pushed back under the weak rule of the Wolaitamala. Only up to there, and not beyond, could one have spoken of a just land seizure during the reconquest.

All informants, however, agreed on the legal nature of this second prophecy: it was only because King Gobe had violated it that his son Gaga had died before his eyes and the Amhara had come into the country.

Kote is also said to have prophesied the coming of Europeans, "Their skin is white, but their flesh is like ours", as well as that of aeroplanes and cars. Prophets of later times, who flourished especially during the volatile Damot government, also proclaimed similar things. Two of them were particularly troublesome, Alito and Hanako, who was a son of King Ogato. Both are noteworthy because they belong to the Tigre clan, whose members otherwise have a proverbial loathing of all prophets and shamans.

Kote left no inheritance at his death and so, according to imperial law, his brother Libana (or Liban, 1722–1742) succeeded. He married his brother's wife

in levirate without knowing at the beginning that she was pregnant by Kote. When she gave birth to a boy, she feared that the king would kill him, since the birth of this child would render his claims to rule invalid. At the same time, the wife of a potter named Tullu living near the palace gave birth to a girl, whom the queen quickly had the midwife exchange for her son. The next day the king asked the midwife what kind of child the queen had given birth to and was initially satisfied with her information that it was a girl. Tube, as the boy was called by his natural mother, who was often with him in secret, grew up and became taller and stronger than all his peers. Once, when the king went for a walk near the palace, he watched the children playing ball. Tube immediately caught his eye among the others, for he was the strongest and most beautiful and always won. He was 12 years old at the time. "Whose son is this?" asked the king. "The son of Tullu." "And his name?" "Tube." The king said to himself, "This can never be true that this beautiful child should be the son of a potter?" He went home, gathered all the house slaves and midwives in a house in the palatinate and questioned them embarrassingly (*oteta*) for a week as to who the mother of this boy was and whether his wife had really given birth to a daughter 12 years ago. But the women all swore up and down that they knew nothing else than that the queen had given birth to a daughter. The queen herself refused to answer and only showed him her supposed daughter. The king then invited the seven boys who had played ball to the palace. The wise queen had the midwives arrested and took the seven boys who had played ball into another room, under the pretext of entertaining them, and had thick porridge served to them. Before serving them the dish, the king pulled his golden ring (the highest symbol of royalty) from his right ring finger and dropped it into the porridge. If he [Tube] is a king's son, he will find the ring, the king thought, since he must have the charisma (*ayana*) of the king. Then he had the porridge put before the children and said, "Eat!" Tube got the ring in his mouth with the first handful of porridge, and as the king was talking to other people, he secretly ran to his mother in a neighbouring house, gave her the ring and returned unnoticed. Soon the children had finished the pot, and the king asked them, "Who has found anything in the food?" "We have seen nothing", they replied. The king became anxious and examined their clothes and hair; nothing was there. In his fear, he ordered a laxative to be given to them. Just as the children were about to drink, the queen came and said, "Don't give the boys any medicine. Here is the ring, your brother's son gave it to me, and if you must kill him, kill him at last!" The king was very happy because he had no sons. He had the great drum (*nagarita*) beaten, gathered the whole country and solemnly installed Tube as crown prince (*wombeto*) and heir (*latiaya*). Yes, he even symbolically slipped the golden ring over him for a moment.

Tube grew up and became a strong and clever young man who soon gathered a band of followers around him and began to quarrel with his uncle because, as the king's son, he had always been entitled to rule. After much toing and froing, Tube fled with many good warriors and a large number of people to Kucha and settled there in the Wosa district. He continuously received influxes of other outstanding Wolaita, who said to themselves that he was the true king. At last, Libana got scared and sent old people as negotiators to Tube to make peace and abdicated in his favour. He handed over rule and all the insignia to him and then moved to Kucha himself, where he lived in voluntary exile until his death.

Tube (1742–1762) was the first king to enlarge the perimeter of Wolaita. He sent his warriors up from Hindo to the high mountains in the east and, after fierce battles, seized from the Hadiya the western part of what later became Koysha County, i.e. Wamura County, as far as the source of the Shoshora stream, the "penis" Shoshora, where the warriors henceforth threw their enemies' cut genitals into the swamp.[22] Despite many attempts to regain their land, the Hadiya failed against Tube's vigilance. He also repelled the Dawuro, who attacked Wolaita several times. His hundred sons were proverbial; he married one beautiful maiden after another and married her off to another man after she bore him a child. Under him, the peculiar relationship of house and love, of enemy and friend, was formed between the Wolaita and Hadiya, who have remained traditional enemies ever since and – this is typical of Ethiopian views – prefer to marry each other. From Tube onwards, whose first wife and mother of the future King Sana was a Hadiya from the Gaga clan (from Tambaro), it became the custom to always take a Hadiya as the first wife and mother of the crown prince. Only the main wife of Tona and mother of Orobu as an Arsi. As Tube grew older, there were again disagreements between him and his successor Sana, who wanted to take over ruling during his father's lifetime. As a powerful warrior like his father, he gathered the most capable warriors against the old king. Against him stood his "99" brothers, who stuck together and gathered their own followers: "We are 99 and strong. Why should one rule us?" So, there was much grumbling (*palama*) in the land and a lot of common people joined them until tempers got so heated that it came to a fight and Sana was driven out. He fled with his followers to Hadiya, his mother's home, and waited there for things to develop. In the meantime, the people repented his actions, for everything was going haywire in the country and neither the old king nor the 99 sons had power in their hands. Every day, good people from Wolaita went to Sana, and many brave Hadiya also placed themselves under his command. The elders and wise men of Wolaita, knowing that he alone could become king ac-

[22] Another Shoshora stream, further west, formed the old border between Wolaita-Kindo and Koysha.

cording to the imperial law, assembled in consultation (*yaa*) throughout the land and at last sent messengers to him to come back and seize the reins. When he arrived with his army, most of the people immediately ran to him and shouted "*Woze Sana!*" ("Rule Sana!"). The followers of his brothers did not submit, so they had to be overcome in bloody battle. The brothers were captured and spared as Tigre, whose sacred blood was not to be spilled. Sana chased them naked and bare across the borders to all neighbouring countries. There, as sons of kings, they were gladly accepted and included as satellites in the retinue of the neighbouring kings. According to a whitewashed tradition that does not want to acknowledge these turmoils in his own country, Sana sent his brothers to their home countries so that they would become kings there and strengthen the empire. In Sidaama – unfortunately, I do not know which region – the Tigre are also said to have become chief. During this turmoil, the "old" king fled to Boroda with his insignia and royal slaves and lived there at the king's court. So, Sana had to rule without the gold and silver finger rings (the symbols of royal power). When Tube came to die, the thoughts and aspirations of his faithful steward (*dencha*) Wonago Gosaro were directed towards bringing the two sacred rings to Wolaita for rightful inheritance, for the Boroda king was only waiting to take the insignia, since a claim to rule was attached to them.[23] The father of Wonago, Gasare, came from the clan of the kings of Dawuro, Kauka, and according to legend had voluntarily surrendered to the Wolaita king as a body slave (*godobusho*, master's child) in order to gain honour and dignity. His descendants were later in hereditary possession of the highest caretaker office and thus had great influence.

When Tube died, Wonago took the rings from him and swallowed them. The Boroda king had all the servants of the deceased king arrested and searched thoroughly, but as he learned nothing about the whereabouts of the insignia despite all the questioning, he dismissed them disappointedly to Wolaita. Wonago reported everything to Sana there and since nothing came to light despite strong doses of the ordinary laxative (*kosso*), he drank a strong dose of *kure* and *onkoko* (especially strong laxatives) and thus brought out the rings; even the flesh of his stomach came along. He remained alive, however, and was highly honoured. Sana now

[23] This policy was systematically pursued by all Wolaita kings with the exception of the mad king, Damote: without declaring war, the unsuspecting Hadiya, whose democratic tribal constitution (*gada*-sytem) was inferior to the Wolaita in terms of clout, were invaded; everything that did not flee or was captured was slaughtered, and the newly won region was immediately surrounded by a border wall. Peace was then solemnly concluded with the Hadiya on the other side of the border, and during the short period of peace, the new land was systematically settled, sometimes by force. The countless pieces of ramparts that are still visible everywhere in Wolaita show how Wolaita gradually expanded at the expense of its neighbours and how the people avoided annexing larger areas to the empire than they could settle.

finally performed the solemn ceremony of enthronement, in which he had the two designated clans put the rings on his right and left ring fingers.

Although Sana did not make the largest spatial conquest, he lives on in the memory of his people as the bravest and fiercest king, one who spent his entire life in successful battle. Under him (according to others, under Tube), Wolaita was already so powerful that it stopped paying tribute to Kaffa; supposedly the king of Kaffa himself had it said that "the Wolaita king should eat his own stones". Sana first made solemn peace with the Marako (Hadiya) in Koysha and married two Hadiya girls named Guramo and Hembebe, who came from two opposing major clans. Then he began to sow discord between his kinsmen and incited them against each other by slander. He gave one clan beautiful spears and the other jagged harpoon spears. When they finally fought each other, he sent out his warriors and had them completely destroyed. Thereafter, there was a long and bloody war between the Marako and the king (*adila*) of the Kambata, Wako Dagoye, but despite all resistance, they were gradually pushed out of the highlands of Koysha. Sana, his brave crown prince (*bushasha*) Ogato and ten other princes (*wombeto*) were the first to fight. If the king did not fight, he had his bed placed on a high cedar tree from whence he could overlook everything. Thus, the Hadiya gradually disappeared from High Koysha and High Kaffa, from the districts of Laso Garumo, Folaya and Yakima to the Zega River in the lowlands. The Arsi, who sat in the foothills of Offa, were also defeated. In between the wars, Sana again made peace with the Hadiya and Arsi and used the time to settle and surround the conquered areas with fortifications. Sana built his new palace directly on the border on the steep, impregnable Bolola Mountain in Laso. He was the first to leave the old royal court in Didaye.

One day the people gathered and presented themselves to him: "Just like your fathers, you marry off your daughters with rich dowries, cattle, horses and slaves only abroad (Boroda, Hadiya, Kucha). But we are your warriors, through us you beat back the enemies and conquer new lands. Shall we go away empty-handed?" Sana then passed a new law that the king's daughters could now also marry Wolaita from good clans and gave his last unmarried daughter to the famous warrior Gana Malko from the Hizia clan. Such people are called *kawo bolota* (king's relatives) and enjoy special privileges. This custom was maintained under the following kings, but it happened rarely enough, so that even now the names of the princesses and their husbands are known. King Ogato gave his daughter to Ufo Adole (Masire). King Amado gave Milko to Maleko Macho (Bubula) and Sade to Dechasa Sakalo (Zirgomala).

Christianity disappeared completely under the reign of Sana, having already all but died out due to the long closure of highland Ethiopia and the impossibility of ordaining new priests. Although the priests (i.e. the members of the Qesiya

clan, who had emerged from the Ethiopian priests, *qes*) still had books, no one could read them any more. The only thing they would have known was *basma'a* ("In the Name of the Father"). However, the priests constantly reproached Sana for his eternal wars, saying he should not do this and that, because God did not love this, until he became angry and destroyed all the books he could get hold of; then Christianity ceased to exist externally.[24] The Tigre language and Tigre names also disappeared completely in Sana's time. Others say that some Christian remains such as books and church utensils could have survived longer and were only destroyed during the Amhara conquest.

When Sana died, he said: "My sons will make the kingdom wide. That I may always be with them, put in my hand a spear with eight prongs on each side; my hand shall not be at my side, but over my head with the spear sticking out of the grave. My face shall be against the Makako and Arsi.[25] All my successors shall begin war in my name as that of the holy ancestor, then they shall conquer all lands." His grave in the great public square (*gutura*) below the palace of Bolola in Laso was guarded until recently by horsemen of the king's guard (*woyse*). If a wanderer passed by, he would dismount from his mount and bow with reverence: "This is the king who made the land wide! Such a warrior as he has never been seen again!"

Ogato (1790–1822), the eldest son of Sana, took over the government without resistance. Next to his son Amado, he enlarged Wolaita the most through conquests. Although, like all kings before and after him, he was only concerned with war and the expansion of his kingdom, he kept peace with all his neighbours, even the main enemies, the Marako (Hadiya), out of prudence in the beginning. He had as his main wife a Marako woman (from Laroso clan) and after his accession to the throne he attracted foreign immigrants into the country in large numbers. This practice was increasingly practised under his successors, so that today the majority of all clans residing in Wolaita are foreign. Ogato attracted many members of the important Hadiya clans of Larosa, Wageso, Habaloso, Ansome, Dodicho, Bohale, especially his brothers-in-law, to Wolaita through the granting of large landholdings and rich gifts of cattle and slaves. They soon merged into the Wolaita people and turned out to be fighters for their own people.

At that time, according to the Wolaita, the Hadiya were still on a very low cultural level: the men went as good as naked, the women in leather. Weaving was almost unknown. After a few years, Ogato invited all the important people from the neighbouring Hadiya to a great feast, which he held in his new palace, Wose,

[24] The last "great" book owned by a priest that had survived the book storm was buried on his chest after his death, according to priestly custom (cf. Conti Rossini 1940:46).

[25] Similar types of burial are also reported by the Amhara and Yem (Harris 1944 II: 232; Straube 1963).

right on the edge of the Koysha mountains. He sent his heralds around the Hadiya country and left none of the big families uninvited. Splendid food (the Hadiya live very simply on ensete and milk) and rich gifts of clothing were promised them. But only a few came, as most were afraid. So those who did come were treated to a variety of dishes, beer and honey wine, and received a pair of colourful trousers (*hade*) and a beautiful cloak (*buluko*) from the king's hand as a parting gift. Ogato told them to bring their relatives and friends with them to the next festival in a year's time. At home, they were marvelled at with their treasures, and those who stayed at home were sad that they had not gone along. They counted the months and thought only of the invitation. Ogato had his spies at the border and among the Hadiya who informed him about everything. When he heard of the friendly mood among the Hadiya, he began to equip his warriors with good spears and shields and to provide them with horses. The last months before the feast, he had a lot of barley, even malt, distributed to the horses to make them strong. When there were only two weeks left before the festival, he again sent messengers to the Hadiya: "Don't be like the last time, but this time come all of you!

While the guests arrived in the afternoon of the festival in a joyful mood, he gave orders to all Wolaita capable of bearing arms to get ready for battle and to present themselves at the border at dawn. He had some of them secretly surround the royal palace. Then the guests were led into the largest house, and the king called on them to come to his private chamber to receive the gifts. As they groped one by one into the dark courtyard, they were seized by the waiting potters and dragged to the Holoze execution rock not far away. There they had their necks cut, and their bodies plunged over the cliff into the abyss.[26]

When all were killed, the king mounted his horse and rode to the nearby border. Before the sun rose, he beat the king's drum and blew the trumpets and fell upon the unsuspecting Hadiya with his army. Beforehand, he had given strict orders to his warriors not to spare any male sprouting pubic hair. Since almost all the Hadiya leaders had perished in the night's carnage, no one was able to organize a proper resistance. A large section of the Hadiya threw away their weapons and shouted, "*Wore, wore* Ogato!" "Ogato be king!" Thus, without much difficulty, he conquered in one day the vast land between his palace and the slope of Damota Mountain near present-day Soddo and the Sorfella plain. All the Wolaita had to build the new border fortifications in great haste. He then issued the following call (*azuzua*): "Every Wolaita father must give his eldest son so that I may settle him in conquered territories; he shall be given much land and I will help him with cattle

[26] This deed must have left an indelible impression on the peoples involved (Plazikowsky1952:23 f). The same event, but attributed to Ogato's successor, Aredo, was reported by the Hadiya. Amado is called king of Koysha; the Dodeshmanna appear as the main clan of the Hadiya. The slaughter of invited guests seems to have been a popular pastime in Ethiopia.

and grain. Whoever does not send his son will be put to death." In order to also help the people with their settlement and their war burdens, he never collected the *mala* tax during his entire reign and often waived all taxes for a year after wars. From the surrounding countries of Kucha, Dawuro Gamo and Boroda, he sent for important warriors, whom he richly endowed with land and slaves, so that the new land was soon divided up and settled.

In this way he ruled: started war, conquered, settled, made peace and started again after some time. He kept some of the heroes who had come from neighbouring countries under constant guard. His eight sons also stood with warriors on the border as guards, and his crown prince Amado was always with him. Before each war, the people were assembled on the meadow in front of the palace and the herald announced the king's special proclamations:

The brave warrior (toranca) who kills the enemies and drives them before him so that they take flight and who saves the country, he shall receive 100 slaves and 100 oxen. I will give him the phallic forehead ornament (kalachu) of silver and he may drink honey wine before my face. This only applies to the real leaders; the others who were also able to kill thanks to the bravery of these heroes may drink wine in the palace. The warrior whose horse is killed in battle shall be given a new one, and whoever has no food or no money, I will help him. But whoever stays at home, the potters will cut off his neck.

He then fell upon the Hadiya again; before that he had assured the other peoples on the borders – the Arsi, Tambaro or Kambata – of his peaceful intentions towards them, so that they would not interfere in the fight and he would have to face a superior force. In the second great raid on the Hadiya, preceded by this proclamation, the enemies were ruthlessly exterminated. Each of his nine sons killed four Marako. A band of Wolaita horsemen climbed the Damota Mountain at night and overlooked the whole wide Wolaita the next morning. Ogato followed them and built a palace (*atwero*) up there. Later he also laid out a royal court at the eastern foot of the mountain, the famous Dalbo, which was to remain the ruling centre of Wolaita until the end of the empire. Parts of Sore and Bosa were also conquered at that time.

The Arsi, who sat south of the Hadiya in the great plains before Humbo, were not attacked by the Wolaita at first. Later, when they had the newly conquered area around Mount Damota firmly in their hands, they also fell upon the Arsi and took from them one after the other the great plains before Humbo, the lowlands at Gogara and Deme on the border to Kucha and then also the Humbo hills up to the lake. Ogato also wanted to attack the northern neighbours, Tambaro, Donga and Kambata, but there was not enough time in his government.

Probably to avoid eternal strife, Ogato was persuaded to abdicate and give the reins to his son Amado (1822–1848). After a year, Amado killed or banished

all the great warriors and friends of his father: "I want to make new friends; my father's are of no use to me. When the old king heard this, he asked his advisors, "What do you think about this? Is it right?" They replied, "This is your fault, for it was your idea to give your son the reins!" Then he became sad and grieved and soon died.

This story alone sufficiently shows Amado's ruthless and harsh character. More than that of any other king before or after him, Amado's life was one of continuous warfare. It is therefore strange that the Wolaita tradition places Sana, not him, as the greatest hero, for his conquests surpassed everything else known about the history of these lands. A certain trait of despotism was already evident in him. His son Damot was to outshine all the kings of southern Ethiopia in terms of despotism. Besides planned conquests and settlements, Amado undertook nonsensical wars against Boroda and Kucha, which were doomed from the start by the natural boundaries of these lands. To illustrate his harsh hand towards his subjects, he is put forward by the Wolaita as the originator of this fable (Budge 1933:223):

Once there was peace, King Posha of Kucha sent a message to Amado: "How is it that you are so powerful? No one obeys me, I do not know how to rule and enforce my will!" Amado had the messengers sumptuously entertained for two days and led them to his garden on the third day. There he had the slaves cut down the large ensete shrubs, but hoe and fertilise and water the small ones. "Now go!" "But what shall we say to the king?" "Go on!" Despondent, they went to Kucha and reported to the king: "We were given good food and drink, but the king said nothing to us, he only let us work in the garden."

Posha was smarter than his messengers and understood the parable. Soon he killed or deprived of power all the great men of his country and took on brave people of lower rank, gave them horses and weapons and created a house power for himself. Thus, he became powerful and famous, and his name was respected like that of no other Kucha king when they swore by him "Posha *itagida*" or "Posha *aicha*", i.e. "that it will go bad for Posha" (if I swear wrongly) according to the oath "at the death of Menelik" of the Amhara.

Ogato thought of his grandfather Sana's words before he began his reign and often said that his father had only imperfectly followed the order to expand the empire. To spur on his warriors, he was willing to use any means. Before every war, he gathered the heroes on the meadow in front of his palace, had the potters pour mead into upturned shields and had the bearers drink the wine in fours "like lions" in front of his face. This was the highest honour. Afterwards they were allowed to come forward and boast about their heroic deeds. In war he was extraordinarily tough and demanded almost impossible self-control and discipline from his warriors. In order not to warn the enemy as they approached, no one was allowed to tie a bell to the bridle, nor was anyone allowed to speak or raise the

battle cry without an extraordinary order, everyone had to fight in silence. No one was allowed to retreat, and wounds received on the back were considered more shameful than the wounds of a woman; only those on the chest counted. "Win or die". Also, mounted potters were posted behind the army to cut off the heads of those fleeing with their large knives. After supplying his army with weapons and horses, with a mounted group on the wings, he divided the warriors into three sections: an attack group, a reserve hidden behind, and finally his own band. Then he set out without declaring war and invaded the Arsi country, the lowlands east of Humbo on the lake, and the hills of Wanche and Hobicha.

The first attacking group was soon pushed back by the brave Arsi; many fell, and the retinue asked the king if they should not come to their aid. He ordered them to be silent: "If you are afraid, cover your eyes with your shields and wait." Hidden in a ravine, the reserve lurked under the leadership of Mara Gareno (from Zamine clan), one of the most famous warriors of his time. He had orders to first come to the aid of the others, and only when he himself needed help to raise the battle cry, "for he was not one of those who boasted and roared easily". Soon he too was engaged in battle with the Arsi, and when the battle raged most fiercely, he raised his mighty voice and shouted "Sere [his country of origin in Ofo], Gareno [his father's name], Kawo Amado [King Amado], Dayu, Wagitu, Badi [the three most famous Arsi clans] – *hachi nawa beekita* [today none of you will be left]!"

Then the king stormed in with his bodyguard and struck at the Arsi. On the western edge of Wanche Mountain near Kabala, a great sycamore still stands today. There the battle raged for three days until the Arsi were completely overcome. Each of the king's five sons killed five Arsi, his brother Boricha Ogato killed four, and the famous Mara Gareno destroyed so many that they could not be counted. Three days after the battle, the Wolaita rode in and killed all the scattered or wounded Arsi, anyone whose pubic hair had sprouted. The surviving Arsi fled to Duguna and across the Bilate. Thus, the Wolaita conquered Wanche and Hobicha and the landscapes around these mountains, namely Buke, Abbala Oloba and Motala. The Arsi in Buge and Oloba further north were also destroyed.

After a few days, Amado gathered his army, pushed north and attacked the unsuspecting Hadiya in Woliso, Dawe, Mayo, Koiyo, Sake and Doke. Everywhere, his warriors were victorious, and the terror that went before them paralysed all resistance. In a great move, around the northern edge of Mount Damot via Boditi, Sibae (where the famous palm of Kote stands), Gage, Fulte, South Shore, Mashido and Sorfella, he returned to the south of the mountain. Immediately after this move, he surrounded the conquered land with ramparts and made peace for three years. The remaining Arsi and Hadiya were made slaves. When the land was distributed and the Wolaita had built houses and established plantations, he moved north and took North Shore and parts of Boloso (Tigo and Hadaro) from

the Kambata in one day. The Tambaro and Donga living on the mountains were also deprived of part of their lowlands. In another move against the Hadiya, he seized the lands north and northeast of Boditi: Shanto, Sesa, Ade Cherake and Cheraka-Gale. Thus, the empire had regained its old extent under the Wolaita-mala, and according to the prophecy of Kote, Amado had stopped at the palm tree Adusa Zamba. Stories of Amado's wars still circulate among the people.

At the end of his reign, Amado made ill-considered moves against his southern neighbours, the Kucha, and against the Boroda, who had always been on friendly terms with the Wolaita and were considered peaceful. However, if they were attacked in their homeland, they fought back fiercely and were brave and fierce warriors. Their cavalry was particularly feared. Their small, nimble horses leapt like dogs over the cliffs of their mountains. Once the Wolaita fought with them and were overcome, so that they fled from the plain, where the battle took place, to the Humbo mountain. Then the younger brother of King Akako fell from his horse, which bolted and ran away. A brave and clever warrior Morka Bacha (from Indigena clan) jumped off his horse and gave it to the prince: "You are the king's brother; I will sacrifice my life for you. Take my horse and save yourself! I will not be able to escape but tell your brother the king to take care of my children!" The king's brother rode off. Morka dropped into a dry grass-covered ditch and escaped the Boroda. When they moved home in the evening, he crept back to Humbo and moaned at the door of a far-off poor house: "I am an astonished one, ask me not!" So, he stayed there unrecognised for three days, because he wanted the rumour of his heroism and sacrificial death to spread everywhere.

Meanwhile, the prince returned and told his brother everything. When Morka did not come back after three days, his family declared him dead and began to lament his death. The king ordered that the family be generously helped and sent them 200 heifers as a gift, as well as twelve oxen for slaughter and six loads each of ensete and grain for the guests at the funeral. In front of the house of mourning the king had twelve large cotton blankets stretched out, gave two richly decorated horses and two mules, with four slaves to lead them up and down in front of the house and two coloured trousers so that the women could lament and dance with them.

The feast was in full swing when Morka came crawling home on all fours like a dying man. They marvelled at him like a miracle and took him to the king. There he entered the great hall, groaning and leaning on two friends. "How did you escape?" cried the king. "I fell down into a ravine and lay there unconscious for three days until I felt much better and came here." "What can I do for you?" "Hitherto I have been a peasant and used my hands, but now I can attack nothing. I am all broken and must die of hunger if no one helps me." The king was grieved at the misfortune of this excellent man. He gave him a large estate and 100 slaves

as labourers. Only many years later, shortly before his death, did Morka reveal his deceit.

In one of the skirmishes with the Kucha, the Wolaita were hunted from morning until evening. The battle was poorly prepared and the great warriors began to retreat: "It is not the right day to fight!" It was feared that in the retreat, the foot soldiers would be cut down by the Kucha. Gega was a clever man and not a great hero. He called out to the people in a loud voice to dismount and stand behind the trees. It was already dark and so the Kucha would no longer be able to see them properly and could easily be beaten down. When the Kucha heard this, they got scared and turned back.

Amado's reign came to an end in this useless skirmish against his southern neighbours. Finally, he made a mighty move against the Boroda and conquered the south of their country, where he built a palace in the Dengel countryside and levied tribute from them for three years. In the fourth year he returned to Wolaita and died there in his palace Atwaro. His tomb, not far from the Dalbo to Boditi road, is still preserved today. Amado is said to have entertained many grandiose ideas, such as the diversion of the River Zumano or the conquest of Kaffa, both of which were later taken up again by his son. He therefore had himself called *tosa kawo* (God-King) and Damot *miza kawo* (Kaffa-King). Elements from Tigre are said to have broken into Bosha (Bero) during his reign and founded a new dynasty there.

Amado's beautiful and brave, but megalomaniac and cruel son Damote (1848–1853) is terribly remembered by the Wolaita. All the unbridled qualities of his father came out in him in a distorted form. He is also said to have been the only king possessed by a spirit. In the five years of his reign, the empire was almost destroyed by insane wars and projects, by general legal uncertainty and the dissolution of the traditional order. Even today, all Wolaita, even the members of the royal clan, compete in telling unbelievable stories about his cruelty and madness, pointedly remarking that he ruled at the same time as the cruel Theodore of Ethiopia. Even at his birth, blood played a sinister role. His father built his palace (*taza gasua*) on the western summit of Damota Mountain, and at the hour that he slaughtered the sacrificial bull and smeared the central pole of the new royal hall with its blood, his eldest son Damot was born close by, and named after the mountain.

Even more terrible than Damot's morbid cruelty, the horrific atmosphere of general insecurity and fear of those five years has remained in the memory of the Wolaita –all the more so because it was not caused by external enemies or the weakness of the people but by the very one who was supposed to be the embodiment of justice and protection. They were good days for the executioners, and the rock slab at Kuile, on the southeastern slope of Damota Mountain, saw the blood

of many victims. To test the mood of his subjects, the king would sneak through the countryside at night with a soot-blackened face, greasy smock and a fur cap, disguised like a potter, asking for night quarters and guilefully questioning the small peasants or large landowners about their king. Depending on their answers, he would send the potters (executioners) or the chamberlains with gifts the next morning. He is even said to have sounded out small children about their parents. He chased away the families of the executed and seized their belongings to give to his favourites, who provided him with informer services, or to the horsemen of his bodyguard, who consisted of immigrant Kucha nobility and were his mainstay along with the potters and royal slaves. Not far from the sacred spring on the southeastern slope of Mount Damota rises a dome-shaped hill on which a special friend of the king, who had delivered most of his neighbours to the knife and seized their land by his pointeering, had his court. After the deposition of Damot, this man fell into general contempt; the ill-gotten estate was taken from him, and he died lonely and ignored up there.

Later, without pretext, respected Wolaita – especially from rich families who resisted him the most – were stripped of their property and robbed of their wives. Damot's rage did not stop at his own family either. Two brothers, Albazo and Mando were tied up and thrown into the Omo for allegedly seeking dominion. Another brother mysteriously disappeared because the king lusted after his wife.

The fables about the king's morbid sensuality and debauchery are hard to reproduce. He changed his wives constantly and sent messengers around the country to look for beautiful women or girls. Whoever they found, he had them brought to him by force. Often, he kept them for only one night and chased them home again. If the husbands resisted, they were executed or beaten. Once he is said to have jumped thirty women in turn like a bull on the lawn of his palace. Finally, to make the monstrosity unsurpassable, the legend accuses him of incest. In order to maintain the appearance of justice, he asked his advisors whether a king could marry his daughter. Fearing for their lives, they kissed the ground in the affirmative and let him carry out the sacrilege that shook heaven and earth. But God's punishment was not lacking: a dreadful disease attacked him, worms consumed his penis, so that he perished in torment. So much for the fable.

Regardless of all his deeds, the Wolaita endured this tyrant for five years. When asking why they did not shake off the unbearable yoke sooner, one is always reminded of the sacredness of the oath by which the people pledged to remain loyal to every ruler for eternity when they were enthroned. The people were never denied the right to resist, but open rebellion was unheard of, and it took the reign of terror of Damot to destroy the unbreakable nature of the oath. Also, the revolution was spontaneous and not the result of a conspiracy. It was different with the secessions of the people under Gobe and Tona, when there was no thought of

deposing the kings, but only a compulsion to obey the sacred laws of the imperial order.

But now a historical account of Damot's reign.[27] Like all Ethiopian kings, Damot began his reign with a war that was to have no end until his death. Whereas otherwise in the history of Wolaita, the kings, in their moves, in wise restraint, never underestimated their actual power and endeavoured to settle the conquered territories and surround them with ramparts in order to annex them to the empire, this possessed one plunged from one adventure into another, overran the neighbouring countries without ever being able to seriously think of occupying them, and wasted the strength of the country in useless battles on steppes and mountains. Despite all his moves, only a few narrow border strips remained as accidental gains for the empire after his death: the Tiya and Hadaro districts in Boloso, which were taken from the Kambata and Donga, and Mokonisa and Gache in Damota, which had previously belonged to the Badawacho. Tribute from the subjugated neighbouring peoples was also received only very hesitantly and ceased immediately after his death.

Often Damote would jump up at dinner, blow the trumpet and beat the drum and announce that he was now going to war. "Whoever stays behind will have his neck eaten by the vultures." Then he jumped on his horse and with his bodyguard chased towards the border. All the people rode and ran as fast as they could along the great roads after him, for already the potters were sent out with orders to cut the throats of every defaulter with their long knives. The king cared little how many people followed him but invaded the enemy's country at the head of his mounted bodyguard. No one is said to have equalled him in bravery.

When the news of his father's death became known, the Boroda became indignant and attacked the Wolaita living in their country. At the same time they sent envoys to their "Gamo" neighbours (Ezo, Chencha, Shochora, etc.) saying, "Until now only we are slaves of the Wolaita; the new king will come and subjugate you." Then the Gamo came to the aid of the Boroda from all sides, so that the Wolaita garrison retreated to the fortified palace of Dengel and were locked up there. At the same time, the Badawacho and Kambata declared war, so Damot had to fight on all sides. Replacements for the trapped Wolaita did not arrive in time; they were cut down by the Boroda and Gamo. Damot first defeated the Badawacho in a short but fierce battle, in which he excelled, and then marched against the Boroda with seven armies, at the head of which he placed seven tried and tested heroes. Everywhere he appeared the people submitted, shouting, "*Woze* Damot!" (Damote

[27] Haberland had published an article, in which he describes the three last Wolaita kings in detail (1983).

be ruler!). Thus, he occupied seven districts in the lowlands.[28] When Damot also turned against the Boroda, they sent envoys asking for peace and asking that their land not be taken away (apparently Amado had settled there). They undertook to pay tribute. Later, Damote is said to have invaded Gamo once more. Another move was against Kucha, whose unsuspecting king, Gobana, had to flee to save his life. His palace with its women and treasures fell into the hands of Damote. Damote took the very chief's beautiful wife to Wolaita, won her dear and let her live with him for a year like his lawful wife. One day he asked her, "Who do you love more, your former husband or me?" She replied, "You both have no heart; he because he fled without fighting and you because you fight like a senseless one." Then Damot was sad and let her go back to Kucha.[29]

Not content with subjugating his neighbours, Damot, like his father, entertained the idea of attacking Dawuro and Kaffa and already had his courtiers call him "the husband of Wolaita and the lover of Kaffa". In the third year of his reign, he embarked on a project that had allegedly been prepared before his father: the diversion of the Zumano River. I have not been able to ascertain what the real reasons were for this utopian plan. The Zumano is a small river that flows north of Damota Mountain parallel to the Badawacho border and flows into the Bilate. It is difficult to decide whether Damot's words, "I will use it to let the cattle of the Marako (Badawacho) die of thirst", are true; it seems ill-founded in view of the many streams flowing down from the Kambata mountains. Or is it perhaps an entirely different drudgery that the mad king imposed on his people and which later fostered the legend of the derivation of the Blue Nile – a myth known in Ethiopia since ancient times. This is a theme that appears countless times in history and legends and which, regardless of the real circumstances, has given Ethiopia a powerful position as "Lord of the Nile Springs" to this day, leaving it to its discretion to let Egyptians die of thirst (cf. e.g. Bruce 1790:574). Damot built himself a large palace there and settled his bodyguard, potters and slaves there in allegedly 3,000 houses. The former owners were expropriated without further ado – a breach of law often practised by Damot. In the breaks between the wars, the free Wolaita and their slaves had to create the enormous dams that are said to still be visible today.

In the third year, a man from Gamo (the Gamo are considered clever and smart) passed by there and watched the working and groaning people. "For whom are you doing this work?" he asked. "For our king!" "All of you for just one king?" he asked, holding up a finger, "How can one finger wash the whole body?" He is also said to have asked, "Can't I take one man and throw him into the water?"

[28] Three of their names –Tela, Sozua, Gelya – were known to my informants. Apparently, these are lowland districts of the land of Shochora.

[29] It is also said of Kucha that it paid tribute to Damot until the end.

The Wolaita left their work and clapped their hands. This one sentence brought out the anger that had been pent up for years. Soon people demanded an end to the torment. The members of the prestigious clan Hizia, who were particularly affected by dispossession, were said to be the first to preach open revolt, and after a few hours (or days), the people stormed and set fire to Damot's palace. The king killed five rebels with his own hands, but then had to flee from the overwhelming force of the attackers, who slaughtered everything that belonged to the tyrant's party. Damot escaped from Kucha on horseback with a few mercenaries from his bodyguard. But wherever he went, everyone rose-up against him. Finally, he arrived at his main palace, Choramo, on the eastern slope of Damota Mountain, where the people had already begun looting. He burst into the palace, killed and drove out the rebels and had the great royal drum beaten "to proclaim the law" that the people should rally around him to help him. People also came to the palace, but when they saw that the king was almost alone, surrounded only by a few bodyguards and potters, they broke in and overpowered and bound him.

In the weeks that followed, the fate of the kingship and the Tigre hung by a thread. The spokesmen of several large clans, especially the Wolaitamala and the Hizia, who had fomented the rebellion, demanded that the king and with him all the Tigre be killed. But this proposal was rejected by the majority of the ancients and sages, mainly because no one could imagine who would then rule: "The Tigre are the king's race." Since then, there has been a traditional enmity between Hizia and Tigre, which is no longer taken seriously by the enlightened.

Damot promised everything if only he were released: he wanted to rule justly, waive taxes, no longer command corvée labour, etc. But the hatred against him was so great that it was finally decided to keep him in prison for life as no one wanted to stain their hands with the holy blood of the king and to appoint his eldest son, Gobe, as king. Gobe had to affirm with the most terrible oaths to always keep to the laws, to judge impartially, "not to take away anyone's wife or property without cause" and above all not to avenge his father. Damot died a year later, having completely collapsed. It is said that he repented of his misdeeds, blessed his son and wished him a long and happy reign before his death. He was buried far away from the palatinate, on the border of the then Wolaita, before Duguna, so that he would be as far away as possible from all good people even after his death.

Gobe (1853–1889) lives on in the memory of his people as "the good one", and his long peaceful reign is considered the golden age, during which – if popular legend is to be believed – every peasant had two or three large kraals full of cattle and even the slaves were rich.

When he came to power, as was to be expected, the Badawacho and Arsi rose up. He defeated both peoples in skilfully planned, short campaigns. With the exception of a small strip of land, which later fell to him as the "dowry" of a

noble Arsi girl, Gobe conquered all the land up to the Bilate, today's districts of Duguna and Fango. In the north, he extended his territory beyond the famous palm Adusa Zamba (from the prophecy of Kote) and annexed the districts of Buge, Kontola and other landscapes of western Badawacho to the empire. From then on, peace prevailed with the Hadiya and Arsi, the previous hereditary enemies. With the kingdoms in the south and west –Boroda, Gamo, Kucha, Dawuro – the best relations existed from the beginning of Gobe's reign. The alliance between Kambata and Wolaita against the Badawacho, as reported by Plazikowksy (1961), the defeat of the Wolaita and the destruction of the Gamo warriors fighting in their service were not known to my sources. Gobe settled the conquered areas and established palaces there.

Then Gobe issued "the new law": the imperial order, which had become unstable under Damot, was renewed and a final division of the court and imperial offices was made. The empire was divided into eight districts (*shucha*), and the number of districts and municipalities was fixed. The term of office of the heads of these administrative units, who often remained in office for two or three years if they were persistent or very popular, was limited to one year. At New Year (*maskal*) all offices had to be changed (presumably this had originally been the case). The twelve imperial councils (*balamuala*), which had lost their importance under Damot, were reconfirmed as the supreme court of the kingdom. By a special decree, Gobe prohibited encroachments by the king's sons and Tigre, who had taken some liberties under Damot. The expropriated lands were restituted as far as possible, and tax was only collected at long intervals, often waived altogether.

During Gobe's reign, Wolaita experienced its greatest economic and cultural flourishing. Despite the rapidly growing population, the land was still sufficient to bring everyone abundant food. Also noteworthy is the introduction of new cultural goods that came into the country from Dawuro, Kaffa or Jimma through trade favoured by Gobe. Until then, with few exceptions, the borders were hermetically sealed, and contacts with neighbouring peoples were limited to warlike confrontations. Relations between Jimma and Wolaita became particularly close when Gobe married Digito, the clever sister of Abbu Gifar of Jimma.[30] She is still well remembered by the Wolaita, especially because she planted the first spice garden and planted coriander, fennel and azmut there. Jimma also produced the potato *(galla domua*, the galla tuber), the "new" maize and oil fruits (linvu, guizotin and safflower; sesame only arrived with the Amhara). The mule, which had almost fallen into oblivion with the first Tigre kings, became popular again. Crafts received a strong impetus through contact with Jimma; silversmithing became more refined, glass beads and Maria Theresa thalers became more common,

[30] Abbu Gifar married a daughter of Gobe.

painted cowhides, leather beds, colourful woven straw tables and vessels and horn cups found their way into the homes of the rich.

When the power of the Amhara in Shoa increased steadily from 1880 onwards and Menelik annexed one country of the southwest after the other to his empire, the clever Abbu Gifar voluntarily submitted to the king of Shoa and retained his independence in return for the promise of tribute and military service. Jimma thus remained an autonomous territory within the Ethiopian state until his death in 1933. The Wolaita tradition reports that Abbu Gifar also advised his brother-in-law Gobe to contact Menelik and pay him tribute. Gobe is said to have done so, but no source exists about this. Later, with the beginning of Tona's reign, the tribute was stopped again.

Gobe ended his initially happy reign in sadness and bitterness. His beloved eldest son, Gaga, died while still a young warrior; although he did not rule, he was counted in the official king's list. Since his [Gaga's] son Tona was still a young boy, the old king preferred to appoint his own next eldest son, Hadaro, as his official successor (*bushasha*), although this measure constituted a transgression of the imperial law of primogeniture. A great grumbling arose in the country about this. When the king continued to insist on his plan despite the reproaches of his advisors, the people refused to obey him. Led by the great ones, everyone gathered in the public places and swore to each other that they would only recognise Tona. The agitation grew from day to day and one morning "the whole country" went armed and on horseback as if for war to the king's meadow (*zaba*) in front of the palace in Dalbo. The horsemen brandished spears, blasted around and chanted, "*nu kawo Gobe, nu bushasha Tona*!" ("Our king is Gobe, (but) our crown prince is Tona!"). The king sat alone in the palace all day, but no one would take up his cause. When the sun set, he angrily stood before the whole gate and cursed the people: "You let my grandson put earth on my grave, therefore let your grandchildren do the same to you!"[31]

Hadaro, however, continued to retain his father's love and approval and tried to gather a following around him with his secret support. The adolescent Tona did the same. When Gobe died, the most influential great ones seized the sacred rings (the king's insignia) and placed then on Tona, who was thus the rightful king. Hadaro still did not give up. At Gobe's open grave both parties met, spears in hand. Hadero was the first to step up to the grave, but as he was about to take the earth in his hands, Tona's partisans drew their spears to push him down. Then his

[31] At the funeral, the eldest son, or the official heir and successor, is the first to throw earth on the grave. The king wanted to express with his curse that the sons of his adversaries should also die and their grandsons should perform this service. The curse came true. Many young warriors soon fell during the Amhara invasion.

people, who were not as numerous as Tona's followers, became frightened; they talked him down and finally he left, leaving all rights to Tona.

Tona ruled for only five more years before the Amhara invasion. He was young, haughty and not very popular. Instead of winning over the "nobility" and the freemen of the land through gifts and kindness, which they insisted was their right, he favoured the potters and royal slaves and apparently tried to create his own force in order to be independent of the people. He even gave them the guest meals due to the great ones, so that once again much "grumbling" arose. The people seceded to the Tome plain in eastern Koysha, and threatened to refuse him use of the army against the Amhara, whose first armies were just touching the borders, if he denied the free heroes their due rights. The elders and the wise men took up cudgels and persuaded them to postpone the conflict for the time being, as first they would all have to stand together in battle. The battles with the Amhara up to the final catastrophe so absorbed all forces that peace prevailed and taxes were no longer collected during those five years.

Even more than the Amhara danger, which was not taken seriously until the last moment, Tona was tormented by a prophecy that a king would settle in Soddo and rule the country from there. To forestall this, he moved to the area of the present city and built a palace. After a year, he moved back to Dalbo because it was too windy for him there.

Amhara conquest and recent times

The history of the conquest has been so vividly described by Vanderheym (1896) and Guebre Sellassie (1930/32:360), who both took part in the campaign, that I will only very briefly let the Wolaita tradition speak. Several times between 1890 and 1894 Amhara armies had unsuccessfully attempted the conquest of the country from Gurage and Kambata, such as – according to the Wolaita – with the *dajjach* Wadage and the *dajjach* Saule, both of which were repulsed with heavy losses, under *ras lul* Sagad and *ras* Mangasha, who even made a tearful move. The strike corps did not succeed in overcoming the Wolaita contingent assembled outside the imperial walls, and the border fortifications posed a morally difficult obstacle to overcome. Already Dawuro and Konta had been subdued, Gamo and Gofa had been passed through several times by Amhara troops (cf. Vanutelli and Citerni 1899) – only Wolaita had not yet set foot on an enemy foot. Their bravery is still not forgotten in southern Ethiopia: "only Emperor Menelik with 12 *dajjach* was able to break their resistance" say the Basketto (Haberland 1959). According to Simon (1885:360), the immediate cause of the last Amhara move was an attack by the Wolaita against the Dawuro and Konta, because the latter had sub-

mitted to *ras* Walde Gyorgis and had become Christians. Menelik himself then marched against Wolaita at the head of a large army. He owed the rapid conquest of the country to tactical methods not emphasised, or not emphasised enough, by Vanderheym (1896) and Simon (1885): he did not stop at the border fortifications, but had his troops fill in the ramparts and tear down the entrenchments and then had not only his army advancing from Badawacho but also the troops of his commanders posted in Dawuro, Kucha and Gamo break into Wolaita at the same time. Smaller groups had orders to invade the country behind the backs of the Wolaita warriors and set fire to the houses. When, before the eyes of the horrified Wolaita, the fortifications, which were considered insurmountable, were surprisingly brought down at dawn,[32] behind their backs their dwellings went up in flames, and messengers came from all sides reporting the invasion of the Amhara also from the west and south, all organised resistance collapsed and everything fell apart in wild flight. After a few days of terrible slaughter, calm returned. The terrible incidents during this conquest can be read in Vanderheym (1896). The Wolaita said that more than half of their houses were set on fire by the Amhara soldiers for their amusement. Tona had fled after a brave fight and was shot in the neck by an Amhara soldier south of Humbo. Wounded, he was brought before Menelik who, in his diplomatic way, received him into grace and reinstated him as sub-king over Wolaita as an imperial fief.

However, it took a long time before real peace returned. The Amhara occupiers continued to behave as if they were in enemy territory, abducting members of rich families for no reason, threatening to sell them as slaves to extort ransom. Even after a few years, Bottego, crossing Lake Abaya, witnessed the Amhara driving away the Wolaita cattle on the Bilate and the natives complaining bitterly about the oppression they had to endure.

However, the country survived the removal of part of its population into slavery, the destruction of its livestock and the pressure of an Amhara garrison better than the larger Dawuro or even Kaffa, which has not yet recovered from the consequences of the war. Already Stigand (1910) and Wellby (1901), who passed through the country a few years later, described it as prosperous and populous, densely populated and intensively cultivated. The Wolaita were not spared the pressure of the *gabar* system, which prevailed throughout southern Ethiopia until 1936, and many an old man knew of the exaggerated demands of the Amhara and of chain and block. But at the same time, the lot of the Wolaita has been better than that of other peoples. For one thing, the Amhara occupation was only small in relation to the large number of people. Above all, it played a role that Wolaita

[32] Cf. Cerulli (1916: 585/586), where a victory song over the Wolaita states that they had walked along the border at night in no man's land (*noggu*) and surprised the enemy in the morning.

was not, like other provinces, under frequently changing governors, who tried to squeeze out as much as possible since their sinecure could be taken away by imperial whim, and who, when they were transferred, let part of the population go with them against the explicit imperial laws. Since the country had been conquered by the emperor himself, it was considered an imperial domain and thus belonged to the category of provinces called *mad bet* (kitchen), which were under an imperial representative and, apart from the tributes to the troops stationed in the country, had to send money intended for the maintenance of the imperial household to Addis Ababa. Because of the great distance and the transport costs, almost exclusively only cotton fabrics, butter, honey and slaughter cattle were sent to the capital.

Unlike in other areas, the indigenous peasants were not assigned individually to the Amhara soldiers, but were grouped together in tax units, which were called *shama* (cotton cloak) here. The term is taken from highland Ethiopia, where tribute used to be paid primarily in cotton cloth. These tax units were compiled by Amhara officials by eye and were supposed to be equal to each other in size and yield, as they were burdened with the same levies. For example, a rich landowner with a lot of land and labour had to pay the same levies as ten, fifteen or more poor farmers with little land. The Amhara administration seems to have gone especially by the size of the landholding, so that a man with a lot of poor land and little labour was put to the begging stick. The Wolaita felt that the *gabar* system had been more favourable in other areas, such as Sidaama, where the individual farmer was taxed individually according to his wealth. I am of the view that the levy, though palpable, was not beneficial. The system had above all the advantage of sparing the Wolaita from the daily drudgery resulting from the direct relationship between farmer and soldier.

A *shama* group, which included an average of three to four medium farmers, had to perform in a year:

36 *kunna*[33] grain (maize, millet or barley –it depended on the soil and climate of the district)

12 *kunna* teff

12 *kunna* peas

12 very large bundles of wood

3 large lumps of butter

hay or grass worth 4 Maria Theresia Thaler or 4 Maria Theresia Thaler in cash

[33] Opinions differed as to how many litres a *kunna* could hold; today this is no longer counted in Wolaita. The most common measure of a *kunna* was about ten litres. In central Ethiopia, on the other hand, a *kunna* measures four to five litres. Either the measurements differed from province to province or there were, literally, two measures.

"salary" (*damoz*) for the Amhara: 4 Maria Theresia Thaler

1 Maria Theresia Thaler per child per year

In addition, there were, of course, special benefits, gifts to governors and soldiers, hospitality for travellers, etc. But with the large population, all this did not weigh as heavily on the individual as it did on smaller groups. Also, among the Wolaita themselves, only a few Amhara settled in the larger towns, while the cultural life and property relations of the Wolaita remained untouched. [This was] in contrast to the strong Amhara peasant colonies in some areas or the practice in Baddawacho, where the first governor, *ras* Getachu, managed to have land transferred to his private ownership, so that today the whole group cultivates its land as tenants.

After his capture and subjugation, Tona was first taken to Addis Ababa, where his wounds were treated. There, he converted to the Christian faith and was given the name Tekle Haymanot in memory of the great apostle of the Ethiopian south, who, according to the Amhara, also Christianised Wolaita. A little later, he was found together with Abbu Gifar of Jimma in the retinue of Menelik when the latter marched against the Italians, but both were sent back to the south with other greats halfway to Tigre to "guard" their provinces (Guebre Sellassie 1930/32:396).

In the first years after the conquest, however, Wolaita was not yet considered an imperial domain (*mad bet*), but a fief of Tona. Apparently, it was to be given a similar status to Jimma. The fact that the land was treated so preferentially may have been partly due to the fact that the royal house, which originated from Tigre, was regarded by the Amhara as almost equal and the formerly Christian population as not as "barbaric" as other southern Ethiopians. However, friction soon arose between the officers of the Amhara occupation and Tona, who resisted the oppression of his subjects. The situation came to such a head that he fell from grace and spent the rest of his life in exile in Addis Ababa. This must have happened around 1900, since in 1898 he was still king in Wolaita (Darragon 1898:139), whereas in 1903 he had already been deposed (Colli di Fellizzano 1905:116). Since then, an imperial official ruled the country. In 1914 his residence was still on the site of the former royal palace of Dalbo, which was razed to the ground by the Amhara during the conquest; later the seats of government changed (Hodson 1927:26). Soddo was only established in 1908. The photograph reproduced by Lincoln de Castro (1915 I:92, fig. 56), which shows a bearded face framed by a strange crown, dates from the exile period of Tona, who died around 1900 in Addis Ababa.

The son of Tona, Orobe (his Christian baptismal name is Fesseha), was still a boy when his father died, so he was not even nominally appointed as *balabat*, i.e. native chief, by the Amhara administration. Shortly after his only son Desta was born to him by a Badawacho girl, Orobe died. From then until the invasion

of the Italians, there was no native chief of the whole of Wolaita; the affairs of the people were represented collegially by the most eminent members of the Tigre clan, who administered the individual districts and in this capacity held the title of *abigaz.* For a time, the *fitawrari* Dogiso, a descendant of King Ogato, played a decisive role, while the gradually growing son of Orobe, the rightful heir in office as people's leader, remained entirely in the background. Shortly before the invasion of the Italians under the governorship of *dajjach* Makonnen, the *fitawrari* Bakalo played a very prominent role and maintained himself as a loyal follower of the Amhara for a long time even after the end of the Italian rule. Bakalo was the son of the last great housemaster of King Tona, who came from the lineage of the kings of Dawuro. Much to the annoyance of the Tigre, who now saw a slave descendant set over them, he was appointed head of the native administration of the whole of Wolaita by the Amhara, who appreciated his loyalty and wisdom, before the outbreak of the Italian war. He was held in high esteem by the common people because he was lenient and just in his judgments and not so concerned with his material advantage as the often very domineering Tigre.

When the Italians crossed the Ethiopian border, the subjugated groups everywhere rose up against the Amhara. In Wolaita, where there were relatively few Amhara and where the Christianised nobility had entered into marriages with the Amhara, things remained quiet. The chief of Kambata tried to persuade the *fitawrari* Bakalo to join him in destroying the Amhara. The latter went along with it in pretence, and even swore to an alliance with the Kambata with the most fearful oaths, killing a black dog. Bakalo then revealed the rebellion of the Kambata to *dajjach* Makonnen, who invaded Kambata with the Amhara soldiers still remaining in the country and a Wolaita posse, killing many men and dragging women and children as slaves to Wolaita, where they were only freed a year later by invasion of the Italians. The most significant event for Wolaita under Italian rule was the abolition of slavery. The [former] slaves, who now lived as free labourers in much worse economic conditions than before, emigrated in large droves to Addis Ababa, and a large number were settled by the Italians in the former no man's land between Wolaita and Kambata in Achura in the "slave village" (Vittorio Bottego). For the nobility and the larger peasants, the loss of their cheap labour was a hard blow, yet the upper class of Wolaita was very attached to the Italians. Soon after the conquest, the Italians had installed Desta as king of Wolaita, giving him the title of *dajjach.* The Wolaita nobility, who occupied positions in the subordinate administration or among the irregular troops (*banda*), also benefited from numerous ranger elevations, which were, however, later not recognised by the Amhara. Wolaita was assigned to the Sidaama governorate, Soddo was the capital of a commissariat that included parts of Hadiya in addition to Wolaita. While the Wolaita remained fairly quiet, the country was troubled by frequent raids by Amhara resis-

tance fighters from Dawuro during Italian rule, which is why fortifications were built on the mountains of Koysha above the Omo, but with little success. The occupation of Wolaita also proceeded from Dawuro when Italian rule collapsed. Dawuro itself is said to have been pretty much destroyed by the fierce battles between Italians and resistance fighters.

When Amhara rule was re-established in 1941, Desta was first appointed to Addis Ababa and the loyal Bakalo was reinstated as *balabat* despite opposition from the Tigre. Due to a special service Desta rendered to the Ethiopian emperor, he was given the rank of *fitawari in* 1953 and appointed governor and native chief of Wolaita – a dual position reserved for only a few, such as the Sultan of Jimma.

Preliminary king list of the Wolaita, Tigre dynasty

Mikhala (Mikael) 1580-1600 (uncertain)
Shubaguma (*shum agame*) 1600-1620 (uncertain)
Chifra 1620
Azena 1620-1629
Girma 1629-1650
Katama 1650–1679
Aday 1679–1710
Kote 1710–1722
Libana 1722–1742
Tube 1742–1762 (beginning of the conquest against the Hadiya)
Sana 1762–1790
Ogato 1790–1822 (period of greatest land grabbing by Hadiya and Arsi)
Amado 1822–1848
Damote 1848–1853
Gobe 1853–1889 (final border demarcation of the empire)
Gaga dies before taking office
Tona 1889–1894 (Wolaita is conquered by the Amhara)

The material culture

by Elisabeth Pauli

It is natural that the impulses emanating from highland Ethiopia have not only affected the spiritual world of the Wolaita, but also their material culture. This is why the material inventory of the Wolaita – although they adopted relatively few objects from the northern Ethiopians – is much more sophisticated, differentiated and beautifully executed than that of the other Ometo, with whom they share the basic elements. What the highland Ethiopians brought with them either fell into oblivion after a short time, just like the script, or was remodelled according to existing patterns. According to tradition, for example, the Tigre brought ploughs and sickles with them, but the Wolaita did not adopt them. The long highland Ethiopian trousers also had to give way to the short ones. Many items long common in the other southern Ethiopian kingdoms did not reach Wolaita until after 1850 or until after the Amhara conquest of 1894. Despite the amazing richness of Wolaita's material culture, it must be said that it never reached such heights as in Jimma or Kaffa. These countries always maintained much closer trade contact with highland Ethiopia. Islamic traders imparted many cultural goods to them, which only gradually seeped into Wolaita.

Even, if the absolute cultural level of the Amhara is higher than that of the Wolaita, a fortunate historical development that which produced neither a feudal nor a tenancy system but a free peasantry, the very fertile soil and a mild climate have caused the Wolaita to generally live in better conditions and to call incomparably more beautiful houses and better inventory their own than the peasant in Samen or Gojjam, who until recently lived in wretched huts overburdened with taxes. Even in comparison to the highland Ethiopian areas, where the people live in more favourable conditions and where impressive stone houses are built, as in Tigre or Lasta, the material culture of the Wolaita is clearly distinguished by the care of the workmanship and the conscious emphasis on the aesthetic and harmonious aspects.

Homestead, house and furniture

The section on material culture should begin with the house as an important centre of family life and the setting for many religious ceremonies. The latter aspect in particular is more pronounced among the Wolaita than among other peoples. But the house as a protective and sheltering place, as a home, also plays an important role in the Wolaita's perception. The mighty dome, whose carefully built framework lasts for decades, denotes this function much more than the often very carelessly and not very durably built houses of other groups, which even fulfil their purpose as rain and shade protection only imperfectly. The interior decoration, too, with its thick blank walls, the decorative weave of the roof, the heavy central pole, the various rooms for people and animals and the many pieces of furniture, shows a conscious striving for a beautiful dwelling.

At first glance, the domed house of the Wolaita could be mistaken for that of the Sidaama, but a closer look reveals that the Sidaama house is much flatter and tapers off into a peak. Inside, the difference is particularly obvious, for in Sidaama (as in Guji) a tangle of support poles carrying the roof framework fills the space, whereas in Wolaita a single thick central pole bears the weight of the roof. Similar houses to those of the Wolaita can be found among the Boroda, the Gamo peoples and the Amarro, but all have their own particularities. For example, among the Amarro, the roof does not rest on the end of the central pole but runs out into a series of struts that absorb the pressure. Among the Dorze and other Gamo groups, the dome shape is more pointed and higher. The "nose" above the door, which is so characteristic of the houses of most Ometo, does not start immediately above the lintel, as it does with the Wolaita, but already begins at the roof peak. Also, many of the bamboo-woven houses of the Dorze do not have a central pole, as the construction is self-supporting, etc. In Kucha and Zala, this type of house is still common, while further west, among the Uba, Gofa, Malo and the ancient peoples, the common Ethiopian conical-roofed house is found again.

In the whole of Wolaita, there was only this one form of house; other houses, such as the long or half house of the Kaffa (also common among the Ari), did not occur. The king's reception hall was only one large house. The so-called "festival houses" (*zamfa*, Amharic *das*) are open arbours designed to provide shade for visitors. Today, in the few market towns, one finds the conical-roofed house and the Amhara square house covered with corrugated iron.

The Wolaita, like all Ethiopians who do not have a distinct megalithic culture and live in villages, settle together in individual homesteads family by family. In the homestead of a man who has several married sons who are still under his *potestas* and have to build their dwellings near him, with whom furthermore the former slaves remain as manual labourers, a dozen or more houses cluster together

in an open hamlet. But the single house is the rule, since the number of houses a married man owns is determined by the number of his wives and most people live in monogamy. The desire to live in the centre of one's own plot, if possible, contributes to the fact that brothers who lived closely together until the death of their father, later move apart. But with the extremely dense settlement, the next house is rarely more than 100 metres away.

The Wolaita only build actual storage buildings in the highlands; instead, nests of about one and a half metres in diameter woven from canes, which are completely covered with grass and placed on tree trunks in front of the house doors. The trunks are surrounded at the bottom by a funnel made of wooden sticks to prevent mice from climbing up (see figure below). In the Damot district, the grain is usually stored in large wickerwork urns in the house. Before threshing, millet and maize cobs are provisionally stored in large bundles on low table-like platforms (*kaya*) or in the branches of small trees and covered with straw.



Fig. 11: Pile storage built on tree stumps or trees

Similar to the Sidaama, the house is framed by the ensete grove, while in front of the door first a threshing floor of rammed clay (*bäso*) and then the evergreen lawn (*guchalya*) spreads out, which is never missing even among small homesteaders who have to be sparing with their scarce land. The strip of lawn almost always abuts a public path (*ogya*) or at least a neighbourhood path (*loso*) at the end opposite the door. The land to the right and left of the lawn is often used as a home garden and cultivated with vegetables (red peppers, beans), more rarely with millet and maize. According to the indigenous people, the homestead and also the gardens and fields did not know any fences in former times, as most of the cattle were in the lowlands or on the large pastures and only a few dairy cows were kept indoors. Today it is different, as the country is much more populated and almost all cattle are grazed close to the homestead, where they have to look for their

meagre fodder on the grassy area in front of the door or on the fallow land or the few uncultivated places, for example, along riverbanks. The endangered areas of the plantations are now protected by hedges of euphorbia, erythrina or vernonia, by rows of eucalypthus or fences of cleverly interwoven millet stems. Laburnum is also being planted again, not only in hedges, but as an ornamental tree at the entrance and on the lawn. In the past, the most favoured ornamental tree was the wild olive, while acacias or the few larger deciduous trees spared by the axe form the shade trees of the communal meadows, under which the wise and the old meet (see figure below). The rich Wolaita are now beginning to surround their homesteads with fences or hedges, following the Amhara model, and to erect gates at the entrance in front of the lawn.



Fig. 12: Public place, east of Soddo near our camp

The house is separated from the ensete grove by a metre-wide strip (*shafincha*), today also by narrow stone patches. When the house is built, care is taken to ensure that it is a little higher than the ensete grove, if possible, so that the slurry from the cattle shed can flow through a ditch (*woro*) into the ensete. The privy – usually a hole in the ground, hidden from view by leaves in the case of the finer people – is also located in the ensete grove. Behind the grove and to the sides are the fields with the other crops.

The significance of the house as a sacred space that protects humans and animals and whose vaulted roof arches over the microcosm of the family like the sky over the whole world is not only evident in the countless ceremonies that apply to the centre pole, as the most sacred part, the doorposts, the hearth fire and the roof attachment, but is also already emphasised during the extremely ceremonial construction, during the course of which a total of five celebrations take place.

The construction is preceded by a *yarso* sacrifice. The builder goes to the designated place with an overflowing beer calabash (*kumeta*) and roasted barley (*banga shasha*), drips and scatters the offerings there and prays to the spirit of the earth: "*Bita talahio,*[34] *haga ma, tana moka, tana madda*!" ("Spirit of the earth, eat this, receive [i.e. hear] me, help me!"). Then the ground is levelled.

After asking a wise man or a magician for advice, construction begins. To do this, it is above all necessary for the builder to obtain the wood needed for the walls and the central pile beforehand, which often takes months given Wolaita's lack of trees. The walls, i.e. the planks up to 3 metres long that are rammed into the sides of the house, should if possible be made of juniper (*tida*), which is the best wood and is not attacked by termites. There are houses whose thatch and wickerwork have been renewed many times, but whose walls are said to date back to the time before the Amhara conquest. Today, eucalyptus wood is often used, which is not nearly as durable. But even such walls last thirty to forty years. For the central pole (a trunk up to 9 metres long), cordia (*mokota*) or podocarpus (*ziga)* are considered the best types of wood. The grass needed to cover the house, the lianas or ensete cords and the rods and battens for the rafters of the roof are mostly brought by the neighbours, who also do all the building work (see the section on neighbourly help). Only one man experienced in house construction, usually an *ogesa*, is hired to supervise the construction and receives special pay after the work is completed. Although the neighbours only receive lunch and are later treated to a festive meal, the construction of a house costs enormous sums of money. The owner of a particularly large and beautiful house, however, told me that he had

[34] Presumably, *talahe* – as is evident from this passage in particular – means the mother deity, earth.

spent almost 400 Maria Theresa thalers, about 1,000 German marks.[35] Even if only eucalyptus wood is used and one works as economically as possible, it will be difficult to build a medium-sized house for less than half the price indicated above, so that all the forces of a clan are engaged in such an enterprise and the entrepreneur is indebted for years to come.



Fig. 12: House building at Imbecho (northwest Wolaita)

The construction of the house begins without any ceremony. The owner or the construction manager drives a stake into the place where the central pole will later rise, to which he ties a string and circumscribes the diameter of the house as if with a compass. An ordinary farmhouse that houses a whole family with their livestock has a diameter of at least six to seven metres, houses of rich people up to twelve

[35] For comparison, a very large flowering eight-year-old ensete perennial of the best quality was sold at the same time for one thaler.

metres. First, the 2–2$^1/_2$-metre-long planks that form the walls (*goda*) are driven in. If the owner is rich, he can afford to put them together without gaps. Once the walls are set, the solemn moment of raising the central pole (*tusa*) approaches. First, a 2- or 3-cubit-deep shaft is dug to accommodate the pole. Starting from the front door, a trench is dug that gradually descends to the deepest point of the shaft, in which the pole is rolled forward with the help of a mortar and then pulled up with ropes. Then the central pole is inserted, but now the owner of the house approaches. He holds in his hands things that are symbols of fertility and blessing, namely some malt (*buluwa*: germinating and multiplying), dung (*osa*: wealth), grass (*gorta*: evergreen, long life, cattle feed). His wife stands beside him with two calabashes full of beer (*kumeta*).[36] The most important of these gifts is the malt as a symbol of germination and life. It ensures the eternal continuation of the family in this house. The father of the house throws everything into the shaft next to the central pole, pours some beer from each calabash and then drinks with his wife. He then throws the first handful of earth on the pole and prays: "*Yelua dagaya, semfua gamisa, ta machua tana mada*!" ("[My] children multiply, [my] soul let live, my wife and I help!").

After this celebration, the completion of the house continues. The door, which until then had no lintel (so that the central pole could be raised), is closed at the top and the struts of the roof are extended. Due to their weight, they bend by themselves at the top and are united in the middle, where they meet radially, by a specially reinforced mesh. This part of the ceiling is called the *kara*. The *kara* rests on a large, round cushion (*shida*) of ensete leaf sheathing on the central pole, which had to be inserted at exactly the right height so that the roof would have a beautiful curvature at the top (figure cf. Bieber 1920:218f). The roof mesh is covered with thick layers of grass. A straw mop was placed on the top of the roof, which was later crowned by an attachment, to mark the completion of the building. The plank walls are also covered with grass, so that from the outside one gets the impression of a half-arched beehive house.

Apart from the roof attachment, the door leaves and their colouring (see below), the type of interior wickerwork and the roof rings (*zaudida*) are also important for the status of the house owner. According to the weave pattern, four types of house can be distinguished. The first most carefully woven type (*meshwa*), in which the decorative rings completely cover the wall and roof surfaces, was reserved for the most respected very old people, the second (*gulanta*) for very wealthy peasants, and the third (*burare*) for the rich common freemen. Simple peasants, craftsmen and slaves used to own only the unadorned wickerwork of the fourth type (*meresa*). In addition, a distinction was made between the very meagre

[36] Food of man, the calabashes embody the husband and his wife.

occasional huts (*kule*), as they were built for the herdsmen and seasonal workers in the lowlands, and open festival huts (*zamfa*). Since the Ethiopian house does not have a flue, but the smoke has to find its way through the thatch, the rafters and all the wickerwork soon acquire a deep black, shiny colour. After twenty or thirty years, the roof gradually begins to sink in at the sides. If one does not decide to tear down the house and build a new roof over the plank walls and the central pile, support piles are inserted at the sagging places so that the house resembles a Sidaama dwelling.



Fig. 13: Interior wickerwork of a house of the first kind

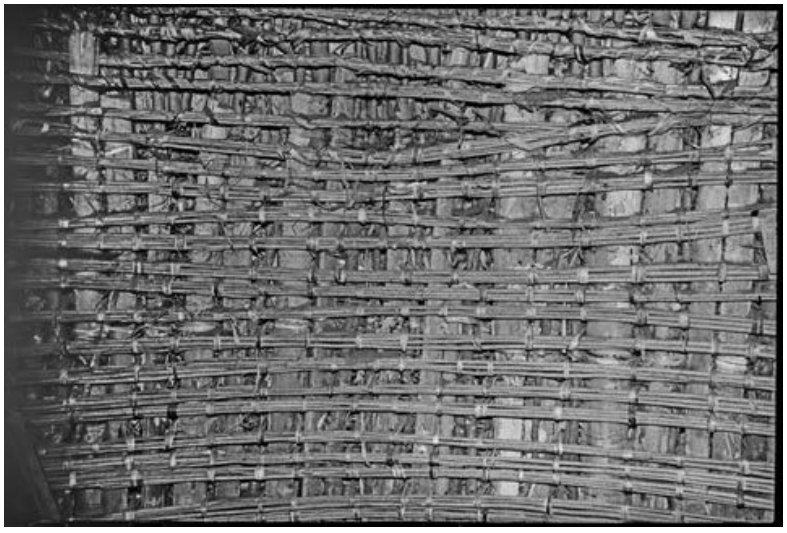


Fig. 14: Interior wickerwork of a house of the third kind

No ceremony is performed in the construction of the door (*pengya*). The frame consists of four thick planks cut to size with an axe (the saw is still virtually unknown in Wolaita today), doorpost (*kosileta*), threshold and lintel (*korya*). The

members of the royal clan had the privilege of painting the posts, as well as the roof attachment, with red earth colour. Furthermore, as a special privilege, they were allowed to install a wooden door that turned on pins at the top and bottom (*sanka*, in Amharic also *sanka*) – a distinctly highland Ethiopian cultural element. The other Wolaita had to make do with the woven door plate (*irfita*), made of bamboo in the highlands, which was placed against the door frame from the inside at night and secured by a beam placed halfway across, which in turn was often stuck in lock-like wooden rings.

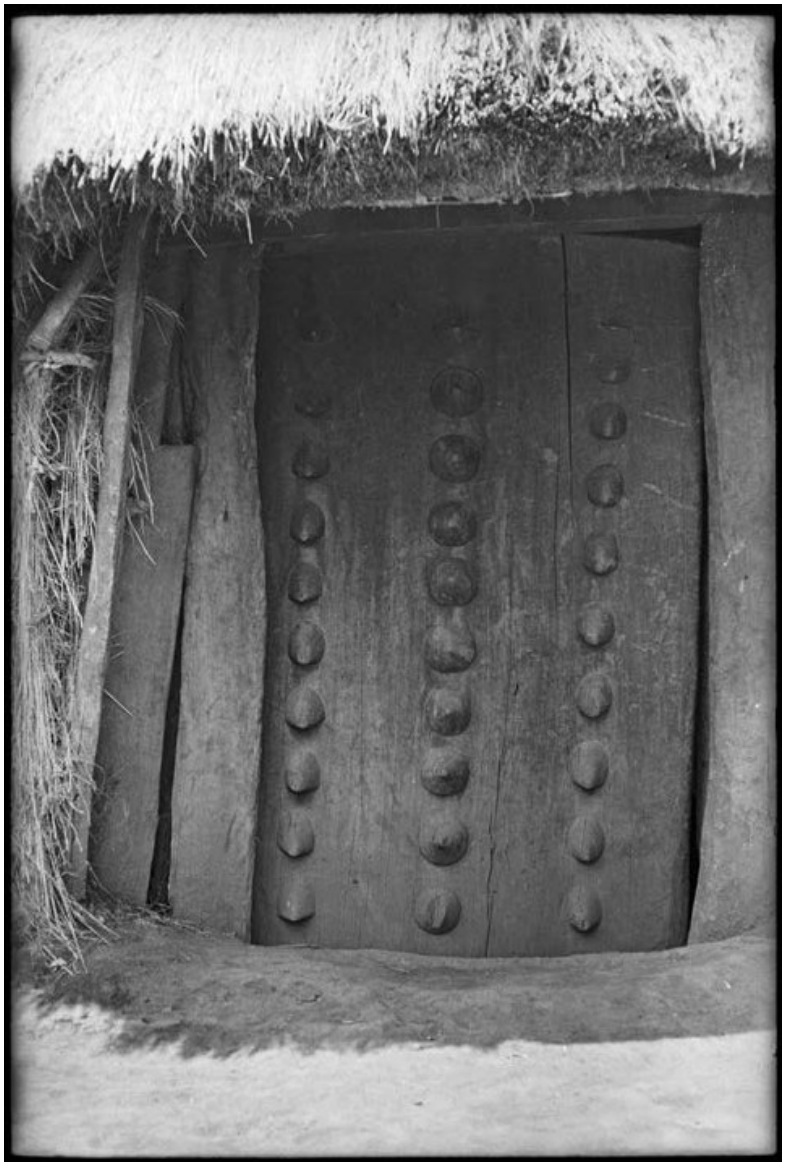


Fig. 15: Richly carved wooden door from Hobicha

Above the door of the Wolaita house arches the characteristic "nose" found in most houses of the eastern Ometo, which is often decorated with different coloured straw braids and bast wrappings, as are the outer wall parts at the side of

the door. It has been reported that in ancient times a porch (*sarga*) was placed in front of the doors under the "noses".

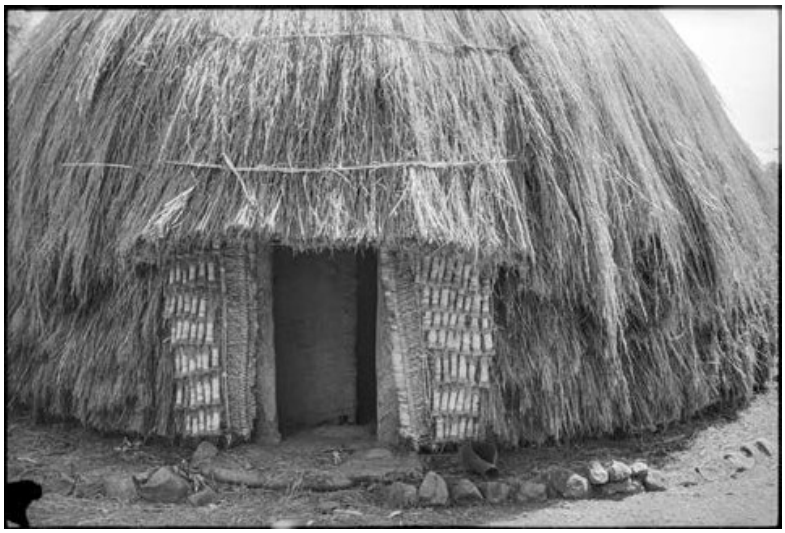


Fig. 16: Front door decorated with bast rolls in Kindo

The next work is the laying of the floor, which is done in careful form only in the front room of the house, which therefore bears the same name (*wuiye*). Poorer people are content to tamp the soil firmly and cover it with a thin coating of cow dung, which has the advantage of driving away fleas. Richer ones cover the firmly tamped earth with a thick layer of cow dung, clay from termite mounds and soot (to get a nice black colour). Water is poured on this mass, and it is covered with leaves of a certain shrub for several days, which is supposed to make the soil hard and shiny. Finally, it is polished with flat stones and is then indistinguishable from a well-waxed cement floor.

Soon after moving in, the owner first invites all the women who helped, and the next day the men. He puts a good dish of fine ensete flour (*godeta*) in front of them and has to prepare enough beer that they can spend the whole night singing and dancing.

The householder now waits for about two or three months, "until the spiders have stretched their webs in the roof", and then celebrates the official house-warming festival. If he has the means, after four months he slaughters a bull (otherwise a goat or a sheep) in the front house, brushes his forehead with the blood, then the middle pole with both hands, then his wife and children with two fingers of the right hand and prays solemnly: "*Ta shemfo keha, ta shemfo gam'ita, ta maches ta natusi keha*!" ("Give good to my soul, let my soul live, give good to my wife and children!"). He then prays to the ancestors to bestow health and long life on him and his. If the father of the householder is still alive, he must sacrifice the animal or at least formally give his permission for slaughter. The sacrificial animal must not have black fur.

All these ceremonies – and enough other references are cited later on as well – sufficiently reveal the great importance of the central pole in the ritual. In Wolaita it is not clearly stated, but it seems that its significance is that of a celestial support for the domestic microcosm, whose celestial vault is embodied by the roof. In continuation of this idea, the Yem had an iron sky pillar erected in their country which only disappeared in the last century. This idea overlaps with the view of the Oromo, according to whom it is precisely a sign of God's omnipotence that he erected the sky without a pole. Among all the southern Ethiopian peoples, the central pole is the most sacred place in the house, for example among the Oromo, the Kaffa (cf. Bieber 1920:218) and the Yem, among whom the erection of the central pole and the door required human building sacrifices (Fernandez 1707). Among the Dorze, only particularly distinguished persons, such as eldest sons or dignitaries, are allowed to erect a central pole in their house.

The central pole is continued outwards in the roof superstructure. I have already pointed out (Jensen 1959) what a close connection there is between the central pole and the roof extension, which represents the crowning and completion of the house. In Wolaita, the most widespread type is the wooden attachment – a pole about one and a half metres high, carved at its upper end. It is placed on top of the central pole and must be artfully anchored and interwoven with straw so that the roof does not let rain through at this point. Some of the most common forms represent stylised phalli, which are even more recognisable on other trunks. They testify that this ornamentation of the house originally proclaimed the slaying of the owner of the house, as did his other phallic ornaments or the phallic stones erected after his death. Now, among the Wolaita, the right to erect these house ornaments is no longer precisely defined, but it is still taken for granted that only important or "deserving" people may do so. The Tigre were allowed to paint the roof tops red. In Kindo and Koysha, I encountered clay roof ornaments, which my informants claimed had only existed since the Amhara period. Incidentally, this is also what Bieber states of the clay ornaments of the Kaffa (1920:214). However, this statement seems to me to be rather questionable, since the clay attachments occur exclusively in the two regions mentioned, which were least influenced by the Amhara. Is this an element of an older population stratum? (cf. the Basketto pottery, Jensen 1959). Incidentally, I was informed that the potters in Middle Wolaita also used to have clay attachments.

The house of the Wolaita, like the house of many other peoples of central Ethiopia (e.g. Hadiya, Sidaama, Gurage, Guji, etc.), is divided into three rooms: the front room, the back room and the cattle shed. These compartments are separated from each other by solid walls. In the following description of the interior rooms of the house, I sketch a schematic picture which, however, applies to most Wolaita dwellings. Whether the cattle shed is to the right or left of the living part depends



Fig. 17: Large house with central pole (roof attachment) and beautifully woven "nose" above the door southeast of Soddo

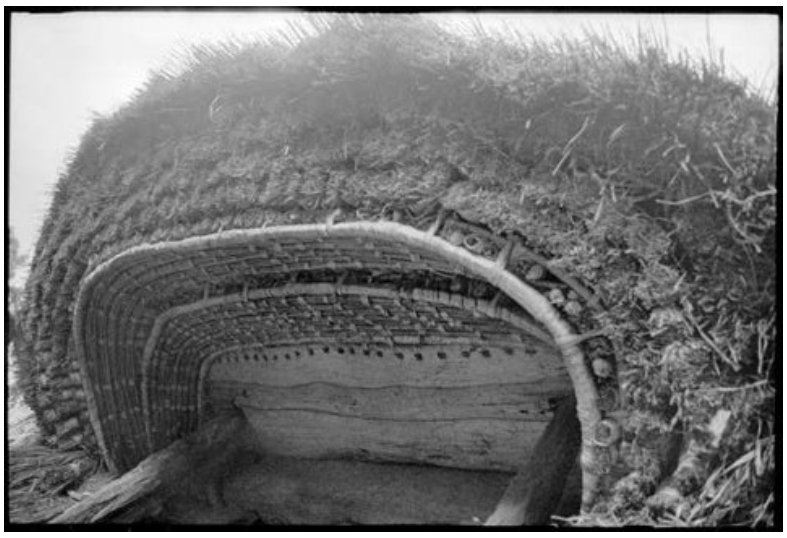


Fig. 18: Detail of the woven "nose"

on the terrain, as the shed is always set up on the lower side so that manure and dung can drain away to the outside.

