

Resistance against Centralization Drives and Interventions: The Case of Doba/Raya from c. 15th to 19th centuries

Review Article

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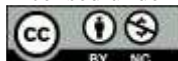
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Abstract: The paper is a review article that summarizes and synthesizes existing research studies, literature, or information on the specific topic. It employs a historical research design to delve into the persistent campaigns and raids conducted against the Doba/Raya people by the central government, analysing the consequences of these interventions. Primary data sources include historical chronicles, accounts from travellers, and select secondary sources. A qualitative content analysis approach was employed to interpret and synthesize the collected data, identifying themes related to centralization drives, interventions, and the Doba/Raya people's enduring resistance. Originating as one of the oldest groups known as Doba, subsequently identified as Raya, these people inhabited regions in present-day South-eastern Tigray and North-eastern Wollo. From the 15th to the 19th centuries, the Doba people faced punitive expeditions and continuous campaigns orchestrated by the central government, often with the participation of their immediate neighbours. In an attempt to secure trade routes leading north during the medieval period, King Ba'edaMariam initiated multiple campaigns against the Doba people, resulting in significant losses on both sides and creating a challenging period for the Doba people. This pattern persisted under various Ethiopian rulers until the era of Emperor Yohannis IV, marked by demographic changes and other consequences of the time. Despite these challenges, the Doba/Raya community maintained a resilient stance against any interventions from the central government, a resistance that endured until recent times. This research contributes to our understanding of historical power dynamics, shedding light on the complexities of regional struggles against central governance.

Keywords: Campaigns; Doba/Raya; Intermingling; Raids

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1. Introduction

The core of the country, Ethiopia, consists of the highland plateau surrounded by lowlands with ethnically different peoples of the border lands. The northern half of the country comprised of largely Coptic Christian that consisted of Amhara and Tigre people with some Oromo, and others. The southern portion of the country is inhabited by millions of Oromo people, partly Islamized from the coast, Sidama, Somali, Welayta, and Kaffa among the Cushitic-speaking ethnic groups (Messing, 1955). Further differentiation is drawn between the way of life of the more stable agricultural peasantry on the fertile central plateau; largely Amhara, Tigre, and Oromo, the nomadic and semi-nomadic Muslims and followers of traditional religion of the belt of semi-desert lowlands that almost surround the green highlands (Messing, 1955). Therefore, in the highland regions of Ethiopia, there were isolated communities, and the geography of the regions has been responsible for the development of fierce provincialism which was typical to the traditional Ethiopian society. The landscape in the region promoted differences among the people who were marked by wide variation in ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural makeup. The socio-cultural differences which emanated from geographical factors are numerous to describe. Eventually, these situations promoted a feeling of exclusiveness thereby reinforcing provincialism. In such an atmosphere, there emerged many distinct provincial identities and strong attachments, “which coexisted and struggled with a sense of identity and loyalty to the nation-group. The waxing and waning through the centuries and also the struggle between these two forces is the dominant theme of Ethiopian history” (Markakis, 1968: 81-82).

In the country, traditions of divine kingship that embodied the Solomonic legend prevailed for a long period till Derg regime. This tradition had linked the throne and the Christian religion in a spiritual bond of remarkable tenacity. According to the *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of the Kings), an apocalyptic work containing the Solomonic legend, the possession of the Ethiopian throne is restricted to the male seed of Solomon (Markakis, 1968). It had partly resolved the expected political faction for the imperial throne by limiting competition for power to the male side of the Solomonic blood but it invited the weak and very young rulers for the position and helped to develop the patriarchal nature of the society, too. In Ethiopian kingship, there was inactive and peaceful king who by his very presence had tried to bring peace, prosperity and welfare for his country. There were also kings who were active and conducting campaigns, and whose main concerns were politics and war for territorial expansion and strong central government (Marrassini, 1990).

