



Metamorphosis in Conquest of Borana Oromo (c. 1897-1907)

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to note the process of conquest of Borana Oromo and the final stages in the formation of modern Ethiopia. To do this, researcher has consulted both primary and secondary sources. The data are collected, analyzed and interpreted. Thus, descriptive and interpretative research design was used to address the aim of the study. The study has comprehended the period after math of Adwa to boundary demarcation between Ethiopia and Kenya by Anglo-Ethiopian treaty (c.1897-1907). Hence, the study has branded that the conquest of Borana Oromo in southern part of Ethiopia was part of Empire building only aftermath of Adwa victory in 1896. In this paper, the background to the Sidama-Guji-Borana conquest were addressed. The first attempt to conquer Borana was launched before Adwa in 1893 when the imperial armies commanded by Dejjach Asfaw Darge, the eldest son of Ras Darge Sable Selassie. The second part discussed with the conquest process in aftermath of Adwa, in 1897 when imperial armies command under newly appointed chief in staff of army, Fitawrari Habte Giorgis Dinagde, who simply appointed after death of Fitawrari Gabayabu Gurmu (Abba Gora), who fallen at battle of Adwa. The third section deals with power consolidation of central government over the periphery with particular reference to the area under studies. The last section dealt with the process of boundary demarcation between adjacent colonial master mainly with Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 189 that marked the formation of concrete boundary of Ethio-Kenyan border of today.

KEY WORDS: Expedition, Conquest, Borana, Demarcation.

1. Background

The military conquest of Emperor Menelik against South, West and Eastern part of Ethiopia was classified in to three major phases; the first phase was from 1865-1889, when Menelik was a *Negus* of Shewa, he conquered vast territory with his valiant general Ras Gobana Dache (c.1818-1889). At that time, he able to conquer the Shawan Amhara in 1865-1868, Tulama in 1875, Mecha in 1880, Leqa Naqamte in 1882, Leqa Qellem in 1883, Anfillo in 1886, Illubabor in 1886, Arsi in 1886, Harar in 1887, Guraghe-alaba Kembata in 1889¹. The second phase was from (1889-1896) from his coronation to

¹ Bahru Zawde (2001) *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*, 2nd edition, AAUP, pp.59-63; Asafa Jaleta (1993). *Oromia and Ethiopia: State Formation and Ethnonational Conflict, 1868-1992*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner: Publishers, p.71.

the battle of Adwa, within those years, he ruled and collected tribute from all provinces formerly under Emperor Yohannis IV, including from Gojjam ruler named *Negus* Tekle-Hymanot. The only Northern chief, who refused to be subject of Menelik II was Tigray under *Ras* Mengesha Yohannis for his ambition as a power contender but, he also submitted in 1891. Besides to northern provinces, he conquered the vast lands of the Bale in 1889, Hadiya in 1890, Sidama in 1890, Kullo, Konta in 1893, Maji Gedeo, Ghimira, in 1893, Wolaita in 1894². At this time the commander in chief of armies was *Fitawrari* Gabayehu Gurmu, (r.1889 - 1896) who killed at the battle of Adwa, and replaced by another 3rd Oromo commander in chief of army of Menelik, *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis Dinagde, who appointed in October 1896. The third phase was launched only aftermath of Adwa (1896-1900), that was intended to create buffer zone with colonial power of European state, at this period the armies were able to conquered Afar in 1896, Somali in 1897, Kaffa in 1897, Borana in 1897, Benishangul in 1898, Bench Maji, Gardula, to Lake Rudolf in 1898. In some districts in periphery provinces the project of conquest was continued until 1900, the year which marked the making of modern Ethiopian empire of today³.

2. The First Attempt to Subjugate Borana

The pastoral and semi-pastoral groups of Borana are *ilman angafa* (first born) for all Oromo tribe. Borana was lived dominantly in Ethiopia, apart from small are enclaved inside Kenya, live in the East of Lake Rudolph with the rest Oromo of Ethiopia⁴. They lived as independent republic with egalitarian political system of self-governance for thousands of years.⁵ However, that self-governing polity was unable to sustain, and challenged by external threat since Liban Jaldessa was Abba Gadda of Borana

² Sanchez, Janet Hoard (1974). "Political Incorporation in Ethiopia, 1875-1900." MA Thesis, California State University at Long Beach, p. 23 ; Tekalign Wolde-Mariam. (1995). "A city and its hinterlands: The political economy of land tenure, agriculture and food supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1887-1974)", Ph. D Dissertation, Boston University, p. 176; Tsehay Berhane Selassie. (1969) "Menelik II Conquest and Consolidation of the Southern Provinces" BA thesis, Addis Ababa: HSIU, , *idem*1981, "The political and military tradition of the Ethiopian Peasantry (1800- 1941(Ph. D, dissertation, History, Oxford,

³ Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibsa. (1990). *The invention of Ethiopia; the Making of a dependent Colonial state in North-East Africa*; Red Sea Press, p.86; Braukamper, Ulrich. 1980. "La Conquete et l' administration Ethiopiennes du Kambata an temp de Menelik II in Tubiana, J. (ed.), *Modern Ethiopia. Form the Accession of Menelik II to the Present* (Rotterdam,); Bulatovich, A. K., (2000). *Ethiopia through Russian Eyes: Country in Transition, 1896-1898*. Trans by Richard Seltzer. 1st Red Seal Press ed. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, pp, 45-50.; Caulk, Richard. (1978). A; "Armies as Predators; Soldier and Peasants in Ethiopia (c.1850-1935)", in the (*IJAS*), Vol, XI no; 3.

⁴ Kurt Reinhard. (1963.) "Die Musik der Borana." *Volker Sud-A' thiopiens*, Vol. II, pp. 721-761, Stuttgart, p.734; Noel J. Cossins. (1987). The Borana Pastoral System of: Southern Ethiopia *Agricultural Systems* 25 p.211; Robert Hazel. (1999). "La circoncision en pays Maasai et Borana: Guerre, procréation et virilité en Afrique orientale (Circumcision among the Maasai and Borana. Warfare, Procreation and Virility in East Africa)" in *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 39, Cahier 154, p. 297.

⁵ Asmerom Legesse. (1973). *Gadaa: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society*. New York: The Free Press.; Marco Bassi (1997). "Hunters and Pastoralism in East Africa: the case of Waata and Oromo-Borana" in *Dynamics of Populations, Movements, and Responses to Climatic Change in Africa*, Edited by B.C Barrich and M.C Gatto, Rome, pp. 164-176.

