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SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA, C.1850-1974

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LAND, AGRICULTURE AND SOCIETY IN THE GIBE REGION: SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA, C.1850-1974

By

Guluma Gemeda

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

LAND, AGRICULTURE AND SOCIETY IN THE GIBE REGION: SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA, C.1850-1974

By

Guluma Gemeda

For a long time, Africanists have dealt with the phenomenon of cash cropping and its impact on the society. They have analyzed why and how subsistence producers shifted to cash crops, and how the market economy has impacted the life of the peasants. Yet they are not able to adequately explain why cash croppiny has failed to transform the peasant society in any significant way. The effort to understand the issues have been undermined by the reliance on a specific theoretical model. Secondly, while focusing too much on particular periods and specific social groups, Africanists have paid little attention to the problem of capital formation by successive generations.

Evaluating neoclassical, structuralist and the culturalist paradigms, this study argues that the predicament of cash crop producing peasantries can not be fully explained by a single model. This is because the process of agricultural transformation is complex and it is influenced by

various factors: cultural, social, political and environmental issues. A combination of these factors produce a variety of results under different circumstances. In the Gibe region, where coffee was cultivated and exchanged for very a long time, the ability of the peasants for capital formation had been circumscribed by political and social factors.

This study has revealed, though, the momentary success and failure of the peasant producers. Almost every generation, since the mid-nineteenth century, the process of agricultural transformation was thwarted by a period of crisis. For this reason, little or no capital was transferred from one generation to another. By documenting the periodic crises that faced the coffee producers of the Gibe valley, this dissertation has concluded that the incomplete transformation of the peasant society was due to the peasants' insufficient share of agricultural surpluses and lack of security for agrarian property rights. The market conditions, the politics and the environment have all contributed to the problem. It is therefore imperative to study the peasantry and the current agrarian crisis in a broader perspective.

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This Dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Konno Daksa.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the emergence of coffee as a major cash crop and its socioeconomic impact on the society in the Gibe region. For a long time, communities in the Gibe valley of southwestern Ethiopia cultivated coffee for domestic consumption and commercial exchange. Particularly, since the mid-nineteenth century, coffee has evolved as a major cash crop in the region. Its trade linked the community with the outside world. The cultivation and trade of coffee resulted in social and economic changes.

Changes resulting from coffee cultivation, however, failed to lead the society to a successful transition from peasant to capitalist agricultural economy. Despite long years of involvement in coffee production, communities in the Gibe valley are still small producers. Their living standards have changed but very little and their quality of life is indeed poor. A report in 1965, for example, indicated how the income from coffee was unable to cover the food expenses of one third of the coffee farmers in the sub-district of Choche.[1] According to the 1984 Population and Housing Census, most of the peasants in Kafa, including Jimma area, lived in poorly constructed, "semi-temporary," single-room houses with a family of five persons.[2] Personal observation during the fieldwork confirmed such a conclusion. The persistence of the peasant economy despite

long years of cash cropping is one of the major themes of this study.

This study challenges the assumption that cash cropping among African societies began as a result of contact with expanding world economy during the nineteenth century. While emphasizing the changes introduced through exposure to the world economy and the expanding European empires of the late nineteenth century, some Africanists have been reluctant to admit the processes of change during pre-colonial times. Contrary to such assumptions, this study shows that the shift to cash cropping was the result of an internal process that preceded the penetration of the world economy.

While documenting the evolution of coffee production, trade, landholding systems and agriculture, this study analyzes the socioeconomic changes in the region during the last century and half. The central issue is to explain why long years of cash cropping failed to transform the society in any significant way. In other words, why do peasants remain peasants?

So far Africanist scholars have tried to explain this crucial question, but their efforts were undermined by lack of a clear conceptual framework. Even the very definition of peasants and the circumstances under which they emerged have caused a lot disagreements. Some Africanists view the peasantry as the creation of the expanding global markets

and colonial regimes which forced subsistence producers to shift to commodity production. Other, for varius reasons, have shied away from using the term at all when refering to African cultivators.[3]

Fifteen years ago, Frederick Cooper has, for example, argued that the term "peasantry" is abmigious for it lumps a cultivator who confronts the state over taxation together with a sharecropper who lives under the fear of eviction by a landlord who controls credit and exercises power over the tenant. Cooper believes that the term peasntry does not help us to understand the dynamics of rural class structure and economic system.[4] Portraying the peasantry as a monolithic group is indeed misleading; but it is equally confusing to conceptualize the state apart from the social classes whose property it protects and enforces land and commercial laws that favor the same group. The landlord who monopolizes the credit facilities and evicts the tenant, and the state who fixes the prices of agricultural commodities both rely on political power institutions. Apparently, Cooper overstretched the differences between rural agricultural producers and narrowly defined the state.

In this study, I will use the term peasantries to refer to rural agricultural producers who engage in subsistence production but also partly participate in the market economy. Peasantries here include smallholder farmer who owns a plot of land, landless worker who participates in

sharecropping, and migrant farm worker who spends part of his time working for wages. In doing this I am following Allen Isaacman's lead who has identified different types of peasantries by analyzing property relations in the countryside together with the processes of labor.[5] Isaacman's definition captures the complexities of rural life and its relations to the socioeconomic forces beyond the peasant society. Although I refer to the contribution of women coffee farmers, I do not extensively deal with the gender relations in the region. Before turning to considering the different theoretical formulations regarding cash cropping in Africa, I will describe the process of data collection and the methodology employed in this study.

Sources and Methodology

The data for this study was collected over several years. My initial interest in the Gibe region goes back to my undergraduate years at Addis Ababa University in the late 1970s, when I worked on the translation of the "Jimma Oral Tradition" which was collected in 1973-74 by the members of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and History Department of Addis Ababa University. In the Summer of 1982, I did additional fieldwork in the Jimma area. These oral documents were used for M.A. thesis which was presented to the Graduate School of Addis Ababa University in 1984.[6] The thesis dealt with the political developments in the Gibe

valley between the mid-eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries.

In 1985, I spent a month in Jimma interviewing elders, merchants, peasants and agricultural extension officers. Then my purpose was to gather data on the impact of coffee cultivation on the peasants. Generally, coffee producers were considered more affluent than food crop producers. But during the research I realized how such impressions concealed the precarious position of coffee farmers. Indeed, coffee has changed the peasants' life; but it has also failed to transform them into prosperous capitalist farmers.[7]

Later on, I decided to pursue the investigation of coffee production in the Gibe region and its impact on the society. In 1990-91, with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, I undertook more research on the coffee industry of the Gibe valley.

The choice of the research site was based on the region's long tradition of coffee cultivation and its link to the major commercial centers in northeast Africa and Red Sea region since the early nineteenth century. The contribution of the Gibe valley to the volume of coffee trade in northeast Africa has increased significantly since the mid-nineteenth century. During the last five decades, the districts of Gomma, Limmu and Manna (all in the Gibe region) have contributed about thirty five to forty five

percent of the total coffee export from Ethiopia. For this reason, these districts are considered to be ideal places to study the development of the coffee industry and its impact on the society.

The fieldwork in 1990-91 was carried out at a very critical moment in Ethiopian history.[6] The proliferation of conflicts and the change of regime at the time crippled the transport system. Despite the difficulties, however, I was able to survey the landscape, to collect oral history and do archival research both in Addis Ababa and the Jimma area.

The physical survey was done both from the ground and the air during my visits to Jimma. The areal view in particular helped me to observe the river systems, the forests, cultivated fields and settlement patterns of Limmu and Jimma provinces. Doing the research, I observed the ecological diversity within the area. For example, although Jimma is generally considered as the "coffee province," more than half of the land is devoted to the production of cereal crops.

Counter-checking the physical layout of the landscape and recent settlement patterns with the oral traditions and genealogies, I was able to visualize what might have happened in the past. The local ecological diversity influenced cropping patterns and the movement of labor. In Jimma, coffee farmers recruited labor from cereal-crop producing areas during peak harvest season. Gomma, the

largest coffee district in the country, relied on migrant laborers from outside the district during the peak harvesting season.

The collection of oral traditions during the fieldwork focused on selected elders whose testimonies were needed to reconstruct the social and economic history of the region before the twentieth century. A few of these elders were interviewed in 1973-74, for the "Jimma Oral Tradition Project" and in 1982 for my M.A. thesis. In 1990-91, interviewing focused specifically on the cultivation of coffee in the nineteenth century. Individually and in a group, knowledgeable elders were asked both open-ended and specific questions regarding coffee cultivation. The group interviews sometimes led to useful discussions between the informants themselves.

Collection of oral history or life-time memories of farmers, merchants, extension agents, migrant workers and government officials was another goal of the interviewing process. Some informants were asked about events in which they had personally participated. Migrant workers were, for example, asked when and how they first engaged in coffee production; with whom they worked; how much they earned; and what they did during the slack seasons. A simple biographical sketch of each informant provided useful historical data not readily available otherwise. Such vignettes helped me to understand the processes of social

and economic changes in the region during the last eighty years or so.

Part of the investigation also focused on library and archival research. First, I spent several weeks at the excellent research library of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, in Addis Ababa. In addition to its already impressive collections, the Institute's Library has acquired microfilm copies of valuable documents from archives in the United Kingdom, France, Italy and other European countries. Although all of the newly acquired materials were not properly catalogued at the time of my research, I was able to consult the relevant documents. I also took advantage of Michigan State University's special collection library both before and after the fieldwork. I consulted some of the US State Department files in MSU's special collection library.

The archival research was conducted in Addis Ababa and in Jimma. While interviewing, I consulted the archives of the ministries of Interior, Agriculture, Justice, Coffee and Tea Development in Addis Ababa and their branch offices in Jimma and Limmu. I also refered to the archives of the Municipality of Jimma. The most relevant documents were obtained from the archives of the Ministry of Agriculture (both at the head office and the branch office in Jimma), Kafa Administrative Region and Limmu Coffee Enterprise.

The physical condition of the files was mostly deplorable. Very often, files containing valuable

historical information were kept in small, poorly constructed, makeshift archives. From the administrative point of view, all the files related to land tenure and commercial agriculture had lost their values after the radical land reform of 1975. Those which survived mishandling were never catalogued or properly shelved.

Searching through such old files, I was nonetheless able to retrieve some useful information. At one place, for example, I was able to recover several volumes of land transactions and tax assessment notebooks. The first two volumes of the land sale registries are particularly important because they list all the land purchases of Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi during his governorship of Kafa region from 1945 to 1954. The land registries and tax assessment books shed some light on the nature of agrarian changes during the 1940s and 1950s.

Cash Cropping and Economic Development

The theoretical models used by scholars to explain the development of cash cropping and the processes of agrarian change are many and confusing. Essentially, however, they could be grouped into three major categories: neoclassical, structuralist, and "culturalist." The first includes market economy, rational choice, vent-for-surplus, and political economy as its variants. The second includes all Marxist and neo-marxist approaches ranging from classical Marxist

theory to dependency, center-periphery, world system and "articulationist" paradigms. And the third consists of all studies that emphasize culture and the behavior of the peasants in their analysis of socioeconomic changes.

Neoclassical economic theorists tend to emphasize the role of exchange rather than production. Market competition is considered as the source of economic progress, whereby individuals make rational decisions to optimize their interests. In this regard, peasants could produce more if they were offered favorable prices for their commodities. Thus the market serves as a catalyst for economic change.

Some neoclassical economic theorists assume that the development of cash cropping was limited before the expansion of the world economy. It was only after contact with international market forces that surplus land and labor in Africa were converted into the production of cash crops. This particular version of a neoclassical theory was popularized by Hla Myint.[9] Then some scholars applied the model to the study of African societies.[10] Others__for example, A.G. Hopkins[11], Jan Hogendorn[12] and Susan Martin[13]__used a modified version of the vent-for-surplus model in their analyses of the economic development of West African societies. Unlike most of the vent-for-surplus theorists, these scholars recognize the part that local producers and merchants played in the accumulation of capital and expansion of palm oil and other cash crops in

West Africa. Yet, despite their effort to credit indigenous initiatives, the vent-for-surplus theorists are generally criticized for emphasizing exchange rather than production.[14]

Those economists who focused on the individual decision making process, also called "rational choice" theorists, have engaged in intensive research on production through case studies at the micro-level. They are able consequently to depict the complex social and economic processes taking place at the local level. After investigating specific communities, political economy or rational choice theorists have argued that peasants are active participants in the world economy. In his study of the process of change in Vietnam, Samuel L. Popkin has, for example, portrayed peasants as active agents who react to market conditions and are capable of making risky investments. Furthermore, Popkin argues that peasant involvement in commercial agriculture is a voluntary response to new market opportunities rather than a conservative reaction to a threat from the encroaching market economy.[15]

Another study with a similar theoretical stance is that of Robert H. Bates. In a case study based on Zambia, Bates has argued that the cultivation of cash crops by peasants is one way of integration into the modern capitalist economy.[16] In another study dealing with agrarian developments in Kenya, Bates criticized the neo-classical model for ignoring

institutions and politics in its scheme of analysis.[17] To overcome this common neo-classical weakness, Bates considered the relations between agriculture and politics as one of the major themes of his work. By considering institutions, he attempted to illuminate their significance in shaping economic developments. By doing so, Bates has indeed addressed a weakness of the neo-classical theory.

His discussion of politics incorporated local as well as national processes of change and highlighted the impact of the state on peasant surplus production. Unlike other neoclassical theorists, Bates does not regard the state as neutral or benign institution; eventhough its nature and policies might be determined by "endogenous" factors. On the other hand, as other neoclassical theorists, he does not regard the role of the market as problematic. Thus, if peasants have failed to transform themselves into capitalist farmers or even failed adequately to feed themselves, Bates implies that it is not necessarily because of their involvement in the market economy or their unwillingness to participate in it, but because of bad state economic policies. Monopolistic marketing boards and urban biased projects skimm off the profits that peasants could have made by producing and selling cash crops. After all, the state is run by bureaucrats who make decisions to safe-guard their interests. Bates, conclusion is useful; but it remains

within the neoclassical theoretical model. At least it explains one aspect of the problem of agrarian change.

In general, despite their sophisticated arguments, the studies that are informed by neoclassical theory or its variants have failed to address the question of power relations. Although they are right in portraying peasants as active agents who are capable of making intelligent economic decisions, neoclassical theorists have shied away from addressing the circumstances under which peasants make economic decisions. Thus, failure to deal with the issue of power relations still remains one of the major weaknesses of the neoclassical theory. According to Sara Berry, "even self-critical neoclassical economists have not developed a systematic explanation of how power interacts with production and exchange to shape processes of economic growth or differentiation over time."[14] Instead, they treat politics as exogenous; and the state as neutral. On the other hand, even when they address politics, as Bates does, they do it within a framework of the village or national context. The impact of the market and politics beyond the national boundary is generally overlooked.

Historical study of cash crops and their impact on the peasant society and the national economy, however, remains incomplete without analysis of local, national and international sociopolitical conditions. It is, for example, not enough to blame the failure of the process of

transition on the peasants or the national state alone. It is true that state policies may have a significant impact on the economic performance of the peasants. State intervention in the market is very often negative, because it distorts the economic process and undermines the peasant's ability to maximize profits.

Beyond the urban biased programs, Third World states also operate under the constraints imposed upon them by transnational corporations. In this case, it is rather naive to expect the national state to be neutral and the market to be fair to the peasants. Even without direct state intervention, there are enough forces to tip the balance against the peasants.

If the market is regarded as a positive force or an engine of economic progress by neoclassical theorists, the structuralists consider it as a source of crisis. Despite a wide range of attitude regarding the state and market institutions among the structuralists, neither the state nor the market is neutral or benign force. They all tend to believe that the market and the state are manipulated and controlled by privileged classes. Some argue, for example, that the state is an agent of the capitalist class. Accordingly, the colonial state in Africa that facilitated the shift to cash cropping did so for the benefit of the metropolitan capitalist interests. The policies of the colonial state destroyed the pre-colonial, "natural"

economy[19] and made peasants dependent on production of cash crops for the capitalist markets.[20]

Initially, Marxists welcomed the spread of the market economy because they believed that it would enable traditional societies to get rid off backward social and economic practices and facilitate their integration into the modern economy. But after long years of participation in the market economy, Third World societies are still far from making full transition into modern economic systems. Thus the absence of any clear transition led structuralists to reformulate their arguments. Now, neo-marxists argue, instead of facilitating transition, capitalist penetration has retarded the development of Third World societies and blocked their integration into the modern economy. After incorporation into the world capitalist system, indigenous entrepreneurs were overwhelmed by the unequal relations of exchange. Bill Freund and R.W. Shenton, for example, argue that the efforts of indigenous merchants "were blocked by the unequal relations of power" at every turn of the process.[21] As European merchants penetrated into the interior of Africa, indigenous merchants were reduced to mere agents of European companies. Thus, rather than encouraging the emergence of a strong, independent class of indigenous entrepreneurs, capitalist penetration has retarded the development of colonial social formations. Using the development of palm oil as an example, Freund and

Shenton describe how the process of integration of African productive forces into world capitalist system has retarded the development of indigenous forces of production.[22]

Even where Africans took the initiative in the cultivation of new cash crops, for example, cocoa in Nigeria, as Sara Berry has pointed out,[23] the prosperity of the African farmers was "more apparent than real."[24] Capital generated through cocoa production did not transform the economy; instead it went into non-agricultural activities that propelled the population into urban centers. Even where farmers invested in tree crops, the mode of agricultural production changed very little. In the long run, cash cropping plunged indigenous farmers into a dependent relationship on the expanding world economy over which they had no control[25]

But there is a great deal of disagreement among the structuralists as to why the process of integration resulted in dependent relationships. Some argue that the incomplete transformation of the Third World societies was possible because pre-capitalist forms served useful purposes for the capitalist system. Structuring the modern world into hierarchies, with developed capitalist system at the core and marginalized Third World societies at the periphery, these theorists believe that capitalism retained non-capitalist social formations because they contribute to the profit making scheme of the capitalists.[26] Others emphasize

the successful resistance of the non-capitalist societies to complete integration into the market economy.[27]

Whether, as a result of deliberate decision or as the resistance of pre-capitalist societies, currently the end of transition is nowhere in sight. Instead, pre-capitalist social formations are flourishing along side capitalist ones. Some scholars, therefore, have recast the structuralist model as "articulation." Articulation emerged as an explanatory concept from the Marxist critique of the dependency theory. Initially it was developed from the structuralist concept of "social formation."

According to Bruce Berman, atriculation emerged from a struggle and uncertainty in specific historical context as European capital and the colonial state attempted to control the labor and production of African societies. It is "a process of uneven capitalist development in which logical necessity confronted the historical reality of conflict and the limitations of instrumental capability."[28] Articulation looks at structural contradictions on two levels: the penetration of capital that undermines the ability of the non-capitalist societies to reproduce themselves by substituting commodities for consumption which were previously produced by the domestic community or acquired through simple exchange; and the ability of the same communities to resist complete proletarianization.[29]

For the proponents of the articulationist theory, the colonial state is a "variant of modern capitalist state,"[30] but serves contradictory interests. For example, the colonial contributed to both the destruction and preservation of indigenous African societies. Its policies reflected the state's ambiguous role. As agent of capitalism, it sought to create favorable conditions for the penetration of the capitalist economy. But in practice, its demands provoked unrest and hindered the development the market economy . The colonial state not only destroyed but also restructured indigenous social formations and propped them up and sustained them; it encouraged internal accumulation and a transition to capitalism while also blocking the full development and consolidation of capitalism.[31] In this regard, the survival of non-capitalist economic relations along side capitalism is not surprising.

Unlike neoclassical and structuralist theorists, others stress cultural and traditional factors in their analysis of agricultural developments in the Third World. The "culturalist" theory assumes that peasants operate within an economic logic different from capitalism. To some extent the "culturalist" perspective shares some features of the substantivist theory used by some scholars in the sixties.[32] Works informed by the "culturalist" theory include those of James C. Scott[33] and Goran Hyden.[34] Scott argues that the primary concern of the peasant is meeting

familial subsistence needs rather than maximizing profit by making risky economic decisions. Instead, the peasant strives to add to his safety nets. Thus, the peasant looks towards the community and participates in reciprocity, mutual support and cooperation instead of mazimizing individual profit. Accordingly, the peasant's actions do not fall within a capitalist economic framework. As far as possible, the peasant tries to avoid complete integration into the market economy by open rebellion or everyday forms of resistance."[35]

Another criticism of the neoclassical and structuralist approaches comes from Goran Hyden. He argues that both colonial and post-colonial states have failed impose homogeneity because the peasants were able to avoid full incorporation into the modern economic system. In other words, the state has failed to "capture" the peasants. Hyden posits that, when threatened by the state and market economy, peasants often withdrew from the modern economy and turned to kinship based economic networks (which Hyden calls the "economy of affection"). The latter are preferable for the peasants than the impersonal, risky and uncertain market relations."[36]

Both Scott and Hyden tend to portray peasant society as static and peasants as conservative creatures who are fearful of the competitive and impersonal nature of market economy. If true, this might help to explain the state's

inability to establish absolute control over the peasants and the failure of the capitalist system to impose homogeneity. But the moral economy approach fails to show the diversity and the social tension within the peasant society itself. Depicting peasants as conservative folks who are bound by kinship ties, the theory fails to account for the internal struggles and continuous social changes within the world of the peasant society.

Sara Berry attempts to explain both agrarian change and food crisis in Africa in a different way. Unlike Hyden, she portrays African farmers as dynamic agents who engaged in continuous negotiation for access to productive resources. According to Berry, agricultural producers work in a "fluid, dynamic, and ambiguous" cultural and institutional frameworks."[37] She criticizes both the neoclassical and structuralist models for their tendency to regard culture and politics either "as exogenous or subordinate to economic systems and processes" while in reality "culture, power, and material resources" act in "mutually constitutive ways to shape the course of economic and social change."[38]

Unlike Scott and Hyden, Berry does not believe that the peasant is circumscribed by his concern for subsistence, but is rather engaged in a continuous process of negotiation with the social forces around him to shape his destiny. Since access to economic resources depends partly on the "ability to negotiate successfully," peasants, however,

invest in the means of negotiation as much as in the means of production. Thus, instead of capital accumulation, farmers use their surplus to build up and consolidate their social networks. According to Berry, therefore, it is not the concern for subsistence that holds the peasants back but the desire to build followers that could influence the negotiated access to resources. In Africa, she believes, the social status and political influence of a person hinged upon "his or her ability to mobilize" followers. Such strategy, although useful to enhance the ability at negotiation, makes it difficult to create absolute property rights which, as a prerequisite, demand exclusion."

Obviously, Berry's approach is different from that of Hyden. Rather than being timid and conservative producers who are concerned with subsistence, peasants are portrayed as active agents who are shaping their world. Berry's approach better explains the process of change. Her recognition of the fact that culture, politics and material resources are equally important in shaping social change is very useful. Yet she also uses cultural idioms to explain agrarian changes. Despite her effort to overcome the weaknesses of neoclassical, structuralists and culturalist theories, she tends to explain the absence of a complete transition to the modern capitalist system by the cultural behavior of the peasants. Her peasants seem to be negotiating continuously to retain their marginal position

in the society. There should be a more adequate explanation why peasants are unable to deal with the market and the state more successfully.

Recently some Africanist historians have turned to an "environmentalist" approach in their analysis of agrarian changes.[40] This approach draws upon two major sources: the Annales school and farming systems research (FSR). The Annales school was first developed by French historians in the 1930s and has since then been applied widely by a generation of, mostly French, historians.

Among Africanists historians James C. McCann, for example, refers to the works of Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, a prominent historian of the Annales school, to analyze the impact of the environment on the agricultural history of Ethiopia. McCann defines agricultural history as "a subset of a much broader ecological history which reconstructs human interaction with the physical environment."[41]

McCann also partly relies on studies conducted in the tradition of the farming systems research by agricultural economists of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) and International Livestock Center for Africa (ILCA). The farming systems research approach was developed by agronomists and economists in the 1970s. Farming systems research attempts to explain, though synchronically, the "total" environment in which agricultural production takes place. This approach is criticized for the limited scope of

the applicability of its findings.[42] Some historian are, however, attracted to it mainly because the findings of FSR provide "empirically verifiable evidence" for historical reconstruction.[43]

McCann examines the long term impact of environmental changes on agricultural productivity in highland Ethiopia in the traditions of the Annales school and the empirical evidences of the farming system research. He is thereby able to explain why Ethiopia's modern agricultural system__ which had, incidentally, sustained a complex sociopolitical system for many centuries__has "fallen into deep fundamental crisis" since the late nineteenth century.[44] He favorably compares Ethiopia's economic performance during the last two centuries with that of the pre-industrial Europe, where economic growth was "dominated by the play between demographic expansion and limited resources."[45] There is a problem with such a comparison, though. The cyclical subsistence crises in pre-industrial Europe gave way to continuous growth and the successful transition to modern capitalist economy, while the Ethiopian case does not promise any immediate relief.

McCann's concern is, however, locating the source of the deepening agricultural crisis rather than the question of transition. For him, the contributing factors for the

decline of agricultural productivity are demographic changes, climate, technology and social property relations." He regards the impact of politics, that is, the intervention of the state in agricultural production as as secondary, and almost neglects the penetration of the world economy.

To sum up, over the years, neoclassical, structuralist, culturalist, envornmentalist theories and their variants have tried to provide competing models to illuminate the process of agricultural change. Each has contributed to our understanding of some aspects of agrarian systems. Each theory has been modified in response to new empirical evidences and criticisms from other competing paradigms. Interdisciplinary approaches and common research methodologies have also tended to bridge the sharply opposed conclusions. However, basic differences still exist. For example, neoclassical theory continues to treat the role of the market largely as unproblematic. For neoclassical theorists, the logic of the market is universal; and ideally, it plays a positive role in economic development. The state is presumed neutral, whereas peasants react enthusiastically to favorable prices. For structuralists, the market contributes to social inequality; the state serves the interests of the owners of capital; and the peasant is the victim of the state and market conditions. Lastly, for the culturalist, both the market and the state

play negative or positive roles, while the peasant prefers a strong social networks to the vagaries of the market and therefore emphasizes subsistence rather than seeking more profits (for summary, see table 1.1 below).

Table 1.1 Summary of the Major Theories

Major theoretical models and variants	Market	State	Peasant
Neoclassical Modernization Market Economy Vent-for-surplus Political Economy	plays a positive role	Neutral	Rational actor. Maximizes individual interest. Responds to price incentives
Structuralist/ Materialist Neo-Marxist Dependency World System Center-Periphery Articulationist	Contributes to inequality and distorted development	Agent of capital	Caught up in unequal exchange. Generally, victim of market forces and state policies.
"Culturalist" Moral Economy "Economy of Affection" Substantivist	can play both negative and positive roles depending on power relations	neither neutral nor simple agent of capital	Active agent. But gives priority to subsistence needs of the family and the community; maximizes safety net; "uncaptured" by the state or market. Plight is the result of negotiated historical and political circumstances

Although the above approaches blame the state for its urban biased, often misguided policies or condemn the capitalist system for its exploitative nature, they fail to explain the permanent state of transition in the Third World. In real life, the actions of the peasants, state policies and market institutions are full of contradictions. Peasants can voluntarily participate in the market economy, while still trying to avoid total integration. Even with distinct urban bias, the state could serve several contradictory local and global interests. Markets can provide opportunities as well as risks. The market, politics, culture, the environment and demography can contribute to agrarian transformations. What is needed is a theory that can help us understand the contradictory tendencies, the complex nature of the peasants and markets as human institution serveing group interests. We should also realize the limitations any theory, for no one theory can address all aspects of the agrarian society.

To fully understand the predicament of cash crop producers and their interactions with the ecology, with each other, and their response to local, regional and global political and economic forces, one should consider the historical context. But historical reality is never as neatly organized as abstract theory. As David McCreery has recently pointed out there is always a gap "between the airy

castle of theory and the grim and chaos of the piles of documents from which historians extract history."[47]

The Argument

As far as possible, this study avoids fixation on any particular theory in favor of flexibility and the desire to utilize insights from various models. But to some extent, it is inspired by the social history perspective that has partly succeeded in avoiding a narrowly constructed theoretical paradigm in favor of more eclectic approach. The work of Carol A. Smith, although cast within the framework of dependency school, is a useful conceptual model. It analyzes the local processes of change in a global context."[48]

Two issues are central to study of cash cropping. First, adequate attention should be given to historical circumstances affecting cash cropping; and second, an attempt should be made to show the organic connection between between the environment, local history and national and global processes of change. It is important to highlight not only how the expansion of the market economy and state policies affect local systems of production, but explain also how local factors facilitate or hamper the development of cash crops; how agricultural communities interact with their environment, among themselves and external forces over a longer period of time. By

considering local circumstances under which cash crops are produced and the stages they pass through before they reach the consumers at the global markets, it is possible to explain the agricultural crisis facing the producers.

The Gibe region is inhabited by the Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. The Oromo shifted from pastoralism to agriculture during the seventeenth century; and since the eighteenth century, they cultivated various food crops that required systematic allocation of land and labor. Increased agricultural productivity led to the emergence of states and the development of local markets in the eighteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, local markets in the Gibe valley were connected to a network of trading centers in northeast Africa.

Coffee entered the long distance trade at an early stage. From the outset its development came from indigenous initiatives. Unlike the situation elsewhere in Africa, where the imposition of colonial rule facilitated the expansion of cash cropping, coffee cultivation in the Gibe region faced a serious setback during the early period of Shewan conquest in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The conquest of the Gibe valley by King Menilek of Shewa and its incorporation into the Ethiopian empire in the early 1880s changed the land tenure, agricultural productivity and the trade of the region. Initially, the conquest severly affected the production of coffee.

Ethiopianist scholars believed that Menilek's conquest opened up the southern parts of the empire to modern market economy.[49] Without any investigation of the situation of the pre-conquest period, some Ethiopianists have asserted that landholding systems in the region south of the Awash and the Blue Nile rivers was communal before Menilek's conquest.[50] This assumption remains unchallenged even in the most recent works. Shiferaw Bekele, who has just published a revisionist article on Ethiopian landholding systems, for example, refers to the south only marginally. In contrast to his thorough discussion of the land tenure systems of the north, he offers practically nothing about the situation in the south during the pre-conquest period. As other Ethiopianists, he assumes that, before conquest, land in the south was communally owned and changed only gradually to large scale private holdings in the early twentieth century.[51] His generalization has many weaknesses.

First, it fails to show the diversity of the sociopolitical developments in the south before the Shewan conquest. During the pre-conquest period, the society in the south was highly complex with political hierarchies based on cattle, land and other resources. Communal ownership of land indeed existed in some areas; but in others, like the Gibe region, complex tenure system has evolved before the conquest. Second, the distinction of the southern polities on the basis of their response to

Menilek's expansion at the time of conquest is not very helpful. In the long run, those who resisted occupation and those who submitted peacefully all lost their lands.

After the conquest, tribute and the subsistence needs of the imperial army shifted the chores of agricultural production away from cash crops to the production of cereal crops. The volume of coffee, which was rising before the conquest, declined sharply until the second and third decades of the twentieth century. It was only after the restructuring of the landholding system in the 1910s and 1920s, and the increased penetration of foreign merchants that the production of coffee revived. Then, the initiative for production passed from the indigenous farmers and elites to the second generation of imperial officials who had just acquired the coffee lands through the restructured tenurial systems. The imperial elites who needed cash to pay for foreign luxury goods used political authority to gain access to land and to mobilize labor for production. At the same time, the subject people, who were alienated from their lands, became tenants of the indigenous and imperial landlords.

However, despite its political influence, the imperial elite's ability to accumulate wealth was circumscribed. First, even by the 1920s, the households of the imperial soldiers were extended and characterized by wasteful consumption. Secondly, the peaceful resistance of the

peasants through flight undermined the mobilization of labor. Third, at a higher level, the imperial elite shared the income from the coffee with foreign merchants who supplied them with luxury items and acted as their commercial partners. Thus very little of the revenue was plowed back into agricultural economy.

In the 1930s, coffee production was affected by the Italian occupation (1936-41) and its social consequences during the immediate post-war years. Some imperial officials were dislocated during the occupation and lost their accumulated wealth. Those who survived the Italian rule had to adjust to the post-war social reality. Recovery was even slower for peasants. Thus, only by the the beginning of the 1950s, did some landlords start investing in coffee plantations by employing migrant laborers. By then, the situation led to social tensions between the peasants, local landlords and the imperial elite who also dominated the state bureaucracy.

In the 1960s, the volume of coffee production grew more than ever before. The economic transformation that started at least a century earlier was, however, far from complete when a revolution broke out in 1974. The revolution swept away old landlords and incipient capitalist coffee farmers altogether and subordinated the peasants to a radical state that restructured and controlled agricultural productivity more than ever before. The changes that were introduced to

the coffee industry after 1974 are beyond the scope of this study. The following chapters trace the process of agricultural changes from the mid-nineteenth century upto the outbreak of the Ethiopian revolution in 1974. The next chapter provides the background to emergence of the coffee cultivation and trade of the nineteenth century.

Notes

1. Qagnazmach Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, sub-district governor to Gomma District, August 1965, KAF 4/42/199/57.

2. Population and Housing Census, 1984: Analytical Report on Keffa Region (Addis Ababa: Population and Housing Census Commission, 1990).

3. James C. McCann, for example, preferred to use "farmers" rather than "peasants" to emphasize their role as "managers of the environment over their relations to the state." James C. McCann, People of the Plow: An Agricultural History of Ethiopia, 1800-1990 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), p.7.

4. Frederick Cooper, "Peasants, Capitalists, and Historians: A Review Article," Journal of SOuthern African Studies, VII:2 (April 1981), 284-314.

5. For the definition of "property relations" and "labor processes" see Allen Isaacman, "Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa," African Studies Review, XXXIII:2 (September 1990), pp.2-3. See also, idem., "Review Essay: Peasants, Social Protest and Africanists," Journal of Social History, XXII: 4 (Summer 1989), pp.745-765 and "Peasants, Work and the Labor Process: Forced Cotton Cultivation in Colonial Mozambique, 1938-1961," Journal of Social History, XXV:4 (Summer 1992).

6. Guluma Gemeda, "Gomma and Limmu: The Process of State Formation Among the Oromo in the Gibe Region, c.1750-1889," M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1984.

7. See Guluma Gemeda, "Some Notes on Food Crop and Coffee Cultivation in Jimma and Limmu Awrajas Kafa Administrative Region (1950 to 1970s)," in Proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar of the Department of History (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 1986), pp.91-101.

8. The research was conducted while widespread conflict raged the country and a change of regime was taking place. The political situation created some unnecessary delays during the fieldwork.

9. Hla Myint, "The `Classical Theory' of International Trade and the Underdeveloped Countries," Economic Journal, LXVII: 2 (June 1958), pp. 317-37.

10. G.K. Helleiner, Peasant Agriculture, Government Economic Growth in Nigeria (Homewood, 1966); R. Sereszewski, Structural Changes in the Economy of Ghana, 1891-1911 (London, 1965).

11. A.G. Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa (London: Longman, 1973).

12. Jan S. Hogendorn, "The `Vent-for-Surplus' Model and African Cash Agriculture to 1914," Savanna, V: 1 (1976), pp. 15-28, Idem., "Vent-for-Surplus Theory: A Reply," Savanna VI: 2 (1977), pp. 196-99.

13. Susan M. Martin, Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, South-Eastern Nigeria, 1800-1980 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

14. W.M. Freund and R.W. Shenton, "`The Vent-for-Surplus' Theory and Economic History of West Africa," Savanna, VI: 2 (December, 1977), pp.191-96.

15. Samuel L.Popkin, The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

16. Robert H. Bates, Rural Response to Industrialization: A Case Study of Village, Zambia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976; Idem., Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

17. Robert H. Bates, Beyond the Miracle of the Market: The Political Economy of the Agrarian Development in Kenya (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

18. Sara Berry, No Condition Is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p.11.

19. "Natural economy" refers to pre-capitalist social formation wherein production was characterized by use-value rather than exchange-value. Simple to complex exchange relations, however, existed within a natural economy.

20. For example, Samir Amin, Neo-Colonialism in West Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).

21. W.M.Freund and R.W. Shenton, "The `Vent-for- Surplus' Theory," p.193.

22. Ibid.

23. Sara Berry, Cocoa, Custom and Socio-Economic Change in Western Nigeria (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

24. Freund and Shenton, "The `Vent-For-Surplus' Theory," p.193.

25. Ibid.

26. Harold Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: from Segregation to Apartheid," Economy and Society, 1 (1972), pp.425-56; Claude Meillassoux, Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Economy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

27. For example, see Timothy J. Keegan, Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa, The Southern Highveld to 1914 (London: Macmillan Press, 1987).

28. Bruce J. Berman, "The Concept of `Articulation' and the Political Economy of Colonialism," Canadian Journal of African Studies, XVIII:2 (1984); See also Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992).

29. Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, Unhappy Valley pp.133-34.

30. Ibid., p.141.

31. Ibid., p. 137.

32. For substantivist theory used in the sixties, see Paul Bohannan, "The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy," Journal of Economic History, XIX (1969), pp. 491-503; George Dalton, ed., Tribal and Peasant Economies: Readings in Economic Anthropology (New York: Natural History Press, 1967).

33. James C. Scott, The Moral Economy of the Peasant (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

34. Goran Hyden, Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980); Idem., No Shortcuts to Progress (London: Heinemann, 1983).

35. James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

36. G. Hyden, Beyond Ujaama; idem., No Shortcut to Progress.

37. Sara Berry, No Condition Is Permanent, p.6.

38. Ibid., pp.12-13.

39. Ibid., p.15.

40. Earlier, John Tosh has called attention to the role that environment played the production of cash crops. John Tosh, "The Cash-Crop Revolution in Tropical Africa: An Agricultural Reappraisal," African Affairs, LXXIX:314 (January 1980. Also see Charles W. McClellan, State Transformation and National Integration: Gedeo and the Ethiopian Empire, 1895-1935 (East Lansing: African Studies Center, 1988), pp.119-122.

41. James C. McCann, People of the Plow, p.5.

42. See Sara Berry, No Condition Is Permanent, pp. 5-6; Susan M. Martin, Palm Oil, pp.12-3.

43. McCann, People of the Plow, p.18.

44. Ibid., p.4.

45. Ibid., p.5.

46. James C. McCann, "The Great Agrarian Cycle? Productivity in Highland Ethiopia, 1900 to 1987," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, XX: 3 (Winter 1990), pp.389-416.

47. David McCreery, Rural Guatemala, 1760-1940 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p.4.

48. Carol A. Smith, "Local History in Global Context: Social and Economic Transitions in Western Guatemala," Comparative Study of Society and History, XXVI: 2 (April 1984), pp.193-228.

49. See for example, Donald Donham and Wendy James, eds., The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and and Social ANthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) Harold G. Marcus, The Life and Times of Menilek II: Ethiopia, 1844-1913 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Charles W. McClellan, State Transformation and National Integration.

50. The literature on land tenure in Ethiopian studies is often preoccupied with the rest and gult systems that prevailed in the north. The main features of these two institutions are very well documented. By contrast, landholding systems in preconquest south often are neglected or grossly misunderstood. For an exception, Charles McClellan, State Transformation and National Integration, 25-31.

51. Shiferaw Bekele, "The Evolution of Land Tenure in the Imperial Era," in An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia, vol. I, The Imperial Era, 1941-74, edited by Shiferaw Bekele (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1995). p.101.

CHAPTER II

ECOLOGY, SOCIETY AND POLITICS BEFORE THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Physical Geography of the Region

The Gibe region, in southwestern Ethiopia, is divided into three ecological zones: badda (highland), badda-dure (middle highland), and gammoiji (lowland). The altitude determine the amount of annual rainfall and the natural vegetation varies from a tropical rain forest in the highlands to savannah grass lands in the lowlands. The highest place in the region is located in Mocha /Gimira, to the west of the Gibe valley. The Mocha highlands form a watershed between the tributaries of the Gibe (Omo), the Blue and the White Nile rivers. Major river systems such as the Gojeb, Dudes, and Baro have their sources from the Mocha plateau. With their limited knowledge of the interior of Africa, some nineteenth century European geographers indeed believed that the Mocha/ Gimira mountains were the true source of the Nile. Antoine d'Abbadie, for example, identified the Mocha (Gimira) mountains with the ancients' "mountains of the moon."[1]

This study deals with eastern part of the Gibe region which is bounded by the Gojeb river in the south, the Didesa in the west and the Gibe river in the east.[2] It was here that five Oromo kingdoms flourished in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries.[3] The Gibe region is dominated by "Y" shaped chain of mountains and hilltops. One mountain system runs from north to south and divided the kingdom of Limmu. At Kossa, about fifty kilometers north of the town of Jimma, the chain joins from the Babbiya mountain which stretches towards Hagalo and Chora in the north-east. To the southwest of Kossa is located the Sadacha forest which is connected to the hilltops and mountains of Gomma and Gera.

Another chain of mountains also extends from the confluence of the Gibe-Jimma and the main Gibe rivers and forms a reversed "L" shape along the northern edge of the Gojeb valley. The Janjero, Bosha, Mancho, Garima and Chala mountains are all located in this area. Stretching westward towards Gera, along the northern bank of the Gojeb river these mountains are connected to the Mocha/Gimira highlands in the west.

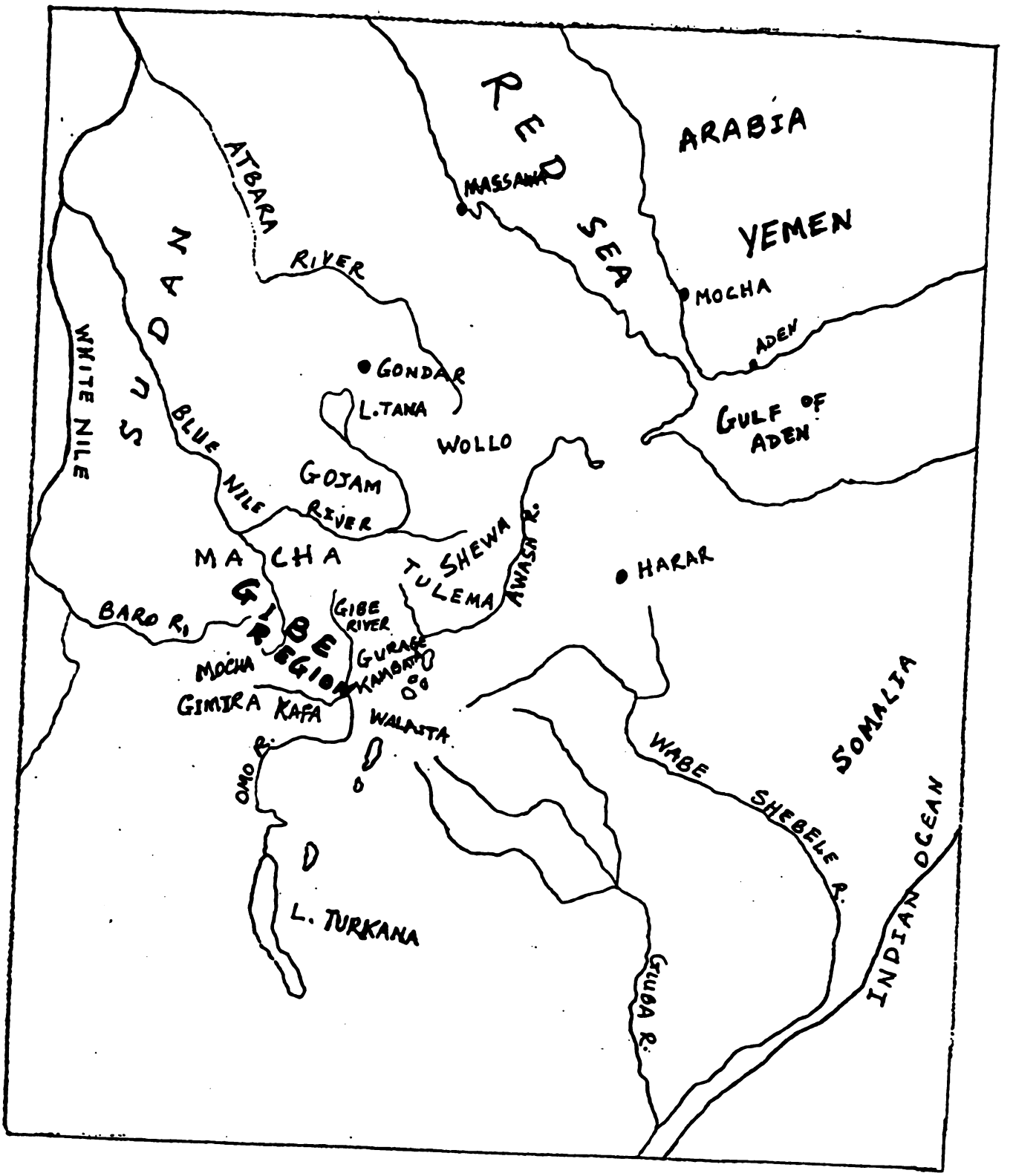
The mountains of the Gibe region are separated from each other and from the river valleys by relatively open plains, broken here and there by small undulating hills. The Limmu plains start from the edges of the Babbiya mountain and run along both sides of the Gibe-Limmu river. To the east, beyond the confluence of the two Gibes, are the extensive Nonno plains, which extend from Limmu to the edges of the Jibat forests. Nonnoland is bounded by the Amaya and the Gurage mountains in the southeast and by the Jibat

forests in the northeast. In the west, it extends to the Wamma valley. An open grassland similar to that of Nonno is found in Jimma, separating the Babbiya highland in the north, the Janjero and Bosha mountains in the south, and Sadero and Santama forests in southwest.

The remaining part of the Gibe region falls within the category of gammojii (lowland), most of which is located along the Gojeb and the Dudes rivers. Infested with dangerous human and animal diseases, this zone was relatively poorly exploited and underpopulated. Malaria and sleeping sickness are prevalent in the Gojeb and Didesa valleys.

The region's physical geography and the ecology impacted on human settlement, economic activities and history. For example, the relatively harsh environment of the lowlands served as a natural boundary between the Gibe's major ethnic groups. The Gojeb valley, for example, formed a frontier between the Oromo of Jimma and the Omotic speaking peoples of Kafa, Kullo and Konta.[4] In the east, the deep gorges of the Gibe served as a natural boundary between the Jimma Oromo and the Kambata and the Gurage peoples. In the southwest the Mocha mountains and the thick tropical rain forests separated the Oromo from the Gimira. In the west and north, however, the ethnic composition remained the same mainly because the natural barriers were

Map 1. The Location of the Gibe Region



insufficient to prevent Oromo penetration into the region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ecology was in turn influenced by politics, economics, and cultural and social interactions.

In this chapter I will examine the impact of ecology on human settlement and economic activities and the process of cultural changes between the sixteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries. For the purpose of my investigation I will focus only on the eastern part of the region outlined above, or the Gibe-Gojeb-Didessa triangle. This region has a very rich tradition of political organization. It was, for example, part of the medieval kingdom of Enarea,[5] and after the sixteenth century, the home of the Oromo monarchies of Gomma, Jimma, Limmu, Gera, and the Omotic kingdoms of Janjero and Bosha.[6] The present study concentrates on the areas previously controlled by the kingdoms of Gomma, Jimma, and Limmu.