The front room (*wuigja*) is the family members' living room, where visitors are received, festivities are celebrated, and smaller tasks are carried out that are not related to food preparation. The front room is separated from the back room by an ornamental wall (*koldo karta*) that is over a man's height and carefully woven from bamboo, on which the most beautiful household goods hang: calabashes covered with pearls, woven plates, bowls and sieves or the shield and spear of the master of the house. On one side are the two-metre-high grain urns (*kafo*) woven from bamboo or straw and covered with cow dung. Next to the front door, there is usually a low clay bench surrounded by sticks driven into the ground or a simple fascine bed, which used to be the seat of the house inhabitants, as chairs or stools

were rarely used. Sometimes this bench is also surrounded by a high bamboo wall and serves as a sleeping place. It is then called *sirita*. Today, three-legged stools (*oydya*), often with decorative struts on the legs, can be seen in almost all houses, as well as the large three-legged reclining chairs (*oydya*) cut out of a trunk with an axe, or the leather-covered four-legged chairs (*arata*), which reveal by their shape that they were adopted from the Jimma Oromo and Amhara. Originally, people sat either on the clay benches, on skins or ensete leaves spread out on the floor, or on a cushion-like piece of furniture (*sida*) consisting of a covering of ensete leaf sheaths and a filling of sheepskin. Rich people also have a game board (*sadeka oyde*) in the front room, which in the Wolaita has two times ten game holes and two double holes at the ends.



Fig. 19: Old game board from the time of King Ogato in the homestead of kawona Kuse

From the front room, to the right and left of the decorative wall, a passageway leads into the back room, the *kolo pengya* (back-room door) and the *miza sinta pengya* (cattle shed door). At the back-room door, enclosed at the head and foot by high plank walls, stands the bed (*hitasua* or *arsa*) of the household head, either a clay bak or a fascine bed, from which the household head can overlook the front and back rooms and the cowshed at a glance. A tanned leather (*irfanya*) or a hide (*itiya*) serves as a base for sleeping. The Tigre had the privilege of putting up curtains of cloth (*garuda*, from the Amharic *magaradja*) in front of the bed, which in the case of the rich consisted of black or colourfully serrated panels.

In the centre of the back room (*kol'o*, *koldo* or *kuma keta*, food house) is the hearth with its three stones (*tegulsa*), which – in keeping with the refinement of Wolaita culture – are very often replaced by three clay cylinders. The hearth is not a simple hole either, but consists of a clay pan (*cocce*) set into the floor, over which a frame (*tokocho*), also made of clay and with three legs, is placed to hold the coffee pot or other vessels. Around the cooker are the many household utensils:

the various clay vessels, calabashes, containers woven from straw, the grinding stones (*wota*), the mortar with pestle (*udula* and *udula mita*), perhaps also one of the huge beer tubs (*wongere*). Above the fire and on the wall are platforms (*sefa*) as high as a man, on which seed corn, tools, clothing and jewellery are kept dry and protected from mice in sacks made of cowhide (*ogorua)* or goatskin (*luka mua*) or in straw urns. The wooden boxes (*satin*) now so popular among the Amhara are only gradually finding their way into Wolaita.



Fig. 20: View from the cattle shed into the back room with fireplace

The cattle shed (*miza akua*), which among the Sidaama is only separated from the living room by a small barrier, is separated among the Wolaita by a mighty frame (*zazalua korya*) made of thick billets and planks that reaches more than two metres in height, so that the cattle stick their heads halfway through the shed. Right next to the entrance door is the stable for the householder's horse or mule, next to it a special section for the draught oxen or a bull, adjoining which is the cow shed. The stable floor is grooved or covered with a wooden grate so that the manure and dung can drain away to the outside and the animals can stand in the dry. The plough is kept in the horse stable. The large ensete board leans against the cow shed behind it.

The high standard of living of the Wolaita is also reflected in their many types of artificial lighting (*wukada*); otherwise, only fire is used by the southern Ethiopians to illuminate the dark hut. The Wolaita told me of six different lamps that were used in the past but that have now been replaced by a primitive paraffin lamp (*panus*) made from a small tin can with a baked-on tube for the wick.

In the past, the most luxurious thick wax candles (*dola*) were cast in bamboo tubes and were supposedly only used by the king and the great and at the nightly funeral of the king. More common were the thin wax candles (*mukada* or *esa mukada*), also known to the Ahmara, which consist of a thick strand of cotton

thread and a thin layer of wax (the Wolaita call wax *esa*, like honey). Poorer people made do with the belly fat (*morya*) of cattle as lighting material, which was either stuffed into a tall clay stand (*kindalya*) and burnt with a cotton wick or wrapped around a bamboo splinter and lit like a torch. This smelly and smoky illumination was very popular. There were also rhizine seeds (*kobo*) strung on sticks and torches (*tomfya*) made from a special type of grass that burns very slowly.

Clothing and weaving, hairstyle

Although almost all inhabitants wear cotton clothing today. According to the Wolaita, it was not long ago that the poorer part of the population wore leather clothing, i.e., leather loincloths and small back skins, as in the Oromo kingdoms (cf. Cecchi 1888). Day labourers, potters, and slave descendants still occasionally wear leather loincloths, caps made of ensete leaf sheaths, or round fur caps while working. The conical caps of the Kaffa and Dawuro (made of leather) and Malo (made of ensete fibres) are not known to the Wolaita. The evil king Damot is reported to have wrapped himself in ragged skins when he roamed the land at night to investigate the views of his subjects. According to the Wolaita, women's skirts made of slitted ensete leaves or raffia – as are now common among the Kaffa, the ancient peoples, and the benighted Konta (Piccaia 1940:30) – were never worn in their country.

The better classes have long worn cotton clothing: the men capes, knee breeches and body wraps; the women skirts consisting of capes covering the whole body and short capes, sometimes also pants and body wraps. The half-length pants brought into the country by the Tigre immigrants – still the national costume of the Amhara and Tigray – soon went out of fashion. Among the Yem, long pants still survive as royal dress. Incidentally, around 1830 the costume of the Amhara also consisted only of half-length trousers, body bandage and cloak, and many people still wore shaggy sheepskin cloaks in highland Ethiopia at that time (cf. Rüpell 1838:290).

The little girls up to seven or eight years of age wear the pubic apron called *masko*, made of braided cotton cords studded with cowrie shells; the daughters of the Tigre had only kauri strung together as aprons. Shoes or sandals were unknown and even now are rarely worn.

What the Wolaita reported about the cultural-historical age of weaving coincides with the fact that this cultural element was brought to southern Ethiopia by the Amhara in the High Middle Ages. According to the Wolaita, weaving came to them via Gurage or Dawuro (still now an important weaving centre) and then

spread further to southern Ethiopia. Later, the art of weaving colourful pants or jagged fabrics also came to Wolaita via Dawuro. Further supporting the northern Ethiopian origin is the fact that the weavers and silversmiths, neither of whom formed a special caste like the other craftsmen, were most often found in the so-called Amara clans (the Amerra clans of the Dorze). The clan name Fatigara is particularly revealing. Along with Salale in western Shoa, Fatigar and Argobba-Ifat are considered centres of Middle Ethiopian weaving. Among the Kaffa, a thick weave type is known by the name *argubbo.* Cerulli (1951:404) calls attention to a passage in the *Futuh al Habasah* (Basset 1897, II:359), according to which cloaks made of Argobba were proverbial at that time. Gojjam was also an ancient weaving centre: *goggami* is what the Wolaita call a fine type of fabric.

It is true that weaving – like silversmithing – had no stigma attached to it, and the weavers did not form a special caste as they did in Konso. But this occupation did not correspond to the peasant–feudal ideal of life of the Wolaita, and it was completely out of the question for ,"decent'" people to learn this wage trade. Thus, the fabrics produced in the country were not sufficient for the needs, which were met by imports and the work of itinerant weavers from Dorze. These wage labourers –especially if they were skilled in making fine capes and colourful pants – received extraordinarily high pay and good food. Today, as in ancient times, a lot of cotton fabrics are imported, partly from the Dawuro and Konta, whose capes with the characteristic yellow edges are sold as far as Jimma, but above all from the Dorze, whose country, next to the Konso, is the weaving centre of southern Ethiopia.

Weaving techniques and looms do not differ from those of other Ethiopians. As in Dorze, the loom bears the name *harfa,* which comes from Amharic. The shuttle, like an ear ornament, is called by the sound-painting word *muhuhua* ("ringring") (warp = *kacina*, weft = *salua*, thin thread = *kuncutya*). The shape of the spindle does not differ from the rest of the Ometo or Amhara.

In accordance with the strict order of the ranks, the Wolaita not only had precise differences in the quality of the fabrics that could be worn, but also in the colour and pattern of the decorative edges of capes, pants and body bandages. Originally, the different coloured edges of the capes, which are common today, were unknown; they are said to have been adopted late by the Dawuro. The nobility and the commoners had red cloak edges, the artisans had black ones, and the slaves also had black ones, which, however, unlike those of the artisans, were not woven in, but subsequently dyed with soot.

With the very numerous names of the capes, one must distinguish whether they designate the quality of the fabric, the number of panels sewn together, or the manner of wearing. Bieber (1920) has given a detailed account of this complicated subject, so that I can limit myself to the most important points. Since the

cloth panels are very narrow – rarely more than a cubit wide – at least two panels are sewn together, which only together constitute a "real" piece of cloth for the Ethiopians. For the cape form called *buluko,* several panels are sewn together and folded crosswise in the middle, so that there are decorative edges only at one end of the cape, and at the other there is the folding crease. In addition, it is customary not only to place the individual sheets sewn together on top of each other, but also to sew them altogether in the middle at the seams, creating a bundle of fabric that is continuous in the middle and open at the sides.

The generic term *buluko* thus covers all multi-folded cloaks of various sizes and qualities. A distinction is made between the *patala buluko*, the most precious garment, which consists of four double-folded panels (i.e., eight layers of fabric). The fabric is so finely woven that "neither breath nor water penetrates through it, like a dream so beautiful". It is approximately eight to nine cubits long and four cubits wide. The *goggami buluko* is made of the same fine type of fabric, but folded only twice and is slightly shorter. The ordinary *buluko* (the third category) has the same dimensions as the *goggami*; it is made of poorer quality fabric. The fourth is the *dila buluko*, double-folded twice, six cubits long and three wide. It is a large fabric with uneven threads, to which brownish cotton is also added. The fifth, worst, type is the thin *giteto buluko*, twice double-folded and four cubits in size.

The unfolded simple fabric, worn by women or children as a skirt or cloak, is called *iricua* (Amharic: *natala*) by the Wolaita. Here again, according to the quality and uniformity of the fabric and the cleanliness of the cotton, four types are distinguished, the dimensions of which roughly correspond to those of the *buluko*: *goggami iricua; iricua in* the proper sense; *asara iricua* (or *dila iricua*); and *giteto iricua*.

The pattern of the knee pants (*hadya* or *sere*, coloured pants also *gaza*) and the corresponding body bandages (*dancua*) were also subject to the strict regulations of the dress code. The famous *dunguza* trousers, whose black–red–yellow meander pattern is known to most Ometo and also to the Kaffa (Bieber 1920:276), as well as the striped body bandage of the same colour (*dunguza dancua*), could only be worn by important men and only at festivals, funerals or before the king. It was a popular honorary gift from the king to deserving heroes. Of the second type (*gutuma*) there were two different versions. Its fabric is no longer completely colourful but shows wide white stripes. Also in the corresponding body bandage, the white outweighs the colour. This second type was the better everyday clothing of all rich and important people who visited or went to consult the king in this way. At great festivals, it was the greatest fortune of a hero to have a slave wear the trousers of the first type, to put them on in front of the assembly and to appear with the boastful shout: "Here comes the man who has his trousers worn by



Fig. 21: Woman from the Wolaitalama clan with old traditional costume

the slave!" The third type (*sawera sere*) was the festive costume of the common freemen. It has a multicoloured border only on the belt and at the bottom of the trouser legs. Very rich royal slaves and the members of two famous pottery clans enjoyed the privilege of putting them on. Rich people wore this type only when they went to the field to supervise the slaves' work. The fourth type (*gaza sere*) was adorned only by a narrow black stripe on the belt and black fringes on the trouser legs. It was the everyday costume of the sons of rich people and the ceremonial costume of potters. The body bandage has some black stripes. The fifth and last type (*asara sere*), made of ordinary white cloth, was the everyday dress of peasants. The loincloth made of cloth (*asara*) is not considered "clothing" of decent people, who at most gird themselves with it when working in the fields, and it is frowned upon even for the poor to appear like this at festivals.

Women's clothing consists of a long piece of cloth wrapped around the body and a body bandage at the waist, the pattern of which used to depend on the husband's social position. Usually, the woman wears the upper part of the dress folded over her shoulders so that the upper part of her body is covered. If the top is lowered, or if the fabric is too short to cover the upper body, a thin cloak is thrown over. Now Amhara shirts or European sweaters are also often worn. The breasts are uncovered in public only at funerals – a common Ethiopian custom that also occurs among the Amhara and Tigray.

Besides these fabrics and garments, other colourful fabrics were worn in Wolaita as festive and ritual clothing, which were bought from other groups – Dawuro or Gamo. Only the *cacafo* or *cafcafo* was made in the country. It was an unfolded good fabric (*goggami iricua*) that the heroes smeared all over with red earth colour after a kill and that formed their most beautiful robe of honour during great feasts. *Kototo* was a very large red, white and black striped cape made in Gamo; it was the festive costume of rich people and also their shroud. *Madda,* according to some sources, was the red, white or colourful flowered fabric used today by Ethiopian priests for wrapping sacred objects; according to others, it was the fiery red cloak of the Wolaita kings, with thick knobs woven into it. Both fabrics were obtained from Dawuro. (In Kaffa, too, the colourful giant fabrics came from Dawuro, cf. Bieber 1923:122). Finally, the fabric *garuda* should be mentioned. Originally, only the black and white curtains on the beds of the Tigre were called this; later, the shamans (*sharecho*) used this fabric to make pants and capes. Today, a peculiar jagged black–white–red–yellow fabric that comes from Hadiya is also called *garuda*. The characteristic warrior coat (*lamd*) of the Amhara and Kaffa made of a colourfully lined fur with stylized paws was not known to the Wolaita. The heroes wore the skins of lions and leopards, unworked or sewn at the edges with silver plate.

After 1984, the Wolaita learned other garments from the Amhara, which today have become components of the folk costume: the long Amhara shirt (*kolya*), the sewn women's skirt (*gufantua*), and the black burnoose trimmed with red leather (*warua* or *barnos*). The long colourful women's pants are now out of fashion; only now and then do you see them on older ladies when they are on horseback. These pants are now still one of the characteristic garments of the Harari women. Amhara women wear the same white long pants as their men when they ride or travel.

Finally, the different ways of wearing the cloaks must be mentioned. Although the Wolaita do not know the very developed ceremonial of the Amhara, who have innumerable ways of putting on the toga, depending on the occasion (cf. Tilahun:25 f.), they too have enough ways of wearing the cloak, depending on whether one is going to the field, taking a walk, sitting in court, or appearing be-

fore the king. With the large masses of fabric of a rich man's cloak, it requires a lot of experience to drape them in a tasteful form – a job that takes several minutes.

Like all Ethiopians, the Wolaita know only three "actual" colours: black, white and red. All other colours are somehow associated with these three: the blue sky is black, light-skinned people are red, and everything light in nature is white. The green of plants is not perceived as a "colour". This way of looking at things, which is so different from ours, is helped by the fact that blue and green as artificial colours (dyes) were almost non-existent in the past. Green is known to me only from the royal coat of the Kaffa (as indicated by Bieber 1920) – probably an imported piece. The tribal leaders of the Dorze wear cloaks of very dark blue (*halaka*). The Ethiopian separates from this colour scale the colours of the cattle, although he also distinguishes black, white and red. Quite in contrast to the summary way in which otherwise under black everything dark is summarized, he knows here innumerable nuances, hardly distinguishable for the European.

In addition to the three basic colours mentioned above, other colours are also used in dye production, but these are only perceived as variations, such as yellow, which is considered a dark white, and khaki, which is considered a light red. In the past, the Wolaita were able to produce most of the dyes for the basic colours themselves, even if they did not achieve the perfection of the Kaffa or Dawuro, who were considered as role models in this as in other handicraft techniques. Dyeing agents are not sold; the weaver either prepares the dye himself or buys the dyed yarn on the market. The bright yellow (*adilya*) needed for the colourful pants came from Kaffa or Dawuro. In the country itself, three colours were produced, which were distinguished from the now imported by their extraordinary durability. The few pants from "old" times that one still happens to see surprise by the soft sheen of their colours, even after long use, while the garish modern colours (from India or Egypt) fade after a short time.

Black colours were obtained thus: threads were buried in swamp holes, and soaked in a slurry consisting of the crushed bark of the oca tree (*Sizygium*) and fruits of *cacawa*. To produce the red colour, these three substances are crushed, mixed and mixed with water: red earth (*bara*, from the lowlands south of Humbo), the leaves of the shrub *ecere wosolo*, and the roots of *wosolo* (*Impatiens tinctorius*). (Women also use *wosolo* to dye their fingernails red at festivals). This mixture is left to infuse for two days, then the threads are soaked for one day and washed out. To make dark khaki dye, the carrot-like roots of the *coldya* plant (Amharic *mokmoko*) and the leaves of the *ambe* shrub are pounded. This mixture is boiled, and the threads are put into the cooled broth.

Hairstyle and scar ornaments

The hairstyle of the Wolaita is very simple. Usually both sexes wear the hair combed upwards and cut quite short. In the past, rich people and heroes like the king wore the hair longer, sometimes falling to the shoulders. People were very reluctant to cut their hair, or they shortened it only at the tips when it became too long. Long hair was the prerogative of the heroes and slayers. Those who had not killed always had to wear it short. Allegedly, the slayers never combed their hair in the past, but only anointed their wild mop of hair with butter. (The idea of a connection between hair and soul substance is not known in Ethiopia). The common man often cuts off his hair altogether if the lice plague him too much and he does not have enough money to anoint it with butter now and then, which Ethiopians believe is the best means of driving away the vermin. Common practice is the shaving of the head at the death of close relatives. All the cut hair is carefully collected and put into a crack in an ensete shrub. Braids and plaited hairstyles are not common. The peculiar wigs of Jimma women are unknown. Little girls and maidens used to wear their hair in the form of a brush on the top of the head, and the sides were shaved bald. Today the Amhara maiden tonsure has become generally accepted. The beard, once the mark of the mature man, is now almost out of fashion.

Tattoos or body painting are not common. Only for the Feast of the Cross and other major festivals, including weddings, do the girls and women dye their fingernails and palms red. The circular temple scars common among the Wolaita are not tribal marks like the scar tattoos in Sudan. They are caused by burning smouldering wood for headaches. The Wolaita claim of the Amarro that they carved a cross on the root of their nose or forehead as a sign of their descent from the Christian land of Manz, like the Manz themselves. This is a typical example of such tales spread about neighbouring peoples: the Manz teach young children to make a horizontal cut on the eyelid and the Amarro a vertical one on the root of the nose "so that the eyes will remain healthy". (The Tigray also wear two or three oblique cuts on the temples for this reason).

What is known about the body care of the Wolaita was already reported above. Even before the coming of the Amhara, the Wolaita knew small metal mirrors (*herega*), which were made in the country itself.

Jewellery, silversmithing and ritual implements

The wearing of jewellery among the Wolaita is determined by two factors: by their more highly developed culture, which no longer knows the naive enthusiasm for jewellery of the neighbouring peoples (Arsi), and by the system of rank and merit,

which also subjects jewellery to a strict order. As a result, apart from children, almost no one wears jewellery – as is the case with the Amhara – who does not have a guaranteed right to do so, and then it is worn only at major festivals and merit ceremonies (see also the section on merit festivals).

Today, it is difficult for the Wolaita to imagine what their jewellery was before the silversmiths (i.e. fine smiths) came to the country, since the coarse smiths do not make jewellery, and the coarse jewellery made of iron, brass or copper otherwise known in southern Ethiopia – mainly thick arm rings, finger rings and phallic symbols or crude neck jewellery – are not common among them. However, they must have been worn by the Wolaita at some time in the past, as silversmithing is described as a rather young craft that came from Dawuro or Kaffa with the so-called Amara clans, which also form the weaver clans and to which the so-called wise men (*wogachiya*) and manual workers (*hillanca*) belong. More precise data on this could not be obtained. Cecchi (1885, 1886, 1887, 1888) reports from Gera around 1880 that the silversmiths there had learned their art from Arab merchants. Perhaps finely crafted jewellery made of silver or brass was brought to Wolaita from the north for a long time before a craft developed in the country itself with the immigration of silversmiths. Silver, as a barter item or as a material for jewellery came to Wolaita on a larger scale only from around 1860, in the form of Maria Theresa talers.

The coarse blacksmiths and leather workers (*degella*), who like the potters (*cinasha*) form a special caste, do not make jewellery. The silversmiths also make saddles and harnesses for horses and their metal fittings.

Silver thalers and thin brass or copper rods still form the raw material for all jewellery today. The metal is made red-hot in the fire, hammered, heated again and worked until it has the desired shape. Only a few silversmiths have small melting pots which they cut themselves from soft stones. The liquid silver is poured into small stone troughs and wire is drawn from it. With the low heat of the fire and the primitive tools, it takes an infinitely long time to create an ornate piece of jewellery. Just pulling a wire through thinner and thinner openings in a piece of iron takes half a day, not to speak of twisting and folding the wire and melting it onto the surface of the jewellery. The most common ornaments in silverwork consisted of such fine, twisted and multiply folded silver wires. Glass beads played a subordinate role in the jewellery.

Adornment for acts of merit could be worn by a man renowned for killing and a meritorious woman (*gimo*) for her wealth of children. Celebrations of wealth were not expressed in jewellery. Men and women usually went without jewellery. Only children and young girls were allowed necklaces of glass beads (*gozda*), silver rings and silver balls (*birra)* or of alternating strings of beads and silver rings (*birra guguma*).

As jewellery outside the rank system, the colourful beaded aprons *gozda masko* were still mentioned, which were worn (opinions differed on this) either by the daughters of kings as pubic aprons or by the queens‘ servants on their backs over their clothes. Wealthy men liked to wear finger rings and necklaces.



Fig. 22: Apron made of coloured glass beads

For the metals of jewellery and other objects, the rule was that gold was reserved exclusively for the king (so also in Kaffa and the Oromo kingdoms); silver was allowed to be possessed by common freemen as profane jewellery (for example, on the harness of horses, on the fittings of fur cloaks, as finger rings or as chains), while the silver badges of heroes or of meritorious women could only be worn by the Tigre and the “privileged”. The merit jewellery of the simple commoners was made of copper or brass, as was all the jewellery of the craftsmen and slaves.

The slayer's jewellery is similar throughout southern Ethiopia. Earring, ostrich feather, ivory arm ring and the phallic forehead jewellery are not missing among any people, not even among the Amhara, whose slayer forehead jewellery, worn until 1935, still shows echoes of the phallic form. I do not want to tire you with a detailed description of the jewellery in the following, but only give a brief account.

First of all, the slayer's jewellery. The most important sign of the slayer among the Wolaita is the earring, a small round ring called *belelesa* if it is made of silver and *macala* if it is made of brass. As in Jimma, it was often decorated with fine filigree work. The next most important insignia are the white feather (*balya*) tucked into the hair and often wrapped with blue and red cotton threads, and the ivory ring worn on the upper arm (*irbora*). It is not decorated here with the circle dot pattern typical of all horn and bone carvings throughout Africa.

Brass arm rings were worn less frequently. Only then came the phallic forehead jewellery, which among other peoples (e.g. Kaffa) is the slayer's sign par excellence, but among the Wolaita was more the jewellery of rich slayers, as well as of meritorious women (*gimo*). It is called a single phallus *kalachu.* The single phallus is always hollow, soldered together from several thin metal strips and attached to a disc. The white shell disc of the Oromo is not known to the Wolaita (Jensen 1959). The phallus is often decorated with meanders of twisted wires and hung with silver chains. The jewellery *wogero*, consisting of several beautiful silver phalli, is worn by women. For poorer people there exists an ornament made of several brass phalli, which are even in number. The basic shapes are always the same, never missing, for example, the four pyramid-shaped balls on the tip of a phallus. The fact that the phallus symbolises the cut-off limb of an enemy, which was originally probably tied to the forehead, is no longer known to the Wolaita today; like most Ethiopians, they put the similarity between phallus and human limb down as purely coincidental.

Lion slayers wore a headdress made of many tiny phalli that wrapped around the forehead like a ribbon and ended in small chains on both sides. Wealthy slayers also adorned themselves with necklaces, of which there were quite a number. Elephant slayers were entitled to jewellery made up of many small plates, rhombuses and chains (*moga*), women to necklaces (*kulto*) made of curved discs. (Apparently, a necklace of many small miniature phalli was also part of the men's killing jewellery. Further south, I saw them among the Zaysse as women's and girls' jewellery).

The slayers' robes smeared with red chalk and their fur cloaks have already been described.

A woman who received the rank of *gimo* at an advanced age, after a successful life blessed with children and grandchildren, was given jewellery that surpassed that of the hero. The most beautiful piece was the forehead jewellery (*wogero*),



Fig. 23: Young man in Amhara costume with the headdress of a slayer who slew three people (three ostrich feathers)

which included several phalli of different sizes, from which chains hung down that ended in tubes. This jewellery was strung on cotton threads, and glass beads were strung in thick balls between the individual phalli. Under the phalli, the *gimo* woman wore the jewellery called *sasora*, fastened around the forehead and covering the face like a veil and consisting of a row of silver triangles (or rhombuses) strung on strings of beads, between which little chains with pendants were inserted. This complicated double jewellery could also be replaced by a hairnet of beads, the strands of which united above the forehead in a silver cylinder bearing a phallus (*wogero*). Like a slayer, the *gimo* wore an ostrich feather – replaced in very rich ladies by a replica made of silver (*birra balya*) – and spherical or semi-circular earrings, ornately decorated and studded with pendants, whose tonal name *muhuhua* is also given to the weaver's shuttle. She also had a necklace (*gimo*



Fig. 24: Qegnazmach Fere from the royal clan of the Tigre. In the picture he is wearing the old Tigre jewellery

gozda) made of the tubular red glass beads that have disappeared in Ethiopia today.

The Wolaita possess only a few pieces of ritual equipment – apart from the slaying signs. The simple calabash is the only object permanently used for sacrifice; among the Tigre and the privileged, such calabashes were covered with beads and hung with large cowrie (*gozda gosse*). Some clay vessels have a certain sacredness attached to them, e.g. those used to store milk or butter or to prepare food for *somano* ceremonies. They are not supposed to be taken from their place or taken out of the house without a ritual occasion, so I had to give many good words to the wife of my main informant Kaba until she would allow me to photograph the pots at the front door. Similar to the milk pots of the Oromo, they belong to the "honoured" pieces, but if they are destroyed, new pots can replace the old ones without any ceremony.

Anyone who had not killed was not a man. The rank staff (*gumbo*), was about one and a half metres high, running into a spear shoe at the bottom and a brass spiral at the top. It was not a badge of office as in Dorze. The dignitaries of the royal court are said not to have carried it.

Forging, tools, equipment and weapons

In Wolaita, the blacksmiths (*wogache*) together with the leather workers (*qaciaga*) form a caste called *degella.* As with other Cushitic peoples, the blacksmith's art among the Wolaita did not reach the level of the ancient peoples (*Altvölker*)[37] of

[37] Jensen and his team including Haberland, Kuls and Pauli, tried to reconstruct the cultural history of the ethnic groups of southern Ethiopia, as they understood them as "fragments" of more an-

the southwest, who smelted the iron themselves in elaborate blast furnaces, nor that of the Amhara, who developed a quite significant coarse and fine forging technique under oriental influence. Elsewhere I have suggested that not only iron smelting but also blacksmithing was originally foreign to the Cushites, both the western and the eastern, and that they only received this cultural element from the highland Ethiopians. This is supported by the insignificant position of the blacksmiths, who form a caste but take a back seat to the highly important potter-hunters, and by the names of the blacksmith's tools, most of which come from Amharic.

The iron used to come to Wolaita in the form of wedges (*bete*, Amharic *tagara*) via Konta-Dawuro, Jimma or Tambaro. Bieber (1920:412) also reports of the Kaffa that they received their iron in wedge-shaped pieces from the Jimma. The Yem obtained their iron from Bosa, neighbouring Jimma. The blast furnaces missing in Wolaita also existed there. The name Dime, the main iron country of southern Ethiopia, is not known to the Wolaita today.

Like all Ethiopian peoples, with the exception of the ancient peoples, the Wolaita also possess the hose bellows (*wenfina,* from the Amharic *wanaf*) made of goat skin with bamboo handles. It runs out in a horn or wooden tube into which a thin iron nozzle is inserted. The workshops are either in a corner of the dwelling house or under a shade canopy in front of the door. I did not notice any special forge huts. Charcoal is made from the roots of *maylo* (laburnum) and *cacoa* (*Acacia species*). The blacksmiths' inventory already had a lot of tools before the invasion of European tools: the hammer (*narika*), biting and flat pliers (*kabya*), drill and file (*morada*). The finer tools such as drills, soldering irons, gravers, tweezers etc. are part of the silversmiths' inventory. Today, the Wolaita smiths only make tools, implements and weapons, not jewellery. The smallest items they make are tweezers and awls (*gota*) and copper needles (*narfya,* from Amharic *marfe*).

Among the most important items worked by the blacksmiths are the field implements. The large and small field hooks (*ayle*) are worth mentioning here. For these, as for other implements, the blacksmiths only make the iron parts, the *hillanca* carve the wooden handles. The double hoes of the Wolaita, like those of the Konso, are intricately assembled: the iron tips are stuck in pieces of wood, which are attached to the large handle with a leather ring and strings. The small hoe is used for weeding or for planting cuttings (taro, yams, ensete, tomatoes), the large hoe replaces the digging stick, which is rarely used by the Wolaita, for breaking up harvested fields or grassy fallow land. The digging stick (*kaswa*, a heavy thick pole without an iron tip) is used singly and operated with both hands, while

cient cultures or *Altvölker* that represented different epochs of cultural development (see Jensen 1959). In the following *Altvölker* is translated with ‚ancient peoples'.

many other southern Ethiopian peoples hold a stick in each hand when breaking up the soil (Jensen 1959: table 31,1). Only when clearing root-rich soil do they use a smaller digging stick (*sodira*) with a broad spade-like iron blade. On the stony high fields of Kindo and Hoysa, the farmers work with the hoe called *tekya* or *kontya* with two iron tips, which is said to have come from Dawuro. It is not very common in the Central Plateau.



Fig. 25: Grassland breaking with large field hoes

The plough was brought by the Tigre around 1600 but was not adopted by the Wolaita because, as the reporters pointed out, they were well aware that the soil worked by the slaves with hoes yielded a higher yield. Also from northern Ethiopia is the sickle (*baca*, from the Amharic *macid*), which was probably brought by an early wave of immigrants not only to Wolaita, but even further south (*baca*, from the Amharic *macid*). It is weakly curved, often only a serrated knife, and is used exclusively for cutting barley or wheat. The old people still tear out the stalks of grain by hand.

The wide working knife is called *billama*. It is also used, for example, in the preparation of ensete. In former times, a longer and narrower working knife *olwa* was known, which was similar to the knife of the Amarro. What the Wolaita have in common with the other Ethiopians is the thorned wooden axe (*bete*), as well as the small spout axe (*kaltay*) used for all kinds of work, with which boards and planks are also made, as the saw is still unknown.

The main weapon of the Wolaita was the large heavy throwing spear (*tora*), which the horseman or foot fighter carried in his right hand, while in his left he held a second throwing spear and a short thrusting spear together with the shield. According to the shape of the blade, the spears have special names such as *abusa* (very long), *orogoto* (smaller), *koysha* (very long and narrow), *tinka* (serrated downwards) and *macäme* (the barbed spear of the Hadiya).

The shield (*gondale*), with its curved edge, strongly raised back and ribs running out from it, has a similar appearance to the shield of the lowland Arsi, Sidaama and Amarro. It is made from the special parts of buffalo or hippopotamus leather.



Fig. 26: Warrior with shield and spear

In close combat, the most popular weapon of the Wolaita was the short, crooked shark knife (*arussya*), which is heavy in the hand and can be used to deliver terrible blows that cut straight through a thick shield of buffalo hide. The knife is carried crosswise in front of the belly in a beautifully hallmarked scabbard open at the side. This knife and the long sword knife with a horn handle (*bisua*) are also common among the Arsi, Sidaama and Gedeo.

Pottery and clay vessels

The ordinary vessels, which make up the bulk of the supply are made by women potters, who are also the sellers of the goods at the market; the men, who of course also understand how to make the basic shapes, often specialise in producing special pieces such as pipe bowls, imitations or models. In the past, their many functions, not to mention their former duties at the royal court, kept them so busy that very few got to make pottery exclusively. But in Wolaita I had the impression that here – unlike in the south of Ethiopia – the livelihood of a potter's family is essentially provided by the sale of their products. In other peoples it is said that the *manna* – as the potters are usually called – do not own land, do not cultivate the land and are not allowed to own livestock. However, if one examines the circumstances, one finds that they generally live from agriculture and only practise their craft as a sideline. Ad. E. Jensen, who studied the *manna* among the Baka in detail (1959:61 f), found that they form such a large part of the population there

that they could not possibly live only from making vessels. There is also very little demand for clay vessels among these primitive peoples – a peasant family will rarely own more than ten. With the Wolaita, with their higher standard of living, it is quite different; already in the home of a former slave one may find more clay objects – as well as other inventory – than in the home of a "rich" peasant of the ancient peoples. A rich Wolaita owns, in addition to many utensils, a large number of vessels that are only used on festive occasions or during ceremonies. Therefore, at a larger marketplace in Wolaita, one can easily buy all the important vessels in one day, which are offered there in large quantities.

Pottery has reached a peak among the Wolaita and has no equal in the rest of Ethiopia. The multitude of vessels, vessel forms and other objects made of clay have no parallel among the Amhara or the Gurage. The number of all clay objects, including pipe bowls and roof attachments, rarely reaches twenty among any Ethiopian people, but among the Wolaita it is well over fifty. In addition to the pots that have long been part of their cultural inventory, the Wolaita have also adopted vessels from neighbouring peoples, e.g. from the Hadiya. They were very much inspired by the Jimma-Oromo and later by the Amhara, who brought a lot of new forms into the country after 1894, which they copied from the Wolaita in clay, even if they were originally made of other materials such as horn, glass and metal. These vessels are often more original than beautiful and do not achieve the balanced harmony of the autochthonous vessels, which show that they are the result of many centuries of craftsmanship and that every step in their production has become second nature to the potters. The potters have made every aspect of their work their own. This perfection explains the potters' excellent sense of proportion in the production of their objects, which are like two peas in a pod.

The pottery technique is the one commonly used in southern Ethiopia. The carefully kneaded lump of clay is driven onto a base (usually a flat potsherd) by the potter with a round stone. In the process, the base is often turned quickly, without, however, achieving an actual turning effect as with a wheel. While the potter drives with the stone with his right hand, he simultaneously turns with his left, which holds a damp leather to smooth the surface and keep it moist. For complicatedly constructed pieces or for very large vessels, the lower part is made first, allowed to dry and then the upper part is built up. The rim or neck of the vessel is put on in spiral beads. Apart from a few pieces that are exposed to particular stress or have protruding parts that break easily, most vessels are only fired very superficially in a brushwood fire, so that the core of the pots, which are porous and not very durable to begin with, consists of unfired clay.

I have arranged the following list of vessels in the following order for the sake of clarity. First, the most important vessels are described, which are not missing in any household and are used for cooking, as containers and for measuring.

Then follow variations of these forms, followed by the numerous vessels from which one drinks or eats or which are filled with food on ritual occasions. The fourth group is made up of vessels copied from Amhara models; compare also roof attachments, cooker forms and pipe bowls. *Tarwa* is a small round pot used for cooking cabbage and other vegetables and for measuring (Amharic *masero* or *menecat*, Oromifa *tuwe*). The next largest vessel is the *tugwa*, which measures four *tarwa* (Amharic *ensera*). It is used to fetch water and to store milk. Three *tugwa* in turn fill a *bataa*, which is used as a water or beer container (Amharic *gan*). The pot *lakwa* is a quarter smaller than the *bataa* and is used for the same purpose. *Safeta* or *safeta kere kerga* is a large flat cooking pot with a lid, used to cook good food, ensete porridge and the like (Amharic *dest*). *Basya* is what the Wolaita call a flat curved clay plate on which, covered by another plate, bread or ensete patties are baked.



Fig. 27: Potter at work near Tilge's house

Modifications of these forms include all the vessels that come into contact with milk and butter and therefore belong to the "honoured" pieces: *peso tarwa*, an almost spherical pot, used for storing buttermilk; *yeso tarwa*, slightly smaller than the previous one, with a longer neck, used for milking; usta *tarwa*, a small milk pot; *manatya*, about the size of the *tugwa* (see above) used for churning butter. *Cin'a* is a giant vessel the size of a *bataa,* decorated with ornamental beads.

A large number of vessels are used for eating and drinking. *Bitire* is the name given to two differently shaped drinking vessels decorated with geometric patterns, which are used by the old and the noble. *Kere* is a domed pot with a base, from which ensete porridge is eaten, hence "*muco kere"*. Its "brothers" are the similarly formed *somano kere* pots, decorated with ornamental carving and only brought out during *somano* celebrations and of which a pair always belongs together with two horn spoons (fig. *somano moke*). *Logomo* is the name given to the



Fig. 28: Potter at work near Tilge's house

most beautiful decorative pot with many ornamental beads and eight eyelets. It is filled with food and given as a present at big celebrations (later returned empty). Children-in-law bring their parents good food in it when they visit, and so on. The term *kuyle* or *kule* is used to describe a small earthenware bottle from which children drink milk and a round pot with a base similar to the *kere* (see above) which is used to store butter. *Satya* is the name given to the variously sized bowls with bases and prongs from which the family dines on festive occasions. The same purpose is served by the eating bowls called *fildwa*, of which I know of three types with different shallow or deep bowls and very long to very short feet.



Fig. 29: Ritual and eating bowls (somano kere) with horn spoons

The following vessels are copies of Amhara forms. *Wance* and *fincän* or *fingäl* are, as their Amharic-Arabic names indicate, replicas of the Amhara's horn-turned drinking and liquor cups. They are often decorated with pretty incised patterns in



Fig. 30: Drinking vessels

which white paint is painted. However, they did not prevail over the calabashes as drinking vessels. The vessels known as *makorkorya* are modelled on the Arabic brass jugs that not long ago found acceptance among the Amhara and in the Oromo kingdoms. Today, both jugs have had to give way to cheap aluminium vessels. They are remarkably hard and well-fired, as their handles and brackets are exposed to greater stress than the other vessels.

The coffee pot (*gabana*), which is now widespread throughout Ethiopia, is also an Arab import, as is coffee drinking. Since many Wolaita potters find it difficult to make the thin handle, the pot is often made without it.

A peculiar piece is the pot of the *sharecho* (i.e. the pseudo-shamans), who make a point of drawing attention to themselves through conspicuous clothing and inventory. It has two snouts. Unfortunately, I could not find out anything about the ritual background of this undoubtedly sacred object. Finally, there is the vessel (*kule*) with two necks used in the celebration for twins.

Calabashes and whistles

Apart from vessels made of clay, the Wolaita only know calabashes, which are used almost exclusively for drinking beer. The calabash (*kumeta*), filled to the brim with beer, is never missing from a sacrifice and is presented to the honoured guests as a drink of honour. Vessels made of other materials are not found among the Wolaita. The proximity of the Oromo, with their milk bottles woven from grass, their horn containers and their many wooden vessels, has not had a stimulating effect. The vessels made of clay are only used by people who are addicted to novelty or are kept for the sake of curiosity. Many calabashes are decorated

with tasteful firing patterns. The calabashes can be made by anyone and are used exclusively for domestic purposes. You will not find them in the markets.

The individual pieces are divided into calabashes with neck (*gose*) and without neck, the latter being less appreciated. The very large calabashes are used to fill with beer. If beer is given as a gift, the calabash is closed with a plug (*tucha*) of grass or ensete bast during transport. Where beer is served from giant pots or wooden tubs, large scooping calabashes with a round cut-out on the side (*bule*) or long calabashes cut in half are used for decanting into the drinking vessels. Smaller calabashes – oval or with a neck – are the drinking vessels that are the very personal possession of every respectable man who, if possible, does not drink his beer from any other vessel and who used to have his favourite cup carried forward by a slave when he was invited. Such vessels, which were also used in ritual, used to be covered with beads and kauri (*gozda gose*; cf. Bieber 1920:238). Spices are stored in very small calabashes or calabash tips (*kusha*); rarely the tips of cattle horns (*buda*) are used for this purpose.

The standpipe (*gaya*) consists of a long-necked calabash, a wooden tube (fixed in the calabash), a clay bowl (*konche)*, a movable pipe and a leather (rarely wooden) or ensete bead. Men of good age who are self-respecting may only smoke from this pipe, while women, the poor and young people may smoke the stick pipe (*argubbe*), which is mainly used when walking. The pipe of this pipe is firmly connected to a cow horn filled with water or beer, on which a small pipe is placed that carries the bowl of the pipe. A bulge in the bowl serves as a windbreak.

Only domestically grown tobacco is smoked, which is only very superficially fermented and comes to the market in long rolls. To suit the taste of Wolaita, it must be as strong and biting as possible. Mild tobacco prepared in the oriental way is therefore not appreciated. Every tobacco seller has several lit pipes next to his stand so that the buyer can immediately convince himself of the quality of the goods. The very moist tobacco, whose leaves are matted with others and resemble cow dung, does not burn by itself, so there must always be some smouldering charcoals on top of the pipe bowl. Rich people use beautifully crafted flat tongs (*kabiya*) to place the coals.

The Wolaita distinguish between two types of tobacco: the older Wolaita *tambo* (*Nicotiana rustica*) and the *tambo* (*Nicotiana tabacum*) adopted from the Jimma Oromo. They asserted that before becoming acquainted with tobacco, they smoked the leaves of an Echinops species (*borisa*) that grows particularly frequently in Kucha.

Wickerwork

The most important material for all weaving is ensete bast, i.e. either dried leaf sheaths (*susa*), which are used in wide rags or split open and made into strings (*woderwa*). Sticks of leaf sheaths are the most popular packaging material. Women going to market tie their goods (coffee, eggs, butter, vegetables) into handy balls with this material and pack everything in a very wide ball sheath, which is pulled up as a backpack and hung over the shoulder with strips of the same material. Leaf sheaths are also used to make seat cushions or pads between the roof and the centre pole. Twisted cords are used on countless occasions. Spliced bast serves as a towel.

The Hadiya bring the stiff, long containers made of ensete fibres (*korgo*) into the country. Knives and valuables are kept in them. Everything is placed in a very wide leaf sheath, which is taken up as a backpack and hung over the shoulders with strips of the same material (cf. Jensen 1959: plate 5.1).

Baskets made of spliced bamboo (large: *kesai*; small: *tiginke*) are used in the fields to carry plants and dung or in the market as measuring containers. Cigar-shaped tubes of the same mesh [i.e. bamboo], over two metres high and covered with cow dung, stand as granaries in the house. However, their distribution is limited as bamboo grows only in mountainous parts of Wolaita. Woven from bamboo leaf sheaths and reinforced with bamboo strips are the peculiar rain roofs found only in the Sore district on the west side of Mount Damota. The parasol made of the same material or palm leaves has become common in Wolaita.

In the case of the straw wickerwork, a distinction must be made between the items that originated in Wolaita and those that came with the Amhara. One of the old items is a round straw urn, irregularly shaped and up to one and a half metres wide, in which clothes and fabrics are kept. It is part of the dowry of every girl from a well-off family and is a joint gift from her friends, who work on it for weeks.

Flat plates made with edges (small: *kununa*; large: *samfa*) are used for working grain and for holding raw cotton and spindles during spinning, but not as eating plates as among the Amhara. Among the ancient wickerwork of the Wolaita are the sieves used for barley flour, teff and berbere with very narrow mesh (*banga zazarya*) and for ensete with wide meshes (*unca zazarya*). The rim of the sieves is woven from straw in the usual spiral technique, the meshes of the sieves are made from fine strings of ensete fibre. The beer strainer (*parso hofya*) is similar to a sieve, with a funnel-shaped rim made of straw and a bottom woven from ensete cords.

With the Amhara came the objects made of straw from which the members of this people eat or in which they store food or take it with them on journeys, such

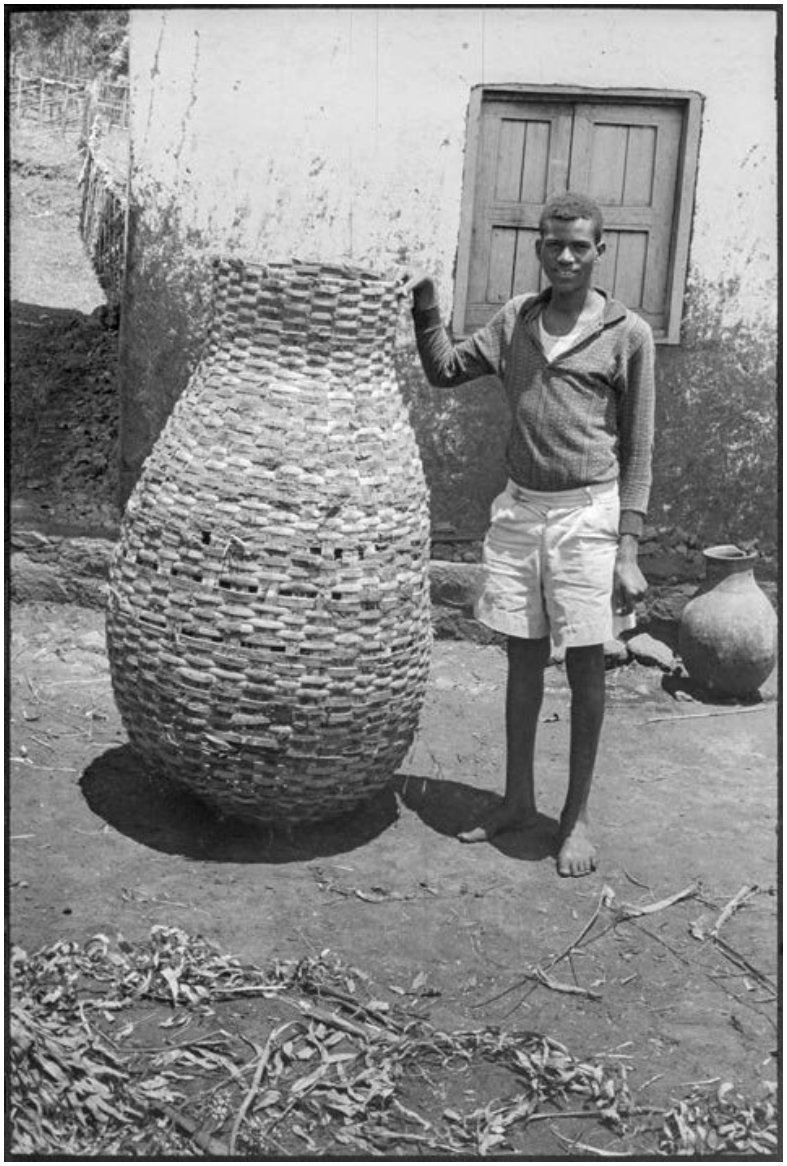


Fig. 31: Large urn

as the round table (*lemat*), the various large-lidded baskets (*masofe,* Amharic: *masob*) and the leather-covered carrying bags (*agelgel*). Such pieces are only found in the homes of the great ones who have adopted Amhara customs and like to entertain their guests on such straw tables. The Wolaita people still eat from clay bowls or from ensete leaves spread on the floor.

Leatherwork

Although leather work is one of the functions of the blacksmiths, the hunter-potters (*cinasha*) and the *wogachiya* (silversmiths) also make items from leather. The hunter-potters process the thick skin of the hippos they kill into leather whips. They also skin fallen cattle that no one wants to touch and slaughtered animals,

as rich people often leave the cutting to them after they have slaughtered them themselves.

The blacksmith leather workers are mainly tanners and produce the leather blankets used as bases for sitting or sleeping (tanned hide with hair: *itjya*, tanned leather: *irfanya,* leather bag: *ogoro*). The most popular among the Wolaita are smooth, soft leather blankets that have been given a yellow colour through tanning. However, the leather workers are not familiar with the decoration of these blankets with red paint in geometric patterns.

The skin is soaked in a lye of water, ash and salt for several days and then the hair is removed. The typical tanner's tool on the west side of the lake region – i.e. also in Wolaita – is a split cudgel into which a sharp obsidian splinter is inserted. Since the obsidian quickly becomes blunt when scraped, the tanner pulls it out from time to time and knocks off a narrow splinter, creating a new sharp edge. On the underside of the lakes, there is an artfully designed handle in which the splinter is embedded. Finally, the dehaired, cleaned, softly rolled leather is treated with the crushed and bruised fruits of the creeping nightshade (*bulwa*, *Solanum campylacanthu*).

Today, leather workers make straps from cowhide with which the mule loads are finished; in ancient times, there was no such thing as transport on animals. Starting from the outside, the leather worker cuts the whole hide in a spiral so that it is transformed into a single long strap. The most complicated work of the leather workers (blacksmiths) was the making of shields.

The *wogachiya* make horse harnesses and saddles. Although the Wolaita have been riding for a long time, the names of the different parts of the saddlery show that they are of Amhara origin, just like among the Oromo. As among the Amhara, the saddle has a back and a horn-like pommel. It is held in place by tail, belly and breast straps. The stirrups are small and only provide space for the big toe. The bridle with the ring bit (*lugamwa*) is covered with a decorative halter. Depending on the wealth of the owner, the saddle, girth, bridle and halter bear rich ornaments of braided leather straps (piercing technique), brass fittings and brass discs with phallic attachments. The leather of the horse harness is not dyed, as is the case with the Amhara. A thick fleece from the highland sheep serves as a saddle cover. The treatment of the predator skins worn by the heroes was also part of the *wogachiya*'s work. Rich people had *smata,* the edge of the skins decorated with strips of silver plate.

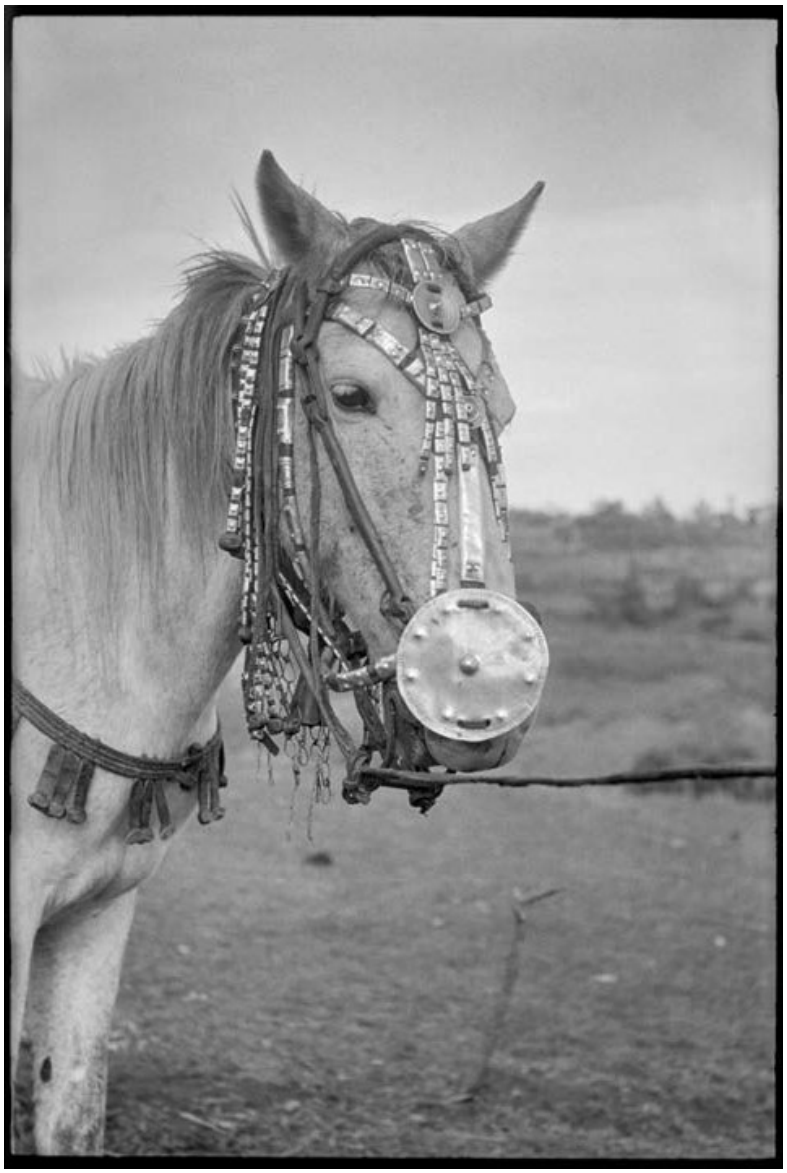


Fig. 32: Wolaita horse headdress

Musical instruments

The most important musical instruments belonged to the king until 1894 and were only played by the potters, the king's musicians, at his command. This was done in the morning and evening to indicate to the country the ruler's awakening and falling asleep, during the king's rides, proclamations and great plagues. The king could give the order to play at the funeral of a great person as a special honour. Today, many potters earn their living by travelling around the country in groups and playing at weddings and funerals for a fee.

The royal instruments included, as the most distinguished piece, the big drum (*nagarita*), in the form of the Amhara king's and priest's drum. This drum was only played on very special occasions.

The potters used to be allowed to play the "potter's drum" at their own funerals. It is roughly cylindrical in shape and tapers slightly towards both sides. This drum is carried across the chest on a rope and beaten with the hands on both sides.

The wind players form a band. Their instruments are the trumpets (*tcaca zäyift*), which are about two metres long, made of wooden tubes, pieces of bamboo and leather cuffs and held in a daredevil position. The king trumpet (*malkata*, Amharic: *malakat*) differs from the other trumpets by having a much larger mouthpiece and a long bell made of euphorbia wood. The most striking wind instrument of the Wolaita is the trumpet (*dinkiya*) that is up to 5 metres long and held vertically and made of a bamboo tube with two antelope horns pushed into each other as the sound box.

Besides these "sacred" instruments, the profane ones hardly play a role. The clay pot drums (*karabya*) are a popular means of entertainment for the women, who sit separately from the men at the best times and spend the nights clapping their hands and singing in monotonous rhythm. If there is no drum at hand, a clay pot covered with a piece of leather is sufficient. The five-stringed lyre, widespread among the old peoples, is rarely seen in Wolaita, and the bamboo flute (*sulälya*) is also not popular. It is almost only played by shepherd boys.

Miscellaneous

Various objects, some of which have already been mentioned, form elements known to the Wolaita today but have only recently arrived in the country. They can be attributed to cultural contact with Jimma and Kaffa, just as one cannot overestimate the influence of these countries on southern Ethiopia.

From Jimma come the beautiful products of woodcarving and woodturning (attributed to Arab influence and otherwise unknown in Ethiopia), such as the large chairs and stools hewn from one piece, the turned wooden boxes and the round stand boxes.

One type of neck rest (*borkota*) with an openwork base is an element of the Hadiya (also found among the Sidaama and Arsi), while another type, with one leg and a conical base, comes from Jimma or Kaffa. The same shape is known from ancient Egypt and from the Bedja.

A widespread object in Ethiopia is the glass drinking vessel in the shape of a small carafe, which everywhere bears the Arabic name *birille* and is mainly used for drinking honey wine. A hundred-year-old (according to its owner) piece of flat shape with a diamond pattern was broken before my eyes before I could photograph it. A hundred years ago, most of these bottles came to Ethiopia from

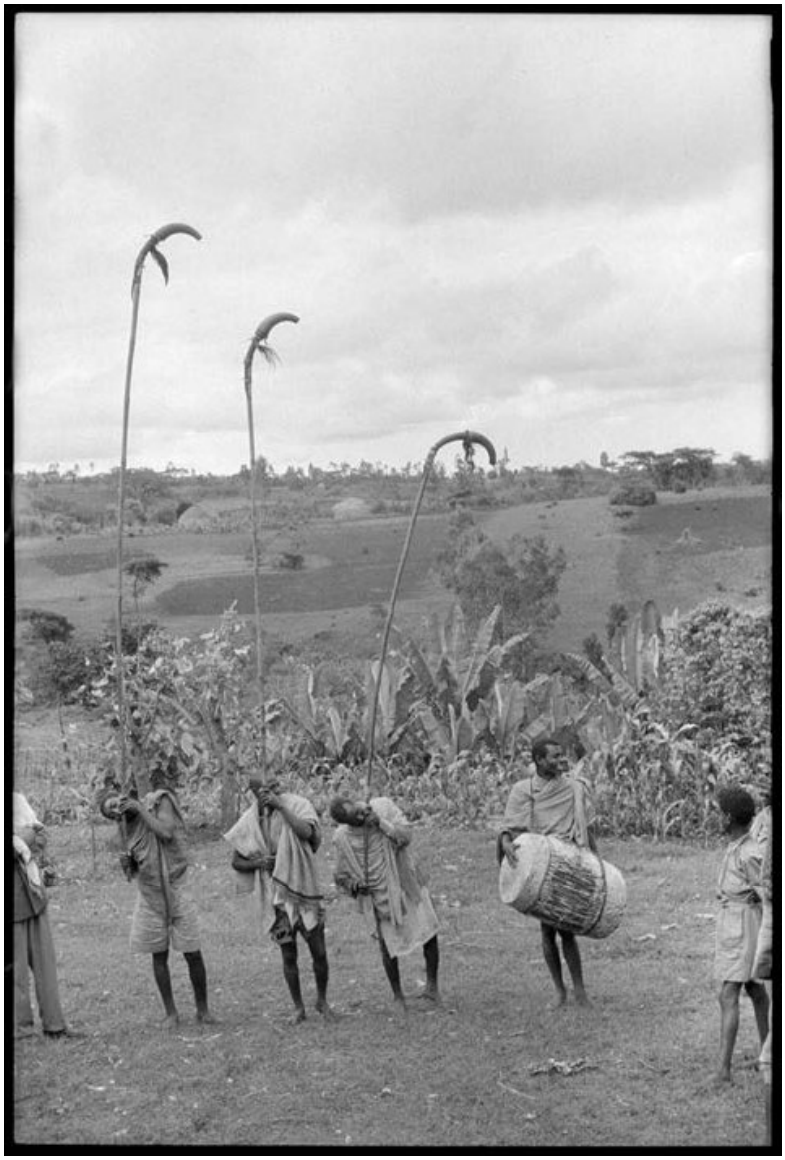


Fig. 33: Pottery chapels. Chapel with three trumpets held vertically and the potter's drum

Basra via Massaua (Rüppell 1838/1840:194 f., 282), before that, in Bruce's time, also from Trieste (Bruce 1790, II: 649, 670).

The beautiful horn cups of the Amhara and Jimma Oromo with their covers of colourful pattern are only used by rich Wolaita, who are said to resemble the Amhara. Jimma objects are the painted cattle skins, the boxes woven from coloured straw, tables, plates, the peculiar cylindrical containers for the coffee cups and the sunshades. The utensils used to make coffee are now firmly part of the cultural inventory of the Wolaita. The coffee pot and the wooden board for placing the cups are made in the country, while the tiny porcelain cups still come from India or Japan.

Economy and nutrition

by Elisabeth Pauli

Farming

Since Wolaita agriculture is dealt with in a special chapter written by Wolfgang Kuls, only some general cultural-historical and ethnographic information will be given here.

The influence of the Tigre also had an impact on the economy. Although most of the Wolaita remained small and medium farmers, a layer of wealthy landowners was formed alongside them, thus creating a stratification of the people into wealth classes unknown in the rest of southern Ethiopia. There, is little differentiation in terms of wealth, and even the sub-chiefs do not own much more than the others. Common wealth was considered a desirable ideal in Wolaita, especially because – like heroic deeds – it gave its owner a respected social position. But it is only the coincidence of heroism and wealth that forms the ideal image of the perfect human being. Thus, land, the income from the fields and the ownership of large herds of cattle are not so much loved for their own sake – the chthonic attachment of the ancient peoples to their earth and the intimate love of the Oromo for his cattle are something completely foreign to the Wolaita – but as a symbol of social prestige: one wants to show that one is rich. Big festivities with lavish invitations that swallow up half the harvest, the giving away of food and cattle and the slaughtering of cattle increase the prestige and merit of the rich in the eyes of his fellow citizens (compare Haberland 1963). The richest of all the Wolaita, and at the same time the one who gave the most generously, was the king, who therefore had to increase his possessions again and again in the course of Wolaita history through new conquests, as these dwindled away through donations in the years of peace.

Presumably, the influences of two different Ethiopian cultures overlap and intensify among the Wolaita: the merit system (based on wealth and killing) of the megalithic peoples and the chivalric-feudal world and the estates system of the Amhara and Tigray. The relationship of agriculture to livestock is such that in the eyes of the indigenous people, livestock is emotionally valued more highly as an

expression of wealth, although everyone is aware that agriculture is the livelihood of the people.

This appreciation of land and livestock ownership goes hand in hand with very rational and intensive agriculture, at least by Ethiopian standards. For example, the Wolaita are one of the few Ethiopian peoples who know how to fertilise their land and keep some of their livestock indoors. Since ancient times, all land has been private property (without prejudice to the king's overlordship) with precisely defined boundaries, the violation of which was punishable by law. The realisation of the advantages of a certain crop rotation ensures high yields. In the mountains (Kindo and Koysha), in addition to the "real" terraces, which are intended to create level field surfaces, "false" ones are also built, i.e. the stones of the sloping fields are piled up to form long terrace-like ramparts. When, after two or three years, the soil between the ramparts is exhausted, they are moved and the soil under the stones, enriched by the leaching of minerals, is cultivated for the same period of time.



Fig. 34: "False" terraces in Kindo with millet, yams and taro

Above all, it was the existence of slavery on a large scale that made rational, planned economic activity possible. According to Wolaita levies, slaves once made up almost a third of the population, and even smaller farmers called a slave family their own. The advantage of this free labour force, which had to provide for its own livelihood on its own fields, does not need to be particularly emphasised: one was thus not only dependent on family members at harvest time, could send cattle to the great imperial pastures, and could cultivate fields in different areas far away from the homestead. It was the ambition of every larger farmer to own fields in the country – in the Bilate valley or at Lake Abaya – because there he could not only find undisturbed grazing opportunities and good watering places for his cattle, but also the coveted cotton grown, which did not thrive in the midlands.

Therefore, when the land of Middle Wolaita was taken and the district boundaries were defined, great care was taken to ensure that each district of Damot county was given a marginal strip on Lake Abaya. Wealthier farmers always had a few slaves in the lowlands who tended the cattle and cultivated the fields, one of whom went to his master every week with butter, milk and produce from the fields. Their permanent residences and families were, of course, at their owner's homestead. In the lowlands they lived in huts near the cattle kraals or in the fields. Incidentally, in the lowlands the boundaries were precisely marked by thorn hedges and stone walls, so that even in the wasteland there were no plots whose ownership was not precisely defined.

The drastic effect of the abolition of slavery can be seen in the fact that today the lowlands are used much less than in the past. Thanks to the importation of cheap cotton fabrics, many cotton fields have been abandoned. Even the experimental cotton fields that were established on the excellent soil by the lake during the Italian period have been overgrown by bush again. In many cases, Sidaama have established their cattle kraals down there, and they graze their animals together with the Wolaita, to whom they pay fees for the use of the pasture.

Despite the transformation of agriculture by the Tigre, the importance of ensete (*uta*) as the economically and emotionally most important plant remained untouched. As with the ancient peoples, it is the "good mother" who always gives everyone enough food and never disappoints. Although at most one fifth of the fields of an ordinary farmer is cultivated with ensete (with larger farmers this proportion is even smaller), every Wolaita, when asked about the most important plant on his land, will unhesitatingly name ensete. After building a new house, the first thing to be done is to plant the ensete grove, which surrounds the homestead protectively on three sides. Unfortunately, the Wolaita, like the ancient peoples, could not provide much information about the religious significance of this plant.

In Wolaita too, the ensete is a plant of the female principle; it was probably once closely associated with the earth goddess. The Wolaita speak of it in the feminine gender, while taro and yams are masculine, as are most other plants. Only the potato is an exception. Working with the ensete is the women's business, as is fertilising and harvesting the tuber crops, while the grain belongs to the male domain. Only the hoeing and "killing" of the ensete must be done by men. This peculiar expression is used to describe the halving of the tuber of a cut-down perennial before putting it back in the ground so that it germinates young shoots, which are then separated and set (compare also Ehrmann 1793/1794). The Wolaita do not associate any other ideas with this expression, which foreshadows so many connections. In religious life, the ensete appears a hundred times, for example, in haircutting, as a substitute for burying living children, in circumcision, etc. Two

superimposed leaves, which are then called *erge*, are the most common underlay for all sacrifices.

The ensete is the only plant that has a "spirit" (or daimon – *eka*). A certain shrub of the *mazya* kind is consecrated to him and stands next to the front door and is considered his seat. Its existence brings blessings to the whole grove. Like the cattle, this ensete is called *baka uta*. When the shrub blossoms and one has to cut it down, one plants a new ensete of the same species next to it beforehand and prays, "Let your spirit pass to this plant!" A feast is prepared from the uprooted plant. Every year at the new moon at the beginning of the third month (mid-November), one cooks porridge (*muco*) from the stored fine flour (*itima*) of the cut-down ensete, places some of it on the new plant and prays, "Help all ensete to grow!"

Apart from food, the ensete is used in many other ways. The green leaves serve as a base or packaging for various occasions, the dried leaf sheaths and the dissolved fibre are processed into cords, braids and the like.

This will be followed by some remarks on the most important crops and their cultural-historical age. Apart from ensete (*uta*), the plants cultivated in Wolaita since ancient times include: taro (*boyna,* the most popular of all tuberous fruits), yams (*boye*, with several underground and overground species), coleus (*dönua* or Wolaita *dönua,* cultivated only in the highlands) and a carrot-like tubers (üsuse), which are hardly planted today.

In the highlands, "black" barley (*banga*), wheat (*giste*) and emmer (*kambara*, rare) were the ancient cereal species; in the midlands, red millet (*maldo*). A type of maize (*madoye*) with small angular grains is also said to have been cultivated long before other species were adopted. The common name for maize is *badalla*. *Poa abyssinica* (*gashiya*) used to be used only as infant food and horse feed. A distinction was made between a red (*säye*) and a black (*metazo*) species. Wolaita opinions differ as to whether eleusine (*fargice*) is also an ancient plant or came from Jimma. It is grown in the lowlands and provides the best malt for beer.

Tree cabbage (*santa, Brassica carinata*) is grown in large quantities (names of the different species: *boza, dangi, matya*). The leaves of a certain *Solanum* species (*bulwa santa*) were also eaten like cabbage. The cabbage tree (*halako, Moringa stereopetala*) is only found in the lowlands around Lake Abaya, also in Duguna and in Kindo. In terms of legumes, only a white bean species (*eka wohya*) was known in the past. Onions (*sunkrutwa* or *sunkurto*) and garlic (*tumwa*) are also ancient field crops. The banana (*tora uta* – "spear ensete", *Musa paradisiaca*) is said to have been known since ancient times and was eaten, pounded, by wounded people, hence the name. Today, the Arabic word *muz* is used for eating bananas, as it is throughout Ethiopia. The lemon grows wild on the Omo (in the Sale district of Boloso) and is a popular festive gift for children. It is not used in the

kitchen. Its Arabic name, *lome*, indicates that it was probably introduced a long time ago and then spread on its own, just like the peach (*kok*, from the Arabic *hauh*) which grows wild in some areas. Coffee (*tuke*) is said to have come from Kucha only in 1820. Ginger (*yengelo*) and red pepper (*bambariya*) are ancient spices, i.e. indigenous since time immemorial but of Oriental and New World origin respectively. Other ancient crops worth mentioning are: cotton (*futo*) and tobacco (*Wolaita tambo – Nicotiana rustica*).

Through contact with the Oromo kingdom of Jimma, which was strengthened by the marriage of King Gobe to the sister of Sultan Abbu Gifar, a number of plants previously unknown to the Wolaita entered the country, in addition to other cultural goods. These included the potato (*galla donua*, as distinct from *Coleus Wolaita donua*), several types of maize (*badalla*), the tomato (*tomätim*), various beans (*zö'o wöhya*), lentils (*misir*), broad beans (*bakelya*), peas (*atarya*), safflower (*süfya, Carthamus tinctorius*), edible pumpkin (*lelehya*) various spices, including coriander (*korarima)* and sugar cane (*sonkora*).

Introduced by the Amhara were: the sweet potato (*sukar*, a large round variant, *kirbo*, an elongated variant, *maske*), chickpea (*sumbura)*, eucalypthus (*barzäfya*, as became a character tree in Shoa) and foxtail (*gagabso*, mainly used as medicine and eaten in or as porridge). Around 1930, the Capuchin Father Pascal planted papaya and sweet cassava in his famous garden at Ancuco, from where they spread all over central Wolaita. Oil fruits are still hardly cultivated.

Nutrition

Since no Ethiopian people know such an abundance of cultivated plants as the Wolaita, their menu is the richest. They are also among the few Ethiopian peoples who – like the Amhara and Tigray – have a developed culinary art. Although the diet of many southern Ethiopians is not as monotonous as that of the Oromo, whose diet is limited to boiled and roasted cereal grains, boiled or roasted meat, sour milk and raw wild fruits, they usually content themselves with merely boiling the tubers, making the cereals into bread or porridge and seasoning these simple dishes with a sauce of cabbage, red pepper or butter. Among the Wolaita, the influence of the highland Ethiopians has also had an effect on the cuisine, so that they know a number of dishes that are prepared in a complicated way and are also palatable to Europeans. The ordinary farmer, who like all Ethiopians is very modest and moderate in his eating, is, however, content with the above-mentioned cooked plants and a simple supplement as everyday food. At the rare feasts, he can devour unbelievable quantities.

Meat was eaten less frequently in the past than it is today. Now it is also possible for the poor to get a piece for a few pennies from the many butchers who spread their wares on ensete leaves in every marketplace. Meat prices are low even by southern Ethiopian standards: a kilo of beef cost about 50 pennies in 1955.

Although the Wolaita are generally better fed and more diversified than other southern Ethiopians, there are very many families where food is scarce because they have little arable land and find it difficult to find other ways of earning a living. Of the children, it is considered proverbial that they are always hungry.

The menu of the small farmers in the district where I lived was roughly as follows. For breakfast, which is very often skipped, they only have a cup of salted coffee with boiled, puffed or roasted grains. At lunchtime, ensete flatbreads with cabbage or red pepper are usually eaten. For the main meal in the late evening, around 10 p.m., one enjoys maize or millet flatbreads with smoked cabbage and some beer or buttermilk.

Ensete is still the most important food crop, and the Wolaita, like the Gedeo and Gurage, are masters in its fermentation and further preparation. However, no ensete is exported, as its cultivation just covers the Wolaita's own needs. The Wolaita distinguish countless species of ensete according to size, appearance and growth period. The majority need about six to eight years to flower. Some species, which are said to originate from Gamo, flower after only two or three years, like the perennial called *gefetäno,* which grows only two metres high.

It is considered desirable to cut down the ensete only after it has flowered and begun to wither, but only very rich farmers have such extensive plantations that they can afford this luxury. Often the perennials are cut down a year or two before they reach maturity, when they have reached a certain size. First, the leaf veins and leaf sheaths are taken apart, until the perennial is completely disintegrated. The leaf veins are cut into suitable pieces half a metre long and tied with a string to the top of a mighty plank standing vertically that serves as an ensete board (*oteta* or *gonge*). The pieces are scraped out with a bamboo splitter (*maylya*). The woman stands while working; holding the ensete with the feet, as by many peoples, is unknown.

This [scraped out] mass is called *uncya* (*koco* in Amharic); often all scraped and fermented parts of the ensete are also called *uncya.* The pulp is first pounded in green leaves for a few days. Then fresh ensete leaves are dried over the fire (*lole*), and a trough is lined with them. Place the large board over it, put the wet porridge on it and start tamping it with your feet until the liquid that collects in the pit is squeezed out. After two hours, a starch-like flour will have settled at the bottom (*itima*), which is the finest substance extracted from the ensete and will keep indefinitely. It is mixed with water and baked on a pan to form thin patties or boiled with butter to form porridge (*muco*).

The pressed leaf pulp (*uncya*) is then left to ferment for several weeks or months, depending on the substance to be obtained, either alone or mixed with the crushed tuber in a pit lined with leaves and later sealed in the ensete grove, until an edible mass is produced, which is kept in a deep pit in the house. The pulp from the crushed and fermented tuber is called *godeta*. It is used to make thin patties and thick bread-like cakes. Before baking, the fermented pulp is squeezed again, cut into small pieces on a board with a knife, sieved to remove the fibrous residues and mixed with water.

There are also countless variations on the preparation of ensete, one of which I would like to describe. The leaf ribs of a certain, still young ensete species (*fura*) are buried for a week, whereby they develop – according to the Wolaita – a wonderful smell. The tuber of this perennial is hollowed out a little, filled with the crushed ribs and fragrant grass and completely wrapped in green leaves. "After a week, you can smell the good smell far away in the neighbourhood." After two or three weeks, you open the leaves. The whole inside of the tuber has become soft due to the addition of the fermented ribs. Both substances are mixed together, pressed out and then form a seasoning called *gama*, which is added to all other substances extracted from the ensete to give them a good taste.

Tubers: Taro, yams, coleus, more recently also potatoes and sweet cassava are boiled and eaten with a sauce of cabbage and onions or red pepper and salt. Taro boiled and fried in butter or dumplings made of yam flour (*ficata*) are the food of rich people.

An important folk food is cabbage, which forms a popular side dish when boiled in salt water or mixed with other dishes. Red pepper, whether in powdered form or as a green pod,is used only as a spice. Beans and other pulses always appear on the table in the form of *koka* (poached and cooked, *nefro* in Amharic), occasionally baked with ensete. They are not kept for long but consumed immediately after harvesting.

Wild fruits have never played a role in the diet of the Wolaita – unlike the Oromo – but form an additional food of the poor, shepherds and children. The most important of these plants are: *eta* (fig of sycamore), *oca* (plum of *Sizygium*), *lade* (berry of *Carissa edulis), hengera* (a type of blackberry), *gasa* (fruit of *Pygeum*), *mula ho* (a *Solanum* species), *lome* (lemon) and *hagela* (a fruit supposedly similar to citron). The Wolaita also eat mushrooms (*morsa*), which are an abomination to most Ethiopians.

Only the three domestic animals, cattle, sheep and goats, are considered as meat food (*ashuwa*), as there is practically no game and poultry, eggs and fish are considered unclean, as is the case everywhere in southern Ethiopia. Even the Christian Wolaita still observe these commandments in many cases. The brain, lungs, spleen and udders of domestic animals are not eaten, but it is claimed that

the artisans also eat these parts. It is known throughout Ethiopia that it is a special proof of the shamefulness of the craftsmen that they eat unclean things. Testicles, a prised power food among the Amhara, are disdained.

A respectable man eats, if possible, only the meat of animals killed by himself or by friends with the slaughter cut. Animals stillborn or fallen in other ways are rejected by respectable people, as is the meat of animals slaughtered by those of other faiths, craftsmen or slaves (common Ethiopian). Yet a respectable man is content to kill the animal and then leave the gutting and butchering to others, including slaves and artisans. Allegedly, the cutting up of slaughtered animals was one of the special functions of the potter-hunters. Poor people, craftsmen and slaves also eat fallen or stillborn animals. Apart from the three domestic animals, "pure" animals are considered to be most antelopes, buffaloes and, peculiarly, the locust, which is disdained by many Ethiopians. Malicious neighbours like the Guji claim that among the Wolaita and Amarro, the invasion of a swarm of locusts would be celebrated like a festival and everyone would dance around shouting "*bole, bole*" ("locust, locust"). All other animals, including the giraffe, are considered unclean, but the potter-hunters are said to eat hippopotamus and wild boar.

Meat is roasted on the fire or boiled in water. Meat broth (*camba*) is used for finer dishes. Rarely, dried meat (*zaledo* or *tukwa*) is prepared. Raw meat used to be eaten only by the great warriors, who – like the Amhara – used bile as a seasoning. Even today, eating raw meat is not as popular as among the Amhara, who were already famous for it in the Middle Ages (compare Makrizi in Ehrmann 1793/1794, II: 269).

Milk (*mata*) is scarce, given the scarcity of pasture. Even in ancient times, it was not a common people's food as among the Oromo, as the herds grazed far away from the dwellings in the lowlands or on the great plains and only the butter (*oysa*) was collected. The milk is strongly flavoured with fragrant herbs such as mint (*kusay*) and drunk mainly sour. A tasty drink is made from whey and scraped onions. Butter is used for nutritional purposes; it is added to porridge and vegetables or drunk melted by rich and sick people. The curd cheese (*fila*), which is not known in southern Ethiopia, is probably due to Amhara influence. It is made by boiling milk, like Italian ricotta.

Beer (*parso*) is the national drink of the Wolaita. The most popular is the porridge-like thick and nutritious beer or beer made from millet or maize with an addition of barley malt. A very thin beer is *zara* made from millet and barley malt. *Geso* was the name given to the thin Amhara barley or wheat beer. It owes its name to the Amharic word for *Rhamnus prinoides*, whose wood and leaves are used to ferment Amhara beer (and honey wine). Beer is the most common offering and must be offered from a calabash (*kumeta*) filled to the brim. Honey wine (*esa*

= honey) is still rarely drunk, although its consumption has not been a prerogative of the Tigre since 1894.

Coffee (*tuke*) was also said to be drunk only by the Tigre in the past, but without being one of their exclusive prerogatives. Its cultivation, once minimal, is now increasing year by year in view of the coffee boom in Gedeo. It is said to have been introduced from Kucha only during the reign of King Ogato (1790–1822), though it remains unclear whether one means the knowledge of drinking it or the plant itself. (The latter is unlikely, as wild coffee is said to exist in Koysha and Kindo). In former times, as in the whole of southern Ethiopia, people only drank coffee "tea" (*tuke* or *hayta* = leaf), i.e. a decoction of the shrubs' leaves and some green cherries (Straube 1963). A number of spices are added to this drink, of which *yengelo* (ginger), *kusaröte* (a mint), *suko* (*Trigonella foenum graecum*), *kefo* (*Lippia adoensis* or rosemary), *katkäla (Foenivulum)* and *talötya* (*Rutea bracteosa*) are the best known. The Arabic name *buna* is first used for coffee cherries stewed in butter – a popular dish among the Oromo – and then also for coffee prepared in the Arabic way from roasted and pounded beans. This way of drinking coffee and the ritual associated with it was previously unknown to non-Islamic Ethiopians, including the Amhara. This is also evidenced by the vessels associated with the preparation of coffee: the coffee pot with the Arabic name *gabana*, the cups with the likewise Arabic name *sini* or *fingan*, which come from India or Japan. Drinking coffee requires a precisely defined ritual; it is only poured again when everyone has finished drinking and placed their cups on a carved board. Coffee must never be enjoyed without some food (*bika*), even if only a few grains are nibbled symbolically; furthermore, incense is supposed to be burnt while drinking.

Salt does not occur in Wolaita. Therefore, salt merchants from Kofale used to be of such importance in Arsi that they were even given free passage during war. The coarse, black Borana salt was brought by Gamo people. The main spice is still red pepper, as well as ginger, coriander, cumin, nigella, etc. Most spices only came to Wolaita from Jimma around 1860 with the famous Queen Digite from Jimma, who planted the first herb garden there. *Celastrus*, which grows wild in the mountains, is only eaten by sorcerers (*sharecho*) or Arabs.