(1888-1896⁶). The reasons why the egalitarian Gadda system unable to save Borana even the entire Oromo from aggression was, the military supremacy of Abyssinian's over Oromo and other subjugated ethnics in Ethiopia. This mainly after Abyssinian's were received military aids from Europeans super powers. Besides to this, at that time, Borana Oromo was confronting within triangular tension; Somali from East, British East Africa from South, and Abyssinians from North. Then it more deteriorated by internal misunderstanding among Aflata Dido and Goyo Ana of Sabbo and Gona respectively.

In the last quarter of 19th century the threat of Borana was from three main forces. These are: Somali, the old enemies and friends of Borana, and the two new enemies were Abyssinia in North, and British East Africa in South. Of these, the serious threat was the Abyssinian forces⁷. The first military expedition of Menelik armies to Borana was simply extensions of Arsi-Bale conquest. Particularly it launched after conquest of Bale province. The Oromo of Bale was totally conquered in 1890/1891 by armies of *Dejjazmach* Asfaw Darge, the son of *Ras* Darge Sahle Selassie⁸, who was appointed as governor of Selale and Arsi provinces and his son Asfaw Darge⁹ appointed to rule the Bale province until he was replaced by *Dejjazmach* Leul Seged Atnafe in 1903¹⁰ Some historians said the intention of military campaign to the Bale was mainly Great Famine (1888-1892), that was in search of cattle,¹¹ accordingly *Dejjach* Asfaw Darge led campaign to Bale and plundered thousands of cattle from there¹². Some of these cattle were sent to Emperor Menelik II and others were slaughtered for his soldiers¹³. After that it was using Bale as springboard and led their military expedition to the Borana in 1893.

⁶ Waktole Tiki, Gufu Obaa, and Terje Tvedt. (2013). "An indigenous time-related framework for reconstructing the impact of disasters on ancient water systems in southern Ethiopia, 1560-1950" *Journal of Historical Geography* 41 33-43, p. 39.

⁷ Bassi, Marco. (2010). 'The politics of space in Borana Oromo, Ethiopia: demographics, elections, identity and customary institutions', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 4: 2, 221 — 246.

⁸ *Ras* Darge was Menelik's uncle and he was given the Province of Arsi and the died in Fiche and buried at Debra Libanos on 22 March of 1900. See, Wakene Frew. (1973). "The Family of *Ras* Darge and the Church in Salale." BA Thesis, History HSIU, Mindaye Abebe. (2008). 'The Oromo of Bale; A Historical Survey to 1974' AAU, p.23.

⁹ Gufu Oba. (2013). *Nomads in the Shadows of Empires: Contests, Conflicts and Legacies on the Southern Ethiopian-Northern Kenyan Frontier African Social Studies Series, Volume: 30* p.37; Belete Bizuneh. (1999). "inter-ethnic, pp.34-36.

¹⁰ He is the second husband of *Itege* Menen, and he died at the battle of Toramask in September of 1916, in attempt to dethrone *Lij* Iyasu from power. See, Tekletsadiq Mekuria. (1983). *Atse Menelik ena Ye Ethiopia andenet*, Addis Ababa: Kuraz publishing press, p.618.

¹¹ Richard Pankhurst. (1966). "Some Factors Depressing the Standard of Living of Peasants in Traditional Ethiopia" in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 45-98, p.52.

¹² R. Pankhurst, p.52.

¹³ Laphiso G. Delebo. (1983). *Yee Ethiopia Gebbar Sirat ina Jemar Capitalism 1900-1966*, Addis Ababa; Commercial printing press, p.182.; see Thesis and Dissertations; Ketebo Abdiyo. (1999). "A Historical Survey of the Arsi Oromo Ca.1910- 1974".MA. Thesis, History, Addis Ababa University, 2010; Mindaye Abbaba, (2008). 'The Oromo of Bale; A Historical Survey to 1974' AAU, Sanchez, Janet Hoard. "Political Incorporation in Ethiopia, 1875-1900." MA Thesis, California State University at Long Beach, 1974.; Sentayehu Kasaye(1985). "Goba: Foundation, Growth and Development to 1974" B.A Thesis, Dep't of History,

The military conquest of Borana was aimed to have an upper hand of a political-economy in the region, that mainly to create 'Buffer Zone' with European colonial powers¹⁴. Initially, the Abyssinian armies aimed at plunder of cattle in order to recover from the effects of cattle rinderpest (*Desta Beshita*) that severely exterminated cattle in Shewa plateaus. With the Amhara, there was no stock substitution since they brought none with them; instead, they deprived the Borana of their cattle when they offered resistance, and later treated them, it was said, as "cattle producing machines" for the purpose of securing adequate tribute and taxation.¹⁵ Secondly, the object was to easily gain ivory in the region.¹⁶

To do this, Bahru said 'he [Asfaw] the second object was easily to gain and collect ivory from the region.¹⁷ As Bahru said in order to accomplish this mission, he [Asfaw] firstly sent delegation of Arsi elders to Borana, but following refusal of Borana to submit in peaceful means, he again came along with victims of Anollee, as a means to horrify Borana by exhibiting victims of war and telling their fate will be same to Arsi or what was happened to Arsi was waiting for Borana unless peacefully submitted. Following this quarrel verbal dispute Borana *Gumigayo* (assembled) and decided to resolve their fate in battle field. Accordingly, Borana on their horseback¹⁸ stood and confronted with the armies of *Dejjach* Asfaw, who equipped with European rifles. The forces of *Dejjazmach* first invaded¹⁹ via Liban, which is bordered by the Dawa and Ganale River and extended to east wards. In short, the invasion accent to customary land of Liban including Dollo area²⁰ the whole *Shanan Liban* (five Liban tribes); Liban Dikale, Liban Sende, Liban Wata, Liban Nyencho, and Liban Golba were targeted. The war was taking place in Kurkuru, at the battle of Melka and the decisive battle was fought at Haraa Qalaa, which Borana denoted it as *loola Daraa* (war for either to die or survive) resulting in the

AAU, p.11; Teferi Tekla Hymanot. (1971) "The Ethiopian Feudal army and its works 1868-1936" PhD Dissertation, Dept of History, Kansas State University, p.205.

¹⁴ Bahru Zawde, *A history of Modern*, p. 88.

¹⁵ P.Maud, "General account of the tribes from Lake Stephanie to the Ganale River and the Abyssinian relations with them", 1903? E'O.I/48

¹⁶ Gufu Oba (2013) *Nomads*, p.37.

¹⁷ Gufu Oba (2013) *Nomads*, p.37.

