

Tangaza College

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Dear Colleague Reader

This long essay prepared by Alvarez Jaime on:

When Islam and Christianity meet – A case study: Sololo

Is longer than you would usually expected according to the Academic Handbook of Tangaza. I gave my assent for a kind of exception due the importance of the research for the Diocese of Marsabit. No study of this kind had been performed before, therefore several pastoral agents of that diocese, many of whom were involved in the research, asked the writer to be pretty exhaustive in order to contribute to ameliorate the missionary presence and action in that difficult area of Kenya.

With due respect

Fr. Francesco Pierli, mccj
Moderator of the Long Essay

TANGAZA COLLEGE
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

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WHEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY MEET
A Case Study: Sololo

Moderator
Rev. Dr. Francesco Pierli, M.C.C.J.

A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

NAIROBI 2003

To the Christians of Sololo. May they always be “the salt of the earth [...] and the light of the world” (Mt 5:13-14).

Epigraph

“The Church’s commitment to dialogue is not dependent on success in achieving mutual understanding and enrichment; rather it flows from God’s initiative in entering into a dialogue with humankind and from the example of Jesus Christ whose life, death and resurrection gave to that dialogue its ultimate expression” (DP 53).

“There was a time when I rejected my neighbour if his or her religion was not like mine. Now my heart has been transformed into the receptacle for all forms: it is meadow of gazelles and cloister of Christian monks, temple of idols and Kaaba of pilgrims, Tablets of the Law and Sheets of the Qur’an. Because I profess the religion of Love and I go wherever its mount goes, since Love is my creed and my faith” (Ibn ‘Arabi [1165-1240]).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Fr. Francesco Pierli for encouraging and accompanying me in the elaboration of this long essay. Through his pastoral concern and approach, he has prompted me to write something that can be helpful to the Christian community of Sololo.

I am also very grateful to Fr. Paul Tablino and Fr. Provvido Crozzoletto, who, in their knowledge of the history of the Diocese of Marsabit, have read and corrected the first two chapters of the present work.

Likewise, I express my most sincere gratitude to Fr. Cosimo Spadavecchia for having shared with me his rich and positive experience of dialogue and collaboration with Muslims and for making some valuable suggestions to the final chapter.

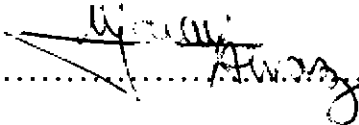
This essay could not have been written without the support and warm welcoming of the religious community of Sololo made up by Fr. Jovercino Sirqueira and Fr. Jesús W. Lobato García. Thank you!

I also thank with all my heart the Christians of Sololo, who received me as their brother amongst them and who shared openly with me their experience of being Christians in an Islamic environment. God bless you!

Finally, my word of gratitude goes to all those who, in one way or another, have assisted me in this endeavour. Some of them are: Rt. Rev. Ambrose Ravasi, Rt. Rev. William Waqo Boru, Fr. Alexandre Ferreira, Fr. Rinaldo Ronzani, Sr. Gabriella Vangelista, Sr. Piera Massoleni, Luko Robe, the members of the Comboni Scholasticate of Nairobi and so many others.

Student's Declaration

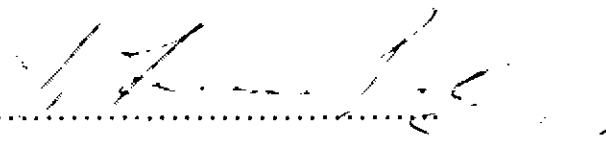
I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay (thesis) is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:..........

Name of Student: Jaime Álvarez, M.C.C.J.

Date: 3rd February 2003.

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed:..........

Name of Supervisor: Francesco Pierli, M.C.C.J.

Date: 3rd February 2003.

INTRODUCTION

In the year 2001, I, together with a confrere of mine, spent two months in Marsabit, where we joined the religious community of the parish in their evangelising and pastoral work. One day before our departure, we went to bid farewell to some families that had been especially close to us during our stay. A mother of one of those families looked really sad. She pleaded with us to come back in the following words, “We really need people to encourage us to stand firm on our Christian faith. These days some Christians are giving in to external pressure and are becoming Muslims.”

On my way back to Nairobi, these woman’s words kept on echoing in my mind. Some questions started, little by little, arising and made me take her request seriously. How can we, missionaries, strengthen the faith of the Christians when they constitute a minority amidst a successful and attractive Muslim majority? How can we, at the same time, promote dialogue and collaboration between Christians and Muslims? What makes Islam be so appealing in this area and how does the success of Islam in the region challenge the local church of Marsabit? These and other questions helped me realise the importance of this matter and I decided to use the writing of this Long Essay, required by Tangaza College, as an opportunity to deepen my understanding of this

issue. Consequently, the local church of Marsabit has always been in my mind and heart in the course of the elaboration of this work and it is to her that I dedicate the fruit of my effort. •

As soon as I presented the theme of the essay to my moderator, he urged me to follow the “Pastoral Circle” in my undertaking. “There are four major “moments” that constitute the Pastoral Circle: Insertion, Social Analysis, Theological Reflection and Pastoral Planning for action.”¹ Thus, these have been the four steps that I have taken in the elaboration of this Long Essay on Muslim-Christian dialogue.

Insertion. I spent one month (July 2002) in Sololo, a small town of the diocese of Marsabit, characterised by the predominance of Islam. Sololo became, therefore, the centre and focus of my study. There, besides joining the religious community of the parish in their pastoral work, I interviewed thirty persons,² mainly Christians, on the issue of Muslim-Christian coexistence.

— *Social Analysis.* My personal experience in Sololo, the interviews I made and an extensive library research (carried out, especially, in the Kenya National Archives), have been the tools I have used in the working-out of the social analysis of Sololo and its religious plurality. This social analysis is particularly characterised by a historical approach.

¹ R. MEJÍA, “Pastoral Theology”, 125.

² See Bibliography, interviews.

- *Theological Reflection.* I have tried to show how Christian faith is linked to dialogue in the concrete context of Sololo. In this reflection I have based myself on the culture of the people of Sololo, the Word of God and the recent Catholic teaching on interreligious dialogue.
- *Pastoral Planning for action.* Finally, I have drawn up some pastoral suggestions, both at parish and diocesan level, which, I believe, are important in order to improve dialogue and collaboration between Christians and Muslims in the area.

This process was concluded with the final writing of this essay, which consists of three chapters. The first one describes the geography, people and social challenges of Sololo. The second one presents the history of both Islam and Christianity in Sololo. And the last one deals with the current situation of Christian-Muslim coexistence in Sololo and proposes some pastoral guidelines based on the certainty that every Christian is called to be a minister of dialogue and collaboration.

It is important to mention that this work has been done from a Christian and Catholic perspective. Nevertheless, I have tried, as much as possible, to take into account Protestant and Muslim positions on different matters.

I would like to finish this introduction by recognising that I have only been one month in Sololo and three months, all together, in the diocese of Marsabit. Thus, despite exhaustive research, my knowledge of Sololo and its context is still limited. It is the task of church leaders and other Christians of Sololo and, generally, of the diocese of Marsabit, to confirm, purify and apply whatever helpful is found in this work.

Chapter I

Social Analysis of Sololo Area

Introduction

In this first chapter I will analyse different aspects that make the people of Sololo be what they are today. In order to do that, I will describe the geography of the area, the identity and history of its people and their current situation. All this introductory material will provide us with a good basis for the core of this essay, namely Muslim-Christian coexistence in Sololo.

1. General Description of Sololo

This section will be dedicated to a description of, firstly, the geography and demography of Sololo and, secondly, the Catholic Parish of Sololo.

1.1 Geography and Demography of Sololo

Sololo is located in the northern part of Kenya, in Moyale District. This district is one of the thirteen districts that make up Eastern Province - - the second biggest

province in Kenya, both in extension and population.¹ Moyale District covers an area of 9,390 sq km and borders the Republic of Ethiopia to the North, Marsabit District to the Southwest and Wajir District to the Southeast (see map 1).²

From the administrative point of view, Moyale District is divided into four divisions namely Central – where Moyale Town is located – , Golbo, Uran and Obbu (see map 2). The last two divisions will be the centre of my study in as much as they correspond to the territory of the Catholic Parish of Sololo, where I have carried out my research. Uran Division has an extension of 3,257 sq km and a total population of 3,509 people, whereas Obbu Division measures 2,767 sq km and has 8,043 inhabitants. The latter is made up of three locations. One of those locations is Sololo, which in its turn includes the sub-locations of Sololo Town (or Ramata), Mado Adi, Waye Godha and Anona.³ Sololo Town can certainly be considered the main centre of both Uran and Obbu divisions.

Moyale District is located in the semi-arid zone of Kenya. It consists of both high plateau hills (800-1,200 m) along the Kenya-Ethiopia border and flat low-lying plains (500-800 m) which extend south in the district. Sololo Location is situated in the

¹ The biggest province in Kenya is Rift Valley Province. Eastern Province follows it with 253,473 sq km and 4,631,779 inhabitants. Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, xxxiii-xxxiv.

² Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 4.

³ There is some contradiction as regards locations and sub-locations between the two documents quoted in notes 1 and 2. Here I follow Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, 1*78-1*79.

high plateau hills and is surrounded by mountains rising up to 1,517 m above sea level. It is in these highlands that most of the sources of surface water are found.⁴

There are no permanent rivers in the district but seasonal rivers emerge during the long rains. The average of annual rainfall is of 300 mm during the long rains (March-May) and 250 mm during the short rains (October-December). This makes of water one of the most precious elements in the area. The temperatures are rather high varying from 20°C to 36°C – or even higher in some areas.⁵

The soil of the district is mainly of two kinds: black cotton and rocky stony lava. The former, suitable for cultivation, is quite common in the area of Sololo and Moyale Town, whereas the latter, appropriate only for shrubs and bushes, is present in the rest of the district.⁶

The vegetation of the lowlands “consists mainly of [open grassland], low scrub, thorn bush and stunted trees, of which the biggest is the acacia.”⁷ By contrast, the highlands are considerably humid and their vegetation changes to thick bush. It is there that livestock — the major source of income for the people in this region — find a good grazing ground during the dry seasons.⁸

⁴ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 4.

⁵ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 6. In Sololo, for example, temperatures can easily reach 40°C and above, especially in December, January and February. Cf. P. CROZZOLETTO, “Re: Long Essay”, E-mail to the author.

⁶ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 6-7. It is worth noting that out of the total area of Moyale District (9,390 sq km) only 190 sq km represent arable land.

⁷ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 3.

⁸ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 6.

The harsh climatic conditions already mentioned make of Moyale District a sparsely populated one. Its total population in 1999 was 53,479, having, therefore, an average density of 6 persons per sq km.⁹ Its population growth rate is 2.3%. The two urban centres of the district are Moyale Town and Sololo Town, with an estimated population in 2002 of 27,786 and 2,838 respectively.¹⁰ This means that roughly half of the population of the district lives in the towns. At the same time, 85% of the population of this area is pastoralist, which means that they depend almost exclusively on their livestock. Thus, their settlement patterns tend to vary according to the availability of water points, grazing grounds, and nowadays, schools and health facilities.¹¹

1.2 The Catholic Parish of Sololo

The Catholic Parish of Sololo is located in Sololo Town, at the foot of Borole hill and at an altitude of 750 m above sea level.¹² The territory of the parish includes

⁹ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, xxxiii-xxxiv.

¹⁰ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 8. Again, the data offered on this issue by *Moyale District Development Plan* and the *1999 Population Census* do not coincide. For the estimated population in 2002 I am basing myself on *Moyale District Development Plan*. For the data offered by the 1999 Census, see appendix 1.

¹¹ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 6. The fact that over 50% of the population of the district is living in urban centres and, at the same time, 85% is pastoralist may look like a contradiction. We can only harmonise this apparent confusion by understanding that within the urban population there are still a good percentage of people that can be considered pastoralist. These "urban pastoralists", though their main settlement is located in or around the town, keep on moving with the livestock in search of grazing land and water according to the climatic circumstances.

¹² Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 4.

Obbu and Uran Divisions and part of Turbi Location.¹³ Thus, the actual extension of the Parish of Sololo is approximately 8,000 sq km.¹⁴

The Parish of Sololo, named after the Holy Spirit, is one of the ten parishes that make up the current Diocese of Marsabit.¹⁵ It consists of the centre¹⁶ and 10 outstations¹⁷ and is currently run by two Comboni Missionary priests.¹⁸ In 1999 the population of the

¹³ The rest of Turbi Location is under the jurisdiction of the parishes of Marsabit and Maikona. Cf. P. CROZZOLETTO, "Re: Long Essay", E-mail to the author. Administratively speaking, Turbi Location belongs to Maikona Division in Marsabit District. Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, 1*69.

¹⁴ See Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, 1*78-1*79; by contrast, other documents attribute to the parish of Sololo an area of 3,600 sq km, probably referring exclusively to the area where pastoral activity can be carried out. Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 50.

¹⁵ Cf. Kenya Catholic Secretariat, *The Kenya Catholic Directory 2000*, 99-104. In this total, I have considered the Parish of Kargi (Yesu Doribe) an independent one and I have not counted the possible future Parish of Dirib Gombo. The data offered in the *Kenya Catholic Directory* have to be regarded taking into account that the territory of the Diocese of Marsabit was divided into two on 30 June 2001 on the occasion of the formation of the new Diocese of Maralal. Cf. P. TABIINO, "Ecclesial Province of Nyeri". 50. The current Diocese of Marsabit includes the territory of both Marsabit and Moyale Districts. It has, therefore, an area of 78,078 sq km and a population -- in 1999 -- of 174,957 people. See S. BOTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 12; see also Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, xxxiii-xxxiv.

¹⁶ The are four Small Christian Communities in the centre: St. Monica, St. Kizito, St. Peter and Blessed Daniel Comboni. Around 50 parishioners participate faithfully in their weekly prayers.

¹⁷ By outstations I mean chapels or small multifunctional buildings where the Christians of the different areas of the parish meet regularly for catechesis, prayers, mass and other religious purposes. Nowadays, the outstations of the Parish of Sololo are the following: Christ the King (in Sololo Makutano), St. Anuarite (in Turbi), St. Joseph (in Walda), St. Mary (in Dambala Fachana), St. Augustine (in Anona), St. Joachim and Ann (in Waye Godha), St. Monika (in Mado Adi), Good Shepherd (in Uran), Mary Assumption (in Golole) and finally an unnamed outstation in Kar Bururi.

¹⁸ They are Fr. Jovercino Sirqueira, from Brazil, and Fr. Jesús W. Lobato García, from Mexico. Cf. Comboni Missionaries, *Anuario Comboniano*. 2002, 117.

parish was 13,032¹⁹ and the baptismal books registered a total of 1,553 living Catholics.²⁰

The main activities carried out in the parish are first evangelisation, spiritual care of the Christian community and human promotion. By first evangelisation I mean the first announcement of the gospel to those who have not yet heard it, mainly those who live far away from the urban centres and follow the Traditional Religion. Spiritual care of the Christian community refers to everything that is connected to catechesis, the administration of the sacraments, visitations, prayers, Small Christian Communities, etc. Human promotion involves chiefly the fields of education and health: the parish sponsors six primary schools and ten pre-primary schools²¹, and collaborates with the Sololo Catholic Hospital, which is run by the Diocese of Marsabit.²²

Summarising, this section of the first chapter shows clearly that, in this essay, I am dealing with an area which is physically harsh, lowly populated and in which livestock constitutes the major source of income for its inhabitants. Moreover, the Catholic Church, though a minority, is meaningfully present in this area through the Catholic Parish of Sololo.

¹⁹ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, 1*69.1*78-1*79. I have obtained this figure by adding the populations of Obbu Division (8,043), Uran Division (3,509) and Turbi Location (1,480). See appendix 1.

²⁰ Cf. Sololo Parish, "Liber Baptizorum. Sololo Parish". I, 1969-1986; Sololo Parish, "Liber Baptizorum. Sololo Parish". II, 1986-1999. Thanks to a note written in both books by Fr. Angelo D'Apice - parish priest in 1999, we can know that on 3 February 1999, there were 1,675 registered baptisms in the records of the parish. From those baptised persons, 74 had passed away, 44 had become Muslims, two had joined the Anglican Church and two had been registered — or, literally, baptised — twice.

²¹ Cf. Kenya Catholic Secretariat, *The Kenya Catholic Directory 2000*, 103.

²² See Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 4-7.13-17.

2. The People of Sololo

After describing the geography and demography of the area under study, I am going to focus on its people. Thus, I will firstly identify them and explain briefly the main features that characterise them as a community. Subsequently, I will develop their history and, finally, I will set out, specifically, the history of Sololo Town.

2.1 Description of the Boorana²³ People

The Profile of Sololo Catholic Parish states that “the population of the parish is formed exclusively by Boorana people.”²⁴ Nowadays, members of other ethnic groups are also present in Sololo area,²⁵ but still the great majority – over 95% – are Boorana. They are the owners and main dwellers of this area. Therefore, the following pages will be dedicated to them.

Ethnically considered, the Boorana are a cattle pastoralist people who belong to a wider Oromo group.²⁶ In Kenya, they concentrate themselves in Isiolo, Marsabit and

²³ I have chosen the spelling of “Boorana” instead of “Boran” or “Borana”, following the indications by Mario Aguilar. See M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 24, note 1.

²⁴ Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 7. This profile was made in 1986 as one of the tools for the ‘Diocesan Synod’ of Marsabit that took place between 1985-1987.

²⁵ Among the people who are living in Sololo and are not Boorana, we can distinguish two main groups. On one hand, there are those who follow a similar life-style to the Boorana of the area; they are namely some Gabra, Sakuye and Waata families. Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 15-45; Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 12; P. TABIINO, *The Gabra*, 355-356-359. On the other hand, we can identify some specialised employees in the hospital, schools, NGO’s, government and police and, finally, ministers of the different churches present in the area. This group includes mainly people from the Meru, Burji, Kikuyu, Rendille and Somali communities and a few Europeans and Latin-Americans.

²⁶ Oromo-speaking peoples, include 20 million people and occupy a vast territory stretching from the Ethiopian province of Tigre to the Tana River in Central Kenya. Cf. M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 1. Oromo language (previously called Galla) is a branch of Lowland East Cushitic and Boorana language belongs to the Southern Oromo group. Cf. P. TABIINO, *The Gabra*, 271.

Moyale Districts and numbered 80,160 in the census of 1989.²⁷ Nevertheless, the majority of them are in Southern Ethiopia, reaching, all together, an approximate figure of 300,000 people (see map 3).²⁸

Some authors distinguish four sub-groups within the Boorana: the Gabra, the Waata, the Sakuye and the Boorana-gutu²⁹ (or Boorana proper). In this essay, I use the term Boorana to refer exclusively to the Boorana-gutu. The other groups, if mentioned, will be called by their own names.

The Boorana are a pastoral, cattle people, though recently they have started to lead a more settled agro-pastoral lifestyle. Due to a progressive deterioration of their environment and to external aggressions by Somali bandits (*shifita*)³⁰ in the sixties, many Boorana have adopted a mixed cattle/camel herding economy. They also keep goats and sheep. However, cattle are still at the core of their economy and culture.³¹ This is expressed in the saying: "*Looni male Boorana imbullu* (without cattle the Boorana will not survive)."³² Stock belongs to men and is inherited patrilineally except for a small and fixed number of cows.³³

²⁷ Unfortunately, the Kenya census of 1999 has not yet published any information regarding ethnic or religious demography.

²⁸ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 351.

²⁹ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 4; H.A. ISACK, *Boran*, 3.

³⁰ See note 94.

³¹ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 30. "It is considered rich a *manyatta* with 500-1000 goats and 1000-2000 cows, reasonably well off a *manyatta* with 300-500 goats and 500-1000 cows, poor a *manyatta* with less than 100 goats and 100-200 cows and destitute a *manyatta* with no goats and less than 100 cows." Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 8. For a definition of the word "*manyatta*", see note 71.

³² P. MUIYANGA, "Evangelisation among the Borana", 12.

³³ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 23.

The Boorana people can be classified as semi-nomadic because they do not move as whole families. A resident group remains in the homestead while warriors move with the herds in search of pasture and water.³⁴ Boorana settlements are generally made up of about ten homesteads, the largest ones containing up to forty. A homestead consists of a man, who is the head of the family, his wife or wives, children, married sons and workers. Each settlement has as its administrator an elder.³⁵

In their social organisation, Boorana people are mainly characterised by two features. The first one is their division into two exogamous sections³⁶ . . . *sabbo* and *gonna* ---, which are further divided into several clans.³⁷ The second one is their generation-set system or *gada* system. This is a rather complicated social structure that differs from the age-set system (*arya*) and that I can only describe generally here. It concerns exclusively men, who are incorporated into a generation-set (*gada*) that is determined by their father's position in the system. There are five generation-sets, which last eight years each, and through which all men pass. Therefore, every eight years, the whole system moves up one grade.³⁸ This system is central to Boorana life

³⁴ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 30. For the migration patterns of the Boorana see map 3.

³⁵ Cf. A. FEDDERS - C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35; Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 23.

³⁶ The two sections are qualified "exogamous" because they observe inter and not intra-marriages. In other words, a *gonna* has to marry a *sabbo* and vice-versa. Cf. N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 34.

