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**Maale Material Objects  
in Their Social and Ritual Context**

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# **Maale Material Objects in Their Social and Ritual Context**



by Sophia Thubauville

Mainz, April 2004

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1. Minimalism and Ethnography – Exploring the Aesthetics of Order, Measure, Proportion and Harmony**

*”There are two possible courses to affluence. Wants may be ‘easily satisfied’ either by producing much or desiring little”.<sup>1</sup>*

Before I start writing about objects of the Maale people of southwest Ethiopia, I want to point out some fundamental differences between objects, which the people in Maale produce and use, and objects used and produced in the western world. Some differences are obvious:

Most objects in the western world, from furniture to toothpaste, are bought in shops, while in Maale the people themselves make most objects. Whereas people in the western world generally do not even know whether a product was produced in China or Thailand, people in Maale produce their belongings with materials which they can find surrounding their homesteads.

I think it would be hard to give an account of all the objects of one family in the western world – just think of the items a woman carries around in her handbag or the amount of toys a child owns. During my field research in Maale I asked people about information concerning all material objects I observed, which was around 180 objects<sup>2</sup> altogether. By comparing only the amount of the different material objects of the western world with the number of Maale objects one may think the Maale are poor or they lack ideas, but I claim there is a profound reason for their small number of different material objects. Their material objects are a good example of the aesthetics of the minimal.

The kind of aesthetics inherent in the minimal has been explored in the western world by the group of people, who are most concerned about aesthetics: artists.

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<sup>1</sup> Sahlins: 1

<sup>2</sup> All objects described in this thesis, excluding the medicines made by the *joi*.

Initially a **minimalist movement arose in the visual arts** of post-war America. Artists like D. Judd, R. Morris, C. Andre, S. Le Witt, T. Smith and D. Flavin painted pictures and made sculptures in geometrical shapes or in serials. They produced their artifacts with a minimal quantity of elements and a simple structure. The working style of the minimalist aesthetics of these artists was **”less is more”**.<sup>3</sup>

After the heyday of the minimalism in visual arts in the 1960s, young American composers explored techniques of reduction and repetition analogous to those used by the minimalist movement of the visual arts<sup>4</sup>. The most important representatives of **minimal music** were L.M. Young, T. Riley, S. Reich and P. Glass. They wrote their compositions primarily for keyed instruments and percussions.

Some years later a school of **minimalism in American fiction** came into being. The authors Mary Robinson, Frederick Barthelme, Bobbie Ann Brown and Tobias Wolff wrote formally sparse and tonally cool literature, producing a very realistic effect<sup>5</sup>.

All of these artists and authors tried to achieve a **maximum of perfection with a minimum of means**<sup>6</sup>. This is exactly what links them to the Maale people’s process of preparing new material objects. When a Maale man needs to prepare a new *silb’o* (spoon), he looks for the nearest tree of suitable wood, cuts a piece out of it and carves it with the minimal expenditure of labor into a spoon.

This idea of the minimalist artists to achieve a maximum of perfection with a minimum of means has also been developed in social anthropology by Marshall Sahlins<sup>7</sup>. He wrote about the minimal effort with which gather and hunter societies obtain their subsistence.

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<sup>3</sup> Motte: 4

<sup>4</sup> Motte: 1

<sup>5</sup> Person: 11

<sup>6</sup> Person: 25

<sup>7</sup> See references

Returning to the material objects of the Maale, until now I only showed their connection to minimalism; however, one must also be concerned with their aesthetics:

I claim that the sense of **aesthetics** in the objects in Maale are not reduced to outward appearances as are the aesthetics of objects in the Western World. The Maale aesthetics is identical to the sense of **order, measure, proportion** and **harmony**, as defined in the aesthetics of Plato<sup>8</sup>. For example, the aesthetics of order can for example be seen in Maale, as it is possible to tell the social position of people by their clothing, jewelers and hairstyle. A Maale man, who has *derso* (ritual beads), is the *toidi* (oldest son) of a family; or a woman who has the *muddo* (hairstyle of a mother) is married and a mother.

There is not a great variety of objects in Maale, but the objects serve the people's material needs and also make different kinds of social orders clear. This fact illustrates the **measure** and **proportion** inherent in the object world of the Maale.

Objects the Maale produce, are prepared out of raw materials, which can be found around their homesteads – wood, vegetable fiber, clay, cotton, leather, gourds and stone – and only few materials like iron, beads and few clothes are bought from outside the community. By using natural raw materials, only as needed, they live in **harmony** with their environment.

Thus, all their self-made objects can be called aesthetics according to Plato, while the material objects in the western world would lack any component of aesthetics according to Plato's definition.

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<sup>8</sup> Schomburg-Scherff: 240

## **2. On Materiality – the Fascination of Axes, Coats and Wheat**

*”What counts is not the physical axe or coat or wheat but the idea of them, the knowledge how to produce and use them, their place in life.”<sup>9</sup>*

What is so interesting about material objects, such as an axe or a coat or wheat? Compared with immaterial topics like religion, kinship etc., material topics seem to be neither very popular nor highly valued in social anthropology. Two statements, one of Mona Suhrbier and one of Mark Münzel, are suitable examples for the status of materiality in anthropological discourse. While Suhrbier<sup>10</sup> states that there is a sharp distinction in our culture between work done by the head and work done by hands and that humanities consequently deal with immaterial topics, Münzel<sup>11</sup> stresses the contrast between the highly valued ideational or institutional (i.e. the nonmaterial) issues in social anthropology and the less valued material ones.

In social anthropology materiality has been dealt with in works on material culture since the first exploring expeditions, which were the precursors of anthropological research. The early days of anthropology were also the time when the study of material culture received its strongest emphasis. But soon, especially from the 1930s to the 1950s, material culture studies became more limited to the issue of technology<sup>12</sup> and were considered unfashionable. During that time the interest in social anthropology changed to nonmaterial areas and new methodologies of participant observation and interviewing. Material culture studies on the other hand stayed in a neglected condition until 1970.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Kroeber, Kluckhohn: 67

<sup>10</sup> Suhrbier: 54

<sup>11</sup> Münzel: 172

<sup>12</sup> Parezo: 747-748

<sup>13</sup> Parezo: 750

Since the beginning of the 1960s an international renaissance of the interest in material culture can be seen, which has been initiated by semiotics. In publications appearing since the 1970s many other disciplines, such as archaeology and American Studies, share this new interest, and some publications even connect several disciplines.

This new interest in material culture was caused partly by the former insight that the knowledge of material issues, of a society provides an access to immaterial issues and as a result these two issues are more and more interwoven in recent works on material culture: Tilley, for example, writes that things not only provide an access to social conditions, but create them, after the things themselves have been created by people. He corrects the idea of the passive existence of things into an active existence<sup>14</sup>. Parezo emphasizes the active role of material objects by saying that *"Material culture studies have come to exhibit enormous scope and complexity because of the conceptualization of material culture as simultaneously a product of cultural behaviour, a part of culture, and a mover of culture."*<sup>15</sup>

Kopytoff<sup>16</sup> adds to Tilley and Parezo that objects are not only active, but further have biographies or life-phases like human beings and Hoskins even writes that she could not collect the histories of objects and the life histories of people separately, as *"People and the things they valued were so complexly intertwined they could not be disentangled."*<sup>17</sup>

Miller's idea<sup>18</sup> is to compare different material worlds in order to be able to achieve general statements on material culture theory. By this way specific issues of material culture can be examined in reference to a general theory.

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<sup>14</sup> Tilley: 75-76

<sup>15</sup> Parezo: 748

<sup>16</sup> See references

<sup>17</sup> Hoskins: 2

<sup>18</sup> Miller 1998

The ties between people and their objects I observed in Maale, and consequently I will often mention the owner or user of an object together with it. Not only is every object unique, but also every person uses each object in a unique way. The life-phases of things explained by Kopytoff are another point, which can be explained by means of some of the objects I will describe in my thesis. Some examples of these life-phases I will raise throughout my thesis and finally explain in the conclusion.

Personally, the focus on materiality was a good choice for me to get a first insight into the culture of the Maale. Even without understanding every word in *malló múcci* (Maale language), I could observe many details of their objects, e.g. how they were stored or used and by asking the names of the objects I even improved my knowledge of the language. Above all, nearly every person was able to talk about some of their objects, even when he or she was not a close friend of mine.

### **3. The Organization of the Text**

*“Unlike language we cannot hope even to enumerate the types and varieties within which the object world might be categorized and we are soon aware that any attempt imposes various arbitrary classifications over what is actually an endless creative hybrid world.”<sup>19</sup>*

In addition to the problem of categorizing objects, which Miller describes in the preceding quote, anthropologists also face the problem of stepping out of their own categories to start following an emic approach<sup>20</sup> in order to find an

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<sup>19</sup> Miller: 6

<sup>20</sup> The “emic” point of view in social anthropology gives attention to the classification of ideas of those who participate in a given culture. The “emic” point of view is the complement to the “etic” point of view, which is based on interpretations of a culture by an outside observer in his own categories.

appropriate way of representing and describing these objects. Before I try to find a solution for this problem and describe some aspects of the object world in Maale, I will give some introductory notes to the reader.

After I finish my introduction by showing the existing publications about Maale, I will give a short general view of the field research I did in Maale. I will start that chapter by telling about the reasons for carrying out my research in Maale and go on to the places I stayed at. I will describe my host-families and friends, who offered me a home during my research; and also the personal problems I had to face in obtaining information, as these dynamics consequently influence all statements I make in my thesis.

In the third chapter of my thesis I will introduce the beautiful country of Maale: Its location in southwest Ethiopia and also the *gurda* (villages) of Maale. I will give some information on the population, the language and the history of Maale people as it was told to me by informants. Also I will give a short general view of the social organization, the economy, the political institutions and the religion of Maale.

Afterwards I will introduce the material objects I observed during my stay. In chapters four and five I will focus on the objects, which have been produced and used by Maale people themselves or by craft workers who have been living in the Maale area for a long time. Objects that have arrived recently with traders from outside will be shortly mentioned in chapter six.

While the social contexts of the material objects are mentioned throughout chapters four to six, in paragraph V.3 I will show the connection between objects and rituals:

In chapter four I will explain some facets of the everyday object world of the Maale people. In the first part I will concentrate on their houses: the differences in building in the highlands and lowlands of Maale and the three different kinds of houses that exist with different purposes. Finally, I want to give an example of a homestead and its houses in Maale by explaining which and how many houses

were placed in the homestead of my host-family in the lowlands and how their houses were situated inside the homestead.

In the second part of the fourth chapter I will describe the interior objects of the different houses. I will show which objects are stored or used in which kind of house and how they are arranged. Subsequent to the description of the inside of a house, I will describe its objects by classifying them into different groups.

While the fourth chapter deals with Maale people, who are farmers and pastoralists, the fifth chapter shows some people, who have other professions (potters, blacksmiths, weavers and healers and fortune-tellers) or hold political offices (*kati* and *godda*). Linked to these people are special objects, which they need to carry out their professions and political offices. Unfortunately, some of the special objects which have been in the possession of the *kati* and *godda*, have disappeared because traditional political offices have changed and lost importance in the last decades. It is possible that even more objects than I could reconstruct with the memory of informants and by the books of Donald Donham<sup>21</sup> were lost in these changes.

Another group of special objects explained in chapter five is not related to a special profession or political office, but to a special occasion. This group of objects is only used and needed for rituals. In order to be able to describe these objects I will first give a general view of the rituals performed in Maale. After describing the special objects used in and needed for rituals, I will describe special objects, for which rituals have to be done, before they are allowed to be used. Most of these objects are made by specialists, who are marginalized and not considered Maale people. Other objects, which are in need of such a ritual, are bought from outside the Maale area.

Writing about objects, one has to consider trends and fashions. In chapters four and five I will mention them only marginally, but globalization has also arrived in Maale in the form of plastic cans and soccer shirts. Some areas of Maale are

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<sup>21</sup> See references

more afflicted by these changes due to having more outside cultural contact than others. This will be the topic of my sixth chapter.

In my concluding remark I will not draw a conclusion, but rather show the connection between the described objects and the idea of minimalist aesthetics I already explained. Further I will explain that there exists a biography for some of the described objects, as Kopytoff has illustrated<sup>22</sup>. After a brief summary of my thesis I will shortly mention in which of the presented issues further research remains to be done.

#### **4. Publications about Maale**

When talking about the publications which already exist about the Maale people, the first person who has to be mentioned is Prof. Donald Donham. He was not the first to write about the Maale, as I will show soon, but he was the first one to study there for a longer period; and by far most of the publications that exist about Maale are written by him<sup>23</sup>. Most of his works are concerned with production, Marxism and the effects of the Ethiopian revolution on Maale, but by reading his books one can get an insight into many other aspects of the people as well.

The first anthropologists, who went to Maale were the participants of the Frobenius expeditions (1950-1952 and 1954-1956) under the direction of A. Jensen. They primarily collected information on material culture and oral literature. They visited many ethnic groups of South Omo and published short information on all of them in the book "Altvölker Süd-Äthiopiens".<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See chapter I.2

<sup>23-27</sup> See references

Recently, Hugo Ferran, a French anthropologist, has undertaken some ethnomusicological research in Maale. In 2002 he wrote his M.A. about this research and is now going on to compare some aspects of music in Maale with music in Gofa, which neighbors Maale to the northeast. Prior to this comparative work, he wrote a second publication in 2003.<sup>25</sup>

My friend Hanna Getachew wrote her B.A. thesis on the marriage practices and the family system in Maale<sup>26</sup>in 2000; she is still doing research in the area for her M.A. thesis.

A linguistic study of the Maale language, which is essential to people studying in Maale, has been written by Azeb Amha in 2001. The work also contains an introduction with general information on the Maale people and their country.<sup>27</sup>

With my thesis on material objects in their social and ritual context I hope to add another aspect to the already existing publications about the Maale people.

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<sup>23-27</sup> See references

## **II. Field Research in Maale**

### **1. How I Came to Study Maale Culture**

My first trip to Southern Ethiopia was an excursion from September to October 2002. Before that trip I had attended classes of Prof. Ivo Strecker, who introduced us to that part of the world. I wanted to get my own impression of the people there, of whom I had only heard and read so much.

During the 2002 excursion the participating students first went on a small field research expedition to one or two ethnic groups of South Omo; and afterwards they invited some of their new friends from these groups to a workshop, which took place in the South Omo Research Center in Jinka in October 2002.

I arrived in Jinka in September 2002 with my friend Kerstin Wientzek with the aim to visit the Ari and the Maale people for at least one week each before the workshop started. In Jinka we met the two research assistants of the South Omo Research Center, Hanna Getachew and Tzega'Ab Kassa, who gave us great assistance in getting to our aimed places of research. First Tzega'Ab arranged a car for us to Tolta in the Ari area and after one week, we left Tolta to undertake another short field research expedition together with Hanna in Baneta in the highlands of Maale.

After a hard and rainy week in Tolta, my first visit Baneta showed it to be a good place for studying. Hanna's friends, Zeleketch and her children and Meriegeta and his mother, not only cared very much about our well-being, but also showed us around the village. They seemed to understand our work and were also very interested in it. During our short stay in Baneta Kerstin and I observed and asked questions about various material objects. After one week in Baneta we went back to Jinka, and a few days later our friends Meriegeta, Zeleketch and two more Maale women arrived to take part in the workshop at the South Omo Research Center.

I went back to Germany and worked on the report of our excursion, and I decided to return to Maale and continue with the research on Maale material objects for my M.A. thesis.

I went back to Jinka at the beginning of June 2003 and stayed until the end of November of the same year. Half of my stay I used to do some practical work in the South Omo Museum in Jinka and the other half I spent in Maale doing field research.

## **2. Places and Friends**

When I arrived in Jinka in June 2003 I found research assistant Hanna Getachew at the South Omo Research Center. As she wrote her B.A. thesis<sup>28</sup> about the Maale people and was planning to do her M.A. research in that area, we decided to go on most of the field trips together. That is why I will often speak of "we", i.e. Hanna and myself, in the following chapters.

Hanna and I had two host families in Maale: one at the homestead of Zeleketch in Baneta in the highlands and one at the homestead of Sale in Gongode in the lowlands.

There were different reasons for having two research sites. The first was a rather practical one. After we had decided to study only in Gongode, we found it problematic to get transport to that place (only cars of a Catholic mission went there). It was much easier to get to Baneta, where market cars go regularly. The second reason for the two locations was to be able to observe the differences between the objects and the life of Maale people who live in the highlands (Baneta) and the lowlands (Gongode). The third reason was that the remote area of Gongode was a more interesting location for my research. I enjoyed staying more in Baneta, where people understood my work and food and water were less of a problem to obtain.

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<sup>28</sup> See references

In Baneta I stayed at the homestead of Zeleketch Dalko, a woman in her early forties<sup>29</sup>, who is divorced from her husband. Zeleketch already knew Hanna for some time and thus it was easy for me to be accepted in her family. She has eight children, of whom the four youngest live with her; most of the older ones go to school in Jinka<sup>30</sup> and visit Baneta only during weekends and holidays. Zeleketch and all her children are Protestants. She attended a Protestant school in Maale and speaks Amharic. As a consequence of her religion she gave up most Maale traditions<sup>31</sup>. However, she was a very good informant as she understood best the content and aims of our work.

Zeleketch lives at the marketplace of Baneta. The marketplace is essential for two of her sources of income: she rents one of her two houses to young Muslim traders who frequent the biggest *booka* (Maale markets), and on market days she sells injera with sauce in her house. As a third source of income she has a small field where she works, mostly alone, because all her children go to school. Zeleketch's homestead consists of two houses for sleeping, a small cooking house and a small hen-house. Apart from chicken she also keeps some goats. After school her two small sons take care of them. The two youngest daughters help Zeleketch with fetching water, cleaning and cooking.

Another very good friend of ours in Baneta was Meriegeta Markos, a young man of about 22 years, who married a few months before I arrived in June 2003. He lives with his wife T'igist in his mother's homestead. His father died some years ago. Besides Zeleketch's homestead the homestead of Meriegeta was not only the place I spent the most time in, but Meriegeta was also the person who helped the most with translations and finding the way through Baneta and the neighboring villages to the east.

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<sup>29</sup> All ages of people are only estimated because nobody counts his/her age.

<sup>30</sup> In Baneta there is a school up to grade 6, afterwards the children stop or continue with school in Jinka.

<sup>31</sup> For example Protestants are not allowed to wear traditional clothes or jeweler. Also they are not allowed to smoke water pipes and drink alcohol, etc.

In Gongode I stayed at the homestead of Sale Tik'isa and his large family. Sale is a respected elder and when we arrived in Gongode for the first time, the *Kebele* official Assefa Shale asked us to stay at his homestead. Hanna and I accepted the idea, since we both liked Sale from the first moment on, and he accepted us immediately as his two new daughters and took care of us like family members. Sale, a man of about 50 years, stays at his homestead together with his wife Datzo Anko, his youngest daughter Afayo, and one of his sons, and his son's wife and children. He has three sons and four daughters, of whom only the youngest daughter Afayo is not married yet. He already has 18 grandchildren. Sale owns different fields, one at a "near" walking distance and some others far away. He also owns cattle and goats at a far *mootsi* (cattle camp). His family (he, his wife, the youngest daughter and the families of the three sons) share the burden of looking after all the fields, cattle and goats. That is why there is always a confusing coming and going of family members at his homestead. People alternate with each other taking turns staying for some days at the distant fields, cattle camps or at home. At first this division of labor was very confusing for me, as family members left for several days to the far fields just when I got used to them, and new people whom I had never seen before came back.

Sale also has a large number of beehives, inside the homestead and on trees in the bush, and when he has no work to do on the fields and cattle camps he is usually busy repairing old beehives, building new ones, arranging them somewhere or harvesting the honey.

### 3. Problems in the Field

*"No one disturbs me. I just lie and watch. I have reached a stage where I am fading out of the picture, have no exotic value any more and, therefore, can watch without being disturbed..."*<sup>32</sup>

Unfortunately, during my field research I was never able to reach the state Ivo Strecker describes in this quote. Being constantly observed by people and always feeling a little bit like an alien element is not always a handicap for doing one's research. Yet, one will inevitably start to avoid crowded places or special occasions, like mourning ceremonies, because after a few minutes people will interrupt what they were doing before in order to observe you.

I often was thinking about these kinds of problems. Even in our own homestead in Gongode people came to stare at me, since I was the first white person studying in this area. When I told a friend that this made me feel uncomfortable, they answered that the people stared because they liked me and wanted to learn more about me. This answer made me aware that the people observing me were better anthropologists than myself. While my cultural upbringing made me feel uncomfortable being observed and also observing; their culture understood staring at people as something positive. This made observing me easier for them than the other way round.

Another problem I only faced in the lowlands of Maale in Gongode was the lack of comprehension of my work. Of course, after a while, my host-family understood that I was interested in their culture. Most of my questions were related to their objects and rituals, but it still seemed to me that they could not understand that my main work was reading, writing, asking questions and observing. Especially in the afternoons, when I sat in the house of our homestead in Gongode and the women were grinding like usual, they often asked me to stop writing and help them instead. After some minutes they

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<sup>32</sup> Lydall/Strecker 1979a: 240

realized that I was only able to spoil the work they had done already because of my lack of practice in grinding, and so they allowed me to continue writing.

Even though I found some people who liked to answer questions and who were patient and very friendly to me, I also often had the experience that people lost their patience after I had asked them only half of the questions I wanted to and they would leave in the middle of an interview. Especially young girls, who would start to answer some of my questions, would then get very nervous after some minutes, since they were afraid that the men at their homestead would beat them for not working and talking to me instead. This was a second reason that led me to an increasing amount of half-finished interviews and more and more open questions.

Another problem that occurred was jealousy. The members of my host family in Gongode were really jealous when Hanna and I visited other friends or places and thus we did not stay together with them for the whole day. I had not imagined this would be a serious problem until our host father Sale told us that he did not want to see Assefa, who is his nephew and our best translator and informant, at his homestead any more. He argued that Assefa only visited Sale when we are around and normally Assefa would pay no attention to him. At the same time the women of our homestead started asking questions about some presents that I carried out of the homestead to other friends. To find out what I was doing outside their homestead they sent children with me to observe what I was doing even when I only left for fetching water. I started to feel uncomfortable when being observed in this way. It became worse during my last days there and I even had to leave Gongode under this circumstance.

Finally, I also had a problem of transportation. We gave up our plan to walk to Maale, not only as a result of my bad knees and Hanna's ever returning typhus, but also because of the long distance. Consequently, we usually used a market truck to Baneta and a car of the Catholic mission to Gongode. The market truck to Baneta ran twice a week. It transported people in the back on top of all grain sacks. The first problem with this truck occurred during the two months of rainy

season (August and September), when the car could not pass the muddy roads and the passengers got wet from the constant rain. Furthermore, the traffic police punished the drivers for transporting people, and it became more and more difficult to find a car at all. The car of the Catholic mission to Gongode usually went once a month to bring the staff of the mission to Jinka to get their salary and to do some purchases. Sometimes in between there were other programmes of the mission with additional cars which went to Gongode, but these cars going there were not too many; and when we stayed in Gongode, we sometimes had to depart very unexpectedly when a car went back to Jinka.

#### **4. Methods of Research**

*Anthropology by its very nature requires the cooperation of those being studied; the dependence of the field worker upon such cooperation is great. Beyond that, whom one sees first, and is seen with; whose wife gets sick, and who lives or dies; where one's hut or camp is located; with what paranoia one's aims are interpreted – all such matters are of course largely in the laps of the gods and witches, and can be guided by the field worker only in limited degree.<sup>33</sup>*

The methods I used during my field research were the usual ones, such as participant observation and interviews with people of different ages, sexes and from different places. In the following chapters I will describe how I obtained my information by introducing my informants and my places of observation. A list with the names, ages, marital status, profession, belief and residence of my informants I have placed in the appendix to give further information on the informants, of whom I only mention the names in the text.

Some of the interviews I made were informal conversations with open questions, other interviews I had planned before and thus asked specific

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<sup>33</sup> Smith Bowen: xi-xii

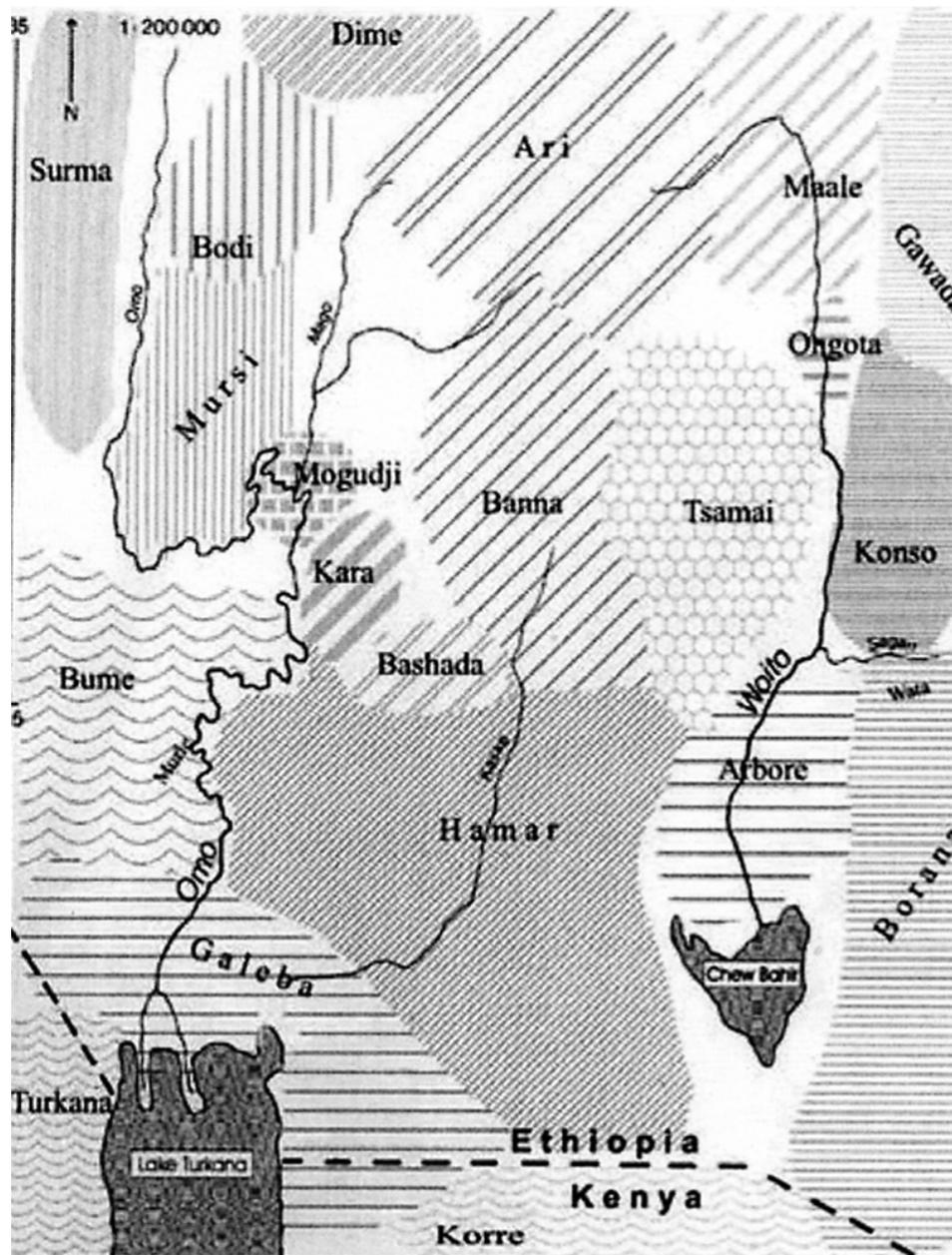
questions. In the "informal" interviews Hanna translated for me from English to Maale and back. In the highland areas she could even often speak to people in her mother tongue, Amharic, since many people learned Amharic in school. Hanna is nearly perfect in speaking Maale and even better at understanding it, since it is the mother tongue of her mother, and she did field research in the Maale area beginning with her B.A. research. However, when I had some specific questions, Hanna felt more comfortable to have an intermediary translator, who was perfect in speaking Maale. In Baneta our friend Meriegeta Markos helped us in this aspect, in Gongode Assefa Shale assisted Hanna in difficult translations. I myself started learning Maale, but due to all the helpers I always had in translating, my competence in communication did not progress far.

I also want to point out that all my information was collected during a very limited time and within a restricted location, above all in the vicinity of my two host families in Baneta and Gongode. Furthermore, as already mentioned in the quotation of Elenore Smith Bowen at the beginning of the chapter, all my information is influenced by my accidental selection of places and people.

