The Cultural Logic of Civiculture in Ethiopia

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Ethiopia is known as the major country where civet cat farming (civiculture) is practiced. Civiculture, having a history going back to the 12th century, is nowadays mainly conducted in southwestern Ethiopia solely by a group of Muslim called the Naggaadie or Naggaado respectively by the Oromo- and the Kaficho- speaking peoples. The exclusive practice by the group may be explained not only by the uniqueness of the practice itself, but also by the local belief that it was gifted to the group by a local Muslim holyman. This article discusses the local or “traditional” methods of civiculture and the effects of a governmental attempt to control and “modernize” the practice. The latter follows an accusation pointing out the “cruelty” of the practice, which was staged by the World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA), an international NGO working for animal protection. I argue that the description of the practice in the WSPA report one-sidedly focuses on the “cruelty” of the practice, and attempt a counterargument based on the local logic voiced by the farmers.

Key words: Civet cat farming, Naggaadie, southwestern Ethiopia, Oromo, Kaffa, WSPA.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the process of so-called “globalization,” which was initiated by a fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century movement towards the creation of a European-centered world-economy, the ebb and flow of the demands of a French dining table became influential enough to make an African peasant adopt a new kind of living. Globalization was a hierarchically structured system, in which the demands of the European world determined the economic tide.

Civet, the secretion of the civet cat, known as zabad in Amharic, apparently related to the Arabic term, zabād, was one of those goods exported from Ethiopia that was almost exclusively reserved for the use of foreigners, who monopolized the technology for processing the civet into perfume. Civet is used widely in the perfume industry as a "fixative" to preserve and enhance the smell of other, more delicate fragrances. The distinctive and complex odor of civet was hard to replicate artificially, and it is only in the 1910s that civetone was identified and synthetic versions were used to supplement the demand for natural civet. But however refined the synthetic version became, the unique odor was difficult to reproduce, and the demand for natural civet survived (Anonis 1997).

This inaccessibility to the knowledge of processing the coveted merchandise eventually prevented the civet business in Ethiopia from developing into an all-round perfume industry. In Ethiopia, civet cats (Civettictis civetta, Amharic: ከምን) are captured in the

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wilderness and kept in husbandry to facilitate the collection of the civet secretion. Civet used to be one of the most expensive products of Ethiopia, second only to gold, and was an important export item from Ethiopia long before its coffee became known to the world (Girma 1995: 47). Thus developed an international division of labor whereby the civet business was divided into supplier and processor (and consumer) of civet.

Despite the value of civet in the international economy, the civet cat business in Ethiopia was restricted to a limited part of the population. This limitation was sanctioned by mythical and practical factors, which largely persist today. These aspects prevented the civet cat business from expanding to the populace, and, as a result, contributed to keeping an ecological balance in an area where human migration had drastically altered the ecosystem. Human immigration markedly reduced the population of such carnivorous mammals as lions and leopards, which were the natural enemies of civet cats. Humans did not hunt to kill but captured the civet cats alive. Normally, in Ethiopia, civet cats are regarded as vermin to human society because they often appeared in rural areas to steal small domestic animals and fowl. These aspects are often ignored by critics who inveigh against the practice of civet cat farming as "cruel" and thus unnecessary.

The recent charges against Ethiopian civet cat farming made by one of the animal rights’ movements are highly biased by their ignorance of the ecological balance, economic conditions of the farmers and the local logic or value system underlying the practice. This paper aims to outline the local method of civet cat farming, or civiculture, conducted in southwestern Ethiopia (Map 1) and attempts to understand the local logic behind this method. What I will suggest is that the civet cat farmers have their own logic in the way they practice civiculture, and this logic is comprehensible only by referring to their way of living and their value system.

Research on civiculture has hitherto been conducted sporadically by Italian, English and Ethiopian scholars, and by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization (EWCO) since the 1980s, but the purpose of their research was mainly to introduce civiculture as an economic activity and to investigate more effective and advantageous, or in other words, “modern” methods for civiculture, thus regarding the cultural and social aspects as secondary. This paper will focus mainly on these aspects of civiculture, and the questions

Map 1. The Gibe area (Oromiya State) and Kaffa area (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ State) in southwestern Ethiopia
what category of people do the civet cat farmers belong to, and what are the cultural justifications behind the methods of civiculture?

Civiculture is not readily selected as a profession in Ethiopia, but rather is traditionally restricted to a limited category of people, who transmit the knowledge of handling the civet cats and civet from father to son. This restriction in access to the civet business, in effect, has worked as a sanction against the expansion of the business. This category of people, called the “Neggaadie,” has traditionally monopolized the civet business in Ethiopia. This paper discusses the extent to which the knowledge of handling the animal and material is regarded as special, and how the “Neggaadie” have exclusively retained their knowledge in handling the civet cats and the civet business. This restriction in access to the knowledge is intertwined with the cultural logic by which the people handle and utilize the animal, and justified in mythological terms.

The reason why I focus on the social and cultural aspects is because the practice of keeping civet cats is becoming a target of the animal rights’ movement. Governmental organizations have quickly responded to these accusations and are now investigating “modern” methods of capturing and farming civet cats. However, a subtle improvement in the methods would not be enough to refute the accusations, for both neglect the cultural meaning behind the methods.

In order to clarify these points, I will first look back to the history of civiculture and how the “Neggaadie” people came to occupy the business. Secondly, I will examine the “traditional” methods and logic of keeping and handling the civet cats in present-day Oromo and Kaffa societies. And thirdly, I will discuss governmental efforts to control and “modernize” the practice in response to international pressure.

2. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH AREA

2.1. Description of the civet cat
The civet cat belongs to a family of carnivorous mammals called Viverridae or Mongoose. Among the species of the Viverridae family, only three are considered viable for domestication from an economic point of view. These are Civettictis civetta and Viverra civetta, both living in Africa, and Viverricula indica, which is found in South and Southeast Asia. Among these species, only the first two are actually available for civiculture. However, although Civettictis (Viverra) civetta is found extensively in Africa, from Senegal to Somalia, and south to Namibia and eastern South Africa, civiculture is only practiced in Ethiopia (Teshome 1987: 2–4).

The height of a mature civet cat is approximately 25 to 30 cm and its head-to-body length is 680–890mm and tail length 445–463mm (Photo 1). The civet cat is nocturnal and its diet omnivorous, including smaller mammals, lizards, snakes, birds, eggs, roots, fruits and other vegetation. Poultry and young lambs are sometimes taken, and it is thus considered verminous in the rural areas. Civettictis are generally solitary and individuals have defined and marked territories. The scent glands, which are located under the tail, leave scent along the path to convey information, such as marking territories, or telling whether a female is in estrus. Civettictis is widely distributed in forests and savannahs, but in Ethiopia, civet cats are mainly found in broadleaf tree forests where underbrush abounds. Meteorologically, they prefer areas that share the common feature of a temperate humid (wāyna dāgā) and cool (dāga) climate.

Photo 1. Civet cat
Despite the wide distribution of civet cats in Ethiopia, the tradition of capturing and keeping them in captivity is mainly found in the southwestern part of the country: 95 per cent of the total amount of civet is produced in Oromiya State, and the remaining 5 per cent in Kafficho Shakicho Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' State. In Oromiya State, the Limmu area (Jimma Zone) in the western part of Oromiya stands out for its quantity of produce, which gradually reduces in proportion to the distance from Limmu.\(^2\)

2.2. Environment and subsistence economy of southwestern Ethiopia
Meteorologically, the area under discussion belongs to temperate humid (wöynä däga) or cool (däga) climate zone, and the altitude ranges from 1,500m to 2,500m above sea level. Geographically, this area is covered with dense forest, including planted coniferous, coffee and natural broad-leaf trees.

The majority of the population are peasants, and the main crops produced are maize, sorghum and teff (Eragrostis teff). The regional economy depends heavily on coffee, for which this region is well known and which is etymologically believed to have its origin in “Kaffa,” the historical name of the region. Although nowadays qat (Catha edulis Amharic: čat) is gradually gaining popularity as a cash crop in preference to coffee, the latter nevertheless remains a major product of national concern. Despite its historical importance, the commercial planting of coffee only began in the latter part of the nineteenth century on estates possessed by political leaders of the region (Mohammed 1990: 122–3). And it was only in the 1940s that coffee became the main export item of the Ethiopian empire; until then, such merchandise as ivory, slaves, gold, spices, animal skin and civet stood out as the leading exports.

The conquest and incorporation of the region into the Ethiopian empire at the end of the nineteenth century precipitated the expansion of coffee cultivation (Matsumura 2002). Christian Amharas and other northern highlanders settled in this region and occupied large areas of land for plantation use, where they cultivated not only coffee but also tea and such tropical fruits as pineapple, papaya, and banana. Thus, dependence on coffee (and in the latter half of the twentieth century, qat) became a salient feature of the peasant economy of the region, and their living standard fluctuates according to the domestic producers’ price of coffee, which is largely determined by the international coffee market.

2.3. History of the region
The residents in the region under discussion are mainly speakers of the Oromo or Kaffa languages. This is a consequence of the political history of the region. It was initially inhabited by speakers of the Gong’a language, from which the language of Kaffa originates (Huntingford 1955: 104; Lange 1982). In the sixteenth century, the Oromo migrated from their original home in the southeastern part of the present Ethiopia and expanded their territory in all four directions. One of the branches of the Macha Oromo group, i.e. the group that migrated into the western part of Ethiopia, settled in the Gibe river area around the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. This branch of the Macha Oromo people either expelled or intermingled with the original inhabitants (Ennarya, Bosha, and Kaffa) through their unique system of adoption and assimilation, or “Oromization” (Lange 1982; Mohammed 1990: 21).

