

Abyssinian Invasion: Reminder of a Seven Century-Old Animosity

Said Alinuri : 17 Jan, 2007

When some concerned Ethiopians are asked why do they have a problem with political developments in Somalia, usually they refer to security issues or the political events in the Horn of Africa over the last four decades. Most of the analysts of the problem in Somalo-Ethiopian relations, however, consider over a century-old antagonism. But some others go beyond that and point out older events. This paper is a humble attempt to provide a picture for the roots of an age-old conflict between Christian Abyssinia and Muslim Somalia at general, and the ongoing invasion at particular. But before I plunge into the subject, let me give some background the Islam in Somalia.

The Spread of the Islam in Somalia

Within a few decades of its birth, Islam reached Somalia. Documents from Zayla'a (Awdal) and Banadir, both ancient centers of civilization, indicate that migrants from western Arabia settled in these regions in the period of khalifa Umar bin Khattab (A.D. 634-644) and khalifa AbdulMalik bin Marwan (A.D. 688-708). Moreover, Arabic inscriptions from Muqdisho (Mogadishu) refer to the death of four Muslims from A.D. 719 to 767, at least two of whom had immigrated from Hijaz.

After this initial advent, Islam became stronger in the coastal centers and gained substantial footholds in the interior during the period of 850-1000 A.D. The Jabarti community, a Muslim Somali, expanded from the northern coastal regions of Zayla'a and Sanāg around the middle of 9th century. Zayla'a became a well known place by outside Muslims after 850, a sign of Muslim presence in the city. In fact, the Awdali document, written around 1290, states that descendents of one of those settlers in the period of khalifa Umar founded the Emirate of Shawa in A.D. 896. The Emirate of Shawa appears to have been an offshoot of the Empire of Awdal, variously known as Jabarti or Zayla'a. Few decades later, however, Al-Masāudi wrote that there was a Muslim community in Zaylaâ, albeit of a minority status. The regions of Zaylaâ, Sanāg and later Harar, were the centers of dispersal for the founders of many Muslim communities to further reach out to outlying provinces. As a result, the indigenous populations of the vast land between Ras Aseyr (Guardafui) in the east and Shawa and Bali in the west embraced Islam as their religion. A chain of political units by ethnically related communities evolved in this belt throughout the first quarter of the second millennium. As regards the regions of Shawa and its eastern neighbor, Awfāt, accounts recorded from the 12th century onwards show that, besides the Jabarti sub-clans of Harla, Gidaya-Geri, and Walasmaâ, the indigenous Awdali clans of Warjeh, Wargar, Gabal, Hagar, Shawa, Hargay and Argobba had been converted to Islam.

In the south west, many Arabic inscriptions commemorating the deaths of individual Muslims from A.D. 1000 to 1267 make clear the early existence of Islam in the area between Harar and Hadiya. In addition to the linguistic evidence, the tradition of the region adequately corroborates these historical accounts. A sizable section of the current population of Hadiya, Gurage, and Arusa regions of southern Ethiopia, are descendents of Somali settlers. In fact, many of the inhabitants of these regions trace their ancestry to sub-clans of Guardafui-Harar prominent in the early period of the Awdali Empire. The Somalis, along with the two small Semitic-speaking communities of Adari and Argobba, constituted the Awdali population. Bali, the southernmost province of greater Awdal, was a meeting point of the northern and the southern strongholds of ever-growing Islam. Besides the Awdali substratum of present-day population in that historical province, the 12th century coming of legendary Sheikh Nur Hussein of Bali from a Muslim family in the Banadiri city of Marka serves as a testament to Bali's role as the cultural link between Awdal and Banadir. In fact, genealogical traditions connects this family to the founders of the state in Muslim Awdal, and relatives of the founders of Shawa sultanate are also found in Banadir region, as a further indication of connections in the North-South developments at that time.

Early Islam in the southern coast, had been reinforced by gradual local conversion and waves of migration, leading to the evolution of Muslim city-states in Banadir. In the 8th and 9th centuries, about five of these migrations swept from both sides of the Arabian/Persian Gulf and settled in Somalia, particularly Banadir. Still further south, a mosque was built in A.D 1050/75 in a settlement of historically Somali-inhabited Lamo archipelago, now the SE coast of Kenya.

