

Queima Cattle Tribute in the Christian Kingdom of Northern Ethiopia, with Special Reference to Its Historical Significance

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The Oromo migrated into the Christian kingdom of northern Ethiopia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Although several studies have examined the military and administrative reforms that occurred during this period, little is known about the kingdom's financial reforms. I evaluated the historical significance of the *Queima* cattle tribute imposed during this time and concluded the following. The state revenue of the kingdom decreased during the period of the Oromo migration. Every person who owned cows paid one cow for every ten cows owned every three years during the reign of Susnəyos (r. 1607–1632); this tribute was known as *Queima* by the Jesuits and *tākws* in Amharic. *Queima* was imposed during the first half of the 1550s in an effort to reconstruct the kingdom, which had been devastated by the Muslims during the first half of the 16th century. Yoḥännəs I (r. 1667–1682) abolished the tribute in 1667 for several reasons, including the heavy burden it placed on the peasantry. *Queima* was a principal tribute, and the revenue collected from it contributed to the survival of the kingdom.

Key words: Christian kingdom, Ethiopia, history, Oromo, Solomonic Dynasty, tribute, cattle

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of This Evaluation

The emperors of the Christian kingdom of northern Ethiopia expanded their territory during the 14th and 15th centuries, oppressing the Muslims who inhabited the eastern part of the Ethiopian Plateau. However, during the first half of the 16th century, the Muslims began to take the offensive, and the Oromo moved northward. As a result, Christian society was thrown into confusion, and the territory of the Christian kingdom was remarkably reduced (Map 1).

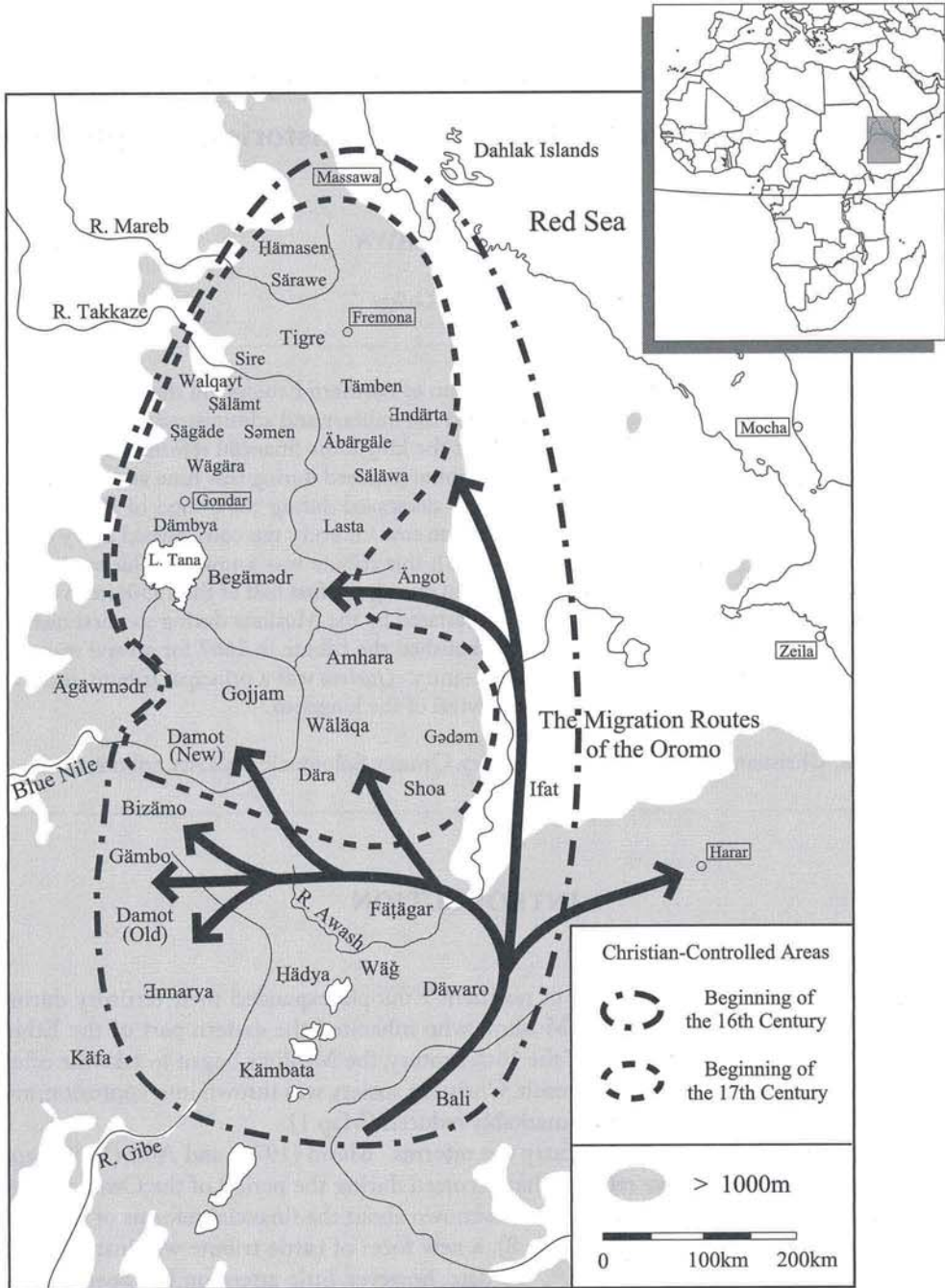
This crisis compelled the emperors to carry out reforms. Merid (1971) and Abir (1980) reported on the military and administrative reforms that occurred during the period of the Oromo migration in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, little is known about the financial reforms of this time.⁽¹⁾

