



ASMARA UNIVERSITY

BILIN LANGUAGE PROJECT
The Origin and Development of Bilin

By
Kiflemariam Hamdē

Sponsored by The Institute of African Studies

Asmara, March 11, 1986

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FOREWORD

In this study entitled "The Origin and Development of Bilin" it seems that everything related with the Bilin language has been treated rather throughly. If on the other hand one considers the work incomplete, we would very much like to invite prospective local scholars to write the sequel or part II. The editor however feels that Ato Kiflemariam Hamde has already done a lot in presenting a somewhat obscure Ethiopian language in a very detailed and quite scholarly manner. One thing though should be taken into consideration as one embarks on the study of this work: the author is no linguistics majorer. Being a native Bilin himself he was guided more by a scholarly zeal and pride in his own language rather than by a cold and impersonal analytical approach, a method commonly adopted by foreigners dealing with native cultures and languages.

The present work is however none the worse for it and deserves serious study by all local and foreign language scholars who would like to get a glimpse of a language hardly ever studied so deeply before.

Amanuel Sahle, A/Director
Institute of African Studies

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PREFACE

Language is one of the most important heritages of mankind; without language, perhaps, the life of human society as we know it now would be somewhat a different one. Language enriches and keeps (preserves) human culture; the individual as well as the social life gets its meaning through expression of language. Every society has its own linguistic heritage which is peculiar to it. And this is what contributes to its identity and particularity. Although as human beings people have many basic features in common, the possession of separate languages within a given space and time results in variations in character and habits as these have marked influence on behavior. Studying a language would somehow be one way of studying about the people who speak it.

Bilin is a language spoken in Bogos, in the district of Keren, Northern Ethiopia. It is less studied and less known. As a native speaker of Bilin, it has always been my personal interest to say something about it, and when the IAS asked me to write this paper, that internal interest came into reality. However, despite this deep interest, two apparent limitations could be observed on this work. The first is that this small work has been carried out independently of those few earlier contributions on the language (except those mentioned and described in Chapter II) because of their non-availability. This is also reflected in the bibliography. The second problem is that, apart from the author's personal interest in and knowledge of Bilin, the work is by no means based on any qualifications as would be required for such an important work - such as specialized skill on linguistics and/or at least being a student of languages. Nevertheless, both limitations also do not altogether hinder one to contribute

on what he is able to do and to give as a necessary information for those specialists (scholars) who can study the language on a scholarly way. This work is, therefore, regarded as an invitation to those scholars who need basic information for their analysis and study of the language.

After explaining shortly the origin of the language and tracing some similarities with Agew language (in the first chapter) some earlier works on it are presented in the second chapter. Then short analysis of the structure of the language as regards grammar and phonetic features follows. One would not do justice to the language if he were to explain its present situation without trying to explain what changes or developments are taking place in the language at present. This would not also show the whole picture of the language as it is used today, So chapter IV treats shortly the present day situation of Bilin as influenced by Arabic, Tigre and Tigrinya - all Semitic languages. With this in mind chapter V treats the present day spoken Bilin as practised in different spheres of the 'Bilina-man'. Finally, some reasons for the obscurity of the language are given, followed by recent informal attempts made to develop the language.

Thanks to the progressive policy of the government which treats all Ethiopian languages on equal basis, Bilin could now be studied and regarded on the same footing with other languages of the country.

My special thanks are due to the IAS (Institute of African Studies) which sponsored this work and particularly to Ato Ammanuel Sable, the A/Director of the Institute, who earnestly reviewed the sections regularly. I also

forward my thanks to Mr. Reddy and Ato Kiflemariam Zerom, both of the ILS (Institute of Language Studies, Asmara University) for their scholarly revision of chapters III and IV respectively. Br. Keflezghi Yosief also deserves my warm thanks for this untiring co-operation in revising the translations into English of the poems in Chapter V.

TRANSLITERATION

The following symbols have been used in trnasliterating Bilin letters into English.

<u>Consonants</u>	<u>Typically Bilin Sounds</u>
ts = ʂ	ñ = ʃ ʒ
p = ʈ	ñw = ʃ ʒ
t = m	<u>Vowels</u>
h = ɦ	Giiz (the 1st syllable) = e
sh = ʃ	kaib = u
ch = ʧ	sals = i
tch = ʧ	rabi = a
zh = ʒ	sads = i
q = ɸ	sabi = o
qw = ɸ	
x = ɰ	
xw = ɰ	
,	o

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND - THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SETTING

Bogos is an area in and around Keren which is inhabited by the Bilin people. It is bordered in the north by Bet Juk, and Marya, in the east by Mensa, in the west by the Beni Amir and in the south by Hamasien. The word 'Bilin' signifies in the language as well as the people who speak it. 'Belain' also means Bilin-^{man/}woman. Bogos is the land of the 'Belain'!

The origin of the word Bogos is not known; tradition holds that it was the name of the leader who led the people out of their original homeland (Lasta)¹. According to Conti Rossini, Bogos is a village in the Wello province (Bogosha)². For some, it is a modification of the word 'Boas gor' - which means sons of the Jewish king-Boas³. of the Old Testament.

The meaning of the word 'Bilin' also is not known. Some version of the tradition holds that it is Saho word (belen) for Christian⁴. In fact, 'Belen' in Saho means a Christian. If this is true, still we have to answer the question why the people call themselves 'Bilin' and how and when it began to apply to them; and again, why the other Christian communities, such as the Semitic Tigrinya speakers and the Irob (Cushitic) are not called 'Bilin' like this group of Agew people.

Bilin tradition does not help in tracing the period when the people emigrated from their original homeland, although it strongly holds that they are in fact Agew people. They count back sixteen to eighteen generations which were believed to have lived in Bogos, Conti Rossini gives the 10 century A.D. for the first wave of migrations and the date 1270 for the second⁵. The word Bilin is also

said to have been in use by the time of king Bedemariam in 1478.⁶ It is to be noted that:- "these people came in waves of migrations and not at one time or to one place"⁷.

Bilin tradition explains the migration in connection with the two dominant tribes - the Taqur and the Tergequr; the latter is said to have arrived in Bogos first. The reasons for the migration of the Tergequr are said to be:

i) that one of the Terge sons bore a child from his step mother and, to avoid conflict, fled to Bogos⁸;

ii) that the sons of Terge killed a man and to avoid the revenge, they fled to Bogos⁹; and that

iii) The Bilin people have come from Lasta as military colonies after the rise of the Zagwe dynasty to defend the borders from the invading Bejja tribes, around the second half of the 10th century¹⁰.

The Taqur group were said to have come later from Qwara in Gondar region. They immigrated to Bogos as a result of the problems created by Queen Guidit in the 10th century¹¹. It should, however, be noted that not all of the Agew emigrants reached Bogos nor all of the present Bilin speaking peoples trace their origin to Lasta and/or Qwara.

There is also another striking point which links the people with Agew origins - the linguistic link, * that the Bilin people speak an Agew language that is similar to those Agew varieties spoken in Seqota (Xamtinya) and Dangla region of Gojjam (Awraja),¹² will be seen in Chapter I.

*I contacted Awiya speakers and theirs has much in common with Bilin

The migration can also be traced by the existence of Agew names all the way down from Lasta to Keren, such as Dibarwa in Serae, Chinduwa, Tilqustxw, Jegertaxw etc. in Hamasien¹³.

Foremerely, the people were Orthodox Christians but they are now adherents of either Catholicism or Islam which were both introduced into Bogos in the 19th century¹⁴. There are also some Protestants. Moslems are in the majority. The latter are said to be $2/3$ ¹⁵ or 75% of the whole Bilin population.

The present number of the people is not exactly known but it can fairly be estimated from the census taken by the Catholic Vicariate of Keren in 1983/84 - which includes non-Bilin Catholics. According to the above census the total number of Catholics was (is) 32,600*. The non-Bilin Catholics in the region are said to number about 3,000. Therefore, the Bilin Catholics are estimated to be around 30,000. Since the Moslems are in majority - $2/3$ or 75% - we have 60,000 Moslems or 90 Moslems respectively. The total being either 90,000 or 120,000. Whichever gives the fair estimate depends on the reliability of these ratios. In fact, the above mentioned statistics for the Christians is based on actual counting of the people on parochial basis so that it seems rather dependable. And if we consider the distribution of Islam among the Bilin people, the ratios seem to reflect the reality because almost the whole Taqur and substantial number of the Terge group are Moslems.

*Abba Tesfazghi Ogbit - Vicarri of Keren Catholics and Abba Asfaha Kidanemariam Arch. Priest of Keren give the same information.

These two groups - Taqur and Tergequr - are indistinguishable almost in all respects except that there is small variation in the language. The Terge group are called 'Senhit' from the Bilin word "Senhi-na" - to walk in a relaxed manner (gendel -na). It is said that when the Tergequr settled in their present habitat - Megarish, Tchindiq (Elabered), Haggaz, Debresinna - now that they finally found their refuge, they began to walk slowly and proudly.¹⁷

It signified there was peace - that they would not any more continue their trek in search of a 'peaceful land' and the hardships they encountered on their way were ended. So, 'Senhit' Bilin and Taqur Bilin are somehow distinguishable at local level. The latter call themselves Bilin and to the former they call Senhit. The term was later applied to the whole district of Keren.

I. BILIN AS AN AGEW LANGUAGE

That the Bilin language is Agew in origin is attested both by the Bilin people themselves and by scholars who write on Agew languages. In this section an attempt will be made to show how it is related to one of these Agew dialects - Awiya. Awiya is spoken in Gojam in the Dangla region. The other Agew languages include Xamtanga spoken in Seqota, Wollo province, and Qimant which is spoken in Gondar province in the Aykel area. The Kunfal people are also said to speak an Agew variety in the west of Lake Tana¹. The Felashas are also said to have once been speaking an Agew variety, but lost it and now speak Amharic, however, they are also believed to practice their language outside of the "hearing of outsiders."²

Fleming and Bender hold that the main divisions within Agew based on vocabulary and grammar seem to be as follows:³

1. North - (A) Bilin, Xamtanga; (b) Qimant;
2. South - Awingi.

To try and find out when these languages began to be spoken as distinct ones is beyond the scope of this paper. According to Fleming and Bender again, there are certain features which give Agew language specific characteristics⁴. These are expressed in phonology, grammar and vocabulary.

1. Phonetic features: Fleming and Bender say that "considerable doubt exists about the general Agew phonology because in several cases investigators have been unable to hear sounds reported in Agew languages by the two older primary sources, Reinisch and Conti Rossini. Most in

doubt are glottalized consonants which Fleming, Hetzron, and Bender did not hear in Awingi and Palmer did not hear in Bilen, although both were previously reported. Pharyngals are found only in Bilen and Xamta, while implosive phonemes are probably not found at all."⁵

They also give some particular characteristics of phonetic sounds which specifies the Agew sound. These are:

- a) the frequent occurrence of q and x and other similar forms such as xwe and xwe;
- b) the uvular flap or trill (R), and
- c) the most important, the velar nasal \bar{n}

They also hold that the latter, the velar-nasal \bar{n} occurs at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of words. As examples they give $\bar{n}in$ or $\bar{n}an$ 'house', $la\bar{n}a$ 'two'. But in Bilin as far as present spoken Bilin is concerned, there is no word which begins with \bar{n} . In Awiya, however, it occurs in all positions as the scholars have observed; as we will see below.

2.) Grammatical Features: according to Fleming and Bender again, the gender system of Agew has gradually been drifting away from the gender system of Cushitic⁶. Since the present work is not concerned with Agew as Cushitic language, no more will be said about this point further.

In general, there are gender distinctions in:-

- a) pronouns,
- b) verb forms, and
- c) demonstratives

a) Pronouns/personal. - subject forms

<u>Bilin</u>		<u>Awiya</u>
S 1.	an = I	ani/an
	2m. enti = you	enti
	2f. enti = you	enti
	3m. ni = he	ni/n̄i
	3f. nri = she	"
P 1.	yin	noszi / ɣH /
	2m+2f = entin = you	etoszi / ɣ fH /
	3m+3f = naw = they	n̄waszi / ɣ̄H /

The occurrence of zje () in the plural forms of Awiya is not present in Bilin but in the singular forms they are similar.

b) Personal pronouns - object forms

<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>	
S 1.	yit	Iyase
	2m+2f. kut	Kusi
	3m. nit	Gnwarzhusi
	3f. nirti	
P 1.	yinet	
	2m+2f. entet	
	3m+3f. nat	

c) Possessive pronouns

<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>	
S 1.	yixw = mine	Yiwi
	2m+2f. kuxw = yours	kuwi
	3m. = nixw = his	n̄wi
	3f. nruxw = her	"
P 1.	yinaxw = ours	enwi
	2m+2f. entaxw = yours	entoszusui
	3m+3f. nax = theirs	n̄waszusui

d) Demonstrative pronouns (or adjectives)

	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>
S	ninen (m), = this	eni
	nine(f), = this	ena
	enjendin, = that(m)	
	enjendini, = that(f)	
P	ena-nen, = these for both genders	ani
	enchenden, = those	ani

e) Possessive Adjectives (pre-fixes)

	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>
S	1. yi/ = my	i
	2m+2f. kwi(ku) = your	ke, ki
	3m. ni = his	ni
	3f. nir = her	ni
P	1. yina = our	nni
	2m+2f. enta = your	nti
	3m+3f. na = their	n̄a

f) Interrogative pronouns

	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>
Which	awin	-
who	awini	ai
whom	awti	-
what	wireni	dama
how much	wirikew	wixa
where	awil	wada
how many	wirko	wixa
which thing	wira	watay

g) Numerals:

	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>
one	laxw	lahu
two	leña	leñwa
three	sexwa	shuha
four	seja	sieza
five	ankwa	ankwe
six	welta	welta
seven	leñeta	leñwáta
eight	sexweta	seheta
nine	sesa	seseta
ten	shika	tsika
twenty	leñereñin	leñwarña
thirty	sexwereñin	shuha shika
hundred	lix	liha

Except for one (laxw), the Bilin numerals, from two to ten, end in - a. The same vowel also appears in Awiya for the same numerals but instead of the Bilin "xwe", "ha" is used as in sexwa (Bilin) and shuha (Awiya), three. "Je" in Bilin is changed into "ze" in Awiya. From all of the above examples, numerals in both languages are more related to each other than in any other group of comparisons we have used.

Verb to be

In Bilin, there is an invariable particle which serves for all number, gender, and person, and it comes at the end of a sentence - gin.

Simple Present Tense-

<u>Sg.</u>	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awia</u>
1.	an gin, I am	ani ah
2.	enti gin, you are	inti ah
3m.	ni gin, he is	n̄ix
3f.	nri gin, she is	

<u>Pl.</u>		
1.	yin gin, we are	nozhi ix
2.	enti gin, you are	entozlix
3.	naw gin, they are	n̄wazhax

3) Vocabulary - there are many words which are common for all the Agew languages. Some of these are,⁹
gwedug or gizuḡ, (belly) arba, (Awia and kunfal arfi), (month)
nasha, nash, (bone) gerik (noon) or gerken in Awia
kriṅ, (stone)

Compare also the numerals which are more or less the same except for some minor modifications. As for the parts of the body, Bilin and Awia have many similar words.

