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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ISLAMIC SHRINES IN JIMMA  
ZONE, SOUTH WESTERN ETHIOPIA**

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June, 2012

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Seyoum Merga, entitled: An Archaeological Survey of Islamic Shrines in Jimma Zone, South western Ethiopia and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Archaeology complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality;

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## **Abstract**

An Archaeological Survey of Islamic Shrines in Jimma Zone, South western Ethiopia.

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Islamic shrines are a sanctuary devoted to Muslim saints and used for ritual practices. As defined by Braukamper.U (2002), shrine is any man made sanctuary (sometimes associated with natural objects) devoted to a Muslim saint (*wali*). The custom of venerating saints and visiting their shrines is a common phenomena found in the Muslim world (Ishihara 2009). In Ethiopia, the presences of several shrines are typical proofs of the existence of a deep rooted tradition of venerating saints among the Muslim people. Islamic shrines in Ethiopia are not only a religious place, but are also important depositors of the pre-Islamic cultures of the indigenous communities (Trimingham 1965; Hussein 1994; Braukamper 2002; Kassaye 2009). Hence, Islamic shrines are important heritages used to understand cultural changes and continuities of the past and the present. However, due to the past socio-political and historical marginalization of Islam in Ethiopia, Islamic shrines have been studied very little. The previous researches conducted on Islamic shrines have been geographically and thematically limited. Consequently, shrines in the historically prominent Muslim lands (the five Gibe states) of the present day Jimma zone remained unstudied. Therefore, this paper presents archaeological survey research conducted on the Islamic shrine sites of Jimma zone. The study identified and documented two Islamic shrines namely; shrines of Sadeqiyo and *Abba* Arabu, located in Sokoru district and around Jimma town respectively. The shrines, being located near the former economic and administrative sites; have great significance to understand the history of Islamic relation with the past political and economic scenario of the area. In addition to this, the pre-Islamic Oromo cultural and ritual traditions are well preserved in the two shrines of Jimma zone. Albeit scholars such as Terje Ostebo (2009) claimed the 'Islamaization of the pre-Islamic Oromo cultures', the ritual performances conducted at the shrines of Arabu and Sadeqiyo, clearly indicates the 'Oromization of Islamic religion'. Moreover, the shrines have actual and potential economic, scholastic, and cultural significances. Despite this fact, the shrines are presently endangered from deliberate anthropogenic actions as well as natural factors.

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# Table of contents

	<b>Page</b>
List of Figures .....	IV
List of Map and Chart .....	VI
List of Acronyms .....	VII
<b>Chapter one</b>	
Background of the study .....	1
1.1. Review of Related Literature .....	1
1.2. Statement of the problem .....	15
1.3. Objectives of the Study .....	22
1.3.1.General Objective .....	22
1.3.2.Specific Objectives of the Study .....	22
1.4. Significance of the Study .....	23
1.5. Methodology .....	24
1.5.1. Delimitation .....	24
1.5.2. Data Acquisition Techniques .....	27
1.5.2.1. Pre-field Data Acquisition .....	27
1.5.2.2. Data Acquisition Techniques during the Field Work .....	28
1.5.2.2.1. Measurement .....	29
1.5.2.2.2. Photographing .....	29
1.5.2.2.3. Interview .....	30
1.5.3. Techniques of data Analysis .....	30

## Chapter Two

2. The Study Area: Natural and Cultural Setting .....	32
2.1. Geographical Location and Environmental Setting .....	32
2.2. Demographic Context .....	36
2.3. Economic Activities .....	38
2.4. Religion .....	41
2.5. History of Settlement Pattern and Pre-Islamic Religion .....	43

## Chapter Three

3. Findings and Analysis .....	48
3.1. Abba Arabu: an Islamic shrine around Jimma town .....	48
3.1.1. History of the shrine site of Abba Arabu .....	54
3.1.2. Pilgrimage ( <i>Ziyara</i> ) and Ritual performance at Abba Arabu's Shrine .....	56
3.2. Sadeqiyo: An Islamic Shrine Centre in Sokoru District .....	59
3.2.1. History of the Sadeqiyo shrine .....	65
3.2.2. Pilgrimage ( <i>Ziyara</i> ) and Ritual Performances at Sadeqiyo Shrine .....	68

## Chapter Four

4. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations .....	74
4.1. Discussion .....	74
4.1.1. implications of Geographical Locations of the Shrine Sites .....	74

4.1.2. The Overall Values of the Shrine Sites .....	76
4.1.3. Common Features of the shrines and their symbolic Values for the Muslims .....	80
4.1.4. Conservation Status of the shrine sites .....	83
4.2. Conclusion .....	86
4.3. Recommendations .....	87
Bibliography .....	90
Appendix I .....	96
Appendix II .....	98
Appendix III .....	99



## List of Figure

Figure- 1 Gibe River around Asandabo (photo by Seyoum M, 202) .....	33
Figure-2 Deforestation in Oromia .....	35
Figure- 3 Firing of forest at Sadeka Kebelle, Sokoru district (Photo by Seyoum Merga, 2012) .....	36
Figure- 4 Mujja hill, where Abba Arabu shrine is located as seen from the north of Jiren hill, where the palace of Abba Jifar II is found. (Photo by Seyoum Merga 2012) .....	48
Figure- 5 the Palace ( <i>Massara</i> ) of Abba Jifar II viewed from the entrance. (Photo by Seyoum Merga 2012) .....	49
Figure - 6 the road from Jimma town to Abba Arabu's Shrine .....	50
Figure – 7 A and B partial view of the tomb house and the tomb of Abba Arabu as it is covered by curtains .....	51
Figure - 8 partial view of the Mosque near the tomb of Abba Arabu (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	52
Figure - 9 Abba Gomol Abba Fixa, descendant of Abba Arabu and Guardian of the shrine. (photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	53
Figure - 10 (A) Zamazam of Abba Arabu and (B) the shrub near the holly water (photo by Seyoum M, 2012).....	54
Figure -11 Mountains and broken lands between Qumbi and Sadekiyo (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	59
Figure - 12 the shrine viewed from the east (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	60
Figure - 13 the hut particularly built for the dedication of the saint (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	61
Figure - 14 the internal roof decoration of the memorial hut and its pillar (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	62

Figure - 15 Partial view of the shrine from the East (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	63
Figure - 16 Partial view of area which the informants claimed previous slave market place (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	64
Figure - 17 the holes on the rock on which Sadeqa game was played (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	65
Figure – 18 the book of unknown language written by <i>mufti</i> Sadeqiyo (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	67
Figure – 19 ‘ <i>Oda</i> ’, the tree under which shrine community gathered occasionally. (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	68
Figure - 20 the people eating food on the leaf of <i>qocco</i> (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012)- .....	70
Figure – 21 the attendants of <i>hadra</i> drinking coffee by <i>Qabbe bunaa</i> (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	71
Figure - 22 the people praying in the hut built for the dedication of Saddeqiyo (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	72
Figure – 23 the remains of the burnt hut (the pillar of the hut) (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	84
Figure -24 Religious manuscripts being destroyed by poor preservation (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012) .....	85

## List of Map and Charts

Map1 showing the Study Area.....	26
Chart.1 Ethnic composition in Jimma Zone (CSA, 2007).....	37
Chart 2 Religious compositions in Jimma Zone (CSA, 2007) .....	42

## **List of Acronyms**

**ARRCH**-- Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage

**CSA**- Central Statistics Agency

**EEPCO**—Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation

**GPS**- Global Positioning System

**M.a.s.l**- meters above sea level

**MoA**- Ministry of Agriculture

**ONRG**-Oromia National Regional Government

**SNNPR**- Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region

**WBISPP**- Woody Biomass Inventory and Strategic Planning Project

# **Chapter One**

## **1. Background of the study**

### **1.1. Review of Related Literature**

Islam is a religion that bound the community together, in the first instance, by the Holy Koran. Then, it became the last of the three great world religions (namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam) to emerge in history (Shillington 1995). Since its emergence, Islam began to shape the social, political and cultural developments of several communities in the world. According to Kelvin Shillington (1995), Islam became not only a religion, but also a succession of political hegemony and a variety of linked cultures. Therefore, the social, cultural and political progress of numerous societies has been shaped by Islamic religion and practices.

Arguably, Ethiopia is one of the countries in the world that provided a fertile ground for the early Islamic expansion (Hussein 2006; Kassaye 2009). History of Islam in Ethiopia can be dated back to 615 A.D. when the companions of the Prophet Mohamed (the Sahaba) came to Aksum fleeing religious persecution by the Qurayish ruling elite in Mecca (Trimingham 1965, Hussein 1994 and Erlich 1994). Amidst of this persecution, the Prophet advised the Sahabas to migrate to Aksum where they would be protected by a righteous Christian king, widely known in the Arab world as Najashi, who later converted into Muslim (Dereje 2011). Thus, the amiable welcome of the king to the Sahabas provided a suitable scenario to the expansion of Islam in Ethiopia. As Hussein Ahmed (2006) stated, the hospitality and the tolerance the Sahaba got in Ethiopia is said to be critical in the survival and expansion of Islam.

Therefore, the first chapter of Islamic history in Ethiopia was closely connected to Aksum. This shows the introduction of Islam in Ethiopia during the early period of its emergence.

The special relationship between early Islam and Aksum (Ethiopia) is of two kinds. According to Dereje Feyissa (2011), the first is related to the stronger socio-economic ties between Aksum and the Arab world before and during the rise of Islam. This tie had a political expression in the form of Aksum's occupation and administration of Yemen in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D (*ibid*). As noted by Kassaye Begashaw (2009), Ethiopia and the Horn of African region became influenced by early Islamic cultural activities due to the presence of pre-Islamic cultural, economic, and political contacts between the region and the Arab world.

The second event that accrues a prestigious connection between Islam and Aksum (Ethiopia) is related to the coming of Sahaba (Trimingham 1965; Hussein 1994; Erlich 1994). The central act of connection between early Islam and Ethiopia is of course Najashi's benevolence towards Islam and the belief in his ultimate conversion. In relation to this, Hussein Ahmed (1994:54) states that "Ethiopian Muslim tradition has canonized the Aksumite king as a Muslim saint under the honorific name, Ahmad al-Najashi, with the Prophet believed to have given him that name".

Nonetheless, Islam was first established in the coastal lands of Ethiopia. As noted by Hussein Ahmed (2006), Islam was introduced to Ethiopia early on through the international trade routes that linked Ethiopia with the Arabian world. Hence, the coastal areas of Ethiopia were the main gates of Islamic religion into the country. This was

followed by the expansion of Islam into the neighbouring communities and then into central parts of Ethiopia such as Northeast Shoa in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by Muslim traders and clerics (Trimingham 1965; Kassaye 2009). By the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Muslim Sultanate of Shewa emerged in central Ethiopia and stayed in power until the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Abir 1980). Then, in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Islam had already been well entrenched in the central and south-eastern part of the country taking advantage of the flourishing international trade that linked the Ethiopian hinterland with the Gulf of Aden (Trimingham 1965). Islam progressively made headways in the peripheries of the Christian kingdom, particularly in the southern part of present-day Ethiopia.

As Dereje Feyisa (2011) claimed, various prosperous Islamic kingdoms or states with Islamic orientations emerged in southern part of Ethiopia by the 19<sup>th</sup> century includes: the five Oromo Gibe states in the southwest and the Sultanates of Guraghe in the south. Although Dereje Feyissa (2011) claimed the introduction of Islam in southern Ethiopia as a base for the emergence of the five Gibe states, a large corpus literature such as Trimingham (1965), Mohammed (1990) and others confirmed the establishment of the five Gibe kingdoms before the arrival of Islam in the area.

Islam was introduced among the Oromo of Gibe states (around the area of present-day Jimma zone) in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (Trimingham 1965; Mohammed 1990). Therefore, the introduction of Islam in Jimma was relatively late compared to other Islamic lands of Ethiopia.

Unlike Islamization process in North Africa and elsewhere in the world, Islam was expanded in Ethiopia through peaceful means. Regarding this, Dereje Feyissa (2011:30)

states that appreciative of Ethiopian king's favour the Prophet is believed to have made the following historic statement regarding Ethiopia: *utruku al-habasha ma tarakukum* "Leave the Abyssinians/Ethiopians alone, so long as they do not take the offensive".

Consequently, Islamic traditions claim that this is the reason why the early jihad was not applied to Ethiopia at a time when all countries in the Red Sea sub region succumbed to the new Islamic political and military power (Trimingham 1965; Erlich 2007). Nevertheless, since the introduction of Islam was occurred through peaceful means, it has a unique history in Ethiopia.

Moreover, the introduction of Islam in Ethiopia was also not followed by Arabization. Rather, Islam was established in Ethiopia by Synchronizing itself with presented home-grown traditional and cultural practices (Braukamper 2002; Jeyllen 2005; Kassaye 2009). This is to mean that the Muslim communities in Ethiopia have remained faithful to their already established cultural practices as long as they were not contrasted to Islamic teachings. In other words, it was characterized by Islamization of the indigenous belief systems and practices. This enabled the Muslims communities of Ethiopia to preserve their pre-Islamic cultural and traditional elements. However, this does not mean that Ethiopian Muslims didn't accept any elements of Arabian culture (Dereje 2011). Rather, it denotes that the influence of Arabian culture in Ethiopia is relatively less compared with Muslim societies of North Africa and elsewhere in the world. In view of this, some Muslim communities in Ethiopia such as Somali, who claims their Arabian origin, are good cases in point (see Bahru 2002). Even so, Islam has a lion share in shaping and



moulding the social, political and cultural developments of several communities in Ethiopia.

In fact, like other religions in the world, Islam has acquired several cultural heritages (tangible and non tangible heritages) through the course of its long history. Broadly speaking, heritages are tangible and non tangible cultural elements by which the values, beliefs and identities of the society are manifested. However, the study of Islamic culture has not been recognized in the field of archaeology until recent time. This is to mean that the values, beliefs and attitudes of Muslim society have not been archaeologically studied until recent time. According to Stephen Vernoit (1997), Islamic archaeology itself emerged as an independent field of inquiry about one hundred years ago in the Middle East by the European travellers such as Robert Ker Porter, Charles Teiker. Even then, most of these travellers were diplomatic missionaries rather than professional archaeologists (*ibid*). The rise of Islamic archaeology is relatively late compared with other branches of archaeology. Stephen Vernoit (1997) further explains that before the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the study of the art and archaeology of Islamic lands failed to attract significant critical interest among the scholars.

In Africa, archaeological investigation in general and Islamic archaeology in particular began during the colonial era. According to Stephen Vernoit (1997), archaeological investigation was, of course, concomitant with colonial expansion. The French occupation of Algeria in 1830 and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 brought archaeological inquiry into their wake (*ibid*). This is to mean that that the European colonial expansion into Africa was accompanied by several scholars such as

archaeologists. During the colonial period, the major objective of archaeological investigation conducted in Africa was not for the benefit of African societies. Rather, archaeological researches in various regions of Africa were conducted to fulfil the interests of the colonial powers (Bassey 1995). Therefore, Archaeological investigation in general and Islamic archaeology in particular began in Africa as a colonial enterprise. Because of this fact, theories and practices of African archaeology have been influenced by European archaeological traditions and theories.

As noted by Bassey, W. Andah (1995), the influence of African archaeological investigation by European archaeological traditions is largely the result of European colonization of various parts of the continent. Therefore, it is now apparent that African archaeology in general and Islamic archaeology of Africa in particular has been influenced by the theories and practices of European archaeology, which is irrelevant to the study of African societies. It was within this general context that the study of Islamic cultural elements began in Africa.

In Ethiopia, the beginning of archaeological investigation has a unique history. Although archaeological investigation began in Ethiopia as a foreign project, it was not a colonial endeavour (Dawit 2010). This is perhaps because Ethiopia is exceptional African state in defending her sovereignty. Nevertheless, like other third world countries, archaeological investigation in Ethiopia is not free from the influence of European archaeological theories and practices. Thus, Europeans exerted their archaeological theories and practices on African archaeological investigation through their fund and their educational system (Bassey 1995).

The study of Islamic culture has been given little consideration by the scholars until recent time in Ethiopia (Kassaye 2009). This is because of the socio-cultural and political marginality of Muslim communities of Ethiopia by the Christian one. The marginalization of Ethiopian Muslim had largely resulted by the myth presented Ethiopia as a purely Christian state (Hussein 2006). According to Dereje Feyisa (2011), if the image of Ethiopia as a purely Christian state had largely defined Ethiopia's foreign relations with its Muslim neighbours, it has also justified the socio-cultural marginality of its Muslim population. As cited in Dereje Feyissa (2011), Markakis (2003) noted that the official myth presented Ethiopia as a purely Christian state was widely accepted by the first generation of foreign scholars who studied this country. Therefore, foreign scholars who studied about Ethiopia were mostly focused on the Christian culture. It was because of this fact that the cultural elements of Ethiopian Muslim communities remained unstudied until recent years.

