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ETHIOPIAN COSTUMES

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The illustrations for this book are based almost entirely on photographs from sources too numerous to mention individually. Some of the photographers whose work I have plagiarized are as follows: Michaud, Gerster, Fabby, Last, Leslau, Shack, and Wubale. For most of the details of jewellery and hairstyles, reference was supplied by ETC photo archives, and a few of the costumes illustrated are in the Ethnological Museum, Addis Ababa.

J. L.



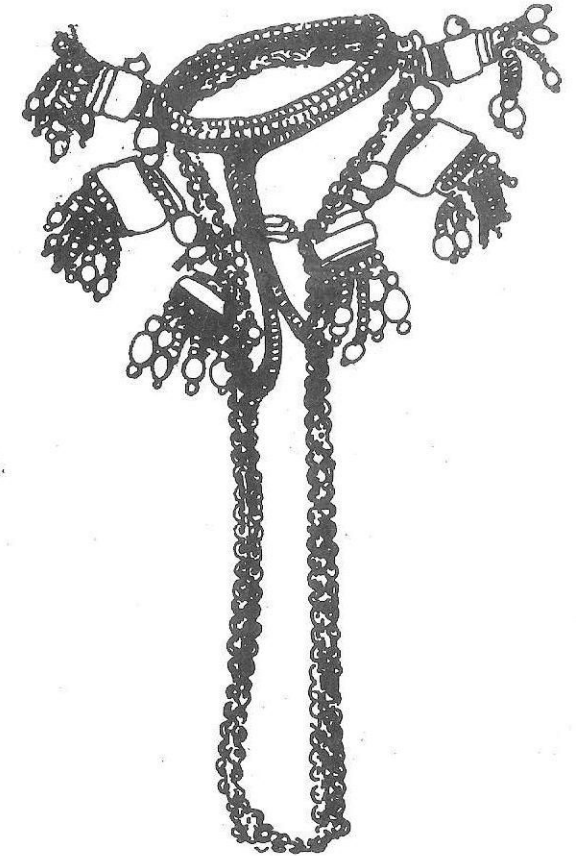
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1980

Little Somali girls have the front part of their heads shaved, the top hair neatly plaited and the remainder loose. They wear gaily coloured cloths and bead necklaces.







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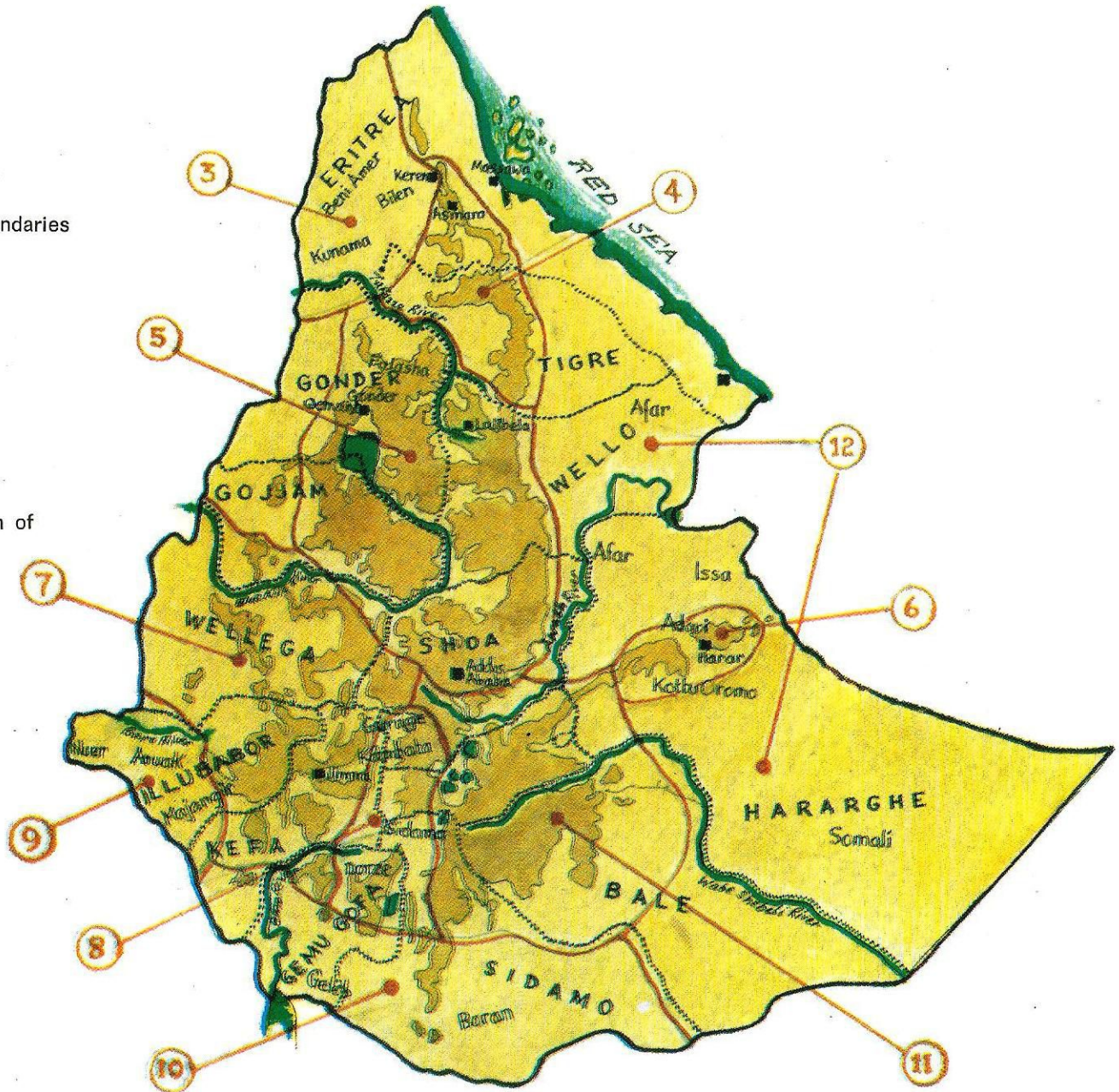
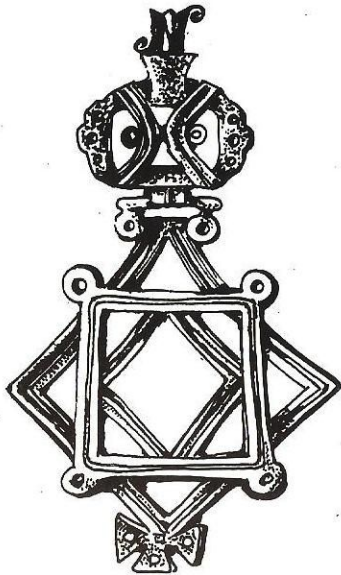
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A necklace worn by an Afar girl consists of small leather packets hanging from the neck chain and lavishly decorated with red and blue beads.

LEGEND

-  Kunama People illustrated
- TIGRE** Regions
-  Administrative Region boundaries
-  Elevations over 2,000 m.
-  Lakes and rivers
-  Towns named in text
-  Plate numbers and location of areas covered



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*A ceremonial stick from the
the Gamo Gofa region.*



Arsi Oromo women wear their hair in many different styles. The one shown is one of the less common.

Young girl of Wollo near Dessie wears silver-earrings and necklace, a circular silver cross. Tattoo on the cheeks and forehead are additional signs of beauty.



INTRODUCTION

The costumes of the Ethiopian people are as varied and interesting as the population itself, reflecting ancient and modern trends in decoration, the fanciful as well as the practical.

Broadly speaking, the basic garment of the highland Ethiopian is the *shamma*, a length of cotton that doubles as a body and headcovering and is often worn in addition to items of modern dress such as a skirt or trousers. In the streets of Addis Ababa the traveler will see the *shamma* in all its permutations. Other common items of apparel include the *netela*, a light cotton shawl; the *kutta*, a heavier version of the *netela*; the *gabi*, a coarse, blanket-like cloth worn for warmth; and the *barnos*, or cape. The *kemis* is a dress of varying length worn by women and decorated with embroidery and a coloured woven border. Children, depending on the family's income, sometimes wear hand-me-downs from the parents or short dresses, trousers, and shirts. The very young often make do with a single garment, sometimes of animal skin.

A love of ornamentation ruled by a natural affinity for beauty leads the Ethiopians to adorn themselves in memorably dramatic

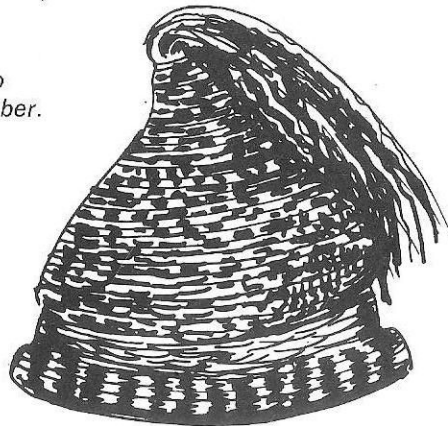
A Majangir girl from western Ethiopia whose hair is kept in place with a lavish application of red clay. Bracelets are usually of brass, the lip ornament of ivory or horn.

Hats of all shapes and sizes are worn throughout the country: wooly caps for the windswept plateau or broadbrimmed straw or grass for the sunny savanna.

fashion. Timeless symbols such as the cross and the lion's mane have long been used in decoration. Tattooing of the face, neck, and hands, and elaborate traditional coiffures, though no longer the rule with sophisticated city dwellers, are still seen everywhere among country folk. A profusion of jewelry, whether crafted by skilful smiths of gold and silver or made in the villages of cowrie shells and leather, base metals and colorful beads, is an integral part of the national dress. And rain or shine, umbrellas richly covered with embroidery and brilliants are held above the heads of priests and deacons.

Briefly, in dress as in political, cultural, and religious traditions, the Ethiopians follow a heritage that is vital, colorful, and unique. One of the great treats awaiting the visitor is the ever-changing pageant of costume that will pass before him as he walks through the cities or drives about the countryside, witnesses a religious ceremony or takes part in a public celebration. To know something of the history and significance of the garments that will catch his eye should add immeasurably to the tourist's enjoyment and understanding of Ethiopian society.

Peasant cap from Wollo made from vegetable fiber.

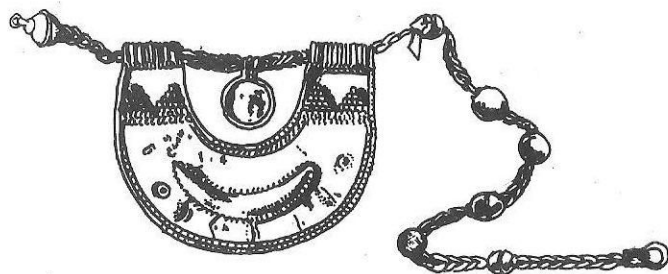


Followers of the Prophet always wear a head covering of some kind and the small embroidered caps are commonly seen from highland to coastal desert.



Fur hat worn by both men and women in Sidamo.





A Saebean necklace found at Timna dating from about second century B.C.

Plate 1. — Jewellery detail

1. Heavy metal bracelets of this type are found most commonly among the Arsi Oromo. Made of copper, brass, and nowadays of aluminium, they do not compare with the finer silver bracelets. 2. Earpicks come in a thousand designs in filigree silver and are worn round the neck on a cord. 3. Lion's claw mounted in silver filigree. 4. Cylindrical containers, lavishly decorated with filigree and silver beads, are used in wedding ceremonies to hold small ornaments like the bride's rings. 5. These square silver, or baser metal, medallions are usually hollow, and were originally used to carry a small prayer or charm and although large are not very heavy. 6. Silver medallions, some made from the old Maria Theresa dollar, are a favourite form of jewellery.