Finally, some dishes must be mentioned for which the cooking of the Wolaita is so famous. Like the *wat* of the Amhara and the *ketfo* of the Gurage, they always consist of a goulash-like porridge (*sulso*). The most popular food is *kocköco*, which is composed of minced meat, cabbage, green peppers, garlic, onions, spices and butter. *Wotaya* consists of curd, barley flour (which has been pre-cooked), cabbage, meat and spices. *Bunceca* is roasted millet flour to which butter and spices have been added. *Gurdo* and *posamo* are the same, but made from barley and maize respectively. Cabbage is not only simply cooked in salted water, but also

squeezed after cooking, mashed, mixed with butter and stewed again. *Poa* flour cooked in milk and butter is considered the best food for children.

When eating, people sit on ensete leaves on the ground or on low clay benches and reach with their hands into the food spread on leaves or in clay bowls. Only rich and respected people use beautifully carved horn spoons (*mökya*) or forks made of bamboo (*mutya* single-pronged, *koncya* three-pronged) – these for taro. The parents eat with the adult children; the young children, formerly also the house slaves, are fed afterwards. The meals are rather quick and unceremonious and lack the trained ceremonial of the Amhara. It has already been mentioned that it is good manners to eat with the mouth open and to smack one's lips.

Livestock

The cattle breeding of the Wolaita has its characteristic elements in the view of cattle as a measure of wealth and prestige and in the relatively rational use. The sacred herds (*bakra*) are an element that I am not familiar with from the rest of Ethiopia and about which I cannot make any generally valid statements.

Today, most farmers have few livestock – about six to eight animals per house (cows and a yoke of oxen for ploughing) and a few calves. In the past, apart from the rich (whose huge herds disappeared during the Amhara conquest), there used to be more on average, firstly because there was more land and thus more fallow land, so that the animals found enough pasture near the house, and secondly because slavery allowed some of the livestock to be sent to the lowlands or to the large imperial pastures.

Although the animals are kept indoors at night because of the cold night air in the Centre and Highlands and even spend several hours in the stable during the greatest midday heat, one cannot really speak of actual stable keeping, since the animals have to look for most of their food outside, and only small amounts (ensete waste or weeds that have been pulled up in the fields) are fed in the stable. Only when the grasslands and fallows of one's own property are completely overgrazed are the animals kept in the barn for a few days, although it is almost impossible to get enough fodder for them. Haymaking is not common. In front of many houses, one sees parts of the lawn protected by small fences behind which the grass is supposed to grow, so that one always has a reserve of fodder that is fed green when needed. Despite the low number of cattle per capita, the few grassy areas available in the overpopulated midlands are completely overgrazed, so that severe erosion damage is already occurring. Milk is very expensive.

The economic use of livestock is, measured by European standards, very low, but in comparison with the Oromo it is still significant. While the Oromo have

an idolatrous love for their animals and, if possible, never slaughter them, the rationally thinking Wolaita looks at his livestock with completely different eyes. That is why he slaughters or sells his animals without hesitation when it seems opportune. Only the owners of very large herds used to consciously save their animals if they wanted to secure the right to hold a festival of merit by reaching a certain number (a hundred or a thousand). But even then, the cattle are a pure measure of wealth and give the owner the opportunity to show off just as he does with his many slaves. Cattle are also exchanged without further ado. If one needs a fat ox for a festival, one gives two heifers in exchange, and so on.

Compared to the very intimate relationship between humans and animals and the developed cattle ritual of the neighbouring Oromo, the "cattle complex" – apart from the "sacred" herds – is not very developed among the Wolaita. Only the clans originating from Hadiya and Kucha, among them especially the Mugerüta, are known for taking things seriously that the other Wolaita do not, such as the ban on pouring milk into clay pots.

A ceremonial tasting (*tera*) is known for the first milk. When a cow has given birth, it may only be milked by its owner. He collects the milk for a week and tastes it on the ninth day. Before tasting, he says three times, "*Kaciafe goynafe mata*!" ("It should be milked from the tail and the horn!"). All the neighbours receive samples of the milk in small pots (*küile*). If the owner is not there when the cow calves, the shepherd in charge asks a "pure" boy (*kala*) to touch the cow's udder symbolically, then he may milk. He collects the milk for a week and sends it to the owner. If two people have a cow together, they often let the *kala* boy taste the milk to avoid quarrelling.

Just as the ban on bringing milk into contact with clay is only observed by the clans who migrated from Kucha, only they see to it that milk does not come into contact with other food. If, for example, milk gets on the large ensete board, they throw it away, and they throw food away if a drop of breast milk falls into the pot from the breast of the woman preparing the meal. All Wolaita are careful not to boil milk.

Other cattle breeding elements include the calf doll (*gasa,* all bellows, also hunting trophies are called this), a completely stuffed calf skin with sticks in the legs that is doused with milk and sprinkled with salt before being shown to the cow. Cow blowing (with the mouth) is rarely practised. A bundle wrapped in ensete bast is stuffed into the vagina of a cow that does not produce much milk and left there until the milk flows more abundantly. Inside is a mixture of crushed grass, red pepper and a herb called *gullo*.

Although you know the number of your cattle, you never officially count them, except at merit feasts. They pay little attention to the behaviour of the cattle. Only when a cow often roars like a bull does everyone become horrified and say: "Now

comes the time when women will behave like men and take the reins from them." Those who can afford it slaughter the cow, poor people sell it far away.

Some people, but only very few, practise ear pruning, not as a mark of ownership but because the cattle then multiply better. If the father started it, the sons continue the custom for all eternity, because they fear that the cattle will die if they do not cut them. I was only shown three very simple marks: *zida*, the tip of the ear is cut off; *masko* ("apron"), the ear is split by a longitudinal cut; *maseta*, a half-round is cut out of the upper half. Little attention is paid to the different colours (except for the sacrifice) and shapes of the horns. There is a special name for cattle with diametrically directed horns, but the owner is indifferent to the existence of such an animal.

The horse was held in the highest esteem by this chivalrous culture. Now, under Amhara influence, it has been completely replaced in this esteem by the mule. Officially, it is said that the horse came with the Tigre, just as the military superiority of the Tigre over the Old Wolayita is attributed to their cavalry. But another tradition reports that the Wolaitamala came from the mountains on horseback together with other "mala" clans. A good horse was essential for any hero, and a famous warhorse was the most coveted gift the king could give to a deserving warrior. Even today, families know which of their ancestors received the horse Lesesso from the king around 1800, for example. Also, people still call themselves by their favourite horse, e.g. Moyzo *göda* (Lord of the horse Moyzo), as a name of honour.

The most important breeding area for horses is the cool Koysha, as the Ethiopian horse thrives best in the highlands and becomes easily susceptible in the lowlands, often even in the low mountains. To refresh the local breed, horses have long been brought from Kambata and Sasago, a famous horse country between Gurage and Arsi.

Some famous war horses were said to have a special daimon (*ayana*) because their rider was always happy in war and hunting. As a sacrifice to this spirit, and to protect the animal from the evil eye, a black goat was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled over the horse. As a permanent protection, a long strip of the sacrificed goat's belly fur was hung around the animal's neck.

Although the mule came with the Tigre as a royal riding animal, it only became known in larger quantities through contact with Jimma. Since there were no donkeys in Wolaita until the middle of the last [nineteenth] century, it is likely that the mules brought by the Tigre found no successors for lack of breeding opportunities. The Wolaita also report that all the people converged when the first mules came from Jimma under King Ogato.

There is nothing of importance to mention about the other domestic animals. Sheep are only found in the highlands of Koysha, where they still find enough

pasture. The climate in the midlands does not suit them, as they belong to the highland breed (brown-red coat and long thin tail). The black and white lowland sheep (Somali sheep) with the thick short fat tail is not found in Wolaita. The goat, which would tolerate the climate of the midlands, is absent there because it causes too much damage in the densely populated area. The myth tells that the goat came with the sorcerers (*kalicha*). Wolaita was one of the few countries in southern Ethiopia that knew the domestic cat (*garawa*). It is completely absent in neighbouring Konta (Piccaia 1940:22) and is also rare in Kaffa and Amhara. It is said that they were only kept by the rich "so that mice would not gnaw up bridles and saddles".

The kingship

by Eike Haberland

Like the entire culture, the kingship of the Wolaita – like that of the Kaffa – stands on the threshold between the northern Ethiopian highland culture and the peoples of the southwest, among which many Ometo peoples must also be counted. Unlike the Kaffa or Yem, however, where the old substance of "divine kingship" has been preserved in its most important elements despite many influences and migrations from the north, surprisingly little of this has remained in Wolaita – just as little as in the Ethiopian empire. Yet, as in the Ethiopian imperial ceremonial, there are still enough traits to indicate with certainty that a "sacred" kingship once existed here as well. The reasons for this are of various natures. The early introduction of Christianity – for one must reckon with this, whether the legendary Motolomi really resided in Wolaita or not – did not encourage elements that could not be reconciled with Christian moral precepts. Christianity set up a different model of kingship than the one that had prevailed until then and thus also strongly influenced the formation of the consciousness of the entire people. The figure of the holy king as it appears among the ancient peoples of the southwest, still completely entrenched in myth, of supernatural origin and as a living embodiment of the cosmic forces responsible for the balance of the world, has given way in Wolaita to a quite secular rulership, whose representative is still the chief priest of his people and performs the great state sacrifices, but whose most important functions lie in the purely political sphere. The first requirement of the king, to be a *rex justus*, clearly betrays the power of the Christian image of the king, which is still influential after centuries of paganism.

A further inhibiting factor for the preservation of the sacred kingship was that the Tigre, who immigrated around 1600 and founded the dynasty that still rules today, belonged at best to the nobility (*makwannent*) in their old homeland (Agame or Temben), if they were not of simple origin. The preconditions for the creation of a myth were therefore poor; it was different with the peoples whose ruler boasted, for example, of descent from the Solomonids or one of their side lines from Manz in Shoa. Nor did the highly developed historical consciousness of the Wolaita make it possible to confer supernatural origins on a dynasty that

had demonstrably immigrated so recently. Hence the non-absolute position of the Wolaita king compared to other Ethiopian peoples; he was no longer surrounded by the mystery of supernatural origin and did not stand outside the human sphere.

He was indeed an autocratic ruler, but he had to be considerate of the imperial laws he invoked when he came to power. Whereas in the older African kingdoms, the king's "failures", independent of personal various ones, his ageing, illness, physical defects, failure of the rains, bad harvests, epidemics and the like, made it obvious that he did not possess the charisma of the sacred leader and therefore had to be deposed or killed. In Wolaita, these "failures" would not be imputed to him, although it was also considered a sign of his "good fortune" if no diseases or droughts afflicted the people during his reign. This view also prevailed in highland Ethiopia: notwithstanding the military failure of the House of Lebna Dengel and its terrible defeats at the hands of Mohamed Gran, it did not occur to anyone to depose him [the king] and replace him with someone more capable. On the other hand, the king's human failings became his undoing, and when he violated the laws and customs of the realm, the people had a formal right to resist, as evidenced by the deposition of Damote and the secessions among the much-loved Gobe and Tona. However, the claim to rule of the ruling dynasty, the Tigre, was never shaken; with the revolt, the people only wanted to force the king to respect the law in the future. Even when Damote was deposed, when voices were raised to get rid not only of the hated tyrant but also of all the Tigre, it was clear to the people that they could not go on without kingship and that the Tigre were now called to rule.

A whole series of old elements had remained. The sacred rings as a genuine African royal symbol had not yet given way to the highland Ethiopian crown. Other elements worth mentioning are the king's drums, the connection between the king and the king's animals (elephant, lion, bee), the relationship with the sun and the moon, his position as the chief owner of the whole country, special dietary rules, the sacred character of the palatinate, etc.

Today, kingship in Wolaita represents a bygone power that the natives longingly mourn, and they painfully feel that they no longer possess a real king, like the neighbouring peoples (e.g. Boroda or Kucha), who still exercises his office in the old style. They have had to endure this state of affairs practically since the Amhara conquest, since Tona, the last king, died in exile in Addis Ababa and his son Orobe, who was still officially enthroned as king with the old ritual, followed his father into the grave after a few years. When Desta was reinstated as king by the Italians, it was difficult to find a seamless transition according to rank. A few years after the re-establishment of Ethiopian rule, Desta was removed from office for an extended period. I learnt that he has since been transferred to another province as Amhara governor. Moreover, *fitawrari* Desta is far too enlightened and

modern to be able to continue the ceremonial of his ancestors. I am sure that much of the old royal ritual was therefore already not very well known to my informant and that a questioning of other sages will bring many an important element to light.

Succession, insignia and ritual

The only remnant of the close connection between the king and the stars in other Ethiopian kingdoms is the honorary name *awa ayfe* and *aginafe* ("of the sun" and "of the moon") given to the king, and later to the upper Tigre. Also, during a solar eclipse (*korba*), the identification between king and sun reappeared. Everything then rushed to the ruler, fearing his imminent death, and performed a great sacrifice to avert the evil. It was similar when there was a lunar eclipse or a change in the colour of the moon – "red means blood and war". All the people then rushed to the front door and shouted, "*Wo ze aginni*!" ("Moon, be ruler!").

It is characteristic of the "secular" character of Wolaita kingship that the question of succession was resolved by the automatic succession of the eldest son. This principle of primogeniture, which originated in Ethiopian hereditary law, is not transferred to the sacral sphere of kingship by any other Ethiopian people. Although everywhere kingship is hereditary through a dynasty whose supernatural origin legitimises its endowment with special power, the vocation for the most sacred office lies outside the scope of profane hereditary law – the one worthy of succession must prove his superhuman qualities by divine judgement. This ordinance is missing in almost none of the southern Ethiopian ancient peoples (cf. Jensen 1959, where many examples are given). The memory of it (e.g. the bee miracle of Lalibela) was still so strong even in the Ethiopian empire that it tacitly naturalised primogeniture, but it never became imperial law. It is often stated in later times that if the younger son succeeded, "he was more pleasing to God". The chronicler surely has in mind the example of the two great ancestors of the imperial dynasty, who both became kings although they were the youngest sons: David and Solomon. According to tradition, primogeniture as the most important fundamental law was invoked by the people and the king with the most gruesome oaths at the founding of the empire under Mikhala. This had such a strong impact on the people's consciousness that they responded to all attempts to introduce a different order (e.g. Gobe) with an uprising.

The king was therefore always the eldest son of the reigning ruler. If the crown prince (*bushasha*) died before taking office, his eldest son (i.e. grandson of the king) succeeded him. If a king was childless, the succession passed to his eldest brother and his eldest son. The king could only be a son of the main queen (*dembe*

gennento), who should come from a noble Hadiya family. He had to be completely healthy, had to have no physical defects, be neither left-handed nor cross-eyed. His outward ideal was that of a handsome warrior, braver and stronger than his heroes, fighting all before him in battle. A certain survival of the notion of a particularly charismatic gift of the king is betrayed by the tale of the youth of Tube, who was always victorious in the ball game and found the sacred golden ring – not, however, because a divine sign was needed to manifest his calling, but because as the eldest son of a deceased king he was already king and the rings came to him only as his birthright, just as he was naturally superior to all others as the son of a king. The heir to the throne always played a significant role in Wolaita history. His title *bushasha* suggests a strong influence from Kaffa, for *bushasha* is the name of the clan of the Kaffa king. The root *bush* (child, son) is unknown in Wolaita and exists only in the honorific title of the king's slaves (*godobusho* = master-child). As a child, the heir to the throne lived in the palatinate with his father and accompanied him in processions and in wars. At the moment of his marriage, he moved out of the palatinate and was given his own court nearby.

There he usually began to gather around him the boys of the country and all those who were opposed to his father. Often this position developed into an actual power struggle between father and son. Wolaita history knows several examples of old kings who fled abroad or ceded power to their son, probably more reluctantly than voluntarily. I would like to see in this not so much a remnant of the ritual regicide – in various African kingdoms the king was dethroned and killed after a certain period of reign – but a reflection of the change of rank prevailing throughout Ethiopia. Among the peoples with the *gada* (age grade) system and also among the Dorze, who are part of the Ometo group, this allows the political leaders to change and is everywhere closely linked to the "merit" complex.[38]

The other princes (*worbeto*, from the Amharic *abeto*), i.e. all royal sons from marriages with legitimate queens, played no role politically and merely enjoyed the same privileges as the other Tigre, who were recruited from the descendants of kings.

After a violent seizure of power, the new king, despite the homage of the realm, was still not a fully legitimate king until he had donned the two most sacred insignia with whose possession the kingship was connected: "the king's gold" (*kawaa workya*) and "the king's silver" (*kawo birra*). This was a golden and a silver finger ring that the king wore on his middle finger on the right and left side. The ring is the classic royal symbol throughout Ethiopia (in many parts of Africa and also among the Ari and Oromo). It is a difficult question to answer whether any owner of the rings would have been recognised as a king under any circum-

[38] More information about the merit complex can be found in Haberland 1957.

stances. The story of the youthful Tube could serve as an answer, for he did not become king because he happened to find the ring, but he seized the ring because he was theoretically already king. Accordingly, it was due to him as a rightful inheritance and property. In other words, a pure heirloom within the Tigre dynasty, who inherited this lore from their predecessors, the Wolaytamala. However, this is contradicted by the Boroda king's efforts to take possession of the sacred rings after the death of the man who had fled to his country and the great importance attached to them, so that the faithful servant risked his life to save them. It seems, then, that a legitimate successor was recognised as king even without the rings but lacked the most important legitimacy. Several years ago, one of the two high priests of the Borana was slain by the Guji. It was not his death but the theft of the sacred arm-ring that aroused great bitterness, and even today the Borana, speaking of the brother of the fallen man, who became high priest, lament: "He has no power without the ring." The two finger rings are probably from the highland Ethiopian circle, as the arm ring predominates in southern Ethiopia, and the names of the rings are Amharic.[39] The Ethiopian emperor also wore a finger ring as a symbol of power.

At the proper investiture, the court officials sent messengers to all the greats after the king's departure: "The king is respected. Come to the palatinate." There, the leaders of the people (regional chiefs, councillors, war leaders etc.) gathered and, after a brief consultation, installed the Crown Prince, who had also been notified, as the new king.

Immediately after death, the leader of the Walsa clan had taken the gold ring from the king and the silver ring from the Zutuma clan leader.[40] The Crown Prince climbed onto the Zutuma man's shoulders and received the golden ring from the Walsa on his right middle finger, then he climbed onto the Walsa and received the silver ring from the Zutuma.[41] At that moment the crown prince was king; everyone prostrated themself before him, kissed the ground and intoned the jubilant cry: "*Wore, wore Tona*!" ("Rule, Tona be ruler!"). One after the other, the representatives of the individual estates paid homage to him as representatives of the people as a whole by touching (or kissing) his hand: the blacksmiths, the potters, the royal slaves, the common freemen (represented by merit nobles) and finally the Tigre. They promised to recognise him as king forever, not to serve any other lord and not to emigrate. He then made a joint vow with the "vow slaves" never to leave each other. He then dressed in royal robes and put on the red headscarf.

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39 The Kushites do not have their own designations for gold and silver.

40 It was not possible to convey whether the office of ring-keeper belonged to the clan elder or was hereditary within another family.

41 It is possible that this ceremony keeps alive the memory of a former dual system, of which all traces are otherwise missing among the Wolaita.

In the past, according to tradition, the king swore at his investiture in St. George's Church in Offa to uphold the laws, not to take away anyone's property or wife, and to respect "the land" (i.e. the people).

A royal crown did originally not exist in Wolaita, as it did in the whole of southern Ethiopia. The "imperial crown" of Kaffa, which unfortunately entered the literature as such thanks to the efforts of Bieber (1920, 1923), represents nothing more than a grand form of the phallic forehead ornament of the hero and slayer, which in the case of the king of Kaffa was made of gold and connected to a golden replica of the pointed cap. There is sufficient evidence that the ring was the actual symbol of rulership in Kaffa, too (Onneken I: 92). The crown's existence appeared to be a mystery, especially since it deviated from the *mitwa* shape of royal and priestly crowns otherwise prevalent in highland Ethiopia and resembled a European crenulated crown. An age solved the contradiction: Tona had the crown made for him in Addis Ababa, probably by an Armenian goldsmith. He would have worn it in the Amhara style to document his rank as king despite his internment. Menilek was generous and diplomatic enough to grant such outward honours to the subjugated; the war captive king was Kaffa, who had not submitted like Tona, was bound with a gold chain when he entered Addis Ababa and was allowed to keep his parasol. Presumably, it even meant an increase in Menelik's prestige to have a subjugated crowned king sitting at his side at large receptions.

Apart from the rings, only the large royal drums were real royal insignia. All the other objects listed below probably helped to raise his nimbus, but no longer belonged to the sacred sphere. In other kingdoms and among the ancient peoples, too, the drum is one of the king's special symbols of power, so it is probably an ancient cultural element. Among the Wolaita, however, the name *nagarita* suggests that this drum is a highland Ethiopian cultural item (Amharic: *nagarit*). They also take the form of the Amhara priestly and royal drum. Two sacred drums were in the palace; one, the peace drum, was played slowly and dully in the morning and evening of each day, when the king rode out, at proclamations and great festivals. The war drum was beaten very quickly. These sacred drums were played by the potters, as were the other large instruments assigned to the king (vertically held trumpet, horizontally held trumpet, war trumpet, potter's drum).

Originally, the two precious metals gold and silver were royal property. No one but the king was allowed to possess the raw metal or objects made from it. Since there was no gold in Wolaita and the immediate neighbouring countries, this prohibition was practically meaningless. There was also very little silver in Wolaita, and it was not until contact was made with Jimma in the mid-nineteenth century that Maria Theresa thalers arrived in the country in larger quantities. Early on, all Tigre were granted the right to wear silver jewellery, and later this privilege was extended to the "merit nobility". However, the king remained the only one on

whose utensils silver was used in abundance: studs on knives, jewelled nails on calabashes and spoons, plates on the fringes of headscarves and towels.[42] The bodyguards (*woyse*) wore silver trim on their shields.

The king's other furnishings, such as the bed covered with woven leather strips (*arsa*) or the chair and bed covered with the same material on which he sat during audiences, were not prescribed by the ritual; they merely served to enhance his prestige. The chair and bed were covered with blankets made of fine cotton. Rich people could also own a leather bed and chair. The canopy (*garuda*, Amharic: *garzdo*) seems to have been a prerogative of the king. It was a throne canopy made of red colourful flowered fabric attached to four bamboo poles.[43] This canopy always stood over his official seat in the main house or was brought to the king's lawn when he was present there for court sessions or festivities.

The colourful parasol (*dabab, dambab*), to which other Ethiopian rulers attached such great importance as a symbol of power that the Kaffa king allowed the king of Innarya, who had fled to him, to keep it, was unknown in Wolaita. Parasols woven from bamboo sheaths or palm leaf strips were, of course, an ancient cultural asset. The first cloth parasols are said to have come from Jimma under Gobe and were not particularly popular with the king or the great ones in the beginning, as the soothsayers proclaimed: "With the parasols much evil will come to the land!"

His [The king's] clothing, too, was not very striking when compared to the regalia of the Kaffa king.[44] It is said that he changed his clothes daily, before sacrifices and going out to war – this was an absolute duty for him. A particularly regal piece of clothing was the red headscarf, which was wrapped tightly around the head and knotted at the neck, just as it was for the Ethiopian emperor and also for the kings of Aksum (cf. Müller 1910, 1913). The headscarf was accompanied by a cloak (*kadda*), also fire-red, made of coarse cotton fabric with thick knobs woven into it. The fabric was imported from Dawro or Kaffa. For sacrifices, he wore a snow-white cloak and a white headscarf, along with a long red stole (*kasa*), which he wrapped around his neck several times and let fall on his chest and back.

If he wore his hair loose, he always tied a golden or silver phallus on his forehead and placed an ostrich feather in his hair, which was braided into large plaits (*citta*) reaching from the front to the back, as still worn by Emperors Theodros and John of Ethiopia. Like the beard, it was only rarely allowed to be shortened at the tips – a commandment that is said to be still observed by Emperor Haile Sellassie.

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[42] Allegedly, only he used a cloth towel; even the rich made do with ensete fibres.

[43] This fabric, imported from the Orient via Jimma and highland Ethiopia, is the same fabric used, for example, to make the Ethiopian priestly vestments and to wrap the holy books.

[44] However, the description of Bieber, as his whole book, was to be taken with a grain of salt.

Ritual shunning and invisibility of the king, which were not only part of the ceremonial of the Christian Ethiopian emperors but are still observed today among the tiny southern Ethiopian ethnic groups, were unknown among the Tigre in Wolaita. The king did not even wear a veil on public rides, something which was still adhered to by the shadow emperors of Gondar (cf. Bruce 1790), and everyone could stare at him, even if reverence demanded that they lower their gaze in his presence. All the other commandments also show that we are not dealing with ritual-religiously anchored rules, but with quite secular rules of etiquette that were based only on the nobility of the king. In practice, the king was invisible to the people, as only a few were allowed to have an audience, and on rides, a dense swarm of courtiers, bodyguards, potters and royal slaves surrounded the ruler and pushed everything off the road.

Thus, there was also no prohibition on the king entering other people's houses. If he was surprised by rain on a ride, he could enter any hut, but since he could justifiably fear for his majesty and did not want to mingle with the people, he only went into the empty guest houses of the great ones. The salute paid to the king was the same as that paid to the Tigre. Only in two areas had the old religiously based ceremonial of the king been preserved. Everything connected with death was kept away from him, so that he did not attend any funeral, not even that of his own father. He himself was not forbidden to kill; it was even prescribed for him, as he was only allowed to eat the flesh of animals he himself had slaughtered. He was also obliged to make several great sacrifices. In battle, he counted it an honour to slay enemies if possible. As a special honour, he sent his wives to the funerals of great heroes.

Like the Ethiopian emperor and the king of Kaffa, he ate alone and was not seen by anyone except the pages (*kirinagi*) serving him, who also prepared the food. They were subject to strict rules of ritual purity, as they had direct contact with him and were probably feared not so much for [the threat of] poison as for [that of] hostile persons and powers having an evil influence on them. However, it was assured that the king of Wolaita, unlike the rulers just mentioned, was allowed to use his hands when eating.

His royal title was Wolaita *kawo* (or *kawe*), the kingship was called *kawoteta*. When addressing him or speaking of the king in proclamations, the form *kati* was also used. Like all Tigre, he was addressed in the second person plural, *intena* (you), and when speaking of him, it should be in the third person plural, *maridosona* instead of *marides* (he has mercy). It is considered unseemly to speak of the king or to make statements about him unless one called him or swore by his name. One should not even say that the king was rich; that was improper because he was the owner of the land, i.e. the people (*derya kawo*).

Functions and duties

The only ritual function of the king, which certainly originated in pagan times, was his office as the supreme sacrificer and priest of the people. Remnants of Christianity survived only in very limited areas, such as the belief in the "creator god", to whom the king was particularly attached. Pagan and Christian rituals have already perpetuated themselves in Amhara Christianity in an even stronger way in the Ethiopian south. For example, the Wolaita king undertook the grandest of his almost ritual hunting excursions on Good Friday. In the popular consciousness, the king remained a mediator to supernatural powers until today. This notion is often touchingly extended today to government governors by the natives whose formerly firmly established world order is tottering under the gradual intrusion of the spiritual good of "civilisation". *Dajjach* Gerassa, a famous resistance fighter and an undoubtedly imposing leader, assured us several times in Gidole that when he was governor of Gamo-Gofa, the rains were always plentiful and the cows gave birth more often than usual. Rain and fertility are the two most conspicuous consequences of the charisma of the appointed ruler. The Wolaita kings bowed to the popular will and continued the ancient sacrifices as they had been offered to the powers since time immemorial; they, who still adhered to the christian faith at the beginning of the dynasty, were also required to help in cases of calamity and distress to influence the supernatural powers through their special powers. The king was no longer the chief priest for the Wolaita people as a whole but was considered the clan leader of the Tigre, but he rarely exercised the duties associated with this function.

Like every clan elder, the king had a sacred herd (*bakra*) from which the sacrificial animals were taken and whose cows were consecrated to the various great powers and symbols. It was not only the sacred herd of the king and his family but of the whole people. The young king also inherited his father's sacred herd, which, however, lost its sacred character at the moment of the death of its former owner and was absorbed into the profane herds after a solemn ceremony. According to the soothsayers, he [the king] then assembled his own sacred herd of cows. A single bull (*disa*) was designated to cover it. Cow calves were never killed, they lived until they died of natural causes. Their milk was reserved for the king, his wives and children. The bull calves formed the slaughter animals for all the king's sacrifices; they were often slaughtered before they were sexually mature, otherwise they had to be segregated and kept in special custody. It would have been a bad omen if they had mounted a cow in the sacred palace.

For the sacrifices, the king took, if possible, a bull calf of a cow consecrated to the corresponding power, e.g. for the creator god, a bull that had been calved by a cow consecrated to the creator god. If, however, the coat colour of the offspring

of this cow was too different from that prescribed for sacrifice, he would take another young bull. The calves of the sacred cows were never sufficient for the annually repeated and many extraordinary sacrifices. Therefore, every year the king selected young animals from his "profane" herds and the herds of respected people and let them live for a year among the animals of the sacred herds; then they were considered sacred animals and could be sacrificed as well.

The most sacred animal of the whole herd was the *disa* bull dedicated to the king's genius (*ayana*). It was kept in a special house in the king's palace. When it died of old age, it was handed over to the knacker. The king then appointed a new *disa* bull, which, like the old one, had to be red with a red mouth and a small white spot on the forehead. The animal was taken from the royal herds or those of a respected man. At the solemn investiture ceremony, the king rubbed his forehead against that of the bull and said, "*Ta ayano, ta ayano, tana gamisa, ita gehwa hasa, ita behasa, kea eha mataya*!" ("My genius, my genius, let me live, keep evil away, keep bad away, that good may come to us!") When the king dreamed something evil or significant, he waited until the day of the week on which he was born, took leaves of the *mayo* tree and rubbed the bull and himself with them: "My genius, look upon me! The evil dream I dreamed, you shall drive it away!"

When appointing a new cow as *bakra,* the king patted her behind the hump four times and said, "*In medida tosa, medida tosa, haga mesi imais!*" ("Creator God, Creator God, this I give you!").

To each royal herd belonged the following sacred cows: a red or speckled one (all colours except black and white) for the genius of the Wolaita land (Wolaita *bita ayana*)*;* a red one for the creator god and a red one for the genius of the king; a white one for the sun and a white one for the moon; one each of any colour (except black and white) for the gold and the silver ring of the king. Finally, some kings kept *adaco* or *algano* cows for all the genii.

The greatest sacrifice was the one for the genius of the Wolaita land, which was celebrated once a year. The well-being of the whole people depended on its observance. The king did not celebrate special sowing and harvesting festivals as the peoples in the southwest did. In the second month (*tigimita aginna*, i.e. October/November), early in the morning, a huge procession with the king went from the palace to *eka dunne*, the sacrificial mountain, a steep hilltop, north of the king's palace *wose laso,* which is one of the most characteristic of Wolaita. The king had avoided any contact with women the night before and slept under a new blanket. In the morning, he washed from head to toe and dressed in new all-white clothes – trousers, cloak and head bandage. Sacrificial knives (*eka olwa*) and the sacrificial spear (*eka abusa*) were also new or were only used for sacrifice. The king was accompanied by the diviners (*kayuwa)*, all the court officials, the cattle bailiffs (*sanga mocona*) who had to look after the sacrificial cattle, the bodyguard,

and the potters with their bailiffs. The people also followed in large crowds but kept at a proper distance. Only the most distinguished Wolaita and one old man from each respected clan were in the immediate vicinity of the king. Cripples (lame, one-eyed), left-handed people, even those maimed in war (even those who had only lost a finger) and members of the two dishonest clans, Gaca and Gaga, were not allowed to show themselves under penalty of punishment. The animals for slaughter were four un-noble bulls that had not yet lost any teeth and had not mounted a cow, four rams and four billy goats in red, yellow, red-speckled and yellow-red-speckled. On top of the mountain, the king slaughtered the bulls first by cutting their throats with the spear, then the sheep and goats with the knife. The animals lay on their right side, their heads facing east. At each slaughter, the king invoked the spirit of the Wolaita land: "*Derya mada, tana mada, ta shenfo gam'eta, ta mata, ta mayu mada, derya siyia ita naga! Ma!*" ("Help the land, help me, keep my soul, help my children and women, keep away the evil that comes to the land!" Eat!"). He took some of the blood of each animal in his hand, dabbed his forehead and sprinkled it four times with the same words of blessing in all four directions and over the people kneeling before him. Then he sat down apart while the retinue lit a fire and, without opening the body of the animals, cut off a few pieces from all parts of the body (legs, back, chest, etc.) from the left side and roasted them. The roasted meat of each animal was put on two ensete leaves placed one on top of the other, then the king stood up and performed the basic sacrifice (*yarso*): he took the pieces of meat, which were cut again after roasting, and placed them to the right and left of each animal, repeating the invocation. Finally, he tasted all the meat. Afterwards, he had the bodies of the animals opened so that the soothsayers could look at the entrails and the fat web. They either said "It is good", which ended the ceremony, or they declared that the signs were bad. Then new animals had to be slaughtered until the oracles were more favourable. The sacrificial animals remained on the mountain after the ceremony and were left for the royal potters to eat there or take the meat home. At the beginning, the king had blood from each type of animal poured into calabashes. In the palace he dabbed and blessed his wives and children with it. Afterwards he washed himself again and put on new clothes.

The second great sacrifice was to the creator god, to whom one or more red bulls were slaughtered in the main house of the palace (slaughter house = *shukya keta*). This sacrifice took place in the second month on the morning of the weekday on which the king was born.

Also with a red bull, the sacrifice was made to the king's genius on his birthday, for example, always on Tuesday of the third week of the sixth month.

Also in the second month, the king sacrificed a white bull for the sun and moon, which was slaughtered for the sun at sunrise on the first Sunday, and for the moon at full moon.

The sacrifice for the genius of the father (*awa ayanaa*) was an annual repetition of the festival of remembrance of the dead, which was performed in the seventh month after death. For this purpose, the king provided a bull from his *bakra* herd, and his brothers also brought him a bull for sacrifice, as they were not allowed to slaughter for their father as younger sons. These two animals were kept in the dead king's "slaughterhouse", which was maintained for this purpose until the death of the successor, even though the palace was no longer used. The king slaughtered the two bulls and smeared the centre pole of the house with blood and honey: "*Ta awaa ayanaa ma!"* ("Genius of my father, eat!").

These were the annual sacrifices. In addition, there were ceremonies on special occasions. When the rains failed and drought prevailed, "the land" met for large gatherings in the communal meadows and finally sent a deputation to the king: "Help us! The land is dying." The king consulted with the soothsayers and the next morning performed the rain sacrifice on the king's meadow in front of the palace. He slaughtered a black young bull, a black he-goat and a black ram, dabbed the blood twice on his forehead and flicked the blood four times with his fingers towards the sky: "*Ta tosav, ta ayanaw, ira ima!"* ("My God, my genius, give rain!"). He also flicked black honey four times with the same exclamation. He mixed the honey with water and poured it into a horn. From this he took a mouthful four times, sprayed it towards the sky, then drank twice. Then it rained immediately said the Wolaita, regretting that *fitawrari* Desta refused to perform this sacrifice and left it to the old people or to the private initiative of individuals because such ceremonies were naturally not so effective.

If the rain lasted too long and did not allow the grain to ripen (e.g. in October), "the land" went back to the king. He performed a similar sacrifice with white animals and white honey and called out during the ceremony, "*Ira deautargi!* " ("Keep the rain away!").

Furthermore, if for some reason it seemed necessary, the king slaughtered for the two great genii Algano and Avcaco, or he repeated the sacrifice for the genius of his father or sacrificed for the genius of his mother. When there were epidemics, he killed a black bull – the only sacrifice other than the rain sacrifice in which a black animal was slaughtered. His soothsayers often said, "*Humbo solkua garua sukrite*" ("Slaughter on the palatinate") or the like if they dreamt of evil or if there were evil omens whose consequences they wanted to avert.

Just as the king occupied the highest place in the religious sphere and was the highest priest and sacrificer for the whole of Wolaita (just as the pater familias was for the extended family and the clan leader for his clan), so he stood at the top

of the hierarchically structured pyramid of the imperial constitution, which was structured according to different principles than the sacral sphere. Internal administration, jurisdiction, military succession and taxation were not based on kinship groups but on the division of the country Into regional districts – municipalities, counties and districts – within which, for example, the administration of justice was carried out in an orderly manner. In theory, he was bound only by the law he invoked and could make his decisions freely. In reality, of course, he listened very much to the judgement or advice of the great and wise who were around him a lot and who had found senate-like representation in the twelve imperial judges (*balanwaka*) anyway. Legend even has the mad Damot, who flouted all laws, ask the counsellors if he could marry his daughter, just to keep up the appearance of law. Without exaggerating, it may also be said of Wolaita that the opinion of a college of elders embodied the public conscience. The consciousness of right and wrong is very ingrained in the Ethiopian. Therefore, popular opinion expects the ideal king not to abuse his office (not to touch the land and wives of his subjects), to judge wisely and justly, and to be munificent. While amorous adventures are looked down upon, one of the worst accusations that can be levelled at him is that he steals others‘ wives or uses his influence to persuade women to leave their husbands.

Municipalities, counties and districts administered themselves under their freely elected leaders, who were confirmed by the king. Only in the case of disputes between two counties – for example, over the renewal of an imperial road – or the disobedience of a member of the association, did the regional district have recourse to the king.

Every subject had the last option of appealing to the royal court after his case had gone through all the instances. They also had the option of appealing to the king immediately if they felt that their rights had been infringed for any reason. However, this was not welcomed; the parties should first exhaust the ordinary legal remedies. The king was the only one who could pronounce the death penalty. Therefore, murderers, robbers, high traitors and insulters of the majesty were immediately brought before his court, as were those who refused justice, since self-help without a proper sentence was frowned upon and the king alone was allowed to exercise coercion and order execution. The king judged all such cases with his twelve imperial judges and had the verdict announced by his spokesman (*zaba dana*) on the meadow in front of the palace.

The king declared war and peace, sent envoys and lifted the army ban. In the event of imminent danger or an enemy attack, a district leader or a chamberlain residing in a border palace could summon the armed men of his district. Every person capable of bearing arms had to comply immediately with the call to arms;

anyone who concealed himself was liable to be executed.[45] In addition, the king collected taxes, which were not for the benefit of the country but were at his free disposal.

This list does not exhaust the official functions of the king. Like the Ethiopian emperor, he was the supreme representative of an institution that was ingrained in all Ethiopian peoples: the "merit system". Just as in highland Ethiopia, there was a broad state-bearing class in Wolaita whose kings I would like to call, for lack of a better name, the "merit nobility". Although it was of great importance for the reputation of the individual to come from a famous family, there was no hereditary nobility, with the exception of the royal clans that occupied a special position. The *homo novus*, who was distinguished by his martial or political merits, enjoyed higher social esteem than the son of a great man who had not yet distinguished himself. Although in Wolaita, as in highland Ethiopia, there was no official hereditary nobility of merit. Some families were able to maintain their position through generations, either through the permanent efficiency of their members or through their wealth.

When, for example, the chronicles speak of frequent changes of office in highland Ethiopia, i.e. the replacement of one fief holder by another, it was in reality usually the members of a large family taking turns. Similarly, among the Wolaita, the coveted offices of heads of the regional districts, which were to be filled anew every year, also only fell to certain large families. In general, membership of a "good" clan was a prerequisite for admission to the nobility of merit. Those who came from one of the despised clans, for example, were excluded from the start, and even the greatest heroic deeds could not erase the stain of their birth.[46] Among the Wolaita, it was the Woshesha, Qesiya, Hisia, Zawine, Masire, Bubula and Zigonda clans that provided a particularly large number of members of the merit nobility. The killing of enemies or big game was valued as the highest merit throughout Ethiopia, which brought the brave greater fame than wealth or wisdom. In return, they enjoyed very special honour and were formally entitled to gifts, which were bestowed on them by the general public in democratically organised peoples and by the king in monarchically governed states. The Wolaita nobility of merit, who in time were granted privileges that originally only belonged to the king and the Tigre (silver jewellery), expected as their right from the king these rewards, which in the case of special heroic deeds increased to immeasurable proportions and consisted of entire herds, estates and flocks of slaves. The heroes knew well that through their bravery the empire expanded from year to year and the king's power increased. The kings never succeeded in creating a

[45] All these areas of public life are dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

[46] Craftsmen and slaves were in any case incapable of ever entering the circle of the free.

house power out of slaves, potters and foreign mercenaries with which they could wage their own wars and rule in a completely authoritarian way. Notwithstanding the good advice given by King Posha to the envoys of the Kucha ruler to reload the large ensete perennials and nurture the small ones, the Wolaita kings never drew, nor could they draw, the consequence of this wisdom. Without a strong nobility of merit they were powerless in foreign affairs and the retainers ("ministerial") they fostered soon became a new nobility of merit, aware of its rights. Thus, the Wolaita Empire was dominated by the permanent tension between the king and the nobility of merit until the end of its existence, since the king both needed the nobility and tried to hold it down, and the nobility of merit enjoyed an antagonism against the ruler, which often vented itself in secessions or blackmail, but could not do without the glory of royal majesty, whose splendour also elevated its own existence. Without the king's achievements, they were unwilling to stand up for him and were quick to complain if, in their opinion, the king's daughters were only married off to foreign princes or if they felt an important expression of the royal "centre", a banquet in the palatinate, was not given to them often enough. Much of the wealth that kings received from their conquests was claimed by great men as a gift for their services, and what was not eaten up by the court from the tax also flew to the heroes in the form of gifts of honour and hospitality.

Right

Like the emperor of Ethiopia, the king of Wolaita was "owner" of all the land and master over the lives and limbs of his subjects. He could, for example, expel any Wolaita from his property, declare him a slave or have him executed; in reality, this never happened except under the tyrannical Damot. Dispossession, enslavement and execution were only carried out in the case of certain precisely prescribed facts, in the absence of which they were perceived as unjust and a sign that the king was no longer fulfilling one of his highest duties, to uphold justice. After the deposition of Damot, respect for the lives and property of his subjects was one of the most important conditions of life and property imposed on Gobe by the Assembly. In contrast, there existed a series of norms regarding the availability and abuse of this "suzerainty" of the king, which were resolved by different notions, so that in addition to the theoretical suzerainty over the whole of Wolaita, one can distinguish the pure property of the king, the special rights that belonged to the ruler in his function as representative of the kingship, and the imperial property.[47]

[47] Of course, this abstraction and delimitation of royal rights was not included in a catalogue by the Wolaita, but this schematisation is not arbitrary, as it was readily derivable from the legal consequences.

The king's suzerainty over all land had, in practice, been rendered invalid by the principle of hereditary fealty, which also prevailed in Wolaita. Only if a landowner died without leaving sons or grandchildren did his property revert to the king; in such a case, the king confiscated the land, but rather than take it into his personal possession, he lent it on, often to "deserving persons". This ownership was clearly expressed in wars, when all the captured goods, as well as the acquired land in general, first belonged to the king, who did not share it with his soldiers, but gave it away as he saw fit.

The king's private property was what he received after his father's death, when the inheritance was divided: the larger half of the king's private land (*hagaza*); the other half fell to his brothers. The yield from these lands was his main source of income, along with tax. He shared the cattle (except for the sacred herd), sheep and goats and the slaves (except for the sworn slaves) with his brothers. As the eldest son, he was entitled to his father's sacred herd of cattle (*bakra*), horses and mules, clothes, jewellery and weapons according to the law that was binding for all Wolaita.

As representative of the kingship, he inherited the sacred insignia: the gold and silver rings and the king's drums, as well as all the musical instruments of the potters' bands. The king was not only the only one who had the right to wear gold, but all the gold that existed in Wolaita belonged to him. Another law, widespread in Ethiopia, stated that all big game whose killing was considered a meritorious deed, namely lion, elephant, leopard and buffalo within and outside the borders, were the property of the king; they could only be hunted with his special permission, and anyone who transgressed was liable to suffer severe penance.[48]

In addition, each hunter had to present his trophies: ivory, elephant ears and tail, hands and claws of lions and leopards, skin and horns of the buffalo to the king as his property; the king then usually gave them to the slayer. I assume that originally only the king's sacred "totem" animal – lion, elephant and snake – were included in the royal sphere and that only later were other big game included in this catalogue. This is supported by the fact that the rhinoceros, which is regarded by the Oromo as the greatest hunting game, is not a protected animal species among the Wolaita – it does not occur in the country. Theoretically, bees were royal property, but this had long since been abandoned. It was expressed that honey wine could only be prepared and drunk by the king (and the Tigre). To the great ones of other clans, the king granted permission to brew honey wine at a family feast as a special favour. There was also a special kind of thick wax candle that was only used at the king's funeral. Furthermore, the king received all the sworn royal slaves (*godobusho*) and all the palaces, which were subject to

[48] Antelopes, wild boars, monkeys, hyenas and the like did not fall under this provision.

special provisions, when the inheritance was divided. Finally, he had three very significant rights, which show the original omnipotence of the kingship, namely, to pronounce death sentences on criminals and to have them executed, to declare freemen slaves under certain conditions, and to levy taxes on every landowner.

The king was also overlord of all imperial property, i.e. that which was public property. This included all wasteland, the great rivers, mineral springs and salt pans, public pastures, roads, squares and markets. Their administration is described in the chapter on the legal constitution. Furthermore, the no man's-land outside the border fortifications with all plants, mineral resources and animals, which was subject to the wasteland bailiffs, was included.

The tax was purely a royal tax and was not used for imperial purposes. Its name, *gira* (from the Amharic *gebar*), shows the origin of this element from highland Ethiopia. In southern Ethiopia, kings receive everything they need from the people, who give as much as is in their power and also work in the king's fields (cf. e.g. Jensen 1959:268); precisely specified and regular contributions collected under compulsion are unknown in these ancient cultures.

The king's slaves and all freemen who served at court, the chamberlains, pages, cattle bailiffs, the bodyguard, beadles and all holders of rank during their term of office were exempt from tax (*paro).* Every father of a family who managed his own business was liable to pay taxes, including slaves who ran their own economy. In itself, their lord was obliged to pay for them, but he could also shift the tax burden onto them.

The stewards (*dencha*) under the leadership of the highest *dencha* were responsible for the collection and use of the tax. They went to the individual districts and informed the district leaders, who in turn informed the community leaders. These then carried out the distribution and collection of the tax with their helpers (*herago*) and the municipal council. After a while, they appeared a second time, this time accompanied by beadles, to collect the taxes and put pressure on the defaulters.

Taxes were collected in the communities after endless public meetings, where poor or distressed people had the opportunity to ask for deferment or remission. Poor people with poor slaves usually had the tax waived and were content with their personal contribution. Often the neighbourhood pooled and paid for one of their own, or a rich man helped a poor man for the promise of working in his fields. If the tax collectors came to a hero or great man who was going in and out of the king's house to collect taxes for him and his slave, he might defiantly say: "Here are two pieces of iron money for me. Go to my slaves if you want something from them!" In such a case, the community leader hardly dared to exert any coercion and withdrew without bothering his slaves.

A distinction was made between four regular types of tax, each of which was levied once in July:

1. Smoke tax (*cuwa gira*) or money tax (*marcho gira*). Each "hearth" (hence the name "smoke tax") had to pay two pieces of iron money (*marcho*). However, "hearth" meant the family head, not the individual house.
2. Clothes tax (*santa* or *afala gira*). Each household had to pay a piece of iron. For this, the heads of the districts bought cotton cloth with which the king's slaves were clothed or which went into the king's storehouses. Each district is said to have had a certain number of lengths of cloth imposed on it, so that this tax, which may once have been the main tax, bore great resemblance to the *sana* tax of highland Ethiopia, where a tribute in pieces of cloth was also imposed on the individual provinces (cf. Conti Rossini 1916:60, 68; Alvarez 1881:284).
3. For honey and butter (*adara*). Each household had to pay one iron piece or the equivalent in honey (1.5 kg butter or 0.5 kg honey). Grain or tubers were not paid as tax, what was offered on the royal lands was sufficient for the royal needs.
4. For slaughter cattle (*mitazua*). Each household had to pay a piece of iron. In districts, oxen for slaughter were bought for this.

At irregular intervals, the king exercised his *mala* right: he was entitled to all male cattle, sheep and goat cubs that were spotty or whose spotting deviated sharply from the main colour. Animals that were delivered to the king after suckling were said to have made up a quarter of all males.

The stewards were responsible not only for the collection but also the distribution of tax, since the maintenance of the palatinate was their main task. Each rightful queen (*gennento*) was assigned a district, part of whose income was used to support her. If there were five queens, the entire income of the other three *gennento* went straight into the royal storehouses. The head of the household had to divide the taxes and the purchases from the tax money in such a way that throughout the year there were not only enough butter, honey, spices, slaughter cattle and clothes for the needs of the court, but also that the king's treasure houses (*misa keetaa* and *bukura keetaa*) were always sufficiently stocked. The king used these supplies to prepare for war, for example, but above all he needed them to make gifts to the deserving.

From time to time, a "good king" remitted a part or all of his people's taxes for a whole year when rich harvests had filled the royal storehouses, when he wanted to make the people happy in view of an upcoming war or when his own storehouses were filled after a successful campaign. In order to make the greatness of this grace unforgetable to all the people, this was done not by roving messengers

or during the deliberations in the municipal assemblies, but through the mouth of a chamberlain, who proclaimed it first on the king's meadow in front of the palace and then in all the great marketplaces. In front of him he had a bamboo pole erected with a white cloth. After a potter had beaten the great royal drum (*nagarita*), he called out three times: "*Azazwa sinau shiqite*!" ("To hear the call, gather together!"). When all the people had gathered, he proclaimed:

Azazwa siite!

(Hear the call!)

Inte ola oletidi sacido gisau, dere.

(Waging your war, therefore, wait, country.)

Kosatido hagada into mita kida ola oletikone tonoiko ne sugikone, hara laita.

(If in this way you wage war pulling out of the borders and conquers and advances the enemy, another year.)

Haga danka kauwe intesia girafe semfisonsona, haga malaitia woga.

(In the same way, the king you before the tax will give rest [lit. will make breathe] and this as it seems, behaves law.)

Dogofite, yea di.

(Remember, this is what [the king] said.)

This means, because you went to war so bravely this year and because the people got into trouble as a result, the king will show mercy and waive your tax. If you fight just as bravely in future wars, win and drive away the enemy (and thus conquer new land), the king will also waive your taxes. Do not forget this law, the king says. In the same way, great judgments, declarations of war, new laws and administrative changes were proclaimed.

Court offices

The court offices are to be distinguished from the offices of self-government of the people, which changed annually and could only be held by freemen. They were usually for life and were held not only by freemen but also by slaves and craftsmen.

All court offices are eclipsed by the *dencha*, who could arguably be called household emperors, since they were administrators, treasurers and slave bailiffs. Nominally, they were themselves royal slaves and belonged to that privileged group that bore the honorific name of *godobusho* (lords' children). Within this group, the *dencha,* together with a few other outstanding slaves whose families had also lived at the royal court for generations, formed the group of *caqoo*

godobusho (the sworn royal slaves). They made a solemn oath to each king when he took office to serve him faithfully and never to leave or betray him. He also swore to them never to deprive them of their functions and never to give them away. By the power concentrated in their hands and by their prerogatives, they rose not only far above the rest of the slaves but also above the great multitude of the common freemen. The otherwise strictly observed dress code had special provisions for them; like freemen, they were allowed to have a red selvage on their cloaks. The former royal slaves I met had the same physical features as the freemen. It is indicative of their respected social position that they were all wealthy landowners and treated as their equals by the surrounding freemen, while the former slaves are still not full citizens and no one wants to sell them land. These *dencha* and *caqoo godobusho* were also only people from good clans who, for example, had fallen into Wolaita captivity during war and were assigned to the royal household because of their special skills. Many had voluntarily surrendered to the Wolaita king as slaves in order to attain dignities and riches that they would never have received in their home countries. The most famous of the twelve clans of the *caqoo godobusho*, were the Kauka, who formed the royal clan in Dawuro. They usually provided the head housemaster. To this family also belonged the *fitawrari* Bekolo. Of several of the other clans, only the names of the progenitors were known to my informants:

Family name	*Progenitor*	*Country of origin*
Karka	Gasaro Wonago	Dawuro (royal clan)
Amera (?)	Gababo Amace	Alaba (allegedly their chief clan)
?	Gindabo Wandara and Bocuso	Dawuro
Herayto	Ano Kagela	Gamo
Anara	Dagero Lugo	Gofa
Anara	Lola Tuso	Kucha
Anara	Abaro Guge	Kucha
Anara	Waysero Goco	Kucha
Guderet	Kela Sokala	Kucha
?	Birrema Taso	Kucha
?	Nagaru Adamo	Kucha
Womigera	All Bomb	?

Often enough, the names of the clans do not match the original ones in the home countries; in many cases, the immigrants or prisoners of war joined a good Wolaita clan and were adopted.

The German translation "Hausmeier" for *dencha* – the Amhara call the corresponding dignitaries at the imperial court *bagarond* or *azazhi* – makes the fullness of power of this office most comprehensible. The supreme *dencha* was one of the most powerful men in the state, although he did not come forward publicly except in the collection of taxes and had no place in the hierarchy of the free. In his hands was concentrated the entire administration of the king's property. He collected the taxes and determined how they should be used, was responsible for the provisioning of the palace and all those employed at the royal court, and supervised the royal cattle bailiffs, although they were free officials. The large magazines in the palatinate, where valuables and money, weapons, harnesses and grain were collected as equipment for future wars, were also under his control. His powers even extended to public matters in which the jurisdiction of self-government and royal power were disputed; for example, people who wanted to cut wood or hunt in the wasteland often turned to him so that he could instruct the border and wasteland bailiffs to let them do so. Under the highest *dencha* (*uba dencha azazinga,* who commands all *dencha*) there were twelve or more (the number was apparently not fixed) lower stewards who were responsible for lesser portfolios: the court-keeping of the individual queens or the collection of taxes in the individual districts, which the highest *dencha*, who never left the king, did not bother with. Others sat on platforms to oversee the work in the fields. In contrast to the Merovingian house masters, however, the *dencha* of the Wolaita kings never stepped out of his subordinate position and was never more than a loyal servant to his lord. Nor would it have been possible among a people so insistent on the prerogatives of rank and free birth as the Wolaita to place a slave – for that was what the *dencha* were – in a position where he could give independent orders to freemen. This is best illustrated by the example of the *fitawrari* Bakalo, who, despite the justice of his administrative management and the love that was often shown to him by his people because of it, experienced the general rejection of the influential estates and therefore had to exercise his office without moral support.

The stewards were the most reliable servants of the kings and in the moment of a popular uprising (under Damote, Gobe, Tona), together with the other oath slaves, they were the only ones who stood by him. After the death or abdication of a king, the *dencha* transferred his allegiance to the new king, even if this accession was done by force. As far as one can apply this to Ethiopian circumstances, one would like to say that the *dencha* did not serve the king, but the kingship. It was taken for granted that he would also sacrifice his life for his oath, and the sacrifice of the loyal *dencha* who saved the rings, was not a special case.

In return, the stewards enjoyed many extraordinary privileges; they could own property that was only confiscated by the king in the event of a crime and of which they were free to dispose. It was even claimed that they owned land – the most

significant difference separating freemen from slaves. Significant portions of the land taxes and of the harvests of the king's lands remained in their hands – a practice that no one felt wrong as long as it was kept within limits. Even today, in some areas of southern Ethiopia, the native chiefs receive 10 per cent of the taxes they collect from their fellow men and pay to the government. When the *dencha* surrounded the king on horseback, they flaunted beautiful mounts and weapons, which they proudly displayed as their own, while bodyguards and potters were equipped by the king.

The sworn slaves (*caqoo godobusho*), who were not *dencha*, also enjoyed privileges and held positions of responsibility. For example, they were appointed as overseers (*sunta)* of the common slaves (*ayle).* The common slaves did not benefit from their membership of the royal court; they had it rather worse, as they often did not live together in families like the slaves of the peasants but had to work in groups in the fields of the lowlands. Moreover, they could be sure at any moment that they would be taken away as a gift from the king and torn away from their family and acquaintances.

At the head of the free courtiers were the *guda*, who can be described as chamberlains and royal messengers and can be equated with the *legabe* (introducer) and *ayfari* (ceremonial masters) of the Ethiopian imperial court. Like the *dencha,* they also had a chief chamberlain (*eba guda azazingo*, who commands all chamberlains). Their office was life-long and, in several families, as good as hereditary. In order not to make their office too strenuous, half of all *guda* served at court, while the other half lived on their estates. Every year at the Feast of the Cross – the usual date for the change of offices – the chamberlains who had been in office until then retired and were replaced by the other half. Their quarters were in the palace at the main gate, where they received the audience-seekers after they had passed the smiths and potters, and first lodged them in a large waiting house before deciding on their requests. These audience-seekers were petitioners hoping for a favour from the king, plaintiffs or defendants in a legal dispute who wanted to present their case before the royal court, heroes presenting their trophies to the king, people who wanted to hold a feast of merit or ask for permission to brew honey wine at a festival and to have part of the king's band play. Considerable sums of money flowed from the petitioners to the chamberlains, in whose hands lay the decision to provide them with an audience. They regulated the course of the audiences and were responsible for the king's ceremonial. Some of them always stayed near him to receive his commendations, as they were the king's messengers and heralds, delivering his orders and issuing proclamations. In this capacity, they were also allowed to have the king's drum played. Some of them sat as the king's political representatives in the outer palaces, where the stewards saw to the cultivation while they watched the border and sounded the alarm in the event of an enemy in-

cursion. They divided up the bodyguard (*woyse*) for service at court and led them on rides and in war.

Like the *balabat* of the Ethiopian emperors, the pages and personal cooks (*kirinagi*) were boys from good families, mainly from the Woshesha clan, who took office at about 12 years of age and left after puberty, or at the latest after marriage. They lived permanently in the palace near the kitchen. They were the only people who touched the food of the king, who was allowed to use his hands to eat. It was always emphasised what importance was attached to their purity – in a double sense – and that strict care was taken that they did not spend much time outside the palace and that their hands were always clean, their fingernails were cut short and several times a day they had to clean their hands in water and hot butter. The strict regulations of the Ethiopian emperors about their pages (Perruchon 1893:9) and the frequent commandment that only virgins were allowed to brew beer for the southern Ethiopian clan kings (e.g. among the Shangama, Ubamer and Basketto, cf. Jensen 1959:122, 172, 200) or that it must be a "pure" boy who slaughters animals for the king of the Baka give us an inkling that originally all activities that were of utmost importance for the king's well-being could only be performed by ritually "pure" people. Among the ancient peoples, e.g. the Ari, only "pure" people were allowed to approach the king at all (cf. Jensen 1959:32). As in ancient Israel and among the pagan Arabs, sexual intercourse and everything related to sexual intercourse (menstruation, childbirth, even suckling children) is considered impure and defiling in Ethiopia.

The *sanga mocona*, the royal cattle bailiffs, were said to be elected annually like all dignitaries of self-government; it is more likely that they held this office for life. There was one in each district who supervised the royal herds there and came to the court from time to time with slaughter cattle or dairy cows. They did not have administrative functions like the *sahafe lam* of the Ethiopian emperors. Below them were the actual cattle herders, the *aro*, who were freemen and exercised their hereditary office for life. They are said to have formed a special corporation similar to the *abelan* of the Amhara rulers, about whom unfortunately very little is known (Harris 1844 II: 97).

I was unable to obtain much reliable information about the *woyse* or *wose,* the bodyguards who settled the land around the royal palace and whose names are still borne by two parcels of land in Koysha and near Dalbo. Apparently, as in Kaffa (Bieber 1923:215) – the *cawa* of the Ethiopian emperors are also comparable – they were free men settled on royal land who had to do military service in exchange for the use of the land. According to one source, they were free of tax, and the office passed with the land to the son – i.e. ,it was a service fief – whereas according to another source, the *wose* only settled in the palatinate for fifteen years. They were free of tax for the first five years; the following five years

they had to pay half the tax, and the last five years the full tax. During the first ten years, in addition to guard duty at court, they had to perform labour service and mend the palatinate's houses and fences. For the last five years, they were exempt from this work, after which they were allowed to move away. They also had daily guard duty in the palace and had to accompany the king on his rides. Some of them, who had the title *koma*, were in the immediate vicinity of the king and carried his canopy (this information is uncertain). The bodyguard was equipped by the king with horses and weapons, and the nobles among them wore shields decorated with strips of silver plate. The *tace*, whom Cerulli's reference (1929/1930:5) erroneously called chamberlains (*agafari*), were royal beadles.[49] Since there was no police force and no member of the people was allowed to act against others, including lawbreakers, without special authorisation – an exception being murderers caught in the act – they enforced compliance with judgments and imperial law by special royal order. For example, they fetched conscientious objectors who did not want to appear in court and brought them before the king, who intimidated and imprisoned them. The house magistrates (*dencha*) were always accompanied by some *tace* as enforcement assistants when collecting taxes. They were distinguished by the bundle of rope attached to their belt; anyone who disobeyed them had their arms tied together with the thin ropes from the hands to the upper arm until blood flowed from the fingertips (but there was no official torture). They did not execute death sentences and had nothing to do with guarding prisoners, that was a matter for the blacksmiths. For their services they were rewarded by the king with land.

The singers (*azmari*) of the Amhara culture were unknown in Wolaita, but the dwarfs, storytellers and court jesters (*kasiaga*) were not lacking in the palatinate and, just as in highland Ethiopia, they entertained the ruler with their antics and stories (Harris 1844 III: 340).

Eunuchs, with which the court of Jimma was teeming and which were also present at the court of the kings of Kaffa (Borelli 1890; Bieber 1920:262 f.; Harris 1844 II: 26, 56), were unknown in Wolaita. The idea of a "man" who was not capable of procreation was so appalling to this still very primitive people that they did not even want to see such creatures and those who were emasculated in battle often committed suicide (cf. also the usual attitude of the Male, Jensen 1959:291).

The craftsmen, especially the potters, were in even closer contact with the king in Wolaita than in other southern Ethiopian countries, where they almost everywhere form vassals and bodyguards of the ruler and also often have a very close ritual relationship with him, such as the *manna* among the ancient peoples in

[49] The other two court offices listed by Cerulli – the commander of the cavalry (*pera raso*) and the commander of the bodyguard (*kao kuro*) – were not known to my consult.

the southwest, the *manco* among the Kaffa and the *wata* among the Oromo. Here the potters will only be described as far as their connection with the king justifies it. The special social position of the craftsmen will be described in detail in the next chapter. I reserve the right to deal with the actual problem of the Ethiopian craftsmen separately.

The blacksmiths were, as elsewhere in Wolaita, of only secondary importance at the royal court. Just as the number of potters was many times that of the blacksmiths, they too were ordered to serve the court and lived in the vicinity of the palatinate on imperial land parcels in village settlements that were separated from public squares and streets for this purpose. They were exchanged from time to time for other potters who lived in the country and could return to their old places of residence and practise their craft there again – during their service with the palatinate, they had little opportunity to do so. As long as they were at court, the potters were subordinate to special bailiffs from their own ranks (often clan leaders) who had the title *erashsha*, which was otherwise not used in Wolaita.

What was particularly striking in all this was the close connection between the king and the potters. Admittedly, they no longer tended a sacred state fire or held an important position as lords of water or earth (cf. Jensen 1959:283). But in my view, something of their ritual function was still preserved in the fact that the potters – like the *manco* in Kaffa, by the way – had to provide the firewood and water for the palace. If one tries to interpret this process (apparently) rationally and explains it simply by saying that the "most despised" caste was given the most menial tasks, one must reply that it would then have been more obvious to entrust the royal slaves with this. The Wolaita themselves also record with amazement the close personal contact between the king as well as all the Tigre and the potters. The otherwise shunned craftsmen, who were unwillingly allowed into the house and whose mere touch made the property of the free so impure that it was thrown away, went in and out of the palace or the houses of the king's clan and were not subject to any of the otherwise so fearfully observed shunning commands. Equipped with horses and weapons, together with the oath slaves they were his bodyguards, another part went around the country to catch cowards and cut off their heads (so under Damot) on the spot. Finally, they were the state executioners who carried out the royal sentences at the three execution sites.

Other functions of the blacksmiths at court were their work as guards at the second gate, where they also guarded the prisoners. As in other countries, the potters were the musicians, playing the instruments reserved exclusively for the king, such as the various drums and trumpets, of which the great drum (*nagarita*), proclaiming war and peace, was one of the most important symbols of royal power. They formed the many choirs that performed at festivals and that the king might send as a special tribute to a hero's funeral. One band consisted of nine potters

who played the potter's drum, the three vertically held bamboo trumpets and the four horizontally held bamboo trumpets. Today they go around as musicians and play for anyone who pays them.

The royal courts or palaces, as they may be called, were more than mere residences of the king and his family. As in the early European Middle Ages, they represented the political, religious and economic centre of the entire country in the complete absence of towns or permanently populated trading centres. Here the threads of administration and jurisdiction ran together, here spread out the royal meadow (*zaba*), where the highest celebration of the state, the Feast of the Cross, was celebrated, where the great court hearings took place and where many of the most exciting events of Wolaita life, the feasts of merit, also took place. The same function was performed by the royal palace called *adabebay* or *gan meda* (plain of majesty) at the Ethiopian imperial palace and the meadow in front of the palace, where those– otherwise invisible –showed themselves at the war festival, held court and performed heroic honours. All proclamations were proclaimed there first. There was always a market nearby, which had a special size due to the needs of the court, the many visitors to the palace and the appearance of the otherwise rare foreign merchants. What constitutes the importance of every Ethiopian "market" place (which is, after all, more than a mere place of trade and exchange), namely being the focal point of all strands of popular life, was especially true of the meadow and market at the palatinate. The density of population around the palatinate was unusual by Wolaita standards, since courtiers, bodyguards (*woyse*) and potters had their homes there for as long as they served at court. The palaces were almost always located near one of the major imperial roads. Unlike the Ethiopian kings, who changed their palaces more frequently – although not as often as is sometimes portrayed – the Wolaita kings lived almost exclusively in their one main palace, while rarely or never entering the many other palaces that existed alongside it. The small size of Wolaita made it unnecessary for the king to move around. Since the expansion of the empire to the east which began under Sana, the only palace existing until then, Didaye in Kindo, was abandoned. Each king established his main palace where it seemed best to him for political reasons or continued to inhabit the same court as when he was crown prince, which thus acquired the character of a palace. He could theoretically also take over the palace of his predecessor, which in any case was maintained and not abandoned, unlike what happened among so many southern Ehtiopian groups. Sana and Ogato established their palaces on mountain heights in eastern Woysa for strategic reasons; since Ogato, the palaces have been concentrated on the south-eastern slope of Damota Mountain.

Beyond the functions mentioned above, the royal palace was a sacred place where the king performed some of the great state sacrifices. Its sacred character

and its connection with the sacred person of the king was expressed most strongly in the commandment that reserved the two most elementary expressions of life for the Ethiopians – begetting and killing – exclusively for the king. Only he was allowed to sacrifice and kill animals for his daily needs in his main house, which therefore bore the name *shukya keta* (slaughter house).[50] Since only the king and his family were allowed to enjoy this meat, all slaughtered animals destined for the court were killed on an adjacent road – the roads being no man's land. Even any "profane" slaughter was performed as a solemn sacrifice, invoking the creator god or the king's genius and smearing his own forehead and the large central pole with blood. It is generally considered sacrilege in Wolaita to kill an animal on someone else's land, because in doing so you gain a certain power over the landowner and you can use black magic against him. However, the fear of the magical effect had weakened over time, so that today this act is perceived by many people only as a gross violation of good manners. But all royal palaces, even abandoned ones, were considered such sacred places that a magical act would have had the worst consequences for the ruler's health and the welfare of the empire. Therefore, even in deserted palaces that no longer had houses, some potters or royal slaves were always settled as guards to guard the place and prevent anyone from performing magic acts there. The "slaughterhouse" of the royal predecessor was maintained as long as the successor lived, and he performed the memorial sacrifice for his father there every year and smeared the central pole with blood.

Some palaces were built exclusively for sacrificial purposes on the instructions of the soothsayers (*kayuwa*) after long consultations and dreams had led to the choice of the site. Often the soothsayers then commanded the king to sacrifice too, because something bad was threatening him or the kingdom.

The other commandment was observed just as rigorously. The king was the only male allowed to have sexual intercourse in the palace – that is why the wives of the courtiers lived outside, why most of the men left the palace at night, and why the pages (*kirinagi*), who performed such a significant role in the king's life in preparing and serving his food, were to be "pure" boys who, if possible, did not come into contact with the impure world and who left his service as soon as they married. Similar demands were made of the pages of the Ethiopian emperors (Perruchon 1893:8f.) The king's sons were given their own homesteads in the country after they married. The scrupulous observance of this rule went so far that the cattle in the palatinate were not allowed to jump each other and were kept separately by sex in large stables.

In addition to the main palace inhabited by the king and the abandoned palaces of his ancestors, however, there were a whole series of royal courts that were

[50] He only ate meat from animals slaughtered by his own hand.

hardly ever inhabited by the king and served strategic or economic purposes. Humbo, Doguna and Tone-Ode, for example, were set up to secure the border. There was always a court official (*guda*) there with royal slaves and potters to watch the border and lead the first defence in case of attack. Usually, such palaces contained a large royal drum, which was beaten in the event of an attack in order to mobilise the country. Other palaces – most of which were built by King Gobe – such as Hofga and Olobo in Bikrose, or Zuba in Boloso, were farmsteads built by kings on conquered land after an expansion of territory. A steward (*dencha*) would then sit there to supervise the slaves growing cotton in the lowlands, or a royal cattle bailiff to oversee the herds in the neighbourhood.

First a list of the various palatinates.

Didaye:
In the lowlands of Kindo on the peninsula between Omo and Deme was the oldest palace of the Tigre and is said to have been taken over by the Wolaitamala. Apart from some wood remnants, no traces remain. According to tradition, the first kings are buried there.

Laso Bolola:
It was built by Sana, the great conqueror, to serve as a base for further conquests in the east. The palace was surrounded only by palisades, as the steep slopes made ramparts superfluous, but the earth fractures above the streams are still visible, above which water could only be drawn for the king.

Woysa:
Sana's successor Ogato built his palace Woysa directly on the edge of the mountain range, where it slopes steeply into the plain. Here the effort to make the palace the centre of the empire is clear: the great imperial road was laid so that it passed near it, despite the steepness of the mountain. Nearby was the great meadow, the burial place of King Sana and a large market, the sacred sacrificial mountain (*eka dunne*) where the king performed the annual sacrifice of the state, and the steep cliff Holozo, where criminals' necks were cut before they fell. This was the scene of the nighttime assassination of the Hadiya nobility. Of the palace, which is said to have been one of the grandest in all Ethiopia (the king is said to have had a high stone basement built), all that remains, apart from the well-preserved double moats over 500 m in diameter, is a huge sycamore that once stood in the middle of the horse stables. It forms a characteristic landmark and is visible from Sidaama on a clear day.

Taza:

Later, in the course of the great conquests, Ogato built the palace of Taza on the western peak of Mount Damota. He assigned it to his son Amado as a residence, and his son Damot was born there. He was named after the mountain of his birth.

Atwaro:
Amado established his palace of Atwaro at the eastern foot of Damota Mountain, where a total of five kings – including Gaga, who died young – resided. At the time of its foundation, the palatinate lay directly on the border of Wolaita, for although Amado came as far as Bilate on his victorious campaigns, the newly won territory was only gradually actually incorporated into the empire, often by building a new rampart only a few kilometres from the old border fence and settling the area thus protected. On the road from Dalbo to Boditi, one thus crosses a total of four ramparts over a distance of about eight kilometres. Only small traces of the palace itself remain. Amado was buried not far from the palace, not far from today's road.

Solkwa:
On the summit of Humbo Mountain, Amado established the palace of Solkwa on the advice of his soothsayers and as a safeguard against the Arsi, who were still very restless at the time.

Corono:
After his accession to the throne, Damot continued to live in his Corono court, a quarter of an hour's walk south of his father Amado's palace. Here he was captured after the dramatic events at the River Zumano, and here he also died a year later as a prisoner. The rampart and ditch are still well preserved.

Zumano:
Damot also built a palace on the Zumano River to supervise the work there. It was razed to the ground after the uprising, as dispossessed former landowners settled there again. Remains of the dams and canals are said to still exist.

Dalbo:
Dalbo is said to have been a farm of Ogato's before Gobe set up his residence there, which his son Tona took over from him. Since Dalbo formed the centre of Wolaita for so long, after the previous kings (Amado and Damot) had already lived in the vicinity, the first Amhara governors also set up their residence here. The site and surroundings of Dalbo are subsequently described as the pattern of a palace. Popular tradition also place Malberade, the capital of Motolomi, very close to Dalbo in the Zola district. Gobe built several palaces from Dalbo, in which he rarely lived and which were purely farmsteads.

Hofga:

Hofga in the lowland Damota-Borkose was located where Tekle Haymanot is said to have built the church Gerarya. Nearby were the king's large cotton plantations.

Oleba:
Oleba in the Damota-Borkose highlands has remained the grazing centre of the royal herds to this day.

Shone-Gele:
Shone-Gele, north of Boditi was established as a border town against the Badawacho and Arsi.

Bitana:
Bitana on top of the Duguna Mountains.

Koysha and Baba:
Koysha in Fango and Baba in Boloso were located at the King's cotton plantations.

The court of Gaga not far from Palbo declined after his death. During his short reign, Tona mainly lived in his grandfather's Dalbo palace. For a short time, to forestall a prophecy, he lived near Soddo, but it did not come to the establishment of a permanent palace.

None of the palaces survived the collapse of the Wolaita Empire. Dalbo went up in flames in the first days of the Amhara conquest and the rest fell into ruin. The vivid accounts of Cecchi, who describes the bustle of the colourfully dressed courtiers (1888:161f.) in Linuv, Enarya, Gonne and Gera by Borelli (1890) and Mylius, (1906:398) may serve as a substitute for this – very much the same may have been the case in Wolaita. I would like to attempt a reconstruction from the descriptions of *fitawrari* Desta and some ancient Wolaita, who had seen royal courts before the Amhara conquest, at the site of the palace of Dalbo, whereby it can be assumed as certain that the construction of Dalbo was similar to that of the other palaces.

A more modest reflection of the past glory of this palace with its mighty houses and throng of splendidly dressed courtiers are the farmsteads of the petty kings of the Ethiopian southwest, as in Ubamer or in South Male, which are still quite grandly laid out (cf. Jensen 1959).

Dalbo is situated on a gently sloping terrain at the eastern foot of Damota Mountain. East of the palace, whose huge circular rampart is well preserved in front of the large main gate, spreads the king's meadow (*zaba*), of which a large piece that has not become farmland is still preserved. Behind it is the "village" of the potters, who were the only ones of all the court servants to stay, because craftsmen could not own their own land and they were happy to have found accommodation on royal land. They therefore still pay taxes to the *fitawrari* Desta. Their houses today are characterised by particular poverty. Still further east, at

the intersection of two former imperial roads, lies the great Thursday market of Dalbo, still very important despite the disappearance of the palace. However, it has had to cede its once paramount role to Boditi.

A little north of Dalbo, on a spur of Damota, rises the Church of Gabriel, which is said to stand on the spot where Saint Tekle Haymanot once built a church. Its holy of holies had been taken by Motolomi and used as a pillow until the saint came and put it back in a church. South of Dalbo, in a rocky gorge, there is a spring whose waters are considered sacred and which is said to be the spring where Saint Tekle Haymanot baptised King Motolomi and the inhabitants of Damot (Wolaita). An area of several square kilometres around the palatinate was inhabited exclusively by members of the bodyguard (*woyse*) and the courtiers – hence this parish, like that of the palatinate of Woysa, still bears the name *woyse*.

A two- to three-metre-deep ditch ran around the palace, behind which a four-metre-high rampart rose. The ditch and rampart were covered with pointed stakes and a thick palisade wall was rammed into the top of the rampart. Behind it was a 20-metre-wide intermediate zone where the cattle were guarded, and behind that a second mighty palisade wall rose up and encircled the inner palatinate.[51] Following the pattern of all Ethiopian royal palaces,[52] three gates led into the interior: the large main gate at the king's meadow (*zaba pengya*), which was used by the king on official visits and through which many visitors entered the palace; the women's gate (*macyas pengya*), through which the queens and their friends went in and out; and the small king's gate (*kawo pengya, erenekyo pengya*), through which only the king and his small retinue passed on horseback. No one else was allowed to pass through this last gate (cf. Perruchon 1893:25).

In front of the outer rampart were two houses where the blacksmiths were the first guards. They stopped any visitor who did not belong to the court or to the king's confidants and, after questioning him, took him to the potters who formed the second guard in front of the inner pallisade. They accommodated the visitor in a special waiting house that stood next to their guard houses and notified the chamberlains (*guda*) who, with members of the bodyguard, formed the third guard on the inner side of the palisade.

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51 At the Woysa palace there was a second inner wall.

52 Harris (1844:63, 96) also reports three gates at the Angolloda palace of Sahle Selassie in Shoa, of which the entrance called *serkosh bar* was only used by the king on unofficial occasions. Similarly, Menelik's old imperial palace in Addis Ababa has three gates: *fit bar*, the front and main gate at the large reception hall on the southwest side *sirqos bar*; the "thieves' gate" for the king and his confidants on the west side; and the *sara gala bar*, "cart gate" on the north side, which is now the main gate. The new palace also has three official entrances, of which the gate designated for the official entrances is called the Lion Gate, as in the case of the Zara Ya'kob palace.

The wide space between the outer wall and the inner palisade was mainly used for keeping domestic animals: slaughter cattle for the daily use of the king and the court, dairy cows, the "sacred herd", riding animals, etc. Other livestock for slaughter was kept in large kraals in front of the gate, where the cattle bailiffs who were ordered to serve the court also stayed.

The interior of the palace was filled with a seemingly orderless tangle of houses, fences and gates. Remarkable here was the use of stone, otherwise absent in Wolaita, and also not absent in the royal palaces of other peoples who otherwise did not erect stone buildings (cf. Ubamer in Jensen 1959).

Among the Wolaita, however, the use of stone was almost exclusively limited to paved paths and small stairways; very rarely, house bases made of stone – as among the Yem (cf. Straube 1963:339ff) – are said to have been used. The attic of Ogato in the Woysa Koysha palatinate is either a unique exception or must be relegated to the realm of fable. Surrounding the houses and farmstead complexes were spice gardens, areas of roses and ensete shrubs planted for ornamental purposes, and individual large trees. Nearest to the entrance were the quarters of the chamberlains, since it was their duty to receive visitors and bring them to the king, as well as those of the house masters, who also supervised the adjacent magazines and horse stables. Special quarters, supervised by a chamberlain or a particularly reliable slave, housed the lower court servants, such as the maids, horse boys, chambermaids and common slaves. Clustered around the king's kitchen house lived the pages. Next to them was the homestead of the first queen (*dembe gennento*), which included a large guest house where she met with her friends, gave receptions and where the other queens not living in the palace also stayed. They all used the women's gate located in this district. Right next to the king's private houses were the houses of the bodyguard. The king was probably the only man in Wolaita to have his own house; otherwise, the number of houses in a homestead is determined by the number of wives, each of whom has her own house. Because the king performed sacrifices there and slaughtered for himself, this house – the most sacred place in the palatinate – bore the name *shukya keta* (slaughter house). It was also here that ceremonial receptions and private audiences took place, and it was here that the king received the flowers at the county fair. In front of this house, which was still protected by a special palisade, rose a large and a small consultation house, in which court and meetings were held in bad weather and large banquets were held. The maintenance of the small palaces in the country was the responsibility of the district in which they were located, and the maintenance of the main palace was the responsibility of the entire nation.

Every day, at sunrise and sunset, one of the two large royal drums was beaten slowly for a long time. Then, in the morning, the bodyguard and court officials hurried to the palace to assume their duties. The imperial councillors and confi-

dants went to the king, who, supported by them, spent the morning with consultations, court sessions and audiences. In the afternoon he usually rode out to "see the country" and breathe the wind. When riding out and returning, the drum was beaten again. When the drum sounded for the last time in the evening, it was the signal for all married people to leave the palace.