The century between 1150 and 1250 marked a decisive turn in the role of Islam in Somali history. Al-Hamawi and, later, ibn Said note that the Berber (Somalis) were a Muslim nation during that period. In the north, Awdal proper (Zayla-Hawash-Shabelle region) now is a center of commercial empire from Ras Aseyr to Hadiya. In the south, similarly, the powerful commercial city-state of Hamar (Muqdisho) took the lead. Townsmen from this Somali coast spread Islam along the East African coast and laid the foundations of the Sawahili civilization.

As a source of civilization, Islam developed the state formation, trade activities, and coexistence among different communities. Within this difficult process of cultural transformation, Islam spread in the Horn of Africa through peaceful means: trade, migration, intermarriage, etc. There is no sign of violence associated with this process of Islamization except for isolated incidents in few places. Even different communities of Sunnis and Shiites co-existed in peace in the regions of Awdal and Banadir.

A new Threat, the Amhara Expansion (C. 1270)

That golden era of Islam in the region, particularly in Awdal, had been disturbed by the expansion of Amhara in the last quarter of 13th century. The Amhara dynasty was founded in 1270 in the present-day region of Wallo, north-central Ethiopia. The Amhara dynasty's establishment coincided with a period that the Muslim communities in Shawa and Awfat had been undergoing an internal conflict. A time-to-time regular struggle for power among the leaders of Shawa sultanate, finally developed into a civil war in 1262 in Shawa and related parts of Awfat. Awfat was a powerful city and province that was even claiming the political leadership of greater Awdal at those times. In efforts to end the conflict, the Awfat-based Umar Wali-asmaâ Dunyahur Jabarti began to interfere it militarily in 1276, removed most of the contending amirs from the power in 1285, and fully integrated the area in 1289. But before he did so, Amhara authorities had already been taking advantage from this prolonged civil war. The new leadership of Amhara, had immediately started an expansion towards Muslim-inhabited Shawa.

There is no doubt that these southward Amhara movements had finally touched the sense of security and sovereignty of these Muslims. As an introduction for protracted conflict between the Amhara-led Abyssinia and Awdal-led Somalia, some confrontations had been reported from 1280 onwards and about 1298. A further sign for the growing tension and the anger among the frontier Muslims, a local leader organized Awdali communities in Northern Shawa for a jihadic campaign against Amhara in 1299, but an actual encounter was just avoided by concluding uneasy truce between the two sides.

The forty-five years after the advent of Amhara dynasty was, however, the beginning of a period of retreat and shrinkage for the Somalis. Never again will Somali enjoy peace at his interior borderlands. The happy period of conducting the long-distance trade and procuring the well-demanded African products from vast inland to the international merchants through the Somali ports, was finally disrupted and replaced by a troubled period of conflict with an ever-expanding power.

Break out of the Big War

The hostility between the Christians and Muslims took an escalating direction after Amda-siyon (1314-44) acceded to the powers of Abyssinia. This negus (king) adopted an aggressive policy of territorial

expansion towards all neighbors of Amhara and prepared his people for continuous crusading campaigns. Of all these invaded or endangered lands, Awdal was the only relatively organized state that could potentially challenge the newly reorganized Abyssinian kingdom. The struggle between the two had a unique nature in the region, as shown by its scale and span. Before 1322, Amda-siyon conquered Hadiya and Damut, the source of gold and slave trade for the Awdalis, and he continued to expand over Muslim districts of northern Shawa. Besides this comprehensive frontal assault, Hadiya appealed for help to Awdal. Convincing himself that the Awdal is the only power obstacle to his empire-building program, and expecting a reaction from the awakened state, Amda-Siyon pillaged in a surprise attack the lands of Shawa and Awfat. As a sample of his typical raids at the time, Amda-siyon was himself reported to say:

“... my army arrived, and it destroyed utterly the land which is called Ifat. And I took from it gold and silver and bronze and lead ... and many garments. Then I sent my army into all the lands of Muslims ... into all the land of Shawa. And they made war on them with the point of the sword. They burned also their great and strong cities; they took much livestock as booty, and countless prisoners”.

The Awfat-led parts of Awdal, which was headed at that time by Haquddin Walasma'i, grandson of Umar Dunyahur, decisively counteracted and overrun the Amhara-conquered districts in northern Shawa as far as the eastern side of Blue Nile around 1325. Throughout the next few years, however, Amda-Siyon managed to consolidate his power in the previously acquired territories and penetrate deep into frontier or vassal states of Awdal.