### III. Basic Features of Maale Culture

#### **1. The Habitat and the People**

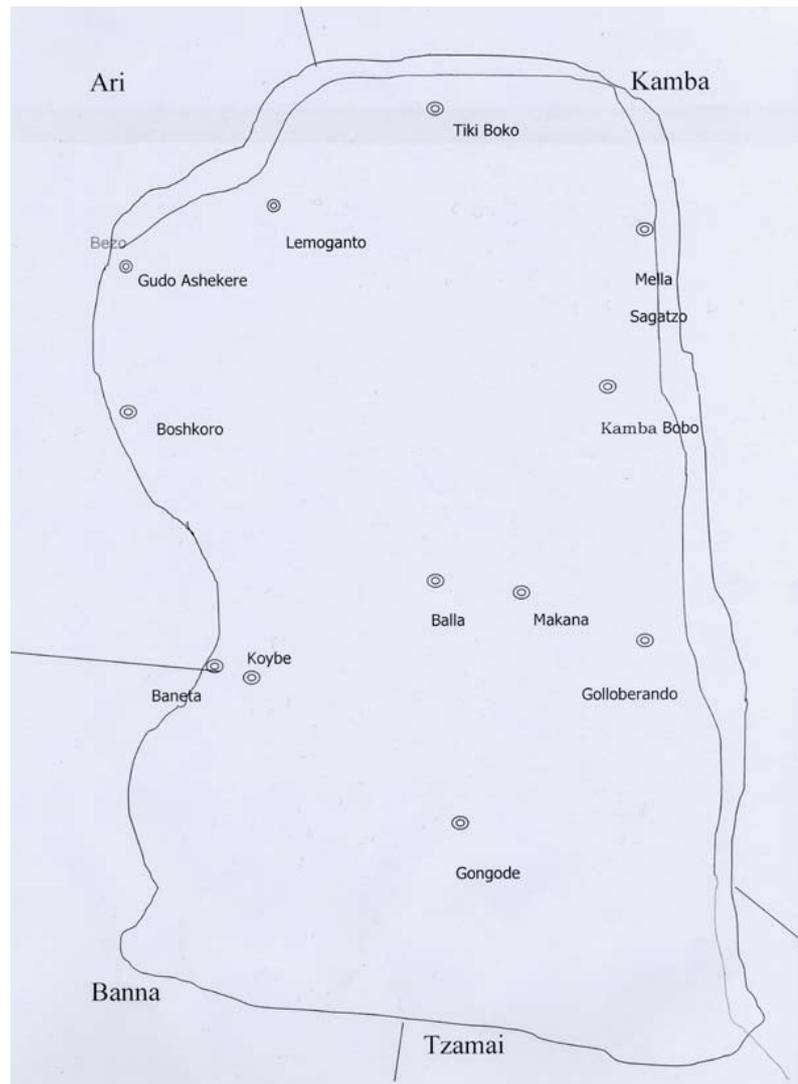
The Maale area is located in southwest Ethiopia, in the province of South Omo.



Map 1: The ethnic groups of South Omo<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Source: [http://www.uni-mainz.de/Organisationen/SORC/research/map\\_diversity.html](http://www.uni-mainz.de/Organisationen/SORC/research/map_diversity.html)

South Omo is divided into four districts: Salamago, where the Mun (Mursi), Bodi and Dime live; Bako-Gazer, where the Maale and Ari people live; Hamer-Banna, the country of the Hamar, Banna, Kara, Tsamako and Arbore people; and Kuraz, the country of the Dassanech and Nyangatom people<sup>35</sup>.



Map 2: Map of the Maale area and its borders, sketched with the help of Assefa Shale.

The Maale area consists of 12 *gurda* (villages), named by the government: Balla, Baneta, Boshkoro, Golloberando, Gongode, Gudo Ashekere, Kamba Bobo,

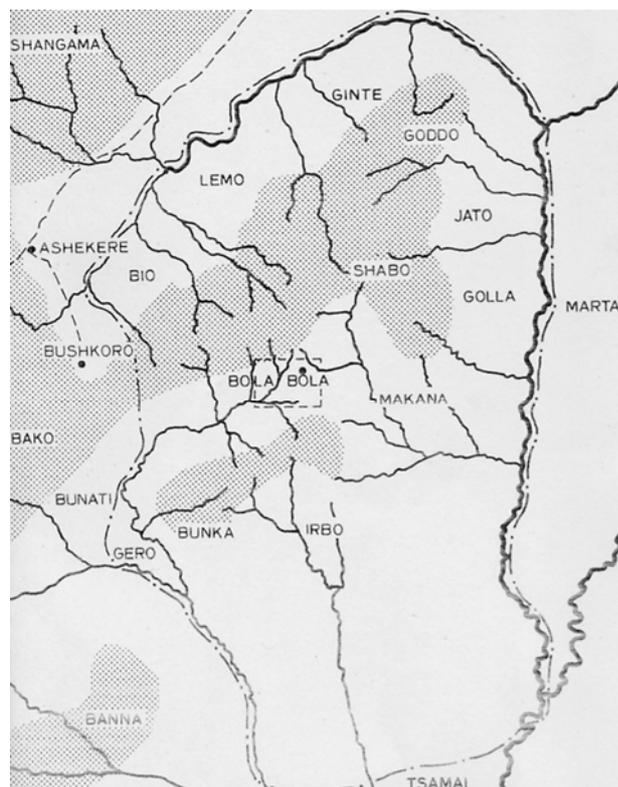
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<sup>35</sup> Ferran 2002: 22-23

Koybe, Lemogento, Makana, Mella Sagatzo and Tiki Boko<sup>36</sup>. The villages are subdivided into smaller sections called *Kebele*<sup>37</sup>.

Traditionally the Maale area consisted of 13 sections<sup>38</sup>. The center was the section of Balla, where the *kati* (ritual and political leader) lived. Though today the Maale area is divided into villages by the government, the names of sections are still known and sometimes used by the people. Also *godda* are still in office independent of the officials of the government.

The neighboring ethnic groups are the Ari to the west, the Kamba to the northeast, the Tsamako to the southeast and the Banna to the southwest.



Map 3: The sections of the Maale territory as it existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> See map 2

<sup>37</sup> Amharic term

<sup>38</sup> See map 3

<sup>39</sup> Donham 1999: xiii. According to an e-mail from Donald Donham dated 10.01.04 Baneta and Ashekere were outside the borders of the Maale territory of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it existed as an independent section.

Donham divides the Maale area into four different zones<sup>40</sup>. Zone two is the center of Maale. It is a highland valley, surrounded by three lower and drier peripheral valleys, named zones one, three and four. The altitude between the mountainous area around the center (Balla, Baneta, Koybe) and the lower valleys ranges from 1000 to about 2800 m<sup>41</sup>. Not only the altitude, but also the temperature and the amount of rain, especially in the two rainy seasons (March-May and August-September), differ significantly between the highland and lowland areas.

According to the National Census of 1994, which gives the latest reliable number, the Maale people count 46.391 people, 24.391 of them male and 22.318 female. 46.188 of the people live in rural areas, while only 203 lived in urban areas when the census was made<sup>42</sup>.

Especially at the borders of the Maale area, people often live together with the people of neighboring ethnic groups and marry each other. People living near the borders usually visit markets of other areas, as the people of Kamba Bobo usually visit the Kamba markets and the people of Baneta the Banna markets. People living in areas like Gongode, with no neighbors close by, only know and visit Maale markets, especially the larger markets in the mountains.

As already mentioned, I carried out most of my field research in the two villages Baneta and Gongode:

Baneta is a village surrounded by several rivers at the western edge of the Maale area in the highlands. It is not only very green with a variety of crops, it also has one of the biggest *booka* (markets) in the area, which is held every Thursday. The town center Ballado, which has about 300 households, is not exclusively inhabited by Maale people. Many traders have come to this area from other

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<sup>40</sup> Donham 1999: 37, see also section on map 3

<sup>41</sup> Amha: 1

<sup>42</sup> These numbers are taken from the 1994 National Census of Ethiopia, published in 1996.

regions of Ethiopia, as can be seen also by noting their different religions (Orthodox Christians and Muslim). Of the five *Kebele* of Baneta only two are inhabited by Maale people and traders, while three are mixed with Maale and Ari people.

Baneta has a small health post, a school up to grade six<sup>43</sup> and an Orthodox Christian and a Protestant church. About 2000 households in Baneta are Protestant<sup>44</sup> and a few people who have immigrated from outside the Maale area are Orthodox Christian or Muslim.

Baneta can be reached by car from Jinka by following the road up to Kak'o and then turning to take a narrow track on the left. This track led directly to Baneta, when I visited it in September-October 2002, but when I arrived in June 2003 a big gap in front of the village was caused by the heavy rains of the rainy season and now separates the village from the road.

Gongode (i.e. platform, plain) is very different from Baneta. It is a very wide area in the south of Maale with no directly neighboring ethnic group. Gongode is divided into 15 *Kebele*. The soil is very dry, the homesteads of the people are very isolated from each other, there are no rivers near by and the people have to walk far distances to most of their fields and cattle camps. A small market was introduced only a few weeks before I arrived in June 2003, but many people still visit the big markets in the mountain areas which requires climbing up the stony mountain paths for several hours. To make life a bit easier for the people in Gongode, the Catholic mission dug a well and protected a spring, since in former times the women had to walk several hours to the Damikere River at the border to the Tsamako area. The Catholic mission also provides a small health post with medication at low prices and has one staff for women's issues. The mission also introduced informal education for two hours a day, which was changed in September 2003 to formal education and is now run by the government. Still very few children can visit the school and perhaps the formal education, which takes more hours a day, makes the choice for the parents to

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<sup>43</sup> See footnote 30, page 13

<sup>44</sup> All numbers were estimated by my informant Ato Oid'isha Tushkulo.

send their children to school even more difficult. The Catholic mission is not converting people and there is no church in Gongode. Only a few people are Protestants, mainly due to the fact they went to school in Koybe, where a Protestant mission is converting.

There is no road at all into Gongode. To the rest of the Maale area Gongode is linked by steep mountain paths. The mission cars arrive from Jinka via Kak'o and Key Afer and before Woyto drive to the left and go on for another two hours through the bush land.

## **2. Language**

The mother tongue of the Maale people is called *malló múcci* (*malló* is the plural of the self name of the people, *múcci* means language)<sup>45</sup>. The language belongs to the north Omotic languages and four dialects can be distinguished: the northern dialects spoken around Lemogento and Gudo Ashekere, the southwestern dialects, spoken around Baneta and Gero, the central ones around Balla and Makana and the southern ones around Gongode<sup>46</sup>. The language has not been threatened by language shift nor death until present day and most of its approximately 46,000 speakers are monolingual. *Malló múcci* is used for all social, ritual and local administrative purposes and recently it has even been introduced as a medium for education<sup>47</sup>. Even schoolbooks in *malló múcci* are now being used, in which the language is written in Amharic script.

People living near the borders of Maale are mostly multilingual. Some Maale also know Amharic from school. In remote areas like Gongode, people only speak *malló múcci*, since they do not live near other ethnic groups. A school to learn Amharic has only recently been opened and only very few people can send their children to this new school.

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<sup>45</sup> Amha: 1

<sup>46</sup> Amha: 7

<sup>47</sup> Amha: 3

### 3. History

I asked two people to tell me the history of the Maale and their country. I will write down both stories which were told to me since they differ very much from each other:

The first person I asked to tell me the history was Ato Bayenne Bagussa from Koybe. With an estimated age of 110 years he might be one of the oldest people living in the Maale area. He told me that the first ancestor of the Maale came from the Merti (people of the Gori area around Gofa). When this first ancestor arrived in Maale, he lived around Balla. According to Ato Bayenne, the generation of the first ancestor has some spiritual power and to today they can still cause sickness and death to people with whom they are not satisfied.

The people who arrived in the Maale area after this first ancestor are believed to come from different places. Those who live around Baneta area are believed to come from the neighboring Banna, the Gongode people from Tsamako and Arbore and the Ashekere Maale from Gamo where also the Balla and Makana Maale are believed to come from. The first *kati* of Maale according to Ato Bayenne came from Kamba.

The second and more detailed version of the history of Maale was told to me by Ato Oid'isha Tushkulo. He is not only writing a book on the history of Maale at the moment, but has also been the translator of Donald Donham. Donham published a short version of the history of the Maale as well and his story is in many aspects similar to the story which was told to me by Ato Oid'isha<sup>48</sup>.

Ato Oid'isha explained that there were two groups who lived in the Maale country before the Maale *kati* and the Maale people arrived. They were Utili and Olasha. The Utili, who lived first, became extinct because of a big fight. Of the Olasha, who lived in the Maale country afterwards, nearly everybody died from an epidemic disease. As a result only two men who survived from the Olasha lived in the Maale country before the *kati* arrived. The two men were the

Makana *godda* (local ritual and political leader of Makana) and a man called Are. They did not know how to make fire and just put their food into the sun to dry. Also they were not able to build proper houses. They simply arranged some grass to lie underneath in the shade.

But when the Maale *kati* arrived in this area he brought all important things to the Maale country. He brought not only fire, potters and blacksmiths, but also the clans Are, Sage, Goji and Golomalle. Further he brought the instruments for making *kashi* (rituals), *wortzi* (spears), metal and much more.

The *kati* of Maale was one of the five sons of the ritual and political leader of Buze (in Shangama). When their father died, the sons took all his property and started fighting. Elders came together and decided that only the oldest brother should stay in Shangama, the others should go to other places. Thus the four younger brothers went together to the Maale country. Since this country also only needed one ritual and political leader, the only one of them who could stay there was the one who was able to make fire with a *suringi* (fire drill). The youngest brother was able to make the fire and consequently became the *kati* of Maale. For his three remaining brothers the smoke of the fire showed the direction where they should settle down to become ritual and political leaders.

The smoke showed the oldest brother to settle down with his people and staff in the Ari country and to become the ritual and political leader of Ari, the second brother to become the ritual and political leader of Banna and the third to become the ritual and political leader of Kamba. On their way to their new countries the Ari and the Banna ritual and political leader accompanied each other up to Bako. It is said, that because they walked together for a long time, their languages are related to each other. Only the brother, who was able to produce fire with the *suringi* stayed in the Maale country as the new *kati*.

One day, when the Maale *kati* made a fire with the *suringi*, the only two other men in the Maale country, the Makana *godda* and Are, thought that the moon or the stars had come down to earth because up to that moment they did not know the new *kati* of Maale nor had they seen a fire before. At the next morning

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<sup>48</sup> Donham 1979: 22

the Makana *godda* and Are went together to the place where they had seen the fire the night before. Since they could not find anything, the Makana *godda* sent Are to go on with searching. Are found the new *kati* of Maale and after getting to know each other, the *kati* gave Are a stick with fire on it. He went back home with this stick and when he arrived, he immediately made a big fire with wood. The Makana *godda* and Are cooked their first warm meal and warmed themselves at the fire. Then they went away and hid a stick with fire inside their house because they were afraid somebody would steal it otherwise. After they left, the fire burnt down their whole house and the whole Maale country. When they came back they saw what had happened and the Makana *godda* said: “This fire burned our whole house and the whole Maale country. I have to look where the fire ends to identify the borders of our country. ”

Thus the Makana *godda* observed where the fire had stopped and by circling the burned country, he drew and named the borders of the Maale country. That is why he is called “the mother of Maale” and also is the most important *godda* until today. Always when a new *kati* is nominated the Makana *godda* has to circle the Maale country like he did at that historical day and by circling the country he is also blessing it and chasing away all diseases.

#### **4. Social Organization**

The social organization of Maale is characterized by two moieties (*karazi* and *ragi*) and over 30 clans, which branch into various lineages<sup>49</sup>. The two moieties can be followed back in the history of Maale to the first inhabitants: the Makana *godda* and Are belonged to the moiety *ragi* and the *kati* (ritual and political leader) to *karazi*. From then onwards *ragi* married *karazi* and vice versa<sup>50</sup>.

The **family** in Maale is organized patrilocally. All daughters move out of their parent’s household at time of marriage and younger sons stay usually only until

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<sup>49</sup> Amha: 2

<sup>50</sup> Donham 1979: 23, Jensen: 266

their first child is born. Oldest sons (*toidi*) continue to live and to cultivate the fields with their parents after marriage<sup>51</sup>. The oldest sons will also be responsible to do the *kashi* (rituals) for the rest of the family after the death of the father.

**Marriages** are rarely arranged by the parents. The usual marriage practice in Maale is called "*qoche equen*" or "*neshimona efie*"<sup>52</sup>. This marriage practice allows a boy to choose the girl by himself, by pulling her hand secretly at night when she sleeps. The girl has the choice of agreeing or refusing the marriage. After marriage the girl moves in with her husband and the female members of her family get bride wealth in form of honey, cattle and blankets<sup>53</sup>. Bride wealth was not common in Maale in former times and the people were even proud to say "We do not sell our daughters". It was only introduced later by northern landlords<sup>54</sup> who settled in Maale.

There are two special cases in the social organization of Maale: the cases of **mani (potters)** and **gito (blacksmiths)**. People with these professions and their families are marginalized. They live on the outskirts of villages in shabby houses, are not allowed to eat and drink with Maale people and even not to enter their homesteads or walk with their cattle. They can only marry among each other. Even though they speak *malló múcci* (Maale language) and have lived in the Maale area for as long as they can remember, they are not considered Maale people<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Donham 1999: 27

<sup>52</sup> Getachew: 12

<sup>53</sup> Getachew: 17

<sup>54</sup> Donham 1979: 63

<sup>55</sup> Information from interviews with *mani* (potters) and *gito* (blacksmiths).

## 5. Economy

The principal areas of production in all areas of Maale are **horticulture, livestock raising and apiculture**<sup>56</sup>. In the mountain areas horticulture is of most importance, while in the lowland areas livestock raising and apiculture play a more important role.

My host-father Sale told me that **honey** is collected three times a year (January, April and September), most of it in the lowland areas. The beehives, which are placed in trees in the bush and also under the roofs of houses, can range from ten up to 300 per family. The honey is sold on the big markets in the highlands, or used to make honey wine or to eat. Since it can be sold of at very expensive price, it is usually only offered to guests.

The **animals** raised in Maale are cattle, goats, sheep, chicken, donkeys and mules. The possession of animals raises one's prestige and they are often needed for bride wealth, but they also carry out a number of other tasks. Food can be obtained by their meat, milk and eggs; and the hides of cattle and goats are also used for mats, backpacks, skirts, etc. Furthermore donkeys and mules can be used for transportation and oxen for ploughing.

**Grains** cultivated in Maale include maize, sorghum, teff, finger millet and barley. Further two kinds of beans, small brown ones and big white ones, are cultivated, and also the leaves are eaten. Also pumpkins, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, many cabbage-like leaves, different kinds of yams and ensete have been recently introduced. The cultivated fruits in Maale are mangos, bananas, papayas, lemons, guavas, oranges, watermelons and sugar cane. As spices ginger, garlic, red pepper and onions are grown. To obtain oil, an oil plant (*salitzi*) and sunflowers are planted. Also cultivation of coffee and peanuts is very important, as these products are sold together with teff as cash crops<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> Donham 1990: 28

<sup>57</sup> Information from Ato Oid'isha.

Even though the amount of different grains, fruits and vegetables seems to be amazing at the first glance, most of these products can only be grown in the highlands. As already mentioned in the highlands there are also the biggest markets and most of the products sold as cash crops are planted there. The amount of cash crops is still very small compared to the subsistence production, as the transport of cash crops is still a problem due to the bad roads.

The tasks in the fields, cattle camps, regarding the beehives and inside the home are divided among all members of a family. The youngest children from four up to ten years already help with taking care of babies, small goats and watching the homestead. Starting at the age of ten children participate in fieldwork. Moreover girls fetch water, collect firewood and grind, while boys start to follow and help their fathers in all their daily tasks. After marriage, women have the additional work of cleaning the homestead and cattle camps, cooking, making beer, spinning and preparing women's items. Men, additionally to their work in the fields and with their cattle, prepare houses, fences and some household items and do all apicultural work (preparing beehives, distributing them, collecting honey, etc.). When men and women get older, they lessen their work and stop walking to the far fields and cattle camps.

Work is not only done within the family. There are also three different kinds of **work groups**, in which people work together on fields and build houses. The *mol'a* and *helma* are reciprocal work groups. They consist of a group of households that work in rotation on each other's fields. The *dabo* on the contrary is a festive work group. The sponsoring household "begs" neighbors for help and brews beer and prepares food for them<sup>58</sup>.

In a chapter titled "economy" all produced goods will be mentioned, also they will be explained in the following chapters.

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<sup>58</sup> Donham 1979: 105

## 6. Political Institutions

The highest authority of the traditional political institutions in Maale is the ***kati* (ritual and political leader)**, whose homestead is located in Balla, the political center of Maale. At the level below the *kati* there are 13 ***godda* (local ritual and political leaders)**, amongst whom the *godda* of Balla and the *godda* of Makana have a special and higher status. Donham calls the *kati* (ritual and political leader) together with these two *godda* (local ritual and political leaders) a triumvirate<sup>59</sup>, which is constantly striving for a balance of power. The thirteen *godda* have up to four ***gatta* (local ritual and political sub-leaders)** each, depending on the size of the section, to assist them.

The ***kati* (ritual and political leader)** of Maale is defined by Donham as a divine king and by Jensen as a chief<sup>60</sup> who maintains the fertility and prosperity of the country in all aspects through sacrifices and invocations to his ancestors<sup>61</sup>. The last *kati*, who carried out the tasks of a ritual and political leader, died in 1970 and the revolutionary government did not tolerate the installation of a new *kati* at this time<sup>62</sup>. Only in 1994 was the last *kati* officially buried and a new *kati*, his son Dulbo Tolba, was installed<sup>63</sup>. Even though Dulbo Tolba has been installed as *kati*, he is working as veterinary assistant outside the Maale area and visits his country and his wife in Maale only very rarely. According to the inhabitants of Balla his last visit was around three years ago. Nevertheless, the people of the village told me that some people still make presents like beer or honey to him, when he is visiting. I heard rumors that some elders are thinking of installing a brother of the dead *kati* subsequently to be able to install his son as *kati* and thus have a "real" *kati* again, who lives in Maale and carries out the tasks of a *kati*.

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<sup>59</sup> Donham, James: 70

<sup>60</sup> Jensen: 266

<sup>61</sup> Donham 1999: 38

<sup>62</sup> Donham 1999: 61

<sup>63</sup> Donham 1999: 183

The **godda (chiefs)**, on the contrary, still carry out all tasks of their office. The office of the two highest *godda* of Balla and Makana is inherited, while the other *godda* should officially be appointed by the *kati* (ritual and political leader). Especially nowadays, but also in former times, the *godda* have much autonomy in their sections, which are like miniature kingdoms<sup>64</sup>.

Even though most people still respect the traditional political institutions and the *godda* still do their jobs, they cannot live off the labor tribute as they did in former times. As I was told by the Irbo *godda* (chief of the Gongode area), the chiefs look after their own fields, cattle and beehives today. The Irbo *godda* still gets some presents from people or people help to work on his fields. According to him the respect given to him has decreased compared to his father.

The task of a chief is to do *kashi* (rituals) for the well-being of his section, to bless the people and to settle conflicts. The **gatta (local ritual and political sub-leaders)** help their *godda* (local ritual and political leaders), by whom they are appointed, in the *kashi* (rituals) and the *anjo* (blessings). In former times they also collected people to work on the fields of the *godda*.

## 7. Religion

The traditional religion in Maale is characterized by the belief in **tsosi, ancestor worshipping** and carrying out **kashi**<sup>65</sup> (rituals).

**Tsosi**<sup>66</sup> is the term for a God-like being and also the term by which the ancestors are addressed. I thought for a long time about how to translate *tsosi* and finally discovered Strecker's text on the term "barjo"<sup>67</sup>. I agree with

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<sup>64</sup> Donham, James: 74

<sup>65</sup> There seem to be similar rituals (*kashi*) among the neighboring Ari. See Yintiso: 73

<sup>66</sup> See also Donham 1990: 113

<sup>67</sup> Strecker 1988: 8: "To translate *barjo* as 'God' or 'Gottheit' and to say that when the Hamar perform a *barjo älä* they are praying to God does not do justice to the Hamar use of the term

Strecker's idea that some terms cannot be translated into another language and go on in using *tsosi* untranslated. Ato Bayenne explained that *tsosi* is the term for an abstract creator God or a natural power which created everything. The term also appears in phrases like "*tsosio*" ("Oh, God!"), "*tsosi ngongo*" ("Let's thank God!") or "*tsosi marongo*" ("Let God forgive!" i.e. "May you get well!"), where people address a supernatural power or being.

**Ancestor worshipping** is performed in Maale by putting fresh meat on the *daabo* (gravestones of the forefathers). According to Ato Oid'isha there are three occasions for worshipping the ancestors. The first occasion is during a ritual that is carried out for the well-being of the cattle. By putting the fresh meat on the graves of the ancestors, the ancestors are asked to take care of the cattle. Secondly, there is a ritual for the improvement of the harvest. By putting the meat on the gravestones, the ancestors are asked to help to achieve a good harvest. Finally, when somebody is sick and by examining the intestines of a goat it is seen that an ancestor is causing this sickness, fresh meat is put on the grave of the respective ancestor to ask him to stop the sickness.

I already mentioned the *kashi* (ritual) for the cattle and harvest above. Further there are *kashi* for the family, a new bride and certain newly acquired or prepared objects. The *kashi* are performed by the *toidi* (oldest son of a family), who need certain special objects to carry out these *kashi*. The rituals differ very much from each other in terms of complexity and performance. Many of them include the slaughtering of an animal and ancestor worshipping. According to Sale the aim of all *kashi* is to achieve or stabilize the well-being of the family.

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*barjo*. True, even the Christian notion of 'God' which lies at the back of our western thinking implies that 'God' has many different facets and dimensions. Also, 'God' can, in the last resort, not be defined and remains a fuzzy and opaque concept. Therefore it lends itself for spurious ethnographic description. When you find a mysterious term in a foreign culture which you can not quite understand but which in some way reminds you of your own notion of 'God' then you translate it as 'God'. In this way you simply substitute the one unknown by the other unknown."

Apart from the traditional belief one can find many people in the Maale area today, who are **Protestants, Orthodox Christians** or **Muslims**. While the Orthodox Christians and Muslims are people who immigrated to Maale, the Protestants are mostly Maale people who were converted. The Protestant Khale Heywet church, a denomination of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM)<sup>68</sup>, arrived in Gudo Ashekere, according to Ato Oid'isha, around 1962. The second compound of this church was built in Koybe where it still is the dominant church at present. Further Protestants were converted by the Mekanne Yesu church led by missionaries from Norway and by the Mulowonge church.

Missionaries used and still use aspects of modernity such as technology, medicine and schools to propagate Christianity<sup>69</sup>. The people who are converted by the Protestant missions in Maale are not only forbidden to drink alcohol, take tobacco or live in polygyny, moreover jewelers and objects believed to be connected with their traditional belief are not allowed to be used any more. Thus all converted Maale people stop wearing their traditional jewelers and doing *kashi* (rituals). Because of the prohibition on alcohol they even have to work in their own separate work parties, in which coffee is drunk instead of beer.<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately, even my informant Ato Oid'isha, who is working for the Protestant mission in Koybe, could not estimate the percentage of Maale people who have been converted. It is obvious that more people around the centers of Maale villages and especially near the mission stations are converted. Even in the middle of a larger village one can find people following the traditional belief. In Gongode, which has no mission, one can find people who were converted some years ago in another village of Maale.

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<sup>68</sup> Donham 1999: 93

<sup>69</sup> Donham 1999: 82

<sup>70</sup> Donham 1999: 161

## **IV. Houses and Their Material Contents**

### **1. Houses – Variations in Vernacular Architecture**

#### **1.1. Building a House**

In this chapter I will describe the building of houses in Maale. As I explained in chapter III.1, the altitude and climate of the highland and lowland areas of Maale differ greatly which is the reason why the houses in these two areas also have to be constructed differently. I will describe these differences, how I observed them and how they were explained to me at the two villages Baneta (highlands of Maale) and Gongode (lowlands of Maale).

##### **1.1.1. In the Highlands**

The building of houses in the highlands of Maale usually takes place between December and the end of February. This is the time after the main harvest; and since the people have leisure time and enough food, most feasts, including house-building parties and marriages, take place during this time.

Houses in the highlands can be begun to be built after the teff harvest in August and finished later, starting in December. I was able to observe the building of few houses. The rest was explained to me by my friend Meriegeta Markos from Baneta.

I will begin with the reasons why people may build a new house. The first and most frequent reason, according to Meriegeta, is that a couple will marry and want to have their house to live in after marriage. Another reason may be that an old house has become dilapidated (usually after about ten to fifteen years). In the first case, the father of the groom selects a place either inside his homestead or if there is not enough space inside his homestead he will look for a place

outside. When a new place outside the father's homestead has to be selected, a *joi* (healer and fortune-teller) is often asked for advice. In the case that an old house is dilapidated, a new one is built next to it in the same homestead.

For the building of a new house the groom and his family, as well as any other person who has to build a new house, calls the *dabo* (festive work group) for help. The family who is requesting help prepares *ala* (local beer) and sometimes also food for the members of the *dabo* (festive work group). When a participant of this work group is in need of helpers in the future, he will get the help of the families he has helped before in return.

The men and women of the *dabo* first go to collect wood and grass. The men collect the wood often some days in advance so that it can dry. Later the women collect the grass. Afterwards the men use the biggest poles that they have collected to start building the wall. They stick these poles in a circle inside the ground.

Before they finish the wall, the *jello* (roof) is prepared. First a *t'sakassi* (circle out of flexible wood) is bound together with vegetable fiber, and then long branches of wood are fastened around this circle<sup>71</sup>. Along the branches more circles are added. The branches are bound together at the top to build the tip of the roof, then the *musule* (wooden tip) is added on top. The conical roof is put on top of the wall of the house and finally the grass is fixed onto the roof. The preferred grass for roofs is called *sargaino* in Maale.



Figure 1: Steps of building a roof from a bird's-eye view.

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<sup>71</sup> See Figure 1

After finishing the roof the men continue building the wall by sticking smaller branches in between the big poles. Then they plait flexible wood between the poles in horizontal direction<sup>72</sup>.



Figure 2: Steps of building a wall.

The *zigimo* (door) is plaited in the style of the wall or in recent times men have begun to carve doors out of wood to make them more solid.