According to Pankhurst (1961: 188; 1990: 8), a new form of cattle tribute was instituted during the reign of Gälawdewos (r. 1540–1559).⁽²⁾ To date, however, little attention has been paid to the importance of this tribute, which the Jesuits called *Queima*. My purpose is to clarify the historical significance of this tribute by investigating its economic importance and the reasons for its introduction and abolition.⁽³⁾

1.2. Sources⁽⁴⁾

1.2.1. Gə'əz Sources

The most important sources for the history of northern Ethiopia at this time are chronicles written



Map 1. Northern Ethiopia during the Oromo Migration Period

in Gə'əz (classical Ethiopic). These chronicles are divided into the *Royal Chronicles*⁽⁵⁾ and the *Short Chronicle*.⁽⁶⁾ The *Zenabu lä-Galla*⁽⁷⁾ (*History of the Galla*) is the principal source on the Oromo migration and was written in 1593 by Baḥṛəy, an Ethiopian Orthodox clergyman. Baḥṛəy wrote about the genealogy of the Oromo and the history of their migration into the Christian kingdom; he also analyzed why the Christians were inferior in strength to the Oromo.

Table 1. Emperors, 1508 to 1706

Emperor	Period of reign
Ləbnä Dəngəl	1508–1540
Gälawdewos	1540–1559
Minas	1559–1563
Šāršä Dəngəl	1563–1597
Ya'qob	1597–1603
Zädəngəl	1603–1604
Ya'qob	1604–1607
Susnəyos	1607–1632
Fasilädäs	1632–1667
Yohännəs I	1667–1682
Iyasu I	1682–1706

1.2.2. European Sources

In the mid-16th to the mid-17th centuries, Jesuit missionaries wrote many letters and volumes about their work. Their writings are highly valued by scholars of northern Ethiopian history during this period. The following four works, written in Portuguese,⁽⁸⁾ are most important in my analysis: Paez's *Historia de Ethiopia* (Pais 1945–1946⁽⁹⁾; Beccari 1969 II & III), Barradas's *Tractatus tres historico-geographici* (Beccari 1969 IV), Almeida's *Historia de Ethiopia alta ou Abassia* (Beccari 1969 V–VII), and Lobo's *Itinerário* (Lobo 1971).⁽¹⁰⁾

2. THE OROMO MIGRATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STATE REVENUE

2.1. Tributes during the Reign of Susnəyos

The Jesuits were able to obtain specific information on state revenue because they had a close relationship with Susnəyos (r. 1607–1632) and other nobles. Their reports are invaluable to the study of taxation in the Christian kingdom; Pankhurst (1984–1985: 62) described them as “the first comprehensive information on Ethiopian state revenues.” According to Paez (Pais 1945–1946 I: 236–238; Beccari 1969 II: 283–286) and Almeida (Beccari 1969 V: 79–82), Susnəyos received the following items as tribute from provinces and districts⁽¹¹⁾: (1) gold from Ənnarya⁽¹²⁾ and some districts in Gojjam⁽¹³⁾; (2) gold paid by governors of each province and district; (3) cotton cloth, honey, butter, and *mantimentos*⁽¹⁴⁾ levied in each province and district; (4) horses from Gojjam and Tigre; (5) taxes collected in markets; (6) customs revenue; (7) food from crown lands such as the *reguengos*⁽¹⁵⁾; (8) food from the peasants of “Dambeã, Gojam, Begameder, and other provinces” apart from the crown lands; (9) butter from herdsmen; (10) cloth or gold from weavers; and (11) cattle from the *Queima* tribute. Paez and Almeida also reported that the Oromo migration caused several serious changes in state revenue until the reign of Susnəyos.

