

Shāwa, Ethiopia's Prussia. Its Expansion, Disappearance and Partition

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Since the fall of the Māngestu régime in 1991 a region known as Shāwa/Shoa has not existed any longer. Situated in the centre of Ethiopia with Addis Abāba as its capital Shāwa was the most populated province in the country. This region which was peopled by Oromo and by Amhara did not fit in with the ethnofederal principles of the new Ethiopian Constitution. Paradoxically Shāwa had already disappeared from 1936 to 1938 during the Italian occupation. However because of its rapid growth Addis Abāba has restored around the national capital a metropolitan region the territory of which extends over the former province area.

Disappearance, Reappearance and Partition²

Shoa as well as Tegray/Tegré is one of the Ethiopian regions which have their names recorded in a number of European languages : Choa in French, Shewa/Shoa in English, Schoa in German and Scioà in Italian. These spellings come from Xoa in Portuguese which appears on early XVIIth century maps based on accounts by Portuguese travellers, soldiers and missionaries who spent some time in the region which was the core of the Christian Kingdom before it was driven back to the north bank of the Abbay river under repeated attacks by *Graññ* and constant pressure of Oromo migration. The people of Shoa found themselves almost surrounded by Oromo territory and formed a kind of outpost in a border *marche*. As early as the first half of the XIXth century the kings of Shoa took advantage of their peripheral location to establish direct regular contacts with European powers without the kings of kings' permissions. This border region although facing the threat of the Wällo and Tulama Oromo even on its plateaus became the centre of Greater Ethiopia when its king Menilek came to the throne. He benefited from the growth of his new capital, Addis Abāba, which gained national capital status and was chosen as the terminus of the Djibouti railway line. However in the reigns of Menilek, of Zāwditu and in the first reign of Haylä Sellasé (till 1936) Shoa was not the largest or the most populated province (Harär was larger and the North and South-West had a larger population). The size of a region depended on the royal favour enjoyed by its chief : the *shum-sher*³ policy had also consequences on administrative divisions and for lack of accurate maps it is difficult to grasp the changes of territorial limits. It remains that for a long time the Europeans used the term Shoa to refer to Ethiopia just as Holland is commonly used to refer to the Netherlands.

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² Translated from French by Bernard LIGER (Paris).

³ The monarch had the right to appoint and to dismiss the chiefs without warning and used this to push aside the ambitious and to promote the faithful.

In 1936 the Italians banned any reference to Shoa which was a distasteful reminder of their defeat at Adwa. Their victor Menilek was after all the king of this region which had brought together all the *ras* and Ethiopian provinces to form an alliance, however short-lived it was to be. Because of their mixed origins, being both Amhara and Oromo, Shoans resisted the « divide and rule » doctrine implemented by the occupying power (Gascon 1988). It had reorganized the *Impero* on a language basis : *Amara, Eritrea, Somalia* and *Galla e Sidama* (Guida, 1938). Around the capital city remained a small *Governato d'Addis Abeba*. It must be remembered that in 1945 the Allies removed Prussia from the map of Germany because it embodied German nationalism. After their reunification in 1990 the Germans opposed the fusion of the Berlin and Brandenburg *Länder* possibly because it brought back bad memories⁴. Was this due to regret or remorse ? We cannot say. In 1938 Viceroy Amedeo d'Aosta re-established a *Governato del Scioà* which was larger than the previous *Governato d'Addis Abeba*. He probably meant to appease the Ethiopians after the bloody repression ordered by Viceroy Graziani and to encourage allegiance. There must have been other considerations such as the construction of the road network radiating from Menilek's capital.