The Ennarya (or Hinnario) state, dominating the area between the Gojeb and the Dideessa rivers, flourished as a lucrative slave- and gold-supplier for the Christian Ethiopian empire to the north, beginning from the mid-thirteenth century and ending with the conquest of the state by Oromo forces in the early eighteenth century (Lange 1982: 17–23). Although the Ennarya state faded out of the historical scene under the advancing Oromo forces, on the southern side of the Gojeb river, the Kaffa state developed into a powerful kingdom under the Minjo dynasty until the end of the nineteenth century.

The “Oromized” society on the northern side of the Gojeb river gradually abandoned the “democratic” gada system and transformed into a hierarchically stratified society. By
the first half of the nineteenth century, five political entities were formed along the Gibe river, namely, Jimma, Limmu, Guma, Gomma, and Gera (Asmarom 1973, 2000; Mohammed 1990: 86). These political entities, customarily called “Gibe shanan” (five Gibe), or “the Gibe states” (Huntingford 1955; Mohammed 1990) (Map 2), flourished with the economic advantage gained from being located not only in a productive land but also on a trade route that connects the region directly to the trade center in the northern highlands and thence to the Red Sea port at Massawa. Commodities such as gold, ivory, spices, slaves, animal skins, and civet were collected and transported to the north.

The prosperity of this region attracted both traders and migrants, most of whom were Muslim. Muslim traders and merchants transported commodities to and from the northern highlands, where the political elite were mostly Christian Amhara, and Muslims were regarded as second-rate citizens (Levine 1972: 78). The political leaders of the five Gibe states not only recognized the advantage of assisting the activities of the Muslim traders, but also gradually adopted Islam as their state religion. The Muslim traders, other than professing trade, thus became precursors of Islamization, and the conversion of the ruling elite attracted Muslim religious leaders to migrate to the region (Mohammed 1990: 133-61). Initially these migrant traders and religious leaders were the only Muslims among the pagan Oromo, and the term “neggaadie,” an Amharic term meaning “trader” or “merchant,” had the connotation of being “Muslim” (Cerulli 1922: 25). However, with the decline of the power of the gada officials and the rise of war leaders, Muslim traders were encouraged to settle in the region and were endowed with the right to own land. This was a “turning-point” in the spread of Islam in the region (Mohammed 1990: 150), and in the middle of the nineteenth century, Islam gradually spread among the local populace to become a distinctive feature of the five Gibe states against the surrounding societies, either Oromo or other. For example, Nonno, located north of the state of Limmu, retained the traditional Oromo gada system and qallu institution. And in the Kaffa kingdom south of Gera, Christianity took hold.

Customarily, the Gibe Oromo people recognized others by their clan (seenni) affiliation,
which explicitly or implicitly indicated their place of origin, social stratum and, in some cases, craftsmanship (Lewis 2001: 59). Under the Gibe states, the Oromo people were roughly categorized into “guutu” (full) and “hir’uu” (“incomplete” or “not full”), and Muslim traders (neggaadie) were classified under the latter, which includes other social categories such as Muslim religious leaders (asqaari), blacksmiths (tuuntu), hunters and foragers (waata), and tanners (fugaa). (3) Although some of the Muslim traders settled in the region as peasants, the descendants of the settled Muslim traders retained their appellation “neggaadie” as their kinship category. Thus a type of profession was translated into a kin group appellation. Today, “Neggaadie” is counted as one of the numerous clans found in this region. Its distinctive feature is that it is not recognized as an exogamous unit, and, in this sense, “Neggaadie” may well be denoted a quasi-clan. (4) This quasi-clan is an umbrella category, which includes subgroups, names of which indicate social characteristics of their first-comers such as their places of origin and religious status (Table 1).

### 3. THE HISTORY OF CIVICULTURE

Civiculture has a long history in Ethiopia. According to “oral tradition,” the legendary Queen of Sheba (or Saba), Makeda, upon visiting King Solomon of Israel in the tenth century B.C., brought civet along with other gifts (Rouk & Hailu 1963: 2; Budge 1932: lvi). This oral tradition may well express the historical significance of civet on a national level, for the legend of the Queen of Sheba was regarded as a national epic under the imperial

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**Table 1.** Subgroup names of the Neggaadie (Naggaado) clan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oromo Society</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Kaffa Society</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abujedi</td>
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<td>Abjedo</td>
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<td>Argubba</td>
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<td>Ganno</td>
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<td>Dâgoye</td>
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<td>Ifraaz (Ifraajo, Ifrago)</td>
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<td>Darita</td>
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<td>Jibril</td>
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<td>Finciso</td>
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<td>Kallisho (Qallichoo)</td>
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<td>Naasiro</td>
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<td>Sharifo</td>
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<td>Tigero</td>
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<td>Mantina</td>
<td>I, J</td>
<td>Waasili (Waasalo)</td>
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<td>Mânsuri</td>
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<td>Yukuti</td>
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Sources: Huntingford (H) 1955: 114; Jimma Oral Tradition (J) 1973: 10, 18; Lange (L) 1982: 260; Ishihara (I) 1996: 46. Source (I) includes unpublished material obtained from interviews. Names in bold are those found in both Oromo and Kaffa societies.
regime that ended in 1974 (Pankhurst 1998: 54). My informants not only confirmed the prevalence of this oral tradition in the Gibe region, but also informed me of a legend regarding the origin of civiculture. The informant, Shaykh Muhammad-Nur, is a 78-year-old former civet cat farmer, belonging to the Darita subgroup of the Neggaadie clan.

Legend 1: The origin of civiculture
Sulayman (of ancient Israel) is known for his ability in understanding animal language. Long ago, the wild civet cats used to come to Sulayman to have their perennial glands wiped of civet every nine days. However, annoyed by seeing people argue over the expensive civet, Sulayman set the civet cats free and told them not to present their precious civets, which is equivalent only to gold to human beings, and let them fetch for themselves, if they wish. [To my question: Is this based on a written source, or is it orally transmitted?] It is based on the Qur’an, the chapter is... “Tasin.”

This legend is interesting in several ways. First, as an elderly “shaykh,” denoting an honorific religious status, Shaykh Muhammad-Nur refers to a Qur’anic source, a chapter referred to as “Tasin.” Although an explicit reference to the practice is hardly deducible from the contents of the chapter that begins with the word “Tasin,” or the 27th chapter named “Naml (Ants),” the importance lies in the local understanding of the practice of civiculture as a given mission legitimized in the holy Qur’an. The other interesting point is that the legend refers to some of the specific methods of handling civet cats. This reference to specific methods (detailed below) expresses the historical depth and the “rationality” in the seemingly incongruous aspects of some methods of the practice. Such practices as the custom of removing the civet of the perennial gland every nine days, and the belief that civet cats cease to secrete civet where resentment hangs in the air, are not readily explicable. However, by relating the practices to the deeds of the ancient king, whose authority neither Christian nor Muslim would contest, these practices gain legitimacy and justification.

As for written documents, civiculture was first referred to by the twelfth-century geographer, al-Idrisi (d.c. 1165). In his work on the properties of diverse plants and various kinds of drugs, he states that civet is collected from civet cats kept in captivity and fed meat, and the “perspiration between the hind legs” is “a kind of perfume,” and is used as medicine (Sezgin 1995: 144).

However, al-Idrisi does not mention exactly where this practice of keeping civet cats took place. Thus, it is only when Europeans began to explore inland Ethiopia that civiculture appears in written documents. Almeida, a Jesuit monk, during his stay in Ethiopia from 1624 to 1632 witnessed civet cats, whose excrement was used as “perfume with which they usually scent their clothes” (Beckingham & Huntingford 1967: 52). And according to a French medical doctor named Charles Jacques Poncet, who traveled the northwestern part of Ethiopia from 1699 to 1700, civiculture was conducted widely in Emfras, which is a day’s journey from Gondar, the then administrative and religious center of the Christian empire in the northern highlands. Emfras was noted for the trafficking of both slaves and civet. The residents, mostly Muslim, not only brought civet from other places for trade, but also conducted civiculture themselves. Some merchants are reported to have kept up to three hundred civet cats (Foster 1967: 136). This report is interesting, because “Emfras” is found, today, among the multiple subgroups of the Neggaadie clan (see Table1). Yilma, citing Mesfin, reports that traders introduced civiculture to south and southwestern Ethiopia from northern Ethiopia, specifically to the Limmu area (Limmu districts, i.e. Limmu-Kosa and Limmu-Seqa districts, now included in the Jimma Zone of Oromiya State). According to Mesfin, it was from Limmu that civiculture spread to neighboring areas including Jimma and Wollega. In short, despite the difficulty in ascertaining the beginning of civiculture, it is safe to say that the practice was known as early as the twelfth century and was in full swing in the seventeenth century in northwestern Ethiopia, and thereafter was introduced to southwestern Ethiopia by traders.

Yilma also refers to the practice as only known to Muslim communities (Yilma 2000: 2). As was the case with Emfras, civiculture is traditionally perceived as a Muslim profession.
Bruce, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, also mentions that, even where civet cats abound (such as in Tcherkin of northwest Ethiopia), the residents “know not the use of them, nor how to extract the civet. The Mahometans only are possessed of this art” (Bruce 1790: 296). However, not all Muslims, but only the Neggaadie (or Naggaado) were privileged into the art of civiculture (Tadesse 1995: 54).