³⁷ Clans are not related to a specific territory, but they are dispersed and mixed up. Nevertheless, there is a strong sense of clan unity. All children belong to the clan of their father. Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 24; H.A. ISACK, *Boran*, 6-7.

³⁸ Cf. A. FEDDERS - C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35-36; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 299.312.375-376; P. CROZZOLETTO, "Re: Long Essay", E-mail to the author. For a detailed description of the *gada* system see A. LEGESSE, *Gada*.

and still controls activities such as the time of marriage and of begetting children. During the eight years of each *gada* cycle, which marks the passage of every man's life as well as the history of the people,³⁹ many ceremonies are performed, such as the naming of a child, circumcision⁴⁰ and marriage;⁴¹ but the most important one is the *Jila Gadaamoji*⁴², which is the highest expression of the Boorana culture and is attended by a large number of people.

Leadership in Boorana society is of two kinds, religious and socio-political. Each exogamous section has a religious leader (*Qallu*), who is regarded as a mediator between the people and God.⁴³ In the socio-political realm, every elder (*Jarsa*) is a leader by virtue of his age. The most important elder is the *Abba gada* (Father of the era), who is the leader of all Boorana and who, in the framework of the *gada* system, is chosen every eight years from among the elders of all the clans.⁴⁴ Thus, "democracy is not an unknown reality in Boorana tradition."⁴⁵

³⁹ Cf. A. FEDDERS · C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35-37.

⁴⁰ Circumcision is done, at puberty, to both boys and girls (clitoridectomy) and signifies the official initiation into adulthood. Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 8.

⁴¹ Cf. S. BOUIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 48-49.

⁴² This is the ceremony that marks the retirement of the members of the last generation-set (*gadaamoji*) and the taking over of their followers (*qomicha*). Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 299.

⁴³ Cf. N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 55. The *Qallu* has his own position and behaviour in the Booran society and in the *gada* system. His wife bears only one son, who is his heir at his death. Cf. H.A. ISACK, *Boran*, 27-28.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. FEDDERS · C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 37; Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 9; H.A. ISACK, *Boran*, 10. When elders are not able to solve certain issues, they may consult the *Qallu* and his judgement will be regarded as final. Nevertheless, this hardly takes place. See Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 27. Both the *Qallu* and the *Abba gada* have resided in Dirre – an area in Southern Ethiopia highly revered by the Boorana – since the 1930s. Cf. N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 28.

⁴⁵ G. DABASSO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

Many Boorana, especially in Ethiopia, follow the Boorana Traditional Religion.⁴⁶ They believe in one Supreme Being, *Waqqa*,⁴⁷ who is regarded as the Creator of all things and the Source of all life. Boorana Traditionalists believe in life after death and consider death as a bridge between human beings and the *ekhera* (spirits).⁴⁸ Prayers and animal sacrifices are common in the Boorana religious practices. They are mainly characterised by a request for peace and abundance of cattle, grass and rain⁴⁹ (see appendix 2).

Perhaps the highest value among the Boorana is *Nagaa Boorana* (Peace of the Boorana), which is the foundation of a strong and united society. Any kind of intra-Boorana conflict has to be solved⁵⁰ in order to guarantee a continuous harmony among the Boorana themselves.⁵¹ By contrast, in the course of their history, the Boorana have engaged in frequent feud with other peoples.⁵²

The Boorana are, generally speaking, amicable people and joyful in character. Reports from the colonial time support this statement: "I have found the [Boorana] a

⁴⁶ There are different opinions about the percentage of the Boorana in Kenya who follow Traditional Religion. Reliable sources, though not very recent, assert that though most Boorana have been influenced by Islam, as many as one-third of them could be considered to be Traditionalists. See Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 32.35.

⁴⁷ "The word *Waqqa* in the Oromo language, [...] expresses the idea of god and sky at the same time." Cf. M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 10.

⁴⁸ Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 9; N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 51.

⁴⁹ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 32.

⁵⁰ An explanation on the means used for solving internal conflicts is given in chapter III, note 16.

⁵¹ Cf. A. FEDDERS - C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35.

⁵² In this regard, it is worth quoting a fragment of the report left by Mr. G. Reece, District Commissioner of Moyale in 1931: "[The Boorana of Abyssinia] are still allowed to use rifles, while our people are not; and they take advantage of this to continue desultory feuds with the Garre, Ajuuran and other Mohammedans. [...] As a result we get a sequence of murders, usually of a very cowardly and

very pleasant people to deal with and they are possessed of a very great gift in that they have a cheerful sense of humour.”⁵³

2.2 *Origin and History of the Boorana People in Kenya*

“In their oral tradition the Boorana claim to have come from the Dirre and Liban regions of Southern Ethiopia”⁵⁴ (see map 3). However, their origin prior to their settlement in those regions is not clear.

Some legendary beliefs assert that Boorana and Somali came together from Arabia under the rule of a common *Qallu*.⁵⁵ Others, point to the fact that the tribe originated from a common ancestor called *Horo*, the greatest Boorana ever since.⁵⁶

According to historical research, scholars claim that the Oromo started their expansion north and southwards in Ethiopia in the middle of the 16th century. The first Oromo group to settle in Dirre and Liban and to arrive in Northern Kenya was the Wardai.⁵⁷ These were later on pushed southwards by the powerful and well-organised Boorana who came from the Ethiopian Highlands – probably from around the vicinity

horrible nature, the victims invariably being small children, women or defenceless individuals in lonely places. The bodies are often mutilated.” Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 42.

⁵³ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, January 1933, 19.

⁵⁴ G.S. WFRF, ed., *Marsabit District Profile*, 26.

⁵⁵ Cf. S. BOTTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 47. This tradition argues that, at the beginning, all Boorana were Muslims. As it will be shown in the second chapter, this belief does not have historical foundations. Cf. M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 20.

⁵⁶ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 1; S. BOTTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 48; N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 27.

⁵⁷ The Wardai were the ancestors of the current Orma community, settled along the Tana River in the vicinity of Garsen. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 220.359.

of lake Abaya⁵⁸ - and adopted a pastoral life-style in the 17th century. The further expansion of the Boorana in Northern Kenya consisted in a gradual diffusion of the Boorana language and culture assimilated by the original dwellers of the area.⁵⁹

However, the Boorana did not move permanently into Kenya until 1897, when Menelik II reached Southern Ethiopia and annexed Boorana-land to the Abyssinian Empire.⁶⁰ After that event, the Boorana began to apply real pressure on the grazing of Northern Kenya.⁶¹ "Thus, the Kenya Boorana are the progeny of Ethiopian Boorana, whose heartland is in the south of Sidamo province [...] [and who] still consider Ethiopia as their homeland."⁶²

Between 1889 and 1895 the British Government declared their protectorate over the current Kenya, which they called the British East Africa Protectorate.⁶³ The demarcation of the border between Ethiopian and British territories was a very long and complicated process. Both Abyssinian - eventually Italian⁶⁴ —and British Governments tried to respect the "red line", which was established by a Boundary Commission in 1902 and officially accepted by the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik on 7

⁵⁸ Cf. N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 27. See map 4.

⁵⁹ Cf. A. FEDDERS - C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 220-221.

⁶⁰ The Abyssinian Empire included the current states of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibuti and part of Somalia.

⁶¹ Cf. G.S. WERE, ed., *Marsabit District Profile*, 26; H.A. ISACK, *Boran*, 3.

⁶² Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 2.

⁶³ Cf. W.R. OCHIENG', *A History of Kenya*, 87-88.

⁶⁴ The Italians invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and occupied the whole country from 1936 to 1941. In 1942, Ethiopian independence was again internationally recognised. See Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, 1935, 5; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1942, 4-5. See also M. ORWIN, "Somali History. 1880-1960", 717-718.

December 1907.⁶⁵ However, even after the official acceptance of the “red line”, problems related to the border kept on arising until late 1950s when the process of demarcation was definitively settled.⁶⁶

Two important aspects of the “red line” Treaty are fundamental to understand the situation of the Boorana settled on the Kenyan side. First of all, the line cut across the normal grazing areas of the Boorana, Ajuuran and Garre⁶⁷ and all the permanent water along the border was on the Ethiopian side “with the exception of Moyale and a very small supply at Sololo.”⁶⁸ Secondly, and consequently, “the tribes occupying either side of this line were to have the right to use the grazing grounds on either side while free access to the nearest wells was also to be accorded to them.”⁶⁹ The main difficulty for the British Government was “to administer a tribe which [was] at liberty to live in Abyssinia or British territory as they [thought] fit.”⁷⁰ Thus, they took as their guiding principle the location of the Boorana *manyatta*.⁷¹ “If the *manyatta* [was] in British territory, the Boorana would be (according to Treaty) under British Jurisdiction; [if in]

⁶⁵ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1926, 2. The “red line” did not differ substantially from the current Kenyan-Ethiopian border. For its detailed description, see T.S. THOMAS, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District*, 89-93. See also Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/5, 8-11.

⁶⁶ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1955, 2. See also P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 229-230.

⁶⁷ The Ajuuran and Garre are two other pastoralist communities of Northern Kenya who define themselves as Somalis but whose origin is probably Oromo. Currently, they are both entirely Muslim. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 351-352.

⁶⁸ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1937, 1. See also *ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 9.

⁶⁹ T.S. THOMAS, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District*, 90.

⁷⁰ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1926, 2-3.

⁷¹ The word “*manyatta*” means the settlement where a group of people is established. The Boorana of Marsabit and Moyale Districts use the word *olla*, a proper Boorana word, to refer to the same

Abyssinian, under Abyssinian Jurisdiction, irrespective of where the stock was being watered and grazed.”⁷² This was, therefore, the origin of the division between Kenya and Ethiopia Boorana, which, though apparently jurisdictional, would have important consequences.⁷³

By the time of the definition of the “red line”, the British territory bordering Ethiopia received the name of Northern Frontier District (NFD)⁷⁴ (see map 5). In 1917 the Boorana were found in most areas of the NFD. Those under British Jurisdiction were estimated to be around 5,000.⁷⁵ In the course of the following 30 years, however, the Kenya Boorana – mainly Traditionalist –, who had lived as far as Wajir, El Wak and Buna (see map 4), were gradually pushed westwards by the Somali – Muslims in their totality.⁷⁶

In view of this, one of the priorities of the NFD authorities was to prevent the south-west movement of the Somali on the Boorana areas so as to grant peace in the district. In fact, feuds between different ethnic groups were quite common due either to religion (e.g. ‘Pagan-Muslim’ feud), or to the possession of grazing ground and water.⁷⁷

reality. Cf. M.I. AGUIAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 1.25, note 5; N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 27.

⁷² Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1926, 3.

⁷³ Scholars and Boorana themselves rightly assert that in spite of that division, the unity, cohesion and cultural identity of the Boorana as a whole still exists. Cf. A. FEDDERS – C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35. However, the different grade of development and historical events in Ethiopia and Kenya have shaped the Boorana of either country in their own way, especially regarding education and religion.

⁷⁴ Cf. G.S. WERE, ed., *Marsabit District Profile*, 27. This region covered the desert area between Isiolo and Moyale and between Lake Turkana and Jubaland. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 230.

⁷⁵ Cf. T.S. THOMAS, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District*, 86.

⁷⁶ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, January 1933, 18; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/5, 16-17.

⁷⁷ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 12; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/4, 10.

In order to keep peace in the region, “an arbitrary boundary line, running from North to South through the middle of the NFD, [was] imposed, leaving Mandera, Wajir and Garissa on the Somali side and Moyale, Marsabit and Isiolo on the [Oromo] side.”⁷⁸ In this way, the Kenya Boorana were confined to the areas of Isiolo, Moyale and Marsabit.

The Boorana of Isiolo had been moved from Wajir into the Waso area — in Isiolo District — in 1932 by the British authorities. This group is known today as *Waso Boorana* and numbers around 25,000 people.⁷⁹ The Boorana of Marsabit were restricted to the upper parts of Marsabit Mountain and identify themselves as *Boorana Sakku*.⁸⁰ In 1987 they were about 12,000 people.⁸¹

Finally, the Boorana of Moyale District⁸², known as *War Obhu*,⁸³ were about 4,000 in 1953 and constituted one of the main ethnic groups in the district, of which they occupied the Western side.⁸⁴ In 1987 their number had increased approximately up

⁷⁸ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1947, 14. The current border between Eastern Province and North Eastern Province is a remnant of that line which ‘divided Islam and Paganism’ during colonial times (see map 1). Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1939, 6. See also P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 232. In addition to this line, other minor lines were established to separate the different ethnic groups (e.g. Garre line, Ajuuran Eastern line, Baludda line, Ajuuran Western line, Marsabit line...). See Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1947, 15-18.

⁷⁹ M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 2; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 359. See chapter II, note 39.

⁸⁰ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 2; N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 32.

⁸¹ Cf. S. BOTTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 40.

⁸² Moyale District, one of the administrative districts of the NFD, included Wajir and Mandera in early colonial times (since 1929) and had an area of 20,000 sq km. Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, January 1933, 3; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 235, note 39.

⁸³ Cf. N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 32.

⁸⁴ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1953, 1.33.

to 33,000.⁸⁵ The Boorana of Moyale District were divided, in colonial times, in three main groups: those living at Dabel, those settled around Moyale and those living to the West of Moyale, that is, in Sololo area.⁸⁶ It is on the last group that I will now focus my attention.

2.3 A Historical Survey of Sololo and Its People

After a general description of the history of the Boorana people in Kenya, I will develop briefly the history of Sololo. In order to do that, I have considered appropriate to divide it into three main stages, namely Sololo under the British rule (from 1895 to early 1960s), Sololo at the time of independence (early 1960s) and Sololo after the foundation of its Catholic Parish (1966).

2.3.1 Sololo under the British Rule (from 1895 to early 1960's)

As I have already stated, Boorana people started settling significantly in Northern Kenya at the end of the 19th century. Sololo, due to its northern location, must have been one of the first places, within current Kenyan territory, where the Boorana established themselves. Documents written in the beginning of last century give evidence of Boorana presence in Sololo. One of them is the 'Notes of the Journey' of a

⁸⁵ Cf. S. BOUFIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 40. The surprising difference between the figures given in 1953 and in 1987 might be due to inaccurate censuses carried out in colonial times, which probably underestimated the number of the Boorana in the area. Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1957, 25.

⁸⁶ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 12; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/4, 10.

group of Consolata Missionaries from Nyeri to Southern Ethiopia in 1914.⁸⁷ According to these notes, the expedition reached Sololo on 26 December, where they kindly received water and milk from Boorana people in a village. Sololo – or Ramata – was, therefore, one of the stages in the Marsabit-Moyale rout where “[p]erennial water [was available] at the foot of Borole hill”⁸⁸ and where Boorana people were settled.

The distribution and movements of the Boorana of Sololo were described, some years later, as follows. They occupied the Uran plain west of Borole hill and the Turbi, Ambalo and Itirr areas (see map 4), where the *fora*⁸⁹ herds were taken during the rains. When rains were insufficient, the *fora* stock had to be sent to Ethiopian grazing land. As regards the supply of water, the wells at Sololo proved to be insufficient and the people were forced to water their stock in Ethiopia, at the Golole, Dankale and Maiti wells, just across the border.⁹⁰

Concerning their social organisation, reports from 1914 record Galgallo Mudalle as their headman.⁹¹ He was the most prominent headman of the Boorana of Sololo during colonial times and, eventually, became the head chief of all the British

⁸⁷ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 16-24.

⁸⁸ T.S. THOMAS, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District*, 218.

⁸⁹ In Boorana villages, “the cattle are divided into two herds; the family (*warra*) herd, of lactating cows and their calves, and the larger (*fora*) herd of dry cows, heifers and steers. The *warra* herd is kept near the village for daily milking and near the well for easy access, while the *fora* herd utilises the more remote and extensive pastures in the periphery [...]”N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 32.

⁹⁰ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1926, 8; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 9.20; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/5, 17. Some Ethiopian officials took advantage of this situation and, violating the Treaty of 1907 charged illicitly the Kenya Boorana for using their wells. This caused permanent tension in the area. See *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1947, 12.

⁹¹ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/1, 1914-1915, 13.

Boorana.⁹² According to a census carried out in 1928, Mudalle's *manyattas*, settled in Sololo, had an approximate population of 180 people.⁹³ They used to own a good number of rifles so as to defend themselves from *shifita*⁹⁴ attacks.⁹⁵

During the Second World War and with the Italian occupation of Moyale District,⁹⁶ Galgallo Mudalle's people fled to Marsabit, where they remained approximately for two years.⁹⁷ In 1943, they had already come back to their homeland, but Galgallo Mudalle had to stay in Marsabit, where he died in 1944.⁹⁸ Galgallo Mudalle was, therefore, the headman of the people of Sololo for more than 30 years.⁹⁹ Generally speaking, he seems to have been a loyal headman to the British¹⁰⁰ and, perhaps because of that, "he [was] not liked by and cut no ice with the big men of the tribe in Ethiopia."¹⁰¹

⁹² Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 62.

⁹³ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1928, 6.

⁹⁴ This Amharic word was originally applied to those who stole and killed, particularly those who were armed with guns. The same word was used later on to name those who fought in the '60s to annex the NFD to Somalia. Nowadays, the word "*shifita*" is again used in its original meaning. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 357.

⁹⁵ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1924, 37.

⁹⁶ Moyale District "was in Italian hands from July, 1940, until February, 1941." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1941, 24. The British civil administration was re-established in the district on 3 March 1941. Cf. *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁷ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1941, 4; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1942, 16.

⁹⁸ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1943, 10; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1945, 7.

⁹⁹ From Mudalle's death to independence time, the Boorana headmen of Sololo were, in chronological order, Kuse Katello, see Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1943, 10; Guyo Dunkale, see *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 28; Jirmo Haro, see *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1947, 24; and Galgallo Matoia, see *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1955, 15.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, January 1933, 56.

¹⁰¹ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1942, 96.

The process of consolidation of Sololo as a town started during this period. The British administration regarded Sololo as a strategic place to control the Kenya-Ethiopian border. There is evidence of a permanent British military post in Sololo in 1922,¹⁰² which, for unknown reasons to me, was removed thereafter.¹⁰³ During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia¹⁰⁴, the Italians erected a military post at Sololo in 1937, and the British re-established their own.¹⁰⁵

Sololo post protected the area which extended from Furroli to Funanyatta, and which reached South as far as Turbi. The functions of this post were mainly three: to protect the local people under British jurisdiction (particularly Galgallo Mudalle's people), to defend the frontier and to avoid giraffe and leopard poachers in the area.¹⁰⁶ Sololo police post continued functioning after independence and is still today an important police station of the region.

The establishment of this post brought some development to the area and constituted the foundation of Sololo Town. Examples of this development were the digging of the first water pan at Sololo in 1939,¹⁰⁷ the construction of an airstrip in

¹⁰² Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/1, 1922, 7.

¹⁰³ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, January 1933, 108.

¹⁰⁴ See note 64.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1937, 1.8. By 1939 the permanent British police post of Sololo contained 7 policemen and kept part of the riding camels of the Moyale Police Detachment. Cf. *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1939, 22. After the Italian occupation of the district (see note 96), British administration fortified the military posts at the border and, thus, assigned 20 policemen to Sololo. Cf. *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/5, 55-56.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1942, 42.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1939, 17. This pan – or perhaps a new one – had by 1957 a capacity of 4 millions of gallons (18 million litres approximately) of excellent water. Cf. *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1957, 29. Currently the pan is still in use and in perfect conditions.

1958¹⁰⁸ and the installation of two borehole pumps equipped with house engines, pipes and tanks in 1959.¹⁰⁹ There is also evidence of some agricultural activity near Sololo police post in 1956.¹¹⁰

Traditionally, Sololo had been “a notorious place for the leopard skin trade”.¹¹¹ With the arrival of the police post, this trade was forbidden¹¹² and shops for the trade of common goods were established.¹¹³ Moreover, Sololo was the main centre of stock marketing in the district together with Moyale and Buna.¹¹⁴ Trading activity in Sololo would be, as it will be explained in the second chapter, an important factor for the spread of Islam in the area.

2.3.2 *Sololo at the Time of Independence (early 1960's)*

On 1 July 1960, the establishment of the Somali Republic was greeted with enthusiasm in Moyale Township.¹¹⁵ Earlier that year, in February, the British

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1958, 14.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1958, 9; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1959, 8.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1956, 22.

¹¹¹ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, 1935, 24.

¹¹² See Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, December 1934, 10.

¹¹³ The first shop in Sololo was opened in 1935 by the Somali Aden Dahir, an educated man and ex-member of the colonial army (King's African Rifles). Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, 1935, 24; see also *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1939, 20. According to other sources, however, Mr. Guyo Hugana, a Boorana, was the first one to establish a permanent house near the Police Station in the early '40s, “where he run a small shop which provided both the policemen and the nomads with some goods.” G. DABASSO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. Some years later, in 1959, the retired Police Assistant Inspector Jillo Adano, built another shop at Sololo on a plot granted to him by British Administration. Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1957, 39; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1958, 14; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1959, 21.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1956, 34.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1960, 3.

