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- **Cover:** .470 NE Heym PH non-ejector double rifle and .500 NE Heym 89B double rifle with ejector. Property of Safari Outdoor, Lynnwood Bridge, Lynnwood, Pretoria, South Africa. Tel: 0861 22 22 69. www.safarioutdoor.co.za
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A HUNT IN ETHIOPIA

at the time of Emperor Haile Sélassié

Ivan de KLASZ

In 1969, the assignment of a close friend to Somalia gave me the opportunity of a pleasant and successful hunt in that country. To plan this hunt, which would be done without a PH (much cheaper), I had consulted extensive literature on regional fauna, and endemic species in neighbouring Ethiopia aroused my interest. When I discussed this with colleagues Philippe and Lili Magloire, with whom I had already hunted in Gabon and Zambia, they warmed to the idea.

When Philippe, Lili and I all had home leave, I contacted Tom Mattanovich, whose family I had met during the stopover on my way to Somalia. Tom was a Hungarian who came to Ethiopia with his parents as refugees from Soviet-occupied and communist-governed Hungary. They were granted citizenship by Haile Sélassié, the emperor of Ethiopia at that time. I had read very good reports about Tom in some papers, written by former clients. I once saw a leopard skull with a small hole in it hanging on the wall in his family's house. I was told that the leopard had been killed with a .22 Long Rifle Rimfire by Tom when he was a teenager, looking for small game somewhere in the bush outside Addis Ababa.

Upon my arrival at the airport, a young man was holding a cardboard with the name "De KLASZ" written on it. I thought it was Tom, but he introduced himself as Tom's brother. One of Tom's drivers had broken one of his Land Rovers, and quite a few other things, returning from the previous safari. As a result, Tom would not be back until the next day.

As Lili and Philippe were supposed to arrive only that day – and being used to "surprises" in Africa in many forms for quite a few years – this did not appear to me as a major problem. Tom's brother took me to the Ethiopia Hotel, which I knew from the previous year's stopover on

my way to a hunt in Somalia without a PH. No Hilton or other luxury hotels existed then. Later, Tom's brother took me for lunch at his parents' house. There I also met his wife Alexandra, a stunningly beautiful Italo-Ethiopian.

Generally, many visitors to Addis Ababa (meaning "new flower" in Amharic) notice the high percentage of very pretty ladies per square kilometre there, and also among the flight attendants on Ethiopian Airlines.

The next day we went to the airport with Tom's brother to pick up Lili and Philippe, as well as two cases of .375 H&H ammo, which had been ordered long in advance with the help of "Kenya Bunduki", the well-known Nairobi gunsmith firm. When booking the safari, I asked Tom how many cartridges we had to bring. He advised me to bring as many as possible, as they were not always available locally. Thus we ordered the maximum allowed: 200 per hunter (!); half soft-nose, half full metal jackets (FMJ).

Tom himself came to the hotel in the afternoon, bringing bad news: the Land Rover dealer had no car of the model needed available, and in addition, the governor of Arba Minch (meaning "40 wells", if I remember correctly), where we were supposed to go, had forbidden hunting, having learnt that a PH (originally a Swiss clockmaker) had sold unlicensed rifles he got or bought from clients, to local people. I told Tom I had heard very favourable comments from a PH who had used Toyota Land Cruisers



Emperor Haile Sélassié (He also had the title "Lion of Juda", as, according to legend, his dynasty reached back to the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon.)