¹⁸ In fact, by late of 19th century, Borana "had plenty of cattle, camels and horses". See, Major John Boyes, *My Abyssinians Journey: A journey Through Abyssinia from Red sea to Nairobi in 1906, in the days of Menelik II, 1906*, London, p.88.

¹⁹ Bahru Zawde. (2008). *Habte Abba Mala; Ka Xor Morkegninat eska Agar Marinet*, Addis Ababa: Eclipse printing press, p.61; Tabor Wami, *Partisan Discourse and Authentic History*, Artistic printing press, 2015, p.500.

²⁰ Marco Bassi (2011) "Customary Institutions in Contemporary Politics in Borana Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia" in *Contested Power in Ethiopia Traditional Authorities and Multi-Party Elections* Editors: Kjetil Tronvoll and Tobias Hagmann, pp.221-243

destruction of the Yaa Arbora (ritual settlement) of *Gadaa* and kidnapping of ten of the *Daballe* (children of the *Raba*) named Mira Kano, Liban Qalqalcha, Liban Dhaadhacha and other were taken to be baptized by Christian priests.²¹ Regarding to this invasion, Bahru Zawde and Belete Bizuneh claimed that Borana resisted the Abyssinian armies who came from Bale under command of *Dejjach* Asfaw for only two days²². Whereas Gufu Oba, who collected and conducted intensive fieldwork in Borana claimed that Borana resisted conquest of Abyssinian's armies for nearly six months.²³ Though his armies able to invade Liban and Dirre, and overrunning the Borana and setting up an Ethiopian post at Arero to rule Teltellee, Liban and Dire.²⁴ Yet, the armies of *Dejjach* unable to monopolize the vast arid territory of Borana and unable to control the mobile life of Borana but plunder of cattle was common practices of the day.

3. The Second-Round Conquest of Borana (c.1897-1898)

At this time, Konso, Burji, Guji and part of Somali (Ogaden) were absolutely invaded and conquered in or before 1896²⁵. The conquest much that was still obscure about the Ethiopian advance southwards into Borana. As noted in background the conquest of Borana was one of the military expeditions of Menelik armies in the post Adwa victory. These were basically launched for two fundamental reasons; the first one is part of international politics, in which Abyssinian were in competition with British Empire building in British East Africa. And it's to forestall the British who were believed to be advancing northward from their East African protectorate.²⁶ and their attempt to engulf Borana into their territory alongside with Oromo of Kenya today. Here, the main objective has been to create

²¹ Gufu, *Nomads*, p.37

²² Belete Bizuneh, "inter-ethnic, p. 35

²³ Gufu, *Nomads*, p.37.

²⁴ Haberland (1956), 146; Opt. P.Maud, (1970). "Mr. A.E. Butter1s expedition; contents of Report", EO.I/48.; Edmund Romilly Turton "The Pastoral Tribes of Northern Kenya 1800 – 1916" PhD Dissertation, History dept, University of London, , p.269.

²⁵ George Montandon, (1912). '*Au pays Ghimirra*,' (Bull. Soc. Neuchateloise de Geog., Neuchatel, vol. 22, p. 65; Walde Yohanis Warqineh and Gemechu Melka, (1986 E.C). *Oromia Yetedebeqe Yegij Tarik*, Addis Ababa: no publisher, p.95; Harold Marcus, (2009 e.c) *Life and Times of Menelik II* Trans in to Amharic by Biniam Alemayehu, Addis Ababa, , p.280; Donham, Donald L., and Wendy James. (2002). *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History & Social Anthropology*. Oxford; Athens; Addis Ababa: J. Currey; Ohio University Press; Addis Ababa University Press; Tibebe Eshete. (December 1994). "Towards A History of The Incorporation of The Ogaden: 1887-1935" in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 pp. 69-87; Hermann Amborn, (1984)"History Of Events and Internal Development the Example of The Burj-Konso Cluster" *In Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* Addis Ababa: University of Addis Ababa, 1984, Edited by Dr Taddese Beyene, Volume 1 ISBN — Volume 1: 1 85450 000 7 Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa 1988, p.751. *idem*, (2006). The Contemporary Significance of What Has Been. Three Approaches to Remembering the Past: Lineage, Gada, and Oral Tradition. *History in Africa*, 33, pp 53-84 doi:10.1353/hia.2006.0004, p.54.

²⁶ Belete Bizuneh, (2008). "An Agrarian polity and it's pastoral periphery: state and pastoralism in the Borana Borderlands" (Boston University, PhD Dissertation, History Department, pp. 20-27.

buffer Zones of “effective occupation” on the borders with their adjacent protectorates.²⁷ The second reason was domestic politics to subjugate the Borana for its resources mainly cattle and ivory. That manifested by measure of the oppressor gave a name of ‘civilizing the *zalan*²⁸’. In Borana, there were very little croplands and private lands, and virtually all lands were allocated to livestock production as mainly *Woraa* and *Foraa*, and these trends continued until 1975 land reform²⁹.

3.1 Course of Campaign

Aftermath of Adwa in October 1896, *Ato* later titled *Fitawrari* Habte Georgis appointed as a commander in chief of army of Emperor Menelik³⁰. Here after, Menelik appointed Habte Giorgis as a governor of Borana, in addition to Mecha and Jibat as reward.³¹ The southern Borana had intermittent contact with the Kismayu administration of British. Yet, when a Borana caravan arrived at Kismayu in May 1896, there was no news of an Ethiopian attack." Again, when the government interpreter met the Borana Oromo at Bardera in July 1896, no hint for any aggression. Finally, in February 1897 when traders from the Liven visited Kismayu, there was still no mention that the Borana was in immediate danger. However, when the Ethiopians attacked them from July to October 1897, the Borana was certainly not slow to ask for help from Kismayu³². Qallu named Afalata Dido, quest for corrective measure by British state for the oppression they were facing. Accordingly, he sent delegation to the British diplomat at Kismayu. Accordingly Harding, as a response cautioned Salisbury to take rapid measure or any possible action by saying “ unless something is done and done quickly ..the Borana Oromo as a people will be exterminated.; however, due to Salisbury reluctant the Borana

²⁷ Elamin Abdel Karim Ahmed Abdel Karim “An Historical Study of The Shawan Amhara Conquest of The Oromo And Sidama Regions of Southern Ethiopia 1865-1900” University of Khartoum, PhD Dissertation, in History, 2009, p.167; Guèbrè Sellassie, *Chronique*, 11, note 7 on page 463 by de Coppet ; Montandon, G., *Au pays Ghimirra* (Paris, 1913), pp. 267-270.

²⁸ Asebe Regassa, Yetebarek Hizekiel & Benedikt Korf (2018): ‘Civilizing’ the pastoral frontier: land grabbing, dispossession and coercive agrarian development in Ethiopia, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2017.1420060, p.9.

