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A HISTORY OF OROMO LITERATURE AND IDENTITY ISSUES (c. 1840-1991)

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This work is dedicated to the loving and contributory memories of my father, the late Tolessa Bessa; my mother, the late Zewditu Merga; my step-mother, the late Dembale Rabbi; my sister, the late Werknesh Tolessa; and my cousin, the late Tesfaye Burayyu.

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Abstract

A HISTORY OF OROMO LITERATURE AND IDENTITY ISSUES (c.1840 to 1991)

By Tesfaye Tolessa

The purpose of the study is to document the reciprocal relationships between Oromo literature and identity issues in the process of the Oromo struggle against the formation of Ethiopian homogenous nation as the subject has not received proper historical study. In an attempt to fill the gap, the dissertation reconstructs a history of Afaan Oromo literature as a storehouse of Oromo identity, transcript for consciousness creation and instrument of resistance against impositions of Amhara rulers. For the study, pertinent available data were collected, interpreted and analysed qualitatively based on historical research methods using mainly narrative and analysis styles. The research findings depict that before the Oromo were conquered by the Amhara, the main emphasis of Afaan Oromo literature was the socialization of Oromo youths into ethically committed and morally strong Oromo. It was mainly used to teach the Oromo youth what was good and evil, moral and immoral, destructive and constructive, and encourage thought and action with its tales, poems, songs, epics, riddles, demonological legends, ballads, anecdotes, proverbs, lullabies, history and others. It also stored these principles in the forms of values, tension, myths, common experiences, psychological makeup and intellectual curiosity. The first attempt to write in Afaan Oromo might have come from the Muslim scholars whose efforts were to get written Afaan Oromo in a suitable script, which continued until Qubee was adopted in 1991. From c. 1840 onwards, the missionaries saw it as a language spoken by many people over large territorial areas and as a pathway to control the Oromo cultural identity and convert them to Christianity. The missionaries insisted on writing in Afaan Oromo under severe conditions that even cost them heavy prices. Consequently, from 1840 to 1899, they effectively worked on translation of the scriptures into Afaan Oromo, inscription of Afaan Oromo folklores and studies of Afaan Oromo grammar and vocabularies which gave Afaan Oromo a written basis, and from 1900 to the period of Italian conquest on teaching how to read and write in Afaan Oromo. Besides, the determination to write in Afaan Oromo and the increased consciousness of nationalism were paradoxically escalated by the attempts to suppress Afaan Oromo and Oromo cultural identity in favour of the formation of the linguistically, religiously and culturally homogenous Ethiopia from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Oromo grievances against the domination were articulated, recorded and passed on vertically from generation to generation and horizontally from one geographical area to another in Afaan Oromo literature. The networking of the grievances by Oromo oral literature and the consolidation of Oromo consciousness of their identity made the Oromo to consider the Italians as liberators when they began to use Afaan Oromo for education, broadcasting and office activities. These linguistic and cultural freedoms that the Oromo tasted under Italian rule made them to pose serious resistance against the restoration of Emperor Haile Sillasie. The Harar and Baalee Oromo uprisings, the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association, the Afran Qalloo Cultural Movement and other covert movements of the Oromo were what evolved because of the imposed strict language policy and this gradually consolidated Oromo consciousness. The struggle was one factor for the decline of Emperor Haile Sillasie. The struggle to write in Afaan Oromo and the Oromo

national question continued under the Darg until it was declared that the Oromo were a nation with their own regional state and Afaan Oromo became the written official language of the Oromia Regional State in 1991. The script adopted to write Afaan Oromo passed through intermittent linguistic studies with constant and critical debates until Qubee was adopted as standardized script to write Afaan Oromo. The script in which Afaan Oromo was to be written continued to be the subject of linguistic and political debates of the agencies engaged in issues of written Afaan Oromo throughout the study period until Qubee was officially declared as the script in which Afaan Oromo is now written.

Preface

This dissertation is an examination of Oromo literature and its place in the formation of the collective 'identity' of the Oromo nation. The dissertation covers both oral and written Oromo literature while giving much emphasis to written literature. I believe the dissertation to be important because language is central in any ethnic-related rejuvenation or degeneration and the same is true for the Oromo. This is because, since recorded history, language has served not only as a means of communication but also as a storehouse of one's myths of origin, customs, culture, history, communal cohesion, collective identity and world view. It serves as an important instrument for defending collective identity and communal cohesion. For these values attached to it, language needs to be properly managed and used. The abuse or mismanagement of language can result in problems which may involve individuals, groups or the whole nation. In spite of these vitalities, attempts to see issues of Oromo language in historical development are underemphasized. Therefore, this dissertation is to present Oromo language in a proper perspective as nation formation and preservation.

My initial interest to study the topic goes back to the 1997/2004 Ethiopian election when debates to promote *Afaan* Oromo to a federal working language were echoed throughout almost all election centers in Oromia Regional State. The debates made me to question the historical roots and routes that had made *Afaan* Oromo one of the major factors to win over Oromo votes. My first attempt to answer this question was started during my study for my MA in history at Addis Ababa University in 2008 and 2009. During this study, I identified more gaps that could be treated as a topic for doctoral dissertation. The gaps and the complications I came across while I was collecting data for the MA study inspired me to proceed for Ph. D. study in this area. Therefore, the present dissertation is the result of this aspiration.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters including the introduction. The introductory chapter covers the objectives, conceptual framework, historiographical issues of the topic, source analysis and methodology of the study. It thoroughly discusses what the dissertation focuses on and what it is going to achieve.

Chapter two is an overview of how the pre-1840 Oromo preserved their ideology, myths, memories, social organization and belief system in their literature and used them as a reference in moulding their common identity through generations. It also explores how the pre- 1840 economic, religious, political, geographical, historical and linguistic interaction of the Oromo with the societies of their neighbours affected their common identity and development of their literature. It highlights the use of *Afaan* Oromo in the court of the Ethiopian Christian kingdom and in Quranic Schools, and the impacts of state formation among the Oromo and their struggle with the Christian kingdom on Oromo national identity.

Chapters three and four attempt to show the roles of the Christian missionaries and the Muslim clerics in transforming *Afaan* Oromo from solely oral to written form specially between the years 1840 and 1899 while converting the Oromo to their own respective religions. In the chapters, emphasis is given to schooling in *Afaan* Oromo as the translation of scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo, the transcription of *Afaan* Oromo oral literature, and the studies of *Afaan* Oromo grammar and vocabularies were a path to the conversion of the Oromo. The chapters highlight the hardships and challenges both the foreigners and indigenous Oromo missionaries underwent to reach the Oromo with the Bible and the Quran using *Afaan* Oromo literacy as a pathway.

Chapter five is about the development of *Afaan* Oromo literacy during the controversies between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Protestant missionaries in Wallagga, how Oromo

oral literature communicated with the Oromo at large and was used to defend common Oromo identity, and the role of the Italians in the development of written *Afaan* Oromo literature between 1900-1941. It elucidates the use of *Afaan* Oromo oral literature as weapon of resistance and how these resistances laid basic ground for the transformation of the Oromo from cultural nation to political nation. It also discusses the role of the Italians in the development of written *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo nationalism.

The sixth chapter is about the linguistic and national question of the Oromo on the one hand, and the exhaustive efforts of the Ethiopian government to restore the pre-war *status quo* and to strengthen the linguistic homogenization process on the other hand. The chapter thoroughly deals with the Oromo struggle to determine their own destiny mainly in organized forms like social welfare, cultural troupes, armed struggles and radio broadcasts.

Chapter seen is devoted to the study of development of written *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo nationalism under the *Darg*. It is concerned with the roles which some Oromo members of *Meison*, *Ichaat*, the *Darg*, and revolutionary bands *as* well as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) played in developing *Afaan* Oromo to the written official language and the Oromo to the political nation of their own regional state. It also examines how the *Darg*'s plan to use *Afaan* Oromo for basic literacy and even for their local administration was aborted for fear of the rising Oromo nationalism and conversely how the strict suppression resulted in a more aggravated Oromo movement towards self-autonomy.

NB. In this dissertation, I deliberately avoided the pejorative term 'Galla' in all its forms and substituted it with the term Oromo in parenthesis i.e. [Oromo].

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Acronyms

ACS	African Civilization Society
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COC	Congregation of Oromo Children
COPWE	Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia
DNN	Dangerous Narrow Nationalist
ECHAAT	The Ethiopian Oppressed People's Revolutionary Struggle
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
ENLF	Ethiopian National Liberation Front
EPDRF	Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ESM	Ethiopian Student Movement
ESUE	Ethiopian Students' Union of Europe
ESUNA	Ethiopian Student Union of North America
FCL	French Catholic Lazarist
GHM	German Hermannsburg Mission
HMI	Hermannsburg Missionary Institution
LCMS	London Church Missionary Society
LMS	Lovedale Missionary School
MIESON	Ethiopian People's Socialist Movement
MTSA	Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self Help Association
ND	No Date of Publication is Given
NPC	No Publisher Company is Given
NPP	No Place of Publication is given
OBN	Oromia Broadcasting Network
OBS	Oromia Broadcasting Service
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OMN	Oromia Media Network
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organization

PAE	Peasants' Association of Ethiopia
PMAC	The Provisional Military Administrative Council
POMOA	Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs
REYA	Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association
SEM	Swedish Evangelical Mission
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNAOS	Union of North American Oromo Students
UNEOS	Union of European Oromo Students
WSLF	Western Somalia Liberation Front

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Transliterations

I. All words of *Afaan* Oromo origins are spelled according to the writing and reading system in the Oromo alphabet, *qubee*. *Afaan* Oromo has basically ten vowels: Five long and five short.

Short vowels	long vowels
a	aa
e	ee
i	ii
o	oo
u	uu

II. Length in vowels results in meaning change

Example: *Lafa* earth

Laafaa soft

III. Sequences of more than two vowels is possible only if separated by a glottal

Example: *Ba'aa* burden, load

IV. Oromo consonants (Phonemes) are stressed (geminated) by doubling similar phenomes and clustered by devoicing two consonants, as the case of 'b' in Abbaa (father, or possessor) and 'm' and 'y' in the case of *Ammaayyuu* (Still).

V. There are five paired phonemes that are formed by two different consonants. These are ch, dh, ny, ph and sh. Of these dh, ny and ph have different sounds from the English consonants.

Dh: dental, implosive as /ɗ/. Example as in *Dheeraa*.

Ny: voiceless, palatal, nasal as /n'/. Example, as in *nyaataa*

Ph: voiceless, bilabial, ejective, stop as / p'/. Example as in *Laphee*

Moreover, c, q and x have different sounds from the English consonants.

C: as /c'/. Example, as 'c' in Caffee (Meadow or Oromo Assembly)

Q: as /k'/. example. As 'q' in Qubee (*Afaan* Oromo Script)

X: as/t'/. Example, as 'x' in Qorxii (hard, strong, important)

VI. A non-vocalized consonant is not required to be followed by a vowel, but followed by a dissimilar consonant as 'r' in Arsi.

Amharic and related words are spelled according to Amharic alphabet.

I. The seven sounds of Ethiopic alphabet are represented as follows

1st = ባ=Ba

2nd=ቡ= Bu

3rd=ቢ=Bi

4th=ባ=Ba

5th=ቤ=Be

6th=ብ=B/Bi

7th =ቦ=Bo

II. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

Sh=ሸ

Ch=ቸ

Gn= ኘ

Z= ዘ

Zj= ዠ

J=ጀ

III. Glottalized sounds are represented as follows:

Q = ቀ

T=ጠ

Ch=ፈጨ

Ts=ፀ/ጸ

Ph=ጰ

IV. Gemination is indicated by doubling:

Example

Dajjazmach ደጃዝማች

Ka**bb**ada ከበደ

NB. Both *Afaan* Oromo and Amharic proper names common to academic literature are used as they are in the literature.

Chapter One

Introduction

"A nation could lose its wealth, its government, even its territory and still survive, but should it lose its language, not a trace of it would remain"[1]

This dissertation is the study of the reciprocal relationship between *Afaan* Oromo literature and Oromo identity from 1840 to 1991. It offers a fascinating scene of coupled transformations of literature and identity issues. The essential determinant of the transformation is the reciprocal relationship between Oromo literature and Oromo identity issues. The reciprocal relationship is marked in that *Afaan* Oromo literature has played a decisive role in shaping the collective identity of the Oromo on the one hand, and the collective identity of the Oromo has played indispensable role in producing and maintaining the literature that stores and reflects their collective identity intact across generations on the other hand.

Issues of *Afaan* Oromo entered identity politics in 1840 when Ludwig Krapf and king Sahla Sillasie of Shawa disputed over the issue of writing in *Afaan* Oromo. The dispute arose from Krapf's belief that to get acceptance among the Oromo it was necessary to write and preach in *Afaan* Oromo and king Sahla Sillasie's refusal to allow Krapf's travelling to the Oromo for fear that Krapf's move would abort his kingdom's plan of territorial expansion over the Oromo.[2] From that time onwards, *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related issues of Oromo identity passed through intense and successive suppressions. These events were closely related to the linguistic policies of the Ethiopian government and the Oromo resistance.

[1]Firidum Kocharli quoted in Johnn Edwards, *Language and Identity: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): www.en.bookfi.org, p. 206.

[2]W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf, *Journal of the Rev. Messrs Isenberg and Krapf …,* p.175.

The few studies which have come out in political science, literature, linguistics, anthropology, folklore, etc. in relation to these themes are not only devoid of historical depth but also infused with biased views and ideological imbalances. They have wrongly perceived historical sources as dead and as if they have no power to influence the generation under their studies, whereas the reverse is more true to solve the problem from its roots. By contrast, historians of Oromo history have underscored the contributions of the struggle made by Oromo literature in transforming the Oromo from a cultural to a political nation and *Afaan* Oromo from oral to written form.

The process how *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related Oromo identity have survived the intense and successive suppressions have been underemphasized. The efforts of European travelers, freed Oromo slaves and other individuals to promote Oromo language into written status, the script problems they encountered during its composition, and the purpose for which the foreigners were interested to write in and translate scripture into *Afaan* Oromo have been inadequately reconstructed. The attempts to create, or adopt *Geez*, Arabic and Latin scripts for the written *Afaan* Oromo have not been historically explained. Contextual analysis of broadcast materials in Oromo language through Radio Ethiopia and other radio stations, recorded songs in cassettes and newspapers in Oromo language are data waiting for historical reconstruction. The reason why the *Darg*'s basic attempts to increase literacy in *Afaan* Oromo ended with less achievement has not been yet elaborated. The nationalist issues that are involved in the writing of *Afaan* Oromo and the degree to which Ethiopian language policies and political conditions affected the promotion of *Afaan Oromo* into written status have not been widely analyzed and interpreted.

Besides, the importance of *Afaan* Oromo in understanding the social relations and cultural interaction in tracing the history of the Oromo and other societies related to them has rarely been treated. The role that Oromo oral literature had in transforming identity issues by initiating and provoking a continuous struggle and contest concerning the identity question of the Oromo has been insignificantly treated. Moreover, its role in maintaining Oromo national identity cohesively and how it was boldly maintained in the contested national question of the 1960s and 1970s have not been investigated from a historical point of view.

In spite of these problems, a history of *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related identity issues have a remarkable significance for the academic world. Careful historical reconstruction of the genesis and growth of Oromo literature in relation to its ethnic and nationalistic characteristics will contribute a comprehensive and objective knowledge to the scholars of Oromo affairs. The study of a history of Oromo literature in relation to their identity issues needs deep understanding of how the Oromo have used their literature to develop their collective identity consciousness, and how the nationalization of their ethnic identity has promoted Oromo literature from oral to written official status. In other words, it needs an understanding of how the Oromo have used their literature in reflecting their grievances in different areas like politics, economic life, administration, education, religious matters, court proceedings, in prison and in work places. We also need to understand how the mismanagement of Oromo identity and the Oromo efforts to develop their language into a written form in the formation of the Ethiopian nation-state made Oromo identity a contested national question. These complicated issues of Oromo literature and identity issues cannot be understood without studying its development through the course of history.

Therefore, in addition to fill the gaps, the study would provide clear understandings in an attempt to build common understanding and general misconceptions about national question of the Oromo. It would provide an insight into how the reciprocal relationships between Oromo literature and identity issues reinforced and used to mobilize cultural, social, psychological and moral raw material for linguistic and social survival of the Oromo throughout the study period. Study may also generate the challenges encountered in an attempt to make Amharic a sole mother tongue of all Ethiopian nations in general and the Oromo in particular and put the country into instabilities and conflicts. It presents historical evidences in an attempt to adopt a policy of multilingual federal working languages for Ethiopia that the Oromo struggle to have the rights to nurture, protect and promote their language and identity has been an old aged issues.

Therefore, the central thesis of the dissertation is to show how *Afaan* Oromo was transformed from orality to written official language and the Oromo from cultural to political nation of their own regional state during the period from 1840 to 1991. The study takes as a principal organizing theme the contest over *Afaan* Oromo literature and Oromo identity between the Ethiopian state builders who sought to suppress *Afaan* Oromo in favor of Amharic and Oromo identity in favor Amharization and the Oromo resistance forces who inexorably struggled to save and use them as a weapon of resistances. The work is neither entirely about literature nor entirely about Oromo national identity. In so far as it has elements of both, its topic falls under the general rubric of *Afaan* Oromo literature and the issues of Oromo national identity relations. However, it will be more useful and appropriate to cast it as study of the struggle over *Afaan* Oromo literature by the Ethiopian state builders and the Oromo resistance forces.

The subject of the dissertation is to examine how the Oromo nation made decisions individually and in groups and transformed their language into written literature and their people to a political nation, managing identity issues in the changing social, economic and political situations of the period under study. Within this framework, the dissertation focuses on how individuals, groups, institutions, and political organizations promoted *Afaan* Oromo to an officially recognized written status and the Oromo to their own recognized regional state despite the opposition they had to face for their strong attachment to it. Thus, the agency of the dissertation is the Amhara[3] and the Oromo élites.[4]

Nevertheless, my intention is not to cover all aspects of Oromo literature and identity issues within this period, but to produce a comprehensive historical analysis of the intertwined relationship between Oromo literature and identity issues of the Oromo. The study considers *Afaan* Oromo literature both in its oral and written forms as a bridge between *Afaan* Oromo and the related Oromo identity issues. It sees *Afaan* Oromo literature as linguistically documented Oromo identity. However, in the study more focus is given to written literature.

In case of the oral, more preference is for the literature which is characterized by issues of identity in content and time-bounded in nature. The identity here is the Oromo ethnic identity which has direct relationships with *Afaan* Oromo but not what the anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and others describe as professional, gender, peer, or any other

[3] In this dissertation the term Amhara refers to anyone who is either born into Amhara society and culture or anyone who chooses to enter them and engaged in the imposition of Amhara religious, cultural, economic and political practices upon the Oromo nation. The definition is adopted from P. Baxter, "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem: The Oromo" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No.308 (1978), p. 289.

[4] The phrase 'Oromo élite' in this dissertation refers to those Oromo who became conscious and worked to defend the Oromo from any form of domination and who were involved in the struggle to transform *Afaan* Oromo to written form and the Oromo to a political nation. Therefore, here it does not only mean the educated but any Oromo who consciously resisted domination against Oromo interests.

interest-based identities. Thus, instead of viewing Oromo literature chiefly as an illustration of all social aspects of the Oromo society, the dissertation studies a history of Oromo literature as issues of identity.

I have devoted a great deal of space in this dissertation to the means and strategies which the Ethiopian state builders used to suppress the linguistic identity of the Oromo on the one hand, and which the Oromo used to respond to the suppression on the other. Pertinent to this context, this section of the dissertation has attempted to set research objectives and questions in the historiographical context of *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related identity issues and explains methodology and sources.

The dissertation focuses on the Oromo, who are linguistically the largest nation in the Horn of Africa. According to the Central Statistics Agency of Population Projections for Ethiopia, their population number is estimated to be 43,835,700 of the Ethiopian population as of 2018.[5] Territorially, in East Africa, they are distributed from Southern Tigray in the North to the River Tana in Kenya in the South and from Somalia in the East to the Sudan in the West.[6]

They speak *Afaan* Oromo as a first language. Observers of different periods have pointed out that Oromo speakers of this vast territory have understood each other without significant dialectical barriers. L Krapf, who lived among the Oromo from 1839-1842 and also visited the Oromo of different dialects in slave markets, stated that *Afaan* Oromo was common to all

[5]*Central Statistics Agency Population Projections for Ethiopia, 2007-2037* (Addis Ababa, CSA, 2013), p.50.

[6]Gadaa Melbaa, *Oromia: An Introduction* (Khartoum: NP, 1988), p. 280; E.C. Foot, *An [Oromo]-English, English-[Oromo] Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), p. vi; Tsega Etefa, *Integration and Peace in East Africa: A History of the Oromo Nation* (New York: Macmillan, 2006), p.1: Kebede Hordofa, "Toward the Genetic Classification of the Afaan Oromo Dialects" (Ph. D Dissertation, Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, The University of Oslo, 2009), p.1.

Oromo.[7] Similarly, Martial de Salviac, who had been among the Oromo of Hararge in the last quarter of nineteenth century and visited the *Muudaa* (pilgrimage) ceremony when representatives of the Oromo from all corners gathered together in the same period, disclosed that all the Oromo of different clans distributed over the vast territory spoke one language which was *Afaan* Oromo.[8]

Almost twenty years later, Enrico Cerulli, who extensively studied Oromo folklore, confirmed the statements of Krapf and Salviac.[9] In addition, John Trimingham in 1952 appreciated the uniformity of *Afaan* Oromo over the vast expanse of the country in spite of the physical barriers that separated the Oromo clans.[10] Lately in 1987, Jan Hultin also pointed out that, "any Oromo speaker, whatever part of Oromo land he or she may come from and whatever dialect he or she may speak, can easily be understood by other Oromo…"[11]

The dissertation is an investigation of how this large population over a vast territorial area was able to keep its common identity and common language during the period from 1840 to 1991. The year 1840 was taken as the initial landmark because it was when issues of *Afaan* Oromo and the related Oromo ethnic identity began to be subjects of political interest. It was when the translated Bible, personal letters, grammar and dictionaries began to appear in *Afaan* Oromo[12]

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[7]W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf, *Journal of the Rev. Messrs Isenberg and Krapf, Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1840), p. 79.

[8]Martial De Salviac, *An Ancient People, Great African Nation: The Oromo* (Trans. By Ayalew Keno) (Fnfinnee: Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, 2008), pp. 12-13.

[9]Enrico Cerulli, *Folk Literature of the [Oromo] of Southern Ethiopia* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1922), pp. 11-16.

[10] John Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p.190.

[11]Jan Hultin, *The Long Journey: Essays on History, Descent and Land among the Macca Oromo* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1987), p. 2.

[12]L. Krapf, *An Imperfect Outline of the Elements of the [Oromo] Language* (London: Bibliotheca Bodlana, 1840), p. xii; Richard Pankhurst, "The Beginning, of Oromo Studies in Europe" in *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionli, Anno XLIII, No.1* (Gennaio-Marzo, 1976), pp. 185 - 188, Mohammed Hassan, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 110, 177-178; Donald Crummey, "European Religious Missions in Ethiopia, 1830-1868" (University of London: Ph. D. Dissertation in History, 1967), p. 361; Charles Beke, "On the Language and Dialects of Abyssinia and the Countries to the South"

and King Sahla Sillasie had begun to suppress missionaries' efforts to write in *Afaan* Oromo. An example of this was that J. L Krapf was opposed by Orthodox clergy at the palace of king Sahla Sillasie for using Latin characters for writing *Afaan* Oromo.[13] The year 1991 is taken as an ending landmark for the study as it was the time when *Afaan* Oromo was transformed from a suppressed household language to an official language of Oromia Regional State and the Oromo became a nation with their own state. Therefore, the dissertation is to address the following basic research objectives and questions.

1.1. Research Objectives and Questions

The rationale for the study arise from the notion that presented the formation of the Oromo as a single nation and *Afaan* Oromo as official language of Oromia as a construction of a few Marxist-affiliated Oromo from 1960s and a promotion of TPLF's divisive project in 1991 to divided Ethiopia along ethnic lines. The central argument of the notion that before these periods, the Oromo were divided among themselves and had never assumed a single nation and their language lost the power to hold them together especially since sixteenth century. Thus, the dissertation in general terms looks into processes and factors with particular focus on how the Oromo were able maintain their language and shared values to this period. For these purposes, the thesis has attempted to attain the following five interrelated objectives.

The first objective examines how the Oromo struggled individually or in groups for the recognition of their identity in *Afaan* Oromo both in written and oral form as a center of conflict between the Oromo people and the Ethiopian nation state builders. My objective is not merely

in Philological Society, v. ii, no. 33 (April 25, 1845), pp. 8-9; Karl Tutschek, (ed. by Lawrence Tutschek) *Dictionary of the [Oromo] Language* (Munich: Bibliotheca Bodlana, 1844), p. 182. The dictionary was published by Lawrence Tutschek, brother of Karl Tutschek, because of Tutschek's death before finalizing the work.

[13] See J. Lewis Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years' Residence in East Africa (*Second ed. With New Introduction by R. C. Bridges) (London: Frank Cass, 1968), pp. 69-71.

to narrate the biographies of the social élites. Rather, the intention is to trace how the works of oral narrators, poets, singers and writers incorporated identity issues of the Oromo into their works to reflect the injustices and grievances of the masses. In this case, the contributions of the students of Quranic school, chroniclers of the Ethiopian Christian kingdom, missionaries, freed Oromo slaves, musicians and journalists as well as resistance songs in oral form and cassettes have been assessed.

Second, I have looked at the degree to which *Afaan* Oromo has made the relationship between self-identification, group cohesion and world view among the Oromo possible. Attention has been given to the relationships but also to the interpretation of the role of oral songs, proverbs, recorded Oromo songs and newspapers in promoting collective Oromo identity and developing written *Afaan* Oromo in relation to the period of their composition. Under this objective, I have stressed how the struggle by *Afaan* Oromo literature was structured by constantly changing political processes and the Oromo from all corners developed a common consensus in the reaction to opposition. In this regard, I have shown how Oromo literature played a substantial role both in covert and overt forms in communicating and informing the Oromo about the nature of the political situations they were undergoing.

The third objective of the study elaborates how the linguistic policy of the Ethiopian regimes tried to disintegrate the common identity of the Oromo and suppressed the development of *Afaan* Oromo from having written status. Under this objective, assessments of the method and process that different Ethiopian rulers employed to replace *Afaan Oromo* by Amharic and Oromo cultural identity by Amhara[14] cultural practice are presented.

[14] In this dissertation the term Amhara refers to anyone who is either born into Amhara society and culture or anyone who chooses to enter them or engages in the imposition of Amhara religious, cultural, economic and

The fourth objective of the study demonstrates how the Oromo perceived the attempts to impose Amharic as the mother language of all Ethiopian nations and nationalities and made counter-struggle to promote the political position of *Afaan* Oromo. Under this objective, I have investigated how the interrelationship between Oromo identity and Oromo literature fed the strength of the Oromo struggle against the imposition of Amharic.

The fifth objective of the study shows how *Qubee* has become the standardized *Afaan Oromo* alphabet. Here, I have stressed how political interest over the type of the scripts complicated the process of adoption of suitable scripts and elongated the time of endorsement of a uniform system. In this regard, the debates and conflicts over the criteria have made a history of written Oromo literature a fascinating historical study. Therefore, the endeavors that were made to develop *Afaan* Oromo to written literature has been analyzed in relation to the politicized debates.

The dissertation has hopefully achieved its objectives in answering the questions of how the reciprocal relationship between *Afaan* Oromo literature and Oromo identity influenced each other, and withstood imperial imposition and transformed the Oromo from cultural to political nation and *Afaan* Oromo from oral to written official language of the Oromia Regional State. Centering on this chief question, the thesis has attempted to answer the specific questions like: how did the intricate relationships of Oromo literature and issues of Oromo identity develop into strong Oromo nationalism? What were the nationalist roles of individuals, groups, religious institutions and political parties in promoting Oromo literature from orality to written discourse? How did the Oromo communicate issues of their identity through their literature in

political practices upon other Ethiopian nations. The definition is adopted from P. Baxter, "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem: The Oromo" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No.308 (1978), p. 289.

resisting the policy of imposing an Ethiopian identity? And what were the views forwarded in relation to the development of Oromo literature to written form and the growth of Oromo identity issues into a contested national question? To answer these questions in perspective, a brief review of the literature on the history of literature in relation to issues of identity is important.

1.2. Oromo Literature and the Related Issues of Identity: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review.

The study on the relationships between literature and the related identity issues of the Oromo needs an understanding of the conceptual relationships between language, literature, cultural nation, political nation and nation-state which are deeply rooted in the Oromo social process during the period under study. Therefore, full understanding of the nexus between *Afaan* Oromo literature and Oromo identity requires short explanations of these concepts as *Afaan* Oromo literature and identity issues covered in this study are characterized by these features.

Since literature is the leading subject in the dissertation, contextualization of the concept in this study is important. In fact, the contextualization of the concept literature is not an easy task. The difficulty begins from the definition of the concept. The concept 'literature' itself is elusive. The concept has no universally agreed upon common definition. The attempts to define it vary across periods and geographical regions.

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica states that prior to the late eighteenth century literature was defined as any written form of language.[15] In the late eighteenth century, it was redefined and was made to include only creative and well written materials. However, this definition was

[15] "The Art of Literature" in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), V. 23, pp. 77-211.

criticized for its exclusion of written texts on real and social trends.[16] Based on this criticism, the definition was revised in the late nineteenth century and was made to include the meticulous documentation of real life and social trends. These eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' definitions of literature were mainly from the perspective of major European countries. The nineteenth century definition not only excluded oral literature but also depicted African languages as artistically undeveloped and linguistically unstudied, simple in structure and deficient in vocabulary.[17]

It was in connection with the use of oral tradition as sources of historical studies in the second half of the twentieth century that the earlier perception of literature was improved and literature was redefined as any expression of real and imaginative works both in oral and written form which concerned social and environmental pressure on human beings. The study by Ruth Finnegan on African oral literature remarks that it was in the1960s that oral texts were defined as part of literature. In connection with this, oral literature was defined as one of the main human products by which human beings have preserved their world views and creativities as well as that by which they have established unity, loyalty and patriotism through generations.[18] Adding to Finnegan's definition, B. W. Andrzejewski discussed both written and oral literature as the mechanism through which shared myths of origin, history, feelings of identity,

[16]B.W. Andrzejewski, "Oral Literature" in B.W. Andrzejewski (ed.) *Literature in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Survey* (London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 31-33. I would like to note that phonological, morphological and syntax aspects of language remain outside this definition and also are not in the scope of the dissertation.

[17]Andrzejewski, "Oral Literature" …, p. 31; Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa: World Oral Literature Series V.1* (Cambridge: Reprinted by Open Book Publisher, 2012), pp. 29- 51.

[18] Finnegan, *Oral literature in Africa…*, pp. 29- 51. See also George Anaso, Nwabudike, Christopher Eziafa, "Culture, Language and Evolution of African Literature" *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. III (Apr. 2014): www.iosrjournals.org* www.iosrjournals.org, *pp. 81-85*.

alienation, assimilation, suppression, imbalance of power and transformation have been symbolized and articulated in artistic ways to the outside world.[19]

Beyond definition, scholars have also debated on literature about which forms of language have power to play these roles. The debate is on whether the literature must be in the vernacular or can be in a second language. Writers from the perspective of the modernist approach argue that the role of the vernacular and a second language is one and the same. They assert that the relationship between language and a nation is instrumental or what can be constructed at the intersection of political and economic interests. Their argument has an intention that élites can create a nation for any language by creating an intersection of political and economic interests.[20] In their top down approach, they strongly maintain that the language of a given speech community can be switched and re-switched on the basis of individual or group interests. Therefore, for them, there is no difference between vernacular and second language for the purpose of identity identification as far as one has good command of that language. In fact, their argument is from the perspectives of a liberal view in that it focuses on the individual interests or individual rational choices and it suffers from not reflecting the rationale of group interest or the speech community.

[19] Andrzejewski, "Oral Literature" …, p.31.

[20]The modernist theorists assert that the relationship between members of a given nation is an instrumental one whether accidental or intentional. See Ernest Gellner, *Nation and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983), pp. 116-120; Eric Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Ed. Second (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 46-79; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Revised Edition (London and New York: Verso, 1991), pp. 1-46.

On the contrary, primordialists[21] and perennialists[22] view the role of literature in the vernacular and in a second language as what should not be presented as in any way equal. For them, the role of literature in vernacular language in mirroring the identity of its speech community is by far greater than the language second to them. For example, Clifford states that language plays its real role when it is only for the purposes of its native speakers, as it defines for the native speakers how to talk, how to think in terms of their own group, how to maintain cultural views, how to perceive the others and how they are perceived by others.[23] Similarly, John Hutchinson states the role difference between the two as, "no matter how well you speak other languages, you are one or two degrees below your level when you use them."[24]

Within this approach, Edward Shils is another scholar who argues that national identity exists not only in the person but also in the folklore, literature and history of the society in its potential to generate nationalism by evoking factors which a second language cannot do among the members of the speech community.[25] Fishman also assumed vernacular language as the storehouse of the speech community. He maintains that on whatever developmental level the national group is, the reciprocal relationships between their identity and vernacular language is a mandatory for the group to have recognizable durability. Therefore, for Fishman the

[21] Primordialist is a group of theorists of identity who suggest that the identity of a nation is based on various socio-biological conception of genetic quantities or 'otherness'. See for example, Edward Shils, "Tradition" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 13, No. 2, *Special Issue on Tradition and Modernity* (Apr., 1971): http://www.jstor.org/stable/178104, pp. 122-159; Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publisher, 1973); John F. Stack, ed. *The Primordial Challenge (*Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986).

[22]Perenialists are also theorists who argue that the identity of a nation is what is derived from generations from time immemorial. However, they do not accept the fact that a nation is necessarily built on genetic realities fitness. See Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1986), pp. 12-17, 210.

[23]Clifford, pp. 59-87.

[24]Andrei Plesu, "Nation and Nationalism" *in Proceedings of the International Symposium Nation and National Ideology: Past, Present and Prospects* (Held at New Europe College, Bucharest, April, 6-7, 2001), p.14.

[25]Shils, pp. 120-159.

struggle for a nation is the struggle for vernacular language and the struggle for vernacular language is the struggle for a nation. Fishman also asserts that the loss of one is the loss of the other.[26] Alyssa Ayres has also the position that the role of vernacular language is central in creating boundaries of belonging that shape the nation state.[27]

For this most scholars have perceived vernacular language and its literature with overlapping meanings. Especially, after the recognition of oral texts as part of literature, the similarity between language and literature comes close together in defining the identity of a given ethnic group. The recognition of the two as synonymous has been extensively reflected in the works that deal with the identity issues of the speech community. This is articulated in the study of Asghar Ali Ansari. He underscores that except among specialists of linguistics and literature, the two terminologies are popularly accepted as synonyms.[28] That is why László Marácz states that, "The nation lives in its language."[29]

Since *Afaan* Oromo is vernacular to the Oromo nation, I have also used the term language and literature indiscriminately as differentiation between these two concepts has no practical value in the context of this dissertation. This interwoven or overlapped conceptual framework of language and literature would allow us to access how *Afaan* Oromo literature has been used to store and reflect social process among the Oromo on the one hand, and how the Oromo defended themselves from external threats.

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[26]Joshua Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity in Minority Socio-linguistic Perspective Multilingual Matter* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1989): www. bookzz.org, pp.1-27.

[27] Alyssa Ayres, *Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 3.

[28]Esmail Bahtash, "Interrelationships Between Language and Literature from Old English to the Modern Period" In *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, Vol. 4, No,2 (2012), pp. 190-216.

[29]László Marácz, "The Root of Modern Hungarian Nationalism" Lotte Jensen (Ed.) *The Roots of Nationalism: National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe, 1600-1815* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), p. 235.

An understanding of this reciprocal relationships between *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related issues of Oromo identity demands an understanding of the social process among the Oromo that preceded and followed the conquest of the Amhara. This understanding is important because it serves to illustrate how *Afaan* Oromo literature as a literature of vernacular language has retained strong holds as an emblem of the Oromo national identity both when they were free and when they were under domination respectively. It is also helpful to highlight the social dynamics that the Oromo have undergone before the conquest and after.

As studies by Martial De Salviac and Asmarom Legesse show, before conquest the Oromo had a common identity which was welded together by the unity of their cultural practices and common vernacular language.[30] As Mekuria Bulcha, Dinsa Lepisa and Gemeda Eshete have illustrated, in order to keep the continuity of this common identity, the Oromo developed cultural practices by which they socialized the newly born generations into the core cultural identity of the Oromo. Their studies underscore that the main objective of the socialization was to build ethically committed and morally strong membership so that they would follow accepted *Gadaa* values and avoid too much dependency on the one hand or rebelliousness on the other hand.

The main socialization instrument was their oral literature. The body of Oromo oral literature put a lot of emphasis on distinguishing between good and evil, moral and immoral, destructive and constructive, thoughts and actions. These have been stored into it in the forms of values, tension, myths, common experiences, psychological makeup and intellectual curiosity. The socialization of the generations into this set of distinctive values was made possible by the

[30]See De Salviac, pp. 7-30; Asmarom, *Oromo Democracy…*, pp. 41-195.

recitation of tales, poems, songs, ballads, anecdotes, proverbs, history and others.[31] Such practices from generation to generation resulted in a very rich oral literature of the Oromo which has also been a mechanism to build responsible members within the Oromo identity.

The literature on the identity issues I have reviewed on the topic ensured such socialization of the consecutive generations into the core values of common cultural identity of the bearer society as cultural nationalism. Smith, John Hutchinson, Eric Woods and Kmylicka defined cultural nationalism as a movement to cultivate an ethically committed and morally strong community using vernacular culture in which literature of a vernacular language plays a dominant role.[32] Kmylicka also adds that within the practices of cultural nationalism there is a practice of the socialization of membership outside the cultural identity of the nation by participating in common culture and language of the socializing nation rather than emphasizing 'ethnic nature' as a ground rule.[33] The Oromo system of incorporation of non-Oromo through *guddifachaa* (adoption) and *Moggaasaa* (naturalization)[34] can be interpreted within this

[31]See Mekuria Bulcha, "The Survival and Reconstruction of Oromo National Identity" in *Being and Becoming Oromo*; *Historical and Anthropological Inquiries.* Eds. P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin and Alessandro Triulzi (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996), pp. 50-53; Eshete Gemeda, "African Egalitarian Values and Indigenous Genres: The Functional and Contextual Studies of Oromo Oral Literature in a Contemporary Perspective" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Department of Literature, Sedans University, 2008), pp. i-xx; Dinsa Lepisa, "The Gada System of Government: Sera Caffee Oromo" (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, L. B. Thesis in Law, 1975).

[32]John Hutchinson, *Nation as Zones of Conflicts* (London: Sage Publications, 2005), pp.33-34; Will Kmylicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 242-244, Anthony Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism: A Cultural Approach* (London and New York, Routledge, 2009), p.24.

[33] Kmylicka, p. 1-30. The definition given to ethnic group/identity is as elusive as that of literature. However, I adopted Smith's conceptualization of ethnic group as a society whose group members claim common origin of descent, myth, history, culture and language. I am also more convinced by his argument among others' literature on issues of identity which assert that ethnic identity is a base for subsequent nation formation. See Smith, *Ethno-Symbolist*, p.24-31. The second whose group name is modernists, (which can be both constructionists and instrumentalist) says that there is a group of 'primitive' society loosely organized on the basis of common language and common culture, yet they argue because of its nature of fluidity it could be created and recreated and their language switched and re-switched on the basis of individual or group interests. See footnote, no. 19.

[34]Tsega, *Integration and Peace in East Africa…,* pp. 44-47.

Kmylicka context. Therefore, it is possible to refer to the pre-conquest Oromo movement to cultivate and promote their cultural identity as cultural nationalism.

Within the same understanding, Hugh Seton-Watson explains a community whose unity is promoted on the basis of persistently cultivated common culture, historical mythology, vernacular language or other cultural bonds as a cultural nation.[35] Therefore, the main objective of cultural nationalism is to build a cultural nation that keeps its unity by loyalty of its members to common cultural practices. Kmylicka argues more convincingly that the scope of a cultural nation is more than an ethnic group, as a cultural nation is open to individuals or groups who are willing to learn their language and practice their culture.[36] Based on this, the dissertation argues that the Oromo before conquest was a cultural nation and the role played by the use of *Afaan* Oromo literature to maintain the continuity of the Oromo as cultural nation was cultural nationalism.

Nevertheless, the continuity of cultural nationalism could be sufficient in uniting and sustaining the cultural nation as far as that nation is free from external challenges. Otherwise, Eric Woods and John Hutchinson argue that in case a cultural nation is challenged by shattering external events, it needs other supplementary forms of movements known as political nationalism. The demand for political nationalism is because in its nature it is a mindset of a national movement to defend a nation from external threats with the aspiration to be a

[35]Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), p. 4.

[36]Kmylicka, p. 24.

politically and legally recognized and self-ruling nation in its own homeland.[37] Such a nation is popularly known as a political nation.[38]

Yet, getting all the members of a cultural nation into the movement for political nationalism as immediately as it is required, is usually difficult. Jonathan Githens-Mazer, Smith and Hutchinson argue that the difficulty is that the grievances from external threats and to which political nationalism is a response cannot be felt simultaneously. Therefore, getting members of a cultural nation into the movement of political nationalism and shaping them into a political nation are developments that take long time.[39] Scholars agree that in both cases (cultural nationalism and political nationalism), literature in the vernacular language is central to the movements. On the one hand it plays a central role in shaping the movement, and on the other hand, it is being shaped and enriched by the events in the movements.[40]

Mohammed Hassen and Mekuria Bulcha elucidated that the cultural and linguistic unity the Oromo had cultivated did not help them to withstand the wars waged against them from Shawa Amhara in the center and from Gojjam in the direction of Wallagga from the early 1870s. As is generally true in the development of political nationalism, Mohammed and Mekuria lamented that the attempts to develop the Oromo into nationwide political nationalism was a

[37]Eric Woods, "Cultural Nationalism: A Review and Annotated Bibliography" In *Studies of National Movement*, Vol. 2 (20140. Http://snm.nise.eu/indx.php/studies/article/view/0202s; John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of Irish Nation State* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1987). p.124.

[38]Seton-Watson, p. 4.

[39]Jonathan Githens-Mazer, *Cultural and Political Nationalism in Ireland: Myth and Memories of the Easter Rising* (London: University of London, 2005); Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism*…, pp.65-67; Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of*…, p. 128.

[40] Ayres, pp.2-3.

long and slow process. According to their argument it was the process that was undertaken for no less than a century.[41]

However, both agree that in this long process, literature of *Afaan* Oromo in its different forms was used as a main instrument to cultivate the Oromo into political nationalism on the one hand, and was taken by the Amhara conquerors as a dangerous weapon of resistance to be demolished first.[42] The idea of vernacular literature as a means to oppose, to inform and document the newly introduced suppression is also elaborated in the work of Alyssa Ayres on language and nationalism in Pakistan. In her work, she pointed out that it is a language that plays the central role in shaping the idea of the nation about their conquerors and retains strong hold among the nation under threat when other cultural practices are under suppression.[43]

By the same token, *Afaan* Oromo literature was central in the movement to transform the Oromo from cultural to political nation as it was in *Afaan* Oromo literature that the extortions from the conquerors were interpreted, registered and transmitted across geographical areas and time. It also served as an important instrument in the protection of collective identity and communal cohesion of the Oromo. At the same time, learning these roles of *Afaan* Oromo literature, the ruling Amhara forces took it as the protective shell which should be broken first. It is to this aspect that the dissertation has given details.

Collections of Oromo literature in both written and oral forms show the effective use of *Afaan* Oromo literature to interpret, to inform and to register their grievances, as well as to promote their struggle against the domination they were brought under. In addition to my collection

[41] Mekuria, "The Survival and Reconstruction…, pp. 48-66; Mohammed Hassen, "The Development of Oromo Nationalism" P.T.W. Baxter, Jan Hultin and Alessandro Triulzi(Eds.) *Being and Becoming Oromo*; *Historical and Anthropological Inquiries* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996), pp.67-80.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Ayres, p. 2

during my fieldwork, the collections of Enrico Cerulli, Alessandro Triulzi, Negaso Gidada and Tamene Bitima[44] are indicators of the roles. Therefore, detailed examination of the collections offers an excellent understanding on the roles *Afaan* Oromo literature played in transforming the Oromo from cultural nation to political nation.

The prime concern of the Oromo about their language, *Afaan* Oromo, was also understood by the Christian and Muslim missionaries who wanted to reach the Oromo with their respective religions. The main reason especially Catholic and Protestant missionaries insisted on studying *Afaan* Oromo and translating the scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo was that they recognized that the use of *Afaan* Oromo was the best method to convert the Oromo. A study by Richard Pankhurst on "The Beginning of Oromo Studies in Europe…"[45] is one of the best materials to learn how eager European missionaries were to learn *Afaan* Oromo.

Pankhurst thoroughly dealt with the letters ex-slave Oromo wrote to each other in their language. While summarizing their biographies, he included how the ex- slave Oromo had expressed in their letters the affection they had for their folklore, language and nation. He also extensively dealt with how the contents of the letters and the happiness the ex-slave Oromo felt when they communicated in *Afaan* Oromo encouraged the missionaries to assume that approaching the Oromo as a promoter of *Afaan* Oromo would help them win the trust of the Oromo. His work has also brought evidence of Oromo language into easy accessibility.[46]

[44]Cerulli, pp. 10-245; Alessandro Triulzi, "Social Protest and Religion in Some Gabbar Songs from Qellam, Wallagga" in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Nice/ 19-22 December 1977), pp. 177-196; Negaso Gidada, "Oromo Historical Poems and Songs: Conquests and Exploitation in Western Wallaga, 1886-1927" in *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*, Bd, 29 (1983), pp.327-340.

[45]Pankhurst, "The Beginning of Oromo Studies…", pp. 11-17.

[46] *Ibid*., pp.171-206.

On the part of Catholic missionaries, Alberto Antonios has collected rich information on Oromo literary materials while studying the Catholicization of the Oromo. In his survey of the Catholic missionary interests among the Oromo and Oromo literacy from 1846 to 1942, he thoroughly explained the commitment Catholic missionaries showed to learn *Afaan* Oromo and to train freed Oromo slaves into using written *Afaan* Oromo as a pathway to convert the Oromo mass to their religion. He has insightfully identified and located the translated Catholic scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo with their titles and date of translation. He has also cited the schools established by the Catholics in the middle of the nineteenth century to educate Oromo children in *Afaan* Oromo language.[47]

The interest of Islamic religious zeal to convert the Oromo into their religion using the promotion of *Afaan* Oromo as a mechanism to win over the Oromo was another indication that changing the beliefs of the nation required teaching through the vernacular language. In his studies on an Ethiopian Ajami-Oromo Script, Mohammed Hakim argues that although Arabic is the most preferred language to teach Islamic religion, the Sufi sect of Islam strongly believes that the clerics should use vernacular language in order to create easy communication and trusted learning from the new converts. In connection with this principle, he gives his elaboration on how *Manzuma* (Islamic poetic verse in *Afaan* Oromo) has been used as a mechanism to win Oromo converts.[48]

[47]Antonios Alberto, "Ethiopian Review of Cultures: The Apostolic Vicariate of [Oromo], A Capuchin Mission in Ethiopia (1846-1942)" (Ph. D dissertation: Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology, 1998).

[48]Mohammed Hakim, "Birillee-Safa: An Ethiopian Ajami-Oromo Manuscript: Introduction, Comments and Annotated Translation" (Ph. D Dissertation, Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University, 2012).

The readiness of the Oromo to learn in their language and their enthusiastic desire to find their language in written form is thoroughly evaluated by Gustav Arén. Referring to letters and reports of both foreigners and indigenous missionaries, he underscores that both foreign missionaries and the Oromo themselves strongly insisted on writing and teaching in *Afaan* Oromo even when the situations were threatening to their lives. He states with emphasis that the purpose of the withdrawal of Oromo students from Najjoo Kidane Mirat Orthodox Church education and their rejoining of missionary school was only to learn in their own language. He also pinpoints that both *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa of Leeqaa Naqamtee and Abbaa Jifaar of Jimmaa were enthusiastically interested to teach their people in *Afaan* Oromo. Elaborating on this, Arén shows how the Oromo used *Afaan* Oromo as a main instrument against domination and for their national consciousness.[49]

The struggle over *Afaan* Oromo literature (specially the written aspect) between the Oromo resistance forces and the Ethiopian state builders became subjects of scholarly debates among Ethiopian and foreign writers. Panoramic evaluation of materials consulted on the subject show that these writers could be divided into two main blocs: those who write from the Oromo viewpoint and those who write from the position of Ethiopian state builders (commonly known as the main paradigm). In both blocs, foreigner and Ethiopian writers have participated.

Those scholars who have written from the perspective of what was once the main paradigm have made the Oromo the focus of their writing to legitimize the intended formation of a homogenized and united Ethiopia. Much of their argument presents the reciprocal relationships between *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo national identity as non-existent. They depicted the

[49]Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: The Origin of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus* (Stockholm: Uppsala University Press, 1978), pp. 423-433.

Oromo as divided in their identity and *Afaan* Oromo dialects as unintelligible to each other.[50] Those who admitted the presence of Oromo identity saw it as an impediment to the national unity of Ethiopia, and referred to any resentment regarding issues of Ethiopian unitary status as ethnic parochialism. Instead, they presented Ethiopia as a country which has been welded into unity by its ancient civilization, history, language and culture of Christianity. They have referred to the Amharic language as a *Lisane Niguse* (language of the king) which everybody has to use to be part of civilized Ethiopia.[51] Therefore, their works underemphasized issues of ethnic identity, with the belief that national unity and development have not been possible unless a country has a single common culture, language and national identity.

One of the earliest academic works which embodied this view most extensively was Tedla Haile's MA Thesis "Pourquoi et Comment Pratiquer une Poliitique D'assimilation en Ethiopie" and presented to the Univesité Coloniale d'Anvers in 1930. Tedla's concern was overwhelmingly the assimilation of the Oromo for the sake of unity and control. Taking Amhara- Tigrean culture as a core Ethiopian national identity, he recommended the assimilation of the Oromo as the only credible and sensible measure for the realization of homogenous nation formation in Ethiopia. .His presentation of Oromo culture and language as inferior to Amhara culture, religion and Amharic and his recommendation was an early indication of what the future (after the imperial restoration in 1941 following the Italian occupation) would have in store for the Oromo.[52] In my opinion Tedla's might have helped

[50] Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1948), pp. 298-314; Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (Third Ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); Harold Marcus, "The Corruption of Ethiopian History" in *Proceedings of the Sixth Michigan State University Conference on Northeast Africa* (April 23-25, 1992), pp. 220-227.

[51]Perham, pp. 298-314; Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (Third Ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); Harold Marcus, "The Corruption of Ethiopian …", pp. 220-227.

[52]The summary of the idea is taken from Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2002), pp. 131-132.

to inspire the language policy of the restored imperial regime after the Italian occupation and Tedla's presentation of Oromo culture and language as "inferior" to Amhara culture and religion and the Amharic language was certainly an early indication of what future would be in store for the Oromo after 1941.

Another work that evaluated the strategies which the Ethiopian government employed to build a homogenous nation of Ethiopia and the Oromo question was Margery Perham's *The Government of Ethiopia*. In her analysis, she argued that the established Orthodox churches at different centers, the expanded military and administrative structures, the introduced *geber* system (economic relations), and the determination to use Amharic as the sole government language were carefully identified strategies for the formation of a homogenous nation state in Ethiopia. [53]

In her argument, she saw the understanding of the divided Oromo into northern, south-western, southern and south-eastern as facilitating factors for the immediate attainment of a homogenous nation of Ethiopia. She took the division as a guarantee of the success of a homogenous policy, as she understood that the northern Oromo penetrated deeply into Amhara culture in such a way that one could not distinguish them from their Amhara counterparts; the south-western Oromo were divided into different economic, religious and occupational identities; the south-eastern had, however gone away with an Islamized identity and the southern remained pastoralists.[54]

[53]Perham, pp. 298-314.

[54]*Ibid.;* Tesema Ta'a, "The Place of the Oromo in Ethiopian History," in Journal of Oromo Studies, Vol. 11, No.1&2 (July 2004), pp.3-4.

However, important for this dissertation is what she stated as not yet tackled. This was the unity of the Oromo in their language. In her argument, she stressed that *Afaan* Oromo remained a major cultural factor that continued uniting the Oromo from east to west and from north to the south. She stated that even the Amharized Oromo of the north had never dropped *Afaan* Oromo at least speaking it in their homes. Therefore, on her way to arguing that *Afaan* Oromo and its bearings remained an obstacle to the expansion of 'Ethiopian identity' and the growth of homogenous Ethiopian 'nationalism', she revealed how the Oromo insisted on using their language and how *Afaan* Oromo kept a common Oromo identity. She went even further and stated that the Oromo insistence on using their language was an indication of their readiness to reclaim their common identity in case conditions offered them the opportunity. This made her predict the possibility of a united Oromo nationalism and call upon the Ethiopian government to work effectively for the spread of Amharic through official use and in schools.[55]

Another leading scholar of the main paradigm, Edward Ullendorff, followed Perham with the book he first published in 1960. He argued that, "We shall mainly confine ourselves… to Semitic languages of Ethiopia, since they express the real Abyssinia as we know it and are the virtual exclusive carriers of Ethiopian civilization, literature, and intellectual prestige."[56] Central to his assumption, since non-Semitic Ethiopian populations had only "inferior" cultural elements, he wished them to join what he referred to as the real Abyssinian identity. He illustrated that emphasis given to language homogeneity in the Ethiopian nation building process was what should be worked on with great care. In the three lines in which he mentioned

[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Ullendorff, pp. 111-112.

Afaan Oromo out of twenty pages long devoted to language, he admitted that *Afaan* Oromo was a language as strong as Amharic in the number of its speakers.

Therefore, he advised that all the Amharic speaking administrators who were stationed throughout the country should direct the linguistic homogenization process.[57] His support of this Amharization process made his book to win the Emperor Haile Sillasie's prize of 1972.[58] In spite of these biased and prejudiced approaches, his work has great significance in showing how the Oromo were united as well as how Emperor Haile Sillasie supported scholars in crushing Oromo ethnic identities and their language into the project of a monolithic nation state.

In the same vein, the late Harold Marcus, who was the author and editor of many articles, collections of essays and books as well as mentor of many Ethiopian history students, suggested the collective national identity of the Oromo as a fabrication of Marxist-affiliated Oromo intellectuals. For him, before the 1960s, there was no Oromo nation and Oromo region and it was only the educated Oromo nationalists who had constructed them from void space. Among his series of publications, the most serious in relation to this argument is his article on "The Corruption of Ethiopian History."[59]

In this article, Marcus vehemently exposed all that he had been silent about throughout his earlier scholarly life. In this article, he repeatedly argued that the Oromo in Ethiopia had been 'integrated' and 're-integrated' into Ethiopian nationhood and there was no sense of belongingness among them from the perspective of *Oromummaa* (Oromo identity). He

[57]*Ibid.*, p.119.

[58] Mekuria, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization in Ethiopia and The Conflict Over the Status of 'Afaan Oromo'" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 384(July 1997), p.338.

[59]Marcus, "The Corruption of Ethiopian History" …, pp. 220-227.

strongly argued for the position that there was no concept of common national identity among the Oromo and their language was simplistic as it had no written script. He saw the common identity of the Oromo at the time of his writing as simply an artificial construction of pro-Oromo scholars.

His argument indicates that issues of Oromo identity and Oromo language entered Ethiopian historiography as disintegrators of the Ethiopian empire and Ethiopian history by Oromo élites for their own political advantage. In his debate, he went beyond this, also criticizing the research methods of the students he had mentored for their assertion of the existence of collective Oromo identity in their scholarship. In addition, he also criticized the foreigners who had written from the perspective of the Oromo. He accused them of putting forward a politicized Ethiopian history which has been mothering nations in Ethiopia, specially the Oromo. He condemned any argument against the main paradigm of Ethiopian history as fake and fabrication. [60]

It seems clear that Marcus's article lacks analysis of the developmental stages of the formation of a political nation. His account ignores the concepts developed by scholars of identity studies, showing the developmental stages of nation state: the growth from a clan to ethnic group, ethnic group to cultural nation, cultural nation to political nation and finally nation state.[61] Although Marcus's argument does not show how, when and why a linguistic nation claims its own autonomous state, it has a contribution in investigating how issues of Oromo identity and language have been perceived in the main stream of Ethiopian history.

[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*

Although not as aggressive as Harold Marcus, the study of Abraham Demoz was another literary work that views issues of ethnic identity in Ethiopia from the perspective of the main paradigm. In his study Abraham viewed ethnic identity in Ethiopia as a matter that could be alternatively defined as territorial or religious or cultural or linguistic. Central to his argument, he tried to show that during the pre-nineteenth and the nineteenth centuries ethnic identity in Ethiopia was primarily defined by religion, and during the twentieth century primarily by language. While arguing in this context, he interpreted the role of language within material interests rather than as a marker of identity.[62] In fact, the purpose seems to have been adjustment to the philosophy of the main paradigm, that states that the use of language as a marker of identity in twentieth century Ethiopia was the fabrication of ethnic nationalists.

Nonetheless, his argument contradicts Joseph Tubiana's assumption which argued that languages in the Horn of Africa are beyond instruments of communication, and are "…the totality of the entire culture: pattern of behavior, moral values, beliefs, as the sum total of the history of the community"[63] Nonetheless, the approach Abraham used to justify language politicization in Ethiopia is helpful to understand how instrumental, symbolic and cognitive functions of *Afaan* Oromo as a marker of Oromo national identity were interpreted to define the position of the Oromo in the process of nation building in Ethiopia.

Nearest to neutral is the work of Teshale Tibebu.[64] Teshale argues that nation formation in Ethiopia was one sided and only modeled on four pillars around which Amhara cultural identity has been built. The pillars he identifies are the *Geber* system, *Tabot* Christianity, the

[62]Abraham Demoz, "Language, Identity and Peace in Ethiopia and the Horn" in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the Horn of Africa* (May 26-28, 1989), pp.69-75.

[63]Joseph Tubiana, "The Linguistic Approach to Self Determination" in I.M. Lewis (Ed.) *Nationalism and Self Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London; Ithaca Press, 1983), p.24.

[64]Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia, 1896-1974* (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 1995).

Aksumite paradigm and *Geez* Civilization.[65] He argued that all efforts of the post-Adwa victory of Menilek II to construct a people of one culture, one religion, one language, and similar economic structure were on the basis of these pillars. He underscores that anyone from the newly incorporated areas had to show trustworthy loyalty and submissiveness to the four pillars with good articulation of the *Lisane Negus* (language of the king) to be referred to as civilized and patriots of Ethiopia.[66]

In fact, before Teshale, Andrian Hastings developed a view that Ethiopian strategies of nation construction had their origin in the Judaic model of a monolithic nationhood construction which fused land, people, languages and religion; and the early Christian tradition that sanctioned the use of vernacular languages and translations.[67] According to Hastings, the Judaic and Christian traditions did not only provide ideological principles of assimilation, but also informed the Ethiopian rulers of the impeding power of vernacular language to assimilation if converted to written language.

Generally, the arguments of writers in the main paradigm on the history of nation formation in Ethiopia seem to have been informed by the modernist approach which argues for the possibility of 'inventing' a culturally and linguistically homogenous nation at any time and

[65]Teshale defined the *geber* system as a combination of servant, tribute paid to the rulers and the distribution relations of the appropriated tributes among different levels of rulers according to their status. From his argument, it is possible to understand that the *geber* system is more an economic relation in nature. His work also defines Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia as *Tabot* Christianity because of its holding together both emblem of Christianity and Judaic practices that makes it different from other Orthodox Christianity or other Christians. He also portrayed the Aksumite Paradigm as a legitimacy root that connects the ruling classes and their policies to Biblical tradition, and as an ideological justification for the necessity to impose superiority of the culture, language and religion of the ruling classes on those outside its cultural embraces. The fourth is Geez civilization which he defines arguably as to practice equally all the above three without showing any significant deviance from them. See Teshale, pp. 3-18.

[66]*Ibid*., p.49.

[67]Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa, 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994): http://:www.en.bookfi.org, pp. 16-27.

place by established intersection of economic and political interests.[68] The strategies such as military and administrative expansion, centralization of government and a taxation system, and the use of state supported language that the modernists suggested are more or less reflected in the works of these main paradigm writers. In fact, there were also conditions where they reflected primordialist views of identity reclamation in time and space based on favorability of the conditions[69] when they state their fear of an inevitable identity reclamation of Amharized Oromo.

On the other hand, those who write from the perspective of the Oromo claim that the reciprocal relationships between *Afaan* Oromo and issues of Oromo national identity are interrelated. They have argued for the difficulty to understand one aspect of them in the absence of the other. For this, they have developed the position that *Afaan* Oromo literature and its bearing have been central, although not the only one, to the development of Oromo political nationalism. In their arguments, they emphasized that it was *Afaan* Oromo which kept the common national identity of the Oromo at the time when the exercise of *muudaa* ceremony and the *Gadaa* system networks were suppressed by the Amhara rulers. [70]

They also argued in contrast to the main paradigm that the attempts to build a homogenous nation of Ethiopia were an imposition that attempted to uproot the cultural values and language

[68]Gellner, pp. 39-43; Anderson, pp.5-7,37-46; Hobsbawm, pp. 9-11.

[69] See footnote, no. 21.

[70]Among their series of publications of books, articles and essay collections, best relevant to the theme are Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibsa, *The Invention of Ethiopia* (Trenton; New Jersy: The Red Sea Press, 1990); Asafa Jalata, *Oromia and Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethno National Conflict, 1868-1992* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1993); Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent and the Ancient Oromo Nation: Dilemmas in the Ethiopian Politics of State and Nation-Building* (Cape Town: The Center for Advanced Studies of African Society, 2011); Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization…" pp. 325-352; Mohammed Hassan. "A Short History of Oromo Colonial Experience, 1870s-1990s," in *Journal of Oromo Studies*, V.5, No.1&2(1998); V.7, No. 1&2(2000); Mohammed Hassan "Shaykh Bakrii Saphaloo (1895-1980): A Prolific Scholar and a Great Oromo Nationalist" in *Journal of Oromo Studies* (2003). 10, 1 & 2:135-168.

of Oromo so as to supplant them by the Amhara values and Amharic language. They also maintain that the Oromo were disintegrated into different administrative zones and dialects because of the Ethiopian government's "divide and rule policy" over non-Amhara ethnic groups.[71]

Therefore, they have presented the Oromo as victims not only of economic imbalance and political inequality, but also of cultural and ethnic discrimination and language suppression. Among others who have significantly contributed to this perspective, it suffices to mention the co-authored works of Bonnie Holcomb, who is a social anthropologist, and Sisai Ibssa, who was a political scientist, Asafa Jalata, Mekuria Bulcha, both sociologists, and Mohammed Hassen, who is a distinguished historian.[72]

The co-authored work, the *Invention of Ethiopia*, is in fact the work that has aroused strong controversy among scholars of Ethiopian studies. In this work Holcomb and Sisai described the Oromo as an ancient nation who have kept their common national identity by their common vernacular language, modes of livelihoods and territorial integrity before the Oromo were gradually brought under the Amhara ruling system from the 1840s. They continuously contend in their work that *Afaan* Oromo and common Oromo national identity suffered at the hands of Ethiopian state builders. Therefore, the book is helpful to the dissertation in informing the relationships between Ethiopian nation state and the Oromo national question.[73]

Not very far from Holcomb's and Sisai's position, Asafa Jalata conducted a panoramic study of political relationships between the Oromo and the Ethiopian state in historical perspective.

[71]*Ibid.*
[72]*Ibid.*
[73]Holcomb and Sisai, *The Invention of Ethiopia…*

After defining the Oromo within the same context as Holcomb and Sisai, he presented the Oromo and the Ethiopian state as two deadly enemies from the time they came together. The main focus of his study ranges from the victory of Tewodros over the Walloo Oromo in 1853 and passes through all the forms of the Oromo resistance to the 1960s, and then goes on to the national struggle for independence from the 1960s to 1992.[74]

In his study, Asafa informed us that the establishment of garrison towns, Orthodox churches, administrative institutions, schools and other cultural and social associations were to prevent the Oromo from developing their culture, peoplehood and nationalism and to disenfranchise *Afaan* Oromo from official usage. He also highlighted how *Afaan* Oromo literature was used as a marker of common Oromo identity and instrument of struggle from the 1960s against imposition of Amharic from Amhara rulers. Yet, the analysis on why the Oromo insisted on using their language while being victimized because of the way *Afaan* Oromo literature was used in the struggle against domination even before the 1960s has been missed from the study.

Mekuria Bulcha's history-affiliated sociological study provides details on the rejection of *Afaan* Oromo in the administrative system of Ethiopian government. His article "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization in Ethiopia and the Conflict Over the Status of *Afaan* Oromo,"[75] and his chapter on "Language in the Making of Ethiopia"[76] eloquently explained Ethiopian language policies in relation to *Afaan* Oromo. Relating to socio-linguist theories, the author depicted the way language and identity issues were manipulated in the attempts to homogenize one nation in Ethiopia. Especially, his analytical arguments on Ethiopian language policy from

[74] Asafa, *Oromia and Ethiopia*…, pp. 151-176. Although the whole contents of the book deals with this issue, this part of the book is the most relevant to this theme.

[75] Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization in Ethiopia…, pp. 325-352.

[76] Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent and Ancient Oromo Nation…,* pp. 457-499.

the 1941 restoration of Emperor Haile Sillasie enriches our knowledge of the impacts of Ethiopian language policies on the identities and linguistic disadvantages of Ethiopian nations. The incorporation of his living experiences as a native speaker of *Afaan* Oromo at lower and higher schools as well as a participant in student movements with his empirical analysis makes his works important to cross-check information from the informants.

However, his conjugation of theories and literature into the analysis, his omission of the role of oral literature and his underestimation of the importance of relating events to time of their happenings have made it difficult to understand his work from historical angles without the support of other historical sources. In addition, his omission of works by *Alaqa* Zenab and Habte Sillasie as well as endeavors of many Muslim scholars to develop *Afaan* Oromo to written status are major gaps of his works.

Other scholarly contributions to the studies of common Oromo identity and the struggle of Oromo nationalists by writing in *Afaan* Oromo have come from a distinguished historian, Mohammed Hassen. In his article, "The Pilgrimage to Abbaa Muudaa", Mohammed reminds us that the Oromo were so concerned for their common national identity that they designed the *Muudaa* networking system in order to maintain their common identity both culturally and linguistically. Mohammed has identified that before the Oromo were brought under Amhara rule, their clan representatives used to meet at Madda Walaabuu every eight years to take common direction of how to regulate common cultural and linguistic practices. He also lamented that this was why Menilek II banned it as soon as he became sure that he had brought the Oromo under his control.[77]

[77]Mohammed Hassan, "Pilgrimage to Abbaa Muudaa" in *Journal of Oromo Studies, V.12*, No. 1&2, (2005), pp. 142-154.

In another work, Mohammed Hassen also states that the Oromo *Mootiis* (kings) started to form unified Oromo states from different petty states as had happened in Germany and Italy in Europe and in Ethiopia this might have succeeded if not hampered by the Amhara conquest. But unlike Germany and Italy, according to Mohammed, unified state formation(s) of the Oromo remained premature as their internal struggle was exploited against them by their "Abyssinian" counterparts. In his view, Mohammed concludes that although unified state formations of the Oromo was aborted, the Oromo exist as a cultural nation unified by their language, customs and myth of origin within defined geographical boundaries.[78]

In his 2003 article, Mohammed further gives a more critical assessment of the relationship between *Afaan* Oromo literature and Oromo nationalism among the Oromo of Eastern Ethiopia. Using the contributions of Sheik Bakri Saaphaloo to written Oromo literature and to the development of Oromo nationalism as central to his argument, Mohammed has thoroughly documented how the Oromo both individually or in groups contributed to the development of common Oromo nationalism and the promotion of *Afaan* Oromo to written literature. He has also emphasized how the Oromo used *Afaan* Oromo literature as an instrument of struggle in promoting Oromo nationalism. At the same time, he has pinpointed how the endeavors to write in *Afaan* Oromo and working for common Oromo unity were seriously suppressed under the government of Emperor Haile Sillasie.[79]

In spite of the limitation, Mohammed was not able to access sources of written Oromo literature by different *Sheik*s or Islamic Oromo students except that of *Sheik* Bakri and the restriction of his studies only to the eastern part of Oromo land, his texts are informative and valuable in

[78] Mohammed, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…*, pp.84-113.
[79]Mohammed Hassan, "Shaykh Bakrii Saphalo (1895-1980) …, pp. 141-158.

explaining the status of Oromo identity at different periods and the roles of the Muslim Oromo in developing written Oromo language and Pan-Oromo nationalism.

Ghirmai Negash, who produced extensive and well-articulated work on the history of Tigrinya literature, argues that although the consecutive Ethiopian governments severely suppressed the attempts to develop Ethiopian languages other than Amharic, their efforts were not successful as some Ethiopian languages gradually achieved written literature. He also confirms with the Eritrean cases that literature in vernacular is a reflection of the activities of mankind, challenges, general feelings of bitterness and voice of resistances coming out of domination. He elaborates clearly how Tigrinya literature both in oral and written form played a significant role during the Eritrean liberation movements from the Italians and later from the Ethiopian government.[80] Therefore, his approach to these facts and other arguments in relation to Ethiopian languages have methodological significance to the study of *Afaan* Oromo literature and identity issues.

Generally, what the above works have in common is the fact of the centrality of *Afaan* Oromo in the struggle for the Oromo national identity on the one hand, and in the endeavors to include the Oromo into the homogenization process of Ethiopian nations on the other hand. In both perspectives the emphasis given to the role of *Afaan* Oromo either as a challenge to build united Ethiopia or to promote a united Oromo nationalism shows the strong relationships between vernacular language and the speech community. Nevertheless, these are not sufficient sources to reconstruct a history of *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related issues of Oromo identity.

[80]Ghirmai Negash, *A History of Tigrinya Literature in Eritrea* (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, 2010), pp. 175-196.

Therefore, the research of my dissertation is aimed at filling in these gaps by conducting further thorough research on other sources related to the topic.

1.3. Sources and Methodology

A study like the process through which the reciprocal relationship between *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related issues of Oromo identity has passed to the current development presents considerable methodological and technical difficulties. For a region as vast as Oromia, and issues as complex as the reciprocal relationships between *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related issues of Oromo identity, and a long study period of 1840 to 1991, the difficulty of finding sufficient representative data and the scarcity of written sources cannot be too greatly emphasized. The problem is not only the absence of sufficient data in relation to a history of written *Afaan* Oromo literature, but also the little available documentation is ideologically, religiously and politically informed and has made the extraction of evidence problematic as well as difficult.

Nonetheless, efforts were made to solve problems of reliability and representation. Materials which were written in *Afaan* Oromo during the study period were identified, collected and examined. Documents which were written in other languages, especially in Amharic and English, in relation to *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity were explored and carefully used to supplement the study. Oral traditions and information were collected especially from the areas where the struggle against the domination of the Oromo and the activities to write in *Afaan* Oromo had been predominantly undertaken. The gaps that could not be narrowed by informants in the country were supplemented by audio and audio-visual biographical interviews of different mass media with participants of Oromo struggle in general and for written *Afaan* Oromo in particular. The data from these media interviews are important because

they have restored relevant data from appropriate informants who either live abroad or died although data from such media need to be used with great care before being depended on.

The data for the study were collected over several years. The first phase was conducted in 2008 and 2009 for the study of my M.A thesis in history. During this period, I was able to interview informants who either themselves were participants /observers of the struggle against domination of the Oromo using *Afaan* Oromo as instrument of struggle and markers of identity or who had heard first-hand information from their fathers and mothers or grandfathers and grandmothers. This helped me to identify that the subject was a potential topic not only for an M.A thesis but also for a Ph. D dissertation. Therefore, I decided to collect extensive data both written and oral as much as possible not only for the planned MA thesis but also for an aspired Ph. D. dissertation. The aspiration helped me to conduct more and timely interviews with elders who had died before I later conducted my fieldtrips for my Ph.D. The second phase was undertaken from November to January 2015 and from March to May 2016. as well as occasionally from 2016 to 2018. In this regard, I am fortunate enough that I was able to access most knowledgeable informants from different Oromia regions in Addis Ababa.

As stated, one of the major sources I have used in the reconstruction of a history of *Afaan* Oromo literature and the related identity issues was archival materials written in *Afaan Oromo* during the study period. Archives which were written in other languages especially in Amharic and English, and have immense substantiation potential and relevance to the study were collected and made use of. Attempts were made to collect archival materials from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Archives of Wallagga Museum, Records of Dambi Doolloo Catholic Centers, Records of Harar Branches of Ethiopian Radio Station, the Library of Bakkaniisaa Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Wolde Masqal Tariku Memorial Research Center of Addis

Ababa University, the Ethiopian National Archives and Library Agency, the Records of the Former General Governorate of Wallagga in Naqamtee, Records of Boojjii Karkarroo Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Office, the Aster Gannoo Memorial Archives and Library of Ayraa, Record Offices of the Former Kafa General Governorate, Records of former Hararge General Governorate, and the Records of Dirre- Dhowaa Municipal Administration.

However, except that of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University, the Record Office of Harar Branch of Ethiopia Radio, the Archival Collections of Wallagga Museum and to some extent the Ethiopian National Archives and Library Agency, it is sad to report that records referring to identity issues in these centers were either removed or made inaccessible as in the case of the records of Boojjii Karkarroo Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Office and Dambi Doolloo Catholic Center because of inappropriate storage (amounting to just dumping) and fear of unhealthy encounter on opening as they had been locked up for many years. Yet worse, is to hear from the current and ex-record keepers of the centers that old documents were dismissed as *Kosii Warra Durii* (trash of former generations) and were discarded for extra space.

If not for the collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University, it would have been unthinkable to write the dissertation in a meaningful manner. It is from its rich collections and good documentation that I found *Afaan* Oromo grammars, lists of words, vocabularies, dictionaries, translated scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo, inscribed *Afaan* Oromo folklore, *Afaan* Oromo newspapers, *Afaan* Oromo fiction and poems. *Afaan* Oromo publications in its collections range from the time of Job Ludophus's publication of seventeen

Oromo words in 1682[81] to the present. Others such as travelers' accounts, studies about *Afaan* Oromo, reports, decrees, leaflets, students' and political parties'/organizations' manifestoes and others are mainly accessed from this institution.

I was also able to collect archival materials which are not found in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in other areas' record centers. One of such record centers is Harar Branch of Ethiopia Radio Station. The station has good documentations of reports, letters (which were written to them from government bodies and which were written by them to government bodies), minutes, inscribed early music of *Afaan* Oromo on paper and recorded Oromo songs. While their management of audio records are well-standardized and easily accessible, their paper documentations are characterized by a haphazard manner of record keeping. Specially letters of opinion sent to them by listeners from which the dissertation would have benefitted in addressing how the listeners perceived the songs and the broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo were destroyed. Nevertheless, I have benefitted from their audio records specially in relation to the earliest songs of the *Afran Qalloo* cultural band. Since their audio documentation system has classification on songs that were sanctioned or kept pending or permitted by censorship authorities, it has enabled me to learn what kind of songs were sanctioned, kept pending and/ or allowed for broadcast.

The other center where I have collected a few but very important archival sources is Wallagga Ethnographic Museum. The ethnographic museum has some collections of letters and reports written from Naqamtee rulers to the central government and from the central government to Naqamtee rulers between 1890 and 1935. In fact, some of these letters were collected,

[81] See Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia* (London: A Godbid and F. Playford, 1682), pp. 80-82.

transcribed and published into a book by Alessandro Triulzi and Tesema Ta'a in 1996 E.C.[82] Although many of the collections are about the taxation system, some of the inserted letters on the Western [Oromo] Confederation and the complaints of the Amhara settlers of *Ras* Demisew at Arjoo are important to view the study in perspective. The documents I have accessed in the possession of individuals should not be overlooked. Even though the documents are very limited in number, my access to them has been very important. Though access to them was not an easy task, their absence would have created gaps in the dissertation.

For the study before 1941, publications produced in *Afaan* Oromo, studies about *Afaan* Oromo and travelers' accounts were used as main sources. For the studies from 1941 to 1974 materials which were written in *Afaan* Oromo and studies about *Afaan* Oromo are nearly absent. However, reports, decrees, leaflets, students' and political organizations' manifestos, newspapers and recorded *Afaan* Oromo songs were significant sources of data used in the study. For the study from 1974 to 1991, there are ample archival materials and the most relevant of these were selected and used.

The other major sources on which this research relied were *argaa-dhageetti* (oral tradition and oral information) which significantly contributed to the study of a history of a non-literate society. The rationale is that major events of the non-literate society are recorded in their oral tradition and information. At the same time, even if they had been literate, the victims would have been given no right to record, store and protect major events in their history. Since the Oromo had been both a non-literate and victimized society, they developed a good mechanism of storing their historical episodes in their oral traditions. Therefore, oral data provided me

[82]Alessandro Triulzi and Tesema Ta'a, *የወሊጋ የታሪክ ሰነዶች፡- ከ1880ዎቹ እስከ 1920ዎቹ (Documents for Wallagga History, 1880s-1920s E.C*) (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1996 E.C.).

with crucial information in the writing of the dissertation and also to fill in the gaps for which written sources are scarce.

As a student of history, I have learned that a prior building of trust would invite informants' generosity to disclose data that they considered relevant to the questions. In most cases, to avoid informants' suspicions for any political agenda, I asked the informants with whom I had already established a good relationship to introduce me to the next. In this respect, Ibrahim Haji Ali, who was a member of *Afran Qalloo* Cultural Band, producer and editor of *Bariisaa* (Dawn) newspaper in the *Darg* period and who is now serving in Radio Fana as a journalist is worth mentioning. Besides, being a key informant with whom I conducted continuous communication, Ibrahim played appreciable roles in introducing me to most of my informants from different angles of Oromo regions in Addis Ababa and some of them in Dirre Dhowaa and Harar.

Guiding informants pertinent to the topic under study was another difficult task. In the initial informal discussions, the informants had much to say on the mistreatment of the Oromo both under the Imperial and the *Darg* regimes in a wider context. Often they spoke more about public events like Menilek II's wars of conquest, the battle of Mi'eessoo in Hararge, the battles of Sagalee in Walloo and Guute Dilii in Wallagga, the Italian occupation, the grievances against the restoration of Emperor Haile Sillasie, the Ethiopian Revolution, the Red Terror, the 1984/5 famine in Ethiopia and the overthrow of the *Darg*. As a result, as interviewees got involved in the discussion, I had to be careful to direct them to issues pertinent to the dissertation. Great care was taken not to offend the informants when I directed them from informal initial discussions to the semi-structured interview questions.

To make the interviews effective, guiding interview questions, both open ended and semi-structured, were prepared. Even if interview questions were prepared in a way to address major issues in the dissertation, all informants were not interviewed with the same questions. Questions were sorted out in relation to the informants' knowledge and experiences. But in order to determine facts and perceptions, more than one informant was interviewed with the same enquiries. There were also group discussions as deemed relevant. Generally, the interview sessions varied from the shortest, thirty minutes, to the longest, two hours whereas the informal group discussions ranged from two to three and half hours.

The fact that informants were carefully selected based on their knowledge of the topic or at least one of the themes under the topic enabled me to access valuable information related to a history of *Afaan* Oromo literature and its bearings. For the pre-Italian period, informants remembered the narratives which come down to them from their fathers or grandfathers' generations. They justified these traditions when they responded stating that they heard from fathers or grandfathers. For the post-Italian period, informants were either participants or eyewitnesses for what they narrated.

As a result, most of them had excellent capacities to explain the contemporary situations with regard to the Oromo and the Amhara rulers' view on *Afaan* Oromo scriptures, challenges of schooling and writing in *Afaan* Oromo, grievance songs at social gatherings, Oromo experiences at government institutions, speeches at different forms of meetings, causes of Oromo imprisonments, hidden transcripts in Oromo songs and dramas of cultural bands, etc. For the post-1960 period, a simple biographical sketch of most informants or their parent's provided useful historical data for the study. Access to such informants was made possible by *darba dabarsaa* (snowballing data collection techniques).

Interviews with oral informants who had participated in the struggle for the free practice of *Afaan* Oromo literature and Oromo culture identity, who were not in the country at the time of the data collection were obtained from audio and audio-visual interviews in different *Afaan* Oromo media. Although it is impossible to claim that these media had interviewed all these important figures, I was able to access some of the interviews on issues connected to *Afaan* Oromo from websites and these were significant contributions to my research. In this regard, interviews of Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN), Oromo Broadcasting Service (OBS), Oromia Media Network (OMN) and audio documentation of Ethiopia Radio of Harar Branch are worth mentioning. In fact, care was taken on their use as interviews of this kind had their own original objectives, which could have differed from mine. They were used not as the main basic sources but to get clarity on other data.

Nevertheless, to ensure the validity of oral sources for the reconstruction of history was not an easy task due to the fact that informants might be subjective and biased towards their ethnic, religious, political and social backgrounds. In addition, omission and exaggeration of oral information about certain events or personalities are factors that challenge historians who use oral sources. Aversion to chronology is another trap. Above all, the most serious problem was the corruption of knowledgeable informants by government agents' interviewers of for political consumption. It was usual to be asked by informants to choose for alternatives from *akka ati barbaaddutti moo* (should it be as you want) or *akkan beekutti* (as I know). No doubt, my choice was as he/she knows but the problem was that the informants have learnt how to utilize data to what they perceive the researcher might like. Nonetheless, it was my responsibility as a historian to sort out the data, and evaluate and arrange it by chronological

order using internal and external cross-checking. If this is properly done, it is now believed that oral data are indispensable in the reconstruction of the history of societies.

Another problem which was not only serious but also dangerous was the proliferation of conflicts followed by two consecutive state of emergencies in my study area during data collection. The conflicts and states of emergency did not only cripple transportation systems but also made any seeking of information from the societies without pre-notification to the respective command posts impossible, which again caused me much difficulty. Even with the permission of the respective command posts, it was very difficult to convince informants and other data providers to support the data collection. Despite the difficulties, however, I was able to collect oral data and consult archival sources.

Lastly, the collected information from various sources was carefully scrutinized, arranged, and qualitatively analyzed and synthesized based on historical research methods using mainly descriptive and narrative styles. I have tried to compare and contrast as well as critically examine the data obtained from oral and archival and scanty and fragmented published and unpublished materials. The collection of sources from different angles and the interpretations that emerged from them gave the dissertation a full rounded picture. Based on these sources, efforts have been made to distinguish truth from fiction and value judgements. Objective historical explanation is conducted upon the discovery of the relationship between causations and their effects and drawing inferences from inductive and deductive evidences. These sources were, I hope, effectively used beginning from chapter two next to this introduction.

Chapter Two
Reflections on Oromo Literature and Issues of Identity before 1840

To understand the reciprocal relationship between Oromo literature and identity issues, it is necessary to highlight how the Oromo linked issues of identity to their oral literature at least from the sixteenth century. It is important to locate the roots of earlier Oromo identity in relation to their oral literature in order to clarify the historical development of Oromo literature and identity as interrelated phenomena. Edward Shils definitely remarks the importance of such linkage. He reminds us that as change and persistence are gripped by the earlier pasts, linking them to their earlier developments of issues in events, entities and systems has considerable importance.[1]

Thus, the main concern of this chapter is to link the pre-1840 reciprocal relationships of Oromo literature and issues of Oromo identity to the post-1840 developments. It has also an overview of how the Oromo preserved their ideology, myths, memories, social organization and belief system in their literature and used them as reference in moulding their common identity through generations before 1840. I endeavour to show how Oromo institutions and social links kept the uniformity of Oromo identity and literature throughout the territory they occupied.

In this endeavour, the role of *muudaa* (anointing) ceremony, moiety system and *caffee* (national assembly) in keeping the homogeneity of Oromo identity and literature throughout Oromo land is the central argument of this chapter. Moreover, it also explores how the

[1] Shils, "Tradition" …, p. 122.

economic, religious, political, geographical, historical and linguistic interaction of the Oromo with the societies of their neighbours affected their common identity and development of their literature. To this end, it investigates how *Afaan* Oromo was used in the administration of the Christian kingdom and in Quranic Schools. The impacts of state formation among the Oromo and their struggle with the Christian kingdom on Oromo national identity will also be the focus of the chapter.

2.1. Issues of Oromo Literature and Identity in the Early Interactions between Christian and Islamic Kingdoms

The evolution of the identity of a given society cannot be seen separately from its vernacular literature. Because it is in its vernacular literature that most aspects of that society has been stored and continued to shape its common identity. As literature in the vernacular serves to establish the feelings, attitudes, and values which even include praising, cursing, insulting and scolding in a given society, its role in the face of ethnic interaction is at the forefront.[2] Therefore, to make clear the relationship of Oromo literature and identity issues to be discussed in the subsequent chapter, it is necessary to point out how the Oromo established and preserved the network of their common identity through their vernacular literature before 1840.

Although we do not know when the identity of the Oromo nation and language evolved as separate entities from the Cushitic stock, the studies on cultural and linguistic identity reveal that the Oromo nation is one of the ancient and homogenous societies in the Horn of Africa.[3]

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[2]Harld Haarmann, "History" in Joshua A. Fishman (ed.) *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 63-66.

[3] Darrell Bates, *The Abyssinian Difficulty: The Emperor Tewodros and the Maqdala Campaign , 1867-1869* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 19979), p.7; Perham, p.10; Ehret Christopher, *Cushitic Prehistory in Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1976), pp. 86-89; Negaso Gidada, *History of the Sayyoo Oromo of South Western Wallagga, Ethiopia, from about 1730-1886* (Johann

Geographically, the Oromo are distributed from Tigray in the north to the interior of Kenya in the south; and from Somalia in the east to the border of the Sudan in the west. They are the largest and most widely distributed ethnic group. The total area they have inhabited is about 367,000 square kilometres. They have a vernacular language, *Afaan* Oromo, which is one of the major living Cushitic language families. Their language is rich in vocabularies, myths, stories, folk tales, riddles, songs, nuptial songs and others all of which have been constructed in their world view and in turn continued to preserve and reflect their identity.[4]

Wolfgang Goethe University: Doctoral Dissertation in History, 1984), pp.36-44; Mohammed, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…*, pp. 43&61.

[4] Asmarom, pp. x & 30-34.

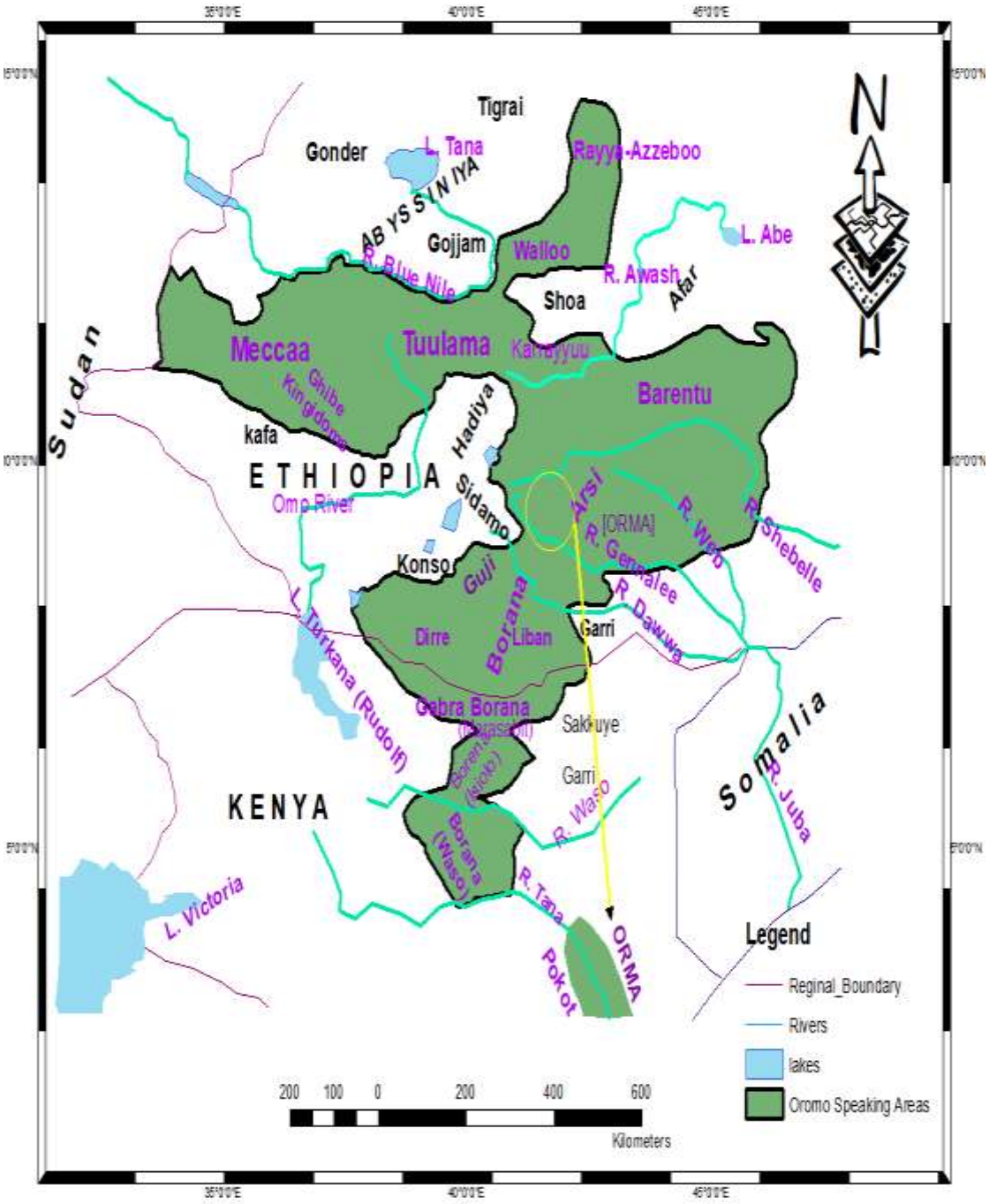

Figure 1: Map of *Afaan* Oromo Speakers' Distribution in East Africa

Source: Adapted and Modified from Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System* (Asmara: The Red Sea Press, 2000), p. 4.

As we see later, the network system they established through their literature enabled all the speakers of *Afaan* Oromo to understand the essence of their language without linguistic barriers[5] although the linguists have classified them into six major dialectical variations.[6] As will be discussed below, travellers' accounts, anthropological works and a few linguistic analyses on the Oromo reveal that the similarities in identity and language have been kept over generations because of the institutional mechanisms the Oromo developed to regulate their day to day life activities. The *Muudaa* (anointing) ceremony, moiety system and *Caffee* (assembly of the multitude) were some of such major mechanisms.

In spite of these developments with long lasting historic roots, issues of Oromo identity, especially in the pre-sixteenth century history of the Horn, have remained controversial. Most literature referring to the pre- sixteenth century Horn of Africa has relegated issues of Oromo identity into myths and legends. Either they have presented the Oromo as unknown to Ethiopia in the periods before the sixteenth century or confined them into a narrow corridor of the Baalee lowland.[7]

The misrepresentation of the identity of the pre-sixteenth century societies in the present day Oromo inhabited area has created confusion. No one can speak of the identity and the category of the languages of these peoples with any certainty. Especially, that of the Oromo has

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]Fedha Negasse, "Classification of Oromo Dialects: A Computational Approach" in *International Journal of Computational Linguistics*, Volume.6: Issue.1 (2015), p. 7.

[7] For example, see G. W.B. Huntingford, "The Ethnography and History of South-West Ethiopia" *History of the [Oromo] of Ethiopia with Ethnology and History of South West Ethiopia, Trans and Annotated by Huntingford* (Oakland: African Sun Publishing, 1993), pp. 2-3; Merid Wolde Aregay, "Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of Sixteenth Century" in *IV Congresso Internationale Di studi Etiopic, V. 1*(Rome: Accadaemia Nationale Dei Licei, 1974), pp.625-626; De Salviac, p.50; Bairu Tefla (ed.), *Asma Giyorgis and His Work: History of the [Oromo] and the Kingdom of Shawa* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1987), 137; Ulrich Braukämper, *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia: Collected Essay* (New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, 2004), pp.30-35

remained an issue of debate. The chroniclers glorified and exaggerated the victories of Christian Emperors but the realities of Oromo existence and culture were ignored. Nonetheless, they were not able to avoid insertions of some Oromo issues in the literature. It is possible to read at least some Oromo clan, place and personal names in their reference to pre-sixteenth century Ethiopia.

The scholars in the mainstream of Ethiopian history have located the Oromo in a very small pocket area of the massif mountains of the Baalee highland. According to their hypothesis, it was from this pocket area that the Oromo overran all the areas they have inhabited today by occupying Bali, Dawaro, Shirka, Faxagar, Sidama, Damot and even some northern Ethiopian territories within no more than one and half centuries duration and created the agglomeration of the present day *Afaan* Oromo speakers. In their writing they ended histories of Bali, Dawaro, Shirka, Faxagar, Waji, Sidama and Damot states exactly at the beginning of Oromo history.[8] It is surely difficult to accept that a small community could have engulfed large communities of different cultural backgrounds and dominated them. They argue moreover, as if the Oromo are not an ethnic group with their own identity but a collection of peoples who speak *Afaan* Oromo in common.[9]

Nevertheless, a critical reading of the early Christian literature or works translated from them and some travellers' accounts give clear clues to the existence of the Oromo as widely in the central highlands of Ethiopia in a well-established manner at least since the fourteenth

[8] For example, Trimingham, pp.93-94; Ulrich Braukämper, *Islamic History and Culture in Southern Ethiopia: Collected Essay* (New Brunswick, London: Transaction Publishers, 2004), pp. 129-142; Harold Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, (Berkley, CA: University of California, 1994); Merid Wolde Aregay, "Southern Ethiopia and the Christian Kingdom 1508- 1708 with Special Reference to the [Oromo] Migration and Their Consequences" (PhD Dissertation: Department of History, University of London, 1971).

[9] *Ibid.*

century.[10] Oromo language terminologies, names and a few Oromo traditions inserted in Christian literature are major clues. The literature contained unmistakable Oromo personal and place names in the legends and myths they created to glorify the role of the Christian kingdoms. The assertions of the clan or individual names might have been made either due to the fact that the chroniclers might have considered the Oromo clans they had come across as independent ethnic groups or refusing to recognize the Oromo as a nation.

There are also traditional history writers who confidently assert who and where the Oromo were during the pre-sixteenth century. The works of *Azaj* Tino (Chief Steward Takla Sillasie), who was an Oromo by origin,[11] and *Alaqa* Taye[12] are worth noticing. Besides locating the Oromo in the highlands of Ethiopia, *Azaj* Tino elaborated collected Oromo oral tradition and explained how the Oromo protected their common identity by their social structure. Particularizing the *Muudaa* anointing, *Azaj* Tino elucidated the laborious journey the Oromo undertook from different corners of their country every eight years to have common consensus in their daily life activities. *Azaj* Tino also made Dawaroo the homeland of the Oromo and Laaloo their founding father.[13] By the same token *Alaqa* Taye clearly stated the Oromo presence in Ethiopia at least from the fourteenth century.[14]

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[10]Taarika Za [Oromo], IES No. 2598. The manuscript "Tarika Za[Oromo]" must have been written perhaps during the reign of Lebna Dingel as its anonymous author says we are ordered to transcribe the prophecy of Lebna Dingel so that "ዳግመኛ አገሩ በጋላ እዳይገዛ" (Never will the country be administered by the Oromo again). It is an old manuscript written on parchment; Taye G/Mariam, *Ya Itiyopiyaa Hizib Tark (History of the People of Ethiopia)* (Addis Ababa, 1948),p.36; Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and The Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia, 1300-1700* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2015); Šihãb ad-Din Ahmad bin Abd al-Qãder (Trans. Lester Stenhouse), *The Conquest of Abyssinia* (Addis Ababa: Tsehay Publishers and Distributors, 2003), pp. 236 &297; Perham, p.10; Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (London: Pall Mall Press,1965), pp.30-33,54-55.

[11]Mohammed Hassen, "The Pre-Sixteenth Century Oromo Presence within the Medieval Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia" in David Bronkesha (ed.) *A River of Blessings: Essays in Honor of Paul Baxter* (Syracuse University1994), pp. 48-49.

[12]Taye, p.62

[13]Mohammed, "The Pre-Sixteenth Century Oromo…", p.48-49.

[14]Taye, 62.

Even after recognizing the Oromo presence in the Horn of Africa from the sixteenth century, the identity of the Oromo were portrayed in the Christian literature as barbarians, cruel, uncivilized and hordes wandering to kill the Christians without purpose.[15] Even some of them made a taboo of mentioning any type of Oromo names and referred to them as *የአገራቸዉ ቋንቋ የሚናገሩ እና* '*በአገራቸዉ ቋንቋ*' (who speak their country language and in their language).[16] Although referring to the Oromo by their language was not to recognize the collective identity of the Oromo in the highlands of Ethiopia, the phrase indicates that language was the main marker of identity by which the Oromo were identified. Thus, over long periods, the real identity of the Oromo was engulfed by the myths that were fabricated by the Ethiopian chroniclers and Europeans who followed them.

These works have continued to influence modern scholarship of Ethiopian history. For example, Taddesse Tamrat, a distinguished Ethiopian historian, although included in his book different Oromo names and terminologies already referred to in the hagiographies of *Abuna* Tekla Haymanot, Abuna Filipos, and *Abuna* Qawistos when he referred to pre-sixteenth century events in their corrupted forms, he failed to see that the clans were the Oromo and terminologies were *Afaan* Oromo. Galaan, Yaayyaa, Salaalee, Laaloo, Ammaayaa, Ganjii, Qaallittii and others are the Oromo clan names he referred to in different sections of his book. The names and terminologies he used are still today popularly used throughout the Oromo people. In fact, names are written in his book in their corrupted pronunciation as Gelan, Yay,

[15] M. de Almeida, "The [Oromo] from History of High Ethiopia or Abassia," *History of [Oromo]of Ethiopia with Ethnology and History of South West Ethiopia, Trans and Annotated by Huntingford* (Oakland: African Sun Publishing, 1993) pp. 56-61; Ludolphus, pp. 81-88; W.C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia,* Vol. 3 (London: Longman, 1844), pp.72-73. Ullendorff, *Ethiopia* …, p.76;

[16] *ጌታቸዉ ሃይሌ፣ የአባ ባህርይ ድርሰቶች ኦሮሞችን ከሚመለከቱ ሌሎች ሰነዶች ጋር* (Getachew Haile, *Essay of Abba Bahrey with Other Oromo Focused Documents)* (Oslo: no Publisher, 2002),p.139.

Selalish, Lalo, Maya, Ganzi and Kilat respectively. He also named *Abuna* T/Haymanot's birth place *Ittisaa* which means in *Afaan* Oromo defence.[17]

Taddesse must have not been reluctant to link these clans and place names to the Oromo for Ayele Bekarie says, "naming plays a critical role either in defining or distorting one's identity."[18] In fact, it is difficult to assume that Taddesse was unaware of the relationship that these names have with the identity of the Oromo as he might have known the works of *Tarika Za* [Oromo],[19] and *Azaj* Tino's Chronicle of Susenyos,[20] Taye G/ Mariam,[21] Margery Perham[22], Šihãb ad-Din,[23] and others. Nonetheless, as Ayele Bakarie states since, "Name is surely the simplest, most literal, most obvious of all symbols of identity."[24] The appearance of the names in Taddesse's book is therefore, a good ratification for the existence of the Oromo with their well-established identity in the central highlands of Ethiopia before the sixteenth century.

Another distinguished Ethiopian historian, Merid Wolde Aregay, frequently inserted Oromo terminologies in his discussion on pre-sixteenth century Ethiopia. Baar-gamoo, Jimmaa, Gadaa-Tuullaa are the terminologies he has frequently referred to rather than referring to them at least as the names of the Oromo clans.[25] He argues that the Oromo entrance into Ethiopian documentation and their present day territory were only after the sixteenth century.

[17] Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State*…, pp. 6, 43, 76, 119, 148, 184 and 277.

[18]Ayale Bekerie, "Ethiopica: Some Historical Reflection on the Origin of the Word Ethiopia" in *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies V.1, No.2* (Winter/Spring 2004), p.110.

[19] See footnote, 10.

[20]Mohammed, *The Christian Kingdom…,* pp. 48-53, 75-77.

[21]Taye G/Mariam, *Ya Itiyopiyaa Hizib Tark….*

[22] Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*…

[23] Šihãb ad-Din Ahmad bin Abd al-Qãder, pp. 236 &297.

[24]Ayale Bekarie, "Ethiopia…", p. 110.

[25] Merid Wolde Aregay, "Southern Ethiopia…", pp. 59, 54,58,77.

Nonetheless, the names he references are further indications for the establishment of Oromo identity in most parts of the territory they live in today.

In fact, there are also substantial numbers of modern writers who have shown concern to identify who and where were the Oromo in pre- sixteenth century Ethiopia. These historians have made great attempt to identify the existence of the Oromo with their identity in the Horn of Africa in pre-sixteenth century Ethiopia.[26] For this assertion, the scholars have employed the inserted terminologies of Oromo culture and place names in the Christian and Muslim literature.

Margery Perham indicates that the Oromo were Cushitic and the inhabitants of Northeast Africa even before the Semitic immigration.[27] In the same way, referring to Ph. Paulitichek Gada Melba[28] pointed out the existence of the Oromo in Northeast Africa during the Aksumite period. Šihãb ad-Din, another writer, had the same opinion with others indicating that the Yajjuu Oromo were well established in Walloo before the war of *Imam* Ahmad ibin Ibrahim al-Gazi.[29] Negaso Gidada in his recent work has indicated the Oromo presence at least as far as northern Shewa during the Zague period (1137-1270).[30] According to Negaso, certain Christian influences on the Oromo were observed during the reigns of the Zague and later during the reign of the "Solomonic" kings: Yekuno Amlak (r1270-1285), Amda Tsion

[26] Mohammed, *The Oromo and The Christian Kingdom…*pp. 62-221; Negaso, *History of the Sayyo Oromoo…,* pp.36-44; Bates, p.7; Perham, T*he Government of Ethiopia…*; *Christopher,* pp. 86-89.

[27]Perham, p.10.

[28] Gada, pp.10-11.

[29] Šihãb ad-Din, pp.297 &236. Yajjuu language is the Oromo language of Šihãb ad-Din who might have been ignorant of the existence of other branches of Oromo speaking the same language with Yajjuu.

[30] Negaso, *History of the Sayyoo Oromo*…, pp.36-44.

(r.1314-1344), Zara Yakob (r. 1434-1446) and Libna Dingil (r. 1508-1540). The Oromo had also brought their influences into the government of the Christian Empire.[31]

Although not until the 1950s, there were scholars who asserted the presence of the Oromo in the Horn of Africa as old as other Cushitic stocks. One of such writers is Darrell Bates. Using the sources confiscated during the Maqdala invasion, Bates strongly concludes the Oromo as one of the ancient nations of Africa as follows.

> *The [Oromo] peoples of the southern and south-western highlands watched this struggle with interest. They had suffered in their time from both parties, and were waiting in the wings for opportunities to exact revenge and to recover lands which had been taken from them. The [Oromo] were a very ancient race, the indigenous stock, perhaps, on which most other peoples in this part of eastern Africa had been grafted.*[32]

Above all, it is Mohammed Hassen who firmly argues for the presence of the Oromo using their language and having their cultural identity in the Horn of Africa in pre-sixteenth century Ethiopia. To establish this, Mohammed carefully deals with names in travellers' accounts, Ethiopian Christian narratives and works of modern historians of Ethiopian history. He carefully analyses the relationship between the names, terminologies and concepts mentioned in the documents and their extension in the current cultural identity of the Oromo. Extracting the terms like the [Oromo], [Oromo] river, [Oromo] forest, and [Oromo] mountain, Laaloo, Galan and Yayyaa, Kattaa and others inserted in the Christian documents, Mohammed Hassen conducted remarkable and critical analysis to establish the Oromo nation with their early identity in much of central and northern Ethiopia at least from the thirteenth century.[33]

[31] *Ibid.*; Mohammed Hass, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom…,* pp.64-65.
[32]Bates, p.7.
[33] Mohammed Hassen, "The Pre-Sixteenth Century…", pp.43-61.

Mohammed's finding is a summary of others' works in a way that any reader of the reference can easily understand.

Therefore, the above argument shows the strong links between elements of Oromo literature and identity as the relationship serves historical fact in establishing the origin of the Oromo. It also enables us to understand how the cultural, religious, and political institutions the Oromo had developed in the distant past persisted into the period of my dissertation, keeping Oromo literature and identity in common. Nonetheless, my argument is not to establish the original homeland of the Oromo, but to set a useful point of departure towards better understanding of debates on Oromo identity and literature in anticipation of the discussion in subsequent chapters.

2.2. Literature and Identity Issues in Oromo Polity

Issues in Oromo literature and polities have been symbiotically interlinked. When polity served as means of control, literature served as a tool of transformation of rules and regulations both across generations and geographical territories. In the organization of the Oromo polity, literature and issues of identity have had a central position. While the issue of identity was a central point in recruiting and socializing members into the polity, literature was used as a main reference text across generations and a tool of communication across geographical areas. As Robert Copper rightly observed, both literature and identity are the products of social interaction between individuals and other members of the society.[34]

[34]Robert Copper, "A Framework for the Description of Language Spread: The Case of Modern Hebrew" in Peter Lengyel ed. *Interaction Through Language: Sociological Research, Cases and Application, V. 36, No.1* (1984), p.18.

The idea of Oromo literature and issues of identity resided in the complexity of the relationship between self-identification, group cohesion and world view. They are principal means in establishing plausible reciprocity perspectives among the group in defining shared knowledge, history, culture and world view. In fact, among the Oromo, whether an individual or group, identity was based not only on subjective identification but also needed objective judgment. His/her self-identification as an Oromo has not been the only sufficient condition, but also he/she has had to pass public judgements for his/her internalizing Oromo world views. A variety of social roles of individuals and groups in Oromo society were controlled and given public judgements through Oromo traditional polity. The polity had institutions which were built on the basis of Oromo social, cultural, religious, political and economic aspects which were articulated orally. [35]

As Graham Furniss elaborates, these roles of oral literature in a society are not only for the purposes of domestic entertainment use as many think, but have been the means by which individuals or groups comment on power or cultural relations in a society.[36] Crafted rules and regulations of the Oromo flow up and downwards along the polities stretched from the centre to the *Kora Ollaa* (neighbours' council). It has been through such system that the identity of the Oromo was ingrained in the life of every member of the Oromo community. The institutions for control in Oromo polity are moiety, *caffee* (national assembly or the meeting of the multitude), and the *muudaa* (anointing) institutions.[37]

[35]Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tesfa Bula, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Qajeelaa Bayana, Firrisaa Waggaa, Arjoo (East Wallagga), January 25, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008.

[36]Graham Furniss, and Liz Gunner (eds.), *Power, Marginality and African Oral Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp, 1-4.

[37]For details see Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy*…, pp.158-188 and Gemchu Megersa, "Knowledge, Identity and the Colonizing Structure: The Case of the Oromo in East and North East Africa" (Ph.

The Oromo polity was neither monocephalous (one king headed) or acephalous (stateless). Rather it was polycephalous which means many heads, whose power was separated by custom and law but in interrelated institutions. The *gadaa* (the ruling group), *Qaalluu* (religious leader) and *gumii* or *caffee* (national assembly) are the three main institutions that made the polity. The institutions were used as checks and balances. In this case, literature played the role of storing the principles and laws for the check and balance. Of the three institutions, when the *gada* and the *Qaalluu* engaged in day to day activities of the Oromo nation, the *caffee* or as it is known among the Booranaa Oromo, the *gumii*, were held at the national level once every eight years at Madda Walaabuu, which was a common centre to all. However, the intervals of every eight years did not include the *Qaalluu* (religious leader), the *gosaa* (clan) and village leaders. These institutions held meetings when need arose, but yet they had to wait for the eight years' assembly when they failed to resolve local issues at the common meetings of the three although such issues were rarely happened.[38]

The institutions of the Oromo polity had a great role both in maintaining the common identity of the Oromo and homogeneity of their literature. One of the deepest aspects of the past Oromo legacy in Oromo history is that stored in in the moiety institution and shared by the entire Oromo nation before Menilek's conquest. The moiety institution is an Oromo practice which has functioned over centuries in creating and maintaining peaceful relationships among different sections of the Oromo society. It was a social structure and the division of society into two halves with interlinked and interdependent activities. The division was only a matter

D. Dissertation in Anthropology, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993), pp.29-31, 204- 213. *Caffee* is also known as *gumii* among the Booranaa Oromo whereas the term *muudaa* is a common term to all Oromo.

