

A Study of Reconstructing the Historical Link between Wolaitta and Damot Kingdom of Wolaitta in Ethiopia

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to reconstruct the misunderstanding on historical link of medieval state of Wolaitta and Damot. Damot was the medieval state name of Wolaitta for outsiders and neighbors. The name Damot was the administrative center of medieval Wolaitta at the top of Mount Damot. However, Tsehay Brahan - Sellassie; the author of an article "*The Question of Damot and Wolaitta*" created miss conception that brings disagreement on historical link between Wolaitta and Damot. Besides, Tsehay added that Wolaitta, Damot and king 'Motolomi' had no relation amongst each other. Thus his study used primary sources of data intensively to validate as to whether 'Damot' was the name of the state of Wolaitta or only an administrative centre of Wolaitta (town) during medieval time. The study also used secondary sources of data. The result of this study indicated that Wolaitta was the name of the kingdom and Damot was the name of the administrative center for kingdom of Wolaitta in which non-natives refer the kingdom by the name of Damot. Therefore, Wolaitta was the name of the kingdom, and Damot (Damota native name) was the administrative center of Wolaitta. Thus, based on the conclusion of this study the new generation is allowed to know their history by contending such misunderstanding of their community and preserve their history.

Key words: Wolaitta, Damot, Motolomi, reconstructing, administrative center, kingdom

1.1.1. Introduction:

Wolaitta is an omotic people of Afro- Asiatic category with the population of nearly two million in the present Zone of Wolaitta and exceeding number outside its current zone population. Even though the kingdom of Wolaitta had no demarcated boundary in the South, west and East, except in the North up to Jama River (North Shewa), the present day Wolaitta zone is bounded by Hadiya and Kambatta in the North, Aris and Sidama in the East, Gamo-Gofa in the South and Dawuro in the West. The absolute location of the current Wolaitta zone is 6° North latitude and 37° East longitude. The climate conditions of the area include Dega, Woina-Dega, Qolla and Bereha. The last two climate conditions are in Rift valley, Bilate, Umma (Omo), Deme and Bisaria River valleys. The land features include steep hills, mountains, flat plains and Rift valley. The hills in Kindo Koysa and Kindo Didaye are some of the examples. There are also mineral rich areas such as metal over, natural oil, Geothermal, hot spring and salt land sites in the zone. Other medieval and modern historical and cultural centers also found in the zone such as palace centers, tombs, steal stones and urban centers.

1.1.2. Background of the study:

The state of Wolaitta was very old with its clan category of Malla and Dogolla. Even though the written sources trace the origin of the state of Wolaitta up to the state of Damot for alternative use of Wolaitta up to the state of Damot (the then naming in medieval time) and to the 13th c of saint *Abune* Abune Tekle- Haymanot, who gave a Christian name for his father king Motolomi, son of king Saso, the Wolaitta oral history as well as archaeological excavations in Wolaitta trace their history to the remote past, even before the Neolithic Period. To confirm their long history various historical and archeological and natural sites are still visible in Wolaitta. For instance, those historical and natural sites that gives some sort of the peoples evidence to confirm their existence in the area are more than 30 caves among them Moche-Borage Arujia, Wawu, Woganne, Akirissa, Galato, Amigoda and others. There are more than one hundred steal (obelisks) in Wolaitta that signifies their old history. The defense trenches and walls (kella) of Ijaio kella, Amado kella and Arujia Kella had its own part to their history. In Wolaitta some natural features that supported peoples social history include Tossa oge (God's way), Tossa Zarpe (God's Bridge) and Tossa Afo (God's hell at Ajora water fall in Boloso Bombe district).

A well recorded history of Wolaitta state exists after thirteenth century, but the community tradition went back to remote past. Wolaitta people had their own king, who was accountable

to the society and Balimona; Wolaitta parliament consists of twelve councilors and fifty-four representatives elected by the people. In Wolaitta state there were three dynasties; Wolaitta-Malla dynasty, Arujia dynasty and Tigre dynasty. Wolaitta-Malla dynasty ruled up to the 16th c, until the power is transformed to the Tigre dynasty. The separation of power was between kawo (king) at the top and Tondiya (village leader) at the bottom. The political structure tell us that Wolaitta was very organized up to its, incorporation into Ethiopian state in 1894, when the last kawo, king Tona was surrendered to the European armed Shewan force as different from king Tona, armed with traditional weapons.