When Ethiopia regained its independence in 1941 Shoa was re-established to its former status and recovered its previous territorial and population expansion. The centralization policy initiated in the second reign of Haylā Sellasé was continued during the Revolution : despite the loss of its monarch the spirit of the empire remained (Tubiana, 1978). The fall of Mängestu's *Panzersozialismus* in 1991 annihilated the rise of Shoa and of Addis Abäba. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia was ratified in 1994 and confirmed the 1991 division of the national territory into state-regions (*kellel*) on an ethno-linguistic basis. It results that Shoa is no longer a capital region. Mälläs Zénawi's opponents consider this omission as evidence of the « Tegrean » administration hostile intentions towards Shoa and towards the capital city which have been the symbols of Amhara or Amhara-Oromo central power. In fact it was preceded by a division decided in 1987 by the *Shāngo* (Parliament) convened by Mängestu Haylā Maryam. However Shoa still exists through its various zones which themselves are subdivisions either of the Amhara *kellel* or of the Oromia/*Oromiyaa kellel*⁵. It also lost Addis Abäba which is now the federal capital locked within a small territory reminiscent of the Brussels capital region, an enclave inside Flanders. Should we consider that this division of Shoa has weakened or strengthened the region ? Has Addis Abäba been cut off from Shoa or has its urban attraction recreated a « Shoan » metropolis within the sphere of influence of the national capital. It is remarkable that in everyday life people still refer to the former regions which have either disappeared or been reduced to zone status. The *Ethiopian Mapping Agency* keeps selling a map of Ethiopia showing the 1987 administrative limits !

Choa and federalism

The First Partition of Greater Shoa (1987)

In 1984 Shoa, Greater Shoa had an area of 85,000 km² and a population of over 9.5 million inhabitants, such a figure resulting from the size of the capital. The population density (68 inhabitants/km²) was twice the national average (n° 5). On about 7 % of the

⁴ In present day Germany Prussia is still used in the name of a heritage foundation for the preservation of major monuments.

⁵ Oromia in English, Oromiyaa in Oromifaa.

national territory lived 23 % of the Ethiopian population. To the North it extended on the highlands as far as the Blue Nile canyon on the border with Gojjam and as far as Mount Abuyä Méda on the border of Wällo. To the East it plunged into the Afar Triangle to the borders of Harärgé which followed the Awash river as far as Awash-station and included the middle Awash valley and the lakes of the Rift depression as far as Shashāmané to the South. Its southern limits ran along the Waläyta mountains and met the Omo canyon to the West on the borders of Käfa. To the North-West Shoa extended as far as Baqo on the Gibé river sharing there the Métcha highlands with Wällägga. North of Addis Abäba this Greater Shoa was peopled mainly by Amhara with an important Oromo minority on the borders of Wällo. To the West and to the South-East of the capital the Oromo were predominant and the Afar were present in the lowlands of the Awash valley. Also part of Shoa the highlands situated west of the Rift had a dense Guragé, Hadiya and Känbata population relying on *ensät* cultivation⁶. Greater Shoa and Greater Ethiopia sustained parallel growths and we shall later draw lessons from their formation.

The 1987 administrative reform was unveiled on the Shängo (Parliament) opening day ; it split Greater Shoa into four regions Addis Abäba, West-Shoa (capital : Wälliso), South-Shoa (capital : Zeway) and North-Shoa (capital : Däbrä Berhan). The latter district was later to be divided into North-Shoa and South-East Shoa (capital : Nazrét).

n° 1 : Population, Area and Density of Divided Shoa (*Shängo*, 1987)

North-Shoa (Däbrä Berhan)		
2 683 793 h	36 205 km ²	74 h/km ²
South-Shoa (Zeway)		
2 776 486 h	17 035 km ²	163 h/km ²
West-Shoa (Wälliso)		
2 248 797 h	20 724 km ²	108 h/km ²
Addis Abäba		
2 685 053 h	11 127 km ²	241 h/km ²
Shoa Total		
10 399 129 h	85 091 km ²	122 h/km ²

This hasty reform meant to show that the *Därg*⁷ era was over and that from then on the country was stepping into stability with the proclamation of the People's Socialist Republic of Ethiopia. Already Commander in chief and Secretary General of the Party Mängestu was an obvious choice for president. This new administrative map did not survive the collapse of the comrade-president's régime but it is an important turning point (Gascon, 1988). The divisions were smaller and more numerous, the administration was closer to the people probably to keep it under tighter control. The 1987 reform created for the first time a new category : the peripheral regions of Eritrea, Tegray, Afar, Dirré Dawa and Ogadén were granted an autonomous status. Their local Parliaments elected an executive endowed with a number of basically cultural prerogatives. None of the four regions resulting from the division of Greater Shoa acquired an autonomous status. Shoa as the « capital » province was probably far too central for a strong régime not to keep a tight hand on it.

⁶ *Ensete edule*.

