Inter-Ethnic Relations on a Frontier: Mätakkäl (Ethiopia), 1898-1991

Bearbeitet von
Tsega Endalew Etfa

ISBN 978 3 447 05442 3
Format (B x L): 17 x 24 cm
Gewicht: 500 g

Weitere Fachgebiete > Ethnologie, Volkskunde, Soziologie > Volkskunde > Kultureller Wandel, Kulturkontakt, Akkulturation

Zu Leseprobe

schnell und portofrei erhältlich bei

beck-shop.de

Die Online-Fachbuchhandlung beck-shop.de ist spezialisiert auf Fachbücher, insbesondere Recht, Steuern und Wirtschaft. Im Sortiment finden Sie alle Medien (Bücher, Zeitschriften, CDs, eBooks, etc.) aller Verlage. Ergänzt wird das Programm durch Services wie Neuerscheinungsdienst oder Zusammenstellungen von Büchern zu Sonderpreisen. Der Shop führt mehr als 8 Millionen Produkte.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABBREVIATIONS</th>
<th>xi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY OF MAJOR LOCAL AND TECHNICAL TERMS</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>xix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

1.1. The Physical and Geographical Setting ................................ 1

1.2. The Main Objectives of the Study ................................. 2

1.3. The Significance of the Study ....................................... 3

1.4. Sources and Methodology ............................................. 4

1.4.1. Fieldwork ............................................................. 4

1.4.2. Libraries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia ......................... 4

1.4.3. Durham Archives, England ..................................... 5

1.4.4. Libraries in Hamburg, Germany .............................. 5

1.5. Limitations and Problems Encountered ....................... 5

1.6. Data Analysis .......................................................... 6

1.7. Organisation of the Study ............................................ 6

1.8. Literature Review ..................................................... 7

## CHAPTER TWO

### ETHNIC IDENTITY AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS ................... 15

2.1. The Peopling of the Region ....................................... 15

2.1.1. The Gumuz: Identity and Settlement Patterns .............. 15

2.1.2. The Šinaša (Northern Gonga) ................................ 19

2.1.2.1. Patterns of Šinaša Expansion and Settlement .......... 23

2.1.3. The Agäw and the Amhara .................................. 27

2.1.4. The Oromo of Mätäkkäl: Patterns of Settlements ......... 28

2.2. Major Economic Activities ........................................ 32
## Table of Contents

### CHAPTER THREE

**MÄTÄKKÄL ON A FRONTIER: DILEMMAS OF RULE** ................. 35

3.1. Centuries of Expeditions But Late Incorporation

(16th–19th Centuries) ............................................................. 35

3.1.1. The Borderlands During Turco-Egyptian Rule

of the Sudan (1821–1885) .................................................... 40

3.1.2. Ethio-Mahdist Relations (1885–1898) ............................. 42

3.1.2.1. The Frontier Areas to the North of the Abbay:

Mätäkkäl, Čälga, Mätämma ...................................................... 45

3.1.2.2. The Frontier Areas to the South of the Abbay .......... 48

3.1.2.3. The Rise of Guba and other Sheikdoms to the North

of Beni Šangul ................................................................. 51

3.1.2.4. The Frontier Areas after the Battle of Mätämma .......... 55

3.2. Local Resistance and Incorporation ................................. 57

3.3. Mätäkkäl: From No-man’s Land to Ethiopian Territory ...... 65

### CHAPTER FOUR

**INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND INTEGRATION** .................. 76

4.1. The Link: The Trans-Frontier and Trans-Abbay Trade ........ 76

4.1.1. Items of Trade and Routes ........................................... 76

4.1.2. Problems of Trade and Communications ...................... 84

4.2. Intra-Ethnic Relations ................................................... 93

4.2.1. Intra-Oromo Relations on both sides of the Abbay ........ 93

4.2.2. Intra-Šinaša Relations .................................................. 95

4.2.3. Intra-Gumuz Relations ................................................... 97

4.2.4. Intra-Agäw and Intra-Amhara Relations ...................... 101

4.3. The Dynamism of Inter-Ethnic Relations and Integration .... 102

4.3.1. Gumuz-Oromo Relations ............................................... 102

4.3.2. Gumuz-Šinaša Relations .............................................. 103

4.3.3. Gumuz-Agäw Relations ................................................ 105

4.3.4. Agäw-Šinaša Relations ................................................. 106

4.3.5. Oromo-Agäw Relations .................................................. 107

4.4. Corollaries of the Relations: Inter-Marriages, Integration,

Traditional Beliefs, and Community Service Organisations ...... 108

4.4.1. *Luba Baasa*: A Traditional Institution of Integration .... 108

4.4.2. Traditional Beliefs and Practices ................................... 111
### Table of Contents

4.4.2.1. The *Mirao* Ritual and other Šinaša Practices ..................................... 112
4.4.2.2. The *Aeteetee* and *Qaalluu* Institutions ............................................... 115
4.4.3. The Role of Community Service Organisations for Ethnic Relations ......................................................... 118