1.1.3. Scope of the study:

The state of Wolaitta up to its incorporation to the Ethiopian kingdom had a palace in various parts of the community but Mount Damota was a dominant center for the Kingdom or state of Wolaitta, where exactly the Wolaitta-Malla and “Tigre” dynasty had had their palace on top of the Mountain. Damota (Damot-nonnatives) was / is a historical and natural beauty for the state of Wolaitta. The name Damota is a Wolaitta term for the name of the highest pick in Wolaitta, and Damot include six Damot names such as Damota-Pullassa, Damot-Gale, Damot-Kolbaye, Damota-Woyide, Damota-Humbo and Damota-Sorre. These six Damota community called as Usupun-Hudugga-Damota were one of the centers, of Wolaitta near to Mount Damota. However, it is the mountain name in Wolaitta language. Mountain Damota is the largest and huge hill in Wolaitta which is the center for more than ten medieval rulers of Wolaitta. Damota has a historical sites like Motolom’s Baptist place by saint Tekle Haymanot, on Xazza palace, Kike Damota, Darina (Xossa Pengia-God’s gate), and various caves like Woganne, Moche-Borago, Odda, Essi, Ladissa and others. Naturally, the mountain is very attractive, and on its top it is possible to see the Rift valley and other highlands of Ethiopia. Among all historical aspects on mount Damota (Damot-as outsiders call it) its centrality to Wolaitta-Malla dynasty, especially king Motolomi son of king Saso and the evangelical activities of Saint *Abune* Tekle Haymanot makes the mountain more indigenous and popular. On top of Damota in the second half of the thirteenth century king, Motolomi, grandson of king Dacasso was baptized as Christian with other 10,999 people. Still know this is visible. Thus, this place found on top of the mountain: at Xaza Garuwa. The gate-ways to the Motolomi’s palace are four; via Saint Tekle Haymanot, Gurumo, Pullassa-Wonchoro and Dalbo. While climbing the mountain there are a lot of historical and natural sites. Thus, the mountain has historical and natural sites to Wolaitta community.

Thus, the mountain had various historical sites such as Tossa-Pengia (God's gate), flat plain called Darina, Tossa-Pengia and many caves, more than hundred tombs and trenches of Arujia, Godare- Pengia (Hayna's road), Woga koka (large hill), Christian church, Bawto and others. It is possible to conclude that Damota (Damot) had historical and natural importance the state of Wolaitta and preserving the current Wolaitta identity.

1.1.4. Review of related literature

The review of related literature on this study is referred to, with reference to the historical researches and surveys conducted by the researchers and university departments in Ethiopia. Some of the most pertinent studies made are as follows:-

1. Abesha Shirko. A History of Wolaitta Soddo since 1974. MA Thesis, Bahir Dar University, Department of History, 2010.
2. Aysha Amado. The Beginning of Wolaitta History, Addis Ababa, 2003 E.C
3. Bahru Zewde. *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002.
4. Demissie Mojja. "A Socio-Economic and Political History of Wolaitta, 1894- 1974." MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, Department of History, 2007.
5. Wakasa, Motomichi. *A Descriptive Study of the Modern Wolaytta Language*. Doctoral Dissertation, the University of Tokyo, May 2008.

From the above said studies it is noted that there is no specific study conducted on the specific area which has been studied in this study in hand.

Therefore, it is this fact that enabled the researcher to confirm that there is no question for Damot that it was the land of Wolaitta and originally Wolaitta state, where its political centrality became strong. It is also possible to call Wolaitta and Damot interchangeably to memorize the history of Wolaitta people. Besides, concerning king, kawo Motolomi was expansionist king of Wolaitta, son of king, king Saso, was the indigenous and heroic Wolaitta-Malla family, and still his family found in Wolaitta. Thus, the controversies link between Damot and Wolaitta. The present wolaitta town is called wolaita sodo which is located at 280 kms from Addisababa in Ethiopia.