Emperor Haile Sélassié and Queen Elizabeth II

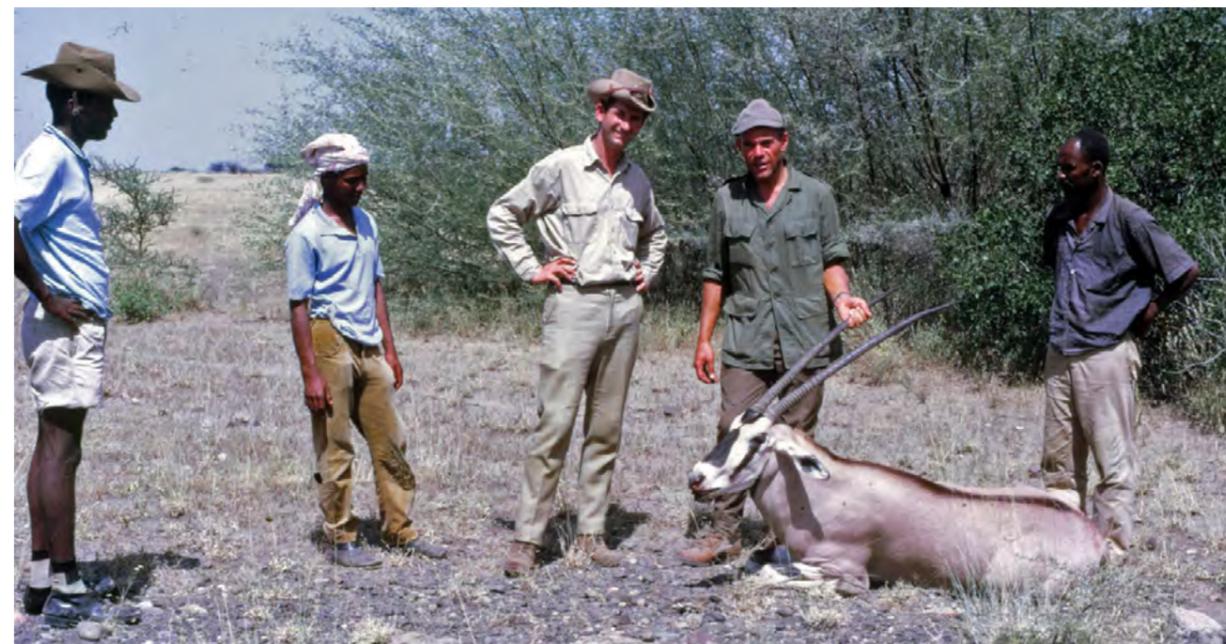
in Southern Angola, where in loose sands they got through where all other 4WD's engines got boiling hot. Tom immediately went to Reception to find out the address of the Toyota agents and called them to ask whether they had such cars in stock. They had, but needed one day of preparation, if ordered. Tom also told me that in case we could not go to the Arba Minch area, we could opt for Danakil, where there were no Nile buffalo, but which was otherwise a good area. From Danakil, we could also go to the Chercher Mountains to hunt mountain nyala in easier terrain than in most places. He also suggested I went with him to see the head of the Wildlife Department about this, and immediately asked for an appointment for the next morning.

The following morning, Tom arrived at the hotel, saying he had already ordered the Land Cruiser. He also informed me that, should we be unable to arrange a hunt near Arba Minch, he would save time by sending down the entire staff and material by train on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti

railway to Afdem, a station not far from where our camp would be set up. This railway was built by the French at the end of the XIXth century.

Then Tom took me to the Wildlife Department. It was very different from the one I had seen the year before in Somalia. The head was General Mebratu, a gentleman of around 50 years, dressed in a three-piece navy blue suit.

When Tom explained the situation and told him that the governor had forbidden the hunt, he was incensed. He rang his secretary and told her to immediately call the governor of Arba Minch. "He has no right to forbid the hunt! If necessary, I'll ask for an audience with His Majesty!" he told us. (His Majesty was Haile Sélassié, *Negusa Negest* [King of Kings], emperor of Ethiopia. Though his country had lost a war against the Italian "colonisers" in the 1930s, he had the reputation of being an extremely courageous and respected head of state.) Gen Mebratu then asked me, "Would you mind if I ask for some details from Mr Mattanovich in Amharic?" I guessed he was try-



Philippe's enormous Beisa oryx



Danakil landscape



Haute couture



Fish market



Dankali with arms



Little "caramel girl" mentioned in the article



Seasoned traveller



Horseman of the Emperor's Guard in parade costume during the national holiday parade



Decorated bus



Market scene



Big gate of Harar



Travellers in the countryside

ing to find out the identity of the culprit selling unlicensed guns. After their short conversation, the secretary came back with the message that the governor could not be found either in his office or his residence. Tom then asked me whether the arrangement to go to Danakil would suit us as a replacement, even though there were no buffalo. The general apologised for the inconvenience and seemed genuinely sorry that such a thing could happen in Ethiopia "in a time when they are trying to build up a really well-functioning safari industry".