However, Ethiopian and expatriate scholars began to be involved in the study of Islamic culture in Ethiopia. Accordingly, British and Italian scholars such as Cerulli and Trimmingham were the first who showed interest in the study of Islamic culture in Ethiopia (Kassaye 2009). Moreover, some Ethiopian scholars have recently begun conducting research on Islamic areas (see Hussein 1992; Kassaye 2009). However, most parts of Islamic heritage such as Shrine centres and large parts of Islamic areas such as Jimma zone are not studied by both expatriate and Ethiopian scholars.

Jimma is the name of the zone on which this study was conducted as well as one of the five "Gibe states" that flourished in the second half of the eighteenth century (see

Mohammed 1990). Jimma is also the name of the current capital of the Jimma zone. The five Gibe-states that emerged in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century are part of the present Jimma zone administrative boundary. Therefore, the history of Jimma zone is mostly the history of the five Gibe-states.

According to Mohammed Hassen (1990), Jimma was the most important centre of Islamic culture and education in south western Ethiopia. Islamic religion was established around the today's Jimma zone in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Trimmingham J S. (1965) noted, Islam established itself in the Gibe Oromo states between 1840s and 1870s. According to Abir (1968), Islamic religion was introduced around the areas of the Gibe states by Muslim clerics and merchants from different parts of Ethiopia, mainly from Gonder, Wallo, Harar, Arsi, Bale and south western Wallaga as well as from the Sudan.

Moreover, the construction of mosques, the influx of Muslim scholars (*ulama*) to the area and the establishment of Islamic schools of learning (*madrasas*) immensely contributed to the strengthening of the position of Islam in Jimma (See Mohammed 1990). Consequently, Jimma became the most important centre of Islamic culture and education in south western Ethiopia. Thus, the position of Jimma as centre of Islamic activities can be proved by the presence of Islamic cultural heritages (tangible and non tangible heritages) in the area. Accordingly, Islamic shrine centre is one of the most important heritages of Muslim community in Jimma zone.

Shrine can literally be defined as a holy place used to conduct pilgrimage. Islamic shrine is a sanctuary devoted to Muslim saints and used for ritual practices. Braukamper.U (2002) states that the term shrine may be defined as any man made sanctuary (sometimes

associated with natural objects such as holy water and cave) devoted to a saint. It can be a *Kubbah* (dome: cupola shaped stone building) or a simple wooden construction, in both cases usually surrounded by a wall or fence. It may shelter a real or a fictive grave of saints.

Even if Islamic shrine is a place of worship just like a mosque, it has distinctive feature. Mosque is a place of worship within which peoples gathered to pray and to engage in teaching as well as, to convene with other saints (*awliya*) (Martin 2005). Whereas shrine is a sacred place devoted to saints within which peoples gathered to give honour and offerings to the saints (*awaliya*). According to John, A. Subhan (1983), the striking difference between Mosque and shrine can be illustrated by the distinction between the worshippers in a Mosque gathered for congregational prayer and the devotees of a saint when they assemble in a shrine to pay homage to him. As also noted by Mohammed Mukthar (2003), the ritual practices held within the mosque and the shrine centre shows the distinction between shrine and mosque. Mohammed Mukthar (2003:35) states that in a Mosque the prayers are offered in a solemn, dignified and orderly manner according to the prescribed details, but in a shrine one can see men, women and children all giving expressions to their inner feelings of devotion to the man whom they believed was a lover of God, and though his remains lie buried in tomb, yet he lives and receives their homage, hears their prayers and intercedes on their behalf.

Arguably, shrine is associated with Islamic sect known as Sufism. According to John A. Subhan (1983), the veneration of saints is common practice in Sufi Muslims, as they believe in the ability of the saints to intercede with Allah. The veneration of saints during

their life time is also continued following their death. As claimed by Martin Lwing (2005:22), “the Sufi believed that the saints of God die not, rather they merely depart from one habitation to another. Consequently the excessive honour paid to the saints in their life time is continued to them after their death”.

However, other Islamic sects such as *Salafism (Wahhabiya)* strongly opposed this veneration of saints. As Terje Ostebo (2009) stated, emphasizing strict adherence to the principles of God’s singularity (*Twahid*), the *Wahhabi* fiercely rejected pilgrimage to the shrines as well as other practices irreconcilable with this idea. The opponents of Sufism claimed that the Sufi teaching is irrelevant to the Quran and the Sunnah. Accordingly, Muhammad, ibn Rabee (1998:7) states that Sufism has greatly affected the beliefs of the Muslim and has diverted it from its true course, which was laid down in the Noble Quran and the Pure Sunnah. This is the most dangerous aspect of Sufism since Sufi thinking has become combined with veneration of the pious people and exaggeration in veneration of the dead, just as it has become combined with the saying that everything in existence is in reality Allah (*wahdatul-wujood*), not to mention the other aspects of Islam which Sufism has corrupted. Sufi followers are characterized by dependence upon others whilst falsely claiming to depend upon Allah, and by their monasticism (*ibid*). Therefore, this shows the divergent views of different Islamic sects towards the shrines of Islamic saints.

In Ethiopia, Sufi Islam was established in different areas. Dereje Feyisa (2011) stated that although Ethiopian Muslims belong to the wider Sunni Muslims predominantly following the Sha’afi school of thought, mystical Islam (Sufism) is also popular in the areas such as Bale, Arsi, Jimma, Harar, Wallo and etc. This implies that Islamic shrine centres are

perhaps found in those areas of Ethiopia where Sufi Islam was fiercely emerged. Therefore, it is logically reasonable to conduct archaeological research on the Islamic shrines of Jimma zone, one of the areas in Ethiopia where Sufism was already established.

However, despite the abundance potentiality and fast disappearing nature of the heritage (shrine), very little research has been conducted so far in Ethiopia. Therefore, more remains to be studied. Because, the study of Islamic shrine centre is very essential to understand the values, beliefs and culture of Muslim community. As Braukamper U (2002) noted, a comprehensive presentation of Islamic shrines in Ethiopia is very decisive.

In fact, little contribution made in the field by some Ethiopian and expatriate scholars and have mostly based on a very limited range of primary and secondary data and thus covered only certain aspects of the heritages such as historical and cultural aspects (see Braukamper 2002). Moreover, the works of these scholars confined only on few Islamic shrines found in some regions of the country and other areas yielding important sources on the issue remained unstudied. Even then, no Islamic shrine centres were archaeologically studied.

Nonetheless, Dirre Shaikh Hussein of Bale is one of the few Islamic shrine centres studied better in Ethiopia. Here, the works of Andrzejewski (1972); Temam (2002) and Umer (2006) can be mentioned in testimony of the better research conducted in the area. The investigations of these scholars have mainly focused on the historical and cultural aspect of Islamic shrines of Dirre Sheikh Hussein of Bale. By doing so, they tried to

reconstruct history and culture of Islamic religion in the area. Moreover, the works of these scholars are highly credited for providing a large corpus of literature on the subject.

However, none of the work of these scholars on the nature of Islam in Bale has provided clear understanding about the role of oral arts in transmitting and preserving cultures and traditions of the community. This is to mean that they gave little emphasize to the oral arts of the community and they viewed it as a passive reflector of historical events. In Africa, each religious cult has its own kind of poetry with special techniques of recitation. Therefore, oral arts play a significant role in symbolizing the religious as well as the secular image of each society (Jahn, 1969). According to Mohammed Hassen (1990), since the Oromo did not have written literature in the past, oral traditions remained as the sole source of knowledge about the society's socio-cultural and historical experiences. Despite this fact, the scholars who conducted researches on the Islamic shrine of Bale gave little emphasize to the oral arts associated to the shrines. In other words, in their study of Islam in Bale in general and Islamic shrine of Bale in particular, oral arts have been used very little by the scholars as an input.

Moreover, Terje Ostebo (2009) also tried to assess the functions of Islamic shrine in Bale in his comparative analysis of different Islamic sects in the area. In his research, Terje Ostebo (2009) observes the views that different Islamic sects in Bale hold towards Islamic shrine centres. In fact, his work shed light on the changes of the functions of Islamic shrine of Dirre Sheikh Hussein of Bale since the emergence of a new Islamic reform movement known as *Salafism* in the area in the 1970s. In other words, this research clearly shows changes in the socio-economic and religious functions of Islamic



shrines in Bale since the arrival of *Salafi* movement in the area in the 1970s. However, Terje Ostebo (2009) did not have mentioned whether change occurred or not to the indigenous cultures associated to the ritual practices at the shrines.

The issues related to the Islamic shrines of the Harar plateau and Arsi land are shortly discussed by Braukamper (2002). In his study of culture and history of southern Ethiopia, Braukamper tried to assess Islamic shrine centers of Harar Plateau and Arsi land from historical perspective. He attributed the introduction of Islam into the Arsi land mainly to the Muslim scholars from Harar as well as to the Amir of Harar known as Abd al – Shakur (1783 to 1794). To this regard Braukamper (2002: 155) states that Abd al-Shakur, the amir of Harar from 1783 to 1794, initiated the construction of a shrine in Annajina, which was dedicated to Abd al-Kadir al-Djilani, the founder of the Qadiriyya order. The establishment of this sanctuary was obviously intended to strengthen the Islamic mission among the “pagan” Arsi-Oromo.

However, he did not analyze the social, economic and religious relationships between the Harar city-state and the Arsi-Oromo people before Amir Abd al-Shakur initiated the introduction of Islamic teaching through the sanctuary. Beside this, his conclusion of the pre-Islamic Oromo of Arsi as a “pagan” shows analytical and historiographical gaps in the Braukamper’s work. Moreover, Braukamper also failed to show the role of the Arsi People in preserving the sediments of the medieval Islamic beliefs which, according to him, acted as stimulating factors in the Islamization of southern Ethiopia since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Braukamper 2002:170). Conceptually speaking, analytical and historiographical gaps are the serious drawbacks of Braukamper’s research.

In addition to this, some contributions are also made in the study of Muslim shrines in Wallo by Hussein Ahmed (1991). In this study, the socio-cultural and economic significances of the shrine centres have been clearly articulated. However, this work of Hussein Ahmed (1991) is limited in its space since he only focused on the two Islamic shrines of south Wallo.

Moreover, Kassaye Begashaw (2009) has also made an inventory of some Islamic shrine centers in his study of Archaeology of Islam in Northeast Shoa. In fact, the research conducted by Kassaye Begashaw (2009) is very significant in providing valuable information regarding the where about (location) of Islamic shrine centres in North east Shoa. Nevertheless, his failure to articulate the current conservation status of the shrine is a serious drawback of his work.

Regarding research and literature of Islamic shrines in Jimma zone, there is only one BA Thesis that has been done by Abdo Adem (1992). In his BA Thesis, Abdo Adem (1992) tried to conduct historical survey of a single Islamic shrine located around the town of Jimma, which is Kubba Abba Arabu. This is the only available literature that revealed the presence of Islamic shrine in Jimma zone.

It is now clear that the studies conducted on the shrine sites of Muslim community in Ethiopia are very limited both in their scope and detail. Therefore, a lot research remains to be done on the shrines of Muslim communities of Ethiopia.

This is because of the fact that in the absence of archaeological research, it is difficult to comprehend vulnerability of heritage to destruction. In other words, conducting

archaeological research is very useful to understand the extent of heritage susceptibility to destruction.

Today, human destruction of the heritage continues at the frightening pace, through land degradation, building projects, expansion of town and agriculture as well as looting (Renfrew 1996). The destruction of our evidence of the past can minimize our ability in understanding the past human cultural progress (UNESCO 1970). Hence, protection of the heritage and its utilization to understand past cultural activities as well as to socio-economic and cultural development of the local community is very challenging. Therefore, in order to protect the heritages from further destruction, conducting archaeological research is very crucial. It is now apparent that for the benefits of the present and the future, the study of past human remains is beyond question. In this regard, the value of studying Islamic shrine centres is unquestionable.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

In fact, the history of Islam began to be emerged in Ethiopia since 615 A.D (Trimingham 1965, Hussein 1992, Erlich 1994). This is to mean that the history of Islam in Ethiopia span about 1398 years. Through the course of its long history, Muslim communities of Ethiopia have acquired several cultural heritages (tangible and non-tangible ones). As in the case of Christianity and indigenous religions such as *Waqeffanna*, the establishment and growth of Islam contributed a lot to the development and the enrichment of Ethiopian culture (Kassaye 2009).

Like Christian churches and monasteries as well as ritual centres of indigenous religions, the mosques, urban and trading settlements, graves and shrines are the most important

depositories of the cultures of many indigenous Muslim communities (Kassaye 2009). In other words, the indigenous cultures and practices of several communities are maintained and preserved within the heritages of Islam. In view of this, J.W.Hussein (2005: 54) states that the *muudaa* ceremony at Annajina revealed that the pre-Islamic cultures of the Oromo formed not only the colour, but also the substance of the cult of Sheikh Hussein. Because of this, it is difficult to consider the cult of Sheikh Hussein as a new religious and cultural identity introduced with Islam.

It is now clear that religious conversion is not simple process of losing one cultural identity and gaining a new one. As Terje Ostebo (2009) stated, through the process of Islamisation, Muslims and adherents of the Oromo religion came to live side by side, in turn resulting in a gradual accommodation to the new faith. Therefore, Ethiopian indigenous cultural practices such as *muudaa* ceremony of Oromo are inculcated within the ritual practices of Islamic shrines. As a result of this, the study of Islamic shrine centres is very helpful to understand the cultural developments (cultural changes and continuity) of Muslim communities.

Despite this fact, Islamic cultural heritages in general and the shrine centres of Islam in particular are studied very little. Although few considerable studies have been recently conducted on Islamic cultures of Ethiopia, it is now important to critically look at some of these works. One of the significant works regarding the study of Islamic culture in Ethiopia has been done by Braukamper U. (2002). The study conducted by Braukamper is well acknowledged for providing us with additional knowledge about the culture and

history of southern Ethiopia. However, analytical gap and historiographical gaps are the major drawbacks of Braukamper's work.

As a result, his explanations are marred by some contradictory reflections. In Chapter IV of his book, Braukamper (2002: 139) confirmed that after the Oromo invasion of Bale, the region of *Annajina* was occupied by the Waw, who belonged to a "true" Oromo clan. By contact with the surviving Muslims they developed a kind of syncretism, and, in addition, pockets of orthodox Islam seem to have persisted throughout the centuries. Braukamper further explains that it was for good reason that Amir Abd al-Shakur just elected *Annajina* to establish a shrine of the Qadiriyya order as a focus for missionary activities.

Firstly, Braukamper (2002) is not clear in what he means by "good reason." He unconvincingly stated that the Amir's plan was to strengthen the Islamic mission among the "pagan" Arsi-Oromo, without first indicating why and how the Arsi remained "pagan" up to that time. He also failed to analyze the relation between Harar city state and Arsi Oromo before the introduction of Islam in the Arsi land.

Secondly, he also suggested that few pockets of orthodox Islamic practices persisted even after the Oromo overwhelmed the area, but said nothing about how the Islamic practices and the pre-Islamic Cushitic belief systems influenced each other to create a type of Islam that is local. Neither did he provide us with clear information concerning the Oromo's actions to assimilate the Islamic practices into the cultural mainstream. J.W. Hussein (2005) claimed that if one looks seriously into the Arsi-Oromo's social and cultural themes of tradition and the available linguistic-etymological data, one comes to realize

that the cult of Sheikh Hussein, in its current development, is the result of long years of mutual assimilation. Since arguably the Oromo occupied the area at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Shillington 1995; Braukamper & Mishago 1999), the Arsi's association with the cult of Sheikh Hussein most likely occurred around the same period. For Braukamper (2002), the Arsi's association with the cult of Sheikh Hussein is a recent religious adherence developed merely from socio-political crises. Therefore, he neglected the Arsi-Oromo's contribution in the cultural construction of the cult of Sheikh Hussein.

Thirdly, Braukamper (2002: 163) pointed out that the cult of Sheikh Hussein provided the Arsi with a new cultural identity after their religious complex associated with the *Abbaa Muudaa* (father of anointment) at Horra Wolabu declined considerably in the 1950s and replaced by the cult of Sheikh Nur Hussein, the patron saint of Muslim Arsi land.

Conversely, J.S. Trimingham (1965) claimed that among the African societies that lately embraced Islam, the cult of Muslim saints works as a substitute of the pre-Islamic ancestor worship rather than as a new religious practice. Therefore, the association of Arsi –Oromo to the cult of Sheikh Hussein did not bring a new cultural and religious identity for the Arsi-Oromo people. Generally, although Braukamper's contribution to Islamic studies in Ethiopia is credited, the above stated problems are serious drawbacks of his study and glaring denial of the reality on the ground.

Other studies were also made on the shrine of Dirre Sheikh Hussein of Bale by different scholars at different time. Dirre sheikh Hussein of Bale is one of the frequently studied shrines of Islam in Ethiopia. In view of this, considerable studies have been done by

scholars such as Andrzejewski (1972); Temam (2002) and Umer (2006). The main themes in the works of these scholars were Islamic culture and history. Of course, the works of these scholars are acknowledged for widening and deepening our knowledge of Islam in Ethiopia in general and of Muslim shrine of Dirre Sheikh Hussein in particular. Nonetheless, their failure to use oral arts (oral traditions) as large as possible in their sources of data is a major drawback of their works. According to Curtin (1995), the role of oral tradition in constructing African history is enormous as Africans transferred their natural and cultural heritage orally. In his *The Oromo of Ethiopia*, Mohammed Hassen (1990) placed importance on the people's oral traditions. Haji, A. (1991), as cited by J.W. Hussein (2005:23) on his part, revealed the significance of oral traditions for the further understanding of the cult of Sheikh Hussein and to explain the nature of Islamization (or Islamic tradition) in the south eastern parts of Ethiopia.

