



DMU



AJIDS

A History of Qorata Wolete Petros Town to 1975

Setegn Getaneh

Department of History and Heritage Management, Debre Markos University, Debre Markos, Ethiopia.

Corresponding Author's Email: setegn.getaneh@dmu.edu.et or setegngeta@yahoo.com

Abstract

One of the limitations of Ethiopian historiography is the lack of giving emphasis to the social and economic themes. In recent years, there is an attempt of incorporating the economic and social histories. In the Godarine period (c.1636-1850s), several towns were flourished around Lake Tana along the major trade routes. One of the urban centres of the period was Qorata Wolete Petros Town, located in the present district of Dera, in South Gondar Administrative Zone. The church was founded in the reign of Emperor Fasiladas (r.1632-1667) and the area developed into an urban center in the early 18th century. Historians have not yet conducted research on town of Qorata. In line with this, this paper attempts to investigate the foundation, growth, and functions of Qorata Town up to 1975. The year 1975 is taken as the ending period of this paper due to the public ownership of rural land proclamation that greatly affected coffee cultivation at Qorata. Both primary and secondary sources are collected adequately, interpreted cautiously and presented impartially in the course of writing this paper. The findings show that Qorata was a centre of an endowed church and gradually developed into urban centre in the early 18th due to the long distance trade and the introduction of Coffee cultivation into the Lake Tana areas. In its popular period from the 17th to mid-20th centuries Qorata had an urban features and functions having different socials classes.

Keywords: *Qorata, Dera, Wolete Petros, Lake Tana, Gondar.*

1. Introduction

Among Europeans there is a perception that Africa as a whole had lacked urban experiences before the advent of colonial rule to the continent because the sizes and functions of towns in the period were not exciting. Moreover, the history of Africa in general and urban history in particular has been neglected by scholars until the United Nations via its special agencies conducted

a broad study in the 1950s and 1960s.¹ Lack of giving emphasis to the social and economic themes is one of the limitations of Ethiopian historiography. The historiography of the country has focused largely on the political aspects. Despite this, there is a promising work recently in giving attention to the economic and social

¹Solomon Addis, "Urbanization and Urban Space in Africa: The Case of Gondar, Ethiopia", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 45(2012), pp.117-118

histories.² The study of Ethiopian economic history is progressing in recent years. However, the social history part that includes urban histories is at lowest level relatively.³

Cities and towns are categorised as urban centres. However, they are different in their physical size, population number and diversity, level of infrastructural developments and social services. The standards are also varied from one country to another. Towns have less population number, smaller geographic size, and less infrastructural developments than cities have. Ethiopia has long years of civilization dated back to the ancient period. However, scholars have different views on the existence of urbanization in the history of the country. For instance, by looking from European standards, Frederic Gamst and Ronald Horvath argued the non-existence of real urbanization in the country's history after Aksum. Rather they were temporary camps and residences of the ruling class.⁴ This view emanated from euro-centric perception and applied in general to pre-colonial Africa and in particular to Ethiopia.

Contrary to this Euro-centric view, several Ethiopianist scholars like Donald

Crummey and Richard Pankhurst argued for the presence of towns and urban centres in Ethiopia at least since the 18th century. However, the population size of the towns was not larger in number, they were less developed than cities in infrastructural developments, and the factors for their foundations were varied.⁵ Crummey argued that although there were no real cities in the Christian Ethiopia, there were towns that served some of the functions of cities and it is a sign of urbanization in the country in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁶ Supporting the existence of urban centres in the country, Benti Getahun says "trade and trade routes made significant contributions to the emergence of markets and towns as well as the process of urbanization in Ethiopia over the last two millennia".⁷

Some towns continued as an urban settlement even after the national and regional ruling classes abandoned them as administrative centers like Aksum, Harar, Gondar, Adwa and Ankober.⁸ Nevertheless, due to several external and

² Bahru Zewde, "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, (2000), p.11

³Tim Carmichael, "Bureaucratic Literacy, Oral Testimonies, and the Study of Twentieth-Century Ethiopian History," *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (2006), p.26

⁴Frederick Gamst, "Peasants and Elites without Urbanization: The Civilization of Ethiopia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XII (1970), 373-392; Ronald Horvath, "The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia," *Journal of African History*, X, 2 (1969), pp.205-207.

⁵Akalou Wolde-Michael, "Urban Development in Ethiopia (1889-1925) Early Phase", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1973), pp.1-5; Merid Wolde Aregay, "Gondar and Adwa: A Tale of Two Cities," Taddese Beyene (ed.), in *Proceedings Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 26-30 November 1984, Vol. II, p.57.

⁶ Donald Crummey, "Towns in Ethiopia: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in his *History Miscellanea One*, IES, pp.1-12

⁷ Benti Getahun, "Shashamane: Foundation and Early Growth up to the Italian Occupation", in *Proceedings of the Fourth Seminar of the Department of History, Awasa 8-12 July, 1987* (AAU, 1989), p.10.

⁸ Tekalign Woldemariam, "Notes on Entoto, The Precursor of Addis Ababa (1881-1892)", in *Proceedings of the Fourth Seminar of the Department of History, Awasa 8-12 July, 1987* (Addis Ababa University, 1989), p.134

internal factors many popular towns and cities in certain period have declined and totally vanished in a slow and steady historical process similar to their birth and growth.⁹

The Euro-centric perception had some impact for the late beginning of urban history as a field of historical research in Ethiopia and the rest of Africa. Urban history, which is part of social history, in Africa was not the focus of historical research until the 1960s.¹⁰ In the same way, a historical study on the towns and cities in Ethiopia has not been given sufficient attention from scholars engaged in Ethiopian studies. Studying the urban centres and towns in Ethiopia was started in the 1960s. Richard Pankhurst is the pioneer in this regard by studying the city of Addis Ababa.¹¹ In recent years, historians have attempted to study on the various towns and urban centres of the country. In north-western Ethiopia, several towns and urban centres emerged since the 16th century. Some of the towns in the Lake Tana region have received scholarly attention such as Derita by Abdussamad H.Ahmad (1989), Debre Tabor by Richard Pankhurst (1977), Gondar by Solomon Addis (2006), and Bahir Dar by Seltene Seyoum (1988).

Nonetheless, the town of Qorata Wolete Petros that was a popular town and market

centre with its coffee plantation has not been studied yet and left to the margin of historical study. Studies conducted on Qorata exclusively focused on the hagiography of Saint Wolete Petros. Qorata Town was popular market centre from the 17th to 20th centuries and it had the features and functions of Ethiopian towns and urban centres. Hence, it is worthy for historical study. In this paper, I want to show these features and functions of the town and its development with the introduction of coffee plantation in the early 18th century. Qorata is located on the southeast shore of Lake Tana, in the district of Dera. It is situated between Bahir Dar and Yifag towns.