Back at the hotel, Tom asked whether we would agree with the "Danakil alternative". There were a good number of species, lion included. We agreed. For the mountain nyalas we would then go to the Chercher Mountains, not too far away. For the latter he also suggested that we take a taxi at a "negotiated price" to go and see a fellow in a village about 80 km away in the Rift Valley to buy two sacks of special saline earth that could be useful. We set off in a taxi and the driver quickly found our man, helped to fill the sacks and we started back.

Darkness fell rather quickly. Shortly after the driver had

put the lights on, one of them went out, then the other. The driver fiddled with some wires to try and fix it, but to no avail. As there was no bright moonlight, it was impossible to go further. Lucky for us, after about half an hour of waiting, we saw the approaching headlights of a car. When it came close, we made frantic signs. Fortunately they saw us and stopped. It was a double-cab *bakkie* (pickup) with two young people, a brother and sister. They immediately agreed to take us back to our hotel in Addis. They were of Czech origin and their family had a transport and freight forwarding business. They also said that we would probably do business with them, as they normally sent off safari trophies, including those of Tom's clients!

The next morning the taxi also turned up at the hotel, delivered the saline earth, and was paid. Tom arrived with an Ethiopian game scout, Tafarra, who became the guide for the day, while Tom organised the train trip for his crew and material to Afdem. Knowing that we were used to 4WD vehicles, he also asked whether we would mind driving his remaining Land Rover to Afdem to collect his staff and material so that they could set up our camp. Tafarra would accompany us.

After Tom's departure, Tafarra took us to attend some festivities, as this was an important national holiday. The emperor was supposed to appear in person, with his guard. Tafarra succeeded to secure us a place from where we had a clear view of the *Negus* on his white horse, preceded and followed by members of the Emperor's Guard wearing helmets made of lion mane, not bear skin like in Britain. They were throwing handfuls of silver coins to the cheering crowd. (A few years later, in 1974, this courageous and internationally respected monarch was overthrown by a military coup d'état supported by Cuba and the then Soviet Union. A year later he was killed, suffocated with an ether-soaked cushion. Rumour had it that the "red dictator", Mengistu Haile Mariam, was the perpe-



Fort at the sea



Encounter with local people

trator. Having been overthrown himself some years later, he enjoyed the hospitality of another dictator, Robert Mugabe, who successfully ruined one of the most thriving Southern African countries, Zimbabwe.)

Late that afternoon, we loaded our luggage and Tafarra loaded his own bag. Then we started our “descent” to the east (Addis Ababa is about 2 500 m above sea level, Afdem being more or less 2 000 m less!) Tom’s Land Rover had a radio, and when we tried it, there was just news in English, announcing the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian military dictator. Both Lili and Philippe greeted the news with enthusiasm. I was more sceptical – better the devil you know ... But they were right.

When arriving at Afdem railway station, we found several people there, with an impressive load of mate-



Local hunter’s equipment



Granaries

rial. A young Ethiopian lady immediately took command and they packed as much material as possible into the car, including three folding camp chairs. The campsite was indeed not too far away, and when the car was unloaded, the men who came with us from the station started setting up camp. First of all they erected a rather big canvas-covered structure that was to be our lounge-cum-dining room. Obviously they were well trained to do things surprisingly fast. One fellow, who turned out to be the cook, organised his “kitchen” a bit further away, while I returned with Tafarra to the station for a further load of material and staff. It is amazing how much you can load in a “standard” 4WD when it is done methodically and you have the necessary experience. Just as well, as Tom had among his clients some well-known personalities from the hunting world with deep pockets, such as Prince Abdorrezza, brother of the late Shah of Iran, and quite a few others (look this up in the Safari Club record book) who expected efficient service.