As mentioned above, the Neggaadie in the Gibe Oromo region and the Naggaado in the Kaffa region are descendants of migrant Muslim traders from the north. Although, today the Neggaadie and the Naggaado use the language of the society they settled in, the correlation between the subgroup names of the two quasi-clans indicates some kind of continuity in the migration history of the two groups (Table 1). Both are regarded as pious Muslims and holders of special knowledge, which includes not only the systematic knowledge of Islam and writing culture (which is unknown both in traditional Oromo and Kaffa culture), but also knowledge concerning various transactions. Piety, a necessary corollary of business transactions, guarantees trustworthiness to a certain degree. In a peasant society where the institutionalization of jealousy works against the accumulation of wealth, the wealth of a Neggaadie (or Naggaado) is justified by the fact that he is a Neggaadie (or Naggaado), a holder of special knowledge. Civiculture may well be included in this “special knowledge,” which local peasants other than the Neggaadie (or Naggaado) cannot share.

Moreover, civiculture is not only regarded as “special knowledge” but also associated with religious belief. One of my informants told me how the Neggaadie became related to this profession.

Legend 2: The Neggaadie and civiculture
Civiculture is a given profession of the Neggaadie people. This is related to the story, long ago, when Sayid Nasrallah suffered from an eye infection, he anointed civet and was cured. Thus the entire Neggaadie, that is, Nagresso, Darita, Abujedi, Tigre, Yasufi, and all other (sub) groups were blessed to conduct civiculture. Regarded as a given profession, the Saada’o clan (descendants of Sayid Nasrallah) of Limmu has a custom of slaughtering an ox every nine days when they collect the civet and they celebrate the event by citing the Yåsin (Qur’an Ch. 36). Those who handle the civet cats should be those who do not argue with others and are both physically and spiritually clean.

Sayid Nasrallah is a highly venerated Muslim holy man, who came to Limmu most probably in the seventeenth century (Mohammed 1990: 154). The fact that Sayid Nasrallah is a holy man venerated in Limmu is pertinent to the fact that Limmu is the center of civiculture, and has the largest number of civet cat farms. Thus, civiculture is believed to be a gifted profession blessed by Sayid Nasrallah, exclusively for the Neggaadie (or the Naggaado), and for this reason, the Neggaadie customarily thank God for the yield by citing the “Yásin,” one of the most important chapters in the Qur’an.

4. “TRADITIONAL” METHODS OF CIVICULTURE

4.1. Methods of capturing civet cats
The method of capturing civet cats (Or. ṭrañ, K. wongoo) seems to vary according to the individual and regional level. However, in administrative reports, these diversities are categorically neglected or are lumped under the category of “traditional” (Am. bahalawi) as against “modern” (Am. zāmānawi) methods (Hillman 1987). The methods described in this section were obtained from a report written by Pajella, an Italian who conducted research in the 1930s on behalf of the then Italian colonial administration (Pajella 1961), and from my own interviews with local civet cat farmers. These methods are categorized as “traditional” supposedly in the sense that the methods were devised out of local experience transmitted from father to son.

Wild civet cats are captured in traps. In order to spot appropriate places to set the traps, trappers need to be able to judge which track is that of the civet cat, and whether it is a
mature male or not. For this purpose, civet cat farmers used to ask individuals belonging to the hunters’ clans to capture civet cats for them. The waata and manjo are hereditary social categories specializing in the task of hunting respectively in the Oromo and Kaffa societies. Individuals belonging to these categories used to live in the forest and live mainly on hunting until the 1974 revolution. Following the socialist program, which enabled the landless artisans to own land, and government restrictions against hunting, the waata and the manjo gradually abandoned the practice (Gezahegn 2001: 93). Despite the reduction of the population subsisting solely on hunting, some informants suggested that there is a general consensus among the local residents on who belongs to the waata and manjo, and residents occasionally ask them to capture civet cats on their behalf. Other informants claimed that the civet cat farmers themselves or their domestic laborers or servants take on the task.\(^7\)

Civet cats being nocturnal, traps are set at midnight. The animals begin to move about looking for food from around seven o’clock in the evening and go back to their nests at around four o’clock, before daybreak.\(^8\) Trappers search for the tracks and digging left by civet cats and set their traps at these points, for the civet cats have a habit of excavating at the same spot continuously.\(^9\) Trappers need to be able to distinguish the footprints of the civet cat, and this is only possible at muddy spots where tracks show clearly.\(^10\)

There are two types of traps, i.e. the net (Or. daboo, K. daboo) trap and the cage (Or. qafoo, K. qafoo) trap. Net traps are traditionally made from ensete (Ensete ventricosum) fiber, but nowadays, nets made of cotton and nylon string are more commonly used. The size of the nets is about one meter in width and four to five meters long. Nets are either placed on the ground (Pajella 1961) or stretched between two poles planted vertically in the ground.\(^11\) When the civet cat is driven into the net trap, the trappers quickly catch the animal by the tail and transfer it into a wide mesh bag. The civet cat is then carried home. As soon as they return to their residence, the trappers move the cats to their cages (qafoo).

As for the cage trap, cages are set against a tree, the opening facing downwards, with some kind of bait (usually a fruit like a banana) hanging inside. The trap is set so that, when the target animal steps inside the cage and catches hold of the bait, the trapper waiting in a nearby hiding place runs out and bars the opening with pieces of sticks, used as a door.\(^12\) This method is convenient in the sense that the animal may be carried by the cage as it is, to the farmer’s residence without having to take the risk of letting it escape or getting bitten.

Other than these two methods, there is a trapping method using a rope. This method, usually employed for hunting bushbuck or other small animals, is not normally chosen specifically to catch civet cats, which must be caught alive. This trap uses a single rope, making a hoop on one end and concealing it in fallen leaves on the ground and holding the other end behind a nearby bush. When an animal puts its feet inside the hoop, the trapper pulls at the other end of the rope. Civet cats, caught in these traps by accident, are treated separately from those which were caught by net or cage traps, for they may be injured or traumatized by the procedure.\(^13\)

The trappers only keep male mature civet cats and release the female or immature cats for a number of reasons. Firstly, the civet extracted from the female is considered to be of low quality.\(^14\) And secondly, keeping both sexes is not preferred for they would be stimulated in mating periods. So, when females are caught by accident, they are set free after cutting one of the nails of their feet, the number and place of nails differing slightly among the trappers (Hillman 1987). For example, one of my informants stated that the middle nail of a front leg is cut, and another told me that three nails of a hind leg are usually cut. By cutting the nails, the trappers would know by the footprints before setting up the traps whether the target animal is a female that had been caught recently.

The trapper also sees to it that the civet cat captured is mature. He determines this not only by the physical size of the body, but also by the length of the penis when pulled by the tail, and also by the size of the perennial gland.\(^15\)

Civet cats are sold to those who requested to have them captured. As the trappers capture civet cats on request, there is basically no excess of supply. The price of the civet
cat seems to vary according to the region. Pajella has reported that the price of one civet cat was set at 12 to 20 Maria Theresa dollars.\(^\text{(10)}\) According to a report written in 1987, the price of a civet cat was 90–120 birr in Neqemte, 50–80 birr in Gimbi, and 40–60 birr in Qellem (Teshome 1987: 9). The prices mentioned to me by informants in the Limmu and Sigimo districts varied from 50 to 150 birr.\(^\text{(17)}\) Normally, the civet cats are sold together with the civet that is removed the day the civet cats are captured. This civet, called liquaami (or liquaamo in the Kaffa language), is highly esteemed and used as a perfume itself.

4.2. Methods of farming civet cats

The number of civet cats per farm varies and is largely determined by the amount of capital. According to Hillman’s report, a civet cat farmer keeps an average of 15 civet cats (Hillman 1987).\(^\text{(18)}\) Initial investment consists of expenses for the housing and caging facilities, payment for the civet cats and (nowadays) the license for civet cat farming. For the sake of comparison, this initial investment can be estimated at around 3,900 birr (roughly equivalent to $459 in 2002), for a farmer retaining 15 civet cats.\(^\text{(19)}\) Thereafter, efforts are made to increase the number of civet cats held, which is dependent on a combination of factors listed below.

The methods of farming civet cats vary by region, with the Gibe region slightly different from the Kaffa region.\(^\text{(20)}\) This regional similarity and differentiation may be explained by ecological and social factors, which also influence the way of life of the farmers themselves.

a) Trial stage

Although civet cats are wild animals, they are not regarded as such after the trial stage, whereby the wild civet cat is transformed into a domestic animal. After this stage, the farmers treat the civet cats as second only to their own family, keeping them in housing similar to their own, and sharing their food. Nowadays, this transitional process is translated into practical terms, and the symbolic aspect is hardly significant. However, the perception of the civet cats as highly vulnerable under the transitional process indicates that this process has (or had) a ritual aspect.

After being caught in the wilderness, civet cats are kept and fed separately for three to four days. During this period, the civet cat is fed maize porridge, with raw eggs, raw butter and milk. The raw materials serve as a purgative for cleansing their bowels of grass, bacteria and insects, which the animals took in with food (Hillman 1987: 7).\(^\text{(21)}\) This food is given only by men who are “purified” or “clean” (Or. < Ar. tahara) through ritual ablution (Ar. wudu’).\(^\text{(22)}\) If the civet cat defecates in the process, it is judged to be adaptable for domestic use. Some civet cats die in this initial period, unable to adapt to the new living conditions. Those civet cats that defecated are fed the usual diet of maize porridge, from that day on. The taboo against women, however, is not lifted until the ninth day, when the first civet is safely removed from the perennial gland.