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1 General Objective

- The general objective of this paper is to reconstruct the history of the town of Qorata from its foundation to 1975.

2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this paper are:

- To analyse how the town of Qorata was founded
- To investigate the introduction of coffee cultivation into the town and its economic significance for the growth of the town
- To discuss the factors that led to the growth and decline of the town
- To explore the social structure, and urban features and functions of the town
- To assess the religious, commercial and administrative functions of the town.
- To contribute to the broader Ethiopian urban historiography by

⁹Tesema Ta'a, "The Process of Urbanization in Wollega, Western Ethiopia: the Case of Neqemte", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1993), p.59.

¹⁰ Shimelis Bonsa, "The Historiography of Addis Ababa: A Critique and a Discussion of the 'Ethiopian City,'" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol.45 (2012), pp.21-22

¹¹ Richard Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1961)

filling the literature gap on the town of Qorata.

3. Methodology (Materials and Methods)

Since the study is historical research, it employed historical research methods. The data for this research is gathered from primary and secondary sources. The archival documents, travellers' accounts, and first-hand information obtained from eyewitness informants are the primary sources. The secondary sources include the unpublished and published resources like

articles, books, pamphlets, and magazines. Eye witness accounts are collected from elders in the study area, in the district of Dera. Archival documents are collected from the former North Gondar Administrative Zone Record Office (NGAZRO) (now the Central Gondar Zone) at Gondar city. The secondary sources are collected from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) at Addis Ababa University and online journal sites. These sources are cross-checked, evaluated critically and used them as evidences in the course of writing this paper.



Figure 1. the location of Qorata Town on the south-eastern Shore of Lake Tana

Source: Adopted from Donald Cummeey, *Land and Society in the Christian Highland Kingdom of Ethiopia from the 13th-20th Centuries* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p 76

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Foundation

In the pre-20th century Ethiopia, towns and urban centres were developed from administrative, garrison, market and monastery/religious centres. However, they were few in numbers in Ethiopia's past because of sparse population

distribution, low level of technological development and the presence of local feudal social organizations.¹² The shift of the political centre of the Christian Highland Kingdom from Shewa to Lake Tana area contributed to the emergence of towns around the lake. Emperor Sertse Dengel (r.1563-1597) set up his capital at

¹²Solomon, pp.119-120

Enfranz. Likewise, Emperor Susenyos (r.1607-1632) made Denqez, Gorgora and Azazo his capital one after another. Gradually, these sites developed into vibrant urban and market centres.¹³ Gondar was founded in 1636 by Emperor Fasiladas (r.1632-1667) and gradually developed into an urban centre, serving as the third permanent capital of Ethiopia until the 1860s.¹⁴

Wolete Petros was a female Saint of Ethiopian Orthodox Church lived between 1593 and 1644. She was a prominent religious figure in the struggle against Catholicism in the reign of Emperor Susenyos (r.1607-1632). She was born to a noble family and was married to Melka'a Kristor, the governor of Lasta. He was one of the high-ranking army commanders of the king. Probably due to the loss of her three infant sons, Wolete Petros joined a group of monks on the shores of Lake Tana. However, she subsequently returned to her husband with mediation. When Melka'a Kristos was converted to Catholicism, she supported the resistance of *Tewahido* church and lived as a hermit in various churches of Lake Tana. She was exiled to the wilderness in Zegie for three years.¹⁵ She was also sheltered at Rima

Medhani Alem monastery and stayed for some years by praying and preaching Orthodox *Tewahido* doctrine. Her followers increased from time to time and Rima was not enough to hold her supporters. A new area was needed for them and she requested *Aba* Za-Hawariate, head of Rima Medhani Alem church, to get the nearby forest covered small peninsula for settlement of her followers. In Amharic “ይች ባህር ገብ ቁርጥ መሬት ትፈቀድልኝ” (This inland sea, allow my followers to settle). On the basis of this, the area has been named “ቆራጥ” (Qorata).¹⁶

Wolete Petros is relatively popular in Qorata where there was a monastic community. She was one of thirty women saints in the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church and one of the six women saints with hagiographies. She passed away in 1643 and laid to rest in Rima Medhani Alem Church. *Aba* Zehawariat led Wolete Petros' community at Qorata and they were able to write her hagiography in 1671/72 having a narrative of iconographic cycle. This indicates that the community had the resource at the time to produce it.¹⁷

¹³ Richard Pankhurst, “Three Urban Precursors of Gondar: Enfranz, Gorgora and Danqaz,” In Robert Hess (eds), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Session B, April 13-16, 1978* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1979), pp.415-426.

¹⁴Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Highland Kingdom of Ethiopia from the 13th -20th Centuries* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp.75-77, 105

¹⁵Yirga Gelaw, “Colonial Rewriting of African History: Misinterpretations and Distortions in Belcher and Kleiner's Life and Struggles of Walatta Petros”, *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages, History and Culture*. Vo. 9, No 2, (2020), pp.137-139; Wendy Laura Belcher, “Sisters Debating the

Jesuits: The Role of African Women in Defeating Portuguese Proto Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century Abyssinia”, *Northeast African Studies* , Vol. 13, No.1 (2013), pp.144-147

¹⁶ Te'ezazu Mesfin, “YeDera Wereda Yeturist Meseheboch Merejä,” (Ambesamie, 2000 E.C), p.3

¹⁷Claire Bosc-Tiesse, “Creating An Iconographic Cycle: The Acts of Walata Petros and the Emergence of Qorata as A Place of Asylum”, Siegbert Uhlig ed. in *Proceedings of the XV International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20-25, 2003* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp.410- 415

4.2 The Growth of Qorata

Church endowments, its role as a place of asylum, trade, and coffee cultivation were important factors that contributed to the development of Qorata Town since its inception in the 17th century. Most towns in north-western Ethiopia were education centres having mostly one main endowed church and obtained their names from it. For example, Dima Giorgis, Qorata Wolete Petros, Derita Mareyam can be mentioned. Such endowed churches were called *Dabir* or *Gedam* and they obtained *gult* and *rim* lands from Emperors or regional ruling classes in return for their services to them. In dreadful times, sanctuary endowed churches helped to preserve and protect accumulated agricultural surpluses and property, and gave provisions and asylum for refugee and those seeking to escape punishment by the kings.¹⁸ Churches also gave religious services and various functions to the surrounding people. The presence of people around a church led to the evolution of markets and growth of towns.¹⁹ Qorata Wolete Petros was among the churches around the Lake Tana that Emperor Fasiladas and his successors gave ecclesiastical endowments.²⁰ The Church of Qorata Wolete Petros was founded by Emperor Fasiladas and dedicated to Saint Wolete Petros. In the reign of Fasiladas the church had about 300 monks.²¹