[38]Asmarom, *Oromo Democracy*, pp. 29-32,97.

of senior–junior relationships or order of birth. The generations of the first born was considered as senior and the generations of the second born was considered as junior.[39]

Each moiety used to be headed by their own *Qaalluus*. As the nation grew larger and spread out, the dual moiety system replicated itself without changing their original moiety lineages and made cross distribution. Starting from Booranaa-Bareentuu the institution went down to localities such as Sabboo-Goonaa in the south, Maccaa-Tuulamaa in the west, Raayyaa-Aseeboo in the north, Sikkoo-Maandoo in south central Ethiopia and Ittuu Humbaanaa in the east. These dual moiety systems again replicated into other divisions down to local levels.[40]

The structure was organized throughout Oromo territory so that the implementation principles were more or less similar. Except for the fact that regionally one moiety might have numerically dominated the other, they were separated geographically. Since endogamy marriage within a single moiety was termed as *haraamuu* (cursed) and each person should take a spouse from the other moiety, geographical separation was difficult. They lived within each other. For instance, the Karrayyuu moiety settled in the southern, eastern, central, northern and western Oromo lands keeping its Bareentummaa junior moiety lineages.[41]

Unlike the arguments of Jan Hultin, Triulzi and Mohammed,[42] moiety dualism was not class based stratification. Since the main purpose of its function was for checks and balances on

[39]*Ibid.*, pp. 139-141.
[40]*Ibid.*
[41]*Ibid.*
[42]In the case of the Maccaa Triulzi, Hultin and Mohammed Hassen argued that *Gabaroo* were the lowest social class who were deprived from taking part in any political and ritual activities of the Oromo. In fact, their arguments contradict each other. For instance, Triulzi says marriage was only possible across the Booraanaa-Gabaroo. If marriage was conducted across moiety, it can be questioned how the *Gabaroo* is only reserved for the adopted. Confused with the premises of the Maccaa Oromo expansion over the alleged pre-Oromo societies, Triulzi presented the *Gabaroo* as servants of the Maccaa and divided the Maccaa Oromo identity into two. He developed the concept servitude confused with the Geez term *gabbaar* (who serve). But among the Oromo the word *garbaa* is stagnant water which symbolized junior status when seniority was associated with springs. Similarly, Mohammed contradicted himself by saying that the adopted non- Oromo were deprived from *buttaa*

power and authority, the situation in which one moiety manipulated the other moiety scarcely happened. Except in ritual purposes when priority was given to the elder moiety, politically, representatives of the two equally competed for *gadaa* leadership and whoever won the election became *Abba Gadaa* of the two halves. But the case was exceptional for *Abbaa Muudaa* and the Oromo religious leaders under *Abbaa Muudaa*.[43] They had no right to compete for the position of *Abbaa Gadaa*. However, the political power they had in connection with this was that they had full power in attending and checking injustices and fitness of the election for the position of *Abbaa Gadaa* enforcing peaceful power transfer.[44]

In this thesis, the role the moiety system played in keeping the Oromo cultural identity intact and the uniformity of Oromo literature across time and space needs emphasis. In addition to checking and controlling power, the moiety system of the Oromo had concern in moulding children into the established cultural identity of the Oromo. One aspect of such education was training children how to count their patrilineal genealogies to their proper moiety lineages. The Oromo used genealogical counting for three main purposes. The first was to identify their moiety clans with the places where they were distributed. The second was to avoid endogamy. And the third was to keep intact with common identity. Counting their genealogy helped Oromo children to learn their culture, which was a building block to build their identity across generations and geographical areas. It linked the living generation to the past ancestors. It was

ceremony while they were in Wallagga but not when they were recruited into cavalry as *Yaabbataa* (riders) and went to Gojjam to help Susenyos and asked him permission for the celebration of *buttaa* ceremony. Therefore, except the fact that it was gradually incorporated from the feudal system, even the Oromo had no concept of *Gabaree* which is etymologically Amharic. Therefore, the Booranaa and *Gabaroo* issues in Oromo is more class issues than ethnic as the adopted clans or individuals were found among the Booranaa and *Gabaroo themselves.*

[43]Asmarom, Oromo democracy…, p.139. For detailed explanation on *Abbaa Muudaa* See pp. 16-20 of this chapter.

[44] Asmarom, *Oromo Democracy, pp. 134-141*

through these genealogical lines that the moieties sent their representatives to the *Caffee* and learned the status of their moiety counterparts in other parts of Oromoland[45].

The endogamy marriage system across the moieties enabled them to keep their blood ties across the moieties, since endogamy within a single moiety was termed as *haraamuu* (cursed marriage) and completely forbidden. Such type of marriage relationship integrated the Oromo not only socially but also in blood ties. Interestingly enough, this endogamy marriage system enabled non-Oromo who were taken into Oromo moieties either through *guddifachaa* (adoption) or *moggaasaa* (neutralization)[46] to join the Oromo genealogies not only socially and politically but also in blood ties, because as soon as they joined the Oromo moieties they got the right of marriage as the adopting moiety did. Anyone who was considered defiant to these rules and regulations was informed through the Oromo folk literature about the punishment they would suffer. The literature made other Oromo aware of the rules and enabled them to learn from this literature. [47]

The exogamy marriage across the moieties in parallel had a great role in integrating the lineages under both moieties by criss-crossing the marriage spouses. It integrated both socially

[45] Interview with Baanjaa Hurruba, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Sadii Mullata, Olaanaa Hundee, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[46] *Guddifachaa* is also another method of taking others into an Oromo clan. It is a process of taking individuals into Oromo identity by individuals although an individual Oromo could not perform *guddifachaa* without the permission of the clan. Anyone who was taken as *guddifachaa* into an Oromo family had all rights the son or the daughter who performed *guddifachaa* had. *Moggaasaa* is a process of taking non-Oromo groups into an Oromo clan. In Oromo tradition *moggaasaa* was undertaken by *Abbaa Gadaa* of the clan on behalf of his clan. A group taken into Oromo by *moggaasaa* took an oath by saying "I hate what you hate, I like what you like, I fight whom you fight, I go where you go, I chase whom you chase…" then after this the group became the sons of the *gosaa*. For detail see Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…*, pp. 21-22.

[47] Interview with Baanjaa Hurruba, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Sadii Mullata, Olaanaa Hundee, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

and in blood ties not only the previous Oromo but also those who had been taken into the Oromo by *moggaasaa* and *guddifachaa* in both moieties. This method of integration through blood chain indicates that identity construction among the Oromo was built around core (primordial) identity. The system made any member of the Oromo count his/ her genealogy to either Oromo moiety.[48] Thus the Oromo are not a mere collection of people as Donald Levine thought,[49] but were chained together by institutions and blood lines. Oromo identity was organized on the basis of a hereditarily related society so that its bearers were able to withstand the attempt to disintegrate them over centuries.

Parallel with creating moiety relationships, the Oromo also used to store what they observed and incorporated into their tradition in the form of oral literature. Among the Oromo it was and is usual that what they added or avoided from their culture soon joined their literature and circulated as songs or proverbs or riddles. What children somewhere in Oromoland learnt was also learned by the Oromo children of some other places. In doing so, the Oromo moiety played a significant role in increasing and maintaining the uniformity of Oromo identity and literature both across time and space. All the methodologies and the substances to be taught were kept in Oromo oral literature in the form of tradition.[50] Therefore, the system was a pillar in keeping the identity of the Oromo together and enriching Oromo oral literature.

The moieties were organized by the spiritual leaders known as *Qaalluu*. Originally there were two *Qaalluus* at the heads of the two moieties, the *Qaalluu* of the Booraanaa moiety and the Bareentummaa moiety. Traditionally, both *Qaalluus* were known by the name *Abbaa Muudaa*

[48] *Ibid.*

[49]Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 135-136.

[50]*Ibid.*

(father of unction). *Abbaa Muudaa* is said to have been the custodian of all Oromo traditions and the laws of Waaqaa (God).[51] The land of *Abbaa Muudaa*, which was at Madda Walaabuu in Baalee, is said to have been a place of righteousness, wisdom, harmony and peace so that its social order was respected. The belief that *Waaqaa* reveals His laws through *Abbaa Muudaa* gave the *Abbaa Muudaas*/ the *Qaalluus* the spiritual power to maintain the social order. According to the belief of the Oromo, violating the laws of *Waaqaa* not only affected the violator but also the clans of the violator. Thus, curse and sanction were the punishment. Therefore, no one dared to violate the laws.[52]

The *Abbaa Muudaa* institution was branched down to local levels and had representative from all Oromo clans. The representatives were known as *irreesaa* or *Jilaa* (the right hand of *Qaalluu*). These representatives received the right to exercise the spiritual powers from the main *Abbaa Muudaa* of Madda Walaabuu in Baalee. Until travel to the *Abbaa Muudaa* was closed at the end of the nineteenth century, the *Irreesaas* or the *Jilaa*s were not the real *Qaalluu* but the *Qaalluu* emissaries. All the *irreesaas*/*Jilaas* used to engage in the daily activities of their clans representing their *Abbaa Muudaa* who was at the centre in Baalee. But with the close of the travel to *Abbaa Muudaa*, they also began acting as the real *Qaalluu*, establishing their own centre at the level of the clans they were representing.[53]

Besides safeguarding and directing religious and spiritual duties, the *Abbaa Muudaa* institution also functioned maintaining a sense of belonging and links among the Oromo.

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[51]Hassen, "Pilgrimage to Abbaa Muudaa" …, pp. 142-157. *Muudaa* is a ritual ceremony held every eight years like the central *caffee*. Recruitment to *jilaa* (pilgrimage) to the *muudaa* center was not random. Representatives were recruited on the basis of their ritual ability and moieties networks. The law of *Waaqaa* and customs of the Oromo were expanded at the center of *muudaa* which was located in the regions of Baalee and Sidaamoo, said to be the places of righteousness, wisdom, harmony, and peace and *gadaa* democracy. It was also the center where the Oromo developed their view of the universe.

[52] De Salviac, p.177.

[53]*Ibid.*

Although the main objective of the *muudaa* ceremony was spiritual, the role it played in maintaining the integration of the Oromo by giving directions how the Oromo had to value their cultural principles, especially in the interaction with themselves and others, was very important. Through the *jilaa* (pilgrims) who were recruited on the basis of their moiety affiliations, the Oromo maintained contact with each other. As Mohammed cited, *Azaj* Tino wrote in the 1620s that the Oromo all "go to him [*Abbaa Muudaa*] from far and near to receive his blessings".[54]

Later in the 19th century several European writers reported how the *jilaa* (pilgrimage) to *Abbaa Muudaa* criss-crossed Oromolands and kept the Oromo in contact. Referring to d'Abbadie, who in 1946 saw the *jilaa* from Limmuu-Ennariyaa, Guumaa, Jimmaa and Geeraa gathered in Limmuu-Ennariyaa on their departure to the land of *Abbaa Muudaa*, Mohammed Hassen states that the Muslim kings of the Gibee States were used to send their representative to the land of *Abbaa Muudaa*.[55]

Referring to A. Cecchi, who travelled in Oromoland in the 1880s, Eric Knutson also states that both the Gibe kings who had been already converted to Islam and the *hayyuu* of *gada* paid homage to the *Abbaa Muudaa*. Similarly, Knutson stated that in the 1840s Antoine d'Abbadie had reported that the Guduruu Oromo left for *Jilaa* in the month of June and returned to their home next year. He also summarized Guidi's observation that the Tuulamaa Oromo visited the *Abbaa Muudaa* to confer about his laws and receive his blessings, which kept them in the sphere of pan-Oromo culture.[56] In eastern Oromoland Martial de Salviac

[54] Mohammed, "Pilgrimage to Abbaa Muudaa" …, pp.7 & 142-145.
[55]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom*…, p.52.
[56] Eric Knutsson, *Authority and Change: A Study of the Kallu Institution among the Macca [Oromo] of Ethiopia* (Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet, 1967), pp. 147 – 148.

witnessed that the eastern Oromo made pilgrims to *Abbaa Muudaa*.[57] With regard to the Booranaa Oromo, Asmarom Legesse reported that a *jilaa* pilgrimage in Booranaa has been the usual custom over many generations.[58]

It can be argued that the *jilaa* (the pilgrimage) served in connecting the Oromo across generations for centuries and over vast geographical areas. Geographically it connected the Oromo from Wallaggaa in the west, Hararge in the east, Walloo in the north and Kenya in the south. The routes to *Abbaa Muudaa* criss-crossed Oromo lands along the routes of the *jilaas* (pilgrims). In doing so, they communicated the laws of *Waaqaa*. Since the songs they sang along the routes of *jilaa* were more or less similar and identifiable with them, they were identified by any Oromo along the routes. Mohammed Hassen states that individuals involved in *jilaa* (pilgrims) had full power to direct individual Oromo to live according to the law of *Waaqaa*. Members of the *jilaa* were considered as being endowed with ritual power to curse or bless. The Laws focused mainly on Oromo world views concerning natural resources, stories, cultural festivals, songs, rules and regulations and even how to treat their enemies. In such a way they stirred up pan-Oromo feelings.[59]

The use of *muudaa* performance as traditional networks significantly strengthened the Oromo relationships from far and near. At the *muudaa* festivals, the pilgrims performed cultural entertainments such as, songs, drama, intercultural playing, narratives of stories of their own localities and created common literary arts for the Oromo. The *Abbaa Muudaa* warned the participants to name the land they had inhabited by the name of their clans. This also enabled

[57] De Salviac, pp. 183-186.
[58] Asmarom, *The Oromo Democracy…,* pp.97-100.
[59] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of…,* pp. 6-9; Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom*…, pp. 49-55.

the Oromo to tie their identity not only from one clan to another but also to the land on which they had settled. The *Abbaa Muudaa* and the pilgrims used their oral literature as references to control deviations saying "*kun safuu Oromoo miti*" (this is not in Oromo code of conduct) as the Christians referred to the Bible and the Muslims to the Quran.[60]

The performances reckoned the strength and weakness of their past generations from different localities in such a way that the participants learned from them. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a Catholic missionary, Salviac, collected benedictions, songs, stories, and *safuu* (Oromo rules or moral conduct) narrated and analysed at the *muudaa* ceremony showing the strong role it had processed in creating a unified Oromo nation. He tells us that discussion on myth of their origin, unity of their religion, language and the way the Oromo moral conduct was handled were the focus of the discussions during the *muudaa* ceremony.[61]

The *jilaa* (pilgrims) communicated the benedictions, social advice, blessings, stories, songs and others with which had been instructed not only to their home clans but also to those whom they came across. When they reached home they planted an *odaa* tree and used it as a cultural, religious and political symbol that connected their generation to the coming generations.[62]

Therefore, the pilgrimage performed an integrative function for the nation as a whole and kept Oromo literature and identity intact across generations and geographical areas. It was through such association that the Oromo used to keep their integrity throughout their inhabited areas over generations. The *muudaa* ceremony continued to be central nerves of Oromo identity even when the Oromo established their own *gadaa* centres at their localities until it was

[60] De Salviac, pp. 161-191.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Mekuria, *The Contour*, p.413.

banned at the end of the nineteenth century.[63] Supporting such relationships a prominent historian, Anthony Smith, argues as:

> *[T]he funding of cultural myths, symbols, memories and values were transmitted from generation to generation, but also throughout the territory occupied by the community or its enclaves, and down the social scale. The chief mechanism of this persistence and diffusion is organized religion ... myths of descent and ritual and sacred texts in which they were embodied, helped to perpetuate the traditions and social bonds of the community*.[64]

The other polity in centralizing the common identity of the Oromo was the *gumii* as it is named in Booranaa and the *caffee* as it is in other Oromo moieties.[65] Like the *muudaa* ceremony, *Caffee (gumii)* was a regular meeting at the interval of every eight years at the centre of highland Baalee where the main *Abbaa Bokkuu*/ *Abbaa Gadaa* resided. The main purpose of the meetings was to review the rules and regulations in operation and to adopt new ones. The rules and regulations were disseminated from the centre to all Oromo inhabited areas.[66]

The meeting was attended by the *Abbaa Gadaa* of each Oromo clan and individuals who had proven ability to present concerns of the mass. At the meeting, reports on rules and regulations of the past eight years were heard orally from the representatives. Evaluations and criticisms were forwarded by participants on the reasons of strength and weakness. Finally the revised and adopted laws and regulations were proclaimed orally from the top of a *Dhagaa Tuullaa* (pile of stones) for the implementation in the next eight years of the *gadaa* period.[67]

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[63]De Salviac, pp.177-221.

[64]Anthony Smith, "The Origins of Nations", in J. Hutchinson. & A. D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism,* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.151.

[65]Asmarom, pp. 97-100.

[66] Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008. In the case of the Walloo, in informants of Mohammed Hakim affirmed the same view.

[67] Mohammed, *The Oromo of Ethiopia...,* p. 16.

The participants were advised to rule the Oromo according to the law of *alangaa* (the law proclaimed at the centre). The participants were also expected to memorize what were already the rules and what had just been proclaimed, to use them in the next *gadaa* cycles. Especially, the *Abbaa Gadaa* of the clans had duties to memorize the *lallabaa* (proclamation) for the use at their home places and to make the rules and regulations uniform.[68] Informally, cultural exchange, history and stories about curses and prosperity were communicated. The participants shared knowledge, ideas, emotions, values, ritual activities, religious issues, indigenous dances, poetry, epics, story-telling, work-songs, ritual songs, dirges, recitations and other forms of oral art. The practitioners of the arts themselves, poets, singers, rhetoricians, dancers and composers, enjoyed an enormous reputation as a class of intellectuals, who were respected for their wisdom and profound thought. When the participants went back to their home country, they also communicated with their people of their localities. In doing so, they used to preserve common identity and the uniformity of their literature. [69]

Through the information exchanged both at *muudaa* and *gumii/caffee,* the Oromo who lived at distant places from one another became conscious of each other. Although all the Oromo could not get the opportunity to meet each other, the exchange of information through the *muudaa* and *gumii*/*caffee* enabled them to create the image of their own common union in their minds.[70] In fact, according to Benedict Anderson it is not necessary to know or meet one another to become members of the same community. If the members get a little information about the existence of their fellows in some other places, it is enough to become common members of a

[68] Asmarom, pp. 97-100.

[69]Interview with Baanjaa Hurruba, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Sadii Mullata, Olaanaa Hundee, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[70]De Salviac, pp. 210-212.

given nation.[71] Therefore, through these institutions, the Oromo were able to keep the integration of their collective identity both through geographical areas and across generations.

At the ceremony, story-telling, heroic recitations, poetry, work songs, dirges, dance, other songs or giving a speech were made in artistic ways of language usage. The Oromo oral literature served not only as entertaining agents but also as a domain in which individuals and groups in a variety of social responsibilities were free to comment on societal relations. As Graham Furniss says in the case of African literature,[72] Oromo oral literature is a significant instrument by which perceptions of social realities were provoked, overturned, directed and reorganized. Cultural dances, songs, storytelling, heroic recitations, poetry, work songs, and other arts were performed with the intention to reflect how the contemporary relations among society and society to environment affected political, economic and social life of the Oromo.[73]

Social sharing of verbal genres intersected orally across individuals and created knowledge about Oromo in other geographical areas. Participants at the meetings from different corners of Oromo regions went back to their home places with similar words and accents they heard at *muudaa* and *gumii* rehearsed and delivered in a similar manner at their regional centres.[74] Thus, it was also one of the mechanisms by which the Oromo enriched their literature and kept the uniformity of their language.

The Oromo cultural heritages such as ideas, emotions, values, art, music, rituals, religion and others remained to play integral roles in linking every Oromo clan even after the Oromo had

[71]Anderson, p. 6.

[72] Furniss, and Gunner, pp, 1-4.

[73]Interview with Baanjaa Hurruba, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Sadii Mullata, Olaanaa Hundee, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[74]*Ibid.*

established their own *gadaa* centres at their localities. *Odaa Roobaa, Odaa Nabee, Odaa Bultum, Odaa Bisil* and *Odaa Bulluq* became subsections of such *gadaa* centres. The rules and regulations the Oromo framed at the national assembly reached the subsections and individuals through oral literature. At the centres, all laws and regulations were recited orally to the people who went back to their *Kora Olla* (council of the neighbourhood) and then to the families.[75] As we will see later, each family had a duty to teach their children the code of conduct through folktales, fables, stories, proverbs, songs and other mechanisms of orality. For any irregularity, the clans were responsible. For this, Oromo oral literature had immense roles among the Oromo nation as all life activities of the Oromo were guided by the code of conduct embodied in their oral literature.

During the extensive expansion and interaction with non-Oromo society, the *gumii*/ *caffee* of their branches delivered ways to manage and retain Oromo unity in order to overcome resistance from other ethnic groups. The laws focused especially on how to avoid conflicts among themselves, emphasized the importance of the *buttaa* ceremony and how to deal with the newly adopted individuals and groups. They adopted them into the clan through a practice known as *moggaasaa* (naturalization) or *guddifachaa* (adoption).[76]

[75]Dereje Hinaw, "Historical Significance of Some Major Gada Centres in Oromo" (Addis Ababa University: MA Thesis in History, 2005), pp. 9-10.

[76] Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008. Mohammed Hassen and J. Hayward have the same stands with the informants.

The Laws of Makkoo Bilii of Maccaa,[77] Daawwee Gobbuu of Booranaa[78] and Jaajee Budduussa of Gujii[79] are among such resources which are preserved in Oromo oral literature because of their great contributions in the history of Oromo society. The importance of the laws they delivered were recalled in their oral literature and made use of. The Oromo laws and constitutions were imbedded in the oral literature of the Oromo.[80] Developing such well-organized mechanisms and storing them in their oral literature, the Oromo were able to preserve their integration in all regions until their institutions began to be threatened by the Oromo interaction with the societies of monarchical tradition.

State formation, inter-states' conflicts and adherence to new religions did not prevent the Oromo from engaging in their cultural activities. They were able to retain control over their own identity through their institutions even after the political significance of the *gadaa* system was removed by emerging state formation. The ritual aspects of Oromo polities continued to exercise control over the collective identity of the Oromo through social and ritual aspects.[81]

Those who adhered to the Christian and Muslim religions incorporated some aspects of Oromo religion into their new religions. Most Oromo cultural elements entered the new religions and political administration with Oromo literature. Resistance, acknowledgment, loyalty, devotion, praying, dirges, patriotic songs continued to be performed with inherited and pre-existing social meanings.[82] In fact, this function of literature is not unique to the Oromo. According to Gerhard Schulz, who was one of the contributors to the *Literature of*

[77]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia*, pp.44-47; Alessandro Triulzi, "The Saga of Makkoo Bilii: A Theme in Maca'a Oromo History" *Paideum*, 36(1990), pp. 319-327.

[78]Asmarom, pp.209-210.

[79] Wako Dubo, Gujii: *Social Convention and Laws of Society Rehearsed by at 22nd Bokko Assembly* (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Salam Printing Enterprise, 1998), p.30; Dereje, p.90.

[80]Mekuria Bulcha, *Contour and the Emergent*…pp.446-447.

[81]Cerulli, pp. 18-149.

[82]*Ibid.*

German Romanticism, literature based on common national language is an instrument to achieve a national identity in a country where political centralism or unity is weak or absent.[83]

In the same token, Graham Furniss and Liz Gunner[84] state any analysis of relationships between individuals, groups and classes in society must take the body of knowledge in oral literature into account as literature is the storehouse where issues of social identity are preserved. Societal laws, customs, ethics, norms, values and morals are ties, which are expressed through literature and actions. According to Tadesse Jalata, the Oromo have been aware of these facts. They stored their experiences and knowledge in their literature and used it as learning materials in socializing their offspring into their ancestral cultural identity. Each Oromo family had a duty to teach its children these cultural values beginning from their early childhood.[85]

Under their *Gadaa*, the Oromo developed very well-structured and organized polities. In the past, every activity of the Oromo was performed and bounded by the unwritten constitution of the *Gadaa*. The constitution was enriched by the distribution of power, rule of law, government structure, transparency, equity, and cosmic order. All the principles were expected to be rehearsed by individual Oromo from memory when the need arose.[86]

In due course, the Oromo gradually enriched their literature through generations and preserved evidence of social, political, economic and cultural activities from the past in their

[83]Gerhard Schulz, "From "Romantick" to "Romantic": The Genesis of German Romanticism in Late Eighteenth-Century Europe" in Dennis F. Mahoney (ed.) *The Literature of German Romanticism, V.8* (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2004), p. 32.

[84]Furniss and Gunner, p. 1.

[85]Tadesse Jalata," Children and Oral Tradition among the Guji Oromo in Southern Ethiopian" (Norwegian University of Science and Technology: Ph. D Dissertation, 2013), pp. 31-39.

[86] Lepisa, pp. 49-71, Gada, pp, 10-17.

oral literature.[87] The Oromo used their oral literature to express their history, culture, identity, philosophy, administrative experiences, directions, blessings, praise of the heroes, criticism of the cowards and their world view. Since oral literature is performed publically every member of the Oromo nation strove to act correctly of the society so as not to be criticized publicly.

Individual members of Oromo society expected to teach their children these social principles. The teaching started at an early age when the child was *dabballee* (1-8 years) and continued through five stages until it reached adulthood in fifth grade (32-40). Especially that of the early years or the first grade focused on how to socialize the children into the Oromo cultural identity. The children were taught through riddles, proverbs and storytelling. The contents aimed at ensuring the continuity of their culture, norms, mores, values, skills, and knowledge from generation to generation.[88]

Tracing their family line, study of nature surrounding them, listening and reciting folktales characterized mainly by animals were the main focus of the study. They were also taught songs and dances through which they were reminded about past events such as droughts, epidemics, battles fought, crop failures and other events. The main purpose of the education was to socialize children into Oromo cultural identity. The children were not only taught by parents but also by village elders. The elders were recruited based on their cultural knowledge of the society.[89]

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[87]Tesema Ta'a, "Oral Historiography on Oromo Studies" in Harold. G. Marcus (ed.) *Papers of 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies V.1* (Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press, 5-10 September, 1994), pp. 983.

[88] Melaku Mekonnon, "Some Features of Traditional Oromo Education" *in Journal of Oromo Studies*, V.8, No. 1&2 (2001), pp. 101- 108.

[89]*Ibid*.

During their adolescence poems, songs, proverbs, dirges, lyrics of blessings, warriors' boasts, laments over dead heroes, parables and the art of public speech were the main learning materials which could be followed by observation and involvement in major and minor public activities.[90] Each mode of Oromo thought whether good or evil, moral or immoral, destructive or constructive or any other type was made use of, using memory and recitation.[91] The teaching was aimed at conveying norms of behaviour to the individual Oromo so that he/she would follow accepted *gadaa* values and regulations, and avoid outrageous behaviour so that they could be socialized into common Oromo identity and keep Oromo oral literature alive.

The curriculum of Oromo traditional education in language skill was also considered essential in socializing the Oromo children. In the skills emphasis was given to public speaking, effective listening, thought expression, memorizing oral literature and composing music and songs. Children were taught to use proverbs, poems, folktales and other elements in their literature in association with events and situations taking place in the community. Great care was taken to maintain the uniformity of the aims, methods and sometimes the contents of the education not only across time but also across space. [92] This has enabled the Oromo to retain the homogeneity of their language and consistency of their literature up to the present.

The identity and world view of the Oromo was transmitted from generation to generation through oral tradition which is defined in this dissertation as oral literature. Oromo oral literature combines both spoken word and 'language of the mind'. Deciphering such literature

[90] *Ibid*.

[91] Gemechu Megersa, "Knowledge, Identity and the Colonizing Structure…", pp.56-58.

[92]Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008. Mohammed Hassen and J. Hayward have the same stands with the informants.

needs not only the knowledge of the spoken word but also of the Oromo world view. Although the degree of understanding and engagement varied from individual to individual, the Oromo children were trained how to express and preserve their creativity into their literature and how to decipher Oromo literature with multiple layers.[93]

According to Gemechu Megersa, the layers were to protect Oromo oral literature from infiltration which might have the capacity to destroy Oromo identity through time.[94] This assisted the Oromo to inherit their identity through generations in the form of well-organized oral literature. Such education was carefully given in order to achieve the intended objective. As Salviac succinctly states:

> *The Oromo child, imbued with principles and rules of conduct, becoming philosopher without school, eloquent without rhetoric, soldier without enlistment, lawyer without code, theosophist without effort, advances without steps in the accomplishment of the duties and assimilates the character of the race…*[95]

The Oromo developed the mechanism by which they incorporated newly created bodies of literature and transferred the ones already in circulation. The mechanism functioned in vertical and lateral systems. Vertically, it functioned by transferring stored and preserved innovation, history, cultural identity and philosophy of the preceding generations to the living generation through the process of *argaa dhageettii* (the seen and the heard).[96] Among the Oromo *argaa dhageettii* repeated itself in various forms and remained alive within the society. In fact, the Oromo *argaa dhageetti* has various level of meanings which can be deciphered only by those

[93]Gemechu Megersa, "Knowledge, Identity and the Colonizing Structure…", pp.56-58.

[94] *Ibid*., pp. 53-55.

[95]De Salviac, p. 286.

[96] *Argaa dhageetti* is the main body of Oromo oral literature. *Argaa* is what is seen by being at the place in time and space. However, it does not mean that it is not past events. There is a situation when a person could narrate what he/she had "seen" in the past as old as the eldest age in their society. *Dhageettii* is what was heard from others. Although *dhageettii* mainly refers to events in the distant past, it should not be interpreted only in this regard. It may also refer to prophecy or what is seen at the moment by another person and told to another just a few minute after the events. For detail see Gemechu, "Knowledge, Identity…", pp. 53-57.

who know the language within the perspective of the Oromo world view. The Oromo were very cautious in protecting their oral literature from distortion by entrusting it to individuals who were trained in storytelling.[97]

The Oromo oral 'text' has several layers of meanings. To decipher the meaning, it is necessary to know not only the language but also the Oromo world view or the language of the mind. To be developed to an oral tradition, oral text has to be repeated and internalized by a society. An oral text, developed to oral tradition, was protected from distortion by entrusting it to a few individuals who were recognized by the society as its custodians. The position was not easily given. An individual interested to have the position of custodian was evaluated for his/her integrity and for his/her respect of societal values. It was after passing such criteria of evaluation that he/she attained the position. During evaluation the learner should display great patience and follow the right cultural procedures. The period of evaluation varied from three months to six and in certain circumstances might be more. The period was the time to undertake thorough investigation on the background of the learners. One of the criteria was to trace ancestral descents and relate the descents' impact on his or her contemporary conditions.[98]

In such cases although individual Oromo had a right to have knowledge of *argaa dhageettii*, they were very few who had the right to instruct. Gemechu reads this elaboration succinctly as:

> *[Oromo] Oral traditions [in their inner meanings] are kept secret [only known to experts] to protect them against infiltration based on the same model or distortion of the original message. When a deliberate falsification takes place, there is no way of controlling the falsehood from being perniciously incorporated into the oral tradition and it thus endangers the entire system of transmission. For this reason,*

[97] *Ibid.*
[98] *Ibid*.

> *the knowledge of the oral traditions is entrusted to only a few individuals, who are recognised by the society as its custodians. In Oromo, any member of the society who is genuinely interested in learning this knowledge can approach such a custodian and ask to be taught. But before the expert consents to such a request, the student must fulfil certain conditions. In order to he accepted, the learner must display great patience and follow the right cultural procedure.*[99]

This system of safeguarding oral tradition enabled the Oromo to keep their common identity through their oral literature from generation to generation without unmanageable infiltration and much distortion. The concern for their common identity was also made laterally across geographical area through the tradition of *iyyafannoo* or *quba qabduu* (curiosity about happenings). In *iyyafannoo (quba qabduu)* travellers across Oromo territory were expected to inform what they had seen or heard along their road to anyone along the road who sought the information. In *iyyafannoo (quba qabduu)* the one along the road asked the travellers for new information and the travellers had a duty to give their information. In the process any incident against or in favour of Oromo identity was known across this vast geographical area and the Oromo at different corners reacted upon it. The information circulated through *iyyafannoo (quba qabduu)* was filtered and entered to *argaa dhageetti* to serve the next generations. This rich body of oral literature enabled the Oromo to keep the communicability of their language and common identity of their culture.[100]

Oromo oral literature even continued its function when some parts of the Oromo established monarchical states and exploited their fellow clans, moving against the rules and regulations of the *gadaa*. Parts of the society who were offended by the breaking of *gadaa* law and

[99] *Ibid.*, p.54.

[100][100]Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008. Mohammed Hassen and J. Hayward have the same stands with the informants.

adoption of foreign elements used to express their feeling through the already established pipeline of oral literature. Those who were in north and central north began exercising the tradition of the societies among whom they settled. Yet, they never stopped expressing their opposition or support for the distortion of the way of their Oromo life through their oral tradition. Although their interaction with societies of other traditions highly affected the legality of the Oromo social organization at least at the level of the leaders, the Oromo were strong in building and preserving their constructed identity in their oral tradition, in which oral literature had a great role. According to Mohammed Hassen, the Oromo continued to practice their tradition even when being among a chirographic society until they were almost totally incorporated to Ethiopian unification in 1899.[101]

2.3. The Interplay of Oral and Written: The Interaction of the Oromo with the Societies of Written Script

In the interaction of the script and oral society orality and literacy are not two distinct and independent things which live parallel without touching each other, or one after the other. The continuous interaction of the script society with the oral has broadened the opportunity of linguistic and cultural borrowing from one another.[102] In the course of time words, phrases and folk tradition of the hitherto non-written language have been cited, listed or even written down in passage. The societies of non-written language also might have sent their children to the schools of the script society. In turn there would be the possibility to write down their language, adopting the script of the language with which they have been in interaction. At the same time,

[101]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and The Christian Kingdom…, pp.* 337-353.

[102] Negash, pp.2-4; Peter Zima, Language and Script in (Viladmir Klima and *et al* eds.) *Black Africa in Black African: Literature and Language* (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976), pp.19-26.

the opportunity of writing down the literature of a non-written language by writers of the written tradition depends on his or her interest in the non-written tradition.

In fact, as Albertine Guar notes adapting the written script of another language is only likely if this adaption is relevant to the needs of the oral society adapting it. Otherwise, they may completely reject it and insist on their own method of information storage.[103] On the other hand, the opportunity of writing down the literature of a non-written language by writers of the written tradition depends on his or her interest in the non-written tradition. [104]

The Oromo interaction with the society of written tradition is not different from these views. A written history of written Oromo literature is characterized by the insertion of words, phrases, citations of important folk materials, and adoption of scripts, educating their children in writing but sometimes rejecting literacy in the non-vernacular language. Nonetheless the linguistic interactions of *Afaan* Oromo with the literacy tradition of Christin and Islamic literature since their early contact have been strong. The continuous interaction of the Oromo with these societies broadened the opportunity of linguistic and cultural borrowing from one another.[105]

The Oromo interaction with both the Christian and the Muslim societies either in peace or conflict had great impacts on the early written history of Oromo literature and Oromo identity. There was insertion of terminologies, personal and place names, and a few phrases. A few of

[103]Albertine Guar, *A History of Writing* (London: Cross River Press, 1992), pp. 15-16.

[104]Pieter Botha, "Cognition, Orality-Literacy, and Approaches to First-Century Writing" in Jonathan Draper (Ed.) *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity* (Leiden: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004): www.en.bookfi.org, pp. 37-63.

[105] Mohammed Hassen, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism: A Historical Overview of the Development of Written Oromo Literature" in *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Vol. 17, No.1, (March 2010), p.139

such writers were Abbaa Bahrey[106] and Šihãb ad-Din.[107] While Bahrey extensively employed many Oromo names and terminologies like *Gadaa, Malbaa, Muudana, Tuulama, Maccaa, Galaan, Walaabuu* and others in addition to describing Oromo social structures, Šihãb ad-Din used Oromo personal and place names. The insertion of the terminologies not only contributed to the development of written Oromo literature but also introduced the identity of the Oromo into Christian and the Muslim knowledge.

The employment of Oromo nurses and the intermarriage of the Oromo among the Christian families made the Christian society to learn *Afaan* Oromo, according to Salviac even "before that of their own native land."[108] The employment of the Oromo as infantry and cavalry soldiers in the wars of both the Christians and the Muslims opened the opportunity for the Oromo to celebrate the victories of the two whether they were fully heard by the Christian or the Muslim scribes directly or through mediators.[109] As a result, war boasts, challenges from the field commanders, repartees to verbal attacks, songs of triumph over victories and laments over dead heroes in *Afaan* Oromo which they used to address in victory might have come to the ears of Christian and the Muslim scribes to be recorded in both Geez and Arabic scripts.

[106]G. W.B. Huntingford, "The Ethnography and History of South-West Ethiopia", pp.44-55. The first appearance of Bahrey's book is said to have been in 1593. What is more interesting is not only what Bahrey had written but how he was able to understand the society whom had been described as unfamiliar to the Christian society. The question leads us to raise an argument that there was at least one person who knew both Geez and Oromo languages to have produced the book. Otherwise, as Jan Vansina states, it is difficult for someone to collect oral tradition of the society whose language he/ she does not know. Under any circumstances, it would have been impossible to get oral information embodied in the book from the Oromo through interviews without either *Abbaa* Bahrey's knowledge of Oromo language or an individual Oromo with good knowledge of *Geez* language. Consequently, we can assert that either *Abbaa* Bahrey knew Oromo or there was at least an Oromo who knew *Geez* language. In both cases, it gives a clue that *Afaan Oromo* was a language of literate individuals. Thus, Bahrey's knowledge of Oromo culture and history is clear indication of the reciprocal influences between the Oromo and the Christians.

[107]Šihãb ad-Din, The *Conquest of Abyssinia*….

[108] Salviac, p.276.

[109] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom*…, p.262.

There were also great historical episodes when the Oromo sent their children into the Christian schools and later those children were recruited by the Christians as cavalry, advisors and chroniclers. Even some of them were well-versed in *Geez* and took important positions in the court of the Emperors. One of such personalities was *Azaj* (commander) Tino who was an Oromo. Mohammed Hassen assumed that *Azaj* Tino was a second generation Oromo who settled deep in Gondar province in the sixteenth century. He was one of the highly learned Oromo in *Geez* and became a man of key position at the court of Emperor Suseniyos. He served the Emperor as advisor and chronicler.[110]

Regardless of the tenure of his office, *Azaj* Tino is said to have written Oromo history from the perspective of the Oromo. Mohammed reveals that *Azaj* Tino wrote Oromo history by interviewing the Oromo who were on their way as *jilaa* (pilgrims) to *Abbaa Muudaa*. According to Mohammed, *Azaj* Tino clearly stated how the Oromo from different corners of the country easily communicated in their language without any dialect barriers and their devotion to their indigenous religion, even including those who were adherent to other religions.[111] In addition to introducing Oromo cultural identity into the written tradition, *Azaj* Tino evidenced that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Oromo were not a population who were isolated because of geography and cultural interaction with other societies and lived with a strong common identity and linguistic homogeneity.

Emperor Susenyos, whom *Azaj* Tino served as advisor and chronicler, was also well versed in *Afaan* Oromo. Although he had conflict with the Oromo as normal, the relation he had with the Oromo was also very strong. He was brought up among the Oromo and married an Oromo

[110] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom*…, p.262.
[111] Mohammed, *Oromo of Ethiopia…,* pp.6-9.

woman. He also said to have brought many Oromo into his administration and army in his power struggle.[112] Thus, according to Mohammed Hassen the language he frequently used for communication was *Afaan* Oromo. Mohammed stated, referring to the chronicle, that Suseniyos oratory in *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo war chant he eloquently sang made the Oromo consider him as their natural leader.[113]

From this, I argue that even within strong challenges the Oromo persisted in their identity and went on as far as assimilating the king. Although we do not have concrete evidence, in a situation where the king, his wife, chronicler, and his soldiers were speakers of *Afaan* Oromo as well as making important communication in Oromo, it is not far from the truth to assume that they also used *Afaan* Oromo in writing. This might have enabled *Afaan* Oromo to be already in the form of written language at least at the level of having some pieces of notes.

The reign of Bakkafa (r.1721-1769) was another significant period for the use of Oromo language in the Christian court. During his reign, the Oromo participation in the Gondarine administration was predominant. The king himself got his name Bakkafa from Aminzo Oromo, which means sprawl legs. His early acquaintance with Walloo Oromo became one of the major causes for his later invitation of Oromo advisors to his court and his fluency in Oromo language. According to Paul Henze and Greenfield, he also married an assimilated Oromo from Quara (Chilga) to get the loyalty of the newly recruited Oromo.[114]

This indicates that in the second half of the eighteenth century Oromo Amhara interaction, language and identity were issues at the main centre stage of politics. As they were regarded

[112]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom...*, pp. 269-274; Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia…*, pp.39-43.

[113] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom*., p.340.

[114] Henze,91-92; Greenfield, p.56.

as the causes of conflicts, they were also used as instruments of alliances. As a result, Oromo identity issues and language were used as tools of social mobilization in the gathering of backup forces. The value given to the Oromo as reinforcement forces in the politics of the Christian kingdom affected Oromo identity and language in two ways. On the one hand, the Oromo entered into Amhara ways of life, learned their language and adhered to their religion and then went onto lose their identity and their language. On the other hand, those who withstood the pressure and continued to use their language and exercised their cultural identity took issues of Oromo identity and Oromo literature into Christian society.

The shifting of political power to the Walloo aristocracy came with Emperor Iyoas who was said to have been monolingual in Oromo,[115]and the engagement of 3,000 Oromo soldiers as palace guards[116] helped *Afaan Oromo* to be the official language of the palace.[117] The occupation of the position of *Ras Bitwedid* by the Yajjuu Oromo over the central regions of the Christian kingdom from the middle of the 1770s for more than half a century further exalted the use of *Afaan* Oromo in the administration.[118] According to James Bruce and Huntingford, during Iyoas' reign nothing was spoken in the court of the Christian kingdom but *Afaan* Oromo.[119] In the same way, K. Darkwa underlines that all the important officials and troops of the Gondarine period were Oromo. All the procedures of litigation were carried out in *Afaan* Oromo. [120]

[115] Greenfield, p. 56.
[116]Trimingham, p. 105; *Arén, Evangelical Pioneers…,* p. 39.
[117] De Salviac, p.43.
[118] Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia…*, p.40.
[119]James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, V.3(*London*:* Ruthven, *1777),* pp. 658, 665,667; Huntingford, p. 21.
[120]Kofi Darkwa, *Some Developments in Ethiopia During the Era of the Mesafint, V.6, No, 2* (Lent Term: Institute of Ethiopian Studies Research Review, University of Ghana, 1970), pp. 7-8.

The interaction also attracted the Christian nobility to marry Oromo women[121] which had significant impacts influencing both Oromo literature and identity. A few of such women were the mother of Yekuno Amlak,[122] Tsion Moggaasaa,[123] Berihan Moggaasaa (Mintiwab)[124], Wubit[125] and later many others. Through marriage alliances, the Oromo also entered into the line of Christian kingdom rulers. Although we do not have any information whether these rulers claimed the identity of their mothers or not, their relationship with the Oromo either in the form of conflicts or alliances remained issues of identity and political tensions. It also took expressive folklore in *Afaan* Oromo. Mohammed Hassen elaborates that issues of Oromo identity dominated the politics of the Christian kingdom. According to Mohammed, the relationship was sometimes associated through marriage, sometimes military alliance, sometimes provision of asylum, and most of the time conflicts dominated accompanied by bloody wars.[126]

The interactions brought *Afaan* Oromo to the attention of learned individuals in the course of the documentation of languages. Although in many cases, *Afaan* Oromo was seen as a vulgar language, especially among the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy,[127] the impacts of the Oromo in the course of interaction never allowed them to avoid citing issues of *Afaan* Oromo in relation to Oromo identity. The setting down of *Afaan* Oromo into written literature was made either to learn about the Oromo through *Afaan* Oromo or to portray the Oromo as a crude society to

[121] De Salviac, 276

[122]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom…*, p. 78.

[123]Verena Boll, "Séyon Mogäsa" in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, V.4*, (2014), pp.645-646. The father name of "Séyon, Mogäsa", is an Oromo name. She was also sentenced to death allegedly that she was found worshipping pagan saints and using black magic. Therefore, it would be a good reason to assume because she was Oromo. See also Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State*, pp.284-285.

[124] Harold Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*…, p.39.

[125] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and The Christian Kingdom…*, pp. 344-345.

[126] *Ibid*.

[127] Mohammed, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism…", p. 138.

be converted. In both cases, either lists of words or some folk literature was employed in the Christian written documentation. This is evidenced by *Abbaa* Gregorius who was a member of the Ethiopian Orthodox clergy and happened to be in the Middle East to visit Jerusalem and met with Job Ludolphus.[128]

While teaching Ludolphus[129] about Oromo identity between the years of 1649-1658, what *Abbaa* Gregorius cited as best example to locate the common identity of the Oromo was *Afaan* Oromo. To establish whether the identity of the Oromo which he told Ludolphus was different from the Amhara, Tigray, Agaw and the *Bete* Israel of Ethiopia, he listed seventeen words of *Afaan* Oromo with their parallel in *Geez*, Amharic and English.[130] Describing the uniformity of *Afaan* Oromo to all the clans of the Oromo, *Abbaa* Gregorius to show the peculiarity, listed about seventeen Oromo words with their parallel in Geez, Amharic and English.[131] The effort seems to have been to learn and to teach about Oromo at the time. *Abbaa* Gregorius was well aware of the uniformity of the Oromo language to all the clans of Oromo.

Ludolphus[132] who studied Ethiopian Semitic languages between 1649 and 1651 was most likely the first European to take words in Oromo language as specimens. He recorded about seventeen Oromo words with their parallel translation in *Geez*, Amharic and English in the book he published in 1682. As far as the sources at my disposal show, the lists may be the first published written Oromo word list. To authenticate the genuineness of what he had written about the Oromo, Ludolphus states that *Abbaa* Gregorius' knowledge of the Oromo

[128]Job Ludolphus, pp. 80-85. Ludolphus was the founder of Ethiopian studies as an academic discipline and the first modern history of Ethiopia.

[129]The common language *Abbaa* Gregoius and Ludolphus used for communication was not identified.

[130]*Ibid.* See also appendix I.

[131] Its English parallel translation might have been done by Ludolphus.

[132]*Ibid.*

had been rich. From this we can understand that *Afaan* Oromo served as the front door to learn the role the language had in the interaction of the society and about the identity of the Oromo.

What is important here is not only the inclusion of *Afaan* Oromo as one of the main Ethiopian languages, but also the bilingualism of *Abbaa* Gregorius. Although this does not enable us to know the identity of *Abbaa* Gregorius, whether he was an Oromo who had learnt Amharic or an Amhara who had learnt *Afaan* Oromo, it is possible to know that at least he was bilingual in Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo.[133] From this we can assert that in the middle of the seventeenth century *Afaan* Oromo took the position of being spoken by literate individuals and had begun infiltrating written literature.

Nonetheless, getting full-fledged written materials of *Afaan* Oromo in the distant past is not easy. This is because in ancient and medieval Ethiopia, most written materials were religious, so that writing or translating any religious material into any other language other than Geez was considered heresy or inadmissible. This was witnessed by James Bruce who was in Ethiopia between the years 1670-1678 to discover the source of the Blue Nile. Bruce came across a law about language of the scriptures while he was searching for written *Afaan* Oromo to include into his report as specimens of the languages he came across. The act was religiously condemned and regarded as immoral. As Bruce put it:

> *…there is an old law in this country [Ethiopia], handed down by tradition only, that whoever should attempt to translate the holy scripture into Amharic, or any other language, his throat should be cut after the manner in which they kill sheep, his family sold to slavery, and his house razed to ground…it was great obstacle to me in getting those translations of the Song of Solomon made which I intended for specimens of different language of those distinct relations.* [134]

[133]Ludolphus, p. 80.
[134] Bruce, p.425.

However, daringly breaking this traditional law, Bruce translated Solomon's praise for the Queen of Sheba into *Afaan Oromo* in Geez script on a page of his work. This is the second earliest tangible evidence of the beginning of writing in *Afaan* Oromo next to Ludolphus's word lists.[135]

Arnuald Hudson and Charven Walker also made the same observation when they stated that "It is a curious fact that, although so many of the great Abyssinian officers are pure [Oromo], and although nearly every Abyssinian know[s] [Oromo] as well as Amharic, yet they do not care to speak [Oromo] in public. This can only be ascribed to a kind of false pride, as in private they will talk it readily."[136] Tesfaye Shewaye confirmed Hudson's and Walker's argument by stating that the Amhara rulers who had been succeeding to the throne one after another disparaged the growth of Oromo language.[137]

According to the four writers, there were both psychologically and legally prohibitions on writing in any forbidden languages. Those who might have attempted to write in a forbidden language would have had to hide or destroy their works for their own security, which undermined the development of written Oromo literature. Thus, the written archives that were protected from the protracted wars as well as environmental hazards and preserved for the next generation were the religious and other materials of the Orthodox Christian and Islamic religions. Therefore, many of the materials in *Afaan* Oromo might have been lost due to less concern for a long period or had only existed in the hands of private individuals.

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[135] Bruce. The Specimen of *Afaan Oromo* is found next to page 400. For the page of specimen page numbers are not given. See appendix II.

[136]Arnuald Hodson and Charven Walker, *An Elementary and Practical Grammar of the [Oromo] Language* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1922), p. 8.

[137] Tesfaye Shewaye, "The Viability of the Vernaculars as Media of Instruction in Ethiopian Schools" (M.A. Thesis: Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, University of California, 1971), p. 24.

However, the frequent records of *Afaan* Oromo as an entry to study the identity of the Oromo were started because of European interest to get influences in Africa. The studies and the records were made by the Europeans themselves directly or by their trainees within the country. In 1809 and 1810, Henry Salt, who undertook a journey in south eastern Ethiopia under the direction of the British government, collected the vocabularies of Harar, Somali, Oromo, Afar and others, and inscribed them in his account. He recorded Oromo vocabularies with their parallel translation in English, Harar and Afar on four and a half pages of his volume. Although he attempted to write by modifying the Latin scripts, using diacritical marks, his characters do not represent Oromo sounds as the natives pronounce them.[138] In the same manner Rochet d'Hericourt, a French envoy to Ethiopia in 1839, gathered about seven hundred Oromo words and published them in the last thirty- three pages of his *Voyage en Abyssinie* in 1841.[139]

The studies of *Afaan* Oromo as a means to get into the internal identity of the Oromo was also made by Europeans influenced Ethiopian Orthodox clergy. One of them was a person named Habte Sillasie.[140] Habte Sillasie wrote an *Afaan* Oromo dictionary and grammar as one book with their translation in Amharic in *Geez* script using them under the title *Negere* [Oromo].[141]

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[138]Henry Salt, *Voyage to Abyssinia and Travel in the Interior of that Country: Executed under the Order of British Government in the Years 1809 and 1810 (*London: Frank Cass &Co. 1967), p. xvii.

[139]Rochet d'Hericourt, *Voyage Sur la Côte Orientale de la Mer Rouge, dans le pays d'Adal et le Royaume de Choa,* (*Paris*, 1841), pp. 166-7, 265.

[140]No clear recorded information is found to establish the identity of Habte Sillasie. Gustav Arén indicated three different Habte Sillasie who had direct contact with the European missionaries. Two of them with Bishop Samuel Gobat and the other with John Krapf. One was with *Ras* Wube of Tigray, the other was with Samuel Gobat at Gondar and the third was at Shewa with Krapf. The one at Gondar and Tigray had a strong relationship with Bishop Samuel Gobat. In his journal Samuel Gobat only mention one Habte Sillasie in connection with an Oromo missionary. Therefore, for me Habte Sillasie of Tigray whom Arén described and that of the Gondar should be the same. See Arén, *The Evangelical*…, p.65, note 102 and Samuel Gobat, *Journals of Three Years Residence in Abyssinia* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1850), pp. 212-214.

[141] Conti Rossini, *Rendiconti Della Reale Accademia Dei Lincei Vol. XIII* (Rom: Tipografia Della Accademia, 1901), pp. 307-335.

Within no more than 28 pages long, Habte Sillasie includes the derivatives of main entries and translated all into Amharic. Nonetheless, although as to the time it was a good beginning, both the dictionary and grammar are not exhaustive.

The exact time when Habte Sillasie's dictionary and grammar were written was not indicated. Conti Rossini, who copied the manuscript and annotated it did not state the date when the book was written and even who was the author. Samuel Gobat did not say anything about the dictionary and the grammar. Huntingford took it as around the beginning of the eighteenth century.[142] However since Habte Sillasie repeatedly reminded Samuel Gobat about Oromo missionary work, the dictionary and the grammar might have been written in the 1830s. Otherwise, it shows the attempt to convert *Afaan* Oromo to written words and to facilitate Amara Oromo interaction by increasing the number of bilingual individuals in Oromo and Amharic.

As in the Christian kingdom, the Oromo interaction with Islamic society had its own significant influences on the identity of the Oromo and the integration of Oromo language into written literature. According to Enid Starkie, the Oromo had contact with Muslim society as early as the thirteenth century[143] although the exact period of the contact has remained an issue of debate. Alemayehu *et al* say that they were the Oromo who welcomed the Muslims during their *Hijira* to Ethiopia in the seventh century.[144] Hassen Kawo puts the first Oromo

[142] G.W.B. Huntingford, *The [Oromo] of Ethiopia: The Kingdom of Kafa and Janjero (*London: International Africa Institute, 1955), p. 18.

[143] Enid Starkie, *Arthur Rimbaud in Abyssinia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p.8. Arthur Rimbaud lived in Harar area from 1880-1891 when he was able to learn the interaction between the Harare and the Oromo. See Enid Starkie page vi.

[144] Alemayehu *et al*, *History of the Oromo to the Sixteenth Century,* (Second ed.) (Finfinnee: Oromia Cultural and Tourism Bureau, 2006), pp.24-25.

Muslim contact in the thirteenth century which coincides with the early scholarly endeavours of *Sheik* Hussein.[145]

The assertion of Hassen is on the basis of the hagiography of *Sheik* Hussein which is said to have been written in Arabic by an anonymous author under the title, *Rabi al-Qulab Fidhiki Managib wafada al-Sayid Shaykh Nur Hussein*. If it is so, even the hagiography made *Sheik* Hussein the contemporary of the Yemani scholars: Faqih Abu Abbas, Ahmad ibn Musa ibn Ali ibn Ujayl and Ismael al-Hadrami who were said to have lived between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.[146] According to Rab al Qulub in Hassen, at the beginning the Oromo people challenged the Islamic endeavours of missionary activities of *Sheik* Hussein.[147]

Braukämper's genealogical analysis also made *Sheik* Hussein's presence in Bale around 1300.[148] Yet there are other scholars who have brought Sheik Hussein's Islamic career in Baalee to the seventeenth or nineteenth centuries.[149] There are also other scholars who have brought the Oromo contact with followers of Islam to the sixteenth century.[150] Whatever the argument there is a consensus that the Oromo have had contacts with the Muslims since the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, what is important here is not locating the exact period of contact between the Oromo and the Muslims but the relationship the Oromo and Islamic societies had engaged in, as it had impacts on Oromo identity and Oromo language.

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[145] Hassan Mohammed Kawo, "The Contribution of Shaykh Muhammed Jaju (Abi al-Mahaasin) (1894-1956) to Arabic Literature in Arsi" (M.A. Thesis in Philology, Department of Language and Philology, Addis Ababa University,2008), pp. 21-41.

[146] Eshetu Setegn, "Shaik Hussayn of Bale and His Followers" (Addis Ababa University: M.A Thesis in History, 1973), pp. 8-17.

[147] *Ibid*. The book Hassan talks about is a biography based on the life and career of Shaykh Hussein. According to the writer, he had written the book by the order of the grandson of the Sheikh. It was edited and published by Haji Yusuf Abdi al-Rahman in Cairo in 1967.

[148] Braukämper, *Islamic History and Culture…*, p. 83; *Jerje Østebø, A History of Islam and Inter-Religion Relations in Bale, Ethiopia* (Stockholm: Universitet strckeriet, 2005), pp .12-29.

[149] Trimingham, p. 208.

[150] *Ibid.;* Braukämper, p. 83.

Unlike that of the Christian kingdom, the interaction of the Oromo and followers of Islam had only manageable skirmishes about a written language, as it is the tradition of Islamic belief especially that of the Sufi, that conversion and persuasion should be go along with the provision of basic literacy.[151] *Sheikh* Hussein was one of such a pioneer Muslim *Sufist* who believed that wisdom and knowledge, which were the basic criteria to attain communion with God, would be achieved through such educational endeavour.[152] As the focus of the conversion was the youth, they established *madarsa* (a Muslim village school) here and there.

It is said that at the *madarsa,* Arabic script was taught as introduction to Arabic language and the Holy Quran. This Islamic tradition of converting people following the provision of basic literacy resulted in the development of the *Ajami* writing system.*[153]* As Peter Zima argues, if somebody is literate in any type of script, it is unavoidable to put his native language in writing in the script he/she is introduced to. Thus, according to Zima, if there is literacy a written literature is unavoidable. Zima affirms that while teaching the students, explanation was also given in the vernacular to indigenize the lesson and make it clear to the students.[154]

Mohammed Hakim explicates that in *Madarsa,* the teacher reads a phrase of a passage in Arabic text to which followers listen with by the help of commentary in *Afaan* Oromo. Students listened, took notes and asked questions in their vernaculars.[155] In such a way *Madarsa* were able to produce thousands of students who could not speak Arabic but were

[151] Trimingham, p. 233.

[152]Jeylan W. Husein, "The Functions of African Oral Arts: The Arsi-Oromo Oral Arts in Focus" in *African Study Monographs*, Vol. 26, No. 1(March 2005), pp. 15-58; Temam Haji Adam, "The Transformation of Anajina from A Religious Shrine to A Centre of Ethno-Nationalist Resistance, 1881-1991" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Department of History, University of South Africa, 2018), pp. 181-191.

[153]*Ajami* is a written text of language, other than Arabic, using Arabic or modified scripts.

[154] Zima, p.32.

[155] Mohammed Hakim, p. 81.

literate in Arabic script.[156] The Islamic literacy influence on the Oromo can therefore be traced back to the early introduction of the religion to the Oromo nation. This led to the development of *Ajami* writing in Oromo language.

Mohammed Hakim found that Islamic proselytizers used the Oromo method of employing oral literature to expand the new religion. He underlines that Oromo language was the medium of Islamic education, interpretation and preaching from the very beginning of its contact with the Oromo. Through this literacy, the converted Oromo might have been inspired to write *Manzuma* (Hymns) in praise of Allah and Muslim Saints in *Afaan Oromo*.[157] Informants are very confident that writing *Ajami* in *Afaan Oromo* from the earliest period of Oromo contact with followers of Islam was a common activity. Such type of writing in *Afaan Oromo* expanded to Walloo, Harar, the five Gibe states and other Oromo areas with the expansion of Islam.[158] There has even been a widely circulated tradition that Sheik Hussein of Anajinaa translated the Quran into *Afaan* Oromo. Supporting this idea, Paulitichek quoted in Braukämper reads as:

> *Among the southern [Oromo] the Panigal are said to have been the first to adopt Islam. Shaykh Hussein, a Somali from Harar, had preached it to them. At which time this happened cannot be defined …. The Panigal permitted him to settle among themselves, accepted Islam, and Hussein could proceed from them to spread Muhamad's faith among the Borena, Geriere[Garrii], and Arussi[Arsi]. He is said to have translated the Quran into the [Oromo] language, the translation said to have been preserved there up to the present, a fact which is doubtable however…. '*[159]

[156]Charless A. Ferguson, "The Role of Arabic in Ethiopia: A Socio-Linguistic Perspective" In *the Ethiopian Language Conference* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sillasie I University, 1969), p. 9.

[157]R.J. Hayward and Mohammed Hassen, "The Oromo Orthography of Shaykh Bakri Saphalo" in *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, V.LIV, Part III* (London: University of London,1981), p. 17; A. B. Andrzejewski, "Literature in Cushitic Language Other than Somali, Theoretical Issues and Sample Survey" in A. B. Andrzejewski (ed.) *Literature in African Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 126.

[158]Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008. Mohammed Hassen and J. Hayward have the same stands with the informants. See Hayward and Mohammed, p. 417.

[159] Braukämper, p. 139

According to the quotation the Booraanaa, Garrii and Arsi Oromo had contacts with Islamic literacy as early as the presence of *Sheik* Hussein in Baalee. Although it has remained difficult to get the manuscript, the said Quranic translation in *Afaan* Oromo is another major indication of literacy in *Afaan* Oromo as early as *Sheik* Hussein's period.

Generally, the arguments show that in the interaction of the Oromo with Islamic societies or individuals, there was tolerance and the accommodation of one's identity. Informants affirm that until recently, the Oromo in south central areas continued to live with their basic identity except a few infiltrations of Islamic cultural elements. Islamic religious songs, festivals on the celebration of Islamic saints, dress styles and others conformed to indigenous Oromo identity. Even pilgrimage to *Abbaa Muudaa* of the Oromo was substituted by pilgrimage to *Sheik* Hussein (Anajinaa) after it was forcefully banned by the Christian rulers.[160]

As in south central Ethiopia, the interaction of Muslim society and the Oromo in the north was made in adaptation of local pre-existing social values. Until *Imam* Ahmad Ibrahim al-Qhazi forced total conversion, the traders and the *Ulaama* (Muslim clerics) persuaded conversion through education. In Walloo since it was used as a means of resistance against threats from the Christians, nominal conversion to Islam was common. It was later on, with dynastic state formation that issues of identity among the northern Oromo became complicated. The complication emanated from the consolidation of Islam in line with the

[160] Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

efforts to preserve their Oromo cultural identity in the face of the encroaching imperial power and Christian ways of life.[161]

In spite of politico-religious confusion, according to Donald Levine and Hussein, the Oromo in north central Ethiopia continued to maintain their collective identity. Both writers explicate that the Oromo in the north central Ethiopia, even in different political situations and when there was different religious adherence, mutually understood each other and formed a coalition on the basis of their descent when they were challenged.[162] Except those Oromo who became Christian and Gondarine in culture, the rest continued practicing their culture while at the same time they had strong attachment to Islam.[163] The tolerance of Islamic proselytization towards Oromo cultural identity and the Sufi sect's method of teaching before conversion in Walloo also benefited Oromo language to be put into written literature. Hussein and Alula pointed out that Walloo (Dawwee) was one of the earliest and common centres of Islamic education. According to them, Dawwee served not only as a centre of Islamic religious expansion but also as a centre where *Ajami* in Amharic language flourished.[164]

Although they believe that Dawwee was inhabited by the Oromo and a place where considerable volumes of *Ajami* in Amharic were produced, they did not include the Oromo *Ajami*, which is popular in the region. Contrary to these writers, Mekuria and Mohammed Hakim reveal that during the eighteenth century writing in Oromo language was a common

[161] Mohammed, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism…", Hussein Ahmad, *Islam in Nineteenth Century Wallo, Ethiopia: Revival, Reform and Reaction (*Leiden: Koninklijeke, 2001), pp.21-22 & 51.

[162] *Ibid*. pp., 24-25; Donald Levine, pp. 135-6,156.

[163]*Ibid*. p, 28.

[164]Hussein Ahmad, "Traditional Muslim Education in Wallo" in *The Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, V.3* (Moscow: Nauka Publisher, 1988), p. 101; Alula Pankhurst, "Indigenizing Islam in Wällo: Ajami, Amharic Verse Written in Arabic Script" In Bahru Zewde, Richard Pankhurst and Taddesse Beyene (eds.) *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian studies, V.11*(Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1994), pp.258-259.

activity among the Muslim Oromo scholars.[165] Mohammed Hassen also agrees with Hussein's and Mohammed Hakim's assertion. He affirms that Oromo *Ajami* has existed since the presence of Islamized Oromo in Dawwee. Because of the popularity and an extensive use of *Afaan* Oromo in Islamic teaching and *Manzuma* (hymns in Oromo), the production in Oromo language is accepted as *Afaan Islaamaa* (language of Islam) by the local population.[166]

As in the south and north central parts of the country, in the east, especially in Harar, although Islamic cultural influences on them were strong, the Oromo continued to have their Oromo cultural identity. Except during the period of the Egyptian occupation, Islamic religious propagation was based on persuasiveness rather than coercion in Harar, which was conducted with the help of education. The *Sheik* had a legal obligation to teach the unlearned.[167] These activities made Harar one of the regions where immense volumes of *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo flourished, as also later on. *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo was popularized by the endeavours and activities of *Sheikh* Bakri Saphaloo.[168]

When the Oromo developed monarchical institutions toward the end of the eighteenth century in the Gibe Basin and Wallagga,[169] Islam became a bonding ideology (for the Gibee states) and *Afaan Oromo* emerged as privileged language of these states. In both the Gibe Basin and Wallagga, although the Oromo *gadaa* lost their political power they continued to show their allegiance to *Abbaa Muudaa* who played centre stage in maintaining collective cultural

[165]Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization…, p. 328.

[166] Mohammed, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…,* p.159.

[167] Abdulnasir Edris, "Traditional Islamic Centres of Learning in Harar "(B.A. Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1992), pp. 1-7.

[168] Aliyi Khalifa, "The Life and the Career of Sheik Bakrii Saphalo (1895-1980)" (Addis Ababa University: B.A. Thesis in History, 2000), pp.5-50.

[169] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991*(Second Ed.) (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2002), p. 18.

identity of the Oromo.[170] Their language served them both as symbol of identity, and the official and commercial language. All the kings of the states prioritized their Oromo identity and spoke in *Afaan* Oromo. In the case of the Islamized Gibe states, no report has been heard that they made Arabic their official language because of its being written and the language of their holy religion.[171]

Therefore, *Afaan* Oromo was extensively used by the merchants of long distance trade, missionaries and administrators. For easy and immediate communications, the merchants who frequently engaged in the market had to learn *Afaan Oromo* or employ interpreters. As Enrico Cerulli collected and annotated, the information the kings sent to each other were made in *Afaan* Oromo. Interestingly enough many of the messages were made in poems.[172] The involvement of literate Muslim merchants in the long distance trade and the development of Islam as the ideology of the ruling class of the Gibe states elevated *Afaan Oromo* to the status of a written language. Preachers and teachers of Islam as well as traders and administrators used written *Afaan Oromo* for correspondence.[173]

Mohammed Hassen has pointed out that *Abbaa* Bogboo, the founder of the state of Limmuu Ennariyaa, used written *Afaan* Oromo in Arabic script in his administration. The scribes first wrote down the directives and regulations dictated to them by the king in *Afaan* Oromo, and

[170]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom*…, p.52; Eric Knutsson, *Authority and Change: A Study of the Kallu Institution among the Macca [Oromo] of Ethiopia* (Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet, 1967), pp. 147 – 148.

[171] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia*…, p.161,177-178.

[172] Enrico Cerulli. Almost all Cerulli's collection is predominately poems and songs composed by the Oromo especially in opposition to the conflicts among the Oromo states and later the conquests.

[173] Charles Beke, "Reasons for Returning the Gold Medal of the Geographical society of France, and for Withdrawing from Its Members" *in Journal of the Royal Geographical Society (*London: James Madden, 1851), pp. 8-9; Mohammed, *The Oromo of...,* pp. 159 & 161: Jeylan Wolyie, "The Politics of Language, Power and Pedagogy in Ethiopia: Addressing the Past and the Present Conditions of the Oromo Language" in *Australian Journal of Language*, Vol.28, No. 1(June 2008), p.34.

then translated them into Arabic if they were to be used by others. Within the Five Gibee states, *Afaan Oromo* was used as a written administrative language.[174]

As a centre of Islamic learning in Northeast Africa, Jimmaa became another centre where a modest amount of religious literature in Oromo language was produced.[175] This helped the Oromo Muslim scholars who were engaged in disseminating Islamic religion among the Oromo to produce an immense religious and secular literature in *Afaan Oromo* in modified Arabic scripts. The Jimmaa informants unanimously agree that writing *Afaan Oromo* in modified Arabic script has been a common activity of the literate Oromo using Arabic script. Besides religious material they also took notes for their daily activities until the introduction of Latin letters or *Qubee* (a standard script to write Oromo language).

Ajami writing was another activity that promoted *Afaan Oromo* into written language in Jimmaa. Sufism, the major school of Islamic thought, which was disseminated from Walloo to Jimmaa, believed that using *manzuma* to be the best way to convert the local society to Islam. As a result, literate Oromo Muslims were encouraged to write *manzuma* in Oromo language so that many people were converted. M. Ishihara and our informants assert that praising Allah and Muslim saints in *manzuma* was introduced to Jimmaa from Dawwee Caffaa in Walloo. The Walloo Oromo Muslims were able to reach Jimmaa along with the merchants of long distance trade, most likely as *Jabarti*.[176]

Nonetheless, it is not easy to get written documents in *Afaan* Oromo other than *Geez*, Amharic and Arabic in ancient and medieval Ethiopia. For one thing, the writing materials were scarce

[174] Mohammed Hassan, The Oromo of…, pp. 177-178.

[175] De Salviac, 54

[176]Mohammed Hassan, *The Oromo of* …, p.159; Minako Ishihara, "Textual Analysis of a Poetic Verse in Muslim Oromo Society in Jimma Area, in Southwestern Ethiopia" in Shun Sato and Fisei Kurimoto (Eds.) *Senria Ethnological Studies, No.43* (Osaka: Nakashi Printing Co Ltd, 1996), pp. 207-232.

as it needed one to slaughter at least goat or sheep to get *beranna* (parchment).[177] The preparation of the parchment itself was restricted and controlled by the knowledge of others. The preparation was made secretly in a church compound or at the house of the skilled person.[178] Therefore, getting access to written materials remained deficient. The other problem was the nature of parchment. As it is organic in nature, it is easily vulnerable to decay unless preserved in well-protected places.

The other difficult factor for the Ethiopian clergy, Muslim clerics and foreign writers was issue of script. As *Afaan* Oromo had no script, its distinctive nature from other languages was a challenge for those who attempted to write it. Those who attempted to write in *Afaan* Oromo unanimously complained about the unsuitability of the existing scripts. Moreover, many of them had no clear knowledge of the language so that the letters they adopted could not properly represent the sounds of Oromo language.

Generally, both the Christian and the Muslim élites were quite curious to collect and write linguistic studies of *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity in their reports. The collections vary from writing a few Oromo words and folklore as specimens to composing dictionaries and grammars in Oromo language as a basic means to describe the identity of the Oromo. As I will discuss in chapters above, when some of them tried to write *Afaan* Oromo by the scripts they already knew and were already in existence, others attempted to develop suitable scripts that would enable them to write it. In doing so, they contributed a lot in developing Oromo language into the status of written literature. Nonetheless the studies of Oromo identity and language only conspicuously started in the second half of the nineteenth century.

[177]Ullendorff, p. 39
[178] Belai Giday, *Ethiopian Civilization* (Addis Ababa, No Publisher, 1992), pp. 71-72.

Chapter Three

Missionaries, Social Spaces and Oromo Literature, 1840 to 1870

The beginning of the 1840s up to the turn of 1870 had significant historical episodes in the history of Oromo literature. The year 1840 marked the beginning of solid Oromo language publications. The year 1870 is marked for the beginning of schooling in *Afaan* Oromo on African soil. Thus, the period between 1840 and 1870 is important for the study of *Afaan* Oromo as it saw a series of publications of the scriptures translated into *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo oral literature was transcribed into texts. The period also witnessed the appearance of indigenous missionaries, both Muslim and Christian, during the course of vernacularizing the religious texts. It was the time when Oromo oral literature began to reflect the challenges that the common identity of the Oromo had undergone because of state formation and conversion to Islam and Christianity.

The study of Oromo literature is identified with the endeavors of religious missionaries both Muslims and Christian. Inside and outside the country, the missionaries and missionary affiliated individuals engaged in studying *Afaan* Oromo. Studies of *Afaan* Oromo and converting it to written literature were seen as a decisive instrument to get easy access to the heart of the society. It was also seen as a major entry point to introduce the culture and doctrine of both the Bible and the Quran. The efforts to convert *Afaan* Oromo from orality to written literature also became one aspect of state formation when the Oromo monarchies used written *Afaan* Oromo in correspondence.

Therefore, this chapter deals with these and other issues. It investigates how the attempts to transcribe *Afaan* Oromo to religions books transformed the *Afaan* Oromo from oral to written

form and challenged common Oromo identity. First, the chapter shows how the attempts to convert the Oromo to Islam contributed to the development of written Oromo literature and loosened common Oromo identity. Within this context, the main focus is to explain how the efforts of *Mootota* Oromo (Oromo monarchies) to establish centers of education within their states and their hankering for using written records developed the Oromo language to a written status. It also proceeds to examine the contribution of Christian missionaries in the transformation of Oromo language from oral to written form while converting the Oromo to their new religion. The study of Oromo vocabulary and grammar, the translation of the scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo and the collection of Oromo oral literature is discussed in the chapter in detail. Focus is also given to how the attempt to indigenize the missionaries' work contributed to the studies of *Afaan* Oromo. While dealing with these issues, the chapter gives due attention to how oral literature was used to reflect the undergoing changes.

3.1. Oromo Literature and Identity Issues in State Formation and the Conversion of the to Islam in the Middle of the 19th Century

The historical record of Oromo literature that was produced in relation to the impact of state formation and conversion to Islam is not complete. Nonetheless, the testimonies of D'Abbadie[1], Charles Beke,[2] Cardinal Massaja,[3] Antoine Cecchi,[4] Martial de Salviac[5] and the

[1]. See Antoine D'Abbadie, "On the Oromo: Great Africa Nation Often Designated [Oromo]" Trans. By Ayalew Keno *in Journal of Oromo Studies, V.14, No. 1*, (February/ March 2007), pp. 117-146; Mohammed Hassen, "The Significance of Antoine D'Abbadie in Oromo Studies" in *Journal of Oromo studies, Vol. 14, No. 1* (February/ March 2007), pp. 147-164.

[2] See Charles Beke, "In The Countries South of Abyssinia", *Journal of Royal Geographical Society*, 3: 254-269.

[3]. See Alberto, *Ethiopian Review of Cultures...*, pp. 105-120.

[4] See also Hassan, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…,* p.84.

[5]Salviac, *The Oromo: An Ancient People Great African Nation…*

collection of Enrico Cerulli,[6] along with ample oral tradition, are the closest major sources in time and space to learn how state formation and conversion of the to Islam contributed to the development of written Oromo literature.

A history of nineteenth century Oromo literature was partly linked to the process of state formation and conversion to Islam. The studies of Oromo language benefitted from the establishment of the centers of Islamic education and local pilgrimage which were founded in the activities to convert the Oromo to Islam. The most important centers of Islamic scholarship between the years 1840 and 1870 among the Oromo were in Walloo, Harar, Baalee and the five Gibe estates. It was from these centers that the Muslim itinerant clerics moved and provided basic Islamic literacy.[7] What is more interesting here is the fact that these centers produced scholars deeply versed in Islamic literature both in Arabic and local languages.

The supports that were provided for basic Islamic literacy education varied on the basis of the objectives for which the education was sought. In the Oromo areas where statehood was not common, Islamic literacy education was needed for religious dissemination and the sponsorship was undertaken by devoted individuals.[8] In this case, the teachers and the students were forced to live on their own plots of land which were usually provided by local communities living around *Zawiyya.*[9]

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[6]. See Enrico Cerulli, *Folk-Literature of …*.

[7]Hussein*, Islam in the Nineteenth Century Wallo…,* pp. 50-51.

Mohammed, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…,* p. 86; Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom…*, p. 348. Although the nineteenth century is out of the period of his study, Mohammed dealt with issues of Islamic education in the first half of nineteenth century in the epilogue of the book.

[8]Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom…*, p.348.

[9] Hussain Ahmad, *Islam in the Nineteenth Century Wallo…*, p. 93-94. Hussein explains *Zawiyya* as: Newly established Islamic center amongst agricultural communities by early cultivators of Islam before the establishment of formal mosque.

In the areas which had undergone state formation, education was needed mainly for administrative activities and was subsequently sponsored by state leaders. In these areas, the overlapping interest of the monarchies to get good numbers of scribes and the Muslim missionaries to engage learned local Muslim clerics for the work of conversion raised the needs of education to the top of the ladder. The kings fully extended their support to Islamic education for their administrative records while the itinerant clerics willingly provided the scholarship to produce able evangelizers. This resulted in the emergence of local clerics who spearheaded both the dissemination of Islam and the development of written literature in *Afaan* Oromo.[10]

At the beginning, the intention of the monarchies and the Muslim missionaries was not to get Oromo literature in written form but to use education for the consolidation of their position within the society.[11] However, the necessity to expose students to Arabic writing as a first tool to read and memorize the Quran without basic knowledge of Arabic, the absence of Arabic speakers in societies, lack of professional teachers, and the less time devoted for learning Arabic, made *Afaan* Oromo the language of record and preaching.[12]

Although in principle conversion to Islam was characterized by Arabism in culture and Arabic in language,[13]among the Islamized Oromo there is no report that Arabic was used as a medium of communication. For easy and immediate communication, the Muslim missionaries, the teachers and the merchants were advised to learn *Afaan* Oromo. The need to forge Islamic connections across boundaries of space and culture networked this kind of Islamic literacy

[10] Guluma Gemeda, "The Islamization of the Gibe Region, South-western Ethiopia from C. 1830s to The Early Twentieth Century" in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies, Vol. 26, No. 2* (December 1993). p.71.
[11] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of…*, p.105.
[12]*Ibid.* Mohammed Hakim, p.60 and 96.
[13]Trimingham, p.139.

across the Islamized Oromo of Walloo, Harargee, Baalee- Arsii, and Jimmaa. Informants of Walloo, Harargee, Arsii, Baalee and the five Gibee States report that mainly since the 1830s, some of the Islamic students crisscrossed these regions seeking more advanced and specialized knowledge.[14] In doing so, this early Islamic education produced a large number of literate Oromo whose command of Arabic was only nominal.

The acquired reading and writing skills through basic literacy built a positive disposition towards Oromo oral literature in print. As reading and writing are associated with literature, the literacy of the students resulted in the production of written texts in Oromo. Young men who felt they had acquired writing skills are said to have tried their pen with paper in *Afaan* Oromo. The itinerant clerics began recording, using Arabic scripts, the poems and songs composed either to praise, or denounce individuals including the kings who were engaged in material building of the self than the interest of the society. The kings ordered the literate individuals in their states to record important events in their activities as some of them were partly reproduced in Enrico Cerulli's *Folk Literature of the Southern Oromo*.[15]

Whereas in some areas the writing of issues in connection with Islamism was the most common, in the Gibe states the role of the literate individuals was mainly connected with the activities of the monarchies. Guluma Gemeda states that the Gibee monarchies invited the Muslim clerics, to get scholastic and advisory support. According to Mohammed Hassen, *Abbaa* Gommool (the first king of Limmuu-Ennariyaa) was the first to invite the Muslim

[14]Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008. In the case of the Walloo, in informants of Mohammed Hakim affirmed the same view. Mohammed Hakim, p. 54.

[15]See Enrico Cerulli, *The Folk Literature of Southern [Oromo]*.

clerics. The invitation was made in 1800. Guluma writes that *Sheik* Sharif Abdallah and Sheik Fallata were the most remembered invited Muslim clerics in Limmuu Ennariyaa in connection with the literacy education of Ibsaa, the son of *Abbaa* Gommool, who was later renamed *Abbaa* Bogboo.[16]

The scholarship of *Abbaa* Bogboo contributed to the transformation of *Afaan* Oromo into written literature. Preachers and teachers of Islam as well as traders and administrators used written *Afaan Oromo* for correspondence.[17] Charles Beke, Sven Rubenson, Mohammed Hassen and Donald Crummey have pointed out that *Abbaa* Bogboo used written *Afaan* Oromo in his administration. The script they used was newly invented.[18] Informants also confirmed that the writing system was in frequent use in the administration of *Abbaa* Bogboo,[19] and one of the letters was discovered with its corresponding Arabic translations and documented in Rubenson's collection of Ethiopian correspondences.[20]

The letter was written to *Dajjazmach* Goshu of Gojjam in 1840, and was sent to Paris in January 1841 by M. Arnauld d'Abbadie and published in the Seventh Volume of the second series of the *Bulletin of the Geographical Society of France*. However, Charles Beke stated that the published form was only the Arabic version.[21] Rubenson states that *Dajjazmach* Goshu had the habit to use *Afaan* Oromo in writing in Ethiopic script.[22]

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[16] Guluma Gemeda, "The Islamization of the Gibe Region…, p.71.

[17]Beke, "Reasons for Returning the Gold Medal …", pp. 8-9; Mohammed, *The Oromo of...,* pp. 159 & 161.

[18] Beke, Reasons for Returning the Gold Medal …", pp.8-9; Sven Rubenson (ed.), "Correspondence and Treaties, 1800-1854 …", pp. 40-41; Mohammed Hassan, *The Oromo of...,* pp. 177-178; Crummey, "European Religious Mission in Ethiopia,1830-1860" …, p. 361.

[19] Interviews with Tayib *Abbaa* Foggii and Shakkayitti G/Meskel, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008, Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008 and Abdulkarihm Abbaa Garoo, Jimmaa October 29, 2008 and January 20, 2015; Kamal Fiixaa, Addis Ababa, October 30, 2016.

[20] Rubenson, p. 40. For the letter, see Appendix III.

[21]*Ibid.*; Beke, Reasons for Returning the Gold Medal …", pp. 8-9.

[22] Rubenson, p. 41.

Nonetheless, the *Afaan* Oromo invented alphabet has not been deciphered so that it is difficult to comment on the accuracy of the invented script in representing *Afaan* Oromo sounds. It is also stated that besides the newly invented *Afaan* Oromo script, Arabic script was used to write *Afaan* Oromo in the region.[23] Therefore, the writing system is an indication that that *Afaan* Oromo was the official administrative language of Limmuu Ennariyaa.

As in Limmuu, in Gommaa also Abbaa Maannoo extended his full support to Islamic education to strengthen his state through the bond of Islam and the knowledge of literacy. The education stressed memorization of the Arabic alphabet and the Quran. However, limitation of knowledge in Arabic could not take them far.[24] As Arabic could not get a foothold among the society, the language they usually used in their literacy activities was *Afaan* Oromo. Therefore, in Gommaa too, Islamic scholarship helped the development of written Oromo literature. This opened the opportunity for Oromo language to be written in the adopted Arabic script.

Gumaay was another area of the Gibe states where literacy grew among the Oromo society. This is witnessed by the literacy background of Amaan Goondaa[25] and Ganamee Yaa'ii Shaaseeda Odaa.[26] Before both Amaan and Ganamee were sold into slavery from Gumaay in the 1820s, they were said to have been provided with a satisfactory education. Studying the background of Amaan Goondaa who was sold from Gumaay in the 1820s, Karl Tutschek states that literacy was common in the Gumaay society. According to Karl Tutschek, Amaan Goondaa and his family were well educated. Furthermore, Tutschek asserted that the Oromo

[23] Mohammed, *The Oromo of…,* pp. 177-178

[24] *Ibid*., p. 110.

[25] Tutschek, Karl, *Dictionary of the [Oromo]Languag*e…, p. xxii.

[26] Wolbert Smidt Wolbert G.C. Smidt, "The Role of the Former Slave Pauline Fathme in the Foundation of the Protestant Oromo Mission" in Verna Boll *et al* (Eds.) *Ethiopia and the Mission: Historical and Anthropological Insights* (London: Transaction Publisher, 2005).

had a writing method of their own by citing the un-deciphered Oromo script. The script is said to have been sent by Arnuald d'Abbadie to France.[27] Similarly, in the biography of Ganamee, Wolbert Smidt pointed out that Ganamee was provided with a privileged education before she was sold into slavery.

However, since both Tutschek and Smidt do not state the type of script used in the education of Amaan and Ganamee this limits our ability to judge how much the script they used represented *Afaan* Oromo sounds. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence that there was literacy among the Oromo of Gumaay in the years before the 1840s. However, both Tutschek and Smidt did not state the type, level and script in which Amaan and Ganamee were educated. Nonetheless, the education might have been in the above newly invented *Afaan* Oromo and Arabic script.

Another center where a modest amount of religious literature in *Afaan* Oromo was produced in the first half of the nineteenth century was Jimmaa.[28] As in other Gibe states, *Abbaa* Jifaar did not lose time to invite the learned clerics for an advisory role. Thus, Islamic education in Jimmaa were started at the same time as in Limmuu Ennariyaa. The strength of Jimmaa in political power attracted many Muslim preachers and teachers. Guluma states that *Sheik* Abdulhakim was the most widely remembered among the many Muslim clerics in the region.[29] The Jimmaa informants unanimously agree that writing *Afaan* Oromo in modified Arabic scripts was a common activity of the Oromo literate in Arabic scripts.[30]

[27] *Ibid.*
[28] Ayalew Keno, *An Ancient People…*, p. 54
[29] Guluma, "The Islamization of …, p. 70.
[30]Interviews with Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, October 10, 2008; Shakkayitti G/Masqal, October 9, 2008 and Tayib Abbaa Foggii, October 9, 2008. The interviews were undertaken during fieldwork for my M.A study in History.

All the kings of the Oromo states and Islamized Oromo prioritized speaking in *Afaan* Oromo as their command of Arabic was inadequate. At the beginning they were taught reading and writing in the Arabic script and then the Quran. At the early stage of education, the preachers and the teachers translated their materials in Arabic into *Afaan* Oromo to create easy communication. The students took notes in *Afaan* Oromo using Arabic script. The fact that the Sufi method of teaching the students how to read and write Arabic scripts before the Quran contributed to the preference for writing in *Afaan* Oromo. This approach helped the Oromo to evade the dominance of Arabism in culture and Arabic in language, and created a conducive environment for Oromo language to become a written language of the religion and the states.[31] In doing so, the Oromo Muslim scholars not only indigenized Islam among the Oromo but also started a new form of writing known as *Ajami.*[32]

As indicated in Chapter two, although it is difficult to locate the exact date when the first *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo was written, a contextualized *Ajami* writing system in *Afaan* Oromo was attested from the nineteenth century onwards. The difficulty to locate evidences on its earliest written text is attributed to multifaceted problems. Students of *Afaan* Oromo philology in Arabic script unanimously complain that although not usually impossible, it is difficult to get the earliest written manuscript of *Afaan* Oromo *Ajami*.[33]

The reasons they state are the unprotected record keeping, absence of public depositary, scholars' perception of Arabic as the only venerated language of the Quran and mother tongue

[31] *Ibid*. Conversion to Islam was not able to shape the identity of the Islamized Oromo into Arab identity. Islam only existed among the Oromo as a religious category rather than winning over the *Oromummmaa*. The Islamized Oromo continued their community membership with the other Oromo, which involved ceremonies, rituals and the belief of the community. See Temam, "The Transformation of Anajina…", pp. 181-191.

[32] *Ajami* is a written text of language, other than Arabic, using Arabic or modified scripts.

[33] Hassen Mohammed, "The Contribution of …"

of the Prophet Mohammed to be preserved, and in the later period the suppression from the Christian emperors. Therefore, most archives of *Afaan* Oromo *Ajami* have been lost although it is reported that a few exist in the hands of private individuals. It is also even a challenge to locate the written date of the discovered *Ajami* as most of them have no written date.[34] Nonetheless, important bodies of *Afaan* Oromo *Ajami* literature have existed for long in spite of the fact that written records are rarely regarded as part of literature in *Afaan* Oromo.

Since its beginning, *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo is said to have been used for writing religious, political, administrative, diplomatic, commercial, poetic, and personal texts.[35] Although the quantity and the quality varied depending on the intensity of literacy and consciousness level of learned Islamized Oromo, such types of *Ajami* writing were widely distributed throughout Islamized Oromo regions. To make it attractive, the *Ajami* was composed in a way the Oromo used their language in traditions. Content wise, some gave their focus partly on Oromo issues. The others totally focused on issues of Islamic religion.[36] In both cases their contribution to the development of written Oromo literature was two dimensional. On the one hand, they converted *Afaan* Oromo to written language. On the other hand, they enriched Oromo vocabulary by blending and borrowing words.

Among the *Ajami* texts in *Afaan* Oromo the most common both in written and oral forms is Islamic poetic verse known as *Manzuma*. *Afaan* Oromo *Manzuma* was written to inspire the praise of Allah and Muslim saints. Since its introduction it has also been used for expressing various local issues of societal concern. Owing largely to their poetical or proverbial nature,

[34] From my discussion with Hassen Mohammed Kawo, student and lecturer of Oromo Philology at Addis Ababa University, it is also difficult to date the discovered *Ajami* itself.

[35] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of…, p.* 106, Mohammed Hakim, p.3.

[36] Mohammed Hakim, pp. 3-5.

multitudes of *Manzuma* expressions have become woven into the very tissues of Oromo literature. Except the scripts and the indoctrination of Islamic religious elements, the forms, the styles, the similes, the metaphors and the lyrics are the continuation of the *Faarsa*[37] in Oromo oral literature. As in Oromo oral literature, the similes and metaphors are based upon simple elemental things such as the heavens, running water, and the herds of wild beasts. The emotions are mystical and rapturously expressed, and convey the impression of much earnestness.[38]

Although it is a difficult task to get *Afaan* Oromo *Ajami* in the years before the 1870s, narrations of Oromo *manzuma* which traces its origin to the time of Oromo contact with Islamic religion are popular among the Muslim Oromo. The narrations mention for example the names of *Sheik* Muhammad Shafi (1743-1806), Abbaa Muhammad of Bir'nsaa Qoree (1833), Mufti Dawud of Gadoo (1743-1819), Al-Haji Sayyid Bushura Ay Muhammad of Gata (1760-1863) and *Sheik* Jawar bin Haydar of Shonke (1832-1973) in connection with written Oromo *Ajami* in general and *manzuma* in particular.[39] We can assume with great certainty that these great Muslim scholars might have used *Afaan* Oromo in teaching and preaching their students which plausibly led students to take notes in the language.

From this point of view Mahammad Hakim argues that the Sufi sect of Islam in which the aforementioned *ulamas* were the members encouraged the teaching of Islam in local languages

[37] *Faarsa* is a poetic verse of the Oromo culture usually used to praise their spiritual fervor, the unity of the Oromo and brave personalities. According to Mohammed Hassen "through *faarsaa* songs, eloquent heroes found their poetical expression, which set members of their tribes aflame with pride. Through these powerful songs the dead heroes of the nation were reincarnated and the living heroes were elevated to a higher plane; bravery was almost worshipped as a religion." See Mohammed Hakim, "Birille-Safa…" and Mohammad Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…*, pp. 12-13.

[38] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of …*, pp. 12.

[39] Mohammed, "Birille-Safa:", pp. 36-42. According to Mohammad Hakim, all of them are Walloo Oromo.

to impart the message in the Quran. The suggestion is that within this order and as far as they were Oromo, it is fair to assume that the writing of *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo was inevitable.[40]

However, this does not mean that Islamic propagation in *Afaan* Oromo did not affect the common identity of the Oromo. Although the process of the conversion of the to Islam was not followed by Arabization as it did in some other African countries, the challenges to Oromo identity should not be ignored. Some of the elements that played roles in criss-crossing common understanding of the Oromo from east to west and north to south were infiltrated. The roles of the *Qaalluu* institution that used to look after *Safuu* Oromo were transferred to the *sheiks* who worked to develop Islamic brotherhood more than that of *Oromummaa* (Oromoness).[41]

In western and northern parts of the Oromo region the dignity of electing a new government at the interval of every eight years was replaced by centralized and dynastic power structures. The approach drew boundaries, at least among people who had the same culture and language. The *caffee* council which used to settle differences among the people now became the events where the kings settled their territorial problems. It introduced social, political, and religious concepts of Islamic laws into Oromo cultural identity. This also restricted to some extent the flow of information, the information that enabled the Oromo to create and maintain a common sense of belonging. The *jilaa* by which the Oromo got together across boundaries entered into competition with pilgrimage to Mecca.[42] At least this development reduced the strength of the chain that criss-crossed the Oromo of the different regions. Oral tradition collected by Mohammed Hassen shows that the *geerarsa* themes of the poems recited at Oromo ceremonies

[40]*Ibid.*
[41] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of …,* pp. 151-152.
[42]*Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

were also altered. Before the formation of the kingdoms, individual heroes, their families and their clans were the principal themes of *geerarsa*. Now, the songs of heroes and the boasts of singers fused with the praise of the Prophet Mohammed messenger, of God, and Mecca as the holy land.[43]

According to the tradition, the Oromo literature which kept common Oromo identity alive and gave it memory and hope now extended itself and incorporated issues of state formation, trade and Islam. As both state formation and Islam were foreign to the Oromo cultural identity, the Oromo literature reflected Oromo surprise, adoption and resistances against these intruding elements. But also, songs of successful merchants and praises of Islamic saints began entering Oromo oral literature. Oromo oral literature especially the songs in which the Oromo used to convey prayer, love, heroic subjects, nuptials, births, wedding and birth ceremonies, successful hunting expedition, and other issues related to identity, now began to manifest issues of state formation and holiness of Islamic ideologies.[44]

The overlooking of *gadaa* law, the custom of *jilaa,* and the executive power of *gadaa* officials were commented on by stories, riddles, proverbs, and songs and even in prose literature.[45] Rather than focusing on the holistic issues of Oromo values, Oromo literature produced in these areas focused on the praise of Islamic zealots. Although the situation started to challenge the networks through which the Oromo had kept their common identity together, the activities enriched Oromo literature. Above all, the designation of Arabic names, specially to the Oromo

[43]*Ibid.*

[44] Interviews with Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008

[45] Mohammed, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism…", p. 138.

ulama, was critical. It was critical in that it consigned the ethnic identity of the *ulamas* to obscurity. Originating from this designation, nowadays according to Trimingham, most of the renowned Oromo scholars of Islam were linked with the legends of saints coming from Arabia.[46]

Nonetheless, this does not mean that the previous Oromo values were completely disrupted. The Oromo did not incorporate many elements of Islam into their identity and other changes were quite nominal and superficial. The Oromo before 1870 cannot be classified as a people identified primarily as Islamic because their acceptance of Islam was not entirely solid. From this point of view Amartya Sen and Cherri Reni Wemlinger state that classification does not become identity until it can assume real solidarity.[47] Historical events, cultural ties, myths of common origin and use of *Afaan Oromoo* remained the basic cohesive forces for the Islamized Oromo in their social relation with other Oromo groups.[48] Therefore, the Oromo identity was still connected to its ancient past by its values and beliefs.

There was no abrupt break with the past. Both the process of state formation and the conversion of the to Islam did not isolate the Islamized Oromo from their culture and kinsmen and Oromo literature from its vernacular. Among the Oromo to distance oneself from the religion of the community would mean giving up kinship connections. Even those who were converted to Islam retained their identity through incorporating aspects of their traditional religion into their new religions and began reflecting this with their own ways of expression. Especially the conversion of the to Islam of the Oromo before 1870 was superficial and the majority of the

[46]Trimingham, pp. 140-141.

[47] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2008), p.20; Cherri Reni Wemlinger, "Identity in Ethiopia: The Oromo from the 16th to 19th Century" (M.A Thesis in history: Washington State University, 2008), p.65.

[48]Trimingham, p. 262.

common people retained their traditional religion, the belief in *Waaqaa*. Islamizing of the ruling classes of the kingdom was based on tactics rather than religious depth. The Oromo converted to Islam continued their very close ties to their cultural identity and often maintained most of the elements of their religious system and created syncretic form of Islam. [49]

In Oromo areas where states were developed under Islamized kings and the Oromo *gadaa* had lost its political power, kings continued to show their allegiances to Oromo social values. They found themselves acting as leaders of the *buttaa* ceremony in their respective states and also danced together with the people in the festival. The prestige they felt for the *Abbaa Muudaa,* who was at the center stage in maintaining the collective cultural identity of the Oromo, continued as usual with very minor changes. Except for not undertaking *Jilaa* to the *Abba Muudaa* by themselves, they continued extending their support. Mohammed Hassen sates that in 1846 Antoine D'Abbadie observed when Limmuu Ennariyaa, Gumaay, Jimmaa and Geeraa sent the *jilaa* in their respective states to *Abbaa Muudaa*. As the kings respected the presence of the *Jilaa* in their respective states, it was also reported that the kings themselves sent gifts to the *Abbaa Muudaa* in the hands of the *Jilaa*.[50]

The continuity of Oromo identity in the culture of Islam can be partly attributed to the continued use of *Afaan* Oromo rather than Arabic both in the formation of the state and the process of the conversion of the to Islam. The Oromo of the region could not manage Arabic for both religious and daily activities. They preferred to use their native tongue *Afaan* Oromo. Muslim preachers and teachers were advised to learn the language of the masses.[51] Although both the traders and preachers were able to introduce alien elements into Oromo cultural

[49] Mohammed, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…,* pp.152-153.
[50]Mohammed, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom…*, pp. 52-53.
[51] Trimingham, p. 139.

identity, Oromo literature continued to be the mouthpieces of the judgement of the masses on previous issues and the newly encountered alien elements. It is usually difficult to express the culture of a given society without using its language or the use of vernacular language for a culture alien to it. The Oromo used their language as a mechanism to maintain their identity.

As the vocabulary of a language faithfully carries the culture whose purposes it serves,[52] vocabularies of the Oromo language continued carrying traditions of Oromo culture into the newly introduced religion. Words have always had a sensitive role to play in the induction of the culture they serve into newly introduced phenomena. Describing the relationship between literature and society, Arjun Dubey states that the identity of a given society can only be understood in its own terms, the terms that make up the literature. Literature by itself is not an independent entity. It is a glass through which the outsiders can understand that society.[53] As far as the language is deep-rooted in the society that speaks it, it took its vernacular concepts into the newly introduced concepts. This is what Islamic proselytization faced at its earliest stage among the Oromo.

On important occasions Oromo oral literature continued to manifest the considerable collective sentiments and pride of belongingness to a particular state or clan or the nation as a whole. On different occasions, songs were presented that explained and related successes and failures. In the songs culture and identity were reflected as tools of historical inquiry. The songs and the boasts of singers about their land and their nation on occasions nurtured the sentiments of the

[52] Asafa Tefera, "Ethnography of Resistance Poetics: Power and Authority in Salale Oromo Folklore and Resistance Culture" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, 2015), p.24.

[53] Arjun Dubey, "Literature and Society", in *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences V.9, Issue 6* (March-April 2013): www.Iosrjournals.org, pp.84-85.

young and the old into loyalty. The mass at the grassroots also forwarded their own views on their observation by the songs, poems, proverbs and stories in *Afaan* Oromo.[54]

Societal reflection of their discontents or contentment through their literature continued in the usual way. Oromo literature, especially the oral part, played similar roles in Oromo social dynamics. The Oromo people in different social structures and positions expressed their observations and views in their literature. Through this literature, the children and youth were taught how things had come to be at the expense of the past[55] since issues of literature in the vernacular are directly related to the culture of the society that speaks it. As a result, the old religion and Islam operated side by side for a long time and Oromo literature remained the mouthpiece.

Nevertheless, generally it is wrong to believe that the conversion of the Oromo to Islam did not encounter resistance. Although the Islamized Oromo did not abandon their basic identity and language, their conversion to Islam collected comments from neighboring Oromo non-Muslims. There were strong criticisms against Islam from Oromo states which did not make Islam their state religion. As the songs collected by Cerulli indicate, the criticisms were put forward by tracing their past glory and their insistence on it. The criticisms constantly reflected the struggle to make sense of what was happening and the cultural climate in which they lived. The criticisms were stronger in the Gibe states which were Islamized and Wallagga where conversion of the to Islam was not significant. The Wallagga states, proud of keeping their Oromo identity, criticized the Gibe states for their conversion to Islam. On the other hand, the

[54] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia…,* p. 99.
[55] *Ibid.*

Gibe states looked upon the Wallagga states as stubbornly backward accepting Islam for not.[56]

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The dichotomy was developed to the level of a league. Those states which remained with their native religion named their league *Arfan Oromotaa* (the four Oromo)[57] and those which were converted to Islam were renamed *Sadan Naggadota* (the three traders or Muslims).[58] Although the leagues wanted territorial expansion and domination over one another, Islam and remaining with the previous religion produced bold invectives. The following are examples of such invectives from both sides.

The *Arfan Oromootaa* invective	**English Translation**
Islaama Hudduu dhiqattuu	*Anus washing Muslims*
Siinii wajjin dabalamee	*Being with you*
Hinballeessu maqakoo	*I never defame myself*
Yeggaa isin dhiftanii	*When you would come*
Sadan naggadotaa	*You, the three Merchants(Muslims*)
Nuty wammadhinna arfan oromoota[59]	*The four Oromos would be united against you.*

The *sadan Naggaadotaa* (the three merchants) responded to this song as follows.

The *Sadan Naggaadotaa* invective.	**English Translation**
Borganama dhaqeen sii fidaaa	*I will capture you tomorrow morning*
Yoo lafti bariitee	*At the daybreak*
Oromtittiin akkam quuftee	*Oh! the four Oromo became obnoxious*
Kan karraan qalte hinyaattuu	*Who do not eat meat slaughtered by knife*
Bor ganama dhaqeen siifidaa	*Tomorrow morning I will capture you*
Yoon siifiduu baadhee	*If I do not!*
Addamirraa hindhalannee[60]	*I am not the descendant of Adam!*

[56] Cerulli, p.33.

[57] *Afran Oromotaa* were the Oromo states who refused to allow Muslim converts in their regions. They were Leeqaa Hordaa, Leeqaa Billoo, Noolee Kaabbaa and the Hannaa of Iluu Abbaa Boor. See Cerulli, p.33.

[58]*Sadan Naggaadota* were the Oromo states whose leaders were converted to Islam and allowed their people to be converted. They were named *Naggadota* (traders) because Islam was introduced to the regions by traders and at the time Islam and traders were considered as one and the same. Interviews with Tayib *Abbaa* Foggii and Shakkayitti G/Maskal, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008, Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna, October 10, 2008 and Abdulkarihm Abbaa Garoo, Jimmaa October 9, 2008; Kamal Fiixaa, Addis Ababa, October 30, 2016. These states were Limmuu, Jimmaa, Gommaa and Gumaay. See Cerulli, p.33; Takalign Wolde Mariam, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Kingdom of Jimma (Ca. 1800-1935) (M.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1984), p.67.

[59] See Cerulli, p.34.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 33

The invectives were mostly conveyed through songs and poems. The songs were used as a politically effective weapon. Any social gathering was the best event for the exchange of such invectives. Songs of Oromo values were frequently sung at the ritual activities. The exchanges have found their documentation is the songs and poems collected and annotated by Enrico Cerulli.[61]

Nonetheless, the Oromo never considered each other as fundamentally enemies. Their shared a common form of cultural values, ethics and language which involved the conceptual scheme through which humans interpret the world and the individuals' place in the world had more power than what divided them. When the Oromo kings tried to create an identity support for the state, the mass never denied their belongingness to larger Oromo society. Thus they developed terminologies for the wars between themselves and other ethnic groups. When the war was among themselves they called it *walloluu*[62] and when the war was with other ethnic groups they called it *diina loluu*.[63] The songs for the *walloluu* and *diina loluu* vary. If the fighters caused serious damage to the other Oromo, the Oromo minstrels criticized the deeds publically at the gatherings. But if the damage was to non-Oromo the damage is praised but within the context of common humanity.[64]

Generally, the Oromo who were converted to Islam and were subjects of different states never saw themselves as divided either ethnically or linguistically from the other Oromo. Though

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] *Walloluu* is the war the Oromo fought against each other for the purposes of Oromo kings' territorial expansion over another Oromo. The wars were not on the basis of Oromo against others but duty for the kings' political purpose.

[63] *Diina loluu* is a type of war to defend the Oromo territory, culture and identity from invaders of the Oromo, for instance neighboring non-Oromo ethnic groups.

[64] For the songs see Cerulli, p.34.

they had become Muslims for the contemporary benefit and were divided into different states, internally they continued their previous common cultural and linguistic practices.

3. 2. Early Oromo Studies at Home: Shifting or Endorsing of the Paradigm

After long and tiresome endeavors, the European missionaries were able to make successful contact with the Oromo in their homeland in 1839. There had been a new focus given to the countries to the south of Abyssinia in the nineteenth century after renewed relations between Europe and Ethiopia. In fact, what made the missionaries in Oromoland important for this dissertation is not their desire to evangelize the Oromo, but the study of Oromo language they undertook.

The missionaries saw the study of Oromo language as their entry point deep into the Oromo society. Consequently, this phase (1839-1870) of missionary engagement among the Oromo was a significant contribution to the study of the Oromo language. The missionaries were well aware of the fact that having good knowledge of the language would give them deep insight into the culture of the society. The missionaries were Protestants and Catholics. In 1839 the Catholics and Protestants sent their agents to the Oromo. It was on this basis that an agent of the French Catholic Lazarists, Rochet d' Hericourt,[65] and an agent of the London Church Missionary Society, J. Lewis Krapf,[66] arrived in Shawa.

The beginning of Oromo studies through missionary evangelization was made in line with the extension of Christianity and the rise of anti-slavery movements.[67] Thus, the Oromo studies

[65] Isenberg and Krapf, p. 61.

[66] Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary…,* p; 25; Donald Crummey, *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia, 1830-1868* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), p.46.

[67]The missionary institutions were organized mainly to pursue revolutionary impacts of Christianity on Africans through education. See, Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova, "Christian Missions in Africa and Their Role in The Transformation of African Societies" in *Asian and African Studies, 16, 2007, 2,* pp. 253-255.

benefitted from the institutions organized by abolitionists, humanitarians, philanthropists and legitimate traders. The Protestant missionary was the outgrowth of the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Evangelical Church Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society which were established in 1792, 1795, 1799 and 1804 respectively. According to Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova, similar organizations had evolved in Scandinavia, Holland and the USA as well as in Germany.[68]

The above institutions had the two important aims of getting the written scriptures in vernacular and learning the Oromo language. The first one was to avoid the distortion of the message of Christian instruction that could have been possible solely with orality. The second was for the missionaries to have good command of the language of the target society that would enable them to be effective in evangelization through effective communication.[69] It was generally believed that the missionaries should overcome the problem of language to minimize cultural misunderstandings and distinction between themselves and their potential converts. Moreover, Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova states, the missionary institutions of the Catholics believed in the final conversion of Africans in African languages by Africans themselves. As Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova states, societies with large number of population, large geographical size and favorable location were prioritized.[70]

In the project of this evangelization of East and Central Africa, the Oromo nation was one of the major prioritized societies. The prioritization of the Oromo as a potential force in the conversion of East and Central Africa was not as spontaneous as one might think. The decision

[68] *Ibid.*
[69]Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova, pp.254-257.
[70] *Ibid.*

was made on the basis of information collected about the Oromo before 1840.[71] The collected data inspired missionary interest in the Oromo. It is reported that almost the final objective of the missionaries in East Africa was to reach the Oromo. [72]

The works of both the Protestant and the Catholic missionaries among the Orthodox in Northern Ethiopia was also to wait for a favorable time to proceed to the Oromo. The intentions of Moutuori, a Catholic Lazarist and Samuel Gobat, a Protestant of the Church Missionary Society, were cases in point. Moutuori indicated in his letter to *Propaganda Fide* on 7 August 1839, cited in Crummey, that he had a plan to learn *Afaan* Oromo language from the Oromo at Gondar which would enable him to announce the Kingdom of God among the Oromo.[73] Similarly Gobat revealed his great interest to preach the gospel among the Oromo when he was in an intensive discussion with Habte Sillasie on the issues.[74] His persistent presence at Gondar was to wait for opportunities to reach the Oromo. However, he failed to conduct proselytization among the Oromo.

The way the travelers characterized the identity and the language of the Oromo further encouraged the interest of the Europeans. From the reports some perceived the Oromo as "fetish worshippers", a people ready to kill, cruel and lacking civilization.[75] Others identified the Oromo as innocent, socialized, intelligent, ready to hear the words of God, and laying trust

[71]Adding to the knowledge of the west, there had been continuous European travelers' reports on Oromo since the fifteenth century Portuguese engagement in Ibin Ahmad Ibraham al Gazi's war on the side of the Christians. Lobo, Alvares, James Bruce, Henry Salt and Samuel Gobat were some of the prominent individuals whose travel collections were the first hand in informing about the greatness of Oromo population, status of their culture, learnability of their language and the suitability of the environment they inhabited.

[72] *Journal of Three Years Residence…*, p. 213.

[73]Donald Crummey, "European Religious Missions in Ethiopia…", p. 311.

[74], *Journal of Three Years Residence…*, p. 213.