Despite this fact, the works of these scholars have mostly based on limited range of primary and secondary data and thus covered only certain historical aspects of the heritage. Moreover, these scholars were unable to integrate the history of Ethiopian Muslims within the general history of Ethiopia. Sean Hanretta (2005:490) states that we must strive now to reintegrate the history of Islam in Africa into the social, cultural, political and above all intellectual history of Africa.

The research conducted by Hussein Ahmed (1991) on Islamic shrine has been geographically limited to the two Muslim shrines in south Wallo. The shrine centres in other parts of the country which have considerable value in the study of Islamic culture were not included in the research of Hussein Ahmed (1991). This is to mean that his

research is very limited in its space. The investigation of Islamic shrine in Jimma by Abdo Adem (1992) is very important in articulating the presence of Muslim shrine in the study area. This thesis is very acknowledged because of the fact that it is the only single work regarding Muslim shrine sites of Jimma. In other words, none of the existing literature mentioned about Muslim shrine in Jimma zone except the thesis of Abdo Adem (1992). However, the investigation by Abdo Adem is confined to the historical survey of a single Islamic shrine called Kubba Abba Arabu, located around Jimma town. Furthermore, he said nothing about the presence of additional Islamic shrine sites in other parts of Jimma zone. In general, the research conducted on Islamic cultural elements in general and on Islamic shrine centres in particular have analytically, thematically and geographically limited.

Moreover, most of the researches conducted on Islamic shrines were not archaeological. Because of these, Islamic shrine centres in large parts of Ethiopia remain unstudied. It is obvious that a lot remains to be done on many parts of Ethiopia which have not been studied so far (Hussein 1994). This is also the case in Jimma zone. Although the available historical documents (e.g. Lewis 1964; Trimingham 1965; Mohammed 1990 and others) describe the areas around the today's Jimma zone as important centre of Islamic culture and education in south western Ethiopia, no systematic archaeological work exist on Muslim shrines of the study area.

Moreover, in the absence of archaeological research, conserving the heritages is very difficult and thus become more vulnerable for destruction. In other words, conducting archaeological research is a key step to grasp the extent of heritage exposure to



destruction. The illegal excavation or looting of archaeological sites and modernization projects that do not include heritage management into their plan are now serious phenomena (Dowman 1970).

As a result, in addition to the formulation of different rules and regulation regarding heritage management and conservation, the protection of archaeological heritages requires a wider base of professional knowledge and scientific approach (ICOMOS, 1990). In other words, formulation and implementation of rules and regulations as well as conducting research in accordance with the needs of the society are the most important steps in heritage management.

In this respect, the Ethiopian government has also endorsed the protection of the heritage through its proclamation No 209/ 2000. This proclamation sets different rules concerning the research and conservation activities of the cultural heritage (Negarit Gazeta Proc. No 209/2000). This implies the current need of the country to conduct research and conservation activities in the heritages of the country. Accordingly, this research is designed on the basis of current necessity to conduct research and conservation activities on the cultural heritages of the country with goals of identifying and presenting conservation priorities of Islamic shrines of Jimma zone. Therefore, despite the absence of significant archaeological research work both at country level and the context of Jimma zone, this study aspires to address the following major questions:

1. Where are Islamic shrines located in Jimma Zone?
2. What is the current state of conditions of the shrines in the study area?
3. What are the threats and why are the shrines threatened to destruction?

4. What could be solution for protection and conservation of the heritage?
5. What are cultural, scientific, and socio-economic significances of the shrines to the general public?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

This study is generally aimed at locating, documenting and analyzing Islamic shrine centers found in Jimma zone of Oromia Regional State. This therefore helps to provide archaeological data- base for concerned authorities and researchers particularly to the topic. Moreover, the current status of the heritages (shrines) is assessed by focusing their conservation.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study**

Specifically, the study aims at attaining the following objectives:

- Identifying Islamic related shrines in Jimma;
- Documenting them in order to create archaeological data-base;
- Identifying the state of conservation condition of the shrine centers at present;
- Providing means of alleviating both natural and anthropogenic damages
- Analyzing their socio-economic, cultural and scientific significances to the general public.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

It is obvious that cultural and natural heritages need to be researched and conserved to the benefits of the general public, namely the scientific community and the local community. This is because of the fact that heritages are key instruments to understand changes and continuity of cultural, social, political and economical aspects of the past society. In order to utilize the benefits, heritages should be researched and conserved.

However, there is great problem in conserving and protecting heritages and this in turn leads to destruction of most invaluable heritages in different parts of the country. Thus, the archaeological survey conducted in Jimma has a number of significances. Accordingly, this study would show the importance of the heritage to the socio-economic and cultural development of the community. This is to mean that it would bring the significances of Islamic shrines into public awareness. As pioneering work in the study area, it also helps to inspire scholars for further investigation. It would also create archaeological data base particularly to the topic (Islamic shrine centres). Moreover, it provides valuable information about the present conservation status of the heritages and this helps policy makers at federal and regional levels to formulate research and conservation strategies of the heritage and integrate them into country's development initiatives. Therefore, the information acquired from this research would help as an input to the formulation of policies and strategies concerning research and conservation activities of the heritages. Furthermore, the study would show the potential significances of the shrine sites as important tourism destination.

## **1.5. Methodology**

In order to realize the objectives that have been mentioned above, appropriate method of archaeological research need to be utilized. Therefore, archaeological field survey was regarded as the appropriate method of the study. Here, field survey was regarded as relevant method of this study because of absence of previous archaeological work on the Islamic shrine sites of Jimma zone. Consequently, shrine sites of Jimma zone need to be located and mapped in this study. As Colin Renfrew advised (1996) a conventional method to locate a new archaeological sites and features is to look for surviving remnants in the landscape. Accordingly, as the point of the study was identifying and locating Islamic shrines of the Jimma zone, archaeological field survey was considered as appropriate method of the study.

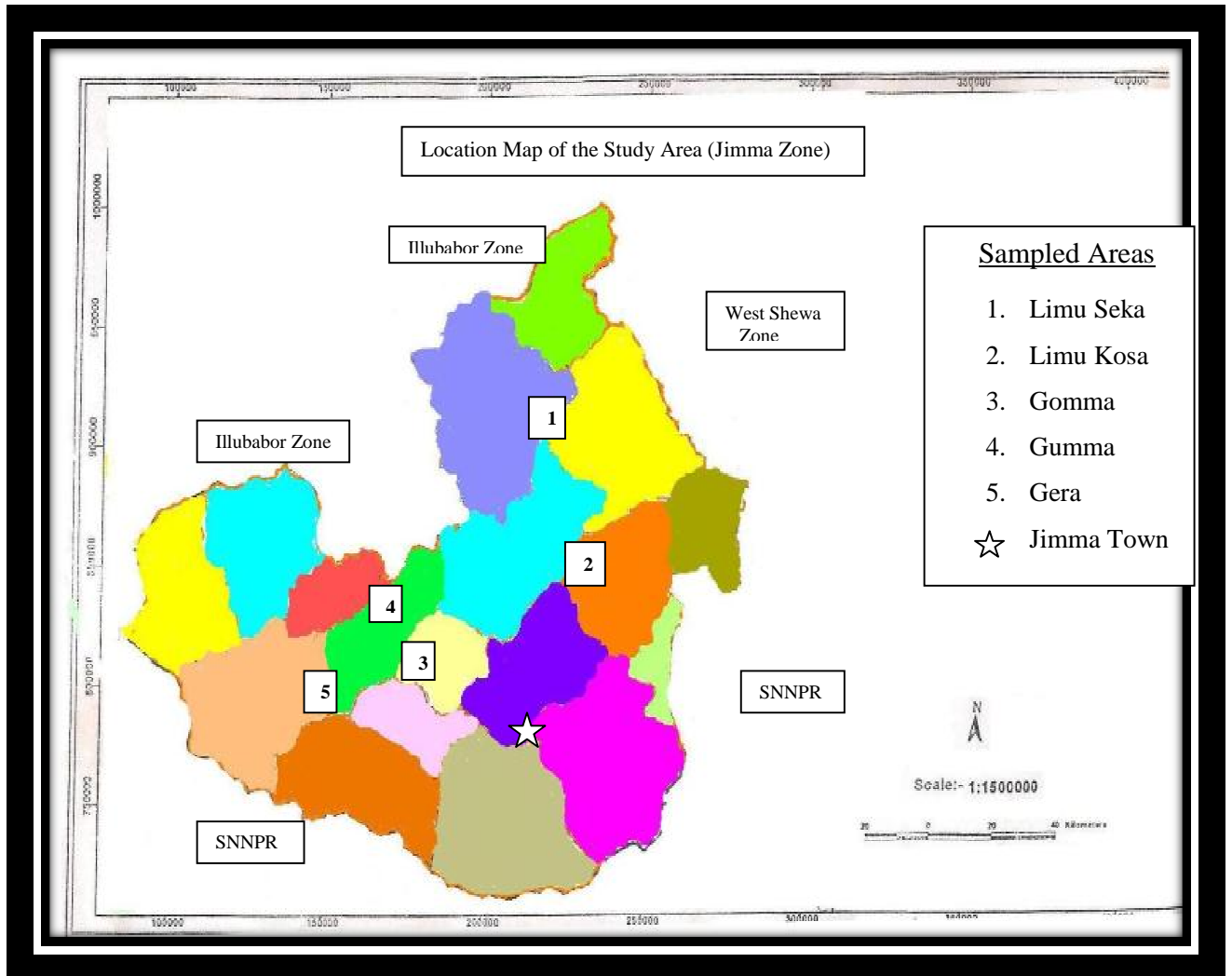
In this section, sampling technique used to select sites in the study area; techniques used to collect data both during the pre- field and during field work and techniques used to analyze data are presented.

### **1.5.1. Delimitation**

As already mentioned, archaeological has not been conducted on the Islamic shrine centres of Jimma zone. Consequently, the presence of Islamic shrine centre in Jimma zone is numerically and geographically unknown. However since it is very difficult to investigate all areas in Jimma zone with limited time and finance, it is important to delimit the research into the selected sites of the study area. Regarding this, Colin Renfrew (1996) claimed that since it is usually difficult to afford the time and money necessary to investigate all areas of a large region, some sort of sample is required.

Hence, systematic sampling technique was used to take sample of the areas from Jimma zone. As advised by scholars (Fagan 1986; Renfrew 1996), it is important to use systematic sampling technique if the objective of the research is to be able to draw reliable general conclusion about the whole region from small areas sampled. Therefore, since the objective of the study is to investigate Islamic shrine sites located in all parts of Jimma zone based on the sampled areas, systematic sampling technique was considered as appropriate tools to the case.

Accordingly, among the seventeen districts of Jimma zone, five districts and the areas of Jimma town administration were systematically selected. Thus, the five districts namely Gomma, Gumma, Limmu Genat, Limu Saka and Gerra and the areas of Jimma town administration were systematically selected as a sample. And totally the selected sites were six including Jimma town.



Map1 showing the Study Area

The areas were selected because of three important reasons. The first reason is their historical importance. Historically, the selected sites constitute the former areas of the five Gibe states which flourished in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the numbers of Gibe kingdom were five, the selected sites were six. This is because of the fact that the former kingdom of Limu Enareya is currently divided into two districts, namely Limu Genat and Limu Saka.

Nonetheless, the six selected sites represent the five Gibe states. Consequently, they have historical significance. Secondly, as already mentioned, Abdo Adem (1992) shows the presence of one Islamic shrine in the former kingdom of Jimma (around the today's Jimma town). On the basis of this information, there is an assumption that the five Gibe states may have the potential to possess additional Islamic shrines. Thirdly, the selected sites are easier to investigate because of their proximity with each other and because of their accessibility. Even if six sites were systematically selected, the research is initially designed to investigate Islamic shrine sites located in all parts of Jimma zone as much as possible.

### **1.5.2. Data Acquisition Techniques**

In this study, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. This has been done both during the pre-field and during the field work (during on site investigation of cultural sites).

#### **1.5.2.1. Pre-field Data Acquisition**

Before the field work, data was acquired by consulting both published and unpublished secondary sources such as books, articles, journals and unpublished reports from the libraries of Addis Ababa University, Institute of Ethiopian Study and ARCCH. This is because of the fact that consulting documentary sources is the first major task of the archaeologist to identify location of sites and features (Renfrew 1996: 69).

Thus, consultation of documentary sources offered valuable opportunity to know whether or not research conducted on the study area, particularly in relation to the topic of this

research. According to Dowman (1970), consultation of documentary sources before the field work provides basic direction to the field survey. In addition, internet sources were used to gather secondary data. These data have been used for better interpretation and analysis.

#### **1.5.2.2. Data Acquisition Techniques during the Field Work**

During the field work, primary data from the site was collected by conducting survey and interviewing the local people. Based on the data gathered from the secondary sources (books, articles, journals and unpublished reports), there is so far no archaeological research exists on the topic in the study area. Therefore, this implies the importance of conducting reconnaissance survey in order to identify the location of shrine sites within the study area. To do so, the first step was consulting the concerned offices at zone and district levels. Information was gathered from culture and tourism office of Jimma zone as well as council of Islamic affairs of Jimma zone. In addition to this, culture and tourism offices of the five selected districts and Jimma town were consulted. The reconnaissance survey also supported by the information acquired from the local elders. From each and every selected districts and Jimma town, three elders were systematically selected with the help of Council of Islamic affairs and culture and tourism offices of Jimma zone and the selected districts and town of Jimma during the reconnaissance survey. Finally, the information gathered from the local elders and the offices was scrutinized and accompanied by the pre-field data acquired from secondary sources.

Accordingly, the result of this preliminary survey shows that two Islamic shrine sites are found in Jimma zone. Among the two shrines one is located around Jimma town, which



has been cited by Abdo Adem (1992). While the second shrine site is located out of the selected areas at the district of Sokoru. Then, intensive survey was conducted on the two Islamic shrine centres namely, Kubba Abba Arabu which is located around Jimma town and the Sadeqiyo shrine which is located in the Sokoru district. Intensive survey was conducted to measure the extent of the shrine sites, to see the architectural style and raw material used, to evaluate the present conservation status of the shrine sites and to identify the associated features. The material subject to this work was categorized mainly based on their level of association to Islamic shrines. The kinds of information identified during intensive survey were documented on inventory format adapted from ARCCH (see the attached inventory format).

#### **1.5.2.2.1. Measurement**

Monumental houses found in the shrine sites were measured using metric system. Tape measure was used to measure the length and width of the monumental houses existed in the shrine sites. The distant of the sites from the nearest town were measured using hand held GPS.

#### **1.5.2.2.2. Photographing**

Digital camera was used to take pictures of the shrine sites, monumental houses in the sites, and every other feature related to the shrine sites. The photographs have been taken using scale and each photograph was followed by annotating note (name, location, direction view....).

### **1.5.2.2.3. Interview**

In order to understand the perception of the local people regarding the shrine sites, the history and functions of the shrine sites as well as to identify conservation problems of the shrine sites, oral interview was conducted to selected informants. A total of eight (8) elders were selected from the local residents living near the shrine sites during the intensive survey. The informants were selected with the help of Culture and Tourism Offices of Jimma town and Sokoru district. First, a letters of collaboration were written from the Offices of Culture and Tourism of Jimma town and Sokoru district to the guardians of the shrines found within their respective area of administrative jurisdiction as well as to the *Kebelles* within which the shrines are located (the letter from Culture and Tourism Office of Sokoru district to Sadeqa Kebelle, the *Kebelle* where Sadeqiyo shrine is located, is attached in testimony of this at Appendix III). Then, the *Kebelles* and the guardians of the shrine sites have also cooperated by facilitating the selection of informants and by providing valuable information. The selection of informant was conducted based on their willingness, age (elders), number of years living in the areas, knowledge and religion. After the informants were briefed about the objective of the research, oral interview questions were presented to collect the data. The data has been collected from the informants using audio recorder tape and field note.

### **1.5.3. Techniques of data Analysis**

In this study, data is analyzed through qualitative (description) and quantitative (statistical) techniques. These techniques are used to analyze the data collected from secondary sources (such as books, journals, articles and unpublished reports...) and from

the field work. Accordingly, the data collected from the field using GPS was used to describe the locations of the shrine sites both in terms of quantitative and qualitative techniques. In addition to this, the qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive techniques. Generally, architectural styles, geographical locations, functions, conservation status of the sites and other issues related to Islamic shrines of the study area are evaluated through these techniques.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2. The Study Area: Natural and Cultural Setting**

#### **2.1. Geographical Location and Environmental Setting**

It is obvious that the cultural and historical development of every society is depends on the natural environmental situation of the area. Accordingly, in this chapter, the social, cultural, historical and economical background of Jimma zone is presented in relation to the natural environmental description of the area.

