





# Editorial by Dr Jama Musse Jama



## Building an enabling environment for knowledge production: a paradigm shift in the Global South and Global North Collaboration for Research

In Africa and the wider Global South (GS), a new environment that enables culture, art and other knowledge producers locally should prioritise structural reform of the existing system. In this editorial, we list a set of non-exhaustive practical suggestions, intended to help to improve the research environment. I start from the perennial question “who should benefit most from research?” The answer, surely, is that there is mutual benefit in seeking a high-impact form of collaboration of the Global South and Global North (GN). This is essential, the notion of reciprocity that is in anthropology a basic to every well-balanced human relationship. Another priority in common for both sides is the need to promote self-respect in local cultures through a global art, humanities, and research partnerships. Parties in both the GS and GN must see themselves as part of a joint endeavour, whose terms of engagement ensure that neither are in a position of subservience or acquiescence to the other. Publications in local and access to the repositories remotely are a priority in this collaboration.

That GS leadership needs to allocate better resources for their own research and gradually seek an end to the current overwhelming GS reliance on external research patrons. This is by no means to deny the possibility of a future in which research funding continues to reflect an internationalist interest in ‘finding out’ about global issues, the current imbalance that sees funding streams flow so disproportionately from GN to GS is damaging and can only be rectified by increasing levels of GS research funding. GS researchers for their part need to build self-confidence within a wider research community. This means an ability to resist becoming mere ‘informants’, or being compelled to accept research agendas and conceptual frameworks that are not collaboratively developed. There is also a need for a GS research environment that seeks to ‘decolonize from within’: researchers should focus on bottom-up processes for evaluating and building trust within local communities, instead of ceding the right to establish local networks and research priorities to GN or diaspora researchers.

There is also a language issue that reflects pragmatic reality: the need to improve the capacity to write in English, the lingua franca for worldwide knowledge production. There is a new generation of



researchers based in the GS, well equipped with sound methodologies, but for whom the English language is a barrier (for example, some of Francophone countries or countries which use local languages for basic education without English language in schools). This is particularly a problem in humanities and social science as opposed to natural science, i.e. in fields where there is an emphasis on 'writing' or 'argument' beyond the expertise or 'capability'. As laudable as these policies often are in intent, the reality we must face is that English is increasingly employed as the medium for much research. The debate on English as the language for contemporary conversation is heated by the contradictory positions between Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Biodun Jeyifo, amongst others [see Mugane, 2018].

The production of a cohort of capable and trained senior researchers also demands that PhD programmes be strengthened throughout the GS, and most particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, so that issues of importance locally can be taken up by researchers trained and developed in precisely the localities with those needs. In the case of society in transformation, like Somaliland, where the transition from oral to written culture is in action, extra tools and platforms like the Hargeysa International Book Fair become instrumental [Jama Musse, 2019].

Access to knowledge produced by local researchers is also critical. That requires the promotion of local writing and the publication of books to a professional standard and translated or generated in local, including African, languages. While English might in practical terms be the medium of communication for a growing proportion of researchers, local languages remain (indeed, must remain) a rich source of cultural identity and diversity. African languages are, as others, are, an invaluable asset that should be protected and promoted through cultural exchange within Africa scholarship. In this regard, the GS needs to create an intellectually vibrant cohort, with publications in one's own country/region that does not simply submit to the peer review norms of GN journals, but seeks a degree of professionalism that is the equal of that in the GN, but with characteristics that reflect a more local array of traditions. To accomplish this, GS institutions need also to develop long-term plans - a minimum of 12 years at a time - to build strong platforms that can produce researchers first, followed by strengthening research outcomes.

Knowledge generation and knowledge processes need to be anchored in issues and conflict realities they are trying to address. The assumption and common practice of GN countries as the "givers" (i.e. methodology, direction, money, ideas, "capacity") and GS as mere recipients (i.e. implementers), needs to be interrogated fundamentally. Givers-takers is this ancient problem of one single-way dynamic of help. The fact is when we give without asking anything in return, we only "assist" and impoverish ourselves. We do not learn anything from this logic of donation, except self-esteem. On the other way, GN very often still considers GS as an "open market" for field research, but not necessarily for collaborations with local academics, research departments, and very important, students and teaching activities. In my opinion, GN needs to reshape its own vision of knowledge, which remains very much euro-centrist and in the end, sadly self-sufficient.

Modernizing knowledge production in the GS should have as base the elaboration of endogenous and indigenous approaches and methodologies to challenge the power exercise. This requires not only the full engagement of the GS scholars in order to bridge better this process of modernization, but also to be the frontrunners of leadership in this process. In terms of co-producing knowledge, an enabling environment must make room for such collaboration and at the same time contribute to 'liberating knowledge' by emphasizing that research be undertaken "with" rather than "about" the GS [see Horst et. al., 2018, for similar argument].

The GS needs also to look at its institutional limitations and acknowledge the gap it might create in knowledge production without compromising the quality of knowledge produced. Creating the GG to GS networking, methodological development, and formulating space to share knowledge for concrete, critical, constructive, and honest reflection with each other. HCC is taking the lead in this initiative by creating both a discussion platform and also this magazine which is shaping itself as an academic publication by creating positive collaboration between GS and GN researchers and research institutions.

Accordingly, in this issue of Dhaxalreeb, 2022, we focused on the knowledge production in the region with contributions from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Somaliland. The articles published include Filed research papers, Book Reviews, reflections, and desk reviews.

We hope it to be a sustainable space for knowledge production with a wider scope of including publications mainly in indigenous knowledge production and management. I thank all the contributors and invite others to join the practical knowledge sharing by publishing on the magazine.

#### Bibliography

Horst, C; Erdal, MB, 2018  
Co-Creating Knowledge: Creative collaborations between researchers, artists, policymakers and practitioners, PRIO Policy Brief, 10. Oslo: PRIO. Online <https://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=11129> Retrieved 1.12.2018.

Jama Musse Jama, 2019  
Transitioning from oral to a written culture: The impact of Hargeysa International Book Fair, Africa e Mediterraneo n. 89 (2/19), "Libri d'Africa, Libri in Africa".

Msiska, MH 2017  
Rethinking the future of Humanities in Africa and the question of epistemological agency, J. Humanities. (Zomba), Vol. 25, No. 1, 2017, pp. 5-30.

Mugane J, 2018  
Contemporary conversations: is English an African language?, Journal of African Cultural Studies, 30:2, 121-123, DOI: 10.1080/13696815.2017.1357353

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1995  
'On the Abolition of the English Department', in The Postcolonial Studies Reader, first edition ed. by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 438-42.

# Impressum

Dhaxalreeb - ISSN 2074-028X

Vol 18. No. 1, 2022

Warside ka hadla aqoonta, dhaqanka, fanka iyo suugaanta. Waxa soo saarta Xarunta Dhaqanka ee Hargeysa.

Dhaxalreeb waa warside sannadkii soo baxa dhowr jeer oo kusoo baxa qaabab kala duwan:

- Dhaxalreeb (Warsida ka hadla aqoonta, dhaqanka, fanka iyo suugaanta) waxa uu soo baxaa sannadkii afar jeer. Gu', Xagaa, Dayr, iyo Jiilaal. Tirsigani waa kii Xagaaga 2022 ga.
- Dhaxalreeb (Waanada macallinka) waxa uu soo baxaa sannadkii lix jeer, waana warside xilliyeed waxbarasho oo xidhiidhiya Ardayga, Waalidka iyo Macallinka.
- Taxanaha Dhaxalreeb waa qoraallo aan kalgal sugan lahayn oo sannadkiiba dhowr jeer kasoo baxa degelka redsea-online.com oo loo qaybiyo si buug elektoroonig ah. Ka eeg <http://www.redseaonline.com/e-books>.

**Soo saare / Publisher: Ponte Invisibile Edizioni**

REDSEA Culture Foundation

[www.redsea-online.com](http://www.redsea-online.com) | [admin@redsea-online.com](mailto:admin@redsea-online.com)

**Tifatire guud/Editor in chief**

Dr. Jama Musse Jama, [jama@redsea-online.org](mailto:jama@redsea-online.org)

**Tifatire cadadkan/ Editor of the issue**

Tirsit Yetbarek, [tirsit.yetbarek@redsea-online.org](mailto:tirsit.yetbarek@redsea-online.org)

**Wakiillada/Country representatives**

Ka eeg bogga <http://www.redsea-online.com/dhaxalreeb>

**Qoraalka ku socda tifatiraha / Articles to the editor**

Email: [dhaxalreeb@redsea-online.com](mailto:dhaxalreeb@redsea-online.com)

**Buugaagta / Books for review**

Jama Musse Jama

Via Pietro Giordani 4, 56123 Pisa, Italy || Xarunta Dhaqanka ee Hargeysa, Sha'ab area, Hargeysa, Somaliland.

**Golaha talo-bixinta iyo tifatirka / Advisory board and editorial team**

Cabdalle Ducaale Wacays, Ayaan Maxamuud Cashuur, Cabdalle Cismaan Shafey, Cabdillaahi Cawed Cige, Cabdiraxamaan Yuusuf Carten, Ibraahin Yuusuf Axmed "Hawd", Rashiid Sheekh Cabdillaahi "Gadh wayne", Xasan Cabdi Madar, Rooble Maxamed.

© 2022 Xuquuqda qoraalkani waxay u dhawran tahay soosaaraha wargayska.

**Internal and cover design**

Muuqo ([info@muuqo.com](mailto:info@muuqo.com)), Hargeysa, Somaliland.

Published and bound in Somaliland.

# CONTENTS

- 5** ART-CENTERED COMMUNITY BUILDING, KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION & SHARING PLATFORM: THE HARGEYSA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR  
BY TIRSIT YETBAREK
- 11** INTOLERANCE: A VILE AND DANGEROUS HUMAN ATTITUDE  
BY SAID JAMA HUSSEIN
- 14** IN THE SEARCH OF THAT SPECIFIC KIND OF MANUSCRIPT. TRIP NO.3  
BY JAMA MUSSE JAMA
- 22** HOW CAN THE HORN BE STABILISED? SECURITISATION OR INVESTMENT IN DEVELOPMENT  
BY SAMUEL TEFERA ALEMU (PHD)
- 25** A BOOK REVIEW ON THE NOVEL: BLACK MAMBA BOY  
BY NADIFA MOHAMED  
BY ABDIFATAH MOHAMED ABDI
- 30** REBUILDING A CONTINENT OF PROUD PEOPLE ON AFRICA'S KNOWLEDGE BASE  
BY ANTHONY BIEGON, NERISA KAMAR, & DR. JAMA MUSSE JAMA
- 33** IGIABA SCEGO'S LA MIA CASA È DOVE SONO (MY HOME IS WHERE I AM)  
BY MANISHIMWE GISELLE MUSABIMANA
- 37** AMIR TEDINA BINT MAYA: THE VISIBLY INVISIBLE AMIRA OF HARAR  
BY TIRSIT YETBAREK
- 46** SITAAD': THE SOMALI WOMEN'S TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL GATHERING  
BY MUNA AHMED & HAMDIA RARGE
- 51** BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOMALI STUDIES (BOSS)  
BY MOUSTAFA ALI AHMED
- 53** HARGEYSA CULTURAL CENTER'S ARCHIVAL CASSETTES  
BY HAFSA OMAR
- 56** NABADGELYO SICIID: A LEADING SCHOLAR AND TRUE ENLIGHTENMENT THINKER PASSED AWAY  
SAID JAMA HUSSEIN (1942 - 2022)  
BY JAMA MUSSE JAMA

## Art-centered community building, knowledge production & sharing platform: The Hargeysa International Book Fair

by Tirsit Yetbarek



### Introduction

After the devastating civil war Somaliland faced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the need to rebuild all institutions even to the level of rebuilding homes was a daunting task the community had to focus on. The nation had lost both its human and infrastructural elements by aerial bombardment of the then Somali Republic government state apparatus. The capital city Hargeysa was literally flattened to the ground (War-torn Societies Project', (2005); Bradbury, (2008); Kaplan, (2008)). The efforts after reclaiming independence in May 1991 were invested in the rebuilding of the social, political, and economic situation of the country. The effort was a successful experience that brought a functional homegrown government system and government, political stability, and hopes for community-led development. While this macro-level nation and community development granted transition, aspects of the social fabrics such as the cultural and artistic social elements were not given as much attention as they deserved. It was well understood that it was not the priority at that turn of the national situation but it was also important to make sure the central cultural identity is not lost in the making.



The concern was pressing as the efforts of rebuilding the nation came after the mass migration and foreign destination of the leading artists who were the voices of the community in the nationally praised literary act mainly poetry. The fact that the community had to migrate to all corners of the world exposed the people to different cultures and ways of life. This has interplayed in the concern and the need to capitalize on what defined the community before the tragic civil war. It is in this aspiration of preserving the identity, art, and culture of the community along with the belief that “art and culture is what makes a society human”, initiatives were started by concerned Somalilanders in the diasporas. Among these initiatives that became successful and managed to lead the centralization of art and culture in Somaliland is the Redsea Cultural Foundation which was established in 2001 and gave birth to the Hargeysa International Book Fair, which has become the biggest art and cultural festival in the Horn of Africa, and Hargeysa Cultural Center which is now a permanent space for social debate and cultural performance (Economist (2019), Anglo-Somali Society Journal (2019).



While the Redsea Foundation started its activism and service through a printing press in Italy using the publishing house of Ponte Invisible, the Hargeysa Cultural Center built itself in Somaliland Hargeysa starting in 2004 by practically campaigning for the restoration, preservation, and promotion of the art and culture of the society along with creating space for reading for social development physically in the community. It also envisioned using art and culture as a means to rebrand and keep Somaliland on the world map through the soft diplomacy of the cul-

tural festival where the Hargeysa International Book Fair become the channel.

### ***The Hargeysa International Book Fair and The Hargeysa Cultural Center***

As indicated in the introduction, the birth of the two pillars; Hargeysa International Book Fair and the Hargeysa Cultural Centre, came as a response to the fear of losing the Somali art and cultural expressions such as poetry and theatre due to the destruction that forced the community to refuge including the leading artists. The need to see seeds of identity preservation and place the nation on the global map facilitated the realization of the mission. Currently, The Hargeysa Cultural Centre runs the Hargeysa International Book Fair, a Research and knowledge development Institute, and the Redsea online publishing.

I was one of the fortunate who is in Italy and found both the time and privilege to fully become conversant with the world around me and the drastic changes being brought about by the dynamic development of science and technology. I was imbued with the deep conviction that only by moving from oral culture to a culture based on reading and writing can the Somali society recover its identity, preserve its history and keep pace with the rapidly changing world. (From an upcoming book by Dr. Jama Musse Jama, 2022)

In 2014, Redsea Cultural Foundation (RCF), the institution that initiated the Hargeysa International Book Fair (HIBF) in 2008, felt the need to make a permanent hub for Somali culture, and with the partnership of Rift Valley Institute (RVI) and with the support of European Union (EU), established the Hargeysa Culture Centre (HCC). The main aim of the Centre was to promote the culture of reading and writing and foster a culture of tolerance through reading among the young generation of Somalilanders and create an enabling space for the youth and wider society to have a platform for discussion and expressing themselves. The Centre targeted youth and women intentionally, but because of the political situation of the country (i.e. unrecognized), it turned out to be the flagship interface for the international community to connect to Somaliland and vice versa. It became an open window for the young to the world, but also for the international community to engage with Somaliland people when political restrictions do not allow direct engagement with the government. This has made a significant

impact as so many people identified Somaliland with the Book Festival and the Cultural Centre, and vice versa (The Economist (2018), The Guardian, (2019))

The aim of the Centre hence is, on the one hand, to foster internally a strong cohesion among the sectors of a fragmented society (intergenerationally, gender-wise, economically, and in terms of class, through unhealed, post-conflict traumas, etc.) to nurture and cultivate just, democratic, tolerant and enabling spaces that release full intellectual and spiritual capacities. As the lack of space for discourse and interaction creates a poverty of thought, well-being, and personal development, the Centre provokes young people to learn, to allow themselves to acquire their own space, and not to infringe on the space of others. On the other hand, the aim of the Centre is to connect an otherwise isolated society to the rest of the world by showcasing its art and heritage by inviting visiting artists and scholars via cultural and artistic exchanges.

Prior to having the permanent physical space of the HCC located now, Hargeysa International Book Fair come into existence in 2008 enabling the first physical gathering of the community to celebrate art and culture at a rented space in Hargeysa. At the start, the initiative was surrounded by many questions including the relevance and if it is even realistic for such initiatives for a community that has had so many pressing issues. This was a well-understood context even by the organizers but it had its long vision of planting the seeds for tomorrow's big tree that shades the identity, culture, and social fabrics of the community.

After many years and effort in the diaspora, it culminated in the inception of the Hargeysa International Book Fair in 2008, in Somaliland; but our aim was much more than what the name simply suggested – an exhibition of books for mere commercial purposes, for our society had

no money and did not even value books. Art, culture and books were certainly not a priority, and to most seemed even a little crazy, but we strongly believed that in the short term, arts and culture could help with the recovery and healing of our society and in the long term be truly instrumental in the cultural transformation of the semi-literate Somali society. (Excerpt taken from an upcoming book by Dr. Jama, 2022)

This fear of not being a timely matter and might not even work was also shared by people like Dr. Edna Adan, the patron of the Hargeysa International Book Fair. Dr. Edna has shared her reservations at the beginning days stating that; “a book fair in Hargeisa? Who would come?” (Dr. Edna Adan, 2015 at Hargeysa International Book Fair) She as a patron now is an ambassador to the event speaking that it has defied all thoughts and become a true space of internal and external coexistence. The consistency in hosting the Fair with an ever-increasing number is a testimony for the call to have the

festival was a well-tough action. In gross numbering, it can be said the book fair so far had more than 70,000 people engaged as indicated in the Yearly reports of the Center.

The book fair has set its own structure for the events. Two of the main elements are the theme of the year and the Guest country. The theme of the year sets the main discussion point of each year's Book Fair. The first fair had the theme of Freedom in 2008 followed by censorship in 2009. The remaining themes up to now included Citizenship, (2010) Collective Memory, (2011), Visualizing the future, (2012), Journey, (2013), Imagination, (2014) Spaces, (2015), Leadership & Creativity, (2016), Wisdom, (2017), Connectivity, (2018) Coexistence, (2019), COVID19, (2020), Neighborhood, (2021) and Solidarity for 2022.

The Guest country format mainly follows the theme of the year and brings representatives from the country selected for the year to highlight the relationship and sharing of what makes the guest country unique. It also is a





way to inform the guest country representatives who in most cases are artists who have a wider influence in their countries, so that they can become an ambassador for Somaliland by sharing their experience at the Book Fair. The guest countries hence have been, Djibouti, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Rwanda, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Senegal for this year. The guest countries are all from Africa since the festival wants to stand in harmony with the Pan-African ideology of stronger continental cultural and community relations that will foster better development and coexistence. This ideology is not limited to the invitation of guest countries but also it is manifested in the collaborative work the center has with other literary festivals. The partnership includes but not limited to African literary events including StoryMojja (Kenya), Kwani?(Kenya), Writivism (Uganda), AMLA Network (Continental level), Music In Africa Connects (South Africa), as well as non-Africa-based African literary network including Africa Writes (UK) and African Book Festival (Berlin). The most notable partnership is the one with the annual Somali Week Festival held in the UK, which enables to bring representatives of local Somali artistic productions including books, music, and paintings as well as their producers to the UK to participate in the week-long events and get international exposure to the Somali Diaspora community and their host countries.

#### Academic Role of the Center and the Hargeysa International Book Fair

##### *The Cassette Archive*

While creating a permanent space for cultural and art promotion, HCC has enabled the preservation of not only the contemporary cultural art production in all forms but it also has become a depository for the past productions especially those which are no more in circulation. For instance, the Centre's role in the preservation and promotion of Somali music by building an archive with more than 14000 cassettes collection that has diverse historical, traditional, and other significant sound collections is a major knowledge store and production tool. 4000 of these cassettes were already scrutinized and cataloged and the digitation process is ongoing. This collection has served in the production of contemporary written and audio-visual documents such as the "Sweet as broken dates" label produced by Ostinato Records (USA) in 2017, which is one of the typical examples of the many contributions the sound collection provided. Scholars in

contemporary art and humanities use the music archive regularly. The archive is also part of the digitalized sound archive that is the base for the translation, academic articles, and also references to the change in the music pattern and industry. Dr. Christian Woolner has done her Ph.D. research using this archive (Christina, 2016).

The great contribution of the Centre in terms of music is also exhibited in the grand project of Qaarami songs project the Centre implemented in 2018 and has evolved into the establishment of the Muusdanbeed, a council of Somaliland prominent artists, poets, and musicians in the traditional Somali songs. Providing space for the young musicians during the book fair, and specially arranged events for their performance is a major part of the activities in the music sector.