Government had decided to grant independence to Kenya.¹¹⁶ This decision, however, was not welcomed with the same enthusiasm by the inhabitants of the district, but rather, with dislike. Majority of them preferred to merge with a greater Somalia rather than with an independent Kenya. The major factor that determined their preference for Somalia was their Muslim identity.¹¹⁷

In spite of that, “by March 1963, Britain announced that the NFD would become the seventh province of Kenya.”¹¹⁸ Finally, on 12 December 1963, Kenya became an independent African state.¹¹⁹ These events led to a constant state of guerrilla between the secessionists and the Kenyan Government – the “*shifita* war”¹²⁰ – that lasted five years.¹²¹

Sololo was deeply affected by the *shifita* war. All the people living in the Eastern villages of the area were obliged to move to Sololo centre, where a kind of refugee camp was created. It consisted of a big fenced *manyatta* kept by guards day and night.

¹¹⁶ Cf. W.R. OCHIENG', *A History of Kenya*, 137.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1960, 1-2. The Somali – Muslims – , who made up 62% of the population of the district, wanted to annex the whole NFD to Somalia. For the Boorana, the decision was not that easy. The old generations, still Traditionalist, preferred to join the eventually new Kenya, while several of their young men, together with the Boorana of Isiolo, who had been Islamised, supported the secession to Somalia. Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1960, 2-3; M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 3; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 235. In this regard, P. Baxter would even interpret “opting to join the Somali Republic as equivalent to a declaration of Islamic affiliation.” P.T.W. BAXTER, “Acceptance and Rejection”, 235.

¹¹⁸ M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 4.

¹¹⁹ Cf. W.R. OCHIENG', *A History of Kenya*, 142. Nevertheless, “the handing over of Marsabit District [which at that time included Moyale] by the British administration to the Kenyan Government did not take place until May 1964 [...]” P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 235, note 108.

¹²⁰ See note 94.

¹²¹ After five years of killings and destruction in the NFD, Kenya and Somalia signed a peace treaty in 1968 whereby the territories in dispute and their inhabitants were recognised as fully Kenyan. Cf. M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 4; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 235-236. Despite the peace treaty, the “*shifita* violence” continued until the late '70s. See Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 3.

This unexpected situation had several consequences. On the one hand, majority of the cattle were stolen and people became dependent on external assistance. On the other, the process of consolidation of Sololo as a town was accelerated and trade within the camp flourished.¹²²

2.3.3 Sololo after the Foundation of Its Catholic Parish (1966)

After crossing the NFD on his way to Southern Ethiopia, Fr. Angelo Dal Canton wrote in 1915: “I believe that schools and medicine are the most effective means of entering these regions.”¹²³ This would be the inspiration, some fifty years later, for Bishop Charles Cavallera, who was appointed first bishop of the Diocese of Marsabit on 25 November 1964.¹²⁴

In the first six years of his prelature in Marsabit, Bishop Cavallera “built ten new missions, each consisting of a boarding primary school, a dispensary (or health centre or hospital), a simple church, a house for the sisters and a house for the fathers.”¹²⁵ Sololo Catholic Parish, founded on 17 July 1966, happened to be one of them.¹²⁶

¹²² Cf. W. WARIO M. GALGALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; P. GUIYO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; RUBEN ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹²³ P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 24.

¹²⁴ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 39.

¹²⁵ P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 40.

¹²⁶ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 40; Comboni Missionaries, *Annuario Comboniano*, 2002, 117. The Profile of Sololo Catholic Parish gives another date — probably mistaken — of the foundation of the parish: July 1967. See Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 1.

Thus, the foundation of the Catholic Parish of Sololo implied the building of the primary boarding school¹²⁷ and the hospital.¹²⁸ After the *shifita* war, the missionaries kept on building schools in the villages around Sololo centre.¹²⁹ Moreover, from its beginning, “the mission gave everything free: education, clothes, food, medical assistance...”,¹³⁰

Summarising, with the arrival of the Catholic Missionaries in 1966, Sololo was provided with education and health facilities and thus became an important centre in Marsabit District.¹³¹ Consequently, the population of Sololo Town increased.

As a conclusion of this historical section, it can be asserted that Sololo was transformed in the course of the last century from a remote and lowly populated area to the second biggest town of the current Moyale District. Three important factors caused this transition, namely the creation of the police post of Sololo by the British

¹²⁷ When Bishop Cavallera arrived in Sololo, there was already a very simple primary school established by the government, which the mission helped to improve. Cf. P. CROZZOLETTO, “Re: Long Essay”, E-mail to the author. Before that, by 1946 there were only two schools in the whole of Moyale District. One was a Koranic school and the other a Dubas school – a place for training an élite force. Both schools were located in Moyale Town. Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1943, 48; *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 37. In 1956, the first Government African School was opened in Moyale Town. Cf. *Ibid.*, PC/NFD 1/6/5, 1956, 36.

¹²⁸ This hospital was started by the medical personnel of *Unione Medico Missionaria Italiana*. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 45. Nowadays, the hospital of Sololo is the most complete one in both Moyale and Marsabit Districts.

¹²⁹ These were the cases of the schools of Golole, Dambala Fachana, Sololo Mkutano and Turbi. Cf. Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 1; Cf. P. CROZZOLETTO, “Re: Long Essay”, E-mail to the author.

¹³⁰ Cf. W. WARIO – M. GALGALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹³¹ In the early ‘60s Moyale became part of Marsabit District. Recently, in 1995, Moyale was made again a district of its own. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 235, note 39.

Government, the establishment of a refugee camp at the time of the *shifita* war and the education and health facilities built by the Catholic missionaries.¹³²

3. Current Challenges in Sololo

In this section, I intend to set out the main social challenges that are present nowadays in Moyale District and, specifically in Sololo. This description will lead us to the core of this essay, namely Christian-Muslim interaction.

3.1 Major Development Challenges

One of the main challenges in the district is urbanisation. People continue migrating to Moyale and Sololo Towns in anticipation of better opportunities. This will increase the population of both towns by 24.8% and 15.9% respectively in the next six years. The current infrastructures of water, housing, education, health facilities and job opportunities will not be able to answer to such a demand.¹³³

Another important challenge is the extent and magnitude of poverty in Moyale District. In times of drought, virtually everybody relies on relief food as over 97% of the land is barren and the remaining 3% is not optimally utilised. Other causes of poverty are insecurity, poor infrastructure, illiteracy and the high level of dependency of the

¹³² Another important event in the social transformation of Sololo was the change in the public administration that took place during the '70s and '80s. In 1973, there were only two chiefs in Sololo area. Gradually, chiefs and assistant chiefs started to proliferate. They were young Muslim Boorana not chosen by the people, but invested by the government. The first generation of chiefs had been respectful to Boorana tradition, but this change inflicted a big blow to the traditional way of the Boorana. Chiefs started to use and abuse their power giving orders against or without the consent of the elders and inviting the Boorana to stop practising their Traditional Religion. Cf. P. CROZZOLETTO, "Re: Long Essay", E-mail to the author.

population on the government and other donor agencies.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the land is good for a pastoralist-based economy and, actually, a traditional *manyatta* can be self-sufficient.¹³⁵

HIV/AIDS is a potential problem among the people of the district. The spread of the disease is rapidly increasing and “most of the affected group fall within the age bracket 12-49, who covers mainly the youth and labour force.”¹³⁶

Finally, gender inequality is quite evident and is manifested in various forms such as literacy level, access to resources and ownership, position of men and women in decision making and educational attainment.¹³⁷

Besides the development challenges already mentioned, there are two other major social challenges in the area. The first one is the situation of violence and insecurity caused by local banditry¹³⁸ and by incursions of the Ethiopian army in pursuit

¹³³ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 18-21.

¹³⁴ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 22. I consider worth reproducing here a reflection on the fatal effects of the relief system. Though it comes from the context of Marsabit District in 1986, it may perfectly be applied to the current reality of Moyale District: “What we have in Marsabit District is uncontrolled social change. It starts with a natural calamity like drought. The people then have a propensity to settle near a police station (for security), near a church (for food, clothes and other forms of relief), or perhaps near a shop. In this situation, the people survive by begging, and in this way the peoples of the District have been dehumanised. [...] They make excuses for not paying school fees for their children or selling some of their animals to feed their families. ‘The Government is there!’ they say. They know that the Mission and the Government are ready to help.” G.S. WIRE, ed., *Marsabit District Profile*, 44-45.

¹³⁵ Cf. P. TABLINO, “Dear James”, Letter to the author, 20th December 2002; P. CROZZOLETO, “Re: Long Essay”, E-mail to the author.

¹³⁶ Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 23.

¹³⁷ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 25.

¹³⁸ Cf. Kenya Human Rights Commission, *The Forgotten People*, 47.

of OLF soldiers.¹³⁹ The second one is the tension, increasingly evident, arising from interreligious coexistence in the area.

3.2 The Challenge of Interreligious Coexistence

With no intention of disregarding other challenges of the district - -which I consider worthy of serious reflection and action - -I will concentrate, in the following two chapters, on the issue of interreligious coexistence in Sololo.

Sololo is a place of encounter of three faiths: Boorana Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. In 1986, "The Parish Profile of Sololo" indicated that 70% of the inhabitants of Sololo were followers of the Boorana Traditional Religion, 21.5% were Muslims, and 8.5% Christians.¹⁴⁰ By that time there were six mosques and twelve Christian centres of worship in the territory of the parish.¹⁴¹

Fifteen years later, the situation has changed dramatically and, though only a minority practices Islam 'religiously',¹⁴² Muslims constitute the majority of the population of Sololo. Some current statistics claim that 75% of the population is

¹³⁹ "The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) is a guerrilla movement in southern Ethiopia fighting against the Ethiopian government [...]" The Ethiopian army accuses the Boorana "of harbouring OLF soldiers, and targets Boorana regions when conducting searchings [...], result[ing] in the untold suffering of innocent Boorana Kenyans. They are tortured, abducted and murdered. Villages are raided and bombed, and livestock are stolen. Leaders and other prominent people in the Boorana community are harassed." Kenya Human Rights Commission, *The Forgotten People*, 22-23.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 12. The percentages have been calculated by the author in order to avoid obvious contradictions with other sources. See chapter II, note 136.

¹⁴¹ Cf. S. BOTTIGNOLF, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 34.

¹⁴² Some statistics claim that 90% of the Kenya Boorana are Muslims. Cf. D.B. BARRET - *al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 181. Nevertheless, only "a minority practices Islam 'religiously'." Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 32. See also note 46. In Sololo, according to some informants, "the majority of Muslims are ignorant of their own religion." G. JILLO - P. WARIO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

Muslim, 15% Traditionalist and 10% Christian.¹⁴³ These statistics are confirmed by the following facts. Firstly, “those who follow Boorana Traditional Religion have become few and belong mainly to old generations. The youth join either Christianity or Islam during their education.”¹⁴⁴ Secondly, the Christian community, which includes around 2,000 people, represents still a minority.¹⁴⁵ Finally, a dominant Muslim environment is evident to anyone who visits Sololo.¹⁴⁶

Thus, interreligious coexistence in Sololo today is mainly characterised by the interaction of two world religions, namely Christianity and Islam. This reality is not an isolated one but, on the contrary, reflects the situation of the whole country, the African continent and many parts of the world, where followers of both religions happen to be living together (see appendix 3). Therefore, the reflections and conclusions of the following two chapters on interreligious coexistence in Sololo can also be useful to other similar contexts.

¹⁴³ Out of this 10%, 6% are Catholics and 4% members of other Christian denominations. Cf. J.W. LOBATO, “Missionary Experience”, 38.

¹⁴⁴ RICHARD ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. A good example of this reality is offered by the Secondary School of Sololo, where out of its 140 students, 88 are Muslims and 52 Christians. Cf. YCS OFFICIALS, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹⁴⁵ Catholics are the biggest Christian group in the area. By August 2002, they were about 1,600 baptised Catholics in the parish of Sololo. See note 20 taking into account that the third volume of the “*Liber Baptizorum*”, which begins on 19 September 1999, had 52 registered baptisms at the beginning of August 2002.

¹⁴⁶ All the informants I interviewed during my stay in Sololo agreed to the fact that Islam is currently the dominant religion in the area. Cf. G. JILLO - P. WARIO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. See note 142. Even Muslims from Moyale Township assert with satisfaction that “the people of Sololo are not any longer ignorant [that is, followers of Traditional Religion], since many of them have become Muslims.” MURIUKI - DORIS, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to make a social analysis of Sololo. In order to do that, I have, first of all, described the geography and demography of the area. Secondly, I have set out the main features of the Boorana people – the dwellers of Sololo – and developed their history and, more specifically, the history of Sololo Town. I have, finally, concluded by mentioning the main social challenges of Sololo, one of which is Muslim-Christian coexistence, on which the following two chapters will be focused.

Chapter II

Islam and Christianity in Sololo

Introduction

This chapter will address the issue of Muslim-Christian coexistence in Sololo from a historical perspective. Thus, I intend to present briefly the history of Islam and Christianity in Sololo.

1. History of Islam in Sololo

Since its beginning, Islam has experienced an expansive force that is founded on the Qur'an itself, where God commands his Prophet, "Call all men unto your Lord with wisdom and arguments yet more sound, with comely, wise exhortation; argue with them always with better arguments"(Qur'an 16:125).¹

¹ Cf. I.R. FARUQUI, "Islam", 253.

After Muhammad's death in 632, Islam spread vigorously in all directions. In this section, I will explain how this expansion reached Africa and, specifically, Kenya, influenced the Kenya Boorana and arrived in Sololo.

1.1 Arrival and Spread of Islam in Kenya

The first Muslim presence in Africa goes back to 616, when about eighty of the first followers of Muhammad were sent to Abyssinia to escape from the violent opposition of the people of Makkah to the new religion. Twenty-five years later, the second successor of Muhammad, 'Umar ibn al Khattab, conquered Egypt and, by the year 700, all the Southern shores of the Mediterranean were occupied.²

According to some historians, by the 8th century Islam was already present - in small pockets — on the Somali, Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts, thanks to some political refugees and traders who had come from the Arabian-Persian gulf. In the course of the following three centuries, they founded several trading posts on the coast such as Mogadishu, Pate, Malindi, Mombasa and Zanzibar, which developed, later on, into independent sultanates and well organised Muslim cities³ (see map 7). It was there, between the 14th and 15th centuries, that East Africa witnessed the emergence of a new

² Cf. J.M. GAUDEUL, *Encounters and Clashes*.I. 21; J. JOMIER, *How to Understand Islam*, 11.20.30.

³ Cf. R. OEHRRIG, ed., *A Survey of Islam*, 32-33; J. STAMER, *Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 14-15; E. CERULLI G.S.P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, "Somali History. To 1880", 715. The economic, religious and cultural prosperity of these Islamic cities was only interrupted by both the Portuguese dominion over the coast and the disruptive human movements of the Oromo on mainland during the 16th and 17th centuries. Cf. A.I. SALIM, "Kenya", 886.

people, language and culture, Swahili, rooted in much of Islam and fruit of a beautiful combination between Arab and African races, elements and languages.⁴

Islam, however, did not penetrate into the interior of Kenya until the 19th century,⁵ when it did it in three different ways. First of all, the peoples who lived in the immediate hinterland, like the Pokomo and Mijikenda groups, were Islamised in varying degrees through interaction with their Swahili neighbours.⁶ Secondly, Arabs and Swahili began to move significantly to the interior after 1860, so as to acquire trade goods directly from inland African peoples. Though the Maasai and Kikuyu showed themselves rather hostile to them,⁷ Muslim traders established caravan routes -- through Tanzania -- with the Western Kenyan peoples and created trading centres in important places such as Mumias.⁸ Finally, in the North-eastern parts of the country, the Somali, who had been pressing south from the Horn of Africa since the 12th century, opened the third way for the spread of Islam in Kenya. I am particularly concerned with this third way, which I will describe next, in so far as it was through long association with the Somali people that the Kenya Boorana were gradually Islamised.⁹

⁴ Cf. R. OEBRIG, ed., *A Survey of Islam*, 33.

⁵ Cf. A.I. SALIM, "Kenya", 887.

⁶ Cf. Department of History of Christianity, "A Historical Search", 35; A.I. SALIM, "Kenya", 887.

⁷ One of the reasons for this hostility might have been that this trade included the slave trade, though slaves were secondary to ivory, cattle, rhinoceros horns and other goods. Cf. A.I. SALIM, "Kenya", 888. See also S.J. TRIMINGHAM, *Islam in East Africa*, 30, note 1.

⁸ Mumias was "the important capital of the Wanga kingdom in Western Kenya, ruled by Munia, who allied himself closely with the Swahili traders." A.I. SALIM, "Kenya", 888. See also Y.A. NZIBO, "Islamisation in the Interior", 40.

⁹ Cf. S.J. TRIMINGHAM, *Islam in East Africa*, 51; A.I. SALIM, "Kenya", 888; N. KABIRI, "The Evolution", 70.

Along the Somali coast, Zeila and Mogadishu had become important centres of Islamic activity before the end of the 9th century (see map 7). From the 10th century, Islam gradually made an impact in the interior of Somalia through Arab missionaries, traders and converted Somali pastoral nomads. The latter played a significant role in the spread of Islam in the Horn of Africa through their geographical expansion, cultural assimilation and absorption of non-Muslims into their tribal structure.¹⁰ This expansion was temporarily held back by the invasions of the Oromo in the 16th century. It gained new strength in the second half of the 19th century, when the Muslim Somali crossed the Juba River in force and destroyed completely the Oromo power in the coast.¹¹ “Thus began the invasion and settlement of another part of Kenya by Muslims and the slow religious interaction between nomadic Muslims and their neighbours”,¹² among whom the Boorana constituted the biggest group.

At the beginning the 20th century, the extension of the *Pax Britannica* in Kenya hastened the spread of Islam in the interior despite hostilities from both Christian missionaries and the colonial administration.¹³ The building of the Uganda Railway brought Indian immigrants, many of whom were Muslims, and, once finished, facilitated the movement of local Muslim traders, who married and settled in the

¹⁰ Cf. S.J. TRIMINGHAM, *The Influence of Islam*, 30; R. OEHRIG, ed., *A Survey of Islam*, 37-38.; M. ORWIN, “The Role of Islam”, 722.

¹¹ Cf. S.J. TRIMINGHAM, *Islam in East Africa*, 30. This explains the displacement of the Boorana by the Somali from the Eastern side of the NFD referred to in page 18.

¹² A.I. SALIM, “Kenya”, 888.

¹³ Cf. Y.A. NZIBO, “Islamisation in the Interior”, 40. There is no agreement among historians about the real stand of the British administration on the spread of Islam in their protectorate. In this regard, see appendix 4.

interior.¹⁴ Moreover, the colonisers employed Muslims as soldiers, guides, schoolmasters, interpreters, tax-collectors and clerks due to their knowledge of the interior, literacy and degree of “civilisation”.¹⁵ The Europeans, therefore, granted the Muslims a prestigious social status which other natives hoped to achieve by embracing Islam.¹⁶ Besides this, Islam was amicably received by the indigenous people because it did not imply a radical change in their own traditions.¹⁷

These factors led to a rapid spread of Islam in Kenya, though rather superficial, at the beginning of last century.¹⁸

1.2 Islamisation of the Kenya Boorana

As I mentioned in chapter I, in early colonial times the Boorana constituted the biggest Traditionalist group in opposition to their Muslim Somali neighbours. Documents written at the end of the 19th century testify to this fact: “In the Jubaland, [Islam] is the religion of the entire population, Somali and Swahili, the Boorana [...]

¹⁴ Cf. A.I. SALIM, “Kenya”, 890.

¹⁵ Cf. S.J. TRIMINGHAM, *Islam in East Africa*, 27; Y.A. NZIBO, “Islamisation in the Interior”, 42. Muslims were commonly referred to as *wastaarabu* or “civilised”, while local non-Muslims were looked down and called *washenzi* or “barberians”. Cf. Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 37.

¹⁶ “This was particularly evident in the colonial army (King’s African Rifles) [...], where the new recruits from the interior took it as a fashion to embrace Islam.” N. KABIRI, “The Evolution”, 74. These soldiers, after returning home, converted their whole family and relatives to their new faith. Cf. N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 63.

¹⁷ Cf. Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 36.

¹⁸ After the Second World War, Islamic organisations were created in the Islamic schools of the coast for the propagation and strengthening of Islam in the interior. Cf. Y.A. NZIBO, “Islamisation in the Interior”, 41.51. By the same time the *Ahmadiyya* movement initiated a missionary campaign in Kenya which culminated in the publication of the first Swahili translation of the Qur’an in 1953. To this, followed the translation published by the Islamic Foundation in 1969. Cf. A.I. SALIM, “Kenya”, 891; D.B. BARRET *al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 296.

and the few scattered Waboni being the only non-Muslim races.”¹⁹ By 1931, the religious identity of the Boorana was practically the same: “The whole population of [Moyale] District, with the exception of the Boorana, Gabra,²⁰ Burji,²¹ Konso²² and Sakuye,²³ are Muslims.”²⁴ At that stage, the Boorana did not only reject Islam, but were involved in violent encounters with the Somali – concretely with the Garre, Ajuran and Degodia²⁵ – which British authorities defined as “the perpetually smouldering Pagan-Muslim feud.”²⁶ In order to keep peace in the region, the colonial rulers established an arbitrary line “dividing Islam and Paganism”²⁷ – the “Boorana line” – which by 1937 coincided roughly with the Moyale-Wajir road.²⁸ Thus, one of the “important [duties] of

¹⁹ A. HARDINGE, “Report by Sir A. Hardinge”, 39.

