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**Convergence and Divergence: The Diversity of Material Culture in
South Omo**

Workshop and Debates at the South Omo Museum and Research Center
Jinka, Ethiopia Sept. 16 - 18, 2001
Transcriptions

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List of Objects and their Donators

Introduction

In September 2001 an intercultural workshop was held at the South Omo Museum and Research Center in Jinka. For three days (16th to 18th September) twenty-four representatives of various ethnic groups of South Omo debated on cultural contact and material culture in the region.

Each participant was asked to bring one object to the workshop that he regarded as characteristic of his her culture. During six plenary sessions (two per day) these objects were presented by the individual participants. After each presentation the objects' cultural significance - whether historical, symbolic, pragmatic, or personal - was discussed among all participants. Questions regarding production, ownership, and the daily use of the objects were discussed as well as their roles in rituals, trade, and their uses by neighbouring groups. The comparative perspective revealed insightful parallels as well as clear distinctions in the meanings and uses of the same or similar objects found among the different ethnic groups. On September 18th, after all of the objects had been presented and discussed, the workshop came to a close. An impromptu session was added, however, in order for Horra Surra, a guest who arrived after the workshop was officially over, to talk about the objects that he had brought from Arbore.

At the end of the workshop the participants donated their objects to the museum. An exhibition on the workshop and its results could be seen from October 2002 in the Museum of the SORC.

In addition to the invited guests, a number of people who had heard about the workshop by word of mouth arrived to join the discussions. Ateme Sonko came from Maale, Ariyo Dore from Kara, and Natia Bereda from Dassanech. We had expected only men to come, but by chance also three women who had come to Jinka for medical care, eventually joined us. Among them was Duka Aike from Hamar, who gave her fruitful comments in one of the session. Two elder men, Nakwa Dal'o from Bashada and Choke Bajje from Hamar, opened the workshop with their blessings. They also had come to Jinka for medical treatment. Unfortunately due to their health state they were unable to fully participate in the plenary sessions.

1. Guests and participants of the Workshop

We had invited guests from several different regions. It has to be mentioned that there is a lot of individual movement in the area, especially between Hamar, Banna and Bashada. Some of the people who now live in Banna, originally have come from Hamar, others who were born in Hamar moved to Bashada. In the documentation we indicated the region where the respective person lived at the time of the workshop. In the list below provide a short annotation to the origin of each person as far as it is known to us. We also give information about the approximate age and social status of each participant as obviously age and status determine the cultural knowledge of an individual.

1. Nakwa Dal'o from Bashada (about 80 years old):

Nakwa originally came from Banna. As a young man he moved to Bashada and was initiated there and married two Bashada women. He is the last *parko*, a ritual office that correlates to the office of the *bitta*, of the Hamar/Banna/ Bashada region. He is very knowledgeable about the history and the social and ritual interdependence between Banna, Bashada, Hamar, and Ari. He hosted Susanne Epple when she conducted her fieldwork.

2. Belaini Nakwa from Bashada (about 38 years old):

Belaini is Nakwa's eldest son and will be his successor as a *parko* after Nakwa's death. He was born in Bashada but still has many ties to Banna. In some ritual aspects he follows Banna, not Bashada tradition.

3. Bashiri Arbala from Bashada (about 55 years old):

Bashiri was born in Hamar. He moved to Bashada as an adolescent. When it comes to ritual practices, he follows Hamar tradition, although he also knows about specific aspects of Bashada rituals.

4. Gude Dalko from Bashada (about 40 years old):

Gude's family belongs to the few original Bashada clans (Shako). His grandfather was one of the men who lead the Bashada back to their original land after they has been dispersed by Menelik's troupes in the beginning of the 20th century.

5. Maldo Lito from Banna (about 27 years old):

Maldo was born in Bashada. His grandfather was from Ari. His father was the first in his family to be initiated in the traditional way of leaping over the cattle. Most of his sisters are married in Banna. After his parents died he lived with one sister in Bashada or sometimes with the others in Banna.

6. Sago Bargar from Banna (about 36 years old):

Sago's father came from Banna but had moved to Bashada. Sago was born in Bashada. After a conflict in Bashada he moved to Banna together with his wife Duka, his mother Sagonda and his children.

7. Duka Aike from Banna (about 37 years old):

Duka is from Hamar. She is the daughter of Aike Berinas, also known as Baldambe, Ivo Strecker's and Jean Lydall's great friend and teacher of Hamar culture. When she was married to Sago she moved to Bashada and, after a few years together, they moved to Banna.

8. Choke Bajje from Hamar (about 60 years old):

Choke is from Hamar. He has been a good friend to Ivo Strecker and Jean Lydall for a long time and can be seen in some of their films (especially in "The song of the Hamar herdsman").

9. Tsasi Aike from Hamar (about 45 years old):

Tsasi is from Hamar. He is Duka's brother and the eldest son of Aike Berinas. He has known the anthropologists Ivo Strecker and Jean Lydall since his youth.

10. Shada Alma from Hamar (about 40 years old):

Shada is from Hamar. He is the neighbour of Tsasi Aike and has also known the anthropologists Ivo Strecker and Jean Lydall since his youth.

11. Joseph Loteng from Nyangatom (about 40 years old):

Joseph is from Nyangatom. He has attended school and has become a Christian. He has been the field assistant and informant of the French anthropologist Serge Tornay.

12. Kutsha Bulle from Arbore (about 36 years old):

Kutsha is from Arbore. He belongs to the family that hosted Echi Gabbert during her fieldwork in Arbore.

13. Horra Surra from Arbore (about 60 years old):

Horra is from Arbore. He has attended school and speaks fluent Amharic, Hamar, Dassanetch, and some of the other languages of South Omo, and some English. He has been in contact with anthropologists for a long time.

14. Ateme Sonko from Maale (about 35 years old):

Ateme is from Maale, he has visited school and lives in Jinka now. He was brought to the workshop by Joseph Loteng.

15. Ariyo Dore from Kara (about 22 years old):

Ariyo is from Kara. He is one of the very few from his region to have attended school in Jinka, but frequently visits home. He speaks some English.

16. Natia Bereda from Dassanetch (about 50 years old):

Natia is from Dassanetch. He has been employed as a police officer in Jinka and speaks some Amharic. He was invited to the workshop by Joseph Loteng.

2. Languages, Translation and Transcription

The discussions were mainly held in the Hamar language and immediately translated into English by Susanne Epple. All participants could understand either of these two languages. In some cases, explanations were given first in Amharic and then translated into Hamar by Walle Alma from Banna. Susanne Epple then translated from Hamar into English. Some explanations were given first in English which were then translated into Hamar by Susanne Epple and then from Hamar into Amharic by Walle Alma.

The explanations were either translated sentence by sentence, or, if a speaker explained something in detail, such as, the sequence of a ritual, this was translated later on. The transcriptions of the English translations were then again compared to their original speakers. While translators translated as literally as possible, leaving their own interpretations aside, translations are not word-for-word. Anyone who is interested in the literal explanations should use this text as a reference book and listen to the original tapes. The names of the objects as well as terms for rituals and social offices were kept in their original languages. All mistakes and other shortcomings of the presented text are in full responsibility of the translators.

Together, the transcriptions of the plenary sessions comprise a valuable document, which highlights the various issues discussed during the workshop. First results of the workshop were shown in the South Omo Museum in October 2002. In an exhibition in “The Convergence and Divergence of Material Culture in South Omo” the donated objects were exhibited together with Posters showing the main comments made by the workshop-participants. The exhibition can also be seen as an online exhibition in the SORC homepage.

(<http://www.uni-mainz.de/Organisationen/SORC/conferences/ws2001b/index.html>)

3. Workshop Organisation

The Workshop and the Exhibition were prepared in the context of the Special Research Programme (SFB 295) „Kulturelle und sprachliche Kontakte: Prozesse des Wandels in historischen Spannungsfeldern Nordostafrikas/Westasiens“, of the Johannes-Gutenberg University of Mainz, as part of the Project E.2: „Culture Contact in Southern Ethiopia: Contact Dyades and Cultural Self-Esteem“, which was directed by Professor Ivo Strecker. It was supported by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) of Addis Abeba University (AAU), and the Institute of Ethnology and African Studies, University of Mainz.

The workshop was organised by Susanne Epple, Christina Gabbert, (both PhD Students, University of Mainz), and Tina Brüderlin and Judith Melzer (M.A. Students, University of Mainz) with the support of Professor Ivo Strecker.

The workshop sessions were conducted by Susanne Epple. At the same time she acted as an interpreter and translated from Hamar into English and from English into Hamar. Walle Alma, A Banna living in Jinka, in some sessions translated from Amharic into Hamar and from Hamar into Amharic.

During the workshop photos were made by Christina Gabbert and Tina Brüderlin. The photos from the field were taken by Susanne Epple, Nicole Poissonier and Alke Dohrmann during their respective fieldwork in Bashada and Banna in 1996, 1998/99.

The sessions were recorded by Judith Melzer with a Sony Digital Recorder (DAT). Back at Mainz University Tina Brüderlin and Judith Melzer transcribed all recordings. The final editing was done by Susanne Epple and Tina Brüderlin.

4. Technical Equipment

All recordings were made by Judith Melzer with a Sony Digital Recorder (DAT) and a Sony Microphone. The tapes were later copied onto audio tapes. The photographs were taken by Christina Gabbert and Tina Brüderlin using automatic and reflex cameras and Kodak film.

5. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the SFB 295, TP E.2 for its financial support, especially the director of TP E.2, Prof Ivo Strecker, who had the idea to organize multiethnic workshops in the South Omo Research Center. We also thank the IES, especially Prof. Baye Yimam, for his friendly cooperation. We thank Michael Shackleton and Shauna LaTosky for proof-reading the text.

In the course of the workshop we were grateful for the help of the SORC staff and other friends, among them were Abiy Tefera (logistics, transport), Walle Alma (organization, translation), Tsehay (catering), and Gendale (technical help).

Day One: Morning Session

Discussants: Bashiri (Bashada), Gude (Bashada), Belaini (Bashada), Ariyo (Kara), Joseph (Nyangatom)

Susanne Epple (*welcoming the participants of the workshop*):

Today we will have a look at all the objects which you have brought. I asked you to bring an object that you would like to show and explain to us. We would like to learn more about its purpose, what it is used for, whether it has a ritual meaning, which material it is made of and who makes it. Maybe you could tell us background stories to it. While one of you is talking maybe the others start to join: 'Oh, I also have to say something about it.' They then should say it. Or maybe you say: 'Oh, we have a similar object in Nyangatom. But we use it in another way.' Some might say 'I have never seen such an object before! Does it have such and such a meaning?'

So I invite everybody to take part in the discussion and to contribute what he knows. Now let Bashiri begin, he is the most senior of you. Being senior he should start.

1. *Daa*: Pot (Bashada)

1.1. Trade and exchange of Bashada pots in South Omo

Bashiri: I brought this clay pot. There is also another kind we use for making coffee.

There are other kinds which are used for making *parsi* [sorghum beer]. We have also pots for preparing food. In olden times, we, the Bashada, already used to make these pots. Already in former times this was our tradition. My grandmother, the mother of my mother, she used to make them and we still make them now. This is why I brought this pot, because it is our tradition. In former times the Hamar used to get the pots from the Bashada. The Galeba [Dassanetch] got the pots from Bashada. The Bume [Nyangatom] get them from Bashada. Nowadays, a few people in Hamar have also started to make pots. I brought this, because only we, the Bashada, used to make these pots before. This is what I have to say about the pot.

Echi: You say, the Hamar and the Bume, they use these pots. So, how do they get them?

Do they come directly to your houses, or do they go to the markets to buy them?

Bashiri: Our grandfathers used to go to Galeba, for example, to exchange goats for the pots. Now the government has come to our country and we have little towns and we have markets. So now we take the pots to Turmi, for example, and in Turmi the Konso people buy them and sell them to the Galeba. Now everybody comes to the markets to buy them. In former times, when there were no markets, your relatives used to buy the pots from you and maybe they gave butter in return. Now you sell them in the towns, maybe for two or three Birr.

Echi: You say that the relatives exchanged the pots. So there must have been a lot of travelling by foot and people were carrying the pots to the different places.

Bashiri: Yes, there was a lot of walking. In times of hunger, we carried the pots on our backs and we exchanged them for sorghum.

Susanne: I remember that when we were in Arbore a few days ago, someone said that the Hamar people take the pots to Arbore and there they exchange them for sorghum. They buy these pots on the market from the Bashada and then they go to Arbore to sell them.

Echi: So, Bashiri, you said that they took the pots to the Hamar, to the Galeba, to the Bume, to the Arbore. Did they trade the pots with anybody else?

Bashiri: To the Banne, the Banne people, to Tsamai, to everybody. Only the Mursi do not buy them, because they make pots themselves. Ari people also make pots themselves.

Gude and Belaini: Now some Kara people make pots, too. But in former times they would get pots from the Mursi and also from the Bashada, who exchanged them for sorghum.

Ariyo: I do not know if there was a taboo in former times. But in former times the Kara would not make pots. Now they have the same rules as the Bashada people. Kara and Bashada have the same rules. The Kara used to get their pots from the Bashada.

1.2 How pottery saved the Kara from extinction

Susanne (*to Joseph from Nyangatom*): Nicole told me a story, which you told her about the pottery in Kara and Nyangatom. Could you tell that story? When the Nyangatom and the Kara were enemies, they were fighting each other and the Nyangatom were about to kill all the Kara. Would you tell the story one more time?

Joseph: Actually, in olden times there were conflicts between most of the tribes. During that time the Nyangatom and Kara had started a conflict. The Kara were the ones who started first, and they killed many people. They killed those who were living alone, on their own. They killed many. And they also captured one of my father's sisters.

Susanne: Your father's sister? His older or younger sister?

Joseph: Younger sister. So the Nyangatom people organized themselves to fight against the Kara. They announced to their people, that if they would find that girl, they should not kill her as she is a Nyangatom. They started to encircle all the Kara. They fought and killed. They searched for the girl, but could not find her. They fought long, until only a few Kara were left. The Kara were hiding in the reeds, in

the high grass. Then the Nyangatom people came there: 'Let us kill all those who are inside the grass!' Others said: 'Yes, we will kill them! But maybe we should talk with them first.' One said: 'We will kill them! But it is not good to kill all the people. We should let some live, so we can keep getting pots from them.' Some said: 'No, we must set a fire here.' Finally the Nyangatom agreed to the idea of sparing some of the Kara. 'All right, we will not extinguish them, because of the pots.' So the Nyangatom left. And peace was set. Unfortunately my niece was also still there.

Susanne: She stayed in Kara?

Joseph: Yes. She was with those Kara hiding in the reeds. After peace was settled they brought her back. They said: 'Here is your daughter. We bring her back without doing her any harm.' Our people were very relieved and so they gave a gun to the Kara. What ever else they needed, they gave them.

Susanne: Then they became friends?

Joseph: Yes, they became friends and today my niece is still alive.

Susanne: So for the Nyangatom, it is the Kara people who are the pot makers?

Joseph: Yes. But the Nyangatom get their pots from anyone, also from the Mursi . . . and, of course, from the Bashada and from the Kara, because they live close to us. When they come, they carry pots to the Nyangatom the Mursi and the Bashada also. The Bashada also are good friends of the Nyangatom. They do not kill each other, and also the Arbore.

1.3 Taboos about pot-making

Susanne: Everybody in Bashada makes pots except for the *Parko* family. I have been told that it is their taboo. I would like to know if there is more to know about pot-making taboos.

Belaini: It is a taboo from the *Parko* family from former times.

(Discussion in Hamar between Gude, Tsasi, Kolle, Belaini)

Susanne (*translating the discussion*): Belaini said all the people from *Binnas*, which is one moiety in Hamar and Bashada, were not allowed to make pots, but the others, like Gude and Kollo, said: ‘Yes, they were allowed to make them.’

Gude: The wife of the *bitta*, she may not dig the clay.

Tsasi: The relatives of the *bitta* may make pots, but not the *bitta*’s family, his wife and his children. It is the same with the *parko* family.

Gude: What is true is that the *Galabu*, the other moiety, are the only ones who are allowed to dig the *assille* [red-coloured earth].

The Hamar did not make pots. But nowadays the Hamar say: ‘Oh, what is all this about? We are all one. There is no difference between us.’ So, there are some people in Hamar who now say: ‘We also make pots.’

1.4 The ritual usage of Pots

Tsasi: One reason why the Hamar did not make pots is that there are special rituals for which pots are needed. They are used, for example, for the *gali* ritual, when a newborn baby receives its name. So in Hamar we say that the Bashada are our *gilo edi*, which means that they are the people who make the rituals for us. They are the ones who make the pots for us, which we use for rituals. They are our *dari*.

Susanne: *Dari* are certain people who can assist you in rituals. But *dari* also has other meanings in other contexts.

Tsasi and Shada: With the Bashada pot you make only coffee. But we also use Ari pots for rituals. For example we do need Ari pots for a funeral.

Shada: In the Bashada pot we make coffee for the small child.

Shada, Tsasi and Sago: You have the *bakulo*. You have the three stones of the fireplace. We place the Bashada pot on the *bakulo*. Then you put the Ari pot in front of the front stones. You put four coffee beans inside. There is no water, only the coffee beans. Then you take the coffee bowl, the *sherka*.

Shada: You take some coffee from the Bashada pot and pour it into the *sherka*. You also put *gali* leaves inside. Then you stroke the mother with the baby with the wet *gali* leaves; you stroke her breasts and her child and you bless them. Then all the

- donzas*, the elders, they take their coffee and they call *barjo*. The real important pot for the ritual is the small Ari pot. This pot is the elder brother of the Bashada pot.
- Gude: If you do not have a pot from Ari you can take a *gali* leaf and use it instead of the pot. You place the *gali* leaf here and say: 'This is my Ari pot.' You put the four coffee beans onto the *gali* leaf and say: 'It is my Ari pot.' If you do not have the pot you use the *gali* leaf. If you have a pot you use the Ari pot.
- Sago: Then there is another ritual. If someone dies you have the funeral ritual. And after some years there is another ritual done for the deceased. After the man has been already buried you have a ritual called *duki* or *sala*. You perform this ritual and then you say, 'The dead man has crossed the big water.' Or you also say: 'We have finished his Ari pot ritual.'
- Bashiri: If you have not finished the ritual with the Ari pot, the *duki* is not finished. The ritual is not finished.
- Tsasi, Gude, Shada: There is a special gateway at the funeral through which all the people walk. It may be the cattle gateway. You place the Ari pot in front of the gateway. For a deceased woman it is the son who makes the *duki* ritual. He will bring a goat and his wife will hold the right front paw of the goat. Only then the pot can be taken away from the *kerri*. They say: 'She has bought the pot.' He will give the goat to his wife; by giving the right front paw to his wife he can take the pot away from the gateway. Then they say the pot has been sold and the ritual is over. It is the end of the *duki* ritual.
- Not everybody has an Ari pot. So, if he takes the pot and puts it in his house maybe tomorrow or some days later someone will come and borrow it for his *gali* ritual or another *duki* ritual. If you have not finished this ritual with the Ari pot in the funeral, later when you kill a goat and look at the intestines it will be visible. They will say: 'Ah, you have not finished this part of the ritual.' It is very important. Without an Ari pot you cannot finish the funeral ritual. If you have finished the part with the Ari pot, it will be seen in the intestines and everything is fine. Everything is clear then. If not, his *alpha*, [*alpha* means knife, but it is also the term for looking at the intestines] the intestines, they get bad. If the *alpha* is not good, the intestines are not good. Then your whole family might get sick or

- die. So, in the *gali* ritual you may use a *gali* instead of the pot, but in the funeral it has to be a real Ari pot to do it properly.
- Gude: In Hamar you may replace the pot in the *gali* ritual with a *gali* leaf. Only in Bashada you are allowed to do that.
- Tina: Why does it have to be an Ari pot? You said before that it is ‘the father of the coffee’, is that why you have to use an Ari pot, or what is the significance of the Ari pot?
- Sago, Gude and Tsasi: It is because the Ari are our ritual people, they are our *gilo edi*. Originally, we all came from Ari. Our people came from Ari, our rituals came from Ari; the coffee is from Ari, the sorghum comes from Ari. Our *bittas*, they all came from Ari. We all came from there and we moved down to the lowlands to herd the cattle.
- Shada, Gude: They are our ancestors. They are *ch'arangi*.
- Susanne: *Ch'arangi* means ritually pure. Everything is considered to be pure in Ari.
- Tina: There is the naming ritual of the child, the *gali*, at the beginning of his life, and the funeral at the end of his life. Is there also a ritual in between these two stages, which involves an Ari pot?
- Tsasi, Gude: No, there is nothing else.