2.2. Influence of the Oromo Migration on State Revenue

2.2.1. The Oromo Migration as Recorded in the *History of the Galla*

After presenting the genealogy of the Oromo in the *History of the Galla*, Bahṛəy stated⁽¹⁶⁾:

They [the Oromo] have neither king nor master like other peoples. However they obey the *luba* during eight years. After eight years, another *luba* is given its name and the predecessor retires. They do this at each time. The word *luba* means “those who are circumcised at the same time” (Guidi 1961–1962 I: 225; translation my own)

Table 2. *Lubas* of the Oromo during the 16th Century

Luba	Period of leadership
Melbaḥ	1522–1530
Mudäna	1530–1538
Kilole	1538–1546
Bifole	1546–1554
Məsle	1554–1562
Ḥärmufa	1562–1570
Robale	1570–1578
Birmäge	1578–1586
Mul'äta	1586–1594

Source: Beckingham and Huntingford 1954: 208–210.

Baḥrəy wrote about the history of nine *lubas* (Table 2) in the *History of the Galla* (Guidi 1961–1962 I: 225–230). Beckingham and Huntingford (1954: 208–210) specified this period by comparing Baḥrəy's information with the writings in the *Royal Chronicles*.

The Oromo started to invade Bali when Melbaḥ held *luba* (1522–1530). They made incursions into Fäṭägar during the period of Bifole (1546–1554). After attacking Amhara, the Oromo began to invade Begämödr during the period of Ḥärmufa (1562–1570). They devastated Shoa and started to attack Gojjam during the period of Robale (1570–1578). During the period of Birmäge (1578–1586), Dämbya was devastated by Oromo incursions. By the period of Mul'äta (1586–1594), Damot and Shoa had been ruined by the Oromo.

At the end of the 16th century, the Oromo made repeated incursions into the regions around Lake Tana, which was the center of the kingdom at that time. They often attacked Tigre, Begämödr, and Gojjam during the reign of Susnəyos (Esteves Pereira 1892–1900 I: 116–122, 216, 223–236, 249–252, 262–263).

2.2.2. Lost Provinces and Districts

The Jesuits noted reductions in the Christian territory during the second half of the 16th century (Beccari 1969 V: 9, 11; XI: 130–134). Almeida stated that the emperors used to rule “30 countries” and “17 provinces, or districts smaller than countries,” but only “17 countries” and “9 provinces” obeyed the present emperor, Susnəyos. The Oromo migration reduced the territory of the Christian kingdom by nearly half (Beccari 1969 V: 9, 11). Almeida also stated that the emperors who had ruled before the Oromo migration had received more tributes than Susnəyos (Beccari 1969 V: 81). Clearly, the emperors lost vast amounts of revenue due to the Oromo migration.

2.2.3. Devastation in the Regions Bordering the Oromo Lands

The Oromo migration also had a major influence on the tributes of the regions that were still under the control of the emperors. The Oromo incursions devastated the bordering lands and drained the populations:

Mul'äta of Borän afflicted the Christians of Damot. It dispersed them and devastated their country. Shoa and Damot were devastated in this period. (Guidi 1961–1962 I: 229; translation my own)

These regions were devastated not only by the Oromo, but also by Christian soldiers because the emperors allowed the latter to forage on military expeditions. Supplying food to soldiers was a heavy burden for poor peasants (Beccari 1969 V: 82).

The kingdom ran up expenses as a result of repairing military establishments. For example,

the Christians used flat-top mountains called *ämba* as forts or shelters in wartime. The chronicle of Yoḥännəs I (r. 1632–1667) reported that the emperor repaired 12 broken *ämbas* to protect the Christians from the Oromo (Guidi 1960–1961 I: 8).

According to the Jesuits, the emperors exempted some tributes for regions that were already groaning under the heavy burden of the war against the Oromo. The reason that the governors of “Begameder, Amaharâ, Holecâ, Xaoa” did not pay so much gold was that these regions had been ravaged by the Oromo (Beccari 1969 V: 81). Šäršä Dəngəl (r. 1563–1597) exempted the tribute of horses from Gojjam and instead ordered the people to use the horses to fight the Oromo (Pais 1945–1946 I: 237; Beccari 1969 II: 284; V: 79).

2.2.4. Evasion of Tributes

As the Oromo migration continued, several regions left the Christian kingdom⁽¹⁷⁾ and neglected to pay tribute. The amount of gold brought in from Ənnarya decreased sharply (Pais 1945–1946 I: 236; Beccari 1969 II: 283; V: 80). Ənnarya suffered great losses against the Oromo without military help from the Christian kingdom. It was difficult to send gold from Ənnarya to the emperor because its northern regions had come under the control of the Oromo during the reign of Šäršä Dəngəl. It also seems reasonable to assume that the Oromo migration was merely an excuse for the region’s failure to send gold; the chronicle of Susnəyos revealed one instance when Benäro, the governor of Ənnarya, appropriated gold that he should have sent to the emperor (Esteves Pereira 1892–1900 I: 239).