Historical Background

The relationship between ecology and society on the eve of Oromo migration and settlement in the Gibe region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remains obscure. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the region was incorporated into the Ethiopian empire by King Menilek (r.1889-1913) of Shewa, two state systems - the Omotic and the Oromo - flourished in this region. The Omotic kingdoms

that dominated the Gibe region before the sixteenth century were: Enarea, Janjero and Bosha. Enarea extended across the upper parts of the Dudes, probably up to the Gabba and Birbir rivers in the west and to the source of the Gibe-Limmu in the east. Southeast of Enarea, along the western edge of the Gibe river, were two relatively smaller Omotic kingdoms - Bosha and Janjero. To the north of Janjero and Bosha existed three, rather obscure, principalities - Konch, Gumar and Shonkora.[7]

These Omotic kingdoms and principalities disappeared or were confined to smaller territories after the Oromo migration of the sixteenth century. Enarea, the largest and the strongest in the region during the sixteenth century, resisted Oromo penetration until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Located partly to the west of the Dudes river, Enarea dominated the territory between the Dudes and the Gibe-Limmu rivers until the seventeenth century. The territorial extent of Enarea at the apogee of its power in the sixteenth century is difficult to establish from the fragmentary documents of the period. Apparently, at one time, the principalities of Mocha and Bussasie in the southwest and west, respectively, were part of the border provinces of Enarea.[8]

Economically, the Omotic kingdoms produced cereal crops and raised cattle for subsistence. Adapting their agriculture to the forest ecology, they also produced a

variety of root crops like ensete/gocho (ensete edule) and taro (colocasia antiquorum). Their modes of production required village type settlements, the largest of which were located in the cool, medium range altitude (badda-dure), from where the farmers went down and up the hills clearing the land and cultivating different crops. The area around the homesteads was devoted to gardening and root crops like taro and ensete. Subsistence production of these crops required different levels of labor organization and land utilization. Processing ensete for food was quite sophisticated and difficult; but its cultivation, like other root crops, did not require many tools.[9] The cultivation of cereal crops, such as millet and teff (Eragrostis teff), however, required relatively more investment in tools and oxen, extensive land and better organization of labor. Grains were therefore cultivated in the open plains below the settlement areas. The cultivated fields were separated by common grazing fields. Further down the hill, in the river valleys, the prevalence of human and cattle diseases prohibited extensive exploitation of the land. On the other hand, the forests in the middle mountain ranges were used for the cultivation of coffee.[10] It was through the exploitation of the different ecological zones that the Omotic communities developed complex political systems before they encountered the Oromo in the sixteenth century.

The decline and the disappearance of the Omotic kingdoms in the seventeenth century led to the formation of another state system - the Oromo monarchies - in the region. These monarchies were created by the Jimma and Limmu clans, branches of the Macha (western) Oromo, who settled in the Gibe valley during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After defeating Enarea, the Jimma and Limmu Oromo settled between the Gibe and Dudes river valleys and beyond, and created five kingdoms in the eighteenth century. These Gibe Oromo kingdoms -Gera, Gomma, Guma, Jimma and Limmu - were the first to develop social institutions based on hierarchy that departed from the relatively egalitarian traditions of the gada system of Oromo.

The Gibe monarchies evolved as a result of long period of conflict with the Omotic communities. The details of the conflicts are apparently suppressed in the oral traditions because Oromo and non-Oromo informants tend to downplay the fighting between the two societies. Some recount only limited clashes between the Oromo Enarea before the rulers of the latter fled to the region south of the Gojeb river.[11] Others say that the former inhabitants of the land, whom Oromo informants usually called Kafa, abandoned the region during the wars of Ahmed Gragn (1529-43).[12] Thus they claim that the land was vacant when the Oromo occupied it. On the other hand, a different picture is depicted by the fragmentary written sources. Christian chronicles, our only

written sources for this period, recorded some bitter fighting between Enarea and the Oromo, before the former disappeared in the early eighteenth century.[13]

The Oromo migration of the sixteenth century is widely documented.[14] Here we will only refer to the penetration of the Macha, one of the largest Oromo groups who spread over a vast territory stretching from the upper Awash in the east to Tulu Walal in the west.[15] For some generations, the political center of the Macha was located at Tute Bisil, between the upper Awash and the Gibe rivers, where they had established their common chaffe.[16] From Bisil, the Jimma and Limmu Oromos made successive forays into the eastern frontiers of Enarea.

For the Oromo, these military activities formed part of the gada system,[17] that involved the organization of the society into different age-grades. According to this system, every male Oromo was required to undertake a military duties before completing the cycle. The young initiates engaged as a group in cattle raiding or hunting parties. In the Gibe valley, after repeated raids, the Omotic peoples were weakened and then forced to retreat to remote, inaccessible mountain areas. The first to be affected were those who lived in the plains; whereas those who occupied the mountains, the forest zones, and the lowlands were less challenged. When the plains were

vacated, the Oromo brought in their cattle and, later on, their families to establish settlements.[18]

Through such processes the Limmu penetrated into the territory north of the Babbiya mountain. In the south, the Jimma Oromo penetrated along the Gibe-Jimma valley into the open plains between the Janjero and the Babbiya mountains towards the Santama forests. The Babbiya mountain and the Sadacha forests separated the Limmu and the Jimma settlements. After occupying the plains, the Jimma Oromo created a separate ritual center at Bakke Hulle, to the southeast of the present town of Jimma.

In the seventeenth century, despite the continued confrontations, both the Oromo and the Omotic communities lived alongside each other by exploiting different ecological zones. For example, grazing their cattle in the plains, the pastoral Oromo also hunted game animals in the adjacent valleys and forest zones. The mountain zone was, however, continued to be dominated by the Omotic peoples.[19] The Omotics cultivated barley, wheat, and <u>enseta</u>, and probably, also planted coffee in the forest zones. They abandoned the forests as the Oromo penetrated into the region.

Omotic resistance to the Oromo depended on the internal socio-political conditions and the natural terrain of the land. Some had been weakened by the raids of Christian kingdom from the north before they encountered the Oromo.

For example, Bosha and Janjero had been assaulted frequently by the Ethiopian Christian kingdom during the second half of sixteenth century. These raids ruined the defence systems of the omotic monarchies and made them more vulnerable to Oromo penetration in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Bosha and Janjero survived up to the nineteenth century only by retreating to the mountainous areas along the Gojeb-Gibe confluence.[29]

Initially, the Oromo were challenged more seriously by Enarea. With relatively abundant material wealth and good relations with the Ethiopian Christian kingdom, Enarea put up strong resistance against the Oromo. Unlike its neighbors, Enarea remained on friendly terms with the Christian kingdom. After 1548, for example, Enarea paid generous tribute to the Christian monarchs of Ethiopia and received some support against the Oromo. The alliance with the Christians, although temporarily tipping the balance in Enarea's favor, cost her a huge tribute in gold that drained the kingdom's economy and increased its vulnerability.

In the meantime, internal and external problems sapped the strength of kingdom. According to Manuel Almeida, a Jesuit missionary who lived in Ethiopia in the early seventeenth century, the king of Enarea faced internal opposition while fighting the Oromo. Almeida says "apart from the Gallas [Oromo], there were usually many rebels in the kingdom near its court." Benero, the king of Enarea who

received Father Antonio Fernandez, another Jesuit missionary, at his court in 1613, was overthrown by a rival group around 1619. Benero was killed and his son Emana Kristos was exiled to Gojjam. Some years later, Enarea's partisans overthrew the new king and brought the exiled prince back to the throne. By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, heavy tribute to the Christian kingdom, continued pressure from the Limmu and Jimma Oromo, internal rivalries, religious strife between the aristocracy and the masses exacerbated the political crisis within Enarea. No doubt, the conversion of the ruling elite to Christianity led to division between the Christianized court elite and the non-Christian masses.

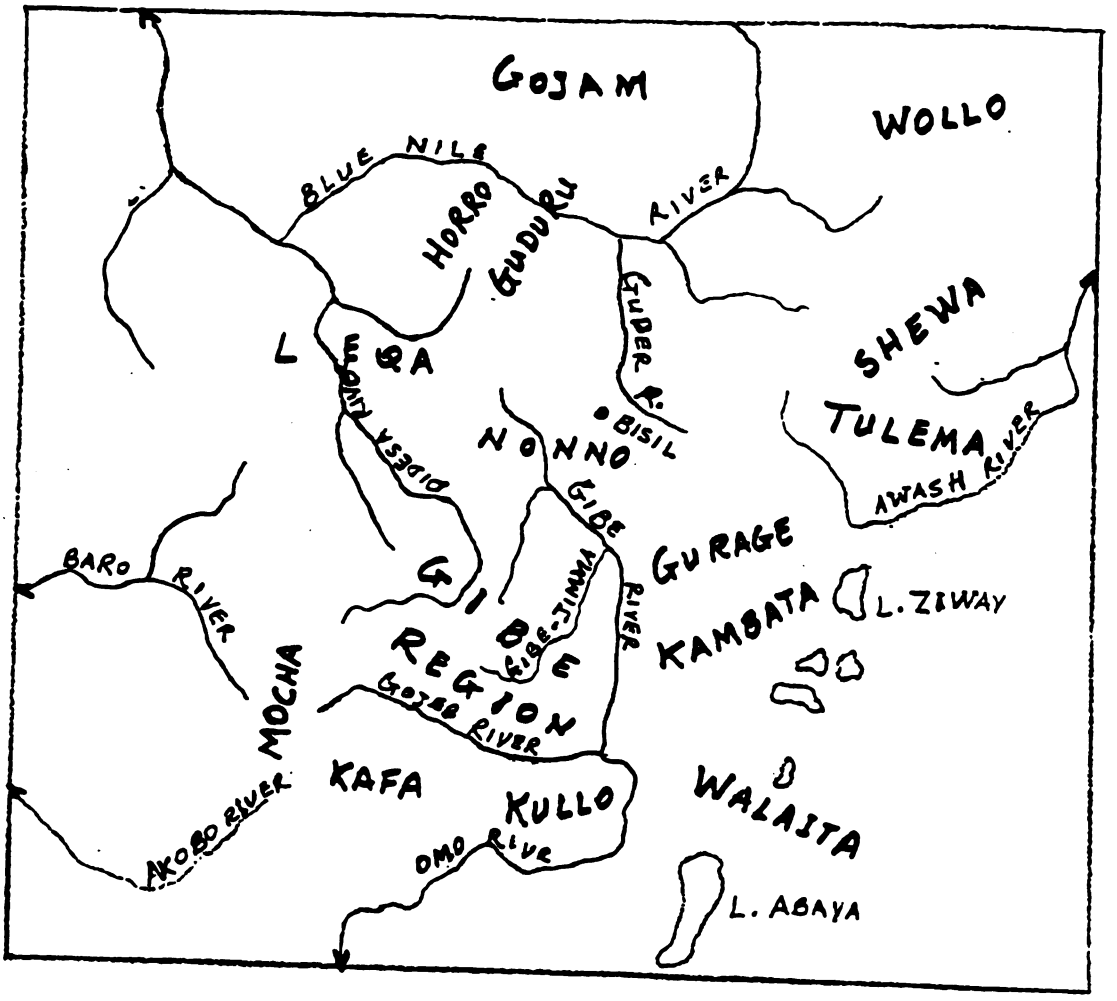
After 1632, cut-off from the Ethiopian Christian kingdom, the kings of Enarea were left to fend for themselves. During the second half of the seventeenth century, Enarea lost fertile agricultural lands to the east of the Didessa. The farming communities concentrated in the previously forested zones and high mountain ranges. The aggregated settlements were defended by ditches and heavy military garrisons along the border areas. Maintenance of a large army and the diversion of labor for the preparation of the defence ditches took a toll on Enarea's economy.[21]

For some years the Omotic and the Oromo communities lived along each other by exploiting different ecological zones. Initially, as pastoralists, the Oromo exploited the

open grass lands more than the forest zones; while the Omotics, as agriculturalists, utilized the forests and mountain ranges more effectively. But when the grasslands were mostly utilize and the Oromo shifted to agriculture in the seventeenth century, coexistence became untenable. By the century's end, the Oromo in the Gibe Valley had already started practicing mixed agriculture - horticulture, annual cereal crops and animal husbandary - for which they needed the grassland and the forest zones.[22]

The shift of the Oromo from pastoralism to agriculture, further threatened the economic basis of Enarea. The Oromo now needed the fertile forest zones, hilltops and the sources of the main streams. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Oromo started moving into such previously neglected ecological zones as the forest areas and mountain ranges. This process represented the second phase of Oromo penetration into the areas previously dominated by the Omotic communities. The Oromo shift to agriculture diminished the differences in the settlement patterns, economic activities and material culture between the Oromo and Omotic societies. It was at this juncture, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, that a new wave of confrontations between Enarea and the Jimma/Limmu Oromo began. Unlike the previous encounters, however, the new Oromo offensive threatened the very survival of Enarea. Politically isolated and economically ruined, Enarea finally

Map 2. The Gibe Region in the Eighteenth Century



succumbed around 1710. The ruling elite fled to Kafa and Mocha and the subject people integrated into the Oromo society as junior partners.

Settlement Patterns and Cultural Synthesis

The shift of the Oromo from pastoralism to agriculture and the final defeat of Enarea minimized the gap between the material culture of the two societies. Differences in settlement patterns based on ecological divisions had gradually disappeared when the Oromo penetrated into the forest zones and, through adoption, assimilated Omotic cultivators.[23] In the process of assimilating their former adversaries, the Oromo also moved from the low lying open grassland areas to the hilltops and forest lands. The movement up hill and the penetration into the forest, following the shift in economic activity, was accompanied by cultural changes.

For the social and cultural historian, it is particularly interesting to know how a predominantly pastoral community such as the Oromo, defeated and successfully absorbed the Omotic communities with a long tradition of agriculture and state formation. In the process of the socio-cultural interaction, the Oromo gradually adopted not only the economic system but also some cultural idioms from the Omotic peoples in the Gibe region.

Nevertheless they retained the basic elements of their socio-political culture.

The Oromo had several institutions which helped them to incorporate the people whom they conquered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One was the institution of Mogaasa[24] (adoption) that played a crucial role in incorporating individuals and groups into the Oromo society. The mogaasa ceremony was undertaken by the Abba Gada, the highest raking official of the Gada system, a socio-political organization of the Oromo. On this occasion animals were slaughtered and a ritual was performed in the presence of an assembly of people. Touching the blood of the slaughtered animal, the individual or the group to be adopted by an Oromo family/ lineage/ clan recited an oath which included: "I hate what you hate, I like what you like, I fight whom you fight, I go where you go, I chase whom you chase....[25]

Another procedure of integration involved gudifacha,[26] which appears to be more personal than the mogaasa ceremony. According to Arnauld d'Abbadie, who observed the ceremony among the Guduru in the 1840s, it involved both the adopting person and the adoptee. In this case the foster parent allowed the adoptee to suck his/her breast or finger. Through such symbolical union, the adoptee became a "biological" child of his/her new foster parents.

A third avenue of integration was called kolu,[27] a sort of patron-client relationship. In this case, a weaker individual or group initiated the relationship by seeking the protection of a more powerful leader or group. Once a deal was negotiated between the two parties it was the responsibility of the protector to ensure the safety of his client. In return, the client pledged to support his patron in warfare. At other times the client was essentially free to pursue his activities. Like the mogaasa, kolu also involved a ritual where the patron slaughtered cattle and put medhicha (skin from the forelegs of the slaughtered animal) on the arms of the client. The blood of the animal symbolized the new relationship and unity between the client and the patron.

In a sense the moggaasa, gudifacha and kolu all served as mutual obligations that the two parties entered into voluntarily. The adopting group promised protection and pledged to consider the adopted group as a member of its own lineage. On the other hand, the adoptee also pledged to follow his/ her patron's kin. In the mogaasa ceremony, the blood of the slaughtered animal signified the cementing of the new relationship as did the sucking of the breast or finger of the patron in the gudifachaa, and wearing of the medhichaa in the kolu ceremonies. After all these ceremonies, the adopted group or individual was either fully or partially accepted into Oromo society. Through this

process the Oromo were able to integrate large number of diverse ethnic groups during the course of their migration between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

Despite the existence of methods integrating the non-Oromo into the Oromo society, distinctions between the two groups persisted for many generations.[2] For a long time the new society was divided into the Borana, "pure" Oromo and the Gabaro, assimilated groups.[3] Besides the ethnic basis, the persistence of distinctions between the two groups can be explained away by some socio-economic conditions. Initially, the distinction helped the Borana to legitimize their claims to land. During the redistribution of land, the Gabaro were assigned the low lying areas while the Borana, who claimed a senior social status and ritual purity, occupied hill-tops. By occupying the high ground, the Borana secured the control of the fertile lands of the forest and mountain ranges. In so doing, they also maintained the source of the mineral waters (hora) and the burqa, source of the springs, the control of which was economically and ritual very important. These claims were enshrined by the laws enacted at the chaffe assemblies and by the ritual ceremonies. According to Father Lambert Bartels, who recorded many traditions from western Macha, through the socio-political transformation, all land was claimed by the Borana who blessed it and gave it back to the

Gabaro.[39] Thus, for some time, the geographical space that each group occupied mirrored the social inequality.

The changing settlement patterns and the development of agricultural economy, however, facilitated a cultural synthesis. In the course of time, through marriage and other socio-cultural intercourse, the Borana/Gabaro dichotomy was blurred in the eighteenth century. Although the Gabaro were initially excluded from different chaffe assemblies and from practicing the gada ceremony, gradually they were fully admitted into the socio-cultural process of the Borana Oromo.

The Gabaro also contributed to the new cultural synthesis. Some of their political institutions were, for example, adopted by the Oromo. It is out of this cultural synthesis that a new social and political hierarchies emerged in the Gibe region in the eighteenth century. In the remaining part of this chapter we will deal with the process of state formation among the Oromo in the Gibe valley.

The Process of State Formation

The process of state formation among the Gibe Oromo is very intriguing. When fully documented, it will help us to explain how an egalitarian society with a democratic political organization and pastoral economy may be transformed into a hierarchical social structure within a

relatively short period of time. During the early period of their migration into the Gibe valley, the Macha Oromo were characterized as egalitarian pastoralists. The Gada system governed not only their social and political lives but also their military and spiritual activities. Important decisions were made by the elders at the chaffe assembly. But after settling in the Gibe valley and shifting to agriculture, the Jimma and Limmu Oromo abandoned the democratic political system for a monarchical form of government. When and how did this occur; what happened to the traditional office holders when state structures emerged?

An attempt to provide clear answers to such questions is circumscribed by the historical sources at our disposal. Both oral traditions and travellers' accounts are to some extent limited. Although the latter are available from about the 1840s, their quality depended on the knowledge of the local informants and the travellers' ability to understand and interpret these traditions.[21] Understandably, oral traditions about state formation are often selective. Sometimes only official versions are transmitted; and they may be modified to suit the political interest of the ruling elite. In spite of such limitations, it is still possible to reconstruct the general processes of state formation in the Gibe region.

In The Oromo of Ethiopia, Mohammed Hassen argues that the Gibe states were formed as the result of wars between

the various groups around or after 1800. According to him, "all the Gibe states were the creations of war leaders. War made the Gibe kings, and all of them made war the prime business of their administration."[32] Hassen's over all assessment of the process of state formation among the Oromo of the Gibe region is valid. He, for example, rejects the conventional scholarly emphasis put on trade and cultural borrowing as major factors for the emergence of these states. Yet his assertion that warfare created states is simplistic and less convincing.

Warfare indeed played an important role in shaping the society and, at least in some cases, facilitated the emergence of state structures. Indeed, some war leaders (Abba Dula) exploited their military positions to amass wealth which they in turn used to create their own personal army. The growing influence of war leaders thus undermined the power of the traditional gada officials. But by emphasizing the role of warfare and war leaders, Mohammed Hassen tends to neglect other factors. In the first place it is obviously wrong to assume that only a single factor, or, for that matter, a few factors alone can give rise to state formation. The circumstances that lead to state formation are very often varied. For this reason, several factors, both internal and external, should be taken into consideration.

One of the crucial reasons for the rise of state structures among the Gibe Oromo was the evolution of a class society based on the ownership of cattle and land. The open plains of the Gibe valley were suitable to rear cattle. High annual rainfall provided abundant grazing grass. The widespread mineral water furnished additional nutrition for cattle and facilitated breeding. The cattle population in the region apparently increased significantly between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. On the other hand, the forests also provided game animals for hunting and other food supplements. It was, however, the practice of agriculture that facilitated the accumulation of wealth and concomitantly the emergence of monarchies.

Thus by the seventeenth century, distinct social classes were emerging among the Gibe Oromo. Rich cattle-owning individuals emerged during the early period of expansion and then used their wealth to acquire more land and even slaves. In the long run, the social prestige based on material wealth gradually undermined the importance of gada offices."

With the rise of a propertied class, instead of playing a more active role in the political decision making process, gada officials became simple ritual figures. And as such, more and more restrictions were put on their daily activities, which further made the offices less attractive to more ambitious war leaders. Writing to a friend from

Gera in August 1863, Leon Avancheres, a Catholic priest, says "... during the time of his government, the Abba Bokku does not leave his house and does not visit anyone."[34] Similarly, C.J.Jaenson, an anthropologist, observed that, towards the end, the office of Abba Bokku was not "coveted because many restrictions were attached to it."[35] In some cases, for example, the Abba Bokku was "not allowed to hunt, to kill either human beings or animals, to cut down trees, cultivate his fields, [or] pick fruit."[36] As Guglielmo Massaia also observed in Guduru, it was probably because of such ritual restrictions that the Abba Bokku was selected from among the poorest families.[37]

Furthermore, the new techniques of warfare acquired during or after the migration and settlement weakened the gada system and facilitated the emergence of powerful war leaders. When the Oromo started using horses in warfare is not definitely known, but Bahrey, a sixteenth century monk, claims that they had horses in sixteenth century.[38] By the seventeenth century, the Oromo were already noted for their skilled horsemanship.[39] The riders came to constitute an elite warrior class who distinguished themselves from the infantry, for the simple reason that not all warriors were able to own horses or achieve the necessary riding skills.[40] Jimma oral traditions suggest that the opportunity to own horses was limited by the short supply. The children of the horse soldiers had a better chance of training than those

whose parents did not own one. The rise of the cavalry therefore played an important role in social stratification and the gradual decline of the gada system.

It was also during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the development of mixed sedentary agriculture led to the emergence of a group of relatively wealthy individuals on one side and less privileged farmers and slaves on the other. The emergent class of aristocracy was sustained by the labor of free farmers and slaves. The labor of the latter two was particularly very important for agricultural production, hunting and local trade.

Development of social inequality requires closer investigation of the socio-political conditions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For example, how did the elites control the land, labor and produce of the cultivators? What were the mechanisms of surplus extraction? To highlight some of these issues, let us examine the evolution of inequalities in land holding system among the Macha Oromo in general and those of the Gibe valley in particular.

Land and Land-holding System

Earlier we have seen how the Macha Oromo interacted and integrated the agriculturist Gabaro population. Apparently, in the process of cultural assimilation, the Oromo also adopted some of the Omotic concepts of land and property

ownership. But, from the outset, the Oromo imposed their own concepts of land and property ownership as soon as they incorporated Gabaro population. The key institution in their land-holding was the gabbiyye system.[41] The Oromo who arrived first occupied a new territory and claimed the land on behalf of their lineage, irrespective of the pre-existing landholding systems. Thus a gabbiyye was a piece of land/territory that was claimed during the original conquest by lineage leaders on behalf of their followers. The geographical limit of such a territory was initially quite vague; boundaries were defined by natural barriers -hill tops, streams or forest areas. But to avoid overlapping claims on the same territory and subsequent conflict, all gabbiyye holders were expected to report their claims at chaffe assemblies for a confirmation.[42] Then the land was "registered", owned and utilized corporately by the lineage members. Economically and socially, communal holding of gabbiyye land tied a lineage/clan together and consolidated group identity, because access to land also entailed collective defence of the same territory from rival groups.

Before the evolution of well defined private property relations in land, the gabbiyye system allowed for overlapping but hierarchical claims to the same piece of land. Such hierarchy was often based on the biological or socially constructed seniority of individuals and groups. A senior member of the family or the lineage, for example,

claimed larger units than the junior ones. Within a family, a person whose father was alive would share a piece of land with father, brothers and his children. Theoretically, all could share the land.[43] But the amount of land claimed by the father was greater than that of his sons and grandsons because he could claim all that his children held.

The gabbiyye system was, however, structurally unstable. Assimilation and natural reproduction required frequent readjustment of the gabbiyye land. Instead of continued communal ownership of land, some Macha Oromo groups established new sets of rules regulating ownership probably as early as the seventeenth century. The Jimma Oromo, for example, decided at their Hulle assembly that women, craftsmen and the nagade[44] would not have the same rights to gabbiyye land as the descendants of the first claimants who had cleared the virgin land. Similarly, "late comers" to the region were also denied the same kind of privilege that the first occupants enjoyed.[45]

Another institution that facilitated accumulation of landed property was the Oromo practice of primogeniture. This tradition favored the first born (angafa) at the expense of juniors.[46] According to Antoine d'Abbadie, who observed the practicing of primogeniture among the Macha Oromo in the mid-nineteenth century, the first born (angafa), retained two-third's of the father's land and

cattle; the second-born, the remaining two-third's, and so on, until there was no property left to share."

Such a system was obviously disadvantageous for the junior and female members of the family. However, its main purpose was not social equity but consolidation of property which was threatened by fragmentation as population increased by natural reproduction and assimilation. In the absence of more space for expansion, new comers and new generations were forced to enter into patron-client relationships with the older generations or the earlier Oromo occupants of the land. The new comers were regarded as gubbaisa (tenants). As clients, their access to land was circumscribed. They acquired usufruct rights in return for labor services to the earlier holders." In the long run, therefore, the system encouraged social and political hierarchy. Consequently, the process contributed to the development of pivate ownership of land among the Oromo in the Gibe valley."

The accumulation of land and evolution of social classes encouraged hostilities among the Oromo clans. Guglielmo Massaia who did missionary work among the Macha Oromo in the mid-nineteenth century wrote:

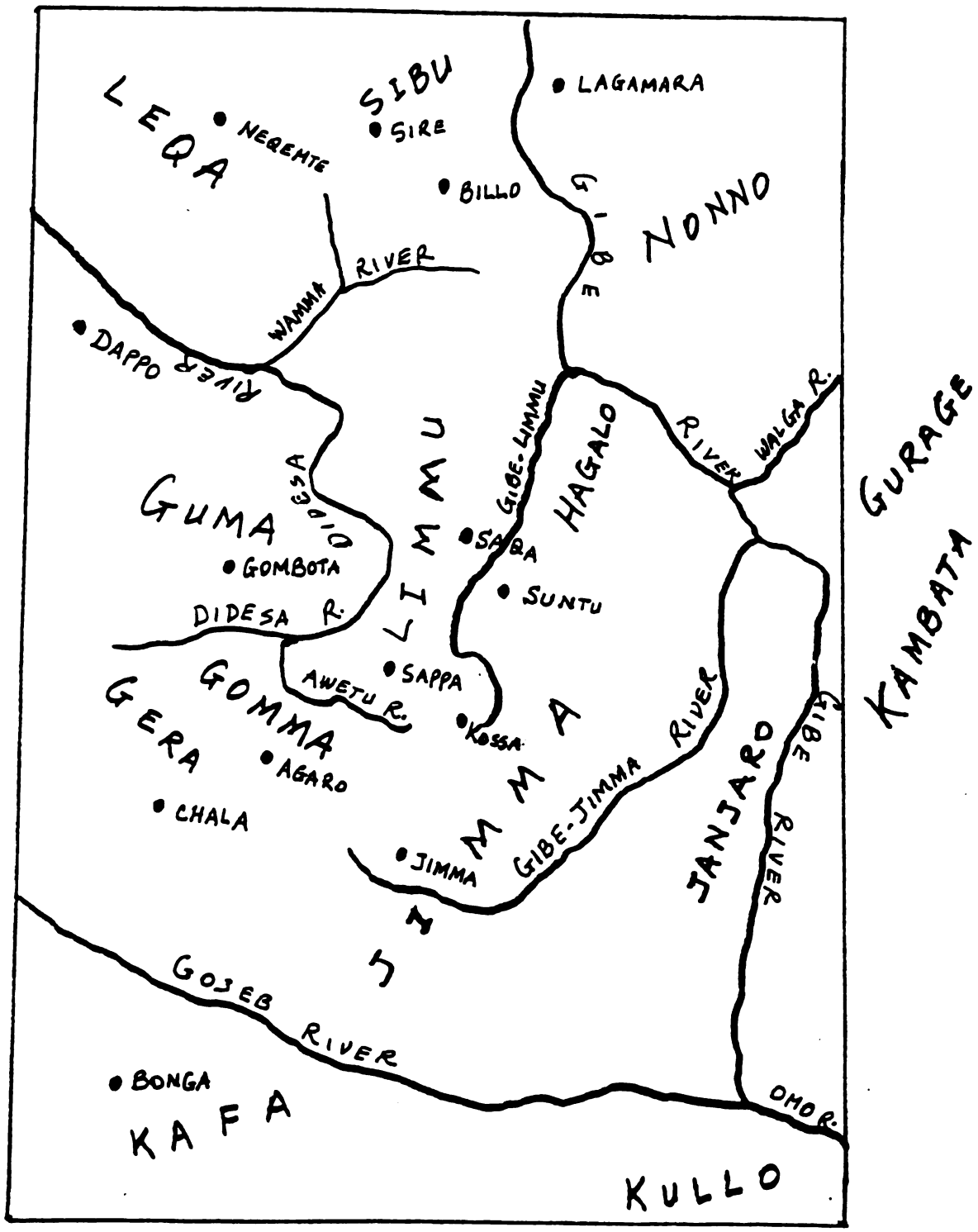
> Since agriculture demands particular proprietorship, this often meant the division of the land holdings. These divisions eventually dismembered tribes, multiplied the individual families, and made more chiefs than there had been before. Thus, the various castes were formed and since,among these there were always some disparities and quarrels the need was soon felt for a supreme chief, and for a strong governor,

> who would be able to decide on all these litigations, defend the rights of private property and guarantee the rights of the individuals. The tendency towards monarchy stems among these people [Macha Oromo] from these needs."[50]

Thus accumulation of land created an elite class who found power and social prestige outside the gada system. As the star of the new elite (soressa) was rising, that of the gada officials was declining. While the soressa manipulated the system to meet their own interests, the weakened gada officials simply endorsed their decisions. It was, however, possible that some gada officials might have taken advantage of their traditional positions to accumulate wealth. When the gada system started to decline, the politically ambitious war leaders exploited the state of confusion and built a private army of their own. 'At least three relatively well known cases from different regions occupied by the Macha Oromo tend to confirm this conclusion. These are the rise of Bakare in Leqa-Neqemte, Gama Moras in Guduru and Bofo Boku in Limmu.[51]

Thus state formation in the Gibe region was preceded and followed by social differentiation and the decline of the gada system. But some traditions from the same region also suggest that in some cases the ecology, the pressure from the surrounding non-Oromo population and the relative geographical isolation from the major ritual centers, for example, forced the Jimma Oromo to unite and create new political structure. The geographical distance from the

Map 3. The Gibe Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century



common assembly centers (chaffe) undermined the contact with other groups, while fostering unity among the isolated lineages who settled in the Gibe valley.

It was particularly in the Gibe valley, where the Oromo faced strong resistance from the Omotic kingdoms, that the need for effective political organization was seriously felt. In the forest zone, concerned about their identities, various Oromo clans came together to form a state.[52] The traditions of Gomma and Jimma suggest that such a voluntary association of clans soon developed into a state structure. On the other hand, the case of Limmu illustrates how a war-lord could usurp the power of the traditional gada officials and create a monarchy. Now let us examine these three examples in more detail.

Gomma

Gomma was one of the five Oromo monarchies that flourished in the Gibe valley between the second half of the eighteenth and the last quarter of the nineteenth centuries. Information on the early history of Gomma is still very scanty. Over a century ago, Antonio Cecchi, an Italian explorer, recorded some traditions about Gomma's emergence and obtained a kinglist. According to this tradition, the ruling Awallani dynasty descended from Nur Hussein, a Somali sheikh who came from Mogadisho. A certain Wariko, the Sheikh's descendant, became a saint or a gallu (ritual

expert) of the Oromo, whose tomb near the Didessa river was venerated by the local inhabitants. Wariko was succeeded by his son Allayo. Until Cecchi's time there had been eleven kings."[53] Another tradition also recorded during the last quarter of the nineteenth century traced the origin of Gomma's ruling family to Gojjam."[54]

Although referring to different places, both traditions suggest that the founder of the kingdom of Gomma was a certain religious holy man. The association of the founder of the kingdom with a spiritual leader was apparently intended to give political legitimacy to the ruling dynasty."[55] The tradition about Sheikh Nur Hussein was indeed a corruption of Sheikh Hussein, a popular and prominent religious figure among the Muslim peoples in the Horn of Africa."[56] During the nineteenth century, traditions about this Sheikh apparently reached the Gibe region through clerics coming from Harar or through the Jilla, Oromo pilgrims who visited the Abba Mudda, a traditional religious figure who lived in the Borana region. Considering the political developments in the late nineteenth century, the shift of the origin of the dynasty to Gojjam is also understandable."[57]

The oral traditions recently collected from the same region clarify some of the confusions and inconsistencies associated with the earlier stories. The new accounts claim that before the establishment of kingship, different Oromo

clans in Gomma lived under their respective Abba Bokkus according to the gada system. Then the major clans called Jidda, Jarso, Wacho, Badina, Dagoyye, Awallani and Ennangea had their own clan leaders. Each lived separately. Realizing their relatively weaker positions vis-a-vis their neighbors, these clans created a common chaffe with new political leadership. According to Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, a well informed oral historian:

> Some times after their conquest and settlement in this area [Gomma], the Jidda, Jarso, Wacho, Badina and others desired to create a common forum where they could consult each other and settle their differences. They said to each other: "Come, let us create a common place, where we would meet and settle our problems. Let us choose one man who would look after our unity and our dignity." Thus, Jimma chose Abba Farro; Gomma chose Abba Mano (Odda Allayo); Gera chose Abba Bosso; and the Mottumma[58] was created."

The same informant also says that, in Gomma, the responsibility for choosing a king was entrusted to nine clan leaders by the general assembly of the whole community. These clans were: Awallani, Jidda, Jarso, Wacho, Ennangea, Badina, Arfeti, Dagoye and Nagade Abba Chasso. Senior members of these clans finally chose one of the sixteen sons of a certain Abba Bokke, a respectable member of the Awallani clan. Abba Bokke was neither a warrior nor a gada leader, but probably a religious man who was reported to have spent most of his time making prayers. His spiritual life and non-involvement in political intrigues probably made him a popular person in the area and led to the choice

of one of his sons for the new position. Like an earlier tradition collected by Antonio Ceccchi, this one also suggests the spirituality of Abba Bokke's family.

At the beginning, what the clan leaders wanted was probably not a strong military leader, but a humble and respectable official who could forge the unity of clans. Unfortunately, all the experienced sons of Abba Bokke declined the offer. When asked by the clan leaders:

> The eldest son of Abba Bokke said, "I would like to concentrate on my prayers;" the second said, "I raise cattle;" the third replied, "I want to trade;" the fourth answered, "I want to farm." [Thus] all except the youngest,presented their own reasons and declined to accept the offer. Nevertheless, they decided to meet the request by nominating their youngest brother, whom they said knew public affairs as he roamed around, and was not occupied at home."

Thus Abba Mano (also called Odda Allayo), the youngest son of Abba Bokke, became the first king of Gomma. For Abba Mano, the nomination was a very good opportunity, because as the junior member of the family his share of the family property was limited. By rejecting the offer, the senior members did not realize the political and social prestige that this office soon provided. It is possible that they regarded it as one of the gada offices to which many restrictions were already attached.

Abba Mano's choice as a king (motti) was favorably accepted at the assembly of the clans. Then a gold ring, the Omotic symbol of kingship, was given to Abba Mano. From that period onward, Abba Mano commanded the respect of the

clans and ruled for about forty years. On his death he was succeeded by his son, Abba Bogibo. After ruling for thirty years, Abba Bogibo was in turn succeeded by Abba Rago. For over a century and half, the Awalani dynasty ruled the kingdom of Gomma."[41]

A closer examination of the earlier traditions and those recently collected provide some important explanations about the emergence of the kingdom of Gomma. In both cases, the Awalani clan (which might even be a corruption of Awuliani, "the holy one" as Mohammed Hassen suggested), and Abba Bokke, a member of this clan, were known for their strict religious practices. Secondly, all the traditions essentially agree on the same kinglist. But Cecchi's list is confusing at the beginning."[42] At any rate, the founding of the state in Gomma was not a result of military victory by a powerful war leader. It was created by a voluntary association of all the clan members. The case of Jimma also suggests the same process.

Jimma

To the east of Gomma, another Oromo kingdom called Jimma emerged almost at the same time as the kingdom of Gomma. The process of state formation in Jimma was similar to Gomma. As in pre-state Gomma, different clans in Jimma lived under their respective leaders, even though they still retained a loose association among themselves. Diggo, one

of the major clans, for example, had its own abba bokku, as did Harsu, Lalo, Hagalo, Badi and other clans.

In Jimma, the initial process was slightly different from that followed in Gomma. Here, the responsibility of choosing a king was not entrusted to selected clan leaders. Instead, all clan members participated in choosing the first king. After a long consultation among the clans at Hulle, they resolved to appoint a certain Abba Farro from the Diggo clan as their new leader. Like Abba Bokke in Gomma, Abba Farro was very humble and politically rather unassuming." Initially, when approached for the position, he had reportedly hesitated. He was reported to have said: "They are numerous and come to my house with their horses. But I do not even have a big compound to accommodate them. I will also be occupied by their business and will not get sufficient time to farm my fields."" His intelligent wife advised him to request the assembly to prepare a new compound for their meetings. He was also advised to ask for voluntary contribution and free labor to cultivate his field. When all his requests were met, Abba Farro agreed to serve as their king. But with the consolidation of the structures of the state, the voluntary contributions were converted to tax obligations and the free services to corvee. That the people initially envisaged their commitment differently when they agreed to meet Abba Farro's

requests is suggested by the following tradition. Sheikh Hassen Sheikh Umar, one of my informants, says:

> One day [after his election] Abba Faro was found farming his field. The people said to him "You are our leader, why do farm your own field by yourself?" He replied, "If I stop farming, my family would starve." Then they said "we will bring every thing for you and your family will not starve." According to their promise, next day, each person brought a small amount of maize, wheat, and barley. [Others] brought either a cow, an ox, a goat, sheep, horse or mule. Suddenly, Abba Faro's compound was full of every thing. Instantly, he became the richest of all."

One might suspect that this was a story invented mainly to legitimize the tax collections and the use of corvee labor by the elite class. But due to the democratic character of the gada system and the increasing ritual restrictions on office holders, Abba Farro might have feared that his new position would limit his accumulation of wealth. But whatever the initial expectations of those who were involved in the process, the outcome turned out to be very different. The suspicion of a dissenting voice from a member of the Lalo clan - "You have elevated this man [Abba Farro] today and put him on your heads; but tomorrow you will find it difficult to put him down," - although neglected at the time, indeed became true." Like the Awalani in Gomma, the Diggo became a ruling dynasty in Jimma. After his death, Abba Farro was succeeded by his son, Abba Magal. During the reign of Abba Jifar I (r.c.1830-54), the fourth king, the state structure had consolidated well that the gada offices were relegated to

unimportance. Bordering Gomma and Gera in the west, and Limmu and Hagalo in the north and northeast, and the Gibe in the east, the Gojeb in the south, Jimma became the largest and the richest Oromo kingdom in the Gibe region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century."

Limmu

Unlike the process of state formation in Gomma and Jimma, the kingdom of Limmu was created not through peaceful, voluntary decision of clan elders, but by a war leader whose personal army undermined the traditional gada system. We have at least two traditions regarding the formation of the kingdom of Limmu."

One version, first recorded by Antoine D'Abbadie, says that the kingdom of Limmu was founded by a man called Bofo Bokku from the Sapera clan. As a young warrior, Bofo took part in raids on the neighboring clans, particularly against the Nonno in the east. Bofo distinguished himself as a successful warrior, leading to his marriage to the daughter of the head of the Sigaro clan who dominated the eastern part of Limmu. The liaison helped Bofo to unite the two powerful clans from Sappa in the southwest to Saqa in the east.

But the initial good relationship between the Sigaro and Sapera did not last long. Bofo soon quarrelled with Abba Rebu, his father-in-law, and lost his authority until

Limmu was attacked by Guma, another Oromo kingdom to west of Limmu. The people of Limmu retreated to uninhabited frontier land (mogga) on the border of Nonno in the east. But while Guma was celebrating its victory, Bofo, together with a few of his loyal followers, made a surprise counter attack and killed many Guma soldiers. Thus Guma was defeated and the people of Limmu returned to normal life. Bofo was rewarded for his heroic deeds after the end of the battle. He regained his credibility and emerged again as the most powerful military leaders. Many warriors reportedly said: "We do not want any other leader but you." Thus, Abba Rebu was forced to accept the fait accompli and recognized Bofo Bokku as the supreme leader of the whole of Limmu. Taking the name of his war horse, Abba Gomol, Bofo ruled Limmu until 1825, when he abdicated in favor of his son, Ibsa (Abba Bogibo)."

Another version emphasizes Bofo's adventurous activities as descendant of the Sapera clan from Sappa, in southwestern Limmu. From his base at Sappa, he collected loyal followers and made cattle raids on adjacent peoples. He kept the his party together and consolidated his position by generously distributing the booty from the raids. His success in warfare earned him the recognition of Odda Anniyye (Abba Rebu), the leader of Sigaro clan around Saqa, who eventually agreed to give his daughter to Bofo in marriage.

Another version of Bofo's rise to power emphasizes his military successes. He is remembered for fighting his way from Sappa to Saqa. First, he raided the clans nearer to Sappa and defeated one group after another. Before reaching Saqa, he attacked the Balfo clan, then ruled by a woman. Bofo's continuous military victories and generous rewards to the warriors earned him more followers, and he shifted his residence from Sappa, first to Kossa, then to Genna and finally to Suntu. From the last position he attacked the Sigaro clan around Saqa. To end the hostilities, Odda Anniyye offered his daughter to Bofo and provided him a piece of land around Saqa where Bofo built his new residence. Thus Bofo succeeded to unite various clans of Limmu under the Sapera dynasty.

Obviously the second version to some extent substantiates the tradition recorded earlier by Antoine d'Abbadie. The fact that Bofo Bokku was a successful war leader who took over the neighboring clans before he created a new dynasty, for example, emerges very clearly from different traditions collected from the Gibe region. For this reason, it is plausible to regard these versions as parts of the same tradition, even though they do not agree on some details. The essential point is that a monarchy in Limmu was created by a warrior who amassed wealth and became powerful outside the traditions of the gada system. Unlike the cases of Gomma and Jimma, the Sapera dynasty in Limmu

did not rely on the myth of voluntary clan association. Instead, Abba Gomol utilized effective propaganda to consolidate his rule.

After establishing his residence at Saqa, Bofo (Abba Gomol) sought to ensure his control of natural resources, tribute and labor. First, after his military victory, he ordered the clan leaders to surrender their possessions. They reportedly agreed to give up their undeveloped estates, entitling Abba Gomol to claim all the uncultivated lands including wild or abandoned coffee trees. The control of the forests also gave him a monopoly over hunting rights and all forest products. Thus ivory and wild honey also became the property of the king.

Second, he established a new system of collecting market dues. One informant says:

> Bofo requested Odday Anniyye to give him a piece of land around Saqa. He cleared the land and made it a market place. He then ordered all who came to this market place to put aside as his share a little bit of whatever they brought to the market. He told them to put some coffee here; cotton there; grain here and pepper there. Those who refused to do this were confiscated of their possessions.[70]

Third, oral traditions also suggest that it was Abba Gomol who established an arbitrary system of enslavement of the subject people. Another informant says:

> [After his military victories] Bofo said "come and submit to me." He ordered those who submitted to him to wear a <u>medhicha.</u>[71] Those who agreed to wear the <u>medhicha</u> became his subjects. They cultivated his fields and built his palace. Those who refused were deported or enslaved. He also took a container full of blood; inserted a whisk in it and sprinkled the blood

> on the crowd of people. All those on whose body a bit of blood was found were declared his slaves.[72]

During the forty years of Bofo Bokku's rule, he relied on the loyalty of his army and the wealth that he accumulated through military victories. Despite the harshness of his rule as depicted by the traditions, he was able to create a powerful kingdom that held a strategic position in the Gibe valley. After uniting the Limmu and non-Limmu groups who lived between the Sadacha forests in the south and the Wamma river in the north, Abba Gomol also made several attempts to expand the frontiers of his kingdom in all directions, particularly at the expanse of Jimma, Guma and Nonno. Abba Bogibo, Bofo's son who succeeded him in mid-1820s, continued essentially the same policy.

The historical traditions about the emergence of the monarchies of Gomma, Jimma and Limmu outlined above corroborated similar traditions analyzed by Mohammed Hassen. But I disagree with his dating of the emergence of these kingdoms. Following the chronology previously suggested by other scholars, Mohammed Hassen believes that the Gibe monarchies were established during the early nineteenth century.[73] Yet oral traditions, that Hassen used quite extensively, do suggest that the Oromo monarchies of the Gibe region were established in the eighteenth century. Using the oral traditions and some documentary references we

can now establish a new chronology and time-frame of the emergence of the Gibe monarchies.

According to traditions collected both recently and in the nineteenth century, eight kings ruled in Gomma until the kingdom was conquered and incorporated into the Ethiopian empire in 1886. Oral traditions also claim that the eight kings ruled for a total of 148-150 years; and according to Cecchi, Abba Rebu, the fourth monarch, who ruled for about twenty six years, died in 1856.[74] Thus his accession to power probably took place around 1830. His predecessors, Abba Mano, Abba Bogibo, and Abba Rago ruled for forty, thirty and twenty-five years respectively. Thus in Gomma, the transition to monarchical rule appears to have taken place during the second quarter of the eighteenth century or about ninety five years before the beginning of Abba Rebu's reign around 1830.

Similarly, eight kings ruled in Jimma from the emergence of the kingdom up to 1882 when it started paying tribute to King Menelik of Shewa. Abba Jifar II (d.1934), the last king of Jimma, came to power around 1878; and before him, seven kings ruled for about one hundred and thirty-five years, placing the beginning of the Diggo dynasty around the middle of the eighteenth century. Abba Warri, an informant from Gomma, claims that the election of Abba Farro took place seven years after that of Abba Mano in Gomma.[75] For Limmu we have a relatively shorter kinglist and

easily traceable chronology. According to D'Abbadie and Massaia, Abba Bogibo I, the second king, came to power in 1825 and died in 1861; and according to traditions discussed above, Bofo Bokku, the founder of the Sapera dynasty, ruled for forty years. Thus he apparently came to power in the 1780s.

To conclude this chapter, so far we have examined how two societies _ the Omotic and the Oromo _ interacted in the Gibe valley between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the Oromo incorporated the Omotic society and settled in the Gibe region, the Jimma and Limmu Oromo abandoned their pastoral way of life and shifted to agriculture. The cultural interaction and the economic changes led to the development of economic and political hierarchies in the eighteenth century. The Omotic kingdom of Enarea disappeared by the early seventeenth century, and in its place, the Oromo kingdoms of Gera, Gomma, Guma, Jimma and Limmu emerged in the eighteenth century. For the Oromo, centralized political institutions created favorable conditions for the exploitation of forest products, the development of agriculture, the emergence of new market centers, and the revival of local and long distance trade. Increased agricultural production and exchange also gave rise to a small group of political and commercial elites that participated in local and long distance trade. This group linked the indigenous producers with the expanding

world economy of the nineteenth century. The next chapter will analyze agricultural production, trade and the penetration of the world economy from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

Notes

1. Antoine d'Abbadie, Géographie de l'Ethiopie (Paris, 1890); For more details on the geographical description of this region, see George Montandon, Au Ghimira, Réçit de mon voyage à travers le massif Ethiopien, 1909-1911 (Neuchatel: Attiner Freres,1913); Idem, "Journey in South-western Abyssinia," The Geographical Journal, 40:3 (September, 1912), pp. 372-391.

2. The Gibe river has three main sources - Gibe-Limmu (Enarea), Gibe-Jimma and the main Gibe. The last one originates near the present town of Bako. Gibe-Limmu has its source from the Babbiya mountain between Limmu and Jimma; and Gibe-Jimma, from the forests of Santama to the southwest of Jimma town. These three Gibes are joined by Walga river that originates from the Amaya mountains, and at the lower course, by the Gojeb river that comes from the Mocha highland. The Gojeb divides the Oromo and Kafa ethnic groups. Then the Gibe takes another name, the Omo, before ending in the Lake Turkana (Rudolph).