Among the Ethiopian people, the inhabitants of North Wollo had the distinctive feature since the third quarter of the 15th century; there were Doba, Afar, Amhara, and Tigreans. Most of the region were under the control of the Solomonic rulers of the Central Highland Kingdom from the period of Bā'edā Maryam (r. 1468-78), if not earlier. But this control was lost as a result of the wars of Imam Ahmed and Oromo¹ settlement in the area (Ta'a, 1986). The Yäjjju, who gave their name to one of the *awrajjjas*, settled in the first quarter of the 16th century. After the Oromo settlement in the area around 1600, the dominant ethnic groups appeared to have been the Oromo and the Amhara in the west and the centre and the Afar in the east. In Yäjjju there emerged a local ruling dynasty called the Wärrä Sheik (r. 1769-1855) which extended its rule over Raya and Qobo and controlled Gondar for most of the Zāmānā Māsafint. During most of the period of the Wärrä Sheik, and Rases in Gondar, both Yäjjju and Raya and Qobo² seemed to have enjoyed a certain measure of autonomy from central government control. During the reign of Emperor Yohannis IV (1872-1889) Tigrean settlements increased. The Oromo were increasingly assimilated culturally with the Amhara in the area south of the present town of Wajja and by the Tigreans in the area north of the same town. However, distinct Oromo

¹ The Oromo's were said to come from the south-eastern parts of the country called Bale. It was following the long years of war held between the central government and Imam Ahmed in the 16th century they motivated to move towards the Northwest and Northeast direction from their Origin. Hence in their North-easterly direction, they could penetrate up to Southern Tigray and other places even to Gojjam and Gonder.

² Raya and Qobo area separately set is perhaps used to indicate Raya Qobo and Raya Azabo which were taken to be a different administrative entity in 1957 by Emperor Haile Sellassie I. However the name Raya since the coming of the Oromo to the place was remained to be the two places in Common.

communities are still found in parts of the eastern area of the region. Mock-fights among villages and raids and counter raids between the lowland and highland inhabitants had long been part of the culture of the people (Begna, 1990).

About the Doba, there is a consideration that they were one of the isolated groups of people, which are to be found occasionally interspersed throughout all the regions of Africa (Salt, 1814). This idea further confirmed due to the presence of the Doba in Mofer Wuha in Menz, as Southern Angote were its ancient territory and Inderta (Enderta) and also probably parts of southeast Ethiopia. In this account, they even appeared as the founder of Walasama dynasty or Ifat sultanate and allies of the Christian kingdom by patrolling the areas between the Afar lowlands and the highlands. The name Doba in Mufer Wuha is still present that *Ras* Imiru Haile Sellassie (right hand of Emperor Haile Sellassie I) had specified the place Doba as he rested in it and a family members of his mother's side found (Hailesellassie, 2002). Dobas presence at Semhar (Bahre-Negash area) as part of the wondering people from the months of November to April with their cattle is also indicated by James Bruce (Bruce, 1913). But, the Doba were often used to be treated by travellers and authors as they were always hostile with the central government and raiders. If they were the same people of the time they would need to have interdependence in many aspects of life. What so ever the case, the connection of the Dobas of everywhere needs further investigation.

Geographically, the people (Doba or Raya) were/still are situated between Afar in the east, Lasta or Angote in the west, Tigre in the north and Yeju in the south (Aregay, 1971). They had been committed to pastoral way of life and most of them were said to have been followers of traditional religion until they were converted to Islam and Christianity. Considering the end of the 16th century as the period of the Wello Oromo settlement in the Doba, the Raya were one of those groups who settled in Doba (Assefa, 2005). Therefore, with the coming of the Raya Oromo, the Doba were most likely swallowed up by the former. Hence, the main purpose of this article was the relation of Doba or the later Raya with the central government and their immediate neighbours.

2. Research Methods

This review article adopts a historical research design to investigate the resistance against centralization drives and interventions by the Doba/Raya people from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The historical approach allows for the examination of events, campaigns, and consequences over an extended period, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between the Doba/Raya community and the central government. The study focuses on the geographical regions of South-eastern Tigray and North-eastern Wollo, where the Doba people resided and later became known as Raya. These areas serve as the primary context for analyzing the historical campaigns and resistance against central interventions.

The primary data sources for this review include historical chronicles, accounts from travellers who documented their experiences in the regions, and relevant secondary sources. Historical chronicles offer insights into the events as recorded during the periods of interest, while travellers' accounts provide firsthand observations and perspectives on the campaigns and resistance. The data collection process involved a thorough review and analysis of historical documents, chronicles, and narratives that detail the campaigns against the Doba/Raya people. Additionally, secondary sources were consulted to contextualize the historical events and understand the broader socio-political landscape of the time. A qualitative content analysis approach was employed to interpret and synthesize the collected data. Themes related to the centralization drives, interventions, and the Doba/Raya people's resistance were identified and analyzed. This method allowed for a nuanced exploration of the historical dynamics and their impact on the community.