Although it was the right of every Wolaita – as well as that of every Ethiopian – to approach the king to present a request, especially after not receiving justice at the lower instances [i.e. the lower courts], it was not easy for a poor man to come before the king's face. At all three gates, hands were held up to him, by blacksmiths, potters and chamberlains, and only when he had satisfied their demands and those of the chief chamberlain who brought him in, did he reach the goal of his wishes. The poor man who was in a client relationship with a great man was better off and could pass through all the gates with him, who had free access to the court, unhindered. Only the chief chamberlain, who introduced the visitors to the king, always received a gift. When the supplicant entered the king's huge hall, which did not differ in its construction from that of any other Wolaita house (dome shape and central path), he uncovered his upper body and bundled up his cloak in the prescribed manner.[53] Near the entrance, the great ones of the realm, brothers of the king, heads of districts, war heroes and the councillors of the realm who enjoyed the privilege of drinking before the face of the king, sat and drank honey wine from beautiful calabashes. The back half of the room was separated to the sides by bamboo walls, in the middle by a curtain. The chamberlain led the visitor in front of the curtain, where he loudly shouted "*saulayti kawotite!*" ("1000 years of kingship") and lifted a corner. In front of him he saw the king, dressed in flaming red robes and with the sacred rings on his fingers, sitting on a leather chair or a bed hung with blankets. Around him stood some courtiers and bodyguards. The visitor quickly cast down his eyes, bowed deeply, touched the floor with his fingertips and kissed him, saying "*Abe, abe!*" ("Oh Lord, Oh Lord"; Amharic: *abet*). Simple people even threw themselves to the ground. Then he gave the actual royal salute, which was also given to the other Tigre: he stretched out his hands and said "*Kushe, kushe*!" ("[Take my] hand"), whereupon the king thanked him in the usual way: "*Aga, aga!*" ("Let be"). The visitor took a step back while the chamberlain, at a hint from the king, let the curtain fall (it was a sign of special grace if it remained open) and recited his request with lowered eyes. When he had finished, he kissed the floor again and knelt down when the king spoke to him. Afterwards he withdrew into the background and took his leave unless the king had a calabash of honey wine handed over to him as a sign of mercy. If it

[53] The custom of appearing before the king in the worst possible clothes – as in Kaffa – was unknown to the Wolaita.

was a clear-cut case, the king would immediately issue instructions through the curtain to a chamberlain or imperial councillor to settle the matter, otherwise the legal dispute would go before his royal court. The simpler the visitor, the more he tried to show his humility, while confidants could behave quite freely despite all the etiquette.



Fig. 35: The nobility welcoming the king

King's wives

Since a house law established by King Tube (1742–1762), the first wife of the king (he usually married while still crown prince) and mother of his successor was a Hadiya girl from a chief clan (e.g. Aganco). She held the title *dembe gennento*. The reason given was that the Hadiya were brave warriors and their daughters

would also give birth to heroes. After that, one can calculate that only Hadiya blood flows in the veins of the Wolaita kings. This tradition has been upheld to the present day. The eldest son and main heir of the *fitawrari* Desta, who was at school at the time of my stay in Addis Ababa, was descended from a Hadiya of noble family, from whom Desta had divorced in the meantime to marry a noble Amhara woman. Only the first wife of Tona and mother of Orobe is said to have been an Arsi (disputed). Only after the birth of a son by this wife was the king (or crown prince) allowed to take a second legitimate wife.

The number of queens, i.e. legitimate wives, was not limited, but these marriages were not entered into arbitrarily, as they were mostly of a "diplomatic" nature and a divorce would have meant a great mortification for the side-in-law and perhaps even war. As in all southern Ethiopian kingdoms, great importance was attached to marital unions with the daughters of neighbouring kings, because this was expected to bring about alliances of friendship and support in war. The clever Gobe, like Solomon, married a king's daughter from almost every surrounding country – not a disadvantage of his kingdom, because with the famous Digito, the sister of Abba Jifar of Jimma, one could have an abundant dowry and a large number of cultural goods hitherto unknown to the Wolaita. Through the friendship with Jimma, trade received a strong boost. An Arsi girl, whose father was the reigning *abba gada* at the time, brought with her, apart from a large herd of cattle, two parcels of land on the Bilate, which rounded off the Wolaita territory to advantage. Another wife of Gobe was a king's daughter from Dawuro, as was the second wife of Tona. The chiefs of the small ethnic groups in the south – Ari, Gofa, Basketto – still follow this rule today and, although nominally Christians, marry as many daughters of neighbouring princes as possible. Of Wolaita clans, only four are eligible for marriage as legitimate queens: Wolaitamala (the former royal dynasty), Qesiya and Woshesha (immigrated together with the Tigre), and Zamine. All other clans were rejected because of their poor origins, their poverty or, like the otherwise highly respected Bubula and Oato, because there were often possessed people among them.

Even among the Wolaita, as in the Ethiopian empire or in Gera as noted by Cecchi (1888), the ritual did not assign a special role to the queens in where they had influence on politics and the affairs of state; they owed their power not to an institution but to their personality and the independence that the Ethiopian grants to the woman. There is nothing here, as in the whole of Ethiopia, that equals the special mythically anchored position of the mother or sister of the king in the central and southern African kingdoms.

All queens used the title *genne*, which is widespread in southern Ethiopia, also in the Oromo kingdom. When addressing the queen and also when merely mentioning her name, she was spoken of in the *pluralis majestaticus* as *gennento*.

Before the title *gennento,* the queens still used the name of a landscape, often those that were not in Wolaita. As with the queens of Jimma (Cerulli 1930) and Amhara (see below). These were probably originally names that denoted the origin of the queen or the territory assigned to her as a fief and later became pure titles. The first queen was called *dembe gennento*, in memory of the country of origin "Dembe" (Tämban) of the Tigre. The second was called *sisa gennento*, supposedly after the landscape Sisa in Dawuro, where the Tigre are said to have sat for a long time before their migration to Wolaita, perhaps after the landscape Sire in Tigre. Others were titled after the district assigned to them as a fief, e.g. Koysu *gennento*.

Only one queen, the *dembe gennento*, lived permanently in the palatinate, the others had houses or homesteads directly on the ramparts or somewhat distant, in the narrower palatinate area. Each king was assigned the tax or part of the tax of a district for their maintenance. Eunuchs in the house administration, were unknown, as in all Wolaita; we find them in Ethiopia only at Islamic courts, very rarely among the Amhara kings (e.g. in Shoa). The queens enjoyed the greatest freedom – "the fear of the king was so great that no one dared to raise his eyes to them" – and were allowed to make visits to the country and attend funeral ceremonies, to which they were often sent by the king to honour distinguished families. At great festivals they sat next to the king in the seat of honour, and during the day they were also much in his vicinity or stayed with other female friends in a house of the royal court. For the queens and their visitors, there was a special women's gate in every palace. Only one thing was forbidden to them: they were not allowed to prepare the king's food or see him eat.

In addition to the legitimate wives who liked to hold the titles, the king could still maintain concubines, usually beautiful girls from ordinary families. If he heard that there was a very beautiful girl somewhere, he would send a house master [steward] with some worthy old women to speak to the parents. These were always highly honoured and pleased, for this affinity brought them many advantages and honours. An old woman from the kinship went with the steward and the girl to the ensete grove, where the steward looked at her attentively "above the girdle and below the knees". She also had to put on a dress of thin material for this inspection, so that he could determine whether she corresponded to the ideal of beauty in everything. Often the bridal inspection of a future queen was held in a similar way. If a concubine gave birth to a child, which the king liked to see, "for bastards spoil the good race", he quickly parted with her and gave her as a wife, with a rich dowry as a tribute, to deserving people he wanted to bind to himself. He liked it when the new husband of the concubine also took over and adopted the son so that he did not inherit the king's name as his patronym. Natural daughters were married off with rich dowries to respected Wolaita. This was considered one of the highest favours and was popular with the people, while the

legitimate daughter was earmarked for "diplomatic" marriages with neighbouring kings. This often led to friction with the great ones of the empire, who insisted that "real" daughters of the king should be married to Wolaita.

Death and burial

The death of the king, which was not kept secret, was announced with the words "*kawa senfidosona*" ("the king is resting") or "*kawo cegidasan*" ("the king has grown old"), because it was forbidden to pronounce the word "death" in connection with the king – except for the oath "at the death of the king". There is no ritual chaos or prolonged popular mourning. On the contrary, there is an effort not to let a hiatus occur between the reign of the deceased and the new king.

Immediately after the death, the head of the household (*dencha*) took the king's gold and silver finger ring, which he gave to the two old men from the Wolisiya and Zutuma clan. They put them on the crown prince at the investiture ceremony that took place soon afterwards, on the same or the next day. The new king, as almost everywhere in Ethiopia, did not take part in the great national mourning, but withdrew to his palace after symbolically turning over the earth with a hoe at the place where his father's grave was to be. Soon after the death, the pages and chamberlains washed the corpse with hot salt water and rubbed it with fragrant butter. They closed the eyes and mouth and tied the thumbs, knees and big toes together with cotton strips. Immediately before burial, the strips were untied and the body was wrapped in many cotton blankets.

On the fourth day after the death, the people, who had been lamenting until then, gathered in the morning for the great funeral lamentation on the meadow in front of the palace. All the people, with the exception of the new king, cut off a strip of hair above their foreheads and shaved themselves completely bald after the funeral. The great ones sat on their horses in full war regalia, but dressed only in their trousers, and jumped up and down complaining. With the long hippopotamus whips they beat their backs so that the blood flowed down and said, moaning:

Woï, woï (Oh, oh,)

Sanafe guye anko (after Sana (only) vultures are there)

Sanafe guye afo. (after Sana (only) the abyss is there).[54]

The women behaved as if frantic and ran around with their arms outstretched: "*Abe, Abe tana mo*!" ("Oh, oh, eat me!"). All scratched their cheeks and temples with thorns and those close to the king pierced their tongues with them. "You

[54] This is supposed to mean "After Sana's death, the vultures will eat us, as we no longer have any protection".

have spoken with him, you have eaten with him – what more shall you do?" After sunset, the king was carried to his grave amidst tremendous crowds. In addition to torches of all kinds, the large wax candles used only for this purpose were lit. To the right and left of the path from the palace to the grave, wide strips of cloth were hung up. Later they were thrown into the grave. The friends, court officials and great men carried the bundle of cotton wrapping the corpse on their hands, taking turns, each anxious to lay a hand at least once on the remains of his king. It is said that the funeral procession moved in silence. The grave was a deep niche grave, the floor and lower walls of which were paved with stones. At the bottom, a thick layer of coarse earth salt had been heaped up and grass scattered over it. The king was laid down in the niche and the opening was closed with wooden planks. Now came the solemn moment when the new king appeared with his bodyguard and was the first to place a handful of earth in the grave. Thus, he was finally the rightful heir and successor. Then the grave was closed with earth.

The burial of the king, silently and at night, was surrounded by a dark mystery. Human sacrifices are known from Kaffa and Yem in connection with the king's cult and burial (Bieber 1920, 1923; Fernandez 1707; Bruce 1790; Straube 1963). The kings of southern Ethiopia, for example, the Male and Basketto, also knew the burial of the king with living humans, although it was pretended that the victims were animals. In general, it is still known in southern Ethiopia that the king and queens of Wolaita were also buried together with living humans. In Gofa and Basketto, I was told in 1951 that a slave was sat next to the head of the dead Wolaita king with his pipe. According to Gavrilov (1930:1074), kings and members of the aristocracy were buried in a deep grave wrapped in 20–25 cloaks and lying on a bed. Around them were placed the bodies of their wives and slaves; wives are said to have even been buried alive in the past. Food, drink, weapons, tobacco pipes, clothes, etc. were also deposited there. Hodson (1927:28), who travelled through Wolaita in 1914, reports:

The Wolamo used to bury the body of a respected person together with the living. When the last queen died three women were buried with her, one to make her bed, one to prepare coffee for her and one to light her pipe.

Whether this custom used to be kept so secret in Wolaita that only very few knew about it, or whether the memory of it had accidentally slipped away from people in authority, it is peculiar that no one knew anything about it anymore. I am sure that such enlightened people as *fitawrari* Desta or Debo, who communicated quite different things, would certainly not have concealed this custom if it had been known to them. In view of so many other statements, its existence cannot be doubted.

The first kings from Mikael to Adayo are said to be buried abroad, mostly in Konta or Kaffa, where they were summoned as vassals of the Kaffa king. Others claim they are buried in Didaye. According to one version, Kote died in voluntary exile in Dawuro, Libana fled from his nephew Tube, and Tube died in Boroda, where he fled from his son Sana. Only since Sana were the kings buried at their palaces. They determined the location of their grave while they were still alive: always near a major road, so that the people would remember them and pay homage to them. Sana is buried in the communal meadow of Laso in Koysha. His actual burial – standing and with the spear arm protruding from the grave – represents an ancient burial form of many Ethiopian kings. Ogato immediately next to his palace Woysa in Koysha, Amado not far from his palace Atwaro near Dalbo, Gobe as well as his son Gaga close to Dalbo on the road. Tona is supposedly buried in Addis Ababa, Orobe in a cemetery in Soddo. At many of the royal tombs, faithful people have planted large trees, podocarpus and more recently eucalyptus, so that they are visible from afar as sacred groves. In ancient times, only candelabra euphorbia and erytima were planted at the graves, and little houses were built above them, with a high fence around them. The houses were maintained and rebuilt until 1896. Close by was a guard's hut where potters lived who guarded the grave and told passers-by to get off their horses, bow and lay grass by the side of the road.

On the fifth day after death, the new king slaughtered a plain white, red or fawn bull at the grave, dripped the blood, roasted pieces of meat and honey on the grave and tasted some of the raw meat: "Here my father, eat and bless me!" The sacrifice remained there and was left for the potters or vultures.

The imperial order

by Eike Haberland

If my informants have reported correctly, the Wolaita used to be among the few peoples in Africa who had "abstract" money, i.e. a means of payment whose purchasing power bore no relation whatsoever to its real practical value. All other objects that facilitated the exchange of goods, such as iron, salt, silver or gold, were never money in an abstract sense in southern Ethiopia, but objects of exchange that were gladly accepted because of their handiness and durability, as they facilitated an exchange – for every transaction was nothing else.

Something quite different is the peculiar cloth money *kareta*, a long narrow sheet that was twelve cubits long and half a cubit wide. Its value was officially fixed and extraordinarily high, namely 36–40 pieces of iron money, which was the most common local currency. Unfortunately, opinions differ about its manufacture: some think it came into the country from Gomara, Kaffa, Dawuro or Jimma, others state that it was made later by certain weavers by special order of the king. The accuracy of this information is very limited. Another source, for example, gave the average price at twice that given above. In general, the prices do not seem to have been related to economic efficiency but were dependent on other considerations. That a good dairy cow was worth seven pieces of cloth money is still understandable, but the price of 18 pieces for a fattened giant ox bears no relation to the value of the meat. What is decisive for me is the relationship of the East African cattle breeder to his animals and the joy he took in the prestige he enjoyed when he called such an animal his own "whose hump was hanging down with fat and in whose resting place a hole had to be dug in which his tub had room". It was agreed that its [the cloth's] real value was many times less than its commercial value and that it was, of course, strictly forbidden to imitate it; it was made of simple black threads. There was probably no great danger of this, since these pieces, a large part of which were in the king's treasuries, were only passed from one trustworthy hand, which could vouch for their authenticity, to the next. Because of its high value, it was only used in larger transactions such as for cattle or slaves. It was particularly popular as a handy object in tax collection to invest

the surplus income not needed for the upkeep of the royal court. The king gave the *kareta* to deserving heroes.

Famous throughout southern Ethiopia was the iron money (*marcho*) of the Wolaita. In 1935, despite the intrusion of copper and silver coins, it was still the common coin of choice, only to disappear completely from commerce soon afterwards. With great difficulty, I was still able to muster two pieces that lay rusty in a junk room. The value of the iron money was the same as the use value of the iron, which came into the country in the usual pieces in wedge or stick form from Jimma, Tambaro or Kambata called *bete.* In Wolaita they were further processed by the blacksmiths and presumably two *marcho* were made from one piece of *bete*, flat iron bands widening towards one end, were bent at an obtuse angle. The ethymological interpretation of the name *marcho* is not clear to me; also the iron of the ploughshare is called so in the Wolaita language. Iron on the other hand is called *birata*, derived from Amharic. In Gofa, too, this form of iron money used to be known (Cerulli 1938), but when I travelled through there, no one could remember it, not even in Dime, the iron exporting country. The iron is exported there, even now, in the form of bars or wedges (Jensen 1959:250). Iron money used to be widespread in Northeast Africa. Erlanger (1904:22) and Straube report the use of "pan-like" iron sheets (*womasa*) as money in highland Sidaama (Abera).

In the ancient lands of Dawuro, Arababui, and Hadiya, too, the iron money *hunuka* of Maqrizi is reported to be "as wide as a needle and three times as long (Ehrmann 1793/1794 II:275; Cerulli 1938:47, 370). The divisional coins otherwise very common in Ethiopia, namely silver or salt, penetrated only very late. The Maria Theresia thaler, which the Wolaita called *kurusa* or *karusu* (from Arabic/Amharic *kars* or *kors*) came into the country only under King Gobe from Jimma. Salt ingots of a span width, which are still traded in southern Ethiopia as a popular barter item under the Amharic name *amole*, came to Wolaita only after the Amhara conquest. These salt ingots come from the Amole landscape in the northern Danakil region and are brought to the south by Wollo traders. Glass beads (*gozda*), which formed a kind of money in Kaffa (Bieber 1920, 1923) and Gofa (Cerulli 1938:47), also did not play a major role as barter items in Wolaita.

The small change under the iron money was cotton threads, pieces of fabric, lumps of butter, beads, etc. It is difficult to state the actual value of the old money, since the reporters had difficulty remembering it and the Amhara occupation also brought about a great change in the old values. In the old days, a piece of cloth money is said to have been worth 36–40 iron pieces or 15 Maria Theresa thalers, which proves to be correct when compared with other price ratios (e.g. a pair of first-quality trousers = 16–20 iron pieces, a slave = 5 bulls or 5 pieces of cloth, a heifer = one and a half pieces of cloth). A piece of iron would therefore have been worth half of a Maria Theresa thaler and a third of a present-day Ethiopian

dollar. The current price of iron in dimes also corresponds roughly to this. However, this is completely contradicted by the information of Stigand (1910:296), during whose journey through Wolaita after the turn of the century 10–12 pieces of iron went for one Maria Theresa thaler. Perhaps this was connected with the devaluation of iron money that was already beginning at that time and the demand for silver money caused by the payment of taxes. Even in 1955, during the coffee harvest in Gedeo Land, the value of paper money fell by half compared to silver shillings, because the farmers did not want paper money for coffee. Such fluctuations, due to the world market price of silver, etc., have not been uncommon in Ethiopia. The cowrie shell (*eleba*), highly prized by the Oromo, was meaningless in Wolaita.

In accordance with the multitude of means of payment, the measures were also richly structured. In the markets, the hollow measures were, for grain, a medium bamboo basket (*tiginya*) and a larger one (*kega*). For liquids and grain, there were three main types of pot: a small amphora (*tarua*) was the smallest measure, four of this type filled the next larger (*tuga*), three of these filled the largest pot (*bataa*). Following the Amhara pattern, the largest vessel is now also divided into two middle pots (small *lakua*, Amharic: *gambo*). The concept of a mule load (*daula*) was only introduced by the Amhara and is calculated, for example for honey, with either three or four *tuga* on each side.

The smallest weight – used only for precious metals or spices – is the ounce (*woket* or *oket*), i.e. the counterweight of a Maria Theresa thaler (428 gr.). A lump of butter (*kaso, asar* in Amharic) sold on the market wrapped in ensete bast weighs about 500 gr. All other weights (at the same time hollow measures) originating from the Amhara such as *kunna* (depending on the part of the country (3.25 to 4.67 kg), *frazula* (originally 16.8 kg, now 20 kg) and *quintal* (100 kg) are only common among merchants; the people still calculate according to the pots. The scale (*mizan*) was unknown until recently.

One has to admire the sense of proportion of the potters; out of long-learned routine, they make the pots so true to size that – as all Wolaita assure us – the differences in their capacity are completely insignificant.

There are also many measures of length. Here, as everywhere in Ethiopia, the body measurements serve as basic measures, but in a very differentiated form compared to the simple measures of the Oromo, for example. They start with the width of one finger (*biradhe*) and continue with two, three and four fingers to the width of the hand (*icnin biradhe* = five fingers). Then comes the span (*takarva*, approx. 20–22 cm) and three types of *ulna*. The first cubit (*wara*) extends from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, the second (*bubuto*) from the elbow to the first limb of the little finger of the clenched fist, the third (*desa kure*) from the elbow to the knuckle at the pulse. This is mainly used to measure fabrics. Land is

measured with a rope 24 cubits long (*kanta wodoro*, Amharic: *gamad* or *qalad*) or 48 cubits long (*adusa wedero*).

Land constitution

The land constitution of Wolaita was determined by the kingship, since the king was also the owner of all land in highland Ethiopia or Kaffa, whether it had been in the possession of a family since time immemorial or had only been distributed at the time of a conquest. However, just as the king could not unrestrainedly dispose of his subjects, who were in theory his slaves, he could not attack their rightfully acquired or inherited land, unless he disregarded morality and law as a tyrant.

The land constitution of the Wolaita, like that of the Amhara, was extraordinarily similar to the European medieval fief system. Especially, the prerogatives of the king are astonishingly reminiscent of the regalia of the medieval regents. Although the legal concepts were not as abstract as in Europe, one can distinguish four different forms of land ownership without artificial constructions: king's land, imperial land and private land. The latter was divided into freehold land, which the owner could dispose of freely and for which he did not have to pay anything apart from his duties as a subject and citizen; this was the predominant part of the Wolaita land and land whose use was linked to special services (*wose*, Amharic: *gult*, *gualt*). For the Wolaita, these were exclusively soldier's estates. The Tigre enjoyed special privileges for their land. Lordless land on which one was allowed to settle without permission did not exist.

King's land was all the land that the king had inherited as his father's eldest son and that remained to him after the division of the inheritance with his brothers. The palaces with the surrounding land were inseparably part of this, while the rest of the land was subject to frequent change, being reduced by divisions of inheritance and donations or enlarged by conquests. After an area of land had been annexed, the king selected the best pieces for himself before the general division and he settled this with slaves and had them cultivate it. In addition, all land without heirs fell to the king, but he usually soon gave it away again.

Everything that was common property and was used and administered by the community belonged to the imperial land. In his capacity as ruler, the king had a special right of use, which he only granted to others with special permission. Imperial lands were the border fortifications, the wasteland inside and outside the border, the salt deposits, the larger springs, streams and rivers, the large plains (*dembba*) used for pasture, the public squares and marketplaces and the roads. All these lands were properly administered. Border bailiffs (*mita mocona*) were appointed for the border areas at each gate, and under them were the wasteland

bailiffs, who saw to it that no one cut wood or grass there without special permission, etc., and above all that no one hunted big game without personal permission from the king. Even the exploitation of the salt deposits required the permission of the bailiff of the wasteland, to whom a gift was given; no other duties were associated with these uses. The watercourses and larger springs were free for normal use by anyone, but no one was allowed to divert large quantities of water for irrigation without consulting the neighbours across the shore or the community. Springs that rose in the middle of a man's land were private property along with the watercourse up to the boundary of the plot. The great plain (*dembba*) and sterile areas of white soils, many of which lay in flat land on the watersheds were poorly suited to cultivation because of their dryness. Constant intensive grazing has destroyed all remnants of former tree growth there, so that one can overlook the completely flat areas covered only with grass for many kilometres. In central Wolaita, south of Damota Mountain, several plains (Gandaba, Hebu, Perera, Amaleka, Ose, Larena, Tiskisa, Fundune and Anama) merge to form a complex several hours wide and long. To the west of the Damota is the large Sorfella plain, and to the north, on the border with Badawaco, is the Buge plain. The plains at the Bilate River and Lake Abaya and the Bale plain at the Omo River are partly covered with dense bush and can only be used as pasture in the clear areas. In the past, this plain could be used as pasture by anyone, a great relief for the people of middle Wolaita, as it meant that they did not have to send their cattle, for which their own soil did not provide enough fodder, to the far-off lowlands at the Bilate River, Omo River or Lake Abaya. Taxes were not levied for grazing, nor was any Wolaita, including slaves and artisans, allowed to send his cattle there, regardless of the location of his residence. The administrative rulers in whose area the pastures were located were responsible for order and security; they were supposed to make sure that the neighbouring groups did not appropriate anything from the pastures – something they did often enough after satisfying the rulers with gifts. After the Amhara occupation, the plains became the property of the Ethiopian state and were given to the priests of the Christian churches of Wolaita, who grazed their cattle there or let other people's graze for a fee.

The public squares have already been dealt with, the marketplaces are described at the end of this chapter.

Finally, I come to the roads, i.e. both the major royal roads and the communal and field roads. The roads within a plot are the property of the landowner, but he may not deny passage to neighbours if frequent passage has become customary. A special feature of the southern Ethiopian kingdoms (e.g. Kaffa and Yem) are their great royal roads, which were artificially constructed, no longer following the soil conditions or the boundaries of the plots, but cutting straight through the land over long distances, overcoming uneven ground with small dams and water-

courses with bridges. They connected the palaces and marketplaces in a straight line and were – this is clearer in Kaffa than in Wolaita – the roads on which the king travelled when he went from one palace to another. Although they are now partly unmaintained, and traffic has taken other routes, so that they have been washed away by rain, overgrown by bush or trimmed in width by land-hungry farmers, they are still easily recognisable by their straight lines. Today's car road from Dalbo to the border with Shone runs mostly along the old King's Road. The communities through whose territory such a road ran had to repair it under the leadership of their chiefs twice a year (in October after the rainy season and June before the rainy season) by royal proclamation. The bridges also had to be repaired. The many other roads and paths in the country were not maintained.



Fig. 36: King's Road on the border between Kindo and Koysha

The course of the royal roads was like this: the oldest road (1) began in Kinde-Halale and led via Sosora-Wamura and Yakima. There, the road divided into three arms. In the north Yakima (2) Kocal (now Bakelo)–Ancuco-Zumino–Himbeco–Madero, the border to Kambata. In the middle of the country (3) Yakima–Gerera–Lintala–Otona–Dambe–Dalbo (there another fork). The southern arm (4) ran from Yakima through Mura and Eso on the border of the Gamo lands. Like Yakima, Dalbo was at the intersection of several roads: the eastern road (5) led from Dalbo via Dawe (near Woliso), Duguna and Fango to Dinto market on the Sidaama border. Northeastwards to the Hadiya border (6), the road ran from Dalbo via Boditi and the Walaca River. From this road, before Boditi, a northwest pointing branch branched off (7), which led through Gale and Gara and joined another imperial road at Tubeco. The road (8) leading south from Dalbo went via Dakube, Gulgola and Damboya to the border wall Galgak in Humbo. From there, the great caravan road (now car road) continued along the western edge of the rift valley via Boroda into the heart of the Gamo lands. Apart from this road, there are said to have been

two other roads, the existence of which, however, has been partially denied by my reporters: one from Bakelo via Offa to Dalbo and a second from Offa through the great plain to Humbo.

All public paths, i.e. those that lead between the properties of different owners and form a border, have the peculiar character of a no man's land, a sphere that is ownerless in a legal as well as in a religious sense. Since no one is responsible for it [a public path] from a religious point of view, anyone may slaughter on it, since the evil magic that may be associated with it cannot be directed against anyone and has no power over anyone. Whoever kills an animal on someone else's ground can do him much evil there. Therefore, it is a matter of course that a piece of cattle given by the master of the house to the guests for hospitality is either slaughtered by him on his ground or brought to a road by the guests for this purpose. People like to get rid of cursed things by throwing them into the street or by binding their illness or misfortune in a magic bundle and placing it on the street so that someone stepping over it will take the evil away with them. Legal action could be taken against this anonymous magic, which was not directed against anyone in particular.

Facilities

Every market in Wolaita – including, oddly enough, the old ones in Kindo and Koysha – goes back to a founder whose name is still known to local residents. I was not able to find out what really happened to the markets in Kindo and Koysha; one would think that they would be very old, at least so old that it would be difficult to remember their founders. Most of the markets in Wolaita, are in the areas that have been resettled since the great land grab. According to the Wolaita, the way a market was founded was that, after the land seizure was completed and the land divided up in a community or district, the desire to have a market one's own and not go to the neighbouring market, which might be far away, became powerful over time. After the project had been duly discussed in the people's assembly, a respected man, a war leader (*gaddauwa*) or a just officiating headman, went to the king and asked him in an audience for permission to establish a new market, which the king usually allowed after consulting his councillors. The place and day of the new market was publicly proclaimed throughout the country by royal messengers. The market then took place in a corner of the often very large public square (municipality or district). The founder retained supervision and court over the market for himself and his descendants for all eternity. He did not receive an official title or fees, he could unofficially be called *gia dana* (market judge). The small gifts given to him by the market visitors were of a voluntary nature; pre-

sumably he received bribes as a judge in market disputes. Every month he made some unspecified tribute to the king from this income. To maintain order, the market judge was assisted by the market helpers (*adasine*), who were also voluntary and unsalaried. On all markets, especially on the border markets, there was a very strictly observed peace of God, which was considered disturbed by mere tavern brawls.

Districts and counties

The municipality or landscape names listed next to the district names do not, of course, exhaust the large quantity of these names; only very large municipalities or historically significant places are indicated:

1. Kindo, the ancient ancestral land between Omo and Deme, has four districts:
   - I Didaye-Gafe-Halale in the lowlands and low mountains in the west. In Didaye lies the palace of the first kings.
   - II Jimma-Selo in the centre, Jimma in the low mountains, Selo in the lowlands
   - III Borkose-Zero on the border with Koysha, Borkose in the mountains with the Kaballe-Zega parish, where there is a famous church. Zero in the lowlands.
   - IV Bortobosa in the south, both in the highlands and in the lowlands.
2. Koysha, which stretches from the high mountains in the west to the great plain at the foot of Mount Damot, is divided into eight districts:
   - I Wamura with the municipalities of Wamura, Cnukare, Lasasa, Bauta, Fatata, Mogisa.
   - II Laso with the palace Bololo.
   - III Wose with the palace of the same name and the Eqa-Beg on the eastern slope of the highlands.
   - IV Fulasa with the districts Borkose, Dole and Garumo (Abo Church) and the Gale and Mimo plains in the foothills and the gorges on the Omo.
   - V Yakima (Makena Margan Church) and Sado.
   - VI Woide on a ridge on the border to Sore with the large market Bakelo (formerly in the neighbouring village Kocu) and the parish Mashido, which belongs half to Sore and half to Koysha.
   - VII Waraza and Dakaia, south and southeast of Woide. In the southern part of Waraza lies the plain Haba.

VIII Garera-Tome on the west bank of the Lintala, which forms the border with Damot and Humbo. Half of Gerera is occupied by a grassy plain. To the south is the community of Sorma from which old Duna Otango, one of my informants, came.

3. Offa, which encompasses the south of the mountain range on which Koisu also lies and the plains towards the Deme, has four districts:

   I Sere in the high mountains with the famous St. George's Church in the market town of Guyo (Sere-Guyo) and the market town of Offa on the ridge of the easternmost mountain range south of Yakima and at the site of Bosase, where in prehistoric times the first cow came out of the ground and others of the first Wolaitamala jumped out on horseback.

   II Hira-Sikirsa towards Deme with the market Mure.

   III Okoto on the edge of the mountain with the southern part of Kakima and the execution site Holozo. The imperial road passing through the present village formed the border of Koysha and Offa.

   IV Wachigoa-Eso with the market of the same name close to Deme.

4. Humbo, which comprised the Humbo Mountain, on the southern slope of which, at the little river Sauware, the border to Boroda ran. The Manuka plain adjoining it to the south is already Boroda territory. North of the mountain, most of the major realm plains belong to Offa. It contains three counties:

   I Offa's south and southwest edge of Hum Mountain with Fango district and the large marketplace of Gulga.

   II Shochora with Humbo Mountain, on top of which was the royal palace of Solkun and the plains of Amama, Fundune, Ose, Amaleka, Tiskisa, Larena and the Salte district to the west.

   III Koysha to the east with the new market town of Humbo-Abo and the market town of Ogodamo on the Hamasu, which forms the border with Damota.

5. Sore west of Damot Mountain has six counties:

   I Wamura, which includes part of the Sorfella plain.

   II Caukare.

   III Mashido. The southern half belongs to Koisu.

   IV Doge or Doke.

   V Zamine with the market town of Amcuco, which succeeded the market Zamine.

VI Afayma on the ridge of the same name. At the foot is the Catholic mission station Dubo.

Sore peculiarly has no lowland on the Omo but is separated from it by a strip of the Boloso district.

6. Boloso on the northwestern border. Much of the territory now belonging to Boloso (or Wolaita) was until recently no man's land at the foot of the mountains inhabited by the Tambaro, Dongu or Kambata, such as the Achura countryside, where the Italians founded the village of Villagio Bottego, inhabited by freed slaves. The district has four parts:

I Homba.

II Zaba.

III Himbeco on the border with Tambaro with the market of the same name and the execution site Ajora or Tomagia of Motolomi.

IV Matala, which extends as a narrow strip from north to south as far as Koysha, encompassing the great scrubland of Bale and the countryside of Sale, famous for its many lemons.

7. Damot or Damota, the heart of the empire and its largest district, which occupied the surroundings of Damota Mountain and extended from there far east to Bilate and south to Lake Abaya. It covers about two fifth of the area and population of Wolaita. I have been able to put down the names of its landscapes fairly accurately, but unfortunately not how many districts it comprised and what the names of the districts were. This is due to the size of the districts, one of which is often larger than one of the normal districts, and also to the fact that in the Amhara period districts were apparently often merged and split up. Whereas my informant Kabu thought there might have been 16 districts, which he was unable to define. Otango stated with certainty districts, of which Woide, however, consisted of four separate parts:

I Woide: the largest county.

Woide I: South of Damot Mountain. On the north corner are the districts of Kokate, Wogane, Zala, Auka (where I lived; the three districts of Woide, Borkosa and Bosa meet here) and Kodo (American mission); Otona (south of it); Womba (on the river of the same name on the car road to Ceuca); the great plain, the northern part of the Amaleka plain on the Lintala, which forms the border with Koysha; the district of Offa with a once famous market. The eastern half of the present town of Soddo is in Offa, the eastern half in Waraza (Garuna). A partitioned piece of land belonged to this Offa.

Woide II: Also called Offa-Sere, at Abaya Lake at the mouth of the Hamasa.

Woide III: To the east of Damot on the border with Duguna. Mayo and Koyo in the west, Woliso on the road from Dalbo to Duguna, the residence of the Fitawrari Bukalo; Dawe Sake and Doke on the border to Duguna, Ofore and Lenda in the lowlands.

Woide IV: West of the mouth of the Bilate River at Lake Abaya. The northern part occupies the eastern half of the mountain range called Wanche-Hobicha, on which the districts of Cafa, Motala, Bada and Bonyota lie. In the south, it includes the Bilbo hot springs, Gasera district and the Coware salt site.

II Bosa: A long narrow strip stretching from Damot Mountain to the lake.

To the north, Kaca with the Anka and Kola corridors. Odoro with the market Guigula, Ara; Damboyu; Demba-Wanche on the western slope of the Wanche Mountains, where a church of St. Mary is said to have stood; Mortoto; Buke-Abala, i.e. the land up to the lake, where the previously mentioned parishes of Bosa have their lowland strips. The *fitawrari* Gabre Selassi lives in Abbala.

III Boskose: Stretches from Damot to the Bilate south of Duguna.

To the west, Kule (the famous execution site); Ziga; Zalu Danube (large market, now Amhara administrative centre); Sela, Kote; Gilo on the edge of the lowlands; Buge with the royal palace, Oloba – the legendary Maryam Gerarya church founded by Tekle Haymanot is said to have stood nearby; to the east, the royal palace Hofga in the lowlands Adaca and Cifisa.

IV Garumo or Gurimo: On the western edge of Damot Mountain.

Waraza west of the present town. Soddo with the great plain of Sorfella; north of it, Wagu; Garuma with the eponymous Fulte market and Ongole.

V Fulasa: To the north and northeast of the mountain.

Gage, the northwestern part of Damot Mountain; Araka; Zumano on the river of the same name – I have not been able to determine its exact location; Dola, Gara and the Badawacho border; and Admanco, which, as its name suggests, was Badawacho land until recently and has now been settled by Wolaita.

VI Gale: Extends from Dalbo to the Arsi border.

It includes most of Damot Mountain, with the Macame Kore peak and the Taza palace; the northwestern part of Dalbo; Coca; Boditi (large market); Sibae, with the Abita and Santo fields, where the palm of King Kote's

prophecy stands; Ade Cerake; Cerake; Walaca (famous battle site of King Amado), Taba, Gaceno; Makonisa with the Aro and Hinbo fields; extends to Bilate; the long and narrow plain of Buge; finally the grassland of Shone – now Wolaita territory, but already belonging to the Badawacho before the Amhara period. Today, a mighty sycamore in the Caco district marks the border. A few kilometres beyond lies the Amhara settlement Ras Getachew Katama (The town of Ras Getatchew), the main town of the Badawacho area.

VII In ancient times, the area around the royal palace was excluded from the county division as a Woysa (settlement of the bodyguard) and formed a special district directly under the king. It also included the large market of Dalbo.

8. Duguna, also called Duguna-Fango: two parallel mountain ranges, from which Fango descends to the Bilate valley. In the south, a large piece of lowland still belongs to this disctrict.

I Edo in the lowlands in the north.

II Duguna with the districts of Boloso, Sore, Sinka and the royal palace of Bitana on the top of Duguna Mountain.

III Tuke with the disctricts Wamura, Kindo also Anka. Side is joined by the sparsely inhabited lowland Lenca.

IV Fango with the district of Koysha and the border Dinto.

Today's Wolaita, which forms a sub-province (*awraga*) of the Sidamo-Borana province, is divided into five districts, some of which dissolve the old ones, but most of which follow the district boundaries. The district heads, like their deportees (*mislene*), are partly from good Wolaita families. For each district, there are the *abigaz* as official representatives of the Wolaita, who have more or less taken over from the old order. Districts sit in:

1. Humbo: Subscription with Humbo and Ofu
2. Bakelo: With Koysha and Kindo. In Bakelo sits the *abigaz* for Koysha; in Sakina sits a *mislene*; in Kalale sits an *abigaz* for Kindo.
3. Aucuco with Sore and Boloso.
4. Voloso under the *fitawrari* Bakalo, who is both district chief and *abigaz*. This includes Duguna, as well as East and South Damota (Woide, Bosa and Borkose). A *mislene* for the western part sits in Dambe.
5. Boditi with North Danota (Gule and Fulasa).
6. Soddo town is a special district directly under the Governor of Wolaita.

The municipal constitution

The core cell of administration and political life is the municipality (*sakosuca*). In this community, the opinion of the people is expressed and also takes effect much more than in the imperial administration determined by the royal court and in the district and county administrations, in which the feudal classes dominate. In this intimately connected community, the voice of every free man could (and still can) be heard and discussed, which was no longer possible in the district assemblies, where small but powerful factions held the floor. Also, as a rule, only "privileged" people were admitted to the offices of district leaders.

If neighbourly help (see below) was basically a voluntary matter despite the strong moral obligation of all community members, participation in official community affairs was binding law. It was unthinkable that someone evade the deliberations, stay away from community life and not come to the public square (*gutura*) on Saturday and Sunday, but only "lay". Such people were immediately judged by the community and reported to the king.

There were two types of congregational meeting: the small consultation (*soreta*, Amharic: *makar*) and the large meeting (*yaya,* Amharic: *sango*). At the small meeting, the old people of the community (*cimaa*, the "old men") met daily to discuss the affairs of the community in an unofficial way and gossip about the affairs of the community, or to act as arbitrators in everyday disputes.

Meanwhile, the elders (*kina)* met under the chairmanship of the community leader (*aduna)*, his two assistants (*herago)* and the community council, whose members had the honorary title *donza* and, as the first instance, judged all disputes that did not immediately come before a higher court because of the size of the subject matter of the dispute or the seriousness of the crime. In addition to the court – which today is only a voluntary court of arbitration whose judgement has no legal force – all matters of administration were and still are handled: collection of taxes, division of public labour services (maintenance of roads and bridges, in former times, also of the border ramparts and royal palaces), restitution of the poor and distressed from public obligations, atonement ceremonies of individual community members (*cuca*), community ceremonies and formulation of requests to the higher authorities or the king, e.g. for the establishment or relocation of a market. Such deliberations often lasted for days, each [elder] with his ifs and buts to say, and each, in the manner peculiar to thoughtful peasants, repeating ad nauseam the antecedents of the case and the opinions of the previous speakers before giving his view. Since it is considered unseemly to interrupt someone who is speaking, there is no end to the length of his speech; everyone sits on the floor in a venerable posture, sometimes somewhat lost in thought, patiently waiting for the next speaker. In all disagreements, the old people hold the balance and

skilfully use the Ethiopian's reverence for age and the white hair to assert an opinion. Unanimity is sought in all decisions, and the recalcitrant are coaxed until they tire of insisting on their opinion. Thus, the communities and their assemblies were, and are, probably the best and most direct expression of the people's will and an excellent regulator against the deviating actions of higher authorities, which even today rarely do anything without having checked the general mood.

The heart of the community is the public square (*gutura*), where political, religious and economic life is centred. This square in a flat, grassy area where a few tall trees, mostly acacias or sycamores, have been left to provide shade for those sitting there could also be called the communal meadow. All around, it is surrounded by small mounds of earth and hedges of euphorbia, which are intended to prevent the adjoining owners from secretly shifting their boundaries to the disadvantage of the common property. One part of the square can be occupied by the marketplace, another part is formed by the somewhat desolate cemetery with overgrown burial mounds, overgrown grave plants and the remains of burial huts. The slave cemetery was separated from it at one corner of the square. In addition, the community meadow is free pasture for all community members. In the middle of the actual consultation meadow, under the two sacred trees (*eku mittu* or *somberu*), as the largest sanctuary of the community, lies the grave (*dubushsha)* of the founder of the community. He planted these two trees (crotan and cordia) after the land was taken, and these are not touched by anyone until they fall down and are replaced by new ones planted by the founder's descendants. It is always the eldest son who holds the highest priesthood of the community (*dubushsha fogia*) and performs the great community sacrifice (*dubushsha eka*) on the three sacred hearthstones at the grave every year, in the tenth month. From that moment on, the boys of the community begin to pile up the great pile of wood there, which is lit at the circle festival. The public places for the district assemblies also have these shrines, which are, however, of much less importance than the congregations.

Instance path

Procedural law, conduct in court, afursata, oath

In all legal disputes, there was a strict path of appeal that had to be followed under all circumstances with punishment. However, the court imposed a considerable penalty for impropriety over trifling matters. Every Wolaita was theoretically entitled to do so [appeal], if he was not satisfied with the verdict of one court, and to go to the next, and so on up to the court of the king himself, provided, of course, that this was not over a trifling matters and he had enough influence to get a new trial and be admitted to the royal court. One could go directly to the royal court

immediately in the case of serious crimes or other weighty matters. What applied to the Ethiopian king, namely that those seeking justice flocked to his throne, also applied to the Wolaita king, before whom, as before the Ethiopian emperor and every governor today, one expected to receive a just verdict. Of course, it was difficult for the uninfluential and poor, who knew no one at court or could not pay bribes to the chamberlains, to present their case to the king.

Public prosecutors were unknown. Where no motion was filed, there was no trial, "where there is no accuser, there is no judge". Here, too, the principle of self-operation of the proceedings by the parties prevails, but the judge is not strictly bound by this and can also intervene in the process himself by asking enlightening questions. In spite of the state's means of power, which are given to the judge here, the entire code of procedure still has much of the character of a pure arbitration court, in which the jurisdiction of many other groups presents itself and where one basically strives for nothing more than an amicable agreement between the parties. In the case of neighbouring peoples, where the royalty was not strongly developed or was confined to the religious sphere and therefore possessed no political power, there was actually no authority capable of carrying out execution, except for the possibility of the whole people falling unitedly upon a wrongdoer. There was hardly any possibility to punish anyone who refused to appear in court or to comply with its judgement and was powerful enough to defy public opinion,.

In all minor disputes within a community, also in matters where both parties are at fault, such as in a brawl, the first instance is the court of arbitration of the elders, which does not yet have an official character. They are the same worthy old people who later act as advisors and jurors to the judge, but here they advise the disputing parties more privately to reconcile or pay fines and give in before the actual, often very costly, trial takes place. The influence of the elders is immense: even among the Amhara and the "civilised" Oromo, the government judge expects the parties to come to him first, and only when a settlement has not been reached does he begin a regular trial. The Amhara call these "old people", who are often people in their prime, *ya agar szamagile* (the "old men" of the country) because that is also how every old person is called today. That it was originally a purely honorific name is clear from the name *jumagulle*, which the nobility of the Tigre in Eritrea use in contrast to the vassals (Höfner 1951:7). The Wolaita call the old men *cimaa.* To honour the right-speaking, they add the word *donza*: *cimaa donza* (*donza* still has the meaning of lord among some Gonga peoples). With the great reverence the Ethiopians have for age, it is easier for them to get the parties to yield than it is later in court, where bitter opponents give away possessions to get a case through all the instances and spend half their lives in court, for worse "litigants" are probably not to be found on the whole earth. In Wolaita today, if the old people's attempt at reconciliation fails, they go to the government court,

which is located at the seat of the district chief in charge. In the past, this was the beginning of the local courts' path of appeal. One went to the next authority, the community leader (*adoma),* who, assisted by his helper (*herogo*), administered justice in the community meadow. If it was a minor matter, such as a debt of a few pieces of iron or the disputed ownership of a sheep, this was the court of last resort; no further appeal was possible. In the case of larger matters in dispute – a cow or a piece of cane money (*kureta*) – one could appeal and go successively to the district head (*huduga*), even possibly to the district judge (*dana*). If, however, the first three instances had passed identical sentences and a troublemaker nevertheless appealed to the district head, the latter became angry and made him pay an additional fine. If it was a matter of rather large values, such as five pieces of cloth money or several head of cattle, one could go immediately to the district head after the hearing before the old men, the two intermediate instances were denied the right to judge such high values. The fifth instance was the twelve imperial judges (*balamuala*), who usually administered justice under the presidency of the imperial judge (*zaba dana*), as the king's representative. Like all other dignitaries of the imperial administration, they would be newly elected every year; they could, of course, retain their office for several years. The word *bala muala,* also pronounced *balamola* by the Wolaita, comes from Amharic, where it means companion or favourite of the prince. Among them, too, there was a tendency not to override what "the country", i.e., the headman in question, had judged. The college already had the power to give a creditor an enforceable sentence and to instruct the royal beadles to enforce the judgement, if necessary by force. Normal legal disputes, e.g. over debts, never actually came before the king. The twelve chief judges were considered the embodiment of wisdom and justice, and it was a matter of course that in difficult cases they often deliberated for days and interrogated the witnesses until they reached a verdict. If they had reached a unanimous verdict, an otherwise possible appeal as the highest and last instance was pointless. Like the chief magistrates, the king could only be called upon in really important disputes, above all in private-law disputes over land ownership, since he was the chief owner of all land, and in all criminal cases, such as thefts, woundings and killings. In the case of traitors, rebellion and customary crimes, he himself intervened without request. The king's official representative, both in the deliberations of the chief judges and in the pronouncement of the royal sentence in the last instance, was the imperial judge or *zaba dana*, the "plains" judge, who corresponds to the *afa negus*, the "king's mouth", of the Amhara. He gets his name from the king's meadow in front of the palace, where he instead of the king pronounces the judgement before all the people.

In Wolaita, too, the disputing parties "dance" around in front of the judge while reciting their sayings. There are no maxims in the Ethiopian trial, so objec-

tions can be raised at any time. Even today, the parties appear in court with all their relatives, so that the court is influenced by the importance of their family, and are accompanied by law-abiding and eloquent advocates (*tabaka* in Amharic) who speak for them in court. The gesticulating and melodramatic presentation in front of the immobile judge has often been described. I would like to add that it is considered a sign of good form to arrange one's cloak in the proper manner before each of the individual phases of gesticulating, and at the end, when presenting the main argument, not to fling forward the whole hand, but only the index and middle finger of the right hand. The left hand should hold the staff. Among the Wolaita, it is customary to ram the staff into the ground and, holding onto it, jump back and forth.

Merchant class

An actual merchant class was not known in Wolaita, given the purely peasant population and their low needs. The small people who often went to the markets to sell spices or to make a small profit by bartering were always peasants and pursued this occupation only as a sideline. For this reason, they were looked down upon by their richer peers. The craftsmen visited the market as much as any other Wolaita in order to participate in the events there, but they usually worked only by order and only sold large quantities of goods on the market when they needed cash. Today, there is a very large range of handicraft products on offer at the markets; in the past, this was less well known. The weavers also worked a lot to order, the itinerant weavers to a large extent even as guest workers.

Only foreigners were real merchants (*zal'anca*) and here only two groups were allowed into the country as an exception and were allowed to move freely. These were the salt merchants from Arsi and the Jimma merchants. Other foreigners – Arsi, Sidaama, Hadiya, Dawuro, etc. – either exchanged their products in the markets in the no man's land between the border and the Wolaita or were allowed to do so in the marketplaces close to the border (such as Halale). They had to leave the country again on the same day. The Wolaita also only entered foreign countries in this way. For security reasons – if, for example, a beadle was in the border area and revenge was to be feared – the women, who are never attacked in Ethiopia, went to the markets in the foreign territory.

The two groups of foreign merchants, who formed regular guilds, enjoyed special privileges and were gladly invited to come to the country, as their appearance was vital. This was especially true for the Islamic salt traders coming from Arsi, as there was no salt in Wolaita itself and the people were dependent on imports. These merchants, called *bada kofole* (*badda* is the Oromo word for highlands and

kofola or *kofale* a stretch of land in high Arsi) or *matinia ihia asa* (salt-bringing people), were so important to the Wolaita that they were given free passage even in times of war, even when fighting the Arsi. "If we forbid them access, they will never come back!" They brought red salt and the expensive white salt. They did not have to pay any tributes at the border either but gave to the border bailiff. The Jimma people took over the importation of all the things of higher culture that used to come from Kaffa via Dawuro and were peddled by Dawuro traders in the Halale and Sero border markets. In very ancient times, under the first kings, Kaffa merchants are also said to have come as far as Wolaita with gold, silver and glass beads (*gozda*). When relations with Kaffa ceased, and especially since the marriage of King Gobe to the sister of the Jimma Oromo king, the latter took over the trade. They crossed the Omo at Garo, which was subject to Jimma, and moved from the north via Tambaro to Wolaita, where they settled mainly in the large Dalbo market near the royal palaces. Like the salt merchants, they did not have to pay any tribute – customs were apparently unknown – but gave appropriate gifts to the border bailiff and also to the king. Just like the Jimma princess by marriage, they were pronounced bringers of culture and encouraged the Wolaita to produce or cultivate these things themselves, such as silverware, colourful fabrics, woodwork, straw wickerwork, painted cattle hides, spices and mules, furthermore glass beads, glasses, salt, gold etc. They were self-confident, haughty people, splendidly dressed in beautiful clothes and red turbans, who looked contemptuously at the Wolaita, who were only half-civilised and pagan in their eyes. The king assigned them special living quarters below Dalbo near the market, where they lived under their own responsible leaders. They were known to the border lords and kings. From there they went to all the large markets in the country. Whoever joined them in the "king's merchants" (*kawa zal anca*) was punished by the king, thefts were pursued relentlessly and if something was lost, the king replaced it after he had called the community in question to account. What they bargained for their goods in Wolaita I do not know. It must only have been things that were worth the long return journey, such as Ivory, slaves, Maria Theresa thalers or raw cotton.

All transporting of goods in Wolaita used to be done on the back or head. Horses, mules or donkeys were too rare and too precious, and loading them was unknown. Only the foreigners came by mule or donkey caravan. The Omo and Bilate can be crossed in the dry season. The Bilate is then knee-deep, while the Omo reaches over the shoulders of the natives in deep places. They then walk in groups to support each other. In the big rainy season, the two rivers are impassable. When the water level has lowered somewhat after the rainy season, or in the small rainy season, the rivers are crossed with the help of floats and inflatable tubes. The indigenous people living on the banks do this as a business and take advantage of

the travellers‘ distress and fear to make extortionate demands, as we also found out on this expedition. The goods are stuffed into the inflated skins, the travellers hang onto the tube and are pushed forward by the float.

Small wars

Cecchi (1888) as an eyewitness and Cerulli (1925, 1929/30) according to the songs he collected give us a vivid picture of the endless small wars of the Oromo kingdoms, which broke out for important reasons and often consisted of no more than a series of individual knightly battles. There (the same was the case with Kaffa), it was a matter of state structures for which further expansion was difficult due to geographical borders or densely populated neighbouring countries. Moreover, close attention was paid to the balance of power: if a state threatened to succumb to a powerful opponent, its other former enemies quickly came together to support it. It was different with Wolaita, which hardly fought a war without conquering new land from the Arsi or Hadiya, who already belonged to a completely different, semi-barbaric world outside the kingdom. Reasons for the wars included: killing a Wolaita in no man’s land or in a border market without any atonement being made for it; insulting Wolaita envoys or the king himself by, for example, refusing him the daughter of a neighbouring king as a wife; and so on. In such wars, where speech was paramount, war was solemnly declared on the enemy by the envoys (*gaana*), who in this particular capacity were called *mette.* I would like to assume that this was connected with a special ritual, just as with the conclusion of peace. The Wolaita only knew that a ritual was necessary to dissolve the solemn oath of peace that the Wolaita king had sworn with a neighbouring king. These difficult ceremonies, involving the sacrifice of cattle and goats, were taken very seriously because of the power of the oaths sworn in the process, and as long as the oath was not dissolved, no one dared to start a war. In Wolaita at that time there was a man, Narena, from the clan Argama who, along with his descendants, had the power to dissolve such oaths. If a curse solver could not be found, the Wolaita king asked the other ruler to declare him free of the oath.

Long before the actual start of a war announced in this way, the gates were closed and all strangers were denied entry. The war, but not the actual start of the battle, was announced everywhere by royal proclamation so that people could prepare themselves, and the war declarers and border bailiffs went around everywhere in no man’s land and on the borders to warn the peasants to withdraw their livestock and not to remain alone in endangered territory. Envoys were also sent to the other neighbouring peoples who bordered the territory of the attacked group

to inform them of the peaceful intentions of the Wolaita towards them: "We make war with the ... , but with you we remain at peace."

When all the preparations had finally been made, the great moment came when, with the rapid beating of the royal drum, the attack was announced, both in front of the royal palace and on the great meadows: "*Duguna mita gocita, torai dces torni dees*!" ("Go to the gate of Duguna, it is war!") The potters who lived all over the country had orders to immediately alert the country by blowing their trumpets and to spread the call further. The mad King Damot, who often issued a proclamation of war and an order to attack at the same time, so that the people hardly had time to prepare, added a threat to his proclamations: "Whoever is at the border gate after me, the vultures will eat his flesh" etc. The country was thrown into turmoil, the great heroes stood trembling and groaning half unconscious with excitement and lust for battle, while their freemen and slaves saddled their horses and brought them their weapons. Only when they were on horseback did they regain consciousness and gallop away with shrieking cries. The imperial road was full of warriors on foot and on horseback who, accompanied by their slaves and retainers, were striding towards the border gate. The king gathered the army there in a large meadow, divided it up and gave the order to attack, whereupon it poured into enemy territory to the blaring of trumpets and the booming of drums.

However, Wolaita's desert wars were far less raids than real conquests, which aimed at land acquisition and were also planned and carried out by the kings. It is through this deliberate and always foregrounded policy that Wolaita has become so great. Only the megalomaniac Damot made only senseless and adventurous moves to subjugate his entire neighbourhood, which he never succeeded in doing despite all his victories in the field. His plans to attack Kaffa as well were put to an end by his deposition. Most of the territories now belonging to Wolaita were won from the Hadiya – especially the Badawacho group – and the Arsi. For the Arsi, the land around the lake was only grazing land in which they did not cultivate any fields; the Hadiya – with the exception of the Kambata, no great field farmers anyway – only had small, rather pitiful plantations of ensete and millet, as they still do today. Thus, after the armies of the Wolaita had been militarily defeated, no strong resistance could be offered by a rooted population. The "Marako", i.e. the Badawacho group of the Hadiya, were the hereditary enemies of the Wolaita in the first place, and it was mostly them at whose expense the empire expanded. Probably only the Amhara conquest saved them from final annihilation, which was not far off it seems if one compares their tiny present territory with the large territory they once inhabited. With them as well as with the Arsi, the most backward opponents, Wolaita often did not make any of their many cryptic declarations either, but sneakily raided them without any official reason to make a solemn peace after they had taken enough land. The best example of this is the dastardly slaughter

of the Hadiya nobility by King Ogato and the subsequent raid on the leaderless people. Very many wars were undertaken in this way. To keep them secret, not all the Wolaita people were mustered for the purpose, but only the best fighters, who marched along the slippery imperial road at night with a select retinue, only to spring a surprise attack on the unsuspecting neighbours at first light. If the old people are to be believed, there was not a year without war in the past until the peaceful government of Gobe.

Among the other neighbours of the Wolaita, the Boroda were famous as brave fighters who knew how to move skilfully in the mountains of their homeland with their small horses. Despite their bravery, they are considered a peaceful people who never attacked their neighbours on their own initiative.

In the event of an enemy attack on Wolaita, the border bailiff or a dignitary living on the border rushed to the nearest palatinate, where the chamberlain in charge there gave the alarm on the king's drum by beating it rapidly, whereupon the distress call was given from homestead to homestead and everyone who heard it moved to the border.

The Wolaita did not expect to meet the enemy at the border wall, which was difficult to climb over but was not set up to be defended from inside; instead, they moved to meet the enemy in no man's land. Among the warriors, three classes could be distinguished: the *gaddauwa* (war leaders), the *toranca (*great warriors) and the *monica* (common men). These designations were more honorific names than real ranks and had no connection with the ranks in the administration or at the royal court.

Being a *gaddauwa* or *toranca* was synonymous with belonging to the privileged; conversely, dignitaries or sons from good families were expected to be among the great warriors. The *gaddauwa* corresponded to the *abba dula* (father of war), and was the leader of larger war bands, e.g. of a district or county. He had to be the bravest warrior of his followers, someone who fought in the front line and slew the most opponents. To him the king awarded a large piece of land after the battle, which was to form a new district or municipality and which he passed on to his comrades-in-arms according to their rank, bravery or reputation, and which was usually named after the name of the old home. He is considered the actual founder of the community, his grave under the sacred tree in the public square became the religious site of the community. I suspect that the name was taken from the *gada* or *abba gada* of the Oromo, who was the leader of the ruling age group that formed the ordinary warring class.

The *toranca*, the great warriors and heroes who were not leaders, take their names from the word *tor*, which means both spear and war.[55] To be called *toranca*,

[55] The same applies to the Oromo word *warana.*

one had to have killed several enemies, and real warriors at that; the killing of an opponent who was an old or weak man or of one's own slave, conferred the right to pierce one's ears as a man-slayer (*woriaga)* but did not bring the slayer into the ranks of the heroes. Along with the war leaders, they [the *toranca*] received the lion's share in the distribution of the land and the conquered cattle.

The *monica* were the "followers", i.e. all those who had to obey the royal summons in order not to be punished, perhaps even going into the field on horseback, but who never had any success to show. *Monica* probably means "people", "little horsemen" (cf. Yem *mono* = people).

Every great warrior was surrounded in battle by his clientele, which consisted of the poor peasants of his neighbourhood, his tenants, slaves, possibly also potters, as well as a lot of *monica.*

A closed battle order or even a battle line was unknown. Each group, even individual fighters, fought on their own, dispersed to loot and fled when they were opposed. In the event of a leader's death or panic, everything tried to save itself in wild flight and became easy prey for the spiritedly pursuing enemy. For days, the opposing parties faced each other, drawing strength from Homeric invective, praise of their own bravery, and challenges to fight, without anything being done. Battle luck, of course, was not always on the side of the Wolaita. At the Walacu River, which long formed the border with the Hadiya, fighting continued on and off for several years in the time of Amado, with varying success, until the Wolaita were able to conquer the land beyond. The same goes, for example, for the landscapes of Hobicha and Wanche, which were fiercely contested by Wolaita and Arsi.

The driving force of the battle was the king with his entourage (bodyguards, potters and royal slaves) and the great *gaddauwa*, who had higher goals in mind than just kills and loot and tried to exterminate the enemy in a planned manner.

No pardon was given to the [enemy] men; before the battle, the call was issued to cut down everyone "that had pubic hair", so that even boys and old men were doomed to die. Those who did not fall or flee became prisoners of war; all freemen and children fell to this fate from the start. Only in rare cases were Arsi or Hadiya prisoners made slaves; the Wolaita felt they could not make such people belonging to "fine races", whose relatives were brave warriors, into work slaves, and they could also secure ransoms from the families of such prisoners. There were no such scruples with captured Gamo or Dawuro, unless they were people from very good clans. Arsi and Hadiya always tried to buy their relatives for cattle. The Hadiya and Arsi women who remained in the country were often married by the Wolaita, and their children adopted. After the battle, all the cattle and the common spoils of war prisoners, were gathered in a large meadow and distributed to the army by the king, who first took what he liked. While the brave received large herds, several

monica had to make do with only one cow. A "war" rarely lasted more than a few days or weeks; in the rainy season the weapons rested.

After every war, a solemn peace treaty was required before normal relations and mutual market visits were resumed. First, old men were sent to the opponents on the border, holding grass in their hands and shouting "*woge woge, hola, hola*", which translated to me as "we made a mistake, don't pay us back" or "be magnanimous". When the neighbours showed a willingness to make peace, a ceremony would be performed at one point on the border, with countless people gathering on both sides. On both sides of the border, the kings would slaughter a bull, ram and he-goat each and apply the blood to their foreheads while shouting "*siga, siga*" ("peace, peace"). Then four old men rubbed the blood on their foreheads, each put some blood in a clay bowl, went over to the opponents and there four old men spread the blood on their foreheads with two fingers, "*siga, siga*", returned again and were there also spread with blood by the four old men of the opponents who had followed them. When this was completed, the elders dabbed all the men of their people who were present. Peace agreements were often followed by solemn treaties of alliance, during which a black ox and a black goat were slaughtered under the most terrible oaths.

Also during the alliance between Kambata and Wolaita against the Amhara in 1935 (from which the Wolaita later withdrew), according to an uncertain report, a black cow was slaughtered in the marketplace of Boditi in front of the Wolaita and Hadiya sitting in long rows on the ground. Unfortunately, the ritual could not be reported to me. While driving through Wolaita on the first expedition in December 1950, I saw a goat carcass erected on a pole at the border between Wolaita and Badawacho in the Shone countryside, pierced from the front and back with a spear each, which were still stuck in the body. Passers-by stated that this was a sign of a peace agreement that had happened after a local feud and that, beforehand, a deputy of each party had pierced the animal from his side with the spear.

Whoever slew a "relative" belonging to the opposing people in battle, which could easily happen as many Wolaita clans were descended from the Hadiya, later had to perform a solemn expiatory sacrifice with a shaft (*cuca*) in order to avoid evil. Both parties loaded themselves with the most horrendous punishments if they violated the contract.

Markets and trade

Markets

The markets (*gia*) played an important role not only in economic life, but also in social and religious life. They act as focal points where cultural phenomena

converge. It is no coincidence that they take place in the public squares (*gutura*), where the grave of the community's founder, the general cemetery and the community's sacred tree are located. Corresponding to the importance of the public squares, the large markets are at least laid out on district squares. The centre of all the markets as well as all the public places was the market in Dalbo below the King's Meadow.

While the people's assemblies were usually not held on market days, but on Sundays or Saturdays, when there was greater peace and quiet, the market was important for all those social events that required as many people as possible to be present. On the one hand, there were the sacred proclamations about declarations of war, tax decrees, changes in the law or court rulings, which thus became accessible to the entire people in an instant. But then, above all, there were all the honours connected with deeds of merit, such as the silent market walk (*sofe*), which the Sidaama also know for the young girls, and the loud market walk of the slayer or the *gimo*, which could only take place with royal permission. Those who wanted to celebrate a more "private" festival of merit, such as the festival after the birth of twins, held a mock market in their own meadow with invited guests. The more the king wanted to honour a great hero, the more often he allowed him to go to the market. Today, the markets have been largely stripped of these functions, for slaying honours are impossible; the silent walks of young girls, however, still occur frequently. The increasing Christianisation, or the disappearance of the old ideas, also contributed a lot to depriving the marketplaces of their original numinous character and to seeing in them a pure trading place, which is what the markets founded since the Amhara period, such as Soddo, Humbo-Abo, Butrelo, etc., are anyway.

The Wolaita markets, like the markets of other West Cushitic peoples, are weekly markets of the Christian seven-day week. Generally, a market was held in each square only once a week, and it was rare for a market to be held on a second day, albeit an insignificant one. Today, many towns have established permanent markets where, outside the actual market day, only food and firewood are offered in small quantities for the townspeople. The Wolaita named the markets after the corresponding days, i.e. Gulgula-Orua (Wednesday) or Masa Kera (Saturday). Since, despite the strong influence of Christianity, the fasting commandments of the Ethiopian church never really took hold, markets were also held on Wednesdays and Saturdays, which is impossible for the Amhara because of the ban on slaughtering or selling meat. Today, these markets have either lost much of their importance or have been moved to another day. Without doubt, the seven-day week, which is found consistently among most Ometo peoples, as well as the Kaffa, is due to the strong Christian influences that came to southern Ethiopia with the various waves of recent royal culture. While several peoples of the East-

ern Cushitic group such as the Sidaama, Gedeo or Konso have the four-day week. The institution of the market was originally unknown to the Oromo, as it was to the ancient peoples in the west (Ari, Dime, Yem). However, even today it has no function in their spiritual or social life. The fine man does not participate in the market, i.e. he does not buy or sell, just as he does not take up residence in the market taverns. For one thing, he is too proud to enter such wretched huts; moreover, he fears losing some of his dignity by sitting with common people; moreover, he would be exposed to molestation and drunkenness. However, as a visitor, he can stand a little apart, look at the hustle and bustle, and talk to other dignitaries. The purchase of a horse or mule does not fall under the lower legal transactions.

The markets of Wolaita

The markets of the Wolaita, like most Ethiopian markets, have lost little of their originality, except in large cities. They differ little from the markets of surrounding peoples in terms of their nature and the way they are conducted. A characteristic feature, however, is the very late hour at which the market begins: rarely before one or two o'clock in the afternoon. By the time the market reaches its peak, "when the market stands" as the Ethiopians say, i.e. by the time the last visitors have arrived and no one has yet started to leave, it is often four o'clock, so that a large proportion of the visitors go home after dark. This very awkward time, which also provides an opportunity for night-time riots or looting by drunk people, is still maintained by the Wolaita despite all government efforts to change it. Another special feature are the small pubs under leafy roofs, where beer is served in calabashes as everywhere else (for a few cents you get several litres), but chopped sweet potatoes, taro or yams as raw food and the free use of water pipes are also offered. Thick smoke rises from one part of the market: tobacco buyers taste the quality of the tobacco with the sellers' pipes, which are in constant use, before buying. Otherwise, it is like everywhere else in southern Ethiopia: the vendors, mostly women, sit in long rows with their products, in special quarters according to the type of goods, whether it is pottery, fabrics, iron utensils, wood carvings, tuber crops, ensete, spices, vegetables or beer. The markets also feature slaughter, and the cut meat is laid out on green ensete leaves. In a special corner sit the professional traders (*nagade*), usually Gurage or Amhara with buttons, needles, dyed cotton threads, soap, jars, etc. In Wolaita, the butcher's shops also play a major role on market days, selling meat for just a few pennies and thus enabling even the poor to eat meat several times a month. The number of market visitors, whether they are actively involved or mere spectators, varies enormously: at small community markets there are a few hundred, while in Boditi, for example, many thousands of people often gather. What is new are the "small" markets, i.e. those

held as a second market in a large market place in the same week. They have only secondary importance.



Fig. 37: Market visitors in Soddo

The most important markets used to be:

1. Halale in Kindo (founder: Godo Kote) on Monday. It was the border market for the Dawuro who are allowed to come as far as there. Still quite an important market today.
2. Zero in Kindo in the lowlands towards the Omo on Wednesday (founder: Agore Hati). Also border market to Dawuro, now less important.
3. Yakima in Koysha on Sunday, not far from the old St. Mary's Church (founder: Loke Doroka). In ancient times, before the great conquests, the most important market of the empire, now not very important.
4. Mure in the lowland of Offa on Thursday.
5. Eso or Esua in the lowlands on the Deme River on Saturday. In ancient times, located directly behind the border wall. Border market for the Kucha and Shochora.
6. Kocha in eastern Koysha on Monday, which was not a significant market in the past. The village square has now moved to the neighbouring Bakelo parish and is now the most important market in the whole of west Wolaita.
7. Zamine in Sore on Thursday (formerly Wednesday), replaced today by neighbouring Ancuco.
8. Imbeco (or Himbeco) in Boloso on Tuesday (formerly Wednesday). Border market to Tambaro, Donga and Kambata. Originally, the marketplace was outside the border wall in no man's land, over time this was also settled so that it is now in the middle of the Wolaita area.
9. Gara in Damot-Fulasa on Thursday (originally on Friday). Border market for the Hadiya and Arsi. Originally also like Imbeca in front of the ramparts.

9a. Cerake Bogallu on the way to Kambata on Thursday.
10. Boditi in Damot on Tuesday, formerly insignificant, now one of the biggest markets, much favoured by its location at the car road.
11. Bitana on the mountains of Duguna not far from the former palace on Thursday.
11a. Karcece in Duguna on Saturday.
12. Liko in the lowlands of Duguna on Wednesday. Now very insignificant.
13. Dinto in Fango at the Bilate on Thursday (formerly Wednesday). Still today, like the market of the same name on the Sidaama side of the river, it is one of the most important border markets, especially for cotton and fabrics. Both markets are notorious for their unsafe environment: Wolaita, Hadiya, Arsi, Guji and Sidaama touch each other in this area. The farmers in the lowlands along the river have a reputation for being arduous robbers and for assaulting individual market-goers. Therefore, traffic on both sides only takes place on market days, with visitors coming and going in closed travelling groups.
14. Dalbo at the foot of Damota Mountain on Thursday. In former times, it was the largest market in the empire and the place where foreign merchants settled. Situated on a crossroads of the imperial road and in front of the gates of several royal palaces. Today it is of no great importance.
15. Gorumo Fulte on the west side of Damota on Monday.
16. Offa on the southern slope of Damota in the eastern part of the present Soddo town, where the government buildings now stand (Friday). Now the big market in Soddo on Saturday has taken its place, but only small business is done in public – all the bigger business (coffee, grain, slaughter cattle) is done in the houses of the businessmen from Wollo or Jimma.
17. Dambe (Sunday). Today the seat of an Amhara district sub-officer (*mescene*).
18. Gugula "under the big sycamore" in Bosa (Wednesday). Formerly a large slave market.
19. Bilbo on the lake not far from the hot springs and the salt camps (Saturday). Mooring for the lake peoples (Gidico and Gatami).
20. Galga in Humbo on Sunday, previously Friday (founder: Morgame Daulo). Still an important border market today. It has lost some of its importance to the Amhara town of Humbo-Abo, north of the Arubo mountain.

In addition, there were of course countless small markets scattered all over the country that had no such official status and had often only grown out of wayside taverns, etc. In Koysha, for example, there were at least nine such markets:
1. Dakaia: Tuesday
2. Laso: Saturday
3. Wamura: Saturday
4. Gale: Thursday

5. Dolai: Tuesday
6. Gerumo: Saturday
7. Ceraca: Monday
8. Bode: Tuesday
9. Patale: Tuesday

In addition to these markets located in the Wolaita area, three border markets on foreign tribal territory also played a major role:

1. Masa in Boroda (Saturday). It is situated on the slope of the Boroda Mountains at the great caravan road (now motor road), where the more densely populated highlands gradually merge into the uninhabited former no man's land.
2. Dinto on the Sidaama side of Bilate is not a market after the 7-day week, but after the 4-day week of the Sidaama.
3. Orope in Arsi or Sidaama (Monday). The market place, the exact location of which I could not find out, is on the eastern side of the Bilate.

Since disputes at the border markets could easily lead to serious entanglements between the two peoples involved, old people always made sure that this did not happen. If a serious dispute broke out, however, everyone fled in a mad rush – the Wolaita behind their safe walls. When tempers had calmed down, the old people and dignitaries would come from both sides and shout "*aga, aga*" ("leave it, leave it"); a dispute should not mean war. However, manslaughter was usually grounds for war.

Neighbourhood

Throughout Ethiopia, there are various forms of neighbourhood association and neighbourhood helpers who, for example, help each other when there are accidents or support each other in building houses and working in the fields. They are purely economic associations of convenience that have no ritually anchored functions.

Mere neighbourliness (*hera*) does not impose any obligation if someone lives relatively far away from another, even though he knows him well. The first type of neighbourhood association, whose organisation is called *isifeteta* (unity, being one) or *ma dua* (help, Amharic: *ordata*), is morally but not legally obligated. All those who live in a locality called *sorua*, i.e. in a theoretical circle of 300- to 600-metre radius around a man's house, are united in such an association. Each person thus belongs to countless other neighbourhoods, since he in turn is obliged to help anyone who helps him. Borders of municipalities or districts are not taken into account; the *sorua* reaches beyond this and unites everything spatially by neighbours.

In addition to the *sorua*, relatives living further away are also obliged to help their comrades – most frequently with the house fires that often occur in Wolaita. Neighbours, who may have been specially asked by the victim, appear whenever they want to help (*madra* also called *matagagaz* in Amharic) – they cannot be forced to do so. Those who do not show up only have to fear that no one will come to them when they need help. As I have seen for myself, at least 30 to 40 men usually turn up at a fire accident and help for two or three days. The victim feeds them to the best of his ability, and since everyone knows that he is in distress, they are satisfied with boiled taro or yams without all the ingredients. On the second or third day, when the walls are up and the middle pole is in place, all the wives of the helping men pool their money and donate spices, coffee, salt or a few cents, depending on their wealth, and have meat bought in exchange, with which they entertain their husbands at a communal meal.

While this kind of neighbourly help is still in full bloom today, there used to be another, much more tightly organised form, called *sera* (Amharic: *ider*), under an elected leader who was taken to be a public official (*sunta*). These organisations formed cohesive units that also coincided with political districts. Membership was voluntary, but those who stayed away were forced to join through repression, not being allowed to draw water from a privately owned spring that was otherwise accessible to all others or being denied a fire when theirs had gone out. The comrades swore to help each other in any circumstance and to be obedient to the leader's requests. If they gathered and one was absent without excuse, they drew close and burned his door plate as a form of foul scolding. In contrast to the previously discussed help from the neighbours, who came and went as they pleased and only worked, the members of the *sera* came, also went out together in the evening and brought wood, grass, vines for building houses. What differs from the *hariga* of the Konso is the age of its members and their restriction to help only in cases of misfortune.

Property law

Private law was little developed in Wolaita and was still in its most rudimentary beginnings. The individual obligations were hardly defined. Property law, with the exception of the feudal relationships resulting from the imperial constitution, was practically non-existent. This is in stark contrast to the Amhara, who possess a number of thoroughly differentiated legal institutions not only in the modified law, which has, however, penetrated little into the popular consciousness, but also in the popular law. In the case of the Wolaita, I am also sceptical as to whether the few examples I will cite do not stem from the Amhara occupation.

A peasant and conservative society, without trained crafts and trade, which even 50 years ago did not show much differentiation into rich and poor and whose land was the property of the king, contributed to the development of a law of obligations through the complete self-sufficiency of its individual members. Such a society carries its laws in the living consciousness of each individual and does not yet require abstractions. The enforcement of a claim could only proceed by way of a court action. Self-help, unless in self-defence, was punishable. The sanctity of house, land and livestock forbids a creditor from securing his rights by a pledge, as unauthorised entry into a possibly locked house, even if only to have shelter in the rain, is perceived as the worst breach of the peace. Even today in Ethiopia, the person charged with an enforcement is afraid to enter the home of the owner against his will. As an extreme measure, the court could have the beadle arrest and bind the defaulting debtor and hand him over to the creditor, who would only have to release him if he wanted to. That is why all legal relationships are conceived as simply as possible, and why one can say a whole series of institutions like rent or the contract of service – which in a patriarchal conception of society are not based on a legal foundation – were unknown. In general, one should not, as is often done by ethnologists, transfer our purely abstract legal concepts shaped by Roman legal thinkers to the other. With them, law does not form an abstract entity that has a life of its own vis-à-vis the other areas of culture; it is embedded in the wholeness of the folk culture, from whose context one can already extract individual elements. Thus, the whole complex of family and inheritance law can only be understood from the belonging of an individual to a family and a clan, just as the emphasis in the position of the slave is not on his legal status but on his place within the estates order. Just consider how many centuries it took for Roman law to prevail over Germanic law, which was much more emotionally bound, and the fact that it never managed to make a clear distinction between property and ownership, for example. Even the existing institutions, such as loans, guarantees, leases and service contracts, are not abstract institutions outlined by norms, but are based on informal agreements that are determined far more by custom or legally unfixable principles of rank among the estates than by law. All such legal transactions are concluded in front of witnesses – although this is not a condition – for the sake of greater security, especially when it comes to things that can easily be stolen, such as mounts or cattle.

Whether there were interest-bearing loans at all in the past seems questionable to me. The fact that one returned more to a lender than one had received was probably based more on gratitude or the desire to appear generous. Therefore, I am not sure whether one can deduce an interest rate of twelve per cent from the statement that one paid back twelve pieces of cloth money after one year on a loan of ten pieces. That this "addition" was more at the discretion of the recipient than

a legal obligation is also shown by other examples. If, for example, one received a female slave for a year – e.g. to enlarge a daughter's dowry – good manners dictated that not this female slave but another, better one "a few fingers larger" be returned; the same applied, for example, to cattle. It was expressly stated that no one demanded interest on trifles.

If a debtor could not pay and was charged, he could provide a guarantor (*hurbuta*) who offered sufficient security and had to stand by with his assets if the debtor was unable to pay even at a new appointment. In cases of insolvency, the debtor could not become the slave of the creditor (the reasons for the enslavement of one who did not pay his contribution at the feast of the cross were religious, not legal).

The lease and the contract of service were also not precisely outlined. I do not know whether the lease is an old institution or did not come with the Amhara. I would almost like to assume that in former times there was only the form of voluntary labour assistance described afterwards. Today, it is mainly former slaves who are tenants of their former masters. The tenant (*uniya,* Amharic: *cesäna, cisäna*), according to common Ethiopian custom, gives a third or half of the harvest to the owner (*goda,* i.e. master). The amount of the fee depends on whether the owner sowed the seeds or whether the tenant participated in this, and today also on whether he does the field work with his own plough-ox or borrows the owner's cattle. The tenant's house usually belongs to the owner. The land around the house, often just a large vegetable garden, is left to the tenant for free use and is called *te'uwa* (Amharic: *gulämma*).

From the fact that the agricultural labourer (there is no such thing as a day labourer), *uniya*, is also mentioned, one can conclude that he was replace by the present-day tenant farmer. I once recruited these agricultural labourers, who also had their own land, from poor people who, as a result of frequent divisions of inheritance or of dispossession after having been forced to sell their land due to debt, no longer owned all the land they needed to feed themselves. In the old days, however, this was an exception, as there was still enough land. Above all, it was such poor people, who belonged to bad and influenceless clans and had to fear that one day they would be seized as slaves by a big one. As clients, they entered into a close relationship with a great one of the neighbourhood, worked for him, formed his retinue and in return enjoyed his protection and support. Legally, this patriarchal relationship was not precisely delineated. Both their work for the patron and their remuneration were at his discretion. Thus, the rich man gave away milk and butter to the clients or gave them a good milk cow for their children as a reward for a year's work. This was very important for poor people in the past, as milk and butter were not sold (many Oromo groups still do not do this today) and so they could give their children something other than grain or tubers. In

addition, the farm workers, like the members of the neighbourhood watch, were given simple rations with plenty of beer on working days. The Wolaita believe that drunken workers can be encouraged to work harder and that they are not so quick to try to get away from beer.