3. The five Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe region were: Gomma, Jimma, Limmu, Gera and Guma. The first three will be discussed below. But Guma, located to the west of the Didesa river, and Gera, along the Gojeb valley, are not included.

4. Omotic here refers to the communities who live along the lower Omo valley and speak a group of eighteen related languages. These languages were earlier classified as part of the Cushitic language family, but currently linguists prefer to classify them as "Omotic," a separate language family, belonging to the Afro-asiatic group. See Harold C. Fleming, "Omotic Overview," and Edward J. Allen, "Kullo," in The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia (East Lansing, African Studies Center, 1976), ed, by M.Lionel Bender, pp.299-323, 324-350.

5. On Enarea see Werner J.Lange, History of the Southern Gonga (Southwestern Ethiopia) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1982), pp.17-49; Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

6. A brief description of the kingdom of Janjero in the early seventeenth century is given by Father Antonio Fernandez. See Almeida, "History of High Ethiopia or Abassia," in Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646, trans. and ed. by C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1954). On Bosha, see Werner J. Lange, History of the Southern Gonga, pp. 50-92.

7. With the exception of Enarea, the history and territorial extent of these pre-Oromo kingdoms remain largely unknown. We can locate only Enarea, with some degree of certainty, because of the existence of some written sources about its survival until the end of the seventeenth century. Gumar, Konch and Shonkora disappeared after the sixteenth century.

Examining the fragmentary sources in the chronicles of the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia, Merid W. Aregay located Konch, Gumar and Shonkora along the western edge of the upper Gibe river. Konch probably flourished around the Wamma river where there is still a hill known by the same name. To the south of Konch, Gumar extended probably from the edges of the Babbiya mountain in the south to the confluence of the first two Gibe rivers (main Gibe and Gibe-Limmu). The Gibe-Limmu seem to have formed Gumar's western boundary with Enarea. To the south of Gumar, there was another province called Shonkora. South of the Babbiya mountain and west of the Santama forest, flourished two other Omotic kingdoms: Bosha and Janjero. The latter dominated the mountain ranges overlooking the Gibe valley in the west; while Bosha's stronghold was the plain land south of the Gibe-Jimma. Before the sixteenth century, Bosha appears to have controlled most of the territory along the upper parts of the Gibe-Jimma. Between the sixteenth and the second half of the nineteenth century, Bosha was confined to a small area towards the confluence of the Gibe and the Gojeb rivers. See Merid Wolde- Aregay, "Political Geography of Ethiopia at the Beginning of Sixteenth Century," in IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici, vol. 1 (Rome, 1974), pp. 613-31.

8. Werner J. Lange, History of the Southern Gonga, pp.93-126; Girma Mengistu, "The Busassie of Anfillo, Qelem, Wellega: A Historical Study," B.A. Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, 1973.

9. For the processing of ensete, see Fecadu Gadamu, "Traditional Setting of the Kistane (Soddo) in Central Ethiopia," Paideuma, 32 (1986), pp.17-19.

10. Oral traditions suggest that coffee was abundant in the Gibe region even during the seventeenth century. But whether these forest coffee was truly "wild" or a plantation that reverted to wild state is still controversial. United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) experts who surveyed the coffee forests of Kafa region in the 1950s concluded that what was generally considered as wild coffee was part of an earlier plantation. See Pierre G. Sylvain, "Ethiopian Coffee - Its Significance to World Coffee Problems," Economic Botany, 12:2 (April-June, 1958), pp.111-139; H.Von Strenge, "Wild Coffee in Kaffa Province of Ethiopia," Tropical Agriculture, 33:4 (October, 1956), 297-301; Frederick G.Meyer, "Notes on Wild Coffea arabica from Southwestern Ethiopia, with some Historical Considerations,"

Economic Botany (1964), pp.136-151. Observation during my fieldwork indeed corroborates the view that cultivated coffee can very easily turn to a wild state. It was, for example, very difficult to distinguish plantations, abandoned during the last two decades, from the natural forest. For more details see chapter III.

11. Interview, Sheikh Mohammed Shifa Abba Bilo, February 20, 1992.

12. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe. See also H.S. Lewis, A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, 1830-1932 (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1965), p.35.

13. Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp. 51-58, 71-83.

14. Bahrey, "History of the Galla," in Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646; Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp.48-83.

15. Other Oromo groups include: the Tulama (central), Wollo (north), Arsi and Ittu (eastern), and Guji and Borana (south).

16. Low-lying fertile land, used for grazing and clan assemblies. See Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp.41-45.

17. On the gada system see Asmarom Legesse, Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society (New York: Free Press, 1973).

18. Father Antonio Fernandez, Jesuit missionary who visited the region in 1613, gives an interesting description of the settlement patterns. He observed Enarean settlements concentrated around mountain edges and forest zones, while the Oromo then occupied the open fields. Asma Giyorgis, late nineteenth century Shewan historian, also recorded traditions regarding Christians who took refuge on mountain-tops and in the forests when the Oromo occupied the land. In the plains of the upper Awash river, Asma wrote, the Oromo "established their metecca [medhicha] [settlement?] at a place where water was available but which had no people living on it. They found many such places, for the country had become a wilderness since the time of Gragn [Ahmed Ibrahim, d.1543])." Christians who lived in the forest zones, lived as out-laws, stealing the cattle of the Oromo, until they were integrated into the Oromo society through the mogassa (adoption) system. See Almeida, "The History of High Ethiopia or Abassia," pp.150-51; Asma Giyorgis, "Ya-Galla Tarik," trans. and ed., Bairu Tafla, Asma Giyorgis and His Work "History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Sawa," (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987), pp.708-13. On the Mogassa, see below.

19. On the role of hunting, see P. T. W.Baxter, "Giraffes and Poetry: Some Observations on Giraffe Hunting among the Boran," Paideuma, 32 (1986), pp. 45-63.

20. The mountains and the gorges provided Bosha and Janjero with strong natural defence against the Oromo. In the east and south they were protected by the Gibe gorge, and in the north, the mountains served as a barriers against Oromo penetration. The core political culture of Bosha and Janjero survived in isolated mountain ranges, where the people continued to practice their hoe agriculture of ensete and other crops until the end of the nineteenth century.

21. Due to the nature of our sources it is difficult to estimate the impact of the crisis on the population of Enarea. It is however plausible to say that the population was declining, in the seventeenth century probably owing to increased military confrontations, decreased food production and migration.

22. G.W.B. Huntingford, The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kaffa and Janjero (London: International Africa Institute, 1955); Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp. 114-123.

23. See below.

24. This refers to the adoption of a clan or a tribe by an Oromo clan. During the process, the initiate was renamed after the adopting group. So far, this system has received very little attention from cultural anthropologists. See also Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, p.21.

25. Ibid.

26. This also means "adoption," but apparently it is limited to individuals. See Arnauld d'Abbadie, "Douze Ans de Sejour dans la Haute-Ethiopie (Abyssinie)" (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vatican, 1980), in Studi e Testi, #286, pp.272-73; Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, p.21.

27. Jan Hultin, "Man and Land in Wollega, Ethiopia," Working Papers of the Department of Social Anthropology, #10, University of Gothenburg, April 1977.

28. Reference to the gabaro goes back to the early period of the Oromo migration. During the Bifole gada (mid-sixteenth century), Bahrey wrote that the Oromo made those whom they defeated their gabare (slaves/tenants?). The exact meaning of this term is not clear from Bahrey's description. It, however, implies a strong sense of obligation between the conquering Oromo and the defeated subjects. Even after adoption, the Borana ("pure" Oromo)/Gabaro ("assimilated" Oromo) dichotomy remained in popular memories of the people.

29. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Sur les Oromo, grande nation africaine designee souvant sous le nome de 'Galla'," Annales de Société Scientifique de Bruxelles (1880), pp. 167-182; Lambert Bartels, Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia - An Attempt to Understand (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1983); Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp, 6-9,22; Alessandro Triulzi, "The Saga of Makkoo Bilii: A Theme in Mac'a Oromoo History," Paideuma, 36 (1990), 319-327

30. L. Bartels, Oromo Religion, p.133.

31. In the 1840s, Antoine d'Abbadie collected traditions from merchants, elephant hunters, slaves and messengers of the Gibe kings. Although he had many merchants as his informants, d'Abbaddie rather suspected their testimonies particularly regarding market conditions and prices of goods. D'Abbadie was, however, more interested in geographical explorations than the political systems. See Antoine d'Abbadie, Géographie de l'Ethiopie; idem, "Letter to the editor," The Athenaeum, #1041, pp. 1056 (August 5, 1847).

32. Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, p.93.

33. For more details see Guluma Gemeda, "Gomma and Limmu," pp.36ff.

34. Leon des Avancheres to Giusseppe Ortalda, August 25, 1863, in G. Massaia, Lettere e Scritti Minor, Anni 1827-1889, 6 vols., ed. by Antonio Rossi (Rome, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1978), I, p.25.

35. C.J. Jaenen, "The Galla or Oromo of East Africa," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, VII: (1956), p. 165.

36. Bairu Tafla, "Four Ethiopian Biographies," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, VII:2 (1969), p.11. Gemeda Imana, personal communication.

37. G. Massaia, I Miei Trentacinque Anni di Missione in Alta Etiopia, 12 vols. (Rome: Tiporafica Mauzio, 1923-1926), III, p.60.

38. Bahry, "History of the Galla," pp. 116-7.

39. Almeida, "History of the High Ethiopia or Abassia," pp. 135, 137.

40. For the role of horses in warfare in Africa, see Jack Goody, Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.36,

41. Qabbiyye literally means "caught," that is, land claimed by a pioneer group. Among some Macha Oromo the pioneers were also regarded as dagal saqii ("forest openers"). Grazing cattle on the land or clearing the forest for cultivation also entitled the individual to the land. By grazing his cattle on the land, an individual could claim it as his dhoqee, for his cattle had fertilized the field by their (dhoqee - dung) or his chiraa (settlement). H.S. Lewis, A Galla Monarchy, p.50; Jan Hultin, "Man and Land in Wollega," p.1; Tesama Ta'a, "The Basis for Political Contradictions in Wollega: the Land Apportionment Act of 1910 and its Consequences," Northeast African Studies, VI: 1&2 (1984), pp.181-83.

42. Interview: Sheikh Mohammed Shifa Abba Bilo; See also Jan Hultin, "Man and Land," p.1.

43. For more details, see Jan Hultin, "Man and Land in Wollega," pp.4-10.

44. The term nagade means "trader," but among the Gibe Oromo it also refers to originally non-Oromo, equivalent of what other Macha Oromo call the gabaro.

45. "Late comers" apparently included Oromos who migrated to an area after others had already claimed the land. But through social and political reconstruction, even the gabaro who had previously been on the land were regarded as "late comers." See below.

46. Several Oromo proverbs suggest the seniors and juniors had unequal rights to family property. The following are three such examples.

(1)	Quxisuun boe fudhataa hangaftii moe fudhataa	The younger gets by weeping what the senior takes by force.
(2)	Quxisuun abbaa hindhaluu abbatu tare (dhamaae) cacabaa.	The younger can not inherit his father's property, he has to labor for himself.
(3)	Yo hangafitti doofee quxisuun karra dhaala" -	If the hangafa becomes foolish, the qutissu inherits the cattle.

Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe; Abba Dula Abba Magal; Abba Dura Abba Bor; Abba Dula Abba Goddu. See also George Cotter, Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People of Ethiopia and Kenya (Queenstone, Canada, Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), p.6.

47. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Les Oromo," pp. 167-180.

48. Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp. 121-22; Jan Hultin, "Man and Land in Wollega," pp. 20-21.

49. Initially, before the frontier was closed for migration, the young and less privileged individuals always had the option of moving to new areas where they could establish themselves as qabbiyye holders. But in some directions, like the Gibe region, migration was checked at an early stage because of the forest ecology and stronger resistance from the Omotic groups.

50. G. Massaia, I Miei Trentacinque anni di Missione, III, p.116.

51. For more details on the rise of Bakare, see Tesema Ta'a, "The Oromo of Wollega: A Historical Survey to 1910," M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1980; and for Gama Moras, see Massaia, I Meie Trentacinque anni di Missione, III. pp. 38-42; on Bofo Bokku see below.

52. Guluma Gemeda, "The Process of State Formation in the Gibe Region: the Case of Gomma and Jimma," Proceededings of the Second Annual Seminar of the Department of History (Addis Ababa University, 1984).

53. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, pp. 239-240.

54. I. Guidi, "Strofe e brevi testi Amarici," Mitteilungen des Seminars fur Orientalische Sprachen, 10 (1907), P.181.

55. Many ruling dynasties elsewhere in the region claimed similar foreign origins. A ruling dynasty in Wallaita, an Omotic kingdom, for example, claimed northern Ethiopian origin. Similarly, since the thirteenth century, the Christian kings of Ethiopia claimed descent from King Solomon of Israel, and hence called "Solomonic" dynasty.

56. Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp. 109-110.

57. After Menelik's conquest (see Chapter III) of the Gibe region in the 1880s, the importance of northern Ethiopian origin had gained more importance.

58. Mottumma means state and motti, king. The term drives from the verb mouu - "to win". It is not clear to what extent it is related to a pre-Oromo title of "Motlami" of the kingdom of Damot, a kingdom that flourished to the north of the Gibe region before the fourteenth century.

59. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe.

60. Ibid.

61. For more details on this issue see chapter III below.

62. There are several reasons for the confusion in Cecchi's kinglist. The three names _ Odda, Allayo, and Abba Mano _ that Cecchi thought represented three persons referred only to one person. According to the recently collected traditions, Odda Allayo was the childhood name of Abba Mano, who took another name when he became king. Such naming practices are common among the Oromo in the Gibe region. It was also possible that Cecchi's informants purposely gave him a longer list to give the impression of an older dynasty.

63. Interview: Sheikh Hassen Sheikh Umar, Jimma, September 13 & 14 1982; Haji Abba Jabal Abba Digga, Jimma, October 3, 1982, February 1985.

64. Interview: Sheikh Hassen Sheikh Umar.

65. Ibid.

66. Interview: Hajji Abba Jabal Abba Digga.

67. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, p. 537.

68. Earlier traditions that were collected by European travellers attributed the origin of the kingdom of Limmu to descendants of two Portuguese adventurers who came to Ethiopia during the Wars of Ahmed Gragn (1540-43). According to this tradition, two Portuguese soldiers called Sigaro and Sapera remained behind after the war was over. Later they settled in the Gibe region, where they assimilated into the Oromo society and became the leaders of two rival clans named after them. After some years of rivalry, Sapera finally emerged victorious and established a dynasty that ruled Limmu in the nineteenth century. At present, however, there is no tradition that can corroborate the Portuguese origin of the Sapera dynasty. Members of the two clans do not have any memory of Portuguese descent. This casts some doubt about the validity of the earlier tradition. Dramatic and very sensational as it might have been, the presence of foreigners among a homogenous group is unlikely to have been forgotten. For the nineteenth century tradition, see A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, p.157.

69. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Nouvelles Acquisition Francaises" (NAF) 21300; see also M. Abir, "The Emergence and Consolidation of the Monarchies of Enarea and Jimma in the first half of the nineteenth century," Journal of African History, VI:2 (1965), 201-19; Mohammed Hasssen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp.103-105.

70. Interview: Abba Dula Abba Magal, September 26, 1982.

71. A piece of skin cut from an animal killed for a special (ritual) ceremony and is hung on the wrist for a few days (usually five days) or until the ceremony is over. See Martial de Salviac, Un Peuple Antique au pays de Ménélik, Les Galla: Grand Nation Africaine (Paris H. Oudin, 1901), p.195, Asma, Asma Giyorgis and His Work, p. 133.

72. Interview: Abba Dula Abba Magal.

73. Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, p.93. For earlier attempts at dating the rise of the Gibe Monarchies, see M. Abir, The Era of the Princes.

74. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, p. 240.

75. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe.

CHAPTER III

COFFEE AND THE EMERGENCE OF COMMERCIAL NETWORKS, C.1840S-1880S

This chapter examines the nature of agricultural production, local and long distance trade and social class formation in the Gibe region during the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century this region witnessed significant population increase, surplus food production, and centralized political organization. The last development also facilitated the emergence of a local market and the development of trade. This chapter in particular focuses on coffee cultivation and its entry into local and long distance trade alongside such commodities as ivory, civet and slaves. Trade in these commodities, originating mainly from the Gibe valley, linked the Ethiopian region to the commercial networks of the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and subsequently to the global economy.

Coffee Cultivation and Trade Before the 1880s

The Gibe region is widely accepted as the home of Coffea arabica,[1] from where it spread, first to Arabia, Southeast Asia, and then to Latin America. Coffea arabica thrives very well at an altitude of 1500 to 2000 meters and an average annual temperature of 18-25 centigrade. It also requires an average annual rainfall of 1500-2550 mm., which is evenly distributed throughout the year with only a brief

dry period before the flowering season. An ideal soil for coffee cultivation is deep slightly acidic, with free drainage but reasonable water retention.[2] A good combination of altitude, rainfall, temperature and soil for coffee cultivation exists in the Gibe region. Owing to such favorable ecological conditions, Coffea arabica grew profusely in the forests of the Gibe valley long before its commercial value was recognized.

Commercial cultivation of coffee requires time and attention. First, small plants should be raised in nurseries for about ten months, and then transferred to a permanent field. Preparing permanent fields requires clearing the forest and digging holes to accommodate the seedlings. Thereafter, planted coffee requires occasional weeding, manuring, pruning, and disease control. Coffee starts bearing cherries between three and five years after transplanting. If maintained properly, a coffee tree can last for several generations, but production declines with age, unless pruning is practiced.

Coffee harvesting and processing also consumes long working days. The picking season lasts for two to four months depending on the rainfall pattern for the year and the availability of labor. To obtain good quality coffee, ripening cherries should be collected when they turn red. Then, the cherries are pulped, washed and dried before being sent to national and international markets for sale. Coffee

destined for foreign markets is graded and packed according to specified standard and quality. At different stages, from planting to marketing, coffee requires a steady supply of labor. Both the quantity and quality of the crop could be affected unless the necessary labor is available to handle it. Coffee cultivation, according to Mesfin Sileshi, provincial governor and coffee planter, "could only be handled by a rich person for a poor man could not attend to its constant demands for labor."[3]

The existence of cultivated coffee in the Gibe valley as early as the seventeenth century is supported by oral traditions.[4] In this case, Enarea and other Omotic communities in the region had cultivated coffee probably earlier than the seventeenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century, cultivated coffee was found around Lake Tana. Prutky, a Franciscan missionary who visited Gondar in 1752, found old coffee trees "which produce large crop [and] sold cheaply."[5] As contact between Enarea and Gondar was close during the early seventeenth century, the Lake Tana (Zage) coffee probably came from the Gibe valley.[6]

Despite favorable climatic and ecological conditions, the Oromo in the Gibe region, however, long remained reluctant to grow coffee. Surprisingly, we encounter some early ambivalence about coffee. Some Oromo traditions, for example, portray coffee as a sacred crop. According to a tradition collected by Lambert Bartels from western Wollega,

> Coffee is our great medicine. From among all trees it was blessed by Waqa [God], blessed by his tears. All plants grow from rain, but [originally] the coffee plant sprouted from the tears of Waqa.'

Because of such tradition, coffee is needed for some religious activities and ritual ceremonies. Many rituals, for example, involved the Buna Qala ceremony,[8] which was wide-spread among the Oromo. The Buna Qala was served on several occasions: at weddings, religious holidays, child birth and even at the birth of a new calf or annual thanksgiving ceremonies. On such important occasions, coffee beans, roasted in butter, were mixed with barley or other cereals and served to the guardian spirits and the people who gathered for the ceremony. This practice indicates that coffee was not only consumed as food but also served a special role in the religious and ritual ceremonies.

On the other hand, coffee is also believed to destroy cattle. As pastoralists, the Oromo, loved and protected their cattle more than any other domestic animals. During their settlement in the Gibe valley, some clans reportedly abandoned their original gabbiyye, when they discovered "wild" coffee trees on the land. A sub-clan who originally settled near the Sadacha forest to the northwest of Jimma town, later on abandoned the land because it had some "wild"

coffee trees.' In general, there was a wide-spread belief that coffee and cattle do not thrive together at the same place. Apparently, it was for this reason that Oromo peasants were initially reluctant to plant coffee.

This cultural ambivalence, however, raises some questions about the cultivation and consumption of coffee by the Oromo. For example, if coffee was feared, why was it used for religious/ritual ceremonies? How could a crop supposedly given to the people by god be considered harmful to their cattle? At least two explanations can be offered to these questions. First, despite the claims that it was given by Waqa (god), the Oromo did not probably adopt coffee before their settlements in forest areas of the Gibe valley. Thereafter, they probably incorporated coffee into their religious rituals mainly because of fear of the plant than from love of it. For example, the symbolic "killing/ slaughtering" of coffee for certain important occasions and its mixing with butter, which comes from a cow that coffee is believed to destroy, might signify the union of opposing elements for the welfare of the society. After its symbolic death and unity with cows' product (butter), coffee presaged the continuity of life. Therefore, the buna qala ceremony and the use of coffee at religious rituals grew out of the desire to integrate the ambivalent attitudes.

Secondly, the myth that coffee destroys cattle was probably rooted in the pastoral ideology of the Oromo which

preferred cattle over other kinds of property. This myth could have also been invented by the rich cattle-owning elite and the peasants who did not want to plant coffee at the urging of their rulers. The wealthy cattle-owners were initially reluctant to shift to coffee because it competed with their cattle breeding for land and labor.[11] Similarly, coffee was not attractive to the peasants either because it consumed labor and time without immediate rewards. It increased their workload and threatened to reduce their subsistence production. Cattle breeding needed open grass land with sufficient water. But coffee thrived well in the forest zone where shade was available. Thus a farmer required different fields to keep cattle and to cultivate coffee in abundance. As pastoralists, before the shift to agriculture took place, the Gibe Oromo exploited the grass land for cattle breeding more than the forest zone for the cultivation of tree crops.

Thus, in the Gibe valley, the initiative for growing coffee was taken first by the rulers rather than by the cattle-rich elite and the peasants. Given the difficulties facing slave trade during the second quarter of nineteenth century, and probably informed by merchants about the prospects of coffee trade in the Red Sea region, Oromo monarchs of the Gibe valley developed the interest to grow coffee. In the 1830s, Abba Rebbu Abba Bogibo (d.1856), king of Gomma, for example, established strict regulations for

coffee cultivation. He made office-holding contingent upon the elites willingness or effort to cultivate coffee. He ordered all district governors, warriors and court dignitaries to plant coffee trees if they wanted to retain their political positions or to enjoy royal favors. Those who failed to comply with his orders were denied access to the court and political positions.[11] Even though some of the dignitaries were initially reluctant to introduce coffee to their fields, they complied with Abba Rebu's orders and planted the crop. In turn, they also encouraged their subjects to plant coffee.[12]

At the same time, although not as committed as Abba Rebbu of Gomma, other kings also fostered coffee cultivation. By the mid-nineteenth century, Limmu was already known for its coffee plantations.[13] In the 1840s, King Abba Bogibo (r.1825-61) possessed "a vast field [which] was entirely devoted to coffee," and Saqa, the political and commercial center of the kingdom, was regarded as a "great emporium" in the region.[14] Unlike the case of Gomma, coffee was relatively a royal monopoly in Limmu. Abba Bogibo owned most of the coffee plantations to which he assigned royal slaves. Female slaves were responsible for picking and storing his ripe coffee berries. In the month of December, the king's slaves left Saqa in the morning; worked on the plantation during the whole day; and returned to the capital in the evening, loaded with the coffee they had collected

during the day.[15] The royal coffee was then dried and stored in the king's treasury until it was sold to caravan merchants. From Saqa it was taken to the Basso and Gondar markets or to the Shewan market of Aliyu Amba and sold again to merchants from the Sudan, the Red Sea Coast or Harar and Gulf of Aden respectively.[16]

In the neighboring kingdom of Jimma, coffee cultivation was also sponsored by the rulers. There, it was King Abba Jifar I (r.1830-54), sometimes regarded as the real founder of the kingdom, who is credited for initiating the cultivation of coffee. In the 1840s Abba Jifar was reported to have planted many coffee trees.[17] But compared to Limmu, Jimma's coffee plantations were quite modest in the 1840s and 1850s. Beke remarked that Jimma supplied only "small quantities" of coffee for trade.[18] Abba Jifar's plantations of the mid-nineteenth century, however, served as basis for the future development of cultivation in the kingdom.

Outside the Gibe region, by the mid-nineteenth century, coffee was also grown in Harar. According to Richard Burton who visited the walled town in 1854, garden coffee grew around the town, while the greater part of it came from the region of Chercher, about seven-days journey to the west. As in the Gibe valley, coffee farms near the town of Harar were strictly controlled by the emir, who monopolized both the production and trade of coffee. Very often, he had also "forbidden the Harash, or coffee cultivators, to travel lest

the art of tending the tree be lost."[19] Nevertheless, there was sufficient product for the emir sometimes withheld coffee from the market of Berbera "fearing to glut" the coastal market.[20]

Coffee Trade: International and Local Conditions

Long before the mid-nineteenth centry, as a source of valuable trade items, the Gibe valley was part of a wider commercial network, including north and central Ethiopia and the Red and Gulf Aden region. Before the seventeenth century, the kingdom of Enarea was quite famous for its gold trade with the Ethiopian Christian kingdom in the north.[21] But owing to political circumstances, its trade fluctuated very often between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the wars of Ahmed Gragn (1529-43) and the Oromo migrations disrupted the production of commercial items, old patterns of trade and trade routes. The political fragmentation of the Christian kingdom, particularly the loss of the rich provinces like Enarea to the south of the Blue Nile, led to the decline of long distance trade. Finally, the trade of the Gibe valley declined probably because of the long confrontations between the Oromo and the kingdom of Enarea and other Omotic principalities during the seventeenth century.

At the same time, the trading ports of the Red Sea were affected by the rivalry between the Turkish and European powers from the early sixteenth century onwards. The Turkish-Portuguese rivalry disrupted the old established Arab and Indian commercial networks in the Red Sea area; and in the seventeenth century, the emergence of the Dutch as dominant group in the trading system of the Indian Ocean further eroded the profit margins of the local merchants. The ascendancy of the Dutch in the Indian Ocean trade ruined Arab and Turkish merchants and undermined the revenue of Ottoman Sultan. The Dutch merchants diverted the southeast Asian spice trade away from the Red Sea ports to the Indian-Atlantic ocean route. The Dutch also dominated the coffee trade of Mocha, a port city of Yemen. To maximize its profit from the trade of Southeast Asia, the Dutch East Indian Company tied the coffee trade of the Red Sea with India.

Coffee that was bought at the Red Sea ports was first taken to India and partly exchanged for Indian commodities. Then, together with other south Asian commodities, the remaining coffee was taken to Europe through the Indian-Atlantic Ocean route, relegating the Red Sea ports to commercial unimportance.

One lasting impact of the Dutch involvement in the Red Sea coffee trade was their successful introduction of coffee cultivation into their Asian colonies and then to the Dutch

West Indies in the early eighteenth century. Before they gave up their monopoly over the coffee trade of Mocha in 1712, Dutch merchants successfully smuggled coffee plants from Yemen and began cultivation in Java.[22] After this period, coffee plantations were established in Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and South America and effectively ended the monopoly of Mocha over the world coffee trade.

The commercial situation in the Red Sea region remained depressed throughout the eighteenth century. British domination of India and the Indian Ocean trade from the mid-eighteenth century on further undermined the international trade of the Red Sea area. The commercial monopoly of Indian Ocean trade by the British East Indian Company (BEIC) seriously curtailed the activities of Arab and Indian merchants who traditionally traded with the Ethiopian region. According to Rev. John Ovington, who was one time chaplain of the British East Indian Company (1690-93), as early as the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Mocha's trade was undermined by the policy of BEIC who confiscated the commodities of Indian merchants when war broke out between the two in 1686. The hostility ruined the business of several Indian, Turkish and Arab merchants.

In 1691 alone, English vessels confiscated merchandize valued to L120,000 from Indian and Arab merchants who "traded between Mocha and Suratt".[23] In the eighteenth century, the coffee trade of the Red Sea region became the

virtual monopoly of the British East India Company, which essentially operated in the same way the Dutch company did in the seventeenth century. The BEIC supplied Indian clothes and spices in exchange for Mocha coffee. The company's vessels carried coffee round the Cape of Good Hope to markets in Western Europe. The monopoly not only ruined Arab and Indian merchants but also inflated the price of commodities originating from the Red Sea area.

Without benefitting the producers, the trading system increased the price of coffee for Western European consumers partly because of the high cost of transportation involved. In the late-eighteenth century, for example, the East Indian Company delivered Mocha coffee to England at L10.3s.8d/cwt. If not shipped to India first, but taken directly to England by English merchant vessels or by Arab merchants through Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea, the same amount of coffee would have cost at only 4 pounds.[24] Apparently, the monopoly of the East Indian Company on the coffee trade of the Red Sea region discouraged the expansion of coffee production and trade in the region in general.

In the eighteenth century, the political situation in the Ethiopian region also did not encourage coffee production and long distance trade. In the north, regional war-lords fought frequently over the control of the royal and commercial city of Gondar and the trade routes leading from the interior to the Red Sea port of Massawa or to the

Funj Sultanate in west. During the period known as the Zemene Mesafint (1769-1855), none of the regional lords was strong enough to provide security for merchants along the routes to encourage trade in the region.

In the south, frequent warfare between the Oromo kingdoms and principalities often blocked the movement of merchants and goods. A poor transportation system also limited the volume of trade reaching the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean ports. For this reason, prices of coffee and ivory were much lower in the Gibe valley than at Gondar or the Red Sea.[25] At Saqa market, for example, D'Abbadie claims that coffee was sold by small measures, usually a horn cup holding about a pound and some times by a goat skin. During the cheapest seasons, four or five pounds were sold for an amole (salt bar).[26] Even at Harar which had better access to the ports on the Gulf Aden, a parcel of 27 pounds cost only one-fourth of a dollar during Burton's visit, while a camel carrying 12 parcels (324 pounds) to Berbera was rented for five dollars. Because of the high cost of transportation, Burton remarked, "the profit did not repay [the] labor and risk" involved in the business.[27] Such conditions therefore, discouraged the development of the coffee trade until the second half the nineteenth century.

But the situation was changing both locally and internationally during the first half of the nineteenth century. Internationally, the East Indian Company started to

face some competition from a new group of merchants. In the 1790s, the Company purchased less than six thousand bales of coffee from the Red Sea; while on the average, about sixteen thousand bales of coffee passed through the Arabian port of Jedda to Alexandria and the Mediterranean region.[28] During his visit to Red Sea region in 1804-5 Valentia obtained the following data.

Table 3.1 Coffee Export from the Red Sea Region, 1795-1801

Year	Amount (in bales of 305lbs each)
1795	2154 (2100 bought by BEIC)
1796	2000 (all by BEIC)
1797	130 (bought by private merchants)
1798	12 (bought by private merchants)
1799	1866 (bought by private merchant)
1800	6440 (1000 bought by BEIC)
1801	1340 (176 bought BEIC)

Source: (Lord) Valentia, Voyages, II, p.364.

After 1802, besides the competition from the Arab and Indian merchants, the BEIC also faced challenges from American coffee merchants. In 1802 U.S. merchant ship

reached the Red Sea to buy Mocha coffee. The venture resulted in a huge profit and soon attracted other American merchants to the area. The increased competition between the European, American and Indian merchants further undermined the monopoly of the BEIC and the Ottoman Sultan. The competition was immediately reflected in the price of coffee sold at the Red Sea ports. By 1805, the price of coffee at Mocha jumped from fifty-six to seventy-five dollars per bale.[29]

The entry of American merchants into the coffee trade of the Red Sea coincided with the changing political situation in the region. With the rise of Mohammed Ali (d.1849) to power in Egypt and his military victories in the Arabian peninsula and the Sudan in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, political stability came to the Red Sea region. Arabian markets revived[30] and increased their demands for commodities such as gold, ivory, slaves, civet and coffee.[31] In 1805, Henery Salt observed that the Abyssinian trade with Arabia was "considerable."[32]

Local and Long Distance Trade

Unlike the situation in Abyssinia where warfare and raiding weakened agricultural productivity and trade, the establishment of monarchical rule in the Gibe region favored the development of agriculture and the expansion of local trade. Old markets revived with the increased agricultural

productivity and the rise of centralized political organizations; new markets emerged near clan meeting places.

Depending on the location, availability of certain items and local political conditions, markets gradually attracted different groups of people. Through time, these markets developed into hierarchical positions. By the second half of the nineteenth century, a network of principal and secondary markets connected villages throughout the Gibe valley with the long distance routes that linked the region with Gondar in the north and Shewa in the east.

The principal markets received local supplies and disseminated imported goods through numerous secondary markets. The secondary markets were distinguished from the principal ones by the nature of commodities they handled and the number and the type of people attending the market. Local markets primarily served the needs of the surrounding population who came from a distance of half a day or less. The essential feature of the local markets was absence or rarity of ivory and slaves which were destined for long distance trade. Gold and other precious metals had also very little demand. Instead, grain and other agricultural products were exchanged. Coffee was sold in small quantities, while salt was needed mainly in smaller pieces to facilitate the transactions. In general, local markets

were more subsistence oriented and catered the immediate needs of the farming population.

Table 3.2 Local Markets in the Gibe Valley in the Nineteenth Century

Market	place	day	attendance and items sold
Billo	Nonno	Thursday	Attended by 6-7,000 people. Items sold: cattle, sheep, coffee, grain, butter. vegetables and local manufactures (clothes).[33]
Omo	Janjero	Thursday	Items sold: cotton, slaves,cotton clothes (local manufactures), horses, mules, cattle, salt. pieces of iron ("marchu," also used as medium of exchange), salt. Attended by merchants from Limmu, Amaya, Gurage, Kullo, Konta, Kambata.[34]
Qumbi	Jimma	Tuesday	attended by Gurage, Janjero, and Oromos from the surrounding area. Items sold: coffee, cattle, salt, honey.[35]

Table 3.3 Major Markets between the Blue Nile and Kafa during the Nineteenth Century

Market	Place	Day the of week	attendance and items sold
Asandabo	Guduru	Monday	A transit market between Basso market in Gojjam and the Gibe valley. Attended by about 100,000 in the mid-nineteenth century."
Billo	Leqa	Tuesday	attended by merchants from Fazogli (Sudan), Dappo, Leqa-Naqamte, Limmu, Jimma and Kafa. Items sold: coffee, slaves, gold and gold dust, salt, beads, cotton and cotton clothes."
Hirmata	Jimma	Thursday	attended by merchants from Kullo, Contab, Kucha, Janjero, Gera, Gomma, Gumma, Shewa, Gojjam, Gondar and Tigre. Items sold: all kinds of agricultural products , particularly coffee and cotton, local and foreign manufactured goods, civet, ivory, slaves (about 300 on market days), mules and horses."
Saqa	Limmu	Thursday	attended by merchants from Gondar, Adwa, Guduru, and from all over the Gibe region. Considered as "great emporium" in the mid-nineteenth century. Had a population of about 12,000 in the 1840s. Items sold: coffee, ivory, civet, honey, cotton, slaves and manufactured goods."
Tiffa	Kafa	every 4th day	Attended by merchants from the all over the Omo valley and the Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe region. Other merchants also came from Gondar, Gojjam, Guduru and Leqa. It had distinct merchant quarters. Major items sold: coffee, slaves, civet, ivory, and coriander."

Table 3.3 (continued)

Qabiena	Gurage	Saturday	Attended by merchants from Jimma, Limmu, Gondar, Wollo, Shewa and the surrounding areas.[41]

Apparently, the bigger markets operated at different level. Unlike the village level markets, principal markets were both competitive and complementary in nature. The relationship between the markets can be understood from their spatial distribution and the pattern of the weekly cycles.[42] Although none of the markets specialized in any one commodity, some items were found more abundantly in one area than in another. In the 1850s, for example, Jimma sold its grain to Kafa in exchange for coffee which it partly resold to caravan merchants coming from the north.[43] Kafa needed Jimma's grain to supplement its ensete bread.[44] The markets along the route connecting Hirmata (Jimma) and Bonga (Kafa) were arranged in such a way that caravan merchants could attend them almost every day of their journey between the biggest markets.[45]

Markets were also competitive, but at different levels. Smaller markets competed among themselves, but they served as sources of supply for the bigger caravan merchants. Similarly, bigger markets sought the long distance caravan merchants. The competition between the biggest market of

each kingdom can be seen from the choice of market days in the weekly cycles.

Thursday was, for example, a major market day for almost all the kingdoms.[“] Its choice as a favored market day was probably a deliberate decision by the rulers who attempted to attract merchants away from their rivals. The competition between Saqa (Limmu) and Hirmata (Jimma) markets is, for example, quite evident. Both markets were held on Thursday, forcing merchants to choose only one of them every week. In the 1840s and 1850s, the rulers of the two kingdoms were also engaged in a serious struggle to control the major market centers and the trade routes that connected the Gibe region with Gondar in the north, Shewa in the east, and the Omotic kingdoms in the south. The emerging importance of the long distance trade intensified this competition.

The Role of Coffee in Local Trade and Politics

To strengthen their respective positions, Limmu and Jimma fought over a territory between the Janjero and the Hagalo mountains inhabited mainly by the Badi-Fola sub-clan[”] For Jimma this territory served as natural outlet to the markets of the Gurage and Shewa. Control of this territory also enhanced Jimma's trade with Kullo, Konta, Walaita and other Omotic kingdoms of the lower Omo valley. The Gibe-Jimma valley also grew good cotton, which Jimma needed for local consumption and for long distance trade.

On the other hand, Limmu also needed the same territory to maintain access to the markets of the Omo valley in the south. In order to retain its commercial monopoly, Limmu exploited the resistance of the Badi clan to the ruling Diggo dynasty of Jimma. The Badi-Fola who inhabited the area around Afata were the strongest rivals of the Diggo dynasty. During the early period of rivalry between Jimma and Limmu, the Badi-Fola sub-clan allied with the latter. But, after a long struggle, Jimma subdued the Badi-Fola and annexed the contested territory.

By the 1870s the Diggo dynasty of Jimma extended its rule to the district of Abalti and effectively cut-off Limmu from the markets in the Omo valley. After its expansion towards Abalti, Jimma also secured a direct route to the Gurage and Shewa markets east of the Gibe river. Its victory in the 1860s and 1870s also enabled Jimma to acquire fertile agricultural lands along the Gibe River that produced food crops, cotton and coffee. In the southeast, Jimma defeated and incorporated Bosha (Garo) in the 1860s.

Meanwhile, Jimma was also at war with Gera and Gomma in the west. As in the east, Jimma for a long time sought to incorporate the kingdoms of Gera and Gomma. But here it was not so lucky. Through regional alliances and with small but effective armies both kingdoms resisted Jimma's attempts. But, in the 1870s, Jimma somehow acquired important coffee forest of Gembe from Gomma. Located on the border between

Jimma and Gomma, the rich coffee forests of Gembe and Choche were relatively neglected during the early nineteenth century. With the growing importance of coffee trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the control of these lands became very crucial for both Jimma and Gomma. According to one informant:

> The land around Gembe once belonged to Gomma; but during the reign of Abba Gomol [king of Jimma, d.1878], Jimma secretly built houses in this forest. The land was then a mogga [unsettled frontier land]. Abba Gomol ordered his subjects to build houses [at Gembe]. These houses were built during the night to avoid being seen by the people of Gomma. They also used old building materials to make houses look like old settlements. When the new settlements were discovered on the mogga (frontier, uninhabited land), Gomma asked Jimma to dismantle the houses. But Jimma refused to evacuate. In this case, a battle was averted because rulers of the neighboring kingdoms mediated a settlement. At a council, attended by the kings of Gera, Guma and Limmu, Jimma argued that the land belong to her because she already owned settlements over the land. Gomma on the other hand argued that the land was her original gabbiyye. After evaluating both claims, the leaders decided that Jimma should retain the contested land, because "Land possession meant houses, and without settlement land belongs to god."[48]

Even though Gomma retained most the Choche forest from which it obtained coffee seedlings for its plantations, Jimma acquired a portion of the forest and added it to its coffee district of Manna. In the 1870s, Jimma had already gained valuable agricultural land and important market centers in the Gibe valley. On the other hand, Limmu, its main rival, was losing significantly in the northeast. The Hagalo mountains and particularly the Nonno plains to the

east of the Gibe river, which Limmu had coveted for a long time, were lost in the 1860s and 1870s. After the death of Abba Bogibo in September 1861, the pastoral Nonno successfully resisted Limmu's expansion and reversed its previous victories. During the next two decades, Nonno not only regained lost territories but also raided occasionally into the interior of Limmu. Internally, its warrior elite fought over the coffee lands. Abba Bogibo I (r. 1882-86), relocated some farmers from Sadacha forests in the southwest to the lowlands in northern Limmu mainly to control their coffee trees."[49] Trade in general, later coffee trade in particular, contributed to social class formation and conflicts.

Local Trade and the Rise of the Afcala

Agricultural productivity, evolution of monarchical rule and the emergence of local markets among the Gibe Oromo gave rise to a small group of Oromo traders called Afcala.[50] Oral traditions and mid-nineteenth century travelers' accounts suggest that the Afcala were junior members of the Oromo families, ex-slaves and servants of the long distance merchants who turned to trade when the conditions for local trading started to improve by the second half of the eighteenth century. The practice of primogeniture among the Oromo, as indicated earlier, limited the chance of junior members to share family property. Juniors who were denied

most of the agricultural lands and a good part of the family wealth, turned, therefore, to trading as an alternative means of accumulating wealth.[51] Thus the Afcala were mostly junior family members who had limited access to land.[52] Obviously, it was the development of agriculture and trade in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that facilitated the emergence of this small, yet dynamic, group of indigenous merchants.

The rise of the Afcala is an interesting case. Initially, these traders had very little capital, for their activities were limited to local markets within a small radius. Moving very quickly between these market places, they were able to build enough capital to enable them to venture to distance location in search of marketable commodities and better prices for the items they collected. Those who started out working for established merchants, used their savings to launch their own independent business.

By the early nineteenth century, the Afcala served as a major link between the Oromo and Omotic societies south of the Blue Nile and the Christians to the north. They supplied agricultural and forest products from the Gibe valley to local consumers and long distant merchants in Gojam, Gondar and Shewa. They collected commodities like ivory, civet, gold, coffee and slaves from smaller and far off markets and exchanged them for salt (amole), imported cotton clothes and beads at Basso market just north of the

Blue Nile. In the early 1840s, Charles T. Beke observed the interaction of the Oromo merchants with the northern Ethiopian (Muslim and Christian) merchants at Basso. He saw these Oromo merchants conducting business through intermediaries, or brokers, who taxed both the sellers and buyers.[33] Although the involvement of the brokers undoubtedly reduced their profit margins, through speed and local connections, the Afcala made successful business ventures every year.

The key to Afcala success was the quick turn over of their enterprise. Their merchandize was very small; but wherever they went, they bought and sold and maximized their profits through quick turnover. After selling their goods at Basso market in Gojam, they returned very quickly to the south with easily disposable items like salt, cotton clothes and beads. Secondly, the small Afcala caravans travelled faster. According to Antoine d'Abbadie, who accompanied one group of these traders between Gojjam and the Gibe region in the early 1840s, the Afcala completed the trip between Basso and Saqa, a distance of 150 miles, in seven days, while it took the bigger caravan at least a month to travel the same distance.[34] Thus, the Afcala made several trips during the year, while the bigger merchants mounted only one trip. Moreover, it was much easier for the Afcala to detour around toll gates and avoid dangerous and risky spots.

Finally, the network of kinsmen and relatives helped them to operate independent of the local rulers. But wherever possible, they also welcomed the patronage of political leaders. Serving partly as commercial agents, and some times as messengers of the chiefs, they consolidated their ties with the political elites. Abba Bogibo (d.1861) of Limmu used these merchants both as political and commercial agents. In 1840s, for example, he sent two merchants called Dawd, a native of Limmu, and Galati Gabaya, to Anfillo for a commercial expedition.[55]

Despite a spectacular success in the early stages, the long term prosperity of the Afcala was hampered by the competition from another merchant group called Jabarti.[56] The Jabarti were mainly Muslim merchants who dominated long distance trade in the Ethiopian region. With limited access to land in Christian Ethiopia, Muslims specialized in commerce. Among the Christians, where they were a minority, their position was precarious. But Christian chiefs protected the Jabarti because they handled their commercial affairs. At the Red Sea coast and in Arabia, where Muslims predominated, the Jabarti had the advantage of being Muslim while conducting commerce.

To the Gibe valley, the Jabarti brought amole,[57] beads of various colors, cotton clothes and metal utensils; and on return, they carried coffee, civet, ivory, slaves, honey, coriander to the north. After the penetration of the

Jabarti into the Gibe valley, the Afcala moved further to the west and south, to local markets outside the reach of the big caravan merchants. They, for example, collected trade items from the markets of Dappo, west of the Didessa river, or even went as far west as Anfillo."

The big caravan merchants encountered some obstacles too. The nature of their activities were, for example, less flexible. First, their business was closely tied to the bigger market centers along the caravan routes. Travelling together, mainly for security reasons, they glutted the market very easily. On their arrival, major trading centers were overstocked by commodities that the customers could not consume immediately. For this reason they spent several months selling off their commodities. It also took equally long time to collect enough supplies for the return trip. When Omar Baduri, one of the biggest Jabarti merchants from Harqiqo, near Massawa, brought merchandise valued at twenty six-thousand amole, to Jiren (Jimma) in the early 1840s, he had to stay for almost two years to sell all his goods and buy ivory, civet, slaves and coffee for his return trip to the Red Sea port. Although he had employed several agents to sell and buy commodities for him at the markets of Saqa, Gombota (Guma) and Bonga (Kafa), he had to stay so long because the market was glutted."

Secondly, the bigger caravan merchants were highly dependent for their security on local rulers who

occasionally restricted their movements. They were frequently halted on the road when conflicts broke out among local communities and even during peaceful times, they were often stopped at several toll gates to negotiate favorable customs dues. These patterns undermined the merchants' chances for profit making and capital accumulation.

At the early stage, working under such circumstances, both the Afcala and the Jabarti cooperated.[40] When their activities were limited largely to the markets north of the Blue Nile, the Jabarti depended heavily on the Afcala for commodities from the Gibe region; similarly, the latter received salt and other trade items from the Jabarti merchants and distributed them to local consumers in the Gibe region. The Afcala rarely travelled beyond Basso in the north and Aliyu Amba in the east partly because the Jabarti provided a ready market for their goods.[41] Thus until the mid-nineteenth century such complementary relationship characterized the commercial network between the Afcala traders from the Gibe Valley and Jabarti in northern Ethiopia.

As security conditions improved and trade expanded, the Jabarti extended their commercial networks deeper into the Gibe valley. Instead of waiting for the Afcala traders at Basso, north of the Blue Nile, or at Saqa in Limmu, the Jabarti penetrated to Jimma and Kafa markets by mid-nineteenth century. Thus, as trade and commercial networks

expanded in the second half of the nineteenth century the activities of the Afcala were restricted. The penetration of the Jabarti into the Gibe region turned the complementary relationship with the Afcala into competition. Operating with bigger capital the Jabarti pushed the Afcala out of the commercial networks by the end of the nineteenth century. Fortunately, by then, many of Afcala had already acquired substantial capital to buy land and settle down as respected soressa (dignitaries). They received also property from the rulers in return for their commercial services or bought land from the money they earned during their commercial adventures. Some also acquired political offices. Thus, although short lived, the commercial adventures and the prosperity of the Afcala had a very important impact on class formation in the Gibe region. By turning to trade they earned economic and social prestige which in turn enabled them to join the rank of the emerging landowning elite.