1.5 Pot-making in Maale

- Joseph: The Maale also make pots. I invited my friend Ate me Sonko from Maale. Maybe he can tell us more about the Maale pots.
- Sago: Please tell us about the Maale pots. Are there any rituals connected to the Maale pots?
- (Joseph translates for Ate me into English, Susanne into Hamar).
- Ate me: We make three kinds of pots: one is a very big one, the second one is medium, but has a little different shape, and the third one is for coffee.
- Bashiri: Yes, this is true. In Bashada we also have different sizes.
- Ate me: The biggest one is for beer. For example, when there is a feast, like a meeting or a ceremony, we make beer in big pots. The second kind is for cooking food. The

coffee pot is a long one...a long one, like this shape. And they serve coffee like with this one (*pointing to the Ari pot*). But it does not have this mouth, this sort of opening.

Susanne: Do you not have a *gungulo* [a ladle used in Hamar and Bashada to pour the coffee]?

Ateme: No, we bend the pot over like this and then pour the coffee (*demonstrating how it is done*). The Maale people make pots for themselves. They do not sell them to other people. The Ari have their own. The Banna also have their own. The Maale make the pots only for their own use.

Sago: Is it just their tradition to make pots or do they also have rituals connected to them?

Ateme: I do not know anything about any specific ritual usage of the pots. This is all I know.

1.6 The ritual usage of pots in Arbore

Echi: I would like to ask Kutsha if there are rituals connected to pots in Arbore.

Susanne: I would like to extend Echi's question: The Bashada make rituals with these pots and with the Ari pots, but the Arbore and the Nyangatom and the Kara, do they perform any rituals with the pots they buy from the Bashada or do they just use them for daily use?

Kutsha: We do not distinguish between Ari pots or Bashada pots. Not everybody knows which pot is from where. Only some elders know where the different pots come from. But we perform rituals with all pots. For example, when someone marries we make coffee in one of these pots. It is part of the ritual. We also make *antsi*, which is a kind of honey wine, or *parsi*, sorghum beer. We prepare these beverages in the pots. The coffee is made of real coffee beans, not just from the shells. This coffee is used for rituals. When a girl gets married the relatives come. Some of the wife's relatives sit under the *bara* [shade], some sit inside the house.

Sago and Gude: It is like in Hamar. You have one pot with *parsi*, maybe for the mother's brothers, the *aranga*, and you have one pot for the other relatives, the female

relatives, who bring the water and everything else. You have separate pots for different groups of relatives. It is like that in Arbore it seems.

Kutsha: The relatives of the mother's brothers have to bring the pot. They all have different pots. The wives of the mother's brothers have different pots; the males and the females of the *aranga*. That is how we use the pots. We also have one pot that we call the *bitta daa*, the *bitta's* pot. But we do not distinguish between the Ari and the Bashada pots. They are all pots and we use them equally. They could also be pots from Konso, we would also use those. They are all the same to us.

1.7 The ritual usage of pots in Nyangatom

Susanne: Joseph, is there anything you could tell us about the pots in Nyangatom?

Joseph: Of course. In Nyangatom we use many types of pots. We use pots from Bashada, from Ari, from anywhere. The pot used for making coffee is a different kind than the one used for cooking. We also have one, which we use as a water container. In Nyangatom we also have rituals connected with the cooking pot. We use the cooking pot for rituals, and, also the coffee pot, like this one (*pointing to the pot from Bashada*), because they are good. The coffee boiled in such kinds of pots is not the same as the one boiled in a *diski* [metal pot]. We say that the coffee boiled with this pot is sweeter than the one from a metal pot. We use the *diski* because when we move from one place to another, the clay pots easily break. That is why nowadays we use the clay pots only in the permanent settlement.

Susanne: So you have permanent settlements and you have temporary settlements?

Joseph: Yes.

1.8 Purification of meat by cooking in the pot

Susanne: I was told one thing by Nakwa before, but I am not sure if I understood it properly. He said, that as a *parko*, he is not allowed to eat meat, which has been slaughtered during a funeral ritual, because it is impure. But even so Nakwa is often given meat from such a ritual. Then he brings it home and his wife puts it into a pot, a Bashada pot. He explained, that as the pot is *mingi*, it is impure, you can cook the impure funeral meat in it and as you cook it inside this pot it becomes *ch'arangi*, it becomes clean. And then he may eat it. But this, he said, is only the *parko's* ritual; it is connected to his ritual office.

In this context I would like to ask about the *ukulis*, the initiates, because they also may not eat the meat slaughtered for a funeral. So, can you tell me if they are allowed to eat this meat after it has been cooked in the pot?

Belaini: No, this is only the ritual of the *parko*.

1.9 Women, men and pots

Echi: Are pots considered to belong to the women's world? I have never see any men who carry pots. Are pots attributed to the women?

Gude: Yes, pots belong to the women. Jinka is so far and our women do not come here. That is why Bashiri brought this pot. That is the only reason why he brought it, even though he is a man.

Bashiri: But there are also men who carry pots and go *muda*, which means they exchange them for sorghum somewhere.

Susanne: Will men carry pots if, for example, their wife has a small child?

Bashiri: Ah, not every man will do it.

Susanne: Yes, every man will do it!

Bashiri: No, only very weak men will do it. Would you say everyone who has a penis is a real man?' I only brought it, because you said, bring something really typical, which is of ritual meaning for us Bashada. Otherwise I would have never brought a pot to here. Only the really weak and stupid men will carry pots.

Gude: There are many men who carry pots when there is real hunger. But they feel ashamed.

Echi: One more question about the pots. Do men look inside? Do they take anything out of the pots?

Tsasi (*asking Judith*): Do you know Worro, the younger brother of Birinda?

Judith: I know his name, yes.

Tsasi: He is one who, for example, came to Galeba carrying a pot!

Echi: So women cook and take the food out of the pots. Do men also do that?

Gude, Bashiri: If you have a wife, how could you cook? How could you look into the pots?

Bashiri: Only when the young men go far away with the cattle they do cook.

Tsasi: There are no taboos about men cooking food in a pot. If you go with the cattle very far the young boys will cook, not the elders. But it is allowed for the men to cook in a pot. It is not taboo. The pot is the father of the ritual, isn't he? He is the father of the coffee, isn't he? He is the one who makes the rituals. The pot is the one who makes the coffee for the elders when they come, isn't he? There is nothing *mingi* about it. There is no taboo about it, nothing *mingi*. It is just that we do not like to do it. You feel ashamed to cook or to carry a pot, but there is no taboo. In former times we said that the pot is the cow of the women. The pot is the cow of the women. If you have a pot in your house your wife will stay in the house. There is no taboo about it.

1.10 Quality, clay and rituals connected to the clay

Tina: I have one more question about pot making. When we went to Gunne [Bashada] we saw how pots were made and we were amazed by the fine quality of the pots. The Bashada pots are traded very far. But why is the Bashada pot so good? Is it really because of the good quality of the clay? Do the other groups not have such good clay? Why is it the Bashada pot that has been traded so much?

Shada, Sago, Tsasi, Gude: The clay is very good. If you work with it properly and you treat the pot carefully, it won't die for a long time. Only a silly woman will break the pot. It is our long time tradition.

Sago: The reason why the Ari pot did not become very famous in the area is that when you slaughter a goat or a cow, if you put the meat inside and you cook it, the pot will become wet. Our pot from Bashada becomes even stronger when you put fat inside, but the Ari pot becomes weak and breaks easily.

Echi: Are there special places where you go and get the clay?

Gude: In former times there was only one good place. Now there are many places. There won't be twenty places, less than twenty. Maybe in Silbe, there are two places; in Gunne, maybe three. These are the places that our grandmothers showed us. There is one place in Omus, a settlement area between Gunne and Argude; we know about this place since olden times. These places never finish.

The people from Argude come to Gunne to get their clay. Some people do not go to the good places. They simply make pots, which then break easily. We know the old places of our ancestors, and the clay from there is really good. The pots made from that clay do not die.

Susanne: I have heard that sometimes *gali* leaves are put into these clay places.

Gude, Bashiri: Yes. These places are taboo for women who have their period and also for women who have a *wuta* – that means women who are pregnant without having performed the necessary rituals. These women may not go and dig clay. If they go, the clay becomes bad and all the pots made by it will die. So, when many pots die, people say: 'Oh, who has been digging the clay? Maybe someone who was not pure has been digging the clay.' And then a cold person, that means someone from the Binnas moiety, goes there and drops some *gali* leaves. He takes the *gali* leaves, spits on them and places them there, saying: 'Don't die out!'

Tsasi, Sago: That person from the Binnas moiety says: 'You are the cow of the women, become the cow of the women, become *korkoro*.'

Susanne: *Korkoro* is the word for the metal pots.

Tsasi: Become hard. Do not die out. And then he puts the *gali* leaves there.

Susanne: I heard that in former times the Bashada did not have goats and cows.

Gude: They had very few goats and the cows. Those which they had they gave to the Hamar saying: 'Herd them for us!' Just like the Kara people do now. At that time the Bashada country was not good for herding cows.

Susanne: I heard that in former times the Bashada made pots and exchanged them for goats and cows, to collect cattle.

Gude: Yes, for example there was no butter in Bashada. So the Bashada women made pots and went to their Hamar relatives. There a goat was slaughtered for them and they were given a big pot of butter to do the hair.

Tsasi: The Hamar would say 'Oh, this is my *bel*, this is my bond friend, this pot is *ch'arangi*; it is pure. This is the one who makes the rituals for me; it is my Bashada pot.'

Gude: When the father of Bashiri was young, the Bashada country was still real bush. There was nothing. So, he moved near to Hamar. Then more and more people came and wanted to live there and have one or two cows. They liked the idea of herding cows. If you have one or two cows, later you will have ten, won't you? We have seen how the cattle have entered Bashada. In former times we were the ones who brought the cattle to Bashada. Our grandfathers have bought goats in Galeba, but we have not exchanged pots for cows, only for butter. Some cows we also got by raiding the other groups. And then of course, if you have many goats, which you have bought with pots, you can use the goats for buying a cow. That's how we have collected our cattle.

(Afternoon break: Choke and the other elders call barjo)

Day One: Afternoon Session

2. *Karamb'a*: Coffee Bowl (Hamar)

Discussants: Kollo (Hamar), Tsasi (Hamar), Bashiri (Bashada), Sago (Banna), Gude (Bashada), Shada (Hamar), Kutsha (Arbore), Joseph (Nyangatom), Duka (Hamar), Ariyo (Kara)

Susanne: As Kollo is the second eldest man he should be the next one to talk. He has brought us two objects. One is the *ukuli boko*, the stick of the initiate in Hamar and the other one is a coffee bowl. As we just had coffee, let's start with the coffee bowl and all the things, which are connected to it. We will talk about the *boko* later. As other people also have brought a *boko*, we should talk about these later. Now let us start with the coffee bowl.

Kollo: Every ritual is finished by the coffee bowl. You have the pot and you have the *karamb'a*. *Karamb'a* is the coffee bowl. The *barjo*, fortune, is called forth by the coffee bowl. For example, an *uta*, a bride... When a girl moves to her husband, she becomes a bride. And then *barjo* will be called for her by way of the coffee bowl. Then there is the ritual of giving the *boko*, this stick, to the initiate. Then *barjo* also will be called with the coffee bowl.

Then there are people who are unable to give birth to children; women who do not get pregnant. They will get pregnant by the *karamb'a*, by the coffee bowl, because the elders will call *barjo* for her. You hold the *karamb'a*: 'It shall come down from the sky.'

2.1 The right-handed *karamb'a*

Kolle: We call *barjo* with the *karamb'a*. The *djalepha*, the eldest son, has a right-handed *karamb'a*. The younger brothers, the ones who have elder brothers, they have a left-handed *karamb'a*. Old men like Nakwa, for example, old men call *barjo* with a right-handed *karamb'a*. When the elders have called *barjo*, a woman will get pregnant.

We also call *barjo* for the goats. When we collect goats from others, we put butter into the *karamb'a*. This is how we collect goats by putting butter inside.

Before the bride has given a coffee bowl to her husband, she will not be given to her husband. She is a bride. Only after three months, after being blessed, she will be given to her husband. All these rituals are connected to the *karamb'a*.

Tsasi, Kolle, Bashiri, Sago (*explaining to Susanne*): As a bride you collect cattle from the elder brothers of your husband. It is called *buls*. So if I were the younger brother of Chaka, for example, his wife would come to me and I would take a *karamb'a*. I would put butter inside and then I hand it to her. She will sip a little bit of the butter and then hand the *karamb'a* back to me. Then I drink some of the butter. Again, she drinks and I drink; four times. From then on my cow belongs to her. I have given it to her. She will also go to Belaini, who is the elder brother of her husband and he will also give a cow to her.

Gude: She also collects cattle from the father of the husband. First a goat is given and then a cow. Everybody gives first a goat and then a cow. It is important that a father distributes the goats and cows equally to all of his sons when they marry he gives them to the wives of the sons. He gives equally one goat and one cow. If he does not give the cattle equally to everybody, his sons later will fight with each other.

Sago: All this cattle is given by way of the *karamb'a*, with the butter ritual.

Kolle: After the father has given these cows and goats to all his children, maybe one of these cows will not give birth. But, as the father has distributed them equally beforehand, the sons will not quarrel with each other. They will rather go to each other and say, 'Please give me one cow, mine has not given birth.' But they will not be fighting about it. If you do not have a *karamb'a*, if you do not collect cattle

by the way of the *karamb'a*, you cannot collect cattle. It is the only way you can collect cattle. This talk about collecting cattle is finished by the *karamb'a*.

That is why the pot and the *karamb'a* are the most important things for our rituals; and also the *boko*. So there are three important things, they are the most important things.

Collecting the cattle with the *karamb'a* concerns only the cattle and the goats you get from your relatives. The wife collects from the male relatives of the husband. But of course there are other people, who also give you cattle, like your *bel*, your bond friends. Then you do not need the *sherka*. That is different. You can collect from them without the *karamb'a*. The coffee bowl only concerns the cows and goats which you collect after marriage.

If Belaini and Nakwa [Nakwa is the father of Belaini, Belaini is the eldest son] have a fight with each other, the father can curse his son.

Susanne (*explaining*): He said *atap delka*. *Atap* means tongue and *atap delka* means to talk with the tongue; it means to curse him.

Kolle: Then the *zarsi* [the elders of the area who belong to one village] come and bring a *koli*. *Koli* is a long stick, which is used for settling conflicts. If you have a conflict you can send someone with a *koli*. Belaini says, 'I did something wrong. I am your son. I did something wrong.' He will give in. He says to his father: 'Please, make coffee. Take some *gali* leaves' [a soft creeper, which grows in Hamar]. 'Take *karko*' [a nice smelling plant]. 'Take some butter. Come and wash your mouth. Take a nice *karamb'a*, which has no hole and nothing broken. Take a right-handed *karamb'a* and call *barjo* for me with it.'

Tsasi, Gude and Sago (*interrupting and adding further details*): You take the coffee bowl and put a little butter inside, and also some cold water. Then you take the *karko* and the *gali*, dip it into the butter and water and then wash your mouth with it. You stroke your chest with it and then downwards to your heart, saying: 'I have not cursed you! I have not said anything bad. Everything I have said should be gone!'

Kolle: So, the *karamb'a* is also used to settle conflicts and to take back cursing.

Sago: Then you say: 'I have washed my mouth, now everything is clean, now the curse has been taken back.'

Kolle: These are the rituals connected to the *karamb'a*. Without a *karamb'a* you cannot perform any rituals.

2.2 The left-handed *Karamb'a*

Tina: I would like to know why they brought the other *karamb'a*. It is not a right-handed *karamb'a*.

Shada: As I am the younger brother of someone, as I have an elder brother, I brought a left-handed *karamb'a*. This is the one I usually drink coffee with. As long as my father is alive I won't drink from a right-handed coffee bowl. As long as my elder brother is alive I won't drink from a right-handed coffee bowl. That is why I brought this left-handed bowl in case you would ask me about rituals.

The rituals connected to the left-handed one are the same as the ones connected to the right-handed one. The ones who give cattle by this *karamb'a* are the father and his sons and the *äke nasa*, which means the children of the elder brother of the father. These are the only ones who give cattle by the *karamb'a*.

Gude: When the wives of the brothers are given the cattle it has to be in the right order. First the eldest brother, or the eldest *äke nasa*, has to receive it. As long as the wife of the elder brother has not collected the cattle by the *karamb'a*, the wives of the younger brother cannot receive cattle. It all has to be in the right order. First the eldest, then the next and the next....

Shada and Tsasi: When the bride is new in her husband's house, the age mates of the husband will come. She will have prepared lots of coffee bowls. She will make coffee and serve it to everyone. Then they will call *barjo* for her. Maybe they have come from many places, from Hamar, from Banna, from Bashada. They come from many different places. They bring their *barjo* from many places to her house and they call *barjo* for her. They say: 'She should have many children; she should give birth to children like monkeys give birth to their children. The homestead shall be filled with cattle and with goats and everybody should feel envious when they see the abundance of cattle!'

Shada: So the pot and the *karamb'a* are connected to all these rituals. They are the most important objects.

Echi: Sometimes you said *karamb'a*, sometimes you said *sherka*? What is the difference between these two names?

Bashiri: *Karamb'a* is the word for the coffee bowl. And *sherka* is the general word; you use it for all kinds of bowls, for the ones for eating and everything else.

Echi: Who makes the *sherkas*?

Gude: There is no taboo about the making, but it is usually the men who cut the gourd into two pieces. There is no taboo for women, but they say: 'Oh, I do not know how to do it.' A woman says to her husband: 'You do it for me!'

Gude and Sago: This one does not have anything, but often they have this little *sudi*, we say it looks like a nose. You look at the whole fruit and then you cut it. If you cut it the other way you do not have a left and right-handed piece. So you look at the gourd and then cut it in this angle.

Sago: If you cut the calabash this way you have a right and a left-handed bowl.

Tina: Shada said that this is his *karamb'a*. If this bowl breaks is it simply replaced, or is there anything special about making a new one?

Shada: If it breaks a little bit you can sew it. You can repair it. If it breaks totally you make a new one. There are no rituals connected to it.

Echi: Are there always enough *sherkas*?

Shada: There is one *karamb'a*, which belongs to the husband; it is made by his wife. It is the one she always hands him when she serves him his coffee. It is always the same one. When a gourd gets older it becomes very red. First it is yellow and then it becomes red and nice. If such a *karamb'a* breaks it touches me. It makes me sad. I say: 'It has become like a child to me.' And if it breaks I will cry. So I will try to repair it, because it has become like my child.