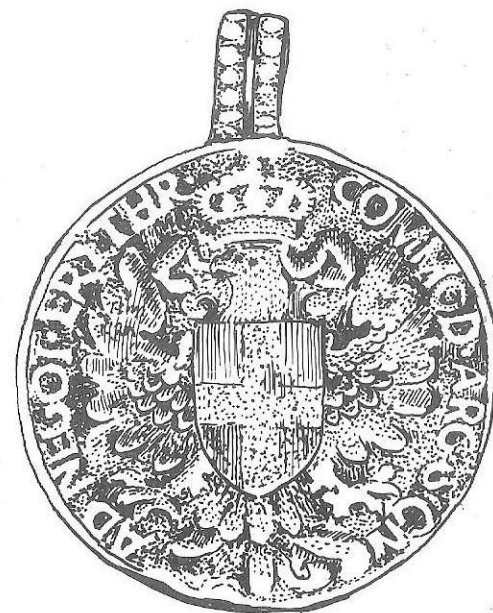
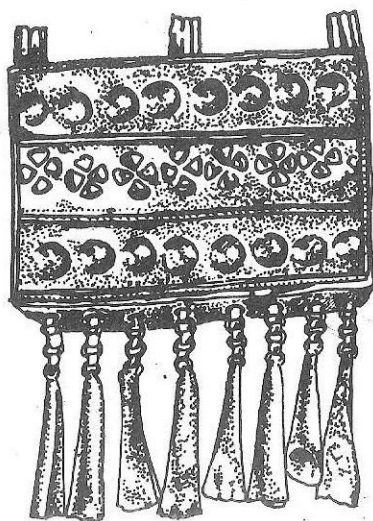
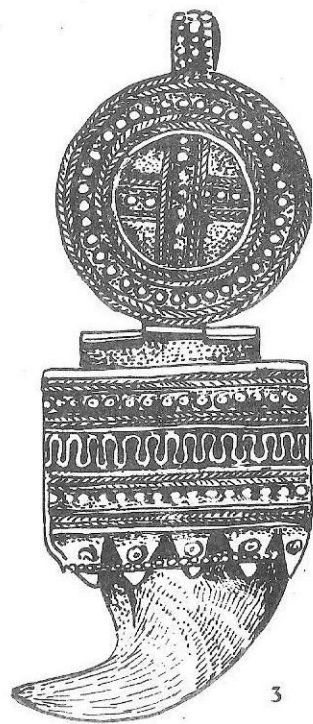
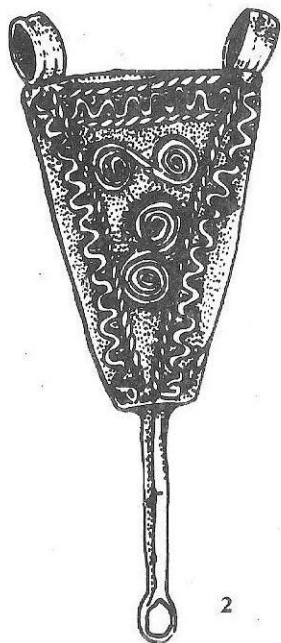
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cotton is said to have been imported to Ethiopia in earliest times. At the Red Sea port of Adulis in the first century, during the heyday of the Axumite Empire, cotton was the chief import. We do not know, however, just when local cultivation of cotton began, or when the practices of weaving and spinning became widespread. It has been suggested by various writers that only gradually did cotton replace animal skins and vegetable fibres as the basis for clothing, and that the use of cotton garments was for centuries restricted to members of the aristocracy. Today in southern Ethiopia women still wear garments made of skins, as do shepherds and workers in many rural areas of the country; and now that the National Leather Processing Industry is producing a large variety of skins suitable for high-fashion wear, leather garments in the modern mode are seen widely among city dwellers. Nevertheless, cotton remains the fabric of choice among the bulk of the population, which clings to traditional costumes.

In the past Ethiopian weavers, potters, tanners, and other artisans have gathered in communities under the protection of royal or ecclesiastical rule, where they were assured of a ready mar-

ket for their wares at church or court. Thus centres of arts and crafts developed in widely separated areas — Gonder, Harar, Ankober, Adua, and Jimma for example. The fine cloth produced at Harar and at Gonder has long been renowned, and according to a nineteenth century explorer, the coarse cotton fabric for which Adua was noted was "unrivalled in any other part of the country"

Today Ethiopian spinners and weavers practise their ancient occupations in much the same manner as their forebears. In the capital city, Addis Ababa, many male weavers of the Dorze nationality from the southern regions of Gamo Gofa and Sidamo are employed in large workshops, where they produce not only materials for the traditional costume but also up-to-date suiting and decorative fabrics. In addition to these enterprises, some of which are cooperatively owned, there is the Rehabilitation Agency, where disabled persons are taught the arts of loom and needle as well as a variety of other ways to earn their livelihood. And in homes throughout the country lone weavers and family groups continue to spin and weave, cut and sew, using the same methods employed by their ancestors.





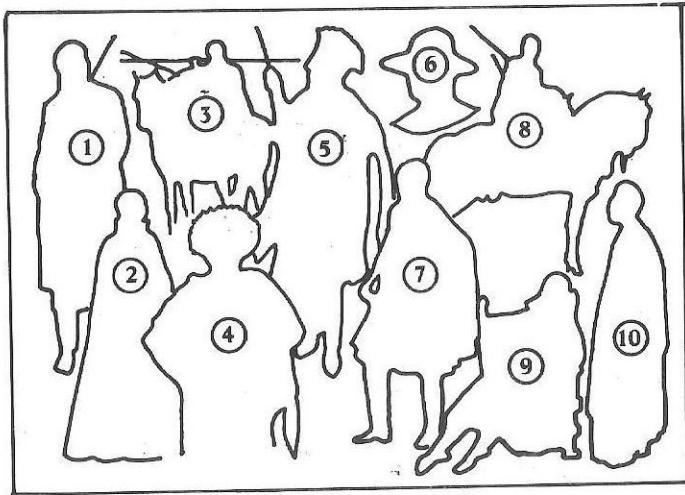
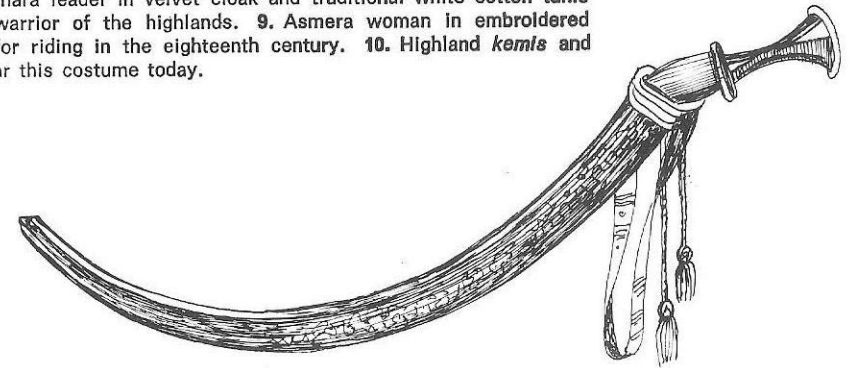


Plate 2. — Period costume — Warriors, hunters and aristocrats

1. Elephant hunter at the turn of the century. These men also sometimes wore their hair long and plaited in hundreds of plaits. Bracelet and earring were only worn by the brave. 2. Ladies of aristocratic rank wore gold embroidered cloaks (*kaba*) over their handwoven cotton dresses. 3. Oromo warrior carries a shield of hippopotamus hide. 4. A warrior chief from the highlands with Gelada baboon fur headdress and lion's mane cape worn over a striped silk tunic. The quantity of gold embossing on the shield was indicative of rank. 5. Amhara warrior in velvet gold-embroidered cape, the shape of which is based on an animal skin. Such costumes are still worn on festive occasions. 6. Hats were worn by townfolk at the turn of the century. 7. An Amhara leader in velvet cloak and traditional white cotton tunic and jodhpurs. 8. A mounted warrior of the highlands. 9. Asmera woman in embroidered pantalons and overshirt used for riding in the eighteenth century. 10. Highland *kemis* and *shamma*. Older people still wear this costume today.



An Ethiopian sword used at the battle of Adua in 1896.

PERIOD COSTUME

In ancient times dress was an important sign of class. None but the aristocracy were allowed to wear ornate clothing; and even under the progressive nineteenth century monarch, Tewodros, cotton clothing was ordained for the masses, and only aristocrats might dress in silk and brocade. Until the early years of the twentieth century such prohibitions were general throughout Ethiopia. In the northern regions, only ladies of quality might wear embroidered cloaks and red-bordered *shammas*; while in southern Ethiopia the color green was reserved for the king, as was the use of golden jewelry.

No more colorful and imaginative costumes could be conceived than those traditionally worn by the Ethiopian warrior. Tewodros allowed his soldiers to wear shirts of silk, and the use of animal pelts as part of the military uniform has long been a custom. By the middle of the nineteenth century, soldiers were wearing specially cut trousers and shirts, with cartridge belt, swordbelt, and shield of toughened animal hide. Often the shirt was silk, and the shoulders might be covered with a sheep, goat, or wild

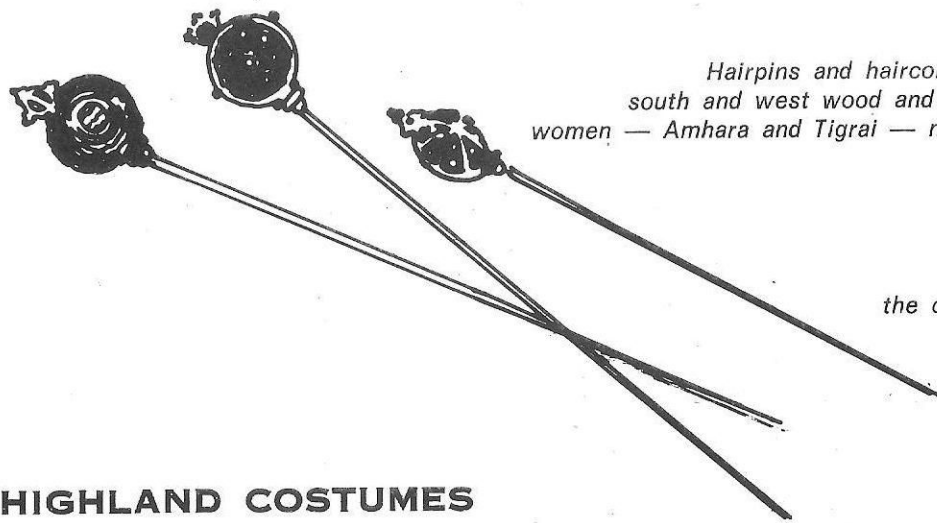
animal pelt. Status was indicated by the amount of gold decoration on scabbard, sword, and saddle mountings.

Prowess in battle, indicated elsewhere in the world by medals, might be evinced in Ethiopia in a number of ways. Bracelets, earrings, and neck chains often were worn to show that the warrior had rescued a companion, killed many men, or shown unusual bravery as a hunter.

In the 1930's an effort was made to popularize the use of khaki cloth among soldiers, instead of the traditional white shirt and trousers that made them an easy mark for enemy rifles. It was not until very recently, however, that the Ethiopian soldier wore boots or shoes with his uniform. Toughened by long marches over rough terrain and a lifetime of barefoot activity, he was able as no Westerner would be, to walk for miles without harm or difficulty. Barefoot cavalymen secured the stirrups between big and middle toe.

