Interdependence and Interactions in Ethiopian History

Edited by
Bahru Zewde

Addis Ababa
2023

Interdependence and Interactions in Ethiopian History

Edited by
Bahru Zewde

Addis Ababa
2023

ISBN

Translated from the Amharic by Taye Assefa.

Published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
P.O. Box 8786
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Contents

Preface

Ethiopia is a country with a long and glowing history. And we have been proud of this. However, we are also aware of the fact that history has become a political battleground in today's Ethiopia. The changes in Ethiopia's socio-political system that were introduced in 1991, following the change of regime, have played a significant and positive role in protecting the rights of hitherto marginalized nationalities. At the state level, Ethiopia was committed to 'multi-national unity' and the idea of 'unity in diversity'. However, nowadays, Ethiopia's diversity is more pronounced than its unity.

Our country has been rocked by ethnic and regional conflicts. Of late, the situation has been so serious that the very survival of our country has become an issue of concern. Citizens have been 'branded' as locals and as settlers, which has led Ethiopians, who have peacefully coexisted for ages, to label each other as 'the enemy'. Not only have people been evicted from the places where they were either born or had lived for a long period of time, they have even been massacred.

Due to this violence, moving from one place to another has become a dangerous undertaking. Towns like Dembi Dolo, where we were assigned as part of the Ethiopian University Service program in the imperial days, or sub-provinces like Metekel, where we built huts for settlers during the Derg regime, now appear as far away as Mars.

In contrast to what the current situation suggests, Ethiopia has a long history of communal interrelations. Historical records attest that Ethiopia's nationalities and regions were intertwined and integrated in many different ways, despite the fact that they had distinct identities and institutions. Although there are about eighty nationalities in Ethiopia, linguists classify them into four major language families. The ruling class has not been confined

to one nationality, but has comprised individuals coming from different nationalities. In particular, individual Amhara, Oromo and Tigrayans were part of the ruling class during different periods in Ethiopia's history. The very name of Aksum, the foundation of the Ethiopian state, is a compound of the Agaw word 'ak' (which is Cushitic) and 'seyum' (which is Semitic). Its meaning is 'chief of the water'. The water referred to is a pond that is still a prominent site in the city.

When we examine our recent history, we find that the Oromo have lived by interweaving and blending with the Amhara, Gurage, and other nationalities. As described in detail in one of the papers included in this collection, Wollo exemplifies this process of integration and interaction. Shewa, too, has been a province where Amhara, Oromo, and Gurage have lived together, bound by intermarriages and blood ties.

Our national heroes and role models in the spheres of politics, military exploits, the intellectual arena and the arts also include individuals from all nationalities of Ethiopia. Here one might think of Emperor Yohannes and Emperor Haile Selassie, Ras Alula and Ras Gobena, Gebrehiwot Baykedagn and Heruy Wolde-Sellassie, Tilahun Gesese and Bahta Gebrehiwot, Mengistu Worku and Luchiano Vassalo, Abebe Biqila and Miruts Yifter, Derartu Tulu and Letesenbet Gidey. Even in terms of our diet, the cuisines of specific nationalities have, over time, become national dishes. In this respect, one could cite the Oromo *chechebsa*, the Amhara *doro wot*, the Tigrayan/Eritrean *A/Hambasha*, and the Gurage *kitfo*.

This historical reality, so replete with multi-national interdependence, should be given more prominence. Especially now, as a national platform for dialogue has been established and efforts to create a national consensus are underway. One of the objectives of the Association of Ethiopian Historians is to contribute to this process. Insights into our history, and history

education, we believe, can play an important role in building a national consensus. Historians do not deny that our past is marked by many atrocities. However, in view of the great danger that currently threatens the very survival of our country (one can even say, because we are teetering on the edge of a precipice), we should emphasise our unity more than our differences, and focus on the present rather than the past.

It was for this reason that the Association chose 'The Role of History in Building National Consensus' as the general theme for its inaugural workshop, which was held on 24 and 25 May 2022. Speaking to this theme, scholars presented eight papers on historiography and historical methodology. The workshop was attended by scholars of history, as well as government officials, intellectuals, prominent individuals, and representatives of professional associations and the youth. It also received wide media coverage. The central message we wanted to convey through this workshop was that, contrary to what is currently assumed, history is not part of the problem, but part of the solution.

Following this first event, the Association organised three workshops with the theme 'Interdependence and Interactions in Ethiopian History'. The first was held on 16 August 2022, and was opened by Ethiopia's Minister of Education, Professor Berhanu Nega. The second took place on 4 October 2022, and the third on 15 November 2022. In this series of workshops, the participants presented and discussed eighteen papers. The presenters were sixteen academics from nine different universities in Ethiopia (Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Gondar, Haramaya, Jimma, Kotebe, Meda Welabu, Wollo, and Wollega), and two based at North American universities.

Although the papers presented address different subjects, they can be grouped under five broad sub-themes: **the interdependence of and interactions between nationalities**;

the problem of blended identity and the relevance of mixed identity; **religious tolerance and cultural interrelations**; **urbanism and trading**; and **identity and political power**. The papers in the first category, in particular, clearly demonstrate the extent to which Ethiopia's nationalities became intertwined and interdependent. Given this historical reality, the question of how the current situation of conflict and fratricide could come about is one that every Ethiopian should seriously think about and strive to address.

Many workshop participants wondered whether these useful papers and discussions would simply remain a one-day affair. To ensure they would not, we asked the presenters to send us a three-page synopsis of each paper shortly after the workshops concluded. Although this is no easy task, especially perhaps for historians, all complied. These texts went through the necessary editing process and are presented in this publication. We hope that this work will contribute to public education, and that it will serve as a useful input for the National Dialogue Commission and its endeavours.

Finally, on behalf of the Association, I would like to thank the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) sincerely, in particular its Resident Representative in Ethiopia, Ms Susanne Stollreiter, and the Program Director Dr Belete Belachew. The financial support provided by FES enabled us to conduct the workshops mentioned above, and to share their outcome with the public and other stakeholders in this format.

Professor Emeritus Bahru Zewde

President of the Association of Ethiopian Historians

Opening Remarks: The Second Round of National Consultative Workshops

Ms Susanne Stollreiter, Resident Representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Ethiopia

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning. On behalf of FES, please allow me to welcome you all to this second round of national consultative workshops, which focus on the broad theme of building a national consensus in Ethiopia. It gives us great pleasure to work together with the Association of Ethiopian Historians (AEH) to address a key element in the ongoing efforts to transform the political landscape of this country.

In this workshop series, we aspire to address the topic 'Interdependence and Interactions in Ethiopian History' comprehensively. The plan is to initiate a high-level and deeply informed exchange of views among stakeholders on the matter of consensus building and the development of an all-inclusive political settlement in the country.

It has now become clear that for a country like Ethiopia, with its complex and diverse socio-political traditions, the past matters significantly. In order to move forward, therefore, we need to understand and be able to contextualise factors that have shaped events and developments in the past.

We are not partnering with the Association of Ethiopian Historians to talk about irregularities or achievements in Ethiopia's past. Instead, this exercise hinges on the now and

the immediate future. One of our priorities is to inform the ongoing political transformation process in Ethiopia through the mechanism of dialogue and other parallel initiatives. In this regard, I am sure that the FES-AEH partnership will produce fruitful results in the coming months and years.

We are planning to make a synopses of the presentations held at these three successive workshops available to a wider audience by the end of this year. By doing so, we seek to ensure that the message of 'interdependence and interactions' will be communicated to relevant bodies within the framework of national consensus building.

Before concluding my brief remarks, please allow me to thank the organisers, paper presenters, the moderators and participants who have invested their time and energy to make these workshops a reality. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.

Becoming a Prisoner of History or Exploiting History's Positive and Negative Events to Improve the Lives of Current and Future Generations?

Opening Speech by Professor Berhanu Nega,
Minister of Education

Distinguished Guests,

Distinguished Organisers of this Workshop,

Distinguished Members of the Association of Ethiopian Historians,

Good Morning!

When I was asked to open this workshop, I took a long time to decide whether or not to accept the invitation. As a field of knowledge, history is one in which, by using analytical methods established within the discipline, studies enrich our existing knowledge, facts are distinguished from fabrications, and critical historical events are differentiated from daily-life activities, although both are important to give us a holistic historical picture. History is a field which documents both the positive and negative historical developments through which a community has passed. It does not only make us aware of the past; it enables us to draw lessons from it. In other words, it arms us with the knowledge to improve the lives of present and future generations.

In contrast to these scholarly endeavours, we live in a time and in a country where any impostor, aiming to gain a temporary political advantage by pandering to the emotions of a community, can pick out those titbits of history that will help him sell his personal beliefs and indulge in political rag-ball dribbling.

It would, therefore, not be surprising if a public official decides to stay clear of such a serious matter as is history. When I decided to accept the invitation to speak here, I thus did not do so as a government official or leader of a political organisation seeking 'to give direction' to the intellectuals gathered here, but as a former academic with respect for knowledge and, more importantly, as a citizen with concern for his country. This invitation prodded me to give careful thought to the issue, and it gives me the opportunity not only to express my views but also to learn from professional historians.

Even if the current time is not conducive to a sober discussion of historical issues, saying 'why should I bother?' and leaving it to so-called experts, or avoiding it altogether, will not make the problem disappear. Of course, the essence of a historical fact, or a consensus on how it should be analysed (for example, whether or not Emperor Menelik was a good leader), is important. However, if we do not have a clear understanding of the very nature of history and how it should interact with our current life, and more importantly, the role it should play in our current political life, it will have immense power to wreck our lives and the destiny of the future generation. Does our history determine the destiny of our contemporary and future generations? If so, to what extent? Or is it our birthplace that shapes our destiny? Or is it our institutions? These questions have not yet been answered, and it may not be possible to do so. Is it our history that shapes our destiny? In other words, are we prisoners of history? Or is it the responsibility of contemporary and future generations to draw appropriate lessons from our past and shape our destiny? This is the decisive question that must be addressed. If history is the outcome of an intergenerational transfer of experiences, i.e. if every generation has the opportunity to shape the future direction of its history, starting with the knowledge it inherited, this raises the question: when did the weight of the past generation's history tip the scale to become the right standard

of measurement? I raise this point, while leaving another to be deliberated at this forum. Namely, out of thousands of years of human history, which historical epoch can we view as the turning point that will help us gain a clear understanding of Ethiopia's contemporary condition?

By 'clear understanding', I do not mean to say that all historians should reach a full consensus on the matters at hand. History is not just about reconstructing a given past occurrence accurately. In fact, since historians mainly analyse the meaning and implications of past events, the perspective from which one scholar writes about an event may be different from that of another treating the same subject, at least for two reasons. One is that the person who witnessed the event might misrepresent it in his documentation, due to his personal bias. When, for example, a person selects one event out of many others to record it for posterity, or when he takes the interests and needs of the person assigning him this task into account when doing so (the chronicler was often a courtier of the king or the representative of a religion), this arrangement could make us question the veracity of the account given or the validity of the analysis. The second reason is that when historians write about an event long after it occurred, it is inevitable that their own outlook will be reflected in their writing.

'Scientific' historiography recognises that those who record historical events are subject to biases. For this reason, it has established its own disciplinary methodology to arrive at a common understanding of events by comparing and contrasting different records. Nonetheless, historical analyses of long-gone events can still be biased due to the writers' own outlook. For this and other reasons, it is not surprising if professional historians reach different understandings of the same event. Nevertheless, genuine historians accept the possibility of different interpretations and try to narrow down differences between them through further research and dispassionate

discussions. And, if this is not possible, they seek to further develop their skills, recognise their differences, and are prepared to learn more through additional research and dialogue.

If it is no surprise that differences of understanding and analysis emerge even among historians seeking to establish facts and respect their profession, then it is certainly no surprise that history is exploited by those forces who manipulate people, who exploit their sense of victimhood, and instigate discord and divisions within a society. One of the favourite ways in which these forces use history to confuse the public and gain a temporary political advantage is to present it 'superficially'. For example, instead of considering the whole historical picture, they pick out a part of the history they want to exploit for their benefit and deliberately ignore other parts that do not support their objective. Using a 'half-truth' to mislead the public is seen as a better option than using a 'full falsehood', and we hence see history used in this way for propaganda purposes.

History is not black and white. It memorialises commendable events, but also horrible occurrences. This is not a feature specific to one country; it manifests itself in the histories of other peoples of the world as well.

Presenting history in a 'superficial' or highly selective way, as just described, is not just a problem when history is deliberately manipulated for political benefits. Unless we are careful, there are elements in our minds that prevent us from fully recognising reality. For now, we can cite what psychoanalysts regard as our natural propensity for bias, i.e. the tendency to perceive the whole reality through the prism of recent occurrences that our memory selectively recalls and considers as the general truth. This is a tendency to perceive specific events that prick our emotions, rather than everyday occurrences that have less appeal, as if they were more frequent and more widespread

than they are. For instance, while millions of people go about their everyday business and come back home safely, most of the daily news we hear is about the crimes committed each day (people's peaceful return home being the least exciting 'news'). So, it would appear to us that crimes are committed in our country/city every day.

If you take any written history of human kind, or any legend, it might seem like most human beings spent most of their time at war, and only occasionally experienced spells of peace. But the reality is that in the past, too, human beings spent most of their time peacefully pursuing their daily lives. Since historians prefer to write about 'decisive events' and not about peaceful everyday activities, and since the former are mostly related to wars, we read and hear very few historical accounts of peaceful interactions in daily life. However, most history of human civilisation shows that it was the daily struggles to improve human life that brought about the progress observed, from going beyond using mere animal and human power to using the mechanical energy that ushered in modern agriculture, which eventually paved the transition to our present-day fourth industrial revolution. We don't deny, however, the ways in which research that was initially conducted to make war more efficient has contributed to broader advances in technology too.[1]

As I understand from the concept note, this workshop seeks to address this superficial conception of history. It also appears to seek to show that Ethiopia's history does not just have bad chapters, but also good ones. Now especially, when the politics of 'ethnic identity and differences' has reigned supreme, when talks and discussions (if one can call them discussions!) are all about the 'injustices' perpetrated in the name of and due to

[1] The Annales School led by the French intellectual Bernard Braudel initiated the field of social history, which focuses on the everyday life of people as a critical component of history.

identity,[2] dispassionate discussions among Ethiopian historians can serve to highlight that there have also been positive interactions between communities with different ethnic identities in Ethiopia (cultural exchanges and blending among different ethnic groups, intermarriages and interbreeding, linguistic borrowings and adoptions, participation in political leadership by members of different ethnic groups, changes in habitat due to migration, religious tolerance, the forging of strong trade and economic linkages, etc.). A genuine and sober exchange of views on such issues will serve to demonstrate that what unites us is more than what divides us. This knowledge will, in turn, help to ease the tensions observed in our society.

If we read our history with a broad mind, we see that most of people's time was devoted to the peaceful pursuit of their daily lives, and that this pursuit, cooperation, and a search for mutual benefits was not only evident in the interactions of different ethnic groups within this country, but even across its borders (for example through commercial interactions, exchanges in food culture, the birth of a lingua franca through adoptions, etc.). If we can demonstrate that people rallied together, not only to defend Ethiopia against an enemy from afar, but also in times of natural disaster, and that this helped to foster a sense of close affinity and a common destiny, we can turn the focus of our society from its differences to its unity, from conflict to mutual support and love, and from striving to exploit the downfall of the other to marching in unison towards collective prosperity. Deliberations conducted in this spirit will help to convey the message that all of us (as individuals, collectively, and as a nation) will benefit. This message can be transmitted based on solid knowledge rather than empty propaganda, and by focusing our historical perspective on the genuinely peaceful

[2] This vociferous habit of hyper-inflating a sense of victimhood has reached such a pitch that there seems to be no ethnic group that does not claim to have suffered 'genocide'.

and co-operative interactions in people's day-to-day lives, instead of on the events of war and conflict in particular.

I fully support the aim of this workshop. Apart from the concrete and practical benefits I have just mentioned, I believe it reflects the internal drive of human nature to seek truth and knowledge. The search for truth and knowledge should always be encouraged as it contributes to human civilisation, and it is this capacity that distinguishes humans from other animals. By applying this capacity to think and analyse mankind progressed from merely consuming what nature avails for his survival to controlling the world (although mankind has also inflicted much damage to nature in this process). In fact, making use of well-founded historical knowledge to foil the objectives of those who strive to instigate social discord by exaggerating the differences between people in our society is always a commendable undertaking. My fear and worry is: will correcting a misguided understanding of history by itself be enough to pull us out of the existential crisis in which we are? Even if we think so, is the problem we are now facing one that can wait, given the extensive period of time that it would take to rectify this distorted understanding of history? Let me wrap up with a few points on these two issues.

Firstly, considering our existential challenge, the main problem lies in the question that has, so far, no answer and which we have been trying to avoid: on what bedrock should we establish the Ethiopian state for it to have legitimacy for most of its people? What principle of equality should form the basis of the state, for it to gain legitimacy in the eyes of those who believe that 'the old state' victimised them because of their identity? Those that believe so are also not certain that the new state will guarantee that neither they nor others will be victimised, and that it can create a politically stable society. I am not claiming that it will be easy to address this political issue. However, if we define the issue properly, we have at least gone half way in

addressing it. This issue is also not one which can be resolved by Ethiopian historians alone. We should also go beyond our own history, to draw lessons from the knowledge and experience of other civilisations. We must then use the lessons we draw to create institutional structures that can prevent the alleged atrocities that are cited as causes for the current discord in the country from reoccurring.

If we are unable to address the above-named issue, resolving disagreements over our history may only serve as one part of our efforts to address the main problem. We can try to do so by moving from political polemics to a dispassionate and sober dialogue over the outstanding issues. Our first task is, therefore, to make our political system responsive to the demands of our time and ensure that it is based on a solid principle of equality. This is no easy task, given that there are a considerable number of political forces who, apart from having a distorted outlook, merely view the political system in terms of the benefits they can derive from it. In order to not lose these benefits, they are prepared to put up a fierce struggle, even if it destroys the country in the process. We recognise the responsibility of historians and other social scientists to discuss this issue, and to come up with a principle on which our political system should be founded. However, it is also necessary to point out that, in order for this principle to be endorsed by the public, extensive political and public relations work among the broad masses will be necessary.

The second point is related to the issue of time. Even if we agree that creating a stable society requires changes in people's mentality, effecting such change will undoubtedly take a long period of time. It could even take a whole generation. We must realise that the politically motivated and poorly digested education we have been offering our children for so long is responsible for the decline of our educational system, and the moral abyss and identity crisis we are currently facing.