Gude: If it breaks totally the wife will simply make a new nice one for her husband.

2.3 The ritual usage of the coffee bowl in Arbore

Echi: I know you have *sherkas* in Arbore as well, but are they also used in rituals?

Kutsha: There is the *karamb'a* which belongs to the father of the house, to the husband. He drinks coffee with it. His *karamb'a* is not used for the coffee, which is mixed with milk. It is only for the pure coffee. It is taboo to put the milk mixed with

coffee inside this one. Other people may not drink with it, only the husband drinks with it. It is the *karamb'a* he uses for calling *barjo*.

This bowl is given to you by your father. If you do not have a father anymore your elder brother will give it to you. When my father passes the coffee bowl on to me he will tell me all the history and the rituals connected with it. He will tell me not to pour milk inside. 'Do not put cold water inside! Even if there is no other bowl to drink water with, do not put cold water inside! Don't give it to anybody else! It is only for coffee, only for your coffee!'

A man will receive this bowl from his father once he has brought his wife home. We do not use the kind of bowls which have this nose.

Bashiri and Shada: In Arbore they do not use the ones with the horn, with the nose. They only use the completely round ones.

Kutsha: We put a piece of *gau*, a small golden metal ring, on it. When the father gives the bowl to his son he puts a golden ring on it. Only the father gives the *karamb'a*. When the wife makes coffee, she first pours the coffee into this bowl. She places it in front of the husband's stool. The husband has a special stool. Nobody else may touch it. Next she will serve coffee to the other elders. The husband is also the first one who may drink the coffee. After he has drunk the others will drink. He drinks. While he is drinking, while he holds the bowl in his hand, he will not be mad at the children. But then when he has drunk and put the *sherka* down, he may shout at children. If the wife has not poured the first coffee for the husband the guests would ask: 'Why didn't you pour coffee for your husband first? Where is the *karamb'a* of your husband?'

In case I, as a husband, go far away, she will pour my coffee even when I am absent. She will pour coffee into the *karamb'a* for me and set it on the ground. Then she will pour coffee to the others and they will drink. Later she will take my bowl back. She will take the coffee from my bowl and pour it into another bowl. This coffee she gives to the children or drinks it herself. But she will not drink from my bowl. That is the tradition connected with the bowl in Arbore.

When my father gave the bowl to me he said: 'Take this bowl! It is yours. By this you will collect everything. You will collect goats with this. You will collect cattle with it. Look after your homestead. Look after your children. Look after

your relatives. Look after everything by holding this *sherka!*' he said. 'Take your *sherka* and look after everything with your *sherka*. Be together!' He spoke like this when he gave it to me. If I go somewhere I always know that my *sherka* is waiting for me in my home. It will be there with my coffee inside.

If it breaks there is no ritual performed for it. A new one is made. The *gau*, the golden ring, will be taken off the old one and put onto the new *sherka*. That is the tradition connected with it.

2.4 How to serve coffee in the right order

Tina: Kutsha talked about the drinking order and that he will be served coffee first. In Hamar, isn't the serving order set by age? I thought that the oldest one would be served coffee first, even if he is not the husband.

Bashiri: For example, if Nakwa comes to my house the coffee will first be given to me, because I am the owner of the house. But then the next one will be Nakwa, because he is the oldest one. But right now, here, we all are guests, aren't we? If we are all guests, of course, the oldest one will be served coffee first. But in a homestead, in a house, the owner of the house will receive the coffee first.

Echi: Who makes the *sherkas* in Arbore?

Kutsha: We make them ourselves. It is the men who make them in Arbore. There are a few men who are specialists in making nice *sherkas*. There is no taboo. Women could make them too, but they don't know how to do it.

Echi: I saw on the market that the Arbore buy *sherkas* from the Hamar.

Kutsha: The ones who do not have *sherkas*, they buy them. Some grow them on their fields, some do not have any. The ones who do not have any, they buy them.

Susanne: Are there *sherkas* in Nyangatom?

Joseph: *Sherkas* exist everywhere. We use them in the same way as it has been already described by the others. They are used for eating, for coffee, for rituals and for other purposes. Just one kind of *sherka* has not been mentioned yet. It is the full one, the one which is not cut into two pieces. This is a special bowl, the *onkolo*.

Susanne: Can someone bring an *onkolo*?

(While someone goes to get an onkolo, people continue discussing the sherka.)

Nakwa: In our coffee bowl we drink only coffee, maybe we put honey inside. But we do not eat food with it. There is no taboo about it. But the coffee does not taste anymore if you put other things inside it.

(Someone brings an onkolo.)

Susanne: Like this kind?

Joseph: Yes. Like this one.

2.5 How to remove curses with the coffee bowl in Nyangatom

Joseph: Like this one [a calabash which is not cut into two pieces, but has an opening at the top]; we cut it here and leave the rest as it is. We actually use this for storing milk and also for making rituals.

If someone has been cursed, the one who cursed him may take the curse back. He will take water into his mouth and then spit it into the *onkolo*. He mixes the saliva with water. Then he will send the gourd to the one he has cursed, to the one who is sick now. The cursed person should drink the liquid in order to recover. Even if you live far away from each other, the one who spoke the curse will remove it by putting the liquid into the *onkolo* and sending it to the sick person; to the cursed one.

Susanne: The curser takes water and spits it inside?

Joseph: Yes. The liquid is like the curse he has spoken out before. The saliva represents the words. So, the one who has cursed the other one will send him some water, in order to take back the curse, to cleanse him of the curse. If they live close to each other, then he will make coffee and his mouth will be washed by this.

(Discussion between the participants)

Hamar men: It is like our *sherka* ritual. We use the same plant, the gourds. It is very similar.

Joseph: Yes. And in Nyangatom we also use the *sherka* for transferring things from one person to the other. For example, when a father gets old he passes the

responsibility over to the oldest son of his house. He will talk to him and use this water, just like what the Hamar people have said about the *sherka*.

2.6 The symbolic meaning of cold water (Nyangatom)

Sago (*to Joseph*): You are my age mate, aren't you? Bume *nasa*, son of a Bume [Hamar term for Nyangatom]. I have seen something when I was in Bume; I would like to ask you about. When your wife has made coffee...you are in the house. Before the elders drink coffee, the guests, they take one *sherka* and ask for cold water. Then they call *barjo* with cold water, with one *sherka*. What is that? What kind of tradition is that? We want to know what that means.

Joseph: Hot water is hot, cold is cold. The reason why they prefer cold water for blessing is that cold water makes everything cool. Coolness means absence of bad. They bless you to make your way cool, rid of bad things. Also when you go somewhere, they bless so that there will be nothing bad, nothing hot. We relate bad to hot and to hot water.

Susanne: So hot stands for bad things, like for example a conflict?

Joseph: Yes, hot represents negative things.

Susanne: If someone is sick do you call it hot? Is sickness hot? Or does it only stand for quarrels, conflicts?

Joseph: For quarrels, for all bad things. When we bless you with cold water it takes away your heat. Then things turn to good. This is why we prefer cool water for blessing.

Gude: This is just like we said before: we, in Bashada, we also wash our mouth after cursing. For example, when a mother shouts at her children, or she is angry with them, she washes her mouth with cold water and with sweet smelling *karko* leaves and soft *gali* leaves. It is a parallel. We also wash our mouths with cold water. It is the same.

Susanne: So this concept of coolness also exists in Bashada.

Joseph: To give a blessing means to make everything cool. 'Be cool! Take all the bad things out!'

All: That is good! Our rituals are the same. Being different they are all the same!

2.7 The ritual usage of coffee bowls in Arbore

Echi: Do you have this concept of coolness also in Arbore?

Kutsha: We do the same in Arbore. For example when you shout at your children; maybe you have shouted at a small girl because you were very angry with her, and then she will get sick. Then we take cold water and we spit on our stomach. We spit so that it gets cool. Then we take butter and we rub it onto the chest and everything will get well again. So, it is all the same.

Joseph: They also may use coffee or hot water, if there is no cool water.

Gude: You have good rituals. We have the same rituals.

Joseph: The ritual calabash, the *onkolo*, will not be used for anything else, only for ritual things.

2.8 Different kinds of bowls in Kara

Susanne: Is there anything you can tell us about how it is in Kara?

Ariyo: There is one type of bowl, which is called *apho baassal*. It is the *sherka* of the husband. What the coffee bowl is in Hamar, which is called *karamb'a*, is called *baassal* in Kara. It is the same kind. *Isimu sherka* is the *sherka* for food. All the rituals are done with the *apho baassal*, with the husband's *sherka*. If the husband is at home, as in Arbore, you pour the coffee and set the *baassal* down for the husband. Only then you may serve coffee to other people. You never put cold water inside this *sherka*. If the *sherka* of the husband is touched by cold water, the *maeshi* [the spirits of the ancestors] will come. The spirits of the ancestors can harm you.

Also, if the son of your sister has killed a buffalo or any other big game, he will come back and sing a hunting song, a *maerta*. He comes to the gateway of the mother's brother, the *arak*. In Kara the *arak* will take this bowl, the *apho baassal*, and spill cold water on him, he will cleanse him by doing that.

Susanne: In Hamar there is a ritual, *morsho*, it is a cleansing ritual for the hunter, but they cleanse him with goat blood, from a goat which is killed in the gate way.

Ariyo: Yes. It is like the *morsho* in Hamar, but they do it with cold water.

Echi: Did you not say that cold water is not allowed to touch that gourd?

Ariyo: Only in this context you are allowed to put cold water into the gourd, because it is this ritual.

The *apho baassal* of the husband does not have this...ear, nose, whatever you call it. Ours is like the one in Arbore. It is round. We also do not carve ornaments. It is plain. They say that if you carve it and the owner of the *sherka* will go to war he will come back with scars. Like the scars on the *sherka*.

Having drunk coffee by the *apho baassal* it will be put back into a separate place. All the other *sherkas* are hung up in the house on one string, but the *sherka* of the husband hangs in a different place.

Susanne: In Hamar they all hang together.

Echi: Do other *sherkas* have ornaments?

Ariyo: Yes, it is no problem for the other ones. Also, if your age mates drink from the *apho baassal*, it is spoiled. We throw it away. You will get a new one. No one else will drink from it. With all the other *sherkas* it is no problem, only with this one it is taboo.

2.10 How a Hamar woman learns to serve coffee and food in the right way

Echi: I would like to ask the women, if they have something to add to this topic.

Duka: If the mother in law, the mother of my husband is still alive, I first will serve the coffee to her and then to my husband. If the father of my husband also is alive, I first will give some coffee to my father in law, then to my mother in law and then to my husband. The father in law will drink the coffee from a right-handed *sherka*. His wife will drink the coffee with the left-handed *sherka*. My husband, the son, will drink the coffee with a left-handed one. If his mother and father have died, then the coffee for my husband will be served in a right-handed *sherka*. For myself I will pour the coffee into a left-handed *sherka*. If the father of my husband has died, but his mother is still alive I will give food to him in the right-handed *sherka*.

So, we have the coffee *sherkas* and the food *sherkas*, and whether he gets the right or the left-handed depends on whether his parents are still alive. If his father and mother are still alive it is taboo for him to eat or drink from a right-handed *sherka*. If the father has died, I will first serve it to the mother with the right-handed *sherka* and then to the son with the right-handed *sherka*. If he is an *edi kana*, which means the younger brother of someone, then he will have a left-handed *sherka*, as long as the elder brother is alive.

This is what we learn when we marry. When we put on the women's leather skirts, we are told how to serve the coffee to whom and with which *sherka*. Then we are told, 'This is the *sherka* of your *eyke*, your grandfather.'

Susanne (*adding*): The same word, *eyke*, is used for both your grandfather and father in law.

Duka: 'And this is the *sherka* he will eat with.' You are shown that and from then on you use it for your father in law. This is what we learn when we get married.

Tina: Who teaches you that? Is it your mother?

Duka: It is my mother-in-law.

Susanne: Again, grandmother and mother-in-law is the same word, '*aka*'.

Duka: My mother only tells me: 'When you go and live with your parents in law, listen well to your mother-in-law! Do everything she teaches you! Listen well to her!'

Just listen to everything she tells you! Just work the way that she tells you.’ That is all she says to me and I do it.

2.11 The adorned coffee bowl of the husband in Arbore

Echi: In Arbore I saw many *sherkas* adorned with cowry shells. Can you tell me something about that?

Kutsha: When I get married, there will be two *sherkas* made for me, one is for coffee, one is for food. The people, the women who live in my homestead, like my mother, they will make them for me together. One is for food. The other one is for coffee. The one I talked about before, the one with the golden ring is the one that will be adorned with cowry shells.

When my wife gives birth to her first child, all the cowry shells will be cut off the *sherka* and the golden ring is put on and in the place of the shells. She will take the cowry shells off the *sherkas* and sew them onto her belt. So, in Arbore one is for coffee, one is for food and that is why we adorn it with cowry shells.

Tina: How is it in Hamar and in Bashada? Don't they also have *kibo sherkas* [cowry shell *sherkas*]? Is it the same there, or is it different?

Shada, Gude and Sago: In Hamar it is the wife, the bride, who makes the *sherkas*. The *sherka* is given to her by her mother in law, but the wife is the one who sews the beads and the cowry shells on it. She is the one who adorns everything.

Tina: Do they sew the *kibo* onto the women's belts?

Susanne: No, they use the bowls with the *kibo* as long as they want.

Sago: When you marry, your wife will also make beads for you, like these ones here (*referring to his glass bead necklace*).

Gude: If you have a lazy wife, then you won't have any.

(*Laughter*)

3. Kan'di zau, Mido, and Boko – Iron Rings and Staff of the Initiate (Hamar)

3.1. How the iron rings are used by a Hamar initiate

Discussants: Tsasi (Hamar), Bashiri (Bashada), Sago (Banna), Gude (Bashada), Shada (Hamar), Nakwa (Bashada)

Susanne: Tsasi, would you like to tell us what you have brought from Dambaiti?

Tsasi: First I would like to talk about this object; it is a *kan'di zau*.

Susanne: The *zau* are important objects for the *ukuli*, the initiate in Hamar. He receives it from a woman who belongs to his moiety.

Gude, Tsasi: A widow may not give him an iron ring. It has to be a woman who is married to a man who is still alive.

Tsasi: And she must be a first wife.

Shada, Gude and Tsasi: She gives the *zau* to her husband and the husband puts it then over the arm of the *ukuli*. The initiate will hold his *boko* stick and the husband will put the *zau* over the *boko* and then on the *ukuli's* arm.

Tsasi (*with comments from Shada and Gude*): Now that he wears the *zau* on his arm he is an *ukuli*, an initiate. Yesterday his father has cut something off for him, hasn't he? The father has cut off a string of beads, which had been tied around the waist of the boy before by his father and the younger brothers of his father. The boy takes the *boko* and then he goes to receive the *zau* from one of the women who belong to his moiety. Now he is an *ukuli*, an initiate. When his leap over the cattle has come close, people say, 'Go to a *dari* person [a person who belongs to your moiety and who can assist you in rituals] and ask for a *mido*.' You go to a relative, Tsasi's son for example; he will later take the *mido* from Duka, Tsasi's younger sister. Duka will take a *mido*, an iron ring, a small one, off her arm and give it to her husband. Then her husband spits, he blesses the boy and then puts the ring onto the *boko* and then over the arm of the initiate.

Next the initiate will go to get the *banzi* [ritual item]. You, the *ukuli*, you go to a man, who will sew the *banzi* for you.

Susanne: It is a small item made from antelope leather, which later is put on the finger of the initiate.

You go there and you pay the *banzi jagä*, [the one who sews the *banzi*], for this ritual work. You pay him with milk. You have two small containers in which you pour the milk.

At the *banzi's* house, the initiate takes the two containers and pours the milk into a *sherka*. Then he takes the *mido* and also puts it into the *sherka* together with the milk. The *banzi* is also put into the milk. Everything is inside the milk, the *banzi* and the *mido*. Then the *ukuli* takes the *banzi* out again and puts it onto the small finger of his right hand, so that it is hidden from the other people. They cannot see it; it is hidden inside his hand. Then he takes the two containers, which he used for bringing the milk. Then the *banzi* takes the *mido* out of the milk, he spits on it and gives it back to the *ukuli*. Then the initiate runs away.

The initiate's assistant takes cow dung and paints stripes on his back and on his front, like a cross. Later when he leaps over the cattle, a string of bark will replace the dung there. But now it is done with cow dung. Then the initiate runs away. He runs to the bush. He hides in the bush. There he takes the *banzi* off and puts it into one of the milk containers, and then closes the container with leaves of *baraza* [a sacred plant often used for rituals in Hamar].

He runs back to his homestead where all the girls are waiting for him. The girls are dancing in front of the gateway. He approaches them and takes off his cloth. Now he is naked. When the girls are not watching he runs through the midst of them and through the gateway. There is a beehive waiting for him and he runs and he hides the *banzi* inside the hive. He runs there, takes the *banzi* off his finger, puts it into the beehive and closes it. It has a lid. It will stay there. Now the only thing he has to do is to leap over the cattle. That is our ritual.

After a while, when he is going to leap over the cattle, he goes back to the beehive and takes out the *banzi*. He puts it back in his hand. Holding it, he leaps over the cattle. But before he leaps over the cattle he takes the *banzi* and he goes with his ritual assistant to a river, a dry riverbed. There he is cleansed with the sand and they will tie the strings of bark around his upper body. Then he puts the *banzi* on his finger. The milk containers and the *boko* he gives to his ritual assistant, who is called *shi'a*, washer. He is the one who washes him with sand. There are also the *maz*, the ones who initiate him [they have leaped over the cattle but are not

married yet]. They will initiate him. They have their rituals and they have *gali* leaves. They bless the cattle and tell them to be calm and so on. They also have built a gateway for the *ukuli*. They have eight *miceres*, whipping wands.

One *maz* is his ritual assistant. He is called the 'mother of the *ukuli*'. The ritual mother sits behind him, the *ukuli* sits in front of him and together they hold eight whipping wands and the *boko*. They put the *zau* around the *boko*. They hold the *boko* together. Four times they lift it up and down, and up and down, then, they spill the rings on the ground. They do it again like this, now on the other side. All together four times.

Now the *ukuli* runs to the cattle that have arrived at the *boaka*, the meeting place. He has only the *banzi* in his hand. He walks to the cattle. The girls and the women walk around the cattle and sing.

The ritual mother is wearing a women's belt around his waist. He is the one who holds the *garo* calf. The *garo* calf stands as the first cow in front of the row of the cattle he will leap over. The *maz* and the elders come and hold the cattle, so that they stand still in a row. The initiate goes a little bit to the side. There he stands only with his *banzi*.

There is one girl who has given a sheepskin to the *ukuli*. She takes the initiate's *mido* and puts it on the ear of the *garo* calf. Then he leaps over the cattle for four times. The ritual mother takes the *mido* from the girl. She takes some cow dung and touches the right paw of the *garo* calf and rubs it. Then he lifts his arm and throws the cow dung up into the air.

Shada: All the *maz* start to shout and try to catch it!

Gude: It is like when you play football.

Shada: They all try to catch it and the one who catches it will put it on his arm and take it away.

Tsasi, Gude and Shada explain together:

The *banzi* is just thrown on the ground. Now the initiate leaps over the cattle. It is finished. He only has the *boko* now. The ritual with these rings has finished.

There is one ritual connected with the *boko* after the leap. When he was an initiate he was holding the *boko* like this. After he has leapt over the cattle, the big part

will be held in front, like this, the other way around – the head of the *boko* in front (*demonstrating how it is held correctly*).

