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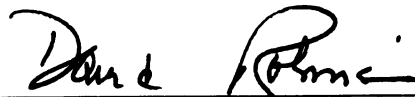
Knowledge, Power, and a Region: The Making of Ethiopia's
South-Central Rift Valley Agricultural Environment and
Society, 1892-1975

presented by

Getnet Bekele

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**KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND A REGION: THE MAKING OF ETHIOPIA'S
SOUTH-CENTRAL RIFT VALLEY AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND
SOCIETY, 1892-1975**

VOLUME I

By

Getnet Bekele

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

2005

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ABSTRACT

KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND A REGION: THE MAKING OF ETHIOPIA'S SOUTH-CENTRAL RIFT VALLEY AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY, 1892-1975

By

Getnet Bekele

This dissertation examines the environmental, economic and agricultural history of Ethiopia's south-central Rift Valley. This area exhibited a strong livestock-based agriculture up until the third decade of the twentieth century. Beginning around 1930, the region's agricultural environment underwent dramatic change. Marking this transformation was the rapid "cerealization" of most of the south-central Rift Valley region and the proportionate decline of livestock production for the remainder of the twentieth century. This study explores the course, causes, and patterns of the valley's agricultural evolution through a study of the forces and social actors that shaped it over time.

In this study I demonstrate that the valley's agricultural transformation since the last decade of the nineteenth century is intimately associated with competition and negotiation over agricultural resources and output. Because of its proximity to the geographic locus of the modern state and its attractive agricultural resources, the valley was among the regions that came under relatively enhanced state control early on. The first three chapters of the dissertation analyze the region's prewar agricultural transformation in the context of local forms of production organization, evolving terms of access to resource control, and infrastructure development.

The changes in Ethiopia's postwar national political economy affected the Rift Valley's agrarian character in profound ways. The imperial state's relative success over its regional power contenders fostered a relaxation of prewar policies on rural land and labor. A concomitant process in the post WWII period was the appropriation by the state of the ideology and practice of development as a tool for building a modern state. State relaxation of stringent prewar policies on agricultural resource allocation fit well with the changing desires of Ethiopia's emerging bureaucratic elites that vied first for controlling rural land for rent, and then for commercial production. At the same time, state appropriation of development also led to the launching of a series of intervention regimes aimed at transforming farm production and rural society. The valley was one of the regions where the new round of competition over agricultural resources and the country's Green Revolution-inspired interventions materialized with relative intensity. The second half of the dissertation explores both processes to explain the actual procedure of crop-livestock change in valley agriculture to 1975.

In light of the radical land reform the *Derg* promulgated in March 1975, the last section of the dissertation reflects on valley farmers' experience in the post-imperial era. It highlights new tension and competition over access to resources and the impact the subjectivity of property entitlements had on aspects of land use, farm production, and environmental resource management in the eras of command economy and market liberalization.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every dissertation is born in debt. I am particularly indebted to the late Professor Harold G. Marcus for helping me to come to Michigan State University. Dr. Marcus passed away when this dissertation was at its infancy, but his optimism and readiness to entertain even the unusual propositions had always been a source of inspiration. Because of his sudden death I finished my study under the supervision of Professor James C. McCann of Boston University. Although the circumstances that brought Dr. McCann here were unpleasant, I for one benefited a great deal from his expertise and advice. I acknowledge his contribution with gratitude.

In the research phase of the dissertation a number of individuals and institutions contributed to the success of this study. Most of all, I thank my informants for sacrificing their precious time to share with me their own life experiences and their knowledge of local and national politics without asking anything in return. In particular, I am deeply indebted to the exceptionally talented *Ato* Nino Abino who, in addition to availing himself to many hours of interviewing, also raised a number of topics that could easily have evaded me. Next to my informants, the close support I got from the Ministry of Agriculture's district officials and extension agents was crucial to the success of my research. In Addis Ababa, the Ministry's rich library was my second home. Its chief librarian, Tegest Wuhib, showed interest in my work and offered her expertise in locating useful materials. I owe great debts to each and all.

Michigan State University has one of the largest collections of easily accessible Ethiopiana materials under one roof. Dr. Joseph Lauer, the indefatigable librarian has

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made this happen almost single handedly. On top of his professionalism, Joe is a particularly decent and caring person. He provided summer job opportunities for me and several other international students, an excursion that helped me not only survive the “dry” months but also grasp the basics of cataloging—a skill that enabled me to locate useful materials from other libraries and documentation centers.

For funding at Michigan State University, I am grateful to the Graduate School for offering me all of its competitive fellowships, some more than once. The Departments’ and the Center for Integrative Studies’ assistantships kept me rolling over the years. I am also extremely thankful to the International Institute of Education (IIE) and the Graduate School for sponsoring my dissertation field work.

In my long journey in academic training, I have benefited from the teachings of many, most of whom I remember by name. I thank them all although space prohibits me from listing their names here. Among these, however, I must single out Professors Bahru Zewde and David Robinson who have left a lasting impression on me in their discipline, unique professionalism, and support. I first met Dr. Bahru as an undergraduate student at Addis Ababa University at a time when I was not quite sure about which way to go in my professional career. His wit was one of the reasons that kept me in a class I found myself almost by accident.

At Michigan State University I was fortunate to study under Dr. David Robinson. I learned a lot from his seminars and the materials he presented to us. His critical feedbacks and suggestions shaped the structure and content of this dissertation significantly. I also benefited from his unfading support virtually in every step of my training at MSU. I am deeply grateful to him.

Also at MSU, the seminars Professors David Campbell and Harry Reed organized, respectively on environmental issues and agriculture in the American south helped me broaden my perspectives. At another level, the support I received from Associate Dean Patrick McConeghy, Professors Leslie Moch, Lisa Fine, Assefa Mehretu, and Mark Kornbluh was important in many respects. I also stumbled on several fellows here who made my stay in East Lansing intellectually worthwhile and socially meaningful. Cheikh Babou and his wife welcomed me to their home on several occasions; and Cheikh was always willing to share his own experiences in “beating the system.” In Tim Carmichael I had the useful companion one can only wish for in a graduate school environment. Tim’s multiculturalism is inspiring, and the many hours of discussions we had during our leisurely moments will be greatly missed. Melanie Shell was always ready to listen and help.

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TRANSLITERATION

Transliterating Ethiopian languages presents several challenges. For names I used the English version whenever I found one used by the person concerned even if that deviated from the standard I have adapted here. Also for terms such as *birr* (the Ethiopian unit of money), and place names such as Debre Zeit or Holeta, I stick with the conventional ones to minimize any probable confusion. In rare cases where there is more than one established version of the terms—as in the case of *rest* or *rist* tenure, for example—I used the latter to distinguish it from the English “rest” which has a different pronunciation and meaning. In the transcription of consonants, I used *gn* and *ch* to represent the palatalized *n* and *c* respectively, *q* to represent the ejective *k*, and double consonants to indicate gemination. In all other cases I used the Library of Congress’ romanization table without the diacritics. Hence, I have rendered vowels of the 1st to 7th order in the Ethiopic script as a, u, i, a, e, e, o respectively. The “e” of the 6th order is dropped when silent so as to allow the reader a better chance to pronounce the name or word relatively accurately.

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia's south-central Rift Valley—the narrowest section of the Great Rift Valley just south of Addis Ababa, between the towns of Debre Zeit in the north, Awasa in the south, Nazareth in the east, and Buta Jira in the west—is home to several “surplus” food-producing communities. The region's early-21st century agriculture may be described as one of Ethiopia's most commercialized smallholder agriculture, and individual farmers' use of chemical fertilizers is among the highest in the country.

Almost a century ago, the British explorer M.S. Wellby witnessed an array of Oromo and other herding communities inhabiting the land. The fertility of the region and the availability of water impressed Wellby, but he found it incongruent that the communities he encountered there did not cultivate the soil. The herders he talked to told him that “their fathers and grandfathers never had [cultivated the soil].”¹ He remarked that: “This may have been reasonable where intertribal warfare was the order of the day, but under Menelik's rule peace reigns and taxes are paid there seems no excuse for their laziness and apathy.”²

Exactly three decades later in 1927, a team of German anthropologists led by Max Gruhl visited the valley. They observed: “a wide plain populated by herds of cattle belonging to the Galla [Oromo].”³ But unlike Wellby who envisioned the valley's potential for cereal agriculture, Gruhl believed that: “Agriculture is impossible to any important extent in the sterile lands of the Great Rift. A pastoral life is the only feasible one here...”⁴

After a generation, the then Director of the United Nations Food and Agricultural

Organization (FAO) toured the valley along Ethiopia's southern highway. He saw a flourishing maize agriculture and equated the region south of the Awash with the "corn belt triangle of the U.S. and the rich corners of Queensland in Australia."⁵ In 1968 a Stanford Research Institute investigative team described Ada-Lume in the northern parts of the valley as one of Ethiopia's intensively cultivated landscapes.⁶ Further south in the Rift Valley lakes area, a host of specialists working for the British Ministry of Overseas Development in 1973-75 observed a vibrant small-scale agriculture and a fledgling large-scale commercial farming that competed against each other over environmental resources such as pasture.⁷

The testimonies and conclusions of the observers mentioned above provide a glimpse of the patterns and discourses of agricultural and ecological change that took shape in the valley throughout the twentieth century. By the turn of the 19th century, the bulk of the valley was a pastoral landscape endowed with pasture and reportedly high livestock population. In a span of less than half a century, however, valley populations abandoned cattle herding almost completely.⁸ The grassland ecology that once characterized the valley also emerged as a site for the cultivation of food crops and vegetables geared to urban markets. Inhabiting the western part of the valley, Mareqo and Silti farmers became the chief producers and suppliers of chili pepper. Oromo farmers in Arsi Negelle and Shashamane *warada* in the south specialized in maize, vegetables, and tubers (like potato) production, now conspicuously dominant in Addis Ababa's food markets both in quantity and quality. In the north, Ada and Lume smallholder farms evolved as one of the best sites for cereal (such as *tef*) and pulse (like chickpea) production in the country.⁹

This dissertation is about the history of agricultural transformation in Ethiopia's south-

central Rift Valley during the century of state rule. It seeks to analyze the course, patterns, and causes of agricultural change in a region in the context of a transforming national political economy. More precisely, it is a study of the historical interactions among large-scale political and economic forces and small-scale societies.¹⁰

An important development in the valley's modern history is its incorporation into the Ethiopian state in the late-19th century. Negotiating peaceful incorporation, elite groups in the valley successfully avoided the kind of military conquest most of their highland neighbors encountered.¹¹ The kind of relationship that evolved between the state and the valley's different communities since then comprise a broad and complex subject. It was, however, competitions over agricultural resources and output that characterized state-rural society relationship most throughout the 20th century.

The state's interest in valley societies for most of the pre-Italian occupation period (1936–41) was part of a larger project aimed at controlling people and re-arranging power relations toward building a national state power. In fact, an enduring theme in modern Ethiopian history (at least since the 1880s) had been the state's focus to refashion power relations between the center and the regions. Such refashioning depended up on the nurturing of networks and alliances with a range of actors across the political spectrum. It also depended up on mediating access to resources as a means to solidify those networks and, where possible, regulating them to suit state prerogatives. Theoretically this seemed a viable alternative for a state that was not bureaucratic. But in practice the actual configuration of power relations and resource control hardly followed the paths stipulated by the state. On the one hand, and as a reflection of the power politics itself, the propagation of dependent food producing and tribute paying smallholder farming

populations became the focus of imperial policies on land, labor, and agriculture throughout the prewar period. On the other hand, the allocation and transfer of authority over land, labor, and tribute became an important avenue of political competition and control, one that pitted the state and its own elite classes against each other. The state responded by introducing a set of contradictory legislative measures regarding access to those resources. That legislation not only amplified elite-state competition but also affected agrarian change as different groups of social actors seized those legislative measures to promote their own interests in regard to resource control and tribute appropriation.

These two interrelated processes, i.e., elite quest for labor and land and the state's interest in propagating a dependent farming population, dictated inter-elite as well as state-rural society relationships throughout the pre-Italian occupation period. Both had an enduring impact on agrarian transformation as they laid the foundation for, among other processes, the crystallization of a crop-biased ideology and practice that related property rights to the degree to which the land had been cultivated. For valley farmers, expanding crop cultivation therefore proved to be a viable alternative not just to cope with the new tribute regimes but also to reaffirm individual ownership of the land that could otherwise be simply defined as undeveloped (*taf*) and subject to expropriation.¹²

The national political context in which valley agrarian transformation took shape changed dramatically in the post-WWII period. Marking this transformation was the state's relative success over its regional power contenders. A direct result of this change had been the redefinition of the terms of access to agricultural resources that was crucial in mediating state-elite-rural society relationship in the prewar period. Given its relative

success over the local/regional elite, the state relaxed its prewar stringent measures over land, consciously or unconsciously paving the way for a new round of competitions and negotiations over property rights, labor, and product appropriation.

Valley agricultural transformation took shape in the context of those changing rules over access to resources and what a host of social actors (such as bureaucrats and farmers) made of them. In social and political terms, one discernable outcome has been the crystallization of absentee landowners, share-tenants, and smallholder farmers that competed and negotiated the terms of access to land, labor, and output. In purely agronomic terms, marking this postwar agricultural transformation was the entrenchment of specialized agriculture, with distinct patterns in terms of crop choice, land-use, and livestock production. From the perspective of output, farmers developed a strategy whereby they factored in urban food demand, soil fertility, and moisture availability as they gravitated to the production seasonal and marketable crops. In terms of land-use and field technology, expanding crop-agriculture led to a decline in fallow and intercropping matched by a proportionate decline in other resources such as woodland, pasture, and livestock.¹³

Two interrelated developments fed valley agricultural transformation in the postwar period. The first relates to the rapid and historically unprecedented expansion of the food market in the country. The spur to this fastly growing food market were a new demand in the Middle East (resulting from new war time and postwar Allied food demand) and a growing domestic urban food market.¹⁴ If Ethiopia's involvement in the international food market was a qualitatively new development in and of itself, its long-term impact on the country's agriculture was janus-faced and more consequential. On the one hand, it led

not only to the unwarranted association of Ethiopia's agriculture with the flattering label of the "bread basket" of the Middle East, but also it fashioned the procedure of postwar international aid and development intervention in the country.¹⁵ On the other hand, it also created a new kind of interest among Ethiopia's political elite, bureaucrats, and farmers alike on crop-based agriculture in a new and more rigorous manner. The export market waned by the mid-1950s. However, the expanding domestic urban food market (intermittently coupled with sporadic booms in the export market such as was the case for haricot beans in the early 1970s), helped sustain that interest throughout the postwar period.¹⁶ The kind of relatively intense competitions over land, labor, and output that characterized valley agrarian relations in the postwar decades found their economic inertia from the food market itself.

The second factor that provided fresh context in the valley's postwar agricultural transformation relates to changing state-led agricultural development initiatives. In fact, one of the chief characteristics of Ethiopia's postwar governments is their seizure of development as ideology and practice for rural transformation and the building of the modern state. Haile Sellasie's postwar government endorsed rural development right from the outset, and economic growth, community development, and agricultural development became its *raison d'être*. It sought and found allies in international organizations (such as the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the United States International Aid for Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and the World Bank) and capital. The valley was one of the few places where Ethiopia's mainly fertilizer-based intervention-regimes have been practiced insistently with results not always congruent with what the planners had in

mind.¹⁷

Because of its direct link with the political economy of food extraction (both through market and non-market channels) and as a site for the relative longevity of agricultural intervention regimes, the valley provides an excellent focus for the historical interactions between local farmers and large-scale political and economic forces. That is the central focus of this dissertation.

Agency, ecology, and modern encounters

The deepening crisis in African agriculture and ecology, manifesting itself in widespread famine, poverty, and environmental degradation several decades after decolonization, African rule, and development intervention led in the 1980s and 1990s to fresh thinking into the problems of rural development. As David Anderson succinctly summarized it, an interesting development in the “new thinking in African development is the emphasis many gave to historical evidence to Africa’s environmental and development problems, leading to the acceptance of the historical dimension as a legitimate (and increasingly essential) component in research and planning.”¹⁸ Informing the social science development literature, and in turn, informed by it, historians also joined the debate rigorously broadening the scope of African history and “opening up new sub-fields of investigation into areas such as environmental history.”¹⁹

Underlying the on-going debate in the historical literature dealing with agriculture and rural development is the emphasis given to African agency. Unlike previous studies that gave much weight to structural forces—such as the colonial or non-colonial state and the international economic order (hence lumping together and portraying Africans as victims

of colonialism and state-rule)—emerged alternative explanations that emphasized African agency, “demonstrating the multiple means by which rural Africans had delayed, deflected and avoided the intention of the colonial state...”²⁰ In fact, emphasis on African responses, deeds, engagement, and negotiation with colonial and postcolonial states and other forms of structures has led to a veritable revolution in Africanist historiography beyond the structure-agency divide.²¹

Historians along with others in the humanities and social sciences who have adapted a historical perspective offered in in-depth analyses and explanations of Africa’s ecological change and agricultural transformation. Often they explained change and transformation by identifying variables and processes such as access to resource control, ecology, and indigenous knowledge.

Those interested in the relevant question of the dynamic interface between property rights and agriculture were among the first to shift the emphasis from the class (economic) and structure-centered analysis that dominated Africanist historiography for several decades to increased understanding of “how social arrangements condition resource use and management...[and] and how people’s roles and responsibilities—for example in providing food...-shape their concerns with...crops or products.”²² Their findings elucidate how resource positions and responsibilities are the subject of continuous competition, contestation and negotiation, and attest to the fact that patterns of land use, labor, and product in African history were conditioned by broader social and institutional arrangements than were simply dictated by colonial legislation.²³

Others looked at the neglected subject of ecology to explaining African agricultural transformation, but differed significantly in their conceptualization of agency, the

environment, and politics. Political ecologists blended a broadly defined political economy with ecological concerns to explain the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself.²⁴

James McCann, in seeking to understand the mutual constitution of agriculture and the physical environment, focused on agronomy, crop regimes, disease, and climate. He shows how demography influenced land use and shaped agricultural change in Ethiopia's highlands in the 19th and 20th centuries.²⁵ James Giblin and Gregory Maddox have argued further that social and political structures impinge on the way farmers produced, and managed their ecology or controlled disease, flora, and pests in Tanzania. Works in this genre focus on ecological adaptation and see the initiatives undertaken by rural communities as responses to environmental change.²⁶

The 1980s and 1990s literature on indigenous knowledge (most directly associated with the writings of Paul Richards and Robert Chambers) also got its impetus from the various critics of postwar developmentalism. It focused on issues of participation, bottom-up and actor-centered development.²⁷ For example, James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, in their historically grounded study of Kissinganou's (Guinea) forest savannah landscape, showed how local people's own theories concerning social and ecological issues combined with broader socio-political conditions to influence people's engagement with the environment. Their "pluralistic ecology" is therefore antithetical to understandings of the past as a state of equilibrium between nature and a functional social order, and makes the case for the operation of a dynamic indigenous science.²⁸

Building on the insights from African agency and indigenous knowledge, and more

importantly looking at the interaction between African agency and colonial ideas, David Anderson (in his dissertation and recently published book) explained colonial Baringo's (Kenya) development history carefully.²⁹ Such emphasis on interaction and the need to understand "what constrained colonial policy and what motivated African response" led Anderson to think of an evolving "politics of ecology" as a mediating factor in the relations between the "developers and the developed" in Baringo.³⁰ Locating the politics of ecology at two levels—one imperial and the other local—Anderson shows how "the ideologies behind [imperial] development translate into the politics of local action [in Baringo], and argues that: "Like all politics, the politics of ecology in Africa was mutable, divisible and biddable."³¹

Anderson's Baringo case is an excellent illustration of development encounters in modern African history. Underlying the new thinking in the development encounter, therefore, is the need to look beyond indigenous knowledge and grand imperial ideas into development practice. Hence, it is imperative to look at the interaction between different forms of knowledge in contrast to "indigenous" versus "other" dichotomies as premised in most studies on ethnohistory.³² This is important because valley farmers (like many of their African contemporaries) encountered changing regimes of modernity and development throughout the 20th century. Earlier in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, such encounters and competitions manifested themselves most in issues of land use, of resource allocation, and of the control of labor and output. While those issues continued to be relevant throughout the 20th century, in the postwar period the expansion of a food market and development regimes added new dimensions to those encounters and divergent visions of modernity in the Ethiopian case.

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Development interventions became commonplace in many farming communities in postwar Africa. But how can we study their impact beyond the broader categories of “development crisis” or “development discourse”? Addressing those questions and in seeking to understand what actually happened on the ground, scholars have called for “a closer examination of the dynamics of interaction that occurred on the sites of development activities.”³³ The focus then is not on “development merely as an external project that is accepted, adopted or resisted in a local setting, but on a more dynamic view of interaction, in which the development apparatus is examined at the same time that the complex social, [political,] and economic contexts into which it intervenes are explored.”³⁴

Talking about contexts and practices, one might be tempted to introduce the notion of “alternative modernities,” i.e., that modernity may have been “instituted as a global phenomena through colonial capitalism, but it was in the process resisted, re-invented, and reconfigured in different social and historical locations.”³⁵ Key to the notion of alternative modernities, however, is not the truism that modernity takes different forms, given the specificities of particular historical situations, but rather the question about what makes the experience of modernity unique, and how “conjectural relations of inequality” shaped that experience “to form particular fields of power.”³⁶ Discourses of progress, modernity, and development, along with the politics of food self-sufficiency played a central role in shaping the evolution of national policies in Ethiopia throughout the twentieth century.

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concern is to detect how the elite's grand modernizing schemes have been accepted, re-invented, and resisted (consciously or unconsciously) by social actors and how interactions between large-scale political and economic forces and local farming communities impacted agrarian transformation in Ethiopia's south-central Rift Valley. But before starting to do that I must delineate the study area in space and time, explain the origin and nature of my sources, and review the existing literature. That is the focus of the remainder of my introductory chapter.

Mapping south-central Rift Valley in space and time

South-central Rift Valley refers to a small section of the Great Rift Valley that divides Ethiopia physically into two unequal parts. The Ethiopian rift Valley is over 560 km long but the portion covered in this study is less than a third of it, extending from Debre Zeit (about 50 km south of Addis Ababa) in the north to Awasa (275 km from Addis Ababa) in the south, from Buta Jira in the west to Nazareth in the east, respectively 125 and 100 kilometers from Addis Ababa. It is a portion of the Rift Valley that is easily distinguishable on the map by its narrow strip that forms a corridor as it dissects the southern highlands into two.³⁷

On the ground too, several features distinguished this segment of the Rift Valley. Modern agricultural economists may describe it as a site for one of Ethiopia's relatively successful small-scale agriculture. To the urban geographer, however, it is the prevalence of numerous medium and small-scale towns that may be more attractive. Some of the country's most popular medium sized towns like Debre Zeit, Nazareth, Shashamane and Awasa, and smaller ones like Buta Jira, Mojo, Zway, and Arsi Negelle are found in this

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zone, not to mention Maqi, Adami Tullu, Bulbula, and Kuyara. Arguably the region now exhibits the highest concentration of urban centers per unit area than any other part of the country.³⁸ To policy makers and politicians it was the “surplus” food producing potential of the region that was historically most important. To part-time and serious tourists the lakes, birds, and game and the few resort hotels (mainly at Lake Langano) have been most attractive in much the same way that roadside sacks of charcoal were to urbanites crossing the middle section of the valley over the decades.³⁹

Seen from the perspective of this study, the south-central Rift Valley region is even more appealing. In fact, the region became one of the few places where the country’s successive intervention regimes, ranging from economies of extraction to developmental, have been implemented throughout the 20th century. The valley’s intimate engagement with the country’s urban-based food regimes started with its inclusion into the rubric of a special food extraction system called *madbet* and *waraganu* that functional until the Italian occupation period. However, it was in the post-WWII era that valley agriculture underwent dramatic transformation engendered mainly by an expansion of an urban-based food market and intervention regimes. Ever since the region’s farmers endured and participated in numerous successive food production and supply regimes. One of the major impacts of all these developments was the rapid expansion of crop-based agriculture against the backdrop of a livestock-based economy that characterized valley landscape up to the early 1930s.