²⁹ A. Allan Degen. (2011). ‘Transformation of Borana from pastoralists to agropastoralists and shift of livestock from cattle to include more goats, camels and sheep in Southern Ethiopia *Int. J. Business and Globalisation*, Vol. 6, Nos. 3/4, p.300; Noel J. Cossins. (1987). The Borana Pastoral System of: Southern Ethiopia *Agricultural Systems* 25 199-218, p.203.

³⁰ Mersi, e Hazen Walde Qirgoos, 1999E.c). “*Yee Hayegnaw Kifle Zamen Mebecha Yee zamene Tarik Tezetayee kaa Ayee hut Ena Kee Sema, ut 1896-1922*, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, p.323.

³¹ Mahtama Sellase W/ Masqal. (1961 E.C), *Che Belaw (Yefera Sem)* Addis Ababa: Neged press, p.16.; Mislu Gugsu, (1974).; "Estate Administration in Part of Present Day Jibat and Media under *Fit. Habte Giyorgis*" (BA Thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, p.19. Sergew Hable Selassie, (1970). *Dagmani Menelik Yeaddisu Selixane Mesrachi*, United printing press, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p.205; Gabre Selassie, W/Aregay, (1959 E.C.), *Tarik Zamana Ze Degmani Menelik; Negusa Negest Ze Ethiopia*, no publisher, p.277; Bahru Zawde, *Habte Abba Mala*; p.88.

³² Edmund Romilly Turton “The Pastoral, p.269.

was forced to pay the imposed taxation by Abyssinia; and relatively speaking better than other region.³³ In fact, that consideration was not real sense of belongingness of Menelik to Borana rather it emanated from enforcement of Ethiopian treaty with British East Africa on May 14, 1897 Enlightened with the right of trans-frontier pastoralists³⁴.

The conquest of Borana was not, in fact, undertaken until June 1897, when *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis left Shawa at the head of a sizeable expedition. He was accompanied by Leon Deagon, a famous French explorer, and what little was known about this expedition was based on his accounts³⁵. On Sunday 31 May 1897, the imperial *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis was appointed as a governor of the Borana Oromo and commissioned to conquer their territories which extended from Lake Stephanie to the Ganale Doria River in the east. He left Addis Ababa in June 1897 at the head of an army. According to Leon Deagon the armies of *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis started their journey from Dandi in West Shewa³⁶ via Soddo he crossed *Sabat-bet* Guraghe then to Hadiaya-Kembata route then he welcomed by Kawo Tona of Wolaita , and king Magero of Boroda district, finally he welcomed by Konso.³⁷ In the meantime, *Dejjazmach* Wolde Gabriel followed a route just to the east of Lake Zway, Lake Shala, Lake Abaya, and Lake Chamo, marched with his army through Alaba, Kembata-Konso line of way and continued to Borana, and reached with his 15,000 armies on July 31, 1897 camped at place named Sogida, where he welcomed by local chief of the area named Afalata Dido. In fact, Sogida was not far from *Fitawrari* later court capital Megga Town³⁸. Menelik chronicler, *Tsehafe Tezazu* Gabre Selassie Walde Aregay, noted briefly the campaign of Borana as follows "During this period, *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis was appointed to Borana in June and took up all the battles beyond Awash. Then he put his country in charge of it and made it a city".³⁹

3.2. Reaction from Borana

The invasion targeted northwest customary land of Borana named Arero including Teltelle, Dirre, Yaballo, Areeroo, Moyyale, Burji, and Guji⁴⁰. The Abba Gadda of Borana, Addi Doyyo (1896-1904)⁴¹ advised by local elder and *Gummi* (assembly) not to confront as former campaign. Accordingly, they

³³ Guffu p.42.; Hickey, 1984, p.112

³⁴ Guffu p.42.

³⁵ Bahru Z, *Habte*, p.58.; Turton, p.271.

³⁶ Montarlot, Leon De "D Addis Ababa a Boran" *Le Monde Illustré*, n.d., p.406.

³⁷ The Konso and Gardula were already conquered in 1893 by armies of *Dejjach* Leulseged Atnafe.

³⁸ Bahru Zawde, *Habte Abba Mala*;:60-61

³⁹ Gabre Selassie, p.277.

⁴⁰ Marco Bassi (2011) "Customary Institutions in Contemporary Politics in Borana Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia" in *Contested Power in Ethiopia Traditional Authorities and Multi-Party Elections* Editors: Kjetil Tronvoll and Tobias Hagmann, p.2240

⁴¹ Gufu, *Nomads*, p.37

decide to give their hands. The Borana dealt over the case and finally assembly passed the decisive decision on how to deal with central government. Finally, they agreed to peacefully submit since they had learnt military gaps in the former war, and the central government in its part promised not to eliminate their institution and culture. But the reality behind submission of Borana was not only military gaps but also the reconsideration of their mobile life and pastoral life that was to move their cattle at a time when the Shewan forces come to receive tributes⁴². The Borana Oromo were easily subjected without offering any significant resistance. On another side the Abyssinian's having established a *Ketema* on top of Mount Megga and arranged the administration of the region to its satisfaction, *Fitwarari* Habte Giorgis returned with the bulk of his army, passing through Guji -Alaba-Guraghe territories to the, Addis Ababa at the beginning of October 1897. At this time, besides to the then Abba Gadaa, Liban Jaldessa, (1891-1899)⁴³ there were two main Borana leaders, Guyo Ana, head of the Gona Borana, and Afalata Dido, head of the Sabbo. Goyo Ana is known to have fought with the Ethiopians but was quickly defeated while Afalata apparently capitulated without resistance and was therefore allowed to keep fourteen villages for himself⁴⁴. The reason why Ana refused to peacefully submit to Abyssinians and Afalata submit is unknown, but there is cue point worth noting. Prior to the advent of the Ethiopians, Afalata's position amongst the Sabbo had been extremely precarious, and it's strengthened rather than weakened by official Ethiopian recognition of his title. The legitimate head of the Sabbo should have been Geydu who was born after his father's death and his mother's marriage to Afalata. In oral, Afalata should only have been Regent for a certain number of years, but he had tried to maintain that Geydu was his son and relations miles of Sogida, and he missed the Ethiopian expedition by no more than a day or two. It is quite possible that news of a powerful caravan rather than lack of water deterred the Ethiopians proceeding further south between the two were not amicable. Thus, while Afalata remained on good terms with the Ethiopians, Geydu on the contrary did not, and Ethiopian support for his step-father was probably an important factor leading him to adopt a more recalcitrant position.