Qorata Wolete Petros was a place of asylum and a centre of the *Tewahido* movement during the Gondarine period. In the reign of Emperor Iyasu I (r.1682-1706), members of its religious community participated on his side in two synods in 1690s. The Emperor was supporter of *Tewahido* doctrine during the religious controversy with Qebat faction and called for monks of Qorata to examine the Orthodoxy of the newly brought Egyptian bishop, *Abuna* Markos. The church was a place of asylum in the Gondarin period and *Zamana Mesafint*. Following the assassination Emperor Iyasu I in 1706, the murderers, namely Pawlos (governor of Damot) and Darmen (governor of Gojjam), are said to have taken shelter in the vicinity of Qorata for some time. In return, king Tewoflos (r.1708-1711) gave compensation for monks of Qorata church who acted as intermediate of the case. In 1730, Empress Mentewab gave 30 pieces of gold to Qorata Wolete Petros and returned its former *gult* grants.²² This implies that Qebat doctrine affiliated Emperor Dawit (r.1716-1721) had expropriated Qorata's former *gult* grants. Initially, Emperor Bekkafa (r.1721-30) was *Tewahido* affiliated king and tried to reconcile the *Tewahido* and *Qebat* factions. The main leader of the *Tewahido* camp during Bekkafa's period was Amha Iyesus of Begemdir.²³ Thus, Empress Mentewab's activity to the church of Qorata was a reconciliation act, although she was a Qebat affiliated woman in her later years.

¹⁸ Crummey, "Towns...", pp.6-12

¹⁹ Solomon, pp.120-121

²⁰ Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Highland Kingdom of Ethiopia from the 13th-20th Centuries* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp.75-77

²¹ La Verle Berry and Richard Smith, "Churches and Monasteries of Lake Tana, Ethiopia, 1972", *Africa*, Anno 34, No.1/2 (1979), p.19

²² Crummey, *Land....*, p.164

²³ LaVerle Berry, "Coalition Politics and Royal Office in the Mid-18th Century Gondar", In *the 10th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Volume I (Paris, 1994), pp.220-223

The accessibility of *gult* land or *rim* lands of the church for rent attracted artisans and merchants to settle around Qorata Wolete Petros church. They were separated from the quarters of government and church officials. Government and church officials supported the development of market centres, as they generated revenue and contributed to their personal economic prosperity.²⁴

During the *Zamana Mesafint* (c.1769-1855), there was insecurity in the northern provinces of Ethiopia. Since bandits and war lords plundered peasant villages, many people including rebels took asylum in Qorata. Gondarine period kings are said to have given amnesty to rebels sheltered there. For instance, Emperor Tekle Giorgis in his July 1782 proclamation gave asylum right to Qorata and Daga Estifanos churches.²⁵ Due to insecurity, victim peasants took refuge in nearby towns and most towns in Begemdir congregated the destitute peasants and entreaties. Members of the urban communities and churches gave support to them.²⁶ The asylum position of Saint Wolete Petros Church contributed to its development as a commercial centre. As Henry Blanc, a British envoy to Emperor Tewodros II, states “merchants eagerly sought the protection of such a sacred asylum, and soon an important commercial city arose at the foot of the church.”²⁷ In times of

disputes, the clergies of Qorata Wolete Petros also played a role in bringing peace by reconciling conflicting parties. For example, around 1813, when *Dejazmach* Zewdie Seltan of Damot and *Ras* Gugsä Maršo of Yejjū quarrelled and prepared for battle stationing their forces near the outlet of Abay River from the Lake Tana, the former at Andasa and the latter at Robit Bata, the monks of Qorata Wolete Petros initially reconciled them and averted the blood shade.²⁸

The existence of market place and permanent population number of various sizes was one of the features and functions of most towns in northern Ethiopia including Qorata. Gradually, local markets attracted caravan merchants and led to the growth of local markets into caravan markets.²⁹ The Lake Tana area was the nerve line of the commercial activities crisscrossed by various routes during the Gondarine period. Qorata was connected with various trade routes: to the east with Estie Mekane Iyesus and Mahdere Mariam, to the west across Lake Tana with Zegie, to the south with Bahir Dar via Cherechera and with Adet via Alata Bridge over Abay River, and to the north with Yifag, Derita and Gondar.³⁰ This trading activity led Qorata to evolve from a religious centre to a major market and urban centre in the 18th century.

In north-western Ethiopia, most towns including Qorata had served as

²⁴ Abdussamad H. Ahmad, “Darita, Bagemdir: A Historic Town and Its Muslim Population, 1830-1889”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1989), pp.441-442

²⁵ Bosc- Tiesse, pp.415-416

²⁶ Abdussamad, “Darita...”, p.442

²⁷ Henry Blanc, “From Metemma to Damot, along the Western Shores of the Tana Sea”, *Journal of*

the Royal Geographical Society of London, Vol. 39 (1869), p. 47

²⁸ Blundell W (eds.), *The Royal Chronicle of Abyssinia 1769-1840* (London, 1922), p.479

²⁹ Donald Crummey, “Towns...”, pp.1-12

³⁰ Seltene Seyoum, “A History of Bahir Dar Town, 1935-1974” (MA Thesis in History, AAU, 1988), p.8

administrative centres and residences of local ruling classes. This attracted judges and tax collectors to reside together with the ruling classes.³¹ As a result, it became a resident of rich merchants and local government officials. The Scottish traveller, James Bruce, in 1770s mentioned that Qorata and Alata Bridge over Abay were the places where *shums* (local governors) and *negadrases* (literary head of merchants) lived.³² The trade routes via Alata Bridge as well as the use of *tankwa* to Bahir Dar, Zegie and Delgi had contributed to the economic significance of Qorata.³³

The introduction of coffee cultivation to Qorata in the early 18th century contributed a lot to its growth. It appeared, before the end of the 17th century the Ethiopian Orthodox Church did not encourage Christians to drink coffee possibly due to religious and cultural reasons. Perhaps, as a result of this, the Jesuits who were in Ethiopia in the 16th centuries did not document any coffee consumption in the northern regions.³⁴ Although coffee was exported to the outside world, coffee drink and coffee cultivations were not common in northern Ethiopia until the 18th century. When a French physician Charles Poncet visited Gondar via Sennar in the Sudan in 1699, he observed that while the residents of Sennar drank coffee but it was not consumed in Gondar.³⁵ In 1769, James

Bruce saw coffee being served at the residence of the Naib of Arkiko near Massawa.³⁶ Moreover, coffee was likely considered a luxury enjoyed exclusively by the ruling elites.³⁷ Despite its limited local consumption, coffee cultivation began in Qorata and other areas of Lake Tana shores in the early 18th century.