The women finish the wall of the house by smearing the inner side with mud. Then they cover about a quarter of the outside of the wall with mud on both sides of the door. When I asked for the reason of this style Meriegeta told me that the mud next to the door is added for decoration. Sometimes this part is even made more decorative by painting light colored stripes, dots (as Zeleketch and her children did it) or ornaments. The light soil for such paintings can be found near riverbeds.



Picture 1: A Maale house in Baneta with wooden door and decorative light colored stripes on both sides of it.

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<sup>72</sup> See Figure 2

Finally the house is complete and the women can plaster the floor with cow dung, what they have to redo every two weeks.

The kind of houses which I have described here are built in the highlands (Baneta, Koybe, Balla). The walls are plaited and insulated with cow dung and thus are suitable for the sometimes cooler climate in the mountains.

### **1.1.2. In the Lowlands**

In Gongode, like in other places in the lowlands, the houses are built differently due to the hotter climate. The participants of the Frobenius expeditions observed that in the mountains of Maale the houses were made out of wickerwork, while in the lowlands the walls were made out of tightly stuck poles.<sup>73</sup>

The reasons to build houses in the lowlands is the same as in the highlands. The same as in the highlands, the father of the groom is the one to select a place for the house if the couple is going to live outside his homestead. For example, one of the sons of Sale wanted to move to a homestead of his own since his wife Pauwa did not get along very well with the other family members. Sale selected a place for their homestead only about 50 meters away from his own. In this way the young couple had their own place and could still participate in the work on the fields and in the cattle camps without difficulty.

Houses in the lowlands are usually built within one day, and I did not have the chance to see houses being built like in Baneta, since with very few exceptions the houses are only built after the main harvest starting from December up to the end of February.

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<sup>73</sup> Jensen: 300

Assefa explained to me that in Gongode, a *dabo* (festive work group) is called for help in the house-building. The participants of the work group also get *ala* (local beer) for their work and can expect help in return in the future. A *dabo* (festive work group) of 15 people can build a standard house within only one day.

Assefa further told me that in Gongode houses are started with the *jello* (roof). The first step in building the roof is to bind together the first *t'sakassi* (circle out of flexible wood). Afterwards long branches are fastened around this circle<sup>74</sup>. After adding more circles along the branches, the branches are bound together at one end and the *musule* (wooden tip) is fastened on top. Then the grass is arranged on top and the roof is finished.

The *musule* (wooden tip) is typical for all Maale houses. People who are not Maale are forbidden to add such a wooden tip on top of their houses.

After the roof of the house is finished, the men build the wall of the house. They stick big poles of wood tightly next to each other in two rings into the floor. The inner ring is called "*garo reko*", which means inner stabilizer and the outer ring is called "*humbo reko*", which means outer stabilizer. The two walls are necessary for upholding the roof, since usually Maale houses do not have a pole in the middle of the house to carry out this task.

In the northern direction the men leave some poles of the walls out as an entrance. At most houses in Gongode I observed plaited doors in front of the entrances, while only occasionally there were no doors at all.

Finally the roof is put on top of the two walls and with this the house is finished.

Returning to the two walls of houses I explained only the simplest version above. Often the outer wall is not stuck tightly, as it is often used like a shelter for storing some items safely from sun and rain. Furthermore there are two reasons why people even often remove poles of the inner wall: Many Maale store beehives not only in trees in the bush, but also inside the homestead. Inside the

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<sup>74</sup> See Figure 1, page 37

homesteads, they are stored under the roofs of the houses. For that reason some of the poles of both walls have to be removed. Another reason for removing poles is that small insects often enter them and this can spoil the whole house. Thus many families, like my host-family in Gongode, remove all poles of the front side of the inner wall and leave only about one quarter in the back closed. Sale told me that after removing the poles in front, he did not have problems with insects.



Picture 2: A house in Gongode with a complete wall out of tightly stuck poles.



Picture 3: Sale's main *ket'so* ("woman's domain"). The space behind the outer wall is used as a shelter for storing newly made beehives. The inner wall is removed up to one quarter in the back. A few beehives are put directly under the roof.

## **1.2. Different Houses for Different Purposes**

In the preceding chapter I explained the building of houses called ***ket'so*** or ***kanta mari*** ("woman's domain"). They are the standard houses that exist in every homestead and the first house a young couple should build when starting their own homestead. Walking through Maale, you can observe that most homesteads consist of two to five houses. Some of them have different purposes. Apart from one main *ket'so* or *kanta mari* ("woman's domain") a homestead can have further smaller houses of the same style, one ***sogaro*** ("man's domain") and one ***kashi mari*** (ritual house). Also hen-houses, goat-houses and granaries are built in the style of miniature Maale houses and exist in many homesteads.

### **1.2.1. *Ket'so* - a Woman's Domain**

Now I want to describe the *ket'so* or *kanta mari*, which is built in the style already mentioned in the preceding chapter. I will translate *ket'so* with "woman's domain" since it is above all the domain of women, as I will show in the following pages.

I used to sit inside the big *ket'so* of our homestead in the afternoons, where the women of my family were mainly concerned with cooking, grinding and watching babies. Sometimes neighbors or other guests arrived and took a rest in the shady house, where they used to chat and smoke together with the women of my family who did their housework. Apart from these purposes the *ket'so* are also used for storing household items and women's items and further as a sleeping place for women and children. Men usually sleep inside their *sogaro* ("men's domain"), but if a couple has just been married and only owns one *ket'so*, men are allowed to sleep together with their women inside this *ket'so*.

Some homesteads have only one *ket'so*, which is very big and used for all mentioned tasks at once.

If a homestead has two or more *ket'so* or *kanta mari*, mostly one is only used for sleeping and storing personal items, while another one is used for cooking and storing household items. Further *ket'so* can also belong to a son and his wife living on the same homestead.

As already mentioned these houses are the domains of women, but men can sit inside to eat or drink coffee during a very hot or a rainy day. Since the actual place of men is on the *kela* (stone benches) outside the house, there is no special order how men or women should sit inside a house.

Most of the *ket'so* are built by a *dabo* (festive work group), because they are usually big and the main houses of a homestead. But if a smaller one is built only for cooking, Zeleketch told me, the family members do it by themselves or the neighborhood can be asked for help. For the neighborhood no *ala* (local beer) has to be prepared. The help between neighbors works as a principle of reciprocity.

### **1.2.2. *Sogaro* – a Man's Domain**

*Sogaro* I will translate with "man's domain", because it is the exclusive space of men. Not every homestead has a *sogaro*. Usually it is a matter of age and time to be able to build one. When a couple starts a homestead of their own they first build one or two *ket'so* ("woman's domain") and only after that they may build a *sogaro*. As young husbands are still allowed to sleep inside the *ket'so* together with their wife, they are not in a hurry to build a *sogaro*. If one is built, they will also call a *dabo* (festive work group) for help.

Even from the outside the *sogaro* is different from the *ket'so*. The entrances of the *sogaro* I observed around Gongode were not drawn down to the floor. To get into the house one has to climb over a high threshold. Also the *sogaro* usually have plaited doors. Both, the threshold and the door, are meant to keep out

animals, since they are often situated next to a goat-house. Compared with the *ket'so*, more beehives are usually arranged under the roof of a *sogaro*. Under the roof the beehives are supported by wide wooden poles<sup>75</sup>. Even though my main informant Assefa told me that it is not exclusively the case, I could observe that most *sogaro* are separated from the rest of the homestead by a fence. Usually *kashi mari* (ritual houses) and goat-houses are also located behind this fence.

According to Sale the *sogaro* is only used by adult men. It is a sleeping place for them and their guests and also a storage place for very valuable food like honey, full beehives and dried meat and further valuable items. It is also the place where new bond friendships are made. Men make new bond friendships while sitting together inside the *sogaro* eating and drinking *ala* (local beer).

Looking inside the *sogaro*, one can see dried meat, bows and arrows, fieldwork tools and spears and rifles with bullet-belts. Further the *basho* (ritual apron) and big cowhides and beds made out of leather strings can be found. The above mentioned objects are the most valuable ones a family possesses and the ones to offer to guests. The guests also sleep in the *sogaro*. None of the other houses use beds. Apart from men and guests in the *sogaro*, everybody else sleeps on cowhides on the floor.

### **1.2.3. *Kashi Mari* – a House for Objects Related to Ritual**

The *kashi mari* (ritual house) is a very special kind of house and not every homestead has one. It can only be found in homesteads of *toidi* (oldest sons of a family), who are allowed to do their own *kashi* (rituals). Usually oldest sons stay at the homestead of their parents with their family and continue to live there after the death of the parents. Thus new *kashi mari* (ritual houses) only have to be built when old ones are dilapidated. Another reason for building a new one may be that a *toidi* (oldest son) allows a younger brother to do his own *kashi*

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<sup>75</sup> See picture 18, chapter IV.2.2.2

(rituals) because the younger brother is moving far away from him. When a new *kashi mari* (ritual house) is built it is done by the *dabo* (festive work group).

The *kashi mari* (ritual house) also differs in its' appearance from the *ket'so* ("woman's domain"). The roof and the wall are the same, but on top of the wall a *gabo* (platform) made out of wood and covered with cow dung is built. Because of this platform the ceiling of the *kashi mari* is very low and sitting inside it in an upright position is not possible. The entrance is usually closed with a plaited door. The *kashi mari* (ritual house) is always separated by a fence from the part of the homestead where the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") is situated.

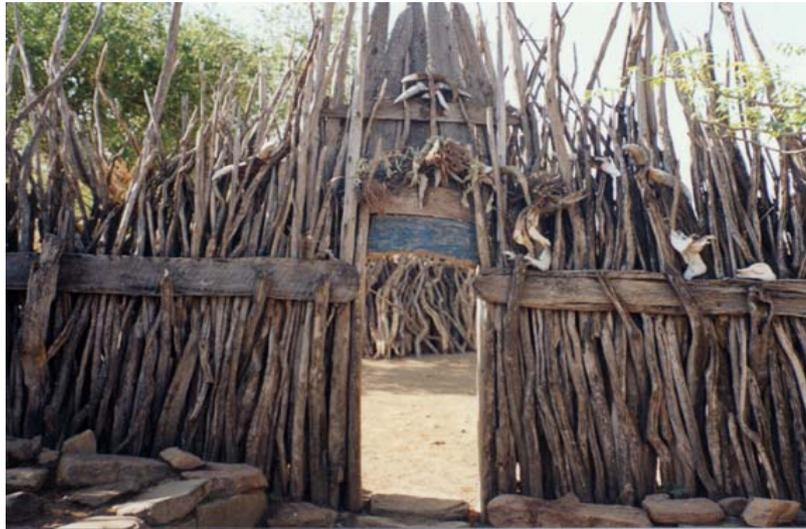
Inside the *kashi mari* valuable foodstuff like honey or butter is stored. On the *gabo* (platform) old items and items related to rituals can be found. The platform is also the place where a new bride will sleep for a while after her marriage.

Even though *kashi mari* means literally "ritual house", the rituals are not performed inside of it. They are usually carried out on the *t'zuzo* (ritual stones), which are placed next to the *kashi mari*. These stones may only be touched by the *kashi ado* (father of the ritual).

### **1.3. Example: a Homestead in Gongode**

I will now describe the homestead of my host-family in Gongode to show an example of the arrangement of houses in the homestead of a large Maale family.

On one of my first days in Gongode I examined the homestead of my host-family together with my host-father Sale and my friend Assefa. We started with the entrances.



Picture 4: Main entrance to a homestead in Gongode. All entrances are decorated with horns and cranial bones of cattle as a sign of wealth.

The first **entrance** to the homestead of Sale was not visible to me at first sight. It only consists of two small wooden sticks stuck upright into the ground on both sides of the path which leads to the homestead. Following the path after this first entrance after about 50 meters one arrives at the main entrance of the homestead. The main entrance is located inside the fence. It leads to the part of the homestead where the *ket'so* ("woman's domains") are situated. As Sale and Assefa explained, main entrances of Maale homesteads are always in eastern direction. During daytime they are open to everybody and only at night they will be closed by a plaited door.

A second entrance to Sale's homestead is to the west and only used by animals, *bela* (bond friends) and new brides. From the watering place behind the houses and from the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") there are entrances to the part of the homestead where the *sogaro* ("man's domain") and *kashi mari* (ritual house) are situated.

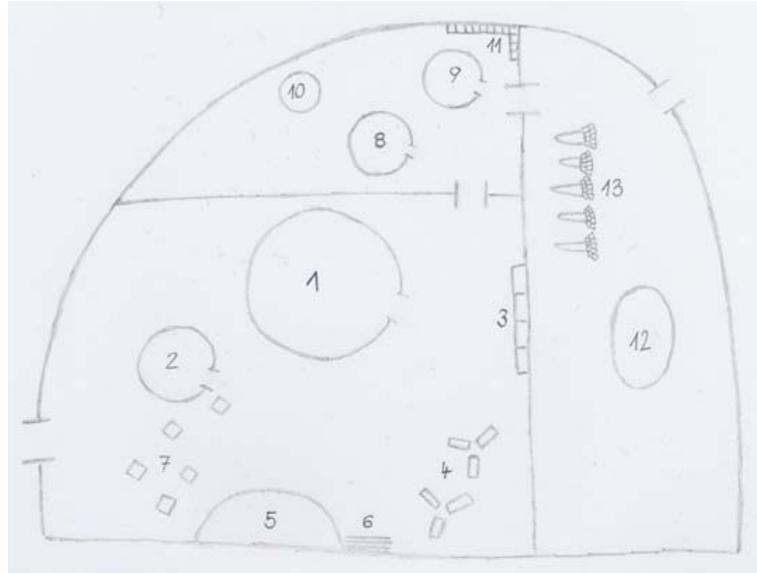


Figure 3: Sketch of the homestead of my host-family. 1. *ket'so* ("woman's domain"), 2. *ket'so*, 3. stone benches, 4. fireplaces, 5. storing places, 6. storage for fire wood, 7. graves of eldest women, 8. *sogaro* ("man's domain"), 9. *kashi mari* (ritual house), 10. goat-house, 11. *t'zuzo* (ritual stones), 12. watering place, 13. *daabo* (graves of forefathers)

The whole homestead of my host-family is divided into three big parts by fences. The biggest part consists of two *ket'so* ("woman's domain"), fireplaces, stones used as benches, grain stores and the graves of eldest women; the second part includes the *sogaro* ("man's domain"), the *kashi mari* (ritual house), a small goat-house and the *t'zuzo* (ritual stones); and the third part is a meadow with a watering place for animals and the *daabo* (graves of forefathers).

Number one of the sketch is the **main *ket'so*** ("woman's domain") of the homestead. It shows all the purposes I described for a *ket'so* in chapter IV.1.2.1: All day women grind and cook inside and take care of babies and at night women and children sleep inside of it.

The **smaller *ket'so*** ("woman's domain") was built for the oldest son of Sale and his wife. They store some of their personal belongings and household items inside, but work and sleep together with the rest of the family members in the main *ket'so*, respectively the *sogaro* ("man's domain"). Therefore their *ket'so* is most of the time only used as a storage place.

In front of the main *ket'so* the **kela**, stones used as benches, are situated. This is the place, where Sale with his sons and male guests sit while eating, drinking, smoking water pipe or chatting. Especially when drinking coffee in the mornings, many neighbors gather and discuss news at this place.

The place where the women and children of the family eat, drink and chat is around the **fireplaces**. Beginning early in the morning they sit there together, often with visitors from the neighborhood, drink coffee and chat.

Since most of the fields of the people in Gongode are far away, they only have small open **stores for grain** inside their homesteads. Most grain is stored in bigger stores at the fields.

Every homestead has a place to **store firewood**. At Sale's homestead this store is placed directly next to the outdoor fireplaces. New firewood is brought every evening by women, who arrive back from the fields.

Especially around the main entrance to the homestead of my host-family many big, flat stones are inside the ground. They are the **graves of the wives** of the forefathers, who have lived at the homestead in former times. At the first sight they are not noticeable, since they are very flat and therefore just look, as they would naturally belong to the ground.

Entering the second part of the homestead you will first see the **sogaro** ("man's domain") with a big amount of beehives and swarms of bees around it. As already mentioned, this house is mainly used for storing valuable things. It is empty until the men go there at night for sleeping.

The **kashi mari** (ritual house), which is placed behind the *sogaro*, is only used when searching for a special item that is stored there or when a new bride is coming to the homestead.

Behind the *kashi mari*, there is a small **goat-house**. But only few goats stay near the homestead, as watering places are rare around Gongode. The big *mootsi* (cattle camps) are far away.

In a corner next to the ritual house the **t'zuso** (ritual stones) are placed. They are a pile of stones collected by a forefather of Sale. Most rituals are done on or in front of them.

Through another door you can enter the last part of the homestead which has a further gate to the outside. In the middle of this part the *t'churo*, a watering place for animals, is placed. Water is only inside of it during the rainy season and at that time it is not only used as watering place for the goats, but also the women launder blankets.

Behind the *t'churo* (watering place) you can see the *daabo* (graves of the forefathers). They consist of a pile of small stones with an elongated upright stone in their middle. The graves are comparable to those of the Hamar explained by Lydall and Strecker.<sup>76</sup>

As only the oldest sons are buried in this way, the others are buried outside the homestead, the number of the graves shows you for how many generations a family has lived on a homestead. On Sale's homestead, for example, there are six graves of forefathers, which means that his family has already been living at the homestead for six generations.

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<sup>76</sup> Lydall, Strecker 1979b: 187

## 2. Houses as Centers of Activity – Objects in Use

*”And the Alhambra, some tiny gothic church, an old New England house, an Alpine hill village, an ancient Zen temple, a seat by a mountain stream, a courtyard filled with blue and yellow tiles among the earth. What is it they have in common? They are beautiful, ordered, harmonious- yes, all these things. But especially, and what strikes to the heart, they live.”<sup>77</sup>*

### 2.1. Some Notes about the Production of Objects

Before I describe the interior equipment of different houses in Maale and the activities carried out with this equipment I want to give some general explanations of the preparation of some objects.

In chapter V.1 I will explain the preparation of objects produced and used by specialized professions: potters, blacksmiths, weavers and healers and fortune-tellers. Most objects may be produced by any Maale person. About some of the objects, which can be produced by anybody, general statements are not possible, and thus I will describe the production later in the respective chapter.

First I describe some general images Sale and Ato Oid’isha told me about the **production of wooden items and gourds:**

According to Sale **wooden items** in Maale are always prepared by men. On days when not much work on the fields has to be done, or especially after the main harvest beginning in December, men are busy in making beehives, carving bowls and producing other items. When Sale did not set out for one of his fields early in the morning, I usually observed that he made new beehives, repaired the fence or maintained the path which leads to his homestead.

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<sup>77</sup> Alexander: 8-9

None of the wooden items are produced by an especially skilled person. Any man can tell you which tree has hard or soft wood and for which items the wood is suitable. After finding the suitable wood for a certain item, it is cut and split by the *yirga* (axe), which has a wooden handle and a long, sharp metal blade. Finally the men will carve an object out of the wood with the *kalta*, a tool that has a short rectangular metal blade and a bent wooden handle.

**Gussi (gourds)**, on the contrary, are prepared largely by women as Zeleketch explained. When the gourds have grown to the right size, after about one year, the farmer will knock at the gourd and if it sounds hollow the peel has already become hard and the gourd can be harvested. It is left somewhere in a shady place to dry, and when the color changes into yellow the tip is cut by men<sup>78</sup>. A woman will later on take out the dried seeds of the gourd with a *sat'zo* (thin wooden stick). Some seeds remain inside and have to be removed by an *ashki kire* (meat hook). In former times those seeds were roasted for eating, but Ato Oid'isha told me that this is not done any more.

After all seeds are taken out a woman cleans the gourd with water. Some gourds are already used at this point for carrying water or as storing containers, others are cut to become bowls or a piece has to be removed to become butter-containers. These preparations are also done by women.

To know which shape planted gourds will become, the seeds of different shapes of gourds are stored separately inside different *t'zukana* (grass bundles). In Sale's *ket'so* ("woman's domain") these *t'zukana* (grass bundles) were hung up under the roof over the fireplace.

Ato Oid'isha explained to me the shapes of gourds, which are differentiated in Maale:

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<sup>78</sup> Compare the preparation in Hamar in Dohrmann: 39

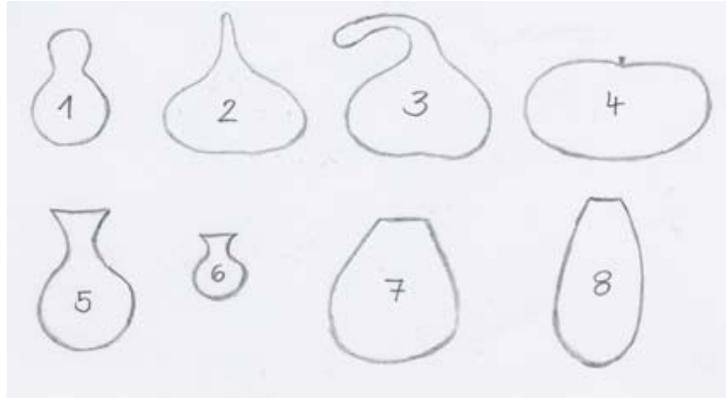


Figure 4: Different shapes of *gussi* (gourds)

1. *Kert'so gussi* literally means gourd in the shape of a neck.
2. *Bak'anno odossi gussi* means long necked gourd.
3. *Karo gussi* is the term for a bent gourd.
4. *Dudi gussi* means a circle-shaped gourd.
5. *Tukko gussi* literally means coffee gourd. Even when these gourds are still growing in the field their names refer to their later purposes.
6. *Kulle gussi* refers, like the *tukko gussi* (coffee gourd), to its later purpose. *Kulle* is the term for a tobacco container.
7. *Betch'e gussi* means *gussi* (gourd) in the shape of a drinking-vessel.
8. *Kola gussi* is the name for an oval shaped gourd.



Picture 5: Two *bak'anno odossi gussi* (long necked gourd; on the left) and one *karo gussi* (bent gourd; on the right) growing in a maize field in Baneta.

The shapes of gourds can be divided into three different categories: names after body parts, names after geometrical forms and names after future purpose. After Ato Oid'isha, Zeleketch and Meriegeta discussed with me the shapes, my informants drew the three shapes, which are named after their future purpose (figure 4, numbers 5, 6 and 7) as they look when already in use. Therefore shape one, five and six are actually the same shape, but differ in size. Shape one (*kert'so gussi*) is actually the biggest gourd, used for storing honey, milk, etc. Shape five (*tukko gussi*) is much smaller in size and used for carrying coffee to the field, while shape six (*kulle gussi*) has only the size of a thumb and is used to store a little amount of snuff inside. All other gourds are differentiated by shape and not by size.

Broken gourds, which I saw at several places, had been repaired by piercing small holes on both sides of the crack and sewing them together with vegetable fiber. Also old and broken gourds were placed in two houses of Sale's homestead under bird's nests to protect the floor from the bird's excrements. I also saw pieces of broken gourds, which were used for storing roasted coffee or put on women's graves at the day of the funeral.

## **2.2. The Interior Equipment of the Different Houses**

In this chapter I first want to describe the inside of the three different kinds of houses which exist in Maale, *ket'so* ("woman's domain"), *sogaro* ("man's domain") and *kashi mari* (ritual house), by explaining which objects can be found inside and showing how they are arranged there. Afterwards, I will take a closer look at single objects, which I combined according to different actions carried out in the respective houses or starting from them. As the translations of the first two houses "woman's domain" and "man's domain" already foretell, the objects found inside these two houses are mainly connected to the life of women in the first case, and to the life of men in the second case. The objects stored inside the ritual house are all more or less connected to rituals.

## 2.2.1. A Woman's Domain: *Ket'so*

### 2.2.1.1. A First Look Inside – Objects and Their Arrangement



Picture 6: Ceiling of the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") of Dozo Garko in Baneta.

I think that after field research everybody has some special moments or pictures in mind, which he or she will always remember and mention to everybody, when asked about the new experiences in the field. One of the favorite memories is when I first entered the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") of Dozo Garko in September 2002. Up to this moment I had never seen a Maale *ket'so* from the inside.

When I entered the *ket'so* through the small entrance it was dark for the first moment because it was one of those *ket'so* in Baneta whose wall is plaited and covered with cow dung, and therefore almost no sunlight enters through the wall. After few seconds I got used to the dark and saw this view: the whole ceiling of the house was full of gourds in all sizes, shapes and colors.

All gourds you can find in Maale houses are very basic and not decorated with beads or cowry shells as are the ones of some of the neighboring ethnic groups,

but this simplicity is their most striking feature. They are not decorated but they vary in their colors instead, which is created by the rising smoke of the fireplace. This smoke turns the yellow gourds red after a while and after even more time they become black.

By putting the gourds up under the ceiling, where the smoke from the fireplace reaches them, insects are kept away from the gourds and their contents. Furthermore this beautiful arrangement makes it very easy to find the gourd one is looking for.

Apart from the gourds there are many other items stored inside a *ket'so* ("woman's domain"):

Entering the *ket'so* of my host-family in Gongode on a hot sunny day, one would find the following scene: on the right side are people sitting together, chatting and taking care of babies, while on the left side women are cooking. Thus, on the right you can observe people relaxing and chatting on many *zeddi* (cowhides) and on small *oyta* (wooden stools) which are spread all over the floor. Behind the cowhides and stools a *damboto* (water pipe) is hanging on a pole that the people who rest on the cowhides and stools can reach easily. Most times the water pipe is actually not hanging on the pole because it is used by the people while chatting and socializing. The first object you can see on the left side is the *tamo et'zo nabo* ("*tamo*" means fire, the other two words I could not ascertain), a fireplace for cooking, made out of three stones. In the surrounding of the fireplace pots and plates are stored on the ground and in the ceiling above it small items like spoons, hooks or whisks are stuck. Next to the *tamo et'zo nabo* (fireplace), two *wontzo* (grinding stones) are placed. Depending on how many women stay in the homestead during daytime, one or two grinding stones are used. Since for the main dishes in Maale, as well as for beer, ground maize or sorghum is used at least one woman stays inside the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") grinding all day. Near the grinding stone you can find small hard stones to roughen it, *hatzi* (brooms) for sweeping together the produced flour as well as *anda* (gourd bowls), the flour containers.

Turning the view to the ceiling, which is opposite from the entrance, some clothing and jeweler items of the women can be seen. The jeweler items,

brassieres, stomach binders and skirts are hung up on wooden sticks directly under the ceiling. Some of these items are still in use, while others are old and worn out.

Above I described only the inside of a *ket'so* ("woman's domain"). But the *matzi itinzi* (beehives) arranged under its roof remain almost invisible from the inside<sup>79</sup>. Since honey is one of the most important products in the lowland areas of Maale, you can find beehives under the roofs of most houses. The honey of these beehives is easy and quick to take out, in case of the arrival of guests. Under the roof of the *ket'so* of my host-father Sale around ten beehives were stored out of which three were in use.

### **2.2.1.2. Containers and Storage**

One of the main purposes of a *ket'so* ("woman's domain") is the storing of objects, and many of the objects inside of it have the same purpose, namely storing. Most of the containers are only stored in the *ket'so* in an empty state. The empty gourds are hung up under the ceiling and the empty leather containers are hung up on sticks at the wall.

The majority of the containers stored inside a *ket'so* are made out of gourds. According to their size and shape they are used for storing and carrying different things:

The ***oisi gussi*** (butter gourd) for example, is a gourd used for keeping butter. It is only stored inside the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") as long as it is empty. Filled with butter it is very valuable and thus stored inside the *kashi mari* (ritual house). When men or women carry the *oisi gussi* to or from markets, they use a string of vegetable fiber pierced through the tip of the gourd, with which they can also hang it up inside their house. *Oisi gussi* (butter gourds) are mostly

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<sup>79</sup> See picture 3, chapter IV.1.1.2

small gourds and have the shape of a *karo gussi* (bent gourd)<sup>80</sup>. For a lid a piece in the middle of the gourd is cut out. Through this hole the butter can be filled in or taken out.

Like the *oisi gussi* also the ***ezo gussi*** (honey gourd) is only stored inside the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") as long as it is empty. Sale told me that a full *ezo gussi*, like a filled butter gourd, is put inside the *kashi mari* (ritual house). The *ezo gussi* (honey gourd) is used for storing, as well as for carrying the honey to and from markets. Honey containers can always be recognized by the vegetable strings fastened around them (three to four fastened vertically and some more fastened horizontally) as carrying-straps. On top they are often closed by *kurle* (lids) carved out of wood. Sometimes men decorate these lids with carved ornaments on top.

An *ezo gussi* can be made out of a *kert'so gussi* (gourd in shape of a neck), a *betch'e gussi* (gourd in shape of a drinking vessel) or a *kola gussi* (oval shaped gourd).



Picture 7: Two *ezo gussi* (honey gourds): the left one in *betch'e* (drinking-vessel) shape, the right one in *kert'so* (neck) shape, with carrying-straps out of vegetable fiber.

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<sup>80</sup> For explanations of the shapes of gourds, see chapter IV.2.1

As Zeleketch explained to me, after milking the *diki* (fresh milk) is stored inside a ***detche gussi*** (milk gourd). The milk is collected inside the *detche gussi* (milk gourd) for a few days. When there is enough milk to prepare butter, a woman holds its long neck with both hands and shakes the gourd. After shaking a woman fills the product into an *anda* (gourd bowl) in order to separate the produced sour milk from the butter. The *detche gussi* (milk gourd) is made out of a *bak'anno odossi gussi* (long-necked gourd) since the long neck is necessary for shaking it.