##### *Manuscripts Research and Preservation*

Another prominent contribution to the academics and preservation of indigenous knowledge is through the research and collection of manuscripts. The center has more than 198 rare manuscript collections which are a primary source for ongoing research regarding the cultural and religious development in the region and in the nation, which has not been yet utilized. The digitalization process along with the academic articles to be published based on this available national treasure is something the Centre sets as an assurance for the maintenance and preservation. The research and collecting of manuscripts now extend to the Horn of Africa. An academic discussion by leading Islamic and manuscript researchers is a constant panel structure for the Book Fair. The maps collection is also a rare collection that is helping in informing concrete historical developments in nationhood and border-based identity formation.



##### *Academic Dialogue in Hargeysa (ADIH)*

Academic Dialogue in Hargeysa (ADIH) is a discussion platform run by the Hargeysa Cultural center that also brings

the experts pool for the academic panels taking place during the Hargeysa International Book Fair. This has been a major part of the center's activity starting in 2017. The aim of the dialogue platform was initially to be a networking platform for researchers in Somaliland and also for researchers coming to the region to do research on Somaliland and the region of the Horn of Africa in general. The platform had 71 presentations by researchers mainly at a PhD level. It was a physical presentation and discussion system until the covid-19 pandemic forced to change it to a virtual engagement, especially in 2020 and 2021. In late 2021 and 2022 after the global restriction for public gathering is lifted, it went back to its physical gathering but kept also the virtual platform as it has created a technology-assisted togetherness beyond space limitation. The series Africa 40&40 which covered academically the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was a bigger part of the center's regional and global contribution. Currently, the platform is run as a hybrid of virtual and physical gathering to share knowledge and develop the co-creation of knowledge between south-south and South-North researchers.

##### *Bibliography of Somali Studies (BOSS)*

Bibliography of Somali Studies is a comprehensive online system meant for the scholars and researchers of the field of Somali Studies to browse and the aim of BOSS is to offer an open-access database, containing indexed bibliographic data of Somali Studies. The bibliography is established to help scholars and researchers in the field of Somali Studies to browse books, articles, reports, and conference proceedings relevant to their research projects. BOSS is planned to produce an electronic annotated bibliography of the Somali Studies field. So far the database has more than 1693 authors, a 1964 bibliography, and 645 subjects, and these subjects are divided as such; 133 books, 1637 articles, 68 chapters, 26 general, 73 theses, and finally 15 conference proceedings. (HCC archive, 2022).

##### *Pre-HIBF courses*

One other developed feature of the center and the Book Fair which is partly academics but also has its leg in the art and cultural preservation is the pre- Book Fair courses. Organizing courses in the knowledge and skill-sharing schema of the center has enabled the organizing of more than 15 courses in partnership with regional and



international institutions. Courses such as Library management are provided in collaboration with Information Africa a Kenya-based knowledge management institution, the Oral History research methods are organized in collaboration with Rift Valley institute and South Sudan University, and the Summer Lab Urban Development workshop training in collaboration with University College London, and the Academic and Creative writings in English in collaboration with Bristol and Exeter universities are once that are delivers with international and regional partners.

While these have been significant knowledge and skill-sharing courses, the most significant ones that are addressing the mission of transforming the community from the oral to the writing and reading culture is the Creative writing in Somali training given every year as a pre-HIBF activity. The training has been there for 10 years led by the most prominent Somali scholars such as the late Seid Hussein Jama, Macalin Said Salah, Rashid Gedweyane, Sh. Mohammud Shakh Dalamar. This course has enabled the creation of local young authors who are producing books both in Somali and English. In the 15 years of the Book Fair, more than 300 local books are produced. Every year the number of training participants increased the last one being 175 participants in 2021. The trainers also have grown in number by bringing talented young Somalilanders to be leading trainers through the years. This includes Mona Omer, a female Somali art and culture writer, and blogger. The impact of the creative writing in Somali also in turn also facilitated the establishment of a printing industry that was not in place in the first years of the book fair history. Currently, there are at least three publishing houses in Somaliland; Sagaljet, Hill Press, Color Zone and Sahan Books.



## Conclusion

The Hargeysa International Book Fair and the Hargeysa Cultural Center illustrate the possibility of creating a public space and leading a literary movement that will be owned and nurtured by the community it stands to serve. It is an example of a well-executed mission that lived for its vision of being a safe space for discussion at all levels, a place for cross-generational knowledge sharing, transmission, and preservation. has become a public space for discussion, knowledge sharing, preservation, and dissemination. The stages it has evolved from being a small gathering to a fully flagged institution leading research, capacity building, and democratic value development attest to its well-grounded long-term plan. The Book Fair has served its mission of being a window for the nation to engage with the wider world and for the world to see through a nation that wouldn't have been visible as the global space prefers recognized entities. Most importantly, the Book Fair has become a soft diplomacy tool with consistent delivery of pan-African-centered themes and guest countries. The unintended impact of the Book Fair which is multiplying its feature beyond the national border is another important contribution it has made. Currently, there are 6 regional book fairs with a similar mission of bringing the community together to discuss social issues, celebrate art and culture and produce knowledge. Few to mention are the Mogadishu International Book Fair, Jigjiga International Book Fair and the Rwanda Book Fair are among the list. The continental mission can also be considered an enabler for the envisioned regional and continental integration. It can be concluded that the Book Fair and the Centre are as stated beyond the name and serve a higher purpose that needs to be given due attention to replicate with contextualization and capitalize on the soft human aspect of the community.

**Tirsit Yetbarek Seme** is the research and academic programs director of the Hargeysa Cultural Center. She is also the Host of Academic Dialogue in Hargeysa an academic platform that facilitates networking and knowledge sharing and exchange platform. She comes from a language, literature, journalism, peace and security, and sociolinguistics academic and research background. She is interested in the development and political dynamics of the Horn of Africa. she can be reached at [tirsit.yetbarek@redsea-online.org](mailto:tirsit.yetbarek@redsea-online.org)

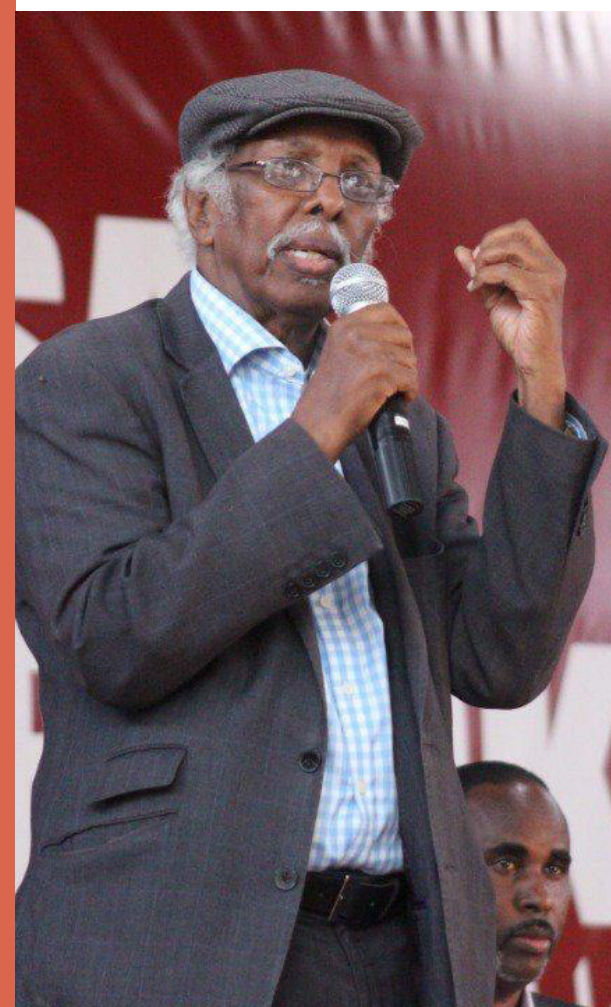
## References

- Anglo-Somali Society Journal (2019) <https://www.anglosomalisociety.org.uk/>
- Christian, W. (2016) The Labour of Love Songs: Voicing Intimacy in Somaliland. PhD Dissertation. UK: Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge.
- Drysdale (1994). Peace In Somaliland: An Indigenous Approach to State-Building Burao, Borama, and Sanaag Conferences. Academy for Peace and Development Hargeisa, Somaliland.
- Kaplan, S. (2008) 'The remarkable story of Somaliland', Journal Of Democracy, 19 (3), pp. 143157 [Online].Available at <http://www.sdwo.com/Somaliland.pdf>
- Mark, B. (2008), Becoming Somaliland, Progressio/James Currey, London/Oxford
- Michael, Walls and Steve, Kibble (2011). Somaliland: Change and Continuity. [http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland-change\\_continuity\\_2011.pdf](http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland-change_continuity_2011.pdf)
- WSP (War-torn Societies Project) International (Ed.). (2005) Rebuilding Somaliland. Issues and possibilities. Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press.

This article, rather more of an essay, was written by Said Jama Hussein at the wake of the second Hargeysa International Book Fair (2009), as one of the main themes launched to mark the literary splendour and significance of that occasion. Thirteen years on, and in the light of the groundbreaking changes currently taking place in our region in the Horn of Africa, that essay seems, by all standards, to us today equally begging for our attention and honest brooding. Hence its republication in this magazine for the benefit of our readers.

# INTOLERANCE: A VILE AND DANGEROUS HUMAN ATTITUDE

By Said Jama Hussein



The International Book Fair with Mooge Cultural Festival, held in Hargeysa, the capital of Somaliland between 22 July and 27 July 2009 was a unique cultural event at least for three tangible reasons:

Firstly, it was the first time a literary and cultural festival of that scale and magnitude has taken place in the country since the downfall of the obnoxious military rule of General Siad Barre in 1991.

Secondly, Since the festival had been primarily meant, as its name unmistakably indicates, to honour the memory of the late Mohamed Mooge Liban, celebrated artist of rare talents, a patriot and educationist of amicable personal qualities, Hargeisa as undisputed hub of Somali art and culture, and being the hometown of the late Mohamed Mooge, was the most apt venue to be chosen for this remarkable event.

Thirdly, the astonishingly excellent level of preparation and organisation carried out by the co-partners, KAYD arts and cultural organisation and Redsea Cultural Foundation, under the experienced and dynamic direction and leadership of Ayan Mahamoud and Jama Musse Jama respectively.

The Hargeysa festival which lasted for a whole long week, practically starting at dawn and finishing at dusk throughout the week, was meant to achieve three objectives: to inform, to entertain, and to educate. For this purpose, to the festival was invited an appreci-



able number of renowned artists, writers, poets, intellectuals, playwrights, professors, and prominent social figures. The sponsoring organisations of Redsea Cultural Foundation and Kayd had, this time also, true to their principled tradition in such undertakings, chosen such pertinent themes as Censorship, Intolerance, Need for Reading Culture to be debated and discussed as a vital and integral part of the festival programme.



And this is precisely the reason that prompted me to hastily scribble this short article on 'INTOLERANCE' as its subject. Before moving to our theme of 'Intolerance', let me say a final word about the festival. The turn out to the festival was massive beyond belief, particularly among the young generation who luckily happened to be on their school vacation; and the festival ended in a brilliantly resounding success.

It is my absolute conviction that of all human passions, attitudes, and behaviours the most dangerous and despicable is intolerance. Hence the fight against it must be equally resolute and tenacious. Human history is full of glaring examples of the immeasurable damage which extremist movements, be they political or religious or in many cases the combination of both, driven by their blind and powerful urge of intolerance, are capable of inflicting. To cite but a few easily remembered ones, we can easily mention the Crusade Wars in the Middle Ages, the First and Second world wars in the first half of the 20th century, and the most spectacular atrocity of our time- Al-Qaeda's attack on the World Trade Centre in New York killing at least 3000 people in the first year of this 21st century of ours.

It has been verified beyond the slightest shade of doubt that all radical and fundamentalist movements of whatever persuasion can be seen to have the spirit of intolerance deeply ingrained in their political ideologies or religious doctrines for that matter.

Appalled by the horrific outcome of the world wars of the last century, and to forestall the recurrence of similar catastrophes in the future, the United Nations has promulgated the Human Rights Law as a major article in its charter and made it binding to its member states. As quite well known, all the UN member states, despite their obvious differences and diversities, are signatories to this most plausible law ever to be enacted in the interest of humanity.

Its message is loud and clear- to unreservedly and indiscriminately safe-guard the well-being of humanity and forcefully thwart any measure deemed detrimental to the life and livelihood of humanity. The commendable positive impact of this Human Rights Law notwithstanding, yet the stark reality remains that no matter how fatal the policies may be practised by states or parties such repulsive and outrageous actions cannot be simply stamped out by the mere setting of a law. That is why even the most despotic and totalitarian regimes in the world today though having the Human Rights Law incorporated into their national constitutions, do not care the least.

On the other hand, a quick glance at the democracies or the democratic states in our world today is enough to reveal that they are sustained, among other essential factors like economic, social and cultural advancement, by the dissemination of the spirit of tolerance coupled with the enforcement of the rule of law. And that constitutes the bedrock of their much admired and envied social welfare and social harmony. As it is for the state, so it is equally true for the individual citizen. To acquire in your lifetime the commendable trait of tolerance as part of your personal

character is to have gained the key to the realm of human civilisation- the utmost that one can aspire to achieve.

Of special concern to us here is to briefly touch upon the theme of intolerance and how it applies to the Somali society. Since the ousting of the military regime headed by general Siad Barre in 1991 and the subsequent collapse and disintegration of the Somali state, the country has been ravaged by incessant, unabetting diabolical civil war that aptly earned it in the world mass media the reviled title of 'the most failed state' for the past two decades and which it strangely struggles to retain much longer.. Of course, this dire state of affairs did not come about randomly, nor as a curse from heaven as some feeble-minded people try to self-righteously explain. The

gist of it is that we came to this lamentable state as the result of logical culmination of unpopular and misguided policies and unbridled maladministration over the past forty years. In short, one can safely say that aside from the direct repressive policies and practices meted to the Somali people by the dictatorial Siad Barre regime and the warlords who succeeded him only to take his hateful legacy even further; in both instances the wilful and malicious spread by remorseless politicians of clannish values utilising the parochial notion of intolerance among the hapless population contributed to no small extent to the prevailing state of agony and hopelessness.



Over the past 20 years, at least, we have been hearing from Somalis, supposedly learned ones, as well as foreigners writing about the core causes of the ongoing Somali dilemma their haughty assertion- the same vague sing song- that the chief cause of the Somali predicament lies squarely on its nomadic, pastoralist, clannish way of thinking and behaviour. In other words, the qualities and natural behaviour of the pastoralist nomads were chiefly responsible for the unending internal wars and the destruction of the country. There is absolutely no denying of the fact that the parochial relations and the tribal value system dominantly prevalent in the countryside acted as a catalyst to be exploited by wily, undeterred selfish politicians serving their own interest and not caring the least for the Somali masses that brought them to power. This being so, yet such audacious claim that the Somali tribal structure and its traditional business norms were

the primary cause that ultimately ruined the country ludicrously smacks of naivety and can simply be dismissed as a load of rubbish. 'How have they – these pastoralists- been able to achieve independence in the first place?' is never asked. Nor is it for me to waste much time in that futile debate.

Worth reminding ourselves, there was a time when Somalia did enjoy a period of relative peace and stability. For the first nine years of its independence, Somalia had, compared to many other African countries, a relatively democratic system of governance that sowed a palpable degree of tolerance among its people and willingness to adhere to the rule of law.

Unfortunately, that was but short-lived. The blatant violation of the constitutional laws by the ruling echelons of the government brought a wedge between the rulers and the ruled which eventually paved the ground for the military takeover.

Moving to an interesting episode on personal level quite relevant to our theme of 'Intolerance', Nuruddin Farah the internationally acclaimed Somali novelist having come to the end of one of his trips to Kenya and on his way to the airport wanted to say his farewell to his father who had been undergoing medical treatment in Kenya at the time. Contrary to his expectation, he found his father cross with him and unforgiving because of his choice of becoming a professional writer in a foreign language and to no lesser degree critical of his choice of dress, his habits, and his friends. Addressing his son the father said curtly, "No one trusts subversives." To which Nuruddin dutifully replied politely but meaningfully, "I wish the two of us could be sufficiently tolerant of each other to celebrate our differences. It is time we got to know ourselves better, time we celebrated the differences in our world views." What a world of difference between the two positions or the two poles of tolerance and intolerance.

To sum up Intolerance is not an inherited but rather an acquired negative trait of character. It is engendered by the historical, geographical, psychological and political milieu in which a person has lived. It cannot be totally eradicated as long as human beings continue living on the face of the earth; but to reduce its negative effect to a minimum is quite a possibility. There could be multitudinous ways of different approaches. The one that is uppermost in my mind now, taking our present epoch



into view, is the one that entails the active collaboration of the most effective factors in the accomplishment of this colossal mission. These factors are the international community, the national state, the civil society, and the individual citizen. The attainment of the highest form of political and human moral consciousness by the person seems to be the ultimate desired goal in which each of the mentioned factors has its own significant role to play. Added to this is the delightful advantage offered by the dynamically transforming world of our time whereby the growing geopolitical, social, and cultural mobility, and the free flow of information, ideas, and value systems do inexorably expand the horizons of human awareness. In conclusion, let there be no illusion that this duty of working towards the realisation of a tolerant society living in harmony and free from the evils of prejudice, bias, and taboo in which sound political activities combine with systematic sound education and orientation to reach its final desired fruition, will definitely demand enormous efforts, huge sacrifices and a great deal of time. Indeed, it is one of the worthiest human endeavours to set our hearts and minds to.

**Said Jama Hussein (1942-2022)** was a well-known Somali scholar, intensely devoted to the promotion of the Somali language and culture. He is the author of *Shufbeel* and *Safar Aan Jaho Lahayn*; both are collections of short stories and literary essays. His most recent work *Ma Innaguun Baa!* also published by Ponte Invisible, comprises of short stories and personal Memoirs.



# In the search of that specific kind of manuscript trip no. 3

by Jama Musse Jama

Scholars who in the past documented written culture in the coastal area of Somaliland and the wider Somali peninsula, including Harar and Ethiopia highlands, spoke about the existence of Ajami writings in Somali language at least since the 2nd half of the 19th century. I looked at the small but important corpus of manuscripts preserved at the Hargeysa Cultural Centre, as well as some key single manuscripts

owned by private collectors or families, or in isolated shrines in Somaliland and in Harar. Also, for the last three years, I was traveling through the eastern and the southern regions of Ethiopia, to traceback some of these writings. I spent time in different institutions in Addis Ababa, where old Islamic and non-Islamic Ethiopian manuscripts are preserved, visited Negash in Tigrinya, Jigjiga in Somali State Region, Harar in Harari region, and now Welkite in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples State. I am grateful to Yikunnoamlak Mezgebu, the director-general of the National Archives and Library Agency of Ethiopia as well as a scholar and lecturer at Addis Ababa University with a focus on Ethiopian Literature in Geez, Amharic, and Tigrinha, who arranged this visit, and my colleague Tirsit Yetbarek of the Hargeysa Cultural Centre for putting together such a great and insightful trip to Ethiopia.

Established ca. 120 years ago by an Agropastoral community, predominantly Muslim background, Welkite is in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples State of Ethiopia, and in particular the Gurage Zone. It is in the fertile region of the Western Highlands of Ethiopia. Today Welkite counts about 30,000 inhabitants.



The bigger Gurage zone community is composed of seven ethnicities Sebatbet Gurage which correspond also to seven different linguistic backgrounds, and they are the Kebena, Silte, Wallane, Aneba, Marako, Ambaro, and of course Gurage which also englobes others as major linguistic ethnicity. In Welkite however, the linguistic predominance is Kebena, and the symbols and the oral history elements of the five Islamic Kingdoms of the Gibe region (Gera, Gomma, Gumma, Jimma, and Limmu-Ennarea) are still notable through the privately owned manuscripts, in the widespread small mosques in the remote areas, and centres of religious and educational settlements. The Zawiya (or the Hadra-s) are religious and educational centres formed in a complex of buildings

mainly a mosque, library or reading room, prayers room and some other buildings reserved for educational classes. They refer to a shrine or to a local renowned Sheikh, who could be the founder. Usually, they include separate buildings designated to host madrassa or to host travellers and members of the local Sufi brotherhood. Zabbi Molla Zawiya is the congregational place in Welkite that we have visited August 2021.