The political map of the valley has never been stable. In the prewar period, the region south of the Awash was an autonomous administrative unit (balabbat territory as distinct from Haile Sellasie’s provinces or *teklay gezat*, for example) whose boundaries extended

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beyond the valley and as far as Kambata to the west, parts of Arsi to the east, Lake Awasa to the south, and the river Awash to the north. During the short-lived Italian occupation period (1936–41), the valley became part of the larger Galla and Sidama governorate general. For almost two decades following Italian occupation the region, now named as Kambata *awraja*, became part of Arsi province before it joined Shawa as Hayqochena Buta Jira *awraja* in 1962/63.⁴⁰ The portion north of the Awash which later became Yararena Karayu *awraja* with its capital at Nazareth has been part of Shawa since at least the late-19th century.⁴¹

Contrary to the administrative divisions drawn by the state, scholars have studied the physical, ecological, and agricultural characteristics of the valley in isolation from and in contrast with the broader Ethiopian region.⁴² Of these perhaps the most pervasive have been so-called agro-ecological zones of the country. A.H. Bunting (1963) may be the first to offer such a classification. Bunting divided Ethiopia into eleven agro-ecological zones based primarily on altitude and agricultural systems. Our region, with an altitude range of 1200 and 1900 meters above sea level, comprised a distinct category called Southern Rift Valley and Lakes region, a label reinforced by E. Westphal and used by most studies of Ethiopian agriculture since.⁴³

Building on the notions of agro-ecology, development experts further showed the environmental peculiarities of the valley such as in terms of soil, water availability, and development potentials. A 1975 development-oriented study by a British land survey team divided the valley south of the Awash into two “regional” and several “special” development areas based largely on climate. The regions included what the team termed as the Northern Plains and the Central Plains. In the first region, the survey team included

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the area between the River Awash and Lake Langano with altitude ranging from 1570 m (typical of the valley) to about 2100 m (in the west and outside the confines of this study). Here the team found a decrease in annual rainfall north to south, the Zway area getting only 570 mm of rain per annum. As for the soil, the specialists found them to be pale in color, generally coarse in texture and free draining but poorly structured. The team also found an increase in clay content as one moves away from the lakes. According to its descriptions most valley soils have weak topsoil structure, a factor together with the soils' fine sandy texture, the specialists argued, made the soils vulnerable to wind erosion or to surface capping once the protective cover of acacia trees has been removed. Overall, the survey team noted the soils in the northern plains had low amounts of organic matter, had only moderate capacity for retaining nutrients, low levels of nitrogen and copper, and deficient in phosphate, but with adequate potassium content.⁴⁴

The central plains, as described by this group of specialists, also included a much larger area than we are concerned with here. Lying between an altitude of 1600 m (again common in the valley) and 2100 m (outside of the valley) annual rainfall in the central plains decreases from west to east, from over 1200 mm at Wando Ganat to 1000 mm at Alaba Qulito. According to the same study, the soils of the northern part of the central plains (covering the area between Lakes Awasa and Langano) is derived from volcanic ash, pumice and weathered ignimbrite, generally characterized by medium to coarse texture with dark surface horizons. The fertility (in terms of organic matter) of this recent volcanic soil is fairly high, with relatively high phosphate levels as compared to the soils in the rest of the valley.⁴⁵

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this study for two reasons. First, as I have shown above, the administrative divisions not only changed constantly over time but also always covered much larger areas than I am concerned with here. In fact, Hayqochena Buta Jira *awraja*, which covers almost three-fourths of the region included in this study, has been invented only in the early-1960s and does not represent well the time-space dimension the study anticipates. Second, unlike the administrative divisions that had been dictated by political considerations and are subject to change as the interests and priorities of the ruling parties changed, agro-ecologies refer to productive and environmental processes that are central to this study.⁴⁶

Like the spatial boundary, the temporal framework adapted for the purpose of this study—extending from 1892 to 1975—makes a lot of sense if one looks at agriculture as both a scene of production and an arena of social interaction. The year 1892 marks the end (at least in official/scholarly discourse) of one of the worst famines in Ethiopia's modern history. Caused by the rinderpest plague that hit most of eastern and southern Africa in the late-1880s and early-1890s, the famine inflicted an enormous human toll and went to history dubbed *kefu qan* (cruel day) in popular parlance. In addition to the massive cost of life both the plague and the famine inflicted respectively on livestock and humans, the damage it caused on the psychology and inner workings of most rural communities (particularly in places where its impact was hard felt) can only be summarised.⁴⁷

The 1890s also witnessed the culmination of conquest that had started at least a generation earlier, in the early 1870s. For south-central Rift Valley herding and farming communities, like their cohorts in different parts of the country, the beginning of the consolidation of Menilek's state meant the onset of new forms of contact, control, and

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Several developments marked the onset of the state's growing power at this time, but perhaps the most important had been the state's changing interest in checking regional-elite power in Shawa and beyond. One of the first measures the state took to that effect was the November 1892 edict on tithe. The edict made it mandatory for subject elite and non-white populations to pay a ten percent produce tax, a measure that snatched the tax levying power of local governors for the first time. Only two developments presaged that. The first was the 1879 edict to measure Shawan land, a decree that does not seem to have been carried away in earnest. The second relates to the introduction of a flat land tax on Shawan cultivators, a revolutionary measure that foreshadowed the state's growing power with in Shawa and one that infringed on the tax levying power of the local governors in its own way. The introduction of the tithe in 1892 was a continuation of the government's changing interest in regulating elite power at the core Shawan region and beyond. Its impact on state-elite-rural society relationship was equally dramatic, and offers a useful start-up date for a study that seeks to tell a story of the encounter between large-scale political and economic forces and local societies.⁴⁹

The upper limit of this study is marked by the proclamation of Ethiopia's most radical land reform edict by the *Derg* in March 1975. The revolution that drove Haile Sellasie from power opened opportunities for a group of army officers to seize power in 1974. In tune with the demands of Ethiopia's revolutionaries, the land reform nonetheless lent some degree of legitimacy to the *Derg*. On the ground too, the land reform altered the direction of agrarian change in the valley as it affirmed the subjectivity of property entitlement rights and encouraged new rounds of competitions over agricultural

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resources. As in land, the governments' doctrinaire socialist policies and command economy structure impacted rural society in many ways, hence providing a logical cut-off date for a study that seeks to explore farmers' actions in a constantly changing political national economy.⁵⁰

Although the valley had never been densely settled, population has concentrated in the more fertile parts adjacent to the highlands and in the lowlands along the many rivers like the Awash, Maqi, Bulbula, and Jiddo that cut the valley horizontally in several segments. According to a 1950 sample-based population census, a total of 200,000 people inhabited Yararena Karayu *awraja* the majority of whom were farmers (numbering 162,000) and herders (numbering 35,000). The region south of the Awash was part of Arsi's Kambata *awraja* inhabited by 230,000 farmers and 104,650 herders. Only Nazareth, Mojo, Bishoftu (later Debre Zeit), Buta Jira, and Shashamane had municipalities in 1950.⁵¹

A more reliable population data is available from the 1984 census. According to official census reports, Yararena Karayu had a population of 693,689 and Hayqochena Buta Jira had a total of 1,288,168 inhabitants in 1984. Of these, the *warada* chosen for this study comprised almost a third of the total population (206,300 of the total 693,689) in the former and roughly half (512,575 of the total 1,288,168) in the latter. As the following table demonstrates, the population distribution at *warada* level showed significant variation and the female population was higher in the two *awraja* selected for the purpose of this study.

Both districts included areas and populations larger than the part of the valley we are concerned with here. The exact ethnic composition of each county is not available, but the majority of the inhabitants in all the *warada* considered in this study but for

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Masqanena Mareqo were Oromo although none of these areas were ethnically homogenous.⁵²

Table 1.0 Population distribution in selected *warada* (sub-district or county) in Hayqochena Buta Jira and Yararena Karayu *awraja* (district) in 1984

District	County	Male	Population Female	Total
Yararena Karayu	Ada	67,420	69,908	137,328
	Lume	34,759	34,213	68,972
	Total	102,179	104,121	206,300
Hayqochena Buta Jira	Shashamane	89,607	87,462	177,069
	Arsi Negelle	45,476	47,592	93,068
	Masqanena Mareqo	89,340	92,543	181,883
	Zway	29,679	30,876	60,555
	Total	254,102	258,473	512,575

Source: Central Statistics Office, *Ethiopia Population Census* (Addis Ababa, 1986), 41-49, 112-17.

An equally interesting aspect of the valley's demographic history is migration.

Throughout the period covered in this study, the valley had been a magnet for migrants, almost all of whom happened to be farmers. As we shall see in some detail later, the most important reason for the valley's growing attractiveness to immigrants relates to the region's unique agricultural antecedents and forms of transformation. From a geographic point of view, almost all the regions adjacent to the valley contributed populations to it with the apparent exception of the Sidama to the south. From an ethnic point of view, the Oromo (from Arsi, Bale, and Shawa), the Silti and Gurage were numerically the most important, distantly followed by the Amhara, Hadiya, Kambata and Wolayta.⁵³

Sources, methodology and limitations of the study

The sources utilized for this study may be divided into three broad categories. The first, and I should note, most useful for this study, was the range of oral interviews I was able

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to conduct during the course of my field study. This work required working closely with zonal and warada (county) government offices, mainly those of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). But I was careful not to let government and Peasant Association (PA) officials select “knowledgeable” informants for me. I tried to overcome this problem by identifying specific villages as sites for conducting interviews and discussions with individual farmers.

I relied on administrative divisions at work in the early-1970s. Already by this time my region was part of the larger Shawan province and composed of two *awraja* (districts): Yararena Karayu in the north and (north of the Awash) and Hayqochena Buta Jira in the south. Yararena Karayu comprised seven counties (*warada*) of which three were partly within the valley. Hayqochena Buta Jira comprised a total of nine counties of which seven were partly or fully within the valley.

For interviews, I selected half of the counties from each district (*awraja*): Ada and *Lume* from Yararena Karayu, and Shashamane, Arsi Negelle, Masqanena Mareqo, and *Zway* from Hayqochena Buta Jira. Then, I narrowed down my focus to two selected *villages* from each *warada*, and worked closely in a total of twelve villages for the *purpose* of conducting interviews. My selection of the villages was based on certain *criteria*. I chose the villages from each *warada* based on distance from each other and *from* market centers, high versus low population densities at the time of the research, and *past* development experience.⁵⁴ It is my contention that for the kind of *historical/qualitative* data sought after here to reconstruct patterns of change over time and *on* a larger scale (as distinct from household or farm level data most economists are *concerned* with), the sample and type of data generated by oral interviewing are reliable.

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I interviewed different groups of farmers—rich and poor, men and women, (ex-) politicians/elite and non-elite, long-time residents and emigrants at different locations. At times officials advised me that my list should include specific individuals. Most often these were elite and/or rich men. Where possible, I tried to accommodate their requests.

I spoke with my informants in their field the first time I met them or as per arrangements made by *warada* offices and extension agents. I conducted individual and group interviews of a total of 120 elite and non-elite farmers, approximately 10 from each village. Although I initiated my interviews with organized questions and formats, the interviews almost always developed into discussions and took directions beyond what I anticipated. To my delight, many (though not all) accepted my invitation for interview, but a considerable number of subjects declined to be taped while others (numbering around two dozen) insisted that I should acknowledge their testimonies by a pseudonym.

In general, only a few, particularly in Ada, were reluctant to spend their time as *research* subjects because of weariness and research fatigue. At one site near Kuyara (just *north* of Shashamane) my informants even challenged me with questions about how my *research* was going to benefit them. They noted that one researcher who studied their *farms* for over six months later sent them dozens of sickles as a sign of gratitude. They *comm*mented sarcastically that they were neither short of sickles nor were the tools useful to *the* kind of crops they grew. But in almost all cases a little introduction by the official or *ext*ension agent who accompanied me to the village the first time and my own brief *interj*ection about the use-value of academic research was good enough to clear any *doubts* most of the subjects might have had at first regarding my interest and motive. The *fact that* I was particularly interested in how extension works, issues of fertilizers and

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credit, access to land, the parameters of the grain market—the same issues farmers cared most about at the time of my research—created some common interest to build on. In almost all cases the discussion sessions that started with a degree of curiosity in the informants' part ended with much excitement and a chant of the traditional blessing they accorded to me.

The valley is not a homogenous social space inhabited by smallholder farmers who shared identical experiences and speak the same language. Moreover, oral histories could be mediated by existing discourses and power, and embody both fact and representation. My informants were ready and often willing to share many of their personal experiences and their knowledge about local and national politics and the manner in which their own actions and that of others impacted their day to day productive activities. But they also brushed aside certain questions, suggesting that they were unaware of such developments or suggested that the “expert” on a given subject may be someone else whom they did not hesitate to mention by name sometimes.

In matters relating to drought and declining food production, for example, the explanation the majority of my informants presented to me was sophisticated. I was surprised to hear that farmers, like extension agents, explain drought in the context of deforestation and soil degradation caused by erosion. This led me to wonder to what extent farmers' “traditional” knowledge has been colored by the kind of bio-scientific discourse communicated to farmers since at least the mid-1980s (following the 1984-85 famine) by MoA experts and the mass media. Likewise, I came to learn that social and political histories as told by bearers of oral tradition and history could be subject to editing and refashioning over time. This is particularly true on matters like land

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entitlements, power relations and alliances, ethno-history, farm-credit, and numerous other topics that subjects think the past could have its bearing on the present.

But sometimes such editions and refashioning could be initiated and encouraged by organized parties and government controlled media. A case in point may be the campaign conducted by the Oromo Peoples Liberation Organization (OPDO), an Oromo wing of the ruling Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF), to “educate” local society in Oromo history, culture, and rights. OPDO cadre officially summoned to Nazareth many notable figures from our region twice in the 1990s, and lectured them on Oromo and Ethiopian history as told by OPDO. An ethnographer working on social and ethnic history could easily detect the articulation of contemporary vernaculars and thoughts as well as increasing sensitivity among subjects on topics pertaining to migration, ethnicity, and politics. In general, oral sources, like other sources, should be read critically and cross-checked with a variety of sources to minimize possible adverse effects on reconstructing past developments and politics.

The second major source of data used for this study is archival, including letters, accounts, life narratives, memoirs, and various kinds of contemporary reports deposited in the registrars and documentation centers of the ministries, most notably that of Agriculture (MoA), and research libraries in and outside of the country. Palace registrars in the pre-Italian occupation period also relied on information acquired from provincial rulers and local elite in documenting national history. Some prominent state officials, most notably Mahtama Sellasie Walda Masqal (son of a notable palace registrar during the reign of empress Zawditu) before he himself became secretary of Crown Prince Asfa Wassan in the early 1940s, and then vice-minister and minister of Agriculture from 1949-

58, assembled this kind of data and published *Zekra Nagar*—a comprehensive account of Ethiopia's prewar land tenure systems and taxation.⁵⁵

Zekra Nagar fails to capture localized circumstances, responses, and conflicts and is silent on the actual impacts of government legislation on regulating access to resource control, taxation, and agriculture. But it contains invaluable information regarding the origins and parameters of state ideology and regional land tenure regimes, particularly at a time when state bureaucracies remained unorganized or non-existent. In that sense it fills a clear gap created by the absence and/or inaccessibility of state archives.

The archival repository in prewar south-central Ethiopia is poor to non-existent. The opening of the first government office in Arsi Negelle (for the entire region that later became Hayqochena Kambata *awraja*) occurred only in 1943. Unlike the prewar period, government advancement to the region in the postwar era had led to the production of a rather sustained correspondence, reports, and personal files that could yield useful information about various aspects of local history as well as state-society relationship. Poorly handled, the now defunct Ministry of Interior archives yield useful information pertaining to land tenure, taxation, and politics but very little on agriculture, crop regimes, livestock, and climate that could be used to reconstructing the ecological history of the region. This kind of archival data begin to appear only after the opening of the Ministry of Agriculture's provincial and *awraja* level offices in the 1960s.

In addition to Ethiopian government archives, I have also consulted similar material generated by the foreign embassies of Britain and the United States. I found these materials useful as they documented and reported on agriculture and the food market (both domestic and export) as well as government policies and actions in the 1941-59

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period for which declassified documents are now available. These reports do not dwell on aspects of production or the interface between factors of production, but they provide useful data to situate local agricultural conditions in the context of national and international food regimes and politics.

It must be noted, however, that neither the production nor the physical existence of the national or foreign archives was insulated from politics and the semblance of power relations. For example, the constant shift of district and sub-district government offices from place to place following the constant redrawing of the administrative boundaries at all levels meant that some (and sometimes most) of the archival documents were subject to neglect and displacement, a situation that has worsened after the ethnic-state (*kellel*) structure the EPRDF has adapted. Now the old district structure is gone and at the time of my research none of the new offices were ready or equipped to inherit the *awraja* archives nor is there a body willing or able to take care of archives for academic interest.

With respect to their contents, archives are not neutral repositories of documents awaiting the historians' rearrangement and recasting. Rather they reflect the circumstances of their creation and respond to the political, economic, and social occupations of the state officials and the governments they served, and should be analyzed as such and critically.⁵⁶ Local actors themselves did not necessarily see archives simply as repositories of knowledge and as apolitical. It is not surprising therefore that sometimes some offices and some documents were doomed to destruction by their subjects. In 1974 and again in 1991, farmers attacked MoA *warada* and *awraja* offices in Shashamane and Zway which they believed deposited credit files, destroying altogether what could have been historically useful documents and data on input distribution,

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Notwithstanding the gaps and lapses created by poor handling and destruction, all the *warada* offices have modest archival collections of historical importance. I have exhaustively used the archives at Arsi Negelle, Shashamane, Zway, and Mojo *warada* MoA offices without any restrictions whatsoever. At Debre Zeit (in Ada) and Buta Jira (Masqanena Mareqo) I was given access to archives that deal with agricultural extension but did not enjoy the kind of liberty I did at the other *warada* mentioned above.

The third category of sources relates to the reports made by external observers under different provenance and for a different audience than the first two. It includes the accounts and studies created by people who lived in one or another part of the valley for various reasons and for different periods of time. Despite the varied reasons of creation, all these documents explore some aspect of rural life in the valley or its landscape and people based on quick observations or systematic research and data. They range from traveler accounts to the reports of agricultural experts working for different institutions. The few European travelers who depicted their impressions on aspects of valley landscape and society provide a glimpse of certain aspects of local society and agriculture and help us fill a void in the documented evidence on late-19th and early-20th century.

Contrary to the few travelers who made passing but useful remarks on aspects of the valley landscape, agriculture, and society, a host of trained (foreign and national alike) personnel crisscrossed and studied postwar valley agriculture closely. Development experts and scholars in the second half of the 20th century conducted feasibility studies and researched different aspects of valley agriculture, ranging from soil to agronomy, whose recommendations and findings yield information and data relevant to the historian.

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If government administrative archives generated a range of information and discourses, the field data this group of experts and managers generated yields unique material to understand modern encounters in theory and practice. Such data is relatively easy to locate and some are even published in the form of periodicals and annual reports or are deposited as unpublished reports in the Ministry of Agriculture's rich library. For example, Ethiopian Project Implementation Department's (EPID) annual reports on fertilizer trials, input distribution, credit, and yield provide project-specific data that is impossible to find in the administration archives. The compiled reports by the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), the investigations conducted by a range of specialists representing one or another institution--most notably that of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Stanford Research Institute, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, and a land survey conducted by the British Land Resource Division—provide comprehensive data and analysis on a range of issues such as agronomy, the environment, markets, input and credit, livestock and human population, income, labor, and land use to various degree.

Unlike the roadside glimpses of the observers, these materials provide household, village-level, and regional data on smallholder agriculture as well as development intervention and local responses to it often in quantifiable measures. Trained at different times and by different institutions, the researchers brought with them various methods and employed divergent analytical frameworks ranging from agricultural systems to farming systems to development economics, and their findings were equally diverse. And like the other sources they dispense, albeit inadvertently, specific data regarding farmer

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To these studies, reports, and accounts may be added newspaper reports. The Ethiopian weekly (later daily) *Addis Zaman* lend much space and focus to agriculture, the state of the livestock sector, and the food market (most notably that of Addis Ababa) in its postwar issues. It published a wide range of agricultural topics written either by its own staff reporters or by individuals and provincial offices that liked to publicize their own achievements and work. But most of all it became a forum where intellectuals, urbanites, and politicians debated the country's agriculture and development in the postwar period. As such, it provides clues to relate local issues to broader national ones. Sometimes, news reports remain as the only available source of information on such issues like parliamentary debates on land tenure reform (that became important in the 1960s and early 1970s) as long as that institution's archives remain locked up and inaccessible to researchers.

I have attempted to compare and contrast as well as critically analyze oral testimonies, archival sources, and individual or group generated reports and studies.⁵⁸ I hope such a comparison, crosschecking and critiquing will help me overcome some of the gaps and

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biases of the sources. The use of oral and a variety of written materials generated by a host of social actors and observers has been central to my analysis of valley agrarian transformation. In my research I will demonstrate that ecological change and agrarian transformation in the valley was not unidirectional, simply superimposed from without but resulted from dynamic encounters as local actors accepted, adopted or resisted the contents of modernist schemes to defend, promote or re-fashion their varying and constantly changing interests and priorities. I will argue that in their struggle, local actors consciously or unconsciously redefined and seized intervention regimes as fields of power and action. My findings show that agriculture has been central in defining intra-elite as well as state-rural society relationships in the century of state rule, and the constellation of its multiple social actors reveals the manner and degree to which state rule had been maintained and legitimized, the parameters through which it had been constantly challenged, and the way the nexus of state power and society has been mediated.

Agriculture, development, and the state in Ethiopia: review of the literature

Ethiopian agriculture has been a subject of scholarly inquiry throughout the last century, but more so in the postwar period. The fact that agriculture occupied a key role in state-society nexus and had been the mainstay of the country's economy throughout the 20th century meant that it generated a sustained interest among scholars who were particularly interested in changing it. In addition, unlike most fields of inquiry, agriculture and rural society have been "open" fields of investigation to scholars of different academic background and provenance. The result has been the production of fairly large bodies of

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literature on one or another aspect of the country's agriculture. It is difficult, therefore, to do justice to the relatively large and growing body of literature in a review like this. However, it may be possible to review the existing literature by drawing certain patterns and trends.

One discernable trend is agriculture's growing attractiveness to historical investigation. The postwar period saw an unprecedented interest in studying Ethiopian agriculture, and for the first three to four decades the subject remained the monopoly of economists. But later sociologists, geographers, political scientists, and more recently anthropologists joined the field and made significant contributions mainly by focusing on land tenure issues and development matters.⁵⁹

When historians followed suit, at first they geared their attention on medieval and ancient times.⁶⁰ Only recently have historians of modern Ethiopia begun to see agriculture as a topic deserving full-scale investigation. A couple of incidents were responsible in kindling this new interest in agriculture as a subject of historical inquiry. The first relates to the outbreak of famine in Ethiopia, first in 1972-73 and then in 1984-85.⁶¹ The second famine in particular has been responsible for generating a sustained interest on Ethiopian agriculture in general or crisis in food production in particular. James McCann's *From Poverty to Famine in Ethiopia* (1987) and *People of the Plow* (1995) had their origins in that context, but both monographs deal with the broader issue of agriculture and rural society than famine perse.⁶² The first home-grown PhD dissertation to be written at Addis Ababa University's History Department was on famine.⁶³

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subject of historical inquiry relates to the matriculation to U.S. universities of a number of Ethiopian graduate students. Several of those students studied aspects of Ethiopian agriculture often from a single crop perspective and/or in line with the West African/Latin American cash crop tradition that dominated research in the late-1970s and early-1980s.⁶⁴ An exception to this trend is Tekalign Wolde-Mariam's "A City and its Hinterlands" that looks at Addis Ababa's food supply not from a crop perspective but from the vantage point of political economy.⁶⁵

Another broadly discernable pattern in the literature is the shift in the linguistic medium used in writing about Ethiopian agriculture. For much of the prewar period and the first two decades following the Italian occupation, the bulk of the studies written on or about Ethiopian agriculture, modernization, and the state were book-size and in Amharic. In the post-1960 period, however, the monograph gave way to the journal article and English replaced Amharic.⁶⁶

The time coincided with the crystallization of development economics as a distinct field of study, the growing attractiveness of agricultural and then farming systems research for studying Third World agriculture, and the launching of several development schemes in Ethiopia. Consequently, numerous monographs were written on the Ethiopian economy, agriculture, and to some extent also of rural communities. The economists Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole's *A Profile of the Ethiopian Economy* (1969) was in tune with the dominant development economics thinking of the 1960s, and espoused two-inter-related themes: that agriculture should be the engine of economic development, and planning as the key to development.⁶⁷

Working from the perspective of agricultural systems, the agronomists H.P. Huffnagel

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and E. Westphal also published several monographs on Ethiopian agriculture in the 1960s and early-1970s.⁶⁸ Huffnagel's full-length study is a compilation of basic physical, agronomic, livestock, tenural, and institutional data on Ethiopian agriculture. It provides inventory of crop types, livestock varieties, and plant and animal pathogens in the Ethiopian region. Westphal's two treatise offer useful data on agro-ecology, climate, soils, natural vegetation, and farming systems across the regions' that are of immense importance to academic inquiry. His and Huffnagel's works and methodology have influenced a host of studies on Ethiopian agriculture, but in the passage of time their own works have become important source materials for studying change in Ethiopian agriculture.⁶⁹

Similarly, the launching of rural development schemes in the late-1960s and early-1970s also led to the emergence of a veritable academic industry that blossomed and faded in tune with the programs themselves. Particularly the first half of the 1970s saw its climax both in the intensity of the programs as well as in the efforts to study them.⁷⁰

An important turning point in shaping the study of Ethiopian agriculture and farming communities is the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. The revolutions' impact on scholarship could be seen both from the growing attractiveness of agriculture and the peasantry as fields of study as well as the dominance of Marxism-Leninism as an analytical tool to study them.⁷¹ Starting with the political writings of the 1960s (mainly by Ethiopians but coming from abroad) Marxist and neo-Marxist writings dominated the scholarship for most of the late-1970s and 1980s.⁷²

Marxism's dominance on Ethiopian rural studies stands in stark contrast to the wider currency underdevelopment and world systems theories enjoyed in West Africa and Latin

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American studies. In the Ethiopian case Michael Stahl is among the very few who applied underdevelopment theory to explain Ethiopia's "political contradictions in agricultural development," the title he chose for his book. Building on Samir Amin's formulations of modes of production, Stahl concurred that the "tributary mode of production" was the most dominant in Ethiopia.⁷³

Since the 1980s, the Marxist/neo-Marxist, dependency, and world systems theories and in fact the entire development framework have come under serious attack and criticism from different directions. One strand of criticism came from what may be collectively termed as ultramodernists. It consists of a range of economic theorists who located the nexus of rural poverty and lack of growth to "distortions of the market" often by government or outside agencies that intervened to make the market work better but in fact made it worse. They advocate free market that they admit, "does not guarantee equality of income...but it produces as optimal an allocation of resources as possible."⁷⁴

James Pickett's study on the Ethiopian economy and agriculture embodies most of the points described above. Unlike a generation of scholars who insisted that Ethiopia is poor because agriculture is traditional, Pickett argues to the contrary, emphasizing that agriculture is traditional because the economy is poor. According to him Ethiopia's smallholder agriculture is relatively efficient and it cannot be controlled or encouraged other than by the market itself. He contends that "poverty is so widespread that if the market is good for growth, it should not be shunned in the interest of equality particularly since intervention seeking to increase equality could on past evidence have the opposite effect."⁷⁵

A second strand of criticism to development comes from postmodernists. The latter

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define development as a controlling device, in fact colonialism by another means. They see development as a discourse through which social reality comes into being, the articulation of knowledge and power, essentially as a linear trajectory that fashion (with a kind of illicit or direct power) a division between the West and the “rest.”⁷⁶ To my knowledge the postmodernist strand has not been applied to study Ethiopian development or agriculture to date.

The postmodernist school in turn has come under severe criticism. A closer look at development practice, beyond structures and discourses, elucidate that power is not essentially detrimental, and a particular discourse could be appropriated for other purposes. The task is therefore to rethink development on a fresh ground, and problematize it as a “contingent, contextualized, and changing phenomena.”⁷⁷

Amidst the late-1980s sharp criticism of development and 1990s renewed concern for environmental sustainability emerged a new developmentalist agenda that calls for crop-livestock integrated agriculture. In fact, many involved in development policy making now think that “increasing agricultural and livestock production is key to alleviate African poverty and food insecurity.”⁷⁸ Consequently, they advocate mixed-farming—the cultivation of crops and the raising of livestock in a single farm—as the best approach to enhance both the productivity and sustainability of African smallholder agriculture.⁷⁹

This has been characterized in the writings of McIntire *et al* and others as an alternative intervention strategy to cope with low productivity and “destructive” forms of shifting cultivation or transhumant pastoralism. They start with the premise that “different population densities and different agro-ecological zones make possible, and even compel, specific interactions between crops and livestock.” Therefore, they propose

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But alternative views to 1990s advocates of mixed-farming challenge the apparent evolutionary view of agricultural change, particularly the presumed “linear sequence of crop-livestock interactions moving from limited interactions under low-population pressure to an integrated mixed farm model, where crop and livestock production are tightly linked.”⁸¹ Instead they take into account broader contexts—such as an understanding of political economy, the changing policy priorities, history, social differentiation, and institutional parameters—to emphasize processes, diversity, and variability in African past crop-livestock agriculture and its future.⁸²

Valley agricultural history is entwined with dynamics of crop and livestock change that has led to shifts in agricultural practice driven by and resulting from contingent processes such as politics, land policy, institutional dynamics, market imperatives, and development encounters. Valley agriculture presents a strong but not so unique case about the intricacies involved in crop-livestock interaction and Ethiopia’s localized farming practices. This study builds on recent scholarship on development encounters, and renews and broadens scholarly knowledge of agricultural change in modern Ethiopian history.

The structure of this dissertation

This dissertation builds through nine successive chapters an understanding of the history of agricultural change in Ethiopia’s south-central Rift Valley. Chapters deal to different degrees with ideologies, policies, and local action; with theory and practice; with

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production and appropriation; with markets; and with state-society relationships to reconstruct agrarian transformation and the role of different groups of social actors in shaping it.

Chapter 1 charts the moments of interlinkage and independence between diverse regional agro-economies several decades before and after the birth of the modern Ethiopian state in the late-19th century. It also explores the dynamics of socialized land management practices or the evolution of interaction and competition between different land use practices, such as for crop, pasture and forest. I pay particular attention to the degree to which farming communities managed to regulate access to resources, the place of crop and livestock agriculture in the social organization of production, and of markets in regional economies. This chapter is mainly based on first-hand accounts by a host of European (mainly British and Italian) travelers and missionaries. I complement these accounts with Shewan court chronicles and informants' testimonies.