After a woman separates the *sulke diki* (sour milk) from the butter, she fills it into a ***saro gussi*** (gourd for sour milk). The *saro gussi* has a shorter neck than the gourd for fresh milk, but also the shape of a *bak'anno odossi gussi* (long-necked gourd). Vegetable fiber is always bound around it that it can be transported from the *mootsi* (cattle camp) to the homestead.



Picture 8: Wodyago, the granddaughter of my host-father Sale, carrying a water gourd with the help of a *sayo*.

In every homestead in Maale you can find several **watzo gussi** (water gourds) in different sizes. The water gourds are used by women and girls to fetch water at rivers, springs and wells and also to store the water at the homestead afterwards. They can have the shapes of a *bak'anno odossi gussi* (long-necked gourd) or a *karo gussi* (bent gourd). The capacity of a *watzo gussi* (water gourd) ranges from three to more than twelve liters. Women use larger gourds and girls use smaller gourds to carry water. When women arrive with their *watzo gussi* at a river or spring, one can observe them first filling the water into the gourd with the help of a small bowl or a *maga* (funnel made out of the neck of a gourd). When the gourd is filled, the women close their gourds with fresh leaves and then arrange the *sayo*, special rope constructions, around them. The *sayo* are made out of strings of the *algisho* plant, which are knotted around a ring of vegetable fiber to the needed size. Two of the strings are arranged as shoulder straps for carrying.

Another object used for storing is the **tukko gussi** (coffee gourd) made out of the shape of gourd with the same name. It is a small gourd that is about 25 cm long, which is used to carry *tukko* (coffee) or *kalko* (tea made out of coffee leaves) when walking for a long distance, for example to a faraway field. According to Zeleketch people who are converted also use the *tukko gussi* (coffee gourd) for carrying coffee or *kalko* to the church to drink out of it after the prayers. There is no difference between a man's and a woman's *tukko gussi* (coffee gourd).

Apart from containers made out of gourds, in Maale there are also two containers made out of animal's skin:

The first one is the **ora**, a backpack prepared out of a cowhide. In the evenings, the women of our homestead in Gongode often came back from the *goshi* (fields) with an *ora* (backpack) full of maize or sorghum on their backs. This item is especially important in areas where the fields are far away and the grain is stored at the fields. The grain for one day can be carried to the homestead in an *ora*.

I watched Sale when he prepared an *ora* out of an old *zeddi* (cowhide), which had been used first for sitting and sleeping, then for separating grains and finally was turned by him into an *ora*. He folded the old cowhide into two halves and flattened the crease with a stone. Then he took an already used *ora* for measurement, laid it on top of the *ora* to be prepared and cut with an *arfaro* (knife) along the edge of the used *ora*. In this way, he cut a new *ora* out of the old cowhide. The leftovers of the cowhide he used for leather strips. With these strips he sewed the right and left side together and arranged two straps at the upper end of the *ora*. With these straps the *ora* can be worn like a backpack.



Picture 9: A *surba* (leather container) at Sales homestead.

The ***surba*** is also a leather container used to carry grains from the *goshi* (field) to the homestead. It is made out of the hide of one whole goat. Ato Jacob explained that when a *surba* should be made out of a hide, the hide has to be removed as a whole after slaughtering the goat. Then the hide is dried and softened with *mukale* (oil seeds) and wood. Afterwards the part where the head of the goat has been, as well as the forefeet, are sewn together. The hind feet of the goat are used as straps for carrying.

While the *ora* (backpack) can only be used by women, the *surba* (leather container) can be used by both women and men. The reason is that a *surba* (leather container) can be carried over the shoulder, and also hung on a piece of wood which two people carry together. In this way men are also allowed to carry

it because for them it is a taboo to carry things on their back (like the backpack *ora*).

The objects explained above are all used to store or carry things inside of them. In contrast the ***ro'jo*** is a construction on top of which items are stored. It is made out of flexible wood and vegetable fiber. The flexible wood is bound together in an oval shape and the fiber is fastened net-shaped in between. Usually one can find a *ro'jo* fixed under the roof of a house for storing small items like *anda* (gourd bowls) on it. One day I observed several women carrying babies on a *ro'jo* on their backs, but it was the only time I saw somebody using it for carrying in Maale. In other ethnic groups of South Omo, e.g. the Kara, I could observe that the *ro'jo* is used like the *sayo* (rope construction for carrying gourds) is used in Maale for carrying water from the river to the homestead.

### **2.2.1.3. Objects for Food Preparation**

The typical dishes which are served almost every day in Maale are *samo* (maize and sorghum stew) and *lado* (maize and sorghum bread). The most important ingredients of both are ground maize and sorghum. While for *samo* the ground maize and sorghum is just cooked together with beans, green cabbage and sometimes meat and red pepper, *lado* is a kind of bread baked out of the two ingredients. The preparations for cooking start when maize or sorghum are brought in an *ora* (backpack) or *surba* (leather container) from the field.

In summer 2003 Pauwa Kuta, a daughter-in-law of my host-father Sale, had two small children and was pregnant again; therefore she usually stayed at the homestead for the whole day. I could observe how she first separated the sorghum with the *uddo*, a big wooden mortar which is not only used for separating sorghum, but also for pounding coffee or *kuse walashi* leaves (these pounded leaves are used as soap). The pounding is done by the *dul'zo* (pestle).

After she finished the separation with the mortar in front of the house, Pauwa carried the separated sorghum inside the house in a big *anda* (gourd bowl).

Inside the *ket'so* (“woman’s domain”) she continued grinding the sorghum with the *wontzo* (grinding stone). Apart from sorghum she also ground maize and sometimes even coffee beans with the grinding stone. The base of the grinding stone is usually placed on a smaller stone at the back to get an oblique position. In some houses, like at Sale’s *ket'so*, small elevations of ground are made for this purpose.

Pauwa put the sorghum or maize to be ground at the top of the base of the grinding stone and ground it with the smaller longish stone for several times. This smaller longish stone she held between the palms of her hands.



Picture 10: Pauwa Kuta, daughter-in-law of Sale, grinding in the main *ket'so* (“woman’s domain”).

After she ground a certain amount of flour, she brushed it together with a small *hatzi* (broom) and put it into a big *anda* (gourd bowl). The small brooms are

made out of sorghum sticks and bound together by vegetable fiber. They are also used for cleaning the cowhides and the inside of the house. Big brooms are made out of thin branches of *saringa* wood which are bound together with cotton strings. They are used for cleaning the homestead.

It becomes obvious that grinding is one of the main tasks of women when one looks at the *sunguro* (rough skin), which they have on the bottoms of their palms. When Pauwa observed my palms, which do not have this rough skin, she surprisedly said that I had smooth hands like a man.

In large homesteads you can often find more than one grinding stone. When Sale's daughters-in-law ground together at the same time they arranged their stones parallel to each other and ground in the same rhythm. They often started singing when they were grinding together. Either they would both sing or one of them would sing and the other one would hum. They told me that their songs were marriage songs, harvest songs and sometimes praise-songs for their forefathers of whom they called each name.

After the grinding, which can take the whole day, a woman starts to cook. For arranging pots and plates over the fire, she uses a construction of three stones of the same height which are arranged into a circle. As you can see on the sketch in chapter IV.1.3 a homestead has several of these *tamo et'zo nabo* (fireplaces made out of three stones). One is inside the *ket'so* ("woman's domain") and several others are outside. The fireplaces are usually the places where the women sit together, not only for cooking, but also for eating, drinking and chatting. During the dry season one of the fireplaces outside is used. Only in the rainy season will a woman use the one inside the *ket'so*.

Instead of the *tamo et'zo nabo* (fireplace made out of three stones), some people own *nabanno*. The *nabanno* are three clay pieces formed in pear-shape. They are arranged in a circle and used like the *tamo et'zo nabo* to arrange pots and plates over the fire. Using the *nabanno* (three clay pieces) is more comfortable than using stones, since all clay pieces have exactly the same size and it would not be easy to find such stones. According to Zeleketch some kinds of stones

burst easily when they are very hot. This does not happen to the *nabanno*. However, as far as I could observe, the *nabanno* are only used by few Maale people since they have to be bought from the potter, while the three stones can just be collected anywhere.

Between the stones or clay pieces of the fireplace women use dry wood to make fire. Even though matches are known and sold in the Maale area, some people still own and use a *suringi* (fire drill) to make fire. It consists of two wooden parts. One is just a thin stick and the other one is a wider stick, which has several notches. When a woman makes fire, she puts the small stick into one of the notches of the wider one and twists it between her palms. The fire is created by the friction, and to catch the fire dry sorghum or grass is arranged under the *suringi* (fire drill).

After the fire is made a woman will put the pots and plates on top of the fireplace. For the preparation of most typical dishes and beverages there are specific pots and plates in Maale. Even though some of them are very similar, they all have different names. I noticed eight different clay pots for different purposes in Maale:

A pot, which is used at least daily, is the *tukko oti* (coffee pot). It is used for preparing coffee, which is made out of powdered coffee beans. Women roast these beans in potsherds, before they powder and boil them. Every morning people drink coffee and it is also offered when guests are around or during festivities. It is usually drunk with salt and if salt is not available without any additive.

The height of the *tukko oti* (coffee pot) is about 40 cm and it has one handle. The decoration of a *tukko oti* differs from pot to pot. It is done around the neck and on the handle and depends on the taste of the potter.

In Maale not only the coffee beans but also the leaves of coffee plants are used. A tea called *kalko*<sup>81</sup> is made out of them. The *kalko* can be drunk instead of coffee in the mornings or at other special occasions. The pot for this tea, the *kalko oti*, looks sometimes exactly the same as the *tukko oti* (coffee pot); occasionally it can be a little bigger.

Especially in towns and marketplaces like Baneta, the *mani* (potters) also prepare *jebena* (Amharic term). These are the smaller pots used for the Amharic coffee ceremony. The *jebena* are very small in size, about 15 cm high. They have only one handle like the *tukko oti* (coffee pot), but their neck is very slim and they have a mouth out of which the coffee can be poured. The *jebena* are mostly bought and used by the immigrant traders living in Maale, but also by some Protestant Maale people. My host-mother Zeleketch from Baneta for example used only the *jebena* for preparing coffee.

The most important pot for preparing food in Maale is the *samo oti*, a big cooking pot for preparing *samo* (maize and sorghum stew). It has two handles and sometimes a decoration around the rim. As *samo* is usually cooked for a big family and can be eaten at every time of the day. The pots are big with a height of about 50 cm.

The *ashki oti* (meat pot) has the same height and shape as the *samo oti* (pot for *samo*). This pot is used for cooking meat. While in Baneta you can often find fresh cow meat, the meat that is cooked in Gongode is usually dried meat since the cattle camps are very far away. The dried meat is carried to the homestead by a donkey and stored inside the *sogaro* ("man's domain"). The meat cooked inside the *ashki oti* is mostly mixed into the *samo* (maize and sorghum stew) afterwards.

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<sup>81</sup> To prepare *kalko* first coffee leaves of a yellow color are pounded and then put into boiling water. The boiled tea is finally poured over as many as possible of the following spices: garlic, ginger, onion, mint, salt and local spices (*t'enna adam, dinbellal, simpati*).

The biggest pots in Maale are the *ala oti* (beer pots). They are at least twice as high as the coffee pots and have a much bigger body and two handles. The local beer made of maize and sorghum flour is prepared and stored inside these pots. As the beer is usually only needed for special occasions (markets, mourning ceremonies, work parties, etc.), it is always prepared in large amounts. Since an *ala oti* (beer pot) has a big capacity, it is still used even when it has some cracks, for example for storing grains.

The *arak oti* (pots for strong liquor) have the same size and shape as the *ala oti* (beer pots), but sometimes their neck is a little bit longer. They are used for preparing strong liquor. Often I observed the distillation of *arak* (strong liquor) inside a *ket'so* ("woman's domain") where I went on a visit. The construction for the distillation consists of two *arak oti* and one *anda* (gourd bowl) for closing one of the pots. A bamboo cane, at which a metal bottle is hung up at one end, links the two pots.

In Maale *arak* (strong liquor) is even more popular than beer. Therefore it is often the first thing offered to arriving guests.

*Disto* or *wotzo oti* (sauce pot) is the name for a small pot used for cooking sauces. It differs from all the other pots, since it has no neck. Its' two handles are directly placed under the rim, which is often decorated by ornaments. *Disto* can have different sizes ranging from about 40 cm to 50 cm height.

The sauces cooked inside the *disto* are usually eaten together with *lado* (maize and sorghum bread). *Lado* is big, circular bread made out of ground maize and/or sorghum. This bread is baked on the *boko*, a clay plate, which can have different sizes. Smaller ones are usually used for roasting maize, while larger ones are used for baking *lado*, or in the towns, *solo* (injera). The plates are never decorated with ornaments.

Apart from pots and plates, there are some small kitchen tools used during cooking. Women use, for example, *kire* (wooden hooks) to take the cooked meat out of pots. These hooks can sometimes have a metal tip, prepared by the *gito* (blacksmith). Further *silb'o* (wooden spoons) are used for stirring the sauces,

which are eaten together with the *lado*. The spoons can have different sizes and shapes, but they do not have any decoration. For stirring sauces also *tirbano* (whisks) can be used. They consist of a long wooden stick, which ends with three short branches. For chopping and cutting meat or cabbage women use *arafo* (small knives).

#### **2.2.1.4. Bowls and Plates**

In Maale meals are usually eaten early in the mornings and late in the evenings. As the preparation of food takes the whole day, fresh meals are cooked in the evenings, while in the mornings usually the leftovers are eaten. During meals men sit together on the *kela* (benches made out of stones), while the women sit together with the children around the fireplaces. Even when my host-father Sale had no company of sons or friends, he preferred to sit alone on the *kela* (stone benches) instead of joining the women. He only spoke to the women when he needed new charcoal for his *damboto* (water pipe) or when he complained about the food. Since men and women usually sit separately, they will also eat and drink out of separate dishes:

Starting with the ***tukko anda*** (coffee bowls), there is a strict separation between the bowls for men and the bowls for women. One bowl is called ***atinke tukko anda*** (men's coffee bowl) and is the coffee bowl used exclusively by men, the second is the ***lali tukko anda*** (women's coffee bowl), the coffee bowl only used by women. The coffee bowls are made of small gourds, which have about the size of two hands. The neck of the gourd is used as a handle. Even though I often found it hard to see the difference between the men's and the women's coffee bowl, Sale explained that after cutting the gourd into two halves, the right half is given to the men, while the left half is given to the women. Since *karo gussi* (gourds with a bent neck) are used for producing coffee bowls, the

bowls look like the palm of a right hand (used by men) and left hand (used by women)<sup>82</sup>; the neck of the gourd being like a thumb<sup>83</sup>.

Another important *anda* (gourd bowl) used for drinking is the ***alo anda*** (beer bowl). The local beer, which is drunk together with guests, at festivities, on market days or even sometimes in the evenings instead of food<sup>84</sup>, is drunk out of this bowl. There is no distinction between a men's bowl and a women's bowl, but since most times men and women sit separately and there is usually more than one *alo anda* (beer bowl) one will be passed among the men and one among the women. The *alo anda* is usually a little bit bigger than a coffee bowl and the neck of the gourd is cut. As the neck is cut, it does not matter which shape the neck of the gourd had. It can be made out of a *bak'anno odossi gussi* (long-necked gourd), a *karo gussi* (bent gourd) or a *dudi gussi* (circle-shaped gourd).

Beer can also be drunk out of a *betch'e gussi* (gourd in shape of a drinking-vessel), made out of the gourd with the *betch'e* shape<sup>85</sup>.

The ***samo anda*** (*samo* bowl) is used to eat *samo* (maize and sorghum stew). As for the *alo anda* (beer bowl) and also for the *samo anda* there is no distinction between the bowl for men and for women, but since men and women sit separately during eating men and women eat out of a different one. The *samo anda* is bigger than the *anda* (bowl) for coffee or for beer and has no handle. It can be prepared out of the same gourd shapes as the *alo anda* (beer bowl).

Apart from gourd bowls, there are two kinds of wooden dishes which are also used for eating *samo* (maize and sorghum stew):

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<sup>82</sup> See Tilley: 38 for further explanation of the widespread dualism of left- (evil) and right- (good) hand.

<sup>83</sup> Lydall, Strecker 1979b: 102

<sup>84</sup> The beer doesn't contain much alcohol, but rather mostly maize and sorghum flour and is thus very nourishing.

<sup>85</sup> See chapter IV.2.1 for the explanation of the different shapes of gourds.

These are the ***gabbata*** (wooden bowl) and the ***gonga*** (wooden plate). The *gabbata* is a circular wooden bowl. It can have different sizes and even stand on a stem. Sometimes it is decorated with ornaments around the rim. The *gonga* (wooden plate) has the same purpose as the *gabbata* (wooden bowl), but it has a different shape. It is always oval, has no stem and is much bigger than a *gabbata*. Usually men and women eat from a different *gonga* or *gabbata*. Since the *gonga* is bigger, it is used for larger groups of people and the *gabbata* accordingly for smaller groups.

The last object I want to describe in this paragraph is the ***murso***. *Murso* is the term for a small bowl used by children for drinking milk or eating *samo* (*maize and sorghum stew*). It is also used as a spoon to take *samo* out of a clay pot. It does not even have the size of a hand and its shape does not matter, as long as the gourd is small.

### **2.2.1.5. Objects for Idle Hours**

Everybody, no matter if after a hard day of work or a long walk, has to relax somehow. How and where can you relax in Maale and which objects do the people need for this purpose? At this point I want to show the different objects inside a *ket'so* ("woman's domain") which are used during idle hours:

Entering my host-family's *ket'so* in Gongode, you can find the women on the left side, who are doing their housework, while on the right side often visitors can be found who relax and chat with the working women. Thus, on the right side there are usually several ***zeddi*** (cowhides), which are spread over the floor for visitors or other people in need of a rest. The cowhides are used to sit and to sleep on and the newest and nicest ones are offered to guests. The new cowhides still have some hair on the hide, sometimes with very nice patterns. When they become old and the hair with the patterns wears off, they will mostly be used by children to sit and sleep on. Very old hides are used by women for separating

the seeds of the sorghum from the sticks in front of the house. If cowhides are completely worn out they can be made into an *ora* (backpack).

Apart from cowhides, a guest is often offered an ***oyta*** (stool) in order to sit more comfortably. *Oyta* is the term for different kinds of wooden stools. The most basic one has a circular seat which can have different sizes and three or four legs. The length of the legs differs, but usually they are very short. These stools are not only used inside a *ket'so*, but also outside houses or even on top of the *kela* (stone benches). When guests are around, the stools are of course first offered to them; otherwise the first people who have the advantage to sit on stools are the men of the homestead.

If a family is not in possession of an *oyta* (stool), they will offer a ***kere*** to a visitor. The *kere* is a longish and very low wooden headrest, also used as stool. There are two sizes of *kere*: one has four legs and is used for a single person as headrest, while a longer *kere* with six legs is used for a couple. The primary use of a *kere* is as headrest on top of a cowhide.

Whenever I saw people sitting on cowhides, stools or wooden headrests and chatting at the right side of the *ket'so* of my host-father Sale, they would be smoking the ***damboto*** (water pipe, literally: tobacco (*dambo*) pot (*oto*)). For that reason the *damboto* is hung up on a stick directly behind the area where the cowhides are spread out and the stools and wooden pillows are placed. In this way the people who are resting on the cowhides, can easily reach it.

The *damboto* is not only smoked when people sit together to relax and chat at Sale's homestead, and the smoking of the *damboto* is moreover inseparably connected with the daily routine of people. The smoking usually starts in the early mornings. First the *damboto* is smoked by the men sitting on the *kela* (stone benches). They begin smoking before drinking coffee and eating breakfast<sup>86</sup>. After they have finished their coffee and breakfast they go on with smoking and talking until they start on their way to the fields and cattle camps.

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<sup>86</sup> See the cover picture of the thesis: My host-father Sale starting a new day by smoking *damboto*.

After the men have left, the *damboto* circulates among the women chatting at the fireplace until they also set out for work. When the family members return to their homestead after work, it is already dark. The women, who stayed at the homestead during the day, have started to cook. The men sit down and while waiting for the food smoke the *damboto* again. Even after eating they end their day by smoking the *damboto*.

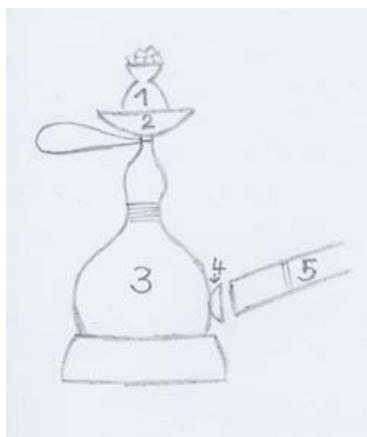


Figure 5: Parts of a *damboto* (water pipe): 1. *masherito*, 2. *gaya*, 3. *oti*, 4. *pirato*, 5. *wosho*.

As the *damboto* is the favorite item of my host-father Sale, its parts were the first and only words he taught me in *malló múcci* (Maale language). To make sure that I did not forget them I had to repeat them several times on several mornings and evenings.

The main part of the *damboto* is the *oti* (literally: pot), a long-necked gourd. On top of this gourd the *gaya*, a round wooden plate, is fixed. On top of the *gaya* the *masherito*, a pipe-bowl made out of clay by the *mani*, is placed. The *dambo* (tobacco) and the charcoal are arranged on the *masherito* (pipe-bowl) by metal tongs.

The pipe stands on a balance carved out of wood. Often this balance is decorated by notched ornaments. Through the *pirato*, a hole at the bottom of the pipe, water is filled into the gourd. And furthermore the *wosho*, a long bamboo stick through which the smoke is inhaled, is inserted.

An alternative to this kind of *damboto* is a smaller and simplified version with the same name. It is made out of a smaller gourd in the shape of a *karo gussi* (bent gourd). At the point of the gourd the neck is cut and a wooden pipe is fixed as mouthpiece. The pipe-bowl, which is made out of clay, is linked to the gourd by another wooden pipe. During smoking, the *damboto* is held with both hands since it has no balance to stand on and the wooden pipe is short. This *damboto* is mostly used as transitional solution or for traveling until a better and bigger *damboto* is made.



Figure 6 (Pauli: illustrations 19): Simplified *damboto* (water pipe).

The last object I observed, especially at the house of Sarke Goike in Baneta when people were chatting and smoking together, is the ***goala*** (lyre). Not every family owned one, but especially in homesteads of respected elders or chiefs where people often meet for chatting and smoking, lyres can be found. In Maale lyres have always five *pine* (strings). These strings are made out of leather or plastic fiber. Their body consists of a tortoise shell or sometimes wood in a similar shape and it is covered with goatskin on top. Two long wooden sticks are fixed on top of the body. At their upper end another stick is fastened between them to hold the strings.

The player of the *goala* usually holds it with the left arm and either puts it over his or her legs or holds it in a horizontal position during playing. Then he or she presses the strings with the fingertips of the left hand while two fingers of the right hand pluck the strings with a small piece of leather. There are different

rhythms which are played on the *goala*<sup>87</sup>, and most have the names of the songs which are sung to accompany the playing. One of the rhythms I heard very often was "woybe". *Woybe* is the name for the month of April and to the rhythm a song is sung about the rainy, green and fertile month of *woybe*. Other rhythms have for example names of birds or special cattle, which are described and admired in the songs.



Figure 7 (Jensen: illustrations 39): *Goala* (lyre).

### **2.2.1.6. Women's and Children's Dresses**

In this chapter I want to describe the clothes of small children and women. If they are not in use or when they are being made one can find these clothes hung up on sticks under the ceiling of a *ket'so* ("woman's domain").

In many areas of Maale, especially where most of the people are Protestants or live near market places as in Baneta, mainly second hand clothes are worn. These were brought by traders to the markets. In other areas, around Gongode, for example, only a few people wear second hand clothes and most still wear

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<sup>87</sup> Ferran 2002: 66

self-made clothes. That is why above all I want to describe in this chapter the observations I made in Gongode.

I will start with the clothing of **small boys** around Gongode: At the age of about three months, before they get their first teeth, a sister of the grandfather binds *patilo* (cotton strings) around the neck and the waist of the baby boy. These strings are regarded as clothing and when I asked Sale for the reason for these strings, he told me that they are used so the children are not bare. Sale further told me that the *patilo* around the waist is often exchanged with a small belt, made out of leather, when the boy gets his first teeth. Up to about age twelve I observed that boys usually do not wear anything apart from this leather belt and sometimes black sandals made out of old car tires. Especially when herding or walking for long ways, one may also find small boys with a *gofalo* (small goatskin) on their back as protection against the sun. The *gofalo* has already been described as clothing for small boys by the participants of the Frobenius expedition<sup>88</sup>.

Like small boys, **small girls** get a *patilo* (cotton string) around the neck and around the waist at an age of about three months. When getting the first teeth, the *patilo* around the waist is exchanged against a belt made out of one string of small glass beads. This is the entire dress of a girl until she starts walking. Then the first *shiro* (skirt made of cotton strings)<sup>89</sup> is made for her. This skirt which the girls wear up to ten or twelve years is made out of a large amount of twisted cotton strings that are fastened at one cord. The cotton strings are mainly fastened to the front. The skirt is closed by the cord in the back, where the granddaughters of Sale fixed some bottle lids as decoration at the tips of further strings. The strings in front of their skirts were colored partly in red or blue and some of the small girls added some strings with *sarungo* seeds (red seeds of the *sarungo* bush) in between. When the *shiro* of Sale's granddaughter Wodyago

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<sup>88</sup> Jensen: 307

<sup>89</sup> See chapter IV.2.2.1.7, picture 17

became too short, she was given one with longer cotton strings, which had belonged to an older girl of her family.

At the age of around ten or twelve years girls stop wearing the *shiro* and the mother makes the first ***buddo*** for them. The *buddo* is a leather skirt made out of the hides of four goats. When I observed the preparation of a *buddo* at the homestead of Ato Jacob in Gongode, he told me that the goats to which these hides belonged were blessed before slaughtering and their intestines were read to know if they will bring good fortune to the woman who will wear the skirt. Then the hides were cut at the abdomen of the goats and removed. The hides were first softened inside water, and later, when I arrived at his homestead, I observed several men and women holding the hides one after another stretched by strings, while others softened them with sand and hard stones. This way of softening hide is hard work which takes a whole day. Because neighbors help with this work, the mother of the homestead prepares *ala* (local beer) for them. After the softening the sewing of the skirt begins. The sewing is done by the woman herself, or if it is the first *buddo* for a girl, by her mother. Strings of the back sinew of cattle are used to sew about seven cut pieces of the softened leather together: short pieces for the front and very long ones for the back. The skirt is bound together to the left side in front by small leather strips. The front the skirt does not reach the knees, while in the back the skirt can reach down to the ankles.

Over the *buddo* the ***d'amma*** (leather strings) can be worn as decoration. The *d'amma* consists of a long leather string on which many shorter leather strings are fastened. These short leather strings hang as decoration over the casual leather skirts and swing with every movement of the women. At the back where the skirt is bound together bottle lids, beads or old coins can be added at the tips of the strings. The *d'amma* is worn mostly by young women; most old women I met or saw had stopped wearing it.

As a marriage dress a strip of black goat leather is sewn around the edge of the leather skirt. Of the remaining leather the hair is removed and it is softened thus the black color of this strip is a contrast to the light and softened leather. That is

why the skirt with the black stripe is called ***chacho buddo*** (black skirt), and is the eye-catching sign of a bride.



Picture 11: Jacob Balasho's wife from Gongode exhibiting her *chacho buddo* (marriage skirt).

A further article of women's clothing is the ***sharamo***. It is a brassiere which can be made out of any piece of leather. When Tollogo Bok'e, a daughter-in-law of Sale made a new *sharamo* she took a small strip of leather from an old cowhide, softened it and sewed it into a simple rectangular shape. At both ends she gathered up the *sharamo* by additional leather strings which she twisted together. With these leather strings the *sharamo* is bound together at the back. As decoration leather stripes with bottle lids or beads at their tips, can be added at the back of the *sharamo*.

Tollogo explained that women prepare a *sharamo* after the birth of every child. They have to wear it as long as they breastfeed their children in order to avoid their breast-milk is falling into food or into water. Food or water is taboo to eat or drink if the breast-milk falls into it. If the breast-milk falls onto a stone on the ground this stone will immediately be thrown out of the homestead.

Another item worn by women directly after the birth of a child is the **go'bo suzo**. It is a belt to reduce the bulge after childbirth<sup>90</sup>. The women prepare the *go'bo suzo* out of the bark of the *bar'e* tree and strips of goat leather which are fixed at both ends of the bark. In addition, leather strings are fixed to bind it together in front of the bulge. Sale told me that men measure the bulge of their women to know how big the piece of bark has to be. Afterwards they cut the bark and give it to the women, who soften it with oil seeds and add the leather parts.

Even in areas like Tiki Boko, where the women mainly wear second-hand dresses, I saw that they still wore these stomach binders on top of the dresses.

Women can also wear the **gofalo** (goatskin), which small boys like to wear on their back, either on the chest to protect their breasts or on the back as protection when carrying water gourds. Sale's youngest daughter Afayo often wore a *gofalo* over her back as protection against the sun when leaving to the field.

The clothing of women differs not only in the highland areas around the big markets, but also in the lowlands of Maale. Instead of the *buddo* (leather skirt) a **gurdo or tzago** (cotton skirt) nowadays is preferably worn. This is a skirt with many pleats, which is sewn by the women. The cotton cloth for the skirts is available at markets. While in the lowlands white is the favorite color for these skirts, in the highlands often two colors (e.g. pink and light-blue) are used. Zeleketch told me that the pleated skirts were introduced by the first missionaries in Maale. They gave white cotton cloth to the women; and since they could not sew properly, they just put a rope around and gathered it up. By this way the skirts got pleats, what is imitated today.