Responding to this continuous Abyssinian menace, the successor and brother of Haquddin, sultan Sabruddin, retook the neighboring Amhara bases and converted to the Islam the Christian settlers. Yet, he declared a jihad on Amhara and set up an ambitious plan to conquer it, according to Abyssinian chronicle which is the only source for this war. But before any further Muslim action, Amda-siyon pre-empted whatever plan they had in mind, and he once again attacked Awfat, sacked the city and even crossed over Hawash river. Having alarmed by this serious development, reinforcements from other provinces of Awdal, including the remote ones such as Zayla', Mille, Jinasane, Harar, Nogob and Bali, had haphazardly rushed to the battlefields in Awfat. But, the Awdalis were defeated in a difficult war that lasted for 10 months because of the weakness of their internal organization. As a result, Awdal lost the provinces of western Awfat, Shawa, Fatagar, Dawaro, and later western Bali; and its interests in Hadiya and Damut.

Consequently, the morale of the frontier Muslims was seriously damaged. Amda-siyon and his successor exploited the situation and applied a policy of 'divide and rule' towards these shaken Muslims. The political organization of Awdal provided an opportunity for the warrior kings of Abyssinia to interfere the internal affairs of these frontier areas. Although the authority of Walasma'i sultan was generally recognized by the different provinces and sheikhdoms, these local entities were also largely operating independently. Amhara kings also made use of individual Muslims who had been doing a profitable business with them.

The intervention was particularly directed to the ruling families to divide them into contending members and to support those could be used as Abyssinian agents at the expense of more legitimate ones. Even the Walasma'i ruling house had faced this family feud. Some members crossed the line and looked for their interests at the Abyssinian court, while others were in a firm determination to resist. The sultan of this era, Ali Sabruddin (1332-62) attempted to wage war against Amhara, but he was undermined by the disunity of his people. Individual interests had dealt had blow to the Muslim unity and Western Awdal faced a sad condition of subordination in the invasion and resultant intervention. Those 30 years of Ali's reign, had been branded as an era of differences, weakness and humiliation.

The First Revolution

Encouraged by eastern parts of Awdal apparently, the Awfatis had finally run out of patience and exploded to the situation. Their immediate problem was the unpatriotic stand of their own incumbent leaders. Eventually, a civil war broke out between the Amhara-blessed ruling group and a nationalist opposition group. Ironically, the nationalist movement had been led by two grandsons of sultan Ali, who once lived at the Abyssinian court because their father was a good friend of the negus. A faction-fighting flared up amongst the ruling family around 1362.

The two young brothers, Haquddin and Sa'duddiin who were not previously in politics but busy in education, considered the ruling relatives as an Amhara puppet. Because of their uncompromising nationalistic spirit in a critical moment and their charismatic leadership, the new leaders easily obtained the public support. The Abyssinians supported the incumbents and reportedly reinforced them by an army of 30,000 men. However, the two brothers and their followers had finally defeated the alliance. Their uncle, Malasfah, who was an assistant of his father, sultan Ali, was killed at the battle; and their father, Ahmad-harbi, was previously killed by his subjects. They assumed the powers of the state, but left their grandfather as a titular sultan.

After this internal victory, they could not avoid to conduct a jihadic campaign against the Abyssinians to restore fully the sovereignty of western Awdal. The Past events and the continued threat, turned out the Awdal leaders to be intransigent militants and led Awdal to a period of bloody struggle with Abyssinia. As revolutionary leaders, Haquddin and Sa'duddin revitalized the power of Awdal. According to Awdali chronicle, Haquddin 'was the one who established the way of jihad'. Maqrizi added that Sa'duddin had improved the army and administration built by his brother.

However, the primary factor that strengthened the political and military position of the new leadership was relocation of their traditional political center to a more secured place. Awfat was forfeited and the center was transferred, probably by Sa'duddin, from this vulnerable province to Harar plateau, the very heart of Awdal Somali, and eventually a source of inexhaustible manpower.