The growth of the town of Qorata as an important commercial centre, place of asylum and residential place of local governors and *negadrases* attracted craftsmen or artisans. The presence of craftsmen and people engaged in selling food and beverage was another feature of towns in north-western Ethiopian including Qorata. Artisans in Qorata were involved in weaving, smithing, pottery, and tanning. They were mostly tenant farmers settled near market places to sell their products and rent land from the church and local government officials. Most artisans in the Lake Tana region were religious minorities such as Muslims, Falasha and Woyto. They had no *rist* land rights and to support their life most artisans engaged in farming in the form of crop sharing agreements.³⁸ The Woyto involved in producing *tankuas* (reed boats) which was used for transporting goods and people across Lake Tana. In Begemdir, Islam said to have entered and expanded by Muslim traders and clerics who came

³¹ Crummey, "Towns ...", pp.1-12

³² Bruce, Vol.V, pp.83-100.

³³ Seltene, p.12

³⁴ Merid Wolde Aregay, "The Early History of Ethiopia's Coffee Trade and the Rise of Shawa", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (1988), pp.19-20

³⁵ Charles J. Poncet, "The Journey of Charles Jacques Poncet From Cairo into Abyssinia and

Back", in *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries: At the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. W. Foster, (London, 1949), p.106.

³⁶ James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Blue Nile in the year 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773*. Vol.III, (Edinburgh, 1813), p.13.

³⁷ Richard Pankhurst, *A Social History of Ethiopia: The Northern and Central Highlands from Early Medieval Time to The Times to the Rise of Tewodros II* (London: Edmunburg Press, 1990), p.314.

³⁸ Crummey, "Towns", pp.1-12

from north following the long distance trade routes. However, it is difficult to state the specific time. In addition to trade, Muslims engaged in weaving and craftworks. Although Christians were less interested in caravan trade for different reasons, Christian merchants participated in trade by permanently residing on urban centres.³⁹ For instance, there were rich Christian merchants named Kassa and Wondie who resided in Qorata in the 1860s.⁴⁰

Qorata was noted as the resident of craftsmen. Due to its asylum status, Qorata had relatively larger number of craftsmen who produced better quality crafts including brassware, church ornaments, sword blades, bowls, and harness decorations than the surrounding areas. Craftsmen in Debre Tabor produced large needles. Derita was distinguished for its leather work and its craftsmen also produced beautiful silk cords which served as money (medium of exchange) in the nearby areas.⁴¹

The growth of the town of Qorata also attracted people engaged in producing and selling local alcoholic beverages. Qorata was noted for the production of wine and it supplied to the neighbouring markets including Gondar. Wine was a commercial goods and it also served as a preferable item which rulers accepted as a tribute. Every trader of wine was said to have paid a jar of wine every year. The vessels used

by the mass were unglazed earthen jars. Mostly between the months of March and May, wine was abandoned and it relatively cheaper. A single *amole* (bars of salt) was exchanged for a large jar of wine, about six gallons.⁴²

The high demand for coffee in the external market and the suitability of Qorata for coffee production encouraged the residents to engage in coffee plantation. The monks of Qorata are said to have better economic power than other sections since they engaged in coffee cultivation on the peninsula covered with forests. Coffee seedlings were planted in the area in July and August. Then in September the seedlings were shifted to the shades of big trees that naturally coffee trees need. After three years, the seedlings produced coffee beans. The suitability of the soil of Qorata for coffee helped inhabitants to produce large amount of coffee in a small plot of lands.⁴³ Samuel Gobat, a protestant missionary who was in Ethiopia in the 1830s, noted that the monks in the town of Qorata were very wealthy and lent money to chiefs and merchants with interest. Similarly, Edward Ruppell, a German traveler, in the 1830s stated that coffee cultivation around the lake was dominant mainly in the Muslim town of Qorata where every inhabitant had a group of coffee trees.⁴⁴ Coffee produced in the lake area was predominantly exported to the Sudan via Metema-Gallabat route, as it was a shorter distance compared to the route through Massawa. The export across the northern highlands to Massawa was

³⁹ Abdussamad H. Ahmad, "Trade and Islam in the Towns of Bägemdir 1900-1935", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1996), p.5

⁴⁰ Pankhurst, *A Social...*, pp. 207-304.

⁴¹ Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia: 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: HSIU Press, 1968), pp. 271-272.

⁴² Solomon Addis, *A History of the City of Gondar* (Asmara: The Red Sea Press Inc, 2006.), pp.12-13

⁴³ Informants: Gared, Getaneh and Tebebu

⁴⁴ Pankhurst, *A Social ...*, pp.181, 236, 314.

very limited in the 19th century because of the long journey and rugged landscape. For example, Charles Beke, a British traveller in the 1840s, reported that the value of Ethiopia's coffee export at Massawa amounted to £200 per year.⁴⁵

In addition to coffee, Qorata was ideally located in the resourceful areas that produced different trade items. The two French brothers, Antoine and Arnauld d'Abbadie visited Qorata in 1843/44, described it as a town with a striving market supplied with goods like honey, meat and butter by the people of Gojjam. Qorata had a large market where both raw and processed cotton brought from Quara and the Sudan by pack animals was transported across the lake to Qorata.⁴⁶ Antoine d'Abbadie, perhaps with some exaggeration, described Qorata as "the greatest city of East Africa, proud of its sanctuary and of its 12,000 inhabitants."⁴⁷ Walter Plowden, a British Consul, passed through Qorata in the mid-1840s on his way to visit *Dejjazmach* Berru Goshu of Gojjam. He travelled from Qorata to Bahir Dar by reed boat across the lake because it was a safe route than the land route from bandits.⁴⁸

The members of the British Mission to Emperor Tewodros II, namely R. Markham, Hormuzd Rassam, Henry Blanc and Henry Stern, were camped at Qorata in early 1866 gave us information about the

town. They moved from Zegie and Wondegie to Qorata by *tankwa* across the lake. Markham expressed his view about Qorata as "The first view of Kuorata, as approached from the Lake, is picturesque in the extreme. To the eye it seems like a terraced hill covered with the tangled foliage of wild coffee and lemon tree, while here and there the conical top of some house peeps forth."⁴⁹ Since Qorata is suitable for coffee production, the local people have been harvesting it without investing much labor. Coffee and lemon are still well known in Qorata, and there is a popular song in Dera, that says:

የቆራጣ ሎሚ ወደ ዘን ዘሚል

እንኳን የቀመሰሽ ያየሽ አይኑን ታሟል፡፡⁵⁰

The lemon of Qorata is inclined to Zegie

Let alone those who test her, those eyes who saw her became ill.