'ili, (eye)

kes, (Awia, kesar), (shoulder)

luk, (leg)

For animal names also we have similar names as in the following:

<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awia</u>
liwi	elwa, (cow)
bira	bire (ox)
dixwara	dixuara, (an ass, donkey)
gidiṅ,	gisieṅ, (dog)
weka	wixi, (hyena)

Other nouns which are more or less similar are also:

ik, (adam), in Awiya axi, (human being)
exwina, in Awiya xwina, (woman)
enqaq, in Awiya entsak, (girls)

The most related group of words which we have seen so far are, as we said above, the numerals; on the other hand there is a group of words which are unrelated in both languages: the names for the days of the week:

<u>English</u>	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>Awiya</u>
Monday	senu	machi
Tuesday	selin	sefit/wifchi
Wednesday	lebwa (legwa	yimi
Thursday	amid	janay
Friday	arib	'arb (as in Amharic or Geez
Saturday	senber shigwaxw (lit.younger sunday)	edami
Sunday	senber qidaxw (lit,elder sunday)	adgu

The above names of the week are not only unrelated but there is also the occurrence of the Amharic letter (che) in some of the Awiya words (machi) which is completely non-existent in Bilin sound. Perhaps it might be an influence of Amharic but to say categorically that it is an Amharic influence is a little unsafe.

As noted above an attempt has been made to compare Bilin with another Agew language - Awiya and in fact there is some link between the two languages; but since both are spoken in different environment, they are undergoing

- i) Die Bilin-Sprache, Leipzig, 1883
- ii) Text der Bilin-Sprache, Leipzig, 1887
- iii) Worterbuch der Bilin Sprache, Vienna, 1887
- iv) The Gospel of Mark in the Bilin or Bogos language, Vienna, 1882

His textbook of Bilin language (i) and (ii) deal with³

- history of Bogos
- sayings, anecdotes, related to the customs and laws of Bogos
- animal tales, and humour songs.

He used the letter \bar{n} , a typically Agew sound, in the book, but instead of xwe (\bar{n}) he used the letter que (ϕ)⁴. Here some explanations of the usage of letters in the Gospel (iv) will be considered). In this translation, he uses many Tigre words - perhaps his informant was said to be 'Taour Bilina'*. His use of qe and qwe instead of xe and xwe respectively results in a shift of meaning of the words. As an example, two versés from the translation of the Gospel are given.

Mark 1:30 - ቢጥገደ ኦቶር ገና ኩደር ሽመደ ለብር ሰጥቲ
ቢጥ ገርጵ መጸገ ይገኙሉ

31 - ኒ ይኸ ሰኩር ገደሹባ ገረናገቢ ባቸ።
ቢጥ ገርባ። ባርሹባ ገሽቆርተረሎጥር ሰጥቲ።

*As communicated to me, by Abba Keflamariam Fadega, March 22. 1985 (Keren)

Although, as is said before, Reinisch used the typical Agew sound \bar{x} ($\bar{\chi}$), the insertion of ϕ (ϕ) instead of \bar{x} (\bar{x}) shifts the meaning such as in the underlined (mine) $\bar{x}\bar{\phi}$ (shaqo) which might have been written as $\bar{x}\bar{x}$ (shaxo). The latter means "having caught, having touched", while $\bar{x}\bar{\phi}$ (shaqo) means "having toasted, having friend". He also wrote $\bar{m}\bar{n}$ (metan) instead of $\bar{m}\bar{x}$ (metan) but here there is no change in meaning because the word he used does not have a different meaning as in the above; it is, however, not a Bilin sound. The other observation is that he used the verb " $\bar{s}\bar{n}\bar{t}$ " (señeti) = (she had been) both for simple past tense and the past perfect in V. 31 and V. 30. In V. 30 it should have been $\bar{e}\bar{g}\bar{i}\bar{t}$ (ergiti) while in V. 31 it is correctly put.

Some other uses of $\bar{\phi}$ (q) instead of \bar{x} where these result in shift of meaning is in the following verse.

Mark 2:5. $\bar{y}\bar{n}\bar{h}\bar{c}$ $\bar{y}\bar{y}\bar{e}\bar{y}\bar{t}\bar{n}$ $\bar{x}\bar{n}$ $\bar{e}\bar{m}\bar{n}$ $\bar{g}\bar{c}\bar{\phi}$ $\bar{n}\bar{x}\bar{h}\bar{n}$
 $\bar{y}\bar{\phi}$ $\bar{e}\bar{h}\bar{n}$: \bar{y} $\bar{e}\bar{\phi}$ \bar{n} $\bar{h}\bar{c}$ $\bar{e}\bar{m}\bar{n}\bar{t}\bar{h}\bar{h}\bar{n}$ $\bar{g}\bar{n}\bar{h}\bar{n}$:

Here the meaning of " $\bar{e}\bar{\phi}$ " replaces that of " $\bar{e}\bar{h}\bar{n}$ " (my son), while the former means my daughter. So the exchange of letters " \bar{h} " and " $\bar{\phi}$ " results in inagreement of gender and verb - the verb (demituxulka) is for masculine. For agreement with the " $\bar{e}\bar{\phi}$ " (my daughter) the verb should have been " $\bar{e}\bar{m}\bar{n}\bar{t}\bar{h}\bar{h}\bar{n}$ " (demituxulki); so, the correct word is " $\bar{e}\bar{h}\bar{n}$ " (wo yixra = my son). In the form as it is put by Reinicsh, it reads as saying "my daughter," to the man.

The other point which needs attention is the verb (demituxulka), which means "is left for you" i.e., you are foregiven. As we shall see in chapter 3, in Bilin the

verb form can have different meanings according to the context. Since there are no independent words for prepositions corresponding to the English at, from, in, on, etc. ..., their existence in a sentence is also understood from the usage and context. The verb "ደዎቢትኸኣካ" (demituxu.ka) may have the meaning of either "it is left from you", or "it is left for you", or "it is left to you", depending upon the context. To show this difference, Bilin speakers highly affected by Tigre insert such particles as "ግገግ" (minie ...), from me ..., "ግገካ" (minka ...) in which case Rienisch's verb would be "ደዎቢትኸኣካ" (demituxw minka) the last particle being a Tigre addition to show the existence of the preposition, from you. Similarly in those areas where Tigrinya affects Bilin more than Tigre to show the difference, the people insert a Tigrinya usage "l", so that it is following this usage that Rienisch uses "ደዎቢትኸኣካ" (demitixulka), rather than the invariable "demituxwuka" "ደዎቢትኸኣካ"; in Tigrinya the difference between "ተሪፋካ" (terifuka) and "ተሪፋልካ" (terifulka) shifts the meaning while in Bilin the same form "ደዎቢትኸኣካ" (demituxwuka) serves both cases. As noted above, Leo Rienisch also used many Tigre words in his translation of the text into Bilin; words which are not even today used in Bilin as it is being so much influenced by Tigre. We can see this in the following verse:

Mark 1:45; ነካ ፈ ደዎቢ ገሪኹ ግሪቦር ከዎቢተኹ

The word "ከዎቢተኹ" (ambetuxw is purely Tigre meaning "started", which replaced the Bilin word "ተርሲኹ" (tersixw)

verb form can have different meanings according to the context. Since there are no independent words for prepositions corresponding to the English at, from, in, on, etc. ..., their existence in a sentence is also understood from the usage and context, The verb "ደዎቢትኹልካ" (demituxulka) may have the meaning of either "it is left from you", or "it is left for you", or "it is left to you" depending upon the context. To show this difference, Bilin speakers highly affected by Tigre insert such particles as "ግገ" (minie ...), from me ..., "ግገካ" (minka ...) in which case Rinnisch's verb would be "ደዎቢትገካ" (demituxwulka) the last particle being a Tigre addition to show the existence of the preposition, from you. Similarly, in those areas where Tigrinya usage to show the difference (1), so that it is following this usage that Rienisch uses "ደዎቢትኹልካ" (demituxulka), rather than the invariable "demituxwuka" "ደዎቢትኹልካ" in Tigrinya the difference between "ተሪፈካ" (terifuka) and "ተሪፈልካ" (terifulka) shifts the meaning while in Bilin the same form "ደዎቢትኹልካ" (demituxwuka) serves both cases. As noted above, Leo Rienisch also uses many Tigre words in his translation of the text into Bilin; words which are not even today used in Bilin as it is being so much influenced by Tigre. We can see this in the following verse:

Mark 1:45; ኒቫ ረ ደዎቢ ገሪኹ ወሪሰር አዎቢ ተኹ

The word "አዎቢ ተኹ" (ambetuxw) is purely Tigre meaning "started", which replaced the Bilin word "ተርቢኹ" (tersixw)

II. Conti Rossini; this great Ethiopianist also wrote the "Racconti e Canti Bileni"⁵. He also used the letter " ፈ " (q) instead of " ሸ " and " ሸ " . And instead of " ፒ " , the typically Agew sound, he uses the Amharic letter " ገ " (gne) in the first part of his collections. We can see this in one of his paragraphs.

In English: the people who ruled in Keren were called Ghibeciu and Qetinu. Then the Tarke tribe came and made them serfs; they owned the land, although they seemed at first very weak. A Ghebeciu man said: the people gave them; and because they (the Ghebeciu and Natinu) were few and supposed that they will be for them brothers. If we did not give them they would oust us from the land.

As we can see in the underlined words (mine), " ፒ " (gne) replaces " ሸ " (ḥ) who had used it some three decades ago; Rinisch worked in the 1880's while C. Rossini's collections are given the date 1902.

The other thing in C. Rossini is that the word " ገልፍት " (gulfat) today carries a different meaning than it is given in the text quoted. 'Gulfat' (ገልፍት) here is translated and used as "serfs" while today it means an unmarried lad (young men who have not yet reached adulthood, who spend their time in conversing with young ladies).

⁵Sotto messione dei Ghebecciu e dei Catinu di Cheren ai Bet Tarche' ስርገሊ መለሰ ሰገወ ገጠጤ ቀጠኑ ይሰተነኩ: ደገገገ ተርቀቀር ክገትቀግ ገልፍት ሀቢኒቀሎም:: በረሰ ለውኑቅ ገጦሽሩ ለኩት የቀ ሰገርዋ ገጠጤትቅ በሪልድ መለስነኩና ኡነገ ይገ አቀተ ገገ ይናሽገ አቅድነፍ ይናኩት

In the first part of his collection, "Racconti", of Bilin history, C. Rossini's use of the letters " ƒ " and " ƒ̄ " also shifts the meaning of the words as we have seen in the case of Rienisch. But the correct letters are put in their appropriate places even the Agew letter " ḡ " (ḡ) is used, in the second part of his work - the "Canti". We can see this from No. 7 of the "Canti".

No. 7 ከገጃጃ ሸገገርዩ ተከገዩ ሀጽባሹ ጠጉትል
ሸዋ ሰዓዩሽ ተሰባሽ ጃረባጋሽክ ሊሸጉል።

Engediña shingerza tikiñ yo himbaxw Bogutil
that's a star very near to Bogu.

Sham sidawaxw tekisekw jerebgaxik nishutil =
For one who's never fell in love it seems to
him very easy

We can see now that the poem is written in good Bilin and the previous mistakes are corrected (no " ƒ " and " ƒ̄ " for " ḡ ") and we see the inclusion of the Agew letter " ḡ " (ḡ). Some 164 such poems are recorded by C. Rossini. Interestingly enough, even today such poems are practised in rather similar manner as he presented them, of course, in spoken Bilin. They are used in a traditional Bilin dance called " ገልጋ " (golya) in combination with " ሀይ " (hoi).

Although C. Rosini's "Racconti e Canti Bileni" gives some glimpses of Bilin at that time, strictly speaking it can not be regarded as a study material of the language. His aim seems to be that of collecting data relating to the history and poetry (dances) of the people. Still, his work reflects the situation of spoken Bilin at that time.

III. Abba Woldeyohannes Habtemariam: (1940)

Perhaps the most important material on the language is the catechism of Abba Woldeyohannes, a Catholic priest, (1966 E.C.) - "አዳም ሀዘን" (who created us?) a translation from Tigrinya, and printed in Rome in 1946⁶. The translator was a native speaker of Bilin. His writing system follows that of Beez and Tigrinya of the period⁷, the separation of words by two dots, three dots (··) serve as comma and four dots used at the end of a sentence (still a common practice).

He correctly inserts the Agew sound "አ" ^ገ, uses dots over those letters that are to be stressed; possessive adjectives are separated from the nouns they modify by a hyphen (-), as in "ይና-ኸር" (yina-xir) = our father - and unaccented sound (loose sound) is shown by a short dash over it, as in "አጫጎ" (Amen). We can see all these developments* in the following paragraph ⁸.

ይናኸር ዓስተርሊ ወገደር ጎራኸር
ኩ-ቡግ ለመደሰኒ ኩ -ጭልከ አገጎጊ ፣ ኩ - ቀልጠ ዓስተርሊ አኸሰና
ብሬልር አኸኒ:: ይነ-ነብራ ገርጥኸሰ ገቢ ናኸና ይገይነጎ ዓገጠኸሰ
ብሕል ይነሰና ይና-ዓገጠሰ ብሕል ይና፣ ጭቀሊልኸር ተሰገና ሸርልደር
አርገሰና አጫጎ::

*For recent development, see Chapter VI.

In English : Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, let thy will be in earth as it in heaven. Give us our daily bread; as we forgive those who trespass against us forgive us our sins; and leave us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, Amen.

The publication of this translation proved for the common man that the language can be put into writing. It was republished in 1982 by the Ethiopian Studies Centre, Asmara, in the Franciscana Press. The text is written in good Bilin and its place in any future Bilin literature will remain unchallenged.

III. SOME STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF BILIN

In dealing with the structure of the language, only the most obvious features are given; as more intensive study of the language dealing with phonetic and grammatical aspects separately will need an independent work by itself. Hence, the most distinctive features of Bilin phonetic and grammatical aspects are presented here. Some examples on the pattern of Bilin expressions and sentence constructions are also given, followed by some vocabulary differentiations in Taqur Bilin and Senhit Bilin.

1. Phonetic Features:- almost all the Geez alphabets can be used in Bilin with the exception given below.

The typically Bilin sounds which give the language its distinctive nature are:¹-

i) more guttural sounds like /q/, /qw/, /x/, /xw/, as in "qabeb-na", to despise, "qwal-na", to see, "bexexa", to be scared and "bexwer-na", to lack respectively. But the letters /x/ and /xw/ do not occur in beginning of any word. The tigrinya sound / ǣ / is also not usual.

ii) The most distinctive Bilin sound which is unrelated to the Geez sounds (as treated in Chapter I) is the velar-nasal /ñ/ and its labialized form /ñw/, which do not occur in the beginning of any Bilin word although they occur in other Agew languages, as in Awiya; "leñeta", seven "suñw", name, "shiñ-na, to call "siñwera", kind of tree, "buñwa", a liar and so on.

iii) In Bilin, some Geez letters are only learned sounds such as /z/. /ts/, /p/. The illiterate 'Bilin' pronounces /z/ as /d/ /ts/ as /t/ and /p/ as /b/

Examples:- Zerai is pronounced as "Derai" (proper name)
Tselot is pronounced as "ṭelot" (prayer)
Petros is pronounced as "Betros" (proper name)

Leo Reinisch also used this type of pronunciation in his translation of Mark's Gospel into Bilin. He uses /b/ instead of /p/ as "Betros"².

iv) Amharic letters which are also not found in Bilin tongue are /ch/, /tch/, /zh/, and /gn/. An illiterate Bilina can never pronounce these sounds. The Amharic labialized forms, /lua/mua/ /rua/, etc., are also absent in Bilin sounds.

v) In Bilin there is also a sound which is between /a/ and /'a/ and still not given a separate symbol, as in "aqw" or "'aqw" meaning water; "ameqreb" or "'ameqreb", dusk, "anger" or "anger" meaning throat. The sound /a/ has a loose sound /'a/ is guttural.

vi) Syllabic Length and Stress:

The pronunciation of certain syllables in some words having the same spelling distinguishes the meaning of the words (stress and length is phonemic); for example,

1. "nan" /nan/, hand
"nan" /na:n/, now
2. "sherebna" /Serebna/, to plumb
"sherebna" /Sere'bna/, to work with palm leaves
in making mats
"sherebna", /Serebna), to disappear

In example 1, vowel length is phonemic while in 2 both stress and length are phonemic, although the written forms are the same.