Chapter 2 examines the degree to which structural transformation affected local production organization and power relations by presenting challenges as well as alternatives to access to resource control and product. Two institutions—with political and economic ramifications—will be closely studied to unravel the complexities involved in the nexus between state rule and agriculture (or local society) in the first several decades of valley communities' encounter with the Ethiopian state system. These are the politico-administrative institution called *malkagna/balabbat* and *madbet/waraganu*--a food extraction mechanism that linked rural communities to the imperial court distinctly differently from other food producing and tribute paying regions and populations. This chapter draws on literature produced by state functionaries, chronicles, informant's

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Chapter 3 builds on its preceding chapter to highlight the political and infrastructural foundation of valley agricultural change between 1917 and 1941. The year 1917 witnessed the completion of the construction of the railroad (a portion of which cut through the valley's northern part) and Tafari's (later Haile Sellasie) ascendancy to power. Tafari's prewar policies on land and labor are carefully examined to measure the saliency of national politics in local agricultural change and vice versa. That is followed by a discussion of the development of modern communication networks in which the short-lived Italian occupation had been important. In this chapter I rely primarily on official documents, informants' testimonies, contemporary accounts by Italian scholars, and secondary literature by Ethiopian and foreign writers.

Chapter 4 marks the mid-point of this dissertation. It canvases the entire 1941-74 period to highlight changing government policies on agriculture and its broader implications at a regional level. A key factor that distinguished government policies in the postwar era from the previous decades had been government appropriation of development as a means to bring about agricultural modernization and farmers' understanding of it. I show the specific circumstances that made development palpable to the state and the role of international organizations in mediating its acceptance and practice. I rely on government publications, official reports of the international organizations (such as FAO), and informants' testimonies to analyze the history of development in Ethiopia and the valley.

Chapter 5 complements its preceding two chapters in that it offers material from informants and documents that illustrate the kinds of changes that I have identified from

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the national level on that transformation. Chronologically it covers valley agricultural transformation in the 1941-59 decades. The year 1941 marks the successful transition most valley farmers made to crop-based agriculture distinctly differently from livestock production that has been important in the first third of the 20th century. The upper limit (1959) of this chapter is conditioned by the new shift in government policy regarding access to land as well as the beginning of a new trend in farmers' own field organization techniques. I rely on evidence from informants and secondary sources to explain the valley's impressive agricultural transformation in the two decades following Italian withdrawal.

Strikingly such transformations at the regional level interacted with broader developments in terms of the food market and national politics. Therefore, in Chapter 6 I stress the food market to locate its impact on valley agrarian transformation. I show that the attractive food market had been responsible for the kind of interest elite and non-elite urbanites showed over agricultural land in the postwar period. The manner and degree to which a range of social actors (such as the urban elite and small-scale farmers) seized government policies on land to promote their-own advantages is central to draw a fine-grained picture of valley agrarian change in the postwar period. The sources for this chapter are mainly drawn from Ethiopian and foreign (British and U.S.) government archives, government publications, newspaper reports, as well as informants' testimonies.

Building on developments outlined in the previous chapters, in Chapter 7 I provide a close analysis of the sharecropping arrangements that characterized valley agrarian relations in the 1960-75 period. I show not only how sharecropping enabled absentee landlords to reap agricultural produce from the land but also how tenants seized those

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arrangements both to bolster their presence (as rightful possessors of or contenders to the land) and even “accumulate” land. I also intend to demonstrate that while fueling social and political tensions, sharecropping arrangements in fact had been the engine of “cerealization” in valley agriculture. In this chapter I rely primarily on official government reports on land tenure, FAO directed studies, and informants’ testimonies.

In Chapter 8 I discuss the actual procedure of valley agricultural change in the 1960-75 period. I focus on two groups of farmers—small farmers and big farmers—and analyze the impacts of specialized agriculture on such indices as fallow, crop-mix, and the interaction of crop and livestock agriculture in the valley. I use the fascinating study reports by development specialists (such as those affiliated with the Stanford Research Institute and the British Land Resource Division), government publications, published or unpublished scholarly works, newspaper reports, and oral history.

In Chapter 9 I provide a close analysis of the evolution of agricultural intervention regimes in Ethiopia between 1966 and 1975. The valley stands out as one of the few areas where virtually all of the country’s agricultural intervention programs have been experimented. I will show how ag-extension became not only a creative means for substituting by a less coercive and developmentalist means the old *madbet* institution, but also an arena where modernity itself was adapted, reinvented, and resisted at particular times and places and by different groups of social actors. In this chapter I rely on official reports, documented evidence generated by agricultural experts who worked for the different institutions that sponsored the interventions, and farmer’s views.

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valley farmers the revolution period (1975-91) presented perhaps the most challenging and most intrusive state policies yet. In terms of land use alone, new policies on land and farmers understanding of it impacted the pace at which rural producers utilized grazing lands for crops critically marginalizing fallow and related field management techniques on cultivated lands. In the long run, diminishing land-based resources convinced farmers to adapt modern inputs in hitherto unprecedented scale. If the latter had become the mainstay of state-led developmentalism in the 1990s, its immediate impact had been growing farmers' indebtedness and "corrupt" soils that have now become "addicted" to inorganic fertilizers to grow crops. I rely primarily on Ministry of Agriculture archives, published and unpublished reports, and farmers own testimonies to reconstruct aspects of the valley's agrarian transformation in the post-imperial era.

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CHAPTER ONE

CROPS, LIVESTOCK, AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: PERMUTATIONS OF AGRO-ECONOMIES IN ETHIOPIA'S DIVERSE LANDSCAPE (1892-1930)

The antiquity of Ethiopian agriculture, the cultivation of indigenous grasses such as *tef* [*Erograstis tef*] and plants as *enset* [*Ensete ventriosum*], and the evolution of relatively efficient production techniques that sustained complex state structures for the past millennia have been the object of relatively intense scholarly investigation.¹ The prominent Russian botanist N.L. Vavilov, who studied the origins of cultivated plants in different parts of the world, found in Ethiopia indigenous cereals such as *tef*, distinct seed varieties of barley, wheat, sorghum and finger millet, and legumes such as chickpea, lentils and peas. Consequently, he described that country as one of the primary centers of crop domestication and dispersal in the world.²

Subsequently, scholars such as E. Westphal and H.P. Huffnagel, working under the purview of agricultural systems, focused on crop regimes, methods of cultivation, and agro-ecologies to highlight Ethiopia's rich and diverse agricultural landscape.³ More recently, historians such as James McCann and Donald Crummey looked at change and continuity in Ethiopian agriculture by probing, respectively, key variables such as demography and property rights.⁴ McCann's pacesetting study looks at the important question of why, since at least the late-19th century, Ethiopia's highland agriculture has "slid into deep fundamental crisis." He focused on the interface between demography and

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In a far less accessible piece, Crummey also remarked the disparities between highland Ethiopia's 19th century practices of pastoralism and crop agriculture, and late-20th century commentary about it. Unlike most studies that depicted Ethiopia's highland agriculture an essentially crop-based system, Crummey stressed the prevalence of both crop agriculture and animal husbandry across the central and northern highland regions throughout the 19th century.⁶

The works of McCann and Crummey are important because of their emphasis on change, and the methodological alternative they provide by looking at interlinkages across the regions contrary to the presumably unique land- and ethno-scapes proponents of agricultural systems tend to foster. My study joins the debate by looking at the historical interactions among large-scale political and economic forces and small-scale agricultural society to explain the course, pattern and causes of agricultural change in Ethiopia's south-central Rift Valley since the late-19th century.

In this chapter I seek to provide base-line interpretation of valley agriculture juxtaposing it with developments in the central and southern highlands (that are coterminous to the valley) several decades before and after the birth of the modern Ethiopian state toward the turn of the 19th century. I will do so both to establish the regional history perspective I have adapted for the purpose of this dissertation and emphasize the fact that valley agricultural transformation since the late-19th century took shape in direct contact with those agro-economies and a rapidly changing national political economy.

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Apart from the methodological advantage such a regional approach would allow, a quick look at developments in the highlands enables me to chart the analytical parameters of my study. Because of their long history of crop-based agriculture and the availability of recorded (mainly by European travelers) evidence, Ethiopia's highlands have long attracted scholarly attention and have been central in shaping the debate on Ethiopian agriculture.

To position my study in relation to the burgeoning literature and highlight the perspective I have adapted for this study, I will preface my analysis with a brief commentary on the agricultural and farming systems literature that has been so pervasive in the study of Ethiopian agriculture since the late-1950s. I offer alternative explanations based on processes and interlinkages to the seemingly unchanging and isolated practices the agricultural systems literatures posit.

First, I will look at the highlands adjacent to the valley, dividing them into two distinct parts (southern and central highlands) so as to explore aspects of their transformation and the forces of change since around the mid-19th century. Then, in the last section of this chapter, I will focus on the valley itself to illustrate aspects of its relatively distinct transformation with regard to land use and ecology management. Because the documented evidence is scarce (with the exception of few but useful reports made by European travelers) I will rely on informants' testimonies to reconstruct prewar (1890s-1930s) valley agricultural history. Though often syncretic and episodic, I found the testimonies of my informants reliable and consistent to follow aspects of valley agricultural transformation.

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think agriculture and the landscape in your village and beyond have changed over time? How?” My informants approached this question differently and explained agricultural and ecological change variously. But never did the changing configuration of crop-livestock agriculture escape emphasis in the discussions. Many underscored decline in livestock population and the ratio of crop to pasture land as not just a mark of the present, but as largely responsible for growing problems in most rural communities, ranging from children’s malnourishment to soil fertility.

A key thread in my narrative is therefore the dynamics of crop-livestock change. My goal is to show how the links between crop and livestock, cropland and grazing land, changed over time, and how this change, in turn, affected production organization and ecology management in valley history. I generally agree with the assumption that, change in African agriculture sometimes manifests itself in the degree of interaction between crop and livestock production. But I don’t agree with the argument that this change was necessarily a Malthusian function of population growth.⁷ I will argue that resource competitions coupled with productivity decline in crop-agriculture and/or the need to raise it played crucial roles in shaping valley agrarian transformation throughout the 20th century.

1.1 Taxonomy of Ethiopian Agriculture

Scholars have studied Ethiopian agriculture from different vantage points and applied various yardsticks to measure and classify it. The dominant parameters used to classify Ethiopian agriculture include cultivation methods (i.e., the type of tools used to cultivate the soil), agricultural systems (i.e., the characterization of a field system based on a set of

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farming practices as emblematic of cultural traits), and farming systems. Those interested in cultivation methods (most directly associated with the writings of W. Stiehler) identified “plow farming” and “hoe culture” as distinctive markers of Ethiopia’s divergent agriculture. According to Stiehler, plow farming dominates the “greater part” of the Ethiopian highlands, whereas hoe culture exists in the southern parts of the country.⁸

Much more than cultivation systems, however, it is the classification of Ethiopian agriculture in terms of “systems of agriculture” that has been more pervasive in the 1950s and 1960s. Proponents of agricultural systems identified four distinct types of Ethiopian agriculture: (1) the seed-farming complex, (2) the *enset*-planting complex, (3) shifting cultivation, and (4) the pastoral complex. Defining the four systems of agriculture is a range of factors including crop types, means of reproduction of the crops, climate, farm implements, the raising of livestock, and ethnicity.⁹

Farming Systems Research (FSR) evolved in the 1970s, basically as an offshoot of the dominant agricultural systems school that had dominated research in the preceding two decades. Developmental in approach FSR enjoyed wider currency among researchers and policy makers alike for more than two decades. Because the highland zones of sub-Saharan Africa, which, contrary to being a small fraction of the total land area of the continent, account for large human and livestock population and have considerable agricultural potential, farming systems researchers focused their studies and development activities on the highlands where “mixed farming” prevails.

Since the largest highland area of the continent, covering nearly half (or 490,000 km² of the 1 million km²) of the African highlands, is located in Ethiopia, and because the

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country possessed the largest livestock population in Africa (with approximately 26 million head of cattle in 1976), the International Livestock Center for Africa (ILCA), the chief institutional promoter of FSR in Africa, established its headquarters in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia's capital) and focused its research and intervention on the Ethiopian highlands.¹⁹ Underlying ILCA's farming systems research and development intervention, therefore, is both the recognition of the embeddedness of livestock in Ethiopia's crop-agriculture and the promotion of livestock enterprises to boost farm productivity in the country's smallholder agriculture.¹⁰

Informing ILCA's farming systems research and its intervention schemes was Amare Getahun's (1978) classification of Ethiopia's agriculture into three distinct categories based on farm resources and development potential. According to Amare, Ethiopian agriculture comprised: the high-potential cereal/livestock zone, the low-potential cereal/livestock zone, and the high-potential horticulture/livestock zone.¹¹

An interesting feature of all the classifications described above is the emphasis they gave to regional variation and, to some extent also, to change. Though mainly concerned with the dominant agronomic or herding features that characterized farming or herding "systems," almost all the classifications have indicated change within each system they have come to identify. Those interested in cultivation systems underscored the additional use of hand implements in the plow complex. Acknowledging the usefulness of cultivation systems as proposed by Stiehler, Huffnagel, for example, stressed that a clear geographic mark of field technology between the plow and the hoe culture is not possible. He noted that "pure plow farming without the use of additional hoe implements for cultivation work does not exist in Ethiopia."¹²

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Proponents of agricultural systems emphasize more such transitory features in field technology and agronomy. Westphal's classification of Ethiopia's agricultural systems shows both the wide range of variations within the seed-farming complex itself and how significant changes have taken place in a wide range of areas such as in arable-pasture rotation, the mechanisms of maintaining soil fertility (such as in soil burning, fallow, and crop-rotation), crop choices, and annual labor calendars.¹³ Farming systems literature also accents change, often measured by soil erosion, scarcity of land, land fragmentation, diminishing forest resources, and underutilized labor.¹⁴

However, none discussed those changes in a specific time-space dimension that would satisfy the historian. Neither is the cause of those changes studied carefully to help us understand the processes involved as well as the linkages among the communities across the different agro-ecological zones. The agricultural history of the valley, as it unfolded in the last one hundred years or so alone, tempts one to shift the emphasis from "systems" to "processes." Valley agriculture, like almost all other regional agro-economies, had never been stable or necessarily unique, but changed constantly throughout the 20th century. Change took place as a result of or due to farmers' and herders' own initiatives and changing needs in consonance with the power of the physical environment (relating to such indices like soil fertility and rainfall variability), field technology, availability of labor, and resource competitions. But change also took place in relation to, in fact in direct contact with, regional and broader national political economies.

By the beginning of our period, most of the valley was a pastoral landscape. But by the end of our period all but a small portion of the valley has transformed into intensively cultivated smallholder agriculture. At times (as was the case in the late-19th or early-20th

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century) valley landscape stood in stark contrast with the relatively intensely cultivated highlands surrounding it to the south, west and north. By the second half of the 20th century such broad distinctions became blurred as the valley evolved as one of the major centers of crop production in the country eclipsing some of those regions by the degree of its integration to the national markets.

1.2 Contrasting the valley with its coterminous highland environment

Geographically, the valley stands in close proximity to Ethiopia's highlands that were known for their crop-based agriculture for millennia. To the north is the central (Shawan) highlands inhabited mainly by Oromo and Amhara farmers. In the south, east and west, it is bounded by the southern highlands which the valley cuts into two parts: an eastern part inhabited by Arsi herders, and a western and southern part inhabited by numerous farming communities that differed ethnically but shared common histories. In a north-south direction, these communities included the Gurage, the Hadiya, the Kambata, the Wolayta, and the Sidama, who lived in a distinct geography but resembled each other in terms of field technology and agriculture.

From a crop perspective the communities residing in the southern highlands immediately to the west and south of the valley distinguished themselves from those to the east and north by the cultivation of *enset*. The plant's relatively unique agronomy and its geographic concentration in the southern Ethiopia highlands made it an object of scholarly investigation early on. *Enset* caught the attention of anthropologists and cultural geographers who defined it as the chief cultural marker of Ethiopia's southern communities.¹⁵ One of them, the American anthropologist William Shack, for example,

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labeled the Gurage “a people of the *enset* culture.”¹⁶ Others emphasized agronomy, field organization, labor, and the “carrying capacity” of the crop, and explained its distinct qualities without necessarily considering it as a cultural marker.¹⁷

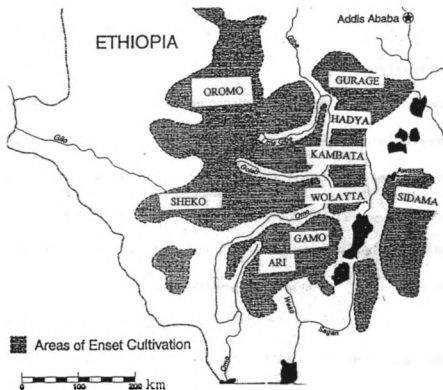


Figure 1 *Enset* growing areas of southern Ethiopia and ethnic groups mentioned in text
Adapted from Brandt *et al*, *The “Tree Against Hunger,”* 1997, p. 5.

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Historically, perhaps the most striking feature of *enset* agriculture has been the degree to which livestock (notably cattle) were integrated to it. In addition to the food requirements, the plant itself required constant and considerable supply of manure to grow and produce food.¹⁸ Therefore, quite distinct from the strategies adapted by Ethiopia's cereal-legume cultivators to maintain soil fertility (often by practicing fallow and soil burning), *enset* cultivators applied manure for that purpose and practiced integrated crop-livestock agriculture for long.¹⁹

As much as *enset* cultivation and cattle-raising became the mainstay of those communities in the past, what has been equally significant in the agricultural history of the southern communities since at least the mid- to late-19th century has been the growing integration of cereals and/or cash crops to the farm. The recorded historical evidence is too scant to measure the degree to which cereals and cash crops became integral parts of southern agriculture. Yet, in virtually all the regions described above cash crops such as coffee and *chat* (*Catha edulis*) had become equally (if not more) important crops by the second half of the 20th century.

Among the Sidama, for example, the most enduring and conspicuous change in localized agriculture and land use took place with the expansion of coffee cultivation. Sidamo coffee entered the official trade statistics for the first time in 1906, with about 50,000 *farasulas* (approximately one million kilograms) of coffee exported from that region in the same year.²⁰ Two decades later Adrien Zervos estimated Sidamo coffee exports at over 3000 metric tons. By the 1920s, Sidamo's share of the country's coffee export has begun to rival that of Harar which up to now has been a major coffee production and supply region from all of Ethiopia.²¹ Half a century later, in the early

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1970s, Sidamo contributed more than 30% of the coffee Ethiopia exported via the Addis Ababa – Djibouti railway.²²

The Gurage too have integrated different crops into their farm throughout the 20th century, depending upon availability of land and labor. In the cooler highlands of Mugar (west Gurage) the dominant crop by the late-20th century was barley not *enset*. In the transitional (*wayna-daga*) zone, roughly between 1600 –1800 meters, Gurage and Silti farmers also have successfully integrated chili pepper, coffee or *chat* to their *enset* fields.²³ To be sure, the Gurage region did not emerge as one of the chief producers of coffee (as were the Sidama for example) anytime in the 20th century. But it had been one of the major producers and suppliers of *chat* to the booming domestic shrub market since the last quarter of the 20th century.²⁴

Even more than their Sidama and Gurage contemporaries, Wolayta, Kambata and Hadiya farmers also have cultivated grains and cash crops such as cotton and chili paper longer. Late-19th century travelers such as Wellby described Wolayta as one of the most fertile and intensively cultivated regions of Ethiopia.²⁵ Late-19th and early-20th century Kambata and Hadiya farmers also cultivated grains such as sorghum, barley and wheat, and by the second half of the 20th century *enset* was in fact a secondary not a primary crop in those regions.²⁶

Equally striking, but even more neglected agricultural systems literature, is the question of labor or labor mobility. *Enset* cultivating regions are among the most densely inhabited regions in Ethiopia. According to late-20th century estimates population density in most *enset* cultivating regions averaged between 200-400 people per square km.²⁷ Since at least the mid-20th century (and in the case of the Gurage and the Wolayta even

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earlier) most *enset* producing regions have distinguished themselves by the degree to which their adult male populations migrated to the urban centers and commercial farms on seasonal or permanent basis.

Late-20th century social science literature has documented the preponderance of Gurage, Kambata, Hadiya, and Wolayta laborers in Ethiopia's urban centers and the commercial farms that sprang up along the Awash valley since the 1960s. Economists and anthropologists have explained this phenomenon as resulting from state taxation and/or the so-called "pull" and "push" factors.²⁸ Economists in particular underscored the "pull" effect of Ethiopian urbanization and commercial agriculture to explain labor migration from those regions. But no satisfactory explanation has been forwarded to explain, for example, why those 'pull' factors pulled the Gurage and the Kambata as opposed to the Oromo, who lived much closer to the sites of attraction.

Though not conspicuous to most urban observers, rural to urban migration is not the only form of population mobility that characterized those regions in the period under consideration. Accompanying it was a rural-to-rural migration that sometimes predated the rural-to-urban migration briefly described above. The rural to rural migration from such regions as Gurage and Silti took two forms: group and individual. The former was a conscious and relatively organized move by a group of highland cultivators whereby they colonized a new agro-ecology slowly but incrementally over time and space. In almost all cases it took the colonization of lowland frontiers adjacent to and in some cases distant from traditional settlement sites. The rapid colonization of the lowland regions of Wulbareg, Dugda, Dalocha, parts of Maqi, and Mareqo (all located within the valley) by a group of Silti and Gurage farmers in the first half of the 20th century resulted from such

conscious move by highland cultivators.²⁹

Distinct from the group based rural-to-rural migration, individual farmers also migrated to areas such as the valley where they took up farming per contractual arrangements they made with *rist* or private land owners. Interestingly, the valley had been one of the main attractions to a number of individual migrants mainly (but not exclusively) from highland regions described above. Consequently immigrants from as close as Arsi and Silti to as far as Tegulat and Tigray found their way to the valley first (in the prewar period) in small, and later (in the postwar period) in growing numbers.

If *enset*-livestock agriculture, the secondary role cereal played in it, and labor mobility rendered a comparatively distinct feature to the regionally variegated agriculture in the highlands to the west of the valley throughout the 20th century, agriculture in the eastern portion of the southern highlands (i.e. those inhabited by the Arsi Oromo) also underwent dramatic transformation since the late 19th century. Documentary evidence on crop regimes, land use, and the social organization of agriculture in the Arsi highlands is thin. The Shewan historian Asma who detailed Menilek's Arsi conquest does not talk about the way of life of the conquered populations in any detail. But he did mention that Shewan forces plundered the "agricultural region of Sirka [in central Arsi]," alluding to the fact that at least some parts of Arsi have been relatively intensively cultivated.³⁰ Gabra Sellasie also identified Sirka as a region endowed with grain crops ("*ehel kemiabeklew ager*") to distinguish it from the rest of Arsi that had been inhabited by cattle herders and from whom Menilek's conquering forces took herds of cattle as booty.³¹

Arnold Wienholt Hodson, who visited southern Ethiopia (Arsi, Bale, Sidamo, and

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Borana) in the 1920s, also provided us with some anecdotal information regarding Arsi agriculture and the environment. Passing through the Chilalo Mountains, the elegant landscape visible from the valley, Hodson witnessed small and scattered Oromo villages and the mountain itself “ascended by gradual grassy slopes.”³² His description of aspects of Arsi and Bale landscape, its population and agriculture provides a glimpse of the regions’ early twentieth century agriculture. He noted:

Descending from Chilalo, we passed through Albaso, one of the most beautiful parts of Arsi, and Arsi is one of the most beautiful provinces of Abyssinia. [The higher slopes in this region resemble] the Yorkshire moors. [The] country is sparsely populated, and there is little cultivation but plenty of stock. [Farther south] we traveled through open pastoral country and descended between Mounts Haro and Kaka to the Wabi River, which forms the boundary between Arusi and Bale. ...Descending the mountains of Lojo, we crossed the Webbe River... and then debauched upon a wide plain which extends to Ginir...The sparseness of the population was again remarkable...A certain amount of barley is grown, and stock-raising flourishes.³³

Hodson’s description of Arsi landscape and agriculture portrays a predominantly pastoral economy. This view was later (1960s) reinforced by the German ethnographer Eike Haberland who explained that traditionally the Arsi were predominantly pastoralists. But Arsi also cultivated barley, albeit in a small scale and in isolated pockets south of the Gugu Massif, in Sirka and around Guba and Ginir, along the middle course of the Wabi Shebelle, and in east Bale. According to Haberland cereal-based plow agriculture expanded in Arsi and Bale only in the 20th century, largely owing to what he generally referred to as “Amharic influence.”³⁴

The dynamic interface between Arsi crop and livestock agriculture underwent dramatic transformation in the 20th century, marked most by the rapid expansion of cereal-based agriculture at the expense of animal husbandry. The Italian agronomist

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Brotto was probably the first to document this transformation.³⁵ During his relatively extended stay in Arsi in the late-1930s, Brotto witnessed first hand the pace at which cereal agriculture expanded in Arsi. He argued that this transformation was the net result of politics, most notably the consolidation of changing tenural arrangements resulting from land measurement and government allocation of land as *madarya* (in lieu of salary) to its own elite who, in turn, rushed to turn them into crop fields. He related that compressed by new tenural arrangements and unable to find sufficient grazing land for their livestock Arsi herders were compelled to switch to cereal cultivation rather quickly.³⁶ In the postwar period Arsi in fact evolved as one of the major centers of cereal-pulse production in the country. In the 1960s and 1970s proponents of agricultural- and farming-systems described the region as a seed-farming complex comparable to the central and northern highlands.³⁷

Land Use, soil fertility, and farm productivity in the central highlands

Similar to the southern highlands described above, agriculture in the central (or Shawa) highlands (immediately north of the valley) also embodied crop agriculture and animal husbandry by the mid- to late-19th century. That historically Shawa's highland agriculture centered as much on livestock as on crops can be drawn from accounts in the relatively abundant travel narratives, property systems, and social relations of production. Alongside their descriptions of a rich crop repertoire, the fertility of the cultivated highlands, and the soil being "more fertile," with yields "much higher than in Europe," Shawa's mid- to late-19th century European travelers also painted a picture of exceedingly high livestock populations and "rich green meadows."³⁸ Perhaps one of the

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most direct and relevant pieces of information comes from the British Douglass Graham who, in 1840, described Shawa as an agricultural landscape endowed both with cropland and pasture. He wrote:

From a careful observation during many journeys in every direction, I have calculated that one-fifth of the whole surface of Shoa may be fairly considered to be under cultivation, whilst two fifths are preserved as good meadow land and the remaining two-fifths may be stated to be very indifferent soil, forest or impractical rock..., there are few forests or wastes, excepting the impractical for pasture or cultivation.³⁹

Graham's estimate, which was not based on quantitative hard evidence, nonetheless may be useful for re-drawing Shawa's landscape history. Graham implies that crop agriculture in Shawa had not yet impinged on livestock (or pasture) in any serious way indicating interaction than competition between crop and livestock agriculture or cropland and pasture. In fact, judging from his own estimates mid-19th century Shawan smallholder farmers reserved more land for pasturage than for crop cultivation.⁴⁰

Late-19th century descriptions of Shawa's landscape and land use are in consonance with Graham's earlier remarks. Gustavo Bianchi, reporting in the late 1890s, described the area between Entoto and the country to the south of it as being one of "good cultivation and very extended meadow."⁴¹ P.H.G. Powell-Cotton's early 20th century descriptions of the northern hinterlands of the recently founded capital Addis Ababa also indicated that only a smaller portion of the land was permanently cultivated while the majority of the land was in grass.⁴² Wellby was in fact amazed to see that "immense amount of fertile land...lay uncultivated and undrained, ...growing nothing but vast stretches of grass six or eight feet high, destined only to be wasted and burnt."⁴³ He was also struck by the "astonishing absence of villages" which he believed was due to the fact

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that “small inducement had been offered to the Gallas [Oromo], or to the Abyssinians [Amhara] themselves...to cultivate...and the advantages of commerce have so far been overlooked.”⁴⁴

What appears to have been overlooked by the travelers, who, telling from their narratives, seemed biased to crop-based agriculture over other forms of land use, however, is the link between grassland and cereal agriculture. To be sure, the grassland environment travelers like Wellby viewed as wasteland may not be necessarily so. Rather grassland provided not just forage for cattle but also it was an intrinsic part of the arable-pasture rotation strategy Shawan farmers developed to maintain soil fertility. Farmers I talked to in Sabata, Gina Ager, Jirru and Menjar remarked that traditionally arable-pasture rotation provided an alternative for Shawan farmers to maintain soil fertility in their crop fields.⁴⁵ A.T. Semple, who studied soil conservation strategies of Shawan highland farmers in the early-1940s, remarked that over the centuries a rotation of crops and sod grasses maintained soil fertility and the productivity of crop land.⁴⁶ Graham also observed and acclaimed Shawan farmers’ crop rotation practices though mainly from the perspective of crop-agriculture alone. Thus:

In all districts of Shoa, a regular system of cropping has been established, and these rotations of crops are scarcely ever departed from, founded on the principle of preventing the soil from becoming impoverished. ...In the valley, teff, jewerre [sorghum], cotton, oil and wheat follow in succession. On the high country, barley and wheat in alternate seasons, and in the cold moors of the table land, the ground is left fallow for one year to recover itself before a fresh crop can be taken from the exhausted material.⁴⁷

Like the link between pasture and cropland, the extent of the livestock component of Shawan agriculture itself did not enjoy the kind of attention Shawan crop agriculture had long evaded the gaze of farming system scholars despite the

strong historical data available. Graham, for example, noted the existence of livestock in Shawa, and remarked that large herds were found in the plains.⁴⁸ J.L. Krapf and C. Harris also reported a large concentration of livestock and pasture in the area between Debre Berhan and Bulga in northern Shawa.⁴⁹ South of the Chacha River too, mid-19th century Oromo farmers grew barley, wheat, beans, and lentils in their highland ecology and raised large herds of cattle in the plains.⁵⁰ According to the reports of C.W. Isenberg and J.L. Krapf tending the cattle was the responsibility of boys and young men while adults plowed the soil together with the women who worked in the agricultural fields in addition to their household duties.⁵¹

Indirect evidence to Shawa, and indeed of all the central and northern highland regions' livestock population and its place in the regions' political economy comes from the markets. Livestock probably were the most important and dominant trade items in the long distance markets that flourished in the region as economic and social networks at least by the second half of the 19th century. Drawing largely from generated by the *Societa Geografica Italiana* (SGI) and consular reports on commerce in Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Italian writer Alamani E.Q. Marino explained the parameters of the livestock market in the 1880s, right before the rinderpest pandemic wiped out cattle in those regions.⁵² His findings, as could be seen from Table 1.1 below suggest a strong livestock market and by implication a solid agricultural base that sustained and depended on it.