In the highlands on top of these cotton skirts colorful **shasho** (covers out of synthetic cloth) are worn. The covers can be one-colored or flowers can be printed on them. They have a rectangular shape and are simply bound together

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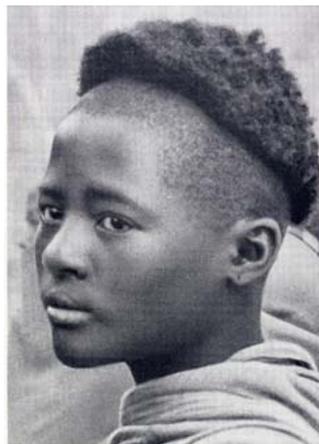
<sup>90</sup> Sciamia and Eicher also describe such belts (Sciamia and Eicher: 90).

to the front of the skirt. In Baneta I saw young girls, wearing up to three covers in different lengths and colors over their skirts.

Very popular, especially among women, are ***shirabu or sak'o*** (shirts). Most of these shirts are just blue or blue with red and white stripes crosswise over the breast<sup>91</sup>. They can be bought on every Maale market and are also popular among some of the neighboring ethnic groups in South Omo. According to their label, they are imported from China.

### **2.2.1.7. Body Adornment**

As in most cultures, the people who are most concerned about their body adornment in Maale are young girls before marriage. Consequently they are also the ones who spend the most time on it. Especially for *booka* (markets) and *korgi* (dances) girls style their **hair**, use **perfumes**, do **tattoos** and wear as much **jewelers** as possible. In the following I will explain how and with which objects girls prepare themselves for markets or dances. The preparations are often done together with friends and sisters in and around a *ket'so* ("woman's domain"):



Picture 12 (Jensen: chart 15, picture 4): Young girl with *toko demo*.

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<sup>91</sup> See picture 10, chapter IV.2.2.1.3

I will start with the **hairstyle** of girls, the *toko demo*. It is a circle of long hair with the hair around shaved. The girls shave each other's hair around the circle of long hair with a *wado* (razor blade) made by the blacksmith. The long hair of the circle they comb with a *batzara* (comb). The *batzara* is carved by men out of a hard kind of wood and has a rectangular longish handle. In Maale you can find two sizes of combs. The larger ones belong to women, while the smaller ones belong to men. Combs and razor blades are stored between the branches of the roof of a *ket'so* ("woman's domain").

For further treatment of their hair, girls smear *oisi*, the butter made out of cow milk, into it. This butter is not only used for hair, but also as lotion for the skin and to soften leather, e.g. of leather skirts. For the same purpose the seeds of the *muk'ale* (oil plant) can be used. The seeds are ground and then put into the hair or onto the skin or hides. Oil seeds and butter are often used in a mixture. Oil seeds also have a nice smell additional to their softening effect which butter does not have. Since butter is expensive, the women and children of my homestead in Gongode usually used only the smashed oil seeds.

If a girl not only desires to look beautiful, but also to smell lovely, she will mix the smashed leaves of the *dunko* plant together with butter or oil seeds. These leaves have a nice smell and are sometimes just fastened on necklaces as a kind of **perfume**<sup>92</sup>. In this way, fastened at a necklace of a young girl in Baneta, I observed the *dunko* leaves for the first time. Zeleketch explained their use to me and told me that there is another plant used as perfume called *bukbukka*. *Bukbukka* is a kind of wood and to produce perfume out of it, girls powder the inner part of the *bukbukka* wood and mix it with *oisi* (butter) afterwards.

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<sup>92</sup> See picture 13



Picture 13: Girls in Baneta. The girl in the middle fastened *dunko* leaves at her necklace as perfume.

As another kind of body adornment ***konko* (permanent and non-permanent tattoos)** are very popular in Maale:

In the lowland areas girls still get **permanent tattoos** after their first menstruation to show that they are fully girls now and ready to marry. Sale explained that these tattoos are made by a skilled woman with the spine of the *angitzi* plant. Black powder is put into a wound by this spine. The powder is made out of soot mixed with the leaves of the *kuzo* tree. After three days the tattoo is smoothed by *tz'aba* grass. Permanent tattoos have a fixed shape consisting of three components: one long stripe from the top of the forehead to the tip of the nose, three half circles around the top of the eyes and finally three parallel stripes at the chin. Directly after the tattoos are made, they can be seen very well. With the years the *konko* will bleach so much that in the faces of old women I found it sometimes hard to recognize them anymore.



Picture 14: Chato Baddi from Baneta with a non-permanent tattoo on her hands.

In the highland areas of Maale most people desisted from doing permanent tattoos, according to Zeleketch, as a result of the pain they cause to the girls. Girls in the highlands, especially during the age when the lowland girls get the permanent tattoos, like to make **non-permanent tattoos** all over their body for special occasions like markets or dances. The style of those paintings covers a broader area compared to the permanent tattoos. The painted ornaments depend only on the taste and creativity of the girls. The paintings are also not only done in the face (like permanent tattoos) but also on legs, arms, hands and bellies. The black color, which is used for them, is made out of the seed of the *z'io* plant and painted with sticks and fingertips. It will last for three up to six days.

Chato Baddi, a girl from Baneta, visited us twice at our homestead in Baneta. One day she had *konko*, which were done with the help of a girlfriend because a dance was taking place. Her face was decorated with a stripe over her nose and small dots, her arms with small half-circles and her belly with wide vertical stripes. The inside of her hands and fingers were painted with short lines and half-circles<sup>93</sup>.

For dances and markets girls wear all the **jewelers** they own. In contrast to the participants of the Frobenius expedition<sup>94</sup>, I observed people wearing jeweler at

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<sup>93</sup> See picture 14

<sup>94</sup> Jensen: 308

all places I visited in Maale. The only exceptions were people converted by Protestants who were not allowed to wear the Maale jeweler any more.

There is a special circulation pattern of jeweler in Maale, which also explains why girls own the most pieces of jeweler before they marry and become mothers:

When I asked girls where they got their jeweler from they usually told me that some of their necklaces and bracelets they bought by themselves, while others they inherited. The money for buying jeweler girls earn mainly by selling *ala* (local beer) on the market; to the issue of inheritance I will come back later.

On the markets, where they sell *ala* (local beer) and buy jeweler for the earned money, boys might be attracted by them. According to Chato Baddi, the boys visit their favorite girl at night to pull her hand<sup>95</sup> and if the girl accepts the boy as boyfriend, she will pull back one night or hold a piece of jeweler in her hand for him. Girls will give necklaces as well as rings and bracelets to their boyfriends. Chato for example told me that she already gave five *gauwi* (bracelets) and one *shekeni* (necklace) to her boyfriend, when he visited her. The number of given jeweler items depends on the possessions of the girl. The girlfriend is the only source a young man can get jeweler from, as men never prepare jeweler items by themselves. Even old men do not have any jeweler except from their *derso* (father beads)<sup>96</sup>.

The amount of jeweler of a young couple increases up to the day of marriage and stays the same until the woman has her first child. Young married women without children can not only be noticed by their large amount of jeweler, but also by their hairstyle called *toko demo*<sup>97</sup>.

The mothers, whom I asked about their non-existing jeweler, told me that when a Maale woman has her first child, all her jeweler is returned to her father including the pieces she gave to her husband. It is said that if a mother did not

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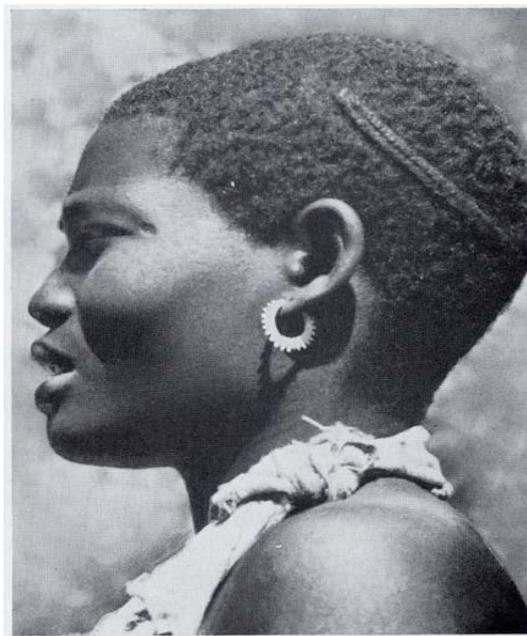
<sup>95</sup> See marriage practice in chapter III.4

<sup>96</sup> Compare the jeweler of Arbore men, described by Gabbert (Gabbert: 69).

<sup>97</sup> See picture 12 of the same chapter

return the entire jeweler she and her child would get sick. The jeweler items she returns to her father, he passes on to younger daughters, or if there is no younger daughter, to the women of his sons for their daughters. As a result the jeweler is always circling around in a family.

Apart from giving away her jeweler, a mother will get another hairstyle, the *muddo*. For this hairstyle the main part of the hair is shaved with a razor blade and only one long braid is left and laid around the head in a circle.



Picture 15 (Jensen: chart 15, picture 2): Married woman with *muddo*.

After the birth of the first child, the only possibility for a woman to obtain new jeweler is to get it as a present from her husband. This is rare in Maale. Thus, married women who are already mothers can be identified by their wearing no or nearly no jeweler. This lack of jeweler and the hairstyle "*muddo*" are the two most obvious signs of a mother.



Picture 16: Dimbilso Biraga, a young bride from Gongode.

After explaining the circulation pattern of jeweler, I now want to explain the **pieces of jeweler**, which can be found in Maale. Most of them are worn by the young bride Dimbilso in picture 16.

Jeweler items are either made out of beads or of metal. The metal items are bought at the blacksmiths, while the beads are bought in strings at the markets and arranged to necklaces, belts, etc. by the girls. Often they do this work together with their girlfriends.

In the following I want to describe the **metal jeweler items**:

The most important and also most numerous metal jeweler items found in Maale are the *gauwi*<sup>98</sup> which are the usual Maale bracelets worn on the forearm.

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<sup>98</sup> See pictures 14 and 16

They are flat and open at one side that they can be bent to the right size. Their color is golden and two or three stripes are scratched at both ends. At the time of marriage girls wear up to ten *gauwi* on each arm<sup>99</sup>. Equivalent to the *gauwi* in Maale are the *middo* of the neighboring Banna.

A group of young girls whom I met at the homestead of Laotso Anani in Baneta, explained that since the girls in Baneta, which is not far away from the Banna market in Kak'o, visit this market frequently, the *middo* are very popular in this part of Maale at the moment. They also told me that the *middo* are not only more fashionable, but they are also only half of the price of the *gauwi*.

*Ashapo* is not the name for a special bracelet, but the name for a color of bracelets. For example the bracelets usually worn on the upper arm are called *ashapo*<sup>100</sup>, as their color is silver. They are made out of a very long aluminum piece which is bent into several rings of exactly the same size around the arm. At every upper arm two *ashapo* can be worn. For dances girls like to fasten strips of cloth, which move when dancing, to the *ashapo*. Also bracelets with the same shape I explained for the *gauwi* (bracelets in golden color), which have a silver color instead of the golden, are called *ashapo*.

The *jiro* (rings) many girls wear look like miniature *ashapo*. Some girls I met wore rings on all ten fingers. The rings are made out of a long piece of aluminum which is bent into several rings. In Maale I only observed rings of silver color.

The smallest metal jeweler item in Maale is the *gudetcho*<sup>101</sup> (ear stick). It is the only one which is not only made by blacksmiths but can be made by any Maale man. It is a small metal stick of silver color in a conical shape. I observed young girls in Gongode wearing up to six ear sticks at each ear. Behind the ear they are often connected as well as closed by a string of small colorful glass beads.

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<sup>99</sup> See picture 16

<sup>100</sup> See picture 16

<sup>101</sup> See picture 16

A last metal jeweler item are the *yicho* (foot rattles). They consist of many small metal bells, which are sewn onto a strap of leather or cloth and are fastened at the ankle. Zeleketch told me that the *yicho* are only allowed to be worn by young girls and brides. They are especially popular to use during dances.

Apart from the jeweler items made out of metal, there are many others made out of **beads**:

The name used for all jeweler items made out of the small colorful glass beads, e.g. rings, breast belts and bracelets, is *shekeni*. The more specified names for necklaces out of these beads often name the color they are made of. Necklaces out of light beads (yellow, orange, and red) are also called *gango*, while those made out of dark beads (blue and green) are called *mangatzi*. Necklaces worn by *joi*<sup>102</sup>, which consist of white beads, are named *shekeni ino*.



Picture 17: A granddaughter of Sale with a *shekeni* (necklace made out of glass beads).

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<sup>102</sup> Healer and fortune teller

The necklaces I mentioned above are just a row of beads threaded on a string. Two further kinds of necklaces which I observed are made differently:

For the one you can see in the picture above, the beads are knotted together with the string. The pattern and colors of this kind of necklace are always the same: triangles in orange and light blue.

For the second kind of necklace different colors of beads are arranged on a string and separated by small plastic pieces, made of an old sandal. The longish plastic pieces are threaded in between the different colors and hold together many strings with the same color arrangement. At both ends the strings are twisted together and sometimes the remains of the beads are threaded at the tips of the strings. The girls and boys wear these necklaces closed to the front. The tips, made out of the remaining beads, hang down<sup>103</sup>. Both necklaces I described above are as well called *shekeni*.

As jeweler for the head, both of the necklaces described in the preceding paragraph can be used. They are worn around the head and closed at the back<sup>104</sup>. They can also be worn by men, especially during dances and mourning ceremonies. A special jeweler item for the head, which is only worn by girls, is the *toko demo*. *Toko demo* is not only the name for the hairstyle of girls and women before becoming mothers, it is also the name for the jeweler arranged around their circle of long hair. It consists out of several strings of small glass beads in the colors yellow, blue and light blue. With the different colors vertical stripes are formed<sup>105</sup>.

Belts are also made out of the small glass beads. Some girls prepare them out of many rows of beads. They separate the colors of the beads by small plastic pieces as explained for the necklace above. These belts are called *kerno shekeni*.

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<sup>103</sup> See picture 13

<sup>104</sup> See picture 13

<sup>105</sup> See picture 16

Other girls prepare belts by just threading beads of the same color on a single string. Of these belts, which are called *kecho*, often several pieces in different colors are worn over each other.

The last two items I want to describe, which are also made out of glass beads, are borrowed from Banna and thus they are mostly worn along the border to the Banna area. One day when Chato Baddi came to our homestead in Baneta she wore these two jeweler items.

The first item is the *nagurro*. It is an earring consisting of three plastic rings pierced through the ear and a flat rectangular plastic piece, which is hanging down from these rings. Onto the plastic piece small glass beads are sewn in different patterns.

The second item is the *kotso*, a simple necklace of threaded beads which ends at both sides with a thin metal stick. Both metal sticks are connected by a further twisted metal stick. The *kotso* can be worn around the neck, but also the metal sticks can be stuck into the hair, while the beads lie as decoration over the forehead.

Also used as jeweler, but **neither made of metal nor beads** are the following items, which all seem to be recent inventions:

When young girls wear metal bracelets at their forearm they like to add colorful plastic bracelets at the top and below the row of metal bracelets. These bracelets are called *amba* and are made out of melted pieces of broken plastic sandals<sup>106</sup>.

Furthermore *g'inte* (metal chains) are nowadays hung on simple necklaces or fixed at the tip of the hair. When worn in the hair they are called *saro*. According to Chato Baddi, especially new brides wear them in this way.

*Gulp'a* is the Maale name for safety pins. I observed many people who wore a large amount of safety pins on their necklaces. Apart from the use as jeweler, I was told that they are also used for removing thorns out of the feet.

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<sup>106</sup> See picture 14

A last item used as jewelry are *sarungo* seeds. These small red seeds of the *sarungo* bush are used as jewelry in different ways: They can be threaded on a string and worn as necklaces or belts or single short strings with these seeds are fastened between the hairs. Most girls I saw wearing jewelry made out of *sarungo* seeds were very young, not yet old enough for selling beer on the market to earn money for buying beads or bracelets.

### **2.2.2. A Man's Domain: *Sogaro***

#### **2.2.2.1. A First Look Inside – Objects and Their Arrangement**



Picture 18: The entrance of Sale's *sogaro* ("man's domain") with beehives arranged under the roof.

The outside of the *sogaro* ("man's domain") differs very much from the one of the *ket'so* ("woman's domain"). The *ket'so* in the lowlands of Maale are often built openly, i.e. the poles of the walls are not tightly stuck. Consequently

everybody can easily look inside and further they are the houses open to all guests and neighbors who come for a visit. The *sogaro* ("man's domain") on the other hand, are separated from the more public part of the homestead by a fence and further their wall is built by tightly stuck poles.

I found entering the *sogaro* of Sale less pleasant than entering a *ket'so*. The first reason was the big amount of beehives. While around the *ket'so* of Sale's homestead only three beehives were in use, around the much smaller *sogaro* there were ten beehives. Thus, entering it in the daytime, when the bees are most aggressive, was not easy. Even from outside I further recognized the sweet smell of the *ashki* (dried meat) stored in the *sogaro*, which was even more intense inside the house. These two issues are typical for a *sogaro*, which is the storing place of valuable goods like meat and beehives.

The object, which caught my eyes inside the *sogaro* first, was the *shala* (bedstead), made out of wood and leather strings, which not only took up most of the room, but also was the first one I have seen, since beds are only placed inside a *sogaro*. In front of the bed many *gulambo* (nice cowhides made by a tanner) were hung up at the ceiling. On the left, old pots with sorghum inside were standing and at the wall and close to the ceiling I observed bows and poisoned arrows in containers, fieldwork tools, rifles and bullet belts, spears and big knives. Other valuables like cotton blankets and clothes were hidden inside plastic bags and hung up close to the ceiling. Most of the items, I saw inside the *sogaro* ("man's domain") are more valuable than the ones stored inside a *ket'so* ("woman's domain"), and inside the *sogaro* these items are hidden from the public. Only grown-up male members of the family and their male guests have access to a *sogaro*. Guests are usually relatives, *bela* (bond friends) or *gete* (ritual friends).

#### **2.2.2.2. Mats and Beds**

When men stay at the homestead during the day and want to relax or sleep they will make use of the *kela* (stone benches) or the inside of the *ket'so* ("woman's

domain”). Men enter their *sogaro* (“man’s domain”) for sleeping only at night. While women and children sleep inside the *ket’so* on casual cowhides, the men of the homestead sleep together with male guests inside the *sogaro* on more comfortable and valuable items:

The most comfortable object to sleep on is the ***shala*** (bedstead). It is made out of a wooden frame. In between this frame leather strings of a cowhide are tightened.

Sale told me that he made the *shala* inside his *sogaro* by himself, but many other people would buy such bedsteads from tanners.

A further item which is used to sleep on and which is more comfortable than the casual cowhides are the ***gulambo***, cowhides, which are made by tanners. The difference from the casual cowhides is that the *gulambo* are more solid and beautiful.

In the case where somebody owns only one bedstead, like Sale, it is offered first to a guest, and if no guest is around to the oldest man of the homestead. The other men will sleep on the *gulambo* on the floor.

### **2.2.2.3. Agricultural Tools**

When men leave their homesteads and go to work on their fields, they carry at least two items with them: a *bokoto* (wooden headrest) or an *oyta* (small chair) to rest on and a filled *watzo* (water) or *tukko gussi* (coffee gourd). To close by fields the tools which are stored inside the *sogaro* (“man’s domain”) also have to be carried.

The ***bokoto*** (wooden headrest) is used to sit or lie on, not only on long journeys to fields, but also to markets, festivities, etc. It has an oval curved head-rest, connected by a flat and broad stick to a base in half-circle shape and mostly a

leather string or metal bracelet is fixed at the stick as a handle. With this handle it is carried around, often hanging on a belt. Furthermore it can be decorated with beads or bottle lids.

The *bokoto* (wooden headrest) is used, above all, by young men. They prepare their first *bokoto* between ten and twelve years primarily for using it during the time of "qoche equen" or "neshimona efie"<sup>107</sup>- the time when boys visit their girlfriends at night. During this time it is taboo for the boys not to use a *bokoto* and sit on the floor instead. Younger boys accompany their older brothers when they visit their girlfriends at night and observe what is going on by hiding in the dark sitting on their *bokoto*. At an age of about twelve years they can start to have girlfriends on their own and visit them. Adiyu told me that the boys start out together with the other members of their age mates in the evening and on the way to visit their girlfriends they split up. They carry their *bokoto*, a *kolo* (stick) and a *battri* (torch) with them. They carry a stick in case a fight takes place. Fights can occur between two boys who visit the same girl. In such a case boys fight with their sticks and use the *bokoto* as a shield. Sometimes a *bokoto* will break or will get lost during such a fight and then a new one has to be carved.

As Adiyu explained to me men, when they recognize that they are older and need to rest, e.g. when walking long distances or carrying heavy things, will carve an *oyta* (stool). The *oyta*, a small stool, is more comfortable than a *bokoto* (wooden pillow). As young men carry around their *bokoto*, old ones carry their *oyta*. The seat of this *oyta* has the same size as the one of a *bokoto*. From the circle-shaped seat three parallel sticks go down and end in a base of semi-circle shape. This seat is only used for sitting, because of the flat seat it cannot be used as wooden headrest like the *bokoto*. It is used mostly by men starting from around 30 years.

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<sup>107</sup> For details on "qoche equen" or "neshimona efie", see chapter III.4.

Together with a stool or wooden headrest and a coffee or water container, a man has to carry the tools which he needs for the work he has to do on the field. In Gongode and Baneta I observed the following tools for fieldwork:

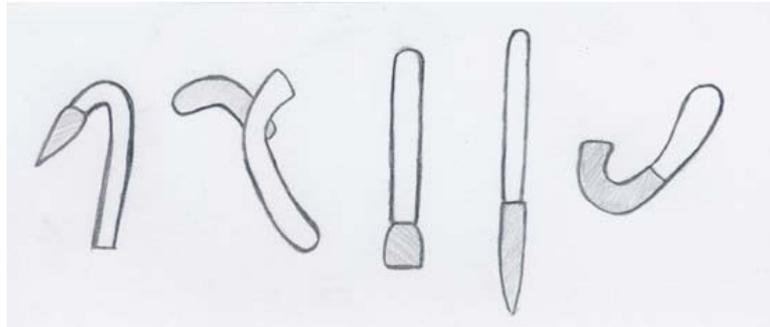


Figure 8: Tools for fieldwork (from left to right): *gosha* (hoe), *walo* (machete), *balasha* (spade), *kurkurro* (digging stick), *anko muji* (sickle).

When a man has to dig, uproot or weed the ground of his field, he will look for the **gosha** (hoe) inside his *sogaro* and carry it with him. This hoe is made out of a bent wooden handle and a blade with a socket hafting.

For digging, especially when sorghum has to be planted, a man will be in need of the **balasha** (spade). It consists of a long wooden stick and a short blade made out of metal or sometimes out of wood. For fixing the blades, rings of *lalange* seeds can be arranged around it. Often the stick of the *balasha* (spade) is provided with a shaft at the top. After a man digs and clears the field with the *balasha*, he can collect the cleared grass with this shaft.

For clearing bushes, weeding and harvesting, a man is in need of his **walo** and thus has to carry this tool with him to his field. The handle of the *walo* is slightly bent, as well as the blade. The blade is stuck into the handle and often additionally tightened with leather straps.

Especially in areas where the ground is very hard, men use the **kurkurro** (digging stick) for digging instead of a hoe or spade. The digging stick has a very long and straight wooden handle, as well as a very long metal blade.

If a man needs to harvest teff or sorghum, he will take the **anko muji** (sickle) with him to his field. It has a small handle and a bent, sharp blade.

Donald Donham estimated that by 1975 in addition to these traditional fieldwork tools, ox-drawn ploughs were introduced to less than a third of highland households in Maale<sup>108</sup>. I also observed these ploughs in Baneta.



Picture 19: Two oxen drawing a plough in Baneta.

Two oxen usually draw these ploughs, which were introduced in Maale from the northern part of Ethiopia. The two oxen are fastened to the *kambarā* (yoke) by a rope. To prevent the yoke from slipping, small sticks of *bike* wood are stuck through the yoke on both sides of the oxen's necks. The yoke is fixed by the *mirara* (leather string) at the *kalsho* (plough beam). On the other end of the plough beam a wooden stick is pierced. This stick ends in the *maresha* (metal blade), the actual tool that is digging the ground. The metal blade is further fixed by a metal ring with a hook at the plough beam.

The farmer follows the oxen with the plough and whips them with the *shirafa* (whip) to make sure that they go in the right direction and do not stop in between. The whip is made out of a short wooden handle and a long leather strip.

Some time after the fields have been planted, the grains will ripen and then the work of children starts. They stand on *selo* (platforms) over the fields and chase away birds and apes to protect the harvest. The platforms are made out of wood

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<sup>108</sup> Donham 1990: 89

and are usually built by a skilled person, who is paid for the work with food. The instrument which is used by the children to chase away animals is the *worra*. It is a long string made out of *golsi* fiber. Around Gongode it is made by children and sold on the highland markets. To make a *worra*, the children twist the plant fiber between the hands. First they twist strings by string and then twist them together. The twisted rope becomes about four meters long. In the middle of the rope they weave a broader part. When the children use the *worra* in the fields, they put a stone into this broad part, hold both ends of the rope in one hand, swing it around in circles and finally let go off one end of the *worra*. In this way the stone, which was placed at the broad part, flies away and scares away the animals.

Sale told me that girls often play the *malko* (pan flute) so that they do not get bored while sitting on their platforms and taking care of the fields. Even though I asked many people if they own such a *malko* (pan flute), nobody was able to show one to me. Sale explained that it consists of between six and nine *pilea* (small bamboo flutes) of different sizes. The *pilea* are tied together by vegetable fiber in one row and at the upper part they are stuck together by black resin.

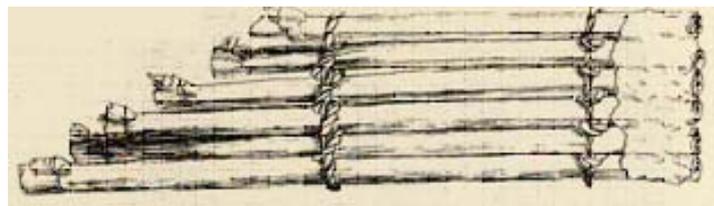


Figure 9 (Jensen: illustrations 39): *Malko* (pan flute) made out of six *pilea* (small bamboo flutes).

#### **2.2.2.4. Herding Items**

Men when they leave for herding also take a *bokoto* (wooden headrest) respectively an *oyta* (stool) and a small coffee or water gourd with them to have a break in between the work.

As I already mentioned, the cattle camps are far away from the area of Gongode where I stayed. Thus, the men of that area usually stay at the cattle camps for a period of several days. When they move their cattle from the cattle camp to the Damikere River, for example to water them, they are in need of two important objects: **bells** and **rods**. The rods are thin branches by which men keep their herds together and drive them to the aimed direction. The men furthermore put bells around the necks of goats and cattle so that they can always find their animals again by hearing the specific sound of their bell. While cows wear *dongo* (bells made out of iron) in Maale, goats wear *konkorto*, i.e. bells made out of the shell of a small turtle with a wooden clapper inside.

Since boys who herd may get bored or tired, they like to carry bows and arrows for shooting birds or a *wumbulko* with them. The *wumbulko* is a flute made out of the skin of a fruit. *Wumbulko* is actually the name of a tree and its fruits. The boys cut five holes into the skin of this fruit: one at the bottom (where the fruit is taken out) and two small holes on the right and on the left side. Then they can play it while holding it with both hands.

When cows and goats return from their cattle camps, respectively to their goat-houses after herding, two more objects are needed for the purpose of milking. The first is the *halko*, a small gourd used to catch the milk while milking. It has the shape of a *bak'anno odossi gussi* (long-necked gourd) or a *karo gussi* (bent gourd). Directly below the neck of the gourd a hole is made so the milk can pour inside. While milking a cow a woman holds the gourd between her knees. Through the thin neck of the *halko* she fills the milk into the *detche gussi* (gourd for fresh milk) afterwards.

A second gourd used for milking is the *bullo*. It is a small gourd bowl used for milking goats.

### 2.2.2.5. Weapons

Inside the *sogaro* ("man's domain") **bows** and **arrows** hang down from the top of the wall. According to Ato Oid'isha the Maale have always been very famous for shooting with these weapons. They killed not only wild animals, but also used bows and arrows as weapons in fights. Today they are mostly used for hunting wild animals. Some of the animals are allowed to be eaten, while of others, like apes, only the skin can be used.

Shooting with a bow and arrow is the task of men. To become really skilled they have to start practicing early in life. At an age of three or four years boys start to play with a small bow and thin wooden arrows. I observed Norte, a grandson of my host-father Sale, running around the whole day carrying his bow and an arrow. Since he is still very young, his first attempts at shooting were actually more an amusement for us adults. He is about four years old and his only task is to drive the goats back to the goat-house in the evening. The rest of the day he is free to play and practice shooting. I further observed boys of about ten years herding cattle at a riverbed near Baneta. They had small bows and arrows and tried to shoot birds. Their handling of bow and arrow looked more professional than that of Norte.

When grown-up (there is no special time or age according to Sale) men start to use the "real" bows and arrows, which are sometimes even poisoned:

The *k'osi* (bow) is made out of a branch of *shilaji* wood which is very flexible. The *shashie* (bowstring) is today made from plastic fiber, taken from a maize bag. The wooden part can be partly covered by the back-sinew of an ox or by the hide of an antelope to strengthen it.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> See Jensen: figure 36

Two kinds of arrows are differentiated: poisoned and non-poisoned ones.

