

ETHNIC INTEGRATION AND CONFLICT:
THE CASE OF INDIGENOUS OROMO AND
AMHARA SETTLERS IN AAROO ADDIS ALEM,
KIRAMU AREA, NORTHEASTERN WÄLLÄGA

03607

A Thesis Presented to
The School of Graduate Studies
of
Addis Ababa University

In Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Social Anthropology

By
Assefa Tolera

June, 1995

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

Ethnic Integration and Conflict: The Case of
Indigenous Oromo and Amhara Settlers in Aaroo
Addis Ababa, Kiremu Area, Northeastern Wallaga

by

Aasefa Tolera Sori

College of Social Sciences

Approved by Board of Examiners:

Seifullah A. Raminile
Advisor

A. Raminile

A. Tolera Sori
Advisor

A. Tolera Sori

Alimona Haaloo
Examiner

Alimona Haaloo

Brigitta Benzing
Examiner

B. Benzing

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed in various ways from the conception to the finalization of this thesis. However, I would like to express my indebtedness to those whose lasting advices and encouragement had always been with me. My special thanks go to my supervisors Drs. Ronald Reminck and Alula Pankhurst. I had received their intellectual support and scholarly critics from the early stage of this work when the very idea of **ethnic integration and conflict** came to my mind as a possible topic of study. They have unfailingly guided me through all my work; sacrificed their invaluable time reading all field reports; and critically commented on the first as well as the final drafts of this thesis. My thanks also go to Dr. Makonnen Bishaw, Medical Anthropologist, who, from the very beginning, stimulated my passionate interest to study Social Anthropology through his brotherly advice, exemplary and committed concern for the development of his field of specialization. He was not only a teacher but also a friend.

Thanks also go to all my instructors in social anthropology and other staff in the college, all of whom have contributed in one way or another. I must express my gratitude to Drs. Tesema Ta'a and Antonio Palmisano who read and forwarded their critics and comments on some of the chapters, and also helped me locate some literature. I owe Dr. Mohammed Yousif for the role he played in the maturation of my ideas and his comments on the proposal. I am also indebted to W/o Hirut Terefe, chairperson of the department of Sociology and Social Administration and my friend Bekele Gutema, department of Philosophy, for their continuous support and encouragement which has immeasurably influenced my successful work. W/o Enanu Admassu, Department of Sociology and Social Administration secretary, W/o Asnaketch Abebe, Social Science Graduate Studies secretary and Chuchu Metaferia, College of Social Sciences Administration secretary whose constant supports had been with me all through the writing of this thesis.

The completion of this work would not have been possible without the generous assistance and encouragement of relatives and friends. My special thanks go to my mother Ititta Tesso, brothers Negash Tolera, Alemayehu Tolera, and friends Sima Dheressa and Abdissa Fufa who had eased my stay in the field through their regular visit. My friends Sima Abdi and Dhaba Galata of East Walläga Natural Resources Development and Environmental Protection Office need special acknowledgement for their unfailing support in arranging transport services during my preliminary survey and

transporting field equipment as well. Brothers and friends Assefa Abebe, Dereje Tolera, Lammi Nagari, Lamu Moti, Waqjira Duressa, Dachasa Beqeale, Ragassa Aboma, Magarssa Nagassa, Aynalem Magarssa and others whose names are too many for inclusion are due special thanks for their moral support. Despite its lack of appreciation of problems of life in the field, the School of Graduate Studies of the Addis Ababa University deserves thanks for the financial support it granted me in this research.

I would like to thank my informants of Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* for the long hours I spent with them discussing invaluable issues for the development of my thesis. In order to confide with the identity of informants, I have restrained myself from mentioning their names. However, the initial names of some of my informants are found at some points in the text.

It behooves me to thank my classmates with whom I have developed sincere and cordial relations that had made enjoyable my stay in the M.A. programme.

CONTENTS

1.1. Introduction of the Population and the Study Area	1
1.1.1. Background Information about the Population	1
1.1.2. Research Site	2
1.2. Statement of the Problem	3
1.3. Purpose of the Study	4
1.3.1. General Purpose	4
1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study	5
1.4. Methods of Sampling and Data Collection	6
1.5. Review of Related Literature	7
1.5.1. Demographic Characteristics	7
1.5.2. Growth and Fertility among the Study Group	11
1.5.3. Reproductive Migration and Fertility	12

CHAPTER TWO

2.1. Cultural Background of the Study Group	13
2.1.1. History of the Village of the Study Group	13
2.2. Reproductive Migration Patterns	15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF DIGRAMS	vi
LIST OF MAPS	vi
TRANSLITERATION	vii
GLOSSARY	xi
ACRONYMS	xv
PREFACE	xvi
ABSTRACT	xix

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Description of the Population and the Study Area	1
1.1.1. Background Information about the Population	1
1.1.2. Research Site	4
1.2. Statement of the Problem	6
1.3. Purpose of the Study	11
1.3.1. General Purpose	11
1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study	11
1.4. Methods of Building a Body of Data	13
1.5. Review of Related Literature	14
1.5.1. Inter-ethnic Relationships	14
1.5.2. Kinship and Property among the Macca Oromo	18
1.5.3. Spontaneous Migration and Settlement	21

CHAPTER TWO

Socio-cultural Background of the Sinicho/Shinasha	26
2.1. History of the Origin of the Sinicho/Shinasha	26
2.2. Oromo-Sinicho/Shinasha Relationships	32

CHAPTER THREE

Factors of Walloye Migration to Aaroo	38
3.1. Drought as a Precipitating Factor	38
3.2. Population Pressure and Land Degradation	40
3.3. Loss of Plough animals and other Personal Reasons	46
3.4. Land Fragmentation	52
3.5. Summary	53

CHAPTER FOUR

Oromo-Amhara Interaction	56 ✓
4.1. Conflicts	56
4.2. Inter-ethnic Marriage	67
4.3. Social Ties	73
4.3.1. <i>Abelij</i>	73
4.3.2. <i>Qire</i> and <i>Iddir</i> in Mourning Ceremony	74
4.3.3. <i>Qire</i> and <i>Iddir</i> in Conflict Resolution	76
4.3.4. <i>Ṭut Maḥbāt</i>	77
4.4. Oromo-Walloye and Walloye-Gojjame Attitudes towards each other	79
4.5. Economic Activities	85
4.5.1. Livestock Production	86
4.5.2. Crop Production	87
4.5.3. <i>Eqqub</i>	90
4.5.4. Labour Exchange	90
4.6. Summary	92

CHAPTER FIVE

Land Rights and Resource Conservation	95
5.1. Land Rights	95
5.2. Natural Resource Conservation	105
5.3. Summary	111

CHAPTER SIX

Influence of National Politics on Local Affairs	113
6.1. Neighbourhood Relationships	113
6.2. Religion	120
6.3. Language	128
6.3.1. Language and Social Identity	128
6.3.2. Language and Politics	129
6.3.3. Language use in Aaroo Addis Alem	130
6.4. Summary	133

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1. Population Pressure and Land Degradation	134
7.2. The Discovery of the <i>New World</i>	135
7.3. Natural Resource Conservation	135
7.4. Double image of the Late-Awrājā Administrator	136
7.5. Inter-ethnic Marriage and Integration	136
7.6. Economic Ties and Conflict of Interest	140
7.7. Religion	141
7.8. Regionalization Policy and Language Problem	143
7.9. Trend of Spontaneous Migration	143
7.10. The Sky for God, the Earth for Israelites	145
7.11. Ethnicity, State and the Role of Social Anthropology	147

BIBLIOGRAPHY	150
--------------	-----

APPENDIX

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1: Number of People Who Visited the Flour Mill 66

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Sinicho/Shinasha Genealogy 31a

LIST OF MAPS

1. Map I Location of Aaroo Addis Alem xxi
2. Map II Map of Jidda Kiremu Woreda xxii
3. Map III Map of Aaroo Addis Alem xxiii
4. Map IV Approximate Settlement Pattern of Oromo-Walloye Communities xxiv
5. Map V Sketch Map of Migration Route xxv

TRANSLITERATION

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

1 st	ሀ =	Ba	5 th	ሄ =	Be
2 nd	ቀ =	Bu	6 th	ወ =	Bo
3 rd	ለ =	Bi	7 th	ሀ =	Bo
4 th	ቀ =	Bē			

- II. Regarding the sixth form in the above list, it must be noted that the 'i' will be suffixed to the letter only if the letter is vocalized or stressed. Otherwise it won't be required at all. As a general rule also, the 'i' is not required when the sixth form is the last letter of a word.

Examples:	ሙከር	=	Mamh <i>i</i> er
	ወከር	=	D <i>i</i> ddir

- III. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

ሸ =	Sh	ሹ =	zh
ቸ =	ch	ጸ =	j
ፕ =	ñ		

- IV. Glottalized sounds are represented as follows:

ቶ =	q	ጸ =	ʔ
ጠ =	ʔ	ቦ =	ʔ
ጨ =	ch	ጸ =	p

V. Gemination should always be indicated by doubling:

Examples: Iddir = ለፎር

Eqqub = ለቁብ

VI. General Examples:

ለረቆ = Araqué

በኔር = Behér

ጥቃቆሽ = chiq̄shum

ገባር = Gabar

ለግሻ = Lamañ

ቆላ = Qolla

ጠላ = Tella

VII. For the Latin script used in the transliteration of the Oromo proverbs, couplets and words the seven sounds are represented as follows:

1st ለ = Ba

5th ቤ = Be (e)

2nd ቡ = Bu(u)

6th ብ = Bi

3rd ቢ = Bi(i)

7th ቦ = Bo(o)

4th ባ = Ba (a)

VIII. Regarding the second, fourth, fifth and seventh forms in the above list, it must be noted that the "u", "a", "e", and "o" will be doubled only if the letters are stressed, while in the sixth form the "i" will be suffixed to the letter only if the letter is stressed.

Examples:

Gababaa = ɣɑɑ (short)

Reeksisaa = ʁhɑɑ (Notice)

IX. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

ʃ = sh ɣ = ny

ʧ = ch ʝ = j

X. Glottalized sounds are represented as follows:

ʈ = q

ɕ = x

ɕ = c

ʈ = dh

ʈ = p

XI. General Examples:

ʈʈ = dhadhaa (Butter)

ʈʈ = daadhi (honey-mead)

ʈʈ = lafa (land)

laafa	(loose, soft)
Baddaa	(highland)
Kajeelli	(coveting)
Mooti	(King)
Waaqa	(God)
Waxii	(Sauce)
Macca	(branch of Oromo descending from Boorana)

GLOSSARY

A. Amharic

Araqé	Home-made liquor
Awrajā	Sub-province
Balabāt	Local notable; one who comes from a distinguished family
Bālambarās	Commander of the fort
Beg	Sheep
Behér	Nation
Behérésāb	Nationality
Chīqa shum	Local headman
Daga	Highland
Dajāzmāch	Title given to the feudal lords by the Emperor; general of an army
Derg	The ex-military Government of Ethiopia
Diqus	Pepper ground with salt
Doma	Hoe-like cultivating tool
Eqqub	A form of rotating savings association
Fitawrāri	General of the vanguard
Gābicha	Marriage
Gāsha/qalād	Land of 40 ha. size
Gabār	Tribute payer
Gabaz	Church administrator
Gult	Conditional rights to the tribute and corvée labour due from the peasants on a certain piece of land
Halāfi	Head
Iddir	Self-help association
Injera	The staple pancake
Kebra Nagast	The Glory of Kings
Lamān	Beggar
Lamd	Sheep skin
Māhbar	Religious (Orthodox) association
Marigeta	Religious title give to middle level theological teachers in Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Magäbi	Religious title given to high level theological teachers in Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Mahala	An oath
Masqal	Holy day celebrated commemorating the founding of the true Cross
Maṭbāt	Suckling
Qabalé	Local administration
Qolla	Lowland
Qurban	Communion
Rist	Hereditary rights to the use of land
Samon	Church land
Sanbate	Sabbath association
Sedār	Hand-woven basket used for crop measurement, by the Walloye
Seyuma egziābhér	Elect of God
Shengo	Local tribunal
Shifta	An outlaw
Shimagile	An old man
Silicha	Skin bag
Ṭibaqā guad	Militia, squad
Ṭella	Home-made beer
Ṭut	Breast
Wäus	Guarantor
Woṭ	Sauce in which <i>injera</i> is dipped
Woreda	Lowest level government unit
Yahämsa alaqa	Head of fifty men
Zamacha	Campaign

Alphabet B. Oromo

Ajjeesa	Someone who has killed big game
Araqé	Home-made liquor
Ayyantuu	Time reckoning expert believed to have the capacity to talk to various spirits
Baddaa	Highland
Boorantu	Someone descending from Boorana branch of the Oromo
Borqii/Maasii	Farm field
Budeena	Staple Pancakes
Daadhi	Honey-mead/wine
Daadoo	Work party circulating among members
Daboo	One-day work party
Damma	Honey
Dhoqqe	Farm field
Eele	Cooking plate made of clay
Ekerá dhibasu	Offering libations to the ancestors
Faagaa	Unit of measurement of honey
Farsoo	Home-made beer
Fildeгна	Corrupted Amharic for a field worker
Galchi	Votive gift
Gammojji	Lowland
Gasoo	Hoe-like cultivating tool
Giftii	A status given to a lady of high status
Gursumaa	Divorcee
Haamsho	Share-cropping arrangement in which a share-cropper gets 1/3 of the produce
Haraamuu	Incest
Holqa	Hollow; wild-honey
Jarsa	Old man
Kajeeltu	Coveter
Kaka	An oath
Laga	River

Masqala	Traditionally it was new year celebration, but now it is equal to Christian masqal.
Moortuu	Fortune teller; someone who reads layer of fat or membrane
Mooti	King
Mulluu	Boiled maize, bean, peas, etc.
Qalaada	40 ha. land
Qondaala	Someone who has killed big game
Qufoo	Hand-woven basket
Waaqa	God
Wareega	Vow
Waxii	Sauce in which <i>injera</i> is dipped

PREFACE

...and, being and having oneself. This was what has been identified as a major thrust

In a country like Ethiopia where one finds over seventy different ethnic groups (Abbink 1991:11), studies dedicated to multiple aspects of activities in which the various societies come together are crucial and important. The social dynamism in the areas where the various ethnic groups interact in their daily life is given less attention and/or sometimes exaggerated. Depending on the political motives and aspirations each group in power wants to promote, ethnic differences are either denied or over-stressed. The reality, however, is different and needs close examination. This study is meant to investigate an *ill-defined, but recognizable domain* of inter-ethnic relationships.

Knutsson's (1969) study of the complexity of inter-ethnic relationships in southern Ethiopia was the beginning of such studies in the field. In the Department of History [of Addis Ababa University], Oljira (1994) studied the history of Amhara-Oromo relationship between 1840 -1941 in Horro Guduru. It was only during the last two years that chapters in social anthropological studies were dedicated to inter-ethnic relationships in the works of Ayalew (1993), Mellesse (1994) and Gezahegn (1994) in their M.A. theses. Inter-ethnic relationships studied by the students of social anthropology mainly dealt with various neighbouring societies in southern Ethiopia who inhabit adjacent geographical territories for generations. All are communities indigenous to their respective areas of settlement. It seems to me that the most probable reason why Ethiopian intellectuals shied away from this area of study, is the political condition of this country, which for long had regarded discussions relating to ethnic differences as destructive. Some pretended as if the differences did not exist. Others kept silent because they did not want to suffer the unbearable consequences of treating this delicate issue. Whether one belongs to this or that group, ethnicity "takes us straight into social and political problems of urgent nature..." (Tonkin *et al* 1989:2). However, "Ethnicity will not allow us to separate the tranquillity of thought from the upheavals of action, will not allow us to separate the dream world of mere ideas from the materiality of people and things. Or, if we allow ourselves still to keep these things apart, then our expression is at fault" (ibid:2).

Changes in world politics have helped various societies of the globe to closely examine their prevailing conditions than worshipping whatever they have been made to believe. This reminds me of what George and Wilding (1976) call '*socialization of one class by another*'. The current trend is towards socialization of oneself in one's own

values, being and feeling oneself. This was what has been considered as a major threat to the Ethiopian rulers.

Another main interest of this study is to identify forces behind spontaneous migration and their permanent settlement in far-off places. For years, every time famine is acknowledged, drought is discussed because the latter is said to have caused the former. This study, however, on the basis of the data obtained from the informants, settlers who had suffered the consequences of displacement, reveals other equally, if not more, important factors. There is no single factor which claims sole responsibility for the displacement of people; rather a host of factors worked together, some as initial and others as aggravating ones. Some of these are ecological (deforestation and soil degradation), others are cultural (blood feud and the expectation of revenge) and still some are socio-economic (land tenure and descent systems).

My field-work took a total of ten weeks, namely six weeks in October and November 1994, and the remaining four weeks between mid-February and mid-March 1995. The major sources of data were unstructured interviews and observation of the daily interactions of the members of the community. (See below in methodology on the specific activities involved.)

My arrival in the area had different meanings for different people. The Oromo took my words, as a student, at face value and treated me accordingly. The Walloye, however, took me for an agent of missionaries. My image as a missionary was changed when I was observed drinking *jella* prepared for *māhbar* in the house of one of my Walloye informants. One of the Walloyes present, Fisseha, who knew me before, expressed his feelings that he was happy seeing me drinking *jella* from a *Tewahido* (Coptic) Christian house. He said "we do not like anything against our *Tewahido*". The Walloyes present there took the news of my drinking *jella* to all villages and I was treated as a Christian from that day on. They also saw me greeting the priest and kissing the Cross, the symbol of the Crucifixion of Jesus.

Besides this, some Walloyes suspected the motives for my extended stay in Aaroo, because talks relating to ethnic relations invite suspicion of being an agent of a political organization. The most outstanding example I recall in this regard was the refusal of a certain Abebaw, a Walloye, to talk to me when I visited his home. Although I tried to make my purpose of being with them clear, he refused to talk to me and finally said *yajare saw meghiyaw ayitawqim* (literally, "it is difficult to know the

ABSTRACT

Inter-ethnic relationships are one of the least studied subjects in this country. This thesis aims to add to the meagre information we have on the subject. Scholars as well as politicians address ethnic issues, but for different purposes, the former in order to understand them better and the latter to use them as an easy avenue to achieve political power. The major issues of this thesis are to identify the factors leading to self-initiated migration and settlement, and to assess areas of interaction between indigenous Oromo and the Amhara settlers (Walloye and Gojjame), of Aaroo Addis Alem qabalé, Northeastern Wälläga, be it cooperation, competition or conflict.

Usually spontaneous migration and settlement is attributed to drought-induced famine. However, the data built up from this research clearly reveals that other factors such as scarcity of arable land, degradation and fragmentation of land, lack of oxen, and other personal problems are dominant. Famine as a result of recurrent crop-failure, caused by shortage of rain, is reported to be only a precipitating factor. Although spontaneous migration seemed to have decreased in the 1980s because of extensive state sponsored settlement schemes, currently it is widely exercised since the latter is halted.

Inter-ethnic interactions take the form of membership in religious associations, competition, and conflict; or, to put it differently, it is an interplay of economic and social ties. These interactions, which cut across ethnic boundaries, do not seem, at least so far, to lead to change of ethnic identities. Although the Walloye villages are about two decades old in the area, compared to the Gojjames who arrived only during the last three years, the latter seem to be more successful in closely associating themselves with the indigenous Oromo. The eventual ethnic integration, especially between the Walloye and the Oromo, does not seem likely to be achieved in a decades to come. However, the completion of the construction of the school and the rise at which women are married among the Walloye may make inter-ethnic marriage possible.

Local level inter-ethnic relationships are susceptible to be influenced by national level political conditions, mainly because either the *balabär*¹ and *gabär* (tribute payer)

¹ The concept *balabät* is used differently by various scholars who have done considerable work on the history of feudal Ethiopia. Patrick Gilkes (1975) says it is 'local gentry' whereas Bahru Zewde (1991) uses 'landlord' and 'local ruler'. Donham (1986:39) writes "*balabät*, means essentially big man, literally 'one who has a father', that is a local notable from a family with significant rights over land".

relationship is addressed (when the *Derg* came to power) or ethnic differences are emphasized (when EPRDF came to power). Depending on what is happening at the centre, relationships become either tense or lax. After the Regionalization Policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), the Amhara seem to be disappointed, which they express only under the guise of using one's own language at local level. Orthodox Christianity is a common denominator for most of the population of the study area, it is, therefore, a factor of integration. The desire each has to have upper hand over the control of the administration of the church is, on the other hand, a source of conflict.

The problem of dwindling natural resources is commonly discussed among the population of the study area. It has been reported by informants from both ethnic groups that forest reserves were irreversibly destroyed after the settlement of the Walloye. Allegations and counter allegations are going on between the Oromo and the Amhara regarding who was responsible for the destruction. Although almost all Oromo and some Amhara mentioned that the reckless way of dealing with the forest reserves is more visibly observed among the Amhara than among the Oromo, population pressure has also aggravated the problem.

MAP I Location Map of Aaroo Addis Alem



MAP 122 MAP OF AAROO ADDIS ALEM

KILIL : OROMIYA
 ZONE : MISRAK WALLAGA
 WOREDA : JIDDAKIREMU
 FARMER ASS. : AAROO ADDIS ALEM



LEGEND

- WOREDA BOUNDARY
- ... P.A. BOUNDARY
- == ALL WEATHER ROAD
- - - FOOT PATH
- BRIDGE
- ~ PERENNIAL STREAM
- A LOCALITY - MOUNTAIN
- CHURCH - SCHOOL
- x MARKET PLACE
- VILL

MAP IV Approximate Settlement Pattern of
Oromia-Walloye Communities

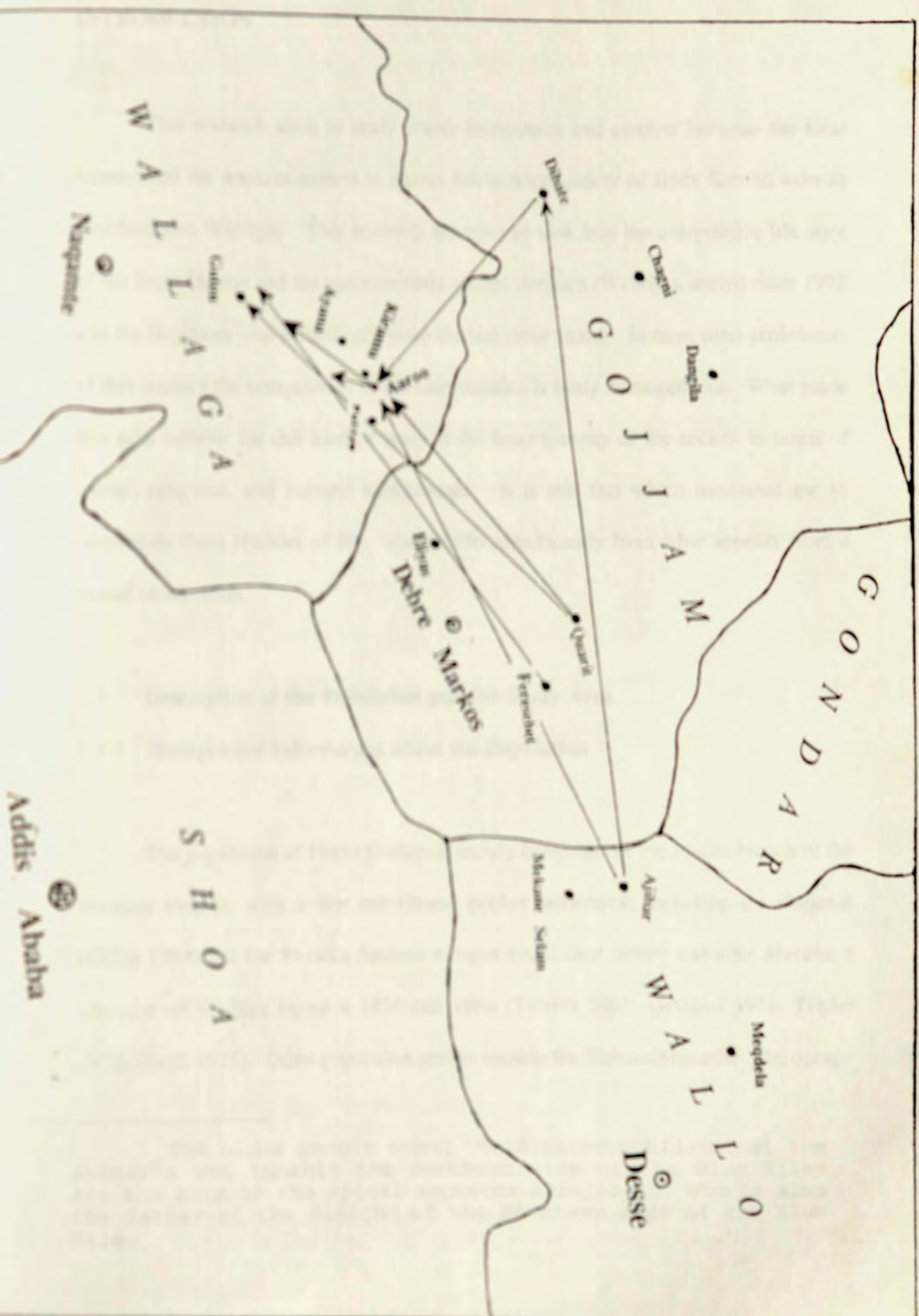
KILIL . . . OROMIYA
ZONE . . . MISRAK WALLABA
WOREDA . . . JIDDAKIREMU
FARMER ASS. AAROO ADDIS ALEM



SCALE 1:50,000

LEGEND

- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- WOREDA BOUNDARY
- F.A. BOUNDARY
- ALL-WEATHER ROAD
- FOOT PATH
- BRIDGE
- PERMANENT STREAM
- LOCALITY + MOUNTAIN
- CHURCH + SCHOOL
- MARKET PLACES/SPRING
- WELL



MAP V Sketch Map Migration Route

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to study *ethnic integration and conflict* between the local Oromo and the Amhara settlers in Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* of Jidda KIRAMU *woreda* (northeastern Walliga). This research attempts to look into the competitive life style of the local Oromo and the spontaneously settled Amhara (Walloyes settled since 1972 and the Gojjames who settled only since the last three years). In most rural settlements of this country the composition of the communities is fairly homogeneous. What made this area suitable for this kind of study is the heterogeneity of the society in terms of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. It is this fact which motivated me to investigate these realities of life, which differ significantly from what appears from a casual observation.

1.1. Description of the Population and the Study Area

1.1.1. Background Information about the Population

The population of Horro Guduru is mostly composed of the Macca branch of the Boorana Oromo, with a few non-Oromo pocket settlements including the Gojjame (Ojira 1994) and the Shewan Amhara villages established before and after Menelik's conquest of Walliga between 1876 and 1886 (Terrefe 1968; Getahun 1974; Triulzi 1975; Caulk 1975). Other population groups include the Sinicho/Shinasha¹ who occupy

¹ The older people among the Sinicho confirm that the Shinasha who inhabit the northern side of the Blue Nile, are the sons of the apical ancestor Abbajabgib, who is also the father of the Sinicho of the Southern side of the Blue Nile.

the hot lowland region of the Abbay valley (Tesema 1980), and the Gumuz who live on the edge of the Abbay Valley and Anger River. Although the Sinicho are said to have occupied only the lowlands of the Blue Nile, there are significant areas inhabited by the Sinicho in the highlands of Amuru, Jidda KIRAMU, Limmu, and Ebantu *woredas* of Horro Guduru *awrajjä*. But, since the Sinicho on the south of the Blue Nile speak only the Oromo language their ethnic identity as non-Oromo community has been overlooked for decades both by the local Oromo and the scholars. Because the Sinicho are assimilated by the Oromo, they are usually regarded only as a clan in Oromo. However, the elderly people both from the Oromo and the Sinicho confirm that the two were different societies before the eventual assimilation of the latter by the former. In most of the small towns in the region, the population is ethnically heterogeneous. Historical evidence reveals that the Macca crossed the Guder river to the southwestern regions (Hansen 1990:42) during the Robale gada³ (1570-1578) and the Birmaji gada (1578-1586). The Oromo community of Horro Guduru are followers of Ethiopian Orthodox⁴ and Protestant Christianity and Islam. The majority, however, are Orthodox Christians who have also retained certain features of traditional Oromo religion.

³ "The term gada is very difficult to define precisely" (Mohammed 1990:9). "The term gada cannot be given a univocal interpretation. It stands for several related ideas. It is, first of all, the concept standing for the whole way of life..." (Legesse 1973:81). On another page Legesse writes: "Gada System is a system of classes (*juba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities. Each gada class remains in power during a specific term (*gada*) which begins and ends with a formal power transfer ceremony" (ibid:8).

⁴ The majority of the Oromo who are Orthodox Christians have also maintained their traditional Oromo religion, for instance, in the form of paying sacrifices to ancestral cults during the important annual festivities.

Their main source of livelihood is cultivation and livestock breeding, i.e., mixed farming. Agricultural products include *teff* (*Eragrostis teff*), barley, wheat, maize, finger millet, sorghum, beans and peas, and the livestock they keep include cattle, sheep and goats. They restore the fertility of their farm land through crop rotation, swidden agriculture and by using animal manure. They have recently started using inorganic fertilizers to compensate for the shorter fallow periods and decrease in the use of organic manure resulted from decrease in the cattle population. They also keep pack animals such as horses, mules (brought from Gojjam) and donkeys. Poultry is also an important additional source of nutrition and income (for miscellaneous expenses). The community of Jidda Kिरamu area has not kept horses, at least for the last five to six decades; perhaps because the area is not conducive for horse-keeping.

Aaroo Addis Alem is estimated to be 1800 meters above sea level with June through September rainfall. This altitude, according to the Ethiopian Meteorological Service (1979:2), is within the range of *wolna dagā* (1500-2500m, temperate) climatic classification, and is conducive both for crop production and animal husbandry. The main crops grown in Aaroo are maize, finger millet, *teff*, and sorghum. To some extent, beans, peas, barley and wheat are also grown. The production of sorghum, or what is called *meera* locally, was introduced to the area by the Walloyes. Aaroo is surrounded by various springs and big rivers from which both human and animal population get water all year round. (See map three.) The community of Aaroo Addis Alem town fetches water from *laga qallo* spring which was protected with SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) support in 1990.

Descent is reckoned through the father's line, in other words, patrilineal descent is the norm (Holcomb 1973; Assefa 1983). Traditionally, the principle of male primogeniture was highly observed in the inheritance of power, guns and houses. Other

properties such as land and livestock are equally distributed if the father dies before arranging the share of each. Those sons whose manners are not liked by the father may not get an equal share with those who have the blessings of their father because of their good deeds. Daughters do not claim shares from real-estate and even personal estates since it is believed that they take their share on marriage or afterwards in the form of dowry. Marriage is based on clan exogamy and religious endogamy (Holcomb 1973; Assefa 1983). The rationale behind male primogeniture is the continuity of the lineage, that is, the society does not approve heirs born to one's daughter by a husband from a different clan.

1.1.2. The Research Site

When I decided to work on ethnic integration and conflict a year ago, I was eager to cover various settlement sites in Horro Guduru *awrajjā*, ranging from extended state sponsored settlements at Anger Guten to pockets of *sigsega*, "integration of new settlers into traditionally settled subsistence agricultural areas of the highlands above 1500 meters" (Kloos and Aynalem 1988:148). Given the time constraints and the financial implications this study would entail, I decided to limit my work to two contiguous peasant associations of Aaroo Addis Alem and Aaroo Bagin in Jidda KIRAMU *woreda*. These two peasant associations are where one could find Walloye villages of slightly over two decades old, the oldest in Jidda KIRAMU *woreda*. As soon as I arrived in the area in October 1994, I decided to further limit my research area to only Aaroo Addis Alem.

There are a number of reasons why I decided to study the community of Aaroo Addis Alem.

1. The main reason was the ethnic composition of the community. The purpose of this study is to investigate *ethnic integration and conflict*, which requires ethnic heterogeneity in a community where societies of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds reside in close proximity to one another. In Aaroo Bagin *qabalé*, the second *qabalé* I was to study, there are, according to *qabalé* sources, about four hundred fifty households out of which the Oromo comprise less than thirty households. The remaining proportion are Walloye settlers, from Borana Sayint *awrājā*, Wallo. In Aaroo Addis Alem, on the other hand, there are 201 registered households out of which fifty-three are Oromo. This made me decide in favour of Aaroo Addis Alem.