Alamani's may be the only quantifiable evidence available to us to get at least a generalized picture of central and northern Ethiopia's livestock market and agriculture.

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Table 1.1 Annual

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By contrast, the available evidence is much more diverse and reliable regarding Shawa's crop repertoire and agronomy.⁵³ According to the majority of Shawa's mid- to late-19th century travelers, the regions' agriculture was rich, endowed with a range of cultivated cereals and pulses so much so that Graham described the region as "inexhaustible granary for all the fruits of the earth."⁵⁴

Table 1.1 Annual livestock sales in the central and northern markets (1880s)

Market	Oxen	Cows	Goats	Sheep	Chickens
Gondar	80,000	18,000	10,000	20,000	60,000
Aliu Amba	17,500	120,000	20,000	9,000	11,400
Basso	38,000	17,000	18,000	16,000	19,500
Majete	48,000	16,000	19,000	38,000	1,250
Waldya	40,000	10,000	20,000	10,000	1,050
Dabra Tabor	70,000	8,000	14,000	8,000	1,050
Adwa	100,000	40,000	18,000	15,000	18,750
Antalo	16,000	8,000	8,000	17,000	1,850
Saqota	21,000	2,000	10,000	1,500	1,950
Adigrat	18,750	1,110	1,875	1,878	1,614
Massawa	280,000	57,000	16,000	15,000	580,000
Keren	18,000	18,000	16,000	11,109	1,150

Source: Alamani E.Q. Marion, *La Colonia Eritrea E I Suoi Commerci* (Torino, 1891, p. 356; reproduced in Pankhurst, *Economic History*, p. 210.

Certainly the list of Shawan mid- to late-19th century cultivated crop varieties is long. But probably the most dominant, both in terms of area of cultivation and food value were *tef*, barley, wheat, sorghum, and elusine, pulses such as lentils, peas and chickpea, and a wide range of oil seeds.⁵⁵ Shawan agriculture has changed dramatically since the mid-19th century, not so much by the composition of its crop varieties but by such indices as the ratio of cropland to pasture and productivity per unit area.

Graham may be the first to document the beginning of the growing competition between cropland and grazing land and vegetation that was to become particularly acute

only later. He described the situation in Shawa in the 1840s despairingly when he noted that “the plants and trees which flourish wild in the forests and meadows...are gradually disappearing before the axe of the wood-cutter, and the plough of the undiscerning farmer.”⁵⁶ Obviously Graham’s view is reminiscent of a classic environmental stewardship. He saw the interaction between cropland and forest and pasture in a unidirectional pattern without necessarily considering the dialectics between localized agriculture and environmental resources. Nonetheless, his testimony is indicative of a pattern that would ultimately change land use patterns in the Shawan highlands.

In addition to Graham, Charles Beke, Nathaniel Pearce and V.P. Ferret and G.J. Galinier, also looked at the central and northern highland landscape differently. They focused in part on yield and soil fertility so as to compare production in the high plateaus with the river valleys such as that of Denki (near Shawa). If they found Ethiopia’s highland agriculture more matured and relatively efficient than most other African field systems, they also remarked of the limited attempts made by highland cultivators to increase yield.⁵⁷

Often their measurement of yield was not based on hard evidence and lacked specificity in terms of field technology, labor input, and the probable impacts of markets or politics. James Bruce, who was among the first to reflect on crop yield in the Ethiopian region, for example, noted that Ethiopian farmers harvested lower yields on their fields compared to 18th century Europe without necessarily specifying the context of those disparities in any detail.⁵⁸ Mid- to late-19th century Shawan travelers such as Graham and Ferret and Galinier also reflected on crop yield, by contrasting the highlands and the valleys based on the ratio of planted seed and harvested product.

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Graham's detailed description of Shawan agriculture is in fact a comparison of the plateaus and the valleys, which he identifies clearly. According to him, farmers' Shawan farmers' harvested better yield in the valleys than in the plateaus for the same amount of seed planted per unit area.⁵⁹ Similarly, according to the French Scientific Mission, "whereas in the highlands a sixteen-fold yield of grain was all that could be expected, under the most favorable conditions the fertile alluvium of some lowland areas could yield sixty-fold."⁶⁰

At times the same travelers explained low yield in the plateaus in terms of poor soil management techniques and/or scarcity of labor. Hence, as much as they admired the practice of crop rotation, soil burning, fallow and, in rare cases, terracing to protect water and soil loss, few of the 19th century travelers were equally struck by the inability of Shawan farmers to use manure to enhance soil fertility.⁶¹ Pearce, for example, related poor yield in the highlands to the limited attempts farmers' made to preserve soil fertility.⁶² On the same vein, Ferret and Galinier even went as far as to declare that the soil became increasingly impoverished as one moved into the plateaus from the valleys.⁶³

But not all the travelers implicated soil quality to explain poor productivity. At least one of them, Lobo, for example, complained earlier that fruits were a rarity in the northern highlands not because the land is not suitable for their production but because of farmers' recalcitrance to cultivate them.⁶⁴ By contrast, Wylde related poor production to politics than to soil fertility and labor productivity. He remarked that: "Abyssinia could produce a great deal more than it does at present, but ... the natives do not dare to put much ground under cultivation owing to the taxation and the insecurity of the country."⁶⁵

Still, the available evidence is extremely sketchy to draw a fine-grained picture of

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late-19th century Shawan agriculture, production and productivity. Rarely did travelers make clear distinctions between productivity and production, and seldom is production explored in the context of the changing needs and demands of the communities concerned or in the context of organic matter. In general travelers judged fertility and productivity by the variety of crops grown or simply by intensity of cultivation, making their reports important only for conjectural and comparative use rather than as a fact to pass any judgment on the state of soil quality or productivity per unit area in Shawa.

McCann's study has shown the contours of the expansion of cereal-based ox-plow agriculture across the highland landscape in the 19th and 20th centuries. His analysis of Ankober (Shawa) agriculture in the 19th and 20th centuries illustrates how and why the region's crop agriculture expanded and contracted in the wake of demographic shifts and a "declining" agricultural environment.⁶⁶ McCann's study also proves that agricultural transformation in the highlands resulted from a slow and internal process, as opposed to a conscious and deliberate experiment enacted by the state to ensure cultural hegemony or create a certain economic base.⁶⁷ In the central highlands this expansion throughout the second half of the 19th century was probably marked by intensity, like in the reduction of fallow, and even more by extensification, i.e., the changing configuration of the ratio of cropland to pasture. The context of this change, as we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 2, owes much to competitions over agricultural resources as it did to field technology and the environment.

1.3 The valley as a pastoral landscape and early forms of crop agriculture

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the onset of our period, most of the valley by the late-19th and early-20th centuries was a pastoral landscape. Also unlike those highlands, most notably that of Shawa, the recorded historical evidence on valley agriculture is too sketchy to allow us to reconstruct its late-19th century agricultural landscape in good detail. The general exceptions to this dearth may be the accounts of Leopoldo Traversi (1886) and Luigi Cappucci (1887), specialists directly associated with the Italian *Societa Geografica Italiana* (SGI), and that of the British traveler Mongagu Sinclair Wellby (1898).⁶⁸

Though crucial in filling a clear gap in the documented evidence the narratives of Traversi, Cappucci, and Wellby are not comparable to that of some of their European predecessors like Graham in terms of the amount of information they provided regarding valley agriculture.⁶⁹ Traversi and Cappucci visited only the northern part of the valley (up to Mount Zequala) where the news for the existence of Christian churches dating back in time to the middle ages had always captivated the gaze of European travelers.

Traversi described Ada with fascination: “What a splendid panorama! An expansive plain spreads itself at the foot of the mountain, the plain slowly undulates, divided like a chessboard by so many verdant paths, bounded by so many cultivations of barley, wheat and teff...what fertility!”⁷⁰ Cappucci also remarked the fertility of Ada with passion, enunciating its agriculture semantically, referring to it as “superior to other Oromo lands,” and qualitatively, claiming that Ada’s farmers produced 100 *dawla* [c. roughly one metric ton] of grain on a third of a *gasha* [i.e., about 10 quintals per hectare] with “little effort.”⁷¹

Cappucci also observed the prevalence of a dominant livestock sector in Ada, but described the regions’ expansive pasture as underutilized simply because it was not

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efficiently organized to exploit more land for cultivation. He remarked: “it is difficult to put more land in production because of their [Ada’s farmers and herders] not having the custom of cutting the straw to give to the livestock in the dry season, in which vegetation is scarce; they oblige themselves to take a large piece of land to maintain livestock there in which they live together as pasture.”⁷²

McCann, relying extensively on the evidence from the late 19th century travelers’ narratives and juxtaposing it with information acquired from oral informants, aptly described Ada’s agricultural landscape and agriculture in the 19th and early-20th-centuries. He remarked:

If agriculture was well established by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, it coexisted with a powerful and still largely autonomous livestock economy, still only weakly integrated with ox-plow farm economics. Ada’s extensive livestock herds grazed on fallow fields and along cultivated borders. In the dry season, pasture existed in relative abundance, much of it lower-lying, virgin, and vertisol plains. The dry seasons pasture on dried, black soil *chafe maret* (seasonally marshy fields) provided abundant forage on lands too labor intensive to attract cultivation. These open, yet fertile, pastures which still existed during Menilek’s time and early in the reign of Haile Sellasie, composed the primary arena of competition and innovation for cropland in the late twentieth century.⁷³

If livestock agriculture was autonomous or weakly integrated in Ada by the late- 19th and early-20th centuries, the pattern in the remainder of the valley was even more distinct. Most of the valley in the late-19th and early-20th centuries was a pastoral landscape with very little or no crop-agriculture at all.

The best recorded evidence for that comes from Wellby, likely the first European explorer to visit the valley south of the Zequala by the close of the 19th century. Wellby started his sojourn in southern Ethiopia (“towards the unknown”) in December 1898. He

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traveled extensively in the valley, visited Gurage, Kambata, and Wolayta from where he proceeded to Lake Rudolf, Sobat and Fort Naser. He started off from Addis Ababa towards Zequala, the popular destination of his Italian predecessors a decade ago. However, Wellby does not tell us much about the landscape or the people inhabiting the region between Addis Ababa and Mount Zequala, except for the brief interjection on the Oromo he met, his fear of the tsetse fly that he was told would kill his pack animals, and a scenic description of the Mountain, its crater lake, its cotton and juniper trees, and the existence of an old church in the area.⁷⁴

Having celebrated Christmas Day in Zequala, Wellby encamped at the Awash for several days, hunting hippo, gazelle, guinea fowl, partridges and sana-groose, fishing and making “excursions in all directions over hills and plains.”⁷⁵ He stayed at the bank of the Awash (near Zequala) for a fortnight and proceeded farther south and encamped north of Lake Zway for two weeks in January 1899. During his stay near the Lake and along the Maqi River, Wellby met several Oromo whom he described as hospitable, provisioning his exploratory team with goats and milk, “their sole means of subsistence.”⁷⁶ But what struck Wellby most was the reluctance or inability of the Oromo to cultivate the land. He asked them, “why they grow no crops, for the soil was fertile and water plentiful. They could only give as a reason that their fathers and grand fathers never had done so. This may have been reasonable where intertribal warfare was the order of the day, but as under Menelik’s rule peace reigns and taxes are paid, there seems no excuse for their laziness and apathy [sic].”⁷⁷

Wellby’s gaze was even more captivated more by the beauty of the Lake and the story he heard about its islands as being home to hidden treasures from the 16th century.

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He reiterated the story he heard about the islands and the “hidden treasures” the following way:

About the middle of the sixteenth century, Gagn, or Gragye, Mohammed, a powerful chief of Danakil, invaded and devastated the country, and hid for safety on those islands an immense quantity of treasure, the results of his plunder. This wealth remained hidden without attracting the curiosity of any of the Shoan kings till the beginning of this century, when King Sahala Selase...made determined but ineffectual attempts to recover these riches. The treasure must, therefore, still be hidden there...a good find for someone.⁷⁸

Wellby's story was not necessarily accurate nor was he able to sail to the islands for “the east wind which blew caused waves sufficiently strong to swamp my little canvas bond.”⁷⁹ As for the mainland, Wellby noted:

The climate was perfection. It seemed remarkable to me that the Waliyu [Wayu] Arussi Gallas [Oromo] who dwelt in the neighborhood, and who are subject to Menelik, had made no use of the water which had been given to them for irrigating the land and growing crops, for the people are exceedingly poor, possessing scarcely any clothing. Beyond the possession of few goats, donkeys of good breed, and a few ponies, they have to a large extent to depend upon the chase for an existence. They hunt the elephant and hartebeest on horseback, and differ from the Hamaran Arabs in their method of dispatching their victims, for they use the spear instead of the sword.⁸⁰

The Gambo Oromo lived just south of the Wayu whom Wellby described as “equally poor” as the Wayu to the north but not as hospitable. Wellby's destination was the lakes of Hora [Abijata] and Lumina [Shalla] farther south where he witnessed “thousands of flesh-coloured birds” and “many antelopes scattered off across the plain.” He also met a “hunting party of the Arussi ... [who,] armed with spears and shields ... had been out for several days, and were somewhat disheartened at their ill-luck in finding no elephants.”⁸¹

From the lakes, Wellby proceeded in a south-westerly direction to present day Arsi Negelle where the “Tuki” [Utta] Oromo lived. He described the Utta as herders and

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hunters, as well as having good relationship with Menilek, and their Gurage neighbors to the west from whom they bought grain in exchange for livestock. He remarked:

If they [the Utta Oromo] kill an elephant, one tusk is sent to Menelik and the other they sell to men from Addis Ababa for forty or fifty dollars or a cow, according to the size of the tusk. Menelik in return for every tusk gave them a ring, to be worn in the lobe of the ear. Some of the men wore metal bands round the wrist, each representing the death of a lion, elephant, or man.⁸²

From Utta country, Wellby proceeded westwards to Wulbareg, traveling “through magnificent park-like country,” watered by the Jido River and plentifully stocked with game—large and small koodoos, hartebeest, gazelle, and elephants, and inhabited by “other small tribes the Addari and Waragi [probably referring to the Qabena or Alaba or Silti].”⁸³ Traveling through open plains of grass and bush-land, Wellby crossed the river Shashago to Kambata and reached Wolayta, which he described as “one of the most beautiful parts of Abyssinia.” According to him Wolayta farmers cultivated a range of crops such as *enset*, tobacco, limes, ginger, raspberries, and a delicious vegetable called *goderi* [yam].⁸⁴

In Wolayta, Wellby was struck by the relative intensity of its agriculture and by the market, its organization, its size, and the unit of money used for transaction that he noted was unique to the region. The products transacted in the market comprised sorghum, barley, ginger, onions, skins, cotton, cattle, sheep, goats and ponies as well as buttons and beads, for which the people used *dorma* to buy and sale their products.⁸⁵

Wellby’s one and a half-month journey from Zequala to Wolayta provide a rare glimpse of valley landscape, scenery, and people in the late-19th century. It reinforces, as we shall see below, the view from oral histories that depict the valley as a distinctly

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pastoral landscape in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Wellby's narrative also provides unique, though not equally detailed, information regarding the degree to which game hunting and transaction of so-called natural products like ivory and rhino horn fashioned local political economy.

Scholars, working within the perspective of state expansionism, have depicted a linear trajectory in the declining game frontiers and trade in natural products in the Ethiopian region. Charles McClellan, for example, explained Ethiopia's declining game frontier as resulting from the availability of firearms and the state's voracious appetite for revenue.⁸⁶ The scanty evidence from the valley could help re-examine previous explanations by broadening the question to look into local participation, and patterns of change within local economies. Indeed, Wellby's accounts are indicative of valley populations' own involvement in hunting and the transaction of natural products in the Ethiopian region.

Not many Europeans followed Wellby's footsteps to give us further evidence so as to trace patterns of change in valley landscape history in the first two decades of the 20th century. Arnold Hodson, Wellby's fellow countryman, who traveled southern Ethiopia in the early-20th century, followed the highlands trails and avoided the valley altogether.⁸⁷ The next generation of western observers to actually visit the valley were the German Max Gruhl and the Americans Louis Furetes and Wilfred Osgood in the 1920s.⁸⁸ By the time these westerners visited the valley, the game, such as elephants, rhino and the lions Wellby saw in the late-19th century, must have disappeared completely. Gruhl witnessed flocks of cranes, marabouts, ibises, bustards, hornbills and other birds but not elephants or rhinos.⁸⁹ Furetes and Osgood also witnessed and painted different kinds of birds but no game. They observed the prevalence of animal husbandry in almost the same way as

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Gruhl described his journey south from Mojo as “A wonderful journey...across a wide plain populated by numerous herds of cattle belonging to the Galla [Oromo].” The only farm Gruhl mentioned was that of a certain Herr X (Ehm), a German Chemist who owned a farm on the southern shore of Lake Zway. The farm grew vegetables such as tomatoes and the collection of milk from the local Oromo women that Ehm and his wife sold to Addis Ababa’s foreign residents.⁹¹

With the apparent exception of the commercial farm owned by Ehm, the portion of the valley the German anthropologist visited (extending between Mojo and Lake Langano) still was a pastoral landscape by the 1920s. From his vantage point in Adami Tullu and sitting on a “rocky perch” one day, Gruhl witnessed:

An entire Arusi clan [migrating]...with all their belongings—cattle included—in search of new pastures. This country is in a state of continual change—the movement of whole nations, clans, families, and individuals. These migrations are rendered necessary by the difficulties attendant upon the fight for a living. Agriculture is impossible to any important extent in the sterile lands of the Great Rift. A pastoral life is the only feasible one here; and that means nomadism. Even white settlers must submit to this decree of nature if they wish to live and work in this country.⁹²

Indeed cattle herding unlike game hunting, which must have waned in the first several decades of the 20th century, proved to be an enduring and dominant activity in most of the valley until the late-1920s or early-1930s. However, the early-20th century might also have seen the beginning of crop-based agriculture in parts of the valley, albeit in few localities and/or as a supplement to animal husbandry. The best, yet brief, documented evidence for that come from the observations of the British traveler C.H. Stigand. Passing through Wulbareg, in the western part of the valley in 1907, Stigand witnessed a

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flourishing crop agriculture in the area remarkably distinctly from what Wellby observed a decade ago. Stigand described Wulbareg as a “well cultivated low-country” with “old cattle tracks, showing that at one time these people must have had much cattle, where now they have but few.”⁹³

Unfortunately, Stigand does not dwell on the subject in any good detail to help us reconstruct Wulbareg’s seemingly unique transformation, the type of crops cultivated, and its relatively rapid pace of transformation from the rest of the valley. Neither Gruhl nor Fuertes and Osgood managed to visit Wulbareg, which lied west in the lowlands and further away from the trails they took in the east. Therefore, any attempt to reconstruct the agricultural history of the valley at a time when documented evidence (both from travel narratives or archives) is rare should rely on oral history.⁹⁴

My attempt at tracing earliest expansion of crop agriculture, dynamics of farming practices, the “age” of any number of cultivars and their methods of cultivation, forest size and type of trees, and land-people ratio in the early-20th century was not always a success. Informants generally narrate a broader picture of the landscape, herd size, and crop type but were less informed about the genealogy of cultivars, yield, and even forest size. Around Mareqo, in the western part of the valley, informants (mainly ethnic Mareqo) noted that their forefathers were cattle herders at the time of Shawan conquest in the late-19th century. The same question could be answered differently by Silti informants who now inhabit part of the Mareqo Ridge alongside with the Mareqo. To them one talks about the expansion of chili pepper production rather than the crops’ “age” or arrival to the area which they consider is endemic.⁹⁵

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maize, potato, or onion, whose cultivation they traced to specific decades with relative certainty. According to the majority of my Arsi Negelle informants, crop-agriculture has a relatively short and easily traceable history. Maize is the oldest crop in the sub-region, dating back to the 1930s when few farmers began growing it small-scale. In the decade following the Italian occupation maize quickly emerged as the dominant field crop in Arsi Negelle alongside with beans, peas, and some wheat. Potato and onion, were late-comers, arriving only in the 1960s and 1980s, respectively. Interestingly, informants traced the genealogy of maize, potato, and onion to Wolayta; building on closer cultural and economic ties they traced back to the second half of the 19th century.⁹⁶

In the northern part of the valley, Ada-Lume farmers gave similar testimonies to such matters as the role of livestock in the farm economy or the way Ada's role as supplier of food stuffs to the imperial court in the late-19th and early-20th century impacted crop choice or land use (see Chapter 2). They also provided generally useful information regarding field organization and type of crops (cultivated and abandoned), although their descriptions of crop yield, labor organization, and related matters is very general at best.⁹⁷

For example, many talked about the progressive increase in *tef* and wheat production throughout the 20th century but provided little information regarding size of cultivated land, extent of land based resources such as wooded land and pasture, and mechanisms for regulating access to resource use, yield or income in the past. Emigrant farmers also remembered the kind (and means) of land they occupied, what they planted on it first, and when they switched to the cultivation of one or another crop that have come to dominate their farm plots by the close of the 20th century.⁹⁸

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century) ecology showed considerable localized variation. Far too often, informants described an epistemology and practice that took into consideration competition over agricultural resources (such as land and labor), soil quality, and rainfall variability as essential elements fashioning production organization during their life time. When pieced together their testimonies are useful for reconstructing change and continuity in valley agriculture and ecology throughout the 20th century. Their testimonies suggest that the agricultural history of the valley is wrapped up with the specific trajectory of crop-livestock change, one whose outcome was mediated not only by the seemingly conservative factors of soil fertility or rainfall availability, but also by politics and markets. They are also indicative of the saliency of local action and broader interactions in fashioning regional variations of ecological change.

For the sake of convenience, I have divided the valley into three sub-regions to show both the overlapping as well as distinct trajectories in valley agricultural change. The three sub-regions comprised: Ada-Lume in the north, the region between the river Awash and Lake Awasa in the south, and the plains stretching from Mareqo to Alaba in the west.⁹⁹

Land-use: Ada-Lume's weakly-integrated crop-livestock agriculture

By the late-19th and early-20th century, Ada-Lume agriculture was characterized by increasing crop cultivation and a strong presence of a livestock sector. Historically, Ada-Lume farmers developed distinct land use strategies that resonated well with the demands of expanding crop agriculture and a living animal husbandry. In particular Ada farmers had to synchronize cultivation with the seasons because Ada's predominantly black soils

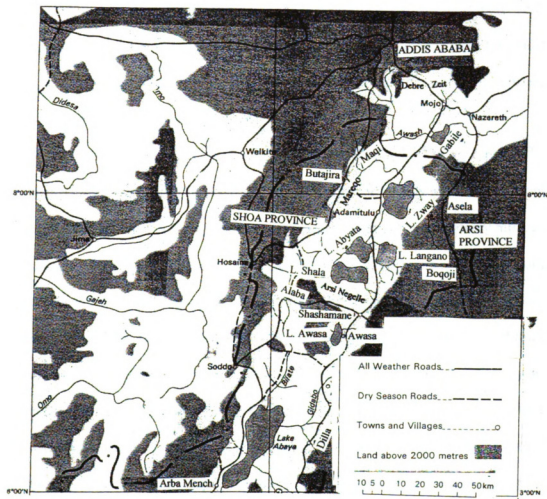


Figure 2 South-central Rift Valley: location
Adapted from Makin, Development Prospects, p.5.

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logged water during the rainy seasons (June through September) that was dangerous for the kind of cereals they cultivated.¹⁰⁰

Most of Ada's plains turn into swampy fields for a good three to four months of the year. During those months and until the water evaporated farmers avoided cultivating those fields altogether and concentrated on the slopes and the highlands. When the water receded, they turned some of those fields into crop lands but only marginally and on a temporary basis whenever they felt the need to fallow their upland plots for a relatively extended period of time (5-15 years). Otherwise the plains served as long-term pasture for the relatively large herd of cattle they raised.

The most important crop most Ada-Lume farmers cultivated in the early-20th century were barley, *tef*, chickpea and wheat. *Tef* was important mainly as a "tribute-crop" while most rural cuisine comprised barley and livestock products (most notably milk and butter). Chickpea was both an important marketed- and "fertilizer-" crop specifically cultivated to replenish the soil (with nitrogen). Ada farmers did not explain the nitrogen fixing quality of the crop in the language of bioscience but they knew very well its value through practice. They learned that the legume's cultivation helped restore soil fertility as yield in major crops like *tef* increased after the land was set aside for chickpea production first or at regular intervals of 1-2 production seasons.¹⁰¹ The farmers' repeated the cycle for many years before they set the land fallow. During those years the farmers did not abandon crop-agriculture altogether but they might scale it down by colonizing a piece of land which they would exploit only for the duration of the fallow (often ranging from 5-15 years). In the new farm, farmers repeated the same process, starting with chickpea (which they used as a pioneer crop to "tame" the land) followed by *tef* or wheat.¹⁰² In

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modern parlance we can call Ada-Lume's late 19th and early-20th field organization a variation of long-fallow agriculture that is common in areas of acute labor shortage and "undeveloped" farm technology but available land.