Given the historical nature of the review, ethical considerations revolved around ensuring accuracy and contextual integrity in interpreting historical accounts. Respect for the perspectives and experiences of the Doba/Raya community were paramount throughout the analysis. Limitations of this

study include potential biases in historical accounts, gaps in historical records, and the challenge of interpreting events from the past. Efforts were made to address these limitations by triangulating information from multiple sources and acknowledging historical uncertainties.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Contact with the Central Governments and their Immediate Neighbours till the 1850s

Relation in its terminology could have a positive or hostile aspect. The people (Doba) as part of the country shared borders with Afar³, Angote, Wag, and Tigrayans would have had a contact in any case. The Raya's frequent military engagements with the Emperor's force, excellence in fighting tradition, and settlement along the long-distance trade route perhaps enabled them to have space in some historical accounts of the period.

Among the Ethiopian Emperors of the medieval period, Ba'eda Maryam was preoccupied with two major issues; first, his campaigns were aimed at expanding Christianity by establishing churches and fighting traditional religion believers. Second, he wanted to consolidate economic power by effectively controlling the trade routes. This was a legacy inherited from his father (Bartnicki and Mantel-Niecko, 2003). Historically, it was Ba'eda Mariam who conducted the historic campaigns against the Doba people for expanding Christianity and controlling the trade routes which passed via their territory. His campaigns against the Doba people were caused by the disruption of the trade routes and raiding traders as well as others which they considered to be his men (Trimingham, 1952). The Emperor organized troops and using his Chewa regiments which stationed at Bale, Fatagar, Gidem, Gann, Hadya, and Angote, he made frequent combat. When the Emperor Be'ada Maryam marched to fight with Doba, the chief of Afar had given him vow that if the Doba came towards his territory, he would hand them to him. This oath of loyalty was perhaps to avoid the destruction that would happen in case he failed to cooperate with the king. After losing battles one after the other, he finally destroyed many Doba including their children and women [were indiscriminately assaulted]. The rest were forced to accept Christianity and Ba'eda Mariam ordered them to build the Church dedicated to St. Mary.

During his final victory, forces from Tigray, Telemite, and Afar had cooperated. Angote had also taken a part. After his victory and destruction that the Doba people faced, they were ordered to follow the rules and lifestyles of Christianity by appointing men among them as governors. He ordered them to plough lands and not to use weapons. He also established two military regiments called Dawit Amba and Man-gedefo that consisted of captives of men from Doba (Haile, 2005). After he conducted a successful campaign against them, the Doba people resisted the king's order for the second time that the Emperor once again beat them and set to build many churches with gifts of a different kind. At the time, the chronicle stated that when the Doba people heard the coming of the king's army which was led by a person who wore lion skin and had his javelin in his hand, they informed each other to run away into the mountain hideout. But when they saw the king was determined to attack them with much preparation, the Doba people began to pack their goods, gather their cattle, children and wives saying that if he came he would kill them all and destroy their country. As expected, the king's army made wanton destruction. Then, the king together with his army marched to Iyda where they celebrated their victory, and by that the whole nation said to be satisfied (Haile, 2005). Even though the chronicles of the time were known for their exaggeration of events, the account underlines much destruction. Therefore, the Doba who had their own socio-economic and political organization as well as religious outlooks were forced to do things that were extraordinary to them. The king had moved to the extent of confiscating weapons from them that they had nothing to defend themselves even against the Afars as they mostly fight with each other.

Regarding their relations with the Afar since 16th century, the rich grazing plains of south eastern Tigray have been inhabited by Raya and Azabo people which includes Dobas, Marawa, Kereyu

³ Adal and Dankali also sometimes Teltal are names traditionally given to the Afars by neighboring people.