⁷ Amharic for Provisional Military Administrative Committee (PMAC)

How Shoa Disappeared and Multiplied (1991-1994)

As soon as it seized power in Addis Abāba at the end of May 1991 the transitional coalition government headed by Mällās Zénawi leader of the Tegray People Liberation Front (TPLF) put on its agenda as a priority the partition of the Ethiopian territory on ethno-federalist lines. It quickly started to divide the country into « homogeneous » state-regions (*kellel*) according to « ethnic » characteristics, basically on linguistic criteria. The 1994 Constitution of the Democratic Federal Republic later endorsed the division and extended the content of autonomy, going as far to recognize the right for every people, nation or nationality to secede (Gascon, 2006). The « multi-ethnic » Greater Shoa which had expanded while « multi-ethnic » Greater Ethiopia was unified and centralised did not fit in with the principles of the new Constitution. However Greater Shoa has not disappeared completely but has been relegated to an inferior administrative status. It is now confined to the status of zone, a subdivision of an homogeneous *kellel*. The *awrajja* (provinces) which were subdivisions of the former regions no longer exist and there is now no intermediate level between the zone (former region) and the *wäräda* (district). West-Shoa (capital : Ambo), North-West-Shoa (capital : Fiché) and East-Shoa (capital : Nazrét) are parts of the Oromia/*Oromiyaa kellel*. North-Shoa (capital : Däbrä Berhan) is one of the zones in the Amharakellel .

n° 2 : Population, Area and Population Density of the Zones Called Shoa (CSA, 1998)

West-Shoa (<i>Oromiyaa</i>)		
2 329 699 h	21 551 km ²	108 h/km ²
East-Shoa (<i>Oromiyaa</i>)		
1 668 184 h	13 624 km ²	122 h/km ²
North-West-Shoa (<i>Oromiyaa</i>)		
1 157 978 h	11 376 km ²	102 h/km ²
North-Shoa (Amhara)		
1 560 916 h	16 070 km ²	97 h/km ²
Addis Abāba		
2 112 737 h	530 km ²	3 986 h/km ²
Shoa Total		
8 829 514 h	62 751 km ²	141 h/km ²

However the new disivision has deprived Greater Shoa from an important part of its population and territory and has created an enclave. In 1991 previous limits were ignored when former South-Shoa was split between the Oromia *kellel* and the Guragé-Hadiya-Känbata *kellel*. In 1994 the latter *kellel* eventually became a zone of the South *kellel* which was itself later reorganized when the Silté zone was created. It must be noted that the South *kellel* is not exactly an homegeneous entity (Gascon, 2006). Addis Abāba was not integrated into Oromia and it forms an urban federal enclave within narrow limits. This is an effort to prevent the capital to extend its cosmopolitan influence (i.e. : Amhara centered⁸) on *Oromiyaa*. It is inspired by a kind of Brussels approach. Before the 2005 elections those Oromo who supported the coalition government obtained that Addis Abāba/Finfinnee⁹ was substituted to Nazrét/Adamaa as the capital of their region. Being unable to contain its attraction on *Oromiyaa* they hope

⁸ More than 80 % of the population of Addis Abāba speak Amharic (CSA, 1998).

⁹ Addis Abāba in Amhareña, Finfinnee in Oromifaa.

to repatriate Addis Abäba to their territory. There is severe tension between the population of the federal capital and both federal and Oromo administrations who belong to the same coalition. This is because the capital has massively returned opposition MPs who in the majority combat federalism which they consider to be manipulated by Mälläs and the Tegray people.

Governments in power frequently try to contain and to limit the influence of macrocephalous capitals because they fear their political economic or cultural weights. There are numerous examples in Africa, in Ivory Coast, Egypt, Nigeria and Tanzania or outside Africa in Brazil... It is not the case in Ethiopia where there are no plans for a new capital. Since the foundation of the capital in 1887 successive governments have shown interest in the region : it was promoted, divided, shrunk or obliterated. We shall therefore consider the hypothesis of a « Prussian » process.