Historically, Ada-Lume's agriculture and land-use techniques evolved in the context outlined above. Therefore, at any point in time in the mid- or late-19th century, the proportion of cultivated area to Ada or Lume's total land mass may be relatively small. But this does not mean that the rest of the land was unused or outside of the community's short- or long-term economic or political interests. Rather, as could be seen from Ada-Lume farmers' day to day activities or the manner in which they defended (and sometimes expanded) their territory from others (such as the Karayu Oromo) who claimed access to their environmental resources for most of the 19th century, the short- and long-term interests as well as the economic and political ones had always been important in local understandings of resource use and entitlement.

It is interesting to note that several of my Ada-Lume informants, like those in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo explained change in their agrarian ecology by narrating the link between crop and livestock agriculture or cropland and pasture. This group of informants explained long-term change in light of recent dearth in livestock resources. They remarked that most early-20th century Ada-Lume farmers possessed on average 18-24 head of cattle, which they maintained, was possible because pasture was not a problem. But when I asked them if they would have wished to live like their predecessors none responded on the affirmative.¹⁰³ Others explained change in localized agriculture not necessarily from the perspective of crop land pasture but from the vantage point of the expansion of crop agriculture such as in terms of crop types and cultivated area.

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According to the second group of informants what distinguished late-19th and early-20th century Ada-Lume agriculture was the sub-region's limited cereal agric culture compared to what they generally referred to as its rapid expansion in the one decade before and after the coming of the Italians (in 1936).¹⁰⁴

Though each group differed in the criteria they used to measure change, they reached at the same place with respect to the landscape or aspects of ecology management. From their descriptions, it is clear that the evolving land use practices of late-19th and early-20th century Ada-Lume farmers and herders, with limited crop agriculture and the utilization of the commons for pasturage lent the landscape a distinct feature, one that could be easily mistaken by outside observers as unutilized or inefficiently exploited. While Traversi exclaimed the diversity of Ada agriculture stating that, "Besides the fields where grain is already dry, another where it is scarcely germinated, another where it is scarcely grown its stalk,"¹⁰⁵ Cappucci, on the other hand remarked that: "...it is difficult to put more land in production because of their not having the custom of cutting the straw to give the livestock in the dry season, in which vegetation is scarce; they oblige themselves to take a large piece of land to maintain livestock there in which they live together as pasture."¹⁰⁶ For government land assessors, who judged land ownership or productivity by the degree to which it is cultivated, Ada-Lume's vast uncultivated fields could simply go down as vacant or unutilized.¹⁰⁷

To late-19th and early-20th century Ada-Lume farmers, however, the uncultivated fields were important resources used for seasonal exploitation and pasture or reserved for future use. According to the majority of my informants, livestock were valued property in the late-19th century, shaping, in turn, land use and resource allocation. Historically most

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Ada-Lume farmers cultivated the land they owned as personal property, and enjoyed collective rights over the commons that were meant for pasture. Therefore, they were both cultivators and herders who, like their northern Shawa counterparts did not apply manure to maintain soil fertility but practiced legume planting, fallow, and crop rotation for that purpose.¹⁰⁸

An equally interesting aspect of Ada-Lume's late 19th century economy is the degree to which it interacted with other regional economies. The interlinkage was particularly strong in terms of trade and population mobility. In the late-19th century, Ada's markets attracted traders from as far as Arsi, Gurage, Hadiya and northern Shawa. Ada supplied grain, particularly chickpea (that was highly demanded by some, most notably Gurage) in exchange for clothing, the most demanded coming from as far as Wolayta and Gojjam, and cattle coming from Arsi.¹⁰⁹ Traversi may be underestimating the significance and extent of Ada's markets when he remarked that:

Relative to the country, the market is rich, but not because of its people who gather there: for a sack of berbere or for a handful of dry chickpeas would 20 people come from 20 kilometers distance? Likewise would they come from Gurage to carry [back] a cloth of black cabbage? What impressed me was the cattle of Arussi, which truly surprised in a country like this, where the herds are generally of skin and bones... There comes in second line... cloth from Gojjam, which here is quite esteemed, then skins, horses, mules, pepper, and grains.¹¹⁰

Ada-Lume attracted not only products but also farmers and herders who moved to the region in a temporary or permanent bid to exploit its land-based resources. A growing number of individual farmers began migrating to Ada-Lume starting from the turn of the 19th century, but their numbers remained significantly small up until the 1940s.¹¹¹

Ethnically, the immigrants were diverse but included Oromo, Amhara, Wolayta and

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others who found in Ada-Lume's evolving *qalad* tenure and its potentially attractive cereal agriculture a viable outlet.¹¹²

Ecology management: livestock production in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo

If Ada-Lume's agrarian ecology showed a degree of uniqueness by its cereal-legume agriculture and livestock production that of Arsi Negelle was considerably different. The valley between the river Awash in the north and Lake Awasa in the south was a pastoral landscape in the late-19th and early-20th centuries with no cultivation practiced by its Oromo inhabitants.¹¹³

Consequently, instead of land livestock took center-stage in traditional Arsi Negelle understanding of capital, resource use, and ecology management. My Arsi Negelle informants commented that late-19th and early-20th century households owned on average 60-90 head of cattle and several dozens of goats. Few owned less than 40 or 50 head of cattle and they were not considered rich whereas those who owned several hundred (they noted some had as many as 400) were considered wealthy.¹¹⁴

It is not clear from their description how local society managed grazing rights but it seemed apparent that clan (*gosa*) rights were paramount. The same informants identified two major clans (namely Utta and Wayu) and twenty sub-clans for the entire region south of the Awash. Individuals identified themselves first by their sub-clan (*ibbidda*) and then by their clan. Each clan had its own traditional law (*sera*) that governed a range of issues from access to resource control to dealing with crime and marriage. Therefore, individual Arsi Negelle herders only had usufruct rights over the commons whose ultimate ownership belonged to the sub-clan and the clan itself.¹¹⁵

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Unsurprisingly therefore, my informants responded to questions like “what was the average size of land owned by early-20th century farmers” with ease and an answer that does not resonate with survey forms adopted from economists. Certainly the idiom used by valley farmers to express “ownership” and right of access to resources is different from “modern” categories and vernaculars. Later in the postwar period, valley farmers began to measure their land with *temad* and *gasha*, and my informants remembered how average land holdings first increased (approximately from one to three *temad*) and reached its highest point around the late-1950s. Then farmers’ holdings started to decline by more than one hundred percent in their lifetime, often from 8 *temad* by the 1950s and 1960s to only 4 and 2 *temad* by the close of the 20th century.¹¹⁶

My informants also explained change between the “past” and the “present” by limited mobility. They defined late-19th century patterns of access to resource use as characterized by internal mobility, the availability of the commons that could be “freely” exploited by valley Oromo communities as well as highland Arsi herders. It is striking to note that historically Utta and Wayu communities considered themselves and their ecology as part of, indeed an extension of Arsi highland environment and society. Therefore, they generally welcomed highland Arsi herders who migrated to the valley to graze their livestock during and immediately after the rainy seasons that start in July. In turn, valley herders also migrated to the Arsi highlands to graze their livestock during the relatively harsh summer between April and June.¹¹⁷

Consequently, the number of livestock the valley sustained and its human population fluctuated frequently, increasing during and immediately after the rainy season (July to October) and declining considerably during the long summer season (November to June).

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During the rainy season the sprouting grasses and shrubs attracted herders from Arsi's highlands where the men housed several wives. The latter descended to the valley with one of their wives and their entire livestock destined to stay there for one season before migrating back to the highlands in November.¹¹⁸

Utta and Wayu communities also maintained close economic ties with others most notably the Wolayta and the Gurage to the west. Valley Oromo dietary habits were based on the consumption of milk products, honey, goat meat, barley, and corn flour. The bulk of the meat and milk products were produced locally whereas barley and maize were acquired through exchange from neighboring and distant communities. Arsi Negelle pastoralists forged close relationship with their keens in the highlands of Arsi (most notably Sirka) from whom they acquired barley in exchange for butter, and with Wolayta from where they acquired corn flour and clothing in exchange for cattle. According to my Arsi Negelle informants, all the clothing as well as most of the corn flour came from Wolayta where they had close cultural and trading ties. At times those linkages were further augmented by marriage alliances. Late-19th century Utta and Wayu (Arsi Negelle) *Abba Gada*, by the name of Turi Gobana Robe, was married to King Tona's (Wolayta) daughter, and it was common practice for individuals from both communities to constantly travel to and stay in individual domiciles at the time.¹¹⁹

Also according to my informants, Arsi Negelle farmers got their first maize seeds from Wolayta in the late-1920s or early-1930s. They related that the regions' visitors and traders brought the seed with them and test-planted it in Arsi Negelle.¹²⁰ One of my informants even claimed that his own father was among the pioneer maize cultivators in the entire Arsi Negelle region who had begun cultivating the crop just a few years prior to

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Once introduced, maize became a profitable crop to Arsi Negelle farmers. But, as we shall see later, it took several decades before the crop won the landscape, commensurate with the expansion of the food market, changing tenural practices, and intervention regimes all of which were biased to crop agriculture.¹²²

The expansion of crop agriculture was attended by change in farm technology allowing the entrenchment of the ox-plow as the dominant tool for cultivation. Like maize, Arsi Negelle farmers acquired the plow from the Wolayta about the same time as crop technology. However, at first it was difficult for Arsi Negelle farmers to acquire the *marasha* (the iron tip of the plow), forcing them to use the hoe as *marasha* or without its iron tip. My informants contended that initially the fertility of the land made it easier for farmers to cultivate the soil with a wooden-plow or the hoe, before the iron plow became readily available in the postwar period.¹²³

In addition to Ada-Lume and Arsi Negelle, Mareqo provides yet another example to understand dynamics of localized agro-economies within the valley itself. By the late-19th and early-20th centuries Mareqo agriculture generally resembled that of Arsi Negelle, but it also showed a degree of uniqueness. Like Arsi Negelle, cattle herders inhabited Mareqo with average herd size between 50 to 60 head of cattle per household.¹²⁴ Unlike Arsi Negelle, where informants described the genealogy of maize relatively clearly, those in Mareqo posited different, though not necessarily contradictory, picture regarding chili pepper—their most important crop by the second half of the 20th century.

Home to ethnic Mareqo at least since the early-19th century, the region began to attract highland immigrants (mainly from Masqan and Silti) since the second decade of the 20th

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century. Distinctly from the Mareqo who were cattle herders, the migrating highlanders (who had been practicing *enset* and crop agriculture before) took up farming as they settled in the Mareqo lowlands. Consequently, Mareqo agriculture evolved within this unique interface between the lowland and highland populations. It may not be by accident, therefore, that amidst the dominant narrative that depicts Mareqo as a pastoral landscape emerges a parallel narrative that posits the prevalence of crop agriculture that could be tentatively traced back to the 1920s. The distinction also showed some geographic semblance indicating that the areas closer to the highlands (probably as far south as present day Qoshe town) might have been cultivated early than those to the south of it.¹²⁵

Notwithstanding those variations, the majority of my Mareqo informants, however, concurred that crop-agriculture had started in the region prior to the coming of the Italians in 1936. Probably the “first” crops Mareqo farmers cultivated were sorghum and chili pepper, although some indicated that early-20th century Mareqo farmers also cultivated maize and *tef*. Many of my elderly informants (over 65 years of age) did remember that their parents cultivated chili pepper and sorghum but only in small quantities. From their testimonies, it appears that the 1920s and 1930s seem to have witnessed a slow expansion of crop agriculture, but it was in the decades following the Italian occupation that the cultivation of chili pepper and maize took a leap and became the dominant cultivated crops in Mareqo.¹²⁶

An interesting aspect of post-1930 Mareqo agricultural history is the tendency to integrate crop and livestock production. This interaction between crop and livestock manifested itself most in farmers’ propensity to use manure to enhance soil fertility on

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crop fields. Unlike Shawa where farmers used cow dung for fuel, 1930s Mareqo was not short of wood. But it was the limited nature of crop agriculture and the low crop-land ratio both chili pepper and maize cultivation demanded at the time that permitted manuring as a viable alternative for maintaining soil fertility and increasing yield in prewar Mareqo agriculture.¹²⁷

In sum, three factors dominated the explanations I was offered for the shape and course valley agriculture and ecological history took by the late-19th and early-20th centuries. First and foremost is the key role animal husbandry played in fashioning land use and production organization. Livestock's position in valley agriculture and its place in the social construction of wealth remained central in the epistemologies and practices of valley populations at least up to the 1930s.

Second, valley herders and farmers also showed limited interest in venturing on crop agriculture at least by the early 1930s. If interest in crop agriculture showed considerable localized variation in almost all cases it had to be carefully calibrated to that of livestock production and the maintenance of soil fertility.

Third, intimately related to both points raised above is the link between the seasons and aspects of ecology control and management. Late-19th and early-20th century valley herders and farmers defined the seasons based on rainfall variability not only to determine the availability of resources (like pasture and water or soil moisture) but also of the ecology of human disease, most notably malaria.

To begin with the first point, informants in all the three sub-regions described above talked about the key place livestock occupied in localized agriculture and land use practices. In the late-19th and first third of the 20th century, cattle herding was the

dominant economic activity in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo. In Ada-Lume too, livestock comprised a strong component, impacting land use and labor organization.

As I will show later in greater detail, shaping valley agricultural transformation in the post-1930 period were changing tenural regimes and an expanding food market in Ethiopia's growing urban centers (most notably that of Addis Ababa). Valley herders and farmers responded to such changes pro-actively, either through increasing land under cultivation (as was the case in Ada-Lume) or by integrating crops such as maize and chili pepper to their once livestock centered production organization (in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo). At sites of production, therefore, if the use-value of livestock shaped aspects of land use and patterns of agricultural change in the valley in the first third of the 20th century, concern about soil fertility impacted the pace of the expansion of crop agriculture in its own way. Consequently, identifying which soil type is good for a given crop required constant testing and improvisation. Indeed farmers' crop choices and selection of new cultivars was anything but straightforward. It required constant preparation of the field and planting until the soil gets "used to the crops" (*maretu eskilamd*-Amharic). Informants talked of the land not as a *tabula rasa* that could simply be cleared and planted to grow any kind of crops, but as a resource that needed to be "tamed" and "(re) processed" to grow crops.

But this task of taming and reprocessing of the land required labor and technology that was not always easy to come by. For example, as I have indicated earlier, for Arsi Negelle farmers, acquiring the plow was more difficult at first than possessing a pair of oxen as they began to increase their crop fields in the 1940s. In Ada-Lume, developing a mechanism for draining the marshy fields or for that matter the constant need for it

required a new kind of mobilization and redefinition of terms of access to resource use which awaited external intervention in the part of the government. In short, the processes involved for “taming” a given piece of land and make it “fertile” or suitable for the cultivation of old or new cultivars as well as maintaining soil fertility required fresh rearrangements of labor and technology.

Based on existing vegetation patterns and experience, early-20th century Ada-Lume farmers knew that wooded land was more “fertile” than grassland and they looked to it whenever they felt the need for bringing more land under cultivation. Unlike late-20th century farmers who explained rainfall variability at least in part to the presence or lack thereof trees and vegetation, a knowledge, it seems apparent, they have now acquired from agents of bioscientific agriculture, early-20th century Ada-Lume farmers did not readily understand the link between forests and rainfall. Rain fall from the sky and the power to give or deny it was vested on the sky god (*waqa*). But unlike rainfall, farmers very well understood that soil fertility is as much their own making as it was a gift of nature. As such, they regulated soil fertility in different ways. As indicated above, Ada-Lume farmers’ practice of legume planting and fallow or Mareqo use of manure was a conscious move by farmers to preserve soil fertility and enhance crop productivity.

In addition to soil fertility, informants also underscored human and cattle diseases, soil moisture, and rainfall availability as reasons for planting particular crops, for not planting crops, or for seasonally exploiting land-based resources and human settlement. For example, the prevalence of the anopheles mosquito that caused malaria in most of the valley seem to have conditioned herders’ and farmers’ resource use strategies throughout the first half of the 20th century.

Information regarding the degree to which the prevalence of malaria affected herders and farmers' production organization and ecology control in the late-19th or early-20th century is hard to come by. Informants described the potency of the mosquito and referred to malaria as a common health hazard for most of the prewar period. From their testimonies, it appears that in general the valley's late-19th and early-20th century herders and farmers alike knew that geographically the mosquito is particularly active around marshy lands, and temporally after the rainy season and following an abrupt increase in temperature. They tried to avoid the marshy fields as much as possible.¹²⁸

Aside from human disease (most notably malaria), informants also noted the prevalence (and at times devastating impact) of cattle diseases, most notably rinderpest and anthrax (*abba sanga* and *dasta*) throughout the first half of the 20th century. But they offered very little information regarding the seriousness of cattle diseases, the manner and degree to which they impacted ecology control or the traditional coping mechanisms to dwell on the subject in any good detail.¹²⁹

Rather it is in the area of resource use and rainfall variability that informants offered some useful information. In Ada, as we have already noted, soil moisture was detrimental to farm organization. The turning of most of Ada's plains into marshy lands during and immediately after the rainy season meant that crop agriculture was often confined to the high grounds and slopes. Ada's vertisols were suitable for the cultivation of *tef* and chickpea but the organization of the fields and the timing for planting the crops had to be adjusted to the seasons. Ada-Lume gets most of its rains between June and September. Therefore, land preparation and harvesting had to be calibrated carefully to the seasons. The production of the major crops-- wheat and *tef*-- stood center-stage in shaping farmers

decision about land use as well as labor allocation. Chickpea was considered as a secondary crop key to restoring soil fertility.¹³⁰

The link between rainfall, soil type and land use was equally pronounced south of the Awash where crop agriculture did not start, and animal husbandry remained the dominant activity up to around 1930. Just like their Ada-Lume contemporaries, Arsi Negelle herders depended on the seasons to exploit grazing resources. Neither of the two communities developed a strategy of stubble feeding but migrated between the lowlands and the highlands in search of seasonal grazing. During the rainy seasons the valley provided ample fodder to livestock. During the dry season, valley herders migrated to different places in the southern highlands to graze their cattle. Such practices of valley herders not only ensured a relatively efficient exploitation of resources across wider ecological zones but also it reinforced close relationships between communities and their diverse landscapes unbounded by political boundaries.

Beginning around 1930 such traditional practices based on frequent mobility and seasonal exploitation of broader ecological niches and resources entered into a new phase as dynamics of crop and livestock agriculture as well as access to resource control changed swiftly. The impact of the transforming Ethiopian state and its political economy was crucial in that respect.

Conclusion

Compared to the surrounding highlands (most notably that of Shawa) the recorded evidence for reconstructing the valley's late-19th and early- 20th century agricultural history is not rich. Very few of the European travelers chose to explore valley landscape

and its, by their standard, not impressive agriculture and politics. The only exception to that may be the British Wellby whose narrative is particularly useful to understand aspects of the peopling of the region and the larger picture of production organization and ecology management by the close of the 19th century.

By comparison the spoken evidence is relatively coherent and satisfactory. I have used the scanty evidence from travel narratives and oral history to enunciate aspects of valley environmental history in relation to the coterminous highlands to show paths of interaction and interdependence across ethno- and land-scapes until around 1930

A striking feature of valley agriculture during this period has been the slow expansion of crop-based agriculture. I have shown the extent to which livestock production and limited crop agriculture hinged on land use, climate, and property entitlement rights by looking at three relatively distinct sub-regions namely Ada-Lume, Mareqo, and Arsi Negelle.

All the three sub-regions exhibited a strong presence of a living livestock sector in the four decades covered in this chapter, but differed significantly in the degree to which they practiced crop agriculture. Ada-Lume had the largest crop fields in the early-20th century, and crop agriculture rather than livestock production was central to local understanding of environmental resource use. Crop agriculture's contour, in turn, depended on moisture, availability of labor, farm technology, and Ada-Lume's diverse landscape that permitted allocation of resources for different use in relatively shorter distances between *daga* (highland), *wayna-daga* (transitional zone), and *qolla* (lowland) climate. Most of Ada-Lume's crop fields this time were based in the highlands and slopes that were relatively less vulnerable to the vertisols water logging ability that was dangerous to tef. The

availability of uncultivated lands in the plains and lowlands allowed Ada-Lume farmers to raise livestock as an integral part of the farm economy. They were also a vital resource that could be used as a retreat whenever the farmers felt the need to “rest” their cultivated fields at regular intervals once in many years.

South of the Awash, in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo, the mundane plains and grassland environment was best for livestock rather than crop production at this time.

Consequently, Arsi Negelle Oromo populations developed a strategy whereby they exploited resources specifically for livestock production while maintaining close relationships with their highland neighbors to acquire grain. Rather than owning land individually, they bestowed entitlement rights to the community. Yet Arsi Negelle was not an egalitarian society with any differentiation in terms of capital or power.

The same was true for Mareqo. None the less, Mareqo differed from Arsi Negelle in that the lowlands had began to attract Silti and Gurage cultivators from the highlands who would work to change its landscape along the lines we saw in Ada-Lume and which Arsi Negelle would follow soon. But before I discuss those changes in each sub-region, let me step back and explain the valley’s incorporation into the Ethiopian state structure in the late-19th century. As I will show in the next chapter (and subsequent ones state expansionism and the resultant changes in terms of resource entitlement rights were arguable the most detrimental factors that shaped the process of valley agricultural change throughout the twentieth century.

CHAPTER TWO

HERDERS, CULTIVATORS, AND POLITICIANS: VALLEY ENCOUNTER WITH THE TRANSFORMING ETHIOPIAN STATE (1892-1916)

In the previous chapter I outlined aspects of valley agricultural change in the 1892-1935 period, juxtaposing it with developments in the broader Ethiopian region, specifically with the highlands surrounding it in all directions. The purpose was to detect similarities and differences as well as aspects of change as valley farmers applied acquired knowledge to produce and exchange as well as manage their ecologies.

As much as valley farmers, both as individuals and in groups, shaped and reshaped their ideologies and practices regarding production, resource use, and ecology management, they also responded pro-actively to the challenges and alternatives a transforming political economy posed throughout the 20th century. Indeed the fact that the economic foundations of the modern Ethiopian state was destined to be agriculture, and the fact that the majority of its subject populations were herders and cultivators meant that a direct relationship had been established between the state and its dependent rural populations. This was particularly true for the valley's farming populations and resources because of the regions' relative proximity to Shawa and their existing and potential productive capacity.

In this chapter, I attempt to illustrate the degree to which state transformation affected local production organization by presenting fresh challenges and alternatives to access to resource control, including land, labor, and output. I discuss the particular ways in which

the state incorporated the valley and the structures it put in place to sustain that control. I focus on the political infrastructure (known as *balabbat*) to show how as an institution that got its legitimacy from state expansionism *balabbat* and the local office holders' who took the same title from it, enabled the reconfiguration of new patterns of access to resource control in the valley. However, my primary interest is to unravel the changing rules of access to resource control and the competitions and contradictions that resulted from it became a catalyst for agricultural change and social transformation in the late-19th and early-20th century valley history. I explain those changes by looking at two broad categories. The first category relates to the specific arrangement in which the imperial court moved forcibly to allocate to itself distinct reserves of land and populations strictly meant for provisioning the royal court and its dependent populations in Addis Ababa. Labeled *madbet* (imperial pantry) and *waraganu* (royal pasture) these lands and their respective populations became feeders of the royal court for most of the prewar period.

The second category I examine to unpack the interface between the politics of resource control and local agricultural change relates to the forging of different types of land and what social actors made of them. Consequently, new categories of land emerged labeled *samon* (reserved for the clergy or the church itself), *malkagna* or *balabbat* (meant for the administrative elite and their subject populations), and government land, ostensibly unoccupied land which the state could provisionally grant to its own servicemen (often in the form of *madarya*) or sale to farmers. None of these landed-categories enjoyed identical rights and prerogatives regarding ownership or tributes. Neither were all the categories prevalent in the entire valley uniformly. For example, *samon* land that dominated Ada did not exist in the valley south of the Awash in the

entire prewar period. Likewise, *madarya*, which was common in Ada and Lume, was a rarity in Arsi Negelle where *balabbat* and *waraganu* prevailed.

While those distinctions were important for shaping the parameters of access to resource control, and ultimately agricultural transformation itself, two interrelated developments mediated the actual procedure of change on the ground. First, even if those labels tended to foster a semblance of fixed property entitlement rights, what they did in fact was anything other than accentuating the fluidity of those rights. Balabbat land, for example, denoted an administrative unit rather than an estate that could be willfully claimed by the local elite. The fluidity of property rights was even much more pronounced in so-called government land. Unless otherwise sold to individual cultivators, government land in fact attracted a host of claimants such as *madarya* holders and farmers alike who seized the apparent ambiguity on those lands to ensure property entitlement rights. *Madarya* holders deployed political capital (such as service to the government) as a means to promote their tribute exacting “rights” from the land and when possible convert it to *rist*. Farmers, on the other hand counted on their productive and tribute paying capacity to affirm their entitlement rights.

Secondly, even if the elite secured temporary land entitlement rights, those lands meant very little without labor. Availability of labor became crucial not only because of relatively low population density but also (and probably mainly) because the numerous tenural and tribute arrangements put in place, in turn, exacerbated shortage of labor by monopolizing it in the respective tenures. The elite mobilized labor either by recruiting farmers through contractual share-cropping arrangements or, in the case of prominent political officials, by obligating individual farmers to render free service (*corvee* labor)

on their respective estates (known as *hudad*) as part of the farmers' annual tribute obligation.

These two interrelated developments, the quest for securing land for tribute or production and the labor to utilize it fashioned agrarian transformation in the prewar period, exacerbating the battle for agricultural resources between the state, local and non-local elite, and farmers alike. I will discuss those contestations by unpacking the legislative measures the state introduced, and their causes and impacts on regulating access to resource control and power relations. I contend that the legislative measures were responses by the government to developments on the ground rather than reforms heralding fresh antecedents.

2.1 Problematizing conquest and state rule: valley incorporation into the Ethiopian state

The valley's incorporation into the expanding Ethiopian state system in the late-nineteenth century created a new kind of power arrangement and altered the texture of rural society in its wake. As a frontier adjacent to historic Shawa, the valley felt Shawa's political influence early on. This was particularly true for the region as far south as Mount Zequala and the islands of Lake Zway Shawan rulers considered as "lost" Christian settlements that they hoped to incorporate once again.¹ In fact, it seemed apparent that the Shawan kings looked at the Awash as their "natural" boundary as the Abbay was to Gojjam or Takaze to Tigray, although none were bounded by the rivers and individuals often wanted to cross them rather than follow their courses.