The camp was situated at the confluence of two dry river beds, or rather creek beds. Opposite to it on one side, the shore was made up of loose loess (sediment), which young baboons often used as a “sled ramp”, just as Northern Hemisphere children would do on a snow slope. The adults were far more cautious. Maybe some of their clan had become leopard bait, although Tom never mentioned this. Anyhow, when having a drink in the dining area, the young ones often made us laugh with their antics, so much like human children. (Fortunately, as there were always personnel in camp, the baboons never came to annoy us as they sometimes do in some African national parks where they can become a real nuisance.)

Lili mentioned to Tom how energetically and efficiently the young Ethiopian lady directed the building of the camp, and asked whether she was the game scout’s wife. Tom told her that she was in fact *his* wife (to Lili’s great embarrassment!). Diana, their little daughter, was tricycling around in camp. Tom’s wife and daughter never came to the meals with us. This probably was the custom during previous safaris, possibly as not to disturb discussions about hunting. However, just before we left Ethiopia, we had a typical Ethiopian meal in an elegant restaurant in Addis Ababa, with Birke, Tom’s wife, dressed in a beautiful local dress, and speaking fluent English. (During the hunt, when together, we usually spoke French. Tom was also fluent in Amharic, Italian, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian,

and Galla. When alone with Tom, we would speak in our mother tongue, Hungarian.)

Although we did not have the huge East African-type tents with their thick, heavy wooden poles, our tents were quite comfortable. Similar tents exist even today, even more comfortable than those of “old”, with an en suite shower and chemical toilet. These tents are especially found in permanent luxury camps, as apparently quite a few well-heeled clients love to think of themselves as Hemingways or Ruarks, having read the books of these famous author/hunters, or having seen films like *King Solomon’s Mines*. (I never could resist laughing when the clothing of the heroines of such films remained impeccably clean, not even slightly rumpled after the most hair-raising adventures! By the way, some of the actors of these safari films, e.g. John Wayne, were also experienced hunters and clients of the well-known PHs of their time. Ruark was said to have become a really good tracker himself.)

During the first two or three days, we went out together with both cars. Having both shot Sudan Soemmering’s gazelle for “starters”, we saw a secretary bird pacing majestically, looking for some prey on a very flat plain. Tom decided that we should catch it! Though these predatory birds look beautiful, also when in flight, they need to run some distance to take off. We “attacked” with the two cars on the flat plain with practically no vegetation. We gave chase and caught up to the bird, with both converging cars nearly colliding when we stopped! Tom jumped out and caught the exhausted and panicked bird, which was obviously rather desperate at the beginning, but became apparently rather quiet when Tom gently stroked it. However, once put down, it got away as fast as it could. Lili complained a bit, as when the Land Cruiser hit the hole of some beast, she nearly went through the cabin roof. Back in camp, one of the steering rods of the brand-new car had to be dismantled and straightened as well as possible, the truck having the tendency to pull to the side of the said bent rod.

