

THE GALLA IN NORTHERN SOMALILAND ¹⁾

I. M. LEWIS

RIASSUNTO. — Da tempo è stato provato che una volta i Galla occuparono zone del territorio ora somalo. Il presente articolo mostra che, prima dei Somali, essi stanziavano in alcuni punti di quello che oggi è il Protettorato britannico e ne ricostruisce l'allontanamento sotto la spinta dell'espansione dei gruppi somali nella Somalia settentrionale.

RÉSUMÉ. — Depuis longtemps il est prouvé que les Galla occupaient des parties du pays somali avant les Somali. Le présent article montre qu'avant les Somali ils étaient établis dans certains endroits de l'actuel Protectorat britannique et suit leur déplacement dans la Somalie septentrionale sous la pression des groupes Somali avançant.

SUMMARY. — There has long been evidence that the Galla occupied parts of Somaliland before the Somali. This paper shows that before the Somali they were stationed in parts of what is today the British Protectorate and traces their withdrawal under pressure from the expanding Somali communities in Northern Somaliland.

That the Galla occupied what is today central and southern Somalia prior to the Somali is securely established. Dr. Cerulli has brilliantly reconstructed the sequence of Somali migrations which, from perhaps as early as the 12th century, began to bring a medley of Somali groups from their earlier positions in the north of Somaliland into the centre and south at the expense of the earlier Galla inhabitants who were driven south-westwards into Ethiopia. In the 17th century the Galla were forced across the Juba River, and by about 1910 the Dārōd Somali had advanced as far south as the Tana River in Kenya where they were halted by the establishment of fixed grazing areas ²⁾. That at an earlier period the Galla also preceded the Somali as the inhabitants of Northern Somaliland is not so well established, although it is suggested by traditions which trace the origins of the Galla to Northern Somali-

¹⁾ This paper is based on material collected in Somaliland during my tenure of a Colonial Social Science Research Council Fellowship in Social Anthropology. I am greatly indebted to the Council for their generosity and to the Government of the Somaliland Protectorate. For criticism of an earlier draft of this paper I am especially grateful to Mr. B. W. Andrzejewski and to Dr. M. Pirone.

²⁾ See E. CERULLI, *Le popolazioni della Somalia nella tradizione storica locale*, "Rendiconti R. Accademia dei Lincei (Scienze Morali)", 1926 pp. 150-172; I. M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, London, 1955, pp. 45-8; and CERULLI, *Somalia, Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti*, vol. I, Rome, 1958.

land¹⁾. Some evidence has also been furnished that the Galla formerly occupied northern Mijerteinia²⁾ (in the north of what is today Somalia), and also parts of the present Ogaden region of Harar Province of Ethiopia³⁾. In this paper I adduce new evidence which to my mind makes it almost certain that the Galla did in fact occupy much of northern Somaliland prior to the Somali.

I.

Before presenting my evidence, it is necessary to refer briefly to a linguistic point which has been a source of much confusion in evaluating local Somali traditions concerning the Galla. In contemporary Northern Somali there are two distinct linguistic expressions which have often been taken as the same. These are *Gālla*, the name by which the Galla people are known to the Amharas, Arabs, and others, and *gāl* (Pl. *gālo*, and with the article, *gālada*) a pagan, infidel, or non-Muslim in general⁴⁾. In contemporary Somali these are separate and distinct terms; and Somali are well aware that many of the Galla people, whom they also refer to collectively as *Gāllāwi* or if they cultivate, as *Qoti*, are Muslims and therefore not *gālo*. In Ethiopia, the Amharic word *Gālla* has the sense of "subjects", those under government⁵⁾; and although the Galla peoples are known collectively to outsiders by this title, they do not apply it to themselves. Indeed, there is apparently no collective name used by all the various Galla groups to designate themselves as a distinct cultural entity⁶⁾. It has however been suggested that this name, which is first recorded in the 16th century⁷⁾ and which

¹⁾ See G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD, *The Galla of Ethiopia*, London, 1955, p. 19.

²⁾ CERULLI, *Tradizioni storiche e monumenti della Migiurtinia*, "Africa Italiana", iv, 1931, pp. 153-169.

³⁾ See M. PIRONE, *Leggende e tradizioni storiche dei Somali Ogaden*, and *Le popolazioni dell'Ogaden*, in "Archivio per l'Antropologia e l'Etnologia", lxxxiv, 1954, pp. 119-143.

⁴⁾ As is well-known, the word *gāl* is commonly applied by Somali to Europeans, often without any directly derogatory intention. In Northern Somaliland *gāl* in this context is used as widely as the more neutral word *faranji*.

⁵⁾ B. W. Andrzejewski, personal communication.

⁶⁾ The name Oromo which includes the majority of the Galla people does not include the Boran Galla of the Northern Province of Kenya and cannot therefore be taken as an ethnic name for the whole Galla group. B. W. Andrzejewski, personal communication.

⁷⁾ It is apparently first recorded in Bahrey's *History of the Galla* (1593). See C. F. BECKINGHAM and G. W. B. HUNTINGFORD, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646*, London, 1954; *The Galla of Ethiopia*, cit., p. 11.

Cerulli apparently erroneously refers to as the "ethnic name of the Galla", has been adopted by Somali in the form *gāl*, infidel or pagan, referring to a time when the Somali had adopted Islam but while the Galla were still non-Muslims¹⁾. But no secure evidence has yet been adduced in proof of this theory, and the fact remains that in modern Northern Somali, at least, *gālo* and *Gālla* are quite distinct, although this may of course have not been so in the past.