2. Another reason why I decided to conduct my study in Aaroo Addis Alem was the presence of the small but steadily growing town of Aaroo. It was reported that the village is only two years old. It is the place where the *qabalé* office is located and is also crossed by the road which connects Naqamte with Bure town in Gojjam. The village has one hundred ten housing units, some are not occupied because they are newly built ones. This is the place where people from the surrounding *qabalés* meet in various forms of economic and social relationships. It has a Sunday market to which people from Aaroo, Kिरामु, Sombo and Agamsa (the latter three are Oromo areas) are attracted. Aaroo also has a motor (diesel) grinding mill which was installed in September 1994 by three Oromo share-owners on loan from the Development Bank of Ethiopia.

3. People are also attracted to Aaroo because of the road; those who want to go to Gojjam, Agamsa (a small town in Amuru *woreda* on the north of Aaroo on the way to Gojjam), Kिरामु, and Naqamte wait for transport at Aaroo. The town is composed of Oromo and Amhara (both Gojjames and Walloyes). Each of them have different attitudes towards one another.

4. It is a common territory between Oromo dominated highlands and the Amhara villages.

It is found in the Northeast of Naqamte, roughly five hundred kilometres from Addis Ababa on the road to Bure (Gojjam).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study is an inquiry into the nature of *ethnic integration and conflict* between the indigenous Oromo and the new Amhara settlers who "spontaneously"⁵ migrated from Wallo to Jidda KIRAMU of Northeastern Wälläga roughly twenty two years ago. The officially reported reason for their abandonment of their original village was drought-induced famine. These migrants came to Jidda KIRAMU in October 1972, no doubt, during the peak of the 1972-4 drought (Clarke nd:25; Mengistu 1987:79). Since state-sponsored resettlement schemes were largely a phenomenon of the post-1974 revolution (A. Pankhurst 1992:14; Clarke nd:27; Wood 1982:157), the migrants took their own initiative to find places where the environment was less hostile for human habitation.

Early in 1974, when the migrants arrived in Horro Guduru *Awraja*, there was a heated debate between those who sympathized with the Walloye and supported their settlement and those who opposed it raising the question of rights to the land which was then under private ownership. The debate was resolved and the Walloyes were settled on the peripheries of the main lands, that is in the lowlands and the escarpments.

⁵ Although the migration of the people from Wallo to Wälläga was not state sponsored, it is reported by the settlers themselves that the government gave pass cards to the migrants. (See the chapter on *Forces of Walloye Migration to Aaroo*.)

Wood commented that the areas settled by subsistence farmers who moved over a long distance (because of drought and eviction) were "...escarpments and lowlands at the edges of the highlands, ..." (Wood 1982:159). This allowed the establishment of new villages composed of homogeneous Amhara communities adjacent to the Oromo villages who had lived in the region for many centuries.

After the declaration of March 4, 1975 of public ownership of rural land and of December 14, 1975, Declaration of the Organization and Consolidation of Peasant Associations, some of these new villages formed independent Peasant Associations, because the villages were separated by escarpments from the old villages of the indigenous people. Some were organized along with the indigenous settlements since they were either very close to the old villages or they could not form an independent Peasant Association since they were too few in number. In Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* the new Walloye villages were organized in the same Peasant Association with the existing Oromo villages.

The map of the research site shows the location of the new villages vis-a-vis the old local villages, including the market places, religious sites and offices of Peasant Associations. (See Map III)

Although spontaneous settlement of this nature was unknown in Jidda Kिरamu until 1972, Horro Guduru *Awraja* had experienced settlement from the late 1960s (Chernet 1988:55). On the number of spontaneously settled Walloyes in Horro Guduru *Awraja* in pre-1974 Revolution, Chernet stated "Before the 1974 Revolution, the number of migrant Wolloyes throughout Horro Guduru had reached an estimated number of ten thousand, out of which six thousand had settled in Abe-Dongoro Warada" (ibid:58). Since then there has been a continuous influx of migrants to the area, especially from Wallo and Gojjam.

Currently, settlers are also coming from Gojjam. Regarding the reason why they migrated the scarcity of arable land is mentioned as the major factor. Wood writes: "The most important factors stimulating spontaneous agricultural resettlement were the political circumstances of the Imperial regime, the environmental conditions in the long-settled rural areas and the economic situation in the country" (1982:160-1). Since the reason of "the political circumstances of the Imperial regime" discussed by Wood is no longer relevant since the March 1975 nationalization of rural land, the other two factors, in addition to population pressure, have induced subsistence farmers to leave their villages. The pattern of settlers' movement is that they come in small groups and seek settlement sites, either in consultation with chairpersons of each Peasant Association or, in the lowlands, out of an easy reach of the Peasant Associations.

Wood argues that unless forced by severe circumstances "resettlement by subsistence farmers was organized on a family basis..." (Wood 1976:159). This means that each household or a group of households descend to the lowlands if they cannot manage to earn livelihood in the highlands because of lack of oxen for plough cultivation. Each household which has settled itself in the new village attracts more from its area of migration and, according to some sources, many thousands of people have settled in Jidda Kिरamu during the last two decades. My attempt to get a rough estimation of the size of the population and the number of households settled in the area was unsuccessful since no document regarding demographic characteristics of the *woreda* was available in the office of the *Woreda* Administration. The local people, however, complain that there is a serious pressure both on farm land and grazing land because the population has increased beyond the carrying capacity of the land.

Among the indigenous Oromo, property rights to the land are transferred from the father to the male children, because the society is patrilineal. Different households in a village share grazing land for their livestock. Farm lands are never shared unless the owner grants use rights. This land which had been cultivated by a particular family is called *borqii warra abaluu* (the farm field of so and so's family). This, therefore, means that a newly married young man is granted land either by his father, if the latter is alive, or by other protectors, from the land transferred by fathers. Since there was no serious problem of land shortage in earlier days, every newly married man used to be given a small plot from around the homestead and he then would expand his holding by clearing the forest land within the vicinity of the village. Property in land used to be considered as something more than economic wealth. It was also a symbol of status (Hultin 1984:455). On the reaction of people towards someone who might have sold the land, J. Hultin commented:

A man who sold land was regarded, not as an economic man who made rational choices, but as an embezzler who destroyed resources on which his kin and future generations depend for subsistence. Therefore, every transaction involving land provoked a strong moral reaction and became the immediate concern of a great number of people. (Hultin 1987:11)

Bartels also writes "land, too, [in addition to cattle] is a symbol of status, and people are apt to value the quantity of it for its own sake. In former times, nobody was allowed to pass it on to another clan without the consent of his fellow-clansmen. Nowadays, this norm has lost much of its force" (Bartels 1975:885).

Currently, it is highly unlikely that someone can expand his holdings by clearing the forest since one could hardly find unoccupied fertile land in the vicinity. In fact there is wide area of land not conducive either for plough cultivation or for slash and burn cultivation because of its ruggedness and steep slopes.

Despite the fact that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the indigenous people, since "their" land was taken over by the "outsiders", there is interaction and interdependence between the Oromo and the settler communities. The interaction is particularly intense in the fields of exchange of farm products (grain crops and livestock and its product) and litigation over certain plots of land temporarily, usually transferred in lease from the Oromo to the Walloye. It seems to me that despite the interaction, ethnic boundaries which may act as barriers to social relationships other than economic transactions persist. Let alone interaction for exchange of and competition over scarce resources, ethnic boundaries persist even in the case of the flow of personnel (Barth 1969: 9).

Haaland, in his study of the nomadized Fur among the nomadic Baggara, argues that even value changes that are generated by the practice of nomadic subsistence [of the Fur] did not invariably lead to a change of identity [to Baggara] (Haaland 1969:67).

State-sponsored settlement schemes took two forms, *madabaña* (extended settlements in the lowlands) and *sigtega*. The number of households made to settle in each *qabale* depended on the size of the population of each Peasant Association. Some *qabales* did not receive *sigtega* settlers, Aaroo Addis Alem is one (CSA 1991:54). Most of the *sigtega* resettlers have left, or were planning to leave (CSA 1991:190-1).⁶

⁶ Reasons for returning to place of origin include join family or relatives, distance from birth place, climate, health reason, problems of food items, drought improved [in place of origin], and possession left behind (CSA 1991:196-7).

1.3. Purpose of the Study

1.3.1. General Purpose

My main interest is to study *ethnic integration and conflict* between the local people [Oromo] and the settlers [Amhara] of the early 1970s. I will also provide some general background information on the different views expressed towards the planned and controlled resettlement schemes in the area. The knowledge one has of this situation would also help explain how the local people and the settlers describe it. I hope the result of this research will serve as a springboard for further studies on the subject which has attracted the attention of only a few scholars so far.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

Although there have been many studies conducted on resettlement, that is, 'planned and controlled transfer of population from one area to another' (Belshaw 1968:14), schemes in Ethiopia, (Pankhurst 1992; Dieci and Viezzoli 1992; Clarke, nd; to mention but a few) and two studies on spontaneous settlement (Wood 1982; Turton 1984), hardly anything has been done on ethnic integration and conflict between the local people and the settlers.

In this study I will research:

- (a) the factors which triggered the migration from the people's point of view;
- (b) what resources they share and for what resources they compete;
- (c) the attitudes of each group on the settlement and towards one another;

- (d) how the marriage practices changed in each group or what new marriage and kinship relationships have developed since the first settlement;
- (e) how political roles are played out and who the significant players are;
- (f) The importance of the role of religion in their social relationships.

This study will establish whether or not what has been claimed so far to be the prime factor of migration is true in this case. Prior to 1974, drought and eviction were causes for longer distance movements of subsistence farmers (Wood 1982:157). Even before the 1974-Revolution, I do not think that eviction of the tenants by the landlords led to migration in the northern part of Ethiopia. Moreover eviction cannot be the reason for migration since March 1975's nationalization of rural land all over the country. Drought, however, has been with us at least every decade. Other scholars who have studied the problems of recurrent drought, and planned and controlled transfer of population from one area to another, i.e., resettlement, mention factors such as civil war, peasants' lack of knowledge of how to wisely use the land, or an inappropriate system of land management (for instance, no attempt at crop substitution and bush clearing to get additional farm land), and over-grazing. Clarke (23-4) says:

Land-hungry people clear a few hectares, farm them until the land is exhausted, then move on to another patch. Each time they find somewhere less and less suitable for permanent farming: steeper slopes, thinner soils, harder work, lower yields. And they leave behind a land which will probably never be productive again.

Yeld in Anthrope (1968:25) and Bullock in James (1975:56) argue that, although overpopulation and inappropriate systems of land management (which lead to

overcropping and problems of erosion) play equally important roles in forcing people to abandon their villages, only drought receives attention because it is taken as a cataclysmic event intruding to upset the natural order.

The hypotheses I am going to test are:

- (a) interaction between the indigenous people and the settlers is based on both mutual distrust and interdependence;
- (b) regarding natural resource conservation the indigenous people feel more responsible than the settlers;
- (c) both groups treat one another with a degree of contempt;
- (d) religious institutions involve both conflict and as well as integration.

1.4. Methods of Building a Body of Data

In order to answer the questions which inspired me to conduct this study, both secondary and primary sources were used. On the history of drought, spontaneous settlement and rationale behind state-sponsored settlement, I have consulted books and relevant articles on the subject.

Since this job requires more qualitative data than what documents can reveal, unstructured interviews, oral histories, and life stories of some informants were used. The interviews held with informants were recorded with 60 minute cassettes and written notes. The tapes were transcribed and translated. Unstructured interviews were also held to obtain information on factors which induced migration, peoples' experiences before and after migration, the reaction of the indigenous community, the views they hold of the current political situation and the attitudes towards the other ethnic group.

Multi-ethnic communities interact quite differently from homogenous ones. This can only be understood through observation and participation in the daily life of the community concerned. Careful observation of the various aspects of daily life in the market, drinking houses, *qabale* assemblies, funeral ceremonies, religious sites and rituals, dispute settlement meetings and casual interactions and the effect of differences in ethnic and/or regional background on the quantity and quality of relationships were the major sources of information.

1.5. Review of Related Literature

1.5.1. Inter-ethnic Relations

Although geographical boundaries remain to influence ethnic identities, it is crucial to study social boundaries since ethnic identities are maintained even in situations of multi-stranded inter-ethnic relationships. The following citation from Barth clearly reveals this.

Though the naïve assumption that each tribe and people has maintained its culture through a bellicose ignorance of its neighbours is no longer entertained, the simplistic view that geographical and social isolation have been the critical factors in sustaining cultural diversity persists. ... categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on absence of mobility [physical], contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. (Barth 1969:9-10)

Knutsson (1969) discusses two patterns of inter-ethnic relations in Ethiopia. His area of interest is southern Ethiopia in which his subject of study is more complex, primarily because of the occupation of the southern part of present Ethiopia by Emperor Menelik during the end of the last century. The conquest of the southern regions was

followed by the settlement of the Amhara/Tigre soldiers, which changed the ethnic composition of many small towns and some villages in the rural areas. "Increased inter-group mobility, immigration from the conquerors' ethnic groups, introduction of the victors' system of ethnic classification and valuation were incidents and circumstances contributing to the present ethnic situation in Southern Ethiopia" (Knutsson 1969:86-7).

Knutsson argues that although the setting is similar to what has been brought by colonization in other parts of East Africa, some degree of integration was achieved in Ethiopia which was never the case between the colonizers and colonized in other parts of Africa. "It is true that the new rulers recognized ethnic boundaries as did the European colonial powers; the administrative division into sub-provinces and districts is principally built upon such a recognition" (Ibid:87). Since the influx of people from the north was large, the immigration did not produce ethnic and social cleavages unlike those which existed between European settlers and native Africans. Knutsson points out that the new rulers employed two methods to facilitate inter-ethnic relations, and eventually to achieve assimilation, between the settlers and the indigenous people. The methods were, primarily, to force the immigrants to live basically the same life and accept the same standard as the indigenous ethnic groups, and, secondarily, "to Ethiopianize, which was tantamount to Amharize, the subject groups". According to Knutsson the major policy was the first one and the second one was employed only to some extent. I very much doubt whether the situation was as Knutsson was trying to present it, since only the latter, that is, the policy of *Ethiopianization/Amharization* of the subject groups, is supported by literature and empirical observation. Keller writes "... in the process of colonization, rather than consciously attempting to integrate subject peoples into the dominant culture, the emphasis was mainly on exploitation and

control. This policy created a class structure with distinctive ethnic undertones" (Keller 1988:45). Keller argues that assimilation was possible theoretically, but it was selective. He adds:

It was theoretically possible, for example, for an Oromo to be assimilated into the dominant culture. He simply had to become Amharized- to take on the language, religion, customs, and mannerisms of the Amhara. As mentioned previously, however, the process of assimilation was selective, affecting only a small segment of indigenous elites. (ibid: 63)

Although among the subject people the use of Amharic is presented as equivalent to *sittane*, i.e., civilization by the conquering force, Baxter writes "This does not mean that all subjects were encouraged to become *evolués*. No more than the French Empire could the Ethiopian have given equal citizenship to all its members" (Baxter 1983: 138).

Knutsson, however, was very close to reality when he says the Ethiopianization policy "often had the opposite effect: ethnic identities became emphasized and polarization on ethnic grounds was increased" (ibid: 88).

Knutsson's study dealt with two different types of settlement, that is, the rural area (the Rift Valley Arsi and their neighbours) and the urban centers (the Polyethnic market village in Macha).

The neighbours of the Rift Valley Arsi, which Knutsson included in his study were the Laki (islanders in Lake Zwai), the highland farmers (the Amhara and the Shoa Oromo, who settled in the highland following the occupation of Arsi by Menelik), and the Jille (who belong to the Tulama tribal cluster of Oromo and who, like the Arsi, live on the Rift slopes and bottom). Knutsson remarks "Extensive traditions tell about fierce fighting between the Arsi and the Laki over the control of the shore land" (ibid: 90). Since the occupation of the highland by the Shoaan settlers, this situation has changed

to a kind of symbiotic interrelation because the district was of vital importance to both groups, "to the Laki as agricultural land from which they could supplement the limited produce of their island terraces; to the Arsi for pastures and free access to the water for their cattle" (Ibid: 90-1). The islanders supply cloth, fish, and some items of merchandise and the Arsi market butter, ghee, fresh cheese, sorghum, corn, and occasionally meat (ibid: 91).

Regarding the Arsi relations with Amhara and Oromo immigrants, the former lump the latter together into one category, despite the latter's intra-community differentiation, and refer to them either as Sidama (the Arsi word for Amhara) or as Shoa (people from Shoa). Knutsson revealed that the Arsi adopted the highlanders' farming system, but maintained and perpetuated ethnic dichotomization.

... even if the explicit aim of their [Arssi] new economic strategies is to become as much as possible like the highland immigrants and even if overt expression of their ethnic affiliation in dress and symbols is reduced, an Arssi ethnic identity is still fiercely maintained. This cannot be achieved in the traditional way, as this would imply retaining the whole pattern of their former pastoral life. Instead it is done by the transition to a Moslem or rather semi-Moslem system of knowledge, values and symbols that makes it possible in a partly assimilated situation to maintain and perpetuate ethnic dichotomization. (ibid:93)

The Arssi and Jille belong to the Tulama tribe of the Oromo. The point of analysis is inter-tribal, not inter-ethnic. Knutsson writes the following about why he included Arssi-Jille relation in the study entitled 'inter-ethnic relations':

However, the dichotomization demonstrated in their interrelation, the fact that both stress not their common but their different ancestry within the very large Galla [Oromo] people, and finally the fact that they exhibit fairly different systems of social organization, makes it reasonable to include them in this context. (ibid:95)

Because the Arisi and the Jille do not transact and exchange produce, and also compete for grazing land and plots of arable land, differences are strengthened, rather than bridged.

In the polyethnic market villages of Macca the situation differs from what we have seen among the rural communities. Knutsson observed the situation from the perspective of the use of language, patrilineally oriented inter-marriage and trade. In the use of language, Amharic is the 'political' language, although the language of the higher ranking ethnic group is used in economic transactions (Knutsson 1969:96). Regarding transfer of women in marriage Knutsson writes: "Intermarriage in the Macha [Macca] market village largely constitutes a one-way traffic of women from lower ethnic groups to higher". Integration is more vivid in the economic field than in ritual. The introduction of Orthodox Christianity "contributed to give the village community a unitary set of symbols, although integration in the ritual field is .. less marked than it might seem" (ibid:99).

1.5.2. Kinship and Property among the Macca Oromo

In the process of their expansion towards Western Ethiopia, the Macca Oromo dominated the whole landmass between the Abbay river in the north, the Dabus river and Tulu Walal in the west and the Gojeb river in the south (Tesema 1986:48). Despite changes in their economic activities, and population growth which had led to pressure on the land (both farm and pasture land), the Oromo had regulated land rights and allocation through the mechanisms of "qabiye" literally means land holding; but as a system it seems to refer to established rights of precedence in the occupation of newly conquered land" (Tesema 1980:21). Tesema argues that since land was plentiful during

those early days, the exercise of communal rights by all clansmen did not create problems. Since women join different clans through marriage, only male members of the clan are entitled to a plot of land which some call *dhoqqe*, some *maasii*, and still others *borqii*, which may mean the plot of land belonging to a man who has the right to use and gradually devolves it upon his male offspring. The difference is only regional variation.

Hultin closely examines the relationship between notions of continuity in the domain of land use and that of kinship. He writes:

Notions of continuity in the domain of land use are closely related to notions of continuity in the domain of kinship, to ideas about filiation and descent, in that norms and rules derived from such ideas are used to organize processes of succession and group filiation. A man gives his son a piece of land when the boy is about ten years old. ...As a man grows up, marries and gets children, his father gradually devolves land upon him and his brothers. He and his brothers are thus using fractions of their father's land, that is of their father's *masi* [*maasii*], and their father and his brothers in turn use fractions of their father's *masi* [*maasii*] and so on. (Hultin 1984:453)

Macca Oromo constitute an exogamous patrilineal group with a defined territory.

This process has given rise to a settlement pattern where a man's brothers and paternal cousins are his closest neighbours, his second and third cousins live little further away on the same ridge, and more distantly related agnates live still further away on the adjacent ridges. Therefore, when we look at the men who *actually* live within a given area we will find a correspondence between genealogical and spatial separation. (Hultin 1984:453)

Descent is by definition ancestor-oriented. Descent constructs, therefore, refer to formulations of genealogical connections between persons and their ancestors in the

form of genealogical continua. Hultin also stresses that it is more than tracing one's relationship to either the living or the dead. He writes:

... people concerned with genealogical continuity are of course not only ancestor-oriented, they are like most other people also concerned with the future; notions of continuity presuppose not only ideas of past and present and of the past in the present, *but also the future* [emphasis mine]. (ibid:453)

On the relationship between land and descent among the Macca Oromo, Hultin correctly argues "the lineage estate is a chronicle and a kind of archive of lineage history" (ibid:455). He also discusses the fact that there was a common recognition that there existed a mystical bond between man and land which could not be broken even by force" (ibid). It is because of this fact that the Oromo (including the Sinicho) community of Aaroo claim that their ancestral land should not have been taken away by Walloyes. The Sinicho say "they [Walloye] took our father's land and left us empty handed". Each *gāsha/qalada* (40 hectares) is usually called after the name of the holder of the *qabiyye* right. Hultin provides us with a couple of stories which are the basis of his thesis, that is '*the land has eyes and ears*'. It is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with the stories which Hultin collected on the land having eyes and ears. Descent is, therefore, not only ancestor-oriented, but also an ideological construct which 'legitimizes existing property relations and makes members of the descent groups almost immune to claims from non-members' (ibid:453).

"Descent does not *per se* give access to land, it rather defines to whom land could be given. Furthermore, the fact of being born to a particular parent is, although a necessary condition, insufficient for the assignment of kinship status;..." (ibid:455). Handing over of ancestral land is a social recognition of the child and which automatically defines membership to the lineage.

Thus, the gradual handing over of land can (in the domestic domain) be seen as a ritual of filiation and (in the juro-political domain) as the ritual integration of persons into the local descent groups. In the cultural terms, what we are dealing with here is a conception of kinship as a composite of descent constructs and notions of property. Land is instrumental for filiation, for making legitimate fathers and sons; agnation is instrumental for property, for making legitimate "fathers of land [*abba lafaa*]". (Hultin 1984:455)

1.5.3. Spontaneous Migration and Settlement

Chernet (1988) provided us with the historical background of the settlement of the Walloye in Abe-Dongoro *woreda* of Horro Guduru *awraja*. According to the information obtained by this researcher, the major factor behind their leaving their original home area in Wollo was population pressure. The Walloye began out-migrating in 1962 and the initial direction of their migration was to Matakal *awraja* in Gojjam where they had worked for about six years (1962-68) renting the land from an Agaw landlord (Chernet 1988:52-3). In 1967 the landlord raised the rent to sixty Birr (it was twenty when they started in 1962) and the settlers refused to pay the amount demanded by the landlord who ordered them to abandon the land which the tenants still refused to do. This forced the landlord to evict the settlers. "He incited the Shanqilla [Gumuz] to take up arms against the Wolloye. ... This clash claimed several lives among the Wolloyes" (ibid: 53). Then in 1969 the Wolloyes left Gojjam for Wälläga with the help of the then Governor of Gojjam *Dajäzmäch* Dereje Makonnen, who sent the Wolloyes to his cousin *Fitawräri* Abera Wirtu, the *balabät* of Dongoro *woreda* at that time. Regarding why the Governor of Gojjam acted in that way Chernet writes: "He, first of all, did not want to see further problems in his governorate, which had

been already rocked by the peasant revolt of 1968. Secondly, he saw the benefit the Wolloyes would yield to his cousin" (ibid: 55). Chernet argues that the number of the self-settled Wolloyes "increased as more Wolloyes came to settle upon information of the abundance of land and its fertility transmitted back home by these pioneers" (ibid: 58).

The relationship between the Wolloyes and the indigenous Oromo was not satisfactory, since inter-ethnic marriage and other daily activities were limited due to religious differences, that is the Wolloyes were Suni Muslims, the Oromo Orthodox Christians. He writes:

Difficulties arose particularly because the Wolloyes worked throughout the year except on Fridays while the rest of the *woreda's* population observed all non-working days stipulated by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Wolloyes also became endogamous in marriage. Thus they became an isolated minority. (ibid: 58)

Another important work on spontaneous resettlement in Ethiopia was that of Wood (1982). His study covered the period from 1950 to 1974, and he revealed the fact that spontaneous agricultural resettlement was dominated by traditional subsistence farmers (Wood 1982: 157). He also brought to our attention the fact that in the mid-1960s resettlement for commercial agricultural production grew in importance. These two types of settlements brought under cultivation grazing lands of pastoralists, forested areas and little used woodlands and grasslands. His main emphasis was on short-distance down-slope movements to grazing lands of pastoralists (along the eastern escarpments of the northern highlands and the southern edges of the northern highlands and the southern highlands) and across plateau and up-slope resettlement to forested areas. The first type of resettlement probably received the greatest number of settlers

whereas the second one received the lowest number during the period considered. The other, probably the second major movement of population in the form of resettlement was the one which colonized grasslands and woodlands "which had formerly been little used because of their low and unreliable rainfall, the limited availability of water, and the presence of malaria and animal trypanosomiasis" (ibid: 160). These areas covered the Shire lowlands of Takezze river in the north, the Blue Nile valley in the central part, and the valleys around the settlements of Bako and Bulki in the south.

Wood mentions only two cases where longer distance movements took place. The first case was from Tigre to the southern part of the Rift Valley as a result of specific information about the availability of land, while the second case involved the settlement of the northern highlanders in Agew Midir and Metekel *awrājās* of western Gojjam (ibid: 160). The settlement of spontaneous migrants in Horro Guduru is the extension of the second type of movement, since most of my informants reiterated the fact that they were informed about the availability of land in Wällāga by those who had already settled in Abe Dongoro *woreda* and Yohannes Yimer, member of Chamber of Deputies of Sayint *woreda*.

According to Wood the facilitating factors are: (a) the political circumstances of the Imperial regime; (b) environmental conditions in the long-settled rural areas; and (c) the economic situation in the country. He argued that these factors interacted to exert a number of influences upon conditions in the rural areas and this directly or indirectly encouraged farmers to undertake resettlement (ibid: 161). The problem of environmental degradation in the northern highlands of Ethiopia was critically observed by many scholars. Ståhl writes:

Environmental degradation in Ethiopia is well documented. It is estimated that 50% of the highlands are significantly eroded, while 25% are seriously eroded and 4% are beyond recovery. If present trends in grazing, cultivation and removal of vegetation continue, the physical resource base in the northern highlands will be overtaken by irreversible degradation at the turn of the century. (1989:181)

Beyond what has been said so far on types of resettlement, areas where these resettlements took place and the factors which stimulated these movements, Wood hardly said anything about the effect of these resettlement on inter-ethnic interaction and its integrative effect. However, he noted the fact that the Imperial Government encouraged these agricultural resettlements (directly through its policies and indirectly through its inactivity). The Emperor claiming all the land, encouraged the highlanders to settle in the lowland which was under the control of the pastoral societies and supported the cultivators (who migrated from the highland) in conflicts over the expansion of the cultivation into the grazing land (ibid: 161). This, Wood argues, "was partially the bias of a government almost entirely composed of highlanders..." (ibid). At another point, Wood states that the expansion of the highlanders into the lowlands "is probably the continuation of a long-term process of down-slope resettlement by highland Amhara farmers to regain land occupied by the predominantly pastoral Oromo (Galla) during their diaspora in the sixteenth century" (Stitz 1970:78 cited in Wood 1982:160).

Wood identified three trends of migration. These are: (a) migration from cleared areas into the forest fringe in search of richer soils, coffee forest and lower rents; (b) migration within the closed forest out to the fringe in search of markets, alternative economic opportunities and facilities; and (c) migration along the forest fringe (Wood 1975:18). These are all short-distance movements of small farmers who

either move down-slope or up-slope. The latter seldom takes place while the former is the usual trend since "forest soils when newly cleared are friable, need very little preparation for cultivation and the absence of weeds for the first few years means that hand cultivation is possible without a heavy expenditure of labour" (Wood 1975:15).

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY

2.1. Origin and History of the Sinicho/Shinasha

The Sinicho/Shinasha live on both sides of the banks of the Blue Nile. Although they know why they are called Shinasha, they are not certain how and why they are called Sinicho. Alaga Taye asserts that the Sinicho were called Shinasha by the Amhara because the growing population flooded the highlands in thousands (Plazikowsky-Brauner 1970:37). Shinasha has the sound of the Amharic word for thousands and thousands, namely *thi ina thi*. This assertion is also confirmed by local informants. This same people are called by different names in different regions of Walläga and Gojjam, namely, Sinicho in Walläga, Shinasha in southern Gojjam and Dangabo in Wambara *woreda* of southwestern Gojjam (Oljira 1994:16). Although we cannot be certain to whom the ones on the northern side of the Blue Nile trace their apical ancestor, those on the southern side say their apical ancestor is Abbajangib. Indeed, the majority of the Sinicho of the research site stop counting their pedigrees at Abballan (Allan). It is only the elderly people who know that Abbajangib fathered, from the oldest to the youngest, Abballan, Dukkano, Dabbino, Allaago, and Xilimo.

Oral sources confirm that both Sinicho and Shinasha are one and the same, and this is evidenced by prohibition of endogamous marriage since this is considered a form of incest, or *haraamuu* (in Oromo). Informants are unable to trace the exact homeland of the Sinicho/Shinasha, apart from mentioning that Abballan and his four brothers were born at a place called Luqma, on the southern bank of the Blue Nile in Amuru *woreda* of Horro Guduru *awraja* of Walläga. The response of the elders to the question "from

where do you think the Sinicho/Shinasha came?" is outright *gamaa dhufne* ("we came from over there or yonder"). Since an Oromo word "*gama*" implies across the river, lake or sea, informants do not clearly indicate which river or lake or sea they are referring to. Unlike what Oljira (1994:18) writes "...above all the Sinicho cannot trace themselves to a separate descent other than the Oromo", the Sinicho, are certain that they came to the area from the opposite direction to the Oromo, whom the Sinicho call 'Oromo Walal'. Indeed the Oromo inhabiting Horro Guduru belong to the Boorana Oromo branch who migrated from Haroo Walabuu, opposite to Tullu Walal, northern part of Ganale river (Mohammed 1990:18). From this, one can assume that the Sinicho came through Gojjam, although it is still difficult to conclude that the Sinicho/Shinasha crossed the Blue Nile to Walläga from Gojjam. Historical records do not say anything on Alaqa Taye's dubious assertion that the Sinicho/Shinasha came to Ethiopia from Kana'an through Egypt. History has, however, recorded the presence of the Sinicho not only in Horro Guduru but also in the regions west of the Dhidhessa river (Oljira 1994:15). In these historical records nothing is said about when they lived in the said regions.

At present, because of the complete assimilation of the Sinicho with the Oromo, especially those in the research site and the surrounding *qabalés* in Jidda, Amuru, Limmu and Ebanta werredas, they speak the Oromo language. It is confirmed that there are only a few elderly persons who still speak the Sinicho language, usually when they want to discuss confidential matters in the presence of a non-Sinicho (Oljira *ibid*: 18).

Regarding the linguistic classification of the Sinicho/Shinasha, there is an unresolved debate, namely, whether it belongs to the Cushitic or an Omotic language family. Brauner (1970:31) asserted that the Shinasha belong to the Cushitic language family. Bender (1976:62) asserts that the Shinasha have to be grouped into the Omotic

language family. According to Fleming (1969:356-66), the Shinasha are classified under the Kefa or Gonga languages, and also, Lange (1982:3-4) writes that Gonga is a linguistic classification. According to Lange, therefore, the Shinasha languages of northern Wallāga and southern Gojjam form northern Gonga. If the debate whether or not the Omotic language family exists as a separate language family, different from the Cushitic language family, is resolved in favour of a separate Omotic language group, one would assume that the Shinasha belong to the Omotic language family. It is very recently that Omotic languages, which were included in the Cushitic language family, were treated as a separate language family. It seems to me that it was when the present Omotic languages were under the classification of the Cushitic language family that the Shinasha was grouped into the Cushitic language family.

The following legend explains how the Sinicho lived in the area.

Abbajangib fathered five sons with a woman called Ruadee. Abballan (Allan), their oldest son, is the strongest person ever seen in human history. Not only his strength, but also his stature is said to have been extraordinarily huge making it difficult for people to believe that such a person has ever existed. Abballan always came back victorious from hunting big game such as elephants, lions and buffalos.⁷

Once upon a time the five brothers went to a place called Qoora, in Gojjam, hunting big game. Since Abballan always killed big game, his four brothers asked him to lend them his spear and shield to go hunting. He did not hesitate to give them what they asked for. Unfortunately, they were not successful. He took back his spear and shield and went out hunting while they stayed at their station. This time he came back with a trophy of an elephant and a buffalo. Envious of his success, his four brothers decided to bury him alive. There was a disagreement as to what action they would take against him. As soon as he was back at their station they invited him to take a seat over a deeply dug hole covered with

⁷ The community still believes that a man should kill big game to become a hero.

grass. Abballan did not suspect that his brothers would do anything against him since it is normal and expected of the younger to leave seats for the elders. He soon fell in the hole. His brothers left him in the hole and reported back home to their parents, who were alive, that Abballan had been killed by an elephant. After a few days he managed to get up from where he was buried alive. Since he did not want to see his brothers again, he stayed in Gojjam where he got married to several women with whom he had sons like Sakala, Ginja bara [and five other sons whose names the informants do not know.]