Law and jurisdiction

It is probably due to the Christian influence that the Wolaita Empire was so emphatically a constitutional state, even if the despotic behaviour of some kings or the oligarchic aspirations of the great ones shook it. The very fact of how strongly this was perceived as arbitrariness and injustice proves better than any modified legal principles the general feeling for equality and justice. Unlike in Islamic countries, where – despite a highly developed legal system based on Hellenistic principles – the subject was often for centuries at the mercy of an unbridled despot against whom there was no appeal and no help, such excesses are prevented by the position of the king as supreme judge and guardian of justice. Like each of his subjects, he is but a creature of God and no closer to him than the poorest beggar. His consecration as ruler may well make him sacrosanct, but this ceases when his behaviour shows that he is not a bearer of the charisma, but a false king.

This is no longer the case with the peoples further south, where the ruler is worshipped as god and sun and embodiment of the cosmos and is so far above the earthly order that concepts such as right and wrong are no longer applicable to him. The East Cushites with their "democratic" constitution (*gada* system) and the absence of a monarch do not know the system of state jurisdiction and prosecution. Punishments can only be enforced where the plaintiff is strong enough to enforce them himself.

The Ethiopian – be he Amhara, Oromo or Ometo – abhors every form of coercive rule and injustice, which are "more hateful to him than death". The foreign observer only notices the flip side of this character trait, namely the irrepressible lust for litigation, which never misses an opportunity to start a legal dispute. Since legal recourse, at least in theory, is open to everyone, nothing is easier than to pursue one's rights. In Wolaita, as in all Ethiopian monarchies, this is even more pronounced than in other peoples, because here, the state as an abstract power lends its arm to the weak and helps them to assert their claims, which would not be possible for them in a "democratic" constitution. In such peoples as the Oromo or Sidaama, similar conditions prevailed as in the Germanic peoples of prehistoric times, where a claim, no matter how well-founded, could only be enforced with the help of a strong faction, indeed without this support the start of a trial could not be expected at all, because the opposing party would push it back, drag it out

or put the judges under pressure. In such societies, the weak are virtually without rights and must see to it that a powerful person is taken on as a client in order to enjoy a certain degree of protection. A balancing factor in comparison to these conditions, which are very blatant in Iceland, for example, is the extraordinarily equal displacement of wealth, the basic prerequisite for a position of power, among primitive peoples. It is always surprising to observe how little differentiation there is in the wealth of primitive peoples and how the chief hardly differs in his possessions from the average people. Another factor that prevents the oppression of the weak is the extraordinarily close cohesion of the clans, which are united in all disputes and thus form a very strong support for their members.

If it is said that in monarchically ruled countries with developed forms of government and state sanctioning of offences, it is possible for every individual to pursue his or her rights before the public courts, this is only true to a very limited extent. For one thing, there is no equality of all people before the law, and women and sons – subject to the *patria potentes* even if they were already adults – were excluded from the outset, as were all classes such as hunters, potters, blacksmiths and tanners (among the Amhara also the musicians) and slaves. They are all subject to lower estimation and have a more difficult time obtaining their rights. Then, of course, it goes without saying that in a feudally determined society like that of the Wolaita and Amhara, economic predominance confers strong means of power. One must resign oneself to hearing the countless past and still occurring stories of bending of the law, delays to judgements, unjust and bribable judges, and how it is often not even possible for a poor man to file a lawsuit in the first place, and so on. The bribed judge, like the deceived husband, is one of the most popular characters in folk tales. One must not forget, however, that the wise and just judge also occupies an equally important place, and the fact that a judge is perceived as corruptible and a judgement as unjust shows me too well how strong the sense of justice is in the Ethiopian's mind. The judge or ruler in these countries can find it difficult to override public opinion, and an easily wounded sense of honour fears just reproach more than anything else. Among the Amhara, the one who does not get his due has a dreaded weapon in satire, which he – or a minstrel – dresses up in coded form or makes especially memorable by puns in a quatrain and spreads among the people, where it does more harm to the one attacked than a lost battle and forces him to do justice. A last resort is the public plea for justice, where the deposed person publicly throws himself at the feet of the judge or ruler, thus drawing general attention to himself.

The Wolaita lacked a precisely defined law. Judgments were made according to equitable discretion, based on what was legal and customary. The word *woga* encompasses both concepts, which are different for us but which coincide for Africans, who are not inclined to the abstract. For this reason, there are no abstract

norms and no fixed basic principles among all these peoples, quite apart from the fact that when law and custom coincide, the entire family, social and religious sphere of the natives also form a whole. Although it seems difficult/impossible to do so, here, for the sake of comprehensibility, the actually inseparable complex of Wolaita culture is broken down into individual areas.

Among the Wolaita, as in some parts of Ethiopia today, the principle of tribal law applied, i.e. the individual was treated – at least as far as marriage, inheritance and religious law were concerned – according to the law of the tribal or religious community to which he belonged by birth or conversion. In all criminal cases, as well as to some extent in the law of obligations and in disputes between two members of different groups, the law of the country in which they resided – today the Ethiopian imperial law – ruled. A precise demarcation of these terms is difficult, as purely religious precepts or the customs of individual clans are not legal norms in our sense of justice. By Christian Ethiopian law, tribal rights were fully recognised until 1935, insofar as they did not run completely counter to moral sensibilities and the norms of Amhara law. Today, imperial law is beginning to assert itself more and more and is doing much to dissolve tribal rights, both through its laws based on the older Amhara law and through the modern laws designed with the cooperation of Europeans. For example, while it strictly prohibits infanticide or abandonment, which was permitted among the Wolaita as well as the Oromo (*gada* system), it allows plural marriage, which is illegal under Christian law, among pagans and Muslims, and also protects the claims of a wife living in polygamy. As long as an individual has not changed religion or group, he is expected to submit to the laws of his community, with the Ethiopian court fighting for the enforcement of the same, as the ethnic groups have no official authority to do so. Grotesque cases can arise in the process. At Negelli in Borana land, for example, a lax Muslim was reported to the Amhara court by the local *kadi*, who looked after the religious and family law concerns of the Muslim community, because he ate during the Muslim daytime fasting period. The judge then sentenced him under threat of punishment to observe the Muslim fasting period and justified this with his affiliation to Islam, whose rules the accused had to follow until he officially renounced them. Conversely, the nominally Christian Konso – the entire people were baptised around 1948 without being asked – were forbidden to slaughter in the markets or sell meat in public during the Christian fasting period. The assimilation of the upper class to the Amhara, which is beginning in many groups, strongly promotes the incursion of the new law. For example, in 1950, at the instigation of the already very Amharised chief, the Shabadino group of the Sidaama seriously discussed changing the tribal laws according to the Amhara model to also make women capable of inheriting.

Vows

The oath was sworn by all saints and worshippers. In simple courts, the most common oath was to the king: "by the king" (*kawo aica,* for the Amhara *ba negus* often also used as a formula for naming), "by the death of the king" (*kawo amat*, also *kawo ita gida,* that it may go badly for the king), "by the king's gold" (*kawo workia),* "by the king's god" (*kawo ayana*, Amharic: *banagus amlak*).[56] Furthermore, to honour the court or the community, one swore "by the god of the land" (*derya ayana*), "by the god of the court elders" (*cimaa ayana)*, "by the god of Offa" (*Offa derya ayana*), and so on. One could not swear before the king himself; that was forbidden by reverence. Instead one swore by the phallic head ornament of the slayer (*kalachu*), by the ostrich feather of the man-slayer (*baliyaa*) or by the "ivory" i.e. whoever breaks the oath shall never kill an elephant and thus be deprived of the highest honour.

Forcing people to testify by means of penalties or torture is unknown. The system of community imprisonment (*awucaciya*, Oromo: *afarsata*) used by the Amhara for this purpose is used by the Wolaita as *ote* in a much milder form. Among the Amhara, the entire community on whose soil a crime was committed, about the perpetrator of which no one wanted to testify, was rounded up in one place with their wives and children. The people were thus left to wait for a day or two, defenceless against the rays of the sun and the cold of the night, knowing how the monkeys plundered their fields and their cattle roared with hunger. When tempers had thus grown soft and impatient and the individual feared economic loss more than the wrath of the indicated villager, when the bonds of community solidarity began to loosen, an elderly judge, together with a priest, interrogated the people individually and secretly and made them swear on the clergyman's cross to tell only the plain truth. In this way, he was able to discern the person of the alleged perpetrator from individual clues and hints – the informants were assured of their anonymity. Among the Wolaita, on the other hand, the community was gathered on the community meadow under threat of punishment and then questioned secretly by the community elders in individual groups according to family or clan. In the evening, however, everyone could go home again, regardless of whether the questioning had brought a result or not. The Ethiopian rightly fears the consequences of such statements, because although the investigators are supposed to maintain strictest silence, something always leaks out. He will not be berated by the community, because he acted under duress and everyone is morally obliged to report a crime, even if it was committed by a neighbour. However, he must fear

[56] One does not say *kawo tosa*, that would be just as impossible as swearing by the king's *egziabher* among the Amhara; by both terms God in heaven is meant, while *amlak* and *ayana* denote a deity who can join a person as a personal guardian spirit and is also plural.

the revenge of the accused, which he can be sure will reach him one day. In my community, the houses of two farmers burned down when they reported a thief. The perpetrator could not be identified, but the arson took place after the thief had served his sentence and was back.

The reverence for the court, but also the curiosity about participating in the trial, was so great that an invited witness rarely does not appear. He could be brought to court with coercion, just like in the Amhara court today. This was a popular way for evil judges to blackmail people by repeatedly inviting them to appear as a witness until they got tired of it and made a "gift" to the judge.

The royal beadles (*tace*), who were sent by the king at the request of the judges to seize property, arrest the disobedient and forcibly bring defaulters before the judge, were responsible for enforcing the court's rulings. They were notorious as hard and cruel people who, as a sign of their office, always carried a bundle of thin ropes with which they tied the arms of the arrestees together "so that the blood came out of his fingertips". These beadles had to be freemen, since it would not have been possible to have a free peasant touched by slaves or potters (except during execution). Their non-partisan office saved the municipal assemblies the embarrassment of having to use force against their own comrades. Also, voluntary executors of a sentence would have been sure to face the revenge of the relatives.

In purely democratic tribal constitutions, such as that of the Oromo, where there is no central executive, it is much more difficult to enforce a judgement, as there is no one willing to do so. If the plaintiff's family is weak and the defendant's strong, judges prefer to limit themselves to attempts at reconciliation and do not pass judgement at all.

Types of punishment and penal system

The law of the Wolaita knew as punishments property fines, which could go as far as the complete confiscation of all movable and immovable property, prison, banishment and execution. Whipping was known more as a deterrent than a punishment and was used only against juvenile offenders and thieves. Like the "block" it was a "family" punishment that was not ordered by the courts. The other types of punishment, which Amhara law adopted from the Orient more in theory than in practice, such as burning, hanging, blinding, mutilating, etc., were unknown to the Wolaita, as was the chaining of defendants. Enforcement of sentences, arrest of the accused and confiscation of property fines were in the hands of the beadles. The ignominious side of execution, namely guarding the prisoners and the execution itself was carried out by the potters.

The only prison (*goca*) in the country was a large house behind the first rampart of the king's palace, next to the potters' guardhouse. Prison was only meant as an additional punishment, which, like its aggravation by the block, was at the discretion of the king or the authorities. Moreover, accused persons were kept there until sentencing. Prisoners had to be fed by their relatives.

Apparently, in ancient times, the right existed for a person sentenced to death to choose between banishment and execution if all attempts at reconciliation had failed. Those who preferred banishment lost all their possessions and had to move abroad with their families as beggars, where an uncertain fate awaited them. Those who preferred death retained their family property and often, out of mercy, the king supported his children until they were grown up. In the punishment for killings, Wolaita law, like that of others, struck a middle course in order to reconcile both the state's condemnation, which was necessary to maintain general order, and the obligation of the family of the person killed to seek revenge, by leaving the perpetrator to the plaintiffs after the court had sentenced him, who treated him in the same way as he had treated his own victim. The family of an executed person had the right to give him an honest burial, but the funeral lament was kept very subdued.

Criminals against king and realm – rebels, traitors, spies, deserters, even habitual criminals – were executed by the royal executioners, the potters, at the three official execution sites. These were the rocky cliff Holozo near the King's Palace, Woysa above Yakima in Koysha, the earth cleft near Ajora in Boloso and the Kule place in the Borkosho district of Damota. The executioners cut the throats of the condemned with a crooked knife and plunged the body into the abyss in Holozo and Ajora. Ajora, in tradition, is equated with the execution site Tomagia of King Motolomi. It seems that an underground waterfall pours into this narrow gorge, so that, according to the descriptions of the natives, the spray pours out of the gorge like smoke. Originally, as is also described in the life of Saint Tekle Haymanot, the condemned would be thrown in alive – the original method of execution in the southern Ethiopian kingdoms (cf. Jimma in Mylius [1906]; Kaffa in Bieber [1923:276]). The sacred blood of the members of the royal house, the Tigre, was not allowed to be shed; they were thrown bound into the water (in the Omo or Deme) and drowned.

Crime

Despite the prohibition of self-defence, a thief could be killed in the act or during the pursuit. However, the thief could not be too far from the victim's house and the latter had to bring witnesses so that it could not be said that he had murdered



Fig. 38: The former execution site in Koysha



Fig. 39: Waterfall Ajora in northwest Wolaita

the thief without reason. If someone discovered something stolen at the thief's house, he first raised a loud cry – the cry of distress common among all Ethiopian peoples, "u'u'u'u!", which is emitted in frantic staccato at every distress, or "wui,

wui, wui!" – upon which everyone has the duty to rush to help. Those who wantonly or for the sake of trifles startle others with this will be severely punished. With the witnesses rushing over, the discoverer ran to the nearest magistrate, who summoned the court and, after establishing the facts, asked the king for beadles to arrest the thief. The punishment depended on the severity of the case. In any case, the thief had to compensate the person he had stolen from, allegedly with seven times the value of the item stolen. If the belonging is not enough to compensate, the king takes the land of the thief and gives it to the stolen person. The only time we have been told about the otherwise uncommon punishment of beating was in connection to theft. Only slaves were beaten by their master or family members by the head of the household. Younger people who were to be taught a lesson were flogged in the presence of the whole community. The community would elect a strong man who would cut ten long sticks of the *mike* tree, let them dry in the sun for a day and then beat them short on the delinquent's back. Otherwise, only the usual types of punishment – property fines, prison, banishment and, in the case of incorrigible thieves, death – came into play.

Wolaita is notorious as a land of pyromaniacs. During the six weeks of my first stay, three houses burnt down in the neighbourhood, surely not all of them due to the negligence of the inhabitants. Such fires are usually set in revenge, and rich and respected people are the most vulnerable. Arsonists, who were difficult to identify, were expelled from the country by the king or had to pay double or triple the value at reconciliation. A rich man once gave a king twelve slave virgins, among many other gifts, for his mediation.

The husband can kill a caught adulterer but must then expect a lenient punishment by the court. In ancient times, an adulterer could be sentenced to death by the king if no one stood up for him and he got off with a property fine. In contrast to the Oromo and other Eastern Cushites, who are generous in this respect, the Ometo, like the Amhara, are very strict about their domestic honour. Even today, one is amazed at the very harsh punishments meted out by the Amhara courts to adulterers, who can receive up to five years or more in prison. If the husband also killed his wife in anger, her family made sure that he too met his death. The king delivered him like a murderer to the judgement of the family concerned, who killed him in the same way he had murdered. A husband was free to beat his wife or chase her away at any time. As the Amhara also did, the cruel husband burned his wife with a red-hot iron around her vagina as a deterrent. The wife's family also finds these punishments quite all right, but he was not allowed to punish her in such a way that her eye, tooth, nose or limbs were wounded. Usually it is agreed at the wedding what he has to pay as a punishment to her family if he did not keep his promise.

In the past, the father of a family could kill his children without further ado. Who should have denounced him? On the contrary, if he killed a child in anger, his enemies were still happy about it. Today, the enlightened Amhara law treats infanticide like manslaughter.

If a slave committed a crime, the master discharged his liability by handing him over to the injured parties, who could kill him, for example, in the case of manslaughter. If the master wanted to keep the slave, he had to pay compensation, otherwise he was prosecuted. Anyone could kill his own slaves whenever he wanted, they were considered as cattle, although decent people detested this. Whoever killed another's slave had to give his master double the value as compensation.

Opinions differed about the punishment for proven sorcery (*bita*, black magic). Some said that the person concerned would go unpunished. From others I received these details: one year in prison and a gift of two slaves to the king; a bull and a sheep as atonement to the injured party. I met a silversmith (*wogachiya*) from the Amara sound group who had already been accused of being evil eye (*buda*) during the Amhara occupation and had been bound by his hands and feet by the king for over a year, so that after his release he remained a cripple all his life. This punishment is said not to have existed in ancient times; chains only came with the Amhara.

In the case of negligent, non-severe wounding (*danua*, also negligent homicide), friends refrained from asking for compensation; otherwise one went to the royal court. The more important the injured person's position was, the more he sued. A rich man is said to have received seven slaves, ten cows and a large piece of land as compensation for a broken arm.

In the case of manslaughter or murder (*woroa*), the perpetrator fell victim to the revenge of the kin of the killed if he did not get to safety quickly. He had to be quick to hide where the avengers could not find him or where the name of a great man deterred them from entering the homestead. Although self-defence was not officially permitted, the irascible temperament of the Wolaita, as with all Ethiopians, broke through in such a way that the members of the offended clan did not care if they could only fulfil their duty to speak.

The king and the officials took a very dim view of these acts and tried to curb them, since endless blood-feuds and enmities between two clans easily emerged from such acts of revenge, which affected their whole neighbourhood.

If the slayer did not flee abroad and had no advocates, he was forcibly brought before the royal court by the beadles and sentenced to death or banished after a trial that lasted for days. There was, however, a way to escape the sentence. The most important thing was to belong to an important clan or to be acquainted with people who had access to the royal court. These people were able to get the king

to intervene and attempt reconciliation as quickly as possible, before the family of the murdered person had initiated the process. Supported by the chief magistrates and the wise men of the land, they persuaded the plaintiffs and pestered them with stories, proverbs and the prospect of high compensation until they gave in and renounced their revenge. The Wolaita's reverence for the wisdom of age is very great and it is still amazing today how good coaxing and allowing much time to pass so that anger is spent can bring the most heated plaintiffs to their senses. The ceremony of blood solution is called *cuca*. On a Sunday afternoon, the two clans involved appeared united on the communal meadow, where a huge crowd gathered. The murderer appeared in peculiar soot clothing: he had smeared soot all over his body and clothes and hung dried-up ensete leaves over them. While his relatives threw themselves face down on the ground, he threw himself pleadingly on the ground in front of the family of the killed man and shouted: "*Sala tistadisi kunasya duncadise, woranagiko – woite!*" ("I have smeared soot, I have put on ensete leaves, if you want to kill, kill!"). Thereupon all the people raise a loud wail and cry, "*Marereketi!"* ("Have mercy!"). The old men and wise men placated the last stubborn ones: "Leave the blood, better you give in than more people die!" When the family has finally given its consent, an old wise potter, a *cinasha erashsha,* appears and performs the expiatory sacrifice. He slaughters an old cow and an old sheep with a new knife and sprinkles the blood over both families with a sacred mayo branch: "This blood shall grow old on you. The blood (of the dead) shall not come upon you. Your strife shall die like these animals and set with the sun!" With this, the reconciliation is complete. In addition to the sacrificial animals, the potter receives a pair of trousers and a cloak as his reward.

Defence

A characteristic and a distinct cultural element of almost all major kingdoms in southern Ethiopia (Kaffa, Konta, Dawuro, Wocamo, Yem, the five Oromo monarchies, Boroda, Kucha and others) are the defensive works that protect them and turn them into fortresses. In front of these border works (*mita*), which could consist of stone walls, earthen ramparts, graves, pallisades or natural fences (bushes), depending on the nature of the soil, lay the border jungle (*bazuwaa),* a piece of no man's land behind which rose the border fortifications of the neighbours. In a few places, guarded gates (*pengya*, Amharic: *kela*) made access to the kingdoms possible. The guarding of gates and ramparts was the responsibility of special dignitaries. The Eastern Cushites (Sidaama, Hadiya, Oromo, etc.) as well as the ancient peoples (Ari, Dime, Yem) do not know these border defences; the Konso only surround their villages with walls and gates. Now there is not much left to see

of these mighty works, they are dilapidated and overgrown by bush and gradually levelled by cultivation.

Cecchi (1888), who was the only one to experience the old royal cultures in their heyday, gives an account of the closed borders from his own experience that can hardly be surpassed in its forcefulness, since he tried to get to Kaffa and Jimma from Gera and was literally faced with closed gates each time after having crossed the no man's land – which was teeming with wild animals, with great hardship – and was turned away. Several of these realms, such as Limmu, Enarya, Kaffa and Jimma, were not completely surrounded by ramparts or trees. For long stretches, the humid mountain massifs with their impenetrable jungles and layers of bamboo formed natural barriers that no one dared cross. The artificial constructions were limited to the more open areas touched by traffic at the gates.

I have the impression, on the other hand, that Wolaita, surrounded everywhere by open plains or forestless mountains, was completely enclosed by fortifications, although I have not travelled around the country enough and received sufficient reports to confirm this with certainty. I myself have seen the double mighty stone ramparts, halfway up the slope towards the Omo and Deme, which surround Kindo at a distance of about a kilometre,. These ramparts, made of large stones heaped loosely on top of each other, are, like the others at Lake Abaya on the border with Boroda (described by Bottego [Vannutelli and Citerni 1899] and visited on this expedition by Wolfgang Kuls), two to four metres high and one to two metres wide. Ditches in front of them were not to be seen. In Kindo, the old gate of the road to Dawuro is still well preserved as a neatly made opening in the wall. Opposite, on the steeply rising mountain walls of Dawuro, one also sees large earthworks in several lines, one above the other. In accordance with to the nature of the soil, the fortifications in the flat country were earthworks consisting of ramparts with ditches dug in front of them. They are often seen in the country, not only at the border to Badawacho, but also in the interior, where the highway crosses three times before and after Boditi, where they were were built one after the other according to the different stages of the conquest. On the ramparts, palisade fences or thorn walls were erected, and deep pits were dug at particularly vulnerable points favourable for attack; these pits were equipped with pointed stakes and became especially dangerous for the cavalry. The Amhara lost considerable time in their advance until these dangerous obstacles (Vanderheym 1896:159), which were still visible some years later, were removed (Wellby 1901).

The double gates that Bieber describes among the Kaffa were not known to the Wolaita (Bieber 1920). The gate openings in the ramparts or walls were closed with beams pushed over each other. Behind the gate was a hut for the guard, and there had to be a tall tree in the neighbourhood from which the border could be overlooked.

In Wolaita, too, only a few gates, probably no more than eight, led abroad; these were the places where the major roads crossed the border ramparts: to Dawuro at two places below Halule and the market Zero; to Kucha near Esho; to Humbo near Galdja; to Sidaama and Arsi near Dinto; to Badawacho near Shone and Gara; and to Tambaro and Kambata near Imbeco. The gates were normally closed and only opened on market days or for known friends (merchants or envoys), who, however, had to wait at the border until the king was informed of their coming. Peoples passing through the border markets had to leave the country again on the same day. For supervision, a border bailiff (*mita mocona*) was appointed for each gate and the border ramparts adjoining it who was responsible for guarding the border, controlling border traffic, observing the neighbouring people and maintaining the fortifications. He had the border communities work on the fortifications twice a year. The border bailiffs were respected people who, together with simpler people, were commanded to be border guards by the king, often enough against their will; they were not allowed to leave this post until they were relieved after one year. So that they did not get into economic difficulties, the king supported them with gifts of cattle, money and slaves, but during this time he kept their sons as hostages at his court to have a guarantee of their fathers‘ loyalty. In addition to the guards, the border bailiffs were accompanied by the *ocollo*, who were in charge of the no man's land belonging to the king as well as the wastelands within the ramparts on the border and charged small fees for permission to cut wood, graze cattle, cut grass or hunt game there. Entering the no man's land was dependent on permission from the border bailiff to pass through the gate. In addition, the border bailiffs supervised immigration, which was very important for Wolaita, as the indigenous population was insufficient to settle the newly conquered territories. It was encouraged to the utmost and for a long time Wolaita was considered by the surrounding peoples as a land of the future, where every immigrant received good land in abundance and gifts of cattle from the king. Immigration must indeed have been extraordinary, even taking into account that in every Ethiopian ethnic group many clans derive their origin from a neighbouring people. Even including those who immigrated from Tigre, the number of clans that have lived in the country for a longer period of time constitutes one tenth of the clan names found in the country. However, it must be taken into account that they certainly make up more than half of the population in terms of number of souls.

Not all immigrants fared as they hoped. If, after examining their circumstances and origins, the border bailiff found that he was dealing with poor and insignificant people, it was quite possible that he would declare them slaves, keep some for himself and give the rest to the king or the head of the district. “Great” people from famous clans who arrived with horses and herds and gave him a good gift,

he took as honoured guests to the king, who gave them land. Damot in particular tried to draw in the nobility from neighbouring countries, especially Kucha, to form a new nobility dependent only on him. Despite all the security measures, it happened time and again that slaves were smuggled across the borders abroad.

The Wolaita were forbidden to emigrate, it was the task of the border bailiff to catch them. Only criminals who had chosen banishment as their punishment were allowed to leave the country. Freedom of movement at the borders was only enjoyed by the foreign merchants known in Wolaita, who brought salt from Arsi and luxury items from Dawuro, Kaffa and Jimma, as well as the envoys (*gaana*). In all kingdoms there were confidants of the king who had been entrusted with this important role and passed it on to their sons. They were the only ones who had unhindered entry at the borders and were allowed before the kings with their messages. The condition was that they were personally known to the border guards as well as to the court, so they also took their sons with them so that they become familiar with the duties of the office at an early age and become known to the people of the neighbouring kingdoms. They were allowed to move freely in the neighbouring countries – albeit with a guard of honour – were highly honoured and entitled to good hospitality and accommodation. They were the bearers of important state secrets; through them kings asked neighbouring rulers for advice and help in war, asked princesses for wives or sent gifts. Often they were only sent under a pretext to scout out the internal conditions of neighbouring countries that were otherwise difficult to enter, or to find ways for an attack. A killing of an envoy is said never to have occurred.

Administration

The eight districts (*alana*, also called *hozpuna dana*, the eight judges or *hozpuna woise*, the eight military districts) were administered by annually changing district heads (*dana*) elected by the people's assembly and confirmed by the king.

The districts were divided into circles (*kumeta sucha*, "full" stone) under district chiefs (*huduga*), and the circles into communities, or if you like, parishes (*saho sucha*, small stone) under community chiefs (*aduna*). As can be seen from the history, these divisions – with the exception of Kindo – are not very old but have changed frequently in the course of the conquests. The districts were also sometimes merged or divided in connection with the growth of the population and the establishment of markets. Therefore, my informants could never agree on how many divisions each districts had and also which communities belonged to which district. The border of the districts, however, was and is fixed. In general, the borders of the districts follow natural features – ridges of mountains, river courses and

valleys – as far as possible, and this principle can also be observed in the districts. In many cases, however, this principle is also broken and the border winds its way across the terrain, just as it was marked out when the land was taken. Another phenomenon that is very common in Ethiopia is the very frequent recurrence of the same place names, which were undoubtedly very often connected with the migration of peoples and which pose many a difficult riddle for historical interpretation (e.g. Damot or Dawuro). The Kindo landscape, the centre of the Wolaita expansion according to the Wolaita of the Reconquista, gave a large number of names to the newly conquered territories. Names such as Sore, Sere, Boskose, Gorumo, etc. are particularly common. Of course, my notes are limited to the larger entities; if I were to make a comprehensive record of all the field names, I would certainly find many more of the same names. In order to know which names originate from the Wolaita and which are taken over from the pre-population, an accurate list of the field names of the western disctricts would have to be recorded. But even there I find names that come from other peoples, such as the Arsi or the Hadiya.

Almost all the wars of the Wolaita were prepared campaigns of conquest, the main purpose of which was to permanently occupy and settle the conquered land. This was facilitated by the sparse settlement of the Hadiya and Arsi, who, as predominantly cattle breeders, did not have a strong attachment to the land and also made no effort to reconquer it.

Immediately after the end of the fighting, the king determined the future new boundary of the kingdom and, standing on a hill or mountain, distributed the land to the war leaders (*gaddauwa*) and great warriors (*toranca*), describing their pieces "from the great sycamore to the stream and from there to the small hill" etc. The best lands were declared king's lands.

In those ancient times, when land was plentiful, such pieces were often many square kilometres in size, so that the war leaders and heroes distributed their pieces back to the "fellow travellers" (*monica*) of their retinue. Often the land was also distributed by the king directly to each man of the posse, and each was required, under severe penalty, to resettle his eldest son there. In this way, the land was to be populated by the Wolaita as quickly as possible and firmly connected to the rest of the empire. After the division of the new communities and districts, all the people gathered and in a short time drew a protective border wall around the new territory. Often, without an outright declaration of war, in small-scale warfare or even tacitly, the border was extended by a few kilometres and a new rampart was built in the twinkling of an eye. For example, one can recognise three ramparts in succession along the motor road from Dalbo to just beyond Boditi. If an old name was not adopted, the new community gladly gave its land the name of its old home (compare above). There was so much land that anyone who wanted could obtain large plots without difficulty through some connections.

For example, a large piece of land on which a group of the Woshesha clan now sits, was originally the secondary property of a single woman to whom King Damot gave it as compensation because her husband had been killed in the war. She already had a large estate in Koysha. This strip of land, which at that time was still almost completely overgrown with forest, belonged to a poor man whom the tyrannical king chased away. He later received other land as compensation under King Tobe. The war leader or hero who distributed the land to his followers and clients, as the founder of the community, laid out the community meadow with all the sacred sites of which he was considered the overlord. Left out of the distribution were the king's lands and the great imperial pastures. The lowlands were in great demand because the precious cotton could be planted there and because the cattle could graze there without hindrance. This explains why the counties of Borkosa and Bosa in Damot extend down into the lowlands as long narrow strips, and why the county of Woide, located south of Damota Mountain and originally without access to the lowlands, was given three more large strips of land in the lowlands during the course of the empire's expansion which were not contiguous with the ancestral territory, so that its inhabitants could also obtain plots of land there. The Wolaita do not share other highlanders in Ethiopia's strong fear of the lowlands, although people were reluctant to live there for the long term for climatic reasons. Mostly slaves of the rich lived there, herding cattle, cultivating cotton, millet and red pepper (more recently also maize), and beekeeping.

Looking over Wolaita today, which is situated around Damot Mountain and has its natural, political and economic centre at its foot, it is strange that this organic and self-contained structure should have come into being only in recent times through conquest. The old ancestral land of Kindo and Koysha no longer play any role at all in relation to the new centre, which has grown so much. It is true that the old people of the Wolaita emphasise that their land had the same mifortune in ancient times as it does today, and that they were only pushed back by the Hadiya. At the time of Ahmed Gran, as the chronicle (Basset 1897) reports, Wolaita probably reached as far as the area of Shone. The reconquest gained not only the old territory but also new territories to the east and north (Duguna, Boloso, Damot-Fulase). Under the first nine kings at Libana, the Wolaita territory included only the old district Kindo. Tube conquered parts of highland Koysha (up to the Sosora II), Sana Middle Koysha up to the river Zega, and highland Offa. Under Ogato and Amado, the country experienced the greatest growth. In long wars, Ogato added West Damot with the mountain, Sore, Lower Offa (Wachigoa-Eso) and Humbo to the empire. Amado conquered parts of Eastern Damot, Duguna (which was not yet firmly connected to the empire), the plain (from Lake Abaya), North Damot (Gege) and parts of Boloso. Under Damot, only a few strips of land in Boloso grew (Tigo and Hadaro), Gobe completed the woe, extended the em-

pire to Bilate and rounded it off in the north. Duguna was finally joined to the empire. The conquest only finally began to cease not only because of the peaceful tendency of Gobe's government, but also because the empire was now surrounded on all sides by natural boundaries beyond which expansion and settlement were hardly possible. To the west, southwest, south and east, the deep unhealthy valleys of Omo, Deme, Lake Abaya and Bilate prevented denser settlement, and the mountainous lands of Dawuro, Kucha and Boroda rising behind them already had dense populations. In the north, the Wolaita had almost annihilated the Badawacho group (the former inhabitants of the land) and confined them to a small strip near the present town of Ras Getachew. Further northwest, they had advanced almost to the ridge inhabited by the Tambaro, Donga and Kambata, which also prevented further advance. Without the conquest of the Amhara and the consequent enclosure, the Wolaita would probably only have been able to settle the rest of the Badawacho area and would then have come to a definite standstill, if they had not annexed the then still sparsely inhabited western Sidaama in a grand expansion. More recently, Wolaita have seeped into the sparsely populated areas in Badawacho in large numbers and live there as tenants. Although the land officially belongs to another province (Kambata), it already bears a completely Wolaita character. The large Wolaita settlements in western Sidaama (Selo, for example) are not connected to the motherland.

Dignitaries

It is surprising that in Wolaita – where, for example, the number of imperial judges emphasised the sacred number twelve – they did not also try to preserve twelve entirely through other divisions instead of eight, as was the case in Kaffa, Male or Basketto, for example. The division of the Ethiopian empire into twelve provinces after 1941 was probably not purely coincidental. Twelve, already significant in the old African kingdoms, is naturally traced back in Ethiopia to the twelve disciples of the Lord. Like them, the twelve highest officials and governors of the imperial provinces are supposed to surround the ruler. This has also been reinforced by the strong emphasis on the number twelve by the communion societies, which meet in turn at a different one each month throughout the year.

The ranking system of the Wolaita is extraordinarily strongly influenced by northern Ethiopian institutions. If the same names have not been adopted in a slightly modified form (e.g. *balamuala*, *dana, rasa*, etc.), then at least they are analogies that make the models of the individual offices clear. Just as the Amhara and Tigre call every office bearer *shum* and his office *shumat* (derived from *sayum*,

the appointed, installed), so do the Wolaita, who have the word *sunta* for the office bearer and *suntäteta* derived from it for the office.

For the duration of their office, all office holders enjoyed certain privileges, such as tax exemption, like the other imperial officials (border bailiffs) and the dignitaries serving as chamberlains at the royal court. All office holders were freemen, however, only the roles of district head or imperial judge, which were counted among the class of the privileged, elevated them to a higher status.

The heads of the regions were called *dana* (judges) or also "*alana*" *dana* (wide judges because they had a wide district). The name *dana* is also common in many other southern Ethiopian kingdoms, together with the form of kingship originating in northern Ethiopia, and also occurs in the form *daina* or *dann.* This word denotes a judge or official, as Conti Rossini notes, a "juge choisi librement par les parties, une sorte d'arbitre, qui donne des décisions purements civiles" (Conti Rossini 1912:227, 228). This contrasts with the rank of *makonnen*, not known in Wolaita, a "juge, qui étant donné d'une notorité supérieure put infliger des châtinerts corporels et se servir d'eux-même pendant l'instruction du proies" (Conti Rossini 1912:227, 228).

Below the regional leaders (*dana*) were the district leaders (*huduga*), and below them, as the last real dignitaries, the community leaders (*aduna*). The latter two rank names are common among the Ometo peoples, at least among their eastern group, and originate from the Ometo language. Among the Dorze, they are used to refer to the two leaders of the people, also called *ulaka.* The community leader had two helpers and messengers (*herago*) with him who passed on his orders. The actual representative of the community was the people's assembly, which met in the public square (*gutura*) and which, among the Wolaita, as among all African peoples, was led by the elders and wise men.

All these dignitaries changed every year on New Year's Day. For a while, during the great conquests and the confused years under Damot, this was no longer so strictly observed; but Gobe reintroduced it as a basic law during his reorganisation of the empire. At the end of the term of office, large popular assemblies were held in the districts, counties and municipalities and a vote was taken on whether to keep the previous head, i.e. to officially extend his term of office, or to elect a new one. Everyone could hold office several times in the course of his or her life. Actually, only privileged persons were eligible for the offices of regional and disctrict head. When the regional assembly, which was naturally dominated by this class, had agreed on one man, they moved to the royal meadow around New Year's time and sent messengers to the king's court, asking them to confirm the new incumbent "the year has come to change". After the regional head was elected, the districts and municipalities presented him with their new heads, to

whom he had to give his approval. The community leaders were supposedly not confirmed by the district leaders.

On the day of his inauguration, the regional chief, who had thus officially moved up into the class of the privileged, held a great festival, *alana mata* (regional grass). In the morning, all the people gathered in front of his door, laid down grass (*mata*) and wished with "*hashu hashu*" ("Good luck"). He slaughtered at least fifty cattle for the visitors and had huge quantities of beer and honey wine ready, which he had asked the king's permission to prepare. As a sign of his rank, he erected two high bundles (*wonco*) of climbing plants, bamboo and wood to the left and right of his door, at the foot of which he poured out stomach contents during the slaughter.

In Wolaita, the spiral-wrapped dignity staff (*gumbo*) was not a special insignia of imperial officials as it was in Gamo; every respected person, including women, could wear it. The ranks of district and commune chiefs have now disappeared as official institutions, and the same is basically true of regional chiefs (*dana*), although older wise people are still often called *dana.* This is then an a vernacular honour to indicate the respected position they hold as advisors and heads of the councils of elders. They no longer have the power of command, even though their voice has great influence.

In relation to the Amhara administration, the *abigaz* have assumed the role of Amhara district chiefs. Their areas of command do not always coincide with the old regions. *Abigaz* is a rank apparently originating from the Gurage (*aba gaz,* lord of command) which the Amhara also transferred to other subjugated territories. It denotes a high rank that is closest to the chief or king of the subjugated peoples (Amharic: *balabat*). Below the *abigaz* are lesser ranks; here in Wolaita they are the *cika su* (literally: earth chiefs), in other areas they are called "ox chief" or *koro*. The *abigaz* are elected for lifetime – if they are not deposed for misconduct – and, in contrast to the old days, come almost exclusively from the Tigre clan. The relatives of the present king, who shared rule of the country before his accession until 1935, also bore the name *abigaz* in addition to their Amharic ranks (*fitawrari*). Today, they do not play a major role in the self-government of the people, which is limited to the municipality, but are mainly there to support the government in public tax collections.

The other officials of the old imperial administration will be dealt with below, such as border bailiffs (*mita mocona*), wasteland bailiffs (*ocollo*) and envoys (*gaana* or *mette*), the imperial judge (*zaba dana*), the twelve chief judges (*balamuala*), the beadles (*tace*) and finally the market judges (*gia dana*). The chiefs (*erashsha*) of the potters and blacksmiths were apparently not dignitaries. The royal dignitaries have already been described.

The classes

by Eike Haberland

Unlike most southern Ethiopian peoples – whose social order is not very differentiated and usually only knows the king, who is outside the earthly sphere, and the large mass of common freemen and craftsmen – the social stratification of the Wolaita shows well-developed features. The Wolaita distinguish five large groups of classes, some of which are themselves subdivided: the hereditary nobility, i.e. the members of the royal house (Tigre); the common freemen (*goqa*); the slaves (*ayle*); the craftsmen-potters (*cinasha*); and the blacksmiths (*degella*). No fixed estate was formed by a special class, which I will call the "privileged" (or personal) nobility, who almost surpassed the nobility proper in importance. All estates, with the exception of the royal clan, break down into a large number of exogamous and patrilineal clans, some of which in turn divide into independent clan groups. Nobility and freemen intermarried. There was no possibility to change; only freemen could become slaves through misdemeanour or captivity. The other three estates are endogamous. The estates are sharply distinguished by their class-consciousness, which erects insurmountable barriers between them, and by the precisely defined rights and duties, which were regulated in detail to such an extent that salutation, greeting, dress, house construction and jewellery were fixed for each person.

The most precisely prescribed differences were in the clothing that betrayed the individual estates: nobility and freemen were allowed to have a red border on their cloaks; potters and blacksmiths a black one; and slaves a black one that was not woven in but dyed afterwards with soot on the finished fabric. This was not so strictly applied to the trousers, of which five different types were known. The rules were more fluid, although it would have been out of the question for a rich slave to wear coloured trousers of the second or third kind, not to mention the first. A respected potter who was a particularly deserving retainer of the king might at most have trousers of the third kind. It was the same with the inner weave of the walls, for example.

Similar to the even more highly developed culture of the Amhara, the structure of the economy and society of the Wolaita, which was still predominantly

oriented towards soil cultivation and animal husbandry, contributes to the fact that other classes have not been able to emerge despite all attempts. The function of the two artisan classes was clearly defined and fulfilled in economic terms everything that a peasant community needed; all other professions were assigned in some way to the various classes, although their position was usually an oblique one and not very prestigious. Tenant farmers and agricultural labourers were almost non-existent in the past; poor peasants who, for reasons of protection, entered into a client relationship with a rich man and worked as day labourers in his fields or cultivated them as a kind of tenant farmer did not thereby lose their legal status as freemen among the Amhara. And the legal system, which was also very common among the Oromo in Shoa, was little known in the Wolaita and had not yet become a legal institution. It is understandable that such small people did not enjoy much prestige anyway. The less numerous weavers, with the exception of the Konso and Dorze, did not form a special class as in the whole of Ethiopia. They also did not have special status names but were called *samainya* or *simainya* after the Amhara Tigre word for fabric. This, like the tradition of the Wolaita, who let the Dawuro take over the weaving, points to a northern Ethiopian origin of weaving. Among the Dorze, the weaving people in Ethiopia par excellence, the actual weaving clans also originate from Manz in Shoa. The name "Dorze" is synonymous with weaver in large parts of Gamo-Gofa province, just as weavers from Dorze came to Wolaita in ancient times. The small merchants who transacted table business or traded in spices at the markets were, like the weavers, poor peasants who sought a side-line. The real merchants were foreigners. All people who pursued such a sideline were not very respected in the feudal social order. Decent people sat at home, supervised slaves working in the fields and carved spears when they wanted to do something by hand. In the afternoons, they went to the public squares, preceded by the slave boys who carried the pipe and the seat leather, and deliberated on the affairs of the community. On Sundays, the horses were exercised and equestrian games were held. A decent man was not a wage-worker and merchant for others, he was a lord (*goda*).

Silversmithing, which probably came late to Wolaita, was practised by the *wogachiya.* They were freemen whose other functions identified them as a priestly class.

The Tigre

The royal clan, the Tigre or Tigrea, also called *kawo naa* (children of the king) and even more so *awa ayfe* and *aginafe* (those of the sun and the moon), represent the only real noble class. Officially, they played no role in the state; they took no office



Fig. 40: Weaver in his hut between the houses of Tilge and Kaba

and were even somewhat antagonistic to the king, since they were too noble to take orders from anyone in the world. Unofficially, their extraordinary prerogatives gave them a tremendously honoured position, which raised them high above the other people and which, together with their great numerical strength, contributed to the fact that they were among the strongest pillars of the kingdom, in spite of many a peeve, which was basically nothing other than resentment that they of all people had not become king. It has been shown in the history of Wolaita, with the exception of Tube, that they behaved indifferently towards the king when he was distressed.

They formed a huge clan with supposedly 10,000 family fathers, of which the descendants of King Tube, who had 100 sons, are said to number over 5,000 men. I do not know if the number is exaggerated, because that would mean at least 50,000 people with all the family members. Among themselves, this clan as a whole – the clan leader is the king – has little connection. It knows no common festivals and sacrifices. In contrast, the descendants of the individual kings form close clan-like kinship groups that are still very close to each other despite the many generations that separate them from their progenitors. The formation of such a clan portion goes like this: when a king dies, the eldest son becomes the new king. His other brothers (*wombeto*) celebrate a solemn covenant in which they swear to respect each other and their descendants as close relatives for all eternity and to help and support each other. Usually, they also settled on closed land complexes that their brother who became king ceded to them. Only such a part of the clan considers itself truly related to each other and dutifully attends funerals and weddings. They have little contact with the other descendants. On the contrary, there is a strong rivalry, as those who are descended from a king who has not been dead for long think they are better, as they have even more royal

blood in their veins and are even more closely connected to the palatinate than those whose ancestor died many generations ago.

Apart from the descendants of the present king or king's line, there are no descendants of the first kings of Mikael at Katama. There are a few descendants of the Adayo branch living in Cherake and as emigrants in Kambata. Kote had no children except his only son Tube, and Libana is said to have died childless (or his sons were killed in the inheritance disputes). It is only with Tube that the great branches that still flourish today began. Also his descendants, who are the most numerous for he had 100 children, sit mainly in Cherake. The descendants of the kings Sana, Ogato, Amado and Damot are found scattered throughout the country. There is said to be a lot of Tigre in the Ongote district of Garuno. Gaga's descendants (Gaga had only a few children in his young life), like those of Tona, form a kind of particularly privileged stratum that held all the offices of the ethnic group at the beginning of the Amhara period and still holds much power now. While Tona had several sons, the current *fitawrari* Desta, his grandson, was the only child of his son Orobe. The Tigre played a major role once again during the ingterregnum between the death of Orobe and the installation of Desta by the Italians. At that time, Wolaita no longer had a supreme leader, but the individual districts were administered by the sons of Gobe and Tona, and even a descendant of Ogato, Dogiso, attained high office, contrary to all custom. The fact that Bakalo, who was popular with the people because of his mildness and justice, was never able to fully assert himself was also due to the Tigre, whose arrogance could not bear the fact that not one of their own but a former slave ruled over them. The privileges of the Tigre form a small catalogue. They are of great interest because, on the one hand, they make clear their northern Ethiopian origin, unchanged after several hundred years except for the expressions, and on the other hand, they show how the Tigre took over the prerogatives of the older royal class, whose once mythical character is still vaguely recognisable. The royal family that ruled before them, the Wolaitamala, who give the country its name, have degenerated into insignificance and have not retained any of their ancient privileges.

Most striking in this regard is the designation of the Tigre as children of the sun or moon (*arwaife* or *aginafe*), which is alien to Christian northern Ethiopians but fits well with pagan southern Ethiopian kingship. The Auwanaa (sunlight) clan, which is the royal clan in several small countries near Gofa, even knows a tale of how their ancestor was begotten by the sun.

While everyone else in southern Ethiopia addresses each other with a regular "you", a formal "you" (*arswo*) has only been developed by the Amhara, the Tigre brought the idea of this form of respect with them. Although there is no polite form of "you" in the Wolaita language, the second person plural *intena* was used as a substitute – and is also used by the Oromo in Shoa, who have come under

Amhara influence, when they address their superiors with *isini* (your). Even the young children had to be addressed politely.

Tigre men would not be addressed with their first names, as is customary, but with *goda* (Lord) or with the name of their favourite horse *moizo godo* (Lord of Moizo). This custom is quite common in Ethiopian royal culture. It is well known that the kings of the Oromo kingdoms were named after there most famous horses, such as Abbu Gifar (Lord of the Apple Grey) or Abba Boru (Lord of the Light Brown). It is less well known that Ethiopian emperors are also named after their horses, whose names, chosen by the emperor himself in his younger years, is supposed to be symbolic of the future government. Thus, Menelik was also called Abba Dana (Lord of the Judge), and the current emperor Haile Selassie Abba Tekel.

The women of the Tigre who came from lower clans (they married only good clans, like those named below) and their unmarried daughters were addressed as *abento.* The Amharic word *abeto* (or *ato*) originally referred only to princes (more rarely princesses) of royal blood. The third son of the current emperor, Sahle Selassie, bears this title, which was also used by the regents of Shewa before they became kings. In addition, the wives were also called *guanto.* In addition, they were naturally entitled to the title *godate* (mistress, madame) like all better ladies. Tigre girls who had married into a clan of the common free were not allowed to be called by their name by their husband or by their new relatives but were entitled to the honorary title *kanubiye* (royal).

Just like the king, the Tigre were greeted with outstretched hands and the call "*kushe"* ("my hand"), to which they replied "*aga*" ("let it be"). Even young boys, as soon as they were circumcised, had to be addressed in this way. Their slaves, like the king's slaves, had the honorary title *godobuhso* (king's child), but whether they were allowed to wear red stripes on their cloaks like the king was a matter of differing opinions.

Their grave is not called *dufo* like the rest of the people but *makana* (the place); at funerals, the Tigre women wishing condolences shout "*Abe, abe, tana mua*!" ("Oh, oh, eat me!").

Of the practical privileges, their tax exemption was the most important. If they committed crimes, they could only be drowned so that their precious blood would not flow. They were thrown into the Omo below Kindo or at the Tamboro border. Some of the privileges that were originally theirs alone were, in time, also granted to members of the privileged class, such as permission to wear silver jewellery; the rest of the people were only allowed to wear copper or brass. Gold was reserved for the king.

Originally, only they were entitled to: door leaves (denoted by the Amharic word *sanka*) – the rest of the people only had panels woven from bamboo; the

dyeing of the roof-top and door leaves and jambs in red; bed curtains (*garuda*) – as with the Amhara, among the Tigre, the bed of the master of the house is a sacred place which is not to be seen and on which only the closest trusted friends are allowed to sit; finally, the brewing of honey wine, which was originally a sole privilege of the king. Also shared with other estates was the privilege of erecting a sacrificial bundle of bamboo and liana at the front door. Today, all this is only theoretical, for everyone can do as he pleases; there is no longer any way, apart from through the talk of others (i.e. gossip), to punish anyone that transgresses the barriers of the old estates order... Most people still seem to arrogate to themselves rights to which they are not entitled, although the enlightened no longer have any relationship at all to these rules. Thus, the king told me, laughing and also uncomprehending, that the very rich and respected *qegnazmach* Gabre Madhia from the clan Hizia, who is related to him by marriage, officially asked for permission to put up his magnificent door leaf.

In other respects, too, the Tigre keep themselves somewhat apart, although today, when they often sit among the rest of the population as small, even poor peasants, the distinctions of class have become blurred. The rich among them are distinguished by special dignity and courtesy, which set them apart from the rest of the population, as does their still racially distinct appearance. Within their community, they take part in all matters of public life, as for example in neighbourly help or in cases of death, but maintain a certain distance from the common people as far as possible. Their children, especially the girls, are urged to stay indoors if possible and not to be exposed to the sun, so that they keep a fair complexion. They also fear more than anyone the evil eye of the jealous over their beautiful children. At the *maskal* festival, they do not participate in the communal slaughter and feasting of others but put their honour into sacrificing at their own door. The king was considered their religious leader, their clan leader. Now they have adopted Amhara Christianity in many cases, to a far greater extent than the rest of the people, who, when they abandon paganism, tend to join the Protestant missions. The reason why the Tigre reject the Protestants is characteristic for them: it is beneath their dignity to take part in their common church services, which are attended by all classes, where they would have to sit next to ormer slaves. Finally, the public confessions of sin that these pietistic congregations demand seem incompatible with their reputation. They are now more absorbed into the Amhara culture than any ethnic group in southern Ethiopia and have adopted its customs. Starting with the king, many members of the Tigre and other good clans hold posts in the Amhara administration, such as the secretary-general of Dilla, or the district chief of Balta, the *fitawrari* Gabre Giorgis, a grandson of King Gobe.

As a peculiar appendage, a small sound group, the Komo-Tigre, belongs to the Tigre. At the beginning of the Tigre's reign, the second king, Shoba, issued

a proclamation that all people should be counted and their clan affiliation determined. There remained two men who had immigrated from Konta; they did not belong to any of the clans settled in Wolaita. Since the people were of good origin, the king said they should be counted among the Tigre and christened them Boina-Tigre ("Taro-Tigre" – no one knew the connection) or Komo-Tigre (*komo* is the name given to all members of the same clan who no longer know how they are related to each other). Some also call them Tigre-Toso (belonging to the Tigre) according to the artisan clan.

The commoners and their clans

It was not possible for me to compile an exact list of all the clans, as their large number – there are supposed to be 124 of them – stood in the way. Another circumstance also made it difficult. What distinguishes the clans of the Wolaita from those of other Ethiopian peoples is their astonishingly strong fragmentation into clan parts, which, even more than the clans themselves, are the actual ritual associations and are therefore also called *komo* (or *keta*, house) like the clans, i.e. the grouping of all those who are descended from common ancestors and founders (*ma'e*). The group within the clans and clan parts that know not only about their mythical but also actual kinship and know their common ancestors (*maizu*) are called *sesa*. This is also used in the sense of closer kinship, clan.

Thus, for the Wolaita, it is often not so much the original clan name – such as Womigera, Bubula or Hizia – that is important, but the name of the clan founder and his next son, such as Arbi-Aldada, which means more to him than the meaningless clan name. With the extraordinarily high level of immigration – almost 90 per cent of all clans come from other countries – often the most diverse immigrant groups, in order to assimilate or to hide their bad origins and become honourable, have adopted the name of a large clan, so that apart from the autochthonous Womigera, there are those who come from Dawuro, Kucha and Gamo. This is particularly true of the slave and artisan clans, which presumably only later adopted the name of a good clan in order to belong to the ethnic community. It was often the case that newly purchased slaves had "no" clan affiliation at all, i.e. that their own clan – if they came from Yem or the Ari lands, for example – was unknown in Wolaita. In this case, they joined some slave clan after a while. In most Ethiopian clans, with the exception of the very noble and exclusive ones, there is a tendency to like to adopt strangers, because this strengthens the power of one's own clan, which is perceived as a unit. In this way, clans can make up for their lack of fine origins through their large numbers or even the bravery of their members.

The Wolaita do not know the close feeling of kinship that unites the clans of other peoples; on the contrary, for many people, their community affiliation is almost more important, and especially in public life, the regional divisions have overtaken the clans. Such a notion of clan unity – as with the Konso or Gauwada, who say of their brother clans among the Burdji or Borana "the language may be different, but the kinship is more binding" – would be completely alien to the Wolaita. The clans in Wolaita have far too many members for that, all of whom no longer know how they are related to each other. At best, the members of a *sesa*, a group named after a common ancestor (i.e. all those who know about their actual relationship), who meet every year at the clan festival, maintain this contact in a stronger way. Such a unit, which could perhaps be called a large clan, since it often comprises more than a hundred people, and whose cohesion is all the stronger the closer they live to each other, also appears in public as a unit with the associated clientele of their neighbours, craftsmen and slaves, for example, when it is necessary to lend the necessary emphasis to a legal complaint or to avenge an injustice. However, such a unity is not so much a religious one as the clan originally was, but rather a legal association of convenience. It is also for these protective reasons that it is so important to "belong to a clan", i.e. to be a member of a community that made it possible for the small and the weak to exist. Otherwise, a poor person who "did not have a clan" could face the prospect of being enslaved by a powerful person with no hand extended to support him. The same happened to poor immigrants who already suffered this fate at the border, while rich emigrants who had advocates in the country joined a clan, such as the Komo-Tigre. Many poor and small people, who could not be adopted by a good clan because of their lowly origins, therefore entered into a kind of client relationship with a rich person in their neighbourhood, working for him and forming his retinue on all occasions; in return he took over their legal protection. Only in one point does the original ritual kinship of all members of the same clan still emerge: in the strict exogamy rule, which is apparently observed to this day. Not only was marriage to a member of the same clan ritually forbidden, but also extramarital intercourse, which the Oromo, who are otherwise very strict in all exogamy regulations, consider meaningless. The Wolaita had to fear the dreadful consequences of such a misstep – otherwise the embarrassing confession of sin associated with the redemption of the curse could not be understood.

The leader of each clan – if it is undivided – or of each part of the clan, the *baira keta*, is the eldest of the house, but not truly the eldest, but the eldest descendant of the eldest son in a direct line from the founder of the clan. He is not prominent in the mundane life of his clan, at weddings or private battles; only in the case of very small clans might he be formally asked for permission to hold the feast, just like the grandparents who are still alive. Only at the big annual clan

festival called sacrifice does he play a decisive role. In the clans that do not know any clan festivals at all (Tigre, Wolaitalama, Wogo), his position is therefore only a very nominal one. On a certain prescribed day (or during a month, because this is not taken very seriously), all the relatives, including the free ones, gather and go with gifts to the house of the "elder". One or more – this depends on the rules of sacrifice – bring the sacrificial animal, which is always obtained from the sacred herd (*bakra*) that every better person possesses. The clan leader can also provide the sacrificial animal. Close to his homestead there is a sacred tree (*eka mita*) surrounded by a small bush wilderness, because no one touches anything here and does not even collect dry wood. There or in the house, the slaughter is then carried out with the sacred knife used only for this purpose, which he wears tied around his waist during the celebration. In the details on the clan festivals, I have listed some peculiarities of such festivals, which differ little in their ritual from the general sacrificial ceremonies as far as meat distribution etc. is concerned. What they all have in common is that the beef hump goes to the clan leader, who lets all participants taste it before blessing the meal. Although not directly pronounced, the sacrifice is not only to the ancestors but also to a sound spirit or a spirit being whose name is often understood to be the name of the ceremony. The "possession" of such clan spirits – who are called *eka*, as is the festival held for them – is very important for the clans, as they represent a magical power that protects one's own clan and can harm others: "He who has no clan spirit cannot curse". This is very important for field thefts, for example. The clans that do not have a spirit, such as the Tigre, Wolaitamala and Wodjo, must help themselves in other ways or ask someone from a clan that has a curse to help them.

The following gives a list of the clans according to their origin. The names of the clan founders are in brackets but are unfortunately missing for very many ethnic groups. They are especially important for differentiation, as several groups with the same clan names come from different countries, such as the Woshesha, of which one group with the Tigre is from Temben, the other autochthonous, or such as the Bubula, of which one part is autochthonous, another comes from "Amhara".

Before listing the special features of the individual clans, I would like to give some summaries of clans that have common features. The best clans, which the king also marries, are the Wolaitamala, the former king's clan. They are very numerous, but do not enjoy any special privileges. There is a jokingly perceived enmity between them and the Tigre, which is why they "marry each other preferentially".[57] Also the Qesiya and Woshecha who came with the Tigre; the reputation of the Woshecha, however, has declined over the years and the Qesiya no

[57] It has already been pointed out among other peoples that close kinship or friendship between two clans makes marriage impossible, while enmity or the forcible severance of previous ties of kinship is the best guarantee of frequent intermarriage.

longer count many members. The last Wolaita clan whose daughters were married by the kings are the Zamine. They are now very dwindled in numbers. Then there are: Nizia (prestigious and numerous), Zato (no longer many), Bubula (a thriving clan), Womigera (many, not as prestigious as before), Zirgomala (numerous), Komine (not many), Wodjo (very prestigious and very few). A large part of them are autochthonous clans, equal in prestige to those originating from Tigre.

The closest in reputation are the *mala* clans, i.e. those of the many immigrant clans that had been (and in some cases still are) king clans in their old homeland. The other immigrant clans were called *dogala.* The *mala* clans have different reputations; it is explicitly said that the Gamo Mala enjoy little prestige. In Gamo, which is not a country but a collective name for different countries, there is of course no such clan, I assume that the Wolaita mean the Gawu-Mala clan. The Wolaitamala were once the royal clan in Wolaita. I have not been able to find out anything about the Zirgomala. The Kogomala are now chiefs in Eso and Tchencha, as are the Borodamala in Boroda. I have been unable to find out anything about the Hilimala, who are also said to come from Gamo, or about the Misimala, Zontomala and Lontomala, who come from Kucha. The Golomala are still the kings there.[58] Several ruling royal slaves (e.g. in Dawuro or in the Hadiya) do not have the addition *mala* in their clan name.

People were reluctant to marry clans which are very respected and numerous but whose members are said to be jealous (or werewolves, *buda*) or often possessed by spirits. They are feared because if they marry a member of another clan, they can easily curse him with illness or "eat him with their eyes" or send their spirits after him in case of marital discord. Such curse solutions are always a very complicated and costly affair. Clans with jealous people are said to be all Amhara, mainly the Fatgara, further the Damota, the subgroup Aldada of the Hizia, and a subgroup Sigae, for which I did not find out to which clan it belonged and where it came from. Their relatives mostly live in Offa-Sikirsa. Clans with strong spirits are, for example, the very respected Bubula, Zato and Womigera. Clans with totemic relations also have a certain something about them, although one would never dare to hold it against them or even classify them in a bad social position, as the Basketto do, where such clans are seen between the "decent" people and the craftsmen. The Kauka, or Komine, for example, are distinctly approachable clans. Only the four clans Gatsha, Gadja, Maila and Mascha are outspoken pariahs and, for the Wolaita, belong to the dregs of humanity; they are one step lower than slaves or craftsmen.

[58] Golo is said to be the old name for Kucha. The Gezo or Gezomala come from Gergeda, i.e. the area now inhabited by Sidaama or Guji.

The nobility of merit

As with the Amhara (and also, for example, the Kaffa), between the nobility, which consists of the members of the royal house (or clan), and the common freemen, who are the full citizens entitled to the right of descent, there is a class whose members possess a kind of personal nobility and are distinguished from the other freemen to whom they nominally belong by a number of privileges which they share with the nobility. Among the Amhara they are called *makuanout* (sing. *makuanen*, often pronounced *makuonen*); the Wolaita have no special designation for them. Although members of this stratum, which constituted the state-bearing element in Wolaita, generally emerged from the same families as among the Amhara, belonging to one did not mean being entitled to the privileges. Certainly, a member of such a family had an easier time than an outsider in attaining prestige and dignity, which were within the reach of any brave and clever freeborn. As privileges were very much dependent on personal ability and public standing, a rich but untalented son of an eminent father had no other privilege than that of being a son of a distinguished man. The same is true among the Amhara, who call the son of a dignitary *bey* (young nobleman) without conferring any rank. The only restriction that existed for the circle of those who could be admitted was that they belonged to a good and respected clan, especially those who had come from Tigre or the Wolaita clans, while people from clans like Gatscha, Gadja, Maila or Mascha or even from little-seen Amhara clans could hardly ever expect to be recognised. I have often discussed with my informant the question of whether a great war hero from a despised clan could not have been admitted to the ranks of the privileged after all, because a member of a bad clan would have been capable of a heroic deed precisely because of his origins, which in the eyes of the other Wolaita also shaped him in terms of character and talent. I would also like to believe that the extraordinary power that the ideas anchored in the popular consciousness can have a formative effect on the members of the individual groups by giving them a lack of self-confidence.

In the description of the popular uprisings in the Wolaita story, in the pressure on the kings to marry off their daughters to respectable people, it is always this class that arrogantly and defiantly confronts the ruler. There was a peculiar love–hate relationship between the king and the privileged. On the one hand, they were the great heroes and pillars of the empire, who increased its scope as well as the king's power in endless wars, who received honours and great gifts from his hand as his most loyal fighters. They were the elected bailiffs of self-government and responsible for order and justice in the kingdom. But on the other hand, they represented a haughty, proud nobility that insisted on its rights and was prepared to disobey the ruler or openly declare war on him even on minor occasions because

of allegedly violated rights. The events during Gobe and Tona's times illustrate this best, while the revolution under Damot was a genuine popular uprising. The advice that King Amado gave to King Posha of Kucha illustrates well the dilemma in which the kings striving for autocracy found themselves vis-à-vis the feudal social orders. Without the allegiance of the best and bravest of their people, they were powerless, for with their personal vassals – potters and slaves – they could not prevail; in turn, they always had to fear that the nobility would become too powerful for them. Thus, the advice Amado gave, namely to reset the great ones, to strip them of their power or to kill them and replace them with a new class directly linked to the person of the ruler, probably only had temporary success. With the social structure of these peoples, clans with the same claims as the deposed ones soon formed from these upstarts who had been elevated to dignities. In Wolaita, none of the kings seriously attempted this; only Amado is reported as having disposed of his father's confidants and surrounded himself with people of his own choosing. Damot's attempt to raise a guard of foreign mercenaries failed due to his early dethronement. In Kaffa, one has the impression that this layer of the privileged practically held power in their hands and that the king was their tool. As in Wolaita, they do not form closed castes, but are an official nobility and recruit from the prestigious clans, hence their name *sowe niko* (fathers of the land) (cf. Bieber 1923:58 ff.). We can interpret Leontieff's (1900:110) account of Uba as meaning that there the royal clan would have tried to retain control by sharing power, with 21 princes standing alongside the 21 "judges" (*rasu*) of the people's administration.

In Wolaita, the privileged included: the war leaders (*gaddauwa*) and great warriors (*toranca*), the district bailiffs (*dana*), even if they no longer held the office, but not the district and communal bailiffs, the husbands of king's daughters (*kawo boloto* or *kawo bolote*) and, to a limited extent, the husbands of Tigre girls (*kawona boloto*). People who had performed a killing duty and distinguished themselves by merit feasts were also included. Their privileges were part of those enjoyed by the Tigre: tax exemption (*paro*), the right to wear silver, to name themselves after their horses, to paint the roof tops and doorposts red and to erect sacrificial bamboo bundles in front of the door. Rarely were chosen ones granted permission to put fixed doors on houses. Spouses of king's daughters were allowed to brew honey wine without permission.

The potters

The potters (*cinasha*) are referred to by popular opinion as the "fourth class" and rank below the slaves, although they are allowed to keep slaves themselves.

Their peculiar and weighty social and ritual position, which combines respect and contempt, is particularly diverse in Wolaita. I have already dealt with the special cultural-historical problems inherent in this class in southern Ethiopia.

They are commonly called *cinasha,* but in official address "the potters" and as a status name, an "official name", as the Wolaita say, they are called by the common Ethiopian word *manna.* Finally – here the overlapping of so many strata in Wolaita becomes apparent – those of them who work as hunters, tanners, knackers and corpse bearers are called *wata.* This does not exhaust the multitude of their activities. Apart from the five mentioned, they also practise the following professions: sacrificers and ritual assistants and royal satellites (king's servants, musicians, executioners).



Fig. 41: Potters, living east of Soddo

They are generally poorer than the other Wolaita, their huts smaller and their clothes dirtier. Their traditional headgear is sheepskin caps, otherwise worn only by the proverbially poor and thin peasants in the barren and harsh mountains. Their jewellery and household goods are also simpler. Ornamental accessories such as the carefully woven hut walls in various designs or the carved roof attachments are forbidden to them. That they originally – presumably before the strong growth of the slaves – ranked ahead of them in the estates order is shown by their clothes, which even today are better decorated than those of the slaves: the black edging around their cloaks is woven in, while the slaves had to dye it on the already finished woven cloth.

The main reason why popular opinion ranks them as the fourth class after slaves is that they eat impure meat such as hippopotamus, antelope and hare. Chickens, guinea fowl and partridges, eggs and foxes, however, are not eaten by them. But the flesh of fallen animals and the entrails spurned by others are. No

decent slave did that; only "very bad" ones who had just been bought from some barbarian country and had not yet got used to the customs of the Wolaita.

The exaggerated avoidance of some Ethiopian peoples – among the Dime, they are not even allowed to approach the homestead – is not known to the more rational Wolaita, although they already keep their distance. Sexual intercourse between freemen and potters (the same applies to blacksmiths), however, is the most horrific thing imaginable – although one cannot imagine that anyone would be able to do such a thing. If this atrocity were to become notorious, the criminal couple would be taken to no man's land by order of the king and there their throats would be cut by the executioners (potters). The corpses were left there. Without this punishment, they had to fear that disaster would befall the land, that the rain would stop or that the hail would smash everything.

A number of clans that possess special goods are more reserved towards craftsmen than the others. These are, for example, the clans Bubula (Muluguso), Womigera (Hanbaza), Zato (Aborde), Womala (Aba), Zanine (Gamana), Woshesha (Ingalala), Gofua (Simania), and Filsat Mairam.

If one of these ritually defiles himself by touching an object that comes from the artisans – for example, he uses a vessel or a garment without knowing it – he must ceremonially cleanse himself. First he rubs his face, forehead and hands with the leaves of the mayo tree. Then he slaughters a sheep, puts the blood and stomach contents on a plate and mixes them with water. He spreads this mixture over his body again with mayo leaves. Economically minded people keep the remaining blood and stomach contents dried to use again on similar occasions. The other clans, which do not have spirits, do not care about these rules at all and treat the craftsmen quite cavalierly, which, however, does not affect the socially poor position of the craftsmen. For example, when they came to funeral ceremonies or the like, they were expected not to sit down on the lawn in front of the door without further ado, but to put ensete leaves they had brought with them underneath and take them away again afterwards. On such occasions, food was given to them in folded ensete leaves; crockery they used had to be destroyed. A peculiar custom dictated that if they were given drinks in a calabash, it should not be a whole calabash, but one that had been cut open or in half. They had the right to take the calabash with them, since no one could use it anymore. If they had to be invited into the house – they were not allowed to enter without special permission – they were given their place in the most despised corner: right next to the door to the cowshed. There they sat on leaves on the ground, as no chairs were offered to them. They were not allowed to receive milk and butter under any circumstances. This contrasts extraordinarily with their strong participation in ritual life, which brings them into the closest contact with the others.

Those who did not care at all about these shunning rules were the king and the Tigre, who, on the contrary, had a close relationship with the potters that went far beyond the mere relationship of masters to servants (the potters were special royal vassals). This close relationship, one would almost like to say symbiosis, is a phenomenon that also appears in other royal cultures in Africa. The potters are considered to be the house children of Tigre and the king, and the popular saying even goes that "they came with them from Teuben as their sons". Although this is more than unlikely, some have even gone so far as to claim that there were no potters in Wolaita before the immigration from Tigre! In the houses of the Tigre, they are allowed to use the eating utensils without hesitation, just as the Tigre enter their houses without shyness, but do not eat anything there. When a Tigre goes to a potter's funeral, he puts cow dung on his temple, and when he goes to a blacksmith's funeral, he puts earth on his temple; the craftsmen do the same when they go to a Tigre's funeral.

One of the many contradictions in the existence of the craftsmen is the impurity associated with everything they touch but which does not prevent other "pure" people from eating from the vessels made by the potters or cutting their food with the knives made by the blacksmiths, or even performing ritual operations with them. In general, the principle that applies to the southern Ethiopian is that everything that emerges from the hand of the craftsman still unused is pure and that contamination only occurs through use. However, there are people who are not satisfied with this and additionally sanctify the tools created by craftsmen. Among the Wolaita, I could not find out anything about this from the people who mostly belonged to the Tigre clan, but among the Amhara I heard that after buying a clay pot, fine people first called the priest, who had to read a passage from a gospel over it and sprinkle it with holy water before they used it.

This purification is not connected with a custom I often observed in the markets: the buyer asked the maker of the clay pot or fabric to bless the goods by spraying them after the purchase was completed. This would prevent – so I was told – the maker, who has great power over the products of his hands, from secretly cursing the object so that it would soon tear or break.

The pottery that the *cinasha* practise in their homesteads (the pots are also fired there) has already been described above. The connection with hunting is shown by their other name, *wata,* which is applied to them to indicate their activity as hunters, knackers, tanners and gravediggers. Among many other peoples, such as the Oromo, *wata* is synonymous with hunter and potter. Thus, individual groups of potters hunted hippos in the Omo, whose meat they ate and whose skin they sold to the actual tanners (*degella*), who did more fine work or further processed them themselves into whips, straps or ploughshares. Below Kindo they had a market on the Omo near a crossing point where they sold the meat and leather.

Then the potters have to remove fallen cattle or carrion and are also responsible for burying they unburied bodies of people who died a "bad" death. Most important, besides their connection with the king, is their function as sacrificial helpers and, in general, as ritual officiants. For fine Wolaita, it was beneath their dignity to cut up a sacrificial or slaughtered animal after they had slaughtered it. For this purpose, a potter living nearby was called in, who received the intestines, lungs, spleen and heart as a reward, which the good Wolaita do not eat, as well as some of all the meat parts. Furthermore, the perpetrators appear at curse solutions (*falaikya*), at murder solutions, at circumcision etc. and on all occasions receive the sacrificial animals which are slaughtered to avert harm and which the sacrificer himself does not eat.

The potters also work as doctors, although they are not trusted as much as the actual doctors and silversmiths (*wogachiya*). But if there is no such doctor at hand, they undertake all kinds of interventions: treat open wounds, pull teeth, make suppositories, and so on. Their knowledge of pharmacology is considered to be limited compared to that of the actual physicians. Finally, there are their many functions as royal vassals. Even in the small countries of the south (e.g. Male and Basketto), where there are often only a few artisan families, they appear as the king's satellites; the same applies to Kaffa, where the *manco*, royal border guards, were also responsible for the water and wood supply of the royal court. In Wolaita, a large number of the potters scattered throughout the country, who liked to settle near the markets, were always detached to serve in the king's court. There they lived under the leadership of old experienced potters' bailiffs (*erashsha*) in village-like complexes outside the gates of the palatinate on strips of land that belonged to the king or that were separated from imperial lands (king's meadow, imperial roads). During this court service they were exempt from taxes. They also had much time to pursue their crafts and to offer their products at the great market at court. In the area around Dalbo many potters still sit on former royal land, which has now become the private property of the *fitawrari* Desta. Their attachment to these representatives of the royal house is touching to see. While the women and older children fetched wood and water, the men were assigned to guard the inner gates; the blacksmiths guarded the outer gates. In addition, the potters formed the royal band and possessed the three different kinds of trumpets, the king's drum (*nagarita*) and the potter's drum (*kamba*) – all instruments that could only be played by them and only at the king's command. Only the magicians had smaller instruments similar to the potter's drums. The band played every morning and every evening when the king got up and went to bed, at festivals and for war. At proclamations only the large king's drum was beaten. As a special honour, the king ordered potters for the funerals of great men and nobles; the more he sent, the more honourable it was. An ordinary mortal was not entitled to this honour. At

usual funerals the potters, in groups of eight to ten men, blew three to eight each of the two different trumpets and one beat the potter's drum. The only requirement for this was a wage, the amount of which determined how long they stayed and played. Many of them threw themselves exclusively into the lucrative trade and gave up pottery. Their activity as ritual helpers was not bound to any special permission even in ancient times.

Next to the king's slaves (*godobusho*), they [the potters] were the king's personal bodyguards in war, as they were the most reliable. As the example of history shows, it was only these two groups who remained loyal to their ruler during popular uprisings. On horseback and on foot they surrounded the king and fought bravely with him. The slayers and heroes among them were rewarded with jewellery and estates just like those of the other estates. Such potters were then great lords; in general, their social situation was worse than that of the rest of the people.

Only a part of the potters went into the field with the king, and the people's posse, half of their men capable of bearing arms, roamed around Wolaita and looked after law and order as police, because the adult men were out of the country with the army. They were especially on the lookout for shirkers who had evaded the draft and brought them bound to the king's palace for punishment. In the time of the mad Damote, they had the authority to cut off the cowards' necks with their crooked knives, and the potters who went into the field also hunted down fleeing or departing Wolaita. At that time, the potters had a bad name, which was made even more hateful by the many executions that Damote had carried out, because as royal executioners they had to carry out the punishment.

Today, all that has stopped. However, they are still distinguished from the rest of the Wolaita by their small land holdings, so that they cannot support themselves from agriculture alone, but still depend on the income from their pottery or musicianship. They often live on the land of a rich Wolaita who allows them to cut the firewood they need to fire their pots and to graze their cattle on his fallow land. In return, they pay him small fees and supply him with all the pottery for free. Even if they live on their own land, they gladly take shelter as clients of a rich man, otherwise they are easily set back because of their low status. They never settle alone, but in groups of at least four often ten and twelve families together, still near a market. Such "villages" are called *cinasha soga* or *cinasha mantia*. In the communities where they live, they still do not have full rights; they are not allowed to participate in consultations, for example. Even in neighbourly help, this most important expression of community life, they are not taken seriously. At most, very poor and insignificant people, who are otherwise not respected for anything, help them in order to make friends. Anyone who gets involved with them too much, goes in and out of their houses or even eats with them, is treated as an outcast by the other free people.

Their clans are said to be very numerous, I only learned about the five most important ones. Here, too, it is characteristic that the name of the founder (or group founder) is considered more important than the actual clan name, which is hardly known.

Wogela Made	Zäto
Hambara Ako	Zato
Birsu	Tigre
Botan Taso	Maka
Tere Abaro	...

The blacksmiths and leatherworkers are called *degella*, the blacksmiths *wogache* and the leatherworkers *qaciaga* (also sometimes *degella*). They are the last and most despised profession, which because of its small number hardly appears and is pushed into the background by the numerous potters who carry out many activities.

All that has been said about the ritual impurity and the prohibitions of opinion towards the potters also applies to them. They are despised before the potters, marriages between these two strictly separated classes do not occur, both are endogamous. However, they are not subject to any tightening of the rules of avoidance, as is the case with other peoples, where it is precisely prescribed which craftsmen may enter the property, which may enter the homestead and which may enter the house.

They were also called up for royal service and had to guard the outer gates of the royal palace, where the prison was also located. As blacksmiths they only produced coarse ironwork, all the fine work as well as the work in other metals was done by the silversmiths (*wogachiya*). When it came to leather working, they shared the production with the potters; they themselves only worked on pieces that required more craftsmanship, such as shields, finely tanned hides or horse harness (the brass fittings, however, were made by the silversmiths). The potters usually only cut the hippopotamus skin roughly and pre-tanned the large hides, i.e. they scraped off the meat residues.

The names of the main blacksmith clans are:

Allade (Guderet)

Bari Galgo

Mashasha Taso

Hanchechu (Zutuma)

Fichu

Madalcho

The slaves

Curiously, the slaves are jokingly referred to as the third class or "third race" (*hezanto sesa*) after the Tigre and the freemen, thus placing them above the potters and blacksmiths. The Wolaita justify this with the contempt directed at the potters and blacksmiths as "omnivores" of impure things, as executioners and knackers, while the "good" slaves only ate pure things like their masters, and clans of great and noble origin were found among them. This is contradicted by the fact that craftsmen could keep slaves, and also by the official dress code, which prescribed that slaves, with the exception of the royal slaves (*godobusho*) who can hardly be called slaves, could not have coloured trousers or coloured selvages on their capes. The only thing they were allowed was a black stripe, which they were allowed to apply with soot or paint on the edge of the already finished cloth; the craftsmen, on the other hand, were allowed to have a black selvage on their cloaks and supposedly also wear trousers of the third kind.

Slavery as a legally well-defined institution, like much else, raises Wolaita (and with it the other great empires such as Kafa, Dawro, Jimma and Enarya) above the level of the socially little differentiated other peoples and shows the strong influence of the northern Ethiopian high culture on their culture. Whereas slavery is practically non-existent among the East Cushites and has no place in the status order – they have not even developed their own word for it but use the Amharic *gabra* (transformed into *garba*) – it is older among the West Cushites and is presumably related to kingship there. In most countries and already in Boredda and Gamo, which adjoin Wolaita to the south, the slave estate does not play a major role and is not at all noticeable in terms of numbers compared to the rest of the population. In Gofa, for example, I was told that apart from the king and a few great men who kept slaves only as servants, without any actual benefit from them, no one ever thought of acquiring slaves. In Wolaita it was different. According to reliable information from my informants and some estimates, I would like to say that in the centre of the country, where I could best overlook the conditions, one third of the population are still former slaves today, despite the heavy migration since the Italian period. My main consort, Kaba Debo, even said that the ratio of slaves to the rest of the people was 1:1. His own father claims to have had 52 slaves before the abolition of slavery in 1935, another rich Tigre in the neighbourhood called Kuse, 90. People who had several hundred are said to have been not uncommon, while there were also very many poor freemen who did not own slaves. That some people had large numbers of slaves is proved by the festival of merit for owning 1000 slaves or 100 slave families. Especially in the heart of the country around Mount Damota, where during the conquest period the great ones received huge estates from the king which they could not possibly cultivate alone,

the possibility of using slaves beneficially was much greater than in "Old Wolaita" (Kindo and Koysha), in whose mountainous, overpopulated terrain there was no possibility at all of using working slaves. The majority of slaves in Wolaita – it must be said here in advance – were not, as in other countries, also among the Amhara, servants, domestic staff, herdsmen of the farm labourers, but primarily dependent farmers who either had their own house in the main homestead of their owner or, which was even more common, lived as independent administrators on covered field plots or in the cotton fields in the lowlands.