For about a year, there was an Ethiopian garrison in Anole, and it was only after this was abandoned towards the end or the beginning of 1899 that Afalata was forced to move his headquarters to Arero and that a station was set up there. Could it be assumed that, therefore, the Ethiopian conquest of

⁴² Belete Bizuneh, "An Agrarian, pp. 20-27

⁴³ Gudrun Dahl and Gemetchu Megeressa. (1990). 'The Sources of Life: Boran Conceptions of Wells and Water' in *From Water to World Making, 'African Models and Arid Lands* Edited by Gisli Pálsson, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies Uppsala, p.29.

⁴⁴ Turton p. 272

Borana was completed by the end of 1898 at the very latest? By that date, at any rate, the permanent residence of Ethiopian troops in the Borana capital had also been accompanied by their dispersal in small numbers throughout the country. Then, in October 1897 a deputation of Borana elders arrived in Addis Ababa and formally submitted to Menelik. Both Ana and Afalata were given minor official posts and assimilated into the Ethiopian bureaucratic structure. They were both made responsible for collecting tribute in their areas, and were given a few Ethiopian soldiers who came under their command. But this does not mean that all the Borana were conquered, and one clue to the limits of Ethiopian rule could be found in the continuing requests from the Borana for assistance against the Amhara. Regarding appointment of two Borana chiefs, it's still obscure where they receive minor title given to them and who award them as well. Tsehay Berhane Selassie noted as of Habte Giorgis gave *shum-shir* prior to his return to his camp at Dandi, "he created two *fitawrari's* named; Gedo Jillo and Guyo Anna as a governor of Borana" (Teltelle, Liban and Dirre⁴⁵) but we couldn't find their name in literature in their future administrative structures rather *meslanes* of Habte Giorgis named *Fitawrari* Walde Gabriel and *Qegnazmach* Teklagiorgis⁴⁶ and others.

After *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis stay at Anole, the capital of Aflata, he returns to Shewa due to lack of rain prevented the expedition from proceeding further south and armies forced returned northwards without delay. Indeed, the outward and return journey was completed so rapidly - with only a few exceptions Habte Giorgis did not halt in the same place for longer than a single night - that, at first sight, 'it seems incredible that conquest rather than exploration should have been the chief objective'⁴⁷. The six days that were spent in Afalata's capital at Anole left the Borana in no doubt as to Habte Giorgis intentions, and though the expedition only stayed a few days at Anole; a small garrison remained behind protected by the certainty of further reinforcements after a few months. What made possible an extremely rapid advance through Borana was, of course the almost fragmented of resistance encountered by the Ethiopians. Also, in 1897, a military expedition was sent to subdue the pastoral Borana Oromo in the far southeast. Generally, the campaign of Borana was only lasted for five months (the journey from Dandi to Sogida in his march and from Sogida to Daandi in his return). This was lasted from June 1897 to October 1897⁴⁸.

⁴⁵Tsehay Berhanesellasi. (1969). "Menelik II Conquest and Consolidation of the Southern Provinces" BA thesis, Addis Ababa: HSIU, p.50.

⁴⁶ Bahru Zawde, *Habte Abba Mala*, p.127.; Lord H, Sport and Travel, p.106-108

⁴⁷ 'I H.S.H.Oavendish, (1898). "Through Somaliland and around and south of lake Rudolf", S.J.. XI (1898), 376.; L. Darragon, "Voyage, Comptes Rendus des Seances de la Societe de Geographie de Paris p.150.

⁴⁸ Laphiso G. (1982). Delebo *Ethiopia ye Rajim ena Ye Hizb Tarik*, Commercial Printing Press, p.288.

Borana was subdued to the limits of the present boundary with Kenya⁴⁹. There are more than one million Oromos in northeast Kenya⁵⁰ but, like other African ethnics they were divided by colonial boundaries during scramble for Africa. The subjugation of Oromo started with annexation of Wallo in North around 1875 and completed with conquest Borana Oromo in 1899. Their desire of ages and dreams became a reality with the acquisition of modern weapons from the European powers. However, as the result, Oromo “never derived any advantage from being Ethiopian subjects.⁵¹” When Menelik totally subjugated the Borana Oromo in 1897, this marked the success of Abyssinian’s attempt to conquer the Oromo provinces at least for the last centuries⁵². Guffu noted, “in her long history, the Empire of Ethiopia defined her southern frontier with definite geographic and social markers. Ethiopia’s historical claim to southern frontier, which may at one time have sounded more fictional than real, now became a political reality⁵³”.

However, even if the Oromo people identity was under shadow for more than a century, they have preserved their indigenous values and knowledge, the best example for this is Borana Oromo have preserved traditional culture almost intact, only their religion is scarcely has been affected by either Christianity or Islam⁵⁴. Particularly Islam began to undermine their traditional beliefs. Yet, majority of them remained pastoralist and clung to their republican institutions and their beliefs⁵⁵. There being practically no trees in this part of the country, many of the “Borana huts consist of a low, circular wall of stone, with a few camel-mats thrown over the top. For the same reason they do not have wooden vessels for drawing water from wells, as do the Rendille, but they use strong leather buckets⁵⁶”. Borana finally submitted due it's having multiple enemies Sidama in West Somali in east , who frequently cross Genale River and crossed into Borana provinces and high pressure and encroachment of British East Africa in their land.⁵⁷ In theorizing center-periphery politics of Ethiopia, Markakis said,

⁴⁹ Ibid p.594

⁵⁰ Makuria Bulcha (1988) *Flight and Integration: Causes of Mass Exodus from Ethiopia and Problems of Integration in the Sudan* Paperback October 1, p.51.

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Its cover the attempts of the first Solomonic ruler, Emperor Yekuno Amlak in 1270 when start attack against Yaya and Galan Oromos of Tulama until the conquest of Borana in 1897, See, Gedle Qewistos, p. 71 ; Tadesse Tamrat (1968), *Church and State in Ethiopia , 1270-1527*, Ph.D Dissertation, SOAS, London University, pp.154, 358; Tabor Wami, (2015). *Partisan Discourse and Authentic History*, Artistic printing press, p.500.

⁵³ Guffu p.42.

⁵⁴ Markakis John (1974), *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, clarendon, oxford press, pp.54, 69.

⁵⁵ Trimmingham J.Spencer, *Islam*, p.9.

⁵⁶ Captain G H. Stigand (1910) *Account of A Journey Through Unexplored Regions of British East Africa By Lake Rudolf T O T He Kingdom Of 'Menelek*, London Seeley Cs' Co., p. 132.