1.2.1. Objective of the study:

The primary objective of the study was to clear the historical misconception of the people about the real pre-history of Wolaitta kingdom. It is evident that Wolaitta and Damot are interchangeable to the history of Wolaitta people. The secondary objective of the study was to clear the misconception of the people that the author of an article "*The Question of Damot and Wolaitta*" created miss conception that brings disagreement on historical link between Wolaitta and Demot. The ultimate objective is that Wolaitta was the name of the kingdom, and Damot (Damota native name) was the administrative center of Wolaitta and the fact that king, kawo Motolomi was expansionist king of Wolaitta, son of king, king Saso, who was from the indigenous and heroic Wolaitta-Malla family.

1.2.2. Hypothetical background

The hypothesis of the study to the state of Wolaitta was very old with its clan category of Malla and Dogolla. Even though the written sources trace the origin of the state of Wolaitta up to the state of Damot for alternative use of Wolaitta up to the state of Damot (the then naming in medieval time) and to the 13th c of saint *Abune Abune Tekle- Haymanot*, who gave a Christian name for his father king Motolomi, son of king Saso. This historical reality was twisted in a different way and presented by Tsehay Brahane-Sellassie; the author of an article "*The Question of Damot and Wolaitta*".

1.2.3. Research questions

1. Whether the historical background leading to the real pre-history of Wolaitta that Wolaitta and Damot are interchangeable to the history of Wolaitta people.
2. Whether the historical reality twisted in other way and presented by Tsehay Brahane-Sellassie; in the article "*The Question of Damot and Wolaitta*" is an historical fact.
3. Whether the name of the Wolaitta kingdom, and Damot (Damota native name) were the Administrative center of Wolaitta (the controversies link between Damot and Wolaitta).

1.2.4. Project Design and Methodology; Relevant and necessary data was needed for this article to reach at final conclusion and to answer the research questions. This research employed a qualitative approach. To collect the necessary and relevant data the research used various methods.

1.2.5. Study Area, Population and Sampling; The central focus of this research is Wolaitta Administration, found in the Southern part of Ethiopia. Because of the difficulty to include all people in this study, the research included 52 participants through purposeful and snowball sampling among the study population. The selection criteria are based on accumulated experiences and up on the consent of the participant.

1.2.6. Sources of Data; The study used both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data were people living in and around different villages who have different societal status, mostly elders and officials from Wolaitta Administration Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs who have sufficient knowledge about the history of Wolaitta whereas the secondary sources used were prior studies, manuscripts of Sodo town municipality, official documents and related literatures.

1.3.1. Method of Data Collection

a. Interview; Key informants had provided an ample knowledge and experiences regarding the history of Wolaitta and Damot. Semi-structured and unstructured question in the form of oral interview were prepared and a careful interview was conducted with those people earlier identified by purposive sampling. Besides, note taking based up on the consent of the participants, thus, this research article was incorporated the data obtained through recording. The interviewees were selected based on purposive sampling techniques by considering their experience and ample knowledge on history of Wolaitta.

b. Focus Group Discussions; On the other hand, this study used four equally sized focus groups, each having no less and more than eight participants. The participants for focus group discussion were selected in snowball sampling technique in cognizant to age, roles in the community, and the vivid account of information they provide to the study. There was simple communication accessibility because the researcher is native to the community and understands informants' interest and ethical issues.

c. Document analyses; The study was also needed to conduct the necessary and reliable information by reviewing the available documents and needed to make a link or connection between different variables contributing to the history of Wolaitta and Damot. This method used the researcher to cross check and triangulate the data obtained through interview and focus group discussions. In this case data which are available in the form of recordings at Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs Department such as prior findings

and scholarly research works, files, photographs, films, official reports, letters, archival documents, private collections, currencies and memo were used.