Even if slave hunts in the style practised in the south, which depopulated entire provinces, were unknown in Ethiopia, the wars of conquest and raids by the more highly developed peoples such as the Ometo, Kaffa or Amhara against the ancient peoples (Ari, Yem, Prenilots) – for it was only from them that the slaves were normally recruited – had devastating effects and contributed greatly to their shrinking. If Munzinger (1864) is to be believed, it was by a hair's breadth that the Barias and Kunama did not disappear completely in the last half of the previous century. The last venture there was Lidj Iyassu's move against the Yem. While the pagans knew of no precept or moral commandment that would have made slavery reprehensible to them, the Christians in northern Ethiopia could justifiably refer to the Bible, especially the Old Testament and also their book of law (Fatha Naqast) influenced by Roman law, both of which legalised slavery in all its forms.

We will see from the explanations below that the situation of the slaves in the Orient as well as in Ethiopia, with the Wolaita perhaps even more than with the Amhara, was a relatively favourable one and – as has often been said – could not be compared at all with that of the plantation slaves in America. This was probably not so much due to a principally more humane treatment of the slaves in Africa or in the Orient, but to the circumstance that the Africans and Orientals who stood opposite them there as masters had a completely different work ethic and a different conception of life than the European slave masters, whose psyche had to remain forever alien to their African slaves and whose demands for regular work far exceeded the African measure.

There is no doubt that, despite all its limitations, Christianity had a mitigating effect on slavery in Ethiopia. Slave trading was frowned upon by Christians, and by decent people in general, and the worst trait associated with slavery, eunuchism, the businesslike castration of slaves, was not only alien to Christians but also forbidden under penalty. While it was not considered bad to buy or sell slaves for any reason, the slave trade had a bad reputation attached to it, probably not only for moral reasons, but because of the general rejection of the merchant profession by Ethiopians. I was once shown an ancient Amhara in Dime, southwest Ethiopia, who had become rich as a soldier under Menelik and through the slave trade but later became completely impoverished and blind and was given a

reprieve on the farm of an Amhara landowner. With some reproach in his voice, his evil trade was blamed for his condition: "The flesh of slaves stings and has made him poor and blind."

Thus, the slave trade was largely the domain of the Muslims and was in the hands of the Sudanese Arabs in western Ethiopia and the Jimma Oromo and Islamic Amhara (Jeberti) in the southwest. Therefore, it was not so much the favourable location of Jimma that was responsible for the important slave market there – the largest in the whole of southwest Ethiopia – as the religion of its inhabitants, and that is why the assembly point of the slave caravan before its final march to the coast of Islamic Ifat was in Shoa below Ankober.

About the few former slaves I know more closely – who tried to conceal their former status with all their might – it is difficult to say anything about their mental abilities and their character and to determine whether they differ from the free Wolaita in this respect. Centuries of oppressed, unfree status have contributed their share to shaping this class. I noticed several times that, in contrast to the freemen, they were more sullen and quarrelsome and did not attach as much importance to good behaviour as the latter; in a word, they represented the lumpen proletariat among them. One must not forget, however, that they still do not own their own land and in many cases are not doing well economically. The Wolaita, of course, like all other Ethiopians, are eager to blame "the" slaves for every evil and every conceivable character flaw. Moreover, the undoubtedly correct remark has been made that the bondage of slavery corrupts the character of man and therefore a slave could never be truly relied upon. Just like the donkey or the mule, the slave reacted to benefits with ingratitude and arrogance and was therefore to be ruled with the whip to kiss the hand that beat him.

A master who has many slaves makes one of them who is old, trustworthy and wise their overseer (*harasho*), gives him powers and instructs him about the slave rules. From time to time, especially when there are special occasions, he gathers all the slaves together and reminds them of their duties:

I am now building a new house, then the adult male slaves must come from morning to evening until it is finished. After that I will assign work specially. Each man must work two days a week for me in my own fields or in my house, each woman one day a week. Those who live far away in my fields in the lowlands are to come up to me every two or three days and stay for up to a week in return. For the Feast of the Cross, all slaves must come to me ten days before the feast, the men must lay in stocks of firewood, clean the homestead and smooth the ground everywhere, the women must prepare flour and ensete. All slaves who wish to bring a sacrifice for the Feast of the Cross must slaughter the animal at my door. When I go to a funeral or make an official visit, none of the men and boys must be absent. Even if there is a funeral in the neighbourhood, the women and girls must not go there until they have asked my wife if they are not needed as an entourage. Only if she does not need you may you go alone. In the case of a distant bereavement, you

must go with her in any case. Any of you who wishes to marry shall not do so on your own and ask for a slave girl belonging to a strange master. He shall speak to me first. I will try to marry him to one of my own slave girls and if this is not possible, I will buy him one, or else I will give him half the purchase price and he shall put the other half on top [about the complications of such a "mixed" marriage see above]. Every first-born child will come into my house as a servant or maidservant as soon as they are reasonably grown up. They may not leave my house to marry until their parents have created replacements for them. If an old slave dies, his household is dissolved and his wife moves into my house to look after the slave girls, tend my children or milk the cows. Do nothing without telling me. I forbid you to sell any of your cattle without my knowledge. [The lord feared she might turn her possessions into money and escape.] Whoever does not obey these rules will be punished, the rich of you I will take an ox from!

The Amhara conquest In 1894 brought no change in the status of the slaves; as before, they worked for their masters, who had to pay the *gebar levy* (land tribute) according to the size of the land and the number of their slaves. The official abolition of slavery during the first reign of the present emperor had been in force for too short a time to have any effect. Only the Italian occupation brought the radical abolition of all previous feudal institutions such as slavery and the *gebar* system. A lot of slaves emigrated, others were settled by the Italians in the hitherto no man's land of the Atshura countryside on the border of Wolaita and Kambata, and their village, which was to be a model settlement for housing freed slaves, was named Villagio Bottesa. It is said to form a large village even now. The immigrant slaves are now found as the lowest stratum of the population in Addis Ababa and the gradually growing street towns, such as Shashamane, Kolito Alaba, Dilla and even Gidole. Because of their clumsiness and probably also because of their lack of intelligence, they are unable to take up a trade or engage in small-scale commerce like the members of other peoples (Gurage, Wordji, Harari) who have also emigrated. They are casual labourers, lorry drivers and the like and enjoy a very bad reputation, which discredits the name Wolaita and contributes to the fact that in central Ethiopia the Wolaita are imagined to be a people of half Negroes and rascals. The vernacular of Addis Ababa ascribes special tribal characteristics to the criminals: the Wolaita are regarded as nocturnal burglars who, as in their country, dig their way under the walls of houses and drag everything away; the Gurage are seen as pickpockets and shoplifters, rose cheats and general swindlers; and the Hadiya as manslayers and robbers.

The larger half of the slaves remained in the country and live to this day as tenants on the fields of their former masters. They are now equal before the law, like all Ethiopians, but despite the general social levelling and the disappearance of the old customs, they are as sharply separated as a class from the freemen as before. A connection between the two estates seems quite out of the question, as

does the idea that anyone could sell them land. If this does happen, everyone acts as if the world is coming to an end, people run around complaining (holding their heads with both hands) and shouting "wui, wui" as if shouting out a crime. In my neighbourhood near the old Kuile execution site lived a generally respected man from the Zato clan, a rich, tall man, the very model of an industrious and honourable farmer, with whom I talked frequently on my walks. He was famous throughout the area for his exemplary farming and the many new plants he grew. It was only on the day of my departure that his guide Kaba confided in me that he was a former royal slave. His landed property, which had been in his family for generations as a royal hereditary fief, had become real private property over time since the cessation of kingship – an exception only possible for royal slaves. I had therefore mistaken him for a freeman. Kaba, who was very relieved to see that this news made no impression on me, was very apologetic for having concealed this from me. He thought that I would have broken off intercourse with this man, whom he held in high esteem, if I had learned his status.

Kinship

by Eike Haberland

Exogamy

The exogamy rule and the prohibition of intermarriage were fearfully observed and, moreover, people were probably also wary of extramarital intercourse with relatives, even in name only. If it happened, for example, that a man and a woman of the same clan had sexual intercourse with each other – this could happen, for example, at festivals when both were drunk – their fear of the terrible consequences of this incest was so great that they preferred to take upon themselves the shame of opening up to their spouses and, above all, performing the atonement ceremony. Otherwise, they had to fear becoming ill or barren or seeing their children die. An old potter, who also performed such ceremonies (e.g. in the case of murder), dug a three- to four-metre-long tunnel under the ground close to the lawn, through which the two wrongdoers had to crawl. While they were crawling, he would strike the lawn above with a special stick (my informant did not know what it was for) and shout "*Falaikya*! "("Evil or sin – go!"). He then slaughtered an old cow and a sheep and sprinkled them with the blood. He received the meat, which no one else would eat, as a reward.

Inheritance

It has already been said that the father gives pieces of his land to the married adult sons one after the other so that they can live on it with their family. Most of it, of course, goes to the eldest. But he himself reserves a large piece of land until his death. If the father becomes very old, ill, irresponsible, or has difficulty moving, all responsibility – but still no rights – passes to the eldest son, who must provide for his and his family's well-being. He must have the roof covered, have firewood brought in, give him tobacco and good food, renew the sleeping skin when it grows old, and so on. In return, after his father's death, he gets the lion's share (*bairateta*, "the elders' share") of the land and everything that is rightfully his as the eldest. But if he does not honour his father, does not obey him and neglects

him, his father can still curse him with his last strength. Then, the son gets nothing at all and everything is awarded to the brothers. But all this is rare.

The broad lines of the division of inheritance are clear from the outset when, on the eighth day after the memorial service, the counsellors and dignitaries of the community gather together with the brothers of the deceased to act as arbitrators in the division of inheritance between the sons. However, disputes over individual plots can last for days and go all the way to the highest courts.

Daughters do not inherit anything in the real sense. The married ones are already settled with the dowry; for the still unmarried ones, the eldest son, who bears the greatest responsibility in everything, completely takes the place of the father (if their maternal grandfather is not still alive). When the inheritance is divided, a share is taken out especially for those who are destined for marriage for the trousseau and the wedding feast, which their brother manages for them.

The eldest's inheritance, apart from the best and most land (there are, however, no rules about this division), are the father's main house, i.e. the house where his mother (usually the first wife) lived, with the ensete grove, vegetable garden and burial ground belonging to it, then all the father's movable immediate possessions, which include clothes, weapons, jewellery, horses and mules, furthermore the entire sacred herd. Cattle, goats and sheep he shares with his brothers, as well as the slaves, of which the oldest and best, whose lineage has lived with the family for a long time, fall to him.

If they are descended from different mothers, the other sons (i.e. the eldest son of each mother) receive, in addition to their share of land, cattle and slaves, their mothers‘ houses with ensete grove and forecourt. Each son who thus takes over his mother's house has thereby also taken over the care of her, if she does not marry again; they are entitled not only to food and clothing, but also to slaves and milk cows. Often the son lets her [his mother] continue to live in the previous house out of reverence, although he would like to move into this splendid house of his father's, he has the right to do so, but often he fears quarrelling between her and his own wife. Only when she is very old and blind or difficult to move does he move and let her live with servants in his previous house or in a new building. If the mother was already dead when the father died, then of course he moves immediately and tears down his previous house so that it does not stand empty or bad people set it on fire.

The division of the inheritance also includes levirate: the younger widows (the older ones prefer to stay with their sons in the old age home) are asked in front of the assembled relatives whether they want to marry one of the brothers and closest cousins of the deceased. Whom they choose, they must take. In the past, very young women who did not yet have children could even marry the sons of the deceased! However, levirate is not an absolute obligation as it is among the

Oromo. Some women prefer to go back to their family, then they get their dowry back and two dairy cows on top. Some even marry a new man later; they call the relatives of their first husband beforehand, apologise with fine speeches and formally ask for permission, which cannot be denied them, although this is done very unwillingly and makes bad blood and resentment. All the children who were still with the woman must be returned to her for good. The brothers of the deceased (or if there are no brothers, the closest male relatives) marry the mothers of the underage sons and are the boys‘ guardians (*diciaga*). This keeps the family together. The wards must obey their guardians just as they would a father, and the guardians have the duties of a father. When they marry and thus become independent, the guardian in whose house they lived up to that point now divides the inheritance of the father among them and hands over to them everything he took into administration. Honourable and noble men are anxious that no gossip should arise that they have misappropriated the property entrusted to them. In order to preserve their good reputation, they add something from their own wealth so that it is as much as possible, and if the deceased had horses or mules that have died in the meantime, they buy new ones and give them to the wards.

A strong clan and a sense of togetherness is the best protection, because here too there are the injustices to widows and orphans that are blamed all over the world. Orphans are defenceless against an evil guardian: as children and young people they cannot sue and if no one stronger can be found to take care of them and represent their cause in court, they lose out. The motto “where there is no plaintiff, there is no judge” is fully valid here. Public opinion disapproves of such immoral acts in the strongest possible terms, but what does it help. The evil one is strong enough to override it and among the little people who may need his protection and economic help, no one has character enough to show him their disgust.

Meaning of the eldest brother

The ritual importance of the eldest brother is completely overshadowed among the Wolaita by the presumably younger “father right”, which, as among the Oromo or Amhara, establishes the primacy of the father as the highest instance of family and social organisation. At the moment that a father dies and leaves behind sons who are already married and have children of their own, their non-independence ceases. They have equal profane and ritual rights to each other and do not need to ask anyone for permission for the sacrifice, for example. Of course, the eldest son, who is also the main heir – although not as exclusively as among the Oromo – is also the most respected in his kinship. This is again ensured by the right of primo-

geniture, which excludes all gerontocracy and thus also the privileged position of old age. Only in the person of the clan elder, or better the leader of a clan or a clan group into which large clans are divided, does the old position of the elder, the "eldest brother" (in the peoples further west *toidi*) still shine through in the name *baira* or *baira keta* (eldest brother of the house, i.e. clan), although the office is hereditary in primogeniture and a particular family of the clan.

One can also see from the texts here what importance the father had and with what almost perfect power he was endowed vis-à-vis his family. That he could kill his slaves, who were his property, without further ado was quite natural, but he also had full power over his sons and unmarried daughters. The married ones had left his power, and a kind of compensation had taken place with the brewing price. However, their indissoluble blood ties to the clan and parental family remained untouched; this is where they returned in cases of quarrel or divorce, and perhaps also in cases of widowhood. Here she also had legal protection, which ensured that she was not at the mercy of her husband and that she could not be unduly punished, wounded or killed. Her powers within the new family depended entirely on the husband's goodwill; officially she had no rights, only duties, while he did as he pleased, marrying off his children and taking wives or concubines without even notifying her or asking her. Rebellion would only have earned her a beating, which would also have been considered perfectly legal by her father or brothers.

The father can do whatever he wants with his children. We have already experienced the terrible custom of burying infants, where no one was allowed to embrace the father, just as no intervention was possible when a father beat or killed an adult son. The law also recognised his moral authority to do so and left the children to his free will. The killing of a son, intentionally or in the heat of the moment, was regarded no differently than the killing of a slave. We find the same view in the older Amharia law. "Who should also have accused him?" say the Wolaita on the subject. His own kin were too horrified by this loss of blood anyway, and were glad when peace came, and the enemies rejoiced, for they knew that the father was punished enough later by his own journey and the moral indignation of his clansmen, though for diplomatic reasons they did not like to show it to him. They also accepted such an atrocity with the thought that this was better than the children no longer obeying their parents and thus all earthly and heavenly order dissolving. The relatives united in supporting a father who was too old or weak to beat his disobedient son or to make him obey. They gathered together, seized the villain by force, whipped him and laid him on the block in his father's house. After six months he is asked by the assembly, "Will you now obey your father?" He bows low, kisses the ground "Yes, yes" and is released. He gives the father an ox in reconciliation.

The power of the father over his children, children-in-law, but also wives and grandchildren, used to be tremendously strong and was not only strengthened by general opinion but especially by legal regulations in the division of inheritance. Even sons of forty had to let their father tell them what to do, they had to ask his permission in the morning when they went somewhere, and good manners dictated that when they married off a daughter, they should leave the decision to him. It seemed completely out of the question that children could marry without their father's permission or even against his will, and even in the case of a robbery, the father would fight to the utmost against anything that ran counter to his will. In everyday life, too, the father of the house was shown great deference by the children and the household. No one but he and his wife were allowed to pass by the passageway inside the house where his bed stood.

Special restraint was imposed on the daughters-in-law; they were only to pass their father-in-law with their eyes downcast. If he was sitting on the lawn in front of the front door, they did not dare enter past him but went around the back of the house and quickly scurried into the door. The individual women owned houses, but this did not matter as such houses were not homes of their own but those of their husbands. A man's ideal of life was: wealth in cattle, many good children, brave sons, being a slayer and a bailiff himself.

Next to the father, the married sister – from the same mother and the eldest in the case of several sisters – is the most important personality in ritual life, more important than wife or mother, and in this position is called *menata.* Most of the prominent events of life and also of the daily routine cannot take place without her, and she has to step in to help with difficulties. Those who do not have a biological sister who can be *menata* for them take a cousin up to the fourth member of the kin; if there is no married woman of the same generation as them, they ask someone from the same clan from their age group to become *menata* for them.

I have taken several of her [*menata*'s] functions out of their context and reproduced them here in order to make their extraordinary significance clearer. It has already been reported that she loosens the belt of her husband's future wife before the bridal night and washes her the next morning; in return she receives a whole hind leg from each animal slaughtered at the wedding. Likewise, it is not possible for the celebration of the first child (*kushe kuseta*) to take place without her; she simply has to be there and receives the largest ball of butter as a gift. When a brother or his wife dies, the *menata* comes after the funeral, carries the deathbed out of the house and throws it into the street in no man's land. When the son of her still-living brother dies, she throws the bed into the ensete grove, which more than anything else shows her power in the family ritual.

The hearth fire is the most sacred place in the house, next to the centre pole that supports the sky roof of the family microcosm, and the doorpost. If one of the

vermin that the Wolaita do not love at all – mouse, frog, lizard or snake – falls into the fire, the place is desecrated as is the fire in the house, which must be extinguished (compare Lev. 11, 32–35). The sister comes, takes ashes and hearthstones and carries them as far away as possible on a road. In return she gets a large butter chunk or a piece of cloth money. She digs a new hole, puts in new stones and sprinkles it with a frond of *mayo* leaves with blood and dung which she kept for this purpose.

Even the rick of grain (millet or maize) that is stacked on a platform or a tree stump and fell down due to bad stacking or the wind needs the blessing of the *menata* to be rebuilt. The most terrible curse is that of the *menata*, which, like that of the wife, strikes the husband with illness or insanity and requires a long ceremony to be released.

Curriculum vitae

by Eike Haberland

Courtship[59]

So, after long deliberations within the family, the young man's cousin, accompanied by an old man and two young men (*kala*), sets off on a Saturday or Monday. The *kala* should come from good families, both their parents must still be alive, and above all, they must not have touched a woman yet. In Wolaita, in good families where the children are kept strictly, this can certainly still be boys of 17 or 18. One of the two *kala*, the main *kala*, is a close friend of the groom. The old man serves as an advisor, and the second *kala* is taken along so that together they form an even, not an odd number, because even, "full" (*kumeta*) numbers are favourable; odd ones (*faca*) are not popular. So, the two men ride, while the *kala* run alongside, to the homestead of the girl chosen as a bride. On the lawn in front of the front door they shout loudly "*Saro*, *saro*! ("Hail, hail!"). They inquire about everyone's well-being and settle down with the father of the house under a shady tree on leaves that the boys have spread out for them after knocking the dust off their clothes and feet. When they leave, they leave the leaves, which is why, if the father of the bride rejects their courtship for any reason, he says to them. "I'm sorry, but there were visitors before you who left their leaves!" i.e. my daughter is already promised. At first they talk about all sorts of things, then on a seemly occasion they stand up, bless the "father of the bride" and the old man says to him, "I have come to make you the father of a son and me the father of a daughter." The other pretends to be quite overwhelmed by this honour – perhaps the proposal is unexpected – in any case he gives an evasive answer: this is too sudden for him, he needs to discuss it with his relatives first, "My daughter is not yet big enough to marry, please wait a few more years, now is not the right time, please go again!" The others are not offended by the answer, both parties part on the best of terms. When the visitors are gone, he [the girl's father] seeks out his elder brother or his father – who, as the girl's grandfather has great authority over her – and discusses everything with him, whether they should reject or accept the

[59] Haberland has published his findings on marriage in Wolaita in one article (Haberland 1985).

proposal. Other older members of the clan are also consulted for advice. In many cases, the bride's bidders are sent straight to the elder on subsequent visits. In general, it is popular in Ethiopia not to make important decisions oneself or alone, but to leave the decision to elders and wise men. Fourteen days later, the visitors come back, bless the bride's father and present the proposal again. They also go through their lineage and check whether there have been marriages between their two clans in the last generations, which would be an obstacle to marriage. Besides that, they note that the two clans used to marry each other all the time in the past, so that it can be seen that both are equal and that no one will forgo anything in the marriage.

They also tell how their forefathers fought bravely under the king, what they killed and what honours they received so that one can see how famous and great their family is. The bride's father says: "I see how excellent your family is and I would be happy to give my daughter to you, but I have not yet spoken to my relatives so that they can check whether you are really not related to us. Nor do I know whether the mothers of the two are perhaps related. I also want to ask the soothsayer (*kayuwa*) if the couple is a good match and the wise man (*hayu*) what he thinks. For the time being, go back home until I send you word." After another two weeks, when he has consulted family, soothsayers and sages, he asks them to come a third time. If he has heard of obstacles to marriage, he is very apologetic and tells them, "Forgive us for troubling you so often, but the diviners think it is not going well!" Many really do follow the advice of the diviners, but only reward them when a favourable prophecy has come true and the young couple is happy and has a child. Even if he finds out that the other clan does not have a good reputation or has a bad totemic origin, the soothsayer will be invoked in the rejection so as not to offend the others. The most unpopular clans are those in which possession occurs. If the daughter is married to such a man and perhaps divorces him later, his relatives may curse her to fall ill or die. When finding out that one's relatives are too close, one says this to the others without being shy. But at last, everything has gone well and a new fourth meeting is arranged after a week. This time, the bride's father prepares a small feast (*dagas* in Amharic). Again the bridegroom's father comes with his companions. They are invited into the hut and the bride's father sits down with a companion (even if it were only a boy, because of the "full" number) to join them. They are given coffee and a snack, the elderly relatives and old people from the neighbourhood come and talk to them. Finally, after several hours, just before they leave, the two visitors get up and start: "Before we part, let's finish what we came for!" The bride's father says, "All right, talk to these relatives of mine here." (Of course, he has already arranged everything). His eldest brother asks him, "Have you spoken to the soothsayer? Are there no obstacles to marriage? etc." "All is well", is the reply,

"I have called them here for the fourth time today to give them the decisive answer. Please arrange everything else." The eldest brother rises solemnly and says, "Let our daughter then be counted in your clan and your son in ours." The wedding bidders also rise, give thanks and bless everyone, call in one of the *kala* who is outside with the horses and have him kiss the feet of the eldest brother, the bride's father and the bride's mother. They leave and wait decorously for three months – often longer so that it doesn't look as if they can't wait. Then they come a fifth time and ask the bride's father. "Can we kiss your daughter's hand?" If he has does not have the excuse of a party or other event coming up, he invites them for a fortnight later. So, they come for the sixth time! All the bride's relatives and the elders of his clan are invited, as well as his own brothers. The bride's bidders stand up again and say: "We have come to complete everything." The bride's father formally asks permission from the eldest brother (if he is still alive) and the bride's maternal grandfather (his father-in-law). Both bless him to do so. Now he turns to the wooer and says: "I tell you the price [*caca*, Amharic *waga*]. Take the price! [*Caca ekite*!] ", i.e. you must accept the price I tell you! "*Ero*!" ("Good!") says the groom's father. Now the enumeration begins: a big ox, a huge lump of butter so big you can't hug it (*idima oisa*), two pots of honey, a slave girl (*dangerixa*), a slave boy (*lugame*), 60 Maria Theresa thalers or four strips of cloth money (*kareta)*, for the bride's father a richly harnessed mule and a leopard skin, for the maternal grandfather another skin, and so on, silver bracelets, silver rings, another lump of butter, which is later smeared into the hair of the participants, etc. These were prices for the relatively rich, but even among the well-off middle class they were considerable, so a young man who was not yet wealthy paid, as the first half of the bride price: a large ox, two cows, a very large jar of butter and honey each, two valuable cloaks and 22 Maria Theresa thalers. Poorer people gave correspondingly less, but for all of them it was sensitive. In return, the bride's father gave his daughter a rich trousseau according to her wealth, which, however, remained her private property and returned with her on divorce. When all this was announced, they made a delivery date in six weeks. After two weeks, however, they come back for a seventh time and try to reduce the price. A fierce haggling ensues and to show their goodwill, the bride's family drops the price a little. For example, instead of four, they only ask for two *kareta,* but that is all. After the agreed six weeks, they come for the eighth time and bring everything demanded in one long procession: two old men as spokesmen, the two *kala* and slaves who carry the things or lead the animals. The bridegroom's father and groom stay at home. The bride's father has already prepared everything for a great feast and asked the king for permission to brew honey wine. He has also slaughtered a fat ox, the meat of which is eaten raw, prepared sheep goulash and several kinds of beer. His relatives and those of his wife, especially his married sister (*menata*)

are invited, as well as wise old people who can tell good stories and entertain the guests.

The procession of the groom's party is met at the door by an old friend of the house who checks that everything is there and nothing is missing. If something is not right, he ruthlessly sends them back for the right or missing thing and does not let them enter until everything has been checked. Everything is taken possession of immediately, except for the large lump of butter, which is taken into the house by those who bring it. The official envoys of the groom's father: two old men, two men and the two *kala* are now invited in and told to sit down. Before doing so, they place a huge lump of butter on each of the knees of the bride's mother and her father's sisters (*menata*), "which can be embraced", and ask permission to begin the hair anointing. "First sit down and drink beer!" is the reply. Two women of good family come with two calabashes each and offer them to drink. The oldest of the four takes a calabash and blesses everything:

Dabota oiko, dafi dutofo.

Kinship should be firm, when it is carried, it should not tear,

Menti me afo.

If it is broken, it shall not break.

Dangarsa dande gido, kaco hororo gido!

Elephant space should be, ant burrow should be.

That is, even if the new kinship is subjected to a test of endurance, it should be constant. Elephant man and elephant woman go different ways during the day, but in the evening they return to the common dwelling place. The children should be as numerous as ants and the future generations should be as long as the ant trails.

Afterwards, each of the four blesses the assembly with a calabash in his hand and returns it without drinking. The women go with them into the back room of the house and come back with the same calabashes, this time the next eldest starts blessing. This goes on four times until they taste the beer, which is done in the same way, with blessings four times. Now comes the actual ceremony. The eldest of the guests asks the head of the household, "Do you allow me to anoint your head with butter?" ("*Oisa hube wotishite*?")

A *kala* is sent out and returns with two ritually superimposed ensete leaves (*erge*). The last one, a lump of butter wrapped in ensete strips, is opened and placed on the leaves in the outstretched arms of one of the elders, who makes the rounds accompanied by elders of the legation and a *kala.* The elder turns to the bride's parents and tells the *kala* to put butter on their heads, but they politely refuse: "No, here our uncles and aunts are older and more worthy, they must get it first!" But they protest, "No, no, of course the parents first!" The *kala* puts butter

on everyone's head four times, each time a little less, and the old man calls out the bridegroom's name and "*dura duro*" (about year after year) and the bride's name "*dura duro*" each time. There is a lot of noise, everyone laughs and shouts, the old man makes jokes and also lets the boy attack the roof as a joke.

Some women get angry because they think they did not get enough butter. A funny relative of the bride's father gets up and shows the salvers who else they have forgotten, perhaps even sending them to the house next door where other guests are sitting. At last everyone's hair is glistening from a large quantity of butter, but there is still plenty of butter left, so the eldest shouts: "*Tusa tukia wota gata, ya goge haga gidene? Gatida!*" ("You house post, putting butter on you, didn't you say that? We did!") and slaps the rest of the butter on the sacred centre pole.

A relative of the bride rises and blesses them and also puts butter on their heads. This concludes the ceremony, which represents the firm engagement, and the *kala* may put the engagement ring on the bride's right middle finger. They stay there the whole evening and are well entertained. The next morning they leave without having agreed on the date of the wedding.

Perhaps after two months, the groom's father sends a delegation for the ninth time and asks the bride's father to have her circumcised. The groom was already circumcised when they set the bride price. Along with the girl, her favourite slave is circumcised, a girl (*dangerixa*) of her age, nicknamed *udula* (mortar). She will also later always be around the young woman, because as a fine girl, she cannot sit alone and above all must have at least one steady companion every time she goes out. After she is circumcised, she has to stay at home for four months "to recover". Finally, hearing nothing at all, the groom's father's patience almost snaps, and though it is beneath him, for his family is far too refined to admit to placing any value on the bride, he sends a letter: "Give the girl out at last!" This is used by her family to demand new gifts, most of which are used or given away at the wedding: one ox each for the relatives on the father's side, the mother's side and for the slaves. The bride's circumciser (*gale*) receives a heifer (*gale usa*), the bride's brother receives a horse (*aiyo fare*) and a spear (*aiyo tora*). Finally, "for decoration", two or four large pots of honey and ten of butter are requested. These are filled with ensete beer at the bottom and only covered with a thin layer of butter or honey at the top – the main thing is that it they are splendid and plenty. Now that the honour of the bride's father has been satisfied with this eleventh communication with the others, he at last firmly promises that in two months' time, at the twelfth meeting, the wedding shall be. So it often takes two or three years for the wedding to finally take place. Finally, the time has come. Both parents invite all their relatives, neighbours and friends. The groom rides around with his friends inviting the specially honoured guests and tries to get as large an entourage to-

gether as possible. The bride's father, who has to hold the biggest feast, asks his brother and his wife's brothers to give him each a huge jug of beer and a cloak as an aid to the wedding. All the house slaves are busy spinning threads, they look around for weavers to weave the trousseau. Several kinds of beer are brewed. Respected people ask the king for the privilege of making mead and using the pottery chapel. Several festival arbours (*zampa*) are built on the meadow in front of the homestead. Tuesday is the preferred wedding day. On Monday afternoon, the invited guests gather at the bride and groom's parents' home and also spend the night there; only the groom's friends arrive on horseback on Tuesday morning. The guests are then asked to the individual feast houses where they stay with relatives and friends, very fine guests who come with their entire family and slaves as entourage are given a feast arbour for them alone. Each arbour is assigned a female slave who sees that the guests have all the comforts. She operates the fireplace where clay pots and pans of all kinds are placed and has a slave boy with her who helps her and fetches wood. Basic foodstuffs are stacked there in large quantities – beer, barley, various kinds of ensete flour (*godeta* and *bula*) – as much as the guests can eat and drink. When everyone is settled into their quarters, the landlord and housewife go in and see if all the guests are properly settled, show them all the food and have more brought: "Here, take this beer. This is your butter and your spice." A large ox is slaughtered and a wise man distributes the meat to everyone, which is eaten raw in large quantities. Later, the guests call the hosts and present the gifts: textiles, food, butter, sheep, cloth money etc.

The pottery band that comes also gets an ox and a huge jug of beer, but they either get ready-made food or have to cook for themselves; a slave is not assigned to them – proof of how they are really thought of, that is, as people one does not even want to subordinate a slave to. At the same time, they are seen to do many things at the feast if only they can blow and drum properly, as they allow themselves many an impertinence in drunkenness. It is similar with the *shankilla* who blow on long brass tubas at the Amhara weddings in Addis Ababa.

The next morning, two or three oxen are slaughtered again and quite splendid food is prepared especially for the groom's "cavalcade" in this house, which is why the feast costs of his family are often higher than those of the bride. The old men who bring the remaining part of the bride's price leave first. In this capacity they are called *tazunta*. Accompanied by the pottery band, they parade through the country playing music. In front of the bride's door the gifts are unloaded and examined. They sit down in the shade with the other guests and are given beer and pipe. Before sunset, the first horsemen of the bridegroom's entourage arrive and sing a mighty chorus (*chekua*) to the bridegroom and especially his father in front of the fence in front of the house square, which was erected especially for this purpose, and then they race away again after a few minutes. Two are specially

equipped for this task and must have mighty voices. Soon the whole troop of horsemen comes galloping in silence – they stop in front of the fence and come back four times.

After the third time, three riders race past the fence, across the forecourt, and once around the house. At the fourth approach, the groom rides in the lead. A funny and clever woman stands in front of the fence and very skilfully rolls a clay pot full of wax in front of her, to everyone's amusement. The groom has to smash it with a thrust of the upturned lance; if he fails, it is an evil sign and his two helpers (*kala*) have to do it, to his shame. That is why he often gives the woman money beforehand so that she will make it easy for him. When this has been succesful amid great rejoicing, the whole company rides back a little, the fence is opened wide and they ride singing in front of the homestead. From the house someone then calls out, "Where is the *kala*, the *kala*, the *kala*?" Accompanied by his helper, the main *kala* enters. The bride, unveiled and dressed in bad old clothes, sits between two friends on a large pile of ox hides; before this, they had put ensete leaves on her hair like spoons of butter until it turned white. The two helpers grab her and carry her outside the door despite her resistance; she holds on to her friends. No one is allowed to scream as they do so. Outside, the groom receives her and solemnly grasps her right hand. He lifts her onto a gelding and rides off with her, two slaves carrying a canopy on bamboo poles above her, her slave friend and a house slave walking behind her. After a while she is put on a mule. (Others claim first she would be put on a mare and then on a gelding). They stop at the front door of the next homestead and leave her there under the guard of five horsemen. All the others return to the bride's house with the groom. The groom and main *kala* enter the house of the parents-in-law's house, who are invisible behind a curtain at the back. The groom and *kala* put their right leg through [the curtain]: the father pours honey water over them four times and says to the groom: "*Fara togisana*." ("I will put you on a horse.") The mother pours milk four times and says to her, "*Hadia giti sana*." ("I give a pair of trousers.") Then the curtain is drawn aside and son-in-law and parents-in-law see each other as relatives for the first time. (The groom receives both gifts the next morning). Then they go to the other horsemen who are already feasting in a banqueting house and are treated to the best food: only white, fat meat, honey wine, three huge troughs of beer, etc.

After three hours they leave for home and pick up the bride. She is veiled the whole time. When they arrive at the groom's house, where everything is waiting for them, it is deep night. In front of the door, four elderly widows sit on the floor with their legs stretched out next to each other. The escort lets the bride down from the horse and lays her lengthwise over the ladies' legs as if asleep. The groom sits down in front of her. Eight coffee cherries are roasted and two each are put with

butter into two small cups made of horn or calabash tips. The bride and groom taste one cherry from each cup and then exchange them, this is repeated with the remaining four.

The main *kala* takes her in his arms and carries her to the bridal chamber: both *kala* keep watch there in a side room during the night. The groom's sister (*menuata*) and the favourite slave undress the bride, i.e. they actually only take off her belt, then the dress falls apart. The slave quickly puts a pure white cloth on the bed under the bride and then leaves her alone with the groom, who is also expected to consummate the marriage with her in the flesh. It is customary for her to resist and fight back with all her might; the groom is often badly beaten up and, if she is a big strong girl, even with the help of the two *kala*, he cannot cope with her and will have to call in a strong youth to help. It is also possible that the bridegroom is so excited that he cannot attend her, then – but only this once – the *kala* steps in, and if he is also unable, the second *kala* takes his place. Immediately after the intercourse, he leaves and mingles with the other guests without saying a word. If she was not a virgin, he beats her to extort the name of the seducer with whom he will live in enmity in the future. However, repudiation is very rare in this case. The groom can sleep with her every night from that day on, whereas the Shoa Amhara and Oromo, for example, avoid their bride for several nights after the first coitus. If she was a virgin, however, the two *kala* go straight to the door and intone the trill of joy (*ililta*).

In the morning, the groom's sister comes and washes her completely with warm water and puts a special meat dish (*kascca*) in front of the young couple, which the groom tastes first and then lets the bride taste. If she was not a virgin, they break off the handle of her spoon for shame and for all to see. The favourite slave goes to the bride's parents' house with the bloody cloth, trilling incessantly and shouting "*Misiraco, misiraco*!" (from Amharic *Yä misrac* = good news). The bride's father gives her a small heifer. Then he starts handing over the dowry to the *lasanta*, the old men who brought the bride price the day before and earlier. Now, when you read the truly magnificent gifts that a rich man gave his daughter, you wonder why he haggled so hard over the bride price, which is far exceeded by the dowry. To this the Ethiopian knows only one answer: "because of honour." A rich man would not be seen as generous if he gave a portion of the bride price to the poorer bridegroom's family. On the contrary, it would be interpreted as weakness, and the higher the sum, the greater his reputation. With the daughter's trousseau it is something different; its size cannot be prescribed, but he gives of his own free will as a generous donor. Moreover, everything remains her personal property and goes back with her in case of divorce.

First, he hands over trousers and a horse for the son-in-law. This is followed by three full slave families, which the young woman can dispose of freely; later she

bequeaths them to her children. Only the slave children born during the marriage do not revert to her in the event of divorce, but pass to her children, if there are any already. If there are none yet, they also return with her. Among the slaves there should be: a wise old woman (*asigo*) who supervises everything; another woman in her prime who is meant to be a wet nurse for the children (*kadmat*), because the fine Wolaita ladies feed their children themselves for a month at most, so that they have another child as soon as possible; an experienced younger slave woman (*garunde*) who manages the household; two slave girls (*dangerixa*); and two boys (*lugame*). Further, two milk cows, a pair of oxen and, if their father is very rich, a fully bridled mule (otherwise a horse) which one of the slave boys leads by the bridle. Then the complete interior of her house and all the clothes she needs: four thick first-grade cloaks (*gogani*); four thin first-grade cloaks (*gogani iricho*); twice four middle-grade cloaks; twice four simple cloaks; two giant cloaks folded eight times; and a large straw urn (*guba*), a metre in diameter, to store the clothes in. Her friend wove them before the wedding. If the father has killed, he gives the daughter another cloak dyed with red (*chachafo*); she is allowed to wear it once when she goes to the market for the first time as a young woman, in celebration (*sofe*). If her husband has also killed, she can always put it on. Further: two beer strainers, two strainers for barley flour, two strainers for ensete flour with wide meshes, two large straw baskets for bread or cotton, two straw plates, two large horses, ten copper sewing needles, twelve knives in a small sack, two sleeping skins, two pomp calabashes covered with pearls, and two neck supports, and finally a water pipe held by the horse slave. The bride's favourite friend (the *gule*, who also helped her with the circumcision) receives a very beautiful cloak and a colourful body bandage. The four *lasanta*, the old people who brought the bride price, each also receive a cloak, and their helpers, who now help carry the dowry, receive cloth money. Then the four old men are treated to another sumptuous meal and honey wine and, as a farewell, they receive butter on their heads. They say goodbye solemnly and bless the bride's father and wish: "*Naai wori, naiga yeli be ite*!" ("You shall see that your child [the son-in-law] kills and has children!").

The young people live together for a month. The young wife is not allowed to see or speak to her parents-in-law; her husband socialises with his parents but is not allowed to eat with them. After this month, his father invites them to his home in the evening and entertains them all by himself. They stand before their parents, who bless them; the father gives her a milk cow, him a slave, and the mother gives her a cloak, him a pair of trousers.

After six months (*laita baga*), on the prescribed date, the bride's parents call the young couple in and they start visiting each other again. Until then, however, there is no official avoidance of in-laws: at funerals or in the market they can see and speak to each other without further ado. Children, however, never like

to mention the name of their in-laws, they are afraid that if they do, their own children will fall into the fire.

The *kushe kuseta* (handshake) festival is almost more important than the wedding, because it represents a means of pressure for the bride's parents in cases when the bride price was not paid correctly or their daughter was stolen or even ran away with the groom. To avoid this festival would mean the worst curse, not to mention terrible consequences for the as yet unborn children. It is only celebrated before the first child. Some clans – the Kalicha, Qesiya, Bubula, Womigera, Aifarso and Heraito – have special ceremonies to perform in addition to the celebration of the *kushe kuseta.* The man who marries a daughter from these clans must go with his wife to her parents' house some time afterwards; until then, he is not allowed to enter her house, or even see it, and he also has to avoid the in-laws. Superstition linked terrible punishments with the transgression of these commandments; all future children would die. Among the Kalicha, the son-in-law with his wife and child go to the parents' house with a goat and a "full calabash" (*kumeta*) of beer. There in the house, they kneel down; the wife holds the child on her knees, the husband holds up his upturned hands and asks the father to bless them. He blesses them with a long blessing and sprinkles the beer over them: "May you have many children, become rich and heavy." He asks her to get up and slaughters the goat and dabs the blood on the foreheads of both spouses. Holds out his upturned palms to the children, they kiss them, and he sprinkles blessings on them again. Now they are called *saga* (free) and can rejoin their parents as before. The Qesiya also perform the ritual with a goat and beer, the Bubula with a bull and beer, the Womigera with bull, goat, honey and beer, the Aifarso and Heraito have only beer. This ceremony is extremely unpopular and contributes a lot to the fact that the girls from these clans – at least from other good clans – are unwillingly married. The Kalicha are feared as sorcerers anyway, and the Bubula and Womigera as possessed, so it happens that their daughters often have to wait "until their breasts fall down" before marrying.

When a young woman is expecting her first child, her mother sends to the young husband in the seventh month and tells him: "I will come for my daughter after a fortnight. This is a sign for him to prepare a big feast and to splice open a whole ocha tree (*syzygium guineense*) for the feast fire, (n.b. fine people appoint a special *kala* (helper) for this; they themselves are too distinguished).

On the feast day, the young woman's mother appears with a large entourage (without her husband) and brings the various gifts – always eightfold – which may vary according to their richness: eight decorative pots with eight different dishes, eight large lumps of butter (*kaso oisa*) wrapped in ensete fibres (ideally, these should be so large that they cannot be covered), and eight patties of millet

or ensete flour, then perhaps several vessels with barley flour, finest ensete flour (*itima*), and beer.

A married friend from a good family lights the fire with the festive wood and cooks a dish of barley flour mixed with butter on it. The young woman also sits by the fire and places her spread legs on the right and left ends of burning logs. Barley flour is put into her cupped hands four times and so much liquid butter is poured over it that it drips down and smothers the flame. She tastes four times each of the four fillings. Meanwhile, two boys run to the back of the house and whistle there, then they come into the house and jump and dance around there with their shepherd's crooks. The young woman holds a round thick millet cake in each hand with a small pot of milk on it and hands this to them as a reward.

On the same fire, a large pot of water is boiled with two kinds of fragrant grass (*muda* and *mase*), the woman is washed with it, and a lot of butter is put on her head. If she is from a very rich family, they ask four ladies to help her. In return, they get a good porridge made of the finest ensete flour with lots of butter. The woman who started the fire gets a big ball of butter and a bowl of barley porridge; the mother, father and sister of the husband also each get a ball of butter, a patty and a vessel of food. The husband himself, who is celebrating with his friends in another house – the festival house – also receives several vessels with food, flat cakes and beer. This is all taken from the mother's gifts, and whatever else she brought is also consumed. The husband is expected to slaughter a sheep or an ox in the evening and to entertain all the festival participants throughout the night on his own initiative. The next morning, the mother leaves with her daughter. The woman gives birth to her first child in her father's house, the afterbirth is sent by an old woman who has stopped giving birth (*balteta*) to her husband (in the case of a boy on the third, in the case of a girl on the fourth, day after birth) for burial. The young woman remains in her mother's house for two months until her husband becomes impatient and sends to her mother: "I want to fetch my wife". Her family then has her reply, "We will give you the answer in 15 days!" When he has made a proper wedding, paid the bride price in full and everything else is in order, they send his wife to him with acquaintances and give her some more gifts: a milk cow for the child, clothes and so on.

But if it was a predatory marriage, if the bride price was not paid in full or even if her father cursed the husband, then they tell him: "First make up with us, pay the bride price and make *ayfe gataa* ("the eye meeting"), otherwise we will not give you the wife."

When describing the extremely lengthy and complicated wedding preparations, one can understand that the main person involved, namely, the groom, sometimes runs out of patience, even more so if he is a grown-up young man in his own right or is even marrying a second time. Often he cannot or will not pay the some-

times very high bride price, or his own father, who still manages all the family's assets, refuses to purchase such an expensive bride. So, the time passes with endless negotiations, neither party wants to give in "because of honour", which is also a main reason why it is two or three years until finally the wedding takes place. No one wants to think that it is forcing its daughter or son on the other party! On the contrary, marriage is always an honour for the other party, while one's own family behaves as if one were foregoing. Thus, even in the preliminary negotiations, everything is left undonegacca for months because both families are too proud to be the first to send messengers again or to give in when the matter has gone to pot.

The young man then secretly makes an agreement with the girl or bribes her friend with gifts so that she comes to a less frequented area under the pretext of fetching water or visiting the market. There, the groom is waiting for her on horseback with friends and a mule. She is put on the animal, despite her real or feigned resistance, and they all ride off to his father's or eldest brother's homestead, where he puts her up and has her circumcised. In the meantime, he may negotiate terms with her father after all as he is afraid that he will curse him, for that would cost him dearly. Either way, she stays with his [the groom's] relatives under guard – she is usually happy to find a husband – and after a month, a small, rather meagre wedding takes place. Her relatives do not come, of course, and many respectable people also stay away because they do not want to quarrel with her family, who officially take no notice of it, so only his closest relatives (some of them don't come either because they are angry with him because of his impatience), his friends and possibly girls from their acquaintance appear. They initiate the real wedding, place the bride between two friends and have her carried by the *kala* into the bridal house. Her father solemnly curses her "*Tine*!", but only to somehow have a means of reprisal and force her to make up for the "second" wedding feast, the *ayfe gataa*.

But not all fathers agree to such marriages. A rich man from the Wolaitamala clan had a beautiful daughter who was stolen by a young man, Gage, from the Gezomala clan and brought to his clan homestead to be circumcised before the wedding. Her father was highly enraged, rode out to seek help and immediately met a friend of his family, Bilata, a famous hero and powerful man from the clan Wogo. The father was so upset that he told him, "If you get her back, I'll give her to you as a wife and a lot of dowry on top of that!" Bilata didn't need to be told twice and gathered all the young men of his clan who were capable of bearing arms and rode to the homestead of the Gezomala people as if armed for war. They were completely unaware and were taken by surprise by the intruders, who stood in front of the house door with spears and questioned everyone until they found out which house the bride was in. Bilata had the house surrounded, for entering by force would also have been a bad breach of the law, and told the kidnapper,

"Hand her over willingly or we'll break in by force." Gage was reluctant to let his prey go, but most of his kin had no desire to fight for a naughty girl. The old ones, averse to all impetuosity anyway, and persuaded him to hand her over. Bilata went off as a great hero with the girl to take her to her home. On the way, her father joined them. When he saw the huge cavalcade, he stopped and said to Bilata: "You will never again have such a splendid escort for your bride with so many beautiful young horsemen. Let this be the wedding! Take her right away and marry her, we'll do the official wedding feast (*ayfe gataa*) later!" This is said to have been a great celebration.

Someone who has married and is thus independent and no longer so much subject to his parents' supervision marries without their help, perhaps marrying a beautiful girl whose father is old or ill or powerless and can do nothing against him. She is little respected by his parents because they did not help choose her.

Since the Wolaita have lived in peace with the surrounding peoples, it has become more and more common to marry a Gudela as a second or third wife. Racially, they are no different from the Wolaita and are also popular as members of a tough and warlike race, although on the they are also somewhat looked down upon as half-barbarians. Above all, they are "cheap", and their bride price pales into nothing in comparison with those of the Wolaita. They bring with them the custom of putting three small black tattooed lines (like the Sidaama and Arsi) on each cheek and pass this custom on to their daughters, even to their granddaughters, so that one now sees many Wolaita girls and women wearing this strange mark.

If none of the means of coercion help the father of a stolen girl to get at least part of the bride price, he makes the solemn *tine* curse (Amharic: *irim* = forbidden). He slaughters a sheep and when its blood flows, he says: "*Tine gidi dorsa suta gandis*!" ("Forbidden shall be, the blood of the sheep shall stand"). Some translate this to mean that the blood of the sheep shall stand between him and the cursed as an obstacle. Others think it means, "No, blood shall flow when I meet them again!" He gives the meat away to the potters. Later, when he grows old, the son-in-law becomes afraid that the old man will die with the curse on his lips and neither he nor his children will share in the blessing. He then sends old people (perhaps his own father) with gifts, beautiful horses, clothes etc, who come begging to the father-in-law: "Please open what you closed by *tine*! We want to give you all this and more and make up for his mistake!" He sends them away again, of course, but they keep coming, twice every week, persuading his friends and his own relatives to help them, until in time he becomes quite dull and soft. There is no Ethiopian who can cope with a constant onslaught of requests and persuasion, possibly from older and more worthy ones, to whom he can refuse nothing anyway. His own clan is becoming more and more a burden to him: "Then

why do you want to let them get lost? Both are of good race and she is your own blood, give in for our sake!" Until he can stand it no longer and cries, "What am I to do? In the name of God, bring his kinsmen here, but leave me out of it!" Immediately the kinsfolk of the son-in-law appear, he [the father-in-law] fetches his own wise and old relatives, and says, "Say – what shall I do about it!" and withdraws. Then they bargain bitterly, and in the end it is decreed: "Bring the father a slave youth with a harnessed horse in his hand, beautiful clothes, a leopard skin, bull, sheep, goat, butter and a slave girl!"

Mostly, however, the cursing is not necessary at all. The very strictly observed custom of the young woman coming with her first child to her parents (*kuse useta*) returns it to their hands, and now they can force the husband to bow to their terms. On two occasions *ayfe gataa* is made: once in the case of a robber marriage, where no real wedding took place and no bride price was paid. In addition, it often happens among the Wolaita that the mother's father raises a grandchild as his own when his wives have no more children and he is longing for youth around him. He then marries the girl [his grandchild] off as his own daughter and arranges her wedding; her parents do not take part in it, but celebrate the "second wedding", the "*ayfe gataa*", where their eyes meet those of their son-in-law for the first time.

The *ayfe gataa*, which is a scaled-down repetition of the wedding ceremonies, is of course preceded by negotiations about the bride price. First, the inevitable two or four old men are sent to bring the bride money. They wait at the door of the bride's house: "What do you want?" "We have brought everything you want!" The bride's father's advisers inspect everything and if everything is in order, they are allowed to enter. The husband is notified that he may come.

The wife's father and mother receive him in the hut, surrounded by three old men and three old women behind the curtain. Husband and *kala*, accompanied by four friends, enter and both put their leg through the curtain (the same process as at the wedding is repeated). The parents tell him, "Tomorrow we will talk more!" He goes with his friends to an adjoining house. In the evening and at night there is a big feast; the potters make music. The next morning, he [the husband] gets good food from his mother-in-law and is then invited back to the feast house. Two ladies enter, each holding in one hand a beaded calabash of honey wine and in the other a calabash of beer, and simultaneously give the mother-in-law and son-in-law four drinks from each vessel, alternating wine and beer. Then they feed them barley porridge, alternately with the same spoon. The two *lasanta* (bride-price bringers) appear and perform the already described butter anointing of all present and finally the house-pole. Finally, everything is blessed again, and the two ladies appear and take turns to give them a drink from the pearl calabashes. On the same day or the next morning, the groom with the *kala* and the two *lasanta* are invited in again. The young woman arrives in new clothes and is ceremoniously handed

over to her husband. Her parents give her a little slave girl to look after the child, a big slave to accompany her and carry the child, and a milk cow. A tanned skin is spread out before the two wise old men and the dowry is spread out on it (much less than at a real wedding, supposedly the numbers and pieces are fixed, but I think only for rich people; for poorer people, even that would have been much too much): eight multiple cloaks (*buluko*, two of each of the four grades) and eight simple cloaks (*irichua*), eight body bands, a large straw urn, a beer sifter, an ensete flour sifter, a straw plate, a neck rest, a pearl calabash. Regretfully, the father says: "I would have liked to give more, but he married without permission, so he only gets this as a dowry." When the old men have counted and announced everything, he also gives them a horse and his son-in-law trousers, has their heads anointed with butter and asks them all to bless them.

Those who have the *simane* as their clan spirit and clan festival, that is the clan Gofua and a part of the clans originating from Dawuro, must make two festivals in connection with childbearing, in this case, even if the mother comes from this clan, otherwise the sacrifices are only based on the father's origin. "That is why", adds the practical-minded Wolaita, "these families are reluctant to marry."

When a fourth child is born in such a family, one of whose parents is connected to the *simane,* a potter from the Zato clan (clan part Wogela Made) is appointed as a festival helper. A boy from the neighbourhood is asked, "Be you *gala* [ritual helper]!" He then stands by the sacrifice whistling the whole time. The father takes a red heifer from his sacred herd, slaughters it and takes out its heart. The potter takes hold of the heart, presses it on the husband and wife's hearts and then throws it under the marriage bed, where it is later swept out with the sweepings. The meat of the heifer is given to the potter as a reward. From then on, the *gala* boy is no longer allowed to see the neighbour's wife.

After many years, when the woman has stopped giving birth (she is then called *balteta*), the man holds a feast and invites the whole family. An old cow is slaughtered and its head is hung on the centre pole. The former *gala*, who has become a great man, is ceremoniously invited to enter the woman's house for the first time and to see her again and is served good food. From that moment on, this family is distinguished by the ceremony and observes a contempt for all the unformed and the primordial, as is known from other sacrifices. They do not eat diseased fallen ensete or drink milk from a deformed cow. When cooking, if the pot slips off a hearthstone and touches the bottom, they give the food away. A castrated person is not allowed to enter their house. Above all, they no longer enter houses where a death has occurred or the homesteads of potters, blacksmiths, the two despised clans Masa and Maila and, allegedly, even of people who own deformed cows.

Married life

It is very difficult to say anything about marital morality after a shorter stay. To generalise, one can say that the general tendency is similar to that in all of Ethiopia: strict guarding of young girls and high esteem for virginity, relatively free position of the woman, who commands in the household and can have some property. Here, too, love intrigues are often instigated by both spouses, but, in the context of a rural community where the close living together of all family members and neighbours is heightened by the dense settlement, there are few opportunities to meet one's lover unseen. The position of women is also not nearly as free as among the Christian Amhara, whose women enjoy a high degree of independence, or among the Oromo, who, as cattle breeders, grant women a great deal of freedom for reasons of work. Thus, among the Wolaita – at least in rural areas (it is somewhat different with uprooted people or city dwellers) – marital morality is conceivably high, even if it is conditioned by coercion and little opportunity for immorality.

In general, it can be said that marriage and family life are quite happy and that the solidity and duration of marriage and family are held up with all consciousness as an important law of healthy folk life. Theoretically, the husband can kill a caught adulterer or report him to the king, who would have him executed by the executioners. I believe that this has always remained more theoretical, for bloody self-help was always frowned upon. There is little in Ethiopia that cannot be settled by consultation and fines. Even in cases of deep rifts or even open adultery, relatives and friends try to settle the matter and persuade the offended party to be lenient, whereby economic reasons alone and the rearing of children without a mother (they always stayed with the father) plays a decisive role. A serious adultery requires a complicated atonement. A wife commits adultery and conceives a child without the knowledge of her husband, who raises the bastard as his own. But nothing can come of such a child. After a few years, it falls ill, dies and is buried in the ensete grove.[60] From that moment on, the wife's sin and the strange corpse on his land bring misfortune to the unsuspecting husband; he falls ill, his cattle die, until he goes to the soothsayer. He then says: "*Falu erite, tuma erite*!" ("Know the spell, know the truth!"). "Evil is there, very near, with you or with your wife, in your land or with your cattle!" The man begins to question all the people, gathers them to himself, goes to the old people and inquires everywhere: "I am not aware of any guilt. Perhaps I cursed my wife or my sister [*menata*]?" But both deny such things. Old wise people also forcefully question the woman. Perhaps they also suspect something, for evil is always revealed, or the woman has blabbed. "If you have done something bad, you must say it, otherwise you

[60] All children up to the secondary dentition are buried in the ensete grove.

will die or something very bad will come upon you and your family!" Finally, she gets a grip on her fear and confides in friends. The counsellors tell the man "We all sin once in our lives, and if we gave in to nothing, it would be bad for all of us. So, you too give in and forgive; it behoves a good man to be generous!" until they have persuaded him to forgive the woman. Then a potter, in whose family the office of opening graves in this way [i.e. to lift curses] is hereditary, is brought in. In this function, he is not called *cinasha* but *wata,* namely *wata botia cadiya* (the *wata* who takes away the curse). A Wolaita does not touch a corpse if possible, they are also afraid of it. He opens the grave, takes out the remains of the deceased child and takes it far away into the wilderness and leaves it there. On his return, the husband slaughters a sheep and dabs his wife all over with the blood. The potter takes his ritual staff, *bote*, and sprinkles the blood and stomach contents all over the house with it, shouting "*Falaykya!*" ("Spell be far away!"). In return he receives the meat of the sheep and a piece of cloth money.

A man can easily send his wife home whom he no longer likes her. If he persists in his decision despite all the good words of others, he gathers her family, spreads butter on her back from top to bottom with a bundle of *gorta* grass in everyone's presence, and blesses her. Then she is free and can marry again. Her dowry is returned to her. The children she has borne so far, the first husband keeps, but over her children in the new marriage – her new husband also has to pay a bride price to her parents – he has no right. Only at the woman's funeral does his original, once irremovable claim to them shine through: without the presence of the first husband, she cannot be buried. Usually, the husband leaves the smaller children with the mother, but if he is very angry, he takes them away from her as soon as they are separated and has them raised by a slave. A woman cannot divorce herself. She has no legal right to do so. But when she wants to leave, she quarrels all the time, does not cook her husband food, lets the household go to waste and makes his life hell. He beats her and admonishes her, but it does not help. Then he runs out of patience, chases her away and curses her solemnly in front of witnesses:

Don't cut the nails, don't cut the hair!

Do not wash, do not put butter on your head!

Don't go to the market, don't go to the street, don't go to the funeral!

Stay at home like this for four years!

And this was respected by her. Such power the husband used to have over his wife. Her father, with whom she lives, comes to the husband at regular intervals and asks him to dissolve this oath; he refuses: "Let her change her mind and return." Finally, after four years the father comes: "Time is up, you must release her now!"

When the husband says yes, the father takes his daughter for the last time to her husband, who strokes her back with the grass *gorta* butter. Now she is legally divorced and can marry again. The husband's power did not last longer than four years, and if he did not comply with the father's requests, the latter would accuse him to the king and force him to release his wife and lift the curse. If there were children in the marriage thus divorced at the instigation of the wife, who remained with the father, he did not get back the bride-price; if she was childless, he was entitled to restitution.

Divorced women (*sauwa*, Amharic: *galamota*) who live single in their father's house after divorce have a stigma attached to them: the Amharic word *galamota* is synonymous with whore. She sits around at home and has a hard time finding a husband again. For this reason alone, her parents try to prevent a divorce with all their might. As an independent adult, her parents no longer have the same power over her as they did when she was a virgin; they cannot prevent love affairs from taking root and giving the family a bad name. She hardly ever gets a good husband but, at best, someone from a bad clan who is happy to at least be related to a respectable family in this way. Unlike the Amhara, who consider this a sin against God and a barbarity, they also meet their lovers in the bush for a tryst. The fruit of such unions is always suppressed; the doctors (*wogachiya*) know abortifacient potions and send them secretly on demand to her parents and, if these fail, she goes to the river or the bush at the hour of delivery and throws the bastard away there. The shame is feared and that is why it is done secretly. Abortion and infanticide are not considered worthy of punishment. Virgin children are treated in the same way, regardless of whether their mothers are rich or poor.

Concubines

Besides proper wives, who were married with a proper wedding ceremony and had all the rights, many rich people, especially the king, had concubines (*baka*), always just pretty young girls. They were taken from simple and poor families of bad clans, where the fathers were happy and felt honoured to come into contact with a fine clan. No bride price was paid, but the rich man gave his "father-in-law" cattle or pieces of land in the lowlands as a gift. He also helped him with house building or difficulties. The concubine did not live in the main homestead with the other women (the husband feared quarrelling) and was given a smaller house of her own on an outskirt or in the "slave quarter" nearby. No one had the right to reprimand him for this. Children in such unions were very undesirable, for fear of destroying the "good race", and the master usually separated from the concubine after the first child and married her off to a pauper with a rich dowry. Such a

bastard (*karen yele tiadaya* = "born at the door", Amharic: *dikala*) inherited his father's clan but did not have the rights of a proper son and was not considered full by anyone. When the inheritance was divided, if he was lucky, he received some gold or cattle but never land, so the generous fathers, who lamented the fate of such a son, gave them some fields in the lowlands while they were still alive "so that he will also be far away". Their lot was not a happy one. All the world knew who their father was, but they were not allowed to enter his house and enjoyed no paternal affection, "the father was disgusted to kiss the bastard son". They were not even allowed to eat the meat slaughtered by their father; superstition prophesied the father's imminent death in return.

Death and burial

The Wolaita's ideas about the why of death, about the entelechy of human life, are just as poor as those of the other Ethiopians, with the exception of the Christian-influenced Amhara. Some Christianity has also been preserved here, but more as a misunderstood formula, as have the ideas of the soul, many of which are of Islamic origin. What is involved in the strange ideas of the *kalicha* about the light-filled sky is inexplicable.

Where the soul goes is a mystery to everyone, i.e. most people don't even think about it. "Whoever is dead is lost", that is the view of most people. The idea of a heavenly abode for the soul shimmers through very faintly. Some say, "He is very near in heaven and judges there together with God!" I was told that perhaps the Qesiya, the clan formed by the descendants of the Christian priests, still knew something about life after death. I have not been able to speak to any of them about this. I am sure they are just general Christian ideas.

Death is accepted and felt in all naturalness. Thus, the lamentation of parents for a beloved child is more genuine and heartfelt than for a grandfather who was a burden to the family and is hardly really mourned after a fulfilled life or for a person who leaves loveless widows and underage children behind in misery. In both funerals, the form is so binding that an outsider will not notice any difference. An old man who feels death approaching gathers his children around him, if possible, and blesses them in a very biblical way, wishes them well and prosperity for their lives, exhorts them to remain united, and settles, perhaps for the last time, all questions of inheritance. In view of his imminent death, the family begins to prepare for the funeral ceremony in an unbiased manner – beer is brewed, food is cooked, and close relatives are notified. And what if he doesn't die at all? "Then we eat everything in a celebration of joy because he stayed alive!"

Death is much more important as a social event. Firstly, for the memory of the deceased and, secondly, for the mourning community. It is the last opportunity to commemorate the person publicly and to highlight the greatness of his personality and the power of his merits even more than during his lifetime. Of course, it is a satisfaction for the relatives to see and hear their dead honoured in this way but, unlike in Europe, they take a back seat to the grief of the guests, who act as if their closest relative has died. The obligation of the individual to participate in the celebration is the strictest of all and exceeds even the ties to the state or economic considerations. There is no excuse for absence. The field work of the entire community or neighbourhood group (this depends on the importance of the deceased) has to stop until the funeral. A neighbour would go the funeral of even their own worst enemy out of the fear of the disapproval of the community and, even worse, the wrath of the dead person's relatives, who will then not come to his own funeral celebration. In such cases, eternal habituation allows tears to flow easily and the appropriate words of lamentation to be found, which one expects from a sympathiser; but a great deal of the grief, which seems strange and feigned to the European, is genuine and spontaneous and expresses itself – unhindered by any rules of self-control – just as unselfconsciously as sudden anger or self-conceit. Only the elderly maintain a measured demeanour because their age, which is beyond the good and evil of life, no longer gives cause for exaltation and because, as judges and sages, they are expected to be impartial, which is a prerequisite for such composure. By this I do not mean to say that the lives of others are without dignity in appearance. Chastisement and order and politeness are very honoured virtues, but on the right occasion, there is the right to an outburst, which, at such festivals, is carried out with all violence and strength even by outsiders.

In addition, the funeral celebration was an important social event that was only second in importance to the market walk. For the dead, it [the funeral celebration] is the last chance for glory, but for the living it is a desired opportunity to show off their own importance, in the splendid costume of the slayer and hero, who only puts on his splendid trousers in front of the mourners, or in the seating order of the women, where the wives of heroes or the women of the highest rank – the *gimo* – claim the best seats and also receive them without resistance. The entourage is also important here. So the slaves of many great lords were required to first go to the funeral service with the lords as escorts and then return later to attend the feast "privately". Moreover, it was natural for the slaves of a fine man, especially a Tigre, who went to the funeral alone in a hurry, to join him immediately and mourn with him while he was there; this was not counted as personal mourning to them.

According to the feudal and hierarchical order of the Wolaita people, the funeral service, the burial and the grave are also arranged differently according to

the rank and wealth of the deceased. The elementary rite is the same for all people, but the unfolded splendour, the influx of people and certain forms essential for those in the know distinguish the grand celebration of a warrior from the humble one of a small man. We shall begin with the description of a funeral of such a hero (*porancu*) – actually, its entire chararcter means it should still fall under the festivals of merit.

When death has occurred, the corpse is laid on the bed and washed with water in which fragrant grasses have been boiled. Under the head and foot of the bed are placed two incense burners with rotten wood from the inside of old trees, which burn day and night under the supervision of the house slaves. They also make sure that the mice do not gnaw the body. Messengers are sent out to invite the relatives and to inform the king of the death of his free vassal. The greater the fame of the dead hero, the greater the honour the king bestows on him: he sends the potter's band, in exceptional cases even with the great *tuba malkata*. A whole procession of king's slaves give five, ten or fifteen large cloaks, twelve loads of grain or ensete, pots of butter and oxen for slaughter to help entertain the guests. The queens also appear on the day of mourning; the king never goes to a funeral. On the fourth day in the morning – men are buried on the fourth day, women on the third – the great dirge begins. The relatives, who had been wailing and crying in the days before, now break out with all their might into the mourning cries, which last up and down for days and start with renewed violence at special moments or on the arrival of particularly honoured guests. In between, pauses must be taken to allow those exhausted by all the crying and screaming moments of rest, in which they drink or talk quite unabashedly with guests who have already arrived, until the arrival of new, complaining, guests causes them to break out into new wailing.

Like the old men, the old women have half their upper bodies uncovered; the younger ones completely. They both hang ensete leaves over the front of their clothes to show their slave status. All the slaves have shaved out a circle above their foreheads and rolled their heads completely in dust before coming to the feast. Singing psalms, they follow the procession of others up and down the square. "*Nugoda ha taida, no goda gibida*!" ("Our Lord is lost, we are separated from our Lord!") All the livestock are gathered below the festival meadow in a large crown of thorns, so that no one who was connected to the dead may be missing.[61]

At last, next to the shadowy roof, stands the potter's chapel, which magnifies the din with the dull thud of timpani and the buzzing hum of long trumpets.

[61] Recall here the Germanic people who communicated the death of the father of the house to the trees and the cattle.

From nine o'clock in the morning onwards, the mourners approach and soon fill the square in wild confusion on foot and on horseback, singing, jumping, cartwheeling, galloping or as spectators. The fine ladies with their rich entourage of slave girls appear, as do the poor peasant women of the neighbourhood – no one is missing. The women's funeral oration, with response and counter-action by the mourners, takes the form common throughout Ethiopia, with weeping, sighing, slurping of air and beating of chests: "*Toso, toso, woi tose woi toso*!" ("O God, O God!") "My brother, oh would I have died for you." "How are we going to survive this?" All the while, tears stream down their faces, as they do to those who suffer. Having thus fulfilled their duty, the women take their seats under or next to (if they are of lowly origin) the shade canopy.

The men come galloping up in groups on horseback, arranged according to clans or districts. Immediately before the festive assembly, they parry the horses on their hindquarters and whip their bare backs with the reins, groaning so that it can be heard far and wide. "*Toralage, torala taida*!" ("The warlord is gone, the warlord is lost!") They turn back again and race around many times, waving spear and shield and uttering their shrill war cry. The poor follow them on foot with spears. Others gather in large groups on horseback and sing the slayer's death chant, "*Hoho selo, hoho selo*!", and another group answers them, booming "*Ehe hoho, walo, lebleo*!"

The good singers – also good slayers – run or blast their spears and sing the individual laments (*gairo*) to the dead:

Ge, ge, ge, O, o, o,
torai tolgin zares, when the enemy harassed us, he came to our aid
bucai kati edge. his beard trembled as he cut off the penis.

or:

I am a killer and I cut off the necks.

He was my friend in the war.

He came to my rescue and gave me rich gifts.

Where is he now?

I can't find it anymore!

or:

You drove back the troubles (i.e. the enemy in war).

Oh, you dear friend, on whom we depend.

Everyone had to jump off their horse at least once and do a cartwheel. The wives-in-law, who each appeared at the head of a large procession with many gifts and a slaughter ox, had to somersault countless times, often also crashing to the earth with force. In the early afternoon, the mourning reaches its climax: the wives scratch their temples and faces with thorns, let themselves fall to the earth, even pierce their tongues with the thorns. The next of kin are assigned friends who take care that they do not harm themselves in the midst of pain, heightened to intoxication by the general excitement. The men scourge themselves violently with their horse whips so that blood runs down their backs.[62]

To stanch the blood and speed up the healing process, they were dabbed with cotton flakes afterwards, so that after a large funeral the whole community walked around with white dots on their foreheads. After the oxen of the sons-in-law – each had to give one – were slaughtered at the front door, the whole procession – horsemen, spearmen, slaves, women and the musicians – set off for the grave on the communal meadow. The dead man, wrapped in many white blankets, is carried to the grave by hand. The mourning continues on the communal meadow (it can also be the district or regional meadow) until shortly before evening, when the burial takes place. After the burial, the mourning continues for several days. Festive huts are erected where the relatives sit and eat only meat with the mourners, and many oxen have to give their lives for this. New condolences arrive incessantly from people who missed the celebration or live so far away that they could not come in time. The potter's band is dismissed with rich gifts.

On the fourth day (for women on the third), the whole family erects the burial hut above the burial mound. The eldest son slaughters a bull there in the afternoon, which is eaten raw by all together at the same place.

Beforehand, the sons had made a dish of raw minced meat (*acha)* from all parts and placed it on the grave as an offering to the dead: "My father, eat!" After this presentation, the eldest and after him the other sons, taste it twice. Likewise, they pour a calabash of honey wine and one of beer on the grave. Thus, it becomes dark, but they remain holding wax candles in their hands and, as all the relatives are gathered, solemnly declare the end of mourning (*qomo bogatu*). That night everything is still asleep at the hosts; the next morning most of them leave, only some very close relatives stay longer to help in the transition period and so he [the deceased] was laid to rest without any great pomp. Even the funeral chant was different and, as at a woman's funeral, people sang "*Mote, mote*" (from the Amharic *mota* = he has died).

[62] Today, people use the thorns and whips less and less, but instead stroke their temples violently with the hard felt of the Amhara burnosse, creating valley-sized, bleeding wounds in no time.

Already at an early age, everyone cuts their hair. On the death of an important man and father of a family, all his close relatives, including on his mother's side, cut their hair; in the case of younger people, fewer relatives do so. To express very great grief, some men shave their heads completely; most are content to cut their hair short, many even shorten it only symbolically above the forehead. Until the memorial service two months later, no one is allowed to anoint their head with butter. The hair is thrown on the lawn in front of the door, as are the thorns with which the mourners scratch themselves. After the funeral service, the potters collect everything and throw it on a public path. The heirs slaughter a sheep and give it, along with the skin, to the potters as payment.

At the end of the house lawn, where it borders on a path or other complex, a bamboo scaffold has been erected, on which the symbols of all that he killed have been hung: animal trophies and, for each person killed, a short rope of twisted cotton stuff. As this is where the whole celebration takes place, a shade canopy of bamboo with grass or ensete leaves over it, under which the finest mourners take their seats, is often also erected,.



Fig. 42: Trophy scaffolding

Graves

In the past, the general burial place was a corner of the communal meadow at the opposite end of the consultation site and the sacred trees (*dubushsha*).

There was no actual fear of graves, but people did not like to walk past them at night, especially fresh ones, also for fear of encountering the werewolf. The graves of babies (*pito*) and of children up to their first teeth (*kono*) were laid out in the ensete grove, more rarely in the field. The grave (*duro*), called *makana* by the Tigre, is the usual niche grave, up to two metres deep, which was paved for

the rich. For freemen it was laid out in the east wall, for slaves, in the north–south direction. Men were laid on the right side, as if asleep, with their heads to the east and their feet to the west, so that their faces faced north. Women were placed on their left side, head to the west and feet to the east, so that they also faced north. They did not know how to tie the toes and thumbs of the Amhara. The corpse is buried without grave goods, wrapped in one or more – the richer the more – cloaks. All jewellery had been removed beforehand. The richer the man or woman, the more cloaks were wrapped around him or her, so that the corpse looked like a huge bundle of cloth. In the case of rich people, a thick layer of black salt earth was placed at the bottom of the grave (this supposedly prevented termites from coming) and sometimes one or two cow skins were placed under the corpse, but this custom was said to be new. It was not customary for the poor anyway.

The forms of the tomb vary. The basic form was a stone or heap of earth around which a cylinder of woven bamus was placed or a small house was erected.



Fig. 43: Tomb with a woven bamboo cylinder in highland Koysha

This was the old burial order during the time of the kings. Today, due to the influence of Christianity, the Amhara, the cessation of war and killing and the weakening of the strict tribal order, many changes can be observed here as well. In many cases, burial no longer takes place in the community meadow, but at churches (for Christians) and in hereditary burial grounds (for pagans). Above all, the strict rules that determined how much honour could be given to each person have fallen.

Besides this general burial – even the kings were buried in such a way – some clans had special burials. The descendants of the Christian priests, the clan Qesiya, buried and still bury their dead in their sacred groves, *kasa,* where Christian churches once stood in some cases.



Fig. 44: Grave on the King's Meadow in highland Koysha, near Lasho Bolola



Fig. 45: Sacred grove in the highland of Kindo

The Kalichu, the clan of magicians, bury their dead at the place where they used to beat their drum. They have a very peculiar burial.

The burial of the very despised clan Gacha almost makes you think of the bad death, because their normal death is already perceived as "bad". In the past, they were officially obliged to bury their dead outside the boundary walls in no man's land, because otherwise the rain would not have stopped. Even if a very small child died and they buried it in the ensete grove for the sake of convenience, the whole community would force them to exhume it and take it to the wasteland if anyone found out. It was proverbial, when it rained too much, to say that an investigation should be made to see if a Gacha was secretly buried somewhere.

A bad death was distinguished primarily by special burial. The Wolaita are the only Ethiopian people I know of who have a special burial for a bad death caused by evil disease or extraordinary circumstances. Just as the sinful child foisted on

a husband who unknowingly considers it to be his brings evil to the community after its death and is buried in the wasteland – preferably outside the border or in uninhabited territory by the great rivers or by the lake – so too in most bad deaths burial, or abandonment, of the body in the bush is the main defence.

Suicide (*pula*), especially by hanging, was not uncommon and occurred in both sexes in cases of despair and distress: when the wife ran away, injustice in court, misfortune of the children, death of a beloved spouse or loss of property. Although a proper funeral service was held, odium was attached to the family, and no one liked to marry them anymore. The body was buried properly but in the lowlands. Those who fell from a tree were buried in the usual way, along with a dog's tail; those who fell into the fire and died from it were buried in a fresh oxhide.

A decent funeral is held for the person killed by lightning. But there is no lamenting or crying and if someone cries or breaks out in shouts for the dead, the relatives quickly say "*Maldo, maldo*!" ("Let it be sweet [or pleasant]!"), i.e. do not talk about it. They fear that another one of them might be killed. A tree is planted on the site of the misfortune as a reminder. Evil diseases are especially feared also as an after-effect by the relatives. Of all the diseases, *duhe* is the most dreadful; in Amharic it is called *dawe* or *serae*. Unfortunately, I do not know what is meant by it: the body of the sick person is full of worms that make noises, it swells more and more until it almost bursts, then the sick person dies. If possible, the sick person had already been laid in a separate place. After death, he is not touched, but the potter, whose job it is to do such nasty things, is called, the *wata bota, chadiya*. He drags the corpse into the wilderness, opens its body and inspects the inside. Why he does this is not clear to anyone, because he does not report what he saw. He only covers the corpse with grass and twigs and leaves it lying there. The father, eldest son or other closest relative of the dead person slaughters a sheep, with whose blood and excrement the potter sprinkles the house with a leaf wreath "*Aska gida*!" ("Hail be, salvation be!"). He is allowed to take the sheep's meat and the dead man's best cloak home as a reward.

Lepers (*inchera*) are not allowed in the market or at funerals and other social gatherings. The other people fear him and insist to the relatives that he should live in seclusion. When things get very bad with him, they build him a small house away from the homestead, which is burnt after his death. As with smallpox (*pantata*), no funeral lamentation is held. Smallpox is feared more than leprosy; no one lets sick people enter their home, and decent people are expected to put up or hang ensete leaves on the lawn in front of the house so that everyone is warned and does not enter by mistake. When someone offers their condolences to the relatives at the funeral, they only answer "*Barara!*"

Mothers who die in childbirth are buried like everyone else.

After seven months – others dispute this and say it is a year – the memorial feast (*gaba*, Amharic: *tzakas*) for the dead takes place. The number forty, which is so highly regarded by the Amhara, plays no role at all in the Wolaita. In the sixth month, one sends to the relatives and the great ones of the acquaintance to come. A Hadiya, who has to perform a part of the ritual, is also asked. For a week, the relatives send all their slaves to help with the festival preparations; the women brew huge vats of beer, grind grain and prepare all kinds of ensete flour. The male slaves build many festival huts: in front of the house on the lawn some very large ones, further outside ten or more smaller ones for the less honoured guests. Large piles of firewood were stacked in front of the houses and the houses were straightened to receive the guests and sprinkled with fresh grass. An experienced slave was ordered into each feast hut to look after the visitors and given food: several large lumps of various raw ensete rice and already prepared ensete flour, butter, large pots of beer, small-priced firewood, plus three hearthstones with a large hotplate erected above them. Since their own crockery was not sufficient, many borrowed pots and plates from the neighbourhood. Then the relatives appear; two families who are friends with each other are lodged in a hut and given food and utensils. The fine people, Tigre for example, come alone to the big hut at the residence. The Hadiya, who have also arrived, commit the opening sacrifice (*tafana*) on the grass in front of the door: first they slaughter a black goat and sprinkle the blood and stomach contents around the large dwelling house of the dead man, the meat is given to the potters. Then they sacrifice an old cow and a red bull (neither of them black) without doing anything with the blood or stomach contents. This is one of the very few cases where the owner of the land on which slaughter takes place does not do the slaughtering himself. Pieces of raw meat are cut from all parts of the cow and placed on the pillow of the deathbed by the Hadiya sacrificer. He addresses the spirit (*ayana*) – not the soul – of the deceased father (and if she is no longer alive, that of the mother): "You used to eat from his hand, do not ask that now, for he is no more. Think no more of it! Do no harm to his children and live in peace with them. Eat only this old cow; there is nothing more!" In the evening, the eldest son goes to the grave with two thick wax candles, a horn full of honey, wine, a calabash full of beer, and pieces of meat from the right side of the bull. All the close relatives – but no one by marriage except the daughters-in-law who have already given birth – follow him. At the head of the grave, he places the meat on two ritually superimposed ensete leaves, pours honey wine twice and beer twice over it: "Eat my father, drink my father!" This is for the father himself. What is left of the meat, beer and wine, he places on the side of the grave. The Hadiya man who performed the sacrifice roasts some of the bull's meat, which he also carries, in front of the grave and places it with the raw meat on two ensete leaves in front of the foot end. He performs the same libations as the son and addresses the great

spirits (*algano, talahe*, also the *ayana* of the father): "Eat, drink, do no harm to the children!" The few people who "have no *algano*", i.e. do not believe in him, or do not fear him, omit this ceremony performed by the Hadiya. The origin of *algano* from Hadiya explains the function of the Hadiya man.

