

the matter: "Allerdings wollen die Borana eben- sowenig wie die anderen Stämme etwas davon wissen, daß der *kalača* einen Penis darstelle, sondern betonen, daß er mit derartig trivialen Dingen nichts zu tun habe, sondern 'von Gott geschaffen sei'" (Haberland 1963: 51). He takes it as given that the "*kalača*" was originally the killer's insignia, representing the phallus of the slain enemy (209).<sup>13</sup>

As regards entitlement to wear the *kallačča*, the sources known to us agree that within a society it can only be worn by a select circle of persons, as a rule men who already have an eminent status in the society, for instance a specific *gada* rank, and this only on special occasions, which are always related to some religious or spiritual purpose.<sup>14</sup> As a rule, these are persons that are expected to employ their power of blessing on others. When Haberland (1963: 51) aptly describes the *kallačča* of the Borana as "vornehmstes Stück aller Ritual-Gegenstände," this can without doubt be extended to the whole of the region concerned.<sup>15</sup>

The honouring of killers is mentioned in the sources, but this was the great exception, *not* the rule.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, even in these cases it remains unclear whether the person concerned did not already possess a rank before the act of killing. Usually killers of men and beasts permanently wear a bracelet as a sign to be recognized by. Killers I questioned thought that the idea of wearing the genital trophy (if only as a model) on the forehead was repulsive. Indeed, tying it (always including the scrotum and a flap of skin) to one's wrist as is usual at sacrificial animal killings is a more frequently found custom.

The following may speak for itself: among the Gawwada and Gollango, neighbours of the Konso to the west, and also the Mačča Oromo, for instance (Bartels 1983: 239), it is the *xallašša* to which an important role is attributed in peace talks.

### 3 Ethnographic Sources

In what follows, we will first give a survey of the meanings attributed to the *kallačča*, as far as they can be determined from the sources, and this will help us to define the area in which it is found. For this purpose, we will make use of the ethnographic present tense, even if the authors are only able to describe a limited chronological period. In a subsequent section (section 7), I will describe more recent developments, especially those changes that are due to the influence of the book religions (cf. Amborn 2007).

For the sake of clarity, the references for interpretations which according to the anthropologists are attributed to the *kallačča* by southern Ethiopians, are indicated by capital letters and listed in the footnote below.<sup>17</sup>

- 17 A: Borana: Haberland 1963: 51; Mačča: Bartels 1983: 146. Among the Guji the *kallačča* got its power from God (Hinnant 1978: 235).  
 B: Haberland 1963: 540.  
 C: Bartels 1983: 141, 145; Knutsson 1967: 89. He also refers to a myth which has similarities to the story of Abraham and Isaac: The *kallačča* came down from heaven on the back of a lamb (89).  
 D: Amborn 1990: 310; Jensen 1936: 206.  
 E: Haberland 1963: 479.  
 F: Haberland 1963: 359.  
 G: Southern Gonga: Bieber: 1920: 304; 1923: 67, 305; Lange 1982: 39, 129, 271; Wolayta: Haberland 1965: 278; Janjero: Straube 1963: 337; Amarro: Straube 1963: 110.  
 H: Dita: Straube 1963: 224; Dizi: Haberland 1993: 169; Dorze: Straube 1963: 190 (for the *halaka*, two dignitaries who are elected for a limited period); Gid'eo: Jensen 1936: 327; Hadiya: Braukämper 1980: 242; Mačča: Bartels 1983: 140; Knutsson 1967: 88; Oromo: Haberland 1963: 51 (Borana); 285, 359; (Guji); 540 ("Schoa-Galla"); Leus 1995: s.v. *kalaca*; Burji-Konso-Cluster: Amborn 1990: 310, 330; Jensen 1936: 36, 402, 495; 1959: 370; Tadesse 1992: 20; Watson 1998: 201.  
 I: Baxter 1978: 167; Haberland 1963: 51 (Borana); 285 (Guji); 456; Kassam 1999: 494.  
 J: Bartels 1983: 140 f. (Mačča); Jensen 1936: 395 (Guji), 402 (D'iraašša and Kusuma); Knutsson 1967: 89 (Mačča).  
 K: Kept in the roof of a special ceremonial house (Dullay); Bartels 1983: 140 (Mačča); Haberland 1963: 306, recently worn by *k'allu* of the Guji under a wide-brimmed hat when travelling.  
 L: Hallpike 1972: 188 (Konso); Hinnant 1978: 236 (Guji).

<sup>13</sup> Maybe recent supporters of the phallus theory saw a confirmation of their interpretation in Bruce and Russell, who wrote that this decoration (referring to the present-day object that resembles the *kallačča*) is put on after a successful military campaign (Bruce 1790, Atlas pl. 34, 35; Russell 1833: 158).

<sup>14</sup> *Gada* is a cyclical generation-set system with ascending ranks, in which social and ritual responsibilities are transmitted.

<sup>15</sup> Knutsson (1967: 88) is of the same opinion: "The *kallu* also possesses a *kalača*, the most respected of all ritual objects not only among the Macha but among all Galla." "Galla" has been replaced today by "Oromo," because over the course of time it has become a discriminatory term.

<sup>16</sup> Dittmer (1964: 74) was the first to point out that according to written evidence killers were decorated with the *kallačča* only in exceptional cases and then always together with the killing insignia. For the most widely spread killing insignia in southern Ethiopia, see Braukämper (2001: 224). Incidentally, the *kallačča* does not appear among his examples, even though he speaks in another context of the "phallic symbol" (230, 232). For the insignia of killers in Konso, cf. Nicole Poissonnier (2007).