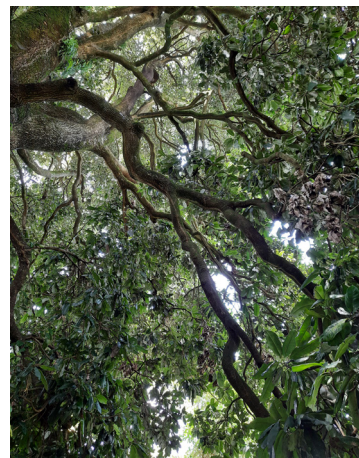


The Zabbi Molla Zawiya Centre was established by Sheikh Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥāḡḡ Surūr (1856-1914) with Sheikh Muḥammad al-Raššād al-Qāqī. Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥāḡḡ Surūr was the founder of the Raššādiyya ṣūfī order in the area, and he passed the Centre's management to his son Sheikh Badr al-Dīn b. al-Ḥāḡḡ Surūr b. Bašīr (?) (1910[1917?]-1972[1981?]), who continued the tradition until his death in 1972[1981?], and now the centre is led by the grandson Hagi Mohamed-Ammin b. Sheikh Badr Al-Dīn (1950?- ) who fathered 17 children, 9 of them working at the congregation while others moved to Addis Ababa or to outside of Ethiopia. Hagi Mohamed-Ammin told me that he counts 32 ancestors to Ismail al-Jabarti in his genealogy clan tree,



and when I asked if he knows where the tomb of Ismail al-Jabarti is, he said “probably they took the body back to Yemen”.

The Hadra is very welcoming and calm environment with old trees, according to the management of the congregation, dating back some 150 years ago. One of these trees locally called Leega tree is considered sacred and, according to Hagi Mohamed-Ammin, it was impossible to geminate elsewhere even from the local forestry department, and below in the photos, the tree with the green plate on its trunk, geminated by itself here at the Hadra. Other tree under which his father and grandfather used for teaching is still there, and the space is well cured and maintained.



There is a small room for the Imam of the mosque who acts also as teacher for the madrassa, whose name is Mişbāh al-Dīn b. Šayḥ Ġamāl al-Dīn b. Ḥāḡḡ Surūr. There were around 10 young students (between 11-16 years old), all of them male, learning in that morning



There is a nice residential area, with traditional hut, where Hagi Mohamed-Ammin’s younger wife lives. She is, as Hagi Mohamed-Ammin says, a strong woman who coordinates the entire work at the Centre and manages people who works there.



The mosque has a space enough for 100-150 people to pray inside, and some books for reading, mostly Quran, are located inside the small windows of the mosque. An interesting manuscript, which is usually read only during Ramadan nights, is found among the printed books in the mosque.

Hagi Mohamed-Ammin says that his father has been trained by a well-known Sufi Mufti from Raya who taught the right interpretations of Hadiths. His father later became an author by publishing books on prohibited habits such as chewing Qat and learning Tawhid, and this book is published in Egypt and now used in schools at Wallo region. One of the texts written by the father is “Muḥammad Surūr al-Ma’rūf bi’l-Ubbiyy b. al-Šayḥ Muḥammad Bašīr al-Zabiyy al-Qabīnī al-Šāfi’ī al-Qādirī al-Rašādī”. To follow the tradition, Hagi Mohamed-Ammin says, he sent one of his sons to study al-Azhar, Egypt, to learn the correct interpretation of Islamic literature and teachings.







The Centre has a well-equipped library. They got support recently from the National Library whose staff spent some time to train the staff of the centre on how to catalogue. The library has been built by the founder of the Centre.

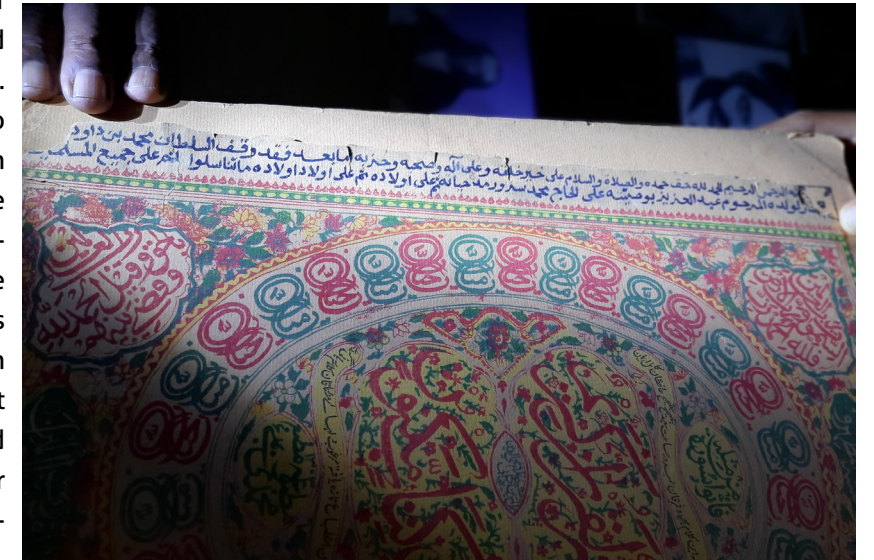
In the well catalogued library, there are some couple of hundred of manuscripts, 30 of them already digitized, and the oldest manuscript they own is, according to Haji Mohamed-Ammin 175 years. He considers these manuscripts important for "the identity of his own people be preserved and these texts contain the reliable information about the origin of the people as well as the fate of correct Islam they obtained from their ancestors". Now that many descendants of Ismail al-Jabarti are dislocated in different wide geographical areas and spread in the Horn of Africa with different political orientations and

nations, Haji-Mohamed says, we do not allow these politics interfere with history to rewrite the identity of our people. The second reason why these scripts are important, he says, that "the Wahabism ideology is putting in danger the Sufi tradition" which used to be our heritage. We want to teach these scripts to young people so they can learn from them the Islamic tradition that existed for centuries here, and to counterbalance the aggressive propaganda and the indoctrination of Wahabi by others using money and resources that we do not own.

The centre has also a separated gallery where special manuscripts and other Islamic tradition culture material are preserved. Interesting family photos and recent photos of other dignitaries who visited the Centre hung on the walls. Among the heritage material include Loah (the traditional piece of wood for writing Quran at the mad-rassa, traditional ink and pen for Quran teaching, as well as cloth-made special bag for Quran).



The gallery also hosts unique collection of manuscripts, protected in boxes, considered important historically by the management. One of these manuscripts is a donation to the founder of the congregation by Sultan Mohamed Bin Da'ud. The following lines are written on the colophon: In the name of Allah, the Munificent, the Merciful. And Peace be upon the noblest of all His Creatures, his family, companions, and followers. The Sultan Mohamed ibn Daud offers this as endowment for his late son Abdulaziz. This will covers and is for the benefit of the Haji Mohamed Surur as long as he remains alive and then his children and their children as long as they procreate and the after that it covers all Muslims.



The old houses where the founder of the congregation used to meditate and isolate himself is still intact. There is a small window, where the students of the Sheikh collected the questions from the public and asked the Sheikh to answer back to the public. The entrance is quite difficult, and this door was not open to everyone, except the assistant of the Sheikh.

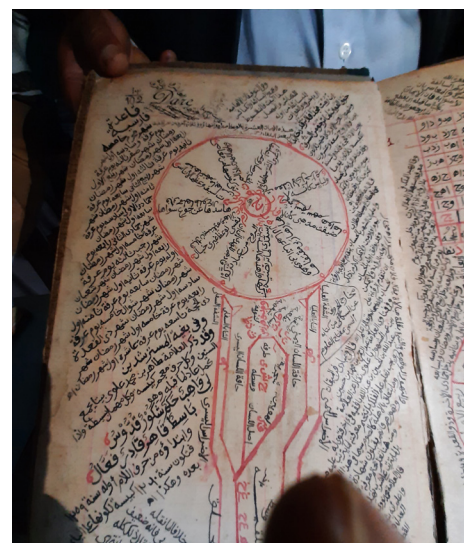
Many other families or small congregations now value the preservation of manuscripts in the region. For instance, the family "XXXX" had their house closed for almost forty years, because the father (a local Sheikh) passed away and the male children grew up and left the region to Addis Ababa. When they recently reopened, they found an interesting collection of manuscripts, but also clothes and other cultural material used in the past, and now they display the collection with a good income-generation scheme. Other families own small collection of Islamic manuscript, and they are proud of them, not only from the spiritual meaning but also now the heritage value these objects have.







We found many interesting manuscripts. Around 30 of them already digitized and accessible via computers at the library. Many others are still to be catalogued and digitized. Among these manuscripts on teaching religion but also some interesting treaties on justice, astrology, traditional medicine, calendars and other indigenous sciences.



There has been Kebene and other local languages Ajami, but unfortunately, we could not find a Somali Ajami as we expected.



The trip was an eye-opening to discover how many people dedicating themselves to preserve the local culture, their identities, and to promote among the younger generations these vital sources of knowledge and history. It was also a discovery of humanity. We were welcomed and treated well with food and amazing hospitality.



We were offered a delicious traditional dish, kind of a porridge called Buula made of the root of a false banana tree locally called Enset. It is served as a breakfast specially for new brides and special guests.



**Jama Musse Jama (PhD)** is the Director of the Hargeysa cultural center and also a senior researcher at the University College of Landen at the Planning Unit. He is also a fellow of the Rift Valley Institute. He comes from an Ethno-mathematics background but specializes in many areas including research on Islam in the Horn of Africa and Islamic manuscripts. He is the founder and organizer of the Hargeysa International Book fair the biggest Art and cultural festival in the Horn of Africa. He can be reached at [jama@redsea-online.org](mailto:jama@redsea-online.org) or @JamaMusse

### Bibliography

Banti, G, (2018). Ajami traditions in the horn of Africa and the concept of isograph, talk at Copenhagen University (11.04.2018), unpublished article.  
Petrone, A, (2016). Mission to Somaliland - First exploration of a larger corpus. Mission report of the Islam in the Horn of Africa project. Available online at [http://www.islhornofafrica.eu/islHornAfr\\_mission2.pdf](http://www.islhornofafrica.eu/islHornAfr_mission2.pdf) (accessed 12/12/2021)

See Moreno (1955), Cerulli (1864), Banti (2018) and Maxamed Cabdi Makaahiil (1354h=1935/65)

See Jama Musse Jama (2021), "Conservation of historical religious manuscripts in Somaliland".

Some the manuscripts have been also digitalized under the 'Islam in the Horn of Africa' project in 2015, led by A Gori. See Petrone (2016), Mission to Somaliland - First exploration of a larger corpus (Mission report of the Islam in the Horn of Africa project. This mission in Somaliland allowed to digitize important witnesses of Islamic culture of Somaliland, specifically of Berbera)

See Jama Musse, J. and Abdullahi, A., 2021, A close reading of an old manuscript found in Sufi Hassan shrine in Harar. Dhaxalreeb Magazine.

See Jama Musse Jama (2019), translated and commented by Banti: Banti 2019, The footprints of the Companions A Somali short travelogue by Jama Musse Jama, Ethnorêma, No. 15, Vol XIV, pp. 148-149

See Jama Musse Jama (2021), Sadcaalkii xilgudashada, Dhaxalreeb, No. 1, Vol 17, pp. 7-11

According to 2007 national wide Census, Welkite counted 28,866 population. The trip has been partially supported financially by the National Archives and Library Agency of Ethiopia (NALA) in a broader knowledge exchange project between the NALA (Ethiopia) and the Hargeysa Cultural Centre (Somaliland).

It has been mentioned that the mosque and zāwiya were founded by šayḥ Muḥammad Raššād al-Qāqī (founder of the raššādiyya ṣūfī order) with Kamāl-Dīn al-Ubbī, and later became a tradition of the family of the first (šayḥ Muḥammad Raššād al-Qāqī).



# How can the Horn be stabilised? Securitisation or Investment in development

**Samuel Tefera Alemu (PhD)**  
Center for African and Asian Studies,  
Addis Ababa University



## Overview

The state of affairs in the Horn of Africa can be explained as a growing opportunity disguised in challenges from commissioned securitized projects of the West. The Horn of Africa has for long been a battle field and fertile breeding ground for radical groups and their toxic suicidal agenda and ideologies. The pretexts of intervention from the West and its allies either in the name of fighting terrorism or operations to control piracy often are chocolate coats for regime change. While pacifying the region and cleaning threats is important element of sustaining development, the targeted investment in military and security operations has not yet materialized into actions that contain the movement of terrorists' and destroy their capabilities. The long silence of African Union's security and peace architecture and the IGAD member states should not continue and due action should be taken through consultations.

Sovereign interests of states cannot be secured single-handedly by any country, powerful or powerless. Maintaining peace and stability is an all-actors' engagement requiring dynamic global actions. Over the years, the political changes in the Horn of Africa has given birth to a spirit of political and economic cooperation bringing in a new culture of regionalism. Thus, positive developing stories are evolving through the formation of strong eco-

nomic and political coalitions between member states of the Horn and IGAD region. Notable examples can be normalized relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea that put into rest decades of uncertain no peace-no war situation; and Somalia and the Berbera-Addis Ababa corridor development project between Ethiopia, Somaliland and United Arab Emirates DP world, and improved political relations between Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea.

Moreover, renewed diplomatic ties with Turkey, and China's pledge to create a trade zone and support export through financing trade by providing ten billion USD and investment through the One Belt and Road initiative will further boost needed investment in manufacturing infrastructures and improve diplomatic relations between Africa and China where the Horn is a major beneficiary. Such a development, however, is challenged by a pressure that stands against the spirit of solidarity and regionalism. This increasing motivation of states in the Horn is driven by the willingness from states to end decades of human suffering and the coming into power of a reformist government in Ethiopia that shook traditional political establishments that limited the political space of the Horn of Africa States to make decisions pertaining to their own affairs by themselves.

Cooperation in the areas of trade and infrastructural investment among states in the Horn of Africa has no bet-



ter alternative to pull the region's people out of the vicious cycle of poverty. While democratisation and respect to human rights remain at the core of building strong institutions to advance peace and stability, equally or even more strong is a believe that fundamentals of democracy and human right issues require economic development. Without economic development, expanding education services and coverages is impossible, so do the production of informed and enlightened citizens that can make decisions. The importance of power production and all-inclusive infrastructural development, therefore, becomes second to nothing.

The Horn of Africa collectively shares cultural values and a political economy of development making the transfer of knowledge and technology easier for use and dissemination. The customary form of livelihood that relies on mobile pastoralism and trade and associated networking and kinship formation is part of a culture that is widely accepted and developed for centuries despite the introduction of colonial boundaries. The rise and fall of any civilization in any of the states in the Horn can therefore be translated directly into the rise and fall of the rest of states. This is why pan African and #nomore movements should bring people together to voice their concerns against interventions and perpetual propagation of colonial propositions by the West for development to change lives of people in the region.

#### The way forward

Unless the West challenges its self to review and revise its foreign pol-

icy to the Horn, maintaining decades of geopolitical dominance will not be advisable strategy in the Horn. Otherwise, the Horn of Africa can turn into a brewing barrel for the birth of a new political world order calling for an alternative to the existing US led international 'liberal' world order. The rise of China, the potential departure of UAE from the Arab league monophonic viewpoints and influence from Turkey coupled with Ethiopia's genuine and fraternal gesture of electrifying the region through hydropower energy from the Grad Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would fuel economic and political integration and unity of purpose mobilising the Horn of African states to stand against any form of intervention and attempts to compromise their political spaces.

The future of the region should be guided by a strategy and modality to deal with the militarization and partition of countries like Djibouti by foreign powers in order for such bases bring no harm to the region and the host states. In conclusion, development of the Horn of Africa region is dependent on the completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project and similar others to drive industrialization and improve import-export trade through port systems development where ensuring maritime security along the West Indian Ocean and Red Sea Coast is a common security and military project by all and trusted allies. Sustainable human development and greater peace is a function of investment in energy infrastructure and responsible leadership. The democratisation projects of the West would bring meaningful contribution if the long years of collaboration

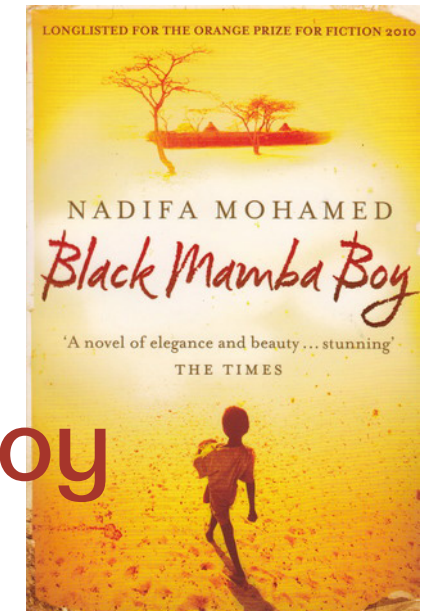
takes note of the existing geopolitical dynamics Securitization projects without investment in infrastructure development alone cannot stabilise the region.

**Samuel Tefera Alemu** (PhD) is an Assistant Professor and Asian Desk Coordinator at the Center for African and Oriental Studies and Associate Dean for Research and Technology Transfer of the College of Social Sciences at Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia). He is a lead researcher and proponent in the area of the shared water arrangement of the Horn of Africa, especially on the issue of the Great Renaissance Dame of Ethiopia. He is an advocate for regional integration with human-centric development diplomacy. He can be reached at [samueltteferaalemu1983@gmail.com](mailto:samueltteferaalemu1983@gmail.com)

# A book review on the Novel:

## Black mamba Boy Nadifa Mohamed

by **Abdifatah Mohamed Abdi**



the Author: Born in Hargeisa (now in the defacto republic of Somaliland) in 1981, Nadifa Mohamed moved as a child to England in 1986 with her parents. Nadifa's Family was unable to return to Hargeisa and stayed permanently in the UK when the war broke out in Somalia.

The author lives now in London and her first novel, Black Mamba Boy was published in 2010. Her other works include 'The Fortune Men' and the more recent one is 'The Orchard of Lost Souls.'

#### Book summary

The black mamba boy was the 'Born a crime' of Guure's and Ambaro's firstborn. his parents lived quite impoverished life while Amabro was discontent with her husband's inability to provide for his family. Guure's Laziness being the first of a series of misfortunes cursed on

them, the family lost their younger daughter Kaahaweris, engulfed by a ruthless drought and things fall apart for them. Guure Migrated to Sudan, Ambaro to Yemen and the six years old Jama aka Goode later joined his mother in Aden.

Aden in Yemen, Ambaro worked in a coffee factory and lived on the roof of a house owned by a distant relative until she passed away from a disease that inflicted on her. In the evening Ambaro died, she told Jama the story of the black mamba that rested on her belly button listening to the heartbeat of the yet unborn Jama and finally sparing them. After Ambor's death, the clansman in Aden sent Jama back to Hargeisa, Somaliland to live with a relative.

Jama worked as a Caracas carrier in Hargeisa and learned that his father is a driver in Sudan, and days passed as Jama contemplated on the gigantic mountains that surrounded Hargeisa mapping his way to Sudan until he accidentally finds a lorry to Djibouti where he survived on the generosity and the hospitality of a young couple. Jama aka Goode enjoyed his first impression of a wedding party, ate his first fish, and played with a merry-go-round in Djibouti.



*on a steamboat on the red sea coast, Jama left Djibouti for Eritrea where he received the news of the death of his father. He then joined the Italian fascist army and fought for them; he also met his friend Shidane on the war front. Unbearable to the brutality of the Italian commanders' humiliation to the African Askaris Jama tried several times to escape and finally succeeded. He left Eritrea for Sudan and passed to Egypt after days of hunger and thirst crossing rivers, dunes, and jungles.*

*While in Egypt, Jama met with a Yibir friend and lived with him, deported together to Sudan, found a way to reach Palestine, and finally sneaked back to Egypt where they were so lucky to get British passports. As a British subject, Jama was able to join the British navy as a fireman to stoke the engine.*

*Jama's ships finally docked in Glasgow, Scotland. His next assignment was supposed to be to Canada, the land of the extreme colds, until he received that his wife in Eritrea Bethlehem gave birth to a son. Bethlehem was in Jama's dreams, he used to fantasize about being with her and traveling with her to all of where he has been to. Jama got his tattoo of a black mamba in London and finally returned to Eritrea where he wanted to father his son and give him the love, he wasn't fortunate to receive.*

#### The book reviews

Black mamba boy is a novel based mostly on the life of the author's father. The story of Jama, the main character in the novel, is an adventurous journey of traversing all sorts of terrains in the Eastern part of Africa, the Gulf of Aden, North Africa, and Europe learning about people, history, and culture. Through Jama's struggle for survival in coming out of successive misfortunes that have seemed to plague his life including searching for his never-seen father and a better life, the writer marks points of great humanity and brutality as well in the story.

In this analysis of the book, however, we pick the two themes of 'Injustice' that existed in the political, social, and economic layers of the societies that Jama lived in during his journey and the theme of 'Deconstruction of African colonial histories' as it is told today in the Western World.

#### Deconstruction of African colonial histories

History is always a significant part of the current economic, social, and political dynamics of any country. The African historiography is split into three separate eras which are namely pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial times. Each one of these eras has its own features that make it different from the other two although they are highly connected.

