Conquest and its impacts on the Gibe Oromo states: Evidence from Limmu Enarea Ca. 1880s-1910

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Abstract: This paper principally investigates the conquest and its impacts on the Gibe Oromo states, emphasizing on Limmu Enarea. Limmu Enarea was one of the five Gibe Oromo states politically well consolidated, economically prosperous and socially organized under Gadaa system before the conquest. However, Menelik conquest of the Gibe region in general and Limmu Ennarya in particular brought serious challenges such as socio-economic exploitation, administration restructuring, imposition of new cultures, land tenure system, plundering of the soldiers and environmental degradation. The data used in this paper was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were collected through interviewing with elders purposively selected from the local communities based on their knowledge and experiences about the title under study. In addition to primary sources, secondary sources such as books, journals, articles and thesis were consulted based on its relevance to the topic so as to supplement the primary information obtained from oral informants. Then, all data collected were finally analyzed

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

In Ethiopian history, the mid-nineteenth century saw the great expedition of Menelik II and his counter parts to incorporate independent states and peoples of southern, southwestern and western Ethiopia. Of these, the Gibe Oromo states in general and Limmu Enarea in particular from an access/download; Manuscript - with author details Click here to access/download; Manuscript - with author details; Limmu on edition.docx were areas conquered by Menelik II in the last decade of nineteenth century. Though conquest of Gibe Oromo States allowed the emperor to secure economic gains that would strengthen his political and military power, it brought adverse impacts on the conquered peoples economically, politically and socially. Although Menelik conquest of Limmu Enarea had paramount impact on local community socially, politically and economically previous researchers did not give attention to investigate such impact as a separate theme. It is from this background that the authors tried to study conquest and its impacts on Gibe Oromo States with special reference to Limmu Enarea. The findings of study also indicate that the conquest had adverse impact on Gibe Oromo States in general and Limmu Enarea in particular.
and interpreted qualitatively based on historical research method. The finding of this work reveals that Menelik conquest of Limmu had paramount impact on local community socially, politically and economically.

**Subjects: History; Modern History; Political History**

**Keywords: Gibe Oromo states; Limmu Enarea; conquest; impacts**

In Ethiopian history, the mid-nineteenth century saw the great expedition of Menelik II and his counter parts to incorporate independent states and peoples of southern, southwestern and western Ethiopia. Of these, the Gibe Oromo states in general and Limmu Enarea in particular were areas conquered by Menelik II in the last decade of nineteenth century. Although conquest of Gibe Oromo States allowed the emperor to secure economic gains that would strengthen his political and military power, it brought adverse impacts on the conquered peoples economically, politically and socially. Although Menelik conquest of Limmu Enarea had paramount impact on local community socially, politically and economically previous researchers did not give attention to investigate such impact as a separate theme. It is from this background that the authors tried to study conquest and its impacts on Gibe Oromo States with special reference to Limmu Enarea. The findings of study also indicate that the conquest had adverse impact on Gibe Oromo States in general and Limmu Enarea in particular.

1. **Introduction**

The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the conquest and colonization of independent states and peoples of southern, southwestern and western Ethiopia. The Gibe Oromo states were among the southwestern states that were targeted for conquest by both Shawa and Gojam in the late 1870s. In fact, the time was unfortunate time for the Gibe Oromo states because it was a time when they were trying to become powerful in the region by controlling different commercial centers in the one hand and suffered leadership crisis in the other (Tesema, 2008).

Similarly, it was also a big question for the Gibe Oromo states either to accept or resist alien conquest at any cost. However, it was only Abba Jifar II of Jimma kingdom who chose to submit peacefully and continued to rule his own kingdom, manage his internal affairs and make his own decisions. While others like Limmu Enarea, Guma, Gera and Goma tried unsuccessful resistance and lost. Although, the conquest had paramount impact on the kingdoms, it was much higher in Limmu Enarea where the conqueror settled for many years basing as garrison center. This made Limmu Enarea exceptional from other Gibe Oromo States and imposed negative impacts economically, politically and socially (Guluma, 1996).