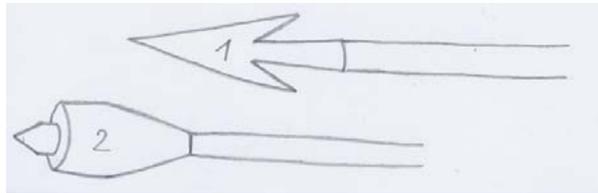


Figure 10: 1. *fal'e* (poisoned arrow), 2. *fung'o* (non-poisoned one)

The *fal'e* (poisoned arrows) have a sharp and pointed metal blade with a socket hafting. The stick is made out of a stick of the sorghum plant. Around the shaft of the blade the poison is smeared. This poison is taken from the *dan'o*, a root crop. The crop is boiled until it becomes black in color, then it is dried, smashed and smeared onto the blade of the arrow. According to Assefa the *dan'o* is so poisonous that birds and other small animals which eat it will die immediately.

The *fung'o* (non-poisoned arrows) also consist of a stick from the sorghum plant. The tip of the arrows is carved out of *bar'e* wood. Even though the tip is made out of wood it can kill birds. These arrows are the ones mainly used by children for practicing.

For the non-poisoned arrows there is no special container. The *fal'e*, on the other hand, are stored inside the *katili* (container for poisoned arrows). It is made out of a branch of the *katili* tree. Men hollow the inside of the branch and close it with a lid made of cowhide. Additionally, they wrap strips of cowhide around the container. One of these stripes is used as a strap for carrying.

When I observed the old bows and arrows of Sale's forefathers inside his ritual house, Sale told me the bows, poisoned arrows and *katili* are transmitted to the oldest son after the death of a man. They are kept in the *kashi mari* (ritual house) or the *sogaro* ("man's domain").

Apart from bows and arrows also *wortzi* (spears) and *gitimme* (shields) can be found in Maale and are also stored inside the *sogaro* ("man's domain").

According to Meriegeta and Adiyu they are not the traditional weapons of the Maale. Instead they are borrowed from the neighboring Ari, who used them for fighting, while the Maale usually used bows and arrows.

The borrowed spears and shields are not used for fighting nor hunting in Maale, but have two other tasks: the spears are used as a decorative walking stick for long journeys and also for mourning ceremonies. During the mourning ceremony the *gorro* (fame) of the dead person will be announced by a woman. At the same time some men hold the *wortzi* (spear) in one hand and the *gitimme* (shield) in the other, walk in a circle, and make a sound by clapping the *gitimme* (shield) against a foot. This use of spears and shields I observed in the village Tolta, in the Ari area.

### **2.2.2.6. Beehives**

Like also in many other ethnic groups of South Omo apiculture is very important in Maale. Especially for the people in the lowlands, where the most honey is produced, it is an important source of income, since honey can be sold for a very expensive price at the markets in the highlands. Honey is furthermore a part of the bride wealth and a special item often offered to guests.

As I already mentioned in the chapter on economy, my host-father Sale told me that a family can own between 10 and 300 *matzi itinzi* (beehives). They are stored under the roofs of houses or in trees, from where the men collect the honey three times a year. Accordingly, the beehives also have to be collected and remade or new ones have to be built three times a year. These are as well the tasks of men:

I often observed my host-father Sale building and remaking beehives at his homestead. He made the body of a beehive out of a trunk of *balanga* wood. He cut a piece of about one meter length of the trunk and hollowed it. For hollowing Sale used the *shorka* or *haylo*, a tool made out of a very long wooden stick and a round metal blade. As support for the trunk after hollowing, he arranged rings

of *garazi* wood inside it. Afterwards he smeared the inner part of the trunk with cow dung. Finally, he put dried grass around the trunk and fastened it by vegetable fiber of the *bar'e* plant. After constructing the body of one or more beehives, he carved doors for closing them. He carved them out of wood to the same diameter as the apertures of the beehives and finally cut small holes around their edges as entrances for the bees.

On the old beehives, which Sale collected for remaking, he only smeared with new cow dung inside and fastened new grass at their outside.

After building new beehives and remaking old ones, he distributed them again. Some of them he arranged inside the homestead under the roofs of houses, mainly at the *sogaro* ("man's domain"). Most of the beehives Sale put between the branches of trees in the bush.



Picture 20 (picture by Felix Girke): *Matzi itinzi* (beehives) arranged between the branches of a tree.

From the beehives at the homestead a little amount of honey can be taken even before the general harvest, in case of the arrival of guests. The beehives under the roofs are easy to reach. When my host-father Sale was going to take out some honey, I observed him undressing himself, taking a stick with fire and disappearing to the beehives at his *sogaro* ("man's domain"). When he came back with fresh honey, which he offered me in a bowl, he told me that he first

put the stick with fire inside the beehive to smoke it. After a while, when the bees were calmed, he cut a piece of the honeycomb with his big knife and took the honey out with his hands. He only did this at night, since the bees are less aggressive then.

The harvesting of the beehives in the bush is all done at once. Sale told me that he always does this work together with one of his sons. One of them climbs up the tree to the beehive and after taking the honeycomb with the hands outside, he will let it down to the second person piece by piece in an *anda* (bowl made out of a gourd) on a rope. There the second one puts the honey inside a big gourd and gives the *anda* back to the other person, until all honey is harvested.

### **2.2.2.8. Men's Dresses**

In this chapter I want to describe the clothing of men in Maale. Most of the articles of clothing of men you can find inside a *sogaro* ("man's domain"), as in Sale's, where the clothes are hung up in plastic bags under the ceiling.

Before describing my own observations I want to mention two statements, one of Jensen and one of Donald Donham, which already express my major findings in observing and asking after men's clothing. Like Jensen<sup>110</sup> I observed that the tendency of men to accept Western clothing is much stronger than the acceptance of these clothes by women. Jensen already observed men wearing khaki trousers in Maale in the 1950s. Donham on the other hand was given the information, as I also was given from interviews on clothing, that traditionally men, even old men, wore no clothes at all<sup>111</sup>. This is also an explanation why they accepted the western type of clothing faster than women, for whom more articles of traditional clothing exist.

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<sup>110</sup> Jensen: 308

<sup>111</sup> Donham 1990: 92

According to Ato Oid'isha men in Maale wore *dursi* (sandals) made out of cowhide or of the hide of a bushbuck in former times. But these sandals were replaced by the sandals made out of old tires already around twenty years ago. In the evenings or mornings men wrapped *bulukko* (big white cotton blankets) around their bodies as protection against the cold. The *bulukko*, which are made by the local weavers, are still used for this purpose. These two articles of clothing were the only ones used by men in Maale in former times.

Since apart from sandals and blankets, even in the lowlands of Maale, certain manufactured clothes are very popular among men today, I also want to describe the most important of these items in the following:

For boys and young men starting from about twelve years the most favored dress is the *dildimma*, a long piece of synthetic cloth with colorful stripes. The young men wrap it around their waist like a short skirt. Most senior men I saw preferred to wear *mutante*, synthetic sports shorts in the colors blue, red or yellow, with white stripes at both sides. Over the *dildimma* (striped cloth) or the *mutante* (sports shorts), *shoborna* (cartridge belts) are worn. They are made out of black leather and have many small bags for storing bullets, where different things (necklaces, rings, money, etc.) are put inside. Additionally, men also sometimes wear *shirabu* or *sak'o* (shirts), which are, like the ones of the women, often blue and have stripes crosswise over the breast. All of these items are manufactured and can be bought at the big Maale markets and at many other markets all over South Omo.

### **2.2.3. A House for Objects Related to Ritual: *Kashi Mari***

#### **2.2.3.1. A First Look Inside – Objects and Their Arrangement**

There is not much to tell about the actual inside of a *kashi mari* (ritual house). When I observed Sale's *kashi mari* together with him for the first time, I was a bit disappointed. Since I had not asked for information about the *kashi mari* before I observed it, I expected to find many interesting objects connected to *kashi* (rituals) inside of it. Sale explained that only the valuable gourds filled with honey or butter are stored on the floor of the house on the cowhides, while all other items are stored on the *gabo* (platform).

I observed all the musical instruments which were in Sale's possession (clapping sticks and bamboo flutes) and a special *anda* (bowl), *gussi* (drinking-vessel for beer) and fireplace for new brides. As I will explain in chapter IV.2.2.3.3 new brides sleep on this platform for a certain time. Moreover, old items inherited by forefathers are hanging under the roof or are stored on the platform. For example in Sale's *kashi mari* I found an old wooden plate, spoons, spears and arrow containers. Sale said that the family could use these inherited items again, if a shortage of one of these items occurred one day.

Most objects stored on the platform are related to rituals that are performed on the ritual stones next to the *kashi mari*. The musical instruments stored there are used for the dances which take place after a *kashi* is carried out. The special items for the new bride are used by her during the transitional phase between the marriage, the ritual and feast through which the bride is accepted by the family of the groom. The old items stored on the platform are only slightly connected to rituals since they are transmitted after the death of a man by his ritual friend to his oldest son.

### 2.2.3.2. Musical Instruments for Dances

Dances take place at the time of harvesting sorghum and teff, when marriages or mourning ceremonies are done, when a *kashi* (ritual) is carried out or sometimes after a work party. Sale explained that the dancing grounds are usually placed in front of homesteads of respected elders. Dances are forbidden when a mourning ceremony is held in the neighborhood.

I already explained how girls decorate themselves for dances. The decoration of boys on the other hand depends on the amount of jewelers they were given as present from their girlfriends. In addition to the jewelers worn at dances, some musical instruments are needed. In the homestead of my host-family in Gongode all of these musical instruments were stored on the platform of the *kashi mari* (ritual house):

The simplest musical instruments used during dances are the **gaylo** (clapping sticks). Usually, the *gaylo* (clapping sticks) are carved out of wood into an oval shape. One is held in each hand and they are clapped together in the rhythm of the music played by other instruments like flutes. I could observe that clapping sticks are used by women as well as by men, and if none are available at the locality where the music takes place just two pieces of wood can be collected and clapped together in the same way.

Apart from some *gaylo* (clapping sticks), **pilea** (small bamboo flutes) are used. The *pilea* are a set of nine bamboo flutes in different sizes. Sometimes their outside is covered with hide. As they have no additional holes, every *pilea* only has one tone. They are held with both hands and the up to nine players blow alternating with each other their different tones. The *pilea* have names given according to their tone pitch. From low to high tone pitch their names are: *u'uli* (husband), *macho* (wife), *soliti* (ritual and political leader), *andito*, *sheko*, *telo*, *haitzasi* or *neo*, *hii* or *mep* and *maro kafo* (the one who stays inside the house). The names which I did not translate in brackets were translated to me just as

fellows of the first three flutes. The name of the smallest one "maro kafo" reveals that the last flute is the one, which stays most often inside the container. If the players of the *pilea* are not nine, but e.g. seven, they will take the seven *pilea* with the deepest tone pitch and thus the highest one is the first one which will stay inside the container and not be used.

The players of the *pilea* usually dance in a circle or a line and stomp from time to time with their feet.



Picture 21: The Irbo *godda* (chief of the area around Gongode) dancing and playing *pilea* (small bamboo flutes) together with his family members.

A further instrument that can be used for dances is the ***gaferi gurani*** (bushbuck horn). I only had the chance to observe this horn at the homestead of the Irbo *godda* (the chief who lives around Gongode). His *gaferi gurani* (bushbuck horn) is about 30 cm long and has two holes, a small one at the tip of the horn and a larger one in the bending of the horn. The players open and close the hole at the tip of the horn with their left forefinger and blow air into the larger hole. For example during a dance called *handalko*, people clap their hands in different rhythms, stomp with their feet on the floor and short sounds are blown in between by the *gaferi gurani* (bushbuck horn).

Finally, the **shulungo** (bamboo flute) is played at the dancing ground. It is a flute made out of a bamboo stick. Four holes are cut into the bamboo stick. Women hold it to the left side opening and closing the first two holes with the right hand and the last two holes with the left hand. Sale told me that only women are allowed to play it; sometimes they even do it in between work in the fields. One day, when I was sitting together with the women inside the *ket'so* ("woman's domain"), they also tried to calm down a baby by playing *shulungo* (bamboo flute) for it. Inside the *shulungo*, which I observed at Sale's *kashi mari* (ritual house) white feathers of cocks were stored. They are popular decorations for sticking into the hair during dances.

A last item which is a piece of jeweler and musical instrument at once is popular to wear at dances: the **yicho** (foot rattles). They are made out of a strap of cloth or leather and a number of small metal bells are sewn onto this strap. They are worn at the ankle, mostly one on each foot. They produce a rattling sound in the rhythm which the girls dance. Only *wuduro* (young unmarried girls) and *uta* (brides) use them during dances, *lali* (married women) do no longer wear them.

### **2.2.3.3. Special Objects for the New Bride**

Since during the time of my field research no marriages took place, marriages take place after the main harvest starting from December, one evening I asked my host-father Sale to explain to me what happens when an *uta* (new bride) arrives at a homestead:

He told me that brides arrive at their new homesteads accompanied by their girlfriends and female relatives. At least one of the companions usually plays a gourd rattle, the **uto bullo** (literally: small gourd of a bride) and the other companions sing songs, in which they praise the bride and insult the groom and his family. The gourd rattle is prepared by the women themselves out of a

*bak'anno odossi* (long-necked gourd)<sup>112</sup> shape. The gourd is opened at one side, filled with *sarungo* seeds (small red seeds of the *sarungo* plant) and closed again with cow dung. The part where the gourd has been closed with cow dung can be decorated with further *sarungo* seeds.

Like bond friends new brides enter a homestead through the cattle entrance. First the father of the groom will offer the bride beer and coffee. He does not give the bride the usual drinking-vessels. For drinking coffee and later for eating *tirbo* (porridge) and *samo* (maize and sorghum stew) the bride must use the ***sichinti anda*** (bride's bowl). It is a bowl only used by the new bride or the bond friend. In comparison to all other *anda* (gourd bowls), this special bowl is decorated mostly in line and circle patterns with burning sticks of *sarungo* wood. The ornaments are usually made by skilled women.

For drinking beer the bride uses a ***sichinti gussi*** (bride's drinking-vessel), which apart from her can only be used by the bond friend and has branded ornaments. According to Sale brides are very shy and like to hide from their parents in law. They will spend between one month up to the birth of their first child on the platform of the *kashi mari* (ritual house). They sleep there on cowhides and even have a small place there to make fire at night. This will change when the groom's family performs a ritual and prepares a feast with beer for the neighboring people. On this day the bride wears a feather in her hair and carries an umbrella in her hands. In front of her father in law she falls down on her knees and then kisses him. She then kisses all the family members and elders, who then bless her, wishing her good fortune and fertility. After this feast she does not hide anymore in the ritual house, but either lives with her family in law or with her husband in a house of their own.

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<sup>112</sup> See chapter IV.2.1.

## V. Specialists and Special Objects

### 1. Specialists and Their Tools

#### 1.1. Marginalized Specialists

##### 1.1.1. *Mani* (Potter)



Picture 22: New pots and plates drying in the sun, Baneta.

The *mani* (potters) in Maale are an **endogamous group**. Even though they have already lived in Maale for a long time and speak *malló múcci* as their mother tongue, they are not considered Maale people. Like many other groups of craft workers in several societies, the *mani* in Maale are **marginalized spatially, economically, politically, socially and culturally**<sup>113</sup>. The **spatial** marginalization includes not only living on the outskirts of a village, but also segregation at social events. *Mani* are not even allowed to eat or drink

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<sup>113</sup> Freeman, Pankhurst: 2

together with a Maale person. **Economically** they were marginalized, because they were not allowed to have own fields in former times. This issue changed officially with the 1975 land reform, when the *mani* got their own fields. Nevertheless, some of them are still forbidden to work on these fields by the surrounding people. Of course, people who are restricted in all these ways are also not given positions of political leadership and this leads to a **political** marginalization. Their **social** marginalization ranges from prohibitions to participate in work groups and to enter the homesteads of Maale, over separate burial places to endogamous marriage. Finally, they are **culturally** marginalized, since people call them lazy and unreliable and say they would eat the impure meat of wild animals. The *mani* were also said to "eat" people like sorcerers and kill their victims magically in order to consume their flesh.

In the past they had the special task to serve the *kati* as policemen, capturing and imprisoning miscreants, and when ordered, executing criminals. In times of war, *mani* had to form the front lines<sup>114</sup>.

With the **arrival of Protestantism** the marginalization of *mani* decreased. Many *mani* who are Protestants go to church and thus sit and pray together with Maale people. They are not excluded from church celebrations. Also the potters I interviewed<sup>115</sup> told me that they were not allowed to build Maale houses with the typical wooden tip<sup>116</sup> in past times. Instead of this tip a stone was placed on top of the roofs of their houses. Today, as a result of the influence of the Protestant church, they are allowed to have Maale houses, but still they are not supposed to build them by themselves. Maale people from the neighborhood have to come for the building.

One group of *mani* who is not marginalized in any way is the one living around the *kati's* homestead in Balla. When I asked Arazo Bambo, a *mani* from Balla, about their lack of restrictions she told me they do not have to observe any,

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<sup>114</sup> Donham 1979: 112

<sup>115</sup> See list of informants

<sup>116</sup> See chapter IV.1.1

since they are believed to have arrived together with the first *kati* of Maale and thus have a special status<sup>117</sup>.

*Mani* is the name of the women of this endogamous group who work as potters. The husbands of the *mani* are called ***mansi***. The only clay item the *mansi* produce is the *masherito* (pipe-bowl). Most of them work also as tanners. The tasks of tanners can also be carried out by other Maale men, and there is no special name in Maale for tanners and their profession. They prepare *gulambo* (special big cowhides), *arsa* (beds made out of strings of cowhide), *mirani* (leather ropes to fasten the ox with the plough) and *mechanjo* (belts for fastening luggage on donkeys or mules).

One leather object only produced by *mansi* and not by other Maale men is the *darbe* (drum). These drums are only played at mourning ceremonies, in most cases two *darbe* (drums) together, and the *mansi* (husbands of potters) are the only people allowed to play them. They prepare the drums out of *korje* and *galmi* wood by hollowing the inside of the wood and finally tighten a cowhide on top.

When a person dies, the nearest *mansi* is asked to come to the mourning ceremony to play the drums. Only if the next *mansi* lives too far away, as it is the case in Gongode, a mourning ceremony without drums can take place. For every drum that a *mansi* brings and plays, he is paid in cash.

The role of a musician, especially during a special event like a funeral, is a task often carried out by marginalized groups<sup>118</sup>.

In the following I want to describe the work of the *mani* and the **material they use** for their work. On my first visit to Gongode I planned to interview a *mani*. When Assefa told me that there was no *mani* around Gongode I was very surprised. First I thought the reason might be that there was no market until a few weeks ago, but I still wondered why because people could also buy pots and plates at the homestead of the *mani*, instead of carrying big and heavy pots from

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<sup>117</sup> See chapter III.4

<sup>118</sup> Freeman, Pankhurst: 2

the mountain markets through narrow mountain paths for several hours. One day the *gito* (blacksmith) of Gongode told me the reason why no *mani* lives around Gongode. He said that as the nearest river is far away from Gongode, a potter would neither find the fitting clay nor water, which are the most important raw materials for potters. That is why a large number of potters live in the highlands around Baneta, Koybe and Balla, where rivers are plentiful.

The clay used by the potters is found around riverbeds. For pots red clay is used, while plates are made out of black clay. The potters carry the clay to their homesteads, dry it, and afterwards grind it into a powder. When they mix it with water again they have to use it immediately. First the *mani* measures the amount of clay used for a certain pot or plate on a cowhide. Then she begins the shaping of the object first by her hands and later with the help of different items. To smoothen the outside of the pot, she first uses a stone to remove small bumps and then refines it with a plastic piece of an old sandal and a small metal blade. The inside of pots she smoothes with *kolosho* (pieces of broken gourds) and the peel of the *dankiliki* fruit. Finally, she shapes the rim of pots and plates with a wet piece of cloth or cowhide.

Some *mani* decorate the pots with ornaments, especially around the rims or handles<sup>119</sup>. When I asked Idillo Shirfo the reason for this decoration, she told me that *mani* are taught by their mothers, and depending on the mother's practice to make ornaments or not, they will also prepare their pots later. Ornaments differ from family to family. Idillo carved them for example with the handle of the metal blade, which is a little bit wider than the blade itself.

After finishing the pots and plates, the *mani* puts them in front of the house to dry in the sun. For big pots like the *ala oti* (beer pot), first the upper part is shaped<sup>120</sup> and dried, and afterwards it is turned around and the lower part is added. Then the pot is dried again as a whole. After the pots and plates have dried, they are brought to the *batsho*. The *batsho* is an open place near the

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<sup>119</sup> See picture 22

<sup>120</sup> See picture 23

house of the *mani* where a pot or plate is baked. At this place wood is arranged around the pot and burned.



Picture 23: Idillo Shirfo, a *mani* from Baneta shaping the inside of the upper part of an *ala oti* (beer pot).

In this way *mani* produce *tukko oti* (coffee pots), *kalko oti* (pots for preparing *kalko*), *ala oti* (beer pots), *arak oti* (pots for preparing strong liquor), *samo oti* (pots for preparing *samo*), *ashki oti* (meat pots), *disto* (pots for preparing sauce), *boko* (plates), *jebena* (pots for the Amharic coffee ceremony), *ingrite* (clay constructions for producing charcoal fire) and *nabanno* (clay pieces used for the fireplace). Their husbands, the *mansi*, produce the *masherito* (pipe-bowl)<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> All items are described in the preceding chapters.

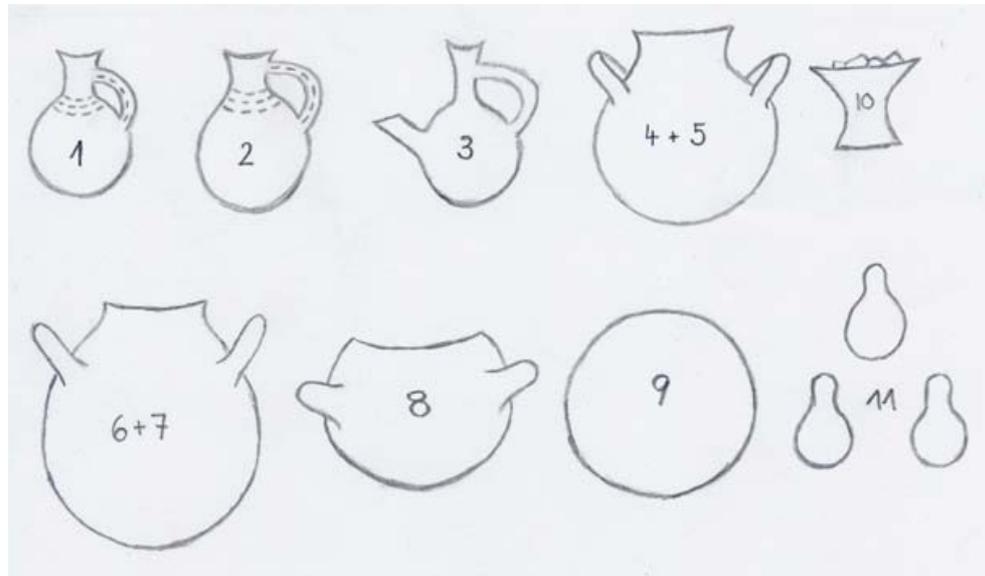


Figure 11: Household items made out of clay: 1. *tukko oti*, 2. *kalko oti*, 3. *jebena*, 4. *samo oti*, 5. *ashki oti*, 6. *ala oti*, 7. *arak oti*, 8. *disto*, 9. *boko*, 10. *ingrite*, 11. *nabanno*.

### 1.1.2. *Gito* (Blacksmith)

The *gito* (blacksmiths) are an **endogamous group** like the *mani* (potters). Only the men of this group work with metal, the women do the housework and plant small amounts of crops inside their homestead. The *gito* are also **marginalized spatially, economically, politically, socially and culturally**. In Maale, like in most ethnic groups of southwest Ethiopia<sup>122</sup>, blacksmiths are the most marginalized group.

The first *gito* I interviewed in Gongode told me that apart from the **restrictions** prohibiting eating and drinking together with Maale people and entering their homesteads, they are also not allowed to participate in mourning ceremonies of Maale. Also, to walk in between cattle or goats of Maale is forbidden to them. Even though the government allowed them to have their own fields in 1975, their Maale neighbors forbade them to have fields, since they

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<sup>122</sup> Freeman, Pankhurst: 138

believed that if they did the rain would stop falling. That is why the *gito* still only plant small amounts of crops inside their homesteads.

When a *gito* dies, it is not allowed to bury the body near the house. They have to bury their family members far away at the *gunno*, which is a burial place for *gito* and handicapped people, usually placed between the boundaries of sections. The *gito* I visited in Gongode is still not allowed to have a Maale house and has a house with a stone on top instead, while in Baneta and Balla the *gito* are nowadays allowed to have Maale houses. In Balla they can even participate in the building of houses, which was forbidden to them in former times.

Changes in the marginalization of the *gito* also occurred as a result of the increasing **influence of Protestants** who preached that all people are equal<sup>123</sup>. A good example for these changes is the *gito* of Gongode. He has one wife in Gongode and a second one in Koybe. In Gongode, where no Protestant mission is near, he has to obey many more taboos, his house is built by Maale people and a stone is put on top of it. In Koybe, as a result of the Protestant mission station there, he has a house with a Maale stick on top and he was even allowed to participate in building it.



Picture 24: *Gito* of Gongode working in the *gilpa mari* (house for doing metal works).

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<sup>123</sup> Freeman, Pankhurst: 345

He is the only blacksmith in Gongode<sup>124</sup> because only recently a small market has been established in this area, and the business for *gito* is better around the large highland markets. *Gito* sell their products on markets, but customers also visit them in their homesteads to order items or for the repairing of old ones.

As *gito* are not Maale people, they also do not perform Maale *kashi* (rituals). Instead the *gito* of Gongode described an own kind of *ritual*, which he called *birto musî*: before sorghum or maize, given by another person or planted inside their own homestead, can be eaten, coffee is prepared and given to the oldest man of the homestead. He blesses the family with the coffee to bring health to the family members. After this blessing they can start to eat this maize or sorghum. He also blesses new clothing by pretending to wear it and wishing it a long endurance.

In comparison to potters who find their **raw material** in their close surroundings, the *gito* have to buy it from outside. For the different items they prepare, several raw materials are bought. All of them are old or broken metal items, which were once produced in factories. The transformation of these objects is a great example of recycling: fieldwork tools, as wells as knives and arrows are made out of old car parts, which the *gito* can buy on markets in big towns outside the Maale area. The bracelets with a golden color are made out of used bullet casings. Old cooking pots, which the blacksmiths also buy on markets in big towns, are melted and bracelets of a silver color and also rings and ear-sticks can be made out of them. A further raw material used for rings are the metal parts of broken umbrellas. The bracelets of a copper color which are worn by the *joi* (healers and fortune tellers) are made out of the former Ethiopian coins.

The old metal items are first melted; in this state the metal is called *angoshio*. Afterwards the metal piece is heated with the help of the *bajo* (bellows). The lower part of the *bajo* is made out of clay, and it is covered with goat leather on

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<sup>124</sup> All together he counted about 46 *gito* in the Maale area.

top. Through the bottom of the clay part a metal tube is stuck to transport the air into the *konjo*. The *konjo* is made of five stones tightly arranged into a circle. In the middle of the circle charcoal is put. The metal pieces are held inside the *konjo* to get hot and shapeable before they can be formed by different tools.



Picture 25: Tools of the gito in Baneta. From top to bottom and left to right: *shijo*, *modosho*, *nariki*, *tsau'tsa*, *pardo*, *kalta*, *kire*, *gauch'o*.

I want to explain the **tools** used by the gito of Baneta in the order, in which they are displayed on the preceding picture. Before I took a picture of these tools in Baneta, I asked Gaire Gabre, a gito of Balla, who has nearly the same tools, for their uses. Many tools I had observed before during several visits at the homesteads of blacksmiths:

A *gito* uses the ***shijo*** to cut metal into pieces of the right size before he starts to shape an item. The *shijo* has a long wooden handle and its rectangular sharp blade is pierced through the handle at the upper part.

As the ***modosho*** is the biggest and heaviest hammer, a *gito* uses it to flatten metal pieces, e.g. the blades of metal tools or bracelets. I observed that they use it also as a base on which an item is laid to then be shaped with another tool.

For giving a round shape to bracelets a *gito* uses the sharp end of the ***nariki***. With the flat side bracelets or other items can be flattened more accurately after

they have been flattened by the *modosho*. The *nariki* has no handle and is just a metal blade with a wide and flat end and a sharp end.

The ***tsau'tsa*** is a hammer with a sharp point. As it is the smallest hammer with the sharpest point, a *gito* uses it to give the last shape to the produced items.

Another hammer with a sharp point is the ***pardo***. Its size is between the size of the *modosho* (big and flat hammer) and the *tsau'tsa* (hammer with a sharp point) and thus a *gito* uses it for giving shape to items after using the *modosho* and before using the *tsau'tsa*.

For cutting wood for the handles of the produced tools, a *gito* uses the ***k'alta***. It has a bent wooden handle and a blade with a socket hafting.

The ***kire*** is a hook made out of a long wooden handle and a long metal hook. Blacksmiths need it to take out the charcoal of the *konjo* (circle of stones in front of the bellows).