The question whether such long-term solutions can save our country before its death, due to the crisis it is currently entrapped in, is deeply worrisome. While we pursue these long-term interventions, strong, practical actions and decisions in the political, economic, and security arena will need to be taken before the current crisis gets out of control.

In other words, while seeking to change people's outlook through long-term interventions, it is also essential that we take political measures to improve people's lives in economic terms, to create an administrative and judicial system that is free of corruption, and to ensure the security of the country and its people. Since the challenge facing us is complex, the solution, too, requires caution and deep thinking. Such work demands different skills and expertise, as well as the cooperation and participation of broad sections of our society. So, our professional historians should not confine themselves to the bounds of their profession by assuming that their role is simply to rectify misconceptions of history. They are expected, as citizens, to play an active role in the collective effort to avert the danger facing our country by ensuring that it is based on a stable political bedrock. I hope and believe that you will do this. I hope the forthcoming national dialogue will give us all an opportunity to do this.

Let us use it wisely.

Thank you!

I. Conceptual and Historical Context

The Movement of People and Goods and their Movers and Controllers in Ethiopian History: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives

Dr Tekalign Woldemariam

This paper provides an overview and describes the central features of the movement of people and goods in Ethiopia's long history. It also surveys the creation, growth, mind-set, and forms of action of those forces who were the 'movers' and 'controllers' of these movements.

The first part of this paper is conceptual. It describes the differences and relations between 'humans' and 'goods' which, in different periods and contexts, are referred to as 'movers' and 'controllers' (fencers). These distinctions help us see that humans and goods are not only movers and moveable (the former, for instance, within the context of the slave trade), they are terms that are merged to refer to one actor. Although the mover and controller or restrictor are often different and opposing actors, there are times and conditions in which they merge.

To help us understand and assess the historical background of this issue, the second part of the paper distinguishes between 'pre-modern' and 'modern' chapters in Ethiopia's history. Drawing upon historical evidence and pioneering studies relevant to each of these periods, it presents the following major findings:

First:

The pre-modern period in Ethiopian history refers to developments before the end of the 19th century,

a) Since people and goods moved, and were moved, continuously and without restriction, this can be viewed as a defining feature of the history of our region.

b) The local geographical conditions and the distribution of people and resources were the main factors that determined the movement of humans and goods. Although various natural and man-made occurrences (for example droughts, floods, shortages of water and pasture, and the conflicts that these triggered) changed the movements' direction, scope and speed, one can say that there was no region that was not affected by the movement of people and goods.

c) In contrast to major population movements that have, so far, been the focus of historians and scholars from other disciplines, the movement of small segments of the population and of groups pushed by compelling life conditions and interests had a greater impact here. Likewise, regarding the movement of goods, the means for sustaining daily life, such as production tools, clothing, plants and animals, were not less important than the caravan trade merchandise that has received greater attention.

d) Regarding the process of movement, our sources indicate that, irrespective of whether the movement was initiated through mutual consent or push factors, negotiation or accommodation, it was not sudden. Instead, it was a slow process that proceeded stage by stage over an extended period of time, and in a manner that facilitated the creation of blood and neighbourhood ties among people. Its outcome was thus that, after prolonged periods of interaction, temporary distinctions between 'indigenous' and 'newcomer' gradually blurred and disappeared, which has led to a shared history of a unified people.

e) Among these movements, a few were driven by the use of force and by conflicts. Most others were initiated by segments of the population or individual groups. The role of third party movers (i.e. an organised state or armed forces) was limited during this period of Ethiopia's history.

Second:

The chapter of Ethiopian history we refer to as modern reaches from the end of the 19th century until the mid-20th century. During this period, which differs from the preceding one in many ways, the movement of people and goods was driven by orders, and was based on the interests and decisions of well-organised third parties. The following major events and contexts drove these processes and tendencies:

a) Major territorial expansion campaigns supported by organised armed forces;

b) Following these expansionist movements, the widespread demarcation of international boundaries and the delineation of internal administrative borders, which is one manifestation of the modern state;

c) The emergence and gradual consolidation of an unaccountable, non-participatory and highly centralised administrative and decision-making system;

d) The development and implementation of projects that invite and encourage high-level interventions, complete with 'plans' and 'maps', based on scientific perspectives and professionalism, and informed by various ideologies aimed at transforming people's residences and life styles.

Apart from the development listed under a) above, the others are prominently connected to the socialist military regime (1974-1991). The forced resettlement and villagisation programmes carried out during this period came at a high price for the people affected. They also led to the birth of opposition movements, which were founded and driven by people who felt marginalised and oppressed. In fact, as the movement of people and goods was scaled up in a manner insensitive to the wishes of the people, the opposition movements gained strength. They also began to be linked to ethnic identities in form and content.

Ethiopia's new political system, which took shape after the change of regime in 1991, did not fundamentally differ from the preceding one, except for changes in its structure and form. Its defining feature was that the country was now structured into regions based on ethnic and linguistic differences, and state power was allocated to these *killils* (regional states).

Following the weakening of the EPRDF-led regime through widespread opposition, current conflicts, growing instability and the *killil* borders' role in restricting the movement of people, goods and resources show that there is still an unresolved debate and struggle going on.

In its conclusion, the paper presents recommendations regarding issues that need to be thought about and addressed in order to break out of the current political-economic deadlock. In particular, given the topic of the paper and the themes addressed, the concluding part emphasises the following:

Historical accounts of Ethiopia as a modern nation-state have not given much attention, nor weight, to its peoples' interdependence and harmonious relations between them. It is, however, necessary to establish a participatory system of representation in Ethiopia that will give due prominence to these assets, and that will enable people to voice their interests and

views regarding state structures, major people-to-people relations, and the distribution of resources. For such a system of representation to produce the necessary results, it is advisable to move beyond the *killil* level and give greater attention to the zonal and *woreda* structures where people live and interact. In short, this means transforming the political-economic system by allowing, enabling and encouraging people's direct participation in self-governance.

II. Blended and Mixed Identity

The Case for a Composite Nation-State

Professor Emeritus Shumet Sishagne

The challenge that the Ethiopian nation-state faces is one which other countries, too, have faced. However, the Ethiopian case differs in that there has been no timely solution. The problem is now so serious that it poses an existential threat to the country. This is a problem that has been around for a long time, due to its citizens' lack of drive and capacity to act on time. In particular, efforts to modernise the ancient state after the dawn of the 20th century were slow and superficial. Emperor Haile Selassie I, who had the opportunity to lead the state for half a century and guide it out of an all-pervasive backwardness, lacked the courage and willingness to introduce basic structural changes. The Emperor, who was very protective of his power and honour, was also too preoccupied with his personal fame to give due attention to building modern institutions that would serve as a solid foundation for the state. In short, the task of modernising the nation-state to ensure that it would be fit for the times was not completed.

The new generation, which was disillusioned with the slowly evolving and backward system, wanted to address the problem by embarking on a hasty path of transformation that aggravated it instead. The path that the new generation chose to bring about radical change was hijacked by Marxist ideology. Joseph Stalin's treatise 'on the national question' became its psalm. Focused on instigating revolutionary change, the young generation belittled the state it aspired to modernise. As extremism is anathema to reform, the idea of enriching the nation's existing interdependence and utilising its positive values to steer it towards a reliable course of change was abandoned. Instead, there was a rush to reject anything and everything connected to the past, and to start from zero. The

medicine that was prescribed to save the country eventually began to threaten its very existence.

The new generation's reckless attitude towards the Ethiopian nation-state became even more dangerous after the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) took power in 1991. The TPLF mischievously used the nationalities slogan that had been naively adopted by the new generation: it eroded the multinational nature of the Ethiopian state by reorganising its people along ethno-linguistic lines that accentuate their differences rather than consolidate the age-old bonds between them. Interrelations that were nurtured over centuries were torn apart. People were made to hate one another and were herded into narrow ethnic enclaves. The narrative of coexistence was replaced by new divisive and vindictive narratives. In a manner unprecedented in the history of other countries, the TPLF rulers imposed and advanced their narrow political aim by denigrating the country they led and by pitting their subjects against one another.

Contrary to the old adage, 'a person's homeland is [determined by] his deed', which enabled people to move around and make a living freely, Ethiopia's new rulers branded people as 'native' and 'newcomer', and ossified ethnic differences by legislating them and preventing people of different geographic origins from living together. Rather than those people who actually live on the land, those who were entitled to utilise the land became the nations and nationalities who 'own' it. In this way the whole country was transformed into tribal enclaves. Fortunate countries have grown from narrow ethnic domains into broader nation-states that perform huge tasks. What has happened in our country is the opposite: demolishing the nation-state and letting ethnicity reign supreme.

What has been continuously preached for the duration of a generation is not how we can become citizens of one nation,

but how to snap the threads that tie us together, making us stand apart in isolation. A brother has been agitated to fight against his brother. Intermarriages between speakers of different languages have been publicly slandered, millions of Ethiopians born out of such wedlock have been labelled 'bastards' and made to feel marginalised. Instead of encouraging people to forgive one another for any offence they may have, knowingly or unknowingly, caused one another, they are incited to act in revenge against one another. The underlying objective of the labels 'native' and 'newcomer' is to perpetuate these divisions.

What we are witnessing now is a crisis created by poison that has been sprayed for the duration of one generation. The atrocities that are continuously committed against various people in broad daylight indicate the nature and scale of the brutality suffered. Although the promoters of ethnic-based structures claim 'we will first separate and then come together voluntarily', the experience of the last thirty years has shown us the opposite. What we see on the ground is that love and goodwill are disappearing and that suspicion and hatred are growing. It was claimed that organising the state along ethnic divides would satisfy most people. In practice, we see that it has created more chaos, and led to atrocities and frustration.

Like trying to collect water with a sieve, sealing a hole ends up puncturing another. When one ethnic group's demand to become a *killil* (regional state) is addressed, five other ethnic groups demand the same status. There is now a vicious circle of endless demands for *killilhood,* a zone demanding to be split into five zones, a *woreda* demanding to be upgraded to a zone, and a *kebele* demanding to be a *special woreda*. The root cause of all these crises is the Constitution, which was deliberately designed to sow divisions rather than consolidate Ethiopian unity. Given that the Constitution encourages fragmentation, it is bound to carry people along this path.

The Constitution warrants that each ethnic elite may have its own crown. In practice, this can only happen if the speakers of other languages are ethnically cleansed from the area that is to be monopolised by an ethnic elite. For this reason, the elite of each ethnic group projects an image of a 'negative' significant other. It perceives its own benefits in terms of a zero-sum game. Consequently, it draws its boundary in such a way as to prevent others from encroaching on it. Since the boundary becomes the basis for holding land and power, the ethnic group's elite defends its boundary from penetration by others, enlarges it, and thus engages in conflict. To prove that the *killil* is theirs alone, they have to evict those they regard as newcomers or immigrants. Since the country's constitution has circumscribed their identity and benefits within the bounds of their ethnic group, the elite, too, make their livelihood within their ethnic group. As it is their bread and butter, they will kill and die for it.

How do we get out of this vicious circle? As Albert Einstein has said, 'insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results'. This means that, in order to break the vicious circle described above, we must soberly examine the path that led us to this situation and make necessary changes. If we discover that the primary problem that threatens the survival of our country is that the very nature of the nation-state itself is questioned, then we have to give this special attention.

Like any form of community, the nation-state is a human construct. If it is man-made, then we should also be able to reconstitute it in a manner that will serve our best interests, rather than destroy us. This homework cannot be deferred until tomorrow. It is an uncontested fact of history that the nation-state forms a foundation for a firm and stable community life. In relation to this, we should realise that a nation-state does not just suddenly appear. It is the result of a process that involves massive efforts, sacrifices, and even brute force. The nation-

states that we consider successful now were also created through this process. As the famous founder of the German nation-state, Otto von Bismarck, once said: 'Watching closely the formation of a nation-state and the making of a sausage is nauseating, but the final result is delicious.' Demolishing a nation-state built through such efforts, by racing to establish other competitive ethnic states, would mean repeating this labour and pain.

The most civilised and constructive method is not to destroy what others have laboured to build and start from zero, but to improve the existing state by reorganising it in such a way that suits us all. Change is a guarantee for survival. Life's sustainability is ensured through continuous change. Those incapable of transformation, like the animals and plants that could not adapt to changing circumstances, have become extinct. Likewise, man-made institutions that adapt to changing conditions will be invigorated and strengthened through processes of change, and will have a solid foundation. For the Ethiopian nation-state to move with the times, and be able to meet the needs of most of its citizens, it must go through a continuous and meaningful process of change. As the generations change and the times usher in new challenges, the nation-state needs to develop structural approaches to address new demands.

Other countries have, in the past, encountered the kind of identity crisis that we now face too. We can draw useful lessons from their experiences if we examine what approach they used to address this problem. The United States of America, for example, needed to address issues such as: Based on what kind of identity shall we establish our nation-state? To whom does the country belong? What relations should exist among us? After much wrangling over these issues, they fought a bloody civil war in the mid-19th century. Finally, among many alternatives voiced, the idea that appealed to most and that was

based on the most humane principle was: 'America does not belong to this or that race; irrespective of their racial or geographic origin, it is a composite nation-state of all those that now live on the land.' This composite identity considers the individual not on the basis of his race or ethnicity, but his humanity. Consequently, people do not identify with traits that distinguish them from others. Instead, they identify with the relations and interests that they share with these others and that bind them together. These shared interests, values such as freedom, justice and equality, guarantee the strength of their bonds. A citizenship based on these values is more inclusive and more humane.

In contrast, the forces that seek to establish their nation-state based on ideas of a 'narrow identity' mobilise by excluding others and by focusing on the differences they claim exist between ethnic groups. This approach pits one community of people against the other, encourages ethnic chauvinism, and paves the way for brutal and atrocious actions. It suffices here to recall the crimes against humanity committed by Hitler's Nazi followers, who sought to establish a nation-state based on the idea of a pure Aryan race, and South Africa's apartheid system crafted by the Afrikaner rulers.

By its very nature, a political grouping that is based on an ethnic identity focuses on itself at the expense of others and is, hence, a source of threat to others. In a country like Ethiopia, the political community has had a composite identity since the nation-state was formed. It is thus not difficult to predict the crisis and fragmentation that follows if, after a long period of interdependence, some want to divorce from the union by fracturing the collective along ethnic lines. It is therefore vitally important to encourage a reform process that would strengthen the composite nation-state, in order to save Ethiopia from the looming crisis.

The ethnic-based political narrative does not view the blending of peoples and cultures in Ethiopia, which took place over a period of several centuries, positively. Ethiopia's peoples, it assumes, stand apart and belong to antagonistic camps. If we examine this narrative closely, the assumed differences among people is a fabrication deliberately created by ethnic elites. There is no contradiction on the ground that would prevent people from continuing to live together in harmony, nor do antagonistic political views prevail in these blended communities. Ethnic elites also advance the narrative that disagreements in today's Ethiopia centre on a struggle between 'unitarians' and 'federalists'. In practice, however, there is no force that currently opposes federalism, or seeks to restore the old unitary state. Therefore, the term 'unitarian' is a label deliberately used to cow people into submission and to vilify the sense of citizenship that is based on a strong feeling of Ethiopian-ness. If there is a clear realisation that this fabricated narrative is divorced from reality, it would be as if a black veil had been removed.

Finally, one may raise the question of who should facilitate this renaissance of the nation-state that Ethiopia so sorely needs. The most reliable force is the Ethiopian people; they carry this burden as the issue concerns them the most. However, an intermediary agent is required to mobilise and organise the people and their efforts. Renewing a nation-state is a huge project that requires, whether we like it or not, resources that are at the disposal of the government. There may be people who do not like the idea that the government should be able to do this. Nevertheless, one should underscore the question of what alternative there is. Honestly speaking, the choice is to either remove the existing government or to work with it. Given the currently confused and narrow political space in Ethiopia, it is not difficult to envision the crisis that would ensue from an attempt to remove the incumbent government.

In light of these problems, citizens should focus on encouraging the government to take the right path, to cleanse itself from political machinations that drive wedges among Ethiopians, to arm itself with a positive national vision, and to lead the renaissance. We need to gently pressurise our rulers to mature, and persuade them to take a constructive direction, rather than being belligerent and trying to marginalise them. Psychologists refer to such a positive approach as 'the nudge factor'; i.e. a soft and fruitful method to help people act in a desirable way. It is based on the belief that, just as we can straighten a bent piece of wood by applying the right pressure, we can also apply moderate pressure on government leaders so that they turn to their proper duties.

Mixed Identity and National Consensus

Dr Tewodros Zewdu

Ethiopia's long history has been moulded by, and is interwoven with, different traditions and cultures. The interdependence and interactions of its people created conducive social, political and economic conditions that enabled them to accommodate their differences. History openly testifies that Ethiopians have regarded their country and administrative structures as their common house and lived in it. People with a 'mixed identity' reflect this historical trajectory. From the living room to the public square, they have reinforced familial and national bonds. However, the EPRDF belittled, trashed and destroyed the values of Ethiopia's long-existing interdependence and interactions through the barrel of the gun. In 1995, it proclaimed a constitution that dislocated Ethiopians from their places of habitat, and their long-accustomed social, political and economic life. As a consequence, people with mixed identities have been denied constitutional and *killil* representation. The EPRDF's constitution has thus led individuals and families with mixed identities into psychological, social, political and economic crises.

Psychological

In order to lead his life properly, a person needs psychological strength. A person in a psychological crisis becomes a burden to himself, his kinsfolk and his country. Contrary to this scientific fact, the EPRDF's constitution and *killil* structure were designed to make a person of mixed identity suffer an identity crisis. This is because the constitution and the *killil* structure force a person with mixed identity to express his identity based on denial. For instance, when I came back to Ethiopia in 2015/16 and applied for a *Kebele* ID card, the response I got was one which forced me to deny my mixed identity. When I informed the *Kebele*

official that I wanted my registration to show the identities of both my father and my mother, I was told that this was not the standard procedure for issuing an ID card. So the choice I was given was to deny my mixed identity, and register with a single identity, i.e., by choosing my father's ethnic identity. This has led me to experience a serious psychological crisis. To demand that one deny one's mother and one's identity exposes one to a serious psychological disorder. Therefore, since individuals with mixed identity are exposed to a serious psychological crisis under the present constitution and *killil* formation, the latter must urgently be revised.

Social

Article 34 (3) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's Constitution provides that 'the family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.' The decisive role that the family plays in people's social life has thus been recognised unambiguously. Despite this, the choice that the Constitution gives to families of mixed identity is to split. This means that for a mixed family to get constitutional representation, it has to separate from the mother's identity. This kind of *killil* formation and constitutional practice nullifies the legal protection of mixed families. Furthermore, article 35 (3) of the Constitution provides that 'the historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures.' The Constitution was written by trampling upon and removing the right of mothers to have an identity. A typical reflection of this inhuman practice is the pressure put on families of mixed identity to split and dissolve the union. Until this practice is changed, the only option of mixed families is to split.