Jimma Zone is one of the zones of Oromia Regional State which is located in south western parts of Ethiopia and it covers an area of 15,568.58 square kilometres (ONRG 2000, Profile of Oromia zones). Concerning administrative structure, Jimma zone is divided into seventeen districts each with its own administrative capital. Jimma town is the capital of Jimma zone. Jimma Zone is bounded on the south by Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (Kaffa zone), on the west and northwest by Illubabor Zone, on the northeast by West Shoa zone and in the East by Omo Zone of Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region.

In geological terms, the zone is underlain by volcanic rocks of Tertiary age, which is mostly basalt in the vicinity of Jimma. According to Ethiopian Geological Survey Report (2009) the rock unit of the zone consists of medium to acid lava and tuffs of the so called Trap formation. The three dominant soil types in Jimma zone are Eutric verisols, Humic Alisols and Humic Nitosols (Jimma Agricultural Research Centre 2010).

According to the report from the National Metrology Agency (2011), Jimma Zone reliably receives good rains, ranging from 1,200 – 2,800 mm per annum. In normal years,

the rainy season extends from February to October. The same report states that most districts of Jimma Zone receive *belg* rains from February, with intermittent rains continuing through October. Sigimo and Setema districts, however, generally receive rain a month earlier (in January) than the other districts of Jimma Zone.

In addition to this, many perennial rivers exist as a result of the topography, vegetation cover and rainfall pattern in the zone. Cheseche, Kota, Awetu, Urgessa, Fite, Janje, Sunde and Bore are the prominent rivers found in the Zone. The rivers drain to Ghibe/Omo to the east and Dedesa River to the north. In addition to this, Gibe is the greatest river that cross Jimma zone and flows east and join Omo River, then to Lake Turkana of Kenya.



Figure 1. Gibe River around Asandabo (photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

As far as the environment is concerned, Jimma Zone has an agro-ecological setting with 15% of highland, 67% of midland and 18% of lowland areas. It lies in the climatic zone locally known as *Badda Dare (woynna Daga)* which is considered ideal for agriculture as well as human settlement (Ministry of Agriculture 2007). According to the survey conducted by Mineral and Land Resource Management Bureau of Oromia Regional State (2009), the highest point in Jimma zone is Mount Maigudo (2,386 m).

Although Jimma zone is known by its rich natural resources, the degradation of natural resources has accelerated in recent years without commensurate measures being taken to protect the resource base and conserve the environment. Based on studies in Oromia Regional State by WBISPP (2001), the highest rate of deforestation was 2.6% per annum in Jimma Zone. Moreover, the study shows that 27% of the Oromia Regional State's forests in 1990 will have been turned to cultivation by 2020 and the greatest forest losses will be in Jimma zone (225,500ha), Bale zone (161,500ha) and Illubabor zone (110,000 ha). The deforestation rate of Jimma zone and other zones of Oromia Regional State is presented for comparison in the charts here below.

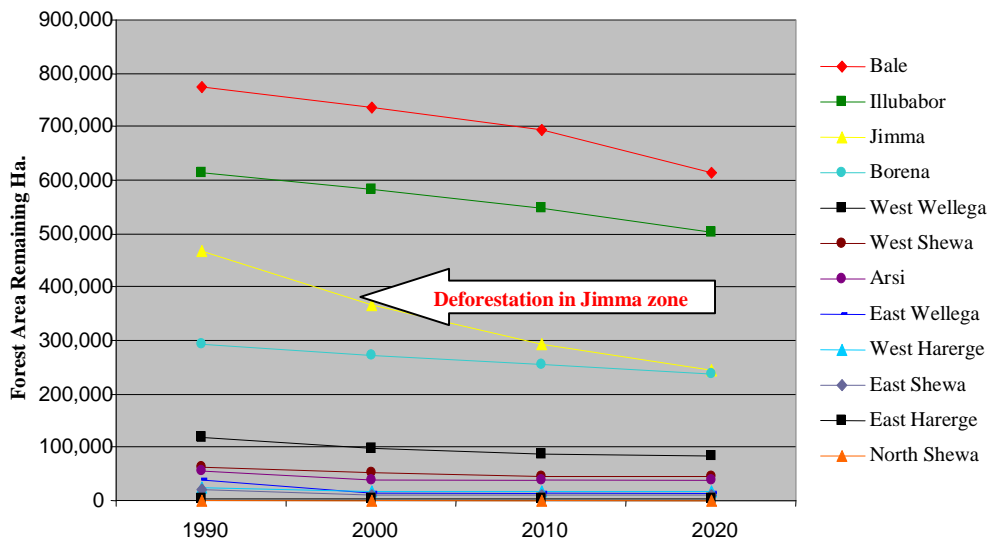


Figure 2 Deforestation in Oromia Regionl State

Source, Woody Biomass Inventory and Strategic Planning Project (MoA, 2001, Addis Ababa)

The rapid rate of deforestation implies the dramatic degradation of environment and natural resources of Jimma zone. According to the study of Jimma Agricultural Research Centre (2010), deforestation in Jimma zone is mainly caused by expansion of agricultural land, settlement expansion because of population growth and firing. Moreover, Gedefa Negera (2009) also noted that the rapid expansion of cultivation and agricultural settlement has resulted in the extensive fragmentation of biologically rich natural habitats and widespread environmental degradation. Thus, firings of forest have been observed during field work at Sadeqa *Kebelle* of Sokoru district.



Figure 3 Firing of forest at Sadeka *Kebelle*, Sokoru district (Photo by Seyoum Merga, 2012)

## **2.2. Demographic Context**

Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the CSA, Jimma Zone has a total population of 2,486,155, an increase of 26.76% over the 1994 census, of whom 1,250,527 are men and 1,235,628 women. Jimma has a population density of 159.69. As far as the ethnic composition is concerned, the Oromo, Amhara and Yem constitute 94.7% of the total population of Jimma zone.



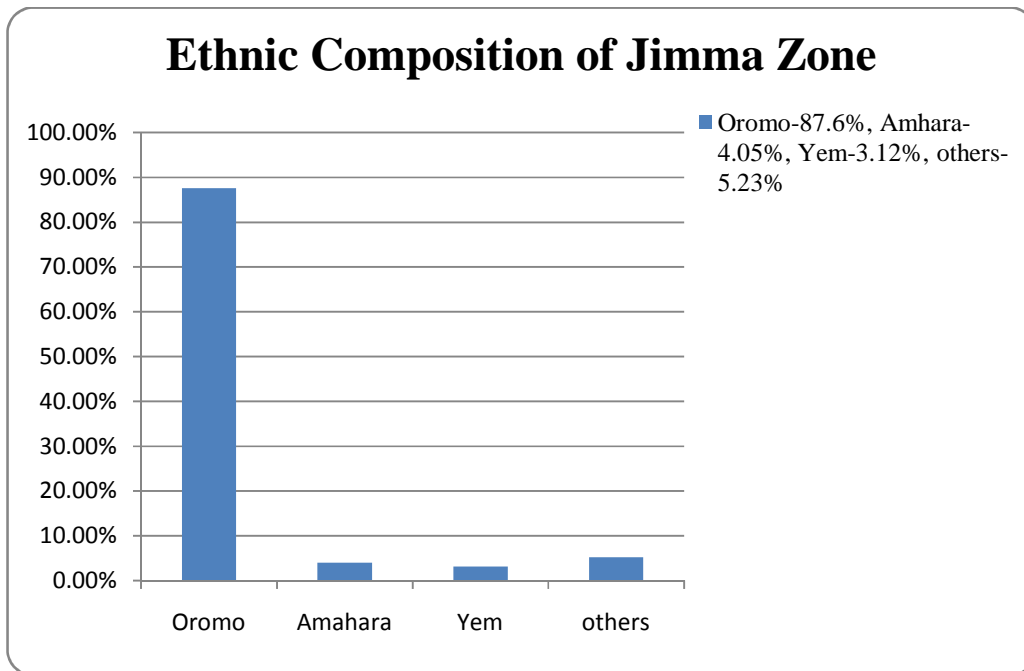


Chart.1 Ethnic composition in Jimma Zone (CSA, 2007)

As far as the language is concerned, the 2007 report from Central Statistics Agency shows that *Oromiffa* is spoken as a first language by 90.43% and 5.33% speak Amharic; the remaining 4.24% speak all other primary languages reported.

Based on the data presented above, the Oromo people constitute 87.6 % of the total population of Jimma zone and *Affan Oromo* is spoken as first language by 90.43% of the people of Jimma zone. This implies that *Affan Oromo* is spoken as a first language not only by the Oromo people, but it is also spoken as a first language by the non-Oromo people of Jimma zone. Statistically, in addition to the Oromo people (87.6 % of the people of Jimma zone), 2.83 % of the people of Jimma zone, who belongs to other ethnic groups (non-Oromos) speak *Affan Oromo* as a first language. Therefore, *Affan Oromo* is widely spoken as a first language even by the non- Oromo peoples of Jimma zone.

### **2.3 .Economic Activities**

Economically, Jimma zone is one of the major coffee growing areas of Oromia Regional State and well endowed with natural resources contributing significantly to the national economy. According to Ministry of Agriculture (2007), Jimma zone is one of Ethiopia's richest and most important agricultural areas, producing much of the country's coffee, a wide variety of arable land and substantial quantities of livestock production.

From historical point of view, several scholars (e.g. Richard Pankhrust 1968; Mohammed Hassen 1990; Asafa Jalata 1993 and others) describe the emergence of different trade centres in the south western Ethiopia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among these local centres of trade, the famous were Bonga (in Kaffa), Saqqa (in Limmu), and Hirmata (in Jimma). These market towns, located on the busy long distance trade routes, also served as political centres. They had both administrative and economic significance (Mohamed 1990).

Bonga was the capital of the Kingdom of Kaffa and the biggest centre of exchange in that kingdom. According to Guluma Gemedda (1984) the importance of trade in Bonga had attracted the *Jabarti* traders from the north, the Omotic traders from the south and the surrounding *Afkala* traders. This implies that Bonga was important commercial center of south western Ethiopia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition to Bonga, Saqqa also emerged as an important trade center of south western Ethiopia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding this, Mohammed Hassen (1990) claimed that Saqqa, the capital of Limmu Ennarya's kingdom, was the most important commercial center which developed in the Gibe region prior to Menelik's conquest of southwest

Ethiopia. It emerged both as a capital of the kingdom of Limmu Ennarya and as a trade center in the nineteenth century. It was the greatest emporium in the region up to the 1850s. Mohammed Hassen (1990) states that the Oromo state of Limmu Ennarya promoted trade by protecting and encouraging long distance merchants and local traders.

In mid nineteenth century, Saqqa was already a major commercial center between Kaffa and the other Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe valley on the one hand and Guduru, Gojjam, Gondar and other locations in the north on the other (Guluma 1984). By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, however, Limmu Ennarya's economic predominance in the south western Ethiopia was effectively challenged by Jimma kingdom. The commercial superiority of Saqqa was rapidly dwindled because of the expansion of Jimma kingdom under Abba Jifar I (1830-1854).

As noted by Guluma Gameda (1984) the kingdom of Limmu - Ennarya declined militarily and commercially from about the middle of the nineteenth century mainly owing to the expansion of Jimma state under Abba Jifar I. Moreover, Abba Jifar I also invited a number of Muslim clerics to evangelize freely in his domain in order to attract Muslim traders. In relation to this, Mohammed Hassen (1990:176) states that "Abba Jifar I embraced Islam for political and economic motives than for religious needs." Jimma's commercial pre-eminence was further secured after the military success of Abba Jifar I against 'Janjero' (Yem) and Badifola in 1844 and 1847 respectively (Guluma 1984). The victory of *Abba* Jifar I assured him of control over an important caravan route between Jimma and the northern markets (Richard 1968). Thus in the second half of the nineteenth century, Hirmata of Jimma kingdom became the most important center of

trade in the Gibe region. Therefore, a well-organized political order, good endowment in economic resources, and strategic location on the main long distance trade route leading into south western Ethiopia, helped the state of Jimma to quickly become the most powerful state in the region.

The most important of these routes could be summarized as follows as described by Yonas Seifu (2002: 43):-

1. Jimma – The Gibe crossing - Kambatta - Alaba - Shashamane - kofale - Dodola - Adabba - Robe - Gasera or Goro - Ginir.
2. Bonga - Jimma - Saqqa - Assabdabo - Baso – Gondar – Matamma /Massawa
3. Jimma - Saqqa - Chirra - Ilubabor
4. Bonga - Jimma - Saqqa - Gurage - Aleyu Amba - Harar Zeila
5. Jimma - crossing Gibe - Dilla.

Generally, Jimma zone constitutes important commercial centres that flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century along with the main long distance trade routes.

In addition to its historical significance in the economic history of Ethiopia, Jimma zone is contributing significantly in the contemporary economy of Ethiopia. Accordingly, the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) reported that 26,743 tons of coffee was produced in this zone in the year ending in 2005, based on inspection records from the Ethiopian Coffee and Tea authority. This represents 23.2% of the Oromia Region's output and 11.8% of Ethiopia's total output, and makes Jimma one of the three top producers of coffee, along with the Sidama and Gedeo Zones.

Moreover, in addition to coffee, a wide variety of crops are grown in Jimma zone based on its altitudinal variations. As Westphal E, (1975) classified the agro-ecological zones of Ethiopia into three, based on the altitudinal and temperature variations, the agro-ecology of Jimma zone can be classified into three namely, *Badda (Dega)* -cool highlands above 2300 m (15% of Jimma zone), *Badda Dare (Waina Dega)*- intermediate midlands with altitudinal ranges between 1500-2300m (67% of Jomma zone) and *Gammojjii (Kola)*\_ hotter lowlands below 1500m (18% of Jimma zone). Accordingly, crops such as wheat, barley and pulses are produced in the highland (*Badda*) areas of Jimma zone. While, in the mid lands (*Badda Dare*) areas of Jimma zone, Teff and maize are the widely produced crops. Finger Millets and Oil Seeds are also rarely grown in the lowland (*Gammojjii*) areas of Jimma zone (Jimma Agricultural Research Centre, Special Report for its 41<sup>st</sup> Anniversary, 1993). Beside this, livestock production is also another source of economic activity in Jimma zone. Regarding this, based on the 2005 livestock census, CSA (2007) indicate the presence of 980,000 cattle in Jimma zone.

From the preceding discussion, it is possible to conclude that Jimma zone has important place in the economic history of Ethiopia and also is significantly contributing to the national economy, especially in its coffee production.

## **2.4 Religion**

Although Jimma zone is the most known Islamic land in south western Ethiopia, it also inhabited by the followers of other religions such as Protestants and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Nonetheless, majority of the peoples in Jimma zone are Muslims. Islam is relatively the oldest religion of the area compared with orthodox and Protestantism. It

was introduced around Jimma in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The exact time when Orthodox Christianity was introduced in Jimma is not known. However, some historical accounts state that Orthodox Christianity was existed prior to 1932 around Fofa and Limmu, some 60 and 80Kms away from Jimma town (see Yonas 2002). Jimma appears to have been among the first few areas in southern Ethiopia to have opened its doors to Protestantism. In the late 1920s, a missionary team led by a Dr. Thomas A. Lambie, after receiving permission from the government of Ethiopia to preach the gospel, is said to have started journey to Jimma (See Warkineh 2010; Yonas 2002).

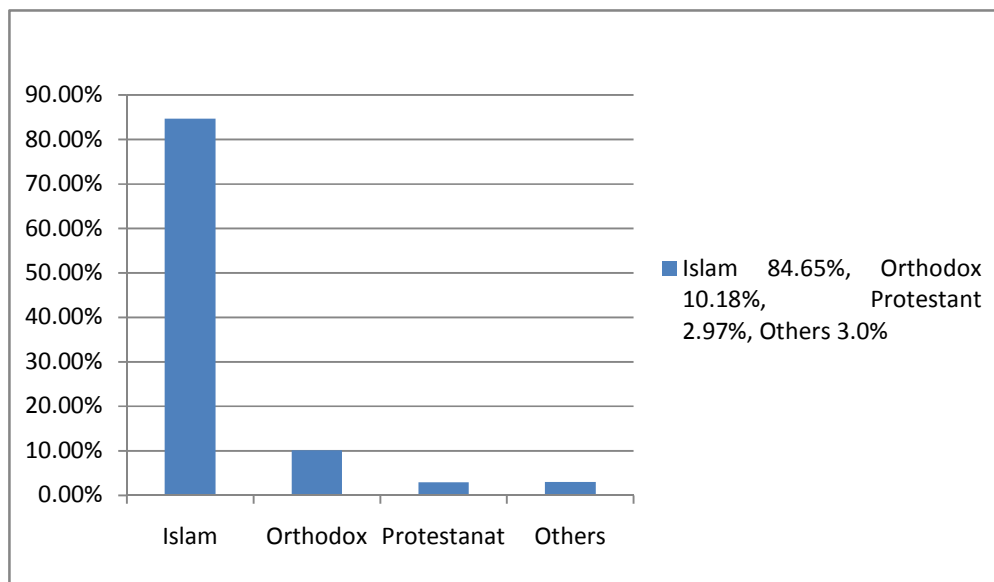


Chart 2 Religious compositions in Jimma Zone (CSA, 2007)

Although historical Accounts (Trimingham 1965; Abir 1968; Mohammed 1990 and others) indicate that Islamic religion was introduced in the areas of today's Jimma zone relatively late compared to other Islamic lands in Ethiopia such as Wallo, Harar, Bale etc, the above statistical data shows (CSA 2007) that vast majority (84.65%) of the peoples of Jimma zone are Muslims. This implies that Islamic religion was quickly expanded among

the peoples of Jimma zone within a short period of time (not more than a century and half) since its introduction in the areas of Jimma zone in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **2.5 History of Settlement Pattern and Pre-Islamic Religion**

As statistical data shows, ethnically 87.6% of the people of Jimma zone are belonging to Oromo nation and religiously, 84.65% of the peoples of Jimma zone are also Muslims. This implies that Jimma is an area which is dominantly inhabited by Muslim Oromo. Therefore, it is now important to see history of settlement pattern and pre-Islamic religion of the Oromo of Jimma zone.