2. **The condition of Limmu Enarea in pre-conquest period**

Geographically, Limmu kingdom was bordered by the Oromo kingdom of Guma in the west, Nono and Wama River in the north, Jimma kingdom in the southeast and Goma in the south. Nowadays, the kingdom survived with little modifications as one district of Jimma administrative zone. Look at the map below

**Map taken from (Abir, 1965).**

Limmu Enarea was established in 1800 and Bofo Boko or Abba Gomol was its first leader. He led the kingdom up to 1825. However, the kingdom was politically consolidated during the reign of Abba Bagibo or Ibsa. According to D’Abbadie Abba Bagibo was an extra ordinary leader, exceedingly tolerant and man of peace. He further stated that, Abba Bagibo made peaceful relationship with Gama Moras of Guduru, Haile Melekot of Shawa, Gaki Serecko of Kafa and Abba Jifar I of
Jimma for the prosperity of his kingdom through trade. For technical support, Abba Bagibo facilitated the establishment of Catholic missionary in his kingdom as well as Gera and Kafa (Hassan, 2007).

Economically, Limmu was the most important among the other Gibe states until 1860. The region served as a commercial center for the whole Gibe region until it was eclipsed by Jimma kingdom after the 1860s. The caravan merchants from Basso to Bonga passed through Saqa, the market center of the kingdom. Saqa as commercial center of Limmu Enarea attracted long distance trade merchants from different corners of the country in the nineteenth century. Ivory, gold, slave, civet, coffee and other commodities were the principal trade items of the region. Supporting this idea, Mohammed Hassen stated that Limmu Enarea played dominant role in trade in the first half of nineteenth century because of its strategic location in the trade of Gibe region, the dynamic Oromo merchant class called Afkala, the organization of the trade and abundance of trading goods in the region (Abir, 1965; Aragay, 1988; Charles, 1843; Hassen, 1994; Regassa & Gemechu, 2015; Wasihun, 2018).

Merid Wolde Aragay also stated that in the first half of nineteenth century, there was shift in export production southwards from Lake Tana region centered in Gondar to that of Limmu Enarea. Such shifts would have stimulated the production of coffee which flourished especially in Limmu Enarea. He further stated that Limmu Enarea exported large quantity and quality coffee through the port of Zeila in the first half of nineteenth century. Charles Beke also asserted that tools like daggers, blades; clothes with ornamented borders and silver that were much better than anywhere else in Abyssinia were also flourished in Limmu Enarea (Aragay, 1988).

Although gradual socio-economic and political transformation among the Gibe Oromo states in general and Limmu Enarea in particular brought the gradual decline of Gadaa system, the system did not completely abandon in Limmu until the area was conquered by Menelik II. Odaa Hulle had been served all Oromo clans settled in the Gibe region including Limmu as their Gadaa center since they crossed the Gibe river. After they left Odaa Hulle, Limmu Oromo clans also established their own Gadaa center at Odaa Tujoo in Limmu (Wasihun, 2018). Eshetu Erana also asserted that Abba Bagibo practiced Gadaa system and Qaalluu institutions in his kingdom even after the introduction of Islam to the region. Similarly, the work of Antoine D’Abbadie also clarifies that Abba Bagibo practiced and protected traditional Oromo religion while he was the Muslim king of Limmu Enarea.
D’Abbadie further explained his eye witness accounts in Limmu Enarea in 1843 when Abba Bagibo himself led sacrificial practice as follow:

…… the king himself walks towards the sacrificial animals pronouncing loudly oh God ‘ I give you a bull, So that you favor us, protect our country, guide our soldiers prosper our country and multiply our cows! I give you a bull, I give you a bull. This done the animal was knocked down and the king cut its throat with a saber, without stooping to do so. A small piece of meat was cut from above the eye and it was thrown into the fire together with myrrh and incense. Then, all the courtiers returned to the palace someone told me that the slaves of the king would eat the flesh of the sacrificed animal (Erana, 2009; Hassan, 2007).

The work of D’Abbadie further stated that Abba Bagibo believed in the importance of Jila, the Oromo pilgrims to the land of Abba Muudaa was a blessing to his kingdom and its people. The king not only treated the Jila kindly, but he also sent gifts to the Abba Muudaa himself. Guluma Gemeda again investigated that Abba Bagibo was converted to Islam during early years of his rule and from that period he maintained some clerics at his court to encourage him in spreading Islam. Equally important, he also stated that Abba Bagibo also tolerated traditional religious practices of Limmu Oromo (Gemeda, 1993; Hassan, 2007).