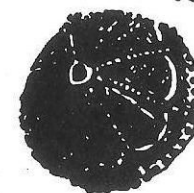
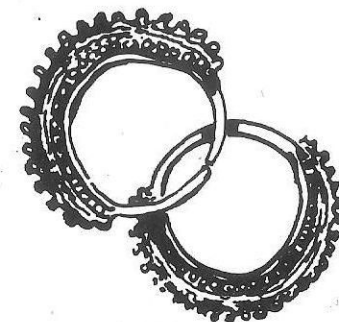






Hairpins and haircombs are common adornments. In the south and west wood and ivory are common, but the highland women — Amhara and Tigrai — normally wear silver filigree hairpins.

A decorated haircomb of silver and silver earrings. This kind of jewellery is now widely distributed throughout the country but it originated in the highlands — probably Harar.



HIGHLAND COSTUMES

In central and northern Ethiopia the Amhara and Tigrean women are usually seen wearing the *kemis*, a long, full-sleeved cotton gown that is often embroidered at the neck, cuffs and hem. Some *kemis* styles are very simple, with a fitted bodice and full skirt; others are more elaborate, with overall pleats and gathering about the waist. According to the area, the *kemis* may be adorned with cotton thread embroidery in the cross symbol, or

studded about the neck and cuffs with small silver beads. Over the *kemis* goes a *shamma*, or light cotton length, usually with a border that matches the trimming on the dress. The *shamma* is draped over the head and shoulders in a graceful fashion and sometimes held by the wearer over nose and mouth. In cold weather a heavier *shamma*, or *kutta*, may be worn, or a conical cape called a *barnos*. The border of the *shamma* and *kemis* may be richly woven with vivid silk or cotton threads to form a border called a *tibeb*, which lends richness and dignity to the humblest costume. The *tibeb* design may contain geometrical figures, purely fanciful forms, or classic symbols such as star and cross; and the width of the border varies from a few centimetres in one case to a quarter of a metre or more in another.

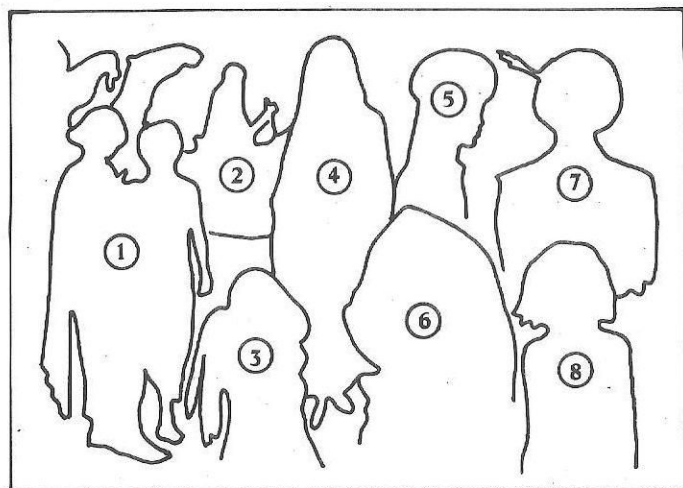


Plate 3. — Northern Pastoral (Eritrea) — Beni Amer, Bilen, Kunama, Beja

1. Men of the Beni Amer — Muslim shepherds — with leather bracelets, charm cases and sandals. The camel wears ceremonial panaply. 2. Festive costume of a Beni Amer horseman. 3. Girl of the Bilen in locally made cotton cloth carries a rope of dum palm fiber which is used for all purposes — from tethering a camel to tying the bundles of firewood. 4. Woman of the Bilen in highland *kemis* and *shamma*. A gold ring is worn in the hair on the top of the head which lends the characteristic shape to the *shamma*. 5. Typical hairstyle of the Bilen girls. 6. Young girl of the Beni Amer wears traditional jewellery, including the nose ring which is the hallmark of the northern woman. 7. Kunama man with leather waistcoat and leather charm *kitab*. The wooden hair ornament is also a comb. 8. Head ornaments, beads and bracelets are not the only ways of enhancing the woman's beauty — facial scarification is also still common.



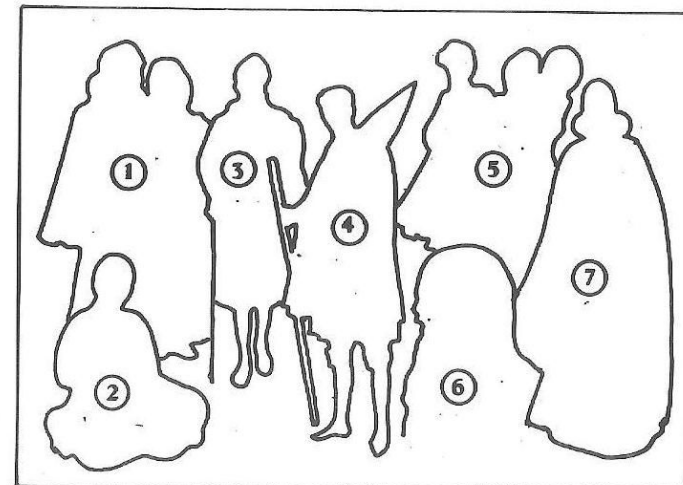
Babies ride in comfort on their mother's backs. They can be quite simple, but it is most common to see the baby-carrier decorated lavishly with beads and cowrie shells.

With her *kemis* and *shamma* the Amhara or Tigrean may wear sandals, heelless slippers, or high-fashion shoes, though in the countryside bare feet are usual. In the north, women stain the soles of their feet and the palms of their hands with a red vegetable dye called *ensosela*. Coiffures based on regional styles are worn by rural and working classes: often this involves an elaborate arrangement of many small parallel braids. Ladies of fashion or students and young city girls will sometimes choose a western-style hairdo. In the cities a sweater or coat may replace the traditional *kutta* or *barnos* in cold weather. Umbrellas, used for protection from both sun and rain, are seen everywhere among rich and poor. Jewelry of silver and gold is widely worn by Amharas and Tigreans. Heavy earrings in pendant, loop, and button styles are popular, as is the crescent, whose tips are slipped through the hole in the ear for an unbroken circular effect. Married women from the north wear elaborately decorated gold pendants on a black ribbon circlet about the neck.

Plate 4, — Northern Highland (Tigray, Eritrea) — Tigre

1. Old man from Tigray with wife. He wears the typical old style black woolen cloak. 2. Woman from Tigray with silver jewellery and leather charms. Her dress is embroidered with the cross motif typical of the Christian highlands. 3. Dignified farmer priest from the Semyen area. 4. Jodhpurs, introduced by Menilik at the end of the nineteenth century, worn under a hooded burnos which protects the rifle. 5. Two young Tigray girls dance at a religious procession. Their new dresses are of factory-made cloth, but the hairstyle is traditional. Tattoo of the cross on the forehead is quite usual. 6. Fantastic hairstyle reminiscent of ancient Egypt is worn by an Eritrean girl. 7. Embroidered *kemis* and *shamma* with the coloured woven sash which is typical of Tigray.

Young girl from Tigray wears the traditional shiruba hairstyle... a multitude of tiny plaits anchored to the scalp, bushing out on to the shoulders. The earrings and three separate medallions of the necklace strung on a black cord are of pure Ethiopian gold. All the women of the northern plateau wear this type of jewellery.

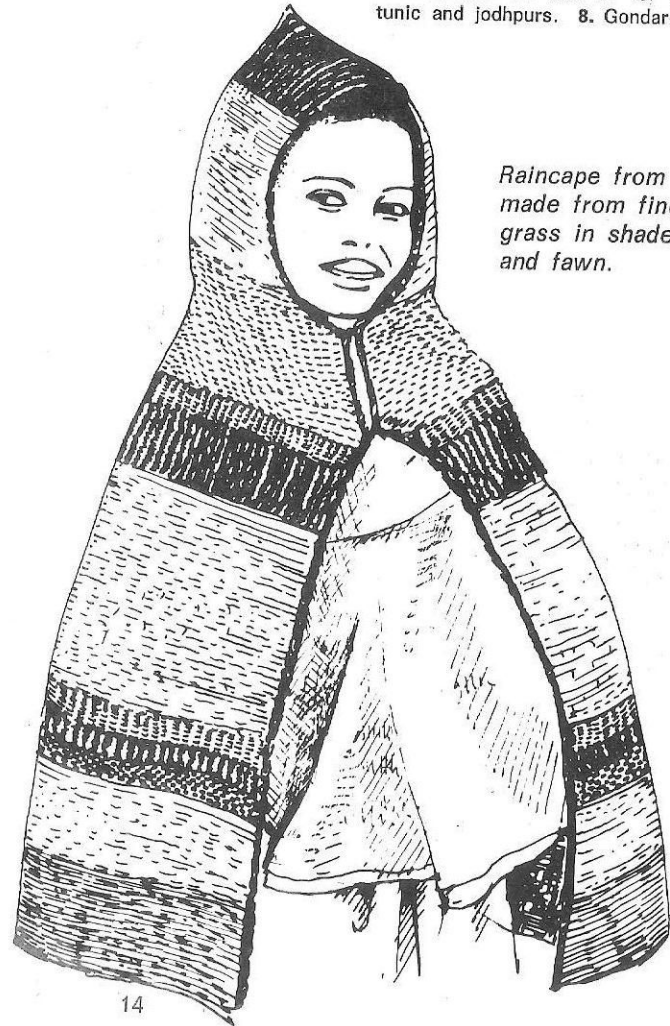




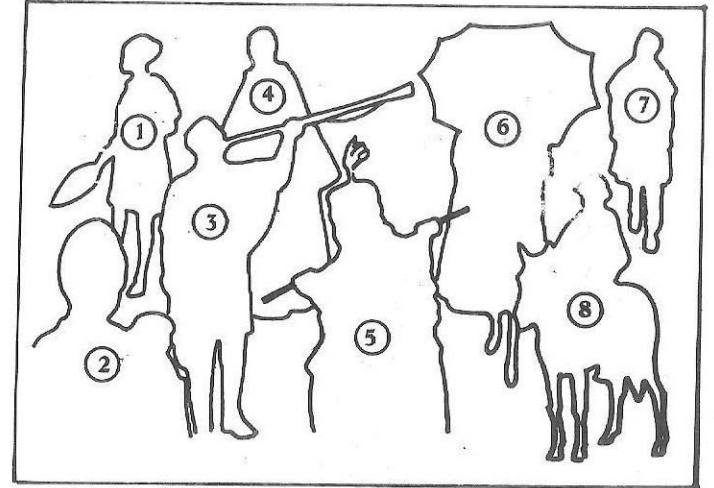
Jill West

Plate 5. — Central Highland (Shoa, Gojjam, Gonder, Wollo) — Amhara, Oromo

1. The Amhara *gaberé* winnows the grain with a *laida*. 2. Amhara mother and baby. His head is shaved except for the tuft on the top. 3. Musician playing the *embilta* wears pure white *netela* over jodhpurs and tunic. 4. Amhara women in black wool cloak over a full length embroidered dress usually worn in the evening. 5. Typical highland shepherd boy — thick woven blanket plus sheepskin cape and a woollen woven cap with Gelada baboon hair tassel. 6. Umbrellas for rain or for shade are universally carried. 7. Male festive garb: *netela*, tunic and jodhpurs. 8. Gondaré wearing the woven straw topee, mounted on a white mule.