Oromo tribes, and Tigreans (Menasbo, 2020). But the same lands had been utilized by the pastoralist Afar and this had proved to be enduring sources of conflict. Particularly, during the *Belg* rains the pastoralists bring their cattle to the plains for grazing (Young, 1997). This idea was further strengthened by a point that at places like Azelo in Afar, northern Yejju, southern Wojierrat, and Raya, the two people were always in conflict (Uhlig *et al.*, 2003). The tradition called *Gaz* which involved deliberate fighting between the two people by destroying byres or kraal and also raiding each other's cattle from the grazing field which was considered as a sign of bravery. During this time, it was common to see open fighting, deaths, and negotiations to get cattle or other properties back. In late August 1928, the Raya and Azabo Oromo people of the eastern borders of Tigray and Lasta provinces of north eastern Ethiopia organized a massive raid on the adjacent lowlands of Afar population taking hundreds of their livestock and killing those Afars who resisted them. This kind of practice was said to have been in existence between the two people for a long period of time (McCann, 1985).

Depending on sources, some historians state that the history of Raya is traced back to the Doba. The Doba people had been pushed by the expansionist policy of the Aksumite, Zagwe, and the later Solomonic rulers. Hence, the Doba were forced to leave many of their territories to the south of Angote or Qeda (Alemu, Nigussie and Sisay, 2017). As a result, there were times when the Doba left their place to Adal in fear of Ba'eda Mariam, the king made his subjects of Waje or Waag and Ganz to cultivate the land after the Doba left the area (Messrs and Kraf, 1843). In the later period, the attempt to restore their previous territories would cause conflict which was marked by raids and counter-raids.

Regarding the king's war on the Doba, Alvarez described that there were two hills where watchmen were observing whether or not the Doba were coming for the attack. When the watchmen saw them coming, they either awakened the people to leave or organize themselves to fight. This time when the Doba appeared strong, they plundered and took away what they would and could. At same time, the neighbouring people made the same thing against the Doba. On this occasion, Alvarez saw their open fighting and he saw [witnessed] the death of eight hundred on the side of Doba but only five from the Christians. After this, he stated, Christians cut off the heads of all the Dobas and went and stuck them on trees along the great roads to be seen by all people who bypass the road (Alvares, 1881). In the districts which were subject to Jan-amora, the Doba also came to burn the houses and churches and carried off the cows from the yards (Alvares, 1881). These all happened in the 1520s, thus the level of hatred they developed looked like beyond the concept of lowlanders and highlanders. In the aggressive move, there would be an occasion that the difference in a living condition sometimes made them defender or invader. Most likely, it was the fate that had happened among highlanders and lowlanders during Alvarez's time. Hassen states that, "the traditional abhorrence of the highlanders for the inhospitable climate of the lowlands and the dependence of the pastoralists upon the cultivator for the supply of grain and other essential commodities had a tempering effect on the conflicts that occasionally flared between the two communities" (Ahmed, 2000: 9). This brought the development of trade relation between them that were held at Corcora or Mandelely as they were known as trade centres of the period (Messrs and Kraf, 1843). But, their engagement was not known. The Doba were said to have spread into the plains of the nearby provinces of Angote and Qeda. They were also lived with the Afars in the lowlands around Mount Hazalo (Aregay, 1971). Due to their relation with the highland, they underwent some economic transformation of adapting agriculture (Assefa, 2005). They had an important market town at Mandelely, which was a centre of a very great trade. It was possible to collect tax from every type of merchandise and merchants that included an infinite number of people of the neighbourhood (Pankhurst, 1997). In the 19th century, the market at Seqota in Lasta had contacts in the north with Yejju and Raya Oromo (Donald, 1974). This interaction and engagement in trade had a long history. Therefore, the Dobas had a wider interdependency that directly and indirectly affected their lives which through time helped them to create strong social fabric that ended in intermingling.

In the medieval period, with the absence of a permanent political capital for the kingdom, it was common to see mobile capitals and military camps (Hable Selassie, 1972). Apart from serving as camps for government troops, the place where the Doba inhabited was the direction of military campaigns. Places like Zobul, Gann, and Gedem which are situated on the edge of the escarpment of east Amhara served as camps and settlements consisting of regiments of Christian troops. Eastern Amhara was also served as a route by King Amda Seyon during his campaign against Ifat in 1329 (Ahmed, 2000). During the war between Imam Ahmed and the forces of the kingdom, his forces were defeated for sometimes but Imam Ahmed preferred to stay at Zobul. Over there, he reorganized his force using the military aid that came through the southeast. With Turkish reinforcement, he fought the Portuguese and the Emperor's joint force at Ashenge, a place near Korem (Giyorgis, 2009). For Imam Ahmed, the place Sirhat was believed to be the site where he was wounded, but when he reorganized his force at Zobul he had recruited fighters in the nearby area (Mekuria, 1987). Thus, the Doba might have taken part as they were mostly co-religionists with the pastoralist Somali and the Afar who made up Imam Ahmed's forces. Therefore, Doba's better knowledge of the landscape and their good skill of fighting could have a role for Imam Ahmed's later victory over the Christians and the Doba had to feed his large army.