⁵⁷ Markakis, p.60; Gadaa Melba (1994). “*An Introduction to the History of Oromo People*” Amharic version, Minneapolis, Kirk House Publisher, p.94.

Borana was one of the periphery both in geographically and politically inconvenienced imposition of a livestock tax⁵⁸. The conquest of Borana paved the way for Abyssinian army to conquer of the Garri, Gabra and other Somali clans in 1899⁵⁹.

4. Abyssinian Rule in Borana

The first garrison town in Borana was established at Arero to easily control the neighboring Borana clans like Dirre (south west) and Liban (northeast) of Borana.⁶⁰ Abyssinian easily consolidated their power by sending out raiding groups and providing a visible form of effective occupation⁶¹. As a result of the 1897 expedition, Ethiopian garrisons were set up at Gardula in Konso, and Abera in Jamjam. The station in Jamjam was under the command of the powerful *Dejjazmach* Balcha, but it was too far removed from Borana to have a direct impact.⁶² The station at Gardula became the main military center in southern Ethiopia.⁶³ For many years, it controlled the area as far south as Lake Rudolf and to the east of the Omo; it also supported the smaller station of Arero in the Liban. The exact date when the Ethiopians established a station at Arero was uncertain, but it was definitely not before the end of 1898. As is sometimes alleged starting from mid of 1890s, Abyssinians were closely branded Borana. However, the British had wanted jurisdiction over Borana to do that, the British attempt to claim the area without any attempt of protectorate but simply by use of map on paper.⁶⁴ According to Marcus Gleichen, the then British council in Addis Ababa has discussed issue with Arthur Harding, a governor of British East Africa, to check advance of Menelik in Borana south of Ethiopia after 1897. But it remained rhetoric due to reluctance of British official in financing this project⁶⁵.

In May 1897 Gleichen and Wingate, two intelligence officers accompanied the Rodd Mission,⁶⁶ also came to the conclusion that the “country up to the shores of Lake Rudolf /had for some time /Been effectively occupied” by the Ethiopians., In fact, the Rodd Mission⁶⁷ accepted Menelik’s claim that the

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.117.

⁵⁹ Trimmingham J.S, p.128.

⁶⁰ Marco Bassi (2011) “Customary Institutions in Contemporary Politics in Borana Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia” in *Contested Power in Ethiopia Traditional Authorities and Multi-Party Elections* Editors: Kjetil Tronvoll and Tobias Hagmann pp.: 221–250

⁶¹ Gufu Oba (2013) *Nomads*, 30 p. 39.

⁶² At this time *Dejjach* Balcha Safo was a governor of Sidamo and he based at Walata Wando.

⁶³ Turton, p.273

⁶⁴ Gufu Oba (2013) *Nomads*, p.37

⁶⁵ Harold Marcus (2009), *Life and Times of Menelik II* Trans in to Amharic by Biniam Alemayehu, Addis Ababa, , p.374.

⁶⁶ Harold, Marcus (1965) Sir J . Rennell Rodd, Social and Diplomatic Memoirs 1894–1901 (London, 1923) p.112ff; H. Marcus, "The Rodd Mission of 1897", in *JES.*, III no. 2

⁶⁷ Rennell Ro dd, who earlier had been Consul at Zanzibar, headed the first British diplomatic mission to Menelik. Its purpose was both commercial and diplomatic. The key topics for discussion were Ethiopia’s borders with the Sudan and British Somaliland.

greater part of Borana and Arsi was already subdued; and this claim was never subsequently challenged. Yet there could be little doubt that both Wingate and Gleichen were deceived about the exact limits of Ethiopian expansion in 1896, and that while the subjugation of the Borana had undoubtedly been planned; it had nevertheless not been achieved even by the end of May 1897.⁶⁸ It seems that rumors about Ethiopian conquests, perhaps deliberately circulated in an attempt to influence negotiations were accepted at the time in good faith, and had since acquired the appearance of historical validity. Admittedly the main reasons for doubting the traditional account are negative.

From 1898, the Borana was constantly asking the Kismayu administration to help them, and a deputation of Borana elders visited the Jubaland coast in 1900.⁶⁹ However, it is noticeable that while the earlier requests for help came from Ana and Geydu in southern Ethiopia; all requests after 1899 came from Borana in Wajir, in 'the extreme south, or from other wells in the East Africa Protectorate. By the end of the century, then, it was only the Borana the highlands who had been effectively conquered, those in the 'Golbo', the lowlands, were merely raided.

It's only in 1905, after Menelik already conquered and cement his power in the region, that British government start to finance for the formation boundary commission to define concrete boundary of the two state⁷⁰. To do this, British dealt with Emperor and decided to employ Ethiopian soldiers as a vanguard of boundary peace keeping force. This actually check the advance of Abyssinian conquest in south by Abyssinian soldier who were employed by British;⁷¹ and it also fixed the exact boundary of British East Africa and Ethiopia on basis of newly formed agreement signed by Emperor Menelik II (Ethiopia) and Harrington, Sir John (Colonel) of (British) in 1906⁷². Accordingly, it partitioned the Borana Oromos in to two sovereign states what we call still today the Oromo of Ethiopia and the Oromo of Kenya⁷³.

After this, to escape from harsh administration and heavy taxation imposed by Abyssinians on Borana hundred thousand of Borana forced to drift in to Northeast part of British East Africa even penetrated

⁶⁸ Wingate & Gleichen, Memorandum, 7 May 1897, PO.I/32, ^Count Gleichen, With the Mission to Menelik 1897 (London, 1898), 315; H.G.Marcus, (1966), "A.History of the negotiations concerning the border between Ethiopia and British East Africa 1897-1914", Boston University Papers on Africa, *African History*, II Boston, 240-2. The only exception is to be found, an MoD. to S, , 30 Aug. 1897, EO.2/44, and this letter is based on Cavendish' s evidence, for which see next page. ^The Rodd Mission left Ethiopia at the end of May 1897* (p. 270)

⁶⁹ Edmund Romilly Turton "The Pastoral, p.274

⁷⁰ Harold Marcus, *Life and Times of ..*, p.374.