According to local informants this is how the Shinasha of the northern side of the Blue Nile settled in Gojjam.

Since Abballan had a single son, Asisso (Asis) at Luqma, before he left for Qoora to hunt big game, he decided to visit his son and his senior wife after seven years of stay in Gojjam. In September of the seventh year after his departure, he arrived at mid-night and knocked at the door of his wife. The female slave asked who he was and he said "I am Abballan". She thought it was someone from the village making fun of her and cursed him saying *saa nyatu Arbi Abballanin nyate, badi asii* (literally, "let the elephant which ate Abballan eat you, get away from here"). Abballan told her that it was him and showed her his hands touching her head, which is believed to circle her head with only one hand. She was shocked when he did the same and told her *giftii* (status given to a lady of high position), Abballan's wife, that it was Abballan. They let him in.

The news of the "death" of Abballan was unbearable to his father, wife and mother. Oral sources report that Abbajangib got blind while weeping day in day out. His wife had been mourning for the seven years of his stay in Gojjam. Traditionally, a mourning woman does not take a bath, cut or shave her hair, cut her nails, and she is also expected to sleep on the ground. Abballan cleaned her as if she was preparing for her wedding. Telling her that he would be coming at the same time at night, Abballan left that very evening and warned her not to utter a word about his coming to anyone whatsoever. On the morrow his parents were angered by his wife's cleaning herself lest she may marry another man. Since she could not resist telling his parents of his coming, she told them that

Abballan is alive and has visited her last night. She also told them he will come again at night. Instantly, Abbajangib's lost sight restored. It was decided that they would beg him to stay. He arrived at a time fixed the day before and was let in by his wife who provided him with food and *daadhii* (honey-mead/wine). In the meantime the parents and all relatives crowded at the gate not to let him go. From among the slaves of Abbajangib a certain man was identified because it was believed that this man could hold him while others may also assist. According to the plan the identified slave caught Abballan and his mother Ruudee appealed to his conscience by showing him her breast which fed him during his childhood. He could not resist the request by his mother and his relatives which had appealed to his emotions and decided to stay, provided that he would not see his brothers who buried him alive.

He asked whether his four brothers were alive or not and was told that they were all alive. He told his parents and the rest of the relatives that it was his brothers who buried him. Abbajangib asked Abballan what each said when he was buried. Abballan reported the words of each of his brothers as follows:

- a) Dukkano: *hinajjeefna* ("Let us kill him").
- b) Dabbino: *jabaa kenya hinajjeefnu, dhignisa nu balleeta* ("We do not have to kill our big man, his blood will destroy us").
- c) Allaago: *jabaa kenya akka malee awalla* ("It is inexcusable to bury our big man alive").
- d) Xilimo: No one remembers what Xilimo said.

This was followed by the publicly observed cursing of the four persons by their father. The cursing is as follows:

- a) Dukkano: *dukanan yo ajjeefan gumaa hinta'in; yo wajin bultanis haramuu hin ta'in* ("Let it not be defined a fratricide if you kill him by night and it not be incest if you get into sexual affairs with his descendants").
- b) Dabbino: *siit lubbaa isa hambise, dhugaa faradi, lafti at dhaqxe arara haa ta'u* ("It was you who saved his life: speak for justice; let everywhere you go be reconciliation").
- c) Allaago: *moggaa ta'i; badi, hindheeratin; gomjiif immoo hinbadi'n* ("Live on the periphery; disappear, let you be cut short, but not be").

- d) Xilimo: lost for the lineage").
xillim jedhii badi ("May you completely disappear").

It is believed that because of this curse only Abballan's line reproduced itself.

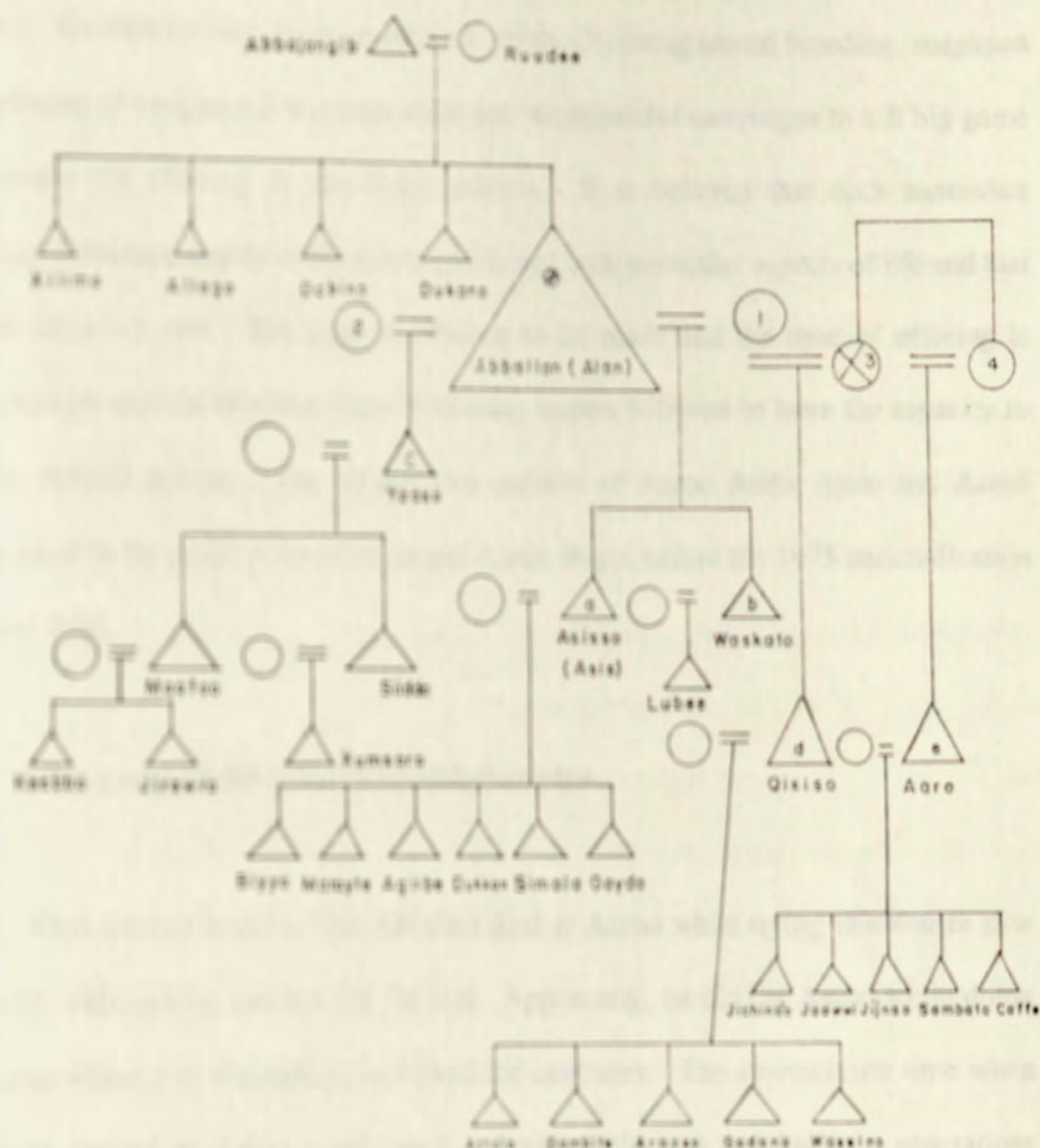
No one really knows who descended from non-Abballan's line of Abbajangib's children.

Abballan had another son, Waskato, with his senior wife after he returned back to Luqma. With another wife (a divorcee, *gurnamaa* in Oromo) he had another son by the name of Yaasoo. Again he married a young girl who died soon after she gave birth to a son called Qixiso, and the younger sister of his deceased wife was given to him in marriage by an arrangement called *hirpha dhaicha*⁸ (sororate). It was with this last young wife that he had his last son called Aaroo. The last wife brought up her deceased sister's son Qixiso and her own son Aaroo. It was with this last wife that Abballan moved to a place called Aaroo, leaving his other children and relatives at a place called Luqma, northeast of Aaroo, between Aaroo and the Blue Nile. Abballan died and was buried at Aaroo, as a result of which the *gasha/qalada* where his grave is located is called after him, Allano. His burial place is considered sacred by all Sinicho, and most often certain ceremonies involving the whole Sinicho take place there. (See Map III for a place name; and Appendix I, Photo for the graveyard of Abballan)

There are some conditions which may require the arrangement for the offering of certain sacrifices to ancestral cults among the Oromo of this area. Although one cannot establish the experience of the Sinicho/Shinasha before they were assimilated to the Oromo, currently they are performing everything in a similar way to that of the

⁸ *Hirpha dhaicha* is not common these days among this community. *Dhaala/bulchaa* (levirate) is, however, exercised, preferably among patrilineal parallel cousins; in case that is not possible, the brother of the deceased husband is forced to assume the responsibility. It is culturally expected of someone who is closely related to the deceased husband to be an adult protector for the survivors.

SINICHO/SHINASHA GENEALOGY



- ② The reason why abballan is represented by a big triangle is not to reflect the story about his extraordinary huge size, but to help accommodate the four wives he was married to in Aaro and Lubee. The women he got married to on the other side of the blue Nile and children he begot there are not included.

Oromo. Conditions such as recurrent poor yields, declining animal breeding, suspicion of breaking of exogamous marriage rules and unsuccessful campaigns to kill big game necessitate the offering of sacrificial animals. It is believed that such anomalies required collective appeal to the spirits concerned with particular aspects of life and that of the ancestral cult. The type of offering to be made and the time of offering is identified by certain *ayyansaa* (time reckoning expert believed to have the capacity to talk to various spirits). The present two *qabalés* of Aaroo Addis Alem and Aaroo Bagin used to be called Aaroo Gamin and Aaroo Bagin before the 1975 nationalization of rural land.

2.2. Oromo and Sinicho/Shinasha Relationships

Oral sources confirm that Abballan died at Aaroo while trying to colonize new territory, although he was too old for that. Apparently, he died at Aaroo while doing the same where his descendants had lived for centuries. The approximate time when Abballan arrived at Aaroo is estimated at between thirteen and fourteen generations (390-420 years). If his father's presence in the area is included it may reach fifteen generations (450 years). This approximates the time of Oromo expansion to the area, that is, between 1570 and 1578 (Hassen 1990:42).

Oral sources confirm that there was no fighting between the Oromo (during Oromo expansion) and the Sinicho who lived in the lowlands. Because the Oromo have heard that the Sinicho were strong fighters, the Oromo did not want to involve themselves in unnecessary fighting, which they thought may be concluded at their own expense. The Oromo, therefore, disseminated the information that the Oromo are *booranaana* in front of whom one cannot stand in antagonism. The *boorana* are the

highest level citizen among the Macca Oromo (Bartels, 1975:885). Bartels writes: "These *boorana* [boorana] are those who take pride in a pure Galla [Oromo] descent. They are the "first born", the people closest to the pure beginning and, accordingly, closest to *Waaqa* [Waaqa] (Sky/God)" (ibid). The *boorantu* are, therefore, the descendants of the *Boorana*, who according to tradition are not mixed with the blood of the non-Oromo groups who might have been either adopted or born to a non-Oromo mother. It is believed by the community that the eyes of a *Boorantuu* can easily kill or make people fall sick if he/she does not get the blessings of the *Boorantuu*. The *Sinicho* did not want to face such a people and, therefore, they stayed in the lowlands.

Oral sources indicate only a single incident when the *mooti* (king) Odaa Jimma (an Oromo) and Addo Ibsa (a *Sinicho*) entered into conflict which in fact did not involve war or even skirmishes. Oral sources do not establish the time when this took place. Nevertheless, one can safely assume that it was in the mid-nineteenth century since history reveals that Addo's contemporaries such as Odaa Jimma and Abishe Garba had lived during that time (Oljira 1994:62). Abata, my Oromo informant, narrates the relationships which existed between Addo Ibsa and Odaa Jimma as follows:

Addo was the ruler of the area between Ulaa Sogida (in *Jarte Jarda* *woreda*), Fazal Selassie (in Gojjam) and the whole Jidda and Limmu *woredas* of Horro Guduru. All the other *mootis* within this territory were subjects to Addo Ibsa of *Sinicho*.

Once upon a time Addo was advised by a *moortuu* (fortune teller) that he should somehow kill Odaa because he was the only threat to his power. The *moortuu* warned Addo saying "unless you kill Odaa he will take your power very soon". Odaa was a young *mooti* with only five fighting horsemen, whereas Addo was the powerful *mooti* having many *mooti*'s as his subjects. Consequently, Addo wanted to kill Odaa Jimma as he was advised by the *moortuu* without the latter knowing anything. Addo invited Odaa to his home in order to kill him after he was

served food and *daadhi*. The plan was to kill him after he became intoxicated. Odaa took the invitation of his chief in good faith and started his way to Addo's place. However, after he was left with only few hours walk to Addo's place Odaa was told that the former was to kill him. He did not change his mind and continued his journey to Addo's house. Odaa, accompanied by his *eebo* (literally, spear), troops, armed with spear and shield, arrived at a time he was expected and was well received by the "host". Since they have already heard of the conspiracy, they did not enjoy the food and the *daadhi*. Addo said to Odaa "why do you not eat and drink my lord?". Odaa fell on Addo's knees and replied: "We are enjoying every thing we are provided with, but why did you want to kill me my lord, I heard it at Dirre [Odaa Jimma's home place very close to Ayana town, the capital of Jidda *woreda*] that you are going to kill me". He was trying to win his sympathy when he said he heard it at Dirre, although he was informed of the case only few hours walk left to Addo's place. Addo thought it was the *moortuu* (fortune teller) who told him, like he did himself, of the case and said to Odaa *moorttuun hin xeebdi maaloo nyaadha dhuga* (literally, "the fortune teller is lying, please eat and drink or, help yourselves"). Addo's plan did not work and Odaa left for his place on the morrow. On his way back to Dirre he declared that every *mooti* under Addo's rule should disobey Addo.

The first *mooti* to disobey was that of Waasti, a Sinicho himself. This news reached Addo and he campaigned against Waasti's *mooti* without seeking the assistance from the rest of his subjects. Indeed, some of his advisors told him to wait until the Amuru *mooti*'s may come to join them on the campaign. Looking down upon the Waasti *mooti*, Addo said *Andaaqqoof billaa barbaadu qeensan qalatu, Waastifin eebo koradha?* ("one does not need a knife to kill a fowl. A nail is enough, I do not seek the assistance of other forces for Waasti"). He went to Waasti and was easily killed by Sinicho *mooti* of Waasti whom he looked down upon.

It was in this way that every *mooti* of Jidda, Amuru and Horro was relieved from the subjugation of Addo Ibsa, whom oral sources present as a notorious *mooti*. After the killing of Addo, Odaa Jimma took over the ruling of the area. It was the injustices he [Addo] did against the people, especially on the *qondaala/ajjeesa* (someone who has killed an elephant, or a lion or a buffalo) which fell him in the hands of his inferior. Addo forced one hundred *qondaala/ajjeesa* to weed *sunqoo* (*tringonella*

foenumgraecum). This act was received as a shocking news by the people because the act violated two culturally endorsed norms. Firstly, the *qondaala/ajjeesa* are the highly respected members of the community for their heroic achievement and they should not have been treated this way. Secondly, it violated the gender based division of labour, that is let alone the *qondaala/ajjeesa*, even the *gurgudu* (non-*qondaala/ajjeesa*) do not involve themselves in the production of spice materials which are usually grown in the homesteads. It is a purely female activity.

Aaroo was traditionally the land of the children of Aaroo Abballan. But now all descendants of Abballan and many Oromo clans⁹ live in the area. Today the Walloyes and the Gojjames also inhabit the area. Because of harsh climatic conditions in the lowlands, where most Sinicho used to live and some still do, most moved to Aaroo which is relatively cool and does not have problems of animal diseases. Compared to most of the areas inhabited by the Sinicho, Aaroo has many springs making it easy for people to live there and keep livestock, especially cattle. One of my informants who is a descendent from Asisso (Asis), the first son of Abballan, now lives in Aaroo area leaving Luqma, the home land of Abballan, since Aaroo is, relatively, conducive for cattle breeding and crop cultivation. Since he was a *balabāt* at Luqma in Amuru *woreda*, which he abandoned due to his migration to Aaroo (in Jidda *woreda*) he had been exempted from land tax by the Aaroo *balabāt*. Exemption from land tax was because of the combination of two things, that is, he was a *balabāt* and is also the descendant of the grandson [Asisso/Asis] of the apical ancestor, namely Abbajangib.

⁹ In Aaroo Addis Alem qabalé there are five non-Sinicho, i.e., Oromo clans, namely, Wandii, Baarii, Diinmaa, Yaayya and Ja'i. It should be noted that the Sinicho are the significant majority of the Oromo speaking communities in the qabale.

The exemption of the Luqma *balabäir* from tax in Aaroo ceased with the nationalization of rural land in March 1975.

The *balabäirs* among the Oromo claim their descent from the *gada* leaders who exercised power at the time of conquest by Ethiopian governors (Markakis 1974:107). As a result of the conquest the highest levels of hierarchies were eliminated in most of the conquered lands. But, "dajäzmäch Moroda, dajäzmäch Jote and *abba* Jifar remained loyal. Thus [those] who revolted lost their lands to the *naftennya* while the territories of these three rulers remained in their hands" (Donham and James 1986:55). The conquering force of the north, however, recognized the middle and the lower levels of indigenous traditional authority which served as intermediaries between the northern governors and the conquered people of the south. In return for their service these middle and lower level chiefs of the conquered societies "were accorded status and privileges and gradually emerged as a distinct group associated with the northern ruling group emulating its dominant characteristics" (Markakis 1974:107).

Among the Oromo of Horro Guduru, the *gada* leaders like Abishe Garba of Horro, biterly fought against the conquering forces although they eventually fell into their hands due to the sabotage of a certain Qadida Wanabe who surrendered to the conquering forces on the promises that he would be given status and power over the people of the area (Tesema 1986; Oljira 1994). The *ex-balabäirs* of the research area were among those who willingly surrendered to the northern force and were appointed *Finawdri* ("general of the vanguard"). It was Buba Jimma, the *mooti* of Aaroo during the conquest, who sought for the guardian of Negus Tekle Haimanot of Gojjam, to who the right to rule the area was granted by Yohannes IV of Tigre. Negus Tekle Haimanot appointed Buba Jimma, the great grand father of the last *balabät*, *Bälambaräs* (literally, "commander of the fort") Mulugeta Beqele. Buba Jimma's son Hirpha (whose

Christian name was Haile Mariam) and his grandson Baqala were appointed *Fitawrari* by the northern rulers because of their loyalty. These *balabäts* have always been regarded as renegades by their own people. Perhaps, the settlement of the Walloyes by the *balabäts* in the 1960s and early 1970s was the extension of their earlier gesture in support of the conquering force.

CHAPTER THREE

FACTORS FOR WALLOYE MIGRATION TO AAROO

3.1. Drought as a Precipitating Factor

"Spontaneous agricultural resettlement is widespread and of long-standing in Africa" (Wood 1982:157). The driving forces behind this movement and resettlement is a combination of factors, such as population pressure, drought, declining crop yields, political conflict and opportunities for market production (ibid). Depending on the specific problem needing to be solved, the resettlement may take a form of local movement within areas already settled and worked by their own people before. This type of movement may be of a permanent or a temporary one resulting in little change in the overall distribution and composition of the population. This happens when sedentary agricultural societies lose their cattle as a result of epidemic animal diseases and are forced to migrate to the lowland where they can easily clear the forest and plant certain crops such as maize, sorghum, finger millet, barley and *nug* (*Guizotia abyssinica*) which may require only hand cultivation with the use of the *doma*¹⁰ (Amh.) or *gasoo* (Oromo) on fertile soil of the forest land. There is a possibility for the people who have moved down to the lowland to cross the escarpment and resettle back in their old village after some years, especially, if they succeed in owning

¹⁰ This is a cultivation tool with a hoe-like blade and a crooked wooden handle.

livestock, especially plough animals. This type of temporary or permanent nature of relocation is quite common in the research site because the area was highly vulnerable to animal disease called *gandi* (*Trypanosomiasis*).

The other form of resettlement which has been widespread since the last four decades in most of African countries is colonization, that is farmers settling in areas not previously cultivated. Writing on this relatively new phenomenon Wood (1982:157) remarks:

In Africa areas of colonization are usually small and, apart from a few notable exceptions (Hunter, 1963; N'doye, 1974), have not attracted the same attention as in Latin America (Preston, 1974) and Asia (Farmer, 1974; Simkins, 1970).

It is only very recently that spontaneous settlement attracted the attention of scholars in Ethiopia. The pioneer in this field was Adrian Wood (1975 and 1982). Regarding the factors of migration and settlement of the population the most widely discussed problem was drought in Ethiopia. In fact, some argue that drought-induced famine has been used as a pretext by the state to resettle people from the north in the south and southwestern regions of Ethiopia. This has been strongly challenged by liberation fronts and a few some writers since such schemes were designed to attain certain political goals (Clay and Holcomb 1986; Dawit 1989:298; Pankhurst 1992:14; Mekuria 1988:118-123; Abbink 1991:13).

"Despite standard images of suffering associated with famine, there is no standard explanation for its occurrence. Multiple factors are at work to generate conditions conducive to societal breakdown and individual starvation" (Webb and Braun 1994:31). Webb and Braun argue that there are various factors that play a part in famine causation. They write,

Most taxonomies differentiate between factors according to a time dimension. For example, Jelliffe and Jelliffe (1971) refer to initial, aggravating and ameliorating factors spanning different periods from decades to months. Others use the baseline and current indices (Downing 1990), proximate and intermediary variables (Swift 1989), and underlying processes, immediate causes and direct consequences (Kates and Millman 1990). (Webb and Braun 1994:31)

The idea in the above statement is that some factors are permanent, others short-lived and transitory and also some are initial, while others aggravate what has been induced by the initial factors. Such factors as population growth and ecological degradation are widely seen as processes of a Malthusian nature that increase the likelihood of food supply failure in the event of a drought and economic crisis (ibid:31). In other words the problems of land degradation and population pressure which had already created dis-equilibrium between human and economic resources would be aggravated by drought, which displaces millions of the vulnerable groups. Ståhl fully agrees with Webb and Braun on the causation of disasters when he writes:

Although acute disasters are related to drought, the decreasing ability of the communities to feed themselves is related to population growth and to the lack of technology improvement. (1989:184)

3.2. Population Pressure and Land Degradation

Spontaneous settlement cannot be attributed to a single factor, but of course one factor may be more relevant in explaining it at one moment and place than the other. Wood has the following to say on the situation in Africa:

Over recent decades in several parts of Africa population growth has led to increasing pressure upon land resources. In some cases the introduction of new crops, changes in agricultural technology and the development of

seasonal migration and off-farm employment have helped to support the growing numbers within the traditional areas of settlement. (Wood 1982:157)

In many areas population pressure has often been eased through the expansion of settlement into areas marginal for rain-fed cultivation, as in a Sahelian zone of West Africa and some parts of Kenya.

Writing on the seriousness of the problem of land degradation and population pressure in Ethiopia, especially in highland Ethiopia, Markos comments:

These losses [which is estimated to cost Ethiopia 600 million birr per annum], when viewed against a background of stagnating development and technological inputs, and increased population, are likely to lead to a grave displacement of population. The Highland Reclamation Study estimates that by year 2010, over 10 million people of highland Ethiopia would have to derive their livelihood from sources other than cropping their own land. They would have to be absorbed elsewhere in the economy. (Pausewang *et al* 1990:162)

In addition to these general problems of population pressure, deforestation and soil losses, factors such as animal diseases and certain personal problems reinforced one another in leading to increasing movement of people. During 1950-74, the time which was covered by Wood's study, spontaneous settlement was a major phenomenon in all regions although the magnitude of the problem may differ from one area to the other. It was during this period (1972) that most of the present villages of the Walloyes at Aaroo Addis Alem were established. Although it was only in 1973 that famine was finally acknowledged, the problem has been with people of some regions of the country, especially in Wallo for at least many decades (Webb and Braun 1994:27).

When the Walloyes arrived at Aaroo and approached the *balabäts* the reason presented to all concerned, including the population at large was drought-induced famine. The reason why drought was presented was to win the sympathy of the local population, the students (who opposed the settlement), *chiqa shum* (local headman) and the *balabäts*. The settlement of the Walloye migrants in Horro Guduru had raised heated debate among the student population and the civil servants in the early 1970s, and the main issue raised was the question of land rights. But since the settlers had already secured the consent of the *balabäts*, and drought was also presented as the force behind their migration, they were allowed to settle. However, later on the facts of population pressure and poor crop yields (because of soil degradation) came to be discussed.

The Walloyes who settled in the research site mention different reasons for their migration. Some say it was mainly drought which forced them to leave their place and find for alternative settlement in Wälläga based on the information obtained from the Walloyes who came to Wälläga through Gojjam in the late 1960s.¹¹ "In 1965-66 many thousands left Wollo province because of famine. They moved right across the highlands into Gojjam in search of new land. Most ended up in the barely usable lands of western Gojjam or across the Blue Nile in northern Wollega" (Gilkes 1975:122). Most of my Walloye informants were of the opinion that land degradation and scarcity of arable land are the major factors for their migration. These settlers, according to oral sources, are of two types.

¹¹ The history of Walloye settlement in Horro-Guduru is raised in chapter one in the literature review, especially in the review of Chernet's (1988) 'Land Tenure System and Self-Settled Walloyes in Abe-Dengoro (1900-74)'.

The first group are those whose holdings could not support the expanding size of the family and this was aggravated by soil degradation. According to the report by the informants it was the Muslim Walloye who pioneered settling outside Wallo, and the first line of migration was to Gojjam and the second one to Wälläga. Since Muslims were excluded from holding land among the Christian highlanders (Paunewang 1990:39), the land which they used to cultivate as a tribute payer to the *gult* holder could not accommodate the growing population. However, since *gult* lands were insignificant in proportion to the *rist* land, the Muslims worked on the *rist* of the Christians until this was also found to be scarce because the population of the latter was also growing proportionately. That is to say that, the Christian *rist* holders refused to give their land to the Muslims either on lease or on share-cropping basis because the land was divided among the newly wed members of the corporate group, leading to extreme fragmentation.

One of my Walloye informants, 34 years old, who came to Aaroo through Gojjam, recalls what his late-father told him regarding the reason behind their migration to Matakal in 1965-66. According to him the major factor of migration was population pressure on the land and land degradation. He says:

The population increased and also the land refused to produce grain. Although the granaries were full of crops, the fact that the harvest is declining by year frustrated people and forced them to leave their home place. The best alternative place for settlement presented to the people was Gojjam. Gojjam, represented by Dangila, a *woreda* in Gojjam, was praised as a land of honey and milk. Dangila is a place where cow is milked three times a day and where honey is consumed from breakfast through dinner. There was a love song in which a young man invites his lover to Dangila, the land of honey: *Anchiye inhid Dangila, mar indinbala* ("you [my lover] let's go to Dangila, in order that we eat honey").

This news, added to the push factors in the home area, attracted many households to Gojjam. Ståhl writes the following which is in agreement with what my informant reported: "In the northern parts of the highlands, the scope for further areal expansion of cropland is negligible. There is no virgin land any longer" (1989:182).

Another Walloye informant, one of the first settlers, fully agrees with the above informant on the problem of population pressure and soil degradation as the forces of migration. He reported that the land was highly fragmented making it difficult for people to plant gardens in the homestead let alone to have land for crop cultivation. As a result of this people were forced to exploit every piece of land in the area, including steep slopes and cliffs. He recalls a story of the death of nine women rolling down while climbing certain steep slope. The place is called *qurach aqirb* (literally, "bring a piece of cloth"), because a piece of cloth was needed to cover the corpse. He pledged to the *zinjaron* (baboons) saying "if I get out of this hilly and degraded land and can settle in a plain state-owned land, I will offer you two *sedärs*¹² of beans". Because he was a *rist* owner in Wallo he did not want to be a tenant to a landlord, but preferred to become *yamangist gabär* (tax payer to the state). According to him a *gabär* (tribute payer) to a landlord is likened to a donkey which is loaded with whatever load the owner wishes to load it with. The following Amharic couplet narrated by Ascheneqew clearly expresses the status of the *gabär* among Amhara society.

*Yegabär lijna yahiya lij mahon;
Seychan ayqarim min waréra bihon.*

"No matter how wild he may be;
The child of the *gabär* and the donkey never escape being
loaded."

¹² *Sedär* is a hand-woven basket used for crop measurement. A *sedär* is about ten killogrammes.

This particular informant did not like being called *gabär*. Since his wish became true he offered what he had promised to the *zinjaros* back home in 1992 (twenty years after settlement in Walläga).

The other group who present land scarcity as the major factor for migration stressed that those who did not benefit from the land measurement policy of the Imperial Government, which came out in the 1942 Land Tax Proclamation (Keller 1988:76-78 and Bahru 1991:88-89), found it very difficult to retain their newly wed young sons on their holdings since it led to extreme fragmentation of land. The conflict among children born to a woman and her brothers on the issue of getting shares from the *rist* of the paternal grandfather of the former and the father of the latter frequently lead to loss of human life and destruction of material and animal resources. The Amhara ambilineal descent system does not recognize differences between those born to the male and female children regarding rights to inherit land. Levine writes:

.. corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; .. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mother's rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors". (Levine [1965] 1972:77)

Although the law does not make partial treatment, the sons and their male children do not want to share the land with those born to female descendants. Those born to female descendants say *taqomfo rucha, tawaldo bilcha yalam* ("as it is not possible to run for a leper, it is impossible to discriminate between siblings"). Another couplet says:

*Kamishinā mofar yishāllāl yarwānzā;
Babbat iristinna bamist yalam wāzā.*

"The beam of a plough of *wānzā* (*Croton macrostachys*) is better than that of *misānā* (*Cordia africana*).
Taking your father's land or your wife away, that is no joking matter."

What Levine had collected on this issue slightly differs from what I was told by my Walloye informants. What Levine collected has a stronger tone than mine.

*Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wanza,
Bābbāt ristennā yallam bamist wāzzā.*

"Shoot him with the dimotfar¹³, get him again with a wanza,
Taking your father's land and your wife away, that is no joking matter."
(Levine, [1965] 1972:249)

Hoben writes that *rist* could be understood in two ways, the first one is as "the right a person has to a share of the land first held by any of his or her ancestors in any line of descent. In its most restricted sense, by contrast, it refers to a specific field held by virtue of such a recognized right" (Hoben 1973:13). According to Hoben it is this dual reference of *rist* which leads to a basic condition of *rist* system "that simultaneously creates conflict within it and commitment to it. This is that a person's *rist* rights always far exceed his *rist* land" (Ibid). That is why, according to my informant, "Sayint Woreda registered high murder cases towards the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies".

3.3. Loss of Plough Animals and other Personal Reasons

There are still some others whose reason for migration were personal problems such as the death of oxen and disappointment with the *Derg* regime. A certain Worqu, one of my Walloye informants, reported that he had three oxen and a cow before all

¹³ Dimotfer and wanza are types of rifles.

died in 1972 at Guameda (in Wallo). This has led him to flee his home and go to Metema (in Gondar). The following Amharic couplet, according to another Walloye informant, forces those who do not have plough animals to flee their home place.

*Samäy tidamämin baré yalalaw saw;
Irubiha sinäsa biret yalalaw saw;
Aywardim way Jimma min alkasakasaw.*

"Someone who does not have an ox when the sky is cloudy;
And one who does not have a gun when there is unrest;
Should descend to Jimma rather than unproductively
waste his time here."

Jimma is known for its high production of coffee, to which poor men flock during coffee picking season and accumulate considerable amounts of money within a short period of time. When they are back after about a couple of years, they manage to buy a pair of oxen and some cows on which they would rely to become independent farmers.