3. QUEIMA CATTLE TRIBUTE

3.1. *What is the Queima?*

The Amhara and the Ägäw of the Ethiopian Plateau were farmers and raised several types of domesticated animal such as cows, goats, and sheep. Jesuit missionaries in the first half of the 17th century marveled at the abundance of livestock. Many people in Tigre had 2000 or 3000 cows in addition to oxen for cultivation, and some people had as many as 10,000 cows (Beccari 1969 IV: 94). As in other East African societies, cattle are a symbol of wealth in northern Ethiopia (Messing 1957: 119; Beccari 1969 IV: 94).

Almeida provided the most famous explanation of the *Queima* cattle tribute:

We must take into consideration one tribute. A little less than 80 years passed since this tribute had been imposed. Every person who has *vacas* pays one *vaca* in ten every three years. Because there are innumerable herds of cattle in this land and most of them are *vacas*, this tribute is great revenue for him [the emperor]. He has divided his countries and provinces so that some of them pay this tribute each year. People call it “burning (*queima*)” because they burn a part of the skin of the cow for the emperor such as a brand. (Beccari 1969 V: 81–82; translation my own)

This account reveals that cows (*vacas* in Portuguese) were collected for the *Queima*, as opposed to oxen (*boi*) or bulls (*touro*).

Barradas referred to the *Queima* as one tribute item collected in Tigre and wrote that it was called *tacussa* (Beccari 1969 IV: 185). Lobo reported that the tribute was called *tucus* (Lobo 1971: 361–362). The Amharic word *tākws* (pronounced *toks*) means brand (Kane 1990: 990). Clearly, *tacussa* or *tucus* means *tākws*, which was the Amharic name for the *Queima*.

Reports by Barradas on the collecting of cows for the *Queima* were more detailed than those of any other Jesuit. According to Barradas, the collectors chose cows that were not pregnant. If a farmer did not own 10 cows, the collectors paired him with another farmer to bring the number up to 10 (Beccari 1969 IV: 185).

As far as the number of cows collected, Paez wrote:

Gojâm supplies 12,000 [cows], Olaçâ 5000, Damôt 2000, Amharâ 2000, Begmêder 6000, Darâ 5000. Although Dambiâ, Oagrâ, Çalâmt, and many other provinces also supply, I could not know the numbers exactly. Therefore I leave them. However, Tigrê supplies 15,900, Çagadê and Oalçait 3000 each. (Beccari 1969 II: 286; translation my own. See also Pais 1945–1946 I: 238)

According to this passage, 53,900 cows were collected for the *Queima*, not including those from “Dambiâ, Oagrâ, Çalâmt, and many other provinces.” Therefore, the total number of the cows collected was more than 53,900.

According to the Jesuits, the emperor did not receive all of the cows because he often exempted owners of numerous cows from paying the tribute and gave many other cows to the collectors or as rewards to the people (Beccari 1969 IV: 185; V: 82).⁽¹⁸⁾ For example, when the Jesuits searched for the remains of Cristóvão (Christovam) da Gama,⁽¹⁹⁾ who was killed by the Muslims at the beginning of the reign of Gälawdewos, Susnəyos gave 2000 of the cows collected for the *Queima* to Täklä Giyorgis (the governor of Tigre) and his soldiers who had participated in the search (Beccari 1969 VI: 502). Also, according to Barradas’s “The Annual Report of the Ethiopia Mission from April 1630 to the Same Month of 1631” dated 20 May 1631, Susnəyos augmented the *Queima* for the Jesuit church in Fremona⁽²⁰⁾ (Beccari 1969 XII: 482). Thus, Susnəyos gave most of the cows to soldiers, noblemen, and clergy. The rest would be consumed in the royal camp.

The Jesuits reported that cows were used for a variety of purposes in northern Ethiopia. The people loved to eat the raw meat, which was indispensable at banquets (Beccari 1969 IV: 165; Lobo 1971: 366).⁽²¹⁾ The hide was an important item for trade, and people used it to make clothes (Beccari 1969 IV: 114, 153, 256–257). Cows were also used in marriage and in making reparations for adultery (Beccari 1969 IV: 177–178; Lobo 1971: 371–373), and they played an important role in barter (Lobo 1971: 369–370). The people that were given cows by the emperor would have used them for these purposes.

3.2. Introduction and Abolition of the *Queima*

3.2.1. Introduction of the *Queima*

In Chapter 20 of the first *livro* (book) of *Historia de Ethiopia alta ou Abassia*, Almeida stated that the *Queima* had been imposed less than 80 years ago. Pankhurst (1984–1985: 69; 1990: 8) stated that this tribute had been imposed during “the reign of Gälawdewos” or “around 1540.” Almeida wrote Chapter 1 of the first book of *Historia de Ethiopia alta ou Abassia* in approximately 1628 (Beckingham & Huntingford 1954: xxxi). However, he worked on the book intermittently. Therefore, one cannot conclude that all chapters of the first book were written in 1628. Chapter 20 of the first book contains valuable information on the date of its writing. Almeida stated that the people of Ənnarya had sent gold to Susnəyos 5 years ago and he had stayed on the land of the *Damotes* (the people of Damot) at that time (Beccari 1969 V: 80). Almeida had been ordered by A. Fernandez to go to the land of the *Damotes* at the end of 1624, and he had stayed there in 1625 and 1626 (Beccari 1969 VI: 425, 427, 440, 476). Thus, Almeida wrote Chapter 20 between 1630 and 1631. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the *Queima* was imposed during the first half of the 1550s, or the 10th to 15th years of the reign of Gälawdewos, because it had been imposed less than 80 years before the writing of Chapter 20.