Having noted that, how African histories are told, written, and represented in academia remains still Eurocentric. This is because of access to financial and other facilities needed to conduct research and raise the African voice in telling the African History is limited in the continent. Western academia, therefore, gets the chance in producing distorted and insufficient narratives about African colonial histories as they have the access to and control of the finances and techniques of knowledge production.

As a result of this, African history, as written in the west highly neglects the western imperialist drive and its implication in structures of exploitation and discrimination, as well as the fraught processes of separating colonized societies from the economic, political, social, cultural, and psychological damage of imperial rule. It also doesn't capture that Empires were engines of migration and social change, which generated vast wealth in metropolitan societies while exploiting the resources of Africa. These gaps in presenting and documenting African Histories and the other Eurocentric histories produced through western historiographic lenses need to be challenged.

To fill this gap stated above, Nadifa, in this piece, is radically challenging and deconstructing those narratives. The text shows the evil history of colonialism and capitalism in third-world countries and specifically in the 1930s and 1940s East Africa. The work details how WWII impacted on that part of the world. It gives the nuanced experiences of the African soldiers who were fighting in the European wars, Families who lost their loved ones like Jama's friend Shidane who was tortured and murdered by the Italians, and poor farmers who lost their fertile lands to the European corporations. As a postcolonial work, black mamba boy documents well the memories of those people who lived under the colonial powers in East Africa that would have otherwise been lost.

Added to this, Nadifa, through the story of her father,

presents the harsh and cruel treatment Jewish refugees received from the British navy officers. Indiscriminate to their age and sex, Jewish refugees were treated inhumane and brutal ways as the following quote from the novel exposes:

.....The refugees had borne the filth, heat, worm-infested soups, moldy crackers, and varied deprivations quietly for three weeks but now they exploded with angry yelling faces, painted gentian violet to heal the blisters and rashes that had erupted on board. By the time the ship docked at Port-de-Bouc in France, a swastika had been painted over the flying Union Jack and the marines had had to force the seething purple masses back into the cage after their riot. (p 191)

Interestingly, the Italian empire and to a lesser extent the French colonies are shown as more destructive than the British colonies in Yemen, Somaliland, and Egypt. The Italian colonial administration was so cruel that it used torturing to death, captivity, displacement of local farmers, and depleting of resources for export. An Italian commander, a descendent of a Jewish Italian family showed more sympathy while his successor dehumanized Jama when he arrested him in a wooden pen where chickens had been kept. This happened while Jama staggered to his work as an office cleaner because he got malaria which pounded at his head. The sympathy that the Jewish commander showed to Jama can be interpreted as that the commander could relate to the suffering and persecution that the Africans under the Italian fascist colonial administration faced. During this time Jewish people in Europe and especially in Germany faced similar violations and suppressions.

In the British colonies of Egypt, Somaliland, and Yemen, although the economic deprivation and poverty were drawn well in the text, the existence of torture and other inhumane treatments weren't shown enough. The reason could be that the author herself grew up and studied in Britain and received the same curriculum that she wanted to challenge. However, the cruel treatment of Jewish refugees on board the British navy ship shows that 'no evil is less evil than another evil'. Colonial powers had the same motives and used more or less the same means for the acquisition of resources and power to subjugate the colonized societies to maintain their imperialism.

Finally, the enslavement of African Askaris(soldiers) in Italian Eritrea and compelling them to die on the front

lines by the fascist commanders is another piece of African colonial history that never appears in western historiography. The soldiers were tortured and punished to death if they tried to resist going and fighting for the colonial administration.

The above experiences of people who lived under the colonial administrations raised by Nadifa in her novel are not well represented in the history books about the colonial times. Macro-level factors like economic variables, politics and power dynamics, ethnic groups and their cultures, and sometimes the literature of the colonized societies were interested and documented by colonial historians.

In conclusion, the novel well represented the efforts of deconstructing colonial African History by giving the experiences of actual people who lived under such administrations in those days. It gave a good account of those people who suffered under the Italian, British and French empires.

#### Injustice and It's many layers

The theme of injustice is widely discussed in the novel. Injustices, discrimination, and alienation of some groups from the rest of the Somali society existed and persists on many layers. Irritational traditional beliefs form the basis of these injustices that have been passed from one generation to the other. For example, discrimination against the Yibir people of Somaliland is said to be based on a story that those people ate a dead animal during a severe drought. Another superstitious and mythical reason was that they were accused of being descendants of a pagan, an African magician who believed that he could defeat the Muslim missionaries. women's discrimination was also reasoned on a story about Eve (representing all women after her) urging Adam to eat from the forbidden tree in heaven. The later incident is said to have caused the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Heavens.

Starting with the discrimination against the Yibir people, Nadifa shows the harrowing acts Yibir people faced in Somaliland as they were socially oppressed and victimized by their likes. In the story, Jama witnessed the Yibir woman whose son was slaughtered, his body butchered, and was left in front of her house. The Yibir people or 'Looma Ooyaan' literally meaning 'the one that nobody cries for his death' faced such vicious acts from their fellow Somalis. On another occasion, Jama's friend Liban



didn't find a job in the British navy ship because the recruiter who was from the Aji clans didn't believe that the Yibirs belong to working such a well-paid job according to Somali standards. The latter case can be related to the type of discrimination against the Yibir people that still sustains to exist in Somaliland.

Added to this, Nadifa's Novel pictures the Yibirs wearing the name of his clan like a yellow star which marked him as low, dirty, despicable. A Yibir, as shown in the book, learned from infancy that he had nothing to be proud of, no Suldaans (traditional leader-) to boast about, no herds of camels, no battalions of fighters. The Midgaan and Yibir boys, whom Jama worked with as a Caracas carrier were also insulted out of the lines for the work and moved away, forming a separate line, silent and enraged.

All those added together depicted the level of social and economic discrimination that Yibir people faced and may still face. This theme of the novel is motivated as the author pointed out in the acknowledgment part of the book by Mohamoud Gaildon's novel of 'The Yibir of Las Burgabo'. Both accounts present vivid images of the daily struggles of Yibir women, children, and men for their personal and economic security. Regarding this theme, the novel can be understood as an awareness-raising tool to reverse these senseless discriminations. It really serves well in giving a vibrant picture of the pain that the Yibir people feel on daily basis as a result of the verbal and nonverbal dehumanization against them. Because of their low representation in the media, politics, and even in the religious institutions the voices of the Yibir that would have projected this pain isn't always heard. Nadifa is bringing this pain to her readers so that other people will feel and act in making the situation better. The text can also be understood as a call for better policies that enhance the inclusion of discriminated groups into mainstream society.

Thanks to the voices like that of Nadifa, the situation is improving today in Somaliland. In the recent last parliamentary election, the candidate from the Minority groups of Somaliland won the highest number of votes in the whole country, a sign of the closure of centuries of political and social exclusion of the Yibir people.

The second group of people who face another form of injustice, as detailed in the text, were women. Women were particularly very vulnerable to other dreadful types of injustices. Jama's mother was accused of being "cursed"

and "miserable," because her family died of smallpox, diarrhea, petty accidents, coughs that had wracked tiny rib cages. Isir, the relative whom Jama lived within Hargeisa after his mother's death was divorced by her husband accusing her of being possessed by Jin (devil). The cruel husband also rejected her Meher; divorce rights.

Not only the denial of rights was the brutal behaviors against women, but also early and abusive marriages were another nightmare that ended the joyful teenage life of many girls. Zainab, the wife of Talyani; a Somali commander in Eritrea, was envisioning getting to Yemen and creating a better life there when she run away from her homeland in Somaliland. After she got married to Talyani she nearly forgot what it was like to have someone to talk to and do things with as Talyani never allowed her to leave the house nor talk to anyone. Her teenager's life, with its cast of sisters, aunties, friends, and neighbors, had come to an abrupt end when she married, a sacrifice she had made without any real knowledge of what she was leaving behind.

Those irrational beliefs as noted above put women in Somaliland in a position of a lower status relative to men. The Gender division of labor in the Somali culture gave women the unproductive and unpaid domestic work while men controlled all the economic resources of the country mainly farming and livestock husbandry. In line with the stories of women narrated in the text, Somali women's rights were/are violated as they were/are economically dependent on their husbands. Divorce was taboo and that made women stay in abusive relationships. Like social discrimination against Yibir, violation of women's political and economic rights is still present in the Somaliland Society, and this is one of those injustices that the writer wants to draw our attention to.

Finally, on this theme of injustices, Nadifa forwards the economic classes as another form in which injustices manifested themselves. In Yemen, Somaliland, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Egypt, Nadifa shows in her novel the social stratification and economic classes that the colonialists brought with them from their home countries. In the bustling cities of Aden, Djibouti, Alexderia or the sleepy Hargeisa Jama would interact with people of different classes. Some of those people belonged to the upper-class and lived in villas, wore nice and attractive clothes, and ate food that Jama dreamed of. These were the colonial masters, navy officers, British ship crews,

and jews merchants in Aden. Jama, his mother, and his friends belonged to the lower class of society. They wore poor man's clothes and slept on the rooftops, beside the tombs of saints, and many times under the blue sky decorated with the blinking stars glaring from every corner.

After the colonial administration left east Africa and Somaliland particularly, economic classes remain to persists as a remanent of the colonial era. The political elites, after the independence, through corruption, accumulated a lucrative wealth from the public funds while also colliding with the emerging businessmen in creating a monopolistic business environment. These two groups together with the military and religious leaders form what later becomes the upper class of the postcolonial Somali society. The rest of the masses still live in poverty and deprivation while the upper class is the 'fortunate in the unfortunate'; they send their children and families abroad for better health, education, housing, and security as they continue their business of exploiting the poor.

#### What needs to be improved

Initially, reading the current text, one should have a map of that region with him/her, the Gulf of Aden, the horn of the African region, and North Africa to better grasp the locations that the journey is taking to the reader. Some of the places mentioned in the novel may not appear on the map like 'Banka Gumburaha' as they are nomadic settlements which only nomads know.

The romantic scenes in the text like that of Guure and Ambaro, Jama's parents, and the lute played by Guure together with the romance between Jama and Bathlehelm made me think that those parts were not in the original story. Maybe I am the only nomad reading Nadafa's book, but the romance was not present or at least not explicitly shown in the Somali nomadic culture. Lute and other musical instruments as well started with the urbanization of Somali society.

Moreover, Young Jama, almost 10 years old or sometimes younger and still able to comprehend everything going around him may breach the rules of logic as similar as his abilities to carry a Caracas of a camel from the slaughterhouse to the restaurants. Likewise, Jama continuing his journey without eating or drinking for along brings the same feeling to the readers. The writer in a YouTube interview mentioned that her father believed he would survive for a month without eating or drinking. My take

here as a reviewer is that logic should prevail in such a case.

The multitude of Somali terms, names, and words in the text without the existence of a glossary in the book will make the non-Somali or non-nomadic readers tired of trying to understand words in their context. Likewise, the novel has too many actors who are emerging and disappearing as the main character pursues his endless journey to find his father or a better life. This makes the readers confuse the actors with one another since the names are foreign to many people.

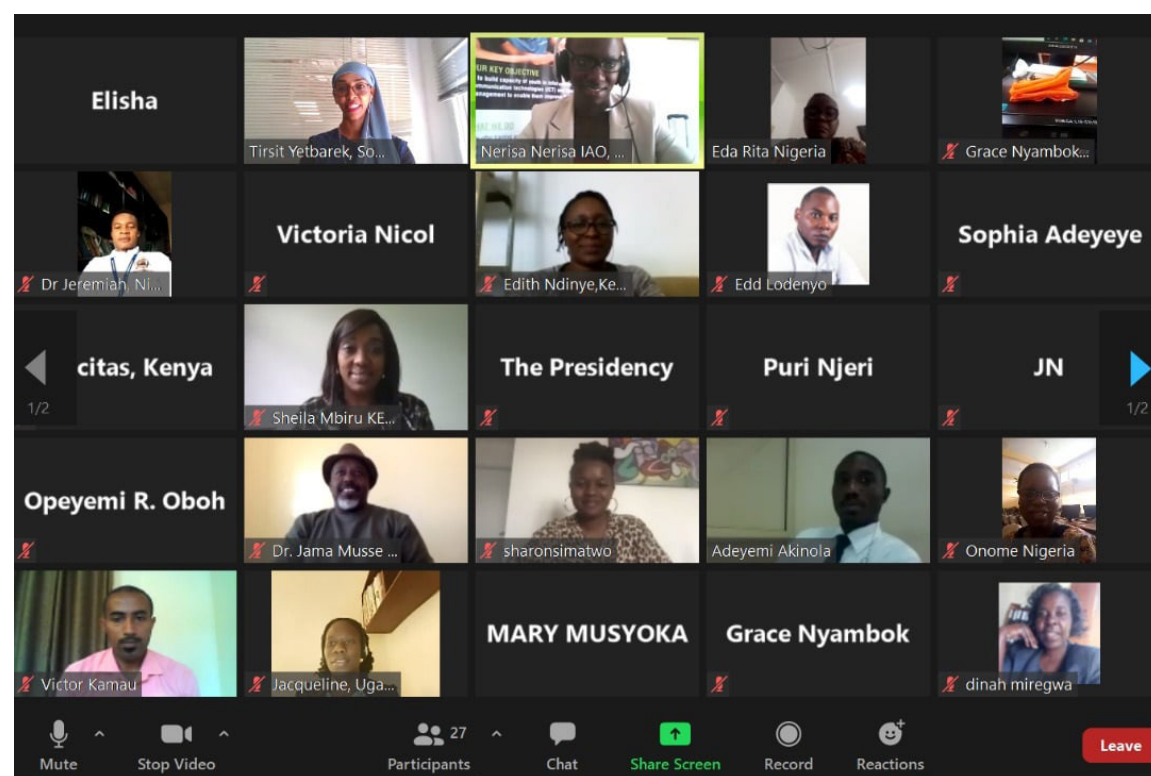
In conclusion, the Black mamba boy is a very interesting educational novel that shows the research the writer did during her writing. For me, the novel is a tool for deconstructing history and presenting the voices of the oppressed. It deserves any time spent on reading it.

**Abdifatah Mohamed Abdi** is a Somalilander born in the Ethiopian Somali State. He holds a BA degree in Development Studies and M.A in Sociology and Social Anthropology. He is also currently pursuing another master's degree in African Studies at three European Universities as a joint program. Prior to this, Abdifatah worked as an academician and researcher in both Somaliland and Ethiopia. Mr. Abdi foresees joining the Somaliland government in the near future. This piece presented here was part of an academic submission for a seminar course on 'African Literature'. He can be reached at [Abdifatahmohamede5@gmail.com](mailto:Abdifatahmohamede5@gmail.com)



# Rebuilding a Continent of Proud People on Africa's Knowledge Base

Anthony Biegon, Nerisa Kamar,  
Dr. Jama Musse Jama



The human society and the system birthed by it are ever evolving. The advancement of this duo requires an ever-growing (Elonye, 2013) need for transformation and adaptability. It is anticipated, for example, that by the year 2060, 65% of Africa's population shall move to cities and this pressure shall overstretch the existing infrastructure within towns [Need reference]. To create safe environments for transient populations, transformations including economic, social, and political changes, must take place.

The COVID-19 is a typical catastrophic change that saw the world restricting movements and alternative means of doing business shifting from less and less physical to more and more activities being on virtual platforms. The success of online classrooms and meetings opened a new avenue that showed more transaction between remote places, even across the continents. A case in hand, is the exchange of knowledge and information conducted by Information Africa Organization (IAO), who so far, has held 28 meetings virtually (18 themes), and involving 22 African Countries with more than 150 scholars and information service professionals attended. For over one year, Africa professionals talked about its challenges, in what they called a transformation caravan, drawing on up to the Kenyan Senate and South

Africa political class, to think on how 'develop the Africa We Want' in the face of changes in human institutions. All these are anchored on AU AGENDA 2063:

"An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena." African Union Commission, 2015

For over one year, the Continent looked at its assets vis a vis its challenges and opportunities and how this can help 'The Africa We Want'. These challenges include poverty, inequality, and climate-change, protecting the environment, peace, and justice. Among the African assets include its biodiversity, its unique cultures. They looked at how these can be exploited to sustainably develop trade, industry and geo-politic. Herbs and indigenous technologies have in the past been shipped out, modified and brought back to Africa by international companies who benefit at the expense of the locals.

Bioprospecting is used by pharmaceutical companies screening plants for bioactive compounds to make marketable drugs. According to Pushpangadan, et al (2018), successful screening of plants for bioactive compounds to make marketable drugs is 1 in 10,000 while locating bioactive compounds through selective screening based on traditional knowledge is 1 in 100 and that the discovery of a marketable drug is 1 in 2. Biodiversity can therefore give Africa an edge over the world for it has the richest biodiversity and therefore a rich source of materials necessary for development of medicines and other health options. This remains largely unexploited and but its unexploited biodiversity may not explain the minimal contribution the continent gives to the pharmaceutical industry. Could it be the way African countries protect these biodiversity and intellectual property thereof or its methodologies remain rudimentary? The SWAKOPMUND Protocol, is an example of how this can be done, to ensure benefits flow back to the rightful owners [reference needed].

However, is protecting indigenous knowledge and materials enough to deliver the Africa We Want?

'Biodiversity and traditional knowledge (TK) the most powerful resources which with the interventions of science and technology can generate wealth' (Pushpan-

gadan P, et al, 2018) and the research community play an important role in achieving the 2030 Agenda (Africa Union, 2015). West Africa in Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana, linen industry is flourishing on traditional dress making and weaving that is now accepted internationally and portrays the African ware as dignifying and making proud those wearing it. Could it be the continent has not developed its other enterprises based on its unique assets, like the linen and medicines addressing the current needs of global societies?

During colonial times, and even at the emergence of new African states, customary institutions have been undermined by the new states who saw them as a threat or in need of modernization (Northern Rangelands Trust, 2019). Traditional medicine practitioners competed with states over natural resources while their methodologies were seen archaic. Herbs and skills in development and administering herbal solutions is slowly disappearing with the passage of the older generation holders of indigenous knowledge, due mainly to lack of support from the states. More threats are from the lack of passage to the later generations and lack of documentation. Intellectual property rights are the rights given to people over the creations of their minds. They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period (World Trade Organization, 2021). The main reason being that most of the knowledge remain tacit and the weak Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) law denying communities benefits from their knowledge and a motivation to preserve neither the gene nor skill.

The indigenous skills (knowledge) disappearance has alarmed many and discussion sponsored by IAO gave Information Communication Technologies ICT as an option. Enablers in this transmission of knowledge are cultures, workflow and integration and institutional support, ac-

*Most African communities' knowledge and cultures are not on the cyber-space*

According to one of its pillars, Dr. Elijah Achoch. Modern ICT can enable flow of knowledge. The continent therefore

needs to think of how to move its Indigenous Knowledge (IK) to the cyber space and encourage exploring, researching, and developing traditional pedagogical methods, and information services, and to incorporate them into the modern higher education systems. The continent needs to revise the way of archiving its knowledge.



It is a way to provoke decision makers “to reflect on the meaning of epistemology and redefine ways to study the history of centuries-old mankind-produced wisdom in their own culture, as another way of knowledge production process that needs to be engaged within formal education.” [Jama Musse, 2021]

Most African communities’ knowledge and cultures are not on the cyber-space, one reason being due to language used (either English, French or Portuguese), where African identity is lost. Placing its knowledge in these platforms ensure wider sharing, preservation and use from remote locations. ICT shall make Africa’s knowledge available for improvement of today’s lives and those of generations to come.

Sustaining this enterprise may be a factor of genetic resource base management as well as that of skills and knowledge, but also creation of value. Herbal solutions have been literally ingredients dissolved or roasted to be applied on a wound or bruise, and paid for a fixed price. This puts new wine in old wine skins. If the enterprise is to play a role in the pharmaceutical industry and survive in today’s highly competitive business environment, whether for profit or social relevance, there must be a mind shift. Mind shift shall see New Product Development (NPD) as a key activity that is undeniably one of the most knowledge-intensive processes and is by itself constantly creating new knowledge.

According to the Africa Agenda 2063, ‘revolution have provided unprecedented opportunities for countries and regions with the right policies to make significant advances and lift huge sections of populations out of poverty, improve incomes and catalyze economic and social transformations’ (Africa Union Commission, 2015). These frameworks bring in intermediaries in knowledge and information professions who will aid researchers in indigenous medicine to access current trends in the industry, searching through patents, tracing genes in products that may have originated from the continent and give rights to rightful owners, and integrate knowledge from its experiences and those from advanced in the industry and help those working on researching into African indigenous medicines and develop tablets, inject-

able or capsuled ingredients acceptable in the contemporary society. Policy frameworks in the African context must therefore shift and give institutional support and management framework where knowledge workers and managers, product developers take part in the process of developing the industry, products and building a legal framework that can protect and preserve it for today and

tomorrow’s generations. Investment in this enterprise need knowledge, which like a gambler, one needs to be tooled with the necessary cards and

a good strategy to play, to increase his chances of winning. Africa has the cards, but is it tooled with strategies to move its population of over 600b hungry to proud citizens who can stand tall and make ‘the Africa We Want’?