Political

According to the 1995 Constitution, political representation is based solely on one's identity. This means that unless an individual states to which ethnic group s/he belongs, s/he cannot have constitutional or *killil* representation. Ethiopia's objective reality shows that the country is home to people who have single and mixed identities. Without regard to this historical fact, the Constitution and *killil* formation gave the country to those who have a single identity. For this reason, those who have a mixed identity and have been denied political representation within the Constitution and the *killil* structure have been obliged to consider themselves as aliens in Ethiopia. Unless this inhuman practice is changed soon, Ethiopia will continue to be a centre of injustice. Disregarding the fact that Ethiopia is our common home, the EPRDF created a state structure that marginalises citizens with mixed identities: the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation. Unless this practice is urgently rectified, Ethiopia is bound to be a bowl of misery.

Economic

To work and live in peace, both as an individual and a community, one needs economic strength. However, my study shows that due to the system introduced by the EPRDF, a person will suffer economically because of his identity. For instance, during the field work that I conducted in 2018 and 2019, many individuals with mixed identities told me that they had to hide their true identity and register with a single identity in order to be employed. This practice allows those with a single identity to develop their economic strength. In a country whose people have single and mixed identities, it is inhumane to force people with mixed identities to deny their true selves in order to be entitled to economic benefits. Therefore, to allow those with mixed identities to be proud of themselves and live freely in Ethiopia, the Constitution and *killil* formation must become

inclusive. As mentioned above, Ethiopia is a product of mutual interdependence and many interactions between the people who call her home. Unless these common values are given the social, political, economic and psychological space they deserve, our country Ethiopia will not be saved from fragmentation. Cognisant of this, my PhD dissertation has proposed eleven solutions. In addition, to make the *killil* structure inclusive, I have come up with seven solutions.[3] Unless the Ethiopian government and people note the analysis and suggestions outlined above and seek to correct the errors of the 1995 Constitution by urgently addressing these issues, it should be understood that people with mixed identities will be alienated from their country. They will deny themselves and distance themselves from their mother, and be condemned to live in a state of psychological crisis.

[3] *The Plight of Mixed Ethnic People in Ethiopia: Exclusion, Fragmentation and Double Consciousness* (York University, 2022).

III. The Historical Interdependence of, and Interactions between, Ethiopia's Nationalities

The Dynamics of Peoples' Interactions in Western Ethiopia, South of the Abay River (1880-2008)

Dr Dereje Hinew

Western Ethiopia, which includes Benishangul-Gumuz and the four zones of Wollega, has been a land both blessed and cursed. It is a land of blessings because it has abundant natural resources and a diverse ecology that is ideal for development. The region has vast forests and largely untapped agricultural resources, including river valleys (Abay, Dhidhessa, Angar, Fincha'a, Wama and others). Such natural endowments have made this region the backbone of the national economy. In terms of its contribution to the country's economy (especially with regard to generating foreign revenue), one could cite its coffee production and gold mines. The region also has sufficient fertile land that could be used for agricultural purposes. Furthermore, the region has served as a place of relief for people in times of hardship: for instance, during the repeated droughts and famines of 1888-92, 1984-85, and 2003-4.

Amazingly, though, this part of the country has recently become a centre of conflict and displacement. Two contradictory developments can be observed in the region. Both are connected to its proximity to the two Sudans, and have internal and international dimensions. The first is the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) that is being built on the Abay (Blue Nile) River. The GERD has raised peoples' hope that it will contribute to the development of the region, the country and the Horn of Africa more widely. On the one hand, if it is put to use wisely and if cooperation is possible, the dam has the potential to speed up national development significantly and to become a pillar for peace in Ethiopia's internal and external relations. On

the other hand, murderous conflicts in the region have led to great loss of lives, the displacement of thousands of citizens, the destruction of property and other damages.

The conflict in Benishangul-Gumuz and neighbouring *woredas* in the Oromiya Regional State, which has been ongoing since September 2017, and the ethnic-based conflict in Metekel, are worrisome developments. These conflicts are without justification and are so destructive that they will lead to bad memories in the region, and possibly in the country. Recently, similar conflicts have occurred between Oromos and Amharas living in eastern Wollega. These conflicts, too, have resulted in the loss of lives and the destruction of property. These developments force us to investigate why those local institutions that enabled local communities to forge integrated relations since the end of the 19th century have collapsed, and why the attendant values of mutual support and cohabitation have disintegrated.

The people of the region had created social institutions that enabled them to live together, offer mutual support, cooperate and respect each other for a long period of time, and eventually to integrate their communities. Such institutions include *gudifecha* (adoption), intermarriage, *michu* (friendship), *abaliji* (godfather/mother), *galu* (cohabitation), *harma-hodda* (breast sucking, or an adult sucking the honey-dipped thumb of a would-be patron for protection), which enabled integration, as well as various other tools of economic ties. In the past, these social institutions and values ensured cooperation and integration. Above all else, they served to forge long-lasting relations between Oromo, Gumuz, Berta, Amhara, Tigre, Agaw and other communities. Such social ties fostered social, economic and political alliances in times of distress. For example, one could cite the oath of fealty between Dejazmach Moroda and the Nilo-Saharan peoples in the 1880s, the agreement between Abba Tone and the local Oromo in the early

part of the 1950s, the reconciliation agreements between 'Gumuz-Oromo' and 'Oromo-Amhara' towards the end of the 1990s, in 2011-12, and in 2014-15.

Nevertheless, in order to satisfy their economic and political interests, local and central government actors, and others, intervened in ways that jeopardised the long-standing relationships between local communities. Towards the end of the 19th century, local disagreements were created by the discordant interests of Sudan, the Bela Shangul, Leqa and Gojjam rulers, as well as interventions by the central government. The Italian occupiers' system of divide and rule during the period 1936 to 1941 also disrupted existing practices of cooperation and mutual support within the local population. For a while, the Derg's policy of insertion (*sigsega*), resettlement and other development programs, led to more integration among ethnic groups. However, by eroding indigenous socio-economic institutions, and using new settlers to control local opposition, the Derg also undermined social integration.

Over the last five to ten years, population growth in this region – a result of resettlements and the spread of large farms and mining explorations – has heightened competition over resources and a realignment of affinities. In addition, misconceptions about federalism and its misapplication, the practice of branding communities as 'native' and 'immigrant/newcomer', and the ways in which access to power and resources has been linked to ethnicity, have all contributed to discord among the communities living here. In the period since 1991, economic factors (competition over land, Amhara migration, informal land transactions and contract violations), political factors (unequal power allocation), socio-cultural factors (Amhara cultural chauvinism and other ethnic groups' sense of victimhood), and ecological crisis (allegations that vast forests have been destroyed by Amhara settlers) have been

causes of conflict in the region. Since the early 1990s, the social and political elite, the rich and other actors have been the engineers of these conflicts. The decline of the social institutions mentioned above has created an opportunity for these actors to instigate conflicts among communities with different social backgrounds. As the basic causes of these conflicts remain unaddressed, they erupt frequently. Ethnic-based conflicts are, consequently, a serious security problem in this region. They constitute a major threat to the social and economic interdependence of local communities, and to national development. In order to rebuild trust and understanding among the peoples of the region, it is necessary to contain the self-serving interventions of conflict entrepreneurs, to reinvigorate indigenous institutions, to strengthen relations between different nationalities, to improve the management of public resources, and to seriously invest in the youth and their development.

A History of the Interlacing of Nationalities in the Gibe-Gojab-Dhidhessa Triangle (Jimma Zone)

Dr Deressa Debu

Due to the wars between the kingdoms of Jimma Abba Jiffar and the Yem from the 1830s to the 1890s, a large number of Yem captives were taken to Jimma as slaves, where they were allocated to the palace and the local chieftains. However, thanks to their diligence and loyalty, they were not only freed from their bondage, but were given the honorific title of 'Abba' and managed to hold positions such as that of a palace butler. For this reason, the local Shenen Gibe Oromo referred to the Yem as honest and loyal Borana (*angafa*). Yem workers were famous for their skills in construction, including in building roads. When Jimma Abba Jiffar II (r. 1875-1932)[4] became bed-ridden towards the end of his reign, the Yem took good care of him while members of his own royal household and clansmen became tired of nursing him. Grateful, the king gave them his blessing and bequeathed his property and land to them. That is why they are still found to be settled around the palace. In addition to this, the Yem have settled, at different times, in the Sokoru, Tiro Afeta, Omo Nada, Omo Beyem, Mencho, Dedo, Qersa, Seqa Cheqorsa, Shebae Sombo and Mana *woredas*. It is estimated that currently seventy-five per cent of the Yem people do not live in the Yem *special woreda,* but in the Jimma zone.

The conflict resolution methods, nomenclature and practices of the Shenen Gibe Oromo and the Yem people are similar. The lowest tier is called *Mila/Luko* and is applied to resolve discord between two to five households. *Shene* serves to resolve

[4] He was also known as Tulu or Mohamed Daud Ibn Ibrahim.

problems that have arisen between five and fifty households. *Regi* is designed to resolve issues involving fifty households and more. *Togo* adjudicates issues that were not resolved by *Regi*, and refers it to *Kure* if it could not resolve it. *Jiga/Tuli* presides over outstanding issues that involve four hundred or more households and reaches the final verdict.

Due to intermarriage and the practice of adopting elements of each other's language and religion, it is very difficult to differentiate the Yem from the Oromo. However, female circumcision is prohibited among the Yem. If a Yem man marries a circumcised woman, he will be punished by being forced to slaughter ten bulls and jump over a fire matching his own height. As a circumcised Yem woman will find it difficult to find a husband from among the Yem, she has to look for one from outside her community. So, intermarriage between Oromo men and Yem women has been common for a long time, and it still is.

While twenty per cent of the people in this region speak only Afaan Oromo, sixty per cent are bilingual and speak both Yemnano and Afaan Oromo. The Oromo near the border also speak Yemnano. As the examples listed in the table below show, the vocabularies of these two languages share many similarities:

No.	Afan Oromo	Yemnano	English Translation
1.	Akkam	Akan	Hi!
2.	Ashama	Ashamni	How are you doing?
3.	Ayyaana	Ayyana	Holiday
4.	Gambaala	Gamala	Door
5.	Ittoo	Eto	Stew
6.	Mammaaksa	Mamaka	Proverb

No.	Afan Oromo	Yemnano	English Translation
7.	Mi'iraamaa	Mi'era	Injustice
8.	Nagaa	Naga	Peace
9.	Oduu	Odu	News
10.	Qoosaa	Kosa	Joke
11.	Qajeeloo	Kajelo	Monday
12.	Qarsaa	Karsa	Tuesday
13.	Arbii	Arbi	Wednesday
14.	Kamisa	Kamisa	Thursday
15.	Jimaataa	Jimato	Friday
16.	Xinnaa	Tina	Saturday
17.	Guddaa	Guda	Sunday

The Kafficho, too, have intermarried with the Oromo, and this history includes dynastic intermarriages. For example, Bofo (Abba Gomol or Abba Habuqa, r. 1800-1825), who was the founder of the Limmu-Enarya Kingdom and the head of the Seppera clan, married Mormelewe, the daughter of Oda Aniye, who was the head of the Sigaro clan. In turn, he made his oldest son Ibsa, the crown prince, marry Genne Manjeti, the daughter of the king of Kaffa. Later, during his reign from 1825 until 1861, Ibsa (Abba Bagibo) also took the sister of Kamo Ga'e Sharicho, the king of Kaffa, as his wife. The king of Jimma, Abba Jiffar II, also married Genne Manjeti.

From the 1920s until the 1980s, a large number of Kafficho crossed the Gojeb River to move to the coffee-growing Shenen Gibe *woredas* (such as Gera, Gomma, Mana, Limmu Kosa, Limmu Seqa) during the coffee-harvesting season (from October to December), and stayed there as labourers. Most of

them eventually decided to stay there for good. Since most of these migrants were men, they married women from other ethnic groups, especially Muslim Oromos, and converted to Islam. There are also some similarities in vocabulary between the Afaan Oromo and Kafinono languages. For example, *genne* (queen) and *ato* (pea) are similar in both languages.

From the 1870s until the 1920s, many members of the Dawro and Konta ethnic groups came to Shenen Gibe on the caravan trade route, crossing the Gojeb River via the Dedo and Mencha *woredas*. The southern exit gate of Jimma city serves as evidence for this history. It has, to date, retained its old name 'Dawro Gate'. Most of the slaves in Jimma used to come from these areas. After slavery was officially banned, most of the liberated slaves settled in *kebeles* in Jimma city and its vicinity. In addition, after the 1920s, many people from these groups migrated to the sub-provinces of Jimma and Limmu as domestic workers, construction workers and coffee-harvesting labourers, and came to constitute a major workforce in this region. They had been pushed out of their homelands by local chieftains, and were driven by a scarcity of land resulting from population growth and deforestation. One result of this intermingling of the Dawro-Konta with the Oromo in Jimma and other places has been that their language style and pronunciation had an influence on local languages, especially on Amharic and Afaan Oromo. In general, the Oromo, Yem, Dawro-Konta and Kafficho communities living in the Gojeb-Dhidhessa-Gibe triangle share a history of strong interdependence and integration in their social, economic and political lives.

Values of Solidarity and their Role in Contributing to National Consensus in Ethiopia: Indigenous Institutions of Interaction between the Oromo and the Somali in Bale

Dr Kefyalew Tessema Semu[5]

There are several indigenous systems that highlight Ethiopia's multi-national character and facilitate inter-community interactions. These cultural systems and institutions bind neighbouring communities together and enable them to live in peace and, during difficult times, to address problems collectively through goodwill and dialogue to reach a consensus. These communities have developed practices of mutual support, good neighbourliness, and close relations that have, over time, become established cultures. These were accepted by all.

This does not mean that there were no conflicts among neighbouring communities in the past. In fact, it was the high number of conflicts that pushed communities to develop conflict resolution systems, to organise security alliances, and create strong compensation and penal laws that, in time, became norms that regulated interactions between them. It might be for this reason that Oromo and Somali communities living in Bale share similar traditional practices (e.g. intermarriage, adoption, protégé-patronage, and compensation), which have evolved

[5] Dr. Kefyalew has died in a car accident since the compilation of this volume. The Association of Ethiopian Historians would like to express its deep sorrow at his passing away at a tender age.

into customary laws that have mediated their interactions over a long period of time.

Among the Oromo and Somali pastoralists and semi-pastoralists in the arid and semi-arid parts of Bale, marriage is a social institution that has led to strong relations between these communities, and has enabled them to adapt their life to the somewhat harsh climatic and ecological environment. Cultural and linguistic blending (for example, between Arsi Oromo clans, such as the Rayitu, Dawe, Gura, Gurara, and Serer, and Somali clans, such as the Hawiya, Gerina, and Kerenleh) has advanced to the extent that these groups could appear to have the same ethnic identity. In the recent past, however, the attempt to divide these communities between two regional states (i.e. Oromiya and Somali *killils*) led to repeated conflicts and displacement. These conflicts are still ongoing. The marriage ties among members of these communities provide social, economic and cultural benefits to both communities, as well as human resources. In times of natural and man-made disasters, these relationships enable these communities to share resources and collectively manage their hardships. Marriage ties, furthermore, give vibrancy to their shared faith and pastoralist customs. Consequently, since marriage is an institution with multiple benefits for both communities involved, the process involves negotiation, entailing both rewards and sanctions.

Megenta (protégé-patronage) is an indigenous institution which is widely used by Somali and Oromo communities in Bale to support each other during times of hardship. For instance, a Somali sub-clan can dispatch respected elders to leaders of an Arsi clan. The Somali elders will then reveal their identity and express their clan's desire for strong ties, saying 'in life and death, take us as *magenta*'. The requested clan promises to hold consultations and, after entertaining the elders, sends them back after giving them a date to meet again. If the request

is approved during the consultations, the bond will be sanctified through a *megenta* ritual. After that, the parties will become *megenta* brothers and support each other. In times of drought or man-made disaster, in particular, members of a Somali clan, along with their entire families and animals, can then come and settle amidst their *megenta* clan for a short period, or even for several years. In this way, in the 1940s, several sub-clans of the Ogaden clan (the Rer), which had entered a *megenta* relationship with the Deka Rayitu of Arsi Oromo, joined them and have been living with them since. Likewise, the Ajuran Somali sub-clan was taken into patronage by the Dawe Oromo, the Kerenle Somali clan by the Serer of Arsi Oromo, and the Geri Somali by the Kereyu of Arsi Oromo living in Dolo/Bale. These communities lead a life of interdependence fostered by the *megenta* custom.

Apart from this, *harma hoda* (which literally means breast sucking, even as an adult), *geyna* (an inherited child, in Somali), *gudifecha* (adoption, in Oromo), and other forms of mutual support are widely practiced among the communities that live in the river basins of south-eastern Ethiopia and cultivate crops in the river deltas. In the arid Bale districts, there are several religious, historical and cultural sites that testify to the long and well-established tradition of social interdependence. For example, the ancient mosque of Sheikh Hussein in Dire, the Kerjul and Sof Omar cave mosques, *geda* custom centres like Arda Terre, Oda Roba, and Oda Meda Welabu, and natural healing water wells (rich in minerals) at El Waq, El Kere, El Sewena, El Qachen, and El Golgol, can be cited as sites of pastoralist cultural rituals. The shared culture of pastoralism, Islamic faith, living under similar ecological conditions, linguistic similarities, and similar positions vis-à-vis the central government: these are all conditions that have enabled these and other indigenous institutions of interdependence and social interaction to develop.

In addition to the customs of interdependence discussed so far, the communities living in this part of Ethiopia have a history of living under the leadership of *abba gada*s (*abba biyya*s), heads of clans, *ugaz*s, *ulama*s, and *imam*s in each *burqa* (hamlet). Day-to-day incidents were addressed in well-developed systems of reconciliation, led by elders. The culture of mutual support also received protection through customary laws (*sera* and *hera*). Regarding security, these communities have a tradition of resisting oppression by forging alliances that reach from the village level to ones that encompass communities from the entire southeast of Ethiopia. Examples include the movements of Kulub, Jagahir, Dombur and Sowra. These movements have helped to create trust and solidarity, and were facilitated by the well-established culture of cooperation among Oromo, Somali, Sidama and other peoples living in the river valleys.