Although nowadays many farmers adopt a utilitarian reason for conducting this transitional process (“to clean the bowels of the forest stuff”), for some farmers this process has a ritual dimension. The wild animal caught in the forest is considered “harmful” to the human being both physically and spiritually. The diet of raw eggs, raw butter and milk serves as a purgative not only for getting rid of the “wilderness” inside the animal’s guts but also for letting out the spiritual “wilderness.” Through this process, “wild” and thus “harmful” civet cats are turned into “domestic” and “harmless” animals more or less similar to cattle. As is often the case with “passage rites,” this interim period is vested with taboos and ritual restrictions (Van Gennep 1909). Women, or men not “purified” are not allowed to approach the animals, which are held to be vulnerable.

The importance of this transformation lies in the fact that this is the point which proponents for animal protection overlook. From the latter’s point of view, civet cats are wild animals and therefore should be left to live in the wilderness, whereas for the civet cat farmers, civet cats that undergo the transformational process are no more wild, but domesticated animals and therefore should be kept in domestic compounds.
b) Housing
Civiculture is usually conducted indoors. (23) Civet cats are usually kept either inside the farmer’s residence or in a separate building. The usual type of building in the area of study is made of wood and mud, with thatched or corrugated roofs. Because the cats are considered nervous and the amount of the civet yield may fluctuate according to housing conditions, when they are kept inside the residence, they are usually restricted to the rear of the building, where there is minimum noise. And when they are kept in a separate building constructed for the purpose, the building is erected at the rear of the compound. Windows are put a high position but normally kept closed, because the civet cats are nocturnal animals. Food for the animals is prepared inside the building, and occasionally, a fire is lit inside the hut, in order to keep the room warm. Thus, darkness and warmth are believed to enhance the productivity of civet. Fire is also considered necessary, as the smoke chases away insects, especially ants (Hillman 1987: 7). (24)

c) Cages
Civet cats are kept singly in separate cages (Or. qafoo, K. qafoo), which are laid on trestles (Or. siren), about 1 meter in height. (25) The trestles and cages are both made of wood. The former is considered necessary for keeping the cages clean of excrement and to protect them from insects. The approximate size of the cage is 50cm in width, 50cm in height and 100cm long (Photo 2). (26) As the civet cats have vicious teeth, the cages are made of hard-wearing branches. The types of trees used for cages in the Gibe area are qacama (Myrsine africana), mixoo (Mimusops kummel), simareru (Galiniera coffeoides), gesho (Rhamnus prinoides), and looko (Cassipourea malosana). These branches are cut to 1.5m length and tied to arched branches (usually aanquu (Embelia schimperi)), which are bent over fire. The material used to tie the branches to the aanqu is tree bark braided into rope (Or. qunce).

On the other hand, in the Kaffa region, cages are made of bamboo tree bark and the bottom part is composed of seven branches. For these seven branches, hardwood types of trees are chosen, such as gesho (Rhamnus prinoides) and yahoo (Olea welwitschii).

d) Feeding
The basic food given daily to civet cats is loose porridge (Or. o’aa, muuqi) made from maize flour. The reason why porridge made from maize is preferred is that it gives the civet a pale color, which is highly esteemed. And for the same reason, they are never fed teff or sorghum, for these crops are believed to darken the color of the civet. (27) A pale and yellowish color is favoured for civet, and attracts a better price. Occasionally, especially after the removal of the civet, pieces of boiled meat and its broth are added to the porridge. It is believed that the more meat is fed, the more civet is yielded. Civet cats are fed any type of meat from a domestic animal and any sort of edible flesh, including offal such as heart, lung, kidney, etc. They, however, are not fed the meat of wild animals or animals considered inedible to human beings.

The amount of food given varies according to the farmer’s capital. According to Teshome, the difference between the recommended quantity of food that should be given to one civet cat and the average amount of food actually given is shown in Table 2 (Teshome 1987: 14). (28)

The difference between the recommended amount of food and the average amount...
given may well be caused by financial limitations on the part of the farmers. Although it is generally recognized that the more meat is given the more civet is gained, it is easier to double the amount of maize flour than meat. For, 250g of maize may cost around 25–30 cents, while the same amount of meat may cost 3–4 birr in southwestern Ethiopia. In a peasant society in Ethiopia, the most common way of obtaining meat is slaughtering one’s own livestock or purchasing cattle with neighbors and dividing the meat equally between themselves, the latter custom being called *qarcha* in Oromo societies. Shaykh Hassan informed me that, when he had fewer than 10 civet cats, one sheep slaughtered every nine days would be enough, and when he had more than 10 civet cats, he used to buy an old cow and share the meat with his neighbors and family. And when he had as many as 30 or 40, he used to buy an ox every nine days. But this practice seems to have become quite rare nowadays as farmers keep much fewer civet cats than they used to, for financial reasons.

Food is presented on a wooden tray (Or. *magi*, K. *gabatoo*). This tray is inserted from the front door of the cage. The type of wood used for the tray is a hardwood, for example *walenso* (*Erytrina abyssinica*), *ororo* (*Ekebergia capensis*), and *arbu* (*Ficus sur*). In Kaffa society, bamboo splits are used for food trays.

e) Farming ambience

It is generally believed that, because civet cats are regarded as nervous animals, the amount of civet that can be collected fluctuates according to such factors as room temperature, food and noise (Anonis 1997: 43). In addition, it is also considered important to keep the farm physically clean. In order to maintain hygiene, the cages are laid on trestles, and the droppings are cleaned on a daily basis. It is also thought important to maintain a socially peaceful and amicable atmosphere. Accordingly, the civet cats are allotted a room at the rear of the house, or a building at the rear of the compound solely for this purpose.

Apart from these tangible factors, there are two other somewhat intangible aspects traditionally considered to have a negative influence on civet cats. First, is any feeling of hatred and hostility (Or. *qiimi*, K. *goomo*) between family members. The legend referring to the origin of civiculture, mentioned above, explicitly describes the distaste on the part of the civet cats for people arguing. And, secondly, is the spiritually polluted state of being, called *gaaddiddu* in Oromo society. For example, a woman who is having her period, or any person who has not performed ablution after having sexual intercourse is regarded as being in a state of *gaaddiddu*, which literally means “shadow.”

The combination of these factors, tangible and intangible, is perceived to affect not only the well-being of the civet cats but also the amount of civet produced. Therefore, the desire to increase the amount of civet adds to the incentive to improve the farming ambience. It is believed, however, that an effort on the part of the human being to improve the ambience should be supported on a supernatural dimension. This dimension being accessible through continuous prayer and supplication, civet cat farmers regularly supplicate God while chewing *gat* and burning incense. Thus, success and failure in civet cat farming is attributed to the divine realm indivisible from faith and piety.

f) Removal of civet

The secretion of the civet is accumulated in the pouch until it is removed artificially. In the
wild, civet cats rub the perennial gland over an exposed tree root or a small branch in order to remove the civet (Rouk & Hailu 1963: 3). Among the Oromos, the removal of the extracted civet is usually done every nine days. The ninth day is called salgi, which derives from the number nine (sagal). However, according to previous reports, the interval is placed between seven and twelve days. (31)

The removal is conducted by at least three persons. The first inserts a long stick vertically through the bars of the cage and encourages the civet cat to grab onto it by its teeth. The second stands at the rear end of the cage and seizes hold of the hind legs and pulls them back so that the perennial gland is in reach. Then the third person presses underneath the gland and turns the pouch (Or. manne zabadi, K. yeere kexo) inside out. The pouch is gently scraped of civet by a spoon made of cattle horn, and after the scraping, special ointment made by the farmer is applied to the pouch. This ointment (Or. deebisa, K. deebiso), made from honey wax and ligaami or butter, will protect the walls of the pouch from drying and add moisture to it. As the quality of the ointment is directly related to the quality of the civet, the ingredients and the processing method were regarded as a secret. (32)

After the removal of civet, the civet cats are fed not only the usual maize porridge but also boiled meat and its broth. Usually the removal takes place before noon, and the meal is served in the evening.

The civet removed from the cats is accumulated in containers made from cattle horn. (33) The amount of civet gained at one time from a civet cat is about 10–15g (Rouk & Hailu 1963: 6; Pajella 1938). (34)

g) Selling the civet

The weight unit used for the civet is waget, which is also adopted to weigh gold. (35) Farmers either sell the civet to brokers who occasionally visit the farms and nearby towns, or bring it to main trading centers like Jimma or Addis Ababa to make a better profit. These brokers or middlemen (Am. dillaala), in many cases belonging to the Neggaadie clan, are adept at distinguishing the quality of the civet and know which farmer gives a constant and high-quality supply. They usually visit in the rainy season to encourage the farmers in anticipation of a later sale. (36) They return to the farmers’ place in the dry season to collect the civet yield. (37)

The producers’ civet price is increasing. According to a farmer living in Kaffa society, the price for one waget of civet used to be around 17 birr before the Derg, 27 birr during the Derg, and after the fall of the Derg often above 35 birr. (38) However, owing to the general rise in prices, the actual price may be decreasing.

The civet collected by brokers is then sold to exporters. The relationship between brokers and exporters is also based on a sort of clientship. In 2001, there were seven Ethiopian concerns licensed as exporters of civet. (39) After the exporters accumulate a certain amount of civet, they blend the various lots collected from different areas to achieve a uniform grade (Rouk & Hailu 1963: 7). After this homogenization, they take 20g from the whole amount for quality testing, which is conducted at the Quality and Standardization Authority of Ethiopia. (40) The civet is evaluated according to the amount of civetone contained (see Table 3).