*who can stand tall and make  
‘the Africa We Want’?*

*Anthony Biegon is a Corresponding author and organizing member of the Information Africa a monthly seminar. Africa Organization (IAO), Nairobi, Kenya | biegonac@gmail.com*

*Nerisa Kamar is the coordinator and representative of the Information Africa Organization (IAO), Nairobi, Kenya. nerisa@smr-knoweldge.com*

*Dr. Jama Musse Jama is the director of the Hargeysa Cultural Centre, Hargeysa, Somaliland jama@redsea-online.org*

#### References

- African Union Commission, 2015, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want; Popular Version, Africa Union Commission
- Jama Musse, J., 2022, Critical Thinking and Introduction to Academic Research Writing, Hargeysa: Ponte Invisibile.
- Northern Rangelands Trust, 2019, Rangelands Strategy 2019-20122: NRT
- Pushpangadan P, George V, Ijiru TP, Chithra MA (2018) Biodiversity, Bioprospecting, Traditional Knowledge, Sustainable Development and Value Added Products: A Review. J Tradit Med Clin Natur 7: 256. doi: 10.4172/2573-4555.1000256
- World trade organization (2021) [www.wto.org>trips\\_e>intel\\_e](http://www.wto.org>trips_e>intel_e) what are intellectual property right?

# IGIABA SCEGO’S LA MIA CASA È DOVE SONO (MY HOME IS WHERE I AM)

By Manishimwe Giselle Musabimana

The title of My Home is Where I Am (La Mia Casa è Dove Sono) captures the quintessence of this autobiographical work by Igiaba Scego, Somali-Italian writer, journalist, and activist. Born in Rome in 1974, to Somali refugees emigrated to Italy following Siad Barre’s coup d’état 1969, Igiaba is one of the most prominent ‘second-generation’ voices active in the intellectual and political arena. Her works denounce the country’s silence on its colonial legacy, which still taints modern mindsets and discourses. As well as being particularly vocal on the issue of migration, her works address the question of “Italians without citizenship”, ‘new-generation citizens’, whom the government still fails to recognise. In her autobiography, Igiaba attempts to draw her home, or rather, her multiples ‘homes’.

**Mapping ‘the land that does not exist’: a journey through ‘space’ and ‘(post)memories’**

The story begins during a convivial family time at

her brother Abdul’s house, in Manchester: seated at the table are Igiaba’s relatives gathered from different corners of Europe. To retrace their memories of Mogadishu, in a “saudade of exiles from their motherland”, they try to draw a map of the now ‘dead’ city, urged by a need to enclose the memories of their former home on paper, “to survive”. Standing in front of the finished map of Mogadishu, Igiaba finds herself at a “crossroads” when her nephew asks her if it is her city: after an initial bewilderment, she realises that the map is in fact incomplete, as it only





represents her city of origin. It is necessary to add her other city, Rome. The place where she was born, raised, and educated but where she is never considered “Italian enough”. Her whole life revolves around this city and her family’s memory of a Mogadishu that no longer exists, swept away by the “uncivil war” .

The main thread of the book is “a mobile geography” : the memory sites between Somalia and Italy are narrated through the moving lenses of Igiaba, who reflects on her childhood and family history, on the abrupt loneliness of being a refugee and on the wounds of the war she did not experience directly, but which she carries within herself like a boulder. In addition, the author reflects on her own multifaceted identity, often questioned, and on Italy, a country unknowingly tainted by its colonial heritage. The act of mapping the memory becomes a way to set a ‘starting point’ to answer the question, common among the exiled of the diaspora, Who am I, and where do I come from?

Although the novel depicts Igiaba’s story and her ‘geographies’, it does not only capture her own personal experiences, but it also includes the lives and memoirs of her family. In particular, the novel portrays the life stories of her beloved mother and her father, Ali Omar Scego, the first governor of Mogadishu, Somali ambassador, and minister of finance . The first-person narration, mediated through Igiaba’s eyes, recounts with an extraordinary emotional charge the family’s experiences and memoirs, whether directly experienced or not. Igiaba speaks of “unlived wounds... that come from absences” : this speaks on the theme “inherited memory”, “absent memory” or “postmemory” , that is, the enduring and tension-filled “relation to a parental past” . In Igiaba’s novel, post-memory is evident in the descriptions of the serene life of her family in Somalia before the “uncivil war” , as well as in tragic events, like the killing of her uncle which happened long before her birth. These joys, the sorrows and memories are ‘felt and experienced’ by Igiaba through accounts of her relatives and ‘revisited’ and newly processed “by imaginative investment, projection, and creation” . Nevertheless, I do not consider this novel to fall exactly into Postmemory Literature. While the family’s life experiences are very much present, it is Igiaba’s thoughts and emotions steering the story. These “inherited” memories are instead part of her personal recollections through which, as a second-generation daughter, she recognises her own ‘heritage’

and finds parts of her identity.

Igiaba draws the map of her “land that is nowhere” starting from the monuments, buildings, streets, and places in the city of Rome, who name some of the chapters in the book (Teatro Sistina, Piazza Santa Maria sopra Minerva, La stele di Axum, Stazione Termini, Trastevere, Stadio Olimpico). The narrative, however, does not follow a precise route, for example from Rome to Mogadishu. Nor does it strictly follow the places mentioned in the chapter titles. The mobility is not a physical or purely descriptive one; instead, it is a journey flowing smoothly towards different directions, between physical places she has visited personally or through the memory of others; across the individual and collective imaginary of Somalia, to the forgotten accounts of the colonial past and the lingering questions of an unknown future. These ‘visited’ spaces highlight her multiple belongings and the multifaceted nature of her identity. What dictates the flow of the story is her emotional drive, her personal perceptions, and points of view, even as she recounts other people’s events and adventures. It is a dynamic, heartfelt, and never neutral narrative, moving between worlds geographically distant from each other but linked by shared histories. This book does not only unfold on Igiaba’s own personal life and those around her but is able to denounce and deal with bigger issues and teach history.

This book review will identify and outline the different, and often interconnected, macro-themes of the book, starting with the topic of her ‘lands’: Somalia and Italy.

### **Somalia, Italy and the condition of the Exile**

Somalia and Italy are often put in relation to each other. The ‘Somalia’ she recalls and ‘longs for’ no longer exists, having been wiped out by the war, and the ‘Italy’ she lives in is stained by its colonial heritage. And where she struggles to feel at home. However, Somalia is not really her home either. And yet, she carries much of Somalia with her; she bears the love of storytelling, which for Igiaba and her family is an opportunity to vocalise and re-shape their memories and preserve connections with their ancestors . As mentioned above, she also carries the “unlived wounds” of the civil war and the pre-exile life in the Mogadishu she did not know; “wounds that come from absences”, from the loss of dear lives, of memories of a glorious past and of a future now compro-

mised . “Even today, after nineteen years, the war holds me close. This is the fate of all Somalis” .

The topics of Somalia and Italy is intertwined with the experience of the tormented Somali diaspora, “imprisoned” between the motherland, the sense of guilt for the distance from relatives who have now become “unknown” and Italy, the ancient metropolis, now a ‘new’ country to which, however, they do not belong. The Somali family friends, acquaintances and even the nameless strangers encountered in the streets and throughout the story “poor disconnected beings” , ‘half’ creatures whose roots have been torn off, dispossessed of their identity . The chapter Stazione Termini (Ch.V), which Igiaba describes as the meeting place of the Somalis in Rome, encapsulates this collision of feelings of abandonment and precariousness, of desperation and melancholic hope of the Somali exiles. Igiaba sees that run-down train station as “a microcosm of life and death”, where “life embraced you or spat in your face” . Igiaba didn’t like walking through Termini station because it forced her to see all those “defeated souls” in the eyes; people who, like her parents, had left their whole lives behind, and who kept dwelling on the past. Left to their own devices, many of them would drink themselves into oblivion and like “black-skinned ghosts” wandered the corridors of the station “with their eyes fixed and their memory constantly going back to a past of pure joy” . In many instances, the arrival and life in Italy seem to represent for Igiaba the moment of “decadence” of her family. In Italy, the Scego family lives in poverty, in contrast to the ‘glorious’ past before their exile; they move between shabby boarding houses, stand in line in front of the charity centres, her father is almost never home pursuing a new profession as a trader. They lived “like suspended creatures” waiting for an ‘undefined future’ when they would finally return home. There appears to be a persisting tension with what has been and what her life could have been, had she been born and raised ‘where she was destined to’. These feelings are common to many ‘new generation’ youths: the immanent questioning of what could have been, coupled with the unending conflict between two lands that perceive them both as foreigners, in different ways.

### **Denouncing Italy’s colonial amnesia**

The theme of the ‘two lands’ (Italy and Somalia) also moves on along the theme of (post)colonial relations.

The first chapter looks at the city of Mogadishu, tainted by Italian colonial legacy: Italy is in the names of streets and squares of Somali cities, and “in the faces of the rejected mestizos” . Even though Italian cities also have sites and relics named after former colonial territories, Italy and Italians continue to ignore their colonial history. “Italy had forgotten its colonial past. It had forgotten that it had put Somalis, Eritreans, Libyans and Ethiopians through hell. It had erased that history with an easy wipe” . In her autobiography, Igiaba denounces this amnesia; a mindset that is reflected in the popular expression “Italiani brava gente!” (Italians, good people!), a sugar-coated image of Italians as opposed to other countries and assumes the inherent goodness of the Italian people. And yet, Italians have killed, denigrated, and humiliated the populations with whom they have come into contact just as the English, French, Germans, Americans, and Portuguese did. Whilst in most former colonial countries there have been discussions and collective reflections on the past colonial imperialism and neo-colonialism, in Italy, there has been general amnesia . The subject is not even properly discussed at school. For those who have grown up in Italy or have lived in Italy, “Italiani brava gente!” is not a mere expression, but it represents the way Italians perceive the essence of being ‘Italians’: inherently welcoming, lovable, good-natured people, artists, lovers of beauty. And as such, an essence that could never be deemed racist. The accounts of Igiaba’s childhood tell another story, showing dehumanizing scenarios of marginalization and ostracization. They tell us about a little girl who, unable to see herself represented anywhere, being described only through grotesque imagery (she mentions she was often compared to gorillas), decides to do everything she could to “disappear”, and with her, extinguish her language, her heritage, her body.

“I was four or five years old. I wasn’t yet an African who was proud of her black skin. I had not yet read Malcolm X. So, I decided to stop speaking Somali. I wanted to fit in at all costs, to conform to the mass. And my mass at the time was all as white as snow. Not speaking my native language became my cranky way of saying ‘love me’.

But instead, nobody loved me” .

A quest for identity through storytelling

“I was underground. Hidden. I sometimes posed as a guest, sometimes as a villager. I played multiple roles:



I was a fullback and a center forward; an African and a European”.

The feeling of exile is closely tied to her own conception of identity. Igiaba sees herself as a “crossroads”, a “suspension bridge”, a person who lives “constantly on the edge”. Growing up in Italy as a child of immigrants, especially as a refugee, implies constantly feeling as the exception. It means longing to be represented, and never finding someone to look up to in the media, in literature, in the surroundings. It means constantly asking themselves Who am I?

Over the course of the book, Igiaba deals with this immanent question, which she had carried along ever since she was a child. She tried to find an answer by mapping her ‘land(s)’, her ‘homes’ transcending rigid geographical borders. Igiaba’s identity, as a Somali and Italian woman, doesn’t bear simple rhetorical definitions. To address this apparently simple question Igiaba tells her life story in this book, taking up the custom she had learned from her family: the art of storytelling.

In Igiaba’s childhood and throughout her life, storytelling was home, support, comfort, and a weapon. For Somalis, “telling stories was never a waste of time”, and the word occupies a place of honour. Through storytelling, people learned how to use words wisely. And again, through storytelling, they learned to make sense of things, because “for Somali nomads, the solution is always hidden within the story”. Through her mother’s stories of Somalia, Igiaba learns to know those parts of herself that she did not understand, did not see, and could not appreciate in Italy. Her mother’s stories wanted her to understand the richness of her origins, of her ancestral land:

“She wanted me to understand that we didn’t come from nowhere; that behind us was a country, traditions, a history. There weren’t just the ancient Romans and Gauls, there wasn’t just Latinorum and the Greek agora. There was also the ancient Egypt and the incense gatherers of the Land of Punt, our Somalia. There were the Ashanti and Bambara kingdoms. She wanted to make me proud of my black skin and the land we had to leave behind.”.

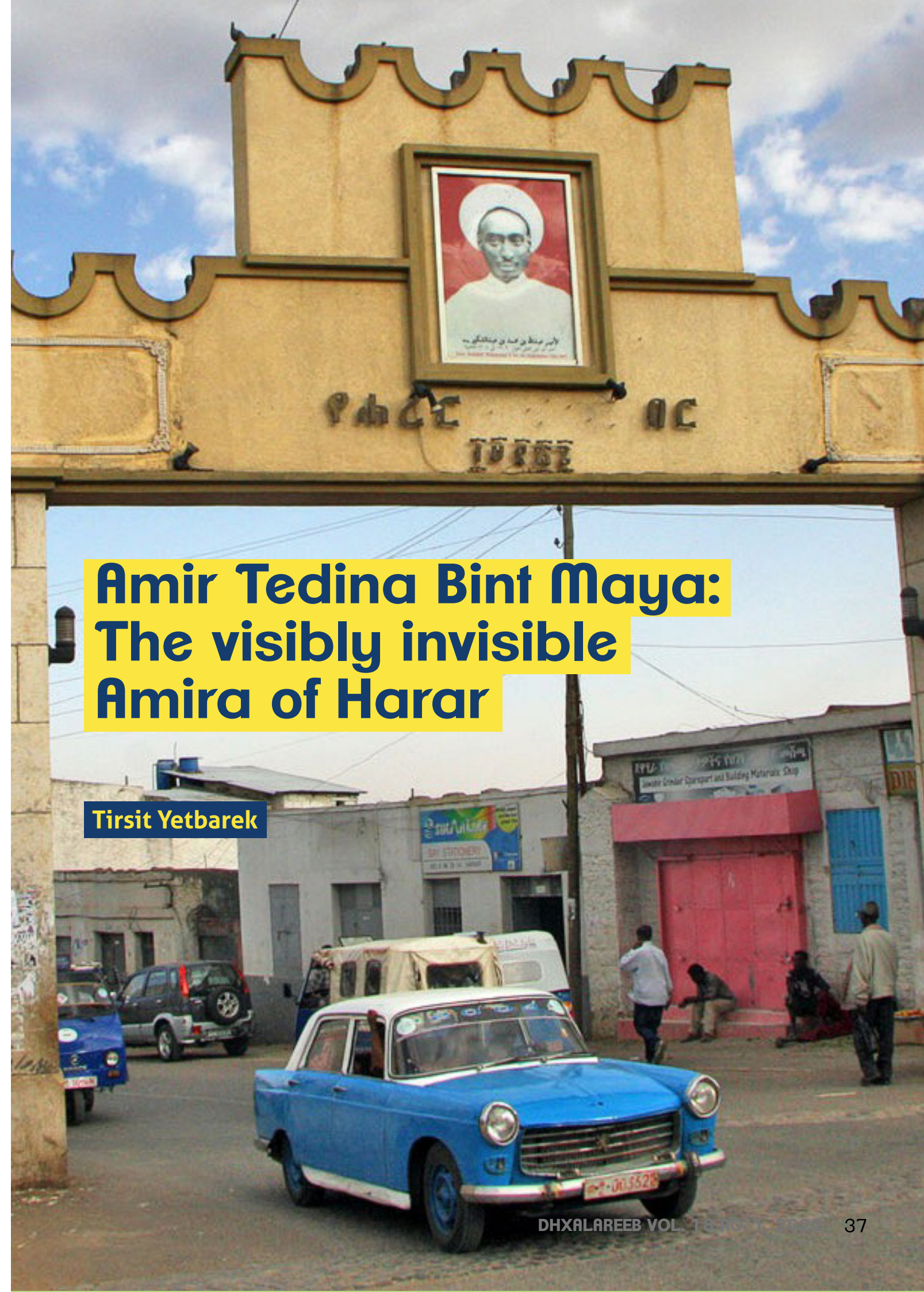
### Conclusion

The last chapter of the book is entitled Essere Italiano per me - Being Italian to me. Towards the end of the chapter,

Igiaba wonders about the answer to this question: what does it mean to be Italian? For Igiaba, the answers are far too many to be contained in one single concept, in a few lines. For Igiaba, being Italian also means, among many other things, “being condemned to eternal anguish”. But in that moment, she is reminded of a tale she had read as a teenager, The Cardinal’s First Tale by Karen Blixen, where, when asked to explain who he was, the cardinal responded: “I will answer with a classic rule: I will tell a story”. Igiaba once again recognises storytelling as her means of making sense of her identity, without reducing it to labels unable to encompass the multitude of her essences. And it is also for this reason that the title of the book, La mia Casa è Dove Sono - My Home is Where I Am, is of particularly pertinent: it encapsulates the dynamism and multiformity of the self, which cannot be only traced back to where we were born, or where we grew up. Igiaba’s fluid and decisive writing paints here a cosmopolitan conception of identity and being, thus refuting aside the idea of purity and “nativity”.

“No one is pure in this world. We are never just black or just white. We are the fruit of an encounter or a clash. We are crossroads, crossing points, bridges. We are mobile. And we can fly with wings hidden in the folds of our heavenly souls”.

**Giselle Manishimwe Musabimana** holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Languages, specializing in German and Russian from ‘Ca Foscari University of Venice, and currently, she is doing a European Joint Master’s Degree in interdisciplinary African Studies (EIMAS). Born to Rwandan parents, her story starts in a UNHCR tent in a refugee camp in Goma, Congo. At 6 months old, her family fled to seek refuge in northern Italy where she spent most of my life. As a bearer of a “multi-faceted” identity as an African-Italian citizen born from former refugees, she is highly interested in Migrations and Diaspora, and their role in transforming societies, geographies, and the concept of “identity”. She can be reached at [musabimanagiselle@gmail.com](mailto:musabimanagiselle@gmail.com)





## Introduction

Horn of Africa is endowed with a civilization that granted it a visible space in the image of the world. Starting with the origin of humankind, to the creation of entities even prior to that of "state" in the Westphalia definition are elements that add to its uniqueness. In this big picture is where one finds the Harari civilization that had preserved its unique aspects within the widely narrated and attributed "highlander civilization" of Abyssinia/ Ethiopia.

Another layer of a unique aspect of the Harari civilization is that of the self-governance of the Harari Dynasty through the 76 Amirs who led it even after the battle of the expansionist mission of Menelik who has accepted to leave Harar for self-administration making it one of the first federation even before the Europeans had one. Among the 76 Amirs of the Harar dynasties, Amir Hoboba Bin Ibrahim (892-828) was the one known for establishing the first dynasty that resulted in the cycle of successive powers concluded after almost 1000 years, with Amir Abdulahi B Mahamed (1885-1887). Another very important and interesting aspect of the Harari power system is the exceptional named female Amir, Amir Tedina Bint Maya (1105-1128), who was the 12th Amir of Harar that is acknowledged in the list of the Harar dynasty by name but seems to be omitted in the histories of Harar and Hararian memories. Hence, this paper explores the legacy of this exceptional woman by looking at the memory of the contemporary Hararian, especially women. It attempted to explore the place Amira Tedina

has by asking about their awareness of her existence, if they are aware of her, asking questions pertaining to their imagination of her physically, intellectually, her authority as a woman, and as a leader. The article also equally walk-through explanations of why the community seems to be not in awareness of her in comparison to the space they give to the Amirs of the dynasty. Accordingly, this paper will address the what, how, and why of the only female Amir through the memories of the contemporary Hararian.

### Background

Harar is named the city of love and peace along with the recognition it has for a civilization of a unique and powerful dynasty that lies in the eastern part of the Great Rift Valley in the Horn of Africa specifically in Ethiopia at a distance of 515 kilometers to the south-east of Addis Ababa (UNESCO, 2006). The oral histories narrated by Harari elders and manuscripts found so far trace the origin of the Hararians from the seven main Harla tribes which are Gidaya, Awari, Wargar, Gaturi, Adish, Hargaya and Abogn. A good number of researches covering Harar and the Horn of Africa also goes in agreement with the oral history that Harar's foundation is based on the Harla even though what Harla covers both geographically and social is still in search of clarity (Banti, G., 2003; Cervick & Braukamper, 1973; Wilding, R., 1975; Jamal ad-Din and Hashim, 2000). Nevertheless, it is this conception of Harar and Harla that supports that the name Harari is derived from Harla which also became the name of the place of their residence too even though the Amharas and Oromos call them Adare

while the Hararies call themselves Gey-usu'. It is also stated that the Hararis lived temporarily in a series of settlements in seven different villages prior to the foundation of Harar the city which are Eskhanti gey, Tukhun gey, Hassan Gey, Harawe gey, Ruqiya gey (Ruhuq gey), Feraqa gey, and Samti gey (Khanti gey up until they found in the 7th century today's Harar. After the foundation of the city, it is recounted that Harar had two prior names, viz. Balad Gatur (Country of the Gatur) and Bandar Awliya (Village of Awiliya) (Cerulli, 1936).