It is necessary to establish this linguistic point because the many stone mounds, loosely referred to as "Galla graves", with which Northern Somaliland is studded, have often been taken as evidence that the Galla formerly occupied the region²⁾ when Somali usually attribute them not specifically to the Galla people but rather to unspecified non-Muslims or pagans (*gālo*). Somali generally regard them as the work of the "people who were before" — an ambiguous description which may mean anything — and because they differ in construction from contemporary Islamic burials suggest that they are the work of non-Muslims. However, a Radio Carbon analysis of wood from one such grave which I excavated indicates that some at least of these burials are not more than two hundred and fifty years old and probably contain Somali remains³⁾. The traditions which I discuss in this paper and examine in the light of other evidence refer specifically to the Galla people rather than to unidentified non-Muslims.

II.

RESIDUAL GALLA GROUPS AMONGST THE NORTHERN SOMALI.

I begin my argument by discussing the many small pockets of Galla which still survive today in the British Somaliland Protectorate and Ogaden region of Harar Province of Ethiopia.

In 1946, the total population of the "Reserved Area" of Ethiopia (then under British Administration) was estimated at 300,000 souls, of whom 5,000 were Amharas, Arabs, and Indians, mainly resident in Jigjiga. Of the remainder, 10,000 were Galla, mainly Akišo, and the

¹⁾ See CERULLI, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 154.

²⁾ See e. g. HUNTINGFORD, *op. cit.*, 1955, p. 19; CERULLI, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 163; and N. PUCCIONI, *Antropologia e Etnografia delle Genti della Somalia*, vol. iii, Bologna, 1936, p. 121.

³⁾ I hope to report on the result of these excavations and the analysis of human remains from the graves in a later article on the so-called "Galla graves" of Northern Somaliland.

rest Somali ¹⁾. The Akišo are a segment of the Barentu or Eastern Galla who form a prominent element in Harar Province of Ethiopia and who extend to the east of the ancient city of Harar in the direction of Jigjiga towards British Somaliland. Among the Somali Yabarre, Bartirre, Geri, and Abaskul clans of the Dārōd clan-family ²⁾, and the Bursuk of the Dir clan-family, today resident in the Harar-Jigjiga region and stretching towards the east and south-east to the Ogaden, live small groups of Galla Waraitu, Waradayo, Asabo, and Lehile. Further to the east in the Ogaden amongst the Somali Dārōd clan of the same name (i. e. the Ogādēn) live groups of Obo Galla ³⁾; and with the Somali Habar Awal clan of the British Protectorate who extend into the same region live Galla Waramiyo, Warapito (or Warabito), Warakiyo, Igo, and Waraloḡo. Finally, the Rēr Rōble Bōrama living amongst the Somali Gadabursi clan of the west of the British Protectorate are said to be Galla, and there may well be other groups ⁴⁾.

The extent of admixture and the character of incorporation of these Galla communities living amongst Somali varies very much from place to place. With the incorporation of Ġarso and Babile Galla, the Dārōd Geri of the Jigjiga region have split up into two separate groups, one to the north of Jigjiga, and the other to the south. In each the Geri Somali are politically dominant, but the Geri Ġarso, who in contrast to the Geri Babile are largely agricultural, are Galla-speaking ⁵⁾.

I have direct personal knowledge of such residual Galla communities only amongst the Habar Awal of the west and centre of the British Protectorate. Here these are not Galla-speaking and are closely assimilated to the Somali of the area. Indeed physically — at least to the eye — and culturally and linguistically, they are indistinguishable from the Somali amongst whom they live and with whom they are heavily intermarried. Amongst the Habar Awal Sa'd Mūse cultivators in the Hargaisa-Gebile-Borama region in the west of British Somaliland, they are distributed in small autonomous farming communities, or resident as individuals in the cultivating villages of the local Habar Awal Somali.

¹⁾ These figures are taken from the "Jigjiga District Notebook" with the permission of the District Commissioner, Hargaisa.

²⁾ I use the term "clan-family" to refer to the largest Somali lineage divisions.

³⁾ Cf. PIRONE, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁴⁾ Information largely taken from "Jigjiga District Notebook".

⁵⁾ See R. BURTON, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, Memorial edition, London, 1894, vol. i, p. 192; B. FRANCOLINI, *I Somali del Harar*, "Africa Italiana", 1938, pp. 1, 127-29.

In this area the Akišo, the largest Galla group, probably number no more than a few hundred individuals and are widely dispersed. Yet they have their own headmen recognised by the Government and their own independent organization for paying blood-compensation. They are thus a "diya-paying group"¹⁾ in their own right, but it seems that they sometimes have to depend upon the support of the stronger Somali with whom they live. They enjoy rights to arable land which are only weaker than those of their numerically superior Somali hosts in virtue of their numerical weakness and inability to meet a concerted attack from their Somali neighbours without the assistance of the Administration. But they are not generally molested, and usually live peacefully amongst their hosts being identified with them in external political relations. As protected minorities they are assigned the traditional status of clients (*magan*), and sometimes with other alien minorities are referred to derogatively as *gun* (literally "bottom") as opposed to the numerically strong who enjoy the status of "aristocrats" (*gob*).