²⁰ The Gabra are camel pastoralist people who live in the arid areas of Marsabit District and in Southern Ethiopia. They share language and many customs with the Boorana, though they are, most probably, of Somaloid ancestry. Nowadays, they still keep to the traditional nomadic existence and are in a process of accepting either Christianity or Islam. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 215-216, 244, 351.

²¹ The Burji are peasant farmers and weavers of southwest Ethiopia. Some Burji families were brought to Kenya by the colonial administration to grow maize and vegetables in Moyale and Marsabit. In the course of their settlement, some embraced Islam and others Christianity. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 351.

²² The homeland of the Konso is in Southern Ethiopia, but some of them are scattered in Northern Kenya, where they work as smiths. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 353.

²³ The Sakuye are a “tattered remnant of Boorana-speaking camel herders very similar to the Gabra.” P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 355.

²⁴ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 107. Appendix: “Correction Letter to Mullins”.

²⁵ The Degodia are one of the ‘true’ Somali clan-families, most of whom are camel pastoralists and, some, traders. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 352. See chapter I, note 67.

²⁶ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1946, 12. See also *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/2, January 1933, 18-19. See chapter I, note 52. The early hostility of the Boorana towards Islam was recorded by British authorities as follows: “[The Boorana] strive to keep out Islam by terrorising the invader with mysterious and cowardly isolated murders.” *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/2/6/2, June 1934, 13.

²⁷ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1939, 6.

²⁸ Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1937, 11. See chapter I, note 78.

the Police [was] to ensure that the Muslim tribes did not come into contact with the Boorana.”²⁹

However, despite the efforts of the British authorities and the Boorana hostility towards their Muslim Somali neighbours, Islam penetrated slowly into the Boorana community. As a matter of fact, as early as in 1924, it was stated that “the Boorana [were] mostly pagans, though Mohamedanism [was] slowly creeping in, especially amongst those who [lived] near Moyale ‘Township’.”³⁰ This town was mainly made up of an influential Arab minority and a Somali and Burji majority, and became, almost since its beginning, an important Islamic centre of the NFD.³¹

In 1935 it was recorded that most of the Boorana living at Dabel had become or were becoming Islamised³² and, in the following years, the colonial administration witnessed a “steady spread of Islam among the Boorana.”³³ The factors that led to that

²⁹ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, June 1934, 43.

³⁰ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1924, 19. Moyale Post was created around 1907 on the spot where the Ethiopians and British had met, eleven years before, in the course of their respective imperial expansions. By 1917 it consisted of the military settlement and the bazaar with about 30 houses and, ten years later, its total population was close to a thousand. Moyale was finally gazetted as a Township in 1928. Cf. T.S. THOMAS, *Jubaland and the Northern Frontier District*, 78-79.91; Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/1, 1927, 22; Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1928, 10; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 229.

³¹ Islam was already present in the British side of Moyale at the beginning of last century. In 1931, Moyale had two mosques and two cemeteries, one for Muslims and another for non-Muslims. In 1934, two Muslim sections had already been registered in the town, the main body (*Sunni*) and the “*sheria* section” (*Shia Imami Ismailia*). Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 78-79; Kenya National Archives PC/NFD/2/6/2, December 1934, 27-28; P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 23.

³² Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, 1935, 80. See map 4.

³³ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1939, 7. See also *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1957, 11.

spread were chiefly four: mixed marriages³⁴, trade³⁵, employment in the colonial army³⁶ and Islamic missionary activity.³⁷

This steady spread of Islam reported by the British authorities contrasts, however, with the anthropologist Baxter's opinion, who claimed that "in Marsabit and Moyale the effect of individual conversions [among Boorana was] slight and proselytisation negligible."³⁸ Baxter carried out a research in the early '50s among the Boorana of Isiolo, who, by contrast and due to their isolation from their homelands, had been widely Islamised or, more accurately, "Somalised".³⁹ The conclusion of his study is highly illuminating:

³⁴ At the end of the '30s, "[...] there had grown up around Moyale a number of small settlements composed of Ex NFD Constabulary, Alien Somals, Garre and Ajuran [...] [who] had converted Boorana women to Islam, married them, bred from them and also converted their male relations in law and other Boorana." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1942, 12.

³⁵ Somali, Ajuran and Garre Muslims travelled through Boorana country trading and living as guests in Boorana homesteads, where, occasionally, they settled and married local women. Cf. P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 245; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 238; N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 63.

³⁶ See note 16. The annual report of 1960 states: "[...] several of the young Boorana men, principally those with the "heshima" [honour] of having been in government service are Islamised." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1960, 2.

³⁷ This activity was rather haphazard and occasional and consisted in a "certain number of travelling sheiks in the district propagating the gospel [sic] and collecting money [...]" Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 107-108. In the Isiolo area, "itinerant teacher-preacher-magicians, mostly Garre and Somali, toured the villages [...]" P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 246.

³⁸ P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 245.

³⁹ The Boorana of Isiolo (*Waso Boorana*) were physically, socially and culturally isolated from their homelands when they were moved to the Waso area by the British authorities in 1932. In this state of isolation, and far from their *Qallu*, traditional ceremonies were gradually abandoned and Somali culture offered an alternative and successful model to be assimilated. In the course of this process, the *Waso Boorana* adopted, not without resistance at first, Muslim practices and, therefore, Islamisation took place through Somalisation. By 1952, 75% of the *Waso Boorana* were reported Muslims. Cf. P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 238.242-243.247.249; M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 2-3.13. Surprisingly enough, the current *Waso Boorana* young generations, though nominal Muslims, are trying to recover and keep the Boorana traditions (*Ada Boorana*). Different religious practices - Traditional, Muslim and Christian - are implemented nowadays to keep the Boorana peace (*Nagaa Borana*). Cf. M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 18.244.247.

Where Boorana have not been defeated and isolated they have retained their traditional social organisation and culture, in particular the cycle of national and individual ceremonies and Islam has been either scarcely noticed or rejected. Where Boorana have been isolated their culture has been influenced by Islam, particularly in those aspects which isolation had perforce attenuated.⁴⁰

The Boorana of Sololo belong to the first group and have only been significantly influenced by Islam in the last twenty-five years. I will look into this phenomenon in the following section.

1.3 Islam in Sololo

The process of Islamisation in Sololo reflects very clearly the model of religious conversion to Islam in Africa suggested by Fisher.⁴¹ This model consists of three main stages - quarantine, mixing and reform — whereby Islam, from being an outside religion, becomes accepted and, finally, through a process of purification, reaches its orthodox version.⁴²

The stage of “quarantine” took place in Sololo during colonial times, when Islamic faith and culture arrived in the area through traders and government employees.⁴³ The former constituted Arabs and, especially, Somalis coming from the East,⁴⁴ whereas the latter were local men who, after having served in the army, came

⁴⁰ P.T.W. BAXTER, “Acceptance and Rejection”, 250.

⁴¹ See H.J. FISHER, *The Juggernaut's Apologia*.

⁴² Cf. M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 11.

⁴³ Cf. N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 63.

⁴⁴ Cf. W. WARIO — M. GALGALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. This was the case of Aden Ahir, a Somali, who opened the first shop in Sololo in 1935. See chapter I, note 113. Besides this, the headman of Sololo, Galgallo Mudale, “[li]ked to collect detribalised Somalis and Ajuuran [...] at Sololo[...]”, a practice that the British authorities opposed by ordering him “to return

back to Sololo as Muslims.⁴⁵ Their presence was, however, rather isolated and irrelevant to the population of Sololo for a long time.⁴⁶ In fact, until late '60s, Islam in Sololo was still reduced to a small group of business people.⁴⁷

The factors that prevented the spread of Islam in this initial stage were the following. First of all, the Boorana of Sololo were not isolated from their traditional core and leader in Ethiopia and, therefore, kept the repetitive cycle of ceremonies which supported their Traditional theological beliefs.⁴⁸ Moreover, conversion to Islam was understood, by some, as an opposition to tradition and to the *Qallu*.⁴⁹ Secondly, they perceived the new religion as a threat to their highest value, the *Nagaa Boorana* (Peace of the Boorana), by associating Islam with Somali culture and, consequently, with its

to their proper tribes all the Muslim people being at Sololo [...]" Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, June 1934, 53.

⁴⁵ Cf. G. JILLO P. WARIO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author. This was the case of Police Assistant Inspector Jillo Adano – a Boorana – who, after retirement, built a shop in Sololo in 1960. See chapter I, note 113.

⁴⁶ According to Baxter, Muslim traders "maintained the feeding prohibitions and daily prayers that Islam enjoins, but their only effect on their [Boorana] hosts seemed to be the provocation of tolerant mirth." Moreover, none of the converted Boorana ex-servicemen or ex-policemen "were proselytisers nor withheld from active participation in traditional ceremonies." P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 245.

⁴⁷ Cf. L. ROBE, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author. By that time this group of Muslims had already built a small house in Sololo where they gathered for their prayers and which we may call the proto-mosque of Sololo. Cf. W. WARIO – M. GALGALLO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

⁴⁸ Cf. P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 238.244.250.

⁴⁹ Cf. P.T.W. BAXTER, "Acceptance and Rejection", 247.

internal lineage feuds.⁵⁰ Finally, their hostility towards the Somali, which increased even more during the *shifto* war, obviously implied a rejection of Islam.⁵¹

It is difficult to determine when and how the passage to the stage of “mixing” took place. I would suggest that soon after the *shifto* war, Islam started being perceived in a different way by the people of Sololo. It was progressively discovered as a religion open to everybody — not only to an élite — and compatible with Boorana tradition. There were two main factors that caused this passage. Firstly, the consolidation of Sololo as a town in early ‘70s entailed a permanent and close contact between Traditionalist and Muslim Boorana. Secondly, Islam was presented as an easy religion to embrace⁵² and one which allowed its converts to continue with their own traditional practices⁵³. Thus, in the last thirty years, Islam has experienced a constant expansion in Sololo, though rather superficial, which was mainly concentrated in the town. In this process, the primary motive to embrace Islam has been more “the desire to belong to a community [...] than the interior assent to a new religious message.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Cf. P.T.W. BAXTER, “Acceptance and Rejection”, 247. Among the Somali “feud and war [...] are the chief means by which relations between the groups are regulated [...]” I.M. LEWIS, *Memorandum on the NFD*, 45. By contrast, “for a Boorana to kill another Boorana is a heinous sin and an offence against God.” P.T.W. BAXTER, “Acceptance and Rejection”, 247.

⁵¹ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 239.

⁵² “The profession of faith in Islam which consists in professing that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet is sufficient to make one a Muslim.” Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 37.

⁵³ This made some Boorana elders say, “This religion belongs to us, for everything that we have been practising is accepted and recognised as an important practice.” N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 63. In some areas of life, however, Islam meant a change which was not easy to be accepted by all. This was the case of the regulations on food, which would not allow Muslims to eat the meat of animals sacrificed by their non-Muslim fathers and brothers. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 239.

⁵⁴ J. STAMER, *Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 124.

Nowadays, though the “mixing” stage is still evident,⁵⁵ there are some signs in Sololo that point to the dawn of the stage of “reform”. First of all, Muslim leaders are encouraging their faithful to give up all traditional practices and live Islam ‘religiously’.⁵⁶ Secondly, the Boorana of Sololo have adopted certain Islamic cultural practices, the most evident one being the way of dressing.⁵⁷ Thirdly, the link with their traditional core in Ethiopia is losing its religious character, though socially, culturally and politically speaking is still fully alive.⁵⁸ Finally, there exists a new proselytising zeal by which Islam is being preached successfully to the Boorana of the rural areas.⁵⁹ One of the main arguments of this new expansionist movement is that “all Boorana have been called to be Muslims.”⁶⁰

⁵⁵ I claim that the “mixing” stage is still evident because a good number of Muslim Boorana live quite traditionally and do not know much about the tenets of Islam. Cf. G. JILLO – P. WARIO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; P. TABLINO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; see chapter I, note 142.

⁵⁶ Cf. G. JILLO – P. WARIO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

⁵⁷ In Sololo Town many men – even Christians – have abandoned the traditional turban of *Konso* cloth and wear the Muslim skullcap. Moreover, in my stay there, I did not see a single man wearing the head tuft (a traditional symbol of ‘Boorananness’) which was common several years ago among Traditionalists and nominal Muslims. On the part of the women, most of them – even Christians as well – cover their heads and dress in the Islamic style. As one goes into the rural areas, Islamic elements are less evident. See P.T.W. BAXTER, “Acceptance and Rejection”, 235.245.249.

⁵⁸ As regards the cycle of individual and national ceremonies, they are still celebrated. The proof of this continuity was the celebration of the *Jila Gaduamoji* in Sololo in 1995. The next one should take place this year, that is 2003. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 239. I have no information, however, on the degree of participation in the last ceremony by the Boorana of Sololo Town. It would be interesting to attend the celebration this year in order to consider how much has Islam affected the traditional practices of the Boorana of Sololo.

⁵⁹ One of the examples of this success is the village of Mado Adi, where, through the instruction and material help of some Muslim preachers, the majority of its inhabitants have become Muslims. Cf. J. M. LEGI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; MURIOKI – DORIS, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

⁶⁰ C. MAIRITHA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. See chapter I, note 55.

The main factors which are provoking the transition to the stage of “reform” are a significant rate of migration to cities with a long Islamic tradition,⁶¹ a boom in education, which includes religious education,⁶² and a worldwide Islamic religious revival that started in the ‘70s.⁶³ The last one has influenced the African Muslim community in two ways. On one hand, it has entailed an Islamisation ‘in depth’, which principally consists in purification and intensification of personal religious practice. On the other, and when taken to extremes, it has meant “Islamism”, that is, the collective effect of several movements whose aim is to impose Islam on African society,⁶⁴ and whose ideology is summarised in the motto: “Africa is the continent of Islam.”⁶⁵

Sololo hosted a Conference of one of these movements in April 2000, whose effect was a good deal of tensions and hostility due to its anti-Christian propaganda.⁶⁶ It also prompted a more consistent Islamic missionary campaign over the rural areas of

⁶¹ Cf. G. JILLO – P. WARIO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

⁶² Cf. P. GUYO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

⁶³ “This phenomenon, [...] [which] embraces both the private and public spheres of Muslim life, has taken many forms: increased mosque attendance, wearing of more traditional dress, a proliferation of religious literature, growth of Islamic organisations, as well as calls for more Islamic governments.” J.J. DONOHUE – J.L. ESPOSITO, ed., *Islam in Transition*, 237.

⁶⁴ Cf. J. STAMER, *Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 60-61.

⁶⁵ J. STAMER, *Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 69.

⁶⁶ Almost all my informants spoke about this event. They all agreed to the fact that its participants were many Muslims (between 500 to 4,000) from all over Kenya and from abroad (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Arabia and Pakistan). Cf. P. GALGALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; G. JILLO – P. WARIO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; J. MUTHIGI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; S. BUBI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; RUBEN ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; M. SHAMA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

Sololo and the formation of some local Muslims in important Islamic centres of Africa and Asia.⁶⁷ This campaign is taking place “in a silent but very efficacious way.”⁶⁸

As I have tried to show, the process of Islamisation in Sololo corresponds to Fisher’s model of conversion to Islam in Africa. However, what makes of this process quite a special one is that, during its first stage, Christian missionaries arrived in Sololo and activated a parallel and simultaneous spread of Christianity. It is this spread that I intend to develop in the following section.

2. History of Christianity in Sololo

Soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first Christians, prompted by the missionary mandate of the Lord and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, “went from place to place, preaching the good news.” (Acts 8:4; cf. Mt 28:19-20; Jn 20:21-23; Acts 2:1-13). These good news “spread [...] widely and successfully” (Acts 19:20) and, at the end of the first century, there already existed Christian communities in Europe and Africa.

⁶⁷ The methodology used by the Muslim missionaries in the rural areas is simple and close to the people. They go on foot and use public means, remain as guests in the villages and use the local language. Their preaching is intensive (between one week to a month) and, at their departure, they appoint somebody in the *manyatta* as the prayer leader. Moreover, they usually offer some material help in the course of their teaching. Some of these missionaries are Boorana who have been trained in the country or abroad. Cf. MURIOKI DORIS, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; RICHARD ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; J. SIRQUEIRA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

⁶⁸ G. VANGELISTA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

In this second part of chapter II, I will describe how Christianity arrived in Africa and, specifically in Kenya, reached the Kenya Boorana and was established in Sololo.

2.1 Arrival and Spread of Christianity in Kenya

Between 50 and 100 AD, Christianity had already reached Northern Africa through a group of Christian Jews living in Egypt, concretely in Alexandria — which further became the Alexandrian Patriarchate⁶⁹. Likewise, in the course of the second century, a flourishing church, whose first evangelists probably came from Rome, was born in Carthage (current Tunis).⁷⁰

Christianity in East Africa is rather recent, with the exception of Ethiopia and Sudan.⁷¹ In Ethiopia, the first Christians were Hellenistic traders who arrived in the kingdom of Aksum at an astonishing early time.⁷² In its turn, Nubia, the Northern half of the current Sudan, became officially a Christian kingdom in the 6th century and, surprisingly enough, reached its zenith during the Islamic ruling over Northern Africa.⁷³

⁶⁹ Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 21.23-24. The Egyptian Church gave birth to a new and radical way of living the Gospel, monasticism, "that turned out to be the greatest contribution the African continent made to the universal Church." *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷⁰ Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 26-30. The Church of Carthage was deeply affected by the Vandal and Islamic occupations in 430 and 697 respectively, which eventually provoked its extinction. Cf. *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷¹ Cf. Department of History of Christianity, "A Historical Search", 38.

⁷² Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 35. According to tradition, there were three steps in the advent of Christianity in Ethiopia: "Philip's Eunuch brought the faith, Frumentius the priesthood, and the Nine Saints monastic life" *Ibid.*

⁷³ Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 30-33.

The first Christian contacts in Kenya took place in the 16th century, when Portuguese explorers, missionaries and merchants reached the already Islamised Kenyan coast on their way to India.⁷⁴ However, it was not until the beginning of the following century that Catholic missionaries settled on the Kenyan coast so as to care for the Portuguese traders living there. Their presence also implied some evangelising activity, especially in Mombasa, where a monastery and a house for the sick and destitute had been built near the Portuguese Fortress (Fort Jesus).⁷⁵ It was there that, in August 1631, in the course of a revolution led by the sultan of Malindi and Mombasa,⁷⁶ around “300 persons, half of them Portuguese, half Africans, died for their faith in Christ”.⁷⁷ The Portuguese were able to repossess the town one year later, but in 1698 they were finally defeated and expelled by Sultan Sayyid bin Seif of Oman.⁷⁸ That was the end of the Portuguese presence in Kenya and, therefore, of the first Christian missionary activity in the country.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ These are the cases of Vasco da Gama and St. Francis Xavier, who stopped temporarily in Malindi in 1498 and 1542 respectively. Cf. D.B. BARRETT *et al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 29.

⁷⁵ Catholic churches were also established with their respective priests in Faza, Pate, Lamu, Pemba and Zanzibar. Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 88-89.

⁷⁶ This sultan was Yusuf bin Hasan, who, at the murder of his father by the Portuguese in 1614, had been entrusted to the Augustinian Missionaries. He was baptised Jeronimo Chingulia in Mombasa and brought up in the Christian way in Goa. When he reached maturity, he was brought back to the sultanate of his father as a Christian king and perfect ally of the Portuguese. It was there, however, that the re-encounter with his own roots and the oppressive yoke of the Portuguese made him adhere to his first faith — Islam — and react violently against Portugal and Christianity. Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 90-91; C. ALONSO, *Los Agustinos en la Costa Swahili*, 63-88.

⁷⁷ J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 90.

⁷⁸ They shortly came back in 1728, but their presence did not last longer than a year. Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 91.

⁷⁹ “There are references in Portuguese sources to some local people becoming Christian, [however] none survived the Portuguese expulsion [...]” A.I. SALIM, “Kenya”, 886.

A new era of Christianity in Kenya started in 1844, when the German Lutheran missionary Johann Ludwig Krapf, a member of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), arrived in Mombasa and, allowed by the Sultan of Zanzibar, started preaching the Gospel to all who would hear. During his first two years in Mombasa, he translated the New Testament into Swahili. After that, he and a newly arrived CMS missionary, John Rebmann, moved among the Giriama,⁸⁰ where they preached with little success and from where they made exploratory tours in the interior.⁸¹

After this and other humble and rather unsuccessful missionary attempts, the situation changed radically with the beginning of the British colonial era, when Christian missions started spreading easily in the interior. On the Protestant part, nine mission societies, among whom the CMS was the leading one, carried out missionary work in British territory. The building of the railway was a key factor for the proliferation of Protestant missions, whose combination of Western education, medicine and evangelism turned out to be a successful missionary methodology.⁸² On the Catholic part, three societies joined hands in the evangelisation of Kenya: “the Holy Ghost Fathers, advancing from the coast towards Kikuyu land; the Mill Hill Missionaries, expanding from Uganda to Western Kenya; and the Consolata [Missionaries] settling

⁸⁰ The Giriama constitute the largest of the nine coastal communities which form the Mijikenda group. They proved to be one of the most resistant communities to the acceptance of the Gospel. Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 224.