In the evening after the leap all the initiate's hair will be shaved off. When everybody has gone to sleep and it is silent, nobody is awake, his head will be shaved. In the night the *maz* make fire. They take blood from a cow's jugular vein. After a while the blood coagulates. It is roasted in the fire. The initiate is lying down. His ritual assistant will take a burning stick and walk around saying: 'Before, you have called him by this and this name. Tomorrow when you meet him somewhere on the way call him 'Burdimbe!' or 'Galtimbe!' or whatever... call him by the name he got after he leapt over the cattle!'

Tsasi: His new name is connected to the colour of the *garo* calf, the calf which stood in front of the others.

Then they sit down. They sit opposite each other, the *maz* and the initiate, in the night and they take the *goala*, the lyre. They take the lyre and they have a container, which is used for milking the cows. On one side of the *goala* you hang a rope which you use for taking blood from a cow, and, on the other side, you have the milk container. You have a cowhide which you put on top of all this.

There are the *maz* and there is the one who shaved the hair of the *ukuli* (*Tsasi and Shada demonstrate how it is done*). He is the initiate. He carries all these items to the *maz*. He goes to all the *maz* and they say: 'Say your *gar nabi*, cow's name!' He says his cow's name. Then they address him by his name and say...

Shada: K'alumbe!

Tsasi: Woi!

Shada: Four times he is asked by each one of them. He is asked: 'Tell your cow's name!' And he replies: 'K'alumbe', and then they call him by his name and he answers: 'Woi!'

Tsasi: So now that is finished.

Gude: Now he is a *maz*. He is not an *ukuli* anymore.

Bashiri: From now on he does not eat sorghum food anymore. When his head was shaved he took some sorghum food and he placed it near the roots of a *baraza* tree. He said: 'I will eat you tomorrow, but I will not eat you now.' He left it there and from then on he does not eat sorghum food anymore. Now he is a *maz*.

A small child, who has not leaped over the cattle, can take the sorghum food away and eat it. This is a child that has not leapt over the cattle yet.

Tsasi, Shada, Sago and Gude explain together (*but mainly Tsasi*): There is a headdress of the *maz*, it is called *oapha*. The ritual mother gives a *mido*, his own *mido*, together with the *oapha* made from the *baraza* bark, to the initiate. Now he is a *maz*. Later, when he gets married, he will give the *mido* to his wife. Like Duka, she has the *mido* of Sago from the time when he was a *maz*.

Gude: When your bride moves in with you, you put it onto her right hand.

Tsasi: With this now all the rituals of the *boko* are finished.

But there are rituals connected with the *goala* which we have not talked about yet. After the initiate has become a *maz* and he may not go to his own homestead anymore.

Gude: He may not enter the house through the door. But, with the help of the *goala*, he will be allowed to enter the homestead again, not into the house but into the cattle gateway. There are two *maz* sitting on one side and two on the other side.

Tsasi: The initiate's mother says: 'Come in! Get in!' He goes through the gateway, inside and out, in and out. When he goes through once, the *goala* is stringed like this. He goes through again... 'Plink', four times and then it is finished.

Then a goat is slaughtered for the *maz* and they will eat it. That is the story of the *boko*. And that is the use of the *goala*, one of the uses of the *goala*.

3.2 Who makes the Boko?

Tina: Can you tell me who carves the *boko* for the *ukuli*?

Gude: There are some people who know how to make them.

Shada: But only people who have leapt over the cattle, only elders are allowed to carve them.

Sago: These are very old *bokos* (*pointing to the black bokos which they have brought*). When you have leapt over the cattle you put it in your house. Maybe someone else who wants to leap over the cattle will come and say: 'I want to buy your *boko*.' Maybe he gives you a beehive for it in exchange.

If someone of your family dies while you are an *ukuli* you have to throw the *boko* away. That is the only reason why one would throw a *boko* it away. They say it is *mingi* now – it became impure. If everything is fine you put it into your house.

Nakwa: Later you can buy a beehive with it. Someone else will buy it from you.

Sago: So a *boko* can be used by many *ukulis*. It can be bought with a beehive. Again and again, again...it can become very old. This one is a very good one. You see? It is very black, so it is very old. Nobody has ever died in a homestead of an *ukuli* who used this.

Susanne: They are made from *baraza* wood. The only wood used for it is the wood from the *baraza* tree.

Kutsha: Who gives the *boko* to you? Do you simply buy it from someone? Isn't it your father who gives it to you? Isn't it your elder brother?

Sago: Yes, you buy the *boko* by yourself. But beforehand there is the ritual of cutting the beads, which we were talking about before. Then your father gives you a whipping wand, a *micere*, in front of the gateway, saying, 'This is your *boko*!' It is a ritual. When you have finished this you can buy the wooden *boko*.

Gude: It is the father, or the younger brothers of the father, who give you the *boko*. Your elder brother may not give you the *boko*. It is your father or your father's brothers.

Shada: If you have no father anymore and no father's brothers anymore you can go to someone from your own moiety and say: 'Give me the *boko*!' But it has to be someone who already has given the *boko* to his own children.

Bashiri: If it is someone from your moiety who gives you the *boko* from that day on you will address him saying “father”. He becomes your father.

Sago: We finished the *boko* talk now.

Tina: Do the other two of you who brought a *boko* have anything else to add? Is that what they wanted to tell about the *boko*?

Bashiri: Yes. It is all the same ritual.

3.3 The making of the *zau* by the blacksmiths

Tina: Where do the women get the iron rings from?

Gude: We have blacksmiths who make them. The big ones you see on the legs of the women, they are bought by a cow. They have to be bought by cattle; they can't be bought by money.

Echi: How many rings do they get for a cow?

Gude, Shada, Bashiri: Twenty five, enough for one woman.

Shada: A man has to buy the rings for his aunt, for the elder sister or younger sisters of his father.

(*All Hamar begin talking*): First you have to buy it for the most senior sister. If you first buy it for a junior one, her legs will become sick and inflamed. In case this *aka*, this aunt, has died before she has been given the *zau*, the iron rings, he will give a cow to her son. He will say: ‘These are the rings of your mother. Take them.’ Only after having done this is he allowed to buy rings for the next younger one.

Gude: And then you can buy for the next younger and the next one.

Echi: Who sells the rings?

Susanne: The blacksmiths.

Echi: And who are the blacksmiths?

Belaini: The blacksmiths are the blacksmiths. They are the ones who work with metal.

Tina: Are they Hamar blacksmiths?

Belaini: They are blacksmiths and they are humans, but they do not leap over the cattle.

Nakwa: The *parko*, in former times, said to these people: ‘You are the ones who work with metal. You are the ones who make everything with metal. You do not leap over the cattle!’

Bashiri: They are the ones who make all tools for the work in the fields, and they are the ones who make the *binyere*, the necklace worn by married women, by first wives.

Gude: The *parko* and the *bitta* are the ones who said: ‘You will be the *gito*, you will be the blacksmiths!’

Echi: But where do they get the metal from?

Gude: They buy it.

Echi: From where, do you know?

All: They take it from the *gal* (*habesha*), from the towns.

Belaini: They take spare parts of broken cars, everything which is metal.

Tina: You said before that the *bitta* decides who will be the blacksmiths and who will not. Did that depend on the clan or the family to which they are related?

Belaini and Bashiri: This happened in former times. We have not seen it. He said to someone: ‘You come! You are our ritual person! You are our blacksmith!’ We have not seen it.

Belaini: The *bitta* and the *parko* said long time ago, ‘You make the axes and all these tools. You make the *binyere* of the women. You make the tool of the *parko*. You are the one who makes all these things we need for the rituals!’ We have heard that when Nakwa told us. Nakwa told us that it was like this long time ago. So you should ask Nakwa!

Nakwa: A long time ago the *bitta* said, ‘You are from this clan, you are this clan, you are this clan, you are this, you are that!’ Since then it has been like this. We have not seen it...but it has not changed from then on.

Judith: So today you become a blacksmith if your father was a blacksmith?

(General approval)

Susanne: Isn’t it that the blacksmiths have come from Ari? That is what I have heard before.

Nakwa: Yes, they come from At’zi. It is a region in Ari. They have all come from there.

Sago: They are specialists, aren’t they? And the ones who make the pots are also specialists, aren’t they? So, in former times when our ancestors were still alive, there were specialists working with metal.

Nakwa: The *parko* went to the blacksmith and said: ‘Make me a stick like this (*referring to the parko stick*), but make it from metal.’

Bashiri: He made a metal one and put a golden ring on the top end of it.

Sago, Gude and Bashiri: Some of the *bittas* have a kind of *boko*, but it is made from metal. It has a round head and at the other end there are little bells. They went to the blacksmiths and said: 'Make one like this for us!' And so he is the specialist for working with metal. The blacksmith does not dig fields. He does not have cattle. Just like the *parko* and the *bitta*, they do not work the fields.

Nakwa: The community works in the fields for them, the *zarsi*. The community works for the blacksmith and brings everything to him. They bring sorghum and everything they need. They are ritual people.

Sago: In these former times it was decided that they would not leap over the cattle. They said: 'You have a lot to work. You do all these things. You do not leap over the cattle.' It was said in former times. 'You only work with metal!'

The blacksmith is even on top of the *bitta* and the *parko*, because he makes all the tools which are used by them for their rituals. But now people say: 'Why should we work the fields and work for the *parko*? And why should we do it for the *bitta* and for the blacksmith?' They do not work as well as they did in former times for these people.

(People start speaking and giggling)

Echi: Why are you all laughing?

All: Because the blacksmith does not leap over the cattle and also he is not buried in the earth. They will just throw him down a crevice.

3.4 Blacksmiths in Nyangatom

Echi: I know that there are no Arbore blacksmiths in Arbore. What about the Nyangatom?

Joseph: There are blacksmiths in Nyangatom. They make things like the bells I have brought. They also make spears and knives and other things. But we treat them differently as you do in Hamar. We treat them as equals the other Nyangatom.

Susanne: They treat them the same way? Do they also have the same rituals?

Joseph: Yes, they are the same. People are happy to have them and that they live close by. When we see pots and other things that are made by neighbouring groups it makes us want to have the same objects.

Susanne: Are the blacksmiths from Nyangatom or do they come from somewhere else?

Joseph: They are Nyangatom. But there are also some who come from the neighbouring groups, such as from Dassanetch and from Turkana.

Bashiri and the other guests from Bashada and Hamar talking:

They must be real specialists.

Gude: In Bashada exist certain spears which are used during public meetings, *osh*, by the ones who speak. These spears have a very big blade. They must come from far away. It must be real specialists who know how to make them. They must be from Nyangatom or Turkana or somewhere else.

Joseph: Yes, that is true. They are made by those blacksmiths who live in Topotha and in Turkana. We also use these kinds of big blades in Nyangatom.

Also short ones, we use them for special ceremonies. There is another kind which has only a short handle. That is another kind of ceremonial or ritual spear.

(People start talking)

Shada: There is one in K'alumbe's house...two in K'alumbe's house. The metal part is very long, but the wooden part is very short.

Sago: The father of Baldambe, Berimba, had made peace with the Nyangatom in former times. The Nyangatom had a long spear and gave it to Berimba. They held the spear up and said: 'If your son comes to our country to kill us, he will die. If my son goes to your country to make war, he will die! We have made peace now. We curse everyone who wants to start a war again!'

Day Two: Morning Session

4. *Shunkurr*: the forked staff (Arbore) and its use in Arbore marriage

Discussants: Kutsha (Arbore), Belaini (Bashada), Joseph (Nyangatom), Tsasi (Hamar)

Susanne: Today we will talk about the different kinds of ritual sticks which have been brought here from Arbore, from Hamar and from Bashada. I suggest that we start with the staff from Arbore and then turn to the other staffs.

Kutsha: This is what I brought from Arbore, from Marle. When we make rituals in Marle we take this stick with us. We walk around with this stick. But not everybody is allowed to own this stick and make his own rituals. A young man who has become an elder by having married, might be given such a stick by another elder who says, 'Take it! Now you can make rituals with it.'

4.1. The *Shunkurr* as the stick of the go-between

Kutsha: In some cases even a man who has not married yet might be given the stick.

Once he has the stick he can go to the house of the girl he wants to marry and ask for her. He will ask for her by way of this stick. With this stick he can ask for the girl. There are other rituals for women and girls which can be performed with this. A man who wants to marry will not go to the girl's house himself; instead he will send a go-between, someone from his family or his clan. The go-between uses this stick when he goes to ask for the girl in another's name. So this is done with this stick.

When you give birth to a child there is another ritual made with this stick. When the child is born, after four or maybe after eight days, there is a ritual when his hair is shaved. For this ritual you also need coffee and tobacco. If you don't have any of this, you can wait for eight days; otherwise you do the ritual four days after the child's birth.

Then, after eight days, there is a ritual where you use this stick. If you don't have such a stick, nobody will come to the ritual. People come to your house, but if you don't have this stick, they won't do any talking in your house, they don't do the ritual. So you need this stick to tell them: 'Do it like this. Do it like that. Shave the hair of the child'. You need the stick to be empowered to say that.

If you want to marry, in fact you have two go-betweens who ask for the girl. Each of the go-betweens takes two pieces of a cow's stomach fat. Each of them has such a stick.

(To *Susanne*) Imagine your son Matti is going to marry. We would go to the homestead of the girl and ask for her. We don't go in the morning. We will leave in the right time to reach her homestead in the evening. We will only enter the homestead after the cows have returned from grazing in the bush. Once the cattle have entered the homestead we also walk through the door. We don't take our headrest inside the house. We take our t-shirts off. We take off the cloth we have on our head. We only have a cloth around the waist and maybe around here. We sit in front of the entry of the *bara*...

Susanne (*explaining*): The Arbore have round houses and in front of each house there is a shaded place, which is a kind of second house where people sit during the day. It has a square shape, and it is called *bara*. So the men sit in front of this *bara*.

Kutsha: ...and then you say: 'How is it?' And then they reply: '*Badada*' [It's good]. Then you sit down. 'What did you bring us?' 'We came with our *koli* [the ritual staff]'... 'Whom do you like, who have you come for?'... 'It's the daughter of so and so.' 'But this man has different daughters. Is it the big one or the small one or the middle one?' If it is the eldest one, we say her name. 'In whose name have you come to ask for the girl?' We would say: 'We came in Matti's name, Maldo's son.' - 'Eeh. We have heard you now.' Then they give coffee to us, and we drink the coffee.

After we have finished the coffee they say: 'Good, now we have heard what you want. Come into the house.' But they don't offer us a cowhide. They don't give us a seat. We have to sit on the ground. 'Come in,' they say. But we don't go in. We return home and come back the next day. When we come again everything is repeated and they say 'How is it. It's good...' But this time the family says, 'The

boy you are asking for, the one who is asking for the girl, he is bad. We won't give our daughter to him. We don't like him. He doesn't look after the goats properly. He doesn't herd them properly. He doesn't work in the fields properly. He won't look after my daughter well, either. I won't give my daughter to him. Drink coffee and then go back home!

So we go home. But the next evening we come back again. 'We like your daughter. We won't let go. We want her.' Now it's the third time that we have come. 'Do you really like the girl?' 'Yes, we like the girl'.

All the people who belong to the homestead get together. 'Go home and come back again. Come again tomorrow evening. We will tell you if we give her to you or not.' And we leave again.

The next evening we come again. This evening everyone who belongs to the family has gathered; all the relatives have come. Maybe Matti has done something wrong in the past and maybe he has been whipped by the elders. Now all this will be mentioned. Maybe in former times he has had a quarrel with this girl he wants to marry now, or maybe when the river was very full he has refused to help her to cross the river. But now he wants to marry her. Maybe, he didn't help the mother of the girl to cross the river. 'Wasn't it you who didn't help the mother of the girl cross the river? It was you, wasn't it? How can you dare to come to our door and ask for our daughter? How can you dare to come here, after not helping the mother of this daughter to cross the river? How can you dare to come here? You just left her in the bush! Wasn't it you who didn't help us to help a cow, which had fallen down into a hole? Wasn't it you who didn't help us to relieve this cow, which belonged to the father of this girl? You didn't help the cow! You didn't help to fetch water! So how can you dare to come to this homestead again? Why do you come here after not having helped us? There are two things which you have done wrong! If you say, 'I like this girl and I want to marry her', bring one cow and drive it through her homestead's gateway. Otherwise we will not give her to you! Go back!'

Then the boy says: '*Dabbi inta ukidi.*' That means: 'I see. I did something wrong. I will bring what you demand. I will give you a cow.' 'That's good. Bring the cow.' Then the relatives talk to each other. 'Is it a male or a female cow that you

will bring us?’ ‘I will bring a female calf.’ ‘It is good but don’t bring us a cow. Just bring a goat and some coffee, because later you need the cow to give milk to my daughter. When she marries you, she will drink the milk of this cow. Just bring coffee and a male goat. We will slaughter it and eat it here. Don’t bring the cow. The coffee will be for the girl’s father; he will drink it. Now you have seen the girl, we have given her to you. Bring the fat.’

There were two people who brought these pieces of fat, weren’t there? These four pieces will be distributed among the girl’s father, the younger brother of the father, to the girl’s mother, and to the wife of the younger brother of the girl’s father. First, the father and then the mother of the girl will be given the fat. Then the younger brother of the father and his wife will be given the fat. One of the go-betweens gives the fat to the father and the mother and the other go-between gives the fat to the younger brother of the father and his wife. Then we sit down and together we call *barjo*. Then it is finished; then the girl will be given to Matti.

After the go-betweens have given the fat to the relatives of the girl they leave. They take the sticks, the *koli*, with them.

Now Matti will look for the things he was asked for; for the coffee and for the goat, for the honey and the tobacco. He collects everything. He will collect and collect and collect.

Then he says: ‘Now I will bring the *micere*, the whipping wand.’ There is no real whipping wand; it’s just a way of saying it. He will buy honey, a goat and tobacco. Matti will call one of the go-betweens again. He says: ‘I have collected everything. Go to the girl’s house. I found the *micere*. I brought the *micere*. Go and take it for me to the homestead.’

Again the go-between will go in the evening. First he has come to Matti’s homestead. Matti tell him: ‘Tomorrow evening, go there and bring these things to the homestead of the girl. I want the *micere* to be brought to her homestead.’ That’s what he tells the go-between. The next evening the go-between goes there. I, the go-between, will take the *koli* from his house again. Now I am the only go-between. Last time we were two. So I go and enter through the gateway. Again, I

sit down at the entry of the *bara*. ‘Good evening, I came with the *koli*. I came to bring the *micere*.’

I only brought the *koli*. The goat and the honey and the coffee are still in Matti’s homestead. I just come to say: ‘I’ve brought the *micere*,’ that means that everything is bought.

The go-between says that Matti has seen to everything that the girl’s family has demanded. ‘He bought everything. He has sent me.’ But then, again, the girl’s family will say, ‘That boy is not good! He never came to see our homestead! He didn’t see if we are well! He didn’t look at us! He didn’t look at our fields! He didn’t look at anything! Why did he not come? Tell me why he behaves like this!’ And the go-between says: ‘Maybe tomorrow he will do it. Maybe he was too shy to come.’

But then the father of the girl says, ‘It is good. I have no coffee now. I have tobacco, but I have no coffee. Bring me coffee. Bring me coffee tomorrow. The day after tomorrow, I want to get some water. Bring water!’

And then I go back and I tell this to Matti. ‘They have said: ‘You should bring the coffee.’

There is one special gourd in Arbore, which is used for buying coffee. And he says: ‘How much coffee shall I bring? One of these, or...?’ ‘They said: ‘Bring one of these full with coffee. Bring it tomorrow!’ So the next day the go-between will go and bring the coffee. Now he has the *koli* and the coffee.