Since the above-mentioned institutions that facilitated interactions and cooperation between communities were led and operated by actors trusted by the people, and were practiced in participatory ways, they were accepted by the public. In current times, too, if they are given recognition, those institutions and systems that have been developed by the people and are led by actors trusted by the people have a high chance of enabling a national consensus, allowing the people to engage in a genuine dialogue about the challenges and problems we face as a nation. In sum, what we can learn from the history of Oromo and Somali pastoralist communities is that values and institutions that have legitimacy, and can be applied in a transparent process, can make a sustainable consensus possible.

Economic and Social Interactions among the Peoples of Eastern Ethiopia

Dr Reta Duguma

In this study, the peoples of Eastern Ethiopia include the Harari, the Oromo, the Somali, the Argobba and the Afar, as well as those that have come from other parts of Ethiopia since the end of the 19th century and live in the region. The Oromo clans that live around the city of Harar are the Nole, Jarso, Ala, Obora, Ittu, and Aniya. The Somali clans of Gili, Haber Awol, Bartra, and Bursub live on nearby hills to the east of the city.

1. Commercial interdependence

Harar and its environs used to serve as Ethiopia's gateway for the import and export of merchandise, and were a junction at which various trade routes met. Richard Pankhurst described the walled city of Harar as 'a centre of the Horn of Africa where several trade routes intersected.' Most of the commercial goods originating from the southeast and southwest of Ethiopia were exported through the ports of Zeila and Berbera. The two ports had commercial ties with Harar, Shewa, Arsi, Gurage, Bale, Hadiya, the central and southwestern parts of Ethiopia up to Gibe, and with Arabia's ports and western India. The ports of Djibouti and Tajura, which were established in the 19th century, strengthened commercial interactions within the region significantly.

Since the 16th century, the Harari and Oromo have developed **harmonious** relations of commercial interdependence. The Oromo, in particular, purchased cotton garments, salt, iron tools, and other goods from Harari merchants. The Harari needed food grains and animal products supplied by the Oromo for trading purposes. This exchange paved the way for greater

commercial interdependence between the Harari and the Oromo. In the 19th century, the Oromo that live around Harar supplied saturated butter, milk, coffee, tobacco, sunflower seeds, maize, wheat, oats, lentils and livestock to the Harar market, while the Somali clans brought livestock, hides and skins, gum (myrrh), resin, incense, saturated butter, and ostrich feathers. The Argobba community also brought agricultural products and handwoven clothes to the market. In the 1880s, market centres outside Harar city, such as Jaldessa, Warabile, Bobassa, Goro-Gutu, Gafra Qalla, and Fugnan Bira served as trading places where Harari merchants bought goods from Somali and Oromos and, in turn, sold imports such as cloth, copper, zinc, silk threads, oats, sugar, glassware, and rice to the local people.

One of the two trade routes that reached inland from the coast began at Zeila port, crossed the Issa Somali land, and reached Harar via Jaldessa and the Nole Oromo territory. The other one started from the port of Berbera and crossed Gadabursi land along the Darmy route. These trade routes helped create important trade links between local communities. The Issa and Gadabursi clans, for example, organised a group led by *abban* that sought to ensure the safety of Harari and other traders. They transported their goods by camel all the way from the coast to the highlands, a service for which they were paid. The Jarso Oromo collected merchandise from the Somali at Jaldessa and moved it up to the city of Harar, and on to the central parts of the country. This, too, fostered strong trade links between the communities involved.

After the 1830s, the Harari used the Tajura-Shewa caravan route to access the Aliyu Amba market. The Aliyu Amba market was used by Amhara, Oromo, Argobba, Harari, Somali, Afar, Gurage, Kaffa and Enarya peoples to trade various colourful articles. About one-fourth of the merchants at Aliyu Amba were Harari and Afar. In particular, Harari and Shewan leaders also

exchanged information about security along the caravan route. Shewan rulers also provided protection for the Harari business community that had settled in Aliyu Amba. Likewise, the Harari emirs provided security to some three-thousand Amhara and other merchants from Shewa who had settled in the city of Harar.

Once the Ethio-Djibouti railway line reached Dire Dawa in 1902, and road transportation improved and urban centres expanded after the Italian invasion, the way the region was used as a route to transport local products and imported factory goods contributed immensely to the strengthening of commercial ties among the peoples living there. The development of vibrant commercial interactions among the peoples of eastern Ethiopia did not just create relations of interdependence between merchants, customers, brokers and transporters, but also enabled people to move from place to place, learn about new areas and gain new ideas. This development also facilitated the intermingling of various peoples, their cultures, religions, and languages. Interdependence and harmony between these communities was further fostered through a resulting sense of neighbourliness and through intermarriage.

2. Indigenous institutions and social interactions

2.1 The Oromo Gada system, Gudifecha and Mogassa

The Oromo society created a system that has helped it address social, economic and political problems. Through the *gudifecha* and *mogassa* customary practices, it has embraced members of other neighbouring communities and lived in harmony with them. Thus, in Hararghe, members of the Girina and Hawiya Somali clans were embraced by the Jarso and Babile Oromo clans and have lived together. The Aniya Oromo gave places of abode to Somali clans, such as the Amarka, Chama, Wara Futa, Agey, and Ade, in Chefe Tirtira and Woliya. Furthermore,

the Nole Oromo embraced the Gurgura Somali clan; the Harari embraced clans such as the Wara Abogno, Samte, Yimaj, Amber and Wara Ali, and have now lived together in Hararghe for ages, creating strong relations of social, economic and cultural interdependence between the communities involved. Likewise, Amhara and other communities living in Hararghe have become members of various Oromo clans and are involved in the affairs of the local community.

2.2 Being attuned to Harari Geyi

The Harari people, too, have a culture of embracing other communities. *Geyi* means to be accustomed to Harari life style, to know the Harari language (*geyi sinan*) and customs, to be a Muslim, and to participate in Harari social *afocha*. In short, to be part of the Harari community. As Sydney Waldron pointed out in his study conducted in the 1960s, many Oromo and Somali living in Harar city had learned the urban life style, Harari language and customs, and were participating in *afocha*. Since 1955/56, and especially after 1972/73, when large numbers of Amhara began to live in the walled city (Jagol), they too became members of the *afocha*, celebrated holidays and weddings with the Harari, and took part in their mourning.

2.3 The Somali Sadqo Association

The local Somali community has an institution called *sadqo,* through which it embraces other communities. Several Akichu Oromo sub-clans have been embraced by the Darood or Bedir clans by paying communal 'blood compensation' and are living in Jigjiga, the Ogaden, and Somaliland (Boroma and Hargeissa). In accordance with the Somali custom of *magan*, these Somali clans provide protection to minority communities living in the Somali Region. The Amhara who live in the region have also become members of *sadqo* and have established good neighbourly relations with the Somali. The Amhara *sadqo* members were given land by the clan who embraced them. The

Amhara, in turn, entrusted their cattle to the Somali clan to look after. When the Somalis came to town for medical treatment, trade, or to access government services, the Amhara provided them with lodging and extended their hospitality to them. In accordance with the *magan* system, the Somali clan provided protection to the Amhara, while the latter paid blood money to the clan and partook in their social life.

3. Interactions at Christian and Muslim holy sites

3.1 Pilgrimage to the shrines of Muslim saints

Within Harar's Jagol and around it, there are over two hundred shrines of Muslim saints (*adbars*), including Aw Abadir, Aw Sofi, Aw Zin and Aw Negus. As indicated by Waldron, hundreds of Harari, Oromo, Argobba, Somali, and Afar pilgrims gather at these shrines and chant in praise of their Creator, and pray for health and peace. The pilgrimage to these holy sites is called *ziyera*, and the shrines were open to followers of all faiths, including Christians, who came here in hope for healing.

3.2 The Kulubi Gebriel holiday

After 1948/49, many Muslims used to participate in the celebration of the annual holiday of St Gebriel, at the church located in Kulubi (northwest of Dire Dawa). Following the appointment of Archbishop Tewoflos as the head of the diocese of Harar, Emperor Haile Selassie and his royal family, aristocrats, noblemen and other officials graced the celebration of St Gebriel at Kulubi. This encouraged many people to participate in the celebration. In December 1973, Muslims and Christians from the Dire Dawa, Harar, Gara Muleta, Chercher and Abora sub-provinces travelled to Kulubi early in the morning to participate in the celebration. Paul Henze observed that in 1978/79, one-third of the pilgrims were local Muslims. He said that Oromo, Harari and Somali pilgrims wore traditional cotton apparel (customarily worn by Christians) on the eve of the

holiday and took part in the celebrations, thereby demonstrating their unity with the Christians. Like the Christians, the Muslims who had problems with childbearing, or suffered ill health and economic deprivation, made vows to the saint and, when their wishes were fulfilled, brought various gifts to the church. During Mawlid, the Ramadan fasting, Epiphany and Easter holidays, Muslims and Christians brought fruits, eggs, bananas, milk, sugar, and cooking oil, and celebrated the holiday together. Furthermore, during the other's respective holidays, they covered the cost of a bull to be slaughtered, and celebrated their holidays together. When the holy tablet was taken to the *chefé* (wetland) for the overnight vigil on the eve of Epiphany, Christian and Muslim neighbours and their children passed the night at the *chefe,* and celebrated the occasion together.

4. The Afocha Association

In 1975 EC, the Derg regime made Christians and Muslims in both urban and rural areas become members of the same Afocha Association, and made them participate in collective development activities and cooperate. Now, too, when a *guza* or *debo* (labour cooperative) is mobilised during harvest time, for example, Amhara and Oromo join hands. On such occasions, both Amhara and Oromo bring their traditional food to eat together.

5. The creation of a multilingual society

The existence of strong commercial and social interactions in eastern Ethiopia has enabled its local communities, i.e. Harari, Oromo, Somali, Amhara and Gurage, to acquire some knowledge of each other's languages. The presence of Ethiopians of different ethnic backgrounds, speaking different languages and practising different cultures in Dire Dawa, Harar and other cities has enabled local communities to become multilingual. In Dire Dawa, many residents speak Arabic, French and Italian, in addition to different Ethiopian languages.

A person who lives in Amstegna Sefer (Village Five) of Dire Dawa can speak Harari, Afaan Oromo, Amharic, and Somali. People who transact with Somali traders can speak Somali. During the Derg period, most of the Oromo, Amhara and Gurage who lived within the walls of Jagol in Harar were able to speak Harari. Oromo who received their education during the Derg period were able to speak Amharic, while the Amhara who participated in various associations were able to speak Afaan Oromo. So, the formation of a multilingual society has fostered social interdependence, inter-communal tolerance, family relations and affinities, and has enabled people to learn about the others' culture and way of life. This has also enriched their own communal life.

6. Being a native of Harar as a new identity

People born in Hararghe province have some distinctive traits. A native of Hararghe is a polyglot and, irrespective of his or her ethnic background, has adopted a culture of mingling and socialising with anyone regardless of differences in culture, religion, or social status. The second trait is their affection for and hospitality towards strangers. A native of Harar prefers a more communal than individualistic life, likes to share and eat together, chew (*khat*) together, have fun, and openly discuss matters at social or economic gatherings. S/he is easy-going, approachable, and such a charming interlocutor in social conversations that s/he can make the shyest person feel at ease. It may be for this reason that singers who stayed there for a short while have eulogised, in their songs, the local people's hospitality, warmth, tolerance, mutual support and unity.

According to my elderly informants, the post-1991 political dispensation in Ethiopia has sowed divisions in this society. In contrast to the long-cherished values of unity, it has over-emphasised differences that make people feel that their rights are limited in another Regional State (*killil*), and that their

participation is circumscribed, thus making them feel alienated. By instigating border conflicts, this system has pitted one community against another, and has spread a feeling of animosity among the people. By weakening people's sources of income, it has made them unable to share and help one another. By creating artificial economic shortages, it has given rise to a new level of greed, and the age-old communal social life of these communities has been deliberately weakened.

Therefore, to develop the nation and build sustainable peace, the government and other stakeholders should not only seek to understand foreign experiences, but also the significant capabilities of our people to live together peacefully, and put this to good use.

Shifting Inter-Ethnic Relations and Social Interactions in Eastern Wollega

Dr Zelalem Teferra

Introduction

This study focuses on inter-ethnic socio-cultural relations and relations of economic interdependence that have been growing and waning, tightening and loosening, warming and cooling, over a long period of time. The study was conducted in two *woredas* that are located between the Abay River and the Anger River, namely Gidda Ayana and Kiremu. These two *woredas* were previously part of the Horo-Gudru sub-province, but belong to the East Wollega Zone now. Although this study focuses on these two *woredas*, the historical background provided here covers the larger Horo-Gudru sub-province. It is a longitudinal research project that took an extended period of time to complete and used an interdisciplinary method of data collection.

Study findings

This study analyses different forms of historical interdependence and interactions in eastern Wollega, especially in the Horo-Gudru sub-province, which are rooted in the ways in which people migrated and settled. The study shows that the region has been a place where multifaceted social interactions took place between different ethnic groups – with their own languages, faiths, customs and traditions – that lived together, shared their cultures, religions, languages and life styles, learned from each other and became interdependent through intermarriage and blood ties.

Relations between Oromo and indigenes

The initial encounters between the Oromo and the indigenous people of the region happened through invasions and conflicts, which caused damages and bred grudges. Nevertheless, the relationship that would develop between these different peoples was characterised by positive socio-cultural and economic interactions, until recent times. However, the study also shows that the socio-cultural interactions between the Oromo and the Gumuz were different from those between the Oromo and the Shinasha. These differences in interaction appear to be linked to their different complexions.

The relationship between the Oromo and the Gumuz had two features. Firstly, those Gumuz captured during the initial Oromo campaigns were reduced to slave status. They were also forced to trace their lineages by adopting the clan names of their captors and masters. In addition, they were obliged to marry only among themselves, as they were not allowed to marry a Borana (a 'pure' Oromo).

Secondly, instead of fighting the Oromo, most Gumuz retreated to the inaccessible lowlands and minimised their physical and cultural contact with the Oromo. This enabled them to live independently and to maintain their identity and culture. However, as my Gumuz informants told me, this alienation also made the Gumuz lose their land. In time, through the Oromo system of forming friendships (*michu*), social interactions between the two communities improved and they were able to live in peace.

The relationship between the Oromo and the Shinasha communities was slightly different, as it was characterised by the Oromo cultural system of *luba bassa,* whereby non-Oromo were incorporated into their community. The Shinasha that were captured during the initial Oromo campaign were forced to perform the *luba bassa* rituals and then became fully integrated into the Oromo community, as a new clan named *Sinicho*.

In contrast to the Gumuz, *Sinichos* that performed the *luba bassa* rituals were allowed to intermarry with the Oromo and had the right to hold land. Hence, nowadays, *Sinichos* are so thoroughly assimilated with the Oromo in terms of their life style, language, and other cultural aspects that they can be regarded as an example of positive 'social blending' and integration.

Inter-ethnic relations between Amhara and Oromo

As indicated in the study, the most complex and dynamic inter-ethnic relations in the region were between the Amhara and Oromo. As historical documents show, these relations began in the last decades of the 16th century. The first encounters between these communities were violent, as they were characterised by raids and counter-raids with the objective to control local areas.

Forces led by leaders of the sub-clans of the Mecha Oromo, namely the fourteen children of Horro (*Kudha Afran Horro*), the seven children of Gudru (*Torban Gudru*), and the four children of Jimma (*Afran Jimma*), raided and took full control of the Horro Gudru region in the east, i.e. from the upper Gibe basin and the Chomen wetlands to the territory that lies between the Abay and Anger rivers, the places now known as the Gida, Kiremu, Limmu and Ibantu *woredas,* though these conditions changed again later. In particular, the growth of the trade route that started from the Basso market in Gojjam, which was then the great caravan centre of western Ethiopia and penetrated deep into the Gibe region by crossing Horro Gudru, transformed the relations between the Amhara and Oromo communities. Both benefited from the commercial interactions, which also helped to foster good neighbourliness. This shows that the two communities benefited more from their commercial interdependence and cooperation than from conflict. European travellers who visited the areas in the 1840s and 1850s, namely Plowden, Massaja, and d'Abbadie, testified that the Horro and Gudru Oromo

collected duties at customs posts, while north Ethiopia's caravan traders also derived commercial benefits from the links.

Unfortunately, this trade-based relationship began to decline after 1872. Two reasons are cited for this development. The first is that the Gojjamé forces exploited internal conflict between the Gudru Oromo leaders and, by siding with one against the other, were able to take full control of the region. The second reason is that, following the Battle of Embabo in 1882, in which Shewa's King Menelik defeated Gojjam's King Teklehaimanot, Menelik imposed a system of tenancy and an inequitable political administration that marginalised the local population. From then on, although they may have changed in form, the struggles that have been waged in relation to the allocation of political power and resources, especially landholding, have had an adverse effect on the socio-political and socio-cultural relations of the people in the region. These struggles form the background to the current inter-ethnic conflicts between Amhara and Oromo communities in Eastern Wollega.

Although inter-ethnic relations in this region did not appear to change much during the regime of Emperor Haile Selassie I, increased migration to the area compounded the problems described above. The multi-dimensional migrations and resettlements that occurred after the time of the Emperor up until the period of the EPRDF (i.e. initially with the invitation and permission of the local chieftains, the resettlement program of the Derg, and the post-Derg voluntary migrations), saw people move from the north to the south, especially from Gojjam, Gondar, Wollo, and Tigray. These population movements meant that the size of the local population in Eastern Wollega grew considerably. This development aggravated the pressure on the environment. It also increased the competition over cultivable land, which sparked inter-ethnic conflicts and affected the existing interactions between different communities living in this region in different ways.

In terms of positive impact, the population movements have created new relations of economic interdependence between settlers and the local population. For instance, the settlers and local farmers have become interdependent, on the bases of paying rent for land, crop sharing at an equal or one-third rate, and working as hired labour for local farmers in need of extra hands. In terms of negative effects, people have voiced grievances relating to the large settler population, blaming them for contributing to deforestation, especially by cutting down trees, and for causing damage by invading the land. By 'ethnicising' these dynamics, the political elite have exploited them to instigate inter-ethnic divisions and conflicts in order to advance their own interests.

Conclusion

Despite these ups and downs, inter-ethnic interactions have continued through alternating phases of conflict and peace. We have seen peace breaking down; yet, good relations have been restored and strengthened through reconciliation. Economic relations, especially trade exchanges, have been reinforced, neighbouring residents have cooperated through *debo, wanfal,* and other forms of labour-sharing and mutual support methods in agricultural activities, and intermarriages have occurred, fostering strong blood ties. So, economic benefits and interests are seen as playing a double role: they can create both discord and interdependence.