⁸¹ Cf. D.B. BARRIE - *al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 30; J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 224. The ‘missionary dream’ of Krapf was to create an “Apostles’ Street” across the continent, a chain of mission stations from East to West Africa. Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 25.

⁸² Cf. D.B. BARRIE - *al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 35; J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 255-256.

around Mount Kenya.”⁸³ In this process, Muslim traders generally welcomed the European missionaries, helping them in their journeys and even in the foundation of mission stations.⁸⁴

It is important to notice that, from the beginning of this second era of evangelisation, the Oromo became a missionary focus for both Protestant and Catholic Churches. Three main reasons must have caused this missionary concern. First of all, the Oromo were a huge human group of related communities who extended from the Ethiopian Highlands to the Kenyan coast in Tana River and who had the same linguistic heritage. Secondly, they had shown themselves resistant to Islamisation⁸⁵ and were, therefore, theoretically open to evangelisation. Thirdly, they were ready to welcome missionaries, who, they thought, would protect them against the expansive raids of their Maasai and Somali neighbours.

Krapf himself had worked first in Ethiopia, where he had carried out missionary work among the Oromo.⁸⁶ After leaving Kenya in 1853, he was commissioned by the

⁸³ J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 257.

⁸⁴ Muslim traders also showed some hostility towards the Europeans, which was not caused by religious differences but by the interference of the Europeans in the Muslim trade, particularly the slave trade. Cf. A.I. SALIM, “Kenya”, 889.

⁸⁵ See page 38.

⁸⁶ He was actually “the first European to publish anything in Oromo; he transcribed parts of the New Testament in Oromo [...] and [...] compiled a simple Oromo dictionary and [...] grammar.” P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, I. Another Protestant mission society present among the Oromo of Ethiopia in the 19th century was the Swedish (Lutheran) Missionary Society, led by Onesimus Nesib, an Oromo himself. Cf. *Ibid.*

British United Methodists to open a mission among the Oromo of the Tana River. This mission was launched in 1862 but, due mainly to Maasai raids, resulted in tragedy.⁸⁷

Catholic missionaries also endeavoured to evangelise the Oromo. With this aim, the Vicariate Apostolic of the Galla in Southern Abyssinia was erected in 1846 and entrusted to the Italian Capuchins, who sent Guglielmo Massaja as its first bishop.⁸⁸ The Southern part of this Vicariate would be requested by the founder of the Consolata Missionaries at the end of the 19th century. This was the starting point of the Catholic evangelisation in the NFD, which will be treated in the following section.

2.2 *Evangelisation among the Kenya Boorana*

After reading Massaja's Memoirs, Joseph Allamano,⁸⁹ "conceived the idea of initiating a society of priests who would continue the work of Massaja among the [Oromo]."⁹⁰ Thus, in 1891, he asked Propaganda Fide to assign him "the region delimited to South-West by the river Tana and the [Turkana] Lake, at North by the Kingdom of Kaffa and Harar, [and] at East by the Huebi Scebeli river as far as the

⁸⁷ In 1885 a group of Oromo Christians were massacred at Golbanti together with the missionary couple who served them, John and Annie Houghton. Cf. D.B. BARRET - *al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, 30; J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 225-226. John and Annie Houghton might have been related in some way to Stephen Houghton (1931-1983), a great missionary in the NFD born in China of missionary parents. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 3.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 165-166. Guglielmo Massaja (1809-1889) became "Italy's most celebrated missionary, chiefly on account of his extended journeys, of which he made 7,000 km on foot." *Ibid.*, 166. During his missionary work in Ethiopia, he was imprisoned many times and eventually expelled, leaving behind an already established local Catholic Church. Back in Italy he was made a cardinal and was asked to write his Memoirs. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 4, note 1.

⁸⁹ Joseph Allamano (1851-1926) was the Rector of the shrine of the Consolata in Turin from 1880 to his death and the founder of the Consolata Missionaries. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 4-6; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 2.

⁹⁰ P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 6.

Ocean near Magadoxo.”⁹¹ (See map 7). After some vicissitudes, Allamano was appointed the Vicar General of that region in 1900⁹² and, in 1901, the Institute of the Consolata for the Foreign Missions was officially founded.⁹³

For various reasons his missionaries were not able to reach this territory until 1914,⁹⁴ when three Consolata missionaries, headed by Fr. Angelo Dal Canton, left Nyeri for Ethiopia on 21 November. After an extremely arduous journey across the desert – already mentioned in the previous chapter – they arrived in Moyale on 31 December, from where they entered Ethiopia. However, great adversities, imprisonment included, made them be back in Moyale in November 1915. There, they remained for the following three years and did real missionary work by caring for the Catholic personnel of Moyale Post, studying the Boorana language, teaching catechism, reading and writing, visiting the Boorana villages and helping the sick. In 1918 the missionaries were informed by their superior that the Consolata Fr. Gaudenzio Barlassina⁹⁵ had entered Southern Abyssinia via Addis Ababa and were asked to return to Nyeri.⁹⁶

In less than four years, Fr. Dal Canton understood the importance and urgency of missionary work among the Boorana as he wrote, “A lot of good could be done

⁹¹ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*.II, 183.

⁹² The Capuchin Mgr. André Jarosseau, responsible for the Apostolic Vicariate of the Galla, appointed Joseph Allamano his Vicar General in that region and asked him to send his missionaries to the area as soon as possible. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 9-10.

⁹³ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 9.

⁹⁴ In the meantime, the Consolata had established some missions in Kikuyu land, which developed so well that in 1909 the Holy See erected the Vicariate Apostolic of Kenya and entrusted it to the Consolata Missionaries. See map 13. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 11-13.

⁹⁵ Gaudenzio Barlassina was appointed Prefect Apostolic of the region of Kaffa in 1913. After his arrival in the Prefecture in 1916, he did considerable missionary work among the Oromo for about twenty years. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 17; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 5.

among the Boorana, but we cannot wait any longer, as Somali and Arab merchants are present [...]"⁹⁷ His departure, however, would create a span of more than 45 years without permanent Christian missionary activity in Moyale.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, in other parts of the NFD, missionary activity was longer and more continuous. In 1931 three missionaries⁹⁹ of the Anglican Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society (BCMS) opened a mission in Marsabit. Their aim was to establish four mission centres around Lake Turkana in order to preach the Gospel to the nomadic people in Northern Kenya. Hence, the foundation of Marsabit was followed by two new stations in Lodwar and Maralal created in 1934. From then on, the British authorities prohibited any other mission in the NFD.¹⁰⁰

Besides offering the medical and educational services required by the government,¹⁰¹ the mission of Marsabit carried out a programme of evangelisation in the

⁹⁶ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 15-25; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 4-5.

⁹⁷ P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 20.

⁹⁸ The District Commissioner of Moyale in 1934 wrote as follows: "There are no [missions] here nor would they do any good if they were." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, June 1934, 30. Only in 1965 the Anglican Church of Kenya established a Parish in Moyale, which was followed by the Catholic one, officially opened in 1969. Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 59; C. PASINETTI, "Moyale Parish: A History", 1. Before that, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, stationed in Mega (Ethiopia), established a post in Ethiopian Moyale in 1953, which, due to the difficulty experienced, was closed one year later. Cf. Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1953, 41; Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/5, 1954, 33. In 1957, "Christians [were] provided [with religious education] in Ethiopian Moyale by a small Lutheran School and a school under the guidance of a Coptic church." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1957, 36.

⁹⁹ Among them there was Dr. Alfred B. Buxton, a central figure of the BCMS. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. D.B. BARRET – *al.*, ed., *Kenya Churches Handbook*, map 5; P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 25-26; J. BAUR, *2000 Years of Christianity*, 147; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 2; N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran", 65.

¹⁰¹ The government expected from the BCMS to station "a qualified doctor at [their] mission [...]" Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/2/b, 1931, 12. In 1934 they had already built "a stone

town and its surroundings. The reaction of the people was friendly but only the Burji farmers, settled in the town, seemed to be open to accept Christianity.¹⁰² During the first six years of the mission, the missionary personnel experienced some changes and increased in number. The leader of the group, Rev. E. J. Webster, was able to prepare a Boorana Grammar and started translating some parts of the New Testament into Boorana.¹⁰³

Missionary activity in Marsabit was interrupted during the Second World War. After the war, the BCMS missionaries came back and, in 1960, were joined by Stephen Houghton,¹⁰⁴ who would become a great evangeliser of the Kenya Boorana. He moved from village to village, between Marsabit and Moyale, preaching and teaching the word of God. Moreover, and this was his great contribution, he continued the work of Webster and, eventually, translated the whole Bible into Boorana.¹⁰⁵

Hospital [...] capable of accommodating two beds [and] [...] a large and well ventilated mud and wattle school." *Ibid.*, PC/NFD/1/2/e, 1934, 17.

¹⁰² Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 2. Colonial documents recorded this fact: "The mission finds it difficult to make any headway among the Rendille or Boorana. The majority of the audience are Burji and natives of all tribes who have formally found an asylum at Marsabit." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/2/d, 1933, 10. In 1934 there seemed to be some success among the Boorana: "The mission continues to obtain the majority of its adherents from the Township. An attempt has been made to interest the Boorana permanently resident on the Mountain, and has met with some success." Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/2/e, 1934, 17.

¹⁰³ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 3. For more information about the process of translation of the Bible into Boorana, see appendix 7.

¹⁰⁴ He was nicknamed "Denge Jillo" by the local people. For more information about him, see note 87.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 3; N.J. WAQO, "The Church and the Booran". 65.395-397. After more than 70 years from its foundation, the Anglican Church in the NFD has yielded plenty of fruits. The most outstanding among them was the ordination to the episcopate of a local priest, Rev. Andrew Adano Tuye, a Gabra, and his appointment as Assistant Bishop of Marsabit in 1993. Unfortunately, he died three years later in a helicopter accident and is currently buried in Marsabit near Rev. Houghton. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 3. His present successor, Rt. Rev. William Waqo Boru, is himself a Boorana. He was ordained bishop on 28 July 2002.

On the Catholic part, there was also a great evangeliser of the Kenya Boorana who has already been mentioned in the first chapter, namely Bishop Charles Cavallera (1909-1990).¹⁰⁶ As soon as he was consecrated Bishop of Nyeri in 1947, he resumed with great determination the work of evangelisation in the NFD.¹⁰⁷ However, due to the colonial administration's ban on proselytising in the NFD, Catholic missionary activity in Marsabit and Moyale Districts was reduced to sporadic visits by Bishop Cavallera and some of his priests.¹⁰⁸

On his first visit to Marsabit, Bishop Cavallera met some Catholic Goans and a Catholic Burji, Paulo Dalle Boru, whom he requested to teach catechesis to some pupils of the Government School. He was assisted, in this apostolate, by a teacher from Meru, Elias Atuegi, and, eventually, some Rendille¹⁰⁹ teachers. Their effort produced the first Catholic fruits in Marsabit, as seventeen boys, Rendille, Gabra and Boorana were baptised on 8 October 1961.¹¹⁰

The doors for Catholic missionary activity among the Kenya Boorana were finally opened in March 1963, when the colonial administration allowed Bishop Cavallera's missionaries to reside in Marsabit and carry out evangelising activities in the district. In less than two years, the Bishop created five new missions in the NFD,

¹⁰⁶ See page 26.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Among them, two *Fidei Donum* priests from Alba, Northern Italy, devoted themselves specially to this apostolate. They were Fr. Bartolomeo Venturino and Fr. Paolo Tablino who, in three years, made twenty visits to the area. One of the main centres visited was Sololo. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 35 note 23.

¹⁰⁹ The Rendille are a Somaloid-speaking community of camel-herders, who live in the South-western region of Marsabit district. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 355.

Marsabit being one of them. In view of the rapid development of the Catholic Church in the NFD, the Holy See established the new Diocese of Marsabit on 25 November 1964, and Bishop Charles Cavallera was transferred from Nyeri Diocese to the new one.¹¹⁰ Finally, two Catholic missions were also founded in the main Boorana centres of the diocese, namely Sololo and Moyale, in 1966 and 1968 respectively.¹¹²

Summarising, Christian faith reached the Kenya Boorana in the course of last century and it did it in three stages. The first one was characterised by a limited Catholic presence in Moyale at the beginning of the century. The second one started with the arrival of the BCMS in Marsabit, which became the only missionary agent in the district for more than 30 years. And the third one consisted in the expansion of the Catholic Church in the district in the '60s.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 33-35; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 6.

¹¹¹ Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 36.39; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 6. The successor of Bishop Cavallera in Marsabit, Bishop Ambrose Ravasi, was appointed by the Holy See on June 1981. Bishop Ravasi has kept on serving the diocese, until today, with the same missionary zeal of his predecessor. During his episcopate, a remarkable event has been the 'Diocesan Synod' of 1985-1987. Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 53.

¹¹² Cf. P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 40.

¹¹³ In this analysis I have not taken into account the Boorana of Isiolo, since my study is focused on the diocese of Marsabit. I will emphasise here some few aspects of their process of evangelisation. The *Waso Boorana* are predominantly Muslims and only a minority has embraced Christianity. Evangelisation in Isiolo area was led by the Methodist Church, which started missionary activities in Isiolo Town in 1952 and in Garba Tulla in 1967. Catholic missionaries arrived some years later and opened a mission in Isiolo Town in 1964, where they were involved in feeding programmes and in building schools and dispensaries, as well as in evangelising work. Later, it extended to Garba Tulla and Merti. Other denominations arrived in the '70s and '80s but have had little impact. Generally speaking, the religious influence of the Christian Churches on the *Waso Boorana* is non-existent and their presence is reduced to human promotion. Merti, however, is a notable exception. There, the *Waso Boorana* converted to Catholicism in large numbers after the *shifita* war. Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 53-55.57-58.63-64; M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 7.29, notes 41.45.

Nevertheless, the question which is still to be answered is how the Boorana themselves accepted this new faith. I intend to do so after analysing the history of Christianity in Sololo.

2.3 Christianity in Sololo

The process of evangelisation in Sololo started only in the '60s. This makes of the church of Sololo a very young church made up of the first and second generations of Christians in the area.

Before the '60s, however, some signs pointed to the advent of Christianity. First of all, on 26 December 1914, the first Christian missionaries in the NFD¹¹⁴ spent the night in Sololo on their way to Abyssinia. Much later, in the '50s and early '60s, rumours spread in Sololo that certain people on the Ethiopian side were able to perform miracles and cure diseases. They were, most probably, the missionaries of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission stationed in Mega.¹¹⁵ Finally, the visits to Sololo by Stephen Houghton and Frs. Venturino and Tablino¹¹⁶ were prelude to the imminent implantation of the church in Sololo.

The first person to proclaim the Gospel in Sololo was Stephen Houghton, who, in the early '60s and taking advantage of his knowledge of the Boorana language, "preached all the way from Marsabit to Moyale."¹¹⁷ In 1965, he decided to establish a

¹¹⁴ They were Fr. Angelo Dal Canton and his companions. See page 21.

¹¹⁵ Cf. G. JILLO P. WARIO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹¹⁶ See note 108.

¹¹⁷ RUBEN ROBA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

chapel in Sololo of which he left in charge a Burji evangelist, Luko Robe,¹¹⁸ who thus became the first permanent missionary in Sololo.¹¹⁹ Luko Robe had proved to be a committed Christian in the Anglican mission of Marsabit and was taken for Bible training to Mega in 1963-1964.¹²⁰ During his stay in Sololo (1965-1970), he preached the Gospel in a very interesting way that many people remember to this day. He used to play Christian Boorana songs in a manual phonograph and then preach the Word of God to those who had been attracted by that unprecedented machine.¹²¹

One year after Luko's arrival, Bishop Cavallera came to Sololo with the intention of establishing there a mission. He pitched his tent under the "Universal Tree" (in the current market place) and, after due talks with the chiefs of Sololo, he was granted a piece of land, at the foot of Borole hill.¹²² The Catholic Parish of Sololo was, therefore, founded by Bishop Charles Cavallera on 17 July 1966.¹²³ Shortly thereafter, other Consolata Missionaries¹²⁴ replaced him in order to start the building of the

¹¹⁸ I had the great pleasure to meet him personally at his house in Marsabit last August.

¹¹⁹ Cf. W. WARIO – M. GALGALLO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; G. DABASSO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author. This first chapel, established by the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), was known by the people of Sololo as "*kanisa la Luko*" (Luko's church).

¹²⁰ He was probably trained in the Norwegian Lutheran Mission of Mega. During his training he had the chance to come down to Sololo a few times to preach the Gospel. Cf. L. ROBE, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹²¹ Cf. W. WARIO – M. GALGALLO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; L. ROBE, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹²² Cf. W. WARIO – M. GALGALLO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; G. DABASSO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹²³ Cf. Comboni Missionaries, *Annuario Comboniano*. 2002, 117.

¹²⁴ They were Fr. Aldo Vettori, Fr. Pietro Davoli, Fr. Domenico Zordan and Fr. Luigi Andeni, who gradually arrived in Sololo. Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 1; S. BOTTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 69; P. TABLINO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

mission.¹²⁵ During his brief stay in Sololo, Bishop Cavallera attracted “crowds of people” by offering gifts, food, medicines and work. Actually, many of the Christian sympathisers gathered by Luko Robe became followers of the Catholic Bishop, whose gifts had become more attractive than the manual phonograph of the zealous Burji evangelist.¹²⁶

The Consolata Missionaries, assisted eventually by two *Fidei Donum* priests,¹²⁷ developed the incipient mission of Sololo by building the church, the boarding school and the hospital¹²⁸ and by starting the catechumenate.¹²⁹ Then, by request of Bishop Cavallera, the Comboni Missionaries took over the Parish of Sololo in November 1973 to this date.¹³⁰

Approximately one century before the arrival of the Comboni Missionaries in Sololo, their founder wrote, “[Missionary sisters] are the pillars of the foreign apostolic Missions [...]”¹³¹ His daughters, the Comboni Missionary Sisters, would also become

¹²⁵ After founding the mission of Sololo, Bishop Cavallera went to found another Catholic Mission in Moyale in 1968, which was officially opened in 1969 by the Consolata Fr. John Dutto. Cf. C. PASINELLI, “Moyale Parish: A History”, 2.

¹²⁶ Cf. W. WARIO – M. GALGALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; P. GUYO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; L. ROBE, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹²⁷ They were Fr. Redento Tignoncini and Fr. Salvatore Scalas. Cf. Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 1; P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 50; P. TABLINO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹²⁸ See chapter 1, note 128.

¹²⁹ Cf. Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 1.

¹³⁰ Cf. L. VAROTTO, “Le Missioni Comboniane in Kenya”, 27. Some of the Comboni Missionaries who were in the Parish of Sololo during its initial stage were Fr. Provvido Crozzoletto, Br. Antonio Corbetta, Fr. Guido Poda, Fr. Tarcisio Corbetta and Fr. Angelo Olgiati. The last one, was incardinated, later on, in his own diocese in Italy. Cf. Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 1; S. BOTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 69; P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 50.

¹³¹ D. COMBONI, *Escritos*, 4465 (“my translation”).

the pillars of the Parish of Sololo, where they have been serving its people from October 1971 to December 2002.¹³² Their recent departure has been deeply regretted by both the local people (Christians and non-Christians alike) and the other missionaries.

Other pastoral agents who have contributed to the evangelisation of Sololo were some lay missionary volunteers¹³³ and, especially, the local catechists.¹³⁴

Thus, evangelisation in Sololo had, from its very beginning, a twofold character: the explicit proclamation of the Gospel and human promotion through educational and health services.¹³⁵ Consequently, a local Christian community sprung up and developed gradually until today. In 1984 this community consisted of 540 Catholic Christians and 250 Christians of other denominations.¹³⁶ Nowadays, the total number of Christians must be approximately 2,000.¹³⁷

¹³² During this span of missionary work, they have been committed to the hospital, nurseries, women's promotion and pastoral work. Some of the Comboni sisters who have worked in Sololo are Sr. Clorinda Zarantonello, Sr. Prassede Zamperini, Sr. Pierina Massoleni, Sr. Felicina Manzoni, Sr. Gina Serra, Sr. Donatella Reghezi, Sr. Gabriella Vangelista, Sr. Marisa Massoleni, Sr. Gabriella Miolo, Sr. Jessica and Sr. Hawariat. Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 1; S. BOTTIGNOLE, *The Profile of the Diocese of Marsabit*, 69; P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 45 (note 35).50; P. MASSOLENI, "CMSs in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹³³ The lay missionaries were mainly helping in the boarding school and in the hospital. Nowadays, there are two permanent lay doctors from Italy working in the health sector of the parish. They are Dr. Roberto Faccini and Dr. Giuseppe Bollini. Other volunteers come temporarily to render specific services to the mission.

¹³⁴ Some of the first Catholic catechists in Sololo were Badaso Sarbesa, Joseph Alake, Gabriel Jesus, John Boru, Simon Galma and Paul Tadicha. Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 2.