Even in 1562 and 1563, the Doba had also suffered heavy depredations by the armies which Minas had gathered against Yeshaq (Aregay, 1971). He raided the Doba to seize the cattle for which they had long been famous (Pankhrust, 1997). Moreover, as presented later, every campaign made in the north including Adwa was passing through the corridor of the Doba area. Therefore, the social dislocation and material depredations which the march of large armies and movements of people caused to the indigenous communities of the area must have been immense. About the tradition of looting by government troops, it was said to be common since the period of Emperor Yekuno Amlak (Giyorgis, 2009).

In addition to his attempt at spreading Christianity, Be'ada Maryam time had established new rules, regiments, and enforced them to adopt sedentary life. About this time, the Emperor determined to occupy the country of Doba and wished to remain there for four consecutive years (Budge, 1928). However, Be'ada Maryam, in maintaining local autonomy he was better than his father but remained strict in the north due to its economic advantage. The case he had with the Doba was different, the emperor was said to be effective with matters he had with the Doba due to his effort of making leaders working for private gains (Bartnicki, A and Mantel-Niecko, J, 2003). Not only of these one in time, but in the later period that the people saw when they went against any possible intervention.

During the reign of Emperor Lebne Dengil, Alvares told us that, among the twenty-four captaincies of the Doba, twelve of them were at war. When the Doba people came to the tents of the king to make peace with him by carrying a stone upon their heads, the king ordered them to banish and forced them to live at Damot with their peoples who followed them. This was made after knowing that, the Doba elected a new leader and began to rebel against the king by raising the whole country into war. This had invited the king's troops to camp in the land of the Doba to restore peace (Alvares, 1881). Therefore, rather than pardoning the Doba people and narrow down the gaps as a ruler, the Emperor purposely relocated some of the people into exotic area as a measure to curb the disorder but it instigated a new wave of opposition. It actually remained to be hallmarks of his period.

In 1625, when Tekle Giorgis, the governor of Enderta, declared himself a rebel against the Emperor, the greater parts of his supporters were Oromo warriors from the clans in Azabo and Doba (Aregay, 1971). By the 1639-1658, the Wollo, Yejuu and Raya Oromo had settled in today's Wollo administrative region and stretched up to Ashenge (Ta'a, 1986). Even though Alvares considered Doba [country] was not a kingdom but in 1628 Almeida named Doba as one of the kingdoms (14) which was under the command of Prester John (Huntingford, 1989). Therefore, the Doba's existence and challenges as organized people was continued in time of the Gonderian period, too. For example, under the reign of king Yohannis I (r.1667-1682), Fares and Zamaryam revolted in 1677 and this

induced many other provinces in which the Doba took part. However, after two years the Doba found themselves under Tigrean rule in 1679.

During the reign of Iyasu I (r. 1682-1706), the Emperor granted some privileges and territories to the assimilated Oromo in addition to those which they had received from Emperor Yohannis I (Huntingford, 1989). These [is] were of course the Karayu and Marawa and Wara Dayea group which also belonged[s] to the same Barentu branch in the early 1620s (Menasbo, 2020). In 1616, the Karayu had advanced with a large number to Tigray and inflicted much destruction that shocked Emperor Susenyos. It seems more logical that from this time onwards due to the intermingling the name Doba ceased to be widely used. In the later period, Emperor Iyasu II (r.1730-1755) had also faced a military offensive from Raya⁴ and Azabo who took sides with *Ras* Michael Sehul of Temben whom according to Pankhurst they paid an immense sacrifice from his attack that ended in the death of hundred fifty of them and with one hundred thirty-three prisoners (Pankhurst, 1997). It was an attempt to abort the Emperor's march towards Arkiko, later renamed Massawa, for halting plundering by the local chiefs to which *Ras* Michael was ordered to do so but refused to maintain good relation with men's of the port (Bartnicki, A and Mantel-Niecko, J, 2003). In addition to his expedition and the casualties and the suffering of the Doba people, they had resisted military operations made by Emperor Susneyos, Fasiladas and Bakaffa (Pankhurst, 1997). *Ras* Ali expanded the territories of the Yejju domain that includes the present day districts of Wadla-Delanta, Dawunt, Waro, Shedehe-Meket, Kulamaso, Raya Zobil, Gura Worke, Angote and Lasta (Tadesse, 2019). *Ras* Wolde Sellassie who was unhappy with this Yejju obsession to position, reacted by conquering the Azabo and Raya Oromo, and controlled important trade passes in and around them (Marcus, 1994). Hence, the relation they had with the central government seems to have been bitter. This was reflected in collaboration with the people of the adjacent territory of Tigre and more or less remained submissive to the cause they stood for.