1.3.2. Research instruments

d. Observations; Besides the information obtained from the participants in various mechanisms above, the researcher used systematic observation throughout the study and used field notes to indicate the historical villages of Damot administrative center on top of Mount Damot and how to preserve it for long.

e. Ethnographic Survey; This is the method in which the holistic approach of a specific link on history of Wolaitta and Damot was surveyed. Hence, this study is employed ethnographic analyses to get a deep insight about the area under discussion with respect to the controversies to its link with medieval history of Wolaitta, and this study can make the untapped historical resources of the area as one of the frequently visiting historical sites of Ethiopia.

f. Method of Data Analyses and Interpretation; After selecting sample population and collecting the necessary data, it was analyzed and interpreted systematically. In Analyzing and interpreting data the researcher sorted out the raw data into the category they belonged and give meaning to those data obtained from primary and secondary sources through narration, ethnographic analyses, thematic organization and triangulation that used for accuracy of sources.

1.3.3. Discussion and Results

The analysis of data from all the three research questions as follows:-

Q.1. Damot (“Damot” is the naming/call by non-natives of Wolaitta) is the historical, natural gifted as well as the highest mountain in Wolaitta. However, on the Journal of Ethiopian Studies Volume XIII, No.1, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, January, 1975, Addis Ababa, written by Tsehey Berhane-Sellassie, “The question of Damot and Wolaitta” made wrong conclusions in place name of Damot, identity of king Motolomi and *Abune* Tekle-Hymanort-the thirteenth Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity evangelist. However, Damota, king Motolomi and *Abune* Tekle-Haymanot were the integral part of medieval history of Wolaitta. The author of this article contends the conclusion of Tsehay with full facts, evidences and real historical analysis and right interpretations, for each paragraph based on both primary and secondary sources.

It is indeed; 'Menelik' led an expedition of territorial conquest on state of Wolaitta, a sovereign state, due to Great famine of 1888-92, demand for wealth and territorial expansion in late 1880s. Nevertheless, the contention between king Gobbe (1841-1890) of Wolaitta and king Menelik (1889-1913) of Shewa war like action continued. The reason for the contention of the former against the later was not to late the sovereignty of Wolaitta to Shewa in late 1880s. In imaginary conclusion, a famous saint, Tekle- Haymanot was not originally Shewa but he was Wolaitta, son of king Motolomi from his mother Egizaharia a Shewan captive, women who came during the conquest of Shewa by Damota state; the then name for the Wolaitta state and naming which was led by king Motolomi.

It was true and factual that *Abune* Tekle-Haymanot evangelized his father's land, his people in Damot kingdom, in Wolaitta while growing with his father, whom saint Tekle- Haymanot converted to Christianity and took the king to Debre-Libanos, by allowing king Motolomi to leave the political power to his son (son of Motolomi) to king Ansa. Therefore, unlike Tsehay's conclusion Menelik had no religions motive to conquer Wolaitta to evangelize Christianity. Menelik's motive was only and only for economic and political reason. Contrary to Tsehay's argument my informants stated that Wolaitta governments sent any tribute to other state had independent sovereignty. Hence, Shewan state, which had a horizontal political, economic and diplomatic relation.

Tsehay believed that the official account of Gebre- Sellassie that states kawo Motolomi as conqueror of Shewa, confirm that the king made a mother of saint Tekle Haymanot, wife of king Motolomi (up to divorce) but she do not accept king Motolomi stated by Gedle Tekle-Haymont (hagiography) and Motolomi as a king for Wolaitta. As she stated the history of Wolaitta is "blank" unless it was not stated by Gebre-Sellasse by claiming to the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, a history of Wolaitta is not "blank" even before thirteenth century rather it was not well documented due to lack of written language in the community and due to land locked nature of the state.

As Tsehay argues the chronicler of Menelik (Gebre-Sillassie) had no option to propagate the history of Wolaitta who fought "bloodiest war" with Menelik rather he confirmed from the written document about the fact of Saint Tekle-Haymanot and king Motolomi what the oral tradition confirm similar to written document. The evidence given by chronicler of Menelik was similar with that of the pre-1894 travelers to Ethiopia about the link (oneness) between Damot, and he recognized king Motolomi and Wolaitta.