The one who went to Metema was not successful in getting a job and obtaining some money with which he thought he could buy plough animals. He fell sick and had to be collected by his younger brother and was taken back home in Sayint *woreda* to a place called Guameda in 1973. After recovering from his sickness he did not want to continue farming in his home area as a share-cropper, the only alternative he had left with if he was to stay in the area. According to him it was shameful for someone known and self-reliant in the community to work as a share-cropper. Consequently, he migrated to Walliga (in April 1974) along with the Walloyes who went back to Sayint *woreda* to collect their relatives. As soon as he arrived in Aaroo he started farming with a Walloye as a share-cropper through which he managed to buy a pair of oxen. In 1975, the next agricultural cycle, he started cultivating the land as a full-fledged

owner cultivator. For him, therefore, land scarcity is not a problem, but those rich farmers whose extra land has been nationalized fled the area under the pretext of land scarcity. According to him the landowners who had tenants on their land and those who used to cultivate land with three to four pairs of oxen were disappointed by the nationalization of rural land.

It is, therefore, because of this long established negative attitude towards those who work as share-croppers in their own society which drove Setargachew, another Walloye, and his family to cross the Blue Nile to Gojjam after the death of oxen with Trypanosomiasis in Walläga, namely Aaroo.

The interview I had with one of my Walloye informants strongly supports the argument which mentions personal reasons as factors of migration. This man arrived at Aaroo Addis Alem in 1976, exactly a year after the declaration of public ownership of rural land. His migration to Walläga had nothing to do with drought or scarcity of land. He used to live in Sayint *woreda* of Borana *awraja* in Wallo Administrative region. According to him the nationalization of rural land was shocking news for some people in the *woreda*. People also suspected that the military government might challenge Orthodox Christianity, the only dominant religion of their ancestors. Those who were angered by the nationalization of rural land and also were suspicious of the motives of the military government organized (this informant was one among the organizers) their supporters against the government and were identified as anti-revolutionary forces by the government. The clash between the government and those who disobeyed lasted for a few weeks and eventually the *woreda* administrator committed suicide since he could not get the situation under control. The parties concerned were throwing certain couplets at each other.

The government forces said to the outlaws:

*Nidāw takatalaw yigaba indahon wuha;
Abbay lanigus inji ayradam ladiha.*

"Chase them down till they get into the water;
Because Abbay helps the king but not the poor."

The outlaws in turn replied:

*Abbaa wasalgang yagif azmarāchin;
Sāyiwāqa qaru jafaw barochāchin.
Inbi ale guameda yawayrāw girgida;
Barē alasarade mistun alāsbaddā.*

"Abba and Waselgegn the harvest of our injustice;
They were not threshed because our oxen were lost.
The wall of woyira (*Olea africana*) Guameda said no;
It did not let his ox be slaughtered and his wife be
raped."

Abba, Waselgegn and Guameda are *qabalēs* in Sayint worda.

This clearly reflects how strong the resistance was at Guameda. The oxen they were referring to were the *Algawerash* (prince) Merid Azmach Asfawossen Haile Selassie and Ras Mengesha Seyoum. *Algawerash* was the governor of Wallo before the 1974 revolution, whereas Ras Mengesha Seyoum was that of Tigray.

The death of the worda administrator added fuel to the already blazing fire and the central government mobilized armed forces to reinforce the attack on the outlaws and even went to the extent of bombing from the air. Finally, the conflict was concluded with the government forces having the upper hand and the outlaws were requested to surrender. Some did, others refused. My informant is one among those who refused to surrender and came to Wallāga along with those who had gone back to Wallo to collect their relatives and possessions. He bitterly recalls the execution of his co-revolters by the government after they surrendered. He adds "I would have

definitely been one among those who had been executed had I not fled the area." These are only exceptions, since we can hardly find many such cases.

The life experience of one of my Gojjame informants, an ex-priest, clearly demonstrates the complexity of factors of migration. Although there are many other persons whose reasons for migration could be attributed to scarcity of arable land, still many more have other reasons. *Magäbi* (religious title) Tibebe, 37, studied religious education for twelve years and worked as a priest for fifteen years until the death of his wife and his two sons (in sickness) in 1988 in Gojjam. For about four years, until 1992, he stayed there and decided to join the monks at Debre Libanos monastery since remarriage after the death of one's spouse is not allowed for those whose marriage was concluded in church under what is called *qerbän gäbicha* (Communion marriage). But since he was too young to become a monk, older monks and priests advised him not to do so, but to remarry. The fact that he could not remarry in his home area pushed him to seek refuge to Jidda woreda, Dambbi Abeebie *qabalé* where he had relatives who had settled there in 1990.

His relatives at Dambbi Abeebie *qabalé* could not do anything to enable him obtain land in the area. They, however, advised him to buy a house in Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* where a village was under construction. He bought a house roofed with corrugated iron sheet for 1,470 Birr where he established himself as a dweller marrying a woman whom he brought from Gojjam. Living in this small town he bought (under the guise of rent) land from an Oromo for seven hundred Birr. Later on his brother and his wife's uncle arrived from Gojjam and shared the land with them. Since the land he had already possessed was not enough for him and his junior brother who came later on, he had to obtain land, in the form of share-cropping, from Oromo who have extra land. As a share-cropper he provides everything needed for crop production

except the land which is provided by the landholder. The distribution of the produce is such that the holder of the land gets a quarter, whereas the share-cropper receives three-quarters.

Mapäbi confidently speaks that he has left huge granaries of grain and seed crops in Gojjam. He says: "Had it not been for the death of my wife and two sons, I would not have fled my home place in Gojjam. Indeed, my land is being farmed by a share-cropper." He asserts that his case is exceptional. However, for the larger majority of the Gojjames, especially for those from Jiga Quarit and Feresbet *woredas*, scarcity of land is the main reason for their migration to Wälläga. In his own words "scarcity of arable land, grass land, even to feed an ox, and a plot of land to build a house for the newly wed couples" are the severe problems of the majority of the migrants.

Mapäbi considers himself to be a successful migrant since he has established himself and has harmonious relationships with the local community, especially with the Oromo. He also measures his success in terms of the number of Gojjames settled in the area. There are thirty Gojjame households in Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé*. All arrived after *Mapäbi* for whom he acted as a *wäss* (guarantor) whenever one is renting land, purchasing a house, or enters into contract as share-cropper with certain person. If the newly arrived Gojjame is to make a certain agreement of the above-mentioned ones, he has to have someone, familiar to and trusted in the area, to act as a *wäss*. The fact that *Mapäbi* is accepted as a *wäss* is the proof of his being trusted by the local Oromo.

3.4. Land Fragmentation

Most of my Walloye informants reported that Sayint *woreda* had registered a high murder rate before the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. The main cause of murder was litigation over land among siblings or half-brothers. The share of each son from his father's holding decreased with declining age, that is the younger the son, the later he gets married and the smaller his share would be. This always puts younger sons in a disadvantageous position compared to their elder brothers. The case is more severe if it occurs between half-brothers. Sons born to the senior wife claim to be the only legitimate heirs to the holdings of their father. This litigation led to bitter conflicts and fights, which very frequently led to loss of life. As long as the father was alive the conflict rarely led to loss of life since it was the father who disposed of his wealth to whomever he likes.

Ideally, land is equally distributed among siblings and half-brothers after the death of their father, including land which has been granted to the eldest son on his marriage. Practically, however, there is a serious problem since the ones who got the lion's share refuse to honour the principles. One informant reported that the refusal of the older brothers to share the land with their younger brothers is not because of selfishness, but due to practical problems, namely serious scarcity of land, not only for cultivation, but also for house construction and homestead.

Since there is hardly any piece of land unoccupied, the next generation only divides among itself the holding of the father which eventually leaves some newly wed young families without holdings. One of my informants who frequently visits his relatives back home in Wallo reported that his brothers who stayed in Wallo are left with only a plot for planting *daba* (*Cucurbita pepo*). This problem has been

underscored by most of my informants. My Christian Walloye informants reported that it is not allowed for a man to keep two or more wives at a time. However, divorce is common leading to litigation over land between half-brothers. Christians believe that marriage is sacred, divorce is illegitimate, and adultery is taboo. But deviation from this norm is widespread among the Amhara. Levine writes "the Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of the priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises" (Levine [1965] 1972:83). Informants reported that polygynous marriages were rarely observed while they were in Wallo, but after they came to Wälläga some men became polygynous for various reasons. Some married a second wife with the consent of the senior wife either because they wanted additional domestic labour or because of the infertility of the senior wife. There are cases where the second wife is brought without the consent of the senior wife. There are only a few polygynous marriages involving three wives for a man. This may represent a conflict between norms and practice. Although the Amhara might have adopted this custom from Oromo practising polygynous marriage, the tradition of divorce and adultery may be "a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy" (Ibid:83).

There are also some Gojjames who have settled in the town of Aaroo following the construction of Naqamte-Bure road. Some worked as day labourers with the project and others started small drinking houses, which included selling food.

3.5. Summary

There are a host of factors leading to spontaneous migration and settlement in this country. Although there are many leading factors which displace thousands, if not

millions, of people, every household or individual has his own reason to leave his home area. Regarding the leading factors, different groups hold different opinions. What is officially acknowledged as a leading factor by the central government is usually taken only as a pretext by the forces opposing the central government. For instance, drought-induced famine had been officially reported as the only reason for population displacement by the state for decades in this country. But forces opposing the government say that political motives are the major goals to be achieved, not genuine settlement of the "victims".

But practically speaking, the problem is more complex than what we usually wish it to be. Most of my informants reported that drought was only an immediate cause and a rationale to justify settlement. The major problems were scarcity of arable land and land degradation. Since it was felt that these reasons may not be able to entitle one for migration and settlement, drought was presented as a condition to entitle one for settlement in a different place. Most of my Walloye informants, who have been to their home areas after they had already settled in Aaroo, stressed that the problem of scarcity of arable land and land degradation is becoming more chronic today than ever before. Consequently, thousands are still migrating to the southwest. In the words of one of my informants "recurrent shortage of rainfall and poor yield is a common phenomenon in Wallo, but the 1972 one did not reach a level where it left people without grain."

Cultural restraints prevent people from engaging themselves in unaccustomed practices to earn a living. Among the settlers, the society does not approve of a person becoming a share-cropper among his own society. Consequently, someone who has lost own resort to move themselves out of their own society where anonymity liberates them from cultural restraints. Magdibi's second marriage was possible because of his

migration to Aaroo, since religious restraints would have not made it possible if he were in Gogjam.

Among the Amhara society one is entitled to claim *rist* rights through father, mother, or through ones children. Litigations to hold *rist* lead to loss of life. Fragmentation of land resulting from *rist* sharing system forced the capable ones to out-migrate to areas where land is not a constraint.

CHAPTER FOUR

OROMO-AMHARA INTERACTIONS

4.1. Conflicts

The Walloyes were granted land by the then *balabāt* of Aaroo in 1972, and the pioneers arrived in October of that year. Since it was the *balabāt* who allotted the Walloye the land, the local Oromo did not give their consent to the settlement, and were bitter about the settlement from the very beginning. Although they were angered by what the *balabāt* did, they could not do anything since the *balabāt* was the sole decision maker of the area. The nationalization of rural land in March 1975 made the situation even worse since access to land came to be based on land use rather than on anything else. The immigrants were legally entitled to possess land and were made equal with indigenous Oromo who claim to be *de jure* residents. According to one of my Walloye informants, in his early fifties, the nationalization of rural land did not completely deny the Oromo claim of ownership rights over the land and they continued to complain about the arrival of the Walloye. The discussions between the Oromo and pioneer Walloye led to an agreement at which the latter took an oath (*kaka* in Oromo, or *mahala* in Amharic) not to bring anyone new no matter how close relative he/she may be. The oath stated *yōhanin wul yafarata fiqur wushā yiwlad* (literally, "May the one who breaches the agreement beget a black dog"). My Oromo informants claim that the Walloyes did not honour the agreement and each household continued to bring five to ten new arrivals under the pretext that each new migrant is a member of the family. Most of the Walloye deny the allegation and argue that they were innocent. One of my Walloye informants confirmed that the Walloye had agreements among

themselves not to bring anyone from Wallo whomever he may be. He said "we did not want to crowd ourselves by attracting or accepting newcomers. But there were a few people who did not have a big family or a wide range of relatives who felt that they were a minority in the area, otherwise they were all from Sayint *woreda*. It was these people who brought their kinsmen lest the larger group may displace them". The Oromo feel that the Walloye, unlike what they pretend to be, have a cunning personality. Although I am not sure whether or not this relates to Levine's observation on Amhara sense of loyalty, the Oromo take the Walloye as someone whom one cannot trust. Levine writes:

Insofar as their individual purposes are served by complying with their norms, they will comply. If greater opportunities are to be found in some other household, or by some other lord, or saint, they will switch. (Levine 1974:125)

It is not unreasonable to assume that Levine has stretched the statement and gave the Amhara peasant a unique place in their untrustworthiness. To me this is a mere exaggeration of the commonplace character of many peasant societies.

The latent conflict between the two exploded when a Walloye man (Christian) and an Oromo woman (Muslim) quarrelled on the 25th of March 1976 at a Thursday market at a place called Sombo, roughly 8 km west of Aaroo Addis Alem. No one among my informants recalls the specific problem which led to quarrel. This did not lead to loss of life, but only three Walloyes are reported to have been wounded. Both the Oromo and the Walloye agree that the latter retreated in this situation. The most probable reason why the Walloye retreated here was that the Oromo are the majority in the area as well as in the market.

It was not later than a year after the nationalization of rural land and the agreement entered into by the Walloye and the Oromo that the latent conflict between the two manifested itself when two individuals, one Oromo and one Walloye, quarrelled in the market at Aaroo Addis Alem. On the 28th of March 1976 Takele Firissa (an Oromo) and Awlew Getahun (Walloye) quarrelled in a drinking hut. The two individuals quarrelled over a seat in a drinking hut and this involved almost all present in the market. The Walloye were angered by those who retreated at the Thursday market and said to those who retreated "how far are you going to retreat, till you reach Wallo?" This time the Walloye decided to kill and die since they did not have a place to go to. They said:

Nälin tigil, tigil iwadälehu;

Inkuan yasaw agar, agarén tichälehu.

"Come on for wrestling, I like wrestling;

I have left my country let alone someone else's country".

The spirit of the couplet is that since they have already left their homeland there is no reason to hesitate, which shows how determined the Walloyes were to defend themselves.

All Oromo present in the market sided with Takele and the Walloyes with Awlew. The fighting left 40 people wounded, roughly equal from both sides, and an old Oromo man dead. The Oromo used sticks and pieces of wood while the Walloye used sticks, wood and stones. My Oromo informants admitted that the Walloye women used stones collecting them from the nearby graveyard at St. George Church and this was the weakness on the part of the Oromo. My Walloye informant reported what happened then as follows: "the Oromo retreated to the highland where they could be backed by Oromo villages in other *qabalés* and the Amhara to their lowlands. This

emptied the villages surrounding the market place." He recalls a certain Amharic proverb in order to describe the situation more clearly.

*Way inersu aymatu, way igna anishagar;
Malkaw tom adare, yehulat fari agar.*

"Neither they come, nor we cross the river;
The confluence of the river is left hungry [not cultivated],
in a country of two cowards."

According to the informants from both sides an old man who died as a result of the fighting was not involved in the fighting, but beaten by a group of retreating Walloyes on their way back far from the market place. The Oromo say that the old man was innocent and did not know anything about the incident. However, the Walloye report that it was the old man who first beat the murderer and the latter killed the former while defending himself. Despite the fact that religious and clan differences exist the Oromo stood together while the Walloyes, both Christians and Muslims, allied against the Oromo. With the intervention of the *awraja* and *woreda* administrators the murderer was identified and arrested. There are different views regarding who the murderer was. The Oromo still hold the opinion that it was a group act, and the Walloye deliberately identified a certain Geto knowing that he would be released since the witnesses, all Walloye, would support him. The witnesses testified that the murderer was defending himself since the murdered took an offensive attack against the former. The Walloye, on the other hand, hold the opinion that it was the murdered who first attacked the murderer and the latter was defending himself. Although the murderer had been detained for three years, the court released him on the basis of the testimony of the witnesses. After being released from prison the murderer sent *Jarsa* (Oromo) or *shimagile* (Amharic) (literally, old man) to the survivors of the murdered

old man to bring peace between the parties. The *shimagile* decided that the murderer should pay four hundred *Birr* blood price and the case was settled accordingly.

With the intervention of the officials from *awrājā* and *woreda* administration both groups settled their conflict and swore not to stand against one another. The conflict resolution was concluded at the market place, where the fighting took place. Each of the communities entering into this contract has its own culturally accepted items of oath with clearly recognized meaning. The items of oath accepted by the Oromo differ from those accepted by the Walloye. However, the Walloye wanted to take an oath with the culturally accepted Oromo oath terms since, as my Walloye informant, a certain Ascheneqew, said, "it is the country of the Oromo and we had to follow their custom". Walloye oath terms are a spear, gun with its bullet, and a newly cut stick whose bark is removed. While taking an oath touching the spear and the gun (with its bullet) the oath taker says "let me die by spear and gun", while handing the said stick would mean "let God leave me naked". Representatives from both groups were made to hold the following items of oath, each of these items imply the negative impact of the oath if one fails to keep the oath. The parties concerned swear saying:

- (a) **thorn:** Let my way be full of thorns and life be terrible, the bed on which I sleep, the road on which I walk, and my tongue be terrible like a thorn if I fail to keep this oath.
- (b) **charcoal:** This charcoal is made of living tree and it is dead now; let my life and my offspring lose life like this charcoal in case I breach this oath.
- (c) **stone:** The stone does not grow and speak; let God make my life as hard as this stone and give me offspring who do not grow and speak.

(d) dried animal dung:

Let God not give me and my descendants animals which may reproduce.

(e) bone:

This bone used to have flesh; but now it is dry and dead; Let God leave me as a skeleton if I breach this oath.

(f) flower:

This is a flower to give fruits. Let God not make blossom any flower (of human being, animal, plant and crop) in my homestead if I breach this oath.

After the settlement of the conflict in the presence of the *awrājā* and *woreda* administrators, (both were in fact Oromo) the Walloyes promised not to instigate any conflict since, they said, "we are here for grain and water". The *awrājā* administrator, the late Emiru Ibsaa, also emphasized that the Walloyes were there to cultivate the land and feed themselves, nothing else. He advised them to establish close and friendly ties through christening children and *tut meṭbāt*¹⁴ (foster parent like relationship) with the Oromo if they are to continue living in this area.

Two months later, on the 30th of May 1976 another incident took place. A group of Oromo outlaws, *shifaa*, headed by a man called Makonnen Golbe came from Gojjam to raid the cattle of the Walloyes and the latter, all Walloye coming from both *qabalees*, Aaroo Addis Alem and Aaroo Bagin, defended their cattle and the attempt of the Oromo raiders was not successful. In this clash three persons were shot dead, two from among the Oromo outlaws (Makonnen Golbe and Dessalegn Amante) and one from the Walloyes.

¹⁴ See below on full description of *tut meṭbāt* practice.

The settlement of this conflict also involved the officials from the *awrāja* and the *woreda* administration. Since the killing was reported as an illegal act by people coming from a different Administrative Region, Gojjam, the officials sympathised with the Walloyes whose cattle were to be raided and the officials decided that the Walloye could buy and own registered firearms. A few informants take the raid as revenge for the murder of Geremew, but since the majority of the local Oromo were not informed of the incident in advance it is difficult to consider this information as reliable. The majority of the informants, both Walloye and Oromo, associate it with the reactionary act of the *balabāts* who ran to the forest opposing the revolution. It was the time when sixty thousand University and High School students and young Military officers were on campaign, *Zamacha* (National Campaign for Development through Cooperation) to put into effect the proclamation of the Public Ownership of Rural Land and to explain the aims of the revolution to the "toiling masses" in the countryside (Keller 1988:193). Some informants reported that it was one young and energetic *balabāṭ* in Amuru *woreda*, one among the few prominent *balabāṭs* who opposed the radical stand of the military government, who sent this group of outlaws. This was an opportune moment for the Walloye to get their firearms registered and buy new ones. Unlike the Oromo who have a less intense interest in owning guns, the Walloyes have a very strong desire to own firearms. Many Walloye informants reported that they migrated to Aaroo Addis Alem with their firearms. Since then the Walloyes kept on buying firearms, which reached a climax in 1991 when the soldiers of the ousted Military government (the *Derg*) disposed of their firearms, including artillery. This was also the time when the Oromo bought firearms.

According to my Oromo informants it was the fall of the *Derg* which totally changed the balance of power, from Walloye dominance to some sort of an equal

balance. According to my Oromo informants, the Walloyes were angered at Oromo having firearms. Eddosa says "This is mainly because the Walloye know very well that the Oromo would never accept their subordinate position unlike the case when the Walloyes surpassed them in owning firearms". Between 1980 and 1991 the relationships between the Oromo and Walloye seemed to be smooth, at least from the viewpoint of the latter. This was mainly because the Walloyes were in a dominant position both in *qabale* leadership and the ownership of firearms. Between the establishment of the peasant associations in 1975 and the fall of the *Derg* in 1991, six¹³ different chairmen served the *qabale*. Out of these there was only one Oromo chairman, who in two different terms served five years. The fall of the *Derg* favoured the Oromo in two respects, namely, they bought and owned firearms from the *Derg* soldiers and also the regionalization policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) entitled the Oromo to have a leading position in their area, especially in running their affairs at the *qabale* level. According to the policy of the TGE one has to, at least, speak the Oromo language to be elected as a member of the *qabale* executive committee in Region Four (Oromia). Since very few Walloyes speak the Oromo language, important positions in the *qabale* leadership have been held by the Oromo.

Conflicts between individuals sometimes subside until an opportune moment comes for them to be manifested, especially if one of the parties is said to have an influential position. A certain Tolcraa (Oromo) is reported to have been in conflict with a certain Gebeyehu (Walloye). The following is the story of the conflict:

¹³ In their order of term of service: Workiye Ayale, Aweke Tesema, Endalamaw Mekonnen, Belay Nagaro, Gebeyehu Taddese, and Wasihun Workneh.

Gebeyehu was the chairman of the *qabalé* (1985-89). In 1985 he got information that Toleeraa had a pistol which was not registered either by the *qabalé* or by the police. As soon as he got the information Gebeyehu rushed into the house of Toleeraa with the *ṭibaqā guad hālāfi* (commander of the *qabalé* militia) and some other militia men to search for the pistol. The *ṭibaqā guad hālāfi* was an Oromo who did not want the pistol to be confiscated. By the time they arrive at the house of Toleeraa, the latter was not at home. Gebeyehu remained outside and the *ṭibaqā guad hālāfi* with some other militia men moved into the house. The *ṭibaqā guad hālāfi* having seen the pistol under the pillow let Toleeraa's wife hide it so that other militia men accompanying him could not see the pistol. Other militia men looked in the granaries and the boxes, where rifles and other important properties are usually kept, and they found only the carrying case. Toleeraa was arrested when he came back from the farm field, and was asked to handover the pistol. However, he reported that he had sold it a long ago. When asked why did he keep the carrying case he said 'it is a taboo to dispose of a weapon with its carrying case'. Elderly people were asked if what Toleeraa said was true or not and they testified that he had sold the pistol sometime before the revolution and it is also a taboo to dispose of the pistol with its carrying case. Toleeraa was detained for some weeks and was eventually released on bail. Since then Toleeraa and Gebeyehu were not on good terms. Toleeraa was waiting for an opportune moment to retaliate. In September 1994 Toleeraa reported to the *woreda* council member who was on fieldwork in the *qabalé* that Gebeyehu has four unregistered rifles with over one thousand bullets. Based on the information, the *ḥildegna* (as a field worker is locally referred to) moved into the house of Gebeyehu and got the said rifles and bullets from the granary. All were confiscated except one which was already registered before. Gebeyehu was arrested for few days and later released on bail.

This was how the grudge between the two which had lasted over nine years manifested itself.

In September of 1994 a grinding mill was installed at Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* by three Oromo share-owners. Before the installation of this new flour mill, there was one owned by a certain Walloye. The one owned by the Walloye man was dismantled

because it was too old to function and to meet the needs of the community. As soon as the one owned by the Oromo share-owners was installed the Walloye also brought a new grinding mill, but it was not installed since the one owned by the Oromo share-owners was bought by the money borrowed from the Development Bank of Ethiopia. This decision was received with anger by the Walloyes in general although only two persons owned the new grinding mill (the one which was not installed).

Consequently, all the Walloyes, through the coordination of some Walloyes, decided not to take their cereal crops to be ground by the grinding mill owned by the Oromo. They agreed to take cereals to Agamsa (in Amuru *woreda*), about ten kilometres from Aaroo Addis Alem. The embargo lasted roughly two months. In the end, however, since they could not influence the earlier decision made by the Bank and the Zonal administrators, the Walloyes started gradually to go back to the grinding mill. Although the Walloye rejected the allegation, the Gojjames also realized that the conflict, though it seemed silent from the surface, was tense. The Walloye held the opinion that the decision of the officials in favour of the Oromo share-owners is the manifestation of the preferential treatment towards the Oromo. The following is the data for five days.

Table - 1:- Number of People Who Visited the Flour Mill.

Date	Oromo		Amhara		% out of total
	No. who visited the flour mill	%	No. who visited the flour mill	%	
14/11/94	20	55.56	13	7.88	16.4
15/11/94	17	47.22	14	8.5	15.42
16/11/94	10	27.78	6	3.64	8
17/11/94	15	41.67	25	15.15	20
18/11/94	30	83.33	45	27.27	37.3

In this *qabale* the registered number of households are 201¹⁶, out of which the Oromo constitute 36 and the Amhara (Walloye plus Gojjame¹⁷) 165 households. The percentage calculated for each is relative to the size of each ethnic group. For instance, on the 18th of November 1994 out of the registered Oromo households, 30 (83.33%) took their crop to the grinding mill whereas only 45 (27.27%) Amhara, including the Gojjames, visited the grinding mill. During my second round fieldwork in February and March, things seemed quite normal, at least from the surface. Quite a number of

¹⁶ The number of households in this *qabale* was reported to be 490 during the last census (October 1994) although it is not officially published. The size of the population, according to this unofficial source, is 2,180, out of which 1,077 are male while 1103 are female. It was not possible to obtain information on other demographic characteristics.

¹⁷ There are very few registered Gojjames in this *qabale*.

Walloye gather at the grinding mill every day. The Oromo see this as a defeat on the part of the Walloye and success of their own side.

4.2. Inter-ethnic Marriage.

Inter-ethnic marriage between Oromo and Amhara settlers is exceptional and looked upon with great disgust among the Oromo. Very few Oromo men have married Walloye women (divorcees). However, the Walloye are eager to establish kinship ties (through marriage) with the Oromo. Contrary to this, the Oromo, both men and women, do not like such relationships since the Oromo feel the Walloye are inferior to the Oromo in many respects. In fact Oromo women and young men treat the Walloye men and women with a high degree of contempt. Oromo old men try to justify why they do not like to give their daughters in marriage to Walloye men saying that the latter are extremely mobile making it very difficult for someone who has established himself to give his daughter to an itinerant person or a traveller. Oromo young people call the Walloye men *qumxaa uffatu* (shorts wearers), as opposed to trousers wearing Oromo (which is taken as a sign of civilization by the Oromo). However, some Walloyes have changed their clothes, from shorts to trousers. One of my Oromo informants told me what has been once said of the Walloye by the Oromo as follows:

*Wallo laka kabeeleaa karaan kenya gargarii;
Lakkii nutti injarjariin.*

"You club-footed Wallo our route is different;
Do not rush to us".

The Oromo regard the Amhara as the crooked footed people. Although this opinion was formed towards the Gojjame who have long established relationships with

the Oromo, the word *kabeela* is also used to apply to the Walloye since both are Amhara. Another Oromo informant reported how the Oromos once expressed their dissatisfaction with Walloye settlement in the following couplet: *harree nurra yaasani, kal'e nutti raasani; lafa keenya nyaatani* ("they drove donkeys on us, wagged a hide at us, and ate our land"). Unlike the Oromo, who keep much fewer donkeys than the Walloyes, the latter use donkeys to transport their farm products to the market and/or to the grinding mill. Relatively speaking, there are less donkeys in Oromo villages than in Walloye villages. Some Oromo households who have *haadhoo harre* (mother donkey) keep between three and four donkeys including the young ones. For the Oromo it does not matter whether a person owns a donkey since they can easily borrow from a relative or co-villager whenever the need arises. The Oromo feel that the Walloye are selfish and this forced a significant proportion of Walloye households to own donkeys. This may be the case which has been observed among the Amhara society by various scholars. "Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society" (Levine [1965] 1972:76). Both Oromo and Walloye informants recall that a certain Oromo woman complained that the Walloyes drove donkeys on the Oromo making it difficult for the pregnant women, children and the sick walk on the streets. She said *hinddaaqoon akka ofi seete kosi namatti haati* (literally, "the fowl scratches dirt about people thinking people are like herself"). The message was that the Walloye drove donkeys on the Oromo demeaning the latter to the level of the former.

Contrary to the reason the Oromo give for not getting married to both Walloye men and women, most of the Walloye people say that the high bride wealth is a deterrent to Walloye marrying Oromo women. Bride wealth is paid in cash among the

Oromo of the study area. In earlier days the amount was not so high, a maximum of 400 Birr (Assefa 1983:9) and the average expectation was between 200 to 300 Birr (Holcomb 1973:113). Nowadays, it is between 800 and 1000 Birr. However, it should be noted that, it may be less depending on the economic standing of the families concerned. One of my Walloye informants is of the opinion that the Oromo may give their daughters in marriage to a Walloye man if the latter are willing to pay more bride wealth than what the Oromo man could pay. However, he is afraid that the Walloye do not like to pay even the minimum let alone to offer more than what is normally expected. According to him it is advisable for the new settlers, whoever they may be and wherever they are, to marry a woman from the indigenous community. He quoted a certain Amharic proverb supporting his position: *setin ina wofchon kalubet hager naw mafanqal* ("a woman and a grinding stone is drawn from a country where one lives"). Another Walloye informant recalls the advice of a certain Agaw old man to the Walloyes settled in Matakal *awraja*, which concurs with that of the Amhara proverb mentioned above. It says "you [the Walloye] should not have brought wives with you, because, if you would have married women from here [Gojjam], you could have established relationships not only with the land but also with the blood". Nigate, however, said:

The Oromo do marry our women because they take them free of charge. Since we like to establish close relationships with the Oromo, we are glad if they take our women free of charge. It is all the same whether we give or take women as long as children are born to these marriages.

The relationship between the Walloye and the Oromo would have been strong had it been based on inter-ethnic marriage, since "alliances are created and cemented by gifts of women: fathers give away their daughters, and brothers give away their

sisters" (Lévi-Strauss cited in Leach 1974:61). The Walloye, however, hold the opinion that whether the group is giving or taking a woman does not make a difference since marriage is regarded, to use A. Pankhurst's phrase, "as a way of forgetting the past and building a future" (Pankhurst 1992:238). For the Oromo, however, this is only one-directional, since there are no Oromo women who have married Walloye men. One of my Oromo informants, who has married a Walloye woman as a second wife says "this eases our worry of giving one's daughter in marriage to an itinerant".

Some of my Walloye informants told me their experiences which contradicts with what most Walloye give as a reason for not getting married to Oromo women. One of my Walloye informants, in his mid forties, had requested an Oromo girl in marriage. He was a young and hard working farmer, and the girl's parents consented to the request, but the girl refused. In his words:

She was brought to the *qabalé* for failing to attend the literacy campaign going on in the *qabalé*. While she was brought and was detained along with other absentees, I was just standing and watching her. Immediately as soon as she saw me, she spat at me. This angered me very much and I was about to kill her if people were not with me. It was on that very day that I sent a letter to an Amhara woman requesting her hand in marriage. I got married to an Amhara woman and I have had five daughters and two sons.

This man, therefore, feels that Oromo women treat the Walloye as inferior to Oromo although he does not know the reason. Another informant, 34, recalls a time when he wanted to get married to a young Oromo woman (divorcee), but his request was rejected because she did not want to be identified among the community as an Oromo woman who got married to a Walloye. Although they had a love affair it could not overcome her negative attitude towards the Walloye. He quotes her saying *Walloye agabash yilash* ("people would say you got married to a Walloye"). Although this

young man insisted on an Oromo woman's hand in marriage, his plan did not materialize since his parents could not afford to pay the high bride wealth the Oromo girl would expect. Consequently, he resorted to marrying a Walloye woman, for which he paid only thirty Birr in bride wealth. This marriage did not last more than a year, since the woman he married was too young to bear adult responsibility.¹⁸

Because he and his family lost plough animals (oxen) from trypanosomiasis (*gendi*) he left for Gojjam, Matakal *awarāja*, Guangua *woreda* in 1982. His parents engaged themselves in farming while he was employed as a school guard at Sorit Elementary School from January 1983 to March 1984. This time he married a Gondare woman and also managed to buy a pair of oxen and a cow. They could not continue living in Gojjam since the Gumuz were so bitter towards the Walloye. He says "the Shanqila [Gumuz] killed my younger brother and we could not afford to lose more family members at their hands". According to Set'argatchew the Gumuz's killing of the Walloyes serves two purposes, namely it is an honour for the Gumuz man to kill a man, and they wanted to get rid of the Walloyes whom they thought had destroyed the forest which the Gumuz use for swidden cultivation and as the pasture for their cattle. It was for this reason that the whole family re-crossed the Blue Nile towards Wallāga, specifically to Aaroo. It was the principle of the '*lesser evil option*' which forced this family to come back to Wallāga. They had to choose between two evils, namely, loss of cattle (of which oxen are important) in Wallāga (because of trypanosomiasis) and the loss of human life at the hands of the Gumuz in Gojjam. Since the purpose of migration from Wallo was to save human life, there was no reason

¹⁸ My informants report that first marriages are not stable among the Walloye, mainly due to the early marriage of the woman.

why they should stay in Gojjam sacrificing the lives of their family members. Then they decided to face the lesser evil, that was the loss of cattle due to trypanosomiasis.