The rich history of Harar and the people also is highly grounded in the role the city played as center of Islamic teachings to the level that it is called the 4th holy city of Islam. Harar functioned as the capital of the Harari Kingdom from 1520 to 1568, became an independent emirate in the 17th century, and was integrated into Ethiopia in 1887. From the late 16th century to the 19th century, Harar was an important trade center between the coast and the interior highlands and a location for Islamic learning (UNESCO, 2006). This is believed to have been facilitated through the location of it being closer to Red Sea and the Gulf. The people also were recognized for their massive involvement and leadership in local long-haul transportation and in the cross-border trade. A review of their multifaceted interactions with the peoples and communities in the Harar Plateau indicated that they had a well-connected relationship with the Somali, Argoba, Afar, Oromo, Silte and other peoples in the Horn.

Looking into the state structure of Harar, for centuries it seems to have

been akin to a Monarchical system in that the Sultans, Imams, or Amirs were the highest authorities in the state structure (Abas,1992). This is also believed to be the base for the transfer of power and leadership to the members of the male line of the sovereign's relatives along with the succession power regulated by local circumstances. The law of the Sultanate was essentially based on the Islamic religion. Political, military, economic, and administrative organizations were all governed by Sharia Law. To this end, the Amir, Sultan, or the Imam and his close associates worked closely with religious scholars- the Ulama. The Ulama served as councilors to the Amir on issues pertaining to secular matters by giving the necessary guidance to the Dameen, Garad and Malaq. They were appointed directly by the council consisting of the Amir, eminent religious scholars, and members of the nobility, called Majlis and the criteria for appointment included the social status, family background, and administrative capabilities (Abbas, 1992).

This is the foundation in which an only acknowledge female Amir is stated to have been a governor and is listed among the 72 Amirs who governed the sultanate. This is the triggering point for the research and for this article to explore what it was like to be the only female leader in such a structure and become a unique element of the system by inheriting the king's bed as the only child. This article explores that in a critical analysis theoretical eye along with a feminist perspective that questions how the stories are framed around Amira Tedina Benti Maya, the unique figure that is mentioned only in the list of Amirs.

### Methodology

The data was collected through a set of oral history semi-structured interviews, that targeted informants of different ages, professions, and levels of education, that included 15 informants of the 20-30 age group, 5 of 30-50, and 5 of 50+. Two focused group discussion sessions were conducted. Guiding questions were prepared to facilitate the interviews as well as the FGDs. The data collected is intertwined with the literature on the history of Harar and Hararians, the history of Islam in the region, and the community relation in medieval and modern Ethiopia where Hara became one of the Regional States. The interviews were conducted in three languages; Amharic, Harari, and English depending on the preference of the interviewee. The interviews were the length of an hour and above. Translation for the languages the researcher didn't have command of (Harari) was provided by a professional linguist from the region. The absence of documented literature pertaining the Amira and her time has set a major challenge for the research along with the wide and somehow contradictory characterization of the women by participants. The latter is taken as a great input for further research while the prior is something that was not able to counter with a solution.



Photo: Addis Standard

## LIST OF AMIRS OF HARAR GEY

| NO | NAMES                      | YEARS     | NO | NAMES                       | YEARS     |
|----|----------------------------|-----------|----|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1  | HABOBA                     |           | 39 | GARAD ABON                  | 1522-1525 |
| 2  | UMAR ALRIDA                | 969-1000  | 40 | S. ABUBAKAR B. S. MAHAMAD   | 1527-1527 |
| 3  | UMARDIN I                  | 1000-1020 | 41 | IMAM AHMAD B. IBRAHIM       | 1527-1543 |
| 4  | NASIR I                    | 1020-1033 | 42 | S. UMARDIN                  | 1527-1553 |
| 5  | F. NASROY                  | 1033-1033 | 43 | NUR I                       | 1551-1559 |
| 6  | NASIR BINI GAMALDIN        | 1033-1038 | 44 | S. ALI B. UMARDIN           | 1553-1553 |
| 7  | MUHAYADIN YOUSUF I         | 1038-1038 | 45 | S. BARAKA B. UMARDIN        | 1555-1559 |
| 8  | UMAR AR'IDA II             | 1038-1038 | 46 | NUR II                      | 1559-1567 |
| 9  | MUHAYADIN YOUSUF II        | 1065-1066 | 47 | USMAN B. BADLAY (ALHABASHA) | 1567-1569 |
| 10 | IDAL (ABDAL)               | 1066-1067 | 48 | S. TALHA                    | 1569-1571 |
| 11 | MAYA LAMA                  | 1067-1086 | 49 | S. NASIR                    | 1571-1572 |
| 12 | TADIN BINTI MAYA           | 1086-1105 | 50 | S. MAHAMAD VI               | 1572-1577 |
| 13 | S. HARHAR (HAZBA'IZ)       | 1105-1128 | 51 | MANSUR B. MAHAMAD           | 1577-1577 |
| 14 | S. HUSSEN                  | 1128-1183 | 52 | IMAMAM AHMAD                | 1577-1583 |
| 15 | S. ABDALLA I               | 1183-1202 | 53 | SA'AD ADI III               | 1583-1617 |
| 16 | S. UMAR WALASMA I          | 1202-1216 | 54 | ABRO B. ALLAM               | 1617-1646 |
| 17 | BAZ YAWI B. WALASMA I      | 1216-1293 | 55 | SADDIK B. YAHYA             | 1646-1646 |
| 18 | HAKKADIN B. WALASMA I      | 1293-1313 | 56 | M. ADAM B. SADDIK           | 1646-1646 |
| 19 | SSABRADIN B. MAHAMAD       | 1313-1320 | 57 | AHMAD II                    | 1646-1647 |
| 20 | GAMALADIN B. MAHAMAD       | 1320-1324 | 58 | ALI B. DAWID                | 1647-1662 |
| 21 | QAT ALI B. SABRADIN        | 1324-1331 | 59 | HASHIM B. ALI DAWID         | 1662-1670 |
| 22 | AHMAD B. QAT ALI           | 1331-1364 | 60 | ABDALLA B. ALI DAWID        | 1670-1699 |
| 23 | HAKKADIN B. MAHAMAD II     | 1364-1366 | 61 | TALHA B. ABDALLA ...        | 1699-1721 |
| 24 | S. SA'AD ADIN B. MAHAMAD   | 1366-1386 | 62 | ABUBAKAR B. ABDALLA ...     | 1721-1732 |
| 25 | SARBADIN B. SADIN          | 1386-1415 | 63 | KHALID B. ABUBAKAR ...      | 1732-1733 |
| 26 | GAMALADIN B. SA'ADIN II    | 1415-1424 | 64 | HAMO B. ABUBAKAR ...        | 1733-1747 |
| 27 | S. BADLAY B. SA'ADIN       | 1424-1432 | 65 | DAWID B. ABUBAKAR ...       | 1747-1755 |
| 28 | S. MAHAMAD B. BADLAY       | 1432-1445 | 66 | AHMAD B. ABUBAKAR ...       | 1755-1782 |
| 29 | IBRAHIM B. MAHAMAD I       | 1445-1471 | 67 | AHMAD B. YOUSUF ...         | 1782-1783 |
| 30 | SHAMSADIN B. MAHAMAD       | 1471-1471 | 68 | ABDUSHAKUR B. YOUSUF ...    | 1783-1784 |
| 31 | IBRAHIM B. QAT NASRADIN II | 1471-1487 | 69 | AHMAD B. MAHAMAD ...        | 1794-1821 |
| 32 | MS. MAHAMAD AZHARADIN      | 1487-1488 | 70 | ABDURAHMAN B. MAHAMAD ...   | 1821-1825 |
| 33 | S. MAHFUZ                  | 1488-1518 | 71 | ABDUKAIM B. MAHAMAD ...     | 1825-1834 |
| 34 | S. MAHAMAD III             | 1492-1517 | 72 | ABUBAKAR B. MAFTAL ...      | 1834-1852 |
| 35 | IBRAHIM B. AHMAD II        | 1517-1519 | 73 | AHMAD B. ABUBAKAR ...       | 1852-1856 |
| 36 | GARAD MAHFUZ               | 1519-1519 | 74 | MAHAMAD B. GARAD DAWID ...  | 1856-1875 |
| 37 | MANSUR I                   | 1519-1519 | 75 | Adminstration of Egypt      | 1875-1885 |
| 38 | IMAM MAHFUZ B. MAHAMAD     | 1519-1520 | 76 | ABDULLAHI B. MAHAMAD ...    | 1885-1887 |

B. BINI S. SULTAN  
F. FAKI

### The queen

Tedina Bint Maya is the only acknowledge female Amir of Harar who is listed as the 12th Amir of the Harari Dynasty governing Harar from 1105-1128 following her father Amir Maya Lama [1086-1105] even though the only solid evidence for this comes from the list that the Harari Cultural Centre produced which has no physical document as supporting evidence for doing so. It is told in oral history by a few who get to know her existence through oral history that she inherited the power as she was the only child of Amir Maya Lama which is quite unique as the leadership was supposed to go through the paternal lineages. It was not possible to find any written document regarding her or her family's history during this study. The rare supporting documents available with speculation of the story being about Tedina are one manuscript found at the Abdella Sharif's private museum in Harar which talks about the right of a woman to inherit power and resources through the Islamic Sharia Law that governed the kingdom and publication by the Harari Cultural Office that has a mythical fable that talks about a notorious female leader that narrates a story of her killing wise men.

The other one was found in Enrico Cerulli work of 1963 a mention of a female strong leader of Harar even though it is still as stated speculation. Pertaining to the first manuscript, Abdullahi Sharif believes that is a proof of the fact that she indeed inherited the power from her father as the law of the land by then has enshrined the right to do so. The other documents seem to make a connection with a later description of the lady Amir yet still it is open for contestation.

In spite of the difficulty to get documented and even orally preserved information about her, her name is listed and presented at all places that talk about Amirs of Harar is something that should be considered a starting point.

It is learned from the interaction with the research participants that she has no space not only in written identified documents but also in memories of the Hararians irrespective of gender, age or occupation. Most of them didn't even recognize or understood that she was female even after reading the list of recognized Amirs posted on the heritage sites of the city and published books about Harar and Hararians. One justification given for not being able to recognize her in the list was started by a partici-

pant that;

"The noun 'Amir' is associated with the male leader and the fact that her name was also written as Amir Tedina which was not helpful in signifying her gender which is a unique aspect."

Emir on its root form, Amir in this case, is defined as a ruler, chief, or commander in Islamic countries. The feminine form is Emira (أميرة 'amīrah). When translated as "prince", the word "emirate" is analogous to a sovereign principality. In contemporary usage, the term may indicate a Muslim head of state of an Emirate or a leader of an Islamic organization. ((Gibb & Bearman, 1960)

Despite being named Amir and listed on printed profiling documents in current times, there seems to be no evidence accounting for her so far obtained regarding her and her leadership. Hence, for most, it remains unknown or is in the contested oral history of herself and her time. Few who say have heard her story describes her and gives the reason for her missing from the popular memories in different manners.

One oral account found on a socially shared media presents her as a skilled horsewoman who used to mount her horse by leaping onto it (instead of mounting it one foot at a time). It further states that she was never seen on the roads of Harar off her horse. It adds that she was rarely seen riding slowly, rather she would race through the streets. This might have a base in the description of the Maya Community who in the Futuh Al-Habashi are stated as horsemen with a good fighting skills (The conquest of Abyssinia 1897: page 70). She was also described as an experienced warrior and really skilled with a spear. It was said about her that she was bloodthirsty adding that during her rulership Harar was always conquering or colonizing cities and tribes even till the Axumite empire. It was said Harar went bankrupt twice because of her expensive war campaigns. Many attempted to set a coup to overthrow her but they did not succeed. Even though there is no ground to attest to this account as true or imaginative, the key question in it is that this account fails to state the battles, the cities she concurred, and even the timeline with the Axumite empire which makes it challenging.

What makes it worth incorporating the above perspective in the search for this mysterious queen is the details such as the story stating that some participant has nar-



rated an oral history that included the existence of a female leader that the Awach (Elders/Community leaders) were beginning to have their doubts about the female leader (Tidina's) ability to rule the city. It further states that the elders of the city gathered and advised her to be wiser in her actions and that there is more to being a ruler than war. Upon the queen's refusal to adhere to the elder's advice, it is said that they gathered their soldiers and waged war against her. Tidina being experienced in war tactics beat every one of her opponents.

It is said that the worried elders decided to resort to the saints of the city. They gathered and visited the saints in the caves of Mount 'Ay Kokahoy' (where the Sufi saints spent their time worshipping Allaah). Upon their arrival, it is said that the saints had a very long dua' written for the elders. They advised them to carry out certain actions than to return to their homes and recite this dua' repeatedly.

The saints also left them a wasiya that this dua' has to be passed down through the following generations and to be recited on a regular basis. The elders did so, the queen passed away and was buried in an area called Abaa Hurayra within the walls of Harar. The following lines are said to be the dua' even though research participants stated that this is just any prayer for blessing and wish for a calm time.

Subhaana daa'imo hamdin takhey Allaah  
Subhaana daa'imo shukrin takhey Allaah  
Nazo nazo yabradey Allaah  
Rahmaan (rahmatzo) yawradey Allaah  
Yifaachubo zaykabtubo Allaah  
Faachnamaan rakhabnabeiw Allaah  
Geizamnamaan amanabeiw Allaah  
Farnamaan salatnabiew Allaah (.....)

To this day the dua' is still recited, in some homes on a yearly basis (every Mawlid, the birth of the prophet) and in other homes monthly/weekly. Originally it was written as one long dua' but as time passed it was cut into pieces the first part done by the mothers and the second part by the fathers (in the famous Zikri Yimaaj Nikhashana). (Harari\_Dinniya social media account)

Looking through more of the accounts from the interview indicated that she got her queenship as the only child of the Amir Maya who himself doesn't have a comprehensive description and information in the accounts

of Amirs. It should be clarified that it is true that there are other Amirs who have no profile as well and the Harari Cultural Beauru argues that her's and her family's missing stories are not the only missing.

This seems to be the way for almost all informants of the research irrespective of the age and academic status. The prominent answer is that they don't know her. Even they have never heard of the name despite the fact that her name is listed among the Amirs. Asked if there was any female Amir they know of, none seem to have had known anything so they answered "there was no Female Amir".

Asked in another way of saying if they have known a women leader in the history of the Amirs of Harar, only they state the wife of Amir Ahmed Gureey who is called Bati Dil Wanbera. The story behind this lady and her husband is a result of the political marriage of the most significant leaders of the Imam that was demonstrated by the successive victories he achieved over the Christian kingdom. Stories emphasize that his success, indeed, was as a result of his political marriage to Bati Dil Wanbera, the youngest daughter of the late Amir Mahfouz. She is also described by many as the most prominent and famous woman of the Horn of Africa in the 16th century (Mina, 2018). In the history of her and her husband, it is stated that when Mahfouz was killed in 1518 by the Christian kingdom and Bati Dil Wanbera, the only daughter of the Amir, became a symbol of succession and a uniting figure for keeping the integrity and protecting the sovereignty of the Sultanate against Abyssinian aggression. Bati's role was far from being only a symbol; she was an energetic helpmate to her husband. When the Imam embarked on the conquest of the Christian kingdom, she took the field with him in spite of the protests of his followers (Chemestov S., 2003). She gave birth to several sons among whom Muhammad, Nasr ad-Din and Ahmed Najashi who were mentioned in Arabic and Abyssinian sources (Mith, F. C., 2003). It is important to state that this woman has a place in the mind of the Hararians across generations and gender even though not as an Amir or a leader but as a strong woman in the political shadow. That is why most respondents brought her as the female leader when pressed if they know of any Amir with the first line of the answer being "there was the wife of the king...". Her being an only daughter and even one that should have and could be an Amir on her own has never been a depiction for her too. In fact, she is the one who is entitled to inherit the kingship and

has been a leader for more than 16 years but the only account people have of her is as the wife of two kings.

Hence, Tedina in this case is assumed to be Bati Dil Wanbera which again when explained to the research participants the difference between the two, they affirm that they don't know Tedina at all. Hence, for ordinary Harariyan Tedina doesn't exist or has no place in their memory.

### Existing accounts

According to historians and researchers who have worked on Harar and the region, few seem to acknowledge her existence and stated that there is difficult to get more information about her or her family. That is why their imagination of her and her historical accounts are different and sometimes incoherent too.

Mr. Ayuub is Head of the Harari Cultural Office and a team member of the ongoing research on the Amirs of Harar that aims to develop a new profile for the listed Amirs of Harar. He has stated the difficulty to find data about the female Amir for two reasons; one it is not recorded and might have had lost in the oral historical accounts that has selective memory preservation and the other, according to him, is the language used for documentation which is Arabic for existing manuscripts. From the ongoing research results, he has indicated that Tedina will be the 11th Amir and Dill Wanbera will be also added as Amira being the 46th Amir too.

For him, Tedina is physically described as a light-skinned, very tall, and well-built lady that has the skill of leadership and negotiation. He also describes her leadership time as peaceful and that has been her distinctive from other Harari leaders. He adds that she is characterized as one who has worked on the dissemination of Islamic teachings. Saying she is the one who worked in the creation of the 20 verses of the Quran for easy memorization. He stated that he has heard of this as an oral account and has not been able to find documented evidence.

His account of the Islamic teaching role she played seems to be shared by Abdilahi Sharif, the founder, and director of the only private museum in Harar that has the biggest private manuscript collections in Ethiopia. He stated that he has no recollection of her as an Amir but he said that in the manuscripts there is one that clearly indicated the law that assured the inheritance right for women which he believes to be evidence for her existence and correlate to that of her time as he insisted that Harar is the

first place to assure women's inheritance right in the Sharia that he says is should be the way she was granted the power of Amir.

He also talked about the Islamic books created as a subunit for easy memorialization associating with her as the manuscripts are said to be written by women. Nevertheless, he insisted that he is not certain if it is her or Yodit Guudit another prominent female figure in the Islamic history of Ethiopia one characterized as the responsible women for winning the Christian dynasty and burned down many churches and religious manuscripts. Very few other informants also associated Tedian with Guudit even though they themselves has stated that they are not sure of this account. Their argument is that she must be very strong to be a leader and this kind of leadership is what they have heard even though the name of the queen was not Tedina. It should be also indicated that the date for Yodit Guudit is not matching with that of Tedian as Guudiit is a recent account in the Ethiopian History. However, this is one aspect of memory people relies to create for Tedian.

Other particular account comes from a man named Fami who is a son of one of the religious scholars who followed the teachings of the Sh. Awberkedle and also was significant in the Harari straggle during the HileSellase time through the "Hanolato" movement. Fami is currently collecting the manuscripts and working on reorganizing religious scholars to resume his father's mission of teaching Islam in Harar. He starts with his acknowledgment of the oral history that Tedian as an Amir from the Maya family who he said used to live at the location of the current Haromaya which is in 30 km away from Harar. The contemporary historiography places this location as a place of an Oromo community and stated that the queen is more known to the Oromo community than to Harari. Yet still, this is more of an oral account than a documented reference he states. Fami insisted this is the Benti Maya and described her as a very strong woman that had the wisdom of spear fight and has managed to travel to her battlefields and lead the nation for a long. He also presents her as a defiant to the structural leadership headed by the old men of the community who wished to inherit the crown and was not pleased with a woman in power. He also narrates the story of their attempt to remove her from power in any way possible including a coup that never succeeded as she was very cautious, observant, and self-reliant.



His description of her death relates to the published fable story even though in the fable story it is a different animal and cause for death.

Nevertheless, he states her death as an account that came as a result of her desire to ride on a bull whereby the old men were more than happy to assist her to be on the ride as a wish for her death. And that, he said is her way of death as the old men have tied her to the bull that left her defenceless to the collides of the bull in all directions. She died cut into pieces that gave the old men a saying that “these women of power with no wisdom”.

This account is one that also go side by side with some other who stated that they have had heard of a queen who is said to be very strong and led by force and had no mercy. They also have stated that the Harari by then were in chaos as she had battles with everyone around her.

Ahmed Zekeriya (Conversation at Addis Ababa University, November 2020) who is a known historian of Harar also affirms the difficulty to locate and talk about the queen even though he has heard of her name but has no account of hers. He stated that she is from a family that is even contested for their historical origin and place of residence, the Maya family. He also agrees with those who say there is a connection between the Haromay and Maya communities but he stresses that there is no clear connection and proof yet.