Mohammed Hassen also stated that Gibe Oromo states practiced Gadaa system even after the introduction of Islam to the region. He further discloses that the two institutions Gadaa and Qaalluu were not instantly abandoned. Instead during the first stage of the spread of Islam over the region, the people including the kings retained their indigenous religion parallel to Islam and Islam that was introduced to the Oromo was customized to their condition without radically uprooting the former religion. Generally, the Oromo society of the Gibe region witnessed a flourishing of trade, the spread of Islam, home of civilization and economic progress unsurpassed in any Oromo areas of Ethiopia in the pre-conquest period. Later on, the wealth of the kingdom attracted the envy of Amhara neighbors from Gojjam and Shawa in 1880s (Hassen, 1994).

3. The conquest Limmu Enarea

Unlike the pre-conquest period, the conquest of Limmu Enarea brought multi-faceted challenges against the local communities. During the first phase of the conquest from 1882 to 1886, Ras Gobana appointed indigenous elite into the administration of Limmu Enarea. As a result, the Oromo balabbat remained strong and acted as an important intermediary between Ras Gobana and local people. It was the local rulers who collected tribute and sent to Ras Gobana that in turn sent to imperial office. This means it was a kind of indirect rule where by authority was given to local rulers to perform all activities in the kingdom. In addition to tribute, local residents were required to pay tax known as asrat (one-tenth of the annual harvest) that submitted to the granaries of the region’s governor and used for temporary support for newly arrived settlers until they received maderia land and became self-sufficient. Later on, heavy tributes collected from each household in the kingdom irritated the local community and agitated them to revolt against Menelik’s hegemony. In 1886, Menelik understood the wide spread of resistance in Limmu Enarea and other Gibe states and suspected the power of Ras Gobana who acquired recognition from all Maccaw Oromo of the southwest and western region. Although sources are silent about antagonism between Ras Gobana and Menelik, Triulzi stated that Menelik fears Ras Gobana’s growing power and wealth by the mid 1880s (Triulzi, 2002; Gulema 1996b).

Subsequently, Menelik made some administrative changes in the Oromo principalities of the Gibe region including Limmu. In the mean time, loyal officials from Shawa were appointed instead of Ras Gobana to govern the Gibe region. Accordingly, Ras Wolde Giorgis was appointed over Limmu and Goma kingdoms, Dejazmach Basha Aboye was assigned to rule Gera and Guma was given to Dejazmach Tasama Nadew (Gulema, 1996b). While Ras Gobana was confined to the governorship of Wallaga until his death in 1888. According to Shalama Kabe, the health condition of Ras Gobana...
was deteriorated after he ate poison food given to him on big ceremony prepared by Emperor Menelik that lasted his life in 1888 and the following was written by Menelik on his grave.

The patriot who conquered from Shawa to Sudan
Gobana, Abba Xigu rested here
Unlike Ras Gobana, Wolde Giorgis and his deputy general Tekleab were sent with hundreds of thousand soldiers to Limmu in 1886. As soon as they arrived in Limmu, the local people were forced to build camp on the mountain hill of Kossa. The area where Menelik soldiers (Neftenya) stationed was selected based on its strategic location for defensive purpose, convenient for residence and its economic importance being found along the line of long distance trade that connect southwestern Ethiopia with northern part. Once after they were garrisoned, soldiers were assigned to different task in and outside of the kingdom. In the first case, they were directed to hold down the resistance from the local community as well as from neighboring Gibe states. In the second case, the soldiers were given authority to collect tribute from local community. Two groups of soldiers were assigned to Limmu. Garrisoned soldiers called Tiklegna who permanently settled in Limmu to accomplish the task given for them and Worwari, those who assigned for temporarily in time of resistance (Richard. A Caulik, 1978).

4. Ravages of the soldiers
The life of the local community became more miserable after the establishment of garrison center in Limmu Enarea. In addition to the tribute they paid, the communities were repeatedly plundered by settler soldiers (Neftenya) day and night. These frequent raids put heavy burden on local farmers and traders, respectively. The soldiers repeatedly plunder local people’s cattle, sheep and goats and lived favorable life for their own and made the life of farmers unhappy. Furthermore, soldiers also raided caravan merchants when they passed through the dense forest of Limmu to Nono. To save their life and their commodities from raiding of garrisoned soldiers some merchants were forced to change direction from ravages of soldiers. Garrisoned soldiers in Limmu not only raided the local community but also the neighboring states like Guma, Gera, Goma and Jimma during their vacation for personal profit (Charles, 1843).