The Amhara express their status in their area of residence saying *yasaw agar jaw* ("a man in another man's country") or *yasaw agar sidatānā* ("a refugee in another man's country"). Consequently, they feel that whether they continue to live there or not depends on how much they succeed in maintaining harmonious relationships with the Oromo. The driving force behind their need to establish close and friendly ties with the Oromo is to gain security to continue working on the land. Despite the fact that the land is state property, they are not confident that the government would defend their interest if any serious threat comes from the indigenous community. Marriage is considered as guarantee to use the land. According to informants from both groups, it seems that the Walloye were not successful in establishing satisfactory affinal ties with the Oromo, especially in taking Oromo women since giving a woman is different from taking a woman. Giving a woman is an expression of one's allegiance to the receiver rather than the other way round. The two Oromo men who married Walloye women did so under special conditions. One was my informant, who married a daughter of his Walloye share-cropper, who brought his family with him to the village of the Oromo man. Since the woman was a divorcee it was easy for the Oromo man to approach the woman for a love affair and she became his second wife. The other man, a tailor¹⁸ employed a Walloye woman as servant. He was a bachelor who wanted to make his living in the town, which made it necessary for him to have a

¹⁸ Some of my informants reported that the tailor who married a Walloye woman did so because he could not obtain an Oromo (Boorana) woman in marriage since he is a weaver himself. His younger brother, he too a tailor, married a Gojjame woman (they are divorced now) because his request to marry an Oromo woman was rejected by the family of the girl.

servant. She was a divorcee when employed as a servant. Since they live in the same house, they changed their relationship to a love affair and they have now a son and a daughter. In Aaroo Addis Alem it is these two cases which my informants recall, although there are a few more cases in other *qabalés* of the surrounding areas. Another important point which has been revealed both by the Oromo and the Walloye informants was that affinal ties are established more between the old pockets of Amhara villages and the settler Walloyes than between the latter and the Oromo.

4.3. Social Ties

The fact that the Walloye were not successful in establishing affinal ties with the indigenous Oromo, led them to resort to establishing other forms of relationship such as *abelij*, *qire* and *iddir*, and *tut maṭbāt*.

4.3.1. *Abelij*

Indeed, another form of bond created to serve the purpose is *abelij*, i.e., a kinship-like bond established between families when either of the two becomes a God-mother/father of a daughter or a son of the other. If the child baptized is a daughter, the wife of the other family will act as God-mother. If, on the other hand, the one to be baptized is a son the husband in the other family acts as a God-father. In either case the bond is enforced by a religious sanction upon which the God-mother or father swears to act as a real father or mother and not to discriminate between his/her biological children and the God-child. This relationship creates a social bond between the families entering into this relationship.

Boissevain in his book *Friends of Friends* discusses many factors which influence the structure of social networks. Among these factors kinship, occupation, power, education and geographical and social mobility are important ones. Power, as the ability of a person to influence the behaviour of others independently of their wishes, can be based on many factors. "These include wealth and occupation or special relations which give access to strategic information, or resources such as jobs and licences that can be allocated by him" (Boissevain, 1974:85). The Amhara in Aaroo area feel that establishing favourable relationships with the Oromo will give them access to the most important resource, that is land. (See below on how establishing harmonious relationships, *fat maibat* for instance, with the indigenous population help one access to land.) Because of this, the Oromo are invited by the Amhara, to use Boissevain's phrase, "to act as baptismal or confirmation godparent or wedding witness" (Ibid:86).

4.3.2. *Qire* and *Iddir* in Mourning Ceremony

In the cases of death, whether involving a funeral ceremony or simply a *mardo laqso* (mourning ceremony which takes place after the announcement of the death of a relative at a distant place) the Amhara have what they call *qire* and the Oromo have *iddir*.³⁰ The basic difference between *qire* and *iddir* is that the former does not involve monthly regular contributions from which the members may be helped in times of social risk. *Iddir*, on the other hand, involves regular contributions from which the

³⁰ *Iddir* is a new phenomenon in the rural areas of Horro Guduru, less than two decades old. It seems to me that it is the result of town influence rather than that of the Walloye settlement.

aggrieved is helped to cover some of the costs of the mourning ceremony. The *qire* and the *iddir* provide whatever is needed to facilitate the funeral or to simply entertain the guests coming from a long distance to express their condolences to the aggrieved. Mourning ceremonies do not take weeks among the Walloye, the maximum is two days. If the funeral is going to take place the same day as the death of the person, this does not give enough time for all relatives and *qire* members to attend the funeral ceremony. In this case the funeral ceremony proceeds with those present and the day will be fixed for what they call *yaqaro laqso* (mourning by appointment) which is attended by *qire* members, relatives from a distant place and the surrounding community, even those who do not belong to the *qire*. On *yaqaro laqso* relatives and friends weep as if the funeral is going to take place. Each *qire* member household brings a fixed amount, four to five, *injera* with *diqua* (pepper ground with salt) and everybody is fed with the *injera* put on a ground on leaves (See Photo, Appendix I). The mourning culminates with the blessing of the priest. In the case of the *mardo laqso* the same tradition is followed.

Qire members help each other in cases of death, wedding and accidents (such as the burning of the house or the death of a cattle). As a member of a *qire* one is entitled to get labour and *injera* in the case of wedding feasts and funeral ceremonies. *Qire* members also work on the farm plot of the aggrieved doing whatever the season demands. If a cattle of a certain *qire* member dies from animal disease, members share the meat among themselves based on a fixed price. This would enable the owner of the cattle to buy a bullock or heifer depending on what cattle he lost, an ox or a cow. This is how they share risks among themselves. Sharing risks in this form is also common among the Oromo.

Mourning ceremonies among the Oromo take weeks since each relative or friend visits the aggrieved to pay respects after death as soon as the news is heard, or at his/her convenience. Depending on the economic standing of the aggrieved family, those who attend the funeral ceremony and the ones who pay their respects after the death are served food (frequently, a cow or an ox is slaughtered), coffee and *araqé* (home made liquor). After the food and the drinks, between fifty cents and two birr is offered to the aggrieved by those who are served the food and the drinks.

The Walloye have recently started practising taking money from the Oromo respect payers since the latter are not *qire* members, who could have contributed *injera* and *diqua*.

4.3.3. *Qire* and *Iddir* in Conflict Resolution.

The *qire* and the *iddir* also play an important role in conflict resolution. If two persons or parties in the *qire* (in the case of the Amhara) or the *iddir* (in the case of the Oromo) are in a dispute over certain land or property, or quarrel for some reason, one of the parties presents the case to the *qire* or the *iddir*, or it may be brought to the attention of the *qire* or the *iddir* by non-partisan members of the community lest the conflict develops to a level where a large part of the community may be involved since it may lead to destruction of property or loss of life if it is not resolved in time.

Through the *qire* or *iddir dāñā* (judge) the parties are requested to identify a neutral person as *yuzamad dāñā* (literally, relative's judge) or the chair of the committee called *shimagile* or *jarsa*. The *shimagile* or the *jarsa* is usually composed of the chairman (chosen by both parties for his neutrality) and two, four or six persons (each party mentions one, two or three persons). Both parties should give their consent

concerning the persons to sit in the *shimagile* or *jarsa*. These are people known by the community for their objectivity and non-partisan judgement. Although the committee is called *shimagile* or *jarsa* (literally, old man), it could also consist of adult men possessed of the above mentioned qualities. Both parties also take an oath to respect the decisions of the *jarsa/shimagile*. If one party refuses to honour the conditions of reconciliation set by the *jarsa/shimagile*, he/she will be ostracized and this is the social control mechanism found to be effective.

4.3.4. *Tut maqbät*.

The Gojjames who came to the area since 1992 did not obtain the opportunity to settle in numbers because every piece of land has someone to claim possession rights over it. Unlike the time when the Walloyes settled two decades ago in the forest area, the Gojjames could not find a plot, equivalent to what is in Amharic called *yabaré ginbar yamitakil* (literally, "equal to a mere ox's forehead"). The Gojjame, therefore, had to find the means by which they could establish harmonious relationships with the Oromo, who, relatively speaking, possess wide areas of arable land. The practice was what they call *tut maqbät* ("suckling from the breast").

Tut maqbät has a cultural basis among the Amhara, particularly, in Gojjam and Gondar. It provides the newcomer and someone who is economically and socially weak with a strong protector. The newcomer and the economically and socially deprived one seeks the protection of the important figure (either because of his political power, religious position, economic achievement) in the community. The one whose protection is sought prepares *fella* and food to officiate the arrangement. He provides his *yefut lij* ("breast child") with something which he thought could establish the latter in a new

community. The Gojjames brought *jut maṭbāt* to Wälläga in order to obtain the protection of the Oromo who are respected among their community for whatever reason. Most of the Gojjames of Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* live in a town, renting houses from either the Walloye or Oromo owners. Except for a few who live from trade, the rest established close ties with the Oromo through *jut maṭbāt*. For instance, a certain Tibebe, a town dweller, has a certain Nugussa, an Oromo, as *yaṭut abbat* (breast father) in the neighbouring *qabalé*. Obbo Nugussa is a rich man and a person respected for his hard work in the area. Another Gojjame priest also secured the guardianship of a certain Gecer, a respected Oromo. The Walloye had only a few successful cases which usually takes the form of *abelij*. There are two possible reasons for this.

Primarily, the Walloyes present a different image in the minds of the Oromo as compared to the Gojjames: the former as enemies and the latter as neighbours. The Walloye are regarded as enemies because it was believed that the Walloye had inhumanly looted and killed thousands of Oromo patriots while the latter were coming back after the defeat of the Ethiopian army at the battle of Maychew (1935-6). The Gojjames relationship with the Oromo, mainly in the form of small scale raids, large scale fighting and through trade goes as far back as the seventeenth century (Oljira 1994). These days the Oromo trade cattle in Gojjam whereas the Gojjame trade pack animals among the Oromo. Indeed, there are many Gojjames in Wälläga, particularly in Horro Guduru, who came either as traders or who started living as sharecroppers²¹, and have now established themselves as important families, some marrying

²¹ With regards to when the Oromo started to have the Gojjame fugitives as tenant labour Chernet writes: "The Oromo landlords in Horro-Guduru had used Gojjame' Fugitive tenant labour under the *haamsho* [one-third of the produce] system since 1884" (Chernet 1988:58).

Oromo women and others giving their women to Oromo. There are also Oromo communities in Gojjam who had been settled there during the raids and counter raids between Oromo and Amhara of Gojjam in the seventeenth century (Oljira 1994). In the case of Aaroo Addis Alem, the situation is even more complex since the Sinicho/Shinasha are found both in Gojjam and Walläga.

The second possible reason is that the Walloye came *en masse* and took Oromo land with the help of the *balabäts*. The marriage of the interests of the Walloyes and the Oromo *balabäts* deprived the local Oromo of their rights to land. The *balabäts* wanted to have a large number of people under their "chieftainship" in order to be eligible for candidacy to the Chamber of Deputies of the bicameral parliament of the Imperial Government. The interest of the Walloye was to obtain licences to cultivate government land, and eventually to become *yamangist gabär*. Unlike the Walloyes, the Gojjames come in small numbers, in fact until the last three years, they usually come at the request of the Oromo who want to have them as share-croppers. This arrangement is made, usually, either through the ones who have worked in the area as share-croppers themselves, or through traders. The Oromo request the Gojjame share-croppers who return to Gojjam to visit relatives or bring their families to do them favour by bringing a share-cropper. Traders, usually the Gojjames, also play the role of matching the resource-poor (land and oxen) with the ones who have the said resources but lack labour. These people are, therefore, doing favour to both parties.

4.4. Oromo-Walloye and Walloye-Gojjame Attitudes Towards Each Other.

The Walloyes do not like the Gojjame settlement in the area as do the latter of the former. The Walloyes do not consider the Gojjames as strong cultivators. The

Walloyes also understand that most of the Gojjames who migrated to Wälläga might have been directly or indirectly involved in murder which they assume is widespread in Jiga Quarit, Ferebet and Daga Damot *woredas* of Qolla Daga Damot *awräjä* of Gojjam. The Gojjames' response about why the Walloyes do not like them is *tiliqu lamda tinithan aywedewum* ("the big beggar does not like the little one"). The Oromo feel that both the Walloyes and the Gojjames are beggars since both are new arrivals to the area. My Gojjame informant says "the Walloye do not like us because we became a strong competitors, especially in obtaining land on lease. Our arrival deprived the Walloye of access to cheap land rent which they used to obtain before our arrival." One of my Gojjame informants reported that the Walloye are destitute, since, "the Walloye left their home area because of famine". According to the Gojjames, there is a basic difference between the Walloye and themselves in that the Walloye are victims of drought, whereas the Gojjames came to Wälläga in search of fertile land, not because of famine. The Gojjames say "we left many granaries of reserve cereal crops back home unlike the Walloyes who came only with *bado silicha* (empty skin bag). The Oromo know that the Walloye and the Gojjame do not like each other. The reason most of the Oromo give for this is *kajeeltun kajeeltu hinjalatu* ("a coveter does not enjoy another coveter"). The spirit of this proverb is that the Walloye (the first-in coveter) do not enjoy the arrival of the Gojjame (the last-in coveter) because the giver is only one, that is, the Oromo. For most of the Oromo, therefore, both are fighting over the resources neither has a legitimate claim to. For the majority of the Oromo, the Gojjame are more reliable than the Walloye who are regarded as selfish and impolite. Ayana, my Oromo informant who is regarded as a close friend of many Walloyes, once commented on the impolite behaviour of the Walloyes. He and I were invited to *pellä* in Aschenegew's house and some Walloyes rushed into the house.

Ayana commented in his broken Amharic:

*Kaft naw enante. Saw chawata lay naw. Enante damo
basirna t'abanja yizo wada bet yiro't'al. Ehe nor naw.
Bar lay qomo salmata yesat'e giza abba warra wato batir
tapabilo yigabal inji bet meda aragachu yamitrot'.*

"You are an animal. People are talking. But you rush to the house with your stick and gun. This is impolite. It is normal to greet from the outside after which the owner of the house would welcome you into the house by receiving your stick and gun; did you take the house for a field to which one runs?"

Among the Oromo there is a conflict of ideas between those who want to derive certain economic advantages from associating with the Amhara on the one hand, and those who condemn this act as double dealing, on the other. The Oromo who do not own oxen to cultivate their farm plot usually lease the plots to the Walloye or the Gojjame. Sometimes, the lease takes the form of complete transfer of the plot, and the majority of the owner-farmers disapprove of this act.

Magäbi Tibebe has organized an *iddir* composed of twelve Oromo and twenty eight Gojjame in Aaroo Addis Alem qabalé. He is the chairman of the *iddir*. There are no Walloye *iddir* members since they have what they call *qire*. Although the fact that the Walloye have *qire* is given as a reason for the Walloyes not joining *iddir*, it seems that the Gojjame prefer not to be in the same *iddir* with the Walloye which, most likely, was the reason why Magäbi did not invite the Walloye to join the *iddir*.

Other areas in which one clearly observes differences between the Oromo and the Walloye are in the preparation of food and drinks, personal hygiene, and dressing style. The Walloye accept that the Oromo are good at the preparation of *waq* (sauce in which *injera* is dipped), whereas the former excel in making *injera* (the staple pancake). The Oromo do not enjoy feasts prepared by the Walloye, mainly because of the *waq*. The Oromo say that the Walloye eat *injera* with *waxii gomanzara* (*Erucastrum*

abyssinica). As I once had the opportunity to eat *injera* with *wof* at one of my Walloye informants' house, I was able to notice that the *wof* was composed of pounded beans and *gomantara*, carefully prepared. The reason why the Oromo despise the *waxii* of the Walloye is that the Oromo make *waxii* from pounded peas and beans. The Oromo use pounded *gomantara* only to polish the *eele*, cooking plate made of clay, while baking *injera*. Indeed, the Walloye also feel ashamed to invite the Oromo into their houses since they know that the Oromo despise the way and the ingredients from which the Walloye make *waxii*. However, since the Oromo feel that it is the *waxii* which matters rather than the *injera*, they refrain from enjoying *injera* with *wof* in the Walloye's houses. One of my Oromo informants told me that a certain Walloye man (who used to be the chairman of Aaroo Addis Alem *qabale*) once admitted that the Walloye do not invite the Oromo to their houses because the latter's *wof* is not the type the Oromo could enjoy.

With the settlement of the Walloye the local Oromo were introduced to a type of *mähbar* with which they were not familiar before, namely *Şigé mähbar*. *Şigé mähbar* takes place between *Meşkerem* 25 and *Hidar* 6 (October five and November 15) every year. *Şigé mähbar* is devoted to the memory of the escape to Egypt and return to Nazareth of St. Mary and Joseph with the new born child Jesus on the orders of the Lord who appeared to Joseph through His angel in a dream. (Matthew 2:13-23) The purpose of the refuge was to escape King Herod who was going to search for the child to kill him. Although the Walloye resumed *Şigé mähbar* as soon as they arrived in the area, it has only been two years since the Oromo joined them in *Şigé mähbar*. *Şigé mähbar*, unlike other *mähbars* which take place only once a month, takes place every week on Sundays between the above mentioned dates. On the day of the conclusion of

the *Şigé mähbar* of the year, Tuesday, November 15²², 1994, those who did not take turns during the six weeks between the said period prepare *ţella* and *injera* to be consumed by all members. In addition to this, an animal to be slaughtered, a cow, or an ox, or a goat or a sheep, will be bought with contributory funds by all members. *Şigé mähbar* takes place in the compound of the church.

On this final day of *Şigé mähbar* of 1994 I was invited by a member of one of the *Şigé mähbars* and I had the opportunity to observe the whole process from the beginning to the end. All the men gathered at their *Şigé* hut around seven o'clock in the morning to clear the area, collect firewood, and slaughter the animal bought for the purpose. At about eleven o'clock women²³ arrived with their *ţella* and *injera* and also to make the *wof*. The *Şigé mähbar* to which I was invited was composed of 14 Walloyes and nine Oromo. Whenever two persons of the same ethnic group were referring to someone who is not a member of their ethnic group, they either say "an Oromo" or "an Amhara" depending on who the speakers are. The language used by most men was Amharic since most of the Oromo men understand the message although they speak broken Amharic themselves. Sometimes Oromo is spoken with only very few Walloye who understand the message conveyed in Oromo language. At times each speaks in his own language and the message is well received and communication takes place. The big issue discussed that day was the news of a certain clash between the forces of the central government and the *shifta*²⁴ a week before at a place called

²² The day of the conclusion does not matter as long as it is not Wednesdays or Fridays.

²³ Women, the wives of the members and young girls attend only the final date since they have to bring *ţella* and *injera* for the occasion.

²⁴ *Shifta* is the word used to refer to the OLF fighters by the government. The local people, both Oromo and Amhara, call it ONEG (Amharic version for OLF).

Caliya, in the same *woreda*. The sitting pattern of the men was almost mixed, but that of the women was not. The most probable reason why the women do not mix is that they are not familiar with one another and also language is a barrier (See Photo, Appendix I).

Another interesting point I observed was the debate between the two groups regarding some parts of the animal's body, especially, what is called *yehod iqa* (Amharic) or *mi'a gara* (Oromo). What they call *yehod iqa* or *mi'a gara* include lung, liver, heart, stomach, intestine, spleen and pancreas. According to Oromo classification liver, heart, stomach and small intestine are edible. For the Walloye, lung is added to what has been classified as edible by the Oromo. Consequently, lung was wanted for different purposes by the two groups, that is, the Oromo wanted it for their cats while the Amhara insisted to include it with other "edible" organs which were ready to be roasted. Although the young Walloyes insisted that lung be consumed, the older Walloye men decided not to include it with the "edible" parts of the animal body and a certain Oromo took it home for his cats. The very question that this part of the animal body should be consumed irritated many Oromo, especially the women.

In terms of personal hygiene the Oromo feel that the Walloye are inferior to the Oromo. In addition to this, the Oromo feel superior to the Walloye in their clothing. One of my Walloye informants, 34 years old, accepts the view that the Oromo hold of the Walloye clothing and said: "*yabag lamd inlebs nabar, ahun naw yatawnaw*" ("we used to wear sheepskin, we dropped it only now"). He also says that the Walloye are shorts wearers unlike most of the Oromo who wear trousers, especially on market days and occasions of importance such as weddings, funerals, *māhbar* days, and *qabalé*

assemblies. According to him it is not only the type of clothes they put on which matters, but the cleanliness which, according to him, is superior among the Oromo than to the Walloyes'.

An Oromo man does not anoint himself with butter unless he is the *qondala/ajjeessa*.²⁵ Among the Oromo it is a woman who may anoint herself any time she feels like doing so. But Walloye men do anoint themselves with butter. The Oromo assume that the Walloye man anoints himself with butter if he had sexual relation the night before. But for the Walloye the reason why they anoint themselves with butter is either headache or what they call *yechinqilat dirqet* (literally, "dryness of the brain"). Among the Walloye, the tradition of anointing oneself with butter followed the killing of big game as the Oromo still do. But, the gradual decline of the forest land deprived the area of big game and killing of one's enemy replaced the original exercise. Today Walloye men anoint themselves with butter for reasons which have nothing to do with either the killing of big game or a human being. It is more the practical need to stimulate the work of the brain.

4.5. Economic Activities.

The question of how far the two ethnic groups (the Oromo and the Amhara, especially the Walloye) influenced one another cannot be easily established mainly due to the fact that genuine and friendly relationships are lacking. However, there are certain areas where both parties accept their having been influenced by the other.

²⁵ See part 2.2. on *qondala/ajjeessa*.

4.5.1. Livestock Production.

The settlement of the Walloye had significant influences on the attitude of the Oromo towards their cattle. One of my Oromo informants reported that the Walloye are wealthier than the Oromo mainly because of their entrepreneurship. The main area of their entrepreneurship is in the way they manage their livestock, especially their cattle. Traditionally, the Oromo consider their cattle as a symbol of status, the larger heads of cattle, added to other factors such as wisdom and age for instance, the higher status one derives. For instance, among the Oromo of the research area someone who herded one hundred head of cattle, including calves, at a time is expected to wear the stomach of the cattle, and this is called *garacha ufate* ("he wore cattle stomach"). If he is able to have two hundred, he does it twice, if three hundred, thrice. So people refer to him as someone who wore *garacha* twice or thrice, which means he is the wealthiest person in the community. Now this is history rather than reality, mainly because of problem of pasture.

Among the Oromo of this area, like elsewhere among the Oromo and the pastoral Somalis, each head of cattle has, like human beings, its individual name given by the owner. The owner of the cattle retains strong emotional ties to his/her cattle. Bartels writes the following on Macca Oromo.

...any true Macha invariably retains strong emotional ties with cattle. Even nowadays, one can say that none of them feels perfectly happy unless he has one or two cows at least. Much more than an economic asset cattle constitute .. a symbol of standing in the largest sense. As with so many African peoples it is more the number than the quality that counts. (Bartels 1975:884)

The fact that the Oromo retain such strong emotional ties with their cattle inhibits them from disposing of the low quality stock in order to obtain better ones. Especially, if the cow has become old while effectively producing calves and an ox has grown old while farming in the hands of the owner, there are some cultural restraints to dispose of them in the market. Usually, these kinds of cattle, whether an ox or a cow, are slaughtered on the *kosi* (homestead, in this context) for certain family occasions. Then the Oromo say "how can I sell so and so". My Oromo informant said that this is the main area where the entrepreneurship of the Walloye exceeds that of the Oromo. The Walloye buy an ox this year and farm with it only for one agricultural cycle, then dispose of it in order to buy two bullocks. He says "The Walloye never wait until an ox or a cow is too old to attract huge amount of money. Although we still have the problem, gradually we are adopting the tradition of the Walloye in this regard."

4.5.2. Crop Production.

The Walloye are strong farmers as compared to the Oromo, especially in oxen plough cultivation. Although, the Oromo had the culture of oxen drawn cultivation before the arrival of the Walloye, the practice was not as intensive as it is now. Before the settlement of the Walloye, the Oromo inhabiting Aaroo and the surrounding *qabale's*, which are very close to the lowlands, cultivated mainly for self-consumption. Their crop production was augmented by cattle breeding, which in fact constituted a significant part of their economy. They used to rely on cattle breeding, cultivation of

cereal crops, and bee-keeping. It was in this situation that the Walloyes were made to settle in the area, which brought about a change in the mode of economic life of the people.

Agricultural activities among the local community were based mainly on the slash-and-burn system before the settlement of the Walloye. Since there was wide area of forest land it was conducive for shifting or swidden cultivation. One of my Walloye informants reported "we learned clearing the land for cultivation and hanging bee-hives on a big tree from the Oromo". On the other hand, the Oromo learned timely farming, weeding and harvesting from the Walloye. It seems that mainly because of the Walloye settlement in the lowlands to which the Oromo used to descend for slash-and-burn cultivation, the Oromo confined themselves to the highlands where only oxen drawn cultivation is possible. It was true that the Oromo used to rely on shifting cultivation, which does not require rigorous weeding and farming activity, and that the Walloye are better skilled than the Oromo in this regard. Although most of the Oromo accept the fact that the Walloye are superior to the Oromo in intensive plough cultivation and they have benefited from them, some reject this on the grounds that their living condition was better before than it is now. Ayana, one of my Oromo informants, asserts that the settlement of the Walloye had the following effects:

Those days there were no Oromo who used to work as share-cropper, if he does not have an ox he will move down to the lowland and clear a small plot of forest between October and November. He leaves it as it is until mid-March or early April when the cleared forest is ready to be burnt. Maize and finger millet are grown. The produce is so huge supporting the family until the next harvest, only from three to four days clearing field. Those days the unit of measurement was *qufoo Golbe*²⁶.

²⁶ *Qufoo* is a hand woven basket used as a unit of measurement for cereals and grain crops. *Qufoo* usually contains between fifteen and sixteen killogrammes. *Qufoo Golbe* refers to the *qufoo* of a certain Golbe who was

not *burccuqo* (drinking glass). The unit of measurement for honey was *faagaaa Gandifee*²⁷, not a kilo or a *burccuqo*. Now we do not have both *faagaa* and *qufoo* as a unit of measurement, but *burccuqo*. It can not be better for one who has moved from the world of abundance to that of scarcity.

These informants reported that there was no problem of land those days. They say:

We clear the forest following Gonka river bank this year and work there for two to three successive years and then move to Qarsaa river bank, leaving Gonka fallow, and do the same there, and then move to Dubuuq river bank with similar pattern. A minimum of seven years was needed for the land once cleared and cultivated to regain forest. The land has never failed us.

According to them shifting cultivation was a successful practice. Shifting cultivation or swidden cultivation is said to be effective and balanced ecological adaptation (Rappaport in Keesing 1975:130 and Harris 1988:254-5).

There are some who do not see any advantage in the settlement of the Walloye in the area. It seems to me that this latter opinion is the intentional rejection of the contribution of the Walloye to the Oromo.

reputed for his hard work and of having a lot of grain reserves.

²⁷ *Faagaa* is the unit of measurement of honey, containing nine killogrammes. *Faagaa Gandiiffee* refers to the *faagaa* of a certain *Gandiiffee*, who was the known honey collector in Aaroo area.

4.5.3. *Eqqub*.

Eqqub is a form of rotating saving system, usually of an urban character. *Eqqub* involves payments of a fixed sum weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, depending on the agreement of the members and who receives when is decided according to a lottery system. In Aaroo town there are a number of small *eqqubs* organized on a neighbourhood basis. Membership is all inclusive, that is, no discrimination on the basis of ethnic background, place of origin or religious affiliation. What is more important is the good history of the credit worthiness of the person.

4.5.4. Labour Exchange.

Labour exchange in the form of *daboo* and *daadoo* are very common among the Oromo. Traditional forms of cooperation, among the Oromo, are much more than an issue of economic efficiency. On Macca Oromo Bartels writes: "No Macha feels happy when he has to go to market alone, to eat alone, to sleep alone. Hence cooperation in their fields is much more than a matter of efficiency alone". (Bartels, 1975:889)

A *daboo*, for instance, is a day's cooperation organized occasionally for the purposes of ploughing, clearing the farmland, weeding, harvesting and house-building. Since it involves many persons (20 - 40 or even more²⁸ depending on how much work is expected to be performed), it is organized only for a single day at the request of the *abba daboo* (father of *daboo*). The *abba daboo* offers the participants a rather lavish

²⁸ The number of people involved in a *daboo* has substantially decreased mainly because people hardly have farm plots which may need extra labour than the family could provide.

entertainment at the end of the working day when the members are "treated to large amounts of *injera* and *wof*, pancakes made of fermented *teff* and pepper sauce, .. and large amounts of beer.." (Bartels 1975:889).

Daadoo, on the other hand, is a form of large-term reciprocal cooperation on equal terms between a smaller number of people who work in turn for each other (Bartels 1977:497). This is widely exercised especially during harvest season since untimely rain could damage the ripe crops.

Among the Walloye it is rare to observe inter-household cooperation, at least during my stay in the village. Nevertheless, informants recall times when inter-household cooperation in the form of *wonfal*, similar to *daadoo* among the Oromo are practised. One of my Walloye informants stressed that one should be a member of the *qire* in order to be provided with labour whenever the need arises.

The Oromo also have the tradition of giving hands to someone who, for reasons beyond his control (sickness, death of the family member, imprisonment, maternity of the wife, etc), fails to cultivate or clear his land, weed or harvest his crop. This practice is called *maldhibdee*. Unlike *daadoo*, *maldhibdee* does not rotate among the co-workers, nor like *daboo* because it does not involve the request of the household to be helped. It also does not involve a feast in the form of *budeena* (*injera*) and *farsoo* (*tella*). Most frequently, only *mullu* (boiled maize mixed with beans) is provided. But very rarely, depending on the economic status of the household to be helped, *farsoo* may be prepared.

These forms of labour exchange practices are composed of people who are from one's own ethnic group. No Walloye enters into such arrangements with Oromo. Other forms of inter-household cooperation such as oxen-sharing and money-lending are also intra-ethnic. It was reported that only very rarely does inter-ethnic money lending

takes place, among co-members in a *māhbar*. Share-cropping is arranged most frequently between the Oromo and the Gojjame, although it is sometimes arranged between the Oromo and the Walloye. Since most of the Walloye have by now established themselves, they resort to obtaining land from the Oromo in the form of lease rather than arranging for share-cropping. Share-croppers and wage-labourers are mostly the Gojjames. Market exchanges are free and no discrimination is made as long as the interest of both parties are met. (See Photo, Appendix I) Despite their differences in other aspects, economic transactions take place. Similar situations are observed in many poly-ethnic societies. Izikowitz writes:

Many neighbouring tribes are often entirely dependent on products from each other, making an exchange of wares and services necessary. Here, too, Algeria can provide us with an example and this complementation between nomads and farmers is probably to be found over large parts of the Orient. Even if there is enmity between the parties, they must maintain a minimum of reciprocity. (1969:144)

4.6. Summary

Amhara-Oromo interactions in the study area present a diverse picture. The most conspicuous form of interactions are competition and conflict, although cooperation and exchange of resources also exist. From the time of Walloye settlement in the area, the Oromo did not welcome the settlement, the Oromo *balabäts* wanted the settlement for their own ends. The March 1975 Declaration of the Public Ownership of rural land made the settlers secure farmers, liberating them from the jurisdiction of the *balabäts*. Because of the fact that the settlers were demographically the majority, *qabälé* leadership fell into their hands.

For over one and a half decades the Walloye had the upper hand in the *qabalé*. But the fall of the *Derg* and the coming to power of Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), changed the balance of power in Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé*. The Oromo purchased guns and took *qabalé* leadership in line with the Regionalization policy of the TGE. Inter-group conflict is most often manifested in the form of quarrels between individuals, Walloye and Oromo. There were times when these quarrels claimed lives.