For taking the hot metal pieces out of the *konjo*, they use the ***gauch'o*** (metal tongs).

Other tools, I observed at the homestead of Gaire Gabre in Balla, are the *z'urumbo* for piercing metal. It looks like the *shijo*, but the blade is very slim and sharp, and the *moret*, a file made out of metal with a rough surface.

With the help of these tools *gito* produce tools for fieldwork, cutting wood, hollowing beehives, piercing leather, knives, spears, arrows, cow bells, razor blades, bracelets, rings, ear-sticks and also all tools they need for themselves.

## 1.2. Integrated Specialists

### 1.2.1. *Dorze*<sup>125</sup> (Weaver)

In Maale there are a number of people called *dorze* (weavers). The *dorze* are weavers, but they also cultivate their own fields. They are not a marginalized group like the *mani* (potters) and *gito* (blacksmiths) and live inside the villages in the usual Maale houses. The skills of weaving are only known by men and are always transmitted from father to sons. The number of *dorze* is large, since very few work as weavers only and do not have their own fields and cattle. Most of them are busy with work on their fields for the whole year apart from the time after harvest (December to February) when they spend their days mainly with weaving.

Weavers prepare their products partly with wool which their women have spun. These products they sell on markets. Many Maale women also bring their own spun wool to the homes of the *dorze* and order a special item to be made out of it.

In Maale cotton is grown and spun by every woman with a *billabitch* (spindle). The *billabitch* consists of a thin wooden stick. Under its upper end a small clay piece is fixed tightly. Since the clay piece can be taken from a broken pot, a spindle can be prepared by every Maale man.

The women prepare cotton with the spindle by putting a piece of unprepared cotton onto the tip of the spindle and twisting it between their palms. Afterwards they wind the gained string around the lower part of the spindle.

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<sup>125</sup> *Dorze* is the name of an ethnic group near the town Arba Minch in the south of Ethiopia, who are known for their weaving skills. Since none of the interviewed *dorze* in Maale remembers a connection to this ethnic group, I suppose that the term is just borrowed.

In contrast to potters and blacksmiths, whose products are still bought and used by all Maale people, the *dorze* whom I met complained about the decrease of demand for woven cotton cloth. Within the last decades more and more Maale people started buying second hand clothes imported from abroad. Tzegai Taso from Baneta complained not only that he sells less nowadays, but also that he has to sell his products for a lower price. This is another reason why most of the weavers work not only as weavers, but also as farmers. Tzegai Taso was the only weaver I met who did not cultivate a field and lived from weaving only.

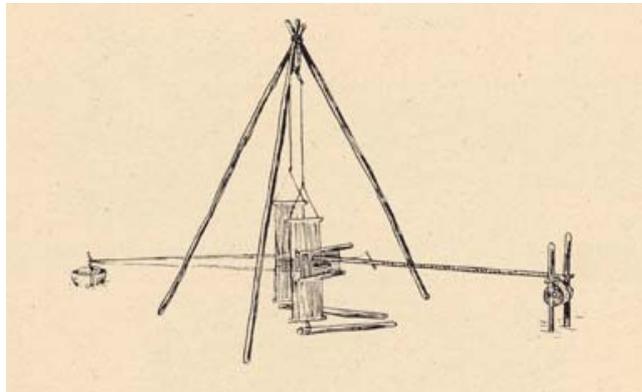


Figure 12<sup>126</sup>: Construction of a mechanic loom: 1. pedals, 2. shuttle, 3. comb, 4. shafts, 5. *t'shak'o*

The *dorze* in Maale use **harpo** (mechanical looms). Like all mechanical looms the elements which help in shedding are combined in *mikane* (shafts). The two shafts are moved by pedals, which are placed inside a big hole in the ground in front of the seat of the *dorze*. The shafts are connected by the *t'shak'o*, a construction out of wooden sticks and rope to decrease or increase their height. The *kaffata* (comb) is movable and used for fastening the shed. *Wandarashi* and *wandarashi nao* (warp beam and breast beam) are placed between the legs and the upper part of the body of the *dorze*. They can be turned around which allows the weavers to produce long webs of cloth. In front of them a thin bamboo stick is fixed to stretch the already finished cloth. This prevents the cloth from shrinking. For passing through the thread the *mokoko* (shuttle) is

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<sup>126</sup> Figure from Hirschberg, Janata: 1980

used. It has the shape of a ship and inside the thread is rolled on a movable stick of bamboo.



Picture 26: Aganna Albe, a *dorze* from Koybe, with mechanical loom.

The items produced by this loom are *bulukko* (big white cloths), used as blankets especially during cold mornings or nights, *gabi* (smaller cloths) and in the areas, where converted people live, *natzalla* (small cloths) which are worn around head and shoulders in church. Sometimes the weavers add colored stripes to the tips of the cloth. They can buy the colored wool from traders.

Tzegai Taso uses for a *bulukko* 40 spindles of cotton thread, for a *gabi* 30 and for a *natzalla* about six. When he is weaving the whole day, he said that he could finish a *bulukko* in five days, a *gabi* in three and a *natzalla* in only one day.

### 1.2.2. *Joi* (Healer and Fortune-Teller)

The *joi* in Maale are **male or female healers, as well as fortune-tellers**. A *joi* transfers his or her knowledge to one or more young relatives, but there is no fixed pattern to whom they should transfer their knowledge. Gadi Miksa, a female *joi* from Baneta, for instance, teaches her nephew instead of her own children.

*Joi* are not marginalized in any way. They live in usual Maale houses, work on their own fields and join the work groups. *Joi* can be recognized by the *doke gauwi* (bracelets and rings of copper color) and the *shekeni ino* (special necklaces made out of big white plastic beads). These jeweler pieces are always inherited from family members who were also *joi* and the person who is wearing them has to have special powers. Gadi Miksa told me that she once gave her copper bracelet to a friend who liked it because of the color, but she could not stand to wear it since she got nightmares.

While especially the marginalized groups of craft workers profited from becoming a convert in Maale, it is just the other way around for the *joi*. The missionaries brought not only a new belief, but also education and medical treatment. The new belief and the education caused many people, like my host-family in Baneta, to have doubts about the practices of fortune-tellers. Converted and educated people prefer modern medical treatment to the natural medicine given by *joi*. Good examples for these discrepancies are my two host-families in Maale: My host-family in Gongode uses the medicine given by the *joi* only and even consulted one to treat me when I became sick. On the contrary, my host-family in Baneta believes *joi* to be swindlers. They laughed when Hanna and I told them our interest in the work of *joi* and when we went to a fortune-telling session to the house of Gadi Miksa. Asrat, our oldest host-sister, accompanied us and obviously found the session very amusing.

The **tasks of joi** are various and differ very much from one *joi* to another. A male *joi* in Gongode only worked as healer, while two female *joi* I visited in Baneta were also able to tell people their fortune and one also worked as a midwife.

All *joi* I interviewed told me that they are able to see and diagnose a sickness of a person, e.g. by observing the eyes of the person. According to their diagnosis, they give the respective **desha (natural medicine)** to their customers. The natural medicines they prepare consist above all of leaves and roots. Some of the plants they grow in their homesteads, while others they have to collect in the bush or buy from traders, as Gante Letso told me. Out of some roots and leaves the *joi* cook teas and others they smear on wounds. Some customers they advise to put the given plants or roots into boiling water and to inhale their steam.

Gadie Miksa from Baneta explained to me more than 20 of her natural drugs<sup>127</sup>. They help with all kinds of diseases ranging from malaria, stomach-ache and the "evil eye" to anemia and belated afterbirth. Itz'o Woyto told me that some people consult a *joi* with very serious sicknesses which the *joi* cannot heal. In such a case she usually recommends the people to slaughter a goat and drink the blood.

The people who consult the *joi* do not have to pay for the medicine immediately. Instead they will pay once they get better. The given **payment** ranges from money to beer and strong liquor to grains and even clothes. If a medicine does not help, no payment has to be made at all. As far as I could observe nobody takes advantage of this practice. At one Saturday during which I stayed at Gadie Miksa's house, two people brought payment for their healed diseases in the form of beer and cloth.

The two female *joi* I visited in Baneta were able to **tell the fortune** by *k'anzo* (stones)<sup>128</sup> and out of the smoke of incense. Usually there are special times when the *joi* tell the fortune to customers. Gadie Miksa, for example, practices every

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<sup>127</sup> See appendix

<sup>128</sup> Compare Jensen: 288

Saturday at her house. I visited her one Saturday and observed her and her customers who arrived from morning to evening, drank coffee and *ala* and asked her questions about their future. First she read the answers out of the smoke of usual incense and later she asked the stones. Both *joi* whom I visited in Baneta have about twenty small stones, which they collected around riverbeds. One stone is white and all others are dark. The white stone represents the asking person.

First the *joi* tells the questions to the stones while holding them in her hands and afterwards she throws the stones on the floor and reads out of their constellation. For fortune-telling people pay the *joi* a small amount of money when they leave.



Picture 27: Gadie Miksa and her nephew, telling the fortune by the *k'anzo* (stone oracle).

## **2. The Kati, the Godda and Their Extraordinary Property**

### **2.1. *Kati* (Ritual and Political Leader)**

One day I walked from Baneta to Balla to see the homestead of the *kati* (ritual and political leader) of Maale. I had already heard that the current *kati* Dulbo Tolba is now living in Shile, a small village near the town Arba Minch, where he is works as a veterinary assistant. However, I still hoped to find some of his

relatives who could explain some features of the homestead and special objects which are in the possession of the *kati*.

When I arrived at the ritual and political leader's homestead together with my friends Hanna and Meriegeta, we met the ritual and political leader's wife Arabo Armale, one of his younger brothers and an old neighbor. The two men had been drinking too much strong liquor and were not willing to tell anything without the payment of one goat and four gourds of beer. This is the usual payment which has to be made to the ritual and political leader for asking him for advice. But the *kati's* wife was very friendly and willing to answer some questions. She explained that her husband is not in the possession of special regalia and showed us around in his room. There I could see a bedstead with a foam plastic mattress, metal and ceramic pots and a food box which is used in the north of Ethiopia for traveling. Also a gourd for drinking beer and a *damboto* (water pipe) are stored there. His room and all items inside are not allowed to be used by anybody else and are just there for one of his rare visits.

The house did not seem very special to me, but it was a large house and his wife was using *nabanno* (clay pieces) instead of stones at the fireplace which is a sign of relative wealth.

In the middle the house is divided by a wall. When entering it, one first reaches the part that is used for cooking, sleeping and sitting together. Behind the wall is the above mentioned room of the *kati*, which is only used by him.

On our way to the house of the *kati* we also passed the house of his deceased father, which is now dilapidated and no longer in use. It had a roof out of corrugated sheet iron, while the new one has a usual grass roof.

Arriving back from Balla to Baneta, I asked Ato Oid'isha about the regalia and the house of the *kati* in former times. He told me about items I already knew from the books of Donald Donham. According to Donham the **royal treasury** consisted of six very heavy spears and *melmaite* (large metal blades), beads, a large number of cowbells, two iron walking sticks, a horn and a knife. Also drums and trumpets were in the possession of the *kati*. The regalia were all taken away by zemecha students during the revolutionary time.

In former times the *kati* had also the monopoly over leopard skins, buffalo hides and ivory and everybody who killed this game had to give it to him<sup>129</sup>. Thus, these were also special items that only belonged to the *kati*.

As Ato Oid'isha further explained, in past times the *kati* had no special clothes since, as already mentioned, there existed no clothing at all for Maale men. Like other *toidi* (oldest sons), the *kati* still owns a *basho* (ritual apron) and *derso* (father beads).

Ato Oid'isha also told me about the **houses of the *kati*'s homestead** in former times. The most important house of the *kati* was called ***zobi mari*** (lion house). The *zobi mari* was about 35 feet high and could be seen from great distances<sup>130</sup>. It had a *turturo* (big pole) in the middle which symbolized the position of the *kati*. Elders in Baneta explained to me that the *zobi mari* (lion house) as a whole was a metaphor for the social order in Maale. The big pole symbolized the *kati*, the *reko* (big poles of the wall) the *godda* (chiefs) and the smaller wood inside the walls the *gatta* (local ritual and political sub-leaders). To the *zobi mari* (lion house) the chiefs came for the *otza* ("praying"), which they performed together with the *kati*. Also usual people could come to ask the *kati* for advice when having any kind of problem. Around the *zobi mari* (lion house) there were also feasting houses for the men of the two Maale moieties *ragi* and *karazi* and one house of the *kati*'s mother. Further there was a small house, where the remains of all former *kati* were placed. Donald Donham drew a sketch of the *kati*'s homestead how it must have looked in the nineteenth century:

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<sup>129</sup> Donham 1999: 52

<sup>130</sup> Donham 1986: 72

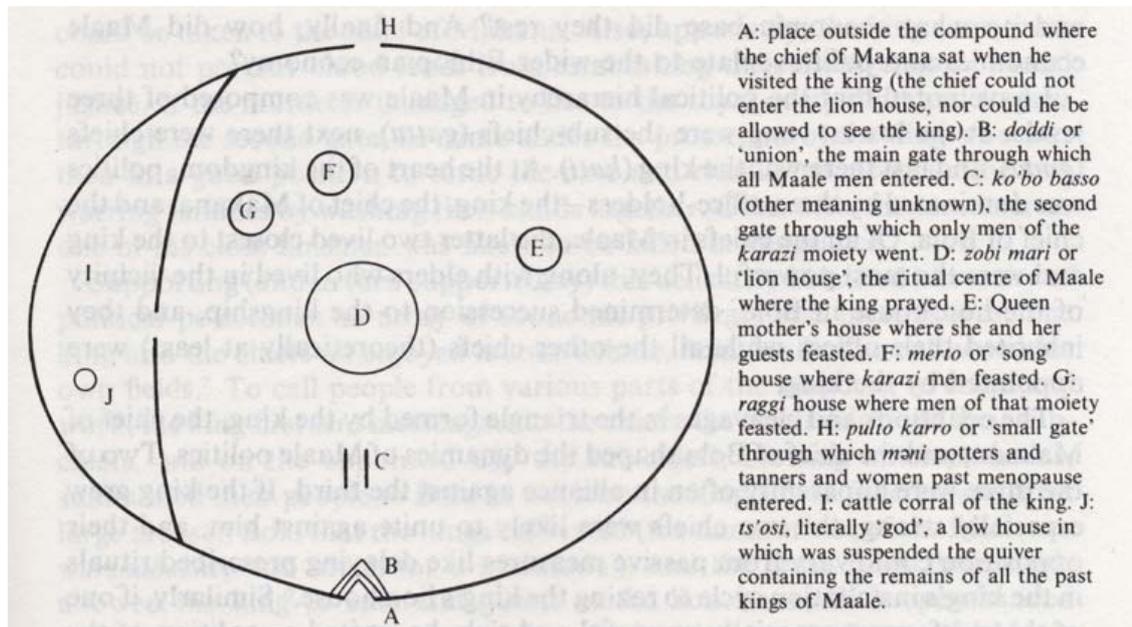


Figure 13: Sketch of the *kati*'s (ritual and political leader's) homestead.<sup>131</sup>

## 2.2. *Godda* (Local Ritual and Political Leader)

Another time I visited the Irbo *godda* (local ritual and political leader of the area around Gongode) and his three wives who live in the *Kebele* Irbo of Gongode. Tasso Galshela is the *godda* responsible for the whole Gongode area since the death of his father six years ago. He still carries out all tasks of a *godda*: he acts as a go-between in cases of quarrels, he prays for a good harvest and the well-being of the people and cattle of Gongode and curses away diseases. Even though he is still doing everything expected from him as a chief, he said that the behavior of the people in Gongode towards the *godda* had changed since his term of office. He told me that during his father's times people brought honey and butter as presents and worked for him on his fields. During the last years the power of the Irbo *godda* decreased. Today he has to look after his own beehives and cattle and even works on his fields by himself. Only few people still come to help him or bring presents, as was common in former times.

<sup>131</sup> Donham 1986: 73

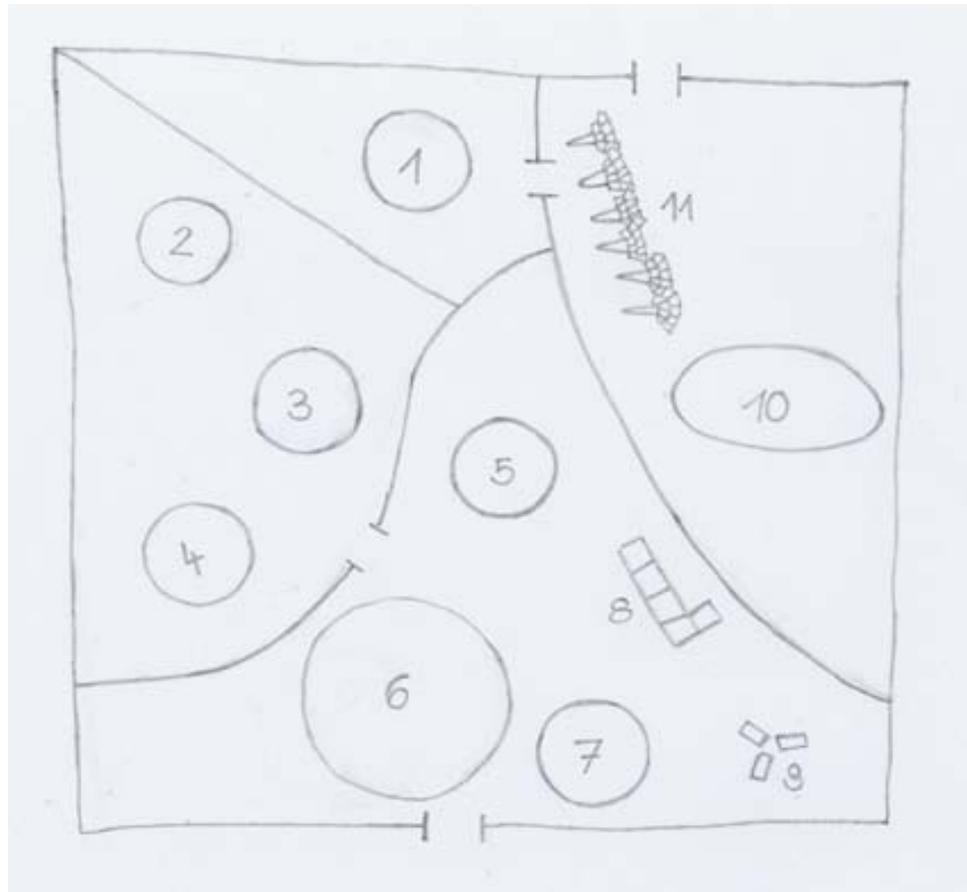


Figure 14: Homestead of the Irbo *godda*: 1. warrior house, 2. house for goats, 3. *sogaro* ("man's domain"), 4. storage hut, 5. house for goats, 6. Gongode house, 7. *ket'so* ("woman's domain") 8. stone benches, 9. fireplace, 10. watering place, 11. graves of forefathers

The main house of the homestead of the Irbo *godda* is the **Gongode house**. Like the *zobi mari* (lion house) of the former *kati* it has a *turturo* (big pole) in its center. This pole can only be found in houses of *kati* and chiefs. Since these houses are always very big, it perhaps serves additionally as a stabilizer. Inside the Gongode house there is a big stool and a coffee bowl, which are only allowed to be used by the *godda*. The two items are placed behind the area where the guests sit and when the Irbo *godda* is away the stool is turned over to prevent people from using it by mistake.

Since the house is used for meetings and discussions two big *damboto* (water pipes), many stools and benches, as well as a *gago* (wooden game), which is played by waiting people or even during discussions, can be found inside<sup>132</sup>.

Inside the **sogaro** ("man's domain") of the *godda*, as also in the *sogaro* of usual Maale men, I observed the most valuable items: his bedstead out of iron, manufactured clothing, plastic items and nice cowhides. It is also, as in other homesteads, the house with the most beehives under its roof.

A special house on the homestead of the Irbo *godda* is the **warrior house**. Since this house is even taboo for the Irbo *godda* to enter during daytime, we had a close look at it from its outside and he explained to me the objects which are stored inside it. The warrior house is a very small house in which the ritual items (ritual apron and ritual stick), the *djolle* (a special spear) and a small iron bell, are stored. The bell and the spear are both needed for a special ritual the *godda* performs for his ancestors. Moreover if somebody does not follow the orders of the *godda* or quarrels with him, the *godda* can take this spear out of the warrior house and lay it on the ground in front of it. Then the rain stops to fall, until the person returns to the *godda* to settle the quarrel. The spear can only be taken out at night and the blade has to be covered, otherwise thunder would come.

Apart from the items I already mentioned, one can find a stone inside the warrior house. According to the Irbo *godda* this stone, which is smeared with the mud from the ground and the dung of a cow, is a symbol for the fertility of the country. Finally, a wooden stool is placed inside the house. On this stool the

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<sup>132</sup> The *gago* is a long wooden board with two rows of thirteen holes. While we were waiting for the Irbo *godda*, one of his wives showed us how it is played. In each hole four stones or seeds are put. One player begins with taking out four stones of a hole and putting them one by one into the next holes. If there are stones in the last hole where a stone is put they are taken out again and put one by one into the next holes. This is continued until the player reaches an empty hole with the last stone. Then the second player starts. The player who empties all thirteen holes of the other player wins.

*godda* sits when praying for a good harvest and health and fertility for cattle and people.

### **3. Special Objects for Rituals – Rituals for Special Objects**

#### **3.1. Maale Rituals: *Kashi***

In the second chapter I already gave some information on *kashi* (rituals) in Maale. *Kashi* are rituals only performed by the Maale people; the marginalized blacksmiths and potters are not allowed to participate in them. The rituals are always carried out by the *toidi* (oldest son) of a family, who wears the *derso* (father beads) as a sign of his power. The *derso* are transmitted from father to oldest son. As my host-father Sale is a *toidi* (oldest son), he told me most of the basic features of rituals in the evenings, when he returned from the field or cattle camp. He sat on the *kela* (stone benches) with his *damboto* (water pipe) in front of him. Between his explanations he stopped, took a puff of his water pipe, thought for a while and then continued to explain:

Usually, the oldest son should do all rituals for his family and for the families of his younger brothers. If a young brother moves very far away from his oldest brother, the oldest brother can give him some of his *derso* (father beads) and consequently the power to do his own rituals. At his new homestead the young brother is allowed to build a ritual house and to search for ritual stones, which are placed next to it. Other items needed to carry out rituals are the *basho* (ritual apron) and optionally the *kolo* (ritual stick)<sup>133</sup>.

What kinds of rituals are performed in Maale? Most rituals in Maale are meant as a kind of precaution. Complex rituals are performed before the fields are planted and directly after the harvest, before the first grains are allowed to be

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<sup>133</sup> Further explanation see chapter V.3.2

eaten. Furthermore they are performed when a new bride moves into a homestead and to be sure that the cattle may stay strong and healthy. During these kind of rituals fresh meat and blood is poured onto the *daabo* (gravestones of the forefathers). In this way the ancestors are appeased and persuaded to do their best for the health and fertility of the family, the cattle and the fields.

A second kind of ritual is performed after something unpleasant has happened. For example when somebody (a family member or cow) got sick or quarreled. In such a case an elder reads the *rugunti* (intestines) of a goat or a sheep. Often the reader of the intestines can see that a certain ancestor caused the misfortune. Then a *kashi* (ritual) will be made and fresh meat and blood will be put on the gravestone of the ancestor to appease him and ask him to undo the mischief. After most of these complex *kashi* dances take place at the homestead.

The Maale *kashi* fits perfectly into the **criteria for rituals** raised by some anthropologists. The central definition of ritual is one of Victor Turner:” [Ritual is a] formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers.”<sup>134</sup>

The definition already entails the criterion of **formality**, also mentioned by Rappaport and Caduff<sup>135</sup>. Formality includes **special circumstances, special places, special clothing** and **invariant sequences**. The invariant sequences are characteristic for all *kashi*. Also for all *kashi* an elder wears the *basho* (ritual apron) and sometimes carries a *kolo* (stick). These two items are special since they are only used during *kashi* and never in everyday life. Moreover the circumstances for a *kashi* are always special, be it the arrival of a new bride or a case of sickness. Finally *kashi* are carried out around the ritual stones or the graves of the ancestors, i.e. at a special place.

Caduff, like Turner, also mentions the **relation to religion** as a criterion. As I already mentioned in chapter III.7, the traditional religion in Maale focuses on

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<sup>134</sup> Turner 1967: 65

<sup>135</sup> See references

*tsosi*, which is the name for ancestors and also for a God-like being<sup>136</sup>. The *kashi*, during which ancestors are appeased by offerings and asked for help, is one of the main elements of this traditional religion.

Further criteria for rituals raised by Rappaport are the **encoding by others** and the **performance itself**. The **encoding by others** becomes really obvious when you ask people about rituals. My host-father Sale, himself an oldest son and thus carrying out *kashi*, described a *kashi* by telling me the formal order according to which he carries out a certain ritual. When asked for the meaning of something he said either he does not know it or he is doing the ritual like this because his forefathers did it also in this way. With **performance** Rappaport wants to point out that a ritual becomes a ritual by performing it, while just a formal verse which is related to religion, is not already a ritual. The rituals in Maale are all a performance.

Caduff further adds the criteria of a **formal decision**, its **publicity** and a **change of state**, which can be attained through the ritual.

**Formal decision** means that a ritual is not performed by chance or arbitrarily. There is a reason and thus a formal decision to carry out a ritual. In Maale this reason may be either that something bad happened or as precaution. The rituals, which are done as precaution, are also performed during certain times, e.g. when a new bride arrives, or when the harvest has just been finished.

The criterion of **publicity** also applies for the Maale rituals. No *kashi* is performed secretly. The clothes are changed officially, the ritual is carried out at the ritual stones, which are not hidden, but can be seen from many parts of the homestead and after the rituals often official dances take place.

A **change of state** through the *kashi* is only attained in rituals done for newly bought or prepared objects, which I have not mentioned yet. They will be described in chapter V.3.3.

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<sup>136</sup> Further explanation see chapter III.7.

### 3.2. Special Objects for Rituals

“... ”ritual” is a quality, which can in theory apply to any kind of action.  
*Ritualization begins with a particular modification of the normal  
intentionality of human action.*”<sup>137</sup>

The objects, used for *kashi* (rituals), I want to describe in this chapter are a part of this ”quality” that modifies a usual action into a ritual and makes the performative element of a ritual more obvious.

In Maale there is a special place and special clothing used for rituals only. As already explained in the preceding chapter, when a person stands in front of a special ritual place in ritual clothing, there is no doubt that a ritual is taking place. These special objects are a part of the formality, which is one criterion of ritual.

In chapter IV.1.2.3 and IV.1.3 I already explained that there is a special kind of house called *kashi mari* (ritual house). The rituals are not directly carried out inside this house, but on special stones next to it. These stones are called *t’zuzo*, which literally means ”grass”. In the homestead of my host-family in Gongode the ritual stones are arranged in a corner on top of an elevation made out of soil. The only person who is allowed to touch the ritual stones is my host-father Sale, who as the oldest son of his family is carrying out the rituals. The *t’zuzo* (ritual stones) are called ”grass”, since on the day they are collected, the men who search for them carry grass in their hands. When they find fitting stones (mostly they are big and flat) they carry them to the homestead on top of this grass. Back at the homestead they put the grass of the left hand on top of the *kashi mari* (ritual house) while they fasten the grass of their right hands at a stick which is put above the ritual stones.

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<sup>137</sup> Humphrey, Laidlaw: 71

New ritual stones do not have to be searched for very often. According to Sale most men take over the homestead of their father including the *t'zuzo*.

The ritual stones are arranged in front of a wooden fence near the ritual house. Some items needed for special rituals are hung up on the fence above the stones. Two items hanging in every fence are leaves of the *bar'e* plant and also a *kur'kule*. The *kur'kule* is a tip of a gourd used as drinking-vessel during the *kashi* which is done for the health of the cattle. The "father" of the ritual drinks a mixture of fresh blood and milk out of the *kur'kule*, first with the milk and blood of a cow and afterwards with a goat's blood and milk.

The **special dress** used only during *kashi* is the ***basho***. It is an apron made out of a small goatskin. The oldest son of a family, who is the only person allowed to perform rituals and to wear this apron, binds it around his waist before he carries out a ritual. A certain goat is used for a ritual apron. Usually the *gete* (ritual friend) selects the goat and gives the hide to a skilled person to prepare. Nowadays the *basho* (ritual apron) is often worn on top of the popular sports shorts. When the ritual friend of Sale arrived for performing a *kashi*, both men bound their ritual apron over their shorts and sometimes even wore shirts.

Together with the ritual apron a ***kolo* (ritual stick)** is carried during the performance of a ritual. It is made out of *bar'e*, *tz'aki* or *remiti* wood. Ato Oid'isha explained that the oldest son inherits the *kolo* (ritual stick) from his father and therefore calls it *ado kolo* (father stick). If the father is still alive, but too old to walk long distances, the stick is sent with his oldest son to the father's *gete* (ritual friend). The *gete* considers the stick as the father, speaks with it and carries out the rituals with it. When the father dies, the *gete* comes to the homestead of the dead men and speaks to the stick again, considering it as the dead father. The stick tells him how to solve the problem of inheritance. Afterwards the *gete* (ritual friend) passes on the possessions of the father to his sons. The *kolo* (ritual stick) is, of course, inherited by the oldest son who can curse people with it from then on who do or did something bad to him.



Picture 28: Labunno Kenogasa from Gongode wearing *derso* (father beads) around the neck.