In their continuous expeditions against Amhara, it is not clear if the strategy of the Awdal leaders was to recover the lost territories or to stop any further Abyssinian expansion towards Awdal proper. However, they failed the first option but achieved the second one. Although Awdali forces was persistently disturbing and occasionally destroying the Abyssinian military garrisons in eastern Shawa or western Awfat, Fatagar, Dawaro and western Bali, these garrisons were carefully deployed in these provinces on parallel defensive outposts.

Thus, on one hand, it was difficult for Awdalis to take all of these provinces at one time or to keep one of them at all times. On the other hand, Awdalis deprived the Abyssinians to relax in these Muslim territories and forced them to remain under state of emergency. More importantly, a risk of Amhara conquest from any part of the predominantly Somali-inhabited Awdal proper was eliminated, and from now on, Abyssinia should stay mostly in a defensive position. More over, Awdal maintained to exercise power and influence within the occupied provinces, and "the kings of Adal were in regular contact with these frontier areas and they always encouraged the spirit of independence of the Muslim inhabitants."

According to Maqrizi, Haquddin had been attacking Amhara more than twice a year before he was killed in 1373 at a battle in Shawa. However, Amhara response to the Muslim resistance, before and after the raise of Haquddin, was cruel and catastrophic. The Awdali Somalis, describing the situation of the affected Muslims to the sultan of Egypt, told him: "The king (Sayfa-ar'ad, 1344-71) of Habasha destroyed the Muslims: Some of them he killed, and some he made Christians.'

Even so, Awdal was militarily victorious at that time and Sa'duddin continued same kind of incursions for thirty years. But, Abyssinians finally afforded to reverse the military superiority of Awdal. In a desperate encounter, at unknown site, the Awdalis were considerably defeated and Sa'duddin was killed in action in 1403. Seemingly, the Abyssinians prioritized to kill the sultan at any cost. Traitors, or God's disobedient, in the Maqrizi's expression, took advantage from this national loss. They assisted Abyssinians to pursue the sultan as far as Zayla and finally showed them his last refuge, a barren island, where he was executed. Disappointed by this atmosphere, ten sons of Sa'duddin left for the Yemeni city of Zabid, across Zayla, where a strong community of Somali Awdal origin had been living in.

Soon afterwards, the Awdali public managed to control the effects of the panic situation. The 10 sons of Sa'duddin returned to Awdal through Siyaro, a local outlet near Berbera, and they were welcomed to replace their father and to lead the country. Sabruddin II (1413-22), Mansur (1422-25), Jamaluddin (1425-32) and Ahmad (1432-45) had followed-up the successes of their father and uncle. But the Abyssinian counteractions were also decisive. Sultan Mansur, for instance, and one of his brothers were taken in 1425 as prisoners at a battle in western Awfat. This was the very same time that negus Ishaq claimed that he subdued the 'Somali', and Abul-Mahasin reported that Ishaq "massacred the Muslims, destroyed their mosques and invaded the land of Jabarti."

But after five years, he himself was killed in action in a period that Jamaluddin had been exporting thousands of captured prisoners as slaves to the Arab countries, Persia and India. The political center of Awdal at the time was Dakar, near Harar, specifically for Ahmad (Shihabuddin) who recovered western Bali and resettled a thousand Muslim families around 1434. It was this sultan that the Abyssinians considered him that he brought support as far as from Muqdisho for his intensions to conquer whole Amhara before he was killed by negus Zara'a Ya'qub (1434-1468) at the battle of Ay Faras, in Dawaro province, about 80 miles SE of mount Entotto (modern Addis Ababa).

It seems that, in the next 25 years the hostility was slowed down and even sultan Kheyruddin (1445-71) concluded a temporary truce with negus Bayda-Maryam (1468-78), who was busy a war with Afar-Saho. But, at the beginning of the reign of sultan Shamsuddin (1472-88), another round of bitter conflict began, at a time that the Awdali clans in Awfat were still in striking position to the Amhara bases in Shawa. Up to 1480, the two sides were exchanging disastrous raids within which one of them Dakar was burnt dawn. The invaders were themselves routed and defeated. After this operation the Abyssinians could not invade any more.

But, there was no more difficult one with Abyssinia than the able general of Awdal, garad Mahfud, who even overshadowed his sultan. In a series of far-reaching forays, he put the Abyssinians under desperate defensive position. Besides the traditional targets of Awdal, he shook Hadiya and southern Amhara from 1491 to 1517. Negus Na'ud (1494-1508) was killed at one of the hopeless battles to defend his empire, while thousands of its defenders were taken into slavery.