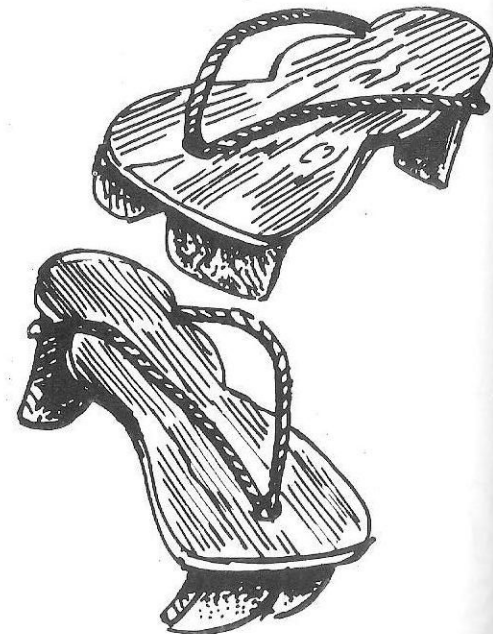


Raincape from Wollo is made from finely woven grass in shades of brown and fawn.



Wedding rings and rings with symbolic patterns are worn, mainly of gold and silver without gems, though from time to time a mounted stone is seen. The most famous type of adornment is the Ethiopian pendant cross, which is usually of silver and occurs in a multitude of forms, from the circular "seal" type to the elaborate Lalibela cross flanked by symbols of the Holy Spirit. Many country folk are tattooed on the brow with a simple cross, and crosses on the back of the ankle are also common.

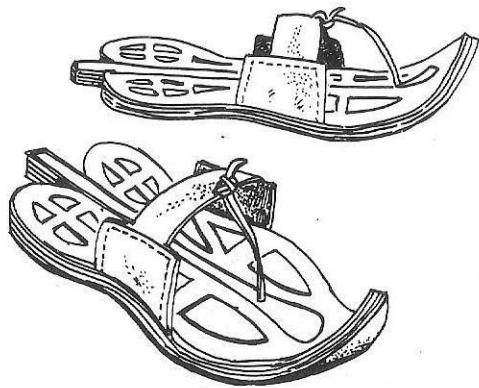
Perhaps because Amhara and Tigrean influence was so widely diffused the dress of the two nationalities has been accepted in many areas, for example among the Welamo, the Mao, and the Konta, in addition to items of regional dress. It was usually the chiefs and elders who adopted the northern styles first, with others following as their purse and station permitted.



Sandals from Shoa cut from a single piece of wood are worn by women inside the house.







Sandals of many layers of leather are hand-tooled and painted with designs of the cross motif.

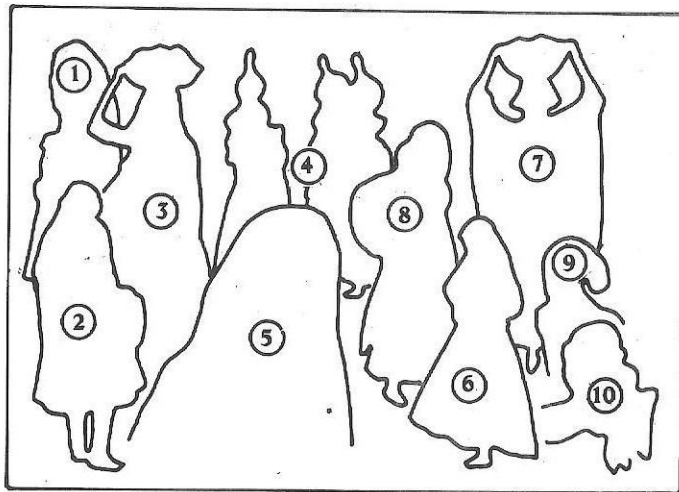
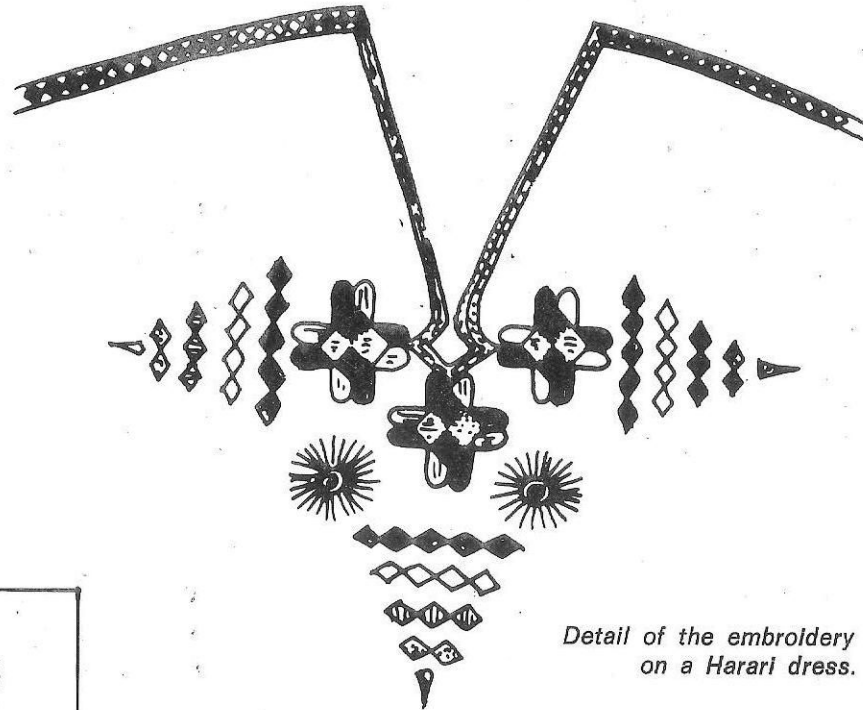


Plate 6. — Eastern Highland (Hararge) — Harari, Somali, Harari Oromo, Argoba

1. Somali girls wear gay gauze veils. 2. Adari women wear trousers, sometimes intricately embroidered, under short dresses. 3. Oromo woman carries a basket on her head. Other produce for the market is hidden in the folds of her dress. 4. Group of Oromo women with gourds balanced on their heads. 5. Argoba girl wears silver filigree head adornment and her amber necklace is a particularly fine piece of Harar jewellery. 6. The long graceful skirts of the women of Harar are fashioned in many different ways. 7. Dress in silk is enormously wide and long. Worn caught up at the waist, inside pockets in the voluminous folds conceal smuggled goods. 8. *Chat* the strength-giving leaf chewed by many Harari males is traded by the women. 9. Oromo girl from the countryside near Harar wearing her silver finery to go to market. 10. Old Argoba woman wearing an unusual gold-trimmed *fotta* with a black *shash*.

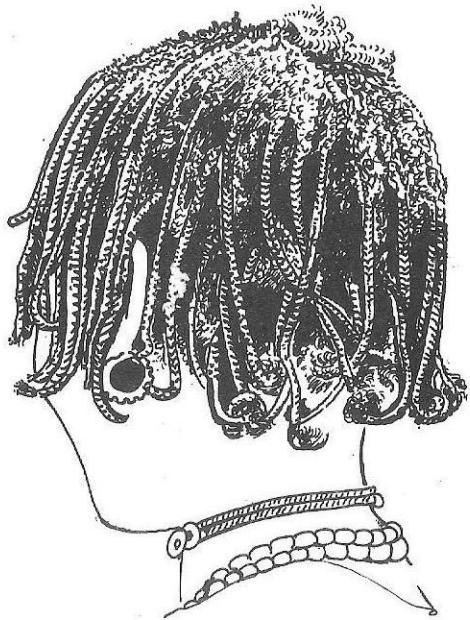
Mother with market produce balanced on her head and baby slung safely behind, shows the typical hairstyle of the Harari and Oromo girls.



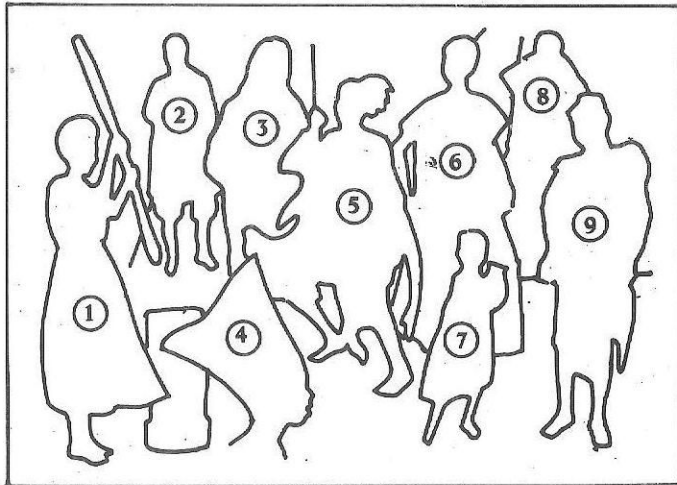
Detail of the embroidery on a Harari dress.







Gidole girl from near Lake Chamo wears her hair in dozens of tight plaits.



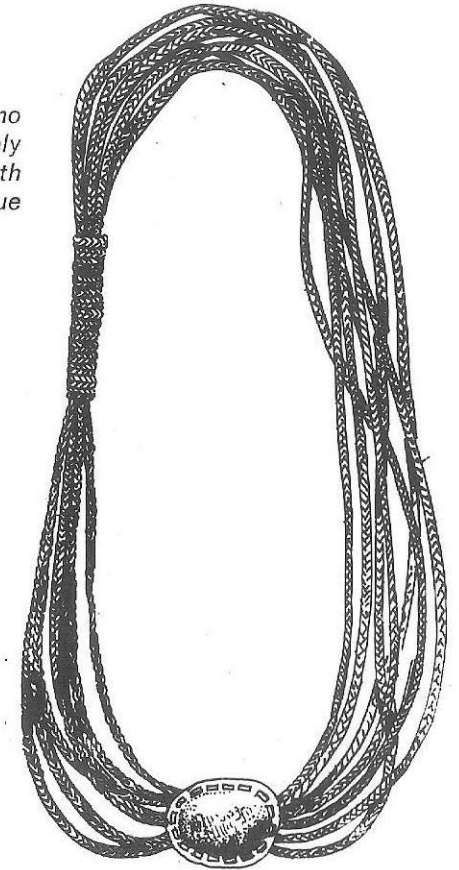
Characteristically, Amhara and Tigrean men wear cotton jodhpur-style trousers that flare above the knee and allow for freedom of movement through the body, while the lower leg is closely fitted. Less fashionable full cotton trousers are worn in the countryside and villages. Cotton shirts, whether crudely cut or in the modern mode, are worn with the trousers, and a *shamma*, which may also double as a headcovering, is draped about the shoulders and upper torso. In cool weather a twill jacket, *gabi*, *kutta*, or *barnos* may be worn. Solar topees are seen and a whip, stick or animal-hair fly whisk is often carried, even in the city.

Students, professionals, and businessmen usually wear western-style apparel instead of the costume just described.

Boots, sandals of leather or plastic, and bare feet are all to be seen among traditionally dressed Amhara and Tigrean men. Little masculine jewelry is in evidence, except for crosses, silver earpicks, emblematic items such as wedding rings, and momentos. Earrings or small ear-plugs are seen from time to time in the countryside.

Plate 7. — Western Highland (Wollega, Kefa) — Wollega Oromo. Gurage, Dorze, Gibe
 1. Gurage women wear heavy handwoven cotton dresses and black head *shash*. Gurage land is famous for its peppers which are trucked into the capital city. 2. A farmer from Kefa has full jodhpurs and a cummerbund. 3. Kefa girl wears the *shash* in the fashion of the area. She carries a wooden butter pot. 4. One of the many fantastic hairstyles worn by the women of the Gibe — but rarely seen today. 5. Wolayta in leopard skin dances at a funeral. 6. Dorze woman in two-piece cotton robe, leather charm cases her only jewellery apart from the small wooden haircomb. 7. Gurage children often wear flowers in their hair. 8. Gurage man in typical heavy cotton *gabi*. 9. Colobus monkey fur cape is worn on festive occasions by men of the Dorze nationality.