The following are some more Bilin words which are distinguished only by their syllabic stress in one case and the absence of it in another.

- "tcheberna" /tje'berna/, to wait for
- "tcheberna" /tjēberna), to stop taking something
- "aremna" /a'remna/. constipation
- "aremna" /aremna/, to weed, weeding
- "haberna" /ha'berna/, to show, to guide
- "haberna" /haberna/, to mix, to accompany
- "bita" /bi'ta/, a louse
- "bita" /bita:/, be (you) satisfied
- "bita" /bita/, you will lack
- "bita" /bita/, soil

As we have seen in Chapter II, Abba Woldeyohannes Habtemariam used two dots (.,) over a stressed letter and a dash (-) over the unstressed one

2. Grammatical Features:- here some of the most important observations about Bilin nouns, gender, number, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and some features of suffixes and prefixes are presented.³

i) Nouns:- besides the independent ones, nouns can also be formed from verbs such as in the following examples.

- "ji'e" is derived from "ji" "e-na", to drink
- "kra" is derived from "kr-na", to die
- "tik" is derived from "tik-yina" to be well, to improve
to repair
- "Tida" is derived from "tidiñ-na" to smoke
- "genja" is derived from "genji-na", to sleep
- "gebra" is derived from "gebrit-na", to be guest",
"to be alien"

Some examples of the independent nouns are:-

"kana", tree	"liñin", house
"krña", stone	"lukw", leg
"bir", blood	"sef", sword
"bra", land	"inshix", spear
"jen", pot	"sheb", milk
"jar", God	"bira", ox

A number of Bilin nouns shows different patterns of plural formation but the most representative are the following:-⁴

a) Most Bilin nouns end in /-a/, the fourth order syllable in Geez syllabery. In forming plurals, this /-a/ is changed into the sixth order (sads) that is, the /a/ is dropped as in the following examples.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
fintira	fintir	goat
fula	ful	ground nut
krña	krñ	stone
mirawa	miraw	snake
jana	jan	elphant
'ifuna	'ifun	maize
ara	ar	corn, grain
keba	keb	beeds
bega	beg	sheep

Some nouns in this order also change consonants in plural formation as in:-

abe	af	well(water hole)
bira/biira	bil	ox
gira	git	mountain
gensina	genshin	slave
laxla	laqil	bee

Some other nouns not only drop the /-a/ but also add "-tit"

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
dula	dultit	club
bra	brtit	field

"tit" is also added into other nouns to form plurals when the singular ends in a consonant (sads) as in the following:

nan	nantit	hand
fin	fintit	unprocessed butter

b) Some nouns change the suffix /-a/ into /-i/ as in

lixinja	lixinji	weevie
jirimba	jirimbi	baby
gunfa	gunfi	cold (influenca)
qanshira	qanshi	straw

c) In some nouns the final consonant is reduplicated, sometimes with consonant changes:

kes	keses	shoulder
bexir	beqlil	first born son
ter	telil	the muscle covering the bell
seg	segik	plateau
gix	gikik	horn
igin	ikikin	thorne
en	enin	grandfather

d) Plurals are also formed by adding /-ti/, a suffix, to the consonant in some and omitting of any suffix in others:

Liñin	liñinti	house
gunna	gurinti	small pot
werena	werenti	that thing place

e) There are also many nouns which form plurals by change of final or medial consonant:

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
shimar	shimat	tail
shabir	shafit	leather
keleb	kelef	fence for cattle
kidiñ	kishiñ	field
'awed	'awes	fool
exir	ekil	father
lexen	leken	wound, ulcer

f) Adjectives also have their own plural forms but they are not distinguished for gender, as in the following.

milmil (m)	melemil	handsome
milmili (f)	"	beautiful
shiraxw (m)	shirew	tall, long
shireri (f)	"	" "
dirñaxw (m)	dirñew(dirin)	short
dirñeri (f)	" (dirin)	short

Mostly, the adjectives for female singular end in /-i/ as in the above examples while the corresponding masculine end in a consonant.

Gender: although masculine and feminine genders can be differentiated in the singular, the pronouns and verb - conjugation plurals do not distinguish feminine and masculine as in English and unlike in Geez.

ferekw (he goes) ferenekw (they go)
fereti (she goes)

In a sentence it can be seen more clearly

Ina qura ferekw = this boy goes

Ina anqi fereti = this girl goes

The plural for both sentences is: ferenekw, i.e.,

Ina quraqur ferenekw = these boys go

Ina inqaaq ferenekw = these girls go

ii) Pronouns: There is no distinction of gender for the second person and the third person plural (i.e., no distinction of gender in plurals), the forms of personal pronouns are given below. In the third person, he and it are shown by the same word. Note also that there is no separate form for the polite second person. In Bilin polite forms are not present and the plurals are sometimes used if the need arises.

a) Personal pronouns: Subject forms

Person	Singular	Plural
1	an (I)	yin (we)
2 ^(m) 2 ^(f)	inti (you) " "	intin (you) " "
3 ^(m) 3 ^(f)	ni (he) nri (she)	naw (they)

N.B. Gender is distinguished only in the third person singular.

b) Personal Pronouns: Object forms

Person	Singular	Plural
1	yit (me)	yinet (us)
2 ^(m) 2 ^(f)	kut (you) " "	intet (you) " "
3 ^(m) 3 ^(f)	nit (him) nirti (her)	nat (them) " "

c) Demonstrative Pronouns: Gender is distinguished only in the singular.

Singular

en - (the)
 ena - (this)
 nin - (this), (m)
 nin - (f), (this)
 intchandin (m), (that)
 intchcendini (f), (that)

Plural

en - (the)
 ena - (the)
 nen - (these)
 " "
 intcheden - (those)
 " "

d) Possesive Pronouns:-

Person	Singular	Plural
1	yixw (mine)	Yinaxw (ours)
2 ^(m) 2 _(f)	kuxw (yours) " "	intaxw (yours) " "
3 ^(m) 3 _(f)	nixw (his) niruxw (hers)	naxw (theirs) " "

N.B. There is distinction of gender only for the third person singular.

e) Possessive Adjectives:

Person	Singular	Plural
1	yi - (my)	yina - (our)
2 ^(m) 2 _(f)	pwi - (your) " "	enta - (your) " "
3 ^(m) 3 _(f)	ni - (his) nir - (her)	na - (their) na - (their)

For the possessive pronouns the forms change when the gender of the thing possessed changes. Example

Person	Singular	Plural
1	nan yixw (m) = my hand 'ili yiri (f) = my eye	nantityinew (our hands) 'ilil yinew(f)(our eyes)
2(m+f)	nan kuxw =(your hand (m) 'ili kuri or kurdi = (your eye (f)	nantitintew (your hands) ilil intew (your eyes)
3 (m) (f)	nan nixw (m)=(his hand 'ili niri (f)=(his eye) nan niruxw(m)=(her hand) 'ili nirdi (nird(f) = (her eyes)	nantit naw (their hands) 'ilil naw (their eyes) nantit naw (their hands) 'ilil naw (their eyes)

In all the plurals there is no distinction of gender. The possessive adjective varies with the gender. For the second person singular also there is no distinction of gender.

iii) Verbs:- The Bilin infinitive form of the verb always ends in (-na) as in Hindi*. Some Hindi verbs of this nature are:-

mar-na = to kill
bol-na = to tell
kha-na = to eat
so-na = to sleep
pi-na = to drink

In Bilin almost all the infinitive forms are of this nature.

*As I was informed by Mr. Reddy (A.U.)

Examples

One-consonant root

ku-na (to kill)
du-na (to tell)
su-na (to steal)
u-na (to give)
fi-na (to get out)
tu-na (to enter)

Two-consonant root

gab-na (to speak)
sab-na (to praise)
keb-na (to cut)
kab-na (to help)
gañ-na (to leave)

Three-consonant root

seded-na (to pull)
geber-na (to build)
tekwed-na (to burn)
teqwer-na (to favour)
simar-na (to be ashamed)
temed-na (to touch)

Four-consonant root

reshresh-na (to beautify)
regreg-na (to play on sand)
gebgeb-na (to shiver)
keharsi-na (to pride)
kemkem-na (to collect)
jegleb-na (to spoil)
senter-na (to circumscribe)
gembel-na (to revise heaviest)

Five-consonant root

kristin-na (to quarrel)
kiskisti-na (to dance)
qurqurti-na (to to bend one's head because of sadness)
desdesti-na (to exaggerate)
twengel-na (to hesitate)
tebetchel-na (to be neglected)
tinkurir-na (to fall down a slip)

In conjugation of verbs, other suffixes are added replacing the (-na) according to person-number and gender combinations. Even in conjugation of verbs, however, there is no distinction of gender for the plural forms*

*See Appendix

iv) General Pattern of Expression: here under some obvious behaviour of Bilin sentence construction will be presented.

a) In Bilin, an adjective comes after the noun it modifies.

anqi milmili (a beautiful girl)

fintira ginayi (a small goat)

gimbi hadisi (a new stick)

idina bedani (a bad world)

All the above expressions are for the feminine gender; this is shown by the /-i/ in the adjective. For masculine gender, the adjective does not end in /i/ but in a consonant

qura milmil (handsome boy)

negel ginay (young he-goat)

tawna hadis (a new cloth)

girwa hayam (a weak man)

b) Adverbs unlike adjectives, usually precede the verb.

defae yo kedemekw (he works slowly)

tikse qakw (he eats well)

gerixw qilsixun (I am tired very much)

awahabre isretiludwile (tell me how you did it)

weleido intuxw (he came soon)

c) usually, the verb in the main sentence comes last giving the structure (o) + S + V, where (O) stands for optional occurrence of an object.

Examples: 1. an genjekun inkuxun

I sleeping am = I am sleeping

(S + V)

2. Yi-sireres ni dihisixulu

(my trousers he lost it)=he lost my trousers

((o) + S + V)

d) The subordinate clause (adjectival) follows the noun it modifies.

Example: in girwa inti viraxwile intla
the man whom you told me of did not come
(sub. cl., underlined)
= the man you told me of did not come.

An adverbial clause precedes the main clause. +

Example : ni shiñosenele intuxun ,
he when he called me I came =-I came when he
called me (Adverbial clause + main sentence.)

All the above combination (four in all) can be seen in the following examples.

in girwa muqla /inti tiksre interdaxwsi/ inkelelilu
the man bad /you very much whom you hate/I don't like him
S (of main clause) adjective clause /verb of main clause.
=I don't like the man whom you hate very much

v) Interrogative and Negative:- in Bilin there are question particles such as:

awi - (awini)	= who
awti	= whom
awin	= which
awil (āwet)	= where
awun	= when
awaxe	= how
wireni (wira)	= what
wirixw	= why
awaya	= what kind

As we can see, the first two letters are "a" and "w" except for two (wrixw & wireni). In addition to these, there is also the common marker (-ma, as a Tigrigna (-do)). Negation is formed by the particle "axla" (is not) and its number-gender combination. It is also the opposite of the verb "to be" gin, which is invariable for all combinations.

Person	Singular	Plural
1	axli (am not)	axini (We are not)
2(m+f)	axilla (You are not)	axini (You are not)
3(m) 3(f)	axla (He is not) axilla (She is not)	axini (They are not)

The spelling and sound for the 2nd person singular and third person singular feminine are the same (axilla).

In verbs, negation is formed by adding the suffix /-le/ for S. and /-ni/ for P. and its other combinations.

Person	Singular	Plural
1	sabi- <u>li</u> (I didn't praise)	sabi-ni(We didn't praise)
2	sabi- <u>lla</u> (You didn't praise)	sab-dinᵢ(You " "
3(m) 3(f)	sabi- <u>la</u> (He didn't praise) sabi- <u>lla</u> (She didn't praise)	sabi-ni(They " "

Note that the second person singular and the third person singular feminine have the same forms. Again the first person and third person plurals do have the same form (sabi-ni) Only the context of the sentence distinguishes these usages.

Two other loan particles, one from Tigre (ifalle, ifalka, etc.) and the other from Arabic (lala) are also common in Bilin.

Example: ferduxwma ima ferdilla? = Ifalie(lala) ferli
did you go or you did. not go?
did you go or not? no, I didn't go.

vi) Suffixes and Prefixes: in Bilin, suffixes and prefixes are common but suffixes seem to be more frequent than prefixes. The following suffixes are the correspondents of the English prepositions:

The suffixes are attached to a noun and the final vowel of the word is changed. If the vowel is /u/ or /i/ (sads) or /o/, there is no change of vowel. The suffix also changes accordingly. It also changes with gender.

<u>Suffix</u>	<u>Masculine</u>	<u>Feminine</u>
(English)	nan (hand)	liwi (cow)
from	nan- <u>lid</u> (from hand)	liwi- <u>tilid</u> (from cow)
with	nan- <u>di</u> (with hand)	liwi- <u>di</u> (with a cow)
on	nan- <u>li</u> (on hand)	liwi- <u>til</u> (on cow)
at	nan- <u>li</u> (at hand)	liwi- <u>til</u> (at cow)
for	nan- <u>ed</u> (for hand)	liwi- <u>si</u> (for cow)
to	nan- <u>li</u> (to hand)	liwi- <u>til</u> (to cow)
by	nan- <u>ed</u> (by hand)	liwi- <u>si</u> (by cow)
of	nan- <u>uxw</u> (of hand)	liwi- <u>ruxw</u> (of cow, both for m
	nan- <u>ri</u> (of hand)	liwi- <u>tri</u> (of cow, for fem.

When the nouns are objects, there are also suffixes which are attached to the nouns.

Example: nan-si kertixw (nan is the object of the verb) kertixw, broken) his hand was broken = he was broken his hand
liwi-it ingisuxulla (liwi is the object of the verb ingisuxulla) the cow he milked it.
(her) he milked the cow.

ii) Vocabulary: the Bilin vocabulary is said to be basically Agew, as pointed out in Chapter I. In addition, there are some loan words from Geez, Arabic, Tigre and Tigrinya, especially those having to do with Christianity and Islam, including other technical words. Geez words like (tselot) "prayer", "qidasi" (Mass), "meharene Kristos" (Save us O Christ) etc. are so assimilated into Bilin Christian usage such that they can not easily be replaced now. Again there are some Arabic words which can be explained similarly. Tigre words as used in Bilin language will be treated in the next Chapter. As for Tigrinya, there will also be some passages together with Tigre in the next Chapter.

Bilin as spoken in the two areas of Bogos (Senhit and Halhal) is a little bit different, showing dialectical variation. There are some words which are different for both groups although each claims its own is the correct Bilin. This is to say that there are two dialects of the language; both groups, however, can understand each other very easily. The following can exemplify this:

<u>Senhit Bilin</u>	<u>Taqur Bilin</u>	<u>Meaning (English)</u>
waxit-na	kirnit-na	to quarrel
derib	gug	road
aresa	fidaruxw	peasant (farmer)
miqaqa	metregetchta	shepherd
fer-na	migwti-na	to go

More intensive study of this variation would perhaps lead one to relate Senhit Bilin and Taqur Bilin to the other Agew language (Awiya, Xanta, Kunfel, Kimant etc.).

The next chapter will present the way Bilin has been influenced by the Semitic languages surrounding it (Arabic, Tigre, Tigrinya). However, this is merely an overview of the issue and deeper and more intensive study could be done to present the whole picture of the language.