[75]For this view, See Manoel de Almeida, "A History of High Ethiopia/Abassia," …, pp.56-61; James Bruce, *Travels in Abyssinia and Nubia, 1768-1777*(London: Edinburg Adam and Charles Black, 1873), p. 86; C.R Markham, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition* (London: Macmillan, 1869), pp.39-40.

in others.[76] In both cases the issues put the Oromo in the target of the missionaries. Those who understood the Oromo as 'uncivilized' made themselves ready to 'civilize' them through evangelization. Those who understood the Oromo as intelligent and sociable were delighted with the hope of getting easy conversions and expanding their missionary success. The missionaries with both views rushed to convert and use them in the conversion of other African societies before they would be converted to the rapidly expanding Muslim religion in East Africa.

The important point for the theme of this dissertation is that both the Catholic and Protestant missionaries to reach the Oromo believed in the importance of linguistic mastery of the Oromo language. Their assumption was that mastery of *Afaan* Oromo would help them to learn the real identity of the Oromo from within. Although their purpose was to get local converts, to enable the Oromo to hear the word of God in their own language and to use *Afaan* Oromo for other minor ethnic groups neighboring the Oromo, their contribution in making *Afaan* Oromo into a language with a script was unsurpassed. Therefore, knowledge of *Afaan* Oromo was seen as a prerequisite to preach the gospel to the Oromo.

Their study of *Afaan* Oromo included not only speaking, writing and reading in the language, but it was also stating its nature, learnability, syntax and the richness of its vocabularies for the later evangelizers and translators. Based on this, A French Catholic Lazarist Rochet d'Hericourt, arrived in Shawa in October 1839[77] and started learning the Oromo language, culture and religion. He stated the learnability of Oromo language and the suitability of Oromo culture for evangelization. From his participation in one of the Oromo *buttaa(gadaa)*

[76]From this view, it suffices to mention d'Abbadie, "On the Oromo: Great African Nation]" …, pp. 117-146 and C.F Rey, *In the Country of the Blue Nile* (New York: Negro University Press, 1927), p.27.

[77]Isenberg and Krapf, p. xii.

celebrations of every eight years at Odaa Nabee in 1839, he learned that *Afaan* Oromo was common to the people gathered there from far corners of the Oromo region. According to the report of his observation, what delighted him more was the easy communication of the participants without any dialect barrier and their belonging to the same descent. He wrote his impression on how the Oromo gathered together from different corners uniformly responded to blessings, songs, and procedural activities in his first publication of his Abyssinian Journey.[78]

Excited by the number, the vastness of their territorial areas and the communality reflected in their culture and the hope that French power, aided by the Oromo, would assist conversion, he broadened his study of *Afaan* Oromo to the collection of vocabulary. As part of this project, he collected about seven hundred Oromo words. The collection includes samples of *Afaan* Oromo common nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, possessive pronouns, prepositions, and location phrases. The letters he used in the transcription were Latin alphabet, in which he did not try to indicate the geminated and long Oromo sounds. The collection was published in his last 33 pages of his *Voyage* in Abyssinia.[79]

A group of a French scientific mission who arrived in Shawa in 1839[80] also contributed to the study of Oromo language. They collected about one thousand Oromo terminologies of which six hundred are nouns and four hundred are verbs. The collection was published in sixteen pages of their *Voyage en Abyssinie* in 1845.[81]

[78] Hericourt, pp.399-432. *Buttaa* was public celebration of power transfer in the *gadaa* system which holds every eight years. Odaa Nabee was a *gadaa* center of the Tuulamaa Oromo to which also representative of other Oromo clans were active attendants.

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] The scientific missions were sent to Shawa by Louis Philippe, king of France.

[81] T. Lefebvre *et al*, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris 1845-9), pp. 377-392.

The other distinguished Catholic missionary under the grandiose scientific mission was Antoine D'Abbadie. He arrived among the south Oromo to the *Abay* (Ethiopian name of the Blue Nile) in 1843. Inspired by the reports on the Oromo, D'Abbadie extended his study from linguistic studies of the Oromo to geographical, ethnographical, astronomical and mineralogical exploration.[82] Except collecting a few manuscripts in Oromo, linguistically his work was not rewarding. Rather, his extensive exploration and collection of information on Oromo geography, history, economy, politics, law and religion have helped us to know how the Oromo imagined their common identity and followed common regulations in their culture. D'Abbadie curiously observed and documented the Oromo sensitivity on the issues of their common identity. He recorded that the Oromo, including the kings who were Islam by religion, practiced and protected their common identity and principles that were maintained by *Abbaa Gadaa* and *Abba*a *Muudaa*.

Notwithstanding the opportunity he had, D'Abbadie did not come out with a solid publication on linguistic studies or translations from *Afaan* Oromo. He could have widened his opportunity to undertake linguistic studies of *Afaan* Oromo including scripture translation as he had been among the Guduruu and the five Oromo Gibe states. His residence in these regions was free from any discouragement that prevented him from exercising his linguistic abilities and religious views. In spite of this limitation, the way he characterized the solidarity of the Oromo culture in relation to their neighboring societies and with each other served as a stepping stone for the later Catholic Christian missionaries to the Oromo.

[82]D'Abbadie, "On the Oromo: Great Africa Nation…, pp. 117-146; Mohammed, "The Significance of Antoine D'Abbadie in Oromo Studies" …, pp. 147-161.

Likewise, the Catholic efforts in *Afaan* Oromo studies showed good progress with the foundation of the Apostolic Vicariate of the [Oromo] in France in May 1846. From its foundation, the Apostolic Vicariate facilitated all necessary conditions for Catholic Oromo missionary translation of the scripture into *Afaan* Oromo and to produce Oromo evangelizers. The first nominated head of the Apostolic Vicariate of the Oromo, Cardinal Gugliemo Massaja (also known as *Abbaa* Massaja), made all efforts at his disposal to establish Catholic centers among the Oromo after his arrival in Asandaaboo on 2 November 1852.[83]

A year after the arrival of *Abbaa* Massaja in Asandaaboo a translation of a catechism in *Afaan* Oromo was published in Paris in 1853 under the title *Katakisimoo: Barsiisaa Nama Kirstaana Biyya Oromoo Jedheeti*. In fact, the person who was stated as the author of the translation was *Abbaa* Jacobi (Bishop Jacob), not *Abbaa* Massaja.[84] The title indicates that the book was prepared to teach Catholic Christianity to the people of Oromo country. The book is 35 pages and was written in the Latin alphabet. In the introduction of the book he described in English how the Oromo sounds are pronounced. The author used diacritics on or under letters to represent Oromo sounds which do not exist in Latin. Although he did not realize the existence of geminated and long sounds in *Afaan* Oromo, the way he represented the sounds made it not difficult for native Oromo speakers to read it accurately.

[83]Antoine Alberto, "Cardinal Gugliemo Massaja and His Missionary Method" in *The Proceedings of the 15th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* Band 65 ed. Siegbert Uhlig (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 641-642

[84]Abbaa Jaaqobii, *Katakisimoo: Barsiisaa Nama Kirstaana Biyya oromoo Jedheeti* (Paris: Imperial Printing Press, 1853). Although *Abbaa* Jaaqoobii is stated as the author, it is difficult to ascertain whose translation it is. Unless *Abbaa* Jaaqoobii translated it when he was in Gondar learning the language from the Oromo speakers there, he was not among the Oromo as *Abbaa* Massaja was. Therefore, we can assume that the translation was done by *Abbaa* Massaja and *Abbaa* Jaaqoobii got the recognition of authorship when he undertook the publication process.

The endeavor of the Catholic missionaries in Oromo studies did not stop with the publication of the Oromo *Katakisimoo*. *Abbaa* Massaja continued his efforts and established centers of Oromo studies and evangelization. He established these centers at Asandaaboo and Guduruu in 1852, at Limmuu Saqaa in 1854, at Lagamaraa and Kafaa in 1855 and at Geeraa in 1859. At these centers he learned *Afaan* Oromo in which he taught and converted many Oromo children. Among the converted Oromo boys Rafael and Stephen were recruited as outstanding students and accompanied Massaja to Marseille to the intended Oromo College.[85]

The college was founded in Marseille in April 1866 named St. Michael [Oromo] College. The establishment of the College was a main contributor to the study of *Afaan* Oromo. In the College Massaja educated and baptized Oromo students who were bought from the slave markets. Although they had a plan to teach about twenty-five Oromo students as the first batch, situations prevented them and they were forced to teach only nineteen of whom ten graduated in the first two years. The graduates were supposed to assume missionary work in *Afaan* Oromo and translate the scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo. However, the vulnerability of Oromo students to European cold and the death of some, and the need to establish an indigenous college among the Oromo resulted in the closing of the College on June 10, 1870.[86]

The interest of Catholic missionaries to convert the Oromo by studying their language and culture were never given up. Another college was reopened with the consent of Menilek II in 1873 by the name of Birbirsaa Oromo College around the present day St. George church of the Piazza in Addis Ababa. The surviving four Oromo students of Marseille: Joseph, Francis, Johannes and Paulus were assigned to undertake the work of recruiting and evangelization in

[85] Alberto, "Ethiopian Review of Cultures: The Apostolic…", pp. 90-91; Antonios Alberto, "Cardinal Gugliemo Massaja and…", pp. 641-642.

[86] *Ibid.*

addition to giving sermons in *Afaan* Oromo. Until it was forcefully closed by the order of Emperor Yohannis IV in 1878, the college produced a good number of Oromo students. It also included the surviving students of the Marseille College. Ten of them were raised to Catholic priesthood.[87]

The role of the college in transforming Oromo literature from oral to written was essential. In order to make the college rich in *Afaan* Oromo literature, the Capuchin Catholic missionaries contributed basic literacy works in *Afaan* Oromo for the beginners. In addition to the catechism which they published in *Afaan* Oromo in 1853, they also studied and published an *Afaan* Oromo-Amharic grammar in 1867. The publication was undertaken by Imperial Printing Press in Paris. The inner cover page of the book tells us that the grammar was authored by *Abbaa* Massaja.[88]

The way the Amharic-Oromo grammar was written was a little more complicated than that of the catechism. The grammar seems to have been a comparative study of Italian, Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo. More explanations are in Italian when Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo are represented as subjects to be discussed. The script the writer used to write Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo was not the same. Although he did not state his reason, he used Latin alphabet for *Afaan* Oromo while employing Geez script for Amharic. The way the grammar was prepared leads us to believe that the work was to provide basic knowledge of *Afaan* Oromo for the white missionaries who were to work among the Oromo.

[87] Alberto, "Ethiopian Review of Cultures: The Apostolic Vicariate of [Oromo]…", pp. 114-117.

[88]Gugaliemo Massaja, *Lections Grammaticales Pro Missionariis Qui addiscere Volunt Linguam amaricam Seu Populorum Galla Nuncupatorum* (Paris: Imperial Printing Press,1867).

Nevertheless, both the catechism and the grammar do not have the names of their Oromo assistants without whom they could not have organized such literary works. There was a French hidden agenda to extend her colonial territory from Djibouti in the east to Senegal in the west across the Oromo land,[89] but French Catholic missionaries concerned with evangelization contributed to the development of Oromo language studies.

Linguistic studies of *Afaan* Oromo also benefited from the arrival of Ludwig Krapf[90] in Shawa on 31 May 1839. On his arrival, Krapf lost no time in learning *Afaan* Oromo. He understood the importance of learning the indigenous language in order to get deep insight into the society. Although Sahile Sillasie (king of Shawa, ca. 1813-1847) had imposed restriction on him to travel among the Oromo freely, he reported that he had soon started the study of Oromo language from the Ankober Oromo who were then incorporated to the dominions of the king.[91]

Krapf started the study of Oromo language and culture by recruiting Oromo students into his small congregation and Oromo assistants as his house servants. He prioritized the study of *Afaan* Oromo accepting the overall nineteenth century missionary principle which says understanding the relationship between language, identity and cultural differences would lead to easier evangelization. The assumption was to get deep insight knowledge of the society which could be possible, according to Viera Pawlikova-Vilhanova, by the mastery of the language vernacular to that culture.[92] On the basis of this assumption, Krapf went fully into *Afaan* Oromo studies.

[89]Bahru, *Modern Ethiopian History…,* pp. 81-82.

[90] J. Lewis Krapf was an agent of the London Church Missionary Society(LCMS). He noted that he started contacting the Oromo after the first twelve days of his arrival which was on June 12, 1839. To get to the Oromo he waited for two solid years (1837-1839) being among the Orthodox Christians of Northern Ethiopia.

[91] Krapf*, An Imperfect Outline of…,* pp. i-vii.

[92]Pawlikova-Vilhanova, pp.254-257.

He stated in his "An Imperfect Outline of Oromo Grammar" that he started learning *Afaan* Oromo from his Oromo servant Barkii whom he intentionally recruited into his service and from his students. Barkii was an Oromo from the area of Qum Dingay (literally standing stone) which is in Northern Shawa. In order to learn *Afaan* Oromo expressions used in different age groups, he reported that he enrolled about 30-40 students whose age difference ranged from young to old.[93] To learn the expressions of the Oromo chiefs, he stated that he created intentional communication with Marachee, who was chief of the Abbichuu Oromo, and also a commander in chief of the king, and Beekuu, who was chief of the Ada'a Oromo.[94] For farther development of his command of Oromo language, he reported that he accompanied king Sahile Sillasie in every military expedition. From the expeditions he collected many Oromo words and syntax from the usual communication in *Afaan* Oromo.[95]

After studies of a year he was able to publish elements of an *Afaan* Oromo grammar. The grammar was published by the Church Missionary Society in 1840 just a year after his arrival in Shawa. On its cover page, it bears the names of the author, publisher, the name of the printing house, distributor and published date. The first 12 pages carry introductory remarks by C. W. Isenberg. C. W. Isenberg was a colleague and friend of Krapf. The remarks focused on the magnitude of the Oromo nation, the productivity of Oromoland and the importance of the Oromo evangelical mission.[96]

In the introductory remarks, Isenberg describes the Oromo as administratively independent but historically and linguistically united. He tried to list the clan names of the administratively

[93] Krapf*, An Imperfect Outline of…,* p. xii.

[94]*Ibid*., ix-x; Pankhurst, "The Beginning of Oromo Studies" …, pp. 185 and188. Both Marachee and Beekuu were recently converted Orthodox whom king Sahile Sillasie had made his vassals.

[95]Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary*…, pp. 24-30.

[96] Krapf's *an Imperfect Outline of…*

independent Oromo. The list of the clans is important as it bears the name of the clans who are today considered not as an Oromo. Doobbaa, Azaaloo, Bargamoo, Bizamoo, Alaa (which was corruptly pronounced as Arela), Ankoo and Sooddoo are in the list. He also states the unity of the Oromo through common origin and language. In his presence in Shawa, he also proved that *Afaan* Oromo was common to all the clans. He also focused on the fertility of the Oromo lands which again shows the missionaries economic and political interests in the region. According to his explanation, the Oromo land was fertile and had a healthy climate. The distribution of plants, crops and animal species were amazing. Isenberg appreciated the value of the Krapf's grammar and called upon missionary societies to work intensively on such potential societies for conversion.[97] In general, the remarks seem to be the manifestation of the missionary societies' Oromo interests.

The other sixteen pages of the book are devoted to the grammar studies of Krapf.[98] Krapf began the grammar with the nature of the Oromo language and ended with the presentation of a few Oromo language expressions as examples of the grammar. It has about eleven sections. The sections are nature of the language, reasons for adopting Latin alphabet for the language, articles, pronoun, declension of noun substantives, adverbs, particles, verbs (both positives and negatives), numbers (both cardinals and ordinals), syntax construction and a few Oromo expressions and sentences.

Under the section of letters/ scripts for the language, he discusses the challenges he had encountered in connection with the choice of suitable letters. As he was well versed in both Amharic and Latin script, the choice of the script was his own. Initially, he stated that he tried

[97]*Ibid*., pp. iii &vii.
[98]*Ibid*., pp. 13- 39.

to write in Geez characters, but he changed his mind, believing that the Latin characters could better represent Oromo sounds, and Geez characters posed difficulty for easy writing and memory. Furthermore, he also took into consideration the plan of later usage of Oromo language for the LMS as far as central Africa as Amharic was then restricted only to northern Ethiopia.[99]

His elaboration of the parts of speech is commendable. The work does not seem to be the endeavor of a person who did not know Oromo language only a year before. In the grammar, he tried to list the main principles of an Oromo language grammar. He explained the principles by taking examples from the sentences the Oromo frequently used in their daily activities. To provide more clarity for the work, he also translated the principles and examples into English. However, the work is not without limitation. He did not indicate descriptions on how to read and understand the alphabet used.

Nevertheless, the way he represented the Oromo language sounds makes it readable though not without difficulty. He also seems unaware of the typical Oromo language sound "dh or [ɗ]", a sound between "De" and "A". He also failed to understand the existence of the articles in Oromo language and declared that Oromo language has no articles. Nonetheless, if the work is not judged from the standard of present day, the work is really what laid a foundation stone for the later students.

Krapf also worked on a German-*Afaan* Oromo vocabulary.[100] He collected the vocabulary from his acquaintance with the Oromo. He studied the vocabulary not with the intention of publication but to use it as an entry point into holistic life of the Oromo people. The collection

[99]*Ibid*., p. 2.
[100]Johannes Krapf, *Vocabulary of the [Oromo] Language* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1842).

stemmed from his wish to evangelize the Oromo from within. He made the first advance for this practical acquaintance with the language, which would help him to interact with the Oromo through situated talk in *Afaan* Oromo. [101]

However, the work was published when Krapf sent the collection to the London Church Missionary Society to introduce *Afaan* Oromo to those who might be sent to his assistance. It was on this account that W.C. Isenberg who was then in Europe was requested to publish it for the public. Accepting the request, Isenberg translated the German part into English. Since the collection was not written in a way fit for printing, Isenberg also took the responsibility to undertake all the necessary editions. Isenberg notes in a preface that he added the parts of speech to which each word belonged, which Krapf had not done. For some words, Isenberg gives reference in Amharic although there is not any good reason for this while the meaning he gives in *Afaan* is correct. However, like the grammar, a transliteration of Oromo sounds was not given.[102]

In his introductory notes to the vocabulary, Isenberg emphasized the reason why they focused on the importance of studying the Oromo tongue and investing in an Oromo mission. One of the reasons he stated is the numerical significance of the Oromo which in his imagination extended as far as central Africa. The other is the distinctive species relationship Oromo language has with the Afar and the Somali languages. For both reasons they imagined having the knowledge of *Afaan* Oromo would greatly facilitate learning the others.[103] His elaborate

[101] *Ibid.*, p. I; Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", pp. 187-188.
[102] *Ibid*., pp. i-ii.
[103] Krapf, *An Imperfect Outline of the Oromo Language*…, pp. i-ii.

description of the language further shows that the missionary gave much importance to the conversion of the Oromo.

Nevertheless, Krapf's vocabulary which came out to the public with the endeavor of Isenberg in 1842 was a good beginning for Oromo linguistic studies. Krapf collected about 3000 main words which are arranged in English alphabetical order from A to Z.[104] The vocabulary translation is from English to *Afaan* Oromo. The collections are words mainly used in daily communication of the Oromo. Much focus was given to religious words. The vocabulary hoped to introduce English speakers to Oromo language and vice versa. By the missionary society it was considered as a ground breaking endeavor for the Oromo mission.

Parallel with the writing of the Oromo grammar and vocabulary Krapf also worked on translations of the Bible into *Afaan* Oromo. During his residence in Shawa he was able to produce a series of scripture translations section by section in *Afaan* Oromo. The first section of the scripture he translated was the Gospel of St. John. In January 1840, he reported that he had completed the translation of St. John's Gospel with the assistance of Barkii for whom he read the portions and explained how much his translation conveyed its religious message to the natives.[105] He completed the translation of St. Matthew on October 2, 1840 and St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans by October 11, 1841. Both of them were sent to the London Missionary Society in the sequences of their completion for printing. He also reported that he was working on the translation of Genesis and the Acts of the Apostles. His selection of Genesis was because of its historical interest and the similarity Genesis had with Oromo religion and culture.[106]

[104] See Krapf's *Vocabulary of Oromo Language.*
[105] Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", pp. 187-188.
[106] *Ibid*., pp.189-190.

Generally from 1840 to 1843, the scripture translations and other texts in *Afaan* Oromo the London Missionary Society received from Krapf were *An Imperfect Outline of the Elements of the [Oromo] language, Vocabulary of the [Oromo] Language, Testamen Imbecillum Translationis Evangelii Johannis in Linguam [Oromo]rum, Evangelium Matthi Transalatum in Linguam [Oromo]rum,*[107] St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the Gospel of St. Luke and Genesis.[108]

In fact, the translation was not without great difficulty. Some of the difficulties were issues of language, style and concepts. Since the cultures of the language in which the Bible was written were different from that of *Afaan* Oromo both in word relations and cultural concepts, Krapf had to make adjustments without distorting the message of the Bible and altering the meaning in Oromo words. In relation to the style, the *Afaan* Oromo sentences were constructed in the syntax style of the Bible. With regard to word meanings, Krapf searched words that fitted the meaning of the words in the Bible and if he could not find them, he blended Oromo words without missing etymological meaning. However, doing these things were the challenges. In reality, it was a difficult task not only for a person who did not know *Afaan* Oromo one or two years before the publications but for native speakers themselves. Krapf also stated such challenge in his letter he enclosed to the London Church Missionary Society stating that the Epistle to the Romans was the most difficult portion of the Bible to translate into *Afaan* Oromo as *Afaan* Oromo had no such concepts.[109]

The other problem Krapf encountered during scripture translation into *Afaan* Oromo and other text writing was the issues of a script. As writing in *Afaan* Oromo was not common at the time

[107] Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary…,* pp.69-71.
[108] Isenberg and J. Krapf, p. ix.
[109] Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary…,* pp.69-71.

he began studying as a big question the script that would best represent *Afaan* Oromo sounds. Moreover, Krapf was forced by the Ethiopian kings and priests from whom he got the permission to study *Afaan* Oromo to use Ethiopic/Geez script. Thus Krapf was challenged between loyalty to linguistic science and the political interests of his hosts. He clearly stated the challenges:

> *I had hitherto used the Amharic characters; but observing that the Oromo language is no Semitic one, that writing in Amharic has many inconveniences, and that perhaps the Word of God may go forth from the Oromo to the whole of Abyssinia, I thought it better to use the Latin characters, employing for the words not found in the Oromo language the characters of the Abyssinian languages, on account of the national connexion of both countries. I know that in using foreign characters I shall be opposed by the Abyssinian priests, who wish nothing else but the Ethiopic to be circulated*.[110]

Ignoring the challenges of the Orthodox priests, Krapf continued his study of *Afaan* Oromo using Latin script. However, his decision to work in Latin characters forced him to quit his work among the Oromo in 1842. Yet, he did not end his Oromo missionary work at this point and started another unsuccessful missionary engagement on the East African coasts from Zanzibar to Mombasa. Working for 11 years (1844-1855) in the coastal area of what is now, Kenya, where he got information that the Oromo extended deep into the interior, he attempted to reach them without getting himself among the Oromo. After his attempt to visit Ethiopia by the invitation of Bishop Samuel Gobat in 1854 he left for Kornthal to live the rest of his life there.[111]

In his inquiry about the Oromo Krapf stated that not to violate his relations with the Oromo, he carefully managed all things that might have disappointed the Oromo and spoiled his relation with them. He did not want to preach to the Oromo directly for the fear that he might

[110] Isenberg and Krapf, p.175.
[111] Krapf, *Travels, Research and Missionary*…, pp. 107-217.

spoil Oromo missionary relations at their earliest stage. Rather he preferred to prepare the ground for the later endeavors. He quietly observed the multiplicity of their clans, military organization, slave trading, family life and traditional beliefs. He proved that all the Oromo easily understood each other in spite of the dialects they had developed in their regions. In relation to the religion he proved that the Oromo believed in one Supreme Being called *Waaqaa*. He was also able to discover quite a different identity of the Oromo from what he heard from the Abyssinians and Gobat. The more he had understood the Oromo, the more he was attracted to them.[112]

He also wrote his observations about Oromo identity. In his traveler's journal, he argued against the bad image Europeans had developed from the collected hearsay of the travelers.[113] He described the common principles the Oromo had in relation to their environment, religion, burial ceremony, cattle rearing, blessing of rivers and uniformity of their language. He imagined the Oromo as divided into many clans but united by language, origin, way of organization and customs. For this he developed a country name 'Oromania'.[114]

Parallel with Krapf, Charles T. Beke, an agent of the London Church Missionary Society, entered into Oromoland and undertook the study of the natural environment, language and culture. He travelled through Guduruu in Wallagga to the five Gibe States. During his travels in the years 1841, 1842 and 1843, Beke collected Oromo vocabularies with the vocabulary of other languages. His collection includes vocabularies of Amharic, Agawo, Gafat, Gonga, Kafa, Walayta Gumuz, Tigray and Harari. His sound representation in Latin characters for all the languages is the same except the Oromo sound 'dh' which he described as the most

[112] *Ibid*., pp, 72-107.
[113]de Almeida, pp. 56-61; Ludolphus, pp. 81-88; Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia…*, pp. 44-52 & 72-73.
[114]Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary…,* pp. 72-107.

difficult sound to produce. The Oromo vocabulary he collected was from the Maccaa dialect although he had information on the Oromo to the south and to the east.[115]

His Oromo language collections were about four hundred and fifty-six words, for which he wrote their translation in English, Amharic, Agawo, Gonga, Tigray and Harari. While recoding the collection, he attempted to invent letters like dh, ny, sh and ch for the Oromo sounds. Nonetheless, his Latin orthography was not able to represent precisely the native sounds of the Oromo. The collection occupied the last eleven pages of his article. [116]

3.3. The Studies of *Afaan* Oromo Abroad

As far as the sources at our disposal indicate, the beginning of Oromo studies in Europe can be traced to the works of Edme-Francois Jomard who was a French geographer[117] and Karl Tutschek who was a German philologist.[118] Both did not come to Oromoland but studied the Oromo from redeemed Oromo slaves then present in Europe.

Jomard learnt *Afaan* Oromo from his young Oromo informants Waaree[119] and Gaba'oo[120] while he was collecting geographical information on their birthplaces. Jomard valued them not only as informants but also as his strong assistants in providing and interpreting cultural,

[115] Charles Beke, "On the Language and Dialects …", pp. 89-107.
[116] *Ibid.*
[117] Pankhurst, "The beginning of Oromo Studies…", pp.173-2-174.
[118] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the [Oromo] Language….*
[119] Waaree was enslaved from Limmuu by the slave dealers and was bought by an English traveler in Cairo. The traveler liberated Waaree and handed him over to Jomard for education in the 1830s. The birth place of Waaree is misrepresent by Pankhurst as the Limmuu of the Gibee states. According to the information of Waaree recorded in Pankhurst, it was the Limmuu of Northern Wallaggaa. The place name Dangabi and the river name Abbayyaa mispronounced as Habaya are exactly the boundaries of the Wallaggaa Limmuu not that of the Gibee States.
[120] Gab'oo was taken to France by Antonione d'Abbadie from the Limmuu of the Gibe state. According to Pankhurst, Jomard had been with several Oromos who had been recommended to him before he began patronising Waaree and Gaba'oo. However, Pankhurst does not indicate the names of these Oromo, and does not explain how they were assisting Jomard's studies. For details see Pankhurst, "The Beginning of Oromo Studies…", pp. 172-173.

geographical, economic and linguistic data of the Oromo. Jomard admired them for the way they memorized, described and related their data which helped Jomard to have good understanding of the Oromo people and their geography. From a linguistic analysis of Oromo language and how the Oromo viewed their environment and other peoples, Jomard was able to identify the Oromo as gregarious and culturally enriched. [121]

Jomard also tried to study *Afaan* Oromo from Waaree and Gaba'oo. From these two informants and assistants though being far from the Oromo and in the middle of France, he proceeded successfully in the study of the condition and language of the Oromo. He collected about 1,000 Oromo words, three Oromo love songs, three war chants, and three Oromo oral prayers of men, women and girls. The collection was transcribed in Latin script and published with its translation in French in the *Bulletin de la Société de Geographie* by the title "Notice sur les [Oromo] de Limmou" in 1839.[122]

From the confidence he had developed in the memories of Waaree and Gaba'oo, Jomard planned to increase the vocabulary in content and volume although there is not any report on the accomplishment of the plan. Here our concern is the extent to which Jomard's study contributed to the study of Oromo literature. Richard Pankhurst witnessed from his studies of European sources that Jomard's article "Notice sur les [Oromo] de Limmou" was widely circulated and influenced the scholarship of many Europeans. According to Pankhurst, it was on account of Jomard's Oromo language article that some notable European scholars aspired to study *Afaan* Oromo and subsequently bought Oromo slaves for the purpose.[123] His work

[121] *Ibid*.
[122]*Ibid*., p. 173.
[123]*Ibid.*, pp. 174-204.

began to be looked for and used as the first reference in the study of *Afaan* Oromo. One of the earliest beneficiaries of these works was a Germen philologist, Karl Tutschek.

Like Jomard, Karl Tutschek studied *Afaan* Oromo outside Africa in Germany. In fact, Karl Tutschek's study of Oromo language started when Crown Prince Maximilian of Bavaria entrusted to him the four slaves he had redeemed from a slave market in the Middle East. The four ex-slaves belonged to the languages of Darfur, Dinqa, Oromo and Somali.[124] Fortune was on the side of *Afaan* Oromo in that one of the redeemed slaves was an Oromo.

The intended study was not started just at the moment of Tutschek's acquaintance with the boys. There was an almost two-month silence because of the problem of two-way communication between Tutschek and the former slaves. According to Lawrence Tutschek, brother of Karl Tutschek, the silence was because of the language barrier and the boys also mistrusted all whites.[125] The silences were broken when the Oromo, Akkafedhee Daallee,[126] "one of the redeemed slaves fell into a trifling illness. Tutschek's kind attention to Akkafedhee changed the obstinate suspicion into heartfelt affection."[127]

It was the sickness of Akkafedhee that brought *Afaan* Oromo to the attention of Tutschek rather than the languages of the rest of the three redeemed slaves. Understanding Tutschek's heartfelt nursing, which was quite different from his previous owner as a slave, Akkafedhee broke the silences and began full conversation. Tutschek analyzed what he heard from Akkafedhee in combination with the thorough investigation he had made of travelers' accounts of Ethiopia

[124] Tutschek, *Dictionary the [Oromo]…,* p. ix.
[125]Tutschek, *Dictionary of the [Oromo]*…, p. ix.
[126]Akkafedhee Daallee was an Oromo who was sold to slavery from Bachoo area which is located to the west of Addis Ababa and north east of Amboo town. Akkafedhee Daallee was a native speaker of Oromo language. He died in Germany in May 1841.
[127] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the[Oromo]…*, pp. ix-xi.

and the Sudan. From the inquiry, he learned, to use in his words, the 'simplicity, euphony and grammatical formation' of *Afaan* Oromo. Thus the study of *Afaan* Oromo attracted his interest.[128] It was at this point that chance made *Afaan* Oromo the subject of Tutschek's research. In January 1839, Tutschek proceeded with the study of *Afaan* Oromo with his full endeavor.

As compared to Jomard, Tutschek undertook detailed and extensive studies of *Afaan* Oromo. From the study, he published a full-fledged Oromo vocabulary and grammar. The approach he had used in the study of *Afaan* Oromo seems different from that hitherto employed by some travelers such as Job Ludolphus, James Bruce, Henry Salt, Jomard and others.[129] Rather than making mere collections of words as had been hitherto done, Tutschek listened to and participated with Akkafedhee in conversation, singing and praying in *Afaan* Oromo. From the participation, he developed an understanding of *Afaan* Oromo words and grammar according to the contexts. He then cross-checked the concepts and the words from Akkafedhee with his reading about Oromo from the treatise of Jomard and the reports of earlier travelers. He studied hard as he considered careful study as the necessary prerequisite to get easy access to Oromo culture and its land.

Within a year and half Tutschek began to manage speaking in *Afaan* Oromo in his two way conversions with Akkafedhee. The conversion with tolerable fluency enabled him to get the linguistic concept of *Afaan* Oromo and its usages as existing over a wider territorial area. In their conversion Akkafedhee informed Tutschek that in almost all the Oromo clans he had known, *Afaan* Oromo was a common language. Akkafedhee nourished Tutschek with

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] Ludolphus, p. 80; Bruce, Vol. 3, p. 425; Salt, p. xvii, for Jomard see Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", pp.172-1753.

philological, geographical and ethnographical data of the Oromo. In his study Tutschek was more encouraged when the linguistic and geographical matters he heard from Akkafedhee identically coincided with Jomard's treatise of *Notice sur les [Oromos] de Limou*.[130]

Tutschek's studies of *Afaan* Oromo was more improved when Tutschek got acquaintance with Kashuu Aaga, another liberated Oromo. Kashuu was in Munich (Germany) with his master Mr. Thomas Pell Platt, a British orientalist and the Librarian of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Cairo, when chance brought him into contact with Karl Tutschek.[131] In Munich, Tutschek arranged with Platt so that Kashuu Aagaa could stay with Akkafedhee for the months of October and November of 1840. The acquaintance of Akkafedhee with Kashuu led to full conversation in *Afaan* Oromo which was later developed into exchanges of written correspondences *in Afaan* Oromo. The exchange of the correspondence resulted in the production of fourteen letters in *Afaan* Oromo. The first letter was written by Kashuu to Akkafedhee on October 19, 1840[132] which was soon responded by Akkafedhee on October 21, 1840.[133]

The correspondence included the excited longing they had for their mother and father, histories, fables, songs, prayers, stories, poems, hunting adventurers of their home countries, how they were enslaved and the hardships they had undergone on their routes to slavery.[134] Thus, the information in the letters became a substantial data for Tutschek's in-depth study of

[130] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the[Oromo]…*, pp. xi-xii

[131] *Ibid*., p. xiii. Many writers including Pankhurst have confused his name as Otishu. The confusion might have arisen from not reading the sound remark Tutschek stated in his dictionary p. xxv which indicates the reading "tsh" for the sound "sh" and Tutschek's hearing "go" sound as "o". Therefore, I have understood the name as Kashuu Aagaa, not Otishuu Aagaa. Aagaa was kidnapped from West Wallaggaa which can be estimated six hundred kilometers from Addis Ababa to the west.

[132] See appendix iv.

[133]See appendix v.

[134] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the [Oromo]*…, p. xiii; Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", p. 182.

the Oromo language and culture. The presence of Kashuu in Munich with Tutschek was important not only for the exchanges of letters but also because it enriched the collection of Tutschek with many Oromo words, songs and prayers.

Kashuu's knowledge of Oromo literature was not only from his memory of his home country. It is also what he learnt from Birillee who was from Gumaay of the five Gibe states.[135] In Munich, Birillee taught Kashuu 208 Oromo songs although some of them were more or less similar with what Kashuu knew. Most of these songs were transcribed into Tutschek's Oromo language study and were later discovered by Philipp Paulitscke.[136] Twenty-three of the songs were *weedduu jaalalaa* (love songs), nineteen of them were *faaruu* (praise songs), twenty-one of them were *gelloo* (songs for dances), forty-four of them were *geerarsaa* (boasting songs), forty-six of them were *weedduu tikee* (shepherd songs), thirty-four of them were *weedduu masqalaa* (songs for the coming of autumn), sixty-two of them were *makmaaksaa* (proverbs, four *weedduu dalagaa* (songs asking for women's fertility) and one *abaarsaa* (curse). The songs were only transcribed and not interpreted into the meanings of the messages.[137]

The songs were kept in archives Claud Sumner published them into his book until hundred year later in 1997 by annotating and interpreting them by the help of Addis Ababa University Oromo scholars.[138] Nonetheless, Tutschek states that the songs highly assisted his study of

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[135] Pankhurst, Birillee was the name given by her family but the name she was known by when she was bought was Mahbuba (beloved). She had been captured into slavery from Gumaay, one of the five Gibe states. She was brought to Germany by a German prince Herman von Puckler-Muskau who bought her in 1837 while traveling in the East and made her his mistress. However, Mekuria argues that the love between Puckler-Muskau and Birillee was filial rather than romantic. After a while she died in Germany on October 27, 1840. See Mekuria Bulcha, *The Making of Oromo Diaspora: Historical Sociology of Forced Migration* (Minneapolis: Kirk House Publisher, 2002), p.124.

[136] Philipp Paulitscke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Africas: Die Geistige Cultur Der Danankil, Galla und Somali* (Berlin: Johansen Reprint Corporation, 1896), pp. 255-264.

[137] *Ibid.*

[138] Claude Sumner, *Oromo Wisdom Literature and Analysis, II* (Addis Ababa: Gudina Tumsa Foundation, 1997), pp.3-4.

Oromo language. The similarity of dialects spoken by the three Oromo from different geographical areas which were far apart and the distribution of the Oromo over vast areas further augmented the interest of Tutschek's Oromo study.[139]

The linguistic, geographic and ethnographic data of the three ex-Oromo slaves were excitingly enriched by the arrival of the fourth ransomed Oromo slave named Amaan Goondaa in 1840. Amaan was from Gommaa, the neighboring state to Birillee's birth place. Tutschek spent a considerable time with Amaan and enjoyed better education about Oromo with Amaan than with the others. According to Lawrence Tutschek, because of his and his family's educational background Amaan elaborately told Tutschek about the Oromo population, the homogeneity of Oromo language among the Oromo he knew, the fertility of the country.[140] Nonetheless, both Tutschek and Lawrence did not know in what language and in what type of script Amaan and his family were educated.

From the four ransomed Oromo, Tutschek was able to know the identity of the Oromo with all circumstances of their topography. As Akkafedhee was from west Shawa, Kashuu was from west Wallaggaa and Birillee and Amaan were from the Five Gibe states, this also enabled Tutschek to prove the dialectic and cultural similarities of the Oromo society. From the information of his four informants, Karl Tutschek inferred that the Oromo had multiple clans but maintained common ethnicity and a common culture and language of their own. He was surprised by their cultural similarities when he faced difficulty in drawing cultural margins of the individual identities of the four redeemed Oromo.[141]

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[139] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the[Oromo]…*, pp. xi-xii.

[140] *Ibid.* Amaan Goonda was the son of *Abbaa Funyoo* (a local functionary). He was named Usuman under his Arab master. He was brought to Germany by another German, Duke Paul Wilhelm of Wurttemberg.

[141] *Ibid.*

Tutschek did not stop his studies only with learning the Oromo language and the home situation of the Oromo. He continued to produce works for publication. While learning the language, he had also collected data on *Afaan* Oromo words, grammar, diction, prayers, songs, geography and ethnography. In so doing, he was able to present in *Afaan* Oromo the sketch of *Afaan* Oromo elementary grammar, a dictionary with diction and prayers and songs with tolerable fluency at a philological symposium that was held in Munich on January 2, 1841. The attenders enthusiastically welcomed his presentation and termed the works as a real scholarly endeavor. The symposium generously backed up Tutschek's Oromo study.[142]

In 1841, however, Tutschek's study of Oromo language suffered two major setbacks. The first one was the death of Akkafedhee on May 17, 1841. Akkafedhee was the main informant of Tutschek with whom he met to communicate in *Afaan* Oromo. The other one was his offending his patron, Duke Louis Maximillian of Bavaria. Duke Maximilian was furious on being notified of Tutschek's negligence towards the other three redeemed slaves entrusted to him and ordered him to abandon the work and stopped all the financial aid he had been providing for the tutorials. He even prevented Tutschek from meeting the ex-slaves again.[143]

Nevertheless, what was promising was that Tutschek had not given up his study of the Oromo language. Although the study lagged behind because of the quarrel with his patron, Tutschek courage persist wish to enrich and make a comprehensive Dictionary and grammar of Oromo language never gave him rest. He actively continued searching for financial and material aid. His active and uninterrupted request for aid enabled him to win the project funds from the African Civilization Society. The Vice President of the African Civilization Society, Sir

[142] Pankhurst, "The Beginning of Oromo Studies…", p. 184.
[143] *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

Thomas Dyke Acland, promised to give him both material and financial aid for the studies.[144] However, again the study encountered a serious setback because of the early death of Tutschek at the age of twenty- eight on 6 September 1843. Tutschek had gone forever before seeing his endeavors in publication.[145]

Although the death of Tutschek was a serious drawback to the development of written Oromo literature, his work was taken over by his brother, Lawrence Tutschek. His main objective was to bring to light the work of his brother through publication. Lawrence Tutschek learned Oromo language from the material abandoned by his brother as he was familiar with Tutschek's materials and methods of work.[146] With the fund already granted for the work by Thomas Dyke Acland, Lawrence Tutschek successfully published both a dictionary[147] and a grammar[148] of Oromo language in 1844 and 1845 respectively.

The Oromo dictionary Lawrence published in 1844 was about 411 pages long and had two parts. The first part had 205 pages and was devoted to the translation of *Afaan* Oromo words into English and German. The second part had 129 pages and was devoted to the translation of English words into *Afaan* Oromo. Editorial notes of the dictionary were made on fifty-three pages as introduction by Lawrence Tutschek. Twenty-five of the editorial note pages were in English and the other twenty-eight of the pages were in German. The notes explained at length the challenges Charles Tutschek had faced and the method he followed to overcome the challenges. Although a great portion of the notes were devoted to Oromo ethnography, there

[144] *Ibid.*, p. xviii.
[145] *Ibid.*, pp. xxii-xix.
[146] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the [Oromo] …, p. viii.*
[147] Tutschek, Dictionary *of the [Oromo] Language …*
[148] Karl Tutschek, (Karl Lawrence Tutschek Ed.), A *Grammar of the [Oromo] Language* (Munich: Bibliotheca Bodlelana ,1845).

was also information regarding Oromo history and geographical data on Oromo country. The grammatical formation of Oromo language and the way Karl Tutschek adopted Latin letters to Oromo sounds are linguistically explained. The number of letters he adopted for Oromo sounds from the Latin alphabet with a few adjustments using diacriticals and doubling the letters were thirty.

In the first part of the dictionary Karl Tutschek attempted to include about two thousand Oromo words. Examples of sentences were constructed with their translations into English and German. The example of sentences was to contextualize the meaning of the words. He also tried to indicate the category of speech to which the words belonged. About two thousand Oromo words were included. The attempt he made to explain expressions connected with the words are remarkable. The second part of the dictionary had 129 pages. It comprised more than two thousand five hundred English-Oromo entries. It translated from English into *Afaan* Oromo but unlike the first part, it had no examples in sentences.[149]

The contributions of Karl Tutschek made the Dictionary of *Afaan* Oromo appear twenty years later than Noah Webster's American Dictionary and forty years before the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.[150] Nonetheless, in both formats, the influence of their German idioms, inability to capture the sounds produced by their Oromo children informants and the Oromo children's inability from immaturity[151] to correct mispronunciation of Oromo sounds made the dictionary not easy to read.

[149] Tutschek, *Dictionary of the [Oromo]*…

[150] Zelalem Abera, "Transition from Oral to Written Oromo Poetry" in *the Journal of Oromo studies, v: 10, No. 1&2* (Tennessee: Middle Tennessee University, 2003), p.120.

[151] It is reasonable to believe that the children were under age as most enslaved children were preferred with age of less than fifteen. See Tekalign , "Slavery and the Slave Trade…", p. 129..

In fact, the way the letters represented Oromo language sounds in the dictionary is not easy to comprehend. Even a native speaker could only understand the representation with great difficulty. In fact, the editor also admitted the limitation at full length in the introduction. He admitted that the dictionary was not completed and elaborated because of the early death of Karl Tutschek and the limitation of their informants to a few Oromo children in the diaspora. He also acknowledged his own weakness while working on the dictionary for publication.

A year later, 1845, Lorenz Tutschek was able to publish a 111 pages long Oromo language grammar and the translation of three Oromo prayers and two letters between Akkafedhee and Kashuu in one book in 1845.[152] The grammar was published without improvement as it was left by the deceased author. Tutschek states that examples of the discussions and the letters and prayers incorporated into the grammar were translated into English by Morgan J. Smead, who was an American student at the time working in Europe for a Ph.D. in language.[153] Apart from the introductory parts, the book is divided into three chapters based on the grammatical formation of the Oromo language. The introductory part is not a chapter as it might have been intended only to give some details of general observations and to the remarks on the alphabet in which the grammar was written.

The first chapter of the grammar was about verbs of *Afaan* Oromo. Under this chapter, Tutschek discussed the formation of verbs, mode of verbs, tenses, numbers, genders, pronouns, and conjunctions. The second chapter was about noun formation in *Afaan* Oromo. Under this chapter, what he discussed in detail was gerund and number formations, adjectives and pronouns. The elaboration was made in detail through the discussion in the subsections. The

[152] The Prayers and Letter are transcribed on the last pages of the grammar. See Tutschek, *The Grammar of [Oromo] Language*. pp, 84-88.

[153] Tutschek, *A Grammar…*, p. vi.

last chapter was about particles. Pages 84-91 of the grammar covered prayers and letters in *Afaan* Oromo. Both the prayers and letters were written parallel with their English translations.

The collection of prayers was before and after a war. These were morning and evening prayers. The prayers before and after war were sixteen. The morning and evening prayers, one each, are still common among the Oromo practicing their culture.[154] The prayers show that though not written, *Afaan* Oromo had well-articulated and organized forms of oral literature. It is also an incredible documentation for those who study Oromo religion from Oromo oral literature.

The letters were two and both of them were lengthy. The first one was written by Kashuu Aagaa to Akkafedhee. The second one was from Akkafedhee to Kashuu. In both letters, with a short introduction of greetings, they narrated how they had departed from their fathers and mothers and the hardship they had been forced to bear. Although they felt happy being in Europe unlike their colleagues whose destination they did not know, they frequently referred to the longing they had for their family and home country.[155]

Nonetheless, the Latin script in which the prayers and letters were written were not fully informative. Unless the reader had the knowledge of how the words should be pronounced, it was difficult to get the exact sounds from the scripts as the representation was not accurately done. Apparently, the misrepresentation might not be from Akkafedhee and Kashuu who dictated the narrations, but the transcriber, Karl Tutschek.

Nevertheless, the work of the two German brothers in Oromo language was a great contribution in the history of Oromo literature. The efforts they made to bring Oromo language into written script has had lasting values. The project brought to light the extraordinary scope

[154] For the prayers, See Karl Tutschek, *A Grammar…*, pp. 84-88.
[155] For the letters see, Tutschek, *A Grammar…,* pp. 88-91.

and richness of Oromo literature not only as a body of partly written literature but also as a field of study. They introduced the language to the scientific world of the Europeans. These works also attracted the interests of the linguists, one of whom was Francis W. Newman who published his works on Notes on the [Oromo] verb and pronoun in the Proceedings of the Philological Society in 1847. Newman's note is a review of Karl Tutschek's Oromo grammar in four pages. In his analysis, he tried to prove the similarity of Oromo grammar with that of the Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Amharic.[156] His finding showed negligible similarities, which is not surprising, for there are no similarities between these very different languages.

Generally, Tutschek's works have continued to be the center of scholarly interest to our day. In combination with travelers' reports, they were also major work to reveal the Oromo language and identity to Europeans. More than any others, it brought the Oromo to the attention of missionary evangelizers. It was from such preliminary works that in their emancipation program the Europeans began to look for enslaved Oromo children to educate and then send them back as missionary evangelizers to their home country.

3.4. Indigenousness Within the Missionary Work: A Path to Vernacularize the Scriptures

The main achievement of modern Oromo missionaries was education of the Oromo who worked intensively to render the Scriptures in the vernacular. The important terminologies in Oromo indigenous religion that the Oromo translators used from an inner Oromo perspective gave the scriptures a sense of indigenousness. It was a great success that the Oromo considered the scriptures as their own when they heard their own words of indigenous religion in the reading of the scriptures. Although problems were observed in relation to representation of

[156] Francis W. Newman, "Notes on the [Oromo] Verb and Pronoun" in *the Proceedings of Philological Society, v. 3, No. 63* (November 26, 1847), pp. 25-28.

Oromo sounds by the then scripts, the way the translators selected the words keeping their original nature attracted the Oromo more than the previous translations by foreigners.[157]

It was the path that was pioneered by Ganamee Yaa'ii,[158] Ruufoo[159] and *Alaqa* Zanab Wolde Maskal.[160] Ganamee, Ruufoo and *Alaqa* Zanab were not the first to work on the translation of the scriptures as there were many Oromos and foreigners before them. What made their works different from the previous ones was the way they tried to see the scriptures through indigenous Oromo religion and culture. This was evident when Ganamee yearned to preach the Bible in her language to her people[161] Ruufoo[162] resisted dropping his family's cultural identity and *Alaqa* Zanab refused to use Latin instead of Ethiopic script.[163]

The earliest Oromo literacy that enabled the Oromo to produce written literature of their own vernacular by themselves was linked to the establishment of the modern Oromo mission, which was mainly established as a response to the last will of Ganamee Yaa'ii. Combined with the missionary principle of evangelizing the Africans by the Africans themselves, the last desire

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[157] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers ...,* p. 171: Daniel Ayana, "The Concept of Waqa and the Missionaries: A Preliminary Study in the Grafting of Christianity on a Traditional Belief in Wollega" in *The Proceedings of the Second Annual Seminar of the department of History, Vol.1* (Addis Ababa, 1984), p. 116.

[158] Smidt, "The Role of the Former Slave Pauline Fathme…, p. 83. Unlike the other redeemed Oromo slaves, Ganamee Yaa'ii was known by her full name as Ganamee Yaa'ii Shaaseedaa Odaa. She was kidnapped into slavery from Gumaay in 1837/8 and sold several times until she becomes a housemaid under the Egyptian ruler of Mohammed Ali from where she was given as a gift to John Baron Muller Wurttemberg who brought her to Germany in 1849 and entrusted Ganamee to the missionary school of Kornthal. She was baptized on 12 July 1852 and renamed Pauline Fathme. For the detail see Smidt, pp. 77-98.

[159] Rufoo was enslaved from Gumaay when he was around 11 or 12 years old. He escaped from slave dealers and stayed in Gojjam for two years and learnt Amharic there until he was sold again after which he was redeemed and taken to Germany in 1866. Rufoo was baptized on 23 May 1869 and took the Christian name Christian Rufoo. For the detail see Wolbert Smidt, "The Unknown First Oromo Bible Translator Christian Rufo: Some Insights from Private Missionary Archive" in Baye Yimam et al (Ed). *In Ethiopian Studies at the End of the Second Millennium. The Proceedings of 14th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies,* November, 6-11, 2000, V.I (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2002), pp.634-648.

[160] *Alaqa* Zanab was Chronicler and scribe of Emperor Tewodros II, and he was converted to Protestantism in 1859 while teaching the missionaries Amharic at Gafat missionaries school. According to Pankhurst he was the missionaries' best converted Oromo. Richard Pankhurst," The beginning of…, pp, 200-201.

[161] Smidt, "The Role of the former Slave Pauline Fathme…", pp.87-96.

[162] Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", p. 37.

[163] Smidt, "The unknown First Bible Translator…", pp.634-648.

she expressed with tears about the Oromo mission on her deathbed became the main pushing factor for the foundation of the schools[164] that educated the later producers of written Oromo literature and educators of other Oromo in the homeland.

Ganamee became one of the main pioneer initiators of schooling in the Oromo mission by the deep affection she had won and she became a woman of influence when she demonstrated Christian devotion and her longing for the Oromo mission. Her talented devotion to Christian education and her wish for the conversion of the Oromo, as well as her clarity in explaining issues in Oromo culture, religion and geography were clearly known not only among her fellow missionaries, including the Director of her school, Ledderhose, but also among Protestant Germans. Unlike the previous Oromo students in Europe, who were employed as informants and assistant translators of scriptures into Oromo language, Ganamee was trained directly to serve the missionary purposes among the Oromo. However, her death on 11 September 1855 prohibited her from taking part in the Oromo mission herself.[165]

Her untimely death and her last word about the Oromo mission that she left on her deathbed made Ledderhose write her biography entitled *[Oromo] Buchlein*. Her talented Christian devotion, her knowledge of Oromo culture, religion, language, geography and vast territory which were mainly accessed through Ganamee in the *Buchlein* circulated throughout missionary Europe. Because of the heartbreaking information it carried, the *Buchlein* was reprinted several times and translated into many languages. According to Smidt, the sale of the *Buchlein* booklet and other contributions related to her life history generated about 500 Swiss francs, 2500 French francs and the promise of Krapf's yearly contribution of 300 gold florins

[164] Smidt, "The Role of the Former Slave Pauline Fathme …", pp. 87-96.
[165] *Ibid*., pp.83-87.

on the establishment of an Oromo Mission.[166] It was this push factor of the *Buchlein* that attracted the attention of European missionaries for the establishment of a missionary school among the Oromo.

Evangelization of the Oromo became an important issue especially among the German and Swiss missionaries. On this basis, St. Chrischona Mission Station added an Oromo mission pilgrimage department to its section in 1856.[167] It was on this condition that the agents of the pilgrim's mission bought Ruufoo into the purpose of Bible translation into Oromoland and established a missionary school that converted *Alaqa* Zanab at Gafat within Tewodros's manufacturing plant in 1860. Until Tewodros imprisoned the missionaries in 1864 and imprisoned them in 1867 because of disagreement on the manufacture of firearms, the school trained significant numbers of Oromo students.[168]

*Alaqa Z*anab's contribution to the development of written *Afaan* Oromo began in 1860, when he completed a handwritten manuscript of an *Afaan* Oromo dictionary which was a translation from Geez to Amharic and then to *Afaan* Oromo. The dictionary was handwritten and published on *beranna* (parchment). It was organized in alphabetical order of Geez word arrangement. *Alaqa* Zanab might have prepared the dictionary to help Ethiopian Orthodox clergy to preach in *Afaan* Oromo within the missionaries' intended Ethiopian Orthodox Church reforms.[169]

[166] *Ibid.*, p.90.
[167]*Ibid., p.* 85, note no. 30.
[168]Arén, pp. 93-96.
[169]Zanab Wolde Maskal, "Geez, Amharic, *Afaan* Oromo and Agawo Dictionary" (1872). See also Appendix vi. At the beginning, the missionaries intended to reform the Ethiopian Orthodox and to use their own rites and to use them to convert the unconverted.

However, indigenous scripture translation into *Afaan* Oromo began to be realized when the works of *Alaqa* Zanab and Ruufoo came together under the auspices of Krapf in the summer of 1868. Before this year, it was Ruufoo who intensively worked on the translation under the supervision of Krapf. Although Krapf himself was acquainted with some knowledge of *Afaan* Oromo, he requested the assistance a competent Oromo with an understanding that Oromo missionary work could not be possible without the engagement of native people. It was on this ground that Ruufoo, a bilingual Oromo in *Afaan* Oromo and Amharic, was redeemed and made Oromo Bible translator in August 1866.[170]

The assignment of Ruufoo on the translation without detailed knowledge of Christian education made him to see Biblical concepts from the perspectives of his Oromo indigenous religion. Ruufoo was not given detailed education on Christian doctrine. He was assigned to the translation under Krapf simply on the basis of the rudimentary religious education he had acquired while he had served as a shepherd in Gojjam before coming to Germany after being liberated. The urgency the missionary had for indigenizing Oromo missionary work did not allow Ruufoo a time to learn detailed knowledge of Christian doctrine. It was supposed that the baptism and conversion of Ruufoo would be made in time while working on the project. Ruufoo´s baptism was allowed at St. Chrischona on May 23, 1869 after he had completed some work of the Bible translation into *Afaan* Oromo.[171]

The view that he had for his family's indigenous culture frequently brought him to clashes with Krapf who wanted perfect Oromo words that could represent biblical concept but not the concept of Oromo indigenous religion. Based on the letter Krapf wrote to St. Chrischona,

[170]Smidt, "The Unknown First Oromo…", pp. 634-648 and footnote no 9; Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", p. 199.

[171] *Ibid.*

Wolbert Smidt states that Krapf continuously blamed Ruufoo for not following the ethics of Christianity, his unbroken old personality and acting in the 'pagan' manner of his nation. The disparity of the ideas made Krapf frequently depict Ruufoo as incapable, "unlearned", "stubborn", "childish" and one who was absorbed in his nation's "primeval" culture.[172] Here the way Krapf characterized the Oromo culture is a quite reflection of the true nature of missionaries about non-biblical culture and his decent approach when he had been among the Oromo was perhaps deceptive.

Mentioning Krapf's letter, Smidt also added that Ruufoo should not be allowed to work on Bible translation before indoctrination into Christianity as his knowledge of *Afaan* Oromo had to be supplemented by Christian knowledge to render accurately the complex concept of the Bible. Smidt said that Ruufoo's knowledge of Oromo was too rudimentary for accurate translation of Bible concepts but really it was the problem of the concepts themselves. As Smidt stated in his notes no. 29, the other contemporaries (Missionaries who had close relationship with Ruufoo) of Krapf who worked with Ruufoo did not agree with on this issue.[173] Apparently, this gives us a clue that the quarrel of Ruufoo and Krapf was not on the ability of Ruufoo to manage meanings in Oromo words but on the etymological meaning of the words. Krapf wanted Ruufoo to bring Oromo words that full Biblical contexts whereas for Ruufoo it was difficulty because there were no paralleled Oromo concepts that represent some mainline Christian doctrine. Because as repeatedly stated, words are mainly formulated to express the concepts of its speech community.

[172]Ibid.

[173]*Ibid.*, pp. 638-640. Above I stated that Krapf carefully controlled his view of Oromo culture when he had been among the Oromo but when he later went back to Europe and mentor Ruufoo he fully reflected his Christian view against the Oromo culture.

Regardless of the disagreement, Ruufoo and Krapf continued working on the translations. According to Pankhurst, on 21 Feb 1867 Krapf and Ruufoo completed the translation of the four Gospels, the Acts, the Epistle to the Romans and twenty-five chapters of Genesis, many of which were the revised version of Krapf's 1838-1842 translations. According to Pankhurst, the translations by Ruufoo and Krapf were comparable to those of Zanab's translations and no significant variations were discovered. Krapf must have regretted his mistreatment of Ruufoo, according to Pankhurst, when he learnt that Ruufoo's and the version he received from *Alaqa* Zanab all coincided.[174]

Zanab's translations also benefited from the assistance of two royal eunuch Oromo assistants: Gebra Michael and Waaree.[175] By the summer of 1865, Zanab reported that he had completed the translation of the Four Gospels into *Afaan* Oromo. Zanab devoted his full daytimes to the translation and missionary works when he moved to Adwa and attached himself to the European missionaries on the British storm of Maqdala in 1868. In so doing, he earned passionate appreciation from his fellow missionaries in Adwa. In June 1870 he completed the translation of the New Testament in Geez script and sent it to Krapf.[176]

The translation started by *Alaqa* Zanab in Ethiopia became a pioneer work in bringing the overseas and inland works together. Copies of Zanab's first batch of *Afaan* Oromo translations were delivered to Krapf by J.M. Flad in 1868. [177] The copies gave great impetus to future missionary to work in Ethiopia not only in *Afaan* Oromo but also in other local languages.

[174] Pankhurst, "The beginning of…", pp. 202-203.

[175] Waaree was an Oromo captured into slavery from Noonnoo, a region in south western Shawa, see Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", pp. 204-205.

[176] Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", p. 201.

[177] J.M. Flad was one of the German Protestant craftsmen. Flad is said to have had great attachment to Emperor Tewodros II. For the details, see Pankhurst, "The Beginning of…", p. 199. However, Gustav Arén argues that Krapf met Zanab in Gondar in 1855 by the invitation of Gobat. See Arén, pp.446-447.

Encouraged by the opportunity, Krapf also urged the Swedish Mission to send evangelists to reinforce Zanab's indigenous missionary work. The combined works of Ruufoo, Krapf and Zanab encouraged and realized the need to translate the scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo in the home country as it was believed that Oromo missionary work could be realized through the indigenization of the activities.[178]

Nevertheless, the common work of Krapf and Zanab was not as smooth as one might have thought. From the very beginning, there had been hot debate on issues of the script to be used. Stating the difficulty to use Geez script for *Afaan* Oromo, Krapf took stand for the Latin script. Krapf outlined his own reasons, underlining the difficulty of memorizing all Geez scripts, the aim to use *Afaan* Oromo as far as central Africa among the societies far distant from knowledge of Amharic, and linguistically the incapacity of Geez script to represent Oromo sounds. For the debate, Krapf used his knowledge of both Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo.[179]

However, Zanab remained firm in favor of Geez script. Zanab based his reasons on the existence of learned Oromo and Amhara who knew both languages. According to Zanab's observation which is stated in Pankhurst, the Bible written in Geez script would fully be accepted as there were many Oromo, especially in Shawa, who were acquainted with Geez script and there were many Amhara who knew *Afaan* Oromo. For his position Zanab also collected support from the missionaries who then resided in Adwa. There were J. Bender and C. Mayer, under whose auspices Zanab translated the scriptures, and they were the leading supporters of the Geez script. J. Bender and C. Mayer recommended the Printing House of St.

[178] Pankhurst, "The beginning of…", pp. 202-205.
[179] *Ibid.* pp. 200-201.

Chrischona to use Geez characters to avoid the resistance of the Orthodox clergy in connection with Latin letters[180] as had happened to Krapf in 1842.

After a long debate not only because of Zanab's convincing argument but also because of the political situation of the time, the Pilgrim's Mission at Adwa unanimously decided in 1869 in favor of Ethiopic script as an interim measure to avoid an inevitable priestly opposition against Latin script.[181] The decision also aborted Krapf's endeavors since 1839 of developing suitable characters for Oromo sounds most probably from Latin scripts. Nonetheless, the combined translations of Krapf with his assistants and *Alaqa* Zanab were published after 1870 as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, the plan to indigenize Oromo missionary work through the natives evidently became fully realized in 1870 when B.P Lundahl established a school for liberated slaves mainly for the Oromo at Massawa. Ganamee's burning last will and the long wish of the European missionaries to preach the Bible among the Oromo seemed to have met the target. It was such efforts to use *Afaan* Oromo for religious purposes and the wish to get massive conversion of the Oromo that laid the ground for the post-1870 Oromo studies by the Oromo in Oromoland and considerable quantities of literature productions in written *Afaan* Oromo.

[180] *Ibid*.
[181] *Ibid.*

Chapter Four

Oromo Literature in the Changing Social, Economic and Political Order, 1870-1899

In chapter two, I have explained how Oromo literature started to be transformed from orality to written by both the Christian and the Muslim missionary evangelizers in the attempts to convert the Oromo to their respective religions. The discussion was made on how European Christian missionaries tried to learn *Afaan* Oromo to cope with the assumption that conversion should be undertaken by white missionaries who possessed as good knowledge as possible of the local forms of speech. However, this does not mean that the missionary objectives to use written *Afaan* Oromo by the Oromo evangelists in the evangelical endeavours got a strong hold.

The attempts were limited to a few foreigners and a few rescued Oromo as assistants. In the case of the Christians, they lived outside their own country. They were a few iterant clerics in the case of the Muslims. A more basic phase to get linguistic works and full translations of the scriptures in *Afaan* Oromo within the changing political and social order was started after 1870. Thus the year 1870 marks the beginning of significant translation into *Afaan* Oromo and the writing of non-religious Oromo literature in large volume. It was also when the Protestant missionaries began to use Geez script for their literature in *Afaan* Oromo based on the decision they had made in September 1869. In this phase, the native Oromo played leading and supervisory roles.

Equally important, 1899 is an appropriate year to end the chapter for around that year the linguistic team turned away from translation work and joined their native people to teach Christianity using the literature they had already written themselves in *Afaan* Oromo. The

period not only witnessed the actual works of the translations into *Afaan* Oromo and linguistic studies but it was also the period when the Oromo folk songs included in their contents the protest literature against the threats to their identity as a collective society by the newly introduced religious, social, economic and political order.

It is to this aspect of written Oromo literature and other related issues that I turn in this chapter. The chapter is a discussion on how the missionary schools both those of the Christians and the Muslims contributed to the development of written literature in *Afaan* Oromo while working for their own respective religions by working on the literacy of the native Oromo within the broad context of its expansion.[1] The chapter also examines how the native speakers of *Afaan* Oromo became leading translators from the level of mere assistants while the expatriate missionaries served as technical advisors.

Within this context, the chapter elaborates the challenges which both the translators and the linguists encountered because of political and religious resistance of the time. Along with the themes, the chapter also elaborates how Oromo literature reflected the disturbances to the foundation of shared cultural identity of the Oromo due to the changing socio-cultural order by political and cultural imposition from outside. The historical songs produced either in support of or against the conquest and conversion of the Oromo as part of oral literature are also one of the themes of the chapter. Nonetheless, as usual the main focus will be on the written/ transcribed literature.

[1]The period under investigation in this chapter is when the European missionary, anti-slavery movement and Menilek II's expansions got a strong hold. Whether positive or negative, all had direct impact on the development of written Oromo literature and issues of Oromo identity. The anti-slavery movement provided the projects of Oromo literacy; the missionary expansion provided basic literacy, colonial expansion specially first Egyptians and later Italians liberated the missionaries from Ethiopian rulers' harassments whereas Menilek II's expansion continued to hinder missionary movements in the Oromoland and in doing so restricted further development of written Oromo literature.

The chapter is organized around some major themes. The major ones are schooling as a path to Oromo literacy, translated scriptures, transcribed oral literature and the changes that challenged the mechanisms by which the Oromo kept their common identity. The chapter is based on literature composed in *Afaan* Oromo such as scriptures, grammars, dictionaries, transcribed folk materials, and other related archival materials, secondary sources and oral traditions.

4.1. Oromo Literature and the Protestant Missionaries: Indigenousness Within the Realm of the Missionary Evangelizers

The introduction and expansion of Protestant missionaries gave Oromo literacy and written literature in *Afaan* Oromo a strong and sustainable basis. Although the final objective of the missionaries was to convert the Oromo *en masse* into Christianity and to use them in the conversion of other Africans, as Krapf states[2], their assumption that providing educational facilities was the most effective way of winning new converts benefitted *Afaan* Oromo to become a language of books. Thus, St. Chrischona Printing House came out with a series of publications in *Afaan* Oromo in the 1870s.

The first publication in Geez script was the Gospel according to St. Luke. According to Pankhurst, the volume bears the title in English and *Afaan* Oromo, acknowledging that the translation was done by Krapf, Zanab and Ruufoo. The second translation which was the Gospel according to St. John came out of the printing house in 1871. It had a similar format with the first Gospel but avoided any reference to Krapf 's Oromo assistants. The third volume, which was the Book of Genesis, was published in 1872 with similar format to the first and second volumes but omitted any name of the translator.[3]

[2]J. Lewis Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary…,* p; 25; Crummey, *Priests and Politicians…*, p. 46.
[3] Pankhurst, "The Beginning of Oromo…", p. 204.

In the same year, the Book of Psalms was published. In 1874 the fifth volume containing the Acts of the Apostles, The Epistle of Paul, the Apostle to the Romans, the First and the Second Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Galatians and the Book of Revelations. In 1875 the sixth volume which was the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Mark was published.[4] Unlike the other five volumes, this volume states the participation of six translators who came together from different regions. On the title page the names of the translators with their places of birth are listed. The translators on the title page are Krapf, Zanab from Ifat Oromo, Soolan from Ada'aa Oromo (in west Shawa), Waaree from Noonnoo Oromoo (in South West Shawa), Jagaa from Leeqaa Oromo (in Wallagga) and Ruufoo from Gumaay Oromo (in the Five Gibe states).[5]

All the volumes were in Geez script and each was one thousand copies. In 1876, St. Chrischona Mission Printing House combined all the volumes into one with the title, "New Testament".[6] The title page was written both in English and *Afaan* Oromo. The English title only bears Krapf's name as sole translator whereas the *Afaan* Oromo title lists all the five Oromo translators in addition to Krapf.[7] In the same years (1876) St. Chrischona mission published the first Book of Genesis (Old Testament) translated into *Afaan* Oromo. According to the information on the cover page of the book the translation was done by Jagaa, a Leeqaa Oromo, and edited for printing by Krapf.[8] Although the cover page bears information both in English and *Afaan* Oromo, full information is given in *Afaan* Oromo whereas the English does not.

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[4] *Ibid*., pp.204-205.

[5] J. Krapf *et al* (Trans.), *Novum Testamentum Domini Et Salvatoris Jesus Christi in Linguam Gallanorum* (Near Basel: St. Chirschona,1875). See appendix vii

[6] J.L. Krapf et al(Trans.), *Qulqullota Maxaafota Kakuu Harawaa (New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ)* (Near Basel: St. Chirschona,1876).

[7] *Ibid*. For the translators in *Afaan* Oromo, see appendix viii.

[8] Jagaa and L. Krapf, Mexaafa Kakuu Moofaa, Maxaafa Calqabaa Kan Musee (The First book of Moses Called Genesis, translated into [Oromo] Language (Basil: St. Chrischona press, 1876). See Appendix ix. Unlike the others' a life history of Jagaa is not indicated and needs another independent research.

The efforts to indigenize Oromo missionary work did not only influence the missionary activities but also important personalities among Ethiopian rulers. One of such personalities was Menilek II. Referring to Krapf's report, Pankhurst asserts that Menilek II showed a great interest to have full translation of the Bible into *Afaan* Oromo and requested *Alaqa* Zanab to translate the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Samuel. Pankhurst stated, "*Alaqa* [Zanab] had been ordered by Menilek to 'translate the Book of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel…'"[9]

He also added that Menilek supplied writing materials for the translation of the Books of Exodus and Joshua. Based on this, a second Book of Exodus was published in 1877 by the Printing House of St. Chrischona.[10] According to Krapf's reports on June 30, 1877 stated in Pankhurst, Zanab also translated the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth and Samuel into *Afaan* Oromo by the order of Menilek II. Although the works were sent to St. Chrischona for printing there was no report that the printing house received the translations.[11] However, no clear reason was stated why Menilek II was interested in the translation of the scripture into *Afaan* Oromo.

Nevertheless, the changes that allowed the promotion of native Oromo from assistants to the level of leading evangelical activities and trusted Bible translators began with the establishment of the Oromo missionary school at Massawa by Swedish Missionary evangelizers in 1870. The school allowed Oromo students to translate the scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo and transcribe the folklores of their society.

[9] Pankhurst, "The Beginning of …", p. 205.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*

The necessity to produce native translators, evangelizers and proficient Bible readers made the establishment of the school in native languages compulsory.[12] The need seems mainly to have been to introduce the converts through self-reading of what was declared to be the "Word of God". The development of literacy in the vernacular was a common practice in the history of Protestantism since the time of the Reformation. Most scholars seem to have concluded that the Reformation greatly advanced literacy.[13] It was believed that without at least basic education in literacy, it was impossible to read the Bible and receive its messages. For this, the role of learned indigenous evangelists in the translation of the scriptures in their vernacular was also significantly valued.

The missionary education that brought *Afaan* Oromo into written literature and broadened the imagination of Oromo students about the Oromo nation was a projection of this assumption. In the missionary endeavours to convert the Oromo, basic Oromo literacy and the production of written literature simultaneously acted upon one another. Thus, the translation of the Bible into *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo literacy remained the integral parts of missionary endeavours to evangelize the Oromo from the early time of Krapf. These frequent Protestant missionary attempts to reach the Oromo with the Gospel in their vernacular began to gather pace with the establishment of the Massawa school.

The school was established to convert the Oromo through indigenous preachers in their vernacular. It was with this vision that enslaved Oromo from different parts of Oromoland including the Booranaa in Kenya were rescued and entrusted to the school.[14] They saw the provision of educational facilities as the most effective way of winning new converts. The

[12]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia…,* pp. 201-202.
[13]Hans J. Hillenbrand (ed.) *The Protestant Reformation* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1968), p. xxiii.
[14]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia…*p. 171.

Massawa Swedish Missionary School began the realization of this vision when Hiikaa Awaaji (the later Onesimus Nesib after baptism) was entrusted to the school as the first ransomed Oromo child in 1870.[15] Thus, the wish to get many Oromo converts gave Oromo literature not only basic literacy but also a sustainable and anticipated future. It would not be overstating the case to say that at the beginning it was the interest in the Bible which gave a new lease of life to the study of *Afaan* Oromo.

The Massawa missionary school was not a new establishment with the admission of Hiikaa. It was an outgrowth of a cottage school which had been established in 1865 to attract the local community to a systematic conversion and to enable the missionaries and the converts to enjoy self-help as interim technicians during the evangelization of the Oromo. Carl Johan Carlson, Per Eric Kjellberg and Lareis Johan Lange were the first Swedish community of the school.[16] For this purpose, Mr. P.E Lager, who was one of the three Swedes and a carpenter, was assigned as the first Director. Besides schooling, the community had never forgotten their Oromo cause. For the first four years, they continued the study of *Afaan* Oromo and the collection of valuable information on the Oromo nation. To reinforce the preparation to reach the Oromo in *Afaan* Oromo, the community was joined by a group of nine Swedes in January 1869. Seven were males and two were females. One of the new arrivals was the Rev. Bengt Peter Lundahl whose name later became identified with the development of Oromo missionary work and Oromo Literacy.[17]

[15]Hiikaa was born at Hurrumuu in Iluu Abbaa Boor in between 1850 and 1858 and was captured into slavery when his age was four. Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change…,* p. 47.

[16]Arén, *The Evangelical Pioneers…,* p.130.

[17] *Ibid*. 143.

It was within this process that the event that changed the course of Oromo literature was started. Werner Munzinger who was Swiss by birth and at the time the French Consul on the Red Sea coast liberated and handed Hiikaa, a native Oromo, over to the Swedish Evangelical Mission at Massawa as a house servant in October 1870. But proving Hiikaa's learning capacity within no more than a month duration, the missionaries did not want to keep him as house servant. They entrusted him to the Bible Academy under the patronage of the Rev. Peter Lundahl. With the admission of Hiikaa, the Massawa cottage school that had been established as a vocational training centre was changed to a Bible Academy while maintaining the vocational trainings as a secondary activity. Subsequently, according to Arén, the role of directing the school was transferred in December 1870 to Lundahl, who was a well-trained theologian.[18]

Lundahl designed a policy of training evangelists and promotion of Bible study in the vernacular. In 1871, in no more than just a year, the school was able to enroll six ransomed students: three Oromo and three others. One of them was Daniel Dabalaa who later became a proof reader of the translated Oromo Bible, Farajaa (Yohannis) and Gammachis.[19] In the footsteps of Hiikaa, the newly enlisted Oromo students demonstrated their *Afaan* Oromo linguistic ability and learning of the Bible by heart. Among them, within no more than a year and half, Hiikaa was qualified for baptism. On March 31, 1872, he was baptized and was given a new name Onesimus (henceforth Onesimus).[20] His contribution to a history of written Oromo

[18]*Ibid*., pp. 164-165.

[19] Farajaa was a liberated enslaved Oromo who was later sent to Jimmaa with Niguse Tashu. With regard to Gammachis destination, no further information was given. See Tarfsa Diga, "A Short Biography of Onesimos Nasib: Oromo Bible Translator, Evangelist and Teacher, C. 1850-193" (B.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1973), p. 5.

[20]The name Onesimus was the same as the Christian state whom St. Paul sent back to his Christian master, urging him to receive Onesimus ("Useful" to St. Paul also) as a fellow Christian. See the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon.

literature began following his baptism. He made every effort with remarkable enthusiasm to show the suitability of *Afaan* Oromo for religious books.

Hearing the opportunity to return to his people, Onesimus studiously studied with the objective of winning the opportunity. Within no more than five years Onesimus demonstrated his command of *Afaan* Oromo, Amharic, Arabic, and the Swedish language in parallel with his other learning talents in the religious academy. In doing so, he became the leading figure of the group and the one who won Lundahl's scholarship project for further education abroad. [21]

On 25 June 1876, Onesimus left for Sweden to study at Johannelund Theological School in Stockholm. In Stockholm, Onesimus studied not only theology but also the way the Swedes adapted the Bible in their own context to use it as a model for his later Oromo mission. After intensive studies for five years, he had graduated with a teacher's diploma and came back in October 1881. He was also commissioned as preacher, evangelizer and translator.[22]

On his return to Massawa Onesimus got a better organized and realized foundation to start his Oromo mission in *Afaan* Oromo among the Oromo. An additional school for girls in which Ayyantuu was the first student was established in 1876.[23] The harsh climate at Massawa was replaced by a moderate one in 1877 when a British general, Charles Gordon (1833-1885) bought them land at Menkullo[24] which was ten kilometres from Massawa into the interior.[25] The conflict of interest with the Egyptians who wanted to make high profits from the slave trade and to expand their colonial territory and Islam in East Africa, the limitation to get Oromo

[21] Tarfsa, pp.5-9.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Arén, *Evangelical pioneer*s…, p.217.
[24] The name Menkullo is spelt differently. Some write it as Imkullu; the others as Menkullo. But my Tigray colleague informed me that it is pronounced as Menkullo. Therefore, I use Mekullo spelling. Aleme Eshete, 26 IES MS 399.
[25]Arén, *Evangelical pioneer*s…p. 226.

children at the coastal area and the determination of the Ethiopian kings to cut off the Oromo from any white contact[26] were solved first by British influences and later by the Italian occupation of the coast in 1885.

The foundation of the missionary school at Menkullo laid the foundation for the later studies of *Afaan* Oromo. The school emerged as a centre where written Oromo literature began to flourish. Next to the care of the religion, both the native Oromo and the white missionaries at the centre intensified the study of *Afaan* Oromo. The natives taught the white missionaries *Afaan* Oromo. The white missionaries taught the Oromo how to read and write. As a result, almost all the foreign missionaries who were enlisted in the five journeys to the Oromoland from Menkullo at different times[27] are said to have had good command of *Afaan* Oromo.

[26]The Egyptians who occupied the region refused the request for tracts of land and liberated slaves. The Egyptians saw the missionaries as a community against their Islamic religious movement and Egyptian economic interests. The Egyptians were to use Islam as an ideology of occupation and the slave trade as major sources of income. The problems were solved when the anti-slavery movement in the Red Sea area got a strong hold. Access to get Oromo children was not easy as the price of Oromo children in the slave market was very high. See also Tasgaraa Hirphoo. *Abbaa Gammachiis (Oneesimos Nasib), A Native of Oromiya: Enslaved, Freed and an Envoy of the Gospel (1856-1931)* (Finfinnee: Aster Gannoo Literature Society, 2007), pp. 39-41; Arén, pp 250 &278.

[27] The first expedition (1877-1884) was made to Jimmaa successfully by Niguse Tashu, Emanuel Hamid with his wife Ayyaantuu who was later baptized as Elsabet, and Yohannis Farajaa. *Abbaa* Jifaar permitted them a place because their education would be useful. The second expedition (1881-1882) was undertaken by Gustaf E. Arrhenius who had learned *Afaan* Oromo at Massawa, A.W. Pahlman who had studied with Onesimus at Johannelund, Hailu and his wife Simatu, Onesimos and his wife Mihrat and a young Oromo Christianized Filipos. In the expedition, although Arrhenius was chosen to be the leader of the expedition, Onesimus expected to play a great role in the journey. The expedition made its route via Khartoum to Famaka. Famaka is an Ethio- Sudanese frontier town. However, the expedition was unsuccessful and the expedition returned to Menkullo after losing Filipos and Arrhenius by death. The third was conducted from 1884 to 1886 through Tajura to Inxooxxoo. The destination was to Jimmaa but Menilek II refused them passage and the expansion ended without fruit. The members were A. Palhman, A. Bergman, Onesimus and his wife Mihrat, Petros Ibsa, and another young Oromo. The fourth expedition was undertaken from 1893-1895 to reach the Oromo from the south. The Rev. Karl Cedeqvist, A. Bergman, the Rev. Nils Hylander and his wife, Mr. Karl Nystrom, Daniel Dabalaa, and Estifanos Bonayyaa (who was originally from Lamu). The Rev. Karl Cedeqvist was the leader of the team. Reaching Lamu, the expedition was forced to turn back by the Somali who saw them as colonial agents. The fifth was from 1897 -1898 and was the most successful of all. It was by this expedition that Gebra Ewostatewos and his wife Gumish, Daniel Dabalaa and his wife Tiru, successfully reached Wallagga and laid the ground for the later overall Oromo mission. See Arén, pp. 234, 249, 274, 381 and 387; Tasgaraa Hirphoo, pp. 24-51; Tarfsa, p. 10.

With this, the idea of reaching the Oromo with holy texts written in *Afaan* Oromo by the Oromo preachers and evangelizers got sustained momentum. The education of Onesimos had a great impact not only in the expansion of the Protestant missionary work that was desired among the Oromo, but beyond that in the development and crystallization of Oromo literature. He made every effort to make *Afaan* Oromo the language of his missionary endeavours. He soon began teaching the Bible, Church History, Catechism, Geography and Mathematics in *Afaan* Oromo.[28]

Having in mind the project of Oromo literacy and the translation of Bible into *Afaan* Oromo, Onesimus wanted to realize his deepest desire and yearning to return to his people as an envoy of the Gospel in *Afaan* Oromo.[29] Within no more than a month of his return and four days after his marriage to Simatu Hailu who was a graduate of the girls' school of Manson,[30] Onesimus joined the second Oromo missionary expedition[31] to Wallagga. It was hoped that the work of the intended Bible translation into *Afaan* Oromo would take place in Oromo country.[32] However, because of the political situation of the nineteenth century in the Horn of Africa, the expedition in which Onesimus was a member could not be succeeded.

On his return to Menkullo, Onesimus never despaired of the plan to reach the Oromo with scriptures in *Afaan* Oromo. He did not waste time to start translations into *Afaan* Oromo side by side with his teaching and preaching in *Afaan* Oromo in and around Menkullo. The teaching and preaching activities of Onesimus were not only helpful in expanding the Bible message but also helpful in enriching the translation of the communications that were in *Afaan* Oromo.

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[28] Tasgaraa, p. 37.
[29] He stated this desire in his letter to Neander cited in Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 250, note no. 5.
[30] *Ibid.* p. 251.
[31] See note no, 14 of this chapter.
[32] Tasgaraa, pp.31-33

As he had left the Oromo in early childhood, the situation benefited him to expand his *Afaan* Oromo knowledge and world view which he could have learned better, had he passed his early childhood among his own society for a longer period. It is said that while teaching and preaching in *Afaan* Oromo, he asked for words, idioms and syntaxes in the Bible for which he could not find his own equivalents in *Afaan* Oromo.[33] It was by the help of such mechanisms that Onesimus was able to get the following first phase translations.

The religious works that were translated into *Afaan* Oromo by the Menkullo Missionaries with Onesimus as a leader had two phases. The first phase was undertaken from 1882-1884 and the second phase was 1886-1899. Within the first phase, Onesimus and his assistants translated Luther's *Hundred Hymns and Psalms* into *Gooftaa Maccaa Galata Waaqayyoo*[34] and John Bunyan's Short Treatise *Man's Heart, Either God's Temple or Satan's Abode* into *Garaan Namaa Mana Bultii Sheexanaamoo Waqayyooti*[35] and *Luther's Catechism* into *Katakisimoo*.[36]

Onesimus' selection of these works for the first phase translation was based on a reason. According to Arén, the translations were to be used as introductory texts for the beginners before starting to learn the Bible with its more complex nature.[37] Luther's *Hymns and Psalms* was translated as *Galata Waaqayyoo Gooftaa Macca* just as *Faaruu* Oromo, which is culturally practiced to praise the deeds of God or other heroes, but in western melody. The

[33]Interviews with *Qes* Fikadu Wayyessa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017: Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April, 20 2017.

[34]Onesimos Nasib (Trans.), *Galata Waaqayyoo Gooftaa Maccaa (Hymns)* (Near Basel: St. Chrischona, 1899).

[35] Onesimus Nasib, *Garaan Namaa Mana Waaqayyoo Yookis Iddoo Bultii Seexana (Man's Heart Either God's Temple or Satan's Abode: Reprinted in Ten Figures for Awakening and Promoting Christian Faith and Life* (Near Basel: St. Chrischona, 1899).

[36]Onesimus Nasib, *Katakisimoo (Catechism)* (Near Basel: St. Chirschona,1899).

[37] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 302.

translation had no even stanzas as is usual in *Faaruu* Oromo. This caused it to be revised three times.

The translation was made from the Swedish hymn book, *Sion's Tuner,* because Onesimus might have hoped its impact among the Oromo would be like that of the *Sion's Tuner* in Sweden and for that reason he made it his first choice of translation. When Onesimus returned from the third Oromo missionary expedition to Shawa, it was this book that was made ready for teaching the Oromo in Menkullo missionary school. It is also the first book that Menkullo printing press published in 1887 after the acquisition of a manual printing press in 1885.[38] Onesimus conceptualized it into Oromo religious contexts. When the book reached the Oromo in 1903, it was well received by the Oromo as their tradition was written into the book.[39]

The translation of *Man's Heart, Either God's Temple or Satan's Abode* as "*Garaan Namaa Mana Bultii Sheexanaamoo Moo Waaqayyooti*"[40] showed the contrasting characters of Christians and non-Christians. The characterizations are supported by imaginative pictures which assimilate the hearts of non-Christians with wickedness, crookedness, evil desires, hypocrisy, gluttony and other sins, unlike the heart of Christians, which is represented as leading to a good and righteous way of life. Onesimus purposefully prepared it to make the Oromo consider Biblical messages as their own cultural identity to win over converts easily. The translation was thought to be a bridge between the culture of the Bible and the Oromo.

[38] *Ibid*.; Tasgaraa, pp. 43-44.

[39] Interviews *Qes* Fikadu Wayyessa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017: Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April, 20, 2017.

[40] Onesimos, *Man' Heart,* pp. 1-49.

The Oromo also accepted it because their world view was not that much different from what the Bible characterized as goodness and virtue.[41]

The catechism was the other third book translated in the first phase.[42] Its translation was perceived as the ABC of Bible doctrine or the first things to be acquainted with in Christian theology. Its approach was based on the Oromo oral dialogue during communications. The purpose was to teach the basic principles of Biblical doctrine rules. It taught the readers by providing Biblical questions that the respondents were expected to answer accordingly. The book, although small, summarized the contents of the main Protestant view of Bible doctrine.

This first phase of the translations brought significant changes to written literature and Biblical knowledge in *Afaan* Oromo. The translations not only taught the beginners how to read Biblical texts but also showed Onesimus the gaps in his *Afaan* Oromo vocabulary for transfer of the Biblical message into *Afaan* Oromo without misrepresentations. He learned from the translations that a true religious translation into a language of another culture needed not only the literary meaning of words but also how the native societies would understand the meanings of the words in their own culture. For this, Onesimus became aware that undertaking a comprehensive translation needed not only linguistic knowledge but also the world view of the target society. Thus, he preferred the next translations to be made among the Oromo society.

The translation activities at Menkullo was interrupted by the desire of the Swedish Missionary evangelizers to convert the Oromo and Onesimus's wish to teach his people in *Afaan* Oromo what he had learned in Sweden. In July 1884 he left in the third Oromo expedition which took

[41]*Qes* Fikadu Wayyessa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017: Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April, 20, 2017.

[42]Onesimus, *Katakisimoo*…, pp.1-46.

a year and half through Tajura, Inxooxxoo and then hoping to reach Jimmaa. However, the expedition was forced to stop at Aliyu Amba where they stayed for almost a year waiting for opportunities to proceed.[43] Although the expedition did not reach its final target, it was not a failure for linguistic study of *Afaan* Oromo. Since Aliyu Amba was a place where several trade routes specially from the Oromoland joined together and was also located partly in Oromo territory[44], it contributed to Onesimus' linguistic studies of *Afaan* Oromo.

As Diarmiat G. Chriost states since it is impossible to understand a language in isolation from its culture or the culture in isolation from its own terms,[45] Onesimus continued studying *Afaan* Oromo within the context of Oromo world view by conducting frequent contacts with the local communities and the Oromo traders gathered at the centre.[46] On the basis of the gaps he had observed during the translation activities of the first phase, he collected many Oromo words and expressions to fill in the later gaps of the translation of the whole Bible. On their return to Menkullo in February 1886, Onesimus was well armed with the knowledge of the Oromo world view through their language.

It is not surprising that works on *Afaan* Oromo linguistic studies found their ways through both challenging and relaxed situations. With the return of Onesimus to Menkullo in May 1886, fertile ground was created to resume both linguistic studies of *Afaan* Oromo and the translation project took place in relaxed circumstances. In this phase *Afaan* Oromo secured the status to be studied among the community of native speakers. According to Bahru, at this period,

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[43] Tasgaraa, p. 40.

[44]Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia…,* p. 22. For the existence of the Oromo in the area, read Ahmad Hassen, "A Historical Survey of Ethnic Relations in Yeafat and Temmuga, Northeastern Shewa" (Addis Ababa University, M.A Thesis in History, 1994), pp.8-20.

[45]Diarmiat G. Chriost, *Language, Identity and Conflict: A Comparative Study of Language in Ethnic Conflict in Europe and Eurasia* (London: Routledge 2004), p.10.

[46] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 276.

Onesimus was joined by about 500 Oromo among whom he undertook evangelical and training activities.[47] The congregated Oromo in and around Massawa from different parts of Oromoland enabled the missionaries to collect much valuable data on *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity. In a context of a largely oral culture where there were no dictionaries and grammars, studying a literature among native community is invaluable and important.

The Oromo congregation used their mother tongue as a guide to the social reality of their common identity, as Chriost states,[48] which gave the studies of *Afaan* Oromo special importance. It was central in enriching written literature in *Afaan* Oromo as it brought the Oromo of different dialects from Booranaa including those in present day Kenya, Ittuu from Eastern Oromo, Tuulamaa from central Oromo and Maccaa from western Oromo[49] to form a small Oromo speaking 'colony'. The Oromo community here was not only important as sources of Oromo vocabularies and dialects but was also important for their being in a place where Oromo cultural perception of the world was reflected.

The impact of this *Afaan* Oromo speaking community on the studies of *Afaan* Oromo for the translation of the scriptures and the understanding of the identity of the Oromo in all the dialects in common was extremely beneficial. It was important because as Gelavizh Abbasi, Saman Saleh Zadeh and others enumerate, a translator has to be perfect not only linguistically but well acquainted with the cultures of the source and target languages.[50] Therefore, Onesimus

[47] Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia…*, p.48.

[48] Chriost, p.11.

[49] Although Cerulli argues that the Oromo Bible is written in the Maccaa dialect, thorough exploration of sources indicates that attempts to incorporate all dialects were made either by making visits to the areas by the missionaries who were assisted by the Oromo or searching for the Oromo who represented the dialects among the rescued Oromo. In both cases the attempts were successful. For further information, see Gustav Arén, pp. 274-278 &378-383, Fride Hylander, "Onesimos Nasib: Some Remarks on Cerulli's 'The Folk-Literature of the [Oromo]"' in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies, V.7, No.2 (1969)*, p.86, Tarfsa, pp.12-13.

[50] Gelavizh Abbasi, Saman Saleh Zadeh et al, "Language, Translation, and Culture" in *International Conference on Language, Media and Culture*, v. 33 (2012), pp.83-86.

and his assistants made use of the congregation in the translations of the scriptures for the same referential, pragmatic and interlinked meanings with the language of the Bible they had translated.

It was from this Oromo speaking community that intelligent and promising rescued Oromo children were recruited into the special class to work on translations into *Afaan* Oromo. It gave them the opportunity to recruit indigenous staff who would have sufficient knowledge of local language, customs, ways of life and popular attitudes to present the Gospel in genuine indigenous form. According to Hylander, the special class went beyond a normal teaching and learning process and was not confined to the issue of education in the narrow sense of public instruction. In 1891, the class developed into a linguistic teamwork in which Onesimos and Gannoo Salbaan (Aster), whose role is discussed below in details) played a leading role. Nils Hylander, a Swede joined the group in the same year, learned *Afaan* Oromo devotedly and became an active member of the group.[51]

The team was to further strengthen the building up of the literal knowledge in *Afaan* Oromo and to facilitate and consolidate the translation of the scriptures for the Oromo mission. The frequent Protestant missionary attempts from the time of Krapf to reach the Oromo with the Gospel in their vernacular began to change the course of written *Afaan* Oromo literature with the organization of the team. The most influential members of the group were Onesimus Nesib from Iluu Abbaa Boor, Daniel Dabalaa from Horroo Guduruu/Wallagga, Gannoo Salbaan from Limmuu, Hirphee *Abbaa* Magaal from Jimmaa, and Diimboo Garbaa from Sayyoo/Wallagga, Istifanos Bonayyaa from Lamu of the present day Kenya, and a certain Natnael and Roorro.[52]

[51]Hylander, p. 85
[52]*Ibid.*

The members of the group came together not only because of their learning capacity but also because of the mother tongue and world view they had in common. Although much was done to instil Bible culture in them, the provided education in *Afaan* Oromo promoted their consciousness of the common identity of the Oromo who were distributed over large areas. As Prah states, it is in languages, which means their literature, that the testimonies and character of the culture, identity and pulse of people are registered.[53] They learnt about their common origin, myth, history and culture that connected them to their nation and their nation's ancestors through their language and began expressing their pleasure in different opportunities.

For example, writing to Kolmodin on 23, June 1886, Onesimos reflected the feeling they had "I labour with delight and happiness together with our newly arrived (Oromo) … What a joy it is to teach them in our mother tongue."[54] In his report Onesimus reflected how much students were bonded together and got strength, being dominated by the ethnic and cultural identity of their nation. Onesimus was also happy teaching his language and culture to the non-native speakers of the group. His words written in *Mission Tidings Report* quoted in Hylander as "'Our beloved brother Hylander reads the [Oromo] Bible nearly as fluently as any one of us, which is a source of great joy to me"[55] is an indication. This type of Oromo gathering around their mother tongue at the mission station of the Red Sea Coast became more common from 1877 as there was a rise of the number of the rescued Oromo.

Along this line, it becomes crucial to understand literature as a valuable tool in developing a deeper comprehension of interconnectedness. Diarmait Chriost expressed in one line the strong

[53]Kwesi Prah, "Challenges to the Promotion of Indigenous Languages in South Africa" *A Review Commissioned by the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa* (January 2007), p. 2.

[54]Arén, Evangelical Pioneers…, p.302.

[55]Hylander, p. 83.

relationships between the world view of the society and the literature of the mother tongue that reflects it stating that, "…more than any other of life's faculties, it is a language that tells us who we are, what we mean and where [we] are going."[56] When these concepts combined with literacy education it soon developed into questioning who are we? This was because, as Bahru states, one of the dual effects of education is broadening of social and political awareness besides the acquisition of clearly defined objectives.[57] This was clearly realized when the students began recording Oromo oral literature or composing their own ideas in *Afaan* Oromo and enriched Oromo literature.

The organization of the team in this manner helped them to perform ground breaking works for the translations they resumed. More elaborated and organized translations of Oromo scriptures were undertaken by the team between 1890-1893. It was the actual time when the group was active and worked closely together. As the path to the interior was closed, the linguistic team energetically worked on ground breaking preparation, prophesying that one day they would be among the Oromo with the books written in *Afaan* Oromo in their hands.[58] The objective of the team was to build a body of Oromo vocabulary and literature in a way that enriched the vocabulary of the scriptures in *Afaan* Oromo while working on translations. The collection of the works was undertaken systematically.

The difficult task the translators faced was finding equivalent Oromo idioms that could express Biblical messages without importing the cultural meanings of the target language unlike the foreign missionaries who took the risk of cultural importation from the target language. Above all, some of the words, phrases, idioms and expressions which are stated in the Christian

[56]Chriost, p.1.
[57]Bahru, *Pioneers of Changes*…, p. 99.
[58] Hylander, p. 83.

scriptures have no equivalent meanings in Oromo words. Therefore, a question of clearing out indigenous culture from *Afaan* Oromo words and the importing of Biblical tradition into the Oromo world view were the challenging tasks, both as regards ethnic identity and loyalty to the religion they adhered to.

As a mechanism to overcome the problem, the team continually organized forum discussions in *Afaan* Oromo. The forum discussions were attended by rescued Oromo slaves and Oromo merchants who converged at Massawa from almost all parts of the Oromo regions as Massawa was the meeting point of the trade routes. They also collected the words from other portal towns of the region. As the translations were mainly religious books, the team purposefully made the discussion of the forums religion-oriented.[59]

The purpose was to collect Oromo religious terms and concepts. As the team saw Oromo folklore rich in vocabularies as well as cultural and religious concepts, a great focus was made on songs, proverbs, folk tales, and any type of entertainment chanted in *Afaan* Oromo.[60] The collection undoubtedly contributed to the endeavours of Onesimus' translation of the New Testament. By the time Onesimus had completed the translation of the New Testament into *Afaan* Oromo in 1893, it was reported that the team had collected and registered about 15,000 Oromo words and 500 Oromo songs as background material for the translations.[61]

From the collection a vocabulary of 6,000 words is said to have been prepared. The vocabularies were said to have been written in Oromo-Amharic and Oromo- Swedish. The Oromo- Amharic was written as Onesimus and Aster were the authors. The Oromo-Swedish

[59] Interviews with *Qes* Asfaw Ballinaa, Naqamtee, Decembers 16, 2017; Geedi Rundaasaa, Naqamtee, February 26,2017.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Hylander, p. 85.

was written by Nils Hylander as the author.[62] But although many translated scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo came out bearing the name of Onesimus Nesib as the sole translator, the role of the Oromo linguistic team was fundamental.

Hylander, whose argument revolves around the notes of his father's notes of observation, gives much credit of the translation to the Oromo linguistic team describing them with the specific duties of the members. He designates Onesimus as leader and Bible expert, Daniel Dabalaa as a man following in the footstep of Onesimus, Aster as Muse of the Bible for her linguistic capacity, Natnael in the footsteps of Aster, Istifanos Bonayyaa as father of his *Afaan* Oromo teacher and his father as pastor of the team. According to him, except the translation of the Old Testament and Dr Barth's Bible Stories, all works of translation were enthusiastically carried out between 1890-1893 by the team.[63]

In these years the New Testament was translated, the *[Oromo] Spelling Book* was composed and Oromo folk songs and vocabularies were collected and the previous translations of Onesimos' *Hundred Songs and Psalms, Catechism* and *Man's Heart* were revised.[64] During revision of Onesimus' previous translations, there were corrections of many words and syntaxes. The corrections gave the scripts of the scriptures a sense of the living Oromo language. Owing to the fact that they were instructed to teach and write in their vernacular while preaching to the Oromo, they became not only indigenous pioneer evangelists but also literacy and linguistic pioneers of *Afaan* Oromo. In doing so Onesimus and Aster who led the linguistic team contributed a lot to the subsequent studies of Oromo literature.

[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Hylander, pp. 81-82.
[64] *Ibid.*

The first published literary work of the team was the translation of the New Testament which was published in 1893 at Menkullo printing Press.[65] The lower half of the same cover page details the name of the publisher, date and place of publication. The text is small in size and in its totality the text consists of 739 pages closely printed in small letters. Nonetheless, it bears no introductory notes which inform how to read the Geez letters used to represent *Afaan* Oromo sounds, the process of translation, the difficulty encountered during translation etc. As Arén states, the information we have about the translation is what is constructed from the reports which were written during the translation.[66]

The terminologies, syntaxes, words derivatives organized during this period was also used in the later translations of Dr Barth's Bible stories and the Old Testament. In order to overcome the linguistic challenges in the translation, the linguistic team developed the mechanism of derivations,[67] extending or narrowing meanings,[68] adoption[69] and combining[70] words.

However, in 1893 the team was dissolved for different missionary duties. Niles Hylander, Daniel Dabalaa and Istifanos Bonayyaa joined the fourth Oromo expedition to Lamu (in present day Kenya) and Harar to learn Afaan Oromo in other areas, and, if fortune opened the path, to enter into the interior of the Oromo lands. Natnael died of tuberculosis. Onesimus and

[65] Onesimus Nasib (trans.), *Kakuu Haaraa: Innis Kan Gooftaa Keenyaa Kan Fayisaa Keenyaa KaYasuus Kiristoos Wangeela Qulqulluu Macaafota Ergamtootas (The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ)* Menkullo: Mekullo Printing Press, 1893).

[66] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p.20.

[67] For example, the word *raajicha* (the prophet is derived from the Oromo word *raajii* (prophecy)

[68]For the example in the case of meaning extension, the common noun Maccaa which has the meaning of human being extended to include the multitude of the Bible. In the case of narrowing the meaning the Waaqaa of Oromo with the meaning of the sky and the God, narrowed down to represent only the God of the Bible.

[69]There are many terms and words adopted to Afaan Oromo from the bible. Some of them are Yesuusis Kiristos, Gimbii Baabiloon, Soddoofi Gomoraa, Amantii Abrahaam, malakata (trumpet), negarte (drum) and kirar

[70]Kakuu Haraa for the New testament, Kakuu Moofaa for the Old testament, Seeraa Keessa deebii Deuteronomy and etc.

Aster remained at Menkullo to continue the translations of the Old Testament and Dr Barth's Bible Stories.[71]

The other *Afaan* Oromo literary work of the team came out of the Menkullo printing press is the book entitled *"ደ/ልቃበ በርሰሳ እንስ መጫፈ ዱቢሱ በርሰሱን አፋን ኦሮሞት" (The [Oromo] Spelling Book).*[72] It was published in 1894 with the purpose to show the Oromo the way to God. Onesimus reported that its work was completed parallel with the translation of the New Testament into *Afaan* Oromo.[73] It has an outer and two inner cover sheets. The outer and the first inner sheets were written on in *Afaan* Oromo and the second inner cover was written in English.

The *Afaan* Oromo cover page bears details of the title, purpose of the book, name and birthplaces of the compilers and place and year of publication. It states Onesimus and Aster were co-authors of the book. But the English cover page only bears the title of the book and Onesimus as the sole author.[74] On this page Aster was omitted. In this book while different reports give Aster much credit for her extra ordinary linguistic and folkloric ability the omission of her name from the English title indicates not only the gender bias but also the less accuracy of the missionaries in recording events as they had happened.

Nonetheless, in the introductory notes of Aster Gannoo's Love Songs published 1899, Fufa Ambacha states that *weedduu tikstuu* (shepherds' song), *ururuu* (babies' song), *weedduu jaalalaa* (love songs), *makmaaksa* (proverbs), *durdur* (stories), *hibboo* (riddles), *tapha Ijoollee* (children's games), *weedduu Atetee* (women's spiritual songs), *sagada* Oromo (Oromo

[71]Hylander, p.87.
[72]Onesimos Nasib and Aster Gannoo, *Calqaba Barsiisaa (The Beginning of Oromo Learning)* (Menkullo: Menkullo Printing Press, 1884).
[73]Hylander, p.82.
[74]See Appendix x

prayers), *geerarsaa* (warriors' songs), *faaruu gaddaa* (lamentations) and *weedduu heeruma* (nuptials) in the *Calqaba Barsiisaa* (*The [Oromo] Spelling Book*) exist in the records of Hylander under Aster as the collector.[75]

Kebede Hordofa, who wrote about the contribution of the missionaries argues that all of the folklore in *Calqaba Barsiisaa* (The Beginning of [Oromo] Learning) is found in the manuscript of Hylander which was documented under Aster's collection.[76] On his part, Hylander also presents Onesimus's role only as designer of the book, whereas he acknowledged Aster for her writing of the texts.[77] He argues that the book was prepared on the example of the Swedish *Folkskolans Läsebok* (the Swedish Reader for Public Schools) which contains poetry, history, geography, folklore and tales, "from the religion of their forefathers who lived before their Christianization."[78] From this, we can conclude that the contents of the book belong to Aster whereas the design was that of Onesimus.

The book begins with the Geez alphabet and number counting and goes through word formation, Oromo folklore and tales, and Christian tales translated from E. Maus' *Christian Stories*, the *History of Martyrs*, the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Faith, the Confession of Sins, the Lord's Prayer and other Christian materials. In addition to these, there are various themes in the Spelling Book. The religious texts are inserted between Oromo folklore and tales at different intervals based on their relationships.

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[75] Aster Gannoo, *Afoola Oromoo-Weedduu Jaalalaa Oromoo (Oromo Folklore- Love songs)* (Finfinnee: Bole Printing enterprise,1999) p. 3. Collected, compiled, annotated, edited and printed by Fufaa Ambachaa and Kebede Hordofa.

[76] Kebede Hordofa, "Missionary, Enslaved Oromo and Their Contribution to the Development of the Oromo Language: An Overview" in Verena Bool *et al* (Eds.) *Ethiopia and the Missions: Historical and Anthropological Insights* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publisher, 2005), pp. 67-68.

[77] Fride Hylander, pp. 79-87.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

The way the book was designed and the selection of its contents made the book designed not only to show the Oromo the way to God but also the way to literacy. It was designed in a way one could learn at least to read at the absence of a regular teacher once he /she heard the contents as the contents were in many cases the folklore they already knew. It was thought that the beginners could read the book with the help of the Oromo folklore they knew orally as there were no ample teachers who could teach them how to read and write. Thus, it was the hope of Aster and Onesimus that anyone who attempted to read the book could be helped to memorize the symbolic representation of letters by what they had already in mind.

I argue that it was the first published book in *Afaan* Oromo from the perspective of Oromo culture. Although their conclusions are made in accordance with Christian world view, out of sixty-nine short titles of the book, forty-six are Oromo folklores and folktales. The contents and the way it was prepared were indeed specimens of important Oromo folklore and folk tales. It is perhaps unnecessary to quote all the contents, but one short specimen of the book's texts which shows how the linguistic team at Menkullo expressed their enslavement may not be out of place:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Hemmuu gaaraa baatee	*When you climbed a hill*
Maa nahinwaamin maaloo	*Why you did not call me!*
Hewwuu gargar baanee	*When we were isolated*
Hewwuu macca taanee	*When we became alien*
Maa nahinyaatiin Baaroo.	*Why! Baaroo (the river) would have drowned me*
Otuu jirbii footanii	*When you threaded the cotton*
Bubbuttuu attam gootanii	*How did you drift?*
Ofii gala teessanii	*You went back to home for yourselves*
Muxuwwaa nabuustanii	*But you deported me to Massawa*
Gumgumtuu nagootanii	*And made me mutter*
….	….
Naminni lammii yaadu	*One who is longing for his/ her nation*
gara hinqabuu	*Is always in confusion*
Otuun ka'ee fiigee	*If I run and escape*
Naqaqqabuu laataa yaa humna koo	*Can they catch me?*

Utuun taa'ee boo'ee	*If I sit down and cry*
Nataajjabdaa laata yaa garaakoo	*Do I regret!*
Adaraa yaa mukaa	*Please! You, a tree*
Dameekee hinraasinii	*Do not jiggle your branch*
Adaraa yaa du'aa gargar nuhinbaasinii[79]	*You, death! Please, separate us.*

The collection of Oromo oral literature by the team of which Aster was the leader and organizer did not cease with the insertion of Oromo folklore and folk tales in the *Jalqaba Barsiisaa (the [Oromo] Spelling Book.* As the team clearly understood that the study of literature is important for understanding the language and culture of a people,[80] they also collected about five hundred Oromo songs. Out of these songs, 215 songs were published in 1899 after more than a hundred years after its compilation under the title *Weedduu Jaalalaa Oromoo (Oromo Love Songs)* bearing Aster's name as author. The publication of the book is not in the Geez letters in which they were originally written. Fufaa Ambacha and Kebede Hordofa transcribed them into the standardized *Qubee* (orthography) of *Afaan* Oromo.[81]

Unlike the songs in the *Jalqaba Barsiisaa,* these songs are free from the influence of the missionaries which the missionaries intended to exert over the Oromo world view and are the original Oromo songs, some of which are still alive among the Oromo. They are the songs evolved over generations. Although it is difficult to conclude that all the songs were collected by Aster, as many argue, perfection of the songs lead to the belief that many of them were collected by her, because she was much praised by the team, including Onesimus and Nils Hylander for her strong memory to recall the oral literature she knew while she had been among her people. Writing the report to the Swedish Missionaries about the progression of the

[79] Onesimus and Aster, *Jalqaba Barsiisaa*…, p.140.
[80] Kebede, "The Missionary, Enslaved Oromo…", p. 68.
[81] Aster, *Afoola Oromoo-Weedduu Jaalalaa Oromoo*….

linguistic work, Hylander, demonstrated Aster's extraordinary memory capacity for *Afaan* Oromo folklore as:

> *The [Oromo] girl Aster's contribution to the dictionary work is fine. She is filling many gaps: she finds the words, as she knows the [Oromo] language better than anyone else. It is enjoyable to see how earnestly and hard she works all day long with her pencil in her hand, and how she finds all the words which can be deduced from one basic root. Although she is young she is unusually steady and has a genuine character. Her face bears evidence of intelligence and energy. She looks so learned and skilful that even in the beginning I had due respect for her, being ashamed of my poor language. ...*[82]

For her memory of the Oromo folklore and her extraordinary linguistic knowledge, Hylander designated her the Muse of the group.[83] This, and other appreciations of the linguistic team for her, make us recognize her right to authorship. Surely, it was her own great contribution that made the songs a vivid reflection of Oromo culture. The vibrancy of the documented songs seems as though she had organized than into written form while she was with the shepherds, the firewood collectors, the traditional dancers, the bridegrooms, the fighters and the like. Although it is entitled as *Weedduu Jaalalaa* (Oromo Love Songs), the substances constitute Oromo customs, ethics, religion, advice, and ways of life.[84] The substance of the songs show indeed the relationship between *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity. The collections are voices of everyday people rather than Aster's personal self-consciousness.