It was necessary to take these defenders violently always. In fact, Awdal was not only helped by relations with the occupied provinces, but also by its ability to affect "even the Christian military colonies stationed along these frontiers." Although "...unlike most other non-Christian provinces, Ifat, Dawaro and Bali were placed under the direct rule of the court [and] governors of these areas were carefully recruited from among the most loyal warriors, and they were often closely related to the royal family ... there were many cases of defection to Adal, and, sometimes whole units of the Christian frontier troops deserted en masse." _

As usual turn, Awdal was badly defeated in 1517 at the battle of Dalmida, near Ay Faras, because of differences among the Muslim army leadership. The popular general, Mahfud, was killed at there, but sultan Muhammad (1488-1518) managed to escape from the battle. It seems that the sultan got blamed for

the battles' failure, and divergences between the supporters of the two leaders had developed. The sultan was himself assassinated in 1518.

Renewing the State

The country entered a period of confusion, and civil war sparked off between two contending factions. Walasma'i ruling family, supported by most of the clans, led a conservative traditional faction; while the warrior garads and young amirs in the army, which had been called many names like Askar-bahar, Malasay, Heegan and Geesi, led a new revolutionary faction. Three sons of sultan Muhammad struggled for the power one after another with the leaders of the opposition. Besides undermining the authority of young sultans, these leaders first fought among themselves until garad Abun (1520-25) took the leadership. He reconciled and shared the power with sultan Abubakar, deal that helped to stabilize the country. Together, they transferred the political center to Harar in 1520 by unknown reason.

Arab-faqih reports that, the country was in chaotic situation of corruption, highway robbery and other evil deeds; but whenever the reformists took over the authority, they had been restoring the law and order, and the prosperity. The respected elements in the society arranged reconciliation at several times, but the mistrust between the two factions wrecked their agreements. After many leaders, a teenage called Ahmad Ibrahim from west of Harar assumed the leadership of the revolutionary group in 1526. And after many battles with the sultan and his supporters, this group finally won in 1527. Their target was not the sultan's post but to gain the second position. A powerful premier-like position was created by Mahfud for the hawkish wing in the state to deal the Abyssinian threat seriously. Even after Ahmad defeated and killed sultan Abubakar, he accepted his brother, Umar-din, as a head of state, but Ahmad had assumed full powers of the country. (Ahmad, a son in-law of garad Mahfuzh, was not a member of Walasma'i sub-clan but a distant relative of them.)

Abyssinians has been watching this political strife and did not miss to exploit it. They surprised the internally embattled Muslims with two attacks, devastating and looting the districts west of Harar.

Once again, a civil war and a new Abyssinian threat made the Awdalis ready to welcome a new uniting and uncompromising revolutionary leadership. Ahmad was a right person at a right moment. Despite his young age, his unique and charismatic personality let him to lead. He united the people, reformed the army and administration of the state. Differences were forgotten. Even his many former opponents, were wisely turned out to be his remarkable supporters. He surrounded himself by able lieutenants, generals, garads and well trained knights. Comparing to the Abyssinian forces, his army was very small. But their motto was 'a victory or paradise'. Equipped with these improvements, he started in 1527 unparalleled jihad to defeat Abyssinia once and for all. Whilst Suleyman of Istanbul was retreating from Vienna, a miracle move that helped the survival of Christian Europe, Ahmad of Harar broke the backbone of Abyssinian military power in March 1529 in the battle of Shimbira Kore, about 40 miles SE of Etotto. In a more unprecedented bloodshed, he completed the conquest of all regions controlled by Abyssinians in 1535. He ruled Habasha until the Portuguese machine guns had killed him at the eastern shore of lake Tana, the watershed of the Blue Nile.

Contrary to current Christian beliefs, the jihad of Ahmad was not inspired by a religious motive or a territorial expansion. Obviously, it was a self-defense that was forced to go. Apart from the traditional hostility, Ahmad witnessed a fresh Abyssinian offence while his country was in a civil war. Meanwhile, Abyssinia was conspiring with Portuguese to destroy Awdal. (In fact, the Portuguese destroyed Zayla' in the same days that the battle of Dalmida took place.) The fact that he limited his campaign only to the areas ruled by Abyssinia, adequately proves that his preoccupation was merely the Christian threat. After he conquered the southern colonies inhabited by Muslims, he was not interested to go beyond and reach out the eastern Cushites of south of Bali; and vulnerable peoples of the Omo region, west of Gojam and

west of Tigrey; while he spent a great amount of time and lives to subdue a powerful Amhara and Tigrey, the Abyssinia proper.