Even if some say the Raya Oromo had contributed for the advent to power of the Yajju Oromo to the imperial throne, Ahmed argues differently. According to him, they were loosely organized socially and politically, and played no role in the politics of the warlord era (Ahmed, 2000).

3.2. Contact with Governments after the 1850s

According to Hussen, the Raya Oromo resisted direct control by the Ethiopian monarchs during the second half of the 19th century and afterward (Ahmed, 2000). His idea further strengthened with an overstatement by other author that "they were enjoyed complete independent until the time of the Emperor John IV, who devastated their country, but even after that they continued in their ways, were never completely subdued and aided the Italian during the war of 1935-1936"(Trimingham, 1952:195). However, most of the literary accounts indicate that there was no complete independence other than an effort to ensure that.

Did the people of Raya/ Doba face destruction under Emperor Yohannis IV? Regarding this, one of the sources which we have for the period of 1870s and 1880s about the Raya Oromo was Yohannis's chronicle which seems to be biased against the Raya Oromo. According to the source, right after his coronation on 24th *Maggabit*, the emperor quickly went to the first rebellious country called Azabo when the Raya Oromo again rebelled. The chronicle was accusing the Raya Oromo for destroying the churches, the priests, men, and women. It explained how the emperor ordered his men to kill them by stating that, "blood cannot be purified without blood." By the Emperor's order, his men reached as far as Adare, Care, Dande and Adal. Then, they crushed them and took booty of cattle and sheep leaving nothing. With this, the Emperor was bestowed his men with new titles (Tafla, 1977).

Soon after his coronation, the Emperor had conducted his campaign against the Raya and Azabo Oromo. However, before he made the region stable he had heard news of disobedience on the side of *Ras* Adal Tessema of Gojjam, who later became *Nigus* Tekle Haymanot of Gojjam (Bartnicki and

⁴ Mohammed Hassen, in his book 'The Oromo of Ethiopia'. Define Raya as a large and powerful confederacy with clan names appearing in almost every Oromo Genealogy all over Oromo territory, probably therefore Raya was among the Original Oromo clans.

Mantel-Niecko, 2003). Because of the problem he had with Gojjam, he did not give up the idea of punishing the Raya people. Some sources indicate his clear military engagements with the people he considered rebellious and defiant, so the relative freedom that they enjoyed earlier was at stake by this time. Evidently, the Doba for a long period were put under the governor of Enderta (Assefa, 2005; Trimmingham, 1952). But, right after the coming of the Raya Oromo to the land of the Doba, the area ceased to be under Tigrean rule till Emperor Yohannis IV. The alliance was in keeping orders, showing allegiance in tribute payment and involving in common agendas otherwise not in appointing and demoting leaders as it was their privilege.

The social fabric and relative enjoyment of autonomy was ended by the Emperor's troops at places like Engoye which led to the death of 3000 Raya Oromo and the forceful conversion of Muslims to Christianity. The forceful conversion forced them to migrate to Sudan and other places after which they composed verses or poems, which is a hasty generalization of course, saying, “ትግሬን አትመኑ ቢምል ቢገዙት ክርስትና አንስተዉ ኩቢን ገደሉት,” meaning even if Tigrean make an oath to you they should not be trusted since they killed a man named Kube whom they baptised [as Christian] (Assefa, 2005:101-106). According to the story, *Kube* was one of the local notables assigned to govern Qobo and its environs but publically was hanged after ordering him to come with his able warriors by the Emperor.