I, as the go-between, go through the gateway. Now the relatives of the girl accept the coffee. I sit down and drink coffee. I say: ‘I have brought your coffee’. So the father of the girl says to his children or to his wife, ‘Bring water today.’ Now there is not much left to do anymore. There is just some coffee to be prepared with which they can call *barjo*.

The honey is in Matti’s homestead. They will make honey wine from it, maybe two pots full of honey wine, two big pots. Or maybe it’s only one, and they will just make one. Matti, the future husband, will make the honey wine in his mother’s house. Now also the husband’s relatives will come.

Tomorrow will be the *micere*. All the boy’s relatives will come. Everybody who has received this stick before, the *koli* before, all these men will come. Also his

mother's brother will come, as well as the people of his homestead, his close relatives, and his close neighbors.

The future husband invites all his relatives and his neighbors to his house where they will drink honey wine. First, there will be two pots of coffee. One is in the house and one is in the *bara*, in the shade. The neighbors will sit in the *bara* and the relatives will sit in the house. First, they will be given coffee. After they drank the coffee, the coffee bowls will be handed back.

Then two people who were sitting in the *bara* will be called into the house. They will serve the honey wine to everybody. Matti, the future husband, will be sitting inside the house. He won't be given anything yet.

After the coffee is drunk, tobacco is handed out. Two bowls full of tobacco. One is for the neighbors and one is for the relatives. The tobacco is distributed among everyone. Everyone takes some tobacco and puts it inside his clothes. They won't chew it immediately. There is also one gourd for the mother's brothers.

Then they will call *barjo*. Everybody is sitting. There is only one who will call *barjo*. The other ones respond saying: 'Ahh, ahh'. Then it's finished.

Then it is morning, isn't it? In the morning we call *barjo* differently. In the evening it's different.

After *barjo* has been called, two people will get up and serve honey wine to the people. We take big bowls and four or five people will share one bowl. First the father of the future husband will be given the *sherka*. Then there is one called *mull*, a *sherka*. This kind is only for the relatives, two *sherkas* for them. And one is for the neighbours. First, these people are served the honey wine. Only then will it be served to the other people, to the other elders. We don't count if it's little or much. But the first four are important. Then there is a bowl for the mother's brothers. That's a very big one, a different kind than the others.

Then we will drink the honey wine. When we have drunk it all we hand the *sherkas* back. And again *barjo* will be called.

There is a tree in Arbore called *med'er*, in Hamar it is called *dongo*. In Marle the name of the tree is *med'erte*. Four people cut small branches off this tree; they are chosen to bring branches of the *med'erte* tree. Each of the four gets some of the branches and brings them to the relatives of the girl. They don't give the branches

directly; instead they place them in the girl's relatives' *bara* or at the entrance of their house. They bring the branches to all of the girl's relatives, to all their houses. In front of each house they place one of these branches, that way they know that she is going to be married. This is what we call *micere*. They bring the *micere* to all the houses so that the relatives know that everything has been prepared for the wedding.

Then these four people return. They go back to the girl's house where they are asked: '*Na'ugall*', which means, 'Did you return well?' 'Everything is well.' they answer. Again, they will be given some honey wine. When they leave with the *micere*, their bowls will be kept well.

Then the future husband, Matti, takes four or five empty gourds. He stands up and holds the gourds in his hand. He already has put his sandals on. 'He has stood up now. Call *barjo* for him!' Then he takes the gourds and leaves the house. The others bless him while he is going out.

Matti goes to the cattle camp. He gives the gourds to different people in the cattle camp who are asked to put milk into the gourds. Matti stays in the cattle camp maybe for four days with the gourds to be filled. On the fifth day he returns from the cattle camp. He brings the full gourds with him. They are filled with milk now. Again, his relatives will come to his house, the neighbours and the relatives will come.

This time it is especially women who will come. The milk gourds are very big. All the milk will be poured into one single big gourd, all together. When the gourd is full, the remainder will be poured into a bowl. *Ante'* is the name for the gourd, a special gourd which is braided. This braided kind originally came from a Borana tradition. This is the one in which they pour the milk into. It's a very big one. They pour the milk inside. When the gourd is filled they pour the rest of the milk into a bowl.

In these containers they bring the milk to the homestead of the girl. One man and two women bring the milk. The man is the former go-between. I, as a go-between, bring the *koli* stick again. One of the women is a neighbour; the other is the wife of a relative of the husband. I'm the one who leads them to the girl's homestead.

We will go in the morning to bring the milk. The women of the girl's homestead wait for us in the morning. They all stand in front of the *bara*. We give the milk to these women. Then we sit, we drink coffee and leave again. The women of the girl's homestead will distribute the milk in the evening. Now it is their milk.

The next day we bring a female lamb to the girl's family. Now it's Matti's mother and me who bring this female lamb to the homestead of the girl. Again, I bring the *koli*. Matti's mother has the *micere*, like this one here or maybe even a longer kind (*pointing*). We make a *micere* from the wood of the *dongo* tree. Our ritual tree is the *dongo* tree, not the *baraza*. I am the one who brings the lamb. I give it to the family of the girl. They will receive the lamb at the entry of the *bara*.

Then they will address me, the go-between: 'Now that man of your homestead has become a real man. Before, he was simply talking empty words. Now the girl's mother has become his mother. Our girl's father has become his father.'

Then they prepare a *sherka* for him. Before, he had no *sherka* in the girl's homestead. They say: 'Now we have made a *sherka* for him. The *sherka* is from his mother-in-law. They also have made a milk container for him. The girl's mother has made the *sherka* and the milk container for him. The *doala* is filled with milk. He should leave his own homestead and drink this milk. The mother-in-law says: 'I have made this milk container for him. I've smoked it for him and I put milk in it. It's waiting. He should know that his milk container is waiting for him. He should come and see what I've made for him. I also have prepared a cow hide for him.'

Like that they speak to the go-between. Again, *barjo* will be called. Afterwards, they say to me, the go-between, 'He should collect things quickly. My daughter has grown up now. He should marry her. The water has come and the river is full. The sorghum will ripen soon. I will give my daughter girl to him.' Then I, the go-between, go and bring the news back to Matti.

This is what we call *shunkurr*. We call this stick *shunkurr*. We use for this ritual. 'Call the man with the *shunkurr*', means: 'Call the one with the stick.'

Now Matti will collect all these things, the honey and the coffee and the tobacco. He will bring all the things, because he and the girl are going to get married soon. Maybe it will take him five or six months to collect all these things.

Then he says: 'Now the marriage has come close.' Then I, the go-between, am called again. He says to me, 'I will marry now. Go to the homestead of my bride!' Again, I go with my stick. If I'm not around he can also ask someone else who has this stick. But if I am there, I will go. 'I will marry her. My honey is getting wet now. All my age mates have married. I want to marry now.' And the girl's family will say: 'But we haven't bought coffee and we haven't bought honey yet.' 'Why have you not bought all this before?' 'The husband of your daughter will bring everything. He has bought everything.' Then they say: 'Alright, it is good. You can go now. Come back again tomorrow.'

They bring four gourds of honey and one of coffee, or maybe two. If they are rich they will expect little. If her parents are poor they will take a lot. The rich will take little and the poor will take a lot from their future son-in-law, maybe two gourds of honey. 'Bring the *marts'o* [the giraffe hair necklace]!' They also want this. If you don't have it, you buy it and bring it. I also bring a lamb.

Now Matti will get prepared. Before was only herding the cattle. He was only looking for the things he needed to collect for his wife. After the lamb has been given he will get up. He will cut a *micere* like this from the *dongo* tree. His father or maybe his elder brother will give the *micere* to him. He will walk around with the *micere* now.

With the *micere* he will drive the lamb out of the cattle camp. Now he will get up. He will collect goats from his relatives and from his age mates. Maybe he has given a goat to someone before. Now he will get it back from his age mates and also from his relatives. He will give them to the relatives of his bride and to his wife. He will go again and again to bring goats, maybe alone, maybe with other people. Two people, not one, always two. The one who has the stick might ask children to help him to bring the goats, all together forty or sixty goats. Then they are counted. They also give goats to the bride's brothers, to her younger brothers and her elder brothers, maybe also to her cousins. They also give goats to them.

But the eldest son in the family will not be given a goat, only the younger ones. The younger ones will receive goats. And then it's finished.

After this a shade is built for the husband. It is the same kind as for the *ukuli*, the initiate, in Hamar. They say: 'Brew *parsi!*' Now the tobacco and honey will be accepted. It has not been given to them before; they were only talking about it. Now everything will be given. Again I act as go-between. We distribute the tobacco, the honey, and the coffee in the homestead. In Marle we say like this: '*Kaah.*' It means we have given all these things.

The next day the *bara*, the shade, will be built. All the husband's relatives will come. They bring the wood and build the *bara* for him; the women bring branches with leaves for the *bara*. Inside the shade *parsi*, sorghum beer, will be served to the helpers. Everything is made possible by this stick.

On the next day there is a ritual called *elmo*. I, the go-between, will bring one big sheep and two female lambs, which will be slaughtered for the mother of the girl. Again all this is done with the *shunkurr*.

When a man marries he will be given this stick. Some are given this stick before marriage. In case a man is the oldest son of a family and if he has only few relatives, the stick may be given to him before marriage. Otherwise, he will be given it after he has married and has fathered some children. It depends. Before a man owns his own *shunkurr* there are other people who make rituals for him.

Echi: Who gives the stick to a man?

Kutsha: His relatives give it to him.

Judith: I would like to know who the go-betweens are. Are they relatives or is this a kind of profession?

Kutsha: It's not the father. It is one of your relatives, but not the father and not the elder brother.

Judith: And do they get paid for doing it?

Kutsha: Yes, you have to pay them. You pay them with honey wine, they come and drink for two evenings and two days. The future husband has to give the wine.

Then the next day the real marriage begins. We bring three female calves and one male to the girl's homestead. We are asked, 'Why did you bring these calves?' 'These are the calves by which we buy your daughter.' The male calf is for the

mother's brother. After the cows are handed over they call *barjo*. All this is made possible with this stick.

Belaini: Does he now finally receive his bride?

(Everybody starts speaking and laughing)

Kutsha *(to the participants who have started speaking)*: If you don't listen until the end, later, there will be something missing and you will say, 'You have brought lies to us.' You should listen to everything that I have to say!

4.2. Marriage and Circumcision of the Bride

Kutsha: In the evening the future husband says: 'We have given everything, tomorrow we will marry!' That is what he says to the relatives in the village and to the mother's brothers and to the girls. He tells it to everyone.

The next day, in the early morning at cockcrow, he gets up. Lots of honey wine has been prepared in his house. Some is for his own relatives; some is for the mother's brothers, some for his age mates, for the relatives, and some for his in laws. There is a cloth, which is called *ruff*. It will be hung at the entrance of the *bara* in the morning. The elders who have a *shunkurr* will hang the cloth on the *bara*. It is two or three elders who put it there. Then they drink honey wine.

This day Matti will get married. He has brought four cows. There are four cows brought to his homestead. Then the girls come. They are the ones who will drive the cows to the wife's homestead. If one does not have four cows he may take three cows and one sheep. In the evening the girls will drive the cows to the wife's homestead. The husband's elder sister will also bring a female lamb.

They will drive the cows with sticks. Matti's age mates will also come. But at first the elder sister will depart with the lamb. Matti, the future husband, has put chalk on his face, some of the yellow kind. There are also strings which he binds around his head together with two ostrich feathers.

Tsasi: Like a *maz* [Hamar initiate].

Kutsha: He ties a big white feather onto his forehead. His hair is shaved now. It is similar to how it is done in Hamar. He also has a stick with him. And he has bells tied around his legs, and also some white pieces of leather on his legs.

He follows his elder sister to the homestead of his future wife. In front of the gateway he will stop. He stands on the right side of it, and three of his age mates stand on the left side. There they slaughter the cows they have brought. The blood of the first slaughtered cow is used to rub the arms of the people there and then they sit down.

Then the husband returns home. If his home is very far away he may also stay with a friend who lives close by. The meat of the cows is distributed among the people, it is not roasted. The bride has been circumcised by then.

(Everybody gets very excited and starts asking questions and talking to each other, as female genital circumcision is not practised among the Hamar, Banna, Bashada, Nyangatom and Maale)

Kutsha: After circumcision her legs are bound together. She cannot walk at that time.

(Laughter in the background)

Kutsha: With a long string her legs will be bound together. She cannot walk. Then the husband and his age mates come. Also all of his and of her relatives will come.

Joseph: For how long will they tie her legs together?

Kutsha: Until the wound has healed, until everything has healed. From time to time the strings will be taken off and she will be washed, then the stings are put on again. After two weeks maybe everything is healed.

(Loud laughter in the background)

Kutsha: Everything will be sewn together so the path of the *barjo*, the vagina, is closed. Later, when her husband sleeps with her for the first time she will cry.

On the day of the circumcision the relatives call *barjo* for the girl and say: 'Take her out of the house!' They bring her out of the house. She steps out of the house and walks very slowly. She walks into the cattle kraal. The relatives of the husband wait outside. Then they call the husband. On the day of circumcision she will leave her family's homestead and move to her husband's house. Her legs are bound together, so someone will hold her on the right and on the left side. She

walks very slowly. She comes back out of the kraal, through the gateway. Then she will be carried and brought to her husband's homestead.

Tina: So she is brought to her husband's homestead the day she is circumcised?

Susanne: Yes.

Kutsha: All this is done by way of this *shunkurr*. We need this stick to do all this. It does not matter if a man is old and wise and white. He needs this stick. A young man who has this stick he can do all this. An old man who has this stick can do all this.

A conflict can also be settled by way of the *shunkurr*. If you have this stick you can settle conflicts. You will say: 'Why have you done this? You have to pay this and this amount so this conflict can be settled.' Without this stick you cannot settle anything, you cannot take anything.

So, this stick, the *shunkurr*, does everything. You ask for a girl with this. The marriage talk is done with this. The shaving of the hair of a little child is done with this. It is very important for Arbore rituals. Without this you cannot do any rituals in Arbore.

That is what I had to say. That is why I brought it.

Day Two: Afternoon Session

5. *Koli* - Staff of the go-between (Hamar and Bashada)

Discussants: Gude (Bashada), Sago (Banna), Tsasi (Hamar), Shada (Hamar)

Susanne: We have about the staffs from Arbore and from Dassanetch. Now let us turn to the ritual staffs from Hamar. Gude has brought a staff. Tell us about it.

5.1. The usage of the *Koli* in Hamar marriage

Gude: You told us to bring something, which has a long tradition. This object belongs to the tradition of our grandfathers. There are many rituals connected to this staff. I think this kind of staff exists in all the different places.

We marry women with this stick. If you do not have a father anymore or an elder brother, someone else will pass this stick on to you. The one who brings the stick to you becomes like your father.

If you had a conflict with the family of the girl you want to marry, you can settle it+ with this stick. It is the stick of the go-between. You send the go-between to the family of your future wife. The family, the first thing they will ask of the new husband is a goat and a gourd full with honey. The next time the go-between comes to the girl's homestead, they will ask him for cows. They will ask for honey. When he has brought all these things they will say: 'Now marry the girl!'

Honey will be asked for the father of the girl and also for the elder brothers of the father of the girl. Maybe the girl is still very small at that point in time. When she has grown a little bit older, the go-between goes there again. The future husband says to the go-between: 'My wife has grown up now. Go and ask for her. I want to get her now. I want to marry her now.' The go-between goes with this stick, the *koli*, and goes to ask for her. And again, something will be asked from him, by the way of the go-between. And it will be given to the girl's family, more and more.

When everything has been given the father of the girl will say to the go-between: 'You gave me everything I wanted, but wait a little bit longer. I want to make coffee.' They say, 'I want to make coffee', but it actually means that they are going to make sorghum-beer.

When the sorghum-beer is prepared they will give a knotted string to the go-between. Each knot counts for one day: when there are seven knots, within seven days the girl will be given. They give the string to the go-between. The girl will call all her age-mates, all her friends. After the knotted string has been made, she will invite all her girlfriends. She invites all her age-mates. If her father and mother are still alive, they will be invited. If they are not alive anymore, the go-between and his wife and one more elder will be invited. They all come to her homestead. In the evening all the girls come, all the age-mates come. But they will not start to sing and clap their hands. Not before the go-between has come. The future father-in-law and the future mother-in-law come. Then when the go-between has arrived with this stick they will start singing and clapping their hands.

It is night time. They start singing and clapping their hands. They all are sitting and they start singing for the bride and the bride will start to cry, because the next morning, she will move to her husband's house. Then either the father-in-law or, if he is not alive anymore, the go-between will come and give a piece of cloth to her. Her mother-in-law will give her a *tirre*, a married women's headdress – this one with the cowrie-shells. In the following morning the mother will put it on the girl's head. All night there will be singing and sitting and clapping hands. The bride will cry and she will be given many things by her friends and by her relatives.

The next morning, when the sun rises, she has to leave. She walks through the gateway. All the age-mates of her father and all the age-mates of her mother, all the elders, they will have a *koli*, like this. They will hold them up, like he is holding it. She will walk through them, underneath these sticks. She will be blessed by them. First, the go-between goes through the gateway, then the mother-in-law, then the girl and then all her girlfriends, her age-mates follow. The elders with their sticks they stand on the right hand side. They bless and they bless all

who go through. The mother of the girl has prepared some *assile* (a red kind of powder made from grounded stone, which the women in Hamar use it to dye their hair. *Assile* is often mixed with butter and used as a cream) and when they have gone through the gateway the mother will go and put the red cream on the forehead of the men and on the necks of the girls. She takes the *koli*, which the go-between has brought before, and also rubs butter onto it. This is the ritual we do with this *koli*. This is one ritual, one way, how it is done when a girl goes to live with her husband. This is one way of taking home your bride. That is when you listen to your father's word and you do it like your father said.

But some men do not like to give their daughters to their future husband.

5.2 Stealing the Bride and Settling the Conflict with the *Koli*

Gude: The father just does not let her go, he just does not give her. So the future husband will steal her. He will wait for her in the bush and take her with him. He hides in the bush with her for some days and then takes her to his home. At first, the father of the girl will be very angry. Her elder brothers also will be very angry. Her mother will cry and then the man with the *koli*, the go-between, will take the *koli* and go to the family to settle the conflict. The father will say, 'I told you that I will make coffee and make the feast and that I would give my daughter to you! Why did you steal her?' The go-between will say: 'I will pay you something.' If the go-between has brought the stick the father will say: 'Bring me some honey!' So, the husband who stole the girl will look for honey and send it through the go-between. Maybe at first the father will not accept the *koli*, and will send the go-between away. If the father does not talk to the go-between, the go-between will go without saying something; silently he will go. Maybe two days later he will come again. If he sends him away again, the go-between will go away again without saying anything. Maybe after three days, he will come back with his *koli*. The go-between will say, 'Why do you send me away all the time? You should not do that! You should accept the *koli*. When you were young, why did you steal the mother of your daughter? Didn't you? Haven't you done it the same way? Haven't you

fathered this daughter, because you liked her mother so much that you stole her? If the father of your wife had talked badly about you, if he had been very angry at you, would you have fathered your daughter? Do not quarrel! Do not be angry!’ This is how the go-between will settle the conflict. Now the father will accept the payment, the conciliation.

Sago: He will accept the honey. He will say: ‘Good, now you brought me the honey. I have seen that you are rich. Bring me more honey! Bring me more goats! Before I said, ‘You are a poor man! That is why I did not want to give you my daughter, but now you have brought me honey. Bring me everything! I will become fat now.’ The conflict will be settled by the way of the *koli*.