After the crisis caused by the death of imam Ahmd, Awdalis attempted to hold on the frontier provinces of Awfat, Dawaro, fatagar and Bali. But negus Glawdiwos (1540-59), with some technical Portuguese support, strove to make sure that Awdal will never come back and devastated the frontier Muslims. This challenge re-energized the Awdalis and united them around Nur Mujahid Suhe (1551-1567), a nephew of Ahmad. Nur reorganized the state, defeated and killed Glawdiwos in Fatagar. But, he was distracted from pursuing more victories revitalization by an Oromo attack who from this period onwards had been invading Awdal after they started to emigrate from the south of Bali around 1520. Amir Nur deceased in 1567 while he was fighting against both Amhara and Oromo.

Awdal fall down and After

Nur was succeeded by his Abyssinian slave, Usman Habashi. Usman was blamed in misconduct and corruption. Eventually, he was opposed by a group led by garad Jibril Geri and garad Magan, his lieutenants, who first recognized Usman's legitimacy as a sultan. A brother in-law of amir Nur and distant relative of both Nur and Ahmad, Jibril attracted many followers including the relatives of imam Ahmad. But these efforts to correct the sultan only divided the Awdal community into warring factions. It is not clear if Awdal has already been in a process of decline or if this disagreement was a beginning of the political crises. But what is clear is, after Jibril's move, the country underwent a devastating civil war. And it was this civil war and the Oromo invasion that caused the final collapse of once powerful Awdal in 1585.

Before this historical breakdown that affected most of Somalia, Awdal-led Muslim Somalia and Amhara-led Christian Abyssinia fought one of the bloodiest wars in the medieval world, as we have considered above. The two centuries between 1363 and 1563, the peak time of the conflict and prior Oromo raise, five out of twelve effectively Awdali sultans and five out of twelve of their Amhara counterparts, lost their lives on a battle. In fact both paid much more price by the corrosive confrontation for they later succumbed under the expansion of a new conquering nation, the Oromo.

Oromo did not only supersede the two decimated nations but separated one from the other from 1578 to 1886. At the end of this period, neither Ethiopia nor Somalia has had a central authority. But, the advent of the European colonists was the turning point of tilting the balance of power in the Horn of Africa in favor of Ethiopia. Ethiopia that we know today was formed in the last quarter of 19th century onwards by inspiration of old events and by a substantial assistance of Britain, France, Russia and Italy at the expense of unity of Somali nation (and others). Once again Somalis, and other Muslims in the Horn of Africa, were seen an obstacle for a program of building a Christian empire in the region, and they were victimized by this ideological misconception.

The period of 1886-1927 was probably the worst chapter in the Somali history. In those 40 years, and again in 1948-54, the Somaliland was partitioned in unacceptable form and the Somalis were defeated and humiliated by a Christian coalition consist of Britain, Ethiopia, Italy and France. Ethiopia even openly opposed the independence of both Somali republic and Jabuti (Djibouti). So, many problems awaited the after-colonial new state of Somalia, and the bloody confrontations between Ethiopia and Somalia over the last four decades reflect that. (Ironically, some claim that the Ethiopian government supports the restoration of Somali statehood, although in the last 28 years, Ethiopia was the most generous distributor of weapons to the cursed rebellions and warlords that have been responsible the destruction of the Somali.).

In conclusion, it has been rightly noted that the differences among the Somalis is the primary factor of

their problem, and, in fact, it is clear that the worst enemy of the nation is within it. On the other hand, there seems to be no doubt that most of the Somalis are not interested to day to recall the past grievances and they would like to see a new era of quiet relations between the two countries. It is also understandable and appreciable that many Ethiopians oppose their government's decision to invade Somalia. But, as the Somalis themselves say, 'If homicide occurs (in a community), quarrel about other things ends at there.' This invasion is homicide, reminding the old animosity and retrieving the painful memories from their mental records. There is no option left for the Somalis but a struggle to free their country from the invaders.