According to historical accounts, (Tessema Ta'a 2004; Mohammed Hassen 1990; Assafa Jallela 1993 and others), the area of today's Jimma zone was inhabited by the Oromo people following the mass expansion of Oromo in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Before embarking to the main subject, it is perhaps important to see the 16<sup>th</sup> century history of the Oromo people. As noted by Tessema Ta'a (2004:2), the period of 16<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a great turning point in Oromo history which could be termed as *Oromo Renaissance*.

Concerning ethnography, the Oromo are indigenous inhabitants of Northeast Africa and speakers of *Affan Oromo* which belongs to eastern Cushitic, a sub-family of Afro-Asiatic (Greenberg 1963; Ehert 2002). As Tessema Ta'a (2004:1) states, "It is beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Oromo who belong to the Cushitic stock are one of the earliest indigenous inhabitants in Northeast Africa".

Though the Oromo cultural identity began to develop in the earlier period of 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium BC, the history of Oromo people up to 16<sup>th</sup> century has not been well recorded (Ehret 2000). Although the period up to 1500 A.D saw the growth and development of the Oromo society as a distinct group within the Cushitic stock of people as *Afaan* Oromo speakers with their Gada institution; during this period, like that of many African societies, not much has been recorded about the Oromo in Northeast Africa (see also Tessema 2004).

In the first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Oromo people began a successful expansion from an area called Madda Wallabu (today located in Bale zone). According to Warkneh, A. Sorri (2010), the name Madda Wallabu means source of freedom which is derived from two *Oromiffa* words, *Maddda* (source) and *wallabuma* (freedom). Moreover, Tessema Ta'a (2004:5) states that "in the first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Oromo began mass expansion from the south-central of today's Ethiopia (*Madda Wallabuu* area) in order to react against the expanding Christian and Muslim neighbouring states of the time as well as to recover the lost lands since the days of the Cushitic dispersal". In the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Oromo were well consolidated under the Gada system and had obtained an upper hand against all their rivals and had settled in the wealthy lands of Oromia (Mohammed 1990; Assefa 2004 and Tesema 2004).

Therefore, it was during this period that the Oromo people had settled around the areas of today's Jimma zone. To this regard, Warkineh A. Sorri (2010) claimed that the south western part of Ethiopia was controlled by the Macca and Tulama moieties of Oromo during *Gada Birmaji* (1579-1586).



Warkineh, A. Sorri (2010) claimed these two groups of Oromo had practiced Gada system in common until the beginnings of 17<sup>th</sup> century and their Gada center is called 'Oda Nabe' with its set at Akaki (today it is part of Addis Ababa city administration). Later, the Macca Oromo established its own separate Gada known as 'Oda Bisil' with its centre around Ambo and occupied the south western Oromia (Tessema 2004). Then, the Macca Oromo divided itself into two groups known as 'Afre' and 'Sadacha' (which means the fourth and the third). In the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 'Afre' group established the two Leqa states in Wallega known as Leqa Qelem and Leqa Naqamte. While the 'Sadacha' group of Macca established the five Gibe states known as 'Enarya, Jimma, Gera, Gomma and Gumma in the areas of today's Jimma zone' (see Warkineh 2010). Following the emergence of monarchical states in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gada system was declined among the Macca Oromo (Mohammed 1990).

Gada system was essentially an egalitarian and democratic institution which was practiced by the Oromo people for several centuries (Tessema 2004). According to Asmarom Legesse's definition (1973:8), "The Gada system is a system of classes (*luba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities".

Gada was a complex system in which the Oromo were divided into five *missensa* or "parties" and participated in military, political, legal and cultural affairs (Baissa, 1971). Each *missensa* or party had specific roles and functions to perform in five stages of eight years each.

Roles and responsibilities began in “childhood,” that is social age with an initiation into the system (Lewis 2004:5). All males in a generational age (social age) in each *missensa* had to be initiated as *itimako*, in the first stage. The second grade, *daballe*, continued the socialization process as well as beginning military training. The third stage *folle*, performed military service under the direction of the *abba dula* and the *abba gada*. *Qondala* was the fourth stage which had dual tasks of military service and preparation for leadership to take over power from the exiting *luba* or *gada* leaders (Lemmu 2004).

As noted by Warkineh A. Sorri (2010), the *Qondala* leaders served as apprentices to the ruling council and elected leaders from their own group at the end of the fifth year and prepared to take over power. They observed the ruling council, attended their meetings but were not given any decision-making capacity until the formal transfer of power at the end of the eighth year (*ibid*). At the transfer of power, the waiting *missensa* would hold ceremonies and become the ruling party for a period of eight years and the leaders of the previous *missensa* retired into an advisory role (Lemmu 2004). Corrupt or dictatorial leaders would be removed from power through *buqisu* (recall) before the official end of their term. Oromo women had also a parallel institution known as *siqqee*. This institution promoted gender equality in Oromo society (see Baissa 1971; Lemmu 2004).

In general, Gada system was a participatory democratic culture of the Oromo people in which the rulers were elected by the people. However, Gada system was declined among the Oromo of south western Oromia owing to the emergence of monarchical states in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Tassama Ta’a (2004), monarchical states such as the five Gibe kingdoms were evolved at the cost of the Gada system.

As far as the early religion is concerned, Oromo people had their own indigenous religion prior to the coming of Islam and Christianity to the area, which is called ‘*Waaqeffannaa*’ (belief in Sky God). ‘*Waaqeffannaa*’ is the Oromo version of African traditional religion. In *Waaqeffannaa*, religious affairs are controlled by a priest (*qaalluu*) and a priestess (*qaallittii*).

Priests and priestesses are ritual experts who are believed to have special relationships with a spirit (*ayyaana*) that possesses them at regular intervals (Bula 2011). Following the expansion of Islam and Christian religions among the Oromo people, the Oromo traditional religion was declined. Accordingly, Islamic religion was introduced into Jimma zone in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Oromo traditional religion was began to decline in the area (see Mohammed 1990; Warkineh 2010). However, in most part of Muslim Oromo lands including Jimma zone, the Oromo traditional religion existed side by side with Islam as the later was mostly tolerant in the past. Therefore, some elements of pre-Islamic Oromo culture were incorporated into Islamic practices. That is why Jeylan W. Hussein (2005) states that the indigenous Oromo tradition offered Islam an African features.

## Chapter Three

### 3 Findings and Analysis

As it has been already stated, archaeological field survey revealed the presence of two Islamic shrine sites in two different parts of Jimma zone. The shrines, namely Sadeqiyo and *Abba Arabu* are located in Sokoru district and around Jimma town respectively. Accordingly, the detail description and analysis about the shrine sites as well as other related features are presented here in this chapter.

#### 3.1. *Abba Arabu*: an Islamic shrine around Jimma town

The sanctuary of *Abba Arabu* is situated in the eastern side of Jimma town at a distance of 9 km from the centre of the town. The shrine is located on the hill known as Mujja and the average altitude of the shrine site is 2153 m (see Figure 5). The shrine site of *Abba Arabu* is in close proximity with the palace (locally known as *Masara*) of *Abba Jifar II* which lies on the Jiren hill. Accordingly, the shrine is located on the northern side of the palace (*Masara*) of *Abba Jifar II* at a distance of 1.5 Km.

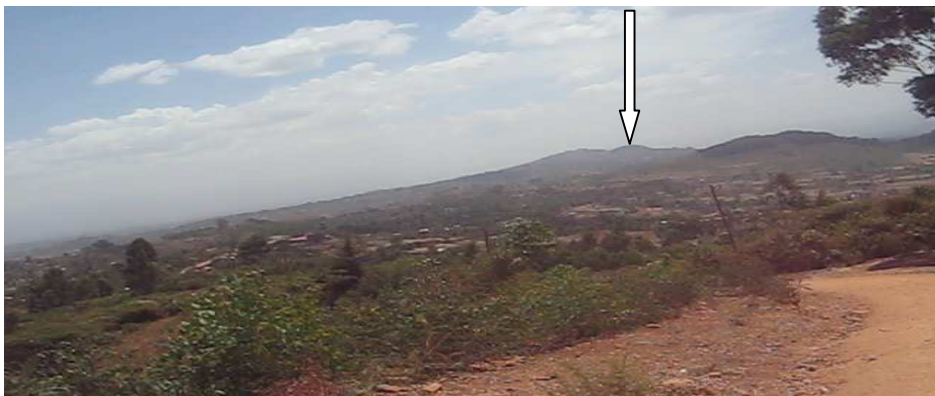


Figure 4 Mujja hill, where *Abba Arabu* shrine is located as seen from the north of Jiren hill, where the palace of *Abba Jifar II* is found. (Photo by Seyoum Merga 2012)

As stated by Mohammed Hassen (1990), Jiren was the political center of Jimma kingdom and the main seat of its rulers. Jiren was founded as a political center of Jimma kingdom during the reign of *Abba Jifar I* (see Mohammed 1990; Yonas 2002). According to Yonas Seifu (2002), prior to Jiren, the capital of the kingdom was Kiftana in the district of Manna. Regarding the meaning of the name Jiren, as noted by Yonas Seifu (2002) there are two traditions. “The first tradition claims that the word 'Jiren' is derived from the expression by the Diggo rulers and clan members: "*Jirenni Kenna Asi*" (here is our residence) and the second tradition identify Jiren with a certain woman called "*Jira*," who they say was the ruler of the area around the present site of Jiren at the time of Oromo settlement in the region” (Yonas 2002: 8). However, during the field work, all of my informants support the former story. Nonetheless, the presence of the palace (*Masara*) of *Abba Jifar II* on the hill of Jiren shows the political centrality of the area to the kingdom of Jimma. And, the sanctuary of *Abba Arabu* is located near the palace (*Masara*) of *Abba Jifar II*.



Figure 5 the Palace (*Masara*) of Abba Jifar II viewed from the entrance (Photo by Seyoum M. 2012).

As it has been stated above, *Abba Arabu* shrine is located in the eastern edge of Jimma town. From the town to the shrine, there is a drier weather road and both sides of the road are covered by artificial forest especially by Eucalyptus tree (see Figure 7). However, the surrounding area of the shrine has no vegetation cover showing intensive human exploitation of the area in the past.



Figure 6 the road from Jimma town to *Abba Arabu*'s Shrine (photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

In the shrine site, there is a tomb of *Abba Arabu* with a house built on it. The house of the tomb itself is surrounded by a fenced enclosure and the fence is built from wood. The house on the tomb of *Abba Arabu* is built by wood, mud, stone and iron sheet on its roof with rectangular plan. The total width of the house is about 32 m and it has a length of about 4 m. The house on the tomb of *Abba Arabu* has only one door lying in the western direction which serves as entrance and exit for both male and female devotees of the saint. The house has no window and hence the interior is very dark. In addition to this,

the curtain by which the tomb is covered is decorated by various depicted icons and flowers attached to it (see figure 7, B). However, no one is allowed to enter the tomb covered by curtains.



A



B

Figure 7 A and B partial view of the tomb house and the tomb of *Abba* Arabu as it is covered by curtains.

In the eastern front of the mausoleum, there is a mosque. The mosque is cupola shaped with its wall and roof covered by iron sheet. According to the informants, the mosque located near the shrine is used by the people for regular prayer. The respondents claimed that the mosque and the shrine have different function. The mosque is a place where the Muslims pray and gratify Allah, particularly for the mercy that Allah would give them through interceding of the saint. The shrine is a place where the Muslims memorize and venerate the saint, as the people would get the will of their heart from Allah through mediation of the saint (*awaliya* in Arabic).

In addition to this, there are two huts located on the western side of the mosque. The huts are built from wood with the roof covered by grass. According to the informants, the huts

are used as accommodations for the pilgrims. The local people call the first hut, *mana kessuma* (guest house).

As the informants stated, *mana kessuma* is allowed for the elder pilgrims and the second is called, *mana Gofta* (the house of lord). The informants said that *mana Goftaa* is allowed for the prominent descendants of *Abba Arabu* during pilgrimage.



Figure 8 partial view of the Mosque near the tomb of *Abba Arabu* (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

On the western side of the tomb of *Abba Arabu*, there is a small hut and the hut is located between the residential area and the mausoleum. According to the local informants, this hut is called *Mana Nazri* and it is used to keep the votive offerings of the pilgrims. The



informants said that the pilgrims offered according to their vow and in most cases the offering includes, incense, matches, sugar, coffee, and cattle.

Adjacent to the Mosque in the eastern direction, there is residential village. According to the informants, the village is formed by the Muslim Oromo who revered *Abba Arabu* and settled around the current shrine when *Abba Arabu* lived there during his life time. The residents are responsible for maintaining the shrine site and serving the descendant of *Abba Arabu*.



Figure- 9 *Abba Gomol Abba Fixa*, descendant of *Abba Arabu* and Guardian of the shrine (photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

On the foot of the hill of Mujja, about 200 m distance from the compound of the shrine, there is a spring called *zamzama Abba Arabu* (holly water of *Abba Arabu*). According to the informants, almost every pilgrim who come to visit the shrine of *Abba Arabu* carried some *zamzama* (holly water in Arabic) from the spring and back home for medicinal use. The spring is not protected (not fenced) from animal and anthropogenic interventions.

According to the respondents, the holy water is protected by the spiritual power of *Abba Arabu*. The area around the holy water (*zamzama*) is covered by dried shrubs.



A



B

Figure 10 A, *Zamazam* of *Abba Arabu* and B, the shrub near the holly water (photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

### 3.1.1. History of the shrine site of *Abba Arabu*

According the informants, Mujja became shrine site when a Muslim saint (*awaliya*) known as *Abba Arabu* died there in 1887. The informants also said that prior to 1887 the current shrine area was a resident of *Abba Arabu* where he also established a prominent school of Islamic learning.

Since there is no written document, most of the history of *Abba Arabu*'s shrine comes from the oral information of the local people. There are two traditions regarding where and when *Abba Arabu* came to the area. As cited by Abdo Adem (1992) the first tradition states that *Abba Arabu* came to Gumma kingdom from unknown place during the reign of *Abba Dula* (c. 1854-1878). The second tradition claimed that it was during the reign of

*Abba* Boka (1859- 1862) that *Abba* Arabu came to Jimma from Dembi Dollo of South western Wallega.

Therefore, it is now important to analyze the religious relationship between Dembi Dollo (south western wallega) and Jimma. As it has been stated in the literature part of this thesis, Islam was introduced to the Gibe states from Bale, Arsi, Dembi Dollo and others. Accordingly, the two orders of mystical Islam, *Qadriyya* and *Tijaniyya* were introduced into the Gibe Oromo states. Regarding this, visiting Jimma in the late 1920s Cerulli, E. (1927) as cited in Yonas Seifu (2002) reports that in Jimma, *Tijaniyya* was predominant along with *Qadriyya*. In addition to this, J .S, Trimmingham (1965:246) also noted that the West African Tijani influence from Dembi Dollo (Sayo) undoubtedly came into Jimma before 1900s. Moreover, M. Ishiharo (2009) also states that *Tijaniyya* order was further expanded in the western Oromo land in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by al-Faki Ahmad Umar, a *Tijaniyya* Sheikh from Bornu (Nigeria) who settled at Sayo (Dembi Dollo) for about 25 years. Hence, Islamic religion, particularly *Tijaniyya* order of Sufism was introduced and further expanded in Jimma from south western Wallega (Dembi Dollo). Consequently, M. Ishiharo (2009) said that “the Muslim scholars of Dembi Dollo became revered as sophisticated mystic among the Oromo public living in the area of Jimma and were also given the honorific title *Sheekota Dembi* (the great religious leaders of Dembi Dollo)”.

In conclusion, since the informants claimed that *Abba* Arabu came to Jimma from Dembi Dollo and the written documents (Trimingham 1965; Mohammed 1990; Ishiharo 2009) attributed the introduction of Islam into Jimma to the Muslim scholars of Dembi Dollo, it is now reasonable to generalize that *Abba* Arabu was one of *Sheekota Dembi* (great

religious leaders of Dembi Dollo) who introduced and expanded Islamic religion in Jimma area.