Gude: This is our grandfather’s tradition. My father did it like that. Also my grandfather did it like that. Also my elder brother did it like that. I will do it the same way when I marry. Later my son will do it the same way. My hunting friend also did it like this. If you do not have a *koli*, it does not work out. It is just a piece of wood, but it is something big for us, something important for us. We finish our talking, we are finished with this.

5.3 Cursing the bride if the conflict is not settled

Sago: If I am the man who has married your daughter and he is my go-between, he brings the *koli* to settle the conflict. If you are the mother you will start crying. But maybe the father of the girl gets very angry and takes the stick and hits the go-between, ‘Go, away! Leave my homestead! Bring my daughter back!’... ‘But why do you hit me? I am not the relative of your son-in-law! I am just a stranger who became his go-between. Why do you hit me? Why did you hit me?’ The go-between then says to the father, ‘I am your age-mate and so I became the go-between of her husband, because we are age-mates. Your daughter is like my daughter. If you whip me, if you do not accept me as a go-between, who will now become a go-between for you?’ So the father says, ‘But do not bring the *koli* to me. I do not want to see you anymore.’ He sends the go-between away.

If the go-between gets angry says, 'You whipped me. Nobody else will bring a *koli* for your daughter anymore! Nobody will be her go-between anymore.' He gets angry and breaks the stick. By doing this he curses the girl and she will not bare any children. If she has children they will die. If the husband of the girl looks for another go-between and says, 'Please, you go to the father's homestead and settle this conflict,' the man will say, 'No, the last go-between, he was whipped. I will not go.' So nobody else will go for him. The community, the men of the community, they will say, 'Oh, the *koli* of this girl has become bad'.

Gude, Sago, Shada: So the girl will not have children or all her children will die.

Gude, Tsasi: This curse concerns the *koli* of all the daughters of this man. Now they all have become bad. Nobody will want to marry any of his daughters anymore.

Sago: That is the talk about this stick.

5.4 The *Binyere* is made for the bride

Gude: There is another kind of *koli*. It belongs to the bride. When the bride goes to live with her husband, she is called *uta*.

Sago: When you become a bride, an *uta*, your hair will be shaved.

The future husband asks a boy who belongs to his moiety to make the *koli*. But it must be a boy who has not yet been initiated, someone who has not leaped over the cattle.

(Discussion between) Sago, Tsasi, Gude: The husband goes to an elder and says: 'Give me your son! Your son should make the *koli* for me.'

Sago: His son will give a stick like this to the bride. The bride is in the house. The husband and the boy will get up very early in the morning. The mother-in-law tells the bride to make coffee in the morning. The husband and the boy go to a *baraza*-tree and the husband shows the boy a nice branch, one that is very straight, one that is not bended. The boy cuts it and brings the stick to the bride. The husband goes first and he follows. Then the family of the bride says, 'You! Go out. The people have come. Go out and get your children!' So, they, the husband and the

boy, bring the *koli* and a *micere* (a whipping wand), both are made from the same tree.

(Discussion between the Hamar): They bring two sticks like this and one *micere*. One of the sticks resembles a girl and one a boy. The one that represents the boy will receive the name of the boy who brought the sticks.

Sago, Gude: And he says, 'Oh, I will not give the name to her child. She is my oldest sister. I will whip her!' The husband says, 'You do what you want. If you want, you give your name. If you want, you can whip her. Do as you like.' And the bride she goes out to take a little baby from the neighbourhood and carries it with her. She goes to the boy, who is approaching...

Sago, (with additions from the others): And the boy whips her. He starts whipping her. But she has a baby in her arms and cries, 'Do not whip me!' She holds the child in front of her face. She uses the child like a shield. Then she approaches and grabs the stick and the whipping wand and puts them into the house.

Before, she has laid out a cowhide in the cattle-kraal. The husband had bought two *dik-dik* (antelope) skins, one male and one female skin. The sisters of the husband have prepared the *dik-dik* skins so the leather becomes soft. There are some specialists who can make the *binyere*. *Binyere* is the adornment, which married women wear around their neck. They have called someone who is a specialist, who knows how to make the *binyere*. There are some elders who have been drinking coffee and a specialist who makes the *binyere*. Then these sticks and the whipping wand are laid onto the bride's lap. The husband sits here and the bride sits there. (demonstrating how it done)

The boy who has cut the sticks has also brought an arrow, which is usually used for taking blood from the cows. He pretends to shoot the skin of the *dik-dik* and he makes a noise...with the arrow and the bow. He takes the arrow and he does like he did before...He says, 'I cut the umbilicus!' He says: 'Now she has born children. I cut this off the child.' Then he lays down the arrow and hands the sticks, which represent the children to the elders. Then the bark is peeled off the sticks. The stick, which represents the girl will have some beads bound around on one end and a golden ring around the other end. These are the children. Then

the *binyere* is made. The specialist will make it. He will make a *binyere*. It is put around the neck of the bride.

Then the girl's mother and father will be called. The father of the husband and the mother of the husband and the brothers of the father's husband are called because now they have to give something. They have this *sherka*. When they cut the *binyere* there are some small left over pieces of the skin, these pieces will be put into the *sherka*. And they give this to the husband. They also put butter inside the *sherka*. This is the bride, this is her father-in-law (*again showing how it is done*) and together they hold this bowl. Then the father-in-law says, 'I have given you a goat. You are my *bel* (*my bond-friend*).' He takes some of the butter and rubs it here. Then the father-in-law goes to the mother-in-law.

They demonstrate how it is done.

Gude: So, I am the mother-in-law, but our women they do not know anything about goats. They just grind the flour. So, the mother-in-law says to the father-in-law, 'What kind of goat shall I give? I do not have goats!'... 'Give this and this goat.' He will say.

Loud laughter.

Gude: Then she says: 'Good. I give this goat (*the one which her husband said*). It shall bear lots of kids for you.'

Sago: All these rituals are made by this *koli*. These are the rituals. In the morning she takes the *assile* and the butter and rubs it onto the stick. Yesterday we have given her the goats. When the mother-and father-in-law have given the goats, the next day they will go and ask the mother's brother, the husband's mother's brother, for a goat. And he will give a cow. His wife will give a goat. Maybe there is another mother's brother, and he will give a goat too. If he does not have a cow he will give a goat. All of them will give goats and cows. They give cattle to them, because the couple does not own any themselves. Before they get married they did not collect any cattle. They did not have any cattle. But with this stick they will collect goats and cattle and everything from everybody. They will take all this cattle and bring them to the husband's homestead. Before he did not have any cows. Just like she (*the mother-in-law*) asked for goats earlier, from the father-in-law, the bride now will ask cattle from the mother's brothers and from everybody.

It is this stick, which helps you to marry and to collect cattle from your relatives and to built up your own homestead. The bride, after she has given birth to this stick, will give birth to her real children.

Sago: When she has given birth to her first child she will place the sticks in the house of the mother-in-law. Now she will take her newborn child with her. She will go to the relatives who she has not gone to before to ask for cattle. Now she will take her child with her and ask for cattle.

Nakwa: When you have given birth you do not take the *koli* anymore. You take your child with you instead.

Gude: That is the ritual connected to our *koli*. Shall we talk more about the bride's rituals? But everything connected to the *koli* is said.

All: No, lets go on to the next staff. The *parko*.

(Everybody starts talking)

6. Parko - ritual staff of the parko

Discussants: Belaini (Bashada), Gude (Bashada), Sago (Banna), Tsasi (Hamar)

6.1. Parko and Bitta - ritual offices in Hamar, Banna and Bashada

Belaini: This is also an important staff, which we use for rituals. The rituals connected to this stick belong to our family, to our ancestors. To the family of the *parko*, to my family. In Hamar and Bashada you have the *bitta* [lit. 'the first', highest ritual office] and the *parko*. They are two very important ritual people. The *parko* is the one who makes the *bitta*, who initiates the *bitta* to be a *bitta*. This is staff which I brought is the staff of the *parko*.

Susanne: Belaini, brought this because his father is the *parko* of Bashada and of Hamar. He is the only *parko* left. Before there were several, but now he is the only one. As Belaini is the eldest son, he will inherit his father's position later and become the *parko* who does the rituals.

Belaini: I brought this because you said bring something ritually meaningful to the Museum. This is why I brought this. With this stick we encircle our country. Now this one is made from wood, but the real *parko*-staff is made from metal. The real one is made from iron and it has a golden ring on top.

When the new *bitta* will be initiated, the *parko* will lead him round the borders of the country. He will show him the border of our country, which will belong to him. He will encircle the country on the borders, walking. He will walk along the border of our country. Only after the future *bitta* has encircled...

Gude and Sago (*interrupting*): Now there is a *bitta* in Bashada. But when he dies, the eldest son of the *bitta* will become the new *bitta*. But first Belaini, or if his father Nakwa is still alive, Nakwa will walk around the borders of the country. They will take a bull with them and walk around the border. They will not enter into Hamar or Banna, just around the Bashada-border. If the bull pees or shits on the way they will pick it up and put the pee or the shit into an *onkolo*, like this one here, into a calabash. The excrements will not be left on the ground. When they come back to

the spot where they started, when they have encircled it, they go back to the homestead and slaughter the bull. This is done when the new *bitta* is going to become a *bitta*. It is done in the homestead of the future *bitta*. A male sheep will also be slaughtered and *barjo* will be called. Milk has been brought from all the homesteads to the *bitta's* homestead. The new *bitta* will call *barjo*. The community has also brought honey and sheep, they brought all these things.

Belaini: They slaughter the sheep. They take a *karko*, which is a nice smelling grass and then the *parko* will lead the new *bitta* through the gateway.

Sago: First the *parko* will be given honey and the milk-containers. They will be given to the *parko* first and then to the *bitta*. There are some *bittas* who do not have a *parko* anymore, so if there is no *parko* they will get the milk-containers first. Now in Hamar and in Banna there are *bittas* who do not have a *parko* anymore, only in Bashada. So, there is only one *parko* now. He lives in Bashada, but the *bitta* who belongs to him lives in Banna. There is a piece, a certain piece of wood, like a spoon, which is used to take the honey out of the beehives in the bush. This piece of wood, the *karko* and *gali*, the soft plant, these three things are taken. A sheep with a big, fat tail will be slaughtered. It is a certain type of sheep. The fat is cut into many small pieces and every man that has come will take a small piece of this fat and put it into the *gali*-leaves and take these three things, the *gali*-leaf, the smelling grass and the piece of wood and take it back to his own homestead.

Then some elders go into the house of the new *bitta*. The ritual is finished, but only now they enter. They have brewed some special honey-wine and they will drink it together. First, the *parko* will drink and then the *bitta* and then the other elders and they will call *barjo*. They bless with the honey-wine. They call *barjo*. Calling *barjo* they say: 'Our new *bitta*, when he calls bees, they will be sure to come and produce lots of honey for us! The cattle shall bear many calves! The goats shall have many kids! All people shall have many children!' They call *barjo* like this. After they have called *barjo* they will go back home. And the *parko* also returns to his homestead.

6.2. Seeking refuge at the *Parko*'s or *Bitta*'s homestead

Sago: If someone has had a fight with someone and killed him, maybe he shot him with a gun, either he will run to the homestead of the *parko* or, if he does not go there, he will go to the homestead of a *bitta*. The one who has killed someone, he will go to the *parko*'s homestead and the *parko* will talk to the elders. Probably the relatives of the killed person will come and they will seek revenge. But when they hear that the killer has entered the *parko*'s homestead, they will not kill him. It is like refuge for him. If he, the murderer, enters a *bitta*'s or a *parko*'s homestead, nobody is allowed to kill him. Nobody may touch him. They must try to settle the conflict by a ritual. When there is a conflict-settling ritual, a sheep will be slaughtered.

Gude: The family of the killer will be called. The family of the murderer will come and the relatives of the deceased person will come to the *parko*'s homestead. They slaughter a sheep and they open the stomach. The inside of the stomach consists of half-digested grass, which is called *soko*. It has an important meaning in rituals. You pour the *soko* on the ground.

Sago: The family of the one who has killed the other one will sit next to the *parko*. And the family of the deceased will sit on the opposite side. The gateway of the *parko* is in the middle. The family of the one who has been killed brings a *sherka* with sorghum. The other family also brings some sorghum. Before, the family of the killer and the family of the person killed did not eat together. Because of the conflict it is taboo for them. But now they both bring sorghum. They mix the sorghum of this homestead with the one of the other homestead. They also have brought some sand from a dry riverbed. They have brought sand from a river from where they live, and the other party also brought sand. All this is mixed in one bowl. They also bring a kind of grass, which is called *zarsi*. They bring all this items and put them inside the *sherka*.

Discussion (Gude, Tsasi and others explain to Susanne): If he is the killer and the other is the elder brother or the younger brother of the one who has been killed, they will both be brought together. They will be told, 'You eat from this sorghum!'

Sago: He will eat one piece of sorghum and spit on his chest. He also eats a piece of liver and he says: 'You eat some of the sorghum!' So, he will eat it and spit. That is before the sheep has been slaughtered. Then he will bring a sheep and it will be slaughtered. They open the stomach, take out the liver, take out the stomach and pour the *soko*, which I was talking about before, on the ground. They take the liver and cut it into small pieces. Then the *parko* will hold his staff, this one the *parko*-staff, between these two people. He will pick up a piece of the liver and tell the killer and the brother of the killed one, 'Take some of this liver and eat it!' And he spits like they did before with the sorghum. Also, before, when they were eating the sorghum the stick was held by the *parko* like that. Like this the *parko* has settled the conflict.

Gude: He has made the new *bitta*, which settled the conflict. The killer now has to pay some compensation. He has to slaughter a cow for the community, for all the men of the community. When the community, when the elders have eaten the cow they will leave.

Susanne: But do they have to pay anything like goats or cows to the family of the one who has been killed?

Gude, Sago: No. Maybe if the family is of the other moiety (*meaning you can marry each other*). Maybe they will give a girl to them to be married by them.

6.3. Moving the Stars with the *Parko*-Staff

Belaini: There is one more thing, which is done by the *parko*. The *parko* moves the stars. When the stars move to a certain direction in the sky it means that it will become very hot. The elders of the community, they will come to the *parko*'s homestead and they will say: 'The stars have moved to a position, which tells us that the sun will become very hot. Move them back to their old route!' So before sunrise, the *parko* will get up and take his staff and lead the stars back to their right position. It is still nighttime. Nobody sees it. If the stars move to the position where the sun becomes very hot, it means there will be a drought. No sorghum will ripen and the

fields will dry out. So that is why he does it. If they go to the place where the rain falls, it will rain a lot. This is the ritual of the *parko*.

Susanne: Has Nakwa, the *parko* from Bashada, my host-father, has he done it while I was there? Why did I not see it?’

Belaini: No, when you were there there was always nice rain.

People start talking.

Susanne: Will he do it with this stick or with the real metal stick?

Belaini: No, he will do it with this one, because the metal stick, it may not leave the place where it is. It is in Banna, where it originally came from. But we can use this one for the rituals too. The metal *parko*-staff has to stay in *Banna* in a house, which is near to the *bitta*'s house.

Gude: The stick is not kept in a real house; it is kept in a tree. Not far from the *bitta*'s house. It is hidden in the bush, in a tree. Nobody can see it. In case someone would see it and take it out, this person would die. If someone touches it, a snake maybe will bite him and kill him. It is also taboo to hold the stick – the metal one – like this, because if you walk with it like this with this fork pointing towards you, you will die. It is like the evil eye.

Sago: The *parko* will take it in the evening and make the ritual the next morning. If he stands at the ritual gateway with his *parko*-stick, then the people who have done something wrong – maybe they killed someone in former times or they slept with a relative or something – may not pass through the gateway.

Belaini: Only the ones who know, ‘From the day I was born I have not done anything wrong. I have not stolen anything. I have not done anything wrong.’ Only these ones will be allowed to pass through the gateway.

Sago/ Shada: If you have done something wrong and you still walk through the gateway you will start to vomit or you will have diarrhoea or something. On the spot that will happen!

Gude: Or your nose starts to bleed!

Sago: That is true! All these people here have seen it happen!

Laughter: This is the ritual of the *parko*-stick.

Laughter again. Participants discuss which object should be presented next.

Day three – Morning session

7. *Nidjeroi* – Dance Bells (Nyangatom)

7.1. The usage of *nidjeroi* in dance and rituals in Nyangatom and among other groups

Discussants: Joseph (Nyangatom), Gude (Bashada), Bashiri (Bashada), Sago (Banne), Walle (Banna), Ateme (Maale), Kutsha (Arbore)

Joseph (*speaking in Amharic, translated into Hamar by Walle and into English by Susanne*): The name of these bells in Nyangatom language is *nidjeroi*. This is the way we attach them to our leg (*demonstrating where they are bound*). If you have two strings with bells, you put them onto both legs. We also wear them on the arms. We dance with them. There is a special dance for *nidjeroi* (*Joseph sings*). That's the song we sing when we wear these bells.

The bells are made of metal pieces and the string with which you tie it is made from leather. We usually wear four *nidjeroi* at a time, two on the arms and two on the legs.

When the husband brings cows to his wife's family, he will tie the *nidjeroi* around his arms and legs and then dance while he is driving the cattle out of his cattle camp.

When a baby is born and it does not start to cry after it has been born, we take the bells and shake them. When the baby hears the sound of the bells it will start to cry.

Several Hamar men: We also do that, but we do not use the *woworra* [the Hamar term for *nidjeroi*], we just clap our hands very loudly so that the newborn baby starts to cry. We also use cowbells and ring them.

Joseph: We do not have cowbells so we use these kinds. We also wear the *nidjeroi* simply to look beautiful, as adornment.

The *nidjeroi* are also worn when you have killed an enemy.

Susanne: Is that so only in Nyangatom or also in Hamar?

All: That is everywhere. In Hamar, in Arbore, in Nyangatom, everybody does it like this. You wear them when you have killed an enemy. You also wear them when you have killed a buffalo for example.

Susanne: I have seen someone in Bashada who has killed a buffalo but I didn't see him dancing with the *worworra*.

Gude: Maybe he simply decided not to do it. But we do have this ritual. We wear the *worworra*.

When you have killed an enemy, first you slaughter a white goat, and you cut leather strings like these ones and tie them around your head, around your elbows, a big one around your arm. You do not use chalk on your face as decoration, you only wear these white leather strings. You also put a white ostrich feather on your head. Maybe, if there are many people who have killed an enemy, maybe ten or so, they form a group like the *maz* [initiates who have leapt over the cattle but have not married yet]. They walk around together looking for the big dances in the area and they take part dressed up like this. But let Joseph have the word again.

Joseph: In this photo I brought you can see people who have killed someone. They have killed an enemy. They will be strapping these bells around their legs now. This photo was taken in former times, when the Dassanetch and the Nyangatom were killing each other; many people were killed at that time.

Not only the Nyangatom wear these *nidjeroi*, all the people in South Omo use them. In Hamar, Bashada and Banna they call it *worworra*, in Arbore they say *worrai*, in Maale they call it *jidjo*.

Bashiri: But the ones in Maale are smaller.

Joseph: The Galeba [Dassanetch] call them *yoyora*. The Ari call them *jidche*. They have different names. This is what I had to say about it. If you have anything to ask, ask!

Gude: There is nothing to say. We know the same things.

Tina: I would like to ask something. Where do they get the metal for the bells from and who makes the bells? Where do you buy them? Are they passed on in the family?

Sago: First they appeared among the Bume [Nyangatom]. From Bume they came to Maale country. The Maale blacksmiths make smaller ones. And from Maale they came to Ari, from Ari they came to Hamar, and then from Hamar to Arbore.