Necklace from Gamo Gofa is made of finely plaited grass with a stitched leather plaque





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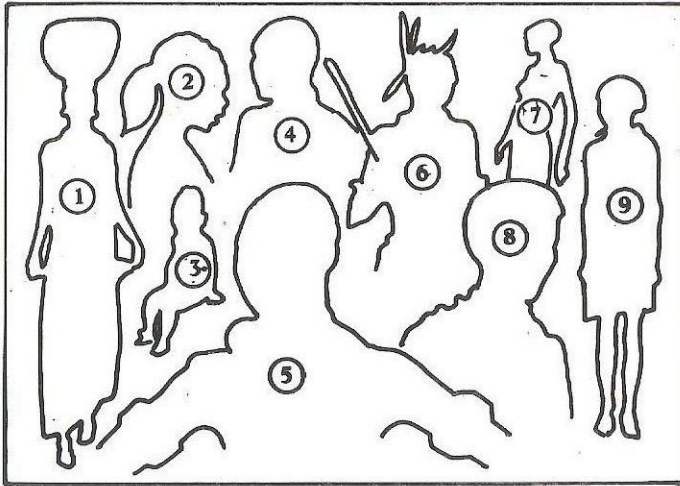


Plate 9. — Southwest Lowland (Illubabor) — Anuak, Nuer, Masengo (Majangir)

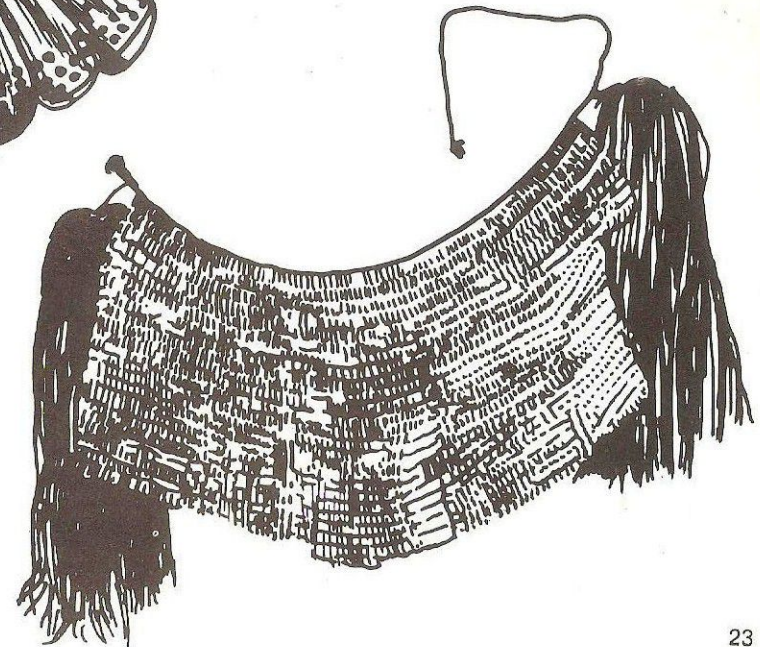
1. Anuak woman from Gambela carries a gourd vessel on her head and a woven grass basket in her hands. 2. Anuak girl superimposes on her unusual haircut, a headdress of beads and Colobus monkey hair. 3. Children wear necklaces and bracelets and leg decorations. Anklets have dum palm nuts. 4. Man of the Nuer nationality decorates his upper arm and forehead with deep scars. 5. Anuak woman with necklace of giraffe tail, beads and leather charm cases, and huge ivory bracelets. 6. Anuak dancer at Gambela wears imported cloth skirt, traditional ivory bracelets and feather headdress. 7. Nuer woman beautified with body scarification. Her apron is made of bark fibre and decorated with beads. 8. Girl of the Masengo (Majangir) with bead headband and earrings. The hair is dressed with red clay to achieve the unusual texture. 9. Majangir girl with adornments and anklets of beads and metal.

Differences in costume among the Oromo include the short, roughly dressed leather garment, fastened at the shoulder and falling just above the knee, that is worn by the Arsi people of both sexes; and the dressed skin robe, pulled to armpit-height and falling to around the knee, worn with a short leather skirt by the Kefa women. Boys and girls in rural areas often wear untreated animal-skin cloaks.

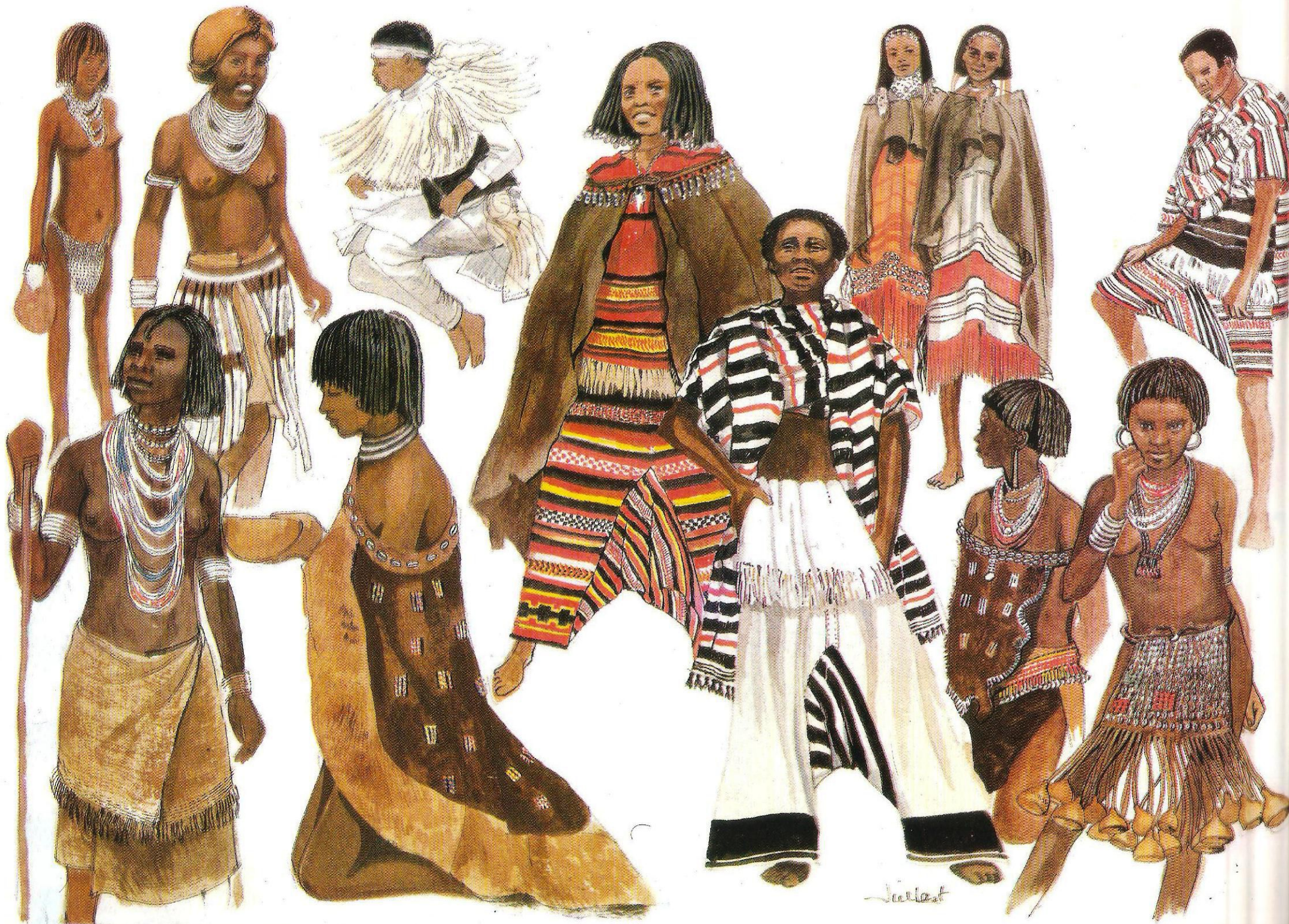
In general, the peoples of areas far from large population centers wear simple clothing ingeniously decorated. Near the Sudan-Ethiopia frontier, the Koma women wear bark aprons trimmed with ostrich egg shell discs, while their chiefs may sport leopard skins slung about the shoulders, often over an Arab shirt. The Ingassana nationalities of southern Ethiopia go almost naked; the men may wear a belt covered with small pieces of iron, and the women a small apron of leather strips. The Suri chiefs wear Colobus monkey fur hats; and young men, though usually



Apron made of engraved ivory from the Omo region.



Apron of ostrich shell beads pierced and strung together to make fabric. The two string tassels are worn behind.



Sidamo men wear their hair in elaborate styles.



LOWLAND COSTUMES

Among the Oromo nationalities, the popular garment for men is the *waya*, a local version of the *shamma*, which is smeared with butter for extra warmth and impermeability. This is often worn with cotton twill trousers, short or long, full or jodhpur-style. Oromo women in some areas affect tunics with sleeves; or the breasts may be left bare, a cotton scarf thrown about the shoulders, and the lower body covered with a leather skirt. Much crude metal-and-bead jewelry, as well as incised brass bracelets and armlets, is in evidence. Cowrie shells, used for decoration, are seen everywhere; and some women carry their babies in beautifully shell-decked halters. Distinctive local coiffures are achieved with the aid of mud or butter; they are stylized and resemble the hairdos recorded in Hittite and Egyptian art.