The cultural and social assimilation of these Akišo minorities (and of course other, non-Galla minorities) to their stronger hosts is rarely accompanied by genealogical identification. And here it is necessary to explain that the Northern pastoral Somali have a segmentary lineage organization in which political relations are expressed partly in genealogical terms, and partly through a system of political contracts (sg. *hēr*) which cut across genealogical relationships²⁾. Minorities can achieve security through contract without genealogical assimilation; and this is generally the position with the Akišo in question when they form wider alliances with neighbouring Somali.

In a few cases, however, such Galla clients have been incorporated in the genealogies of their Somali hosts. Thus with the Habar Awal Rēr Ādan 'Abdalle, who are nomadic, live a group of Akišo dependents who in 1946 were involved in a fight with another segment of the Somali Habar Awal clan. Seven of the latter were killed, but only three of the Akišo who were required to settle four outstanding bloodwealths valued

¹⁾ This is the name given in the Protectorate to those agnatic kinsmen who collectively meet their blood debts (including full blood-wealth, Arabic *diya*, Somali *mag*) in concert. The *diya*-paying group is the fundamental jural and political unit of Northern Somali society. In 1958 in the Protectorate there were over 360 such groups in a total population estimated at about 640,000. Their significance is discussed in my paper *Clanship and Contract in Northern Somaliland*, "Africa", July, 1959, pp. 274-293.

²⁾ See LEWIS, *op. cit.*, 1959.

at a hundred camels each ¹⁾. This they had not the resources to pay, and they approached their Ādan 'Abdalle hosts seeking assistance from the latter and full genealogical incorporation in their genealogy. Ultimately, after much discussion and opposition from other Akišo who wished the segment concerned to preserve its Akišo identity, they were fully assimilated to the Habar Awal clan and are now regarded as a segment of the Ādan 'Abdalle lineage. This loss to Akišo integrity still rankles with other Akišo.

Another case appears to occur with the Hinḡinle lineage of the Dulbahante clan in the east of the British Protectorate. According to some, the Hinḡinle, who are an autonomous diya-paying group and who figure in the Dulbahante genealogy, are in fact of Galla Akišo origin. But this is less well authenticated than the previous case.

More typically, such dispersed Akišo minorities retain their own independent genealogies which, unlike those of the Somali, usually go back only four or five generations to their eponym Akišo. Their short genealogies are in keeping with their small numbers and slight political significance. For in Northern Somaliland there is a general correlation between the size, and therefore fighting strength, of a group, and its political importance ²⁾. A few Akišo, however, trace descent quasi-historically through many generations from "Samāle", the founder of the Somali nation ³⁾. The following genealogy of an Akišo elder of the Gebile region (to the west of Hargaisa in the British Protectorate) was conserved in writing (in Arabic) in a Qur'an.

‘Aqīl Abū Ṭālib ⁴⁾
 Samāle Warre
 Abubakr Samāle
 Ḥaḡi Abubakr
 Madaḥweine Ḥaḡi
 Mihi Madaḥweine

¹⁾ The standard valuation of blood-compensation for a man is a hundred camels, and for a woman, fifty. The amounts actually paid, however, vary considerably according to the context in which a homicide occurs. Within a diya-paying group, blood-wealth is usually considerably reduced in keeping with the solidarity of the group.

²⁾ See my article *Force and Fission in Northern Somali Lineage Structure*, "American Anthropologist" (forthcoming).

³⁾ See LEWIS, *The Somali Lineage System and the Total Genealogy*, (cyclostyled), Hargaisa, 1957.

⁴⁾ The majority of the Somali people trace descent through 'Aqīl to Abū Ṭālib who died in Mecca in A. D. 620. Intervening generations between Samāle and 'Aqīl have been left out in the diagram.

Same Mihi
 Maḥ Same
 'Abdillāhi Maḥ
 Si'id 'Abdillāhi
 Aḥmad Si'id
 'Abdi Aḥmad
 Mubaraq 'Abdi
 Qālib Mubaraq
 Akišo Qālib — *Eponym of the Akišo*
 Kuttaye Akišo
 Allo Kuttaye
 Dado Allo
 Adēlle Dado
 Fāhiye Adēlle
 Širwa' Fāhiye
 'Aye Širwa'
 Hīrsi 'Aye — *Living Akišo elder.*

Those residual Galla communities living amongst the Somali of the west of the Protectorate and in Hargaisa District claim to have been the original inhabitants of the country before the Somali. Those who now cultivate amongst the agricultural Habar Awal, however, were like the latter originally pastoralists, for the cultivation of sorghum which is now extensively practised in the west of the Protectorate is scarcely older than fifty or sixty years. Plough cultivation has been adopted from the Galla of Ethiopia through Somali in the Harar-Jigjiga region and has brought various Galla culture traits associated with agriculture in its train. Thus Somali of the west of the Protectorate use a plough of Galla type ¹⁾ and sing ploughing and threshing songs in which there are many Galla words although independent Somali versions now also exist.

At harvest time, work-parties consisting of kinsmen and neighbours and called *gūs* (cf. Galla *guza*) are summoned to thresh the sorghum in each farmer's field. Such work-parties are not found among the Northern pastoral Somali where most collective enterprises are organized on a basis of clan-ship (*tol*) and contract (*hēr*). These examples of Galla influence are all recent innovations and not evidence of an earlier occupation of the area by Galla cultivators.