About the Galeba [Dassanetch] I'm not sure. Maybe the Galeba took them from the Bume. We don't know. The *worworra* and the bells for the cows have first appeared among the Bume. First they were forged there. The *worworra* are new in our country, before we had no *worworra*.

Gude: Tina, you asked where a person who has killed someone gets these bells from. Some people simply own them; they buy them and then keep them in their house. If you have them, and for example there is an initiation ceremony, girls and women will come and borrow them from you. After they have danced with the bells on, they will give them back to you, to the owner.

Someone who has killed an enemy also looks for someone who has a *worworra* and borrows it from him. He might walk around dressed up and go to the dances wearing the *worworra* for five months. After that time he will give the bells back to the owner.

When you have killed someone and walk around to go to all these dances, you ask your friends and your age-mates for gifts, maybe for a t-shirt or for beads or something like that. You do as an initiate does. This is called *itshi*. You collect these things for several months and keep them. When you finally give the bells back to the owner you will pay him by giving him nice beads or a nice t-shirt, one of the things you have collected.

Not everybody buys these bells. Only some people do and store them in their houses. You do not buy them thinking 'Oh, I will kill an enemy and then I will wear them!' You just buy them to wear them at the dances. Most of us borrow them from others. This is our tradition. I don't know if it is the same in Nyangatom.

Joseph: It's more or less the same. If you ask me who forges them and where you can get them from...There is nobody who produces metal in our country. So we take old pieces of metal, maybe of a broken car or something, and we have them made from this metal by a blacksmith. There are people in our country, blacksmiths, who produce the *nidjeroi*. Mostly they are made for dancing.

The other people in South Omo have seen that and say: 'We want to dance like the Nyangatom!'

Walle (*commenting*): The Nyangatom are the fathers of the dance!

Joseph: The best dancers are the Nyangatom, aren't they? Don't you say like that? Also you sing the songs of the Nyangatom when you dance in Hamar and in Dassanetch, don't you?

Sago: Yes it's true!

Joseph: Just like the best dancers came from Nyangatom and moved on to the other groups in South Omo, these *nidjeroi* came from Nyangatom and moved to the other groups.

Also the names for the *errawak*, for the favourite oxen, in Hamar, come from Nyangatom. They use Nyangatom names. When you've killed an enemy, you also will receive a special name. The killer gets a name which is also in Nyangatom language. In Dassanetch they also give Nyangatom names.

There are people, blacksmiths, who make these bells in Nyangatom and sell them. If I have them, I use them for dancing. When I've killed a buffalo or other big game, I use them too. I can also borrow them from friends or relatives. It's the same what you [Gude] have said about Hamar and Bashada.

7.2 Gender specific usage of the bells among the Maale, Hamar and Arbore

Ateme: I want to ask one thing. In Maale men are not allowed to wear these bells, only women use them. That's a difference. In Hamar, will women and men wear them equally?

Bashiri: When there is an initiate leaping over the cattle also women will wear them. In Nyangatom, if a girl marries, her relatives will come and accept the bride price by putting on these *worworra*. The father and his wife, they will come to ask for cattle of the future husband of the girl. Men and women equally both will wear these bells in Hamar and in Nyangatom.

Joseph: There are two different kinds of bells. There are big ones like the ones I brought and there are also small ones.

Kutsha: In Maale do the women wear the *worworra* only for dancing, or also for rituals?

Ateme: For marriage and for dancing. They will wear them when they get married and the girls wear them for dancing.

Kutsha: We also have these bells in Arbore. We buy them from the Hamar because there are no blacksmiths in Arbore. But in Arbore only men will use them. It's taboo for women to wear them.

They're put on when a man marries, when he has killed an enemy, or when he has killed a buffalo or other big game. Only the husband will wear them, only one string of bells on one leg, not many. When there is a dance, the men will put them on both legs. Also, on the day when a new house is built the husband will put them on. That's how we use them in Arbore.

Ateme: In Maale children wear the bells on their arms. Maale women have similar bells, but they are very small and the women sew them onto their leather skirts.

Joseph: The bells I brought I will leave in the museum so that everybody can see them.

8. *Goala* –Lyre (Banna)

8.1. The use of the *goala* during initiation in Banna/Hamar and Bashada

Discussants: Maldo (Banna), Shada (Hamar), Tsasi (Hamar), Bashiri (Bashada), Kutsha (Arbore), Kollo (Bashada), Gude (Bashada), Sago (Banna), Joseph (Nyangatom), Ateeme (Maale), Balaini (Bashada)

Maldo: Once an *ukuli*, an initiate, knows how many days it will be to his final initiation rite, the leap over the cattle, he makes a knotted string, or otherwise the *maz* make the string for him...

If you leap over the cattle tomorrow, you will look for someone to give you a *goala* today. The name of this instrument I brought is *goala*. You, as an initiate have to look for someone who gives you a *goala*. You need it for your initiation [on the day of the initiation]. The *maz* come to a place where they paint their faces with a special kind of chalk. They paint their faces in different colours. You, the initiate, will have prepared everything for them and while they are painting their faces, they are offered the different kinds of chalk.

After they have painted their faces the *maz* will whip the girls. Then, all people go to the *bara*, it's a big shade made from branches under which everybody sits. All guests will sit and drink sorghum beer, *parsi*, and coffee under the *bara*. Everybody goes there and drinks coffee.

The *goala* is waiting for the *maz* on the right side of the *bara*. The *ukuli*, the initiate, has ritual assistants. One of these assistants is the *shia*, the washer. He is the one who helps the initiate with everything before the leap over the cattle. It's a boy who is not initiated yet. This boy helps him with all these things. The *shia* has brought the *goala* to the *bara*, to the shade, and put it in the right place. There the *goala* is waiting for the *maz*. If the *goala* is not in the right place when the *maz* come to drink coffee, if they see it's not there, they will leave again. They will leave. They will not do the rituals for you, the initiate. If the *goala* is not in the right place, they say it's your *d'abbi*; that means that you have done something wrong. You will have to pay them something.

You will have to search for the *maz* and make them return. The elders will have to beg them, 'Please, please come back! Come back to the *bara*! Finish the ritual!' Then the *maz* say to the initiate, 'You are our *d'abbi*! You have to pay us something!' Then you know. Maybe you have to give a goat; maybe you have to give a big pot of honey. You bring these things to the *maz* and then look for someone who gives you a *goala*.

Shada: At first they drink coffee. Then the ritual goes on and the initiate will leap over the cattle. After he has leapt over the cattle they will all come back to the shade (*bara*). It's evening now. The sun is going setting already.

Tsasi: There is another ritual assistant called *mansange*. He is the one who holds the initiate.

Tsasi and Shada (*at the same time acting as initiate and ritual assistant*):

The one who has leapt over the cattle, the *ukuli*, will take the *goala*. He gives the *goala* to his *mansange*. The *mansange* is his ritual assistant; he is also called 'the initiate's mother'. Behind the ritual mother sits another *maz*, who holds her. The ritual mother is the one who holds the *goala*.

It's done like this, for four times. This all happens while they are sitting under the shade. After this is finished the *maz* will drink coffee. Now the *ukuli* hands a *sherka* to his 'mother'. With the right hand the other *maz* will take the *sherka*, turn it around and behind his back he will take another one. The *ukuli* hands another *sherka* to the 'mother'. The other *mansange* is still holding her. The *maz* who sits behind the 'mother' is called *kedama*. It's the one who helps the 'mother' to receive the *goala* and the *sherka*. Now they will drink coffee again.

When the coffee is finished the mother will pick up the *goala* and play. After the 'mother' has done this for four times, all the *maz* are allowed to play on the *goala*. The ones who know how to do it will play. They may only play it in the night, not during the day. Only *maz* may play it, for a *donza* [married man] it is taboo.

Shada/ Tsasi: If we sing these songs now, it's taboo. We are *donzas* now, we leapt over the cattle. We are not allowed to play these songs anymore, so we only play a little bit to show you.

Maldo: The songs the *maz* sing at night are about the girls who have been whipped by them. They sing, 'Oh, this one has been whipped. My sister has been whipped five

or six times for me when I was leaping over the cattle!’ They sing about the girls and about the cows they leaped over.

Bashiri: About the girls who have been whipped maybe ten times when their brother was initiated, the *maz* will sing a lot. They will praise these girls. About the ones who have only been whipped twice, they won’t sing about.

There are also girls who are afraid of being whipped by the *maz*. The *maz* will also sing about them: ‘This one was afraid! She didn’t want to get whipped.’ That’s what the *maz* sing about in their songs.

Kutsha: Where does the *ukuli* get the *goala* from?

Kolle: It does not belong to him. It is not his own. You, as an initiate, will borrow it from someone and give it back afterwards. After you have used it for the ritual you bring it back. If the *goala* is not in the *bara*, the *ukuli* will not leap over the cattle. The *maz* will just leave.

Gude: But if the *maz* run away, the *donzas*, the elders, will stop them. If you have forgotten to take the *goala* out of the house and place it under the shade, you have to pay compensation. So this is something the *ukuli* is afraid of. Very early he will place the *goala* under the *bara* because he is afraid that the *maz* will run away. There are four elders who take care of everything that concerns the *maz*: they look for a nice place in the bush where the *maz* can sit and paint their faces and they prepare everything nicely. They make sure that the *goala* is put in the right place.

Susanne: What is the *goala* made of?

Kolle/Gude: It’s made from turtle-shell. The turtle is cut open by an axe. It is prepared similarly to the shape of a *sherka*. Then you put hog skin on top of it, it could also be cow skin. There are little stones inside.

Whenever a *maz* plays the *goala*, after he has finished playing he will pass it on to the next *maz*, so he can play. While passing it on he shakes the *goala*. The stones inside the instrument make a noise that can be heard. It is just a tradition; there is no special meaning to the stones.

Shada: Some *maz* don’t know how to play the *goala*. When they are given the *goala*, they will simply shake it and then pass it on to the next one. They don’t play. They simply shake it so that you can hear the rattling stones.

Susanne: Are there *goalas* in Nyangatom?’

Shada: No, in Nyangatom they don't leap over the cattle. But *goalas* also exists in Ari and in Konso. There they only use them for playing songs and dancing.

Susanne: Does the *goalas* exist in Kara? The Kara do leap over the cattle.

Shada: No, I think there are no *maz* in Kara.

(Discussion between the Hamar about the question of whether the maz exists in Kara or not, and who else might take their role to initiate the ukuli)

Tsasi: In Kara, instead of playing the *goalas*, they drum on milk containers. It is like the *arsis* ritual in Bashada. When they leap in the night, they also drum on the milk containers. That's what they do in Kara.

Tina: So, do you only play when an initiate is going to leap over the cattle, or do you also play just for yourself, for entertainment?

Gude: Some people who like to play just play.

Tina: The songs you play, do you learn them from the other *maz*, or do you learn them by yourself? Are they traditional songs?

Susanne: They sing about their sisters. It is always the same song pattern.

Sago: When Maldo went to Germany, he played the *goalas* and sang about his relatives and the people he was thinking about. We make our songs like that. We don't play the songs of the *maz*. There are people who just know how to play and they simply play.

Maldo: You can play all kinds of songs, for example, the ones which are sung during the night dances. Also, the *kaud'e*, the girl's dances and the *purra*, the songs about the favourite oxen; you can play everything. There are also songs from Ari, which we know in Banna and Bashada, we can play these on the *goalas*. I play all songs that I like on the *goalas*. I simply play what I like.

Susanne: Maybe Maldo can play some in the evening.

Some Hamar: There exist only few people who know how to play the *goalas*. Maldo knows how to play it. All the other people here, they don't know!

8.2. Flutes and lyres in Nyangatom and Maale

Joseph: In Nyangatom we do not have this kind of instrument. But we have flutes, *woissas* [Hamar term]. We play the flute during the night. Only few people play it during the day. When it is played at night, the girls are called by its sound. By way of the music they call the girls to come.

Sago: That's what we do in Hamar and Bashada also. It's the same in our place. When you play the flutes you flirt with the girls.

Ateme: In Maale only girls are allowed to play flutes. Our flutes are only played by girls. The girls sit on the high stands in the fields and call the boys by playing the flutes. If they don't have flutes the girls sing nice songs addressing the boys.

I want to ask one more thing about the *goala*. In Maale we also have lyres. When one of your relatives dies, you may not touch the *goala* for a certain period of time. Maybe for six months you may not touch the *goala*. Usually everyone is allowed to play the *goala*, but if someone from your family has died the lyre becomes taboo for his relatives. Do you also have this taboo?

Gude: In Hamar it is also taboo to touch the *goala* when someone in your family has died. In that case you may not play the *goala*. You also wouldn't wear nice beads and clothes if someone has died. It's taboo.

Susanne: When you are an initiate and one of your relatives dies, will you be allowed to touch the *goala*, to place it in the right place?

Shada: Yes, you may do that. As a *maz*, if one of your relatives dies you don't go to the funeral. When the funeral is over there is another little ritual. The bark of a *dongo* tree branch is tied onto your arm. You tie it around your ankles and your wrists. Then, when you, as a *maz*, go back to the other *maz* you take these pieces of bark off again. You throw them away and you say: '*Njarsh!*' – 'may you get lost!' And then you can go and join the other *maz* again. Otherwise the *maz* will run away from you. Having performed this ritual, you have become *charangi* again, you've become pure. That's it.

9. *Micere* – The Whipping Wand

9.1 Whipping as a means of social control in Hamar, Banna and Bashada

Discussants: Sago (Banna), Gude (Bashada), Bashiri (Bashada), Belaini (Bashada), Kolle (Bashada), Walle (Banna), Shada (Hamar)

Sago: I brought this *micere*, this whipping wand. There are two or three rituals connected to it. Among the Amhara people, the way of punishing someone who has done something wrong is to put him into prison.

In Hamar you have your senior brothers. Those who sit here are my seniors. If I insult these elders, if I insult my senior brothers, they will get up and whip me. If I don't herd the cattle properly, if I just go to the dances they will whip me with this *micere*. Therefore, I listen to the words of my elder brothers. This is one ritual connected to the *micere*.

I also may use the *micere* when I collect cattle. I take a goat, a female goat which has not given birth to kids yet, with me. I go to someone whose bond friend I want to become. I bring him this goat. The owner of the cow calls me over to the gateway of the cattle camp. He brings two *miceres*. One whipping one he hands over to me, the other one he places on top of the gateway of the cattle camp. Then he chooses the cow he will give to me and takes it out of the cattle kraal, using the *micere*.

He says, 'It shall bear many calves for you!' He blesses the cow and while he is doing so he gives me the *micere*. In case the cow he has given me dies and he had not given it to me by way of the *micere*, I will return to him and say 'Give me another cow! The cow you gave me has died!' Then he will answer, 'When I gave the cow I had not given you a *micere*. That's why it died!' Then he will give me another one.

By way of the *micere* cows will bear calves. I use the *micere* to collect cattle from my bond friends. You take the cow and bring to your homestead. There you take the *micere* and place it onto the gateway of your cattle kraal. This is how I use the *micere* for collecting cattle.

The third important usage of the *micere* is when the initiate takes the *book* stick. When I leap over the cattle, my younger sisters will be whipped by the *maz*. Each *maz* has brought about ten *miceres*. My sister will be very upset. She will say, 'I want to be whipped by this *maz* until his *miceres* have been finished off! I will finish all his *miceres*!' The *maz* whips only once with each *micere*. Then he throws the *micere* away and takes the next one. My sister will finish them all off! That's the tradition connected with the *ukuli*.

In former times, when the *micere* first came to us, the elders gathered in the *boaka*, the meeting place. The eldest brought a *micere*. When someone has become very old, he calls everybody to the meeting place and he brings a *micere*. He says: 'I'm very old now. I'm going to die soon. I will pass the *micere* on to my younger brother!' Then, the next time there is a big meeting, where all the elders come and sit in a *rash*, a long row, this old man will hand the *micere* to his younger brother. He will bless him while he is giving it, 'Don't talk badly! Look after the children! Become as old as I have become old!' Then the younger brother receives the *micere*. At home the younger brother places the *micere* on his gateway.

In case the younger men do not listen to the elders, in case they just go and kill enemies, if they don't work properly, if they insult the elders, then he and the other elders they will say, 'The *micere* has to rise!' The elders will go to the one who has received the *micere* from the most senior man. And they will say: 'You have been given the *micere*! Raise it! You lift it up for us!' Then all elders take their whipping wands. And they will go and whip the next junior brothers. And then these will whip ones junior to them. And these again will whip their juniors. I will whip the men who are of Maldo's age. I will whip Maldo and his age-mates, my junior brothers. The whipped ones, Maldo and his age-mates, won't get angry and ask, 'Why did you whip us?' They will just get up themselves, go to the bush and get more whipping wands and whip their juniors. So everyone whips his juniors. The ones who really were bad in the past and never listened to the words of the elders, these will be bound by their hands and legs and they will be whipped severely. The ones who used to listen to the words of the elders, the ones who didn't do anything wrong, they will just be whipped very little. That's the most

important tradition connected to this. This is where all the other traditions came from. There are no other rituals connected with the *micere*. That's the most important one.

Susanne: This whipping of everybody, does it happen every year, or only every couple of years?

Gude: No, happens only in some years, only in the years when many young men have done something wrong. The ones who have been whipped become older and the next time they might be the ones who are given the *micere*.

Susanne: Is it only one man who has the *micere* or are there many men with this *micere*?

Gude: It's only one person.

Susanne: Who is it in Bashada?

All: In every region that has a *bitta* [ritual leader] there is one man who has the *micere*. It's the same as with the spear which is used during the public meetings.

Susanne: I have heard something before. I heard that when the *micere* rises to whip everybody a horn is blown. It's a horn of a *roto* [a kind of antelope].

All: This horn is with another man. There is one man who has the *micere* and one man who has this special horn which is blown. The *micere* in Bashada is with a man in Argude, an old man. The horn is with a man in Gunne. This ritual when the whipping wand rises is called *banch'amo*.

Susanne: One time when I was in Bashada with Nicole there was such a ritual, but there was not much whipping.

All: Yes, it is like the one you saw, but even more. That time it was very small. Usually, before a *banch'amo* starts, maybe for two or three months, every young man is afraid, they all hide in the bush from the elders!

Gude: When Bashiri was young, a *banch'amo* started. He heard the horn and ran away. He ran away from Bashada. He ran very fast to Turmi [a town in Hamar]. But the people followed him and caught him there. You cannot escape! That's a very important ritual.

Bashiri: The men who run away will be followed even down to Jinka. They will find you. They follow the footprints. They will find you. When they find you while you are sleeping, they will tie your legs and your arms together. And then they start to whip you. That's with the ones who really have done something bad. They have to

pay a fine. They are whipped and then they are brought back to the Bashada where everything will be settled.

When everybody has been whipped and everything is settled again, the eldest will talk together. Then the *micere* will be put back in its place and there will be peace again.

Sago: And then the elders say: ‘When we grew up, we didn’t do as bad as you did! You have to herd the cattle! You have to take care of the beehives! You have to do all the work as we have done!’ That’s what the elders will say.

Belaini: Then we slaughter some goats and eat them and we drink *parsi*.

Sago: The ones who have been hiding in the bush will come back once the *micere* has been laid down.

9.2. Using the *Micere* for herding the cattle

Echi: Do you use the *micere* for herding cattle?

All: Yes.

Echi: Do you use hard sticks for herding cattle also?

All: There is a kind of stick which we use for herding the cattle, which is short. Like this one here. We also have the *micere* and a *sherka* [gourd] to herd the cattle. The *sherka* is used for watering the cattle.

Echi: While herding the cattle, in which context do you use the hard stick and in which the *micere*?