The commercial networks of the Afcala and the Jabarti linked the Gibe valley with the expanding world economy of the late nineteenth century. These ties boosted the economy of the Gibe kingdoms and increased the volume of trade between the Gibe region and the outside world. This trade also facilitated the expansion of coffee cultivation. Elsewhere in Africa, when European merchants were turning away from the slave trade to natural commodities such as

ivory, gold and agricultural products, the Jabarti continued to trade in slaves. Although they had benefitted from the slave trade for a long time, in the mid-nineteenth century they were forced to look for alternative trade items instead of slaves. In the early 1840s, the slave merchants of Gondar were shocked when Mohammed Ali (d.1848) of Egypt imposed heavy import duty on slaves sold to Egyptian-controlled territories of the Red Sea and the Sudan. Mohammed Ali's policy was probably aimed at increasing state revenue and appeasing European merchants/agents who urged him to end the slave commerce in favor of "legitimate trade."[42]

Faced with unfavorable conditions for the slave trade, the Jabarti wondered what would happen to their business.[43] It was then that some decided to "make their investments in coffee, ivory and civet," rather than committing their capital to slaves alone.[44] Such changing commercial conditions in the Red Sea region stimulated the cultivation of coffee in Gibe region. The Gibe rulers who were probably aware of the emerging demand for coffee at the Red Sea coast, subsequently urged their subjects to cultivate coffee.

However, unlike the situation elsewhere (for example, West Africa), the beginning of the "legitimate" trade in the Ethiopian region did not significantly disrupt the slave trade. In the Ethiopian region, the increasing volume of

such natural commodities as ivory, civet, coffee, during the second half of the nineteenth century, did not necessarily lead to the decline of slave trade.[45] Continued demand for slaves in the Middle Eastern markets kept the slave trade more profitable even after the Europeans banned the trade in the Red Sea region. Despite European anti-slavery campaigns and patrols along the coast, the slave trade continued to thrive throughout the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[46] Nevertheless, the volume of natural commodities, particularly coffee, increased significantly during the second half the nineteenth century.

In the absence of direct evidence, estimating the volume of production and trade originating from the Gibe valley during the second half of the nineteenth century is not easy. A comparison of fragmentary figures provided by Beke in the early 1840s and Cecchi in 1880, however, suggest a significant rise in the volume of trade over the four decades.[47]

Table 3.4. Volume of Coffee and other Commodities Sold at Weekly Markets in the Gibe Region, 1842 & 1880 (estimate)

Item	Beke (1842)	Cecchi (1880)
Slaves (individual count)	200	400-500
Coffee (kg.)	(11.4)	100,000[a]
Ivory (loads)	117	
Gold (waqet)	(100)	100
Tobacco (kg)		250
Cotton (kg)	(100)	400-500

These figures indicate a remarkable increase in the volume of the trade of the Gibe region during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Over four decades, between 1840 and 1880, slave export doubled; while coffee trade increased almost tenfold. The concurrent growth of the volume of the two items, however, requires some explanation. Ideally, the increase in the supply of agricultural commodities and particularly the production of coffee requires more labor. This, in turn, affected the volume of the slave trade. Indeed, cash cropping in some

parts of Africa in the nineteenth century, had diverted slaves from the market into the production of marketable agricultural commodities." In the Gibe region, however, the slave trade and the volume of agricultural products were increasing. The growth of the slave trade may be explained by studying the market conditions, how and from where slaves were obtained. During the nineteenth century, the region's slave holders obtained slaves mainly through raiding and trade with the communities in the lower Omo valley. Thus most of the slaves who sere sold at Hirmata (Jimma) and Saqa (Limmu) markets were actually obtained from the south and west of the Gibe kingdoms. While raiding and local trading patterns fed slaves to the long distance trade, the demand for slaves was increasing at the Red Sea region and Arabia. Despite the crisis in the 1840s due to Mohammed Ali's interference, the slave trade continued to flourish in the Red Sea area. Slaves from the Ethiopian region were needed in the Arabia and the Middle East in large numbers."[70] These factors favored the steady rise of the slave trade in the Ethiopia region at a time when the trade was under attack in other parts of Africa.

On the other hand, slave trade also contributed to agricultural production of the Gibe monarchies. While in transit, some slaves were used for agricultural production, and many were permanently retained locally to work, alongside peasants, on agricultural fields."[71] Slaves and

peasants planted coffee on the kings' estates, cleared the forests, and collected "wild" coffee.

Thus, the rise of the volume of coffee trade by the late 1870s could be attributed to the extensive planting in the 1840s and 1850s, using partly slave labor. Owing to pressure from the rulers, peasants also contributed to the development of coffee cultivation after 1830s. It was the coffee planted in the 1850s that had attained full production capacity by the 1870s. Thus, as lucrative items, coffee and slaves entered the long distance trade in larger numbers in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Rulers and Traders

Throughout the nineteenth century, the relationship between the rulers and traders in the Gibe valley remained delicate. Monopolizing the supply of local commodities and the distribution of imported goods, rulers always tried to maximize their revenues. Controlling local items was part of their strategy to dominate subject peoples and other rivals in the region. Similarly, supervision and distribution of imported goods helped them to retain exotic and prestigious items for themselves. The Gibe kings retained control of the market through appointed officials who supervised the movement of goods, merchants and their own subjects. Each kingdom had an official called Abba Mizan who handled commercial affairs.[72] Selected from among

the successful merchants Abba Mizan was a merchant himself. His official duties included supervision of the king's treasury and maintaining good relations between the court and the merchant community. At the same time, he bought and sold good for the king. Another important official responsible for trade was the Abba Kella," who was responsible for the collection of customs dues and the inspection of goods exported and imported into the kingdom. He was also responsible for controlling immigration and patrolling the frontiers. Thus through Abba Mizan and the Abba Kella, the Gibe kings controlled labor for agricultural production and the exchange of goods. Merchants, on the other hand, wanted free access to markets with little interference from the rulers or their agents.

At the same time, the two needed each other. Rulers depended on traders for the supply of exotic items which boosted their social status. Besides bringing in revenue, traders also helped rulers to dispose of their slaves and local agricultural surpluses. For this reason, the rulers protected merchants when they did business within their borders. Similarly, merchants, too, needed the cooperation of the rulers. With their relative wealth, rulers were important consumers of imported goods, besides protecting the security of the market places and trade routes. In this case, the Jabarti relied on the local rulers much more than the Afcala.

Similar interdependence indeed existed between local rulers and merchants elsewhere in Africa. Writing about the relationship between the rulers and trade in West Africa, Keith Hart, for example, says "... the benefits of the resident commercial community, ready to buy slaves and the products of slave labor, as well as to sell prestigious imported goods, were great enough to persuade these rulers to welcome the merchants with favorable trading conditions."[74] Mutual interests were, however, difficult to maintain when both the rulers and merchants had other alternatives. Rulers who controlled small territories were unable to control their markets and trade. Rival rulers with vast territories often dominated the supply of valuable commodities and routes and were able to attract more traders to their kingdoms. In the Gibe region, competition for the control of the forests (from which coffee, ivory, and honey were obtained), market places and trade routes led to frequent clashes.

Despite the frequency of local wars, the competition between the rulers and the merchants, and the covetous nature of some rulers, local and regional trade continued to expand by the third quarter of the nineteenth century. New and old market centers were well connected with the major arteries of international trade. Some centers such as Bonga had resident merchants, who had relatives in Gondar and Cairo.[75] By 1880s, Jiren, the capital of Jimma, had

developed into an extensive settlement that attracted merchants from the Red Sea region, Gondar, Shewa, the lower Omo valley, as well as the neighboring kingdoms in the Gibe region. Next to Hirmata, the largest market place in the kingdom, Mandera had developed a distinct merchant quarter with a daily market.[74] The emergence of an indigenous merchant class and the convergence of big caravan merchants on the market centers of the Gibe valley, and the growing volume of the import/export trade clearly suggest the region's link with world economy. But the impact of merchant capital and the penetration of the world economy remained minimal for the next two or three decades. The reason why increased agricultural production and the commercial networks of the nineteenth century failed to transform the society in the Gibe region will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Commercial coffee is generally divided into three groups: Coffea arabica, coffea canephora (robusta) and Coffea liberica. The first accounts for 76% of the world's coffee trade, while robusta and liberica contribute about 23% and 1%, respectively. Although called "Arabica," because its trade was initially popularized by the Arabs, Coffea arabica is believed to be indigenous to Ethiopia, particularly to the Gibe region. Many experts associate the name "coffee" itself to the region of "Kafa" in the Gibe valley. Indeed, it was from this region that coffee was first introduced to Yemen sometime before the sixteenth century; and then to the Far East and Latin America by the Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See J. de Graaff, The Economics of Coffee (Wageningen, The Netherlands, 1986), pp.21-22; Addison E. Southard, "The Story of Abyssinia's Coffees," The Tea and Coffee Trade Journal, March 1918, pp. 213-214.

2. J. de Graaff, The Economics of Coffee, pp. 29-30.

3. Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi to Emperor Haile Sellassie, April 8, 1951 (KAF 12/8742).

4. Interview: Shaikh Mohammed Shifa.

5. Remedius Prutky, Prutky's Travels in Ethiopia and Other Countries, trans. and ed. by J.H. Arrowsmith-Brown (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1991), p.195.

6. Experts believe that the Zage (Lake Tana) coffee is genetically "similar to, or derived from, Enarea." See H.P. Huffnagel, Agriculture in Ethiopia (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization, 1961), p. 216.

7. L. Bartels, Oromo Religion, p.306.

8. Coffee berries roasted in butter and served at special ritual ceremonies. For more details see R.P. Azais and R. Chambard, Cinq Annees de Recherches Archeologiques en Ethiopie (Paris: Librarie Oreintaliste Paul Geuthner, 1931), p.55; Bartels, Oromo Religion, pp. 287-307; Getachew Kassa, "A Descriptive Account of Coffee Slaughter (Bun-Qalle) Ceremony of the Gerri of Southern Ethiopia", in The Proceedings of the First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990), pp.13-28.

9. Interiew: Sheikh Mohammed Shifa and his brothers, Gomma, February 20, 1992.

10. The economic and social prestige associated with cattle ownership among the Guduru Oromo was observed by G. Massaia in the 1850s. Special ceremonies were organized for rich cattle owners; and those who possessed over 1000 heads of cattle were "crowned" as abba sa'a ("father of the cattle"). Negus Shumi, whose ceremony Massaia attended, was "crowned" twice because he owned over 2000 heads of cattle. G. Massaia, I Miei Trantacinque anni di Missione, III, pp. 116-18.

11. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe.

12. Ibid.

13. According to Charles T. Beke, the British explorer, almost all the coffee from the Gibe region during the early 1840s was supplied by Limmu together with "a large proportion of ivory and slaves." Beke visited Shewa and Gojjam in 1841-2 but also collected reliable information about the Gibe region from merchants and slaves. Regarding Limmu, however, he appears to have relied much on Dilbo, a slave and native of Limmu, whom he met in Shewa in 1841. Beke characterized Limmu as waina dega (middle highland), which was suitable for coffee cultivation. The rainy season started in April and lasted until September. Charles T. Beke, "On the Countries South of Abyssinia," Journal of Royal Geographical Society, XIII (1843), p.257.

14. G. Massaia, I Miei Trantacinque anni di Missione, IV, p.154; C.T. Beke, "On the Countries South of Abyssinia," pp. 254-69.

15. Besides royal slaves, by 1880, Antoino Cecchi observed that the king of Limmu also hired laborers whom he remunerated by "many kilograms [of coffee] per day". A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, p.164.

16. C.T. Beke, "On the Countries South of Abyssinia," p. 258. According to Antoine d'Abbadie, coffee was abundant in Limmu that the king did not need to assign his slaves to guard it. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Remarks on Dr. C.Beke's 'On the Countries South of Abyssinia'", The Athenaeum, no.1042 (1847), p.1077.

17. C.T. Beke, An Enquiry into M. Antoine d'Abbadie's Journey to Kaffa, in the Years 1843 and 1844, to discover the Sources of the Nile, (London, 1851), p.41; Antoine d'Abbadie, "Remarks on C. Beke's Paper," p.1077.

18. C.T. Beke, "On the Countries South of Abyssinia," p. 258.

19. Richard F. Burton, First Footsteps in East Africa or, An Exploration of Harar (New York: Devor Publications, 1987), pp.26-27. By the early twentieth century, Harar coffee was regarded as the best quality produced in Ethiopia, but in the mid-nineteenth it

was the coffee from the Gibe region that was more reputed. Coffee from the Gibe region and Harar was then sold at the Red Sea ports as Mocha (Yemani) coffee, the name to which European merchants were already accustomed. See Chapter V.

20. Ibid., p.27; J.Lewis Krapf, Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During Eighteen Years Residence in Eastern Africa, 2nd ed. (London: Frank and Cass, 1968), p.461.

21. Almeida, "History of High Ethiopia," p. 149.

22. Thomas E. Marston, Britain's Imperial Role In The Red Sea Area, 1800-1878 (Hamden, Conn., The Shoe String Press, 1961), pp. 27-28.

23. William Foster, The Red Sea and the Adjacent Countries as Described by Joseph Pitts, William Daniel and Charles Poncet (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1949), p.175.

24. Lord Valentia, Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, The Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806 3 vols. (London, 1809), II, p.370.

25. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Remark on Dr. Beke's Paper," p. 1077; Charles T. Beke, Letters on the Commerce and Politics of Abyssinia and Other Parts of Eastern Africa (London, 1952), pp. 4, 16-23;

26. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Remark on Dr. Beke's Paper."

27. R.F. Burton, First Footsteps in East Africa, II p.27.

28. Valentia, Voyages, II, p.363.

29. Ibid. pp. 364, 370; Marston, Britain's Imperial Role, pp.34-5.

30. M. Abir, Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes.

31. Henry Salt, A Voyage to Abyssinia (London, 1914), III, pp. 366-67.

32. Ibid., p. 268.

33. Jules Borelli, Ethiopie Meridionale (Paris, 1890), p. 273.

34. Ibid., pp.331-2.

35. Ibid., p.320.

36. G. Massaia, I Miei Trentacinque Anni di Missione, III, p.15; Alessandro Triulzi, "The Gudru Oromo and Their Neighbors in the Two Generations before the Battle of Embabo," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, XII: 2 (1975), p.53.

37. G. Massaia, I Meie Trentacinque Anni di Missione, IV, p.137; A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, pp. 556-563.

38. Jules Borelli, Ethiopie Meridionale, pp.288-89; Max Gruhl, The Citadel of Ethiopia: The Empire of the Divine Emperor (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), pp.154-56.

39. C.T. Beke, "On the Countries South of Abyssinia;" J.L. Krapf, Travels, p.64; cf. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Foreign Correspondence," The Athenaeum, #1105 (December, 1848), pp.1330-31.

40. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, pp.511-513; Paul Soleillet, Voyages en Ethiopie (Janvier 1882 - Octobre 1884) Notes, Lettres et Documents Divers (Rouen, 1886), pp. 195-7

41. A. Cacchi, Da Zeila, II, p.58.

42. The spatial distribution of these markets indicates the existence of the dendritic and network systems.

43. G. Massaia, I Miei Tentacinque anni di Missione, V, pp.149-150.

44. G. Massaia claims that coccio (ensete) was not eaten in Kafa. Probably what he meant was that the elites of the kingdom needed grain to supplement their ensete while the peasants apparently lived on ensete bread. That ensete was widely cultivated by the Kafa was observed by Massaia himself. In Gera, in the late 1850s, he witnessed new migrants from Kafa planting ensete earnestly in the late 1850s. G. Massaia, I Miei Trentacinque anni di Missione, IV, pp. 173-4.

45. Many local markets had been created since the middle of the nineteenth century; yet the pattern still remains the same. H.S. Lewis, A Galla Monarchy, pp. 54-56.

46. The market days were probably associated with the cultural/ religious practices of the people. For example, Thursday was a day of festivity for women, and hence a day when they were free to pursue market activities outside the domestic sphere.

47. The origin of the Badi clan is not clear. But some traditions suggest that it was the strongest clan until it was subdued by the Diggo rulers around the end of the eighteenth century. It is possible that the Badi clan represented the remnants of the pre-

Oromo population in the region. H.S. Lewis, A Galla Monarchy, pp. 39,41.

48. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, February 15, 1992.

49. Group Interview: Abba Macha Abba Wadajo and others, near Agaro, February 20, 1992.

50. The origin of this term is not clear. But one informant says that Afcala should be a corruption of abshala (meaning "cleaver"). Some Oromo dictionaries define "afcala" as "abshala." See G. Gragg, Oromo Dictionary (East Lansing, African Studies Center, 1982).

51. Apparently not all Afcala merchants were originally from the Gibe region. Some came from other Oromo region like Guduru and some even from north of the Blue Nile. But they all used the Gibe kingdoms for the commercial ventures. For the background of some of these merchants, see Antoine d'Abbadie, Geographie de l'Ethiopie, pp.91-94, 96-97, 106-107, 199-200, 222, 230-231.

52. See M. Abir,"Southern Ethiopia," in Pre-Colonial African Trade: Essays on Trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900, eds., Richard Gray and David Birmingham (London, 1970); Guluma Gemeda, "Markets, Local Traders and Long Distant Merchants in Southwestern Ethiopia during the nineteenth century," in Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, ed. Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa, 1988), pp. 375-91; Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, PP.138-140.

53. C.T. Beke, Letters on Commerce and Politics, p.20.

54. Antoine d'Abbadie, Géographie de l'Ethiopie.

55. Ibid. pp.91-93.

56. For the possible origin of the term, see Foster, p.110; Triminghan, Islam in Ethiopia, (London: Frank and Cass, 1952).

57. Salt bars (amole) were also used as medium of transaction. See M. Abir, "Salt, Trade and Politics in Ethiopia in the 'Zamana Masafint,'" Journal of Ethiopian Studies, IV: 2 (1966), 1-10.

58. Antoine d'Abbadie, Géographie de l'Ethiopie, pp. 91-4, 96-7; G. Massaia, I miei Trenacinque anni di Missione, VI, p. 69.

59. Antoine d'Abbadie to the editor of The Athenæum (#1105, p.131), Feb. 17, 1848.

60. Cf. Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp. 138-44, emphasizes their competition more than their inter-dependance.

61. The fact that a few Afcala did reach the coast is suggested by some of D'Abbadie's informants. Said Musa, a merchant from Guma, told Antoine d'Abbadie that he had travelled to Massawa a least twice; and while in Gondar in November 1842, D'Abbadie met another merchant called Abba Gudda, from Jimma. Antoine d'Abbadie, Géographie de l'Ethiopie, pp. 62, 83.

62. C.T. Beke, Letters on the Commerce and the Politics, p.24.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ralph A. Austen, "An Islamic Red Sea Slave Trade: an Effort at Quantification," in Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, ed., by Robert L. Hess (Chicago, 1979); Richard Pankhurst, Economic History of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa, 1968).

66. Richard K. Pankhurst, Economic History of Ethiopia; Austen, "An Islamic Red Sea Slave Trade"; M. Abir, The Era of the Princes; Charles Schaefer, "Enclavistic Capitalism in Ethiopia, 1906-1936: A Study of Currency, Baking, and Informal Credit Networks," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1990; Timothy Fernyhough, "Slavery and Slave Trade in Southern Ethiopian: A Historical Overview, ca. 1800-1935," in New Trends in Ethiopian Studies, ed., by Harold G. Marcus (Lawrenceville, NJ., The Red Sea Press, 1994), pp. 680-706. For more discussion on this issue, see Chapter IV, below.

67. Beke's estimates were based on his observation in 1842 of commodities reaching Basso market from the region south of the Blue Nile. Apparently, most of the coffee then came from the Gibe Valley. Beke estimated the trading season to be only eight months (32-35 weeks) owing to the disruption during the rainy season. C.T. Beke, Letters on the Commerce and Politics, pp.25-7. Cecchi's estimates were based on his observations of the weekly exchange at Billo market, north of Limmu, which had become a clearing house for the trade of the Gibe valley during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila alle Frontiere del Caffa, II, pp.556-60.

68. This estimate is based on the Cecchi's observation of the amount of coffee sold at Billo market. His estimates of the volume of coffee sold at Tiffa (in Kafa) were 350,000 kgs., and at Rogge, a frontier market of Shewa, 30-40,000 kgs. See A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, I, p. 491, II, p. 512.

69. For West African example, see Paul E. Lovejoy, "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate," Journal of African History, XIX: 3 (1978), 341-68; and for East Africa, see Frederick Cooper, Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa (New Have: Yale University Press, 1977). David Northrup has, however, indicated the compatibility of the slave trade with the production of palm oil in the Bight of Biafra. David Northrup, "The Compatibility of the Slave Trade and Palm Oil Trades in the Bight of Biafra," Journal of African History, XVII:3 (1976) 353-364.

70. M. Abir, Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes, the Challenge of Islam and Re-unification of the Christian Empir, 1769-1855 (New York: Praeger, 1968).

71. Jules Borelli, "Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans les Pays des Gallas du Sud et de Sidama," Bulletin de la société de géographie d'Égyte, 3 (1889), pp. 158-60; Mohammed Nassir, "Economic History of Jimma Aba Jifar, 1878-1930," B.A. Thesis, Haile Sellassie University, 1973.

72. Abba Mizan means "father of balances." The duties of the Abba Mizan resemble that of the Nagadras in northern Ethiopia. For more details on Abba Mizan, see A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, pp. 219, 257-9; Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, pp.143-5. On the evolution of the office of the Nagadras during the reign of Menilek, see Peter Garretson, "The Naggadras," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 1979; Charles Schaefer, "Enclavistic Capitalism," pp. 59-63.

73. Augusto Franzoj, Continente Nero: Note di Viaggio (Turin: Roux e Favale, 1885), p.281; L. Traversi, "Escursione nel Gimma," Bollettino della Societa Geografica Italiana, XIII (18880, p.904; H.S. Lewis, A Galla Monarchy, pp. 96, 108-9; Mohammed Hassen, The Oromo of Ethiopia, p. 145;

74. Keith Hart, The Political Economy of West African Agriculture (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1982), p.33.

75. Paul Soleillet, Obock, le Choa, le Kaffa: une expedition commerciale en Ethiopie (Paris, 1883), p.247.

76. Leopoldo Traversi, "Escusione nel Gimma," p.917; Jules Borelli, "Souvenirs d'un voyage," p. 158; See also Guluma Gemeda, "An Outline of the Early History Jimma Town,"in Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Departmental Seminar, History Department, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 1989).

CHAPTER IV

CONQUEST, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CRISES, 1882-1916

The Gibe economy was disrupted by the political and social changes that engulfed the region during the last quarter of the century. First, epidemic diseases and famine hit the region at least twice in less a generation. Second, the Gibe kingdoms confronted the armies of the kings of Gojjam and Shewa in 1881-82, and finally succumbed to Menilek's conquest of the region. These and other developments in the 1880s altered the social and political landscape of the Oromo kingdoms of the Gibe valley. This chapter examines the crises of the late nineteenth century and the nature of social and political changes that followed the epidemic diseases, famine and conquest.

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, agricultural production in the Gibe valley had improved significantly in response largely to local consumption needs and expanding commercial networks. Rulers participated in slave trade, but they also encouraged the production of coffee. The kings' agents and local traders collected ivory and slaves from the southern Omo valley and beyond the Didessa and Birbir river valleys in the west and exchanged them for salt and imported goods. Ivory came from the Baro and Gimira lowlands; gold from the Birbir valley; slaves, cotton and locally manufactured clothes from Kullo, Konta and other Omotic kingdoms. Within the Gibe Oromo kingdoms,

farmers and slaves cultivated coffee and produced cereal and root crops. Finally, a portion of these products was channeled into the commercial networks that connected the region with Gondar in the north and Shewa in the east. In return, through the same channels came imported goods from India, the Middle East and Europe. The process of integration into the world economy had indeed began.

The process was, however, curtailed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century by the devastating epidemic diseases in the late 1870s and early 1890s. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, epidemic diseases came to the region in two phases, the first in the late 1870s. This epidemic, apparently typhus and typhoid fever, claimed the lives of many people, with Gomma reportedly losing about half of its population. Between June and December 1878, the epidemic claimed many lives, including three Europeans - Father Coccino, who had worked in Kafa since the mid-1850s, and Father Leon des Avanchers, who had established a mission station at Afallo in Gera in the 1860s, and an Italian explorer, Augusto Chiarini.[1] Limmu lost a considerable population, that Cecchi estimated its population in 1880 to just forty thousand.[2]

Before the people fully recovered from the first epidemic, another catastrophic human and cattle disease spread to the region by the end of 1880s. This cattle and human pandemic has resulted in the infamous "great famine"

in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa and; in the 1890s, it has spread to the whole of Eastern and Southern Africa.[3] The pandemic reached Gibe valley around 1890.[4] The second epidemic was more devastating than its predecessor. As elsewhere in Ethiopia, the pandemic eliminated huge cattle population and killed at least a quarter of the population in the Gibe valley. The tragedy, obviously disrupted the social and economic organization of the society.

It is difficult to obtain quantitative data on the economic impact of the epidemic diseases, but agricultural production undoubtedly dropped. For the survivors, economic recovery was very slow. Restocking the lost cattle population took a decade, while lack of oxen left vast fields uncultivated for several years. The able bodied survivors created work teams to clear the forest and plant crops.[5] Full recovery, however, did not come until the early decade of the twentieth century.[6]

The Gibe kingdoms were also confronted by serious military challenges during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Frequent skirmishes and surprise attacks were common among the Gibe kingdoms throughout the nineteenth century. Organized raids on neighboring settlements very often contributed to the kings' revenues. Raids brought captives who worked on the farms or sent to the market as slaves. Wealthy war captives were redeemed by their relatives who paid many head of cattle to their

captors. Although an important mechanism for the redistribution of wealth, the raids were disruptive to the production economy. Owing to the limited nature of the operations, however, the Gibe economy was not largely affected. Political alliances and elaborate conflict resolution systems helped to mitigate the impact of local conflicts.[7]

In 1881 and 1882, however, two Christian kings, Takle Haimanot of Gojjam and Menilek II of Shewa, sent their respective armies to annex the Gibe region. Gojjam and Shewa had long coveted the rich and fertile lands of the Gibe valley and the Macha Oromo territories. As intermediaries in the long distance trade between the Gibe region and the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea coasts, both Gojjam and Shewa benefitted from the export trade of the Gibe valley. The economic attraction of this region became more stronger with the expanding commercial networks of the late nineteenth century.

Prior to the 1870s, the feudal lords of Gojjam carried out occasional military campaigns into Guduru to feed their army, secure the trade route leading to the Gibe region or to escape from the ravages of other Christian lords in the north. They also hoped to put the Oromo territories south of the Blue Nile under their domain. But until the 1881, such an attempt remained ephemeral. Their efforts were undermined by their rivalry with Christian lords of Gondar

on the one hand and the resistance of the Guduru and Liban Oromo on the other. Both Dajazmach Goshu (d.1852), who became a powerful chief of Gojjam in the 1830s, and his son, Dajazmach Birru, failed to occupy the Oromo lands south of the Blue Nile.[8] In the 1870s, however, Ras Adal (later King Tekle Haimanot), grandson of Dajazmach Goshu, began pushing towards the Gibe valley. In 1872, he took advantage of a political rivalry between two Oromo chiefs in Guduru to establish a foothold in that region. His small army, sent to support one of the contenders for power in Guduru eventually occupied the region.

From Guduru, Ras Adal's army raided into Gendeberet, Amuru, Gidda, Horo and Jimma-Rare in the 1870s. Yet, Ras Adal's goal of controlling the Gibe region was frustrated by the continued resistance of Guduru and Horo Oromo. In 1880, nearly a decade after crossing the Blue Nile, his army was still confined to Guduru, where it held a precarious position vis-a-vis the Guduru and their neighbors.[9]

The same factors that attracted the lords of Gojjam to Guduru and the Gibe valley also motivated the kings of Shewa to the Macha Oromo territory to the west of the Awash. In the 1830s and 1840s, Sahle Sellassie (d.1847), Menilek's grandfather, made repeated efforts to conquer the upper Awash area. During these campaigns, Sahle Sellassie succeeded in subduing most of the Tulema Oromo east of the Awash, but he failed to conquer the Macha Oromo territories.

Like Gojjame effort, Shewan expansion faced serious resistance from the Tulema Oromo; and for almost two decades after the death of Sahle Sellassie in 1847, Shewan control over the Tulama Oromo remained nominal. The situation changed only after Menilek came to power in 1865.[10]

The Shewan king, renewed his grandfather's efforts to annex the Macha Oromo lands. Until 1876, however, he was preoccupied by his ambition for the Ethiopian throne and the continued resistance of the Wollo Oromo.[11] As far as the expansion to south was concerned, he entrusted the campaigns to Ras Gobana[12], a high ranking Oromo general who allied with the Shewan king. Gobana began his campaigns towards upper Awash river in the late 1860s. With twenty to thirty thousand relatively well armed soldiers, the general was assured of victory. His Oromo identity increased his chance of winning over some of the Macha Oromo chiefs. But Gobana's early campaigns were delayed by the resistance he faced from the eastern Macha and the Gurage communities. For this reason, he had not yet crossed the Gibe river by end of 1870s.[13]

Thus, by 1880, neither Menilek nor Tekle Haimanot was able to conquer the Gibe valley. But the situation changed dramatically in 1881, the year Takle Haimanot was crowned as "king of Gojjam and Kafa" by Emperor Yohannes IV (r.1872-89) of Ethiopia. Takle Haimanot knew that his title to Kafa was empty unless he conquered the Gibe region. For this reason,

he mobilized his forces and dispatched them towards the Gibe valley in February/March, 1881.

Takle Haimanot's decision to conquer Kafa obstructed Menilek's plan for the same region. Upon learning of his rival's decision, Menilek ordered Ras Gobana to march to Kafa and promptly take control of the territory already claimed by the king of Gojjam. Summing up the competition between the two Christian kings over the control of the Gibe region, Richard Caulk wrote:

> Whatever the exact sequence of Sawan [Shewan] and Gojjame penetration during the decade preceding [the battle of] Embabo, by the rainy season [June-September] of 1881, one expedition was clearly arriving on the heels of the other and clash became likely."

The Gojjame and Shewa threats did not surprise the Gibe kingdoms. By the late 1870s, they already knew the plans of the two Christian monarchs to invade the region, but were ill-prepared to meet the challenges. Besides the social crisis caused by the pandemic of the late 1870s, almost all of them lacked strong and experienced leadership. Ironically, as internal competition over the control of fertile agricultural lands, local markets, trade and trade routes increased, the leadership quality of the kingdoms declined.

After the death of Abba Magal around 1870, Gera was ruled by a queen mother who refused to hand over power to a successor; and by doing so, she alienated many court officials and warriors. Some eventually fled to the

neighboring kingdoms.[15] Similarly in Gomma, Abba Boqa, an inexperienced prince, came to power in 1878. While Abba Boqa served as a figurehead, the real political decisions were made by his mother, Genne Dagoyitti. Her political decisions, however, antagonized and alienated the qoppo (councilors). Around 1882, the qoppo deposed Abba Boqa and exiled him to Kafa together with his mother. The qoppo then selected Abba Dula, a reputed warrior, to be the next king.

Besides his qualities as a warrior, Abba Dula was also son of Abba Qerreppe, a political advisor who served three kings of Gomma from the 1850s to late 1870s. With such credentials, Abba Dula was had hoped to unify the kingdom and restore the morale of its warriors. His accession to power initially satisfied the warriors and the aristocracy. But some years later, when Gomma faced Shewan invasion, Abba Dula disagreed with the qoppo and lost their support. Instead of defending the kingdom, he joined the Shewan army in 1886, during the final stage of the conquest of the kingdom.[16]

After the death of Abba Bogibo in 1861, Limmu did not have a leader of his caliber. His successor, Abba Bulgu, was rather "inept, superstitious and fanatical" leader. Lacking the wise judgement and balance of his father, Abba Bulgu from the outset alienated large number of his subjects who were not yet converted to Islam. Upon coming to power, he declared himself as the "father of the Muslims" and

neglected the mass of non-Muslim population.[17] His successor, Abba Bogibo II, who came to power when the kingdom was facing the threat of invasion from Gojam and Shewa. Then he had very little time to consolidate his authority. Instead of reconciling internal differences, he antagonized some influential families and weakened the defense of his kingdom.

Probably hoping to maintain the royal monopoly over the coffee trade, he attacked whose grew coffee successfully in the southwestern part of the kingdom. Accusing them of plotting against him, he removed some farmers near Sappa and resettled them in the northern lowlands of the Limmu. He then confiscated their coffee farms.[18] According to Cardinal Massaia, Limmu after Abba Bogibo I "possessed no glory, no importance, either material or commercial, nor [did it] enjoy prosperity."[19] It lost the long contested territory along the Gibe Valley to Jimma. On the eve of Shewan conquest, it was harassed by Nonno and Hanna tribes in the east and northwest respectively.[20]

On the other hand, Jimma was relatively successful in the 1860s and 1870s. Abba Boqa (r.1859-1864), who encouraged the spread of Islam, was cautious not to antagonize his non-Muslim subjects. Instead of forcing their conversion, he hired more clerics to teach Islam. His son, Abba Gomol (r.1864-1878), essentially followed the same policy. Thus internally more united, Jimma was able to gain

more fertile lands and important trading centers. But when Abba Gomol died in 1878, Jimma, too, faced the same leadership crisis that its neighbors had already experienced. Abba Jifar II, a young prince who came to power at the age of seventeen, was adventurous during his early years in power. Although surrounded by experienced counselors, he tended to ignore their advice in running state affairs. Thus there was already some tension between him and his advisors when Jimma was confronted by the Gojjame army in 1881.

Expecting assistance from the rest of the Gibe kingdoms, Sultan Abba Jifar decided to resist the northerners. He mobilized his army and marched towards Jimma's eastern frontier. However, most of the aristocracy was opposed to the sultan's decision. Then Abba Jifar discovered that the neighboring kingdoms, who had made a pact to assist each other in the event of an attack from the north, were very slow to come to Jimma's assistance. Only Guma, another Oromo kingdom to the west of the Didessa river, responded positively but rather too late.[21]

Secondly, because of its military victories in the 1870s, Jimma still had many enemies. In the east the kingdom of Janjero continued to resist Jimma's recurrent effort to annex it; and in the west the kingdoms of Gera and Gomma were always suspicious of Jimma's rulers. Indeed Jimma was at war with Gera in 1880. Thus surrounded by

several semi-hostile neighbors and with its allies slow to respond, Jimma had little chance of success in a military confrontation with Gojjam. The Sultan and the aristocracy therefore decided to pay tribute to King Takle Haimanot of Gojjam. On the other hand, the rest of the Gibe states put up uncoordinated resistance and lost.

Nevertheless, the Gojjame control of the Gibe Valley did not last long. Takle Haimanot was defeated and taken prisoner by Menilek at the battle of Embabo on 6 June 1882.[22] At a conference convened immediately thereafter, Emperor Yohannes officially recognized Menilek's military victory and ordered Takle Haimanot to surrender the control of the Gibe region to the Shewan king. Thus, after Embabo, the Gibe valley and the Macha Oromo territories came under Menelik's control. Following this event, Abba Jifar changed his allegiance from Takle Haimanot to Menilek, while the rulers of the other Gibe kingdoms were devastated when they attempted to regain their independence. Through peaceful submission, Abba Jifar negotiated with Menilek for the autonomy of Jimma.

The details of Abba Jifar's agreement with Menilek in 1882 are not fully documented. But it is widely believed that Menilek allowed Abba Jifar to retain his position as king of Jimma in return for an annual tribute paid directly to the imperial court. Menilek then assured Abba Jifar that no imperial soldiers would be garrisoned in the region.

Apparently Menilek also promised the Sultan that the imperial system would respect Islam and refrain from building churches and sending priests to the kingdom. Thus, although a tributary state, Jimma remained an autonomous kingdom, while her counterparts in the region totally lost their independence.

The way through which these kingdoms were incorporated into Menilek's empire and the nature of their relationship with the Shewan court shaped the socio-economic conditions of the region during the following decades. After the conquest, labor and agricultural production were directed away from the long distance trade to the satisfaction of the consumption needs of imperial soldiers. But the level of the reorientation of surplus from the market to the imperial garrison towns depended on the initial response of the indigenous population to the conquest and the continued interaction with the imperial army. Agricultural production was also affected by the type of imperial administration imposed over each kingdom. Despite the varying levels, the imposition of imperial rule and the system of surplus extraction had a profound impact on the socio-economic development of the region and its integration into the world economy.

Imperial Administration, 1882-1916

With the exception of Jimma, imperial control of the Gibe region between 1882 and 1916 can be divided into two phases. The first phase, from 1882 to 1886, involved collection of tribute without changing the existing socio-political order. Tribute was imposed, but imperial soldiers were not sent to collect it. Taxation remained in hands of the indigenous rulers who submitted the required amount to Ras Gobana, Menilek's deputy, or took it directly to Menelik's court at Entoto. No imperial soldiers were garrisoned in the area until 1886, when the system of "indirect" rule was changed to more direct control. The tribute and the frequent raids ruined the economy of the kingdoms. Alphonse Aubry, French explorer who visited the Gibe valley in 1883-4, heard consistent complaints from the local rulers about the pillaging of Menilek's army. In the district of Danno, east of the Gibe river, Aubry met chief Ossana Boka, who told him how his country, which had been very rich, "was constantly pillaged and destroyed by the Amhara" and turned into wilderness. Passing over to Limmu, Aubry also observed "poor people who were ruined" by the raids of Menilek's army.[21]

The pillaging however provoked resistance that continued even after the Gibe rulers had agreed to pay tribute or were removed from power. Shortly after Ras Gobana collected the first tribute in 1882, wide spread resistance erupted throughout the upper Gibe valley. In

1884, for example, the Nonno had threatened to cut off communication between the Gibe region and Menilek's imperial court at Entoto. The Nonno fought bravely, but they lost their leader, Dambi Jigga, who was taken prisoner. In the meantime, three eastern Leqa and Sibu chiefs formed a league to resist the occupation of the Shewan army.[24] A year later the resistance spread further and included the chiefs of Nonno, Jimma-Rare, and the kingdom of Limmu. In 1884, these chiefs engaged the Shewan army at Garaa Doba, north of Limmu. The Shewans, who were led by the three Nadew brothers - Tessema, Desta and Dilnessa - were disastrously defeated. Tessema and Dilnessa retreated towards the Guder river, while Desta died in the fighting. The survivors were joined by Ras Gobana and his army, who passed the rainy season at Falle, about forty miles west Entoto. It was probably to weaken this resistance and ensure the flow of resources to his court that Menilek launched the second phase of imperial rule in 1886.

That year Menilek made some administrative changes regarding the Gibe region and all of the newly conquered Macha Oromo territories. Faced with widespread resistance and probably mistrusting Ras Gobana whose power had grown tremendously after the conquest of the Macha Oromo, Menilek divided the region into several administrative units and appointed trusted Shewan officials to each province.[25] Gobana was allowed to retain only a small portion of the

territory he had conquered. Again excluding Jimma, the Gibe kingdoms were divided into three - Limmu, Gomma-Gera, and Guma. Limmu and Gomma-Gera were given to two of Menelik's cousins, Dajazmach Wolde Giorgis and Dajazmach Bashah Aboyye, respectively. Guma was given to Dajazmach Tessema Nadew, son of Menilek's tutor. In the meantime the former kings of the Gibe kingdoms were thrown into jail.

The second phase of the imperial rule was distinctly different from the first one. From the court's point view, with appointment of Shewan rulers, the region was changed from a frontier area, open for raiding and tribute collection, to provinces for more systematic exploitation. Shewan rulers like Wolde Giorgis came with huge armies to settle in the region. For example, Wolde Giorgis brought about sixteen thousand soldiers to Limmu, while his brother, Bashah led about ten thousand into the smaller kingdoms of Gomma and Gera.

The response of the Gibe kingdoms to direct imperial control after 1886 was similar to earlier period of indirect control. Those who were exposed to repeated raids during the first phase of conquest offered little resistance. Their ability to resist was undermined by the years of devastation. An exhausted Limmu offered little resistance to Wolde Giorgis's huge army. Thus, the Shewan ruler established his main camp at Kossa and distributed his officials throughout the kingdom. On the other hand, Gomma,

which did not face direct attack until 1886, put up a stronger challenge to the soldiers of Dajazmach Beshah Aboyye. Although the leadership was divided, Gomma was still able to put up some resistance to Bashah's army.[24]

The leadership crisis in Gomma ended when a warrior, Abba Bora, who was in exile in Kafa, returned to the kingdom and assumed its leadership. Abba Bora appealed to the warriors of Gomma to join him in the resistance against the Shewan army. With a relatively small army, he fought Dajazmach Bashah at Bakke Tije, near the town of Agaro. The outcome of the encounter was disastrous for both sides. Dajazmach Bashah is reported to have lost about one thousand dead, while Gomma lost about four hundred, including Abba Bora. Owing to the heavy causalities, Bashah was forced to retreat towards Limmu, but returned some months later with reinforcements. The second time around, Bashah defeated Gomma's small army and established an administrative center at Sayo (renamed Managasha). Before he consolidated the imperial administration, the harsh and repressive rule of the Shewan army soon triggered a rebellion in 1888. This rebellion was led by Abba Bosso, another warrior.

Besides Gomma, there was widespread agitation throughout Macha Oromo in 1888-90. Taking advantage of the departure of the Shewan army for a campaign in Gondar in 1888, the Macha Oromo tried to end the occupation. Jules Borelli, a French explorer who travelled throughout the Gibe

region in 1887-8, observed widespread disturbances in Gomma, Hagalo, Nonno and Limmu.[27] An uprising in the Nonnoland in March 1888 again threatened to disrupt communications between the imperial court at Entoto and the Gibe region.[28] Another rebellion in Gomma also threatened imperial control. Gommans attacked Bashah's army everywhere and confined them into their camps. The Shewans were rescued some months later by reinforcements from Dajazmach Wolde Giorgis in Limmu and Abba Jifar of Jimma. Bashah was replaced by Dajazmach Demissew Mekonnen, another Shewan general who finally subdued the rebellion and ruled the province for the next twelve years.[29]

A similar uprising occurred in Limmu during Wolde Giorgis's absence from the province in 1888 and 1889.[30] The troubles continued into the 1890s even when the effects of famine, cattle disease and the presence of a huge imperial army sapped the opposition. For the next four decades, Limmu almost became the personal fief of Dajazmach Wolde Giorgis and his family. He retained the province after he conquered Kafa in 1897 and even after he was transferred to Gondar in 1910, since he left part of his army behind.[31]

The rebellion in Gomma and Limmu in the 1880s and early 1890s to some extent shaped the subsequent nature of imperial administration and the economic exploitation of the two kingdoms. In Gomma, the rebellion led to the removal of Dajazmach Bashah and change the status of the kingdom to

madbet."[32] Because of the imperial court's special interest in the region, the officials who were appointed to Gomma were recalled frequently before they could establish strong relationships with the local population[33], leaving the indigenous elite to remain strong in the administration of the territory. The situation mitigated the exploitation of the peasants by the imperial soldiers.

In Limmu, on the other hand, the failure of the rebellion in the 1890s and tightened control of the province by Wolde Giorgis and his family ruined the power base of the indigenous elite. Consequently, the peasants were much more exposed to the exploitation of the imperial army. When land and labor was reorganized in the 1910 and 1920s, the balabat (indigenous elite) preferred the implementation of the qalad system, even if it led to the loss of two-third of their lands.[34] In the meantime, ranking members of the imperial army became the largest landlords and members of Wolde Giorgis's family became the balabats replacing the indigenous elites.[35]

Jimma

The case of Jimma was unique. Although affected by the epidemics in the 1870s and 1880s, Jimma escaped the devastating effects of conquest. The political and social crisis that affected agricultural production of the Gibe kingdoms had a limited impact on Jimma. Politically, Sultan

Abba Jifar II emerged relatively stronger from the crises of 1880s. In the early stages of conquest, when his counterparts in the region languished in jail, Abba Jifar II easily earned the trust of Menilek. For example, in 1887-88 when Menilek and his lieutenants campaigned in the north, Abba Jifar acted as a deputy governor of the Gibe region. In December 1887, before leaving Limmu for a campaign to the north, Dajazmach Wold Giorgis handed over the deposed kings of Gera, Gomma, Guma and Limmu as prisoners and the administration of the region to Abba Jifar with the following words:

> Menilek summons the chiefs and warriors near to him, for some grave events have happened to Abyssinia. I must leave, but I will return soon; nothing will be changed here. In the meantime, in the name the king, I charge you to keep the kings of Limmu, and Gomma, the queen of Gera and her son imprisoned and under chains; with respect to the son of the king of Limmu, I will take him away. Look after all these countries; by your power, prevent revolt, and if it breaks out, repress it.[36]

During the following decades, Abba Jifar submitted his tribute regularly with special gifts to the emperor and retained good relations with Menilek. With Abba Jifar's continued loyalty, Menelik had no reason to change the relationship. Rather, in August 1895, when he needed all the material and political support of his subordinates to meet the Italian challenge, Menilek promised to treat Abba Jifar like the Shewan officials - Dajazmach Wolde Giorgis,

Dajazmach Tessema and Dajazmach Bashah - and not like the rest of Oromo chiefs."

Thus, Abba Jifar's power within Jimma was little affected by the Shewan hegemony. He continued to appoint his own officials and rewarded them with titles and lavish gifts. He collected taxes out of which he retained large portions for himself and handed over the rest to Menilek's court in Addis Ababa. Thus, Abba Jifar's peaceful submission, helped Jimma to escape harsh treatment at the hands of the imperial army. While the people in the Gibe region and, of course, the whole of southern Ethiopia languished under the imperial rule, those in Jimma enjoyed a relatively prosperous life. In Jimma the peasants were at least spared the irregular taxation that Menilek had imposed on others. In contrast, the peasants in Jimma enjoyed the liberal administration of Abba Jifar.

The conquest indeed imposed some burden on the people of Jimma, too." Abba Jifar's tribute in 1886, for example, included ivory, civet, honey, and local manufactures and some slaves." This tribute was later on converted to cash and the amount was raised tremendously. Late in the 1890s, ivory, honey and other kinds of tribute were accompanied by at least seven thousand Maria Theresa dollars." With the growing centralization of the empire in the early twentieth century, Jimma's tribute obligations increased tenfold, to

MTD 103,000 in 1927, excluding occasional gifts and contributions.[41]

Jimma was, however, able to defray these expenses through a profitable trade with the Omotic communities in the south and the Christian and Muslim merchants in the north. Jimmans bought ivory and slaves from Kullo, Kafa, Maji and Gimira and sold them to local and foreign merchants in Jimma and Addis Ababa. Acting as middlemen between the southwestern borders and the central Ethiopian markets, the merchants of Jimma became very prosperous. According to Borelli, Jimma benefitted from a network of trade with communities along the lower Omo valley. Kullo and Walaita merchants brought slaves and ivory to Jimma's markets and exchanged them for clothes, salt and beads. The French explorer believed that Abba Jifar was not interested in ending the slave trade because it was tied up to the ivory trade, without which the Sultan could not have satisfied the exigencies of Menilek.[42] Bulatovitch, a Russian adventurer who visited Jimma in 1898, estimated Abba Jifar's revenue from the transit trade at 300,000 francs (MTD 66,000) in the late 1890s[43]

Abba Jifar's reliance on the slave and ivory trades to meet the kingdom's tribute obligations was probably exaggerated.[44] Ivory indeed constituted a significant portion of the tribute, but Menilek also needed coffee. In August 1893, for example, Emperor Menilek specifically

requested the governors in the conquered southern provinces to submit coffee as tribute, which he then needed to pay for the firearms he had purchased form European merchants. As its share, Jimma paid 50,000 kilograms of coffee.[45]

After 1897, with the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the European powers and the beginning of the construction of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway, the importance of coffee in the foreign trade of the empire started to rise. In 1903, the value of export coffee was estimated at US$814,000, almost eight times greater than Menilek's earnings from the ivory export.[46] In order to increase imperial revenue, Menilek no doubt continued to pressure provincial governors in the south to supply large amounts of coffee. In turn the governors coerced the peasants to cultivate coffee, without, however, relaxing the demand for cereal crops. The only way peasants could have met such demands was by intensifying agricultural production.