¹⁾ For illustrations of Galla and Somali ploughs see HUNTINGFORD, *loc. cit.*, 1955, p. 72.

The real evidence for the earlier Galla occupation of these regions is thus not the adoption of Galla culture traits, which is recent, but the presence of these residual Galla communities far from the main centres of the Galla in their present distribution supplemented by the local Somali traditions which regard the Galla as their predecessors. In the Jigjiga area itself, tradition still maintains that the Galla preceded the Somali there; and the earliest wells in Jigjiga, Marar, El Yare, and El Bahay, are all attributed to the Akišo. Further evidence is provided by a number of local place-names which are clearly Galla and which are regarded by the local Somali as Galla. Such are *Tog Wağale*; *Iğāra* (perhaps from Galla *iğār*, to build); *Taise* (perhaps from the Galla *tā'*, to sit or settle); *Ġara Horato* (from *ġara*, people, and *hor*, to multiply or prosper); and even *Hargaysa*, the capital of the British Protectorate (cf. Galla *hargaysa*, a plant)¹). No doubt there are other examples which I did not record but these are place-names which Somali of the region single out as of Galla origin.

This new material taken with the traditions recently reported by Dr. Pirone²) from the Ogaden, and by Cerulli from Mijerteinia³) provides substantial evidence for a prior Galla occupation of western, central, and eastern Northern Somaliland, and is corroborated by other local traditions which I mention presently.

III.

THE DIR AND THE GALLA WITHDRAWAL FROM NORTHERN SOMALILAND.

Having established that the Galla occupied Northern Somaliland as well as (perhaps later) central and southern Somalia before the Somali, I now seek to trace something of the circumstances of their expulsion from Northern Somaliland. Traditions from all the areas today occupied by Somali concur in regarding the Dir clan-family as the oldest Somali stock⁴). Traditionally their first stronghold was along the coast and inland of what is today Erigavo District in the east of the British Protec-

¹) Possibly a species of aloe. The Galla interpretations of these words are based mainly on A. W. HODSON and C. H. WALKER, *A Grammar of the Galla or Oromo Language*, London, 1922. Mr. B. W. Andrzejewski has also supplied valuable comments.

²) PIRONE, *op. cit.*, 1954, pp. 120-24.

³) CERULLI, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 154 ff.

⁴) Cf. M. COLUCCI, *Principi di Diritto Consuetudinario della Somalia Italiana Meridionale*, Florence, 1924, p. 99; LEWIS, *op. cit.*, 1955, p. 25.

torate. But in this region today only a few very small Dir remnants survive. Such are the Ġambëlle, Magädle, Madigān ¹⁾, Irdodūb, Madōbe, Minsulle, Tūre and Gurgure, of whom only a few individuals of each group seem to survive today in Erigavo District where they are attached to, and often completely identified with, the stronger local Isāq and Dārōd clans with whom they live. Other stronger Dir groups survive in the Her and Gādsan, both lineages of sheikhs and holymen living as pastoral nomads and priests amongst the Dārōd Ogādēn.

In the west of the British Protectorate, among the Habar Awal cultivators, other small scattered groups of Dir survive in the Madigān who have a similar client status to the Akišo (Galla) minorities of the same area. To the east of Harar live the Bursuk, a small clan also of Dir origin but apparently today very mixed in composition, and mainly practising cultivation ²⁾. The Gurgure Dir also occur in some strength in the same region ³⁾.

But the strongest Dir clans today in Northern Somaliland are the 'Ise (35,000 under British Protection) and Gadabūrsi (45,000 under British Protection) in the west of the Protectorate, Harar Province of Ethiopia, and French Somaliland. The graves of their clan eponyms lie in Erigavo District in the east of the Protectorate, several hundred miles to the east of their present habitat. There are also various Dir communities in southern Somalia, but the largest and most important are the Bimāl clan of Merka region. The present scattered distribution of the Dir raises the question of how the Dir came to vacate their original strong-hold in the north-east of Somaliland and how their movements affected the earlier Galla inhabitants.

Under pressure from Somali — at first apparently mainly the Dir — the Galla moved in two directions. In a southerly direction they moved through central and southern Somalia where at least in some areas they encountered pre-Hamitic Bantu and perhaps Bushmen-type peoples,

¹⁾ Hawiye tradition records a group called Madagān, of allegedly Arabian origin, as participating in the early history of Mogadiscio (See CERULLI, *Somalia. Scritti Vari Editi ed Inediti*, vol. ii, Rome, 1959, pp. 237-41). Since the Dir ultimately claim an Arabian origin as do other Somali groups, tracing their descent through 'Aqīl Abū Ṭālib, it is possible that the "Madagān" may be the Dir Madigān.

²⁾ On the Bursuk see BURTON, *op. cit.*, i, p. 193.

³⁾ The Gurgure who are evidently much mixed with Galla are classified as Eastern Galla by Huntingford (*op. cit.*, 1955, p. 15). They are mentioned twice in the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša* (ed. and trs. R. Basset, Paris, 1897-1909).

whom they expelled, but of whom a few residual communities still survive today ¹⁾. To the north-west they moved into what is today Harar Province of Ethiopia. Huntingford ²⁾ argues that the Galla migration from Somaliland began at least as early as the 12th century and describes the penetration of the Harar Highlands by what are today the Eastern Galla, a movement which by the end of the 16th century had taken them across the Bashilo River and into the very heart of Ethiopia.