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Reference:

Enrico Cerulli, 1941, *Il Sultanato dello Scioa*, p. 1.

Enrico Cerulli, 1965, *Somalia*, p. 236 (Kitabuz-Zunuj).

Ali A. Hersi, 1977, *The Arab factor in Somali History*, p. 113; Cerulli, *Somalia*, 25-6.

Sanāg or Makhir Coast is another historical region between Berbera and Bosāso.

Al-Yaâqubi mentions Zayla'a in a text he completed in 872 without any reference to the presence of Islam.

Cerulli, 1941, *Il Sultanato dello Scioa*. Awdal, probably the Awalit of Periplus around 60 A.D., means, in the classic Somali, 'island' or closed area, referring to the ancient port or its island on the present locality of Zayla'a. But the rise of Muslim Awdal state could be traced back to the mid 9th century.

Al-Mas'udi, *Muruj ad-dhahab wa Ma'adin al-jawhar*, ed. 1982, V. I, P. 340.

Cerulli, 1941; Huntingford, 1965, *The Glorious Victories of Amda Seyon*.

Huntingford, 1989, *The Historical Geography of Ethiopia*, pp. 76, 77.

Ulrich Braukamper, 1980, *Geschichte der Hadiya, Sud-Athiopiens*, pp. 59, 60.

Some people confused Awdal with Awsa or Southern Dankali, but Awdal and Dankali were always two different entities for two different communities. Most of the time, Afars were in a separate struggle with the Abyssinians, (Beckingham & Huntingford, 1961, *The Prester John of Indies*, pp. V. I, 178-80, V. ii, 452-3; Punkhurst, 1997, pp. 248, 254, 328, 297 (maps). However, Awsa was partially awdalized after 1578 when some of the forces and leaders of Awdal, disappointed by civil war in Awdal, moved to Awsa. These Awdalis, which were included by the relatives of imam Ahmad, became part of the rule in Awsa until 1672, (Cerulli, 1941).

Braukamper, 1992, *The Sanctuary of Sheykh Hussein and the Oromo-Somali connections in Bale*, 156-7.

Cerulli, 1967, pp. 235-9; Hersi, 1977, pp. 84-90; Strandes, 1968, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, p. 73; Freeman-Grenville, 1975, *The east African Coast*, pp. 83-4.

Allen, James, 1993, *Sawahili Origins*, pp. 22-30, 130; Allen, 1984, *Shungwaya, the Segeju and Somali History*.

Yaqut Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, ed. 1956, V. ii, 369-70, V. iv, pp. 109, 173; Abul-Hassan Ali, Ibn Said, *kitāb al-Jughrafiya*, ed. 1970, pp. 81-3.

The existence of that kind of empire was indicated in different medieval Muslim and Christian documents. For Awdal-Hadiya connections, see (Al-Umari, Maqrizi and Huntingford, 1965); and Awdal-Ras aseyr connections see (F. Alvares, tar. Beckingham and Huntingford, 1961, V. ii, pp. 408, 453; O. Crawford, 1958, *Ethiopian Etineraries*, p. 95; Cerulli, *Somalia*, P. 113; Beckingham and Huntingford, 1954, *Some Records of Ethiopia*, p. 195). The rich traditions and linguistic/cultural links throughout the area accords well these isolated references.

Amhara nation is a result of fusion of two elements: Semitic-speaking Abyssinian from Tigrey and indigenous Cushitic-speaking Agaw with the former is dominant by culture.

The first known confrontation between Awdal and Amhara took place in 1128. The Awdali document reports that Amhara invaded the land of Warjeh and they defeated the invaders. Although this is an indication for the direction of eventual expansion, nothing else was heard from Amhara until 1270, another indication that there was no notable Abyssinian political or military activity in Shawa during that period.

Muhammad H. Ismai'il, *Šafahatun min Tarikhi Mišra: As-Suldtan Al-Manšur Qalawun*, 1993, 99; The book of Ser Marco Polo, tar. Henry Yule, 1929, V. ii, pp. 427-31; R. Pankhurst, *The Ethiopian Borderlands*, 1997, p. 54.

Enrico Cerulli, 1943, *L'Etiopia Medievale in Alcuni Brani di Scrittori Arabi*, pp. 281-2.