Civet above grade 2 is considered adequate for export. After this quality testing, the civet is put into standardized plastic containers, each containing 5kg, which are placed inside a metallic container. This is tightly sealed in order to preserve quality. (41)

The main export destination was traditionally France, which is famous for its perfume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade of civet</th>
<th>Amount of civetone (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>above 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>40 – 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>below 40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, in the year 2001/2002 the demand from France declined for some reason, which may include the criticism of fragrance industries, many of them situated in France, for using natural civet. The destinations of civet export and the quantity of exported civet in the year 2001/2002 are shown in Table 4.

The export quantity of civet has sharply decreased compared with the total in 1910, when it was as much as 422,000kg (Pankurst 1968: 401). This is almost 300 times the average amount of civet exported from Ethiopia since 1984/85.

### Table 4. Destination and quantity of exported civet (2001/2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination of civet export</th>
<th>Amount of exported civet (kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>684.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1489.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OF CIVICULTURE

#### 5.1. Licensing system

Governmental control was not extended to the field of civiculture until the 1960s. It was in 1971/72 that the Ethiopian Wildlife Conversation Organization (EWCO) was established, and was given authority to control civet cat farming and to introduce new management practices. And it was this organization that was mandated to issue the “Civet Cat Farming License” (Yāṭræḥu Marbat Ṣaqad) to the farmer. This license was issued to farmers who paid both the initial tax on setting up the farming business and an annual tax to renew the license. The former only began in 1990/91, and the payment differed for “peasants” and “merchants.” For “peasants,” it was obligatory to pay 200 birr for keeping one male civet cat and 100 birr for one female. And for “merchants,” the rate was 500 birr for keeping one male civet cat and 250 birr for one female. Once the license was obtained, annual renewal was necessary, which cost 5 birr per head for up to 10 civet cats, and 10 birr per head for more than 10. This license was also necessary for the exporters who purchased civet from the farmers, for in order to gain export permission for the civet, they needed to present a copy of the Farming License stating from whom they had bought the civet.

The official logic for the licensing system is that civet cats are wild animals, domesticated or not, and hence property of the state. The same logic is applied to land, nationalized as a whole during the Derg period. The individual does not possess a proprietary right over a given piece of land, but only the usufruct in exchange of payment for it, and likewise, the utilization of wild animals is only allowed to those who pay for it. This logic, however, is not readily conceded by the farmers. Some farmers, especially those living in remote forested areas, where administrative control is light, do not possess licenses and continue to claim ownership of the civet cats, as much as they do for such domesticated animals as cattle. The licensing system has indeed created a “legal” realm, as well as an “illegal” one. The latter seems to be sustained by the intricacy of the brokerage network, which is elusive from the administrative viewpoint. Thus, the licensing system has proved only effective to control large-scale urban farmers, leaving almost intact those small-scale farmers living in remote areas. If the number of civet cat farms has decreased, it may partially be owing to the licensing system, but from the farmers’ viewpoint it is not the licensing system that compels them to abandon the business but rather the fact that they can no longer feed the civet cats because the brokers “do not come and buy the civet, and if they do so, they do not pay as much as they used to.”
5.2. Efforts to “modernize” farming methods
The licensing system is part of governmental efforts to extend regulation to civet cat farmers. Regulation is also extended to civet exporters, who are requested to pay 73 birr per kilo of civet in export tax. Thus the civet business, being a source of tax revenue for the government, is not subjected to thoroughgoing restriction. On the contrary, governmental efforts are under way to devise and diffuse “modern” methods for handling civet cats. Researchers under the aegis of the EWCO have conducted research on civiculture since 1987 and have proposed a Civet Research Station in Abyatta Shalla National Park (Hillman 1987). And in 1995, a workshop on civiculture and the civet trade was held in Addis Ababa.

Attached to Hillman’s 1987 report is a proposal containing some improvements considered necessary in civet cat farming. These improvements pertain to methods of capturing, housing, feeding, cleaning, and also breeding civet cats. Most of the points included in this proposal have neither been investigated nor effected (a copy of the report has been shelved in the reference room of EWCO) to this day. I list the main points below:

a) Trapping methods
The newly devised trap is made of wood with wire fences. The trap is of rectangular shape and 100cm in length, 30cm in width, 30cm in height. Bait is placed inside the trap and when the civet cat enters, the trap door is supposed to close.

b) Housing methods
Civet cats are nocturnal, solitary and territorial predatory animals, so they should be kept outdoors in a wire pen. Pens should be as large as 200cm x 400cm. Each civet cat should have a nesting box inside the pen.

c) Breeding methods
Civet cats are generally believed to be unsuitable for breeding in captivity. However, breeding has been proved possible by a researcher of the Laboratoire Arago in France. Based on this research, the pen suitable for mating should be as large as 400cm x 400cm, for matching one male and one or two females. Civet cats are supposed to produce civet from the fourth year.

d) Feeding methods
As civet cats are omnivorous, they should be fed intestines, skin and fur of cattle, sheep and chicken other than meat. Undomesticated animals such as mouse, rabbit and pigeon may also be offered.

e) Removal methods for the civet
The “squeeze box,” which is widely used to treat wounds, give injections or to tag wild animals may be suitable for the removal process of the civet. It is important not to scrape all of the contents of the pouch. And if the pouch is bruised for some reason, antibiotics should be applied in order to prevent infection.

However, these proposals for “modernizing” farming methods were only partially put in practice and the proposal for the establishment of a “Research Station” was never realized.

5.3. Decentralization, or dispersion of responsibilities?
In 1995, the EPRDF regime introduced a federal state system based on the new constitution, giving a certain degree of autonomy to the regional state administration. In this decentralizing process, administrative responsibilities were divided between national, inter-regional and regional concerns. On the one hand, the previous central government was transformed into a federal government, exercising jurisdiction over responsibilities of national and inter-regional matters. On the other, the regional government, largely echoing the structure of the federal administrative system, mainly concentrated on the jurisdiction of their own regional concerns.

This division of labor between the federal and regional governments apparently proved effective in implementing regional policies and administrative procedures, but irrelevant in carrying out programs with an ambiguous or dual responsibility, such as civet cat
farming. The conservation of civet cats, as wild animals, basically remained under the jurisdiction of the EWCO. However the administrative responsibilities of licensing civet cat farmers and developing “modern” farming methods, hitherto administered by the EWCO, fell under the jurisdiction of the regional state after decentralization. In the Regional State of Oromiya, where 95 per cent of the Ethiopian civet cat farms are found, these responsibilities were transferred to the Regional Natural Resource Development and Environmental Protection Authority. And largely owing to “budget restrictions,” research on civet cat farming became secondary to other priorities. The only project put into practice is the development of wire trapping cages (see above 5.2a). This project, funded by the UNDP, is conducted in the Bako Rural Technology Distribution Center. The transfer of administrative responsibilities, in effect, has helped to diffuse the target for any protest staged against civiculture.

From the administrative point of view, civiculture is supposed to be on the decline. Officials attribute this decline to the campaign mounted against Ethiopian civiculture by the World Society for Protection of Animals (WSPA). In a circular sent to countries concerned, dated 22 October 1999, the WSPA argued that civet cat farming is contrary to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), and fragrance industries should terminate the use of natural civet by 31 October 2000. This propaganda is considered one of the main reasons for the decline in demand of natural civet in the international market.

6. “CRUEL PRACTICE” OR CULTURAL LOGIC OF CIVICULTURE?

6.1. The logic of “animal protection”
In Ethiopia, the campaign against the utilization of civet cats was first led by ISPA (International Society for Protection of Animals) in 1973. ISPA, which was founded in the UK in 1959, later merged with WFPA (World Federation for Protection of Animals) founded in 1953, and renamed itself WSPA in 1981. WSPA focuses on a wide range of issues concerning animal protection and animal welfare. Its activities center on campaigning against “cruelty” in the treatment of animals. The main focus is thus on those animals regarded as “unduly” confined in cages, kept only for commercial use and thus “exploited,” or killed for religious or other commercial purposes. To list some of their activities, they campaign against the use of animals in circuses, bullfighting in Spain, the fur trade, foie gras production in Europe, bear dancing in India, bear farming in China, etc. The organization campaigns for “better treatment” of farmed animals and abandonment of customs regarded as “maltreating” animals. Accordingly, priority is placed on the animals’ right to live as they are “destined.” According to this logic of “destiny,” wild animals should live freely in the wild, and domesticated animals should be cared for as a member of a family and never be subject to economic “exploitation.” This is a plausible argument from an ethical point of view, which extends the limits of ethics to the realm of animals. This standpoint is typically represented in Peter Singer’s theses on the liberation of animals. I do not wish to attempt to refute this point of view. What I do think is problematic is that the cultural or social situation in which the animals are valued and utilized is considered secondary.

Even the WSPA seems to stand not only against “cruelty” itself, but also the fact that the “cruelty” is caused for the purpose of the fulfillment of human desires that are not considered central to human needs. It is the asymmetrical relationship between the rights to welfare of the consumer and the animal that is the point at issue. But what of the welfare of the residents or producers? Often underestimated in the arguments of proponents of animal rights’ protection is the viewpoint and values of the local suppliers (Umezaki 2001). Whether economically “under-developed” or “developed,” there are many societies in which local residents base their living on the vicissitudes of nature, and people who live on wild animals have managed to devise a method to live in symbiosis with them. Civiculture has been conducted in Ethiopia for at least 800 years, and this continuity
was based not only on the uninterrupted demand for the coveted civet but also on traditionally devised methods, which inevitably prevented the civet cat from reducing in number.