Yet Onesimus and Aster remained with the translations of the Old Testament and Dr. Barth's Bible Stories. Onesimus undertook the translation of the Old Testament and Aster the translation of Dr Barth's *Bible Stories*. More than any other translations he had undertaken, Onesimus much complained of the difficulty he faced during the translation of the Old

[82] Hylander, pp, 83-84.
[83] *Ibid*., p. 85.
[84] Aster Gannoo, *Afoola Oromoo…,* pp. 5-97.

Testament. Although he had previous experiences of the translation of the catechism, *Man's Heart* and the collection of hymns, he stated that he found it very hard to translate an Oromo version of the Old Testament.[85]

Thanks to the vocabularies his linguistic team had collected, he successfully completed the translation. While effectively working on her own translation of Dr Barth's *Bible Stories*, being assisted by Onesimus, Aster contributed much in revising Onesimus' translation of both Testaments as both the New and the Old Testaments were to be issued in one volume. Onesimus continuously benefitted from Aster's work when he sought idiomatic and other expressions.[86]

Without undermining the contributions of the others, Aster played a remarkable role in the translation of the Old Testament and the revision of the New Testament. She participated in choosing appropriate words, commenting on the grammar, structure of syntax and in evaluating how for the original meaning of the Holy Bible was conveyed in its translation into the Oromo language. In doing so, they completed the translations and the revision in June 1897 and continued proof readings for consistence with the revisions until the manuscripts were dispatched to St. Chrischona for publication.[87]

In addition to assisting Onesimus in the translation and revision of the Bible, she translated Dr Barth's Fifty-Two *Bible Stories* into *Afaan* Oromo. The translation contains the stories in both

[85] Hylander, p. 87.
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ibid.*

the Old and the New Testaments with fluent and articulated Oromo language. Most of the vocabularies used in the translation were also employed in Onesimus's Oromo Bible.[88]

The two years gaps between the completion of the manuscripts and publication were used for minor corrections. In 1899 Onesimus departed with the manuscripts to Basel to supervise the printing. In 1899 St. Chrischona printing press published four books in *Afaan* Oromo. The publications are *Man's Heart God's Temple or Satan's Abode (Garaan Namaa Mana Bultii Seexana Moo Mana Bultii Waaqayyooti*)),[89] *Katakisimoo (Lutheran Catechism Catechisms reprinted*)[90], *Oduu Lama Si'a Shantamii Lama (Bible-Stories*),[91] *Galata Waaqayyoo Gooftaa Maccaa (Hundred songs and Psalms) and Macaafa Qulqulluu (The Holy Bible: The Old and New Testament).*[92] The supervision of publication took Onesimus about nine months. The cost of publication was covered by the British and Foreign Bible Society.[93]

Besides Onesimus and Aster's extraordinary contribution to the development of Oromo literacy and written literature, the roles the Oromo linguistic team played should get recognition. Writing in *Afaan* Oromo and translating scripture into it was not as easy as one might think today. The work involved was really very difficult to do where there were not well-organized scripts, dictionaries, syntax guides, grammars and transport facilities. Had it not been for the Oromo linguistic team at Menkullo, it would not have been possible for the missionaries to get a comprehensive and well-translated Holy Bible in *Afaan* Oromo.

[88]Aster Gannoo (Trans.) *Oduu Lama Si'a Shantamii Lama* (Near Basel: St. Chirschona,1899). See also appendix xi.

[89]Onesimus (Trans.), *Garaan Namaa…*

[90] Onesimus (Trans.), *Katakisimoo…*

[91] Aster Gannoo (Trans.) *Oduu Lama Si'a Shantamii Lama…*

[92] Onesimus (Trans.), *Macaafa Qulqulluu: Innis Macaafa ta Kakuu Moofaa fi Harawaa….*

[93] Tarfsa, p.16.

The contributions of the linguistic team to the development of *Afaan* Oromo literacy is beyond praise. It is not to exaggerate to say that publications in *Afaan* Oromo such as grammars, dictionaries, textbooks and other materials which appeared after the translations of this group could not have been written without drawing words, expressions and other linguistic structure from the linguistic group's work. In reality the works were solid and comprehensive which served the Oromo without revision for 84 years as Onesimus foresaw on the conclusion of the translation of the book stating that "…nobody else would be able to do a better job for many, many years."[94]

Although the translations and the writing of other Oromo oral literature at Menkullo were successfully completed and would have a profound effect on the history of written Oromo literature, the achievements were not without challenges. Besides the limitation of words during translations, lack of previous written materials, and the absence of other facilities, the most threatening were issues of the orthography to be used to represent Oromo sounds and the selection of the source language from which the translations were to be made.

It is true that in an attempt to write a language which has not a standardized alphabet, the main question that should come to the mind of the translator/s is issues of the letters to be used. Although Onesimus and the linguistic team confronted the challenge, they were not offered such opportunities. As I have discussed at length in the previous chapter, the issue had already got a decision during the publication of Zanab's translation in 1870 in favour of Geez script. The only possibility Onesimus and his linguistic group had was only to adjust and adopt the Geez scripts as much as possible to *Afaan* Oromo sounds.

[94]Hylander, p. 87.

However, the team did not go farther to improve the phonological distinctions of Oromo sounds. Ignoring the gemination of consonants and vowel length system of the Oromo sounds, they adopted the orthography as it served in writing Amharic even without adding transliteration or transcription. The only modification they made was that they adopted the Amharic ዸ to the Oromo sound (ɗ or dh).[95] As the result all the translations undertaken at Menkullo into *Afaan* Oromo were written in Geez script.

More than any other of the limitations in the Oromo translations and other written materials in *Afaan* Oromo at Menkullo by the linguistic team was that the Geez orthography used attracted criticisms from scholars and the readers of the materials. One of the strong scholarly criticisms was that of Enrico Cerulli. Writing comments on The Oromo Spelling Book written by Aster and Onesimus in Geez script, Cerulli presented his linguistic observation of the difficulty the Geez scripts posed to read the book as:

> *. . . reading this small book is very like deciphering a secret writing, and it is evident why, for 25 years after its publication, its substance remained unknown, and the Swedish Mission fell into the aforesaid error. …the author or the authors write the [Oromo] in Ethiopic characters; therefore, they are obliged to use a very complicated transcription to express the sounds of the Oromo language with letters of the Ethiopic alphabet which express very imperfectly even the sounds of the Ethiopian language.*[96]

The book also faced criticism from its Oromo readers. The informants of Boojjii and Najjoo unanimously assert either their fathers' or grandfathers' complaints about reading the book only with great difficulty. According to the informants, the letters do not support the word read perfectly unless the readers do have prior knowledge of the words in mind. As they state, to get the meaning of the book the readers have to read it again and again against their knowledge

[95]See Onesimus (Trans.), *Macaafa Qulqulluu: Innis Macaafa ta Kakuu Moofaa fi Harawaa….*
[96] Cerulli, pp. 15-16.

of the language in mind. In spite of these limitations, the materials were considered as a symbol of Oromo literacy, that *Afaan* Oromo had been fully established as a written language.

It is not enough for the translator to have an appropriate alphabet. He/ she must also examine from which source the language of the translation would be undertaken. Thus, the other challenge Onesimus and his missionary compatriots had much discussion about was the issue of the source language. The first issue in the discussion was whether it was possible to revise and update the translations which were guided by Krapf. But Onesimus refused, stating that the translations were more complicated and difficult to revise and update than undertaking an original translation, as they were full of errors in which alien words were inserted and other Oromo words were not used at the right places.[97]

The other but as the second alternative they discussed was the possibility of translating directly from Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament. But Onesimus made this out of question, stating that although it was "…preferable if the translation could have been made from the original languages, but as I did not know them that was out of the question."[98] Then finally, the decision was dictated by Onesimus's exposure to the Amharic source language. The translation was made from the Amharic Bible, which had been translated in 1818 by *Abbaa* Abraham while the Swedish version was used for reference.[99]

From whatever source the translation was done, what inspired those who got the first copy was not its religious authenticity but that it was written in *Afaan* Oromo. When the first copy of Onesimus' New Testament was sent to Jimmaa with the fourth missionary expedition in 1893,

[97] Tarfsa, p.16.
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] *Ibid.*

the Jimmaa Oromo were amazingly interested in it. They welcomed it as a symbol of the Oromo having a written language. In 1894, the missionary station at Menkullo received a report that Niguse and Farajaa (Yohannis) were reading the Oromo Bible at the Sunday sermon at the residence of *Abbaa* Jifaar for the palace Oromo including *Abbaa* Jifaar. According to the reports cited in Arén, *Abbaa* Jifaar was listening to the reading marvelling for the reason that it was in Oromo language.[100]

4.2. *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo Children at Sheik Othman Missionary Camp

As at Menkullo, at Sheik Othman missionary camp *Afaan* Oromo was made one of the most frequently used literacy languages. The camp was established by The Free Church of Scotland Mission in 1888 just north of Aden. The purpose was to house and educate the children liberated from slavery by the Royal Navy in the Red Sea. Sandra Shell, who wrote her dissertation on Lovedale Oromo children, points out that at the camp, there were two hundred and seventy rescued Oromo children of whom a hundred and seventy were males and a hundred were females. The teaching of *Afaan* Oromo was started simultaneously with the beginning of teaching the children the Christian way of life.[101]

The instructors of the children at the camp were recruited on the basis of their command of *Afaan* Oromo. Shell affirmed that the three teachers assigned to instruct the children were either native Oromo or had learned *Afaan* Oromo up to the of fluency. Two of them were

[100]Arén, Evangelical Pioneers…, p. 272.

[101] Sandra R. Shell, "From Slaver to Freedom: The Oromo Children of Lovedale, Prosopography and Profiles" (Ph. D. Dissertation: Department of History, University of Cape Town, 2013), pp. 133-134.Lovedale was a mission institution established in South Africa by Glasgow Missionary Society in the Cape Province of South Africa in 1824 and was named after Dr. John Love, one of the leading members of, and at the time secretary to, the society. Initially its aim was to convert the Bantu Children to Christianity and later extended its scope of conversion to other ethnic groups in Africa. *Ibid*., pp.139-140.

females and sent from Cairo by Dr Gulian Lansing who was a missionary in Cairo at the time.[102]

A third teacher was Gebru Desta.[103] Gebru's teaching of the Oromo children at Sheik Othman missionary school was not his first work. Before that he taught in Guduruu, Wallagga after he had been forced to switch his Azezo (Near Gondar) missionary service around the end of 1880. His Guduruu missionary instruction was started to suppress the intensified slave trade, as Guduruu was a place where slave trade routes formed a conjunction. Because of his devotion to teach about humanity at Guduruu, Gebru was widely recognized as the first Oromo evangelist. However, because of the inconvenience Menilek II felt about the situation, Gebru quitted his teaching of Oromo children and was forced to leave the area to Ginda Barat in Shawa and then Jerusalem in 1886. It was while he was returning from Jerusalem to Ethiopia that he became aware of the existence of the Oromo children at the school of Sheik Othman at Aden and became the leading *Afaan* Oromo missionary of the institution.[104]

[102]*Ibid.* Accounts on the early lives of the two female instructors remain obscure. Except informing us that they were sent from Cairo and were fluent speakers of *Afaan* Oromo, literature on the theme says nothing about their names, birthplaces, and educational background.

[103] According to Shell, Gebru was an instructor of Oromo children at Aden missionary school in *Afaan* Oromo. see Shell, pp. 134-184. On the other hand, although Bahru doesn't deny Gebru's assignment to Oromo missionary work, he omitted Gebru's knowledge of *Afaan* Oromo when he lists the languages Gebru had good command of. Nonetheless, Gebru affirmed in his autobiography that he knew *Afaan* Oromo stating that "…በ ከ አሶማን ካምፕ አገኛቸኋቸው ቀርበም *[ለኦሮምኛ]* ሳናግራቸዉ ጊዜ በአንቱ ተጠምጥመዉ ስላለቀሱ…" (…when I got them at Sheik Osman camp and *talked to them in Afaan Oromo*, they hugged around my neck and began to weep...). Emphasis is mine. Gebru Desta, Autobiography, IES MS 1682, p. 55.

He also states that Gebru was a Felasha by birth. See Bahru Zewde *Pioneers of Change …*, pp.42 Teshome Wagaw argues that he was from Gondar and was sent to Felasha for missionary work. See Teshome Wagaw, *Education in Ethiopia: Prospect and Retrospect* (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan State, 1979), pp. 23-24.

[104] Because of conflict between the Shawans and the Gojjames around 1882 over the expansion to Wallagga, Gebru was forced to leave Guduruu (North Wallagga) to West Shewa, which is specifically known as Ginda Barat and again because of Menilek II's disapproval of his settling there, he was forced to leave to Jerusalem in 1886. Gebru, "Autobiography…", pp. 33-45; Bahru, *Pioneers of Changes*…, pp. 43-44. It was while he was returning from Jerusalem that he joined the missionary institution of Sheik Othman at Aden. Shell, p. 248.

It was in this setting that *Afaan* Oromo literacy began as the missionaries embraced literacy education in the vernacular as a means to success in evangelization. With his two female colleagues, Gebru taught how to read and write in *Afaan* Oromo. They taught *Afaan* Oromo not only to the children but also to the three Scottish Missionaries and supervisors of the camp, Matthew Lochhead, William Gardner and Alexander Paterson. In doing so, they made *Afaan* Oromo not only the language of instruction between their *Afaan* Oromo instructors and the children but also the language of communication in the institution. Shell maintains that the use of *Afaan* Oromo helped the children to reflect on and developed further all they had in their memories when they were interviewed about their family structure, wealth, the moment of their capture, and their dreadful journey to the sea as easily as if they were with their families.[105]

In addition, Gebru contributed a lot in interviewing the children and translating the interviews into English.[106] What the teachers wrote in *Afaan* Oromo produced at least some influence on *Afaan* Oromo literature as it had a role in forming a link between oral and written literature in *Afaan* Oromo. Nonetheless, no data is available whether the interviews were documented in *Afaan* Oromo or not. What Shell appended in her dissertation is the only English translation.

Although the beginning of Sheik Othman Oromo literacy was rewarding, the continuity of the school was challenged by thefts of children into re-enslavement, malaria and harsh climate caused a high mortality rate. Within no more than a year, the camp lost one-third of the children

[105] Gebru, "Autobiography…", pp. 33-45; Shell, pp.134-136.
[106] "Gebru (Gaba'oo) Desta" [online resource] http://www.dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/gebru_desta.html.

it had rescued. As a result, in 1889 the mentors of the camp collected about sixty-four surviving Oromo children and shipped them to Lovedale missionary institution of South Africa.[107]

4.3. *Afaan* Oromo and Rescued Oromo Children at Lovedale

The attempts to use *Afaan* Oromo as a language of literacy and the Protestant missionary endeavours that attempted to make Oromo children literate to use them as agents of evangelization were also made at Lovedale in South Africa. The Lovedale Missionary Institution began its education of Oromo children in 1890. The students were those who had been transferred from Sheik Othman Missionary camp to South Africa. In fact, this was not the first relation the Lovedale had established with the Oromo mission. The earliest attempt to use the institution as a centre of missionary training to reach the Oromo had been made in 1854 when a Brig Kandaze was sent by Hermannsburg Missionary Institution.[108] However, the role of the institution with Oromo missionary work and literacy became significant along with the arrival of rescued Oromo slaves in 1890. Until this period very little is known about the institution's achievements in Oromo missionary and literacy work.

The children joined Lovedale missionary school still with the close social relations they had established at Sheik Othman camp. They were received into two buildings which had been constructed for them and named the Oromo buildings: one for the boys and the other for the girls. Combining the close relationship they had created at Sheik Othman school on the basis of their common mother tongue with the opportunity the children were offered to live in the

[107]Shell, p.139.

[108] Hermannsburg Missionary institution was established in North Germany in 1849 by Louis Harms with the objective of reaching overseas societies with scriptures in their own languages. In 1851 the founder of the institution, Louis Harms, made total focus on the Oromo stating that "The [Oromo] country south of Abyssinia in East Africa has become so extremely important to me during the past weeks that I believe there is no country more promising than this in all Africa. For details, see Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…*, pp.114.

same institution,[109] the children felt more free to communicate in *Afaan* Oromo. The Oromo children also taught *Afaan* Oromo to the other children at the mission. According to Shell, from 1890-1900 *Afaan* Oromo became one of the major literary languages of Lovedale missionary institution.[110]

In the institution the children proved Charles Taylor's assertion which says, "It is a language which constitutes social relations; language shapes and sustains the speech community as it is shaped and sustained by the community that speaks it."[111] Although no two children came from the same village or knew each other before their enslavement, in the Lovedale institution they defined themselves according to their common origin by the language they spoke as mother tongue. People wholly unknown to each other were found uttering the same verse to the same melody. [112]

According to Shell, it was difficult to see the children as separate individuals from their days at Sheik Othman Missionary institution to the end when the children departed from Lovedale missionary school. They lived together reconstructing their own parents' Oromo world view. The only identity difference they reflected was sex difference. They turned an alien world into home. In doing so Shell maintains that in the institution the Oromo children formed a small 'Oromo colony' on the basis of their common mother tongue.[113] According to the reports quoted by Shell several times, the students reflected their tightened bonds to their ethnic identity when they expressed their pining for home.

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[109] Shell, pp.148-151.

[110] *Ibid.*

[111] Charless Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (*Cambridge* and London: Harvard University, Press,1995), pp. 98-99.

[112] Shell, pp. 148-152 &233.

[113] Shell, pp.150-151.

Although no clear assertion was made for the reason, what was more interesting was that the Oromo students at Lovedale did not drop their Oromo names after baptism like Oromo children in other missionary institutions. The students might not have had new names imposed by their tutors which deprived the children of the names of their ethnic identity. However, the reason seems to have been the focus of the institution to make the children self-help civilians rather than missionary-monitored envoys of the gospel, as the training of the children equally focused on secular education as on Bible knowledge.[114]

The literacy contribution of Lovedale missionary school went beyond using *Afaan* Oromo as the medium of instruction and religious services. The graduates of the mission institution demonstrated their wish to convert *Afaan* Oromo from oral form to written. They translated St. Mark into *Afaan* Oromo and published it in Latin characters at Lovedale in 1893.[115] The publication of an [Oromo]-English and English-Oromo Dictionary in 1913 in the preparation of which Liiban Bulii,[116] one of the graduates of the missionary school where he worked as clerk, were the influences of the institution.

Missionary involvement in the spread of Christianity among the Oromo and the linking of this process to education also took place in what is now Kenya. Thomas Wakefield translated the Gospel of St. John into the Booranaa dialect of *Afaan* Oromo and published it at the United Methodist Free Church in Ribe 1878. In 1889 he also published the revised copy of the same Gospel at the British and Foreign Bible Society in London.[117]

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[114] *Ibid*.pp,153-171.

[115] Tarfsa, p. 15; Theodore Huebener, "Ethiopia: Land of A Hundred Tongues" in *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 53, No.2 (February 1969), pp.90-93.

[116]Foot, *[Oromo]-English, English-[Oromo] Dictionary…*

[117] Huebener, pp. 90-93. Nevertheless, inaccessibility to the published text prevented me from making more analysis of the relation of the translated books with that of their contemporaries.

Generally, the role that the Swedish Evangelical missionaries and the Oromo linguistic team played in the development of Oromo literacy and written Oromo literature was extremely powerful and ground breaking. Although the primary purpose was to create a strong link between *Afaan* Oromo and Protestant Christianity, these insistent missionary involvements in the spread of Christianity and the linking of a process to education frequently resulted in the development of literacy among the native Oromo.

4.4. The Catholics and Oromo Literature in the Realm of Oromo Missionaries

Although it cannot be compared with that of the Protestants, the contribution of Catholic missionaries in the development of written Oromo literature should not be overlooked. In the plan to use *Afaan* Oromo as a literacy language in their proselytization activities, Catholics also established literary schools in their institutions and to some extent worked on Oromo literature. Similar to that of the Protestant missionaries, Catholic literacy education in *Afaan* Oromo was dual. On the one hand, the Catholic missionaries learned *Afaan* Oromo to use it in preaching, teaching and preparing scriptures. On the other hand, they taught Oromo children both in *Afaan* Oromo and other European language/s to use them as indigenous evangelizers. In both cases, the contribution they made to the development of *Afaan* Oromo as a medium of education and written literature is worth mentioning.

As discussed in the previous chapter, from the period of D'Abbadie the Catholic missionaries tried to reach almost all parts of Oromo regions. Walloo, Shawa, Wallagga, Jimmaa, Iluu Abbaa Boor, and Harar Oromo were among the accessed regions from 1843 until the death of Mgr. Cahagne in 1899. In all the institutions among the Oromo, they established literacy schools for the small congregations they collected.

For the most important centres we have a few recorded documents about their existence between 1870 and 1899. These were the stations of Finfinnee, Fikir Gibbii and Liche, all in Shawa, and the central station in Harar, St. Michael's Station in Awalle, St. Peter's Station in Surree, St. Joseph's Station in Laaftoo Karaa Miillee and St. Francis' Station in Bilaaluu, all in Harargee.[118] What made these Catholic centres important in the history of written Oromo literature is the desire the Catholics developed to have schools established in every station as they were convinced that schools were one of the most effective means of working for the conversion of non- believers.[119]

One of the successful centres of education in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century was the Birbirsaa Catholic Oromo College which was established in 1873 around the present day St. George church of the Piazza in Addis Ababa.[120] The college is remembered in Oromo history for it brought Oromo children together to Christianize them and to undertake evangelism in *Afaan* Oromo.

At the college, many freed Oromo slaves became literate through education. In their centres the Catholics educated native Oromos and enabled them to read, write and preach in their mother tongue. The educated and surviving Oromo students of St. Michael Oromo College of Marseille: Joseph, Francis, Johannes and Paulus were brought into contact with newly recruited Oromo children to the school and made *Afaan* Oromo the working language of the

[118]Aleme Eshete, "The Establishment of the Capuchin Among the [Afran Qallo], 1881-1889", pp. 6-7, IES MS 2336; Alberto Antonios, *Ethiopian Review of Cultures: A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia, 16th- 20th Centuries* (Addis Ababa: Rehobot Printers,2013), pp. 113 &134-136.

[119] Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia…,* p.139.

[120]*Ibid*., pp.118; Antonios Alberto, "College des [Oromo]" *Encyclopeadea Aethiopica, V.1* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag,2003), p.770; Kevin, O'Mahoney, and Wolbert Smidt, "Finfinnee" in *Encyclopeadea Aethiopica, V.2* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), pp. 545-546. We should understand that the said college was not the present day higher institution college but the institution in which students were taught religion and basic education.

station. They also participated in the production and translations of Oromo language literature as both writers and assistants of the foreigners.[121] In doing so, the station became the centre where Oromo children became literate and religious texts and educational literature were produced in *Afaan* Oromo. The college also served as the first centre where Catholic religious literature in *Afaan* Oromo was produced. At this College Fr. Tuarin prepared religious texts in Oromo language for church and education use.[122]

The station functioned well until it was forcefully closed in 1878 as an outcome of the Liche agreement.[123] The first victim was Fr. Massaja who was the bishop of the Capuchin mission to the Oromo and the founding father of the Oromo College. After thirty years of evangelical activities and Oromo language studies in Ethiopia, Massaja was rejected.[124] Subsequently the mission station and the college of Birbirsaa gave up their mission. The Catholics were all driven out of the country and their educated Oromo converts were ordered to leave the country or ordered to quite their activities as Catholics.

However, the order of expulsion declared against the Catholics did not make the Catholic Church abandon its objective of reaching the Oromo. Mgr. Tuarin Cahagne, who became Vicar Apostolic of the [Oromo] following the resignation of Massaja on 3 October 1879, designed another way to enter the Oromoland. He decided to establish again his own headquarter in Harar, passing through Zeila in 1881. The choice of Harar was based on the assumption that

[121]Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church…*, p.173.

[122] Elio Ficquet, "Cahagne, Tuarin, in *Encyclopeadea Aethiopica, V.1* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), pp. 664-665.

[123] Yohannes feared that Menilek might have obtained ample firearms through the contact. Consequently, Yohannes took away Menilek's right of contacting any Europeans independently by one of the articles of the Lichė Agreement. The agreement forced Menilek to expel Europeans including all the Catholic and converted missionaries from Shawa. See Tewolde Beyene "Massaja, Gugliemo" *Encyclopedia Ethiopica*, Vol. 3(Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), pp.848-849.

[124] Aleme Eshete, pp.6-7; Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church*, p.152.

the area was then under the occupation of the Egyptians and far from the control of Emperor Yohannis IV.[125]

Although the Catholics saw the Egyptian occupation of Harar as the best strategy for better success, their activity was not so much free from restriction. The Egyptians, who were engaging in the assimilation of the Oromo to Islam, as well as the previous Harar Islamic state, resisted the Christianization policy of the Catholics and drove them out of the area under their control.[126] In 1886 the Sultan of Harar Islamic state expelled the Catholic missionaries with 12 Oromo boys then under training.[127] The expulsion of the Catholics, from the region not only restricted the expansion of Catholic religion but also the opportunity of educating the Oromo and the efforts of extending *Afaan* Oromo from oral to written form.

It was because of the surrounding Oromo that the Catholics were able to get a foothold among the Afran Qalloo Oromo. The Oromo and their leaders welcomed them and gave them a station[128] until the Oromo themselves were subjugated by Menilek II's expansion policy in 1887. After Menilek II's occupation of Harar, issues concerning the Italian design brought another obstacle to Catholic missionary endeavours as the Catholics were suspected for spying against Ethiopia for Italy.[129]

Despite these challenges and obstacles, the Catholic missionaries did not give up their mission of evangelizing the Oromo and preparing books in *Afaan* Oromo. They continued to take every opportunity, undertaking basic literacy education and religious proselytization among the Oromo. They expanded missionary work and established different centres of education. They

[125]Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church*…, pp.131-139.
[126] Aleme, "The Establishment of Capuchins among…", p. 5.
[127]Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church…*, p.173.
[128]Alberta, p. 152; Aleme, "The Establishment of the Capuchins among…", pp. 6-7.
[129]Aleme, "The Foundation of the Capuchins among…", pp. 1-5.

began using schools that used the local language to further their aims to get converts. The centres of St. Michael's Station in Awalle, St. Peter's Station in Surree, St. Joseph's Station in Laaftoo Karaa Miillee, St. Francis' Station in Bilaaluu, and the Dirree Dhowaa station all had *Afaan* Oromo literacy schools.[130]

Their efforts also showed the Oromo in these areas the possibility of writing in *Afaan* Oromo. Nonetheless, in spite of their efforts to teach in *Afaan* Oromo, the teaching of the Catholics in Harar was not free from colour-biased separation. Unlike the Protestant missionaries who taught both the rescued slaves and the foreign missionaries in the same school, the Catholic educators in Harar had separate classes for the white missionaries and rescued Oromo slaves.[131] Although they did not make the reason clear, the isolation seems to have been to assert the special status of priests in the Church. However, in both the separated schools *Afaan* Oromo and Arabic were intensively given. It was reported that, for example, Fr. Andre Jarosseau was busy studying *Afaan Oromo* and Arabic in Harar 1882-1883,[132] which could be a key for his future apostolate among the Oromo and his work in literature in *Afaan* Oromo.

Catholic attempts to educate the natives basically for easier conversion also produced a good number of educated Oromo, some of whom were later ordained to the priesthood. From 1852-1899, eleven Oromo children were ordained to the priesthood. *Abbaa* Hailu Michael, *Abbaa* Fissaha, *Abbaa* Yohannes, *Abbaa* Paulos, *Abbaa* Yaicob, *Abbaa* Matewos, *Abbaa* Luqas, *Abbaa* Sahla, *Abbaa* Tekle Tsion, *Abbaa* G/ Mikael and *Abbaa* Elias were the Catholic graduates of Oromo origin.[133] However, what is the most challenging is tracing the ethnic

[130]Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Church…,* p. 217.

[131]*Ibid.* The interest to learn and use Arabic came from the imagination that as majority of the surrounding communities were Muslim, using Arabic would help them to conduct easier interactions with communities.

[132]*Ibid.*, p.132.

[133]Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic Churc*p. 214.

origin of Catholic educated natives as it was usually the practice among Catholics to erase all the clues including names from their African converts. Even the clue that gives information about their family identity was purposefully erased. Especially they never left the converts with Oromo names and they were soon given more definitely Catholic names. In most cases, it is difficult to identify and trace the converted natives from their European counterparts by names unless many sources with which they had contact are referred to.

Focusing on linguistic studies more than scripture translations into *Afaan* Oromo the Catholics contributed a good beginning to the study of written Oromo literature. Parallel with the establishment of educational centres in their stations, the Catholic missionaries embarked on collecting Oromo words, studying its grammar and undertaking translations. In fact, the translation was very limited. As far as the sources at my disposal indicate, the religious materials they translated into *Afaan* Oromo were only the catechism and the Gospel of St. Matthew.

The catechism is a book which was repeatedly translated with few amendments by the Catholics since the retranslation of Abba Jacob's 1853.[134] The second version of the *Afaan* Oromo catechism was said to have been translated by Father Massaja in 1867.[135] The third version of the translation was by Mgr. Cahagne and was published at Bonnafus printing house in Carcassonne in 1880.[136] Mgr. Cahagne is also said to have published different religious books in *Afaan* Oromo between 1880-1881.

[134]Abunni Jacobi (Trans.), *Katakisimoo: Barsiisaa Nama Kirstaanaa Bia Oromo (Catechism: The Christian Learning in Oromo*) (Carcassonne: Bonnafus Printing Press, 1853).

[135]Tewelde Beyene," Massaja, Guglielmo" …, p. 848.

[136] Fr. Taurinus Cagahgne (Trans.), *Katakisimoo Joki Barsisa Nama Kristian Bia Oromo Jedeti (Catechism: The Christian Learning in Oromo*) (Paris: 1880).

Nonetheless, the translation of the catechism, which I have at my disposal, is not that much different from Mgr. Massaja's of 1867. Its title in *Afaan* Oromo is *Katekisiomo Joki Barsiisa Nama Kirstian, Bia [Oromo] Gedti* (A Catechism or Teaching the Oromo country Christianity). Like that of Abba Jacobi's it begins with an introduction 5-6 pages long. In this part, the author introduces the transliterations that enable the readers to read the Oromo sounds in the book. The rest teaches how to pray, acknowledge sin and the principles to be followed in Christian life. Including its introduction, it consists of 41 pages.[137]

The other scripture translated by the Catholics was the Gospel of St. Mathew. This portion of the Bible is said to have been translated by a converted Oromo named Hailu. But again the translation bears on its cover pages the name of *Abbaa* Jacob.[138] There is no stated reason why Mgr. Jacob's name frequently appears on the translation of *Afaan* Oromo even on the book which was translated after his death. The translation was published in 1900 at the printing press of Bonnafus in Paris. The book has 133 pages and one to twenty-seven chapters of the Gospel. The idioms in the Gospel were clarified contextually in the footnote on the same page of the expressions. Another book by the title of *Raga Motuma Waqa: Kristosittif Lafarra Motuma Ufi Aka Dabe* was authored by *Abunni* Jakobe.[139]

Nonetheless, the books have the problem of precise representation of Oromo sounds which was difficult not only for the non-native learners but also for the natives themselves. Otherwise, the translator/s of the book had the concept of Oromo words that are long or geminated. For the long and geminated Oromo sounds the translator tried to use diacritical symbols. However,

[137] Abune Jacobi (Trans.), *Katakisimoo: Barsiisaa Nama Kirstaanaa…*, pp. 1-45.

[138] Abunni Jacobi (Trans.), *Wangelium Nagaa Kan G.-K. Jesus Kristos Qidus Mateos Aka Katabe* (Carcassonne: Bonnafus Printing Press, 1900). See appendix xii

[139]Abunni Jacobi, *Raga Motuma Waqa: Kristosittif Lafarra Motuma Ufi Aka Dabe* (Carcassonne: Bonnafus Printing Press, 1900).

in the diacritical representations, the translator did not establish rules of transliteration system and it is difficult to identify which symbol is used for the stressed and which one is for the long sounds.[140]

Nonetheless, the Catholic studies of *Afaan* Oromo was more significant in the study of grammar and dictionaries than scripture translations. In fact, the reason emanated from searching for the best way of conversion. While the Protestant missionaries believed that scriptures in vernaculars were the best method to win new converts, the Catholics held the view that it is linguistic work that takes the converts to the doctrine of the Church.

The Catholics were convinced that linguistic works in *Afaan* Oromo aided the missionaries in learning the local language and the converts how to read and write to promote the Christian messages with greater precision.[141] Consequently, their efforts to translate the whole Bible or its portions into *Afaan* Oromo were not as remarkable as that of the Protestant missionaries. Catholics are said to have preferred outstanding linguists to the best translators and as a result their linguistic works laid a solid foundation for written Oromo literature. They spent precious hours preparing grammars, vocabularies, and dictionaries in *Afaan* Oromo.

In addition to Mgr. Massaja's grammar of 1868, the Catholic Missionaries published different vocabularies, dictionaries and grammars in *Afaan* Oromo for which annotated explanations to *Afaan* Oromo were usually made in the languages of their own respective countries. In 1887, Ettore Viterbo, an Italian linguist and missionary, published an *Afaan* Oromo grammar in Italian language under the title *Grammatica Della Lingua Oromonica* in Ermanno. The grammar is 397 pages long, the majority of which are devoted to the discussion in Italian

[140]*Ibid*., Abune Jacobi (Trans.), *Wangelium Nagaa: Qedus Mateos…*, pp. 1-135.
[141]Alberto, *A Modern and Contemporary History of the Catholic*…, p.139.

language. The first hundred pages are devoted to Oromo grammar, from 103-266 to Oromo-Italian and from 267-397 to Italian-Oromo vocabularies whereas the rest is left for Kaficho, Yem and the other Southern nations' grammar.

In the book Oromo words, phrases and sentences written in Latin script are cited as an example under each explanation of the grammar with its transcriptions in Latin script. As he states in his grammar, his Oromo-Italian and Italian-Oromo bilingual vocabularies were aimed at easing two-way translations that were to benefit both the Oromo and Italian speakers.[142] Nonetheless, his orthographic representation of Oromo sounds is a corruption of the Italian sounding system. It remained difficult, using this grammar, to pronounce Oromo words correctly for both the native Oromo and non-natives.

Similarly, Franz Praetorius a German linguist and missionary, published *Zur Grammaticka der [Oromo]sprache* in 1893 in Berlin. Praetorius' 310 pages of Oromo grammar in German employed Geez script for the Oromo words, phrases and sentences he cited as examples in the book.[143] In this grammar, the focus he made on Oromo language is not worth much ,as most part of the account is left in German. The purpose seems to have been as to a precondition for Germans who wanted to learn *Afaan* Oromo.

4.5. Oromo Literature in Islamic Literacy: A Reaction to New Social and Political Dynamics

As I have tried to elaborate in the previous chapter, literature in *Afaan* Oromo in Islamic literacy continued making its basis in the rural societies. The contribution of Islamic religious

[142]E. Viterbo, *Grammatica e Dizionaric Della Lingua Oromonica, Vocabularic Della Lingua Oromonica Compilato Sulle Note ed Appunti Delling* (Milano: Gichiaarini e Del Missionaric P. Leon Des Aventurres, 1892).

[143] Franz. Praetorius, *Zur Grammatik Der [Oromo] Sprache* (Berlin: Verlag Von Reuther und Richard, 1893).

literacy to convert Oromo literature from orality to written widely expanded throughout Islamized Oromo areas. However, what makes Oromo literature in Islamic education of the Oromo in the years between 1870-1899 different from the prior years is its taking the forms of a resistance ideology against the expanding Amharization policy. Previous efforts of Islamized Oromo to transform *Afaan* Oromo to written form now became an instrument of resistance to Amharization. With this, among the Oromo conversion to Islam was perceived as a defender of the Oromo from Amhara domination.[144] *Afaan* Oromo Islamic poetry opposed the Christian expansion over their religion and Oromo identity and this poetry reverberated throughout social gatherings of the Islamized Oromo. [145]

The dispersion of Walloo Islamic Scholars specially from Dawwee to different Oromo regions gave momentum to the situation. From their long lasting experiences from Walloo, they taught how the Oromo should protect their Oromo identity against the expanding domination of Amharization being rallied under the shield of Islamism. As a result, learning in Oromo language using Arabic script began to be more valued and considered as a defender of Oromo identity. Literacy texts inspired by Arabic models of various kinds were used to enhance and shape this process. The process was intertwined by networks that used personal homes, huts, tents and the shadow of trees as centres of teachings and meetings. [146]

The method produced strong Oromo Islamic intellectuals who became not only propagators of Islamic Oromo identity but also strong defenders. They popularized the Oromo-Amhara

[144]B. W. Andrzejewski, "Some Observations on the Present Orthography for Oromo" in the Joseph Tubiana (ed.) *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (19-22 December 1977), p.126.

[145] Abbas Haji, *Conquest and Resistance in the Ethiopian Empire: The Case of the Arsi, 1880-1974* (Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 176-177; Temam Haji-Adam, "Islam in Arsi, Southeast Ethiopia (Ca. 1840-1974)", (M A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2002), pp. 31-33.

[146] Interviews with Tayib *Abbaa* Foggii and Shakkayitti G/Meskel, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008, Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Manna, October 10, 2008 and Abdul Karihm Abbaa Garoo, Jimmaa October 9, 2008; Kamal Fiixaa, Addis Ababa, October 30, 2016; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yesus, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017.

dichotomy by the *Manzuma* (Islamic Religious Poetry) they composed in *Afaan* Oromo and recited on any occasion of the gatherings. In the *Afaan* Oromo *Manzuma*, past Oromo glories were elaborated in a positive comparison with the fairness, justice and equality which are modelled on moralistic-didactic texts of Islam and Arabic culture. Prayers were also included to call God to preserve them from *Qiyamaa* (misfortune) which came to them from the Amhara.[147] Since a *manzuma* was short and easy to memorize, once it was composed, it orally circulated among the society reminding them of the critical nature of the new socio-political dynamism.

The *Afaan* Oromo *manzuma* forged literary networks between and among individuals and communities as well as geographical regions. Oromo Muslims and pro-Oromo Muslims composed, inscribed and shared texts as well as oral sources that were inspired by Arabic models. *Manzuma* are perhaps the most importantly texts of written literature in *Afaan* Oromo. Originally *manzuma* poetry was an expression of religious ideas about Islam and Muslim saints in relation to Allah but gradually the themes shared stories, histories, poems and genealogies, from the prior glories of the Oromo.

The realm of written literature in local Muslim communities encompassed many themes, genres and linguistic forms. Since Islamic reciters lived in the environment where texts were recited out loud on various occasions they created a complex matrix of interaction and exchange of the oral and the written. These shared texts formed common repositories of

[147]*Ibid.*

images, memories, and meanings that in turn fostered a consciousness of belonging to trans-Oromo communities.[148]

In fact, this was not a feature only of the *Afaan* Oromo *Manzuma*. Roniti Ricci witnessed a similar situation in southeast Asia stating that, "Texts written in metrical verse and meant to be recited, often in public, were central to conveying and shaping cultural codes, religious doctrines and political agendas."[149] Public recitation of a manuscript meant that its message reached many listeners simultaneously. Therefore, the *Afaan* Oromo *manzuma* not only played a role in developing written literature in *Afaan* Oromo and expansion of Islam but also served as a newspaper of the time.

Nonetheless, as Andrzejewski clearly observed, these texts did not have wide circulation and remained in the hands of religious leaders and preachers without getting publication.[150] Therefore, accessing *Afaan* Oromo texts in Arabic script of this period is not an easy task. Andrzejewski faced the same problem in 1970s,[151] and there is no report on the collection of such manuscripts. The few copies of manuscripts found in the hands of individual religious leaders and researchers are characterized by problem of dating and it is thus difficult to be certain of the period when the manuscripts were written.

The attention given to the collection and preservation of *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo also seems limited for two main reasons. One, because of the assumption that as Ricci succinctly stated no language can represent Arabic in revealing divine Qur'anic messages.[152] Second, the

[148] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018.

[149] Roniti Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversation and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011): http://www.book4you.org, p. 2.

[150] Andrzejewski, "Some Observations on the Present Orthography for Oromo…, p. 126.

[151] *Ibid*.

[152] Ricci, p.153.

Muslim Oromo were under double suppression. On the one hand, they used *Afaan* Oromo which the Amhara assumed should be replaced its writing by Amharic. On the other hand, they were Muslims who should be Christianized into Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Although writings in *Afaan* Oromo using Arabic script undoubtedly existed in number, the preservation of the manuscripts was not supported by both the believers and the politicians so that there was no demand for collections and preservation. Nonetheless, the writing of Birille Safa,[153] Kemal Abdulwehab[154] and Abdallah Hadir[155] are the proof of the existence of this long flourishing culture of writing in Oromo.

Although the impact of the *Manzuma* upon the consciousness of the Oromo against oppression was remarkable, the absence of the records of its manuscripts limited its literary impact upon written Oromo literature. The impact on Oromo literacy was less probably because one cannot know and evaluate how and in what form it was written. Its literacy impact on the current and future generations cannot therefore be properly assessed.

4.6. Oromo Oral Literature: The Voices in the Resistance Movement

Although there had been raids and counter-raids between the Oromo and the Ethiopian state builders before, the large scale expansion over the Oromo was undertaken in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century.[156] The expansion was characterized by not only territorial occupation but also the imposition of newly imposed life styles, language and religion.[157] On their part,

[153]Mohammed Hakim, "Birillee-Safa…"

[154] Kemal Abdulwehab, "Critical Edition, Analysis and Annotated of Kitab Al-Tarikh Al-anniby Shayk Jamal Al-Din Mohammed Al-Anni of Rayya (c. 1796-1883); With the Study of His Life, Literature and Shrines" (Ph. D Dissertation: Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University, 2012), pp. 158-1662.

[155]Abdallah Hadir Ahmad, "Qota al-Oromiyyah: The Ajami-Oromo Interpretation of Ajurriyya" (MA Thesis: Department of Linguistics and Philology, Addis Ababa University, 2009), pp.1- 77.

[156] Darkwa, *Shewa, Menilek*..., pp. 95-96, Mohammed, "The Oromo Colonial Experiences…", pp. 129.

[157]Mohammed, "A Short History of Oromo Colonial Experience…, pp.114-115.

the Oromo did not accept the conquest without putting up resistances, which varied from bloody battles as in the case of Azulee and Calanqoo to minor but continuous resistances as the case of Leeqaa Naqamtee and Jimmaa.[158]

In both cases, Oromo literature was one of the main cultural elements that faced the imposition of Shawan expansion and which was used as a main instrument of resistance. The Oromo in all parts of the country under the process of the conquest used their literature in one way or another to pose resistance against the expanding forces. It was the instrument by which the Oromo were determined to express and encourage the 'sacrifice of the struggle'. It was a strong form of resistance with unbroken continuity but has not got much attention from scholars. It was resistance through literature or what James Scott calls 'undeclared guerrilla war.'[159]

It is 'undeclared guerrilla war' because, according to James Scott, it has served to attack anyone from any level of power without creating physical confrontations, as James Scott has well understood in the case of Malaysia.[160] In the early period of their conquest the Oromo exhaustively used their oral literature to elaborate and condemn the systematic form of social, economic and political subordination newly imposed on them. It was a literature organized within a specific historical context which was most immediately situated within the contemporary happenings. In this way literature played the present day role of modern mass media such as newspapers and internet.

This is because literature is, whether oral or written, the mouthpieces of a society which has been used to reflect and even to document the events that have happened to the society where

[158] Bahru, *A History of Modern…,* pp. 61-65.
[159]James Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp.137138.
[160]*Ibid.*

the literature is produced and functioning.[161] Therefore, when challenged, be it in the freedom to express the world view of the society it belongs to or for its style and cultural contents, it reflects the cultural threats imposed on it. It is also an instrument to comment on what is happening to those who hear or read it.

Besides serving for folkways and domestic entertainment, Oromo oral literature became a domain in which individuals in a variety of social roles articulated comments on political and social abuses. The meanings of the content of the transmitted messages were characterized by calls to be united, comments on the collaborators and praise for the brave resistance fighters.[162] Writing about power, marginality and African literature, Graham Furniss and Liz Gunner succinctly state that literature is not only vulnerable to domination over its bearers but is also used to articulate a commentary upon power relations among a society and create knowledge about them.[163]

At the time although the Oromo were under threatening guns and the surveillance of traitors and collaborators, such suppression did not make the Oromo minstrels powerless to reflect the grievances of their society. Graham Furniss and Liz Grunner have stated this as a generalization while explaining the role of oral resistance literature in a society.[164] As I show in the following examples, praises of the heroes, satires on the collaborators, opposition to alien attacks on their cultural norms, the struggle over property right and call for organized unity to struggle against the imposition of oppression were the main themes communicated in

[161] Assefa Tefera, "Ethnography of Resistance Poetics…", pp.196-197.

[162]Tesema Ta'a, "The Role of Oral Literature in Oromo Studies" in Harold Marcus (ed.) *Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (5-10 September 1994), pp.983-988; Assefa Tefera, pp. 227-229.

[163] Furniss and Gunner (eds*.), Power, Marginality and African Oral Literature…*, p. 1.

[164] *Ibid*.

the Oromo resistance literature in songs, proverbs, folk sayings, stories, riddles, and others in general and in songs in particular.

Among these, while the others were used mainly in speeches and other communications, the resistance songs were sung mainly at public gatherings to report what challenged their common interests and to create awareness. For this and because of the limitation of space, I limit myself to Oromo resistance songs which explain the process of conquest as the conquest was also a challenge against Oromo cultural identity. The songs appear interesting to me because they fully express the deep feelings of bravery, hatred, anger, and frustration.

During the early resistance period, the Oromo used their songs to encourage those who fought on their side by praising them as heroes[165] who were born to their father and those who collaborated with the enemy or those who feared to fight courageously as traitors or cowards.[166] In both praising the heroes, and casting insults on the collaborators and the cowards, the Oromo minstrels attached to the literature the past Oromo glories, the dead Oromo heroes, the beauties of their natural resources with its landscape, their cultural civilization, their harmony with their environment and others.[167] They also warned that all these were going to be distorted by the strangers who confronted and suppressed them. Such resistance songs of the Oromo expanded beginning from Shawa to the borders of Oromo territories with the Shawan expansion. For such people, the Oromo minstrels composed praise be it in proverbs or songs or any other

[165] Bravery was not only the ones who fought the enemy courageously but in addition those who had concern to defend the Oromo cause.

[166]Interview with Ejeta Tolessa, Naqamtee, March 5, 2008; January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordof, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017.

[167] Tesema, "The Role of Oromo Oral Tradition…", p. 983.

suitable oral art forms. The struggle for property right and the attacks on their cultural tradition were also the major themes.

When Menilek II's general and empire builder Goobanaa Daancee brought the Oromo clans of Liiban, Gullallee and Eekka under control with the help of modern European arms in 1878,[168] what the conquered Oromo were left with to resist was their oral literature. Observing their defeat in battlefields and understanding their losing of the rights to exercise their culture and to control their resources, the Oromo immediately composed protest songs. Although it is difficult to present all of such songs here, the following song is a sufficient specimen to show how the Oromo used their songs to protest the Shawan expansion.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Inxooxxoo daabatani	*No more standing on Ixooxxo mountain,*
Caffee gadlaaluun hafe	*To look down at the pasture below,*
Finfinnee loongeessani	*No more taking cattle to Finfinnee*
Hora obaasuun hafe	*To water at the mineral spring*
Tulluu Daalattirratti	*No more gathering on Tulluu Daalatti*
Yaa'iin Gullallee hafe	*Where the Gullallee assembly used to meet,*
Gafarsatti dabrani	*No more going beyond Gafarsa*
Qoraan cabsuunis hafe	*To chop firewood*
Hurufa Bombirratti	*To the meadow of 'Hurufa Bombi*
Jabbilee yaasuun hafe	*No more taking calves*
Bara jarri dufani	*The year the enemy came,*
Loon teennas nidhumanii	*Our cattle were consumed*
Edda Mashashaan dhufe	*Since Mashashaa came*
Birmadummaanis hafe[169]	*Freedom has been taken away*

The lyrics directly address and simultaneously resist the chasm that the newly conquering government imposed on them. The song explored cultural, religious, political and economic expropriation of the four clans of the Oromo by the conquest. In all the verses, the song focusses on the expropriation of their land which gave them the foundation and shape of their

[168] Mohammed Hassen, "The Oromo Colonial…", p. 134.

[169]Tamene Bitima, "On Some Oromo Historical Poems" in *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde, Bd. 29* (1983), p. 318.

common identity. In this case their land and the Oromo identity were closely related. By comparing the past glories of the Oromo with the newly imposed suppression, it warned the other Oromo who were not yet conquered about the bad luck that had happened to them and called the Oromo to bond together to resist.[170] Although the songs resonated and called for different types of resistance in moulding public opinion against the occupation, thanks to European modern weapons, Goobanaa overcame them and conquered the Caboo Oromo now living in the Southwest Shawa.[171]

However, at the beginning the Caboo Oromo defeated Goobanaa's forces led by his brother in law named Birruu Nagawoo. In the battle, the Oromo resistance song was used as an arm to encourage the fighters. According to Cerulli, on the spot of the victory the Oromo aired their pleasure in the victory as:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Birruu Nagawoo	*Birruu Nagawoo*
Soddaa Goobanaa	*Goobanaa's brother-in- law*
Allaatti Caboo	*O! eagle of Caboo*
Gulloo Waragoo	*O! hyena of Waragoo*
Shurrubbaa Birruu	*The hair of Birruu*
Nyaatee fixxemoo	*Have you eaten entirely*
Tuultee keessaa	*Or have you put it as it is*
Cabaa irbaatakoo	*A bite for my supper*
Caboo diinakoo	*May Caboo be my enemy*
Jedhe Goobanaan[172]	*Goobanaa has said*

The song was sung to celebrate the victory of the Oromo over the Shawan forces under the command of Birruu Nagawoo at the battle of Waragoo in 1882.[173] Since Goobanaa, the

[170] Assefa Tefera, pp.229-230.

[171] Cerulli, p.73. For the resistance of Caboo Oromo in particular and that of Bachoo Oromo in general see Takalign Wolde Mariam who gave detail elaboration on the stiff resistance of the Oromo of the area against the conquest of Menilek II. Takilgn Wolde Mariam, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1887-1974)" (Ph. D Dissertation, Department of History, Boston University, 1995), pp.96-98.

[172] *Ibid*.;

[173] Mekuria, *Contours of the Emergent…,* p. 329.

commander in chief of the campaign, was not present in the battle, the song was composed ironically as if it was said by Goobanaa himself, regretting the defeat. In the song, Goobanaa asked the eagle and the hyena in the area of the battle whether they had eaten the corpse of Birruu Nagawoo entirely or not. It also warned the Caboo Oromo that Goobanaa would take the revenge.

The song was taken as news and circulated throughout Bachoo area, to be ready for the same victory. It resonated across territories and different ages through individuals or on the stages of Oromo cultural ceremonies. However, although the resistance through oral tradition as usual continued, in the physical confrontation they were defeated in bloody battles and Goobanaa took his next campaign to the Maccaa Oromo.

Among the Maccaa Oromo protest was first made in oral literature, especially as in other areas of the Oromo by songs. The two forms of the peaceful and forceful submissions to Goobanaa forces[174] were well articulated in these oral songs. The artists in the traditional lyrics compared and commented on those who put up stiff resistances and those who submitted peacefully. The following few lines are extracted from the long column of the songs cited in Cerulli.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Tasammaa farda luffuudaa	*Tesemma with sickled horse*
Roggee dhufuunis kutteedha	*The coming of the Rogee is decided*
Waayyuu baqanni kuttedha	*The escaping of Waayyuu (Oromo clan) is clear*
Jimma dhufuunis kuttedha	*The coming of Jimma Gudayyaa is decided*
Gandaa Caalii ilma Waaqeettii	*The land of Caalii, son of Waaqee*
Dhaammanneerra nus isattoo	*We have sent a message to him*
Faxansaa isa iluuttoo	*Faxansa the son of Iluu*
Tasee ya'ilma Naadoo	*O! Tase, the son of Nadew*
Maal siidhaame gooftaankee	*What has your lord sent to you?*
Jaarsi areeda bukkuruu	*The old man with speckled bread*
Nus garaa muranneerra	*We are determined*
Tokkichummaa keenyas gammanneerraa	*We have felt happy with our unity*

[174] Teshale, pp.42-43; Bahru, *A History of Modern*…, pp.61-64.

Tasee ilma shulufii	*Tase! the coward son*
Gogaa saddeetama jigsee	*Mobilizing the awkward crowds*
Eessa ga'uu quba raasaa [175]	*Where are you aiming to reach?*

The song is about the league that the Oromo formed to resist and drive back the Amhara forces from their territories. The league was formed from the Oromo states of Leeqaa Billoo, Leeqaa Hordaa, Leeqaa Gudayyaa, Noonnoo Roggee, Noonnoo Migiraa and Limmuu. Although they did not arrive in time, they also called upon the Iluu families to join the league. In spite of Morodaa's refusal to join the league, *Fitawrari* Dibabaa Bakaree, the brother of Moradaa joined the league and fought the Amhara fiercely.[176] It was why the song first put strong criticism on Leeqaa Wayyuu and Naqamtee for their selling the right of the Oromo over their culture and resources to the conquerors and passes on to stating how the Oromo of different states united and took determination to fight the conquerors. It boasts the moral of Oromo unity while castigating and diminishing that of the enemy who came to them to conquer. The singer incites the preference of the Oromo league to die while fighting and killing even though their enemies were superior in arms.

Beyond this the most important aspect of the song it is an indication how the Oromo united around their common identity and saw those who did not as betrayers. Those who joined the league were described as the sons of the Oromo who were ready to die bravely while fighting for the common cause of the Oromo. On the other hand, it also castigated those who sided with the enemy against the Oromo cause as the sellers of their culture, identity and right just so as to live under any type of situation. It exhorted the clans to demonstrate strength, courage and

[175] Cerulli, pp.75-77.

[176]Tesema Ta'a, "The Oromo of Wollega: A Historical Survey to 1910" (M.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1980), p.78.

power and ironically attacked the conquerors. It also called for the continuing necessity to combat the onslaught coming against them.

Similarly, among the Arsi and Harar Oromo, Oromo folksongs were used as resistance instruments besides the bloody wars they undertook against the Shawan conquest. In the protracted wars that lasted from 1882-1886 to conquer the Arsi,[177] the Oromo folksongs were equally used with the spear and shield to fight the incursions. The Arsi used special the songs to articulate the nature of the wars and to castigate those who urged submission. Each and every point was eloquently elaborated both as reports and encouragement. Of the many the following few lines which show the nature of the wars are taken as specimen:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Amaarrii Waaqaa	*The Amhara is just like God*
Qawween bakakkaa	*Their gun is just thunder*
Kan deete fagaadhu	*Those who refused them, distance yourself from*
Kan gabbarte jabaadhuu[178]	*Those who submitted, good luck*

The song commented on the imbalances of the armies in favour of the Amhara and says confronting them is like striving to fight against lightning and thunder. In addition, the song castigated those who submitted as awkward and encouraged those who resisted to distance themselves from the Amhara force. Nonetheless, the overall message of the song is an indication of helplessness.

The tradition of resistance songs in Harar was also presented in extemporizing form based on stanzas of poetry within prescribed indigenous folk-tune models. The following song is one of the songs about the devastating battle of Calanqqoo in 1887. Since the battle was devastating

[177]Teshale, p.43; *Abas* Haji, "The History of Arsi: 1880-1995" (B.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1982) p. 43.

[178]*Abbas*, "The History of Arsi…", p.43.

and wholesale massacre, in Hararge the outcome of the war was focused on, rather than the resistance or the action of the war. Among such songs, the following is the best example.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Gaafa calanqqoo	*On the day of the Calanqoo*
Qawwee kuusaa se'ee	*I thought the guns a collection of woods*
Aara qawwee sanii	*I thought the smoke of the guns*
Hurrii roobaan se'ee	*the cloud to rain*
Wayaa afran Qalloo	*O! Afran Qallo,*
Wajjin Gallan se'ee [179]	*I thought we went back to home together*
Calanqoo caliidha	*How a silence Calanqoo (river and also battle field) is!*
Lafee bobeessanii,	*They burned human bones*
Laata eessa geeysan	*Where did they take the youth*
Daaraa lafee sanii.	*Ash of their bones*
Warri dhaqee arke	*Who saw the ashes of their bones*
Kana odeessanii,	*They told us that they were exterminated*
Lafee abbootiidhaa	*The bones of fathers*
Awwaaluu dhiisanii,	*They left them unburied*
Qoraan godhatanii	*They made them firewood*
Dhiiroo eessa jenna?	*O! men where we can name?*
Booda qabrii isaanii,[180]	*A place of their graveyard*

The song elaborates how disastrous the battle was for the Oromo and the cruelty the Amhara took as far as burning the bones of the deceased. It contextualized the new events to the Oromo already acquainted within their world view. They assimilated the new events with what they already knew, as the guns were like a big collection of wood, the smoke of the guns like rain clouds, to create internal feelings about the situation.

Besides these elaborations, the song also questions what to record for the next generations about the burial place, since the deceased were not buried as human beings. As Tesema argues in the case of Oromo oral tradition,[181] by doing this the song reflected what happened to them in the battle so that the song shows how the Oromo recorded historical events in their literature

[179] Badri Kabir, "The Afran Qallo Oromo: A History" (B.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1995), p.50.

[180]Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, *Mirriga Oromoo Harargee (The Mirriga Songs of Hararge)* (Finfinnee: Oromia Cultural and Tourism Bureau, 2004), pp. 19-21.

[181] Tesema, "The Role of Oral Literature …", pp. 983-988.

in a well-articulated manner to keep the memory of the past intact with the new generation. Similar to the articulation in the songs, Badir Kabir who interviewed the grandsons of the participants of the battle, succinctly expounded the horrifying nature of the war.[182]

There are many Oromo oral songs which castigate mainly those who betrayed their people and collaborated with the enemy. These people were castigated by the folk and compared with how others fought bravely. Such individuals have been and still today are connoted as *Haraamuu*, a term used to identify individuals who have sexual relation with their close relatives, which is completely forbidden in the Oromo culture. These term is also used for those who have committed wrongs against their people. In this cases, Goobanaa Daancee has been highly castigated as the worst and most dangerous betrayer. In almost all songs Goobanaa was condemned as unnatural base. The following song is quoted to show such criticism on him.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Mee takkan raajii raajaa	*It is strange, it is strange*
Dubartiin mana hin hattuu	*Women do not raid houses*
Kan saree dhaltuu raajaa	*that of female dog is strange*
Lammiin lammii hin baddaluu	*Relative do not hurt each other*
Kan muka qottoo raajaa	*Haft of an axe is strange*
Lammiin lammii hingurguruu	*People of one stock do not sell each other*
Kan ilma Daancee raajaa[183]	*That of son of dance is strange*
Gobanaa Abbaa Wadaajoo	*Goobanaa, the father of Wadaajoo*
Qawwee gar tokkoon mukaa	*Like a gun, a half wood and a half iron*
Gaangee gar tokkoon Harree	*Like a mule, a half horse a half ass*
Shaamaa gartokkoon jirbii	*Like toga a half cotton and a half shama*
Mootii gar tokkoon Oromoo	*A king who is an Oromo by a half*
Abbaa mo'e hamo'uu	*Let him subjugate whom he could*
Ani hinmo'amin malee[184]	*As far as I do not bow for him*

[182] Badir, pp.46-52.
[183] Tamene Bitima, "On Some Oromo Historical Poems" …, p. 131.
[184] Cerulli, p. 83.

The song associated Goobanaa's deeds against the Oromo with a female dog that raids its owner's house to steal and the haft of an axe that helps an axe to cut other trees for his siding with the Amhara, while being an Oromo. And it puts a doubt on his Oromo identity by characterizing him as a mule which is born from two quite different parents: donkey and horse, and with *shama* which is made of half cotton and a half wool. Nonetheless, the overall meaning of the song is that what Goobanaa did against the Oromo was strange to the Oromo cultural practice. Thus, it informed the Oromo that submission to the king who was a half Oromo was a threat. Within their contexts in almost all resistance songs against the occupation the Oromo widely took up political concepts rather than the usual cultural repertoires and the songs became increasingly popular.

The resistance circulated among the society as gossip, rumour, disguise, metaphors, indigenous dances, poetry, epics, story-telling, work-songs, ritual songs, dirges, recitations and ritual gesture in the form of anonymity.[185] Once performed variations of a particular song would spread quickly from village to village. Such songs were extremely effective means of reaching out to the people. The words had power because they had several layers of meaning which could only be properly understood by the knowledge of the language of the mind and an outsider could not easily get the meaning without the help of local knowledge. In doing so it began transforming the Oromo from a cultural nation to a political nation.

Generally, the last quarter of nineteenth century witnessed considerable dynamism in both the development of written Oromo literature and Oromo identity. It was when the foreigners and some Oromo-born individuals endeavoured a lot to transfer *Afaan* Oromo to written form

[185] Interview with Ejeta Tolessa, Naqamtee, March 5, 2008; January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27,2008.

because of the necessary use of the Oromo language in proselytising religion. Although issues of orthography and the attempts to teach the Oromo by being among the Oromo remained unsolved, the effort produced written literature both religious and secular in *Afaan* Oromo. Similarly, it was also the time when the Oromo began to use their oral literature as a hidden weapon quite different from the usual open criticism in protesting against the political dynamism that began to challenge the previous cultural identity of the Oromo. And the period concluded with the total occupation of the Oromolands and the missionaries coming to Oromoland with their vision of converting and educating the Oromo through the use of language.

Chapter Five

Oromo Literature and Silenced Identity: Reponses to Ethiopian Homogenous State Formation, 1899-1941

In the preceding chapter, I have thoroughly discussed the transformation of Oromo literature from oral to written by the efforts of Protestant, Catholic and Muslim religious missionaries to influence and convince the Oromo for conversion to their respective religions. The richness and the quality of the literature they produced in *Afaan* Oromo was analysed in relation to the methods they followed and the hardships they underwent. Along with this, I also tried to show the obstacles that began to challenge common Oromo identity and the common cultural traits of the Oromo population. Within this context, there was also discussion on how Oromo literature was challenged both in contents and forms as a result of the Shawan conquest, and the Biblical and Quranic cultural diffusion. These phenomena and other historical factors explained in the chapter will link to discussions in this chapter which pursues the themes from 1899 up to the restoration of Ethiopian independence in 1941.

The year 1899 is a significant landmark for our discussions because it was when the Protestant missionaries completed the translation works into *Afaan* Oromo and fully joined the work of teaching and preaching among the Oromo in their mother tongue in their home country.[1] It is also when Ethiopia almost completed the settlement of boundary issues with colonizers of countries neighbour to Ethiopia,[2] and fully focused on creating a homogenous state with one language, one religion, and one way of life, with full energy and confidence.[3] The year 1941

[1] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…*, pp. 384-385 &412.

[2] Addis Hiwet, *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London: 1975), 53-53; Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia…*, pp. 84-84; Perham, p. 266.

[3] Mekuria, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization…", pp. 325-328.

is equally important as it was the time when the restored Emperor excluded the use of *Afaan Oromo* for official purposes and suppressed the rising Oromo nationalism.[4]

The chapter is subdivided into four major themes. The first is about the development of Oromo literacy in the controversies between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Protestant Missionaries in Wallagga. This helps us to understand how the Oromo withstood controversies and supported the transformation of *Afaan* Oromo to written language. The second part of the chapter discusses how Oromo oral literature became popular among the Oromo at large and was used to defend common Oromo identity. In this part, the role of Oromo oral literature in exposing the domination of the people is analysed. The third part of the chapter treats the contribution of the Italians to the development of written *Afaan* Oromo in their colonial strategies. Special focus is given to the devotion of the Italians to *Afaan* Oromo linguistic scholarship as well as Italian use of *Afaan* Oromo in her colonial offices in Oromo majority areas. The fourth and the last part of the chapter is a discussion on origins and routes of Oromo nationalism. Under this theme, there is discussion is on how the pressures of conquest transformed the Oromo from a cultural nation to a political nation. It also puts emphasis on how conquest resulted in collective and bitter resistance which ranged from silent resistance to armed insurgencies and open struggles.

5.1. Oromo Literature in the Course of Orthodox and Protestant Religious Controversies

> *Gebre Ewostatewos[5] now produced his books in Oromo, read some portions from the New Testament and sang some hymns, for he had a beautiful voice, Fitawrari*

[4]Mekuria Bulcha, "The Language Policies of Ethiopian Regimes and the History of Written *Afaan* Oromo: 1844-1942" in *Journal of Oromo Studies*, 1.2, (1994), p. 99.

[5] Gabra Ewostatewos was a descendent of a priestly family in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and himself was a priest of the same Church at Hamasen in Eritrea. He was later forced into exile by his family who discovered him reading the Bible written in Amharic. He joined the missionaries at Menkullo and converted to Protestantism.

> *Dibabaa marvelled. He never imagined that it would be possible to use his own native language for sacred scriptures and Christian poetry. Excited, he offered the priest from Hamasen instant employment. Dajjazmach Gebre Egziabher consented remarking that the clergy from Gojjam would never permit the Oromo Holy Scriptures to be read in Nekemte.*[6]

The quotation reveals three main features that later on practically characterized a history of written Oromo literature as a centre in religious controversies between the Protestant missionaries and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the period between 1899 and 1936. The first is, Gebra Ewostatewos considered reading of the scriptures in *Afaan* Oromo as the best method to win first the hearts of the job providers, and then the hearts of all Oromo. The second is, the excitement of *Fitawrari* Dibabaa[7] upon hearing the *Afaan* Oromo from written materials and his subsequent determination to support the teaching of *Afaan* Oromo as a means to get rid of the newly imposed Amharic. The third is, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's[8] paradoxical position. It was paradoxical because on the one hand *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa did not want to drop the use of written *Afaan* Oromo in his administration. On the other hand, officially authorizing the use of *Afaan* Oromo would cost him his post as it was against Emperor Menilek's plan of forging a country of one language, one religion, one culture, and one nation.[9]

He developed interest in Oromo missionary work while he learned *Afaan* Oromo from Onesimus. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…*, pp.374-376.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp.395-396.

[7] *Fitawrari* Dibabaa Bakaree was an uncle of Kumsaa who was assigned as a ruler of Boojjii-Najjoo district in West Wallaggaa under Kumsaa.

[8]Kumsaa (Christianized Gabra Egziabher) was the son and successor (after 1889) of Moradaa Bakaree who had peacefully submitted to Goobanaa's forces and as a reward was given nominal autonomous rule over Leeqaa Naqamtee. At his early age Kumsaa was sent to Menilek II's palace, to learn life in the palace, Ethiopian Orthodox ways of life and how to maintain the political *status quo*. However, it is also said that during his presence at the palace, Kumsaa learned how much being an Oromo was tormenting. Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; See also Tesema Ta'a, "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia: From the Mid-16th to the Early 20th Centuries" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Department of History, Michigan State University, 1986), p. 169.

[9]Kofi, Darkwa, *Menelik of Ethiopia* (London: Heinemann, 1972), p.24.

Nevertheless, the pressures did not prevent *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa from supporting the language and culture they were born to. In order to overcome the anticipated opposition, both agreed to begin Oromo literacy at Boojjii Karkarroo where *Fitawrari* Dibabaa was a district governor under *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa. Boojjii was preferred because of two reasons. One of the reasons was its distance and geographical location from the immediate surveillance of the more powerful and notorious *neftegna* in Naqamtee, Arjoo and Iluu Abbaa Booraa. The other was the vacant position in Boojjii St. Mariam church for which Gebra Ewostatewos was recruited to be employed as an Orthodox priest.[10] As a result, the written Oromo literature which was produced over more than half a century was able to find readers among the native Oromo readers of Boojjii St. Mariam church in December 1898.

However, this does not mean that issues of *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity were free from the surveillance of Ethiopian state functionaries. By the time Gebra Ewostatewos arrived in Boojjii with his *Afaan* Oromo scriptures, agents of the Ethiopian state had already started discouraging the use of *Afaan* Oromo not only for written purposes but also even to use it in public.[11] Still, this did not deter *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's aspiration to use *Afaan* Oromo for religious and office purposes. Surprisingly enough, against the purpose for which the established church was imposing Geez and Amharic, preaching and teaching in *Afaan* Oromo were started in Boojjii Mariam church in December 1898.[12] At the time Boojjii Mariam church had a decade of experience as it was established around the end of 1888.[13] In fact, it was because of Gebra Ewostatewos's wise use of the liturgy in Geez and the sermon in

[10]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…,* pp. 395-396.
[11] Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent…,* p. 465.
[12]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…,* pp.400-401.
[13] Mengistu Senbeta, "The Brief History of St. Mary Church at Bodji, Wollega" (B.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1991), p.8.

Afaan Oromo, *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's overall patronage, and the large number of Oromo children in the congregation that literacy in *Afaan* secured a basic foundation.

Gebra Ewostatewos was very cautious with things related to the Orthodox Church. His wise use of the Geez liturgy was appreciated by one of his students, Abraham Taatoo. According to Abraham, Gebra Ewostatewos well knew the extreme sensitivity of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on issues of doctrine and language. Therefore, he critically made use of his knowledge of Geez, Amharic and Orthodox liturgical procedure on the one hand, and *Afaan* Oromo and Protestantism on the other hand. Although *Fitawrari* Dibabaa urged him to use *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo literature for the liturgical service instead of Geez, he did not want to deviate from principle in the making of Ethiopian unity and explode things before proper arrangements as necessary preconditions.[14] In the morning, he used to preach and serve the church as usual in Geez as his background was an Orthodox priest. It was after the service of the Orthodox church that he invited the congregation of the church to cups of coffee and gave a Protestant sermon in *Afaan* Oromo. At the sermon, portions of the Bible were read and hymns were sung, both in *Afaan* Oromo.[15]

The full support and patronage *Fitawrari* Dibabaa provided were the other factors for the promotion of written Oromo literature. He allowed the preaching and teaching in *Afaan* Oromo in his own house and gave Gebra Ewostatewos and his colleagues tracts of land to support themselves and cover educational expenses. He also gave Gebra Ewostatewos strong moral backup to teach and preach in *Afaan* Oromo as the best mechanism to advance the Protestant mission.[16] The large number of Oromo children in the congregation made the endeavours also

[14]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…,* pp. 397-. 398.
[15]*Ibid.*, p. 402.
[16] *Ibid*. p, 398.

favourable. Informants stated that the use of *Afaan* Oromo in the services soon began to win the heart of Oromo who were attending the church sermons.[17] The functional relationship between *Afaan* Oromo and social codes received stronger aspiration from the congregation. According to Daniel Ayana, the preaching and singing in *Afaan* Oromo by the congregation is said to have collected many new members as followers even from distant places. It gave them a new and distinctive idiom of self-expression.[18]

The arrival of Daniel Dabalaa and his wife Tiru in May 1899 gave further strength to *Afaan* Oromo literacy. On their arrival, they immediately opened a separate school of *Afaan* Oromo in which they and Gebra Ewostatewos's wife, Gumish Walda Michael, served as teachers. The foundation of this separate *Afaan* Oromo school drew boundary lines between the students of Oromo and the clergy families. Almost all those who were Oromo joined the missionary *Afaan* Oromo school whereas those of the families of the clergy remained in the *Qutir Bet* (Reading School).[19]

The missionary usage of Oromo religious words and names as well as Oromo folk tales and folklore in *Afaan* Oromo scripture teaching further attracted the Oromo children to the school. Besides, it is also said that *Fitawrari* Dibabaa also strongly admonished his people whenever there was a gathering in the church or for his reception in his hall to send their children to the school.[20] As a result, within a very limited period the number of students seeking literacy education in *Afaan* Oromo was raised beyond enrolment capacity. However, the school was

[17]Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tesfa Bula, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017.

[18] Oyvind M. Eide, *Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia, 1974-1985* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), pp. 74-75; Daniel Ayana, "Some Notes on the Role of Village Schools in Grafting Protestantism in Wollega: 1898-1935" in Taddesse Beyene (Ed.) *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 1 (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1988), pp. 329-334.

[19]Daniel, "Some Notes on the Role of the Village School…", p.334.

[20]Gustav Arén, *The Evangelical Pioneers…*, pp. 401-402.

able to admit only sixteen students because of the limitation of teachers and teaching materials. Consequently, for the first year the school admitted only sixteen students other than *Fitawrari* Dibabaa and his wife Bokafee. The children were supposed to study for the next twelve months only, to leave space for the next round.[21]

However, the designed curriculum of the school hindered the students from staying in their school for the stated months. The vocational education designed to enable the students to support themselves after graduation became a great factor for the interruption. Their families, who thought that the vocational education was a menial work of domestic servitude for the missionaries, did not tolerate seeing their children performing such activities. Consequently, these were only three students who were able to complete their education and graduated as teachers and evangelists.[22] These three students were Samuel Daankii from Allee Ambaltoo, Boruu Siibaa from Siiban and Akalu Ingida from Gojjam.[23]

Samuel Daankii was brought to the school by his father's mother while a small boy from Allee Ambaltoo which is about fifty kilometres from Boojjii to the east.[24] Boruu Siibaa had been *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's palace guard when he joined the school. He attended the school secretly in the night because of the strict nature of the work and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's refusal to permit him because *Fitawrari* Dibabaa prioritized effective guarding of his palace. However, *Fitawrari* Dibabaa did not want to insist and consented to Boruu completing the courses for baptism. Akalu Ingida came to Boojjii from Gojjam with *Ras* Mekonnon's forces against the Mahdists in 1898. He joined the school in January 1900 while seeking medicine for the fever

[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 402.
[23] See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 402.
[24] Gustav Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel in Ethiopia: in the Steps of the Evangelical Pioneers* (Stockholm: EFS Forlaget, 1999), p. 68.

he acquired during a buffalo hunt in the Daabbus valley. He became the third student to graduate from Boojjii village school of the mission. The Daabbus is a big river between Oromia and the Benishangul Gumz. It is one of the big tributaries of the Nile river. The valley is still today known for inhabiting large and small wild animals.

They were able to escape from the ordered withdrawal by their families from their education because Boruu Siiban was a soldier from *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's service[25] and was old enough to decide on his destiny. Akalu Ingida was a soldier who in middle age had come to the area in the service of *ras* Mekonnon's campaign against the Mahdists[26] and like Boruu Siiban, he was old enough to decide on his destiny. And Samuel Daankii came to the area from a distant place where his family could not observe his daily school activities.[27]

After graduation except Akalu Ingida who was made Amharic teacher at Boojjii, the other two were sent to their birthplaces to open other village schools. As the news of teaching in *Afaan* Oromo had been circulated beforehand, at the new centres the number of students seeking literacy education in *Afaan* Oromo was beyond the enrolling capacity of the teachers as it had been at Boojjii. Within a year, the two teachers reported from their respective centres that the demand for education was beyond their expectation. In September 1902, Samuel Daankii from Allee Ambaltoo reported that the number of students attending the class was ten while a much larger group was waiting for the next chance to be enrolled. Similarly, Boruu Siibaa from Siiban reported in September of the same year that he had enrolled ten students but he was under great pressure of the local society to enrol a much larger number.[28] The third graduate

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 402.
[26]*Ibid*., p.403.
[27]Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaaa and *Qes* Tesfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; *Qes* Asfaw Ballinaa, Naqamtee, December 16, 2017.
[28] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…*, p. 402.

was Akalu Ingida who became Amharic teacher of the village school at Boojjii. Bokafee, and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa became among the first expounders of Oromo scriptures.[29] It was in such circumstance that learning to write in *Afaan* Oromo took shape.

The establishment of the schools in three different directions at considerable distance from each other also disseminated the news of education in *Afaan* Oromo. Informants from the area explained that the society who had previously been told that *Afaan* Oromo was a vulgar unwritten language and sacrilegious for religion were surprised by the news and searched hard for books to prove the new reality.[30] The increased demand was not only among those who had been made literate to read and write but also among the Oromo who were not literate but had the news. It was also reported by Abraham Taatoo that every Oromo who heard the existence of written literature in *Afaan* Oromo was asking for a copy of Oromo in writing.[31]

The demand was reported to Menkullo and *Abbaa* Gebra Egiabher Kokebwork[32] who introduced Gebra Ewostatewos to *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa was commissioned to supply a mule load of scriptures in *Afaan* Oromo to Boojjii. However, the load was confiscated by the order of *Ras* Wale Bitul, the then governor of Adwa, in the autumn of 1900. However, the missionaries who tried to reach the Oromo for a long period of time never lost hope. They soon contacted Habte Yimer[33] who managed to reach Boojjii with two

[29]*Ibid.*, p. 403.

[30]Interview with Baanjaa Hurruba, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Sadii Mullata, Olaanaa Hundee, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Abbaa* Gabra Egiabher Kokebwork was originally from Zage (Lake Tana area) and was converted to Protestantism by missionaries at Massawa in 1881 while he was on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He was also a guider of a fifth missionary journey to Oromo country. He was also the one who introduced Gabra Ewostatewos to *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, pp. 288, 386-392, 398-399, 406, 421 and 449.

[33]Habte Yimar was a native of the Noonnoo Oromo to the southeast of Naqamtee. He went to Mekele as a soldier going to the battle of Adwa but fell ill and was left behind in Mekele. After he had recovered, he joined the Italian colonial forces in Eritrea and, taken to Asmara. In Asmara he became acquainted with Onesimus and

mule loads of scriptures in April 1903. In such ways the *Afaan* Oromo school had taken a strong hold among the society before it began to be openly challenged following the death of Daniel Dabalaa on 13 August 1904.[34]

Nonetheless, the expansion of education in *Afaan* Oromo and the increased demand of *Afaan* Oromo scriptures were not without resistance. Bit by bit the rumours about the use of *Afaan* Oromo in sacred church services and for holy books reached the ears of many clergies in the surrounding areas and became the source of confrontations. Although the rumours started in the early days of the beginning of using *Afaan* Oromo, open opposition followed the death of Daniel Dabalaa on 13 August 1904.[35] The immediate pretext for the open opposition was the refusal of Gebra Ewostatewos to hold a banquet ceremony as a *taskar* (a commemoration for the dead) at Daniel's funeral ceremony stating that it was not scriptural. Therefore, *Abbaa* Gebre Michael, the *Gabaz* (Administrator of the church) did not waste time to present the matter to *Fitawrari* Dibabaa who was then the superintendent of Boojjii St. Mary Church.[36] Subsequently, the event heralded the beginning of strong opposition from Ethiopian Orthodox clergy.

Fitawrari Dibabaa, who sincerely supported Oromo literacy, treated the case in such a way that it did not hinder the progress of Oromo literacy. The informants state that *Fitawrari* Dibabaa advised the *Gabaz* to concentrate on his religious work rather than opposing the development of Oromo literacy. According to the informants, *Fitawrari* Dibabaa frequently

deserted the colonial army and joined the Swedish missionary school. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, pp. 404 & 414.

[34]*Ibid.,* p.406.

[35] *Ibid.,* pp. 404-405 &411.

[36]*Ibid.*

responded to the *Gabaz* that the people had the right to hear God's word in their language as far as the purpose was to advance Christianity.[37]

Subsequent to this, *Abbaa* Wolde Michael evaded *Fitawrari* Dibabaa and took the matter to *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa , stating that the teaching of Gebra Ewostatewos deviated from Emperor Menilek's faith both in language and doctrine.[38] Thanks to *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's wise management of the case, the expansion of *Afaan* Oromo education was saved from early suppression. According to the informants and Arén, as *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa knew the case beforehand, he referred to the Bible in Geez, Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo, and responded to the plaintiff that there were no doctrinal differences between the Bibles in the three languages and all were God's word.[39]

Another serious drawback to the teaching in *Afaan* Oromo at Boojjii happened eight months after the death of Daniel. The death of Gebra Ewostatewos in an accidental fire on 10 April 1905 put an end to the systematic way of using *Afaan* Oromo for written and religious purposes.[40] The Orthodox clergy at Boojjii hoped that the challenge to their religion would come to an end with the death of Gebre Ewostatewos. They went further and declared that the early death of Daniel Dabalaa and that of Gabra Ewostatewos in fire was God's vengeance against their sacrilegious preaching and teaching out of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church linguistic and religious usage. They tried to convince the people that anyone who tried to use

[37]Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen (Biilaa, West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggaasaa Disaasaa, Jaarsoo, May 26, 2017.

[38]*Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid*.; Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers* …, p. 405.

[40] For how Gebra Ewostatewos was died in the conflagration See Emanuel Abraham, *Reminiscence of My Life* (Oslo: Lunderfolag, 1995), p; Arén, Evangelical Pioneers…, pp. 410-411.

non-Geez and Amharic scriptures in the church would face the same punishment from God, alleging that the two pioneers' death was the vengeance of the Virgin Mary upon her scorners.[41]

Had it not been for *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's strong efforts, the teaching and learning in *Afaan* Oromo would have faced early serious repression. *Fitawrari* Dibabaa took over the management of teaching and preaching in *Afaan* Oromo. The repeated warnings of the clergy did not get *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's submission to the warning. According to Arén, even more than ever before *Fitawrari* Dibabaa made strong effort to get the readings of the Oromo Bible in the province under his administration. Using *Afaan* Oromo scriptures for both religious and literacy activities continued, as they had already caught the heart, of the local people. At his home as it had been during the time of Ewostatewos, he invited the congregation to coffee and had scripture reading and hymns sung in *Afaan* Oromo. His protection for the two widows and children of the deceased continued as usual.[42]

He also did not want to abandon the presence of an Oromo leader at Boojjii Mariam church, fearing the discouragement of the *Afaan* Oromo congregation in the church. He believed that he should look for a person who could substitute Gebra Ewostatewos. Tegegne Wudineh was identified on the basis of his good opinion for teaching and preaching in *Afaan* Oromo. Tegegne was originally from Gojjam and had been assigned to Boojjii as the main secretary of *Fitawrari* Dibabaa in 1892. Tegegne had learned *Afaan* Oromo to the level of fluency and also revealed his Protestant beliefs which he used to practice in Gondar under Gebru Desta before coming to Wallagga. However, as he was not ordained, he could not exert pressure on the senior clergy to use *Afaan* Oromo scriptures parallel with that of the Geez and Amharic as had

[41] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…,* p. 410.
[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 411 &423.

been the case during the time of Gebra Ewostatewos.[43] Nevertheless, he served to check and report to *Fitawrari* Dibabaa any unusual development in the church.

However, the good thing was the new development at Najjoo, twenty-five kilometres to the west of Boojjii. At this centre, an *Afaan* Oromo school was established a year before the death of Gebra Ewostatewos in April 1904. The school collected much popularity from the day of its establishment as the staff were a group of renowned translators of scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo. The books they translated into *Afaan* Oromo had introduced them to the Oromo especially those of Wallagga before their arrival. The staff were Onesimus Nasib,[44] Aster Gannoo, Diimboo Garbaa, Hirphee Abbaa Magaal and Matiyas Roorro.[45] Habte Mariam Kasa[46] and Ayale Yimer[47] who were the learned Oromo who accompanied the group to Najjoo. Besides, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa's enthusiastic support gave the school wider fame and popularity.

Dajjazmach Kumsaa who had moved his seat to Najjoo[48] at the time of the group's arrival saw them through their books, and received them with great honour. He provided them with

[43] *Ibid*., pp. 409-910.

[44] Thereafter, in this dissertation I give his name as *Abbaa* Gammachiis as it was said that the Oromo never named him Onesimus but *Abba* Gammachiis from his arrival in Oromo land. *Abbaa* Gammachiis was late to join the evangelization of the Oromo at home because he had been involved with the attempts of the previous second and third journeys to reach Oromo land. See footnote no. 23 of chapter four. However, Habte Yimar asked him to reconsider the decision, telling him that *Fitawrari* Dibabaa and *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa were earnestly supporting the mission. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, pp. 412-414.

[45] All were Oromo liberated from slavery and the members of the linguistic team established at Massawa for the translation of scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo.

[46]Like Habte Yimer, Habte Mariam Kasa was originally a native of Noonnoo. Initially, he served as interpreter in Kumsaa's palace as he was good at Amharic. But he quarreled with Kumsaa and his retainers in the palace and left to become a merchant of long distance trade. It was while he was in Asmara for trade that he came into contact with Habte Yimer, a man of his birthplace. Habte took him to *Abba* Gammachiis in 1901 and he became a convert of the missionary. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 415.

[47]Ayale Yimar was a Muslim Oromo from Booranaa in Walloo province. He happened to become a missionary on his way to Asmara in a search of employment. He came to be acquainted with Onesimus and joined the missionary school at Asmara through the wife of his employee who had a missionary affiliation. Hirphee married Ayele Yimar at Boojjii in the same year of her arrival. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 416.

[48]In 1904, Kumsaa shifted his seat to Najjoo in order to undertake strict supervision over the gold mining from the encroachment of *Sheik* Hojole of Benishangul and *Ras* Tesemma Nadew of Iluu Abbaa Bor. Najjoo is a

full protection and arranged conditions which enabled them to start *Afaan* Oromo literacy teaching. He built residences and a school for them besides his home. He also gave them a tax free large tract of land so that the educators could support themselves and education expenses.[49] Subsequently, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and his officials, and the local people saw the teaching of their children in their mother tongue by renowned translators as a glorious achievement. Quite different from the previous education in Geez and Amharic at Najjoo Kidane Mihret church, the society of the area soon developed an earnest interest to educate their children in *Afaan* Oromo.[50]

It was said that *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his group were implored to enrol several hundred students if they could obtain teachers to accommodate them. However, in his report to the Christ church in Hamasen in early September of 1904, *Abbaa* Gammachiis indicated that they had only enrolled twenty students whom they divided into three classes for effective teaching. On his request for additional staff in the report, Onesimus noticed that *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's moral and material supports as well as the interest of the society to educate their children should not be limited only to a batch of twenty students as they had up to then done because of shortage of teachers.[51]

The church in Hamasen responded to the request of *Abbaa* Gammachiis for skilled teachers by sending them two couples. The missionary station at Massawa did not silently ignore the gaps

region located to the West of Naqamtee at a distance of 181 kilometers. Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen (Biilaa, West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017.

[49]*Ibid.* See also Tasgaraa, p. 68; Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel…*, p. 288.

[50]Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen (Biilaa, West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggaassa Disaasaa, Jaarsoo (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guuta and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), March 24, 2017.

[51] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, pp. 422-423.

created by the death of Daniel Dabalaa and Gebra Ewostatewos. A month after the death of Gebra Ewostatewos, other reinforcements were sent from Massawa who arrived in Boojjii in mid-May 1905. They were two couples, Gebre Yesus Tesfai and his wife Wuba Zenab and Gebre Sillasie Tesfa Gebir with his wife Sendeq Gebre Mariam. All of them reached Najjoo in April 1905. On their arrival, Gebra Yesus Tesfai and his wife Wuba Zenab were sent to Boojjii to reinforce Tegegn's staff. Gebra Sillasie and his wife Sendeq Gebra Mariam remained in Najjoo to reinforce the staff of *Abbaa* Gammachiis.[52]

At the beginning, the school in *Afaan* Oromo at Najjoo seems to have been less contradictory and enjoyed more peaceful conditions than that of Boojjii. Three things made this possible. One, *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his companions did not want to challenge the clergy of Najjoo Kidane Mihret Church for the sake of Orthodox Church reform. Second was the letter of permission, that the group had from the *Abun* Mateos, and the third was *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's wise use of his Orthodox father confessors in pacifying any rumour about the school.[53]

However, that uncontroversial relationship was not sustained for long. *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and his officials opened exhortation to *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his group to teach boldly and diligently in *Afaan* Oromo, and *Abbaa* Gammachiis's refusal to preach any sermon in either Amharic or Geez resulted in irreversible opposition of the clergy at Najjoo. The desertion of Oromo students from the Orthodox church the *Qutir Bet* to the *Afaan* Oromo school further aggravated the friction. As a result, the clergy at Najjoo no more tolerated the development so

[52] Tasgaraa, p. 69.

[53] Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; *Qes* Asfaw Ballinaa, Naqamtee, December 16, 2017.

that they began frequently presenting their case to *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa.[54] Subsequently, *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his team found themselves in a linguistic and religious struggle.

According to the report of Gebra Sillasie, who was one of the missionaries at Najjoo, the issue of frequent complaints of the clergy was linguistic. He stated that "When Onesimos began to preach in Oromo, which they[the clergy] did not understand, they complained to Gebre Egziabher [*Dajjazmach* Kumsaa], alleging that Onesimos had libelled the Virgin Mary."[55] According to informants, at the beginning *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa officially cooled down the irritation of the complaints, responding to them that *Abbaa* Gammachiis would respect everything about St. Mary in the Bible. In fact, the responses were made after thorough and hot discussion with his father confessor.[56]

Yet, the action anticipated in a serious way the future difficulties. The news circulated and reached the ears of *neftegna* settlers in Naqamtee[57] and Arjoo. The news reached Menilek II which made him to order *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa stating that, … ያልሆነ ያልሆነ ታይማኖት ያስተምራሉና እነዚህን ቶሎ ወደኔ ስደድልኝ።(… I am informed that there are people who teach sacrilegious religion, and send them to me soon.)[58] The endeavours of *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and local notables to develop *Afaan* Oromo into an official language by keeping it out of the repression of the *neftegna* settlers became itself a scenario of conflict. It collected support from the Oromo and took speedy expansion and began to challenge the dominance of Amharic in the area. The

[54] *Ibid.*; Arén states that *Abbaa* Gammachiis rejected Gabra Ewostatewos's advice to use Amharic for the sake of the Amhara clergy and then to have someone interpret it into *Afaan* Oromo. See Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 424.

[55]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…,* p. 424, footnote, 274.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 424.

[57] Although Leeqaa Naqamtee was to be ruled under the autonomous administration of Kumsaa, about 3000 Gondares s were settled in Naqamtee town to supervise trade and report any development of irregularity to the emperor. See Tesema, pp.177-179.

[58]Letter from Menilek II to *Dajjazmach* Gabra Egzabher, date *Teqimte* 3, 1896, Folder No. ወ/ሙ/3/34.

conflict was worsened when *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa took *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his team from Najjoo to Naqamtee in November 1905.[59]

As a result, the plan to establish an *Afaan* Oromo school at Naqamtee encountered persistent challenges. The clergy at Naqamtee Orthodox church who had prior information about the situation at Boojjii and Najjoo were shocked seeing the missionaries with *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa and immediately wrote to Arjoo stating that *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa had taken heretics into his protection. *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa faced the first problem related to the use of *Afaan* Oromo which became out of his control. He was ordered to go to Arjoo to accept the judgement of *Ras* Demisew who was the governor of Arjoo and superintendent of the whole of Wallagga.[60] By his decision *Ras* Demisew warned *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa that the Bible in the hands of ordinary people would be disastrous on the one hand and reported to Addis Ababa that *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa had hosted a Catholic under his protection.[61]

Dajjazmach Kumsaa, who had expected *Ras* Demise's decision and report of the verdict, sent *Abbaa* Gammachiis to Addis Ababa with his own justification. The *Abun,* who had first-hand information from the report, admonished *Abbaa* Gammachiis to teach only that Jesus is the saviour orally on the one hand and on the other hand ordered *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa in writing not to give them any local support. In January 1906 *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa was ordered to

[59] Kumsaa was ordered by Menilek II to move his seat to Naqamtee. Although there is no clear evidence why Emperor Menilek II moved Kumsaa to Naqamtee, informants unanimously assert that the removal from Najjoo was made because issues of linguistic and religious controversy at Najjoo reached him. Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, March 5, 2008 and January 13, 2017; Raggaasaa Disaasaa, Jaarsoo (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017.

[60] Arjoo was the region adjacent to Leeqaa Naqamtee. It was the region settled by large numbers of *naftegna* (settler soldiers). It was also a seat of R*as* Demisew Nasibu who was a direct appointee of Menilek II over Arjoo and Horroo Guduruu, and superintendent of Leeqaa Naqamtee and Leeqaa Qellem. According to many sources, he was more trusted than Kumsaa and Jootee Tulluu. See Tesema, p.162.

[61] Tasgaraa, pp.73-75.

support the clergy and have them excommunicate *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his team.[62] This was the point at which a serious blow to the development of written *Afaan* Oromo began take its firm position. The clergy in Naqamtee joined hands with the Amhara in Arjoo and weakened *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa's protection over the teaching in *Afaan* Oromo. This, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa's siding with *Afaan* Oromo literacy, reduced the trust Menilek II had in him. Consequently, as indicated in different letters Menilek II wrote to *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa ,[63] Menilek II assigned superintendents and emissaries to supervise his daily administrative activities.[64]

However, this does not mean that the use of *Afaan* Oromo for preaching and teaching came to an end. In spite of all the efforts to halt teaching connected with identity of the Oromo, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's position to maintain the teaching in *Afaan* Oromo and gradually to undermine the imposition of Amhara was not given up. The *Afaan* Oromo schools established in the localities with less influence of the clergy continued their functions more or less as usual. The schools at Boojjii, Allee Ambaltoo, Siibaan, Sadii Guuma in Qeellem Wallagga, Habte Yimar at Noonnoo along the border of East Wallagga and West Shawa continued an operation.[65]

Dajjazmach Kumsaa continued his support discreetly, although the protection he used to provide was suppressed. In January 1906, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa withdraw three of his servants from the Orthodox *Qutir Bet* (basic literacy school) and sent them to *Abbaa* Gammachiis

[62] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers…,* p. 425.

[63]Letter from Emperor Menilek II to *Dajjazmach* Gabra Egzabher, Date *Miyaziya* 28, 1892 E.C., Folder, No. ወ/ሙ/3/17; Letter from Emperor Menilek II to *Dajjazmach* Gabra Egzabher, Date, *Genbot* 26, 1893 E.C, Folder No. ወ/ሙ/3/167; Letter from Emperor Menilek II to *Dajjazmach* Gabra Egzabher, Date *Nahase* 14, 1897 E.C, Folder, No. ወ/ሙ/3/108.

[64] Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen (Biilaa, West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017.

[65] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 430.

school. He also allowed *Abbaa* Gammachiis to go to Addis Ababa with him to meet *Abun* Mateos.[66] These were within two months after he had ordered the excommunication of *Abbaa* Gammachiis and denounced his teachings.

The endeavours to elevate *Afaan* Oromo as a language of literacy and religion on the one hand, and the pressure to assert Amharic as a unifying language on the other hand, increased the conflicts. Again *Abbaa* Gammachiis was accused and made to travel two times between Addis Ababa and Naqamtee to be judged by *Abun* Mateos in June and July of 1906. On July 13, 1906 the *Abun* joined with accusers and sentenced *Abbaa* Gammachiis, his team and *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa to heavy chains.[67]

However, Emperor Menilek cancelled the verdict and set them free. Yet, the emperor warned them not to engage in teaching activities. Encouraged by the news, the Boojjii Mariam parish also accused *Fitawrari* Dibabaa and his wife Bokafee for reading *Afaan* Oromo scripture and *Fitawrari* Dibabaa 's commanding officer for sending his son to *Abbaa* Gammachiis's school in 1907. However, again *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa turned against the accusers and successfully countered the charge. Defying the indictment, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa ordered the distribution of Oromo readers and exhorted local people to learn by reading the scriptures.[68]

Dajjazmach Kumsaa also permitted the summoning of a teachers' and preachers' conference in Naqamtee. The conference was held in October 1907 and evaluated the development of literacy in *Afaan* Oromo and Gospel ministry, and the encountered challenges. At the conference, representatives of seven village schools were invited: Niguse Tashu from Jimmaa,

[66]Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen (Biilaa, West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017. See also Tasgaraa, pp. 75-78.

[67]*Ibid.*

[68]*Ibid.* See also Tasgaraa, pp.81-83; Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, p. 428.

Boruu Siibaa from Siiban, Gebre Yesus and Tegegn from Boojjii, Samuel Daankii from Allee Ambaltoo, Habte Mariam Kasa from Sayyoo, Habte Yimar from Noonnoo, and *Abbaa* Gammachiis, Aster Gannoo and Gebre Sillasie from Naqamtee were expected to participate. But Niguse and Habte Mariam could not attend the conference.[69]

The conference identified as a success that the teaching and preaching in *Afaan* Oromo and distribution of Oromo literature took firm positions in areas where clerical influences were low. What was identified as a main challenge was the banning of the distribution and teaching of Oromo scriptures in Boojjii, Najjoo and Naqamtee. Finally, the conference concluded, setting directions to continue the teaching in *Afaan* Oromo bravely without fearing the kingdom of the kings but the Kingdom of God and asserting the need for establishing a girls' school.[70]

Dajjazmach Kumsaa prudently continued his support of teaching in *Afaan* Oromo. In October 1908, when *Abbaa* Gammachiis was accused of teaching students and conducting devotion at his own home, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa systematically blocked the accusations. *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa discreetly warned *Abbaa* Gammachiis in an Amharic letter not to offend the priests. On the other hand, he gave tacit permission to continue the activities of teaching in *Afaan* Oromo. He also sent three of *Abbaa* Gammachiis's students of Najjoo to *Abun* Mateos to get them ordained deacon and to ordain them a year later as priests. His purpose was to replace Amhara clergy by them. The replacement was confined to Onesimus as Onesimus indicated in his letter to Kolmodin on 15/02/1908.[71]

[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid*.
[71] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, pp. 424-428.

However, a serious indictment that challenged *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa 's discreet support of teaching in *Afaan* Oromo appeared in May 1911. *Abbaa* Wolde Michael, the *gabaz* of Boojjii St. Mariam church, accused the Boojjii parish in the court presided over by *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa. The core issue of the dispute was "whether it was right to present the Christian faith in vulgar language like *Afaan* Oromo or Amharic."[72] It was a direct charge for using *Afaan* Oromo.

As *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa knew there was no mercy on the language issue if the news flared up, he tried to halt the issue through mediation. In spite of his efforts at closing down the issue, the news flared up throughout the town and became beyond the control of *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa. On 3 June 1911 the case was resumed and *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa sent the other six representatives of the Boojjii Parish to *Abun* Mateos for adjunction.[73] The *Abun* would have passed sentence of mutilation on the accused if they had not been saved by *Afe Niguse* Istifanos and *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis. In 1912 *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa was ordered to join *Abun* Mateos in condemning *Abbaa* Gammachiis to life banishment. In 1913/14 *Abbaa* Gammachiis was ordered by the *Abun* to be removed from Wallagga.[74]

Yet, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa never despaired of having teaching in *Afaan* Oromo in his domain. When Kumsaa Kitii, whom he had sent to Ziquwala Monastery to be trained for the priesthood, came back in January 1914, *Dajjazmach* Kumsaa advised him to have *Afaan* Oromo translation for the preaching in the church. As a result, he was given the name *Abbaa Tirgum* (father of translator). He also established a school in which he enrolled 102 students.[75] Informants assert

[72] Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel*…, p. 72.
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers*…, pp. 424-428.
[75] Kumsaa Kitii, who later took the Amhara name Gulti, was an Oromo who was educated at Ziquwala Monastery which was one of the most venerated monasteries in Ethiopia. He was sponsored by Kumsaa Morodaa

that the unusual increased number of the students was because of the instruction in *Afaan* Oromo.[76] However, because of teaching in *Afaan* Oromo Kumsaa Kitii was also sent chained to Addis Ababa for trial.

In spite of all these tough challenges, the teaching of the Protestant mission in *Afaan* Oromo continued in village centres as usual. According to the report Onesimus received in 1915 in Naqamtee, none of the village schools were prevented from preaching and teaching in *Afaan* Oromo.[77] In October 1915 it was reported that Habte Mariam Kasa had 49 students with three teachers including himself. It was also reported that the sale of *Afaan* Oromo scriptures was increasing rapidly from time to time. The school for girls was established in Naqamtee in 1916 with the aim of teaching some economics besides religious devotion as well as reading and writing skills in *Afaan* Oromo.[78] In fact, this was made possible because of the succession struggle in Addis Ababa between 1909 and 1913, and the short reign of Liji Iyasu that followed the succession.[79]

In February 1925 an elementary school of three grades was established in Naqamtee and received thirty boys and girls. The content of the curriculum was religious and the skill was reading and writing in *Afaan* Oromo and Amharic. Besides, training teachers for primary school in *Afaan* Oromo and Amharic continued. The training was given by Nordfeldt (*Qes*

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so that he would come to Naqamtee and serve in St. Marry Church of Neqamtee as a priest. Because of the translation he made in *Afaan* Oromo he was also known among the Oromo as *Abbaa Tirgum* (father of translation). Like *Abbaa* Gammachiis and his companions, Kumsaa Kitii was shackled hands to legs with his three students and they were sent to Addis Ababa for trial. See Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel*…, pp. 304-5; Tasgaraa, pp. 91-92.

[76]Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggaasaa Disaasaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guuta and Sadiii Mullataa, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

[77]Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers...*, p. 436.

[78] *Ibid*., p. 438.

[79] Mohammed, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism:", p. 150.

Martin), a Swedish missionary, who had learned Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo for the purpose. In January 1929 Najjoo missionary school was reopened with an enrolment of nineteen pupils, and Gammachiis, the son of *Abbaa* Gammachiis, was assigned as a first teacher of *Afaan* Oromo. Within a short time the number of students' enrolment increased to forty-four.[80] Yet, as possible to understand from a letter from Empress Zawditu to *Dajjazmach* G/Egzabher, the conflict between the Orthodox clergy and missionaries continued involving the engagement of the central government.[81]

Nonetheless, all the missionary efforts to transform *Afaan* Oromo into a literary language as presented in this section of my thesis was not free from threat to Oromo culture. On this issue I argue that the village schools established to promote the knowledge of basic literacy in *Afaan* Oromo as clearing the road for the implantation of the new religion also played vital roles in the destabilization of the established Oromo system of traditions. The students and the teachers of schools preached and taught against common Oromo concepts, principles and institutions, and were able to push them down although not able to destroy them.

This can be evidenced in the changing of Oromo names into Biblical ones at conversion. Ganamee Yaa'ii to Pauline, Ruufoo to Christian Ruufoo, Ayyantuu to Elsabet, Hiikaa to Onesimus, Gannoo Salbaan to Aster (for Biblical Esther), Hirphee to Feben (for Biblical Phoebe) and Dimboo to Lydia were a few cases as examples. The attempts they made to replace the historical identity of the Oromo with newly introduced Christian tradition were not easily achieved. Had they not been resisted silently against full assimilation to Christian tradition,

[80] Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel*…, pp. 302-307.
[81]Letter from Empress Zawditu to *Dajjazmach* Habte Mariam, Date Hedar 1, 1918 E.C.

and to the ministry of the missionaries, no one would be able to claim his *Oromummaa* as it is today.

Although not well consolidated as was that of the Protestants in Wallagga, the Oromo Muslim scholars continued the efforts to transform *Afaan* Oromo to written form. For example, *Sheik* Hussein who was known among the Arsii Oromo as *Sheik* Hussein Abbaa *Hiyyeessaafi Maskiinaa* (Sheik Hussein the father of poor and innocents) wrote a manuscript of fifteen pages in *Afaan* Oromo using Arabic script in 1910. In the same year, *Sheik* Faqih wrote a manuscript which deals with a history of *Sheik* Hussein Shrine using Arabic script in *Afaan* Oromo.[82]

The manuscript deals with how the poor and the innocents were entertained at the shrine even after the death of *Sheik* Hussein. In 1915, Kabir Manza Mame, a famous Sufi leader, wrote in *Afaan* Oromo using Arabic script the re-evaluation of Anajina (*Sheik* Hussein Shrine) history in the seventeenth century.[83] In 1930, Bultum Haji Qasim, who was the relative of Kabir, also wrote a manuscript entitled "Dhaamsa Akaakayyoota Kiyya Kabir Saddoofi Kabir Manza Hindagatin Naan Jedhan" (A Will of Grandfathers not to be Forgotten) with the main focus on Arsii Oromo settlement in Dida'a in *Afaan* Oromo using Arabic script.[84] The purposes were perhaps to use Sheik Hussein Shrine as a centre of resistance against the imposed homogenous identity formation from the Amhara rulers.

In Hararge the same development was undertaken. *Sheik* Bakri Saaphaloo, whose main contribution is dealt with in the next chapter, wrote a poem using Arabic script in the 1930s strongly criticising the Amhara ruling system and welcoming the Italians on the move to the

[82] Temam Haji Adam, "The Transformation of Anajinaa from A Religious Shrine to A Centre of Ethno-Nationalist Resistance, 1882-1991" (Ph. D Dissertation: Department of Literature and Philosophy, University of South Africa, 2017), pp. 16-17.

[83] *Ibid.*

[84] *Ibid.*

interior. The poem was composed and printed in 1935 to celebrate the removal of *neftegna* administration.[85] It was a sort of resisting the Amhara system using written *Afaan* Oromo which was completely opposed by the homogenization policy of the Amhara.

5.2. Oromo Literature: Between Identity Configuration and Unacknowledged Resistance

The symbiotic relationship between literature, language and identity never appears more clearly than in the resistance against domination.[86] The relationship becomes more tautened when the literature is in mother tongue. This is because, as Fishman argues, first it is through mother tongue literature that the introduced social injustices are communicated, and a reaction to the circumstances is called upon. Second, mother tongue literature is a storehouse where past collective identity is explored to provoke, to direct, to prevent, to overturn and to recast social reality during crisis situations.[87] Thirdly, it is also what the dominant group sees as a main centre of resistance to be broken first in order to negate the storehouse from where morale and courage for resistance against oppression have come. As a result, for the speech community guarding their language and literature from attack is guarding their common identity.[88] For the conquerors removing the language and the literature of the targeted community is getting a free passport for easy subjugation. Therefore, the contests brought the linkage between mother tongue literature and the related identity issues of the dominated group to the front and made its role the consolidation of a vibrant identity.

Oromo literature and Oromo identity in the first three decades of the twentieth century experienced the same challenges. Once the conquest was completed, language and cultural

[85] Mohammed, "Shaykh Bakrii Saphaloo (1895-1980): A Prolific …, pp. 135-178.
[86] Chriost, p. 18.
[87] Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity…*, pp. 227-228.
[88] Mekuria, *Contours of Emergent*…, pp.458-460.

assimilation into 'core Ethiopian culture' were encouraged and began to be fully implemented.[89] This policy was more intensified upon the Oromo as their population number was large, their territory was vast and their geographical location is at the centre. As a result, as Mekuria states the Oromo were forced to defend their language and identity from the ongoing reconfiguration and assimilation.[90]

Armed forces and clergy who were distributed over the conquered land to enforce the intended unity began either to replace or destroy spiritual and material representation of Oromo identity. Mainly, *Afaan* Oromo was depicted as vulgar and it was planned to replace it with Amharic. The Oromoland to which and on which the Oromo had identity attachment was assessed, measured, confiscated and distributed to those who were assigned to implement the plan. Similarly, Oromo religion was described as the worship of the devil and was castigated as profane to Orthodox Christianity.[91] As Teshale states, the Oromo culture was indiscriminately depicted as 'primitive', 'backward' and 'undeveloped' and presented as a culture that needed civilization.[92]

These attempts were to make the Oromo to feel ashamed of the cultural identity they had built over generations and instead to enforce them to join the identity of their conquerors. For example, the letter Menilek II wrote to *Abbaa* Jifaar on *Nahase* 11, 1887 E.C. is an indicator. It states: "…እንግድህ ነፍጥ እየሰጠዉ እንደራስ ወልደ ጊዮርግስ እንደነ ደጃች ተሰማ እንደነ ደጃች ባሻህ አሳድርሃለሁ

[89] Perham, p. 300.

[90]Mekuria, *Contours of the Emergent*…, pp. 490-491.

[91]Interview with *Qes* Fikadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggaasaa Disaasaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guuta and Sadiii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

[92]Teshale, p. 18.

እንጅ እንደ [ኦሮሞ] አላረግህም።"[93] Translated as ... Henceforth, I will administer you like *Dajachi* Tesema and *Dajachi* Basha by providing you arms, and I never diminish you because just you are Oromo). Such mind torturing approach is in fact not unique only to Ethiopia.