In Jimma slaves were employed extensively in the fields even when they were in transit.[47] Together with the free peasants they cultivated the frontier lands (mogga) which were laid waste in the nineteenth century due to the frequent local wars. Travelers who visited Jimma during the early twentieth century were amazed by the contrasts between the extensively cultivated fields in Jimma and the devastated villages in the neighboring areas which were

under the direct imperial control." Artisans in Jimma also concentrated on improving their products. Jimma's woodwork was very widely known."

Better economic performance of the kingdom, however, increased the cupidity of the Shewan governors and contributed to the insecurity of the kingdom. Abba Jifar particularly feared the Shewan governors who ruled the adjacent territories. These governors indeed kept their covetous eyes on the wealth of Jimma, favoring the direct annexation of the kingdom and the removal of Abba Jifar. The prosperity of Jimma on the one hand and the growing poverty of the provinces under the imperial army on the other reflected upon their maladministration. Secondly, their harsh treatment of the peasants contributed to the flight of the peasants from the neighboring provinces to Jimma. In the 1910s and 1920s, for example, many peasants from Limmu, Kullo, Konta and Kafa migrated to Jimma, where they were given land to cultivate and several years of tax relief. Thus, to share the wealth of Jimma and to stop the flight of the peasants from their respective provinces, imperial governors such as Wolde Giorgis and Tessema wanted to end the semi-independent status of Jimma.

Their ambitions were, however, thwarted by Menelik's long-standing policy regarding Jimma. When his health deteriorated after 1907, however, direct interference of the local governors in the affairs of Jimma became more likely.

To avoid such an outcome, Abba Jifar made "every endeavor to strength his army" and to resist direct political control from Addis Ababa. In 1908, for example, he was busy buying arms and recruiting soldiers.[50] In addition to the traditional militia, who were less prepared for the challenge from the settlers, Abba Jifar recruited Christian soldiers. These troops, locally known as the Jabarti,[51] were a kind of soldiers of fortune. Originally from the northern provinces of Gojam, Gondar, Wollo and Tigray, they abandoned their former masters in search of a better life. Many of them were attracted to Jimma because of its wealth. The Jabarti soon formed the core of Abba Jifar's army and initially served him loyally.

In recruiting Christian soldiers, Abba Jifar not only aimed at consolidating his army but also wanted to avoid any pretext for the Christian rulers to interfere in his kingdom. By enlisting Christians in his army, he apparently hoped to impress upon the imperial court that his loyalty was sincere and the integration of his kingdom was real. The strategy paid off for a while. He avoided direct annexation during the period of political crisis at the imperial center in 1910. Jimma's peasants devoted their energies to material production as peace and security of the kingdom was taken care of by a small of Christian army.[52] Fortunately, Abba Jifar's fear of the provincial governors also declined temporarily after 1910. Very much absorbed by

the power struggle at the center, neither Ras Tessema nor Wolde Giorgis, were able to act against Jimma during the 1910 political crisis. Abba Jifar was apparently relieved when Wolde Giorgis was transferred to Gondar in 1910, and Tessema died the following year.

Their successors were not strong enough to annex Jimma. During the brief reign of Lij Iyassu (r.1913-16), imperial policy shifted towards integration through coopting the indigenous elites in the south. Pursuing this policy, Lij Iyassu married Abba Jifar's niece during his visit to the kingdom in 1912. This political marriage provided greater security for Jimma's autonomy.[5] But after Iyassu's deposition in September 1916, the threat was renewed. Ras Tafari's (Later Emperor Haile Sellassie, 1930-74) policy of centralization and his desire to control the export trade of coffee focused the attention of the center on Jimma's agricultural production, trade and political autonomy.

The Impact of the Conquest on the Economy of the Gibe Region

The impact of conquest on the socio-economic conditions of the Oromo and Omotic communities in the south has not been well examined. For example, while the northern rist and gult systems of land holding are very well documented, there has been no comparable research into the landholding systems of the southern regions during the pre-conquest period. For this reason, we do not clearly know how the

Omotic kingdoms like Kafa and Walaita maintained an aristocratic class that did not directly engage in agricultural production. Similarly, study of status of state formation among the Oromo communities of the Gibe region is often neglected when scholars assess the impact of the Shewan conquest on the southern regions. Rather, without adequate examination of the pre-conquest social formations, many Ethiopianists have asserted that the societies in the south were undifferentiated communities before the Shewan conquest of the late nineteenth century.

Thus evaluation of the impact of conquest is very often based on two assumptions: (1) that the pre-conquest society in the south was egalitarian, and (2) that the conquest facilitated social class formation by introducing northern institutions of political hierarchy and by opening up the region to the market economy. Recently, Charles Schaefer, for example, wrote: "Prior to conquest, the local inhabitants of southern Ethiopia shared rights to crops, pasture, and domestic animals."[54] Yet even after the conquest, Schaefer suggests that Menilek was unable to introduce the rist system of land tenure into the south. The ambiguous property relations and the absence of social and cultural institutions that mitigated the exploitation of the peasants in the north, therefore, helped the northern settler soldiers to exploit the conquered peoples in the south. Under such circumstances, the settlers (naftagna)

were able to "accumulate significant capital" and command sufficient labor for agricultural production and the expansion of trade."[55]

This conclusion is, however, misleading. First, not all communities in the south were undifferentiated cultivators or pastoralists with common property rights over the agricultural and pasture lands. As indicated in the preceding chapters, some communities, such as the Gibe Oromo kingdoms and the Omotic principalities, had developed complex political and economic organizations long before the conquest. In such places, therefore, instead of introducing social hierarchies, the conquest retarded the process of class formation which was already underway and superimposed new ones. Secondly, it was not at all clear that Menilek had wanted to introduce the northern system of land tenure into the south; nor was it in the best interest of the empire's political economy.

Indeed Tekalign Wolde-Mariam has recently argued that Menilek had utilized the same old institutions which had long served the northern Ethiopian aristocracy to exploit the south. Tekalign asserted that it was not the institutional changes that made the situation in the south different but rather the establishment of a permanent city such as Addis Ababa and the need to feed the urban population. But he suggests, despite urbanization, the

Ethiopian polity remained unchanged until the 1930s and altered very little after 1941.[56]

Tekalign's conclusion reinforced an earlier work by Joanna Mantel-Niecko who argued that, in spite of the reforms of modern Ethiopian rulers, the feudal social structure remained unchanged.[57] Both Mantel-Niecko and Tekalign extensively used local Ethiopian sources to reconstruct the evolution of modern landholding institutions and their impact on agricultural production. Yet they both fail to elucidate the nature of landholding system in the south during the pre-conquest period and its impact on the imperial institutions that were superimposed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In fact, like Schaefer, Tekalign dismissed the southern system of landholding before the conquest without any discussion.[58] Secondly, by focusing on the northern landholding institutions and the feudal socio-economic structures, both Mantel-Niecko and Tekalign disregarded the impact of the development of the market economy and the evolution of capitalist economic relations in the south.

But recently, taking the perspective of the southern societies, some scholars have attributed the expansion of the modern Ethiopian empire to its ties with the capitalist world economy. Asafa Jalata, Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibsa have, for example, argued that the modern Ethiopian empire is a "dependent colonial state" which relied on European

powers for its supply of firearms in exchange for the exports of the south. Menilek used such firearms to subdue the Omotic and Oromo peoples of the south." These authors agree that the Ethiopian polity retained its feudal character even after establishing contacts with European capitalist economy but collaborated with the latter to exploit the conquered peoples of the south. Asafa pointed out that the Ethiopian state simply utilized "noncapitalist methods" to create both "noncapitalist and capitalist productive relations."[60] Through its collaboration, in essence, Ethiopia also became part of the world capitalist system.

Thus, according to this group of scholars, the Abyssinian "dependent colonial state," although feudal in character, was also part of the expanding capitalist world economy. Leaving other points aside, this "collaborationist" thesis fails to point out the basis for contradictions between the Ethiopian empire state and the European capitalist powers. For example, it ignores the Ethiopian aristocrats' suspicions of the European agents and their resolve to avoid colonial tutelage.[61]

Indeed, the relationships that Menilek cultivated with the European merchants in the 1870s and 1880s had facilitated his acquisition of firearms that in turn assured him of victory in the southward expansion. Yet the social institutions that were established in the conquered regions

essentially impeded the penetration of the world capitalist system. The expansion to the south and the extension of archaic Abyssinian feudal institutions to the conquered territories caused the decline of agricultural production and put a brake on the development of the market economy. The decline occurred mainly because the imperial administration and its system of surplus extraction was oriented more towards household consumption than production for exchange. The imperial soldiers were very much concerned about the subsistence needs of their families and followers. Thus agricultural production in the Gibe region, which was linked to long distance trade in the mid-nineteenth century, shifted away from the market to the military garrisons (katamas)[42] to feed the imperial army.

Besides the political differences between imperial officials and agents of the European capitalist system, the first generation of naftagna[41] lords remained ambivalent towards trade and foreign merchants. Many did not share the relatively good attitude that Menilek had developed towards foreign trade and merchants. Regional lords very often followed the activities of foreign merchants rather suspiciously. On the other hand, European merchants and political agents who supplied arms to Menilek and enthusiastically supported his campaigns to the south were frustrated by the initial decline in the volume of trade and the limited access that they had to the markets of the

conquered regions."[4] The absence of cheap and faster means of transport and the wasteful consumption patterns of the imperial army discouraged both agricultural production and trade in the conquered regions.

It was only gradually that a symbiotic relationship was established between the Ethiopian "prince-merchants" and agents of the foreign merchant capital."[5] To understand this association and its impact on the economic development of the coffee-producing region of the Gibe valley, an appraisal of the socio-economic processes at the micro-level and the evolution of some key imperial institutions in general is necessary. In the remaining part of this chapter I will attempt to show how the ties of the imperial state with European merchant capital failed to transform the societies in the south at least during the first generation. For a long time, the lack of a convenient route and cheaper means of transport from the Gibe region to the coast remained an obstacle for developing the commercial potentials of the Gibe valley. European explorers and missionaries, who had visited the region since the 1840s, were eager to find a navigable water system that linked the region with coasts. The primary objective of Antoine d'Abbadie was, for example, to investigate the course of the Gibe river. He and other European explorers of the mid-nineteenth century believed that the Gibe river formed the upper course of the Nile or the Juba river."[6] By exploring the upper course of the Gibe

river, travelers and missionaries hoped to find navigable route from the Indian Ocean coast or from Egypt. Such expectations were frustrated when they finally learned that the Gibe does not reach either the Indian Ocean or the Mediterranean Sea, but ends in Lake Turkana (Rudolph).

Thus during his stay in Kafa in the late 1850s, Guglielmo Massaia lamented the lack of a navigable river system that could link the Gibe region with the coast to facilitate the transportation of the abundant coffee and other trade items to European market cheaply. In the 1870s, believing that good relations with the kingdom of Shewa and King Menilek would give them a better chance to penetrate into the Gibe valley, the Italians dispatched a team to Shewa; and from there, they launched an exploration of the Gibe valley. In 1878, two members of the Italian Geographical Society - Captain Antonio Cecchi and Engineer Augusto Chiarini - were sent to Kafa to survey the region and its commercial potentials. Although the Society collected extensive ethnographic and commercial data, the exploration failed to solve the search for a convenient route to the Gibe valley.

In the early 1880s, European merchants were convinced that Menilek's expansion was their only hope to tap the trade of the Gibe valley. Shortly after the conquest in 1882, a few European merchants surveyed the commercial potentials of the Gibe valley. Between 1883 and 1887, for

example, five French and Italian merchants and political agents visited the region. And on their return, all of them reported the existence of abundant coffee and other commercial items. But by the 1890s, European merchants' desire to link the region directly to the Red Sea or the Gulf of Aden coast had declined. Instead, they concentrated on the trade between the Imperial capital and the coast, leaving the newly annexed territories of the empire in the hands of local merchants.

This change of strategy has to do largely with nature of the administration of Menilek's empire. As indicated above, conquest and resistance disrupted agricultural production during the early stages of incorporation. As a result of the frontier raids and subsequent occupation, the subjugated communities failed to attend to their fields. Tribute also took its toll on peasant production. Secondly, during the first half a century of imperial rule, the establishment of numerous kella (toll-gates) slowed down the movement of goods and merchants. With the full approval of Menilek, each regional lord established a toll-gate on the frontiers of his province. In the early decade of the twentieth century, some travelers counted no less than twelve toll-gates between Addis Ababa and Jimma, a distance of only 180 miles."

Yet, above all, it was the nature of imperial administration that affected agricultural production and

trade. The administration was characterized by the gabbar system. The gabbar system, a means of "surplus" extraction imposed over the southern provinces by Menilek. The peasant producer (gabbar) was assigned to the imperial settler soldier (naftagna), who was generally accompanied by a large household. The household composed of several individuals - wife, children and domestic servants - who were not directly involved in production. Feeding such an extended family required huge supply of grain. The naftagna was thus concerned more with grain production than with cash crops. Both the imperial court and its agents were cautious, therefore, not to dismantle the existing system of subsistence production. After removing the higher echelon of the indigenous ruling elite, imperial administration essentially aimed at achieving a reliable supply of grain to the katama (garrison towns), where the families of the soldiers were stationed. For this purpose, the indigenous elites were coopted as junior district officials, as abba goro or balabat. The latter, together with the village elders, facilitated tribute collection and the mobilization of peasant labor.

Obviously, the gabbar system was a very crude administrative mechanism to extract surplus and feed the imperial army. "Both soldiers and officers of varying ranks received a number of gabbar depending on their rank within the imperial administration. The naftagna then extracted

agricultural surplus and free labor services from the gabbar." The obligations of the gabbar consisted of free labor services - working three or more days a week on the naftagna's field; building the soldier's residence, supplying firewood, feeding his mules and horses; as well as building churches and roads. The gabbar also surrendered one-tenth (tithe) of his/her produce to the state. Such a system obviously enabled the state to reward its soldiers who did not have regular salaries. As Charles McClellan observed, the system "guaranteed settlers [naftagna] basic subsistence without having to work the land themselves, and [for the government, it] eliminated the problem of shipping bullion to distance locations to pay employees."[7] For more than a generation, from the 1880s to 1910s (in some districts, even up to 1936), the gabbar system enabled the imperial government to support its army without any handouts from the center.

Under such circumstances, the gabbar was, for all intents and purposes, not much better than a slave. According to Captain Kelly, a British Political Officer, who visited Jimma in 1908, "[The gabbar] cultivates his master's land without remuneration for a certain days of the month, produces a fixed quantity of meat, grain, honey" in addition to the "asrat" (tithe) tax, tribute and regular corvee labor for the district governor. Very often the gabbar was forced to supply presents to the soldier to avoid

harsh treatment and over-evaluation of his harvest during the annual tax assessment."[70] In the hope of escaping from rapacious naftagna lords, some peasants migrated from one district to another. Others moved far away from the main caravan routes into the forest regions, where they cleared new tracts of land and planted crops; unfortunately, they faced more exactions soon after they harvested the first crop. Thus the political circumstance and the level of economic exploitation discouraged the gabbar from producing any thing more than what sustained himself and his family."[71] The system particularly discouraged the production of cash crops like coffee.

In general, the gabbar system was subsistence oriented. The main concern of the soldiers was the control of peasant labor much more than owning land. But, confusing the chronological sequence of the evolution of the landholding system after the conquest, some Ethiopianists failed to elucidate the actual relationship between the gabbar and the land on one side, and the control of the imperial officials over the same piece of land on the other. The general assumption, though inaccurate, is that conquest and the establishment of the gabbar system led to outright alienation of the conquered people from their lands. In reality, however, the gabbar "in principle did not give up his land," which he continued to cultivate during the first generation of imperial rule. The gabbar, nonetheless,

worked largely for the benefit of a soldier to whom he was assigned."[72] It is, however, this particular aspect of the gabbar system which is very often misunderstood by Ethiopianist scholars. In the early twentieth century, many foreign observers compared the gabbar system to serfdom. Charles F. Rey, British political agent, who visited many provinces where the gabbar system was practiced in the 1910s and 1920s, believed it was "a form serfdom ... [which was] more burdensome" than even slavery."[73] It was indeed burdensome; but not the same as serfdom. Even by mid-1970s John Markakis wrote that after the conquest "all conquered land became state property, and its disposal rested solely in the hands of the emperor."[74] This is, however, inaccurate, because actual land alienation did not take place until the 1920s."[75]

For the first three decades after the conquest, the gabbar actually retained his land but paid tribute and performed labor services to the naftagna. This was possible because the primary interest of the latter was more on the labor and the produce of the peasants than on the actual ownership of land. The naftagna might have indeed felt that they also owned the land; but such a claim was simply ambiguous during the early period of imperial rule. Nor did the government have sole control over the land from the very beginning. At least theoretically, the gabbar, remained the owner of the land he cultivated, according to the pre-

conquest landholding systems. It was probably the restrictions put on the peasant that made the system look like serfdom. During his visit to the Gibe region in 1927-28, Enrico Cerulli observed that the gabbar "were not able to leave their villages to emigrate to another area because doing so was regarded as annulling their obligations to the soldiers".[6] In this case, although retaining the land, the peasant faced the heavy burden of the system. In return for access to their own land, the gabbar sustained the imperial soldiers through their labor and produce.

In general, the conquest of Menilek initially disrupted the system of production and exchange but not property relations in land. One would assume that the establishment of centralized administration, and the relative peace and order after the conquest could facilitate more surplus production and trade. But at least as far as the Gibe region was concerned, the conquest was a brake rather than an accelerator for the development of agriculture and the market economy. Since coffee production was disrupted, specialization in production and the shift toward cash crops was impeded. The decline of coffee production can be observed from the estimated volume of coffee reaching the market between the late 1870s and early 1910s. Before the conquest, for example, Kafa produced about 350,000 kilograms of coffee; but in the 1880s it was reduced to 50-60,000 kilograms.[7] In the 1880s and 1890s, the modest

coffee plantations that started in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, were largely abandoned or lost. Lacking continued human care, some of these plantations had reverted to "wild" status or were conveniently identified so by the naftagna lords simply to curtail the access of the cultivators to such coffee forests.

Coffee farms abandoned by their owners during the early stages of conquest were claimed mostly by naftagna lords who treated all coffee forests as "wild coffee." Thus, except in Jimma, coffee became "the exclusive property of the governors." In Illu Abba Bor, for example, Ras Tessema, the first Shewan governor of the region, claimed all "wild"/ forest coffee for himself without any regard to its previous owners.[78] Every November and December the agents of the Ras mobilized the gabbar to collect coffee berries for the governor.[79] The latter then retained a lion's share for himself and sent the rest to Menilek.[80] In this case, only a small amount of coffee, which was hardly sufficient for household consumption, was left to the peasants. The imperial monopoly over coffee affected the volume of the harvested crop. Lacking any incentive in coffee production, peasants neglected its cultivation. For this reason, vast quantities were wasted; the berries were left on the ground or were eaten by monkeys.[81]

While coffee cultivation was in decline, the slave trade, however, continued to flourish. Although Menilek

declared its ban, the conquest of the southern regions stimulated the institution of slavery and the slave trade. Menilek and his officers were reluctant to end the slave trade because it directly contributed to imperial revenue. The Emperor, for example, earned at least MT$10,000 from the transit slave trade.[82] His proclamations regarding the abolition of the slave trade were obviously intended to impress European political agents and merchants who urged him to turn to "legitimate trade." At the local level, his officials were even less interested in enforcing the ban on the slave trade.[83] During his journey through the lower Omo valley in 1900, Oscar Neumann, for example, found the slave trade in full swing in the newly conquered frontier regions. "At the large weekly markets", Neumann observed, slave children were "sold in small or large lots" alongside cotton, coffee, flour, goats and sheep.[84] Taking advantage of the expanding frontiers of the empire, the soldiers turned over large number of the captives to the slave merchants.

Slave merchants, too, took advantage of the social dislocation caused by the conquest. Some like Abba Jobir Abba Lubbu, who had begun coffee cultivation before the conquest, immediately shifted to slave trade. He abandoned his small coffee farm in Gomma and travelled to Kollo and Konta to purchase slaves. The slave trade enabled him to accumulate capital which he subsequently invested in coffee

plantation. In the early twentieth century, Abba Jobir is reported to have employed about five hundred slaves on his coffee farms, which made him the richest coffee farmer in Gomma."

As indicated earlier, European merchants who hoped to benefit from Menilek's expansion were disappointed when they discovered the hurdles imposed after the conquest. Secondly, they were unprepared to handle commerce in a society where the institutions of the market economy were not yet well developed. Instead of long term investment, they hoped to make quick profits with very little investment. Most of the European merchants obtained royal concessions from Menilek that enabled them to create monopolies to buy and sell certain commodities." Eventhough the terms were generous, some concessionaires failed disastrously because they were mere speculators without sufficient funds." Even more serious investments, like the Bank of Abyssinia and the Franco-Ethiopian Railway faced financial and management difficulties before they starting to make profits.

Instead, it was the Indian, Greek, Armenian and Arab merchants who proved to be more successful in the Ethiopian markets. These merchants occupied the vacuum which neither Ethiopian nor European merchants were able to fill. By the early twentieth century, Indian and Greek merchants were able to establish themselves as crucial link between the

world capitalist economy and Ethiopian society. Indian and Greek merchants in particular became active coffee exporters. Operating with a relatively limited capital, but with good social network both within and outside Ethiopia, both group of merchants turned the administrative inefficiency of imperial state to their own advantages. They, for example, exploited the Ethiopian aristocracy's suspicion of European merchants and the aristocracy's growing taste for imported goods. In collaboration with the ruling elite ("prince-merchants"), these foreign merchants penetrated into the southern regions during the early decades of the twentieth century. Operating largely from Addis Ababa, they opened branch offices in Jimma, Gore, Gambela, Sayo and other coffee rich provinces in the south. Some bought coffee directly from the governors and distributed imported goods to the local populations. Thus, by 1910 there were at least a dozen foreign trading firms established at Gambela, Gore and Jimma. The most active ones in the southwest were the Gerolimato brothers, Cavadian, A.H. Capato, Eliadis and G.M. Mohammedally."

Despite the unfavorable circumstances at early stage of conquest, the long term prospects for cash cropping were not bleak. Some coffee continued to reach the market after the 1890s. The penetration of foreign merchant capital - largely Indian, Greek and Arab - and the improvements in means of transportation after 1900, gradually favored the

rehabilitation of old coffee farms and the expansion of new ones.

The producers' share of the benefits of coffee trade, however, remained minimal. After establishing direct trading relationship, the younger generation of naftagna lords and foreign merchants curtailed the producers' share of profits. Thus at the turn of the twentieth century, when Indian, Greek, Armenian and Arab merchants appeared on the scene, the Afcala traders of the nineteenth century were either reduced to small collectors or had abandoned trade altogether and settled as farmers. The Jabarti, who dominated the long distance trade between the Gibe region and Gondar in the second half of the nineteenth century were largely confined to the northern regions of the empire." Only in Jimma, where Abba Jifar II followed a liberal commercial policy, did some local traders remain active during the early decades of the twentieth century.

The impact of the penetration of foreign merchant capital on the economic development of the empire and on coffee production and trade in particular will discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Leon des Avanchers to Società Geografica Italiana, 6 Dec. 1878, Bulletino della Società Geografica Italiana, VI:5 May 1881), pp.108-09; Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, p.181.

2. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, p.165.

3. For an assessment of the "Great Famine" in Ethiopia, see Richard Pankhurst, "The Great Ethiopian Famine of 1888-1892: A New Assessment," Journal of the History of Medicine and Applied Science, XXI: 2 (1966), 95-124. The epidemic was introduced into Ethiopia through infected cattle imported by the Italians to Eritrea. The spread of the epidemic was probably facilitated by the movement of Menilek's soldiers during their northern campaigns in 1888-89. For more details see below.

4. Interview: Sheikh Mohammed Shifa Abba Bilo, February 20, 1992.

5. Ibid. Sheikh Mohammed Shifa says that his mother participated in such work teams at a very young age.

6. Almost a generation later, an influenza epidemic spread to Gibe valley. However, its effects were not so severe as in the urban centers like Addis Ababa. Interview: Sheikh Mohammed Shifa. On the effects of the influenza epidemic in Ethiopia in general, see Richard Pankhurst, "The Hedar Bashita of 1918," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, XIII: 2 (1976).

7. All the Gibe kingdoms regularly consulted each other by sending envoys, called lammi, to each other's courts. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, pp. 298-99.

8. Arnuald d'Abbadie, "Douze ans." (1982-83).

9. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila,; A. Triulzi, "The Gudru and their Neighbors."

10. Kofi Darkwah, Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire, 1813-1889 (London: Heinemann, 1975); Harold G. Marcus, The Life and Times of Menilek II: Ethiopia 1844-1913 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 10-11, 13; Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "A City and Its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture and Food Supply for Addis Ababa (1887-1974)," Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston University, 1995.

11. Harold G. Marcus, Life and Times, p.35-6.

12. Ras Gobana Dachi (c. 1818-1889) was a chief of the Abichu, an Oromo clan around upper Awash. He joined Menilek court at an early stage and played a prominent role in Shewan expansion to the southwest. For the details of his campaigns in the 1870s and 1880s, see Enrico Cerulli, "Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia," Harvard African Studies, III (Cambridge, Mass., 1922), pp. 71-88; Alessandro Triulzi, "The Background to Ras Gobana's Expeditions to Western Wallagga in 1886-1888: A Review of the Evidence," in Proceedings of the First United States Conference on Ethiopian Studies, 1973, ed. by Harold G. Marcus (East Lansing, MI., 1975), pp. 143-56.

13. Nagada "Ya-Ras Gobana Tarik" ["Biography of Ras Gobana"]. This is a short biography written by one of the Ras's followers. I am grateful to Alessandro Triulzi for providing me with a translated copy of this material.

14. Richard A. Caulk, "Territorial Competition and the Battle of Embabo", Journal of Ethiopian Studies, XIII:1 (1975).

15. A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II, pp. 259-63; Alphonse Aubry, "Une Mission au Choa et dans les Pay Gallas," Bulletin de Société de Géographie de Paris (1887), pp. 478-79; Augusto Franzoj, Continente Nero, pp. 292-3.

16. Henry Audon, "Voyage au Choa (Abyssinie Meridionale)," Le Tour du Mond, 58 (1889), p. 146-47; Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe.

17. G. Massaia, I Miei Trentacinque anni di Missione, vi, pp.12-13, 45.

18. Interview: Sheikh Mohammed Shifa.

19. G. Massaia, I Miei Trentacinque Anni di Missione.

20. Enrico Cerulli, "Folk Literature of the Galla," p.35.

21. Guluma Gemeda, "Gomma and Limmu," pp. 153-54.

22. R.A. Caulk, "Territorial Competition," pp.76-77.

23. Alphonse Aubry, "Une Missione au Choa," pp.475-76.

24. The three eastern Leqa and Sibu chiefs were: Garbi Jillo of Leqa Billo, Tucho Danno of Leqa Arjo, and Genda Bushen of Sibu-Sire. The three chiefs were also opposed to Moreda Bakare of Leqa-Neqemte, who remained loyal to Menilek after his submission in 1882/83.

25. Asma, Asma Giyorgis and His Work, p.

26. Abba Dula, the last king of Gomma, who assumed power just on the eve of the Shewan conquest, quarrelled with state councilors and fled to Limmu and joined the Shewan army. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Garo Abba Kaabe, Agaro, Sept. 4, 1882; Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, Sept. 4, 1982.

27. J. Borelli, Ethiopie Meridionale, pp. 280, 322.

28. Ibid., p.433; FO.402/7, "M.Borelli's Travel's in the Countries South of Abyssinia and Shoa," December 16, 1890.

29. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe.

30. While travelling in Jimma in February, 1888, Jules Borelli heard about the rebellion in Limmu. J.Borelli, Ethiopie Meridionale, p.322.

31. After Wolde Giorgis's death in 1918, Ras Tafari (later Haile Sellassie) appointed Dajazmach Habte Michael, the son-in-law of Wolde Giorgis, as the governor of Limmu. By the 1920s and early 1930s, Wolde Giorgis's soldiers who first conquered the kingdom, emerged as powerful force in the province that Dajazmach Wolde Tsadik, who was appointed by Haile Sellassie in 1932, found it difficult to dislodge. This group, known as Tiklegna ("the implanted") became powerful landlords in the region. Their spokesperson, Fitawrari Takle-Ab, was assassinated by the Italians together with his two sons in 1937. Interview: Abate W. Yohannes, Agaro, February 17, 1992.

32. This literally means "kitchen." The tribute from such provinces went to the court directly; and because of this, such provinces tended to be administered by officials directly responsible to the court.

33. Between 1886 and 1936, ten governors were appointed to Gomma. Until 1920, eight governors ruled for an average of four years. The frequent recall of imperial officials gave the balabat (indigenous elite) a better chance to strengthen their position as intermediaries between the local population and the imperial army.

34. On the qalad system, see chapter V.

35. After the Italian period, Waizero Debre-Work, the granddaughter of Wolde Giorgis, became the balabat of Limmu, a title which was usually given to the descendants of the indigenous ruling families.

36. Jules Borelli, Ethiopie Meridionale, p.280.

37. Menilek to Abba Jifar, Nehassie 11, 1887 (August 17, 1895) (from collection of letter in possession of Abba Jifar's family). I am grateful to Abas Ahmed for locating some of the correspondence between Menilek and Abba Jifar.

38. In 1893, for example, as part of his payment to foreign merchants for the arms he purchased, Menilek ordered Abba Jifar to pay 500 dawlas (50,000 kgs.) of coffee as tribute. Menilek to Abba Jifar, 28/29 August 1893.

39. Jules Borelli, who attended the occasion, listed Abba Jifar's tribute as "longues defence d'elephants, ou des tiges de bambous remplies de civette; les autres, des pots de miel, des tissue indigenes, des lances, des boucliers couverts de plaques d'argent, des objects en bois ouvre, notemment des sieges (bartchouna [sic]) creusees dans des troncs de woddeyssa." Slaves were also offered as tribute. J.Borelli, Ethiopie Meridionale, p.159.

40. Bulatovitch, "Les Campaign de Menelik," Journal des Voyages, no. 297-303.

41. "Le popolazioni dell'ovest Etiopico: III - Gimma Abbagifar," ASMAI 54/31-137.

42. J. Borelli, "Souvenirs d'un voyage," p.159.

43. Bulatovitch, "Les Campaignes de Ménélik."

44. See Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Kingdom of Jimma (c.1800-1935)," M.A. Thesis, History Department, Addis Ababa University, 1984.

45. Menilek to Abba Jifar, August 28, 1893.

46. Robert P. Skinner, Abyssinia To-Day (New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1906), p.191.

47. Mohammed Nasir, "Economic History of Jimma Aba Jifar, 1878-1930," B.A. Thesis, Haile Sellassie University, 1973, p.6.

48. C.W. Gwynn, "A Journey in Southern Abyssinia," Geographical Journal, XXXVIII:2 (August 1911), pp.132-33; L.F.I Athill, "Through Southwestern Abyssinia," Geographical Journal, LVI (1920).

49. Empress Taitu to Abba Jifar II, September 1898; Menilek to Abba Jifar II, October 1906.

50. FO. 401/12. Capt. H.H. Kelly to Assistant Director of Intelligence (Anglo-Egyptian Sudan), February 10, 1909.

51. Not to be confused with the Muslim merchants of the nineteenth century. It is not clear why the Christian soldiers Abba Jifar recruited were also called Jabarti.

52. Close to a thousand Jabarti were recruited and commanded by Fitawrari Belachew. All of them received their titles and payments from Abba Jifar. In this case, the Jabarti were different from the naftagna who were paid by the imperial government. The Jabarti, however, made an enclave of a Christian community within the Muslim population of Jimma. This small army later on played an important role when Haile Sellassie annexed Jimma in 1932.

53. During his short visit to Jimma in 1912, Iyassu married Abba Jifar's niece and raised the prospect of stronger ties with the center imperial center.

54. Charles Schaefer, "Enclavistic Capitalism in Ethiopia," p.50.

55. Ibid., pp. 51-2.

56. Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "The City and Its Hinterlands," Chapter II.

57. Joanna Mantel-Niecko, The Role of Land Tenure in the System of Ethiopian Imperial Government in Modern Times (Warsaw, 1980), p. 207.

58. Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "The City and Its Hinterlands," p.

59. Asafa Jalata, Oromia and Ethiopia: State Formation and national Conflict, 1868-1992 (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993); Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, The Invention of Ethiopia: The making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1990).

60. Asafa Jalata, Oromia and Ethiopia, p. 9.

61. The "collaborationist" thesis partly corrects Ethiopianist scholarship which has emphasized the contradictions between the Ethiopian empire and the European colonial powers, while minimizing the impact of internal colonization. But the new thesis goes too far in striking the balance. Although Menilek undoubtedly benefitted from the ties with the European powers and very often skillfully manipulating their conflicting interests to consolidate his position, the Ethiopian state that he forged was not totally the "invention" of the European capitalist system. For the views that portray a unified Ethiopia against the Europeans, see Sven Rubenson, Survival of Ethiopian Independence (Lund, 1976)

62. Wolde Michael Akalou has, for example, argued that the establishment of the katama (military garrisons) encouraged the development of market economy. But the katamas were not "generative" centers that fostered trade. Rather, they were "parasitic" military garrisons that lived off the surrounding villages. See W.M. Akalou, "Urban Development in Ethiopia in Time and Space Perspective," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1967.

63. Literally, naftagna means holders of "naft" - firearm. In the context of the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ethiopia, however, naftagna means imperial soldiers who settled in the southern regions. For more details on the naftagna and their relations with the subject people (gabbar), see below. Also see, Charles McClellan, "Perspectives on the Neftenya-Gabbar System: the Darasa, Ethiopia," Africa, XXXIII: 3 (September, 1978), pp.426-40.

64. Menilek indeed encouraged individual European merchants to do business within his empire and gave some of them monopolistic concessions. With the exception of Ras Mekonnen, the governor of Hararge, his officials in the southern provinces were rather very slow to appreciate the economic importance of trade. When they established partnership with foreign merchants, they preferred mostly the Greeks, Armenians, Arabs and Indians rather than the Europeans. For more details why this happened, see below.

65. The term "prince-merchant" was coined by Shiferaw Bekele to emphasize the fact that the Ethiopian aristocrats who established partnership with foreign merchants in the early twentieth century were "princes" first, before developing business interests, unlike the "merchant-princes" elsewhere in Africa. Shiferaw Bekele, "Prince-Merchants and Tujars: A Preliminary Study of Class Evolution (c.1900-1935)," paper presented at the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, 1984.

66. Antoine d'Abbadie, "Lettre, écrite du pays d'Onarya a M. d'Avezac," Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Paris (1845), pp.52-67.

67. Legesse Lemma, "Political Economy of Ethiopia, 1875-1974: Agriculture, Education and International Antecedents of the Revolution," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1980, p.104-5.

68. Christine Stanford, Ethiopia Under Haile Sillassie (London, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1955), p.48.

69. McClellan, State Transformation and National Integration, p.57.

70. Kelly, FO. 402/12.

71. Ibid.

72. Charles Michel, Vers Fachoda: a la rencontre de la mission Marchand a travers l"Ethiopie (Paris, 1900), p.469. n.1.

73. Charles F. Rey, Unconquered Abyssinia (London, 1923), p.189.

74. John Markakis, Ethiopia: Anatomy of A Traditional Polity (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974) p.108.

75. This issue will be discussed in chapter V. See also Charles McClellan, State Transformation, pp. 61-3.

76. Enrico Cerulli, Etiopia Occidentale, 2 vols. (Rome, 1932), I, p.135; see also Charles Michel, Vers Fachoda, p.469.

77. See A. Cecchi, Da Zeila, II., p.512; Paul Soleillet, Obock, pp.255-56.

78. Captain Kelly, FO 401/12.

79. F.J. Bieber, "Nel Caffa e nel Dauro," Bolletino della Società Geografica Italiana, XLIV (1907), p.340.

80. Charles Michel, Vers Fachoda, p.143.

81. Kelly, FO 401/12.

82. Harold G. Marcus, Life and Times, p.73.

83. Timothy Fernyhough has argued that Menilek's conquests in the south led to the decline of slave trade, while the political crisis after his illness in 1908 favored the resurgence of the slave trade. This conclusion, however, does not stand closer scrutiny. Instead of decline, the conquest further aggravated the slave trade, until the fear of criticism from the neighboring colonial powers and the penetration of the market economy undermined it in the 1920s and 1930. Timothy Fernyhough, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in Southern Ethiopia: A Historical Overview, ca. 1800-1935," in New Trends in Ethiopian Studies, I, pp.680-708. See also Harold G. Marcus, "The Infrastructure of Italo-Ethiopian Crisis: Haile Sellassie, the Solomonic Empire, and the World Economy," in Procedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Chicago, 1978), pp. 559-66; Charles McClellan, "Land, Labor, and Coffee: The South's Role in Ethiopian Self Reliance,

1889-1935," African Economic History 9 (1980), pp. 69-83; Jon Edwards, "Slavery, the Slave Trade and the Reorganization of Ethiopia, 1916-1935," African Economic History 11 (1982), pp.3-14; Guluma Gemeda, "Subsistence, Slavery and Violence in the Lower Omo Valley, ca.1898-1940s," Northeast African Studies, XII:1 (1990),pp.5-19, Dennis Hickey, "Ethiopian Slavery and British Abolitionism: the view from the American Legation, 1920-1935," Tenth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Paris 1988; Tekalign Wolde Mariam, "The Slave Trade In Economy of Jimma," Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1989.

84. Oscar Neumann, "From the Somali Coast Through Southern Ethiopia to the Sudan," The Geographical Journal, XX: 4 (October, 1902), p. 388.

85. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe; Abba Macha Abba Daga (grandson of Abba Jifar Abba Lubbu), Agaro, Febrauary 19, 1992.

86. Robert Skinner, Abyssinia of Today, pp. 196-97; see also Bahru Zewde, "Concession and Concession-Hunters in Post-Adwa Ethiopia: The Case of Arnold Holz," Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies (Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1988), pp. 63-69.

87. Arnold Holz, a German Concession hunter, was one such example. See Bahru Zewde, "Concession and Concession-Hunters," pp. 63-69.

88. Kelly, FO. 402/12.

89. Most of the Jabarti merchants of Gondar and Gojjam operated either between the provinces and Addis Ababa, Asmara or the Sudan through Matama. See Abdusamad H. Ahmed, "Gojjam: Trade, Early Merchant Capital and the World Economy, 1901-1935," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1986.

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CHAPTER V

CHIEFS, PEASANTS AND COFFEE, 1916-36

The gabbar system significantly disrupted the growth of agricultural production and trade and subsequently impeded the development of the market economy and the evolution of private landed property. From the 1880s to 1910s, peasants who could have produced cash crops for the market were impoverished by the heavy tribute and labor services to the naftagna. They lacked both opportunity and the incentive to produce marketable surplus.

The gabbar system also undermined the economic and political power base of the indigenous elite - the balabat and abba qorro. Politically subordinate to the naftagna, the balabat lost not only their power but also the control of economic resources. On the other hand, the naftagna did not fare much better than the indigenous elite in terms of capital accumulation. Although they had the power, the economic and social organization of the military household did not encourage surplus production. The consumption pattern of the naftagna was unproductive and wasteful. Ranked and ordinary soldiers surrounded themselves by dependents and extended family members who did not participate in production eventhough they but who consumed almost all that was extracted from the peasants. In this case, the relative prosperity of the naftagna at the beginning of the twentieth century can only be attributed to

either the over exploitation of the peasants or the enormous resources of the conquered territories in the south.

This chapter examines the socio-economic situation in the 1920s that had a direct bearing on coffee production. Significant economic changes took place during the two decades preceding the Italian occupation in 1936 both in the conquered regions and at the imperial center. During the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the subsistence orientation of the early conquest period had declined. Agricultural production had gradually revived, and the link with the market economy was strengthened. In the meantime, the second generation of the naftagna rulers increased their dependence on the market. Instead of huge camp followers that drained the agricultural surplus, some had learned how to accumulate wealth and invest in commerce. Thus production was once again directed more towards the market.

The shift in turn required a reorganization of labor and a redefinition of titles to the land. Unlike the previous period, coffee emerged as the major crop that linked the Gibe region with the imperial capital and the world economy. Coffee was central, at least in the provinces of the Gibe valley, in the social and economic transformation of the 1920s.

By the early decades of the twentieth century the naftagna and the balabat both needed cash to pay for the

imported goods of which they had become the biggest consumers. Then peasants also responded to the pressure from the rulers and the market by committing more land and labor to coffee. Yet, coffee planting required a clear definition of property rights in land and steady supply of labor. With a changing market economy and the rise of coffee, the imperial center wanted greater control over agricultural production and trade. It was in this context that the galad system, a policy of land appropriation, was implemented extensively in the southern regions. More than the gabbar system, the new land policy subordinated the peasants to the state and influenced their cropping patterns.

The revival of coffee in the 1910s and 1920s is suggested by fragments of Foreign Office (FO) documents. These documents indicate that the volume of coffee sold by the chiefs was increasing. For example, Dajazmach Kumsa (Gebre Egziahber) of Leqa-Neqemte was reported to have earned MT$ 15,000 in 1915 by selling coffee. And in 1922, Dajazmach Habte Michael, the governor of Limmu, and his wife, Wossenyelesh, daughter of Wolde Giorgis, signed a contract with Nassir Awad, an Egyptian coffee merchant, to deliver 102 tons.[1] By April 1924 they had delivered 20.4 tons of coffee while 81.6 tons still remained uncollected. In a renegotiated contract in April 1924, their commercial agents promised to deliver 40.8 tons of coffee between April

and June of the same year and the remaining 40.8 tons up to March of the next year (1925). Like Habte Michael, other officials were also engaged in coffee trade. In 1923 Nagadras Tafesse, sold 5,661 kgs. of coffee to Nassir Awad in Gomma,[2] while Dajazmach Mekonnen Demissew, the governor of parts of Wollega sold at least 15,000 kilograms of coffee to George Payasis, a Greek coffee merchant. In the 1920s, Payasis had obtained a concession to buy coffee from Dajazmach Mekonnen's estates.[3] At the same time, in Gomma, Fitawrari Desta Damtew, the son-in-law of Ras Tafari (Haile Sellassie), granted a concession to (Ditta) Kevorkoff, an Armenian merchant, to buy coffee from his province.[4]

The F.O. documents are very interesting for several reasons. First, they suggest that a new generation of the naftagna lords were developing keen interest in coffee cultivation and trade. Unlike the older group, the new generation of naftagna were more business minded. Instead of relying on surplus extracted from the peasants mainly to feed their followers, the younger naftagna lords were interested in both production and trade. As a cash crop, coffee became their crop of choice. While urging the peasants to produce it, they, however, monopolized its trade by entering into business relationships with the foreign merchants. Although the actual delivery took several years, the increasing amount of production is clear from the

promised delivery, in 1924, of 40.8 tons of Limmu coffee by Dajazmach Habte Michael.[5]

These cases clearly indicate that the elite class, both the naftagna and the balabats, were developing interest in the marketing of coffee as middle men. With their new vested interest in the production and sale of coffee, they facilitated the collection of the crop for export market. Under the supervision of the chiefs, coffee was supplied to foreign merchants and their agents. Because of its autonomy, the marketing of coffee remained relatively different in Jimma, where local merchants sold coffee directly to foreign merchants. In 1926, for example, Kadiro Abba Kobi, a merchant from Jimma, sold 9.3 tons of coffee to Akberally Jawary, an Indian merchant who was involved in the export of coffee from Ethiopia in early twentieth century.[6]

But meet the new demands of the expanding market economy and their changing life styles, the chiefs needed more systematic exploitation of both human and material resources in the coffee producing regions. Such changes were also required a reorganization of the naftagna household as well. In stead of surrounding themselves with a host of dependents, some found it necessary to put their followers in the field for agricultural production. Thus while still requiring the gabbar to supply them with subsistence crops, some of the naftagna lords also reduced the size of their household.

The transition from subsistence to cash cropping was, however, uneven. Provinces with fertile land and easy access to external markets felt the influence of the market earlier than those regions which had poor land resources. Younger governors, particularly those born in the late nineteenth century were more interested in cash cropping than those who actually participated in the wars of conquest.[7] Besides the soil, market conditions and the attitude of governors, demography _ population density and the ratio of peasants to the soldiers _ was also another factor. Provinces with large number of peasants and less soldiers found it more convenient to shift to coffee than those encumbered with a huge imperial army. Although located in the same agricultural zone, such factors also influenced the pace of coffee cultivation in Jimma, Limmu and Gomma.

In Jimma, for example, coffee production had not been affected during the early period of conquest. After incorporation, coffee continued to be produced essentially by peasants who were either smallholders or tenants. But slaves were also used for coffee production. By the early twentieth century most of these slaves came from the frontier region south of the Gojeb river. Jimma's merchants actively participated in the transit slave trade; and through their commercial activities, they provided the kingdom with part of its agricultural labor. Slaves were

bought from Malo and Dokko. Some of these slaves were eventually sold to other merchants in the north. But many were also used in local agricultural production either permanently or while in transit. Together with the peasants, the slaves cleared the forests, plowed the fields, and harvested the crops, and made Jimma one of the richest provinces of the empire during the early twentieth century.[8] Agricultural labor was also more available in Jimma due in-migration of peasants from the surrounding provinces.

In Gomma, control of the soldiers over the local elites and peasants was relatively weaker. The situation allowed a quick recovery and development of coffee cultivation in the early twentieth century. Before the arrival of Fitawrari Desta, in 1920, the governors had exercised weak control over the peasants. The frequent change of guard in particular favored the indigenous elites who consolidated their position over the peasants. To some extent, the peasants, too, benefitted from the situation. A few indeed emerged as rich coffee farmers. Abba Jobir Abba Lubbu, for example, became the richest coffee farmer during the early decades of the twentieth century. He had started out as slave trader, but shifted to coffee cultivation when slave trade became risky. Putting large numbers of slaves on relatively large farms, Abba Jobir Abba Lubbu proved to be a very innovative farmer. At one time he reportedly had about five hundred slaves working on his farms, and when slavery

was outlawed and acquiring slaves became difficult, Abba Jobir converted his slaves to share croppers.

Although developing unevenly, the penetration of the market economy required surplus production that would go beyond the simple consumption needs of the military households. Surplus production in turn, required changes in the landholding system. Apparently, it was due to the changed economic conditions that the imperial government embarked upon the qalad system, a process of land alienation.[9] The system required measurement and classification of land into private and state domains. After measurement the state claimed two-thirds (2/3) of the land and left one-third (sisso) to the indigenous elites. The land which became the exclusive property of the imperial government was divided into maderia and semon land[10] and allotted to soldiers and priests respectively. The remaining one-third, also called sisso land, was left to the indigenous elites - the balabat, abba qoro and some qabbar who previously had extensive holdings.

The imposition of the qalad system resulted in redefinition of the social formation. In the process, for example, large number of the qabbar lost access to land. Those who held small pieces of land before the imposition of the qalad system lost every thing and became landless tenants. The balabat too lost a great deal; but some used the opportunity to consolidate their share by excluding

other claimants to the land. Politically well connected individuals easily excluded other claimants from inherited family land.

Thus, some of the balabat and abba qorro were able to consolidate their holdings as private property. Collaborating with naftagna, some balabat surrendered scattered pieces of land in different areas in return for a consolidated holding in another. In some cases, they bought land from smallholders and added it to their private holdings. It was, however, the naftagna who emerged as big landlords from the process of restructuring. As the state redistributed the confiscated land to the soldiers, the naftagna were transformed from tribute collectors to actual landlords.[11]

The qalad system also facilitated the centralization of the imperial state's power. It allowed the Addis Ababa government to have direct access to local resources and revenues by undercutting the power of the intermediate agents. The control of land helped the state to manipulate the production and exchange of agricultural products. Moreover, the individual soldier became more dependent on the state than the regional lords.