The statement of Gebre-Sellasse stating Christianity in parts of Wolaitta cutoff or stopped due to Gragn war and the state became “pagan” is convincing. This was because after the war of Ahmed Ibin Ibrahim al- Ghazi (Ahmed Gragn) in the 16th century, the 13th century evangelization of saint Tekle-Haymanot, which is preached for that time only (13th c and beginning of 14th century), was not practiced later up to 1894 by the people highly. The evangelization did not enabled Christianity as part of Wolaitta culture, then the people after saint Tekle-Haymont returned to their original and traditional belief. After Tekle-Haymanot took his father, *kawo* Motolomi to monastery (in Shewa) for the sin in which king Motolomi persecuted *Abune* Tekle Haymant’s members, the people who followed Christianity were very few. There after they possibly returned to their traditional belief, worshipping for Salo-Xosso (sky God), and they totally became non-Christian up to 1894, when Christianity (Orthodox) was again preached.

The Pre-Gragn church on the top of Mount Damot had no relation with the emperor of the then Ethiopian, Zara Ya’eqob (1434-68). At the time Wolaitta had been ruled by its own independent king of Wolaitta-Malla dynasty; Motolomi’s family. Tsehay believed that saint Tekle-Haymanot reached Damot. She explained *Abune* Tekle Haymanot’s effort to convert king Motolomi to Christianity in which *Abune* Tekle Haymanot’s fellows were persecuted by Motolomi in Tossa-Afo (Ajjorra Waterfall) in specific place called Toma Geraria. However, it is not clear that why she was not accepting Motolomi as king of Wolaitta, the then time its administrative center was Damot. If Damot was—the embryo of Wolaitta and Tossa Afo (God’s precipice) was still now visible site in Ajjorra Waterfall in current Wolaitta, thus, it is clear that there was no separation of Damot, Wolaitta and Motolomi. Hence, there is no reason to take Tossa Afo (Ajjorra Waterfall) North of Abbay which contradicts her own argument by itself.

Tsehay either deliberately or wrongly diverted the Damot of Wolaitta and *kawo* Motolomi by contending Gebre-Sellassies and the Wolaitta oral tradition about Damot, Wolaitta and Motolomi. She did not state weather Motolomi and *Abune* Tekle-Haymont both had blood relation. Methodologically, if she was arguing in such way it is difficult to say Tsehay did her field work in Wolaitta community. Almost all community members and Christians (Orthodox) followers critically Motolomi was expansionist king and *Abune* Tekle- Haymont was son of Motolomi from his captive mother Egizaharia from Bulga.

Q.11. As oral tradition confirms that originally *Abune* Tekle-Haymont came to Wolaitta to search for his father. This is because his mother Egizaharia married with Motolomi but she was escaped with her loyal armies to her motherland in Bulga, where she born *Abune* Tekle-Haymont. Then she told the mystery when he became the age of nine and he came Wolaitta; Damot (palace of his father; where he was grown) to see his father. Later he evangelized Christianity in Wolaitta. Thus, Damot was a center for a kingdom of Wolaitta. The southern limit of the kingdom was the same as travelers claim. Similarly, the community oral tradition states that the limit of the state of Wolaitta was up to Turkana and further south. The Northern limit was up to Jama Shaafa (river) in North Shewa. In the East it did not surpass beyond Rift valley. Western boundary of the state was up to Gojjeb and beyond Omo rivers. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that she wrote the article by asking the community members. However, it seems that it was written by imagination than doing actual field work. The early literature of the Christian Empire, the *Gadle Tekle Haymont* and in the chronicle of *Amda Tsion* (1312-34), the fact/ information about Damot existed as her claim, which was indeed the reality in medieval written works. She did not cross check, or want to criticize a chronicler of *Amda Tsion*, who stated that *Amda Tsion* conquered the *Damota/Damot*, however, she tell as the song of the conqueror's army, who acknowledged and prided the king of Damot; Motolomi. It must be raised that how the defeated king's history could be told, acknowledged, prided and popular. Hence, this was either misunderstanding or fabrication of making written form of history than writing real history.