⁷¹ *ibid*

⁷² Lord Hindlip, (1906). *Sport and Travel: Abyssinia And British East Africa*, London, p. 60,

⁷³ Mekuria Bulcha, p. 51.

as far north part of Nairobi⁷⁴. The British failure to establish strong hold, at least presence in Borana, helps Abyssinians to buy time to reach the southern frontier of present day Borana⁷⁵ The then governor of Kenya, Harding proposed to annex Dawa and Juba River basin for its resource and defensive mechanism of Abyssinians encroachment in to the region, but failed to do this due to claim of financial shortage of British foreign office at the time.⁷⁶

At the time Menelik imposed tax which was least taxation in comparing to other conquered region by Abyssinians in those days. For instance, Somali forced to pay half of their cattle in a form of tribute in 1893⁷⁷. Here is a copy of his letter to *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis, the then governor of Borana

ይድረስ ከፊታወራረ ሀብተ ጊዮርጊስ

የከብቱን ምልመላ ነገር በዚያን ጊዜ በያገሩ ይመልመል ብያለሁና አንተም በአገርህ ከዐርባ ቁም ከብት አንድ ከብት፤ ከዐርባ ቁም ከብት አንድ ከብት፤ እንድታስመለምል ይሁን። ሲመለመልም አንድና ሁለት ከብት ያለው ሰው ጋር አርባ እስቲሞላ ድረስ እያጣጣ የሚመለምለው ቀርቶ ብዙ ከብት ካለው ሰው ብቻ ይሁን። የአንድና ሁለት ከብት ጌታ አይነከበት። ባላባቱ እጅ ይቆይ። እኛ ይምጣ ባልን ጊዜ ይምጣል። ቁጡሩን ግን እዚህ አገር ይኸን ያህል፤ እዚህ አገር ይኸን ያህል ተገኘ ብለህ በደብዳቤ አስታወቁኝ። {በወላይታ} በኩል ያለውን አገርህን ግን ከብቱን ብቻ መመልመል ነው እንጂ የበግና የፍየሉን በአሥር በግና ፍየል አንድ ብር በአሥር በግና ፍየል አንድ ብር መቀበል ነው።⁷⁸

ነሐሴ 15፣ 1898.

Arrives to Fitawrari Habte Giorgis

For I have said that in the same way you shall bring back the cattle of your land; When he has forty, one cattle is for tribute, When he has forty, one cattle is for tribute, if he has only a man with two and a more cattle, but only one who has a large herd of cattle and who has plenty of cattle. The lord of one and two cattle should not touch it. Let the master hold his hand. It will come when we tell us to come. But let me know, by letter, that it is here, that it is here. If you are only recruiting your country through the "Wolaita", you will receive cattle in similar ways and one birr per ten sheep /goat, one birr for ten sheep /goat:

August 15, 1898

⁷⁴ Harold Marcus, 'A History of the Negotiations Concerning the Border between Ethiopia and British East Africa, 1897-1914' Boston University Papers on Africa History, Vol II, p.243-2254.
⁷⁵ Guffu p.42.; Hickey, 1984, p.112
⁷⁶ Guffu p.42.
⁷⁷ Harold Marcus, *Life and Times of Menelik II.*, p.279.
⁷⁸ Cited in Phawulos Ngongo (2010), *Axe Menelik: Ba hager wusx yetetsatsefuwachewu debdabewochi*, Addis Ababa: Aster Nega publishing co. p. 96, letter number 273.

Only in October 1907, Menelik requested Habte Giorgis to pay to the court 100 *gundo* of butter⁷⁹. On June 19, 1908 Emperor Menelik announced Habte Giorgis as he gave a right to kill the elephants and for the hunters in Sidama and Borana⁸⁰ after ivory was sold the hunters submit the profit for *Negdras* Haile Giorgis.⁸¹

The number of armies of *Fitanrari* Habte Giorgis in 1903 was not less than 30,000⁸². In fact, at this time he not only commander in chief of imperial army but also governor of Borana, Gamo, Soddo, Amaya and Chabo⁸³. The south of Sidama peoples Maji Gimira, Chamo were easily occupied⁸⁴ After introduction of *Safari* of Abyssinians' soldiers in Borana started some sort of agricultural life. Yet, it's insignificant in changing Borana livelihood from pastoral or semi pastoral pastoralism to sedentary agricultural life rather they remain basically with pastoral peoples and retain intact the *Gadda* political system⁸⁵.

5. CONCLUSION

The Borana resisted any external influences more vigorously. They succeeded in doing so by closing their ranks. This seems to be due to the fact that, at the time of their subjugation by the northerners, the interweaving of socio-political institutions was already well developed. In the heartland and in the marginal areas, where external influences were clearly more intensive, different ways of life could be observed. Being aware of this and drawn into a permanent struggle with the politically dominant culture, the Borana sharpened a collective confidence in their own values. The Gadaa leadership was replaced by the government appointed traditional chiefs (*balabats*).

In 1897, a military expedition was sent to subdue the pastoral Borana Oromo in the far southeast. On Sunday 31 May 1897, the imperial *Fitanrari* Habte Giorgis was appointed as the governor of the Borana Oromo and commissioned to conquer their territories which extended from Lake Stephanie to the Ganale Doria River in the east. He left Addis Ababa in June 1897 at the head of an army composed of 15,000 troops. The object of his expedition seems to have been to forestall the British

⁷⁹ See Menelik letter to Habte Giogis in Phawulos Ngongo (2010), *Axe Menelik: Ba hager wusx*, p.268 letter number 976.

⁸⁰ See Menelik letter to Habte Giorgis in Phawulos Ngongo (2010), *Axe Menelik: Ba hager wusx*, p. 472, letter number 1757; B.H. Jessen, (1904), *W.N. McMillan's Expedition and Big Gate Hunting in Abyssinia and British East Africa*. Hant singer printer co. p. 103, 123. Of these hunters the prominent were a Frenchman named Muse Zaphiro, and Mr. Bulpett along with some native Abyssinians.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.539, letter number, p.1980.

⁸² Teklatsadiq, p.617

⁸³ *ibid*

⁸⁴ Trimmingham J. Spencer, (1952) *Islam in Ethiopia*, (Oxford: Oxford University, p.9128.

⁸⁵ *Area Handbook for Ethiopia* By American University (Washington, D.C.). Foreign Areas Studies Division p.65.

who were believed to had been advancing northward from their East African protectorate. Habte Giorgis marched with his army through Sidamo country reaching his destination in the far southeast on 31 July 1897. The Borana Oromo were easily subjected without offering any resistance. After having established a *ketema* on top of Mount Megga and arranged the administration of the region to his satisfaction, he returned with the bulk of his armies, passing through Konso territories to the south of Lake Margareta, to Addis Ababa at the beginning of October 1897.