¹³⁵ The building of nurseries, churches and schools was extended to the villages around Sololo during the '70s. Cf. Sololo Parish, "Parish Profile of Sololo", 1. See chapter I, note 129.

¹³⁶ Cf. Comboni Missionaries, *Annuario Comboniano. 1984*, 84.

¹³⁷ See chapter I, note 145.

In the last 20 years, Christian denominations, other than the Catholic and the Anglican¹³⁸, have started missionary activities in Sololo. They are the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK)¹³⁹, the Emmanuel Church¹⁴⁰, the Evangelical Christian Church of Kenya (ECCK)¹⁴¹ and the Nazarene Church.¹⁴² None of these ecclesial communities has had any significant impact on the population of Sololo so far.

After 36 years of evangelisation in Sololo, we find both positive and negative aspects that can help the current Christian community to be grateful for former achievements and learn from past mistakes.

On the positive side, Christian missionaries have generally been warmly welcomed by the Boorana of Sololo and their work has been highly beneficial to them, bringing about a notable improvement in their quality of life. The young Boorana Christian community, though constitutes a minority, is quite influential and respected in

¹³⁸ The ACK has two parishes in the same territory of the Catholic Parish of Sololo. One is in Uran and the other one in Sololo. The pastor of the former is a Boorana and the one of the latter comes from Central Province; his name is Rev. Simon Bubi. Cf. S. BUBI, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹³⁹ The ELCK in Northern Kenya is the extension of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, which has been present, for a long time, in Southern Ethiopia. See notes 98, 120. The ELCK opened a station in Anona (Sololo) in 1981 and built there a boarding school in 1984. The current pastor of this church is Rev. Kora Woche Korre. Cf. K.W. KORRE, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹⁴⁰ The Emmanuel Church has a small group of faithful in Uran. Its leader resides in Marsabit. Cf. S. BUBI, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹⁴¹ The ECCK comes from South Korea and is established in Walda. Some say that it has absorbed the Emmanuel Church in Uran. Cf. J.W. GUYO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹⁴² The Nazarene Church was founded in Sololo in September 1999 by American missionaries who reside in Nairobi. It consists of three local evangelists and 20 faithful. Cf. J.W. GUYO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

the social life of the area.¹⁴³ Moreover, there are some Christian faithful whose faith and active participation in the life of the church is an example to all.

On the negative side, the human promotion projects carried out by the missionaries have turned out to have an unhealthy side-effect. This side-effect consists in that “many converts seem to have accepted Christianity not so much as a spiritual revelation from God and as a way of eternal salvation, but as a practical means of improving their present condition by making use of the facilities offered by the missions.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, charity became, unwittingly, an agent of superficial conversion to Christianity.¹⁴⁵ This has become the cause of “Christian nominalism” and many drop-outs when better opportunities are offered. Moreover, Christianity (especially Catholicism) is still very much perceived by many Boorana as “the religion of the whites” in contrast with the general understanding of Islam as an African, or even Boorana, religion. The main reason for this identification is a long-lasting foreign leadership of the church that keeps itself distant from the people. This distance perceived in the Christian foreign leaders is mainly caused by their ignorance of the local language and culture and by their lack of stability.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Some of its members hold or have held important administrative or government positions, while others are highly respected and consulted for common affairs related to the life of the community. As a matter of fact, some of the current assistant chiefs are Christians and former catechists.

¹⁴⁴ P. TABIINO, *The Gabra*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. J. BAUR, *The Catholic Church in Kenya*, 151.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Sololo Parish, “Contribution to the African Synod”, 2.4; L. VAROTTO, “Le Missioni Comboniane in Kenya”, 28.35; N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 64; RUBEN ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the history of Islam and Christianity in Kenya, in the Kenya Boraana and, concretely, in Sololo. I have also analysed how the Boraana of Sololo have received both religions and to which extent they have made them their own. It is now time to look at their current coexistence and to draw up some pastoral suggestions.

Chapter III

The Christians of Sololo: Ministers of Dialogue and Collaboration

Introduction

At this point, the reader must be somewhat familiar with the geography and people of Sololo, their history and the history of the advent of Islam and Christianity in the area. In this last chapter, I intend to analyse the current situation of interreligious coexistence in Sololo, to reflect upon it from a Christian perspective and to suggest some pastoral guidelines related to this coexistence.

1. Current Situation of Muslim-Christian Coexistence in Sololo

As it was explained in the second chapter, both Islam and Christianity are rather recent religions in Sololo. Islam has become, in few years, the dominant religion of the area, while Christianity is represented by a minority of the population. This section will describe the current relationship between the followers of either religion.

1.1 General Situation

Most of my informants stated that the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Sololo has generally been good and peaceful. Muslims use to participate in Christian feasts and vice versa. Moreover, members of both groups generally attend together important events in the town such as funerals or marriages, no matter the religious affiliation of their protagonists.¹ This solidarity and good understanding is possible because both groups are united by Boorana and family bonds.²

Thus, in words of the recent Catholic teaching on interreligious dialogue, there exists in Sololo a “dialogue of life” by which “people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations” (DP 42).

There is, however, plenty of room for improvement concerning a “dialogue of action, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people” (DP 42). It is true that Christian organisations are especially committed to the human promotion of both Christians and Muslims in the area,³ but

¹ Cf. S. BUBI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; C. MALICHA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; M. SHAMA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

² Cf. J. MUTEGI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; RUBEN ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

³ Most Muslims in Sololo recognise the goodness of the presence of Christian missionaries expressed mainly in their commitment to human promotion. Cf. G. DIBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

there is little initiative to join hands in this noble enterprise. Likewise, there lacks an effort on both sides to appreciate and share each other's spiritual values and riches.⁴

This has recently provoked religious tensions that have entailed certain enmity between both groups. The clearest example of religious tension in Sololo has been the consecutive erection and destruction of a cross set by the Catholic community on the top of Borole hill (see appendix 5). Moreover, some religious leaders, have, at times, fostered religious enmity by preaching openly against the other religion or by adopting competitive and proselytising attitudes.⁵ Consequently, each religious group has got its own prejudices against the other.⁶ Obviously, these prejudices need to be overcome in order to make interreligious dialogue possible in Sololo.

One of the issues that is causing preoccupation within the Christian community of Sololo is the easy change of religion in some of its members. I will look into this phenomenon in the next point.

⁴ This is what the above quoted document understands by "dialogue of theological exchange" and "dialogue of religious experience" (cf. DP 42).

⁵ On the part of the Muslims, this was evident during the Islamic Conference of April 2000 (see page 45). On the part of the Christians, it has happened during two Protestant rallies held in the town between 1999 and 2000 and through the contemptuous attitude of a certain Catholic priest. Cf. S. BUBI, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; RUBEN ROBA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

⁶ For example, a common prejudice among some Christians is the perception of Islam as a violent, fundamentalist, domineering and "easy" religion. On the other hand, some Muslims look at Christianity as a Western, corrupt, idolatrous and "false" religion. Cf. Sololo Parish, "Contribution to the African Synod", 2-3; K.W. KORRE, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; RUBEN ROBA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

1.2 *Shift in Religious Affiliation*

In the last few years, “a number of Christians have crossed over to Islam.”⁷ This worrying phenomenon is mainly taking place among the youth, though, at times, it has also happened among adult and influential persons. Religious shift in the opposite direction (i.e. from Islam to Christianity) rarely takes place. The main reason for this, according to me, is “the community aspect of the Muslim faith, [which] is certainly one of the main reasons for the success of Islam in Black Africa.”⁸ Nevertheless, unlike in other Islamic areas of the country, in Sololo, a Muslim can freely decide to become a Christian without being “persecuted” by his or her own family.⁹

During my stay in Sololo, I identified four factors that are prompting Christian conversions to Islam. They are the following.

First of all, in some individuals, “Christian faith and conviction are not deep enough and other values (e.g. economic prosperity, social status, etc.) take priority over religion.”¹⁰ This is the result of a superficial evangelisation based on charity as an agent of conversion.¹¹

⁷ Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 38.

⁸ V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 33. See page 43.

⁹ The shift from Islam to Christianity, though rare, normally takes place through marriage (in the case of women) and by personal option (in the case of men). Cf. N. DERA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. J.W. GUYO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. The Protestant Churches believe that “their mission is also to convert some Muslims into Christianity, something that is possible.” K.W. KORRE, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹⁰ G. JILLO P. WARIQI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹¹ See page 62. Before crossing over to Islam, the Christians belonging to this group were usually “nominal Christians”, that is, they seldom, if ever, participated in the activities and prayers of the church. Cf. Sololo Parish, “Contribution to the African Synod”, 3.

Secondly, there are a number of baptised and even confirmed boys, who, after finishing their secondary education, decide to become Muslims. The reason for this change is the difficulty experienced in belonging to a minority, which is stressed by the widespread believe that all Boorana are called to be Muslims.¹² Furthermore, some students are Christians just to have access to educational privileges available to Christians alone.¹³ Naturally, as soon as they have benefited from those privileges, they easily succumb to social pressure.

The third factor that causes shift in religion is intermarriage. This factor affects mainly the girls because the husband's religion generally determines the wife's. Since the majority of the population in Sololo is Muslim, the shift usually takes place from Christianity to Islam. Moreover, some Muslim families have recently compelled their daughter's suitor to embrace Islam in order to marry her.¹⁴

¹² This pressure is mainly caused by their Muslim peers or relatives and, when far from their homeland, by their Somali neighbours. That is the case of some young men who go to work or do further studies in important cities of the country such as Mombasa or Nairobi. There, they lack the support of a Boorana Christian community and feel secure among other peoples of the North, especially the Somali, who live in predominantly Muslim areas of the city. In this context, the fear of dying and not being buried in a "good way" (Muslims would not organise the burial of non-Muslims) makes them become Muslims. Cf. P. GUYO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; C. MALICHA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; G. VANGELISTA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹³ A clear example of this situation is the one of St. Paul's Secondary School. This is a school for boys run by the La Salle Brothers in Marsabit that constitutes one of the best schools in Eastern Province. Only the best Catholic students of the diocese have access to it. Some Catholic students of Sololo, after finishing their secondary education at that school, have embraced Islam. Cf. G. JILLO-P. WARIO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

¹⁴ Cf. Sololo Parish, "Contribution to the African Synod", 3; YCS OFFICIALS, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; G. GUYO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; S. BONAYA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author. A circular drawn up by the "Nairobi Deanery Priests and Laity" in 1993 claimed that "reports from every part of East Africa reveal that Muslims have a systematic policy of marrying Christian girls after bribing the parents with a lot of money." This statement was regarded in Muslim circles as unfounded. Cf. N.M. KAHUMBI, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya", 133.

Finally, some Christians assert that this change of religion has also been provoked by a certain decrease in apostolic zeal and initiative on the part of the Christian evangelising team. At times, confrontations with the church leaders have also been the cause for Christian dropouts.¹⁵

Despite the shift in religious affiliation and the religious tensions already mentioned, there is a sense of unity and solidarity that guarantees peace to both Christians and Muslims in Sololo. The cornerstone of this unity and solidarity is *Nagaa Boorana* (Peace of the Boorana).

1.3 “*Nagaa Boorana*”: the Guarantee of Peace and Unity

The common Boorana cultural identity of the inhabitants of Sololo is what keeps them together and in harmony. No matter what conflicts may arise, there is always room for common understanding and reconciliation.¹⁶ Thus, unity is preserved, life is peaceful and collaboration possible, despite the diversity of religion.¹⁷ This is what the Boorana themselves call *Nagaa Boorana*,¹⁸ a value that has guaranteed the cohesion and survival of the Boorana in the midst of external influences and aggressions.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cf. Sololo Parish, “Contribution to the African Synod”, 3.

¹⁶ “Any [internal] conflict is taken to the elders first and forwarded to other powerful leaders when defeated. [...] After praying and chewing coffee, the elders will judge the case and state a fine.” K.R. DUBA, “Boorana”, 6.11.

¹⁷ Cf. W. WARIO - M. GALGALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author; G. DABASSO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

¹⁸ See page 14; chapter II, note 50.

¹⁹ Cf. A. FEDDERS - C. SALVADORI, *Peoples and Cultures of Kenya*, 35. The proverb “*Qmuba ka ufi ka ajae ufura kutani ingatani*” (one cannot mutilate his own diseased finger), expresses the idea of *Nagaa Boorana*. This means that even when some members of the community seem to be wrong, their

Nevertheless, some foreign influences are infiltrating the Boorana society of Sololo and are becoming a real threat to *Nagaa Boorana*.²⁰ These are mainly the phenomenon of globalisation and the fundamentalist and proselytising approach of some religious movements. The former might gradually bring about the loss of the Boorana cultural heritage, while the latter is demanding a clear break with any kind of traditional philosophy of life.²¹

The Boorana Catholics of Sololo are called to witness to the fact that it is possible to be Boorana and Christian at the same time and thus defenders and promoters of *Nagaa Boorana*. This issue will be developed in the next section.

2. Theological Reflection

Following the previous line of thought, I want to show how the Christians of Sololo are called to be ministers of interreligious dialogue by virtue of both their Boorana culture and their Christian and, more specifically, Catholic identity. In the course of this reflection it is important to keep in mind that interreligious dialogue

Boorana identity keeps them safe and united to the others. Cf. RICHARD ROBA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

²⁰ This was the case, in the Waso area, of Merti, where the missionary approach of the first Catholic Missionaries "divided Merti town into Muslim settlements (the majority) and a *Christian manyatta* located near the Catholic Mission. The town was thus separated along religious lines. As the number of Christians increased, the geographical isolation of the homesteads of Christians created a certain animosity between the two religious communities in a town populated mainly by the *Waso Boorana*." M.I. AGUILAR, "Dialogue with Islam", 326. See also *Ibid.*, 335; F. PONSI, "Carving out a Living Space", 1-5.

²¹ Cf. J. STAMER, *Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 73; W. WARIO · M. GALGALLO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author. This was the case of the Muslim Conference of April 2000, in which Muslims were exhorted not to attend any Christian celebration or event, even if it involved fellow Boorana or close relatives. Such behaviour would be regarded as a curse in Boorana tradition. Cf. M. SHAMA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

entails collaboration (cf. EA 66). The latter is fundamental in the African context, where the spirit of community and co-operation is far more important than the exchange of theological concepts and religious experiences.

2.1 Called to Dialogue and Collaboration as Boorana

It would be too theoretical and almost irrelevant to the Christians of Sololo to reflect upon the value of interreligious dialogue from a purely doctrinal perspective. Thus, it is of utmost importance to start this theological reflection from “whatever goodness is found [...] in the particular customs and culture of [the Boorana, which, through the Gospel], far from being lost, is purified, raised to a higher level and reaches its perfection [...]” (AG 9; cf. LG 17).

In this case, the traditional value *Nagaa Boorana* constitutes the starting point of this reflection. As I stated before, *Nagaa Boorana* is the cornerstone of cohesion, peace and solidarity within the Boorana community. When the community is made up of different religious groups – as it is the case of Sololo – , *Nagaa Boorana* implies unity, harmony and collaboration among them. This is actually what the Catholic Church understands by interreligious dialogue, “in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together toward truth and to work together in projects of common concern” (DM 13; cf. DP 2).

Thus, on account of *Nagaa Boorana*, all Boorana, whether Muslim, Traditionalist or Christian, are called to be ministers of interreligious dialogue and collaboration within the Boorana community. Christian Boorana, moreover, by virtue of

their baptism, are exhorted to a more radical commitment to interreligious dialogue. This will be developed in the next section.

2.2 Called to Dialogue and Collaboration as Christian Boorana

I have already explained how *Nagaa Boorana* belongs to the “goodness” found in Boorana culture. Following, I intend to set out one of the ways by which, according to me, *Nagaa Boorana* “is raised to a higher level” (AG 9) through its encounter with the Gospel.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is presented as the Messiah, who did not come “to abolish the Law or the Prophets [...] but to complete them” (Mt 5:17). This completion consists in a radical fulfilment of the law based on its spirit and not on its letter. Thus, for example, the exhortation “You will love your neighbour and hate your enemy” becomes “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Mt 5:43-44). Likewise, when Jesus as Saviour comes into contact with Boorana tradition, the latter is not abolished but completed. In the case of *Nagaa Boorana*, it reaches its perfection through the same Christian process of ‘radicalisation’: “You have heard how it was said, “Safeguard unity and peace within the community”. But I say this to you, be agents of unity and peace with all peoples. For if you keep these values among yourselves alone, what share will you have with my Father who wishes that every one may have eternal life?” (Cf. Mt 5:21-48; Jn 3:16).

Thus, by accepting the Gospel, the Christian Boorana are called not only to be defenders and promoters of *Nagaa Boorana*, but also of “*Nagaa Namuma*” (Peace of humankind). In words of the Vatican II Fathers,

Christ [...] called a race made up of Jews and Gentiles [Boorana and non-Boorana] which [...] would be the new People of God. [...] This messianic people, although it does not actually include all [human beings], and at times may appear a small flock, is, however, a most sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race (LG 9).

Hence, Christian Boorana, by virtue of their baptism, overcome ethnic boundaries and become ministers of dialogue and co-operation among all peoples.

2.3 Called to Dialogue and Collaboration as Catholic Christian Boorana

The final stage of this reflection will be focused on the Catholic tradition of Muslim-Christian dialogue and its implications for the Catholics of Sololo.

It would be wrong to claim that the Catholic commitment to interreligious dialogue with Islam started with Vatican II. Actually, in the course of the history of Muslim-Christian coexistence generally characterised by quarrels dissensions and wars (cf. NA 3)²², some Christians adopted a positive approach to Islam based on respect, appreciation and concern. Among them, the following are outstanding: St. John Damascene,²³ St. Francis of Assisi,²⁴ Bl. Raymond Lull,²⁵ Charles de Foucaould²⁶ and Popes Gregory VII and Pius II.²⁷

²² See also JOHN PAUL II, “To the Young Muslims of Morocco”, 10.

²³ This Father of the Church (645-750), “saw Muhammad as a theologian who led his people from idolatry to a monotheistic religion though full of errors.” Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 42.

Certainly, the great contribution of Vatican II in the field of interreligious dialogue was to make of those exceptional cases the norm and model of the Catholic approach to Islam. This change of perspective was based on the certainty that “those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways” (LG 16) and that other religions “often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all [people]” (NA 2).

In the case of Islam, the Council Fathers asserted that “the Church has a high regard for [its followers]” (NA 3), who “profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and adore the one, merciful God, [humankind’s] judge on the last day” (LG 16). They also recognised that Muslims “venerate Jesus as prophet, [honour] his Virgin Mother [...], esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting” (NA 3). The Council finally encouraged all to forget the past, to work for mutual understanding and to “preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values” (NA 3).

²⁴ St. Francis “went into the middle of the Muslim army in June 1219 to start a peaceful dialogue with the officers and sultans.” Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 42. See also DM 17.

²⁵ This ‘Spanish’ mystic, writer and missionary (1235-1316) looked for common ground between Islam, Christianity and Judaism and promoted the foundation of schools of oriental languages in Aragon. Cf. F.A. YATE, “Lull, Raymond, Bl.”, 1074-1075.

²⁶ This remarkable missionary (1858-1916), aimed to show himself as a man of God and ‘the universal brother’ in a completely Muslim environment. Cf. A.J. WOUTERS, “Foucauld, Charles De”, 1040. See also DM 17.

²⁷ These popes showed respect and concern for Muslims in their letters written to Muslim leaders in 1076 and 1470 respectively. Cf. Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 43.

This teaching has often been repeated²⁸ and developed in the last 30 years. In this process, interreligious dialogue has been identified as a principal element of the mission of the church because of the fact that this mission “can never be separated from love and respect for others” (DM 19).

The local church of Marsabit has been enriched by these principles and has tried to apply them to her own reality. During the ‘Diocesan Synod’,²⁹ Bishop Ambrose Ravasi, considered the issue of “relation with our brother Muslims” as one of the “areas of immediate and urgent concern.”³⁰ Consequently, in the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese, the local church committed herself to form communities of believers “open to dialogue and co-operation with other Christians as well as non-Christian communities.”³¹

Summarising, in the course of this theological reflection, I have tried to show how the Catholic Boorana are called to be ministers of dialogue and collaboration within their own community, with other ethnic groups and with followers of other religions, specifically with Muslims. In the following section I will draw up some pastoral suggestions that can help the Catholic community of Sololo in this enterprise.

²⁸ See, for example, JOHN PAUL II, “To the Muslim Leaders of Kenya in Nairobi”. See also EA 66.

²⁹ See chapter II, note 111.

³⁰ A. RAVASI, “Address of Bishop Ravasi”, III.

³¹ Diocese of Marsabit, *The Church We Want To Be*, 6, d. Unfortunately, the issue of interreligious dialogue was relegated to personal initiative, as many other “immediate and urgent concerns” took priority in the implementation of the pastoral plan. In the last few years, however, some informative seminars on Islam have been organised in different centres of the diocese. Cf. R. RONZANI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Marsabit Diocese”, interviewed by author.