Why would Gälawdewos impose this tribute? The Muslims who inhabited the eastern part of the Ethiopian Plateau often made incursions into the Christian kingdom during the reign of Ləbnä Dəngəl (r. 1508–1540). As a result, the kingdom was on the verge of collapse at the end of his reign. Gälawdewos, who ascended the throne in 1540, killed Aḥmad b. İbrāhīm, supreme commander of the Muslim army, in the third year of his reign. After repulsing the Muslims from the kingdom, in the tenth year of his reign, Gälawdewos gained a victory in the military expedition against Ädäl or the Muslims’ land in the eastern part of the Ethiopian Plateau. Of note is the fact that Gälawdewos took several measures to reconstruct the kingdom upon returning from Ädäl (Conzelman 1895: 46–59). He constructed a town for the people who had lost their houses to the Muslims:

(When Gälawdewos returned from Ädäl, the kingdom was in peace.) Gälawdewos, being merciful and gracious, gave foods to the people of each class in suitable proportion (...) He constructed a town in one of the regions of Wäg to gather the dispersed people and to give houses to the persecuted people. (Conzelman 1895: 46–47; translation my own)

He also built a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Conzelman 1895: 49, 50, 52). However, Gälawdewos was busy fighting from the 16th year of his reign on because the Muslims of Ädäl had mounted a counterattack from the east, an army of the Ottoman Empire was coming south from the coast of the Red Sea, and the Oromo pressure was intensifying from the south. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the *Queima* was imposed not around 1540 when Gälawdewos was fighting the Muslims, but during the first half of the 1550s when he was making an effort to reconstruct the kingdom.

Crummey (2000: 55–56, 59) described seven land charters during the reign of Gälawdewos. However, these documents do not provide information on revenue at that time, nor is there reference to taxation in other Gə'əz documents on the reign of Gälawdewos or in the chronicle of Gälawdewos and the *Short Chronicle*.⁽²²⁾ Two Portuguese staying in northern Ethiopia during this reign wrote of their experiences, but did not refer to the *Queima* (Bermudez 1875; Castanhoso 1898).

It is difficult to determine how Gälawdewos used the cows collected because there is no definitive information on the tribute during his reign. However, judging from the date of its introduction, it is likely that the tribute was one measure to help reconstruct the Muslim-ravaged kingdom. One may assume that Gälawdewos, who moved constantly for military expeditions and during the reconstruction, chose cows for the tribute because they are mobile animals and were used for a variety of purposes.

3.2.2. Abolition of the *Queima*

There has been no research on whether the emperors continued to collect the *Queima* during the Gondar Period (1632–1769). Information on the state revenue during the reign of Iyasu I (r. 1682–1706) is well known from the testimony of *Khodja* Murād. Murād, an Armenian merchant who had been sent to Batavia by the emperor, reported the tributes of the 14 regions in northern Ethiopia by request of the Dutch authorities (van Donzel 1979: 93–94).⁽²³⁾ The Ägäw yielded annually 100,000 cattle, 2000 pieces of cloth, 20,000 jars of honey, 1000 gourds of cheese, and 1000 jars of butter, but other regions paid only gold (van Donzel 1979: 94). Although Murād did not describe the whole state revenue,⁽²⁴⁾ his testimony makes it clear that not all regions paid cattle to the emperor. In addition, Poncet (1713), Prutky (1991), and Bruce (1790), who traveled in northern Ethiopia from the end of the 1690s to the beginning of the 1770s, did not refer to the *Queima*.

Although little attention has been given to the following passage in the chronicle of Yoḥännəs I, it has great significance for the study of the *Queima*:

The Lord again made the people listen to His merciful and compassionate voice. On the 19th of Təqəmt [27 October 1667], a herald circulated the following proclamation as the voice of our king: “I will have mercy on you. I will abolish the tribute ‘brand of the cattle’ [*tākws zä-labm*].” The hearts of the whole people were filled with great joy and jubilation. They said, “Bless the Lord, the God of Israel who works miracles! Bless His name of glory eternally and everlastingly! The whole land should be filled with His glory! Amen.” (Guidi 1960–1961 I: 7; translation my own)

The new emperor issued this proclamation immediately after taking the throne. It is obvious that the *tākws zä-labm* in this proclamation refers to the *Queima*. But why was the *Queima* abolished?