With the incorporation of the large and rich Southeastern Oromo inhabited areas, and the vast country of the Borana Oromo in 1897, the process of the Shawa Amhara conquest of the Oromo inhabited regions of southern Ethiopia was successfully brought to an end. Further extensions of Shawa domains were continued through the dispatch of military expeditions to infiltrate, subdue or lay claims to peripheral regions all around the already conquered southern highlands. The main objective was to create buffer Zones of “effective occupation” on the borders to protect the safety of the rich, fertile and relatively populous interior regions. These were intended to serve as valuable bargaining cards in the fourth coming negotiations with the European powers for the delimitation of Ethiopia’s frontiers with their adjacent protectorates. The Borana and other Somali ethnic groups was used as a buffer zone by the British to protect its economic projects from Ethiopian expansionism.⁸⁶

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⁸⁶ Peter Karari. (2018). ‘Modus Operandi of Oppressing the “Savages”: The Kenyan British Colonial Experience’ in *Peace and Conflict Studies* Volume 25 Number 1 p.12; Hassan. A. (2008). Coming to Kenya: Imagining and perceiving a nation among the Borana of Kenya. *Journal of East African Studies*, 1(2), 292-304.

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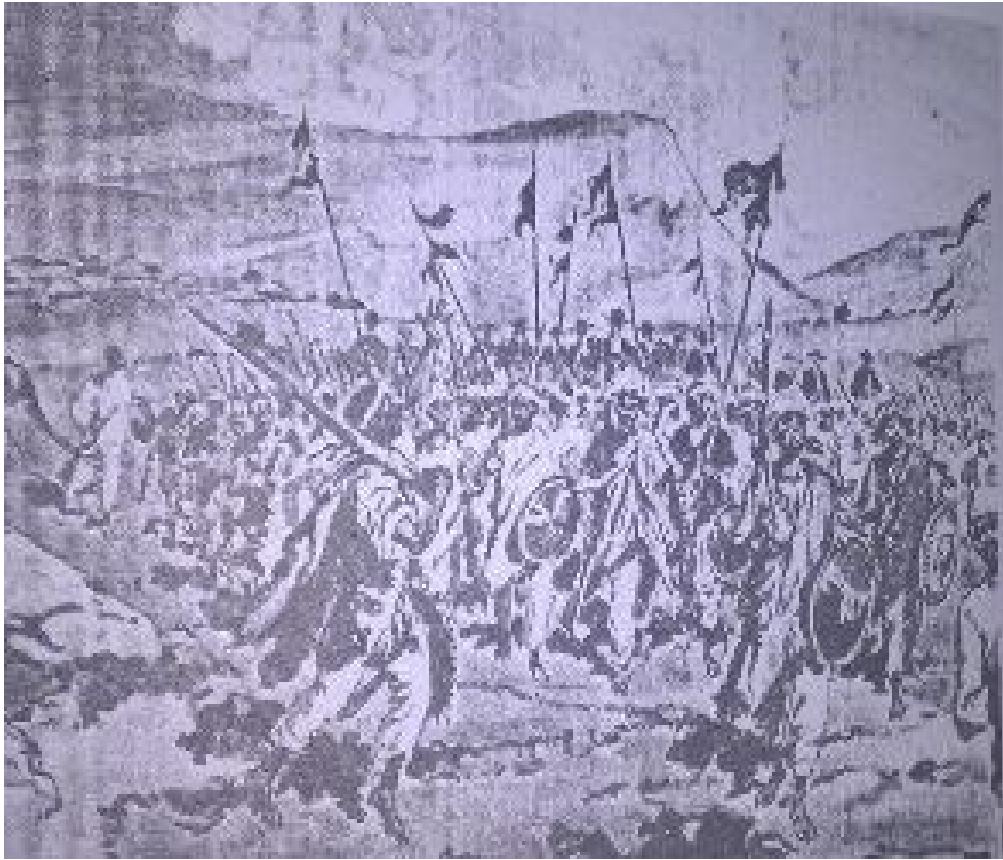
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ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

Figure



1 The

campaign to Borana since 1897

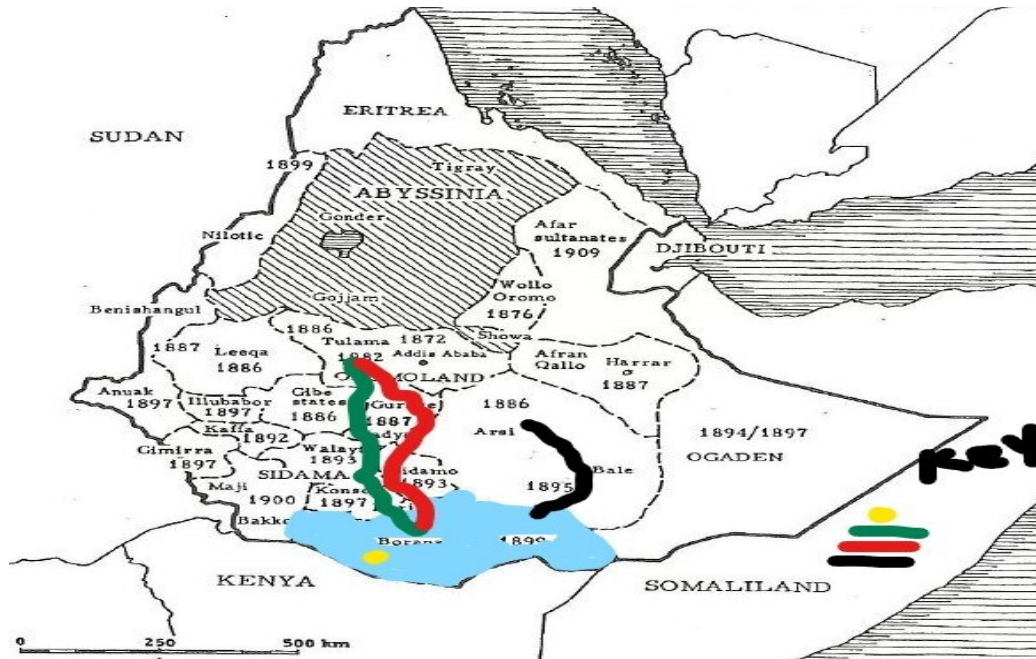


Figure 2 welcoming ceremony to armies of *Fitawrari* Habte Giorgis by Konso people in 1897



Figure 3. *Fitawrari* Habtegiorgis, minister of war and Map 1: Abyssinian marches to Borana in 1897.

The illustration is reproduced with permission from Bahru Zawde *Habte Abba Mala; Ka Xor Morkegninat eska Agar Marinnet*, Addis Ababa: Eclipse printing press, 2008.



Map 2: The Metamorphosis of conquest in Ethiopia (1875-1900) and the invasion of Borana in 1893 by *Dejjach Asfaw* in 1893(in black) and *Fitawrari Habte Giorgis* in 1897 (in red and green).