### **3.1.2 Pilgrimage (*Ziyara*) and Ritual performance at *Abba Arabu's Shrine***

As already known, shrine is a sacred place dedicated to Muslim saints (*awaliya*) where pilgrimage and ritual performance are conducted (Braukamper 2002). Accordingly, *Abba Arabu's* shrine site is one of the centres of pilgrimage and ritual performance. The information about the custom of pilgrimage and ritual performances conducted at the cult of *Abba Arabu* mainly comes from the oral interview of the local people.

According to the informants, the pilgrimage is conducted during the major Muslim festivals, the *Arafa (idal-Adha)*, the *Mawlid (Mawlid an-Nabi)*, and the *Mi'raj*. In addition to this, on the *Thursday* night people also gathered for religious program known as *hadara*. This is regularly held religious gathering with the specific purpose for reciting litanies. The Miracles of *Abba Arabu* is also narrated at locally held weekly gatherings where followers alternated between chewing *chat (Catha edulis)* and giving supplication (*du'a*).

During the annual festivals, said the informants, 20,000-30,000 pilgrims come to the shrine of *Abba Arabu* from different parts of Jimma zone and the surrounding zones such as Silte and Illubabor zones. Reasons for conducting the pilgrimage to *Abba Arabu* shrine are diverse. Some pilgrims go to *Abba Arabu's* cult to fulfil their votive offerings (*nazri*), and others go to the shrine because they have troubles of their own, often personal illness or the illness of a close relative. They have in common their reverence or love for *Abba Arabu*. The pilgrims mostly arrive at the site a day before the annual celebration.

As they enter the shrine, the pilgrims dedicate their votive offerings at *Mana Nazri*. Some people are assigned there to collect the offerings and to conduct *Du'a* on the behalf of the supplicant.

One of the religious practices is the pilgrims' song hymns in *Affan Oromo* in praise of *Abba Arabu* emphasizing his charisma and spiritual quality, particularly his role as spiritual leader. According to the informants, some of the songs show belief of the people that *Abba Arabu* does not only protect them while they are alive but also play an intermediary role between them and Allah after death. One of the songs is presented as follows;

**The song in Affan Oromo**

*Biyya Sheeka Jimmaa bagaa wal gessanii*

*Oduu shekka kan wa dhagessanii*

*Hatti Arabu desse*

*Darajaaa gudaaa gesse*

*Safuu Abba Arabu sera ketif namu mana gadi ba'e*

*Akkuma wan gara hadha tooko ba'e*

*Of na barsifatani ani aakam hata'u?*

*Ol bararufis sami hin qaqabuu*

*Gadii bararudhafis dache hin qaqabuu*

*Anile ammana issinirra haka'u*

*Naa qaqabadhakaa kaan namaa qaqabuu.*

**Literary English translation of the song (line by line)**

That is nice of you, to gather like this at the country of Jimma's Sheikh

Those who have listened something about our Sheikh's

The mother of Arabu

Became the most honoured

Amazing Abba Arabu, all peoples have gathered here to celebrate your festival

Like children born of a single mother

What can I do being addicted to you?

I'm unable, if I try to fly up into the sky

I'm unable again if I try to jump down to the ground

Let me put my trust on you

Rescuers of men, come fast to my rescue.

The informants said that the song itself is accompanied by traditional Oromo dance known as *Shubbisaa* (a rhythmic rocking motion). Accordingly, the pilgrims demonstrate their religious affections and devotions to *Abba Arabu* by performing *Shubbisaa* that is accompanied by instrument called, *Dibbe* (drum).

The peoples are sometimes possessed by the spirit (*ayanna*) as the *Shubbisaa* is performed. According to the informants, another religious practice conducted at *Abba Arabu's* cult is *eebbisu* (blessing). This is the sacred blessing in which the ritual leaders

known as *Wayyuu* blessed the pilgrims. As the informants said, the prayer at *Abba Arabu*'s shrine is the same as the Friday prayer. Then, religious prayer is followed by religious teaching. After the teaching, a myth about *Abba Arabu*'s *Kaarama* (charisma), *Baraka* (holy virtues) and *Mujiizaa* (miraculous manifestation) is narrated. Finally, the pilgrims queue to fill their water jugs with *Zamzam* of *Abba Arabu* and back to their home.

### **3.2. Sadeqiyo: An Islamic Shrine Centre in Sokoru District**

Sadeqiyo is an Islamic shrine centre located in Sokoru district, *Sadeqa kebele*. Sadeqiyo's cult lies on the Jimma-Addis Ababa road 15 Km away from the place called Qumbi to the eastern direction. Qumbi is another Kebele of Sokoru district located on the Jimma-Addis Ababa main road at a distance of about 155 km from Jimma town. Through the way from Qumbi to Sadeqiyo shrine, there is a road which is not suited for vehicle about 15 Km long. Most of the area located between Qumbi-Sadeqiyo is mountainous and broken land.



Figure11 Mountains and broken lands between Qumbi and Sadeqiyo (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

At a distance of about 14 Km from (1km before arriving the shrine site), there is a small river called Jawe, in *Oromiffa* means, Serpent. As the river observed during the field work, it is almost dried. According to informants, Jawe River is used by the people living around the shrine site as a source of water for their cattle.

The shrine is located on the plain area encircled by mountain chains. The shrine was established in 1893 for the dedication of a Muslim saint called *Mufti* Sadeqiyo. However, there is no tomb of Sadeqiyo, the saint (*awaliya*) in the shrine site. As the respondents said the shrine was built on the place where *Mufti* Sadeqiyo settled for 20 years. Though the saint died in 1892 and buried at a place called Bure, Illubabor zone, his former residential area became a shrine in 1893 to his commemoration. The respondents said that the area of the present shrine was the resident of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo and it was also the area where he preached Islamic religion.



Figure 12 the shrine viewed from the east (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012)



Adjacent to the shrine, there is a residential area. According to the informants, the residential area is the place where the devotees of the saint settled since the time when *Mufti* Sadeqiyo lived there during his life time. The shrine is encircled by fenced enclosure and the fence has one door that lies in the northern direction. In the fenced compound of the shrine, there is one big circular hut built from wood and thatched roof. According to the local informants, the hut is particularly built for the dedication of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo, it is named by the local people as *Mana Abiyo* (Father's house). The informants said that the memorial hut was once burnt in 1998 E.C by the Salafis (*wahhabis*) and it was rebuilt by the local people in the same year.



Figure 13 the hut particularly built for the dedication of the saint (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012). Note that this memorial hut was rebuilt after it was burnt by the Salafis in 1998 E.C.

The hut has three doors lying in different directions and each door has its own function. The first door is to the North and it served for male entrance. The second is found to the West and it is a female entrance. The third is to the East and it is entrance of the elites.

Though the cottage consists of three different entrances for male, female and the elites, all attendants conduct ritual performances within the cottage together, without any status and gender exclusion. The internal roof of the cottage is decorated by the local style of house building. A total of 52 pieces of wood aligning the pillar with the roof as seen in the figure below (fig. 14), used to decorate as well as to support the roof.

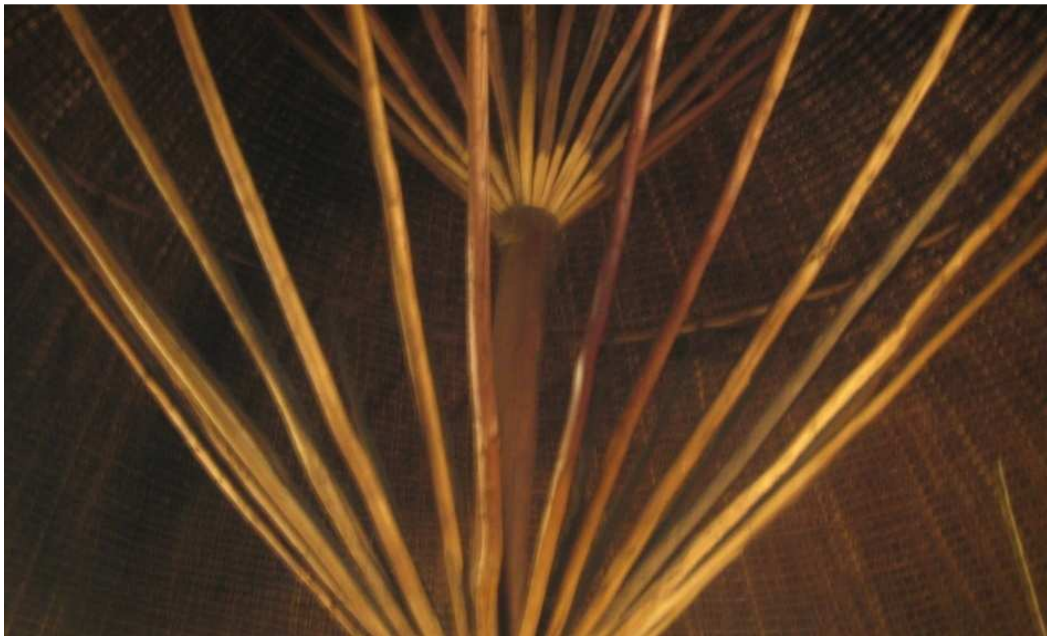


Figure 14 The internal roof decoration of the memorial hut and its pillar (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

In addition to this, there is one newly constructed mosque and another four cottages. Among the four cottages, two of them, located in front of the mosques are built as accommodations for the pilgrims. The accommodations are called by the local people, *Adarashaa Kessuma* (guest's Hall). The remaining two cottages located around the entrance of the shrine are where house within which the offerings of the pilgrims are collected and kept.

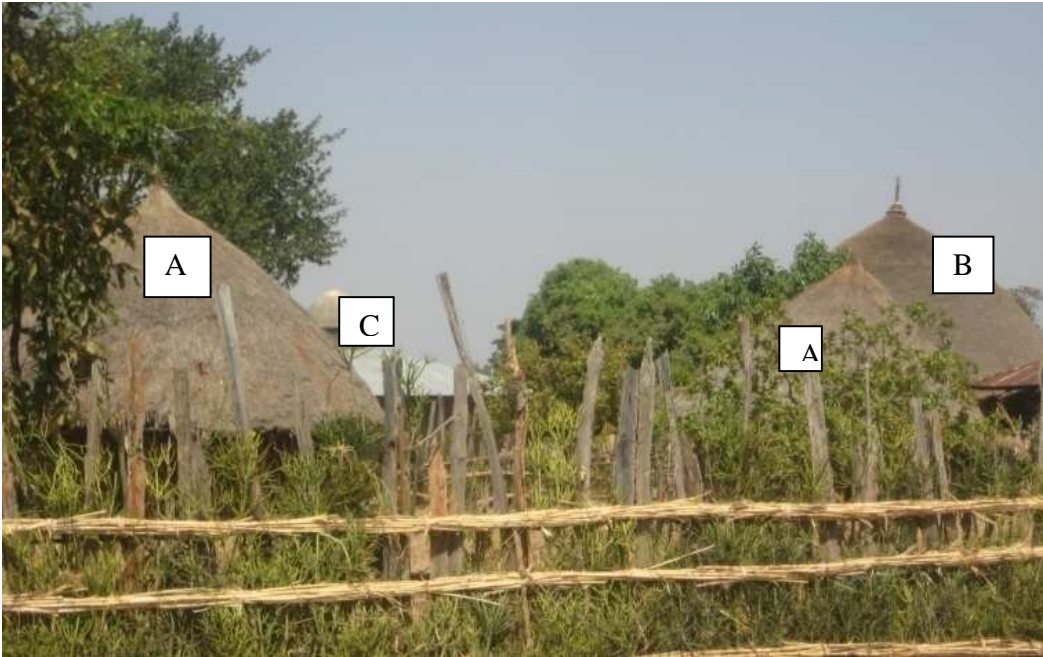


Figure15 Partial view of the shrine from the East, the two huts indicated by letter A, are the accommodations for the pilgrims, the hut indicated by letter B is built for the dedication of *Mufti Sadeqiyo* and letter C shows the mosque for communal prayer (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

In addition to this, there is an area covered by volcanic rock located to the east at a distance of about 200m from the compound of the shrine. The slave trade site is locally called *Gabba Garbaa* (slave market in *Affan Oromo*). The site of the market is covered by volcanic rock and there are also rarely distributed shrubs and Eucalyptus tree. According to the local informants, the area was used as a market place for slave trade. The informants claimed that slave trade in the area was abolished by the teaching of *Mufti Sadeqiyo*. *Mufti Sadeqiyo* taught the merchants of slave about equality of all human beings in the face of Allah. Consequently, slave trade was abolished in the area.



Figure 16 Partial view of area which the informants claimed was previous slave market place (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

The flat rock found in the former market place has several shaped holes. The local people informed that the holes on the rocks were prepared for the traditional ancient Oromo game known as *Sadeqa*. During the time when the area was used as commercial centre, *Sadeqa* game was played by the merchants of the slave. The holes on the rock are varying in number. Though the holes are not fully visible, one of the observed rocks has 51 holes and the other rock has 67 holes. The local elder informants said that, a different rock consists of different number of holes according to the types of *Sadeqa* game played. To restate what the informants said in other words, there were different types of *Sadeqa* game and each type of game required different number of holes. However, today, the custom of playing *Sadeqa* is totally disappeared from the area and the informants said that it is unknown by the living generation of the locality.



Figure 17 the holes of the rock on which *Sadeqa* game was played (photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

### **3.2.1. History of the Sadeqiyo shrine**

Since there is no written document about the history of the shrine site, oral tradition is the only source of information. In relation to this, Mohammed Hassen (1990:16) states about the importance of oral traditions in historical reconstruction of the Oromo people as follows: “The Oromo oral art provides us with ample information about the entire society, including the myths from God’s attributes, through the relation of God to man to the complimentary aspects of man’s relation to him”.

Therefore, it is important to mention history of the shrine site and other related issues based on the oral information of the respondents. As it has been mentioned above, Sadeqiyo shrine emerged for the dedication of the Muslim saint called *Mufti* Sadeqiyo. The former name of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo was Abubakar al-Adam. Later, he was named by the

local people as Sadeqiyo, to demonstrate his role as saviour and protector over the Muslim Oromo of the Sadeqa area.

According to the informants, *Mufti* Sadeqiyo came to the area from Bale. They believed that he was one of the descendants of *Sheekana Huseen* (Sheikh Hussein) of Bale, who came to the area of Gibe to teach Islamic faith. Regarding this, written documents (Trimingham 1965; Lewis 1964; Mohammed 1990; Braukamper 2002 and others) also assert that Islamic religion was initially introduced and later expanded among the Oromo of Gibe states by Muslim merchants and clerics from Sudan, Gonder, Wallo, Harar, South western Wallega (Dembi Dollo) Arsi and Bale areas. Specifically, M. Ishiharo (2009:8) noted that “the descendants of Sheikh Nur Hussayn (*Sheekana Huseen*) of Bale were settled in different parts of Gibe Oromo states and played important role in the dissemination of Islamic religion in the area”.

The teaching of Sadeqiyo is highly valued by Muslim Oromo of the area. There are some aged books owned by the descendant of the saint, *Abba Hikam*. These books are ten in numbers. Nine books are written in Arabic. However, the tenth book is written by unknown letters (see Figure 19) and the message of the book is still unknown even by the local elders. According to the informants all the books were written by *Mufti* Sadeqiyo. The researcher doubts some of the books were not written by hand. Regarding the book written by unknown letters, the respondents claimed *Mufti* sadeqiyo was prophesied that “the one who interprets the book would come from other place”. On the basis of this prophesy of the *Mufti*, the peoples are waiting for the interpreter to come.

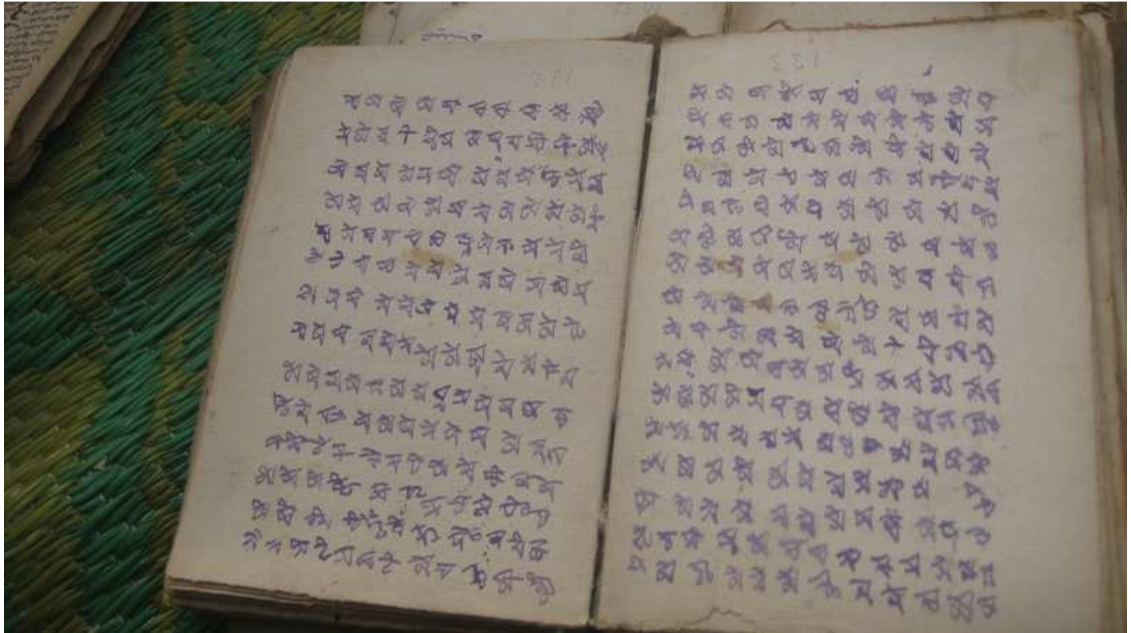


Figure 18 the book of unknown language written by the *Mufti* Sadeqiyo (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

The local people used the manuscript to demonstrate the religious intelligence of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo. The informants said that though there were many religious teachers in the area, none of their teaching was as valuable as the teaching of Sadeqiyo. Regarding this, the respondents stated that “the teaching of other Muslim scholars brought a little light, just like the light of moon, while the teaching of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo brought a great light, just like the light of sun”.