CHAPTER FIVE

HEALING THE PAST AND PEACE-BUILDING:
CULTURAL TOLERANCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS .................... 121

5.1. Why Neighbours Kill? The Major Causes of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Mátäkkäl .............................................................. 121
5.2. The Major Causes of Conflicts within Gumuz ........................................ 127
5.2.1. Marriages ............................................................................................ 127
5.2.2. Abducting Girls .................................................................................. 128
5.2.3. Adultery ............................................................................................ 128
5.2.4. Belief in an Evil-eye ........................................................................... 129
5.2.5. Deliberate Killings ........................................................................... 130
5.2.6. The *Täzkar* and *Mäsqäl* Celebration ........................................ 131
5.2.7. Resource Use ...................................................................................... 133
5.3. Cultural Tolerance and Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms .................................................................................. 134
5.3.1. The Gumuz *Siyaha* Institution ......................................................... 135
5.3.1.1. The *Siyaha* Administrative Structure ........................................... 135
5.3.1.2. The Tradition of *Siyaha* Election ............................................... 136
5.3.1.3. The Role of the *Tissa* .................................................................. 137
5.3.2. The *Mangama* Institution: Traditional Cure for Conflicts .......... 138
5.3.3. The *Michuu* Institution: Strategic Alliances ................................. 140
5.3.4. The Role of the *Gaheya/Gafiya* Religious Practices ..................... 146
5.3.4.1. For Illness ......................................................................................... 146
5.3.4.2. For a death ...................................................................................... 146
5.3.4.3. For loss of property ......................................................................... 147
5.3.4.4. For fertility of women ....................................................................... 147
5.3.4.5. To know the meaning of a dream ....................................................... 147
5.3.4.6. For good harvest ............................................................................. 147
5.3.4.7. During natural catastrophes ............................................................ 147
5.3.5. *Harma Hodha* as a Conflict Management Institution .................. 148
5.4. Feasibility of the African Conflict Resolution Mechanisms .......... 151
5.4.1. Ethiopian Traditional Community Courts: A Glance ...................... 153
5.4.2. Grass-root Courts in Eastern Africa: Some Comparisons .................... 156
Table of Contents

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................................................. 163

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................................................... 171

APPENDICES ............................................................................................. 187
Appendix One: Two Letters ............................................................................. 187
   a. From the Sirdar to the Emperor Menelik, Roseires, 1901 ..................... 187
   b. From Ras Degaz Desta to the Mamur, Roseires, 1900 ....................... 188
Appendix Two: Maps ...................................................................................... 189
Appendix Three: Picture .................................................................................. 195
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Physical and Geographical Setting

Until the end of the first half of the twentieth century, the term Máttakkál was applied to a locality named after one of the La nata Awiya (The Seven Houses of Agäw) clans who settled there. The vast low-lying territories along Ethiopia’s border with the Sudan to the north of the Abbay River were placed within Agäw Mdär and Bägemodär awrağgas. The coffee and gold-rich district of Wänbära, the former Muslim state of Guba, and the districts of Danđiga (Dangäb), Dangur, Zigäm and Máttakkál were governed by Agäw or Amhara chiefs with their seat at Sigadi (later it was moved to Çağani) although sometimes Guba and Dangur paid tributes to the Bägemodär awrağga. After 1948 the whole region was restructured – Máttakkál being upgraded to awrağga status, with the whole district regrouped eventually into six wärädas: Dangur, Đobät, G^ang^a, Guba, Mandura and Wänbära within the Goğgam administrative region (see map 2). The seat of administration was moved from Sigadi to Çağani, which played an important role until 1992 when most of the awrağga was placed under Beni Şängul-Gumuz National Regional State and the administrative centre shifted to Pawi. Çağani, however, continued to play an important role as a socio-economic centre of the region because of its strategic location. Above all it was (and still is) a very attractive commercial centre for traders coming from almost all of the wärädas and played a key role in supplying transportation facilities.