Infact, plundering and conquest of soldiers were not limited to Limmu only. Rather, they went further to Omotic states for conquest and plundering basing their camp at Limmu at the beginning. For instance, in 1886, basing his center in Limmu Wolde Giorgis led successful military expedition to neighboring kingdom and territories. At the beginning of 1886, with the help of Abba Jifar II, Wolde Giorgis conquered the kingdom of Janjero [Yam]. During the campaign, he captured a number of cattle and slaves as war booty but given Yam territories for Abba Jifar to administer under his autonomy (Gameda, 2002).

At the end of 1886, Wolde Giorgis accompanied by his army garrison in Limmu and minor officials marched to kafa through Jimma and ravaged the kingdom of kafa. But, Wolde Giorgis and his army returned to Limmu without affecting the political structure of the kingdom. In 1889, Wolde Giorgis conquered Dawuro, a region traditionally tributary to kafa and Konta to the south of Jimma. He expanded his territories as far as Omo and further to the west of Lake Rudolf. It was after the victory of Adwa that Menelik ordered Wolde Giorgis to led huge military force for the complete conquest of kafa. A number of generals were assigned to assist Wolde Giorgis. For instance, 15,000 troops equipped with guns led by Wolde Giorgis, 8,000 troops led by Dejazmach Damisew of Arjo and 8,000 troops led by Ras Tasama Nadew of Illubabor. Abba Jifar II of Jimma also participated. Finally, Gaki Serecko of kafa was captured and brought to Addis Ababa in 1897. After kafa was conquered Menelik established garrison center in Andaracha to control all kafa territories under his dominion (Tafo, 1973)
Generally, Menelik’s occupation of Gibe region in general and Limmu in particular from 1880s-1890s was characterized by devastation of production, casualties resulting from the fighting and the destruction of housing, extensive seizure of cattle, grain, and in many cases slaves that they brought into their camp. For instance, Richard Pankhurst described the plundering of Menelik’s soldiers in both south and southwest in the following manner:

… in the course of one expedition, Menelik obtained between 17,000 and 18,000 cattle, … from the Gura district with 80,000 head of cattle … by the campaign against … against the [Walayta] in 1894, 36,000 cattle … country around the Diddessa, means most probably Guma, Gera, Goma and Limmu, … a large number of the women and children had been taken by the victors and innumerable houses, including whole villages, burnt to the ground. In the Gore area … flock been destroyed as completely as people (Pankhurst, 1966).

5. Economic exploitation
It was apparent that life in the kingdom of Limmu was appropriate and attractive due to its commercial and agricultural potential in pre-conquest period. For instance, the highlands of Limmu were suitable for the cultivation of wheat and barley while the lowlands produced coffee, maize, sorghum and various species of plants and vegetables. The market of Saqa and its richness in trade commodities also attracted traders from different corners of the country that adds potential income for the kingdom (Fayissa, 1996).

However, things were different after the conquest and domination of the kingdom. The conquest resulted in the monopolization of the market center, trade items and agriculturally potential areas by Abyssinian officials. Using the firearms they acquired from European powers, Menelik settler soldiers (Neftenya) took upper hand over trade in slaves and ivory, which had been the items of local commerce long before Menelik conquest of the region. After they dominated trade routes as well as exchange commodities, contacts with outsiders were restricted. Instead the conqueror began to trade with their northern counterparts particularly with Gojam, Shawa and Tigray (Pankhurst, 1965).

6. Land tenure system and the condition of peasantry
Land tenure system was another critical issue that the people of Limmu encountered during Menelik’s hegemony over the region. Although local rulers had controlled large tract of lands in the kingdom, communal land tenure system was predominantly common in Limmu before Menelik conquest of the kingdom. Followed by the conquest, however, various types of land tenure system were implemented in Limmu. For instance, maderia (land in lieu of salary for imperial officials), samon (church land) hudad, maid bet, etc., were put into practice. Patron-client structure known as neftenya-gabbar system was also implemented in Limmu. Some settler soldier, (Neftenya) also participated in the production of coffee by taking vast gasha of lands after coffee demand increased on the world market. When the demand of coffee increased, several northern settlers were in fluxed to Limmu that increased value of land much more than before. It was not only the land that was assigned to imperial soldier in Limmu but also gabbar who cultivated on the land. The allocation of land and gabbars to Menelik soldiers were based on their position in the role of conquest or service they give as functionaries of imperial government (McClellan, 1978).