Competition over land, Church administration, leadership at the *qabalé* level lead to conflict between these communities. Inter-group marriage (Oromo-Walloye) is infrequent and uni-directional, Oromo men taking Walloye wives. Other forms of social ties also play important roles. One such form is *abelij*, a kinship-like bond established between two families when either one or both parents of a certain household or both households become a God-father/mother of the child of one or both households. This is also infrequent between the Oromo and the Walloye. *Tut maṭbāt* is the practice introduced to the area by the Gojjame settlers. Through *tut maṭbāt*, the Gojjames were able to establish harmonious relationship with the Oromo. Self-help associations such as *qire* (among the Walloye) and *iddir* (among the Oromo and Gojjame) play important role in conflict resolution and risk sharing. Rotating savings associations, namely *eqqub*, is practised among the town dwellers, the basic criterion being good credit history. Labour exchanges take many forms such as *daboo*, *daadoo* and *maldhibdee* among the Oromo. The Walloye have risk-sharing traditions in the form of *qire*.

Walloye settlement influenced Oromo attitudes towards their cattle, namely, they are now concerned with quality of stock rather than simply quantity. Treating cattle as a symbol of status is decreasing since other forms of wealth may also attract status. In the fields of crop cultivation, the settlement of the Walloye has positively influenced

CHAPTER FIVE

LAND RIGHTS AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

5.1. Land Rights

In this community land and livestock, especially cattle, are the major sources of wealth. This assertion is quite evident from what people say in proverbs and couplet.

The value and function of cattle could be observed from the following couplet.

*Saawwa badnan badnee;
Saawwa gallan galee.
Bakka sayya hinjirre, laftti dagaluma;
Bakka sayya jiru, lapheen qabanuma.
Jartti mataa jiisa;
Jaarsa laphee jiisa.
Dibannan bareecha;
Dhugnan qabaneesa.
Gogaan jandee ta'a;
Koteen shini ta'a;
Gaafiti wancca ta'a.
Saawwa qeensa biyyoo;
Keesaa yaa qotiyyoo.*

We were lost following the loss of cattle;
We are back to home because the cattle are back.
Where there are no cattle, the fields are wasteland;
Where there are cattle, the heart is cool.
It wets the head of the old woman;
And also the heart of the old man.
It beautifies when anointed;
And also cools when drunk.
Their skins become sleeping mat;
Their hoofs become *shiini* [coffee drinking cup];
Their horns become *wancca* [beer drinking cup].
Cattle, with soil on your hoofs;
You ox(en) in particular.

The multi-purpose function of the cattle is expressed in the above couplet usually sung by the *Azmari*²⁹ (minstrels) who play with the Abyssinian one-stringed violin called *masingo*.

Above all land is highly valued since it is on the land that crops are produced and livestock are kept, the source of human life.

Dachee yaa haadha jomoree;

Kana hunda sit horee.

Garaa balleetti koo;

Amal qabeetti koo.

Sima irra qotanna;

Sima irratti horanna.

Jiraa keenya baatta;

Du'aa keenya nyaatta.

Leenxa magarsita;

Namaa dabarsita.

Horree sirra yaafna;

Qotnee sirraa nyaatna.

Jalaan bishaan batta;

Irran midhaan bafta.

Sima irra qotani nan mada'e hinjettu;

Sima irratti hagani natti aja'e hinjettu.

Land, you the mother of *jomoree*³⁰,

It is you who produced all these.

You are tolerant and have a good conduct.

We farm on you and multiply over you.

You support and carry our living and eat our dead.

You grow all green things and bring well-being to humans.

We graze our herds on you and feed ourselves from you.

You keep water underneath and grow grain on the surface.

You do not complain of being wounded when cultivated, and of being polluted when defecated on.

²⁹ The Oromo call it *ams(z)ari* (corrupted Amharic) and the *masingo* is called *basango*.

³⁰ The word *jomoree* is used here to refer to everything grown on earth, edible and non-edible plants and animals. *Jomore* in ordinary usage denotes a beautiful girl or young woman. In appreciation of the beauty of a certain woman or girl one would say "*moggo qabdi, jomore intalati*", meaning she has no parallel in beauty, in terms of hair, posture, facial appearance and conduct.

That is why land became the major source of dispute in the *qabalé*. According to many of my informants, land became the only source of litigation between the Oromo and the Amhara after the change of government in 1991. In fact people say that the problem has roots in the military government although because of the strict rule of law and execution of the directives by the local administrators it did not manifest itself. For instance, the 1976 fighting in the market between the Oromo and the Walloye was related to land, that is the Oromo did not want the Walloye to bring their relatives from Wallo. The Walloye, however, breached the earlier agreement between the two not to bring any new Walloye. The Oromo always define the Amhara, both the Walloye and the Gojjame, to use Gonzalez and McCommon's phrase, as "unwelcome intruders" (Gonzalez and McCommon, 1989:8). The Oromo say "*Wallon Saynti baate abba iristti tate*" (literally, "the Wallo came from Sayint and became *rist* holders"). This implies that the land does not belong to the Walloye, but to the Oromo. The Oromo feel that it was the *balabät* who betrayed their own people by bringing the Walloye whom the Oromo regard as an enemy. Indeed, there were instances when the Walloye were regarded with a high degree of sympathy since they were said to have been the victims of drought-caused famine. Almost all my Oromo informants and many Walloye informants reported that the Oromo had assisted the Walloye resettlers by giving them plough animals on a rotation basis and also by granting them seeds for their farms when the latter first arrived in 1972. However, the Oromo are now angered because they think the Walloyes are trying to displace them. The Oromo are of the opinion that the Walloye should feel indebtedness to the Oromo, especially to the ex-*balabät* who planted them on a fertile ground at the expense of his own people. Ayana told me the following story of a certain tree seedling to describe how the Walloye deceived them.

Once upon a time a fruit of *dambbi*³¹ (*Ficus ovata*) asked the owner of the house to allow it to pass the night in his house. When the owner asked "you baby are you travelling alone?", she said 'my parents are just following me, they will come tomorrow'. On the morrow, she said "they will come tomorrow". She kept saying "tomorrow" while at the same time stretching her roots deep into the ground. Eventually, the owner suffocated to death being squeezed by the "guest".

It seems from what the Oromo say of the Walloye that the latter deceived the former in order to promote their own interest, that is to have easy access to land. Indeed, one of my Walloye informants quoted, what he says is the old Amharic proverb about the Walloye³² character, and this agrees with what my Oromo informants said above. The proverb says: "*wallona warka (Ficus vasta or Ficus brachypoda) zaren āsadirung alech yibatal*" (literally, "Wallo and warka said please let me pass tonight here"). This means Wallo and warka need only one night, after which they will take over the control of the place. This feeling of animosity is expressed in the following couplet which I was told by a certain Ayana and Eddosa:

Walloko wayya xuri, wal ilalla ljaā duri;
Wallo wayya lilana, wal ilala milana.

"You Wallo with the dirt cloth, we will retaliate for the past;
You Wallo with clothes inked with butter, now it is time to see you."

³¹ There are a number of trees which do not germinate on the ground, but on the trees. Trees such as *dambbi*, *qilxuu* (*Ficus vasta* or *Ficus brachypoda*) and *gatamaa* (*Schefflera abyssinica*) are called *digaluu* (Oromo), ecientifically, *Epiphytes*, and they are strong enough to kill the host.

³² Walloye for this informant, in fact for all Christian settlers, is a Muslim who lives in Wallo, not Christians like himself.

This couplet clearly indicates the bitterness of the Oromo towards the Walloye and their desire to retaliate against the injustices the Walloye did to the Oromo when the Oromo came back from the battle of Maychaw (Tigrai) in 1935-36. The information that the Walloyes killed and robbed thousands of Oromo returning from the battle of Maychaw was transmitted to the younger generation who now regard the Walloye as enemies. One of my Walloye informants, a certain Ascheneqew, reported that many Oromo resisted the Walloye settlement in Wälläga noting that the Walloye killed their relatives. He quotes what had been said in this manner: "The murderers of our grand-parents should not settle on our land". This challenge came from the peasants and the students. However, the *balabäts* wanted the Walloye settlement hoping that would promote their interest. The *balabäts*, especially those who lived on the peripheries wanted them to swell the size of their population (which was becoming depleted due to push factors, such as animal diseases and lack of water for human and animal consumption) who thought this would entitle them to compete for the Chamber of Deputies of the parliament of the Imperial Government. One of my Walloye informants clearly described the situation saying:

The *balabäts* divided each *gäsha* into two or three and reported to the central government that they had plenty of unoccupied *gäshas*. This was communicated to the Walloyes in Sayint Woreda through their representative and when the resettlers arrived in Horro Guduru the *balabäts* were scrambling for the Walloyes.

The local Oromo are of the opinion that the *balabäts* betrayed them. They say that the Walloyes were smart enough to deceive the *balabäts* in making the latter deny the Oromo the right to live on the land, let alone to take part in certain local level political activities of the local administration. Ayana says "because the Walloyes were

fetching water and firewood for the women of the *balabäts*, the latter thought that these were the best people on earth". Consequently, Ascheneqew was appointed as *yahämsa alaqa* (literally, "head of 50 men") in less than a year's time from their arrival. Although the Oromo were reluctant to obey his orders, the *balabät* trusted him because all the Walloye presented themselves as loyal servants of the *balabät*. In connection with this it is interesting to relate the problem the *yahämsa alaqa* faced while discharging his duties. His name, added to his father's name, Yazew, was disliked by people since it implies bad omen, *milki yara*, for someone who meets him on the way. The literal meaning of his full name is "he captured them after they have suffered". Being captured after suffering is disastrous. As a result of this, his initial name was changed to Misgana, ("thanks"), when this is added to his father's name it gives the message that "he took hold of thanks". Ato Ascheneqew/Misgana has also changed the initial name of his son, who used to be called Enbelachew (literally, "let us smash them"), to Wubiye (my good-looking). Ascheneqew reports that Amhara names imply, to use Levine's phrase, "exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance" (Levine [1965] 1972:38). He adds that Oromo names, unlike those of the Amhara, imply good wishes such names as *Gammachuu* (happy), *Margaa* (the one to blossom), *Gaarii* (the kind), *Tolasaa* (his magnanimity), *Waqqari* (God the benevolent), *Abdiisaa* (his hope) to cite only few examples. It should be noted, however, that there are Amhara names which express good wishes and hopes such as *Tsegaye* (my wealth), *Tesfaye* (my hope), *Degneh* (you'r kind), and *Work'ye* (my gold). Although these are not common, there are also Oromo names which are bellicose, for instance *Ensarmmuu* (he does not agree), *Rorrisa* (frightening), and *Jigssa* (Someone who strikes down; who fells).

Clearly observable conflict over the land resources began during the 1987 villagization programme. The villages were established on the holdings of some of the members of the peasant association without the consent of the owners of the holdings. Those whose holdings were taken as a village site were allotted land in substitution. Most of them were allotted land from the lowland as a substitution for plots in the highland. It was the Oromo who lost their holdings from the highlands on which the Walloye settled from the lowland. People, especially those whose land was taken away against their will, were not happy about the villages and were waiting for an opportune moment to dismantle the villages and return to their ancestral holdings. Some time before the fall of the *Derg*, many villages were dismantled and people rejoined their old villages since the homesteads of the new villages were very small, making it very difficult for people to obtain farm land. Since they had to walk a long distance between the villages and the farm lands in the old villages, almost all abandoned the new villages. Some remained in the new villages, maybe because the new villages are close to the highway and the town; and also they did not want to abandon the plot they had obtained from the highland. This was the opportune moment which those whose land was taken away for villagization sites were waiting for. The Walloye who moved their houses back to the lowland did not want to abandon their homesteads in the new villages and the Oromo, on the other hand, wanted to get back their holdings since the villages established by the villagization programme were already dismantled. This was one bone of contention.

The ex-balabât of the area, who allotted the Walloye an extended area of land for settlement, was one of the victims of the villagization programme. He lost not only his farm holdings but also his compound. Over forty new households were settled on his holdings out of which only very few households have completely moved back to

their old villages. The *ex-balabât*, who now lives in Amuru *woreda* on the land of his wife's family, commutes between Aaroo and Amuru to present himself on the appointment day to the *qabalê shengo* (local tribunal) for between twenty five and thirty charges files he has filed against the Walloye. He was the one who let the Walloye settle, but now he is the one who has been seriously affected by their presence. The Oromo recall an appropriate Oromo proverb to describe the situation. It says "*dhoksitee waljaalatte iyyite gargar baate*". The spirit of this proverb is that they loved one another in secret, but departed crying loudly. That is, the *ex-balabât* brought the Walloyes in a devious way without the knowledge of the local people, but now he is forced to leave his homestead. The Oromo say that he has paid for his deeds, and invokes another proverb which clearly describes the case. The proverb states "*hindanqoon haate, haate kan mormashe muru bafti*" ("the fowls, after continuous scratching, will discover something with which her neck is to be cut"). The spirit of this proverb is that a wrong-doer will be caught and killed by his own deeds. Although the Oromo feel very bitter about the deeds of the *ex-balabât* who planted the Walloyes on their ancestral land, they are supporting the *ex-balabât* who is involved in litigation over the property he had in his compound and the surrounding. The Walloyes claimed the eucalyptus tree and *gesho* (*Rhamnus prinoides*) in the compound of the *ex-balabât* saying that it was planted not by him but by his tenants before the 1974 revolution. Even if the Oromo knew it had been put under *qabalê* control during the first few years of the 1974 revolution, they now testified that the *ex-balabât* planted them himself and that they had never been confiscated. The position of the Oromo was an intentional decision made to support the *ex-balabât*. Another Oromo is currently opening new charges against forty households out of one hundred and ten housing units in the small

town of Aaroo Addis Alem, traditionally called *Allano*. Many Oromo have filed at least two or three charges against the Walloye.

The other source of land dispute was related to the arrival of the Gojjame in 1992. The Gojjame wanted to obtain land on a lease basis since purchase of land is not allowed. When one person leases the land to the Gojjame, another may raise the question of holding rights. The latter argues saying that he/she left the land fallow for sometime and it was not abandoned. According to my Amhara informants the Oromo are the ones who lease land for two main reasons. The first group are the ones who have more plots than they could farm themselves in a certain agricultural cycle and lease additional plots usually only for one, very rarely for two, agricultural cycles. These are households who do not have big families but relatively speaking have more plots than most of the settlers, mainly because of their long stay in the area. The second group is composed of families who do not have plough animals³³ to cultivate the plots themselves, and to some extent also households whose adult males are partially engaged in trade. Sometimes, the lessee refuses to handover the plot when the leaser wants to get back his/her land after the completion of the lease period. This is another source of land dispute in the *qabalé*.

When the land is leased the share of the leaser is one-third if it is maize and one-fourth if it is *jeff*. The Oromo accuse the Walloye of breaching the agreement reached when the land lease contract was signed. According to the Oromo tradition it is a sin to breach an agreement, give false witness, and to deny certain facts since this may disappoint *Waaqa* and the punishment may be unbearable for the descendants. For the Oromo it is unbecoming to do anything against another Oromo since the latter

³³ In the chapter on inter-ethnic relationships I have discussed the fact that the Walloye are richer than most of the Oromo because of their entrepreneurship. Therefore, the Walloye have more plough animals than the Oromo.

would have a *nagaroo*²⁴ (literally, sin) in such a circumstance. *Nagaroo* is more than a sin which one may commit by doing wrong to someone with whom he does not have any relationship. Doing anything against one's own man/woman, a relative or a friend with whom one has shared a dish, is a grave mistake which does not, by whatsoever means, attract forgiveness from God. God's payment for the *nagaroo* may be postponed to one's descendants and that is why the Oromo take care not to do anything wrong against one's relative or a friend. The following is an Oromo couplet expressing the place of *nagaroo* in the culture.

*Nagaroon badadha, xuurin badamadha;
Har'a dhiisee, bor nama gafata.*

"What a bad is *nagaroo*, and a grave is *xuuri* (wrong doing);
It does not ask today, but tomorrow."

The Oromo complain that the Walloye breach agreements and give false witnesses because the Oromo do not have *nagaroo* over the Walloye. Although it seems that the degree of breaching an agreement is high if it is among the Oromo and the Walloye, it is also observed in the cases of intra-ethnic agreements. It is part of life for one party, for one reason or another, to fail to honour agreements. This leads to litigation, sometimes to be settled at the *qabalé shengo* or, sometimes through the intervention of the *shimagile* or *jarsa*.

To cite one example brought to *shengo* in this regard, a certain Goshel leased a plot from his holdings to a Walloye for the 1994/95 agricultural year on the condition

²⁴ *Nagaroo* is a difficult concept to explain out of the context of the discussion. When someone says "Waaqati issa nagare", it is the Waaqa (God) who compensated him for the injustice done against him. If on the other hand someone says "nagaaroo abaluuti kana issa godhe", he is suffering the consequence of his misdeeds against someone close to him.

that the lessee would give to the leaser one-fourth of the produce. The agreement was signed in the presence of witnesses. After the harvest the leaser collected his share and requested the lessee to give him back the plot so that the leaser could farm the plot himself. The lease holder refused to do so saying that their contract does not specify the number of years on which the plot would be held on lease. The leaser brought the case to the *qabale shengo* and submitted his copy of the original agreement which the *shengo* took as a testimony to support the leaser. The lessee argued that the document brought to the *shengo* was forged since he argued they did not have any written agreement. The *shengo* agreed to decide after witnesses gave their testimonies, and the *shengo* heard the words of the witnesses (one Walloye and two Oromo) which also supported the leaser. The *shengo* fixed another date to give the final verdict, which unfortunately was to take place after I left the area on the completion of my field work.

Another, maybe less frequent factor is that people sometimes intrude into the territory of another while cultivating. There is no litigation over pasture land since the cattle graze wherever the pasture is available.

5.2. Natural Resource Conservation

"Deforestation, land and soil degradation have reached catastrophic levels in Ethiopia" (Pausewang, *et al* 1990:162). Markos Ezra asserts that the land covered by forest was 40 per cent some fifty years ago, currently is only 3.6 per cent (*ibid*). The magnitude of the problem of deforestation, land and soil degradation and the effect of all these on all species, human and non-human, is clearly emphasized in the following statement:

There is no doubting the seriousness of environmental and agrarian problems in Africa today in the eye of the developed world. Human life, natural habitat, soils and species are all thought to be endangered in the continent to an extent never known before. (Anderson and Grove 1987:1)

Ethiopian societies have suffered the consequences of natural resource degradation. This is especially true of the northern parts of this country, Shoa, Wallo, Tigray, and parts of Gondar. Already in 1960 Simoons wrote:

According to local tradition and to the statements of many foreign observers, the isolated trees ... and clusters of trees that are found in the wetter parts of northern and central highland Ethiopia are the relics of a forest which once covered much of the plateau and which was destroyed by man. In the initial phases of the destruction of the ancient forest cover, it was apparently the clearing of land for agriculture and grazing that destroyed most woody vegetation, aided by the deliberate and accidental use of fire, to which there are numerous references in the literature. Even today, these destructive activities of man continue, for more woody vegetation is destroyed with every new field brought under cultivation and with every fire set by a herdsman to encourage the growth of succulent grasses for his domestic animals. Indeed, the destruction has gone so far that sizable forests occur on the plateau today only in southern Ethiopia, where the plow is a fairly recent introduction and where in many places a system of "plantation" agriculture is followed which does not require such extensive clearing as the field agriculture of the north. (Simoons 1960:210)

In the research site there had been natural forest covering a wide range of land which had never been cleared to the best of the knowledge of my Oromo informants. According to this information, forest lands such as *Dukkan*, *Horaa Bunaa*, *Bobbi*, *Gusto* and *Saabko* used to be protected³⁵ and some of them venerated. *Dukkan*, for

³⁵ The fact that the forest areas are expansive makes it practically impossible for individuals who want to clear the forest in order to grow certain crops. Such a wide areas of forest land needs collective decision and action to be successfully utilized.

instance, was not only venerated but also worshipped by the people every year, at ceremonials which involved sacrifices of sheep, bullocks and goats. This was a very thick forest which covered a wide range of mountainous land. People used to come to this place to make certain vows, *wareega*, if they had some personal problems such as ill-health, infertility³⁶, and when property was stolen. When expectations are met after making a vow, people make votive gift, *galchii*. *Dukkan* was taken as a body empowered to seek answers for some questions which transcend human understanding to find solutions. With the arrival of the Walloyes all the forest areas were destroyed and consequently, many of the mineral waters, *hora*³⁷, at which people both from Jidda and Amuru *woreda* used to water their livestock dried. According to the Oromo informants, this had a devastating effect on the reproduction of livestock.

Aaroo, Liibano and Caliya used to be the areas best known for their high production of honey until the last one and half decades. Aaroo and Liibano are adjacent *qabaleés* where people used to produce high quality honey. Although many areas of Jidda and Amuru *woreda* produce honey, that of the three areas mentioned above excels others in quality because the flowers from which honey is made in these places differ from those of other areas. In these areas the honey is made of *baddeessaa* (*Syzygium guineense*, *Croton macrostachys*, *Acacia amythethophylla*) (Woldemichael 1980:136) and *dabaqqa* (*Faurea rochetiana*) (Woldemichael 1980:139) flowers and the numerous

³⁶ Infertility of the spouse is attributed to the wife's failure to produce children. That is why wives in barren couples advise their husbands to marry another women.

³⁷ In Horro Guduru there used to be plenty of salty water which declined with deforestation of the area by the increasing population. Plowden writes "... nature has compensated for their distance from the sea, by certain earths, strongly impregnated with salt, and of a reddish colour, to the springs of which, at intervals of a few months, all the cattle are driven to drink" (Plowden, 1968:307).

springs of mineral water. In the market people used to ask saying "*Dammaa Aaroo ti? Dammaa Liibano ti?*" (Is it Aaroo's honey? Is it Liibano's honey?) The following couplet expresses how proud people are of being born at Aaroo: "*Aaroo kottin dhaladhe biyya cuunfa da'mmatti; Ballotin tukssi bare biyya dhuunfa jagnatti*" (literally, "I was born at Aaroo a country of blended honey, and I learned shooting at Baloo a sole country of heros"). Baloo is the place where men go hunting for big game, the killing of which would make one *qondaala*. However, the settlement of the Walloyes in the area irreparably destroyed the forest which used to be full of *baddeessaa* and *dabaqqaa*. The Oromo say that the Walloye always carry an axe and indiscriminately chop down whatever tree or shrub is in front of them.

Baddeessaa is a tree which is highly protected among the local Oromo not because of its religious importance but because of its economic contribution. It has a fruit which ripens between May and mid June. This is of especial importance during bad years when people have to rely on these fruits for some weeks. The other importance is the honey produced from its flower. People in these areas collect huge amounts of honey not only from beehives made and hung by themselves, but also from the holes of certain trees in the forest. The honey collected from the forest is called *holqa* (literally "hollow", contextually, however, it refers to the honey collected from the hollows in a tree, *holqa*). The act of gathering *holqa* is called *soroobina*. The Oromo from early childhood tell their children about trees which may be cut for various household use and those which may not be cut whatsoever the case. *Baddeessaa* and *meexxi* (*Phoenix reclinata*, *Hyphaene thebaica*) are some of these respected trees. Trees such as *baddeessaa*, *meexxi*, *wadeessa* (*Cordia abyssinica* or *Cordia africana*) and other big trees are not cut even if they may be in a farm field. *Wadeessa* may be cut if it is needed for carpentry, for making items such as boxes, doors, and other

household furniture. My Amhara informants have also accepted the Oromo critique of their reckless use of the natural resources. They say that this was the problem only during the first few years of their arrival. Some Walloye put the blame on the Oromo for the destruction of the forest and say that it is the Oromo who recklessly handle fire. They say "the Oromo set fire to the forest or grassland to expose wild animals for hunting". In Amharic they say "*isat bekis teyizo min yirebal*" (literally, "nothing good can be expected when fire [match] is kept in a pocket"). Although each blames the other, the fire is causing great danger not only to the forest and the grassland, but also to human life. In March 1994 three persons were burnt to death in Bote Badhadha Peasant Association, the neighbouring Qabalé to Aaroo Addis Alem, by a forest fire. This year, on the 3rd of March, two persons were killed by forest fires in the neighbouring *woreda*, Amuru.

According to my Oromo informants, the Walloye do not hesitate to cut trees and set fire to any field or forest. They say "since we thatch our roofs with the grasses which are protected from cattle and also from fire, we are now the victims of Walloye deeds". According to the Oromo, the Walloye thatch their houses with straw and do not care for the reserved grass land and the forest. Unlike what has been reported by the Oromo, many Walloye houses are thatched with grasses, although there are some which are covered with straw.

The introduction of official religion has to a great extent led to the destruction of forests, since no tree or plant is sacred in official religion. Simoons argues that both in the north and southern parts of Ethiopia, there were forest reserves where people either worshipped or venerated trees or plants (Simoons 1960:211-2). It is true that totemic societies have more forest reserves than societies in which the influence of

official religion is strong. Thus the spread of official religion led to the declining size of forest reserves.

.. the spread of official theological religion and its eurocentric feeling with the contempt it has for totemism [as the "worship of animals and plants"] led to the decadence of totemism and the declining respect people have for animals and plants. This, eventually, led to the dwindling size of animal and plant resources. (Assefa nd.:12)

In the southern and western regions also the introduction of Protestant and Catholic Christianity by missionaries led to the destruction of forest reserves. These forest reserves (which either follow the courses of rivers or surrounds the mountain) were places where people used to worship and their destruction by the missionaries was taken as evidence to refute the already accepted power of the forest or any other body except the supernatural power of the almighty God. Adopting the preaching of the missionaries that the forest does not have any power, the local people cleared the forests to plant maize and to cultivate for other crops in subsequent years, making it very difficult for the land to become forested again. Population pressure, mainly as a result of spontaneous migration or state sponsored resettlement, aggravated the problem resulting in irreparable damage. Roughly for two decades (since 1972) the sending regions were Wollo and Tigray. However, the fall of the *Derg* and the coming to power of the EPRDF brought in its path mass migration from Gojjam, especially from Qolla Daga Damot *awraja* from *woredas* called Jiga Quarit, Feresbet and Damot (See MAP V, Sketch Map of migration routes). One of my Gojjame informants at Aaroo Addis Alem reported that the two *woredas* from which people migrate to Wälläga are very mountainous and had been under cultivation for years and this made it unrewarding for people to continue working there. According to them this area may

be known in Gojjam for its resistance against the state (both under the Imperial regime and the *Derg* government). It is also known for the high murder incidence at least in the area. The leading factor in this situation is land disputes. The Gojjames started working in Horro Guduru as share-croppers with the Oromo and in the meantime tried to win the sympathy of the *qabalé* leadership to obtain land from the escarpments. As soon as one or two persons are granted land, they bring their relatives as the members of the household for one agricultural cycle, who in turn make their own home. Those who could afford to buy oxen and somehow managed to find small plot of land on lease from the Oromo (who have arable land but do not have oxen to work themselves) gradually take permanent settlement.

5.3. Summary

Land and livestock constitute the major sources of wealth among the Oromo of the study area. There are poems praising both. In the eyes of the Oromo, Walloye settlement led to the decline of the animal population and consequent impoverishment. The Oromo feel that the settlers are parasites, the former the hosts. Litigation over land, especially after the devillagization is a common phenomenon in Aaroo Addis Alem. The *ex-balabät* had over twenty charges filed against the Walloye, whose settlement he had previously facilitated. The Oromo say that the *ex-balabät* is paying dearly for his deeds. Land leasing is becoming a common practice among this society. Traditionally, the Oromo did not have such a practice, but only share-cropping. Failure to honour the spirit of the lease conditions usually leads to dispute. The disputes are resolved either by the intervention of the *shimagileljarsa*, or by *qabalé shengo*.

Natural resources are being depleted, for two major reasons, namely, population pressure and inappropriate resource management. The Oromo accuse the Amhara for the destruction of natural resources, a charge the latter deny.

CHAPTER SIX

INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL POLITICS ON LOCAL AFFAIRS

6.1. Neighbourhood Relationships

Changes in the system of government had significantly influenced the relationship among various ethnic groups in this country. Not going too far back in the history of political power in this country, the last twenty years have tremendously influenced and remarkably changed the pattern of relationships among the various ethnic groups, especially in terms of access to political power. The 1974 Revolution and the consequent steps taken by the military government completely changed the age-old image people had towards the Emperor and his kingdom. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church helped to maintain the status quo, namely the Imperial Government of Emperor Haile Selassie, and also used the school system to disseminate its ideology. Indeed, "throughout Ethiopian history the church was close to the seat of political authority by anointing kings and dispensing blessings on the royal family: many kings succeeded or failed because of the relationship they had with the Church" (Shenk 1972:328). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church used to preach that the Emperor was the elect of God (*seyuma egtäbbär*) and descended from the Solomonid Dynasty. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church used to be the chief legitimator of the Crown. The *Kebrä Nagast* (The Glory of Kings), though the product of many hands, was completed early in the fourteenth century by six Tigrean scribes. It documented for the first time the mythical origins of the monarchs, "its chief purpose was to add legitimacy to the line of kings [namely, Solomonid Dynasty] which gained ascendance with Yikunno Amlak in 1270" (Levine 1974:95). "The *Kebrä Nagast* established the principle that no one except the

male progeny of a direct descendant of the House of David could claim the title King of Kings" (Keller 1988:48). Levine quotes the *Kebra Nagast*: "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God" (Levine [1965] 1972:155).

The church and the school systems had exerted maximum efforts to diffuse the working ideology reflected in *Kebra Nagast*. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church also received a share of taxation from the land under the name *samon*. "Ethiopian legend holds that the Church is due at least one-third of all land in the empire, but this rule has never been followed consistently" (Perham in Keller 1988:55). Both institutions used to reinforce each other, that is the State through coercive mechanism and the Church through religious indoctrination. "As with the nobility and the soldiery, Menelik and Haile Selassie saw the clergy as having a crucial role in the consolidation of the bureaucratic empire through proselytizing Ethiopian Christianity among conquered peoples" (Keller 1988:55). Gilkes writes that the Emperor granted land to the Church and founded many new churches. He added "The Church in return supported secular policies and the political status quo" (Gilkes 1975:57). Since "the Church acquired very substantial amounts from early times" (ibid:54) it was her main duty to proselytize Ethiopian Christianity among peoples in the newly conquered regions.

The 1974 Revolution gave a lasting blow to the long and strong relationship established between the State and the Church. The fall of the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie I (September 12, 1974) and the consequent nationalization³⁸ of rural land on March 4, 1975 denied the *balabäts* the power they used to exercise in extracting the produce of the tenants and small farmers. The *balabäts* who invited the new settlers

³⁸ With the nationalization of rural land, access to land was to be based on settlement and use, rather than based on relationship to people.

to settle in the area under the control of each *balabät* also lost control over the land within the sphere of their rule. This emancipated not only the indigenous tenants but also the newly settled Walloyes. The power at the local level was automatically taken over by the leadership of the peasant association, crippling the *balabäts* and their allies. At Aaroo Addis Alem and Aaroo Bagin it also meant the transfer of power from Oromo to Amhara. The leadership of the peasant associations was elected on the basis of one man one vote principle of eligible voters. This favoured the Walloye since there were only a few Oromo eligible voters, because the *balabäts* and their allies were denied the right to elect or be elected. In the two neighbouring peasant associations the newly settled Walloye are the majority and all important positions in the *qabalé* executive committee were occupied by the settlers. The dominance of the settlers in the *qabalé* leadership lasted for the whole period of the military regime.³⁹ The Oromo felt that they were regarded as strangers at home. This was particularly true under the chairmanship of a certain Gebeyehu between 1985-89. The Oromo recall bitter experiences they had suffered during his chairmanship. In fact there were many Walloye settlers who also suffered during his chairmanship. I attended a couple of *qabalé* meetings in which the case between the then chairman and two Muslim (brothers) Walloyes was discussed. The two persons alleged that they were mistreated by him while he was the chairman of the *qabalé*. The problem between the disputants was not disclosed at the meeting, but both Walloye and Oromo informants report that the chairman did not do anything special against the two brothers, the matter is that both parties enjoy litigation.

³⁹ See chapter on inter-ethnic relationship on the number of Walloye and Oromo *qabalé* chairmen during the Derg regime.

Regarding conscription into the militia the share of the Oromo was only a third while the remaining proportion was to be recruited from the settlers. This was based on the general understanding that the Walloye constitute two-thirds of the total population in the *qabalé*. Theoretically, one may assume that the Oromo might have taken this as a blessing in disguise, but the response of two Oromo informants was the opposite. They say "we would have been glad to give as many militiamen as the government may require than enjoying less quota and losing our land. It is normal for someone to die for his father's land, there is no exception for us".