In the past, Bulän was part of Wänbära and all the territories up to the Şar River were traditionally administered under Wänbära chiefs. It was one of the sixty-five qäbäles of Wänbära and it was in 1997 that Bulän was given a separate wäräda status. Thus Máttakkál became one of the three zones of the Beni Şängul-Gumuz National Regional State bounded to the north and northeast by the Amhara National Regional State, to the south by the Abbay River and to the west by the Sudan. By the end of 2000, its capital, Pawi, was replaced by the adjacent newly founded Galgäl Bäläs town, which is 546 kilometres away from Addis Ababa.

The total area of Máttakkál zone is estimated at 22,028 km², characterised by a hot lowland environmental zone covered with undulating plains and thick tropical forest with a heavy rainfall. The altitude ranges from below 600 m above sea level along the Sudan border to 2,731 m above sea level at Bälaya

Mountain and 2488 m at Dangur Mountain. Much of it is lowland which is 74% flat plains, 16% hilly and plateaus, 6% valley bottoms and 4% mountainous land. Climatically the zone is classified as 82% lowland, 10% temperate and 8% highland. The region is 79% tropical forestland with little cultivable land. The annual average temperature ranges from 16.2 °C–32.5°C with annual mean rainfall of 1,607.8 mm while the annual rainfall months vary from May to October.2

Surrounded on its eastern and southern rim by spectacular mountains like the Bälaya, Diimtuu and Gumgum, and to the south by the Abbay River, Mätäkkäl forms a huge circular depression.3 It is broken here and there by numerous streams, the most important of which are Alaltuu, Ardii, Bäläs, Dindir, Durra, Dondor, Qarsaa, and Šar which are tributaries of the Abbay. In addition there are various other tributary streams, which either decrease their flow or dry up during the dry season. Moreover, Mätäkkäl is known for its rich natural resources, which invited various aggressions from both the Sudan and Ethiopia. Most of its cultivable soils are fertile, and there are diverse flora and fauna composed of natural vegetation with various tree types and bamboo forest, shrubs, and grasses that serve several wildlife species as natural habitat. However, most of the area is infested with Malaria and trypanosomiasis (Cattle disease).4 Malaria in particular poses a serious threat to the region as a result of meagre medical facilities.

1.2. The Main Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are the following:

– To examine the nature of ethnic and societal relations, assimilations and co-existence between the Gumuz, Agäw, Šinaša, Oromo and Amhara in Mätäkkäl.

– To bridge some of the historical gaps in the study of the frontier communities, while contributing to the advancement of historical approaches to the study of frontier peoples and cultures.

– To show how the Oromo and the Šinaša lost their identities to the dominant Amharic- or Agäwña-speaking societies in many parts of Goğgam.


Introduction

– To examine the ways and means used by Oromo and Šinaša to preserve their identities in Mätäkkäl.
– To show how the region was ‘ruled’ by both the Sudan and Ethiopia until eventually incorporated by the latter.
– To show how the traditional African principles of conflict resolution played an important role in the ethnic relations and maintained their solidarity long before the colonial period.
– To draw the attention of scholars to the study of Ethiopian history from a frontier perspective.

1.3. The Significance of the Study

The research work, it is hoped, will make a significant contribution in revealing the history and cultures of the frontier communities, their assimilation, forms of rule and incorporation. Since little has so far been done on this subject, the research will contribute to the understanding of the peoples and cultures of the Ethiopian-Sudan borderlands, to aggression and the domination of minorities, to inter-ethnic relations, to conflicts and their resolutions in Ethiopia in particular and in Africa in general.

The study also provides major recommendations for protecting the rights of minority groups in this peripheral region of Ethiopia. First, to avoid discrimination based on skin colour, occupation, social status, way of living, religion, state organisation and general level of development. Second, to render balanced services to minorities including access to rural roads, clinics, schools, water supply, electricity, and other infrastructures. Scholarly studies must also be undertaken to indicate the problems that such ethnic groups with peripheral status have to appeal to the international community for various kinds of help. For instance, the Gumuz live in unhealthy spots always victims by various types of tropical disease with no or only limited access to clinics, hospitals, schools, and other basic facilities. These lacks have contributed to their low level of development as compared to the other highland peoples of Ethiopia.

The study also attempts to contribute to the understanding of territorial competitions and border problems between Ethiopia and the Sudan as well as enabling us to understand the political developments along Ethiopia’s north-western frontier. Moreover, the study attempts to offer insights into the role of trade on both sides of the Abbay and the international boundary. I hope, therefore, that the present study is directly relevant to the present ethnic conflicts, societal relations, assimilations and changing societies around the world.