According to Gulumo gabbar system means “surplus extraction imposed over the southern provinces by Menelik.” Oral informants also reveal that gabbar was allocated to settler soldier to cover all subsistence of the family under which he was assigned. The loyalty, year of service and rank of the soldier or commander determined the number of gabbar assigned for him. For instance, in Limmu Wolde Giorgis and Tekleab commander and deputy commander of army garrison in Limmu were assigned 100 and 50 gabbars, respectively. While for each garrison soldiers from 10 to 15 gabbars were assigned (Gemedu, 2002).
Besides feeding the lord he was assigned to, gabbar also forced to build the house for soldiers and his family, brought him water and wood, and acted as his porters in time of war or hunt and prepared the provisions needed during expedition. Gabbar was also not allowed to carry weapons or spears though they moved from one place to another with their patrons across the village. Furthermore, the gabbar were expected to present gifts to his patron during holidays. In the case of Limmu, the movement of gabbar to neighboring kingdoms was strongly prohibited by guards stationed around the kellas (Informants: Abba Macca A/Godu and Belay Nigussie).

Unlike other gabbar in Goma, Gera and Guma, who had right to flee to neighboring states to escape from life hardship, gabbar in Limmu were not allowed to flight from Limmu to other kingdoms. This was because of the garrison soldiers suspected the peasants to expose their secret to the neighboring Oromo principalities of the Gibe region. Although garrison commander had responsibility to supervise the garrison he could not intervene between the gabbars and soldiers to whom they were assigned. The peasants were much more exposed when land measurement policy of 1910 was implemented in Limmu. The policy brought the implementation of qalaad system that led to the loss of their lands. While the imperial officials and army commanders became the largest land owners in Limmu. To escape themselves from excessive produce and labor extraction, some gabbars flee to down slope area where all things were not suitable for survival (Richard. A Caulk, 1978). Similar with the above assertion, Charles McClellan described the situation of gabbar system in Sidama in the following manner:

... the Abyssinians who seemed to have a very good time, apparently having nothing to do but drink tej, while the natives did all the work ... building houses, cultivating the crops, herding the cattle or any other things else their masters required. In fact, the natives were practically in state of slavery ... in addition to providing their lord with food and drink (McClellan, 1990).

It was also impossible for local community to present their complaints directly to the royal court. Instead, there was messenger called Bardi for this concerns that access the needs and complaints of the community. The local community also expected to pay some amount of tribute in kind or in cash for such messenger. In case of crime committed, the balabbat and qoro those co-opted by garrison commander to collect tribute from the gabbars could escaped imprisonment by compensating the victim in kind, where the poor people were imprisoned or enslaved (Informants: Ibrahim Mohamed and Zabiba Hassan).

7. The imposition of culture and religion
It was obvious that Menelik conquest of Gibe region in general and Limmu in particular was dominantly economic and political motives. Behind these motives however, there was also religious intention. That was why many northern priests, deacons and debtras were influxed to Limmu followed by Menelik conquest of the region. According to Nagadow, Ras Gobana passed orders that allowed two gashas of lands from every melkegena in every awraja to priests, deacons and debtras for the service they render. Nagadow further stated that Gobana ordered his representatives to send out his orders to every wereda to fulfill Gobana's desire. Similarly, in Limmu vast land was given in the form of samonmeret (church land) to the church and money was collected from the local people for the construction of churches (nagadow).