Writing about Africa under colonial administration Frantz Fanon expounds that, "every effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture...to recognize the unreality of his 'nation', and, in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure"[94] This is done because once a society loses its common cultural identity, unity would be disintegrated. Conversely the disintegration of a societal unity would lead to easy manipulation of the conquered. It was this extension that was attempted to impose the conquerors' images on the Oromo people.

In general, the cultural, educational, and economic organizations of the Ethiopian state outlawed any experience that networked Oromo cultural identity, including making pilgrimage to *Abbaa Muudaa* and the celebration of the *gadaa* ceremony.[95] In order to get rid of their 'primitive' culture and 'vulgar' language the Oromo were ordered to create links to Orthodox parishes or to the armed Amhara landlords among whom they were divided, instead of locating themselves within the kinship structure of the whole nation as they used to do. The Oromo were also discouraged as far as possible from speaking and singing in the language of their masters although majority of them were non-communicant in Amharic.[96] The aim was to

[93]Letter from Emperor Menilek II to *Abbaa* Jifaar, date *Nahase* 11, 1887 E.C., Transcribed in Triulzi, Alessandro and Tesema Ta'a. *የወለጋ የታሪክ ሰነዶች፡- ከ1880ዎቹ እስከ 1920ዎቹ (Documents for Wallagga History, 1880s-1920s E.C*) (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1996 E.C.), p. 1.

[94]Quoted in Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent*…, p.40.

[95]Mohammed Hassen, "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo: Historical Assessment of Human Rights Conditions in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002"in *Northeast African Studies, V.6, No.9* (2002), pp. 22-23.

[96]P. Baxter, "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem: The Oromo" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 308 (July 1978), P. 288.

uproot the Oromo identity so that the Oromo would not develop Oromo nationalism that could hamper the intended homogenous unity.

With this newly introduced socio-economic and political transformation, the cultural experiences and societal values of the Oromo that were built over many generations were threatened and made to suffer. The nationwide Oromo system of communication, cooperation, and assembly which sustained the common identity of the Oromo society were outlawed.[97] Thus the acts challenged the very existence of Oromo literature and identity in particular and the Oromo way of life in general. However, things did not go as imagined. Since the implementation was based on coercion, assault, exploitation, confiscation and extortion, the activities pushed the Oromo into reaction.

The consideration of assimilation as simple as the battlefield where unity through victory could be achieved once and for all, and the misunderstanding of the Oromo as a divided society encouraged the oppression but made the resistance strong. Although there were some Oromo who identified themselves with the conquerors and worked against their own identity, large numbers of Oromo society saw the process as the removal of their *muka abbaa keenyaa* (the forefathers' pride).[98] As a result, from the very beginning the Oromo resorted to different forms of resistance which varied from silent resistance to armed insurgence.[99] It was this unbridled attempt to crush Oromo identity in the formation of the Ethiopian state and uncoordinated but

[97]Mohammed Hassen, "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide…", pp. 18-19.

[98] *Muka Abbaa Keenyaa* is the holistic aspect the then generation inherited from the past consecutive generations. Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggasaa Dhinsaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guuta and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

[99] Interview with *Qes* Fikadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggaasaa Disaasaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

sustained Oromo resistance that brought the issue of Amhara domination and Oromo assimilation into tough political friction.

Therefore, the attempts made to replace *Afaan* Oromo by Amharic, the Oromo belief system by Orthodox Christianity and Oromo social organization by Amhara ways of life made the Oromo to redefine their identity against what was imposed on them. In this connection, the anthropologists Paul Baxter and John Hultin and the historian Alessandro Triulzi have elaborated stating that the newly introduced common experiences especially the common sufferings triggered the Oromo to redefine their common identity.[100] According to their analysis the redefinition was made around *Afaan* Oromo as a common ancestral relationship, past glories, deeds of the heroes, geographical boundaries and other cultural elements.

Therefore, I argue that it is in this struggle against domination and not to be dominated that Oromo literature and issues of Oromo identity defined their relationships. As Diarmait Chriost argued in the case of Europe and Eurasian languages,[101] Oromo literature became a weapon of resistance for the Oromo under domination. On the other hand, it was seen by the conquerors as the first target to be broken as it was seen as a hard centre from which resistance was emitted.

In the redefinition of Oromo identity, *Afaan* Oromo became an identification symbol around which the Oromo began to declare their rejection of subservience and humiliation. Speaking, singing and communicating in *Afaan* Oromo without giving way to intimidation became the major group identification and were used as best ways of resistance.[102] Its literature, as Andrew

[100]Paul Baxter, John Hultin and Alessandro Triulzi, "Introduction" to *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, Eds. Paul Baxter, John Hultin and Alessandro Triulzi (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996), p. 8.

[101]From his studies of European and Eurasian languages, Diarmait Chriost, states that during ethnic conflicts language is at the front door to be dominated or to resist domination. See Diarmait Chriost, p. 23.

[102]Mekuria Bulcha, "The Language Policies of Ethiopian Regimes and the History of Written Afaan Oromo: 1844-1994," in Journal of Oromo Studies, Vol.1, No.2 (Winter 1994), pp. 95-98.

Simpson witnessed in the cases of Asian languages,[103] served in recalling and redefinition of the previous collective relationship to a common historical mythology, common mother tongue, common territory and other cultural bonds.

The greatest as well as the most significant part of Oromo literature of the period between 1900 and 1941 was created within this context. Consequently, according to oral tradition, most Oromo literature produced during this period reflected mainly the protest against domination. In fact, as writing in *Afaan* Oromo was strictly inspected and moreover as there were not many learned Oromo individuals who would write in it, Oromo literature in this period was oral.

Within this context, Graham Furniss brings out the role oral literature plays in supporting or subverting power relations in the case of African societies when he states"…oral literature plays as a dynamic discourse about society and about the relationships between individuals, groups and class in society."[104] According to him, literature is always there to comment on the misuse of power on the one hand and to inform the society about what it is undergoing on the other hand as it is an exercise of the powerless over the powerful through covert resistance against oppression. As part of African oral society, it is also true for the Oromo.

The Oromo used its literature to report and to comment on contemporary affairs and political pressure, and the literature reflected and moulded public opinion. Oral arts which were basically reflecting the severity of the conquest were the dominant themes in the case of the Oromo.[105] It is because, as Diarmait Chriost says oral literature is the instrument of the

[103]Andrew Simpson, "Language and National Identity in Asia: A Thematic Introduction" in *Language and National Identity in Asia*, ed. Andrew Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.1.

[104] Furniss and Gunner, "Introduction: Power, Marginality and Oral Literature" …, p. 1.

[105]*Ibid.*

powerless over the powerful.[106] As a result, the people sing it, story it, imagine and remember it, hold and defend it, hand it down to succeeding generations and keep their models in culture.

Narratives, stories, folktales, riddles, proverbs, lullabies, dirges, indigenous dances, poetry, epics, work-songs, ritual songs, heroic recitations and other oral art forms constituted the repertoire of the resistance. Such literature was widely employed throughout the Oromo against the newly introduced imposition.[107]Almost all critical events were connected by Oromo oral literature which circulated and disseminated the news to the other Oromo.

The contents were carefully knitted together in comparison between the past glories and the contemporary dislocation of their indigenous culture. The contents of the texts were created and shaped between the conqueror and the conquered, the collaborator and the patriot, the traitor and loyal, and the living and the dead. The reflection assumed the existence of an inherited and pre-existing meaning in the texts which captured essential features of the Oromo national culture. [108]

Tracing past experiences enabled the Oromo to have common consciousness of identity through the past. Among the Oromo oral literature coined for this purpose, a proverb which says *Waaqaa fi lafa hinsodaattu yoo ta'e seenaa sodaadhu!* (It translates as, If you are not afraid of God and earth, please, why aren't you afraid of history!).[109] The proverb tells us that in Oromo culture God and earth are much valued. Yet, the position for history is more than

[106] Chriost, p. 23.

[107] Interview with *Qes* Fikadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017.

[108]Interviews with Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Uummataa Geenjaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga), May 27, 2017; Raggasaa Disaasaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017.

[109]*Ibid.*

that. Among the Oromo everybody was responsible for his/her position in society. As a result, anyone who was a member to Oromo society should care much for his/her roles in history rather than their spiritual life. Therefore, the proverb explicitly articulates that for the Oromo violating and distorting their common history or cultural value was more than sin. Thus, the integral roles Oromo literature played in formalizing memory of the past and to make the past comprehensible and accessible had and have pronounced importance.

Among the Oromo, literature has served not only to comment on the criminals but also served as a main weapon to attack the misdeeds of the conquerors the Oromo were forced to endure. Along this, oral poetry in the form of songs took the leading position. The composers and reciters organized more elaborated and aggressive songs which contextualized every observation of the situations. Targets of attacks were more in texts and the reasons for the attacks were outlined. Attacks with reference to trees, rivers and mountains, in Oromoland, common origin and history of the ancestral heroes, and others were entwined into the resistance texts in a way that created a real sense of common consciousness against the new challenges the Oromo faced. The language of attacks was deliberate and powerful.[110]

In order to show their rejection and defiance of the forced assimilation, the Oromo presented the recommended Amhara culture as incompetent compared to that of the Oromo. They went a step beyond this and sang that leave alone being engulfed into their culture, killing one of the bearers of that culture could not qualify to fit into the cultural standards of the Oromo. The following song is one of such expressions.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Kan abbaan buttaa hinqallee	*Whose father did not celebrate buttaa ceremony*

[110] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008.

Kan haati rakoo hinqabnee	*Whose mother had no legal marriage*
Kana ajjeesanii dibachuun saalaa[111].	*Killing such thing does not qualify for trophy.*

The song compared Amhara culture with that of the *Gadaa* system and disqualified it as its bearers were not up to the standards set in the *Gadaa* system. According to the song, since the *naftagna* had no cultural elements of the *Gadaa* system, even killing, an Amhara and celebrating the victory does not qualify as the criterion that the *Gadaa* system set for a trophy to be celebrated.

They also compered Amhara world views of cultures, religions, politics, economic, environment with that of the *Gadaa* system and presented their findings in their songs. The following is one of the songs by which the Oromo questioned why the Amhara ordered the Oromo to fast from their animal products after a baptism by a simple sprinkling of water.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Ilmaan hadha walattee	*The offspring of Wallate*
Shawaadhaa gadi harattee	*Moved down to us from Shawa*
Bishaan mataatti nunaqxee	*Christianised us by water sprinkling*
Adii sa'aa nulagdee[112]	*Prohibited us from eating our cows' dairy products*

The song articulated the religious change and food taboo imposed on the Oromo without teaching them the rationality of it as the *Gadaa* System does. In the *Gadaa* System it was a law that time of evaluation and training would be given for a new change to be adopted or to make another adopt it. Adoption was not enforced and done only on the basis of the willingness of the receivers. But in the case of the song, it condemned the Amhara for their boorish culture that did not take any humanity into consideration and enforced others just only according to

[111] Cerulli, *Folk-Literature of the [Oromo] …*, p. 67.

[112]Interviews with Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Uummataa Geenjaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga), May 27, 2017; Raggasaa Dhinsaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

their own interests. When elaborated in depth, the focus of the song was to indicate how the subjugators strengthened their fight against Oromo tradition and the Oromo used their tradition to resist. It was against Orthodox Christian food restriction of milk, butter and meat which were and are strictly observed during the fasting seasons and two days every week.

They also decried in their songs the anomalous social experiences brought to them as Amhara culture. One of the most articulated anomalous social experiences they articulated in their songs was the service of carrying tributes from frontiers of the country to the imperial seat in the beginning of the twentieth century. The services were the carrying of tributes in the form of bundles of firewood, flour, honey, butter, gold, ivory, skins and others.[113] Informants from West Wallagga, Jimmaa, Baalee, Arsi and Harari unanimously assert that tribute porters joined each other at Addis Ababa and discussed the differences and similarities of the brutality in their localities. According to the informants, when the porters joined together both at Hoolota and Aqaaqii, they reflected their feelings about the burdens which were heavily imposed on them by the songs. It was a kind of service they had not experienced under *Abbaa* Gadaa before conquest. Therefore, it was anomalous to their culture. The following song is one of the indicators.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Fiffidi jetti warri	*Bring, bring the Amhara says*
Maalitti beekti jarri	*What do they know?*
Akka qoraan baatanii	*The suffering of carrying firewood*
Akka qorraan kaatanii	*How travelling in freezing weather hurt*
Akka Hoolota bulanii	*Passing the night at Hoolota*
Akka hollataa bulanii	*How much is shivering!*
Akka Aqaaqii bulanii	*How the night is stayed at Aqaaqii*
Akka Akaayiin bulanii	*How uncomfortable the dinner of parched grain*
Shaggaritti marmaaruu	*Frequent travels to Shaggar*

[113]Addis Hiwet…, p.4; Daniel Ayana, "Land Tenure and Agriculture in Sayyoo-Afillo, Western Wallagga, Ethiopia, 1880-1974" (PhD Dissertation: Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1995), p.103.

Callaa nama hammaruu	*Grabbing threshed grains is irritating*
Calleessanii namaa hiruu[114]	*How annoying taking the divisions of one's produce freely*

The song outlined and articulated five main issues of objections. The difficulty of transporting heavy loads, the suffering of traveling in the foul cold, eating of unpleasant food, forced submission of their products and the suppression of their right to express their feelings to their administrators. They saw the duties as tyrannous ways of treating human beings. In addition to these issues, the song indicates Hoolota and Aqaaqii as the two main gates through which the tributes on which Menilek's palace depended entered the town. The porters from the south and southeast joined together at Aqaaqii and the porters from south west at Hoolota before moving to the palace. The messages of the song coincided with Addis Hiwet's arguments. He repeatedly argues that south, southeast and southwest were the regions which Menilek's imperial palace depended on.[115]

The misuse of environmental resources against the laws of the *Gadaa* system was another condemnation the imposed Amhara culture received in Oromo songs. Although it is possible to list many Oromo songs, poems, proverbs and others, as much as possible, space forced me to state only one example.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Shimala keenya ciruu	*They mowed our growing bamboos*
Ammayyuu keessa jiru	*Still they have never stopped*
Hoomii keenya muranii	*They cut down our ebony*
Hoomaa keenya tuqanii	*They dispersed our unison*
Baddeessaa koo muratee	*They cut down my trees*
Naqaa karraa godhattee[116]	*They built their fence with it*

[114]Tamane Bitima, "On Some Oromo Historical Poems" in *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde, Bd. 29* .1983: http://www. Jstor. Org/stable/41409897, p.322.

[115] Addis, p. 29.

[116]Interview with Qajeelaa Bayana, Firrisaa Waggaa, Arjoo (East Wallagga), January 25, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 3, 2017.

Although the song's presentation of the cutting of important trees was ironical on the one hand, it was also an opposition against the misuse of the trees. In Oromo culture of the period, it was a taboo to cut growing trees and other big trees that was used for symbolic representation. This Oromo cultural view of the forests is well articulated by Martial de Salviac. Salviac took observation how the forest that the Oromo protected for long were cleared indiscriminately by the settling *neftegna* and used unwisely.[117]

From this we can understand that the Oromo responded through their literature to any circumstances they felt were against their world view. For all types of the responses, the literature was loaded with metonymies. The most common metonymies were us and them when us represents the Oromo and them represents the Amhara. *Jarri*, *warri* and *ilamaan hadha walatee* were the frequent metonymies used to refer to them. In doing so they used to avoid direct reference to the subjects under objection. The conventionality of the song makes it possible to indicate publicly what could otherwise be only said privately. The language of the oral literature was consciously designed to effect a certain distance from the immediate emotional situation of the performance. Therefore, the satirical literature could safely be sung even in the presence of the Amharas, since the vast majority could not understand a word of Oromo.

The difficulty to understand hidden messages in Oromo songs needs not only knowing the language of the spoken words. It also needs knowing the language of the mind which could according to Stephen C. Levinson only be felt and understood by people who have mutual

[117] Salviac, pp.111-125.

understanding and a common world view.[118] Moreover, the Oromo reciters or singers benefited from the nature of Oromo song itself as Oromo song is characterised by several layers of meanings. According to Gemechu Megersa,[119] to decipher these meanings it is necessary to understand the language of the mind which could only be deciphered through continuous involvement with the people.

The failure of Ethiopian state builders not in seeing Oromo songs as a vehicle for communication, propaganda, political pressure, and political education[120] also lowered the possibility of detection of the composers and the reciters. As a result, it was only in rare cases that composers and reciters were detected by the conquerors while the songs were going on under their very noses.

The composers and reciters were experts who were gifted with a profound knowledge of the history, psychology and value system of Oromo culture. They were also those who deeply felt the wound of the suppressions and who involved in relationships of power themselves. They were very careful in establishing evidence and facts as the basis of their criticisms. In the oral materials they composed, they drew attention to the antagonistic relationship between the Oromo who were reduced to subservience and the domination of the *neftegna* system. They were careful in using issues common to all people as they were aware that their roles were meaningful only in the context of cooperation with others.[121] Therefore, they carefully coined every word and line of satirical oral literature in a way it could convey the intended messages.

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[118]Stephen C. Levinson, "Language and Mind: Let's Get the Issues Straight!" in *Language in the Mind, Advance in the Study of Language and Thought*, Daidre Gentner and Susan Golden-Meadow Eds. (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003), p.28.

[119] Gemechu Megersa, "Knowledge, Identity…", pp. 53-54.

[120]Interview with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; *Qes* Fikadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen (Biilaa, West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017.

[121]*Ibid.*

The intended meanings were cautiously buried in the songs in a way the conquerors hardly suspected the satirical literature was against themselves.

No matter how much power and authority a political figure might wield, he is certainly not above being disagreed with. The poetry of the songs was also used to pressurize those in authority or to comment on local politics. The reciters never hesitated to comment on the power of the authorities, thinking that the message of the song would reach them by "whistle-blower" who were most of the time the Oromo who had already been joined the system. This indirect means of communicating with someone in power through the artistic medium of a song is a way by which the reciters hope to influence on the person on power while at the same time avoiding the open danger of speaking directly.[122]

According to the informants, in this case the influence was in two ways. On the one hand, once the poetry and narrations had been produced and released to the society, they freely circulated and created complex interactions across trans-Oromo territories and increased the awareness of the mass on the misdeeds of the authorities and the suppressive nature of their system. The poems and narrations related individuals and collectives to each other without privilege, reification or caricature. On the other hand, the poems influenced the authorities as the poems had the power to create mass mobilization against the imposed system.[123]

For the disseminations the poems or the songs no purposive meeting was summoned as any resistance intending formalized gathering would be followed by severe punishment. Instead old established Oromo social activities were used. The songs they sang, the poems they recited

[122]Interviews with Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Uummataa Geenjaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga), May 27, 2017; Raggasaa Dhinsaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018.

[123]*Ibid.*

and the stories they narrated were done at these social activities. Once the oral arts were composed and performed on a given occasion, they circulated throughout the Oromo. Herding, shepherding and private life activities were the continuous occupations where grievances were publicised. However, special occasions such as weddings, *Daboo* (collective work), *Daadoo* (working together turn by turn), gatherings for religious ceremonies, and other festivals were the best media to reach many people at once.[124]

There was also a time when elders narrated for the children how the implanted *neftegna* system caused a gag to the Oromo in their locality and forced them to escape to other areas. The mother also expressed the same view in babies' lullabies. Similarly, the Oromo who were evicted from their land, levy porters and merchants served in the circulation of the oral arts from one region to the other. In such circumstances, there was even a time when it circulated east to west and south to north. Disseminating and multiplying such songs, the Oromo discouraged possible mass assimilation into Amhara culture and managed to overcome the designed possible forced assimilation.[125]

5.3. The Promotion of *Afaan* Oromo to Written Official Language in the Centre of Colonial Strategies, 1900-1941

In its history *Afaan* Oromo was one of the languages in Ethiopia which attracted colonial interest. This because the colonizers saw the Oromo as a large potential resource that should be controlled through favouring it. One of the major strategies the colonizers designed to win over the Oromo loyalty was promoting the study of *Afaan* Oromo and developing it to written literature.[126] The emphasis was because of two main drives. One was *Afaan* Oromo which had

[124] *Ibid.*
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] Mekuria, "The Language Polices of Ethiopian regimes…", pp.98-99.

a large number of speakers and the territory the speakers occupied was vast. As a result, it was worth them winning over the loyalty of the Oromo as they were more potentially supportive than the other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The other motive was the colonizers knew well the repression under which *Afaan* Oromo had been placed. They took the promotion of the study of *Afaan* Oromo as their best strategy to present themselves as allies of the Oromo.[127]

Britain, France and Italy were the three major colonial countries who took such special interests in dividing Ethiopia among themselves.[128] However, Britain became the first to begin the study of *Afaan* Oromo after the Tripartite Treaty of 1906. The studies of E.C. Foot for an Oromo dictionary and Arnold Hudson and Craven Walker for an *Elementary and Practical Grammar of Afaan Oromo* were the cases in point. Arriving in Ethiopian in 1907, Foot extensively travelled among the Oromo from Baraarti in Kenya to Goree in Western Oromo of Ethiopia and proved the similarity of *Afaan* Oromo with manageable dialectical differences. He found that the different *Afaan* Oromo dialects he identified had minimal impacts on common meanings of Oromo words and structural features. He reported that *Afaan* Oromo spoken in northern Kenya and throughout Ethiopia has similar feature in structure and the same meaning in words. He published the study in an *Afaan* Oromo-English and English-*Afaan* Oromo dictionary in 1913.[129] The first 58 pages are an *Afaan* Oromo-English Dictionary and the next 56 pages are an English-*Afaan* Oromo dictionary.

In Fact, Foot's English-*Afaan* Oromo dictionary was not only a linguistic study, it was also a study of the cultural identity of the Oromo through *Afaan* Oromo. The book was not restricted

[127] Interviews with Balcha Denta, Dambii Doolloo, March 10, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14,2017; Warkenash Badhaanee, Naqamtee, February, 6, 2008; Qajeelaa Bayana, Firrisaa Waggaa, Arjoo (East Wallagga), January 25, 2008.

[128] For the partition see Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia…*, pp. 101&179.

[129] Foot, [*An Oromo]-English, English-[Oromo] Dictionary…*

to a translation of *Afaan* Oromo words to English and English words to *Afaan* Oromo, it also gives elaborate data on the common cultural identity of the Oromo, similarities of *Afaan* Oromo across the dialects he travelled through and richness of their natural resources. In the introduction of the book, he pointed out that the Oromo he came across reflected almost the same behaviour in their interaction with human beings, natural environment and with domestic and wild animals. He underscores that these behavioural acts and communality were not even deterred by different religions the Oromo of the period of his study had adhered to. In the recommendation of his study, Foot underscored that studying *Afaan* Oromo had a paramount importance for the long felt want of the British Government to facilitate the British men whose duties, as officials or others, might called them to have dealings with the Oromo.[130]

In spite of these aspects, the linguistic part of the book is a contribution to the development of written Oromo literature. Nonetheless, the book is not without limitation. Although a man helping him was well learned Oromo,[131] the vocabulary has some faults. The Oromo sound Q (velar ejective), X (alveolar ejective), C (alveolar ejective), Dh (alveolar impulsive), Ch (palatal affricate) were not correctly represented and they were made to be pronounced as they are in English. Issues of softening, hardening or long and short sounds were not noticed. The *Afaan* Oromo consonant sounds were made equal with English sounds except 'g' which he stated should be pronounced with a hard sound and he simply ordered that the *Afaan* Oromo vowel sounds should be pronounced as Italian. Nonetheless, in all the pages, the words are well arranged and well translated into their equivalent meanings in English.

[130] *Ibid*., p, vi.

[131] E.C Foot was assisted by Liiban Bulii. Liiban Bulii was one of the Oromo who had been sold into slavery and emancipated. He was sent to South Africa, Lovedale, and learned there to advanced level. Later on he returned to Ethiopia and assisted Foot in the publication of the dictionary.

The contribution of the British scholars to the development of Oromo literature did not cease with the publication of Foot's *Afaan* Oromo English and English *Afaan* Oromo dictionary. The dictionary was followed by Arnold Hudson and Charven Walker's study of *Afaan* Oromo grammar which was published in 1922.[132] The purpose of Hudson and Walker's study of *Afaan* Oromo was the same with Foot's statement in his dictionary. As in the case with Foot's dictionary, the purpose was to help the British who wanted to communicate with the Oromo.

Nonetheless, their contribution to the development of written *Afaan* Oromo literature has significance. Combined with Foot's dictionary, their grammar made the beginning of the secular studies of *Afaan* Oromo quite solid. The way they constructed *Afaan* Oromo sentences and passages as examples for different forms of the grammar is not only helpful to learn *Afaan* Oromo grammar but also an indication of how the Oromo used their language and folklore in the expression of their daily life activities.

To give the grammar clarity, they divided the 269 pages long book into 14 pages' introductory notes, 144 pages' long *Afaan* Oromo grammar, 44 pages' long Oromo-English-Amharic vocabulary, 59 pages' long English-Oromo vocabulary and 9 pages' long transliteration of *Afaan* Oromo folktales in Latin and Geez scripts. All the divisions of the pages were made toward giving clear elaboration for the understanding of the nature of *Afaan* Oromo. After a discussion of one form of the grammar they gave exercises composed in *Afaan* Oromo and their equivalent translation in English at the end of the book. They also transcribed some Oromo folktales in Geez script with their equivalent transliteration in Latin letters. Although the whole book is written in Latin letters, the transliteration of the folktales is both in Geez and

[132]Hudson and Walker, *An Elementary and Practical Grammar*….

Latin scripts. In fact, as he stated, the simultaneous usage of both scripts was to get the comments of the readers to establish the script that most fit the Oromo sounds.

Beyond their linguistic contribution to the development of *Afaan* Oromo literature, they also clearly revealed the view that the Ethiopian administrators had for *Afaan* Oromo during the period of their study. They stated their observation as "…it is a curious fact that, although so many of the great Abyssinian officers are pure [Oromo] as well as Amhara, yet they do not care to speak [Oromo] in public. This can only to a kind be ascribed to false pride, as in private they will talk it readily."[133] Their study also indicates that the administrators attempted to avoid the uniformity of *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity which had already been challenged by the formidable physical barriers of rivers, mountains, forests or deserts by banning their movements from one district to another without written permission. The purpose was to impose Amharic and Amhara culture on them one by one.[134]

Like their British counterparts, the French interest in the study of *Afaan* Oromo has a long history. From the end of the 1830s, a French effort to convert *Afaan* Oromo both in Europe and among the Oromo had remarkable contribution for the development of *Afaan* Oromo literature. Their effort to study *Afaan* Oromo in the first three decades of the twentieth century was the continuation of these endeavours. However, the interest the French developed for the Oromo was challenged by the coming First World War. Some of the French missionaries who had been trained in *Afaan* Oromo ceased their missionary activities among the Oromo and

[133] Hudson and Walker, p. 8.
[134] *Ibid*., p. 9.

went back to fight for their country.[135]As a result, French studies of *Afaan* Oromo remained in the hands of a few French Catholic missionaries and indigenous priests.

In spite of the constraints, this handful of French Catholic missionaries and the indigenous priests did not give up the hope to Catholicize the Oromo using *Afaan* Oromo as a main gate into Oromo culture. In order to overcome human resource limitations, they planned to reach the Oromo by increasing published materials in *Afaan* Oromo. They established a printing press in Harar in 1907. However, in 1908 the printing machine was transferred to Dirre-Dhowaa by Father André Jarosseau. The purpose was to get railway facilities. The principal motives for the foundation of the printing press was to reach the indigenous converts at Catholic centres of Harar, Dobba, Laftoo Karaa Millee, Laftoo Goobbaa and Ciroo[136] with materials written in *Afaan* Oromo.[137]

In Dirre Dhowaa, the machine printed many books of pedagogy, liturgies and catechism until the machine was taken by the Italians in 1935. One of such major publications was Father André Jarosseau's *Notions Grammaticales sur la Langue [Oromo]*. It was published in Dirre Dhowaa in 1922. However, many manuscripts in *Afaan* Oromo which had been produced in this period came out in volumes during the Italian occupation as Italy wanted to use *Afaan* Oromo as one of the major languages in her colonial administrative divisions of East Africa.

Like that of the British and French, Italian colonial interest in Ethiopia was reflected in the study of *Afaan* Oromo. The interest had begun to be anticipated after she had signed a boundary agreement between her colony of Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1900.[138] Using Eritrea as a base, she

[135] Alberto. *A Modern and Contemporary History…*, pp. 146-147.
[136] *Ibid*., 148.
[137] *Ibid*., pp. 146-147.
[138] For the issues of boundary delimitation between Ethiopia and the Italian colony of Eritrea see Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia…*, p. 83.

tried to influence Ethiopia through economic, linguistic, cultural, geographic and political studies.[139] The studies of *Afaan* Oromo was one of these major methods of influence. Following the boundary agreement of 1900, Italian studies of *Afaan* Oromo were started by Carlo Conti Rossini. Conti Rossini edited Habte Sillasie's Amharic-*Afaan* Oromo vocabulary with detailed annotations, transcriptions and translations, and published it in 1904. The vocabulary was again reedited and published in 1912.[140]

Nonetheless, the Italian definite advance in the study of *Afaan* Oromo started after the fascists took power in Italy in 1922. In their fascist colonial project, the Italians wanted to pursue the policy of divide and rule on the basis of the studies on the social, economic, political, and linguistic position in Ethiopia. They planned to side with the ethnic groups who had not been favoured by the previous government and to present themselves as their liberators. In this colonial ideology, the Italians saw the Oromo as a great potential to be controlled and to control the others. The Oromo status of serfdom that they had discovered in their findings gave them the confidence that favouring the Oromo would help them to overcome any resistance.[141] It was with this interest that Italian concern to study *Afaan* Oromo took definite shape. Enrico Cerulli's *Folk Literature of the [Oromo] of Southern Abyssinia* which is the best and the most varied folk literature of the Oromo was the first outcome of this result.[142]

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[139]Alberto Sbacchi, "The Archives of the Consolata Mission and the Formation of the Italian Empire, 1913-1943" in *History in Africa, V.25* (1998): http://www.jstor .org/Stable/3172192, pp.319-334; Giampaolo Galchi Novali, "The Italian Colonial Programme and Claims on Ethiopia After the First World War" in Taddesse Beyene (Ed.) *Proceedings Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies,* v. 2 (1989), pp.267-273.

[140] He was an Italian scholar and had served as director of local affairs in the Italian local administration of Eritrea between 1899-1903. The Habte Sillasie's manuscript was most probably produced in the 1830s. See Lanfranco Ricci, "Conti Rossini, Carlo" in *Encyclopaedia of Ethiopia,* V. A, p.791.

[141] Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini…*, p. 157.

[142] Cerulli, pp. 1-228.

E. Cerulli collected songs about verbal attacks, war boasts, challenges of field commanders, triumphant victories, lamentations of dead heroes, Menilek's conquest of the Oromo, the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1896, the holy war of Hassen Injamo, the war of the Mahdists, the constant clashes among the independent Oromo Gibe states and oral chronicles of Abbaa Bogboo. The collections are the reflections of events among the Oromo over a long period time so that Cerulli's collections are important not only to the development of written Oromo literature but also in the preservation of oral history for students of Oromo history. Through the study of *Afaan* Oromo, Cerulli studied the warfare among the Oromo, the view the Oromo had of the Amhara conquerors, and the potential level of the Oromo cultural environment for the Italian colonial anticipation.

What makes Cerulli's Folk Literature the best and the most varied of European collection of Oromo literature is not only his collection, transcription, translation and interpretation of the folk literature, but also his selection of the folk literature that deals with varied ways of Oromo culture. The collection contains texts which serve as a source of history, as the collections which deal with some major occurrences of the period are authentic when checked against other historical testimonies. Beyond showing the richness of Oromo oral literature, the collection demonstrated how powerful *Afaan* Oromo literature is in reflecting a cultural identity of the Oromo.

The fact that his main informant, Loransiyos Walda Yesus,[143] had made extensive travel in many Oromo regions helped him to access unique sources of information. His collection covers

[143] According to Cerulli, Loransiyos Walda Yesus was born in Abbichuu Oromo in Shawa and visited and lived in Leeqaa Naqamtee, Leeqaa Qellem, but later moved as far as Lake Rudolph. Loransiyos was born to Abbichuu Oromo and made extensive travel in many Oromo regions, and worked under different Oromo Kings. He admired Cerulli as an old, reliable, valuable and knowledgeable person who was concerned about Oromo literature. According to Cerulli, Loransiyos Walda Yesus played a great role by providing large amounts of poetic

almost all folklores of all Oromo regions except that of the Booranaa and Hararge. In doing this holistic collection, Cerulli not only contributed valuable information for the Italian colonizers but also recorded and preserved Oromo folk literature to ours and the next generations.

The other fascinating works in Cerulli's collection is issues of *Afaan* Oromo scripts. In transcribing these collections, Cerulli tried to develop his own version of *Afaan* scripts. In studying to develop *Afaan* Oromo scripts for his own *Afaan* Oromo folk literature collections, he understood issues of gemination and long sounds of *Afaan* Oromo. He also tried to represent these sounds by using diacritics. In spite of his efforts to achieve good scripts that represent the unique sounds of *Afaan* Oromo, many of his *Afaan* Oromo texts were not correctly transcribed, not used at the right places of the words, and even read with great difficulties.

Beyond attempting his own, Cerulli also tried to investigate the appropriateness of scripts that were employed in the writing of *Afaan* Oromo. One of the scripts on which he made analysis was the book *Calqaba Barsiisaa (The Oromo Spelling Book*) written in the *fidal* (Ethiopic character).[144] From his analysis, he discovered that many Oromo sounds in the book are not represented and consequently posed difficulty of reading correctly not only for the foreigners but also for the natives. And he concluded his analysis by severely criticizing the authors (Onesimus and Aster) for their writing *Afaan* Oromo in Ethiopic characters which according to him led them to use very complicated sound representation.

texts as well as by translating the poems from other sources. Cerulli, p.12. See also Dasalegn Seyum, E. Cerulli's "Folk-Literature of the [Oromo] of Southern Abyssinia: Acritical analysis" (MA. Thesis, Department of Literature in English, Addis Ababa University, 1985), pp.4-5.

[144] The book was written and printed in *fidal by* the authorships of Onesimus and Aster.

Cerulli indicates that the book was written without taking into consideration the four typical characteristics of *Afaan* Oromo sounds which are long, short, hard and soft sounds. To use his words, "… they are obliged to use a very complicated transcription to express sounds of the [Oromo] language with the letters of Ethiopic alphabet which express very imperfectly even the sounds of the Ethiopic language… Therefore, reading this small book is very [much] like deciphering a secret writing and [it is] evident why, for twenty-five years after its publication, its substances remained unknown …."[145] In his analysis, Cerulli underlined the impracticality of using *fidal* for *Afaan* Oromo.

Three years after Cerulli's publication, Enno Littman studied principles of the patterns of sounds and rhythms of Oromo poetry and published in his work 1925. His work is indeed a scientific contribution to the studies of Oromo literature. His work was praised by Gene Gragg in 1976 as a pioneering and unchallenged work on the written *Afaan* Oromo.[146] These studies of Oromo oral songs were extended to the studies of *Afaan* Oromo dialects and proverbs. Maria Klingenheben –von- Tiling published his study of *Afaan* Oromo dialect in 1929.[147]

However, many volumes of *Afaan* Oromo publication in diversified forms came out during the Italian occupation. Under the Italian occupation, soldiers, workers and Italian settlers developed interest in linguistic studies of *Afaan* Oromo. The Italian publishers collected these earlier linguistic researches and published a large number of books. In the years between 1934

[145]Cerulli, p.15.

[146] Gene Gragg, "Oromo of Wellegga" in *The Non- Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*, M. Bender ed. (Michigan: African Study Centre, 1976), p. 170.

[147]*Ibid.*

and 1941, about twenty-seven publications came out as solid publications of *Afaan* Oromo or containing partly *Afaan* Oromo materials.[148]

The majority of the books were produced by Italian Catholic missionaries who served as teachers under Italian rule. Among these publications, more than nineteen were collections of vocabularies, eight were compilations of grammars, three were anthologies of proverbs and four were other publications. All of them were published either in Dirre Dhowaa, Harar, Jimmaa and Addis Ababa or in one of the towns of Italy. The establishment of printing machines at Dirre Dhowaa, Harar, Jimmaa and Addis Ababa contributed a lot for such publications. The books that had been produced in Oromo language before and during the Italian occupation were taken out of drawers for publications.

Among these *Afaan* Oromo publications by the Italians, Martino Moreno's work on Oromo grammar and de Thiene's edited Oromo dictionary were stated by scholars who had studied *Afaan* Oromo with solid scholarship as the best of the time.[149] Mereno's work on grammar was referred to as the best scholarly study of the time because he collected by undertaking extensive fieldwork among the Oromo especially that of the Tuulamaa and he also referred to *Afaan* Oromo texts which had been written before his time. In his analysis he used Cerulli's folk literature and Onesimus' translations. The way he analysed the grammar and provided the examples in *Afaan* Oromo make it a subject studied linguistically. He frequently edited the texts year after year and got publication in 1934, 1935, 1936 and 1939. Because of this frequent

[148]For the bibliography of the publications see Gragg, p. 170, and A. Trudnos, *Oromo Documentation Bibliography and Maps, Studies of the Department African Languages and Cultures* (Warsaw: Warsaw University Press, 1984), pp. 9-17.

[149] Gragg, p.170.

revision, his Oromo grammar of 1939 is considered among the best Oromo publications of the period.[150]

However, from the linguistic point of view, his works are not without limitations. His attempt to make sounds long and short by using vowel letters lacks consistency and does not meet the intended objectives. As Cerulli, he did not also attempt to include the dialects of the Harar and Booranaa Oromo. This in turn made it difficult to identify different dialects of the Oromo language he had intended to indicate.

This period of Italian occupation also produced relatively the best Oromo-Italian Dictionary. The dictionary which had been written from 1881-1938 by André Jarosseau, the Vicar Apostolic to the Oromo and edited by Gaetano da Thiene is the best of the time. It was published in 1939 in Harar under the title *Dizionario della Lingua Oromo*.[151] The dictionary was published in Latin characters with all philological distinction though it lacks consistency. Nonetheless, the opposite to that of Moreno's grammar, the words were collected from the eastern Oromo dialects and do not include those of the south, the west and the north.

In an attempt to secure the Oromo loyalty through the promotion of *Afaan* Oromo, the Italians contributed a lot to the development of written Oromo literature. They picked it up and used in the media of administration and field of literacy education, and made it enjoy special status. Informants said that Italy allowed the use of *Afaan* Oromo in the Oromo areas she controlled during the period of occupation. Italy left the Oromo free to nurture their language for office usage and cultivated their common identity of pan-Oromo national unity.[152]

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[150] M.M. Moreno, *Grammatica Teorico-Pratica Della Lingua [Oromo] con Esercizi* (Milano: NP, 1935).

[151] Gaetano da Thiene (ed.), Dizionario *Della Lingua Oromo (Oromo Dictionary)* (Harar: NP, 1939).

[152]Interviews with Colonel Gammadaa Tuuchoo, Naqamtee, August 10, 2008 and January 13, 2017; Balcha Denta, Dambii Doolloo, March 10, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14, 2017,

With her total occupation of the country in 1936, Italy allowed *Afaan* Oromo to be become the language of administration and medium of school instruction in the three administrative units she established in East Africa (Africa Orientale Italiana).[153] It became the second official language and medium of instruction in Shawa Amhara-Oromo, in the Oromo-Sidama and in Harar.[154] A committee for Ethiopian language policy study established by the *Darg* in 1979 also confirmed the Italian use of *Afaan* Oromo for primary education.[155]

In the field of schooling at primary level, the Italian contributions had significant impacts on Oromo literacy development. The 1936 decree of Italian colonial education that ordered Italian educators in her colony to teach the natives in the main local language[156] elevated *Afaan* Oromo to a great prestigious position.[157] Schools of *Afaan* Oromo were established in the areas which had hitherto been without any. Elementary schools were established in Jimmaa, Aggaaroo, Boongaa, Naqamtee, Gimbii, Dambii Doolloo, Goree, Dirre Dhowaa, Harar and other places.[158] The number of students who attended schools enormously increased. According to a 1938 report cited in Perham, there were seventy schools with 10,598 students in the Oromo Sidama region alone.[159] Indeed, as McNab argues, although the emphasis was made on

and the story I was taught by my father, the late Tolasaa Bessaa. My father fought Italy at Amba Radom in the contingent of *Ras* Mekonnon Demisew and was later in the Italian prison at Arjoo throughout Italian presence in the country.

[153] For the sample of students' exercise books, see appendix xiii

[154] Italy divided her east African colony into six administrative language regions. In the regions of Amhara administration, Amharic; in the regions of Oromo Sidama administration, Oromo and Kaficho; in the region of Shawa administration, Amharic and Oromo; in the regions of Harar and south eastern Oromo administration, Oromo and Harari; in the region of Somali administration, Somali languages were used as second official languages next to Italian. See Richard Pankhurst, "Education in Ethiopia during the Italian Fascist Occupation (1936-1941)" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies, V.3* (1972), p. 379.

[155] "Minute of a committee of Ethiopian language policy study", 1977 E.C., IES MS, 4767.

[156] Teshome, 43.

[157]Richard Pankhurst, "Historical Background of Education in Ethiopia" in M. L. Bender, *et al* ed. *Language in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 321-322.

[158] Pankhurst, "Education in Ethiopia…", p. 379.

[159] Perham, p. 249.

obedience and loyalty of the natives to the Italian colonizers,[160] the roles it played in Oromo literacy and making the Oromo literature has a real significance in the history Oromo literature.

In fact, there were no formally prepared texts in Oromo or other Ethiopian languages. Teachers were instructed to translate texts prepared for the natives in Italian language. The focus contents were the glory of Italy, the biography of Mussolini, maps of Italy, and topics on the sun, the moon, the stars, and the four points of compass, rivers, forests, flowers, various animals, insects and others.[161] McNab states that the Italians were too busy to facilitate their colonial ambition by teaching the Oromo how to write in Latin script and teaching Italians *Afaan Oromo* to make the two-way communications in offices easy.[162] However, the worst and most serious aspect of this education was that it forced the natives to stop their education at grade six.[163]

Under Italian colonial administration, *Afaan* Oromo also became a language of mass media. Although a regular time schedule was not allocated for each language of the broadcasts, *Afaan Oromo* was one of the major languages broadcast together with Somali, Arabic, and Amharic. The broadcasts were started in 1939 and ended in 1942. The centres of the broadcast were Addis Ababa and Jimmaa. The Italian office known as *Officio Politico Institut* was established to facilitate Italian communication with the masses through local languages over the radio using written materials. Under this institute, books, leaflets, brochures and others were translated from Italian into Oromo, Amharic, Tigrigna and Somali. The translated materials

[160]Christine McNab, *Language and Language Practice: Implementation, Dilemma in Ethiopian Education* (Stockholm: Edsbbruk, 1989), p. 70.

[161] Pankhurst, "Education in Ethiopia…", p. 391.

[162]McNab, pp.69-71.

[163] Pankhurst, "Historical Background…", p. 321.

were read over the radio. It was mainly for this purpose that the Oromo language broadcast was launched.[164]

The Oromo language journalists were recruited on the basis of their language ability in both *Afaan* Oromo and Italian in addition to their alleged loyalty to the Italian administration. Criaco Mandili (born from a Greek father and an Oromo mother), Balcha Deentaa, Dhaabaa Wasee, Gabra Iyasus Karrayyuu and Zena Odaa were the prominent Radio journalists of the Oromo language of the Italian period.[165]

The Oromo responded this approach better than the Amhara and expressed their loyalty to the Italians, although the loyalty was discontinued as the Italians began to express the real features of colonialism. This is witnessed, for instance, in the resistance report written by Taddesse G/Madin to *Dajjazmach* Yegazu on *Yakatit* 25, 1930 E.C. (March 4, 1938).[166] Therefore, although many Ethiopians and Ethiopianist scholars argue that the Italians did it for the purpose of divide and rule and indeed colonial interests, *Afaan* Oromo benefited from Italian colonial administration.

However, the use of *Afaan* Oromo for offices, as medium of education and broadcasts came to an end with the return of the Emperor Haile Sillasie. The use of *Afaan* Oromo in the office and school as well as the radio broadcast from Jimmaa was immediately aborted in 1941. However, the Addis Ababa *Afaan* Oromo radio broadcast continued until July 30, 1942. It was because the Emperor used it for the war propaganda against the ideology Italians had implanted among the Oromo and to expose the real colonial objectives of the Italians. It was also to buy time in

[164] Interviews with Colonel Gammadaa Tuuchoo, Naqamtee, August 10, 2008; Balcha Denta, Doolloo, March 10, 200; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008. See also Badasa Sima, "A Short Biography of *Fit.* Daba Wase, 1902-to the Present" (B.A Thesis: Department of history, Addis Ababa university, 1980), pp. 27-29.

[165] *Ibid*.

[166] Report Written from Taddesse G/Madin to *Dajjazmach* Yegazu, Date, *Yakatit* 25, 1930, IES MS, 1799.

order to avoid immediate escalation of opposition from the Oromo before the empire consolidated to stability.[167]

Generally, the fact that the Italians stressed political subjugation, economic exploitation and cultural dehumanization of the Oromo under the Amhara in order to present themselves as liberators transformed the Oromo grievances against the *neftegna* imposition into open resistance. Consequently, the legacy of Italians occupation transformed the Oromo to demand fundamental political change everywhere in Oromoland. Therefore, the gap the occupation created helped the Oromo to have a common desire for freedom from Amhara domination, restoration of their land, and recognition of their cultural identity and political autonomy.

5.4. Origins and Routes of Oromo Identity and Nationalism

The relationship between Oromo identity, *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo nationalism has its roots in the *Gadaa* system. Although scholars[168] including the 'Oromo nationalists'[169] trace the beginning of Oromo nationalism to the 1960s, I argue that Oromo nationalism has existed in different forms at least since the organization of the Oromo into the *Gadaa* System. As one aspect of nationalism is a consciousness of belonging to the nation which is the first source of identity and is articulated in the mother tongue,[170] the Oromo had a good tradition of teaching their children in their mother tongue that they always belonged to *Ilma* Oromo.[171]

[167]Badasa Sima, "A Short Biography of *Fit.* Daba Wase, 1902-to the Present" (B.A Thesis: Department of history, Addis Ababa university, 1980), pp. 27-29.

[168]Herbert S. Lewis, "The Development of Oromo Political Consciousness from 1958 to 1994 in P.T. W. Baxter, Jan Hultin and Alessandro Triulzi (eds.) *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Inquiries* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institutet1996), pp37-47.

[169]Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association and the Development of Oromo Nationalism" In Asafa Jalata *(ed.) Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse: The Search for Freedom and Democracy* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1998), pp. 183-222; Mekuria Bulcha, "The Survival and Reconstruction of …" pp. 58-66.

[170] Smith, *Ethno Symbolism and Nationalism…*, p. 72.

[171] Salviac, p. 13.

It was by the values of the *Gadaa* system and in *Afaan* Oromo that the Oromo taught their offspring the inclusion of the self and the exclusion of the others. Thus, according to Smith, the inclusion and the exclusion is one form of nationalism.[172] Even after the disintegration of the *Gadaa* system as a holistic system of the Oromo administration, its values and *Afaan* Oromo continued to function as an instrument of identification.[173] It was this silent but salient Oromo nationalism which has gradually transformed itself from consciousness of belonging to *Ilma* Oromo to the ideology of self-autonomy in contestation with the Ethiopian empire building.

However, these features of Oromo nationalism were misunderstood and have unleashed contesting debates. One factor for the debates is the nature of nationalism itself. It has different nature, but the most important is ethnic nationalism which is the focus of this paper. Ethnic nationalism itself is like a stored energy. It is not always observable, but only observable when the ethic group or the society it belongs to react against other external pressure.[174]

This has misled scholars of the field to have a different perception of it. Some of them argue that it is an élite invention created from eighteenth century phenomena.[175] Others contest that the existence of nationalism is as old as the formation of the society into groups.[176] Thus, what some scholars called élite invented is not the matter itself but the term and the interpretations

[172] Smith, *Ethno Symbolism and Nationalism*…, p.72.

[173]Interviews with Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggasaa Disaasaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

[174] Baxter, Hultin and Triulzi, "Introduction" …, p.8.

[175]E. J. Hobsbawm, pp. 109-133; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 117-131 In this case I argue that the learned Oromo élites could not invent common Oromo ethnic identity and nationalism from non-existent episodes. It is impossible to create a homogenous nation from empty spaces without at least certain common cultural elements which are inherited through generations. If they could do this from the nonexistent it would have been temporary and would not lasted up to now.

[176]Haarmann, pp. 60-61; Abbas Haji Ganamo, "Islam, the Orthodox Church and Oromo Nationalism (Ethiopia)", *Cahiers D'études Africaines*, Vol. 42, No. 165 (2002), pp. 102 &104.

given to the matter. Therefore, I argue that it is an ethnic identity process which is activated from an already existing common identity to respond to any external challenges. The type of the ideology extracted depended upon the type of the action to be taken.

The other factor influencing a debate is the way scholars of Ethiopian studies have perceived Oromo society in history. The perception has emanated from the misconception that the Oromo did not have common ethnic identity and a sense of nationalism before the rise of learned Oromo scholars.[177] In fact, this misconception seems to have emanated from lack of knowledge of Oromo history and how the *Gadaa* system functioned.

Nonetheless, I argue that the potentials that enabled the Oromo to define their common identity and organize themselves in order to defend their common identity existed with them over a long period. The Oromo used to defend themselves against their enemies under common *Gadaa* laws even before their incorporation into the Ethiopian empire. It was this silent but mature Oromo ethnic nationalism that began to reflect itself as nationalism for self-defence in response to the impositions of the *neftegna* system. The Oromo redefined these common cultural traits to defend their *Oromomummaa* (Oromoness).

The Oromo nationalism stored in a silent mode began to be activated when the Oromo were brought under total control and were prevented from exercising their own rights. The "civilizing mission" of the Ethiopian state makers pushed the Oromo to transform their ethnic nationalism for the use of consciousness of belongingness to the search for self-determination. The attempts made to replace *Afaan* Oromo with Amharic, Oromo belief system by Orthodox

[177]Levine, *Greater Ethiopia…*, pp. 129-130 & 164; Trimingham, pp. 187- 207.

Christianity and Oromo social organization by Amhara ways of life made some of the Oromo to redefine their identity in comparison with what was imposed on them.[178]

The redefinition of Oromo ethnic nationalism to get rid of the oppression was reflected in different forms. Open attacks and reflection of grievances in oral literature, escaped to the less *neftegna*- dominated areas, sometimes joining guerrilla warfare and giving support to those whom they thought belonged to them, were the major practices. In one form or another this Oromo self-defence was practiced by the Oromo at different time ranges.

As William Safran, states, besides serving as a centre around which the speech communities are gathered to defend themselves from external pressure, language's role to mobilize large numbers of people around symbols and values in the promotion of nationalism is significant.[179] It is also true that Oromo literature played a great role in expressing the ideas, feelings, attitudes and talk of all the suppressed individuals and groups of its speech community. What was done to the Oromo by their oppressors and the responses of the Oromo soon took the form of songs or proverbs or tales and circulated from one area to another and called the Oromo for collective resistance.[180]

In the back and forth journey between resistance and collaboration the Oromo carefully knit together their resistance poems of those violent experience of war of conquest, executions, and displacement along with their counter-insurgence. The power of words, phrases, paragraphs and sentences was somethings that was used to reflect and identify the crisis situations. By

[178]Baxter, Hultin and Triulzi, p. 8.

[179] William Safran, "Nationalism" in *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp, 77-91.

[180]Interviews with Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Uummataa Geenjaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga), May 27, 2017; Raggasaa Dhinsaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018.

this, the contents and forms of Oromo literature were transformed from the previous service of educating, networking, and regulating common Oromo identity to creating common political consciousness as a major tool to subvert the domination. In doing so, the circulation of *Afaan* Oromo oral arts in these forms became the agent of change capable of detecting, provoking, overturning and recasting perception of social reality. The following extract is quite expressive:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Naqeen nugaggabisee	*At the time Naqe made us faint*
Saaleen nuqaqqabdee	*Sale reached and saved us*
Manni Simaa Guumaa	*The house of Simaa Guumaa*
Jalli Citaadhumaa	*Its bottom is straw*
Naqeenfi Saleen	*Naqe and Sahle*
Jarri Sidaamuma	*Both are Amhara*
Naqeen Abbaa Keetii?	*Is Naqe Your Father?*
Saaleen Abbaa Keetii?	*Is Sahle your father*
Laaqxee albaatetti	*You in diarrhoea*
Hundinuu Sidaamaa	*All are Amhara*
Inniyyu sisaamaa[181]	*He too, plunders you*

The song was sung in 1908 when *Fitawrari* Sahle Giyorgis[182] was appointed over Leeqaa Qellem following the summoning of *Dajjazmach* Jootee Tulluu (hereafter Jootee) to Addis Ababa. It is an admonishment of the Oromo not to trust any appointed Amhara over them. It begins with the first two lines of the song which reflected the replacement of *Qengazmach* Naqa[183] by *Fitawrari* Sahle Giyorgis as a positive measure to relieve the Oromo from extortion. Following the reflection, the next ten lines of the song strongly admonished the reciter of the

[181] Negaso Gidada, "Oromo Historical Poems…", pp. 333-334.

[182] *Fitawrari* Sahle Giorgis was brother of *Ras* Tesemma Nadew who was appointed over Leeqaa Qeellem in November 1908 when Jootee was summoned to Addis Ababa being suspected of secret dealing with the neighboring British officials. See Alessandro Triulzi, "Social Protest and Rebellion in Some *Gabbar* Songs from Qellam, Wallagga" in Joseph Tubiana (Ed.) *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (19-22, December, 1977), p. 178; Negaso, "Oromo Historical Poems and Songs…, p. 333.

[183] Naqe had been a superintendent from Gore over Leeqaa Qellem under *Ras* Tesemma Nadew since 1904. See Bahru Zewde, "Relations Between Ethiopia and the Sudan on the Western Ethiopian Frontier, 1898-1935" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Department of History, University of London,1976), p. 231; Negaso, "Oromo Historical Poems and Songs…", pp. 333-334.

first two lines of the song that whatsoever individual non-Oromo was appointed over the Oromo would not have concern for the Oromo. It says since both of them are Amhara and not from an Oromo *Mootii* (king) such as Simaa Guumaa, both would not hesitate to exploit you. The song is a specific articulation of existing opinion between the Amhara governors and the governed Oromo.

The other manifestation of Oromo nationalism in the process of their resistance against Amhara domination was escaping from Amhara administered areas to the areas under Oromo autonomous regimes. The exile of the Oromo escapees to Oromo administered regions was made on the basis of their Oromo identity, because they preferred the Oromo outside their locality to the Amhara over their birthplaces. Therefore, it was the identification of the self and others. The exile of Tuulamaa Oromo to different parts of Oromo regions,[184] the Booranaa Oromo to Kenya in the times of intimidation[185] and that of the Arjoo Oromo to Leeqaa Naqamtee in Wallagga and Jimmaa[186] were the manifestations of such nationalism.

Since 1900, the Oromo identity which used to reflect itself through Oromo oral literature and escaping from Amhara dominated regions to Oromo administered areas had transformed itself and was developed into open forms of defending common identity. Such open defence of Oromo identity and Oromo nationalism can be observed in Salaalee from the centre,[187] Leeqaa

[184]Tsegaye Zeleke, "The Oromo of Salale: A History, 1840-1935 (M.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2002), pp. 107-108.

[185]Belete Bizuneh, "An Agrarian Polity and Its Pastoral Periphery: State and Pastoralism in the Borena Borderlands (Southwestern Ethiopia), 1897-1991" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Department of History, Boston University, 2008), pp.55-57.

[186]Interviews with Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, 13 January 2017; Getachew Margaa, Arjoo (Wallagga), November 5, 2008 and 10 September 2017; A Letter from *Ras* Demisew to *Dajjazmach* G/Egzabher, 20/12/1905 E.C., File No.ወ/ሠ፡/025.1714963144. The letter is about an order to return the escaped *Gabbars* (serfs) to *Ras* Demisew.

[187] Asafa, "Ethnography of Resistance Poetics…, pp. 155-156; Tsegaye, pp. 101-105.

Qellem and Jimmaa from the West,[188] Arsi,[189] Harar from the East[190] and Raayya from the North.[191]

In Salaalee a concern to defend Oromo identity took the form of guerrilla warfare which was then described as *shiftanet* (banditry) by the Ethiopian state authorities. But for the Oromo, as Asafa Tefera clearly stated, they were folk heroes. The rebellions were staged by Salaalee Oromo youth organized under their ethnic heroes for cultural, political and economic emancipation.[192] In the rebellion, the causes of resistance were Oromo concerns and the revolt was directed towards Oromo interests only. The target was the *neftegna* oppressors including Oromo collaborators.[193] Therefore, as it was by the Oromo, for the Oromo and supported by the Oromo, it was Oromo identity-based resistance. The movement might have started in the form of banditry but developed into striving for the total ousting of the Amhara in their region.[194]

In Leeqaa Qellem the sense of defending Oromo identity in open confrontation was observed when Mardasaa Jootee refused to recognise the Christian name given to him instead of his Oromo name. This early open manifestation of Oromo nationalism was attested by Bahru

[188] Negaso, "Oromo Historical Poems and Songs…", p.333.

[189] Abbas Haji, *Conquest and Resistance…*, p. 234.

[190]Nasser Ahmad, "A History of Oromo Somali Relations in Eastern Hararge (1941-1991)" (M.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2010), pp. 65-68; Ibsa Ahmad, "A History of the Ittu Oromo, 1880-1974" (MA Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2007), pp. 29- 66; Mulugeta B/ Sillasie, "The History of Galamso Garrison Town (1887-1974)" (BA Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1988), pp. 49-52.

[191] Ezekiel, Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion, The Ethiopian Empire, and Oromo Nationalism: The Significance of the Western Oromo Confederation of 1936" in *Northeast African Studies*, V. 9, No. 3 (New series,2002), p.76.

[192] Asafa Tefera, 155-156; Tsegaye, pp. 101-105.

[193] Tsegaye, pp. 57-58.

[194] P. Baxter, "The Creation and Constitution of Oromo Nationality" Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis eds. *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994), p.170

Zewde. Bahru states that Mardsaa's refusal to take a Christian name at his baptism was an early manifestation of Oromo nationalism.[195]

This resistance to assimilation gradually bore fruit and broke into fierce mass resistance in February 1909 against Joote's replacement by Sahile Giorgis in November 1908.[196] In this revolt about 9000 peasants were engaged. The rebellion was able to scare the Amhara out of the area for three years. Although it was suspected that the revolt was organized by Mardasaa, another revolt beyond the control of the *neftegna* in the area broke out in mid-1910 even after the imprisonment of Mardasaa at Addis Ababa.[197] In Leeqaa Naqamtee too, there was a similar problem which was described as በረሃ የገቡ ሽፍቶች (the Desert banditry).[198]

In Jimmaa following the appointment of *Nagadras* Sahle Eshete at the Customs Office with a clear mandate to impose direct imperial rule on the kingdom in 1932, a popular uprising broke out with the objective of ousting the appointed Amhara from the region.[199] In addition to the rifles distributed to them by *Abbaa* Joobir, the local society sold their cattle and bought their own firearms and ammunition. Even those who could not buy rifles, rented them. With this

[195] Bahru Zewde, "Dajjazmach Jote Tullu (1855-1918)" (B.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1970), pp. 40-53.

[196] Negaso, "Oromo Historical Poems and Songs…", p. 333.

[197] Alessandro Truilzi, "Social Protest and Rebellion in Some *Gabbar* Songs from Qellam, Wallagga" in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Joseph Tubiana (19-22 December 1977), p.178.

[198] Letter from Empress Zawditu to *Dajjazmach* Gabra Egzabher, date *Nahase* 8, 1915, Folder No. ወ/ሙ/3/52.

[199] *Berhanena Salam*, *Miyazia* 27, 1924 (5 May 1932); *Hamle* 7, 1924 (14 *Hamle* 1932); *Ginbot* 4, 1924 (May 12, 1932); *Ginbot 18*, 1924 (26 May 1932); Guluma Gemeda, "The Rise of Coffee and Demise of Colonial Autonomy: The Oromo Kingdom of Jimma and Political Centralization in Ethiopia" in *Northeast African Studies, V.9, No. 3* (2002), pp.64-66.

preparation, an outright insurgence broke out. It was by 500 imperial soldiers and some local collaborators that the revolt was suppressed.[200]

The Harar and Arsi Oromo also constantly attacked the *neftegna* settlers in their regions which took an organized and open confrontation in 1917 at the deposition of *Liji* Iyasu. At Gursum in Harar[201] and Eda'a in Arsi[202] the Oromo organized and began open fighting that was targeted to derive out the Amhara from their regions. In Rayyaa and Aseeboo the same measure was taken against their domination. They openly took up arms against Emperor Haile Sillasie's regime in 1928. During the Italian invasion in 1935 they also sided with Italy and attacked the retreating imperial armies from the Amba Radom Front.[203] It is said that they even succeeded in killing *Ras* Mulugeta who was commander in chief of the Amba Radom Front. They also blocked the retreating Emperor who was forced to turn his direction of escape.[204]

When *Liji* Iyasu seized full power following the death of *Ras* Tesemma Nadew, the previous governor of Iluu Abbaa Booraa and his regent in 1911,[205] issues of imposing Amharic and Orthodox religion on the non-Semitic people were less emphasized as he wanted to gain

[200]Guluma, "The Rise of Coffee and Demise of Colonial Autonomy…", pp.64-66; Dheressa Dhebu, "Historical Ecology and Ethnography of Gibe-Gojjab-Dhidheessa Triangle (From 1930-210)" (Ph. D Dissertation, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2018), p.42

[201] An Interview with Hajji Ahmad Mohammed, Ijaajjii (West Shawa), on *Miyaziya* 24, 2009; Ibsa, pp. 29-66; Mulugeta, pp. 49-52; *Berhanena Salam*, No, 25, *Sane* 9, 1924 (June 16, 1932). In fact, the newspaper does not mention the name Oromo. It refers them as Adal and Harar Muslims.

[202]Abbas, p. 234.

[203] Ahmed Hassen, "The Italian Impacts on Ethnic Relations: A case Study of Regional Policy in Northern Shoa (Ethiopia), 1936-194," in *Annales d'Ethiopie*, Vol.16 (Année, 2000), p. 148; doi: https://doi.org/10.3406/ethio/2000.970; Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion…, p.76.

[204]Perham, p. 304; Takla Tsadiiq Mekuria, *Ka Atse Tewedros Iska Qadamawi Haile Sillasie (From Emperor Tewodros to Emperor Haile Sillasie)* (Marha Tibab Printing House, 1936 E.C.), p. 265; Kabada Tasema, *Yatarik Mastawesha (Memory of History)* (Addis Ababa: 1922 E.C), p. 144; Angelo Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War, 1935-1941 T*rans. by P.D. Cummins (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 134-135 & 263.

[205] Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*…, p. 120.

support from them rather than the Shawan Amhara conservatives.[206] Thus the Oromo, who had hitherto criticised all the Ethiopian rulers through their oral literature and though usually by more passive means, took up arms against them and now took praised *Liji* Iyasu as their own ruler.[207] It is because of this that a letter written from the British Consulate at Goree to H.M. Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (London) states that "…the Teferi government was never popular any more than Liji Iyasu…".[208]

By the extensive study he conducted on ethno-nationalists of the Arsii Oromo, Temam has come out with the assertion that "Liji Iyasu was the first Ethiopian ruler who was welcomed warmly by [the] Arsii Oromo when he met Gammadoo Shaatii in 1915"[209] He also condemned the arbitrary suppression of the Arsi Oromo under the pretext of pacifying the [Oromo] *Shiftochi* (Oromo Banditries). This even attracted the attention of the Shawan nobles and became one of the factors by which he was accused at disposition.[210]

Although Bahru summarized the reign of *Liji* Iyasu as an "enigmatic" period[211] and Paul Henze as a "confused" and "hectic" reign,[212] on the contrary the Oromo who had condemned the Amhara rulers before him now turned to praise *Liji* Iyasu as the emperor of respite and emancipation.[213] On his part, for example in Harar, *Liji* Iyasu promised the Harar Oromo

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[206] Donald Donham, "The Old Abyssinia and the New Ethiopian Empire: Themes in Social History," in Donald Donham and Wendy James (eds.) *The Southern Marches of Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 26.

[207]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Haji Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo, Ijaajjii, April 21, 2018; Balcha Denta, Dambii Doolloo, March 10, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14,2017; Warkenash Badhaanee, Naqamtee, February, 6, 2008.

[208]Letter written from British Consulate from Goree to H.M. Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (London), date, June 24, 1936, GB FO/371 240/20206, p.238.

[209] Temam, "The Transformation of…", p. 82.

[210]Nobles accusation of Liji Iyasu for the Violation of Emperor Menilek's Order, 1909 E.C., IES MS 2555.

[211]Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*…, p.121.

[212]Paul B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (London: Hurst &Company, 2000), p.192.

[213]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Colonel Gammadaa Tuuchoo, Naqamtee, August 10, 2008 and February 13, 2016; Balcha Denta, Dambii Doolloo, March 10, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14,2017.

autonomous rights and the lifting of restrictions imposed on their possession of firearms.[214] It is said that he also promised to give recognition for *Afaan* Oromo script which was then being invented by *Sheik* Bakri Saphaloo.[215]

Thus, his positive view towards the Oromo made his reign to be considered as a period of relief from economic, cultural, linguistic and political suppression. Certainly the growing interest of the Oromo to have Oromo rulers has been increasingly reflected in the songs composed in praise of *Liji* Iyasu. The Oromo sang in praise of him before and after his overthrow from the throne.[216] The songs which were sung for him were full of vigorous filial poems, of which the followings are representatives:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Iyasuu dofolaa koo	*Iyasu my handsome*
Siifan nyaadhe kaa boqqollokoo[217]	*It is because of you that I ate my corn*

The song indicates that *Liji* Iyasu was seen as their own and his policy was pro-Oromo. In the song they reflected their perception that he had given the respite because he was an Oromo. The Oromo also critically opposed the movement against Iyasu's power by their song.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Yaa Shaggar yaa Shaggar	*Oh! Addis Ababa, hi! Addis Ababa*
Yakatamaa Iyyaasuu	*The City of Iyasu*
Hajedhan waan jedhan	*Let them wrangle against you*
Jechi biyyaa nama hinbaasuu[218]	*As wrangling does not enforce anybody into exile*

[214] An Interview with Hajji Ahmad Mohammed, Ijaajjii (West Shawa), on Miyaziya 24, 2009; Cedric Burns, "Province and Princes- Power and the Eastern Ethiopian Periphery, 1906-1916," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, V.34, No.2 (December 20010): http://www.jstor.org/stable/ 41966123,p.12.

[215] Hajji Ahmad Mohammed, Ijaajjii (West Shawa), on Miyaziya 24, 2009.

[216] Abbas Haji, *Conquest and Resistance*…, p. 234; Mohammed, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism…", p. 151.

[217] Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Raggasaa Dhinsaa and Beranu Fikadu, Mandii (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; Oljirraa Guutaa and Sadii Mullata, Najjoo (West Wallagga), May 24, 2017.

[218] The song is one of the Salaalee popular songs which joined Oromo folklore and was able to reach the current generation.

The song was to encourage Iyasu against the widespread sedition against Iyasu who did not conform to Emperor Menilek' system of imperial power.[219] The song says the city of Addis Ababa is yours, their conspiracy will not bring expulsion for you. And thus, do not worry about their malevolent words as such words have no impact on anybody. In short, the song is a reflection of the inclusion of *Liji* Iyasu and Addis Ababa to the Oromo and the exclusion of the Shawa Amhara conspirators as alien.

In addition to these, the roads, stones, rivers and hills named after *Liji* Iyasu in Oromoland remained without change whereas the other names did not. It was one of the major manifestations of imagined Oromo identity. All these efforts to get out of Amhara administration was really a route to Pan-Oromo nationalism.

However, the downfall of *Liji* Iyasu and the ascendance of *Ras* Tafari to power in 1917 resumed serious challenges Oromo nationalism. The measures he took against *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity were more severe than his predecessors.[220] The fact that he started his power as a reformer and modernizer,[221] did not save the development of Oromo literature and self-assertion of Oromoness from adverse effects. His reign posed serious restrictions on the use of *Afaan* Oromo and the culture that reflected Oromo identity. His policy to replace Oromo language and identity was not only by building institutions on religious and historical sites of

[219] For the Opposition undertaken against *Liji* Iyasu, see Gobeze Tafete, *Abbaa Tanna Iyasu (Iyasu, the Father of Health)* (Addis Ababa: Maison Des Etudes Ethiopienness, 1996); Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*…, pp.126-128; Harold Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia…*, pp. 112-116.

[220]Although there is a rumour that Emperor Haile Sillasie himself was partly an Oromo, what was done to Oromo and *Afaan* Oromo during his reign was more serious. From interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Colonel Gammadaa Tuuchoo, Naqamtee, February 13, 2016; Balcha Denta, Dambii Doolloo, March 10, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14,2017.

[221]Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia…*, pp.201-202.

the conquered Oromo as his predecessors had done but also by using modern institutions against the Oromo like education, the police force, bureaucratic structures and others.[222]

The schools and other institutions began effectively working on the marginalization of *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo issues. It was because the Oromo were depicted as a potentially dangerous threat to Ethiopian unity unless their assimilation into the Amhara ways of life was hastened. Referring to the assimilation process in Ethiopia, Tedla Haile, in his graduating thesis of the Université Coloniale dAnvers, which he defended in 1930 flatly criticised the government for lagging behind and not radicalising the assimilation of the Oromo.[223]

In his argument, although he believed that the number of the Oromo was much greater than that of the Amhara, he admonished the government that it should have taken aggressive action for their assimilation and for that he forwarded the strategies he thought were the best for the assimilation. Tedla's strong call for absorption of the Oromo was also reflected in Sahle Tsedalu's memo which he prepared in 1933. He went one step further than Tedela and demanded the banning of all Ethiopian languages except Geez and Amharic. As he himself was Minister of the Ministry of Education, he saw the Ministry as a key institution for the implementation of his recommendation. He suggested that the Ministry of Education should declare universal education in which Amharic and Geez should be compulsory languages.[224]

All this swift move to assimilate the Oromo and their language into Amhara identity was fully and clearly elaborated in the Amharic newspaper *Berhanena Salam* in December 1933.[225] The newspaper declared that the government interest was to make all people in the country the

[222] Mohammed Hassen, "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide…", p. 21.

[223]Richard Pankhurst, "Tedla Haile, and the Problem of Multi-Ethnicity in Ethiopia" in *Northeast African Studies, New Series,* V.5, No.3 (1998), pp. 81-96; Bahru, *Pioneers of Change* …, pp. 140-141.

[224] Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change…*, pp.140-141.

[225] *Berhanena Salam (Light and Peace), Year 3, Magabet* 22, 1919 (March 31, 1927).

speakers of Amharic. It also accused the missionaries for their printing and teaching the Gospels and scriptures in the languages of the nations as a purposive act to disintegrate the unity of the country. However, the focus was on the Oromo as the column concludes the narration stating that "ፊዳሉን በላቲን ቋንቋዉን [በኦሮምኛ] ማስተማር በጣም ቅር ያሰኛል (Teaching the Oromo in *Afaan* Oromo and the letters in Latin is really a vexatious act).[226]

Nevertheless, the policy of *Ras* Tafari and his dignitaries against the Oromo never fully materialized. Although powerless and without modern arms, the Oromo began posing resistance, employing different methods. As the oppression became more aggravated the response from the Oromo were also more developed into a challenging open resistance. The 1928 Rayyaa and Aseebo Oromo revolt,[227] the Harar Oromo siding with the invading Italians[228] and the western Oromo movements for an independent state[229] were such manifestations. The dispersed and long lasting struggle convinced the Oromo that the only viable way of ending their repression was to end Amhara rule.

Of all the manifestations of the Oromo nationalism under Amhara domination before and during Italian occupation, that of the Harar Oromo recurrent revolt and the confederation established by the Western Oromo were the major ones in laying a base for a modern form of Oromo nationalism. While the same resistances to grievance was unevenly distributed

[226] *Berhanena Salam*, Year, 10, *Tahesas* 19, 1926 (December 28, 1933). See appendix xiv.

[227]Charles McClellan, "Observations on the Ethiopian Nations, Its Nationalism, and the Italo-Ethiopian War" in *Northeast African Studies, New series, V.3, No. 1* (1996): http://www. Jstor.org/stable/41931125, pp. 70-71, note no.12.

[228] Nasser, pp.65-68.

[229]Tesema Ta'a, "The Bonayyaa Incident and the Italian Occupation of Naqamtee (1936-1941)," In *Ethiopia in Broader Perspectives: Papers of the Thirteenth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui, Eisie Kurimoto, and Masayoshi Shigeta (Kyoto: Shokado Book Sellers, 1997), pp. 266-274; Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion…, p.85.

throughout Oromoland, the movement in eastern and western Oromo took a basis of struggle within the context of the modernity of the time.

In Hararge, besides welcoming the Italians thinking them to be liberators, the Oromo also began condemning the suppressive rule of the monarchy through their folk poems. The best example of such poems was composed and printed by *Sheik* Usman Odaa, popularly known among the Oromo as *Sheik* Bakri Saaphaloo (hereafters *Sheik* Bakri).[230] It reads:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Amaara nurraa fuudhee	*The Amhara who used take*
Raada burree Ayyani	*A brown heifer of Ayyaana*
Dhidhimee gaara seenee	*Were plunged into a deep forest*
Dheeffa gurbee Xaaliyanii[231]	*To escape from Italy*

The poem is a sort of prophecy that the Oromo would get better relief under Italy. In its layered meaning, it points to that whatever feature the Italian administration had, it was no worse than that of the Amhara. In fact, the comparison was not from empty ground. As *Sheik* Bakri was said have been voracious reader of materials circulated in the Arab world and some African countries on the nature of colonialism, the comparison might have been within the context of the time situation.[232] He expressed his happiness at the flight of the Emperor and that all loads of oppression on the Oromo had therefore gone with him.

[230]The consciousness level of *Sheik* Bakri Saphaloo was not an issue materialized accidentally or an issue restricted to him. He was brought up under his father while learning how the Egyptian invasion and the conquest of Menilek II massacred the Harar Oromo. The rounding visit in Baalee and Arsi to acquire advanced Islamic learning exposed him to learn under his teachers how the Shawan massacred the Arsi and Baalee Oromo and the way the Oromo were inhumanly treated and reduced to being mere servants. This shows that not only *Sheik* Bakri but also other Oromos were conscious of issues under strict suppression but could not reveal it openly. However, the Islamic religious education he gathered at different places of Islamic worlds made him more nationalist than the other nationalists of his time. See Mohammed, "Shaykh Bakrii Saphaloo (1895-1980) …", pp. 135-178.

[231] *Ibid*., p. 145.

[232]*Ibid*., p. 159.

The Western Oromo Confederation was formally established in Naqamtee in 1934 by Oromo chiefs with the intention to include other Oromo living in the south, north and east. The Confederation aimed at having an independent government under British government mandate.[233] Erskine who was the British consul at Goree at the time and observed the situation and reported to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stating that "… All [Oromo] chiefs refuse to be represented by their enemies and oppressors, Amharic delegation now in London, who have been parasites on the People of Abyssinia and three quarter of [Oromo]…".[234] The aim was stated in a report to the British Foreign Minister as "… for an administration by mandate which would restore the [Oromo] people their rights, remove them from their subjection to the Amhara, and give the [Oromo] chiefs equal standing with the Amhara officials of the late Abyssinian government."[235]

However, the confederation was dissolved after the clash between the Black Lion and invading Italian forces at the Bakkee Bonayyaa in June 1936.[236] Italy did not take time to dissolve the confederation considering that Bonayyaa incident was a Western Oromo Confederation fomented attack. Even after assassinating its leader, *Dajjazmach* Hambis (Habte Mariam)

[233] Interviews with Warkenash Badhaanee, Naqamtee, February 6, 2008; Raggaasaa Disaasaa, Jaarsoo (West Wallagga), May 26, 2017; the late Balcha Deentaa, Dambii Doolloo, June 10, 2008; "Abyssinia: Confidential", A Report from Consul Erskine (Goree) to Mr. Anthony Eden (Gambella), May 30, 1936, pp, 150-155, PRO GB FO 371 239 /20206; "Desire of Western [Oromo] for British Mandate," Letter of Chief Delegates of the Western [Oromo] Confederation to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Anthony Eden, June 11, 1936, pp. 219-220, PRO GB FO 371 239 /20206; "Telegram Message about Western[Oromo]'s Wish to Plead to the League of the Nations" , June 15, 1936, p. 264, PRO GB FO 371 239 / 20206; Ezekiel, "Italian Invasion…", p. 85; Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Friedman, 1975), pp. 212-213.

[234] Letter from Erskine (Goree) to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, date June 15, 1936, GB FO 371 239/ 20206, p. 146.

[235]Ezekiel, p. 80.

[236]The clash of Bakke Bonayyaa was the incident in which 13 Italians who came to Naqamtee to undertake surveillance were burnt to death with their three airplanes on 26 June 1936 by an ambush contingent of Black Lion military officers in Naqamtee. As a result, the Italians who had pre-hand information about the establishment of the Western Oromo Confederation and their beginning of close alliance with the British took the Confederation as a threat against their interest and dissolved the confederation by killing its chairman, *Dajjazmach* Habte Mariam Kumsaa. See Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion…", pp. 85-89.

Kumsaa, the Italians continued carefully watched for resumption of the activities of the confederation.[237] Nonetheless, the significance was great. From that time onward the Oromo entered into organized resistance rather than confronting their enemies in separate localities.

Generally, under the Italians the Oromo wished to have their own freedom from Amhara domination, restoration of their land, and recognition of their cultural identity and political autonomy. The opportunity they got under the Italians to exercise their language in office, in schools, and in radio broadcast and free cultural practices further strengthened the hope to get free from the Amhara. The fact that the Oromo exercised using their language for education, in offices and in the mass media as well as the free cultural practice showed the Oromo like to have full independence. This Italian period was also when the Oromo demand for freedom became well-articulated. Although almost invariably doomed to defeat and eventual massacre, the great insurrections resaid by the Oromo altogether became an obstacle to achieving any lasting Amharization.

The patient, silent struggles stubbornly carried on by rural communities over the years would also maintain the consensus of Oromo identity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the period 1899-1941 was the time when the first modern Oromo nationalism took its first fermentation, although the development was challenged by a more strengthened and modernized way of repression after the restoration of the Emperor in 1941. However, *Afaan* Oromo and the emerging Oromo nationalism, seen it as dangerous obstacles to Ethiopian unity met consolidated suppression. This and how the Oromo used *Afaan* Oromo as a viable instrument of struggle are the subjects of the next chapter.

[237] *Ibid*., pp.81-86.

Chapter Six

Afaan Oromo and the Oromo Quest for National Identity Following the Consolidation of Imperial Ethiopia, 1941-1974

In chapter five I discussed the attempts of the Oromo to maintain and develop their solidarity using the pre-existing culture, largely and essentially rooted in *Afaan* Oromo. How the studies of *Afaan* Oromo by the missionaries and the neighbouring colonial countries towards their own interests contributed to the development of *Afaan* Oromo to written literature has been narrated. I also explained how the use of *Afaan* Oromo literature created awareness in the resistance against the Amharization process of the Ethiopian regime.

Continuing the discussions, this chapter takes the subject to the struggle in favour of *Afaan* Oromo which was consolidated both temporally and in scope. The struggle was between the Oromo and the homogenising politics of state functionaries of the Ethiopian government. The Oromo wanted to have the freedom to use their language for all purposes and to nurture their common identity towards their own national interest without restriction. On the other hand, the Ethiopian government, who seeing the Oromo as a threat to its policy of homogenous state formation, planned to suppress *Afaan* Oromo and disintegrate common Oromo identity into the aspired homogenous Ethiopia at any cost.

Therefore, this chapter explores how the Ethiopian government targeted *Afaan* Oromo seeing it as a dangerous obstacle to Ethiopian unity and how the Oromo used it as a viable instrument of struggle. Along with this, the chapter discusses how the apparatus the Ethiopian government operated to implement the policy of linguistic homogenization but counter-productively promoted *Oromummaa* (Oromoness). The chapter also sheds light on how the Ethiopian

government which worked to remove *Afaan* Oromo from the list of world languages, was forced to launch *Afaan* Oromo mass media by its own administration.

Therefore, the chapter is organized around five themes. The first part deals with the linguistic and national question of the Oromo on the one hand and the interest of the Ethiopian government to restore the pre-war status quo and to strengthen the linguistic homogenization process on the other hand. The second is about the Oromo struggle for printed *Afaan* Oromo literature and about Oromo nationalism in the modern academic arena. The third is an attempt to analyze struggle of the Oromo students to have well standardized written *Afaan* Oromo as a main instrument for the consolidation of Oromo nationalism. The fourth is an analysis of radio broadcasting in *Afaan* Oromo, and its roles in developing written *Afaan* Oromo and in creating common Oromo national consciousness. The fifth is about the struggle of the Oromo Cultural Troupe for the determination of Oromo destiny, using their songs as weapons.

6.1. Silencing the Oromo Questions of National Identity under the Restored Monarchy

When Emperor Haile Sillasie was restored in 1941, issues of *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo national question had already taken a challenging ground. As discussed in chapter five, to win the Oromo to their side, the Italians allowed the Oromo to use their language for official purposes and to exercise freely their culture which in turn, although out of Italian expectation, helped the Oromo to cultivate and strengthen their Pan-Oromo identity. The Italians taught the Oromo that an Amhara intimidation against their linguistic, social, political, economic, religious, demographic, educational and cultural setup was an act of animosity and should not be tolerated. At the time of the restoration of the Emperor the Oromo had already begun using what they had learned from the Italians against the Italians themselves as Italians began

revealing the real features of their colonial policy.[1] Therefore, at the time of the restoration of the Emperor, the Oromo had already been developed the presumption that a restored notorious *neftegna-gabbar* system would have disastrous effects on them.[2]

Although not thoroughly dealt with and silenced, the first challenging political unrest the restored Emperor encountered was issues of the Oromo national question. According to one of the application letters to the British officers,[3] the Oromo question of resenting the restoration of the Amhara ruling system was started on the spot that they heard the news of the decision. It was before the Emperor took his throne that the Oromo were aware of the fact that the restoration of the Emperor would reverse their linguistic and cultural rights they had already started exercising under the Italian Occupation.

In addition to the Western Oromo, the Oromo aversion to being subjected to the reinstated Amhara system and their hope to have local autonomy was widespread among the Baalee, Arsii, Booranaa, Hararge and Rayyaa-Aseeboo Oromo.[4] For example, *Girazmach* Seeraa, an

[1]Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee (East Wallagga Zone), September 14, 2008; Biratu Kenei's interviews for me with Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3,2015; Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini…*, pp. 160-161.

[2]Gilkes, p. 226.

[3]As cited in Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization… p.332.

[4] "The [Oromo] Rebellions in Northwestern Province", From Addis Ababa to Foreign Office, February 13, 1943, GB PRO FO/ 371 122/1495 pp. 21-30; "Arsi, Borena and [Gujii] joined the Rebellion" From Addis Ababa to Foreign Office, March 9, 1943, GB PRO FO 371 293/ 35604; "The Azebo [Oromo] were fighting against the Imperial Force", From Addis Ababa to Foreign Office, 1943, GB PRO FO/371 294 / 35607; "The [Oromo] of Lowland Bale Trouble to Ethiopian Government" From Addis Ababa to Foreign Office, 1942, GB PRO FO/371 294/ 35608 "Ya Rayya ena Aziboo Hizib Sima (For Raayyaa and Azaboo Peoples)", *Hidar* 5, 1935 (November 13, 1942), IES MS 2555; "An English Colonel organized Banditry preaching to establish independent government" IES MS, 2163; Sbacchi, p. 224; Scanned archival document from Abdalla Sherif Museum By Reta Dhuguma, File No. 964;File No. 7.1.3; File No. Harar *Awrajja* ,6-9; Harar Regional tourism Bureau, File No. 1/3587/3/103/03; File No. 1/1331/ 189/25; File No. 1/146/1/41/65; File No. 1/17/9/59; Hararge Regional government, File No. 12197; 10326; Wolde Maskel Tariku Memorial Research Center, File No.77-2133; National Archive, file No. 17.17.30.02; File No. 17.1.7.31.15; File No. 17.2.81.01; Perham, pp. 361-364; Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War…*, pp. 134-135 &263; Nasir, pp. 65-69; Ostebo, p. 187; Edomond Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p.161; Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion, the Ethiopian Empire…", p.76; Belete, "An Agrarian Polity and Its Pastoral …:", pp.52-56.

important Oromo leader, was assassinated in Nagallee Booranaa because of his attempt to negotiation for the autonomy of southern Oromo with help of British forces in the area. This is articulated by Sbacchi as: "During the same period [the first month of the restoration], *Girazmach* Seeraa, an important Oromo leader, had spoken out for some measure of local autonomy. He was murdered in Adoola, near the camp of the British political officer. He might be suspected of having tried to negotiate the independence of southern Ethiopia with British help."[5]

Subsequently, the Oromo application was discussed in Cairo by the committee of British officers established to facilitate the restoration of the Emperor.[6] The group composed of Sudanese and the Kenyan civil servants supported the Oromo question and they condemned the restoration of the Oromo to the *neftegna* administration and suggested the grant of autonomous rights under the mandate of the British Government.[7] The pro-Oromo debate influenced the chairman of the committee, Lord Moyne. As a result, Lord Moyne wrote to the Foreign Secretary of the British government stating that "…we have a moral duty to see that the people of the country are not oppressed and enslaved. When we are fighting for freedom in Europe how can we restore the [Oromo] and other subject races to the Amhara tyranny?"[8]

However, the idea was reversed by another group who had argued in favour of the British image in world politics. This group strongly argued and convinced the British government that they should not interfere with the internal problem of Ethiopia and the right to deal with their internal issues should be given to the Ethiopians themselves. As a result, the British Foreign

[5]Sbacchi, pp. 224-225.

[6] Harold Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974: The Politics of Empire* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 22-23; Perham, p. 364; Nasir, pp. 65-68.

[7]Sbacchi, p. 218.

[8] Cited in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States*…, p.23.

Office decided to restore the Oromo to the domain of the Emperor[9] with the recommendation that the Emperor should not work against the right and identity of the Ethiopian nations and in particular that of the Oromo.[10] Fearing the anticipated instabilities in opposition to the restoration of the Emperor and to check the suspected grudges of the Emperor against his rivals, the British government supplied him with chief political advisors.[11]

However, the Emperor was not happy with the position of the British political advisors. The disagreement was on issues of ethnic identities. The Emperor and his dignitaries sought to restore the pre-war status quo with few changes, aiming at the consolidation of the power of the Emperor,[12] whereas the British officers wanted the Emperor to have spaces for ethnic diversities. [13] Although there were similar issues with other ethnic groups,[14] the Emperor was frustrated by the rising of the Oromo throughout the country and he wanted to quell the issues before they would attract the attention about the Oromo mass. In the words of Perham, the Emperor's concern of the Oromo was described as "…few questions at issue between the British and the Ethiopians during the first months of the liberation so disturbed the Emperor as the reputed wish of one or two [Oromo]experts on the British side to defend the [Oromo] cause.'"[15]

The Emperor might have taken more concern about the Oromo because of their territorial location, their population number and the speed with which they had attempted to assert their

[9] Perham, p.392.

[10] Sven Rubenson, "The Last Unsolved Problem of Africa 'In Fifty Years' Perspective" in Tadesse Beyene (Ed.) *Proceedings Eighty International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, v. 2 (1989), p. 405.

[11]Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and United States*…, pp.23-24.

[12]McClellan, p.67, Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*…, pp.218-219.

[13] Marcus, *The Politics of Empire*…, pp.22-24.

[14] These ethnic groups were those who lived in Tirignya speaking majority areas, the Somali and some others in Southern and Western Ethiopia. The aim of some British officials was to incorporate them to British administered colonial countries neighboring Ethiopia.

[15] Perham, p.379.

national identity during the Italian occupation. The Emperor even frequently complained against the British political advisors condemning them that they were undertaking a purposive effort to foster identity difference among Ethiopian nations.[16]

Nonetheless, the Emperor did not reflect his resentment against the British officers and did not allow his dignitaries to do so until he had secured the restoration of the Oromo into his full domain. In this case, the Emperor used his usual wise and cautious tactics.[17] The first measure he took was to convince the British officers that all nationality-related instabilities were Italian fabricated questions where they did exist. The emperor informed the officers and the people that all the features of the pre-war feudal system would be changed and nations would have free space to exercise their full rights which would vary from cultural to political practices.[18]

Within these strategies, an attempt to discredit the Oromo national question was carefully worked out. Issues with which the British officers had concerns were carefully handled. There was appeasement and absence of recrimination against all efforts which had been promoted against Ethiopian unity including the Oromo quest for autonomy during the Italian occupation.[19] *Afaan* Oromo radio broadcasts from Addis Ababa were allowed to continue until July 1942. In fact, it is also said that *Afaan* Oromo broadcasting under the Italians that was

[16]Marcus, *The Politics of Empire*…, pp. 8-12; Tibebe Eshete, "The Root Causes of Political Problems in the Ogaden, 1942-196" in *Northeast African Studies*, Vol, 13, No.1 (1991), pp. 9-28.

[17]Alberto Sbacchi, "Haile Sillasie and the Italians 1941-1943" In African Studies Review, Vol. 22, No.1 (April 1979), pp.31-34, Sbacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*…, pp.221-223.

[18] Decree No. 1, Administrative Regulation for Provincial Government, in *Negarit Gazeta*, V.1, 3, 19 June 1942; McClellan, p. 65; Harold Marcus, "Haile Sillasie's Leadership" in the *Papers of Twelfth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, V.I* (5-10 September 1994), pp.842-843.

[19] Stated in a dispatch by A.P. Wavell on British East African Operation to New Delhi on 21 May 1942 by file number W.O. 201/311. The dispatch is cited in McClellan, pp.61-65. See also note no. 46 on p. 83: George Lipsky, *Ethiopia, Its People, Its Society and Its Culture* (Newhaven: HRAF Press, 1962), p. 38.

used to reach the Oromo was evil acts.[20] Other factors were loosely but carefully handled in a way they could prevent further development of Oromo ethnic consciousness until[21] the Ethio-British agreement of 31 January 1942.[22]

The 1942 Ethio-British agreement brought debates on the Oromo national question to an end.[23] The agreement gave the Emperor tacit permission to have total control over the Oromo that had previously been incorporated into the Ethiopian territory. Thereafter, the Emperor Haile Sillasie's government decided to undertake aggressive assimilation of the Oromo thinking that immediate assimilation of the Oromo would solve the mushrooming Oromo national question. Believing that having a single official language is a necessary condition for the well-being of the state as it had been seen in modern Europe,[24] the Haile Sillasie government fully targeted linguistic assimilation into the politically dominant language policy that he intended to defend and promote.[25] The intention was clearly stated in the government leading newspaper, *Addis Zaman*.[26]

Emperor Haile Sillasie's government became more aware of the use of language particularly the promotion of Amharic. With this regard working to replace *Afaan* Oromo with Amharic was taken as a cutting edge of the policy for unity. Emperor Haile Sillasie was well aware how

[20]Interview with the late Balcha Deentaa in Dambii Doolloo March 10, 2008. It was when I conducted a field research for my M.A Thesis. Balcha Deentaa was one of the journalists of *Afaan* Oromo broadcast from Addis Ababa during Italian Occupation

[21] Lipsky, 1962, p. 38.

[22] The agreement acknowledged the restoration the Oromo into the domain of the Emperor when it rejected the raising the Oromo question for autonomy while citing the Somali and the Eritrean questions. See Henze, *Layers of Time…*, p. 235; Lapiso Delebo, *የኢትዮጵያ የጣር ሥርዓትና ጅምር ካፒታሊዝም: 1900-1966 (Feudalism and the Beginning of Capitalism in Ethiopia: 1900-1966)* (Second Ed.) (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1991), pp. 129-131.

[23] Harold Marcus, "Haile Sillasie's Leadership", pp.842-843.

[24]Anne Judge, *Linguistic Policies and the Survival of Regional Languages in France and Britain* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.1.

[25] John Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2011), p.125; Jeylan Wolyie, "The Politics of Language, Power and Pedagogy…", pp.35-37.

[26]*Addis Zaman*, Year. 1, No.11, *Nehase* 8, 1935 (15 August 1943).

Afaan Oromo had served ethnic identification during the Italian occupation. Thus, in the project of this linguistic homogenization, *Afaan* Oromo was seen as a critical obstacle to the unity of Ethiopia if not steadily replaced by Amharic.[27]

Therefore, steps were adopted to smoothen the path of the preferred official medium. One of them was systematically avoiding the implementation of any Oromo related suggestions from the British advisors. The Emperor silently passed over such suggestions, thinking that if implemented, the suggestions would promote ethnic consciousness against his policy.[28] On the other hand, if he refused violently, he might have thought it would distort his government's image in the eyes of the British government which had still a privileged position in Ethiopia. Therefore, the Emperor and his government began secretly working on the implementation of a strict linguistic and cultural homogenization policy.

The other step Haile Sillasie's government took in the suppression of languages in Ethiopia other than Amharic and Geez was the administrative divisions. The first such administrative division after the Italian occupation was launched in 1942.[29] The division did not take into consideration the ethnic similarities or differences of the Ethiopian societies and was purposely made in a way that it lumped different ethnic groups into one administrative boundary or cut the same ethic group into different administrative boundaries.[30]

Above all, the restructuring of the boundaries was made in a way that facilitated the assimilation of the Oromo into the dominant Amhara identity. In the division the Oromo were made to join different ethnic groups and no exclusive Oromo general governorate was set up.

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[27] Mohammed, "Orature, Resistance and Nationalism…", pp. 152-153.

[28] Marcus, "The Haile Sillasie's Leadership", pp. 842-844.

[29]"Administrative Regulation for Provincial Government." *Negart Gazeta*, V.1, 3, 19 June 1942, Decree No.1,

[30]Lipsky, p.38,

The Tuulamaa, the Karrayyuu Oromo and eastern part of Maccaa Oromo were made to join the Shawa Amhara and Gurage within Shawa General Governorate. The other Maccaa Oromo were made to join the Nilotic language speakers within Wallagga and Iluu Abbaa Booraa General Governorates. The rest of the Maccaa Oromo were made to join the Omotic language speakers within Kafa General Governorate. Similarly, the Booranaa and the Gujii Oromo were made to join other Cushitic speakers of southern Ethiopia under Sidamo General Governorate. The Arsi and the Ittuu were merged with the Somali, Afar, Argoba and Harari under the Hararge General Governorate. The Walloo and partly the Rayyaa Oromo together with the Amhara Saynti were put under the Walloo General Governorates. Part of the Raayyaa Oromo with the Tigrigna speakers came under Tigray General Governorate.[31]

In relation to the linguistic homogenization, this division of the Oromo into the general governorates of the speakers of different languages had two main purposes. One was to avoid the uniformity of *Afaan* Oromo by keeping its speakers apart from each other. This is because linguists state that when speakers of a given language are separated from each other for long, the dialects of the language evolve into separate and independent languages.[32] It also brings linguistic intermix with others and avoids separate identity by which the ethnic groups identify

[31]Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tesfa Bula, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Qajeelaa Bayana, Firrisaa Waggaa, Arjoo (East Wallagga), January 25, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Christopher Clapham," Centralization and Local Responses in Southern Ethiopia" in *Government Miscellanea*.1, pp. 22-26. Notes for the division of the provinces only to tell as the division into twelve provinces. The purpose he stated was to make the problems of administration easy. But Robert Hess, when he discusses the issue, states that the authors were discouraged from mentioning the name of any ethnic group as the government urged them to refer only to Ethiopia. Robert Hess, *Ethiopia: The Modernization of Autocracy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), p.179. Nonetheless, he and other authors refrained from indicating which ethnic group was mixed with which. But most of my informants clearly elaborated that the main purpose was to weaken the strength of ethnic consciousness. See also Dheressa, pp.48.

[32] Curt Woolhiser, "Political Boundaries and Dialect Divergence/ Convergence in Europe" in Petre Auer et al (eds.) *Dialect Change: Convergences and Divergence in European Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 238-240

themselves from the others. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, language constitutes and harbours crucial elements in the identity of ethnicity. The other reason was to justify the use of Amharic as the official language and to avoid common loyalty to the use of *Afaan* Oromo. As speakers of different languages were lumped together within the boundaries of the general governorates, there was no logical space for the Oromo to ask to use their language and the same was true for the others.

Therefore, Amharic was presented as the language by which all the nations were served equally.[33] In fact, the equality was the equality of having the same problem.[34] Nonetheless, according to Perham, the Orientation was basically to promote ultimately Amharic as the sole language of the country and ultimately a common ethnic identification with allegiance to the central Ethiopian government.[35]

In the linguistic homogenization process, the Haile Sillasie government had to make the education sector useful.[36] It is needless to state the role of education in promoting a given language to a written status and accordingly recording and preserving the cultural identity of its speakers for the future generations. Therefore, Amharic had mostly benefitted from the principle. On the other hand, marginalizing or keeping away a given language from the medium of education was tied up with the pursuit of a successful policy of assimilation.[37]

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[33] Letter from Hararge General Governorate to Ministry of Interior, Date. *Hidar* 3, 1936 E.C, Ref. No.698; Teqemte 9, 1936, Ref. No. 14/063; Letter from Ministry of Pen to Ministry of interior, Date. No. *Tiqimt* 25, 1936 E.C. Ref. 613, Folder No. ሥዕ ቁ 21/70. The letters said that people in Hararge general governorate preferred to use Arabic for office purpose instead of Amharic and the state representative expressed complete rejection.

[34] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008.

[35] Perham, pp.379-380.

[36] Mordechai Abir, "Education and National Unity in Ethiopia" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 69, No.274 (January, 1970): http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html, pp. 44-59.

[37] McNab, *Language Policy and Language Practice…*, p. 12; Jeylan Wolyie, "The Politics of Language, Power and Pedagogy…", p. 37; Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two*…pp. 125-126.

The declaration of Amharic as the sole Ethiopian language of instruction in all schools in Ethiopia was a systematic marginalization of the languages of others from the medium of instruction. Along with this, *Afaan* Oromo, which used to have considerable benefit from missionary education, was severely hampered by this policy. The missionaries were legally forbidden to teach and preach in *Afaan* Oromo. Any missionary who violated the law was warned that he/she would be deported without any other issue.[38] The cumulative effects made speaking and communicating in *Afaan* Oromo in school compounds to be taboo and a sufficient reason to be punished both physically and psychologically. According to Mekuria Bulcha, speaking fluent Amharic was made a symbol of intelligence and a criterion to pass from one grade to another.[39]

Recording at least "C" grade in Amharic was also made compulsory to join higher education which even Amhara students found it very difficult.[40] The devotion of the Ministry of Education for the expansion of Amharic at the expense of languages of the others was summarized in its report of 1955, when it stated that the promotion of Amharic at various levels of the school is an important task that is fundamental to national integration.[41] The overall attempts of this objective was to make Amharic the language of all Ethiopian nations as the objective was disseminated by leading government newspaper, *Addis Zaman*. The newspaper states: "…እኛ ኢትዮጵያዉያን ትግሮች[sic]፥ አማሮች፥ [ኦሮሞዎች፥ [ጉሙዞች]፥ ሶማሌዎች፥ [አፋሮች] በጠቅላላዉ በኢትዮጵያ ምድር ተወልዶ ደሙዋ፥ማርና ወተቱዋን ሥጋዋና ፍሬዋን በመመገብ … የሚኖር ሁሉ መሠረተ

[38]*Negarit Gazeta*, Year.3 No. 12, August 12, 1944; Perham, pp. 133-134.

[39]Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization…; Baxter, "Unacknowledged Oromo Problem…", p.288.

[40] Bereket Habte Sillasie, "Conflict and Intervention" in *The Horn of Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), p. 80; Baxter, "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem …", p.288.

[41] Cited in Paulos Milkias, *Haile Silassie: Modern Education and Political Revolution in Ethiopia* (Amherst: Camberia Press, 2006), p.54.

ቋንቋዉ **ልሳኔ ግዕዝና አማርኛን ማወቅ ግደታ ነዉ**።[42] Translated as: "…we Ethiopians the Tigray, the Amhara, the Oromo, the Gumuz, the Somali, the Afar …and in general all who have been born and live in Ethiopia feeding on her blood and flesh, honey and milk… to live in Ethiopia knowledge of Geez and Amharic is compulsory criterion." Emphasis is mine.

Attempts to assimilate the Oromo by excluding *Afaan* Oromo also continued in the *Fidal Sarawit* (Alphabetization Campaign) programme which was launched in July 1962.[43] Although UNESCO recommended that basic literacy should be started in a mother tongue, specially the mother tongue which has a large number of speakers,[44] *Afaan* Oromo was excluded from the Ethiopian *Fidal Sarawit* (Alphabetization Campaign) programme of Ethiopia.[45] Instead, attempts were made to present Amharic as the mother tongue of all Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples.[46]

The monarchical regime which attested that language is the most important ingredient in the development of national consciousness was not ready to allow any loophole for the literacy development of other languages. Orientation of the teaching materials and teachers was made on how to make Amharic the language of all Ethiopian peoples as quickly as possible and liquidate diversities in ethnicity into the unity of Ethiopian nationalism. The teaching materials and the teachers were oriented accordingly.[47]

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[42] *Addis Zaman*, Year 16, No. 37, *Tahsas* 13,1949.

[43] "National Literacy Campaign" in *Pamphlets* Nos. 371.9-9.373.9, p. 5.

[44]UNESCO, *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*, 1953, pp.58-60. UNESCO stated that basic literacy development especially adult education should be started in the mother tongue or in a lingua-franca in which the learners have good speaking ability. See; Solomon Inquai, "Adult Literacy in Ethiopia: A Profile" in *Pamphlets* Numbers. 371.9-373.9. Since *Afaan* Oromo is within these criteria as it is a language of a large number of mother tongue speakers and lingua-franca for other nationalities in Ethiopia and Kenya, it should have got the opportunity. See Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization…., p.326,

[45] *Addis Zaman*, Year 23, *Nahase* 1, 1955; Year 23, *Magabit* 13, 1955; Year 24, *Nahase* 13, 1956.

[46]*Addis Zaman*, Year *24, 13, Tahsas 13, 1949; Tahsas* 24, 1956; Year 24, *Yakatet* 5, 1956.

[47]"National Literacy Campaign" …, pp.5-17; *Addis Zaman*, Year. 23, *Sane* 27, 1955; Year. 23, *Hamle* 17, 1955.

It was also made compulsory to record at least than a "C" grade in Amharic to join Ethiopian Universities. To compete and be elected to Haile Sillasie's House of Representative the capacity to read and write Amharic was the first criteria to be proved.[48] Again this marginalized the Oromo from being represented in the parliament. Extraordinary contribution to the development of Amharic was also exclusively made a major qualification to win the Emperor Haile Selassie I Prize Trust. [49]

With regard to the Oromo, not only teaching in *Afaan* Oromo was banned but also teaching the Oromo in Amharic was restricted. The literacy development among the Oromo in Amharic itself was not given time to mature. [50]It was no longer than two years after the beginning of the alphabetization campaign that its executive chairman, Brigadier General Taddesse Biru, was warned by the prime minister Akililu Habte Wold to curb the literacy development of the Oromo irrespective of whatever the language of instruction was.[51] This indicates that leave alone teaching in *Afaan* Oromo, raising questions about it was enough to be criminalized as dissident.

The banning of *Afaan* Oromo from public use by the series of decrees of the imperial government was another step taken in an attempt to change the Oromo into the aspired Ethiopians of one nation and one language. The first of such decrees after the restoration of the monarchy was the decree of August 1944.[52] By this decree, the use of all Ethiopian languages except Amharic and Geez for written use were officially prohibited. Special warning

[48] "A Minute of Task Force Committee to study language policy for Ethiopia, 1979", IES MS 4767.
[49] Haile Selassie I Prize Trust, Year, 10th, (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers LTD, 1973), p. 9.
[50] Mordechai Abir, "Education and National Unity…", pp.57-59.
[51]IES. MS. 1091, p.47. Brigadier General Taddesse Birru's written response to the court of his majesty by file registration number 441/59. It was after the immediate warning of the communication that General Taddesse joined Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self Help Association on 16 June 1964.
[52]*Negarit Gazeta*, Year.3, No. 12, *Nahase* 21, 1936 (August 27, 1944).

was given in a separate article for the missionaries who used to use non-Amharic languages, to restrict themselves only to Amharic.[53] It states that any missionaries within the country should learn Amharic and use it in their activities in teaching and preaching. The article added a warning that any missionary who would be discovered disobeying the law would be deported without any appeal.[54]

Subsequently, *Afaan* Oromo, which had benefitted a lot from the teaching and preaching of the missionaries, was suffered more than ever before. As a result, the decree ended the formal use of *Afaan* Oromo for literacy purposes. Following the decree, it was not only the use of *Afaan* Oromo for public purpose which was made illegal, but also written literature in *Afaan* Oromo was collected and burnt. Possession of such literature was legally forbidden.[55]

Following the decree, all Ethiopian institutions were made legally an integral part of Amharic expansion. Schools, the national army, police forces, churches, court institutions, administrative divisions, business institutions and towns were made legally accountable to the law if they did not fully engage in expanding Amharic and supress other languages. Moreover, the local governors who were assigned to Oromo regions went beyond the decree and actively stood against missionaries- based Oromo literacy. There were frequent reports that they burned books in *Afaan* Oromo and closed *Afaan* Oromo schools built by the local parishes.[56] A British diplomat observed the activities and expressed his worry to his head in London stating that

[53] *Ibid*., Article, No. 13.

[54] *Ibid*.

[55] Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017 and Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; see also Mekuria, "The Politics of language Homogenization …, p.333.

[56] Edict of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, Ref. No. 146/48, Registered Date 8/10/48, Quoted in *Maleda (Early Morning*), first year, *A Seasonal Bulletin*, April, 1993; Lipsky, 1962, p. 134.

"…the Ethiopian government might use the missionaries as a minor instrument of Amharic imperialism in the [Oromo] and other colonial lands."[57]

The expansion of Amharic and the suppression of languages other than Amharic were also reinforced by the amended constitution of 1955. In the article number 125 of the constitution, Amharic was declared as the only official language of Ethiopia while others were silently deprived of a status.[58] The exclusiveness afforded to Amharic as the only official language, and the legal coverage for the eradication of other indigenous languages in general and *Afaan* Oromo in particular were reflected in the covert edict of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs in January 1956.[59] The edict fully targeted the eradication of all indigenous languages in Ethiopia in general and *Afaan* Oromo in particular. It was one of the major and the serious linguistic policy instruments of Emperor Haile Sillasie. In the edict the Oromo were particularized because as shown in the quotation below, *Afaan* Oromo, the Oromo and branches of the Oromo clans were repeatedly referenced.

The edict was a clear strategy to purge *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity. The edict ordered all languages of other ethnic groups, which were stigmatized by the decree as mark of backwardness, to be replaced by Amharic which the decree associated with civilization and the pillar of unity.[60] The decree did not stop at promulgating the language policy. It also ordered all government institutions such as religious, military, agricultural, business, health, educational, handicraft, court and others to secure the replacement of other ethnic diversities

[57] R. G. Howe to Eden cited in Vevica Hollidin, *The Swedes in Haile Sillasie's Ethiopia, 1924-1952* (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1977), p. 77.

[58] *Negarit Gazeta*, Year 15, No 4, November 4, 1955.

[59] Edict of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, Ref. No. 146/48, Registered Date 8/10/48, Quoted in *Maleda (Early Morning*), first year, A Seasonal Bulletin, April, 1993.