Although mainly a pastoralist, Somalia was historically a mercantile nation also. From pre-historic times, civilizations of the known world could not avoid to have commercial links with the Somalis: Egyptians, Summer-Akkadians, Arabs; Phoenicians, Israelites and Sudanese probably; Persians, Greeks, Romans, Indians and finally the China, Bengal, Ceylon, Maldives, Sumatra and Malay all sent their ships to Somalia; and most of them noted the products and trade activities of the country, and some other aspects of its culture.

Hadiya, which covered the territory between upper waters of Hawash and Shabelle, and river Omo, is inhabited by Highland Eastern Cushites and, in less number, by Semitic-speaking Gurage people. As a vassal state of Awdal before Amda-Siyon conquests, its population was mainly Muslim. Damut, which was the south of Blue Nile was probably inhabited by the same stock. Although it had commercial relations with Awdal, its population was not converted to Islam.

Huntingford, 1965, p. 56.

Huntingford, 1965, *The Glorious Victories of Amda Seyon*, pp. 56-108.

Ahmad Yahya Al-Umari, *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*, Ed. Musdafa Abu Deyf, 1988;

Taddasse Tamrat, 1972, *Church and State in Ethiopia*.

Ahmad Ali Al-Maqrizi, *Rasa'il al-Maqrizi*, chapter: Ilmaam, ed. 1998.

Cerulli, 1931, p. 41.

Tamrat, 1972, p. 300.

In that century some Somali students and scholars went to Cairo. They learned that the bishop (Abuna) of the religion of Habasha is always picked up and sent out by Coptic-Egyptian patriarch through endorsement of Egyptian sultan in exchange of huge gifts from Abyssinian kings. Eventually, they approached the sultan and argued him to make use of these relations and take an action against his clients, the Abyssinians, in their cruel measures against the Muslims in the occupied territories.

Tamrat, 1972, p. 149.

Al-Maqrizi, 237-39; Ahmad Ali al-Qalqashandi, *šubh al-a'asha fi šana'ati al-insha*, V. 5, pp. 320-21;

Tamrat, 1972, p. 151.

Maqrizi, pp. 239-40.

Awdalis did not only name the island after Sa'duddin but whole Awdal was renamed 'the land of Sa'duddin'.

Maqrizi, 233, 241.

Cerulli, 1967, *Somalia*, pp. 111-2.

Trimingham, 1965, *Islam in Ethiopia*, p. 75, n. 4.

Maqrizi, 233, 241.

Tamrat, 1976, *Ethiopia, Red Sea and The Horn*, in *Cambridge History of Africa*, p. 155 (v. iii); Tamrat, 1972, 263.

One of the notable developments in this period was the uprising of the Hadiyan people. Encouraged by Awdal, Hadiya rebelled at large against the Amhara over lordship in Zara'a-Ya'qub's reign. The freedom fighters were massacred by Amhara-supported local chief reinforced by huge colonial army. Dawaro and W Bali were prepared to be part of the rebellion (Perruchon, 1893, 59-64).

Budge, 1966, *History of Ethiopia*, p. 314.

J. Perruchon, 1893, *Les Chroniques de Zar'a Ya'eqob et de Ba'eda Maryam, rois d'Ethiopie de 1434 a 1478*, pp. 142-9, 150-3, 166, 180-81.

Tamrat, 1972, pp. 299-300; for this, see also: Maqrizi, Alvares and Arab-faqih.
Beckingham and Huntingford, 1961, V. ii, pp. 410-12.
As a title, garad or amir means a head of district, army or clan.
Beckingham & Huntingford, 1961, V. II, 410-12; Elaine sanceau, 1944, The Land of Prester John;
Budge, History of Ethiopia, 1966, 314, 318, 321.
Shihabuddin Ahmad Abdul-Qadir (Arab-faqih), Futuhal-Habasha, ed. Fahim Shaltut, 1974.
Oromo is lawland Eastern Cushitic people, closely relates to the Somali.
Louis FitzGibbon, 1982, The Betrayal of the Somalis; FitzGibbon, 1985, The Evaded Duty; J.G.S.
Drysdale, 1964, The Somali Disbute.
Madan Sauldie, 1987, Super Powers in the Horn of Africa, pp. 16, 71.

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