« ETHIOPIA'S PRUSSIA »

« *By Blood and By Fire* » (1889-1935)

In the XIXth century the unification of Ethiopia was implemented around the kingdom of Shoa under Menilek's leadership. This expansion was contemporary with the Nationalities Movement which led to the unification of Italy and to the foundation of the German Empire. Bismarck's motto : « By blood and by fire » may be applied to Ethiopia to describe the policies of the XIXth century successive *negus*. Because they were in close contact with the Slavs the Prussians headed the German reconquest east of the Elbe and Oder rivers and became the undisputed champions of German unity. Similarly, because Shoa was a frontier confronted with Oromo expansion it headed the formation of Greater Ethiopia. Like Bismarck Menilek had to defeat many competitors. In the reign of *negus* Téwodros (1855-1868) Shoa lost its high degree of autonomy which resulted from its peripheral position. The king captured the Shoan heir Menilek and held him prisoner until he escaped and was sheltered by the Tulama Oromo (1865). Once King of Shoa he had to pay allegiance to the King of Kings Yohannes who came from Tegray. Menilek found no objection to sign a controversial treaty with Italy then at war with his suzerain before turning back to defeat the Italians at the battle of Adwa (1896)¹⁰. From his base in the « Old Shoa »¹¹ highlands peopled with Amhara he had removed the threat of the Wällo Oromo in the North while pushing south towards the Awash river to subjugate the Tulama and Metcha Oromo. New Shoa refers to the territories annexed in the 1880s. This incubation period ended with the creation of Addis Abäba on the border between the two Shoa in 1887 and the coronation of Menilek in 1889. The King and his lieutenants planned the systematic construction of a road network lined with fortified towns (*kätäma*) where garrisons were stationed (Gascon, 1989). The soldiers married local women and markets prospered. Gradually some Oromo enlisted in Shoan troops, adopted Ethiopian Christianity and were granted land concessions. Chiefs joined the Royal Family through marriages. In short Menilek's reconstruction efforts could be described by an Italian monarch's statement : *L'Etiochia farà da se*¹².

¹⁰ When he signed the Wutchalé treaty did Menilek recognize the Italian protecorate ? Once he was king of kings he denounced it using as a pretext discrepancies between and the Italian and Amharic versions.

¹¹ J. Tubiana.

¹² King Charles-Albert of Piémont-Sardaigne said in 1848 : *L'Italia farà da se* [*Italy will unite by itself*].

Extending from Wällo and the Nile in the North, to the Awash river in the South and East and to the Omo river in the South and West Greater Shoa was a testing ground which Menilek used to develop the tools of his expansion (local recruitment, conversion of local leaders to Christianity, intermarriages, land concessions and *kätäma*) which helped him to defeat the Italians (1896) and to push the limits of his possessions beyond the highlands. Until 1935 the frontiers of Shoa remained fairly stable as far as it is possible to understand from inaccurate maps (Zervos, 1935). It must be remembered that Royal favour could promote or demote individuals as well as affect the size of provinces. Nevertheless Shoa got the upper hand of the northern provinces once bordering the Red Sea but then cut off from it by Eritrea and became the gateway to the outside world when the railway reached Addis Abäba in 1917. But the Harär region could have hampered the development of Shoa as it had been served by the railway since 1902 and was the personal possession of the future Haylä Sellasé. This was not to be. This is due to the fact that the province of Shoa benefited from the presence of the political power in the capital which gave its market a nationwide attraction. Under the Italian occupation Shoa was obliterated in 1936 (n° 3) and resurrected in 1938. This shows how hesitant and inconsistent the new masters were. There is no doubt that the re-establishment of a *governato* called *Scioà* was an effort to appease the Ethiopians. However the Italians could not escape the recognition of Shoa because they had chosen Addis Abäba as the capital of *Africa Orientale Italiana* and the hub of their road network. In fact this decision was the last posthumous revenge of the victor of Adwa.

n° 3 : Population, Area and Population Density of the *Governato d'Addis Abeba* (1936)

300 000 h	7 000 km ²	43 h/km ²
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This *Scioà* was peopled by Oromo and Amhara that the Italians tried to divide to stir up opposition between them (Gascon, 1988). It re-established the nucleus which had been at the core of the Greater Ethiopia aggregation process. Because the Italian occupation was too short we are unable to evaluate the consequences of this resurrection. We know that the resistance entrenched in Old Shoa was led by Amhara and Oromo chiefs and never showed a sign of weakness.