She confused the name of king Motolomi, as Mota Lame as similar title for Oromo Moti. Nevertheless, king Motolomi was an indigenous language of Wolaitta but can be pronounced differently by different people, who were/ are not native to Wolaitta. The written form took the same trend, however, Motalami or Mota-Lame no change. He was Motolomi by correct naming of the community with little or no sound difference as she diverts even his name. Motolomi's territory in the North was occupied by other states due to Gragn War, Oromo population movement and other socio-cultural as well as physical factors. For this reason, the successor's kings of Motolomi such as Ansa, Bure, Oche, Lache and others ruled somewhat smaller than Motolomi ruled Wolaitta.

.Q.111. The location of Damot stated by Alvarez, sixteenth century Portuguese traveler, was correct as Tsehay beliefs that which was/ is indeed the exact location of Wolaitta state. It was not surprising that some writers did not give the exact location of Wolaitta because they

heard only its strength than seeing its actual territory. Hence, they put its location through imagination of their mind-map. Or if they had knowledge for Damot, they might know only the strength of the kingdom. All the territories South of Abbay was not overrun by Gagn as Tsehay generalized conclusion. For instance, Wolaitta was not overrun. Wolaitta defended the war of Ahmed Gagn led by Iman Ibrahim Mujahid and defeated it at East of Bilate River. As she argues Damot was strong that Emperor Sarsa Dingil could not touch, but baptized, Enarya kingdom, West of Ghibe and Gojeb in 1597. The Oromo tried to break the Wolaitta kingdom but unable to cross it. The only state untouched by Oromo which she argued was the exact history of Wolaitta in other hand; however, the argument denied this fact. Monk Bahrey, in the South of the kingdom of Wolaitta, that means North of Lake Chamo and Abaya (where Bahrey lived) stated the case of Damot to Emperor Susnyos (1607-32) was the exact evidence to Wolaitta kingdom, its administrative center; Damot and vice-versa, unless Wolaitta and the successors of kawo Motolomi and their kingdom buried or evaporated by such scholars. It must be considered is that Monk Bahrey's agenda was not writing the history of Wolaitta or Damot king, but establishments of churches in South of Wolaitta. Wolaitta people were the followers of Salo-Xosso (sky God) and they approach to him by the process of *Eqqa*. Therefore, the people of Wolaitta were not followers of Christian religion. The conclusion to separate Damot and Wolaitta was misunderstanding on actual history of the people.

The arrival of Oromo between upper Gibe and the Abbay did not push the people of Gafat and Damot North in to Gojjam" because during the Oromo movement the territory of Damot condensed only to South of Shewa, to Bilate river, where they resisted the Oromo expansion and survived its independence. It seems the fabrication that the argument stating the Oromo pushed the all Damot people North of Abbay. Contrary to this the Oromo expansion was followed by both *Moggassa* and *Gudificha*, rather than pushing a Damot people that was the way of Oromo population movement. This was very south to Debra-Markos as Tsehay imagine, if so who is a Damot people in Gojjam, is there any people that claimed their origin from Damot? They were Gojjam people. The history of Damot described by Ludolf and his informant's argument was similar, and that Damot was more or less the same as oral tradition described. However, Ludolf and his informant as well as Alvarez described what they heard, imagination, than actual observation. Hence, Damot was a little South from what they imagined, however it was Wolaitta.

Tsehay stated that Damot was rival to Shewa in the 13th century. This period as she stated was the period when *kawo* Motolomi conquered Shewa as its adjacent state, from Southern direction. Damot did not influence the state of Wolaitta, because there was no difference between Damot and Wolaitta, unless she forcefully describing it as separate states in wrong conclusion. She believed that Conti Rossini's suggestion of Wolaitta as part and successor state of Damot, which confuses her study, unacceptable, and she deliberately diverted Damot to North without full facts or evidences. Hence, Damot was predecessor state of Tonas Wolaitta. As she argued Christian Ethiopian source must not be good source to describe about Damot, it must be an original source of the people's oral history that can tell their own ancestors kingdom and about *Abune* Tekle Haymanot.