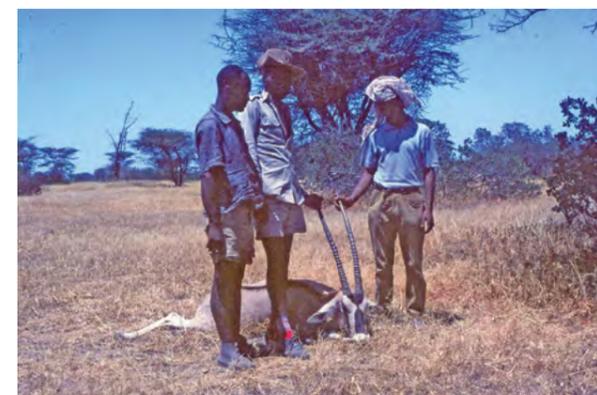
After the first days spent together, and in view of the time lost with the car problem, Tom suggested that I could go out separately with one of the cars with Tafarra, the government game scout. I happily agreed. On the second or third outing with Tafarra and a fellow able to drive the car in case of necessity, Tafarra discovered a lesser kudu bull facing us from far away on the other side of a very large ravine. As we both agreed, mostly with signs, that as little movement as possible should be made in view of an animal with sharp eyesight facing us, I slowly got out of the car with the .375 H&H. Approaching the ravine (I could nearly say a small valley), I noted a tree with a characteristic shape on the other rim of the ravine, not far from where we had seen the bull. Stooping in order to get as much cover as possible from the sparse bushes, I climbed up the other side, not losing sight of the tree with the special shape. When I arrived there and slowly peeked over the rim, the bull was still there, motionless, not more than 60 or 70 m away. Leaning against the tree trunk, I fired. The bull jumped backwards and disappeared from sight. However, I heard Tafarra shouting and saw him jumping out of the truck to join me. Reaching the spot where the kudu had been, we found a copious amount of blood and



Car repairs “on the spot”



Game scout and trackers



Ivan with his Beisa oryx



Philippe’s Patterson’s eland



The author with his lesser kudu

not far from there we also found the bull – stone dead. He had magnificent, thick horns. Taffarra showed me the rather worn-down teeth and said, “Book.” Actually, he used this expression for any decent trophy. When asked why, Tom explained that some hunters, apparently mainly the Americans, often asked, “Does it make the book?”, meaning the record books, probably that of Safari Club International. (It is much easier to get into this book than into the Rowland Ward one.)

Once, when going out with both vehicles, we spotted a herd of Beisa oryx, a subspecies of these regions of Eastern Africa that I already knew from my hunt in Somalia the previous year. Tom discovered a male with very long horns. They approached it with Philippe, who shot it. Measuring over 90 cm (35 or 36”), it turned out to be a magnificent trophy that would have been high up in the Rowland Ward record book. When I asked Tom how

he knew it was a male (as oryx females sometimes have longer horns than the males), he explained that he saw that, when a female urinated, she was “flehming” (baring the upper teeth)! Unfortunately, when Philippe gave it to an official measurer in France, the latter could not do it immediately, and by the time he came to it, the horns had been stolen with several other trophies when his store room was burgled. So it did not get into “the book”. Later I also shot a Beisa oryx, but it was not the same size. What I remember about my Beisa oryx is that, soon after it had been disembowelled, with very little left on the ground, the first vultures were swooping down on it, although the truck was still quite near and a jackal was trying to pinch small scraps from the fighting vultures.

A lion’s bait was urgently needed for Philippe. They first used a Soemmering’s gazelle. Hung to the right height – perfect for lion but too high for hyena – it did not attract any. Then we used an eland haunch tied to a tree with a steel cable to protect it from other carnivores. A lion came and crouched down, facing Philippe. He aimed at the head, shot and missed. The days passed. Tom said the best would be live bait. We had no experience with live baits from our previous hunts, having only read about it in books about tiger hunts in India. Tom said the best solution would be a donkey, and left to secure one. He came back with one tied up on the platform of the Cruiser. When I inspected the intended victim, I found its udders suspiciously swollen. When I squeezed one, some milk squirted from it. When I showed this to Lili, Philippe and Tom, the latter uttered some words not fit for printing, jumped into the Cruiser and came back with a stallion an hour later.

Off we went to find a good place in a river bed with some water to build a hide. Tom’s staff were obviously used to this as they did it with remarkable efficiency. When finished, it was already afternoon. We left Philippe and Tom there, their vehicle having been parked a good distance off, while the donkey, liberated and on the ground, started grazing on the green grass at the river’s edge. We returned to camp in the other vehicle with Lili. Philippe and Tom spent the night in the blind. No lion came, though they heard some roars very far away.