6.2. Campaigns against civiculture

The campaign against civiculture has mainly been conducted by the WSPA. Their manifesto was first published in a paper entitled "African Civet – Civettictus civetta: An Enquiry into Exploitation by the Perfume Industry." This paper was based on an investigation conducted in 1973, and WSPA (at that time, ISPA) stated its opposition to civet cat farming "as an unnecessary abuse of a wild animal, especially when non-animal alternatives are readily available." Following these findings, ISPA made some recommendations (Pugh 1998: 4-5):

1. Regulation of the civet cat farming industry to be by the EWCO
2. Improvements in all areas of husbandry
3. EWCO to produce a booklet on practices within the industry
4. Registration of dealers and owners
5. Further study into the possibility of captive breeding civet cats
6. A research station to be established at Awash National Park
7. Quality control standards to be established for civet at the Pasteur Institute in Addis Ababa.

Based on this previous report, WSPA conducted "undercover" research to re-evaluate the improvements implemented in civet cat farming in 1998. Research was undertaken by WSPA's Regional Manager of Africa, Mike Pugh, and results were published under the title of "Civet Farming: An Ethiopian Investigation." Regarding improvements, Pugh concludes that, for the last 25 years, "the only advances within the industry were a half-hearted effort at registering farmers and exporters, and the setting up of quality control standards" for civet (corresponding to (1), (4), and (7), listed above), all the other recommendations being "ignored or forgotten" (Pugh 1998: 5). However, I feel obliged to point out here that the 1987 proposal published by EWCO refers to most of the remaining points, i.e. (2), (5), and (6), showing that these remaining points were not entirely "ignored" and "forgotten."

Pugh conducted his "undercover" research in May 1998 accompanied by a "regional governmental wildlife official." Although he does not specify in which district he implemented his research, it apparently was conducted somewhere in the southwestern part of Oromiya region. Pugh claims that, because of the traditional belief in buda (evil eye), farmers were reluctant to show their civet cats to outsiders, and "diplomatic negotiations" took place through a translator. As a result, two farmers allowed him inside their homes to see their civet cats, but at two other farms, permission was not granted (Pugh 1998: 8).

In his description of the methods of civet cat farming, Pugh deliberately refers to the maltreatment, "pains" and injuries the civet cats may suffer from. Below I summarize his description of civet cat farming and comment on the way he criticizes the whole civet business. His criticism is mainly focused on three aspects: (1) "cruelty" of the practice of civiculture itself, (2) the difference in margin made by middlemen, exporters, and perfume makers, and (3) utilization of civet (though halved in the past 20 years) in the perfume industry (mainly located in France), which sustains the demand for civet.

1. "Cruelty" of the practice of civiculture

As Pugh's major point of concern is this point, 19 out of 29 pages of his report pertain to the detailed procedure of the practice, with 11 photographs. His findings regarding the procedures are based on observations and interviews with four farmers, two among whom allowed him inside their farms. The details of the procedure itself are broadly the same as those outlined above in section 4. The major difference lies in the references to the "pain"
and “injuries” undergone by the civet cats, based on both Pugh’s own speculation and evidence given by “one farmer.” In his report, civet cats and the civet are respectively referred to as “civets” and “musk.”

a) Discrimination in favor of male civets: After listing the reasons why the male is preferred for farming, Pugh refers to the way female civet cats are released after being caught. The procedure of cutting the claws (mentioned above) “was not observed,” but it “could involve severing nerve endings and inflicting pain” (Pugh 1998: 9–10).

b) Transportation method: Pugh states, “according to one farmer, the subsequent lack of ventilation, combined with struggling by the civet, often leads to death by suffocation” (Pugh 1998: 10). He also claims that because of “rough handling and the primitive methods used, many civets sustain physical injuries during capture and transportation” (Pugh 1998: 12).

c) Quarantine: This corresponds to the “trial procedure” mentioned above (in 4.2a). In respect of the first occasion of extracting musk during this period, Pugh refers to “one farmer” who informed him that this extracting process imposes “stress” on the civet cats, and this “stress” is “one of the main causes of early fatality,” and “many “wild” civets subsequently refuse to take food.” In addition to this stress, the change in diet “can cause diarrhea, leading to dehydration and death.” Pugh claims that the newly acquired civet cats are kept under quarantine for “four weeks.” And he stresses the mortality rate during this period. Based, again, on “one farmer,” he is informed that “of the last 100 male civets” offered to the farmer, “80 had been suitable for musk extraction.” And of the 80, “30 died within three weeks of capture,” which makes a mortality rate of “37.5 per cent in the first three weeks” (Pugh 1998: 12).

d) Accommodation: Pugh describes the rooms in which the civet cats are kept, “inside, or in proximity to the farmer’s residence,” which “traditionally” has “a dried mud floor” and “cow dung/straw walls, plastered onto a wooden frame.” Attention is paid to the difference in temperature between daytime and night. First he describes the darkness and the heat inside the room during the daytime. “Civets are kept in a dark room, with little or no light source.” “A smoldering fire is continually kept on the burn, producing a smoke-filled atmosphere.” “During the day, little ventilation combined with the heat from the fire maintains temperatures consistently higher than outside.” And “in contrast to daytime temperatures, at night the temperature can plummet dramatically.” “In the wild, civets use vegetation for warmth. In captivity, the civets are not given any bedding to keep them warm.” And then he asserts that “these large fluctuations in temperature experienced by the civets sometimes lead to hypothermia and death” (Pugh 1998: 12). Pugh is also informed that civet cats are occasionally in danger of being assaulted by “army” ants. “These ants attack any living creature in their path. In their thousands, they enter the ears and nose of their victim, which will eventually die of suffocation.” And civet cats, “trapped inside their cages, have no means of escape from an ant invasion and will subsequently die.” Pugh is also informed by “one farmer” who explained to him that “in the past, he has also lost civets to attacks by snakes and rats” (Pugh 1998: 14).

e) Cages: In this section, Pugh describes the size and structure of the cage. Then he stresses the discomfort for the civet cats of having to stay the rest of their life in the small cage. “In an area as small as 91 cm long by 30 cm wide, it will have to exercise, feed, defecate and groom. It will spend the rest of its life standing, or laying on soiled wooden sticks.” “The floor is not solid, but made from round sticks with uneven gaps in-between.” And owing to the fact that civet cats do not have retractable claws like domestic cats, “the claws may grow long and sharp, causing discomfort” (Pugh 1998: 15).

f) Hygiene: In this section, Pugh stresses the lack of sanitation inside the room where the civet cats are kept. “The civet’s cage is ‘cleaned’ by poking a stick through the top of the cage and scraping the feces off the slatted wooden floor below.” “Every 9 to 15 days,” without being “washed down with water or cleaned with any sterile solution.” “Below the cages, the feces can build up into layers several inches thick.” And based on his own observation, he noticed “swarms of flies” take off “from inside and around cages.” And moreover, “on closer examination, it was clear that the flies were breeding, as maggots
could be seen moving around on the debris that lay under the cages.” Pugh also recognized maggots “on spilled food around the food containers,” and “swarms of flies flew around pieces of fly-blown meat that were protruding from a cauldron of lentil/meat soup.” And he concludes, “from this inspection, it was clear that hygiene was of little, or no importance to this farmer” (Pugh 1998: 16).

g) Feeding: In this section, Pugh explains that owing to the rise in feeding cost in Ethiopia “in the last ten years,” civet cat farmers cannot afford to buy sufficient “protein-rich food” such as eggs and meat, necessary for producing “best quality musk.” Thus, civet cats are fed high protein food only “under certain circumstances,” such as after the extraction of “musk,” when civet cats start to lose weight, or when the amount of “musk” produced falls (Pugh 1998: 16).

h) “Musk” extraction: In this section, Pugh describes the civet-extracting process step by step. He observed the techniques used for “musk” extraction at two farms. He points out that the process of “pinning the neck prior to musk extraction” must be “extremely painful” for the civet cat. On two occasions he witnessed, this “pinning” process took 20 seconds at the first farm and 2 minutes and 15 seconds at the second. Once the rear legs and tail were secured, the civet cat lay still, “but was panting heavily.” And moreover, “examination through the gap of the cage revealed a deep open wound on the side of the civet’s neck” (shown with a photograph). And “as no treatment would be offered for this civet, it is possible that the wound will become infected, or fly blown, leading to the demise of the animal” (Pugh 1998: 19–20).

i) Health: In the course of his investigation, Pugh noticed some injuries on the civet cats in captivity. When he requested information about diseases leading to the death of civet cats, the farmers mentioned a series of symptoms such as “vomiting, diarrhea, shivering, spasms, blood in the stools, coughing, sneezing, weight loss, loss of appetite, restlessness, collapse” (Pugh 1998: 20). However, his investigation proves that, “it is clear that no vaccinations or veterinary treatments are given to captive civets in Ethiopia.” Pugh was even laughed at by one farmer, when he asked if he ever used a veterinarian. This farmer laughed at the suggestion and said “he did not have enough money to provide medical care for his own family, let alone for civets” (Pugh 1998: 21).