During the first phase of conquest, that means between 1882 and 1886 there was no as such conversion and construction of churches took place in Limmu, Goma, Gera and Guma. Although Menelik blessed east and west by the cross of Ras Gobana and north and south by Ras Darge to convert the non-Christians community to Orthodox Christian, Gobana was also sympathetic to traditional Oromo religion when compared with Ras Darge of Arsi and Djazmach Balcha Safo of Sidama. Hence, construction of churches and conversion was not much serious in Gibe region in general and Limmu in particular during Gobana’s administration of the region (Tafla, 1975).
Different from Ras Gobana however, Wolde Giorgis who was appointed in place of the Ras Gobana as the governor of Limmu in 1886 changed the situation existed before. Side by side with fulfilling imperial policy of empire building, Wolde Giorgis built churches in Limmu and its surroundings. Informants stated that Wolde Giorgis was fanatic Orthodox Christian and taught church teachings during his vacation time. Informants further describe the expression of Wolde Giorgis when he was first arrived in Limmu and heard the non-Christian names of the rulers of Gibe states as follows:

አብaba የለትተከለም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም፡ ከም-archive:

Is there no tabot (church) in your country?
That your names are Abba Gomol, Abba Dula and Abba Rago (Gemechu, 2002).
Then immediately Orthodox clergy came with their Arks and built Saint Marqos church near the royal palace of Abba Bagibo and Abba Gomol was converted to Christianity for political advantages and changed his name to Gabra sillasie. Normally, in Gibe Oromo states conversion to Christianity was very uncommon. Because, Menelik think that there was greater political and economic advantage in enslaving Oromo than converting to Christianity. Conversions to Christianity place them out of the potential slave trade because Menelik think that Fetha Negeist prohibited the sale of Christians to non-Christians (Bulcha, 2002).

In addition to imposition of Orthodox Christian into the kingdom, Settler soldiers (Neftenya) ascribed themselves as higher social rank and looked down on the local culture, language and belief system. Starting from the period of incorporation, Amharic language became a language for official’s communication in Limmu. Then after, a number of factors contributed to relatively spread of Amharic in Limmu kingdom. First, the establishment of Orthodox churches in Limmu during the last quarter of nineteenth century brought Amharic to the local people. Second, the gradual establishment of marriages and other socio-cultural ties between indigenous people and settler soldier created an opportunity for learning Amharic (Informants: Tofiq Hussein and Zabiba Hassan).

As an example, Dajazmach Tasama Nadew the governor of Guma and Illubabor at that time married Genne Alima (Beletchechew) Abba Fogg (younger brother of Abba Jobir of the last king of Guma before conquest for political purposes. In spite of formal and informal exposure to Amharic language, however, the spread of Amharic language in the Gibe region in general and Limmu particular was very low. It remained the language of the town, offices and Orthodox churches. By and large, the Neftenya attempted to change local names of the local community. In pre-conquest period, much of the older name of Limmu Oromo were given after plants, animals, diets, seasons, clans, bodies of water, geographical location and occurrences of events.

For instance, Abba Rejji and Abba Bunaa are name given after plants, Abba Malkaa is name given after water bodies and Abba Mogga is name given after geographical location and etc. From this we can understand that traditionally most Oromo names are directly related with nature. But after conquest, some people changed their name to Christian names after they were baptized (Informants: Tofiq Hussein and Zabiba Hassan).

Above all, the conquest of Limmu and the imposition of Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity contributed for the eroding and abandoning of the local people’s indigenous institutions and practices. It further marginalized indigenous institution of the local community throughout the conquest period. Whatever the case, the Abyssinians target to colonize and eradicate the Oromo indigenous knowledge in the study area was not fully changed into practice because of the strong resistance from the local community since 1884 (Informants: Tesfaye G/Senbet and Sheik Ibrahim Mohamed).
8. The impact of conquest on local environment
Menelik conquest of Limmu Enarea brought far reaching changes including a serious deterioration on the local environment. It was not sudden act, but pre-planned action of Menelik to achieve his ambition to control resourceful areas of the country through military colonial settlement. To accomplish these objectives, permanent settlement of colonial forces was necessitated. Thus, Neftenya settlement centers (garrison centers) were created in all conquered territories (Kuru, 1995).