Coffee has been grown in Qorata under shade of big trees. As Henry Blanc says "from the sea it is almost impossible to see the town, so close and compact are the towering dark cedars and sycamores - the just pride of the inhabitants. The whole hillock is so completely covered with vegetation of every description, [...]"⁵¹ Hormuzd Rassam states how much the clergy of the town warmly received them at Qorata as follows: "about two miles to the south of the town, where upwards of a hundred ecclesiastics from the neighbor well assembled to welcome us [...] They were in full canonicals, and greeted us with prayers and psalmody [...] on our arrival at Qorata we were taken to *Ato*

⁴⁵ Charles T. Beke, "A Memoir on the Commerce of Abyssinia," in *Letters on the Commerce and Politics of Abyssinia and Other Parts of Eastern Africa* (London, 1852), p.4

⁴⁶ Seltene, p.12; Pankhurst, *A Social ...*, p.214.

⁴⁷ Pankhurst, *A Social ...*, p.214.

⁴⁸ Walter C. Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country* (London: Longmans, Green and co.,1869), pp.190-192, 250.

⁴⁹ Clements Markham, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition* (London: Macmillan and Co.,1869), pp.101-102.

⁵⁰ It is a popular poem in Qorata.

⁵¹ Blanc, *Narratives ...*, p. 58

Wonde's house which was considered the best in the place and then *Ato Kassa*".⁵² Henry Blanc described Qorata's true urban feature of the time as "Korata is, after Gondar, the most important and wealthy city of Abyssinia, it is a town of priest and hatched by the water of the Tana Sea. The houses, many of them built of stone and mud, are superior of any we saw in Abyssinia."⁵³

4.3 Decline of Qorata Town

Various factors hindered the development of Qorata town in the last quarter of the 19th century. Epidemic was the one. For some time, Qorata was served as military camp of Emperor Téwodros II in June 1866 and his army estimated by Markham was about 40,000. However, within few days cholera epidemic broke out at Qorata and many people died.⁵⁴ Blanc wrote about the cholera at Qorata as follow:

Cholera had by this time broke out in the camp [Qorata], and hundreds were dying daily. In the hope of improving the sanitary condition of the army, the Emperor moved his camp to some high ground, a mile or so north of the town, but the epidemic continued to rage with great virulence both in the camp and in the town [Qorata]. The church so completely choked up with dead bodies that no more

could be admitted, and the adjoining streets offered the sad sight of countless corpses, surrounded by the sorrowful relatives, awaiting for days and nights the hallowed grave in the now crowded cemetery. Smallpox and typhus fever also made their appearance, and claimed the victims cholera had spared.⁵⁵

Qorata's commercial significance continued, despite the negative effect of the epidemic. An Italian traveler, Carlo Piaggia, who visited it in 1873-1875, reported the large number of monks, coffee plantation and the presence of slaves who performed various works. He also notes in Qorata the dominant production of honey and an alcoholic drink called *Tejj* by fermenting it with laurel leaves.⁵⁶

In addition to the 1866 cholera, the religious policy of Emperor Yohannes IV (r.1872-1889) hindered the coffee cultivation, population size and trading activity of Qorata. In the 1878 Borru Meda religious council, the emperor declared that Orthodox *Tewahido* Doctrine as the only official religion of the state. It is said that in the years after the council, Muslims in the northern provinces forced either accept Christianity or leave the country to the frontiers. As a result, most Muslims of Qorata and Gondar said to have preferred to leave for the Sudan.⁵⁷ Stecker, who visited Qorata in 1881 states:

⁵² Hormuzd Rassam, *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore, King of Abyssinia*, Vol. I. (London: John Murry, 1869), pp.317-319.

⁵³ Henry Blanc, *The Story of the Captivity: A Narrative of The Events of Mr Rassam's Mission to Abyssinia* (London: Smith, Gilder and Co, 1868), p.58

⁵⁴ Rassam, Vol. II, p.130; Henry A. Stern, *The Captive Missionary: Being An Account of the Country and People of Abyssinia* (London: Cassle, Petter and Garpin, Nd), pp.286-287.

⁵⁵ Blanc, *Narratives*...,p.66

⁵⁶ Antonio Romitti, "Carlo Piaggia's Sojourn Around Lake Tana: (1871-1875)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 19 (1986), pp.114-117

⁵⁷ Pankhurst, *Economic*... p. 202.

On 1 April 1881, we reached Korata, the most important, most charmingly situated and largest town of Lake Tsana. Korata is famous for the first-rate excellent of its coffee, which as I was able to satisfy myself, flourished here exceptionally. The place is almost the most important market on the Tsana, but at the moment does not contain more than eight hundred to one thousand inhabitants against three thousand in Tewodros's time, as very many have either migrated from the town or died of fever. At earlier time the Mohammedans were numerous here, but most of them were emigrated to Gallabat after the order issued to them by king John that they should one and all embrace Christianity. Only a few families abandoned Islamism and adopted the Coptic faith.⁵⁸

Moreover, Stecker notes Qorata town was sub-divided into ten *sefers* [quarters] namely "Dengel teffa, Tukuwodeb, Margeza, Kulomalfia, Siet biet Negus, Guaquata, Guwi, Adisamba, Voftchogevia, Gusudur and Islam biet (or Islam modeb), which last is at present entirely deserted."⁵⁹ From this idea, we can realise that Qorata town had ten *sefers* named largely after the items of trade sold

in the market and settlements of different social classes. Like the city of Gondar, the Muslims had a separated quarter at Qorata.