As agreed earlier, we joined them at the blind in daylight to discuss the programme for the day. As they had heard lion further up the river, it was decided to tie up the donkey at a likely place in that direction. The tracker wanted to lead the animal. However, apparently liking the nice grass where it had spent the night, the beast resisted. Taffarra tried to push it. Upon this the donkey kicked with both hind legs, well aimed between the scout’s legs ... The poor fellow bent double with pain, remaining in this position for quite a while.

A lot of time had been spent building the new hide and clearing a shooting lane, so Philippe and Tom remained at the spot with enough to eat and drink, while we returned to camp. Again no lion came, and Philippe and Tom came back to the camp for a short night. When they returned to the lookout well before first light, there was no donkey! At first they thought lion had killed it and dragged it away, but instead of lion tracks they found human ones – obviously the donkey had been stolen!

On one of my outings with Taffarra and the tracker-cum-driver, I missed out on an excellent opportunity to shoot a nicely maned lion. When approaching a dry river bed with the truck, Taffarra and the other fellow noticed a lioness sitting like a dog on the far side. “Ambassa,” (lion), Taffarra said. “But it is a female,” I said, putting both my cupped hands before my chest. Both were shaking their heads, mimicking the mane by holding their hands with spread fingers next to their heads, and then imitating someone or something sleeping. I tried to look with my binoculars, but was unable to discover the sleeping lion in the “lion-coloured” grass. I slowly got out of the car (fortunately I was on the far side), put a round into the chamber of the .375, then two into the double .500/.450 NE, and tried to look with the binos again, but still nothing. Then we heard a car approaching. Hoping that some noise would raise the lion, I held the rifle in one hand and hit the side of the truck with the other. This had the desired reaction: with one fluid movement, before anything could be done, the lion slipped into the dense thicket behind, followed by his mate. I gave both rifles to my companions in the vehicle and started to drive across the river bed. I saw a shadow moving through the thick bush, but it was impossible to make out which of the two animals it was. Halfway through the river bed full of gravel and rocks, one of the tyres suddenly went flat. I got out, taking the

loaded double, but the thicket was impenetrable and I could not see anything. In the meantime, the approaching vehicle we had heard, also arrived. It was Tom’s Toyota with the Magloires. To change the tyre, we had to get out of the river bed. Fortunately there was help to do this. Having already shot two lion in Zambia a few years earlier, the missed opportunity was not a catastrophe, but a pity all the same.

During one of our common outings, rather near the railway line in a wooded area, we saw a number of elongated heaps of stones, at least 20 of them. Intrigued, we asked Tom what they could be. “Well, possibly some Dnakil attacked a train to loot it, and the army retaliated,” he replied. “They always put a lot of stones down so the hyena cannot dig up the corpses.”

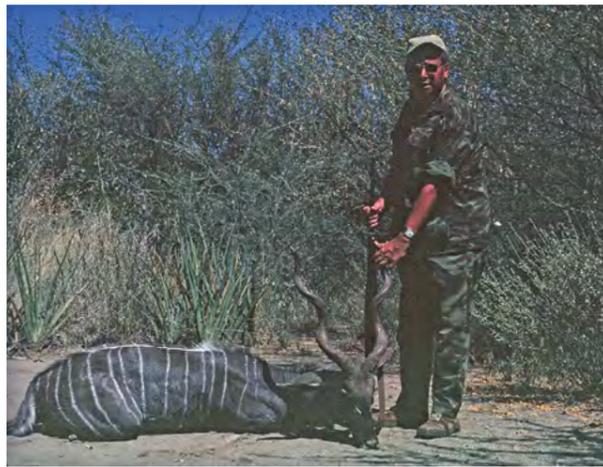
One day, I don’t remember why, we had planned to meet late afternoon with the two vehicles at a certain place. Arriving there, we found Lili sitting alone in the Land Cruiser. She said that the men had just left, following a fresh spoor. We noticed a lot of baboons foraging on a nearby hillside. About 20 or 30 minutes after our arrival, we heard a rifle shot. The sun started to set fast, as always near the equator. The baboons retired to the cliffs towards the far end of the valley where we were waiting.