Contemporary oral tradition in Northern Somaliland knows little of this Galla retreat and Dir advance since these events have been overshadowed by the more recent expansion of the Dārōd and Isāq clan-families at the expense of the Dir, a phase of Somali history to which I refer presently. Tradition holds, however, that when Sheikh Aw Barkhadle, of *ṣarīf* descent, arrived in Northern Somaliland to teach Arabic and Islam and settled at the place which today bears his name — “Aw Barkhadle” — some thirty miles to the north-west of Hargaisa he fought the Galla and defeated them ³⁾. Tradition dates the Sheikh's arrival in the 12/13th century. But since he seems to have been, as Cerulli suggests ⁴⁾, one of the ancestors of the Walasma' dynasty of Ifāt, and indeed according to an Arabic chronicle which I discovered in Somaliland ⁵⁾ the fifth ascending ancestor of 'Umar b. Dunyā-hūz, the founder of the dynasty who died in 1275 A. D., it appears that his struggle with

¹⁾ See CERULLI, *op. cit.*, 1926; and *Gruppi etnici negri nella Somalia*, “Archivio per l'Antropologia e l'Etnologia”, lxiv, 1934. See also V. L. GROTTANELLI, *Pescatori dell'Oceano Indiano*, Rome, 1955, pp. 35-43; and LEWIS, *op. cit.*, 1955, pp. 41-44.

²⁾ HUNTINGFORD, *op. cit.*, 1955, p. 19.

³⁾ For a brief notice of the Sheikh's works see LEWIS, “Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,” 1958, xxi/1, p. 135. Sheikh Aw Barkhadle is traditionally the Arab proselytizer who subdued the power of the Yibir — who are now bondsmen and widely dispersed — by overcoming their ancestor in a sort of ritual duel. This tradition which confirms present-day customary practise, explaining the alms paid to the Yibirs by Somali as part of the blood-price owed to them in perpetuity for the murder of their ancestor, also suggests that the Yibir are pre-Somali and possibly Galla. But I have no specific evidence of this. On this point see also PIRONE, *op. cit.*, 1954, p. 120.

⁴⁾ CERULLI, “RRAL”, Ser. 6, iv, 1931, p. 67.

⁵⁾ This is a list of the rulers of the Land of Sa'd ad-Dīn appended to an unpublished history of Harar written originally apparently by Ibrāhīm Sharīf of Harar. The Arabic manuscript to which I had access was owned by Sheikh 'Alī Sheikh Ibrāhīm of the Education Department of the Somaliland Govt and was copied by him from the version of another sheikh taken from the original. I hope to publish this document at a later date.

the Galla was probably in the 12th century.¹⁾ Thus if this is a correct interpretation, there were at this time still Galla in the vicinity of Har-gaisa whose name itself is, as has been pointed out, probably of Galla origin.

Further light on the Dir advance and Galla withdrawal seems to be afforded by an Arabic manuscript describing the history of the Gadabūrsi clan²⁾. This chronicle opens with an account of the wars of *Imām* 'Ali Si'id (d. 1392) from whom the Gadabūrsi today trace their descent and who is described as the only Muslim leader fighting on the Western flank in the armies of Sa'd ad-Dīn (d. 1415), ruler of Zeila. These campaigns were clearly against the Christian Abyssinians, but it appears from the chronicle that the Gadabūrsi were also fighting the Galla. A later leader of the clan, *Ugās* 'Ali Makāhīl, who was born in 1575 at Dobo, north of the present town of Borama in the west of the British Protectorate, is recorded as having inflicted a heavy defeat on Galla forces at Nabadid, a village in the Protectorate on the boundary between the Habar Awal and Gadabūrsi clans in their present distribution.

At the same time in their oral traditions, the Gadabūrsi record a gradual expansion with the 'Īse along the coast of the Red Sea from the east of Somaliland, a movement in the course of which they advanced inland in the west expelling the earlier Galla Čarso and Akišo of the region. This traditional account of their early movements seems to accord with the distribution of the places of birth and of burial of the early heads of the Gadabūrsi clan as related in the Gadabūrsi chronicle. For, as has been pointed out, the eponym of the Gadabūrsi is with the eponym of the 'Īse clan buried in the north-east of the Protectorate not far from Sheikh Isāq's tomb in Erigavo District; and later leaders of the Gadabūrsi are buried generally to the north of Borama, their present headquarters in British Somaliland.

I have referred to a parallel movement of the 'Īse Dir from east to west. 'Īse traditions tell of conflict between their ancestors and those of the Isāq clan-family in the east of the Protectorate as a result of which the 'Īse moved westwards towards their present position. If

¹⁾ See CERULLI, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 40. On the Walasma' dynasty see also J. S. TRIMMINGHAM, *Islam in Ethiopia*, Oxford, 1952, pp. 58-60.

²⁾ This is a short history of the leaders of the Gadabūrsi clan written by Sheikh Abdaraḥmān Sheikh Nūr of the Gadabūrsi Rēr Ugās and based on an earlier manuscript by Sheikh Barkhadle Sheikh 'Abdillāhi, also of the Rēr Ugās. Sheikh Abdaraḥmān is the inventor of the "Gadabūrsi script", see my article *The Gadabuursi Somali Script*, "Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies", 1958, xxi/1, pp. 134-56.

these traditions are historically valid they imply that the 'Īse only expanded westwards at a fairly late date, subsequent to Sheikh Isāq's reputed arrival at Mait in the east in the 12/13th century to which I refer below.