Local and external political developments of the 1880s and 1890s were the other factors that had a negative effect on Qorata Town. The age-old market of Gondar and the Metema-Gondar trade route lost its glory as the major import and export of Ethiopia starting from the 1880s because of the Battle of Embabo (1882), the war with the Egyptians and the Mahdists, the shift of the capital to Addis Ababa with the rise to power of Emperor Menelik II, the opening of Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, and the emergence of rival ports like Gambela along the Sudanese border.⁶⁰ Especially, the Ethio-Mahdist war led to the decline of frontier commercial relations between Ethiopia and the Sudan via Metema. Subsequently, the Great Famine (1888-1891) also hit the region and diminished the productive capacity of the two countries.⁶¹

Conversely, due to the presence of the British and the Italians colonial governments in the Sudan and Eritrea respectively, there was revival of trade in the northern regions since the dawn of the 20th century.⁶² In the early decades of the 20th century, coffee cultivation in Qorata had become important and slaves who came mainly from the area south of Abay River were actively involved in it. Coffee

⁵⁸ Arthur J. Hayes, *The Source of the Blue Nile* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1905), p.123

⁵⁹ Pankhurst, *Economic...* p.202; Hayes, pp.123-124

⁶⁰ Bahru Zewde, "An Overview and Assessment of Gambella Trade (1904-1935)," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (1987), pp.93 - 94

⁶¹ Abdussamad H. Ahmad, "Gojjam: Trade, Early Merchant Capital and the World Economy, 1901-1935" (PhD Diss, University of Illinois, 1986), pp.15-116

⁶² Seltene, "A History..." p.15.

became an important export crop and it helped the inhabitants mainly priests of Qorata to become economically prosperous. Priests were planters of coffee estates and used largely slave labor to produce coffee.⁶³ The larger scale production of Coffee at Qorata was reported by Arthur J. Hayes who visited it in 1902. Hayes states:

The coffee bushes, which attain a most remarkable size, grew wild here, [...] Evidently the soil is admirably suited for the rising of this product to advantage; the coffees is of an excellent quality, and through the natives bestows no trouble and spend to money on the industry, there is even now a steady export trade in the berries from this district. The principal market for it is in the Soudan, [...] ⁶⁴

Hayes further notes about the peoples of Qorata that he estimated at 2,000 and out of these three-quarters were slaves. He stated that the church of Qorata had many priests and *debtaras* or scribes. Hayes stated Qorata as “a typical township of western Abyssinia.”⁶⁵ Slaves were one of the most important trade items in the region for centuries. In the Lake Tana region, the most important market center for slaves was Yifag, about 60 kilometers north of Qorata.⁶⁶

Various churches in the district of Dera also planted coffee in their church yards

under the shade of tall trees and they harvested considerable amount of coffee beans. Among others, Tana Qirqos Monastery (in the district of Dera) was prominent in this regard. The export of coffee from Qorata had steadily continued in the first three decades of the 20th century and it was more preferable and expensive than that of Zegie. For instance, in 1911, Antongini reported “about seven to eight Egyptian rotoli of Qorata coffee cost a Thaler in Qorata itself, the same amount Zegie coffee sold for a Thaler at Metema.”⁶⁷ However, Antongini did not mention the price of coffee from Qorata at Metema. Moreover, following the Arab insurrection against the Ottoman Empire, in the 1910s, there was a slowdown of coffee trade at Aden, and taking this event as an advantage Qorata and Zegie merchants exported coffee steadily via Asmara in addition to via Metema.⁶⁸

Since coffee plantation at Qorata was profitable for the inhabitants of the town, district officials and influential *balabats* of Dera obtained land around the town for coffee plantation. Since such people were not resident of the town and they lived relatively in faraway areas from the town, they planted coffee in their granted lands and gave caring and harvesting works to tenant farmers and artisans of the town with a share-cropping agreement. Mostly the agreement was half of the product for the plantation owners and half for care takers.⁶⁹ This system continued until the end of *rest* land tenure system with the

⁶³ Informants: Gared Chekol, Getaneh Eyassu

⁶⁴ Hayes, p.116

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp.116-127

⁶⁶ Solomon, p.11

⁶⁷ Abdusasamad H. Ahmad, “Priests and Slaves of Zage (Ethiopia), 1900-1935”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 29, 3 (1997), pp.543-556.

⁶⁸ Abdusasamad, “Gojjam: Trade, ...”, pp.218-219.

⁶⁹ Informants: Getaneh, and Gared

coming to power of the Derg regime in 1975. Thus, coffee plantation at Qorata contributed a lot to the economic growth of its people and local merchants who sold its coffee in the towns and markets of the region. It was also a source of revenue for *Ras* Gugsä Wole, the governor of Begemdir (r.1901-1908, and 1918- 1930), who taxed merchants at various areas when they entered or came out from his territory.⁷⁰

However, coffee cultivation and trading activities at Qorata town was hampered during the Italian military occupation (1936-41). Like other areas, trading activity declined due to the resistance movement and absence of peace and security. Moreover, suspecting the resistance fighters sheltered in the church, Italians destroyed Wolete Petros monastery and killed monks in about August 1937.⁷¹ After liberation, trade in the area revived and the town of Qorata regained its commercial significance once again.⁷² The coffee plantation of Qorata was a source of dispute among local officials after liberation. *Ato* Kebret Wolde Qirqos, Emperor Hayle Selassie's *bete rest shum* in Begemdir and Semien province, wrote a petition to the office of the Governorate- General in 1949 as follows:

.... በደራ ፎገራ ክፍል
ስለሚገኘው የግርማዊ
ጃንሆይ አጼ ሀይለስላሴ
ቤተርስት 1ኛ ጣና ቂርቆስ

⁷⁰Asfaw Tässäma, “Yä-Ras Gugsä Wäle Tarik” IES, Ms. No.998, (1967 E.C), p.36; Awoke Asmare, “The Career of Ras Gugsä Wale c.1877-1930” (MA Thesis, Department of History, AAU, 1996), pp.43-44.

⁷¹ Informants: Garäd, Taräqäñ, Gétanäh; Berry and Smith, pp.19-20

⁷² Informants: Ṭebäbu, Tägäñä, Garäd.

የቡና የጌሾ ተክል ያለበት
2ተኛ ክርስቶስ ስምራ
በሚባለው ገዳም ውስጥ
የቡና የጌሾ ተክል ያለበት
3ተኛ ደምጦሳ ቁስቋም
በምትባለው ገዳም ውስጥ
የቡና ጌሾ ተክል ያለበት
4ተኛ ቆራጣ ወለቴ
በምትባል ገዳም ውስጥ
የቡና የጌሾ ተክል ያለበት፡፡
ክቡር ሆይ በነዚህ አራት
ገዳማት ውስጥ ያሉ የቡና
አትክልት ሰባት ሽህ ዘጠኝ
መቶ ሰማኒያ አራት እግር
ቡና፤ 2 ሽህ ሶስት መቶ
ሰላሳ እግር ጌሾ በአርባ በ፵
ዓ.ም ሌባ በላው ... ለአርባ
ሁለት ለ፵፪ ዓ.ም ደግሞ
እነዳይለቀምብኝ ጥብቅ
ትእዛዝ ለገዳሞች
ለመምህሮች
እንዲተላለፍልኝ በማክበር
አመለክታለሁ፡፡⁷³

This is regarding the *bête rest* of Janhoy Emperor Hayle Selassie I found in the district of Dera Fogera. First, Coffee and buckthorn trees found in Tana Qirqos Monastery. Second, Coffee and buckthorn trees found in Kristos Semra Monastery. Third, Coffee and buckthorn trees found in Demboza Qusquam Monastery. Fourth, Coffee

⁷³ NGAZRO, Kebret Wolde Qirqos to Begemder and Semen Governorate Office, dated 13 Teqemet 1942 E.C

and buckthorn trees found in Qorata Wolete Monastery. You're Excellency, the coffee and buckthorn trees found in these four Monasteries are seven thousand nine hundred eightyfour (7,984) coffee trees and two thousand three hundred thirty (2330) buckthorn trees. In 1940E.C thieves had stolen them. I apply sincerely an order to send to the *memehers* of the monasteries not to take the products of the 1942 E.C.