Greater Shoa (1942-1987)

Once reinstated to the throne in 1941 Haylä Sellasé hastened the pace of the reforms he had started before 1936. He took advantage of the waning influence of local dynasties who had suffered heavy losses because of the Italian repression or had compromised themselves with the occupant and he appointed civil servants to posts in new centralised administrative divisions. He created an Ethiopian Police Force, a Regular Army and Courts of Justice. He made use of the road network, the airfields, the telephone service and the various official buldings left by the occupant. The 12 governorate-generals (regions after 1975) were established around Shoa's central position. In 1942 new Shoa was extended to the Awash river and to Guragé country (Perham, 1948). The plantations which had been planned or started by the Italians were distributed to Haylä Sellasé's favourites and found themselves in the capital province. In the early 1960s Känbata and the Rift as far as Shashämané were annexed (Huffnagel, 1961). New land and an abundant Känbata work force were good opportunities for urban investors. The 1970 and 1984 censuses showed that Shoa which had the highest and densest population in the country attracted the peoples and the products of Ethiopia. It had the most

important education, industrial and health services (Atlas, 1988). The railway and the roads were a serious help in the unification of Old and New Shoa districts. From then on, the cities of the Christian Kingdom (Däbrä Berhan, Ankobär, Däbrä Sina), the *kätäma* founded by Menelik and his lieutenants (Holäta, Addis Aläm) and the stopping places (Ambo, Wäliso) on the highways leading to the coffee growing regions (Wällägga et Jimma) were attracted by the influence of the capital.

n° 4 : Greater Shoa and its *awarajja* (CSA, 1984)

<i>Awrajja</i>	Capital
Chäbo & Guragé	Wäliso
Haykoch & Butajira	Zeway
Jibat & Métcha	Ambo
Känbata & Hadiya	Hosaäna
Märhabété	Aläm Kätäma
Männagäsha	Addis Abäba
Mänz & Gishé	Mähal Méda
Sälalé	Fiché
Tägulät & Bulga	Däbrä Berhan
Yärär & Karayu	Nazrét
Yefat & Temuga	Éféson

n° 5 : Population, Area and Population Density of Greater Shoa

1970 Census		
4 923 906 h	85 500 km ²	58 h/km ²
1984 Census		
9 503 140 h	85 500 km ²	111 h/km ²

Despite the deficiencies of the different censuses and the territorial changes we can observe a constant increase in the population of Shoa. The 1984 census indicated there were almost twice as many inhabitants in the capital province than in 1970 (n° 5). The estimation ordered by the *Shängo* in 1987 showed that the expansion continued (n° 1). From 1991 onwards it is no longer possible to estimate the changes in the population numbers. As we know, former South-Shoa has been divided between the *Oromiyaa* and the Guragé-Känbata-Hadiya *kellel* without taking the former limits into consideration. Moreover the latter *kellel* was integrated in 1994 into the South *kellel* which also experienced a revised distribution of its zones when the Silté zone was created. The total area of the zones still bearing the name of Shoa is only the three fifths of the Greater Shoa area. The loss of 2 million people in the 1994 census (CSA, 1998) was generously compensated by 2004 when the three zones plus the capital had a total population 2 million above the 1987 figure. Population estimates suggest a 50 % increase between 1994 and 2004 (n° 6). This gives all the measure of the huge rural migration towards Addis Abäba which brings activity to the whole of former Shoa and to the northern zones of the South *kellel*.

n° 6 : Population, Area, Population Density and Capitals of the Zones of Former Shoa (CSA, 2004)

West-Shoa (Ambo)		
3 203 622 h	21 551 km ²	149 h/km ²
East-Shoa (Nazrét)		
2 397 498 h	13 624 km ²	176 h/km ²
Addis Abäba		
2 886 996 h	530 km ²	5 445 h/km ²
North-West Shoa (Fiché)		
1 582 707 h	11 376 km ²	139 h/km ²
North Shoa (Däbrä Berhan)		
2 103 455 h	16 070 km ²	131 h/km ²
Shoa total		
12 174 278 h	62 751 km ²	194 h/km ²