IV. PRESENT DAY SITUATION OF BILIN AS INFLUENCED BY TIGRE, TIGRINYA (AND ARABIC)

Bilin language is influenced by Tigre, Tigrinya, and Arabic. According to Abba Kiflemariam Fedega, a Catholic priest working mainly in the northern regions of Bogos where Tigre, Arabic and Bilin are more in contact with each other than in any other place, the degree of influence of the above languages over Bilin is aptly presented;¹ he states that now Arabic is influencing Bilin more than does Tigre and Tigrinya and that, especially the young, are using more Arabic words than Tigre and Tigrinya words*. It is to be noted however that Tigre occupies an influential position not only as a local language but also because of its assimilation by the Bilin people themselves when they use it as their second language, and that almost three quarters of the area where Bilin is spoken (Bogos) is circumscribed by Tigre speakers. Nevertheless, Tigre influences Bilin not only on the regions where they have common borders but there are many traces of Tigre in one form or another even within the central areas of Bogos where Tigre is not in direct contact with Bilin.

In this chapter, some of the factors which help explain this influence are given. The most important channels through which these languages move into Bilin are the social-cultural factors such as the traditional dances and customs which are not only practiced in Bogos

*The Socio-Cultural influence of Moslem majority upon the Christian Bilin minority in Bogos, unpublished monography Prepared during the years 1977 to 1984 for the Catholic Diocese of Asmara.

(the land of Bilin) but are common in the western and northern lowlands of Eritrea (Senhit, parts of Barka, Semhar and Sahel) as well as in the south of Bogos - in the Adreba and Anseba regions. Next, we will see that the Bilin people usually use Tigre or Tigrinya in dealing with animals. There are also some suffixes and prefixes which are borrowed from Tigre and Tigrinya and adopted in Bilin with slight modifications. Finally, some examples of Tigre, Geez and Tigrinya words used as proper names by the Bilin people will be cited.

i) Social-cultural factors necessitating the use of Tigre, Geez or Tigrinya

As stated above, the Bilin speaking ethnic groups are bordered east, by the Mens'a and Ad-Temariam, in the north by the Bet Juk and Habab, and in the northwest by Maria while the Bini Amir (Beja in origin but Tigre speakers) are western neighbours of Bogos. Geographically, the Bilin land (Bogos) is just an island surrounded by an ocean of Tigre speakers and Tigrinya speakers. The Tigrinya speakers border Bogos only in the south.

This locational setting of Bogos forces the Bilin people to interact in their day to day life with the speakers of these languages. And since three quarters of them have geographical contact with the Tigre speakers, the 'Bilina' (Bilin speaker) is forced to communicate with them in Tigre. So Tigre and Tigrinya serve him as languages to communicate with the non-Bilin peoples. But even in markets, usually in Bogos itself (Keren, Elabered, Haggaz) Tigre or Tigrinya is used in daily communication unless the other party (seller or buyer) is also a 'Bilina!'

Secondly, most Bilin Moslems use Tigre as their language of religious instruction (next to Arabic) in their worship as the Christian use Geez and Tigrinya. In some regions such as Halhal (Taqr) and its surroundings, since almost all of the people are Moslems, and since they are the immediate neighbours of Tigre speakers (Marya, Habab, Bet Juk), Bilin is being used interchangeably with Tigre, (Hibub, Krba Beled, Serewa etc.) in the north of Keren². Especially the youngsters learn their "medreset" in Arabic interpreted in Tigre (not Bilin). This is not to say that there are no Bilin speakers at all in the region; there are still Bilin speakers but they are almost the older people whose children use more of Tigre and Arabic³. The trend in these areas therefore seems to point towards Tigre and then Arabic. The last point is more interesting because Tigre itself is being influenced by Arabic even more so than is Bilin⁴.

The Senhit Bilin, professing Islam, also use Tigre as their religious language as well as a medium for other purposes of communication; on the other hand, the Senhit-Bilin, professing Christianity, use Tigrinya and Geez instead of Bilin and in addition of some Tigrinya words in conversation shows that the individual is a Christian. Expressions such as 'tselot'⁵ 'yimesgen Amlak'* 'temesgen Goitay'**, 'meharena Goitay'*** etc.,

* prayer

** thanks to God

*** Thanks be to the Lord, Have Mercy on us

are some examples used by a Christian Bilin while a Moslem Bilena usually adds such words as 'hamde egil Rebi' instead of the corresponding Bilin word 'hamde Jared Axini.' = thanks be to God!

Being Christians since their early settlement in Bogos, however, the use of Christian terminology in Bilin can be explained by the presence of many Geez words. If Geez and Bilin (Agew languages in general) have been in contact from earlier times what impact the latter may have on the former (Geez) needs in itself an independent work.

Again, since the Tigre speakers neighbouring Bogos immediately are almost all Moslems (except Mensa'e where there are also Christians), intermarriage with them has a religious consequence. Having a Tigre wife means that the whole family communicates with her in Tigre. It also results in their children's first language being a combination of both Bilin and Tigre, at least until they go out of the home for broader social interaction. Even then the impact of the mother's language (Tigre) cannot be easily estimated. Tigrinya can be explained similarly in those areas of Bogos where it dominates Bilin - in the south of Bogos, as in She'eb, Haddis Addi, Gush. So this shows that in the peripheries of Bogos, Bilin is vanishing from the home and the family.

One of the reasons why the Bilin people marry a Tigre or Tigrinya (Moslem and Christian respectively) speaking women is that, the customary Bilin law regarding marriage is said to be more demanding, both economically and socially than that of the non-Bilin neighbours (Tigre and Tigrinya speakers). In any case, these practices cannot be explained without affecting the language.

For a Bilina woman marrying a Tigre or Tigrinya speaker, there is no question of using her own language - she automatically has to abandon it and speak in her husband's language (Tigre or Tigrinya). Related to this is the fact that if there comes a Tigre or a Tigrinya guest to a Bilina home, the conversation necessarily takes place in Tigre or Tigrinya, even if the non-Bilina tries to use his intermingled language of 'shîli-Bilin' or deshili-Bilin' combination of Tigre-Bilin or Tigrinya-Bilin respectively.

As for Tigre, one other social factor which enhanced its entrance into Bilin include the traditional dances common in Bogos and other regions outside Bogos. These dances are believed to have come from Tigre speaking peoples, such as sisi'it; from the Mensa'e, and the 'wesomia; from the Beni Amir, the 'hilay' common in the western and northern lowlands of Eritrea⁷. Adoption of such dances means intrusion of Tigre language in one or the other form. The "weter" itself, the vocal intonation used in such dances, is of Tigre or in combination of both languages. Just to show the usage, examples of each alternative are given below.

As stated above, 'sisi'it' is said to have been adopted from the Mensa'e after the Second World War⁸. Before that time, the only and most famous of Bilin traditional dances was the so called "golya" with its associated "hoi", which is typically a Bilin heritage⁹. Even in Conti Rossini's "Racconti a Canti Bileni" we can see that the poems in this dance are almost all in Bilin with some minor exceptions, just as they are used today. The 'golya' poems and the 'hoi' are both in couplets*. In the 'sisi'it'. Tigre is used as well as Bilin, singly or in combination. But, despite

*See Chapter V

the fact that 'golya' is conducted in Bilin, the associated and intermittently used 'hoi' - the conversation, praise, or expressive talks - may be used in Tigre if any of the conversing parties is a Tigre speaker. However, as Bilin has adopted Tigrean dances, this Bilin heritage is also now practiced by the Tigre speakers, especially the Mensa'e and the Bet Juk, and so it is used in Tigre also.

In the following section, examples of how the Tigre dances - sisi'it, wesomia, and hilay, -are used in Bilin areas will be given.

i) Sisi'it:

a) Purely in Tigre:- welet ib jegera hitsan ib bilayu
illizeben kain aman amseleyu (1981)

ወለት ኣብ ሻገራ ሕጻን ኣብ ብላህ
ኣሊ ዘበን ባይን ኣጻን ኣጽላላዩ

Free translation:- a girl wearing her veil and the
boy his garment, they put their
belief in this pretentious era.

b) Purely in Bilin:- enti wirixw sirde an siren yi-haqil
yi-genaxa ilila yi-xira qelaqil (1974)

ኣንተ ወጻኹ በርደ ኣን ሰረን ይ-ሕቅል
ይናገሻ ኣልላ ይቮራ ቀላቅል

Free translation:-Since my mother is absent(dead)
and my father is far away it is logical
if I cry, but why do you cry?

c) Combination of Bilin and Tigre:-

mirwet we sibinet nbur didgini
wadik shengeldinet (1975)

ጦርወት ወሰንኣነት
ንቡር ፈደገኒ ቀዳስ ሸንገልኣነት

Free translation:-You are so courageous and manly to
have your initiation rite (shingale)
and not to lose your tradition

The underlined words in (c) are Tigre words used in combination with the Bilin words.

ii) Wesomia:

a) Purely in Tigre: Wenjillo dib modaikum
Digdud ligba la abaykum
ወገጃሱ ዳባ ጭፋይኩም
ደገፋገ ልገባክ ለከባይኩም

Free translation: Let your enemy bé crashed
It is your land, so move and
dance as you like

b) Purely in Bilin: Wenajella yina-shan
Aduxwule inta-sham
ወናጂላ ይናገሥ
አፋኹላ አገታሽም

Free translation: Play, you who are cur (brothers)
friends. Your love has taken me
(I love you too much)

c) Combination of both languages:

Haleyolom hariret
sefle~~tuxwun~~ Hagizet
ሰለዓሎም ስገረት
ሰፍለልትሱን ስገረት

Free translation: Prais them, you, Hariret (a
beautiful one) I am truly
longing for them (self-leltuxwun)

N.B. Again the underlined are Tigre words.

iii) Hilay and/or Chefera:-

Another dance which is usually carried on in Tigre and some times in Bilin (although its author may be Bilina) is the long poem "Hilay, and/or Chefera". It was also originated from Tigre speaking areas¹⁰. It is similar to the Geez 'Qine'; we will turn to this in Chapter V.

iv) Elelele Welelewo:-

Finally, in the realm of dances this type is practiced during wedding ceremonies - the girls and boys either praise or blame (insult) each other which may relate to the reaction that both families manifest beginning from the moment of engagement until that of the wedding. Although the song is Bilin in origin, the Bilin people do it also in Tigre. The use of Tigre in songs however, cannot be explained fully as this practice is common in Bogos only¹¹. The assimilation of Tigre into Bilin is such that the people use both languages interchangeably. Just to show how this takes place, some examples are given below:

a) In Bilin only: Yina-jema sulira^{wo} Lakin kibir kmira wo

ይና ጁን ስኪሊራ ያ
ላኪን ክብር ከኪራ ያ

Free translation: Our brother in law is handsome

But he seemsto be proud

b) In Tigre only: kento igil mi titefa

Mesil habey werefa'e

ክንቶ ከገልጺ ትጠሩዎ
መሰል ህበደ ወረሩዎ

Free translation: Why Kento is spitted on? (Kento girl's name)

You, who are similar to a monkey and
a coulier?

c) Combination of both languages:

Abdel with big belly
you can't ascend upwards
ዓብጊል ዓብጊል ብብገተት
ከፈገራ በገገት
Abdel Qwedugw Shebatet,
ifergira sigadet.

v) The Language as Used in Dealing with Animals:

While dealing with animals the people use mostly Tigre and sometimes Tigrinya; the words they use in dealing with animals have their corresponding Bilin translations. Some examples are given below.

To dogs: - ne'a - come
tsibet - catch
bila'i - eat

To cattle: - in farming the farmers drive the oxen using Tigrinya words or sentences.
ne'a Gobayey = Come, you my Gobay (name of an ox)
nisixa indixa Goita'alemey = You are really the master of my world

vi) General Borrowings

Tigre and/or Tigrinya influence on Bilin may also be observed either as direct borrowings of words and phrases commonly used by the Bilin people, or in some suffixes and prefixes attached to Bilin words or phrases. The following section illustrates some of the most common borrowings of this nature.

a) Suffixes

There are some Tigre suffixes which are used in Bilin verbs, nouns, and/or other phrases. In Bilin, there is no separate preposition (or post-position) corresponding to the English prepositions such as to, in, out, on, at, up, for etc., but if ever there is need for such particles, they are attached to non-verbs, either into nouns or adjectives or pronouns etc. But in Tigre there are some suffixes such as 'minie', from me, 'itie', on me (or at me), etc., which are used with verbs. In Bilin the presence of such particles is understood from the context of the sentence as well as the nouns/pronouns in the sentence. This is especially observed when there is need for distinguishing direct and/or indirect object, or when the noun is governed by a preposition.

Example: The verb 'adile' can have two meanings depending on the context; it can mean 'take me' or 'take for me'.

a) "adile" =(me) - yit quidi adile ይት ኩባ ከባለ

- me with you take = take me with you

b) "adile" =(for me) - ena lena gimfifsi adile

ኣና ለኻ ግምፋፋጊ ኣጸለ

these two sticks take for me = take for me

these two sticks

The verb "adile" in (a) refers to the direct object "me". In (b), the direct object is "these two sticks" and that there is no Bilin particle corresponding to the English 'for! The presence or absence of it is understood from the context of the sentences.

Now, just to show the difference, Tigre particles are introduced into the Bilin verb such as in the above examples; the particle is entered into the verb where there is need

for an English correspondent of prepositions, (for, in, out, on, at, etc.,). When a Tigre particle is introduced into the Bilin verb such as "adile", the last letter (le) is dropped. So the sentence above in (b) becomes 'ena lena gimfiksi adi igilie'

= adi is the Bilin verb form with "le" is deleted, meaning "take"

= igilie is a Tigre particle which replaces the "le" and means 'for me'

So the meaning of the sentence in (b) above is now differentiated as to verb - form from that of (a).

"Igilie", the Tigre particle introduced into the Bilin verb, is used for first person singular meaning for me. According to Tigre order of number-gender combination, it has different forms for the person and number. When it is used in Bilin, it affects the gender of the sentence in a language where there is no differentiation between masculine and feminine gender of the second person and third person plural. The verb "adile" refers to both genders, masculine and feminine; the corresponding Tigrinya words (just to show the difference) are - "wisedeni" = take me, "wisedeley" take for me, take from me etc., for masculine while for both gender Bilin has only one form = "adile". In the feminine, the Tigrinya forms are "wisedini", = take me, and "wisedilei" = take for me, take from me etc. while again the Bilin correspondent verb is simply "adile". So we see in Bilin the single verb "adile" replacing all the four constructions in Tigrinya, and these are introduced into Bilin verbs when such borrowings occur,

To conclude, it seems that there is no need for the Tigre particles as such to interfere in the Bilin sentence as it is common nowadays in some parts of Bogos, especially in the regions of Sequinna, Taqur Bilin, and western Bogos such as Intchinaq, Haggaz etc.

Another Tigre particle which can be explained in similar fashion are "eie" or "etie", "etka", etc., "minie" "minka" etc., on me ... at me etc. as in Taqur Bilin, 'nitikyaxwsi aduxw minie, means (he took from me the best one). The practice of such particles, as is said above, affects the Bilin verb, but it makes the meaning very clear and very expressive, and also shows clearly the difference between both (a) and (b) type of sentences. But we cannot escape the fact that Tigre is invading Bilin through such grammatically explainable aspects of the language.

Before concluding this section, a corresponding practice of change of verb form in those areas where Bilin is in direct contact with Tigrinya will be given. This is the insertion of "l" in the verb form of Bilin such as (a) "isielka" - to do for you (in Tigrigna, kigebrelka), to show its difference from the verb (b) "isieka" (in Tigrigna, kigebreka) to make you. The former, "isielka" is used just from influence of Tigrigna on Bilin. The verb form of Bilin "isieka" serves both purposes (the first to do for you, the second, to do (make) you. Even Leo Reinisch has used the (a) form of the verb in his Mark's translation of the Gospel, as we have seen in Chapter 2. He uses "demituxwulka" rather than the correct and invariable form "demituxwuku". In Mark 2:5 he writes - wo.yiqra qui haram demituxwulka. The "l" before the letter k in the verb "demituxwulka" is not needed.¹³

b) Prefixes and Phrases: A Tigre prefix which is also commonly used in the areas where Bilin is in contact with Tigre is the particle "kim", which means as, that, so as, and it is attached to the verb.