Thus, it is not necessary to look the history of Wolaitta to pre nineteenth century, Christian literature which had zero relation to write Wolaitta past history, except the evidences for *Abune* Tekle-Haymanot due to his preaching and conversion of Wolaitta king to Christianity. Even though Tsehay well described that *Abune* Tekle Haymanot was grown in Wolaitta, she was silent for why he came to Wolaitta, for whom searching he came at the age of twelve? This question was un- responded. If it was known that *Abune* Tekle Haymanot was a son of Wolaitta-Malla king, *Kawo* Motolomi, it would not have been exaggerated and it must not surprise, and that this history was not well propagated and described. However, the fact was that the *Abune* was the king's (Motolomi's) son.

Vanderheyem confirms the existence of church on Mount Damot, which was built during by Tekle- Haymont's preaching. The primary source to tell the history of Wolaitta is their oral tradition which is incomparable to European account, which was secondary source. There is no need of comparing European accounts of Wolaitta with Kaffa or Oromo- that has no historical importance. If European writers did not actually observe Wolaitta (Damot-the then state naming), how would they put the location of Damot? However, they give their own imagination because the Damot kingdom was strong and popular that everybody was aware of Damot in South-central Ethiopia, present Wolaitta, where *Abune* Tekle-Haymoant preached.

Asma-Giorgise's statement confirmed Wolaitta as sovereign state by providing evidence. He argued Wolaitta had an ambassador to Enary was indeed what the oral tradition claim. However, his confusion was that 'Wolaitta state sent the ambassadors to Enarya to take blessing.' The kings of Wolaitta did not send *Ganna* (ambassadors) to Enarya in order to take

blessing rather Wolaitta kings sent *Ganna* to confirm diplomatic relation with Enarya, and the state had the same relation with other adjacent states for the same purpose. Hence, as Tsehay argued the Wolaitta state formation not begun in 17th century, but its state formation went back to the remote past and Wolaitta is interchangeable naming for the kingdom of Damot.

Damot once ruled from Kindo hill (Kindo Didaye distinct). The Kindo hill in Wolaitta is the heart land of Damot as Tsehay argues, hence, how Wolaitta does not mean the successor of Damot? This fact has to be responded by her. It has also to be left for historical and scholar judgment. This makes the study of Tsehay as deliberate confusion of real Wolaitta history by confusing the real history to story. She also needed to demand some sort of advantage on her diversion of real people's history. Wolaitta never been called as Arujja, which was one of the dynasties in Wolaitta. Wolaitta people due to the longevity of the period they do not call all Wolaitta-Malla kings and Arujja kings but they call at least more than ten kings, for each of the dynasties. Therefore, Motolomi was one of the popular and much loved kings in the history of Wolaitta, whom every person knew clearly that he ruled the vast Wolaitta kingdom unlike the present territory of Wolaitta.

Hence, king Damote was not the base for the naming of the king as she argued. Even if the Damote's naming was the base to give the name for this mountain, what would be the base for his naming the state of Damot to show the king's strengthen and for the memory of that name, since he was expansionist king in the thirteenth century. The reason why Christian sources do not give full information about Wolaitta/ Damot was their little intervention and relation with it except during the time of *Abune Tekle-Haymanot*. Up to the coming of *Abune Tekle-Haymanot* the strong belief of Wolaitta kings and Wolaitta people was not worship for Christianity rather they were conscious of their *Salo-Xosso* (sky God), *Eqqa* (goddesses) and the agents of god, *sharecho* (magic). Therefore, they had no relation with Christian God, that was a case to limit the history of Wolaitta in Christian document except Motolomi-due to his surprise convert to Christianity, by his son unlike his people, who were strongly believed their own sky God, *Eqqa* and *Sharecho* up to 1894 and later on some times.