Similarly, the harsher aspects of Boru Meda in any case soon paled into insignificance in comparison with the intolerance, verging on fanaticism, that Yohannes showed towards Islam: it emerged that he was aiming not only at unity of doctrine, but also at unity of faith. There was no room for Islam in his ideological world. The thrust of his repression was directed against Wollo, the same province which had earlier been the main target of Tewodros's fury. The Muslims of Wollo were told to renounce their faith and embrace Christianity or face confiscation of their land and property (Zewde, 2002). These ideas further reinforced that the Emperor directed to reintroduce Christianity to territories settled by the people of Raya, Azabo, Yajju and the whole Wollo and to unify the Ethiopian highlands by subduing Muslims and Wello Oromo. With these objectives in mind the Emperor ordered his officials to build churches that had been burnt down during the war of Imama Ahmed. Against the forceful conversion one has described his grievances by saying;

“ታናሽ ታላቅ በላን ክርካ አደባባይ
ክርስትያን ሆይ አለልብ ስጋ ይጣፍጣል ወይ”

The big and the small unwillingly ate [the meat] at Kerka public square
Oh Christians! Is it tasty to eat the meat without faith in our heart?

In addition to baptism, the Emperor made an effort to familiarize Muslims with diets considered taboo. It was this time that local notables from Wollo, Wajjirat, Raya and Azabo opted to fled to Sudan and join their co-religionists. By continuing their fighting from Sudan they were said to have avenged him at Mettema where the Emperor lost his life (Mekuria, 1982: 200). In general, the local chiefs and the Muslim of Raya area directly faced Emperor Yohannis's policy of forceful conversion to Christianity. Hence, many of them left their homes to Sudan, some others were baptized without their consent and those disobeyed were murdered.

There was also an attempt to bring in new settlers from Tigray and Lasta to Chercher, Zobul, Qilisha, and other places. The right to govern the people was given to his men like *Bitwoded* Gebre Kidan Zemu whom the people fought for five years from 1872 to 1877 and forced him to hand over his power to another person who had a liberal approach to the people. About the settlement program, there are some legacies that show places of the new residents which were called Agew *kebele* and Tigre *mender*. But coupled with sharing borders with Tigreans and frequent influences which came from immigrants and rulers, the Raya Oromo used to adopt Tigrigna language while they maintained their pastoral life styles. About the Oromo's of this land who were of the Barentu group, they were said to have borrowed enough culture from their hosts since the second half of 16th century that made their adaptation to the area easy. However, they maintained a distinct identity as of political autonomy

and traditional culture (Donald, 1974). Therefore, there was a type of social cohesion and at the same time cultural intermixing.

The above ideas of settlement program are also confirmed by other sources in places like Alamata, Kalim, and Gura Worke were areas where Tigreans came and settled. Beyond the wars and the settlement of Tigrean in these areas, Emperor Yohannis IV had also said to have an intention to clean the Oromo from the land saying, ‘ኦሮሞ ይጥፋ ዱር ይገፋ,’ ‘let Oromo be removed so the land would be vacant’ as a justification for his campaigns. For his campaign against the Oromo, he had made a decree that during his march to meet his objective, everybody who considered his allies should follow him, if not, he would cut off their legs and necks as a punishment for disobeying his order (Kassa and Mengistie, 2005: 54, 60). But under his administration, the Emperor had a federal approach and so liberal to his men under him and personally said to be innocent (Marcus, 1994; Weldeselassie, 2006). Thus, the point here is that [by what calculation] it is bizarre a leader with a good personal character resorted to an approach that any Ethiopian leader did not choose to follow. The attempt to dislocate the Raya Oromo by bringing in new settlers was a fact most writers agreed upon and he was in need of land for cultivating crops as the land is fertile, plainly and watered by many rivers. In addition to this, the Emperor probably wanted to secure the safety of the area while crossing this region since he considered them as rebellious and defiant.