Example:- nis kim isret wasxwun = I heard that you did this.

In Bilin the meaning of the conjunction "kim is understood from the given verb and the context. The verb "isret" means "that you did". The correct form of the above sentence therefore is; nis isret wasxwun = I heard that you did this.

b) Another Tigre prefix which is even more common than the example given above is "ekei" which can be translated as mismal, or improper, as in the examples below.

ekei girga = unfortunate day, bad day, improper day

ekei delm = unpreparedness, maladjustment.

Interestingly enough, this particle has its own Bilin form "shexda" which is common. The people however use both of them interchangeably. The correct forms of the above examples would be therefore:

shexda girga = unfortunate day, bad day, improper day

shexda delm = unpreparedness, maladjustment

Also "Shexda quna" = bad habits of eating, malnutrition etc.

The word Tigre "hate" in the Bilin expression of "ni hate gin" is also to be mentioned as another example of Tigre occurrence in Bilin sentences. It means one, the same, similar. It is more common than its Bilin correspondent "laxw gin", which is less expressive.

c) Words Directly Borrowed from Tigre:- Some Tigre words are used in Bilin phrases and/or sentences with little or no modification at all. Some have come perhaps through Tigre from Arabic, and others do not have Bilin correspondents. In the following examples each of them will be seen separately.

i) Tigre words having Bilin correspondents but are commonly used in Bogos:-

<u>Tigre</u>	<u>Bilin</u>	<u>English</u>
amanet	miikir	faithfulness
rehamet	sexentna	sympathy
hamde	musa	thanks, praise
haleget	sharete (also Tigre)	sign
jinna	quel'a (also Tigrinya)	child
axir	dengoba	last, final
newat	mitin	river (water place)

ii) Tigre words assimilated into Bilin (some are also Arabic)

<u>Tigre and Bilin</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
keyanet	disloyalty
siaset	diplomacy
feham	understanding
lizam	order, discipline
imir	age, (or death time)
bexit	chance, fortune

d) Proper Nouns From Tigre, Geez and Tigrinya

In Bilin there are also many Tigre, Geez and Tigrinya words used as proper nouns for people. Such names are also common for the Tigre/Tigrinya speakers. The Bilin proper names therefore consist of these and other types of names - Bilin origin such as Kiseri = (good news) or good message) Bedoho = Happiness etc. Also there are many religious names both Moslem and Christian. Christian names include Ghebrey Sabhatleab etc. and from Islam we have such names as Umer, Abdalla, Salem etc.

<u>Tigre Names</u>	<u>Tigrigna Names</u>	<u>Geez Names</u>
Adalla, He let to prepare	Buruxw, blessed	Afeworki, golden mouth
Afiet(f), health	Tesfai, my hope	Mehret, forgiveness
Gebir, slave	Misginna, thanks	Mahy ^e dt, one who cures
Amir, developed	Tsehaie, my sun	Fessaha, joy, happiness
Ibuy, one who is refused	Zerom, their seed	Adhanna, he has saved
Barhet(f), bright	Zeru, his seed	Abreha, he lighted her
Abbe, he'll grow	Bahlubi, satisfaction of heart	Medhanie, My savior
Arha, relieved	Azazi, commander	Yisaq, let him laugh
Arhet(f), relieved	Amine, I have believed	Hiywet, life
Hayot(f), life		Tinsaw, resurrection

Many more could be added but as examples these are enough. This is only to show that Tigre, Tigrigna (and Geez) proper nouns have no a wide sphere of influence in Bilin after all.

V. SPOKEN BILIN TODAY

The present situation of Bilin language is reflected in its actual usage of it nowadays by the people. Except for the scanty references in Chapter II and some manuscripts on the last decade, there is no written documents of any literary form about Bilin. In short, we can say that Bilin was transmitted from one generation to another orally through different patterns, such as traditional practices, dances, and common daily usage.

Under traditional formal practices, for the sake of convenience, the actual speech commonly used in engagement ceremonies, the blessing speech of the 'mendelay' and or the bridegroom by the elders will be given,. Next under traditional dances, the language used in the famous 'Bilina-golya' will be presented; these are the forms which Conti Rossini also has included in his "Canti", a part of which was quoted in Chapter II. Finally, some poems called "hilay" or "tchefera" will also be dealt with. The nature of the language used will be commented on, where necessary, under each section.

i) The Engagement Speech: after setting everything pertaining to the engagement agreement, the two families set a particular date on which to meet and officially conduct the agreement, of course, in the absence, but usually in the knowledge of, the couples; the boy's relatives including his mother's brothers march towards the girl's family residence. The other group waits for them in front of the house or 'das'; before entering the 'das, an elder is asked to open the ceremony by prayer, which is given either in Geez (for Christians) or in Arabic (for Moslems). Then the

mediator or 'Mengora' as he is called, introduces himself and informs the participants (all men) that it was he who had acted as a mediator and who assisted in determining all the arrangements. He then announces the amount of the required gifts, 'simé' the traditional agreement requirements, which are previously told to him by the girl's family. Another elder from the village of the girl and not belonging to any of the two families, is asked to lead the official and serious engagement agreement ceremony (meakot tuna); the language he uses therefore constitutes the central theme of engagement and it is this language that we are concerned with now. It is the same all over Bogos and it has been kept in its pure form without being affected by other languages. It is also the same for both Christians and Moslems (Bilin). First the Bilin version is given¹.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. ከና ፍሳገቢ ከና ፍሳገጥ ኡዲት | ina flansi ina flaneti undunuxwmwla? |
| 2. የዋ ኡኑሻገሳ | yewa udunuxwmwla |
| 3. ከና ፍሳገቢ ከና ፍሳገጥ ኡዲገ | ina flansi ina flaneti adinuxwmwella? |
| 4. የዋ ኡዲገሻገሳ | yewa adnixunilla |
| 5. ሻር መከት ለሽገገ ኡዲገትሳ | jar meakot axinima uдинetilla? |
| 6. የዋ ሻር መከት ለሽገገ | yewa jar meakot axini |
| 7. ሻር መከት ለሽገገግ ኡዲገትሳ | jar meakot axinima adinetilla? |
| 8. የዋ ሻር መከት ለሽገገ | yewa jar meakot axini |

These are repeated three times in pairs.

Free translation

1. Do you give this Miss (X) to Mr. (Y)?
2. Yes, we do give her to him (all respond)
3. Do you receive this Miss (X) for Mr. (Y)
4. Yes, we do receive her for him
5. May it be for you as God's covenant that you give her to him.

6. Yes, let it be as God's covenant for us that we give her to him
7. May it be as God's covenant that you received her for him?
8. Yes, let it be as God's covenant for us that we receive her for him.

The seriousness of the language used in the above is similar to the Christian matrimony. After repeating these sentences three times for each party, the participants enter the 'das' and perform some other minor arrangements relating to the engagement; the most important aspect of this language is the occurrence of the word 'meakot' which means covenant, contract, and which is never heard in simple Bilin; it is preserved in this speech, stored and kept for use in observance of such practices only - and as such it has not been replaced by a Geez word such as 'kidan' or by Tigre 'geled'

ii) The Blessing Speech: every 'Bilina' youngman remains a minor until he performs the so-called 'shingalle' which is an initiation rite and which has as one of its central themes a blessing by the elders (gewra). This blessing is also the same, with some minor additions, for the bridegroom. Without entering into details, the speech which the elders use in blessing both the 'mendelay' - one who is conducting the initiation rite - and the bridegroom (merawira) is presented here. First, the speech is given in Bilin, with a free translation following it.²

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. ገጸጽ በብጥ አሽ | geduxw bekit axi |
| 2. አጃጃ አገገ | exwari edani |
| 3. አርበሽና ብልብ | arbeshisenna bilkwi |
| 4. ገጽጽ ደርገሽና ፈገገ | bambi-dergunisena fenteti |
| 5. ገጸጽ ጠጥ | gubisena teti |

This is also the official and formal blessing speech wherever the initiation rite (shingale) and marriage takes place. The words and sentences are of the most correct Bilin and rich in meaning. The analogy given in verses 3-8 is very unique in that these words and sentences are found only in this rite. The word "tchimid" literally means gate or entrance to a house but here it means a wife or a companion. It is however not so common now in the day-to-day Bilin.

iii) Traditional Dances and Poems

As it is said above, the Bilin language has only a spoken not a written tradition; one of the most important channels through which the language therefore has been handed from one generation to another is through such verses of 'golya' and poems (hilay and tchefera). 'Golya' is used in couplets while 'hilay' and 'tchefera' run for several lines as desired by the poet; the Bilin 'golya' is believed by the people as their daily "journal" because it relates to the situation of the people or any other relevant event in their daily life.

Today, some Tigre words are adopted into the language such as "sham", love "sirbeb," longing for something and other especially youth related practices. So the people still remember some verses which are believed to date as far back as the second half of the last century. C. Rossini's "Canti Bileni" deals with such verses and the same forms of verses are in use even now except that the dance is also learned by other peoples especially the Mensae and the Bet Juk. It is said that they began to use it since the 1935's when interaction of the peoples began to take place.

Some examples are given from a period covering the last half of the 19th century. This will help us to see that the situation of Bilin language as used in 'golya', as there is no easier way to compare its development and situation during the past periods.

a) 'Golya'

1. During Alula's time

በሌን ነገዳ ሰበሰቡ	Bilin golya hasebekw
ደሽካልያኝ ሽልደ ሸል ደካ	Deshkilyaxwa shelidshel Deka
ዳርዶ ጀርባኮ	erdo jerebekw

The Bilin people are concerned about 'golya' while the 'deshkilya' (Alula) is trying to sieze Deka (Halhal) through indirect routs.⁴

2. During the Great famine in Ethiopia 1890's*) - Kerboni**

ጥራጥር ይከርታር	temesghenka yixir Jar
ከርቦንሩኝ ደካሰ ሕንጠጠሳኝ	Kerboniruxw dekole hinkuk sekun
ይገባደር	yijinqwr

Thanks be to you, O my God
I have survived from Kerboni and (cleared the pudding stick) began to eat my supper

3. 1920's⁵

ገብረይ ኦና ኦዳና	Gebray ina idina
ነባሽራሽ ባይን ገን ብታል ሸላ	nesaxwraxa kain gin bihil yile
ገዳና	Regina

Oh, Ghebray, what a world is this
Excuse me Regina for a male is usually unfaithful

4. 1930's⁶

ኦና ከባን ደደናት ወልወለዳል በራ ገን
ደቦ ዳደሰት ገን ኦብረሃን በራ ገን

This what you call marriage is just death in life
I don't want to see this Abrehe's land (her fiance's residence

* Years in Gregorian Calender

**Kerboni = the eating of dry skins because of a famine. The famine is known as Kerboni

5. 1940's⁷

በገ ወሪደያ ገገ ወረደሊ Bo'gu weredia gin weredeli deari
 ፳፻፭ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ ጸሃሪ
 ቸሮ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ ለገገገገ
 ገገገ

Why don't you refuse (marrage) and stay this winter, and say "I'll have my water from Boggu (her parents' residence) and not from De'ari (her husband's residence)?

6. 1930's

ሸካ ለኸ shika lexa
 ገና ከራገብ ስሰበርና guinna aranshi*okoberno Berexa

We are amongstten ^{በረከ}fires (problems)
 Let's aranshi descend towards Barka
 (to flee from the situation)

7. 1940's

ሆቢ በደ ይገርብ ገጽጾ Himbi sede yi-gerob gemdigle qeharli
 ገሰ ቀሰርሊ Wira wane dekwegaxw inna welwele'ali
 ወራ ዋነ ደኩጋቸ ኣና ወልወሰላሊ

Don't let me my body to fall 'into frustration (qeharli)
 What unpassing thing is there in this world?
 (Every thing in this world is finite, so why should I bother about it)

8. 1950's

አገሰላጭ ተሰሰረ ሰራይ .Inkelima tekisre sirai inna yi-dades
 ኣና ደግደሰ Danxa dansi intero mesuraxwa ni-mades
 ጻገቻ ጻገሲ አገጠር ጭሰሩ ሲ ላ ማደሰ

You may love, do you think my attitude is of love?
 For a brother hates his brother and a friend his friend

9. 1950's

Inqwaridi jinedi awil wane sinetuxw
 አገደሪጻ ጻገገገ አደሪ ዋነ በነቸቸ
 ጭናበረት አቨገገገ ጭልወሰ Menaberet axgini welwele'al tiretuxw.⁶
 ጻገሰ ጥረቸቸ

There is no chatting and laughing among friends
 What life is this uncondusive world

18. 1971 ከርግ በገገ kirma segen
ገረፍ ሀመቦኩን አገተገ ጅንነቱ ከመቅደም ግብደት ከገደብ
ገረፍ ከገደብ ginito himbekwun entet qwalo kidege
You, with slender necks (as the neck of Ostrick)
I have become insane unless now get recovered by your
presence (sight)
19. 1977 አወይ ሸለቆለቆ awei shelemlema
ሸገልጃ ገገጃጃ አከለለ shugwled genjia akelele yelema
የለ ግ
You, beautiful,
Why don't you object saying 'it's impossible for me to stay
from "youth" =from 'golya' meaning to refuse marrying
20. 1980 ቆልገላገ mildaxwun
ከፍቶ ጋበኸክ አገጋጥ kef yo gabexwuk inqaqe inkelaxwma
አገከላኸግ ይሰናተኸገ yistaxwun
You are just joking
Does everybody who sits and chats with (a girl) called a
lover?
21. 1982 ወራ ጃቡ ሀመቦጋቸ wira jubu hinbegaxw
ደከረመና ይነካ ገን ደከር dekwremena yinekun nixa dekwiro
ደከር ይነካ wanigaxw
Why don't suffer-silently?
We hope that it will pass one day, but it will not pass
at all
22. 1983 አብ ገሰታ ib giseta
አርአሰቶ ገገ ገሰታ aristito gin nikisi enta megwalyayi
አገተ መገልጃይቱ
You with an afro
today we'll come to know who is interested in golya from
from amongst you

The adjective "megwalyay" is a Tirre word for the Bilin 'golitenta' (player dancer)

The above verses are presented to show that Bilin is preserved in such oral forms although it lacks recorded tradition. We are not interested in the nature of the dance but as this type of traditional dance helps preserve some features of the language.

b) Bilin Poem: unlike the above one, this type of poem runs for several lines as desired by the composer. Although both types are composed by one individual, in 'golya' all the participants repeat the couplets (in songs) with two groups in circular dance manner, while in such poems the composer himself repeats them once and all the others simply answer the recurring verse sitting in front of him; the topic of the poems also may change as desired by him. These are rich in technical words, especially those having to do with the customs of the people, or some particular behaviour expected of the youngsters, or in general about the situation or any other message which the composer would like to tell the people.

In the following lines, a recent poem (1985, Jan.) which is rich in its vocabulary content and full of Bilin technical words is presented as an example.⁷ The English version is given as a free translation in a pure form.

POEM. A

- 1 -

Blaming and praising are normal in life
It was not a short time ago since I have started hiding
every thing I have seen

The female threatening and the male ashamed
Go humbly while despised and insulted 'what does she say'?
If these idiots despise, they have some reason
On the one hand they are urban and on the other they are rural
Listening to what they say as the wedding day approaches
The girl tells about the gift cows while her mother records
When the father comes home in the evening, mother starts saying
You x's father* be ready for your daughter's wedding and don't
think about the future
Sell Ej and Haway (cattle) which are both ready to give calves
My daughter will not go crying while there is my private cow**
The unhappy man wanders outside and sideways
Every Sunday the cattle fail to get a good price - at the market
Then they are sold for 200 Birr
While the necklace costs 600 Birr and the earlings 500 Birr
What a pity is it for the girl's father? but no problem for
the father of the boy
These misadvised guys are ready to destroy the livelihood

Unusual things have come into our locality
Is it the girls who despise and the boys despised?
Don't spoil the boys for they have no defect
It is in fact because of us that our fathers quarrel
Elders try to reconcile both quarrelling parties
You, boy's father, we will help you return your property

*The Bilin wife does not call her husband's name, she calls him as the father of the first child.