For how long the Shawan kings contemplated conquering the southern frontiers of

Shawa is not clear. The available evidence indicates that the Oromo north of the Awash had been paying tributes to Shawan kings intermittently at least from as early as the late-1830s. John Krapf listed Ada, among other neighboring Oromo regions, as tributary to Shawa in 1839.² W. Cornwallis Harris also noted that Lume was at one point tributary to Shawa until its chiefs abruptly refused to pay their due in 1841. According to him, a certain Gabru, governor of Menjar, was responsible for collecting the tributes from Lume chiefs and passing it over to Sahla Sellasie (king of Shawa). The Lume chiefs, in collaboration with Botha, chief of the Yarar Oromo, and the “Awash” Oromo chief, called off their tribute obligations and cut the trade route to Gurage.³ Sahla Sellasie responded by leading a punitive expedition against the rebellious Oromo rulers. Consequently, the king reinstated the tributary status of those Oromo regions and reopened the trade route to Gurage.⁴

Nonetheless in the long-term Shawa’s supremacy over Ada and Lume, like in its most dependent territories, often depended on the state’s own internal stability and its relative strength. It is not surprising therefore that whenever Shawa experienced severe problems of power transfer (most notably following the death of its warrior kings like Sahla Sellasie or in the wake of its invasion by Tewodros in 1855), its tributary chiefs rebelled against it costing the state to lose control of its dependent territories.⁵

When Shawa regained its stability and relative strength, its rulers resumed and even extended their conquest and attack all over again. That was exactly what happened when Haile Malakot took office in 1847. According to the Shawan historian Asma Gyorgis, among the regions the Shawan king attacked were Karayu, Lume, Abu, and Zequala, the same territories that once paid tribute to his predecessor.⁶ But, it was Menilek, son and

successor of Haile Malakot, who made a concerted effort to establish permanently Shawan and subsequently imperial supremacy over those regions and beyond. Yet by the time Menilek acceded to the imperial throne in 1889 the military phase of conquest was already over or seemed unnecessary for the region north of the Awash. The available evidence indicates that Ada and Lume may have been dependent territories or their chiefs had already established closer cultural and political ties with Shawa several decades before the 1880s.⁷ To what extent those cultural and political ties sustained and reinforced Shawan hegemony in Ada and Lume throughout the second half of the 19th century is difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless, by the 1870s Ada's dependency to Shawa had been firmly established, and the building of churches (which in fact had started back in the 1840s) and the allocation of land as *samon* and *madarya* were already well underway.⁸

Unlike Ada and Lume, however, the region south of the Awash remained outside of Shawa's influence and territorial interest until the late 1870s. Probably the first Shawan campaign across the Awash took place in December 1879 when Menilek personally led conquest of the Zway islands. The islands caught Menilek's attention most because there existed a Christian church, and treasures reportedly hidden from Ahmad Gagn's plunder in the early 16th century. Menilek succeeded in getting the submission of Alibo, the islands' chief. In return, the Shawan king re-appointed Alibo as Zay (as the Christian population of the island were known) *balabbat*.⁷ Menilek's Zway campaign was a success, but it did not result in the subjugation of the Oromo herding communities on the mainland. Neither did the king succeeded in recovering the "hidden" treasures, but did find "ancient" Christian books and a church in the island.⁹

Menilek's Zway campaign not only settled the exaggerated rumors about the islands' treasures but also, in a way, pointed the direction of Shawa's expansion. It may not be by accident therefore that Shawa's early 1880s conquest targeted Arsi. Highland Arsi conquest was probably the bloodiest of all, unmatched by the others in terms of its duration, intensity, and causality figures on both sides. Menilek's first serious attempt to subjugate the Arsi was made in 1882 though the region was not conquered until 1886.¹⁰ Compared to their kin in the highlands the Arsi in the valley submitted to Shawa peacefully.

The person responsible for leading the peaceful conquest of the valley south of the Awash was *Ras Gobana Daci*, the notable Shawan Oromo general and one of the leading architects of the modern state.¹¹ Gobana accomplished the task by approaching the local leaders and asking them to submit peacefully, which they did. In the eyes of the local politicians, peaceful submission was not a desperate move, or one made simply because they understood the military might of Shawa. Rather, what convinced the local elite to negotiate peace was the belief that by ceding some of their rights they thought they stood a better chance of retaining a measure of control over other areas they valued more.¹²

The local elite responsible for handling the threat that came from Gobana's forces, was a group of officials whose power, term of office, and legitimacy derived from sophisticated regulations that put in place a male-dominated, age-based, and clan-centered politico-administrative institution called *gada*.¹³ The same leaders had conducted a number of military campaigns before, sometimes defending themselves and their resources from outsiders, and at other times for securing more of the resources for themselves. Arsi (Utta and Wayu) oral tradition is replete with tales of internecine wars

that they fought against virtually all of their neighbors in all directions. *Gada* officials led many of those campaigns and managed to settle their scores at the battlefield or in the negotiating field.¹⁴ Yet, Arsi *gada* leadership found the new enemy to be not only militarily formidable but also politically shrewd.

Gada officials understood that what Gobana demanded from them was two things: acceptance of Shawan supremacy and, as a sign of this acceptance, submission of annual tributes, demands they found not easy but still negotiable. After long deliberations, not at all removed from an awareness of the consequences military resistance would entail, the local elite finally conceded to Gobana's request for peaceful submission.¹⁵

From a militaristic point of view *gada* officials' submission of the local elite to Gobana in the late-1880s or early-1890s marked the territorial incorporation of the region into the imperial state system, and the beginning of the end of localized independence.

Structurally, what was put in place to ensure state control and mediate the state-society relationship was the *balabbat* institution.¹⁷ South of the Awash in the valley the *balabbat* institution permitted some sort of compromise between the two competing forces. One side was imperial and aimed at forging local dependencies. The other side was regional and aimed at defending localized autonomy based on *gada* principles. For the Shawan forces, convincing, forcing or co-opting local elite to submit to dependency was always paramount.

For Menilek, whose ideology and practice of nation building relied on the simple logic of nurturing elite-based dependent networks and a mass-based tribute exaction system, the *balabbat* institution suited well. For the *gada* officials, on the other hand, the *balabbat* arrangement provided an alternative from the almost complete subjugation to

which resisting local leaders and communities had been subjected to. The valley's *gada* officials and their constituencies knew first hand the brutality of the Shawan forces from the devastation their kin had faced in highland Arsi fighting the conquerors in the early 1880s. Therefore if they opted for peaceful submission as a matter of military strategy, they also seized new developments to try to strike a balance. Rather than readily compromise the *gada* institution itself, valley politicians thought that they could still hold a niche for themselves and *gada* by allowing, albeit reluctantly, an otherwise parallel *balabbat* institution. Therefore, when Gobana demanded the designation of a traditionally recognizable political figure (preferably Jillo Roba, the *abba gada* or father of *gada* himself) as a leader, the *gada* officials delegated a hitherto less-known and apparently not influential figure in the region by the name of Tuke Mama as *balabbat*.¹⁷

Prior to his nomination Tuke did not occupy any political office in the *gada* structure. He was neither a warrior nor exceptionally rich, although some of my informants remarked his oratory skill. But none attributed to Tuke any special quality so as to make him an obvious candidate. Most remembered Tuke as an ordinary member of the community, and his candidacy for the new office radiated precisely from the fact that he was one among equals.¹⁸ Moreover, late-19th century *gada* officials and their constituencies considered Tuke and the new *balabbat* institution subordinate to *gada*. Hence, one cannot but surmise that, the *gada* leaders thought it might be possible to keep *gada* intact by ceding away only certain rights (like in agreeing to pay tribute) to the state. And indeed, neither conquest nor the *balabbat* power arrangement inflicted an instant damage to *gada*, which in fact continued to function well into the 1930s. Tuke himself, who was delegated to his *balabbat* office by the *gada* officials, was ready and

willing to work within rather than outside of the limits prescribed to him by the *Abba Gada*.¹⁹

However, contrary to existing *gada* rules whereby office was term-limited and the monopoly of only certain *gosa* (clan), Tuke's power and legitimacy sprang from fresh antecedents. Also, contrary to *gada* definition of territory, Tuke presided over a fairly large political unit. His seat was in Jiddo, just north of present day Arsi Negelle, until he was later transferred to Hosaina (in Kambata) as the territory he ruled expanded to include more territory and populations than any of the *gada* officials had previously ruled or even remotely anticipated to control.²⁰

Therefore, it was only a matter of time before the two institutions—*gada* and *balabbat*—would become competitive. In fact, it soon became clear that out of this new arrangement evolved a new generation of local elite who manipulated local politics, and who were ready to negotiate with the state to a far greater extent than were the *gada* officials. Initially the *balabbat* had a very limited authority and Tuke's responsibility was confined to the collection and passage of annual tributes to Addis Ababa. In the meantime, however, Tuke emerged as a mediator of state rule and the form it actually took at the local level. The state relied on the *balabbat* to acquire knowledge about the nature of localized land use practices and the acquisition of so-called unutilized land (*taf*) that it designated as government property.

Consequently, the *balabbat* Tuke became a key voice in generating information and knowledge about local society, and he brokered agreements with the state on matters like tributes and land entitlements on behalf of local society. By dint of his power, Tuke ceded a considerably large parcel of land (reportedly amounting to over 900 *gasha*) to

the government as unutilized or *taf*. Tuke also emerged as an able administrator who found a way to please both *gada* officials and the state, a skill that won him acceptance in Menilek's court and a "political wife" in the extended royal family.²¹ Tuke and his successors also used the *balabbat* institution for personal advancement. His son and successor Ambaye Tuke, for example, succeeded in amassing considerable power and wealth to become a notable figure in Addis Ababa. Indeed, transferring their political capital into an economic one (based on land), *balabbat* emerged as a formidable group in imperial Ethiopia's political and social landscape.

In government lexicon *balabbat* territory in the late-19th and early-20th century comprised a distinct administrative unit where local elite enjoyed considerable local autonomy as a reward for their willingness to submit peacefully and work with the state. The imperial state defined the *balabbat* as the ultimate arbiter of local society, who supposedly knew the extent of individual land holdings, "unoccupied" land and household capital for the purpose of levying tributes or taxes. The *balabbat* could do so by organizing a quasi-bureaucratic structure composed of subordinate local officials who took care of matters related to land and tribute.²²

Therefore, *balabbat* became distinctly different from other administrative arrangements that took shape during Menilek's expansionism. The structural procedures that fashioned dependency and power relations ranged from the virtual autonomy certain regions enjoyed to near complete control of local society through appointed officials.²³ From the range of these units, scholars have conclude that the *shalaqa* (so-called *naftagna-gabbar* in the secondary literature) system of control was the most coercive as it involved the stationing of army units and the requisitioning of an otherwise extortionist

and cumbersome tribute and labor regimes. At the other extreme were the autonomous regions where the pre-conquest elite still wielded local power but paid annual tributes to the state.²⁴

Far less recognized or studied are the regions and people that did not fall under either of those categories. Donald Donham collectively labeled those territories as “fringe peripheries,” primarily because most of the territories that came under this arrangement were lowland regions inhabited by pastoral communities like the Somali (in the Southeast), the Boran (to the Ethio-Kenyan border) or several farming communities along the Ethio-Sudanese border.²⁵ According to Donham, these communities and their respective territories escaped “direct” control because, “the land was not suitable for colonization by highland plough agriculturists, [and] lowland pastoralists were much harder to keep track of and to control than settled horticulturists.”²⁶

Such typologies and the explanations given may help us understand broader trajectories, but they ignore localized variation and tend to simplify an otherwise complex phenomenon. First, not all *balabbat* regions were located in the border regions, and some of the most important ones like Tuke’s *balabbat* or Bacho (in western Shawa) not only neighbored Shawa but also included farming communities.²⁷ Second, it is also possible that some regions and certain communities could shift categories from one to the other often as a result of the state’s direct involvement, as was the case, for example, with the numerous *shalaqa* regions established by Gobana west of Shawa. Others shifted categories without the direct involvement of the state, but due to the territorial and administrative machinations of local leaders, as was the case for most territories along the Sudanese border which were militarily incorporated into the autonomous regions in the

west by local Oromo leaders themselves.²⁸ Third, localized control and state-society relationships in almost all of these regions, took far more complex forms than scholarship in the broader typologies put forward.

As I have already indicated, the state appointed *balabbat* in areas it incorporated peacefully, but the same institution also existed in the militarily subdued regions as well. In Gedeo, which was part of a broader *shalaqa* territory, *balabbat* existed.²⁹ In Bacho, which once was administered by direct military rule, *balabbat* supplanted the old system to run local administration and tribute transfer.³⁰ The title also had been used by rulers of both the conquered autonomous regions as well as those in Shawa as well.³¹ And across the regions, the powers and responsibilities of the *balabbat* varied considerably, and the institution of *balabbat* itself mutated over time and across space.

At first, the *balabbat* arrangement in the valley seemed to have satisfied all the contending parties. Over time and in practice, however, the *balabbat* institution gradually eroded the political, economic, and social foundation of the *gada* system so much so that by the end of our period only certain aspects of *gada*, such as conflict management, lingered in the psychology as well as the social fabric of local society. However, that does not mean that *gada* was uprooted overnight in the wake of the institutionalization of the *balabbat*-state accord. It was not. Having functioned almost fully up until the 1930s certain aspects of *gada*--most notably conflict management, marriage, and belief systems--proved resilient throughout most of the imperial era.³²

Though originally alien to them, valley communities did not view the *balabbat* institution and the political economy that accompanied it as necessarily repugnant. In fact, by pro-actively responding to it, either through outright resistance, defiance, and

neglect or by seizing it, local politicians and individuals shaped the workings of those structures through their actions. True that Menilek's conquest and the political scenario it represented created havoc among the subject populations. Yet, rather than defining the emergent reality as a dooms day scenario, and themselves as hapless victims, local politicians and individuals engaged with the state at various levels and for different reasons. In the process, some allied with it. Others worked around it, forging alternative networks though not necessarily allying with it. Still others appropriated, defied, and deflected the state's ideologies and workings in their day- to-day activities. In practice, therefore, the history of local encounters with the state was a complex one, characterized by changing alliances, negotiations, and engagement than the meta-narrative of conquest and subordination or resistance and collaboration would tell.

2.2 From Frontiers to Royal Fields: valley in the evolution of Addis Ababa's niche economy

Land Procurement: the politics of grain and livestock extraction

If Menilek's state found in the *balabbat* institution a viable politico-administrative system of local control and tribute exaction, the need to address the growing demand for feeding the growing non-agricultural population around the royal court and the new city of Addis Ababa required yet another restructuring. As the nucleus of the empire at whose apex was the emperor himself, the imperial court (or *gebbi*) became a town onto itself comprising not only the royal family but also a host of prominent dignitaries such as the war minister and the chief justice (*afa-negus*), politicians, soldiers, civilians, regional

lords who regularly visited the court, as well as lay people who lived in and around the royal court permanently. In any ordinary day in the post-Adwa years, therefore, the court hosted thousands of people on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The courts' dependent population and its regular guests were so large that an independent institution known as Palace Ministry was formed to look over the organization and day to day activities of the court.³³

The ministry was responsible for court protocol, security, and overseeing public activity that took place within the confines of the palace. But the Palace Ministry's most important responsibility was the administration of food to the palace's large but constantly fluctuating population throughout the year.³⁴ Feeding the court was a difficult job not only because the population that the court fed was large and constantly growing, but also because the very act of feeding this population was a political rather than a festive activity. The banquets were highly elaborate and strictly stratified along political lines. Both the emperor and high- and low-ranking officials used the banquets as an arena for reaching out to the "other" across established lines, to lecture on political and social issues, and to lobby.³⁵ In short, the banquets provided a unique opportunity for many to come closer to the court and its leading politicians, but most of all they defined the court and aspects of its relationship with the army, civil and clerical officials, and the public at large in its own way.

The royal banquets were one of the few routine activities that brought everyday life to the palace, and it was perhaps the most civil form of royalty-nobility-community interaction. Though important, and a system by no means unique to Ethiopia, Menilek's banquets have attracted very little scholarly attention.³⁶ Harold Marcus' detailed article

remains the only study on the subject.³⁷ Marcus' article focuses more on the organization of the royal kitchen than the mechanisms of food acquisition or the complex infrastructure that sustained it. Relying on Marcus' piece, Teshale Tibebu analyzed the banquets as one form of tribute (*geber*), and *geber* as one of the key pillars of the modern imperial state.³⁸ However, Teshale does not deal with the actual organization of the banquet system and sources of its material strength.³⁹

Detecting the metamorphosis of the banquet system may be difficult. Travelers at least since the mid-19th century reported its practice in Shawa.⁴⁰ None the less, it seems probable that the importance of banquets in imperial politics became particularly important in the post-Adwa years apparently coinciding with the permanency of the royal court and the transformation of the monarch from a military-general who led campaigns to a ruler who lived in Addis and presided over politico-administrative and legal matters. Therefore in a way the banquets symbolized the transformation of the royal court itself from campaign headquarters that it was for almost two decades since the mid-1870s into a civilian court meant primarily for administration in the post-Adwa years. In the meantime, the banquets evolved into a political forum where the court interacted with the elite, foreign dignitaries, its soldiers, and the public at large. Reflecting on the place palace banquets occupied in imperial administration, Mahtama Sellasie remarked:

The emperor governs his country and his people not only by internal administration, salary and compensation, but he has another important means called *geber* [banquet] for attracting the public and organizing the army. The king willfully feeds the nobility and the army regularly and without interruption. It is called *geber* [tribute] because even though the emperor is a collector of tributes, what he does for the public in return is considered as tribute and that is why it is [appropriately] referred to by this [the same] term.⁴¹

According to Mahtama Sellasie, Menilek's court organized its royal banquets along three lines. The highest, in terms of prestige but not in terms of number of attendants, was called *yalfegn-geber*. It was strictly meant for the royal family, the aristocrats, and selected high -ranking dignitaries who attended the banquets occasionally. Second-class dignitaries, like the Minister of War, the *ligaba*, provincial lords, judges, low ranking aristocrats, and civil officials attended the second kind of banquet (known as *yalfegne-addarash geber*) that took place everyday. The third and biggest of all was the mass banquet (*yaddarash geber*). Hosted twice a week (later commuted to only once) and during national holidays like Christmas and Easter, the mass banquets were meant for reaching out the emperor's civil functionaries, soldiers, the clergy, and the public at large.⁴²

Mahtama Sellasie's description summarizes nicely the peacetime organization of the banquet and its political rather than social antecedents. To be sure, the post-Adwa years did not see any major crisis situation like that which occurred following the 1889-92 famine to test the palace's ability to cope with similar emergency situations. During the famine, the court did indeed manage to provide relief food to the tens of thousands of starving people who flocked to Entoto (the capital) in search of food.⁴³ Once the Famine had subsided, the court also withdrew its relief food provisioning completely. In fact, nowhere in the sources do we get a picture of the royal court rationing food freely to Addis Ababa's residents in any organized and sustained way, or politically regulating mass supply to the city's growing population at anytime throughout the prewar period. Therefore, the royal banquets that were certainly one of the most mundane and conspicuous activities of the palace in the post-Adwa years, remained important only as a

political, rather than a social activity.

The banquets targeted the politically important figures as well as lay population that resided in the city and its immediate peripheries. Often dominated by men, adults, and women of some stature, the banquets fluctuated constantly in size depending upon the circumstances, such as the arrival of powerful provincial governors (mainly to pay tribute to the monarch) or the celebration of Battle of Adwa's tenth anniversary. If, on average, the regular banquets fed a total of 10-15 thousand people each week, the special banquets organized for commemorating a particular event could bring in twice as many people or more.⁴⁴

Powell-Cotton offers a detailed yet rare description of the banquets as held by Menilek's court towards the end of the 19th century. He observed:

Sunday, 7th January [1899], the second day of the Abyssinian Christmas, was the day on which we [himself and 4 travelers and 11 diplomats from the British embassy] were invited to lunch with the Emperor. ...we were ushered into the great hall... and conducted to a dais... The Emperor was half-reclining on a settee...surrounded by court officials and attendants... The dais was curtained off from the rest of the hall by thin, flowery-patterned chintz curtains...As soon as all were seated, the following menu was excellently served by Abyssinian attendants: milk and rice soup, kabobs of meat and potato; omelet and herbs; mince and artichokes; fillets of beef and radishes; kabobs and cabbage; fried brains; fried mince and macaroni; smoked beef and lettuce; roller and flat *araki* (a strong native spirit rather like sloe-gin drun neat as a liqueur), and, as after-dinner wines, old tej...and champagne (Ephernay). ...The centre aisle nearest the dais was reserved for priests, while the officers sat on either side of them. The soldiers filled the remainder of the hall, until over 4000 guests were being regaled. An *Azajs* (steward), holding a great piece of raw beef ... To each was handled a horn cup, nearly a foot long, filled with tej... As the first detachment of guests finished their bread and meat, they were each given a small glass of araki and ushered out by great doors at the end of the aisles, on either side of the dais. The bread baskets were borne away to be replenished, the *tej* horn fitted into each other and carried off in piles...and in an incredibly short space of time all was rearranged. The doors at the far end were again thrown open to admit another 4000 hungry guests. While they were being served, it being some three hours since we

entered the room, and there being still a third equally large body to follow, we bade adieu to the Emperor and were escorted to the spot where our mules were in waiting...and rode home... I came away, having seen nothing to which the most sensitive spectator could object, and filled with wonder that such a vast number could be entertained with so little fuss and kept in such perfect order.⁴⁵

Powell-Cotton's thick description of Menilek's banquet sheds light on the elaborate and well-organized nature of the royal courts' food provisioning by the turn of the century. The British witnessed one of the rare banquets organized to celebrate the major holidays or to commemorate national anniversaries such as that of Adwa. The banquets were also held regularly at least on a weekly basis. In the latter case, it appears that the size of the banquets were smaller than the ones Powell-Cotton observed. But still the number of attendees in any ordinary banquet was always in the thousands.⁴⁶

In addition to the banquets, the imperial court also used food as capital earmarked for payment as remuneration of service and as part of the monthly salaries for civil and military personnel. We do not know what percentage of the fledgling capital's early-20th century residents actually worked for the government (as civilians or military personnel). But we do know that those who did earned more than half of their income in the form of grains paid by the government in lieu of salary. According to Mahtama Sellasie, in 1921/22, the government paid a Captain of the army *birr* 50 annual salary plus about four quintals of grain per month; a Lieutenant *birr* 30 per year and three quintals of grain each month; a Sergeant *birr* 20 per annum and over two quintals of grain a month; and a Private *birr* 10 annual salary and three-fourths of a quintal of grain a month.⁴⁷

The palace also used its grain capital to provide food and drink (*dergo*) to a host of individuals who arrived at the capital for various reasons, primarily to seek justice or to

appeal to the emperor on a wide range of issues such as disputes over land.⁴⁸ In the past, Menilek adjudicated on any number of such cases on the road, during his constant move from one place to another. In almost all his campaign journeys the king/emperor listened to complaints or litigations and deliberated on them. The cases began to flock to the emperor's court once the monarch limited his mobility and stationed permanently in his capital in the post-Adwa years.

An important development in this regard was the re-organization of the institution of *afa-negus* (lit. mouth of the emperor) as a supreme justice and appeals court that deliberated on all cases but for capital punishment which remained the reserve of the emperor.⁴⁹ Such a reorganization, at least theoretically, entitled all litigants from all over the country (including the semi-autonomous *shalaqa* and *negus* territories) to bring their cases to the attention of the imperial court. The process was further reaffirmed and expanded in an edict promulgated in February 1908 which established six different appeal courts in Addis Ababa to preside over all cases coming from the different regions.⁵⁰ If these developments defined Menilek's palace as a civil court of the highest order, they soon attracted a considerable number of litigants who were able and ready to take their cases to the court for appeal. Most stayed in the city and depended on *dergo* for provisioning until the courts adjudicated their cases.⁵¹

The major means through which the royal court acquired the considerably large amount of food it needed for banquets, payment in lieu of salary, and *dergo* came from two distinctly organized forms of land and farmers.⁵² The first took the form of organizing a royal estate (*hudad*) specifically meant for the production of food for the royal court. *Hudad* referred both to the labor and the land on which it was performed. It

was different from all other kinds of land in that its proprietorship as well as the product and labor on it belonged to the court itself rather than to any individual owners. The labor supply for the royal estates generally came from dependent individual farmers and sometimes from slave labor as well. The former comprised mainly independent *gabbar* who delivered service on the royal estates as a substitute for the land tax due on their respective farms (*rist*), and the slaves, of course, as free, *corvee* labor.⁵³

Though useful, the royal estates however were not the most important sources of food production and supply to the imperial court. In fact, out of more than eighty regions where land measurement (*qalad*) took place in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, royal estates existed only in nine locations.⁵⁴ Even then, *hudad* was the least extensive (in terms of land size) category of all (see Table 2.1 below).

Table 2.1 Distribution of royal estates (*hudad*) in early 20th-century Ethiopia (in *gasha*)

Region	Siso	Gabbar	Madarya	Hudad	Other*	Total
Mareqo	404	297	451	2	534	1688
Meta	-	436	85	3	155	679
Rapi Furi	20	117	39	4	76	256
Bacho Duli	-	223	11	2	13	249
Badi	30	102	1	2	19	154
Ababie	10	100	10	17	165	302
Danaba	88	102	15	5	64	274
Sululta	22	142	38	4	50	256
Mecha	247	2369	557	14	1302	4489

* “Other” includes different categories of land of which the most common were *samon* (Church land) and *waragamu* (royal pasture land).

Source: Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, pp. 133-38. (Some differences could be observed from Mahtama Sellasie’s figures because of rounding off.)

The above table shows that *hudad*, both in aggregate or as a percentage of other categories of land, was the least extensive in terms of size. Only in two localities, i.e., in

Ababie and Mecha, did *hudad* comprise more than 10 *gasha* each. And in all the locations the royal estates stood statistically insignificant compared to individual farmers land, but for Ababie where it comprised 15 percent. Though important for measuring the extent of the royal estates in the early-20th century, the above table does not help us get a precise picture on the exact amount of food grains those estates produced and shipped to the palace. Yet as far as one can tell from its sheer size, the contribution of the royal estates to the Court's food capital may have been statistically insignificant. At the same time, the relative ease with which the state organized royal estates (compared to other types of land categories shown in Table 2.1 above) suggest that *hudad*'s importance in the palace's food provisioning must have declined in the post-campaign decades.

It may not be by accident, therefore, that more than the royal estates it was the second form of food extraction--known as royal kitchen (*madbet* or *ganagab*-valley) and royal pasture (*waraganu*)--that became crucial to supplying the royal court with food materials in the four decades following the battle of Adwa.⁵⁵ *Madbet* referred to land and people the court selectively identified as suppliers of its food requirements.⁵⁶ *Waraganu* was imperial reserve earmarked for livestock production. As "occupied" and cultivated land (*lam*), *madbet* proprietorship belonged to the individual farmers not to the state. In designating those regions as *madbet*, what the state did was to reserve to itself the extracting "rights" from the land and the farmers distinct from similar "rights" the court gave to the church or the elite in other categories of land. To the contrary, defined as "unutilized" (*taf*), the un-cultivated *waraganu* land became the property of the state, distinctly meant for palace use but not for any kind of distribution as *madarya*, *gult* or *samon* as other state lands could be.