On the other hand, peasants who lost access to land were directly subordinated to the new landlords. Even when the qabbar did not totally lose his autonomy, his ability to decide what and when to cultivate was greatly diminished

after the imposition of the qalad system. In other words, with implementation of the qalad system, the imperial state became more intrusive, if not hegemonic, in the local agricultural systems than ever before.[12]

From the imperial perspective, the new landholding pattern was necessary to boost agricultural productivity. As the expanding frontiers ended after a series of boundary agreements with European colonial powers in the 1890s, the administration of the empire no longer required a huge army. Unless directed into the production system, the army was more of a burden to the state and society. Its wasteful consumption pattern was obviously unsuitable for the expanding market economy. Thus the qalad system was needed to replace the gabbar system and subsistence oriented production had to adjust to the changing patterns of the market economy. In some areas where the labor supply was reliable and the prospects for commercialization was promising, the naftagna quickly turned to cash cropping and participated in the market economy.

Thus reorganization of land encouraged privatization and investment in tree crops like coffee. Young and high ranking naftagna welcomed the change. Although given to them on temporary basis, some influential officials sold the land granted to them by the state and invested the proceeds in other areas.[13] In 1928, Dajazmach Wondrad, governor of Gomma (1913-16), for example, sold seven gasha (280

hectares) of land which he had acquired during his governorship.[14] Others transferred their lands into coffee plantations. Dajazmach Mekonnen Demissew, governor of Jimma-Arjo and Sibu-Sire, for example, planted 500,000 coffee trees in the mid-1920, while at the same time urging his deputies to plant coffee extensively.[15]

Yet, not all naftagna were ready to exploit their increased access to land. Indeed, the reaction of the imperial soldiers to the imposition of the galad system was mixed. Opposition came mainly from areas of labor shortage where the naftagna feared that receiving land grants would loosen their control over the labor of the gabbar. And with no peasants to cultivate the land, ownership was unproductive. Thus, when offered land, a group of naftagna in Kafa, for example, resisted, arguing that: "If we take the land [instead of the gabbar], tenants will abandon our land and migrate to the land of the balabat (indigenous landlords) and they will develop theirs and neglect ours. Ours will become wilderness."[16] Similarly, in the Gedeo region of Sidamo, the settlers were reluctant to shift from gabbar to land mainly due to the fear of losing labor. According to Charles McClellan "Settlers strongly preferred gabbars, and if galad was offered they would decline, hoping that gabbars would eventually become available."[17] For the same reason, an attempt to introduce the galad system in Gomma in 1910s, was met with resistance from the settler

soldiers. Some even turned to banditry, highway robbery, kidnapping and slave trade rather than losing control over the gabbar.[18]

Thus, the implementation of the galad system was not uniform throughout the Gibe region. Besides the resistance from the soldiers, the measurement of land and actual alienation depended on the specific political and social conditions of each province. The relative strength/ weakness of the naftagna, the balabat, the status of the province within empire and the response of the local elite to the market economy affected the timing and the rate of implementation. In some provinces, the shift to the galad system began during the 1910s; but in others it was delayed until the 1920s and 1930s. In a few cases, it was accomplished in the late 1940s and 1950s.

In Limmu, the land survey and redistribution began in 1918/19. This province was settled by the soldiers of Dajazmach Wolde Giorgis in the late 1880s. Until 1897, when Kafa was also conquered, Wolde Giorgis's army devastated the region. The huge army settlement in the province exhausted the resources of kingdom. In the hope of winning their rights, the peasants of Limmu rebelled unsuccessfully several times between 1886 and 1897. After 1897, the transfer of some of Wolde Giorgis's soldiers to Kafa eased the burden of Limmu's peasants. But even when he was transferred to Gondar in 1910, Wolde Giorgis left a huge

army there, and the governorship of the province remained in the hands of his family.[19] His soldiers, also known as tiklegna ("implanted"),[20] gradually developed a special interest in the province which they defended against other late arriving mobile soldiers, the worwari.[21]

When the qalad system was introduced, the tiklegna tried to influence its outcome by limiting the access of the balabat and the peasants to land and slowed the process of land redistribution. In 1923, four years after the initial survey, the balabat, for example, complained about the non-implementation and their inability to take their shares. Indeed, it was not until 1927 that surveyors were sent to the province to allocate the balabat's share.[22]

In Gomma, the implementation of the qalad system also started in the late 1910s and early 1920s, but was discontinued owing to the opposition of both the balabat and the naftagna.. Gomma had a slightly different experience from the beginning of the qabbar system. In 1886, Menelik assigned it to one on his cousins, Dajazmach Beshah Aboyye. After facing frequent rebellions, Bashah was recalled from the province only after three years. His successor, Fitawrari (later Ras) Demissew Mekonnen (1889-1900), stabilized the administration partly by coopting the indigenous elite and relaxing the exploitation of the peasants. His successors, during next two decades, stayed only for an average four years and made no significant

changes in the administration of the province. In the meantime the indigenous elites strengthened their position and more successfully blocked the access of the settlers to the labor and the produce of the peasants. Only Abba Wuqaw (governor, 1917-20) attempted to weaken the growing strength of the local elites, but with very little success.

Abba Wuqaw was replaced, in 1920, by Fitawrari Desta Damtew, who represented a new generation of imperial officials who were eager to expand coffee production. He encouraged the balabat and peasants to plant coffee by offering tax relief and by improving the road between Agaro and Jimma town. He also wanted to implement the qalad system, but because of the shortage of labor, the settlers resisted the program. The balabat, who were far more influential in Gomma than in Limmu, also disliked the changes because they feared the qalad would give more access to the settlers over land and labor of the province. Thus, full transition to the qalad system was delayed until the 1940s.

The case of Jimma is still different from the experiences of both Gomma and Limmu. Because of the province's political autonomy, no settlers were garrisoned there until 1932. Abba Jifar, ruler of the kingdom (c.1878-1932) paid annual tribute directly to the imperial court in Addis Ababa. Although the amount of tribute increased significantly during the early twentieth century,

agricultural production and land ownership were less affected by the imperial rule. The gaład system was not introduced to Jimma until the 1940s. But owing to the centralization policy of Ras Tafari (Haile Sellassie), the political autonomy of the kingdom was eliminated in 1932.

Coffee and the End of Jimma's Autonomy, 1926-36

In spite of Abba Jifar's successful resistance to avoid the direct annexation of the kingdom, Jimma finally lost its autonomy in 1932. The circumstances leading to the end of Jimma's autonomy were associated with the economic progress of the kingdom on the one hand, and the centralization policy of the imperial state in the 1920s and early 1930s, on the other. At the local level, the economic performance of Jimma was quite impressive. By the early twentieth century, the administration of the kingdom was reorganized along ecological zones to facilitate cropping patterns.

The reorganized administrative structure encouraged the production of coffee and cereal crops. The districts south of the Gibe-Jimma river, that included Qarsa and Dedo, with more open fields, specialized in cereal crop production and cattle raising. Those to the north of the river, including Manna district, with thick forests, were used more for coffee cultivation. Abba Jifar assigned two deputy governors to each zone to supervise production and taxation.

In the south, Dedo district was particularly rich in

teff, cotton and pepper. And in the north, forests of Manna and Santama produced very good coffee. It was from this district that Abba Jifar annually raised about MT$ 27,000 of the kingdom's revenue.[23]

In both of Jimma's agricultural zones, land was controlled by the Sultan, his family and district officials. The Sultan and his family held extensive land in both agricultural zones. District governors, rich merchants and farmers also held relatively large tracts of land in both areas. In both agricultural zones, the landed aristocracy used tenants and slaves to cultivate their lands.

But with a stable administration and a ruling elite socially tied to the subject people, the exploitation of the peasants was relatively moderate. Abba Jifar's tax policy was liberal. For this reason, many "landless and those who were tired of heavy taxation" in the neighboring provinces fled to Jimma and settled on frontier lands (mogga) of the kingdom. Secondly, Jimma's continued involvement in the slave trade brought in more laborers from lower Omo valley and southwestern frontiers of the Ethiopian empire. Slaves and migrant laborers boosted agricultural labor and production.[24]

The economic prosperity of Jimma, however, increased the envy of the surrounding naftagna rulers. A source of tension between Abba Jifar and the naftagna governors was the flight of peasants from Limmu, Gomma, Gera and Kullo to

Jimma. The exodus apparently increased after the imposition of qalad system in some of the naftagna held provinces. Threatened by the loss of agricultural labor and tax revenues in their respective provinces, the naftagna accused Abba Jifar of recruiting their tenants and depopulating their domains. For this reason, they advocated the annexation of Jimma and the removal of the indigenous rulers. In the 1920s, the local trend coincided with the centralization policy of Addis Ababa. After the death of two powerful political figures _ Fitawrari Habte Giorgis, minister of War, 1907-26, and Abuna Mattewos, the head of the Orthodox church in 1926, Tafari found it easier to expedite his centralization policy.[25] Habte Giorgis and the Abuna were represented the more conservative older generation, while Tafari was eager to expedite the penetration of the market economy.

Regarding Jimma, Tafari's policy evolved with the emergence of coffee as empire's major cash crop. By the mid-1920s, the demand for Ethiopian coffee had increased tremendously. The export of "Abyssinian Coffee" through the port of Djibouti jumped from 280 metric tons in 1921 to 5,864 tones in 1925 and 9,408 in 1934.[26] (See table 5.1). In the meantime, about 2,500 to 4,500 metric tons of coffee were exported through Gambela in the west.[27]

Table 5.1 "Abyssinian" Coffee Export through Djibouti, 1921-1934

Year	Volume (in Metric tons)
1921	280
1922	2,240
1923	1,747
1924	4,653
1925	5,864
1926	6,035
1927	7,090
1928	7,658
1929	7,730
1930	6,272
1931	8,421
1932	11,412
1933	6,602
1934	9,408

Source: A. Zervos, L'Empire d'Ethiopie, p.157.

According to the Addis Ababa Customs Office, which was tightly controlled by Tafari, in monetary value, coffee contributed about one-third of total exports and paid for nearly half of all the imports in 1924-25.[28] (See table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Export of major commodities in 1924-25

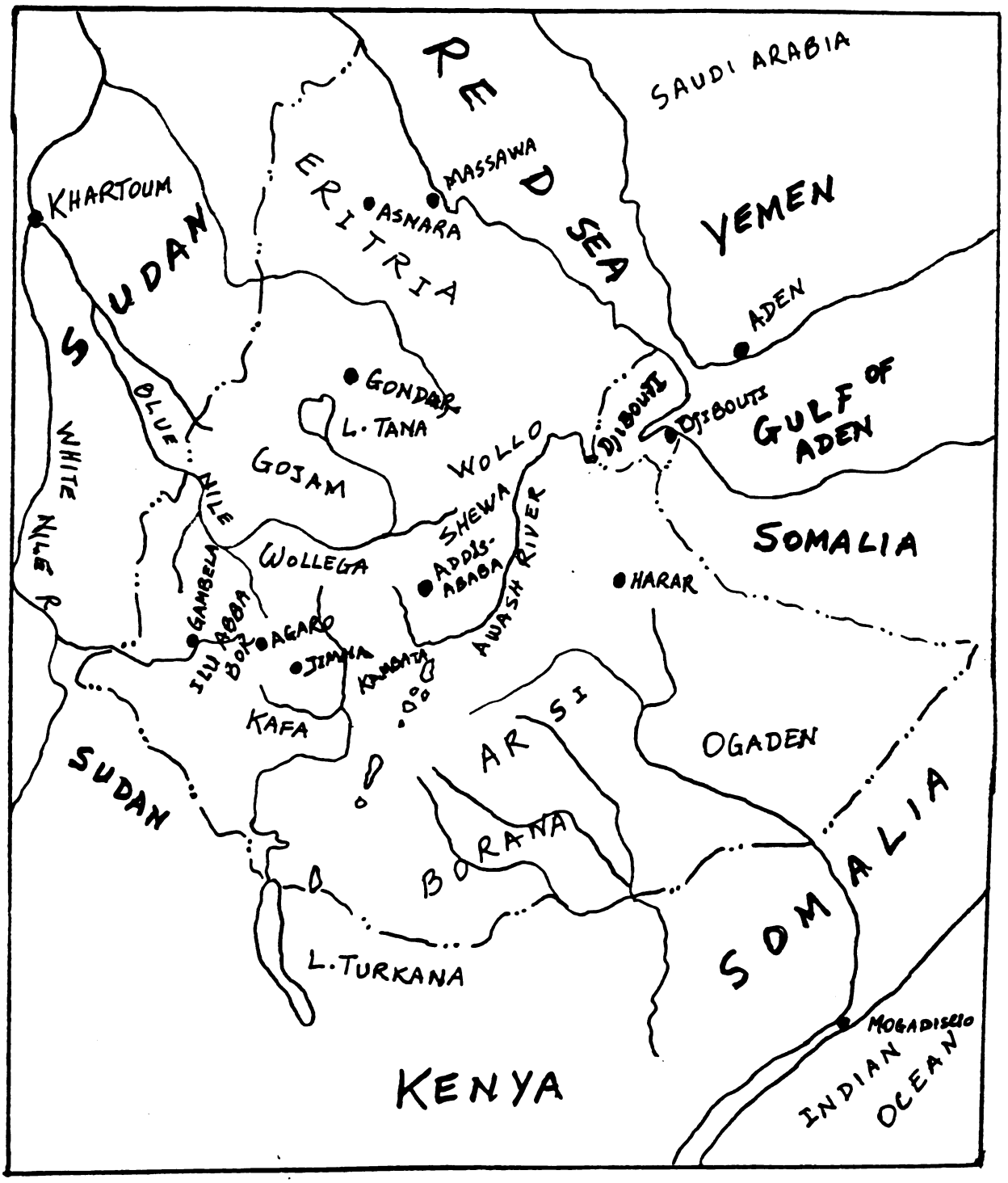
	Exports		Imports
Item	Volume (metric tons)	Value (MT$)	Value (MT$)
Coffee	5,555.8	3,104, 723	
Hides	7,410.6	4,359,104	
Skins	20,865 (in number)	166,901	
Wax	137.6	275,142	
Civet	746.4	87,809	
Ivory	8.3	85,808	
Others		1,078,164	
Total		9,157,651	6,999,295

Source: Berhanena Salam, November 5, 1925.

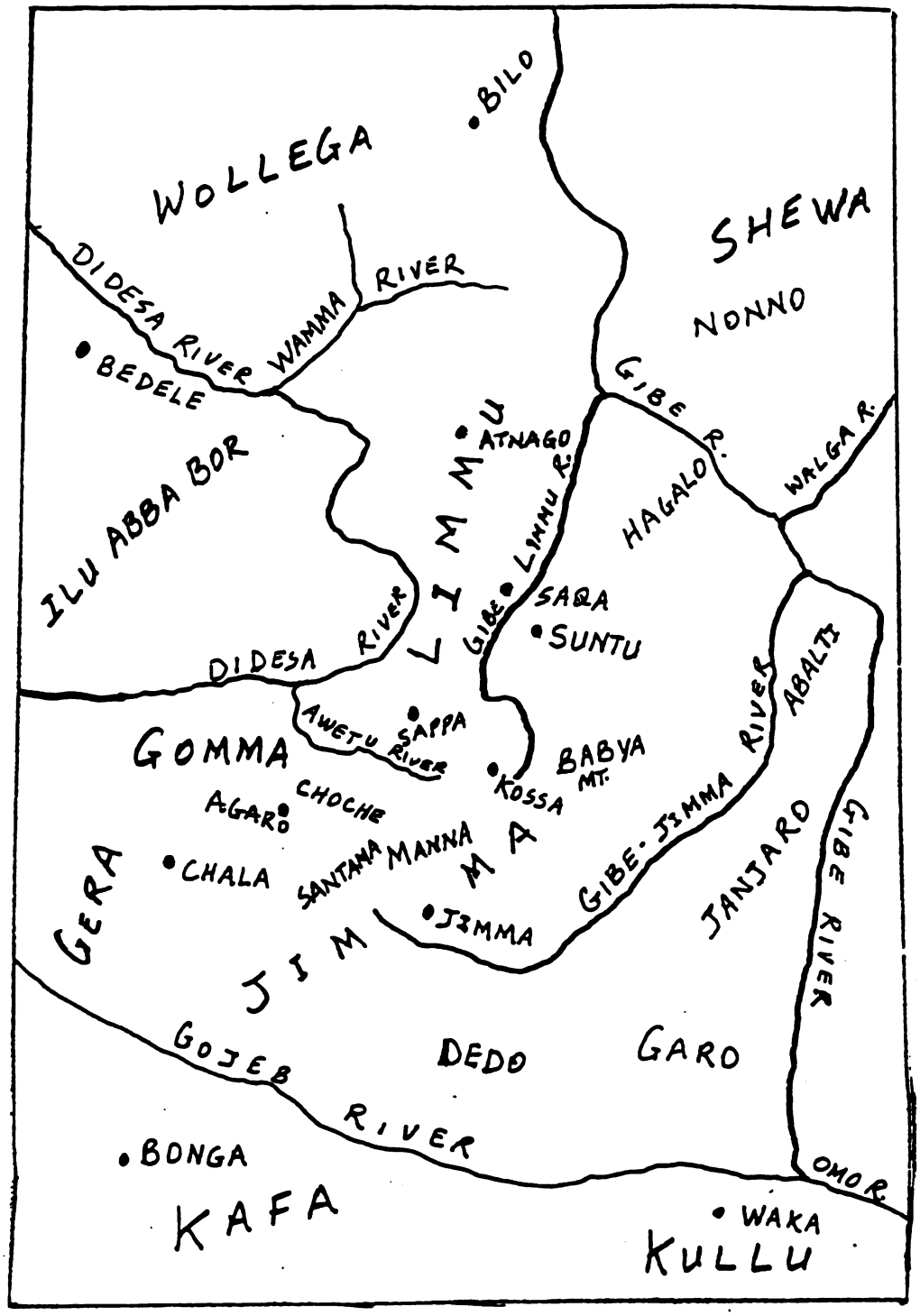
The fact that Jimma was the main source of the "Abyssinian" coffee made it more vulnerable to Tafari's policy of centralization. Although he controlled the export of this crop through the customs offices, Tafari lacked direct access to the production and marketing of Jimma's coffee. To have such access the annexation of Jimma was necessary.

With a spectacular rise in coffee export the previous year, a plan to annex Jimma was initiated in 1925. But initially the scheme involved gradual economic penetration instead of direct political annexation. To connect the coffee producing southwest with the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway and to divert the coffee export subsequently from Jimma and the southwest to the imperial center, Tafari decided to build a motor road from Addis Abba to Jimma. In 1926, he announced a plan to build Addis Ababa-Jimma road."
Unlike other projects, Tafari did not involve foreign capital investment. But the lack of fund delayed the road building project. MT$ 96,000 Tafari initially allocated for the project from his personal fund run out before construction work reached the Awash river, about 35 miles west of Addis Ababa. He was then forced to establish a share company to complete the remaining part of the project.
He invited the northern aristocracy and Ethiopian merchants to buy shares."

Map 4. The Gibe Region and the Ethiopian Empire



Map 5. The Gibe Region in the 1920s



While the road building was in progress, Haile Sellassie also took control of the lucrative customs office of Jimma. In 1931, he appointed a customs officer to supervise the collection of market dues from Jimma.[31] The centralization of the Jimma's customs office, destroyed Abba Jifar's political power and revenue, and subsequently undermined the autonomy of the kingdom. Without the control of market dues the Sultan's tribute obligations suddenly became onerous.[32] Ironically, while Haile Sellassie was taking control of Jimma's customs, Abba Jifar's tribute obligation were increasing. The burden fell on Jimma's peasants because Abba Jifar was forced to increase their taxes to avoid even more tighter control from Addis Ababa on the pretext of unpaid tributes.

During the crisis in 1931-32, Jimma lacked experienced leadership to handle the delicate relationship with the imperial center. The old sultan was unable to handle the situation. His eldest son, Abba Dula, who lacked interest in politics, was unable to fill in the gap. Instead the responsibility was left to Abba Jobir, Abba Jifar II's grand son. But the young ruler, lacked the experience to renegotiate the status of the kingdom. He apparently failed to realize how coffee, Jimma's main economic asset, was at same time alluring Haile Sellassie to centralize the administration.

By the end of 1931, Negadras Sahle Eshete, Haile Sellassie's appointee to the customs office of Jimma, arrived with clear signs of imperial domination. In addition to his duty as director of the customs office, the Nagadras was also appointed as judge of the "slavery office" in Jimma. To enforce his decisions he was provided with about hundred imperial guards. His military position was further strengthened when some of Abba Jifar's Christian army (Jabarti) shifted their allegiance to the central government. Economically, making things worse, the political crisis came in the middle of the World Depression which already had affected the prices of Jimma's coffee."

Table 5.2 Average Price of Jimma Coffee in Addis Ababa, 1925-1930

Year	Value (MT$/17kgs.)
1925	8
1926	
1927	9.5
1928	11
1929	13
1930	12
1931	8

Sources: G. Mackereth, Economic Conditions in Ethiopia, Berhanena Salam, 1927, 1930.

A brief look at the pricing pattern of Jimma's coffee at Addis Ababa market in the late 1920s reveals a great deal of fluctuation. Between 1925 and 1929, for example, there was over a sixty percent increase. But two years later, in 1931, the prices of Jimma's coffee at Addis Ababa market had dropped back to the 1925 level. In reality the fluctuating prices reveal only one part of the story. These figure, for example, concealed the declining share of the coffee producers. If one considers the relatively high prices of imported goods and the fluctuation of the value of the Maria Theresa dollars at the same time, the loss of coffee farmers was apparently greater than what the above figures do suggest.[34]

Tight political control from Addis Ababa and the decline of coffee prices aggravated the tension in Jimma in the early 1930s. The peasants hated to pay more taxes than they did in the past. The district governors disliked the growing erosion of their power and the rising influence of the imperial army. It was at this juncture that Abba Jobir refused to cooperate with Haile Sellassie's government. Doubting the loyalty of the Jabarti army in the event of direct confrontation with the imperial forces, he began recruiting and arming new soldiers from among the indigenous population of Jimma.

Politically, Jimma was in a state of chaos in the early 1932. Incidents of violence were observed in the market

town of Hirmata and in all parts of the kingdom. By mid-March, 1932, a rebellion broke out in Manna and Dedo, two of the most important agricultural districts of the kingdom. In both districts the newly appointed Christian soldiers were the main targets of the rebels. To control the situation Haile Sellassie sent in three hundred soldiers from the neighboring Limmu and a judge, Grazmach Abebe Naqe, to investigate the causes of the rebellion. By mid-June, imperial forces had overwhelmed the rebels,[35] and the rebel chief in the district of Manna, Ahmed Tibba, was captured and sent to Addis Ababa. He was returned to Jimma few days later with Haile Sellassie's verdict be executed publically. Another rebel leader in the district of Dedo held out his position until he was besieged and killed around 1935, just before the coming of the Italians.[36] Abba Jobir was taken into custody in May 1932, remaining in jail until the Italians released him in 1936 and appointed him as the governor of Jimma.

After Abba Jobir's removal, Haile Sellassie appointed Dajazmach Desta Damtew, his son-in-law and devoted officer. Desta shared Haile Sellassie's vision of imperial administration and promotion of the cash crops. He had been the governor of Kafa, Kullo, Konta and Gomma in the 1920s, where he witnessed the flight of the peasants to Jimma. Like the emperor, Desta was interested in the production and trade of coffee. During his governorship of

Gomma in the 1920s, he encouraged peasants, apparently with some success, to expand coffee plantations. In 1928 he had already built a road from Agaro to Jimma to facilitate the coffee trade."[7] When he was appointed as governor of Jimma, Desta became the most powerful governor of the largest and richest coffee producing region in the south and southwest.

In 1933, when the political crisis in Jimma came under control, Haile Sellassie transferred Desta to Sidamo, another rich coffee-producing southern province. On the other hand, in September of the same year, he appointed Dajazmach Wolde Amanuael to Jimma. The new appointee, who had already proved his loyalty to the emperor as head of the Imperial Guard, was expected to supervise the production of coffee and ensure its flow to Addis Ababa, where Haile Sellassie could directly benefit from the trade."[8] Wolde Amanuael was regarded as "an uneducated governor of [an] old school" whose appointment depended more on "his loyalty to the Emperor" than administrative ability."[9]

Taking over the administration of Jimma by the end of 1933, Dajazmach Wolde Amanuael proclaimed the beginning of a new era of collaboration between the imperial government and the people of Jimma. Speaking at his reception ceremony, the dajazmach told the local people that the imperial government had no intention of eliminating the traditional ruling house. "The purpose of my coming to this country," he declared, "is to assist the balabat [Abba Dula] in the

administration...[and] to enhance your interests in agriculture and in all other aspects...but not to hurt you."[40]

Despite the governor's call for cooperation, the local population remained hostile. The former officers of Abba Jifar believed that the days of Jimma's autonomy and agricultural prosperity were over. Some indeed felt insulted to see the ceremony itself held on the sultans royal compound, especially after their young ruler was sent to jail. Their disappointment was clear from their conspicuous absence during the subsequent social gatherings organized by Dajazmach Wolde Amanuel.

At any rate, by May 1932, Jimma, which had escaped the ravages of Menelik's army five decades earlier, had joined the rank of the southern provinces. Even before the death of Abba Jifar in 1934, the symbols of imperial control were installed everywhere in Jimma. Contrary to the previous agreement between Abba Jifar and Menilek, an Orthodox Church was opened in Jimma town in 1932 and Christian soldiers were garrisoned at various strategic points. Within a short time attempts were made even to change the name of the town from Jimma to "Haile Sellassie" town.[41]

Appointing officials who directly controlled the customs office and taxation, Haile Sellassie fulfilled his long standing ambition of diverting the wealth of Jimma to the central treasury and ended the province's autonomy that

appeared anomalous in the 1930s. On the eve of the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935-6), Haile Sellassie's plans for Jimma were almost achieved. After Abba Jifar died in 1934, Haile Sellassie's appointees were busy consolidating Addis Ababa's control of the region. The construction of Jimma road was finally completed by 1935, and Haile Sellassie made a short visit to the province in February 1935.[42] It was a special tour because the emperor was able to take a motor ride over 200 miles to Jimma in two days, a journey which earlier took at least two weeks.

His ultimate plan of economic exploitation was, however, undermined by the continued local resistance and falling international coffee prices due to the world depression. The political crisis had also undermined the expansion of coffee cultivation. Even without the interruption of the Italian period, the revival of Jimma's coffee could have taken several years. The political crisis of 1932 was far more destructive than Haile Sellassie had envisaged. Shortly after annexation, the economic prosperity of Jimma had declined. The indigenous elites and the peasants were dissatisfied with the behavior of the new overlords. The latter over-taxed the peasants and merchants alike to enrich themselves and the central government. The crisis undercut the coffee trade of Jimma even before the coming of the Italians in 1936.[43]

Some scholars have explained the subjugation of Jimma in 1932 as part of Haile Sellassie's attempt to abolish slavery and the slave trade.[44] Slavery indeed existed in Jimma by 1932, but its extent was much less than what was generally claimed. More important, slaves were used in domestic agricultural production.[45] Thus, the question of slave trade was much less important in Haile Sellassie's decision regarding Jimma in 1932. Even contemporary observers like Yaglu Abba Walo did not mention the issue of slavery and the slave trade.[46]

More than slavery, then, it was Jimma's wealth in coffee that prompted the emperor to action. Harold G. Marcus is right when he made coffee the central point for Haile Sellassie's decision on Jimma in 1932. But, although the World Depression might have facilitated the annexation, the plan predated the falling prices of coffee in the early 1930s. In this case, Haile Sellassie appears to have been working towards the direct control of the coffee-rich regions at least since the mid-1920s. In this context, Haile Sellassie's centralization policy was intertwined with the expansion of the cash economy and particularly, in the case of Jimma, associated with coffee cultivation and trade.

* *

In general, the gabbar system which was imposed on the conquered peoples of the southern regions of the Ethiopian empire in the late nineteenth century retarded the

production of agricultural surplus, trade and the development of private ownership of land. But the introduction of the qalad system about three decades later shifted the emphasis of imperial control from labor to the land. By controlling the land, the state and its local agents hoped to subordinate the peasants to the imperial system. The qalad system also increased the access of the center to the resources of the provinces and permitted the penetration of the market economy. In this process coffee emerged as a major commodity and linked the peasants in the producing regions to the imperial center and beyond.

The introduction of the qalad system also led to the consolidation of the social classes in the conquered regions. By the early twentieth century three social groups were formed all over the Gibe region. At the bottom of this social hierarchy were the landless (Chisegna/qubsissa) and the small-holding peasants. This group survived partly or totally by sharecropping. The indigenous elites _ abba qorro and the balabat _ formed the middle echelon of the society. To some extent, this group consolidated its share as the result of the reorganization of the qalad system. Using traditional kinship relations and social and political networks, the indigenous elites accumulated wealth. Yet they also felt the social tension created by the alienation of land and the cultural conflicts between the settlers and the peasants.

At the apex of the social hierarchy were the naftagna soldiers. They were divided into two: (1) those who had lived in the region since the late 1880s, (2) and those came who came later in the 1910s and 1920s. The former formed the core of the settler community. They were members of the conquering army of Wolde Giorgis who settled in Limmu and Kafa, Kullo and Konta, and to a lesser extent in Gomma and Gera as well. Because of the semi-permanent settlement of these soldiers, they were called tiklegna ("those who were implanted").

The late comers, known as the worwari, were mobile forces who moved with their respective commanders when they were appointed to new regions. The worwari were not able to develop lasting relations with peasants because of their limited stay in the region. Their position always depended on the support of the imperial court and the influence of their commanding officer. They had occasional clashes with the tiklegna who, because of their long stay in the region, were able to learn the local language and establish some source of local power base. When the galad system was imposed, both the tiklegna and the worwari received land. The tiklegna, however, either worked on the land themselves or gave it to landless tenants as sharecroppers. But the worwari totally relied on tenants and the supply of provisions from the government granaries which was collected in a form of asrat (tithe).

With the imposition of the galad system, the relatively mixed, some times overlapping and ambiguous, claims to land were replaced by a predominantly private ownership of land in the Gibe region and other parts of the empire in south. Although the restructuring of the landholding system remained uneven until after the end of the Italian period (1936-41), the trend towards privatization had gained some momentum in the Gibe region in the 1920s and 1930s. The following chapter examines the conditions of land and labor for the cultivation of coffee during the Italian period and the immediate post war period.

Notes

1. FO 915/83 contract made between [Qagnazmach Mekonnen and Grazmach Tafari, and Mr.Nasir Awad, Miazia 18, 1916]. Qagnazmach Mekonnen and Grazmach Tafari signed the agreement on behalf of Dajazmach Habte Michael, governor of Limmu, and his wife, Wiazaro (W/o) Wosseylesh. The document mentions 4800 frassula of undelivered coffee and 1200 frassula already delivered. (A Frassula is a unit of measurement equivalent to 17 kg).

2. FO.915/83. Tafasse Habte Michael to Negadras Afework Gebre-Yesus, Special Court Justice, Hamle 20, 1917 [July 27, 1925].

3. FO.915/140. George Payasis to a Panel of Judges consisting of Ras Nadew, governor Gore, Mr. Walker, British Consul at Gore, and Nagadras Tafesse [H.Michael], Miazaia 7, 1918 [April 15, 1926].

4. Archivo Storico della Ministero Africana Italiana (ASMAI), 54/34-137. "Le popolazioni ed i capi dell'Etiopia sud Occidentale."

5. FO.915/83. See note #1 above.

6. FO. 915/172. Special Court Judgement in a case involving Kadiro Abba Kobi (plaintiff) and Akberally Jawary (defendant).

7. Dajazmach Balcha of Sidamo could be an exception. Balcha was himself a victim and beneficiary of Menilek's conquest. He was captured around upper Awash during early stages of Menilek's conquest. Later on, he became one of Menilek's best generals and served as the governor of Sidamo region during the early twentieth century. After 1917, Balcha became very active in coffee cultivation. Other governors who promoted coffee cultivation were those of Tafari's generation.

8. Mohammed Nasir, "Economic History of Jimma Aba Jifar, 1878-1930," B.A. Thesis, Haile Sellasie University, 1973.

9. Qalad refers to rope used for measuring land as well as the measured land itself. The system was introduced by the imperial government to the conquered regions of the south and southwest in the 1910 and 1920s.

10. Maderia was a piece of land that was given to a soldier on temporary basis in lieu of cash salaries. Theoretically, the soldier could use the land while he was alive. But gradually maderia lands were transferred into permanent possessions. Semon land was given to churches to be used by the priests.

11. See Bahru Zewde, A History of Modern Ethiopia, pp.88-92; McClellan, State Transformation, pp.81-102.

12. The intrusive, but non-hegemonic, nature of colonial and post-colonial states in African has been pointed out by Sara Berry. The lack of hegemonic state control is attributed to the strength of the local social networks that mediated the relationship between the community and the state. Sara Berry, No Condition is Permanent, pp. 101, 104.

13. Charles Schaefer has, for example, pointed out the development of urban real estates, mainly in Addis Ababa, by landlords who controlled rural resources. The relationship between the imposition of the galad system and the emergence of what Schaefer calls "rentier capitalism" needs further investigation. See Charles Schaefer, "Enclavistic Capitalism," pp.250-51; Idem., "The Politics of Banking: The Bank of Abyssinia, 1905-1931," International Journal of African Historical Studies, XXV: 2 (1992), pp.384-85.

14. I am grateful to Abate W. Yohannes for providing me with a copy of this document (obtained, February 17, 1992).

15. Berhanena Salam (BS), March 15, 1928.

16. The Balabats of Kafa vs. the Naftagna, "Proceedings of the Chilot," held on Miazia 14, 1951 [April 22, 1959]. A copy of this proceedings is found in the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Archives. (MOA) 22371/45.

17. McClellan, State Transformation, pp.82-3.

18. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe.

19. Dajazmach Habte Michael, who was the governor of Limmu in the 1920s, was son-in-law of Wolde Giorgis. But until the Italian invasion in 1936, Fitawrari Tekle-Ab served as the deputy of Wolde Giorgis and his family in Limmu. During land redistribution in the 1920s, Takle-Ab was regarded as head of the garrisoned (tiklegna) army in Limmu. He and two of his sons were killed by the Italians in 1937. Informant: Abate W.Yohannes, near Agaro, Feb. 17, 1992. See also MOA, 22371/45 ["Land Question of the Naftagna of Kafa Province"].

20. Mantel-Niecko, The Role of Land Tenure, p.78.

21. The origin of this term is not clear. But in the case of Limmu the worwari seem to be the mobile soldiers who were assigned to the region temporarily. Unlike the tiklegna they were not tied to a specific commander. An equivalent of the worwari could be the barud-bet army in Sidamo. For description of the latter, see Charles McClellan, State Transformation, pp. 39-41.

22. MOA, 5545/42, ["Balabats of Jimma"].

23. Yaglu Abba Walo, "[Jimma the Rich and the Fertile Country]," BS, May 5, 1932.

24. Ibid.

25. Together with Empress Zewditu (r.1916-30), the war minister and the bishop represented a "conservative" wing of the imperial government; while Tafari and the younger generation of aristocrats formed the "progressive" party. The latter wanted centralized administration and the development of market economy, of which they became the principal beneficiaries. See Harold Marcus, Haile Sellassie: The Formative Years, pp.78-9.

26. Adrien Zervos, L'Empire d'Ethiopie (Alexanderia, 1935), p.157; Raffaele Ciferri, "Primo Raporto sul Caffe nell'Africa Orientale Italiana," Agrinomico per l'Africa Italiana (1940), pp.12-14.

27. FO. 371/11574. Consul C.H. Walker to Murray, 13 November 1926; US Embassy (Rome) to State Department, April 25, 1937. See also Bahru Zewde, "An Overview and Assessment of Gambella Trade (1904-1935)", International Journal of African Historical Studies, XX:1 (1987).

28. These figures do not include coffee export through Gambela and other routes to the neighboring colonial territories.

29. FO.371/11574. Charles H. Bentinck to the Foreign Office, April 9, 1926. Bentinck's report dealt with Tafari's conversion with an American missionary, Thomas A. Lambie, about his plan to build road from Addis Ababa to Jimma. Thomas A. Lambie, A Doctor Without a Country (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1935).

30. The Addis Ababa-Jimma-Gambela (Auto & Rail) Road Share Co. was established with a total capital of MT$ 20 million. The money was planned to be raised by selling a share of MT$ 200 each. Out of the total (100,000) shares, Haile Sellassie held 25% (25,000 shares), while remaining shares were distributed as follows: Ethiopian Government (5%), Ethiopian "citizens" (50%), and others (20%). Interestingly, Abba Jifar and the richest merchants of Jimma were conspicuously absent from the list of share holders. BS, June 5, 1930; July 3, 1930; July, 17, 1930.

31. Ibid., October 22, 1931.

32. Centrally controlled customs offices were established in several provinces between 1928 and 1932. In this case, the control of Jimma's customs could be considered as part Haile Sellassie's general policy of financial reform of the empire. But the Sultan of

Jimma lost a substantial amount of his revenue when the customs office was centralized. As early as 1899, Abba Jifar was said to have drawn about MT$ 66,666 (300,000 fr) from Jimma's customs. See Bulatovitch, "Les Campagnes de Menelik", Journal des Voyages, # 297 (1902), p.186.

33. Harold G. Marcus suggests that the Depression influenced Haile Sellassie's decision to annex Jimma in 1932. See Harold G. Marcus, Haile Sellassie I, p.121.

34. G. MacKereth, Economic Condition in Ethiopia (Abyssinia, 1929-31 (London, 1932). BS, 1927 and 1930. Charles Schaefer, on the other hand argues that the impact of the world depression on the Ethiopian economy in the early 1930s was minimal. Charles Schaefer, "Enclavistic Capitalism," pp. 326-29.

35. BS, May 5, 12 and 25, 1932.

36. Interview: Abba Macha Sheki Lofe, Jimma, October 23, 19991.

37. BS, February 6, 1930.

38. According to BS reporter, Dajazmach Wolde Amanual was also given the "abagznet" (overlordship) of Gomma. This information was apparently incorrect, because Gomma remained a separate administrative district under Blatta Deressa Amante until 1935.

39. FO 371/20940. In 1936, after the Italian occupation, Wolde Amanuael went into exile in Djibouti. But the following October he returned to Addis Ababa, where he was imprisoned and executed by the Italians in February 1937. See also Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia (Evanston, Northwestern University Press,1969), p.306.

40. The reception ceremony was pompous, apparently intended to impress the local people and Abba Jifar's former officials. Organized on Abba Jifar's palace ground, the occasion was meant for everybody to observe the grandeur of imperial power and the humiliation of Jimma's ruling house. Abba Dula, son of Abba Jifar, and other officers of the kingdom were invited to attend the ceremony mainly to pay their formal allegiance to the representative of the central government. Representatives of foreign nationals and the big merchants of Jimma were also invited. Priests and the municipal guards also occupied prominent positions at the ceremony. Then Dajazmach Wolde Amanuel arrived with Negadras Sahle, the former customs official who was now promoted to the rank of gagnazmach and director of the provincial administration, and other high ranking officers of the central government. See. BS, January 18, 1934.

41. BS, December 13, 1934.

42. Ibid., March 7, 1935.

43. M. Perham, The Government of Ethiopia, p.306.

44. Ibid., Patrick Gilks, The Dying Lion (London, 1975).

45. Tekalign Wolde-Mariam "The Slave Trade in the Economy of Jimma" in Taddese Beyene, Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, vol.I (Addis Ababa, Institute Of Ethiopian Studies, 1989), pp.309-18.

46. BS, May 5, 1932.

CHAPTER VI

LAND, LABOR AND COFFEE, 1936-48

The implementation of the galad system coincided with increased production and trade of coffee during the 1910s and 1920s. By facilitating the privatization of land, the new land holding system encouraged the emerging landlords to expand coffee farms. At the center, in the meantime, some efforts were made to expedite the process by stabilizing the fluctuating currency situation. As Schaefer observed, by the early 1930s the country seemed to be on a "threshold of structural transformation."[1] Yet the expected transformation remained elusive essentially due to the basic contradictions within the socio-economic system.

The imperial government, under Tafari's direction after 1916, was committed more to the development of the market economy than the early conquest period. Beginning in the 1920s, Tafari issued some edicts that promised to secure property rights and relax the labor situation. An edict issued in 1928, for example, made some references to the peasants and the need to protect them from excessive exploitation of the naftagna.[2] The latter were entitled to only three days of unpaid service or three gunna[3] of grain each year. In addition, they were not allowed to demand the free labor services from their tenants except during the non-harvesting seasons (from February to April). Thus

general mobilization of labor for the construction of churches, roads and other public facilities was limited to two months. The edict also made it clear that those landlords who failed to develop their lands would pay the same amount of taxes as those who did.[4]

However, the prime concern of the edict was not the protection of the peasants but to use them more efficiently for increased surplus production that could in turn pay for the centralizing bureaucracy. To meet the expanding market demand, more coffee cultivation was necessary. So, even without an edict, some younger provincial governors had already introduced similar measure in their respective provinces. Fitawrari Desta Damtew had, for example, introduced similar policy in Gomma in the 1920s. Similarly, Mekonen Demissew and Dajazmach Mekonen Wossie did declare tax reliefs to the peasants in Arjo and Sayo respectively.[5]

But not all governors did realize the need to change their life style and participate in the agricultural production and trade. Nor was the imperial edict uniformly implemented. It was ignored in those provinces where labor shortage was high, the qalad system was not introduced, or where the governors were simply unwilling to part with gabbar labor. Thus, expansion of coffee cultivation in the 1920s remained ephemeral. Despite the growing importance of coffee in the export trade and the state's desire to increase its share of the crop, investment in coffee

remained limited Even "progressive" governors widely employed unpaid peasant labor and invested their proceeds in urban real estate, where they built houses and rented them to the fast growing population. Secondly, foreign investment was not available due to restrictions of land ownership by foreigners.[6] For this reason, a transition to large scale commercial plantation did not occur. Thus, the increased production of the 1920s was the result of the labor of the peasants and to some extent slaves.

Without extensive capital investment by the landlords, the expansion of coffee cultivation remained in the hands of the peasants. But peasants' access to land was curtailed by the socio-economic changes of the 1910s and 1920s. For the landless peasants, investment in coffee was beyond their reach. Administrative and marketing constraints limited the profit share of the smallholders. Only the landlords could have invested sufficient capital to expand coffee plantation. But while securing control over the land, the emerging landlords were losing their grip over the labor of the peasants. The Edict of 1928, for example, limited the landlord's use of free peasant labor for agricultural activities only to slack, non-harvest seasons. The possibility of using slave labor was fast disappearing;[7] and mobilization of wage labor, although available, had not been steady. Thus agricultural exploitation from the 1930s onward depended on the

landlord's mastery of the peasantry through different means. Sharecropping was one such option.

The changing social relations, however, did not readily deliver economic and political transformations in the 1930s and 1940s. In reality coffee production and trade significantly declined from the mid-1930s to the end of 1940s. Besides the changing social conditions, there were several factors, both local and international, that contributed to the decline of coffee. In the Gibe region, increased commercialization of coffee created labor shortages. With the establishment of the galad system, the naftagna lost unrestricted access to gabbar labor. Though landless, peasants were to some extent free to enter into sharecropping contracts with the landlords. Some migrated to other provinces that offered better tenancy or sharecropping arrangements.

Until 1932, it was Jimma which had a better opportunity to take advantage of the transition. But the political crisis of 1931-32 and the subsequent occupation by the imperial army disrupted the agricultural productivity of Jimma as well. Shortly after annexation, the economic prosperity of Jimma was ruined. The indigenous elite and the peasants were so dissatisfied with the behavior of the new overlords that coffee production started declining even before the coming of the Italians in 1936.[8]

Secondly, the World Depression also discouraged the production of coffee in the 1930s. The crisis, for example, reversed the favorable price patterns which encouraged production in the 1920s. Because of the Depression, coffee export in the 1930s brought in less revenues than the preceding decade.[9] For example, in 1928, before the beginning of Depression, 12,751 metric tons of coffee were sold for MT$ 11.5 million, while in 1931 an export of 18,530 metric tons was sold for only MT$ 8 million; and in 1932, 19,990 metric tons were sold for only MT$ 9.5 million.[10] As can be gleaned from these export figures, the financial earnings declined significantly after the depression.

In the meantime, the volume of exports was, however, rising. This was possible because of the fact that coffee takes at least four to six years after planting to reach full production capacity. Thus the increased production during the early years of the depression was probably the result of extensive planting in the late 1920s. On the other hand, increased export could also have been the result of the coercion on the part of the chiefs, who sought to maintain their life style. They needed more coffee to avoid the drastic decline in earnings from the export trade.[11] Such an unfavorable trend affected production, but the cumulative effect was visible only in the late 1930s, when neglect or lack of planting during the early 1930s resulted in a sharp decline in production.

It is, however, difficult to attribute the crisis in the late 1930s to the depression alone. After 1935, the situation was further complicated by the Italo-Ethiopian War and the subsequent Italian occupation. Italian occupation (1935-41) and their colonial agricultural policy significantly changed the production and exchange of agricultural commodities. The Italians hoped that the new colony would provide them with food items, mineral resources such as gold, and oil.

At the beginning, Italians believed the colony would absorb Italy's surplus population, but shortly after occupation they discovered that fulfilling these dreams would require many years of handwork, good and stable administration, and lots of money. Unfortunately, their excessive use of force failed to create the administrative stability conducive for the implementation of colonial programs. Thus the colonial government was unable to achieve its objectives of food self-sufficiency.

Throughout the period of occupation, the production of cereal crops was favored over tree crops like coffee. To achieve food self sufficiency for the colony, and if possible exports for Italy, the Italians followed essentially two strategies. First, they encouraged wheat production by offering farmers seed and agricultural implements on generous terms. Second, colonial agricultural policy involved the settlement of Italian farmers in fertile

regions of Ethiopian highlands. Many of these farmers were demobilized soldiers, who were fully armed and lived in camps. As such, these settlers were expected to be soldiers in addition to their role as farmers.[12] The agricultural settlement scheme was intended to absorb surplus Italian population at home and provide employment opportunities for the demobilized soldiers. Economically, food autarky was again a major issue. Thus, several companies were created in 1938 to facilitate the settlement of Italian farmers in Harar, Gondar, Holeta (near Addis Ababa) and Jimma. Yet both indigenous and colonial farmers were expected to produce cereal crops rather than coffee.[13]

During the occupation, a substantial amount of agricultural labor was also diverted to road construction projects initiated by the Italians.[14] The road construction projects and other social works increased the importance of wage labor outside the agricultural fields. Lured by favorable wages in the expanding public works, many peasants left their fields unattended and joined the pool of daily wage laborers. Even those who stayed in the fields devoted much of their time to the production of cereal crops that commanded favorable prices rather than coffee.

By increasing "[m]oney consciousness" and facilitating the "penetration of money economy,"[15] wage labor, indeed, reinforced a process that had already started before the War. However, it also inflated the cost of living. This,

in turn, denied commercial agriculture a cheap labor which could have made the production of tree crops such as coffee more profitable and competitive on the world market. Italian effort to crub inflation was unsuccessful. The colonial government tried to assuage the inflationary situation by depressing the wages of the indigenous laborers, lowering the cost of transportation, and reducing or abolishing export duties.[16] The policy, however, failed to solve the problem.