As it became dark, Lili started to worry. (She had an enormous capacity for worrying about her Philippe.) She could “see” the hunters lost in the dark. After a while she was really nervous and asked me to shoot into the air. I did so, hoping that they would reassure her with an answering shot, indicating they were approaching. But the only answer, rather riotous, came from the baboons that had settled on the cliffs at the end of the valley for the night. Lili’s anxiety grew by the minute. After a while I had no choice but to shoot again, but still no response from the hunting party. Lili became frantic and insisted that I bring down the Milky Way with the .375 for the third time. This time, in addition to the baboons, we also heard human shouting: “We are here!” Astonished, both Philippe and Tom asked why I had fired so many shots – because of the baboons?

The tracker carried the horns and cape of an Abyssin-



Local beauties



Philippe's Abyssinian greater kudu

ian (western) greater kudu. It was not an extraordinary trophy, but given its rarity in this region, it was worth taking. Early the next morning, they went to collect the meat, hoping that no hyena had found it.

Once or twice, young Somali children came to the camp. A little girl of about ten spoke the only Italian word she probably knew: "Caramela." Therefore, when we went to Afdem on one occasion, as Tom had to make a phone call, I bought about a kilo of caramels at a local shop. When the children visited, I gave them a couple of caramels each. Their visits became a bit more frequent around siesta time, but it was not at all disturbing.

One of the two Soemmering's gazelle I shot was a big trophy. As shoulder mounts would take up too much space in our city apartment, we left our trophies with a well-known Swedish taxidermist firm in Addis Ababa for skull-and-horn mounts. These trophies arrived in due time. Two of the best ones, a Rowland Ward lesser kudu and a Soemmering's gazelle, now grace our apartment. The remaining trophies, including trophies from hunts in other countries, are hanging in the offices of the local hunters' federation.

One day I shot a gerenuk with beautifully shaped horns, which now forms a nice pair together with the abovementioned Soemmering's gazelle trophy. This reminds me of something funny: Tafarra and the trackers recovered the gerenuk's guts on the spot, squeezed out the contents of the thinner ones, and made a small fire. They then roasted the guts over the flames for a minute or two and ate it with obvious enjoyment, without any further "ceremony" or cooking.

The days of our hunt were coming to an end. We had to decide what to do: continue looking for a lion for Philippe, or move to the Chercher Mountains for mountain nyala. Should we decide on lion, Tom suggested we go to Harar, where there was a hotel. Not far from there, in the direction of Jigjiga, there was a village close to the Somalia border, where he had had good experiences with lion. Finally we decided to try for lion. We left with only one truck so that the other one could be used to start moving the camp and staff to the railway station and partly back to Addis.

Harar is a picturesque place and the inhabitants wear quite different clothing to what we had seen elsewhere in

Ethiopia. There was a fellow who, for a small fee, would call out at sunset and then take a good-sized chunk of meat between his teeth. A hyena would appear, approach him slowly and delicately take the meat from his mouth before disappearing between the houses.

A big tourist attraction, especially for French tourists, is the house that belonged to the French poet (and alleged occasional arms smuggler, even for Negus Menelik II), Arthur Rimbaud, who lived there towards the end of the XIXth century.

The hotel, though not luxurious, was decent; it had originally been built for convalescent members of the French Foreign Legion stationed in Djibouti, with its rather murderous climate. We just took our luggage to our room and then left.