In addition to this, the informants said that the people living around the shrine of Sadeqiyo has great respect for the tree known by the Oromo people, ‘Oda’. According to the informants, during his life time, Sadeqiyo used the shade of ‘Oda’ to teach Islamic religion and to performance. Consequently, the community living around the shrine site occasionally gathered for religious and social meetings under the ‘Oda’ tree. Despite the claim of the respondents, it might be possible that the ritual significance of the ‘Oda’ tree

at the site continued from traditional belief practiced by the Oromo people before the coming of Islam into the area.



Figure 19 ‘*Oda*’, the tree under which shrine community gathered occasionally (photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

To sum up, in considering both oral and written information, it is logical to conclude that *Mufti* Sadeqiyo was one of the venerated descendants of *Sheekana Huseen* (Sheikh Husein) of Bale who took part in the dissemination of Islamic religion among the Oromo of Gibe states.

### **3.2.2. Pilgrimage (*Ziyara*) and Ritual Performances at Sadeqiyo Shrine**

Just like *Abba Arabus*’ cult, Sadeqiyo shrine is a centre of pilgrimage and a place of performing ritual practices. As in the case of the shrine of *Abba Arabu*, pilgrimage to the shrine of Sadeqiyo is conducted during the annual Muslim festivals i.e. the *Arafa* (*idal-*



*Adha*), the *Mawlid (Mawlid an-Nabi)*, and the *Mi'raj*. According to the informants, a minimum of 30,000 people conducted pilgrimage to the shrine per year.

The religious practice, *hadra* is regularly held on Thursday. The *hadra* program at Sadeqiyo shrine starts on the Thursday noon and continues all the night. The ritual performance of *hadra* is accompanied with lunch program which is followed by coffee ceremony. During the field work, the researcher observed when the attendants of *hadra* gathered in the ritual house for lunch after the mid-day prayer. The peoples sat for lunch in groups which consisted of 4 to 10 people. According to the informants, the sitting arrangement is called *Dawrii* (brotherhood circle in Arabic) and peoples sit according to intimate relationship they have with each others in circular shape. The sitting arrangement would enable friends to discuss on their common issues. Most of the attendants of the program eat their meal on the leaf of *qocco* and others on the plates. According to the informants, the peoples eat food on the green leaf of *qocco* to show their gratitude to Allah for he makes their land green and fertile.



Figure 20 the people eating food on the leaf of *qocco* (photo by Seyoum M. 2012).

The lunch program was followed by coffee ceremony. During the coffee ceremony, in addition to the Arabic prayer, the elder participants recited prayers in *Affan Oromo*;

**Prayer recited in *Affan Oromo***

**literary English translation**

*Bunaa fi nagaa nuuf kenni,*

Give us coffee and peace;

*Manaana fi ollaan barakaa nuuf godhii,*

Bless our home and our neighbours;

*Haraama gochuu irra nu oolchi,*

Protect us from doing sins;

*Gubaa siif baana -*

We are carrying hot for your glory-

*- gubaa nu oolchi,*

- protect us from hot;

*Guutuu siif dhaabna guutuu nuuf godhi,*

We raise full for you, make us full;

*Jabanaan jabaa miti Raabi situ jabaadha-*

*Jabanaa* is not strong O, Allah you are strong

*-dubbii dabaa fi jabaa dhukkubaa nu oolchi,*

-protect us from injustice and deadly disease

After the prayer, the coffee was distributed to the attendants of the *hadra*. The coffee is served with a small colubs, known by the local people *Qabbe bunaa*. According to the respondents, *Qabee* is usually used by the local people to drink coffee.



Figure 21 the attendants of *hadra* drinking coffee by *Qabbe bunaa* (photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

The *hadra* program is led by one descendant of *Mufti Sadeqiyo* called *Abba Hikam*, who is given honorific title '*Goftaa*' by the local people. On Thursday night, every attendant of *hadra* comes with its own '*Chat*' and gives to *Abba Hikam*, '*Goftaa*'. Then, after praying and blessing, the '*Chat*' is distributed to all attendants of *hadra*. Peoples come to *Abba Hikam* not only to attend the *hadra* program, but also to get his blessing and his advice. In this sense, *Abba Hikam* plays important role as advisor and as mediator of social and family conflict. According to the informants, peoples living around the shrine are devotees of *Sadeqiyo* and voluntary servants of *Sadeqiyo's* descendants, *Goftaa*. Consequently, the residents are called *Kadihme*, which means voluntary servant. The

economic life of the '*Goftaa*' and his family depends up on the offerings from the local people and from the pilgrims.

Unlike the shrine of *Abba Arabu* where the people used the tomb house for special days (Thursday and annual festivals), the house built for the commemoration of Sadeqiyo is used for regular religious practices. Peoples conduct communal and private payer in the hut built for the dedication of *Mufti Sadeqiyo*.



Figure 22 the people praying in the hut built for the dedication of Sadeqiyo (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012).

The ritual performance conducted during the pilgrimage at Sadeqiyo shrine is similar with that of *Abba Arabu*'s cult. As in the case of the ritual performances conducted at the shrine of *Abba Arabu*, votives are offered, the hymns in *Affan Oromo* is sung and *Shubbisaa* (a rhythmic rocking motion) dance is performed by the pilgrims to praise Sadeqiyo, to demonstrate their love, to get his peace and blessing.

Moreover, myths about spiritual quality and miraculous acts and life of Mufti Sadeqiyo are also orally narrated. In general, the shrines of Sadeqiyo and *Abba Arabu* have similar religious functions. In the following chapter, I will attempt to situate the findings in the context of the related literatures.

## Chapter Four

### 4. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 4.1 Discussion

##### 4.1.1. Implications of Geographical Locations of the Shrine Sites

Arguably, shrine sites are sacred places dedicated to Muslim Saints and centres of pilgrimage as well as where ritual performance accompanied with cultural elements are conducted. In support of this idea, Jeyylen W. Hussein (2005) defined Islamic shrines as places where religious and cultural practices are conducted. Conceptually speaking, Islamic shrine centres are not only a place where religious practices are conducted but they are also important heritages within which the past cultural and historical experiences are accumulated. Accordingly, the two Islamic shrine sites identified in Jimma zone are religious places and as well as places where the cultural, historical and political development of the people are deposited and demonstrated.

It is now important to see the implications of geographical proximity of the shrine sites with the political and economic centres. In this case, the geographical proximity of *Abba Arabu's* shrine site has historical indication that shows the devotion and official recognition of the local rulers to Islam. Mohammed Hassen (1990) states that as a result of the devotion of the rulers to Islamic religion, by the end of nineteenth century, about sixty or so *Madrasas* (schools for Islamic learning) were established in Jimma. These were mostly located in and around Jiren (the political centre of Jimma kingdom). In addition to this, J.S, Trimmingham (1965: 204) claimed that “*Abba Jifar II* (1878-1932)

enthusiastically tried to make Jimma a centre of Islamic studies and encouraged *fuqara* to settle around his palace and teach." Based on this, *Abba Arabu* was perhaps one of the *fuqara* whom the rulers of Jimma kingdom invited to settle around Jiren and teach Islam there. Therefore, the geographical proximity of *Abba Arabu*'s shrine with Jiren can be seen as tangible evidence to prove the history of Islamic relation with the rulers of Jimma kingdom.

Moreover, the shrine of *Mufti Sadeqiyo* is located in close proximity with a former market place. This has also important historical implication that shows the relationship of Islamic religion with the past commercial activities of the area.

To begin with, Islamic religion itself was initially encouraged by the rulers of Gibe states for political and economic motives. For instance, *Abba Jifar I* invited a number of Muslim clerics to evangelize freely in his domain in order to attract Muslim traders. Hence, *Abba Jifar I* (c.1830-1854) embraced Islam for political and economic motives than for religious needs (Lewis, H.S 1965:41; Mohammed Hassen 1990: 112).

In addition to this, the local markets of Gibe states had both religious and economic significance. According to Yonas Seifu (2002:6), the local markets in the Gibe region were religiously and economically important areas because of two reasons. Firstly, a number of *Ulamas* were settled and preached Islamic faith there. Secondly, a number of Muslim merchants came to the markets from different regions with both economic and religious mission. It is because of this reason that traditions as well as written accounts (e.g. Trimingham 1965; Abir 1968; Mahmmed 1990 and others) attribute the introduction of Islam among the Oromo of Gibe states to the Muslim clerics and merchants from

different parts of Ethiopia, mainly from Gonder, Wallo, Harar, Arsi Bale, and south western Wallaga as well as from the Sudan. Thus, the geographical proximity of the shrine of Sadeqiyo with market place can be seen as best illustration for the history of Islamic relation with the commercial activities of the Gibe area. Generally, the two Islamic shrines are important heritages which help us to understand the interrelationship between religious, political and economic development of Jimma zone.

#### **4.1.2. The Overall Values of the Shrine Sites**

It is also important to look wisely to the overall values of the ritual practices conducted at the shrine sites. This is because of the fact that the shrine centers have been considered as important depositories of the traditional cultures of many indigenous communities (Kassaye 2009). Accordingly, the two Islamic shrines of Jimma zone deposited several pre-Islamic cultures of the Oromo people. In support of this, Terje Ostebo (2009:3) states that an intrinsic part of Islamization process was thus the infusion of pre-Islamic cultural elements of Oromo into Islam; either in the form of Oromo religious practices becoming Islamized or as survivals in a more “purer” form. Moreover, J.W.Husseini (2005:31) also noted that since Islam was highly tolerant towards indigenous creeds in the past, several pre-Islamic elements of Oromo culture, including institutions of spiritual veneration are survived within the dominant faith.

Therefore, the most important cultural and religious practices (intangible heritages) of Oromo people that survived from the past within the ritual performances conducted at the shrine sites of *Abba Arabu* and *Saddeqiyo* include, typically traditions of Oromo ecstatic



dance (*Shubbisaa*), spirit possession ( *Ayaana Qallu*), *Muudaa* ceremony (rite of passage) and others.

The shrine sites are places where one observes a chaotic mélange of other divergent religious practices. According to Asmarom Lagesse (1973:9-10) the traditional Oromo custom of visiting the holy shrine every eight years to have the *Abba Muudaa* conduct the anointment ceremony for them under the *Gada* system, had already transfigured into a Muslim practice of visiting venerated tomb and saints (dead or alive). There are many similarities between the ritual activities conducted at the shrines and the *Muudaa* ceremony to *Abba Muudaa*, though the former has a clear Islamic overtone. Firstly, the ritual performance at Islamic shrines and *Muudaa* ceremony are similar as both intensively involve prayers, blessing and animal sacrificing. As the pilgrims possessed by spirit in ritual performance, *qallu* or *qallitti* have the ability to become possessed by ritual power (*ayaana*) in the traditional Oromo religion. This is what M. Ishihara (2009:3) said “the eastern Macca Oromo believe in ritual power (*ayaana*) vested on certain individuals (*qallu* or *qallitti*)”.

In addition to this, symbolizing fertility of land by the green plants (as the devotees of *Mufti Sadeqiyo* eat the food on the green leaf of *qocco* to show their gratitude to Allah for his making their land fertile), is one of the pre-Islamic elements of traditional religion of the Oromo people. According to Bula Sirika (2011), in religious tradition of the Oromo people, green symbolizes fertility through which a supreme God, *Waaqa* manifest himself to the people. Furthermore, it is also worthy to note that the utilization of coffee for ritual performances at Sadeqiyo’s shrine is another element of Oromo traditional religious practices preserved within the Islamic ritual performances. In relation to this,

Bula Sirika (2011) claimed that the traditional Oromo religion, *Waqeffannaa* is the pillar of coffee rituals. As the prayer recited in *Affan Oromo* during the coffee ceremony at shrine of Sadeqiyo, in *Waqeffannaa* religion the elder Oromos often recite prayer during the coffee ceremony.

According to Warqineh A. Sori (2010), in the traditional Oromo religion, the prayer recited during the coffee ceremony comprises three fundamental themes; the wish of having peace, prosperity and security. The most interesting tangible cultural heritage of the Oromo people maintained at the shrine site of Sadeqiyo is the colubs (*Qabbe Buna*) by which the devotees drink coffee during the religious practice of *hadra*. As noted by Bula Sirika (2010), in the Oromo tradition, the coffee used to be used to be served by small colubs (*Qabbe Buna*), although presently replaced by fabricated ceramic cups. This implies that the important elements of traditional Oromo religious systems continued to operate in the cults of Islamic saints. That is why Moyo (1996) states, the religious syncretism, a spontaneous mixture of divergent religious practices, at *Annajina* reveals that although Africans developed orientations towards modern religions, they have not yet completely parted with their indigenous belief systems.

Moreover, the hymns sung by the pilgrims in *Affan Oromo* to praise the saints i.e. *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* are also important intangible cultural heritages. As J.W. Hussein (2005) states that the oral arts, particularly the hymns sung in respect of Sheikh Hussein at *Annajina* may be of great value for the Oromo people, the hymns sung in reverence of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* serve many functions for the Oromos in general and Muslim Oromos in particular. Regarding this, the most important values of the hymns is that they preserve the traditional Oromo poetic tradition and they also

provide ample information concerning the preservation of the pre Islamic Oromo religious practices.

There is also another important cultural element of Oromo people that preserved within the myths of the saints narrated by the local people. For instance, what the informants claimed as the teaching of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo concerning equality of human beings was not a new phenomenon. Rather, it was what the Oromo people practiced in the *Gada* system for a long century before the coming of Islam in the area. As noted by Asmarom Legesse (1973), *Gada* system, which governed every aspect of Oromo life, has astonishingly consisted of modern democratic elements. Hence, the myth about the teaching of equality by *Mufti* Sadeqiyo is an Islamic version of Oromo democratic system of *Gada*. This implies that Islamic religion has been molded and shaped by the pre-Islamic Oromo cultural and ritual traditions. Therefore, I argue against the idea of Terje Ostebo (2009: 3) who claimed Islamization of Oromo ritual and cultural traditions. In contrast to this idea, however, I emphasize on the idea of ‘Oromaization of Islamic religion’. This is what has been already stated by J.W.Hussein (2005:15) “the indigenous Oromo cultural and ritual traditions offered Islam an African feature”.

The shrine sites of Jimma zone are not only Islamic religious places, but they are also historical places for the Oromo people. Regarding this, particularly the shrine of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo is located in the near distance with the area where the ancient traditional Oromo game, *Sadeqa* was once played. According to the informants, the name Sadeqa kebele is derived from the name of the ancient game which was popular in the area. In turn, the name Sadeqiyo was given to the venerated saint to show his role as protectorate and

savior over the people of the area. Nonetheless, the flat rock consists of several shaped holes on it, which the informants also claimed “the rock, on which the Oromo merchants of the local market played *Sadeqa* game”, has great value in reconstructing the recreational history of the Oromo people. Furthermore, the ritual value of the ‘Oda’ tree at the shrine site of Sadeqiyo is important indicator for the integration of pre-Islamic Oromo culture with the religious practices of Islam in the area. Therefore, in addition to their significances in demonstrating the past relationship of Islamic religion with the administrative and economic scenario of the Gibe states, they have also important values in preserving the pre-Islamic ritual and cultural practices of the Oromo people.

Beside this, the ritual performance at the shrines along with the natural and historical setting of their geographical locations, have potential to become important tourism attraction centres. The potential benefits from the shrine sites as a tourism destination can be seen from different dimensions. Firstly, the shrines have potential economic value in generating income for the country in general and for the shrine community in particular. Secondly, they may be of great significance in promoting the Oromo cultural heritages generally and Islamic cultural heritage specifically. Since tourism is “smokeless industry” (James 2004: 56) the development of tourism in the sites would have significant contributions in the protection of natural and historical environment of the areas.

#### **4.1.3 Common Features of the shrines and their symbolic Values for the Muslims**

While pilgrimage customs in Ethiopia share certain commonalities (Pankhurst 1994), each pilgrimage centre has some distinctive characteristics closely associated with the

personality and contributions of the founder and the cultural and historical background of the centre (Eade and Sallnow 2000). Accordingly, the shrine sites of *Mufti Sadeqiyo* and *Abba Arabu* have several common features with the shrine of Sheikh Hussein of Bale.