**The cow of the wife given to her at the 'Metlu' day
The boy's family give two cows to the girl's family and they keep for her.

Tell all you've forwarded to them, the former and the latter
Four quintals of grain and two gift cows also
Five dollars of the meal blessing and, additionally, sugar also
The favour I've forwarded to them is uncountable
What worse than this can there be? their secret is publicized

One speaks too much if his spirit is aroused
It's just for recreation, do not consider it as a blame
And I do not say to all the females but to those who destroye
only
'Shergi', the remnant of the Jebaliate, be destroyed
Whoever doesn't wear it murmurs' woe to me'
What's called Jeddah is just for the contempt of husbands
We were not living by it, let its gate be closed
Ploughing in the month of June, how sweet is our way of living
You milk your own cow and live independently
Don't consider this as a joke, nothing equals it
Those who are far away will also come as soon as the
situation permits.

What shall I do with you, you who don't understand me?
The females have gone astray, what is their judgement?
Whose mistake is it, yours or your parents'?
Their property is just a suit case with 3 or 4 dresses
The elders advise and the priest with his cross
Please look after your children and don't destroy your living
The past is enough it is impossible for me with this (man)
This is their desire with urban shoes and handkerchief
Your desire is just that, changing from matrimony to aqid*

* Aqid = Islam marriage law

You Halengi and Bella with their third Aulia
Will you give me permission to speak about the situation?
What a fear? May I be refrained from insulting?
My god, the females have gone astray
If you ask one to be engaged, she says 'let me stay for a while
That whom you say you've got married to also murmurs will
I be your servant'?
What is this Saudia, making husbands despised?

We admire learning but even the learned are the same
Females adulterating and males staying in bars
What's called destruction is just this, there is no other
destruction
The Sudanese our brother - in-law marries a Bilina girl.
She asks him for jewelery he is not also in peace
I'll buy for you ten gms when I reap my harvest
But could a Bilin man manage to marry a Sudanese daughter?

My village is "Shafitaxw" near 'Akit's residence
The girls set off in search of husbands of others'
They are right to do so for our livelihood became unsatisfactor
Their sides are harmed by the wooden bed with its four supports
The Sudanese son gets a good honey-moon
Let him enjoy several days in his home
You, respected Bilina daughter, you've been mischiefed from
your country man
As for me, there is no problem, I'll not lack that of twenty
five cts.

Not only the females, we are also idiots
Engage for me, father, set me a wedding house (ablura)
All my friends have married, there is nobody behind
The responsible father marries for him for the following year
Three cows are his gifts and a fourth one the blessing cow
Thanks be to you, my Lord, I've fulfilled my duty as I've
married for him
If God gives him health he'll work now to possess cattle
As for me and his mother he'll give us from what he earns
Having his wife, Mr.'s ideals are somewhere else
His father-in-law as a follower and his 'hanno'* as a secret ma.

Thanks be to God, I thank you God
Isn't the respectful Bilina daughter an asset?
She lives permanently with her first husband and she's a good
station for her guest
Who equals her in all respects?
She sits in the inn-room covering and stretching her carpets
She cares for nobody except for her only husband
But save us now, the situation of our era seems threatening
By saying 'equality' you may spoil your attitude
Keep your matrimony as you've done earlier.

*husbands of two sisters call each other 'hanno'

Let's we peasants discuss our life
The miserable farmer farming all the summer with his oxen
His body becomes weaker by unsystematic efforts
How much does he reap with uneducated guess?
If lucky, it's one quintal otherwise by a basket
What a pity! produce is lost from the land
Our cattle also are destroyed as they could not get any
grass from the mountains
Please, let's cry for ourselves and not for the dead

Megarih and Keren, Labada in their opposite side
I am astonished that we say we are existing
There is no rain from the sky and we see 'wareda'* in the fields
Mr. what of Canada, we hope it will be of some benefit
Our milk is from rubber containers and we have oil for butter
Our new chiefs, judge in justice
As you see our farms failing every year
Water is even worse as the rivers have dried out
And those whom we say we've begotten are gone towards the sunset
Those who are nearer are in Sudan while those far in Jeddah
It seems the last Judgement although the final saying is from God

*Common ownership of land

My people, pray, have courage and patience
A Muslim in the Mosque and a Christian in the Church
Let's finish with lavishness and turn to the right path
Everybody who asks God doesn't lack, or you considered him cruel
The shiek cares for his shop, abandoning his daily duties (prayer)
I am not also satisfied with the tendency of the priests
Rather than treating all equally, they say 'my father' and
'my brother.'
Some of them even accumulate to form capital
Every body deviated from his path, nobody is on the right way

One who relies on the government and the church is fortunate
Don't you see the peasant reaping not from his own harvest?
He receives flour and wheat according to the number of his family
But we do not have courage if we see something to eat
The distributor also hides for himself
If you encourage one, he also tries to kill his brother on that
Why don't you say 'thanks' for it is God's gift?

Every epoch had its own contribution on its own time
In the past we reaped 10 quintals put into one container (gifet)
After that, 500 per hour from Humera
Elabered and Tekreret here near us
These also covered their part for they were useful for tea (wale)
But now what's here in our surrounding (wereba)?
If you look on the sideways you never see cattle on the residence
The farmer never tasting ('amo) the first meal from his harvest
farming for the whole summer
This is easy for God we should have faith in our hearts

The problems of our time are uncountable
Our food is grain imported from foreign
Let it be thanked this 'Green Campagn', which was useful for a
time
Husband, wife, their daughter as a third
All are workers our lames included
We have also timekeepers and some people of 'meter' (seb
meter) (measures)
Their leader the 'chairman' residing in the town
When wage day approaches he mixes with them in the bars
(drink house)
We have to plan the profitable way
Should we cut in kiloes or we can afford carrying quintals?
As not to say they are young, they are 'white haired' (asker)
adults
Let their chair be uprooted for they exploit the soft ladies
(hirem)*

Be careful, son of 'Amar for it is better in carefulness
Disciplineing my mouth and hand by God's power
Wheat has taught stealing especially for the Bilin people
Unsystematically stealing, they carry away the quintal as it is
In front of all these people the quintal as such
If you try to prevent down through the grain market
And if you want to defend, he tries to kill by his club
Don't spil (Gibdegelom) name of our next generation

*Hirem= the females are given a name that has the connotation
of "kind sisters" singular (hurmet)

Listen to me, is my speech right or wrong?

We sold our land by our won money

People plan about their living but we, for our bellies

Let me ask you, Bilin people, about the property you've spent so
Upto now I was not ready for you but today account for all of it
Where did you put the thousands from ground nuts (ful)?

You just set out at 8:00 a.m. clad in white soft cloth (semadit)
The lucky ladies who wait for your coming

With incense in front of the door (tchimid) and with ready chairs
Welcome, enter and sit down here

My sweet, honey brother, let me die before you

My brother Bilina, listen to what follows this

You Bilin, I know your disease ('idirit) long before now

You gathered the arms remanants of the Italians from the mountain.

Selling these for a shillings, your station was in the taverns
(komarit)

With 'medas'*** - shoes on your feet and clad in 'jeger' (white
soft cloth)

Enjoying the taste on your mouth, you asked for some more ~~maider~~

What a pity and shame in the evening after the sun sets!

Listen to their insults -death is preferred to it

Don't spil my chairs with your tobacco saliva

Nothing matters her, the hostess pushes them out

Staggering in the streets saying Ilum + and 'ab hinit'****

Lock back, these are your past memories.

* jeger' is clad in a traditional fashin called 'semadit'

** medas = leather shoes, which the elders and wise people
wear in Bogos

*** Ilum + and ab hinit = nick names based on tribal lines

PCEM B

1. Why don't you get clam, my soul?
Things of the past are not attainable
There were millet (biltug), porridge, (kala) and if you like
injerra (menshaxw)
The yoglurt has not served for a short time
Now, all have become medicine (tla) (=scarce)

2. Abandonning our living alone (darat)
We stand in the town with our baskets
We beg for some reliefs
Stick protected by police
What kind of people shall we be in the future?
Will we be human beings in the future?

3. You proud, human being
You unlucky (tirur) pray lest you will die
Listen to me I am Hatima* the beloved
Please don't destroy your creature

4. Be patient, you, son of 'Amar
The time's problems ('adar) are not yet identified
We cry for poverty refused to depart us
Have mercy on us, O My God Yourself

*Hatima = the tribe nickname of the poet

5. What is the basis of our subsistence?
Our farms withered away as soon as they sprouted out
The cowboy also never returns home
The father also is not allright of his begotten
Will it pass or it will just stay as it is?
6. Why do we bother so much?
God does not destroy the creature
Our mother and father is the government
We live on from the stores, which we didn't harvest
7. About the work of wheat
Our wage is 3 kilos per half day
The so-called time-keepers are also one group
Woe to him who lives on other's sweet
As for the time, it will pass as usual (for its own sake)
8. Beer has come to serve as favour
Idiots (quiunan) lost for their bellies
Why are the unemployed included in the ^{may} list?
Don't leave behind curse on our locality
9. I wondered alone (fekerso)
The peasant has acquired many skills
The white rice is fried in the big pans (meqwalu)
Wheat also is fermented (debebso) for drink (silix)
10. From Barka to the plateau (irora)
Cattle are destroyed and nowhere are also people
Our land Ashera is blessed (bekit)
It will not face any problem by God's power
Please Mary, keep us with those on the right hand side (Laudik)

A Note on the Poems

In Poem A, numbers 1 to 9 have the same theme - that of the expected behaviour of the boys and girls in relation to engagement, marriage, family life, and in relation to each other. Any deviation from this expected behavior results in insults and blamings by the youngsters. Number 10 to 16 discuss the present situation of the farmers in face of the draught and comparison is made with the past when there was normal situation; the psychological and social consequences of this draught are expressed vividly.

Numbers 17 and 18 treat of the Bilin peoples' attitude towards earned property and how lavishly they spent their past property expecting that there would not be any problem in the future. The author accuses them of this irresponsibility and asks them to account for it.

In Poem B the author also rebukes the responsible authorities who irresponsibly distribute the relief aid foods and laments the change of behavior of these individuals which he considers unusual in the locality: stealing and exploitation of the females (hirem) is considered as the most evil among the society of the Bilin peoples. The Bilin versions, are given in the following pages in rythamform as they were composed.

Bilin Poems

1. ልክ ባቡር ከብተሳ አዲናይል ዋገት፤
 ገደሙ አቀቶ አባሊ ደሰሪትክ በተፈ፤
 ኦገሪክ ወጣቶ ነባክሂክ ሰማ፤
 ክርመሰ ለም ሰረ ፈሪ ወራ ዓቲገ ይሰት፤
 ቃብብድና ናሐቅል ኦና ሸካ ቅያ፤
 ሰገፍፍ ከተሞው ሰገፍፍ ገጠ፤
 ከቫገ ሰከትፍሰና ናው ዓነውሰክ ሸኑ፤
 አገደ መትሱት ደወቲ ገርገናክ ከተዘ፤
 ከገገ ኢተፍሰና በልፍ በልፍ ደ ተርይ፤
 ከቶራ ሰገፍ ኢ-ፍሰገ ሰገፍ ደመበ፤
 ኢጁሊ ሰገፍ ደተ-ከሊ ናዋ ለገርክ ሰፈ፤
 ይቶራ ሰርፍ ፈረሰ ይከርጫ ዋገት፤
 ከደህረ ከደህ ገርፍ ተፍ በርገው፤
 በገባር ሸባ ዕፍገል ወሰክ አረክ ብ፤
 ለገ ለክል ከሰተቲ ዓደልወታት ዓዕ ይ፤
 ወልታ ለክ መሰገነት አገቷ ለክ ተሰሱ፤
 ቆሪ አክር ገገፍኩገ አገደ አክር መሰሱ፤
 ገገት ዲህሰር ፈረው አና ገገፍ መቅሱ፤

2. በገገረሪ አገትቲ አና ይና በለደል፤
 ቃብባና አገቃቅሞ ቃብባባና ቆሪ ቆ፤
 አባጣሕሪ ማነይጋ ሰሪ ሸክኒ ሰከር፤
 ነና ይናበባቲ ፍኪተከላ ይነክል፤
 ሸፍገሰ ትውከላ ፍኪተውደ ነበከ፤
 ከውል አደሰናካ ገገ ዓሃ አገት ቆሪክ፤
 አገት ይከሰረው ደደ ናኛባራ ናደገበር፤

በጥ ከገ ገበታ ለገ ልዩ መትሎቸር፤
 ኢገቢ ቅርብ ገባሩ የዳገላ ሸከኩር፤
 አፎርዳካ ህክና ስረሰዳቸርገን ፍገጠር፤
 ሸገር ድጉስተው አቸ ኢገ ነል ድክብ ሀጠው ቅጠጠር፤
 ገሰገ ሂባኩላ ዓገ ፍይሕል ፊቸ የመሥጠር፤

3. ገሪው ጋበኩ ወይሻገ ፊቸት ወሰወሰ ተሰና፤
 ልክክና ይገድረገ መግሰቶ አቸርና፤
 አጠው የትከቢ ዓሊ ሂባደውከክ ገገ ይይና፤
 ሸርጊ አሳይነዳላካ ሸበልዓታ ባረና፤
 ከዓ ለፈከግ ኤድቶ ኩድ በርጋክካ ዓይ አና፤
 ሹዳ ዓናቸ መነይሶ ገርዩ ታበቢሳና፤
 አጠሰትረ ነመራብ ነድ በገነሊ አግና፤
 ገዛረት ይናቸ ታላታቸ በነር ኤርቢል ገደና፤
 ከመገጠት ኢ ገገበር ከካው ናኒሊ ከና፤
 ኤዩ ተለያቸገሱ ሀበገድረገ መልና፤
 ሸሸደውር ወገተርዱ ግዳይ ቀሰነሰና፤

4. ጋብረ ከ-ጋብ የሰገው ወይከአና አገተዲ፤
 አጠው በጣገ አሊህኩ አወያቸኒ ናፍርዲ፤
 ሂባደው አገትገግ አቸትና አግ አገታ ወለዲ፤
 አገቢ ቀልዳ አፎርደ ደባት አገ ባሊ ገዲ፤
 ባልሸታ ናላቤ በፎ-ሰዳ ቀላሸድ፤
 ሸግገላ ሸወነኩ ቀሺራ ነመሰቀልዲ፤
 ሰክካ ከዳር ድህገ ኩ ስልግ ሰገዲ፤
 ገዳብክከ አቅትራ አከላላ አገ ገዲ፤
 ና ድሰያ ኒገ ገራ አሰከርበዲ መገዳልዲ፤
 አገታ ግራድ ኒገ ገራ ታልኪዳገልድ ዓቀዲ፤

11. ጭጋርሐዳ ከረገዳ ጌቀብ ለኾ ለበዓ፣
 ሀምብነኩን ይናኸር ገረጭህ ይዳ፣
 ሰዋ ዓስተርልድ ደይ ኪሻገሳ ዩረዳ፣
 ይና ኪሩኾ ለኸጌ ባሻይ ሰርናይ ከነዳ፣
 ይናሸብኻ ገጭልድ ይናሰናኻ ይዳ፣
 በዓጭ ይነጭ ሐዳይሰ ኪዳ ፍርድ ፈረዳ፣
 ገድነጭሰኻ ደይይነኩ ኦጫ ሸባ ያድዳ፣
 ጫዓገብር ከረቦ ዓይኾ ጀበኩ ኦገዳ፣
 ኦገርገኾን ይነዋ ይርሰብሲ ያድዳ፣
 ተኸታባዮ በዓጌል ሸሸይዮ ያድዳ
 ጫዓአታ ዓለጭ ገን ፍርዳ ሀምብኩ ፍርዳ፣