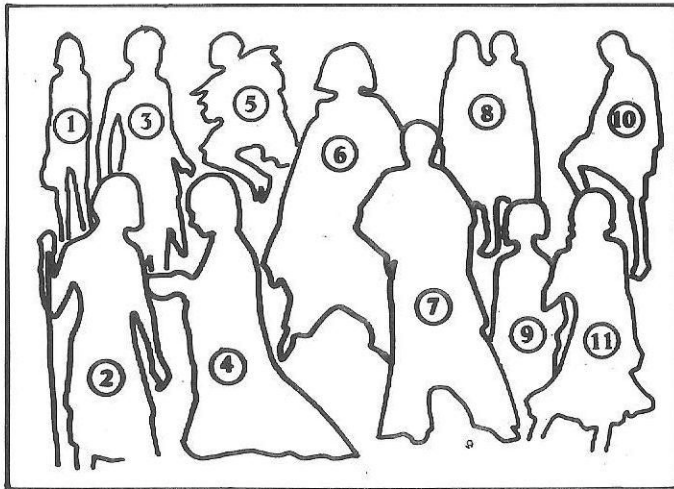
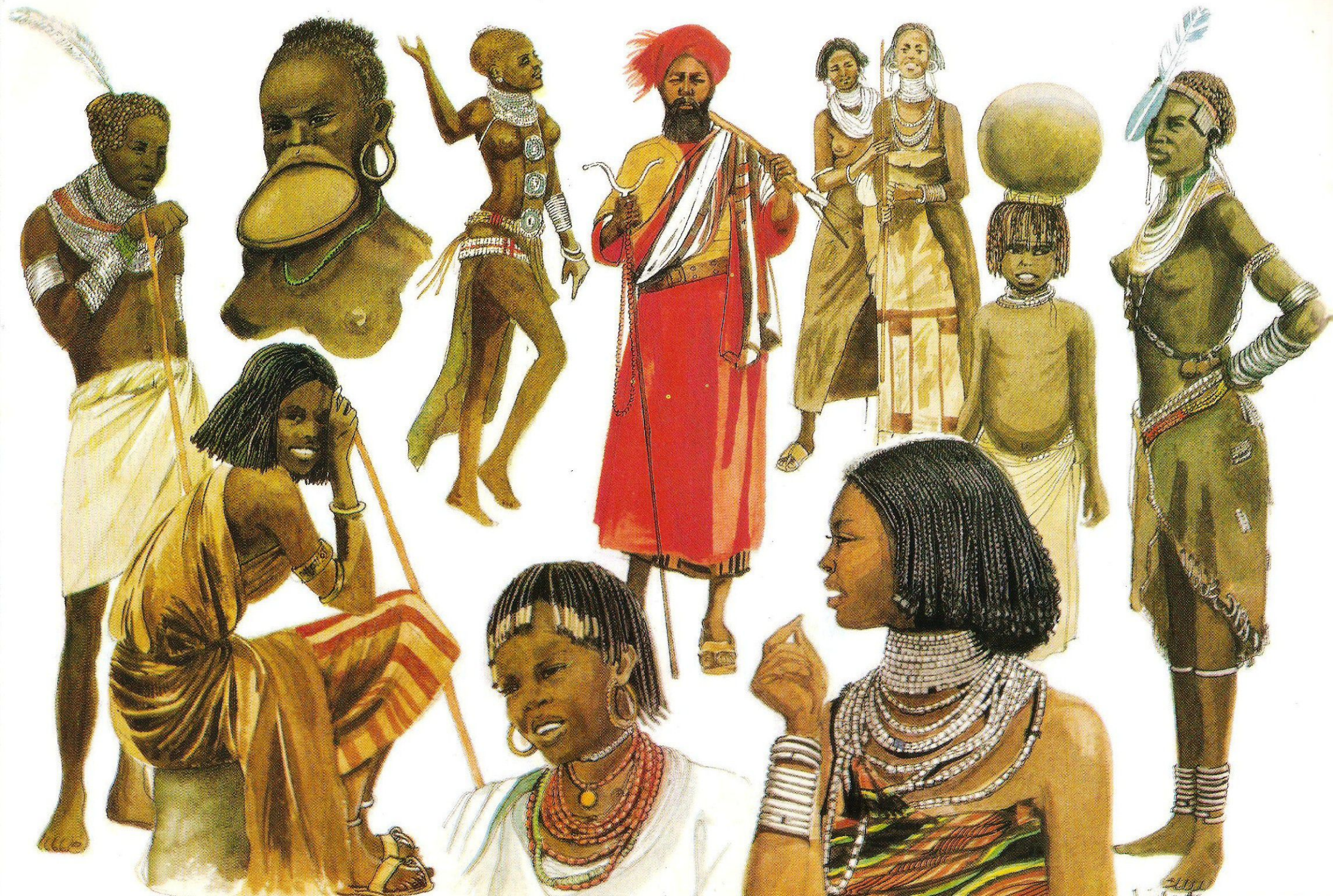


Plate 8. — Southern Cultivators (Sidamo, Shoa, Gamu Gofa) — Gurage, Sidama, Konso, Darassa

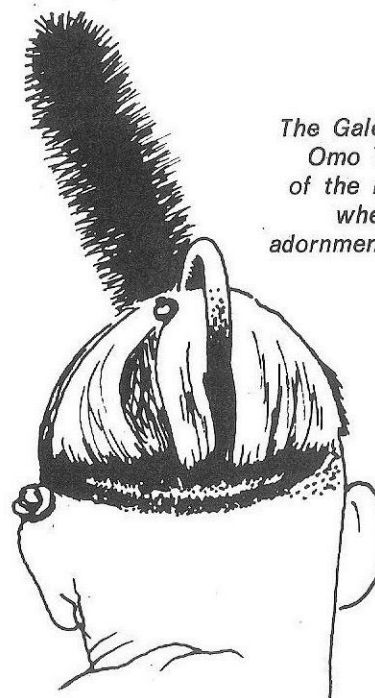
1. Young girl's apron is made of leather and cowrie shells. 2. A cloth of heavy handwoven cotton is worn by women of the Erbore. 3. Konso women wear leather hats to the fields or to fetch water to protect their heads from snakes. The skirt is split goat skin partially shaved and stained dark brown to make the pattern. 4. Gamu Gofa woman in a long leather cloak. The fur is left on the border but the main part is shaved and rubbed with a stone until as soft and pliable as chamois, and is decorated with small glass beads. 5. Gurage chief leads ceremonial dancing wearing a grass cape over his everyday clothes of tunic and jodhpurs. 6. Sidama woman with cowrie shells on the ends of her hair has the brightly coloured trousers and shirt of the region worn under a leather cape. 7. Sidama man wears trousers of the same cut but tied and turned over at the waist. 8. Two young Sidama girls in cotton dresses and leather capes. 9. Gamu Gofa girl has a small leather cape which is used to cover the breasts. Made of smooth and softened skin it is worn with a leather apron and bead belt. 10. Shorts are often worn by the Sidama men. 11. Ceremonial skirt from Gamu Gofa of leather and cowries with a few coloured beads, and trimmed with half gourds.



naked, may deck themselves out in a white bark belt, leather strap ornamented with notches, and short skin garment. The Gubba of Gojjam show a remarkable variety in dress, the men wearing padded cotton garments, while the women content themselves with jewelry and a small apron. *Ensete*, the false banana plant, provides fibres for some regional wear, and *ensete* leaves are often put to use as umbrellas.

Jewelry among outlying nationalities is usually made of natural products such as bone, ivory, grass, hair, and shell; among Christians, a cotton cord called *matab* is given at baptism and worn round the neck till death, at times being used to support a cross or other pendant. Leopard and lion claws, feathers, nuts, seeds, wooden beads, horn ornaments, and amber are worn.

Of special note are the colorful costumes of the Hararghe people of eastern Ethiopia. In and near Dire Dawa and Harar the women dress in brilliant veils, tightly fitted velvet, silk, or cotton trousers, vivid printed or dyed overblouses, and a profusion of the



The Galeb people of the Lower Omo Valley are among some of the most startlingly original when it comes to personal adornment and ornate hairstyles.



Top: the hair is shaved off except for a topknot covered with mud. Colobus hair cap and ostrich feather complete the picture. Right: black colobus tur and clay combine to make this unusual style.

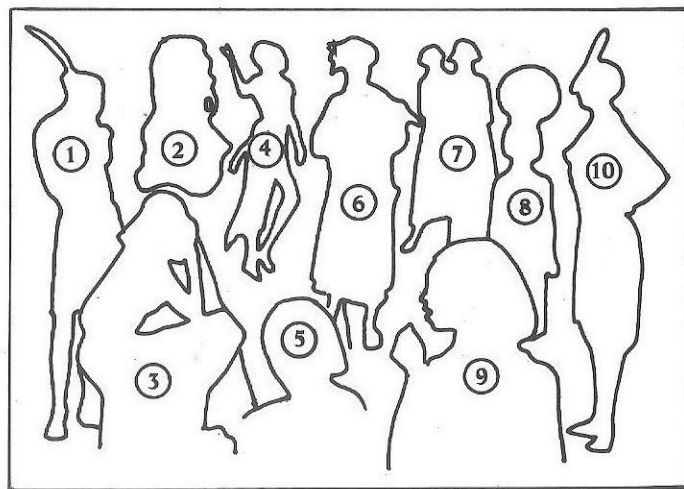


Plate 10. — Southeastern Pastoral (Sidamo, Gamo Gofa, Kefa) — Boran, Galeb, Surma (Suri)
 1. Man of the Galeb people. The necklaces are made from light-weight aluminium beads.
 2. Women of the Surma nationality still wear lip plates and ear plugs of wood or clay.
 3. Boran cowherds, usually women, wear simple leather or cotton clothes, and little jewellery.
 4. Bumi girl with elaborate bead and button decoration on leather.
 5. Young woman of Gidole in central Gamo Gofa; the hair is tipped with bamboo or horn ornaments.
 6. Muslim sheik from Borana travels from place to place. He holds wooden two-pronged sticks.
 7. Leather skirted Borana women. The decorative motifs are done with oxblood.
 8. Young girl of Surma, who may later wear the lip plate, carries water in a gourd.
 9. Girl from Borana with elaborately plaited hair and dozens of metal necklaces.
 10. Hamar woman wears a headdress with a metal plaque over the forehead and leather side flaps plus feathers for added decoration. The edge of her leather skirt is decorated with bent nails which make a pleasant sound when she walks. Heavy metal bracelets and anklets are always worn by women.



Arsi Oromo dress mainly in bead-embroidered leather. Jewellery is usually of fine twisted wire. Beads of copper, brass or glass are used to form the heavy handsome necklace and head and body ornaments.

In general, the peoples of areas far from large population centers wear simple clothing ingeniously decorated. Near the Sudan-Ethiopia frontier, the Koma women wear bark aprons trimmed with ostrich egg shell discs, while their chiefs may sport leopard skins slung about the shoulders, often over an Arab shirt. The Ingassana nationalities of southern Ethiopia go almost naked; the men may wear a belt covered with small pieces of iron, and the women a small apron of leather strips. The Suri chiefs wear Colobus monkey fur hats; and young men, though usually Nomadic women of the Somali nationalities in Hararghe Administrative Region, particularly in the Ogaden area, do not dress in the bright fabrics of the city women, but follow their men on foot or camel across the desert clothed from the waist downward in coarse cotton cloth or skins, their bare breasts covered with simple metal jewelry, and their hair styled in multiple twists or coils, or brought behind each ear in a large bun covered with a net or veil. Hippopotamus, giraffe, or camel hide

The striking bead necklaces can be worn back or front. Cowrie shells or sometimes just plain buttons are all used for decorative purposes.