2. Difference in margin made by middlemen, exporters and perfume makers
Pugh shows the great difference in prices of a kilogram of civet at each successive stage and the price of perfume containing one kilogram of civet (Pugh 1998: 22–3).

a) The price paid for one kilo of civet to a farmer: 1,000 to 1,700 birr (equivalent to $141–$241), and “older farmers” receive even less, between 500 and 600 birr ($70.9–$85.1).

b) The price of one kilo of civet sold by a middleman to exporters in Addis Ababa: 1,500 to 2,200 birr ($202–$312).

c) The price given to a kilo of civet by his contact overseas: 3,102 to 3,243 birr ($440–$460).

d) The price of perfume (10,000 bottles of perfume, each containing 30ml) made from one kilo of civet: a popular French perfume is sold at $54 for one bottle (30ml). Thus, 10,000 bottles have a value of $540,000.

3. Utilization of civet
In this section, Pugh reveals that, despite “documentation of the cruelty” involved in civet cat farming and the availability of synthetic civet, perfume manufacturers continue to use natural civet. Many fragrance houses are reluctant to reveal whether civet is utilized in their brands, only four among 32 houses canvassed in an informal telephone survey admitting the use and a further eight unable to confirm. These findings, he states, “reinforce how controversial the use of civet is for the perfume industry, and how the cruelty implications mean the truth is often obscured” (Pugh 1998: 24–5).

Based on these findings, Pugh concludes his report with some recommendations. As reform of the existing civet cat farm industry is “unrealistic,” owing to increases in feed costs and the actual decrease in the price paid for civet, the WSPA urges the fragrance industry not to use natural civet, and also urges consumers not to buy products containing
natural civet (Pugh 1998: 26). This remark about the reform of civet cat farms as “unrealistic” is a manifestation of WSPA’s decision not to campaign for improvement of farm facilities, but rather to urge governmental attention and intervention to impose such improvements, since the same recommendation made in 1973 was “ignored” or “forgotten” (Pugh 1998: 5). This time, the WSPA turns its gaze on fragrance manufacturers and consumers, urging the former not to use natural civet, and the latter not to purchase products using natural civet, thus indirectly pressurizing the civet cat farms to abandon the whole business.

6.3 Overcoming “cruelty”: Ethnocentrism or relativism?

Pugh’s argument centers on the “cruelty” of civiculture. Whether a practice is “cruel” or not for animals is intrinsically related to the “suffering” experienced by the animal. According to Dawkins, “suffering” can be judged scientifically by evidence of physiological signs and behavior other than its state of physical health (its deterioration often resulting in death), but what is important is the effect on the “mental” state (Dawkins 1985).

However, this “cruelty” argument, or the “suffering” hypothesis, is hardly persuasive to Ethiopian farmers. This fact is borne out when Pugh asked if they ever take the civet cats to the veterinarian, and a farmer laughed at the suggestion and said “he did not have enough money to provide medical care for his own family, let alone for civets” (Pugh 1998: 21). For the farmer, civet cats are in the same category as other domestic animals, and as the well-being of domestic animals is regarded as secondary only to that of human beings, the circumstances of the farmer do not allow him to provide medical care for them.

Regarding confinement, animal rights’ proponents think that confinement may impose much more stress on wild animals than on domestic animals, the latter inherently destined to be confined. This argument is widely accepted among “zoo” opponents (Jamieson 1985). Thus, civet cats, upon being caught and kept in cages are regarded as having been deprived their rights to live freely in the wild, while the confinement itself imposes stress and “suffering.”

However, this argument is also invalid in respect of the civet cat farmers, for, as we have seen in section 4, civet cats having passed the “trial stage” are categorically transformed into domestic animals. Thus, the “cruelty” argument is insufficient and invalid to persuade the farmers to abandon civiculture.

The alternative attempt to pressurize the farmers to abandon farming civet cats by reducing the demand on the part of the perfume manufacturers and consumers may appear to have the possibility of imposing some pressure on the farmers, for the rise in feed cost is becoming a large burden to maintaining the farming. However, while there exist multiple demands by the consumers and civet remains a “commodity,” and as long as civiculture is believed to be a worthy profession and an inherent privilege for a certain category of people blessed by the venerable Sayid Nasrallah, the civet cat farmers, if suspending the practice for a limited period, will surely resume it whenever circumstances permit.

Regarding the remarks made in the 1999 circular, which claims that civet cats are an endangered species, research has been conducted by the EWCO proving that the civet cats do not even come under Appendix 4 (threatened species). In addition, civiculture is practiced exclusively among the peasants and merchants belonging to the Neggaadie or Naggado clans, who transmit the profession from father to son. As this transmission is not obligatory, many people belonging to these clans do not choose to devote themselves to this profession. However, civet cat farming remains a viable alternative to those who belong to the clan and this is justified by the myth, which accounts for the exclusiveness of the clan in carrying out the practice referring specifically to the venerated Sayid Nasrallah. This myth works to restrict diffusion of the profession to the rest of the population.

As a conclusion, as long as the civet cat farming is considered a blessed practice and as long as civet remains a “commodity” in the world economy, civet cat farming will not cease to exist. This conclusion does not imply that efforts of the animal rights’ proponents are futile, but to the contrary, their campaign has aroused the attention of the Ethiopian
government, imposing pressure to extend administrative support and restrictions on the practice. However, the actual implementation of the reform in all aspects of civet cat farming and civet trading may well be a tardy process, as is always the case with developing countries.

What should be targeted for accusation may not be the “cruelty” of civiculture but the “cruelty” of forcing the seemingly universal logic created by a part of the economically advanced world. In a part of the world where human rights cannot be guaranteed, the idea that the rights of animals should be protected will only be “laughed at,” as Pugh was when he asked a farmer if he ever took his civet cats to the veterinarian. It is not that they do not wish to do so, but why should they do so when their own lives are occasionally under threat?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is based on field research conducted in August and September 2001 and in August and September 2002, as part of the research project “Environmental Change caused by State and Development Policies, and the Survival Strategies of Minorities: Comparative Study of Northeast African Societies,” headed by Professor Katsuyoshi Fukui of Kyoto University. It is funded by a Grant-in Aid for Scientific Research (No. 13371008) of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. My research was also funded by the Nanzan University Pache Research Subsidy (I-A) for 2002. In Ethiopia research was supported by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University. I would also like to thank Ato Liqu Petros and his family, for sharing the burden that I encountered during the research.

NOTES

(1) Today, 98 per cent of the civet produced in Ethiopia is exported (Girma 1995: 45).

(2) According to a research conducted in 1995 (Fasil 1995), the number of licensed civet cat farmers and the number of civet cats taxed are reported as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of farmers</th>
<th>Number of civet cats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oromiya</td>
<td>203 (94.4%)</td>
<td>3037 (93.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNNP</td>
<td>12 (5.6%)</td>
<td>197 (6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>215 (100.0%)</td>
<td>3234 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Oromiya State, the breakdown of number of farmers is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Number of farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimma Zone</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illubabor Zone</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Wellega</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Wellega</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Shewa</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, this does not add up to the number (203) of farmers in Oromiya.

(3) These social groups of artisan and craftsmen are basically regarded as “low caste,” and thus endogamous (Mohammed 1990: 130–1; Lewis 2001: 53). Although the Gibe kingdoms may have developed into a roughly classified society based on clan affiliation, the “hir’uu” should not be considered as “low caste.” According to one of my informants, among the “hir’uu” were included not only the artisan groups already mentioned, but also social categories hardly conceived of as “low”, such as “asqari” (Muslim religious scholars), “neggaadie” (trader), and “dubarti” (women) (Informant: Abbaa Wari Abba Dhaaba (Adami clan), resident of Dembi, 31.8.2002).
If by definition, a “seenni” is an “exogamous patrilineal kin group” as H. S. Lewis has explicitly stated (Lewis 2001: 59), “Neggaddie” should not be considered a “seenni.” However, as far as the local residents including those of the Neggaadie regard “Neggaddie” to be a “seenni,” the above-mentioned definition should be reconsidered. The reason for using the term “quasi-clan” is twofold: first it is not strictly a kinship category, but rather is regarded as a kinship category by the local residents.

Informant: Shaykh Muhammad-Nur Husayn (age 78), resident of Agaro town (Gomma District, Jimma Zone, Oromiya), Neggaadie clan (Dariita subgroup), 11.9.2001.

I leave this informant anonymous. His father was “bought” (which means he was a slave), used to work for a wealthy Hajj, who died around 1960, who had a large civet cat farm keeping up to 100 animals. This informant learned how to trap civet cats from a local waata, with whom he used to go hunting and trapping animals.


A similar method is reported by Hillman of a civet cat farm at Shoboka. Here, civet cats are captured by a “simple spring noose with a bell at dropping sites” and this method is employed in the dry season. The net trap method is employed only in rainy seasons (Hillman 1987).

However, some of my informants argued that this reason is unfounded and only used as a justification for not catching female civet cats. The custom of avoiding female cats certainly has an ecological effect, whereby it prevents the overall decrease in the civet cat population. Another reason why people avoid keeping female cats may be related to the fact that keeping civet cats is associated with religion.

The Maria Theresa dollar (MT dollar) or thaler was widely used as a means of currency from the beginning of the nineteenth century and continued to serve as Ethiopia’s principal medium of exchange until 1945 (Pankhurst 1968: 468-73; Belai 1987: 44). It is difficult to estimate the value of the MT dollar when Pajella conducted his research, because in the Italian Occupation Period, the value of the dollar fluctuated at an unknown rate (Pankhurst 1968: 493). For comparison, a cow (not milch) was valued at 14–16 MT dollar in the 1880s in Ankober (northeastern Ethiopia), and coffee was sold from the southwest to Addis Ababa, at a rate of 0.117 MT dollar per kilo (at 1899–1900), which means 12–20MT dollar is equivalent to 102–170kg of coffee (Pankhurst 1968: 394, 400). In 1945, the State Bank of Ethiopia fixed the MT dollar at the exchange rate of Eth. $1.50 for one MT dollar (Belai 1987: 60).