Hence, he came up with new settlers who wanted agricultural land and also to spread their religion. Therefore, by letting them well-adopted with the life style of settlers and setting an example for others to follow, the Emperor might hopefully have made an effort. But when it failed, he probably decided to avoid them once and for all. Finally, the destruction he made seems deliberate that by itself caused his innocent trait questionable. The Emperor as part of his devastation, the impact of settlers over the people was that there was many who understand Tigrigna among the Oromo speakers. However, their socio-political order has been greatly changed since they entered the highlands (Trimingham, 1952). Since the latter half of 16th Century, the Oromo had spread to Amhara and Angote and other places (Donald, 1974)

During the reign of Emperor Menelik II, the Raya and Azabo were still facing serious problems. Even before his advent to power as an Emperor in 1889, as a king of Shewa, he had spent fighting with notables from Wollo which dated back to 1871. At this time, Wollo had 14 administrative divisions of which eight had the right to administer their landholdings. The Raya and Azabo whose settlement extended from the northern part of Wollo to the border of Tigray had been excluded from these privileges. Even later, they were under the king when he appointed Amede Liben as a governor of the whole Wollo. But he appeared as a traitor and was replaced by Mohammed Ali who was appointed with a special title called Yimam (Giyorgis, 2009). King Menelik's influence over Wollo remained till 1882, and hereafter Emperor Yohannis entrusted Araya Sellassie to rule over Wollo. He helped to fan the flames of the rebellion which was suppressed with both Emperor Yohannis and King Menelik's intervention. The nature of the intervention campaign was devastation and massacre. Then, *Ras* Mikael (formerly Mohammed Ali) was forcefully converted to Christianity by Emperor Yohannis and was made ruler of the whole Wollo (Zewde, 2002). During this time, *Dejazmach* Tedla Wahd was appointed by Emperor Menelik II to rule over places like Raya Azabo including Chercher, and Zobul as well as other areas of Raya (Begna, 1990).

In 1891, Raya Kobo area was given to *Ras* Wale but Zobul remained under Tedla Wahd until 1892 (Kassa and Mengistie, 2005). During the Adwa campaign, Raya Azabo Oromo was among the Ethiopian peasants who faced the destruction of the war. Hence, upon return to Addis Ababa, the riches of the Azabo and Raya district kept the soldiers well fed (Milkias and Metaferia, 2005). During his campaign to Adwa, Emperor Menelik II had made his way from Addis to Alamata via river Ala and Golina and camped at Horemat nearby the town called Kobo. It was from here that the Emperor heard the news of the battle made at Alage. In November 9, 1895 again the Emperor and his army made their way to Alamata and camped there (Mekuria, 1987). The camping of Menelik's force at

Alamata, Wofela and Ashenge with hundred thousand forces in mid-December was also a prove that it became burdensome for the people who settled along his routes (Jonas, 2011). He adds that despite the draconian rule, injustice occurred and produced lasting resentment. A full year later, the way to Addis through Ashenge was unsafe because the local people affected by the burden of feeding Menelik's soldiers sought "revenge for the depredation which Menelik's army had committed among them after the battle of Adwa" (Jonas, 2011). Therefore, in addition to the imposition of governors from outside and the mistreatments they faced at the hands of successive Ethiopian emperors, the campaign to Adwa made the Raya and Azebo Oromo to pay incalculable costs.

4. Conclusions

The Doba who were later intermingled with the Raya settled over an area which extended from eastern Wollo up to parts of today's south eastern Tigray and bordered by the Afar and the Angote in the east and north respectively. With their pastoral background, the people had tried to keep at bay any interference from the central government. The lowland areas which were crossed by the oldest long-distance trade routes had been an area of frequent conflicts from the borders and with the forces of central government. The impact which came from the centre seems to be deep that they were even forced to adopt a new lifestyle. In their religious life, they were destined to be Muslim though some say they were followers of traditional religion. As indicated above they were forced by the Emperors to accept Christianity.

When Imam Ahmed declared war against the Christian kingdom, many of the Doba fought on the side of Imam Ahmed and others who were forced to accept Christianity turned to become Muslims. Their religious outlooks also had come to face challenges when emperor Yohannis IV wanted to ensure religious uniformity. In doing these, many of the Ethiopian rulers made campaigns in their attempts at bringing the area under control by disrupting the culture and ways of life of the local people through large scale settlements of the Tigrean and Agew and forceful conversions to Christianity and other means. Hence, the Doba/Raya continuously fought against the central government for autonomy, and even the demand for autonomy persisted in the later periods.

In spite of these, the native Doba intermingled with their immediate neighbours through economic and social interactions and following the settlement program of Tigrean as well as with the coming of the Oromo. Thus, the assumption told on Doba's complete disappearance was wrong. The Doba had maintained different degrees of interactions with its neighbours over a long period of time and so true of the Raya in the later periods.

5. References

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