No Wolaitta oral tradition says *kawo* Motolomi was over thrown by Mikael. Mikael was not a son-in-law of Motolomi. *Kawo* Motolomi lived in the 13th century, according to their tradition. However, Mikael, son-in-law of the last Wolaitta-Malla king came to power in the 16th century. Hence, Motolomi was the 13th century king, who was very popular king due to his war-like nature and expansionism. Tsehay used Motolomi and Mikael at the same period,

by ignoring the gap of more than two hundred years between two individuals. This was either deliberately done or unknowingly concluded by Tsehay to judge the historic Damot and Motolomi to justify that it was not a history of Wolaitta, even though they were the past history of Wolaitta. Either to confuse the history of Wolaitta or get acceptance from the readers Tsehay's put the exact reality of "Tigre" dynasty unlike Wolaitta-Malla dynasty of Damot kingdom. Her study concludes both Wolaitta-Malla and "Tigre" dynasty as part of Wolaitta study but it was pessimistic conclusion on Wolaitta-Malla dynasty by referring its history to Christian sources and European travelers' accounts, which were silent about Wolaitta history, as whole let alone Wolaitta-Malla dynasty.

As it is stated above it is not the Christian source, chroniclers as well as Europeans that can tell us the history of Wolaitta, it is rather the community oral history that can tell us about their mystery. This was because they had insignificance relation with pre-1894 Wolaitta. She argued that the first European to land on Wolaitta was Venderheyem in 1894, if so how the pre-1894 history of Wolaitta can be narrated by Europeans if he was the first person. It must be considered that the boundary is static; hence, the name of the state can be remembered from the name of its administrative center. Indeed, Wolaitta was mentioned by outsiders from its administrative center Damot. Therefore, the European travelers stated partially about Wolaitta, interchangeably using Damot to narrate only its political history, that it was independent and strong medieval state. The community knew that king Motolomi was their ancestors' king, nobody can debate on this historical fact either scholarly or traditionally, or to get a personal benefit or academic and non-academic awards. Tsehay argued that king Damot was the base for the naming of Mount Damot. If so from where Damot did take his name? This question has to be revealed by her research. However, Damot was not a base for the naming of Mountain Damot rather his name was given to remind Damot as oral tradition confirms. Hence, the name Damot was used and given for the son of King Amado.

The oral tradition and some scholars' state that Christians from North Ethiopia. Tsehay argued the ancestors of Christian settlers including the "Tigre" dynasty origin were from Tambean (in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia). However, all descendents of Christian settlers were not from Tambean but also from Shewa, and some of the settlers were from Wollo. For instance Qalicha clan was from Wollo, Ganziya clan from Manz, Qesiga clan from Shewa and Tigre clan from Tamberan, and Gurage. It has to be clear is that Qesiga and Boyna Tigre are not one and the same. According to oral tradition, Boyna Tigre are those Tigres groups

who were lazy for war and they had been planting *Boyna* (taro) at the critical war time, hence to discourage them the rest of the Tigres' and the community called them *Boyna Tigre* (Tigres' farmed taro during the war time) to identify that they are not royal family. To discourage them the community sometimes considers *Boyna Tigre* not as *Goqqa* (free citizen). They were not privileged as Tsehay argued.

Conclusion

Damot was, once the political center for king Motolomi and other Wolaitta kings. It was located on top of Mount Damot. It is the oldest palace site in Southern Ethiopia. Lack of attention for oral history in Southern Ethiopia, especially in Wolaitta diverted the history of the people which motivated this study to be conducted on focusing oral history of Wolaitta concerning Wolaitta and Damot. In this regard, Tsehay wrote the history of Wolaitta and Damot as separate state by putting the misleading conclusion on Damot, Tekle- Heymanot and Motolomi. Wolaitta tradition clearly put similar to the Christian sources, European accounts, chroniclers and scholarly works about the boundaries of the kingdom as oral tradition confirms. The difference was that oral tradition state Damot as administrative center and Wolaitta as name of the kingdom where as foreign sources mention Damot as kingdom. In general, Tsehay in her work bolded about the exact fact for Tigre rulers to cover her miss conclusion on *Abune* Tekle Haymanot, king Motolomi and Damot.

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APPENDIX.

1.



PHOTO OF MOUNT DOMAT , WOLAITA SODO .ETHIOPIA