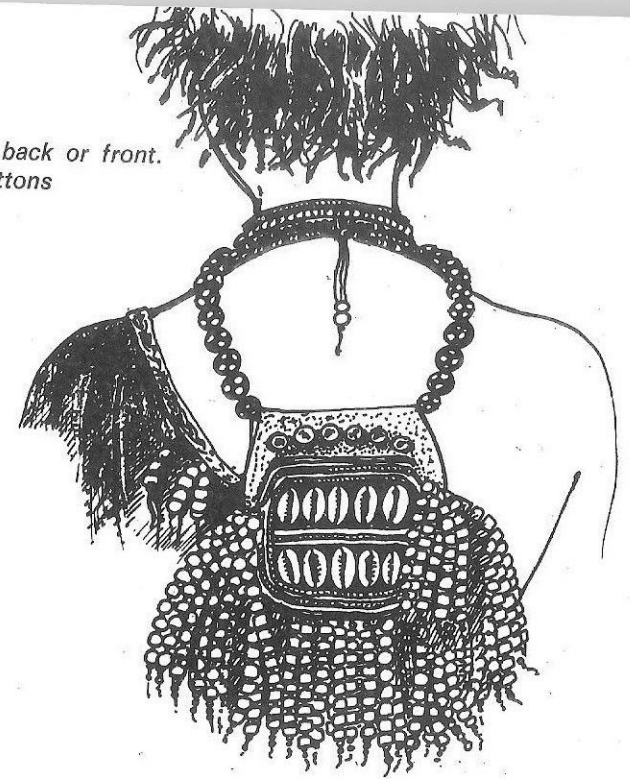
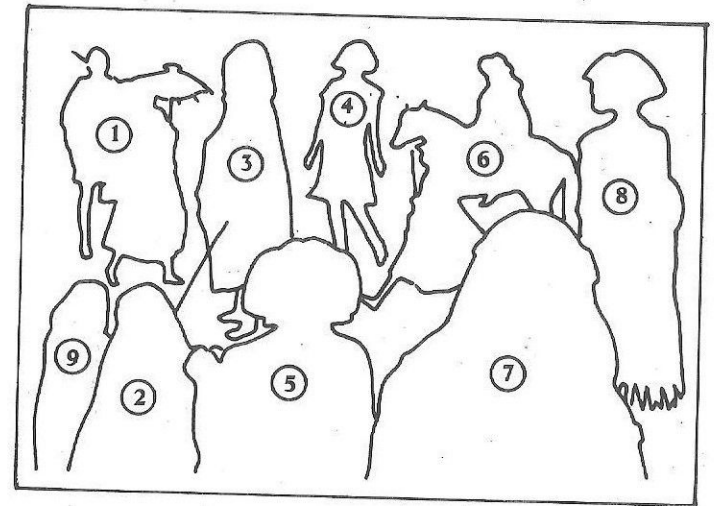
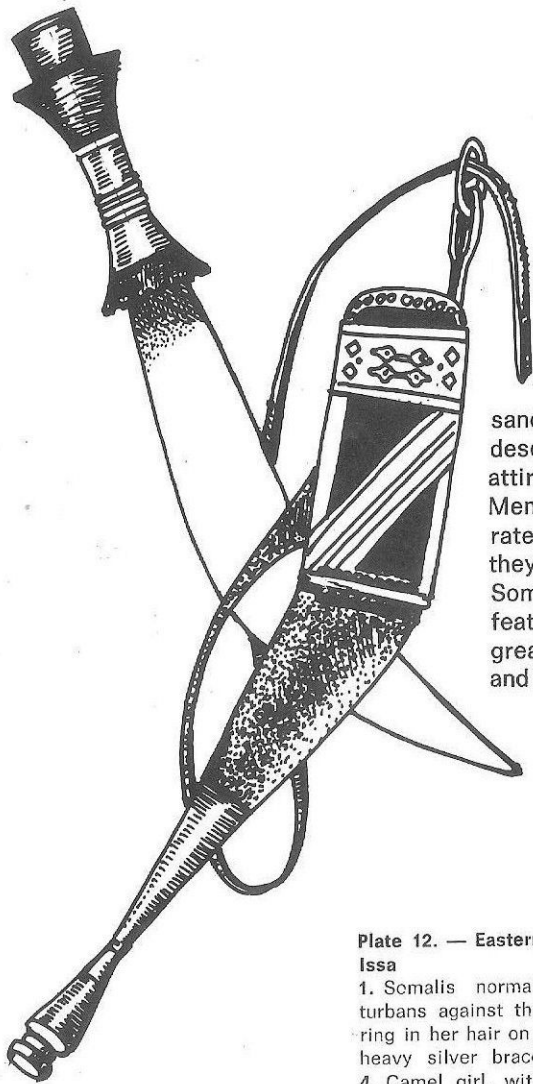


Plate 11. -- Southern Pastoral (Sidamo, Arsi, Bale) — Arsi, Oromo, Guji

1. A wife and husband in Sidamo make their way to market. The umbrella is of woven *enset* leaves. 2. Arsi girls wear leather cloaks decorated with beads. The black and red striped shirts are locally produced. 3. Girl from Bale, with typical black and white cotton headdress wears leather cloak and imported fur-trimmed boots. 4. Little girl from Sidamo in a dress of the red and black cloth of the region. 5. Arsi girl with bead-trimmed leather dress, bead and wire necklace, holds a milkpot decorated with cowrie shells. 6. Bale women ride or walk to market, straw hats over their standard black cloth head coverings. 7. Young girl from Bale wears a mass of jewellery of wire and beads, leather and silver. 8. Water is carried either in large earthenware pots or in leather water containers. The bead design on the dress would probably use the cross motif if she were a Christian, but the people of Arsi are also Muslims or pagans. 9. Head decoration of silver coins worn by a Bale girl.





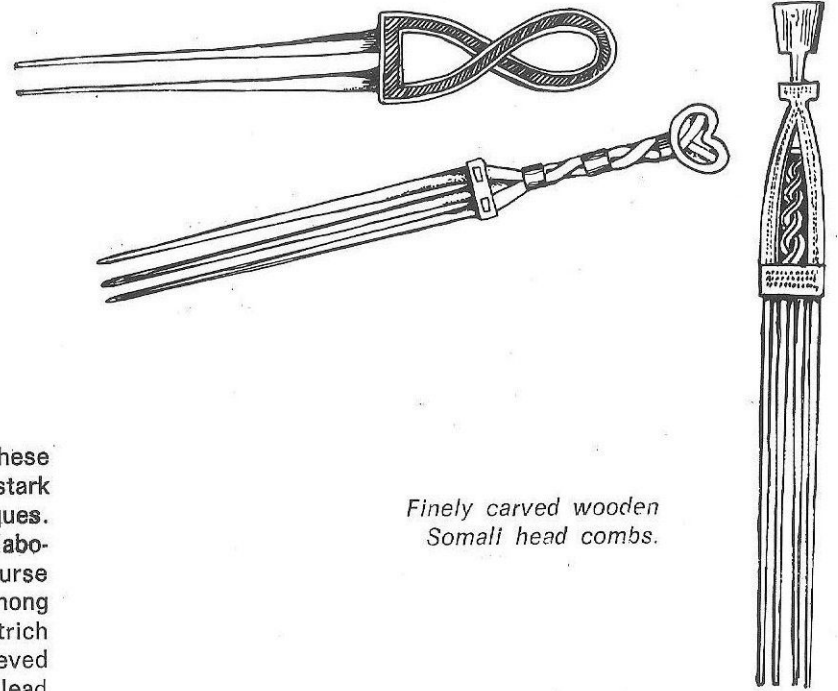


The great curved knife of the men of the Afar and Issa nationalities has become a hallmark. The sheath is beautifully decorated — in some cases with precious metals — be it of wood or horn. Not just a weapon of defense, the knife can be turned to any purpose and no man of the desert is ever seen without one.

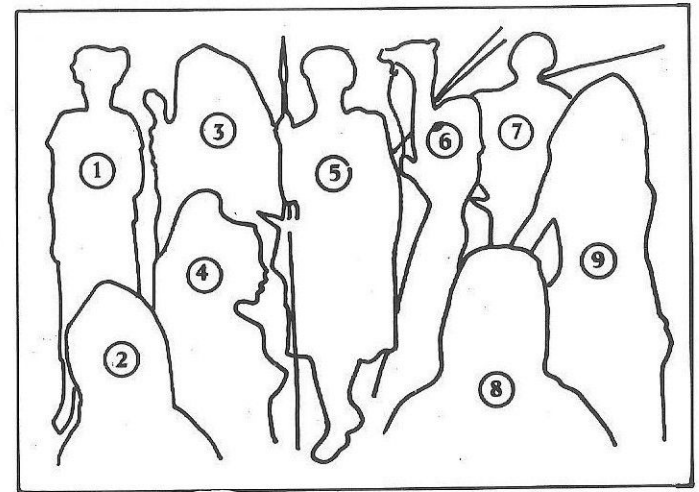
sandals protect their feet from the blistering sands. These desert dwellers are a tall, proud, striking people, and their stark attire well complements the muscular beauty of their physiques. Men wear a *shamma*-like wrap called *maro* or *tob* and an elaborate "mop" coiffure held in place with butter; and of course they carry the very necessary dagger, spear, and rifle. Among Somali men, one who has killed an enemy may wear an ostrich feather; an ivory bracelet marks the man who has achieved great prowess in battle. Both men and women wear silver, lead and zinc jewelry.

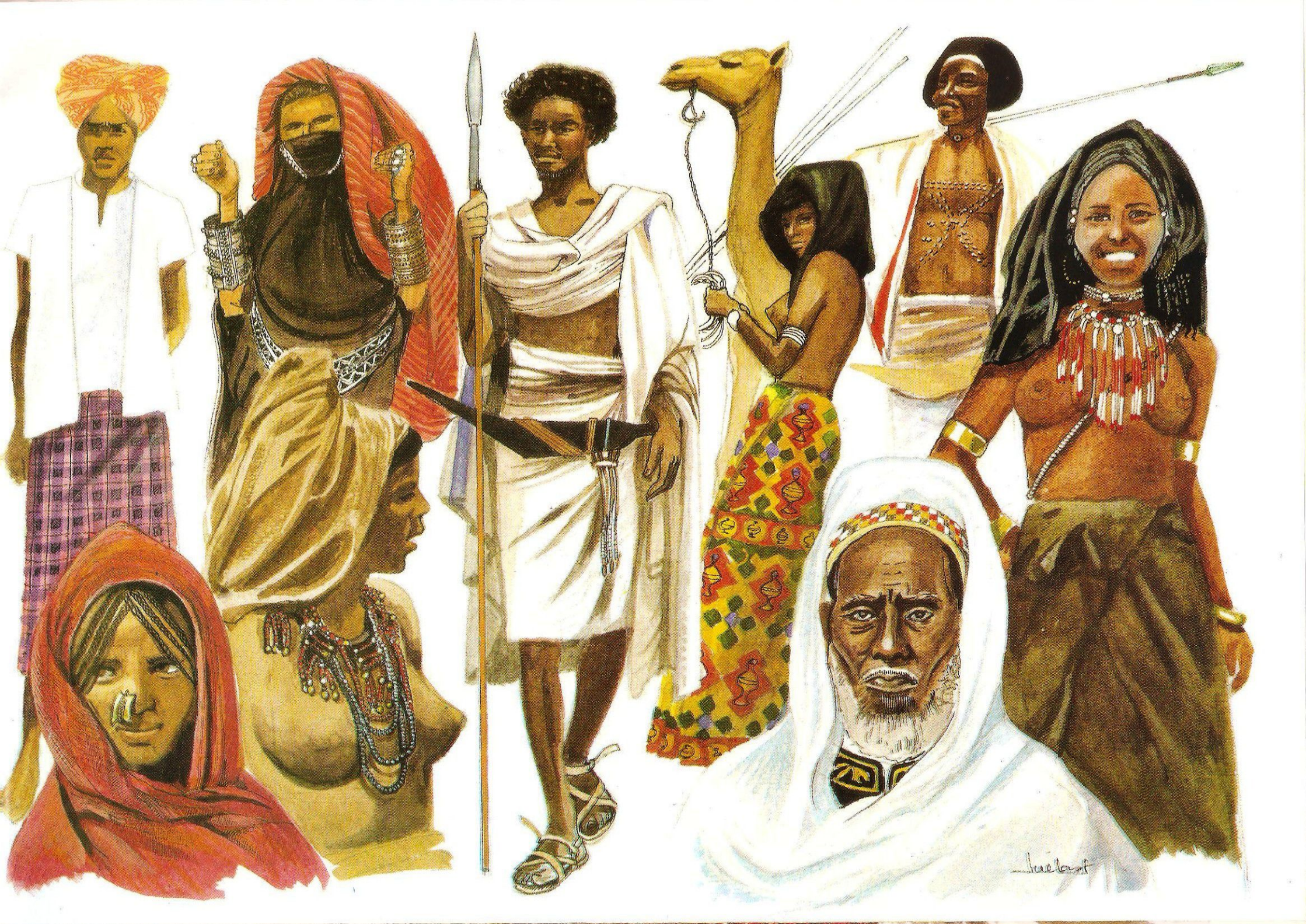
Plate 12. — Eastern Pastoral (Eritrea, Wollo, Hararge) — Danakil, Karayu, Somali, Afar, Saho, Issa

1. Somalis normally wear colourful cotton cloth—calf length wrap-around skirts and turbans against the blazing sun. 2. Eritrean girl with nose ornament also will have a gold ring in her hair on the top of her head. 3. Old Afar woman in Asseb still covers her face. The heavy silver bracelets are probably from Harar, and are found commonly on the coast. 4. Camel girl, with silver and leather necklace, cotton headcloth. 5. Afar man carrying a staff and wearing his huge curved knife. They frequently carry guns and spears. 6. Camel girl of the Issas wears imported colourful cloth skirt instead of the usual leather. 7. Karayu man with body scarification. 8. A *sheik* at Asseb wears an embroidered shirt under his *netela*. 9. Afar girl with a finely-tanned leather skirt.