Merchants of the Qorata also brought coffee from Zegie using *tankua* (red boats). But people preferred Qorata's coffee for its quality and it was bought by merchants who came from several regions. Qorata's coffee was dispatched to the north to Yifag, Derita, and Gondar, and to the east to Estie Mekane Iyesus and Debre Tabor. Locally coffee was purchased and sold using *fenjal* (ceramic cup) and *becharie*(a flask) measurements. The medium of exchange was mainly the paper money and coins of Emperor Haile Selasie. However, since there was no banking service in the town, there was shortage of legal currency. As a result, people usually conducted trading activity by bartering and using Maria Theresa Taler. The price of coffee varied from season to season and from place to place. Merchants of other regions, in return for coffee, brought to Qorata commodities like salt, cloth, flasks, ceramic cups and other

fabricated goods using pack animals transport.⁷⁴

Frederic Simoons, who conducted research in northwestern Ethiopia in the late 1950s, states about the cultivation and production of coffee at Qorata:

Though an occasional Muslims of Begiemeder and Semen cultivated a few coffee plants in his garden, there is no commercial cultivation of coffee in the province except in the Dera region along the southeastern shore of the Lake Tana, where cultivation is reported to be carried on a small scale. There is, however, considerable production of coffee just south of the lake on Zegie Peninsula in Gojjam province. Some of this coffee is shipped northward overland by pack train or across the lake by balsa; the market town of Delgi, on the west shore of the lake, is an important destination of balsa traffic in coffee.⁷⁵

However, beginning from the early 1960s, Qorata town lost its trading significance because of the opening of the highway road between Bahir Dar and Gondar via Addis Zemen. On the newly opened road Hamusit Town was founded in about 1962. Soon the town of Qorata was eclipsed by a rival Hamusit market due to its strategic location along the main road. Before the

⁷⁴ Informants: Gétanäh, Ṭebäbu, Garäd, Tägäñä

⁷⁵ Frederic Simoons, *Northwest Ethiopia: Peoples and Economy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p.113.

foundation of Hamusit, there was an old local weekly market called Dera Gebeya, located about three kilometres to the east of the present day Hamusit town. This market also shifted to the newly founded town. Local government officials and many of the residents of Qorata shifted to Hamusit. Instead of pack animals, most merchants also used car to transport goods to towns located on the Bahir Dar-Gondar road.⁷⁶

La Verle Berry and Richard Smith, who visited Qorata in 1972, reported the presence of 50 clergies in the church and they appreciated some of the houses constructed there by saying “[...] a far different kind of Ethiopian dwelling than any we had ever seen. Obviously built during a more affluent era, there were apparently many such houses at Kworata when it was a flourishing centre in and after the seventeenth century”.⁷⁷ They also says about the newly under construction church as

it was the finest looking church we had seen. The compound was surrounded by a stone wall, broken down in places, beyond which stood large trees (*zigba*). The land around the church is not cultivated now, but this area used to be renowned for its coffee which was traded widely round the lake.⁷⁸

Subsequently, with the coming of the Derg to power and proclamation of mass ownership of rural land in March 1975, the *rist* land ownership ended. This denied peasants to own land outside of their localities. Thus, several coffee plantation owners at Qorata lost their holdings. Most of the inhabitants of Qorata were also moved to Hamusit and Bahir Dar towns and as a result coffee plantation lacked care and protections. With this, the popular town of Qorata and its coffee relatively declined.

5. Conclusion

The history of Qorata Wolete Petros Town shows the dynamic interplay between religion, economy, and political change in the Lake Tana region from the 17th century to 1975. The church was founded in the reign of Emperor Fasiladas and was dedicated to Saint Wolete Petros, a prominent woman in the struggle against Catholicism in the reign of King Susenyos. The monastery soon developed to urban and local administrative centre in the 18th century and makes Qorata was one of the oldest urban centres in the Lake Tana region. The support of Gondarine Emperors by giving endowments and asylum position to the monastery and the advent of coffee cultivation in the area in the 18th century helped the inhabitants of the town to be economically prosperous. Its coffee had an excellent quality and preferred much by merchants in the lake region. Qorata's commercial significance was related to its integration with the regional trade networks. When Gondar lost its political centre for Shewa and the subsequent shift of the trade route to Djibouti in the last quarter of the 19th

⁷⁶ Setegn Getaneh, “A History of Dera Woreda (South Gondar), 1935-1991” (MA Thesis, AAU, 2011), p. 78-79

⁷⁷ La Verle Berry and Richard Smith, p. 19

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 19-20

century had a negative effect on Qorata. This national political condition coupled with various regional and local conditions since the 1860s hindered Qorata's development. However, it was an important urban and commercial centre inhabited by diverse social classes: monks, local governors, *negadrses*, merchants, and craftsmen. Finally, due to the opening of Bahir Dar- Gondar all-weather road in the 1960s and Derg's March 1975 rural land proclamation, Qorata Town lost its glory in region.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge individuals who helped me in the writing this paper. First, I want to thank the former North Gonder Administrative Zone Record Office workers, especially *Woyzero* Belaynesh Telahun and *Ato* Amare Tsege. They gave me relevant archival documents while I was there to gather sources. I also would like to thank staffs of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) for giving me sources relevant to this article. I also want to acknowledge my informants who gave me valuable information on the history of Qorata.

Bibliography

I. Unpublished

A. Archives

NGAZRO, a letter from Kebret Wolde Qirqos to Begemder and Semen Governorate Office, dated 13 Teqemet 1942 E.C, no folder and file numbers

B. Institute of Ethiopian Studies

Asfaw Tässäma. (1967 E.C). "Yä-Ras Gugsä Wäle Tarik" IES, Ms. No.998,

C. Thesis and Dissertations

Abdussamad H.Ahmad. (1986). "Gojjam: Trade, Early Merchant Capital and the World Economy, 1901-1935." PhD Diss, University of Illinois

Awoke Asmare. (1996). "The Career of Ras Gugsä Wale c.1877-1930." MA Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University.