Villagization programmes of the *Derg* government had also led to serious conflict of interest between the Oromo and the Walloye. This was an opportune moment for the settlers to climb the escarpment towards the highland where the Oromo villages were concentrated. In Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* all households were made to establish their new villages at a place called *Allano*. The place on which the present small town of Aaroo is located was called *Allano* (See Map III). This is a place where the village of the ex-balabât was located and was considered to be the best place for settlement compared to the lowland which is unfavourable for cattle breeding due to trypanosomiasis and shortage of water.

The villagization policy entitled the lowlanders to move to the highland which was selected as a villagization site by the *qabalé* executive committee, predominantly composed of the Walloye. The Oromo were forced to leave their old villages and farmsteads and had to retreat to the highland. The Oromo did not want to leave their traditional holdings, but were forced to do so by the local officials and the villagization officers coming from the *woreda*. This being the case, there were some Oromo officials who voluntarily abandoned their old villages although they were allowed to stay there. One of my Oromo informants, the then chief of the *qabalé* militia, had the

chance to stay in his old village. However, he willingly left the old village and moved to the new one because, he says, "I did not want to have Walloye neighbours alone". Alemayehu Beqele, the brother of the *ex-balabät*, sold the plot of land he obtained for house construction at Aaroo Addis Alem because he did not want to have only Walloye neighbours. He said "I have never been on good terms with them. Therefore, how can I manage to live being surrounded by them (Walloye)." He recalls the time (1972) when he chopped down the houses of the Walloyes after they had obtained the land from his elder brother *Bälambaräs* Mulugeta Baqala, the *ex-balabät*, while the former was working as a civil servant in Begi *woreda*, Assossa region of Wälläga. From that time on he felt that the Walloye regard him with high feelings of animosity. It is this fact which led to the establishment of ethnically homogeneous villages in the *qabalé*. Indeed, before the establishment of the villages there were two distinct patterns of settlements, namely the Oromo occupying the "highlands" whereas the Walloye occupied the "lowland".⁴⁰ Even after the establishment of the new villages in the highlands, the distinction between Oromo and settlers village can be easily made although there is no highland and lowland distinction as before. One of my Walloye informants, who used to be the chairman of the *qabalé* during the villagization period reported "I was the only one who put my house in the middle of the Oromo village". Here it should be noted that the distinction between the "highland" and the "lowland" is only relative since there is only between 200 and 300 meters difference in altitude. The community also makes distinction using *baddaa* (Oromo) or *daga* (Amharic) for

⁴⁰ There were a few Oromo households which oscillated between the highland and the lowland, especially the ones who, because of lack of oxen, could not cultivate their plots in the highlands. These households descended to the lowlands which were conducive for swidden cultivation.

the highland and *gammajji* (Oromo) or *qolla* (Amharic) for the lowland. Interaction at the neighbourhood level is confined to one's ethnic group since physical distance was already maintained to preserve the social distance between Oromo and Walloye (See Map IV).

After the official announcement of the policy of the mixed economy in March 1990 by the *Derg* regime and the fall of the latter in May 1991 the newly established villages were weakened and many households abandoned their new villages and left for their old villages where they had already maintained their farm. Although the policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) vests the right for a person to reclaim former holdings provided the new villagers leave for their old village, many of the Walloye who moved down-slope to their old village refused to handover their holdings in the highland. As has already been discussed elsewhere in this text this is one of the most contentious issues in the *qabalé*.

The coming to power of the TGE instead of easing the conflict between the two ethnic groups has created a high degree of distrust and hostility. The main reason why this happened was the regionalization policy of the TGE. This policy has threatened the existence of the Amhara in the area since they feel they are strangers to the area, because they are not allowed to use their mother tongue (Amharic) for official interactions. The majority of the Oromo on the other hand feel the TGE should have made the Amhara leave the area since they consider that the land belongs to the Oromo not to the former. The Oromo are happy to a certain extent but not pleased with the way the TGE handles this delicate situation. All my Oromo informants are of the opinion that the Amhara should not have been given the chance to stay there. It is this inherent hostility and distrust which led the Amhara to suspect the Oromo of supporting the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Most of my Walloye informants reported that the

Oromo support Oromo political organizations although they were also not certain regarding what evidence they have. This distrust and often hostility is expressed whenever there is a dispute between two persons, an Oromo and an Amhara, which very often involves all people present both in support of the person belonging to one's ethnic group.

A case in point is the dispute between priest Alemu Yilma and *debtera*⁴¹ Mengistie Nigate, although one can also observe the fact in the every day life of the people. Even if relations between groups, within an ethnic group, are strained, whenever there is a conflict between Walloye and Oromo, the former unite against the latter. It seems that because the Walloye are regarded as one by the Oromo they strongly unite whenever the threat comes from outside. In the total area of the land space of the *woreda* Amhara ethnic groups are numerically insignificant compared to the Oromo. Their numerical minority has helped them to organize themselves since as a clan or a lineage each household has very few people with whom it claims consanguinal ties. Relationships among themselves are, therefore, based on affinal ties and a conscious and purposeful act of each party concerned. In fact many Oromo feel that the Amhara (Walloye and Gojjame) have clandestinely organized themselves to belong to certain national level Amhara political organizations. The Oromo, on other hand, have a wide range of networks, consanguinal and affinal ties, which imply moral sanctions for everyone involved to respond on time to claims made by one's own kinsman. Since kinship and residential segments coincide in this society, to adopt Boissevain's formulation, "there are many links through which opinions can be made known and pressure applied, there will also be more pressure for conformity"

⁴¹ *Debtera* is unordained but highly qualified clergyman.

(1974:84). These sanctions are strong among the Oromo of the study area in which persons are embedded in corporate kinship units such as lineage, clans, and affinal groups. In fact affinal ties are equally strong, at times stronger than, the lineage and descent ties. Especially, in times of social risks, affinal ties are more responsive than weak consanguinal ties. There is an Oromo proverb clearly reflecting this situation. It goes "*soddaf sarre wajjin kufu*" (literally, "in-laws and pants with one falls"). The spirit of this proverb is that in trouble the in-laws are the first ones to go to. It is this confidence in social networks which the Oromo regard as a social security.

6.2. Religion

Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity was introduced to the southern parts of the present day Ethiopia with the conquering forces of Imperial Ethiopia by Menelik II towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Because of the long-standing relationship between the Oromo of Horro Guduru and the Amhara (from Gojjam) there could have been a great influence on the Oromo to adopt Orthodox Christianity some decades before Menelik II's conquest. Oljira asserts:

...the Oromo of Horro Guduru who crossed the Abbay and settled in southern Gojjam were converted to Christianity almost immediately. Nevertheless, how far Christianity had influenced the Oromo south of the Abbay before the conquest could not be established clearly. Although it is difficult to explain the pattern of its expansion, according to d'Abbadie, in the 1840s a good number of Christians existed in Guduru along with the Muslims. (Oljira 1994:82-3)

Although there might have been the influence of Orthodox Christianity among the Horro Guduru Oromo before the conquest, the spread of Orthodox Christianity, one could safely argue, occurred with or after the conquest. There were Muslims before the conquest who had established themselves among the Oromo, especially very closely related to the chiefs. They were called *qalaxe*, the name by which all Muslims were designated among the Oromo of Horro Guduru until very recently. Other branches of Christianity had been strongly resisted by the conquering forces, although the conquered people were in favour of Protestant and Catholic churches, which were later on widely accepted by the local people at the expense of Orthodox Christianity. Dessalegn asserts 'the latter was the official church of the old Regime and is associated with northern domination in the many minds of the peasants here'⁴² (Dessalegn 1992:65).

In my research area the population is predominantly Christian, that is Orthodox and Protestant. The majority are Orthodox, especially among the Amhara settlers. All Muslims in this *qabalé* are Amhara. There are no Oromo Muslims in this *qabalé* although there are many Muslim Oromo in other parts of the *woreda*, mainly in the towns. The Muslims have small huts in the neighbourhood which are used as Mosques. There is no big Mosque most likely because of their small size, which does not exceed ten to fifteen households, including both Walloyes and Gojjames. The Protestants also do not have a separate Church in this *qabalé*, but have one in a neighbouring *qabalé*, Dhaka Abbasa. The Protestants were allotted a plot of land on the periphery of St. Giorgis Church for a grave yard, whereas the Muslims have a separate place for this purpose.

⁴² Dessalegn is referring to Boloso *woreda*, Wollaita *awrajjā*, southern Ethiopia.

In this *qubalé* one finds one of the three oldest Orthodox Churches in the *worreda*. These three churches St. Giorgis, Iyesus and St. Mariam were said to have been founded during the last decade of the last century by the order of King Tekle Haimanot of Gojjam. St. Giorgis Church, according to local informants, was founded in 1892/3 (See Appendix, Photo). This was the only church found in the area of Aaroo before the arrival of the Walloye in 1972. Currently, there are four (St. Mariam, St. Michael, St. Miazia Giorgis, and Medihane Alem) additional churches established by the Amhara settlers in the area of Aaroo, for the two peasant associations (See Map II).

Priest Alema, the present chairman of the council of St. Giorgis Church, is the son of Priest Yilma Engida who had served the church since 1924 (roughly twelve years before the Italian invasion) and was advised to leave for his "country", Gojjam, by *Fitawräri* Beqele Hirpha, the then *balabät* of Aaroo, lest the Oromo kill the priest since he collected tribute in the name of the church and also from those cultivating *samon* land, the land granted the church by the Emperor. After the restoration of the Emperor in 1941 Priest Yilma Engida came back and resumed serving the church at the invitation of the *balabät*. After the death of Priest Yilma in 1978, the son of the deceased priest, priest Alema took over the duty of serving St. Giorgis Church.

The arrival of the Walloye settlers in the area had proportionally increased the number of clergymen and that of the laity at St. Giorgis Church. According to the Oromo and the Priest a conflict of interest arose between the Walloye settlers and the indigenous Oromo over the control of the Church. The indigenous people complained that the Walloye settlers started instigating conflict immediately after their arrival. The tension between the two has been escalating from time to time and had reached a point where the Oromo called for the assistance of other Oromo living in the neighbouring peasant associations lest the Walloye fully control the church. In January 1992 the Ark

of the Covenant of St. Mariam was stolen from the church of St. Giorgis where it was co-habiting.⁴¹ My Oromo informants reported that it was the Walloyes' deacons and *debertera* who have stolen the Ark of St. Mariam. This conflict manifested itself when the chief priest and a *debertera* quarrelled over certain personal interests relating to benefits drawn from church services, and this involved both the Oromo and the Walloye each siding with their respective member. The chief priest, although an Amhara from Gojjam by birth, is taken as an Oromo both by the Walloyes and the Oromo. There are two possible reasons why this priest was treated as an Oromo. The first is that he was born in the area and is a second generation migrant. He speaks the language and his sons and daughters are married to Oromo women and men. The other possible reason is that many Oromo elders designate him as an Oromo because they say "he belongs to the Jawwi clan of Oromo who live on the northern side of the Blue Nile".

Many Oromo are of the opinion that the Walloye should not create chaos in the Church since it was, they say "our fathers who founded it and was also we who constructed the present church by carrying corrugated iron sheets from Naqamte on our shoulders". They also say that the Walloye have churches which they have established themselves and should go to their churches for whatever religious exercises if they cannot keep quiet. While I was in the field there were repeated but unsuccessful attempts to resolve the conflict between the Oromo and the Walloye which were manifested in the form of conflict between the two persons serving St. Giorgis Church (See Appendix, Photo). Although it was decided that the matter should be discussed

⁴¹ It is quite common for different Arks of the Covenant to co-habit with the Ark of the Covenant after which the church is named.

in the presence of a certain *gabaz*⁴⁴ (church administrator), this was not done since the one who was to mediate the matter had left for Gojjam to visit his relatives. There is no doubt that the conflict, theoretically, is between Oromo and Walloye Orthodox Christians. But the issue is the concern of all Oromo and Walloye irrespective of religious differences. I have clearly observed a couple of *qabalé* meetings where Muslim Amhara and Protestant Christian Oromo were actively involved in the discussion although it might be considered a matter to be resolved by Orthodox Christians alone. It has already taken the guise of ethnic conflict. It is this latent conflict which becomes a violent one when certain factors induce such a conflict. Religious institutions are very strong in all societies. Controlling such institutions would mean to have an influential role since one's interest and ideologies dictate or dominate major decision making processes in a community.

Informants from the Oromo community reported that the arrival of the Walloye influenced their association with the church. According to a certain Tujuba, only four persons used to observe the fasting and dietary laws of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church before the settlement of the Walloye. Today, however, there are many who fast on the major and minor fasting weeks, and also the Wednesday and Friday fasts. Not only men but also some women also observe them strictly. Once I was invited to an Oromo house by the owner of the house and was served a delicious cultural food in which the skimmed milk and boiled butter was the stew. Although I knew the husband was fasting, I never suspected the wife was fasting. Contrary to my expectation, the wife who was in her eighth month's pregnancy brought the food for me and took a seat on the other corner of the house since she was fasting. Even though I insisted that it may

⁴⁴ This *gabaz* was appointed by the woreda Ethiopian Orthodox Churches chief administrator to act on his behalf in matters concerning dispute settlements and related issues in the Churches of KIRAMU area.

be a difficult thing for pregnant women to strictly observe the fasting laws she said "I will try until the day of delivery".

Although they are Christians, affiliated with the Orthodox Church, which rejects all traditional beliefs which contradict with Christian beliefs, most of the Oromo adhere to traditional belief systems. For instance, they offer libations to the ancestors, *ekera dhibataw*, twice a year, namely on the first Monday after Easter and the following Monday or Wednesday or Friday after the *masqala*⁴⁵. They put certain food and drinks under the pillar of the house since it is believed that the dead ancestors visit their survivors on these days. Certain Orthodox Christian religious exercises are coloured by Oromo traditional religious practices, which, according to Christian faith, are a violation of Christian rule. "The Matcha have enriched this Christian festival, *Masqal*, with many rites of their own, most of which have the characteristics of a new-year festival" (Bartels, 1983:258). This is what social anthropologists call syncretism. Braukämper has observed similar case among the Arssi regarding Islam and traditional Oromo religion. He comments:

However extensively Islam changed the original patterns of Arssi culture, local features and peculiarities persisted. The tradition of building graves with decorated stones not only survived, but in certain areas was even supplemented by the introduction of anthropomorphic reliefs and sculptures, although these are contrary to the rules of Islamic orthodoxy. Several times I have observed first-

⁴⁵ There is not enough information whether or not the *masqala* the Oromo celebrate currently is the carry over of the traditional Oromo festivity celebrating the end of the rainy season and the welcoming of the new year and dry season. Until the last two decades the *masqala* of the Oromo used to be celebrated earlier in September (Bartels 1983:258) unlike the Christian *masqal*, the discovery of the true Cross by the legendary empress Helena, (Levine [1965] 1972:62) of the Christian highlanders. Currently, however, both the Oromo and the Amhara celebrate *masqala* and *masqal* on the 27th of September of each year.

or second-generation Muslims laying grass or butter on the trunk of a sacred tree from the pre-Islamic past and evoking the name of *wāqa*, the sky-god of the Cushitic folk religion, instead of Allāh. (Braukämper 1988:773)

Another area where the Oromo adhere to and practice traditional beliefs is in keeping milk cows whose milk is not churned to make butter. These cows are called *wurqjo*. The milk of such cows is consumed only by family members, either in the form of milk or yogurt. It is never offered to non-family members under any circumstances. Indeed, it is not even served to someone who is the member of the family, but not born to the marriage. Not only this, the milk and milk products of all milk cows are not served to outsiders if they were obtained on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Likewise, the milk of these days is not churned.

Another significant new practice that the Oromo adopted after the settlement of the Walloye was the way they serve the co-members in a *māhbar* as a host. *Māhbar* is a religious fraternal association consisting of people of the same sex from the same general area. The members meet once in a month on the day devoted to the saint after whom the association is named, like for instance, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, St. George (all for men), St. Mary and Covenant of Mercy (for women). The members take turns in providing food and drinks at their homes. Unlike what used to be the case in the past, they now take all what has been prepared to the Church yard⁴⁶ and the members are served with food and drinks there. This has substantially lessened their expenses which used to require large amounts of food and drinks for one occasion. The reduction of the cost of serving a certain *māhbar*, gave the chance for the Oromo to secure membership in different *māhbars*. Consequently, a certain person whether an

⁴⁶ There are few old *māhbars* which follow the old custom of serving at home.

Oromo or an Amhara has multiple membership in *mähbars* organized in the names of different saints. Multiple membership is needed because people want to have different saints as their guardians and guarantors in front of God. This tradition was introduced to the area by the Walloye settlers. In the earlier days it was only the *sanbate* (Sabbath association) which was served at the church yard every month on Sundays.

On March 12, 1995 I was invited to a *Sanbate*, composed of thirteen Oromo, which was served by a certain Bayana in the compound of St. Giorgis Church. We were served bread, called *sanbate*, *jella* and food. There was one priest and one *marigeta*. They were not regular members of the *sanbate* but were present to give religious blessings. They move among different *sanbates* for same reasons. At the end, all present bless the host, to be followed by the *marigeta* and the blessing culminates with that of the priest. In the whole process I was impressed by the comments of the *marigeta* and responses of the members of the *sanbate*. The *marigeta* appreciated all the religious devotions of the Oromo of the area, which he reported were far better than what he had thought it would be when he was in Gojjam. He said:

We have not imagined that there were strong Christians in this area. Now we have learned we were wrong. Nevertheless, we disapprove of your tradition of christening a child after s/he is grown up. The Holy Bible prescribes forty days for male and eighty days for female. You do not follow this rule, this is not expected of Christians like you. You say 'the child to be baptized should be able to walk to the church him/herself'. This is wrong.

A certain Tujuba, who was sitting next to me, murmured about the complaint of the *marigeta* saying "Why doesn't he bless and sit down. I do not think he is here to complain, he should have kept it for some other time." This old man is strict in observing Orthodox Church rules. However, he said "our children, even if we baptize

them following the rule, they may become *missioni* (mission) later on." The Protestant missions are attracting many young members of the community and also the women population.

6.3. Language

6.3.1. Language and Social Identity

The importance of language as a medium of expression and as the bearer of the culture of the community speaking the language is well known. "Language is not merely one of several aspects of culture: it is, at the very least, *prima inter pares*, in that it makes possible the development, elaboration, the transmission, and (particularly in its written form) the accumulation of culture as a whole" (Bright 1968:20). In the language is embodied the social, legal, religious, political or economic life of the community which speaks the language. Sapir's observation clearly expresses the function of language as a medium of expression.

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. (Sapir, [1910-1944] 1949:162)

Language serves the purpose of expressing the objective world and social activities. The "real world" is built upon the language habits of the people who speak the language. Language as an expression of social identity for the user is clearly expressed as follows:

Language use creates a social identity for the user... The process is a reflexive one. Language as speaking practice creates and identifies social group membership. Through

shared communicative conventions, individuals treat each other as part of their own social group. It is this that enables them to acquire knowledge and experience which reinforce the social group and sharedness. (Gumperz [1982] 1990:239)

6.3.2. Language and Politics

In a country where we have societies which speak different languages, but only one of these languages is spoken by the politically and economically dominant group, the language of the dominant social group develops at the expense of other languages spoken by the politically weak groups. Through the expansion of political influence and/or through the market (in which the economically powerful group dominates) the group which dictates its interests upon others imposes its language and through this its culture, since language is considered to be the bearer of the cultural value of the people who speak the language. "In effect language is one of the elements constituting a culture yet at the same time it embodies the entire culture... all that threatens the language threatens the culture as a whole" (Tubiana 1983:27).

In Ethiopia the Amharic language was imposed on the southern peoples by the conquering force of Menelik II towards the turn of the last century. The spread of the language was carried out through various institutions such as education, religion (Orthodox Christianity) and through local government. In addition, the Amharic language had also a literary culture which gave it a superior position to other non-literary languages.

In the nineteenth and twentieth century speakers of Amharic spread themselves through Ethiopia largely as a result of military conquest but it was the availability of road systems and towns on those systems that enabled

them to spread their language and consolidate its position in the newly acquired domains. (Wardhaugh 1987:6)

The new rulers instilled in the minds of the conquered people the notion that languages which do not have literary culture are inferior and belong to savage societies. For official uses it was compulsory for one to use the Amharic language. Moreover, non-Amharic languages (probably, with the exception of Tigregna and Tigre) were treated as the language of uncivilized culture. One of my Oromo informants recalls what had been once told to him by the Amhara rulers. *Afaan Oromoo baaretaa fincanii, afaan Amaraa birilee daadhi* (literally, "Oromo language is the pot for urine, whereas Amharic language is the flask to drink *tej* with"). It was the question "did the Amhara learn Oromo language and you theirs?" which evoked the above recitation. It was simply an expression of how much the Oromo language is considered inferior to Amharic (the contempt the Amhara had for Oromo language) and how much the Oromo like to learn Amharic. This is analogous with what has happened once in Spain as Wardhaugh notes: "In Spain Franco once dismissed Catalan [the Romance language of Catalonia] as the 'tongue of dogs' and excluded it, along with basque, from public life" (Wardhaugh 1987:4). Despite the fact that Amharic was favoured by the political power, it faced serious resistance among the conquered people. Wardhaugh writes "the spread of Amharic has met with resistance in Ethiopia among the minority Muslim population, who regard it as an agency of Coptic Christianity" (Ibid:10).

6.3.3. Language use in Aaroo Addis Alem

In Aaroo Addis Alem market, drinking houses, *qabalé* meetings and the streets one observes Amharic being spoken whenever an Oromo and an Amhara meet. I know

only two⁴⁷ young Amhara (in their thirties) who speak Oromo without difficulty and with no fear of unfavourable comment whenever they meet an Oromo (it does not matter whether or not she/he speaks Amharic). The reason given for these two young men learning to speak Oromo is that one of them had lived with Oromo neighbours for many years in *Dhaka Abbasa qabalé* where the majority of the population is Oromo. The other one said "I had Oromo friends in the school who initiated me to learn Oromo language. Since there were no Amhara students who speak Amharic alone, I had no other alternative to learning to speak the Oromo language for the simple purpose of communication". Indeed, in other *qabalés* where we have few Walloye households, many Walloyes have managed to speak Oromo, presumably because they have Oromo neighbours.

Despite the fact that the Amhara and Oromo had lived together for over twenty years interacting very closely, the Amhara did not manage to speak the Oromo language. It is difficult for the adult people to learn to speak a language, what is called language socialization (Gumperz [1982] 1990:244), different from their own mother tongue, unless it is indispensable in their working or living environment. Although there are only small variations in rates of children's mastery of language, given normal hearing and a normal brain, "so gifted in language learning are they that many children become skilled in more than one language in their early ages" (Ervin-Tripp 1968:9). My Walloye informant, Ato Nigate, reported that during their stay in the villages established in accordance with the villagization programme, children of both groups started learning the language of each other because they herded livestock together. This,

⁴⁷ One of these two young men told me that there were three more Walloyes who could speak Oromo, although they were not as fluent as the ones whom I met. But because they live in the lowlands I did have the chance to meet them.

however, did not last since the Walloye descended to the lowland. Another 23 year old young man, currently the secretary of the *qabalé shengo*, complained that he could not speak Oromo despite the fact that he had been working as a REYA Executive Committee member of the *qabalé*, very closely associated with Oromo youth. Although the most probable reason why he failed to learn to speak Oromo is that the Oromo young people with whom he worked speak Amharic, he says "I do not know why". The older ones say "I am too old for that".

Most Oromo, especially men, even the old ones who have never been to school where they could have learned Amharic, speak broken Amharic and express themselves without the use of an interpreter. This is not to mean that there are no Oromo who do not speak Amharic, since women and most of the old people do not. Almost all young men and those who have had the chance to work as *qabalé* committee members have no difficulty speaking Amharic.

At the *qabalé* meetings and at some dispute settlement occasions (where persons of different language groups are involved), except for the ones who are confident enough in their ability to speak in a language other than their own mother tongue, interpreters are used. When the *qabalé* general assembly is held (while I was in the field) the chairman of the *qabalé* (an Oromo) used Amharic and had an interpreter for those who did not comprehend Amharic. When an Amhara wants to say something he requests someone (an Oromo) to translate his speech into Oromo. An Oromo also asks another Oromo who speaks Amharic well to interpret for the Amhara attendants. Both Amhara and Oromo use Oromo interpreters. At the *qabalé* level all communications taking place in written form are in Amharic. The chairman of the *qabalé* reported that they do not know the Latin alphabet, which is adopted for the Oromo language, to use Oromo for written communication.

6.4. Summary

National level politics affects, directly or indirectly, local level relationships. The coming to power of the *Derg* abolished distinctions between the ordinary citizens and the *balabale*, *chipsa shums* and landlords. The land which they had relied on as a source of wealth and status was declared to be public property in 1975. The Emperor, who was said to be the elect of God was deposed and local administration transferred to *qabale* administration (PAs in the rural areas and Urban dwellers Association in the urban areas). Tenancy was abolished and land was given to the tiller. PAs were established to run local level administration and later on empowered to collect tax, recruit *qabale* squads and national militia, establish new villages and organize cooperatives.

Public ownership of the land meant two things for the Oromo, on the one hand they were emancipated from tenancy, and on the other hand the land in the lowlands, to which they used to descend whenever the need arose, was transferred into the hands of the settlers. They were, then, faced with a dilemma. The settlers, however, were pleased by the declaration. Villagization programmes which allowed the settlers to climb to the highlands was also another serious problem about which the Oromo complained. Most of the dispute cases at the *qabale* related to this problem.

The coming to power of the TGE made the relationships between the settlers and the Oromo more tense, mainly because ethnicity was taken as a basis for the formation of Regions. In Oromia the official medium of expression is Oromo, in Aaro Addis Alem, however, both Amharic and Oromo are used to accommodate the interest of both groups.

Religious differences are less magnificent, but the struggle for power over the administration of the Church is evident.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1. Population Pressure and Land Degradation

Cataclysmic situations are the result of an interplay of a host of factors, among which population growth and land degradation are often the leading causes. Land degradation is in itself related to population pressure and irresponsible use of environmental resources. Blaikie and Brookfield in Krokfors (1989:199) classify environmental resources into two main categories, namely stock and flow resources. According to this classification,

Land is a flow resource continuously produced by abiotic and biotic processes. The value of land is best expressed through its capability, "the intrinsic qualities to satisfy a particular use" (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987). (Krokfors, 1989:199)

What makes land a flow resource is its capacity to renew itself if a normal and healthy relationship is maintained between animal population, especially human, and itself. Such a healthy relationship does not obstruct the natural processes because their base of production remains intact (Ibid:199). Krokfors adds "as long as these qualities are reproduced at the same pace as they are used there is no land degradation" (Ibid:199). However, due to specific socio-economic reasons land is overused and "the natural processes are not able to reproduce, for instance, valuable plant nutrients at the same pace as they are extracted" (Ibid:199). In this case land has changed from a flow resource to a stock resource, "the intrinsic qualities of which are soon extracted and what is left is degraded land" (Krokfors 1989:199). It is, therefore, imperative to

launch campaigns against reckless use of environmental resources and also to pursue the promotion of strategies of population control.

7.2. The Discovery of the New World

The name of the *qabalé* is called Aaroo Addis Alem because the Walloye believed that they discovered the New World. The name of the *qabalé* was the result of the compromise between the indigenous Oromo and the settler Walloye in that the former retained Aaroo and the latter introduced *Addis Alem* (literally "New World"). If Aaroo was to be accepted as the name of the *qabalé*, the settlers felt that they did not influence the decision since they were demographically the majority, and if *Addis Alem* alone was to be adopted the Oromo would have felt they had been alienated. Consequently, Aaroo Addis Alem was accepted by concession.

7.3. Natural Resource Conservation

It is very difficult to establish which group is destroying the forest. Whoever is responsible for the clearing, the forest, bushes and shrubs are decreasing day by day. For sure the Oromo attach economic value to certain trees (e.g., *baddeessa*, *dabaqqaa* for honey production), which may deter them from cutting trees indiscriminately. The Walloye admitted that they destroyed huge forest reserves, but they suggest it was mainly during their first few years of arrival in the area. Kloos and Aynalem (1988:167) stressed the need for long-term planning and implementation since "increasing environmental damage due to the same exploitative production methods settlers used in their home areas" threatens healthy human and natural resource

relationships. The observation of Kloos and Aynalem supports the Oromo accusation of the Walloye. Currently, however, many Walloyes plant eucalyptus tree, banana (*Musa sapientum*) and *gesho* (*Rhamnus prinoides*) in their homesteads.

7.4. Double Image of the Late-Awrāḥā Administrator

The late-awrāḥā administrator, Emiru Ibsa, presented different images among the communities of the study area. He is not praised by either, but for different reasons. The Oromo say it was Emiru Ibsa who let the Walloye became deep-rooted on their land. For the Oromo had it not been for him, the Walloye would have left for other areas. The Walloye, however, thank Getachew Haile (the then *woreda* administrator of Jidda Kiramu) who convinced the late-awrāḥā administrator to favour the Walloye. The Walloye say 'had he [the late-awrāḥā administrator] stayed in power, we would have left this place a long ago. We were saved because of his detention and eventual execution by the Derg.'

7.5. Inter-ethnic Marriage and Integration

So far inter-ethnic marriage seems to have been infrequent, mainly because the Oromo did not want such relationships. Giving one's daughter to a Walloye man in marriage was taken as desertion by the Oromo. The majority of my Walloye informants, however, mention high bride wealth as a deterrent factor for the Walloye to marry Oromo women. To me, the situation is less a question of prohibitive bride wealth, since most of the Walloyes are economically better off than the Oromo who pay the required bride wealth to marry an Oromo woman. I do not think this is the result

of a single factor, but of at least three related issues. The first possible reason is that the Oromo are disinterested in establishing affinal ties with the Walloye. For adult Oromo giving one's daughter to a Walloye man is likened to leaving her in wilderness, since for them the Walloye are wanderers. The second reason is that the Oromo women, as has been reported by some of my Walloye informants, regard the Walloye with contempt. Even if Oromo parents agree to the marriage of their daughter to a Walloye man, the girls do not accept the decision of their parents. After 1974, especially with the establishment of the Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association (REYA), arranged marriages carry less weight, since the consent of the would-be bride and the bridegroom is decisive. The third factor is that the Walloyes seem not to be bold enough to pay the bride wealth the Oromo demand since they can find Walloye women without payment, or for a maximum of 30 to 50 Birr. This means there was no need for them to enter into financially costly arrangements.

Inter-ethnic differences are maintained through physical distance between the Oromo and the Walloye of the study area. The young members of both groups do not have an opportunity to mix in the absence of adult people. This acted as a barrier for close and personal contact to develop among the two. Close inter-ethnic interactions and the possibility of inter-ethnic marriage, I argue, will be the function of two factors.

Firstly, if children of both the Oromo and the Walloye attend the same school, they will have sufficient contact to enable them to learn the language, and through that the value of the other group. This may lay a ground for appreciation of life and values other than one's own. With the completion of the construction of the new school in the *qaballe*, which would not be too late, many Walloye households may send their children to school. Since in Oromia the medium of instruction is Oromo language, Amhara students will learn Oromo language, which may eventually help them get Oromo

spouses. Haaland argued that the fact that the children of the Fur-speaking nomads grow up learning Arabic, the language of the Baggara nomads, they "will eventually get spouses from the Baggara communities" (Haaland 1969:65). Attending school will also gradually erode stereotypes towards personal hygiene of the other group of young people, making inter-ethnic attraction possible.

The second reason that will promote inter-ethnic marriage is the decline of early marriage practices among the Walloye. If Walloye girls grown old enough before getting married, the Oromo young men will be attracted to these young girls and may take wives from among them.

Inter-ethnic interaction takes the form of competition, cooperation and conflict. The kind of social relationships which the societies of different ethnic groups enter into does not so far seem to have promoted ethnic integration in the study area. It is more of interaction manifesting itself in the form of competition over scarce resources such as land and forest areas, and economic exchanges.

The main aspect of interaction is competition between individuals, be it within or between groups, over the control of important resources, mainly land. If the competition is between individuals or groups across ethnic boundaries, "hostility among individuals is usually met with a united hostile front by all the other members" (Nnoli, 1989:24), as when the Christian and Muslim Walloyes united against the Oromo, and the Orthodox Christians and the Protestant Oromo united against the Amhara. Young observed "the internal restraints against hostility are relaxed at times of intergroup rivalry which stresses economic competition" (Young 1930:474).

Economic exchanges in the form of selling and buying of grain crops and livestock, land lease and renting houses establish diadic relationships. Patrilineally orientated inter-ethnic marriage¹¹ between the Oromo and the Walloye seems to be only uni-directional up to now, namely from Wallo to Oromo. As far as the Oromo and the Gojjame are concerned, it is too early to comment since only one case of an Oromo man's marrying a Gojjame woman is reported in Aaroo Addis Alem. However, generally speaking, there seems no problem to arise because Oromo-Gojjame relationships have a long history. Or, to put it differently, there is a practice of women exchange between the two.