In general, these population movements have not just intensified competition over political power and economic resources, they have also become the foundation for all-inclusive inter-ethnic cooperation and interdependence. What this shows is that, contrary to the claims of entrepreneurs of ethnic politics, inter-ethnic relations are not just based on ethnic identity but, mainly, on shared economic benefits and an equal allocation of power.

However, due to the way in which central governments have created structures that do not serve different segments of Ethiopian society equally (for instance, the feudal system of land ownership and tenancy during the imperial days, and ethnic-based marginalisation during the EPRDF period), inter-ethnic relations have faced challenges.

Therefore, this study points out, if local communities are to live together on equal terms, to cooperate and interact peacefully, it is incumbent on the government to build an inclusive political and economic system.

IV. Religious Tolerance and Cultural Inter-Relations

Religious Coexistence and Multi-Religiosity in Ethiopia since the 19th Century

Dr Ahmed Hassen

The main aim of this paper is to show how religious coexistence and multi-religiosity fared during different periods of Ethiopian history. Religious coexistence and multi-religiosity existed even before the 19th century and will continue to do so in the future. However, the focus here is to highlight historical facts from the 19th century up to the present time.

We will start by describing what religion is. Religion is having faith in and dedicating oneself to one's Creator. It is also knowing and practising specific rules. In any country and place, religion binds cultural and moral values together, and includes humans' limitless thoughts, holy sites and religious institutions, thoughts about the present and future predictions.

We speak of religious coexistence when followers of different religions live together peacefully. Through tolerance, one can move to a higher order. In any place and time, a society that follows more than one religion is known as a multi-religious society.

This paper surveys a large body of research on different religions in Ethiopia. Based on various sources, it reviews the conditions of religious coexistence and multi-religiosity during the medieval period. It examines the situation in different places, including Harar, Ifat, Bale, Awsa and Wollo.

For one reason or another, religious pressures existed in medieval Ethiopia. In this historical period, the Orthodox Christian religion expanded into the Agaw and Falasha society. Even within the Orthodox Christian religion, there was

intolerance between the followers of Ewostatewos and those of Tekle Haimanot. Those who were called Stephanites were accused of being followers of the Seventh Day and banished.

The main question is, what can we learn from this period? It should be noted that the Christian religion remained an appendage of the central government, and multi-religiosity was largely not tolerated. It is also worth inquiring into the significance of this situation.

Historical evidence shows that the 19th century was a period in which the wider community viewed religious coexistence and multi-religiosity positively. Foreign travellers have left us with credible records of what they witnessed. Other reliable sources are also testimony to this fact.

During his visit of Shewa in the 1840s, for example, the French traveller Rochet d'Héricourt noted that in Cheno, Fare, and other major hamlets and smaller towns in Shewa, people coexisted peacefully and handled multi-religiosity skilfully. He realised that the Christian and Muslim communities lived in consensus and cooperated to address common issues. The British traveller Charles Johnston, who came to Shewa around the same time, was impressed by how King Sahle Selassie took good care of both Christians and Muslims living under his rule. He observed that he would not have done the same thing if he were in the king's place. Similar observations were reported by travellers to Harar and other places. The English explorer Richard Burton, who travelled to Harar and its environs, and the French military officer and explorer Charlemagne Lefebvre, who travelled in northern Ethiopia, especially around Wollo, gave similar reports.

In general, what can we learn from observations made by foreign travellers? Ethiopian followers of different religions were not strangers to peaceful coexistence, and the kings and

various members of society gave due regard to multi-religiosity and religiosity. For instance, Isenberg and Krapf were highly appreciative of the way in which Ethiopians practiced religious coexistence and multi-religiosity. It was difficult for them to tell who was following which religion in 19th century Ethiopia, especially in the 1830s and 1840s.

Trimingham, who recorded the historical trajectory of Islam in Ethiopia, also studied other religions, including Christianity and other indigenous faiths. Professor Hussein Ahmed also studied Islam in Ethiopia, in greater depth, and with a particular focus on Wollo. What we understand from Professor Hussein's work is that there was no 'inter-religious problem' in Ethiopia. Coexistence was peaceful, and if there was a problem among the faithful, it was due to the interference of third parties for religious or other purposes. In the 20th century, for example, especially between 1936 and 1941, the Italians tried to sow divisions among Ethiopians of different faiths, but they did not succeed.

In recent times, new developments have tested these traditions of religious coexistence and multi-religiosity in different parts of Ethiopia. However, the origin and target of these developments are not connected to any religion in particular, but to entrepreneurs who want to instrumentalise religion. It is well attested that Ethiopians do not only follow different religions, but also love their country, reach for each other in times of distress, treat their religion with reverence, and live together in harmony.

Carefully studying this kind of historical interaction and presenting the results to readers, and providing readers with well thought out views that have been enriched through discussions, demonstrates how historical research can contribute to national security and peace.

Wollo: A Beacon of Coexistence, Peace and Inter-Faith Harmony

Dr Assefa Balcha

What was historically known as Bete-Amhara includes most of the territory of present-day Wollo. The first church, monastery and mosque in Wollo were established between the 9th and 13th centuries. Islamic religious ceremonies and practices spread inland from the coastal areas of the Gulf of Aden and reached Wollo around the same time as the Christian faith did, which expanded from northern Ethiopia and reached Wollo. Both faiths then spread among the population of the province. The arrival of Islam between the 9th and 13th centuries was mostly peaceful. The mosque that was built in the 12th century is an important indicator that there were several Muslim communities in this region before the Muslim-Christian wars of the 16th century. During the war led by Ahmed Gragn, the expansion and strengthening of Islam in Wollo reached a peak. After a short time, however, the religious and cultural interactions and interdependence between Muslim and non-Muslim communities were revived and continued.

The intermingling of people with different religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds has made Wollo a social and cultural melting pot. The way in which speakers of different languages have interacted in Wollo (languages spoken by the Amhara, Tigray, Oromo, Agaw, Afar, and Argoba communities) has fostered a way of living together that is based on strong values of love, respect, and cooperation. The Oromo have greatly influenced the religious, social and cultural beliefs and practices of the inhabitants of what is now Wollo. When Oromo settled in the Amhara region in the 16th century, this led to the creation of a racially and culturally blended generation. This genetic blending continued up to the mid-19th century and has made it

difficult to tell the difference between the Oromo and Amhara. This composite identity has transformed the entire social life of the inhabitants of Wollo. Even though Amharic has remained the principal language spoken in the region, other cultural conditions have been strongly influenced by the Oromo. Traces of Oromo culture are still highly visible in Wollo. Both religions (Christianity and Islam) have also made a major contribution to the continuation of social and religious mores of mutual respect.

This process of interchange continued until the time of Emperor Tewodros II and Emperor Yohannes IV. Although the conflict and instability caused by Emperor Yohannes' religious policy seemed to pose a danger to the way in which the people of today's Wollo lived together, the inhabitants of this region withstood this danger. Following the death of the Emperor, the practice of Muslim-Christian integration, which had been one of the most valued social assets of this region for centuries, was revived with new spirit and greater vigour.

The fact that the local inhabitants of this region have, over centuries, repeatedly changed their religion, has both prevented religious extremism from developing and has facilitated the integration of different religious communities. Having made the step to forge close relationships simply based on their humanity, they were able to develop the social and cultural values that enabled them to cross religious and cultural barriers. Examples of such practices include *idirs* (village-based mutual support associations for funerals and other social affairs) that make no religious distinction, intermarriages between the followers of different religions, the practice of converting to one's partner's religion, and of sharing markets, hot-water springs, and holy water.

Such interactions have resulted in racial/ethnic diversity, cultural intermingling, and the mixing of faiths and values. The accommodation of Christianity, Islam, and indigenous faith

systems has made this region a melting pot of religions and local customs. This, in turn, has helped to accommodate and ensure the continuity of social and cultural composites, mutual respect, and diversity. This spirit of blending has created a model of open borders that has enabled various customs to be shared, and different traditions to be embraced. Muslims and Christians have inter-married regularly, forged social relations, attended each other's holidays, and jointly participated in trade and other activities. Pilgrimages to Christian and Muslim holy shrines, for example, have also served as a valuable foundation on which to build inter-religious collaboration and trust, as well as social interdependence and a sense of unity. These essential events have functioned as a unifying and integrating force that transcends racial-linguistic, cultural, and religious boundaries. These religious sites have proven useful to nurture and reinforce major socio-cultural values, to maintain a state of peaceful coexistence, to protect the society's wellbeing, foster cooperation, and resolve conflicts and disagreements.

The *wedaja* ceremony has, for the most part, fostered harmony and trust between the faiths. One could also say that this ceremony has greatly contributed to both social unity and artistic development. This artistic contribution has enabled Wollo to be recognized as 'the birth place' of Ethiopia's secular (traditional) musical beats (composition styles), namely Bati, Ambassel, Anchi Hoyye, and Tizita.

To conclude, these values of love and interdependence, which have been nurtured among the people of Wollo and have enabled them to develop a tradition of hospitality that does not distinguish on the basis of ethnicity, language, or other identity markers, has made Wollo the place of choice to stay for several foreigners too.

V. Urbanism and Commercial Exchanges

Cities, Urbanism, and Building a Nation of Diversity in Ethiopia

Dr Shimelis Bonsa

Nations are neither natural nor eternal; they are man-made, and their form and content changes over time. As the history of nation-building in many countries shows, cities, especially capital cities, play a key role in the creation of an all-inclusive and modern nation and national identity. On the one hand, cities are sites where the foundations for building a nation, particularly a modern nation, are laid down and developed. For example, the transport and communication institutions that connect the state with the people, or the people with other parts of the world, are located in the city. Cities and urbanism are means to connect scattered and unfamiliar people with each other, to enable them to realise that they are citizens of one nation, and to stand together in times of peace and of distress.

On the other hand, as cities are sources of diversity and divergent outlooks, they are more exposed to competition than other places. Cities inhabited by communities that are structured by their identity, class, sex, age, and other attributes, provide a space for diverse and sometimes conflicting thoughts and narratives. In nations with a political system that cannot carry or allow such diversity in terms of identities or views, differences and conflicts, or worse still, civil unrests, prevail in their cities. That is why cities, which are symbols of diversity, need to be governed by an all-inclusive, impartial democratic system that prioritises justice and equality. Because of these characteristics, cities are central to the struggle of building a better nation and future.

In developing countries like Ethiopia, cities and urbanism play a central role in the work of creating a nation that is based on a

new, all-inclusive, modern national identity. By shaping economic, cultural, social and political narratives, and establishing institutions and structures that connect the nation's people, cities, and capital cities especially, are central to the struggle to develop a citizenry and a nation for all, by all. In this regard, they can serve as models. To build such a nation and sense of citizenship that accommodates diversity is to put people at the centre. To this end, it is essential to expand and develop cities and urbanism that are based on, and respect, diversity.

Cities, urbanism and nation-building

Over the last one hundred years, many cities have been established in Ethiopia, and their populations have grown considerably. During this period, an attempt was made to create a modern nation-state based on cities and urbanism. Attempts were also made to develop cities as a model of nationhood, modernity, and unity (not uniformity).

Although the creation and growth of Addis Ababa and other Ethiopian cities has not been unproblematic, these cities have become sites of great diversity and enduring coexistence. Pluralism and a culture of coexistence have continued without being restricted by the identity of their inhabitants, or by linguistic, religious and political differences between them. Even though class differences are growing, and gated compounds in which the rich live have appeared, Ethiopian cities like Addis Ababa still belong to those African cities where the wealthy and the poor live interspersed and in close proximity to each other.

However, it is difficult to say that the work of building a modern nation and a culture of coexistence based on cities and urbanism has been successful in all respects. Under the imperial regime, many cities were controlled by just a few landowners, while the majority of their inhabitants were

marginalised from political life and lived in poverty and as urban tenants. During the time that Ethiopia was an imperial state, and the times of subsequent regimes that claimed to be 'revolutionary', relations between the cities and the surrounding rural areas were based on deep-rooted inequality and exploitation. These unjust structures of oppression were principal causes for popular unrests that led to changes of government. In the recent history of the nation, increased urbanisation and 'development' activities that were informed by neo-liberalism further marginalised the rural areas, agriculture and farmers, and condemned them to poverty. This incited farmers from the rural areas to rise against the cities and the unjust economic and political system that prevails in the cities, thereby forcing a regime change.

Thus, as the history of urbanisation and nation-building in Ethiopia over the past one hundred years shows us, cities have a history of fostering coexistence and unity, but they were, and still are, also sites where differences and marginalisation prevail. During the last thirty years in particular, the way in which Ethiopia has been reconstructed as an identity-based political system, and the creation of ethnic-based regional states, has marginalised cities that were once symbols of diversity. The system that professes diversity as its governing principle has weakened multi-national cities as well as institutions and structures that embodied diversity. As identity politics is connected to populism, it has caused a widening of the rural-urban gap by creating differences between so-called 'immigrants' and 'natives', and by instigating suspicion and, at worst, animosity towards 'immigrants', cities and urbanism. Displacement, the destruction of property and loss of life have become commonplace occurrences. In this process, multi-national cities, especially Addis Ababa, have become the main sites of competition and struggle. In the future, too, cities will continue to be the main locus of multifarious struggles over identity, ownership, and representation. Unless they are

handled carefully and solutions are sought, these city-based struggles that exploit history and narratives and whose primary aim – apart from voicing demands for justice and equality – is to control resources and power, can become bloody and result in the massacre of people and the destruction of the country.

Hence, what should be done to ensure the success of a nation-building project in which cities serve as a key pillar, and to create better cities, and an all-inclusive nation? What are best practices that can be drawn from cities that can be used as inputs for nation-building? What is to be done? What should citizens do?

By way of a conclusion

For cities to catalyse the creation of a new Ethiopia, it is necessary, first of all, to conceptualise them as a foundation for a new kind of diversity, patriotic nationalism, and citizenship. To create a good nation that serves all equally, it is necessary to build good cities that are grounded on justice, for good cities mean a good nation. If cities are built on the values of equality, diversity and democracy, and are infused with a sense of citizenship and Ethiopian-ness that is based on these values, it would be easy to build a nation on these pillars. Using Addis Ababa and other cities as a springboard, it would then be possible to disperse and entrench this understanding of citizenship and Ethiopian-ness founded on equality, diversity and tolerance among the larger population.

To build a Greater Ethiopia, it is necessary to create ‘small Ethiopias in every locality, in the rural areas and especially in cities, and to nurture them. Given the great diversity that cities accommodate, their influential political role and the relations of social and economic interdependence they foster, they need to be provided with broad support. They are the sites where the

new Ethiopia and Ethiopian-ness are to be moulded and nurtured.

Cities are places where the identity of the new nation will, primarily, be shaped. They also serve as a reflection and symbol of the nation. In order to play this role successfully, cities should be given institutional and structural autonomy so that they can govern themselves.

Therefore, based on the diversity and interdependence that urban dwellers and their cities embody, all should rise to build an inclusive Ethiopia and a sense of Ethiopian-ness that enshrines justice, equality, and multinationalism.

Addis Ababa: A Multinational City of Tolerance, Mutual Respect and Coexistence

Dr Almaw Kifle

According to a census from the year 2010 EC (2017/18 GC), Addis Ababa is a city with a population of four million. It is structured into eleven sub-cities and 121 *woredas*. Its inhabitants live within the borders of these administrative units. By historical coincidence, Addis Ababa is the fourth capital city of Ethiopia, established after Axum, Lalibela, and Gondar. It is also the capital city of Africa, where diplomats and high-powered experts reside. Furthermore, it is Ethiopia's political, economic, cultural, knowledge, science, military and religious centre. It is a place where people of all ethnic groups live, all kinds of languages are spoken, and every Ethiopian lives in accordance with his abilities and means.

The founding and growth of Addis Ababa

There is historical evidence that, before Addis Ababa was established as Ethiopia's capital city, the surrounding area was the site of different imperial military camps, and of villages in the medieval period.

Established in 1886, Addis Ababa was not founded by colonial rulers, it had its own genesis. What distinguishes Addis Ababa from earlier Ethiopian capitals is not just its location at the centre of the country, but also that it is a nodal point for various languages, religions, ethnic groups, and economic and social relations. It is also the focus of actors with different interests. It was Empress Tayitu Bitul who took the initiative to move the capital city from the cold Entoto mountains to the flatter area south of Entoto and the hot springs found there, Filwuha (Finfinne).

Addis Ababa was constructed by artisans that came from different parts of Ethiopia, and with material that was collected by royal order through public contributions. The architects and consultants who came from abroad – from India, Italy, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Portugal – also made a significant contribution to the construction and expansion of the city. Under the leadership of Empress Tayitu, Addis Ababa's hills and fields were distributed among various officials and military leaders, who established villages there and built churches. This situation enabled them to bring their servants and relatives from their places of birth and settle them in the city. Examples of such settlements include Ras Birru Woldegebriel Sefer (village), Fitawrari Habte Giyorgis Dinagde Sefer, and Dejach Wube Sefer. Likewise, there were also Serategna Sefer (workers' village) and Zebegna Sefer (guards' village), that belonged to those who provided services to the palace.

Other major developments that contributed to the expansion and growth of Addis Ababa and to the deepening of inter-communal relations and the interdependence of its people were: the victory of Adwa in 1896 and the subsequent opening of foreign legations; the 1907 certification of landholding; the launch of government ministries in 1907; the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line that arrived in Addis Ababa in 1917; the Italian Occupation from 1936 until 1941; and the establishment of the Organization of African Unity in 1963.

Communal *Sefer*s

Addis Ababa does not only draw, in different ways, on the resources and skills of other regions, it also shares the problems of its sister cities and regions, as well as the task of searching for solutions to these problems. Apart from providing shelter, the means of sustaining livelihoods, and jobs for each according to his ability, it has given representation to each

province or ethnic group by naming villages after them. Such is the case with Wollo Sefer, Wollega Sefer, Gojjam Berenda (shopping area), Sidamo Terra (shopping quarter), Somali Terra, Gondere Sefer, Jimma Ber (gate), Asmara Menged (street), Shegole, Gejja Sefer, Abba Koran Sefer, and Harar Ber. These names do not necessarily indicate the communities or ethnic groups living there today. Over time, some of them were able to accommodate a diverse community. However, the names of these places reflect the communities or ethnic groups that initially settled there.