[60] *Ibid*., Article 7/2 and 15/A-I.

into allegiance to Amhara and the desired Ethiopian identity.[61] Strategies for the implementation were elaborated in the following article 15/B of the decree. It reads:

> *በተቻለ መጠን ሌላ ትወልድ ያለዉን ማለት እንደ [ኦሮሞ]፡ሲዳማ፡[ወላይታ]፡ ሱማሌ፡ኢቱ [ሌላ የኦሮሞ ጎሳ]፡[አፋር]፡ቦረና [ሌላ የኦሮሞ ጎሳ] ይህን የመሰለውን ዘር በወታደርነትና በፖሊሰነት ካገሩ ላይ እየመለመሉና እየቀጠሩ ዲሲፕልን እያስተማሩ ወደ አማራዉ አገር መላክ፣ እንድሁም አማራዉንና ትግሬዉን ወደነዚህ አገሮች አዛዋዉሮ እንድጋባና እንድዋለድ የተደረገ እንደሆነ ጠቃሚነቱ ባንድ መልክ ብቻ ሳይሆን በማህበራዊ ኑሮአቸዉም አንዱ በሌላዉ አማካይነት በመንፈስ፣ በአሳብ፣በሃይማኖት፣በሥራ፣ በልማድ፣ በቋንቋ፣በትወልድ መቀላቀልና መጠቃቀም ስለሚያስችላቸዉ በጥቂት ጊዜ ዉስጥ እርምጃ ለማግኘት ከፍ ያለ መሣሪያ ሊሆን ይችላል።*[62]
>
> *Translated as: as much as possible it is better to recruit military and police employees from other ethnicities like the Oromo, Sidama, Walayta, Somali, Ittuu [another clan of Oromo branch], Afar, Booranaa [another clan of Oromo branch]and the like. Then sending them to Amhara country after teaching them discipline. Similarly, recruited Amhara and Tigre into the same institutions would be transferred to these regions and should be made to intermarry with local societies. If these are properly implemented, the importance is all rounded. It serves not only as instrument of social interactions but also bring the ethnicities immediately into the domain of one religion [Orthodox], one language[Amharic] and one social fabric [Amhara cultural identity].*

The article depicts a strategy on how to build a society of one religion, one language and one social fabric. In the strategy, it directs that recruits to police or military employment from non-Amharic speaking areas should be assigned to Amharic speaking areas and from Amharic speaking areas to non-Amharic speaking areas. In both cases, the article dictated the intermarriage of the recruits with the local societies among whom they were assigned. Nonetheless, close examination of the article shows about the strategy how northern settlers among the Oromo would teach the Oromo Amharic language on the one hand, and the Oromo recruits would be assigned to the north to learn Amharic on the other hand.

Even though, all the issues in the edict are about how to assimilate all Ethiopian nations into Amhara culture through the expansion of Amharic, article 15/J states the summary of the edict. It reads: "ሥልጣኔም ለማስገባት የሚቻለዉ በየጋዜጣዉ የሚገለጹትን በየመጽሐፍቱ የተጻፉት ልዩ የስልጣኔ ነገሮችና

[61]*Negarit Gazeta*, No.19, *Sane* 20, 1964 E.C.; Abir, "Education and National Unity…", p. 46.
[62]*Ibid*., article 15/B.

ጥበባት እያነበበ አንዱ ከሌላ ሰዉ ምን ያህል ቅድሚያ እንዳለዉ አዉቆ እና ተረድቶ መከተል የሚችለዉ ብዙዎቹ የዉስጥ ቋንቋዎች ተጨፊልቀዉ አንድ እናት ቋንቋ መመራት እና ግኙኝነት ሲኖረዉ ነዉ።"[63] (trans: It could only be possible to introduce civilization if and only if citizens could read and understand concepts of civilization and arts written in newspapers and books. And then understand the primacy of one over the others and follow it. This could be done only when all languages in the country are substituted and communication would be done in one mother language (Amharic). Although it is true that on many occasions the government had found it useful to unite the nations of the country, the legal support for the assimilation seriously affected the societies to be assimilated in general and the Oromo in particular. It is an indication of the very embodiment of the denial of linguistic rights. Absolutely crucial to the regime's definition was there being one unchallenged Amharic as the language of all Ethiopian nations.

Another state led policy against linguistic diversity was the one which was promulgated on 27 June 1972. The Emperor and his dignitaries, who had learned that what Edmond Keller states as linguistic assimilation is the assimilation of all aspects of the society in target,[64] never stopped to search for more advanced methods of linguistic assimilation. Consequently, to support the linguistic homogenization policy by a scientific method, the government established the National Academy of Amharic Language in June 1972.[65] The purpose was to bring the languages of the others including *Afaan* Oromo firmly under the sway of Amharic and Amhara dominated culture. As the decree on which the academy was established ordered, all government organizations including institutions of education, research, communication and

[63] *Ibid*., Article 15/J.
[64] Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia…*, p.64.
[65] *Negarit Gazeta*, No.19, Order No.79/1964 E.C, *Sane* 20, 1964 E.C.

media should work toward the expansion and development of Amharic in all circles of the country.

In the policy of linguistic homogenization, changing names in *Afaan* Oromo were also seen as part of Amharization. In the realization of the policy, changing original names of places, towns, mountains, rivers, animals and humans, consolidating which had already been changed was taken as one of the steady approaches in displacing the vocabularies of *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo identity.[66] The changing of Ciroo to Asabe Teferi, Ambo to Hagar Hiwot, Adamaa to Nazareth, Bishooftuu to Dabra Zait, Cuqqaalaa to Ziquala, the River Awwas to Awash and the wild animal Gadamsa Baddaa into Menilek Bushbuck were the cases in point.

In Oromo areas where naming plays a central role as part of socialization and cultural affirmation, the changing of such names had double purposes. On the one hand, it was aimed to define and articulate the role of Amharic as the national language. On the other hand, it was to distort or displace the identity of the Oromo which was constituted in the names. This was one of the critical steps as, Ayele Bekerie noted "…naming plays a critical dual role either in defining or distorting one's identity, in articulating or blunting the essence of being human, and in evoking respect or disrespect from human community."[67] Janette Habashi also reminds us in the case of the role of language in the Israel-Palestine conflict, changing one aspect of language not only alters contemporary reality but also the historical memories where language adds new political meaning to historical events thereby erasing or modifying historical facts.[68]

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[66] Interviews with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tesfa Bula, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Baanjaa Hurruubaa, Atoomsaa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Qajeelaa Bayana, Firrisaa Waggaa, Arjoo (East Wallagga), January 25, 2008; Imiru Gebre, Naqamtee, September 14, 2008 and February 14, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; see also Lipsky, p.38,

[67] Ayele Bekerie, "Some Historical Reflections on the Origin of the Word Ethiopia" in *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, V. 1, No.2 (Winter/Spring 2004), p.111.

[68] Janette Habashi, "Language of Political Socialization: Language of Resistance" in *Children's Geographies*, V. 6, No.3 (July 2008), p.270.

Therefore, this was crucial among the Oromo, because it has been customary that most names have been given in such a way that they serve as a bridge of memory and remembrance between the past and the present.[69]

The other factor that threatened *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity was the expansion of towns. These towns not only changed Oromo names, but also became the centres where speaking and using *Afaan* Oromo for affairs in the towns were seen as a sign of inferiority. This was because as Biratu Kenai states, even though in Oromo areas the Oromo created some early towns as in Wallagga, once the towns became under imperial rule the people were compelled to use Amharic as it was the language of administration.[70] Subsequently, the towns soon became the major area of Amharization and Christianisation programs for the empire. Therefore, the towns became difficult places for the Oromo because they were enforced not to use their language and not to exercise their culture in the towns. Rather when they came to the towns, they were obliged to use only Amharic. If they did not have the knowledge to speak in it, they were forced to use an interpreter.

The marginalization of *Afaan* Oromo from mass media technology was another measure taken in the linguistic homogenization process of the restored monarchy. In spite of its large number of speakers, no less than half of the population in the country, *Afaan* Oromo was strictly kept away from newspapers and broadcasting in the years between 1941 and 1972.[71] Although some

[69]Interview with Banjaa Hurruuba, Atoomsa Tolasaa, Dabbasoo (West Wallagga Zone), March 20, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008. The interviews with Mohammed Abbaa Jabal and Tayib Abbaa Foggii were undertaken during the fieldwork for my M.A Study.

[70] Biratu Kenai, "A History of the Oromo in and Around Finfinne (Addis Ababa) from Ca. 1860s-1974" (M.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2010), pp. 60-62.

[71]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22,2008. See also Mekuria Bulcha, "The Politics of Linguistic…, p. 341.

scholars argue that it was because the Oromo did not pose challenges to the Ethiopian government like the other ethnic groups,[72] the purpose might have been for fear that the media in *Afaan* Oromo would increase a united and strong Oromo nationalism.

Nevertheless, the result was not the intended objective. Rather, the cumulative effects of the activities pushed the Oromo into more nationalist militancy. The Oromo saw the attacks on their language, their culture, their religion and their identity as humiliating and derogatory to the very essence of their being human. Therefore, it made them utterly reject assimilation as in any way positive. Even some of those Oromo who had already seemed to have integrated into the Amhara ways of life in all aspects returned to the root of their identity.[73] Joseph Tubiana also consolidates this point stating that "…the person who finds himself completely unable to use his language in the social relations which are imposed from outside finds himself in a critical position here and now, both in the particular moment and more lastingly at the level of his identification and his place in the society. …as a result, they would expressly demand to form their own national community in a more or less autonomous state."[74]

Consequently, the Oromo were determined to resist the oppression by organizing themselves and their people around *Afaan* Oromo. They were determined tenaciously to take all opportunities to make *Afaan* Oromo at least written and at most to get it being recognized alongside Amharic. Therefore, *Afaan* Oromo became a bone of contention between the two: the Oromo and the government.

[72]Perham, pp. 377-379; McNab, 81; Tesfaye Shewaye, pp.81-82.

[73]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22,2008.

[74]Joseph Tubiana, "The Linguistic Approach…, pp.25-26.

6.2. The Voice Under Domination: The Struggle for Printed *Afaan* Oromo Literature

The Oromo struggle for a written *Afaan* Oromo literature is not just an incident of this period. It is what continued from the period of the conquest of the Oromo by Menilek II. However, in this period, the attempts of the government to proscribe *Afaan* Oromo from written form was intensified more than ever before. Correspondingly, the Oromo struggle was organized in form and intensively politicised in nature. It was when those Oromo who felt the prohibition of their language from written form and conceptualized the proscription as a way to force them to relinquish the very culture of the Oromo, counteracted strongly in resistance. The struggle to get *Afaan* Oromo out of restriction and in writing was more strengthened.

The struggle for written *Afaan* Oromo was made the first major reaction against the imperial assimilation policy because as Benedict Anderson notes in the case of Europe,[75] they understood that it laid the bases for the Oromo national consciousness in three distinct ways. The first was that it would give some fixity to *Afaan* Oromo and helped to build an image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the Oromo. It is because language in print has better power to retain the cultural identity stored in it than memorizing orality.[76]

Therefore, writing in *Afaan* Oromo was seen as the first measure to save cultural identity of the Oromo from serious distortion and unnecessary manipulation. The second was that it was seen to facilitate a unified field of exchange and communication which in turn would arouse all-round consciousness and support for the struggle. This is because printed language sets the basis for national consciousness. With these words Benedict argues that "…everywhere [that]

[75]Anderson, p. 44.
[76]Tubiana, pp.25-26.

literacy increased, it became easier to arouse popular support …."[77] The third was that it was thought to put *Afaan* Oromo along other written languages in order to refute the affront that the language could not be written.

It was with these and other grievances that the Oromo who had achieved their basic or advanced education started the movement that promoted *Afaan* Oromo to written literature by writing in it. In fact, the purpose of the movement was not only to develop *Afaan* Oromo to written literature but was also to use its symbolic function to collect support from the Oromo mass. The movement that was first started as individual initiatives gradually collected followers beyond the regional level.

One of the earliest struggles for written *Afaan* Oromo after the restoration of the monarchy was initiated in Hararge by *Sheik* Abubakri Usuman Odaa popularly known among the Oromo as *Sheik* Bakri Saaphaloo (hereafter *Sheik* Bakri Saaphaloo). Although Bakri Saaphaloo's post-war struggle for written *Afaan* Oromo literature had begun earlier and was not a post-war development, the Emperor's post-war policy against *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo identity made him work more aggressively than ever before.[78]

He was said to have expressed his aversion on the date he heard the decision to restore the Emperor. As he had been familiar with the position of the Emperor for *Afaan* Oromo before the war, he predicted that his restoration would have menacing effects on the development of written *Afaan* Oromo.[79] No more than a year after the restoration of the Emperor, he received the message that the Emperor had started to proscribe the use of *Afaan* Oromo for public

[77]Anderson, pp. 80 and 22-25.
[78]Mohammed, "Shayk Bakri Saaphaloo…", pp. 135-178.
[79]*Ibid.*

purposes. Thus, he took the proscription as the first critical step to resist in connection with the rights of the Oromo.

However, receiving the message, he did not keep silent. He took his own initiative to struggle against the injustices by writing in *Afaan* Oromo. His choice to struggle by writing in *Afaan* Oromo was not random. From his knowledge of the reading of materials written on the independent struggles of the Arab world, he had understood that using written vernacular/ local language in the independence struggle would help the anticipated realization of freedom. From this, according to informants, he made his first choice creating inclusive consciousness through writing in Afaan Oromo.[80] This is because he believed that the development of the knowledge of written *Afaan* Oromo would lead to learning other cultural elements which kept the identity of the Oromo intact. In doing so, he aspired to rally the whole Oromo against the oppressors.

His plan to struggle by a written *Afaan* Oromo for *Afaan* Oromo and other Oromo rights was manifested in the three important activities he undertook. These were his education of the Oromo in *Afaan* Oromo, the *Afaan* Oromo orthography he invented and the successive revolutionary poems he wrote in *Afaan* Oromo. He undertook the three activities parallel to each other and supporting one another. The reason he focused on these issues was that he believed that empowering *Afaan* Oromo was empowering the Oromo.

For the sustainability of his endeavours and the realization of his aspiration, he established schools at different centres. This was because according to informants and Mohammed, *Sheik* Bakri believed that education is a weapon to define the self and thus resist any threat against

[80]*Ibid*.; Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, October 26, 2016 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008 and December 15, 2015; Adam Ibsa, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 17, 2008.

the elements that characterize the self.[81] The schools he established at Addallee in 1940, at Ligboo in 1948 and Kortuu in 1953 and the other supplementary centres at Dirre-Dhowaa, at Goota, at Qabanaawa and at Bobbasaa[82] were such centres where he demonstrated the importance of knowledge as a powerful weapon to fight against suppression. They were also the centres where he was said to have tested the arousing power of his poems and where he checked and re-checked the suitability of his new orthography for writing *Afaan* Oromo. In fact, the teaching of Bakrii was not only restricted to the centre of schools. Occasional social gatherings were also his media of reaching the people with his works.[83] The following is one of the mesmerizing poems in which he indicated the value of education to uproot the enemy.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Odoo qara'ee baratee dalagee	*If one learns, acquires and works*
Biyyaa ol ta'ee adawii buqqisaa	*Becomes great and uproots the enemy*
Inni kun oduu biyya isaaf qara'uu	*While others learn to liberate their country*
Oduu nadhoo ballisee saffisaa	*Ours waste their time gossiping about women*
Dubbii hayyaa barachii hinhamiluu	*They are not willing to learn issues of their country*
Achii kijibaan dubartii bakkisaa[84]	*They flatter women with their lies.*

The purpose of the poem was to admonish his people to learn effectively so that they understood the maladministration exercised over them. The poem admonishes the Oromo youth for their not taking issues of education seriously and flattering women. The poem presented knowledge as a powerful weapon for those in search of social justice and ignorance as a darkness in which one could not see anything. By and large, the poem is a call for the Oromo to be literate and to work for literacy as a way to emerge victorious over the enemy.

[81] *Ibid*.

[82] Aliyi, pp. 22-25.

[83] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[84] Mohammed, "Shayk Bakri Saphaloo…, p.148.

His effort to invent Oromo orthography was the other fascinating step in his struggle for written *Afaan* Oromo. In fact, according to Mohammed Hassen, the invention was not a device being driven by emotion. It was what came to the scene after he had tested scripts of Arabic, Amharic and Latin. The decision was what came after he had been obsessed by his attempts to adopt the scripts of these languages to *Afaan* Oromo.[85]

In spite of these, the invention was the result of three motives. The first was, as he stated from his attempts, the scripts of Arabic, Latin and Amharic showed critical limitations in representing *Afaan* Oromo sounds. He found that it was not easy to use them perfectly for Oromo sounds as they did not properly represent sounds in *Afaan* Oromo and lacked symbolic representations for some sounds. Besides he saw them as a hindrance for the development of written *Afaan* Oromo as he heard frequent complaints from his students that the problem of scripts put them in learning difficulty. Therefore, this became one of the factors that pushed him to invent an articulated orthography for *Afaan* Oromo which was free from the above limitations. The second was that he wanted Oromo children to learn *Afaan* Oromo in their own orthography, the same as Amhara children. The third was to make *Afaan* Oromo equal with the languages that have taken as symbols of pride having their own unique scripts.[86]

The period during which he invented the orthography was also part of his struggle by writing in *Afaan* Oromo. Although there are debates on the exact date when he started the invention, scholars and informants agree that the early 1940s was when he began and actively worked on it. The period for the completion of invention also varied from ten to twelve years. Nonetheless,

[85]Ibid., pp. 152-162.

[86]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Hayward and Mohammed, pp. 552-562.

the period saw the invention of the orthography as a counteraction against the proscription of *Afaan* Oromo from written usage and it was when the government actively discouraged writing in *Afaan* Oromo.[87]

Above all, *Sheik* Bakri's newly invented orthography seems to have addressed all the issues in *Afaan* Oromo writing system. His invention clearly identified the short, long, soft, and geminated sound system of *Afaan* Oromo and devised symbols that represented the sounds phonetically. For the other independent sounds unique to *Afaan* Oromo, he developed phonetic symbols that represented them. In doing so, he invented a highly efficient way of writing *Afaan* Oromo. In all the cases, the only viable method he believed to tackle the problem for writing in *Afaan* Oromo was to invent an independent orthography for the Oromo.

Nonetheless, until he came out with his well-articulated representation of Oromo sounds with his own newly invented alphabets around 1952, those who wrote in *Afaan* Oromo were said to have written *Afaan* Oromo in scripts they had association with by taking some adjustments of their own using diacritics although the adjustments were said to have serious linguistic constraints.[88]

In his struggle for *Afaan* Oromo, *Sheik* Bakri did not only expand teaching centres of *Afaan* Oromo and invent Oromo orthography.[89] He wrote successive revolutionary poems in *Afaan* Oromo with the aim to use them as ideological weapon for cultivating Pan-Oromo identity. The poems were ideologically powerful because their contents are full of information on the general situation of the period and were articulated in the form of cultural expressions and

[87]Mohammed, "Shayk Bakri Saphaloo… pp.153- 154.

[88]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and October 26, 2016; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[89] For the orthography see appendix xv.

revival. Informants remember that his readings of the overall panorama of Oromo history contrasting their earlier greatness with their later humiliation under Amhara domination in *Afaan* Oromo moved the listeners into tears of joy and aroused national feelings among them.[90]

The following is one of such most potent parts of the poem evoking the memory by contrasting the past glory of the Oromo with the adversity they were forced to bear.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Odoo Ormi beekee uduu nuduraa	*If we know our past glory*
Ulaan itti cufaadhaa marri banamaa	*All closed gates will be open*
Oduu dur dhageenyaan kale bilisaa	*As we heard our history, yesterday we were free*
Sama magabra taata soda ilma namaa	*Why are you enslaved for fear of other human!*
Abbootuma keetu kale naggasee	*Were your fathers who were kings yesterday*
Taraan isin geenyaa kunoo ammaa[91]	*Because of your decline you lost everything*

The poem is carefully composed in a way it arouses feelings of *Oromummaa*. It compares the status of the Oromo before and during conquest while questioning why the Oromo kept silent while brutally being supressed by reminding the past glories of their ancestors. In short, it is challenge by which *Sheik* Bakri taught the Oromo how the Ethiopian government controlled all aspects of their identity and deprived them of their human dignity. In the poem Bakri also challenged and questioned the legitimacy of the Ethiopian rulers.

He also critically questioned the exclusion of *Afaan* Oromo from radio broadcasting while the use of Tigrinya, Tigre, Somali and Afar were permitted.[92] He fought the injustice with his pen writing as:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Afaan orma kaanii tolchee kabajamaa	*The others' languages are well respected*

[90]Mohammed, "Shayk Bakrii Saphalo…" pp. 146-152.

[91]*Ibid*., p.148.

[92]Seyoum Hayle, "The History of Radio Broadcasting in Ethiopia" (B.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1987), p.34. By 1968 all these languages were in the broadcasting service of Ethiopian Radio.

Kaa isaatii wajjin raadiyoo naqamaa	*Have radio programmes along his[Amharic]*
Odoo ka'anii tolchanii lolanii	*If the Oromo rise up and fight bravely*
Xalaanni cabee batatee dhabama	*The enemy will be crushed and disappear*
Hulaan cuccufame martinuu nibanamaa[93]	*Then all closed opportunities will open up.*

In the poem he reminded his readers and listeners that *Afaan* Oromo was badly supressed even more than other non-Amharic languages in Ethiopia. Thus by the poem he informed the Oromo that the only away to have equity and justice was to fight bravely. Otherwise, according to his opinion, for the Oromo nothing was more hell than losing their language. Briefly through his activities, he showed the other Oromo how to struggle for *Afaan* Oromo.

The other method of *Sheik* Bakri's struggle for *Afaan* Oromo was by reading the poems himself at the centre of his schools and at any Oromo social gathering. It was said that he had never left his poems in paper print as he knew that most of his hearers were not literate. According to informants, *wadaaja* (traditional praying ceremony), *guuza* (traditional collective of public work), *haruuza* (marriage ceremony) were his favourite reading stages among others. They state that in doing so, he would teach the people two things at the same time. On the one hand he taught them how influential reading from the paper was and accordingly aroused the interest to learn in the hearts of his hearers. On the other hand, he addressed them implicitly and explicitly rousing the general feelings of bitterness at domination. It is also said that his reading was so artful that hearing their issues in *Afaan* Oromo moved them to tears at grievances and joy at past glories.[94]

After a few years, *Sheik* Bakri's method of struggle was widely circulated among the Oromo people specially those of Hararge. According to Aliyi it was common to hear all *Sheik* Bakri's

[93] *Ibid*., pp. 153-154.

[94] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

poems popularly recited as grievance reflection.[95] Subsequently, he was said to have attracted many followers. Literate individuals who saw the opportunity while Bakri's readings captured the attention of the people copied the poems and read them as Bakri himself on Oromo social occasions. Therefore, after a few years specially in the 1950s, *Sheik* Bakri was not alone. The richness and beauty of *Afaan* Oromo poems he demonstrated helped to create generations of famous poets and singers. Many of his students wrote revolutionary poems and read them like *Sheik* Bakri on Oromo social occasions.[96]

During the 1950s his poems captured the imagination of the Oromo élites specially that of the Dirree Dhowaa, by then the third industrial centre of the country, and became the pathfinder in the larger vision of Oromo cultural nationalism. His devotion to *Afaan* Oromo literacy, promotion of Oromo consciousness and cultural dances directly contributed to the foundation of the first Oromo cultural bands known as *Afran Qalloo* in 1962.[97]

Nonetheless, one might question how Sheik Bakri could have been successful with such highly provocative revolutionary poems and writing system that violated the order of the period. Informants argue that it was because of two reasons. The first and the most important one was that he wrote and spoke on issues of politics in metaphor, allegory and proverbs which only the native speakers could understand by interpreting them within cultural contexts. The second was when he came to the security personnel, he acted and presented himself as a devoted Muslim preacher who stood against all non-Islamic cultural practices.[98]

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[95] Aliyi, p.55.

[96]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and October 26, 2016; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[97] Mohammed, "Shayk Bakri Saphalo…, p. 149.

[98] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

However, his covert method of mobilising the Oromo against the *neftegna* rule was detected when his *Afaan* Oromo writing system was found in the hands of the Oromo guerrilla fighters captured in Balee in 1964. Yet, *Sheik* Bakri was not punished by more than confining him only to the city of Dirree Dhowaa. According to Mohammed's statements, it was because Emperor Haile Sillasie did not want to further alienate the Oromo by executing *Sheik* Bakri. It was also a time when the reign of Emperor Haile Sillasie was confronted with the armed struggle of the Baalee Oromo from the southeast, an effective war of propaganda from Radio Mogadishu in *Afaan* Oromo from Somalia and the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association from Addis Ababa.[99] Therefore, the punishment during the reign of Emperor Haile Sillasie ended simply by confining *Sheik* Bakri to Dirree Dhowaa.

Nonetheless, *Sheik* Bakri was not alone in instigating the Oromo causes. As he had repeatedly aspired in his poems, teachings and discussions, an organized cultural and linguistic challenge to the Amhara domination was also taken up by other educated Oromo. These Oromo were those who relied on the roots of their Oromo ethnicity in reaction to the extreme oppression of their people.[100] In fact, the reaction was not unique to the Oromo. As Smith, quoted in Mohammed Hassen states, the measure is also true to other societies of the world. In his words:

> *…when the educated professionals find themselves unable to gain admission commensurate with their degrees and talents; they tend to turn away also from the metropolitan culture of the dominant ethnic group and turn to their 'own' culture, the culture of the once despised subject ethnic group. Exclusion breeds failed assimilation, and reawakens ethnic consciousness among the professional élites, at exactly the moment when the intellectuals are beginning to explore the historic roots of the community.*[101]

[99]Mohammed "Shayk Bakri Saphalo…, p. 160.

[100]Interviews Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, 28/08/ 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, 22/04/2008.

[101] Mohammed, "The Development of Oromo Nationalism" …, p.75.

Although there were other cumulative factors for the grievances, informants state that the psychological torture the Oromo who were in the office of the government were forced to bear on issues of language were what they could not tolerate. Among others the attacks they faced in office because of their failure to speak articulated Amharic, the proscription to use *Afaan* Oromo for public purposes, and forcing the Oromo to use interpreters even with an official who knew *Afaan* Oromo were the main issues at the centre.[102] Therefore, in all forms of the reactions to oppose the oppression, *Afaan* Oromo became an opaque weapon of defence as open resistance was strictly forbidden and life costing. This approach of struggle was also affirmed by Celia Britton who states that resistance through language is necessary in a situation where open political struggle is suppressed.[103]

Therefore, most Oromo social associations and armed insurgencies took up the struggle for and by *Afaan* Oromo. Though there were other causes and methods of struggle, the language issue was the very important centre around which their associations took shape, and the major cause to be defended. It was emphasized as the very centre of Oromo national identity and what needed to be liberated from the proscription imposed on it. It is believed that it served to maintain collective experiences and motivate individuals to join the association and the armed insurgencies. Because as quoted in Chriost "…to say language is to say society."[104] As I have stated in chapter one, it is also a guide to social reality. The Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self-Help Association, the Baalee Oromo Armed Insurgencies, the Afran Qalloo Cultural Band, the Oromo Journalists of the Radio Mogadishu and others took the struggle for *Afaan* Oromo as

[102]Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, 22/04/2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2009.

[103] Celia Britton, *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance New World Studies* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1999), p.181.

[104] Chriost, p. 9.

the best mechanism and the first objective to stop the injustice against the Oromo. As informants state, all these movements made the question to use *Afaan* Oromo for written and public purposes the first demand to be answered.[105]

6.3. The Role of Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self-Help Association in the Struggle for Printed *Afaan* Oromo and the Tuning of the Oromo National Question

Established in January 1963, the Meccaa-Tuulama Self Help Association (hereafter the association, unless necessary)[106] was one of the movements which took the mandate to struggle for the Oromo cause from the centre. As the time did not allow associations that questioned government policy by open statement, the association shielded its intention to struggle for the Oromo cause in the objective of its statute as an association only for development.[107] They were well aware of the fact that issues in development like educational, health and economic activities gave them a real connection with Oromo society. Specially through the education programme, they planned to make as many Oromo as literate as possible as they believed that education would increase the level of Oromo consciousness. Mohammed writes, "the framers of the statute were highly educated, well informed, politically conscious individuals"[108] so that they knew that every consciousness-creation about rights could be achieved through literacy activities.

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[105]Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017 Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008.

[106]The Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self-Help Association was established on 24 January 1963 and licensed on 24 May 1964. It is an association which is usually referred to as the first grand Oromo-wide association. One may question why the name Maccaa-Tuulamaa was adopted while the members of the association were from all Oromo branches. The reason was that as the government at the time strictly supervised the foundation of associations having the name Oromo as there was fear of Oromo nationalism. Yet, it is said that even the name Maccaa-Tuulamaa was strictly opposed as the non-Oromo who joined the association or some Oromo betrayals liked the secrete. They used *Odaa* as an emblem which symbolize Oromo unity. See IES. MS.1090. "A court sentence on some members of Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association"; Olana Soga, *Gizit Ena Gizot* (Addis Ababa, 1985E.C). p. 18.

[107]*Ibid.*

[108]Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association and the Development of Oromo Nationalism"…, p. 195.

As the confined resentment against the intense anti-Oromo prejudice was widespread and only waited for a little outlet, it did not take the association long to collect many Oromo members from military officers of different ranks, civilian officials, professional élites and business and religious leaders. These groups of Oromo élites joined the association because they understood that they could not continue being silenced on the issues of their identity and the sycophancy with which they were made to serve.[109] Therefore, they not only became members but also served the association with their skills, knowledge, organizational capacity and leadership quality.

Immediately after its establishment the association sought to unify the Oromo with recognised human and democratic rights. Central to this, they made the *Odaa* (Sycamore tree) the emblem of the association, symbolizing the past glory of the Oromo and the aspiration to unity, justice, fairness and equity. Working to free *Afaan* Oromo from the proscription imposed on it and writing Oromo history that reflected the reality of the Oromo were the immediate tasks the association clandestinely staged.[110] The tasks were entrusted to Lieutenant Mammo Mazamir[111] and Haile Mariam Gemeda[112] who were the founders and the leading members of the association. Accordingly, Lieutenant Mammo and Haile Mariam prepared a sketch of Oromo history, a new constitution, a plan for a new government, and strategies of land

[109]*Ibid.*, pp.195-2006.

[110]Olana Soga, pp.15-21.

[111]Lieutenant Mammo Mazamir was a graduate and instructor of Harar Military Academy. Later he joined Addis Ababa University and graduated from Law School. He was among the first members of the association. He was also the first assassinated member of the association being alleged that he led an agenda that divided the country. See *The Ethiopian Herald*, No. 182, 3 August 1968; *Addis Zaman*, Year, 26, No. 281, *Hidar* 17, 1959 E.C.

[112]Haile Mariam Gemeda was one of the highly respected leaders of the association. He was a lawyer and a man with encyclopaedic knowledge of Oromo history. He was imprisoned for the same case by which Mammo was accused and died in prison mysteriously.

distribution among the landless Oromo. All are said to have been written in *Afaan* Oromo.[113]

The association endorsed the expansion of Oromo literacy to bring the Oromo out of the linguistic domination. That was why the expansion of education was made the leading objective of the statute of the association.[114] Although they knew that the existing law would enforce them to use Amharic for the medium instruction, they believed that whatever the language of instruction was, through literacy they would achieve consciousness of the Oromo about the suppressive government policy. Moreover, it was also taken as the best strategy to have contact with the Oromo in all walks of life. This was tactically planned to go along with the concern of the imperial government to reach all the people with basic literacy as the government stated in 1962.[115] Although the association did not explicitly states the objective, the objective of the association was really the revival of *Afaan* Oromo and well developed Pan-Oromo nationalism.[116]

The government expectation from the outcome of the basic literacy campaign was in accordance with the article 15/1 of the 1956 Edict of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Community Development. The article reads: "ሃይማኖት፣ቋንቋ 'መጥፎ' ልማድ ማህበራዊ ኑሮን የሚያበላሹና የሚያራርቁ ስልሆኑ አንዱ ከሌላዉ፣በልማድ፣በሃይማኖት፣በዘር ሊያገናኝና ሊያለማምድ የሚችለዉ ያንድነት ቋንቋ ታይል ሲበረታ ስለሆነ የትምህርት መስፋፋት በየቦታና በየአጋጣሚዉ ልፍራ[ለዚህ ሥራ] እንዲሆን ያስፈልጋል።[117] (Diversities in religion, language and 'bad' culture are divergent forces to social integration

[113]I was not able to get the documents as it is said that all were plundered and burnt during arrest of the two. See Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association and the Development of Oromo Nationalism"…, pp. 195-2006.

[114]IES. MS. 1090. A Court Sentence on Some Members of Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association

[115]Interview with Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008. *Addis Zaman*, Year.22, No, 3, *Tahisas* 19, 1956 E. C. (28 December 1964). Both newspapers reported on the success of the mass literacy campaign.

[116]"National Literacy campaign" in Pamphlets Nos.371.9-373.9, p.1.

[117] Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, article 15/I.

and at the same time that create social cleavages. Such misfortunes could be avoided when a country would avoid diversities in languages, religions and ways of life and come into unifying elements which can be achieved through strengthening a unifying language [Amharic]. Therefore, the expansion of schools in time and space should serve for the empowering of (Amharic).[118]

Therefore, government interest in mass literacy to achieve the expansion of knowledge and Amharic on the one hand and the Association's secret move to bring consciousness of the Oromo unity through the same medium made mass literacy among the Oromo a bone of contention between the two. Nevertheless, the Association's willingness to teach in Amharic (although the difference in aim was to be reflected later) and the government's hope to use the resources of the Association at least for the expansion of Amharic literacy brought the two along the same line at least in the earliest period. Therefore, the cooperation of the two provided the national literacy campaign with human and material resources and the Association with legal coverage. Thus, shortly after the Association was permitted, the leaders of the association started mobilising the Oromo of all corners through public gatherings.

The other appropriate situation as an opportunity for the Association was the chairman's position of the National Literacy Campaign. The position was occupied by Brigadier General Taddesse Biru who was then loyal to the imperial government and enthusiastically supported the teaching of the Oromo. He enthusiastically stated his concern for Oromo literacy in his speech on the literacy activities of the association stating that: ቅን ሰዉ፣ የወገኑ መደሄትና የራሱ ሀብታም መሆን፣ የወገኑ መደቆርና የራሱ መሰልጠን የሚያስደስተዉ አይደለም። እናት ለልጇ እንድቃጠልበት እሳት እንዳለማቀበሏ መጠን፣ የወገኖቹን መደንቆርና መደሄየት የሚፈልግ ሰዉ የለም። (A genuine person cannot be happy with

[118] *Ibid*., Article 15/h.

his/her prosperous and sophisticated life at the expense of his/her people destitute and unformed life as a mother does not handover a fire to burn her child).[119]

Thus his enthusiastic support gave space for the agents of the association to move freely during mobilization activities, because Brigadier General Tadesse's understanding of Oromo literacy was nothing more than making the Oromo competent Ethiopian nationalists. It is stated that the closer guidance he used to give on the day to day activities, his frequent visits to the centres and his efforts to organize local help[120] in cooperation with the members of the Association protected the activities of the Association from the threats of the local government agents. Using the opportunities, the leaders of the Association mobilized large rallies of Oromo *harambees* in all the provinces and districts they visited.[121]

It was during these early meetings of the agents of the Association with the mass that the hidden objective of the association to bring *Afaan* Oromo to the front as a working language began getting outlet. Balsvik underlines that in all the meetings, the language used to address the mass was *Afaan* Oromo.[122] According to these informants what mobilized the Oromo in mass was mainly not the interest to have schools for literacy in Amharic but the use of *Afaan* Oromo for meetings, dramas and music on the stage. It is said that when the participants heard *Afaan* Oromo harangues from the stage, they were unable to believe whether it was *Afaan* Oromo or not, because the Oromo people saw it as liberation from the most concentrated and active policy of Amharization.[123] Therefore, all the Oromo who heard the news were surprised at the

[119]*Addis Zaman*, Year 24, *Nahase* 14, 1956 E.C.

[120]"National Literacy Campaign" in *Pamphlets* Nos. 371.9-373.9, pp. 15.

[121]For example, at Itayaa about 100,000 Oromo attended the meetings and at Gulallee about 500, 000. See Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association…", p.205.

[122]Randi Balsvik, *Haile Sillasie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1977* (Michigan: Michigan State University, 1985), p.280.

[123]Interview with Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2009; Biratu Kenei's

courage to make speeches in *Afaan* Oromo and are said to have wept tears of joy.

However, the rapidly growing Oromo literacy and the Oromo consciousness, and the use of *Afaan* Oromo for public meetings breaking the law were not simply overlooked by the Ethiopian government authorities. Within no more than a year of the establishment of the Association, the outcome of the literacy development among the Oromo attracted the attention of the imperial government's top officials. Many of them feared the rise of Oromo nationalism and even Oromo competition with the Amhara in government offices. One of such officers was Akililu Habte Wold who was then the Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

The Prime Minister, Akililu Habte Wold, sought to stop this rapidly growing Oromo literacy using Brigadier General Taddesse who was the chairman of the National Literacy Campaign. The Prime Minister, Akililu, who assumed Brigadier General Taddesse to be an Amhara, confided to him in private the hidden imperial educational policy for the Oromo. The Minister's words are quoted in Mohammed Hassen as: "Taddesse! After you have started leading the literacy campaign, you talk a lot about learning. It is good to say learn. However, you must know whom we have to teach. We are leading the country by leaving behind the Oromo at least by a century. If you think you can educate them, they are an ocean [whose wave] can engulf you."[124] Akililu's warning was not only restricted to education. But also he warned Brigadier General Taddesse, on recruitment and promotion of the Oromo in the military services. In relation to this, Bereket Habte Sillasie quoted Akililu's warning statement to Brigadier General Tadesse which reads "…in the recruitment and promotion of soldiers,

interviews for me with Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015.

[124]Mohammed Hassen, "The Macha-Tulama Association…, p. 201.

care should be taken to restrict the number of [Oromo]"[125]

In fact, such accusation and intimidation was not only a unique event to Tadesse. Emanuel Abraham, who was one of the most loyal servants of the emperor and who served as the Director General in the Ministry of Education between 1944 and 1947, was alleged and accused of favouring the education of Oromo students. The accusation was a sensitive one and the emperor himself is said to have investigated the case in which he proved that the number of Oromo students attending the school were five times less than that of the Amhara.[126] The accusation seems to have been an effort to deny the Oromo access to advanced schooling whatever their number was.

This and the other secret policies of the government gave Brigadier General Tadesse strong moral reason to support of Oromo literacy. Moreover, it alerted the Brigadier General to notice the discriminatory policy of the imperial government directed against the Oromo and made him radicalize the campaign more. Informants state that it was these warnings that shocked Brigadier General Tadesse and made him join the Association on 23 June 1964, which he had previously disparaged as a collection for tribal activities when the association had been founded in January 1963.[127]

With the joining of Brigadier General Tadesse, the operational activities of the Association became more radicalised. Breaking the laws, meetings were held in *Afaan* Oromo. Issues of the dehumanization of the Oromo and suppression of *Afaan* Oromo were openly discussed in *Afaan* Oromo. At all the gatherings an oath was also taken not to be divided by religion, by the

[125] Bereket, p. 82.
[126] Emanuel, p. 64.
[127]Mohammed Hassen, "The Macha-Tulama Association…, pp. 201-203.

administrative regions introduced by the Amhara, by the previous Oromo confederacies and other potentially divisive factors.[128]

The injustice of banning *Afaan* Oromo from public usage, the repression of Oromo cultural identity, and the reduction of Oromo peasants to tenancy were publicised and condemned as acts of genocide against Oromo people. They addressed the Oromo in an articulated manner saying that "the Oromo had nothing to expect from the Amhara rulers, and would have to depend on themselves."[129] All the discussions and meetings, also never passed without reminding the people what Joseph Tubiana later articulated as "a state that represses the languages of some of its citizens from public usage is also engaging in a process of cultural genocide."[130]

The Oromo who were motivated by this agitation gathered in large *harambees* which were sometimes said to have reached 50,000 as the case of Gullallee and 100, 000 as in the case of Ittayyaa in May 1966 and raised a large amount of money and donated tracts of land for the construction of schools.[131] It is stated that because of the overall Oromo interests and the contributions, by 1966 just a year before its closure, the association had offices all over the Oromo regions in Ethiopia.[132]

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[128]This was clearly evidenced at the meeting of Dheeraa in 1966 when the Muslims and the Christians ate meat that was slaughtered by the followers of both religions as sign of solidarity. Biratu Kenei's interviews for me with Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. See also Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association…, pp.203-207.

[129] Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association…, p, 2009.

[130] Joseph Tubiana, p.27.

[131]Interview with Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008. See also Mohammed, "The Macha-Tulama Association…, pp. 204-205.

[132]The Ethiopian state which always needed the assimilation of the Oromo into Amhara way of life through suppression and intimidation banned the association in 1966 and assassinated two of its leaders and imprisoned many others stating that they engaged in activities that divided the country. See I.E.S. M.S. 1090. They were martyred for preparing documents for the plan of a new government and new constitution, in which Oromo history

The branches were Sidamo, Jimmaa, Walloo, Baalee, Iluu Abbaa Boor, Harargee and Wallagga which were headed by Tesfaye Dagagaa; Dr Moggaa Firrisaa, Abbaa Jobiir and Abbaa Biyyaa; Abera Yimer; *Sheik* Hussein Suraa and Haji Adam Sadoo; Dr Jamal Abdul Qadir; Major General Abebe Gammadaa, Q*engazmach* Abdulaziz Mohammed, and Colonel Hailu Raggaasa; and Atsede Habte Mariam Kumsaa respectively. The focal person at the offices is said to have created all necessary links with other associations for social services, the students, cultural movements, and armed insurgencies for the same cause. Informed peasants, religious leaders, office workers, businessmen and students were given information on the issues.[133]

However, the members of the association encountered severe challenges when the Association was officially banned by the government in 1967. Some of them were sentenced to death;[134] some were imprisoned; some were exiled to the Middle East where they established two independent organizations to defend Oromo rights; others went to Sudan to establish branch office. Those who remained in the country established underground study circles and cultural committee and continued awakening the Oromo to be united against their oppressors by the paper they produced in *Afaan* Oromo, Amharic and English.[135]

The *Afaan* Oromo paper was mainly to disprove the propaganda which said that *Afaan* Oromo could not be used as a writing system and to show practically the possibility to write in *Afaan*

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and *Afaan* Oromo would have a respected place. They were also being suspected for having secret contact with Baalee Oromo armed struggle. They established they a symbolic role of *Afaan* Oromo as a marker of identity. The other members of the association who were saved from imprisonment and death continued the objectives of the association. Some of the members joined the Baalee Oromo armed struggle, others went to Sudan to establish branch offices, and the remainder transformed the Association into a clandestine movement such as Oromo study groups and cultural committees. See Addis Hiwet, p.100.

[133]Mohammed Hassen, "The Macha-Tulama Association…", p. 206.

[134] IES MS 1090, "Court Penalty on Maccaa-Tuulamaa leaders, pp. 71-72; *The Ethiopian Herald*, No. 182, 3 August 1968; *Addis Zaman*, Year, 26, No. 281, *Hidar* 17, 1959 E.C.

[135] *Ibid., p. 213*; Interview with Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019.

Oromo.[136] In 1973 this secret organization organized a secret conference in which representatives from different Oromolands took part and laid a basic ground for the later establishment of the Oromo Liberation Front in 1974.[137]

Therefore, the efforts to use *Afaan* Oromo in the transformation of the Oromo from a cultural nation to a political nation were continued with full support and devotion. Yet, the most significant activities among all others were those of the clandestine Oromo students' movement of Addis Ababa University College, the Baalee Oromo Armed Struggle, the war of propaganda from Radio Mogadishu of the *Afaan* Oromo Programme and the *Afran Qalloo* Cultural Movements.

6.4. The Role of Oromo Students in Stirring Up the Oromo National Question and the Development of *Afaan* Oromo to a Written Language

The Oromo question which had begun by the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association also became the major question of the Oromo students of Addis Ababa University College, especially students who had been the members of the Association. As a result, the Oromo question became the central issue in the debates of the students. The poem, "ኢትዮጵያዊ ማናዉ?" (Who is an Ethiopian?) which Ibsa Gutema, an Oromo student, read on the College Day in 1967[138] just after the closure of the Macca Tuulamaa Association was a covert reflection of the continuation of the Oromo national question and the struggle for written *Afaan* Oromo.[139]

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[136] Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisa, Addis Ababa, 07/09.2009; Dimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019.

[137] *Ibid.; Mohammed Hassen*, "The Macha-Tulama Association…", pp. 213-214.;

[138] Ibsa Gutema, "Itiyopiyawi Manawu? (Who is an Ethiopian?)", IES. MS. 2404/01/4.

[139] Bahru argues that the objective of the poem is more Ethiopianism than the reflection of ethnic identities, and also the intention of the poem seems to be this but I argue that it is more ethnic as it emphatically opened up issues of national questions which had been taboo in discussions to question from the perspective of ethnic identities. See, Bahru Zewde, *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement, c. 1960–1974* (Oxford: James Currey,2014), p. 196.

In fact, in this poem, Ibsa did not make his position clear whether his poem was for or against the question of nationalities. Nonetheless he broke the taboo by mentioning the question of nationalities in public and delivered the agenda for Walelign Mekonnon who openly elaborated Ibsa's sealed question of nationalities by the analytical argument he read in 1969. Walelign responded to Ibsa's question stating that an Ethiopian was dozens of nationalities "with their own languages, ways of dressing, history, social organization and territorial entity" but forced to wear an 'Amhara Mask' under the name of Ethiopia.[140]

Walelign did not stop by responding to the question. He also challenged the view that Ethiopia should be a country of one linguistic nation when he stated that nations in Ethiopia should be allowed to nurture and preserve their languages, their music and their histories with equal participation in the affairs of the country.[141] In doing so, he opened up the agenda of the national question sealed in Ibsa Gutema's poem to public discussion.

The Oromo national movement was also manifested in the plan to establish the Oromo University in Naqamtee at the end of the 1960s. Many enlightened Oromos joined the movement and began contributing a large amount of money. Had not the government aborted it in 1970, it would have been the centre where strong Oromo nationalism found its basis as it had been covertly planned for furthering awareness of the Oromo. The Oromo student revolt of General Wingate School in 1970 complained that the school administrators and the staff were intentionally marginalizing the Oromo students, denying Oromo students any of the school annual awards. In reaction to this, Oromo students distributed protest leaflets written in

[140] Walelign Mekonnon, "On the Question of Nationalities in Ethiopia" Struggle, 17.1.1.1969.
[141] *Ibid.*

Afaan Oromo.[142] This was another indications of the continuation of the Oromo national struggle.

The effort to make *Afaan* Oromo rich in written literature, and use it in public including that of the government use, without restriction, as the first step to restore the cultural and political rights of the Oromo, was continued in a more determined manner. Pertinent to this, Haile Sillasie I University Oromo students began the printing of the first newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo known as *Kana Beektaa?* (Do you know this?) in 1961 E.C (in 1968).[143]

The paper was a manifestation of the Oromo students' aspiration to study Oromo issues in *Afaan* Oromo. As it was stated in the newspaper itself, the purpose was to collect endangered Oromo folklore and to preserve it for the future. Applicable to its purpose, the paper came out with the printing of collected Oromo songs, proverbs, war and grievance chants, Oromo prophecies, nuptials, baby lullabies, and others. In addition to this, the paper on its second year no. 1 volume also sketched maps that showed the areas inhabited by *Afaan* Oromo speakers which was perhaps a counter reaction to the imperial administrative divisions of the 1942.

[142]Interview with *Qes* Fekadu Wayyeessaa and *Qes* Tasfa Jireen, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Ejjeetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2009. See also Balsvik, *Haile Sillasie's Students…*, p.280.

[143] I.E.S /2393/10/1/9, ከኖ ዐኽታ? (Do you know this), Year 2, No.1.(Muddee 30, 1962 E.C or 8 December1969). As this volume says second year, the printing of the first volume must have been in 1968. The copy is in unpublished typescript.

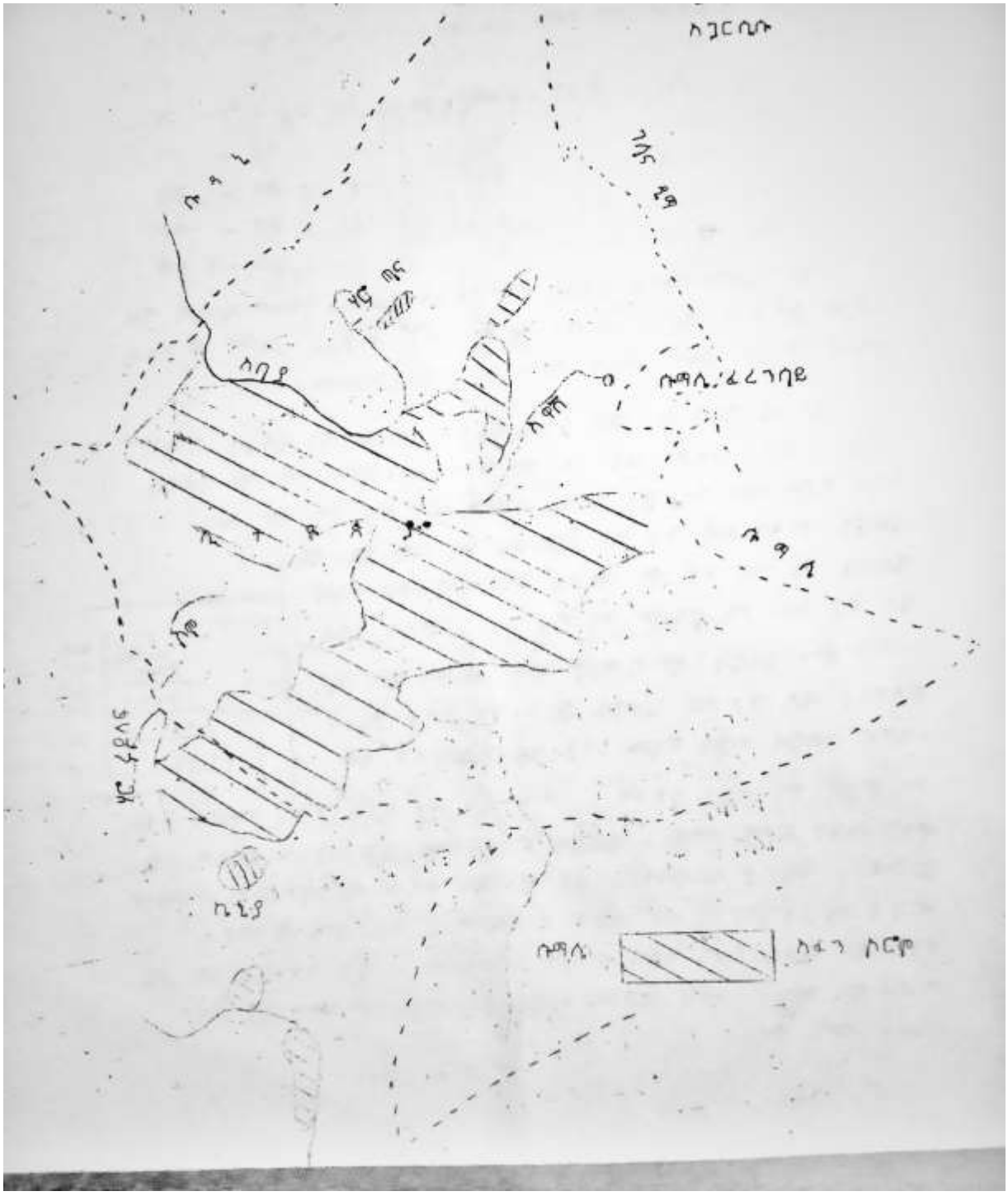

Figure 2: A Map Sketched by University Oromo Students in 1969 for the Imagined Oromo State

Source: "Kana Beekta Newspaper", Year 2, No, 1, Muddee 30, 1962 E.C. (November 8, 1967), p.5

The publication was written in Ethiopic alphabet and the number of the copies at a time was very limited. Because of the limitation, it is said that the copies were circulated from one person to another and reached many Oromo who were literate in *Afaan* Oromo. The resources and the responsibility to print the copies were provided by Mengesha Rikitu who was then serving in Radio Voice of the Gospel.[144] Nonetheless, as writing and publishing in *Afaan* Oromo were not permitted and against the constitution, its printing ceased in 1971 when its editors in chief, Mekuria Bulcha and the late Kebede Firrisa, who were both university students were detected.[145]

The concern to make *Afaan* Oromo a recognized written language was also simultaneously undertaken by the Oromo students' study group in Europe in 1968. The leading members of the study group were Haile Fidaa, Andullahi Yusuf and Mitiku Tarfasaa.[146] Although the main purpose of the study group was to study Oromo history, culture and language, the study of how to write in *Afaan* Oromo was given priority, because they noted in their documents that it is the reading and studies in *Afaan* Oromo that would lead to the knowledge of Oromo history and culture.[147]

The study group conducted a research on the readability of previously written *Afaan* Oromo literature and other Cushitic languages to identify whether the scripts in which they were written were intelligibly readable or not. It was also to identify the special feature of *Afaan* Oromo sounds as well as the advantages and disadvantages of adopting Geez or Latin alphabets

[144]Interview with Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008. Kebede Firrisa was editor in chief of the newspaper.

[145]Balsvik, Haile Sillasie's Students…, p. 281.

[146] Interview with Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019.

[147]The Magazine also documented 130 years of state enforced suppression of *Afaan* Oromo. See IES. MS 2395/02/3/7, *Tatek: A Theoretical Journal of the Ethiopian Students Union of Europe*, pp.5-22.

to *Afaan* Oromo sounds. The finding was presented by Haile Fidaa at the conference of the Ethiopian Student Union in Europe under the title 'Language in Ethiopia: Geez or Latin for writing Afan Oromo?'. At the conference, the comparison of advantages and disadvantages of using Geez or Latin were elaborated.[148] Lastly, the Oromo students whose mother tongue was *Afaan* Oromo approved the modified Latin alphabet on the basis of the greater merits it demonstrated.[149]

The study group identified the seven Oromo sounds that do not exist in Latin and the short vs long, and the softened vs stressed Oromo sounds. For the absent letters for Oromo sounds, they adopted existing Latin letters putting superscripts or subscripts. The short sounds were represented by using a single vowel (a, e, i, o and u) and the long sounds were by double vowels (aa, ee, ii, oo and uu). The softened were represented by single consonants like b, d, f etc. and for the stressed sounds by doubling the consonants as bb, dd, ff and etc.[150] Therefore, the current *Qubee Afaan* Oromo in use is the direct continuation of this adopted alphabet. The only modification made in the present day *Qubee* in use is the changing of the letters written in superscripts and subscripts into the combination of two consonant letters in order to solve the problem of typewriters.

In addition to the elaboration made to their theoretical journal, orthography was made to reach the Oromo through other publications. *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromoo* (the Oromo Grammar)[151] and, *Bara Birraan Barihe* (Oromo theatre)[152] were among these. These books

[148] *Ibid.*

[149]*Ibid*.; Feyisa Deme, "Historical Challenges in the Development of Oromo Language and Some Agenda for the Future Research" in the *Journal of Oromo Studie*s, V. 3, No. 1&2 (Winter/Summer, 1996), pp.22-23.

[150]IES. 2395/02/3/7, *Tatek*: *A Theoretical Journal of the Ethiopian Students Union of Europe*, pp.5-22.

[151] Haylee Fidaa, *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromoo (Oromo Grammar)* (Berlin? 1973).

[152]Haylee Fidaa, *Bara Birraan Barihe (When Autumn is Down)* (Berlin?1974).

were written in the recommended alphabet. Both books were written with the consideration that they supported each other in teaching the Oromo how to read and write in their language. They were also supposed to initiate the Oromo to have courage to pose the national question of the Oromo.

The book *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromoo* mainly explained how to write *Afaan* Oromo in the newly adapted alphabet although its main content is the study of *Afaan* Oromo grammar. Beyond its linguistic contribution the grammar also admonished the Oromo to be brave to learn to write in their language and use their past history to overcome the present day linguistic and cultural suppressions. Most examples used in 148 pages of the grammar revolve around the concepts that reminded the Oromo about their past glories and the crisis Oromo were in when the book was written. The book *Bara Birraan Barihe* narrates the suppression and the subordinate status of the Oromo people. The book characterizes the severe exploitation and scorning by the Amhara even in the drinking houses of *talla* (local beer). The book also reflected the secretly kept pro-Oromo national question position of the author.

These were, in fact, not the only books written in Oromo during this period. There were a number of books published in *Afaan* Oromo abroad and smuggled into the country. Grammars,[153] proverbs,[154] vocabularies[155] and translation of scriptures[156] were among them. Besides, in the 1950s and 1960s, scholarly studies of *Afaan* Oromo were also published in

[153]*M. Nordfeld,* "A [Oromo] Grammar" in *Le Monde Orientale* (1947).

[154]M Borello, "Proverbi [Oromo]" in *Studi Raccolti da Carlo Conti Rossini* (Roma: Instituto Per 1'Oriente). This was published in three volumes in 1945,1946 and 1948 respectively.

[155]P.G Piovano, "Nomi [Oromo] de Vegitali" in *Rassegna de Studi Ethiopici,* II (1942)

[156]*Dansa Qlquo Akka Lukani (Gospel of Luke)* (London: 1945); *Wan Ergattuni Tolcite ("Acts")* (London, 1954). These are some of the examples. These scriptures are written in Booranaa Oromo dialect and most probably from the Kenya Boranaa.

journals and proceedings of conferences.[157]

There were also Oromo groups who understood the strict language policy as unbridled ethnic prejudice, and intensively worked to break the linguistic homogenization policy of the Emperor. *Afaan* Oromo broadcasting from Radio Mogadishu, *Afran Qalloo* Cultural Movements and Baalee Oromo armed insurgencies also worked intensively to break the linguistic homogenization policy of the Emperor.

6.5. The Role of *Afaan* Oromo Mass Media in the Development of *Afaan* Oromo to Written Language and the Resistance Movements

A history of mass media is as old as the organization of human beings into society but before the discovery of the modern mass media, the system was in the form of folk arts. Communication and dissemination of information were conducted in the form of folk songs, folk tales, riddles, proverbs, gossips, rumours and other aesthetic art forms. During this period, censorship was also imposed in the form of social taboo seeing it as a legitimate method of regulating society and culture. Information that was considered as a threat to social norms was supressed culturally.[158]

However, this was not continued in all its forms to modern periods. The development of the interest to have powerful and total control over the society by the ruling élites gradually changed the situation. The purpose was to retain political power often against the interest of the mass by sorting out the information that reached the majority and to impose their interests

[157] B.W Andrzejewski, "The Position of [Afaan Oromo] in Cushite Language Group" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, V.9, No. 1 (1864); B.W Andrzejewski, "The Role of Tone in the Borana Dialects of [Oromo]" in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, 1966). These are a few examples from many. For the bibliography of *Afaan* Oromo publications in this period, see Trudnos, pp.9-17.

[158]Frank Caso, *Censorship: Global Issues* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2008): www.Iosrjournals.org, pp. 3-10; Martin Conboy, *Journalism: A Critical History* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 6-7.

of their own and their groups. With the discovery and growth of modern mass media systems, the situation worsened. The control over the media was taken into the hands of a few powerful individuals or groups. This is because the role of mass media either to quell or mobilize the society at large was extremely high.[159]

The control of over the free flow of information to the mass was not only controlled by censorship. It is also by the languages in which the masses are addressed. In most cases the languages in which the mass media transmit the information are the languages whose speakers are politically and/or economically powerful. This has hindered those who hear it in the second language or through translation to have a full understanding of the transmitted information including its hidden meanings.

Scholars agree that the society addressed by the media in their mother tongue are more beneficiaries in receiving and internalizing the information than those who hear information in a second language or though translations. It is because, as repeatedly stated, mother tongue language is a guide to social reality. Therefore, the media that use a mother tongue language plays double roles. On the one hand, it alerts its readers and listeners to social and political situations of the time. On the other hand, it facilitates the development and promotion of the language which it uses.[160]

However, in a country where monolingualism is a rule, the suppression on the media in favour of the chosen language and the reaction to oppose this are critically high. In such countries, the state controlled the media in order to impose social, political, and economic ideologies of the

[159]Caso, p.1; Conboy, pp. 9-25; Kathleen Endres, "Evolution of Journalism and Mass Communication" in *Journalism and Mass Communication*, Vol. 1(Ohio: The University of Akron), pp.1-8.

[160] Tubiana, p. 25.

society of the favoured language on the others. On the other hand, the subjects whose languages were suppressed would organize for contest to have their own ideas in their own vernacular.[161]

This has put the relationship between mass media and language in manipulations and contestations. Therefore, the role of mass media, both paper print or electronically aired, in either strengthening the status of one language over the other or creating consciousness for resistance has been a great revolutionary development in human history.[162] That is why in most parts of the world, there has been a great rush to control media centres so as to have total control over the people.

In Ethiopia, a history of mass media in the post-Italian period was characterized by the same development. Mass media have been used to dominate virtually all aspects of public life. The mission was the legitimization of the imperial hegemony within the linguistic and cultural homogenization. The intention was clearly expressed in the leading government newspaper on 15 August 1943.[163] The newspaper underlined that the primary function of the media in Ethiopia should be the spread of Amharic and the promotion of Ethiopia unity. It was also to serve as the mouthpiece of the government.[164] As a result, most Ethiopian languages were omitted from the modern media and suppressed in the efforts of homogenization. *Afaan* Oromo was one of the languages which were seriously suppressed.

The use of *Afaan* Oromo for both print and electronic medias was restricted. It was not considered when radio broadcasting began to be operated in Tigrigna, Tigre, Somali and Afar,

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[161] *Ibid.*

[162] Martial T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.161-163.

[163] *Addis Zaman, Year, 1. No.11*,10 *Nehase* 1935 *(*15 August 1943).

[164] Zawge Abate, *Understanding the Local Media Environment and International Media as Sources for Local News: Five Ethiopian Newspapers in Focus* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2010), pp.2-3.

the languages that had less number of speakers than *Afaan* Oromo.[165] Although some scholars of Ethiopian studies argue that it was because the Oromo did not pose threats as those whose languages were given broadcasts,[166] apparently the reverse was true. The operation of the media in *Afaan* Oromo might have been feared for the notion that the media in *Afaan* Oromo would promote Oromo nationalism and create an obstacle to the intended expansion of Amharic and the imagined united Ethiopia as a homogenous nation.[167]

Equally, the Oromo élites saw the marginalization of their language from the mass media as a national suppression and against their very existence as a nation.[168] This is because, as Joseph Tubiana states, "The citizen who is constantly addressed by his[her] radio set in a language which he/ she does not understand would feel attacked or at least excluded and rejected by the official national community."[169] Subsequently, some learned Oromo believed that the Oromo had to have the media in their language and began searching for other alternatives outside Ethiopia. The *Afaan* Oromo radio broadcasts that were started in Caro in 1956 and Mogadishu in 1962 were the outcomes of the endeavours.[170]

The *Afaan* Oromo broadcast from Cairo was operated by the efforts of Muslim Oromo students who fled their country because of suppressions at home and joined Al-Azar University.[171] These students became among the dissidents and activists from Africa and the Middle East

[165]Mekuria, "The Politics of Linguistic…", p. 342.

[166] Tesfaye Shawaye, p.28; McNab, 81; Perham, p. 380.

[167]Mekuria Bulcha "The Language Policy of…, p. 102.

[168] Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, 22/04/2007; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, 04/07/2009; Kebede Firrisa, Addis Ababa, 07/09.2009.

[169]Tubiana, p. 25.

[170]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 20/08/2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, 27 June/2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, 22/02/2018; Ahmad Yasin interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013

[171]Interviews with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Zakariya Mamuye, Harar, July 20, 2008.

who converged in Cairo, the city which at the time became for a while the capital of radical nationalists from both regions. Thus, the Cairo radio was the first international voice of revolution to broadcast on the African continent.[172] Cairo radio added broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo to its languages of broadcasts in 1956. However, after six months of regular transmission, the *Afaan* Oromo broadcast from Cairo was closed down because of Emperor Haile Sillasie's repeated petitions to the Egyptian government and other external pressure on the country.[173]

Nonetheless, the Oromo interest to have mass media in *Afaan* Oromo became one of the major issues in the Horn of Africa following the independence of Somalia in 1960. The Somalis wanted to build Greater Somalia by combining Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, French Somaliland and the Somali in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and Ethiopia.[174] The Somalis in Kenya and the Somali (Ogaden) in Ethiopia were put at the first stage to be annexed. For this, the Somali government searched for any possible mechanism that might best attract ethnic groups in these areas toward Somalia or at least that might weaken the unity of the countries.[175]

They calculated that they could win over the Oromo interest in Ethiopia and Kenya through broadcasting in *Afaan* Oromo as they knew that in both countries the use of *Afaan* Oromo for

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[172] Edem Kodjo and David Chanaiwa, "Pan Africanism and Liberation" in Ali A. Mazui (Ed.) *General History of Africa*, V. VIII (California: University of California Press, 1993), p. 762.

[173]Interviews with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Zakariya Mamuye, Harar, July 20, 2008; Nutuman Dodolla, "Afaan Oromo Mass Media: Challenges and Prospects": A Conference Paper (July 2014), p.5.: https: //www.researchgate.net/publication/267683699,

[174]J. M. Lewis, "The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and the Legacy of Sheik Hussein of Bale" in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (19-22 December 1977), pp. 409-415.

[175]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008, October 26, 2016 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; see also Lewis, *A Modern History of Somali*…, pp. 179-185.

public purposes was suppressed. The objective was to present the Somali government as the allies of the Oromo and to draw at least the Oromo along the border of Somali-inhabited areas toward themselves. It was also to win Oromo support in the formation of Greater Somalia.[176] According to Gebru Tareke they also saw themselves as advocates for all supressed groups in south of Ethiopia.[177]

On the other hand, the exiled Oromo from Ethiopia were in critical need of broadcasting to reveal the Oromo grievances and rejection, and to call the Oromo mass to rise up against the severe oppression they were subjected to. These individuals had better understanding of the contribution of broadcasts in rallying the mass from their experiences of listening to the Voice of the Arab Radio Programme from Cairo, and the reading of the most influential newspaper in the Arab World known as *Al-Ahram.*[178] It was because, in the 1950s these mass media from Cairo became the known voice of revolution and nationalism on the African continent.[179]

Thus, it was this juncture that elevated *Afaan* Oromo to the level of East African politics. The Somali government launched broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo from Mogadishu in 1962.[180] Ayyub Abubakri became the first journalist of the *Afaan* Oromo Programme of Radio Mogadishu. As aspired, the programme began attracting many Oromo listeners from both Ethiopia and Kenya. Informants state that the Oromo who heard the transmission expressed their joy for their self-expression and were happy for challenging the myth that broadcasting in *Afaan* Oromo would

[176]*Ibid.*; Adamu Beyene interviews for me with Hussein Dawwaa, Hassen Shaamoo and Shaamoo Halakee, Moyale, July 12, 2008. The interviews were conducted for my M.A thesis.

[177]Gebru Tareke, "Rural Protest in Ethiopia, 1941-1970: A Study of Three Rebellions" (Ph. D Dissertation: Syracuse University, 1977), p. 293.

[178]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018.

[179] Kodjo and Chanaiwa, "Pan-Africanism and Liberation" …, p. 762.

[180] Abir, "Education and National Unity …, p. 58.

"break the radio" i.e. by "uncouth" sounds. Consequently, the broadcasts unleashed fears from both the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya. Therefore, it necessitated a reaction from both countries.[181]

Although Ethiopia took a long time to react, the British government which was then withdrawing from Kenya, launched a propaganda broadcast in *Afaan* Booranaa (one of the *Afaan* Oromo dialects) for 4:00 hours long daily in 1963. The purpose was that the Kenyan government believed that broadcasting in the language the Booranaa Oromo was a good tactic and military strategy to defeat the current invasion from Somalia and the Somali supported rebels. In spite of the ample time given, it is said that there was dissatisfaction from the vernacular listeners to the schedule of the transmission which was from 8:00 pm to 12:00 pm. The dissatisfaction was that it was the time when normal human being must go to bed. Regardless of this limitation, the consciousness it created among the Booranaa and other Oromo clans in northern Kenya as well as southern and eastern Ethiopia was said to have been significant.[182]

Nonetheless, the *Afaan* Oromo broadcast from Radio Mogadishu had more influence in ideological coverage on the Oromo of Ethiopia than the Booranaa programme of Radio Nairobi. The broadcasting which was begun only for five minutes daily and by one member of staff soon began to be marked by unbelievable ideological influences. Abdi Hussein and Yonus Abdullah, who were the journalists and musicians of the broadcasts respectively, state that the ideological impact the broadcast exhibited earned admiration from the Somali government and the listeners. According to Abdi and Yonnis, it was because of this reason that the duration of

[181] *Ibid.*

[182]Adamu Beyene interviews for me with Hussein Dawwaa, Hassen Shaamoo and Shaamoo Halakee, Moyale, July 12, 2008.

the transmission was raised to one-hour and the staff was increased for the journalism to six and for the musicians to five. The budget was also made sufficient.[183] The journalist staffs were Ayyub Abubakri, Haji Umar, Usmail Malka, Abdi Hussein, Indiya Ahmad, *Sheik* (later also doctor) Abdul Rashad Abdulle. The musician staff were Abdullah Arsi, Mohammed Ibrahim Waday (Shantam Shubbisaa), Hibo Nura, Fatuma Qasim and Aisha Abdo. Hibo Nura, Fatuma Qasim and Aisha Abdo some of whom were Somali girls who took training and sang in *Afaan* Oromo.[184]

The broadcasting was successful because all of the staff were those who had experienced the discriminatory rule of the Ethiopian government. In addition to these living experiences, they had easy access to the information on ongoing activities against the Oromo in the country through their relatives, friends and other Oromo activists. It was said that information was easily exchanged by peoples who moved into and out of the Somali as there was no strict visa rule. Besides, it is also said that the way the journalists and the musicians presented the information with articulated vocabularies and impressive expressions made the transmission followed by a large number of listeners.[185]

Above all, what radicalized the Oromo in the coverage of the broadcasts were the poems and the songs which were aired by the radio. Both the poems and the songs were carefully prepared with powerful words in a way that could touch the feelings of the Oromo in the country. Informants states that the revolutionary nature of the poems and the songs put the youth into

[183]Interview with Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, 22/02/2018; Ahmad Yasin interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Artist Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013. Abdi Hussein was one of the journalists and Shantam Shubbisaa was one of the musicians of *Afaan* Oromo programme of radio Mogadishu.

[184]Interview with Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; Ahmadyasin Ali interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Artist Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013.

[185] Interviews with Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018.

emotional states and consequently many of them joined the insurgencies.[186] The combination of these opportunities assisted the journalists and the musicians to broadcast the propaganda that directed, provoked, and recast the perception of the social, linguistic, economic and political realities in the country. The extract given below is one of the revolutionary songs sung by Yonus Abdullah over the Radio Mogadishu of the *Afaan* Oromo programme.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Bilisummaan aannanii	*Freedom is milk*
Nama beekutu dhugaa	*He who knows drinks it*
Kan bilisummaa hin beeknnee	*He who does not know it*
Bira taa'ee mugaa	*Sleeps aside*
Bilisummaan bilisummaan gariidha	*Freedom, freedom is good*
Yaa obolleeyyan ka'aa lafaa hirribaa	*O! Brothers stand up, do not sleep*
Baasa hinjirree nuutti as baasee	*They bring upon us what is inhuman*
Haqa keenyaa addaan facaasee	*They took away our right*
Dachee keessan masinoo keessan	*Your land, your farm*
Kan irra taa'u adawwii kessan	*It is your enemy who dwelt on it*
Maa callistanii teessan?[187]	*Why do you keep silent?*

It is a song of experiences of suppression sung by the legendary Yunus Abdullah and frequently aired by Radio Mogadishu. The contents of the song pointed to the suffering of the Oromo, and the necessity to fight for freedom and justice. Informants from Dirre-Dhowaa and Harar unanimously agreed that the songs and other broadcasts from Radio Mogadishu were so persuasive that the Oromo within the frequency coverage of the broadcast did not want to miss the programme. Those who could afford it bought radio sets. Those who could not are said to have hurried to listen to the programme with their neighbours. In fact, in eastern Ethiopia, access to radio apparatus was not an issue as the apparatuses were easily smuggled into

[186]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008, October 26, 2016 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; Taha Basha, Harar, July 20, 2008.

[187]*Ibid.*

Ethiopia. It is said that the Somali government also allowed the sale of the apparatus at lower cost.[188]

As a result, the Oromo in the radius of the broadcasts are said to have admired the Somali government much more than the Ethiopian. Moreover, as the radio broadcast was opened up when the Oromo were in strong friction with Ethiopian government on issues of their identity, the propaganda, the poems and the songs which were produced and aired over the radio drew the Harar, Baalee, Arsi and Booranaa Oromo into the war of insurgency. The radio had also access to the living information from the centre through the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association. In areas where land alienation was so critical like Baalee and Harar, the songs and the news transmitted by the radio served as a war of propaganda in attracting many people towards the side of the insurgencies.[189]

However, this cordial relationship did not last long. Following the accession of Sayad Barre to power, toppling Abdi ar-Rashid Ali Shirmarke in 1969, a clash of interests between the Oromo staff of Radio Mogadishu and the Somali government worsened from time to time. Barre exposed the long lasting wish of the Somali government to incorporate the Hararge, Arsi, Baalee, Gujii and Booranaa to the aspired Greater Somalia.[190] He forced the Oromo journalists and musicians to address the Oromo only by the Name *Somali Abo* which meant according to them, *Afaan* Oromo speaking Somalis.

[188]*Ibid*

[189]*Ibid.*

[190]I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somali: Revised, Updated and Expanded* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002) p. 411; Temam Haji-Adem, "Islam in Arsi, Southeast Ethiopia, (Ca. 1840-1974)" (M.A thesis: Department of history, Addis Ababa University, 2002), p. 79.

On the other hand, the Oromo staff of Radio Mogadishu were discontented with the name and considered it part of a plan to bring the Oromo under another domination.[191] Deviation was observed clearly when the Oromo staffs of Radio Mogadishu pushed the programme in the name of the Oromo and rejected the suppression of the Somali government under the name *Somali Abo*. Nonetheless, the radio continued to be used by the Oromo activists and Oromo insurgents in Baalee. The influence is said to have increased from time to time and rallied almost all the Oromo in eastern and southern Oromoland against the imperial government. Information was taken from the activists and the Oromo insurgents in Baalee and given to the radio station by Hussein Suuraa.[192]

In the clash of interest, the Oromo journalists and the musicians remained with little or no protection. As a result, the founder of *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts of Radio Mogadishu, Ayyubi Abubakri, was assassinated by a Swiss mercenary murderer, and one of the Oromo musicians, Abdullah Arsi, was drowned in the Indian Ocean into which he was thrown alive. Although there is no credible information who funded the mercenaries, contemporary informants suspected the Ethiopian government.[193]

The good thing is that even though the situation was difficult, the radio continued putting pressure on the Ethiopian government. The Ethiopian government which sensed the

[191]Interview with Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; Ahmad Yasin interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Artist Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013: Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018.

[192]Biratu Kenei's interviews for me with Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3, 2015. Hussein Suraa was born in Baalee and he was known as a man of endurance in crisscrossing the information from one corner to another clandestinely.

[193]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 20, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; Ahmadyasin Ali interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Artist Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013.

challenges, did all things possible[194] to close the transmission. It came back to open a counter-broadcast to use the opportunity it had lost ten years before. Observing how *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts from Mogadishu had mobilized the Oromo for the last ten years, the Ethiopian government launched another *Afaan* Oromo broadcast from Harar on 1 November 1972.[195]

This *Afaan* Oromo broadcast at home in Ethiopia is interesting because it was opened by the government which had continuously worked to suppress and made the use of *Afaan* Oromo for public purpose illegal. Until it was forced by mass mobilization of Radio Mogadishu, the government had preferred not to address the Oromo in the language they best understood although at the time the number of native and non-native speakers of Oromo language was at least no less than those of Amharic.[196]

Still, the opening of the broadcast was not the result of change of the language policy. But it was what was enforced by the propaganda of Radio Mogadishu. It seems to have been to soothe the Oromo who had become radicalized by Radio Mogadishu which thoroughly aired the marginalization and the suppression of the Oromo by the Ethiopian government. Thus, it aimed at reducing the listeners of Radio Mogadishu by giving them another alternative, and if possible to bring them back to the orbit of Pan-Ethiopianism. The broadcasting was also permitted

[194]*Ibid; Addis Zaman, Year 23, Maskaram 20, 1955 E.C. Year 24, Yakatet 5, 1956.; Year 24, Yakatet 11, 1956; Year 24, Magabit 17, 1956 E.C.*

[195]The copy of the first quarter report of the radio station on 30 *Tir* 1965 (09 February 1973). The report was accessed from in the possession of the late Kumaa Eda'ee.

[196] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 20, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; Zakariya Mamuye, Harar, July 20, 2008.

because the imperial government was not able to withstand the internal pressures from which his reign was coming to an end.[197]

Taking it as the best solution to calm down the Oromo grievances, the Emperor passed an order to open an *Afaan* Oromo radio broadcast that could cover all the wavelength the broadcast from Mogadishu covered. The decision was made urgently so that no satisfactory preparation was made. Therefore, the broadcasting was started in rented house and human power was recruited not on the basis of professionalism in journalism but on the basis of their reading and writing ability in *Afaan* Oromo. They were only three in number[198] so that it was difficult to believe that they could manage all the activities needed for broadcasting. The question of budget, furniture and other facilities were left for time to solve.

However, a good thing is that the recruited journalists needed a media to have broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo more than the government needed them. According to Kumaa Eda'e and Hussein Adam, it was such a pleasure for them to have the Oromo radio broadcast in Ethiopia that they faced all challenges with interest to overcome them.[199] The report from the station explained that even Yeshawali'ul Mengistu, who was assigned to the station as an accountant and secretary, joined the journalists of her own accord and covered human power gaps on program preparation besides her regular duties.[200] What made the broadcast successful was at least the

[197]Interviews with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Abdii Fiixee's Interview with Hussein Adam om Oromia Media Net Work Television on 25/12/2015. Hussein Adam was the first director of the station.

[198]The first quarter of the station report on 30 *Tir* 1963 (09 February 1972). They were Kumaa Eda'ee, Temesgen Gemeda and Hussein Adam. It was only Hussein Adam who had knowhow in journalism as he was from the Ministry of Information.

[199]Interview with Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Abdii Fiixee's Interview with Hussein Adam om Oromia Media Net Work Television on 25/12/2015.

[200]The copy of the second quarter report of the station on 30 *Miyazia* 1965 (08 April 1072. Accessed from the possession of Kumaa Eda'ee.

legal coverage the government provided and the interest of the Oromo journalists to address their people in *Afaan* Oromo.

As the purpose was to detach the listeners of the *Afaan* Oromo programme of Radio Mogadishu, the time of the broadcast in *Afaan* Oromo was deliberately made to overlap with that of the Mogadishu broadcast with the duration of one and half hours daily. The frequency for the broadcast, 100KW, was also intended to overlap with area that was covered by Radio Mogadishu. The efforts were seen to narrow the opportunity of listening to both radios at different times.[201] Until the contents and the intention of the transmission began to be analysed, as we can assume, many Oromo who were in the coverage of the broadcasts are said to have tuned their radios toward the broadcasts from Harar.[202]

The issue was taken so seriously that the Emperor visited the station on the tenth day of its opening to hear the immediate impact in person. Kumaa and Hussein agree that the Emperor felt happy when he heard that the Oromo who had heard the news were pleased with the beginning of the broadcasts. It is said that the Emperor took as guaranteed that the broadcasts would solve the propaganda problems from Radio Mogadishu. However, the informants who were the journalists of the radio at time complain that the Emperor suggested no improvement to material facilities and human power.[203]

Nonetheless, like that of the Radio Mogadishu, clash of interest between the government and that of *Afaan* Oromo journalists began to be the main challenge of the broadcasting station.

[201]Interview with Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Taha Basha, Harar, July 20, 2008; Abdii Fiixee's Interview with Hussein Adam om Oromia Media Net Work Television on 25/12/2015.

[202]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

[203] Interview with Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Taha Basha, Harar, July 20, 2008; Abdii Fiixee's Interview with Hussein Adam om Oromia Media Net Work Television on 25/12/2015

The government needed the radio to support its homogenization policy. On the other hand, the Oromo journalists inclined to point out the real life situation of the Oromo. For this, when the government suspected them and imposed strong censorship on the materials to be broadcast, the Oromo journalists employed words, phrases, sentences and expressions with layered and hidden meanings to reach the people with their intention.[204]

This clash of interests was not restricted to the broadcasting station. It also extended its roots into the listeners. The listeners who were in the government orbit and sensed the impact of the broadcasts were said to have put some constraints on the quality of the broadcasts. For example, the telecommunication branch at Harar was frequently complained of by technicians of the radio station for reducing the permitted 100KW to only Fifty KW.[205]

On the other hand, the listeners who understood the covert meanings of the transmission continued sending the station letters of admiration.[206] The director of the station stated in the report that within nine months of the beginning, the station received 9749 different letters sent from the listeners. The Oromo who were not in the frequency coverage also wrote request letters for the extension of the coverages to their areas.[207] The Oromo musicians who were inspired with the hidden intention of the broadcasts were also said to have given their songs to the station free from payments. It was the revolution of 1974 that closed the first chapter of the contest without any marked conclusion.

The Oromo struggle for their language also forced the Emperor to permit Radio Voice of the Gospel to broadcast in *Afaan* Oromo in the autumn of 1972, the radio that he had refused the

[204]*Ibid.*

[205]Interviews with Taha Basha, Harar, July 20, 2008; Kumaa Eda'ee, Dukam, April 22, 2008. See also the –report of the station.

[206]Hussein Adan, a Yearly Report on *Tiqimt* 22, 1966 (1 November 1973)

[207]*Ibid.*

right since 1963.[208] In spite of these difficulties, however, the broadcasts played a remarkable role in the transformation of *Afaan* Oromo from oral to written form and the Oromo from a cultural to a political nation. The preparation of manuscripts for transmission, appreciation or criticism letters sent to the station and the composition of music for broadcast were the developments that initiated the journalists, the musicians and listeners to write in *Afaan Oromo*. Besides, it played the role of alerting the Oromo to the conditions they were in and instigating them for active struggle. Above all, as the contents of the song show, and the roles played by the songs the station received from the surviving members of *Afran Qalloo* Cultural Band were really powerful.[209]

6.7. The Oromo Cultural Troupes in the Making of Oromo Political Struggle

As we have seen in chapter five, Oromo cultural songs played remarkable roles in maintaining the Oromo cultural identity while persistently serving in shaping and reflecting the resistances against cultural, political and economic repression. However, during this period the performers were not organized, and consequently the work was effort depended on individual enterprise, and the composed songs mainly remained oral. Some of the Oromo who understood these limitations organized themselves into a cultural troupe to assist the struggle to transform *Afaan* Oromo from oral to written and the Oromo from a cultural to a political nation. Therefore, those Oromo who understood the role of music in fostering social cohesion and political

[208]Interviews with Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April, 26,2018; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015; Balsvik, *Haile Sillasie's Students*…, p. 281. Radio Voice of the Gospel was established in 1963. However, it was not allowed to broadcast in *Afaan* Oromo while majority the followers of Protestantism at the time were Oromo.

[209]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Abdi Buh and Adam Ibsa, Dirre Dhowaa, July 17, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre- Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Taha Basha, Harar, July 20, 2008; Abdii Fiixee's Interview with Hussein Adam om Oromia Media Net Work Television on 25/12/2015.

identity were organized into a cultural group and began performing it in a way whose meaning fitted the real situation of the moment.

However, this does not mean that there were no Oromo in organized bands or no Oromo music in modern music of Ethiopia before this. For the purpose of the Ethiopian image in the world politics, there were a few Oromo who were employed either in the orchestra of the Imperial bodyguard, or *Hager Fiqir* Theatre (Theatre for Love of Country). Wasanuu Diidoo who joined *Hager Fiqir* theatre in 1947 and Birraatuu Lammaa who joined the military orchestra at Asmara in 1952 were the first batch of these individuals. In spite of the fact that they were government salaried employees, they opposed the oppression of the Oromo with their layered meanings of songs.[210]

In spite of these efforts, the first better organized and centralized Oromo cultural band was established in Dirre-Dhowaa in 1962 by the name *Afran Qalloo*. It was established when it was still illegal to sing in *Afaan* Oromo. The members of the band were divided into two groups based on their ages. The eldest was named *Urjii Bakkalchaa* (Morning Star) with its members Ismail Mohammed (Shantam Shubbisaa), Abubakri Musa, Ali Shabboo, Ali Ahmad, Ali Tuuchee, Yonus Abdullah, Abdurrahman Yusuf and others. The younger was named *Hiriyaa Jaalalaa* (Teenagers) with its members Ali Mohammed Musa (Ali Birraa), Abubakri Mohammed Adam, Yusuf Ibrahim, Elias Ibrahim, Ibrahim Haji Ali, Ali Abdi, Jamal Barsaa and others. The purpose was to avoid the interference of the elders in youth matters and *vice*

[210] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 20/08/2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, 22/04/2007; Abdii Fiixee's Interview with Hussein Adam om Oromia Media Net Work Television on 25/12/2015; the late Hailu Disaasaa, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2008; the Admasu Beranu, Addis Ababa, August 18, 2008.

versa as it was in the *Gadaa* System. The members of this band were those who came to the front with all the risk of maltreatments to follow.[211]

The establishment of the band was the consequence of the struggle over not to use or to use *Afaan* Oromo equally with other languages. The Oromo who were worried at the silencing of their language from the written, musical and broadcasting worlds were some of the major factors for the establishment. The myth created and disseminated that *Afaan* Oromo would break the radio and other musical instruments, and could not be tuned into them were the hot issues to which the cultural bands were to respond. [212]

The frequent negative responses related to the myth, on the Oromo request to orchestrate Oromo songs with modern musical instruments, were what encouraged the Oromo youths and elders to have their own troupe.[213] Beyond this, the band also determined to publish nationalist songs in cassettes to awaken all Oromo against the linguistic, cultural, religious, political and economic marginalization they were forced to bear. It aimed at forming the basis of resistance and cultural revival while advancing self-awareness to social cohesion and group solidarity.[214]

To transform the cultural group to a more organized and modernized band with increased security, it was superintended by board of directors. The board had three committees under it.

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[211]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 20/08/2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, 27 June/2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, 22/02/2018; Ahmad Yasin interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013; See also *Barisaa (Down) Newspaper (*, Year 22, No, 13, 29 May 1991; See also Asafa, *Oromia and Ethiopia…,* p.186.

[212] Asafa Jalata, *Oromia and Ethiopia…,* p.186; Shawn Michael Mollenhuaer, "Millions on the Margins: Music, Ethnicity and Censorship among the Oromo of Ethiopia" (Ph.D. Dissertation in Music: University of California, 2011), pp.60-63.

[213]*Ibid.*

[214] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 20/08/2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, 27 June/2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, 22/02/2018; Halloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008 and December 20, 2015; the late Hailu Disaasaa, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2008; the Admasu Beranu, Addis Ababa, August 18, 2008;Ahmadyasin Ali interview with Abdi Hussein on Oromo Television on 9/11/2016 and Artist Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013; See also *Barisaa (Down) Newspaper (*, Year 22, No, 13, 29 May 1991.

The divisions the committees were *Koree Tiksituu* (security committee), *Koree Gargaartu* (fund raising committee), and *Koree Goristuu* (advisory committee). The members of the committees were recruited from elders on the basis of their determination and capacities for leadership whereas the accountabilities given to the three divisions were based on the necessity to tackle the contemporary problems that the band had to face.[215]

Accordingly, the *Koree Tiksituu* was made accountable to keep the band out of government security detection and if this happened it was supposed to help them out. The duty of the *koree gargaartu* was to raise money for the bands and to supply the bands with modern musical instruments. The *Koree Goristuu* was advisor on the texts of the songs used for music and how to act to defend themselves. They checked the song texts for layered and surface meanings.[216]

To evade easy security detection, the texts were artfully interwoven with subtlety and ambiguity, which only the knowledgeable and attentive listeners could translate meaningfully. The songs were checked for having the contents that could form the basis of resistance and cultural survival in their inner meanings. Therefore, each song was said to have been coined with ideology of the moment in a way it expressed covertly the idea to advance self-awareness and political identity.[217] As a result, the songs of *Afran Qalloo* are known for their multifaceted meanings.

All the members in *Urjii Bakkalchaa* and *Hiriyaa Jaalala* made divisions of labour among themselves based on their interests and abilities. Since there was no organized training and no

[215] *Ibid.*

[216] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, 20/08/2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, 27 June/2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, 22/02/2018; Halloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008 and December 20, 2015; the late Hailu Disaasaa, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2008; the Admasu Beranu, Addis Ababa, August 18, 2008

[217] *Ibid.*

freedom to do so, the division of labour was based on the natural gifts of the participants. Adaptation to modern ways of dancing, singing, playing musical instruments and writing suitable poems were acquired through trial and error.[218] In such a way, the cultural band became the forerunner for the emerging Oromo nationalism and written *Afaan* Oromo.

On top of this, it played a role in furnishing emotion and ideological cohesion, and fuelled the excitement and sustainability of nationalist identification. It is because history tells us that music profoundly shapes the goals and objectives of a people moving toward collective identity, cultural nationalism, and political independence. Music also transmits ideologies and political demands to adherents and activists of political, cultural, and social movements.[219] The *Afran Qalloo* popular music is inextricably linked with language and illustrates how cultural forms, like music, are important forces in shaping a collective national consciousness and a democratic political system as it was able to rally many number of youth after them.

The band was deliberately organized in a way that reflected the Oromo world view and rejected the imposed views from the *neftegna*. The reflection and the rejection began with the name of the band. They named it *Afran Qalloo*. It was to refute the pejorative name "*Qottuu*" given to them by the newly Amhara settlers for the four sons of Qalloo: Alaa, Babbillee, Dagaa and Oborraa.[220] The purpose was, in fact not only for scorn but also apparently to restore the name *Afran Qalloo* instead

[218] *Ibid*.

[219]John O'Flynn, "National Identity and Music in Transition: Issues of Authenticity in Global Setting" in Ian Biddle and Vanessa Nights (Eds.) *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location: Between the Global and the Local* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), pp. 24-27.

[220]Interviews with Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018; Halloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008 and December 20, 2015; Ahmadyasin Ali interview with artist Shantam Shubbisaa on 12/09/2013; See also *Barisaa (Down) Newspaper (*, Year 22, No, 13, 29 May 1991); see also Badir, p. 2.

of the imposed "Qottuu". The name *Afran Qalloo* at the time was the general name that Eastern Oromo addressed the Oromo in common.

Therefore, it was immediately following their establishment that the band attacked by their songs those who named them "Qottuu" in for example, the song authored by Abubakri Musa. This also reappeared on the Cultural Show of 1977 by Artist Hallo Daawwee. It reads as follows:

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Gariin ilma namaa yaada gabaabbataa	*Some people think narrowly*
Qottuu jechuu se'aa arrabatti fudhataa	*Take the name "Qottuu" [farming] for insult*
Waa arraba mitii maqaa tarkaanfataa	*But beyond the name it is not insult*
Ummanni wabaree qonnadhaan dhadataa	*It is true, civilized people take pride in farming*
Dafquma isaa nyaachuuf hojiidhaan bututaa	*Works a lot to live on his/her earnings*
Hojjetee mullisee bilchesse oomishaatee	*Work exhaustively, harvest much*
Dinagdee ol kaasuf qutudhaa hidhatee	*Growth of economy, it needs effective farming.*
Halkanillee hirrafuu hojidhaan bututee	*He never sleeps in the night because of fatigue*
Akkasumaan naminni itti dhaadatee	*People simply infuriated him rudely*
Roorroo keessa darbe yoom irranfatee.[221]	*How he/she has forgotten the tyranny*

The song chastised those who took name "*Qottuu*" for an insult and named them by it. According to the context of the song, the informed people are not the ones who live on the sweat of others but those who plough and produce much to uphold the country's economy. The song explained that the name, "*Qottuu*" (farming) is the pillar of the country's economy and criticized those for ignorance who took it as an insult. [222]

While Amharization ideology stressed the incompatibility of *Afaan* Oromo, musically or otherwise with any significant culture, musicians challenged and undermined this premise, in both a subtle and explicit, indirect and direct manner. In all of the songs the singers grappled with fundamental issues of what it means to be Oromo, and what it means to resist. They each

[221]Interviews with Haloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008, December 20, 2015: Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Yonus Abdullah, Addis Ababa, February 22, 2018.

[222] *Ibid.*

carefully activated a sense of what is Oromoness. The songs were said to have resonated with the affecting emotion that a lifetime of serfdom cannot be overcome without the high costs of unwavering commitment and sacrifice. Therefore, it is said that within minutes the singers began to perform, all the audience abandoned their seats and circled the stages.[223]

Nonetheless, one may wonder why the Oromo cultural troupe first appeared in Dirre-Dhowaa while the problem was similar all over Oromoland. Informants from Dirre-Dhowaa clearly articulated the reasons. They state that modern musical instruments and the playing of them were introduced first to Dirre-Dhowaa by foreigners who dwelled in the town for business purposes following the arrival of the railway. Therefore, the dwellers of the town including the Oromo got easy access to modern musical instruments and opportunity to learn how to play music on them in beat. The other more decisive reason was the teaching of *Sheik* Bakri Saaphaloo. Most of the members of the band were either his students or who had read his revolutionary poems.[224] All these combined together and gave the Oromo of the area a determination that enabled them to achieve this great cultural input. Therefore, although there were religious dramas and singing of canticles on the basis of written themes by Protestant Christian missionaries in Wallagga,[225] the *Afran Qalloo* cultural and musical bands might have been the first to appear in an organized manner and present secular and Oromo culture based on written music and drama on the stage.

Within three years of its foundation the bands travelled to places like Haro-Mayaa, Awaday, Dadar, Qobboo, Hirnaa, Ciroo, and several other places in Hararge and performed music and

[223] *Ibid.*

[224] *Ibid.*

[225] Interviews with Haloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008: Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008 and 19 January 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Rashid Buuba and Musa Ahimad, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008.

dramas in *Afaan* Oromo. In all the places, it is said that using their penetrating melody and captivating lyrics, the band mobilized the Oromo and enthusiasm for Oromo nationalism and political actions. Similarly, informants assert that they were also able to produce fellow poets, singers and even militant Oromo nationalists. They also made the mass of ordinary township people politically conscious.[226]

It is also said that the band rented air time from Radio Ethiopia of Addis Ababa for 30 *birr* per song which was allowed to be transmitted every Monday at 10:00 P.M. in the middle of the night. They got permission from the Emperor himself by singing the song that praised him as a hero of Ethiopia.[227] Nonetheless, the time was inconvenient to listen, as it is the time for bed and sleep, and the payment required was a reflection of injustice to the development of written *Afaan* Oromo.

Moreover, the cultural band also established links with the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association, Radio Mogadishu and Baalee Oromo movements. Pertinent to this, a Baalee born Oromo named Hussein Suraa played a networking role. He served by circulating information. His role in delivering the news from both the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association and the Baalee Oromoo insurgency to Radio Mogadishu was what updated the radio with news immediately following the events.[228] The purpose of seeking linkage with the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association was to establish their branches throughout the Oromo as the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Association was functioning from the centre to all directions. It was because they were well aware of the

[226] *Ibid.*

[227] *Ibid*.

[228] Interview with Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Biratu Kenei's interviews for me with Mohammed Jirruu, Ahmad Maddaa, Dheeraa, November 4, 2015; with Hamino Eda'oo, Asallaa, November 1, 2015; Muktar Haji Xuqaa, Ittayyaa, November 3,2015; Mollenuaer, pp. 65-66.

importance of creating a united Oromo consciousness throughout the Oromo in order to reach other Oromo with their nationalist performances of musical songs and dramas.[229]

However, the cultural band was not able to continue its functions. The local and the national governments who strictly attended the outcome of the movement intensified their intimidation and harassment on the members of the bands. They were under everyday forms of repression. After the bands functioned for three years effectively and brought remarkable results, they were accused of narrow nationalism and separatist movements and were dissolved in 1965. On the dissolution some of its members were detained and tortured to reveal the civilian coordinators of the band. Some of the members who were mature enough fled to Mogadishu to continue their struggle through their nationalist songs using Radio Mogadishu. Others joined armed struggle in cooperation with the Baalee Oromo movements. Still other few escaped to Addis Ababa. The remaining others were silenced to live with their families.

Despite the harassment and subsequent repression against the band and its members, the band was able to inspire many Oromo youths to follow their footsteps. Many artists were determined to continue to voice their views by songs of metaphor as they accepted musical songs and poetry as appropriate media for discussing the impact of alien power over them. Informants unanimously asserted that individual Oromo youth began composing their own poetic songs, performed on any occasional festival. [230]

Those who got the opportunity also sent poems to the *Afaan* Oromo program of Harar radio thinking that they would be read for them over the radio. There were also those who went to the station and had their music recorded for the purpose of radio transmissions. As they fitted

[229] *Ibid.*
[230] *Ibid.*

the contents and even the lyrics with the ideology of the moment, therefore, this action fostered social cohesion and political identity of the Oromo. It served not only as a mirror to hold up to reality but was also used as a hammer with which to shape it.[231]

These development of Oromo literature and the Oromo national question transferred the Oromo struggle to a new chapter which was to continue within the regime of another ideology. Nonetheless, although the struggle did not ensure the Oromo the right to exercise their own destiny, it laid a basic ground for the struggle to be continued under *Darg* regime. The following chapter thoroughly deals with how the politics of coexistence and confrontation between the *Darg* and the political parties with a large number of Oromo members transformed *Afaan* Oromo to written official language and the Oromo from a cultural to a political nation with their own regional state.

[231]*Ibid.*

Chapter Seven

Afaan Oromo and the Oromo National Question During the *Darg* Regime: Coexistence and Confrontation, 1974-1991

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the contest for *Afaan* Oromo strictly as part of the linguistic and cultural homogenization policy of imperial Ethiopia. In this context, a thorough analysis was made on how the attempted implementation of the homogenization policy triggered the rise of Oromo nationalism. The efforts of the Oromo élites to defend *Afaan* Oromo from the intended domination and its use as a cardinal element in the organization of the Oromo national movements were thoroughly discussed. I have also indicated how the contested struggle over *Afaan* Oromo contributed to the challenges that toppled the Emperor in 1974.

In this chapter I attempt to illustrate how this struggle brought issues of written *Afaan* Oromo and the related Oromo nationalism into the question of coexistence and confrontation under the *Darg*. In this regard, thorough analysis is made how and why the *Darg* accommodated to issues that challenged its policy on the one hand and how on the other it systematically suppressed these issues under its control. At the same time, focus is also made on how and why Oromo activists joined the *Darg*, the state that suppressed their interest, and yet took the risk to operate their hidden agenda.

Therefore, the central argument of this chapter is how the politics of these two things, coexistence and confrontation, transformed *Afaan* Oromo from a marginalized status to a written official language and the Oromo from a cultural to a political nation wanting their own state. A thorough analysis is made on how the Oromo élites used the ambivalent linguistic

policy of the *Darg* to their own advantage to develop *Afaan* Oromo to, written literature and, related with this, Oromo nationalism. I describe the efforts undertaken to make *Afaan* Oromo the language of a government recognized newspaper, broadcasts, cultural bands and the medium of education under the *Darg,* all of which helped transformation of *Afaan* Oromo to the official language of the Oromia Regional State after 1991.

The attempts of the *Darg* to control the Oromo, initially permitting and later suppressing the study of *Afaan* Oromo and the revival of Oromo culture are the focus of the discussion in this chapter. Therefore, the arguments help us to widen our understanding of how *Afaan* Oromo was subjected to the struggle over power relationships between the *Darg* and the Oromo-affiliated social and political movements. It will also help us to understand how the contest transformed the Oromo national question from the struggle over equality with the broad masses of Ethiopian peoples to demand for an autonomous state.

In order to elaborate the developments in the proper historical context, it is appropriate to focus on the most significant events during the period. These were the positions of different political organizations, including the *Darg* and its COPWE party, on issues of the Oromo and Oromo identity; the OLF use of *Afaan* Oromo as a means of struggle and a weapon of Oromo nationalism; the launching of the *Bariisaa* Newspaper; the consolidation of broadcasting in *Afaan* Oromo; the rise of Oromo cultural troupes and the books published in *Afaan* Oromo mainly by authors with their own initiation. These aspects will be examined in great detail.

7.1. The Struggle for *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo Identity Under the *Darg*'s Ambiguous Policy of the National Question

The *Darg* that came to power in 1974 by mass uprising seems to have given a breathing space to questions of nationality, at least at its early period. As it wanted to present itself as 'a

government of people from peoples for peoples', at least for its first two years, it proved willing to accommodate cultural and linguistic practices of the suppressed nations in the country in contrast to the imperial period.[1] Using the opportunity, the Oromo were among the nations to organize themselves into cultural associations to restore the suppressed Oromo cultural practices and to promote *Afaan* to a written and working language.[2]

However, this *Darg*'s early period accommodation of nations' free practices of culture and languages did not last long. After the *Darg* had consolidated its power, its declaration of the right to self-determination was followed by a declaration of the 'absolute', 'inviolable' and 'eternal' unity of Ethiopia. This again restored the imperial method of suppressing nations' free practice of their languages and cultures though strict suppression as it had been under the emperor.[3] Thus the *Darg*'s declaration of the right to self-determination of all nationalities in its programme[4] was simply because self-determination for oppressed nationalities was a standard Marxist-Leninist tactic, as developed by Lenin, and had been advocated by the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik) before the 1917 Revolutions.[5]

[1]Markakis, *The Last Two Frontiers*…, p. 176.

[2] Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, august 27, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008.

[3]Markakis, the Last Two Frontiers…, p. 167.

[4] …the right to self-determination of all nationalities will be recognized and fully respected. No nationality will dominate another one since the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality will have equal recognition in accordance with the spirit of socialism. … this means that each nationality will have regional autonomy to decide on matters concerning its internal affairs. Within its environs, it has the right to determine the contents of its political, economic and social life, use its own language and elect its own leaders and administration to head its own organs… See Programme of the National Democratic Revolution, 1976, Section II, p.5; IES MS 2397/ 01/3.2; *Abiyotawi Seded, Hamle, 1968 (Revolutionary Flame, July 1976);* IES MS 2397/01/3.5; "Abiyot (Revolution" IES MS 2393/ 04/1/12;

[5]A classic statement of this policy is J.V Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question", a 1913 article written under the close supervision of Lenin himself. See J.V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National-Colonial Question: A Collection of Articles and Speeches* (Addis Ababa: Peoples Bookstore with Walta Book Distributor, 1976), p.36.

However, except using self-determination for the daily propaganda purpose, [6] the *Darg* did not expressly raises either to condemn or defend issues of the national question. This ambivalent position of the *Darg* divided its members into two conflicting groups. The conflicting groups were those who wanted to continue the homogenization policy of the imperial regime on the one hand, and those who wanted to struggle for the linguistic and cultural revival of their own respective nations on the other hand. The conflicts on issues were within the minds of many individuals within the same organization.[7] The challenge *Afaan* Oromo and related Oromo ethnic identity encountered under the *Darg* regime for one and half decades was typically a reflection of this problem.

However, what we should not deny is that since the *Darg* did not officially condemn the use of different Ethiopian languages for written purposes and the practice of cultural pluralism for internal affairs, this reticence gave a little breathing space for all Ethiopian nations in general[8] and for the Oromo in particular. The renaming of the Academy of *Amharic language* as the Academy of *Ethiopian Languages* in 1975 was an example.[9] The *Darg* prioritization of education as prerequisite for consciousness creation, mass organization and even arming them[10] provided good opportunity for the Oromo élites.

The Oromo élites who found a little space for linguistic and cultural accommodation in the *Darg* programme soon organized cultural activities and began working for the revival of

[6] "Abiyot (Revolution)", IES MS 2393/ 04/1/14; "Sadad (Flame)", IES MS 2393/01/2; IES MS 2393/01/4.

[7] Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity*…, p.196.

[8] Amsalu Akililu, "The Ethiopian Languages Academy: History and Current Development*" Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (26-29 April 1982), pp.11-12.

[9] "Ethiopian Languages Academy", IES MS 4768; "Minute of Ethiopian Languages academy", IES MS 4766.

[10] For example, see A report on education from Wobarraa Sub-province to Hararge Province, Date, *Hamile,* 26, 1968, Ref. No. 2/5476/142/48/4, Fol. No. አ ወ 1/ሀ1; Letter from Woberra sub-Province to the Ministry of Education, Date. *Phagume* 3, 1968 E.C, Ref. No. 6420/142/48/2.

Oromo culture and *Afaan* Oromo literacy.[11] Informants state that it was the development of *Afaan* literacy which was a cutting edge in the revitalization of Oromo cultural identity and unity. The increase in literacy in *Afaan* Oromo was given priority because of two main reasons. One, it was one of the forms of Oromo cultural identity which had been severely repressed by the preceding Ethiopian government and its immediate revival was therefore necessitated. Secondly, it was seen as the best way to promote the level of Oromo national consciousness.[12]

It is true that the approach to develop *Afaan* Oromo to a language of literacy was not only used for the promotion of Oromo national consciousness and unity but also it was used by different political groups to advance their own interests in the struggle about power and policy. As Markakis states, their population number and the vast territory they occupied made the Oromo of great importance to any group or party concerned with Ethiopian politics.[13] Therefore, in order to win Oromo towards their own respective political goals, different political parties called for the necessity of using *Afaan* Oromo for written purposes and free exercise of Oromo culture. These calls from different political parties became part of their respective political propaganda in the first two and a half years of the revolution. As a result, *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo nationalism became major political issues of the *Darg*, EPRP, *MEISON, ECCHAT* and others which later came to the scene.[14]

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[11] Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers* …, p. 186; Gadaa, *Oromia…,* pp. 99-101.

[12] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal and Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 10, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, august 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015.

[13] John Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (London: Zed Book Ltd, 1990), p. 258.

[14]The *Darg* although half-hearted by allowed Oromo cultural practices and adult literacy in *Afaan* Oromo. EPRP began to translate some portion of its journal into *Afaan* Oromo. Oromo members of *MEISON* and *ECHAAT* effectively worked on Afaan Oromo literacy. For the *Darg* position on *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo culture See Markakis, *National and Class Conflict …*, p. 258; for the EPRP Position on *Afaan* Oromo see IES MS

Notwithstanding these developments, issues to emancipate the development of *Afaan* Oromo literacy and Oromo national consciousness were not free from political ambivalence. This ambivalence was that on the one hand, not to lose the support of both the Oromo intellectuals and the Oromo mass necessitated tolerance of the practice of *Afaan* Oromo literacy and Oromo cultural revitalization. On the other hand, it became a great concern that the anticipated Ethiopian unity would be endangered by the Oromo nationalism which was anticipated to emerge from the movement for the development of *Afaan* Oromo literacy and Oromo cultural revival. Subsequently, the promotion of *Afaan* Oromo literacy and Oromo cultural revival were not wholeheartedly supported specially by most members of the *Darg*, EPRP and some members of *Meison.*

Nonetheless, the Oromo élites did not abandon the struggle to transform *Afaan* Oromo to written literature and the Oromo to a political nation. Many Oromo élites and the organizations in which the Oromo were the dominant members joined the revolution with the aspiration to direct the vague and unarticulated political philosophy of the *Darg*'s *Itiyophiya Tikdem* (Ethiopia First) towards the interest of all Ethiopian nations and nationalities in general and that of the Oromo in particular. The desire appeared credible when the *Darg*, and the Oromo dominated-*MEISON* and ECHAAT jointly established a committee named POMOA in April 1976.[15] This step and the recruitment of a large number of the Oromo into the military provided

2393/07/02/11.2; for *MEISON* and *ECHAAT* see Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.68.

[15]The aim of POMOA was to create a nationwide network of cadre in preparation for the establishment of a political party. It was established to mobile mass support, conduct political education, and to lay the foundation for the workers' party. See Bereket Habte Sillasie, "The *Dergue*'s Dilemma: The Legacies of a Feudal Empire" in *Revolutionary Ethiopia Miscellanea* 1, p.54, b47-56. However, Oromo intellectuals wisely made use of it towards their own target. Mainly the task of educating the mass was entrusted to POMOA. Haile Fidaa, Baaroo Tumsaa, Abdullah Yusuf and Zegaye Asfaw who was the head of POMOA were among the architects of the disguise. They are said to have technically designed the assignment of the officers and the *Zemach* to the *Kifila Hager* (provinces), *Awraja* (Sub-province) and *Woredas* (District) along the ethnic lines of the recruits. See Marina and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (London: African Publishing Company, 1978), pp.

an additional strength to the development of Oromo nationalism using *Afaan* Oromo as a weapon of the struggle.[16]

Subsequently, POMOA was effectively used as umbrella by the Oromo activists for the advantage of raising national consciousness among the Oromo. The first action the Oromo dominated POMOA was the appointment of mass organizers according to their local origins.[17] Accordingly, most of the appointees to the Oromo regions were Oromo and mainly *MEISON* and *ECHAAT* members. For instance, Kebede Dirribaa was assigned to Shawa, Hailu Garbaaba to Wallagga, Dr Kadir Mohammed to Iluu Abbaa Boor, Kinfe (Haile Michael) Hamdeessa to Arsii, Zakariyas Mohammed to Baalee, Eshtu Araarsoo to Sidaamo, and Abdullah Yusuf to Hararge.[18] All of them were provincial heads of POMOA and were exclusively Oromo. Structures below them were assigned in the same model. Similarly, priority given to local origins was at the assignment of teachers and students to the *Zemecha* (National Campaign for

187-189; Clapham, Transformation…, pp. 198 & 215; John W. Harbeson, *The Ethiopian Transformation: The Quest for the Post Imperial State* (London: Westview Press, 1988), p. 147; Andargachew Asegid, *በአጭር የተቀጨ ጉዞ: መኢሶን በኢትዮጵያ ሕዝቦች ትግል ዉስጥ (The Shortened Journey: MEISON in the History of Ethiopian Struggle)* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1992 E.C.), p.335.