Gude: You can use this one or that one either way. There are no rituals connected to the stick. When you whip the cattle with the whipping wand and they do not move onwards you just cut a stick like this from the bush and you whip them with it. But there are no rituals connected to this kind of stick.

Echi: Didn’t Ivo say there are no hard sticks used for herding the cattle in Hamar?

Kolle: There is no problem, you can use them. If you do not whip the cattle, it will not move on to where the grass is. If you don’t whip the cows, they won’t go into the cattle camp. If you shout at them, they will not move back. They won’t listen to

- you! Only if you whip them and shout at them they will move. The *micere*, if you use it, it will finish off soon. This kind of stick you will have a long time.
- Echi: Do children use the whipping wand or the hard stick? In Arbore, the children only use the whipping wand to herd the cattle.
- Kolle: In Hamar you can use both, even when you are a child.
- Gude: But the stick kind is not given to you with a blessing. The *micere* is given by blessing. When the father gets very old, he will pass on the *micere* to his son, spit on it and bless it.
- Cows are stupid, aren't they? They have no heart. If you whip them, they take a few steps forward and then they have forgotten what to do. They just eat, don't they? They forget everything! This is just a stick. There is nothing else connected with it. When you go home you place the *micere* onto the gateway. The stick you take with you into the house. There is nothing special about it.
- Walle: But we do not use big sticks, only this small kind.
- Shada: We also do not whip very hard. We whip a little bit and the cows go their way.

9.3. The usage of the whipping wand in Nyangatom

- Joseph: I have a question about the *micere*. Sago said that the *micere* is passed on from the elder to his younger brother and again that one to his younger brother. Are you talking about one family or about the whole community?
- All: It's the whole community. It's about the age-mates.
- Joseph: In Nyangatom we don't have *miceres* for that. We use sticks like this. With the *micere* we only whip the people who have done something bad, but this stick is used by spokesmen. It is like passing on authority within the family. When a father is going to die he will look for the best person in his family. He will look for his best son to pass his authority on to. The father will say, 'This son will be a good person in future.' So the father gives him the stick. He may give it to the older one or to the younger one. He might give it for both.
- In Nyangatom we also do have the ritual of whipping the junior ones, for example, if they have done something wrong, like insulting the elders. When a

man from the junior generation insults an elder one, all the elders will get up and whip the juniors. All those who belong to the age-set of the one who has insulted the elders will be whipped together. After they have been whipped, they have to pay compensation; they will have to give goats and cattle to the elder ones. Then the whipping is finished.

Gude: It's all the same. Only this story with the stick is different. But all of us who herd cattle in the bush, we all use this *micere*. The government puts people into prison; we herd our people with the *micere*!

9.4 Traditional and modern ways of punishment

Joseph: In Nyangatom we have the same tradition of whipping people who did something bad. Do you like the idea of putting wrongdoers into prison or do you prefer your tradition of whipping?

All: We only like the whipping!

Gude: The towns are only in one place. We go very far when we herd our cattle. We go far when the sorghum has ripened. The elders are the ones who call the rain. The elders are the ones who make everything well. They are the ones who call *barjo* for us. Still sometimes the younger ones will insult them! When the younger ones do something bad, in which prison should we put them? We are in the bush. We are far away. Where should we put them? So we whip them.

Kolle: It's there tradition [the Amhara] to put people into prison. Our tradition is to whip people. It's not our tradition to put them into prison. Prison, what does it mean to us? It doesn't mean anything to us! It's good to whip!

Day Three: Afternoon Session

10. *Kara Balle* – Arbore Headrest/Stool

Discussants: Kutsha (Arbore), Bashiri (Bashada), Tsasi (Hamar), Shada (Hamar), Joseph (Nyangatom)

(Translated by Echi Gabbert from Arbore into English and from English into Hamar by Susanne Epple)

Kutsha: This is what I brought from Arbore. This is an Arbore stool. It is called *kara balle*, the stool of *balle*. This is the real Arbore stool. It is not from Sidamo, not from Hamar. This is only from Arbore.

In former times our grandfathers and great grandfathers had this stool. Everybody in Arbore knows this kind of stool. This one is a very old *kara balle*. Nowadays, the young men are buying Hamar *borkotos* [the stools used in Hamar]. The *kara balle* is the kind we make in Arbore. All the other kinds you can see in Arbore are bought from somewhere.

In former times people knew how to carve the *kara balle*. Now, as the young people buy the other kinds, they do not know how to carve this kind anymore. *(Kutsha here starts to speak in Hamar and Susanne translates it into English.)*

10.1. Everyday use of the *kara balle*

Susanne: Who uses this special kind? Who sits on the *kara balle*? Is it the elders, the married men?

Kutsha: In former times young men did not have this stool, only elders had a *kara balle*.

Bashiri: This is the *borkoto* [seat] of the old men.

Kutsha: Yes. Very old men, like Nakwa, will sit on it. There are some rituals and traditions connected with the *kara balle*. Our *bitta* makes rituals with it: the *bitta* puts some adornment on his *kara balle*, that is a *gau* [golden metal ring], maybe

and some beads. There is something called *balle*, it is a big golden ring, a kind of wide bracelet. The ring's name is *balle*. The *bitta* will wear it on his right wrist. Then this stool will be handed to the *bitta*. He has to put the golden ring on before he receives the seat. Then it is called *kara balle*.

In the past the *bitta* has made this seat and said: 'This is the seat of the Arbore people! This is our special kind of seat!'

All the other seats are bought. We call them *Galeba kara*, *Hamar kara*...

Echi: Is the *kara balle* known by the other groups? If a Hamar sees it does he know where it comes from? Do the Hamar know that this is an Arbore stool?

All Hamar: Yes, we know it.

Tsasi: We have seen it. We know that only the Arbore people have this kind. Nobody else will make like this kinds of stools.

Tina: Is it made from a special kind of wood?

Kutsha: There are three types of trees which are mainly used for it. Actually you could use any tree, but some wood is better than the other. The men who have just started to learn how to carve the stools will use soft wood. The ones, who are really good in making a *kara balle* can use any tree.

Susanne: Do you also use it as a headrest? Do you sleep on it?'

Kustha: Yes.

Susanne: And you also sit on it? Is there a special way of holding it?

Bashiri: The elder men they hold it by this handle. They hold it up when singing for their favourite ox.

(Laughter)

Kutsha *(demonstrating how the kara balle is held up in the air while singing for the ox)*: Someone who sings for his ox will hold it up like this. After a while someone else will take it from him....

Shada: ...and then sing for his favourite ox, then the next one comes and takes the stool away and sings, and then the next one comes and sings and so on.

Joseph: I have a question, because I have seen such a stool among the Dassanetch. It did not have the middle wooden part, but it also had a handle. What do you say about that? You have just said that only the Arbore know how to make this kind of seat.

Kutsha: Yes, I also have seen it in Dassanech. Nowadays, all people have seen this kind of stool and some like it and start making it in the same way. They carve it in the same style as we do in Arbore. But we in Arbore also like the Hamar *borkotos*. And we like the Dassanetch kind also. They like ours and that's why they have copied it.

Joseph: In Nyangatom we do not have this kind. We use another kind which has three legs instead.

Fourth day: Additional Morning Session

Discussants: Horra Surra and Kutsha Bulle (Arbore)

(Translated by Susanne from Hamar into English, Echi some parts from Arbore into English)

11. *Aante unna iyya worit* – milk container of the father of the house (Arbore), Milk container made by the bride for her husband

An additional session on Arbore objects (see chapters 10-12) was held with Horra Surra (Arbore), who came late to the workshop, and Kutsha (Arbore). The other guests were not present. Horra speaks in Hamar which is translated by Susanne into English.

Horra: This container is made by the wife for her husband. It is made for you when you bring your bride to your homestead. The bride makes it for you so that you can drink milk with it. It is made when she has already been circumcised and her hair has been cut. The girl is a bride already, but she has not been given to her husband yet. She makes it during that time.

Susanne: What kind of material is it made of?

Horra: The name of this material is *ergip*; if you have a horn of a goat or of a cow, or of any other animal, the bride she will plant it into the ground, like a seed. Then a plant will grow out of it. This plant is called *ergip*. It is not a real tree, not real grass; it rather has lots of roots, many, many roots. You take the roots and peel their bark off. Then you weave container with that bark. Whenever the husband drinks milk from this container, he will spit a little milk on his chest and call *waq* [bless]: ‘The cows of my homestead shall be as numerous as the roots of the plant this container is made of! The children of my homestead shall become as many as the roots of this plant!’ *(Horra calls waq and blesses in Arbore language.)*

Horra and Kutsha (*begin to discuss*): The husband uses the milk container when he gets married. He also ties a string around his waist. This string is comparable with the *binyere* [initiate's band and later the bride's collar] in Hamar.

Echi: How long is it worn, is it until it falls off?

Horra: It's put on when they get married and it is worn until it falls off. He wears it around his waist.

Kutsha: The bride also has one tied around her neck.

Horra: There is a special place where you keep it after it has fallen off. You are not allowed to simply throw it away. You have to keep it in a special place.

Kutsha: Nobody else is allowed to drink from the husband's milk container. If other people want to drink from the husband's milk it first has to be poured into a different container.

If you are the bride and he is your husband...the husband is sitting on his stool. Then the bride comes and brings this container with milk. She takes off the lid. They do not talk to each other. She does not say, 'Take!' or anything like that. They are both very quiet. Then she opens his hands. Only then he will take the container. First he spits some milk on his chest. When he has finished drinking she will take the container back without saying a word.

12. *Kabbe toll* – Butter container (Arbore) - a gift from the girlfriend)

Susanne: Would you tell us also about this other object you brought?

Horra: Its name is *kabbe toll*. My girlfriend from youth time makes this object for me the day I get married. She melts butter and pours it into the calabash. She takes different things, which smell good, grinds them and puts them also inside this container. She mixes it all up and then brings this container to me. She will do that on the day I get married. All her girlfriends accompany her. My age-mates also come. My girlfriend and her friends make *muna* [Hamar term for sorghum rolls]. We say, ‘Today we will eat the girlfriend’s share!’

The girls will have prepared lots and lots of food. Many bowls full of *muna* and lots of milk containers filled with milk and sorghum bread with butter. We all eat together. ‘Where is the *kabbe toll*?’ someone will ask and then it will be brought. There are two kinds, a big kind like this and a small kind. From the small one my age-mates take some of the good smelling butter and rub it onto their heads, their faces, their arms and bodies.

When I leave I will take these things to my new home and to my new bride. My girlfriend makes this for me, because she likes me so much. It is on the day I marry that she makes it for me.

Echi: Does every man receive such a container when he gets married?

Horra: No, only the ones who had a girlfriend. There are some men who do not have a girlfriend, they do not get it.

Susanne: Does the boyfriend give anything to his girlfriend?

Echi; I think he makes part of the *sara* [cape]. He gives his girlfriend the leather and she decorates it.

Horra: He gives her a goat which she will slaughter in her home. From the skin she will make the *sara*, which is a cape, a kind of dress. She will take the leather from her boyfriend’s goat. He only gives her the goat, she has to buy all the things to adorn the *malinte* – she will sew beads and everything onto it.

Susanne: What is it exactly?

Echi: *Malinte*, it is a kind of belt the girls wear. Everything the girl needs for the belt is given to the girl by her boyfriend.

Susanne: And if she does not have a boyfriend?

Echi: Then she won't have a real *malinte*. Only the girls who have a boyfriend have a real *malinte*.

Susanne: But if you and your girlfriend, if you like each other and you are together but then you get married to someone else will she not cry very much?

Horra: Yes, you cry a lot. But it is our father who gives us. For example, if her father gives her to another man to marry, what can you do? It is our tradition. The day when she leaves we cry very much. We kiss each other and we cry. I give her a goat and she gives me the milk container she has made for me...and we meet secretly in the bush....

(Laughter)

Susanne: Do you really kiss each other?

Horra: Yes! We kiss each other very often!

Susanne: In Hamar they do not kiss.

Horra: We kiss! If you like a girl and you want her to be your girlfriend you ask her for a *zau*, an iron ring. If she also gives you a *zau* she likes you too. Then you are boyfriend and girlfriend. If she does not give one to you, you are not. It may take two or three years, you have to keep asking for this iron ring again and again. You talk to her nicely...maybe she likes you already, but she will make you wait! But finally one day she will say, 'This man is really clever, he really likes me a lot!' And then you kiss each other.

Echi: What kind of leather is the *malinte* made of?

Kutsha: It is cow leather.

Horra to Echi: When we are back in Arbore I will show you how it is made. We make our own project, about how girlfriend and boyfriend get together and how they ask for each other.

Echi: There are wonderful stories about how they send gifts to their lovers in the cattle kraal and so on in Arbore.

Susanne: Does the future wife not get angry when she sees all this? Doesn't she say, 'Don't you beat your girlfriend?' Does she not say this?

Horra: She says, 'It is good!' Well, she had her boyfriend also. The wife had a boyfriend, he had his girlfriend; they both had lovers. It is secret, but at the same time

everybody knows it. So it is just a ritual, a tradition. That is why she does not say much, because she also had her boyfriend. But there are some women who say, 'You have a girlfriend! I have a boyfriend, but now as we are married don't go to see your girlfriend anymore!' She says to her husband, 'Do not go there anymore!' When they fight about that all the time the husband might say, 'Come on, it is not so bad. It is our tradition. You have your boyfriend and I have my girlfriend. Let us not fight.'

If a boyfriend and a girlfriend actually marry each other, the girl may also make this kind of container. If she wants to she can make one, also one for food. When the girl sees that her boyfriend has come to her father's homestead to ask for her to become his bride, she says, 'My boyfriend has come to ask for me!' Then she starts to make these things for her future husband. She also makes a big sour milk container. As a bride she makes three, maybe four or five of these containers, different ones, one for sour milk; one for calling *barjo*, one for his age-mates. She makes so many because she loves him so much.

If a wife does not like her future husband, maybe he gives a goat or a sheep, money or something else to her father's homestead. They will buy such a container and her relatives will adorn it. If she does not like him she simply says, 'I do not know how to do it!' That's what she says if she does not like him. Before he has not received this milk container and called *barjo* with it. He is not allowed to call *barjo* with any other milk container. This is the first one he is allowed to use for that purpose. This is the object by which a man becomes a real adult, a real *donza* in Arbore. He needs to call *barjo* to fill his homestead with cattle and children.

13. Adorned food bowl (Arbore) - A widow's gift to her lover

Susanne: Now tell us about the big bowl you have brought.

Horra: This is also a girlfriend story (*karme kainte, aysaasa*). This is made by a widow lover, a *baski, noko-ma*. If you have lived with a widow before you were married she will make this for you on your wedding day. Also if you have a secret lover who is married to another man, who is still alive, your lover will make this for you, secretly. And then, secretly, by the help of the age-mates, it will be given to you.

Susanne: Won't people ask who made this for you?

Horra: You just say, 'Someone.'

If I were a woman and Baro *imba* [Baro's father] and I have been boyfriend and girlfriend before, and then he gets married, but we like each other so much that we do not want to leave each other...everybody knows, that when we were young we were so much in love and that we met each other...so now since I got married we meet each other sometimes, secretly.

Sometimes I even might get pregnant by him....Some rich people marry three or four women. When a man gets old and the last woman he married is a young girl while he is very old, she will keep on seeing her former boyfriend. When you want to meet your former girlfriend you will ask another woman, who is your age-mate or your girlfriend's age-mate. You ask this woman, 'Maybe my girlfriend and I could meet in your house?' She says, 'Okay.' It is a kind of secret language. He says, 'Hey you! Some day I asked you for something? Where is it now?' You play just like this. Then she says, 'Oh, yes. I forgot it in the house.' This woman will go to your girlfriend's house and talk to her husband, distract him, play with him, so that he does not think about his wife. This way he doesn't notice that his wife has left and gone to another house to meet her boyfriend. So, when a girl gets married she will think about her former lover and send this present to him secretly.

Echi: So, the person who makes this may be a girlfriend as well as a widow?

Horra: This one is given only by married women. It is either a widow or a secret lover who is married. It's your former girlfriend, but now she is not a girl anymore. There is an even bigger, a nicer one than the one I am showing you here.

The big one will be given filled with butter. Later, when the man fathers a daughter, he will take off the beads from the container and give them to his favourite daughter. She can wear them as a necklace. Also the wife will take the beads and sew them onto her belt.

Echi: I have never seen a man who is married to three women. You said men can marry many women?

Horra: I will show you!

Echi: But how do they live? Do they live in separate houses?

Horra: Yes. Each woman has her own house. The most senior wife has her house on the right side; the next one has her house left to it and then the next ...

14. *Kara Balle* – Headrest and elder’s stool (Arbore) (additional comments)

Horra and Kutsha: There are two kinds of seats. There is the husband’s seat. He is the only person who may sit on it. Its name is *kara*. Only very old men, like Nakwa, men in his age sit on them and call *barjo*. Nowadays people do not look at this tradition anymore and everybody sits on these stools. But there are different kinds of stools. Some of them have three or four legs, depending on how many branches the tree had.

13.1. Ritual usage of the *kara balle*

Horra: This *kara balle* is for old men. The Hamar *borkotos* are for young men. Long time ago the Hamar kind did not exist here. In former times we called them Galeba stools [Dassanetch seats] and they were a little bigger than this one. It did not have any decoration. Now the Hamar make very nice ones with decorations. We like them very much, so now we call this kind Hamar stools [instead of Dassanetch stools]. In former times they did not exist in Arbore. In former times we had no seats and when we sat down we took off the *daffare* [cloth] made it into a lump and sat on it. Only elders would sit on stools. We the young, would not sit next to them, it was taboo. When men were sitting together no women were around, we were sitting naked.

It is taboo to show your penis in Arbore. Men enter the water naked together, but as soon as they step out they put on their cloths quickly. As a small girl once you have grown up a little you start wearing the small string skirt. Then, as a man, you will not show your penis in front of her.

List of Objects and Donators

1. *Daa* – (pot), donated by Bashiri Arbala (Bashada)
2. *Karamb'a Misak'a* (right- handed coffee- bowl), donated by Kolle Niko (Bashada)
3. *Karamb'a Workata* (left- handed coffee- bowl), donated by Shada Alma (Hamar)
4. *K'andi- zau* (women's iron- ring), donated by Tsasi Aike (Hamar)
5. *Mido* (women's iron- ring), donated by Tsasi Aike (Hamar)
6. *Ukuli- Boko* (staff of the initiate)
 - a) large staff donated by Tsasi Aike (Hamar),
 - b) medium-sized staff donated by Belaini Nakwa (Bashada)
 - c) small-sized staff donated by Kolle Niko (Bashada)
 - d) new staff donated by Walle Alma (Banna)
7. *Shunkurr* (forked staff), donated by Kutsha Bulle (Arbore)
8. Four stripes of a cow's stomach-fat, donated by Kutsha Bulle (Arbore)
9. *Koli* (staff of the go between), donated by Gude Dalko (Bashada)
10. *Parko staff* (ritual staff of the *parko*), donated by Nakwa Dal'o (Bashada)
11. *Nidjeroi* (dance bells), donated by Joseph Loteng (Nyangatom)
12. *Goala* (lyre), donated by Maldo Lito (Banna)
13. *Micere* (whipping wand), donated by Sago Bargar (Banna)
14. *Kara Balle* (Headrest/ Chair), donated by Kutsha Bulle (Arbore)
15. *Karme Kainte* (Lover's food bowl), brought by Horra Surra (Arbore)
16. *Aante Unna Iyya Worit* (milk container of the father of the house), brought by Horra Surra (Arbore)
17. *Kabbe Toll* (Butter container), brought by Horra Surra (Arbore)