For one thing, the burden of the *Queima* was too heavy for the peasants, and the violence wrought by the collectors of the tribute afflicted the peasants (Beccari 1969 V: 82).

The exemption of the *Queima* was one of four measures undertaken by Yoḥännəs I immediately

upon taking the throne. Yoḥännəs I first released the prisoners who had been imprisoned during the reign of Fasilädäs (r. 1632–1667). He then arrested Fasilädäs's children and sent them to Mt. Wähni. Next, he proclaimed the exemption of the *Queima*. Last, Yoḥännəs I gave gold, silver, and cloths from the royal treasury to the people (Guidi 1960–1961 I: 6–7). During the Solomonic dynasty, it was common to arrest the children of the previous emperor, and it was not rare for a new emperor to bestow valuables on the people. However, the granting of amnesty and exemption of tributes were not customary.

Because the chronicle of Fasilädäs was not handed down, sources from which to examine his rule are limited to the brief account in the *Short Chronicle*, some records written by Jesuits who were expelled by him, and a travel account written by al-Haymī, a Yemeni ambassador who visited the kingdom during Fasilädäs's reign.⁽²⁵⁾ These limited accounts contain many references to imprisonments and executions of important people. Fasilädäs turned a critical eye toward his father's pro-Roman Catholic policy, expelling the Jesuits just after his enthronement. He then executed his uncle Šə'älä Krəstos, who was an ardent Roman Catholic (Basset 1882: 29; Perruchon 1897–1898: 361). In the 15th year of his reign, Fasilädäs arrested his brother Gälawdewos on suspicion of being implicated in a plot and executed him together with some nobles (Basset 1882: 31; Perruchon 1897–1898: 366; Beccari 1969 XIII: 292). At the end of his reign, Fasilädäs imprisoned Wäldä Giyorgis, a principal courtier, and Wäldä Giyorgis's brothers and arrested his own son Dawit (Basset 1882: 33; Perruchon 1897–1898: 371, 372). It is unusual to read about the imprisonments of so many important persons in the *Short Chronicle*, suggesting that Fasilädäs was a strict leader. It seems reasonable to suppose that the release of prisoners and the abolishment of the *Queima* were meant to conciliate nobles who had been disaffected by the coercive rule of Fasilädäs and who possessed many cows, as rich people in northern Ethiopia usually did.

Finally, Fasilädäs and Yoḥännəs I often made military expeditions against the Ägäw that inhabited the regions around Lake Tana. The center of the Christian kingdom had moved to these regions from Shoa during the second half of the 16th century.⁽²⁶⁾ As a result, the emperors increased their military pressure on the Ägäw. According to the *Short Chronicle*, Fasilädäs went to Gojjam and fought against several groups of Ägäw such as the Hänkaša, Mätäkäl, Zigäm, Dängöla, and Äzäna during the 4th, 5th, 10th, 18th, 27th, and 29th years of his reign (Basset 1882: 30–33; Perruchon 1897–1898: 363–366, 370). The author of the *Short Chronicle* wrote that “he [Fasilädäs] fought against the Hänkaša, and killed many men, sacked their cattle, and took their women and children prisoner” in the description of the military expedition against the Hänkaša (Basset 1882: 32; Perruchon 1897–1898: 367). It is reasonable to assume that the emperor and his soldiers plundered numerous heads of cattle in other military expeditions. Yoḥännəs I also undertook several military expeditions against this area (Basset 1882: 34; Perruchon 1899: 168; Guidi 1960–1961 I: 11–12, 14–15). According to Taddesse (1988), who examined the relationship between the emperors and the Ägäw, the land of the Ägäw was incorporated into the Christian kingdom during the reign of Yoḥännəs I. Another reason for the abolition of the *Queima* is that Yoḥännəs I must have expected to obtain many heads of cattle from the Ägäw.

3.3. Historical Significance of the *Queima*

Lobo provided figures for the price of domestic animals during the reign of Susnəyos. After explaining the prices for cows and oxen, Lobo stated that one cow had sold for more than 2 *patacas*⁽²⁷⁾ and that one could usually be bought for 1 *pataca*. Sheep and goats could be bought at the rate of six and young goats at the rate of nine for one piece of cloth, which was worth approximately 1 *pataca* (Lobo 1971: 362). What kind of cow sold for 1 *pataca* or 2 *patacas*? Messing, who investigated Amhara society from 1953 to 1954, reported on the prices of domestic animals possessed by Amhara peasants:

A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT,⁽²⁸⁾ but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the

time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. (Messing 1957: 130)

A sheep brought from 3 Ethiopian dollars (= 2 MT) to 6 Ethiopian dollars (= 4 MT), depending more on the season than on the quality (Messing 1957: 130). The ratio in value of "an old cow ready for slaughter" to a sheep was about 5:1 at the beginning of the 1950s. According to Lobo, the ratio in value of a cow to a sheep was 6:1. Thus, one may say that the cow that sold for 1 *pataca* or 2 *patacas* was "an old cow ready for slaughter."