Similarly, the conquest of Limmu brought fluctuation in number of population as large number of officials, soldiers and priests arrived in Limmu. This fluctuation not only affected the local community but also caused environmental deterioration. Before the conquest of the region, Charles Beke described that Limmu, Guma, Gera and Kafa were covered by vast forests through which caravans went to pass without sun rays from 4 to 5 days successively. After the conquest, however, the sacred forest of the Gibe region get worse than before. Oral informants also stated when Menelik soldiers’ first garrison on the mountain hill of Limmu the area was covered by dense forests, which were home to an exotic variety of fauna and flora. However, to check the possible attack from the garrison soldiers at far distance, garrison leader forced the local community to cut the forest fringe of Limmu and road that linked the garrison with the town was constructed by corvee labor. The Neftenya settlers also devastated sacred forests in Limmu either for farming or for wood and construction of houses for officials and other settlers. After Menelik conquered and occupied Limmu, it was not only the people who suffered but also the trees were destroyed (Charles, 1843; Informants: Tesfaye G/Senbet and Sheik Ibrahim Mohamed). Furthermore, Antoine D’Abbadie who observed the situation in Limmu during conquest period expressed his eye witness account in the following manner:

… the beauty of Oromo territory and its natural gift captured the imagination of Abyssinian leaders and their soldiers and the occupation of Oromo land became the ultimate objective of their endless raids. After they conquered the Oromo land, it was not only the people but also the trees were destroyed. They devastated the forests by pulling it from the laths for their house and campfire (firewood) and for their dwellings. They do not have the foresight to restore or to respect the roots of the trees which would grow new off shoots. They exercised their barbarity against the forest for the sole pleasure of ravaging (Hassan, 2007).

9. Resistance from 1884 to 1910
Although Gibe states in general and Limmu in particular aware very clearly the interest of both Takla-Haymanot of Gojjam and Menelik of Shawa by the end of 1870s, they were not adequately prepared to block the enemy’s advance from their region. It was the time when the Gibe states were in difficult situations that hindered them to defend their areas from alien invasion (Gulema, 1996a). First, with the decline of Gadaa system among the Oromo of the Gibe region, each part of the kingdom had got a king or chief of its own. These kings always wanted to fight each and every one wants to be the greatest of all kings. If one conquers other, first of all he asks for tribute. For instance, until the last quarter of nineteenth century, Jimma fought against its neighbors like Limmu and yam to extend its frontiers and eventually became the most powerful kingdom in the region (Erana, 2009).

The second and the serious challenges most Gibe states encountered during the 1860s and 1870s was leadership crisis. This leadership crisis was also evident in Limmu when Abba Bagibo died. His successor Abba Bulgu was not much strong to administer the kingdom like his father. It was most probably due to he was not much strong in politics as he was in religion. Abba Bagibo II who came to power at a very critical time in 1882 was also did very little to improve the administration system that the kingdom encountered. The weak administration system in the kingdom provide other neighboring clans like Nono and Jimma kingdom to attack simultaneously against Limmu and occupied some fertile lands (Guluma).
It was being under such circumstances that Gibe states faced another challenges from Gojjam and Shawa in 1880s. In spite of their weak coordination, however, Gibe states decided to fight against the invading Gojjam forces. More than the others, Jimma and Guma who were free from leadership crisis determined to confront the Gojjam army before they deeply penetrated into the Gibe region. Immediately, however, Abba Jifar II changed his plan by hearing the advice of his court officials and Ullamas that Gojjam forces were better armed than Jimma militia (Gemeda, 2002).

Although the submission of Abba Jifar frustrated other Gibe states, Abba Jobir of Guma along with his brother Abba Diga confronted with Gojjam forces led by Daraso at a place called Bake Ganji not far from Didessa River. After 1 day of heavy fight, Guma lost her two heroes Abba Jobir and his brother Abba Diga and Daraso entered Guma triumphantly. But, Daraso’s victory over Guma came to an end when he was removed from the region by Ras Gabana (Wasihun, 2018).

In 1882, Gibe States were surrendered to Ras Gabana who was an Oromo general of Menelik without any resistance and began to pay tribute to the Shawan state. Informants stated different reasons why Gibe states peacefully submitted to Ras Gabana in 1882. Some said to avoid unnecessary loss of human life and resource exploitation like what they faced in fighting with Ras Daraso. While others reported that Gibe states believed submission to Ras Gabana may save them from the hardship of Gojjam forces (Gemeda, 1984).

But, things were not as they expect when they began to pay heavy tribute to the central government. Hence, the first opposition against Shawan administration was broke out in Limmu in 1884. The confrontation was later expanded to Nono Oromo. Heavy confrontation took place at a mountain hill of Gaara Doobba (Doba Mountain) in Limmu where large number of Menelik’s forces lost their lives (Gulemo, 1996b).