With the growth and expansion of the city, villages with names that reflect different professions, service provisions and religions were created. For instance, names of villages that refer to religious institutions include Yohannes, Bisrate Wongel, Lideta, Qirqos, Tekle Haimanot, Mesalemiya, and Mesgid. Among the villages that are named after the type of services they provide or the commodity they sell are Berbere Terra (hot pepper quarter), Mismar Terra (nail quarter), Atikilt Terra (vegetable quarter), Gesho Terra (hops quarter), Chew Terra (salt quarter), Awtobus Terra (bus terminal), and Qerra (abattoir). There were also villages named after a foreign country or organisation: Mexico [Square], Piassa (Piazza), Mercato (Italian, market place), Legehar (from the French la gare, train station), Bambis (Mr Bambis' supermarket), Kazanches (Italian, elite residential quarter), Olympya (Italian office equipment company), Popolare (Italian, popular residential quarter), Ferensay (French Legation), Lancha (after the Italian vehicle company, Lancia), Bella (from the Italian Villa, near the Italian Legation).

Around the old and central parts of the city are villages that mostly have Oromo names (e.g. Gullele, Bole, Lafto, Gerji, Kotebe, Yeka, Burayu, Kara). These places supply various consumer goods and inputs necessary for those living in the central parts of the city. The relations between the city's

inhabitants living at the heart of the city and those living in outlying areas have economic, political, social, and religious dimensions and are multinational. They have strengthened the interdependence between these communities, and are based on tolerance and mutual respect. The long-lasting and multifarious interactions between different communities in Addis Ababa have contributed to the city's all-round development, and are central to the process of building a nation.

Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's constitutions

Since the modern Ethiopian state was established in 1855, it has had four constitutions and one transitional period charter. The constitutions of 1931 and 1955 strengthened multinationalism and diversity in Addis Ababa by making the city the seat of the imperial government, the nation's capital, the residence of the people's elected deputies, and the government's political centre. In one way or another, these documents strengthened Addis Ababa's role in nation-building.

The 1987 Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia also proclaimed Addis Ababa as the nation's capital, and as the political, economic, cultural and knowledge centre of the country. It thereby affirmed the city's central role in economic, political and cultural spheres vis-à-vis other provincial cities, and enhanced its role in nation-building. This has made Addis Ababa the chosen destination for many people, consolidating its multinational character and enriching the interdependence and coexistence of its inhabitants.

The 1991 Transitional Charter of the EPRDF-led government and the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Art. 49/1) also declared Addis Ababa to be the nation's capital. The MPs that come from Ethiopia's different regions and reside in the city have further enhanced its power, capacity, and influence, and have elevated its role in nation-

building. Although these four constitutions and the Transitional Charter were based on different philosophies and ideologies, they all enhanced Addis Ababa's role in nation-building. Their proclamation of Addis Ababa as the country's political, cultural, economic, religious, and military centre created a good opportunity for the city to become a destination for people from across the country, thereby making it truly multinational.

Positive qualities of Addis Ababa vis-à-vis other cities

Compared to other cities of the world, Addis Ababa has several positive qualities. The way in which it was established as a capital city did not result from the orders and influence of colonial rulers. It was, instead, based on indigenous knowledge, decisions, and choices. In terms of maintaining and reflecting indigenous values, this makes the city different from other cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

It is common knowledge that Addis Ababa is a city where, unlike most other cities of the world, the poor and the rich, Muslims and Christians, live in the same neighbourhoods, walk on the same streets, worship together, and participate in institutions and social affairs that promote coexistence, such as *iqub*, *iddir*, funerals, religious holidays, weddings and mourning. Compared to many others, it is thus a city of tolerance. It is a city where citizens can leave their homes and come back without worry, earning their livelihoods, and where merchants can safely conduct their business and make a profit. It is a city where citizens can, without worry, walk in the streets wearing expensive jewellery, shopkeepers can display their jewellery in their windows without fearing burglary, and public and private organisations (banks, hotels, schools, hospitals) can go about their daily business with minimum security safeguards.

Until recently, the two cities that were able to conduct huge public festivals and cultural displays that brought them global

fame and acclaim were Addis Ababa (for the Demera, Epiphany, and Eid festivities) and Rio de Janeiro (for its carnival).

Addis Ababa is, for many, a place to take refuge or to nurse hurt feelings, a land of hopes and dreams. There are few people in Ethiopia's Regional States that do not have a relative residing in Addis Ababa. A person who comes to Addis Ababa for appeals, trade, education, medical treatment, to search for work, or for sports, first stays with his/her relatives before proceeding to carry out the business he/she came for.

African Marketplaces as Places of Consensus and Political Interaction: Insights from Some Early Ethiopian Marketplaces

Dr Girma Negash

While the main objective of this study is to explore the social and interactive roles of African, especially Ethiopian, markets, the analysis centres on marketplaces. The study primarily aims to identify, illustrate and appreciate experiences of coexistence, multinationalism, mutual support and tolerance that are connected to our institutions, particularly marketplaces. For this purpose, I have selected some early Ethiopian marketplaces – Bati, Sanbate and Aliyu Amba from the north, and Shello, Shamena, Alelu-Shashamene and Alaba from the south – to draw some insights from our age old institutions that are useful for our life today and the systems we are building.

By way of introduction, let us review some of the literature on marketplaces. Most definitions of the marketplace are related to its economic functions. In this study, the marketplace is an institution where buyers and sellers exchange goods, over one or more days, at a given location. Marketplaces in Africa, especially in Nigeria, Ghana, and Dahomey, have been studied by anthropologists. There are also a few studies on marketplaces in Ethiopia by Ethiopian historians. In addition, Laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin created a vivid image of Mercato in his famous poem.

Most studies on Ethiopian marketplaces focus on the marketplace's features, its organisation, the name of its place and dates, and its economic role. There are also some studies that survey and analyse the social role of marketplaces, as sites for meeting, chatting, entertainment and engagement. Some studies indicate that Ethiopian cities are, mostly, cosmopolitan

spaces and that they were originally marketplaces. I can confirm the validity of this claim by citing some examples, such as Shashamene, and (in light of their names) Hamusit (derived from Thursday), Maksegnit (from Tuesday), and Arb Gebeya (Friday market). In fact, I can say that Ethiopian cities inherited their cosmopolitan character from their original marketplaces.

The main thesis of this study is that the African and Ethiopian types of open markets, in contrast to the supermarkets and hypermarkets commonly found in the Western world, are institutions that symbolise tolerance and coexistence in multi-cultural societies, with due regard to identities and other differences. In a multinational country such as Ethiopia, marketplaces that are located at borders shared by two or more ethnic groups are institutions that enable a culture of coexistence to continue. They encourage mutual support and tolerance between the bordering peoples, which even extends to those coming to the marketplace from afar. For this reason, they deserve to be highlighted and celebrated.

The marketplaces I will cite hereafter simply illustrate the points I have raised above. The outlines provided should not be taken as a full account or analysis of their history and characteristics.

Bati market

This market is located in the northeast of Ethiopia, in the former province of Wollo, 437 km away from Addis Ababa. I have included it in this study because it was a site where Afar, Oromo, and Amhara, as well as Arab and Italian traders converged. The original marketplace from which Bati's famous Monday market evolved was the Geneda Deye market established in the 1880s. As Bati was located on the border between several ethnic groups, it was also an administrative centre in different periods.

Sanbate market

This is an ancient market located in the former Shewa province, now in the Oromiya Special Zone of the Amhara Regional State, 245 km north of Addis Ababa. It was founded in the 18th century and has served as a point of convergence for Amhara, Oromo, Afar and Argobba buyers and sellers. Due to Lij Iyasu's frequent visits and his close relationship to the area after 1912, the market was named Tenaye Market, after the prince's horse name (Abba Tenna).

Shelo market, Shamena market, Sanbata market and Gayo market, Hachaqete market and Adare market

Apart from the Shamena Market, the other markets listed here served as marketplaces for a long time, even before the Italian occupation. They were all border marketplaces for various ethnic groups. At the very least, the Sidama, Arsi and Wolaita regularly used these marketplaces.

Shamena-community

This marketplace started as a settlement in 1960 and grew from being a marketplace into a town. It was deliberately established on the border between Arsi, Sidama and Wolaita communities. As this region was historically prone to conflict, the marketplace was established by the former Community Development Organization (a government institution during the imperial days) as a settlement and a marketplace in order to bring stability to the area.

Alelu

Alelu is found thirteen km north of Shashamene. From the 19th century onwards, several caravan routes intersected here. Alelu served as a converging point for market-users from several ethnic groups in the vicinity (Arsi, Sidama, Wolaita, Kambata, Hadya, and Gurage). Later, it became a settlement for the *neftegnas* (armed militia of the imperial regime). After 1915, its

role as a marketplace and *neftegna* settlement was superseded by Shashamene.

Shashamene

Shashamene served as a marketplace for even more ethnic groups than Alelu did. It was also used as a resting place for pilgrims who were traveling to the shrine of Sheikh Hussein. Many writers attribute the establishment of Shashamene town to its role as a marketplace and trading centre. There are also some who say that it was established as a *neftegna* settlement.

Alaba market

Sources show that this marketplace has been used as a corridor, a resting place and a trade centre since the 19th century. Its central location and good security situation drew more market-users than Alelu could. After 1915, Shashamene's rise led to Alelu's decline as a favoured marketplace.

Let me now outline the enduring and time-tested social experiences that are connected to these marketplaces.

1. The Ethiopian marketplaces we surveyed, and others that ought to be studied, are not homogenising or acculturating institutions, they are ones. In such marketplaces in Africa or Ethiopia, people with different identities come to buy/sell their goods and return home with their language and culture intact. Unlike some other systems, the major ethnic groups do not impose their identities on the market-users. Hence, one wonders whether the insights they offer us could help us in our search for an alternative model of federalism.

2. In general, however uncomfortable African marketplaces are (due to a lack of hygiene, sneezing, various unpleasant odours, the pushing and shoving),

they are platforms where people also practice etiquettes such as politeness. The marketplaces reviewed here required people to develop values such as tolerance and patience, which are in short supply nowadays but are essential for peaceful coexistence.

3. Inclusiveness: These marketplaces have no sole owner. They belong to all. It is unheard of for anyone to say, 'Don't come to our market,' or 'Leave our marketplace.' Regardless of their location in a given regional state, their administrative demarcation or geographic position, all users refer to them as 'our market'.

4. Multilingualism: In marketplaces, especially those frequented by the speakers of different languages, multilingualism is not only a must but commonplace. In countries such as Ethiopia, this is not only useful but essential. However, we have neither given attention to, nor celebrated, these virtues of marketplaces. A culture of multilingualism has several implications. It removes the prejudices we have about others, enhances understanding, and makes it easier for people to reach a consensus.

VI. Identity and Political Power

Experiences of Peoples' Interactions and Interdependence in Ethiopia: Some Issues Concerning the Oromo People

Dr Awgichew Amare Agonafir

Historical research on Ethiopia has paid due attention to the history of interaction between, and the integration of, different communities. Professional historians who have analysed historical sources testify that Ethiopian history is a history of relations, interactions and the harmonious intertwining of different peoples. This intertwining, which has been created by cultural, religious, linguistic, economic and political interactions, serves as the historical foundation of a collective Ethiopian identity. This history of exchanges has continued for ages. It involved several actors, assumed complex forms, went through different processes and led to different outcomes. Ethiopia has a long history of statehood, with administrative structures and a continuous record of territorial unity and interactions that maintained and advanced its people's sovereignty. It looks back on thousands of years of history during which people who spoke different languages, who had adopted different cultures and faiths, who came from different regions and had different political outlooks, were administered and became intertwined. To study this history of interaction and interdependence, it is necessary to understand the current state of theoretical discussions and debates that determine the strength of scientific analyses, interpretations and definitions. Social and cultural studies conducted over a long period of time show that peoples' cultural interdependence is the result of multifarious processes, and that it can lead to different outcomes. This includes cultural and genetic intermixing as a result of inter-communal cultural, linguistic, and religious borrowing and

exchange. This paper argues that scientific historical research should build on theoretical findings in the social sciences.

There is ample evidence that interactions and inter-relations in Ethiopia can be explained through two major historical developments. The first is a result of how the state imposed itself on a given people, while the second results from the way in which a given people shaped the state's territory, systems, and institutions. Territorial expansion, the establishment of administrations, and population movements gave shape to the complex chapters of our history.

There were various interconnected, imperial, ideological, political, religious, cultural, military and economic forces and approaches that fashioned, systematised and institutionalised processes of interdependence in Ethiopia. Relational networks included state-led approaches to bind the people to state institutions, as well as frameworks for interaction that were created and led by religious institutions for their communities. The threads of interdependence that emanated from the state and other communities served to build networks of interaction that could bring the communities inhabiting the changing territory of the state together, create a common identity, and build a nation-state that is based on individuals' sense of belonging to the same nation. In this respect, the state, religious institutions, and various other community-based organisations have made major contributions to nation-building, both individually and collectively. For this reason, the history of interdependence in Ethiopia can be viewed as an outcome of the interactions between different relational networks that were created by the political elite, the clergy, Islamic preachers, merchants, soldiers, and the communities.

In order to ensure the stability of their imperial regimes, to consolidate their power and to prevent political crisis, the monarchs of the Solomonic dynasty diligently worked to

facilitate interactions between the different peoples living under their rule, and between their cultures. The throne was perceived as the supreme protector of the people and the kingdom, and was a symbol of unity and peace. The monarchical system was expected to fulfil its responsibility to protect its subjects and bind them together. The monarch's being in good health and his military exploits were central prerequisites to enable him to expand the imperial territory, to protect the unity of the people, and any lands that were incorporated into the kingdom. For the most part, the emperors appreciated the religious and cultural differences of their subjects and had the skill to practice both homogenisation and tolerance. They referred to the people belonging to a territory they planned to incorporate into the kingdom, as well as those already within the kingdom, as 'my people'. They did not use cultural, linguistic and religious differences between the people as a cause to attach greater importance to one community or to side with one community, to selectively love one or brand another as an enemy. However, as noted with regard to different periods of Ethiopian history, its rulers were not able to protect the people from danger to the extent claimed in the historical records. Due to conflicts of interest and clashes arising from competitions for power, conflicts within the elite spilled over to the people and disrupted their peaceful relations. One can boldly say that there was no time during which the imperial regimes were not rocked by these conflicts.

The development of the political/ideological networks of interaction referred to above was connected to the Solomonids' ascent to power. The latter were able to beat the Zagwe dynasty through a combination of propaganda and force. The new narrative they introduced to legitimise the state they would build, and to account for the origin of the people and nation they would lead, shows that the 13th century leaders of Ethiopia had clear ideas with regard to the new state and institutional system they would establish. These ideas also influenced the story of the

Kebra Nagast and its dissemination from the 13th century onwards. The Kebra Nagast endowed the Solomonic rulers with a legal mandate that legitimised their rule, the territorial expansion of their kingdom, and the way they administered and intertwined the religiously and culturally diverse population living under their rule. Regarding the people, the Kebra Nagast focuses on Ethiopians' common identity. The Solomonic rulers did not regard differences in identity as a political asset. The various incompatible narratives that were created during the territorial expansion were merely expedient methods to rally the people behind their political objective. They should be understood in terms of the level of consciousness that prevailed at the time.

Hence, due to interactions between the people and the elite, figures that came from different communities, with different identities, were able to assume high positions in the kingdom that ranged from political and military leadership positions to the crown itself. Ethiopia was painted as a chosen land to which the tribes of Israel had migrated and whose leaders traced their lineage back to King Solomon. Ethiopia as a land of hope, where honey and milk flowed, was an image that was projected to all territories and peoples that were to be incorporated into the kingdom. The narrative that Ethiopia's conception and institutional organisation could be traced back to Queen Sheba and King Solomon was disseminated by the Church's scholars, in classical literature and through art, so that it would be received as real knowledge.

Historical records show that military formations began to become relational networks during the Axumite period. However, radical changes began to emerge after the ascent of the 'Solomonids' (i.e. from the 13th century onwards). As indicated by historical records, especially the royal chronicles, *gedlat* (acts of saints and other holy personage), studies by European catholic missionaries, and other historical sources,

the Shewan army was built after the 14th century. The Shewan army of this period underwent three major changes: its members were drawn from multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious communities and locations; it settled in newly incorporated territories and border areas; and it developed relations of interdependence with local communities in these places. Thus, the resulting interdependence was a result of these processes and the expansion of the country's borders and territory. The territorial expansion and the way in which the Shewan army served as the executive arm of the administrative system reinforced the state's ability to spread the state's ideology, *riste-gult* (fiefdom), Christianity, as well as the state's dominant culture and 'official' language.

Likewise, the expansion of Christianity and Islam led to the creation of religious identities that transcended nativism, as well as linguistic, ethnic and cultural differences between different communities. The integration of indigenous faiths and cultures into mainstream religious practices also enabled indigenous faiths and practices to contribute to the development of a culture in which Christianity and Islam are interwoven. Over time, social, economic, cultural and blood ties created relations of interdependence that discouraged competition and promoted cooperation, crossed religious boundaries and continued without interruption. The Christian and Muslim communities maintained narratives and social organisations that are interconnected with the basic tenets of Ethiopianism.

The lifestyle of Ethiopians living in different communities has been similar, and this must be viewed in connection to their economic interactions. As historical research shows, economic interdependence took different forms and was related to other threads of interdependence. The ways in which pastoralist and migratory communities settled and acquired land within the landholding system, relations of economic interdependence between permanently settled communities, military camps,

towns, marketplaces, trade routes, etc., acted as catalysts for economic interdependence and the exchange of economic, cultural, and religious ideas. Cultural institutions that were developed to form, accumulate and manage social capital that transcends sub-identities further enabled interconnections between different communities.

The movement of the Oromo people in the 16th century opened up a new chapter in this history of interaction and interdependence, and it did so in an unprecedented way. It is important to study this period to be able to understand and analyse Ethiopian history. The movement of the Oromo population happened in two ways. One entailed the formation of peaceful relations while the other involved forceful expansion. In the long term, while peaceful interactions continued, hostile relations gradually mellowed.

The decisive historical chapter that followed this population movement was the settlement of the Oromo people. During the last years of the reign of Emperor Sertse Dingil (r. 1563-1597), the Oromo people were able to become land owners, either with the consent of the Emperor or through forceful expansion. Beginning during the reign of Emperor Susenyos, the Oromo people settled in fertile and strategic places. This was one way in which the population movement was halted and peaceful interactions began. The manner in which the Oromo people settled after the 17th century encouraged cultural, religious and linguistic intermingling with other communities, and the Oromo people adopted Christianity, Islam, and languages from the populations among which they settled. They also imparted their own culture and language to the latter. The Oromo people subsequently mixed with the indigenous communities over a long period of time, which led to mutual changes of names, the Oromo people's adoption of the *riste-gult* system of landholding, changes in their life style, and the decline of Oromo cultural institutions. These processes have resulted in changes of

identity and roles among both the Oromo and the indigenous people with whom they mixed.