Administratively, the *madbet* territories came under a distinct tier of governors who, unlike *balabbat* territories, for example, were directly appointed by the government. The Palace Ministry nominated experienced officers from its own staff to serve as prevot (*meslane*) in the different *madbet* units, whose major responsibility was the collection of food material and its actual provisioning to the imperial court in Addis Ababa. But *meslane* were also responsible for the administration of justice in their respective territories, obtaining their salary from the one dollar (MTD) dues they collected from litigants whose case they deliberated upon.⁵⁷

By the early-20th century, the Palace Ministry has organized seventeen of such *madbet* units from Shawa's old and recently incorporated regions. Each region and the respective *meslane* were responsible for providing and administering the court's food items and firewood once a year, with durations ranging from fifteen days to a month. In general, the amount of food (tribute) required from each farmer in any given *madbet* region was the same and no distinction was made based on size of cultivated land, income or family size. However, the *madbet* system showed considerable variation across the regions, with, respectively three and four different categories of *gabbar* and *cisagna* identified across the regions.⁵⁸

No specific evidence is available to ascertain the basis on which the Palace Ministry divided the status of the *madbet gabbar* and *cisagna* along those categories. Divided into three distinct groups, individual *gabbar* paid respectively, 1 *dawla*, 10 *qunna*, and 5 *qunna* of grain per head per annum. *Cisagna* generally paid less than individual *gabbar*, but not all *cisagna* paid equal amounts of grain. Rather divided into four distinct categories, *cisagna* paid 3, 4, 5 or 10 *qunna* of grain per head per annum. As for the type

of grain, all *madbet gabbar* and *cisagna* alike submitted a range of food crops, such as *tef*, barley, wheat, lentils, and chickpea, depending up on the type of crops they cultivated and the preference of the court.⁵⁹

Firewood was the other important taxable item. But, unlike grain, as far as one can tell from Mahtama Sellasie's figures, the Palace Ministry gave very little consideration to resource disparities across the regions. Consequently, all *cisagna* from all the regions supplied one-bundle of firewood irrespective of the availability of forest resources and/or the total number of people involved. Individual *gabbar* from almost all the regions submitted 2 bundles of firewood. Only *gabbar* from Ankober, Yifat, and Teguletana Masaqo paid 1 bundle of firewood, but they also paid the least amount of grain per head compared to the *gabbar* in the remaining *madbet* regions.⁶⁰

Table 2.2 shows that the *madbet* arrangement was an effective means through which the palace extracted large amounts of food from its dependent rural populations. In any given year, the Palace acquired a total of more than 8450 quintals of grain (on average 700 quintals of grain each month). Population wise, the number of *madbet* farmers the court mobilized for the same purpose ranged from the lowest in Qaliti (numbering 60 *gabbar* and 11 *cisagna*) to the highest in Tegulatena Masaqo (with 838 *gabbar* and 1457 *cisagna*). On average, more than 1000 farmers (comprising 970 *gabbar* and 300 *cisagna*) supplied the court with food each month in the early-20th century.

However, Table 2.2 does not show the ratio of tribute to farmers' aggregate production. Neither does the table account for the amount of labor and time *madbet* farmers spent in transporting the supplies to the palace, itself a very ominous task given the poor nature of communication and most of Shawa's difficult terrain. One way the

Table 2.2 Distribution of food-producing *madbet* (royal pantry) units in late-19th to early-20th century

Ethiopia

Month	Madbet Unit	Grain and fire wood Raised by gabbar				Grain and firewood raised By cisagna			Total	
		No. of gabbar	Grain		Fw bnd	No. of chisagna	Grain (Qu.)	Fw Bnd	Grain Da	Fw bnd
			Da	Qu						
September	Holeta	900	1	-	2	-	-		-	1800
October	Mecha	1770	-	10	2	133	5	1	918.25	3673.1
November	Guda	222	1	-	2	83	10	1	263	527
November	Dambi	240	1	-	2	16	10	1	248	496
November	Danaba	84	1	-	2	141	10	1	154.5	309
November	Qaliti	60	1	-	2	11	5	1	62.75	131
December	Bacho	1392	-	10	2	56	5	1	710	2840
January	Menjar	612.5	-	n.a	n.a				n.a	n.a
February	Ankober	1555	-	5	1	728	4	1	534.35	2283
March	Yifat	1500	-	5	1	741	3	1	486.15	2241
April	Tagulat-									
	Masaqo	838	-	5	1	1457	5	1	573.75	2295
May	Meta	372	1	-	2	-	-	-	372	744
May	Gaja	372	1	-	2	-	-	-	372	744
June	Chore	296	1	-	2	210	10	1	401	802
July	Ngia	330	1	-	2	-	-	-	330	660
July	Addis-									
	Zuria	273	1	-	2	-	-	-	273	546
August	Ada	827	-	10	2	133	5	1	446.75	1387
Total		11643.5				3709			7045.50	21478.1

Da=dawla, Qu= *qunna*, fw= firewood, bnd= bundle (measured by a persons' load), n.a= not available. *Dawla* and *qunna* are traditional measurements that often varied from place to place and over time. An average conversion rate could be: 1 *qunna*= 5 kg; 20 *qunna*= 1 *dawla*, and 1 *dawla*=1 quintal. The measurement for firewood is rather arbitrary, and it is often estimated on the amount an adult could carry (*shakim*).

Source: Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, p. 26; See also Gebre-Wold Ingida Work, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure," *Ethiopia Observer* 5, 4, p. 305 for a slightly different list of *madbet* regions owing probably to time differential. (I have corrected computational mistakes in Mahtama Sellasie's figures.)

palace attempted to strike some sort of balance between the regions and among different groups of farmers was by dividing responsibilities based on distance from the city.

Accordingly, the Palace Ministry scheduled those regions closer in distance to the capital for the rainy season, and those farther away for the dry season.⁶¹

Royal pasture (*waraganu*) was the other type of land that owed its existence to the imperial food provisioning system discussed above.⁶² Specifically reserved for livestock (particularly cattle) production, the Palace Ministry selected the royal pastures from the best of the areas that were known for their ample pasturage, nutritious grass type, and water availability.⁶³ The equivalent of the prevot (*meslane*) in the regions reserved for royal pasture was the *waraganu shum* (appointee). But the latter, unlike the prevot, were responsible for raising cattle for beef. The appointees earned their salary from a specific type of tribute, called honey tax (*mar-geber*), which they collected from farmers or herders in the area. But they did not adjudicate local affairs in any direct way.⁶⁴

Generally, the *waraganu shum* encouraged people to acquire what was called *rim* land in return for tending the royal cattle. *Rim* was property ceded to individual farmers on which they paid only the tithe (*asrat*) but not the common land tax. Farmers also had the option of not paying land tax on their own farm in return for raising royal cattle in their own farm.⁶⁵

The Palace Ministry organized fifteen such royal pastures by the early- 20th century. Some of the royal pastures were very close to the city itself. In fact, Yaka Bole was right at the doorstep of the capital before it ultimately emerged as one of the most preferred settlement zones of Addis Ababa. By far the largest, however, was Qoqa, which was already known for its large cattle population and water supply due to the Awash (see Table 2.3 below).

Several of the royal pastures, notably Chabi, Germi, Ada Bullo, and Qoqa and one of the major *madbet* units (Ada) were partially or fully in our region. From all the *waraganu* land the south-central Rift Valley region accounted for the largest share of royal pasture

Table 2.3 Distribution of royal pasture (*waraganu*) in early-20th century Ethiopia

Place name	Size of <i>waraganu</i> land (in <i>gasha</i>)*
Warqa	80 $\frac{3}{4}$
Yaka Bole	12
Gawas	5
Chabi	21
Ada Germi	15
Holeta	10
Bacho	20 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mecha	18 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ada Bulo	43
Tute	25 $\frac{1}{2}$
Qurqura	12 $\frac{1}{4}$
Qabu Qebo	14
Gosh Meda	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
Qoqa warada	107
Salale	5
Total	409

**Gasha* varied in size from place to place. In most cultivated (*lam*) regions, however, it was equivalent to 40 hectares.

Source: Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, p. 23. (I have corrected computational errors by Mahtama Sellasie)

comprising a total of 180 *gasha*.⁶⁶ From the *madbet* territories Ada's 960 *gasha* ranked among the top six both in the number of *gabbar* involved as well as in the amount of food contributed to the royal court.⁶⁷

Therefore, by bringing a considerable proportion of valley farmers and herders alike and/or their land into the orbit of imperial food provisioning arrangements, the court's actions restructured significantly aspects of food transfer and state-rural society relationship in its own way. *Madbet* and *waraganu* lands emerged as distinct categories of imperial reserves side by side with other forms of tenural and labor arrangements that took shape in the region in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. That is, where as it may be possible for any one region, defined by past history or agro-ecology, to fall entirely

into either of the categories described above, most often, however, that was not the case. For example, the land south of the Awash, which comprised a *balabbat* territory, in practice could be divided into *hudad*, *balabbat* land, *gabbar* land, *waraganu*, and *madarya*. Likewise, the chunk of territory north of the Awash in Lume and Ada comprised *madbet*, *waraganu*, *madarya*, *samon*, and *gabbar* land, all with significant variations in terms of farmers' rights and obligations, land ownership, land use, and tribute exaction.⁶⁸

Such developments, as we shall see later in greater detail, permitted intense competition among social actors, including farmers, local and non-local elite, and the state. Shaping government policy on land and agriculture by the late-19th and early-20th century was the need to nurture smallholder farmers who could produce food as well as pay tribute to the state rather than the regional elite. However, the constellation of social actors involved in the process and their constantly changing priorities and needs meant that both the production of food and the making of Ethiopia's modern farming population proved to be a very complicated process on the ground. What complicated the matter was the fact that land and tribute formed the basis for regional power that the successive imperial governments sought to control and ultimately (as was the case for Tafari/Haile Sellasie) subdue it altogether. Consequently, the desire of the imperial court to strike a balance between its own needs and that of its elite classes meant that those competing interests over land, labor and tribute were generally resolved in ways which reflected broader relations of power and influence.⁶⁹ They did not result from an imperial policy which got its ideological underpinnings in the creation of a landowning class at the expense of landless farmers, as is often portrayed in the secondary literature.⁷⁰

However, this is not to say that the prewar state acted in a neutral way. It did not. With pressing and growing needs for tribute and to ensure a steady supply of food to the country's growing non-farming populations, the state did indeed act in its own way. But none of its actions were inherently or calculatingly geared to empowering the elite through a wholesale expropriation of *gabbar* land. In fact, as I will show later, more often than not the state's actions and the numerous legislations it proclaimed significantly departed from the interests of the elite, and at times even worked against the immediate needs and interests of that class.⁷¹

Markets: the economics of food supply

While the enlargement of the royal court and its *geber* institution shaped aspects of food provisioning to the city, Addis Ababa's growth as capital of Menilek's empire provided a new impetus in rural-urban interaction. The city, like its immediate predecessor Entoto, evolved as a political capital more in line with the traditional garrison towns that dotted the country's landscape in the late-19th century.⁷² But, in the long-run, what defined Addis Ababa's longevity was not only its emergence as the political nerve-center of the country but also its centrality in the country's economic life as well.⁷³

And almost from the outset, Addis Ababa was bigger and much more complex than the imperial court (*gebbi*) itself.⁷⁴ In fact, quite distinct from its Shewan predecessors which had markets or trading entrepot at their door steps (like Aliu Amba for Ankober), Addis Ababa evolved both as a political and economic capital. And, unlike developments in the political sphere, it did not take Addis Ababa long to excel its regional competitors such as Harar, Dire Dawa, Gambela, and Dessie to emerge as the nation's chief market

center. In fact, as Richard Caulk noted, by 1905, “Addis Ababa was the chief market of north-eastern Africa, commanding sixty percent of Ethiopia’s long distance trade and by 1910 its population outnumbered the 40,000 of Harar, which hitherto had been the only large town in the region.”⁷⁵ Its population growing, often in progression and sometimes exponentially, particularly whenever the numerous regional rulers came to it to pay homage to the emperor, the new city provided fresh impetus for a potentially viable service sector to emerge.

The food market is one such sub-sector that benefited from the city’s transformation early on. Indeed, one of the few things that struck most of the city’s late-19th and early-20th century European travelers and residents alike was the market about which some left their glaring experiences at various lengths. Several of those foreigners such as the French H. Vivian and P. Merab and the British Powell-Cotton and Wellby left their impression focusing on the structure of the market and its population. According to their descriptions, probably the single most important market was Arada, which was an open-daily market, where tens of thousands of people transacted on Saturdays-the major market day of the week. Vivian remarked that “when Saturday’s market hove in sight. I was amazed by the density of the mob; there seemed scarcely a square of foot to spare anywhere.”⁷⁶ If Vivian shied away from giving us any estimates of Arada’s trading population, F. Rosen later estimated that 30,000 to 50,000 attended the Saturday markets, a figure roughly matched by K. Herzbruch’s own estimates.⁷⁷

More than the transacting population, it was however, the marketed products that caught the attention of several of the European travelers in the late-19th and early-20th century. Describing Addis Ababa’s 1899 market scene Wellby noted:

Everyday, excepting Sunday...is a market day at the capital, but by far the largest is on Saturdays, when from the early morning villagers coming from all quarters may be seen driving their donkeys or mules laden with goods for sale. One of the most interesting corners of the market is where the ponies are gathered together...

Next to the ponies, the wood-seller take up their position in the market... Close by are the sellers of honey, wax, and butter... Next are the sellers of various sorts of grain. This is principally barley and teff, but I have also noticed wheat, peas, oats, rice, and linseed.⁷⁸

Powell-Cotton, who visited the city early in the 20th century, further remarked that the scene from the market gives “a truer notion of the productive powers of the country, both in raw material and manufactured articles, and [one] can learn better what foreign goods find a ready sale among the people, than in any of the many markets I have seen in the four countries [I visited before].”⁷⁹ According to him to Addis Ababa’s market came:

grains and spices, peppers and condiments from every corner of the kingdom, coffee from Harrar and Lake Tana, cotton from the banks of the Blue Nile, gold from Beni Shangul, and civet from the Galla country, while salt from the far north of Tigre is the current change for a dollar. Fine cotton *shamas*, heavy burnouses of black, blanket-like cloth, jewelry and arms, saddlery and ploughs, all are here. In fact here you can feel the commercial pulse of Abyssinia, gain some insight into the present state of her civilization, and gather what she wants from the foreigner and what she has to offer in exchange.⁸⁰

Likewise, Rosen in 1907 noted that farmers at Holeta, 40 km north of the city, were “doing good business growing vegetables for consumption in the capital.”⁸¹ Merab, who resided in the “booming city” in the first decade of the twentieth century, also observed how Addis Ababa’s population floated everyday. According to him, the city’s population increased and decreased daily owing to the “large number” of farmers who came and left the city for markets, notably “to sell their farm produce of which they were the main suppliers of foodstuffs.”⁸²

The growing importance of the food market was such that in fact one of its dependent

institutions had been the royal court itself. According to Mahtama Sellasie the palace occasionally resorted to the markets to make-up shortfalls in such resources as livestock, firewood, chili pepper, *gesho*, butter, vegetables, and grain. In all, in the early-20th century the Palace spent annually around 4000 MTD for the purchase of food items and firewood from Addis Ababa's markets.⁸³

It may be difficult to determine the radius of Addis Ababa's food market in the first several decades of its foundation. But in 1901 Wylde estimated it about 37 miles (60 kilometers) as he saw "many countrymen [from the northeast of the capital] with supplies of all sorts, and many animals laden with firewood and timber" traveling to the city to sell their produce.⁸⁴ During his journey north from Addis Ababa, Wylde questioned a farmer at about the same distance who told him that "he [the farmer] made a good deal of money out of crops which he could sell well at Addis Ababa."⁸⁵

No similar recorded evidence is available to locate the probable extent of Addis Ababa's food market to the south for the first two decades of the 20th century. There is no concrete evidence to speculate that given Ada's growing importance in the *madbet* structure, the existence of established trade routes that connected Ada's late-19th century markets with Shawa, and its geographic proximity to the capital, the region may as well have participated in Addis Ababa's food market from the outset. As we shall see later in some detail, both the size and texture of Addis Ababa's food market and aspects of valley engagement with it would change in progression following the expansion of modern means of communication since 1917 and even more importantly the dramatic expansion of the food market in the postwar period (see Chapter Three).⁸⁶

If the *madbet* and *waraganu* arrangements permitted relatively smooth transfers of

food materials to the city (mainly, though not exclusively, geared to the elite), markets, in turn, provided an alternative means of food supply for the majority of the city's non-elite and expatriate population. If those structures and forces appeared to have ensured a relatively stable food supply, their impact on farmers and farms is less clear. Mahtama Sellasie, the authoritative account on the subject provide no clues on the inner workings of the *madbet* system making it difficult to single out the similarities and differences between the different categories of *gabbar* in the various tenure. For example, we know very little about the percentage (compared to total harvest) of the produce *madbet* farmers paid as tribute annually to the royal court. Likewise, there is no recorded evidence to study the probable impact of the new tribute regimes on the farms--that is on farmers' land use, crop choice, and labor organization.

Nonetheless, provided that *madbet*, as one form of tribute exacting mechanism, was a system that worked by reconfiguring extraction (rather than production), its impact on farmers production organization may have been incremental at best rather than drastic. That is to say, as a system that depended on the re-directing of existing farm and labor conditions into new forms, the new tribute regimes might as well have squeezed the farmers and the farms and forced them to adjust to the extra-demands by sacrificing either consumption or capital rather than through agricultural intensification or extensification. The fact that land and labor—the key resources farmers depended on for increasing production—have become the locus of state-elite competitions and negotiations meant that agricultural transformation was a complex issue than a result of demand and supply alone.

2.3 State land, elite land, farmers land: changing power relations and new configurations of property rights

If the *madbet* and *waraganu* food production and extraction mechanisms directly attached the valley to the imperial court and put it within Addis Ababa's orbit more than more distant territories, fresh developments in terms of access to resource control further conditioned agrarian transformation in the valley. As I have already indicated, in carving out its *madbet* and *waraganu* territories, the state had succeeded in reserving a considerable proportion of the valley's land and population under its direct control. But it also had left no less extensive area and populations outside of those arrangements. In fact, from the outset the nature and organization of the imperial state in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, with powerful and relatively autonomous regional elite have made it impossible for the government to emerge as a key player in controlling and regulating the seemingly abundant land and the evidently scarce labor resources.

That this was the case could be attested by the successive legislation the state enacted throughout the prewar period. What makes these legislative acts all the more important for historical investigation is not only their relative frequency (compared to other issues addressed by the government) but also, and even more importantly, the fact that they were responses to developments on the ground rather than the other way round. As such, they reveal the tensions, contradictions, and patterns of change in terms of access to resources and power relations that radiated from them.⁸⁷

As a state that built its ideology and practice on access to resource control and agriculture on Shawan ethnography, it is no accident that the region's land tenure, labor

and tribute regimes became the referent prototype after which Menilek's state fashioned its policies on agricultural resources in the newly conquered territories. It is therefore important for us to step back and recap the workings of Shawa's tenural regimes to draw a clear picture of continuity and change in imperial policies on land, labor, and taxation in the conquered territories.

Scholars have studied the organization of the Shawan state, its expansion and relative contraction, as well as conquest and population settlement patterns with remarkable detail.⁸⁸ Among the themes that has intrigued scholars for long has been land tenure. Several scholars have explained Shawa's land tenure at length or as a key theme in the reconstruction of its history.⁸⁹ Svein Ege, for example, has provided a succinct but useful synthesis of Shawa's land tenure regimes in 1840.⁹⁰ More recently, Tekalign joined the debate by looking at the various Shawan land categories, their transposition into the conquered territories, and more directly what he saw as the state's strong hand in regulating land based resources in Shawa and its hinterlands.⁹¹ Ege's findings show that two major types of land tenure existed in Shawa in the 1840s. The first, generally confined to the "old Amhara provinces," i.e., "Manz, Jama Addababay valleys, and ...the northern Amhara provinces," was called *asma-rist*. According to Ege, characteristic of this form of tenure is the fact that the land "belonged to a kinship group, the peasant gaining access to it by virtue of his [sic] decent from the common ancestor, the *aqegnei* or colonizer of the land."⁹² But an important aspect of *asma-rist* was that it was inalienable due to "absence" or "on the default" of the *rist* holder peasant;" hence the saying "Manz *rest* (belongs) to its owner until the thousand year[s]."⁹³

Gasha maret is the second form of Shawan tenure Ege identified. He relates this form

of tenure to what he referred to as the “conquered territories” of central, eastern and southern Amhara provinces in Shawa. Here, government (or to be more precise, local rulers called *malkagna*) regulated access to land distinctly from *rist* where access to land was a birthright. In short, unlike *rist* holders in the old provinces who had kinship rights over the land they cultivated, those in the *gasha maret* regions acquired the land from the *malkagna* (the local ruler) rather than because of ambilineal descent. Once they have acquired the land, however, individual farmers in *gasha maret* regions could and did indeed hold their land as *rist* (heritable land). Yet individual landholders in *gasha maret* tenure did not enjoy the same kind of land ownership and inheritance rights as those in the first category of *rist*. This was so mainly because in *gasha maret* regions the ultimate arbiters of those rights were the *malkagna*, who retained the power to intervene in land transfer and inheritance rights on individual holdings. While, as Ege has rightly summed it up, farmers in *gasha maret* tenure “held their land securely [and enjoyed heritable rights] as long as they fulfilled the [tribute] obligations involved,” still *malkagna* retained the power to confiscate the land, either due to crime or in case the farmer-holder left no siblings to inherit the land.⁹⁴ This is an important distinction that does not seem to have been well appreciated by scholars to date. Indeed a closer look at the available evidence suggest that Shawa’s political economy since at least the mid- 19th century evolved within the rubric of *gasha maret* than *rist*.

Even far less understood is the kind of power relations the *gasha maret* tenure reinforced within Shawa itself. The dominant narrative traces the origin of the Shawan state to Manz. The tractable genealogies, the court chronicles that often tend to glorify the real or presumed achievements of the rulers, and the once dominant centrist

historiography conveyed the notion of the strong and unified Shawan state throughout its history.⁹⁵ Rarely do scholars entertain the idea that Shawa, much like the other regions, may not have been a centralized polity for most of its history. In fact, a careful look at the available evidence suggests that on matters relating to access to resource control and tribute exaction the Shawan state had limited power over the *malkagna* (local rulers). Let me step back and try to explain my point by focusing on Shawan land tenure and the semblance of power relations which I contend are relevant to our understanding of developments in the valley (and beyond) that accompanied state control and rule since the late-19th century.

As I have mentioned above the forging of *gasha maret* had been perhaps one of the most enduring activities that accompanied the transformation of the Shawan state since the late-17th century. And characteristic of the *gasha maret* tenure prior to the 1880s has been the upper-hand *malkagna* enjoyed in regulating the terms of access to resource control. The degree to which politics interlaced with resource entitlements may be understood better by looking at the three key component parts of *gasha maret* tenure. These were: (1) farmers land (*gabbar maret*), (2) elite land, and (3) labor.⁹⁶

A key element in the forging of Shawa's *gasha maret* tenure up to the 1880s, as in the several decades after that, had been the distribution of land to individual tribute paying farmers. As indicated above, individual farmers in *gasha maret* tenure could and did acquire *rist* mainly through purchase or for free as granted by the local *malkagna*.⁹⁷ No clear evidence is available to specify the actual size of land the majority of Shawa's smallholder farmers obtained in *gasha maret* tenure between 1840 and 1880. Our sources do not tell us about the proportion of land each *malkagna* reserved as farmers' land and

the exact amount of land taxes those individual farmers paid across *malkagna*-ruled regions prior to 1880.⁹⁸ All one can surmise is that because of the land tax accruing from individual farmers, *malkagna* must have been interested in the expansion of farmers' land as much as they were interested in promoting other forms of tenure such as their own estate (*hudad*) or church land (*samon*).

The second important component of the *gasha maret* tenure was what I have termed here as elite land. It consisted of an array of land categories controlled by all those individuals (such as the *malkagna*) and institutions (such as the church or the royal court).⁹⁹ *Malkagna* had been probably the largest per capita possessors of land in *gasha maret* tenure. In case of the prominent *malkagna* the land became heritable property (*rist-gult*) and the state had nominal rather than actual power regarding virtually all jurisdiction over the territories they controlled; a relationship that could very well change depending up on the relative strength of each party involved.¹⁰⁰

To these must be added land assigned for the soldiery as *madarya* (in lieu of salary). *Madarya* land, unlike *rist*, was temporary (i.e., could be revoked whenever the possessor failed or was no longer needed for the specific service the person was first assigned to); but was exempted from the land tax. It is striking to note that the body responsible for granting *madarya* land prior to the 1880s was the *malkagna* who in effect regulated the wartime mobilization of the soldiers' themselves.¹⁰¹

The kind of dynamic reconfiguration of labor that the *gasha maret* arrangement encouraged and indeed depended up on is the third important component of Shawa's evolving land tenure. In many ways *gasha maret* was a practice that worked through a combination of a political desire in the part of the elite who seized land as a means to

control people and that of farmers who were ready to obtain a piece of land for cultivation. As such the forging of *gasha maret* entailed a redefinition of the terms of access to land and labor in a given area at a particular point in time. The generic term applied to those farmers who negotiated the terms of access to land with the *malkagna* was *cisagna*. For the *cisagna* such arrangements provided an outlet to gain access to land according to new and negotiable rules that rested on outright purchase or long-term arrangements of sharing output or labor.¹⁰² For the *malkagna* mobilizing *cisagna* entailed not only an economic but also a political imperative because *malkagna* needed the land first and foremost to attract and control people.

Such were the building blocks of the Shawan state, and, as Ege's study has proven, all had been well in place at least as early as, if not well before 1840. They evolved and indeed reinforced the social, economic, and political foundation of the Shawan state itself. In the political sphere, the evolving *gasha maret* tenure rendered life to the crystallization of the *malkagna* system of political control and local administration. Consequently, *malkagna* evolved as a relatively strong political institution, and its officials possessed significant economic capital (by controlling land and labor) as well as considerable administrative autonomy in their respective regions making Shawa a highly decentralized polity.¹⁰³

In the social sphere, those developments encouraged the consolidation of distinct social classes in Shawa. These included the tribute- or rent-paying farmer (*gabbar* and *cisagna*), the soldier-farmer (on the *madarya* lands), and the non-farming elite (the *malkagna*). Economically, all these developments dovetailed the agrarian nature of the Shawa state.¹⁰⁴

By redefining the mechanism through which agricultural resources (such as land and labor) could be acquired (distinctly from the *asma-rist* regions that had now become at the backwater of Shawan political economy) *gasha maret* permitted the transferability of those resources across ethnic and regional boundaries within Shawa itself. Therefore as a revolutionary tenural regime, *gasha maret* not only encouraged the propagation of tribute paying farmers but also it encouraged, albeit indirectly, the expansion of cereal agriculture at the expense of other forms of land use.

However, none of these developments, notably the forging of *gasha maret* and its attendant labor mobilization strategies, resulted from a peaceful and smooth process within Shawa itself. Rather they resulted from and, in turn, fashioned Shawa's relatively unique transformation as a regional state since at least the late-17th century. In fact, *gasha maret* cannot be studied in isolation from the gradual but insistent territorial expansion Shawan rulers conducted over the centuries. Undergirded, at least ideologically, by Shawa's irredentist philosophy of reclaiming the land that once belonged to it before it was taken over by non-Christians, the forging of *gasha maret* often involved the loss of land entitlement by some (notably herders) in favor of others (cultivators). The best evidence to that comes from the Shawan historian Asma Gyorgis who indicated that the making of *gasha maret* probably started with Negasi's (d. 1703) seizure and allocation of so-called vacant (*taf* or *wudma*) land in Manz's eastern frontiers to his subjects in the form of *rim* land (which Asma asserts is the same as *gasha*). According to him the Karayu (Oromo) used the land for tending their cattle before they lost it as a result of Negasi's actions.¹⁰⁵

Competition and conflict resulted not only in the process of the formation of *gasha*

maret but also after its establishment. Two of these contradictions and conflicts deserve closer scrutiny because of their long-term impact on shaping the transformation of *gasha maret* tenure itself in particular or state-rural society relationship in general. The first kind of contradiction, albeit less crucial (at least from the perspective of the two points mentioned above), relates to land ownership and inheritance rights of individual farmers in *gasha maret*. As indicated above, *rist*-holding farmers in *gasha maret* tenure, like those in *asma-rist*, could enjoy usufruct and land transfer (inheritance) rights as long as they paid the required tribute on the land they cultivated.

However, unlike the latter, those in *gasha maret* could lose their land entitlement rights due to crime (ranging from theft to that of murder or failing to pay tributes and rebelling against the *malkagna* or the state) and/or in case of death (without leaving behind sons or daughters).¹⁰⁶ Those conditions made the rights of the individual farmers precarious not only because the strings attached to it were restrictive but mainly because the same conditions made the whole arrangement subjective by allowing local rulers to alter resource entitlement rights almost at will. In addition, *gasha maret* farmers, unlike those in *asma-rist* areas, were subjected to performing corvée on *hudad* land that belonged to the *malkagna*. The fact that no clear rules existed to regulate the amount of time each farmer had to work on those estates meant that the elite could, and did indeed, subject individual farmers' labor to arbitrary manipulation.