One wax candle is placed on the central pole of the burial hut; with the other, you return to the house, where a large cattle sacrifice takes place. The same evening the visitors are given a feast. They stay there for two days and are given meat three times a day, which they usually eat raw with red pepper. The slave women prepare the food from ensete. Then the other relatives and friends leave. They bless the bereaved and say, "Think no more of death, let death be something of the past."

The dead man's sister and brothers still remain with the children. First, the Hadiya is rewarded, he receives several more meals with good food and new beer and his share of meat: a whole fillet and a hind leg. He has to eat this "*ne komo*" ("your share") there and is not allowed to take anything with him. (They are probably afraid that he might perform magic at home with the meat they slaughtered). When he leaves, he gets some money – maybe ten pieces of iron, a bad cloak and the dead man's fourth pair of trousers; the Hadiya are barbarians, after all, and are glad of anything you give them. As he leaves, he sprays blessings over everyone: "Become rich like the fathers, get offices, have children again live long, your cattle get many calves!"

Now it is the turn of the closest relatives to be fed. They are given the meat on the bone, ensete meal mixed with butter, a large pot of new beer – the most delicious food imaginable: "*inte komo*" ("your share"), "eat until there is nothing left! "After they have feasted for two days, they leave, bless and wish everyone well: "Next time we want to meet on a good day for a wedding or at a ranking ceremony" ("*sunteta soro*" or "*dana teta soro"*).

On the fourth day early, an ox is finally slaughtered for the slaves, and they are given beer, ensete flour and butter. They have to prepare their own food. The best parts, however – the hump, the belly meat, pieces of the hind leg and tenderloin, half of the stomach and liver – they must give to the sons of the deceased. They eat all day and night, for on the fifth day, all the dishes are washed and the borrowed pots are returned to their owners. On the sixth day, the festival arbours are torn down and the wood and grass are stacked in the proper places. On the seventh day, houses and squares are cleaned, for on the eighth day, the great division of inheritance takes place, for which the memorial feast is the prerequisite.

Merit celebrations

by Eike Haberland

Deeds of merit and celebrations

The striving for glory of the Ethiopian peoples, unlike the wild heroic fighting of the Oromo or the communal killing of the Konso, is guided in feudal ways, with certain chivalric and sporting rules. All people were dominated by a strong desire for distinction in war or hunting, although the former was of course incomparably higher. In addition to the multiple gradations of the social order – the privileged class formed by the nobility, dignitaries and the rich, the class of the great warriors who killed, the *toranca* (people with the spear), surpassed all others – the mass of the common people (the *monichu*), who went to war but did not distinguish themselves, were regarded as somewhat contemptible. A conscious policy of the kings promoted the warlike spirit of the people even beyond the general customs of hero worship through abundant gifts to great slayers and the coveted right to receive the drink of honour from the hand of the king at great festivals before all the people. These honours go into all areas of the individual's life, regulate the jewellery and clothing of him and his wife, make both of them sit in the places of honour at festivals and, through the extraordinary form of the funeral, secure him a privileged place even after his death.

In general, it is a trait of the Ethiopian man to distinguish himself through a deed of merit or a celebration of merit (the latter referring to his wealth), and thus to attract the attention and envy of others. Whereas the chivalric ideal of the Occident demands the hero step back from glory and show modesty in the face of praise and celebration, it is virtually prescribed for the Ethiopian hero to indulge in orgies of self-glorification. To associate oneself – and with that the name of one's family and king – with a glorious deed in the public eye is probably the highest thing imaginable. Along with prasing oneself goes the vilification of one's enemies and one's not so fortunate fellow citizens, something which is often the cause of bloody quarrels. All this brings the hero into a state similar to intoxication, in which he – just as when setting out for battle – trembles ecstatically and is no longer capable of clear thought.

Ceremonial market walk (*sofe*)

The custom of the *sofe*, the solemn and silent going to market, is widespread among all Ometo peoples and occurs especially in the wake of the honouring of heroes or at other festivals of merit. However, there need be no other reason for this than to emphasise the value of one's own person in solemn pomp, "to pretend to be great", and to emphasise one's own wealth in comparison to the insignificance of that of others by contrasting one's solemnity and modesty with the trading and haggling market goers. Theoretically, all those who have ever made *sofe* are forbidden from actively participating in the market later, that is, to buy or sell. This is then done by one's servant, just as a fine person should not mingle with the common people at all. In the future, the one who did *sofe* may only participate as a spectator. He will sit down, if possible on his own seat, at the side, where he can overlook the colourful hustle and bustle, which is the delight of every Ethiopian, and drink beer from his own beautiful vessel.

A young girl from a good family, proud of her beauty, will one day say to her friends: "We want to go to the Tuesday market next week for *sofe*." Then they come together in their most beautiful dresses, servants and slaves walk in front of them (as was the custom in the old days; now servants walk behind the master). Preferably, they spread blankets or leather for them a little away from the hustle and bustle. Beer is ordered, which each pays for herself, and when they have seen and been seen enough, they get up and walk proudly up and down through the tumult until they go home together.

Dignified old gentlemen, former imperial bailiffs or slayers also enjoy this market walk very much. The servants hurried far ahead with water pipes, tobacco in beautiful leather bags, coal tongs, small vessels in which a piece of tinder (made of *korch* wood) glowed and the sitting leather. A little away from the market, they arranged the place and spread out the leather. When the old people arrived in a group of four or six – "to make the number full [even]" – they first walked gracefully around the market, looked at everything and were seen. Only then, did they ram their spiral staffs into the ground in front of them and settle down on their leather blankets. The market women brought them a large pot of beer as a "gift from the market" and poured it into beautiful drinking calabashes. The oldest dripped and tasted four times in a ritual manner. The Tigre, according to northern Ethiopian custom, never drank like this in public and always had their servants cover them from the gaze of others with a cloak.

Human and wildlife killing

Unlike the Oromo and Sidaama, who were at perpetual war with their neighbours as hereditary enemies (*dina*) (this did not, however, exclude periods of long but more casual peace) and among whom any glory seeking young man could slay any enemy that got in his way even outside the great killing campaigns of the *gada* system, in Wolaita, any killing of a stranger was strictly forbidden except in official times of war. Without the king's permission – and this was tantamount to a declaration of war – no one was allowed to enter the territory of a neighbouring group in peace and kill there. Yes, anyone who, for example, made a hunting expedition into the border wilderness with royal permission and secretly killed a Boroda, for example, would be stripped of all his possessions by the king as a punishment if he was told of it, for fear that the enraged enemies would start a war.

If a war was not an outright conquest, in which the king tried to fight a decisive battle with the entire army of the people in a short time, it dissolved into disorderly individual battles in which the warriors met in no man's land between the border walls of the contending countries or galloped at random into the open savannah at the Arsi or Gudela border in order to find prey there. Great warriors who had already killed (*toranca*) rode off on their own, accompanied by friends and slaves; or a whole band of heroes under an experienced war leader (*gaddauwa*) joined forces. They were followed "like hyenas by lions" by the inferior people, the *monica*, who were not brave enough to fight and kill themselves and went along in the hope of booty, which was granted to them by the hero, albeit with scorn and derision. They took pleasure in showing their power to the little ones and amused themselves by giving five a cow to share and witnessing the quarrelling of the sharers. If such a band succeeded in attacking unprepared enemies, everyone tried to kill as many as possible. The most common [form of fight] was single combat between two fighters on foot or on horseback, [holding] in the left hand the reserve spears and the large shield of buffalo hide, in the right the spear or the terrible scimitar, whose mighty blows pierced even the shield. With known enemies, the fight was conducted under common rules of chivalry: the weary opponent was allowed to rest, drink water or even smoke a pipe under a shady tree. But there was no mercy for whoever was defeated in battle. The victor fell upon the still living and, in his greed for the trophies, possibly disdained to finish him off completely before he cut off or chopped off his genitals and then, like lightning, swung himself back on his horse and with a resounding shout of victory showed everyone the bleeding trophies. Only such a hero or the one who hunted big game was allowed to put on the coveted slayer's mark: he pierced his ears, i.e. he put on small round earrings (*belelesa*).

Anyone – especially if he was a rich man from a good family – who did not have earrings was looked upon with disfavour. It was considered very shameful that he had not yet distinguished himself, and respectable families refused him their daughters. Such a man, in desperation, bought a bad slave, led him into the wasteland, killed him, pierced him with a spear and carried his genitals home. But he only showed them to the wife. This "hero" was then allowed to pierce his ears and, although many laughed at him, he was better than a common fellow traveller. He had extinguished a life. He is called *arfelo*. Even those who killed a child or an old man in war, who could not be considered full, were looked at askance and not considered a true warrior or *toranca* – but still, he had killed. It is a horrifying thought for the Ethiopian, for whom the duality of killing and witnessing is what makes a full human being, to no longer be able to witness. Whoever is emasculated in battle (an emasculated *muresa*, Amharic: *silb*) instead of emasculating the others himself (*goiris*) is ostracised and dishonourable. No one eats or drinks with him anymore, his wives will refuse to live with him like this and will make use of levirate while he is still alive and move in with his brothers – "he just sits around". Only rarely do very strong personalities or very young people who have not yet been hit so hard by this blow manage to rise above it and assert their place in life, like the famous Amharic *dajjachmach* Balca, who was governor in Sidaama. A good Wolaita, to whom this [emasculation] happens in war, shouts in horror to his friends who have gone along: "Kill me, kill me!" Then they take two thick pieces of wood and put one under and one over his neck, a friend jumps on each end so he is strangled.

The victorious hero rides home with his trophies. The testicles are wrapped in the dead man's trousers and hung on the front of his own horse's chest, just like the cloak or the splendid leopard skin; there, he also attaches the enemy's ivory ring or, if the enemy had none since he was not a slayer, he chops off his arm and hangs it there too. He holds in his hand the spears of the enemy pointing to the ground with his own pointing upwards. Behind him follows the captured horse with his master's shield at the back of the saddle. Thus, he travels silently through the country; even if he happens to pass markets, he calls no attention to his boldness until he arrives at the king's palace, where he steps before the king, praising and boasting, and lays the unveiled testicles at his feet. The king steps on them with his foot, blesses and praises the hero and begins to give him his gifts. The most important is the phallic sign (*kalachu*). Here, in contrast to the Oromo and other peoples, it is made of hollow metal and 30–35 cm long. The tip is slightly curved upwards. It sits on the forehead with a metal plate (not a shell or ivory disc) and is attached to the head with a band of snakeskin. There were also *kalachu* that had several smaller phalli to the right and left of the main plate. Tigre and privileged estates were allowed to have the *kalachu* made of silver, all others of brass. The

kalachu was hereditary and passed to the eldest son after it was visibly displayed to all at the funeral ceremony. However, the son was only allowed to put it on if he had also killed. Then the king put it in his hair or his white head bandage. The second gift is ostrich feathers wrapped in coloured thread or the feather (*bali*) of the *gugi*, a small white bird of prey, or the *yirko* (a large black bird with white under its wings). Likewise, if he does not already have it from the family, he gets the ivory ring (*irbora*) that marks the slayer, the earrings and perhaps a silver necklace (*moga*) consisting of three movable silver strips connected together (with rhombic jewellery plates hanging from them). Above all, he is given the slayer's cloak, the *chafchafo*. This is a very fine cotton fabric over which he strokes red paint mixed with butter with the five fingers of his hand in criss-cross stripes, "for red is the blood". Finally, the slayer may, if he wishes, also take the spiral-wrapped staff of the dignitaries in his hand. The hero's wife was also allowed to put on the *chafchafo* during ceremonial walks and sat in the best seat at the market or at funerals. In the case of simpler people, the king demanded the *kalachu* back after going to market. However, he gives everyone the right to have their wives wear the white feathers at his funeral ceremony, and his horse also gets a feather on each ear.



Fig. 46: Informant Kaba (Tigre clan) with phallic insignia of a killer

Great heroes who have killed several enemies are given a great endowment by the king: a whole estate, five or ten working slaves with families, two milk cows and a female slave to milk them. Then a strong slave who holds a beautiful stallion in one hand and a sickle; he is to cut grass for the horse. He is also given a splendid cloak and trousers of the first kind. Both are worn by an experienced, excellent slave (*harasho*) who understands all the work and supervises the other slaves. At funerals and weddings he will walk, with the two pieces of finery before his master, who arrives dressed in second-kind trousers. Just before they reach the

fairground, they stop, and the master takes off his previous clothes; the ones given by the king are on the slave's shoulder. Then he enters the festival place boasting loudly: "*Hadia harashai hasian tokin gitiaga*!" ("The trousers the slave is wearing on his shoulder, I'll put them on!"). This means, I am the man who has slaves carry his festive clothes. This, the king grants him as the highest honour: two or two times two market walks (*worata*). And finally the king orders the potters to blow for him with two kinds of trumpets each. When other people saw this, they became envious and said to their wives: "Now I'm also going to war, if I don't kill at least two enemies, order me the drum for burial, because then I'd rather fall."

The hero wraps the trophies back into his trousers and rides home in full adornment. As he does so, he boasts his victory cry, uttering his own and his father's names and sound in the stylised way peculiar to Ethiopians (*chequm*, Amharic: *fokara*) or he recites his deeds in psalmody in a song of glory (*geresa,* Amharic: *masalal*).

In front of his house, his family and relatives welcome him, a lot of small clay drums (*karabya*) are played. All the girls and women come towards him clapping their hands and singing, "*Abole, abole, yoho haiya*!" He jumps boastfully between them and throws the trousers with the trophies at the feet of his wife, who is standing at the front door. Then she hands him a calabash (*kumeta*) full to the brim, from which he pours the beer over the bundle, which she holds with two fingers and drags to the centre pole, where it remains until he goes to market. That is why it is proverbially said: "He killed and she dragged the penis."

To counter all evil, soon after, the slayer slaughtered a black goat or a black sheep, also a black bull if he is rich enough, and washed his hands and also the knife or spearhead with which he had killed in blood as well as in water. While doing so, he called to the dead: "If you are a *tosawa* (possessed) or *sharecho* (shaman), do not let your spirit (*ayana*) come to me with sickness or madness and help me kill more."

Great market walk (*worata*)

The warrior now waits until the next big market day approaches, when the king allows him to hold his first ceremonial walk. Usually, the king granted only two different markets; rarely, in the case of very great heroes, did he give the privilege of repeating the walks after a week. It was only the very large markets, of which there were about twenty, where the market walks were held. Favourites, apart from the markets of the closer homeland, were those of Dalbo, at the gates of the royal palaces. With all his ornaments as described above, the ostrich feathers in the white head bandage, accompanied by all his friends on horseback, he went from

the potter's chapel to the market when it reached its peak (about 4 o'clock in the afternoon). In front of the market, he would spur his horse and chase, resounding his shouts of glory (*cheqva*): "*Woro adare*!" (his own and father's name) "Kawo Gobe!" (name of the reigning king) through the middle of the market. The people quickly dispersed, not wanting to be ridden over –of course, he had been warned beforehand. Meanwhile, at the edge of the market, his companions sang a song with the refrain "*Selo*, *selo*!" in a booming voice.

Twice he rode up and twice he rode down, in the meantime his people had already spread a leather skin and over it a cotton blanket on a nice place at the edge, on which he took a seat and drank his beer from a nice calabash.

Now began a glorious time for him. Boasting, he went around the country day in, day out and visited his relatives and acquaintances, who had to invite him to sumptuous banquets and, on top of that, give him precious gifts (*woito*) of cattle, slaves or cloth money (*kareta*). I am not entirely sure about the statement that the slayers did not comb their hair and could let it grow as long as they wanted while others had to have it cut from time to time.

After a month, he has had enough, takes the penis (the trousers of the killed man are kept in his house to be displayed after his own death) and goes with it to the highlands of Koysha. There, near the border with Kindo, the small River Chochora forms a murky swamp not far from its source, shaded by tall palms and bamboo. He throws the genitals into it and kicks them deep into the mud up to the knee. The conclusion of the ceremonies is again *sofe*. He walks silently through the market, drinks his beer apart [from others] and goes home in silence.

Honours and royal gifts were also associated with the hunt, which of course could not compete with human killings in terms of splendour and prestige. After all, one was also allowed to put on the white feathers, the red-striped cloak (*chafchafo*) and the slayer necklace for the successful hunt of elephants, lions, leopards and buffaloes, and for elephants also the ivory ring (*irbore*). A brave warrior who wanted to earn the king's favour would ask him for permission to hunt and already predict what kind of animals he would kill and bring back with him. The highest of all was the elephant's tail: the hunter would sneak up behind a grazing herd of elephants and with one stroke cut off the tail of an animal with a large sharp knife (*arussya*), grab it, run to his horse and race away. For this he was allowed to pierce his ears, just as for killing humans. In general, this was celebrated similarly to a human killing: he was given a collar made of metal strips similar to the *sogu* and his wife was allowed to put on the *emuhuhua* earrings. Lion slayers were given a forehead ornament made of tiny metal phalli (see fig. 46), from which silver chains hung down on the right and left of the head.

The king was the owner of all game, so anyone who went hunting or wanted to organise a hunting expedition as a *gaddauwa* (leader) had to ask him for permis-

sion beforehand. At Easter and at other times of the year, the kings would go on great hunting expeditions to the lowlands further west in Shochora or in Shambare (near Zala), even to the plains of Sasugo as far as Urbaray or to the Arsi steppe as far as Shashamane, without asking permission from the peoples concerned, who would not even think of fighting back in the face of such unexpectedly huge numbers: "They could start a war if they wanted to!" The spoils of the hunt, lion or leopard skins and ivory, had to be brought to the king. He might keep them for himself, have cloaks made from the fur and sword-knife handles from the ivory, or he might bless the gifts and give them back to the man. People liked to have cloaks made from the skins; the silversmiths (*wogachiya*) folded the skin over a little at the edges so that the side of the skin was fringed by a narrow smooth strip and applied decorations of silver strips to it. The trophies (*gasa*) of elephant tails, buffalo skulls and the strips of belly fur from the navel to the genitals of lions and leopards are kept at home and hung on the centre wall.

Now that there is no more big game, many people collect the skins of smaller animals (gazelles, small cats of prey, even monkeys) and the horns of antelopes. At the time of death, a bamboo frame (*zongarun*) is erected at the house where the funeral ceremony is held, and all the trophies are hung on it and stretched out, or in the case of a few objects, they are hung from a pole so that everyone can see what a mighty hunter the deceased was. After the ceremony, the scaffolding is moved to the edge of a much-travelled path so that as many people as possible will experience it. There it remains until it weathers and collapses. The lions and leopard skins are displayed separately and are only felt at the funeral ceremony together with the *kalachu* and other precious items. Very valuable pieces, such as elephant tails, are of course not left to decay, but are removed after some time and kept in the house for generations to come, to be shown to visitors with pride in the deeds of their grandfather.

Merit festival for animal ownership (*eqa*)

Compared to the grandiose and hybridised festivities of the Wolaita when their possession of domestic animals (including slaves) has reached a certain number, the same festivities of the Oromo appear modest and simple. Here, even more than with the heroic deeds, one recognises the pronounced merit festival character of this ceremony.

The lowest of all these feasts is the one for the ownership of 100 cattle, i.e. the owner had to have thirty or forty more than he consumed or gave away at the feast and they were not included in the 100. If he wanted, he could wait until he had more. It was only necessary that the number of cattle shown should form a round

hundred. The first thing they did before all such celebrations was to go to the king for permission to be allowed to celebrate the festival, and after permission, they gave him rich gifts, such as four dairy cows, four oxen, a magnificent young bull with straight high horns, a large sheep and four jars of butter.

All the cattle were now driven from the lowlands and the large pastures to the owner's house and gathered in a large kraal (*dirsa*), specially built for this purpose, on the lawn in front of his door. The herd was kept there for about 14 days, and all the milk was collected in huge clay pots (*bataa*). All the relatives were festively summoned as if for a wedding. They feasted for a day on the meat of four fat oxen (these, like all the other animals sacrificed and given away, are not included in the hundred) and much milk and many good dishes. The next morning the feast-giver slaughtered a bull and a ram after all the guests had blessed him and the sacrificial animals. Then, with blessings and invocations to God, he sprinkled the blood on his 100 cattle in the kraal with a ritual broom made of the sacred mayo herb and bamboo twigs. All the relatives were now given rich gifts: all the sisters, the father's and mother's sisters and the clan leader received a beautiful milk cow. He hung a large iron bell on his favourite bull. This remained a sacred animal all his life; its flesh was not touched after his death, but left for the hyenas. On the wall of his house, he hung 100 yellow nightshade fruits on a string of ensete fibres.

It was generally not customary to repeat the feast at 200, 300, etc. cattle. If the owner wanted, he could put a bell on another bull and increase the number of fly-fruits accordingly. Whoever felt like it could make a similar celebration for 100 goats, also a celebration for 100 mares and 100 mules – which will have happened rarely enough – an old man remembered. Presumably, these were just arbitrary imitations of the real feast, which is only for cattle. In the process, he slaughtered cattle and sheep, sprinkled the blood on the mules and gave mules to father, mother, sisters, aunts and wives of brothers.

The highest of all these feasts was the one for 1,000 cattle.[63] It counted even more than the one for 1,000 slaves. It began again with the petition to the king. Only this time he had to bring more gifts: 20 milk cows, 20 oxen, two beautiful young bulls, two sheep, twelve pots of butter. All the cattle were again herded together in the meadow of the farm and the milk was collected for a long time. When the day of the feast arrived, a deep pit was dug in front of his house and filled with the milk and the blood of many cattle slaughtered beforehand, with a tremendous crowd of people. His friends stood around the pit and spread out their cloaks. Behind this curtain, which protected him from the gaze of the spectators, he completely undressed, climbed into the pit and submerged himself in the liquid. He reappeared, climbed out with the help of his ritual assistant (*gala*), who

[63] Haberland had published an article on this ritual (Haberland 1988).

assisted on all such important occasions, and climbed in a second time. Then he washed himself with water, put on a very bad cloak (*dela*) and put butter on his head. All the cattle were sprinkled with the blood of sacrificial animals in blessing, and at his door he attached 1,000 yellow nightshade fruits on a rope. For four days, everyone lived in high spirits. More and more cattle were slaughtered. Finally, on the fifth day, he gathered all his relatives and friends in the morning and began to give huge gifts to all sides. He gave all his female relatives on his father's and mother's side up to the fifth generation and his sisters – often there were 40 or more women –a milk cow each. He slaughtered another large ox and had a good midday meal prepared for them. The women had had a huge eightfold cloak (*patala*) woven and folded beforehand, which they presented together with particularly fine food prepared by each of them in ornamental pots (*logomo*). His father's brothers each received two milk cows and a cloak; the clan leader receives two milk cows, two oxen, and a "full robe" (*kumeta mayo,* Amharic: *mulu libs*), i.e. cloak, trousers and body bandage. He also gave his brothers' wives a milk cow each, but gave his brothers nothing: "Why don't you raise cattle yourselves?"

After these incredible sacrifices and gifts, which demonstrated to the spectators and relatives the great power of ownership, the guests took their leave. A few days later, he made his way to the market (*sofe*) on horseback, his hair dripping with butter, dressed in his best clothes and accompanied by his *gala* and a large entourage. He took a seat at the side of the market, had the market women bring him beer, dripped some of it on the ground in blessing, thanked God for his goodness and asked for more blessings.

Even grander were the celebrations for 2,000 or 3,000 cattle with even more important gifts – also to the poor and victims. The celebrations for 200 and up to 1,000 slaves also took the usual form.

Slave festival (*aylia eqa*)

To avoid useless repetition, I will pass over the feast for the ownership of 100 slaves, which was only a very reduced form of the great feast for 1,000 slaves. Very fine people also disdained the hundred-slave feast, preferring to hold the thousand-slave feast or nothing at all. Just like the thousand slaves, the ownership of 100 slave-houses (i.e. slave families) is also valued. All slaves – the house slaves, field slaves and those who farm special estates in the high mountains or lowlands – stream in and are housed in the feast owner's homestead, sometimes in quickly erected light feast huts (*gogo*, Amharic: *das*). The next morning, in the presence of all, the owner sacrifices the following animals: a black bull with a white tail and white forehead for the creator god, a red bull for all the red slaves

(i.e. a brown bull (*dama*, Amharic: *magala*) for the brown slaves and a black one for the dark-skinned slaves. For the different kinds of slaves – old and young, big and small, boys and girls, stupid and clever – he slaughters a bull speckled with all the colours one can think of (*sacegaza,* Amharic: *zingurgur*, *gua bire*) He also slaughters five sheep and five goats of these colours. As the sixteenth animal, he sacrifices a pale-yellow bull (*bula,* Amharic: *dalacha*) to his father's god (which is synonymous with the spirit or guardian spirit) and prays:

Tau haya aylia imi dago,

neo imais!

(For me these slaves you have given,

to you I give [this]!)

In addition to these 16 animals, he kills ten or more fat oxen for slaughter. All this is barely enough to feed the many slaves and guests. He moistens his forehead with the blood of all the animals and flicks four fingers over the adult slaves who approach him one by one, bent over, and seizes an empty ear of millet with which he sprinkles blood on the slave children. The day passes in a great feast at which beer is not spared.

The next morning, the overseers (*sunta*), who are themselves slaves, present all the master's slaves to him one after the other: first the old people, then the men, then the women and children. All of them throw themselves on the ground before him or bend so low that he steps on their heads with the balls of his feet and toes after he has examined them and looked them over carefully. Thus, the ceremony, which for many slaves lasts endlessly, is performed, often for six days. With this, the ceremony is completed, and he goes to the king to give him twelve slaves: four young married couples who each get two milk cows, a boy (*lugame*), a girl (*dangerixa*) and two experienced women (*kademeta)*. He also gives a girl and a boy to the chief chamberlain (*uba guda azaziaga* = who commands all the fighters) who arranged for him to have an audience with the king. A rich blessing of gifts pours out on his relatives: if his father is still alive, he gets a full house, i.e. a married couple with many children among whom must be the horse-boy and the little maid, an older (*kademeta*) and a younger (*garunde*) woman and an old man (*harasu*) suitable as overseer. The sister, brother-wives and father-brothers also get a girl and a boy. He then dresses in his best cloak (*patala*) and makes the market walk (*sofe*).

Gemini festival (*mente eqa*)

High culture peoples such as Wolaita and Amhara highly value twins; there is not only an aversion associated with them but an occasion for celebration, and they are considered a gift. For the Amhara, the birth of twins is a sign that the family will be lucky but not a reason to celebrate, while for the Wolaita, it is the cause of a great celebration of merit, in which the parents express how much they feel elevated above the rest of the people. This happy event also secures them a particularly respected social position for later. The mother lives with male babies for four months (three months for girls) in a kind of seclusion, where she is on her own and also has her own dishes. Mothers and children are not allowed to wash or cut their hair during this time. The father's main occupation is to make preparations for the feast.

The most important thing he sees to is to buy or exchange twins of bulls, rams and he-goats and to ask a pair of adult twin males and adult twin females with their spouses and parents to be guests for the feast. If one of these twins cannot come, he sends a representative of the same sex in their place. He has two new dress capes woven for his wife and one each for his children (four in all, the full number). He also orders a nice pair of colourful trousers and a cloak for himself. He also has four small thin cloaks (*irichua*) woven, which are laid out like a sale at the mock market later. He has the potters make various vessels, a very large amphora (*bata*), a smaller one (*tuga*) and a small wooden pot (*qulia*) from which children are fed or drink milk. All are made for the feast with two mouths, but [there is] no two-nosed coffee pot, as that is only for the shamans (*sharecho*). All the time he goes around the neighbourhood asking all neighbours, friends and relatives to come on the feast day.

In the morning, the four invited twins gather with their parents at his house, where he begins the sacrifice with old people advising him. One after the other, he slaughters the six twin animals in his house and wets his own forehead and those of his wife and twin children with the blood. One of the old men does the same to those invited. Then these eight people dip their hands in water and wet the hair of the mother and the twins. One of them shaves their hair and leaves a long strand (*hom*) on the back of the children's heads, on the right and left. The mother goes into the back room with them and puts on new clothes for herself and them.

By now it is afternoon and all the neighbours and friends (he had asked them beforehand) in a wide radius are pretending that a real market is taking place on the lawn in front of the door of the festival place. People flock together from far and wide; they carry all the goods and products that are normally also sold, spread them out on the lawn, some come with beer, others with ensete etc. They exchange their things, buy little things – it is great fun and general merriment prevails. At

four o'clock in the afternoon, the hour when "the market is at a standstill", i.e. when it has reached its peak and no one is coming but no one is leaving either, the father steps out of the house with the children. In front of him on the lawn he has symbolically spread out four small children's capes for mock sale, behind them are the two double-empty amphorae full of beer and the double-empty pot full of milk. He lets each twin taste each spout twice, and the mothers and the eight invitees also drink from the beer. Then the father slaughters an old cow (*inde miza*), whose meat, like that of the other animals, is used for the feast. All the participants in the feast are called into the house or into an arbour built next to it and are served. Until this feast has been completed, the wife must remain in seclusion and may not eat with anyone. However, once the merit feast is happily completed, the parents enjoy social honours of a general nature, such as preferred seats at funerals or at the *maskal* feast. Conversely, they are expected to prove themselves worthy of these honours and to make an outward effort befitting their wealth and refinement. They only drink milk from cows that are particularly beautiful and blameless and have regular teats, and only use crockery that is in perfect condition and has no cracks, even the bowl of the pipe must not be bumped.

The women's rank (*gimo*)

The custom of the female rank *gimo* is widespread among many Ometo peoples. Even today, you can admire the women with their puffed-up hair at the market in Dorze. In Wolaita, this rank is dying out. Only rarely does a rich woman still take the opportunity to occupy this rank, which used to be so coveted. In the past, it was not possible for every woman, even rich women, to become *gimo,* although it used to be a point of honour for every great man to make his wife one. Her relatives would have considered it a disgrace if he had not done so.

Once a lot of money was needed to have her costly jewellery and clothes made and to cover the cost of the huge entertainment for her and his relatives (*sesa*). Then she must be married and blameless and have reached quite an age by the time she stops childbearing. The custom dictates that her children should be married. Recently, when a rich woman, a widow wanted to become *gimo,* she took her first (divorced) husband again as he was necessary to represent her to the outside world. Malicious people even said she borrowed him from his wife for money. In the past, the husband had to go to the king and formally ask his permission before performing the feast. If he was gracious, he also allowed rich royal slaves (*godobusho*) to do it, but for craftsmen it was excluded.

The acquisition of jewellery and clothing took a long time. These were *wogerua*, a forehead ornament consisting of many conical phalli from which

chains hung down, the phalli protruding from the head (see fig. 46). The jewellery was, as usual for the Tigre and privileged classes, made of silver, for all others of brass or copper. Underneath was tied the *sasora*, a lot of fine chains with little bells or jingles at the ends, hanging like a veil down to the chin. A beautiful earring (*muhuhua*) was placed in each ear and a long metal feather (*bira baliyaa*) in the hair. Another splendid headdress was a hairnet of coloured pearl strings and silver rhombs, and a small phallus was attached to a silver cylinder on the front of the forehead. She could also take the spiral staff (*gumbo*, *gasa-gumbo*) of the dignitaries in her hand and put a long chain of many long beads on her neck (*qultua*). All her daily utensils had to be of special quality in the future: she only drank from beautiful drinking calabashes covered with pearls (*gimo gozda*). Her clothes were also of special quality, such as suit trousers and body bandage of the first, best kind (*dunguzu*), the dress of best fabric (*gogami*), over it a cape of colourful striped fabric (*wote*). Their main slaves were also given cloaks of screamingly colourful fabric (*qototo*).

On the day of the great feast, a large crowd of friends and relatives, who form her entourage, gather in front of her house. She appears in her most beautiful jewellery, the spiral staff *gumo* in her hand, and mounts a stallion, rides a few steps, then dismounts and sits on a mule and rides off. The women accompanying her also sit on mules or on a small type of horse (*magaiya*). In front of her rides an excellent female house slave (*garunde*) in her prime, also adorned with necklaces, phalli and earrings (but made of brass). Three of her best friends surround her on horseback so that they can make up the number four with the *gimo.* In front of her ride four men who know how to intonate the shouts of glory (*cequa*), shouting loudly her and her husband's names and those of their ancestors. There are two from her clan and two from her husband's. Her husband, her children and a huge crowd of people follow.

She rides slowly around the market to shouts of glory and then settles down with her entourage on many spread leather blankets and cotton sheets. The women sit in front, the men behind. Beer (*parso*) is set down in front of her in a giant pot, and everyone is given a calabash (*kumeta*) full to the brim and tastes it. The *gimo* rises and strikes the pot four times with her spiral staff until it breaks and the beer runs out. Everyone sits up. One of the heralds rides into the market and shouts loudly to make way. The people scatter on all sides and she rides across.

They usually made a visit to a neighbouring market the following day and repeated both courses at the same markets after a week. Afterwards, there was an enormous feast for all participants, relatives and neighbours, who assumed considerable wealth on the part of the husband, but the relatives helped with gifts of slaughter cattle or cloth money.

In many cases, the prerogatives of the *gimo* are like those of someone who has made the big feast with his cattle, so she is allowed to put a bell around her dearest cow. At all festivals, she sits separately in the best seat, just like the wives of killers in their colourful clothes. She is never allowed to visit the market herself, but only to stand at a distance and watch the hustle and bustle with other fine people. This honour is most evident at the funeral ceremony, where her funeral is less glamorous than that of a hero.

Religious life

by Eike Haberland

Ideas of God

The Wolaita pantheon, like their entire culture, contains elements of all Ethiopian cultures. But what in other areas, such as social life in Wolaita, has combined to form a homogeneous whole, stands here unrelated and unconnected next to each other. It seems as if all the old concepts are completely confused and uncertain in their basic meanings; new religious ideas constantly intruding from outside add to this confusion.

Wolaita is considered by the neighbouring peoples, especially their Ometo relatives, to be the land of sorcerers and spirits. This is only partly true. Often the neighbouring people, where the unknown and uncanny begins behind the seven mountains, is the playground of demons and cannibals, who – once you get there – are now transferred to the next neighbour, so that you could travel to the end of the world without ever getting to them. There is no more witchcraft and magic in Wolaita than in other countries. But what distinguishes the country is the great importance of superstition and the power of the spirits (*ayana*) – that's what I want to call them – which have pushed back the older religion altogether. One could not even say what the old religion was at all, if knowledge of the neighbouring peoples (Dorze, Basketto, etc.) did not allow conclusions to be drawn. This ancient layer is inextricably confused, so that only the pure influences can be determined to some extent. It is the character of the Wolaita that makes the picture even more blurred. It is quite different from the conservative and poetic Oromo, whose firm belief in God and their intimate relationship with the divine leave little possibility for superstition to arise, and whose firmly established worldview gives people enough security to live.

Even among the Arsi, where strong foreign influences are present due to overlapping and recent pseudo-Islamic and pseudo-Christian influences, the old image of God still has the power to triumph over everything. Among the Amhara, the permanent influence of Christianity is so strong that all demons and superstitions are, if not suppressed, then pushed into the background. Such centripetal forces

could not assert themselves among the Wolaita. In addition to the old world-parent pair of heaven and earth, which presumably also existed here, came the Christian ideas of Creator God, of Christ and Mary, Christian saints, to which were added, in colourful confusion with immigrating or superimposed layers of neighbouring peoples, especially the corrupted Islamic concepts of the Hadiya. Thus, Wolaita's pantheon shows the same confusion, as does the origin of the uncounted clans. In the confusion of this pantheon, where the old gods have become spirits and very recent interlopers have been given paramount importance, the character of Wolaita also contributes. Rational and sober by nature – especially the upper class – they completely lack a sentimental and believing mentality, so that they face the numinous things of this world without inner sympathy. On the other hand, they are all the more inclined to fall into the hands of superstition and magic, especially if they fear being threatened by some spell or evil influence. When enumerating the religious ceremonies, one will realise how many are nothing but counter-magic and preventive measures, comparable to the trusting sacrificial acts of the Oromo.

Here devout praying; there conscious facing. Also, the whole nature that surrounds the Wolaita is not at all friendly and positive. Spirits lurk everywhere to harm him, even to drive into him in dangerous places, or the evil eye of werewolves, even the curse of the next, threatens him. Therefore, there is actually no disease that afflicts him or his cattle, no withering of plants, no misfortune that does not have its external cause, whether caused by his own fault, the transgression of a commandment or the intrigues of black magic. It is no longer possible to speak of a fixed world order in religious terms; there are too many possibilities for casting a counter-magic and the general uncertainty as to which ceremony should be held is very great.

The old high god *tosa* has been completely absorbed into the spirit being. Christianity has once again given him some life in the form of the *tosa medidaga*, "the creator god", but he is not particularly respected. If ever there was a model for the otios god, it is him. All that is known is that he created the world; there are no ideas about how. And, as soon as he created it, the enigmatic Talahe, who is the "shepherd and overseer of men" and all the other spirits and the sorcerers and soothsayers, "handed it over to the other powers". He has withdrawn into the "black" sky and no longer cares about anything. He is not completely forgotten, of course, and many a sacrifice benefits him, e.g. the great feasts of merit for cattle. He also always has some animals among the sacred herds, and when people get into trouble, they say, "*Medidaga toso, neni uba eras*!" ("Creator God – You know everything!") when asking to be heard, which is certainly taken from Christianity.

The concept of God, *tosa*, is completely confused by its equation with the general term for spirit, *ayana,* so that the spirit that drives into a person is often called *tosa.* Generally, this applies to the official shaman (*sharecho*), who is par

excellence the "god- or spirit-man" (*tosana*). This gives rise to the confused idea that there are many *tosa*, indeed that every person, or indeed many people, have one, by whom they were created and who, depending on their social rank, are "better" than the others. Thus, the *tosa* of the king commands all others, and the *tosa* of the potter is not worth so much. Members of different clans may argue whose *tosa* would be higher.

After all, it is "still possible" to distinguish the conception of this idea of God from the other spirits who have created nothing and merely act as blessing or cursing or possessing spirits. Likewise, vis-à-vis the divine beings next in importance to the *talahe* (*talahia*). *Tosa*, the sky god, is a purely spiritual being who can also drive humans in this capacity. This is not possible for *bita talahiyo*, the earth deity. I would like to express the unproven assumption that *talahe*, in the capacity of earth deity and non-spiritual being,[64] is identical with the earth goddess of the ancient Ethiopian peoples. Even though nowhere among the Wolaita is there the pronounced pair relationship of "heaven and earth" that so many other peoples, even the Oromo, know. By some context, *talahe* is equated among Christian or Islamic with the "devil" (*setana*), which the Ethiopian peoples do not know. Especially because *talahe* is a deity of the waters, where she strikes people with sickness or misfortune at twelve o'clock in the greatest midday heat. Others think that Satan is not *talahe*, the good and protector of people, but other demons like *daydanta* or *solfa,* who like to ambush people at the water. Not even the dominion of *talahe* over the waters is undisputed; the "god" of the Omo is both *uma toso* and *uma talahe,* although one saying explicitly has *talahe* dwelling in the water and addressing him:

Talahio safandeya antashe. Talahe lives in the river.

Talahe masha maidayo. Talahe wears red and white clothes.

Talahe has nothing to do with the crocodile as the "Genius Omo" as Cerulli writes. The crocodile is not considered at all (unlike in Yem), nor is the snake. Only very few clans have brought a totemic relationship with the snake (*shosha*) from their countries of origin and make a sacrifice (*eka*) to it at clan festivals. However, no one could give me an example.

Many people give *talahe* a bite and a drop of all food and drink as a blessing (*yarso*) and say, "*Talahe* eat this and drink this!" They do this either out of fear *talahe* might harm them or because the fathers already did it. Some also pretend to have met *talahe* on the road; he said to them: "I am *talahe,* if you always worship

[64] Here I cannot go into the very multifaceted complex of Heaven-Spirit-God and Earth-Matter Goddess.

me and give me of everything, I will guide you to the right path that will make you rich." Those who then followed him fared well and their livestock increased.

Ba'ute and *daydanta* are not among the actual spirits. *Hauta* is a piece of cattle that died without being slaughtered. *Ba'ute* is like a woman, like Mary or Atete, who appears to people, especially women, as a nightmare.[65] A sacrifice is needed to appease her, just as it is for *daydanta*, an undefined monster that sits in the water. It lives where the rainbow meets the water and therefore has the colours of the rainbow. Anyone who falls into the water has to be very careful of him and many people are so afraid that they then immediately consecrate one of their cows as a sacred cow (*bakra*) without waiting to see what comes over them.

Ghosts and demons

All these phenomena, however, take a back seat in importance to the spirits, *ayana,* whose classic country is Wolaita. "Every human being", so the Wolaita believe, possesses a spirit (*ayana*). We would better say "a spirit possesses him". Now, it does not depend on the people whether this spirit manifests itself in an outwardly recognisable form in them or whether it perhaps never noticeably appears. Several spirits can also dwell in one person, and that is what makes up the essence of a true possessed person and shaman. The normal person, who will hardly ever feel the working of his spirit (or a spirit), nevertheless adopts its worship out of fear. Perhaps he took this practice from his father or followed the advice of his neighbours. The average man, and especially the fine and well-mannered one, wants to know as little as possible about all spirits. He is glad to have graduated from their victims and does not like to come into contact with their sphere. Even the moaning of the possessed in the seance seems offensive, as a disease; the good man wants nothing to do with it and does not like to marry his daughter or son to a member of a clan of which it is said that possession is hereditary.

Others again love to have a ghost either because it is part of their profession, like the *sharecho*, or because they are poor and sick people who want to make themselves interesting with it or even – I have to judge them by the representatives I met – because they are perverts or hysterics or hypocrites who abuse the supernatural for self-gratification or for market-shouting purposes. It is significant that the evil and undoubtedly anomalous King Damot was the only one possessed among the kings (his spirit was the *aulacho*).

It is the nature of all spirits to demand sacrifices and gifts and veneration from those into whom they have entered. Rebellion against them is pointless and would only result in illness and the certain death of the afflicted. Above all, they want the

[65] Perhaps there is also a connection with *bato*, the earth goddess of the Sidaama.

blood of sacrificial animals, and those who are fortunate may even succeed in satisfying them by large and frequent sacrifices in the beginning of their appearance so that they no longer show themselves and disappear.

Little can be said to explain the names of the many clan festivals (or clan spirits). What is important is that they are never celebrated for the ancestors. Somehow, they seem to be connected with the worship of a spirit, as it is said "whoever has no clan festival has no power to curse" and this cursing is always done with the help of the spirits, as we will see clearly below.

With reservations, I would like to express that I believe that the original "real" possession was by God (*tosa*). This is further stated by the real shaman, the *sharecho* also called *tosawa* "God-man", through the ancient Cushitic name of God Yar, Zar (Sar) hidden in his name. This was corrupted and twisted into the trivial by later infiltrated spirits of a misunderstood superstition, whereby, in the place of the god who proclaimed his secrets, there is an evil spirit who stands in a *do ut des* (Latin: I give so that you may give) relationship with the people. Even greater confusion is shown when the original names of sacrificial acts, ceremonies or festivals are taken as the names of spirits. A process repeated by the Falasha in the personification of the Sabbath, which is nothing other than *som* (fasting), as *somano*, as well as *filsata*, a spirit worshipped by many clans, which is fasting for Mary. Many [spirit names] are of Islamic origin. It is explicitly affirmed that they came to the country with Hadiya women by marriage, and their names, despite all the mutilation, reveal their origin: *algano* (*al ginn* or *algann,* Arabic: spirit), *aulacho* (*auliya*, Arabic: the saints), whose two "brothers" are *sudo* (the black) and *gero* (the yellow). *Kitosa* (Christ) is the spirit of the Feast of the Cross (*maskala)* and *gergisa* (George) is the sound spirit of the *qesiya,* the former having become a priest. *Golfa*, a female spirit, has come from Arsi.

Soul and ancestors

It is peculiar that the Wolaita, despite the vivid idea of spirits of all kinds and their close relations with their ancestors, have no ideas at all about the existence of a soul. Certainly, there are some reminiscences of a Christian kind, according to which "the deceased" (not the soul) go to heaven to God, although no one can clearly imagine what goes there now: "Whoever is dead is lost." The body is in the grave for the time being. Likewise, there are ghostly ideas of the skeleton, of which one is afraid, or of corpses being eaten by werewolves. Also lost is *shemfo*, which means above all breath, but also rest and recuperation and the beginning, and to which the Europeans slightly erroneously ascribe the non-existent idea of a life soul.

The deceased or their spirits (*ayana*), however, are honoured just like all other spirits and are given sacrifices. Partly to prevent evil, as in the case of the souls of slain enemies, partly to assure themselves of the protection of their own ancestors. It is taken for granted that every son remembers his deceased parents throughout his life, but not only them. In addition, they sometimes pray a lot and make offerings to the ancestors in general (*maize*). A frequent form of address is: "My father, [etc.], who is in heaven with God. You who are in heaven with God, help me!" Especially, the parents and ancestors are addressed for the blessing of children. All these sacrifices for the ancestors are of an individual nature and are never performed by a community – as is the case with the ancient peoples.

The sacrifice (*eka*)

As with all other southern Ethiopian peoples, there is no slaughter among the Wolaita that is not also perceived as a sacrifice. Every domestic animal slaughter, whether it is a real sacrifice to the spirits, a festival sacrifice or merely a meat procurement, is always a ritual act that requires certain preconditions for the person of the sacrificer, the execution of the slaughter and the place of the sacrifice. This can be seen above all in the prohibition on slaughtering as long as the father is alive and the even stricter prohibition on slaughtering on land other than one's own, and finally, in the sexual purity required of the sacrificer. The Amhara, which have developed butchery as a profession and thus dispensed with all ritual in the killing, have done much to blur the old religious conception of slaughter. But here, too, the master of the house and the father of the household will take up the butcher's knife himself on ceremonial occasions. Common to all peoples, including the Amhara, is the absolute prohibition on women killing, so that even the enlightened Amhara housewife will call an acquaintance to cut a chicken's neck. All these rules do not apply to killing people and game. In this, every man is free.

Two things are a prerequisite for being able to sacrifice at all: the complete ritual freedom of the person concerned and one's own land on which the sacrifice is performed. As long as the father was alive, it was theoretically forbidden for his sons to make sacrifices themselves – a rule that was not observed in practice, however, if, for example, the father was too old to still be able to slaughter himself or the sons were grown-up family men. In general, it is considered inappropriate to slaughter before marriage, even if permission is granted, and it is considered better to wait until one is 30–40 years old and already has children of one's own. But one always asks the father for permission before slaughtering. As soon as the father has died, each of his sons is free. There is little evidence of the important

position of the *toidi,* i.e. the dearest brother, in his function as family or clan elder, as it is still known among the old peoples in Bako etc. Here, it is more a matter of courtesy. It is more of a courtesy to formally ask the elder brother or even the clan leader – almost no one does this – for permission to slaughter. It is then entirely up to the goodwill of the younger ones to give the older brother some of their offering.

The son receives permission from the father to slaughter and sacrifice himself in a kind of ritual detachment called *goshu.* When a son reaches a manable age, the father slaughters a goat and looks into the entrails to see the son's happy future. When the son grows up and would like to sacrifice and look at the entrails himself, he will ask the father for permission. Almost more important is the rule that a fully valid sacrifice can only be performed on the owner's land. All Ethiopians are very reluctant to let someone else slaughter on their own land for fear that it will give them power over them and cause them harm. The blood of the sacrificial animal that flows onto the ground gives the sacrificer power over everything that lives on that ground with the help of the invoked spirit. It is most harmful if an unauthorised person carries out the slaughter at the sacrificial site in the immediate vicinity of the house. That is why the king always had the palaces guarded, even those that had been abandoned, so that no one could use an evil spell against him and his family there. Members of the expedition had experience of this in Dita in Gamo, where an expedition servant was horribly cursed by the household in the homestead of the chief. The boy, a Muslim, had received a chicken as a gift from the chief as he could not take part in the feast of the others[66] and had unsuspectingly slaughtered the chicken in the chief's homestead. Therefore, the father saw to it, if he had already given them permission, that his sons did not slaughter on their land – for it was still his property until his death and left to them only for their use – but on a public road which belonged directly to no one. He also cared little if they slaughtered in the wilderness or abroad. Or, he insisted that any sacrifice on his soil be performed in his presence, in which case he was sure that nothing evil could be practised and that a grudge from his sons would not come upon him in a magical curse. The slaves, as landless and, secondly, as "eternal children" of their master who could never emancipate themselves, were never allowed to kill and had to bring their slaughtered animals to the master for him to cut their throats. This went so far that a slave who had an acquaintance come to visit could not put meat before him because he did not have the means to slaughter it. One helped oneself in such a way that the slave gave the visitor one of his animals and the latter slaughtered it on a neighbouring street.

[66] The animal intended for this purpose had been slaughtered by a non-Muslim.

In many ceremonies there were official helpers, firstly the *wogachiya* (the "knowers"), who advised people on rituals unknown to them, and then the potters in their capacity as animal cutters and knackers, who dealt with dirty and impure things anyway and did not have to fear suffering harm by touching sacrifices that would also become "bad" through their association with the impure. Finally, the *kala* and the *gala* should be mentioned as ritual helpers. The *kala* is an untouched boy from a respected family whose two parents are still alive and who is allowed to attend certain ceremonies, above all to make the number of participants "full" (i.e. even), i.e. two or six. His other ritual functions – surely, he has had some apart from that – are no longer visible. The *gala* is a close friend of the sacrificer and helps him on very important occasions: at the circumcision, at the feast for 1,000 cattle and at the *simane eqa*.

Before every sacrifice and religious ceremony, even the smaller ones, sexual abstinence should be practised from the evening before until the completion of the ceremony – which can often take weeks in the case of the *somano* or *filsata.* If possible, the sacrificer should not be with anything touched by women. For this reason, he often sleeps on the floor so as not to use the common bed and has a special cloak for this time as he always uses his everyday one as a common bed cover at night.

Slaughter is generally carried out early in the morning at the most common places of sacrifice: in one's own house or directly in front of the front door. The animal always lies on its side; in the house its head is turned away from the door towards the back room, outside the head faces the house. The wife holds the head. The sacrificer silently calls out to God or the spirit to whom the sacrifice is made and cuts the animal's throat with a dragging cut of the crooked knife. The blood flows onto the ground if it is not collected for ritual purposes. It is never drunk. The father usually dips the index and middle fingers of his right hand into the blood and taps himself, women, children, perhaps also the slaves with it on the forehead with blessings: "This we give you, bless us, let us live, make us rich, etc." Then the body of the animal, as it lay there, was opened and the first thing taken out was the stomach contents, which were used ritually, and the fat web (*morya*) on the stomach. From the latter, as with all Ethiopian peoples, the future was seen. Many people are not familiar with this and call in a *wogachiya* who has the fat net ceremoniously placed on a straw plate and oraculates about it for a long time – if he really understands it and is not just pretending. Usually he says "fine, fine" or mumbles about bad times and has a sheep or a goat or even a cow slaughtered. Small pieces of all the important meats are always roasted and dedicated to the invoked power. Often, after the sacrifice, the sacred places in the house – the centre pole and the doorposts – are also sprinkled with blood or stomach contents.

In ancient times, a special privileged class which possessed personal nobility had permission to erect a high bundle of bamboo poles and branches on the lawn to the right and left of the door, around which a liana was looped as a rope. After each sacrifice, the stomach contents were poured out on this, first on the right. In former times, apart from the nobility (the Tigre) and the Kalika, Bubula and Zato clans, only the husbands of Tigre women, the great warriors (*gaddauwa* and *toranca*) and the district governors (*dana*) were allowed to do this. Today, anyone can do it without being denied. Especially the people who have themselves slaughtered on the *maskal* festival love to excel at it. Apart from the two places in and in front of the house, many people had a sacred tree (*basa mita* or *anka*), more rarely *cinem* (*ochua*), at one end of their plot, preferably at the ensete grove, where special sacrifices were performed. For the sacrifices of a larger community, there were still these sacred sites:

For the community, the *zomboro* trees in the sacred space (*dubushsha*) of the community meadow (*gutara*).

For the clans at their clan festival, the sacred tree (*eka mita*) at the homestead of the clan elder.

For the Qesiya clan, their sacred groves (*kasa*) scattered throughout the land and the sites of the former churches (*betaskamm*).

For the king, and thus for the whole of Wolaita, the palaces, each of which had a sacrificial site and sacrificial house. The high mountain peak near the Woise palace, where the entire sacrifice for all of Wolaita was performed once a year, was particularly sacred.

Sacrifices could also be made for the water spirits on the river bank.

The normal sacrificial animals were bulls; oxen were only slaughtered as meat animals at more mundane festivals (e.g. weddings), cows – only old and barren ones – at expiatory sacrifices and expulsions (*falaikya chucha*) or at the Gemini festival. Sheep were particularly suitable for washing away evil with their blood. The colour of the animals generally did not matter, except that they should not be black; that was only for fighting epidemics. Different spirits had their own special colour.

Almost all ritual sacrifices are taken from the sacred herd (*bakra*), which every decent person owns. It is surprising that the idea is especially widespread among the Wolaita, who have a lower ritual attachment to their livestock than the Oromo or Hadiya. However, I can give no clue as to where this cultural element comes from; the Oromo do not know it. This sacred herd does not yield any economic benefit. In Ethiopia, cattle are not used intensively anyway. This does not correspond at all to the practical sense of the Wolaita.

The milk from these cows was only allowed to be drunk by the family, rarely by the clan members, and not given to friends or acquaintances. The cows con-

secrated to the *aulaco* and *simane* were not even allowed to be milked without further ado if they had a calf. This required long negotiations with soothsayers. Only after a sacrifice to the spirit could the milk now be enjoyed, which is why very many people could not afford to drink it. Failure to do so would have caused the death of the cow, if not illness in the family. The bulls of the *bakra* cows were slaughtered before they became sexually mature and great care was taken to ensure that they did not mount a cow. That would have required costly expiatory sacrifices. Except for slaughtering purposes, which involved offering something to their mother's spirit, "they were of no use": they could not be sold, castrated or even harnessed to the plough.

One was only allowed to acquire a wise herd after one's complete ritual independence, that is, after the death of the father, when one could sacrifice freely. All sacred animals inherited from the father lost their sacredness, which they had only in the eyes of their owner, and everyone began to consecrate new animals for themselves.

Their main purpose was their mere existence. The owner expected a special blessing from it when he consecrated a cow to a spirit or God. Perhaps he did this out of tradition. All his ancestors consecrated sacred cows to the creator god and the earth goddess, for example, or else an event and the resulting fear made him proceed to an investiture. Someone fell into the water while crossing a river – possibly at a disreputable place – and soon realised that he had come into contact with the *daydanta,* the "water spirit". Either the *daydanta* appeared to him in a dream and demanded not only an expiatory sacrifice but also the sacrifice of a cow consecrated to him, or the frightened man went to a soothsayer and sought advice. After completing the sacrifice, he then proceeded to appoint a brown heifer, for brown is the colour of *daydanta*. To do this, the father of the family stroked her back four times and patted her on the hump four times: "You are the *daydanta bakra*! I want to feed you before all the other cows!" At each calving, this ceremony was repeated. The first milk is collected for a week and kept in two vessels without touching it. After a week, one pours half of the milk into a calabash and places it against the wall in the back room for a day, saying to *daydanta* before taking it away, "Here is your milk, the first part of the milk, the later we will drink!" The next morning one prepares butter from the other milk, roasts barley in it, takes the calabash with the milk and the butter-barley and goes to the river. Here, at the place where the *daydanta* first came into contact with the people, the offerings are set down and left there: "*Daydanta*, these are my offerings!" Only husband and wife are allowed to enjoy the milk and butter; even the children are excluded. A prosperous Wolaita usually had the following cows for the most important spirits:

ta ayana bakra	for the own mind

ta awa ayann bakra	for the spirit of the father (but only if he was the eldest son)
ta aya ayana baktra	for the spirit of the mother
meda tosa bakra	for the creator God
bita talahiyo	for the goddess of the earth

These were the most important, but there were perhaps *simane* for *aulaco* (and his brothers *sudo* and *gero*) and *daydanta*. "The *algano* got nothing, because they made *somane* for him every year."

Just as the sacred herd of the individual related only to him and his family, so its significance extended to the larger circle of people. The *bakra* herd of the clan leader was sacred for the whole clan, and the sacred herd of the king for the whole country.

Many poor people do not have the means to perform a bloody sacrifice. Then the diviner (*kayuwa*), who advises on all sacrifices, instructs them to "slaughter" some yellow "fly fruits" (of the various *Solanum* species), i.e. to cut them in half. He throws four halves to the sky. If they fall down in such a way that two are on the flat side and two on the round side, it is said "*Dika, dikis!*" ("It is good!"). If it does not happen, other halves are thrown up until the desired position is finally achieved, then it is also good.

As an unbloody sacrifice, the Wolaita know the *yarso*, a ritual offering of all food and drink, at least, that which is enjoyed on ceremonial occasions: roasted grains (also the firstlings of the field crop); milk and honey wine, which are sprayed in blessing; and the dripping of beer. Just as the full (i.e. even) number of participants in the sacrifice is prescribed, so is the "full" vessel of beer at celebrations, which must be so full that it almost overflows. It would be an insult at all to offer an honoured guest a drinking vessel (calabash) that is not overflowing. From this calabash, the offerer – and in the case of mere drinking gatherings, the oldest person present – spills four drops on the floor, sits down solemnly, takes it again and then, only after a while, is the first to taste it.

Of all the plants, the ensete is economically and ritually the most important. Two interleaved leaves are the base of many offerings. Besides it, the leaves of the *mayo*, the leaves and wood of the *malitano* tree and the grass *gorta* are often used ritually. *Ochua* and *anka* are the most common sacrificial trees.

Christianity and the great festivals

Sunday (*wogga*) and, according to highland Ethiopian custom, Saturday (*kera*) were holidays and were strictly observed with regard to rest from work, especially Saturday. Anyone who worked in his field on that day would have everything

smashed by hail. On Sunday, people were not so strict about work. Above all, this was the day of consultation, when the old people gathered in the community squares to discuss the affairs of the community. The young people also held horse races on the community meadow, the best of them were chosen to train the young horses.

The greatest of all festivals – also celebrated today by Christians and pagans in almost all of Ethiopia – is the Feast of the Cross (*maskal*) in September. From its widespread and extraordinary significance, its connection with the beginning of the year, we can conclude that the Christian Feast of the Cross was connected with an already existing ancient Ethiopian New Year. The timing is very appropriate: the heavy rains from June to mid-September have stopped, everything is green, the seeds are sprouting, and people are in joyful anticipation of the coming harvest. Everywhere the festival is associated with the ceremonial lighting of fires, which is the symbol of a beginning. It is probably a mere coincidence that the double feast of the Finding of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross (which is celebrated on 14 September of the European calendar), as the last great victory of Oriental Christianity, was especially celebrated by the Oriental Church and coincided with the end of the rain. This is not true everywhere; in Sidaama and Kaffa, for example, it rains longer. But in highland Ethiopia, e.g. in Shoa, the cessation of rain on the day of the Cross is proverbial. As the main festival of the Ethiopian Church, it penetrated into southern Ethiopia with the Amhara cultural influence, and everywhere – in Wolaita, Gamo and Kaffa – this influence reached, of all Christian cultural assets, it still retained its old character, at least externally.

Now the pagan, i.e. the folk *maskal* also coincides with the Christian Amhara one on 17 September. In the past, the Wolaita assure us, the festival would always have taken place on Thursday – probably the first (or second) of the first month. Already in the months before, great preparations had taken place. Festival comrades got together to buy cattle for slaughter. The children gathered wood for the fires, and the king issued calls to all warriors throughout the country to assemble on the King's Meadow on the actual day of the festival. For all men who lived in the wider area – that meant at the palaces in Dalbo and the entire region Damot –it was an absolute duty to come. They were severely punished if they did not appear. All virgins and younger girls dyed their fingernails red with the herb *wosolo*, otherwise only brides were allowed to do so, and procured lemons and flowers. Early in the morning on Thursday, twenty beautiful girls from noble families, followed by many other girls, came to the king's palace, where the king awaited them with his wives and grandees in his large residence, where he sacrificed and slaughtered a lot. The girls held in each hand large bouquets of the white *maskal* flower (*ko-*

rma), which blooms only in September.[67] While the other maidens stayed behind, the twenty most beautiful ones entered and presented the bouquets to the king with their right hand and to his wives with their left, shouting, "*Yo, yo, yo*!" The king grabbed all the flowers and replied, "*Yoyo, chishai dada dite, maskalai dada dite*!" ("Live like the flowers, live like the *maskal*"), i.e. live year after year and come year after year. Then he threw his flowers at the foot of the central pole and the king's wives threw theirs in the back room. Now the most worthy old men of the kingdom came up and received flowers in the same way. The king entertained the girls with especially good food and tied the flowers to the centre pole himself after they left.

In the meantime, it had become noon and an enormous crowd had gathered on the royal lawn in front of the palace to take part in the highest heroic honour (*gefata*) by the king. All the greats of the empire, war heroes, and hunters had come on horseback, with all their weapons, the most splendid robes and their kill ornaments (*kalachu*, ostrich feathers, necklaces, earrings, etc.). The king took a seat on a chair on the raised side of the field, from where he could overlook everything. Four warriors of the bodyguard held the red canopy over him. His wives with their friends from noble families sat to his left. Even further to the left sat the common women, so that the field was bordered by them on one long side. The king sent a chamberlain to stand among the men on the field and shouted, "Let the husbands of men [*atuma asa azena*] come before the king and let the husbands of women [*macu asa azcua*] come to the women's side!", i.e. warriors and slayers were to appear before the king to be honoured, but for the inglorious, the hour of shame had come.

The mightiest warrior of the realm – like the Gareno Murar in the time of King Amado, who had killed ninety-nine enemies – stepped before the ruler and received from his hand a huge horn full of honey wine, which a servant had to hold for him to drink. Before he began to drink, he boastfully savoured this highest honour one could attain and waited until the other warriors had approached. Four times he took a mouthful and spouted at the others, "*Mige, mige*!" ("This you shall not have!"). Then he ran up and down swinging his spear as if frantic and boasted to the women,"Your husbands will come later. I am the husband of men, I do not know women!", and all the women answered him with loud trills (*ililta*). So, he strode along acclaimed and settled down on the left of the king. The other most famous heroes were also honoured in the same way, one after the other, according to the number of times they had killed. Those who had killed fewer than twenty could still boast in the king's presence but were not given any more wine. After that, the chief chamberlain led the lesser heroes, who could only boast of a few

[67] This must be a different species from Shoa's yellow flower.

or single kills, away from the king's presence. They were only allowed to boast in front of the queens and noble women. The "bad" slayers, who had only pitiful things to show – weak, too old or too young opponents or even children, decrepit buffaloes or young lions – were forcibly brought before the common women, no matter how much they might be ashamed to present their minor deeds. The women usually took pity on them, blessed them and wished them great luck for the future.

Those who had killed nothing at all preferred to hide away so as not to be ridiculed by their happier comrades. Often, such extremely limited and insulted men hanged themselves out of despair.

At the lower end of the royal meadow, the metre-high *maskal* tree (*barota, barudu,* Amharic: *damara*) had already been planted (usually a Croton: *anka*), which, like the *maskal* trees of the Amhara and dead trees of the Sidaama, had been completely stripped of its bark and had only retained a few branches in the crown at the top. A large funeral pyre was piled around it. Before sunset, a page brought a lighted torch to the king, who solemnly lit the pyre and led the procession of the people around the pyre four times, singing in order of rank. Everyone sang "*Nole, eho, aho*!" and held the ripe stalks of millet in their hands, to which the white flowers were tied at the top.[68] Women did not take part in the procession. When the fire was dying out, the king took a calabash of honey wine and one of beer, blasted into the embers and shouted "*Laita, laita, sero gata*!" ("Year after year, give us good!"). The charred stake was laid down, the king broke some coal and spread it on his and his wives' foreheads. All the people did likewise and took some home to bless the children. The king's band and all the potters of the land began to play and over the cheers of the people, the king went back to the palace.

On the following Sunday, the *maskal* festival of the communities and families took place. Long before, since the *dubushsha* festival of each community, the children had assembled a large pyre on the community lawn. On the days before Sunday, all the world made very thick, tightly knotted ropes of grass (*tompe*) – in every homestead, at least as many as there are children. One hour after sunset, the big drum is beaten in the king's palace and the first rope is lit. The father of the family who saw or heard this, or saw a fire blazing somewhere in the neighbourhood, also lit his rope and went around the house with this burning torch, touching with it the centre post, the two doorposts, the two entrances to the back room, the meat for the feast (see below) and the big beer pot, saying each time: "*Setane fule*!" ("Devil out!"). When everything was thus blessed, the father went outside the door where all the sons were sitting with their ropes, lit them on his and moved with them to the community meadow, where the whole community gradually gathered. First, the sacrificial priest throws the torch in a great arc from afar into the heap. The

[68] These were not later thrown into the fire as was the case with the Amhara.

others follow him. Everyone tries to throw as far as possible. Everyone sings and cheers, jumps and hugs each other. People jump around the fire and shout "Dana, dana!" ("We want to live/stay!") and then walk around joking and chatting until midnight, when the fire is extinguished. The *maskal* slaughter, an event of ritual and also legal significance, had already taken place in the afternoon. It can also be held only on the following Monday before the actual feast. The ideal of a rich man is to invite his neighbours to this celebration without expectation of anything in return. A very rich man in the time of King Damote surpassed all men in the history of the people. He let it be known that anyone or any sacrificial community who needed it could get slaughter cattle from him for free, and so allegedly gave away 550 bulls and oxen. The nobility, the Tigre, who think they are better in everything, keep themselves separate from the other people at a slaughter and do not take part in the invitations of the others but only slaughter for themselves with other Tigre, and possibly invite other people as guests.

The normal thing was a festive community of 10–15 people who got together year after year.[69] Each time, someone different would do the slaughtering. The others had to pay him their share by the next feast, otherwise they would become slaves to their creditor. This slaughter usually takes place on the square in front of the house. First, the sacrificer roasts some grain and throws it down to the right and left of the sacrificial animal: "*Bali kitosa, haya bora nesiyo imais*!" ("Feast of Christos, this ox I give you!"). Then he takes four sacred *mayo* leaves with butter smeared between them, taps them four times behind the animal's hump and says the same four times. Then he slaughters it. The blood is collected and kept separately. A piece is cut from all the meat from the right side: from the breast meat, the hump, the foreleg, the hind leg, the rib and the tenderloin – six chunks in all. They are seared briefly and put into the sacrificer's hands in two sheets. Again, he throws the meat down to the right and left of the slaughtered animal and calls out: "*Marechi mori lo'a! Bali kitosa, haya ne imais*!" ("The entrails and the fat let well, Christos feast, this I give thee!"). The feast does not take place until the next morning. The blood had been collected in a large bowl and wrung through ensete leaves to keep it liquid. In the morning, they pour it onto a clay shard and mix it with soot, then paint a full circle on their foreheads with a strong grass stalk. They then dab the small yellow seeds of a nightshade species (*Solanum coagulens*) on it with their finger, make a cross with a circle around it and go to the celebration like this.

Often, regardless of the individuals' celebrations, a rich person would invite his clients, his neighbourhood or his community to a nice feast. The men, women and children would then sit separately in groups and receive different dishes. The

[69] Perhaps originally twelve and thus a remnant of the old communion societies?

boys, for example, were given goulash with the testicles of slaughtered animals so that they would become strong and soon manly. As a fourth group, the slaves of the master in question are fed. The other slaves of the community are only invited to their masters‘ houses. The craftsmen appear a few days later.

Such was the general invitation on Monday. On Tuesday, the girls and boys went around singing and cheering, the girls with thick white bouquets of flowers, which they presented in blessing to the individual fathers of the families, who received the bouquets in the same way as the king before and tied them to the centre post of the house. Other girls bought lemons long beforehand, paraded around with a thick bundle in their cloaks and presented them to their acquaintances. All were invited and entertained or given food on the way.

On Wednesday, the newly married couples go to visit their parents. They also hold flowers in their hands and have beautiful food– raw spicy meat or fat goulash – in decorative pots (*logomo*). They set the food down in front of the door and enter the house with only the flowers, which they give to the parents with a mutual blessing. In the afternoon, the other older children also appear with food and flowers. Those who love their parents cannot possibly be absent. The father receives everything with thanks and gives them even better and more abundant food.

The potters had made all kinds of crockery for the feast and given it to the great ones of the community on whose land they perhaps also lived as clients. In return, they were invited on Friday and entertained on the doorstep or in a feast arbour and given meat for their supper.

Seventeen days after the *maskal* festival, on a Saturday, every father of a family makes *nannuga*: he has some of every field crop, grain, tubers, vegetables and legumes without exception collected and boiled in a large pot with butter to a thick porridge. When the dish is cooked, the father forms dumplings from the porridge, throws them against the roof at the top where it is supported by the central pole, and shouts: “*Kalo esoya kosai karekia*!” (“Let good things stay in the house, let hunger (and evil) go out the door!”). Some think it is a very favourable sign if the dumplings stick for a long time and an evil one if they fall right away.

On the eighteenth day, Sunday, is the great casting out of demons (*golua igeta*). It concludes the celebrations of the New Year. In the evening, everyone waits in the houses until the big band begins to play in the royal palace. Then everyone rushes out with small drums, bullwhips, large leather horns, sticks and burning logs. A wild spectacle of hell ensues: everyone beats frantically on the drums, cracks their whips, beats the leather; trumpets of all kinds are blown. The magicians (*kalicha*) and shamans (*sharecho*) play their big drums, the boys throw the burning logs around in a wide arc and everyone shouts: “*Huhu, alo, goro sero*

bada, seroya!" ("Hey, hello go in good and return in good!"). Now diseases and demons are driven away and the New Year can begin in earnest.

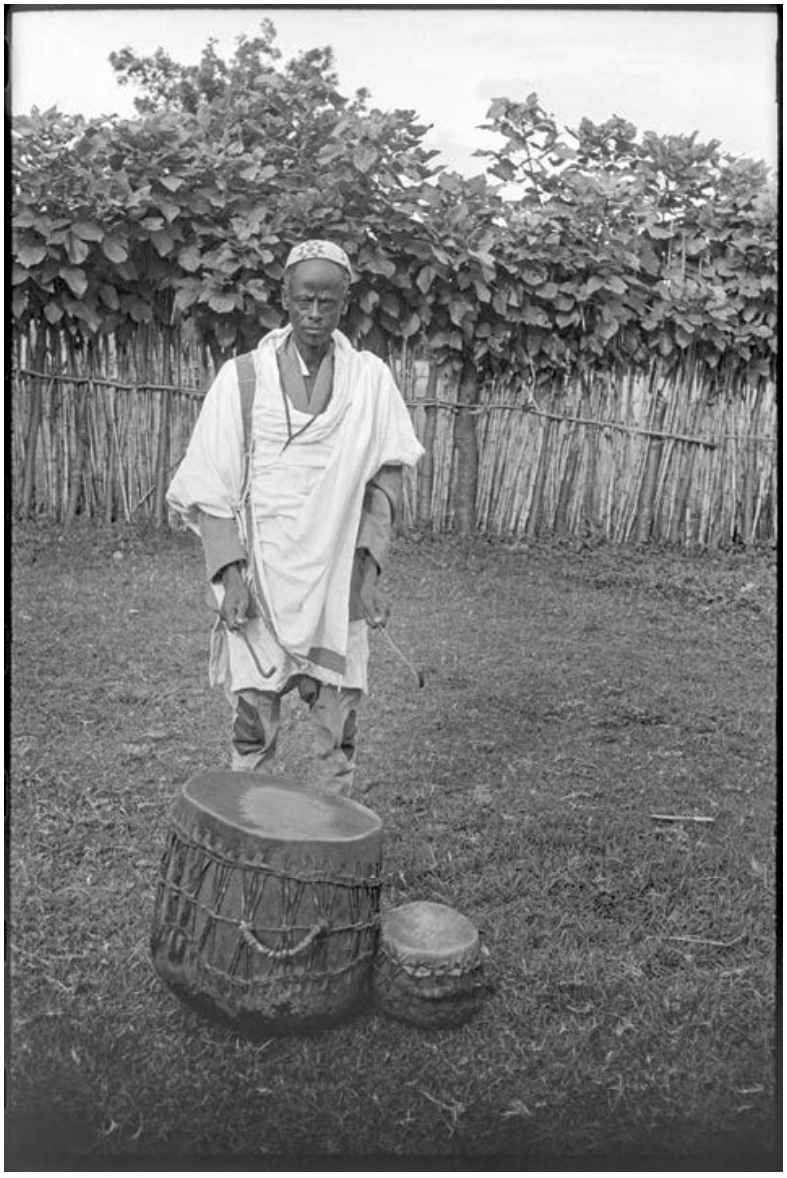


Fig. 47: Drums of the kalicha north of Tilge

The Easter festival (*fasika*), however, has completely lost its Christian character and has become connected with the king's hunt in a way I do not know. When the former priests (*Qesiya*) had calculated the date, the king went out at the head of a huge cavalcade on the morning of Good Friday. The game in the borderlands was not sufficient for this large troop, and so far-flung wastelands rich in game were visited – the lowlands of Sambara near Zala, the Omo lowlands near Bosa (Garo), the steppe below Ulbarak (Gurage) or even the middle of the savannah, rich in game, near Shashamane – without asking the Arsi or one of the other neighbouring peoples beforehand. In view of the huge train that appeared unexpectedly, resistance was not even possible, and if the people in question wanted to defend

themselves, the hunting party was already back home on Easter Sunday. "If the neighbouring peoples objected, they should just start a war!" On Sunday evening everyone returned, and on Monday the king gave a great feast, entertained everyone and had the heroes of the hunt proclaim their glory on the king's meadow.

Other festivals like Christmas or Epiphany (Amharic: *timket*) were not very well known, nor was fasting. Only the priests (*Qesiya*) and a few people who expected something from it celebrated the small fast, *filsata mariam*, of two weeks; the big fast was strangely enough completely unknown.

One public festival is nevertheless celebrated by a great many Wolaita so that it is almost a national festival: *somano*. This is a festival derived from Christianity or Islam, brought by Hadiya free people, on which, apart from the fasting (*som*) that has become a spirit, other terms raised to spirits, *alguno, aulacho, sudo* and *gero* are worshipped. The ceremonies carried ancient remnants in the sun and moon sacrifices, for example. Most of it makes a very recent impression, filled with distinctly superstitious and magical ideas.

Throughout Wolaita in May–June, men, though not Christians, are seen walking with a small stick in their forehead hair. They often have a ribbon tied around their head to prevent the stick from falling off – a sign that they are committing *somana.* Anyone who is doing it for the first time, whether he took it [the tradition] over from his father and has now started making sacrifices of all kinds as an independent person after marriage or whether he is doing it for the first time in his family, must first give the *alguno*, as the main spirit of the festival, and his brother *aulacho* with his two emanations *sudo* and *gero* a great opening feast, called *algano eka* for short, "as if they were being baptised". Some people go to the soothsayer when their child or father dies, they have slaughtered a goat and show him the entrails and fat-net. If some other ceremonies have already been fruitless, the fortune teller now says: "There is a sacrificial ceremony (*eka*) that your fathers performed, but which was forgotten and which you no longer do, it will probably be *somano* and the *alguno eka.*"

The poor man must now first try to acquire the cattle necessary for the sacrifice and all the food and other certain items. He does all this under the guidance of a *wogachiya* (doctor and all-knowing man) who advises him on all these celebrations for a rich reward. He buys or selects from his herd: an old cow and an old sheep, both of which have stopped birthing, and a lamb. Their colour was prescribed for him by the soothsayer after special consultations: a black he-goat, an entirely red bull whose mouth part must also be red, an entirely black and an entirely pale bull (*dalacha*). Furthermore, red, black and white honey and red (i.e. brown), black and white barley.

Once everything is together, the father of the house gathers all his children, including the married daughters, and begins the celebration on a Tuesday if pos-

sible; the *alguno* is not bound to any date. This first day is called *maniso.* In the morning, with the help of the *wogachiya*, he rams four man-sized poles of the *malitano* tree into the ground in front of the front door so that a person can walk between them and connects them at the top with a vine (*ufulte*). A ponytail is hung in the middle of each gate. Each of the festival participants walks through the bars four times in each direction in lines of eight. The *wogachiya* walks in front of the man holding *koso* leaves, a hippopotamus whip and a horse's bridle as a bundle and lets him bite into it at each gate. While doing so, the biter says, "U'a, u'a!" Then the father of the house slaughters the old cow, the old sheep and the lamb. The *wogachiya* takes a bundle of *mayo* and *malitano* leaves and sprinkles the family with the blood in blessing. It is the same with the billy goat. Its hide is cut in a spiral in one piece to form a thong, which the *wogachiya* throws four times on the head of anyone who sits down in front of it. They all go into the house and roast some of the black barley until it begins to stink and extinguish it with the fetid water of a hookah. They crouch close around the barley and spread their robes over it so that the steam does not escape and they breathe in as much of the stench as possible. Once this is done, the *wogachiya* piles the barley, unroasted meat from the goat and the belt onto an ensete leaf and puts it into a sieve. Everyone sits down in a circle with him. He takes hold of the sieve and lets it circle over them. After each circle he puts it on the head of one of them and says, "Devil, go out!" ("*Talahe kia*!" or "*Setane kia*!"). He takes the sieve to a sacred Croton tree (*basa anka*) and pours out the contents in front of it. All this applied to the *alguno*.

Now follows the celebration of the *aulacho*, "the lord of the red". The red bull is slaughtered, the *wogachiya* pulls off a strip of skin (*isinchu*) from the navel to the penis (inclusive), cuts a slit in it and slips it over the right pulse of the master of the house. He strips it off four times and hangs it over himself again, finally leaving it hanging. The brown ("red") barley is roasted, ground, boiled to a paste and poured into the father of the house's clasped hands; liquid butter is poured over it until it flows over his fingers and drips onto the floor. Then they cover his head while he tastes the porridge four times. He holds out his hands to the others. They kiss both his palms four times and taste four times of the porridge. Then the chopped raw meat of the red bull is stuffed into his hands and the whole ceremony is performed with butter pouring and everything else as with the barley. The *wogachiya* puts the red honey with a little water into a cut horn tip of the red bull, takes eight mouthfuls and sprays with it four times in blessing over the festival participants and four times on the ground in front of himself for himself. Finally, pieces of each kind of meat of the bull are scattered around the fire so that they gradually roast there.

Having thus proceeded with all the red for the *aulacho*, the same is done with the black bull, black honey and black barley for the *sudo,* and with the pale animal, white barley and white honey for the *gero,* that is, for both brothers of the *aulacho*.

On the evening of this day, the sun sacrifice (*auwa eka*) is performed. The *wogachiya* takes porridge made of roasted white barley with plenty of butter and piles it on two ritually laid ensete leaves. He mixes white honey with water and pours it into an unused new calabash. He takes an ensete leaf with the barley in his left hand, the calabash in his right hand, goes outside the door to the right side of the house lawn and holds the offerings high towards the setting sun: "*Auwaffa, auwaffa nesi imais*!" ("Sun this I give you!"). He sets it down at the side of the ensete. From a wooden tip he flushes white honey mixed with water towards the sun four times. When the moon comes out, he repeats the offering with a white offering for him and places everything close to the house.

The father of the house does not leave the house with the *wogachiya* for four days. Every morning and evening he repeats with the family the eating of the three different kinds of barley from his hands. At the same time, they eat from the roasted meat lying around the fire, and every morning and evening the *wogachiya* beats them all twice over the back with a hippopotamus whip and a horse's tail. On the fourth day, the *wogachiya* takes some of all the meat, especially the three kinds of honey and barley, the yeast of the festival beer and the grass with which the festival house was strewn, puts them in a sieve and pours them out at the Croton building. The *algano* festival is over and they now await the first *somano* festival.