As previously mentioned, more than 53,900 cows had been collected for the *Queima*. Assuming that one cow cost 1 *pataca*, as Lobo reported, the revenue from the *Queima* was more than 53,900 *patacas*. Although there is no definitive information on the revenue from some tribute items such as grain or cotton cloth, the Jesuits reported that the revenue of other items that was comparable to that of the *Queima*.

The total amount of gold brought from Ānnarya and Gojjam was 26,500 *patacas*. This was less than half of the revenue of the *Queima*. The gold paid by the governor of Begāmōdr amounted to 4000 *cruzados* (*patacas*),⁽²⁹⁾ whereas the *Queima* was 6000 cows (Pais 1945–1946 I: 236; Beccari 1969 II: 283). The governors of Tigre paid gold worth 25,600 *cruzados* (Pais 1945–1946 I: 236; Beccari 1969 II: 283–284) or 23,100 *patacas* (Beccari 1969 IV: 83–85). For the *Queima*, the governors of Tigre paid either 15,900 cows (Pais 1945–1946 I: 236; Beccari 1969 II: 283) or 30,000 cows (Beccari 1969 IV: 185); the latter estimate should be used because Barradas was better informed than Paez about Tigre. Thus, the revenue of the *Queima* exceeded that of the gold paid by provincial governors, and it follows that the *Queima* was an important tribute item during the reign of Susnāyos.

The *Queima* was collected between the first half of the 1550s and 1667, when the emperors of the Christian kingdom were fighting the Oromo. It seems reasonable to suppose that emperors such as Susnāyos received numerous cows for the *Queima* and distributed them to noblemen, clergy, and soldiers. The vast revenue from the *Queima* was important in helping the emperors to administer the affairs of state and fight the Oromo. It is entirely fair to say that this revenue contributed to the survival of the Christian kingdom in northern Ethiopia during the period of Oromo migration.

4. CONCLUSIONS

My main conclusions are as follows. The state revenue of the Christian kingdom of northern Ethiopia decreased as its territory was remarkably reduced by the Oromo migration during the second half of the 16th century. During the reign of Susnāyos, each person who owned cows paid one cow for every 10 cows owned every 3 years. This cattle tribute was called *Queima* by the Jesuits and *tākws* in Amharic. In an attempt to reconstruct the kingdom, which had been devastated by the Muslims during the first half of the 16th century, Gālawdewos imposed the tribute during the first half of the 1550s. Upon taking the throne in 1667, Yoḥānnəs I abolished the *Queima* for three reasons. First, the burden of the tribute on the peasantry was too heavy. Second, he needed to appease the nobles, who were displeased with his father Fasilādās's rule. Third, Yoḥānnəs I expected to acquire numerous heads of cattle from the Āgāw. The revenue of the tribute was vast, and it was a principal tribute item. The *Queima* was collected at a time when the emperors of the kingdom were fighting the Oromo and the state revenue was decreasing; revenue from the *Queima* contributed to the survival of the kingdom during the period of the Oromo migration. The emperors made not only military and administrative reforms, but also a financial reform, to help ensure the survival of the Christian kingdom.

