

## **FROM ENTOTTO TO THE RIVER BARO**

An account of a trip to the southwestern regions of the Ethiopian Empire 1896-97 by  
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translated by Richard Seltzer (from the 1971 edition)

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## GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY

The western regions of southern Ethiopia belong to the following basins: 1) Awash, 2) Guder (tributary of the Blue Nile), 3) Gibye (tributary of the Sobat), 4) Didessa (tributary of the Blue Nile), and 5) Baro (tributary of the Sobat).

All species of predatory animals known in Central Africa live in the wayna-dega: lion, panther, leopard, the spotted hyena, the jackal, and the wild cat. There is a special species of predatory animal which no European has yet seen, but which Abyssinians and Gallas affirm exists. They say these animals, which they call vobo or asambo, are the most terrible. The animal known as tryn, which gives a musk called zebad, also belongs to the species of predatory animals. This animal is similar to a cat: its hair is multi-colored, its tail is comparatively short, and it is the size of a small dog. They catch them in traps, then lock them in cages and keep them at the hearth in their homes, feeding them meat. They are found in the lower moist regions of the wayna-dega. Of the remaining animals in the wayna-dega there are wild boars and hares. Predatory animals abound on the plateaux of Tikur and in the mountains of Chalea and Chobo. In the west, in general, there are fewer, with the exception of panthers, which are only found in the west.<sup>58</sup>

The kola, which is uninhabited by humans, abounds in animals even more than the wayna-dega region. Predatory animals, such as the lion, go down there for hunting. The characteristic inhabitant of the kola is the elephant. Unfortunately, from year to year, they decline in numbers because of systematic destruction. The Abyssinian elephant is smaller than the Indian and more malicious than it. It possesses large tusks, which sometimes attain six poods [216 lbs.] each. Elephants usually travel as whole herds, but those which have the largest tusks go separately and are very cunning, quick-witted and malicious. A hunt for such solitary elephants always costs many casualties.

Handek above all abounds in elephants, since this area gives elephants every comfort: forest, plenty of shade, many fruit trees whose leaves they eat, an abundance of beautiful water, and an entire uninhabited country measuring several hundred square versts [verst = 2/3 mile]. Aside from elephants, in the kola are found **rhinoceroses**, hippopotamuses, buffalo, and a species of antelope called sala with straight and very long horns. This antelope is about the size of a calf, with light brown hair.

There are many birds both in the kola and in the dega regions.