Seltene Seyoum. (1988). "A History of Bahir Dar Town, 1935-1974." MA Thesis in History Addis Ababa University.

Setegn Getaneh. (2011). "A History of Dera Woreda (South Gondar), 1935-1991." MA Thesis in History, Addis Ababa University.

Te'ezazu Mesfin. (2000 E.C). "*YeDera Woreda Yeturist Meseheboch Merejä*". Ambesamie

II. Published

Abdussamad H.Ahmad. (1989). "Darita, Bagemdir: An Historic Town and Its Muslim Population, 1830-1889." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3

_____. (1996). "Trade and Islam in the Towns of Bāgemdir 1900-1935." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2

_____. (1997). "Priests and Slaves of Zage (Ethiopia), 1900-1935." *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol.29, No.3

Akalou Wolde-Michael. (1973). "Urban Development in Ethiopia (1889-1925) Early Phase." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1.

Bahru Zewde. (2000). "A Century of Ethiopian Historiography," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2.

Bahru Zewde. (1987). "An Overview and Assessment of Gambella Trade

- (1904-1935).” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 1
- Belcher, Wendy. (2013). “Sisters Debating the Jesuits: The Role of African Women in Defeating Portuguese Proto Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century Abyssinia.” *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1
- Benti Getahun.(1989).“Shashamane: Foundation and Early Growth up to the Italian Occupation.” in *Proceedings of the Fourth Seminar of the Department of History, Awasa 8-12 July, 1987*.Addis Ababa University.
- Berry, La Verle and Smith Richard. (1979). “Churches and Monasteries of Lake Tana, Ethiopia, 1972”, *Africa*, Anno 34, No. 1/2
- Berry, LaVerle. (1994). “Coalition Politics and Royal Office in the Mid-18th Century Gondar.’ In *the 10th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Volume I. Paris.
- Blanc, Henry. (1868) *The Story of the Captivity: A Narrative of The Events of Mr Rassam’s Mission to Abyssinia*. London: Smith, Glder and Co,
- Blanc, Henry. (1869). “From Metemma to Damot, along the Western Shores of the Tana Sea”, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 39
- Bosc-Tiesse, Claire. (2006).“Creating An Iconographic Cycle: The Acts of Walata Petros and the Emergence of Qorata as A Place of Asylum.” Siegbert Uhlig ed. in *Proceedings of the XV International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg July 20-25, 2003*. Wiesbaden.
- Bruce, James. (1813).*Travels to Discover the Source of the Blue Nile in the year 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773*. Vol. V. Edinburgh.
- Carmichael,Tim.(2006).“Bureaucratic Literacy, Oral Testimonies, and the Study of Twentieth-Century Ethiopian History.”*Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1.
- Crummey, Donald. “Towns in Ethiopia: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.” in his *History Miscellanea One*, IES
- _____.(2000). *Land and Society in the Christian Highland Kingdom of Ethiopia from the 13th -20th Centuries*.Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Gamst, Frederick. (1970).“Peasants and Elites without Urbanization: The Civilization of Ethiopia.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*,Vol. XII
- Hayes, Arthurd. (1905). *The Source of the Blue Nile*. London: Smith, Elder and Co.
- Horvath, Ronald. (1969).“The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia.” *Journal of African History*, Vol.X, No.2.
- Markham, C. (1869). *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition*. London: Macmillan and Co.
- Merid Wolde Aregay. (1984). “Gondar and Adwa: A Tale of Two Cities.” Taddese Beyene (ed.), in *Proceedings Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, November 26-30, Vol. II.
- Merid Wolde Aregay. (1988). “The Early History of Ethiopia's Coffee Trade and the Rise of Shawa”, *The*

- Journal of African History*, Vol. 29, No. 1,
- Pankhurst, Richard. (1961). "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa." *Journal of African History*, Vol. 2, No. 1
- _____. (1977). "The History of Dabra Tabor (Ethiopia)." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 40, No. 2
- _____. (1979). "Three Urban Precursors of Gondar: Enfraz, Gorgora and Danqaz." In Robert Hess (eds), *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Session B, April 13-16, 1978*. Chicago: University of Illinois,
- _____. (1990). *A Social History of Ethiopia: The Northern and Central Highlands from Early Medieval Time to The Times to the Rise of Tewodros II*. London: Edmunsburg Press.
- _____. (1968). *Economic History of Ethiopia: 1800-1935*. Addis Ababa: HSIU Press,
- _____. (1964) "The Trade of Northern Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1.
- Plowden, Walter C. (1869). *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country*. London: Longmans, Green and co.
- Poncet, Charles. (1949). "The Journey of Charles Jacques Poncet From Cairo into Abyssinia and Back." in *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries: At the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. W. Foster. London.
- Rassam, Hormuzd. (1869) *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore, King of Abyssinia* Volume I and II. London: John Murry.
- Romitti, Antoni. (1986). "Carlo Piaggia's Sojourn Around Lake Tana: (1871-1875)." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 19
- Shimelis Bonsa. (2012). "The Historiography of Addis Ababa: A Critique and a Discussion of the 'Ethiopian City.'" *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 45.
- Simoons, Frederic. (1960). *Northwest Ethiopia: Peoples and Economy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Solomon Addis. (2012) "Urbanization and the Urban Space in Africa: The Case of Gondar, Ethiopia." *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Vol. 45.
- Solomon Addis. (2006). *A History of the City of Gondar*. Asmara: The Red Sea Press Inc.
- Stern, Henry. (1869). *The Captive Missionary: Being An Account of the Country and People of Abyssinia*. London: Cassle, Petter and Garpin.
- Yirga Gelaw. (2020). "Colonial Rewriting of African History: Misinterpretations and Distortions in Belcher and Kleiner's Life and Struggles of Walatta Petros." *Journal of Afroasiatic Languages, History and Culture*. Vo. 9, No 2.

List of Informants

No	Name	Age	Date of Interview	Place of Interview	Remark
1	Gared Chekole (Ato)	89	20/05/2012	Areb Gebeya town	He was a sub-district administrator in the imperial period. He knows well about Qorata.
2	Getaneh Eyassu (Ato)	88	15/06/2010	Hamusit Town	He had coffee plantation at Qorata and was coffee trader among Qorata, Zegie and other local markets. He knows well about Qorata.
3	Tegegne Asfaw(Ato)	75	18/07/2010	Hamusit Town	He was a local official and <i>ballabat</i> in the area. He knows well about Qorata
4	Tebebu Agemas (Ato)	85	28/08/2011	Hamusit Town	He was a local official and coffee trader in Qorata in the imperial period. He knows well about Qorata