IV.

THE MIGRATION OF THE DIR FROM THE EAST AND THE EXPANSION OF THE DĀRŌD AND ISĀQ CLAN-FAMILIES.

The dispersal of the Dir clans to the west and to the south under pressure from the expanding Dārōd and Isāq communities, a phase of Somali history which to some extent at least coincides with the rout of the Galla and their migrations into Ethiopia, brings us to a more recent stage in Somali history but still one for which firm dates are lacking. That Dārōd the ancestor of the clan-family of the same name, preceded Sheikh Isāq, founder of the Isāq clans, is universally held by Somali. The precedence of Dārōd is also reflected in the common phrase "*Dir iyo Dārōd*" (Dir and Dārōd) used still to distinguish two great branches of the Somali nation.

Traditionally, the ancestor of the present Dārōd clan-family, a group over a million strong and widely distributed, was Sheikh Dārōd Ismā'il, son of Ismā'il Ġabartī, a descendent of Abū Ṭālib through 'Aqīl, who is said to have crossed to the north-eastern Somali coast from Arabia about the 10/11th century ¹⁾. The exact place of his arrival varies in the traditions, but according to one generally held account, Dārōd first settled at a place called "Dārōd Fūl" near Bosaso. Dārōd made contact with the Dir who were then still in this region and married a Dir woman called Donbirra from whose sons the present Dārōd clans and lineages stem ²⁾. Tradition records the growth in strength of the Dārōd at the expense of the Dir, and the latter's dispersal from the north-east corner of Somaliland.

¹⁾ There are various hagiologies in circulation in Somaliland, some printed in Arabic, which identify Dārōd Ismā'il with the son of Ismā'il Ġabartī, the well-known Arabian saint who died in 1403 and is buried at Zabid in the Yemen (e. g. the *Manāqib as-Šayḥ Ismā'il bin Ibrāhīm al-Ġabartī*, Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī Press, Cairo, 1945, written by Šayḥ Aḥmad bin Ḥusēn bin Maḥammad). This seems clearly an impossible connection since it conflicts with the local traditions proclaiming the antiquity of the Dārōd and would make the Dārōd later than the Isāq.

²⁾ On the legends concerning Dārōd's reception by the local Dir Somali, see LEWIS, *op. cit.*, 1955, pp. 18-19.

As Cerulli has argued, some idea of the early distribution of the Dārōd and of the direction followed in their expansion can probably be gained from the distribution of the graves of Dārōd clan ancestors¹). The grave of Dārōd himself, a rough stone structure and not an elaborate domed tomb such as that of Sheikh Isāq, lies in extremely desolate country some twelve miles to the south-east of the village of Hadaftimo in Erigavo District of the British Protectorate, and some two miles off the Hadaftimo-Buran road. Harti, Dārōd's grandson, and founder of the great Harti division of the Dārōd clan-family is buried in a grave of similar construction but of smaller dimensions a further twelve miles south-south-east. According to Cerulli, he perished at the hands of the Galla who were contesting his power in the area. My informants did not know this tradition, but when I visited the grave pointed to a mound of stones near Harti's grave in which I was told his arm was buried. He has lost his arm, they said, in a *ḡihād* with the people of the area who were not specified (but may have been Galla) and perished shortly afterwards.

The distribution of the graves of subsequent Dārōd ancestors, the descendants of Harti, suggests as Cerulli has pointed out, a gradual movement of the Dārōd to the south-east. This expansion inland must have been underway about the 11/12th century if the traditional date of Dārōd's arrival is correct²); and according to traditions collected by Cerulli in Mijerteinia was accompanied by the expulsion of the earlier Galla inhabitants, and (from my own evidence) also of the Dir Somali. The great movements of the Dārōd into central and southern Somalia have been charted by Cerulli, but their expansion in northern Somaliland has hardly been touched upon. It is this northern migration which concerns us here.

The first secure mention of the Dārōd is in Šihāb ad-Dīn's 16th century *Futūh al-Ḥabaša*³) which constantly refers not to the Dārōd as such, but to that branch of them descended from Harti, and to other

¹) CERULLI, "Africa Italiana", 1931, p. 158.

²) I have suggested above that the connection between the eponym of the Dārōd clan and Ismā'il Ḥabartī of Zabīd is mythical. This does not, however, necessarily invalidate their pretensions to Arabian ancestry. It is possible that their ancestor was of less renown than the Zabīd saint, and that they should seek to attach themselves to the latter for the sake of prestige. And even if the traditions of descent from an immigrant Arabian are entirely false, it seems to me that the traditions themselves must be construed as representing an expansion of the Dārōd at about this time.

³) Ed. and trs. R. Basset, Paris, 1897-1909.

individual Dārōd clans. In the *Futūḥ*, the Harti are described as "the people of Mait", Mait being a small sea-port and today ruined city (probably of great antiquity) ¹⁾ on the coast of Erigavo in the British Protectorate. Of the most westerly of the Dārōd clans, those now living in the Harar-Jigjiga region, the Geri (who are traditionally supposed to have arrived there in the 16th century in the train of *Imām Aḥmad's* victorious armies), the Bartirre, and Yabarre ²⁾ are mentioned by name in the *Futūḥ*. Their whereabouts then is not specified, nor is it clear from the text, but they must have been in contact with the Marrehān Dārōd who today live south of the Ogādēn, since a dispute between the Geri and Marrehān is mentioned in the *Futūḥ*. This suggests I think, that the Marrehān were then north of their present position — perhaps in the Ogaden region — and expanding in the centre of Northern Somaliland while the Geri were moving further to the west with other Dārōd groups.