Thus economically, Ethiopia remained "an extreme disappointment" for Italy. But, to some extent, colonial officials themselves contributed to the disappointing economic performance partly by following commercial policies that alienated indigenous populations and foreign merchants alike. The "hasty and ill-advised" policies, instead of promoting trade, rather upset the flow of trade. Shortly after the occupation of Addis Abba in May 1936, for example, the Italians imposed the Lira, Italian currency, as an official medium of exchange. To comply with the new currency laws, residents were required to clear all transfers, credits and export earnings through the Bank of Italy. The Maria Theresa dollar was officially banned in favor of the Lira, but lack of public confidence in the Lira created commercial crisis. The indigenous people who were unaccustomed to paper currency, preferred the long established silver dollar and initially refused to accept

the Italian currency. Faced with strong resistance, then Italians allowed a controlled supply of Maria Theresa dollars instead of banning them totally. In the process, however, they lost a substantial amount of money.[17]

Furthermore, the strict commercial regulations and priority accorded to Italian merchants disrupted the relatively well established foreign merchant community. Hoping to minimize competition from the foreign commercial firms, and channel the profit directly to the metropolitan country, Italian officials forced many commercial firms to close down their offices. Most affected were the Arab, Indian, Armenian and Greek merchants who previously worked in partnership with the Ethiopian aristocracy.

The first to suffer were those who operated with limited capital; but even the bigger firms were not spared. For example, Antonio Besse and Co., a French firm that handled about forty percent of Ethiopia's import-export trade, struggled to stay on until April 1939, when it relinquished its remaining assets and left the country.[18] The Arabian Trading Company, a major British owned firm, left as early as 1937, when most of its agents were harassed by the Fascist officials and were unable to function.[19] Similarly, Mohammedally and Co., the largest Indian firm in Ethiopia, which had been involved in Ethiopia's import-export trade since the late nineteenth-century, was also

forced to leave in July 1937 after selling its assets for thirteen million Lire (about L140,000).[20]

Thus, during the period of Italian occupation, many foreign merchants who handled the country's pre-war foreign trade were dislocated,[21] their places were taken over by Italian businessmen. Between 1936 and 1941, there were about 573 Italian wholesale merchants in Ethiopia. Most of them, however, lacked an understanding of the country's commercial conditions and knowledge of their indigenous commercial partners. Thus Italian commercial policy proved to be less effective mainly because of the unsettled political situation and the failure of the Italians to fill the gap created by the departure of foreign merchants.

The social and political disorganization caused by the War and the colonial economic policies particularly affected the cultivation and trade of coffee. Coffee plantation was low on the list of agricultural activities encouraged by the Italians. For this reason, coffee production dropped sharply during the occupation. Overall annual production, estimated to 30,000 tons before the occupation has declined to a record low within a few years after the occupation.[22] The abrupt decline in production was quickly reflected in the volume of export. By 1937, a year after the occupation, the volume of coffee export by the Franco-Ethiopian Railway through the port of Djibouti had declined by 59.3 percent, from 8,137 metric tons in 1936 to just over 3,300 metric

tons in 1937. In the same year, the supply of coffee was reportedly insufficient "even for the Italians in East Africa."[23] The supply was so low that no coffee was exported through Djibouti in 1938 and 1940, while only an export of 200 metric tons was registered in 1939.

Table 6.1 Coffee and Other Exports during Italian Period, 1935-1941.[24]

Year	Coffee	Hides & Skins	Wax	Misc.(packages)
1935	19,190	7,953	538	203
1936	12,851	4,984	357	101
1937	4,888	4,362	226	4,470
1938	-	180		
1939	200	48		
1940	-	20		

Source: F.O.371/22028

To meet the shortage of coffee for consumption and to acquire desperately needed foreign currency, the Italians made some efforts after 1938, to direct coffee trade to Italy. Thus export to non-Italian market was limited to only thirty percent of the total coffee export. In the

meantime, agricultural experts began serious scientific research into the coffee industry to collect the necessary data for the development of plantations. But the research was still at an early stage when Italian occupation ended in 1941.

For the south, including the Gibe region, the Italian occupation was not so bad as the gabbar system. For the peasants who had previously performed labor services to the naftagna and for those who had lost their lands through the galad system, Italian rule to some extent helped to redress the situation. Even before the arrival of the Italians in late 1936, peasants in Jimma and Limmu were harrassing the northern settlers in the region. By letting the peasants reclaim the land, Italian officials hoped to gain support for their rule. Taking advantage of this policy many peasants in Limmu, for example, reclaimed their lands lost to the naftagna and started to plant coffee for themselves. Initially, the naftagna put up some resistance; but they were dispersed shortly after their leader, Fitwarari Tekle-Ab, was killed together with two of his sons at Kossa.[25] Then the naftagna from Limmu joined the resistance movement that operated in western Shewa.[26]

In Jimma, the coming of the Italians helped Sultan Abba Jobir to regain his position. He joined the Italians in 1936, and remained loyal to them throughout the occupation. The rest of the balabat in the Gibe region followed Abba

Jobir's example and submitted to the Italian governor. Jimma town, chosen for the capital of the "Galla-Sidama," one of the six administrative regions of Italian East African (IEA), became the favored town of the Italians in the southwest. The Italian population in the town grew very quickly after 1937. During the following years Italians in Jimma constituted more than one-third of the town's population. In 1940, for example, Italian population in the region was estimated of over 13,000.[27]

The agricultural settlements in Jimma attracted some Italians to the region. These agricultural colonization schemes were similar to those established in Harar, Gondar and Shewa which were intended to absorb the demobilized Italians soldiers and boost grain production.[28] Unlike other agricultural colonists, the Italian farmers in Jimma were, however, organized and supervised by the regional colonial officials. With the assistance of the regional administration, the colonists acquired about 2,500 hectares of land by evicting 682 indigenous families at Bakke Bora, about ten kilometers to the southeast of Jimma town. Another settlement scheme in the same area allowed the indigenous peasants to remain on the land as far as they agreed to enter into sharecropping contracts with the Italian farmers.

Like the previous naftagna lords, Italian farmers were concerned about the availability of labor for their farms.

They wanted the indigenous farmers to be close-by and ready for mobilization during peak agricultural seasons. Labor, however, remained in short supply, especially during busy cropping seasons partly owing to the emergence of wage labor created by the booming construction projects, mainly housing and roads. Due to the possibility of earning cash very quickly, indigenous workers preferred construction projects rather than agriculture.

Italian agricultural settlements around Jimma therefore developed very slowly. Out of 6000 hectares of land planned for cultivation of cereal crops by Italian farmers during the first year of the settlement scheme, only eleven percent was actually developed, and by 1940, there were only 311 settlers cultivating about 2000 hectares of land."[2] In the Gibe region in general, the end of the naftagna rule could have encouraged coffee production. But Italian settlements, like those in the other regions of the empire, focused more on the production of cereal crops. Thus because of deliberate colonial policy and labor shortages, the production of coffee remained very low throughout the period of Italian occupation.

For coffee, recovery was very slow even after the end of Italian rule. During the first decade of the post Italian period, the pace of recovery was shaped by the social and economic conditions in the region and other external factors such as the level of state intervention and

the conditions of the national and international coffee markets. Domestically, one of the major constraints for coffee production in the 1940s was the shortage of labor. Domestic slavery had completely disappeared during the occupation.[30] In the 1940s, wage labor was unavailable in the Gibe region, and when available, workers preferred sharecropping arrangements rather than working for wages. Coffee cultivation, however, required steady supply of labor throughout the year for weeding and harvesting the crop. Harvesting season was particularly critical; unless the ripe berries were picked on time, they could fall to the ground and decay, which affected the quality of the crop and lowered the product's price.

Taxation

Another factor that affected coffee production was the system of taxation that was imposed on Gomma and Jimma provinces immediately after the war. Prior to Italian occupation, tax collection in the Ethiopian empire had never been systematic. Until the end of the 1920s, for example, each region was taxed differently.[31] An attempt at standardizing tax collection began in the early 1930s but was interrupted by Italian occupation.[32] At the beginning, hoping to win people's support, Italians canceled land taxation. On his return to power in 1941, Haile Sellassie, however, reintroduced the pre-Italian taxation system to the

region and all parts of the Ethiopian empire. Despite a series of edicts issued between 1941 and 1951, a uniform taxation system throughout the empire emerged very slowly." For example, even after 1941, the rate of taxation for the northern provinces of the empire remained lower than those in the south. The Land Tax Proclamation of 1944, for example, set four tax rates.[34] Yet the taxes of Gomma and Jimma did not follow the categories set in the Proclamation of either 1942 or 1944. Rather, the Gibe region was taxed more stringently throughout the 1940s.[35] In 1942, Ras Birru, governor of Jimma and Gomma(1942-45) imposed Eth. $100,000 on Gomma and an equally heavier tax on Jimma.

This tax assessment was far beyond what the population of the region were able to pay. Its collection led to a crisis that almost led to a rebellion in 1942-43. Over fifty balabat from Gomma went to Addis Ababa to appeal to the emperor for reconsideration of the new tax. To defuse the crisis, Haile Sellassie ordered half of the year's tax to be canceled,"and subsequently the assessments be based on local units of land measurement. Yet the emperor's partial reconsideration brought very little relief. Throughout 1940s a fachassa (0.25 hectare) in Jimma was assessed at Eth.$0.60-0.75 cents. Accordingly, total tax for a gasha (40 hectares/ 160 fachassa)of land was estimated at Eth.$96 to 124. Apparently, some individuals paid even higher rates. For example, in the district of Manna in 1943-44, a

person who owned 12.5 hectares of land, 21 oxen and 15 cows was assessed a total tax of Eth.$241; while another person with 5 hectares, 3 oxen and a cow paid Eth.$47."[37] Over all, the taxes of Jimma in the 1940s were three to six times higher than the rates set for other regions of the empire.

Thus, besides the shortage of labor, onerous taxation also discouraged agricultural production. In terms of surplus extraction, the new tax system was equivalent to the early gabbar system. Obviously, the situation ruined the economic life of the peasants and landlords alike. Crushed by heavy taxation and lacking sufficient labor to cultivate their lands, some landowners became tax delinquents. But by failing to pay taxes, they lost title to their land. By 1951, about 6004 gasha (240,160 hectares) of land in the province of Kafa, mainly in Jimma, were transferred to state domain on the pretext of landlords' tax delinquency.[38] Such land called gibre-tal ("land confiscated for non-payment of taxes") was then distributed or sold to government officials."[39] After 1952, some state-owned land in the Jimma area was also granted to some tenants from Shewa region. But by the early 1960s the state still controlled extensive agricultural fields in the region. According to 1962-3 survey, the state owned 1.2 million hectares of land in Kafa administrative region, out of which 55.4 percent was located in Jimma and Limmu provinces."[40]

Apparently, the landlords' inability to exploit their estates concided with the increasing capacity of the state to interfer in agricultural production. Through the post war state bureaucracy Haile Sellassie was able to promote the interests of Addis Ababa over the elites of Jimma. The struggle over land and labor of the Gibe region in the 1940s set the stage for the coffee boom of the 1900s.

In the 1940s, the economic problem of coffee producers in the Gibe region was compounded not only by the shortage of labor and heavy taxation, but also by poor, though expensive, transportation and unfavorable marketing system. Trucks, although largely replacing pack animals in transporting coffee to the center, were very expensive and unreliable. Many bridges and roads, which were built during the Italian period, were damaged due to the war and lack of maintenance. The Ethiopian Air Lines which began regular flights in the late 1940s, transported some coffee from Jimma and the southwest to Addis Ababa.[41] Yet, although quick and reliable, air transport was expensive. Whether by air or road, the high cost of transportation undermined the profit margins of coffee merchants, who in turn shifted the burden to the producers. Finally, the high cost of transportation discouraged the supply of migrant laborers from other regions to the coffee farms of the Gibe valley.[42]

Furthermore, until the end of Wold War II, Ethiopia's international coffee market was affected by wartime conditions. Considering the import-export trade, the post-liberation economy at the national level appeared sound. Between 1943 and 1947, for example, export trade increased by 150 percent while imports rose by 75 percent.[43] But the favorable balance of trade was based on wartime food cereal export to the Middle East. Taking advantage of the war-time situation, Ethiopia exported cereals and pulses to the Middle Eastern markets. The grain market was, however, transient; it ended with the war. On the other hand, the value of the pre-war principal commodities like coffee, hides, skins, and beeswax was low during the early 1940s. The prices of hides, for example, declined from MT$ 12-15 before the Italian occupation to MT$ 5 per <u>feresula</u> (17 kgs) in 1944. Following the decline in prices, the export volume of such items also dropped.[44]

More important, the war-time situation affected coffee export more significantly. The war disrupted the exports of coffee to Europe and the United States; and, unlike grain, even the exports to the Middle East were carried out under several constraints. For example, as part of its contribution to the war effort in the Middle East, Ethiopia was obliged "to supply a certain" amount of coffee to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan at a fixed price, which was usually below the normal market value. Because of such

restrictions, the prices of Ethiopian coffee in the Sudan in 1944 were equivalent to that of 1931, that is, in the middle of the depression. But as far as European and United States markets remained inaccessible, Ethiopian coffee prices remained depressed until the War ended.[45]

Besides the internationally unfavorable coffee marketing, the Ethiopian government was also responsible for the slow recovery of the coffee industry after the Italian period. The Franco-Ethiopian railway gave priority to the export of grain rather than coffee. The state was directly involved in the lucrative, post-liberation grain trade, while coffee was left to foreign merchants who maximized their profits at the expense of the producers.

Foreign merchants, who had already established themselves as an essential links between coffee producers, indigenous merchants and the ruling aristocracy on the one hand, and the international capitalist economy on the other, returned to the same dominant position in the 1940s and 1950s. After the end of the Second World War they re-established their commercial firms in Addis Ababa, with branch offices in the provinces. By late 1940s, for example, there were about 4,000 Greeks in the country, who handled at least 30 to 40 percent of coffee and hides exports. There were equally large number of Indians who engaged in coffee export. The role of these foreign

merchants in the economic development of the country and the coffee enterprise in particular needs to be assessed.

Despite the constrains coffee emerged as Ethiopia's most important export commodity during the 1950s. In the Gibe region, coffee cultivation expanded very fast and attracted many farmers and migrant laborers to Jimma. After 1940s, more than any other crop, coffee shaped the nature of social class formation, landholding patters and economic transformation in the Gibe valley. The coffee driven economic changes of the 1950s and 1960s will be discussed in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Charles Schaefer, "Enclavistic Capitalism," pp. 326-27.

2. "Statute Established for the Betterment of Public Life," BS, November 29, 1928.

3. A gunna (equivalent to 5 kilograms) is a unit of measurement for grain.

4. "Statute" (see note #2 above). Taxes on newly developed virgin lands (particularly in the lowlands) were fixed as follows: first year, tax and asrat (tithe) none; second year, 25% tax and 3% for asrat; third year, 50% tax and 5% for asrat; and fourth year, 100% tax. Although useful for producers of cereal crops, the tax relief was less effective for the coffee growers because coffee actually begins bearing fruits only the third or fourth year.

5. BS,March 15, 1928.

6. Permanent land ownership by foreigners was prohibited in Ethiopia. Only a few concessions were granted by the emperor with fixed years tenure. This policy essentially excluded foreign investment in coffee plantations as well as urban real estate. The only exception was the Arba Gugu Coffee Plantation run by Belgians according to a concession granted by Emperor Menilek in 1909.

7. For a debate about the end of slavery and the slave trade in the 1920s, see Harold G. Marcus, "The Infrastructure of Italo-Ethiopian Crisis: Haile Sellassie, the Solomonic Empire, and the World Economy," in Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Ethiopian Studies, ed., by Robert Hess (Chicago, 1979); Charles McClellan, "Land, Labor, and Coffee: the South's Role in Ethiopian Self Reliance, 1889-1935," African Economic History, IX (1980), pp.69-83; Jon Edwards, "Slavery, the Slave Trade and the Economic Reorganization of Ethiopia, 1916-1935," African Economic History, XI (1982), pp.3-14; Timothy Fernyough, " Serfs, Slaves and Shifta: Modes of Production in Southern Ethiopia from the Late Nineteenth Century to 1941," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1986; Tekalign Wolde-Mariam, "The Slave Trade in the Economy of Jimma;" Dennis Hickey, "Ethiopia and Britain: Political Conflict in the Southern Borderlands, 1916-1935," Ph.D. Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1984; Guluma Gemeda, "Subsistence, Slavery and Violence in he Lower Omo Valley, ca. 1898-1940," Northeast African Studies, XII: 2 (1990), 5-19. .

8. Perham, Government of Ethiopia, p.306.

9. G. Mackereth, Report on Economic Conditions in Ethiopia.

10. Raffaele Ciferri, "Primo Rapporto;" G. Mackereth, Economic Conditions in Ethiopia; Adrian Zervos, L'Empire d'Ethiopie, p.157

11. A similar pattern was observed during the recent military regime (1975-91), where the steady decline in production was not reflected in the volume of export. The military regime maintained exports by squeezing the peasants and taxing domestic consumption. It is also a clear example of how export data are misleading as far as actual production is concerned.

12. Alberto Sbacchi, Ethiopia Under Mussolini (London, 1985), pp.97, 100; Haile M.Larebo, The Building of an Empire: Italian Land Policy and Practice in Ethiopia, 1935-1941 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

13. Charles W. McClellan, "Land, Labor, and Coffee," p.79.

14. Italian road construction projects diverted large number of laborers from agriculture.

15. Harold G. Marcus, The Politics of Empire: Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p.44.

16. Fernando Quaranta, Ethiopia: An Empire in the Making (London: P.S. King and Son Ltd., 1939) p.33.

17. FO 371/22028; see also Richard Pankhurst, "The Perpetuation of the Maria Theresa Dollar and Currency Problems in Italian-occupied Ethiopia," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, VIII:2 (1970), 89-117.

18. David Footman, Antonin Besse of Aden: The Founder of St. Anthony's College, Oxford (Oxford: The Macmillan Press, 1986), pp. 109-119; Richard Pankhurst, "A Chapter in Ethiopia's Commercial History: Developments During the Fascist Occupation 1936-41," Ethiopia Observer, XIV: 1 (1971), pp. 51-57.

19. Richard Pankhurst, "A Chapter in Ethiopia's Commercial History."

20. Ibid.

21. By 1939, at least 70 Indian and 300 Arab merchants were reported to be living in Ethiopia. But by the end of the year, only 10 foreign firms were reported to be operating. Richard Pankhurst, "A Chapter in Ethiopia's Commercial History," p. 56.

22. Fernando Quaranta, Ethiopia, p.23.

23. US Embassy in Rome to State Department, 25 April 1937.

24. Export through Gambela during 1935-1937, which is not included in the table, was as follows:

	1935	1936	1937
Coffee (in rotl)	50,007	69,928	23,337
Wax (in bags of 125 rotl)	2,171	2,147	1,904
Miscellaneous (packages)	203	101	4,470

25. Interview: Abate Wolde-Yohannes, near Agaro, February 17, 1992.

26. Interview: Qagnazmach Derese Dubale, Atnago, September 22, 1982.

27. Haile M. Larebo, The Building of an Empire, p. 286.

28. Ibid., pp. 170-72.

29. Richard Pankhurst, "A Page of Ethiopian History: Italian Settlement Plans during the Fascist Occupation of 1939-41," Ethiopia Observer, XII: 2 (1970), p. 152; Haile M. Larebo, The Building of an Empire, p. 170.

30. Slave labor was already disappearing even before the coming of the Italians. But the Italian rule and the final abolition of the institution of slavery in 1942 dealt a final blow to the use of slaves in agricultural production. Negarit Gazetta, 22/42, August 26, 1942.

31. See Mahta Sellassie Wolde-Mesqal, Zakra Nagar (Addis Ababa, 1962 Eth. C.); P.H. Huffnagel, Agriculture in Ethiopia (Rome: FAO, 1961), pp. 97-117; Mantel-Niecko, The Role of Land Tenure, pp. 182-203;

32. H.P. Huffnagel, Agriculture in Ethiopia, pp.118-22.

33.Ibid., pp. 122-29; Teshome Mulat, Agricultural Taxation in Ethiopia (Rome: FAO, 1992), pp. 14-17.

34. The four categories were: 1) Shewa (Oromo areas), Harar, Arsi and Wollo; (2) Wollega, Sidamo, Kafa, Ilu Aba Bor and Gamu Gofa; (3) Shewa (Amhara areas); (4) Gojjam, Tigray, and Begemdir (Gondar). Category (1) paid Eth $50, 40, 15 (per gasha/40 hectares) fertile, semi-fertile, and poor land, respectively. Category (2) paid: Eth.$45, 40, 15; Category (3) paid: Eth.$20, 15, 5 for first class, second class and third class land, respectively. Category

(4) paid at the rate of 1927 plus tithe in cash. See Nagarit Gazeta, Vol. 4, no.70 (1944).

35. The stringent taxation was apparently based on the assumption that the Jimma and Gomma provinces were richer than those in the north and could contribute more to the imperial revenue; but informants also believe that it was partly as a punishment for their collaboration with Italians.

36. Interview: Fitawrari Abba Warri Aba Kaabe.

37. "1943 Tax Assessment: Manna District," Jimma Archives (JA).

38. Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi to Haile Sellassie, October 9, 1951, Kafa Administrative Files (KAF) 21/223.

39. Apparently government bureaucrats were deeply involved in registering and processing the tax abandoned lands and, later on buying them cheaply from the government. They also vigorously searched for "excess land" - i.e. land which the owner did not officially register with state or registered only a portion of it with the intention of paying less taxes. When "discovered" such "excess land" was also confiscated by the state.

40. "Pre-revolution Land Tenure and Taxation in Kafa Region," KAF 21/229/63).

41. Guide Book of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: The Chamber of Commerce, 1954), pp. 322-23.

42. Migrant laborers became available with the improvement of road transport in the 1950s.

43. Gorlitz to Joseph Carwell ("Mission Report and Ethiopia's Application to International Bank of Reconstruction and Development/IBRD"), US Department of State, July 13, 1949.

44. American Legation (Addis Ababa) to State Department, "Ethiopia's Financial Position," December 30, 1944.

45. The absence of Brazilian coffee in the Middle East during the war favored Ethiopia's exports, although Ethiopia failed to take full advantage of the situation owing to limited supply. Thus, the country's favorable balance of trade in the early 1940s was made possible largely through grain (about 25% of total exports) and gold exports. American Legation (in Addis Ababa) to US Department of State, July 5, 1947, November 18, 1949. Bahru Zewde says that products like cereals and coffee were highly needed by Ethiopia's trading partners during the immediate post-Liberation years.

Relatively, Bahru is right; but the production of coffee was much lower than the pre-war years. See Bahru Zewde, "Aspects of Post-Liberation Ethiopia, 1941-50", in Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, p.281.

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OR STAGNATION? 1948-74

Scholars are divided in their evaluation of the performance of the Ethiopian economy during the post-war years. Some, focusing largely on the modern sector of the economy__the expansion of small industries, urbanization, transportation systems and the emergence of mechanized commercial agriculture__have argued that the country was heading towards economic take-off by the 1960s and early 1970s. In this case, the revolution of 1974 was not so much a revolution but rather a reaction to the rapid economic changes of the preceding decades. Harold G. Marcus, for example, argues that, despite transient obstacles, capitalistic agriculture was flourishing in the 1950s and 1960s at the expense of subsistence farming. Its success in displacing subsistence farmers caused social discontent that partly contributed to the coming of the revolution.[1]

Reviewing the performance of the economy between 1941-74, the Ethiopian economist, Shiferaw Jammo, also concluded that there "had been considerable changes in several aspects of the Ethiopian economy." In agriculture in particular Shiferaw claims there was "twofold increase" in values.[2] In this case, the revolution took place not because of lack of

progress but due to the fact that the changes failed to satisfy the expectations of the masses of the population.

Other scholars claim that the apparent economic progress of the 1950s and 1960s was largely a mirage rather than a reality. Despite fast development of the modern sector, the bulk of the economy was still subsistence oriented and was generally characterized by slow progress or even stagnation. In the 1960s, when the mechanization of agriculture began earnestly, these scholars argue, the value of agricultural output was falling and the living standards of most people was declining. Even if the decline was not steady, the trend was decidedly downwards. Thus, instead of progress, the economy was remaining stagnant or heading into deeper crisis.[3]

Such assessment should not be dismissed lightly as unbridled, ideologically driven, criticism of the old regime. As a matter of fact, its adherents range from liberal to radical, Marxist oriented scholars; and both foreign and indigenous. The critics also disagree on the real cause of the stagnation or crisis. For radicals, the major cause of stagnation was the nature of the country's incorporation into the global economic system. They believe that integration, limited or otherwise, changed the nature

of social classes and their role in the economy. In a distinct Marxist or dependency tone, a few argue that integration subordinated the indigenous business class to the transnational capital, while the traditional landlords remained entrenched in non-capitalist rural economy. Kidane Mengisteab, for example, asserted:

> "With incorporation into the international system, some landlords joined hands with foreign investors and multinational companies, mostly as shareholders in capitalist enterprises. [For this reason,] [t]his social group never really assumed the classical role of capitalists. It never actively engaged itself in the process of capitalist accumulation. Furthermore, since the bourgeoisie largely relied on the international market for its growth, the potential contradiction with domestic feudalism seemed to have been tempered. [Thus] [i]ncorporation did not ... dynamize the country's overall economy or the agricultural sector. In fact, the distortions of the economy that it created are as responsible for the stagnation of the economy as the country's internal feudal relations"[4]

Dessalegn Rahmato, an Ethiopian scholar, believes that stagnation occurred because of insufficient integration of the peasant society into the world market system. He argues marginal participation of the peasantry in the market economy resulted in the absence of social differentiation that "would have had a healthy impact on the agrarian economy."[5] On the other hand, liberal scholars attribute economic stagnation more to population expansion and less to state intervention and the penetration or the absence of the

market economy. Warren C. Robinson and Fumiko Yamazaki, for example, argued that the major factors for declining agricultural productivity were related to "accelerated population growth and declining availability of arable land." Between 1953 and 1974, "the average annual rate of growth in agricultural production index was about 2.36 percent" as opposed to 2.5 annual rate of population growth. Because of the rapid demographic changes, therefore, the economy had "run out of fertile, easily cultivable land" by the early 1970s. The concomitant population migration to the lowlands pushed the "fragile, traditional ecosystem to the brink of disaster."[6] Thus, although the size of land under cultivation might have increased, labor productivity was declining.[7]

With a broader investigation, James McCann also reached essentially the same conclusion.[8] As Dessalegn has correctly pointed out, McCann's argument is, however, inadequate for many reasons. First, he discounts the peasant's ability to initiate or adapt to new technologies and intensify agricultural production rather than opting for migration. Secondly, he minimizes the impact of class relations, the role of the state and the market economy.[9]

An examination of the agrarian society in the coffee-

rich provinces of Jimma and Limmu reveals a more complex picture than the studies based on aggregate national figures. As the apparent economic progress of the 1950s and 1960s depended partly on coffee boom, one would expect substantial changes in the coffee-rich Gibe region. But as already indicated, the impact of the coffee boom was not directly translated into improved living standards of the producers. From the region's perspective, the process of agrarian change passed through several phases of progress and stagnation. Some progress was visible in the 1950s and 1960s; but at the outbreak of the revolution in the mid-1970s, it was not yet clear whether the progress towards capitalistic agriculture was irreversible. Whatever the case, population growth was not a serious problem for the Gibe valley. Rather, it was the shortage of labor that created some constraints to coffee production in the region.

This chapter examines the nature of the economy at the local level and the social groups that participated in the production of coffee. The major questions are: what was happening to landholding system when coffee became the major export of the country? Who was losing land and who was gaining? How did the peasants react to the coffee boom? Who were the main social actors in Jimma in the 1950s and

1960s? Secondly, this chapter also looks at the role of the state and the market in shaping the economic conditions of the 1950s and 1960s.

For a better understanding of the dynamics of social change during the 1950s, I will use two sources: a sample of biographical sketches of the principal actors[10] and the land transaction registries of the 1940s and 1950s. First, let us consider a brief biographical sketches of some of the participants in coffee production.

Peasants

This group has never been homogenous. Differentiated access to land and labor always created distinctions between the peasants. Peasant farmers were divided into smallholders, landless tenants and migrant laborers. The following biographies, for example, show the diverging origins of coffee farmers and their changing fortunes with the changing political economy of the region. Some retained limited access to land and labor; while others lost control of the same resources.

Shaikh Mohammed Shifa is, for example, among those peasants whose life style changed very little over the last eighty years. He is an elder who lives near Sappa, the

origin of the kingdom of Limmu. The shaikh's descendants cleared the forest along the Awetu river about seven or eight generations ago. Here they raised cattle, cultivated cereal crops, and since the early nineteenth century, grew coffee for consumption and exchange. Shaikh Mohammed's family lost their cattle during the epidemic in the late nineteenth century. Then they were forced to form cooperative work teams to cultivate the land and plant coffee.[11] Despite the changing political conditions since the cattle epidemic, Shaikh Mohammed's family retained small plots of land and continued to grew cereal crops and some coffee. Shaikh Mohammed had spent some time studying the Koran and visiting religious centers. Later he had returned to his farm near the Sadacha forest where he currently lives. He and his brothers, who also live in the same region, can be considered as the most persistent smallhoder farmers in the area.

On the other hand, Gebre Erkato was originally a tenant and migrant laborer. He was born in Kambata region, east of the Gibe valley. He came to Jimma as a migrant farmer in the early 1950s. During the first ten years he spent four or five months of the year in Jimma area picking coffee for local growers. When the harvesting season was over around

December, Gebre returned to Kambata where he also owned a small plot of land.[12]

Each year in September, about sixty migrant workers from Gebre's area returned to Jimma to harvest coffee. Very often they worked on Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi's farms. Around 1960, Gebre and some of his friends were offered small plots of land (about a hectare each), an ox and a cow by Mesfin, and settled near his Badda Buna farm as share-croppers. The arrangement was considered beneficial for both the dajazmach and the migrant workers. By providing them with land to settle near his farm, Mesfin was able to control their labor for his coffee farms. For the workers, settlement reduced the time they spent traveling between their residence in Kambata and Jimma each year. After his settlement, however, Gebre continued to work as daily laborer exclusively on Mesfin's farms. But part of the year he also produced his own food. Thus, instead of depending on wages, Gebre and other migrant workers were gradually turned tenant farmers.

Balabats

Abba Dula Abba Jifar was the eldest son of Sultan Abba Jifar II (d.1934). When Abba Jifar's health declined in the

late 1920s, Abba Dula was offered the chance to succeed his father. But he was politically less ambitious. Without holding any political office, he preferred to accumulating wealth. At the time of political crisis in Jimma in 1932, Abba Dula was probably the largest landlord in the region. When Abba Jifar II died, Abba Dula inherited most of the sultan's wealth.

Yet like many landlords in the region, Abba Dula's position was eroded in the 1940s. Short of labor during the immediate aftermath of the post-war years, his extensive landholding brought huge tax debts. In 1947, for example, he owed the state over Eth$ 100,000 of the tax arrears from his estates in Saqa-Choqorsa, Manna and Omo-Nada districts.[13] Secondly, Abba Dula also suffered from the tightening state control over the region. This process was indeed well advanced in 1932 when Haile Sellassie brought Jimma under the direct control of the imperial state. Haile Sellassie's effort, although discontinued by Italian occupation in 1936, was resumed immediately after restoration in 1941. The post-war state bureaucracy undermined local elite's power to mobilize labor. Thus under this conditions, Abba Dula was forced to redistribute his extensive landholdings. By 1947 he had distributed

about 150 hectares to landless peasants in Somodo district.[14] In the meantime, he also sold many hectares of land to individuals in the bureaucracy.[15]

Abba Dula's case was not in anyway an isolated one. His son, Sultan Abba Jobir, also lost control of land and labor during the 1940s and 1950s. Abba Jobir's misfortune indeed began in 1932 when Haile Sellassie annexed Jimma and sent him to prison. Collaborating with the Italians during the occupation, Abba Jobir temporarily regained his property and power. But his collaboration with the Italians, however, ruined his chances for reconciliation with Haile Sellassie's government after the restoration. Shortly after the latter's return from exile, Abba Jobir was summoned to Addis Ababa and charged with illegal accumulation of land.[16] The charges were never proved but Abba Jifar stayed under house arrest in Addis Ababa and Jimma for several years. The confinement weakened the management of his estates. As the Sultan spent most of his time in Addis Ababa and Jimma litigating to regain his lost lands, his tax debts soared during the 1940s and 1950s.

Bureaucrats and Merchants who Turned to Coffee Cultivation

In the 1950s and 1960s some bureaucrats and urban business men turned to coffee plantation. On the basis of their social background, these new farmers can be divided into at three sub-groups. First, there were some who had aristocratic origin. Traditionally, Ethiopian aristocrats were less inclined to participate in production. But since the early twentieth century, however, some have turned towards trade and coffee cultivation as an alternative sources of revenue.

Second, the new farmers included merchants who held businesses in the urban centers.[17] For the merchants, coffee cultivation was an alternative strategy to diversify their investments. They were the most innovative and "genuine" capitalists of all the coffee farmers in the 1960s. They tended to invest in anything that promised profit. In the early 1970s, when coffee production faced serious challenges, some of them were planning to further diversify their investments. The revolution, however, short-cut their plans. A third group was made up of civil and military officers who were never fully committed to coffee production. This group included Ras Mesfin, Yilma Deresa, long time Minister of Finance, General Assefa Ayane, one time Air Force Commander, General Qelbessa Beka, a

Police Chief, Captain Seyoum Balcha, member of the Imperial Bodyguard, and Colonel Mussie Megarsa and Chief Justice Tibebu Beyene and others. Although not fully engaged in coffee production, some of these officials, like General Qelbessa, were planning to expand their plantations and hoping to move to their farms after their retirement. Yet as far as they remained in the bureaucracy, they were part-time farmers. Their farms were managed by hired agents. Thus strictly speaking, they were not farmers at all. Coffee cultivation was only a source of additional income.

Among these new farmers, only Fitawrari Gebre Kristos Mekonnen and Lij Abate Mulat were fully committed coffee plantation. The following biographical sketch sheds some light on the nature these new farmers: why and how they turned to coffee plantation.

Gebre Kristos Mekonnen represented a third generation of imperial soldiers who conquered the Gibe region in the late nineteenth century. Both his father and grandfather served as governors of Sayo and Gomma, respectively.[18] Incidentally, the land on which Gebre Kristos started coffee plantation was first obtained by his grandfather, Dajazmach Wossane during his governorship of Gomma in the early twentieth century.[19] Realizing the favorable coffee

enterprise during the post-war years, Gebre Kristos turned to coffee cultivation in the 1950s.

From the outset, Gebre Kristos was committed to coffee plantation. Initially, his farm was, however, barely distinguishable from the peasant farms in the area. But gradually he improved it and turned it into a modern plantation. He was particularly receptive to expert advice and occasionally employed trained agronomists. During the harvest season, he employed about four hundred workers.

As active coffee grower, Gebre Kristos encouraged other coffee farmers to adopt modern techniques. In the mid 1960s, he and other coffee growers established the Gomma Coffee Farmers' Cooperative.[20] The Cooperative, among other things, aimed at raising the coffee producers' prices. Thus, with the influence of Gebre Kristos and his associates in the bureaucracy, the Cooperative registered some success. In the late 1960s, for example, the members of the Cooperative were able to sale their coffee Eth$3/<u>feresula</u> (17kgs.) higher than the non-members.[21] But due to the opposition from merchants, the Cooperative's success was limited.

During the early months of the revolution in 1974, Gebre Kristos was appointed as governor of Kafa region. But

he was dismissed when the moderate government that coopted him was swept away by radicals military officers in September 1974. After the land nationalization of March 1975, he abandoned his coffee farms, and moved to Addis Ababa.[22]

Lij Abate Mulat was another bureaucrat of aristocratic origin who turned to coffee plantation in the 1950s. The son of Fitawrari Mulat Kebere, one of the courtiers of Lij Iyassu (r.1910-16), Abate had once served as bureaucrat. Being partisan of Lij Iyasu, his father lost his estates when Iyassu was deposed in 1916. Subsequently, he spent many years in prison and regained none of his properties. To reconcile with former enemies after his restoration to the throne in 1941, Emperor Haile Sellassie granted nine gashas (360 hectares) of land to Abate and his sister in Limmu province.[23] The land grant helped Abate to start coffee plantation in Limmu.

Early in the 1950s, Abate resigned from his position in the bureaucracy to start a coffee farm.[24] Then he consolidated small coffee farms near Suntu town, and added new plantations. Like Gebre Kristos, he also employed agricultural officers and four to five hundred migrant

laborers during the harvest season. Abate preferred wage workers rather share cropping.[25]

Realizing the international coffee marketing constraints in the 1960s, Abate shifted part of his investment to urban real estates. Around 1966/67, for example, he sold the less profitable coffee lands and invested the money in an apartment complex in Addis Ababa.[26] But until the outbreak of the revolution he remained committed to coffee plantation. But with the outbreak of the revolution, Abate also lost his coffee farms and then moved to Addis Ababa.[27]

Because of their prominent role in coffee production in Jimma in the 1950s and 1960s, Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi, and his wife, Yeshi-Embet Guma, deserve special attention. As high ranking official of the imperial government, avid land speculator and enthusiastic coffee farmer, Mesfin was closely associated with the coffee boom of the 1950s. A patriotic leader during the Italian occupation, Mesfin was appointed the governor of Illu Abba Bor in 1942.

Illu Abba Bor was one of the richest provinces before the occupation. Its fertile land and its access to the Anglo-Egyptian (Sudanese) trade through Gambela and the Baro water transport system made it an important source of

imperial revenue until 1935.[28] But after 1941, the Gambela trade and the economic importance of Illu Abba Bor region declined. Until the imperial government reestablished direct control over the peasant economy during the immediate aftermath of the war, Mesfin could not make much profit out of his governorship of this region. His fortune quickly changed when he was transferred to Kafa region in 1945. During his stay in Jimma as a governor (1945-54), Mesfin witnessed the growing demand for coffee at national and international markets. Although labor was still scarce and coffee production was largely depressed by 1945, Mesfin immediately began buying lands and consolidating the abandoned coffee fields. In doing this, he took advantage of his official position as highest ranking state official in the region.

However, it is very difficult to categorize Mesfin totally as a modern coffee farmer. He confiscated, purchased or received land as a gift and employed migrant laborers to plant coffee. Unlike other modern farmers he also used forced labor. Although he supported modern techniques of production, he did not effectively employ it on his plantations. Coffee production was, for him, only one way of accumulating wealth.

Looking at his land grabbing techniques, his use of forced peasant labor, Mesfin could simply be regarded as one of the traditional power elite. Like them, he was not much interested in the transformation of coffee industry into a modern stage. Rather, he was concerned very often with the accumulation of land by frequently using official government position. According to land sale registries of Kafa region, nearly forty percent of the transactions between 1945 and 1954 involved Mesfin and his family.[29]

On the other hand, like modern coffee farmers, he was very much interested in coffee. He planted more coffee trees than any one of the new farmers. None of his farms could be regarded as modern except a small farm located at Badda Buna, about five miles from the town of Jimma. The Badda Buna placation was indeed very small, and part of it was leased to foreigners for a period of thirty years. It was this group of foreigners who helped the Badda Buna farm appear modern. When the Jimma College of Agriculture was established in 1952, Mesfin offered part of his farm at Badda Buna as a demonstration field for the College. Thus, although he was not modern coffee grower, Mesfin was supportive of the modern plantation techniques.

In the bureaucracy Mesfin was the real patron of the modern coffee growers. One way or another, all of the new farmers were related to him. Using his official position, he facilitated their land purchases and blocked any opposition to them from the displaced small landowners or the peasants. Even after he was transferred to Addis Ababa to head the ministry of Interior, and later when he became the governor of Shewa region, Mesfin kept close contact with the coffee growers in Jimma and Limmu provinces. On the eve of the revolution he was believed to have been the richest person in the country. His wealth was no doubt largely drawn from the coffee lands of Jimma and Limmu.

Mesfin's wife, Yeshi-Embet Guma, was also equally avaricious land speculator and coffee farmer. In some cases her accumulation of wealth exceeded that of her husband. Originally she comes from a local balabat family in a rich coffee district of Gidami in western Wollega. And apparently because of her background, she appreciated the importance of coffee much greater than her husband. In 1946, she bought 800 hectares of land near Jimma town and started coffee plantation. From 1946 to 1954, Yeshi-Emebet bought nearly 2508 hectares of land and sold 400 hectares at much higher prices than she originally paid for.[30] Even

after her husband was transferred to Addis Ababa to head ministry of Interior and then became governor of Shewa region, Yeshi-Embet remained closer to her estates in the Jimma area.

More than Dejazmach Mesfin, Yeshi-Embet was very active in the establishment of modern coffee plantations. By the early 1970s, she had already converted almost half of her estates in Limmu to coffee plantation.[31] Apparently she also encouraged other women to participate in the coffee industry. Two of her sisters, Yeshareg and Abebech Guma, for example, had 120 and 80 hectares of coffee farms respectively at Gumar, in Limmu province.[32] The Gumar plantations, where Yeshi-Embet held part of her farms, were dominated by women.[33]

The preceding biographical sketches are corroborated by archival sources. An examination of the land transaction registries of the post war period, for example, reveal the dynamics of social change in the Gibe region during the 1940s and 1950s. Although it is difficult to identify the social status of all the sellers and the buyers of land, the land transaction registries offer a useful insight of the changes that took place in the coffee provinces of Jimma and Limmu.[34] Out of 11,448 hectares sold between 1946 and 1954,

7,082 (62%) involved only twelve local landlords. Among these, Abba Dula Abba Jifar sold the largest amount, 2440 hectares (21.3%). Another local landlord, Fitawrari Abba Foggi, sold 1224 hectares (10.7%). This pattern indicates that the local landlords, such as Abba Dula Abba Jifar, were gradually losing control of coffee lands either to urban based bureaucrats or small farmers.

This process indeed began in the 1940s, when some local landlords lost their titles to land owing to non-payment of taxes. Then, it was mainly the shortage of labor that forced them to abandon their holdings. During the immediate post-war years, the Gibe valley faced labor shortages for coffee production. Without sufficient labor to work on the land, many landowners were unable to benefit from the potentially rich coffee lands. Thus, forest lands were ignored while unpaid taxes accumulated every year. In 1947-48, for example, 319 hectares of land in Manna district were transferred from private to state domain for non-payment of taxes during the preceding three years.[35] Thus, more indebted landlords turned to selling their possessions before they were seized by the state for tax delinquency.

Table 7.1 Landlords who sold over 200 hectares, 1946-54

Abba Dula Abba Jifar (Sultan)	2440
Abba Foggi Abba Jobir (Fitawrari)	1225
Amadie Abba Dula (Qagnazmach).....	843
Wube Abba Chefiq (Fitawrari)	800
Getahun Hiale Mesqal.....	320
Abba Macha Abba Dula (Buyo)	235
Feyissa (Agafari)	220
Debre-Worq H. Michael (W/o)	200
Abba Garo Abba Bulgu (Fitawrari).....	200
Beyene Saman (Grazmach)	200
Atsede Alala/ Abba Macha Abba Dula	200
Hadha Kadir W. Mesqal (wife of Sultan Abba Jifar II)	200
Total	7083

The biographical sketches and land transaction registries suggest the salient features of social change in the Gibe region during the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1950s, coffee land in the region was a contested territory over which peasants, local landlords and bureaucrats fought to shape the regional economy according to their respective interests. Contrary to the general assumption, the outcome of such contest was not easily predictable. The peasants used their small plots of land and family labor to avoid complete submission to the landlords, the state and the market. Local landlords used kinship ties, spiritual and social status to mobilize support and labor. But with increased state control and influence of the market they lost control of land and labor. The bureaucrats and merchants utilized state power and capital to dominate the region. But they too lacked established local ties that balabats enjoyed. The weakness of the position of the bureaucrats can be gleaned, for example, from their constant effort to rally the support of the peasants against the balabats. In a case involving Abba Jamal Sheki and others, Dajazmach Mesfin, for example, sought the support of the

peasants and migrant farm workers to win the contested land.[36]

In general, the expansion of coffee cultivation and commercialization of land in the 1950s benefitted the bureaucrats and the merchants who used political authority and the cash economy to purchase more land. Their growing economic and political influence significantly undermined the position of the balabats. Indebted by tax arrears of the 1940s and lacking sufficient cash to employ migrant workers, local landlords sold their holdings more frequently after 1946. While the local elite lost control of land, the bureaucrats and merchants were, however, accumulating. The latter had access to state power and credit facilities to effect purchases. Some times they bought a piece of land below its market value without properly advertising its transfer from tax-delinquent owners to the state domain.

On the other hand, smallholders peasant who used family labor for subsistence production were relatively more resilient. To some extent the labor shortage worked in their favor because they were able to earn some cash by taking occasional for wage labor. For example, peasants were able adjust to the rhythm of seasonal high demands for labor. Many peasants kept off-farm employment at a minimum

during the peak harvest season to work on their fields. But they entered into sharecropping ("aago" farming)[37] with bigger coffee farmers when after they had harvested their crops. The peasants participated in wage labor between December and April when they were less occupied at home. Over the years, some migrant workers also settled as tenant farmers in the coffee region. Instead of traveling between their home villages and the coffee farms, migrant laborers eventually settled down in the Gibe region and participated in sharecropping.[38] Thus, by the end of the 1960s, the pattern of social change in the region was characterized by resilient peasantry, declining power of the local elite and emerging capitalist coffee farmers.

As in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, peasants participated in coffee production in the 1950s and 1960s. Because of their deep involvement in the market economy some peasant indeed relied on purchased food. Contrary to Dessalegn's assertion therefore the market economy has fully penetrated into the life of the agricultural community. Peasant economic decisions were influenced by the conditions of the market as well as local social and political circumstances.

In this case, the persistence the peasantry can not be attributed to the insufficient penetration of the market economy. Successful farmers took advantage of the market to purchase new plots and expand their coffee fields. A glance at the land transaction registries reveal the fact that most of the purchases after 1955 were, for example, made by smallholders rather than big landlords. Such individuals apparently used family labor to cultivate the land.

Obviously, peasants were not immune to the influence of market economy. But at least in the Gibe region they were not the immediate victims of the commercialization of land. Nor did they instantly turn inward to kinship relations to protect their subsistence needs when the market economy penetrated into their world. Rather, they took advantage of the market without fully surrendering themselves to it. In doing so, they sometimes exploited labor shortages; the struggle between the local landlords and the bureaucrats over local resources, including land and labor; the declining power of the local elite and their social distance from the new urban based landlords.

As indicated above, peasants were involved in market economy for a long time. As hired farm workers, as tenants and independent farmers, peasants directly contributed to

the coffee boom of the 1950s. In 1949 coffee export increased by 45% and for the first time exceeded the 1934 export figure of 19,000 metric tones. Between 1948 and 1954, Ethiopia's coffee export was doubled and monetary earnings from this crop increased from seventeen million to one hundred and twelve million dollars.[39]

As intermediaries between the local communities and the state, local landlords[40] for a long time had enjoyed influential status in the countryside. Using their socio-political status, they were able to accumulate large tracts of land throughout the region during the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1950s, however, this group was challenged from within and outside. Its position was undermined just before the beginning of coffee boom in the 1950s. The rise of aggressive bureaucrats and modern coffee farmers with better access to state power, credit facilities and information about national and global market conditions put the local landlords in a defensive position. The success of the smallholders also contributed to the frustration of the local landlords. As small farmers purchased new plots, the local elite lost substantial power to mobilize labor. Thus, they were forced to compete with the new capitalist farmers for migrant laborers.

As local elite lost control of land and labor, the bureaucrats gained more access to coffee land through imperial grants, coercion and purchases. As high ranking administrative or military officers, they were urban based. For this reason, they were better informed about trends in national and international coffee prices, real estates values and credit facilities. They also had substantial amount of cash money at their disposal. It was, however, their easy access to state bureaucracy, national and international marketing systems that gave them better edge in their economic performance.

The new coffee farmers differed from the peasants and the traditional landlords in their attitudes and techniques of production. To some extent, they practiced modern farming techniques such as pruning; they used chemical fertilizers and established nurseries. Their farms were larger in size than that the peasants.[41] Unlike the traditional landlords, who relied mainly on kinship, political and religious authority to mobilize labor, and peasants who essentially depended on family labor, the new farmers used migrant wage laborers more extensively.