3. Pastoral suggestions

The previous description of Muslim-Christian coexistence in Sololo and the theological reflection on interreligious dialogue would be useless if not followed by a concrete plan of action. This plan, in order to be effective, needs to be worked out by the Catholic community of Sololo itself. Here, I just intend to set out some pastoral suggestions that might be helpful in such an endeavour. In order to do so, I will try to address three main needs that I have so far perceived in the Parish of Sololo: the need for inculturation, the need to strengthen the Christians in their faith and the need to introduce the whole Catholic community to new ways of Muslim-Christian dialogue and collaboration.

3.1 *Inculturation*

The Christians of Sololo constitute, as already stated, the first and second generations of a very young church. Thus, it is the responsibility of the church leaders to see to it that these Christians “feel at home” in their new community. In the case of the Boorana, for whom “it is impossible to talk of culture and religion as two different entities”,³² this is of paramount importance. In order to achieve this aim, the following suggestions need to be taken into account.

³² N.J. WAQO, “The Church and the Booran”, 89.

Church leaders are highly encouraged to know Boorana language, traditions and customs, and to live close to the people whom they serve.³³

The language used in the liturgy should be Boorana, and the Christian rituals already adapted to some Boorana traditional celebrations should often be used.³⁴

Special attention has to be paid to the promotion and formation of local church leaders.³⁵

The Catholic Boorana of Sololo are called to preserve, promote and transmit all positive values of Boorana culture, such as *Nagua Boorana*.³⁶

The need to inculturate the Christian message among the Boorana is urgent. If this need is neglected, the young Christian community already existent runs the risk of being disintegrated and absorbed by Islam. If this need is progressively met, the church of Sololo will be able to assert, using the words of John Paul II, that “not only is Christianity relevant to [the Boorana], but Christ, in the members of his body is himself a [Boorana].”³⁷

³³ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 76-77; Diocese of Marsabit, *The Church We Want to Be*, 7, a; L. VAROTTO, “Le Missioni Comboniane in Kenya”, 28.

³⁴ V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 34-35; cf. Diocese of Marsabit, *The Church We Want to Be*, 7, b; Sololo Parish, “Contribution to the African Synod”, 5; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 266. This is the case, for example, of the traditional ceremony for the naming of a child, to which baptism has been incorporated.

³⁵ Due to the cultural resistance to celibacy, the ordination of permanent deacons in the diocese could be of great help in the building up of a “more Boorana” church. Cf. Sololo Parish, “Contribution to the African Synod”, 5; P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 391; RUBEN ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

³⁶ W. WARIO – M. GAI GALLO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

³⁷ JOHN PAUL II, “To the Bishops of Kenya”.

3.2 Consolidation of Christian Faith

Due to the recent advent of Christianity in Sololo, some people have not yet heard the Gospel in its fullness. Moreover, the Christian community already existent is in a process of deepening their own faith. Therefore, the evangelising team of Sololo is required to devote itself to spreading the Good News of Christ and to strengthening the faith of the young Christian community in the following or similar ways.

- By revitalising first evangelisation activities among followers of Boorana Traditional religion.³⁸
- By bringing the Christian faithful to the fullness of Christian life through continuous catechesis³⁹ and, particularly, through Bible apostolate.
 - By relying on well trained catechists who are able to bring the Christian message closer to the people.⁴⁰
- By strengthening the Small Christian Communities of the parish. This is vitally important in Sololo, where Christians are badly in need of the moral support of a community.⁴¹

³⁸ The few Kenya Traditionalist Boorana still existing, are now making a choice between Islam and Christianity. Their evangelisation is "a real and urgent priority" for the church of Sololo because "once a person declares himself [herself] to be a Muslim, even if his [her] religious convictions are weak, [...] never he [she] will become a Christian, neither he [she] nor his [her] children. [...] Thus, if we fail to act now, the consequence will be a rapid Islamisation of these peoples, who are still open to Christianity [...]. This campaign [...] cannot be carried out in a spirit of competition with Islam but only with the desire to preach Christ to those who are still open to His message today." V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 29-30.

³⁹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, "To the Bishops of Kenya".

⁴⁰ Cf. V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 31; A. RAVASI, "Interreligious Dialogue in Marsabit Diocese", interviewed by author.

⁴¹ Cf. V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 33; A. RAVASI, "Interreligious Dialogue in Marsabit Diocese", interviewed by author. Small Christian Communities are very important in a Muslim

By showing special pastoral care for the Christian youth so as to develop in them a sense of belonging to the church.

By following up those Christians who, for different reasons, start to distance themselves from the church,⁴² and those who migrate to other parts of the country.⁴³

By fostering an ecumenical spirit among all Christians in Sololo. This would not only promote unity among the Christian minority, but also constitute an important aspect of evangelisation.⁴⁴

These pastoral initiatives would help the local Christians of Sololo to grow firm in faith and to be freed from a spirit of timidity and fear that hinders genuine dialogue with their bother Muslims.⁴⁵

3.3 Muslim-Christian Dialogue

At the beginning of this chapter I referred to the existence of a “dialogue of life” between Christians and Muslims in Sololo. This form of dialogue is fundamental and constitutes the basis of any kind of dialogue and collaboration. Taking into account the Catholic directives on interreligious dialogue and the steady spread of Islam in the area,

environment, where “the community aspect of the Muslim faith is certainly one of the main reasons for the success of Islam in Black Africa.” V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 33

⁴² Cf. V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 37-38. RUBEN ROBA, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author.

⁴³ “If we do not take action, we will lose all our Christians in big cities such as Nairobi.” P. TABIINO, “Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo”, interviewed by author. See note 12.

⁴⁴ “[...] may they be so perfected in unity that the world will recognise that it was you who sent me and that you have loved them as you loved me” (Jn 17:23).

⁴⁵ Cf. Diocese of Marsabit, “The Church We Are”, III, 6; See also DP 47-48.

the Christian community of Sololo is called to a deeper commitment to Muslim-Christian dialogue. This commitment may be carried out taking into account the following steps.

“The religious leaders of the Christian community need to believe that encounter and dialogue is part of God’s work among His people.”⁴⁶

Furthermore, they must avoid confrontations and promote respect and concern for their brother Muslims.⁴⁷ Only in this way mutual prejudices will cease.

Those in leadership should be acquainted with Islam and to instruct their faithful in the basic tenets of this religion.⁴⁸

The “dialogue of action” already existent in Sololo⁴⁹ needs to be improved. First of all, it is necessary to establish deep personal and community motivations for the already established collaboration between Muslims and Christians in Sololo (e.g. in the hospital and schools). Secondly, it is highly advisable to find out other ways of collaboration, such as Adult Education

⁴⁶ M.I. AGUILAR, “Dialogue with Islam”, 335.

⁴⁷ Cf. W.W. BORU, “Interreligious Dialogue in Marsabit Diocese”, interviewed by author; A. RAVASI, “Interreligious Dialogue in Marsabit Diocese”, interviewed by author.

⁴⁸ Cf. Daystar Communications, *Unreached Peoples of Kenya*, 76; M.I. AGUILAR, “Dialogue with Islam”, 335. They should also make known the heritage of the church to those Muslims who might be interested in it, so as to establish the foundation of a “dialogue of theological exchange.” Cf. JOHN PAUL II, “To the Muslim Leaders of Kenya”. See also DP 42.

⁴⁹ See page 65.

programmes for men and women, where members of both religions are involved at all levels.⁵⁰

Mixed marriages are usually discouraged by the Catholic Church. When they take place, the Catholic partner is exhorted “to remain steadfast in the faith” (MM). Moreover, the other partner’s “beliefs are to be treated with respect” (FC 78). These directives are still difficult to be applied in the context of Sololo.⁵¹ Their implementation highly depends on the success of the following point.

“Support groups that bring women of various religions in search of equality”⁵² should be encouraged. Certainly, “everything that contributes to the formation and promotion of women in the Muslim world is an evangelical service.”⁵³ Hence the importance of a community of Sisters in Sololo.

Finally, taking into account that “the true missionary is the saint” (RM 90), Christian missionaries in Sololo are called to be “contemplative in action”, inspired by the example of love for the Muslims shown by the “universal brother” Charles de Foucauld (cf. DM 17).⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Cf. C. SPADAVECCHIA, “Personal Life Experience”, interviewed by author.

⁵¹ Cf. Sololo Parish, “Contribution to the African Synod”, 3.

⁵² Department of History of Christianity, “A Historical Search”, 49.

⁵³ V. MERTENS, *Islam in Black Africa*, 36. See also R. MUTHI, “Emerging Gender Issues”, 62-

⁵⁴ See note 26. It is only in this spirit that a “dialogue of religious experience” can be achieved. Through this form of dialogue, “persons rooted in their own religious traditions can share their

Certainly, Muslim-Christian dialogue is not easy, and at times one of the parties may misunderstand and reject all efforts directed to this noble end. Nevertheless, we, Catholics, should be aware that we are not alone in this enterprise. Both other Christian denominations⁵⁵ and a number of Muslims⁵⁶ also feel the need to build positive and constructive interreligious relations. But even when difficulties are huge and numerous, “the Church’s commitment to dialogue remains firm and irreversible” (DP 54).

Conclusion

In this last chapter I have presented the current situation of Muslim-Christian coexistence in Sololo. I have also reflected on the call of every Christian as minister of dialogue and collaboration, and set out a number of suggestions that can be useful to the Parish of Sololo in that regard.

However, something more ought to be said concerning the implementation of these ideals. The Christians, main agents of a “dialogue of life”, need to be empowered to commit themselves to other forms of dialogue. Therefore, action should be taken at diocesan level through the creation of an Office, within the Pastoral Department,

experiences of prayer, contemplation, faith, and duty, as well as their expressions and ways of searching for the Absolute” (DM 35).

⁵⁵ In the Anglican Church, for example, the Post Lambeth Conference Report states, “Relationships between Christians and people of other Faiths should be founded on mutual respect, sensitivity to their deepest faith commitments and experiences, and a willingness to be their servants for Christ’s sake.” J.A. CHESWORTH, “Anglican Relations”, 17.

⁵⁶ Muslims in Kenya feel generally discriminated by the Christian majority. However, they also believe that “Christians and Muslims should not oppose one another. [...] Instead, they should work together to solve the myriad of problems that affect them. [...] Furthermore they should live peacefully and assist one another.” N.M. KAHUMBI, “Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya”, 134.

exclusively dedicated to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue (concretely Muslim-Christian dialogue).⁵⁷ This Office would have the following priorities.

- To strengthen, in collaboration with the Catechetical Office, the faith of the Christians, especially through Bible apostolate.
 - To foster the community aspect in the local church so as to boost the sense of unity, security and self-respect in the Christians. This can be achieved by promoting an ecumenical spirit, strengthening the Small Christian Communities and forming and supporting Christian social leaders.
 - To instruct all Christians - in a systematic, objective, and respectful way - in the tenets, values and social dimension of Islam.
- To promote ways of collaboration between Christians and Muslims, especially in the field of woman's integral development.

In this way, dialogue and collaboration would become, in the diocese of Marsabit - and consequently in Sololo -, "a source of hope and a factor of communion in mutual transformation" (DM 43).

⁵⁷ The issue of Muslim-Christian dialogue is still regarded as one among many others and not as a priority in the diocese. Cf. Diocese of Marsabit, *The Church We Want to Be*, 24; Diocese of Marsabit, *Diocesan Pastoral Project 2001-2005*, 18; Diocese of Marsabit, *Strategic Plan 2002-2006*, 2-5.

CONCLUSION

The elaboration of this essay has been a great opportunity for me to know better the Boorana people and, therefore, to value their cultural heritage. I am really grateful for all what I have learnt from them.

Likewise, I have been very pleased to witness to and “write something on the ‘marvels’ that God made in the last century in Kenya, including the NFD.”¹ In this process, I have certainly been edified and encouraged by the generous example of great missionaries such as Rev. Johan Ludwig Krapf, Cardinal Massaja, Canon Joseph Allamano, Fr. Angelo Dal Canton, Bishop Charles Cavallera, Rev. Stephen Houghton, the evangelist Luko Robe and Fr. Paul Tablino.²

This work has also been a good occasion for me to deepen my knowledge of Islam and to treasure the legacy of this religion in East Africa. Furthermore, the reading of some Muslim authors, whom I have come across during my investigation, has helped me to look at certain issues from the Muslim perspective and to recognise that I also have certain prejudices against Islam that need to be purified.

¹ P. TABLINO, “Dear James”, Letter to the author, 15th January 2003.

² I have had the great privilege to meet personally the last two of them during my fieldwork.

The theological reflection on the Christian call to dialogue and collaboration has awoken in me the awareness that I am also called to be a minister of dialogue and collaboration between Christians and Muslims and, more generally, among all peoples. Despite the difficulties, the daily life of the Christians and Muslims of Sololo has taught me that it is really possible to live as brothers and sisters. To them goes my most sincere appreciation and encouragement.

Finally, as a Comboni Missionary, this study has been of great advantage for me. Our founder, Daniel Comboni (1831-1881), worked, rejoiced, suffered and died in the Vicariate of Central Africa, a highly influenced area by Islam. His position — in accordance with the theology of his time — was generally one of rejection and competition. Nevertheless, he understood that in the evangelisation of Central Africa it was of paramount importance “to study Arabic [...] and to be acquainted with Muslim customs and habits [...]”³ as well as to collaborate with the Muslim authorities and be living witnesses of charity among them.⁴

We, his sons and daughters, who still work with and among Muslims, should take advantage of the teachings of the Vatican II and proclaim with our own lives that “the Good Shepherd offered his life on the Cross for *humanity*.”⁵

³ D. COMBONI, *Escritos*, 2228 (“my translation”).

⁴ Cf. D. COMBONI, *Escritos*, 3197.4832 (“my translation”).

⁵ Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, *Rule of Life*, 3 (“emphasis mine”).

ABBREVIATIONS

ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AFER	<i>African Ecclesial Review</i>
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i>
al.	<i>Alii</i> — other persons
ANA	<i>Apostolate to Nomads Amecea</i>
BCMS	Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society
BPP	<i>British Parliamentary Papers</i> , Shanon 1971.
CACS	<i>C.U.E.A. African Christian Studies</i>
cf.	<i>Confer</i> — compare
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CMSs	Comboni Missionary Sisters
DM	<i>Dialogue and Mission</i>
DP	<i>Dialogue and Proclamation</i>
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> — for example
EA	<i>Ecclesia in Africa</i>
ECCK	Evangelical Christian Church of Kenya
ed.	Edited by
EI	<i>The Encyclopedia of Islam. New Edition</i> , Leiden 1997.
ELCK	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio</i>
i.c.	<i>id est</i> — that is
<i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibidem</i> — in the aforementioned place
ID	F. GIOIA, ed., <i>Interreligious Dialogue. The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church</i> , Boston 1997.
IG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
MM	<i>Matrimonia Mixta</i>
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
NCE	<i>New Catholic Encyclopedia</i> , Washington 1967.
NFD	Northern Frontier District
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
VCI	A. Flannery, ed., <i>Vatican Council II</i> , I-II, Bombay-Dublin 1975-1982.
YCS	Young Christian Students

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APPENDIX I: POPULATION TABLE¹

PLACE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	HOUSEHOLDS	SQ KM	DENSITY
KENYA	14,205,589	14,481,018	28,686,607	6,371,370	581,677	49
EASTERN	2,247,284	2,384,495	4,631,779	957,648	153,473	30
MARSABIT	60,940	60,538	121,478	30,000	61,296	2
Maikona	10,051	9,467	19,518	4,916	20,556	1
Turbi	748	732	1,480	389	2,870	1
MOYALE	26,559	26,920	53,479	10,308	9,390	6
Obbu	3,923	4,120	8,043	1,607	2,767	3
Dambala F.	519	444	963	217	1,009	1
Dambala F.	198	200	398	93	318	1
Garba	321	244	565	124	691	1
Sololo	2,826	3,083	5,909	1,118	129	46
Anona	530	458	988	177	16	61
Mado Adi	350	354	704	160	58	12
Sololo Town	1,745	2,053	3,798	732	46	82
Waye Godha	201	218	419	49	8	54
Sololo Mtno	578	593	1,171	272	1,629	1
Ambalo	128	114	242	61	884	0
Sololo Mtno	450	479	929	211	745	1
Uran	1,678	1,831	3,509	839	3,257	1
Golole	567	715	1,282	306	72	18
Golole	334	426	760	186	27	28
Kar Bururi	233	289	522	120	45	11
Rawana	150	149	299	62	2,215	0
Banale	33	31	64	15	187	0
Rawana	117	118	235	47	2,028	0
Uran	839	844	1,683	407	366	5
Lataka	392	345	737	181	344	2
Uran	447	499	946	226	22	42
Walda	122	123	245	64	602	0

COUNTRY; PROVINCE; DISTRICT; Division; Location; Sub-location.

¹ Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, xxxiii-xxxiv.1*69.1*78-1*79. This table consists of the Divisions, Locations and Sub-locations that belong to Sololo Parish.

APPENDIX 2: BOORANA TRADITIONAL PRAYER¹

This prayer is directed by an elder. To each invocation, the assembly answers, “*Nageh!*”.

<i>Bari Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in the season	Peace!
<i>Barin Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace at dawn	Peace!
<i>Tissa Ellen Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace on the herds	Peace!
<i>Elma Gadin Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace on the one who milks	Peace!
<i>Golbon Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in Golbo	Peace!
<i>Dirren Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in Dirre	Peace!
<i>Diri Liban Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in Liban region	Peace!
<i>Tukan Sallan Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace at nine permanent wells	Peace!
<i>Badaan Saden Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace on the three mountain ranges	Peace!
<i>Ali Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in the wilderness	Peace!
<i>Warri Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in the house	Peace!
<i>For Gosen Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace in the grazing camps	Peace!
<i>Gos Sabbo Gon Nagah</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Peace on both Sabbo and Gonna	Peace!
<i>Waqi Robe Hara Dambula Gut</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	May there be rain to fill dams	Peace!
<i>Sayen Horte Mona Gut</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	May cattle multiply and fill homas	Peace!
<i>Boran Waqi Nagah Gut</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	May God fill Boorana with peace	Peace!
<i>Hora Bula</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	Grow wealthy and live long	Peace!
<i>Hangafa Mandan Bula</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	May your elder and children live long	Peace!
<i>Debana</i>	<i>Nageh!</i>	May you and your herds multiply	Peace!

¹ Source: Sololo Parish, “Parish Profile of Sololo”, 11.

APPENDIX 3: MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN STATISTICS

KENYA (2001):¹

Total Population (1999): ²	28,686,607
Christian Percentage:	78.6% Annual growth: 2%
Muslim Percentage:	8% Annual growth: 3.9%

Other sources³ claim a **Muslim percentage** of 25-30%

AFRICA (1995):⁴

Total Population:	725,850,000
Christian Percentage:	45%
Muslim Percentage:	42%

WORLD (2001):⁵

Total Population:	6,203,789,000
Christian Percentage:	32% Annual growth: 1.4%
Muslim Percentage:	21% Annual growth: 2.1%

(If a religious group experiences an annual growth over 1.39%, it means that it is growing faster than the world population.)

¹ Cf. P. JOHNSTONE -- J. MANDRIC, ed., *Operation World 21st Century*, 380.

² Cf. Ministry of Finance and Planning, *1999 Population Census*. I, xxxiii-xxxiv.

³ Cf. N.M. KAHUMBI, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya", 135.

⁴ Cf. Amecea Documentation Service, "AMECEA in Brief", 5.

⁵ Cf. P. JOHNSTONE -- J. MANDRIC, ed., *Operation World 21st Century*, 2.

APPENDIX 4: BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND ISLAM

There is no agreement among historians about the real position of the British administration on the spread of Islam in their protectorate. Here, I reproduce some primary sources that reflect different and even contradictory approaches of the colonial government to Islam. These approaches are determined, in most cases, by the concrete situation of a certain area and not by a common policy.

The (Coast?) Provincial Commissioner wrote in 1913 a circular to his District Commissioners cautioning them that:

It must be realised that it is not in our interest or in the interest of the people of the Mohammedan faith that the *sheria* should spread among the aboriginal tribes. In fact one may go as far as to say that the policy of the administration should be antipathetic towards Mohammedan propaganda and proselytisation.¹

Godana Boru, a middle-aged man of the Waso area testifies the following.

By that time [40 years ago], the District Officer encouraged them [the *Waso Boorana*] to work together with the Somali. A District Officer he remembers, Bwana Res, told them that they should not be pagans, but at least Muslim. At the same time during the big war, they were discouraged from having anything to do with Catholicism, because Catholics in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya were Italians and therefore enemies of the British.²

The following reports refer to the situation in Moyale District.

According to the missionaries,

At Moyale and in the neighbourhood the Koran is accepted and the Government, of course, favours it. So should the day come when we preach against it, we would not be allowed to stay here.³ (1915)

¹ C.W. HOBLEY, "Circular Letter". Quoted from Y.A. NZIBO, "Islamisation in the Interior", 41.

² M.I. AGUILAR, *Being Oromo in Kenya*, 243.

³ A. Dal Canton, "Letter", 27 January 1915. Quoted in P. TABLINO, *The Diocese of Marsabit*, 23.