The third chapter in this history of interaction of the Oromo people was their transition from settling in the kingdom, to penetrating the state system and its institutions. The two points of entry were military service and marriage ties. It was Emperor Sertse Dingil who first integrated Oromo fighters into the Shewan army. The Oromo fighters were given the mission to fight the Turkish occupation force. They defeated the Turks in the battles of Enticho and Adi Qoro in 1578, and in the Battle of Debarwa in 1589, thereby emerging as defenders of Ethiopia's frontier. This was documented in the Emperor's chronicle and in Turkish sources. From that time on, the kings of Gondar and Shewa had so much confidence in the Oromo fighters that they recruited them into their armies. The Oromo people were thus able to demonstrate their historically proven military capability. Over time, these soldiers were able to mix with the communities among which they settled and became part of the integration process. In addition to this military service, at the end of the 16th century, Oromos also became provincial administrators and palace officials. This started with the Catholic intellectual, Azaj Tinno Feyisa, who was a friend and counsellor of Emperor Susenyos. The fact that Oromo were able to hold such high government posts shortly after the end of the population movement indicates that there was no tendency to brand the Oromo as enemies and that the Oromo, too, were attuned to living with other communities and were amenable to friendship.

It did not take long for the Oromo, with their military experience of serving the Ethiopian state, to transition to political leadership positions and join the landed nobility. Through marital ties with other elite families, local dynasties with composite identities in Gojjam and Amhara (later called Wollo), monarchs and other political and military leaders of mixed identity were able to emerge in Gondar and Shewa. This was a result of the

interactions that took place between the 17th and the 20th centuries.

That the political and social institutions developed by the Oromo people, who were being attracted to the political establishment, gradually declined, can be seen as a natural process. The Oromo states that were established along the Gibe River were transformed under monarchical rule and as local populations mixed. Following Emperor Menelik's campaigns and the alliances he forged, the interactions and relations of interdependence between these polities and the northern parts of Ethiopia – which had existed since the medieval period, although they were interrupted later – were also renewed and continued under one state.

There is no part of Ethiopia where the Oromo people have not settled or mixed with the local population. No event has had a greater impact on Ethiopia's history of interaction and interdependence than the Oromo people's movement, their settlement and intermingling. However, this huge chapter in Ethiopian history is not receiving sufficient attention from scholars. The attention that historians give to processes of interaction and pillars of unity is minimal, although political interdependence has been studied in greater depth. This may be due to the thoughts and institutions created by the identity-based political system. While politically motivated narratives created during the past half century appear to be becoming dominant 'knowledge', studies focusing on collective identity and collective roles in Ethiopia have waned and become marginalised.

Historical studies that are based on fragmented readings and memories, that oversimplify complex images, and that advance singular roles and a mono-identity are becoming dominant in political and academic circles. They are winning 'followers', which will enable their advocates to realise their plan to erase

networks of interdependence in Ethiopia's history from memory, while branding collective values and identities as threats and dismantling them. Efforts have been made, for example, to portray the Oromo population's movement in a narrow way: by ignoring peaceful relations and emphasising the violent expansions, by exaggerating hostile relations, and by presenting the history of Oromo interactions as a history of conflict. Belittling the emperors' initiatives to settle the Oromo, exaggerating the role of conflicts in the history of the evolving relationship between the Oromo people and Ethiopian leaders, and selective amnesia regarding the consequences of the forced takeover of land have led to distortions that defy historical authenticity. As a result, the practice of promoting a singular identity by accentuating differences, the denial of age-old cultural and blood relations between the Oromo people and the populations where they settled, and the way in which some try to gloss over how some Oromo institutions have withered in the course of inter-communal interactions, have all served to produce a version of historical knowledge that stands in direct opposition to the actual facts of history.

Nowadays, in historical research, a narrative is gaining prominence that does not only challenge the Oromo people, but also the elite's role and their identity. The role and identity of prominent Oromo who have served in various official capacities, for example as military leaders, regional governors and palace officials, has been unjustly denigrated. This narrative has led to outlooks and analyses that selectively ignore the history of the military exploits of the Oromo elite, that present the Oromo who progressed from military leadership to political leadership and the landed nobility as heroes, without duly acknowledging the context that facilitated this advancement, that scoff at the mixed identity of some Oromo elites, or that deny that Oromo political and social institutions have been weakened due to the Oromo's cohabitation with other communities, or falsely claim that other parties were responsible for this decline.

When examining the Oromo people's role and identity in Ethiopian history from the perspective of interactions and interdependence, researchers are expected to situate these relations historically in the right way, and to correct short-sighted readings as well as the biased analyses and judgements they lead to. However, debunking these politically motivated narratives and studying history scientifically, based on evidence, demands more human and financial resources. Engaging in this work should be viewed as a contribution to national unity and consensus, and therefore also as work that is paving the ground for development and peace.

The Creation of an Amhara-Oromo Composite Community: Ras Gobena as a Native and Promoter[6]

Dr Dechasa Abebe

Ras Gobena was born in the first decade of the 19th century in present-day northern Shewa. Born to an Oromo father and an Amhara mother, he grew up with an Oromo-Amhara cultural identity, and became a military and political figure. He was the youngest son of his father Dache Wayu, who was known for his military knowledge and skills. Following the path set for him by his father, and by dint of his own diligence, he progressed from being a man of modest means to a high-level public figure. By forging and consolidating an alliance between the Shewa Amhara and the Tulama Oromo, who played prominent roles in building the modern Ethiopian nation-state, Gobena became a protagonist of a community with a composite identity that transcended initial individual identities.

Towards the end of the 18th century, northern Shewa, where Gobena was born, was divided into three regions based on settlement patterns and local ecological characteristics. The first, which was called the 'Amhara land', included the northern and southern part of northern Shewa. This region had river valleys and a rugged terrain. The second region was the eastern part of northern Shewa. It was referred to as the 'Kereyu land' (Ifat), which is located in the basin that borders the Awash River. The third region was in the western and southwestern part that was called 'Shewa Meda' and was inhabited by the Tulama.

---

[6] This paper is an excerpt from my book: *Gobena: A Military and Political Life (1810-1881),* (Amharic Edition), Los Angeles: Tsehai Publishers, Sept. 2020.

Early interactions between the Amhara and the Tulama in these three regions include the Amhara's repeated offensives with which they sought to gain some control over Tulama land. One of the motivations for these efforts was to secure strongholds or establish settlement villages in these areas, and to convert the Oromo to Christianity. These villages were thus not only intended to be used to settle soldiers, but also to build churches or monasteries. Since this requires having several clergymen in the vicinity, they would become a basis for establishing Christian villages. So, these fortresses were not only military, political or administrative centres, they were also religious and educational centres. Several religious scholars, clergymen, deacons and students would settle there. In connection with this, some villages and marketplaces on the borders between the Amhara and the Tulama were able to grow into major centres of interaction. Wayu (Bokisa), today's Encheqorer, Attero Market (later Enewari), Abdalla (Aman), Ankata (Saya Deber) and the like are good examples. One of these centres, Abdalla (Aman), was the birthplace of Gobena.

Gobena was born and grew up in this context, within a process of interaction between the lowland Amhara and the highland Tulama, in the midst of peace and war, and as a product of these interactions. The centuries-long friction/conflict between the Shewa Amhara and the Tulama Oromo eventually began to give way to peaceful relations. As a consequence, the lowland Amhara men who faced a shortage of cultivable land began to marry Oromo women. Hence, the practice of having in-law servants became common. Many young men would become the servants of Oromo landowners and, after a while, they would be given a private plot (*guluma*) to cultivate and earn their livelihood. They then married their masters' daughters and set up their own families. Since they would face land shortage if they returned to their homeland, they preferred to live in the highlands and midlands. Or else, they followed their wives and became *sigeba*. Likewise, as many Amhara began to marry off

their daughters to Oromo landowners, these daughters moved with their husbands from the lowlands to the highlands. Such couples began speaking the language of their spouses in the style of their mother-tongues. Thus was produced a bilingual generation.

Due to these and other related factors, a composite community that did not identify as either solely Amhara or solely Oromo was created when Shewa Meda, especially the northern and eastern part, began to be transformed into a region of predominantly Amharic speakers. In fact, some say this is '[Oromo] *geber*' (veiled/hidden Oromo). This means that the Oromo-*geber* community from lowland Shewa that mainly spoke Amharic might appear to be Amhara, but when they were at home they spoke Oromiffa, or they had parents and grandparents who were Oromiffa speakers. In some areas, there were people who were indistinguishable from either Amharic or Oromiffa native speakers, who followed the lifestyles of both communities, and spoke both languages fluently. There are areas inhabited by such people even today. So, Gobena was born into such a community in Abdalla (Aman), which is on the borderline between the Tulama (Abichu) Oromo and the Amhara of Tegulet (Wegda). This was sometime in 1810/11. His father was a Tulama (Abichu) Oromo and his mother a Wegda Amhara.

Gobena's father, Dache Wayu, was from a low status family but rose to become a senior member of his community by dint of his military exploits. When he trained his children as soldiers, Gobena proved to be the fastest learner. But his mother, who was unsure about his future career, gave him up to be adopted by her relative, a man called Abeto Wolde. However, as Gobena was not on good terms with his mother's kinsman, he fled - first to serve Ato Aboye, a nobleman who was an in-law of King Sahle Selassie and the governor of Qimbibit, and then to serve under Abegaz Bezabih, who was Emperor Tewodros II's

representative in Shewa. Finally, he entered into the service of Menelik in 1854.

Menelik was born in Angolela, which is located between the Tulama Oromo and Gobena's birthplace, but not too far from the latter. Gobena was his senior by twenty-seven years. Since Menelik grew up travelling between Ankober and Angolela until he reached the age of twelve, it is difficult to believe that he did not understand Oromiffa. As stated earlier, although members of the local communities might tilt more to one or the other language depending on their parents' mother tongues, the Amharic speakers understood Oromiffa and vice versa. Some spoke both languages fluently. Since Menelik and Gobena were born and grew up in such communities, one might assume that they realised that they could establish a great nation-state by forging an alliance between the two communities. What could strengthen this hypothesis is that Gobena is said to have been nominated by Menelik's representative, Dejach Germame Wolde Hawariat, for an official position within the Shewan royal house.

> By the grace of God, our throne has been restored. Let us first consult about a butler. … It is unthinkable to have a *dej agafari* [usher, butler] who does not speak Oromiffa. We are too few in number; I am having a problem because so many chieftains coming here have been speaking to me through interpreters. We are thinking of expanding our territory into the [Oromo] homeland. So that everyone who comes may meet [us] at ease…. he is Amhara on his mother's side and [Oromo] on his father's side. Let it be Gobena.

From this quote, we can discern several important points. Firstly, Gobena's appointment was not the decision of one man alone. In fact, the idea was to use Gobena as a major ally who could enable the Shewan royal house to form relations or collaborate with the Oromo. Secondly, from Germame's speech one can understand that, if they were to expand their territory,

forging an alliance with the Oromo would be essential. It is worth noting the expression 'we are too few in number' here. It was necessary to have a sufficiently large force to enlarge the territory, and the largest population in the vicinity were the Oromo. As it turned out, the Tulama Oromo horsemen made up a huge part of the army that conquered and incorporated the vast territory that became the Ethiopian nation-state in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Thirdly, there is the issue of land or territory. Since the beginning of the 17th century, clashes between the Amhara and the Oromo revolved around the issue of who should have a large area of fertile land, and this land was in the hands of the Oromo. Over the last two hundred years, some attempts by Amhara to grab land were relatively successful; for instance, in Ifat and Tegulet, and from Ankober to the Beresa River. Otherwise, they were unable to dislodge the Tulama from their land. So, they had to devise a new strategy. This was to approach the Tulama, to agree to form an alliance, and then to expand the territory by either force or consent.

The fourth point concerns language. An *agafari* who only speaks Oromiffa was not useful to them. So, instead of attempting to impose their own language on the numerically large Oromo population, they sought a man who could speak both languages. As the post that Gobena assumed was somewhat similar to that of a public relations officer today, knowledge of both languages was essential to be able to communicate with both communities or with their respective chiefs.

So, by approaching most of the heads of the Tulama Oromo sub-clans in accordance with Oromo culture and custom, Gobena persuaded them to cooperate, to submit peacefully, and to pay the necessary tributes and provide the required services during military campaigns. In doing so, he paved the

way for them to live in peace with each other and to foster ties with the Amhara. It was for this reason that he was formally promoted from the post of acting commander of a military force to that of a full commander with the title of *dejazmach* in 1875. In sum, Gobena's approach was to persuade the Tulama Oromo to become tribute-paying members of the political order, rather than to wage repeated military campaigns against them or resort to plunder. That the Tulama submitted in this manner had another benefit: the ruling elite could use them as a springboard and a source of manpower to bring in other Oromo (next were the Mecha) and the Gurage, and make them pay tribute. Through Gobena's approach they, too, became part of Menelik's empire state.

After Gobena became a military commander and *dejazmach*, the Shewan aristocracy and nobility agreed to divide the task of territorial expansion among themselves as follows:

- Dejach Woldegebriel should expand towards the eastern part of the empire (Chercher, Harar) as far as he could;
- Dejach Darge should, after having forced the area from Jarso up to Abay Muger into submission, proceed to Arsi, Bale, and further east as far as he could;
- Dejazmach Germame should conquer the territory to the left of the Awash River, from Gurage up to Borana, as far as he could;
- Dejazmach Gobena should expand the western part of the empire, beyond Soddo Gurage and Muger, as far as he could;
- Menelik himself would return to Wollo, where he had already campaigned repeatedly.

Regarding Wollo, the group held two divergent opinions. There were those who said Wollo should not be 'opened' as it was a gate to the rest of the world. On the other hand, there were others who pushed for the opening of Wollo so as to get in touch with Europeans, especially arms traders, and, if possible, to be able to hold the coronation in Gondar. Finally, those who advocated for the opening of Wollo prevailed, with additional pressure from Menelik.

In implementing the plan outlined above, no one could match Gobena in securing submissions through his method of persuasive speech and negotiations. After achieving the submission of all the Mecha Oromo in this way, Gobena supported the other commanders in the territories assigned to them for their campaigns. He was, for example, involved in what is commonly known as the Gurage campaign, to force Hassen Enjamo to submit, and the large-scale campaigns that were waged to force Wollo's rulers to submit. Three years after Gobena was appointed *dejazmach*, he was promoted to the rank of *ras* in 1878. In recognition of Gobena's military exploits, Menelik is reputed to have said of him (in verse): 'I am king of the nation/ you are the king of war [machine].'

Even in his private life, Gobena followed the principle of intertwining different people and clans. The woman who is frequently cited as his legal wife was Ayelech Abba Risa. But it is also said that he took wives and concubines wherever he campaigned, and that he had several children by them. Among these are the following: Askale, Tenagne, Tsedale, Zewde, Tasisa (Wolde Rufael), Tulu, Dalanso, Merid, Abdi, Wodajo, Mena, and Birqe. Merid was born by Menelik's relative, Gette Bedilu. The grandchildren were expected to be *gebers* (of composite identity). For example, the daughter of Wolde Rufael, Tsige Mariam, was married to Ras Imru Haile Selassie (Emperor Haile Selassie's cousin). The fruit of their marriage, Mikael Imru, is said to have named his son after Gobena. The

son of Ras Abebe Aregay, by his wife Askale Gobena, namely Daniel, is also said to have named his son after Gobena.

Although Gobena was born to Oromo and Amhara parents, he appears to have preferred not to bring up his own children according to Oromo tradition, but in the Christian and palace tradition. Even then, unlike the conservative Shewans, he was inclined to impart a modern culture and system to his children, which included bringing them into contact with missionaries. Apart from a formal education and exposure to modern culture, he also introduced his male children to physical education and military skills as was the custom among the aristocracy and nobility. In terms of their marriage, in accordance with the prevailing custom, his daughters and sons were married to military leaders, Shewan aristocrats and members of the nobility. Although short-lived, one could cite the marriage of Wodajo Gobena to Shewarega Menelik.

In the areas surrounding Gobena's birthplace, Christianity was the prevalent religion, particularly in the Amhara *woredas*. The history of Christianity among the Tulama Oromo began with the establishment of the Shewan dynasty at the beginning of the 18th century. The Shewan leaders of Menz built churches wherever they settled. These spread out from Angacha to Ayne, Doqaqit, Haramba, Ankober, Angolela, Liche, Enewari, finally reaching Entoto. In general, Christianity introduced two new practices to the lifestyle of the Tulama Oromo: fasting and cemeteries. Otherwise, it was not their guiding principle in life. Two holy fathers of Christianity (Bishop Gebre Menfes Qiddus and Bishop Tekle Haimanot) were, nevertheless, quite significant in the life and history of the Tulama Oromo. The monasteries of these two holy men were located in the homeland of the Tulama Oromo, and they were centres of pilgrimage for all Shewans, including the Tulama.

The Tulama Oromo communities also maintained large plots in their vicinities so that they could perform *irreecha* ceremonies. They did not worship Christianity in isolation from their indigenous faiths. Gobena could not have come out of this community and become a perfect Christian. Like his Amhara compatriots, it was common for him to send gifts of food and clothing to the clergy and monks of churches and monasteries in the Amhara areas so that they would remember him in their prayers. However, in the Tulama areas where Christianity and Islam did not have a strong foundation, Gobena and Menelik only made limited efforts to make the Tulama abandon their indigenous faiths in favour of Christianity.

Dejazmach Tulu and Dejazmach Woregna Washo: A Brief Historical Overview (1690s-1760s)

Dr Geremew Eskezia

The aim of this paper is to provide a short historical overview of the lives of Dejazmach Tulu and Dejazmach Woregna Washo, who were famous rulers of Bure-Damot, in Gojjam, between the end of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. Both men were members of the Jawi Oromo clan that was brought to Gojjam from an area south of the Abay River by Iyasu I (r. 1682-1706). Although the story of the two *dejazmach*es does not reflect historical relations between the Oromo and the inhabitants of Gojjam in full, it offers us some insight into interactions and relations of interdependence between them during that period of time. The sources that I consulted to write this paper are royal chronicles of the Gondarine period, the *Tarike Negest* (History of Kings), the Scottish traveller James Bruce's five-volume account, oral traditions, and other documents that include works of historical research.

Dejazmach Tulu was born in Dingira, a place located to the north of today's Bure town. However, we do not have detailed historical information about his family. Sources indicate that Tulu was the main governor of the Baso, Liben, Bure Damot and Machakel territories. Impressed by his military skills, King Iyasu gave him one of his daughters, Wolete Selassie, in marriage. Thus, Tulu was able to tie a marital knot with the royal house of Gondar.