The new farmers also came largely from outside the community. A few abandoned positions in the bureaucracy and

turned to coffee plantation. Many devoted only part of their time to coffee growing. All acquired land through various means. Some coerced local landlords to transfer their holding to them. Others received state grants. Despite their dubious techniques of land acquisition, these farmers were genuinely committed to the expansion of coffee plantation.

Table 7.2. Ethiopia's Coffee Export, 1945-54

Year	Export (in Metric tons)
1945	15,882
1946	14,663
1947	17,795
1948	15,344
1949	22,349
1950	18,710
1951	30,349
1952	21,611
1953	43,883
1954	31,592

Source: Ethiopian Economic Review, 6 (April 1963), p.53.

Table 7.3. Coffee Compared to Other Major Exports, 1949-54
(Value in million birr/Eth$ and percentage)

Year		coffee	hides & skins	cereals & pulses	oilseeds
1946/47	value	16.4		17.2	
	%	18.3		19.2	
1947/48	value	17.4		37.1	
	%	19.5		41.6	
1948/49	value	17.0		16.7	
	%	22.0		21.6	
1949/50	Value	32.5	15.3	7.1	6.9
	%	47.6	22.3	9.7	9.2
1950/51	Value	56.5	30.5	9.1	8.5
	%	50.5	28.8	8.2	7.1
1951/52	value	58.8	16.9	16.9	13.8
	%	51.8	14.8	14.9	11.7
1952/53	value	83.0	17.8	16.3	14.3
	%	52.4	11.7	10.3	9.4
1953/54	value	112.0	17.0	12.2	12.0
	%	65.4	9.9	7.1	7.0

Sources: US State Department, Consular Reports, 1950, 1952, 1953; Guide Book of Ethiopia, p.305.

Yet, despite the penetration of the market economy and resulting social differentiation, the march towards full fledged capitalist agriculture was indecisive. By the 1960s, although far from stagnation, the economy was not on an irreversible course of transition. The constraints were embedded in the social conditions of the region and the nature of its articulation with outside world, including the state and the world market.

First, the involvement of the influential group of modern coffee growers had mixed effect on the agrarian changes in the Gibe region. On the positive side, with their education, social standing and political influence, the new farmers brought dynamism to the coffee industry and helped to boost production. Although their over all share of the total production remained very low, they introduced modern techniques of production and processing within a short time.[42] Their participation in production increased the bargaining power of coffee farmers vis-a-vis the state and merchants.

Unfortunately, the emergence of modern coffee farmers had some negative results too. Using their political influences, the new farmers monopolized the credit facilities which could have encouraged peasant producers.

In some cases the new farmers dislocated the smallholders from their plots through poorly negotiated partnerships. The situation, though unavoidable in a period of transition, contributed to social tensions that facilitated the outbreak of the revolution.

Despite their spectacular rise, the landed bureaucrats and modern coffee farmers faced major setbacks by the end of the 1960s. By the late 1960s, the capitalist coffee farmers were not quite certain about the future of their business. At the farm level, the steady supply of labor was achieved through negotiations and compromises with the peasants and migrant workers. Owing to constraints some were cautious in their investments in coffee; instead they were striving to diversify.[43]

The spread of Coffee Berry Disease (CBD) in the late 1960s further discouraged full commitment to coffee production. CBD attacked the green berries of coffee. It was introduced to the farms in the Gibe region probably through infected coffee berries or seedlings from the neighboring Kenya.[44] By 1971 CBD has spread to coffee farms in the Gibe region and before too long, it caused panic among the modern farmers. Indeed their fears were justified. Three years after the report of CBD existence,

production from infected farms dropped by over thirty percent. Unless costly projects were undertaken to arrest the spread of CBD, experts believed that it could result in total loss of plantations in less than a decade. Such news shattered the hopes of the young coffee farmers in the early 1970s. The plans for cut-back in coffee investment were therefore influenced by the anticipated losses and fluctuations of international coffee prices.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, surplus coffee stocks increased steadily at the global market. The situation, as usual, depressed the world coffee prices. It was in an effort to minimize this danger that major coffee producing countries came together and signed the International Coffee Agreement in 1962, and subsequently assigned export quotas to the producing member countries. Ethiopia welcomed the international effort to stabilize coffee market, but refused to sign the agreement before her export quota was revised and up-graded in 1964.

Despite the quota system, however, prices continued to fluctuate throughout the 1960s. The declining revenue discouraged the modern farmers even when they succeeded to minimize the profit margin of intermediate merchants.

Equally discouraging was the rising cost of chemical inputs and processing while coffee prices were declining.

On the other hand, the peasants, who were the actual source of the coffee boom of the 1950s, benefited very little the coffee industry. Their share of coffee revenue undercut by the unfair marketing systems. Even during the boom years, the state and merchants skimmed off the peasants' profit margins. On grounds of poor quality, merchants bought coffee from the peasants below the normal market values.

For a long time peasant producers indeed processed coffee rather lightly. During harvest season, the berries were collected and dried on open fields, usually on the ground. Minimal care was taken when picking and storing coffee beans. The ripe cherries some times stayed longer on the tree while, at other times, the unripe, green beans were picked and mixed with quality cherries. Such random picking technique affected the quality of peasant coffee. But peasants were not always responsible for the poor quality coffee. Sometimes greedy merchants adulterated the good quality coffee with bad ones. Until 1956, quality suffered from poor handling while in transit.

The problem of quality control of export coffee became a serious issue in 1955/56 when several consignments to the New York market were rejected due to high moisture content and some contamination. The situation was so serious that Otis McAllister, the American importer of Ethiopian coffee, sent his own agent to investigate the problem; while the Ethiopian government sent a delegation to Washington to discuss the incident with appropriate business and government agencies.[45] This incident clearly indicated the venerability of the Ethiopian coffee on global market.

It was partly to improve the quality of export coffee that the Ethiopian government created the National Coffee Board (NBC) in 1957.[46] The plan to establish such an agency was first initiated in August 1954, when the government requested the expert advice of the United States Operation Mission (USOM/ "Point Four") and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).[47] The NBC was finally created in 1957 with broad powers to regulate the coffee industry. Besides trade, the Board also supervised coffee research, collected and disseminated data regarding production and trade of coffee.[48] Regulating coffee commerce remained the main object of the Board, however. The Board set up Coffee Exchange Center on the southwestern

edge of Addis Ababa in 1958. Obviously, increased government regulation did not help the peasant coffee producers. Merchants easily transferred the cost of improved quality of export coffee to the peasants and pocketed the profit.

The government introduced two cleaning methods__"work unit" and "wet processing,"__in the mid-1950s. The "work unit" method was introduced in 1956. It was regarded as a convenient method for cleaning coffee from scattered small farms with poor transportation system. Instead of collecting coffee to one cleaning center, the "work unit," used a flexible hand operated machine which was set up on small farms to depulp the cherries. Then depulped beans were washed in an odorless caustic soda solution for thirty seconds or kept in fresh water from half to three days for fermentation and removal of the mucilage.[49] Through such process, the red cherries were cleaned within eight-hour day. Finally, the washed coffee was displayed on an elevated platform to sun dry. The advantages of this method of cleaning are its flexibility, relatively short time for processing, and reduced weight for later transportation to the market.[50]

The "wet processing" method used the Aqua Pulper machine has the advantage of reducing the time spent for fermentation. Through elaborate washing, the machine was able to remove the mucilage without the fermentation process. But its drawbacks are, however, the high cost of installation and relatively less flexible set up that made it less efficient for scattered small farms. In spite of this, the Agricultural Development Bank set up this machine at Suntu farms, in Lummu, in 1955 at the cost of Eth$. 100,000. The initial performance was, however, disappointing.[51] Coffee farmers were reluctant to bring their coffee to the processing center.[52]

Improved quality helped to boost export prices. But the benefits rarely reached the producers. Thus quality control and market regulations benefited the merchants and the state more than the peasant coffee producers. By taking charge of the post-harvest cleaning, grading and licensing, the state justified its high tax rates and huge share of profits from the coffee industry.

Moreover, the marketing structure also favored merchants and bureaucrats more than the peasants. In the 1950s, as in the early twentieth century, coffee export was dominated by the state and a group foreign merchants.[53]

These merchants operated at different levels of the coffee industry. Those with limited funds acted as collectors and brokers between the producers and the major exporters; the bigger firms handled the export. Both collectors and exporters were, however, great speculators. They bought cheaply at the peak of the harvest season and sold when prices soared.[54]

Besides speculation, exporters also maximized their profits by cheating peasants and outwitting government regulators. One common technique was through declaration of false destination of export consignments, usually to the neighboring countries, to obtain lesser export taxes. Other methods included the use of false documentation by bribing corrupt custom's officials; sale or illegal transfer of export licenses; false report of both quality and quantity of coffee.[55] To combat such corruption and maximize its share of coffee trade, the state implemented several measures beginning in 1949. One of these involved tighter control of currency exchanges. Then, the government required exporting merchants to declare their proceeds at the National Bank.

It was, however, through increased coffee export taxes that the government tried to maximize its share. The export

taxes rose sharply between 1950 and 1954. Between November 1952 and April 1954, coffee export tax increased by nearly thirteen-fold, from $20 to over $250 per metric ton. Export tax alone contributed more than ten million dollars of the government's earnings in 1953.[56]

Such spectacular rise of the export tax, unfortunately affected the producers more than the exporting merchants. To shift the burden to the producers, collectors and exporting merchants undercut producer prices and retained good profits for themselves. Thus export merchants and the government ultimately benefited at the expense of small coffee farmers. They both skimmed off the profit that could have trickled down to the peasants. Thus the coffee boom of the early 1950s largely escaped the peasants.

To sum up, seen from a local perspective, by the 1960s the economy of the Gibe region was neither on the threshold of great agricultural transformation nor in deep crisis. The peasants faced many constraints; but they were also well entrenched within the agricultural landscape. Unlike other parts of the country where the beginning of mechanized agriculture displaced many peasants, the emergence of modern coffee plantation did not directly threaten the peasant economy. This does not, however, mean the absence of social

tension. Indeed, the beginning of the revolution was particularly violent in the coffee province of Jimma. As early as March/April 1974, mass demonstrations in Jimma turned violent. Initially, the landless tenants, smallholders, migrant workers, frustrated coffee farmers and merchants all turned against the government and the less sensitive governor of the region. The revolution seemed to fulfill the aspirations and solve the frustrations of all social groups. All probably wanted change for different reasons.

In an effort to buy time and stabilize the coffee growing community, the government appointed Fitawrari Gebre Kristos, one of the coffee farmers, as governor of Kafa region in April 1974. This choice was intended to appease the farmers and the migrant workers. But within less than six months, events in the center moved faster and took a radical turn. The Emperor was deposed in September and new military administration was established. The military government from the outset promised a land reform that would satisfy the landless and smallholder. In the meantime most of the high ranking civil and military officials who were involved in coffee production were arrested. For more than a year, between February 1974 and March 1975, coffee farmers

were in total confusion. Finally, the Land Proclamation of March 1975, introduced new agrarian social relations and restructured the coffee industry. After the revolution, the larger coffee farms were seized by the state and the smaller farms were distributed to the peasants. Thus the revolution effectively knocked out the budding capitalist farmers, local landlords and migrant workers, and subordinated the peasants to the new state apparatus. The revolution, more than any other factor, once again rescheduled the process of transition to capitalist agriculture.

Notes

1. Harold G. Marcus, "The Corruption of Ethiopian History," in Proceedings of the Sixth Michigan State University Conference on Northeast Africa (East Lansing, 1992), p.221; idem., A History of Ethiopia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p.176.

2. Shiferaw Jammo, "An Overview of the Economy, 1941-74," in An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia, p.53.

3. See, for example, Dessalegn Rahmato, "Peasant Agriculture under the Old Regime," in An Economic History of Ethiopia; Eshetu Chole, "Running to Keep the Same Place: Industrialization, 1941-74," in An Economic History of Ethiopia; James McCann, People of the Plow; Keith Griffin, World Hunger and the World Economy, (1987); Warren C. Robinson and Fumiko Yamazaki, "Agriculture, Population, and Economic Planning in Ethiopia, 1953-1980," Journal of Developing Areas, XX (April 1986), pp. 327-38.

4. Kidane Mengisteab, Ethiopia: Failure of Land Reform and Agricultural Crisis (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), p.80.

5. Dessalegn Rahmato, " Peasant Agriculture under the Old Regime," p.182.

6. Robinson and Yamazaki, "Agricultural Production," pp.327,332-33.

7. Ibid., p.335.

8. James C. McCann, The People of the Plow.

9. For similar criticism, see Dessalegn Rahmato, "Peasant Agriculture", p.181; and for peasant technological initiatives and intensification, see H. Ambron, "Agricultural Intensification in the Burji-Konso Cluster," Azania, XXIV, pp.71-83; J.E.G. Sutton, "The Place of Ethiopia in African Agricultural History," in Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, vol.I (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1994), pp.131-33.

10. The post war rural landscape in the Jimma area was dominated by four social groups - peasants, indigenous landlords (balabat), migrant farm workers and bureaucrat-cum-coffee farmers.

11. Interview: Shaikh Mohammed Shifa, 2/20/92.

12. Interview: Gebre Erkato, 10/21/91.

13. Until 1950 land tax in Jimma was assessed at very high rate than anywhere in the empire. In Jimma, a tax for a fachassa (1/4 of a hectare) was assessed at Eth$3.12 while elsewhere in the empire it was less than forty cents. The Land Tax Proclamation of 1942 that fixed land tax from Eth$ 5 to 15 for most provinces in the south, was not applied to Jimma until after the 1950 assessment. KAF 2181/44 ["Report on 1944-47 Land Tax Arrears of Jimma Province, October 16, 1947;" KAF 31/2235, Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi to Ministry of Finance; "Land Tax Proclamation," #8, Negarit Gazeta, 1942. See also Chapter VI above.

14. KAF 2181/44, ["Report on 1944-47 Tax Arrears."]

15. See below.

16. KAF 8461/42 [Undated and unsigned "Note to His Majesty"]. From related exchanges, this note appears to written in 1944 probably by Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi.

17. This group included Mahari Endale, pharmacy owner, Tekle Mariam Kassahun, Teka Egano, restaurant owner.

18. FO 401/12. Captain H.H. Kelly to Assistant Director of Intelligence, Khartoum, February 10, 1909; Berhanena Salam, 26.7.28. Interview with Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, Agaro; Yimam Mohammed, Agaro.

19. Interview Yimam Mohammed.

20. National Coffee Board of Ethiopia (1957-1972), January 1972, p.18; Interview: Abba Macha Daga, interviewed near Agaro, February 19, 1992.

21. National Coffee Board, 1972, P.18.

22. Limmu Coffee Enterprise, 22/2; Interview: Fitwarari Abba Warri Abba Kaabe, February 15,1991; Getachew Worku, Gomma Farm, February 15, 1992; Tibebu Mengiste, Gomma Farm, February 17, 1992; Yimam Ahmed, Gomma Farm, February 17, 1992.

23. No doubt, Dajazmach Mesfin was responsible for the rehabilitation of the Mulat family. Apparently, he also encouraged Abate to shift to coffee plantation. In his report to the Emperor

in March 1951, Dejazmach Mesfin confirmed that he had already implemented the grant of 360 hectares to Lij Abate in Limmu province, in accordance the emperor's previous orders. KAF 21/220, Dejazmach Mesfin to Emperor Haile Sellassie, April 8, 1951.

24. Interview: Mohammed Hussein, interviewed on Lij Abate's old farm near Suntu, February 14, 1992.

25. For Example, Tilahun Sasaba, a graduate from Jimma Agricultural College, was Lij Abate's farm manager in the late 1960s. Interview: Tilahun Sasaba, Jimma, February 10, 1992.

26. Interview: Mohammed Hussein.

27. He currently lives in England. Interview: Tilahun Sasaba; Mohammed Hussein.

28. On the Gambela trade, see Bahru Zewde, "An Overview and Assessment of Gambela Trade (1904-1935)", International Journal of African Historical Studies, XX:1 (1987).

29. ["Land Transaction Registry Book"], vol. 1 & 2.

30. "Land Transaction Registry Book," vol. 1 & 2. In cases where the actual size of land is recorded, it is calculated at 30 bar/gasha (40 hectares) of land.

31. Limmu Coffee Enterprise, 21/2.

32. Ibid. This figure includes what was registered at the time of state confiscation in 1975, whereas the actual size probably exceeded at least five hundred hectares.

33. Ibid. The prominent women who owned farms included Tsigie Sharew, Mintwab Tekle, Workenesh Shonkor and Martha G. Tsadik. Incidently, all of them were daughters of wives of high ranking civil or military officers.

34. More than thirty volumes of the land transaction registries were consulted. The first two volumes contained 230 cases while the subsequent volumes contain about 100 cases each. The largest exchange probably occurred in 1953-54 when an average of eighty cases were recorded every month.

35. "Government Land Registry Book, Manna District;" KAF 218/44.

36. In August 1962, forty five tenants and migrant workers signed a petition supporting Dajazmach Mesfin's claim to a contested land at Gembe, the rich coffee land between Jimma and Agaro towns. On the other hand, four local land lords - Abba Jemal Sheki, Abba Godu Abba Warri, Abba Gissa Abba Jorga, Abba Wole Abba Warri, Abba Bor Abba Gibe, Abba Gissa Abba Bora, and Umer Abdu - the support of 577 peasants. MOA 5548/42 ["The Balabats of Jimma"]

37. "Aago" is a share cropping arrangement between big coffee farmers and the peasant for work on the field during the post harvest season. The job involved picking coffee that matured late or dropped on the ground during previous harvesting. Both local land lords and modern coffee farmers employed peasants for this type of work.

38. Such a plot is locally called kutto (share). Interview: Haji Abba Gojjam Abba Waji, Jimma, 19 Oct., 1991.

39. Report of the United Kingdom Trade Mission to Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia (London, February, 1955), p.102.

40. Here "traditional" landlords refers to the balabat, abba qoro, shaikhs, and survivors of the naftagna who permanently settled in the region.

41. It is in this sense that the new farmers are considered as "modern coffee growers". Such categorization should, however, be kept in perspective. Their planting techniques were not much different from the of the peasants. Initially, they planted new seedlings among older coffee trees. Thus, their plantations lacked uniformity, which created quality control difficult. In 1964/65, FAO experts observed "poor root systems" of the coffee trees on some of the modern plantations which was probably due to inadequate preparation of the soil before planting. The experts also witnessed the farmers lack of appreciation of the damaged caused by couch grass (Digitaria scalarum) and other competitive weeds. FAO, "Coffee Mission to Ethiopia, 1964-65" (Rome, 1968).

42. For example, the present government run Limmu Coffee Enterprise and Babaka Coffee Plantation are based on these older plantations.

43. Such investment plan is visible from the assets seized ny the state at the time of nationalization in 1975. General Qelbessa's farm, for example, included ten hectares of maize six oxen and some

cows besides forty hectares of coffee. Maize was produced mainly for the consumption of daily laborers. LCE 21/2.

44. Its presence in Kenya was first reported in 1926. Since then, it has caused enormous damage to the coffee industry in Kenya. Its presence had increased the cost of maintaining a farm. Although geographically closer, CBD was unknown in Ethiopia until the late of 1960s.

45. The source of the contamination finally traced to a transit warehouse in Djibouti where coffee was stored together with other export items. Joseph Simonson, "Economic Summary, Ethiopia - January -March 1957," US Embassy to State Department, April 9, 1957. SD 875.00/4-957.

46. A proclamation providing for the licensing and grading of export coffee was issued in 1952. Negarit Gazeta, 1952.

47. Joseph Simonson, "Economic Summary: July 1 - September 30, 1954," US Embassy, Addis Ababa to State Department, October 15, 1954. SD 875.00/10-1554.

48. Negarit Gazeta; Oliver L. Troxel, "Weekly Economic Review - Week Ending February 7, 1958," US Embassy to State Department, February 7, 1958. SD 875.00/2-758.

49. Although time saving, the use of caustic soda to remove the mucilage is discouraged by experts because it can change the aroma of the cleaned coffee. Similarly, the fermentation process is very delicate. If removed to early, the mucilage can still remain uncleaned; while over fermentation can affect the good taste of coffee.

50. Coffee dried by the "work unit" method weighs one-fifth of the ripe coffee cherries. Fifteen thousand quintals of coffee were processed using the "work unit" method in 1958/59. "More from the Land," Ethiopia Observer, III:1 (February, 1959), p.12.

51. The Aqua Pulper needed 1000 tons of ripe cherries to produce 250 tons of cleaned coffee. See Simonson to State Department, March 15, 1956; "Coffee Production and its Problems," Ethiopia Observer, IV:6 (July, 1960), pp. 194-5.

52. The Bank was forced to sell a share to Antoine Besse and Co., a French firm involved in the export coffee from Ethiopia. "Coffee Production an its Problems," p.195.

53. About thirty foreign based major import-export firms operated in Ethiopia in the 1920s. Most of them were still active by 1950s. A few Ethiopians entered the coffee export trade in the 1950s and 1960s. A. Zervos, L'Empire d'Ethiopie, p.157.

54. AER 1949. Such tactics some times worked against the exporters. In the summer of 1954, for example, the New York coffee market collapsed and prices fell to sixty cents per pound, while exporter in Ethiopia were waiting for prices to rise. Consequently, they were left with huge amount of unsold coffee in stock. That year, the smaller merchants lost substantial money. During normal years, however, speculation worked very well for the collectors and exporters.

55. Merrell, SD 875.00/8-1450.

56. R.D. Gatewood, "Quarterly Economic Summary (October 1 - December 31, 1952)," US Embassy, Addis Ababa to State Department, 30 January 1953; Joseph Simonson, "Economic Review - Ethiopia - 1953," in US Embassy, Addis Ababa to State Department, 8 March 1954.

CONCLUSION

This study has traced the long history of coffee cultivation and its impact on the society in the Gibe region. Coffee cultivation passed through several stages since the mid-nineteenth century. It started as local initiative before the development of the modern transport system and the penetration of the world economy. The expansion of long distance commercial networks in the second half the nineteenth century facilitated its cultivation and exchange.

Reconstructing the long history of coffee production is not the only objective of this study. The over-arching goal is to investigate the reasons why the production of coffee as a cash crop has failed to transform the farmers in the Gibe region from small scale producers to capitalist farmers.

Contrary to the assumption of culturalist scholars, it is not their inherent conservative nature that prevented the peasants from full integration into the market economy. When conditions were favorable, peasants were indeed eager to participate in the market economy and accumulate wealth. But the market was not always a neutral institution as conventional neoclassical theorist portrayed. It was very often corrupted by politics and wealthy businessmen. Being on the periphery of the political and the economic systems, peasants were easily victimized by the state, the market and individuals who dominated these two institutions.

Transforming the coffee industry required labor, transport, and capital. But in the Gibe region, labor shortages during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hampered coffee production. Transporting coffee out of the Gibe valley to markets outside has never been easy, since no railway or navigable rivers connected the region with the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean coasts.

The process of capital accumulation was also erratic. The political and social circumstances denied the peasants the opportunity for capital accumulation. The Afcala merchants and the Gibe kings lost their accumulated capital during the period of Menilek's conquest; while the early naftagna rulers were subsistence oriented. Contrary to conventional scholarly assumption, this study has revealed how Menilek's conquest impeded the development of the market economy rather than facilitating it. The imposition of the gabbar system was a serious below to the process of capital accumulation in the Gibe region.

Coffee cultivation revived the 1920s when the imperial oligarchs, headed by Tafari, started to take the lead. Then, they urged the peasants, whose land they had expropriated through the galad system. Although production significantly increased, the prospect of long term agrarian change was still limited for three reasons. First, peasants who lost their lands were not enthusiastic about coffee production. Second, the imperial elite was not interested in investing the surplus

it extracted from the peasants in agricultural production. Instead, imperial landlords put their money in urban real estate and spent the rest on foreign luxury items. Third, they lost their wealth as a result of political and social dislocation during the Italian occupation.

Thus, it was only during the 1950s and 1960s that a few members of the aristocracy and businessmen earnestly began investing in agricultural production. Then, as land sale documents have revealed, the traditional elite was losing out, while the peasants maintained a precarious balance between domestic production and the market economy. The imperial elite, who used bureaucratic power to extract land rent and agricultural income, were, therefore, the main beneficiaries of the coffee boom of the 1950s. They accumulated substantial wealth which they also lost when the revolution broke-out in 1974.

Thus the incomplete process of transition can be partly attributed to the absence of steady capital accumulation over several generations. Peasants rarely enjoyed a fair share of the income coffee generated. Even during the boom years their share was always marginal. On the other hand, those who accumulated wealth were reluctant to invest in agricultural production. Indigenous merchants often suffered from bad state policies. They faced numerous regulations and extortionist taxation. Instead of continuous capital formation, the expansion of trade and increasing integration

into the world economy undermined the position of local merchants. The Afcala, as pioneer merchants of the Gibe valley, for example, lost the competition when commercial networks expanded in the second half of the nineteenth century. And by the early twentieth century, the Jabarti had been restricted to provincial markets and Addis Ababa.

Then, the aristocracy established partnership with foreign: Greek, Armenian, Arab and Indian, merchants who dominated the import and export trade of the country. Denied of land ownership and investment in productive resources, foreign merchants transferred their profits to banks in India, Europe and North America and thereby contributed to the crisis of capital formation.

GLOSSARY

Abba bokku (Oromo)	Leader of the Oromo socio-political system
Abba gada (Oromo)	Same as "Abba Bokku."
Abba kella (Oromo)	Chief of toll-gate
Abba mizan (Oromo)	"Father of the balance"; court official responsible for commercial affairs.
Abba muda (Oromo)	Anointer of the pilgrims
Abba qoro (Oromo)	District chief
Abuna (Amharic)	Bishop
Amole (Amharic)	Salt-bar, used as medium of exchange.
Asrat (Amharic)	Tithe (10% tax)
Badda (Oromo)	Highland
Badda-dure (Oromo)	Middle highland
Balabat (Oromo)	Hereditary chiefs
Buna (Oromo/Amhaic)	Coffee
Buna-qala (Oromo)	Coffee ceremony
Chaffe (Oromo)	Low-lying land, often used for grazing and public meeting.
Chisegna (Amharic)	Tenant; see "qubssisa."
Chiraa (Oromo)	Land cleared for cultivation.
Dagal saqii (Oromo)	"Forest opener"; pioneer settler
Dajazmach (Amharic)	Military title; literally, "Commander of the gate"; a title of the nobility, lower than Ras.
Dawla (Amharic/Oromo)	Unit of measurement for grain, equivalent 100 kilograms.
Dhoqee (Oromo)	Animal waste used for fertilizing the land.
Ensete (Amharic)	Ensete edule; false banana; see "Qocho."

Fachassa (Oromo)	Unit of land measurement, equivalent to one-fourth of a hectare
Farasula (Amharic)	Unit of measurement, equivalent to 17 kilograms.
Fitawrari (Amharic)	Military title; literally, "leader of the vanguard"
Gabbar (Oromo)	Conquered cultivators in the southern regions
Gada (Oromo)	Socio-political system of the Oromo
Gamojii (Oromo)	Lowland
Gasha (Amharic)	Unit of land measurement, equivalent to 40 hectares or 100 acres
Genne (Oromo/Kafa)	Lady; title used for royal ladies in the Gibe region.
Gibre-tal (Amharic)	Tax-delinquent land
Grazmach (Amharic)	Military title; literally, "Commander of the Left"
Gudifacha (Oromo)	Adoption
Gult (Amharic)	land-use right granted to officials; see Maderia
(H)angafa (Oromo)	Senior, first born
Haadha (oromo)	Mother
Jilla (Oromo)	Pilgrim
Katama (Oromo)	Garrison town
Kella (Oromo)	Toll-gate
Kolu (Oromo)	Patron-client relationship
Lij (Amharic)	"Child," royal title
Maderia (Amharic)	Land granted to officials; see gult.
Maid-bet (Amharic)	Literally "Kitchen"; land used for royal food supply

Medhichaa (Oromo)	Skin from forelegs of slaughtered animals worn for special ceremonies.
Mogaasa (Oromo)	Adoption
Mogga (Oromo)	No-man's-land; frontier
Mottumma (Oromo)	Kingship ("motti" - king, from "mouu" - to win)
Naftagna (Oromo)	Settler-soldier in the south
Nagade (Oromo)	Merchant
Naggadras (Oromo)	Head of merchant caravan; court official responsible commercial affairs
Qabbiyye (Oromo)	Land held by pioneer person (group).
Qagnazmach (Amharic)	Military title, lower than Dajazmach
Qalad (Amharic)	A piece of rope used to measure land; measured (surveyed) land
Qallu (Oromo)	Ritual expert
Qocho (OromO)	Ensete edule; the same as "Ensete."
Qoppo (OromO)	counselors; advisor to the king.
Qubssisa (Oromo)	Tenant; settler
Qunna (Amharic)	Unit of measurement for grain, equivalent to 5 kilograms.
Quxissu (Oromo)	Junior, last born
Ras (Amharic)	Literally "Head"; high-ranking military title, equivalent to duke.
Semon (Amharic)	Land granted to church services
Sisso (Amharic)	One-third; land allocated to indigenous elite after measurement
Soressa (Oromo)	Rich, wealthy dignitary
Teff (AMharic)	Eragrostis teff, widely used food crop in Ethiopia.
Tiklegna (AMharic)	"Implanted" soldiers

Waqa (Oromo)	**God**
Worwari (Amharic)	**Mobile forces**

APPENDICES

Appendix A. "LAND SALE AGREEMENT"

June 7, 1947

I, Qagnazmach Amade Abba Dula, have agreed and sold 20 gashas [800 hectares] from my land in the district of Gomma, in the locality of Omo, within qoroship of Abba Garo Abba Kaabe, to Waizaro Yeshi-Emebet Guma, at the rate of Eth$40 per gasha. I received a total of Eth$800. The borders of this land are fixed according to the plan drawn by the surveying department of Gomma district.

Witnesses present while we made this agreement are:

1. Fitawrari Abba Garo Abba Bushen
2. Qagnazmach Asfaw Habte-Michael
3. Fitawrari Belay Wolde-Giorgis
4. Qagnazmach Gebre Sellassie Abba Foggi, Abba Qoro of Limmu-Nonno
5. Ato Tilahun Tujii

The above mentioned agreement is prepared in three copies and is distributed as follows: one copy to the buyer; second copy to saler; the third copy will be deposited in the archive of the land department of governor-general's office. I affix my signature to this document confirming that I have made the agreement on my own free-will and have received all the money. If any claimant comes I am fully responsible.

We, whose names are written from 1 to 5, above, affirm that we have witnessed this agreement.

seller:	buyer:	witnesses:
[Amade Abba Dula]	Mesfin Sileshi	1. F.Abba Garo A.Bushen 2. Q.Asfaw H.M. 3. F.Belay W.G. 4. Qagn. Gebre Selassie 5. Ato Tilahun Tuji

[P.S] I verify that the seller and his witnesses came to the land department of the governor-general's office, and the seller has received all his money and duly signed this document.

[signed]

Zelalem Ingda.

Appedix B. Land Purchased by Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi and His Family in Jimma and Limmu, 1945-1954.

Date (Eth. C)	Location	Amount of Land Purchased	Price (birr)
01/1/39	Omo (Gomma)	20 gashas	800
2/1/42	Wodero (Kersa)	250 Fechassa	750
12/27/41	Gembe (Manna/Jimma)	500 "	N.S.
11/7/ 41	Santama (Jimma)	N.S.	gift
3/8/42	Bada Buna (Jimma)	50 Fechassa	200
2/15/43	Choche (Gomma)	10 Chabssa	2000
4/10/42	Bore (near Jimma Town)	130 Fechassa	200
1/5/42	Bada Buna (Jimma)	60 "	200 +
4/10/42	Santama (Jimma)	5 gasha	200 +
..../42	Suntu (Limmu)	5 gasha	19132
6/5/42	Santama (Jimma)	20 gasha	400 +
6/10/42	Santama (Jimma)	29 gasha	500 +
4/12/42	Gembe (Manna/Jimma)	25 fechassa	800
4/1/42	Gembe (Manna/Jimma)	500 "	500 +
4/29/42	Dembi (Limmu)	1/2 gasha	760
4/1/42	Bada Buna (Jimma)	64 1/2 fechassa	500
4/1/42	Bada Buna (Jimma)	13 f + 250m.sq.	200
4/4/42	Bada Buna (Jimma)	11 1/4 f + 50m.sq.	90

4/8/42	Bada Buna (Jimma)	92 3/4 f + 515m.sq.	1032
4/25/42	Gembe (Manna/Jimma)	354 fechassa	600
7/9/42	Gobu/Bero	40 chabssa	1000
9/39/42	Bilida (Manna/Jimma)	70 fechassa	gift
12/22/42	Temsa (Gomma)	2 Chabssa	gift(200)
2/3/43	Kesso/Gembe (Jimma)	50 fechassa	gift(200)
3/28/43	Dembi (Limmu)	1/4 gasha	500
4/24/43	Sokoru (Jimma)	15 gasha	1500
4/25/43	Kesso/Gembe (Jimma)	334 fechassa	N.S.
6/7/43	Kesso/Gembe (Jimma)	30 fechassa	300
7/15/43	Suntu (Limmu)	1 gasha	1000
7/24/43	Kesso/Chullo (Gomma)	2 1/2 gasha	500
7/25/43	Gogga (Gomma)	6 chabssa	gift
7/26/43	Choche (Gomma)	2 chabssa	180
7/26/43	Gejeb/Kuni (Limmu S)	1/2 gasha	400
7/28/43	Choche-Muduga (Gomma)	2 chabssa	200
7/28/43	Choche-Muduga (Gomma)	2 Chabssa	200
7/28/43	Choche-Muduga (Gomma)	2 chabssa	200
8/13/43	Keranso-Hora (Limmu S)	1/4 gasha	350
8/13/43	Keranso-Hora (Limmu S)	1/4 gasha	500
8/13/43	Keranso-Hora (Limmu S)	1/4 gasha	450
8/13/43	Keranso-Hora (Limmu S)	1/4 gasha	400
8/13/43	Gejeb-Damu (Limmu S)	1/16 gasha	200

10/23/43	Tilqu Choche (Gomma)	3 chabssa	gift
10/26/43	Tinshu Choche (Gomma)	6 chabssa	200+g
1/6/44	Abalti (town) Jimma	5 fechassa	300
2/22/44	Merewa/ Somodo (Jimma)	35 fechassa	gift
13/5/44	Qersa (Jimma)	1/2. 1/8 gasha	1000
13/4/44	Badda Buna (Jimma)	30 fechassa	300
1/6/45	Qersa (Jimma)	N.S.	300
1/7/45	Merewa (Jimma)	N.S.	700
1/7/45	Kersa/Saredo (Jimma)	11 fechassa	200
1/8/45	Merewa/Qersa (Jimma)	N.S.	200
5/23/45	Kossa (Limmu)	5,963 sq.m.	200
5/27/45	Kossa (Limmu)	1,927 sq.m.	400
6/19/45	Kossa (LImmu)	1,482 sq.m	1000
6/19/45	Dembi/Kossa (Limmu)	N.S.	300
6/19/45	Kalo/Kossa (Limmu)	N.S.	500
6/19/45	Kalo/Kossa (Limmu)	N.S.	500
6/23/45	Kalo/Kossa (Limmu)	N.S	250
6/27/45	Dambi/Kossa (Limmu)	N.S.	400
6/28/45	Dambi/Kossa (Limmu)	N.S.	400
6/29/45	Qeranso (Limmu-Saqa)	N.S.	400
6/29/45	Qeranso (Limmu-Saqa)	N.S.	200
7/8/45	Gembe-Kesso (Gomma)	3 fechassa	1500
13/5/45	Gembe-Kesso (Gomma)	2 1/2 fechassa	300

1/29/46	Gurati/Dedo (Jimma)	1 gasha	300
1/30/46	Gembe (Gomma)	7 fechassa	1500
2/2/46	Gembe (Gomma)	N.S.	500
2/2/46	Qaja/Dedo (Jimma)	2 gasha	1000
5/28/46	Gena/Babiya (Limmu-K)	12,672 sq.m.	320
3/17/47	Dacho (Gera)	1 gasha	1300

Appiendix C. Land sold or Rented by Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi in Jimma and Limmu, 1945-54.

Date	Name of Buyer/contrctor	Amount of Land	Duration	Price (birr)
8/18/42	Mr.Wakim Mukerzil	10000m.sq.	30 years	1500
7/27/43	Fit.A.Garo A.Kabe	10 gasha	sold	5000
9/15/43	Abba Zeben A.Foggi	74 fechassa	sold	426
9/15/43	Abba Bushen A.Jobir	27 fechassa	sold	159
9/15/43	Abba Digga A.Qoppe	25 fechassa	sold	155
9/15/43	Abba Milki A.Simal	137 fechassa	sold	70
9/15/43	Abba Gissa A.Simal	72 fechassa	sold	402
9/15/43	Abba Malka A.Gunjo	46 fechassa	sold	372
9/15/43	Abba Digga A.Lofe	93 fechassa	sold	496
9/15/43	Abba Fitta A.Warri	63 fechassa	sold	342
9/15/43	Abba Qitte A.Mirre	7 fechassa	sold	42
9/15/43	Abba Foggi A.Dimma	48 fechassa	sold	211
9/15/43	Abba Gissa A.Dula	45 fechassa	sold	225

9/15/43	Abba Dura A.Gojjam	29 fechassa	sold	117
10/1/43	Abba Foggi A.Qitte	44 fechassa	sold	267
10/1/43	Abba Gissa A.Sura	56 fechassa	sold	345
10/28/43	Benatti Olivo	14,000 sq.m.	30 years	2100
10/30/43	Cantini Ajidio	10,000 sq.m.	30 years	2100
11/4/43	Lt.Col. Carl	10,000 sq.m.	30 years	1500
11/29/43	Fit.A.Garo A.Kaabe	4 gasha	sold	2000

APENDIX D. NOTES ON INFORMANTS

A number of informants from the Gibe region were interviewed in 1982, 1985 and 1991-92. The list includes elders, farmers, merchants, migrant laborers and government officials. The following is only a biographical sketch of a sample of the informants interviewed.

1. Abba Gojjam Abba Waji, age 72, was coffee farmer and merchant. He startedout as a small coffee trader before the Italian occupation. In the 1940s, he opened a store in Jimma town, where he bought and sold coffee. Combining his business with coffee cultivation, Abba Gojjam became one of the richest Jimma merchants in the 1950s and 1960s. By the early 1970s he was a successful coffee farmer, dealer and exporter. His business suffered severely after the 1974 revolution, when he lost his coffee farms and export license. Abba Gojjam was very informative about the coffee industry in Jimma during the last seventy years. He was interviewed in Jimma together with another coffee merchant, Abba Rashad Abdulrahman, age 55, on February 18, 1992.

2. Abba Jabal Abba Digga (Haji), age 70, was a landowner before 1975. Related to Sultan Abba Jifar's family through

marriage, he is knowledgeable about the history of the court and the development of agriculture in the Jimma area during the last sixty years. He was interviewed in September 1982 and in February 1985. The first interview focused more on the history of the kingdom of Jimma; and the second on the agriculture and trade of Jimma in the twentieth century. He now resides in Addis Ababa.

3. Abba Jamal Abba Dula (Grazmach), age 80, was the grandson of Sultan Abba Jifar Abba Gomol (d.1934) and was one of the biggest landowners in Jimma. His name appears frequently in land sale documents of the 1940s and 1950s, where he acted often as the representative of his father, Abba Dula Abba Jifar. When interviewed in Jimma on February 23, 1985, Abba Jamal was reserved about his family's landholdings but talked very candidly about the early history of Jimma and the spread of Islam in the region. Although he was suspected of owning all of Abba Jifar's correspondences, he claimed to have lost or destroyed all of them during the revolution.

4. Abba Macha Abba Daga, age 58, is the grandson of Abba Jobir Abba Lubbu, a merchant who later became a landowner and the greatest coffee farmer in Gomma during the early twentieth century. Abba Macha is also a coffee farmer, but over the years he lost control of his family's extensive farms in

Gomma. He was interviewed on February 19, 1992, mainly about his grandfather's involvement in coffee growing in Gomma.

5. Abba Warri Abba Kaabe (Fitawrari), age 90, was abba goro, landowner and coffee farmer. He is a member of a prominent family in Gomma. His was grandfather, Abba Magal Bosso, was one of the active coffee cultivators in the nineteenth century. Abba Warri is very knowledgeable about all aspects of the history of the Gibe valley. When he was young, he frequently accompanied his father to Sultan Abba Jifar's court in Jimma. He claims that he witnessed several sessions there when oral history was recounted and discussed by elders. Since the 1930s, Abba Warri was active politically and served as Abba Qoro of the rich coffee district of Choche. In 1943, he met with Haile Sellassie, leading a deligation of Gomma's elite in a protest against Ras Birru's heavy taxation. Unlike other balabats, he and his bother, Fitawrari Abba Garo, who was the balabat and governor of Gomma, 1941-74, had very good relations with Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi. Abba Warri was interviewed several times in 1982 and 1992. During all the interviews he was extremely relaxed and willing talk on any aspect of the history of the region.

6. Gebre Erkato, age 70, was born in Kambata region, east of the Gibe Valley. As a migrant laborer, he worked on

Dajazmach Mesfin Sileshi's farms. In the late 1950s, he and about sixty other families from Kamabata settled in Jimma as tenants on Mesfin's land near Jimma town. Until the revolution Gebre worked as a daily laborer on Mesfin's Badda Buna farm. Gebre now owns a small plot near Jimma town and some coffee trees, but mainly grows teff, maize and some vegetables.

7. Hadha Kadir (Ayelech) Wolde-Masqal, age 85, was the last wife of Sultan Abba Jifar II. She comes from a Christian family in Kambata. Refusing to marry Ras Getachew Abate, then governor of Kambata, Ayelech joined Abba Jifar's court at the age of fifteen. There she was converted to Islam and married to the Sultan. After his death in 1934, she was remarried to Abba Jobir, the balabat of Guma. Hadha Kadir has a very good memory of Abba Jifar's court during the 1920s. Her sister, Shekaytu Wolde-Masqal, age 75, also joined Abba Jifar's court at the age of seven. Both now live, in poverty, in Jimma, where they were interviewed on February 17, 1992.

8. Mohammed Hussein, age 65, was born at Majate, northern Shewa. He worked as daily laborer in Addis Ababa before joining Lij Abate's farm in 1953. On the farm, he soon became a supervisor of migrant workers. He provided good information on the development of Lij Abate's farms and other

coffee plantations in Limmu in the 1950s and 1960s. Mohammed Hussein also knows a lot about migrant workers: their place of origin, working conditions, wages and number employed at different agricultural cycles. When Lij Abate's farms were nationalized in 1975, Mohammed continued to work on the farm as government employee. Now retired, he works on his small plot near Suntu where he was interviewed on February 14, 1992.

9. Tilahun Sasaba, age 55, is a manager of the Limmu Coffee Enterprise. A gradate of the Jimma Agricultural School, he was himself a coffee farmer in the 1960s. For sometime, he also worked on Lij Abate's plantations. But after the revolution he worked for Ministry of Coffee and Tea Development, as supervisor and general manager of the government coffee plantations in Limmu and Jimma provinces. When interviewed in Jimma on February 10, 1992, he was planning to retire and engage in private business.

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

Informant	Place of interview	Date
Abate Wolde-Yohannes	Limmu-Shay	02/17/92
Abba Biya Abba Bulgu	Agaro	02/22/85
Abba Bultum Abba Warri	Agaro	02/19/85
Abba Daga Abba Kaabe	Goga-Kilole	02/19/92
Abba Dilbi Abba Garo	Goga-Kilole	02/19/92
Abba Dula Abba Magal	Ambuye	09/26/82
Abba Dula Abba Godu	Saqa	09/23/82
Abba Dura Abba Bor	Kamise	09/10/82
Abba Dura Abba Foggi	Agaro	02/16/85
Abba Dura Abba Magal	Agaro	02/18/91
Abba Fiitta Abba Didu	Agaro	02/20/85
Abba Garo Abba Bushen (Fitawrari)	Jimma	11/26/73 12/03/73
Abba Garo Abba Kaabe (Fitawrari)	Agaro	08/29/82 09/04/82
Abba Gojjam Abba Wajii (Haji)	Jimma	10/19/91
Abba Jabal Abba Digga (Haji)	Jimma	10/03/82 02/19/85 02/21/85
Abba Jamal Abba Dula (Grazmach)	Jimma	02/23/85
Abba Jifar Abba Dula (Sultan)	Jimma	11/21/73
Abba Jobir Abba Boqa	Agaro	09/02/82
Abba Macha Abba Daga	Goga-Kilole	02/19/92

Abba Macha Abba Wodajo	Limmu-Shay	02/20/92
Abba Macha Abba Qoro	Limmu-Shay	02/20/92
Abba Macha Sheki Lofe	Jimma	10/23/91
Abba Rashad Abdulrahman	Jimma	10/18/91
Abba Rago Abba Qoyas	Goga-Kilole	02/19/92
Abba Sambi Abba Ballo	Yebbu	02/27/85
Abba Warri Abba Garo	Ambuye	09/27/82
Abba Warri Abba Kaabe (Fitawrari)	Agaro	08/30/82 09/04/82 02/15/92 02/16/92
Abba Warri Abba Malka	Limmu-Shay	02/20/92
Abebe Birru	Choche	02/19/92
Abdala Abba Qitte	Jimma	11/29/73
Abdurahman Abba Lencho (Sheikh)	Agaro	09/02/82
Abraham Kassaye	Chalalaqi	20/13/92
Alemu Woldeyes	Jimma	11/30/73
Ali Mohammed	Kossa	10/24/91
Aliye Abba Diko	Saqa	09/23/82
Awal Abba Macha	Agaro	02/16/92
Bayetta Belachew	Jimma	10/20/91
Bizuneh Ashage	Kossa	10/24/91
Bizuneh Kendie	Jimma	02/11/92
Bogale Eshetu	Kossa	02/14/92
Dagafa Abba Dubbi	Choche	02/18/92
Eshetu Yimer	Agaro	02/20/85
Fikru Demissie	Agaro	02/17/92
Gebre Erkato	Jimma	10/21/91

Getachew Worku	Gomma Farm II	02/15/92
Hahda Kadir (Ayelech) W.Mesqal	Jimma	10/17/91
Hailu Dabala	Jimma	02/22/85
Hassen Sheikh Umar (Sheikh)	Jimma	09/13 & 14/82
Kebede W.Mesqal (Grazmach)	Sarbo	11/23/73
Lemma Adnew	Choche	02/18/92
Mekuria Asefa	Jimma	02/16/85
Mekuria Fetene	Jimma	02/10/92
Melaku Dereseh	Jimma	02/26/85
Mohammed Ahmed (Haji)	Jimma	11/24/73
Mohammed Ahmed	Agaro	02/16/85
Mohammed Sheikh Hassen (Sheikh)	Agaro	02/20/85
Mohammed Nur Hussein (Sheihk)	Limmu-Shay	02/20/92
Mohammed Hussein	Suntu	02/14/92
Mohammed Shifa Abba Bilo (Sheikh)	Limmu-Shay	02/20/92
Ragassa Hordofa	Kossa	02/13/92
Rashad Abba Bulgu	Yebbu	02/27/85
Shekaytu Wolde-Masqal	Jimma	10/17/91
Soresa Balkher	Kossa	10/24/91
Taddesse Ergete	Choche	02/19/92
Teshager Melesse	Suntu	02/14/92
Teshome Legesse	Agaro	02/19/85
Tibebu Mengiste	Gomma Farm II	02/16/92
Tilahun Sasaba	Jimma	02/10/92
Usman Abba Diko (Qadi)	Jimma	11/21/73 11/26/73

Ustaz Ahmed Awal (Sheikh)	**Jimma**	**10/17/91**
Yimam Mohammed	**Gomma Farm II**	**02/15/92**






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