Finely carved wooden Somali head combs.





Priests of the Orthodox Church wear many different types of headgear. Foreground shows that worn by the Abuna and his colleagues. Left: hats most usually worn by the clergy at Axum.

RELIGIOUS COSTUME

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has a multitude of functionaries and the priest, deacon or nun is a familiar sight, especially in the city, where there are large churches and religious centers.

Priests and deacons dress simply, in a long cotton gown that is a variation on the *kemis*, a cloche-style hat, sometimes draped with cloth, called a *kob*; and a cloak of heavy material with a stiff stand-up collar, called a *kaba*. A fly-whisk, hand-cross, or prayer stick (used for support during the long church services) may be carried. On special occasions the *netela* worn over the priest's shoulders has a colorful stripe, and priests of the higher

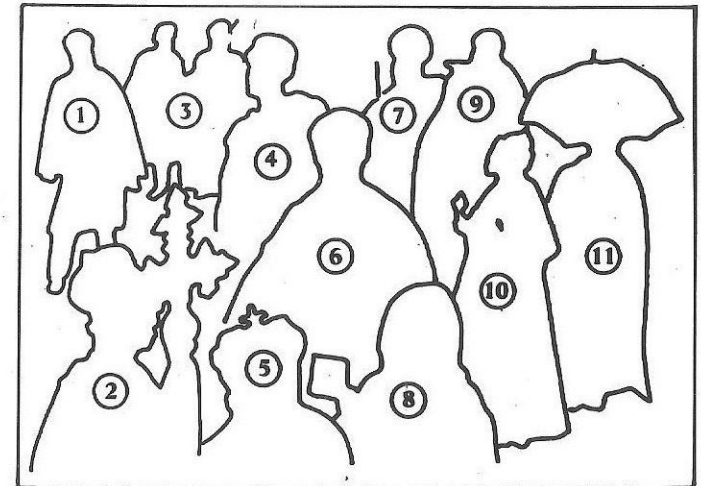
ranks wear richly embroidered bands and a *kaba* decorated with metallic thread.

Nuns, who leave home when they are old to labor in monasteries, baking bread or caring for the household needs of the priests, wear a simple, full-cut *kemis* of the coarsest material, without ornamentation. A white head-cloth is wrapped about their cropped heads, and the older nuns carry prayer sticks for support. Though it may not be visible, a cross is always worn about the neck.

The Islamic religion had its origin in Arabia around 600 A.D. and can be considered as equally old in Ethiopia. However, there is no formal dress whereby one can differentiate the religious hierarchy from the ordinary Muslims. The official structure is as follows; the "Almejlus Al'aela Lishu'un Al Islamia", highest rank, equivalent to Archbishop; the "Muftin", equivalent to bishop by rank; the "Imam", prayer leader equivalent to parish priest; the "Sheiks", religious teachers; and the "Kadis", Judges. Irrespective of their functions, they all wear almost the same dress, i.e. long trousers, *kemis*, cuffia and turban on the head. Some put on a large cloak (*juba*).

Plate 13. — Religious Costume — Orthodox Christian, Muslim, Qemant

1. Priest of the Qemant, a Judaic religious sect akin to the Felashas of Northern Ethiopia, he acts as the religious and secular head of the community. 2. Crown-like headdress of a young deacon bearing a heavy and ornate processional cross of brass. 3. Priests of Lalibela with prayersticks, drums and sistra. 4. Muslim sheik at Asseb. 5. Headdress of a deacon of the Orthodox Church. 6. Old priest of the highlands carrying a flywhisk and prayer book. 7. The Sheiks of Islam do not wear any special clothes or colours to denote rank. They often carry beads or a special stick. 8. Yellow-robed priest from Gonder. 9. An ancient nun in Lalibela leans on the prayer stick which is used as a crutch during the long religious ceremonies. The nuns spend most of their lives serving in the houses of the priests. They wear simple coarse clothes and are usually old. 10. Dignitary of the Orthodox Church. 11. A priest takes part in the Timkat (Epiphany) ceremony in Addis Ababa.





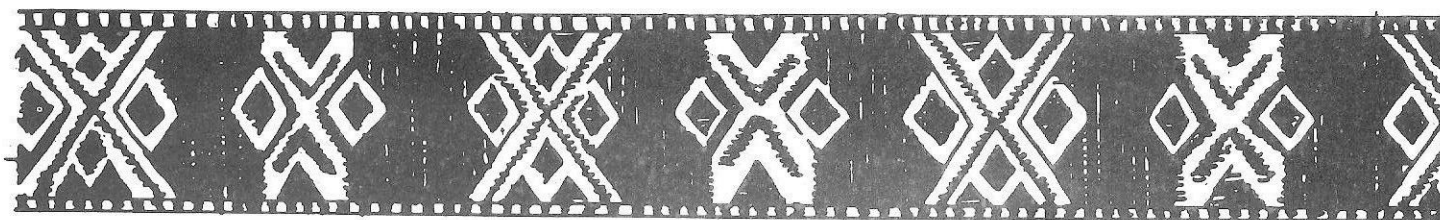
Veelast

Spinning in Ethiopia is by no means a lost art: almost all women can sit down and make the fine cotton thread which will be used to weave the gossamer shamma material and the warm heavy gabi, though the Dorze people have the reputation for making the best cloth.

SPINNING AND WEAVING METHODS

The processes of spinning and weaving have traditionally been carried out through a division of labor between the sexes; the women cleaning the cotton filaments and spinning the thread which was then woven by the menfolk. First the raw cotton is cleansed of its seeds by being rolled on a stone under an iron rod or *madamacha*; then it is further stripped of debris by means of a bow-shaped instrument called a *dagan*; the catgut string of which is vibrated against the pile of half-cleaned cotton until the finer filaments are left on top and the dust and heavier matter have sifted to the bottom. The clean cotton fibres are then twisted around the *dagan* into rough strands, wound into skeins, and set aside till needed for spinning. This process is carried out with the assistance of a spindle about 20 centimeters long ending in a disc. The cotton is held in the left hand, while the right holds the spindle steady on the spinner's thigh and allows it to rotate. As late as the 1900's even ladies learned the art of spinning and made garments for their loved ones from thread they themselves had spun.

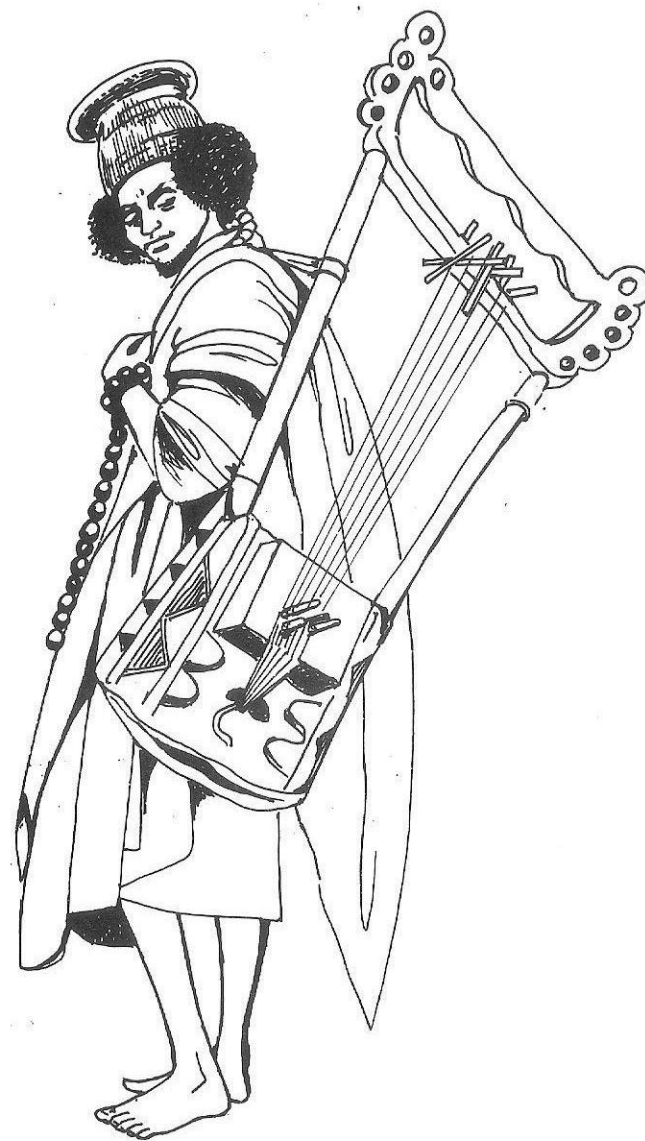
Today there is still much spinning and weaving done within the family for family needs, but Ethiopia's textile and clothing industries take care of the demand for cotton goods as well. Large commercial cotton plantations in Gonder, the Awash River Valley, supply the great textile mills that produce over 60 million square metres of cotton fabrics and 25,000 tons of cotton yarns annually. The finest traditional fabrics, however, are still woven by hand on looms that have not changed substantially from those used in the time of Christ. Warp threads are strung on a framework of stripped sapling poles and are moved as the weaver chooses by means of foot-powered leather thongs. The woof threads are carried across in a pod-shaped wooden shuttle. *Tet*, as the locally grown cotton is called, has a peculiar strength that allows the weaver to vary his fabric from a transparent cheesecloth weight to cloth with the heavy texture of drapery material. Thus the range of Ethiopian traditional garb, from *netela* to *gabi*, is based on one staple thread given variation by spinning and weaving techniques handed down from generation to generation.



The shamma border called tibebe, varies from simple to intricate in its many different forms.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- barnos — cape
dagan — catgut bow used to separate the filaments of cotton
ensete — false banana
ensosela — red dye used for staining feet and palms of hands
fotta — coloured shawl worn by Harari women
gabi — heavy cotton blanket
kaba — stiff collared cloak of the Orthodox clergy
kemis — dress of shemma material
kob — the hat of an Orthodox priest
kohl — a preparation used to darken the edges of the eyes
kutta — a heavier version of the netela of double thickness
madamacha — rod used to roll the seeds out of the cotton bolls
- maro or tob — shamma-like wrap worn by Somali men
maro or to — shamma-like wrap worn by Somali men
matab — cotton neck cord given at baptism
netela — light cotton shawl of single thickness
shamma — the white cotton material and more specifically the shawl made of it worn by both men and women
Shash — women's head cloth
shash — women's head cloth
tibebe — coloured border of the shamma
waya — Oromo version of the shemma



Priest musician carries his begena and his beads, as he wanders the countryside in the Jimma area. His hat is of tightly woven grass, and his robes are cotton.

May we take your family group, too?



ETHIOPIAN
AIRLINES

Going to great lengths to please