As noted by Jeyllan W. Hussein (2005), the shrine of Dirre Sheikh Hussein (*Annajina*) has a village established around the tomb, inhabited by residents responsible for the maintenance of the mausoleum. Like that of *Annajina*, there are villages around the shrines of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo*, where the residents are responsible for the protection of the shrines. However, unlike the case of *Annajina*, the residents living around the shrines of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* are not only responsible for the maintenance of the shrines, but they have also important role in offering financial and free labor services to the descendants of the saints, who acted as the guardian of the shrines.

As the water from Haroo Lukku of Sheikh Hussein's shrine is considered as sacred and taken by the pilgrims for the medicinal use (Jeyllen 2005), the water from the spring found in the foot of Mujja hill (*zamzamma Abba Arabu*) is also taken as blessed water and used by the pilgrims for medicinal use. As in the case of *Annajina*, the shrines of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* are emerged for the dedication of Muslim saints. However, unlike the shrines of *Dirre* Sheikh Hussein of Bale and *Abba Arabu* shrine, there is no grave of the saint in Sadeqiyo shrine site. The shrine of Dirre Sheikh Hussein of Bale and the two shrines of Jimma zone; *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* shrine sites are similar by having custom such as oral myths narrated in praise of saints and hymns sung in *Affan Oromo* by the pilgrims to demonstrate their dedication for the saints.

Moreover, some elements of pre-Islamic Oromo culture such as *ebbissu* (blessing), *shubissu* (a rhythmic rocking motion) and other modes of *Mudaa* ceremony are performed in the two shrines of Jimma zone and the shrine of *Dirre* Sheikh Hussein. This shows that Islamic shrine centers of Jimma zone and Bale have great importance in preserving the pre-Islamic culture of the Oromo people.

In addition to this, the shrines of *Abba* Arabu and *Mufti* Sadeqiyo have similar religious value with the shrine of Sheikh Hussein of Bale. According to Jeyllen W. Hussein (2005), the symbolic value of *Annajina* for the Northeast African Muslims is parallel to the significance that Mecca has gained in the eyes of the world Muslims. As zamzam (the sacred well inside the ground mosque) of Mecca, the water from *Haroo Lukku* of Bale and from Zamzam of *Abba* Arabu of Jimma are considered as sacred and used by the Muslims for medicinal purpose (Braukamper 2002; Jeyllen 2005). Like the pilgrims of Mecca, peoples conducted pilgrimage to the shrines of *Abba* Arabu and *Mufti* Sadeqiyo based on beliefs that the saints have the power to intercede between them and Allah during the life time and after death (see Jeyllen 2005). Therefore, the symbolic value of shrines sites of *Abba* Arabu and *Mufti* Sadeqiyo for the Muslim pilgrims of Jimma zone and the surrounding area is similar to the significances of Mecca to the Muslims of the world.

Here, it should be noted that the ritual activities conducted at the shrine sites are fiercely opposed by the Salafis (*Wahhabis*). According to Terje Ostebo (2009), the Salafis are exclusively referring to the Qu'ran and the Hadith and emphasizing the doctrine of *tawhid*, they sternly argued that the pilgrimage to the shrines and the celebration of

Mawlid was against the divine message of Islam. Therefore, the mystical Islam (Sufis) and the reformist Islam (Salafis) have different views towards the customs of venerating Muslim saints and conducting pilgrimage to the shrines. Hence, in the following section, I will discuss the consequence of divergent views of the Salafis and the Sufis on the conservation of Islamic heritages of the study area.

#### **4.1.4. Conservation Status of the shrine sites**

In spite of the actual and potential values of the shrines and their related features, they are currently in a bad state of preservation. In light of this, the shrines are threatened from deliberate anthropogenic activities. According to the informants, the human anthropogenic destroying the shrines mainly comes from Islamic reformists locally called *wahabbiya (salafism)*. In relation to this, M. Ishaharo (2009:8) states that “although the pilgrimage custom remains central to the religious lives of Muslims in Ethiopia, it is now criticized as heretical (*bid'a*) by the Islamic reformist called *Wahhabiya*. According to the informants, the hut built for the commemoration of *Mufti Sadeqiyo* in the shrine site was once burnt in 1998 E.C by the activist of the Salafi movement and it was rebuilt by the local people. In testimony of this statement of the informants, the remains of the burnt lodge are found in the shrine compound (see Figure 23).

The destructive acts of the reformists should be seen from legal perspective. Accordingly, their action of deliberate destruction of the shrine site is against the right of freedom of religion which is ensured by the constitution of the FDRE. In relation to this, the 1995 FDRE Constitution in its article 27 generously provides the rights of freedom of religion for Ethiopian people. Moreover, the cultural policy of Ethiopia also recognizes the

protection of cultural and natural heritages from destruction. Therefore, the destructive act of the reformists (*wahhabis*) is against freedom of religion and also against cultural policy of Ethiopia.



Figure 23 the remains of the burnt hut, the pillar of the hut, (photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

In addition to this, the religious manuscripts found in the shrine of *Mufti* Sadeqiyo are also in a bad state of preservation (see Figure 24). Owing to inappropriate management of the manuscripts, some parts of them are destroyed by rain and rats. Because of this, the manuscripts are in a tendency of total destruction.



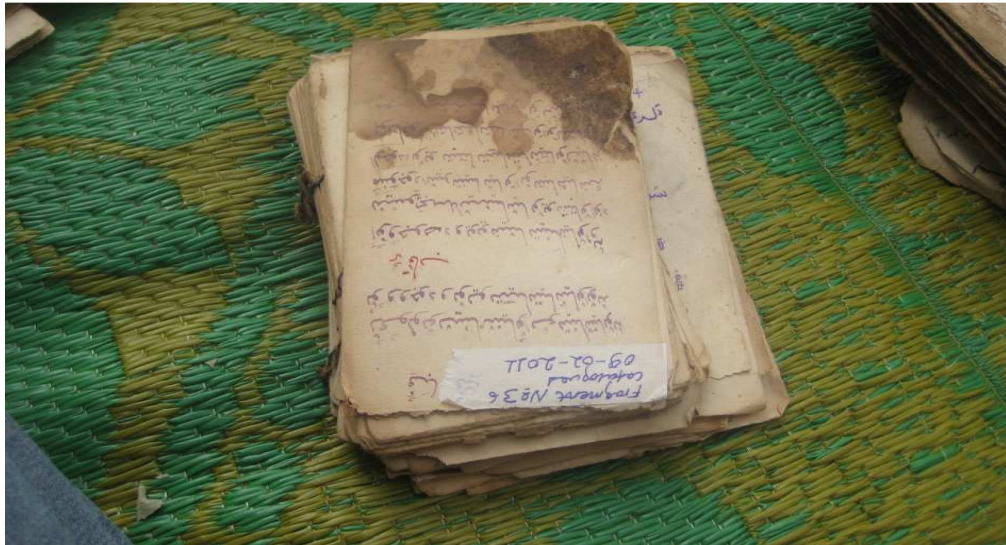


Figure 24 Religious manuscript being destroyed by poor preservation (Photo by Seyoum M, 2012)

Furthermore, the *Sadeqa* game area and the former place of slave market are also vulnerable to destruction. This is because of the fact that since the area is not fenced and sheltered, the heritage (the rocks of *Sadeqa* game) vulnerability to natural destruction through weathering is very high.

Concerning the construction materials and architectural style, most of the houses found in the shrine sites are huts built by the locally available materials (such as wood and grass) with the mode of traditional style typically local. The huts found in the shrines are similar with the houses of the residents living in the area near the sites. This is to mean that the local people used their indigenous knowledge of housing to religious building.

## 4.2 Conclusions

In Ethiopia, the religious venerations held in honour of saints including Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jillian, Sheikh Hussein and Sof-Omar of Bale are typical proofs of the existence of a deep-rooted tradition of Sufism in the country. Accordingly, the shrine of Abba Arabu and Mufti Sadeqiyo shows that the cult of saints is part of Islamic religious practices among the Muslim peoples of Jimma zone and the surrounding area. Although Islamic shrines in Jimma zone are limited in number (as the result of the survey research shows, there are only two shrines), the two shrines sites identified by the research have great actual and potential significances.

For the Muslims of the area, the two shrine sites have symbolic significances in representing Mecca (Islamic Holly lands). They have also great importance for the Muslims of Ethiopia in general and Muslims of the area in particular by preserving religious and ritual practices of Sufi Islamic traditions. As the pre-Islamic Oromo cultures are still operating along with the Islamic ritual practices conducted in the shrines, they have great values for the Oromo people.

The shrines, being located near the economic areas of the past; they have scholastic value to understand the history of Islamic relation with the past political and economic scenario of the past. In general, the shrine sites and their religious practices can serve as sources of information to understand the history of the introduction of Islam among the Oromo people of Jimma zone and to know about the religious figures and their roles in the dissemination of Islamic religion to the area. They can serve also as sources of information to reconstruct the history of Oromo people of south western Ethiopia in

particular and the history of Oromo people in general. The shrines have also potential economic value for the communities of the area and for the country as tourism destination. Therefore, the shrines of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* have actual and potential economic, religious, historical, cultural and scholastic significances. In spite of their significances, the shrines are mostly endangered from human deliberate actions as well as natural factors.

### **4.3 Recommendations**

As already mentioned, the shrines of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* have several actual and potential significances. However, the shrine sites are currently threatened from deliberate human destruction. Thus, the following measures are recommended to protect the shrines from destruction and to utilize their values.

1. In order to protect the shrines sites from the current and future human and natural destruction, the shrine sites of *Abba Arabu* and *Mufti Sadeqiyo* must be documented by the ARCCH as Islamic heritage of Ethiopia in particular and as national heritage in general.
2. The associated features of the shrine sites such as *Sadeqa* game rocks should be studied and preserved (fenced and sheltered) by the ARCCH in collaboration with Culture and Tourism Offices of Oromia Regional state, Jimma zone and Sokoru district as well as NGO's.

3. The group who deliberately destroy the shrines should be presented before the court of law by the concerned government sectors (such as Police and Justice Offices) with community participation.
4. Multi disciplinary research consisting archaeologists, historians and cultural anthropologists must be conducted to utilize the scholastic values of the shrine sites and to understand the religious manuscripts (especially the book written by unidentified letters) found in the Sadeqiyo shrine site.
5. Awareness creation program about the current and future values of the shrines must be given to the local community as well as to the regional and local government officials to protect the sites from present and future human and natural destruction.
6. Museums must be constructed by collaboration of government Offices, NGO's and local community at Sadeqiyo shrine center to keep the religious manuscripts and to make them open to the public.
7. Basic infrastructure such as electricity, telephone and all weather roads must be constructed by the government, NGO'S and local community particularly at Sadeqiyo shrine site, where there is no electricity and telephone services.

8. The geographical locations of the sites and their values must be promoted by the public and private Medias.

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## Appendix I, A

### List of Informants during the Reconnaissance Survey

No	Name	Age	Location	Remarks
1	Haji Jemal Mohammed	65	Jimma town	
2	Abdi Nuru	68	Jimma town	
3	Kamal Golocha	74	Jimma town	
4	Ibrahim Adam	69	Atnago	
5	Sheikh Hussen Garo	66	Atnago	
6	Abba Biya Dawud	59	Atnago	
7	Sheikh Abdinaser Odwa	77	Genet	
8	Ahmed Abdella	67	Genet	
9	Sheikh Ismael Bikila	59	Genet	
10	Nure Mustofa	76	Chira	
11	Alliyi Hirko	64	Chira	
12	Abdulahakim Woyessa	60	Chira	
13	Shiekh Umer Ida'o	72	Agaro	
14	Abba Qarsa Awal	61	Agaro	
15	Tofiq Hussein	74	Agaro	
16	Siraj Daud	78	Gumma	
17	Ahmed Mohammed	65	Gumma	
18	Ziyad Shukri	60	Gumma	

## Appendix I, B

### List of Respondents during Intensive Siurvey

No	Name	Age	Location	Remarks
1	<i>Abba</i> Gomol <i>Abba</i> Fixa	56	<i>Abba</i> Arabu's shrine site	Descendant of <i>Abba</i> Arabu
2	Sheikh Ibrahim Mohammed	75	“	Resident around the shrine
3	Haji Bakar xayib	81	“	Resident around the shrine
4	Sheikh Awal <i>Abba</i> Kamal	87	“	Resident around the shrine
5	<i>Abba</i> Hikam	79	Shrine of Sadeqiyo	Descendant of <i>Mufti</i> Sadeqiyo
6	Sheikh Sayid Guluma	86	“	Resident around the shrine
7	Sheikh Abdella Hussein	77	“	Resident around the shrine
8	<i>Abba</i> Garo Dadi	84	“	Resident around the shrine

## Appendix II

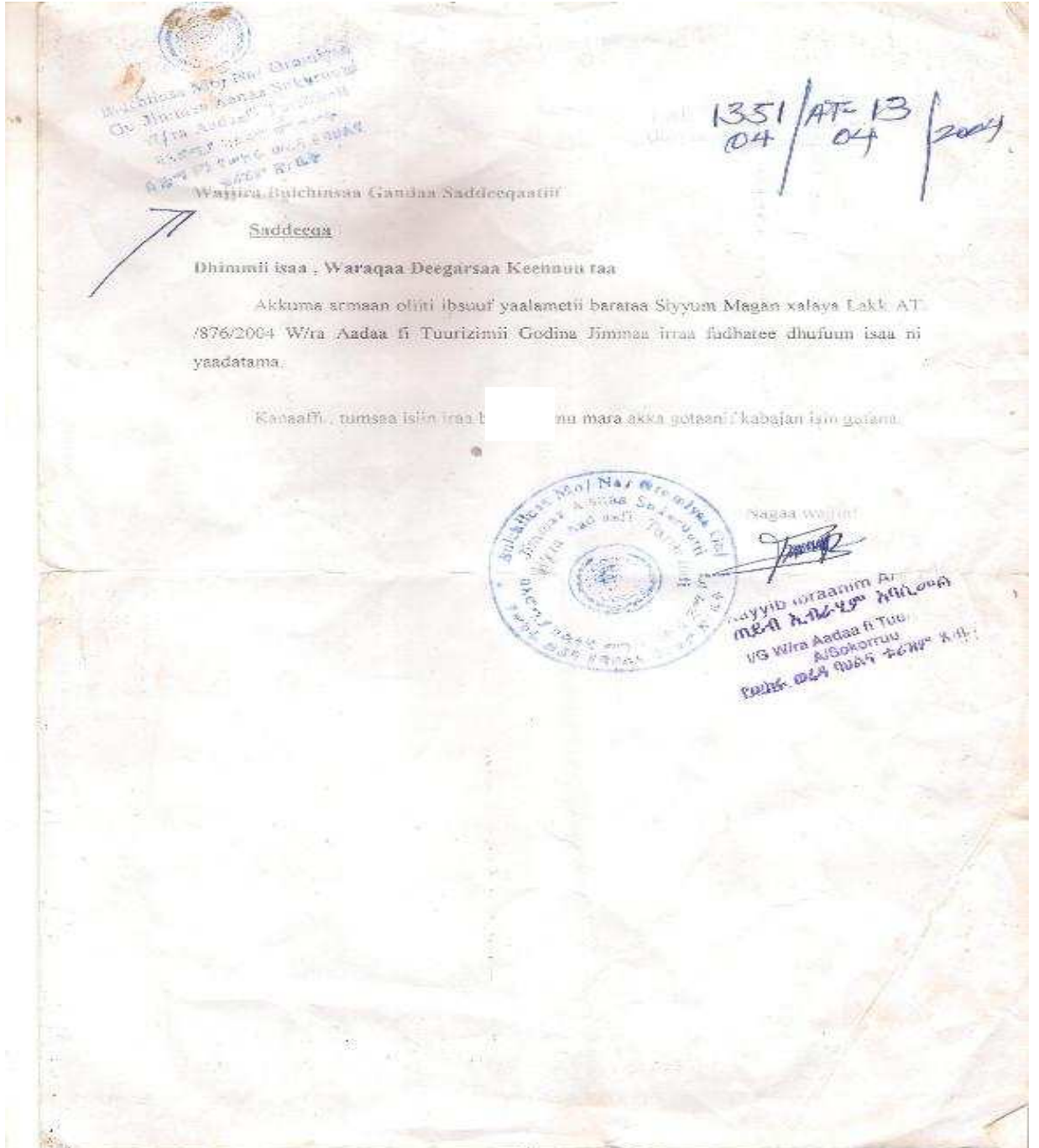
### Inventory Format

Categories of Information	Data	Current state of conditions
Site code No		
Name of the owner of properties, Region		
Zone		
Woreda		
Town, Kebele, District		
Specific location  (Local name/old name)		
Actual/former functions		
Architectural style		
Direction		
Measurement (Distance from permanent feature, size (length, width....))		
Raw material description		
Historical period		
Drawing/sketching/Photograph No.		
Description of any special feature		

Source, ARCCH

# Appendix III

## Letter of Collaboration



## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, affirm here with my own words that this thesis is my original work, and has not been presented in any other University. All sources of materials that are used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Seyoum Merga

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

June, 2012