Shoa a Metropolitan Conurbation

Shoa was the region with the highest urban population rate in 1970 as well as in 1984. There is now a general growth of the towns in the three zones still called Shoa : the population of Ambo had a five fold increase in thirty five years, Däbrä Berhan a four fold increase. This growth is particularly strong in the Awash valley and in the Rift where many commercial farms are located (Mojjo, Nazrét, Wänji, Mätahara in the middle Awash valley and Mäti, Zeway, Nägälé et Shashämané in the Rift). The Oromo and Amhara cereal cultivators in the highlands have in their majority closely mixed for over a century and the winding limit between North-Shoa (a zone in Amhara *kellel*) and North-West-Shoa (a zone in Oromiyaa *kellel*) was particularly difficult to draw. Addis Abäba has attracted many migrants from all over Ethiopia : the Guragé are known for running the Mercato and the Somali are coming in numbers. Providing for the increasing needs of the capital, eucalyptus forests and vegetable gardens are flourishing and now extend beyond the narrow limits of the city into *Oromiyaa*. Since 2004 the authorities have leased vegetable and flower greenhouses to ethio-foreign firms on the outskirts of the city but in Oromo territory. Located one hour away from the airport they export their production to world markets with the benefit of the reduced cost of Ethiopian labour. Between Addis Abäba (2,800,000 inhabitants) in the North-West and Nazrét (208,116 inhabitants) in the South-East there is a continuous line of factories, workshops and warehouses along the main road and the railway on the way down to the Rift valley. Addis Abäba forms with Aqaqi, Qalliti, Däbrä Zäyt/Bishoftu¹³ (119,393 inhabitants) and Mojjo an industrial conurbation (CSA, 2004). Local businesses often in partnership with Chinese, Indian and Japanese firms take full advantage of the good road and rail connections and of the abundant labour. The Shoan metropolitan conurbation which links the capital to Nazrét (third city in the country) enjoys a remarkable development also affecting the towns in between (35,000 inhabitants to 20,000 inhabitants), typically Däbrä Zäyt, now the ninth city in the country. If its growth rate continues the conurbation will see its population rise from 3,200,000 inhabitants in 2004 to 4,000,000 inhabitants in the near future. Its population

¹³ Däbrä Zäyt in Amhareña, Bishoftu in Oromifaa.

is now closer to a third than to a fourth of the total figure of the Shoa zones. As a comparison it must be remembered that the Tegray *kellel* Mälläs's political basis has a population slightly above 6,000,000.

After its partition into three *kellel* Shoa returns under a new shape, that of an industrial-urban region around the national capital acting now as a melting-pot of Ethiopian identity in the same way Shoa did earlier. Like Prussia it was initially a frontier zone and it has become the heart of an empire. However Prussia had acquired a strong industrial position in Rhineland which helped its political rise. With due respect to obvious differences in the case of Shoa, the aggregation of tertiary and industrial activities around the political core of Ethiopia could be compared to the annexion of Rhineland by Prussia.

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Tables

- n° 1 : Population, Area and Density of Divided Shoa
- n° 2 : Population, Area and Population Density of the Zones Called Shoa
- n° 3 : Population, Area and Population Density of the *Governato d'Addis Abeba* (1936)
- n° 4 : Greater Shoa and its *awarajja*
- n° 5 : Population, Area and Population Density of Greater Shoa
- n° 6 :

Maps :

- fig. 1a : Shoa/Shäwa (before 1935)
- fig. 1b : *Scioà* (after 1938)
- fig. 2 : Shoa and its *awrajja* before 1987
- fig. 3a : Ethiopia and Eritrea before the 1987 Administrative Reform
- fig. 3b : Ethiopia and Eritrea after the 1987 Administrative Reform
- fig. 4 : Population, Area, Population Density and Capitals of the Zones of Former Shoa

fig. 1a : Shoa/Shāwa (before 1935)