According to Cerulli, the three sons of Nado, Tasama Nado, Dallansa Nado and Dasta Nado participated on the battle of Gaara Doobba sent by Ras Gabana. But from the three brothers, Tasama flight to shawo, Dasta died on the battle and Dallansa retreated. On the battle of Gaara Doobba, Tucho Danno of Wara Bera and Ligdi Bakare of Leqa also participated supporting Limmu and Nando. It was at that time, that Ligdi Bakare had taken the horse of the Dasta Nado and said:

Ya Farda Dasta Nado
Abbakee biyooof gootee
Ana Aba Biyyaa gootee (Cerulli, 1922).
O Horse of Dasta Nado
You made your master ashes
And made me lord of the country.

This is to indicate that the combined forces of Limmu, Nannon and Leqa groups led by Ligdi Bakare took upper hand over Menelik forces at the battle of Gaara Doobba. To stabilize the situation in Limmu, Menelik restructured the administration system of the region by appointing leaders very loyal to him. However, changing administrative structure couldn’t bring peace and stability in the kingdom. Rebellion also re-emerged in 1887 when Menelik called most of his soldiers from south including Wolde Giorgis for campaign in the north. Although Abba Jifar was given to supervise over Limmu, Guma and Gera while Wolde Giorgis was called for campaign in the north, he was unable to calm down the situation and reported to the central government. In 1888, uprising again erupted in Limmu and expanded to Nono and Hagalo and provoked revolts against Menelik hegemony. Eventually, the revolt disrupted the chain of communication between Addis Ababa and Gibe region. Hearing the circumstance in Gibe region, the neighboring Muslim of Qabena put up formidable challenge to imperial soldiers who stationed in the Gurage land. Some volunteers from Jimma also participated in the in the revolt of 1888 (Gemeda, 2002). However, Menelik crashed all the rebellion in the Gibe region and controlled the area until 1916.
Generally, Jimma remained autonomous kingdom until 1930s while her counter parts in the region totally lost their independence (Gemedo, 2002).

10. Conclusion
In Ethiopia, the last two decade of nineteenth century was characterized by conquest, subjugation and annexation of many autonomous states and peoples of the south, east, west and southwestern part of the country. Gibe states in general and Limmu in particular were also one of the Menelik targets of the day. Before conquest, the kingdom of Limmu witnessed enormous economic prosperity, well established civilization and rich in indigenous institution that guides every life of the people.

The conquest of the area, however, brought fundamental socio-economic and political changes that put the conqueror on higher hierarchical position and undermine the local community. In this case, the restricting of administration system completely changed the structure of land tenure system and tribute collection. The land in the conquered region of Limmu was redistributed and placed at the disposal of the military, ecclesiastical and political representatives of the shawon power system. More than two thirds of the lands in Limmu were given to officials, commanders and settler soldiers (Neftenya). The remainder usually one-third (sisso) were placed at the disposal of local leaders (balabbats) for their service to the system. Obligations imposed on the gabbar required him to pay in kind plus personal and family service to the landlord.

By and large, the establishment of garrison center in Limmu more worsened the life condition of the peasantry. The garrisoned soldiers unquestionably savaged the wealth of local community, burnt their houses, kill the innocent people, raided caravan merchants, etc. The Neftenya further imposed their culture, religion and way of life onto the local community that forced them to abandon their indigenous culture, custom and belief system. The combined effect of this all situation provoked fired rebellion against Menelik rule in Limmu in 1884 and continued up to 1910 when Wolde Giorgis transferred from Gibe region to northern part that witnessed some sort of stability in the Gibe region.

Generally, this study was conducted based on both primary and secondary sources. The written sources include theses, journals, manuscripts and books of Ethiopian languages collected from different areas. However, materials which could serve as sources for this paper are not exhaustively consulted due to many factors. The main problem was the problem of having access to the archives related to the topic since it was difficult to get it. I feel sorry for this lapse. The other problem was the problem of accessing and interpreting travelers’ accounts like the accounts of Antoine Cecchi, Massaja, W.C. Plovden, Antoine D’Abbadie and others. Hence, this paper cannot make a claim that it is exhaustive and complete; much remains to be done. It is only a preliminary attempt hoping that it would highlight a plausible interpretation of Menelik conquest of Limmu and the socio-economic conditions of the local community.

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