[16]Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October10, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015.

[17] Clapham, *Transformation and…*, p. 202; Andargachew, p. 335; Paulos Milkias, "Zemecha: An Assessment of the Political and Social Foundations of Mass Education in Ethiopia" in *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 2, No.1 (1980), p. 20.

[18]Andargachew Asegid, 335; Kiflu Tadesse, *The Generations*, Vol. II (New York: University Press of America, 1998), p.56; Fessiha Desta, *Abiyotuna Tizitaye (The Revolution and My memory)* (Addis Ababa: Tsehay Publisher, 2008 E.C), p.173. In fact, Fessiha does not state that they were Oromo.

Development through Cooperation and Enlightenment).[19] This gave the movement something of an Oromo identity.[20]

The Oromo members of the POMOA eagerly seized the opportunity and quickly organized themselves to spread political consciousness among the Oromo.[21] Informants state that these Oromo groups had taken an oath secretly before departure not to be divided in the struggle until the Oromo were guaranteed full right to practice their culture, and use *Afaan* Oromo for office purpose and mass media.[22] Subsequently, they made the necessary efforts to organize the regional autonomy formula in the *Darg* programme.

The series of meetings which were held to spread the concept of the revolution were effectively used by these Oromo élites. For example, Jan Hultin, a Swedish Social Anthropologist, witnessed such Oromo activities from his observation of one of such meetings held at Sibuu district, located in Northwest Wallagga Province in 1976. According to Hultin's observation, the theme of that meeting was about the right to use and protect their language, the right to exercise their culture, the right to administer their natural resources and the right to be administered by their own appointees. The only language used to address the meeting was *Afaan* Oromo and not a word of Amharic was heard from the stage.[23] Informants remember

[19]The necessity of the *Zemecha* was declared on 21 September 1974 with the aim of implementing the changes that were brought by the revolution among the rural societies while spreading revolutionary consciousness. It was also to facilitate the plan to politicize, organize and arm the rural societies towards the political interest of the *Darg*. Moreover, the plan was to collect mass support for the *Darg* in its political struggle. It is also argued that the *Darg* wanted to remove radical students from the ongoing revolution in Addis Ababa. See Teferra Haile-Selassie, *The Ethiopian Revolution, 1974-1991: From Monarchical Autocracy to A Military Oligarchy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1997), p. 150; J Harbeson, p. 127.

[20] Clapham, *Transformatio*n and …, p p.53-54 and 2002-203.

[21] *Mukula (The Beam)*, IES MS 2393/01/6.1

[22]Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 20098 Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, 26 April 2018; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015.

[23]Jan Hultin, "Rebounding Nationalism: State and Ethnicity in Wollega, 1968-1976" *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol.73, No.3(2003): http://www.jstor.org/stable/3556910, pp. 402-426.

that such gatherings were engulfed with excitement, traditional chants and big applause.[24] Hultin has quoted from the speech of the Awraja (Sub Province) administrator of the respective district and wrote in English as follows:

> *…We were ashamed of using our own language. If we spoke in our language, we were regarded as criminals. This affair is now something of the past and when we now come together, we speak in our beautiful language. Now, I regard every time that we speak in our language as a victory ... If there is anyone who tries to deprive us of our language and our old culture, we will stand against him, even if it means that we will have to shed our blood.*[25]

In the quotation the speaker notified the Oromo to guard their language, *Afaan* Oromo, from any mistreatment. Indeed, the message of the speech coincided with what Davies cited in Joshua Fishman which states "A nation should guard its language more than its territories."[26] From this we can understand that in the Oromo struggle *Afaan* Oromo was clearly pictured as more crucial than the other symbols and expressions of nationality. Therefore, the Oromo activists assigned to *Afaan* Oromo a central area of concern and the first place as a factor constituting Oromo nationalism.

The Oromo activists who infiltrated the *Darg* politics made efforts to promote consciousness of Oromo identity were not only limited to the use of government organized meetings. *Darg* planned basic literacy expansion in the different Ethiopian languages was another area of strategy well used by the Oromo activists. The condition helped the Oromo activists to create links with students who were recruited as teachers and those who came to learn basic literacy. It is said that it was in this scenario that the Oromo activists best informed the Oromo about

[24] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009.

[25] Hultin, "Rebounding Nationalism…", p.419.

[26] Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity…*, p. 280.

the right to use and protect their language, the right to exercise their culture, the right to administer their natural resources and their right to be administered by their own appointees. Specially, the persuasive impacts of the university Oromo students on the rest of the campaigners are said to have been significant.[27]

This literacy programme of the *Darg* also gave the Oromo activists ample opportunity to support the Oromo struggle with literacy in *Afaan* Oromo. In addition to the literacy materials prepared by the government in *Afaan* Oromo using Ethiopic script,[28] radicalized Oromo students are said to have gone to the *Zemecha* (literacy campaign) with *Afaan* Oromo books written in Latin script like *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan* Oromo, *Bara Birraan Barhe* and *Furaa Afaan Oromo.*[29] The aim was to teach the Oromo how to read and write *Afaan* Oromo in Latin script besides the regular teaching in Geez script. These books were deemed important not only for the alphabet in which they were written in but also for their contents. The contents were very important in reminding the Oromo about their past and in what situation they were living. Unlike the materials written in Geez script, the teaching conducted with these books was made clandestinely at night specially at campfire organized for this purpose.[30]

The movements were able to win many more Oromo to an intensified Oromo nationalism. Clapham writes that because of the movement some Oromo who were Amharic speakers with

[27]*Ibid*.; *Qes* Fikadu Wayyessa and *Qes* Tesfa Bula, Biilaa (West Wallagga Zone), May 25, 2017; Rene Lefort, *Ethiopia: An Heretic Revolution*? Trans by A. M Berrett (London: Zed Press, 1983), p.111.

[28]በርሲሳ ከተቢ (A Teaching to Write) (Addis Ababa: Berihanina Salam Printing Press, 1967 E.C.); *ባረና ፊደለፍ ዱብሳ (A Learning of Letter and Readings)* (Addis Ababa, Development Through Enlighten and Work Campaign, 1967 E.C). are some of them.

[29] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017 and October 26, 2016; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27,2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015. For the books see *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromo, Furaa Afaan Oromo* and *Bara Birraan Barhee*.

[30] Randi Balsvik, *The Quest for Expression: State and the University in Ethiopia Under Three Regimes, 1952-2005 (*Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2007), pp. 52-73; Paulos, "Zemecha:", p. 23.

Amhara names dropped their Amhara names and took Oromo names. Some started to translate books into *Afaan* Oromo from other languages. Some organized to launch *Bariisaa (*Dawn*)* newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo. Radio broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo started from the main radio station of Addis Ababa. Books, pamphlets, leaflets and newspapers written in *Afaan* Oromo were published and dispatched.[31]

Therefore, the early days of the revolution marked linguistic renaissance of *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo cultural practices. It was also what laid a solid ground for present day written Oromo literature and Oromo nationalism.[32] However, this early positive attitude of the *Darg* towards the Oromo linguistic and cultural renaissance as well as the Muslims were not welcomed by Ethiopian Orthodox clergy who interpreted it as the *Darg'*s intentional act to weaken the influential role of Orthodox Christianity among the societies. Therefore, the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians disliked the *Darg* perceiving it as strongly anti-Christian.[33]

Nevertheless, these systematic methods of exploiting the *Darg*'s political agenda to advance the Oromo national question did not last long. The *Darg* was not tolerant enough to accommodate the continuation of the language and cultural freedom which began to make much rapid progress. As soon as the *Darg* became sure that it had suppressed its opponents, the regime restored the linguistic policy of the past imperial regime and attempted form a single

[31] Donald Donham, *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1999), p. 195

[32]Clapham, *Transformation and…*, pp. 196-200

[33]Donham, *Marxist Modern…*, p. 195. In fact, Protestants also felt this. Nonetheless, in reality the *Darg* favoured the Ethiopian Orthodox Church more than Protestantism who were regarded as "Trojan Horse" of foreign imperialism.

nationality around Amharic language and Amhara way of life. Amharic and Amhara ways of life became the salient features of Ethiopian nationalism.[34]

As a result, the Ethiopian revolution which had started largely peacefully began to turn sour two and half years later against movements that reflected any form of ethnic identity in general and that of the Oromo in particular. In order to deprive issues of ethnic identity of a legal ground, it redefined its policy of the right to self-determination as no more than a principle and asking questions for its implementation was considered bourgeois and reactionary. "በሔረሰቦች ጉዳይ ላይ የራስን ዕድል በራስ መወሰን እስከ መገንጠል ድርስ የተሰኘዉ ማርክስስት ሌኒንስት መርህ ሳይንሳዊ ትክክለኛ መረህ መሆኑን ሰደድ ይቀበላል። በመሰረቱ የብሔሮችና የብሔረሰቦች የመገንጠል ጥያቄ ከመደብ ትግል ተገንጥሎ የማይታይ ቢሆንም ጥያቄዉ የሚመጣዉ ከወዛደሩ ሣይሆን ከቡርጂዉ መደብ ነዉ።"[35] (Translated as: The revolutionary flame recognizes the rights of nationalities to self-determination including secession as it is the Marxist-Leninist correct scientific approach. But basically the secession question of nationalities cannot be seen separately from class struggle; the question comes not from workers but from the bourgeois class). In this context, ethnic and regional movements began to be castigated as narrow nationalist, reactionary and counter-revolutionary forces. Ethnic nationalism began to be depicted as the most serious threat to the revolution and anyone who attempted to manifest ethnic demands was denounced as 'አደገኛ ጠባብ ብሔርተኛ' (a dangerous narrow nationalist) and counter-revolutionary.[36]

[34] Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent…,* p. 495; John Markakis, "Ethnic Conflict and the State in the Horn of Africa" Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis Eds. *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (London: James Currey, 1994), p. 225.

[35] *Abiyotawi Sededi (Revolutionary Flame),* 1968, IES MS 2393/01/ 35.

[36]Merera Gudina, *Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalisms and the Quest for Democracy, 1960-2000* (Addis Ababa: Chamber Printing House, 2003), p.83. Mekuria Bulcha, *Contour of the Emergent…,* p.494.

The government propaganda machine moved against them to complement the war of annihilation unleashed by the regime to destroy them.[37] For example, Mengistu officially accused *Echaat* over the media stating that "… instead of struggling for the unity and the common freedom of the mass, the so-called *Echaat* group embarked upon dividing the working people along ethnic lines …"[38] The Oromo dominated *Meison*[39] and *Echaat* were eliminated in August 1977 and in the summer of 1978 respectively. Many of their members were arrested and were either killed or imprisoned. Yet some of the members joined the *Darg.* By July 1979, all political parties except *Seded* were portrayed as anti-revolutionary and the *Darg* proclaimed death for them. [40]

The *Darg* era of the 1980s was a period of severe cultural repression. Any potential elements suspected of the upsurge of ethnic based nationalism were carefully identified and suppressed. Besides the serious punishment of the detected nationalists, focus was also given to the systematic dilution of their ethnic solidarity. Above all, what the language policy had become in practice was not accepted by representatives of the *Darg*. The literacy Programme, the state owned mass media, the settlement programmes, peasant associations and other forms of social organizations were used as sophisticated means for the implementation of an Amharization policy and dilution of strong ethnic based solidarity.[41]

The local elementary schools were made to use Amharic and English as the medium of instruction. Some fifteen major Ethiopian languages which had been selected as the media of

[37] *Ibid*., p.83.
[38] *Seded (Flame),* IES MS 2393/01/17.
[39] F. Halliday and M Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 127& 132-133.
[40]Halliday and Molyneux, pp. 196-197; Clapham, *Transformation and*…, p.57; Bereket, p. 56; Bahru Zewde, *Modern Ethiopia*…, p. 248.
[41] Lefort, p. 107.

instruction for basic literacy in the early period of the revolution were dropped and replaced by Amharic. Subsequently, the *Darg* intensified the campaign against the use of *Afaan* Oromo. Instruction in *Afaan* Oromo in schools was officially withdrawn. Teachers were subjected to dismissal if detected using *Afaan* Oromo in the classroom. Instead Amharic became the primary medium of instruction and students were encouraged to speak in Amharic and those who became fluent speakers were appreciated for their contribution to the glory of the Ethiopian nation state. On the contrary those who spoke up for the interest of non-Amhara ethnicity were accused of practicing "tribalism" and of being divisive.[42]

Similarly, much space and air time was given to Amharic mass media and important information was disseminated through Amharic in the media. In addition to the broadcasts that transmitted decrees, news, dramas, music and other entertainment programmes in Amharic with relatively ample time, newspapers like *Addis Zaman* (New Year), *Serto Ader* (The Workers), *Negarit* (The Informer) were also published in Amharic. These newspapers were important because they carried government directives for the people. Specially *Serto Ader* was used as a reference material for the Marxist-Leninist study circles at the local levels. While teaching socialist concepts, the purpose was to attract the interest of the different Ethiopian societies to learn Amharic while attempting to access the information.[43]

The Resettlement Programme which was conducted from 1978-1981 was one of the main strategies implemented by the *Darg* to facilitate the expansion of Amharic and the Oromo

[42]Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4 2009; Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April 10, 2017; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015; Siraji Daadhii, March 20, 2018.

[43] *Ibid.*

integration into Amhara ways of life.[44] Although the *Darg* stated that the purpose of the resettlement programme was to cope with the climatic and economic problem, it also used for the intermixing of different ethnic groups. By the so called ስግሰጋ (Shuffling among the indigenous population) the *Darg* resettled 1.5 million people who were Amharic and Tigrigna speakers among the south and south-western nations particularly among the Oromo.[45] Bereket writes that the covert purposes were two: for one thing it is said that the *Darg* aimed to weaken the home base of the Tigrean Liberation Front; for the other thing it was to weaken strong Oromo identity and enhance assimilation as Amharic speakers. Emphasis on speaking Amharic and the integration into Amhara culture was backed by the government administrators and cadres.[46]

Not less than the others mentioned above, peasant associations served the *Darg*'s policy of integration as focal points where peasants were urged to orient themselves politically to the central government as the primary peasant interest, disregarding ethnic identity.[47] In this context, as with the other Ethiopian ethnicities, the Oromo were one of the group affected by the policy. Informants remember that at the gathering of the associations, they were frequently told to ignore the activities that reflected their specific ethnic identities and languages. Instead, they were advised to speak in Amharic and join cultural practices that reflect Ethiopian national culture which was, in fact, Amhara culture by origin.[48] In this way, the *Darg* was relatively

[44] Dawit Wolde Giorgis, *Red Terror: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 1989), p. 289.

[45]*Ibid*.; Lulseged Erkihun, "The Language Use in Resettlement Sites: The Case of Anger-Guttin, Dimtu, Iluu Abbaa Boor and Gambela" Bahru Zewde, et al. Eds. *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol.1(1994), 527-531. The findings of Lulseged show that Amharic achieved a position to dominate the local languages.

[46] Bereket, pp. 55-57.

[47]*Addis Zaman*, Year. 34, *Megabit* 23,1967; Clapham, *Transformation and…*, pp.157-161.

[48]Interview with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa) October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas

more successful in expanding the reach of Amharic than its predecessors. Between the 1970s and 1991, the number of Oromo who were learning to speak Amharic increased at an enormous rate.[49] Informants recall their observation that it was common to see educated youth reading materials written in Amharic, listening to broadcasts in Amharic and speaking to each other in Amharic.[50]

Nonetheless, the *Darg* was not able to remove the impact of the early period of the revolution on ethnic and regional identities. As mainly the students were instrumental in the formation of thousands of the associations,[51] the *Darg* was not able to escape the questions of nationalities. The educated élites from different nationalities including the Oromo infiltrated the *Darg* itself and continued to bring out issues of national questions to the surface. They compared what had been improved and what had become worse in comparison with the imperial regime.[52]

Moreover, the national liberation fronts which had been more or less active since the 1960s and 1970s made issues of the national question the cardinal elements of their political ideologies and posed serious challenges to the *Darg* policy of centralized administration.[53] In the struggle, they used not only the gun but also literacy in ethnic languages. Although the *Darg* tried to re-approach issues of the national question by the Institute of Nationalities it established in 1983 and the administrative divisions it restructured with an appearance of

Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Wolde Yohannis Workeneh, Addis Ababa, May 20, 2015.

[49] Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent…,* p.495: Lefort, p. 203.

[50]Interview with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohammed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, June 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, 28/08/ 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009.

[51] Balsvik, *The Quest for Expression…*, p. 74.

[52]Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*…, pp. 194-195.

[53] Bahru Zewde, *The Quest…*, p. 258.

autonomy in 1987,[54] the struggle of the national liberation movements continued gaining mass support. Consequently, this and *Darg* maladministration coupled with the military success of the liberation fronts resulted in the overthrow of the *Darg* in 1991. Nevertheless, what was undeniable was that the *Darg*'s language policy was not as suppressive as that of the imperial regime, although strong censorship had continued to suppress any detected move towards ethnic nationalism.

7.2. *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo National Question of the Oromo Armed Struggle and the Oromo Diaspora

The use of *Afaan* Oromo to shape and sustain the collective identity of the Oromo was not only limited to the political struggle within the *Darg*-dominated revolutionary process. It was also taken up by the Oromo liberation fronts and the Oromo diaspora as an instrument to create links across time and space in the growth of Oromo nationalism. In fact, as Erikson, the renowned scholar of ethnic study, notes, the measure is common to nations whose languages have been suppressed by homogenizing states.[55] Thus the OLF and the Oromo diaspora took *Afaan* Oromo as the most defining factor of Oromo national identity. The Oromo Liberation Front defined *Afaan* Oromo as one of the major Oromo cultural traits for which the front had to fight when the Front was established under the deceptive generic name of Ethiopian National Liberation Front (ENLF)in 1971.[56] It is significant to note here that Oromo identity is intimately connected with *Afaan* Oromo.

[54] "የኢትዮጵያ የብሔረሰቦች ችግር የራስ በራስ አስተዳደር (Self-Rule to the Problem of the Ethiopian Nations)" IES MS 2393/01/04; Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution 1974-1987: A Transformation from an Aristocratic to a Totalitarian Autocracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 266-270 &283.

[55]Thomas Hyland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Second, ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 108-109.

[56] ENLF was a deceptive generic name for the Oromo Liberation Front established in Aden in 1971. See Bahru Zewde, *A Modern Ethiopian History…*, p. 262. The objective was to conduct armed struggle for an independent Oromo state. The name and the objective were established after long discussion from 1968. The

When the Front was formally established as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in 1974 and redefined the Oromo national question as a 'colonial question', it also stated in its programme that *Afaan* Oromo was one of the major Oromo cultural traits that needed liberation from the imposition of Ethiopian rulers. Moreover, it was defined as a major weapon in the growth of strong Oromo nationalism. It became instrumental because *Afaan* Oromo was taken as the best Oromo cultural trait that represented traditional bonds of the Oromo, and the strong reality that represented the Oromo national identity.[57]

This was because as Fishman states, language has been more vital to the survival of a people than any other cultural traits and recording a vernacular language is another way documenting and preserving culture, history, arts and ideas that it embodies.[58] Therefore, the use of *Afaan* Oromo was put at the center of OLF struggle around which the Oromo should be organized for the establishment of an independent 'Democratic Republic of Oromia'.[59]

With this objective, the OLF implemented an *Afaan* Oromo literacy programme and Oromo cultural movements alongside armed struggle from the very beginning. Basic literacy in *Afaan* Oromo was endorsed as a compulsory requirement to become a fighter or in getting any form of membership in the OLF. Anyone who was interested to join the Front as a fighter or in any

name Ethiopia was used instead of Oromo to hide the objective the struggle to establish an independent Oromo state. In the foundation of the front, *Sheik* Hussein Suraa, who had been member of Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self-help Association and Hassan Ibrahim, who took the *nom de guerre* Elemoo Qilxuu, played a leading role. The front organized a secret conference that discussed the name and future of the front in Addis Ababa in December 1973 and launched armed struggle in the Harar-Baalee mountain chains. This group and other revolutionary elements joined together and formed the Oromo Liberation Front in 1974. ENLF dropped the name Ethiopia and instead renamed the front the Oromo Liberation Front. In the programme they defined the Oromo question as a colonial question and the objective of the Front was to establish a liberated Democratic Republic of Oromia. Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; See also Markakis, The Two Frontiers…, pp. 194-195; Mekuria Bulcha, *Contours of the Emergent*…, p. 621.

[57] See *OLF Programme*, IES MS 2393/10/1.10.

[58] Joshua Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity…,* p. 278.

[59] *OLF Programme*, IES MS 2393/10/1.10.

form wanted to become a member must pass through the *Afaan* Oromo literacy programme organized by the Front.[60] They also established cultural troupes in the areas they operated and used them for the encouragement of the fighters. In this regard, *Hawwisoo Guma Kafal* (A Troupe for Vengeance) was the example.[61]

This was elaborated in a confidential report of governor of Hararge province to the Eastern division of Ethiopian National Defence as an apprehension that needed immediate attention. The report claimed that large numbers of armed Oromo liberation front were dispatched in different districts of the province and found inciting the residents to struggle for the independent Republic of Oromia. The report also indicated that the liberation front indoctrinated the local people to start the struggle simply by refusing to use Amharic but only *Afaan* Oromo.[62]

The purpose was to make education in *Afaan* Oromo uniform. As Erikson affirms, "uniform educational systems covering large areas greatly facilitate the development of abstract identification with a category of a people whom one will never meet… Mass education, which entails the spreading of books and other texts which describe and reify history and culture, plays an important part in this respect."[63] Literacy in *Afaan* Oromo was given due consideration by the Front and the Oromo diaspora, because as Anderson argues, "everywhere [that] literacy increased, it became easier to arouse popular support."[64]

[60] Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Mekuria, "The Politics of Linguistic Homogenization …", p. 348.

[61]Oromo TV Interview with Artist Adam Harun, Accessed on 08 June 2017.

[62] A Confidential Report from Governor of Hararge Province to the Eastern Division of the Ethiopian National Defence, Folder No. ኦሞ4/ሀ1, Hararge Province Security Issue.

[63]Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism…*, p.90.

[64]Anderson, *Imagined Communities…*, p. 80.

This OLF and Oromo diaspora project for *Afaan* Oromo literacy was stepped up by the joining of a number of Oromo activists. These large numbers of Oromo activists joined both the OLF and life in exile because of the disastrous *Darg* measure called the Red Terror. These Oromo refugees in Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Middle East countries, Europe and the USA in the 1970s and 1980s[65] supported the basis of *Afaan* Oromo literacy both in contributing money for its development and conducting the literacy programme in *Afaan* Oromo.

As much as the OLF, issues of the struggle for *Afaan* Oromo and the survival of Oromo culture and identity became the main agenda of the Oromo in the diaspora. The concern was in fact not only for the development of their vernacular language, revival of their cultural identity and asserting a history that reflected their identity. As Zitelman cited in Baxter states, it also was for their constant fear that their children could lose the culture of their families and thus suffer identity crisis.[66]

Informants state that this fear emanated from three serious threats. One, and the most serious, was that at the time there was no written literature in *Afaan* Oromo on Oromo culture and history to teach themselves and their children about their people and home country. The second was the *Darg* silencing of the work done on the development of *Afaan* Oromo, Oromo culture and history. The third was the absence of opportunity to return home to integrate their children

[65]In this period the number of Oromo diaspora in neighboring and far away countries were astonishing. P. Baxter stated citing NHCR reports that by the middle of the1980s, there were about 500,000 Oromo refugees mainly in the Horn of Africa. This mass exodus of the Oromo was because of the brutality that the *Darg* inflicted on them or members of their families due to their political activism. Moreover, the *Darg*'s ነጻ እርምጃ (instantaneous execution) and the consequence of the war that the OLF had launched from Charchar in Hararge since 1976 and in Wallaggaa from the Sudan border in since 1978 were the serious causes. Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; See Baxter, "The Creation and Constitution of Oromo Nationality" …, pp.170-171; also Mekuria Bulcha, *The Making of the Oromo Diaspora: Historical Sociology of Forced Migration* (Minnesota: Kirk Publishers, 2002). 170.

[66] Baxter, "The Creation and Constitution…", p. 171.

with their people's ethnic identity as well as to work for the promotion of the Oromo cultural identity.[67]

Baxter writes that the good thing was that their fear did not just immobilize threaten demoralize them. Rather it forced them to search for the way out. It made them take literacy in *Afaan* Oromo as one major part of the struggle. The diaspora joined the Oromo armed struggle by contributing to *Afaan* Oromo publications and by establishing study circles that worked for the standardization of the alphabet for *Afaan* Oromo and to write correctly about Oromo history and culture.[68]

Informants remember that both the OLF and the Oromo diaspora took the development of *Afaan* Oromo to a well-articulated written status as an essential. They worked hard to prove and show the possibility to record and preserve the very essence of Oromo cultural identity in articulated written *Afaan* Oromo without any loss of its cultural values.[69] Mekuria also reminds us that it was also to disprove the widespread fabricated myth that *Afaan* Oromo was incapable of writing articulated prose. In doing so they challenged the state that had made them exiles.[70]

Indeed, the focus given to the study of the nature of *Afaan* Oromo and the development of a suitable script for *Afaan* Oromo was remarkable. It was this aspect of Oromo literacy that the

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[67] Interviews with Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Hamid Muudee; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October, 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April, 26, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018.

[68] Baxter, "The Creation and Constitution…", pp.170-5.

[69]Interviews with Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2009; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4,2009; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018; Colonel Siraji Daadhii, Addis Ababa, March 20, 2018.

[70]Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Mekuria, *Contours of the Emergent…,* p.56.

Oromo in the diaspora and proponents of the OLF took as the first problem to be solved. Using the opportunity, from living abroad that they were denied at home, this Oromo group carried out extensive research to establish scripts which would fit the transcription of *Afaan* Oromo linguistically and technologically.[71] As witnessed by U. Braukamper, the work of these Oromo groups in the diaspora had great significance for the important role it played in the development of written Oromo literature and for the rise of Oromo nationalism.[72]

In fact, the search for a suitable script for *Afaan* Oromo was not a fact started by the OLF and the modern Oromo diaspora. This had been a long time concern among those who had attempted to write in *Afaan* Oromo since 1840 although no conclusive findings appropriate to the transcription of Oromo sounds were reached.[73] Therefore, solving this persistent problem was taken as a major aspect of struggle by both the Oromo in exile and the OLF.

In the development of this script, an influential role was played by the Oromo intellectuals who had knowledge of linguistics and devoted themselves to Oromo causes. Among the studies that were conducted to develop a script for *Afaan* Oromo, the studies conducted by Oromo student study groups in Europe, and the Oromo refugees in Somalia made a considerable contribution. As discussed in chapter five of this dissertation, Haile Fidaa, who was a member of the Oromo study group in Europe had advanced the identification of short vs long and soft vs hard Oromo sounds and adopted scripts that at least approximately fit the identified sounds. [74]

He had also identified the Oromo sounds that do not have corresponding similarities in the Latin script and tried to adapt the existing Latin letters by using diacritics to avoid double

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[71] *Ibid*.

[72] *Ibid*., p. 169; U, Braukamper, "Ethnic Identity and Social Change Among Oromo Refugees in the Horn of Africa," *North East African Studies*, V.4, no.3 (1982), p.4.

[73] See chapter three of this dissertation.

[74] See *Tatek*: *A Theoretical Journal of the Ethiopian Students Union of Europe*, 1972, IES MS. 2395/02/3/7.

representations. Haile and his Oromo study group in Europe had also established grammatical rules on how to write and read the long, short, soft and geminated *Afaan* Oromo sounds. This was clearly elaborated in the journal that the study group published in 1972[75] and later in *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromo* in 1973.[76] Indeed, the attempt to develop a suitable script to *Afaan* Oromo was not a new beginning by this group. In fact this aspect had begun to appear in the publications of Martino Moreno in 1935 and 1939.[77]

The other pioneering and influential contribution in the development of a script for *Afaan* Oromo was the study conducted by Abuubakar Ahimad Mahamed and Doctor *Sheik* Mahamed Rashad Abdallaa who were both exiled Oromo in Somalia. The study was published by the School of Oriental and African Studies in London under the title of *Furaa Afaan Oromo* (Solution to *Afaan* Oromo) in 1976. The study produced a more articulated and almost completed *Afaan* Oromo alphabet which they named *Arfii*. While the others were kept as they had been adopted by Haile and his group, the *Furaa Afaan Oromoo* completely replaced the sounds that Haile and his group represented using diacritics by doubling two Latin letters as Ch for tʃ, Sh for ʃ, Ny for ɲ, C for tʃ’, Th for t’ etc. The only sound that used a diacritic to represent the Oromo sound was P’ for Ph.[78]

Informants unanimously agree that until the present day *Qubee* was adopted, both forms of the scripts developed by Haile Fidaa’s and Doctor *Sheik* Mahamed Rashad Abdallaa’s groups were used to write *Afaan* Oromo based on their accessibilities. Their writing systems were taught in

[75]*Ibid.*

[76]See Haylee Fidaa, *Hirmaata Dubbii Afaan Oromo…*

[77] M.M Moreno, *Grammatica Teorico-Pratica Della Lingua [Oromo] con Esercizi* (Milano: NP, 1935, 1939).

[78]See Abuubakar Ahimad Mahamed and Sheik Mahamed Rashad Abdallaa, *Furaa Afaan Oromoo*, Kutaa Tokkoffaa (London: University of London Press, 1976).

literacy programmes of *Afaan* Oromo in the diaspora, the armed struggle and clandestinely in the home country. They were also used in OLF official writing and organs in *Afaan* Oromo.[79] The present day *Qubee* (standardized Oromo *Afaan* Oromo script) in use was an extension of this development.

Qubee began to appear in all its forms and linguistic rules in the second half of the 1970s. Until this period, the script was named alternatively *Fidal* (in the case of Haile Fidaa's and his study group) and *Arfii* (in the case of Doctor *Sheik* Mahamed Rashad Abdallaa's script). The name *Qubee* representing both *Fidal* and *Arfii* appeared in the *Bariisaa* newspaper on 3 August 1977.[80] This newly adopted *Qubee Afaan* Oromo was almost similar to those of the Abuubakar Ahimad Mahamed and Doctor *Sheik* Mahamed Rashad except the improvements on Ty to X for | t'|, P' to Ph for | p'|. Improvement was also made in the order of the letters.[81]

The adoption of the *Qubee* alphabet was the beginning of a new chapter in Oromo history. When the success in armed struggle was limited because of different factors, the success in this area was more impressive. It was taken by many Oromo nationalists as a victory over the suppression of written *Afaan* Oromo. Attempts were also made to introduce this adopted *Qubee Afaan* Oromo to the Oromo at large. The material produced by the underground organs of both

[79] Interviews with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April 10, 2017.

[80] *Bariisaa*, Vol.2, No.15, *Adoolessa* 27, *bara* 1969/ 3 August 1977; "Oromo Support Committee, 1986", IES MS 2393/10/1.5.

[81] "Qubee Afaan Oromo (*Afaan* Oromo Script)" IES MS 2393/10/1.14: "Dura Dubbii: Afaan Oromo Akkamitti Akka Katabamu Introduction: How to Write *Afaan* Oromo)" IES MS 2393/10/1.18.

the diaspora and the OLF were written in this adopted script and smuggled into the Oromo country. [82]

In fact, the purpose of the underground papers was not only to introduce the adopted *Qubee Afaan* Oromo, but mainly to expose the suppression the Oromo were suffering and to mobilize the Oromo mass for the struggle. In order to reach those who had not learnt to read the newly adopted *Qubee Afaan* Oromo the underground organs were written in both Amharic and English. Nonetheless, the Oromo names of these underground organs were written in *Qubee Afaan* Oromo. Even the organs written in Amharic and English were named in Oromo words or phrases which had the conceptual meaning of freedom or bright future like *Bilisummaa* (freedom),[83] *Warraqsa* (Revolution),[84] *Waldhaansoo* (Struggle),[85] *Mukukkula* (Beam of Fire),[86] etc.

Although such publication had begun with the bulletin entitled the *Voice Against Tyranny* in English in 1971,[87] a good number of written materials in *Afaan* Oromo came out after the creation of strong links between the Oromo armed struggle, the Oromo diaspora and their underground cells within the country. The OLF used to publish about six main clandestine bulletins for different purposes in *Afaan* Oromo: *Sagalee Bosonaa* (Voice from the bush),

[82] Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April 10, 2017.

[83] "*Bilisummaa* (Liberation)", IES MS 2393/10/1.12.

[84] "*Warraqsa* (Revolution)", IES MS 2393/10/1.2.

[85] "*Waldhaansoo* (struggle)", IES MS 2395/03/3/13.

[86] "*Mukukkula* (Fire Beam)", IES MS 2393/10/6.

[87] The Oromo Voice against Tyranny, Document,1971. Repeatedly Quoted in Mekuria, *Contours of the Emergent*…

Karaa Bilisummaa (Path of Liberation), *Dammaqasaa* (Awakener), *Qabsoofi Dinagadee* (Struggle and Economy), *Karoorsaa* (Guide) and *Fayyaafi Qabsoo* (Health and Struggle).[88]

Oromo activists organized study circles and Oromo studies ranged from collection and recording of Oromo folklore to scientific studies of *Afaan* Oromo, Oromo culture and Oromo history. The findings were written in *Afaan* Oromo as a means to develop written *Afaan* Oromo although there were times when the findings were written in English and Amharic. The use of English and Amharic was to reach non-Oromo with the findings.[89]

In the same way the Oromo in exile specially in Europe and North America also published bulletins on Oromo issues. These bulletins were published by Oromo organizations established under the deceptive names of Oromo students both in Europe and the USA.[90] These organizations were *Ijaarsa Bilisummaa Saba Oromo*(Builder of Oromo Nation's Freedom),[91] *Tokkummaa Ijaarsa Bartoota Oromoo Awuroophaa* (Union of European Oromo Students),[92] *Tokkummaa Barattoota Oromoo Ameriikaa Kaabaa* (Union of North America Oromo Students),[93] and others.

All had their own organs which they published in *Afaan* Oromo, Amharic and English. These bulletins were *Bilisummaa* (Freedom),[94] *Mukukkula* (Beam),[95] *Karaa Walabumma* (Road to

[88]As still today, possession of such bulletins is associated with terrorism and access to them was difficult for me. For their publication see Gadaa, *Oromia: An Introduction*…, p. 125.

[89]Mekuria Bulcha, *The Making of…,* pp.190 191.

[90] It was because the members of the organizations were not only students but also non-student Oromo. See Mekuria Bulcha, "*The Making…",* p. 184 185.

[91] "Ijaarsa Bilisummaa Saba Oromoo(IBSO) (Organization for National Freedom)", IES MS 2393/10/1.3,

[92] "Tokkummaa Bartoota Oromo Biyyaa Awuroophaa (The Union of European Oromo Students)" IES MS 2393/ 10/1.9; 2393/10/1.11, 27/4/82.

[93] "Tokkummaa Bartoota Oromoo Ameriikaa Kaabaa (The Union of North America Oromo students)" IES MS 2393/10/2.1; 2393/10/2.2.

[94] "Bilisummaa (Liberation)", IES MS 2393/10/1.12.

[95] "Mukukkula (Fire Beam)", IES MS 2393/10/6,

Sovereignty),[96] *Bakkalcha* Oromo (The Oromo of Big Star) etc. The main purpose was to make *Afaan* Oromo the language of written literature and to promote vernacular nationalism among the Oromo. The importance of the publications in Amharic and English were to reach those Oromo who could not read materials written in *Afaan* Oromo.[97]

There was also a bulletin entitled *Hurgie Dima* (Red Star),[98] by TOONA in opposition to views of other bulletins written for the Oromo in *Afaan* Oromo. Unlike the others, this bulletin used Geez letters in its writing and the title it used for this column is ድጵና ጐሣን ዋራ አፉፋመ አርና (Ousting the Narrow Nationalists). For example, issues of Vol.1, No.1, accused Haile Fidaa and Sennay Likke[99] for 'big narrow nationalism'.

It also argued whether membership in Oromo organizations should be restricted only to full blood Oromo or not.[100] Although it is difficult to determine whose position this bulletin reflects, perhaps it might have been a reflection of some *Afaan* Oromo speakers organized by EPRP. Nonetheless, the main objective of the bulletin was not to advance the concept of Oromo nationalism by using *Afaan* Oromo as others did, but to win over the Oromo by addressing them in their language.

More significantly, the continuous exercise to write and produce written literature in *Afaan* Oromo transformed itself to the establishment of regular classes taught in *Afaan* Oromo. From the early 1980s, a large number of Oromo children in refugee camps are said to have attended

[96] "Karaa Walabummaa (The Road to Liberation)", vol. 4, no.1 (February, 1980), IES MS 2393/10/1 .3.

[97]Interview Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Fufaa Ambachaa, Addis Ababa, April 10, 2017.

[98]"Hurgie Dima, The struggle in TOONA", Vol.1, No.1, IES MS 2395/10/2.

[99] Dr. Sinaye Likke was a President of the Ethiopian Students' Union in North America in 1971. Later he created and led the Workers' League which he announced to the public in 1976. Like his compatriots, he was shot and killed in February 1977. See Clapham, *Transformation and*…, p. 54.

[100]"Hurgie Dima, The struggle in TOONA", Vol.1, No.1, IES MS 2395/10/2.

literacy programmes in *Afaan* Oromo and *Afaan* Oromo was made the language of their education. Particularly this was evident in Yabus and Demazin in Sudan, and from the beginning of the 1980s in the OLF liberated area of Oromia.[101]

The literacy programme was mainly supported by the Oromo Relief Association. The Association produced the first primary literacy books in *Afaan* Oromo and developed a body of literature through which learning about Oromo issues would take place.[102] Mohammed Hassen, who visited the OLF liberated area of Wallaggaa in 1982, witnessed the existence of ranges of primary school text books in various disciplines and other supplementary materials in *Afaan* Oromo. He also marked his observation on how Oromo men and women, young and old worked hard to learn in their own language.[103] It was this area of language and literacy that became the foundation for the quick implementation of a primary education programme in *Afaan* Oromo in just one year throughout Oromia Region following the overthrow of Mengistu's regime in 1991.[104] It was also this development that brought the Oromo People's Democratic Organization to adopt *Qubee Afaan* Oromo in 1991 instead of the Geez script it had used to write *Afaan* Oromo since its foundation in 1990.

7.3. *Afaan* Oromo Broadcasts under the *Darg*: Their Role in Integration and Aspiration for Emancipation

It was no sooner than it came to power that the *Darg* understood the role of vernacular radio broadcasting in reaching society at large, specially the illiterate with the same information at

[101] Mekuria, *The Making of the Oromo Diaspora…*, pp.200-204.

[102] "Oromo Support Committee", 1968, IES MS 2393/10/1.5.

[103] Mohammed Hassen, "The Growth of Written Oromo Literature" in *Proceedings of International Conference on Resource Mobilization for the Liberation of Oromia* (Held at Ontarion, Canada from 31 July to 1 August 1993), p. 85.

[104] Interview with Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019.

[104] *Ibid.*; Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisa, Addis Ababa, 07/09.2009; See also Mekuria Bulcha, "The Making…", pp. 199-204.

different places including the remotest areas. The *Darg* needed vernacular radio because of two reasons. One was to present itself as a government that respected the linguistic rights of the nationalities.[105] This was within the context of the political programme of the *Darg* which defined the national question as "no nationality would dominate other nationalities, culturally, linguistically and politically."[106]

The second was to support the projects of mass organization, implementation of land reform and the development through literacy campaign activities among the Oromo and other ethnicities. It was within this context that the national service of Radio Ethiopia started daily *Afaan* Oromo broadcast on 30 December 1974.[107] In addition to the national radio, from 1979 the *Darg* also allowed radio broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo for basic literacy education from Laga Daadhii (near Addis Ababa), from Gimbii in West Wallagga, from Goree in Iluu Abbaa Boor and from Roobee in Baalee.[108] These were in addition to the *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts from Harar branch from 1972. In this regard the contribution of Colonel Takka Tullu, who was one of important figures among the *Darg*'s top officials and continuously acknowledged by Oromo élites for his invisible but remarkable contribution, should not be overlooked. It is said that he strongly urged the *Darg* to have national radio broadcasting in *Afaan* Oromo.[109]

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[105] Interview with Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019.

[105] Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisa, Addis Ababa, 07/09.2009; Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019.

[106] *Seded (Flame)*, IES MS 2393/01/2; 2393/01/4; *Bariisaa* Year 1, no. 3 *Bitootessa* 25, 1968(3 April 1976).

[107] *Addis Zaman*, Year, 34, *Tahisas* 19, 1967. The newspaper informs that it would start on the next 30 December 1974.

[108] *ዕድገት በህብረት የዕዉቀትና የሥራ ዘመቻ (Development Through Enlightenment and Campaign)* Addis Ababa: *Berihanina Salam* Printing Press, 1968 E.C), p.173; Asteraye Haddis, "The National Literacy Campaign in the Course of the Ethiopian Revolution (BA Thesis: Department of Political Science and International Relations, Addis Ababa University,1984), p.33.

[109] Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, august 27, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008.

The beginnings of these broadcasts were also seen by the Oromo activists as a golden opportunity. On the one hand, they saw them as a victory over the domination of Amharic. On the other hand, they envisaged to inject the concept of Oromo nationalism into the poems, songs, dramas and theatre of *Afaan* Oromo the *Darg* had planned to use for its propaganda purpose. As a means to attain the objectives, well alerted Oromo were clandestinely organized and asked to compete for the *Afaan* Oromo broadcasting vacancy positions. This was considered significant because as Joshua Fishman states it is difficult to filter out the world view of the ethnic group from its vernacular language.[110] For this, the Oromo activists seemed to have been well aware of the fact that words have sensitive roles to play in the politics of cultural entities.

As envisaged, by design, the ideas of Oromo nationalism were injected into Oromo poems, proverbs, folklore, songs, culture, drama, theatre and history and transmitted equally with the *Darg* propaganda. This was not unique to the Oromo case however. Some literature produced on the impact of radio broadcasts has addressed such paradoxical outcomes. For example, Eleanor Shember-Critchley argues that in a country where ethnic heterogeneity is prevalent, the role of radio broadcasting in integrating ethnic groups into the paradigm needed by the government or promoting consciousness of ethnic identity is the usual outcome.[111]

According to these sources, the outcome is integrating when the broadcasting focuses on common advantages and common problems of the ethnic groups if the language of the

[110] Fishman, *Language and Ethnicity*…, p.67-68.

[111] Eleanor Shember-Critchley, "Ethnic Minority Radio: Interactions and Identity" (Manchester Metropolitan University: Ph. D. Dissertation, Department of Information and Communication,2012), pp. 48-54; Edwin Okoth, "The Emergence and Growth of Vernacular Radio in Kenya: A Case Study of Radio Having a Positive Economic Impact" in *Reuters Institute Fellowship Pape*r, (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2015), pp. 11-15.

broadcast is understandable to all. It widens the gulf of differences when the broadcasts favor the advantages of one ethnic group over the others. In the latter case, as Joseph Tubiana argues "…a citizen who is constantly addressed in the language which he does not understand would feel attacked, or at least excluded and rejected by the official national community"[112] At the same time, journalists in the broadcasts who believed that their ethnic groups were disadvantaged are said to have used different mechanisms to call their ethnic groups into awareness.[113] The broadcasts of Radio *Afaan* Oromo during the *Darg* regime operated almost in the same fashion as described above. Nonetheless, the high rate of illiteracy among the Oromo, the large Oromo population and the inaccessibility and remoteness of some parts of Oromo-inhabited rural areas made the radio broadcasts the first preference of the *Darg* and the Oromo activists to reach out with this intended propaganda.

This political orientation of Oromo nationalism was interpreted within the context of condemning the suppressive and exploitative policies of the past regimes. This was done while citing the historical injustice, like the continuous aggression, suppression, corruption, exploitation, etc. which the past regimes had inflicted on the Oromo nation during the imperial regime. While doing these, they also informed the Oromo that the Oromo did have natural and democratic rights to nurture their culture, to use their language and develop it into a written language, to exercise their culture without limitation, to retain all their production for themselves, etc. These views were transmitted within the context of promoting the socialist view of the *Darg*. Recorded and orally existing songs, proverbs, aphorisms, satirical

[112]Joseph Tubiana, "The Linguistic Approach to Self-Determination" in M. Lewis ed. *Nationalism and Self Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 25.

[113]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

expressions, etc. which had been produced in opposition to the past regimes were collected and used over the broadcasts.[114]

The *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts are also said to have taught the sense of the glories of *Afaan* Oromo, Oromo culture, and the history of the Oromo under the guise of attracting the Oromo to the support of the revolution. In this regard, the state nationalized Radio Voice of the Gospel of the World Lutheran Federation played a substantial role. In its programme of *Qorxii Dubbi* (Hard Talk), it used to teach how to identify the outer and inner meaning of Oromo songs, proverbs, riddles, aphorisms, satirical expressions, etc.[115] In addition to that, it is also said to have taught the role of *Afaan* Oromo in uniting the Oromo and keeping their identity intact. All the teaching was done while working hard to make *Afaan* Oromo the language of written literature. The impacts of this programme were seen as important in that they were taken up by the *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts from the National Service of Radio Ethiopia when the *Afaan* Oromo programme was dropped from the Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia on 12 March 1977.[116]

Qorxii Dubbii, the important programme Radio Voice of the Gospel used to teach *Afaan* Oromo and other Oromo issues, was inherited by Radio Ethiopia of the National Service on the dropping of the *Afaan* Oromo programme from the Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia. It was taken up because it was seen as the best and most sophisticated way to articulate Oromo culture, language, history and identity of the Oromo into Oromo nationalism. Radio drama

[114]*Ibid*.

[115] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

[116]*Afaan* Oromo was closed from this radio with the justification that the broadcasting time of the radio was to be used for the international broadcast, in fact, while the Amharic programme was continued with its usual position. See *Bariisaa* Year 2, no.10 (22 *Bitootessa* 1969 or 1 April 1977).

which reflected the past injustice of the imperial regime and metaphorical comments on that of the *Darg* were frequently transmitted. Even cases were reported when the journalists of the programme ironically commented on *Darg*'s disinclination to support the revival of Oromo cultural identity and the endeavors to develop *Afaan* Oromo to a written language.[117]

Above all those who enjoyed these *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts were the youth. They enjoyed it because it taught them something about their language, history and cultural identity. These youths were then said to have organized themselves into cultural groups and began producing the same type of *Afaan* Oromo literature in writing while articulating their Oromo identity. These Oromo youths joined in competition to hear their words being transmitted over the radio. They sent letters written in *Afaan* Oromo to the producers of the broadcasts reminding other listeners to make use of the medium to facilitate the development of Oromo language and culture. [118]

Among other things, such activities brought Oromo oral traditions into writing. Based on examples of broadcasts on radio, many Oromo began composing songs in Oromo language for their *Qabale* musical shows. Through such activities, *Afaan* Oromo was rapidly transformed into a written language. They also commented in their vernacular on the truth of the arguments that were broadcast in *Afaan* Oromo. In fact, these youths were not only inspired by *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts, but also by some Oromo members of *Meison* and *Echaat* administrators at provincial, sub-provincial and district levels.[119]

[117]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

[118] Interviews with Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008.

[119] *Ibid.*

Indeed, what is undeniable was that for the first three years that followed the revolution, broadcasting issues related to *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo cultural identity were not a serious problem. Oromo members of *Meison* and *Echaat* who occupied most administrative posts of Oromo inhabited areas[120] are said to have protected *Afaan* Oromo broadcasting journalists and the listeners from mistreatment by *Darg* officials. Informants claim that there were also times when Oromo members of these organizations took time and debated on the importance of such transmission for the advance of socialist principles.[121] While they were teaching the Oromo masses about revolutionary consciousness, they also advised the Oromo that owning a radio apparatus would help them to learn more about themselves and the *Darg.*

However, this beginning was not continued at least at the original pace. As soon as *ECHAAT* and *MEISON* were expelled from their coalition with the *Darg* in August 1977, both the *Afaan* Oromo broadcast journalists and listeners began to encounter serious mistreatments from *Darg* officials. The *Darg*, which had secured total control of power, turned its face towards the goal of national unity and integration which indeed had been planned from the very beginning. This early plan in fact had been leaking out in *Addis Zaman* Newspaper.[122] Most of the *Darg* members who were not happy with the positions of *MEISON* and *ECHAAT* on the questions of nationalities reorganized themselves and began suppressing the evolving cultural revival of different nations and returning to the policy of Amharization.

The mythical roles of Orthodox Christianity and the Solomonic myth in the consolidation of the imperial system were substituted by the use of Marxist-Leninist philosophy in the extensive

[120] Clapham, *Transformation and* …, pp. 215-216.

[121]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

[122] *Addis Zaman*, Year, 34, *Tahisas* 2, 1967; Year 34, *Tahisas* 5, 1967.

mass media, literacy campaign and resettlement policies. While the literacy and resettlement projects were to be implemented by the *Darg* itself, radio broadcasts had been singled out as the most sensitive of all the media which needed to be watched at close range, because it was the best instrument to facilitate the attempt to unify all Ethiopian nations into one language and polity. This was followed by labeling anyone found speaking in the Oromo interest as ጠባብ ብሔርተኛ (Narrow Nationalist). The demand to the media was always explaining government's actions and policies to the people; but not once in any of their broadcasts was a question of explaining to the government what the peoples really needed and aspired for.

The assumption was that the people were ignorant and needed information, that they needed to be educated on how to transform their 'constricted' mentalities, traditions or ways, and to be mobilized and set firmly behind the government's programme of change to modernization. The people were expected to participate in something decided by the government, but not vice versa. The assumption was that it was sufficient to listen to the media for the government's message, which if followed without questioning, would bring about development and national integration. The situation was such that the government was unlikely to authorize the broadcast or the printing of any stories or ideas that differed fundamentally with its official tenets, policies and doctrines.

It was forbidden by law for any individual or group of persons to report or broadcast anything prior to confirmation from the authorities. Moreover, an informal regulation was passed on non-Amharic Ethiopian languages in the broadcasts including *Afaan* Oromo not to broadcast any news or propaganda unless they were translated from Amharic. Songs, drama and other forms of broadcasts in *Afaan* Oromo should be first translated into Amharic and had to bear

the stamp of the censorship authorities before the broadcast. It was also forbidden to broadcast any original news even if it was in Amharic prior to the Amharic broadcast.[123]

Since broadcasts had always been a state monopoly under the government's direct supervision, the authority had few problems ensuring that their policies were adhered to. Administrators, journalists, producers and other employees of the broadcasting station were carefully recruited so that they should pay total allegiance to the government. Whoever dared to question the state monopoly of the broadcast was silenced by a heavy fine or dismissal from jobs or imprisonment or even execution.[124] The control was secured by placing its own people at the head of the broadcast departments.

Nonetheless, the *Darg* was not able to free the broadcasts from Oromo nationalists. These goals and aspirations of the government were not at all compatible with those of the Radio *Afaan* Oromo journalists. Excessive centralization of the decision-making machinery, as well as too much personal ambition and self-interest on the part of officials made the journalists search for any opportunity to inject their own view of Oromo identity into the broadcasts. [125]

Although controlling mechanisms were very strict, some Oromo who often felt that their language and culture were disregarded, denigrated or even suppressed continued to insert some of the messages related to Oromo issues by using Oromo songs, proverbs, riddles, stories, etc. These journalists are said to have used such opportunities while presenting themselves as the

[123] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

[124] The assassination of Abubakri Musa in 1976, the dismissal of journalist Mohammed Hassen, the imprisonment of Mekonnon Tolaa were the case in point. Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

[125] *Ibid.*

most loyal to the ideology of the *Darg*. The *Darg* also embraced and used them in the *Afaan* Oromo broadcasts which it tolerated for propaganda purposes.[126]

The nature of multilayered meanings of these Oromo folktales and the difficulty of translating the hidden meanings into Amharic helped these Oromo journalists to bypass the imposed censorship. Especially, the revolutionary songs in *Afaan* Oromo that the *Darg* ordered given the broadcasts to mobilize the Oromo youths to national military service were used as the best way to influence the Oromo youth to Oromo nationalism. In connection with this, the Oromo journalists used Oromo folklore as an effective weapon to raise the consciousness of the Oromo people. Nonetheless, those detected of this intention were subjected to heavy fines, dismissal from their jobs, imprisonment or even a death sentence. As a result, there are reports that some of these *Afaan* Oromo broadcast journalists were fined, dismissed from their jobs, exiled, imprisoned or suffered capital punishment. [127]

In the 1980s these efforts of Oromo nationalists were backed by the broadcasts aired in *Afaan* Oromo from neighboring countries into Ethiopia. In the second half of the 1980s, the OLF-operated radio broadcasts from Sudan began directly attacking the *Darg* in particular and the Ethiopian state in general.[128] They narrated the history of the country since the conquest of the Oromo by the expanding Ethiopian Empire. They agitated the Oromo to speak and write in their language rejecting the language imposed on them under the pretext of national unity. This appeal began to be backed by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front in the

[126]*Ibid.*

[127] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018.

[128]Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018. See also Mekuria, *Contours of the Emergent*…, p.497.

1990s.[129] The combination of these struggles with other movements brought *Afaan* Oromo full-fledged radio broadcasts after the overthrow of the *Darg* in 1991.

7.4. *Bariisaa* Newspaper: The Struggle for the Recognition of Written *Afaan* Oromo Under the *Darg*

Bariisaa (Dawn) was an *Afaan* Oromo newspaper written in Ethiopic script. It began circulation on 12 September 1975 just a year after the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974.[130] In fact, the attempt to launch this newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo was not an event which happened following the revolution. The attempt went back to 1972 when Mahdi Hamid who was one of the members of *Dhaabbata Bariisaa* (the *Bariisaa* Organization)[131] and the man at the forefront of struggle for *Afaan* Oromo, presented the request to have an officially recognized *Afaan* Oromo newspaper to the Emperor's Ministry of Information. [132]

However, the request was not successful because Dr. Tesfaye Gebra Egizih, who was the then Minster of Information, responded that Mahdi that having a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo was against the language policy. It is said that the Minister attacked him saying "ምን ያህል ብትደፍረኝ ነዉ በ[አሮምኛ] ጋዜጣ አወጣለሁ ብለህ የመጣሄሁ!"[133] (Translated as: How can you be so insolent to me as to ask to have a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo!). Mahdi had a request which totally was unacceptable to the imperial policy.

[129] Tesfaye Tolessa, "A History of Written *Afaan* Oromo to 1991" (M.A Thesis: Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 2009), p.85.

[130] *Bariisaa Newspaper*, Fulbaana 2, 1968 or September 12, 1975.

[131] *Dhaabbata Bariisaa* was a clandestine organization of Oromo activists which was established to support and facilitate the promotion of *Afaan* Oromo and revival of Oromo culture. It is stated that Oromo who were assigned as functionaries of the mass organization at a different ladder of the *Darg* structure had direct link with the *Dhaabbata Bariisaa* and worked towards Oromo interests. The printing and distribution of *Bariisaa* were made possible by the assistance of *Dhaabbata Bariisaa*.

[132] Interview with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; OMN Interview with Mahdi Muudee, accessed on 20 January 2018.

[133] *Ibid.*

The other time when there was an attempt to have a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo was the one which was presented to the Endalkachew cabinet's Ministry of Information in 1974. The request was resumed on the basis of the hope that the cabinet had been established to react to widespread public grievances. However, the presumption was not realized as the cabinet did not want to make itself busy with such topical issues when all things were in tension.[134]

The third round of the demand to have a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo was the request following the outbreak of the revolution. The request was pushed forward in the light of the *Darg's* promise to respect the cultural and linguistic rights of the Ethiopian nationalities. Yet, the response given to Mahdi was not as immediate as he expected. According to Mahdi, Major Girma Yilma, who was then the *Darg* Minister of Information and to whom the petition was presented, was in a dilemma about giving a clear cut response.[135]

The dilemma emanated from three challenging issues. One, the request was for a private newspaper while newspapers at the time were exclusively owned by the state. It was also when privately owned companies were being nationalized. The second was the issue of the language to be used for the requested newspaper. As John Markakis clarifies, the *Darg* had not expressly revised the language policy of the imperial regime or defined a new one,[136] Major Girma believed that it was difficult for him to give permission for a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo. Deciding the question was beyond his power, Major Girma advised Mahdi to contact the higher authorities of the *Darg* itself.[137]

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[134] *Ibid.*

[135] *Ibid.*

[136] Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers…*, p.185.

[137] Interview with Mahdi Muudee, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; OMN interview with Mahdi Hamid, accessed on 20 January 2018.

Mahdi was introduced with his petition to the *Darg* personnel in higher positions through Baaroo Tumsaa.[138] Mahdi presented his petition stating that he "…wanted to address the Oromo in their language about the *Darg* reform." Its Oromo members specially Colonel Takka Tullu who had been head of *Darg*'s Polity Bureau and Second Lieutenant Niguse Nagaasa who had been leading head of mass organization argued that the publication of a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo would help them to address the Oromo mass with socialist ideology. The *Darg,* which at the time aspired to win popular support, is said to have permitted Mahdi to print the newspaper for the coming first anniversary of the revolution on 12 September 1975 reminding him that the permission was only for that day.[139] With this, *Bariisaa* newspaper became the first government-recognized *Afaan* Oromo newspaper.

As stated, on receiving permission, *Bariisaa* came out on its first page of the first issues with two leading articles which were *ኣየና ጉዳ ቢልሱማ* (A Big Freedom Day Anniversary) and *የሮ ሃቃፍ ሆሪን ኣባ ደቢሉ* (A Day When Justice and Properties Have Returned to the Owners) on the first anniversary of the outbreak of the revolution. All the pages of the issue were devoted to the wish for justice and equity believed to have been realized by the *Darg.* Within this context, some of the stories focused on how the military government had apparently freed the peasantry from the suffering and exploitation of the feudal system while condemning '*የሰፊዉ ሕዝብ ጭቆና*'

[138]Baaroo Tumsaa was at the time tactically allied with the *Darg,* being the head of *Echaat,* and it was easy for him to get them.

[139]Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, august 27, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; *Bariisaa* Newspaper, Fulbaana 2, 1968 or September 12, 1975. The support of Kumsaa Lataa who was who was one of Ethiopian Airlines staff and later transferred to govern Jibaat and Maccaa Sab-province also needs mentioning. *Bariisaa* Newspaper on its print year 1, no. 9 gives exclusive credit for his contribution for the development of the newspaper. See *Bariisaa,* Adoolessa 27, 1968 (July 4, 1976).

(the oppression of the mass). Other parts were pieces of advice to the Oromo to protect the achievements of the revolution and to work hard to realize the rights they had as a nation.[140]

The newspaper was quickly duplicated in 21,000 copies and distributed to the Oromo to different elements of the revolution. The distribution was begun at the celebration of the first anniversary of the revolution. More copies were distributed for peasant representatives from all *Qabales* of the country who came to Addis Ababa and resided in Addis Ababa University to participate in the celebration of the first anniversary of the revolution on September 12, 1975. The Occasion was taken as a good opportunity as the number of the Oromo in the representatives were dominant as they were from all corners of Oromoland.[141]

The purpose was to inform the Oromo of the beginning of a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo, and consequently to collect allies against any intended reversal in the policy.[142] The editors also announced that *Bariisaa* was a biweekly newspaper while in fact the permission was only for one day. The purpose was just to increase the pressure of readers' demand on the *Darg* for the continuation of the newspaper.[143]

However, the printing of *Bariisaa* was not continued as per the promise. Its editor in chief, Mahdi Hamid, was imprisoned for six weeks, being accused for instigating the Oromo against the government by disseminating *Bariisaa* as if it were a government-licensed biweekly newspaper when it was not. Hamid states that he was able to escape the *Darg*'s capital punishment by the help of the *Darg* infiltrated Oromo activists. However, the printing of

[140]*Ibid.*

[141] Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, august 27, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008.

[142] *Ibid.*

[143]Interview with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; OMN Interview with Mahdi Hamid, accessed on January 20, 2018; OMN Interview with Immiruu Angoosee, accessed on April 09, 2018.

Bariisaa was banned for good. The banning was for good because Mahdi states that Colonel Asrat Desta, who was then the Minister of Information, vowed not to allow *Bariisaa* to be published again as long as he lived.[144]

In spite of the banning for good, Mahdi and his group behind the scene never stopped the idea of having a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo. They believed that it would enhance the effort to develop *Afaan* Oromo to written literature on the one hand, and it would serve as a platform to exchange ideas on issues of Oromo national identity. Therefore, to resume the newspaper, they continued discreetly looking for any possible opportunity. Mahdii and his colleagues had no problem in searching such possible conditions as most of the clandestine members of *Dhaabbata Bariisaa* were also top officials in the *Darg* administration.[145]

This opportunity came in March 1976. Colonel Asrat Desta, who had vowed not to see *Bariisaa* newspaper published again, was sent to East Germany with his top officials for training in capacity building in socialist media. Following his departure, Mahdii took the request to the Acting Minster of the Ministry of Information. Fortune provided an opportunity in that the Acting Minster was Major Fisseha Gadaa, who had good secret affiliation with the members of *Dhaabbata Bariisaa*. Major Fissaha Gadaa, who was well attuned to the view of Colonel Asrat Desta on issues of *Afaan* Oromo, did not want to waste time on procedures. He is said to have taken the question to *Darg* top officials.[146]

The *Darg* top officials treated the question positively. It was because on the one hand the Darg already had information that the *Qabale* peasant representatives who had come to Addis Ababa

[144]*Ibid.*
[145]*Ibid.*
[146] Interviews with Leencoo Lataa and Diimaa Noggoo, Addis Ababa, February 15, 2019; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, august 27, 2008; Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008.

to participate in the first year anniversary of the revolution and got the copies of the newspaper continued asking for their newspaper. On the other hand, it also learned the importance of having a newspaper in *Afaan* Oromo to win over the support of the Oromo mass as the Mengistu at the time had great interest to win the support of the mass.[147] Therefore, it allowed *Bariisaa* to reappear again on March 12, 1976.[148] With this, *Bariisaa* became not only the first officially recognized *Afaan* Oromo a newspaper but also the only private newspaper in Ethiopia.[149]

Using Marxist-Leninist principles as a disguise, the newspaper began appearing with issues of Oromo identity in the series of its publications. In its early period, the contents of the newspaper were carefully prepared in a way that ironically noted the *Darg's* support of literacy developments in *Afaan* Oromo and the Oromo cultural revivals. Accordingly, until it was nationalized by the government on February 9, 1977,[150] the main focus of *Bariisaa* was political arguments on the fate of the Oromo under the *Darg*, the problem of *Afaan* Oromo orthography and the factors that hindered the circulation of *Bariisaa*.

In fact, these were argued under the disguise of condemning the continuous aggression, suppression and exploitation which had been inflicted on the Oromo nation during the imperial regimes within the context of the *Darg* socialist philosophy.[151] The main purpose was to conceal the topics which were inserted into the newspaper to remind the Oromo on issues of

[147] *Ibid.*

[148] Interview with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; OMN Interview with Mahdi Hamid on 20 January 2018.

[149] There was handwritten newspaper produced by Billatta Gebra Egiabher before 1900 and *Aemro* (Intellectual), which was again handwritten and established in 1902 by a Greek, Andrea Kavadia. Both newspapers were not full-fledged private newspapers.

[150] *Bariisaa*, *Gurraandhala* 1, 1969 or February 9, 1977.

[151] See all series of *Bariisaa* under the *Darg*.

their identity.[152] It also carried decrees and regulations which were mainly translations of Amharic.

Some examples that best show how this newspaper steered the Oromo towards the consciousness of their identity were the propaganda against the imperial regime and Eritrean secessionists. In appreciating the revolutionary contribution of the Oromo, and condemning the past regimes as reactionary and bloodsucking, there were messages for the Oromo which encouraged them to protect their language, culture, history and even natural resources. Similarly, while criticizing Eritreans as secessionists and narrow nationalists, the newspaper also informed the Oromo of the reasons that had pushed the Eritreans to raise armies, focusing on the similar problems for the Oromo. In doing so the newspaper made the Oromo question their situation under the *Darg*.

Nonetheless, through letters, poems and articles sent to the editor of *Bariisaa*, the readers unequivocally discussed issues of implementing equality, justice, the demand for the immediate implementation of the declared right of self-rule without interference, ways to overcome the efforts to paralyze *Bariisaa* and the sabotage on the development of *Afaan* Oromo and the issues of choosing an orthography for *Afaan* Oromo etc.[153] In short, the general contents of the opinions were characterized by both direct and implicit expressions of the voice of the resistance.

Pointing to the common and continued refusal of state authorities to use *Afaan* Oromo in schools and in their contacts and interaction with the Oromo population, the readers reflected their

[152] Interview with Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; OMN Interview with Mahdi Hamid, accessed on January 20, 2018; OMN Interview with Immiruu Angoosee, accessed on April 9, 2018.

[153] See all series of *Bariisaa* from *Fulbaana* 2, 1968 (September 12, 1975) to *Fulbaana* 2, 1969 (September 12, 1977).

aspiration for the immediate implementation of the promised self-rule and the use of *Afaan* Oromo at least for the initial stage of school in Oromo areas. Along with these aspirations, the readers bitterly criticised the continued practical disregard of the revival of Oromo culture and disregard for using *Afaan* Oromo for written purposes. As most letters published in the newspaper expressed, many readers and contributors became pessimistic about the fate of the Oromo under the *Darg* so that they called on the Oromo to be alert and resist.[154]

To give an impression to this idea, it is worth quoting one of the letters about such issues. "በራ ደርበ ኬሳ ቱፋተምኔ አፋን ኬኛስ ጅባመ አከ ቱሬ ሀንያደተማ። ... ስርና ዱሪ ሰነ ዴብሱ ከንበርባዱ፥ እን ኤጋ ስአች ሀንጅሩ። ብልሱማ ኬኛፍ ሀማ ዱማቲ ወልዳንሶ ጭማ ጎቹ ኑበርባችሳ።"[155] Its free translation is: It is in our memory that in the past years we were relegated and our language was hated. If there is anybody who wanted to continue the policy of the past regime, there should be no more opportunity for this. It needs us to struggle until we will be liberated.

The core idea of the quotation was to remind the Oromo that there was no difference between the past and new regimes regarding Oromo linguistic and cultural rights. The writer suspected the resumption of the past injustice and advised the Oromo to conduct meetings and discuss issues on how to resist and withstand the resumption of oppression. The quotation expresses resistance, challenge and a general feeling of bitterness during the revolution while reflecting wishes and aspiration for the self-rule for the Oromo. In fact, it is true that all these ideas were elaborated under the disguise of class struggle to avoid the *Darg*'s strict laws of censorship.

[154] Mahdi Hamid, *Xalayoota Bariisaa (Bariisaa Letters)* (Atlanta: *Sagalee Oromoo* Publishing Co., Inc., 1996). The book is a collection of letters from *Bariisaa* readers to the editor and published by the *Bariisaa* in 1975-1977.

[155] *Bariisaa*, *Gurraandhala* 24, 1969 or March 2, 1977).

The other dominant issue which frequently appeared in the series of *Bariisaa* publications was the issue of choosing an orthography for *Afaan* Oromo. One third of the letters were sent by readers on the issue of orthography. These letters which were published in *Bariisaa* between September 1975 and February 1977, complained about the problem of reading *Bariisaa* in Geez orthography.[156] Except for one letter that asked improvement of the Geez orthography in a way to make it fit *Afaan* Oromo sounds, the rest called for the total replacement of the Geez alphabet. The suggested model for the improved Geez orthography was complicated with loops and diacritics. It also increased the number of letters of the Geez orthography from 260 to 359.[157] Even with these difficulties the suggested orthography failed solve the sound problem of *Afaan* Oromo.

However, the rest of the letters requested the replacement of Geez orthography with standardized *Qubee* (adopted Latin script). Almost all of the letters on this issue boldly urged the editors of *Bariisaa* to take immediate action.[158] Because of the limitation of space to give full elaboration on all the contents of the letters, here it suffices to quote a few topics as a model. "አፋን ኦሮሞ ፊደላ ግእዝን ስሪት ህን ዱቢፋሙ"[159] (Geez script cannot support *Afaan* Oromo to be read), ''ፊደል ግእዝ አፋን ኦሮሞቲ ህንቶሉ። ፊደላ ላቲንን አፋን ኦሮሞ ሃባሬስኑ"[160] (Geez script is not

[156]Mahdi Hamid, *Xalayoota Bariisaa (Bariisaa Letters) ….*

[157] See *Bariisaa*, *Bitootessa* 22, 1969 (April 1, 1977).

[158] See readers' letters in *Bariisaa*, *Gurraandhala* 10, 1969 (February 18, 1977); *Gurraandhala* 17, 1969 (February 23, 1977); *Gurraandhala* 24, 1969 (March 2, 1977); *Bitootessa* 1, 1969 (March 10, 1977); *Bitootessa* 15, 1969 (March 24, 1977); *Bitootessa* 29, 1969 (April 6, 1977); *Ebila* 27, 1969 (April 4, 1977); *Caamsaa* 11, 1969 (May 19, 1977; *Caamsaa* 25, 1969 (or June 2, 1977; *Waxabajjii* 2, 1969 or June 18, 1977; *Waxabajjii* 16, 1969 or June 23, 1977; *Adoolessa* 7, 1969 July 14, 1977; *Adoolessa* 19, 1969 (August 25, 1977); *Hagayya* 3, 1969 (August 3, 1977).

[159]*Bariisaa Caamsaa* 11, 1969 (May 19, 1977).

[160] *Bariisaa*, *Bitootessa* 8, 1969 (March 17, 1977).

suitable to write *Afaan* Oromo; let the use of Latin script) "ፊደል ግእዝ ጉፉ ጉዲና አፋን ኦሮሞቲ"[161] (Geez script is an obstacle to the development of *Afaan* Oromo), "አፋን ኦሮሞ ፊዳላ ኢሳ ቶሉ ዋጅን ሃጉዲስኑ"[162]

There are many letters with such arguments, which were not argued blindly. Almost all the letters justified their views with reasons. Among them the letter sent by a certain person named Nagash Kumsaa under the title *ፊደል ግእዝ አፋን ኦሮሞቲ ሀንቶሉ፣ ፊደላ ላቲንን አፋን ኦሮሞ ሃባሬስኑ (Geez script is not Suitable to Write Afaan Oromo: Better to Write in Latin script)* is the best example. He presented a model of the grammatical rules indicating how to write and read. The rules were supported with examples. Most of the examples were presented written in both *Qubee* and Geez orthographies.[163]

The purpose was to show how Oromo words written in Geez script are pronounced differently and accordingly give different meaning while they are not so changed when they are written in the adopted *Qubee Afaan* Oromo. In this letter the Oromo choice to write their language in Latin alphabet was for convenience and accuracy rather than ideological reasons. In other letters there are also extensive passages written in *Qubee* to show its suitability to *Afaan* Oromo.[164]

The letter written by Qalbeessaa Dhaabaa, though aggressive, is more interesting. It defined Geez script as a major impediment to the Development of *Afaan* Oromo. Reading a few lines of his articulation gives the impression. "ማል ዋኤ ፊዳላ አፋን ኦሮሞ ኬኛ ከነ ማል ያዳ ጅርቱ? ፊደል አማ ኩን ዱርስ አፋን ኦሮሞ ዱቢሱፍ ከን ኑራኪሳ ቱረ አማስ ከን ኑረክሱዳ። ዳሎታ ዱፉስ እሞ ኢቲ ደርበ ሃረክሱ ጀነቱ ኢቲ

[161] *Bariisaa, Waxabajjii* 16, 1969 (June 23, 1977).
[162] *Bariisaa, Bitootessa* 29, 1969 (April 7, 1977).
[163] See *Bariisaa, Bitootessa* 8, 1969 (March 17,1976).
[164]See *Bariisaa* Year 2, No.17, *Birraa* 11, 1969 (December 19,1975).

ረከና?"[165] Translated as "What are you thinking about our *Afaan* Oromo script? In the past this Geez script was creating a problem to read *Afaan* Oromo [i. e to read in Geez script]; now it has continued its obstruction. Why do we now tolerate its problem? Is it not storing up the same problem for the coming generations!"

Another issue to which greater attention was paid to was the issues of the development of *Afaan* Oromo. Letters were sent with titles such as "Let us learn in *Afaan* Oromo",[166] "Why has the Radio Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia ceased *Afaan* Oromo transmission?",[167] "*Afaan* Oromo is One",[168] "*Afaan* Oromo, the language of a large nation should not be obstructed by illegitimate means",[169] "the solution to the development of our language is struggle",[170] etc. These were the most discussed topics within the context of the debates for the development of *Afaan* Oromo. These issues were reflected both in poems and prose.[171]

The demand to make *Afaan* Oromo the language of education and office, the calls for the Oromo to guard it from oppressors, the explanation of its inextricability and natural link with Oromo identity were the central messages of the letters. The links between language and national cohesion, and between language and cultural development were discussed along the same lines. As can also be seen from the *Bariisaa* pages, this interest in language and literary matters was matched with publication of essays which distinctly pointed to the creation of a new kind of nationalism and awareness in the Oromo population. The following poem taken

[165] *Bariisaa*, Year.2 No. 4, *Gurraandhala 10,* 1969 (February 18,1976).
[166] *Bariisaa*, Year. 2, No. 28, *Ebla* 28, 1969 (May 6, 1976).
[167] *Bariisaa*, Year, 2, No.10, *Bitootessa* 10,1969 (March 19, 1976); No. 11, *Bitootessa* 29,1969 (April 7, 1976); No.12, *Adoolessa* 6,1969 (June 13, 1976).
[168] *Bariisaa* Year, 2, No. 18, *Caamsaa* 18,1969 (May 26, 1976).
[169] *Bariisaa* Year 2, No 19, *Caamsaa* 25, 1969 (June 2, 1976).
[170] *Bariisaa* Year 2, No. 20, *Waxabajjii* 2, 1969 (July 9, 1976).
[171] See Mahdi Hamid, *Xalayaa Bariisaa and Mahdi Hamid, Walaloo Bariisaa (Bariisaa Poems)* (Atlanta: *Sagalee* Oromoo Publishing Co., Inc., 1996).

from *Bariisaa* is the best example to show the understanding of *Bariisaa* readers about the relationship between *Afaan* Oromo, Oromo culture and ethnic identity of the Oromo. At the heart of this relationship there was a desire to develop a written *Afaan* Oromo that would reflect an ideal national image of the Oromo.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
ኣዶን ኣፋን ቀቡ ኣፋንኮ ወላሌ	*While I do have my mother tongue, I have ignored it*
ኣፃኮ ቱፋዴ ከን ኦርማ መሊ	*I have relegated my culture to that of something alien*
ነመ-ማኮ ጉቴን ነመ ዱካ ገሌ[172]	*I have lost my identity and followed that of others*

The message of this poem is nationalistic and is to inform the Oromo at large that ignoring their own language is being unpatriotic and to lose one's real identity. Therefore, it was a message for the readers to be proud of using *Afaan* Oromo, practicing Oromo culture and asserting their Oromo identity.

The other issue which appeared in *Bariisaa* was the injustice of destroying Oromo identity by the policy of change of Oromo names. The newspaper condemned the past regime's efforts to change Oromo names including names of places such as Adamaa to Nazareth, Bushooftu to Dabra Zait, etc. as its best means to liquidate Oromo identity and seriously warned the Oromo to resist its repeating by the *Darg*. It stressed that the Oromo should be proud of their names and advised them not to allow anyone to try to change them.

The other theme in readers' letters placed marked emphasis on the issue of the distribution of *Bariisaa.* The cells that *Dhaabbata Bariisaa* had established for the distribution of the newspaper and to collect money from the sales were systematically discouraged though not closed down by the *Darg.* This was the case because of two main reasons. One was that the *Darg* had postponed the plan and did not yet really recognize the principle of the rights of

[172] *Bariisaa*, Year. 1, No.6, *Caamsaa* 13, 1968 (May 20, 1975).

nationalities and languages it had incorporated into its programme and subsequently did not want to allow the rise of Oromo nationalism that would result because of the promotion of *Afaan* Oromo. The second was that the *Darg* did not want to provoke Oromo resistance and reveal the pending plan to refuse recognition of the principle of the rights of nationalities and languages just by immediate cessation of concessions.[173]

Such systematic discouragement was reflected in the order passed to send the newspapers to areas where there were none or only a few *Afaan* Oromo speakers. The editor of the newspaper, Mahid, complained that there were repeated instances when they were ordered to send the newspaper to such regions. At the same time, readers also complained that they could not find *Bariisaa* in the shops where newspapers were sold or with other newspapers sold on streets. Such readers' opinions appeared in different volumes of *Bariisaa* and they give a clear impression. To quote a few lines of one letter before the nationalization of *Bariisaa* in February 1977. It reads: "በሪሳን ከን አፋን ኦሮሞቲን ከተበሙ ቡልቲ ኩዴ ሸን ኩዴ ሸንቲ ህንበአ ጀተኒ ቱርተን መሬረ? ቡልቲ ኩዴ ሸን ዲስቲ ጂአቱ አርጋሙ ህንደንደኘ። ማሊ ረኪኒ እሳ ነማ ቆጰሱቱ ደበሙሞ ሆሪ ደብዳን? ኑቲ በክስሳ።"[174] Its English translation is "Where is the *Bariisaa*, the *Afaan* Oromo Newspaper, you promised to publish every two weeks? Let alone every two weeks, it had disappeared even for more than a month. What problem is there? Is it shortage of human power or lack of resources? Please inform us."

[173]Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009.

[174] *Bariisaa* Year.2, No. 14, *Adoolessa* 20, 1969 (June 27, 1976); Year. 2, No. 26, *Ebla* 14,1969 (May 21, 1976); Year 2, No. 27, *Ebla* 21, 1969 (May 28, 1976); Year .2, No. 32, *Hagayya* 26, 1969 (September 2, 1976).

The situation became worse after the state appropriated the ownership of *Bariisaa*. In this period the problem was not only obstructing the distribution but also that systematic reports were organized to suggest that there was no demand for *Bariisaa,* and subsequently the number of copies per issue was reduced from 20, 000 to 15, 000 then again down to 12,000 and finally to only 8,000.[175] Then worse, even the 8,000 copies were not dispatched regularly as was mandatory for the newspapers in other languages. Yet readers never stopped complaints.[176]

The producers of *Bariisaa* also agreed with this reader's view. They stated that there were frequent complaints of readers that they could not find *Bariisaa* along the street on sale with the other newspapers. [177] The producers also claimed that the newspapers' distributing agency organized under the Ministry of Information refused to distribute *Bariisaa.* They stated their opinion that this rejection of the *Bariisaa* newspaper was all a piece with the systematic doing away of written *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo nationalism.[178]

The editors also expressed the problem that they had with the content of *Bariisaa* after its nationalization. They stated that six months after the *Darg* took it over, *Bariisaa* had become totally a propaganda machine of the *Darg*. Reporters, readers and editors were assigned to it by the government so as to control all activities. Its contents became a mere translation

[175]*Ibid*.

[176] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Badhaasaa Simaa, Addis Ababa, April 26, 2018; Interview with Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019. See also *Bariisaa*, Year, 2, No. 16, *Caamsaa* 4, 1969 (May 12, 1976). *Bariisaa*, Year 2. No. 16, *Caamsaa* 4,1969 (May 12, 1976).

[177] *Bariisaa,* Year 2, No.14, *Adoolessa* 20, 1969 (June 27, 1976); Year 2, No.16, *Caamsaa* 4, 1969 (May 12, 1976).

[178] Interview with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009.

of *Addis Zaman* and *Negarit* newspapers. Except the letters column which continued to publish Oromo riddles, proverbs, metaphors and sometimes poems but with low appeal to Oromo nationalism, almost all of the paper's contents were confined to the translation of official decrees, speeches of government authorities, government announcements, military communiqués, agricultural news, sporting events, financial reports, legal notices, political pieces, etc. Therefore, gradually *Bariisaa* ceased to be a paper for developing and enriching the written literature of *Afaan* Oromo and become little more than wrapping paper for goods in shops and kiosks.[179]

Nonetheless, while some basic literary materials which began to be published ceased in the second half of the 1970s except reprinting material already published, *Bariisaa* continued to be the only government-recognized *Afaan* Oromo publication. As mentioned above, although its contents and distribution were weakened, its very existence became one of the basic reason for the large number of *Afaan* Oromo publications that appeared after 1991.

7.5. *Abiyotawi Kinet* among the Oromo: Revolutionary Bands or Oromo Nationalist Troupes

Scholars in the field argue that musical performances specially in an organized way are weapons to inject the ideology of the weak or subordinate while performing that of the powerful.[180] More than other forms of art, music with its lyrics speak beyond the surface meanings of the contents of poems set to music. It plays a vital role in rousing emotion and stimulating ideological cohesion, and it fuels excitement and ensures sustainability of nationalist identification. Specially,

[179]*Ibid*.

[180]Lara Allen, *Music and Politics in Africa, Social Dynamics*, 30:2, 1-19, DOI: 10.1080/02533950408628682, pp.2-3; Robin Balliger, "Sounds of Resistances" in Ron Sakolsky and Fred Wei-han Ho(Eds.) *Sounding Off! Music as Subversion/ Resistance/ Revolution* (New York: Autonomedia and Contributors,1995), pp. 13-25.

during the revolution its role was beyond one's expectation. It makes the revolution ideology acceptable and popular. Revolutionary songs have served in the struggle not only of the oppressed classes but also whole peoples and minorities living under oppression.[181]Therefore, it has indeed been stated that there is no revolutionary movement without revolutionary songs.[182]

For this purpose, in most countries competition to win over a group of artists or individual artists has been a common practice. Those who are powerful organize their own artists whereas those who are subordinate try their best to infiltrate the organized groups. It was on the basis of this perspective that the *Darg Abiyotawi Kinet* (Revolutionary Troupe) was organized by POMOA in the early period of the revolution. This organized *Abiyotawi Kinet* is also said to have been infiltrated by activists.[183]

Abiyotawi Kinet was a phrase introduced to the Amharic vocabulary during the *Darg* regime. It was a name given to a group of singers and performers who were organized from among the youth, women and peasant associations. Of these, the most important and successful one was *Yawetatochi Abiyotawi Kinet* (The Youth Revolutionary Troupe). The *Darg*'s purpose was to mock antagonists and make fun of their failures, and to urge people to sacrifice for the cause of the *Darg* and to give information about important events through the songs and performances.[184]

The organization of *Abiyotawi Kenet* among the Oromo was positively taken by both members of the *Darg* and POMOA-infiltrated Oromo nationalists. Both of them were interested in it because

[181] Allen, pp.2-3.

[182] Aleme Eshete, *Songs of the Ethiopian Revolution* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1979), p.5.

[183] Interviews with Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, August 30, 2008; Mitiku Bantii, Naqamtee, February 2, 2016.

[184]*Addis Zaman*, Year, 37, *Maskaram* 6, 1969; Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009.

they believed that music was a powerful medium which could be used to convey lessons in attractive, enjoyable form. While the *Darg* needed it to publicize its revolutionary actions, the Oromo activists needed it to expose the *Darg's* sell out of the proclaimed "Socialist Republic" of Ethiopia to the public in general and to the Oromo public in particular.[185]

Therefore, the *Darg* interest to have *Abiyotawi Kinet* and the Oromo activists to have singers of Oromo nationalism resulted in the formation of several Oromo cultural troupes in different parts of the Oromo region. Local agents of Oromo cultural associations encouraged and assisted the formation of several *Abiyotawi Kine*t in different Oromo areas. The organization of the *Abiyotawi Kinet* in this form was made from the *Qabale* levels up to the upper administrative levels. There were no *Qabales*, districts, sub-provinces and provinces which had not organized *Abiyotawi Kinet*.[186] Informants state that it was common knowledge to hear and see singers on any occasion of gatherings. Political clubs, sectional assemblies, anniversary' festivals, etc. were the stages frequently used for the purpose.[187]

The *Qabale* was the first stage to recruit the politically informed and best vocalists for the districts. From the districts more outstanding vocalists were again taken to the *Awraja* (sub provinces). The provinces recruited the outstanding ones from the sub-provinces under their respective administrative structures. Finally, the national level revolutionary bands apparently employed the best of the best. Still there was a claim that *Afaan* Oromo singers were not given the space they

[185]Interviews with Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008 and December 15, 2017; Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008.

[186]*Addis Zaman*, Year. 33, Nahase 22,1967.

[187]Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008: Halloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008 and December 20, 2015; the late Hailu Disaasaa, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2008.

deserved.[188] Whatever the circumstances, in the early era of the revolution the Oromo artists came of age in an outburst of creative song writing in *Afaan* Oromo. Even if Oromo history shows that the Oromo singing about politics was not new to the Oromo, the early period of the revolution witnessed an outpouring of political songs. [189]

Although most of these songs and secular hymns were spontaneous expression of popular feelings, or were to appeal to the market created by those feelings, many were inspired by a conscious desire to propagate a specific message. To impart the past sufferings of the Oromo into the concept of the revolution, songs and other forms of Oromo folklore which had been produced to oppose the *neftegna* ruling system were systematically collected, adapted and used. These folklore presentations were important because they reminded the Oromo to recall misdeeds of the past towards them and to alert them against the anticipated recurrences of the same linguistic and cultural domination.[190] In doing so, they not only kept alive old cultural songs but connected the Oromo of the time to their ancient heritages.

The songs followed the development of the revolution and hence their content was topical, and depicted events in the revolutionary process. During production, care was taken to provide the Oromo mass with insights into the nature of the historic struggle. The newly created songs and dramas were produced almost in the same types and forms of the previous songs while the focus of the contents mainly represented the sentiment of Oromo nationalism.[191]

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[188] *Ibid.*

[189] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2007 and Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009.

[190] *Ibid.*

[191] Interviews Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo,

The songs composed by Oromo nationalists, in particular, addressed the life of the Oromo under the imperial regime in the way that they educated people concerning the nature of the revolution. These *Afaan* Oromo songs were carefully composed in a way they could express the world view of the Oromo both under the imperial and the *Darg* regimes.[192] For instance, to compare and comment on the *Darg*'s ideology of unity first with that of the imperial homogenization policy, Gaaddisaa Abdullahi composed and sang *Qeerroo Mataa Tuuta* (The Youth in Group) in 1975.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Qeerroon mataa tuutaa	*The youth in group*
Hinjarjartuu suutaa	*It is wise, never to be hasty*
Ji'ini guyyaa hinbahuu	*The moon never rises in daylight*
Halkan guyyaa hinta'uu	*The night will never be a day*
Ilmi abbaa cunqursaa	*The son of the oppressor*
Waa firaa nuhinta'uu	*Cannot be our relative*
Aduun takka dhiitee	*The sun which at once darkened on us*
Takka nuubartee	*Became dawn for once*
Kan akka keenyaa hinjiruu	*No one was like us*
Kan garbummaan miitee	*Whom enslavement has ruined*
Jiruun gabrumaadha	*The life of enslavement*
Wa nama dararuu	*How it is tormenting!*
Biyya abbaa keenyaatti	*At the country of our fathers*
An diina hingabbaruu	*I never salute an enemy*
Namni diinaan haqa irraa dhokatee	*A person whose right is suppressed by an enemy*
Akkamiin nyaatee dhugee rafa obsee	*How is it tolerable to eat, drink and sleep!*
Osoo biyyaa qabnuu	*While we have a country*
Biyyaa keenyaa dhabnee	*We are deprived of it*
Osoo heera qabnuu	*While we have constitution*
Heera keenya dhabnee	*We are deprived of it*
Osoo aadaa qabnuu	*While we have a culture*
Aadaa keenyaa dhabnee	*We are deprived of it*
Osoo Afaan qabnuu	*While we have language*
Afaan keenyaa dhabnee	*We are deprived of it*
Akkaa baala mukaa	*Like shaded leaves*
Faffacaanee hafnee	*We remained dispersed*
Gara galchan malee	*Unless uprooted*
Galagaluu hinoollee	*It never ceases to revive*
Ilmi abbaan cunqursaa	*Whose father was oppressor*
Nama ganuu hinoollee	*Never be trusted*
Biyya teenya malee	*It is only for our independence*

Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre- Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008: Halloo Daawwee, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 16, 2008 and December 20, 2015; the late Hailu Disaasaa, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2008

[192] *Ibid.*

Kan oromaa hinfalminuu	*Not to dominate the others*
Abbaadhaan gabroominee	*Their fathers enslaved us*
Ilmaan hindhaalamnuu[193]	*The sons shouldn't.*

The message of the song is a criticism of the EPRP's and the *Darg's* political programmes. The poetic composition of the song is a powerful invocation of popular memory, suppression, extortion, and dispossession. In the song Gaaddisaa expressed a profound grief and sorrow over the situation of the Oromo. It is a warning for the Oromo that both the EPRP and the *Darg* had adopted programmes which were the continuation of the suppressive policies of the past regimes without or with little changes.

It also expounds that not only the policies they adopted but also they themselves were the descendants of those who had divided the Oromo, deprived them of the right to use their language and the right to rule themselves and their country. In the song Gaaddisaa laments the situation in which the Oromo were dispersed like shaded leaves, denied the practice of their language, their culture and their customary laws. He underlines that the agony was perpetrated against the Oromo in their homeland while the Oromo did not wish to perpetrate any domination over the rights of the others.

From all this, he concluded that if there is any Oromo who expects change and hospitability from the offspring of this state, it is just like a wish to see the moon in daylight and to get the sunlight at night. Gaaddisaa warned the Oromo public that there is a new oppressive system in the making using a different tactic and strategy to achieve the same result of its predecessors. Therefore, the singer advised the Oromo of his generation not to be enslaved by the enslavers

[193]Oromo TV interview with Gaaddisaa Abdullah, accessed on January 20. 2018. He sang it during the TV interview. In fact, since the song is very popular access to it is not difficult. But the interview was important as he explained the intention of the song.

whose predecessors enslaved their fathers. As the message of the song also indicates, his song was aimed at urging the Oromo to defend their rights against the continued enslavement policy like the past regime.[194] After it was released to the public, the song was said to have circulated throughout the Oromo of Hararge and became a popular song. It was also one of the fascinating songs presented at the Oromo cultural show of the National Theatre in 1977.

For example, this skeptical view the Oromo held was explicitly elaborated in Ali Birra's *Sooshalisimii jechuun walqixxummaa Sabaa* (Socialism is the equality of the nations).[195] In this song, while Ali declared the necessity of socialism for the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia, he successfully exposed to the public in general and the Oromo in particular that there could be no socialism in a country where equality of nations and nationalities was not recognized.

When the *Darg* began putting restrictions on anything deemed a conveyer of Oromo nationalism including Oromo literature, Ilfinesh Qannoo produced a song titled *dhugaasaan himaa maal godhu irra dibaa* (I speak the truth, why cover up). The song was a strong comment on the falsity of all the freedom the *Darg* promised. Ilfinesh found the *Darg* propaganda of socialism ironic and remained skeptical. It was a call to expose the true nature of the *Darg's* "socialist" revolution. In this song, Ilfinesh frankly depicted the *Darg*'s continuation of the past repression that had lasted for a hundred years. Originally, this song was released in the Wallagga area and from there it circulated throughout Oromia. Here are a few lines of the song.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Ani dhugaasaan himaa	*I speak the truth*
Maal godhuu irra dibaa	*Why masquerading!*
Baane fakkaataree	*Does it seem we are satisfied from*

[194] *Ibid*.
[195]Oromia TV interview with Ali Birraa, accessed on June 07, 2015.

Beela Waggaa dhibbaa[196] *A hunger of a hundred years*

Such and other activities that sought to develop Oromo nationalism were tirelessly worked on by the Oromo activists. The rise of Oromo nationalism was much needed because it was taken as an indispensable weapon to fight against the militarized rule of the *Darg*. The composition of Oromo language songs of this period proved the abilities of Oromo poets and singers. The composers made great efforts to include the songs that taught the Oromo about the importance of using their vernacular, the importance of their unity and they used the power of the Oromo language in conveying messages both covertly and overtly. The songs of the time reflected the social reality and were an effective way of acknowledging and protesting against an unjust political system.[197]

The effort to write *Afaan* Oromo in the script that suits it was the important issue that was given major attention. There was no doubt that the interest to use *Afaan* Oromo for written purposes with the script that suited it was a crucial necessity in the attempt to give more strength to Oromo nationalism. However, the *Darg's* reluctance to recognize the writing of *Afaan* Oromo in the preferred Latin script invited a direct reaction of Oromo poets and musicians. For instance, when the *Darg* sent students to campaign against illiteracy in rural Ethiopia, Ali reminded the Oromo revolutionary students in his song not to forget to teach how to write *Afaan* Oromo in Latin script.

The song was released in 1975 as *A B-Afaan Oromo.* This song is said to have been composed

[196]OMN interview with Ilfinesh Qannoo, accessed on November 09, 2016.

[197] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mohamed Abbaa Jabal, Mannaa (Jimmaa), October 10, 2008; Tayib Abbaa Foggii, Jimmaa, October 9, 2008; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa, July 18, 2008 and December 15, 2017; Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30,2008.

by Taha Abdii who was an OLF fighter as well as a poet.[198] The general impression of the song had three important themes. One was that it gave an assignment to Oromo student campaigners to try to teach *Afaan* Oromo in Latin script. The second was to inform the listeners not to negate the clandestine teaching of *Afaan* Oromo in the adopted *Qubee* as it best fit *Afaan* Oromo sounds.[199]

Thus, Ali urged scholars to use every opportunity to teach how to read and write in *Qubee*. The third theme was to inform the Oromo that education in their mother tongue was the way that would take the Oromo to the road of liberty. It is a song with strong nationalist sentiment that shows the importance of having a written vernacular for the psychological liberation of the Oromo. In the song, Ali depicted the role and the place of *Afaan* Oromo as a repository of Oromo wisdom and knowledge. Nonetheless, the song was not recorded on cassette until a decade after 1991. It was a song which simply circulated in the memory of individuals after it had been sung lyrically from the stage.[200] The following few lines are part of the song.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
A, B, jennee kaanaa	*We begin saying A, B. C*
Kanumaan calqabnaa	*This is what helps us to begin*
Afaanuma keenyaan	*It should be in our language (Afaan Oromo)*
Katabnee dubbifinaa	*In which we should write and read*
Barachaa Barsiisfinna	*We should learn while we teach*
Qubeedhaan calqabinnaa	*We start with Qubee*
Wallalli habaduu…[201]	*Let it dismantle illiteracy…*

These emergent Oromo performances with Oromo nationalist sentiment in different Oromo

[198]Oromia TV interview with Taha Abdii, accessed on June 08, 2017.

[199] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 01, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa, December, 15, 2017; Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008; Mitiku Bantii, Naqamtee, February 2, 2016.

[200]*Ibid.*

[201]Oromia TV interview with Ali Birraa, accessed on 07 June 2015.

Gadaa territories were followed by the extensive visits of cultural shows. Using the opportunity, the Oromo cultural revival groups who accumulated experience by performing songs, dances and dramas on public occasions and social events in their localities, now came out of their respective provinces and made extensive cultural tours to different Oromo provinces. The visits were organized by the clandestine networks of Oromo cultural association. It was along the lines of this network that the Oromo cultural troupe conducted visits of Oromo cultural shows in different Oromo provinces.[202]

This conscious effort to connect the Oromo to their heritage and different provinces together was pioneered by *Aduu Birraa* (The Sun of the Autumn) Cultural Band. This cultural troupe came to Addis Ababa from Hararge in 1975 with the purpose to organize other cultural bands in different provinces. The band was organized and supported by the Oromo cultural association to use it as a model in the struggle for *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo cultural practices. This cultural troupe was taken as a model because the majority of its members were survivors of *Afran Qalloo* cultural bands who were at least thirteen years ahead in participating in such cultural shows. To the amazement of many, this cultural troupe had established itself in a matter of only a few months and began performing their shows in *Afaan* Oromo at some night clubs in Addis Ababa[203]

The coming of this cultural band to Addis Ababa played three major roles in the development of written *Afaan* Oromo and in the transformation of the Oromo from a cultural to a political nation. One was that they had broken the silence of singing in *Afaan* Oromo in Addis Ababa. The second

[202]Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa July 18, 2008; Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008; Mitiku Bantii, Naqamtee, February 2, 2016; Zakariya Mamuye, Harar, July 20, 2008.

[203]*Ibid*. This *Aduu Birraa* Band which is to mean the Band of the Sun of Autumn was the continuation of the *Afran Qalloo* cultural band. The members of this band were Ali Birraa, Ibrahim Hajji Ali, Himee Yusuf, Adam Usman, Mohammed Umar, Abubakar Addawwe, Ahmad Yonnis and others. Most of them were the previous members of the *Afran Qalloo* cultural troupe.

was they became exemplary for the other *Afaan* Oromo vocalists in and around Addis Ababa to sing boldly in the city without giving regard to those who tried to undermine them. The third was that in making their center at Addis Ababa, they undertook extensive tours of cultural shows to several towns of the Oromo areas and inspired other Oromo vocalists to follow their model.[204]

The major and eye opener was the cultural tour they made to some major towns of West Shawa and Wallaggaa provinces. It is stated that the Oromo were very happy to hear that the troupe was received with overwhelming enthusiasm and jubilation in all the towns they performed. The informants give their witnesses that their cultural shows in all the towns they visited drew several hundreds of thousands of attendants. This cultural tour was soon followed by the aspiration of other *Abiyotawi Kenet* to transform themselves to the level that would enable them to undertake the same tour of cultural shows. This was clearly demonstrated when the Wallagga cultural troupe visited Shawa on the cultural festival of *Bokkuu Xollee Gadaa* ceremony and the visit of Jibaat and Maccaa cultural troupe of Wallagga at the *Gadaa* festival of *Odaa Kaarraa* in November 1977.[205]

This development of nationalist songs and dramas at different *Gadaa* territories made a more impressive leap forward in January 1977. Encouraged by the enthusiastic receptions these cultural shows received from the audiences at all the places, *Dhaabbata Bariisaa* organized nationwide Oromo cultural show at the National Theatre of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa on 13 and 14 January 1977. The intention with the cultural show was to interlink the Oromo understanding in people from all corners of the Oromo regions.[206] This show was when the Oromo artists came together

[204] Interview with Diimaa Noggoo and Leencoo Lataa, Addis Ababa, on February 15, 2019; Interviews Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Esayas Hordofaa, Addis Ababa, August 28, 2017, Kuma Eda'e, Dukam, April 22, 2008; Tilahun Jootee, Naqamtee, April 4, 2009; Kebede Firrisa, Addis Ababa, 07/09.2009.

[205] Gadaa, *Oromia…,* p. 100-101.

[206] *Bariisaa*, Year.2, No. 4 (*Gurraandhala* 10, 1969 or February 18, 1976).

from six *Darg* administrative provinces and performed a cultural show at the National Theatre of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. According to the informants, the festival was prepared on the pretext of fund raising for *Bariisaa* newspaper. Nonetheless, the real objective was to link the Oromo cultural singers from east to west and north to south and use them as the most important instrument to promote Oromo nationalism.

For the cultural shows a hundred and fifty performers were recruited from the cultural troupes of Aduu Birraa from Finfinnee, Shawa, Wallagga, Iluu Abbaa Boor, Jimmaa, Arsi, Baalee and Hararge. The attendants were reported to have been several thousands and as a result the compound of the National Theatre was extremely overcrowded and overpowered with emotion to the extent that it put the government security and military under pressure.[207]

Oromo explicit skepticism about the revolution was clearly expressed in the artistic performances of the cultural show. Informants attested that almost all the artistic performances presented at the cultural show were a response to the hypocrisies of the *Darg* and its élite advisors.[208] In addition to the songs quoted above, many politically overtoned songs and drama were performed. Some of them were patriotic, others were expressions of passion for liberty, and very few were purely cultural in nature. In fact, the major focus of the show was on a protracted period of political oppression, economic exploitation, cultural alienation and linguistic subjugation of the Oromo. The following song is one of the specimen of such songs.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Owwalamnee turree jiruun	*We were buried alive*
Nut sabni ballaan durattii	*We the big nation previously*
Nama yartuu cunqurstuu harkattii	*By the illegitimate oppressors*

[207] Mollenhuaer, "A Millions on the Margins: …", pp.62-70; Gadaa Malbaa, p.102.

[208] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008; Mitiku Bantii, Naqamtee, February 2, 2016

Meeqatu bayee bade biyyaa ari'amee	*Many were forced to take exile*
Haqa isaa himachuuf meeqatu fannifamee	*Many were hanged only for demanding their rights*
Osoo Afaan qabnuu irraa ugguramnee	*While we have language, we are deprived of it*
Afaan biraa baruuf qawween dirqamnee	*We were forced to learn other language at the gunpoint*
Kunoo hardha ijaarrachuuf	*It is today we are to revive it*
Qaawwaa xinnoo argannee	*With a very narrow opportunity*
Dhiiraa fi dhalaa if booda akka hinjennee	*Both male and female, do not see it hesitantly.*
Biyyaa teenyaa tiruu maqaa jijjiranii	*They all changed our naming system*
Afaan nut hinbeennen meeqa moggasanii	*They renamed us in the language we do not know*
Warri cunqurstoonni yoom nudamdamanii[209]	*There was no incident when we were sympathized with.*

The song was sung by Mohammed Ibrahim Waday popularly known as Shantam Shubbisaa. The song is the reflection of the suppression of the Oromo under the past regimes which this song depicts as 'illegitimate' oppressors. It was a song of experiences in which the differences and similarities between the past regimes and the *Darg* were revealed. It was a reminder for the Oromo not to interrupt the bitter struggle which their predecessors had already started. The song flatly opposed the imposition of Amharic as a compulsory language and also the changing of Oromo personal and place names. As informants recall, the general impression of the song was to remind the Oromo to nurture the few changes witnessed in the revolution as they were the outcome for which many Oromo had been assassinated and exiled.

The other song which was presented at the cultural show with the most exalted poetical efforts that put into words the idea of the continuity of the Oromo suppression extending from the past regimes into the revolutionary *Darg* period was *Qawwee Malee Maaltu Bilisa Nubaasaa* (Armed Struggle is the only Remedy for Oromo Liberation). The song was composed by Abraham Lataa who is popularly known as Abbaa Caalaa Lataa[210] and was sung by Ilfinesh Qannoo. Elfinash had sung this song at Aggaaroo (one of the towns of the then Kafa Province) in 1976 just a few months before she presented it at the national cultural show of the Oromo at Ethiopian National

[209] Oromo Television interviews with Shantam Shubbisaa, accessed on September 12, 2014.
[210] Abbaa Caalaa Lataa was a brother of Leencoo Lataa and one of the founders of the OLF.

Theatre in January 1977.

***Afaan* Oromo**	**Free Translation**
Gargar baanee teenyee	*We stayed separated*
Bara baayyee turree	*Just for long*
Ani singaafadhaa akkamin walbarree?	*Let me ask you, how impressive getting together is?*
Kun Arsi jedhanii, kun qottuu jedhanii	*They named us this Arsi and that Qottu*
Tiruu dhiigaa tokkoo addaan nuqoodanii	*They separated offspring of the same stock*
Mee hayaadannuu nucunqursaa jiruu	*Let us recall, they continued to suppress us*
Maqaa lafallee nijijjijiruu	*Even they changed place names*
Adaamadhan Nazirete jedhanii	*They renamed Adaama as Naziret*
Tolasaafi Badhaasaa Kiristinnaa kaasanii	*They Christianized Tolasaa and Badhaasa*
Nurratti jigee turee ba'aan inni guddaansaa	*Heavy load has been fallen upon us*
Qawwee malee maaltu bilisaa nubaasaa[211]	*Armed struggle is the only remedy for liberation*

This musical reaction to political events became open and more direct. Its central message was intensely oppositional. The song bitterly condemned the attempts of the past regimes to break the central unity of the Oromo into clans and the replacement of Oromo names by Amharic names, and the continuity of the same system under the *Darg*. The deeper meaning and message of the song is the persistence of unity among the Oromo of different *Gadaa* territories in spite of un interrupted endeavors to demolish common Oromo identity by keeping them apart and changing the naming system of the Oromo. Therefore, the intention of this song is to draw the attention of the public to the need for armed struggle. The song linked the suppression of the imperial regime with that of the *Darg*.

The songs of the cultural show loudly reacted to *Darg*'s restrictions on the development of Oromo nationalism. They produced and performed a strong political awakening songs and dramas, despite the danger posed by the state security structure and individuals with hatred towards the use of *Afaan* Oromo. They were a reflection of the feeling of rage against cultural, linguistic, economic and political oppression under both the imperial and the *Darg* regime.

[211]OMN interview with Elfinash Qannoo, accessed on November 09, 2016.

In Oromo history the cultural show has been described as unique in its nature for its contribution to the rise of Oromo nationalism. It illustrated how cultural forms, like music, are important forces in shaping a collective national consciousness. It evoked the attendants' awareness of socio-structural realities and their own cultural tradition, while the attendants in turn imbibed the message and the rhythm from the music in their everyday life. It also demonstrated vividly that the Oromo came together from distant places, communicated and understood each other without cultural and dialectical barriers perhaps after a century of isolation because of political suppression.[212]

Sentiments toward the cultural show were said to have been the same from person to person. It also demonstrated that Oromo culture and *Afaan* Oromo were still rich and potential enough to be used in the rise of Oromo nationalism. It also not only increased the boldness of singers to sing the songs that reflected Oromo identity and the audiences to express their view of Oromo nationalism but also served as a manifestation of the collective identity of the Oromo national movement. The show became more of a reflection of political nationalism than cultural nationalism as at first intended.[213]

In spite of these challenges, the *Darg* continued to organize and use *Abiyotawi Kenet* for propaganda purposes in different Ethiopian languages. Although under strict supervision, singers and performers organized under *Abiyotawi Kinet* continued performing their cultural shows by moving from province to province, sub-province to sub-province and from district to district under

[212] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017; Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008; the late Hailu Disaasaa, Addis Ababa, April 14, 2008.

[213] *Ibid.*

the sponsorship of the *Darg* itself.[214] Yet, the Oromo singers continued linking issues of Oromo nationalism covertly to their audiences.[215]

Nevertheless, producing or singing such songs was not without risk. Informants recall that the *Darg* response to the movement was swift and strong. Artists, producers, recording companies, and political intermediaries were exiled or spent significant time in prison or were subjected to myriad forms of state terror and harassment. The concert even became the immediate cause for the *Darg* to take measures against such Oromo associations. As a result, some of the performers of cultural Oromo show at National Theatre were killed. Others were sentenced to not less than eight months of imprisonment. A few were able to escape. *Bariisaa* newspaper was nationalized and became the government's *Afaan* Oromo newspaper. Heavy and double censorships were imposed on the rest of *Abiyotawi Kinet* down to the *Kebele* level.[216] The first was self-censorship which was made to avoid any ill-treatment from the *Darg* because of the songs or the plays. The second was the censorship made by the censorship authority.[217]

In the second case, all singers or performers were ordered to translate their songs or plays into

[214] Letter from the Office of Wallagga Regional Culture and Sport to the Office of Gimbii Sub-Province, Date, *Yakatet* 5, 1973 E.C. Ref. No. 09/92/73, The Office of Wallagga Regional Abiyotawi Kinet Folder No. 09/73; Letter from the Office of Wallagga Regional Culture and Sport to News Agency of the Office of Wallagga Regional Administration, Date. *Yakatit* 26, 1973 E.C. Ref. No. 09/100/73, the Office of Wallagga Regional Abiyotawi Kinet Folder No. 09/73; Letter from the Office of Abay Coomman District Administration to the Office of Wallagga Regional Administration, Date, *Tahisas* 24, 1973 E.C, Ref. No. 911/28, the Office of Wallagga Regional Abiyotawi Kinet Folder No.09/73; Letter from the Office of Wallagga Regional Administration to the Ministry of Cultural and Sport, Date, *Tahisas* 23, 1973, Ref. No. አስ/ 13/ቢ204, the Office of Wallagga Regional Abiyotawi Kinet r No.09/73; Letter from the Office of Wallagga Regional Culture and Sport to the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Date, *Tir* 26, 1973 E.C. Ref. No. 09/76/73, the Office of Wallagga Regional Abiyotawi Kinet Folder No.09/73; Letter from the Office of Wallagga Regional Committee to Iluu Abbaa Boor Regional COPWE Representative, Date, *Maskaram* 6, 1974, Ref. No. ክሀ/ፓ3ርአ2/s4/74, The Office of Wallagga Regional Abiyotawi Kinet Folder No.09/73; Letter from Wallagga Regional Administration Office to Wallagga Regional Administration Culture and Sport Representative of the Ministry of Culture and Sport Office, Date *Tahisas* 23, 1973, Ref. No. As/13/B204, Fold. No. Wallagga Province Kinet comrade, 09/73

[215] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008.