The main tasks of local governors such as Dejazmach Tulu were to defend their territory against Oromo incursions from across the Abay River (the Blue Nile), to maintain peace and order within their territory, to pay annual tributes to the king, and

to participate in his campaigns. Accordingly, Dejazmach Tulu played a prominent part in planning and executing the campaigns of 1700, 1702, and 1704 that were waged across the Abay River during the reign of King Iyasu I. One can conclude that these campaigns were successful, especially the 1704 campaign in Gudru, Enarya and Gibe, although they did not succeed in changing the course of history permanently. Tulu's role in these campaigns was significant. Men like Dejach Wollo Hizb (also known as Wollo Hizbo), who were able to become the father of the Bure-Damot area in the 18th century, and were well known around the palace at the time of Queen Mintiwab and King Iyasu II (r. 1730-55), were also among the Oromo that entered Gojjam through these campaigns.

King Iyasu I was killed in a palace coup led by his son Tekle Haimanot in October 1706. Together with Iyasu's sister Eleni, Tulu became the leader of the *Qibat* sect within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Due to disagreements with Tekle Haimanot following the king's death, Tulu was banished to Hamasien and Eleni to a place called Tenkel near the border with Sudan. Tulu stayed in Hamasien for a while, which was under the governorship of Hab Selus at the time. When King Tewoflos (r. 1708-11) came to power his banishment was lifted and he returned to Gondar in 1708. There is no historical record that shows how he fared after that and how he died.

The second historical figure reviewed here is the man popularly known as Dejazmach Woregna, who was a famous military leader during the reigns of King Bakafa (r. 1723-30), King Iyasu II (Adyam Seged), and King Iyyo'as (r. 1755-69). His actual name was Washo. 'Woregna' was a title given to prominent heroes during that period. There are some historians who claim that Dejazmach Woregna may have been an illegitimate son of Dejazmach Tulu.

James Bruce wrote that it was under King Bakafa that Dejazmach Woregna was transformed: the merchant became a soldier. During that period, serious rebellions broke out in the Lasta area. One was led by Amhayesus in 1724, the other by his daughter's husband Gubla in 1725. King Bakafa's royal chronicle states that the Baso and Jawi contingents of the Bure-Damot army, which were led by Dejazmach Woregna, played a decisive role in the campaigns that Bakafa led to put down these rebellions.

One of the acts that illustrate Queen Mintiwab's political skills was that she appointed Woregna as a governor, with the rank of *dejazmach*, after Bakafa's death in 1730. Woregna was given the constantly rebelling Damot, Agaw Midir, and Mecha territories. And Woregna managed to quickly put down the rebellions.

What made Woregna more famous and popular around the Gondar palace was his success in crushing the insurrection in the city of Gondar that took place between 17 December 1732 and 1 January 1733. The leader of the revolt was a native of Damot and Agaw Midir by the name of Tanse Mamo. His aim was to put Hizqiyas, who had royal blood, on the throne, to take back the political power 'usurped' by the Qwaregna 'dynasty', and to position himself as a power broker in the palace. After fifteen days of heavy fighting in Gondar city, Woregna brought his soldiers from Bure-Damot and Gojjam to Gondar and put an end to the revolt. Tanse was captured and hanged.

Following this event, Woregna's reputation spread throughout the territories to the south of Lake Tana that were under the rule of the Gondarine government. One of his primary duties was to defend the Damot and Agaw Midir territories against attacks by the Oromo coming from Shewa and Wollega. To achieve this, he preferred negotiations to war. In addition, he used the threat coming from the Oromo that lived south of the Nile to crush any

revolt over the payment of tributes or other causes. He persuaded the people of Damot and Agaw Midir to live in peace by paying the taxes levied, rather than be 'eaten' by the Oromo south of the river. This referred especially to the Agaw of Ankasha and the Banja areas led by Nana Giorgis. When Iyasu II's government waged its 'Belew campaigns' against Sinnar (Funj) in 1742 and 1744, Woregna's cavalry and infantry played a prominent role. Finally, Woregna died a hero's death while fighting with Nana Giorgis in 1763.

In sum, the story of these two famous leaders of Bure-Damot and its environs illustrates two points. First, although they were settled by the kings, it shows that there were long-lasting interactions and relations of interdependence between the communities that had settled in Gojjam earlier, and the Mecha and Tulama Oromo clans living south of the Abay River. Second, this story helps us understand how loyal and important the Oromo leaders that had settled in Gojjam were to the Ethiopian government based in Gondar. To this day, from Baso Liben in eastern Gojjam to Mecha in the west, the names of these two famous men are widely used as the names of places, mountains, and people. The two men have a prominent place in the oral traditions of the people living in these territories.

Fitawrary Habta-Giyorgis Dinagdé: The Quintessential Ethiopian

Emeritus Professor Bahru Zewde

Fitawrari Habte-Giyorgis Dinagde was undoubtedly one of Ethiopia's prominent political and military leaders. It is to be recalled that I have already written his biography and made the book available to readers.[7] What I want to do in this short paper is to look at his life history through the framework of the three rounds of workshops that were organised by the Association of Ethiopian Historians under the theme 'Interdependence and Interactions in Ethiopian History.' In the papers presented so far, at least three major sub-themes stand out: *ethnic interaction*, *mixed or composite identity*, and *identity and political power*. I will address these sub-themes by drawing on the life history of Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis.

Ethnic interaction

Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis was born in an area that has witnessed centuries of significant interactions between the Gurage and Oromo ethnic groups. Although relations between them were sometimes marked by conflict, especially in the early years, they gradually developed into primarily peaceful relations. This was an area in which inter-ethnic marital ties were common. The local people's livelihood was based on the cultivation of the *enset* plant. In particular, Chabo, Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis' birthplace, was a place where the best *enset* was grown. Some historians say that Chabo is one of those places where Gurages were assimilated by the Oromo. Or, they had made them

[7] *Habte Abba Mala: From War Captive to Statesman* (Addis Ababa: 2008 E.C.) (In Amharic).

gabaro (acculturated), which was how the Oromo dealt with the indigenous people in most places where they settled.

The other development that indicates this history of interaction and interdependence is that many names of the Kistane Gurage, in particular, are Oromo. As examples one could mention common names such as Ibsa, Ilala, Waqjira, Tulu and the like. One could also note that the *warray samale* song, which enlivens Kistane weddings, is also sung among the Oromo. 'Soddo', which is basically the name of an Oromo clan, has been used as an alternative name by the Kistane as well.

Therefore, it is difficult to identify some Kistane clans as either Gurage or Oromo. However, following the change of the political order in 1991, these ethnic groups that were interdependent for many years were split into two camps. They called themselves 'Soddo Jidda' and 'Soddo Gordanna' and began to eye each another with hostility. While the first group claimed to be Oromo, the second stuck to their Gurage identity. After being at logger heads for a few years, they were eventually reconciled and renewed their former peaceful relations.

Mixed identity

It is well known that Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis is from the Oromo ethnic group on his father's side and from the Gurage ethnic group on his mother's side. His father Dinagde Hundul was a member of the Oromo ethnic group while his mother Emet Ajo Amdino was a member of the Gurage ethnic group on her mother's side. In this respect, his life, which was in many ways intertwined with that of Dejazmach Balcha Safo, shared many similarities with the latter's. Like Habta-Giyorgis, Dejazmach Balcha, who was born in Agemja (Soddo), was an Oromo on his father's side and a Gurage on his mother's side. Nevertheless, both military and political leaders came to be known in history not by their ethnic identity but by their Ethiopian-ness. They

advocated Ethiopia's interests and battled for its cause. Balcha played a major role in defeating the Italians at Adwa and, after Maychew, sacrificed his life resisting Italian rule. Very often though, foreign writers have laboured to magnify Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis' Oromo identity in particular.

Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis' superb mastery of the Amharic language is easily observed in his famed judgements, for which he is known in history. A similar case that is worth noting here is Laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin's eloquent and sophisticated use of the Amharic language. He was born of Amhara and Oromo parents. Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis and Laureate Tsegaye grew up in neighbouring localities, the former in Dendi and the latter in Boda. One could even say that no other author has been as successful as Laureate Tsegaye in developing the Amharic language and Amharic literature in the 20th century as he did through his poetry and plays.

Identity and political power

Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis is not the first Ethiopian of Oromo origin to have played a prominent political and military role in the Ethiopian nation-state. As Geremew Eskezia explains in his paper for this collection, Dejazmach Tulu and Dejazmach Woregna Washo also had important roles to play in this regard during the Gondarine period. One could say that they were the forerunners of the aristocrats that established what would become known as the 'Yejju dynasty', which headed the Gondar government for sixty-five years. In the 19th century, there were two other prominent figures worth noting here: one was King/Emperor Menelik's key military leader, Ras Gobena Dache, whose biography is presented in Dechasa Abebe's paper in this collection, and the other was Dejazmach Balcha Safo, who has also been cited above.

When we compare Gobena with Balcha and Habta-Giyorgis, we can see both similarities and differences between them. Gobena was able to gain military fame by creating an alliance with Menelik, while Balcha and Habta-Giyorgis were honoured and promoted after they were brought to Menelik's palace as prisoners of war. Their lives ended differently too. After taking a leading role in expanding Menelik's empire, particularly towards the west, Gobena died of illness in June 1889, i.e. before seeing his master's coronation. However, when Emperor Yohannes IV died a few months earlier at Metema, Menelik's ascent to the imperial throne was already assured. Apart from being eulogised as the hero of the Battle of Adwa, Balcha was among those martyred patriots that fought and denied respite to the Italian occupiers who had come back to wreak vengeance forty years after Adwa. Habta-Giyorgis' life did not end on the battlefield like Balcha's; he died due to illness, like Gobena.

Fitawrari Habta-Giryoris's service to the state can be classified into four categories: military campaigns, administration, securing the national boundary, and preserving Menelik's legacy.

Military campaigns

The most noted military campaign in which Habta-Giyorgis participated was the war in March 1889, which was waged to submit the Qabena leader Hassan Enjamo. In the Battle of Jabdu, both sides suffered heavy losses. During the Battle of Adwa, Habta-Giyorgis' role was primarily that of a counsellor. But, to everyone's surprise, after the military commander Fitawrari Gebeyehu fell, Habta-Giyorgis was appointed imperial *fitawrari,* taking Gebeyehu's place as imperial commander. This was a surprise because most people thought that Ras Abate or Dejach Balcha, who had fought so heroically in the war, were the most eligible for the post. After that, when ministers were appointed in 1908/9, Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis was named

'Minister of War'. He retained this post for nineteen years until his death.

The most detailed account of a military campaign led by Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis is the one in 1896/97, which had the objective to force Borana into submission. We have a detailed account of this campaign because the French explorer Daragon happened to accompany Habta-Giyorgis. However, the *fitawrari* came to be particularly remembered not only for his military strategy, but also for the psychological skills that he demonstrated at the Battle of Sagale. The central government was able to secure its victory over the larger Wollo army led by King Mikael mainly because Habta-Giyorgis was able to buy time for his side by lulling the king into laxity through flattery.

Administration

As the study[8] by Mislu Gugsa shows, Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis was able to set up an efficient administrative and judicial system in his Chabo territory. Besides, as already mentioned, he was well-known for delivering speedy and impartial judgements. For this reason, he was given the epithet 'Abba Qurta'. He encountered more serious administrative challenges in his Borana territory, which was far from Addis Ababa and because of the proliferation of *shiftas* (outlaws) there.

While the administration of the central territories went smoothly, the frontiers posed a serious test. Habta-Giyorgis' Borana administration was particularly replete with problems. One reason was that although Ethiopia's international boundaries were delimited at the beginning of the century, they were not properly demarcated on the ground. The onset of a protracted power struggle over the central government following Menelik's

[8] Mislu Gugsa, *Estate Administration in Part of Present Day Jibat & Mecha under Fitawrari Habte Giyorgis*, BA thesis (Haile Sellassie I University: Department of History, 1974).

grave illness, and Habta-Giyorgis' involvement in this power struggle, left him no room to visit his frontier territory. Its remoteness also created favourable conditions for *shiftas* to operate. The desire of the British, who were then ruling over Kenya, to control the Qadaduma water wells in Borana for their own pastoralists was another cause for wrangling.

Preserving Emperor Menelik's legacy

Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis was well known for his tireless efforts to execute the will and preserve the legacy of Emperor Menelik, the monarch for whom he had the deepest love and respect. After Menelik became bed-ridden, Empress Taytu began to give the old guard a hard time by interfering in state affairs. That was why Habta-Giyorgis allied with Bitwedded Ras Tessema Nadew, the guardian of the crown prince Iyasu, and removed Taytu from the centre of power in March 1910. Later, in September 1916, he took a leading role in deposing Iyasu on the grounds that the latter had violated Menelik's proscriptions. In subsequent years, Habta-Giyorgis had confrontations with the crown prince Ras Teferi. He argued that he would not sit by and watch the latter undermine the power of Menelik's daughter, Empress Zewditu, who had ascended the throne in 1916 with their full agreement.

After the Emperor died in 1913, the news of his death was kept secret in order to forestall public unrest. It was in this context that Fitawrari Habta-Giyorgis expressed his loyalty to the Emperor by hosting a memorial banquet to commemorate his death. He did so under the cover of celebrating Qana Ze Gelila, the holiday on the morrow of Epiphany. He continued hosting these annual memorial banquets even after the Emperor's death was made public.

Brief Notes on the Authors

Dr Ahmed Hassen received his first and second degrees from the Department of History, Addis Ababa University, and his doctoral degree from Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne in France. His research focuses on social, environmental, and economic history and he has published several articles and one book. He has also served Addis Ababa University in various administrative positions: as the Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, in the Office of Change Management, and in External Relations.

Dr Almaw Kifle received his Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees from the Department of History, Addis Ababa University. In addition, he has a Master's degree in Law from Addis Ababa University-Greenwich University. He has several publications on political, social and economic issues. Apart from teaching history and law at the Haramaya and Kotebe Metropolitan universities, he has also worked as a legal consultant and lawyer. The latter has included *pro bono* services to those who needed legal support but could not afford the fee.

Dr Assefa Balcha graduated with a first and second degree from Addis Ababa University's History Department. He holds a doctoral degree from Emory University (Atlanta, USA). He has served as the President of Wollo University.

Dr Awgichew Amare is currently an Assistant Professor at Gondar University. He received his first and second degrees in History from Debre Berhan University, and his PhD from Addis Ababa University. His research area is medieval Ethiopian history, with a particular focus on inter-ethnic and cultural interactions and interdependence.

Emeritus Professor Bahru Zewde received his doctoral degree from the University of London, and has published several books and articles on modern Ethiopian history. He has served as the Chairperson of the Department of History and as the Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University. Outside the University, he has also served as the Executive Director of the Forum for Social Studies and as the First Vice President of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences.

Dr Dechasa Abebe received his Bachelor degree from Kotebe Teachers College, his Master's degree from Addis Ababa University, and his doctoral degree from the University of South Africa. He is currently the Research and Technology Transfer Associate Dean of the Centre for African and Asian Studies at Addis Ababa University. He has published several articles and two books.

Dr Dereje Hinew received his doctoral degree in History from Addis Ababa University and is currently teaching History at Wollega University. Apart from publishing the outputs of his research on the history of western Ethiopia, he has also participated in the Oromo-Gumuz peace conferences held in 2011 E.C.

Dr Deressa Debu received his doctoral degree in History from Addis Ababa University. In addition to teaching and research, he is currently serving as the Director of Jimma University's Oromo Study Centre.

Dr Geremew Eskezia graduated from Bahir Dar University with a PhD degree and is currently an Assistant Professor at the same university.

Dr Girma Negash is currently an Associate Professor of History and the Chairperson of the Department of History at Addis Ababa University. He has served as a history teacher for

several years and has published a book on the adverse impact of the *chat* trade on children's education.

Dr Kefyalew Tessema was an Assistant Professor of History at Meda Welabu University. He did his PhD research on the interactions of the peoples of south-eastern Ethiopia.[9]

Dr Reta Duguma is a staff member of Haramaya University's Department of History and Heritage Management. He has conducted several studies on the interactions between local ethnic groups.

Dr Shimelis Bonsa is an Associate Professor at Stony Brook University in New York. His research focuses on the modern and contemporary history of Africa. He received his doctoral degree from the University of California (Los Angeles) and is expected to publish his PhD dissertation on the 20th century history of Addis Ababa soon.

Emeritus Professor Shumet Sishagne is a former graduate and academic staff of Addis Ababa University in the Department of History. He received his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. After teaching at Newport University in Virginia for fifteen years, he returned to Ethiopia in 2008 E.C. and has been teaching at Bahir Dar University since. Among his publications, his book *Unionists and Separatists: The Vagaries of Ethio-Eritrean Relations* takes the primary place.

Dr Tekalign Woldemariam received his first and second degrees from Addis Ababa University, and holds a doctoral degree from Boston University. His research focuses on the economic interactions between Addis Ababa and the surrounding areas. Apart from teaching at Addis Ababa

[9] Sadly, Dr Kefyalew passed away before seeing this publication. He was one of the staff members of Meda Walabo University who died in a car accident in May 2023.

University for a long time, he has also served as the University's Academic Vice President.

Dr Tewodros Zewdu received his doctoral degree from York University in Canada. His doctoral research focused on identity politics. In this regard, he has played a pioneering role in examining and bringing to light the role and fate of individuals who have composite identities. Apart from his academic work, he has contributed to raising awareness among African communities in Canada and bringing them together.

Dr Zelalem Tefera is an Associate Professor of Sociology and a Research Fellow at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University. He has been widely engaged in research on settlement, displacement and cross-border migration. He has published twenty articles in that field in national and international journals.

The Association of Ethiopian Historians (AEH) was re-established on March 2, 2020 with the principal objective of ensuring that history plays a positive role in promoting national consensus. To this end, it strives to foster scientific and inclusive historical research and writing in higher education institutions. In addition, it works to install in the general public a proper perspective on historical writing and interpretation by organizing workshops and conducting scientific reviews of publications relating to history.

Phone: 251 91 163 0062

Email: info.ethistorians@gmail.com

Website: aeh.org.et

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) is a German political foundation working on social justice, democratic and sustainable economic transformation. Since 1992 its Addis Ababa office has been supporting political, social and economic change and development in Ethiopia. To this end, it has established durable partnerships with Civil Society organizations, Trade Unions, Academia and Government institutions. Its focus areas are: political dialogue and change, equitable and inclusive economic growth and the establishment of a society where gender equity prevails. Furthermore, it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union with a view to assisting the organization's continental activities and to strengthening the relations between Africa and Europe.

Phone: 251 11 123 3245

Email: info.ethiopia@fes.de

Website: ethiopia.fes.de

United Printers