According to the authorities,

It must eventually come about (as it was probably intended that it should) that our population consists entirely of nomadic Somali (and Mohammedan) camel people, whilst that of Abyssinia consists of the pagan or Christian cattle owing tribes.⁴ (1931)

Another important duty of the Police is to ensure that the Moslem tribes do not come into contact with the Boran.⁵ (1934)

Most of Jeldes Jarso's Boran have become or are becoming Islamised, which may prevent murders amongst themselves and the Adjuran and Gelleblesh the other side of the Somali line.⁶ (1935)

One can at the moment do little but preserve the peace between the Boran and the Mohammedan tribes.⁷ (1937)

An evil you should guard against, which is mainly practised by present and past Police and K.A.R. *askaris* [soldiers], is to abduct or seduce some Pagan girl or wife and get the Kathi to perform an Islamic marriage ceremony. This can only lead to Pagan-Islam friction.⁸ (1947)

The progressive conversion of Boran to Islam has continued steadily and is an important factor in the maintenance of peaceful relations with the Somali and Somali-type tribes.⁹ (1957)

⁴ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/1, 1931, 5.

⁵ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, June 1934, 43.

⁶ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/2, 1935, 13.

⁷ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1937, 9.

⁸ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/2/6/3, 1947, 89.

⁹ Kenya National Archives, PC/NFD/1/6/6, 1957, 11.

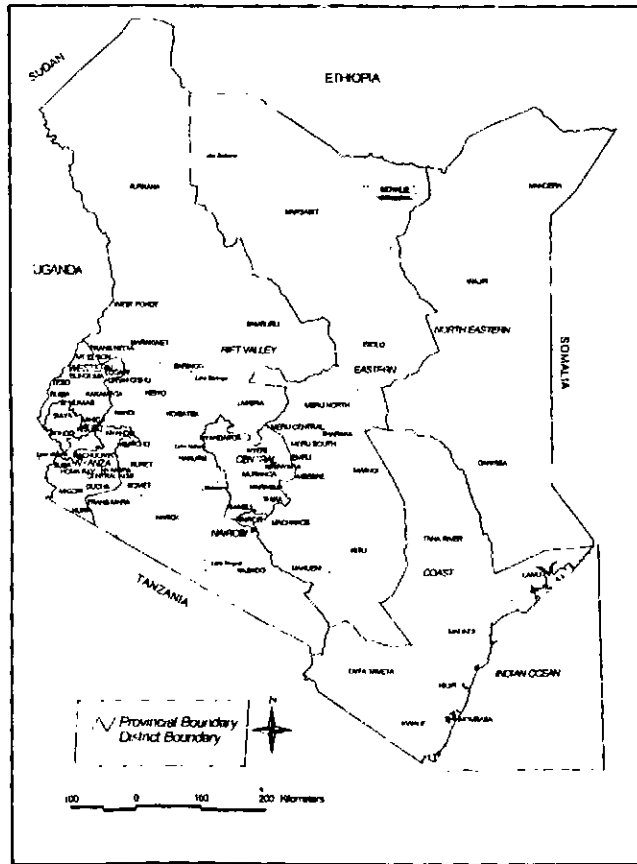
APPENDIX 5: THE CROSS ON BOROLE HILL¹

- In April 1999, by initiative of Fr. Angelo D'Apice (parish priest of Sololo at that time) a wooden cross was erected on one of the sides of Borole hill. Six days later, it was cut down (according to some, by a group of students of the primary school incited by some adults).
- Some weeks after that, the cross was re-erected on the same place and few days later, was again cut down (some assert that the perpetrators of this action were some students of the secondary school, incited by adults).
- The Christians of Sololo Parish did not give up and established a new cross --- this time an iron one -- on the very top of Borole hill in April 2000, while the Muslim Conferencce was taking place in Sololo. After some few days, the new cross was again dismantled at night and thrown on the other side of the hill. This action provoked a lot of indignation in the Christians.
- One year later, the Christians insisted on erecting again the cross on the top of Borole hill. Taking into account their request, the Parish Council wrote a circular letter to the Senior Chief, District Officer and District Commissioner informing them of their intention to put up the cross once more. Moreover, -- and this was the most important step -- they met with all the religious leaders of the area to discuss the issue. Since the very beginning, the leaders of other churches supported and encouraged the Catholic community in their initiative. The Muslim leaders, after several meetings, agreed that it was not an offence for the Muslim community the erection of a cross on Borole hill. Thus, the iron cross was recovered from the Southern slide of the hill and re-erected solemnly in April 2001. After almost two years, the cross still stands on Borole hill as a sign that, through dialogue, mutual understanding is possible.

¹Cf. P. GUYO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; RUBEN ROBA, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author; J.W. LOBATO, "Interreligious Dialogue in Sololo", interviewed by author.

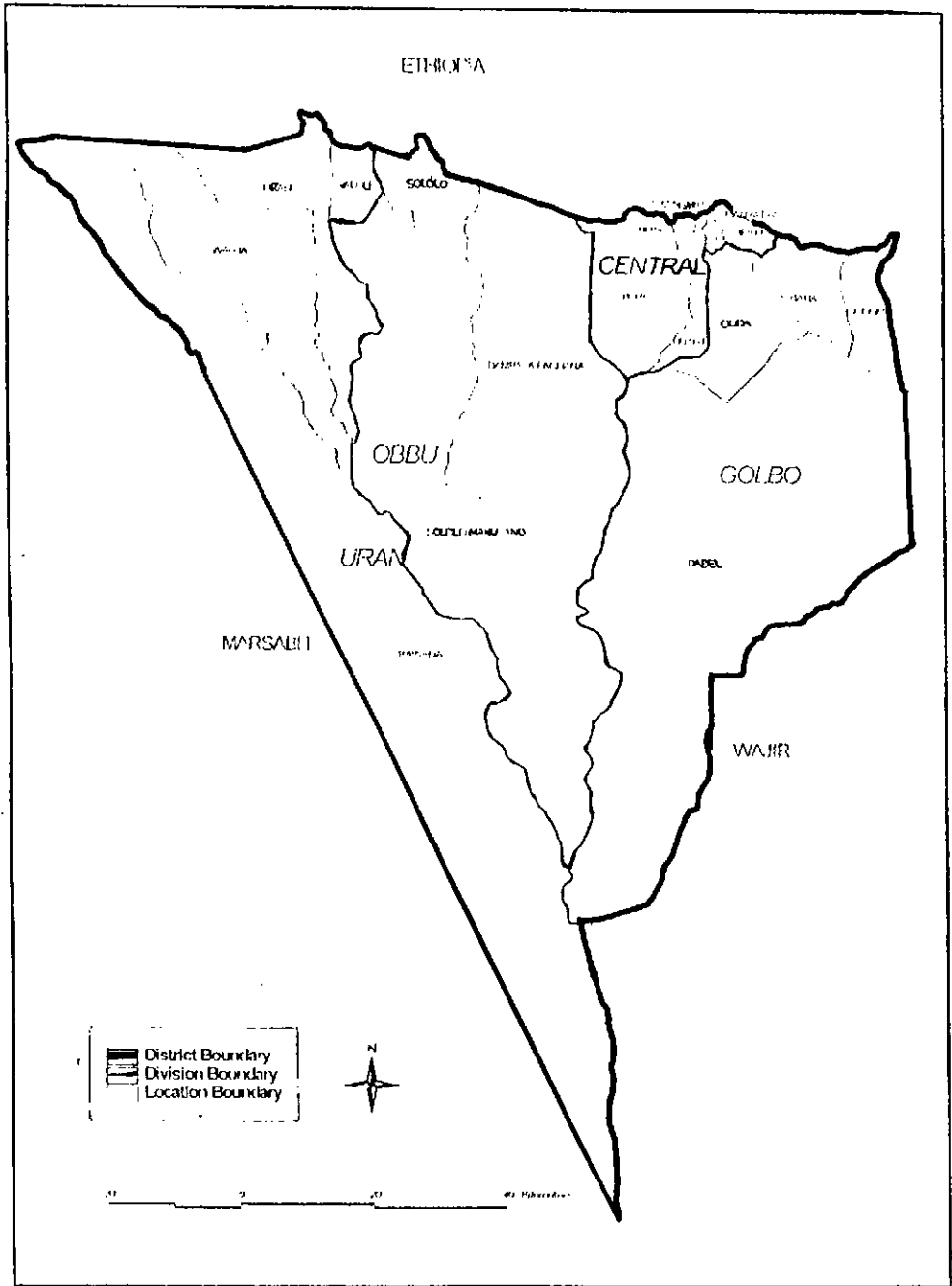
APPENDIX 5: MAPS

Map 1: Location of Moyale in Kenya¹



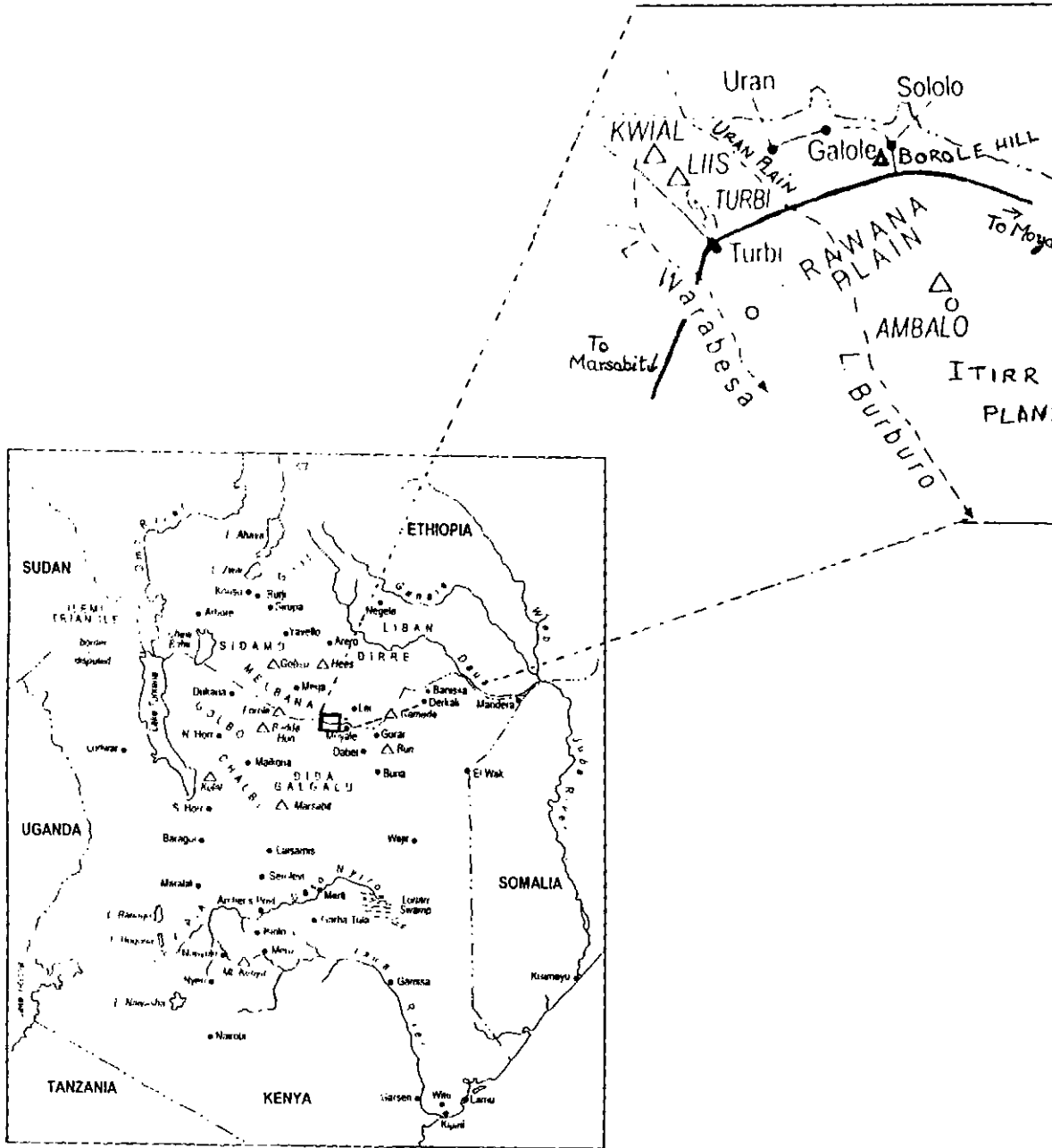
¹ Source: Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 3.

Map 2: Moyale District (Administrative Boundaries)¹



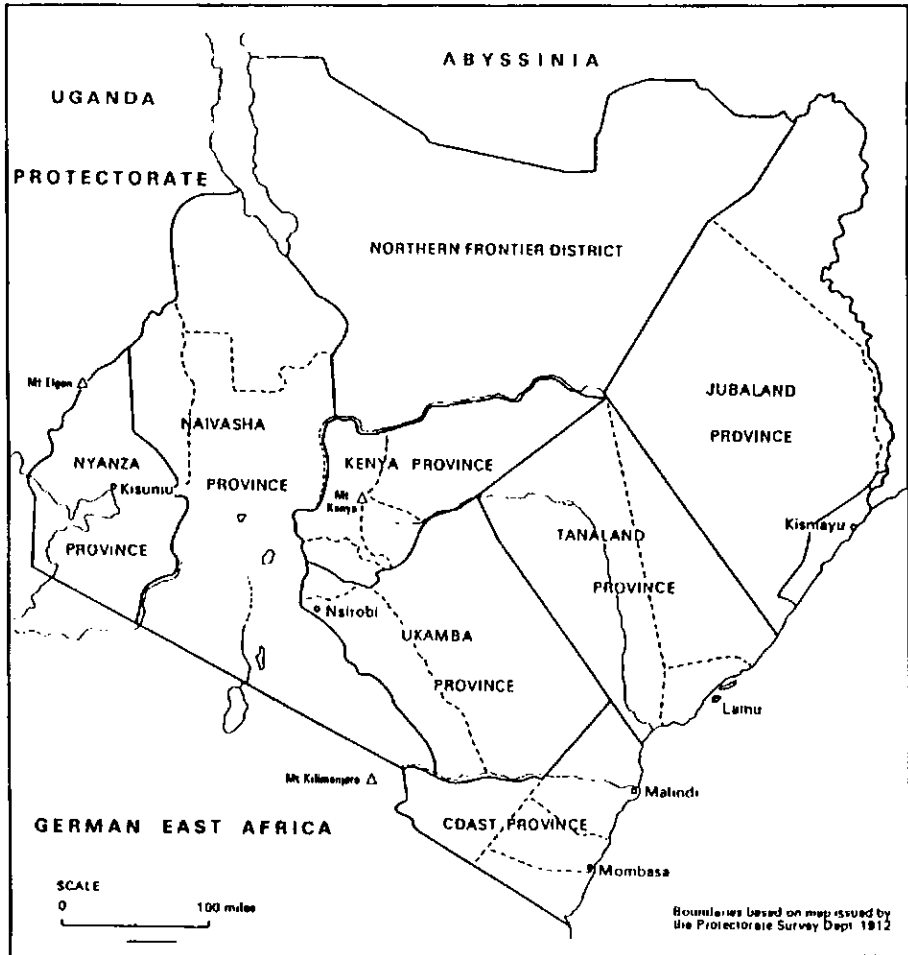
¹ Source: Ministry of Finance and Planning, *Moyale District Development Plan*, 5

Map 4: Sololo and its Surroundings¹



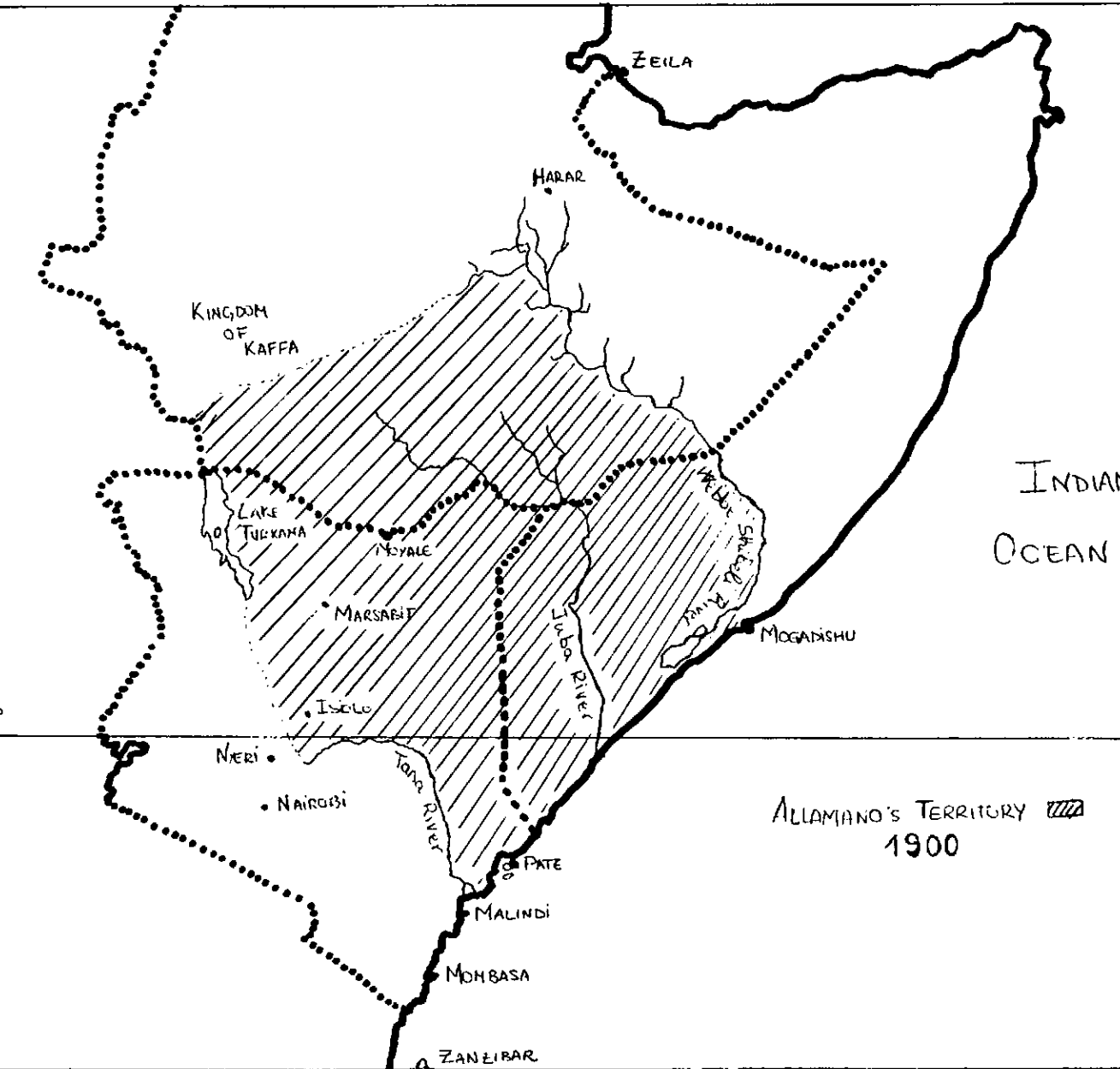
¹ Source: P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, VI.16.

Map 5: East Africa Protectorate Boundaries in 1912¹



¹ Source: P. TABLINO, *The Gabra*, 231.

Map 6: East African Coast and Territory Entrusted to Allamano¹



¹ Made by the author.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I: SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF SOLOLO AREA	4
<i>Introduction</i>	4
1. <i>General Description of Sololo</i>	4
2. <i>The People of Sololo</i>	10
3. <i>Current Challenges in Sololo</i>	28
<i>Conclusion</i>	32
CHAPTER II: ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY IN SOLOLO	33
<i>Introduction</i>	33
1. <i>History of Islam in Sololo</i>	33
2. <i>History of Christianity in Sololo</i>	46
<i>Conclusion</i>	63
CHAPTER III: THE CHRISTIANS OF SOLOLO: MINISTERS OF DIALOGUE	64
<i>Introduction</i>	64
1. <i>Current Situation of Muslim-Christian Coexistence in Sololo</i>	64
2. <i>Theological Reflection</i>	70
3. <i>Pastoral suggestions</i>	76
<i>Conclusion</i>	82
CONCLUSION	84
ABBREVIATIONS.....	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	87
DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH.....	89
ARCHIVES.....	90
INTERVIEWS.....	91
APPENDIX 1: POPULATION TABLE.....	93
APPENDIX 2: BOORANA TRADITIONAL PRAYER	94
APPENDIX 3: MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN STATISTICS.....	95
APPENDIX 4: BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND ISLAM.....	96
APPENDIX 5: THE CROSS ON BOROLE HILL	98

APPENDIX 5: MAPS.....	99
MAP 1: LOCATION OF MOYALE IN KENYA.....	99
MAP 2: MOYALE DISTRICT (ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES).....	100
MAP 3: BOORANA LAND.....	101
MAP 4: SOLOLO AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.....	102
MAP 5: EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE BOUNDARIES IN 1912.....	103
MAP 6: EAST AFRICAN COAST AND TERRITORY ENTRUSTED TO ALLAMANO	104
CONTENTS	105