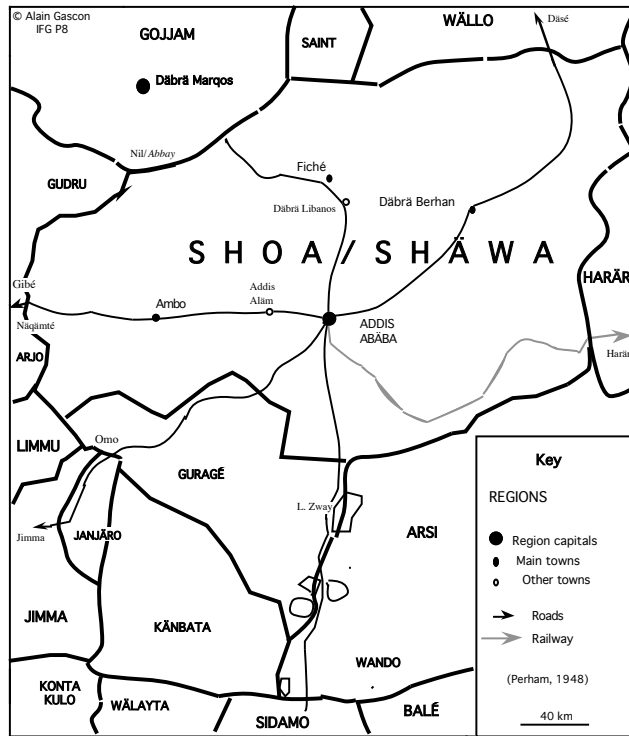


fig. 1b : Scioà (after 1938)