12. ጸሎት ኦባ ወይከው ጭርወት ኦባ ወኤዳ፣
 ኦሰባዳኻ ጭሰገደል ክስታናኻ በክሰታ፣
 ሀምባ ደርብል ወገተራ ኦቅተሎና ዕነዳ፣
 ፍርሊ ሸወኾ ሰኾገኦ ሦባዳ ጠካገ
 ሸክሮ ሰባትሲ ባር ከናከገኾ ጌድጌ፣
 ኦባ ኦቅሸትራ ባህ ቢሰሰ ያወጣ፣
 ናትከ ባገሽ ደይገጌ ይኸር ዓነኩ ወይዳ፣
 ናባልገ ኦክብና ኦሲይና ረኦሰ ጫል፣
 ይርጌል ሀምባኾ ዩገ ጌከ ባሩኾ ጌካገ፣

13. ጫክኮትዳ ገዳጭ በኪት ገን ጎል ጫጎስታኾ፣
 ደይይገገ ገባረሰ ገዳገጫ ሐገፍባኾ፣
 ፊናረዳ በርናይዳ ጌዕያልበነከ ኦዳኾ፣
 ሰኪን ጭርወት ባኾጌ ደይና ይጭ ይገ ቀስታኾ፣
 ዓይሊና ይራኸር ሸሸ ገን ጌትባኾ፣
 ጭርወት ኦሲ ይራኸር ጌዳገ ኮር ጌ ገወታኾ፣
 ይይገጫ ተራራገን ሸ ሸሻይ ፍር ኦወኾ፣

14. ሸገሰጋቸጫ ዓነ ሰብካ ህወክትል፣
 ሰጫናቫ ስድሣይ ሸካ ኪሰ ሰገፈትል፣
 ህይወታቫ ስመራ ስገዲ ሊቭ ሰሰዓትል፣
 ዓሳብርዕድ ተክረረት ይናገባ ተቸትል፣
 ነገር ናቸነከ ገበቤቸ ነፍዑ በገቡ ወሰፈል፣
 ናገ ወራ ሀብባቸን ስናይና ወረቤል፣
 ሰው ሸገገብልመርኪሰር ጫል ደሰገፈቸ ስረትል፣
 ጉፉ ሸቆ ስረባ ዓሙ ናገቸ ዓይታል፣
 ፃርድ በዓቆቸ ገገ ህገ ስዎነት ስሰህገ ሰብኪል፣

15. ሸብር ድገሰጋቸጫ ወክት ይናቸጭ ዕድር፣
 ይናዘገፈ ስለቆ በዓገ ህራልድ ስገገር፣
 ህመታት ገበቤቸ ፃር ትክቢህት ስዎሰይር፣
 ስቸነዒ ገርወኝ ናቤቻ ስገቅቸር፣
 ናውብ ከደመቱ ገፈ ወሰ ይናቸነካሰር፣
 ከታበገር ሸቸገቸን ናባልኝ በብ ዎትር፣
 ስገል ስቸ ስዎስዎሁ ስቦ ወገበር ናባቸር፣
 መሀዓት ሰከት ዓባና መሰተር ስገል ስብርገር፣
 ናገ ስዎበታቸ ኩድገህገ ይነድ ረብሕዓ በሰር፣
 ኪሱታትጫ ቀረጽገገ ስጫስቸገሰድ ቆቸር፣
 ይዓ ገረመከህ ናሰቆገሰገ ናብጠር፣
 ገናቲገገ ይናቸ ሸጫገሰ ገገ ስብር፣
 ስረዎ ሰድቅ ድራተው ስከርህ ናወገበር፣

16. ሸጫል ስቢ ወድ ዓሙር ኪደለጫ ሸጫልድ፣
 ይኩቤቸር ሸመሊ ይናቸር ፃር ሲልድ፣
 ሰርናይ ሰቆገሪ ኪገቤቸ ከሱሰገ ብሊገድ፣

ዓገል አገጋ ሰዓት ሙሽር ብርፍ ከሻብልድ፣
ነሱካ ከወክ መቸልተ ኪሲ ሙሽር ህሊድ፣
ከረፍ ሙረፍ አልሳ ፍረሽ ሰማይታሹድ፣
አገገፍድቶ ተሰይረገ ስር ገውታሹ ጊዓሰድ፣
ሻብድገሎ ፍቡገሲ ቀለዕ ይነው፤ ደመበርድ፣

17. አዎን ሙናው አማ ብገ ሸኑረገደ ይጋብሲ፣
ይና ብረሰ ከድገቱን ይናበሳዳሲ፣
ከዋ ገብረት ሐበበኩ ይጋ ይናገድገሲ፣
ወገቀርናኩሙ በሳይገ ንሻብ ድፃ ገብረትሲ፣
ደሰሞ ነኩሙ ሰገሊ ገሊ ናኻ ሕባብሲ፣
ወሪል አሰዳጊኾንገሎ አኝ አሸሐት ፈሰሲ፣
ሰዓት ሰኾታ ብርፍ ስረረይር ሸገርሲ፣
ብረሽ ዘርኪ አትዳታት መቸልተው ናደርብሲ፣
ጭድሳ ልባና ጥፍሕሲ ወገበርሲ፣
ዋድር ዓሕነ ድአገትረድ ትቋፍዳ ህሊ
ሰውይ ሸኾረይ ሙዳረይ ቅደሚኻ አሙት አነሲ፣
ጭሃ ይዳገ ብሊና ሸኑሪናደገበርሲ፣

18. አሙነገሰክ ኢርአኾን ብሊን አገታዕድሪት፣
ለከሙዳጊኾ ጊሪልድ ጥልግን ባርና አሰክሻት፣
ናት ሸልገል ከድና አገታ ሙጸሳል ከሞሪት፣
ልከከሳ ሙዳባት ስረይድና ሰማዳት፣
ቀሙጣዕበረከ አፍፍሲ ወሰኸልና ወይዘሪት፣
አከሻህዳ ሙገርዳ ከገገ ዪራ ለበሪት፣
ከራ ኪዳኾ ገገ ገብጋ ሸኑሪ ናሸኸኒት፣
ትሙባሸሪ ብሙቅድ ሙገልገላ ስራሲት፣
ደረብርሎ ፍደቲ አገታይ ገዳ ሰማሪት፣
ሸሪዕ ሸባ ሰገደልደል ዕሎ አና ወከብሕኒት፣
ገልጭ ይድና መቸልታ ነገዋ አገታ ገረሪት፣

አብርሃ ሳሙርደኾሪ
ጥሪ 1977 አ.ደ.
ሸናሪል ሐሊዓው

ሰሎሞን ስላሴ ወላላና /2/ ሰሎሞን ማጻይ ከሚሆኑ፡፡

1. ሰሎሞን ፈካኝ ወራ ሀምበላ፤

አማኒኹ ሸረብረ ኦረርበላ፤

ብልተገ ገገ መገሻኹልጻ ካላ፤

አገቶሽ ገገ አቀተኹ ረጢቅበላ፤

ናናጻ አሽ ሀምበኩ ትላ፤

2. ሰሎሞን ሸኸትሲ ናተ ባርና፤

ፊሽትል ሸናቢልጻ ደው ይና፤

ቪውነኩገ ራሕመት ሻሩኹ ሸረብና፤

ገመፍፍድ ጻባቢርድ ገብትና፤

ገደመቢ አመገደኩሚ ከው አሸና፤

3. ሰሎሞን አጻሚገደኹራ ከቡር፤

ኸርገሬገ ሻርቢ ቪህገ ጥሩር፤

ዋቢላ አገ ገገ ሕቲሚ ፍቱር፤

ኩ-ጻይብ ድሂሰገና ኩፍጢር፤

4. ሰሎሞን ሸሚል አቢ ወድ ጻመር፤

ዋጻይር አርኪሰቶ አሳ ኒ ጻጻር፤

ሰርነኩገ ደኩና ሻሻና ጻባር፤

ከሃውድ መሐሬና ይኸርሻር፤

5. ሰሎሞን ወረድ ይናመገብር፤

ጉድነዋ ናብኩሉቢ ሕረር፤

ገናይር ኢትጻሳ ሰገር፤

ዋልጻይር አሻ አሳ አሺር፤

ደኩሮሚ ወሳ ናሽ ሀምበር፤

6. ሰሎሞን ወሬኹ ሸበርሰናሸር፤

ፍጡርቢ ድሂሰሳ ሻርር፤

ሕክሙ ገገ ይናገና ይናሸር፤

ገዲገነው መኻዘገልድ ቀናሸር፤

7. ስላሳ ሰርናይ ይናከድታ፤
 ገርገገፍ ስጦ ኪሉ ጆሮናታ፤
 ከታቦን ይሰተወር ስ ጋንታ
 መሰሉ ኒጤር ሰድቶ ቋንቋ፤
 ወክታ ኒጥቢ ዩ ይኩንታ፤

8. ስላሳ ቢራ ኦቭ ቅጠጠር፤
 ቅዳራን ደይ ሀሙበው ናገደገል፤
 ከደግገው ውሪኹ ቅዳ ሊበተል፤
 ኦቭና ስርጋ ይናወረቢል፤
 ዲባ ኪደኩ ይኩር ፈሄ ስገሰዳል፤

9. ስላሳ ኦገር ይተ ፈከርቦ፤
 ገብራይ ገሪ ጭሮ ጭሮቦ፤
 ሩዝ ቀልወ መቀሉትል ቀጠውቦ፤
 ስርናይር ሰልቭ ኦቭር ደባባቦ፤

10. ስላሳ በረኽቢ ኦሮራ፤
 ማል ዳተ ከወር ኦሳ ኦሪራ፤
 በኪት ገን ይናብራ ኦቭራ፤
 ሻር ሲልድ ዳላ መቀሳ ቋሰሳ፤
 ስውዳክ ማርያሞ ይናተረራ፤

ኦብርሄ ዓጻርደኹራ
 1977 ኦ.ደ.

VI BILIN LANGUAGE: WHY OBSCURE?

Although the above question does not have a very clear answer, some observations can be given as for the reason why Bilin remains obscure. Compared to Tigre and Tigrinya, Bilin is less studied and less known even as a spoken language. Perhaps this may be because of its degree of development; apparently, it looks less developed than either of them.

According to Bender et alia, a highly developed language is one which

- (a) has been reduced to writing and is regularly written,
- (b) is well standardized, i.e., has widely recognized norms of spoken and written usage; and
- (c) has the resources of vocabulary and forms of discourse needed for modern nationhood.

They further observe that most of the languages of Ethiopia are unwritten, not fully standardized, and hardly 'modernized' in vocabulary. Exceptions are given to Amharic and Tigrinya, among the other languages of the country. For Bilin language these apply much more correctly as Bilin is not a written language at all lacking standardized usage - either spoken or written. Those minor sections of the people who get chance to learn it do so by learning Tigrinya and/or Amharic as medium of instruction. They are forced not only to write in Tigrinya but also to speak in Tigrinya - a language which they have to master if they are to succeed. Even in village schools where all the school children are Bilin speakers with no knowledge of whatsoever of Tigrinya, no attempt is made (or has been made) to interpret the meaning of

the subject they are taught in other languages.² for all practical purposes, therefore, Tigrinya has to be learnt for it works in a broader social interactions. Educated thus, the students writes even personal letters to his parents in Tigrinya. So much so that the majority of illiterate Bilin speakers are forced to believe that the Bilin language can not be put into writing.

The other problem is that Bilin is not only a spoken language but it is also spoken by a minority. The number of Bilin speakers in the district of Keren is insignificant compared to the number of Tigre and Tigrinya speakers.

As pointed out in the previous chapter (IV), the land where Bilin is spoken is just an island surrounded by Tigre-Tigrinya speakers. The result is bi-lingualism and in some regions even tri-lingualism. If a Bilina is able to speak Tigre and/or Tigrinya, and even Arabic why should the non-Bilin speakers bother to study his language? Even if the Tigre/Tigrinya speakers tries to study Bilin, it becomes rather difficult for them to pronounce and discern* it because of the existence of the typically Bilin sounds \bar{n} and its labilized form $\bar{n}\bar{w}$. If you ask a Tigre/Tigrinya speaker to say 'le \bar{n} a (two) he will most probably pronounce it as 'lenga!.

*There were two missionaries in a Sequina village, one Tigrinya speaker (1968-1977) and the other a Cunama (1969-1974). The latter learned Bilin within a short period of time and pronounces the sounds \bar{n} and $\bar{n}\bar{w}$ well while for the former it took him much more time. Perhaps the desire to learn and the attitude one has towards the language also may have something to do with this.

Considering all these aspects of the language in its present setting, the question to be asked seems not why Bilin language is less developed as compared to Tigre/Tigrinya, but how it has survived in such adverse circumstances for so many centuries. As an island in an ocean of Semitic languages (Geez, Arabic, Tigre and Tigrinya) not only surrounding it but also right at its heart (Keren), it seems miraculous that Bilin did not give up its struggle for existence.³

What is then the future of the language? Perhaps it would be wise to wait and see what the future brings with it; but if the present trend continues, it will also continue struggling for its survival. Primarily, it needs to be written; it needs to have some place in being a language of instruction and worship; all these depend, however, greatly upon the readiness of the Bilin peoples themselves especially the educated groups. There are some developments initiated by students in Asmara during the last decade. And this itself is a sign of hope for the language although the attempts still remain at informal level. We now turn to these.

Recent Development

During the last decade, there were certain developments based on individual initiative leading to group work. Accordingly, certain manuscripts were prepared-translations from other languages or basic works. The following list of manuscripts includes some of the most important attempts meant to develop the language in written form; the list for individual contributions includes only those which were available, and other such works may not be lacking. All are kept ⁱⁿ manuscript forms.

a) Individual contributions

1. "Werena Jar Musixw", (A Prayer Book), prepared by Abba Kiflemariam Fidega in 1969 E.C. Typed and psychostyled by the Ethiopian Studies Center, Asmara, and distributed for use in the Bilin Christian areas. Includes some traditional aspects of prayers common in Bogos, gathered from the different parts of the region.

2. "Gidase Biled", (The Mass in Bilin), (1968-70 E.C.), by the same author it is a translation of the Ethiopian Mass from Geez. The first part and the anaphora according to the Apostles was psychostyled by the Ethiopian Studies Center, Asmara, and distributed.

3. "Jar Derib", (The way to God), (1970-72), by the same author, It reflects the mentality of the people and their attitude in day to day affairs; still in manuscript form.

4. Different basic collections and works have been gathered and kept in manuscript form, by the present writer of the paper (1968-73), such as:-

- list of names of different trees, animals (wild and domestic)
- diseases and the traditional ways of curing them in Bogos
- instruments and technical words as used in farming activities, and home appliances
- place names (geographical names), and
- miscellaneous collections.

These collections were meant to be raw material for further studies pertaining to the language in its different aspects.

5. "Melamed Qangwa Bilen" (A Manual of Bilin) by Mekonnen Amanuel (1976 E.C.). This was meant to be primer of Bilin for Tigrinya speakers and it follows the grammatical parts of speech, with explanations given in Tigrinya and examples in Bilin. It is the first of its kind, despite, again, of its being kept in manuscript form.

b) Group Endeavour, in 1970 E.C. a group of interested native Bilin speakers (students in Asmara) formed an informal group (committee) mainly to study how the language could be used in writing, and to coordinate the different individual undertakings. It organized itself to carry certain basic works on the language. Accordingly, the following were prepared

1. "Indiba Bilina-Gabuxw", "A Bilin Dictionary" (1970-1975 E.C.) Some 5,000 Bilin words were gathered and, as far as possible, defined with examples whenever necessary. Some procedures were adopted in preparing this work. It is now ready in a manuscript form.