[216] *Ibid.*

[217] *Ibid.*

Amharic and to get censorship approval from the censorship authorities. Here the purpose was to avoid the cooperation of the Oromo in authority with the singers and performers. However, the censorship in Amharic translation became an open opportunity for the Oromo singers. It was because the translation into Amharic could not understand and express the politically subversive meanings of *Afaan* Oromo. Therefore, some Oromo songs and plays that passed strict censorship assessments of the *Darg* was continued to be Oromo nationalistic when one carefully analyzes their deepest meanings.[218]

The Oromo performers of *Abiyotawi Kenet* were not alone in the struggle for *Afaan* Oromo and Oromo nationalism. There were also some Oromo singers and players who were competent enough to join the Ethiopian National Theatre, *Hager Feqer* Theater, Addis Ababa Cultural Theatre and the bands of various military divisions. Ali Birraa (for some time), Hailu Disaasaa, Admasu Berhanu, Taddasa Cuqee, Darajė Zamadu and Sahile Dagaagoo were among such employed artists. Sahile Dagaagoo and Ali Birraa had also been employed during the Emperor's period.[219]

However, some of these artists whom I interviewed claim that they were rarely invited to people's gatherings and were allowed to sing only one or two songs. They also claimed that it was in rare cases that the Oromo singers and players were allowed when Ethiopian cultural shows went abroad. Instead, they argue, the opportunities were given for those who did not know both the culture and the language of the Oromo. According to informants, this abuse had two impacts. First, since the imitators could not show the real culture to which they

[218]Tesfaye, "A History of Written *Afaan*…", p.87.

[219] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008.

did not belong and it reduced the entertaining elements of the culture. Secondly, it also affected the morale and income of the artists from that culture.[220]

In fact, it is also unjust to overlook the contributions of those artists who added one or two *Afaan* Oromo songs to their Amharic cassettes. Unlike those who sang only in *Afaan* Oromo, these artists introduced the lyrics and melody of *Afaan* Oromo songs to non-*Afaan* Oromo speakers together with the Amharic songs. In doing so they made many non-*Afaan* Oromo speakers learn about Oromo and *Afaan* Oromo. In this case, the roles of Tilahun Gessesse, Bizunesh Bekele, Hamalmal Abate, Abebe Tesema, Hibist Tiruneh and others are worth mentioning. Even their *Afaan* Oromo songs were more recorded in cassettes in addition to Amharic songs than those which were sung purely in *Afaan Oromo*.[221]

Nonetheless, many of these songs and plays especially those which were purely in *Afaan* Oromo remained unpublished because of either strict censorship or lack of resources. The only significant recording of *Afaan* Oromo songs in cassette was after 1985. It was after this year because it was the time when the *Darg* infiltration by Oromo nationalists became strengthened. It was also a time when access to recording materials began to improve in quality and to be lower in cost than before.

Nevertheless, informants state that it was the memory of the singers and the keeping of their written manuscripts by a few which enabled the songs to appear in many volumes of cassettes after 1991. The *Afaan* Oromo cassettes which were published in many volumes after 1991 were either a direct copy of the *Darg* period or with some adjustment to the changes of the period. Therefore, from the strict analysis of these songs, one can conclude that the songs were

[220] *Ibid.*
[221] Tesfaye, "A History of Written *Afaan*…", p. 87.

a direct expression of the Oromo life situation under the *Darg* on the one hand, and attempts undertaken to revive Oromo culture, songs, and traditional dances on the other hand.

Generally, the conscious efforts to connect the Oromo for unity and the continued efforts to silence the Oromo put the arts of the Oromo culture, especially the songs, in the center of the struggle. Oromo song clearly emerged as one of the tools with which the Oromo were bonded together to oppose the unjust restriction from their right to self-rule. The widespread access to the social spaces of production and consumption of new forms of Oromo resistance music and plays proved to be a great challenge to the *Darg*. The songs clearly show that the literature of Oromo language played a significant role in informing, teaching and motivating the Oromo. They became one of the rallying calls in the development of written *Afaan* Oromo. It contributed to the growth of written *Afaan* Oromo literature with great expansion. It resulted in the addition of new vocabularies and expressions that fit the changing demands of modernity. It also played a great role in narrowing the dialect variations of the different Oromo *Gadaa* territories, and in establishing basic requirements needed for transforming *Afaan* Oromo into a language of arts and written literature.

In doing so, it supported *Afaan* Oromo publications which were proliferating at an astounding speed. Therefore, the Oromo cultural troupe played an outstanding role in publicizing Oromo culture, language, political consciousness and other aspects of Oromo life to the world of literate societies. The contribution materialized in 1991 and after, when the majority of the Oromo from every corner explosively flocked in unbelievable great number to attend evening language classes learning the use of *Qubee*, Oromo history and culture.

7.6. **Books and Other Publications in Oromo Language Under the *Darg***

In chapters four, five and six, we have seen how several translations of many religious books were made and several grammatical materials were produced in *Afaan* Oromo under very difficult conditions. This showed a little change when the *Darg* came to power and declared Basic Education for All, at least in some major languages of the country. The major objective of the basic education was to enable adults and youth to read and write so that they could grasp the motto of *Itiyopya Tikdam* (Ethiopia First) and later the philosophy of scientific socialism.[222]

The new government needed the message of socialist revolution to be carried to the people as rapidly as possible as it was in a hurry to secure its position with the masses and education was one way of achieving. For this, the *Darg* was influenced to believe that literacy for Ethiopian national development would be expanded quickly if learning took place in the learners' own language. To achieve this skill, initial literacy materials were produced in more than five Ethiopian languages: Amharic, Tigrigna, *Afaan* Oromo, Walayta and Somali.[223]

Nonetheless, the plan to start primary school in mother tongue languages was suspended by the guidelines developed by the Ministry of Education. It states: "… በመሰረት ትምህርትና በጎልማሶች ትምህርት በእናት ቋንቋ እየተሰጠ ለጊዜዉ በመሰረት ትምህርት በሚገኘዉ ልምድ ዝግጅት አማካይነት አቋም ስፈቅድ በአንደኛ ደረጃ በእናት ቋንቋ ለማስተማር ይሞከራል፡[224] (Translated as: "… while providing basic and adult

[222] "Ya Biherasab Quwanqwawochi Latimihiriti Mascha Quwanquwa Siwulu Ya Miyaskatiluti Chigirochi ena Mabtihe Hasaboch" (The Problems and Forwarded Solutions in Using Nations' Languages for Medium of Instruction)", 1979/80, IES MS, 5721; Clapham, *Transformation and*…, p. 152-153; Tsehay Tefera, "A Sociolinguistic Survey of Language Use and Attitudes towards Language in Ethiopia: Implications for Language Policy in Education" (Dissertation in Linguistics: Georgetown University, Graduate School, 1977), p. 62.

[223] *Ibid.*

[224] *Quoted in* "Ya Biherasab Quwanqwawochi Latimihiriti Mascha Quwanquwa Siwulu Ya Miyaskatiluti Chigirochi ena Mabtihe Hasaboch" (The Problems and Forwarded Solutions in Using Nations' Languages for Medium of Instruction)", 1979/80, IES MS, 572.

literacy in mother tongue languages, that of the primary school would be thought throughout over from experiences of basic and adult literacy given the affordable capacity of the country). As the affordable capacity of the country was very low, the hope to start primary education in mother tongue was done illusion which directly affected the use of *Afaan* Oromo for the same purpose.

Nonetheless, the most spectacular example of the revolutionary educational transformation was the national literacy campaign which was launched in 1979. This basic literacy education was conducted from 1979 to 1984 with the object to cover 90% of the Ethiopian population.[225] It was one of the episodes which Oromo nationalists made use of in attempts to make *Afaan* Oromo a beneficiary. They soon engaged themselves clandestinely in the preparation of literacy materials in *Afaan* Oromo. The *Darg* effort to allow the teaching of basic literacy in different Ethiopian languages gave *Afaan* Oromo a share of twenty percent of the published literacy materials.[226]

The literacy books of *Afaan* Oromo had two levels. The first was the book *Barnota Fidalaa* (Book for Alphabet). It was intended to enable the learners to read and write Geez alphabet on the basis of Oromo sounds. The second part was *Kitaaba Dubbisaa* (Readers Book). It was intended to help the learners to begin reading of *Afaan* Oromo passages. Just a year after the beginning of the campaign, the readers' book was developed to the level of *Kitaaba Jireeyna Gamtaa Sabaa* (Book of People's Social Life). It was authored by Jallataa Jaafaroo and the book was about developmental stages of societies.[227] However, since the book focused on the transmission of revolutionary and socialist ideas rather than using the context of the immediate

[225]Asteraye, p.33.
[226]Clapham, *Transformation* and…, p. 152.
[227] Jallataa Jaafaroo, *ጅረኛ ጎሞታ ሰባ (Social Development)* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1967).

environment, the learning was highly compromised, for most readers were not attracted.

In 1978, the committee in charge of revolutionary propaganda published five books in *Afaan* Oromo using the *fidal*. The focuses of all the books were to organize the masses and create awareness. In the same year, an *Afaan* Oromo teachers' guide comprising the parts of speech in Oromo language with parallel translation in Amharic was published. The book was authored by a person named Bakala Mullataa. In 1980 Mangasha Riqituu published a book entitled *Biifituu Diramaa* (The Early Sunrise) in *Afaan* Oromo using *fidal*. The book has about twenty-five titles which deal with issues of *Nnyaata* (Nutrition), *Bishaan* (Water), *Horsiisa* (Rearing Cattle), *Dhibee Daddarbaa* (Transmittable Diseases), *Mana Fincaanii* (Latrines), *Dhibee Busaa* (Malaria), *Walaloo* (Poetry), *Jaalala* (Love), *Aadaa* (culture) and others.[228]

Unlike all other publications during the *Darg* regime, the book saw the society from inside. It tried to convert what the society orally knew into written literature. The author wrote down poems, narratives, and proverbs that already existed in the folklore orally. In the same year, 1980, Temesgen Gammadaa, who was once one of the radio journalists of Harar and National Radio, translated a book entitled *Class Struggle* and *People's Revolution* in *Wal'dhaansoo Gitotaa* fi *Warraqsa Uummataa*.[229] However, in spite of its contribution to the development of written *Afaan* Oromo literature, its contents, which deal entirely with socialism, were not attractive to the learners who had little awareness about socialism or even interest in socialism.

In 1980 and 1981, the Bible Society of Ethiopia published a translation of the New Testament and a book entitled *Gammachiisaa* (Happiness) respectively. Generally, in *Afaan* Oromo the

[228] Mangasha Riqituu, *Biifituu Diramaa (Early Sun) (*Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1981).
[229] Temesgen Gemeda. *Waldhaansoo Gittoota fi Warraaqsa Uummataa (Class Struggle and People's Revolution)* (*Addis* Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1980).

Ethiopian Bible Society published *Qulqulluu Wangela Gooftaa Keenyaa* (Holy Bible), *Hojii Ergamtootaa* (Duties of the Disciples), *Gara Koo Kottaa* (Come to Me) in 1985; *Wangela Marqoos* (Gospel of St. Mark) in 1986; and *Mee Dubbisaa Oduu Gaggaarii Kana* (May You Read the Good News) in 1987.[230] These scripture materials in Oromo were entirely focused on religious issues. They were written while the *Darg* stood against religion and declared its intention to force people away from religion.

Similarly, the Protestant pastor, the Reverend Dafaa Jamoo, came out with different publications in *Afaan* Oromo on different issues. *Huursaa (Short Stories*) in 1976/7,[231] *Gumbii Oduu* (Store of Stories) in 1982,[232] *Aadaa Oromoo Wallagga* (Wallagga Oromo Culture),[233] *Kuusaa Sagalee* (Collection of Oromo Words) in 1988,[234] and *Safuu Biyyaa Keessaa* (Ethics of the Oromo) in 1983.[235] All the books reflected the Oromo way of life and the necessity to stick to it. As he stated in the prefaces of all the books, his purpose was to preserve the cultural identity of the Oromo for future generations. Nonetheless, the contributions of the books were not only for identity preservation but also to the development of written Oromo literature.

However, as the case of *Bariisa* Newspaper, issues of suitable script for *Afaan* Oromo continued to be the subject of conflicts. In spite of the good number of publications of *Afaan* Oromo basic literacy materials, the problem of proper distribution and the deficiency of Geez script to represent *Afaan* Oromo sounds continued without effective solutions. On the one hand, the Oromo learners complained of the difficulty of reading and writing *Afaan* Oromo in

[230] Tesfaye, "A History of Written *Afaan*…", p. 102.
[231] Dafaa Jamoo, *ሁርሳ (River Name)* (Addis Ababa: Berihanina Salam, 1969).
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[235]Dafaa Jamoo, *ሰፉ ቢዮ ከሳ (Indigenous Culture)* (No Town: No Publisher, 1983 E.C.).

Geez script. On the other hand, the government cadres, especially who were against Oromo interest, interpreted the complaints as though the Oromo preferred to learn in Amharic instead of their own language.[236]

Besides this, issues of appropriate distribution remained the other contentions. Informants unanimously agree that Amharic materials were more distributed than *Afaan* Oromo even in areas where the largest portion of the population was Oromo. Regardless of the policy, government cadres played significant roles in disturbing the distribution. There were frequent reports that *Afaan* Oromo literacy materials were instead sent to the areas where there were no *Afaan* Oromo learners.[237] The general aim of the actions was to induce the government to declare openly an 'Amharic only' policy.

In fact, the problem started at the beginning of the production of the *Afaan* Oromo literacy materials. It was at the beginning that Hamid Hamid is said to have suggested the use of the Latin alphabet with the justification that it was preferable to *fidal*, Arabic or Bakrii's orthography. However, the author was ordered to do what he was told and a political decision was given precedence over the recommendation of linguistic science.[238]

Gene Gragg who respected the Oromo interest and observed the problem of reading *Afaan* Oromo in Geez script published an *Afaan* Oromo-English dictionary in 1982. The script he used was the Latin spelling system of *Hirmaatadubbii Afaan Oromo.* Using the Latin script,

[236] Tilahun Gamta, "The Politicization of My Oromo-English Dictionary: The Writer's Reflections" in *Journal of Oromo Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 & 2 (July 2000), p. 3.

[237] Interviews with Ejjetaa Tolasaa, Naqamtee, January 13, 2017 Ibrahim Haji Ali, Addis Ababa, August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016, January 19, 2017; Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017; Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008; Zerihun Wadaajoo, Addis Ababa, September 1, 2008; Rashad Buuba, Dirre-Dhowaa and Musa Ahmad, July 18, 2008; Kebede Firrisaa, Addis Ababa, July 30, 2008; Clapham, *Transformation and*…, p. 153.

[238] Interviews with Ibrahim Haji Ali and Zeyadin Yusuf, Addis Ababa, January 29, 2017 Mahdi Hamid, Addis Ababa, August 27, 2008.

he produced a 462 pages of Oromo-English dictionary. The Oromo spelling system of the dictionary was written in Latin script, coinciding with the currently standardized *Qubee* saving a few differences. The dictionary was prepared in such a way that it constituted a systematic transcription, index notes and bibliography, in addition to the main body of Oromo-English Dictionary. According to the author, the preparation of the dictionary lasted for ten years starting in 1972 and completed in 1982.[239]

However, Tilahun Gemta, who understood the official actions as a tactic to discontinue the policy of using major Ethiopian languages for literacy purposes started preparing an *Afaan* Oromo learning dictionary in Latin script. The preparation of the dictionary was started in 1980[240] and it was published in 1989.[241] According to the author, the preparation of the book took about five years which was from 1980 to 1985. In this period the author visited Arsii, Baalee, Matakkal, Harar, Jimmaa, Shawa, Booranaa and Wallagga in addition to his native province of Iluu Abbaa Boora. The purpose of the visits was to grasp how contemporary Oromo in rural areas spoke *Afaan* Oromo and to collect relevant words for his project.[242] The publication phase took him four years. According to the statement of the author, the publication of the dictionary was delayed for four years after its completion because of the Ethiopian censorship authorities and some individuals who stood against its publication. [243]

Although the author encountered a serious challenge from government authorities for his use of Latin script, he stated that his purpose was to solve the readability problem of *Afaan* Oromo sounds and to allow continuity of studies in *Afaan* Oromo. Nevertheless, his Latin script in his

[239] Gene Gragg, et al, *Oromo Dictionary* (Chicago: African Study Center, 1982).
[240] Tilahun, "The Politicization of…" pp.3-4.
[241] Tilahun Gemeta, *Oromo-English dictionary* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1989).
[242] Tilahun, "The politicization of…", pp.2-3.
[243] *Ibid.,* pp.10-12.

Afaan Oromo-English Dictionary did not give full solution to *Afaan* Oromo pronunciation. Although he solved the majority of the problems, he left the representation of some Oromo sounds with limitations. As the author himself states, the limitations were purposive. He states that although he had the knowledge of the *Qubee* script the OLF was using at the time, he had deliberately made some minor divergence as a tactic so as not to be identified with the OLF.[244]

Generally, all the struggles alerted Oromo for a written *Afaan* Oromo and common Oromo identity and brought *Afaan* Oromo literature to fast growth and the Oromo to a well-defined political nation. The struggles brought *Afaan* Oromo to become not only an official language but also became a mighty weapon for furthering the Oromo cause. Years of continuous effort eventually transformed *Afaan* Oromo in 1991 from a suppressed and household language to the official language of Oromia Regional State and the Oromo to a nation with their own state with an officially recognized map as map III shows. Oromo youth and intellectuals have since then come forth in great numbers with newspapers, magazines, novels, translations and plays that describe their nation and their state in *Afaan* Oromo. Although with some limitations, the struggles have made *Afaan* Oromo books and publications occupy their rightful places in book stores and libraries.

[244] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

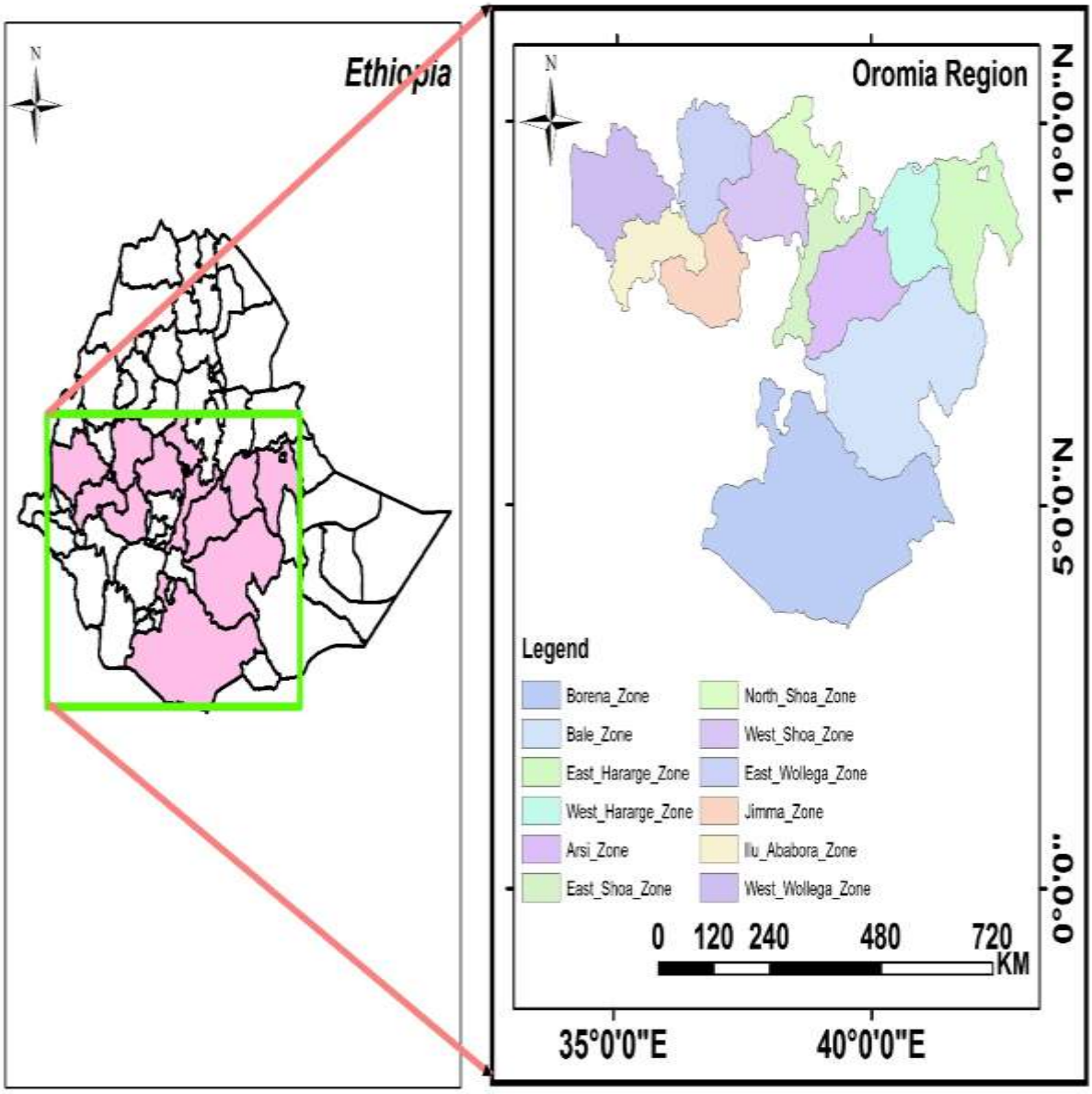

Figure 3: Political Authorized Map of Oromia Regional State as of 1991.

Source: Adapted from Oromia Finance and Economic Development Bureau, 2019

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined a number of issues that are linked with the reciprocal relationship between Oromo literature and the Oromo national identity. As the predominant marker of cultural identity among the Oromo, *Afaan* Oromo literature has occupied the central position as it has been the means by which the Oromo have accumulated, stored and transmitted their cultural experiences of solidarity and cohesion vertically across time and horizontally across geographical areas. *Afaan* Oromo had been changed in the course of time from 1840 to 1991 from the language of orality and a cultural nation to the language of a political nation and the written official language.

Before the conquest, the main role of *Afaan* Oromo literature had been storing and accumulating cultural experiences of the Oromo from which the Oromo youths were socialized into ethnically committed and morally strong generations. The data analyzed in the dissertation show that the performances of tales, poems, songs, epics, riddles, demonological legends, ballads, anecdotes, proverbs, lullabies, history and others were to enable the Oromo youth to distinguish good and evil, moral and immoral, destructive and constructive, thoughts and actions. Simply, it was to cultivate the generations into what the literature on identity refers to as a cultural nation.

During the expansion of the Islamic and Christian religions, the role of *Afaan* Oromo literature was transformed to play the roles by which religious missionaries converted the Oromo. The dissertation has identified that Christian and Islamic religious missionaries viewed *Afaan* Oromo as quite significant, to be transformed to written form and used for religious propagation. *Afaan* Oromo literature was also become an instrument by which the Oromo

maintained their common unity and resisted Amhara domination. The Oromo trusted it as the important instrument by which a nationwide Oromo movement against the Amhara domination was organized. They used it as a significant agent in guiding, provoking, preventing, and recasting perception of the social reality among the Oromo. At the same time, the Amhara rulers took it as a dangerous protective shell to be broken first. The dissertation has disclosed that *Afaan* Oromo oral literature produced during the period under study was not only mere folktales for domestic entertainment but also a domain in which individuals and groups in a variety of social roles articulated a commentary upon political power in a society and created knowledge about power relations.

Nonetheless, the conditions for creating, practicing and developing *Afaan* Oromo to written literature during the period under study were discouraging. The regimes of Emperor Menilek II, Emperor Haile Sillasie and Mengistu at one time or another were brutally repressive with respect to writing in *Afaan* Oromo. Opposition against this repression was interpreted as rebellion, insurrection, and was considered to be treason. However, the good thing was that the severe repression became an instrument that increased unity and awareness among the Oromo. It gave those who took up the agenda more encouragement and determination and made them continue the struggle to have *Afaan* Oromo in a written form although success in this took them more than a century.

The exact date when *Afaan* Oromo began to be written has not been identified. However, since the time of Job Ludolhpus' printing of seventeen Oromo words in 1682, the endeavors to write in *Afaan* Oromo became part of missionary expansion and the Oromo struggle to escape the linguistic domination of the Amhara government. One can assess the struggle to write in *Afaan* Oromo from four main aspects. One was the records of travelers for the purpose of collecting

language specimens as in the case of Henry Salt; the efforts of Oromo rulers as the case of Abbaa Bogboo's letter in 1820s; and Islamic *Ajami* for the purpose of introducing the Oromo to Arabic script. This was backed by the second aspect of the Protestant and Catholic missionaries' efforts for the purpose of converting the Oromo. Although they paid a heavy price, these missionaries were significantly successful in translating the scriptures into *Afaan* Oromo, in inscribing Oromo folklore, collecting Oromo vocabularies, sketching *Afaan* Oromo grammar, as well as educating the Oromo children both abroad and at home in the country. These efforts were mainly noticeable from 1840 to 1935.

The third aspect was studies by the linguists specially by the Italians. The general overview of their work shows that their aim was to develop a standardized script for *Afaan* Oromo on the basis of the Italian language spelling system and to develop Italian-*Afaan* Oromo bilingual speakers. This and their efforts to use *Afaan* Oromo for administration and a medium of instruction during their occupation period laid a basic ground for the later standardized script for *Afaan* Oromo and the united Oromo nationalism. This might have been one of the consolidating reasons for all corners of Oromo resistance against the restoration of Emperor Haile Sillasie.

The fourth and very important was the work done by the Oromo political nationalists who devoted much of their time, labor, money and even their lives to get *Afaan* Oromo written just as any literate language of the world, and make the Oromo a people with their own freedom. This struggle ranged from individual efforts like that of Bakri Saphaloo to well organized Oromo political movements. The struggle became more serious with the emergence of the Maccaa-Tuulamaa Self-Help Association. The movement was joined by the Oromo student struggle and clearly defined itself under the *Darg.* Thus, the struggle has made *Afaan* Oromo

the written official language of the Oromo Regional State and the Oromo a political nation with their own regional state. From this, one can generalize that above all others, it was *Afaan* Oromo literature that played a central role in shaping the idea of the Oromo nation about their conquerors and retained a strong hold among them when other cultural practices were suppressed and threatened.

GLOSSARY

***Afaan* Oromo**	**English**
Abbaa	father, the owner
Abbaa Gadaa	father of the gadaa in power
Abbaa Muudaa	Father of anointing
Afaan Oromoo	Oromo Language
Afree	the confederacy of the four
Ajaamii	written *Afaan* Oromo in Arabic script
Alangaa	hippopotamus skin strip
Arfii	the name given to *Afaan* Oromo alphabet in the1960s
Argaa dhageettii	oral information and tradition (What is seen and heard)
Buttaa	a very joyous Oromo festival, celebrated by each member of a *gadaa* group in power slaughtering a bull.
Caffee	assembly/ the Oromo parliament, in the Case of Maccaa and Tuulamaa Oromo clans
Daadoo	lobar service provided on equal terms on the field of each member in turn
Daboo	a type of lobar help which occasionally organized for one day.
Dabballee	Oromo male children whose age is between five days and eight years
Dhagaa Tuullaa	pile of stones
Gadaa	socio-economic, political and religious institution of the Oromo
Gosa	clan
Guddifachaa	adopting one's child
Gumii	council / parliament, in the case of Booranaa Oromo
Guuza	occasional working in cooperation
Haruuza	marriage ceremony among Ittuu Humbaana Oromo
Irrensa	qaalluu emissaries
Iyyafannoo	a request for information
Jila	the delegates and the journey to Abbaa Muudaa
Kora Ollaa	neighbourhood council
Lallaba	passing of laws
Madrasaa	centre of Islamic learning
Manzumaa	*Afaan* Oromo Islamic rhythm
Moggaasa	amalgamation of non-Oromo clan to Oromo
Mootii	Oromo king
Muuda	anointing

Odaa	sycamore tree under which the Oromo conduct meetings and other cultural festivals
Oromumma	Oromo identity
Qaalluu	leader of Oromo indigenous religion
Qubee	standardized Afaan Oromo Script
Sadacha	the confederacy of the three
Safuu	norms in Oromo culture
Waaqa	God
Wadaaja	ritual festivals among Ittuu Humbanaa Oromo

Amharic	**English**
Alaqa	leader in the priesthood
Azaj	commander
Dajjazmach	military title, Literally "Commander of the gate."
Fidel, Ethiopic, Geez	Amharic alphabet
Fidel Sarawitii	campaign for alphabetization
Fitiwrari	military title, literally "commander of the vanguard"
Geez	old Ethiopian language but in this case it is to mean its alphabet
Nigus	king
Qangazmach	military title, Literally "commander of the right flank
Qes	priest
Qum Dingay	standing stone
Ras	military title, literally "head." The highest military rank given to the nobility
Zemecha	literacy campaign

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Lists of Informants

S.N	Name	Age	Place and Date of Interviews	Remark
1	Abdi Buh	65	Dirre-Dhowaa July 18, 2008 and December 25, 2015	Formerly, he was one of the members of Afran Qalloo Cultural Troupe. He served the troupe by composing poems and singing. He has good memory of how the troupe had mobilized the Oromo against the oppressors.
2	Abdul Karihm Abbaa Garoo	65	Jimmaa October 9, 2008 and January 20, 2015	He is a researcher on written *Ajami* in *Afaan* Oromo in Jimmaa Area. He remembers the intermittent struggle of Jimmaa Oromo Muslims to write in *Afaan* Oromo from the introduction of Islam to the region.
3	Adam Ibsa	60	Dirre-Dhowaa July 17, 2008	Formerly he was the member and player of musical instruments for Afran Qalloo Cultural Troupe. He narrates how the audiences were absorbed into their shows and gave their applauses. He also recalls the repression they were underwent.
4	Adamu Beyene	55	Addis Ababa June 3, 2008; April 30, 2016	He is an Oromo from Matakal (in formerly Gojjam General Governorate). Formerly he was a member of EPRP. He has articulated knowledge on how EPRP mistreated the use of *Afaan* Oromo for written purpose.
5	The late Admasu Beranu	57	Addis Ababa August 18, 2008	He was one of the Oromo who was employed at Hager Fiqir Theatre during the imperial regime and also later. He was also one of those Oromo who tested the change of their name into Amharic as a compulsory criterion to be employed, and as a result dropped his former name Addunyaa Magarsaa and took the new Amhara name Admasu Beranu. Therefore, he narrated how the Oromo were treated both under the imperial and the *Darg* periods.
6	Ahmad Maddaa	80	Dheeraa November 4, 2015	He was one of the participants of the Maccaa-Tuulamaa meeting of Dheeraa in 1964.
7	Ahmad Mohammed	72	Ijaajjii (West Shawa), Miyaziya 24, 2009 E.C	He is from Asala and the interview was conducted at Ijaajji on the celebration of Gadaa Ceremony. He is a traditional historian and his history knowledge on the *Gadaa* system as well as other history specially in relation to Arsi, Baalee and Harar is remarkable.
8	Ahmad Mohammed Dheekkoo (Hajii)	70	Ijaajjii	He is a distinguished oral historian from Arsi. The Interview with him was conducted at Ijaajji in West Shawa where he came to participate on the Gadaa celebration of Maccaa Oromo.
9	Asfaw Ballinaa	45	Naqamtee Decembers 16, 2017	He has good knowledge on how the Protestant missionaries in Wallagga insisted on using *Afaan* Oromo and developed *Afaan* Oromo to the language of education and literature.

10	Atoomsaa Tolasaa	75	Dabbasoo (West Wallagga) March 20, 2017	He is an experienced informant on the events during the imperial, *Darg* and EPRDF periods.
11	Baanjaa Ruudaa	99	Dabbasoo (West Wallagga March 20, 2017	He has fresh memory of Western Oromo Confederation. He also recalls the efforts to impose Amharic on *Afaan* Oromo speakers using state institutions.
12	Badhaasaa Simaa	66	Addis Ababa April 26, 2018	He produced BA thesis on the biography of Dhaabaa Wase, who was on of *Afaan* Oromo journalists during Italian period. He worked as *Afaan* Oromo journalist at Radio Voice of the Gospel of Addis Ababa and later in Radio Ethiopia at Addis Ababa. He has rich memory how they used hidden meanings of *Afaan* Oromo to convey Oromo issues while serving the government propaganda. His knowledge on the history of *Afaan* Oromo radio broadcasting and *Afaan* Oromo singers is really informative.
13	Balcha Deentaa	97	Dambii Doolloo March 10, 2008	He was one of *Afaan* Oromo students of the missionaries at Dambi Doolloo. He was one of *Afaan* Oromo journalists during Italian occupation and later served as Ethiopian Herald editor.
14	Biraasaa Riqituu	88	Mandii (West Wallagga) May 26, 2017	He narrated the situations that the imperial representatives forced them to use Amharic to get services from their offices. He has also clear knowledge on the activities of different political organization during the *Darg*.
15	Diimaa Noggoo (Ph. D)	70	Addis Ababa	He is a reputed Oromo politician and among the founders of OLF. He provided his lived experiences in the Oromo struggle.
16	Ejjetaa Tolasaa	72	Naqamtee March 5, 2008; January 13, 2017	He was one of the students of government school during the imperial regime and faced discrimination because of his unarticulated Amharic. He also served the *Darg* government. He explained how the Oromo were treated by both the imperial and the *Darg* regime and how *Afaan* Oromo was systematically supressed from written status by both governments.
17	Esayas Hordofaa	65	Addis Ababa August 28, 2017	Formerly he was a teacher in Wallagga and had affiliation with Oromo oriented MEISON members. Later he joined Radio Ethiopia as a journalist of *Afaan* Oromo. He provides his rich knowledge on the struggle by *Afaa*n Oromo.
18	Fekadu Wayyeessaa	77	Biilaa (West Wallagga) May 25, 2017	He is a ministry pastor off EECMY at Biilaa. He gave information how the Oromo students were admonished by their teachers even including the Oromo when they spoke unarticulated Amharic. He also narrated how teaching in *Afaan* Oromo helped the missionaries to be established well in West Western Wallagga.
19	The late Firrisa Wagga	98	Arjoo (East Wallagga January 25, 2008	He provided data on how the Oromo were encouraged to practice speaking in Amharic and exercise Amhara culture.

20	Fufaa Ambachaa	55	Addis Ababa April 10, 2017	He is the one who collected Aster Gannoo materials with Kebede Hordofaa and compiled a book. He provided information on the role of the missionaries in the development of written *Afaan* Oromo.
21	Gammadaa Tuuchoo	87	Naqamtee August 10, 2008; February 13, 2016	He was one of the *Afaan* Oromo students of missionary school at Dambi Doolloo. He is a retired Haile Sillasie colonel. He served as police colonel in Dirre-Dhowaa, Baalee, Harar, Addis Ababa and Gojjam. He was chief investigator of those Oromo, who were accused because of their Oromo nationalistic view. Thus, he provided information in relation to these activities.
22	Geedi Rundaasaa	80	Naqamtee February 26,2017	Provided data on how Kumsaa Morodaa and his officers systematically supported the teaching in *Afaan* Oromo.
23	Getachew Marga	75	Arjoo (East Wallagga) August 10, 2008; February 13, 2016	He has good memory on how the Oromo who could not speak Amharic were treated in offices and courts of the imperial and *Darg* regimes. He recalls that an Oromo before the official or the court had to speak Amharic or use interpreter even before *Afaan* Oromo speaking officials. eye witness for the practices during the imperial and *Darg* periods. w the Darg supressed Oromo identity related practices.
24	Girshaa Goobanaa	75	Dheeraa November 4, 2015	Has rich knowledge on how the meeting of Maccaa-Tuulamaa at Dheeraa was disturbingly but effectively suppressed.
25	The late Hailu Disaasaa	52	Addis Ababa April 14, 2008	He was a singer of *Afaan* Oromo at Hager Fiqir Theatre from the last period of imperial regime until his natural death in 2015. He provides information on how *Afaan* singers were treated in government employed bands. He also willingly shared all the events he passed through as Oromo singers.
26	Halloo Daawwee	53	Dirre-Dhowaa July 16 /2008: December 20, 2015	She was one of the members of *Afran Qalloo* cultural troupe and participant of the 1977 Oromo cultural show at the National Theatre of Ethiopia. She is also one of the Oromo singers who was repeatedly imprisoned because of singing Oromo nationalistic songs. She willingly shared with me the difficulty and challenges of singing in *Afaan* Oromo
27	Hamino Eda'oo	53	Asallaa November 01, 2015	She has rich knowledge on how the meeting of Maccaa-Tuulamaa at Dheeraa was disturbingly but effectively suppressed.
28	Hassen Shaamoo		Moyalee July 12, 2008	He provides a history of *Afaan* Oromo broadcasting from Nairobi.
29	Ibrahim Haji Ali	65	Addis Ababa August 26, 2008; October 26, 2016 and January 19, 2017	Formerly he was member of the *Afran Qalloo* cultural troupe. He was also among Aduu Birraa troupe who moved from one Oromo region to another to inspire the other Oromo into the same engagement. Later, he served as proof reader of *Bariisaa* Newspaper. He provided his encyclopaedic knowledge on these issues.
30	Imiru Gebre	93	Naqamtee September 14,	He was one of *Afaan* Oromo students during the Italian period. He has rich knowledge on Oromo history in

			2009 and February 14,2017	general and that of Oromo-Italian relations in particular. He also attempted to produce some *Afaan* Oromo poems in Geez script. Thus, he willingly shared with me this rich knowledge.
31	Kamal Fiixaa	60	Addis Ababa October 30, 2016	He knows Islamic literacy activities in *Afaan* Oromo in the Gibee states. He willingly shared with me knowledge on these issues.
32	Kebede Firrisaa	65	Addis Ababa July 30, 2008.	He was from Iluu Abbaa Boor and one of Haile Sillasie University students. He was among Oromo students who participated in *Fedel Serawit* (Literacy campaign). He was one of the Oromo students' movement and one of the editors-in-chief of *Kana Beektaa* Newspaper. Thus, he provided his rich knowledge of literacy activities in *Afaan* Oromo.
33	Kumaa Eda'ee	65	Dukam April 22, 2008	He was one of the founders Harar *Afaan* Oromoo radio broadcasting and served as a journalist both at Harar and Addis Ababa. He was also among those who organized the 1977 Oromo cultural show at National Theatre of Ethiopia. He had rich knowledge of Oromo struggle for *Afaan* Oromo which he provided me generously.
34	Leencoo Lataa	76	Addis Ababa	He is a reputed Oromo politician and among the founders of OLF. He provided his lived experiences in the Oromo struggle. His information on how the use of *Afaan* Oromo helped them in the linking of the Oromo from one area to another is really remarkable.
35	Mahdi Hamid	60	Addis Ababa August 27, /2008	He was founder and editor-in-Chief of *Bariisaa* Newspaper. He also served as producer of *Afaan* Oromo literacy materials for the *Darg* literacy campaign. He was one of the Organizers of the 1977 Oromo cultural show at the National Theatre of Ethiopia. Later he served as a journalist at Harar radio station. He also produced an *Afaan* Oromo dictionary and other materials in *Afaan* Oromo. Therefore, he witnessed all the success and the failures the Oromo nationalists encountered under the *Darg*.
36	Mitiku Bantii	46	Naqamtee February 2, 2016	He was a member of Wallagga *Darg* Revolutionary Troupe and witnessed for what the Darg needed them and what they also did against the main objective of the *Darg*.
37	Mohamed Abbaa Jabal	65	Mannaa (Jimmaa) October 10, 2008 and January 2, 2015	He narrated about Italian *Afaan* Oromo Radio broadcasting from Jimmaa stating that he had heard from his father who had been guardian of the station. He also informed me with sadness that materials produced on Oromo issues were not preserved for generations.
38	Mohammed Jirruu	82	Dheeraa November 4, 2015	Has rich knowledge on how the meeting of Maccaa-Tuulamaa at Dheeraa was disturbingly but effectively suppressed.

39	Muktar Haji Xuqaa	45	Itayyaa November 03, 2015	Has rich knowledge on how the meeting of Maccaa-Tuulamaa at Dheeraa was disturbingly but effectively suppressed.
40	Musa Ahimad	77	Dirre-Dhowaa July 18, 2008	He was one of the elders who organized the *Afran Qalloo* Cultural Troupe.
41	Olaanaa Hundee	78	Najjoo (West Wallagga) March 24, 2017	He narrates the situations that the imperial officials forced them to use Amharic to get services from their offices. He has also clear knowledge on the activities of different political organization during the *Darg*.
42	Oljirraa Dibaar	73	Mandii (West Wallagga) May 26, 2017	He actively engaged in the administrative activities of both the imperial and *Darg* at the local level. He knows in and out views of both governments of the Oromo.
43	Oljirraa Guutaa	76	Mandii (West Wallagga) March 24, 2017	>>
44	The late Qajeelaa Bayana	100	Arjoo (East Wallagga) January 25, 2008	He knows the practices during the imperial and *Darg* periods. He also well witnessed how the Oromo of his area were eagerly waiting for the success of the Western Oromo Confederation. He also provided data on how it was difficult to convey their cases to Amharic speaking magistrates or lawyers and the repeated failures to get justice because of the language barrier. He also narrated how the *Darg* suppressed Oromo identity related practices.
45	Raggaasaa Disaasaa	100	Jaarsoo (West Wallagga) May 26, 2017	He has fresh memory of the Western Oromo Confederation. He also recalls the efforts to impose Amharic on *Afaan* Oromo speakers using state institutions. He also narrates a history of Oromo struggle at any opportunity against the Amhara domination.
46	Rashid Buuba	77	Dirre-Dhowaa July 18, 2008; December 15, 2017	He was one of the organizers of the Afran Qalloo Cultural Troupe and has good memory to narrate all the activities of Oromo struggle in *Afaan* Oromo.
47	Sadii Mullata	78	Najjoo (West Wallagga) May 24, 2017	He narrates the situations that the imperial officials forced them to use Amharic to get services from their offices. He has also clear knowledge on the activities of different political organizations during the *Darg* period.
48	Shaamoo Halakee		Moyaalee July 12, 2008	He provides a history of *Afaan* Oromo broadcasting from Nairobi.
49	Shakkayitti G/Maskal	90	Jimmaa October 9, 2008	She narrates the aspiration of *Abbaa* Jifaar to have A*faan* Oromo in written and *Abbaa* Joobir's continuous struggle to liberate the Oromo from Amhara domination.
50	Siraji Daadhii	73	Addis Ababa March 20, 2018	Formerly he was from Raaytu (Baalee). He was a participant of the Baalee Oromo struggle in which he was able to rise to the level of colonel. Later also participated in Oromo liberation struggle operations. He cheerfully provided me all information he recalls about the war and its objective.
51	Taha Basha	65	Harar July 20, 2008	He was technician of Ethiopia Radio at Harar. He narrates the limitation of budgets and material supplies

				to the station. He also recalls how the journalists were forced to read *Afaan* Oromo on radio using the enforced Ethiopic script.
52	Tasfa Jireen	70	Biilaa (West Wallagga May 25, 2017	He is a ministry pastor of EECMY at Biilaa. He provided information how missionary teachings in *Afaan* Oromo were continuously suppressed and paradoxically Kumsaa and Dibaabaa gave systematic protection.
53	Tayib *Abbaa* Foggii	55	Jimmaa October 9, 2008	He has rich knowledge on the existence of *Afaan* Oromo Ajami in different parts of Gibee states although he told me with regret that they are not collected and preserved for the researchers.
54	Tilahun Jootee	69	Naqamtee April 04, 2009	He is a great-grandson of *Abbaa* Gammachis. He recalls Abbaa Gammachis's and Aster Gannoo's dedicated efforts to convert *Afaan* Oromo to written form.
55	Uummataa Geenjaa	88	Dabbasoo (West Wallagga) May 27, 2017	He narrates the situations that the imperial officials forced them to use Amharic to get services from their offices. He has also clear knowledge on the activities of different political organizations during the *Darg* period.
56	Warkenash Badhaanee	98	Naqamtee February 6, 2008	She knew when Italy occupied Wallagga. She provided rich information on the Italian language policy and the activities of the Western Oromo Confederation.
57	Wolde Yohannis Workeneh	98	Addis Ababa May 20, 2015	Formerly from Jalduu (West Shawa) and witnessed the drop out of Oromo students from school because of the difficulty they faced to speak articulated Amharic. Later he worked as a *Darg* top official. He provided information how some Oromo in a *Darg* offices provided the Oromo struggle with the necessary coverages and supports
58	Yonus Abdullah	77	Addis Ababa February 22, 2018	He was one of the early Oromo musicians at Radio Mogadishu during imperial period and passed almost his life in the struggle for Oromo issues.
59	Zakariya Mamuye	50	Harar July 20, 2008	He is one of the workers in Harar radio station. He has rich knowledge on the struggle of the Oromo. His knowledge is enriched by the interviews he conducted with individuals who took leading positions in the Oromo struggle.
60	Zerihun Wadaajoo	57	Addis Ababa September 1, 2008	He is an Oromo singer from Wallagga. He participated in the 1977 Oromo cultural show at the National Theatre. Since then he has continued singing Oromo nationalists songs. In addition to a history of Oromo cultural performance, he recalls the punishment that followed singing about Oromo issues.
61	Zeyadin Yusuf	60	Addis Ababa January 29, 2017	He is a composer of Oromo songs especially during Darg period and exiled as a result. He has come back home recently. He provides data on how the Oromo cultural performance was able to reach the status of this day.

Apendices

Appendix I: Job Ludolphus's Ethiopic, Amharic and *Afaan* Oromo Vocabularies Translations Specimen

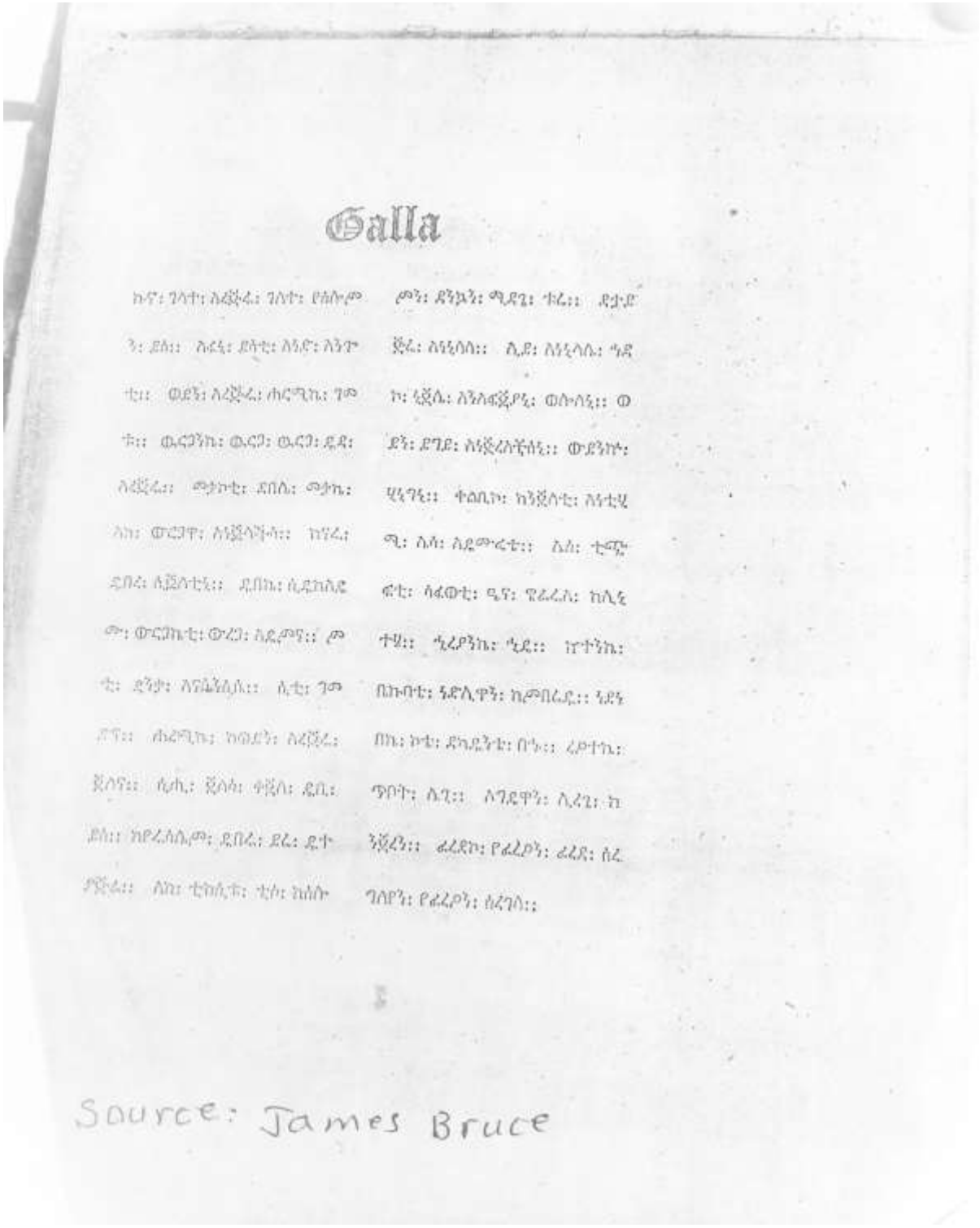
Ethiopic.	*Amharic.*	*Tigran.*	*Dembean.*	*Enarean.*
Egzi=e.	Abet.	Hadazi	Jeg=ja.	Donza.

Gregory left me ſome words of the *Gallan* Language, which I here inſert, to ſhew the difference between the *Amharic* and *Ethiopic* Dialects.

Ethiopic.	*Amharic.*	*Gallan.*	*Engliſh.*
Semaj.	Idem.	*Kake.*	Heaven.
Wabereke.		*Dagae.*	Thunder.
Alat.		*Jbije.*	Fire.
Amatzea Alat.	*Anetza Aſat.*	*Hije fuje.*	bring Fire.
Waj.	*Wahha.*	*Biſan.*	Water.
Firele.	Idem.	*Tarej.*	A Horſe.
Kaleve.	*Weſha.*	*Sareti.*	A Dogg.
Hobaje.	*Janedjero.*	*Tledeſha.*	A Baboon.
Halibe.	*Watote.*	*Anne.*	Milk.
Negus.	Idem.	*Nekus.*	A King.
Nueſate.	*Setotje.*	*Fute.*	A Woman.
Ahuja.	*Wanedama.*	*Abletſha.*	My Brother.
Ahuteja.	*Hate.*	*Ablete.*	My Siſter.
Hubalte.	*Jaba*	*Budeno.*	Bread.

Source: Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia* (London: A Godbid and F. Playford, 1682), p. 80.

Appendix II: James Bruce's Portion of Psalm in *Afaan* Oromo



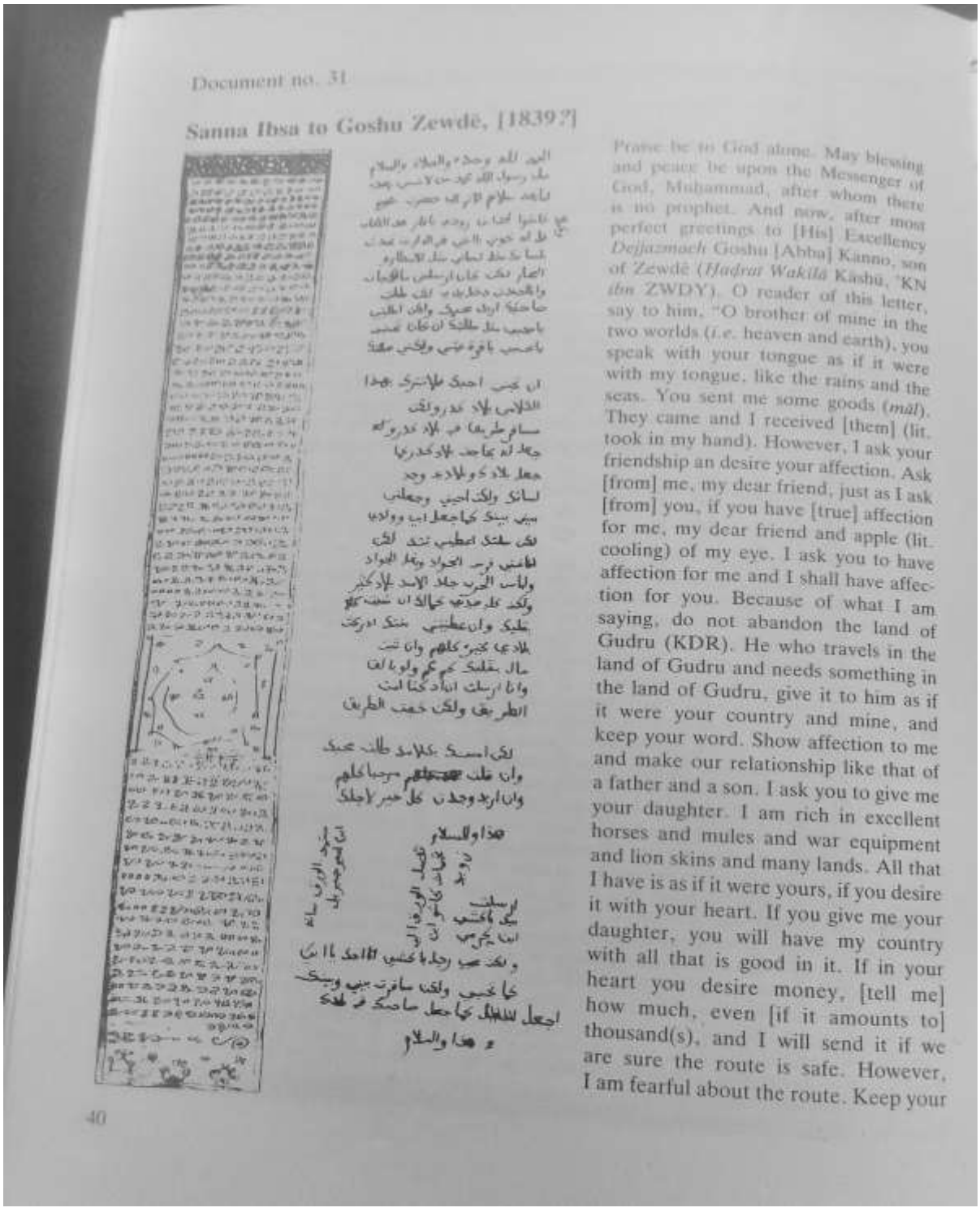
Galla

ኩኖ፡ ገለተ፡ ስፈጨረ፡ ገስተ፡ የሰሎም ሶን፡ ደንኳን፡ ሚደጌ፡ ቱረ። ደታደ
ን፡ ደስ። ስሩኒ፡ ደትቲ፡ ስነሮ፡ ስንጥ ጅረ፡ ስነኒሰስ። ሲደ፡ ስነኒላስ፡ ጎደ
ቲ። ወደኔ፡ ስረጅረ፡ ሐርሚኩ፡ ገመ ኮ፡ ኒጀሲ፡ ስንስፋጂያኒ፡ ወሎሰኒ። ወ
ቱ። ውርጋንኩ፡ ውርጋ፡ ውርጋ፡ ይደ፡ ደኔ፡ ደግደ፡ ስነጅረስጂሰኒ። ውደንሎ፡
ስረጅረ። መታሎቲ፡ ደበስ፡ መታኩ፡ ሂነግኒ። ቀልቢኮ፡ ከንጀሰቲ፡ ስነቲሂ
ስስ፡ ውርጋዋ፡ ስነጀሳቸሎ። ከየረ፡ ሚ፡ ስስ፡ ስደሙሬቲ። ስስ፡ ቲጭ
ደበሬ፡ ስጀሰቲኒ። ደበኩ፡ ሲደከስደ ፍቲ፡ ሳፈወቲ፡ ዒኖ፡ ዊሬረስ፡ ከሊኒ
ሎ፡ ውርጋኩቲ፡ ውረጋ፡ ስደምኖ። ሎ ተሂ። ሂረዶንኩ፡ ሂደ። ነተኑኩ፡
ቲ፡ ደንታ፡ ስናልኔስሰ። ሲቲ፡ ገመ በኩባቲ፡ ኑድሊዋኑ፡ ከመበሬደ። ኑደኑ
ሶኖ። ሐረሚኩ፡ ከወደኑ፡ ስረጅረ፡ በኩ፡ ኮቲ፡ ደካደንቱ፡ በኑ። ረዶተኩ፡
ጀሰኖ። ሶሲ፡ ጀሰስ፡ ቀጂስ፡ ደቢ፡ ጭቦት፡ ሲጊ። ሰገደዋኑ፡ ሊረጊ፡ ከ
ይስ። ከየረስሲሎ፡ ደበረ፡ ደረ፡ ደተ ንጀረኑ። ፊረደኮ፡ የፊረዶኑ፡ ፊረደ፡ ስረ
ሶጅሬ። ስስ፡ ቲከሲቱ፡ ቲሰ፡ ከሰሎ ገስየኑ፡ የፊረዶኑ፡ ስረግስ።

Source: James Bruce

Source: James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, V.3 (Edinburg: Jruthuem, 1777), p. next to 400.

Appendix III: Abbaa Bogboo's Letter to *Dajjazmach* Goshu, 1839?



Document no. 31

Sanna Ibsa to Goshu Zewdē, [1839?]

Praise be to God alone. May blessing and peace be upon the Messenger of God, Muḥammad, after whom there is no prophet. And now, after most perfect greetings to [His] Excellency *Dejjazmach* Goshu [Abba] Kanno, son of Zewdē (*Ḥaḍrat Wakīlā* Kāshu, 'KN *ibn* ZWDY). O reader of this letter, say to him, "O brother of mine in the two worlds (*i.e.* heaven and earth), you speak with your tongue as if it were with my tongue, like the rains and the seas. You sent me some goods (*māl*). They came and I received [them] (lit. took in my hand). However, I ask your friendship an desire your affection. Ask [from] me, my dear friend, just as I ask [from] you, if you have [true] affection for me, my dear friend and apple (lit. cooling) of my eye. I ask you to have affection for me and I shall have affection for you. Because of what I am saying, do not abandon the land of Gudru (KDR). He who travels in the land of Gudru and needs something in the land of Gudru, give it to him as if it were your country and mine, and keep your word. Show affection to me and make our relationship like that of a father and a son. I ask you to give me your daughter. I am rich in excellent horses and mules and war equipment and lion skins and many lands. All that I have is as if it were yours, if you desire it with your heart. If you give me your daughter, you will have my country with all that is good in it. If in your heart you desire money, [tell me] how much, even [if it amounts to] thousand(s), and I will send it if we are sure the route is safe. However, I am fearful about the route. Keep your

40

Source: Sven Rubenson (ed.), "Correspondence and Treaties, 1800-1854" in ACTA Ethiopica, Vol.1 (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1987), p.40.

Appendix IV: Letter from Aagaa to Akkafedhe

4. Letter from Aga to Akafed'e.
(See Dictionary pag. XIII.)

Aga Akafed'ef.

Munich Oct. 16th 1840.

Naga, naga! fayaketi! Ano d'ufa djed'etani d'iben na cabe; ano aman d'ufa, ya firako, ano yom d'ufu bad'ef ati gafatoko kod'u.

Peace, peace! thy health! Though I have promised to come yet an obstacle has prevented me; but I come soon, my dear, and if I do not come, come thou to me.

Ati naga olte had'a? Ati mal hodjad'ta? Hidjolen zi bira kuno, ya oboleszako ziti garid'a? Ya obolezako ati faya cabte irga bia kana d'ufte? namni biakana ziti garid'a? Ati bia kana dyalad'ta garanke? Ano bia kana dyalad'a, ano obolezakodif oboletiko guda yada male.

Hast thou passed this day in in at business art thou en[illegible] are those boys who are ..... , kind towards thee, my brother? Hast thou been healthy since thou hast come into this country? Are the people kind towards thee and lovest thou this country in thy heart? I like it, but I think very much on my brothers and sisters.

Ya oboleszako wuyi biaketi bad'te yo, ati „Bulgun na ñad'a" djed'te? Ati garanke zin zodanneo? Ano guda zodad'era, ano garankokeza guda biz'an na rafame. Ano Galla guda wadjin biakoti baetan unu guda dubanna guda zodanna. Unu garbitcha wadjin d'ufnerra, unu mid'an hinñanu, wuyi ñanu, ibida garakeña keza nu ñad'a. Unu guda huganerra, garakeña nu yana; unu rafu dad'abne, unu tau dad'abne, milo na bobae had'uma boru ademna biyo kana keza; biyonkuno fana nu guba guda.

My brother, when thou departedst from thy home hast thou also said „the *Bulgu* will eat me"? Wast thou much afraid in thy heart? I was much terrified and the waters in my heart were greatly agitated. I left home with many Gallas, we talked much and were very anxious. We travelled with a slave-merchant and had no corn to eat, and when we ate, the fire in our hearts devoured us. We became very thin for our hearts were solicitous, we could not sleep, we could not stand, our feet burned for we always walked in the sand; the sand scorched the soles of our feet very much.

Bia Galade kuno iz'eno guda hamtud'a; bia Djellaba kana hamad'a; bia Massur kana irgan d'ufe ano gari rafa, gari d'uga, gari ñad'a. Bia Massuriti goftanko nama guda tokoti na gurgure, ini na garid'a, hori na kenne. T'ino turcti nama gari tokoti na kenne, nama kana wadjin ama taa.

The country of the Galade is very bad, as also that of the Djellaba. In Massur where I came, I slept well and drank well and ate well. In Massur my master sold me to a nobleman; he was kind towards me and gave me all that I needed. After a short while he gave me to a kind man with whom I still remain.

Ama gafa ati kana kitabte ani wa zi dabala; iza kana kitabe nama na barzizu kanati zi erga.

When thou hast written to me I will add more; what I have written here I send to thee by the man who is my teacher.

Nagaiti buli.

Sleep in peace.

Otshu Aga.

Source: Transcribed in Karl Tutschek, *A Grammar of the [Oromo] Language* (Munich: Bibliotheca Bodlelana,1845), pp. 88-90.

Appendix V: Letter from Akkafedhe to Aaga

Akafed'e Agaf.

Ya oboleżako, nu Wacayon iża ha tolu djena, kan ini nagade hamtu kanara nu fud'e irge gariti nu fide. Yomun ani bad'e ani inanyade: Wacago hamad'ż'udaf abako harkaf had'ako harka na bażen djed'e; wau, akana miti, ini irge gariti na cabe. O hiyadin, ya oboleżako ati dandeże warrake hinagartu „d'ad'an ibidti bue hindebiu". Gallan gudumtu had'ażadif abaża bae oto garanża bou tau; ati had'akedif abake hinagartu obżi tai. Hamana iżanif kad'ad'u, Wacayo aka gariti iżan ha bullshu.

Atamini kan ñanu garakeñali nu bua nuo abdiñ cabnu, iniyadna hoyu, har^{c}a mo boru nu fud'aniti ademu djeneti. Iżan Amhara żodad'aniti halkan ademu d'amodż'a kana keża. Yomużana nu akana hiyane ini irge gariti nu cabudaf nu ademżiże, halkan aka gariti rafna hinżene. Ho Wacayo djed'e ini infullafad'a; maltu beka ho ati gudad'te kobake ademu dandeże goftanke biaketi zi erguf'dyira. O ya oboleżako mali djed'te yomużana had'ike, ho ati djed'te: namni na gurgureti bia ani himbekneti na geże; namitshi tok ufiti na fud'e na gudiże; ani gudanan „had'akedif abake barbadi" nan djed'e, djed'ta. Yomużana laminkedif obolonike ziti yateti zi zimti!

Ani hidjole na wadjin dyirtu kana wadjinan dubad'a: atamiti had'odinkeñaf abodinkeña bulu? djeneti nu homan agarru akanuman yadofna male. Nu arfanu teñeti walwadjin kana hażofna, — ati kobake teżeti garaketin hażofta „atamiti had'ikodif abanko bula?" djed'eti; — Wacayon kad'ad'u, ini Galla ziti ha ergu.

Nagan haft hama nu wal agaruti.

Akafed'e Dalle.

Munich Oct. 21st 1840.

O my brother, let us thank God that he took us from those bad merchants and brought us to a good place. When I departed I thought: God has let me go out from the hand of my mother and my father to do me evil; no, it was not so, he conducted me to a good place. O do not think, my brother, that thou wilt not be able to see thy family again, as „butter fallen into the fire comes not back". Many Gallas who went from the hands of their mothers and fathers sit with weeping hearts; though thou shouldst not see thy mother and thy father again, be comforted! Better pray for them, that God may let them live as happily as possible.

How could that which we ate agree with us? we had truly no hope, since we thought, to-day or to-morrow they take us. Being afraid of the Amharas they travelled at night in the cold. We did not imagine at that time he caused us that painful travelling for our good; we did not think that we should again enjoy a quiet sleep at night. What God has promised he performs; who knows whether thy master, when thou art grown up and able to go alone, will not send thee into thy father-land! O my brother, at that time what will thy mother say when thou tellest her: I was sold and carried to a country that I did not know; and there a man took me to himself and educated me, and when I was grown up he said: „seek now thy mother and thy father". On that day thy relations and brothers will pour out to meet thee.

I and these boys who are with me speak often together: how is it with our mothers and fathers? — we see nothing and think in vain. But there are four of us and we speak together, — thou sittest alone and speakest in thy heart: how is it with my mother and my father? — Pray to God, that he may send thee a Galla.

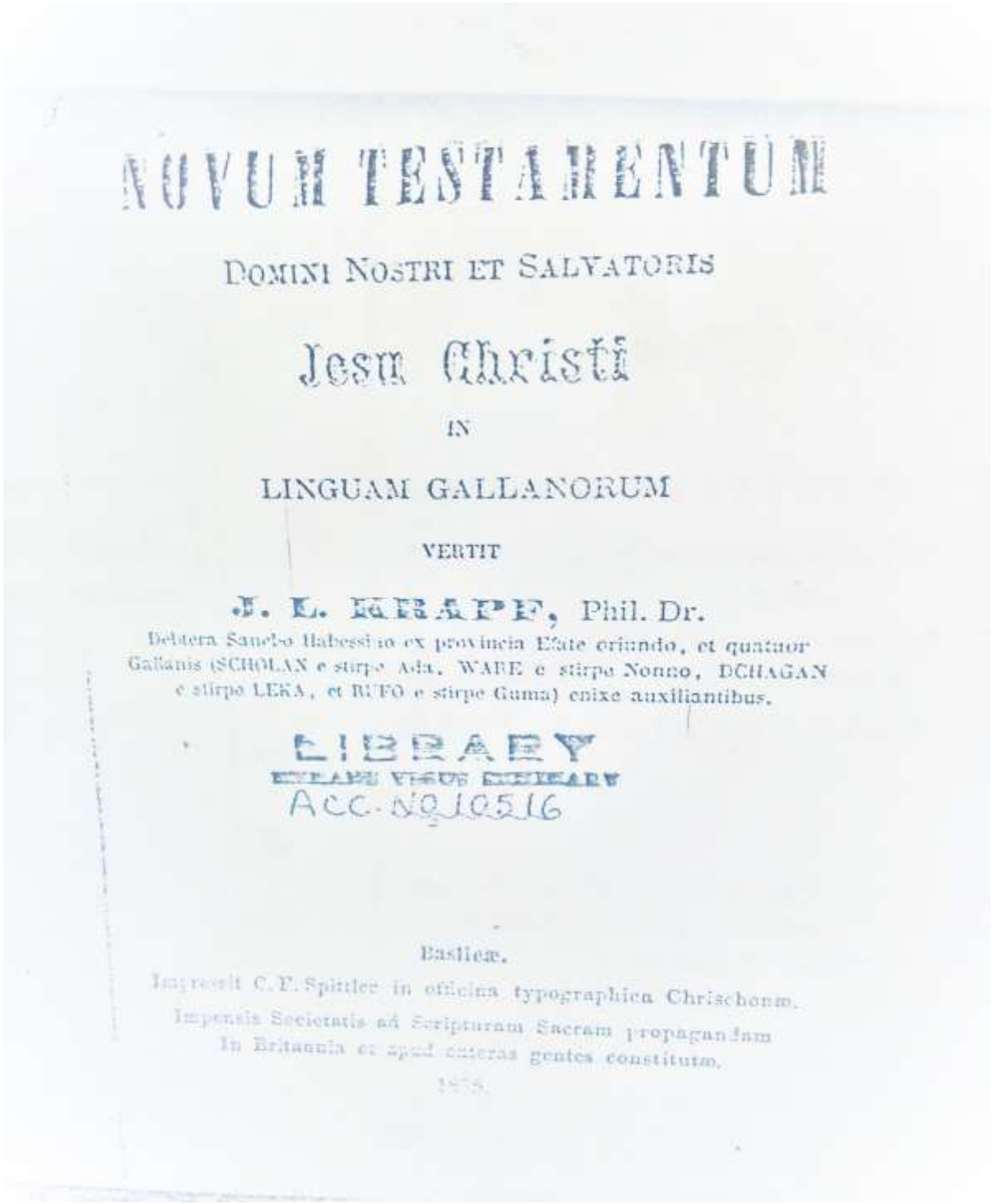
Rest in health until we meet again.

Source: transcribed in Karl Tutschek, *A Grammar of the [Oromo] Language* (Munich: Bibliotheca Bodlelana,1845), pp. 90-91

Appendix VI: Zanab's Geez, Amharic, *Afaan* Oromo and Agawo Dictionary

Source: From the personal possession of Fitsum Wolde Mariam

Appendix VII: Cover page of *Afaan* Oromo translation of the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Mark by Zanab, Soolan, Waaree, Jagaa and Ruufoo.



NOVUM TESTAMENTUM

DOMINI NOSTRI ET SALVATORIS

Jesu Christi

IN

LINGUAM GALLANORUM

VERTIT

J. L. KRAPF, Phil. Dr.

Dekara Sancho Habessino ex provincia Efate oriundo, et quatuor Gallanis (SCHOLAX e stirpe Ada, WARE e stirpe Nonno, DCHAGAN e stirpe LEKA, et RUFO e stirpe Guma) enixe auxiliantibus.

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Basileæ.

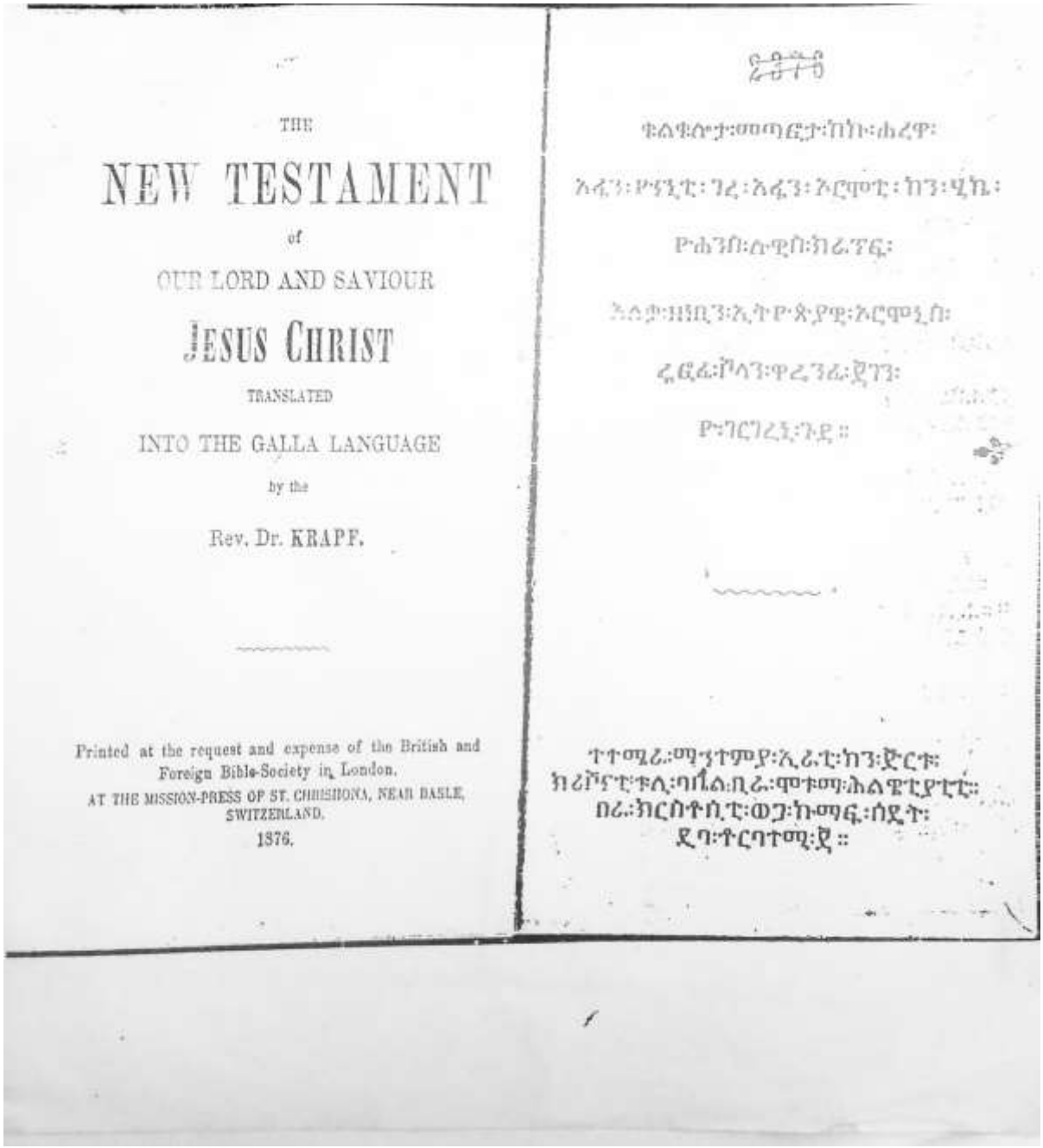
Impressit C. F. Spittler in officina typographica Chrischonæ.

Impensis Societatis ad Scripturam Sacram propagandam In Britannia et apud exteras gentes constitutæ.

1875.

Source: J. Krapf *et al* (Trans.), *Novum Testamentum Domini Et Salvatoris Jesus Christi in Linguam Gallanorum (Near* Basel: St. Chirschona,1875)

Appendix VIII: Cover Page of *Afaan* Oromo Translation of New Testament by Krapf, Ruufoo, Waaree, Soolan and Jagaa



THE

NEW TESTAMENT

of

OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST

TRANSLATED

INTO THE GALLA LANGUAGE

by the

Rev. Dr. KRAPF.

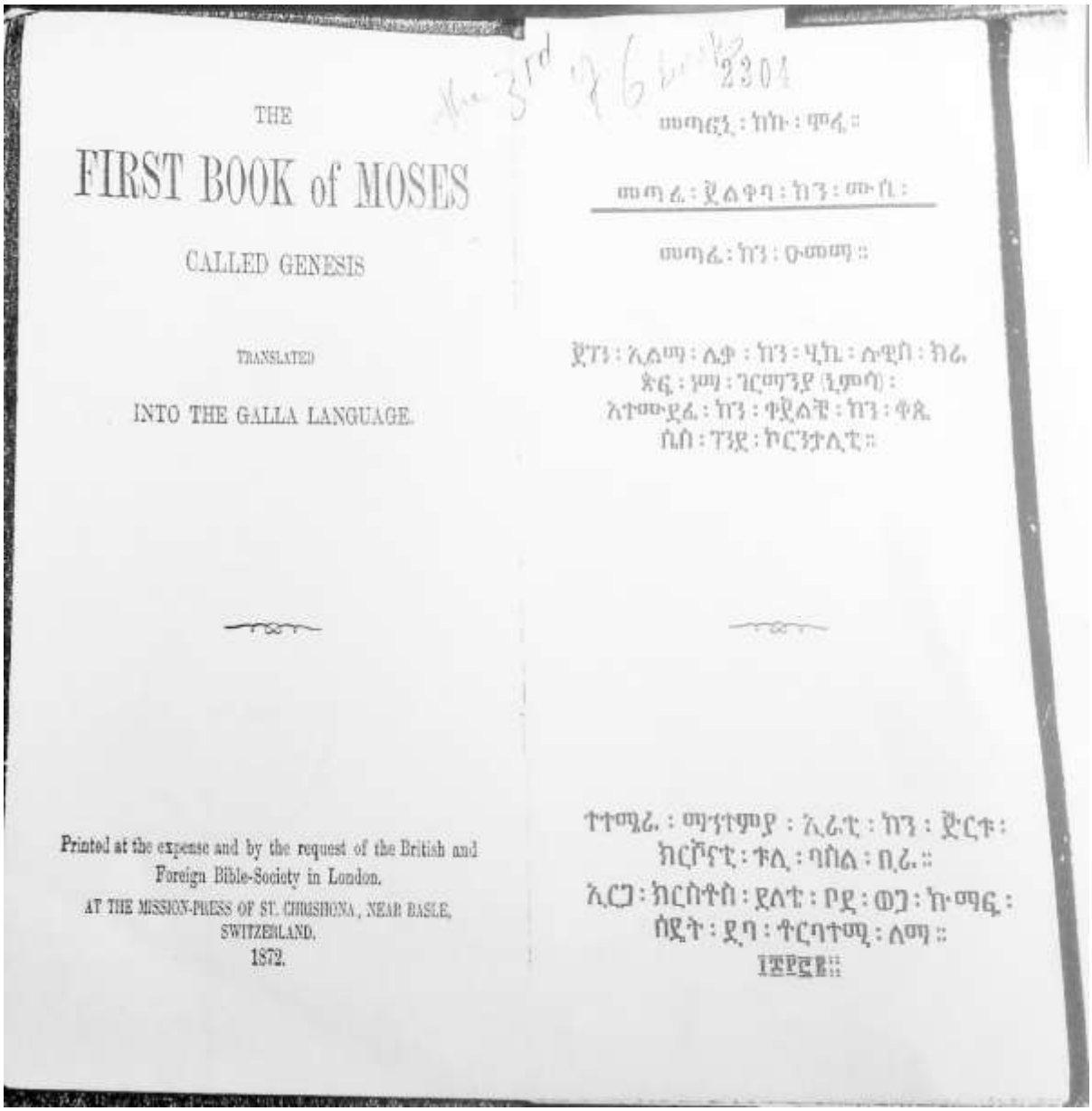
Printed at the request and expense of the British and Foreign Bible-Society in London.

AT THE MISSION-PRESS OF ST. CHRISCHONA, NEAR BASLE, SWITZERLAND.

1876.

Source: L. Krapf, et al (trans.), *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Basil*: The Mission Press of Chrischona, 1976).

Appendix IX: *Afaan* Oromo Translation of Genesis by Jagaa and Krapf, 1872



THE

FIRST BOOK of MOSES

CALLED GENESIS

TRANSLATED

INTO THE GALLA LANGUAGE.

Printed at the expense and by the request of the British and Foreign Bible-Society in London.

AT THE MISSION-PRESS OF ST. CHRISHONA, NEAR BASLE, SWITZERLAND.

1872.

መጣፍኒ : ከኩ : ሞሶ ።

መጣፌ : ጀልቀባ : ከን : ሙሲ :

መጣፌ : ከን : ዑመጣ ።

ጀን : ኢሌማ : ሌቃ : ከን : ሂኪ : ሱዊስ : ክሬ
ጵፍ : ሃማ : ገርማንያ (ኒምሳ) :
አተሙያፌ : ከን : ቀጀለቺ : ከን : ቀጸ
ሲስ : ፕንጀ : ኮርንታሊቲ ።

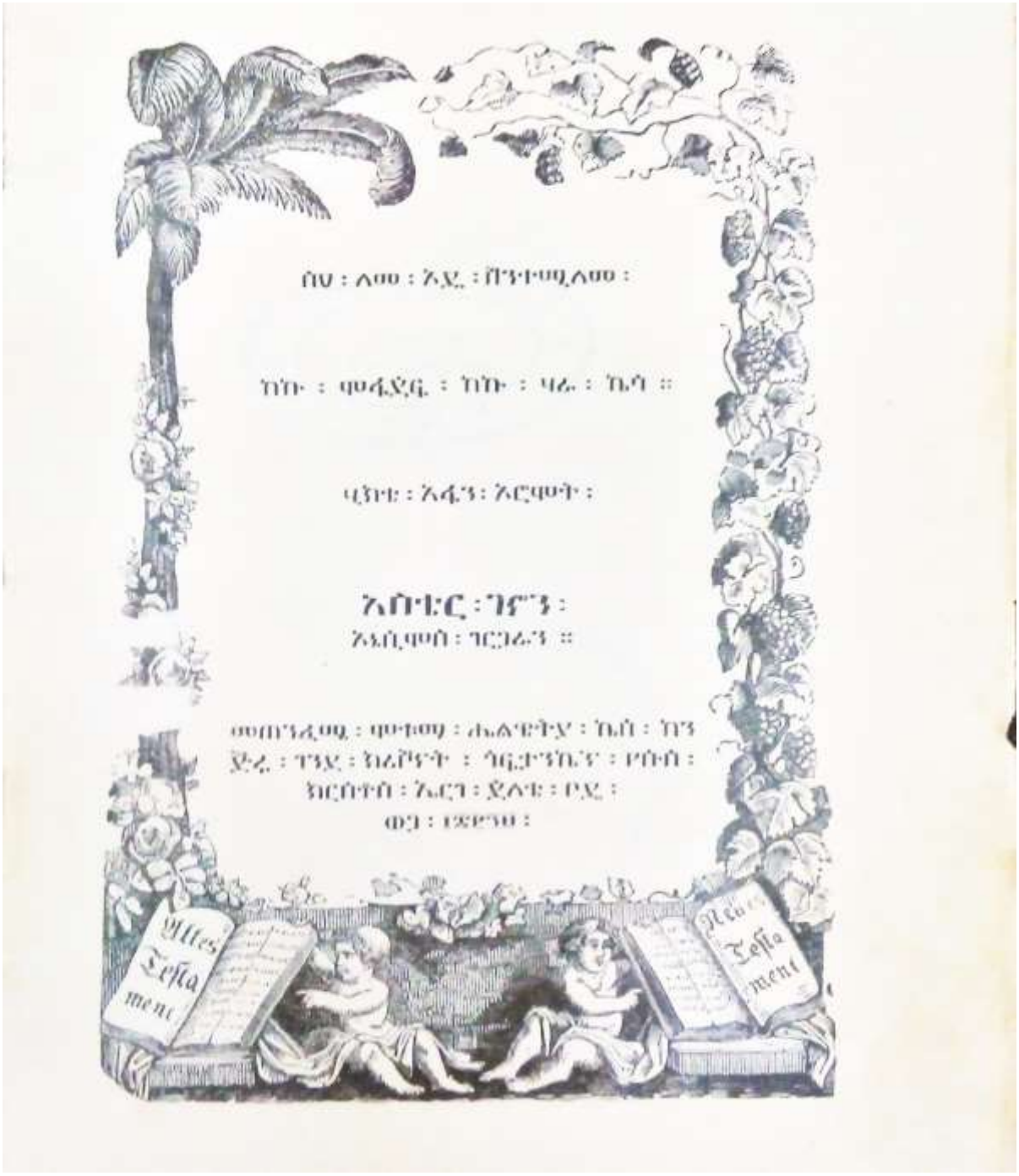
ተተሚሬ : ማኅተምያ : ኢሪቲ : ከን : ጅርቱ :
ክርሾናቲ : ቱሊ : ባሰል : በሬ ።
ኢርጋ : ክርስቶስ : ጀለቲ : ቦጂ : ወን : ኩ·ማፍ :
ሰጂት : ጀባ : ቅርባተሚ : ለማ ።
፲፰፻፸፪።

Source: Jaga, et al (Trans.), *The First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Basle: The Mission Press of Chrischona, 1872).

Appendix X: Cover pages of the Oromo Spelling Book by Onesimus and Aster

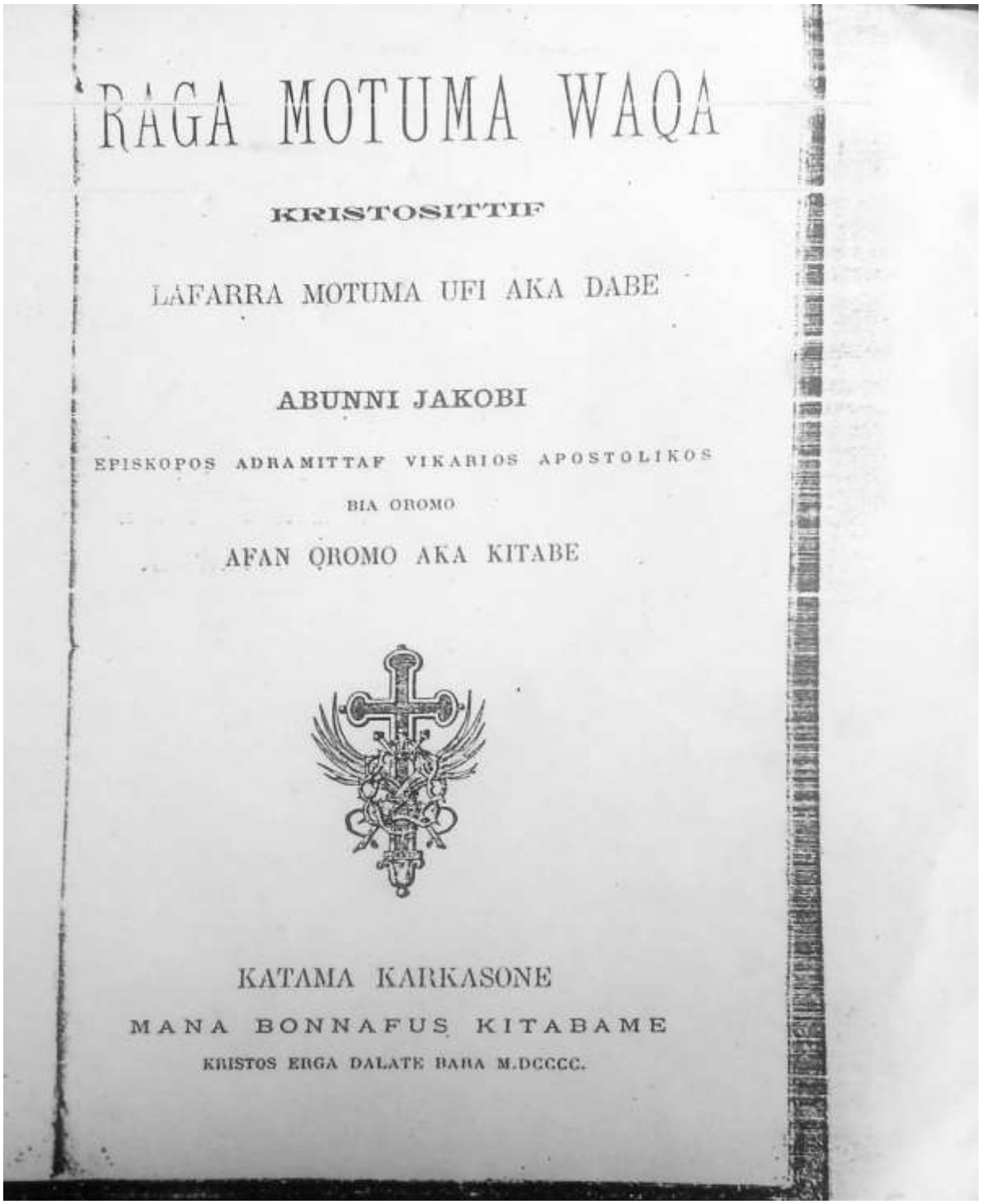
Source: Onesmus Nasib and Aster Gannoo, *The [Oromo] Spelling Book* (Moncullo: Swedish Mission Press, 1899).

Appendix XI: *Afaan* Oromo Translation of Dr Bartha's Bible Story by Aster Gannoo



Source: Aster Gannoo (Trans.) *Oduu Lama Si'a Shantamii Lama (Dr Barth's Bible Story)* (Near Basel: St. Chirschona,1899).

Appendix XII: *Afaan* Oromo Translation of Abbaa Gospel of St. Mateos by *Abbaa* Jakobi, 1900



RAGA MOTUMA WAQA

KRISTOSITTIF

LAFARRA MOTUMA UFI AKA DABE

ABUNNI JAKOBI

EPISKOPOS ADRAMITTAF VIKARIOS APOSTOLIKOS

BIA OROMO

AFAN QROMO AKA KITABE

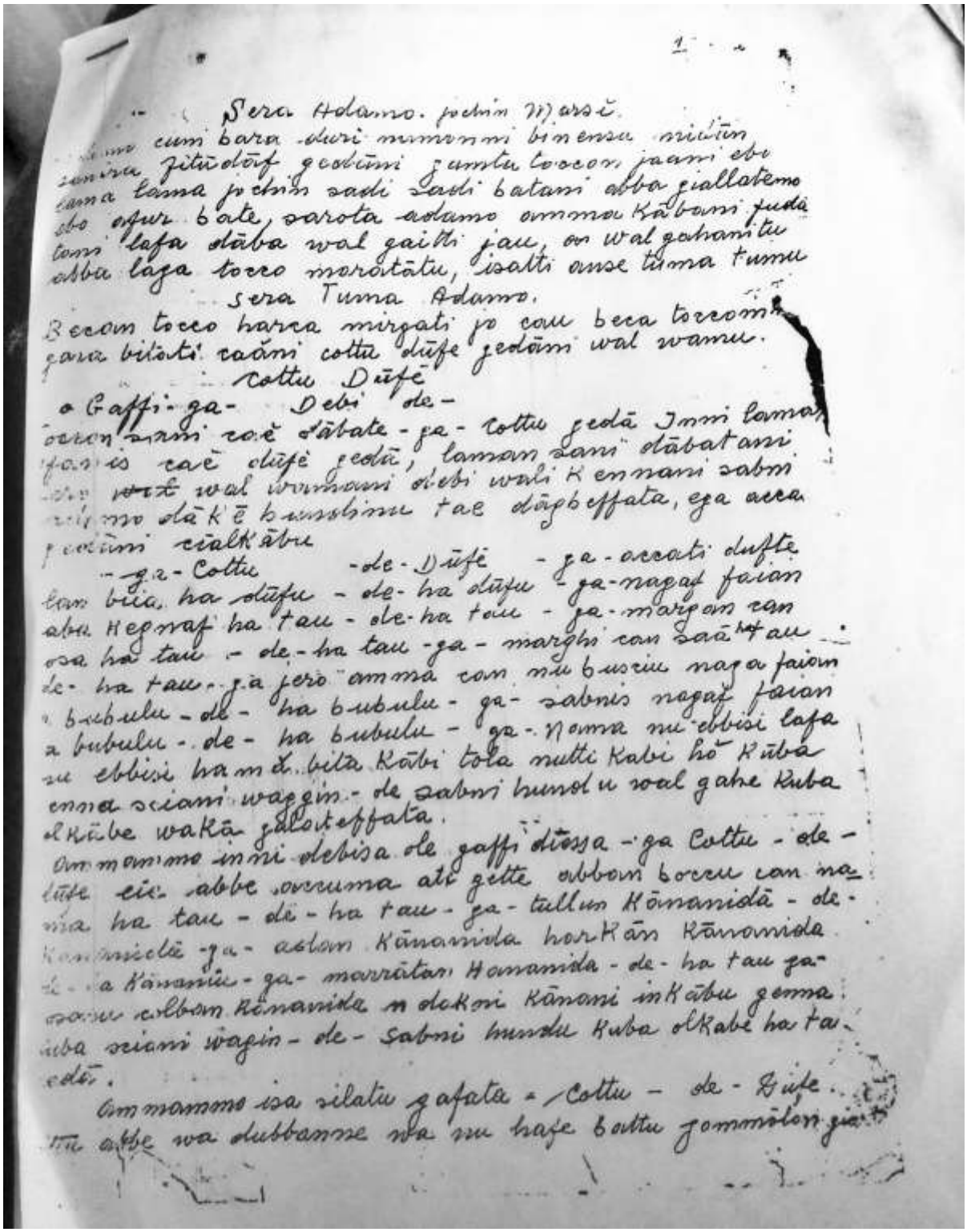
KATAMA KARKASONE

MANA BONNAFUS KITABAME

KRISTOS ERGA DALATE BARA M.DCCCC.

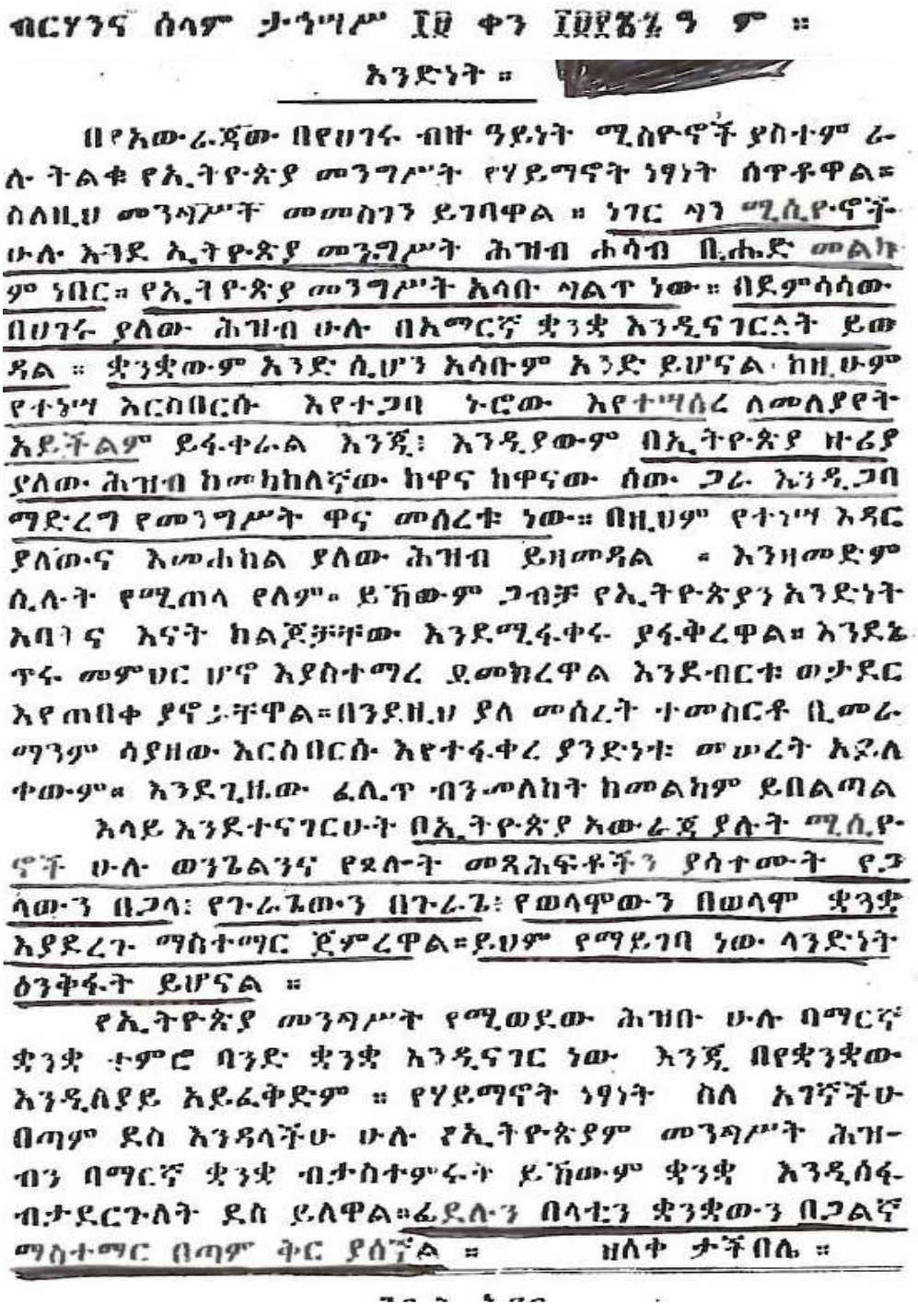
Source: Abunni Jakobi. *Wangelium Nagaa Kan G.-K. Jesus Kristos Qidus Mateos Aka Katabe.* (Carcassonne: Bonnafus Printing Press, 1900).

Appendix XIII: Specimen of *Afaan* Oromo Exercise Books of Italian Education in Ethiopia



Source: From Personal Possession of Imiru Gebre.

Appendix XIV: Disparaging of using *Afaan* Oromo for Writing in *Birhanina Salam* Newspaper



ብርሃንና ሰላም ታኅሣሥ ፲፱ ቀን ፲፱፻፳፮ ዓ ም ።

አንድነት ።

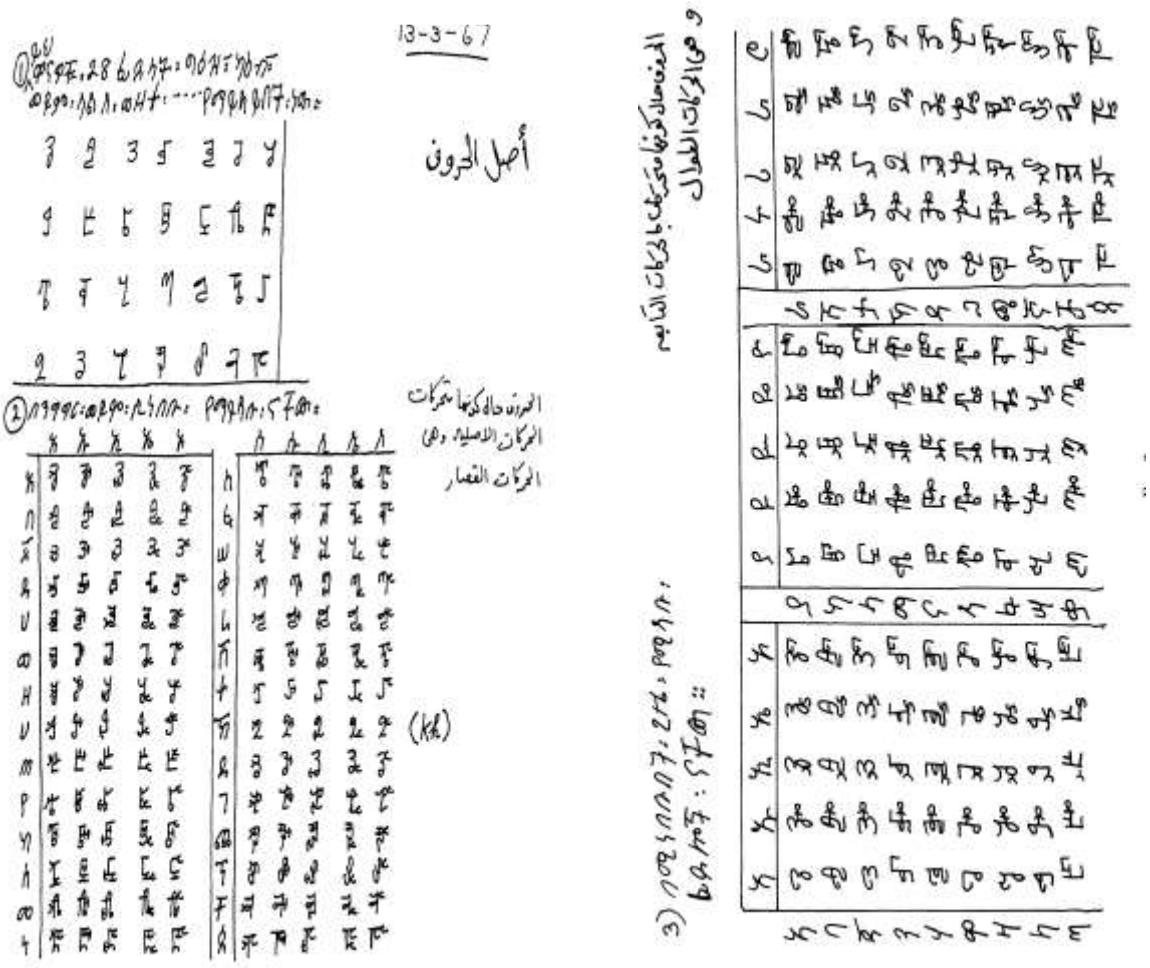
በየአውራጃው በየሀገሩ ብዙ ዓይነት ሚስዮኖች ያስተም ራሉ ትልቁ የኢትዮጵያ መንግሥት የሃይማኖት ነፃነት ሰጥቶዋል። ስለዚህ መንግሥት መመስገን ይገባዋል ። ነገር ግን ሚሲዮኖች ሁሉ እንደ ኢትዮጵያ መንግሥት ሕዝብ ሐሳብ በ.ሐድ መልክ ም ነበር። የኢትዮጵያ መንግሥት አሳቡ ላልጥ ነው። ብዶምሳሳው በሀገሩ ያለው ሕዝብ ሁሉ በአማርኛ ቋንቋ እንዲናገርኣት ይወ ዳል ። ቋንቋውም አንድ ሲሆን አሳቡም አንድ ይሆናል ከዚህም የተነሣ አርስበርሱ እየተጋባ ኑሮው እየተሣሰረ ለመለያየት አይችልም ይፋቀራል እንጂ፤ እንዲያውም በኢትዮጵያ ዙሪያ ያለው ሕዝብ ከመካከለኛው ከዋና ከዋናው ሰው ጋራ እንዲጋባ ማድረግ የመንግሥት ዋና መሰረቱ ነው። በዚህም የተነሣ አዳር ያለውና እመሐከል ያለው ሕዝብ ይዘመዳል ። እንዘመድም ሲሉት የሚጠላ የለም። ይኸውም ጋብቻ የኢትዮጵያን አንድነት አጠና እናት ከልጆቻቸው እንደሚፋቀሩ ያፋቅረዋል። እንደኔ ጥሩ መምህር ሆኖ እያስተማረ ያመክረዋል እንደብርቱ ወታደር እየጠበቀ ያኖራቸዋል። በንያዘህ ያለ መሰረት ተመስርቶ ቢመራ ማንም ሳያዘው አርስበርሱ እየተፋቀረ ያንድነቱ መሠረት አደለ ቀውም። እንደጊዜው ፈሊጥ ብንመለከት ከመልክም ይበልጣል

እላይ እንደተናገርሁት በኢትዮጵያ አውራጃ ያሉት ሚሲዮኖች ሁሉ ወንጌልንና የደሉት መጻሕፍቶችን ያሳተሙት የጋላውን በጋላ፤ የጉራጌውን በጉራጌ፤ የወላሞውን በወላሞ ቋንቋ እያደረጉ ማስተማር ጀምረዋል። ይህም የማይገባ ነው ላንድነት ፅንቅፋት ይሆናል ።

የኢትዮጵያ መንግሥት የሚወደው ሕዝቡ ሁሉ በማርኛ ቋንቋ ተምሮ ባንድ ቋንቋ እንዲናገር ነው እንጂ በየቋንቋው እንዲሰያይ አይፈቅድም ። የሃይማኖት ነፃነት ስለ አገኛችሁ በጣም ደስ እንዳላችሁ ሁሉ የኢትዮጵያም መንግሥት ሕዝብን በማርኛ ቋንቋ ብታስተምሩት ይኸውም ቋንቋ እንዲሰፋ ብታደርጉለት ደስ ይለዋል። ፊደሉን በላቲን ቋንቋውን በጋልኛ ማስተማር በጣም ቅር ያሰኛል ። ዘለቀ ታኛበሌ ።

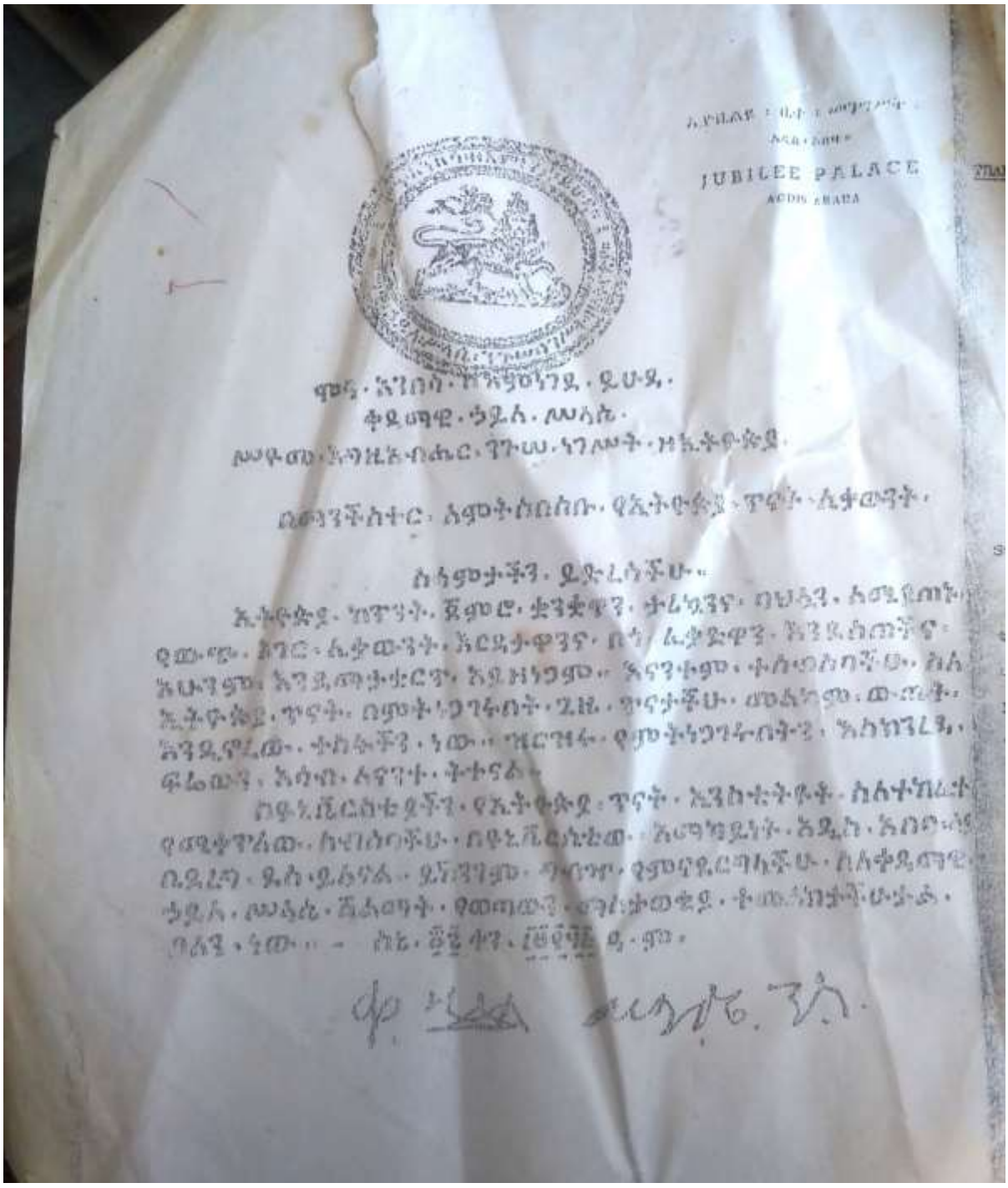
Source: Negarit Gazata, Tahisas 19, 1926 E.C.

Appendix XV: Sheik Bakri Saaphaloo's *Afaan* Oromo Orthography



Source: R.J. Hayward and Mohammed Hassen, "The Oromo Orthography of Shaykh Bakri Sapalo" in *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, V.LIV, Part III* (London: University of London,1981), pp.557-558.

Appendix XVI: Emperor Haile Sillasie's Letter of Scholars Invitation to Study Ethiopian 'Language', 'History' and 'Culture'



Source: Ullendorff, Edward. *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (Third Ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. V.

I, the undersigned, declare that the dissertation is my work and that all sources of material used for the dissertation have been dully acknowledged.

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