Dr. Muna a female anthropologist from the Harari community who has mainly worked on the manuscripts and phenomenal Muslim women of the Horn of Africa also stated that she has no recollection of this wom-

en’s memory other than that she was part of the leadership.

### Conclusion

The search for the memory of the only recognized Amira of Harar can be said is yet a loss as there is a huge gap in truly locating, describing, and also assuring her existence, her leadership style, and achievements. The fact that she is not even recognized by the community while being listed in the Amirs is evidence that people have no recollection of her at all. The mixing of her with other strong women with a “maybe” story also tells the fact that the women have no known history of her own and also questions the historical depiction of the other strong ladies of the region too.

Even among those who said they have heard of her existence; her presentation is wide away from each other as one presents her as the peace-loving with high moral guidance of religious leaders while the other presents her as a defiant to the existing system that was not abiding by the laws and was a problem for the nation itself. As hard as it is to reconcile these two accounts, it should be insisted here that history has always been good in documenting notorious battle stories and if Tedian was as notorious, warmongering, and even powerful with height as one of the accounts presents her, it would have had made the history books of the bigger nation, Ethiopian state-building stories, and chronicles which had documented almost all battles with all their prejudices and selective perspective of defining who is the hero and the villain. The other account that illustrated her as a morally grounded peace-

ful leader might be a good starting point if we accept the hypothesis that Peace Day doesn’t call for more attention and might not come as a must to record in the history books as most of the globally recorded history is an account of the battles and misfortunes the world has had with a high naming and profiling of the prominent actors in it. The case of Dill Wonbera who is recognized as a strong women leader from the Eastern part of Ethiopia (Somali community also recognizes this woman as their leader calling her Araweelo who might be the same or different person) by Hararis but across the Horn of Africa along with Yodit Gudat, one is kept documented as the most influential notorious female leaders is good argument points here.

Whichever way it is, Tedian Bent Maya is recognized only by name as part of the list of Amirs and is a very sad status for one and only female leader in a historical dynasty that has made the history of its own not only in the nation but globally. Is this a historiographical discrimination and purposive deletion of women in history? What has happened and what exactly can explain this? is the story of her that is missing in the academics that need to be investigated more.

**Tirsit Yetbarek Seme** is the research and academic programs director of the Hargeysa Cultural Center. She is also the Host of Academic Dialogue in Hargeysa an academic platform that facilitates networking and knowledge sharing and exchange platform. She comes from a language, literature, journalism, peace and security, and sociolinguistics academic and research background. She is interested in the development and political dynamics of the Horn of Africa. she can be reached at [tirsit.yetbarek@redsea-online.org](mailto:tirsit.yetbarek@redsea-online.org)

### Bibliography

- Abbas Ahmed, 1992: 'A Historical Study of the city-state of Harar (1795-1875)' MA thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University.
- Abraham Demoz. 1972: 'Moslems and Islam in Ethiopic Literature', JES 10.1
- Ahmed Zakaria. "Harari Coins, 1991: A preliminary Survey", In Journal of Ethiopian Studies Vol. XXIV, (Addis Ababa Institute of Ethiopian Studies).
- Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Domenes de sejour dans la Haute-Ethiopie* (Abbyssinie), ed. Jeanne-Marie Allier (Studi e Testi, 286) (Vatican, 1980), i. 162—4, ii. 63.

- Bahiru Zawde, 2002: A history of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991 Addis Ababa Addis Ababa University Press.
- Belaynesh Michael, S. Chojnacki, and Richard Pankhurst (eds.), The Dictionary of Ethiopian Biography, 1, from Carl y Times to the End of the Zagic'e Dynast y c. 1270 A.D. (Addis Ababa, 1975).
- Burton, R.F. 1950: "First footsteps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harar." New York Volumes I II, New York: Dover Publication
- Cerulli Enico. 1971: Islam Yesterday and Today, translated into English published 2013 by Emran Mohamed Waber AA.
- Cerulli Enrico. 1961: 'Islam en Ethiopie: sa signification historique et ses methodes', Correspondance d'Orien1 (Colloque sur la Sociologie Musulmane, 11—14 September 1961), 5 (1961), 323.
- Cervick Pavel and Braukamper. 1973: "Rock Paintings of Laga Gafra, Addis Ababa Ethiopia.
- D. Crummey, 'Shaikh Zakaryas. 1971: 'The Occupation of Harar: January 1887', JES 9.2
- D. Crummey, 'Society and Ethnicity in the Politics of Christian Ethiopia during the Zamana Masafent', International Journal of African Historical Studies, 8.2 (1975), 266-78.
- Eine Liste der Heiligen von Harar', ZDMC 123 (1973), 269—92; 'Genealogien aus Harar' Der Islam, 51 (1974), 97—117;
- Ewald Wagner. 1974: 'Three Arabic Documents on the History of Harar', JES 12.1. 213—24.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2003: "Harar History" Encyclopaedia Aethiopica. Vol. 2 till 1878
- Georgio Banti, 2003: "Harari Literature: Encyclopaedia Aetopica Vol. 2 Harrassowitz Verlag Siedbert Uhlig, Wiesbaden:'
- Hussein Ahmed: 1992: Journal of Islamic Studies, 1992, Vol. 3, No. 1. pp. 15-46: Oxford University Press
- Jamaladin Ibrahim and Hashim, 2008: Ya Afar (Danakil) Hizb Tarik Arki Minch "a History of Afar and its Source" Addis Ababa Tirat Addis Ababa 2000 EC).
- Mith, F. C., 2003
- Muna Abubakr, 2005: Gender Issues in Diwan Courts and Sigil Register In City of Harar during the 19th Century, AA university. (MA thesis).
- R. A. Caulk. 1972: 'Religion and the State in Nineteenth Century Ethiopia', JEs 10.1 23—41.
- Shevir Chemestov. 2003: "Bati Dil Wambara" Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, Vol. I Ed. Sieidbert Uhlig, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz verlag.
- Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 1897: 'Abd al-Qadir b. Salim b. 'Uthman ('Arab Faqih), Futuh al-Habasha, ed./trans. by René Basset under the title, Histoire de la conquete d'Ab yssinie . Paris.
- Teklehawaryat Teklemariyam, 1998: Ye Hiywate Tarik (Autobiography). Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa University Press.
- Wilding, Richard, 1975: "Pre-history in Harar" Conference on Historical and associated Studies in Harargey, Archaeology Unit History Department, Addis Ababa University.



# 'SITAAD': The Somali Women's Traditional Spiritual Gathering



Muna Ahmed



Hamda Raage

*"SITAAD is a genre of religious panegyrics laced with spirituality and a yearning to emulate and fuse with some respected earlier women of Islam" (Awale, 2013)*



It was Friday afternoon. I and my friends have been planning to attend a Sitaad session for quite some time. Today is the day. The place we're heading to opens its doors only on Mondays and Fridays and is closed for the rest of the week. While Monday is a working day, we have decided to go on Friday. We haven't made a booking or anything else because it was not needed. Every woman is welcome to join as long as she is following the rules which are quite simple: you should come early, you should not enter in the middle of a session (in this case, if you come in the middle of a segment, you should wait at the door until that segment is over), you should participate (sing and clap your hands), you should not make distractions (no side talking, talk on the phone), you should respect everyone and bring Sadaqah (small amount of money for the purpose of donation and the maintenance of the place). After forty minutes of drive, we finally arrived at the destination. It was an old house consisting of one big room, a kitchen, and a veranda. The session room was about six to seven-meter square. Its walls were covered with curtains and some calligraphy and writings. There was a big green flag on the right wall of the room with Arabic calligraphy which says 'لا اله الا الله' which means 'There is no God truly worthy of worship except Allah'. On the left wall, the name of the place was written 'Xadrada Hooyo Diran' which means 'Mother Diran's Spiritual Place'

was called Diran. This place was her house originally and she was the one who turned her place into a spiritual gathering location. She was the session leader as well. Once she passed away, her daughter took over, and now, the granddaughter runs the place. It is kind of obligatory and the place should run as long as it's possible.

There were about thirty women in the room sitting in a circle. The middle space was empty as it is inappropriate to sit in the middle because it is the dancing area. Apart from the woman, the flag, the calligraphy, there was also a very big Durbaan (Drum), a few bottles of perfume, a small container of Uunsi: frankincense (Somali prepared scent), a pair of curtains on the window, and undeniably loads of positive energy. The lady in the middle started playing the drum loudly with two sticks. With a very loud and pure voice, she started a spiritual song as well. The rest of the women started chanting and singing after her. She and a lady next to her were leading the session and the rest of us were chanting and clapping. The rhythm, drumming, and clapping were balanced and spiritually uplifting. After a few intense intones, two of the women reached their spiritual climax (Jibbo), started shaking, and finally fell on the floor.

Sitaad (Sittaat) is also known as Xaawiyo Faadumo (Eve and Fatima) or Madaxshub (the anointment of the head) and particularly in the south as Abbaay Sittidey are songs throughout Somalia. Sitaad forms part of a rich and varied range of cultural expressions of Islamic devotion in the horn of Africa, forms of worship that are often directly linked to SUFI brotherhoods. (Kaptjeins, 1995)

As the woman who is in charge of the place told us before the beginning of the session, the place belonged to her grandmother who

was called Diran. This place was her house originally and she was the one who turned her place into a spiritual gathering location. She was the session leader as well. Once she passed away, her daughter took over, and now, the granddaughter runs the place. It is kind of obligatory and the place should run as long as it's possible.

There were about thirty women in the room sitting in a circle. The middle space was empty as it is inappropriate to sit in the middle because it is the dancing area. Apart from the woman, the flag, the calligraphy, there was also a very big Durbaan (Drum), a few bottles of perfume, a small container of Uunsi: frankincense (Somali prepared scent), a pair of curtains on the window, and undeniably loads of positive energy. The lady in the middle started playing the drum loudly with two sticks. With a very loud and pure voice, she started a spiritual song as well. The rest of the women started chanting and singing after her. She and a lady next to her were leading the session and the rest of us were chanting and clapping. The rhythm, drumming, and clapping were balanced and spiritually uplifting. After a few intense intones, two of the women reached their spiritual climax (Jibbo), started shaking, and finally fell on the floor.

Sitaad (Sittaat) is also known as Xaawiyo Faadumo (Eve and Fatima) or Madaxshub (the anointment of the head) and particularly in the south as Abbaay Sittidey are songs throughout Somalia. Sitaad forms part of a rich and varied range of cultural expressions of Islamic devotion in the horn of Africa, forms of worship that are often directly linked to SUFI brotherhoods. (Kaptjeins, 1995)

The word Sitaad has different meanings. The most familiar name is that the word is from the Arabic term Sayidaat which means mistress or a respected woman who has authority. Arguably the Sitaad culture began a long time ago, during the prophet Mohamed's time. While there is no accurate information, it is believed that the daughter of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH) was somehow the initiator of Sitaad because she organized a feast for poor women and children while she was pregnant with her sons (Hassan and Hussein). The purpose was with this act, to ask or beg Allah for safe delivery. In Somali culture, this tradition is called Taraaraysi and it is a ritual act performed during the last month of the pregnancy. (Awaleh, 2013)

Sitaad is very familiar among Somali women, specifically older women. In Somali culture, age and gender have always defined the social roles and responsibilities in society. The status in society is usually determined by age. For example, older men were always the community leaders because of the patriarchal culture and their wisdom. Both cultural and religious leaders were mostly older. Likewise, older women were more respected among the women as well. The traditional midwives, decision-makers, and Sitaad session leaders were mostly older women. These women have specific and important roles, obligations, and status in society and they are very well respected.

Married women had a distinct social circle because of their common roles, duties, and challenges. They have common responsibilities including wifehood and motherhood. This special bond in which they usually share their daily challenges, pray together,



and link their roles and responsibilities to the previous Muslim women as role models are one of the main reasons Sitaad forums were formed and became familiar among Somali women. Sitaad is a form of empowerment forum for women. In every session or occasion, they use to console those among them who experienced misfortune: sickness, poverty, infertility. They also advise themselves from the evil doing. The ideal goal of every woman in the Sitaad is to become Raalliyo (the Good Woman) because their end goal is to be in the heavens.

According to Kapteijns, in his article: Sittaat: Somali Women's Songs for 'The Mothers of The Believers', the singers of Sitaad explicitly emphasize their common problems as wives, mothers, and providers in the urban slums of underdeveloped countries. They also appeal to their common bond of womanhood with the famous women (mothers, wives, and daughters) of early Islam. In doing so they explicitly assert the values central to their own lives. They sing in praise of eve as humankind's first wife and mother. They celebrate the loyal wifehood of Khadija, so beloved by the prophet. In Fatima, they praise the significance of daughterhood, her wifehood to Ali the fourth caliph, and her motherhood to Hassan and Hussein. The imagery used in the Sitaad concretely links the singers to the heavenly ladies by the way of chains ropes and ladders. (Kapteins, 1995).

The big question is how did the Sitaad start? According to the only written book about this topic: Sitaad: is da'reen gelinta diineed ee dumarka, by Ahmed Ibraahim Awale (2013), it all started with the love for the religion

and the scarcity of the basics of Islam among Somali women decades ago. It has been said, back in the day, the knowledge of the religion among the Somalis, in general, was insufficient. While there were no available religious schools in the area, families, and communities used to send selected male individuals to Harar (Harar is an old city in eastern Ethiopia that is also known as the 4th holy Islamic city because of its historic role in Islamic teachings) The reason of sending those young men was to study religion and come back to educate people back home.

Unfortunately, men were the only lucky ones who used to receive such knowledge, and women were always left behind. Not only women had not received these opportunities, but they also were not able to attend the teaching sessions as well. Women then started to become very curious about the Islamic knowledge that only men discussed under the trees and to get any insight they could get, one of them used to sneak into the men's meetings and listen to their conversations and discussions. With the little information they overheard, women started to learn about Adam and Eve, the Prophet's names, the Prophet Mohamed and his families, the caliphates, and more. In order to share the little information, they had with other women, they started composing spiritual songs based on their hearsay along with rhythm and chanting. That is how Sitaad was born. To educate the religion among women.

Sitaad was the only place women found anything related to their religion. Every session was educational and inspirational as well. Furthermore, they expressed freely the love

they had for Xaawa (eve) and the other Muslim women figures including Khadija: the wife of the prophet. Fatuma: the daughter of the prophet and others. For example, this song:

*'Ummooy hortaa ma jirinoo  
Hooyooy hortaa ma jirinoo  
Hortaa, heybedley, hortaa  
Hooyo la isma odhan  
Xubkeed xariiraay'*

*'Before you (the name of) mother did not exist*

*Before you 'mama' did not exist  
People did not call each other mother  
Mother eve, silken beauty'*

Sitaad session is also a place of awareness. Women constantly remind themselves of the result of bad deeds like gossiping. There is always a constant reminder of death, after-life and how every woman should prepare herself for the day of judgment. Look at those verses:

*'Lama ridhoo reer adduun raasa-  
maalba maleh  
Ballami maysaane, waa kala baqool-  
aysaan  
Minkaaga oo buuxa waxa laga baxaa  
madhnaan  
Adiga oo diiran baa dawga lagu  
marshaa  
Qasil la qooshiyo biyaa lagugu qoy-  
nayaa  
Adiga oo qaawan baa qayd lagu  
xidhaa  
Adiga oo qudhiya waxa lagu dhigaa  
qabriga  
Adiyo camalkaaga cidladay isku  
mudanaysaan'*

*'The people truly have no wealth  
(wealth is useless as we shall all pass  
away)*

*There will be no promises amongst  
you to meet rather you'll all leave  
each other*

*You shall leave your full home  
empty-handed*

*Naked you will be carried down a  
road*

*They will wash you and apply qasil  
on you*

*And whilst naked they will wrap you  
in cloth*

*And you, by yourself, will be lowered  
into the grave*

*You and your deeds will be with each  
other alone'*

In recent times, the Sitaad has been in line with the progress and civilization of the modern world and women discuss and raise awareness on the recent issues. For example, during elections, they warn themselves not to vote for tribalism, but to vote for one who is in their best interests and those of the nation, while in times of conflict in Somalia, they urge each other to take part in conflict resolution efforts and contributing to peace.

Apart from the spiritual uplift and the constant reminder of the religious rules, Sitaad session also can be a group counseling session. Challenges of wifehood and motherhood are deeply discussed and sung by the women in the session. After the chanting and the rhythm, women usually feel lighter and supported. The songs and the chanting get rid of any negative feelings and troubles which eventually make them feel relieved and full of optimism and positive energy. At the end of

the session, they come out feeling strong, motivated, and happy. Sitaad is like immediate healing to everyone who attends. This particular feeling is what causes the commitment and the punctuality because Sitaad session is the only place in the community where women don't feel judged, lonely and unsupported. For example, those verses below highlight how helping each other is an obligation.

*'Naa tiina xaaska ah ku xurmeeya  
baa la yidhi*

*Middiina dhali wayda u dhabreeya  
baa la yidhi*

*Dhallaankiina u diroo dhawra baa la  
yidhi*

*Oo naa waa is dhaantaane, isu  
dhiiba baa la yidhi'*

*'It's been said; the wives amongst  
you, respect them*

*It's been said; the ones who cannot  
give birth, fight for them*

*It's been said; and send your children  
to them and protect them*

*You vary in ability so give to each  
other'*



Sitaad has psychological benefits for women, especially the stay-at-home moms & wives because those wom-

en have low or zero social life except the Sitaad colleagues. The sessions have given those women a platform to connect, socialize, chat, empower, and most importantly to have fun.

Shaadali (free tea) is usually distributed during Sitaad sessions. Most of Sitaad venues serve free tea on every session and free food on special occasions like the birth of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). The free food (mainly meat & rice) is sometimes given to the neighbors or poor people. During and after the Sitaad session, the woman leader collects money which serves different purposes. Some of those purposes can be found in this song:

*'Isku samroo isku miciinay Sahri ina  
tidhi*

*Naa waa is dhaantaane, isu dhiiba  
baa la yidhi*

*Oo tiina gaajoota u garaaba baa la  
yidhi*

*Naa tiina kici wayda kaalmeeya baa  
la yidhi*

*Naa tiina taagta daran taageera baa  
la yidhi'*

*'Support and be patient with  
each other, Sahra said to us*

*You vary in ability so give to  
each other*

*It's been said; the one who is  
hungry amongst you, be sympathetic to her*

*It's been said; the one amongst  
you who cannot stand, assist her*

*It's been said; the one amongst  
you who is weak, support her'*

Furthermore, Sitaad is all about prayer and asking for forgiveness and blessing from Allah. it is compulsory to chant with quite a lot of



songs that are a prayer. Most of them are asking Allah for forgiveness, blessing, wealth, children, ease, health, etc. For example, this song is prayer and the women are asking Allah to widen their graves once they are deceased.

*'Qabriga labadiisa dhaban way isku dhawiyihiin*

*Allahayow kala dhufuoy, maalintaan dhex galo'*

*'The two side of the grave are ever so close and tight*

*So O' God please separate them far [for me] the day I enter'*

Overall, Sitaad is a joyous occasion. It is festive. Tea is delivered during and after the session. Cuud and Uunsi are always burning on the Dabqaad (incense burner) and the whole place smells nice the whole time. It is full of good spirit, joy and happiness. Not only women, but sometimes children like to come and celebrate with their mothers as well. It is a celebration and positive vibes.

Despite Sitaad being a joyous and crucial occasion for Somali women, it has been facing a tremendous challenge for the last decades. In general, Somali men never value women's poetry. There are a few lines from a famous poet: Hadraawi also known as the Somali Shakespeare which define Sitaad as something far from literature

*'Suugaantu iib maaha,  
Erey iyo sunnee maaha,  
Hugun iyo Sitaad maaha'*

*Literature is not for sale,  
It is neither words nor free*

It is neither humming nor Sitaad'

This is clear evidence that Somali men haven't given any respect to the Sitaad and they don't see it as being a part of the poetic literature, as it should be. Not only they have dismissed and belittled Sitaad, but they have also tried to stop their wives and sisters from attending Sitaad sessions because some of them believe it is a waste of time. Some others assume that women consume Qaad (qaad is a green leaf hugely chewed by Somali men). Some others look at the actions of Sitaad with the suspicion of a forum to conspire against them. Recent religious ideologists also stamped Sitaad as something which is Haram (not allowed) they specified as shirk/bida'a (means forbidden). Their reason relates to the that some of the songs of Sitaad include believing and asking forgiveness of others rather than Allah only. Those challenges along with the heavy influence from the technology: televisions, the internet, cell phones have caused a huge decline in Sitaad sessions. So many places have been shut down.

However, Sitaad is something that is still familiar among Somali women and it is performed both in Sitaad places and at weddings. Nowadays, it is very common to hear some of the Sitaad songs at traditional weddings and other women's various occasions and festivals.