The father of the house rubbed the three strips of skin from the navel of the bulls well with butter and kneaded them soft and kept them in a pot. Whenever he is in trouble, he takes them out, puts them on, anoints them and himself with butter and prays to the *algano*: "I have always brought you sacrifices, now help me too!"

On the tenth day of the ninth month (*somano agine*), the *somano* month, which corresponds roughly to the end of May, the *somano* festival begins throughout Wolaita. The father gets up very early in the morning, before sunrise, and goes to the nearest stream with an empty calabash and four tufts of *gorta* grass. There he takes off his clothes and, before washing himself, performs a prayer to Haibana, who is "a brother of the *somano*": "Haibana, haibana, give me wealth, many, many children and health! Let me live! Year after year I will sacrifice to you!" He washes his hands, then his feet, then his face with both hands. Finally, he takes two clumps of grass in each hand and sprinkles water over his back four times. Then he turns his face towards the house and his back towards the water and he hurls the grass above him in an arc into the stream with his left hand. With the same hand, he fills the calabash and, holding the calabash in one hand and the grass in the other, starts

on his way home. In the meantime, the woman has cut off the top of the calabash and poured milk into it as if into a cup. The milk must be from an unblemished cow (no horns broken, horns evenly grown, both eyes healthy, all four teats on the udder). The man comes, gives her the water and asks, "Where is the Haibana milk?" She gives it to him, he dips the grass in it and tastes it four times,"*Haibana meda*!", "Haibana help, help me to reach the next year!", and gives it back to the woman. She brings butter, he anoints the grass with it and puts it into the pot with the three strips of belly skin. He settles down and eats good food. Afterwards he enjoys nothing more until evening.

In the evening she prepares *gurdo*, barley porridge: barley is roasted, ground and soaked. In a large shallow pot, many chopped pieces of ensete leaf ribs are placed at the bottom so that nothing browns, and the soaked porridge is placed on top and left to cook. When it is cooked, it is put on ensete leaves to cool, the rib pieces are taken out, and then put back into the pot with butter and spices.

Meanwhile, in the back room of the house between the fireplace and the bed, the father has spread ensete leaves on the floor and settled down on them. The wife fills the two *somano* decorative pots (*somano kere*), which are only used for this purpose, full of porridge, puts a horn spoon upright in each, wraps them with fresh ensete ribs so that they do not fall over and places them on the floor in front of her husband. She and two more family members (so that the four is full) join the man. They hold their hands outstretched over the pots and pray: "*Somano*, *somano*, help me and my wife and children, give us wealth, happiness, health, let me attain rank (*danate ta gata*), etc!" The woman pours both pots alternately into his upheld hands; when they are completely full she pours so much liquid butter over them that it runs over his hands. So that it does not drip onto the ground, she alternately pushes the bowls underneath. He prays again, "*Somano mada*!", kisses his hands four times and then tastes four times and makes his wife and sons (daughters not) kiss four times and taste four times. While he tasted, the invited neighbours sprayed their saliva over him in blessing. What is left over he puts into a third *somano* pot. There is also a lot of porridge left in the big pot, from which neighbours, children and relatives eat together.

Beforehand, he had cut a pencil-long stick from the *maltano* tree and sharpened it at one end. After the ceremony with the porridge, he anoints his head with butter, has the woman bring the stick and puts it four times in the front of his hair: "*Somano tayo kcha, ta maches keha, ta natus keha me*!" ("Somano be good to me, be good to my wife, be good to my children!"). He takes it out again and puts it over the edge of the pots for the night.

The next morning, again bright and early before dawn, before life awakens, the woman offers him the leftovers from the third pot. When a hyena howls, a bird sings or a cock crows while he is still eating, he stops and even spits out what he

had in his mouth. That is not a good sign. Then he drinks four sips of milk from the tip of a calabash and puts the little stick in his hair: the fast has begun. He now eats nothing all day for four days and only eats food in the evening, after he has drunk four sips of milk from the tip of the calabash. At night he puts the small stick and the calabash cup into the right of the two *somano* pots. During the day, if he bumps his toes against a stone or stumbles so that he bleeds, he must add a new fasting day.

On the fourth evening, "*somano sore sano*" (*somano* is interrupted). On the fifth day he eats again as usual and does not carry the stick, the first period is finished. On the sixth day, four fasting days begin again, and so it goes through the twenty remaining days of the month until the 29th day.

Then, in the evening before the sun sets, the woman again prepares a lot of food. He drinks milk four times, eats and, breathing a sigh of relief, lays the little stick across the pots again as at the beginning and says: "I have gone through" or "I have accompanied the fast". The little stick goes into the pot with the strips of fur and the grass. From then on, he considers himself special compared to those who do not commit *somano*. He eats only meat slaughtered by *somano* comrades, drinks only milk from a faultless cow, eats and drinks from no broken dishes and enjoys nothing from a sick or withered ensete. If someone dies in his neighbourhood and he happens not to have been present at the funeral celebration, he cannot enter there later, eat, drink or smoke anything until a relative of the dead person slaughters a sheep and scatters the blood and stomach contents around the house with *mayo* leaves, thus purifying everything that came into contact with the dead person.

Various ceremonies and sacrifices

Of the other sacrificial acts and ceremonies, insofar as they do not appear in connection with other institutions elsewhere in the text, I reproduce here the two most important: the flourishing of the field plants and the release from curses, disease and other coming or past evil.

Banishing (gika)

Anyone whose grain or grass is ripe and who is afraid of thieves or wandering cattle goes to the magician (*kalicha*) and asks him to protect his field. He [the *kalicha*] gives him some khat (*katha edulis*) consecrated by him, with solemn speeches and warnings to be careful, and releases the man after he has kissed his hand. He goes to his field and rams sticks of the *yara* bush in all four corners, wraps the khat with dry ensete leaves and ties the tufts to the four sticks. While

doing so, he shouts four times: "*Woido goda tosa aicha kata bochofa!* "("By the god of the lord of Woido [the sorcerer's ritual name], do not touch the grain!") The neighbours hear this, are afraid of the *kalicha*'s magic power and do not touch anything. When the grain is ripe and nothing has been stolen, he cuts four stalks, takes a calabash of beer and some honey as a gift and the four sticks of khat and goes to the sorcerer. He is done with harvesting, he says, let him release the curse. The magician first opens the ensete leaves and checks whether the khat is still inside. If it is, all is well. He drips some of the beer, lets the man kiss his hand and allows him to harvest. If there is no khat in it because it fell out or a wicked neighbour scattered it over the field, it is bad for the field owner. He cannot easily go into the field cursed by the khat, otherwise he would fall ill. He has to bring a black goat and honey to the *kalicha*, for which the latter has to make a long ceremony to release the curse.

The moles (*ocua*) that eat the root of the young seed come from heaven, according to the Wolaita. When they kill one, they hang it on a high pole. Then they [the moles] see it above, are afraid and do not come down.

If the rain does not fall but the drought is not great enough to induce the king to make a rain offering, one goes to the Hadiya people who live in Wolaita, or to those whose clans once migrated from Hadiya, and brings them a black sheep, a black goat and black honey. The Hadiya slaughters the two animals and greets their heads with some of the honey in a calabash and *gorta* grass near a spring. At home, he prepares honey water with the other half of the honey, pours it into a cattle horn, sprinkles it towards the sky and prays to *algano*, who according to the Hadiya is responsible for the rain.

For all "old" grain crops, i.e. barley, wheat, millet and maize, an initial sacrifice (*yarso*) must be made when they ripen. When barley ripens in May or November and wheat in December, the father of the family picks a few ears, rubs out the grains and roasts them. Then he sits on the bed, scatters the grains around the house in blessing and drips beer. Anyone who eats from a grain for which *yarso* has not yet been made will fall ill. That is why women always ask anxiously when the new harvest comes in whether *yarso* has already been made. When millet ripens in December, *yarso* is made in November, because children like to eat unripe millet and they want to prevent something from happening to them. The woman breaks off four ears, roasts them lightly, rubs out the grains and gives them to the householder, who tastes them and offers them from his hand to the wife and children, saying: "*Dura durua wodian wodiani, sero gata*!" ("Beginning to begin, time after time (i.e. year after year), in goodness let us attain!"). For maize, which is always planted and always ripe, one does the *yarso* even when it is green. Two green cobs are roasted and their kernels scattered. In the evening, some cobs are boiled in water and placed under the family's sacred tree (*basa*).

The father calls all the sons, slaves and herding boys and says, "We have made *yarso*, you can eat!"

Wolaita is considered by the neighbouring peoples to be the land of sorcerers, of the evil eye and of bewitchments, and when one sees what an endless register the Wolaita live in to protect themselves from this, one almost thinks that this opinion is based on facts. Most of the great religious ceremonies, for example, the whole *somano* complex, are not performed as an ancient custom in which man would like to renew his unbiased relationship with the divine, but as a fearful defensive measure to prevent something worse. There are really countless ceremonies that have to be performed to satisfy the spirits. Once when I was at the Omo, in the thick wet bush forest, which is avoided as much as possible, I saw a father with his five-year-old son and a small goat making the descent together with us. We puzzled over the purpose of his journey; it seemed hard to understand why he had set out on the long journey to Dawuro without company and supplies. Down on the shore, the mystery was solved. Father and son crouched on the bank, slaughtered the goat, letting blood and stomach contents and bits of roasted meat slide into the water over prayers to the god of the Omo – they just weren't sure whether to call him *uma toso* or *uma talahiyo.* Father and son had recently returned from a trip to Dawuro, and in crossing the Omo, which was up to the adults' chests, the boy had slipped from his companions' hands and floated several hundred metres downstream. Miraculously, he had been saved. The father then decided to make an offering to the river spirit, not so much to thank him for saving him as to ask him to be more merciful in the future. The goat was the smallest and leanest he had found in all of Wolaita. Such sacrifices turn out very differently, and significantly, wealth is also obliged to sacrifice: poor people buy themselves off with fly-fruit; rich people prefer to think they are safe and donate more. It was mentioned above that a person who has fallen into the water in the highlands makes an offering to the *daydanta* and takes a cow for him into his sacred herd. The sacrifice may be performed thus, according to the instructions of the diviner: the man takes a brown goat and porridge of brown barley with butter and slaughters the goat on the shore where he met the *daydanta*. He lets the blood and stomach contents flow into the water and roasts the meat on a fire by the water. Finally, he takes two ensete leaves (*erge*), puts the porridge on them and the roasted meat on top and leaves it there as an offering.

The *ba'ute* often comes to the women at night as a nightmare. When it accumulates, the woman, with the help of the man, makes an *eka* in the back room in the evening. Beforehand, they have cooked porridge from fine ensete flour and anointed themselves completely with butter. The woman strips naked and holds *erge* leaves with the ensete porridge on her lap, all around she puts four small blobs of butter. The man prays:

Ba'ute, ba'ute, mada mada! *Ba'ute, ba'ute*, help, help!
Wuigia mada, kolua mada! Help the floor, help the back room!
Ta machiu mada, tana mada! Help my wife, help me!

The woman gets dressed again and both go to the next *mayo* bush and lay the offerings there. There are just as many procedures for illnesses.

Reconcilliation ceremony (wurso)

A man lives in discord with his wife (or sister, *menata*), withholding money or the like from her so that she is angry and curses him. He falls ill and puzzles over where the illness comes from. In the meantime, the woman is sorry – or she has forgotten – and goes with the man's eldest brother to the *sharecho* (shaman), who explains to her, "It is your curse, the curse of the wife" ("*machiu gome*" or if it is the sister, "*menata gome*"). She returns home and sends an old man ahead to reconcile her with her husband. When she arrives, her husband kindly asks her to forgive him and take back the curse and promises to do whatever she wishes in the future and to return everything to her: "*Hursa, hursa*!" ("Forgive, forgive!"). She also apologises and tells the reason for her curse. In the meantime, the old man has gone out and comes back with three kinds of plants: some leaves of *mayo*, some stalks of *daldisha* (a herb or grass) and the lowest piece of an ensete leaf rib (*shedia*) split down the middle. The sick person takes the three plants and dips them four times in a vessel of water that is in front of him, each time he takes them out he bites into them. Then it is the wife's turn, she sits on ensete leaves on the floor and, like the husband, brings the leaves to the water and to her mouth, supposedly for an hour! When it seems enough, she says, "*Ashke gida!* ("It is forgiven!"). She takes the plant and water and goes to the ensete grove behind the house, there she opens her girdle so that her body is bare and says, "What evil I said shall come out of my bowels!" She brings the things again and sets them before the sick person: "I have finished everything, I have forgiven you!" The husband stretches out his foot from the bed and knocks over the water: "So shall the curse also be dried up like the water!" This cursing by the wife, more rarely by the sister (*menata*) for with her the brother has not so much scope for dispute, is something quite common and is not taken seriously any more. Apparently, husbands find it quite natural that their wives have something to oppose their superior power. That is why the husband also laments for his wife at the funeral ceremony: "O you my wife, who made me bite grass and *mayo*!"

This whole ceremony of taking away the evil piece by piece through leaves and washing the leaves with water reminds me of another kind of disease removal that is widespread throughout southern Ethiopia, which I myself underwent in Gofa for a stomach illness. The sorceress takes *mayo* leaves and strokes the ex-

posed diseased part of the body for a long time until, in her opinion, the cause of the evil has been extracted. Then she dips the leaves into a large container of water, and soon a soft clinking sound is heard as small black stones and quartz fragments – the cause of the illness – are released from the leaves and washed into the container.

If one assumes that a spirit is the cause of an illness, one performs the prescribed sacrifice for it, even in an abbreviated form. For example, in the case of *algano*, one is content with a ceremony similar to that of the *somano* festival. They slaughter, if they can, roast barley very strongly, pour pipe water over it and let the sick person breathe in the quartz under a blanket. They then burn incense in the house and finally place everything at the foot of the sacred tree (*basa mita*). After that, the ceremony is also called *basa.*

Others make a *yarso* for the sick person, roasting barley and dripping beer at the head of the sick bed: "*Bita talahio, mara, harge afe mara*!" ("God of the soil, have mercy, have mercy on my sickness!").

If the sick person still does not get better, they take thirty-one small stones, as big as marbles, wrap them in a small cloth and put them under his head. After a few days, they ask a *wogachiya*, a knowledgeable person who is also a stone-layer, to come to them, or they go to his house if he is too rich and proud to seek out his clientele himself. He takes the stones in his hand and lays them back and forth, murmuring as he does so, "Stones tell me what this disease is?" Then he takes the handful away and removes two stones at a time from it until one or two stones remain. These he puts to his right. Again he takes some and repeats the procedure until again one or two remain, which he lays down on his left. In this way he lays out four groups of one or two stones on each side, and from the relationship of the stones to each other, he sees what kind of disease it is and how it is to be cured. He never orders a sacrifice but says: "The place where the sick person is lying is not good. Take him to another house!" Then the sick person moves to a neighbour's house for a while, or if the soothsayer recommends it, his family buys another house for him or asks a landowner friend to let them live there for a while and set up a temporary house. Or the *wogachiya* gives as a reason the curse of the wife or sister and lets him do the *wurso* ceremony. He may also have insulted the father so tells him to reconcile with him and give him a bull.

Agreement of protection (gondoro)

Gondoro is an agreement of protection, a blood brotherhood and an eternal contract both among people and with diseases so that they do not harm people in the future. In the case of particularly dreaded diseases, which are recognised by the Wolaita as real diseases – not only as infirmity caused by a curse – and whose out-

break is attributed to the special spirit of this disease, the *gondoro* is made with the entire kinship.

Such diseases are especially consumption (*tira hargia*) and a kind of diarrhoea (*gusua, ulua hargia*). All the relatives, as far as I know them, gather together. The clan leader (*baira keta*) slaughters a sheep in the house and dabs the blood on everyone's forehead: "*Gondoro gondoro* – we won't come to you and you won't come to us!" If someone in the neighbourhood dies of this disease, they do not go to the funeral service, but apologise that they have made *gondoro.* They only go to the funeral of those who also did *gondoro.*

Very intimate friends of different clans who feel the need to express their bond ritually also make *gondoro* with each other, which here has the character of a real blood brotherhood. The older of the two buys a red sheep from the money they have pooled together, slaughters it in his house, dips his index and middle fingers in the blood and dabs the younger four times on the forehead with it: "*gondoro, gondoro*". The younger one does the same to the older one. Then the older one takes the sheep's heart, presses it against his heart and swears: "I will always be a faithful friend to you, always help you, never do anything bad, never lie to you! If I do not, my heart shall die like this sheep's heart!" The younger one does the same.

From now on they are "as kin". They no longer intermarry in their families up to the tenth member and love each other more than relatives, they do not lie to each other and trust each other completely and even let their wives and daughters spend the night in the house of the other *gondoro* without hesitation.

In addition to being a sacrificial substitute, the fly fruits are also regarded as disease-repelling. In a hospital, people hang a long string of wound-up fruit on the roof and stick asparagus (*seretia*) in the wall to the right and left of the entrance. They do the same when someone is lying there with an open wound or an animal has just been castrated. For if there are no fly fruits attached and an unclean[70] person enters the house, the illness does not get better and the wounds do not heal. The same custom is known in Shoa.

Black magic

But while illness, misfortune or curses can be averted through sacrifice and atonement, it is very difficult to combat outright black magic (*bita*). It is always evil people – never sorcerers or priests, as among the Amhara, where the semi-priestly *däbtära* are the main sorcerers – who harm another out of envy or revenge. The worst is the forbidden slaughter of a cow or chicken or rat in the field or even at

[70] Someone who has had intercourse during the night before or a menstruating woman.

a neighbour's homestead. When doing so, the evil one utters terrible imprecations and, if he has enough time, he buries the carcass there. Then misfortune and death befall the house of the cursed person, without him having any idea where it came from. Often the witches do not have enough time and are themselves afraid when they perform the hideous ritual alone at night, then they leave the killed animal in the field or on the enemy's doorstep. The most important thing is to slaughter it on the other person's land, so that they have enormous power over him and can cast evil spells on him that would otherwise have no effect. In the morning there is great horror when the carcass is seen, everyone runs around howling and wailing and advising what to do. A soothsayer is asked who did it and a special potter drags the carrion to the side of a public road or, better still, into the wasteland, because otherwise the passers-by complain and add a lawsuit to the already punished man because they also feel threatened. The bewitched man always slaughters a sheep, washes himself with the blood to free everything from the spell.

Not quite as terrible is the more common practice of slaughtering an animal on one's own land and throwing it on the enemy's ground. He then doesn't know how bad it is and does the whole expiation ritual, *palaikia*. This fear makes even poor people slaughter a sheep when they find a dead rat in their house yard and are unsure if it died of natural causes. The sheep, of course, is given to the potter. They also get hair, nails or the droppings of the enemy and lay them on a fresh grave, cursing them. The Amhara put one of these things in a sheet of paper written with curses and place it under the threshold of the house or another place where the cursed person has to step over. For this reason, people are also very afraid to step over unknown and strange things on the path, e.g. a stick: it could be cursed and the evil will be unleashed on the first person who steps over it. Many sick people witch their illness into a slaughtered small animal or a "magic bundle" and lay it on the road after midnight, hoping that someone will step over it in the dark or otherwise unawares and take the illness away with them. For the Amhara Christians, the very early morning of Easter Sunday is particularly favourable for this, before one has gone to the service. Therefore, many are afraid to go to church first or before dawn because they might step over something magical. One also does not touch such symbols of sorcery and has them removed by a potter or soothsayer who is immune. I saw a magic bundle, made of a large quartz crystal, some leaves, a piece of carved wood and a piece of aloe, lying for a long time in the middle of a much-travelled path. Everyone who saw it stepped aside in fright and pushed past it, no one thought of pulling it a little aside. They tried to force me not to touch the bundle.

Now, I have often said that Wolaita is considered the land of ghosts, sorcery and black magic and I must add that all this badmouthing by neighbouring peoples

culminates in talk that Wolaita is the home of the mischievous werewolves and *gormotiya* (Amharic: *buda*). The name *gormotiya* refers to both, although not all werewolves are addicts. The misfavourable, i.e. the evil eye need not always be connected with the evil will of the owner. He is said to destroy everything with his gaze, but it is also admitted that his gaze can also cause damage without his will or fault. Particularly beautiful and conspicuous things are exposed to the evil eye, either because the evil one is envious or because his eye fell on them only by chance, attracted by the unknown. Average, unremarkable things generally have nothing to fear. Healthy children fall ill and die, splendid cows no longer give milk, ripe grain withers or is eaten by beetles, and newly built beautiful houses are suddenly attacked by termites. The main help against this are conspicuous "lightning rods", things which the gaze of the evil one first involuntarily strikes and exposes to ruin. Thus, he has lost his main power, just as the second and third bites of a snake are no longer as dangerous as the first. That over which he subsequently slides is no longer so dangerous. That is why a pole with a calabash is placed in the middle of the field, or a single tree is left standing, or a black and red ensete is placed at the edge of the ensete grove. In tall, beautiful houses, where the visitor's gaze first reaches up in admiration to admire the elaborate roof mesh and the central pole, a long stick hung across the top attracts attention. Children wear amulets with the famous blue beads and fly fruits are hung on the cowshed.

The much more dangerous side of the *gormotiya* is its werewolf trait and its ability to transform into the hyena, the carrion-eating animal, which fits well with the werewolf's character as a corpse-eater. It does not dare to touch living humans but tries to kill them with its evil eye in order to eat them. Despite the fact that the hyena rarely attacks humans and does not even attack them in packs, except during the rutting season, it is more endangered than lion or snake. Its howling and giggling, which can be a good omen for the Oromo under certain circumstances, is always a bad sign for the Wolaita. They like to attribute disgusting characteristics to her: that she eats her own children and is a hermaphrodite. This idea is widespread throughout Africa. A good man who accidentally hit a hyena with his spear while hunting left the spear where it was, went straight home, slaughtered a sheep and washed his hands with the blood as with water. The meat was given to a potter.

According to legend, the hyena and the raven have lived in the same hole in the ground for ages without ever seeing each other. Early in the morning, when the hyena is still on the move, the raven flies out to croak at the sun. Only then does the hyena, which hides during the day, come home, for it is still waiting for sunrise, perhaps to catch a piece that is already being driven to pasture. In the evening, in the twilight of the setting sun, it leaves the cave before the raven returns home.

The werewolf has the ability to transform into a hyena, but he is also the master of hyenas and uses them as his mount. When he had killed someone with his evil eye, he would call out at night and a hyena would come. He sat on it as on a horse and rode to the grave (in the case of a woman on the third day, in the case of a man on the fourth.) There he beat the ground so that it opened and sprinkled the dead with medicine. He [the deceased] came out, sat behind the werewolf on the hyena and rode with it to the house to be devoured. The hyena got forearms and lower legs as a reward. The werewolves especially loved the leg fat. Another werewolf gets up in the night and leaves his clothes on the bed in such a way that you think someone is still lying there. He grabs his temples with both hands and pulls the scalp with the hair off his head like a cap, his hyena face becomes visible. Then he rolls himself completely in ashes and becomes completely hyena. He runs to the grave, opens it, throws the dead body over his shoulder and runs home to consume it there and takes on his human form again. Werewolves are not quite able to deny their humanity, and they can be recognised by the fact that after the transformation into the hyena, a human body part still protrudes, a foot, a hand, the genitals or the breasts. If one suspects that a deceased person has perished through the evil eye, i.e. has been "eaten" by a werewolf with the eyes while he was still alive, one puts an iron ring on his right middle finger as a remedy against the corpse-eating, then the werewolf has no power over him.

Especially the silversmiths (*wogachiya*), whose clans originated from Dawuro and Amara, were known as werewolves; i.e. they still are, but no one dares to raise suspicions against them for fear of being reported to the government. Of course, people still know exactly who has the evil eye and silently blame such people for many of their own misfortunes. They also lead a rather isolated life and notice the shyness they encounter themselves. Their daughters do not like to be married. They have to fear that they will have to kill and eat their husbands.

When the community suspected one of them of being a werewolf, they would forcibly smoke him with medicine. As soon as the smoke got into his nose, he became furious, started howling, a tail grew out of him, he became a hyena and attacked the people until they killed him. That's why many people who went to a silversmith for business knotted werewolf medicine (made from a certain kind of grass) in their cloak to be protected. When they had been in the workshop for a while, the silversmith became more and more restless, finally he said, "I beg you, go out and put this out of your pocket, I can't stand it anymore!"

I met another old silversmith who, under King Tona (the Amhara had already occupied the country) was accused of being a werewolf shortly after 1900 and put in the block for a year, leaving his legs paralysed.

Priesthoods

Wolaita surprises us with its extraordinarily diverse and differentiated priesthoods, which have developed under the influence of various cultural currents and immigrations. There are a number of surprisingly self-contained groups that are unmistakably different from one another in terms of their tasks and their appearance. Several of these ancient priesthoods no longer exist. The families that bore them have died out, or they have lost their mainstay with the dissolution of the old imperial order and kingship, or they have gone "out of fashion" with the people. The people today are increasingly turning either to the priests and preachers of Ethiopian or Protestant Christianity or running to the "false prophets" (*kalicha*) and the possessed.

Thus, we find these offices: 1. the ancient shamans (and possessed) (*sharecho*); 2. the soothsayers and royal priests (*kayuwa* or *marua*); 3. the sages and soothsayers (*haiyu* or *mala*); 4. the sorcerers and wizards (*kalicha*); 5. the descendants of the Christian priests (*Qesiya*) and, finally, the *wogachiya*, whose name is untranslatable, as they are ritual assistants, doctors, silversmiths and much more. Kalicha and Qesiya each form a clan at the same time; the other priests can come from almost all clans, although a certain heredity has developed in certain families and certain clans. Sacrificial priests as a special status are absent: family father, clan leader, community leader and king are the highest sacrificers in their areas, with whose importance and prestige all other priesthoods cannot stand comparison.

The oldest of the priesthoods is apparently the office of shaman and possessed, the *sharecho,* which today are the least respected of all. These are the people in whom one or even several spirits incorporated themselves; these, in the trance state of the one afflicted by them, speak through his mouth. "Fine" people do not want to have anything to do with him, especially the five clans that came from Tigre and also the Wolaitamala, to whom all possession in any form is an abomination, which is why the *sharecho* is also the least respected of all priests.

These fine clans also regard possession as a disease, and the saying that the *sharecho* holds his séances "under duress" is common. The groans of a sick person are not comparable to the wise prophecies and wisdom of the soothsayers, and the shaman has "no power" and no special abilities. Nor can he cast spells and curses. Even though they are so despised and degraded, their second name, *tosawa* (god's name), betrays their ancient obsession with God. Their ancient ritual, however, is so overlaid with newer elements that we can thus, unfortunately, say nothing of them about the "ancient" obsession that would be so important in elucidating the *zar* complex.

In Wolaita, all people have a spirit (*ayana*), and being occasionally possessed by a spirit does not make one a shaman. One only becomes a *sharecho* if, as the eldest son, one inherits one's father's kind and spirits after his death, or by being possessed by several spirits: "The more the better for the *sharecho*." Many people try to resist the burden placed on them when the spirits demand that they be of service. For apart from their honourable reputation, they are thus excluded from all the honours and rights of civil life and must live lonely lives for themselves. In most cases, all pleading and begging and all counter-sacrifices are of no avail; once the spirits have infested a person, they rarely leave him, and he must surrender to his fate. Especially in the Bubula, Womigera and Sato clans, the *sharecho* are frequent and hereditary. Even without heredity, they are considered very prone to possession.

Then he begins to let his hair grow until it flutters wildly and wildly around his head and never shaves again except at the death of the king. When going out and on ceremonial occasions, he ties a thin scarf over his hair, wears a black and white striped cloak (*garuda*) and slips the shaman's rings of silver (or brass) with four balls on them over his fingers. Most important are his five drums (*andurua*), which are shaped like the potter's drums and are tied two on top of each other. Every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday – these are the main days of the spirits – he begins to beat with a mallet, as he does in the evening, until he falls into a trance, i.e. twitching and throwing his upper body back and forth, moaning and proclaiming the name and greatness of the spirit (or spirits). As he does so, he also breaks out into his own song of glory in the manner customary in Ethiopia, praising himself for being the servant of such mighty powers. The various spirits who speak and praise their names through him are said to speak with quite different voices. At these sittings they come forward one by one. On such days he lives very secludedly, also does not attend funerals and does not allow people who have eaten goat to come near. Once a year, or even every two or three years, he has his great feast day (*eka*), when he prophesies the future for the whole country and all the people who ask him. His moaning in the trance is called *borodo*, hence his name *borodiaya*.

In importance, the highest and once the most respected of all priests was the soothsayer and royal priest, the *kayuwa* or *marua*. Their importance in folk life is marked by the proverb:

> *Maruasi marcua imenake*,
>
> He who does not give money (*marcho*) to the fortune teller,
>
> *dinkia bora kaches*.
>
> is condemned to an ox for the potter's trumpet.

That is, if there was a sick person in a family or misfortune had befallen them and they were too stingy to go to the soothsayer for advice (for which they had to give him some money), there was no help for them and soon a death haunted them, which by the reward of the potter's chapel – an ox – made their former stinginess seem like a bad deal.

They are the main diviners for everything that occurs in life: what sacrifices are to be performed and what new sacrifices are to be used, what the causes of illness, death, cattle deaths are and how they are to be countered, what colour the sacrificial animals are to be, etc. They were particularly favoured by the king, who constantly consulted them, not only about the type of sacrifices and the interpretation of his dreams, but also much about the layout of his palaces, coming wars and their prospects. They also consulted the warriors going into the field about their prospects for good fortune. In return, they received quite enormous gifts by Wolaita standards – fields, cattle and slaves – while on everyday occasions, people rewarded them quite modestly according to their wealth.

What distinguished them from the *sharecho* was their normal life, which was no different from that of other people. Even their clothes were the same. Although they possessed a spirit, even a powerful and "heavy" one (*deto ayana*), which they inherited from their father (they were rarely independent beginners), they did not have séances, but saw the future in second sight or in dreams (*aimua*). They were famous for telling the answer to people seeking advice before they had said a word or even explained who they were. They were most common in clan Gidico, which belongs to the Amara, then in the following clans Worgusa (belongs to clan Woshesha), Mocheso (Womigera), Abasala (Gauraro), and Ano Calbaso (Martoga). Now they are very few, I have never seen any.

Very peculiar were the *hayu* or *mala*, the "wise men" and foretellers, who have now completely disappeared. The name *hayu* indicates a type of the *gada* system, which here in Wolaita arrived at this meaning by strange means. The foreign origin is also corroborated by the holders of the office, who originated from young immigrant clans: either the Woshesha clan (clan parts Katama Worga or Worguso) or the Gauraro clan, which is said to belong to the Amara.[71] They had nothing to do with sacrifice (*eka*) and slaughter and did not order such things. They were asked more about general things: how to become rich, whether the future wife would be a good match, or how to have more children and whether you would become rich with her, or about the auspiciousness of dates for weddings and other important events. They saw all this from the flame of a wax candle that the visitor had brought and placed in front of them and also from the way he

[71] Among the latter, there was a special sound group to which almost only *hayu* and *waiyua* belonged: the *abasala,* a mutilation of the highland Ethiopian *abba sahla* or *bala sahla* (lords of the vow), probably already a priestly or diviner clan at the time of their immigration.

walked, his clothes, his posture, the direction he came from and who happened to be walking in front and behind him. Whether they were watching stars or birds, no one could remember. One said that they had listened for the cockcrow.

In the days before the *maskal* festival, they went to the king to announce what would happen in the coming year. If they said war was on the way, the king gave the warriors gifts of oxen and butter so that they should fortify themselves and barley for their horses and had shields and spears distributed. If they said there would be many traitors in the coming year, he made great banquets with the great men of the realm, gave them gifts and honoured them so that they would not rise up against him.

The wizards and sorcerers, the *kalicha,* form a special clan that came with the first king from Tigre. Their forefather is said to have been called Zarua and to have come from Kumba "close to Tambie". According to tradition, they brought goats and khat, both of which are sacred to them. While the cavalcade was moving from Tigre to Wolaita, they came to the Omo River, which they could not cross. Then the *kalicha* (sorcerer) who was with them struck the water with his four-edged staff (*wobatia*) and divided it so that they could pass it dry-footed. From this common origin came their close connection to the king, who honoured them even more than the soothsayers: "As the king by his power, so they ruled by their knowledge." That they were somehow connected to Christianity in their country of origin as well is shown by the name of their sound spirit *amlaka* (Amharic: *amluk* = god, deity) and the rosaries they wore around their necks.

They did not prophesy, but they prayed and sang to the king's god and were richly rewarded for it every year. Unlike the other priests, they behaved very exclusively and were feared more than honoured. The other people only sought them out when they had an urgent request for them. They were extremely reluctant to marry. They lived so far from each other that they could not hear their drumming and called themselves by their honourable name not after their horse but after the areas they inhabited, i.e. Woide Goda, Boskose Goda, etc. Their signs of dignity included a red and white headscarf "like the king wore" and two large and two small priest drums. When they played music in the evening, they placed one large drum (*adia* = the old man) and one small drum (*inde* = the old woman) to their left and right and played them with two mallets while singing "*womane, womane*".

They are famous and feared sorcerers and usually only cast spells to harm an evil; they never seriously turned against innocent people. But they also cast spells for mere pleasure or for mischief, to see their fellow men in fear. In the time of King Ogato there lived a famous *kalicha* called Dete; his son was Debiye. The father was away one day while the son was tending the goats. The mother prepared a nice meal (*kochocho*) for the father at home. The son returned home, saw the nice meal and asked the mother to give him some. But she did not, and he

silently returned to the meadow. Later the father came, the woman brought him the food, but when he stood before her, everything turned into worms. He asked, "Who saw the food when you made it?" "No one entered the house, only your son was here for a moment." He sent for the son and offered him a chair, then commanded him to get up. Then the chair stuck to his buttocks. The father said, "You turned my food. This is pure revenge!" He ordered the son to spray over the food and when the worms became food again, he also let the chair fall to the ground.

The Wolaita believe that more than all other curses and spells, the power of the *kalicha* has an effect on the wicked. If one does not believe another's ordinary oath to the king or the country, he says: "Go and swear into the hand of the *kalicha*!" No perjurer will expose himself to that.

I have already described how dangerous the spell that the sorcerer puts around a field with his *kalicha* is and how it then turns itself against the owner. Moreover, the *kalicha* is so powerful that his mere curse kills. Anyone who has had money or other goods stolen from him goes to the *kalicha* and asks him, "Borrow your spirit (*ayana*) for a week?" He goes home and publicly announces, "Before I curse the thief with the terrible spirit of the *kalicha,* I will give him one week to return the things, then the curse shall strike him!" When the thief hears this, he gets scared and secretly puts the things outside the owner's door at night. If he does not, he begins to fall ill and dies of the curse. Before he dies, he quickly confesses so that his whole family will not be hit by the curse. Then the sons carry back the stolen things and have to give all their fathers' movable property to the *kalicha* as forfeited: clothes, weapons, personal eating utensils, sleeping leather, etc. The sorcerer does not use these things but hangs them on a scaffold in front of his house. They also give him large gifts of goats and bulls to take the curse off the family.

The dead *kalicha* are not buried in the community meadow but where they beat their drum; the man is buried together with a goat's head, and the woman with red roasted millet. At the funeral the men clapped their hands, the women danced and sang to it "Let the people of this world accompany you with light and those from heaven welcome you with stars!" Then the soul enters paradise (*ganate*), in which the *kalicha* are the only Wolaita to believe.

How long the *Qesiya*, the descendants of the former Christian Tigre or Amhara priests (*kes*) have abandoned their Christianity and the living Christian customs, no one knows. Like the kings, they also come from Tembia. Their progenitor there was Samua, his son who moved to Wolaita was Woldo (Wolde?), and his son Samua.

If we assume that the Tigre immigrated shortly after 1600, which was probably the last time Christian elements reached Wolaita, and that the last book "which

they could no longer read" was lost to tradition under Sana (1762–1790), this is an astonishingly long time by Ethiopian standards. Above all because the next generation of priests who arrived in Wolaita were already no longer priests, due to the impossibility of ordination, which only the one bishop (*abuna*) living in Ethiopia could give.[72] Thus they preserved the increasingly weakened and misunderstood traditions of the Christian Church, some of which have reached the present day, and alongside this they rebuilt themselves into a genuine Wolaita clan, which was famous above all for its warriorism.

Their only official function that still betrayed their former priesthood was their office as time counters. They supposedly knew how to keep to the Christian Ethiopian calendar until the Amhara arrived and were therefore important because they told the king when the Feast of the Cross was and when Easter was. The other people also asked them about the months and days when they were to perform sacrifices with fixed dates. A certain dignity and sanctity of their former priesthood had otherwise remained with them, the only outward remnant of which was the white turban. They did not bury their dead in the communal meadows, but in the small sacred groves (*kasa*), which are still the property of the Qesiya clan.These goves are too many to all be former churches. They were probably built later, in a semi-pagan era, in memory of the old church groves. *Kasa* is an Ometo word and denotes "the sacred" par excellence among many other peoples.

They also show their nobility by eating only the meat of animals that they themselves or their clan mates slaughtered. For many people they were also considered priests. They were asked for advice about favourable dates, whether such and such a day was favourable for setting the central pole of a new house, or whether it was a fast day, i.e. an unfavourable day on which to hold a wedding, and when to sacrifice. They also asked for blessings for children and gave them a goat after birth. If someone was very ill, they would go into their house, pray there and sprinkle water; they never ordered bloody sacrifices. Crazy people were taken by their family to the *Qesiya*, who slaughtered the goat they had brought with them and wiped the sick person's whole body with the blood in blessing.

Their clan festival was *gergisa* (Amharic: *giyorgis* = St. George), so I would like to assume that they were originally the priests of a church of St. George. For this festival, which took place in the first month soon after the *maskal* festival, everyone gathered in the sacred grove (*kasa*) of the clan leader. A small lamb that was still sucking milk and a bull were slaughtered. The clan leader dabbed the blood all over everyone's body and the small-cut, unroasted meat was ritually eaten off ensete leaves. The time of the festival is puzzling as there is no festival for

[72] And he lived in northern Ethiopia, many hundreds of kilometres away, separated by hostile groups and states.

St George in the Ethiopian first month *maskaram* (September). His main festival is in *hidar* (November/December).

Some of them are said to have still kept great feasts (*bone toma* = the dryness fast) before Easter, according to the rite of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. However, it was not popular and virtually unknown to most other Wolaita clans. Much more widespread and followed by other people besides the *Qesiya*, who expect something from it, was the small fast before the Assumption of Mary in August (Amharic: *filsata Maryam*), which, strangely enough, is the only one of all the many feast days and fast times of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that has survived. The Wolaita begin it in the twelfth month on the second day, just like the Amhara on the second day of *nahase* (6 August). The night before, the father of the family slept on the ground by the fire. In the morning he dressed as if for royal audience, puffing up his cloak high and partially exposing his upper body. So he went out into a large street, knelt there and put his forehead in his hands: "*Filsata mariam*! For your sake I will fast in the twelfth month and when I am 40 years old I will make a great feast for you! You know everything/ Think of me too!" In the following two weeks he fasts all day until evening, swallows no saliva, drinks nothing and smokes nothing, and eats in the evening on his own apart from the family. Animal food such as meat, milk and butter is forbidden. Only honey may he eat, like the Amhara. He abstains from his wife and sleeps on two ensete leaves by the fire. On the 15th day of the fast, on the 16th day of the 12th month (22 August), there is a great feast *toma birsamo* (end of the fast). He makes a sacrifice and has a large trough of beer prepared for the guests. After blessing the beer, he puts some barley porridge on the beer and makes all the women who are present pass it. Only those with a clear conscience are allowed to do this. The "sinners" who have not confessed their offences must stand aside and cannot dare to pass beer, otherwise they will fall ill. In the 40th year of his life, he makes a great sacrifice (*eka*) for *filsata mariam* and slaughters a cow and a calf.[73] After the sacrifice, the father hangs the heads of the animals on the centre pole and covers it entirely with the blood, "for it is a consecrated place and sacred to the spirits (*ayana*)." *Filsata mariam*, of course, is also taken as a spirit by the Wolaita. He gathers all the neighbours there and makes them swear to tell the truth and live righteously in the future. Whoever did something bad before must first say it, otherwise he cannot swear. The middle pole becomes especially sacred through this ceremony and when they tear down the house later, the pole remains standing. And everyone makes an arc around it if possible. An ensete grove is created around it, in which it remains standing until it falls down.

[73] The Amhara are said to know a similar festival under the name *kun tazkar*. However, I have no confirmation of this.

During all these fasts, the *Qesiya* do not hold celebrations, weddings, circumcision, or house building. Even if a *Qesiya* steals a girl, he is not allowed to marry her during the fasting period, but must wait until it is over, however urgent it might be.

Finally, the *wogachiya,* about whom one can argue whether they still exercise a special priesthood. Their profession and name cannot be translated into one word. In Oromo, *ogesa* means doctor and sorcerer but contains within itself the whole multifaceted nature of their being. They are above all "knowers". They advise others on which ceremonies to hold and when. Above all, they know all the ceremonies and are the indispensable helpers for those who are performing them for the first time or do not know exactly whether they are performing the ritual correctly. They are also invited to ordinary celebrations and are often able to draw the attention of others to "significant" little things that have been forgotten. Some of them also know how to lay out and count stones and can see the cause of illnesses and the like. That is why they are also called *sucha koriaga.*

Equally important is their function as doctors. Apart from them, some potters also work as doctors, mainly as wound physicians and circumcisers, while higher medicine with medicines and drinks is the sole preserve of the *wogachiya,* who pass on their fearfully guarded recipes in the family. Here, as with other Ethiopian peoples, it is completely impossible to know even the composition of a drug, except for what folk medicine knows anyway. They are particularly secretive about all medicines: the sick person and his family, who have to step aside if possible, are not allowed to know or see what he is given. They prefer not to leave the house with the medicine and if they do, they walk along silently and seriously, answering no one's greetings and only waving their hands. They know remedies for gonorrhoea, which is so feared by the Ethiopians, which they partly rub in and partly instil in their skin. One disease (*asaife*) forms hairballs and worms in the stomach, for which they give emetics that make everything come out. Their medicine knows for open wounds, above all, bananas ground with butter, which therefore has the name *tora uta* (war or spear ensete). Pieces of megaliths ground into powder are also applied to festering wounds. The blood of the owl (*kwa kwucha*) is considered the best medicine against pale lichen. Admirable, however, are the surgical skills, some of which I was able to notice myself. They straighten dislocated and broken limbs and splint them with cotton bandages and light splints made of bamboo, so that no consequences remain. The most amazing thing was the open, badly splintered leg fracture of a boy who fell with a horse. The doctor had to remove several bone splinters before he could straighten the leg and splint it. Apart from the terrible scars, nothing was noticeable later. During such painful operations, the patients are made drunk with strong honey wine to anaesthetize them, or a relative presses his fingers into their ears during the operation, so that a shimmer-

ing, dizzying pain arises, which makes the patient half unconscious. Their tools are of the greatest simplicity. Apart from their fingers, they use the usual sand flea cutlery, which has an awl at one end and a small pair of tweezers at the other, plus a larger and a very small crooked knife.

The uvula is considered by all Ethiopians to be the seat of many diseases, which is why it is usually cut out of children as a prophylactic measure or at the first swelling. For this purpose, they have an instrument that is as simple as it is useful. A loop of horsehair runs along the length of a small piece of wood, one end of which is knotted to the wood and forms a loop there. With this noose, someone grasps the uvula and pulls it tightly to the small wood, while the doctor cuts the uvula with a lancet-shaped knife whose tiny blade and style are formed on a piece of iron. Some blow poked iron onto the wound. Similarly, they grab swollen tonsils and scrape them off. Oral growths would also be removed in this way. Sick teeth, for which the potters were also famous, they pulled with hooks or very coarse pliers, of the latter I am not sure whether they are really an old cultural item, as the Wolaita claim, or only came with the Amhara-European influence. For male circumcision, a split piece of wood was used in which the foreskin was clamped before the potter or doctor cut it off with a sharp knife. Cotton flakes were dabbed on the wound.

The third profession practised by the *wogachiya* was silversmithing, and it was precisely in this capacity that they were known as the bearers of the evil eye. They produced all the few objects of the material culture of the Wolaita that require something more than the coarsest craftsmanship. Several times the view was expressed that all silversmithing had come from Jimma (or Kaffa or from the Amhara via Dawuro) not so long ago. Moreover, they were the famous house builders who were called by rich people and advised them on the height and scale of the houses they planned to build and themselves directed the construction.

Recently, "false prophets" have spread, calling themselves rather indiscriminately *sharecho* or *kalicha.* The latter word is then understood in its general Ethiopian meaning as sorcerer and possessed magician. Already outwardly they are unpleasantly distinguished from the old, dignified priests by their theatrical get-up, in which they indiscriminately equip themselves with all possible insignia. Their fingers are covered with rings, they wear a rosary around their necks, their wild hair is adorned with a screamingly colourful scarf and in their hands, apart from an ostentatious riding whip, they carry a miniature spear with two prongs. Add to this the fact that they chew khat incessantly and brazenly accost everyone they meet for a boon – though their charlatanry earns them so much that they leap about on horseback – and you understand that a large section of the Wolaita rejects them. But a large part now runs to them in the general religious confusion.

Oral history

by Eike Haberland

The seven hands

A rich woman lived all alone and in her house, she had a lot of money and clothes. A gang of seven thieves decided to break into her house. They started digging a hole through the earth under the wall of the house at night, and when they reached the inside of the hut, the first thief put his arm through the opening to feel for objects. The woman, however, had awoken at the sound and cut off his hand and part of his forearm with the big crooked knife. He backed up with a groan and put the bleeding stump in his mouth, "Ah, ah!" The others asked him what it was. "*Eesa tana mana*" ("Honey, honey, I eat honey!"), he cried and licked at the wound. The next one greedily stuck his arm through the hole and also got to taste honey until all seven went armless from there. But the woman gathered the hands, tied them together to make a broom and swept her house with it.

The masterpiece

A female and a male thief went to the market together. The female thief asked the male one: "Why don't you marry me?" He replied: "I don't know whether you are any good at your job as a thief?" So, she said, "I will prove to you today what I can do." When she returned from the market, she joined a farmer and mentioned in conversation that she still had a long way to go home. The friendly man invited her to spend the night with him and his wife. When they had eaten dinner there, she waited until husband and wife had fallen asleep in the marriage bed and then secretly lay down between them. After a while she woke up the man, who was sleeping soundly, and said in a disguised voice, as if she were his wife: "I have to do my needy business, accompany me outside, for I am afraid alone, the hyenas are screaming so. Give me your big warm cotton blanket to drape over me, it is so cold!" The man did as he was told, lit a small wax light, put it in her hand and took her outside. The thief took a few steps into the darkness, placed the candle on the ground and pretended to lie down. In reality, she quietly made off with

the blanket. The man, who saw the candle burning, waited and waited outside the front door. Finally, it became too much for him, he called out. No answer. Now he went to the candle. No one was there! Full of fear, he returned to the house. There lay his wife quietly asleep in bed. Now he got very angry that she had made him wait outside and had gone back to bed without saying a word. He grabbed a stick and began to beat her until it finally became clear that they had both been duped. The female thief had long since arrived with her loot at the male thief's house and was about to marry him.

The voracious

Some people from Gamo went to Wolaita to the market and spent the night on the way with a Wolaita subchief, who was a huge man and a real prankster. "You Gamo people are known as gluttons and no one can fill you up," he said, "but I will give you so much today that you will finally be satiated. He had a whole ox and several sheep, two mule loads of bread, a large trough of beer and several pots of wine brought: "I won't let you leave the house until you've eaten all this!" With that he locked the door from the outside. They ate and gobbled all night until they felt sick and wet their trousers and threw up on their cloaks, for they were afraid of polluting the house. In the morning, when they had eaten everything, he let them go.

The master thief

Once upon a time there was a rich man from the Hizia clan called Dogamo Amago. He had a slave called Amido Anko. This slave was a master thief and was known and feared everywhere for his clever pranks. He was careful not to do anything wrong to his master, so that the latter turned a blind eye when other people complained: nothing could be proved against the thief, and he even felt flattered to be the master of such a skilful man. Once, however, it became too much for him. There was a slaughter in the neighbourhood, in the house of another big man, and Amido decided to feast on the meat and bragged so much about his intention that the neighbour put two guards at the door. In many parts of southern Ethiopia, it is customary to eat dinner very late. In many cases, the servants and children lay down on the floor of the hut after sunset and sleep until ten or eleven o'clock, only then is the meal prepared and the sleepers wake up. Amido disguised himself as a slave and sneaked into the house after dark as if he were one of the many female slaves. The guards let him pass unhindered. Inside, he lay down silently in a corner and waited until everyone had fallen asleep and the fire was almost out.

Silently he crept past the bed of the master of the house to the back room, where he stuffed two mighty pieces of meat into his bosom. On his way back, he took a calabash full of honey wine from the pillow of the householder, who had also fallen asleep, and reached the door with it. To the guards he whispered in a disguised voice that the master of the house was sending them this drink – he himself had to disappear for a moment – and so he won the day. The theft was noticed the same evening, when the guards were first surprised that the servant did not return, when they returned the calabash and no one knew who had given it to them, and when at last the meat went missing. It could only have been Amido!

The owner of the house went to Amido's master the next morning and complained: the next time he would see to it that legal action was taken. Dogamo then took his slave into prayer and swore that the next time he would either chastise him or hand him over to the person stolen from as compensation for the theft.

Amido excused himself by saying that he could not go against his nature and that it would be a pity if he could no longer carry out his masterpieces, which had no equal. If his master forgave him, he would offer to carry out any piece of thievery, however impossible it might seem. "Well," said he, "if you can steal from me tonight in my firmly locked and guarded house, I will say no more." Amido spent the day until evening with his master and made sure that he drank plenty of honey wine. The master locked the door behind him and put a guard in front of and behind it. The thief waited until everything was asleep and then, as was usual, dug a passage into the hut from outside under the wall. Knowing his way around, he found his way to the bed of his snoring master despite total darkness, quietly pulled his silver ring from his finger and, to finish his masterpiece in a dignified manner, cut off one half of his beard with a razor. Leaving the house, he covered all traces and filled the passage again. In the morning he went to the master, who was still in bed, had not noticed anything and received him triumphantly: "Where is your finger ring? Just feel your beard!" said the slave. The master was ashamed: "For God's sake, don't say anything about it to anyone! Do what you want in future, but keep your mouth shut!"

Adultery story

A stupid man was cheated on by his wife. One day she thought he would be gone overnight. She called her lover, he made himself comfortable and stripped naked. Suddenly the man came. She put out the fire and opened the door: "Oh just as you came, I bumped into the water, it put out the fire, we must eat in the dark." (The lover had crawled under the bed). The man sat on the bed and she spoon fed him; every other spoonful she gave to the lover under the bed in the dark, in his mouth,

she thought, but really on his penis. He burned himself very badly as the porridge was very hot. He went up with a loud scream and overturned the bed. The woman shouted to the startled man, "Ba'ute is here, quickly go out to the *mayo* bush and pray!" The man quickly went and prayed there, "Have mercy on us, do not be angry" etc. In the meantime, the lover escaped.

The caught adulterer

A man suspected his wife of secretly receiving her lover when he went out. One day he pretended to go out, took his stick but hid in the ensete. The woman went to fetch her lover and joked with him. Suddenly the man came and knocked on the door: "She should open up". Then he hurriedly went around the outside of the house where the lovers were sitting and heard her telling him to crawl into a beehive. He entered the house, the woman brought him the food she had made for her lover and when the man ate, she took half of it and put it in the beehive: "That should stay there until tomorrow!" (so that the lover could eat). The husband took a clay shard full of fire embers and threw it into the hive: "That shall remain there only . . . !" To save him, she poured water into it. At last, the man took his spear and hurled it into the tube. And so the adulterer died.

The talking pot

Another man, poor and without a clan, married a girl. Soon after the wedding, an evil neighbour made a pass at her and when the man went to the field, he came to her. The man heard of it but could not stay at home all the time. He confided in an old man in the neighbourhood, who he gave him the following advice. When he went out the next morning, he hung a small pot over the door, took a thin stick, hit the pot and said: "Tell me tonight everything that happened, who came, etc." Then he left but hid in the ensete. After a while, the old neighbour, who was in on it, drove his cattle into the woman's seed and called for her help to drive it out. When she went out, the man came and hid on top of the platform. The woman came in and after a while the lover appeared. But she was afraid: "Go ahead, or the pot will tell everything!" He laughed, but she pressed him hard and drove him away. Then the old man did the same trick to remove her. The husband came out and came back in the evening. When he entered, he took the stick, hit the pot and asked. The pot gave a sound. "Aha, that one and that one came!" "What did he say?" asked the wife, who was very afraid and now would not let anyone into the house.

Maize story

This peculiar tale is also known in a slightly altered form among the Arsi and Guji. Its exact context and especially the strange connection between maize and elephants must remain a mystery for the time being. It seems particularly strange that this myth-poor people, who otherwise know no myth about the origin of any of the useful plants, should have such a fable for maize, of all things, which presumably only came into the country a few hundred years ago. The widespread motif depicting the entanglements that arose from the insistence on the return of a certain thing, however, otherwise has only a wavering character and is not connected with the origin of cultural goods. Probably two different motifs have merged here. The idea of a "land of elephants" is something quite foreign to the Ethiopian.

A man once wanted to go elephant hunting and borrowed a large spear from his neighbours. When he was in the bush, he saw a big elephant and threw the spear at it, but it only got stuck in the back of its skin, and the elephant ran away with it. But the neighbour insisted on getting his spear back – "that one and no other" – and sued him for it. The man then went off in search of the spear and came to an unknown land. There he came to a river in which there was sand instead of water. He was very hungry and ate of this sand. After a while he came to another river which was only milk. He drank from this milk too. Finally, he came to a third river which was full of blood and when he had crossed it, he was in the land of the elephants. They lived there like people, lived in houses and worked the ground with hoes. Soon an elephant came up to him and asked what he wanted? The man was very apologetic, told his story and described exactly the lost spear. The elephant left immediately and came back after a while with the spear, which he gave to the man. He also gave him a grain of maize, which people did not know at that time. The man returned home and gave the spear to the neighbour and showed the grain to all the people. It was passed around and so also came into the hand of this neighbour's little son, who put it in his mouth and swallowed it. The man demanded the grain back and, as this was no longer possible, he sued him. The elders decided that just as the neighbour had demanded his spear back, the other could now rightfully demand his maize back and forced the neighbour to kill his son and cut him open to retrieve the maize. The owner of the maize planted it in the ground and when the plant was big and ripe, he gathered all the people together and gave them each three grains. Since then, the Wolaita have had maize.

Appendix

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Fig. 39: Waterfall Ajora in northwest Wolaita, reg. no. FoA 27-KB01-07-08-c

Fig. 40: Weaver in his hut between the houses of Tilge and Kaba, reg. no. FoA 33-Ha05–19

Fig. 41: Potters, living east of Soddo, reg. no. FoA 27-KB088–3

Fig. 42: Trophy scaffolding, reg. no. FoA 27-KB113.12a

Fig. 43: Tomb with a woven bamboo cylinder in highland Koysha, reg. no. FoA 27-KB081–15

Fig. 44: Grave on the King's Meadow in highland Koysha, near Lasho Bolola, reg. no. FoA 27-KB081–9

Fig. 45: Sacred grove in the highland of Kindo, reg. no. FoA 27-KB114–19

Fig. 46: Informant Kaba (Tigre clan) with phallic insignia of a killer, reg. no. 27-KB092–18a

Fig. 47: Drums of the kalicha north of Tilge, reg. no. FoA 33-Ha05–16

Glossary

This glossary is intended to help the reader find a way around the text. The words in Ethiopian languages noted by Haberland, Kuls and Pauli have been adapted to current spellings where possible. However, this was not always feasible. The spelling of Ethiopian terms by Haberland, Kuls and Pauli is still partly adapted to the orthography of their native language German. Sometimes the researchers have spelled the same words differently and therefore there may be duplications in the glossary. Where possible, the Ethiopian language of origin of a word has been placed in brackets after the word. Words without explanation are for the most part Wolaita.

abagaz title of Wolaita tribal representatives, by whom civil jurisdiction was exercised 45

abba gada highest traditional leader 190, 215

acha raw, minced meat 297

adara butter 172

adasine market helpers 202

aday distributor (Amharic) 75

adila king 80

aduna community leader 55, 207, 238, 242

afala gira clothes tax 172

afarsata community detention (Aafan Oromo) 229

agafari chamberlain 229

agelgel leather-covered carrying case (Amharic) 136

aginafe of the moon 157, 246, 248

ayfe gataa 'second' wedding 285, 287, 288

aka exclamation with which an incoming person is called 53

algano great spirit 164, 303, 325, 331, 340, 343, 346

amole salt ingots from a span width (Amharic) 196

andurua drum of *sharecho* 352

arata chair made of wood and leather 113

arsa bed 113, 161

arussya large, sharp knife 129, 311

asar lump of butter sold on the market (Amharic) 113, 163

ashama exclamation with which an incoming person is called 53

asigo wise, old slave woman 283

atwero palatine 83

awaa ayanaa sacrifice for the genius of the father 166

awa ayfe of the sun 157, 246

awucaciya community detention 229

awurajaa sub-province 45

ayana spirit, king's genius 77, 152, 164, 166, 229, 302, 303, 310, 321, 324, 330, 331, 352, 353, 355, 357

ayfari master of ceremonies 175

ayle slave 127, 176, 245
azazhi house manager (Amharic) 176
azene the compassionate one, the sad one (Amharic) 75
azmari singer (Amharic) 178
bagarond house manager (Amharic) 175
baira keta clan leader 252, 272, 347
baka concubine 292
bakra sacred cow, holy herd of the king 150, 163, 164, 166, 170, 253, 324, 329, 330, 331
balabat chief (Amharic) 45, 97, 99, 177, 243
balamuala chief judge, king‘s councilors 92, 210, 241, 243
baliyaa feather, worn as a symbol of being a man-slayer 229, 318
balteta old woman who has stopped giving birth 285, 289
banga shasha roasted barley 105
bäso tamped clay 103
bataa largest measure for liquids and cereals, 1 *bataa* = 3 *tuga* 131, 197, 313
bazuwaa border jungle, wasteland surrounding borders 235
belelesa earring that marks a killer 124, 307
bete iron stick 127, 128, 196
biradhe width of a finger 197
birata iron 196
birille glass drinking vessel (Arabic) 139
bita black magic 105, 164, 234, 323, 331, 346, 347
borisa Echinops species 134
borkota neck rest 139
borodo moaning in trance 352
bubuto a sort of cubit, elbow to the first limb of the little finger 197
buda werewolf, people with the "‘evil eye"’, tips of cattles horns used for storage 49, 134, 234, 254, 349
bukura keetaa treasure house of the king 172
buluko multiple cloak 82, 117, 289
bulwa Solanum species 107, 137
buluwa malt 107
burare wickerwork of the third type 107
bushasha successor, crown prince 57, 80, 93, 157, 158
busho son (west Cushitic languages) 57
chafchafo slayer‘s cloak 309, 311
chaffe large cattle pastures (Sidaama language), s. *dembba* 41
caqoo godobusho sworn king‘s slaves 173, 174, 176
caquwa oath 74
cifra army (Amharic) 75
cimaa old men 207, 209, 229
cinasha craftsmen 122, 136, 235, 245, 257, 259, 261, 291
citta large plaits 161

cocce stove 114
cuwa gira smoke tax 172
dajjach one of the highest military titles of Ethiopia meaning commander (Amharic) 98
damoz salary (Amharic) 97
dana judge, regional leader 36, 210, 238, 241, 242, 243, 256, 329
dangerixa slave girl 277, 279, 283, 315
das festival house (Amharic) 102, 315
daula mule load 197
daydanta water spirit 323, 324, 330, 331, 344
degella tanner and blacksmith 122, 126, 245, 259, 262
dela bad cloak 314
dembba large cattle pastures 41, 198, 199
dembe gennento first queen 157, 158, 186, 188, 189, 190
dencha steward 79, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 178, 181, 182
desa kure sort of cubit; elbow to ankle on pulse 197
dina hereditary enemy 307
dinkiya trumpet held vertically 139
dirsa kraal 313
disa bull 163, 164
dola thick wax candle 115
donza members of the community council 207, 209
dubushsha eka community sacrifice 208
dubushsha grave of community founder, sacred tree 208, 298, 329, 334
dufo tomb of the common people 249
eka sacrifice, clan spirit 144, 253, 323, 326, 329, 338, 340, 344, 352, 353, 357
eka abusa sacrificial spear 164
eka dunne sacrificial mountain 164, 182
eka olwa sacrificial knife 164
eleba special shell 197
eqa merit festival for animal ownership 312, 314, 316, 328
erashsha chief of potters and blacksmiths 179, 235, 243, 260
erenekyo pengya king's gate at the king' s meadow, see *kawo pengya* 185
esa wax, honey 115, 148
filsata mariam small fast 338, 357
fitawrari Amharic military title, comparable to major 36, 45, 54, 61, 63, 98, 156, 166, 174, 175, 184, 189, 192, 205, 206, 243, 248, 250, 260
frazula weight unit (Amharic) 197
gaana envoy 213, 238, 243
gaba memorial feast 302
gabar tenant 95, 96
gaddauwa war leader 46, 201, 215, 216, 239, 256, 311, 329
gala ritual helper 289, 313, 328

galla domua potato 92
gamad rope 24 cubits long for surveying land (Amharic) 198
gambo pot (Amharic) 197
garuda curtains, canopy 113, 117, 161, 250, 352
garunde young but experienced slave woman 283, 315, 318
garzdo canopy (Amharic) 161
gasa trophy 151, 312
gebar land tribute (Amharic) 171, 266
genne title of the queen 189
gennento queen 158, 172, 189, 190
gerar acacia 61
germa majesty, size (Amharic) 75
gia market 217
gia dana market judge 201, 243
gika banishing 342
gimo women‘s rank 122, 124, 125, 218, 294, 317, 318, 319
gira tax 171, 172
goca prison 232
goda wall, owner, master, address of noble men 54, 107, 224, 246, 249, 295, 343
godate ‘madame’, address of noble women 54, 249
godeta good dish from fine ensete flour 110, 147, 280
godiyo ‘madame’, address of noble women 54
godobusho ‘king‘s children’, honorary title for the slaves of the king 57, 49, 158, 170, 173, 261, 263
gogani thick cloak 283
gogani iricho thin cloak 283
gogo feast hut 314
gondoro agreement of protection 346, 347
goqa common freemen 245
gormotiya werewolf, evil eye 349
gorta grass, which is often used ritually 107, 292, 331, 340, 343
gozda glass pearl 123, 126, 134, 196, 212, 318
guba large straw urn 283
guchalya evergreen lawn 103
guda court official 176, 185
gugi small, white bird of prey 309
gulanta wickerwork of the second type 107
gule best girlfriend 283
gumbo spiral staff of dignitaries 126, 243, 318
gurdo barley porridge 149, 341
gutura public square 81, 207, 208, 218, 242
hade colourful pants 82
hagaza king‘s private land 170
harasho overseer of slaves 265, 309

hashu exclamation when clapping your hands as an expression of joy 54, 243
hayu wise man (Wolaita), dignitary of the *gada* system (east Cushitic people) 46, 276, 353
hera neighbourhood assistance 222
herago asisstant of *aduna* (community leader) 171, 207, 242
hitasua bed 113
huduga district leader 55, 210, 238, 242
hurbuta guarantor 225
icnin biradhe hand width, five fingers 197
ililta women‘s high trill of consent (‘ilililil’) 54, 282, 333
inchera human sick with leprosy 301
inde miza old cow 317
intena you (second person plural), address 53, 164, 251
irbora ivory ring that marks a killer 125, 311
irfanya tanned leather 113, 138
irfita braided door panel 109
irichua simple cloak 289, 316
isini you (second person plural); term of address (Oromo) 249
isu exclamation when clapping your hands as an expression of joy (Arsi and Shoa-Oromo) 54
itiya tanned hide 113
kabiya beautifully crafted flat-nose pliers 134
kadda red cape 161
kadmat wet nurse 283
kafo cereal urns covered with cow dung 112
kagu sage; seer 75
kala ritual helper 151, 275, 277, 278, 279, 281, 282, 284, 286, 288, 328
kalachu phallic headpiece 74, 83, 124, 229, 308, 309, 312, 333
kalicha magician, wizard 69, 153, 293, 336, 337, 342, 343, 351, 354, 355, 359
kamba potter‘s drum 260
kanta wodoro rope 24 cubits long for surveying land 198
kanubiye royal (honorary title) 249
kao kuro commander of the guards 178
kara part of the ceiling 105
karabya clay drum 139, 310
kareta fabric money, twelve cubits long and 1/2 cubit wide 195, 196, 277, 312
kasa sacred grove, long, red stole 163, 299, 329, 356
kascca special meat dish 282
kasiaga jester 178
kaso lump of butter sold on the market 197, 284
katama army camp (Amharic) 75

kati address of the king 162, 296
kawaa workya king‘s gold 158
kawo king 7, 53, 87, 93, 162, 191, 229
kawo birra king‘s silver 160
kawo bolota king‘s relatives 80, 256
kawo pengya king’s gate at the king’s meadow 185
kawo naa king‘s children 69, 246
kawoteta kingship 162
kaya table like platform 103
kayuwa sage, seer, fortune teller 75, 164, 181, 276, 331, 351, 352
kefo rosemary 57, 149
kega large bamboo basket 197
kera Saturday 331
kesai large basket made of spliced bamboo 135
kina elder 207
kindalya high clay stand for lighting material 115
kirinagi bellboy, personal cook 162, 177, 181
kobo ricinus candle 115
kol,o centre of the back room 114
koldo centre of the back room 114
koldo karta beautiful wall which divides front room and back room 113
kolecha goat from the magicians 58
kono graves of small children 298
korba solar eclipse 157
korma maskal flower 332
korya threshold; lintel 108
kosileta door jamb 108
kosso laxative 77
kule poor occasional hut 108, 132, 133
kuma keta center of the back room 113
kumeta calabash 133, 148, 238, 275, 284, 310, 314, 318
kunna weight unit 96, 197
kununa small plate for wolfing grain 135
kure especially powerful laxative 79
kushe my hand (greeting) 190, 251
kushe kuseta handshake festival 273, 284
lakua medium pot 197
lasanta old people who bring the bride price 282, 283, 288
latiaya heirs 77
lemat round table 136
logomo ornamental pot 131, 314, 336
loso neighbourhood trail 103
lugame slave boy 277, 283, 315
luka mua goatskin bags 114
macyas pengya women‘s gate at the king’s meadow 185

mad bet kitchen (Amharic) 44, 96, 97
ma'e founder 251
magaradja fabric curtains (Amharic) 114
maizu common ancestor 251
makana grave 249, 298
makwannent 'big man', successful man (Amharic) 50, 155
mala soothsayer 83, 172, 254, 351, 353
malakat king trumpet (Amharic) 139
malkata king trumpet 139, 295
manbar altar stone 63
manna common Ethiopian word for potter 129, 178, 257
marcho iron money of the Wolaita 172, 196, 352
marcho gira money tax 172
marua royal priest 351, 352
maskal new year 92, 250, 317, 325, 329, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 354, 356
masob large basket with lid (Amharic) 136
masofe large basket with lid 137
mayo bush, whose leaves are often ritually used 164, 235, 258, 274, 313, 331, 335, 339, 342, 345, 364
menata sister of the father 273, 274, 278, 278, 290, 345
mente twins 316
menuata sister of the groom 282
meresa wickerwork of the fourth type 107
meshwa wickerwork of the first type 107
mette envoy 213, 244
misa keetaa treasure house of the king 172
mita border fortification 173, 214, 235
mita mocona border bailiff 198, 237, 243
mitazua cattle for slaughter 172
miza akua cattle barn 114
miza kawo Kaffa king 87
mizan scale 197
moga silver necklace 124, 309
mokota cordia 105
muhuhua earring 116, 125, 312, 318
mukada thin wax candle, also *esa mukada* 115
muresa emasculated person 308
nagarit big drum (Amharic) 160
nagarita big drum of the king 77, 138, 160, 173, 179, 260
ocollo bailiff of wasteland 237, 243
ocua mole 343
ogesa doctor, magician (Oromo) 105, 358
ogoro leather bag 137
ogya public path 103

oket ounce 197
onkoko especially powerful laxative 79
ote community detention 229
oteta embarrassing questioning 77, 146
oydya three-legged armchair, three-legged stool 113
palaikia compensation ritual 348
palama grumbling 78
pantata smallpox 301
panus petroleum lamp 114
paro tax exemption 171, 259
parso beer 148, 318
parso hofya beer strainer 135
patala eightfold cloak 114, 314, 315
pengya door, gate 108, 113, 185, 235
pera raso commander of the cavalry 178
pito graves of babies 398
pitya unknown form of jewelry 74
porancu hero 295
pula suicide 301
qaciaga leather workers 126, 262
qalad rope 24 cubits long for surveying land (Amharic) 38, 198
qegnazmach Amharic military title, comparable to captain 36, 126, 250
qes priest (Amharic) 62, 69, 81
qesiya descendant of priests 325, 337, 338, 351, 355, 356, 357, 358
qototo cloak made of colourful fabric 316
qulia wooden pot
ras royal title comparable with duke (Amharic) 94, 95, 97, 206
sadeka oyde game board 113
sahafe lam royal cattle bailiffs (Amharic) 177
samfa big plate for wolfing grain 135
sanga mocona cattle reeve, cattle bailiff 164, 177
sanka special door (Wolaita and Amharic) 109, 249
santa clothes tax 144, 172
sarga porch 110
sasora veil of fine chains 125, 318
satin popular wooden box (Amharic)
sauwa divorced woman 292
sayum ruler, designated 60, 241
sefa man high platforms 114
segun chief 60
serata law (Amharic) 74
sesa relatives 251, 252, 317
setana devil 323
shafincha metre-wide strip between house and ensete grove 105
shama tax unit, cotton cape 55, 96

sharecho shaman 58, 119, 133, 149, 310, 316, 322, 324, 325, 336, 345, 351, 352, 353, 359
shosha snake 323
shucha county, district 92
shukya keta slaughter house 165, 181, 186
shum office holder 71, 75, 99, 241
smata silver decoration of the saddle 137
sofe silent market walk 218, 283, 306, 311, 314, 315
soreta small village meeting 207
sulälya flute made of bamboo 139
sunta overseer 176, 223, 242, 315
susa dried leaf blade 135
tabot copy of the Ark of the Covenant (Amharic) 63, 65
tace royal beadles 178, 230, 244
takarva unit ca. 20–22 cm 197
taklay gezat province (Amharic) 45
talahe earth, mother goddess 105, 303, 323, 339
tarua smallest measure for liquids and cereals 197
taza gasua palatinate 87
tcaca zäyift trumpet held horizontally 139
tegulsa stove with three stones 113
tida juniper tree 105
tigimita aginna second month (October/November)164
tiginke small basket made of spliced bamboo 134
tiginya medium bamboo basket 197
tokocho frame formed from clay 113
toranca great warrior who has already killed 83, 215, 216, 239, 256, 305, 307, 308, 329
tosa God 164, 166, 322, 323, 325, 331, 343
tosa kawo God‘s king 87, 229
tosawa possessed person, see *sharecho* 310, 325, 351
tuga medium measure for liquids and cereals, 1 *tuga* = 4 *tarua* 197, 316
tusa centre pile 107, 279
udula mortar 114, 279
udula mita pestle114
walamo never 66
wara a sort of cubit, elbow to the tip of the middle finger 197
wata hunter and potter 179, 257, 259, 291, 301
woderwa cords 135
wogache blacksmith 126, 262
wogachiya silversmith, doctor, omniscient 122, 136, 137, 234, 246, 260, 262, 292, 312, 328, 339, 340, 346, 350, 351, 358, 359
wogerua forehead ornament 317
wogga Sunday 331

woito	present 312
woket	ounce 197
wola-wicha	free peasants of the Sidaama 46
womasa	pan type iron sheets 196
wombeto	crown prince 77, 80, 247
wongere	huge beer tub 114
worata	great market walk 310
woro	trench 105, 311
wota	grindstone 114, 279
wote	striped fabric 318
woyse	royal guard 81, 161, 177, 180, 185
woze	(to) reign 79, 89
wuigja	front room 112
wuiye	front room and the floor in it 110
wurso	reconciliation ceremony 345, 346
yaa	consulting 79
yarso	ritual offering 105, 165, 323, 331, 343, 344, 346
yaya	big village meeting (Amharic: *sango*) 207
yirko	large black bird 309
zaba	king‘s meadow 93, 180, 184
zaba dana	imperial judge, speaker of the king 167, 210, 243
zaba pengya	gate at the king’s meadow 185
zamfa	festival house 102, 107
zaudida	roof rings 107
zazalua korya	frame for demarcation of the cattle shed 114
ziga	podocarpus tree 105
zongarun	bamboo frame for funeral 312

Index of names

Abaya — lake located in the Ethiopian Rift Valley, near the town of Arba Minch, also called Ochollo-Abba, formerly called Lake Margherita 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 58, 67, 68, 95, 142, 143, 144, 199, 204, 205, 236, 240

Abbu Gifar — former king of Jimma (1861–1932) 60, 92, 93, 97, 147, 249

Adayo or Aday — Wolaita king (1679–1710) 75

Addis Ababa — capital city of Ethiopia 6, 9, 10, 11, 21, 29, 31, 36, 44, 49, 96, 97, 98, 99, 156, 160, 185, 189, 193, 266, 267, 280

Afama — mountain range 37

Agame — former province in northern Ethiopia 47, 68, 71, 75, 155

Aifarso — Wolaita clan 284

Alaba — ethnic group and the name of a district in southern Ethiopia 36, 44, 174, 266

Alami — Damota marketplace, former seat of government 42

Amado — Wolaita king (1822–1848) 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90, 99, 183, 193, 206, 216, 240, 248, 256, 333

Amarro — ethnic group in southern Ethiopia, also called Koore or Koorete 46, 60, 102, 121, 128, 129, 148

Amda Siyon — Ethiopian emperor (1314–1344) 60

Amhara — ethnic group in northern Ethiopia 7, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 71, 72, 76, 81, 84, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104,105, 111, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 122, 126, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 145, 148, 149, 150, 152, 153, 156, 160, 154, 174, 177, 178, 183, 184, 188, 189, 190, 196, 197, 198, 199, 204, 205, 209, 210, 214, 216, 218, 219, 221, 223, 224, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 233, 234, 236, 241, 243, 245, 246, 248, 249, 250, 251, 254, 255, 259, 264, 265, 266, 271, 280, 282, 290, 292, 293, 297, 299, 300, 302, 316, 321, 327, 331, 334, 347, 348, 350, 355, 356, 357, 359

Anchucho — administrative district of Wolaita 45, 56

Ano Calbaso — Wolaita clan 353

Aroge — original inhabitants of the Wolaita zone 7, 36, 54, 66, 67

Arsi — ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 38, 39, 42, 44, 46, 58, 68, 78, 80, 81, 83, 85, 91, 92, 99, 121, 129, 139, 149, 152, 184, 189, 205, 211, 212, 213, 216, 220, 221, 237, 238, 239, 287, 307, 312, 321, 325, 337, 365

Azena — Wolaita king (1620–1629) 75, 99

Badawacho — ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 38, 68, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 97, 184, 205, 206, 214, 217, 236, 237, 241

Bakalo	old *fitawrari* and son of the king's last janitor 19, 36, 45, 98, 99, 175, 206, 248
Bale	plain at the Omo River 41, 199, 204
Belo-Guji	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 38
Bero	see Bosha 87
Bilate	river 36, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 57, 66, 67, 68, 73, 85, 90, 92, 95, 142, 183, 189, 199, 204, 205, 206, 212, 221, 241
Bilbo Gasara	hot springs 43
Blue Nile	river 37, 90
Boditi	administrative district of Wolaita 45, 65, 76, 85, 86, 87, 183, 184, 200, 205, 206, 216, 217, 219, 220, 236, 239
Bolola	mountain near to Sere on the side of Kucha 39, 80, 81, 182, 300
Boloso	Wolaita district 41, 45, 85, 89, 146, 184, 204, 206, 220, 231, 240
Bonga	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 48
Borana	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 44, 45, 66, 151, 159, 206, 228, 252
Boroda	name of a lowland and a part of the Gofa people 38, 58, 67, 79, 80, 83, 84, 86, 87, 89, 90, 92, 102, 156, 159, 193, 200, 203, 215, 222, 235, 236, 241, 254, 307
Bosha	former kingdom in southern Ethiopia 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 27, 44, 57, 61, 62, 70, 87
Bubula	Wolaita clan 80, 170, 191, 251, 253, 254, 258, 284, 329, 352
Chifra	Wolaita king (1620–1620) 75, 99
Dalbo	former royal court 41, 42, 61, 65, 83, 87, 93, 94, 97, 177, 183, 184, 193, 200, 201, 205, 206, 212, 218, 221, 239, 260, 310, 332
Damot	ethnic group in western Ethiopia 37, 59, 60, 61, 68, 70, 76, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 103, 115, 143, 167, 169, 179, 183, 184, 202, 203, 204, 205, 220, 238, 239, 240, 242, 248, 256, 324, 332
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Damote	Wolaita king (1848–1853) 26, 79, 87, 89, 90, 99, 156, 175, 261, 335
Dawuro	neighbouring ethnic group of the Wolaita 8, 35, 37, 39, 46, 47, 57, 66, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 83, 90, 92, 94, 95, 98, 99, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 122, 127, 128, 174, 189, 191, 193, 195, 196, 211, 216, 220, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 246, 251, 254, 289, 344, 350, 359
Deme	river and valley 37, 38, 40, 68, 74, 83, 182, 202, 203, 220, 231, 236, 241

Desta Fesseha Tona	*fitawrari*, governor and tribal chief at the time of research 15, 18, 36
Didaye	peninsula between the Omo and the Deme rivers 38, 68, 69, 74, 80, 180, 182, 193, 202
Digito	famous sister of Abbu Gifar 92, 189
Dinto	town on the Sidaama side of the Bilate with a market 44, 200, 206, 221, 222, 237
Donga	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia, northern neighbours of the Wolaita 38, 83, 86, 89, 220, 241
Dorze	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia, part of the Gamo 49, 54, 65, 102, 111, 116, 120, 126, 158, 242, 246, 317, 321
Duguna	mountain range 37, 41, 55, 85, 91, 92, 144, 184, 200, 205, 206, 214, 221, 242
Eka	ancient sacrificial site of the kings 39
Enarya	old kingdom in western Ethiopia 49, 57, 62, 70, 184, 236, 263
Fere Halala	*qegnazmach*, informant and guide of researchers 36
Fernandez	Portuguese Jesuit missionary 49, 111, 192
Gacha	Wolaita clan 300
Gadabo	Wolaita informant of Eike Haberland 19, 36
Gaga	first-born son of king Gobe, died before he became king 76, 78, 93, 99, 167, 184, 186, 195, 250
Galla-Sidama	former governorate 44
Gamo	highlands and an ethnic group in Ethiopia 8, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 58, 60, 61, 67, 68, 70, 83, 89, 90, 92, 94, 95, 102, 119, 146, 149, 163, 174, 200, 204, 216, 243, 245, 251, 254, 262, 327, 332, 362
Gamo-Gofa	former province 44, 163, 246
Ganta-Abba	lake, also called Chamo, formerly called Ruspoli 38
Gauraro	Wolaita clan 353
Gebre Menfes Kidus	saint of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church 59, 64
Gedeo	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 8, 16, 26, 30, 31, 54, 73, 129, 146, 149, 197, 219
Girma	son of Azena, king of Konta (1629–1650) 75, 99
Gezomala	Wolaita clan 254, 286
Gidico	Wolaita clan 221, 353
Gobe	Wolaita king (1853–1889), son of Damote 26, 76, 88, 91, 92, 93, 99, 145, 156, 157, 161, 169, 175, 182, 183, 189, 193, 196, 212, 215, 240, 242, 248, 250, 256, 311
Gofa	ethnic group in southern Ethiopia 44, 58, 67, 94, 102, 163, 174, 189, 192, 196, 246, 248, 263, 345
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