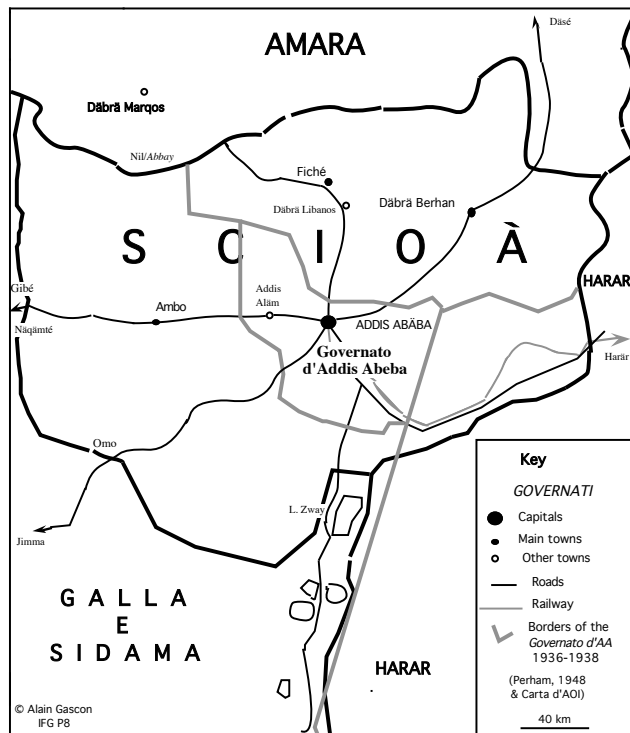


fig. 2 : Shoa and its *awrajja* before 1987

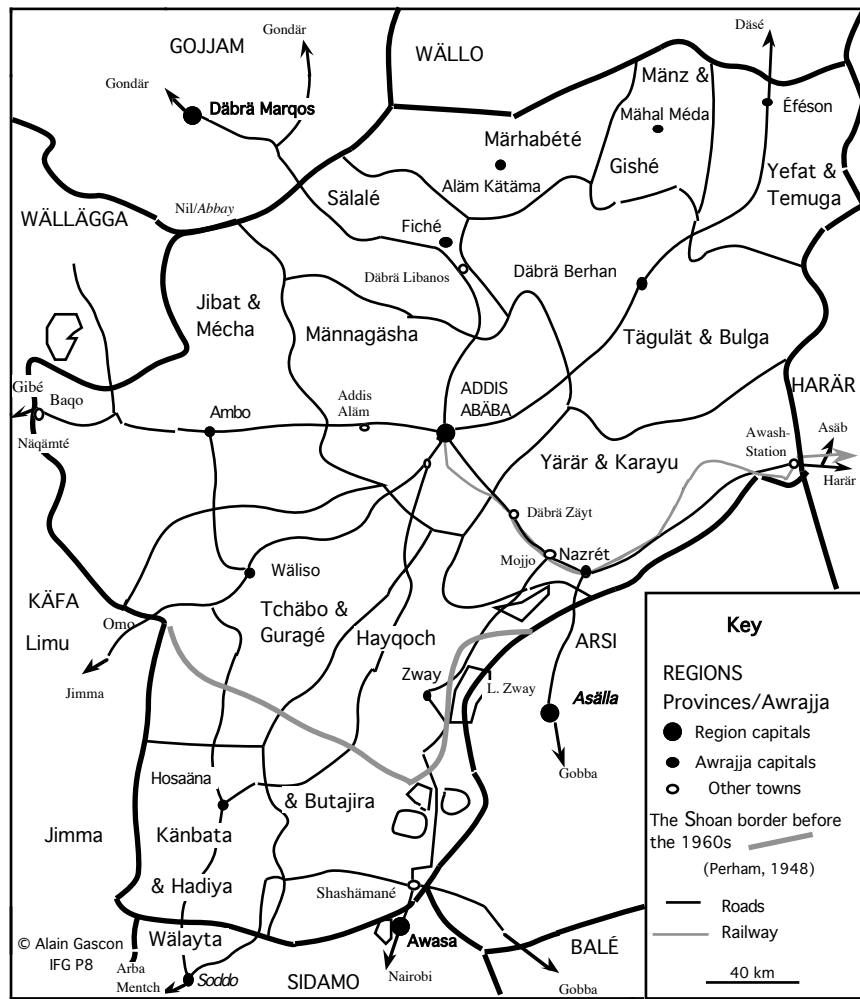


fig. 3a : Ethiopia and Eritrea before the 1987 Administrative Reform

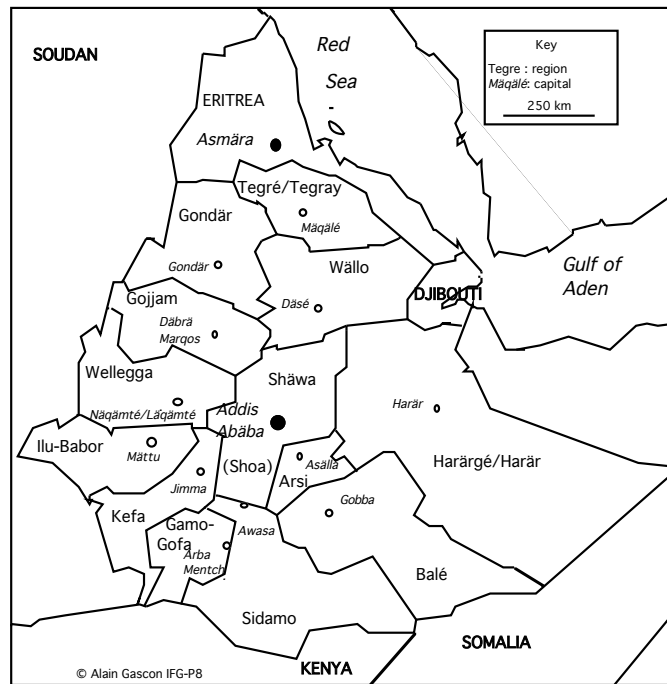


fig. 3b : Ethiopia and Eritrea after the 1987 Administrative Reform

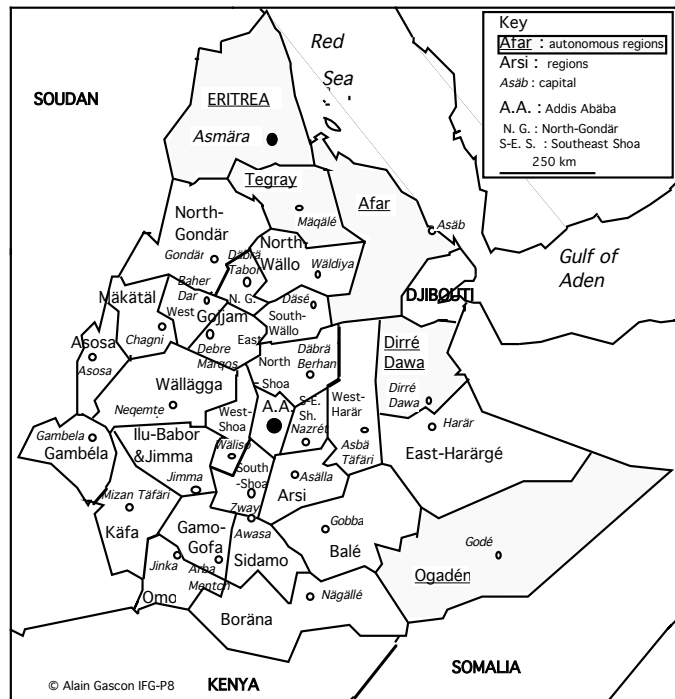


fig 4: **ETHIOPIA**
Kellel
 and
 zones