Traditions describing the occupation of the Ogaden region itself by the Dārōd clan of that name (the Ogādēn) have recently been published by Pirone ³⁾. From their original north-eastern seat, where according to my informants their ancestor is buried to the east of Erigavo, the Ogādēn had moved southwards into what is now the Mudug Province of Somalia, and from there had pressed north-westwards along the valleys of the Fafan and Gerer to the western extremities of the Ogaden. In this expansion they had to struggle with the Raitu and Arussi Galla and with groups of Dir and Hawiye ⁴⁾ for possession of pasturage and wells. It would thus appear that the Dārōd must have occupied the Ogaden by the 17th century, and probably have been there for some time, since it was only towards the end of the next century that they were able to cross the Shabelle River against strong Hawiye resistance and move into the Doi region of southern Somalia ⁵⁾. In any event, the Dir who by the 17th century and probably earlier had been driven out of most of north-eastern and central Somaliland, left behind them,

¹⁾ As well as figuring in the *Futūḥ*, Mait is marked on some 17th century maps of the Horn of Africa (e. g. in the "Blau Atlas", Amsterdam, 1665).

²⁾ This seems a more likely reading for the Arabic *يَبْرِي* than Basset's "Yibberi".

³⁾ PIRONE, *op. cit.*, 1954, p. 122.

⁴⁾ As far as I know the only Hawiye group today present in the east of Northern Somaliland is the Hawiye Rēr Fiqi Šinni who live amongst the Dūlbahante of the Protectorate.

⁵⁾ See CERULLI, *op. cit.*, 1926.

as the Galla had also done, indelible traces of their previous occupation in the residual Dir groups which are today found among the Ogādēn.

But if local tradition is correct, despite the development of the Dārōd during the 11th and 12th centuries, the Dir cannot have been decisively routed in what is today Erigavo District of the Protectorate. For when Sheikh Isāq, the founder of the present Isāq clans, settled in the ancient city of Mait in traditionally the 12/13th century, the area surrounding the port was still in the hands of the Dir, although no Galla are remembered as having still been in the vicinity ¹⁾. Moreover, Isāq married a Dir woman of the Magādle clan (see above p. 29) whose progeny form one of the great divisions of the Isāq clans — the Habar Magādle ²⁾. It would thus seem that the Dārōd were then still confined further to the east in the north of what is now the Mijertein Province of Somalia.

The ruins which lie some little distance to the west of the present port of Mait and close to Sheikh Isāq's striking tomb which is a famous place of pilgrimage, are traditionally the remains of the settlement founded by Sheikh Isāq and his followers and built probably upon earlier foundations ³⁾. Tradition states that when Sheikh Isāq arrived at Mait from the west where he had spent many years after crossing from Arabia to Zeila ⁴⁾, he found the Magādle Dir in possession of Mait and

¹⁾ Some historical connection between the Dārōd and Isāq can be established by the fact that the Ǫulbahante and four other minor Dārōd groups trace descent from the union of their collective ancestor, Harti Kōmbe, with a daughter of Arab, a son of Sheikh Isāq. According to present Dārōd genealogies Harti Kōmbe is the son of Dārōd's grandson, Kōmbe Kablallah. And this suggests a gap of at least about one century between Sheikh Isāq and Sheikh Dārōd.

²⁾ The Habar Magādle are the only Isāq group mentioned in the *Futūḥ al-Ḥabaša*. At least it seems that the "Habr Maqadī" (هبر مقدي) described in the *Futūḥ* are the Habar Magādle Isāq. The Isāq are not mentioned under the name Isāq, nor is there any reference to the easterly branch of the Isāq, the Habar Ḥabūšēd.

³⁾ At Mait fragments of Chinese porcelain are to be found scattered about on the topsoil round the ruins. These urgently require excavation, and since the port is referred to in the *Futūḥ* its excavation and the study of its connections with the other ruined towns of Northern Somaliland should throw very important light on a little-known aspect of Somali history. For a discussion of a preliminary investigation of some of the more important Northern Somali ruins, see A. T. CURLE, *The Ruined Towns of Somaliland*, "Antiquity", Sept., 1937, pp. 315-27.

⁴⁾ A very circumstantial account of the movements of Sheikh Isāq's forefathers in Arabia and of the Sheikh's own peregrinations both in Arabia

ruling the other Dir groups whose present-day representatives in this region have been mentioned above (p. 29). And as the Isāq expanded these earlier Dir communities were driven westwards and to the south towards their present positions, just as previously they had moved from the northeast corner of Somaliland under pressure from the growing Dārōd community. In their train the Isāq spread westwards and to the south-west, but did not penetrate as far in the latter direction as the Dārōd. In this general expansion the Isāq split up into their present component segments, one fraction of the Habar Yūnis clan, the Habar Yūnis Mūse 'Arre, remaining behind in the Mait region of Erigavo District as the custodians of the tomb of their founder, Sheikh Isāq. But it seems that if the Isāq were in fact in the Mait region in the 13th century as their traditions maintain, they must later have for a time lost Mait to the Harti Dārōd since it is they who are described in the 16th century *Futūḥ* as the "people of Mait".