The third item a man needs to carry out rituals are the ***derso* (father beads)**. These are small red beads on a string the *toidi* (oldest sons) wears around the neck. The father beads are needed to have the power to perform a ritual. The beads are usually inherited by the oldest son from his father. Labunno Kenogasa<sup>138</sup> explained that if younger brothers move far away and need to do their own rituals for their families they can get some *derso* (father beads), and thus the permission and power to do their own rituals, from their oldest brother. Labunno himself is the youngest brother of his family and got four *derso* (father beads) from his oldest brother when he moved away.

Men who own *derso* (father beads) always wear them. Unlike the ritual apron and ritual stick they are not only worn during the performance of a ritual.

While the *derso* are beads taken over from the father, the ***kasho jallo* (mother beads)** are beads inherited from the mother. They are threaded big beads of a varying color. They are worn by men and women. Women who own these beads are allowed to take part in the ritual for the family. Sale told me that

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<sup>138</sup> see picture 28

people who wear these beads become infected even worse when eating infected food (e.g. infected by mother's milk).

When a mother dies, her oldest son wears her *kasho jallo* (mother beads) first around his head. After the mourning ceremony he puts them around his neck. Women (only wives of oldest sons) get the mother beads when they arrive as brides at the homestead of the groom's father.

The circulation of the *derso* (father beads) and *kasho jallo* (mother beads) has nothing to do with the circulation of beads worn as jewelry. Often the father and mother beads which are inherited after the death of the parents are the only beads worn by men and women who are married and already have children.

### **3.3. Rituals for Special Objects**

Not all objects used in Maale are prepared by the Maale people themselves. Some are prepared by the specialized groups I described in chapter V.1 and more and more objects are bought on markets and originate from as far as China. If somebody just used one of these newly bought items, it would cause mischief to him. That is why most newly bought items are first given to the oldest son of a family, who performs a ritual for them. According to Sale this *kashi* (ritual) shows that the **object becomes the property of another person**, further the object is **purified from its former owners** and should **make its new owner fortunate**. In the following I will show the different rituals used for different objects. In contrast to the rituals I mentioned in chapter V.3.1, these rituals are very basic and short with no complex sequence of acts.

As objects are used for a very long time and they are repaired over and over again, I never saw a family member buy a new pot, metal item, etc. Thus, my host-father Sale explained all rituals which are performed for new objects theoretically to me.

I begin with the objects bought from the **mani (potters)**. The pots and plates are bought from the potters at their homestead or at the market. Women select the item they need, buy it and carry it to their homestead. Then they are not longer allowed to touch it before a ritual has been carried out. For the ritual the *kashi ado* (father of the ritual) wears his *basho* (ritual apron), puts the pot or plate on one of the fireplaces of the homestead and first touches the inside of the pot or plate and then the ground next to it. Afterwards the item is allowed to be used.

The husbands of the potters, the *mansi* prepare the *masherito* (pipe-bowl). For this clay item no *kashi* has to be done.

Another object made by the *mansi* is the *gulambo*, a cowhide used for sleeping on and for carrying loads by donkeys. When the *gulambo* is brought to the homestead, the *kashi ado* (father of the ritual) will first put on his ritual apron and then sit down on the ritual stones. The cowhide is wrapped up and a piece of meat is put inside of it. The *kashi ado* (father of the ritual) takes the cowhide, eats the meat and blesses it. Then the ritual is finished and the new cowhide can be used.

As the objects of potters do, all objects bought from the **gito (blacksmiths)** on markets or at their homesteads require a ritual before they can be used. Bracelets made by the blacksmiths are mostly bought by girls on the market. They are brought back to the homestead and directly passed over to the oldest son. He puts on his ritual apron and takes the bracelets to the ritual stones. There he first holds them in his hands and next in front of the part of the body at which they will be worn later by the girl. Finally, he puts the bracelets around the arms of the girl. The ritual only has to be performed when the bracelets are newly bought from the blacksmith. When they are passed over by the father to a younger daughter later on, no ritual has to be performed. The girl can wear them immediately.

The metal arrow tips are also bought from the blacksmith and are directly given to the oldest son of a family when they are brought to the homestead. The father of the ritual puts on his ritual apron and just holds the arrow tips in his hands. From then on they are allowed to be used.

All other metal items require varying rituals. After they are brought to the homestead, the father of the ritual sits down on the ritual stones wearing his ritual apron and pretends to use them. With the knives he pretends to cut something, with the *kurkurro* (digging stick), he pretends to dig and so on. Afterwards they can be used by everybody.

Objects bought from the ***dorze* (weavers)** or ***joi* (healers and fortune tellers)** need no ritual. A reason might be that these groups are not marginalized like the *mani* (potters) and *gito* (blacksmiths).

There is an increasing tendency to buy **objects on markets** in Maale. In the areas where people still have the traditional religion and perform rituals fewer of these objects can be found. In Gongode the objects bought on markets include above all beads, manufactured clothes and plastic sandals. For nearly all of them a ritual has to be performed:

Like bracelets, beads are bought on the markets by girls, usually, after they sold a big amount of local beer and thus earned enough money. Out of these beads they will first prepare different jeweler items like necklaces or belts. When the girls finished the preparation they have to give the newly made jeweler to the oldest son of their family. He puts on his *basho* (ritual apron) and sits down on the ritual stones. There he first holds the item in his hands and then in front of the part of the body at which it will be worn later. Finally, he puts it around the neck or respectively the waist of the girl. When the beads are inherited by a younger sister, the ritual does not have to be repeated.

The ritual for manufactured clothes is nearly the same as the one for beads. First the father of the ritual holds the clothes in his hands, then he pretends to wear them and finally dresses the new owner with them.

The act which is done for new plastic sandals before they are allowed to wear is not very complex. When the sandals are brought from the market, the oldest son just has to hold them in his hands. He is neither wearing the ritual dress, nor is he sitting on the ritual stones.

Also bought from outside are *k'auwi* (rifles). When a new rifle is brought to the homestead the father of the ritual wears his ritual apron and sits down on the

ritual stones. Then he takes the rifle, fires it one time and afterwards it can be used.

All objects I mentioned above come from outside the Maale area or are produced by marginalized craft workers. Therefore rituals have to be done to accept those items made by marginalized people in the Maale society. Some other objects, which are not made by the people themselves, like blankets from the weaver, gourds planted by other people or grinding stones collected by somebody else, do not need a ritual before they can be used, because they are bought from Maale people and not from marginalized groups or from outside. What seems exceptional to me are five objects which are **made by the people themselves**, but nevertheless require a ritual:

The first of these objects are **gourds for storing milk, butter and honey**. Before they may to be used, the father of the ritual puts on his ritual apron, touches them and finally pretends to kiss them four times. According to Sale this ritual is necessary because otherwise the cattle and bees who provide milk and honey would become sick.

As well, when a new **loom** has been prepared a ritual must be carried out before it can be used. The father of the ritual sits on the ritual stones dressed with his ritual apron and eats *samo* (maize and sorghum stew) and drinks coffee and beer. The owner of the new loom stands in front of it and is blessed by him to work hard with the new loom.

The last ritual I want to describe is the one done for a new **house**. Most houses are built by a work group. The work group collects wood and grass and builds the wall and the roof of the house, but no one except of the oldest son of the family is allowed to cut the wooden pillars or the grass of the roof to the right size. The oldest son cuts this wood and grass with a *yirga* (axe), dressed in his ritual apron.

After he has finished the cutting of the wood and grass of a *ket'so* ("woman's domain") he has to enter this house and make a fire inside of it. Only then is the house allowed to be used.

Now that I have described all rituals that are done for particular new items I would like to draw a conclusion. The first fact that becomes obvious is that rituals are especially made for material objects that are bought from the marginalized groups in Maale (potters and blacksmiths) and from traders from outside. The only exceptions among these objects is the pipe-bowl, made by the *mansi* (husbands of potters) which does not need a ritual and sandals which are bought on the markets, for which no ritual is performed.

The rituals made for objects bought from outside or marginalized groups have the task I explained at the beginning of the chapter: to emphasize the change of the owner of the objects, to make the new owner fortunate and to purify the items from former owners.

The rituals made for the last five objects which I explained have different tasks: According to Sale the gourds should not cause any mischief to cattle or bees. I suppose that rituals for looms and houses are made, because they are important and have a central position in the life of people. The loom has a great importance to the weaver, as his most important instrument and his source of income. The owner of the new loom is blessed together with it to work hard and consequently get rich by it. As well, for every person the house is a central point of the homestead, every type of house in its special way<sup>139</sup>. The fire, which is made inside the new *ket'so* ("woman's domain") is also the central point of this house where coffee and food is prepared to feed the whole family. Thus, I conclude that these items are central and important objects for the people and that is why they require a ritual to avoid mischief and cause fortune for their owners.

The mentioned *kashi* (rituals) consist of several **elements**:

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<sup>139</sup> See the explanation of different houses in chapter IV.1.2.

The first element of course is the changing of clothes of the father of the ritual. During every ritual he wears the *basho* (ritual apron). Further the father of the ritual often sits on the **ritual stones**. He will **hold the new object in his hands** and **pretend to use it** (e.g. the jeweler, the metal items) or actually **use it** (e.g. pots and plates are put on fire, the rifle is fired). Afterwards the object is often directly **handed over to the new owner**. In the case of pots, plates and the cowhide a **connection between the object and its origin** is also drawn in the ritual. The pots and plates are made out of soil and thus the father of the ritual touches first the object and then the soil on the ground out of which it is made. A piece of meat is put inside the cowhide. This refers to the fact that the cowhide was made out of the hide of a bull or a cow. Very seldom *anjo* (blessings) are spoken during a ritual, only in the case of the cowhide and the loom. I asked my host-father Sale several times if there are no blessings during the other rituals at all and finally I discussed this issue with Assefa. He told me that the intention of the rituals, purifying the objects and making their owner fortunate, is so evident that no blessing has to be done additionally. Also the power of the oldest son, the ritual stones, ritual apron and father beads is present to influence the object.

The rituals carried out for the last five objects have a different task and consist consequently of slightly different elements.

The last issue that concerned me was by whom and how the rituals for newly introduced items like manufactured cloth, sandals or rifles have been invented. These items have been introduced to Maale only within the last decades. When I asked my host-father Sale about the rituals performed for these objects, I always got the answer that his father already did these rituals and he is following what he did. Since the ritual for manufactured cloth is nearly the same as the one for beads and bracelets, I find Turner's statement<sup>140</sup> that new rituals are likely to be largely composed of elements taken from older rituals convincing. For example

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<sup>140</sup> Turner 1973: 1100

for the ritual for rifles, which that consists of the elements "wearing ritual clothing", "sitting on the ritual stones" and "using the new item".

The reason why the bought plastic sandals are just held in the hands of the oldest son and he neither wears his ritual apron, nor sits on the ritual stones, remains unclear to me. One would expect that also for this newly introduced object which was bought from outside a ritual should be performed that has the elements of older rituals.

## **VI. The Influence of Cultural Contact on the Material World**

The character of culture is not static but dynamic. Consequently, culture is in a persistent state of change. The main reason for this situation of constant change is cultural contact, which is of course also the reason for a change in the material world of Maale. The type of contact by way of which this change takes mainly place is trade. More and more markets come into being in Maale and also the number of traders and foreign products on these markets increases. These foreign products, which are bought by Maale people from traders, are the indication that cultural contact took place. This shall be the subject of this last chapter of the paper.

Up to this point I have only described the objects I found during my field research in Maale in 2003, above all in the village Gongode. My second place of research Baneta had already been influenced very much by second-hand clothes, plastic items, colored wool, etc. because of its larger market. Nevertheless, most objects which I described in the preceding chapters can still be found in Baneta as well. Even at places where people have an easy access to products from outside, their self-made objects are still the cheapest ones and often also the most suitable.

Starting with Gongode, the most obvious change in objects can be seen in the change of clothing. While in former times the only clothes for the upper part of the body were small goatskins; today shirts, especially blue ones with red and white stripes are often worn. These shirts are mainly worn by adult women. Men rarely wear shirts, but rather sports shorts with white stripes on both sides. Young men prefer synthetic cloth with colorful stripes, which they wrap around their waists like a short skirt and instead of their leather skirts women start to wear white pleated cotton skirts.

All these clothes are bought from the markets in the highlands of Maale. At the moment it is noticeable that these clothes are preferred to the self-made clothes

especially for special occasions (e.g. markets and dances). One day when I visited two girls who wanted to have their picture taken, they first changed their leather skirts for new cotton skirts. Thus, the use of the self-made articles of clothing has been pushed back to everyday life.

Around Gongode very rarely plastic items can be found. When I visited the spring or the well for fetching water most women I met there had gourds for fetching water. I saw only a few women with plastic jerry cans, which they transported like gourds, by a *sayo* (construction of vegetable fiber). In my host-family the only plastic item present until I was asked to buy a plastic jerry can was a small bowl, out of which the small children ate porridge.

A very interesting foreign object, which recently became popular in Gongode, is a big metal flashlight. While I never saw anybody at night walking with such a flashlight, I saw girls on the market using empty ones as purses, the money was stored at the place where usually the batteries are. In addition girls use it to fill with sugar or pieces of sugar cane, which they then give to their secret boyfriends during markets. Finally, the torches are very popular amongst young boys who use them to find their way when visiting their girlfriends at night.

Up to now these are the changes I observed in Gongode, but I am sure that much more will change very soon since a market was started in this area in May 2003. Every second Friday traders come from the highland areas of Maale and sell products like the described flashlights together with batteries and light bulbs, candles, matches, beads, spices and juice powder. As it is now also much easier for the people of Gongode to sell their honey, butter, sweet potatoes or beer, I guess that soon more money will circulate and the traders will perhaps start to bring second hand-clothes and plastic items.

While in Gongode it was still possible for me to count the objects which were not made by the people themselves, in Baneta there were too many of them. In addition to the big market every Thursday, Baneta has three small shops selling many products from soap to pens. My host-family, who lives directly at the market place, fetches water with jerry cans only, all children go to school and

have exercise books and pens, my host-mother cooks almost exclusively with metal pots, she even has a radio, and she always listens to Protestant songs. I could also observe a big difference in the clothing. Nowadays nobody in Baneta wears a leather skirt and only few girls I saw still wear a *shiro* (skirt made out of cotton strings). While shirts, shorts, skirts and shoes bought by people from Gongode are similar to each other, most people of Baneta buy clothes which do not have a similar style at all. Furthermore, people in Baneta, above all traders from outside, have started to live in houses with roofs of corrugated sheet iron. Nevertheless, people still produce and use many of the objects I described in the preceding chapters. Nearly every family plants gourds, makes wooden household items and buys the metal items from the blacksmith. Also the potters still sell a big amount of coffee pots, plates and all kinds of other pots, since not everybody has enough money to buy metal pots.

Especially the potters and blacksmiths try to uphold their monopoly in selling clay and metal items by selling items which are more influenced by traders or other ethnic groups. These items are not produced in a traditional way, but are increasingly asked for. Some examples of these objects are metal parts of the plough, small coffee pots used for the Amhara coffee ceremony and further the *ingrite* (clay construction for making charcoal) and *nabanno* (clay pieces used at the fireplaces)<sup>141</sup>.

In Baneta many foreign objects are already popular and, of course, will be more and more popular in the future among an increasing amount of people. Mary Douglas<sup>142</sup> compared the spread of new objects with the heat of a fire, which is spreading from the top floor of a house to the lower floors. After a while the objects will spread even to the people of the lowest floor, while at the top floor already new fires burn. I think this is a fitting metaphor for describing the future of the object world of Maale.

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<sup>141</sup> For further explanation of the clay items see chapter V.1.1.1.

<sup>142</sup> Douglas: 151

## **VII. Concluding Remark**

Looking back at the material objects described in the preceding chapters, the connection between **minimalism** in arts and fiction and the minimalism in their production is more than obvious. Out of minimum means, for example a gourd, the maximum of perfection, namely a suitable container, drinking-vessel or bowl for several uses, can be made only by drying, emptying and cleaning it. The same applies for a broom, which is just made out of some sorghum sticks and bound together by any vegetable fiber. Both items are not only efficient in use, but also fit perfectly into their environment.

This suitability into the environment makes the objects already **aesthetic** according to the interpretation of Plato I explained in chapter I.1. Just imagine how anasthetical a plastic broom or a plastic container in flashy colors would look like amongst the other objects of a Maale homestead, whose natural tones of color and natural shapes are in harmony with each other. **Harmony** together with **order**, **measure** and **proportion** are according to Plato identical with the sense of aesthetics. And especially **order** is a quality which is outstanding in many groups of Maale objects:

For example there are many different kinds of houses in Maale, each with their special function. According to the construction it is possible to see the function of each house. In addition, if you enter a homestead with a ritual house you can conclude that an *toidi* (oldest son) is the owner. If you enter one with a shabby house without a wooden tip, you can guess that potters or blacksmiths live there. Finally, if a very big house stands on a homestead which has a big pole in its center, it will be the house of the *kati* or a chief.

Another order inherent in objects is the status differentiation which can be seen according to clothing, jeweler and hairstyle of people. While in the western world men and women can wear the same kinds of clothes, in Maale a leather skirt is worn only by women starting at the age of twelve years and to show that a woman is a bride, a stripe of black leather is sewn around it.

Due to the hairstyle *toko demo* (hairstyle of girls and women before becoming mothers)<sup>143</sup> and lots of jeweler, one can tell that a woman is not yet a mother, while mothers can be noticed by the missing jeweler and the hairstyle *muddo*<sup>144</sup>. The differentiation of men is not as easy, but a young man with necklaces or bracelets, which in Maale can only be presents of a girlfriend, is either shortly before his marriage or married but not already a father.

A senior man can, for example, be recognized by carrying an *oyta* (small chair) instead of a *bokoto* (wooden pillow).

And with a closer look one can even find more rules of order within this world of objects, like the different gourds, which are assigned to a task according to their shape or the gender separation, may it be in the production or in the use of objects. Apart from the aesthetics inherent in these orders, they also function as a system of orientation and non-verbal communication for the people<sup>145</sup>.

A system of order or better an order of life-phases can be observed, when following the **biography** of objects. The advantage in Maale, when following a biography of an object is that you can follow it up from its raw materials and its producer to its very end, while in our western world it would be a hard work of investigation to know all raw materials and the origin of an object or even the places and people where it or its components were produced<sup>146</sup>.

Looking at the **biography of a cowhide**, for example, it is first of all the hide of a cow for a long time until the cow is slaughtered or dies because of any other reason. The hide, which is flayed and then dried by men, will first be used as a seating accommodation for guests. After a while, it will show the first signs of wear and tear and thus will become a sleeping mat. As a mat, it will be first used by men and visitors and after another while transmitted to women and children. When it really becomes worn out, an *ora* (backpack) will be made out of it. And

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<sup>143</sup> See picture 12

<sup>144</sup> See picture 15

<sup>145</sup> See Schomburg-Scherff: 243

<sup>146</sup> See also Hoskins: 192

finally when the *ora* breaks the remaining leather pieces can be used for repairing other leather objects.

In the **biography of jeweler**, the most interesting issue is the one of inheritance. Beads and bracelets are bought partly by girls from the money they earn with selling beer and partly they are inherited from older sisters. As I explained in chapter IV.2.2.1.7, the jeweler has to be returned to the father by the woman when her first child is born, and the father will again transmit it to a younger daughter. Thus, jeweler is always circulating within the family. New items are bought and prepared and old ones break and will be a part of a new jeweler item.

Another biography of objects, which is also very interesting, is the one of **metal objects** produced by the blacksmiths. Items like knives or fieldwork material were parts of cars in their former lives. Rings and bracelets were pots and after melting and shaping them into a ring or bracelet, they started to circulate with other pieces of jeweler between the girls of a family.

When speaking of a **biography** of Maale objects, the **rituals** done after purchasing or preparing some objects also add an interesting aspect. In these rituals the objects turn from the state of non-property to the state of property, from the state of causing danger to the state of causing fortune and so forth. Thus, they undergo rites of passage, as described by van Gennep<sup>147</sup>. But these rituals are only carried out for a small number of certain objects.

In my thesis I wanted to give a general view of the object world of Maale: how I experienced it during my field research from June to November 2003. The world of objects is changing a lot in Maale these days. This I explained shortly in chapter V by means of the newly arrived objects from outside. But the main focus of this thesis lies not on the changes and new objects, but much more on the objects which have been made by Maale people or by marginalized craft workers in the Maale area for a long time. I showed how the material objects are produced and used by people starting from the houses and homesteads, inside

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<sup>147</sup> Compare Caduff: 24

which most objects are stored and used. Also I presented the difference between the everyday material objects of Maale people and the ones produced and used by specialists or during the special occasion of rituals. The connection between material objects and rituals, which I described in chapter V.3., i.e. the objects which are used and needed for rituals and the rituals that are done for certain objects, I only summarized briefly and further research concerning this issue could be conducted for gaining a deeper insight in these subjects. My thesis may as well be a source for further studies of Maale material culture, which would focus on the dissemination and acceptance of foreign objects as a result of cultural contact.

## Appendix

### Glossary

#### Malló múcci

#### English

*ado*

father

*ala*

local beer made out of sorghum or/and maize

*anda*

bowl made out of a gourd

*arafo*

small knife

*arak*

strong liquor

*ashapo*

bracelet of silver color

*Ato*

Amharic for Mr., also used in Maale

*Banna*

most pastoralists to the south of the Maale country (Tsamako, Hamar, Banna, Arbore, Kara) are called Banna by the Maale people

*basho*

ritual apron

*bela*

bond friend

*billabitch*

spindle

*boko*

clay plate

*bokoto*

wooden pillow

*booka*

market

*buddo*

leather skirt

*bulukko*

cotton blanket made by the *dorze*

*daabo*

gravestone for men

*dabo*

festive work group

*dambo*

tobacco

*damboto*

water pipe

<i>darbe</i>	drum
<i>derso</i>	father beads
<i>dorze</i>	weaver
<i>dursi</i>	sandals made out of cowhide
<i>ezo</i>	honey
<i>fal'e</i>	poisoned arrow
<i>fung'o</i>	wooden arrow
<i>gatta</i>	Local ritual and political sub-leader
<i>gauwi</i>	bracelet of golden color
<i>gito</i>	blacksmith
<i>goala</i>	lyre
<i>godda</i>	chief
<i>gofalo</i>	small goat skin worn over the back or to the front
<i>goshi</i>	field
<i>gurda</i>	village
<i>gussi</i>	gourd
<i>harpo</i>	loom
<i>indo</i>	mother
<i>jallo</i>	mother beads
<i>joi</i>	traditional healer and fortune teller
<i>k'osi</i>	bow
<i>kalko</i>	tea made out of coffee leaves
<i>ket'so</i>	main house of a homestead, above all used for cooking, storing items and sleeping
<i>karazi</i>	name of moiety
<i>kashi</i>	ritual
<i>kashi mari</i>	ritual house
<i>kati</i>	ritual and political leader
<i>kela</i>	bench made out of stones
<i>konko</i>	tattoo

<i>kulle</i>	tobacco container
<i>kumpaiti</i>	big knife
<i>lado</i>	bread made out of ground maize and/or sorghum
<i>mani</i>	potter
<i>mansi</i>	husband of <i>mani</i>
<i>mari</i>	house
<i>matzi itinzi</i>	beehive
<i>mol'a</i>	reciprocal work group
<i>mootsi</i>	cattle camp
<i>múcci</i>	language
<i>muddo</i>	hairstyle of a mother
<i>oisi</i>	butter
<i>oti</i>	pot
<i>oyta</i>	chair
<i>pilea</i>	set of nine bamboo flutes
<i>ragi</i>	name of moiety
<i>samo</i>	ground sorghum or maize mixed with green cabbage or soja beans
<i>shekeni</i>	small glass beads
<i>shiro</i>	skirt of small girls, made out of cotton strings
<i>sogaro</i>	man's domain, where all valuable items are stored
<i>suringi</i>	fire drill
<i>t'zuso</i>	ritual stones
<i>toidi</i>	oldest son
<i>toko demo</i>	hairstyle of girls
<i>tukko</i>	coffee
<i>watzo</i>	water
<i>wontzo</i>	grinding stone
<i>zeddi</i>	cowhide

## List of Informants

At this place I mention all names of informants, whom I interviewed. Of some informants I only used little information, while others discussed with me a lot, sometimes because they were members of a host family or friends. The names of my most important informants I will therefore write in bold letters.

<u>name</u>	<u>age</u>	<u>sex</u>	<u>marital status</u>	<u>no. of wives</u>	<u>no. of children</u>	<u>occupation</u>	<u>religion</u>	<u>residence</u>
Adiyu Dichsi	30	m	married	?	?	farmer	Protestant	Baneta
Agenna Albe	45	m	married	1	-	<i>dorze</i> , farmer	Orthodox	Koybe
Arazo Bambo	50	f	married	-	-	<i>mani</i>	traditional belief	Balla
<b>Assefa Shale</b>	40	m	married	1	10	<i>Kebele</i> official	Protestant	Gongode
Bayenne Bagussa	110	m	married	1	7	farmer	Protestant	Koybe
Chato Baddi	1	f	unmarried	-	-	-	traditional belief	Baneta
<b>Datzo Anko</b>	55	f	married	-	7	-	traditional belief	Gongode
Dimbilso Biraga	17	f	married	-	-	-	traditional belief	Gongode
Dozo Garko	70	f	married	-	?	-	Protestant	Baneta
Gadi Miksa	65	f	married	-	?	<i>joi</i>	traditional belief	Baneta
Gaire Gabre	60	m	married	3	9	<i>gito</i>	traditional belief	Balla
Gante Letso	55	m	married	?	?	<i>joi, dorze</i> , farmer	traditional belief	Gongode
Idillo Shirfo	30	f	married	-	3	<i>mani</i>	traditional belief	Baneta
Itz'o Woyto	80	f	married	-	5	<i>joi</i>	traditional	Baneta

							belief	
Jacob Balasho	55	m	married	?	?	farmer	traditional belief	Gongode
Jido Doka	35	f	married	-	6	<i>mani</i>	Protestant	Baneta
Labunno Kenogassa	50	m	married	1	?	farmer	traditional belief	Gongode
Makarro Marnigenne	55	f	married	-	?	<i>mani</i>	Protestant	Balla
	22	m	married	1	1	farmer	Protestant	Baneta
<b>Meriegeta</b>								
<b>Markos</b>								
Mesinko Gangule	18	f	unmarried	-	-	-	traditional belief	Gongode
<b>Oid'isha</b>	45	m	married	1	7	working for the literacy program	Protestant	Baneta
<b>Tushkulo</b>								
Sago Dutta	14	f	unmarried	-	-	-	traditional belief	Gongode
<b>Sale Tik'isa</b>	55	m	married	1	7	farmer	traditional belief	Gongode
Sarke Goike	57	m	married	1	?	farmer	traditional belief	Baneta
Tzegai Taso	40	m	married	2	5	<i>dorze</i>	Orthodox	Baneta
<b>Zeleketch</b>	40	f	divorced	-	8	-	Protestant	Baneta
<b>Dalko</b>								

## Natural Medicines Prepared by Joi

The following natural medicines were explained to me by Gadi Miksa, a female *joi* from Baneta. The medicines are only a small selection, which she explained to me during a visit at her house. As I know only the terms of the leaves and roots in *malló múcci*, a biological determination remains to be done.

<u>plant</u>	<u>field of application</u>	<u>mode of application</u>
<i>anchibe</i> : whole plant	sore mouth	Pounded, mixed with little water and put into the mouth.
<i>api decha</i> : whole plant	evil eye	Soil on which the suspected person walked is drunk with the pounded plant and cold water.
<i>bal'are</i> : root	stomach ache or blood in the urine	Cut, pounded and taken three times a day with cold water.
<i>ballis</i> : root	belated afterbirth	Cut, pounded and drunk with warm water.
<i>baza</i> : whole plant	mental sickness	Crushed between the palms of the hands and held under the nose for smelling.
<i>boto walashi</i> (leaves of the pumpkin)	constipation	Pounded and taken with cold water.
<i>dino decha</i> : whole plant	pocks on the skin of small children	Pounded and put into water, then children are washed with the water and held over the steam of the boiling water.
<i>galo apo decha</i> :	evil eye	Soil on which the suspected

whole plant		person walked is drunk with pounded plant and cold water.
<i>garre</i> : whole plant	malaria, gall-bladder, skinny cattle	Pound and taken with cold water, cattle get it with salt.
<i>lamo decha</i> : plant	stomach ache of children	The pounded plant is taken with pound ginger and cold water.
<i>mashmaila</i> : whole plant	koso worm	Ground and swallowed without water.
<i>matzi gotzana</i> : whole plant	anemia	Pounded and put into water, the water is used for washing face, hands and feet four times a day, the steam of the boiling water is inhaled.
<i>onakki</i> : whole plant	worms inside the stomach	Pounded and taken with hot or cold water.
<i>palo goladdo</i> : root	stomach ache or blood in the urine	Cut, pounded and taken three times a day with cold water.
<i>paro</i> : leaves	stomach ache or blood in the urine	Cut, pounded and taken three times a day with cold water.
<i>sassa decha</i> : whole plant	heart disease	Pounded and taken with cold water.
<i>sauti zao</i> : whole plant	stomach ache	Pounded and drunken with warm water.
<i>sulka decha</i> : whole plant	pocks on the skin of small children	Pound and put into water, then children are washed with the water and held over the steam of the boiling water.

*usisi*: plant with root    diarrhea of babies, who  
get their first teeth    Cut and put into water, the  
baby is held over the steam  
and has to drink cold water  
with pieces of the root.

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