In a village further away, Tom found a recently dead donkey, the belly of which has been ripped open by a hyena. Loading it on the truck, we drove a few kilometres and then placed it close to a thicket next to a large, dry river bed. Parking the car in some bushes and using it as our blind, we waited. Soon after a lioness approached the dead donkey, sniffed it and then looked back to the thicket. The next moment seven cubs and another lioness came walking out of the thicket and started to feast on the carcass. The lionesses made the soft parts accessible to the cubs. The hyena must have also smelled the donkey, as their whooping calls became more frequent and shrill, sometimes turning into the typical cackling laughter. This obviously unnerved the lionesses, as from time to time one stopped feeding and emitted a growl. The excited hyenas vocalised more and more all around them. Finally, one of the lionesses started back to the thicket, followed by all the cubs, and the second lioness as rear guard. Unfortunately, no male lion joined the "kindergarten". As soon as the lion disappeared into the thicket, a whole bunch of hyena rushed to the carcass, fighting for a bite. But then one of the lionesses rushed from the bushes and chased the hyena across the dry river bed. Apparently she reached one of them as it emitted a long, pitiful howl.

As no lion appeared, and it was too late to return to Harar, we set up our camp beds, brought along in a big plastic bag, near the truck for the rest of the night. The



Gerenuk



Soemmering's gazelle

next morning we found fresh goat tracks, followed by lion tracks, a mere 30 m from our beds! Tom was really sorry that we did not get the two main trophies and offered to organise a safari at a substantially reduced price the following year. Unfortunately, I could not go because of family reasons, but Lili and Philippe returned. However, they could not go to Tom's favourite hunting ground, Gambela, because of a catastrophic cholera epidemic. Access to this region was forbidden, although Tom said that, because of the epidemic, there must have been many large, fat lion around ...

For me this safari had a "sequel". As I was already considerably overweight with my luggage because of my guns, I bought a cheap suitcase and sent my hunting clothes as freight with Ethiopian Airways via the much shorter way, namely via Lagos in Nigeria, and from there with the now defunct French airline, UTA, to Gabon, an itinerary I could not use, as Nigeria simply did not answer my requests for a transit visa with my stateless passport. (I had to go a much longer way from Addis Ababa via Nairobi and Cape Town, instead of simply crossing Africa through the middle!) The suitcase with the hunting clothes never reached Gabon. I lodged a complaint with the local airline's offices in the town where I stayed, then with the UTA office in Libreville, capital city of Gabon. In the end, correspondence with the UTA representative became quite acrimonious. He pretended that his company never received the suitcase from Ethiopian Airlines, so he suggested I should reclaim from them.

A few months later, I was back in Addis Ababa for a geological conference. As I did not want to go on a flight over the Danakil Depression, which is below sea level, at



Gerenuk

extra cost, I took a taxi and went to the Ethiopian Airlines office. Within 15 minutes they produced the receipt of UTA in Nigeria, certifying that the company did indeed receive the suitcase. I made three copies of the correspondence and sent one copy with a letter each to the general manager, the marketing manager, and the personnel manager of the company. Within a very short time, I received a cheque with a letter of apology. I also got a phone call from the company's furious manager in Gabon, telling me that he was being transferred from the Gabonese capital, where he could do water-skiing and spearfishing, to Niamey in Niger, where temperatures soar to 50 °C in the hot season.

About 20 years after my Ethiopian hunt, when visiting a big international hunting expo in Munich, Germany, I discovered a brochure mentioning Tom's outfitting business at the stand of an American safari booking agency. I asked for his address and wrote him a letter, asking how he was. A few weeks later I received a long letter from him, telling me that his father, whom I met twice in Addis Ababa, had passed away, and that during the "red terror" of Mengistu, the rest of the family had fled to the US. Birke, Tom's mom and his daughter Diana were still in the US, where Diana attended university. Tom, however, could not stand life in the big city and returned to Ethiopia, where he founded a tourist agency.

Ethiopia is the most spectacular country I have seen during my travels on the African continent. Each time I read about the meetings of the African Union, the sight of Ethiopian herders with their white *shammās* (shawls) appear before my mind's eye. It was a hunt I will never forget.