Conflict is a fact of life whether it is among the religious figures or among the lay people, whether in formal or informal discussions. It seems to me that the Walloye are not convinced of accepting the Oromo language as an effective medium of expression. Most probably that is why the Walloyes were thinking of petitioning the government to be allowed to use Amharic for official purposes. The Oromo take this position of the Walloye as the latter's attempt to make Horro Guduru part of Region Three, Amhara region. For the Walloye, however, it is the matter of exercising one's own right to use one's own mother tongue under any circumstance.

Despite this distrust, social relationships are established and retained, although not encouraged by the indigenous community. This conforms with what Barth writes: 'One finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and frequently based precisely on the dichotomized

¹¹ For Lévi-Strauss, the giving of women in marriage must be considered the most elementary of all forms of exchange (Leach 1974:116).

ethnic statuses" (1969:10). The dichotomy is less of ethnicity, *per se*, but more of competition for survival. However, it is difficult to assume that this relationship leads to change of identity, as Haaland argued, in relation to Fur and Baggara interactions.

Such circumstances do not invariably lead to a change of identity. There are ethnic groups that maintain their unity despite the fact that their populations are distributed over niches that imply just as radical differences in life situation as that between sedentary and nomadic Fur. Arabic nomads, farmers and townsmen is one such case. (Haaland 1969:67).

The argument also goes that since the Oromo relationship with others is in conformity with the principles of "the right of an individual to associate with others on the basis of friendships, neighbour and partners"⁴⁹ (Lewis 1973:195), it is highly probable that the spheres of inter-ethnic relationships become varied and accommodative.

7.6. Economic Ties and Conflict of Interest

Economic relationships cut across all boundaries. Despite the fact that many Oromo feel resentment at seeing the Walloyes and the Gojjames in the area, there are many Oromo who without fear of any repercussions establish close social and economic

⁴⁹ Herbert Lewis identified four more principles guiding Oromo relationship with others. These are "(1) the expectation that neighbours will aid and cooperate with each other, although friendship and free choice may cross-cut and weaken contiguity *per se*; (2) obedience to the formal rules of the voluntary associations to which individuals belong and loyalty to fellow members; (3) the application of universalistic achievement criteria in the choice fellows and leaders; and (4) the use of election, casting lots, and taking turns to ensure fairness" (Lewis 1973:195).

ties with the settlers. For instance, I know of a certain Belay and Ferede (two brothers) who have established close ties with the Gojjames, both settlers and, through them, with those beyond the Blue Nile in the forms of sub-leasing the land and assisting one another in trading. This is what Brewer and Campbell argue: "individuals are likely to exhibit opportunism in their pattern of interaction and alliance, being free to shift perceptions of group loyalty in order to maximize the advantage of differential group identification in different realms of activity" (Brewer and Campbell 1976:136).

During my second period of fieldwork, I have observed a serious conflict between two Gojjames. One of them has a licence to trade hides and skins, and others (a group of three persons) in grain trade. The one who is licensed to trade hides and skins complained that the other group is intruding into his domain, by purchasing hides and skins, and reported him to the office of *Woreda* Ministry of Agriculture. The other group also complained that Demile, the owner of the hides and skins licence, is buying grain crops for which he does not have a licence. The concerned office decided that each side should respect the domain of the other. Therefore, conflicts of interest are also observed within a group.

7.7. Religion

Religion is a factor of integration as well as a source of conflict among the communities of the study area. Persons of different ethnic-groups, or different places of origin, like the Gojjames and the Walloyes, join in varied forms of association such as *māhbar*, *sarbate*, *pat maḥbāt* and *abelij*. Despite what usually appears to be the case when seen from the surface, the Gojjame and the Walloye join in *māhbar*. In one of the St. Georgis' *māhbar* to which I was invited by one of my Walloye informants I

observed two Gojjames associated in one *māhbar* with the Walloye. Ayana, my Oromo informant, is a God-father of the son of Gebeyehu, my Walloye informant, and the wife of the latter a God-mother of the daughter of the former.

Currently, the conflict between the Walloye and the Oromo concerns control over the administration of St George Church. The Walloyes wanted to have the upper hand in running the Church. The Oromo on the other hand wanted to retain that capacity. To me this is only a temporary conflict within a group (of Orthodox Christians). The most likely conflict in the future is between Orthodox Christians and the Protestants. Between mid-1960s and 1974, Protestant Christianity had strong influence among the Oromo of Jidda KIRAMU, Ebantu, Limmu and Amuru *woredas*. However, with the evacuation of the American Missions, called "*missioni*" by local people, from the area in 1974, and the nationalization of the clinics and schools established by the missionaries, the dominance of Protestant Christianity declined. Since 1993/4, however, the American Missions have secured legal permits to work in the area and they have already resumed work at their KIRAMU station, twelve kilometres from Aaroo. Since affiliation to Orthodox Christianity among the Oromo of the study area is only a matter of formality, it is highly probable for the Oromo will be attracted to Protestant Christianity, mainly because the Oromo associate "these religions [other Christian denominations] with their clinics and hospitals, schools, their style of dress and their goods, in short with modernity" (Gemechu 1994:261). The latter attracts people by providing health services to both the human and animal populations.

7.8. Regionalization Policy and the Language Problem

Another problem for the Walloyes in the research area is the regionalization policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. The settlers express their disappointment at being denied the right to use Amharic for official purposes. Getu says:

It is good for every *behér/behérésüb* (nation/nationality) to use its native tongue in his area of residence, but it is also just to allow others to use their own mother tongue if they cannot express themselves fully in a language other than their own native tongue. There are Oromo migrants in Amhara country and Amhara migrants in Oromo country. One should not be denied the right to express him/herself in his/her native tongue, because *makara kucamad inji kabaid aymachim* ("trouble is bearable with relatives, never with non-kin").

7.9. Trends of Spontaneous Migration

Kloos and Aynalem (1988) argued that spontaneous settler migration is unlikely to take place in Ethiopia. In their own words: "It is unlikely that spontaneous settler migrations based on individual decisions and evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of resettlement can again become the main settler migration in Ethiopia" (Kloos and Aynalem 1988:167). Contrary to what has been forecasted by Kloos and Aynalem, large numbers of spontaneous settler migrants are coming to northeastern Walliga, from Gojjam and Wallo, especially from Gojjam since the last three years.

The recently approved Ethiopian Constitution provides that "The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all natural resources, is exclusively vested in the state and in the peoples of Ethiopia" (Art.40.3). It is also indicated that any Ethiopian who wants to earn living by farming has a usufruct right, and others obtain land on a lease basis. If this is going to be applicable across regional

boundaries, it is highly probable that what Kloos and Aynalem predicted, namely state sponsored settlement, will be practised again in order for the land hungry peasants to find a place to cultivate. This implies that self-initiated settler migration, as it had been predicted by Kloos and Aynalem, will not seem likely to be practised. If, on the other hand, what Dessalegn calls 'associative ownership', some how, is adopted as a workable policy in order to give relative autonomy for the community to manage its own resources, the land would remain in the hands of the rural local institutions. This means it does not seem that there would be a room for the self-initiated settler migrants to obtain land in a far off place. In associative ownership, land is freely held by a cultivator who holds the right to transfer it in any form, but only: (1) to the co-resident or fellow peasants in the neighbouring communities; and (2) to those who work it and those who themselves are working farmers (Dessalegn 1994:14).

The major factor which had been reported to have caused the displacement of thousands of households in Wallo and some northern regions was drought-induced famine. The information acquired from this fieldwork challenges this view.

For the settlers in Aaroo Addis Alem *qabalé* scarcity of arable land and land degradation are the leading causes of migration. Informants sometimes make statements such as 'there is no land to build a house let alone to cultivate and produce a crop, and the cultivated ones refused to give yield. Migration is becoming a normal phenomenon even in good years.' Settlers, both Gojjames and Walloyes, stressed that the major factor of migration is scarcity of arable land and land degradation, which may be aggravated by the shortage of rainfall. Drought is only a precipitating factor of famine and migration. Aschensqew described this as follows:

The 1971/72 rain in Sayint *woreda* was only slightly below normal; the major problem was that people could not expand their holdings because no piece of land was unoccupied. *Wandim kawandim, yaihit lijoch kawandim*

lijoch magadal sihom gize mangist tachagare (literally, "a brother kills a brother, children of one's sister kill one's own children, this became a problem for the state").

According to him, "through their Walloye relatives some Gondares and Shoans received pass cards to migrate to Walläga under the pretext of drought-induced famine". We have also seen other factors such as lack of plough animals and personal and social problems playing some role in forcing people to leave their home areas.

According to my Walloye informants the current direction of Walloye migration is towards Kaffa and Ilu Abbañor. They say "Walläga is saturated now, we do not let our people come here". The land is degraded and the population has reached a point where the land can no longer support any additional population. The Walloyes consider the settlement of the Gojjames as a major threat since the latter are only recent arrivals who seem to have been attracted by the green land in Walläga. The Gojjames are not successful in locating themselves in the highlands, consequently they are moving *en masse* to Anger Guten¹⁰ and the surrounding areas in Jidda Kiremu and Limmu wordan of Harro Gubara.

7.10. The Sky for God, the Earth for Israelites

The question of mass migration of the Gojjames and the Walloyes to Walläga is the central issue discussed among the Oromo of the study area, especially among the elderly and educated ones (teachers and secondary school graduates who work the land

¹⁰ Anger Guten is one of the big areas where state sponsored extended resettlement of seventeen thousand three hundred seventy eight households with a total population of fifty nine thousand six hundred had been conducted between 1977 and 1987 (Walläga RRC, 1980 E.C. p.47). Indeed, there are many Walloye households joining their relatives in the resettlement site from Aaroo.

in the rural areas¹¹). It is common to see and hear people talking about the problem of land since the arrival of the settlers. I was told by the *woreda* council members that it had been decided by the East Walliga Zone Council not to allow any Walloye or Gojjame any longer to settle in Walliga. However, local informants complain that the local officials, *woreda* policemen and certain *woreda* council members, usually let the Walloyes and the Gojjames easily cross the check-points established for the purpose. The local Oromo condemn these local officials since they are perceived as "exchanging fertile lands of the Oromo for a bottle of *aragé*"¹². These same officials sometimes repatriate the Gojjames, who come through the Naqamte-Bure road back to Bure, after they have already arrived in Walliga, Amuru or Jidda *woredas*.

The position of the officials in Walliga is not welcomed by the Gojjame and Walloye settlers in these areas. When I asked what he feels about the repatriation of Gojjames, *Magäbi* Tibebe evokes biblical words to substantiate his position of defending Walloye and Gojjame settlement in Walliga. *Magäbi* replied "*The sky for God, the earth for livelihood*". He denounces the artificial boundaries established by man, which he believes is the violation of the law of God. He also mentions the Constitution¹³ of this country which was approved by the Council of Representatives

¹¹ Graduates from secondary schools who were not successful in securing off-farm employment in towns went back to the rural areas and took up farming as a means of livelihood. Desealegn labels them "new peasants". (See Desealegn 1984, eds.:4-5).

¹² The word *aragé* was used to indicate how cheap these officials are in letting the migrants to settle in the area. Otherwise they point to the newly built houses of these officials in the towns, which people believe are the results of corruption, mainly the money obtained from the migrants at these check points.

¹³ The freedom of movement is granted citizens in Article 32 of the Constitution. "Every Ethiopian citizen or any other person legally in Ethiopia has the right to freedom of movement anywhere within the national territory;

and the Constitutional Assembly at the end of 1994, which provides the citizens the freedom to choose their place of residence.

7.11. Ethnicity, State and the role of Social Anthropology

Ethiopia is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse states of Africa. However, these diversified cultures were regarded as inferior to the culture of the conquering force and no attempt was done to encourage their development for over a century, namely, since the conquest of the south by the north. This situation, however, maintained the development of the feeling of self-assertion, not the disappearance of ethnic differences and conflicts as was wished by the rulers. It is imperative for these diverse cultural elements to be nourished in order to make the relationships among various groups mutually beneficial.

The "State is that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence" (Weber in Gellner 1983:5). In addition to the monopoly of the legitimate violence, the state is the greatest source of capital, jobs, contract, education and the various social welfare services (Ninoli 1989:24).

Politicians and civil servants have used it [state] to amass wealth, to deposit such wealth in foreign banks, and to manipulate elections in their own favour. Appeals to ethnic sentiment in political elections based on ethno-regional constituencies have been a facile avenue to power. (Ninoli 1989:24)

to choose freely his place of residence anywhere in the national territory, and to leave the country" (Art.32.1).

There was, and to some extent is, intense struggle between politicians of the 'social minority' ethnic groups who appeal to ethnic sentiments to win elections on the one hand, and the ones who have put themselves in power and who manipulate elections in their own favour on the other. That was [is] why the state gives less attention to ethnic differences and the ones who claim to have represented the interest of the 'social minority' ethnic groups exaggerate the dichotomies. Neither of these contributed to the friendly relationship of different ethnic groups or regional constituencies, since they spread the feeling of hostility rather than the cultivation of common grounds. When ethnicity is politicized and governmental power used for inter-ethnic socio-economic competition, hostility is inevitable (Nnoli 1989:24). Nnoli adds "the building bloc [of ethnicity] must be the relations and interests of the population as they make a living" (ibid: 17). When there is physical proximity between two or more ethnic groups, there is the likelihood of competition over scarce but important resources such as land and the application of political, religious, administrative, and economic power. The need to influence (in language and religion) one's own social environment is also a source of conflict.

The sense of ethnic honour and ethnic identity should be cultivated in each ethnic group and its history be recognized since "resentment can be easily stirred when true historicity is denied or queried" (Tonkin *et al* 1989:8). Ethnic identity "implies a series of constraints on the kinds of roles an individual is allowed to play, and the partners he may choose for different kinds of transactions" (Barth 1969:17).

Bernardi (1989:413) formulates ethnocentrism on the basis of three conceptual aspects implied by the term: the general, the positive and the pathological aspects. He asserts that ethnocentrism, even when unconscious, forms the basis for good judgment, of reasonable behaviour and of critical acting, and this is positive ethnocentrism

(Bernardi 1989:418). On the pathological aspect of the implication of ethnocentrism he writes "pathological ethnocentrism responds to the evaluation of one's own culture in such emotional terms as to make it an impediment towards a respectful understanding of other people's identity, and possibly a reason for intellectual contempt and physical violence" (Ibid:413). Any feeling of ethnicity which is either above or below normal is unhealthy, and Bernardi compares it with normal human body temperature (37°C). Thus body temperature "indicate[s] stable health, if it goes too high or too low, it may indicate a pathological situation" (Ibid:414).

Ethnic identity is *imperative*, in that it cannot be disregarded and temporarily set aside by other definitions of the situation (Barth 1969:17). Reminick quotes Max Weber on the significance of honour in the context of ethnicity and writes "the ethnic group has, as one of its bases, a certain 'belief in a specific honour of their members, not shared by outsiders, i.e., the sense of ethnic honour'" (in Parsons and Shils 1961:307) (Reminick 1983:47). Social anthropologists have a crucial responsibility to discover what a healthy level of ethnicity is and inform people about it, and this is what Bernardi calls "the business of proper social education" (Bernardi 1989:414).

With regards to the direction of anthropological studies in ethnic groups and their relations, I share the views of Abbinck which reads "It would be advantageous for future anthropological studies of ethnic groups and ethnic relations, especially in politico-economic contexts of countries like Ethiopia, to focus primarily on the process of infrastructural, political-ecological conditioning of ethnic labels and their symbolic use" (Abbinck 1991:14).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

A. Documents

Ethiopian Government, 1994. *The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa.

Irada Maatbihiyana Maqasqamiya Komishin, Walläga, 1980 E.C. 'Yesafara Amet'at' *Turkana Safara Biwallaga*. Naqamte.

B. Thesis and Dissertations

Assefa Tolera, 1983. *Marriage Practices Among the Horro- Guduru Oromo, Northwestern Walläga*. B. A. Thesis, Department of Applied Sociology, Addis Ababa University.

——— 1994. *Totemism*. Dept. of Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University, unpublished.

Chernet Wakweya, 1983. *Land Tenure System and Self-Settled Walloyes in Abe-Dungoro (1900-1974)*. B.A. Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University.

Gemenethu Mesgerua, 1994. *Knowledge, Identity and the Colonizing Structure: The Case of the Oromo in East and Northeast Africa*. Ph.D. Dissertation, London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

Genabun Dilubo, 1974. *Emperor Menelik's Ethiopia, 1865-1916: National unification or Amhara Communal Domination*. Ph.D. Thesis, Howard University.

- Gezahen Petros, 1994. *The Karo of the Lower Omo Valley, Southern Ethiopia: Subsistence, Social Organization and Relations with their Neighbouring Groups*. M.A. Thesis, Department of Sociology and Social Administration, Addis Ababa University.
- Melrose Geta, 1994. *Tumako Women's Roles and Status in Agro-pastoral production*. M.A. Thesis, Department of Sociology and Social Administration, Addis Ababa University.
- Ojara Tujaba, 1994. *Oromo Amhara Relations In Horro Guduru Awraja (Northeastern Wullaga). C. 1840s -1941.* Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Tesama Ta'a, 1980. *The Oromo of Wollega: A Historical Survey to 1910*. M.A. Thesis, Department of History Addis Ababa University.
- , 1986. *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.

B. PUBLISHED SOURCES

- Abbiok, Jon, 1991. *The Deconstruction of 'tribe': Ethnicity and Politics in Southern Ethiopia* in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, vol. xxiv. pp.1.21. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.
- Alenayehu Mekonnen, 1990. *Contextualizing the Gospel within the Amhara culture in Ethiopia*. Michigan: Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission.
- Anderson, David and Grove, Richard, (eds) 1987. *Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ayalaw Gebre, 1995. *'The Arbore of Southern Ethiopia: A Study of Inter-Ethnic Relations Social Organization and Production Practices'* Social Anthropology Dissertation Series No.1 Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Administration.
- Bahru Zewde, 1991. A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974, London: James Curry. (Eastern African Studies)
- Barth, Lambert, 1975. 'Dabo, a form of Cooperation between farmers among the Macha (Galla) of Ethiopia: Social Aspects, songs and rituals'. in Anthropos. 70 (3-6): 883-925.
- , 1977. 'Dabo, a form of cooperation on equal terms among the Macha Galla of Ethiopia'. Anthropos. 72 (3-4): 497-513.
- , 1983. Oromo Religion: Myth and rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia - An Attempt to Understand. Berlin: Reimer Verlag.
- Barth, Fredrik, 1969 (eds). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.
- Baxter, Paul, 1983. 'The Problem of the Oromo or the Problem for the Oromo' in Lewis, I.M., (ed) Nationalism and Self Determination in the Horn of Africa. London: Ithaca Press.
- Bebbaw, D.G.R., 1968. 'An Outline of Resettlement Policy in Uganda 1945-63' in Agtheop, Raymond (eds). Land Settlement and Rural Development in Eastern Africa. Kampala: Transition Books.
- Bender, M.L., 1969. 'Distribution and Classification of Ethiopian Languages: Cushitic and Omotic' in Fleming, H.C. and Bender, M.L. Language Survey of Ethiopia (mimeographed). Addis Ababa:

- Bernardi, Bernardo, 1989. 'Ethnocentrism: A Need and a Disease' in International Journal on the Unity of the Sciences, Volume 2, Number 4. pp.405-422.
- Boissevain, Jeremy, 1974. FRIENDS OF FRIENDS: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Brücklunger, Ulrich, 1988 'The Islamicization of the Arssi Oromo' in Taddese Beyene (eds). Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, vol. 1, pp. 767-778. Addis Ababa University.
- Brauner-Flasikowski, Herma, 1970. 'Die Schinascha in West-Äthiopien' in Sonderdruck: Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Band 95, Heft 1, Braunschweig.
- Brewer, M.B. and Campbell, D.T. (eds), 1976. Ethnocentrism and Intergroup Animosity: East African Evidence. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Bright, William, 1968. 'Language and Culture' in Sills, David L., (eds). International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, (vol.9:18-22) New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.
- Bullock, R.A., 1975. *Administrative Approaches to the Management of the Dry Margins of Kikuyuland, 1930-1970* in Newman, James L. (eds), Drought, Famine and Population Movements in Africa. Syracuse, New York: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.
- Caulk, R.A., 1975. 'Territorial Competition and the Battle of Embabo, 1882' in Journal of Ethiopian Studies, vol.XIII No. 1. pp:65-88. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- Central Statistical Authority, 1991. Report on Census of Population and Housing and on Survey of Demographic Changes in the Resettlement Areas. Addis Ababa.
- Clarke, J. ed. RESETTLEMENT AND FAMINE: Ethiopia's Campaign Against Famine: Resettlement and Rehabilitation. London: Harney and Jones, Ltd.

- Clay, Jason W. and Holcomb, Bonnie K., 1986. Politics and the Ethiopian Famine: 1984-1985. Cambridge: Cultural Survival, Inc.
- Comer, Fr. George and Fubers, Maryknoll, 1990. SALT FOR STEW: Proverbs and sayings of the Oromo people with English translations. Addis Ababa: United Printers.
- Dawit Woldem Giorgis, 1989. Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia. Totonon: Red Sea Press.
- Desalegn Rahmato, 1992. 'The Dynamics of Rural Poverty: Case Studies from a District in Southern Ethiopia.' Monograph Series 2/92. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- _____, (ed) 1994. 'Land Tenure and Land Policy in Ethiopia After the Derg' Proceedings of the Second Workshop of the Land Tenure Project. Working Papers on Ethiopian Development No.8: October 1994. Addis Ababa: Institute of Development Research, Addis Ababa University.
- Ducci, Paolo and Claudio Vezzoli (eds) 1992. Resettlement and Rural Development in Ethiopia: Social and Economic Research, Training and Technical Assistance in the Belen Valley. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Dunham, Donald and James, Wendy, (eds) 1986. The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dyson-Hudson, Rada and Dyson-Hudson, Nevilla, 1975. 'Commentary' in Newman, James L. (eds). Drought, Famine and Population Movement in Africa. Syracuse, New York: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.
- Eidheim, Harald, 1969. 'When Ethnic Identity is a Social Stigma' in Barth, Fredrik (eds). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

- Ervin-Tripp, Susan M., 1968. 'Language Development' in Sills, David L., (ed). International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. (vol. 9: 9-14) New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press.
- Ethiopian Meteorological Service, 1979. Meteorological Maps of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa.
- Fleming, Harold C., 1976. 'Kefa (Gonga) Languages' in Bender, M.L. (ed) The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia. East Lansing: Michigan State University. pp 351-376.
- Gellner, Ernest, 1983. Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- George, Vic and Wülfing, Paul, 1976. Ideology and Social Welfare. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Gillies, Patrick, 1975. THE DYING LION: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia. London: Julian Friedmann Publishers Ltd.
- Gonzalez, Nancie L. and McCommon, Carolyn S. (eds), 1989. Conflict, Migration and the Expression of Ethnicity. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Gumperz, John J., (ed) 1982. 'Language and Social Identity' Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hallsted, Gunnar, 1969. 'Economic Determinants in Ethnic Processes' in Barth, Fredrik (ed). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Harris, Marvin, 1988. Culture, People, Nature: An Introduction to General Anthropology. (Fifth edition). New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Hobbes, Allan, 1973. Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia: The Dynamics of Cognatic Descent. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Holcomb, Bonnie K. 1973. 'Oromo Marriage in Wallaga Province, Ethiopia' in Journal of Ethiopian Studies, vol.11, no.1, pp:106-142. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.
- Holton, Jan, 1984. 'Kinship and property in Oromo Culture' in Rubenson, Sven (ed) Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Lund, 26-29 April, 1982. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- ed. 'The Land is Crying: State Intervention and Cultural Resistance among the Macha Oromo' in Bekele, David (ed). A River of Blessings: Essays in Honour of Paul Beane. African Series 43, FACS Publications, Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University.
- , 1987. The Long Journey: Essays on History, Descent and Land among the Macha Oromo. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Leach, Karl G., 1969. 'Neighbours in Laos' in Barth, Fredrik (eds). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Leach, Roger M., [1975] 1981. Cultural Anthropology: A Contemporary Perspective. (Second edition). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Katzev, Edmond J. 1988. REVOLUTIONARY ETHIOPIA: From Empire to People's Republic. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kissa, Hailu and Aynalem Adugna, 1988. 'Settler Migration: Causes, Patterns of Movement and Some Demographic Impacts' in IDR, Proceedings of the Workshop on Famine Experience and Resentment in Ethiopia, Dec.29-30, 1988. Addis Ababa University.

- Koussios, Christos, 1989. 'Population and Land Degradation: A Political Ecology Approach' in Omsik, Anders Hjort af and Salih, M.A. Mohamed (eds). Ecology and Politics: Environmental Stress and Security in Africa, pp.197-210. Motala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Lange, W., 1982. History of the Southern Gonga (South-western Ethiopia). Weinbaden.
- Leach, Edmund, 1974. Claude Lévi-Strauss. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lévy-Strauss, Claude, 1973. Gods: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society. New York: The Free Press.
- Levine, Donald N., 1965 (1972). Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- , 1974. Growth Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, Herbert S., 1973. 'Neighbours, Friends, and Kinmen: Principles of Social Organization among the Cushitic-Speaking Peoples of Ethiopia' in Marcus, Harold G. (eds). Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies. Michigan: African Studies Center Michigan State University.
- MacKinnon, John, 1974. ETHIOPIA: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity. Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press.
- MacKen Ezer, 1988. 'Population issues in Rural Development' in Pausewang, Siegfried, et al (eds). Ethiopia: Rural Development Options. London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.
- Mekonen Balcha, 1988. Flight and Integration: Causes of Mass Exodus from Ethiopia and the Problems of Integration in Sudan. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

- Mengistu Wube, 1987. The Geography of Hunger: Some Aspects of the Causes and Impacts of Hunger. Uppsala: University of Uppsala.
- Mohammed Hassen, 1990. The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nnoli, Okwudibia, 1989. 'Ethnic Conflict in Africa'. CODESRIA Working Paper Series 1/89. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Pankhurst, Alula, 1992. Resettlement and Famine in Ethiopia: The Villager's Experience. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Pausewang, Siegfried, 1990. '"Meret Le Arashu" Land Tenure and Access to Land: A Socio-historical Overview' in Pausewang *et al.* (eds). Ethiopia: Rural Development Options. London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.
- Plowden, Walter Chichele, 1868. Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla country: An Account of a Mission to Ras Ali in 1848. London: Longmans, Green, And Co.
- Reminick, Ronald A., 1983. Theory of Ethnicity: An Anthropologist's Perspective. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Sapir, Edward A. (1910-1944) 1949. Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality. Edited by David G. Mandelbaum. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shenk, Calvin, 1972. The Development of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and its Relationship with the Ethiopian Government 1930-1970. New York: New York University.
- Simonsen, Frederick J. 1960. NORTHWEST ETHIOPIA: Peoples and Economy. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers.

- Sühl, Michael, 1989. 'Environmental Degradation and Political Constraints in Ethiopia' in Ormås, Anders Hjort af and Salih, M.A. Mohamed (eds). Ecology and Politics: Environmental Stress and Security in Africa, pp.181-196. Motala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Terefe Woldemariam, 1968. 'The Unification of Ethiopia (1880-1935): Walläga' in Journal of Ethiopian Studies, vol.VI No. pp:73-86. Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth, McDonald, Maryon, and Chapman, Malcolm, (eds) 1989. History and Ethnicity. London: Routledge.
- Trusler, A. 1975. 'The Gidara Oromo and their Neighbours in the two generations before the Battle of Embabo' in Journal of Ethiopian Studies, vol.XIII No. 1 pp:47-64. Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies.
- Tubiana, Joseph, 1983. 'The Linguistic Approach to Self Determination' in Lewis, I.M. Nationalism and Self Determination in the Horn of Africa. London: Ithaca Press.
- Turton, D. and Turton, P. 1984. 'Spontaneous Resettlement after Drought: an Ethiopian Example' in Disasters, VIII, pp:178-189.
- Wadsworth, Ronald, 1987. Languages in Competition: Dominance, Diversity, and Decline. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Webb, Patrick and Braun, Joachim, 1994. Famine and Food Security in Ethiopia: Lessons for Africa. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Wolde Michael Kelecha, 1980. A Glossary of Ethiopian Plant Names. Third edition, Revised and Enlarged. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Wood, A. P., 1975. Migration and Settlement in the Forest Fringe, Illubabor Province, Ethiopia. Liverpool: University of Liverpool, Department of Geography.

- 1976. The Settlement of Famine Victims in Illubabor Province, Ethiopia.
Liverpool: University of Liverpool, Department of Geography.
- 1982. 'Spontaneous Agricultural Resettlement in Ethiopia, 1950-74' in
Clarke, J. and L. Kosinski (eds), Redistribution of Population in Africa.
London: Heinemann.
- Yeld, Rachel, 1968. 'Land Hunger in Kigezi, Southwest Uganda' in Apthorpe,
Raymond (eds). Land Settlement and Rural Development in Eastern Africa.
Kampala: Transition Books.
- Young, Kimball, 1930. Social Psychology. New York: Dover.

Appendix



The ex-bālabāt and some other Sinocho, on the graveyard of Abballan



Part of Aaroo town



Yaqataro laqso ceremony, people are served food on the tree leaves put on the ground



Yaqataro laqso ceremony, people are served food on the tree leaves put on the ground



Sigé mähbar, women and men together, the final day of the year.



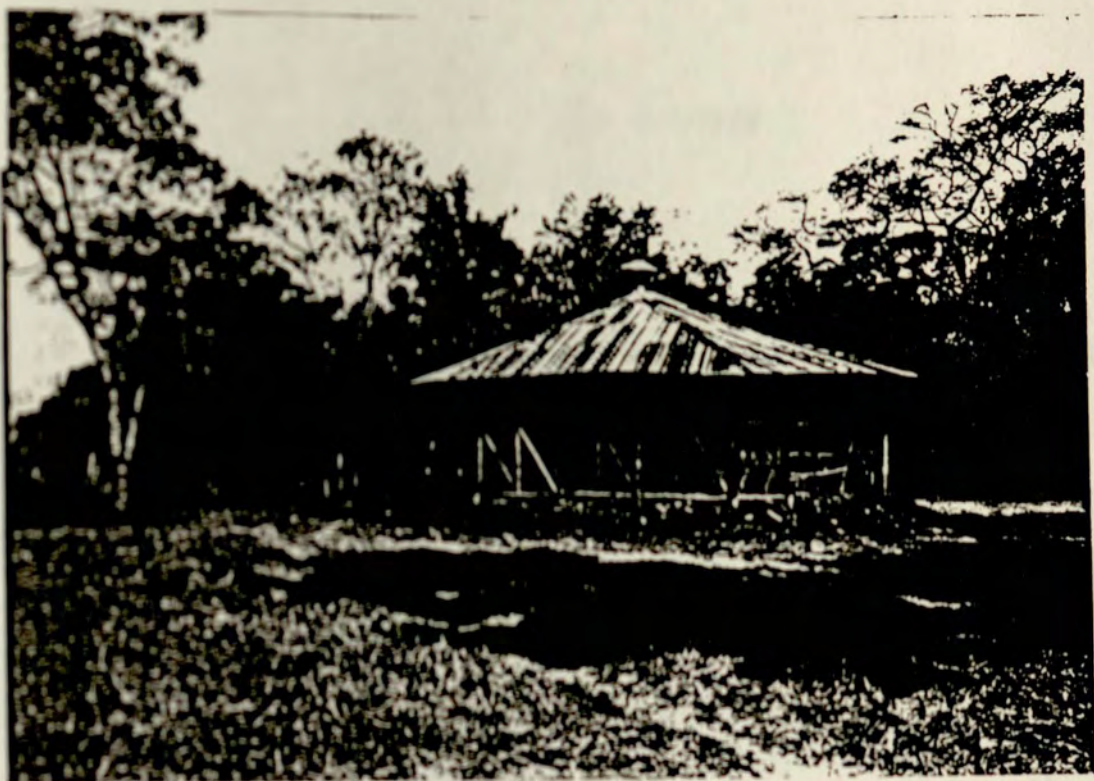
Sigé mähbar, part of the attendants



Weekly Sunday market at Aaroo Addis Alem



Weekly Sunday market at Aaroo Addis Alem



St. Giorgis Church founded in 1892/93



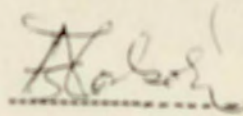
Qabale assembly hearing the case of priest Alemu and *debtera* Mengistie

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my work and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Assefa Tolera

Signature:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Assefa Tolera', written over a horizontal dashed line.

Date: June, 1995