V.

CONCLUSIONS.

The material presented in this paper makes it fairly certain that the people whom we now know as Galla did in fact occupy much of Northern Somaliland before the Somali. But by the time of Sheikh Dārōd's traditional arrival from Arabia in the 10/11th century, (or the growth of the Dārōd community about this time) the north-eastern coastal strip was occupied not by the Galla but by the Dir Somali who

prior to his arrival in Somaliland and in Ethiopia and Somaliland survives in local tradition. These traditions are recorded in Arabic in several manuscript and published hagiologies. One of the most recent of the latter is the *amḡād* of Šayḥ Ḥusēn bin Aḥmad Darwīš al-Isāqī aṣ-Šōmālī, Aden, 1955. For a life of the saint by one who has spent many years collecting these traditions, see 'ALĪ SHEIKH MAḤAMMAD, *The Origin of the Isāq peoples*, "The Somaliland Journal", Vol. 1, 1954, pp. 22-6 (Hargaisa, British Somaliland). So far these traditions have not been corroborated by any external evidence, and in the opinion of my friend Prof. R. B. Serjeant of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, would not be accepted as historically valid by Arabian historians. Thus, as in the case of Sheikh Dārōd, it seems unlikely that the historical origins claimed for Sheikh Isāq are authentic. Nevertheless, I believe that they have an important historical content at least in the sense that they represent an early expansion of the Isāq group and bring this into some sort of historical relationship with the earlier extension of the Dārōd.

still lived in the Mait region further to the west when Sheikh Isāq settled there in the 12/13th century. The Galla would seem thus to have already begun their westerly migrations at about this time as Huntingford suggests: certainly they were no longer dominant along the north-eastern coast of Northern Somaliland. But they were still apparently to be found in the Hargaisa region in the 12th century. And inland they must also have still been in the east if the Dārōd traditions of conflict with them are valid. They would appear, however, to have been driven further westward not long after. And later, the majority of the Dir were also expelled from north-eastern Somaliland, probably in the 13th and 14th centuries.

By the 17th century at least, the Dārōd and Isāq seem to have taken over much of north-eastern and central Northern Somaliland and also the Ogaden region. Other Dārōd had by this time penetrated as far west as Harar, where there were already Dir Somali established; and in the Jigjiga region the Galla who had earlier dominated the area were outnumbered by Somali immigrants.

Thus the present distribution of the Northern Somali seems to have been assumed by the 16/17th century, as is to be expected considerably earlier than in the south where many of the Somali movements of expansion are much more recent. It is of interest that I found no record in British Somaliland today of any of the other Somali groups who traditionally came from Northern Somaliland to settle in the south, except in the case of the Hawiye of whom a small group — the Rēr Fiqi Šinni — are found amongst the Dulbahante (Dārōd) clan of the east of the Protectorate.

The southwards expansion of the Somali from the shores of the Gulf of Aden still continues despite the establishment of international frontiers and Administrative control. It is very evident in the Northern Province of Kenya, and in the British Protectorate the Isāq now appear to be pushing outside the territory at the expense of the Dārōd into the Ogaden and Haud.

The brief chronicle presented here of some of the more important population movements in Northern Somaliland must remain tentative in the extreme. It is still unfortunately impossible to establish beyond doubt the validity of even the few key dates referred to. And there are also other very considerable difficulties which beset any attempt to disentangle the history of the Galla and Somali. Even the precise ethnic relationship of the two peoples remains obscure. It is sometimes held, for instance, that the Somali are merely people of Galla origin who have been Arabized by the incorporation of Arab immigrants and by

long and fairly intense contact with Arabian Islam ¹⁾. And it is certain that there has in fact been Arabian influence of this kind. The difficulties are not eased by the fact that the names "Galla" and "Somali" are first recorded only in the late 16th and early 15th centuries respectively; and it may be quite illegitimate to project them into the past with the assumption that they had the same ethnic and cultural connotations which they have today.

The truth is that at present there seems no means of telling whether the Somali of today are as a whole derived from those whom we now know as Galla, or whether they represent different branches of a common stock which, over a long period, has become increasingly differentiated. Some Galla in contact with Somali claim to be Dir in origin, stating that the Galla are Dir; and the Galla and Dir are certainly sometimes confused in local Somali traditions ²⁾. But whether such claims are historical or merely understandable attempts by the Galla to equate themselves with the Somali ³⁾ for reasons of prestige appears impossible to determine at the moment. Certainly existing Galla groups do not, as far as I know, figure in Dir genealogies today.

¹⁾ This is the view of Burton, *op. cit.*, and of R. E. DRAKE-BROCKMAN, *British Somaliland*, London, 1912, p. 68; and of others.

²⁾ Cf. PIRONE, *op. cit.*, 1954, p. 119.

³⁾ The Midgān bondsmen who are mainly leather-workers and barbers and generally despised by Somali, sometimes produce genealogies tracing descent from Dir Somali. These are regarded as fictions by noble Somali. Cf. K. L. G. GOLDSMITH and I. M. LEWIS, *A Preliminary Investigation of the Blood Groups of the sab Bondsmen of Northern Somaliland*, "Man", December 1958, pp. 188-190.