NOTES

- (1) Pankhurst (1984–1985) examined taxation in the Christian kingdom prior to the reign of Menelik II, and Crummey (2000) studied the *gwəlt* land-holding system from the 13th to the 20th centuries. Neither discussed financial reforms during the period of the Oromo migration.
- (2) When transliterating Gə'əz and Amharic scripts, I have observed *Aethiopia: International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*. However, I have used transcriptions such as Ethiopia, Amhara, Shoa, Tigre, Gojjam, and Tana, because these are well known.
- (3) Shimada (1984) investigated the value of cattle and the social and economic importance of the cattle tribute in northern Cameroon during the colonial period. My analysis owes much to his study.
- (4) One must pay close attention to the ethnic and religious biases in Jesuit reports and in the works in Gə'əz, which were mainly written by the clergy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Extended comment on these biases is beyond the scope of this paper. I discuss the distinctive historiography during the Solomonic dynasty in another article.
- (5) This paper cites the chronicles of Gälawdewos, Susnəyos, and Yoḥännəs I. The original texts of the chronicles are as follows: Chronicle of Gälawdewos (Conzelman 1895): Bodleian Library, MS. Aeth. 29, fols. 43r–54v; British Library MS Or. 821, fols. 116r–145v; Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), MS Éth. 147, fols. 95v–117r. Chronicle of Susnəyos (Esteves Pereira 1892–1900): Bodleian Library, MS Aeth. 30, fols. 1r–75r. Chronicle of Yoḥännəs I (Guidi 1960–1961 I: 1–55; II: 1–56): Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), MS d'Abbadie 167, fols. 1r–27v; Bodleian Library, MS. Aeth. 30, fols. 81v–112r.
- (6) The *Short Chronicle* consists of genealogy from Adam to Yəkuno Āmlak, the founder of the Solomonic dynasty, and short histories of the emperors of this dynasty. This chronicle, also called the *Abbreviated Chronicle*, is referred to by scholars as the *Short Chronicle* because its contents are not solely digests of the *Royal Chronicles*.
- (7) Schleicher's (1893) Gə'əz text of the *History of the Galla* was based on fols. 1r–3r of the MS Or. 534 in the British Library. Scholars have criticized its inaccuracy and instead prefer to use a work by Guidi (1961–1962) based on the same original text.
- (8) Most Jesuit missionaries in northern Ethiopia were Portuguese.
- (9) The spelling and accenting of Portuguese words varied by writer during the 17th century because Portuguese orthography was not yet firmly established. In this case, *Paez* and *Pais* refer to the same person.
- (10) The original texts are as follows: *Historia de Ethiopia* by Paez: manuscript preserved in the Historical Archive of the Society of Jesus in Rome, and MS778 of the Arquivo Distrital de Braga. *Tractatus tres historico-geographici* by Barradas: manuscript preserved in the Historical Archive of the Society of Jesus in Rome. *Historia de Ethiopia alta ou Abassia* by Almeida: MS Add. 9861 of the British Library. *Itinerário* by Lobo: MS 813 of the Arquivo Distrital de Braga.
- (11) There were many administrative units in the Christian kingdom. The Jesuits called the larger ones *reino* (country) and the smaller ones *província* (province). However, scholars call the former *province* and the latter *district*.
- (12) Ānnarya, which the Jesuits called *Nareā*, was situated in the Gibe basin. This kingdom recognized the emperor, although it was surrounded by the Oromo.
- (13) There was no gold mine in Gojjam itself (Beccari 1969 V: 35–36). However, Bruce (1790 III: 552) reported that inhabitants of the neighboring regions brought gold to Gojjam.
- (14) In this case, this word probably means *grain*.
- (15) The *reguengo* is land that came under the possession of the royal family as a result of conquest or confiscation in Portugal.
- (16) The *History of the Galla* is an important source for learning about the Oromo age set system or the Gada system during the migration period. On the relation between the Gada system and the *luba*, see Mohammed (1994: 9–17) and Asmarom (1973: 90).
- (17) Such a political movement was obvious in Shoa, which became the center of the empire of Menelik II (Bruce 1790 III: 255–256).
- (18) "Captains and soldiers" collected cows for the *Queima* (Beccari 1969 V: 82).
- (19) Cristóvão (Christovam) da Gama was the fourth son of Vasco da Gama. He entered northern Ethiopia after a military expedition against Suez. He fought against the Muslim army to relieve the Christian kingdom, but was captured and killed at the beginning of the reign of Gälawdewos. Susnəyos ordered a search for his remains because the Jesuits were eager to send them to Portuguese India (Beccari 1969 V:

501–502).

- (20) This was a Jesuit residence in Tigre.
- (21) Northern Ethiopians raised oxen for food in a special manner (Beccari 1969 II: 230; V: 41; Lobo 1971: 362), but it was common for them to eat cow meat.
- (22) There is only scant information on the tributes in the Gə'əz chronicles. For example, there is only one reference to the *Queima* in the chronicle of Susnəyos: Susnəyos ordered his servant "to brand" when the period of "tākws" arrived (Esteves Pereira 1892–1900 I: 40–41). Clearly, he ordered the collection of cows for the *Queima* because this tribute was called *tākws*.
- (23) Van Donzel (1979: 89–98) translated this document into English and published it.
- (24) Murād reported on the regions along the trade route between the Red Sea and the inland. Other important provinces of the Christian kingdom such as Dämbya and Begämədr were not included in his list.
- (25) Al-Haymī was an ambassador sent by an Imām of Yemen to Ethiopia in 1647. Van Donzel (1986) published the English translation of al-Haymī's travel account.
- (26) From the mid-16th century on, the emperors established their camps around Lake Tana. Fasilädäs chose Gondar as the capital of the kingdom in the fourth year of his reign (Basset 1882: 30; Perruchon 1897–1898: 363).
- (27) *Pataca* was a generic Portuguese term for silver coin.
- (28) *MT* here refers to the Maria Theresa dollar. This silver coin was used in Ethiopia up to the mid-20th century, after it became invalid in Austria. For further details on the use of this coin in Ethiopia, see Pankhurst (1979–1980).
- (29) The *cruzado* was a gold coin minted in Portugal. One of Paez's *cruzados* was equal to one of Almeida's *patacas*.

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