Under the Derg regime, which ended in 1991, US$ 1 was exchanged at an official rate of 2.07 birr. After the devaluation in 1992, the exchange rate dropped to 8.6 birr to US$ 1 by 2002.

According to research conducted by Hillman, the number of civet cat farms in Ethiopia was 181, while the number of civet cats kept in these farms was 2,778 (Hillman 1987). The average number per farm is (strangely) equivalent to the report made in 1995 by Fasil. Fasil reports that the number of civet cat farms was 215, while the number of civet cats kept was 3,234, which makes an average head of 15 per farm.

This is based on the following calculation:

\[
(50 \text{ birr [per head]} + 200 \text{ birr [license fee per head for peasants]} + 10 \text{ birr [estimated cost for making a cage]}) \times 15 \text{ (number of civet cats)} = 3,900 \text{ birr.}
\]

For comparison, 3,900 birr is roughly equivalent to six months’ salary of a high-school teacher just graduated from college.

This difference needs reconfirmation, for this assumption is based on one farmer from the Kaffa region and six farmers from the Gibe region.

Informant: Shaykh Hassan Abba Bulgu (age 56), resident of No’o village (Sigimo District, Illubabor Zone, Oromiya), Neggaadie clan (Genni subgroup), 28.8.2001.

According to research conducted by Hillman, the number of civet cat farms in Ethiopia was 181, while the number of civet cats kept in these farms was 2,778 (Hillman 1987). The average number per farm is (strangely) equivalent to the report made in 1995 by Fasil. Fasil reports that the number of civet cat farms was 215, while the number of civet cats kept was 3,234, which makes an average head of 15 per farm.

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Informant: Shaykh Hassan Abba Bulgu (age 56), resident of No’o village (Sigimo District,
Customarily, *wu'd u* is performed by Muslims in such cases as conducting the obligatory prayer, touching the Qur'an or any other occasion facing God.

As far as I know, I have never encountered civet cats kept outdoors, and Hillman reports none of such cases either. However, a picture of a civet cat farm drawn in *I miei trentacinque anni di missione nell'Alta Etiopia*, by G. Massaia, shows civet cats kept outdoors (Pankhurst 1968: 214), but as far as I know from current reports and observation, cages were kept indoors on trestles.

According to the above-mentioned Massaia’s drawing of a civet cat farm, cages are not placed on trestles but are hung on cross-beams fixed to stakes stuck in the ground (Pankhurst 1968: 214), but as far as I know from current reports and observation, cages were kept indoors on trestles.

Informant: Shaykh Hassan Abba Bulgu (age 56), resident of No’o village (Sigimo District, Illubabor Zone, Oromiya), Neggaadie clan (Genni subgroup), 12.9.2002. However, Pugh reports the size of the cage (in Limmu-Shay, Gomma district) as 30–40cm (width) x 30cm (height) x 91–100cm (length), and Hillman reports a case from Nazareth (Southern Shewa district) of 32cm (width) x 58cm (height) x 100cm (length) (Pugh 1998; Hillman 1987).

Informant: Shaykh Hassan Abba Bulgu (age 56), resident of No’o village (Sigimo District, Illubabor Zone, Oromiya), Neggaadie clan (Genni subgroup), 12.9.2002; Abdu Ali Muhammad (age 55), resident of Gaggibaccaano village (Alle Didu District, Illubabor Zone, Oromiya), Laalo clan, 30.8.2001. He worked for a wealthy civet cat farmer (Neggaadie clan, Nagaaso subgroup) in the village, who happened to be absent upon my visit. Abdu told us that, in the days of Balambaras Alle Abba Morke at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Balambaras used to possess three or four huts built for keeping civet cats, each containing around 30 animals. In those days, slaves served as the workforce to prepare meals for the civet cats and other laborious tasks.

Shaykh Hassan Abba Bulgu of No’o, the only person who gave me information on food with the estimated amount, noted the quantity of food he normally gives as follows:

- Maize 330g
- Meat 250g every nine days (= 27.8g per day)

Other than maize and meat, eggs and butter are given any time the civet cat seems to need them.

- Egg one or two a week
- Butter one or two spoonfuls a week.

The interval period for removal of civet varies: Pajella reports nine or ten days, Rouk & Hailu seven to ten days (Rouk and Hailu 1963: 6). Hillman, on the other hand, reports it to be eleven to twelve days in rainy seasons and nine to ten days in dry seasons (Hillman 1987: 8).

This ointment is not only a simple mixture of honey wax and *liqaaam*. The honey wax needs refining by adding water, fermenting, drying, wringing out the water, kneading, boiling and cooling.

Producers have learned that chemical reactions and deterioration of the civet are kept at a minimum when stored in a horn (Rouk & Hailu 1963: 6).

This makes an annual yield of 400–600g. At administrative levels, however, the annual yield from one civet cat is assumed to be 800g to 1kg (Hillman 1987). Informant: Ato Alemayehu Bedada, Wildlife Expert, Natural Resource Development and Environment Protection Authority in the Oromiya State Council, 22.8.2002.

One Maria Theresa thaler coin was equivalent to a *wäget* or ounce (28.35g), and was used to weigh precious goods such as gold, silver and civet (Pankhurst 1968: 472; 1990: 305).

Although I have not confirmed this point, “encourage” may connote some kind of financial support in advance from the agent, for the farmer needs some form of income in order to cover the expenses necessary to feed the civet cat until he is able to sell the civet. The reason why the agents visit the farmers in rainy seasons is because it is during this season that the living of the farmers is considered most difficult in terms of the agricultural cycle (cf. Kassahun et al. 1992: 179).
The relationship between the civet cat farmer and agent seems quite stable and based on a sort of clientship (Am. dambannya). As the civet is volatile, the quality of the civet is warranted only for a year or two (Pajella 1938). Therefore, the agent regularly visits his client two or three times a year. Informant: Shaykh Hassan Abba Bulgu (age 56), resident of No’o village (Sigimo District, Illubabor Zone, Oromiya), Neggaadie clan (Genni subgroup), 12.9.2002.

Informant: Muhammad Abba Jobir (age 41), resident of Yaagga town (Channa District, Kaficho Shakicho Zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ State), Naggaado (Nasri subgroup), 7.9.2001. The value of the birr has altered during these three periods. Before the Derg, the value of the Ethiopian birr was fixed at a rate of 2.50 birr per US$ 1 (Belai 1987: 59). During the Derg, the value of the birr was fixed at a rate of 2.08 birr per US$ 1. And under the present regime, a market liberalizing policy has brought about an exchange rate of 5 birr for a dollar. The rate deteriorated to around 8.5 birr for US$ 1 in 2002.

Based on information offered by the Wild Animal Hunting and Utilization Group of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation and Development Organization.

Before 1990, quality control for export goods had been conducted at the Pasteur Institute. This quality testing is considered necessary, for the civet is occasionally adulterated with flour, banana, or butter in order to increase its volume (Rouk & Hailu 1963).

Informant: Ato Eshetu Jiffar, Head of Testing Laboratories Group, Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia.

According to Girma, 85 per cent of the civet used to be exported to France (Girma 1995).

Data was kindly provided by Dr Menassie Gashaw, Wildlife Utilization & License Team Leader of Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation and Development Organization.

In this case, the categories, “peasant” and “merchant,” solely indicate professionality.

Despite this official statement made by an officer from the Oromiya Regional State, both the civet cat farmers and brokers seem to have devised ways to evade the seemingly compelling administrative control system. Some of my informants mentioned the inconvenience of not holding a license (such as not being able to deal directly with the exporters), but this inconvenience is a deliberate choice by the farmers. The intricacy of the broker network system seems to undermine the control system.

This “state” switched to the “(Regional) State” after the federalization and decentralization policies. The administrative body for issuing the license changed in 1992/93 from the EWCO, which was incorporated under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, to counterparts in the regional level. Thus a farmer living in the Oromiya regional state will apply for a license at the Oromiya State Natural Resource Development and Environment Protection Authority.

The fact that the brokers do not come and buy the civet as they used to, may be a result of the licensing system, which compels them to select only farmers with a valid license. However, residents of the rural (and the urban) area traditionally regard the legal system as an “arena” where there is much scope for manipulation and “bargaining,” and this may be the reason for their tendency of belittling the importance of the licensing system.

The proposal titled “Management Practices for Civet Farming” attached to the research report written by Hillman was categorically neglected, possibly because of the collapse of the Derg regime and the subsequent revision of the administrative structure.

The contributions to the workshop are published in the Proceedings for the Workshop on Civet Cat Farming and Civet Production and Trade.

The history and programs of WSPA are detailed on their website homepage (http://www.wspa.org.uk).

According to the categories of the IUCA. The 1st Grade are wild animals in danger of extinction within 5 or 6 years. The 2nd Grade are wild animals in danger of extinction within 50 years. The 3rd Grade are wild animals that are highly vulnerable, and the 4th Grade are threatened species. This result is based on “indirect census” research. The method of this research is (1) research on spoor in forests, (2) evidence from area residents, whether they have seen the animal within the last three months, (3) the mortality rate caused by vehicles, and (4) the birth rate, which is calculated as one to three litters from one head of female for every 6 to 8 months interval (Dr Menassie Gashaw, Wildlife Utilization and License Team Leader of EWCO, August 2002).
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