**Hamda Raage** is a young professional lawyer, human rights activist, and researcher. She works with different organizations about gender equality, woman's political participation and equal rights. She is also a culture enthusiast. She can be reached at Hamdarafiiq@gmail.com

**Muna Ahmed** is a bilingual writer, published Author, and Activist. Muna works with some other robust networks to promote literacy and advocate for reading, self-development, Gender Equality, and Cultural Identity among Somali Youth. She can be reached at munagafaneh@gmail.com

#### References

- Awale, Ahmed Ibrahim. Sitaad: Somali Women's Traditional Devotional Space. Finish Somalia Network. 2014
- Kapteijns, Lidwien with Maryam Omar. Sitaad: Somali Women's Songs for 'The Mothers of The Believers'. African Studies Center. 1995
- Awale, Ahmed Ibrahim. Sitaad: Is dareen gelinta diineed ee dumarka. Iftin Publishers. 2013
- Sitaad Audios. Recorded by the authors: Muna & Hamda, 2021

# BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOMALI STUDIES (BOSS)

If you are familiar with the work of Hargeysa Cultural Centre, then probably you heard about the Bibliography of Somali Studies (BOSS). If you didn't, then here it is; Bibliography of Somali Studies is a comprehensive online system meant for the scholars and researchers of the field of Somali Studies to browse and the aim of BOSS is to offer an open access database, containing an indexed bibliographic data of Somali Studies. The bibliography is established to help scholars and researchers in the field of Somali Studies to browse books, articles, reports and conference proceedings relevant to their research projects. BOSS is planned to produce an electronic annotated bibliography of Somali Studies field.

There are many ways we can look into how the field of Somali Studies came to be but one pivotal moment in this regard is the establishment of the Somali Studies International Association in 1978. Professor Lee Cassanelli writes that the field of Somali Studies was considered a minor subfield of Ethiopian Studies which also was part of the larger African Studies. Ever since the establishment of this congress, many important meetings and conferences that spanned more than 40 years (Cassanelli, 2008). It is indeed worth mentioning that the last conferences of Somali Studies (Hargeysa 2018 and Jigjiga 2021) took place under the auspices of Hargeysa Cultural Centre with collaboration with regional and local institutions. This has inspired many scholars and researchers to write more and produce knowledge over the years and this is where our work here comes handy.

One of the central tenets of Hargeysa Cultural Centre's work is to promote knowledge production and providing an enabling environment for researcher to thrive academically by getting access to the published work and also citing other scholars on the field in order to produce knowledge. There are already existing bibliographies who contain resources on Somali studies with particular focus on language and literature including Archivio Somalia at Università di Roma, The Digital Somali Library at Indiana University and Libris at the National Library of Sweden. The fact that the bibliography is based in institution who is working in the global south attests to this goal and so far the experience of this process was successful.

There was a wide global consensus on the importance of citation and referencing for the research works. For starters, it gives the researcher more grounds to explore what has been written or established in the specific area he/she is writing.

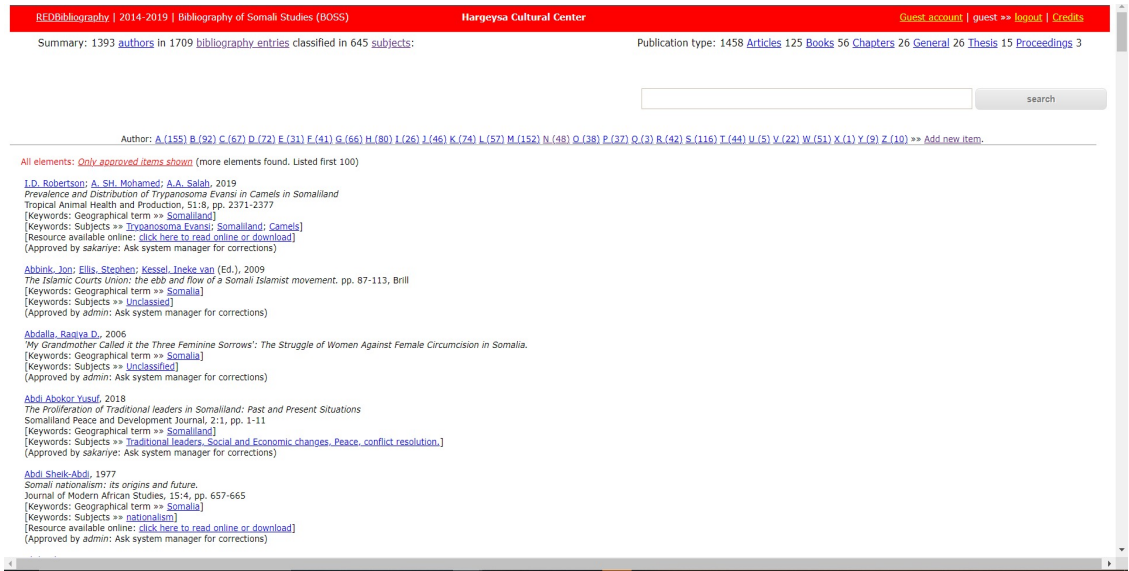


ing about. Also, it gives the authors of the said document their deserved credit for the work they produced. We at the Cultural Centre concur with this idea and that is why we set out to promote meaningful knowledge production on the field of Somali Studies and at the same time give the authors their deserved recognition. One unique aspect of our bibliography is it has a space for the research works that are not as popular as books and journal articles. These include thesis, general works, conference proceedings and other academic production.

So how this bibliography works

BOSS is a web-based online platform and it needs a valid user id and password in order to access it and to research data. The system administrator, who defines also a specific role for each approved user, provides the user id and the password upon request. This gives the system to monitor new members joining the BOSS and also helps the user to have his/her account. It is a self-explanatory system where you get to see all the major functions of the system; the statistics of the number of authors, entries, subjects. In addition to this, it shows the different classifications of the data in the system such as books, book chapters, journal articles, thesis etc. Hence any new user will be able to browse the system either by title of the publication or the author or the keywords the publication contains.

As of today, the BOSS contains more than 1693 authors, 1964 bibliography, 645 subjects, and these subjects are divided as such; 133 books, 1637 articles, 68 chapters, 26 general, 73 thesis an finally 15 conference proceedings. The team working on the system update the data on daily basis and follow the latest published works by scholars and thanks to the BOSS, many scholars can now browse and easily find the reference they need for the projects. We aim at adding more content in the coming year and we target to upload as much data as we can especially those by scholars based in the country.



**Moustafa Ali Ahmad** is head of the Library of the Hargeysa Cultural center and is also the manager of the Bibliography of the Somali Studies database. He comes from an international relations study background and he is interested in social justice, politics, and research. He can be reached at [moustafa.ahmad@redsea-online.org](mailto:moustafa.ahmad@redsea-online.org)

Bibliography

Cassanelli, L. (2008). The Somali Studies International Association: A Brief History . Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies, 1-10.



“Technology and latest human inventions brought new ways to not only communicate but also preserve heritage”

# Hargeysa Cultural Center’s Archival Cassettes



I love stories and I love music too, and working in archival job especially a one about Somali sounds and music, is a very interesting business! In the last few months, I have woken up thinking about the upcoming Somali music cassettes that I would discover and that I would help others discover or perhaps rediscover. Some days I keep thinking about the story that inspired this poem or this play or songs. And how we could have ended up with a completely different song had the situation that inspired the song changed. Hargeysa Cultural Centre Archives is a rich archive

holding thousands of cassettes from different generations and genres, from music to message, from plays to oral poetry. Among these, a selection of four thousand is collected in very beautifully labelled cassettes that once were the only means to collect and preserve Somali music. But times are changing. Technology and latest human inventions brought new ways to not only communicate but also preserve heritage and that is why we at Hargeysa Cultural Centre started working in digitizing and converting cassettes into a modern digitalized and accessible format.

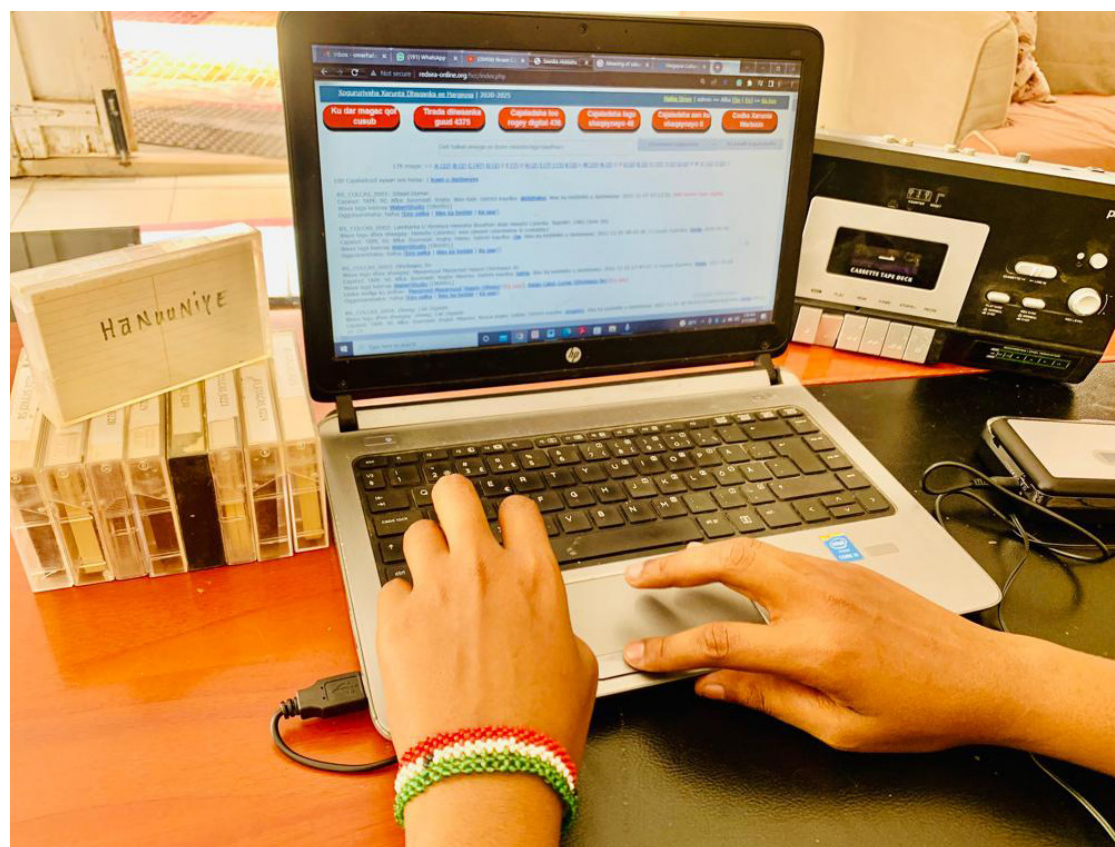


It is impossible to see a country or people who do not have their own culture or a way of entertaining themselves or expressing their different way of feelings. Somali music originally involved a combination of different instruments, Oud, small drums and sometimes flutes with which musicians make up the kind of music they wanted while using different melodies. Some of those songs were produced and recorded in studios like Radio Hargeysa, which was previously called Radio Kudu 1943 and later, Radio Mogadishu and Radio Djibouti, all of them state-run institutions, and a then after other private studios (or music shops) came in to business, like Boodheri, Liibaan and Waaberi Studio. Boodheri studio was the first music-shop and recording studio in Djibouti and they had lot of cassettes but when time went on the studio closed its doors in 2003 and the HCC traced the archive and found some of these cassettes, to establish the first HCC Cassettes' Archive. Since then the archive grew through donations and small scale purchases (see Woolner & Jama Musse, 2021, for more details on the historical background of the archive).

### How the digitization process works?

The cassette digitization is the first step in the process of converting music to MP3 using Audacity Software. To begin, the tapes, cassette recorder, and audacity app are inspected to ensure they are in good working condition. Second, the cassette player is inserted into the recorder, and the digitization process begins after connecting to the audacity app. The length of time it takes to digitize depends on the information in the player; poetry is typically longer, thus it takes a long time. We save the MP3 versions according to their categorized numbers (RS\_COLCAS\_xxxx) and the categories are Songs, Oral poetry, Plays, Quran, Hymns, Traditional dances, and Others. The cassettes are already numbered and registered in excel with their numbers, and these same numbers shown on the physical label. At the moments a total 470 cassettes are digitalized and a pretty good number of 4789 cassettes are cataloged among these catalogued 61% are songs, 0.6% plays, 0.8% poetry, but also 95 cassettes contain traditional dance, 111 hymns and 25 Quran. The most mentioned artists in these cassettes are Mohamed Mooge Liibaan, Mohamed Ibraahim Warsame "Hadrarawi", Khadra Daahir Cige, Xasan Aadan Samatar, Xaliimo Cumar Khaliif "Magool", Maxamed Saleebaan Tubeec and Sahra Axmed Jaamac. There are many more artists but this shows how those seven were more known and people used to listen them more.

The recent new collection of the cassettes are a total of 313 cassettes which are foreign language as they were donated by the Hargeysa Cultural Center friends, The biggest percentage are English and Amharic but there are other languages like Canfar, Congolese, Arabic, Hindi and Portuguese.



RCF developed an in house database to catalogue, classify and easy consult the digital archive. In addition to this, we aimed at making this program to make users familiarize themselves with the prominent personalities who produced all these beautiful songs and poems so that young people will know and old people relive the moments they enjoyed in the past. The newly developed program could maintain and collect a lot of information about the people who are mentioned in those cassettes, in this way we collected the biographies of every person by mentioning when and where they were born and when and where they died. The unforgettable part is that we could know how many songs they sung and also in what plays they were presented in, mostly those Cassettes were recorded starting from the 1950's till 2000. We collected information, like who digitalized every cassette, when was it digitalized and there is a part of note in the system where you can record whether there were any difficulties while digitalizing the cassette or any other further information you can add up.

Recently we started sharing some of the songs and poems from our archives on our social media pages and the response was spectacular to say the least. We could follow as people from Facebook kept talking about this song and how they didn't know so and so sang this particular song. Some expressed nostalgia in seeing this song posted, others came to know who the musician was who produced this beautiful. For many of us, it is not a song, but it's a life history relived and reimagined and this project is working in not only preserving this heritage but also relive it and present it. The first song we profiled was Cishqi: Ma Naxoo Jacayl by Sahra Ahmed Jaamac back in the year 1978 but the first cassette we profiled was The History of the Father of Love Cilmi Boodheri and it was narrated by Muuse Maxamed (Xaaji Wareer) 1970s-19780s.

This program came on a needed time and our goal was to find a way we could preserve and maintain these collections so that it does not get lost and also a way it could help researchers who are writing about Somali music or stories behind any plays or songs know more about them and finding them digitalized easily rather than looking out for information that sometimes could not be accurate or sometimes could not even be found. It is difficult to find some songs while the singers already died and sometimes, they do forget who did the melody and the lyrics of the songs they did sing before, it is not only a

way we could help researchers but also others could help us by collecting the information about the songs and when the songs were written.

The intent of this project in 2022 is to target producing a high quality digital version of these cassettes and aiming a way where young writers or researchers who are interested in Somali music and culture may benefit from this program and the goal is to write more about Somali music and create a path where a lot of Somalilanders could understand how important old Somali songs were and maybe comparing this newly produced music where they have different instruments and different ways of making melodies. So this could be said that it could be a motivation and a way to know more about old music. This will hopefully usher a new period of reviving old Somali music and literature into modern, lively and accessible thing.

**Hafsa Omer** is the cassettes archival manager of the Hargeysa Cultural Center. She is leading a team of interns who are working on the digitalization of the cassette archives. She is a Social Work student at Hargeysa university. She is interested in community service and historical archives to tell the stories of the past and connect the generation gaps. She can be reached at [hafsa.omer@redsea-online.org](mailto:hafsa.omer@redsea-online.org)



## Nabadgelyo Siciid: A leading scholar and true enlightenment thinker passed away Said Jama Hussein (1942 - 2022)

Jama Musse Jama | @JamaMusse



There is no right way to grieve and each of us reacts in our own way to the loss of a friend. Today, we have lost a dear friend whose wisdom, wit and charm have deeply affected all who have had any association with his world. Said Jama Hussein died in London at the age of 80 and many people, belonging to different generations, are mourning his passing. I asked him in the last days of his life, his views on life, and he answered, "as a member of the humankind living on this earth, I have always - since my adulthood at least - maintained that the best legacy to leave behind was to take part in the process of human reproduction - giving birth to children, who hopefully might come up with brilliant ideas; but more importantly, to leave behind ideas that contribute to the progress of man on his journey on this planet." Said was one in a million.

Many people know Said Jama Hussein as a leading scholar and visionary Somali short story writer. He was beyond that. He was someone who was full of wisdom and eventful life. Even though I met him after I was a grown man, meeting him has shaped me in many ways. His independent thinking with his critical observation skills and playful but concrete advice is one of the qualities that made him stand out. His sharp observation skills and power of remembering details of events, not only those he was a participant in, but also those he is told of, are still a mystery to me. His connection with people across generations is another quality Said had. He was a great mentor to many young people, be it in life in general, or in the profession of short story writing for which he is praised as the "king of Short Story writing". A lover of all kinds of art, one day I

sent Said Jama the photo of a painting exhibited in a hotel in Addis Ababa, by an anonymous artist, and as usual he was able to find a way to use the same painting to express his feeling about the sociopolitical state of Somali society. He wrote me back "This type of miniature art belongs to the era of impressionism in painting. Such a pathetic expression on her face must have been moved by a very disturbing spectacle, like seeing (a) Dante's Inferno - a dreadful calamity or (b) the catastrophic precipice the Somalis are mindlessly heading towards." He was an artist and art historian, who would tell you in his own words to discover the thought and emotion which the artist of the painting has portrayed.

Fluent in English, Arabic, and of course Somali, his mastery of six languages has made him have a wider world understanding and the capacity to express his thoughts beyond a language limit. His principle of tolerance and kindness is a human characteristic he wished the Somali community developed more for peaceful coexistence. For this, he has contributed immensely by bridging the language gap through the translation works he did.

There are many incidents I could write as a tribute to him, but I remember our conversation in 2016 in London. I was intrigued to know about his childhood and perspectives and asked him "who is your childhood role model that impacted your life?". I remember the way he looked at me with a heartwarming smile and checked our surrounding if anyone was looking at us followed by saying in a very low tone "is it only us?". I was surprised and thought it was a simple question and

said "yes, it is only us". Said laughed so hard and loud with my response which was still confusing for me. Then he reached out to his bag and brought out messy papers written all over them, and he said, "I have a gift for you". It is some writing that I have been collecting and I call it "is it only us". We both laughed aloud. He then said "it is not yet a book or something you can read. But try to read and make it look like a book, print it, and let it reach people." He then added, "you have a look at it and you will find the answers to some of the questions you just asked me". This is how the book "Ma innagii uun baa" came to be with my curiosity and interesting conversation with the great storyteller.

Someone very close to him characterized him by saying, "he is a nation on his own" which I agree 100% and will add that the nation he was is one of peaceful, tolerant land where everyone is accepted and heard. That is what he makes you feel when you are around him, and it doesn't matter who and what you are; he had space and love for everyone. This is how he impacted many lives in the past 60 years. He embodies a person of civic virtues, creative writing, eloquent storytelling, hospitable, sympathetic, and considerate and many more things beyond words.

Though well-read and connected to the world of books and ideas, his love of soccer might be something a lot of people do not know. He played the game when he was young in Aden, Yemen, and his favorite number was No. 8.

Nabadgelyo macallin.  
Hargeysa, 11 June 2022

Dr. Jama Musse Jama can be reached  
on twitter @JamaMusse  
email: jama@redsea-online.org

  
**Nala Dabaaldeg**  
15 guuradda

**15** 

**BANDHIGGA CAALAMIGA AH EE  
BUUGAAGTA HARGEYSA**

**23-28 JULAAY 2022**  
**MARTIDA SANNADKA: SINIGAAL**  
Goobta: Xarunta Dhaqanka ee Hargeysa



HIBF  
2022



HALKUDHEGGA SANNADKA

**WADAJIR**

**International Conference**  
**The Berbera Corridor**

**Porto, FLUP,**  
**24th-25th November 2022**





2022 WADAJIR || SOLIDARITY

2021 DERISNIMO || NEIGHBORHOOD

2019 WADALAHAANSO || COEXISTENCE

2018 XIKMAD || WISDOM

2017 XIDHIIDHSAMI || CONNECTIVITY

2016 HOGGAAMIN || LEADERSHIP

2015 DEGELO || SPACE

2014 MALE-AWAAL || IMAGINATION

2013 SOCDAAL || JOURNEY



<http://www.hargeysaculturalcenter.org/>

Facebook @XaruntaDhaqankaHargeysa

Instagram @hargeysacc

Twitter @HargeysaCC