2. The four gospels (1970-75) were also translated from Geez, Amharic and English texts of the Bible; again it is kept in a manuscript form.

The first problem which the group faced was lack of written material in Bilin (other than the "Awi Mehadxwunna" of Abba Woldeyohannes*, and Leo Reinisch's translation of the gospel of Mark). Agreement was finally reached on the usage and procedure of certain terminology; the Geez letters "ሀ ለ" and the Amharic " ሃ " were excluded as not applicable to Bilin. Again the letters " ሄ ለ ፑ " were regarded as foreign sounds. It was found that there is no Bilin word beginning with " ሀ " (xe) and the typically Bilin letters ሸ and ሸw, (and).

* See Chapter II

Standards for writing some words also was adopted, such as "hanfeina" or "hamfeina". When "f" or "b" follows "n" or "m" in spoken Bilin the practice is different with different regions or individuals; so, it was agreed that if "f" follows n or m, then "n" should be written. We have then "hanfeina" rather than "hamfeina", (to go fast). Similarly, if "b" follows "n or m", it should be "m" and not "n", as in "himbina" and not "hinbina", (= to stay, to leave).

Again the labialized form of the sound \bar{n} which was not used by either Leo Rienisch or Abba Woldeyohannes, $\bar{n}w$, was added as in "bu \bar{n} wa" (a liar), "su \bar{n} na" (to swallow) and the like. Other important improvements which were believed to be guidelines for the work planned were also explained. These are some of the positive developments.

CONCLUSION

More could be said about Bilin as used in the different spheres of the 'Bilin-man' but due to the limited scope of this paper only an overview has been presented. What has been presented in this paper therefore does not show the complete picture of Bilin, nor again its development through the ages. There are some special words and expressions used in different customary practices which are not yet put into writing.

There may also be much to be said about Bilin as an Agew language which can help one to place its origin rightly. The structure of Bilin as presented in this paper also is merely an overview. As for the developments taking place in the language, the general trend has been pointed out. Some of these developments are just influences from the surrounding languages - Tigre, Arabic and Tigrinya. The contact Bilin has with these languages can not be wholly appreciated at this stage.

On the other hand, if it has to develop side by side with the modern technological advances and prevailing concepts, Bilin has no choice but to assimilate some alien words and concepts. This is not also peculiar to Bilin. As a spoken language, there are some problems which Bilin is facing when it comes in contact with the above mentioned languages. These problems remain the reasons for an easy entrance of the other language into Bilin. The future of Bilin therefore seems to be more dependent on how it can (will) best struggle to stay off the constant incursions by its neighbour languages so that it comes out pure and unstained at the end.

APPENDIX

CONJUGATION OF THE VERB 'SAB-NA' (TO PRAISE)

The verb is conjugated by adding some suffixes to the root (sab-): the suffixes are added according to number, person and gender and tense. The following features can be observed in many Bilin verbs.

1. The present continuous tense and the past tense are formed by adding the auxiliary verbs 'hinb-na' (to be) and 'irgi-na' (past tense of 'hinb-na) respectively. The past tense also can be formed by another auxiliary one (señ-na).

But in the future tense both are not used and the auxiliary verb is 'diw-na' which means to stay.

2. There are two forms of the continuous and perfect tense of the past tense - which are distinguished by the auxiliary verbs 'irgina' and señ-na, for near past and distant past respectively.

An sab-u irgixun = I was praising (past continuous)

An sabu señekun = I was praising (distant past, many years ago)

3. There is no distinction of gender

(i) for the second person, both plural and singular, as in

Inti yi-gena sabrekw = my mother, you praise (f)

Inti yi-ixir sabrekw = my father, you praise (m)

Intin yi-gen sabdenekw = my mothers, you praise
(= to many elder women)

Intin yi-ikil sabdenekw = my fathers (to many elder men)
(you praise)

(ii) For all plurals

4. The 2nd person singular and the 3rd person singular feminine have the same verb forms but they are distinguished only by the auxiliary verb (irg-na/hinb-na/señ-na). But in the future tense they are the same and they can be known only from the context of the sentence or existence of the subject (pronoun)

Sab-ru irgiruxw = you were praising (2nd p. sing.)

Sab-ru irgiti = she were praising (3rd p..sing.)

Sabito gin (inti)=you will praise

Sabito gin (nri) =she will praise

5. When the verb is conjugated for person, the suffixes to be added to the appropriate verb form are:

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
1. -le	-na ()
2m. -ka	
2f. -ki	-kum()
3m. -lu	
3f. -la	-lom()

Here there is gender distinction for the 2nd p. singular (-ka/-ki)

The Simple Tense /ገባር /

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Future</u>
S1	ሰጠኩን	ሰጠኹን	ሰጠኃ ንን
2	ሰጠረኩ	ሰጠሪኹ	ሰጠፋ ንን
3 _m	ሰጠኩ	ሰጠኹ	ሰጠሮ ንን
3 _f	ሰጠቲ	ሰጠቲ	ሰጠፋ ንን
Pl.1	ሰጠነኩን	ሰጠነኹን	ሰጠና ንን
2	ሰጠደነኩ	ሰጠደነኹ	ሰጠኑና ንን
3	ሰጠነኩ	ሰጠነኹ	ሰጠ ደና ንን

Passive - /ተገባር /

S 1	ሰጠሰተኩን	ሰጠሰተኹን	ሰጠሰተኃ ንን
2	ሰጠሰተረኩ	ሰጠሰተሪኹ	ሰጠሰተፋ ንን
3 _m	ሰጠሰተኩ	ሰጠሰተኹ	ሰጠሰተሮ ንን
3 _f	ሰጠሰተቲ	ሰጠሰተቲ	ሰጠሰተፋ ንን
Pl.1	ሰጠሰተነኩን	ሰጠሰተነኹን	ሰጠሰተና ንን
2	ሰጠሰተደነኩ	ሰጠሰተደነኹ	ሰጠሰተኑና ንን
3	ሰጠሰተነኩ	ሰጠሰተነኹ	ሰጠሰተደና ንን

Causative - ለገባር /

S1	ሰጠ ሰጠኩን	ሰጠሰነኩን	ሰጠሰኃ ንን
2	ሰጠ ሰጠረኩ	ሰጠ ሰጠሪኹ	ሰጠሰፋ ንን
3 _m	ሰጠሰኩ	ሰጠሰኹ	ሰጠሰሮ ንን
3 _f	ሰጠሰቲ	ሰጠሰቲ	ሰጠሰፋ ንን
Pl. 1	ሰጠሰነኩን	ሰጠሰነኹን	ሰጠሰና ንን
2	ሰጠሰደነኩ	ሰጠሰደነኹ	ሰጠሰኑና ንን
3	ሰጠሰነኩ	ሰጠሰነኹ	ሰጠሰደና ንን

Causative Reflective /ሐስተጋብር /

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Past</u>	<u>Future</u>
S 1	ባቢረኩን	ባቢረኩን	ባቢረኩን ገን
2	ባቢረኩረኩ	ባቢረኩሪኩ	ባቢረኩረኩ ገን
3m	ባቢረኩ	ባቢረኩ	ባቢረኩ ገን
3f	ባቢረኩ ቲ	ባቢረኩ ቲ	ባቢረኩ ቲ ገን
Pl. 1	ባቢረኩንኩን	ባቢረኩንኩን	ባቢረኩንኩን ገን
2	ባቢረኩደኩን	ባቢረኩደኩን	ባቢረኩደኩን ገን
3	ባቢረኩኩን	ባቢረኩኩን	ባቢረኩኩን ገን

Frequentative /ተገባብር /

S1	ባብረኩን	ባብረኩን	ባብረኩን ገን
2	ባብረኩረኩ	ባብረኩሪኩ	ባብረኩረኩ ገን
3m	ባብረኩን	ባብረኩን	ባብረኩን ገን
3f	ባብረኩን ቲ	ባብረኩን ቲ	ባብረኩን ቲ ገን
Pl. 1	ባብረኩንኩን	ባብረኩንኩን	ባብረኩንኩን ገን
2	ባብረኩንደኩን	ባብረኩንደኩን	ባብረኩንደኩን ገን
3	ባብረኩንኩን	ባብረኩንኩን	ባብረኩንኩን ገን

FOOTNOTE

INTRODUCTION

1. Ato Jawed Berih, (75 yrs. of age) interviewed by me in March 22, 1985 in Keren.
2. Conti Rossini, Carlo, "Racconti e Canti Bileni". Actes du 14^e Congress International des Orientalistes. Tome 2nd - Studi sull'Ethiopia Paris : Ernest Leroux, 1907, p. 331-394, Protenate 1, p. 333.
3. J. Spencer Trimingham, Islam in Ethiopia, London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd. 1952, p. 164 footnote 3.
4. Ato Habte Zere and Ato Petros Eman both hold the same opinion, in informal conversations in March 26, 1985 and May 6th 1985 respectively.
5. Conti Rossini, as quoted in Michael Gabir, Bogos, 1829-1892 unpublished material prepared for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in history, HS I University, Addis Ababa, 1974, p. 3
6. Ibid., p. 4
7. Adhana Mengesteab, Rule by Raid in the Land of the Bilean, paper presented in the International Conference of Ethiopian Studies Addis Ababa University, 1982, p. 3
8. Michael Gabir, Ibid., p. 4
9. Ibid., p. 4
10. Adhana Mengesteab, Op.Cit. p. 1
11. Michael Gabir., Op.Cit., p. 5
12. Bryan Ane Tucker; Linguistic Analysis: The Non-Bantu Languages of North Eastern Africa, London: Long Struggle for Survival, Poems and a Tale, paper presented in the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1985, p. 8
13. Michael Gabir, Op.Cit., p. 14-15
14. Thompson, In Bender (ed), Non-Semitic Languages of Etiopia, East Lansing, 1976, p. 598
15. George A. Hipsky, Ethiopia: its people, its society its culture, New Heave, 1967, p. 43
16. Zemichael Imerior, interviewed by me on March 22, 1985 in Bogra.

CHAPTER I

1. M.L. Bender and others., Language in Ethiopia, Lodnon, Oxford Univ. Press, 1976, p. 40-42
2. Ibid., p. 40
3. Ibid., p. 41
4. Ibid., p. 41
5. This part is adopted from the above work
6. Ibid., p. 41
7. For Awiya, student Asmara : from Asmara University, has provided me with the requisit information.
8. Bryan and Tucker, Op.Cit., p. 523
9. Bender and others., Op.Cit., p. 42

CHAPTER II

1. Dei Costumi e dei drito dei Bogos, A. degli Affari Esteri, Rome 1891.
2. Abba Kiflemariam Fedaga : The Bilin Language, Long Struggle for Survival, Poems and a Tale.
3. Ibid., p. 37
4. Leo Rienisch, The Gospel of Mark in the Bilin or Bogos Languag, 1882.
5. Conti Rossini, Op.Cit., pp. 331-394
6. "Awi Mehadxwunna"?, Rome 1940
7. Amanuel Sahle, "Tigrigna: Recent History and Development", paper presented in the 7th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Lund, Sweden.
8. Abba Woldeyohannes, Op.Cit., p. 12
9. Ato Meibetot Berih (70 yrs. of age) narrates his reaction to this when he first heard the prayers and catechisms in Bilin, in informal conversations with me on February 15, 1985 (Keren)

CHAPTER III

1. Bender and others., Op.Cit., p. 41; see also Chapter I
2. Leo Rienisch, Op.Cit.
3. Bryan and Tucker, Op.Cit., pp. 495-555
4. Ibid., p. 508
5. See also Chapter I
6. For attempts made for this similarity, see chapter I

CHAPTER IV

1. Abba Kiflemariam Fedega, The Socio-Cultural influence of Moslem Majority Upon the Christian Minority in Bogos, unpublished monograph prepared during 1970 E.C. - 1975 E.C. for the Catholic Dioces of Asmara, p. 3
2. Ato Yassin Adim, oral informant of 'Taqr Bilin' interviewed by me on May 8, 1985, Asmara
3. Abba Kiflemariam Fadega, Op.Cit., p. 3
4. Trimmingham, Op.Cit., p. 148; Abba Kiflemariam Fadega, see note I above
5. 'Tselot' in Geez is adopted as it is in Bilin but the verb 'tseleye'
6. Ato Zemichael Imerjor, Op.Cit., see footnote 17 introduction
7. Ato Jawed Berih, see note i introduction
8. As held by Ato Zemicahel Imerjor interviewed by me on March 22, 1985 (Boggu)
9. Ato Jawed Berih also holds the same thing
10. Ato Jawed Berih see the above note
11. Ato Zemichael Imerjor and Ato Jawed Berih both hold it is Bilin in Origin
12. Abba Kiflemariam Fadeg, Op.Cit., see note 1 above
13. Leo Reinisch, see Chapter II, footnote 4

CHAPTER V

- . Ato Sea'd Ansera from Glas, Ato Zemichael Imer Jor from Boggu, both west of Keren, Ato Jawed Berih from Besigdira, Ato Petros Iman from Halibmental (now in Asmara) give the same version as presented
2. See note 1 above
3. Ato Zemichael Imerjor as interviewed by me on March 22, 1985 in Boggu
4. Abba Amir A8shera, (March 23, 1985 in Keren), informed me this verse
5. Verses 3-8 were told to me by Ato Jawed Berih on 22 March, 1985 in Keren many adults also repeat these verses
6. The other verses are common in Bogos area and have been written from remembrance according to when they were used in the 'golya'
7. By Abrehe Amor, Janaury 1985, Keren

CHAPTER VI

1. Bender and others, Op.Cit., p. 13
2. Abba Kiflemariam Fadega, ጥንታዊ ቢሊን ቋንቋ, Op.Cit., p. 14

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3. Bender and others, (ed) Language in Ethiopia, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1976
4. Conti Rossini, Carlo, 'Racconte e Canti Bileni'. Actes du XIV^e Internationale des Orients (1907)
5. Kiflemariam Fadega (Abba), The Bilin Language: Long Struggle for Survival, (poems and a Tale); a paper presented in the 8th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Abeba Univ., Addis Abeba, 1983 (Oct. 26-30, 1984)
6. Leo Rienish, The Gospel of Mark in the Bilin or Bogos Language, 1882
7. Mebrahtu Tesfaghiorghis (Abba), II Matrimonio Bileno, Dissertatio Theologiae morales, Roma: Pontificia Studiorum Universitatis, 1983
8. Michael Gabr, Bogos (1894-1890), Unpublished senior paper prepared for BA in History, Haille Sellasie I University, Addis Abeba, 1971
9. Trimingham, J. Spencer, Islam in Ethiopia London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd. 1952
10. Tucker, A.N., and Bryan, M.A., Linguistic Analyses: The Non-Bantu Language of North-Eastern Africa, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966
11. Woldeyohannes Habtemariam, (Abba), "Awī Menadawunna," Bilin Catechism, Roma, 1950, New Impressor, Asmara 1983.

Corrigendum

<u>Page</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Written</u>	<u>Should Read</u>
1	2	10	me ioned	mentioned
3	1	5	for this	for his
5	1	6	Bilin-woman	Bilin-man/woman
7	2	5	75%	75% ¹⁶
8	1	6	Megarish	Megarih
10	2	4(a)	q and x	qwe and xwe
12	1	3	ninen	nin/en
49	2	6		ከኛ ለገ ገጽፍፍሲ ከጸሐ
62	5	2(No.13)		ከፍ 21ገ

97 foot note 14 is left out 14 op-cit p. 15. The other footnote numbers are corrected as:

14 = 15

15 = 16

16 = 17

100 Chapter VI : footnote 3: Ibid, p. 14