The second form of competition and conflict revolved around the old mandatory practice of farmers' provisioning of soldiers. Indeed, an enduring feature of the historic highland Christian states (like that of Shawa) over the centuries was the manner and degree in which the *gabbar* (tax paying farmer) and the army fed each other.¹⁰⁷ That

historically the soldiery lived off the *gabbar* is now well established in the historical literature so much so that the adjective predatory is often prefixed to explain the very nature of the highland polities.¹⁰⁸ Attempts were made by some, most notably Tewodros, to professionalize the army and pay the soldiery in cash rather than billeting the soldiery on the farmer had been the case before.¹⁰⁹ However, not only had that attempt failed but in practice Tewodros himself had at times been part of the pattern rather than the exception. He himself led several such predatory campaigns targeted at punishing and looting the *gabbar*.¹¹⁰

Aside from the well too known attempts made by Tewodros to regularize payments for the soldiery and relieve off the farmer from the increasingly intolerable demands of the soldiery, earlier attempts to that effect were made in Shawa as well. Consequently, parallel to the old tradition of assigning tribute exacting rights (*gult*) evolved a practice in which land itself was assigned to the soldiery on a temporary basis and free from any kind of tribute obligation attached to it.¹¹¹ At least in theory, the land assigned to the soldiery for their service in the army was directed at so-called unutilized land (*taf*) where individual soldiers should employ their own labor and that of their family or mobilize *cisagna* to cultivate it.¹¹² It is not clear when and where such reforms were first introduced and practiced, but the available evidence attest to the fact that it had been well underway in Shawa at least since the late-18th century.¹¹³

It is probable that *madarya* arrangements might have helped mitigate the classic farmer-soldier relationship and the conflicts that resulted from it but certainly they did not stop them completely. Several of Shawa's mid-to late-19th century European visitors, such as Jules Borelli and Wylde, did notice the appalling predatory campaigns of the

soldiers on the farmers. For example, Borelli, in his 1880s travel in Shawa, observed the extent to which such unregulated moves by the soldiery ruined farmers' crop fields and granaries.¹¹⁴

Therefore, in the 1880s much like the decades before that, the inherent problems that characterized state-elite-farmers relationship were intact and there were only slight indications as to the direction Menilek might take should he get the chance to accede to the imperial throne. The first indication came as early as 1879 following King Menilek's instruction to conduct inventory of Shawan land.¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, very little evidence is available to measure the efficacy of the order and the extent to which it was carried out. The sole primary account on the matter is Gabra Sellasie's chronicle which but is far from being exhaustive in terms of providing sufficient information to dwell on this matter on any detail. Perhaps the order was not effectively implemented to warrant the attention of the chronicler who noted that order was given to conduct registration of all *gasha maret* land, including *malkagna*, *qalad*, *madarya*, *gendabal*, *gabbar*, *samon*, and *chisanga*.¹¹⁶

But it seems to me that the long term importance of the 1879 order lies not in the extent to which the state carried out land registration in the one or two years following the 1879 edict. Rather, the edict must have been the basis up on which the state conducted future land measurements in Shawa and beyond. It may not be by coincidence, therefore, that the first of a series of state-sponsored land measurement and sale activities took place in the 1880s.¹¹⁷

The second indication followed the first just by few years and focused on taxation. Enacted in the early-1880s the new tax codes introduced a flat land tax of a MT dollar per

temad.¹¹⁸ Initially applicable to the “old provinces,” the flat tax soon became the basis upon which *malkagna* collected the land tax from their subject cultivators. According to Borelli, by the late 1880s Shawan farmers paid a flat tax of a MT dollar per *temad* irrespective of possession of oxen for traction.¹¹⁹

Both of these actions foreshadowed developments that were to become common practice after Menilek’s accession to the imperial throne in 1889. The 1879 edict in a way symbolized the transition from *gasha maret* to *qalad*. When practiced *qalad* expropriated a sizeable proportion of land *malkagna* or *balabbat* controlled, limiting their proprietorship to *siso* (theoretically a third).¹²⁰ The flat land tax Menilek tried to introduce in the early 1880s also had its own implication on state-elite-rural society relationship because this was likely the first time that state attempted to regulate rate of taxation directly bypassing the regional or local elite.

But it was only after 1889 (marking Menilek’s accession to the imperial throne) that Menilek pursued both strategies (i.e. redefining the terms of access in *gasha maret* land and taxation) with much force and in full swing than ever before. In fact the first two major edicts Menilek’s government introduced in the early-1890s targeted the pitfalls of the *gasha maret* system itself. The first edict, decreed on January 30, 1891 targeted *gasha maret* outlawing the old practice of the confiscation of *gabbar* land due to crime or treason. The edict also included special provisions to Shawan *gasha maret*, specifically for the regions south of the Wayet and north of the Awash rivers by granting inalienable *rist* rights to all the farmers in that region.¹²¹

The second important edict Menilek introduced relates to a brand new taxation due from farmers of all categories and the elite alike. Promulgated in October 1892, the edict

introduced the tithe (*asrat*), a ten percent tax on grain yields to be paid by all groups of landholders irrespective of their legal entitlements to the land.¹²²

To these two important edicts, Menilek issued a third decree almost a decade later regarding the ownership rights of Shawan Oromo in what was before *gasha maret*. Proclaimed in 1904, Menilek's order restored the ownership rights of the Shawan Oromo that were formerly taken away by the *malkagna* in the process of the forging of *gasha maret* tenure in Shawa's immediate frontiers. Gabra Sellasie, the major primary source on the subject, does not specify the exact size and location of the apparently restored-lands of the Shawan Oromo. Nonetheless, he specified that previously the same land belonged to the Oromo before the *malkagna* expropriated them either through outright eviction or following "voluntary" transfer of such rights by Oromo chiefs due to the latter's "inability" to ensure their cultivation.¹²³

Therefore, the 1904 order, like the 1891 one before it, bestowed *rist* rights on what then became *gabbar* land. The order did so, according to Mahtama Sellasie, by confiscating a certain proportion of the land held by the *malkagna*, and transferring it over to the landless Oromo from whom it was taken in the first place. Accordingly, *malkagna* who owned four or more *gasha* of land as their *siso* had to relinquish one *gasha* each. Those who possessed between two and a half to three *gasha* would give half a *gasha* each, whereas those who had kept one *gasha* of *siso* land surrendered a quarter of it to the Oromo farmer.¹²⁴

The timing of the promulgation of both the 1891 and 1892 edicts, coinciding with the famine that hit Shawa particularly severely, and the contents as well as long-term implications of the edicts on developments on the ground has been the object of intense

scholarly debate and controversy. With regard to the first edict, Pankhurst, for example, argues that the edict was meant for boosting agricultural productivity for the specific purpose of supplying the new city with adequate food.¹²⁵ Tekalign disputes Pankhurst's explanation and instead concurs with Asma. According to him, the 1891 edict was prompted by the urgency Menilek felt in granting tenural security to Shawan *gabbar*-land and *madarya* holders so as to encourage them to migrate to new areas and start cultivation afresh.¹²⁶

Similarly, scholars have explained the meanings of the 1892 edict and its short- and long-term impacts differently. Mantel-Niecko saw the edict strictly from the perspective of the emperor Menilek's changing desire to controlling the army directly by regulating the means of soldiers provisioning and salary. According to her, the tithe brought the soldiery under the direct control of the state reversing the pattern that existed in the past where that right was vested on the *malkagna*. She argued, in the past: "It [the power of the imperial court] expresses itself in...relation to the local administrator. It was one of the duties of the ruler in the province to provide the ruler of the country with a contingent of soldiers, but the ruler in the country wasn't the least bit interested in the way the province maintained its army nor did he himself pay anything towards its upkeep."¹²⁷

Pankhurst, on the other hand argued that the tithe was specifically meant for addressing the chronic problem of soldier-farmer relationship, a problem that became particularly acute in the wake of the famine.¹²⁸ More recently, Tekalign questioned both explanations. Instead he concluded that the tithe was meant for extracting food from the farmers that the state needed for provisioning its growing and dependent non-farming populations in the recently founded capital of Addis Ababa.¹²⁹

If such scholarly debates are normal, they reflect the inconclusive nature of the available documented evidence on the subject.¹³⁰ Moreover, they also resulted from the tendency, in the part of the scholars, to study those edicts in isolation from broader and subsequent developments that characterized the transforming imperial state itself. A closer look at the edicts in relation to past and post-1889 developments reveal that they were not simply meant for addressing short-term crisis, most notably those related to the famine and imperial food demands or the particular problem of regulating soldiers provisioning. Rather they were the first of a series of legislative measures introduced by the successive imperial governments toward addressing the now classic contradictions inherent in Shawa's *gasha maret* tenure and its attendant political economy. Their implications were far reaching as well.

Perhaps the most important political ramification of Menilek's 1891, 1892, and 1904 edicts was the degree to which they curbed the power of the once dominant *malkagna*. As indicated before, *malkagna* were influential political figure in Shawa, with considerable political and economic power under their belt. Apart from exercising virtual administrative autonomy in their respective regions, *malkagna* enjoyed immense economic power, the power to impose and exact tributes from farmers, mediate land ownership and inheritance rights, and organize a fighting force which may be called at times of war. All the three measures introduced by Menilek were probably meant for curbing the power of the *malkagna* and bringing them under the more direct control of the imperial state than ever before. In fact, that is what they actually achieved.

The 1891 edict curtailed *malkagna* power on *gasha maret* by granting inalienable *rist* rights to individual farmers. The conversion of a portion of *gasha maret* into *rist* in the

regions between Wayet and Awash and the commutation from punishment for crime by land alienation to payment in cash, therefore, eliminated in practice *malkagna* established authority whereby they can intervene and ultimately decide land transfer and inheritance rights on farmers' land. Equally importantly, the restoration (as per the 1904 order) of Shawan Oromo land rights not only chipped away a significant proportion of individual *malkagna* land in those areas but also, in its wake, created new *gabbar* land over which *malkagna* enjoyed restricted power.

The 1892 edict on tithe also was a serious set back to *malkagna* power. By standardizing taxation and making *malkagna* estates (so far exempted from state taxes) subject to imperial taxation, the 1892 edict decidedly reconfigured the political and economic foundation of the *malkagna* institution. Unlike in the past where deciding the proportion of taxes due from the farmers was the prerogative of the *malkagna*, the 1892 edict fixed that the new tax should be calculated on a ten-percentage basis and should remain the prerogative of the state. Also, unlike the past where taxing *cisagna* land was the exclusive domain of *malkagna*, the 1892 edict made tithe applicable on those lands as well. In fact, one of the most important facets of the 1892 edict was the fact that, unlike the land tax which was discriminatory and targeted at the *gabbar*, the tithe was almost all inclusive, taxing all groups of landholders uniformly. This was important because the tithe, in addition to the individual *gabbar* who had always been paying the land tax, now required the elite themselves to pay a quasi income tax (tithe).¹³¹

Therefore, by infringing on the tax levying power of the *malkagna*, by eroding *malkagna* traditional authority in mediating access to resource control in *gasha mareṭ*, and by taxing *malkagna* land, the imperial state in effect had straddled toward reshaping

the *malkagna* institution itself significantly differently from the past. Whether or not the imperial governments' actions resulted from a conscious move aimed at power centralization and/or the emperor's concupiscence to encourage the propagation of food-producing and tribute-paying farmers (as a means to bolster government revenue) is hard to tell definitively.¹³² However, it is safe to argue that the edicts not only set new ground rules regarding *gasha maret* across the conquered regions, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, they enabled the government to play a more direct role in mediating access to resource control in places where its politico-military elite ruled.

Understanding the intricacies of Shewan tenural regimes and the degree to which Menilek's state attempted to restructure them is important for various reasons. First, Menilek's early 1890s edicts (and their implicit resonance to power relations between the state and the regional/local elite) laid the foundation for imperial policies on land and taxation for most of the prewar era. As conquered territories, Ada-Lume, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo's terms of access to environmental resources evolved in the context of those policies.

Second, as much as imperial policies and the structure of power and the basic tenets of access to land, labor, and produce, developments on the ground resulted from the entanglements of past history and the pro-active responses of elite and non-elite social actors. As I have shown before, valley incorporation into the modern Ethiopian state had been a relatively gradual process. This was particularly true for Ada where geographic proximity and cultural contact have led to the forging of some sort of a cultural universe early on. Certainly the best example to that comes from the building of Christian churches Ada's indigenous chiefs conducted since the 1840s. By the second half of the

19th century, Ada adumbrated elements of the *gasha maret* tenure found elsewhere in Shawa, including a strong indigenous ruling elite and gabber. In the 1880s Ada had been one of the few places where the first round of state- sponsored *qalad* measurement took place, and it had joined the ranks of the *madbet/waraganu* territories that fed the royal court directly.

For the next three decades (i.e. between 1887-1917—i.e. the official date for the founding of Addis Ababa and the arrival of the railway in the capital) Ada's agricultural transformation resonated well with the challenges and alternatives the region's physical environment, farmers' field technology and priorities, as well as the changing terms of access to resources presented to a range of social actors. One notable development at this time (that is following *qalad* measurement in the 1880s) has been the redefinition of a sizeable portion of Ada-Lume land as government property that could be assigned to servicemen as *madarya*. This is an important development not simply because it symbolized a new trend in the government's relative success in curtailing the power of the elite in monopolizing land-based resources, but mainly because such granting of *madarya* land (despite all the strings attached to it) further accentuated the link between access to land, labor, and crop agriculture. That is to say that once a given land has been designated as *madarya* it came off the hands of the malkagna/balabbat and or the customary practices that governed access to it in the past, hence enabling the grantees and the cultivators (from near and afar) to negotiate its future utilization.

Though statistics is not available in any form, the evidence from my informants indicated that a sizeable portion of Ada-Lume's transitional zone might have been government land, a portion of which the government has granted to its servicemen as

madarya. Here again the evidence is inconclusive to ascertain what percentage of government land has been granted to individuals by 1900 or 1910. All one can tell, based on informants' testimonies, is that the granting of *madarya* land remained insignificant in the first two decades following *qalad* measurement in the 1880s, grew after 1896, and peaked only in the postwar period.¹³³

South of the Awash, the overall trend followed the same trajectory as the sub-regions past history, its physical environment, and the manner in which social actors responded to the new threat and demands coming from Menilek's court all contributed to the relatively distinct pathways of change that evolved in this part of the valley. Above all, the fact that the sub-region has been incorporated into the transforming Ethiopian state peacefully meant that the government could deal with local society indirectly, through the intermediary of the *balabbat*. This was important because unlike the militarily conquered regions like highland Arsi where *malkagna* could lay claim to large tracts of land as a rewards, in the valley south of the Awash peaceful incorporation thwarted such a possibility and made the government and the local elite (*balabbat*) the two major protagonists.

The result was the formulation of relatively simple land categories whereby *balabbat* controlled the presumably settled parts of the valley and relinquished direct proprietorship to the government over a sizeable portion of so-called *taf* (ostensibly unsettled) land. Though less complicated, such arrangements however were not less contentious. The competitions were particularly pronounced in parts of the land that have now become outside the direct jurisdiction of the *balabbat* as government property. Although the state now had under its direct control large tracts of land that could be given

away to its servicemen often on temporary basis, no massive transfer of land took place at this time. A combination of political and ecological factors were responsible for the kind of limited interest *madarya*-seekers showed in government land in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo for most of the prewar period. But in the meantime a growing number of local farmers colonized so-called government land by their own volition and/or as per arrangements they brokered with the few *madarya* holders on the basis of the payment of annual tributes. Some of these farmers were *balabbat* subjects who simply chose to “flee” from the relatively high tribute regimes the former had put in place.¹³⁴ The majority, most notably in the western and northwestern parts of the valley were formerly highland cultivators who for one reason or another decided to descend to the valley in increasing numbers. The desire for such large-scale migration seem to have been long-standing among highland Silti and Gurage cultivators, but success hinged on military prowess and inter-ethnic competitions.¹³⁵ State rule gave new direction to those competitions over resources and permitted individual migrations across the valley distinct from 19th century trends.¹³⁶

Conclusion

Valley encounter with the transforming Ethiopian state impacted virtually every aspect of rural life. The subjugation of valley communities and their existing political structures to imperial supremacy was one of the most enduring impacts of that encounter. But the same encounter also opened up new opportunities for elite individuals who, benefiting from their portfolios soon emerged as key players in the political process itself. The most important players in this regard were the *balabbat* who developed a stake in the evolving

national political economy and contributed in its making in their own way. The state depended on the *balabbat* as much as (and sometimes even more than) they depended on the state. A notable example in our case is the *balabbat* Tuke Mama. Elected to the post by his constituencies on the brink of what seemed an unavoidable threat of military subjugation, Tuke nonetheless fashioned the *balabbat* institution and aspects of state-society relationships, fulfilling imperial land and tribute demands without necessarily intervening in the deliberations of traditional *gada* officials who continued to run local administration almost as before up until around 1930.

If the forging of political networks in the valley appeared to be a relatively smooth process, their economic underpinnings were not. In fact, as a state whose economic foundation was based on agriculture and one that depended on its own redistributive capacities of land, labor, and tribute exacting rights for its own political sustenance, the policies and practices of the state on access to those resources significantly altered the social process of agricultural change in the valley.

An important development in this regard has been the creation of royal fields (*madbet* and *waraganu*) meant specifically for the provisioning of the royal court with food materials. Part of the valley was among the two dozens *madbet* and *waraganu* territories the royal court created for that purpose. From a strictly food provisioning perspective, the royal court succeeded in forging its own dependent groups of food producers and suppliers. From a political point of view as well, the forging of those territories ensured the success of the court in limiting the areas the elite (like the *malkagna/balabbat*) controlled local society. Not only did the court succeed in channeling the tributes from those regions directly to Addis Ababa, but it also administered the *madbet* regions

directly through its own appointed officials.

The state checked *malkagna* power not only through the creation of its own royal reserves but also by introducing a series of measures meant for regulating tribute exaction and land ownership rights. In the past, regulating those rights remained the prerogative of the *malkagna*. In a series of laws it promulgated particularly from the early-1890s on, the state managed to curb the power of the local elite while bolstering its own. A closer look at the context as well as contents of those edicts revealed that they were responses meant for curbing the unwarranted activities of the elite on tributes and land. They were not, as is often assumed in the secondary literature, meant for forging a tenural regime specifically meant for creating a landed feudal class in the conquered territories such as the valley.

CHAPTER THREE

LAND FOR POWER, LAND FOR CROPS: THE POLITICAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF VALLEY AGRICULTURAL CHANGE (1917-1941)

If the first two-dozen years of state rule altered power relations between valley communities and the state and pointed the directions of change in the terms of access to resources, the next two decades and a half (1917-41) witnessed key developments that contributed to the region's agricultural change both in the short- and long-term. The year 1917 marked the completion of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway. A good 60 kilometers of the railway passes through the northern parts of the valley which, together with the roads that followed a little over a decade later, affirmed the region's integration first into Addis Ababa's niche economy and later in the post-Italian occupation period into the international food market.

The same year also witnessed the growing prominence of Tafari (later Haile Sellasie) in Ethiopia's national politics. In his rather long tenure in office as regent and emperor, Tafari/Haile Sellasie pushed land and tribute reforms along the lines initiated before by Menilek. Like his predecessor, Tafari focused on the tithe without meddling much on the more sensitive land tax up until the early-1930s. Unlike Menilek, however, Tafari/Haile Sellasie was more prudent in attempting to reform the corvee labor arrangements that accompanied the forging of *gasha maret* and *qalad* across the regions.

The infrastructural as well as political changes that took shape after 1917 facilitated

the valley's growing integration into Addis Ababa's political economy significantly, and laid the groundwork for more dramatic transformations in the postwar period. From an infrastructural point of view, the completion of the railway and subsequent construction of motorable roads (most notably by the Italians in the 1936-41 period) hastened the valley's economic integration into Addis Ababa's food market firmly. In the political realm, economic integration was attended by a new round of competitions and negotiations over agricultural resources that, in turn, dictated change in the region's landscape resulting in the intensification (in Ada-Lume) and the entrenchment (south of the Awash) of crop agriculture in hitherto unprecedented scale. The foundation of those changes is the focus of this chapter.

3.1 Measuring land and regulating labor: changing the texture of resource entitlement rights in the valley

Tafari/Haile Sellasie's prewar (1916-35) policies on rural land and taxation piggy backed on Menilek's early-1890s edicts. And at their core was the key issue of power relations, most notably the desire to curb the economic and territorial foundations of the local/regional elite. As regent, Tafari, like Menilek, moved carefully and focused mainly on measuring land and reforming the tithe to check elite accumulation of capital (in the political and economic sense of the term). As emperor, Haile Sellasie happened to be more determined than his predecessors to curb regional power and bolster the central government's position toward the building of the modern state.

As I have shown in the previous chapter, Menilek used land measurement as a viable strategy to limit elite (most notably *malkagna*) proprietorship and bolster the

government's own land-fund. From an ideological point of view Tafari/Haile Sellasie's prewar land and taxation policies were rooted in that desire. In terms of magnitude and practice, however, the regent/emperor's achievements diverged from the past considerably. Tafari/Haile Sellasie focused on three interrelated areas during his first two terms in office between 1916 and 1935. These were land measurement and sale, abolition of corvee labor, and restructuring of the land tax. The first was a continuation of past practices whereas the last two were Tafari/Haile Sellasie's own "inventions."

By the time Tafari secured his regent position in Empress Zawditu's government in 1916, *qalad* had made significant inroads in parts of the valley. North of the Awash in Ada-Lume, *qalad* or state-sponsored land measurement and sale had in fact been well underway since the 1880s, the same time it did in other parts of Shawa. Cappucci, for example, observed such practices in Ada in 1887, where *gasha* land could be bought for the price of a mule.¹ Several of my informants confirmed Cappucci's story and added that *lam gasha* land in Ada and Lume could be purchased for as "little" as 3 to 4 MTD in the late-19th and early-20th century.²

Yet, none of my informants were certain about the relative size of Ada-Lume land individual buyers (often farmers) purchased any time before the Italian occupation (1936-41). Neither is it possible to ascertain now the exact proportion of Ada-Lume land that fall into the various tenural categories due to the governments' land measurement in the late-19th and early-20th century. Nor is it possible to extrapolate such statistics based on the Ministry of Land Reform and Administration's (MLRA) 1967 survey mainly because the tenural categories were shifting constantly.³ The only reliable statistics pertains to the *madbet/waraganu* land I explained in the previous chapter.

Lack of quantifiable data notwithstanding, we know for sure that Ada-Lume exhibited the vestiges of *gasha maret* and *qalad* well before the turn of the 19th century. Hence there was *rist-gult*, *gabbar* land, *samon*, and government land, the last two comprising probably the largest landed categories (in terms of sheer size) north of the Awash by 1917.⁴

Compared to Ada-Lume, land measurement and sale had a distinct history south of the Awash in the valley. Here the practice does not seem to have started any time before 1930. Also compared to Ada-Lume, government-sponsored land measurement occupies a special place among bearers of oral history in places like Arsi Negelle. The majority of my informants held the land measurement as responsible (directly or indirectly) for most land-related problems that came to haunt rural society in the postwar period. Others suggested that there is intimate, if not direct, relationship between land measurement and the expansion of crop cultivation in the valley south of the Awash. The oral histories I gathered from the range of informants I interviewed in Arsi Negelle offer interesting factual information to begin to understand the interface between policy and practice at the local level. I have summarized those stories in three interrelated themes.

The first of those stories relates to the mechanics of land measurement and the human figure behind it. The person my informants identified as the architect of land measurement in Arsi Negelle was a certain Assafa *Shebo* (lit. wire), who got his nickname from the material he used to measure the land. Almost all my informants emphasized that Shebo was the government's delegate who came from Addis Ababa to measure and sale the land. But none could be more specific on such relevant points as how long Shebo stayed in the region, the team of surveyors that must have accompanied

him, and the exact size of land he was able to measure and sale. Generally, my informants remarked that Shebo may have been an astute surveyor but it was mainly due to the kind of support he enjoyed from the local *balabbat* that he was able to measure the land without any major difficulty. According to them, Shebo's primary goal was to measure and sale so-called government land to each and all interested individual buyers. What this meant is simply should the locales, like those in Shawa's *gasha maret*, wanted to ensure ownership rights on the land then they had to pay for it. This was an important development because land measurement symbolized Arsi Negelle's inclusion into the *qalad* tenure that had been well underway elsewhere, first in most parts of Shawa and then across a growing number of southern regions such as Arsi, Sidamo, and Wallaga. Compared to past (pre-1930) patterns, land measurement signaled two important developments. First, to the extent that individual buyers were willing to purchase the land, land measurement marked the partial withdrawal of the state from land-ownership. Second, land measurement also limited the amount of land that could be claimed by the political elite such as the *malkagna* or *balabbat*. Hence Shebo also carved out a ten (later commuted to 15) *gasha* of land as *balabbat-siso*, fostering a clear distinction between the administrative unit the local officials presided over and the part of the land they "owned" and over which they reserved the right to collect tributes for themselves.⁵

However, this is the second story the informants narrated to me, since the majority, if not all, of the local population were herders who did not actually own the land as personal property, Shebo's land measurement and sale at first appeared to many as a cartographic exercise with little or no impact on their day to day life. Not surprisingly, therefore, when Shebo and the local *balabbat* auctioned the land for sale, only a small

number of the local herders showed any interest in paying for the land even if the price tag was “minimal” (reportedly a thaler for a *gasha* of land). My informants explained this local reluctance to purchasing the land in terms of consciousness rather than resistance. According to them, the few who dared to buy the land were “enlightened” individuals who were able to predict the future compared to the majority who simply could not understand why they should spend their money for a resource that they believed was a free gift of god. Likewise, compared to other places such as the coffee growing regions of Gedeo or the cereal growing Ada highlands where *qalad* attracted individual buyers from “outside,” in Arsi Negelle the uncultivated nature of the land seem to have discouraged outsiders from buying the land.⁶

The third story my informants told me relates to the pattern Shebo’s land measurement introduced by making receipts (*karni*) as the proof of ownership. In the past, access to environmental resources was permissible and individuals had ostensibly “equal” access to the land as long as they belonged to the *gosa* (clan). But now the introduction of receipts began to foster a different kind of “evidence” for land entitlement rights that tilted the balance from the communal to the individual, and more subtly from the pastoral to the sedentary agriculturalist. This was a qualitatively fresh development with potentially far-reaching implications in farmers’ resource use and entitlement rights. Because only few individuals had purchased the land, and perhaps more importantly, because the demand for individually owned land lagged few years from the time of Shebo’s land measurement, the use-value of the *karni* remained insignificant at first. But this will change soon (i.e., in the postwar era) as the valley’s rapidly transforming crop-based agriculture became a source of attraction for a group of the country’s urban-based elite

and non-elite populations who vied for agricultural land in the region mainly by challenging the farmers' ownership rights based on that evidence.⁷

The stories summarized above shed light on the interface between politics and access to agricultural resources that became particularly potent in the post-Italian occupation period. The relatively unique developments we tend to observe on the ground during this period resulted not so much from Tafari/Haile Sellasie's radical departure from the past on matters relating to land but from the discrepancy between policy and action (that is what the government legislated and what social actors made of those legislations in practice). For example, contrary to Shebo's assumption that land measurement could lead to the sale of large tracts of land to individual, taxpaying smallholder farmers, the outcome on the ground proved to be disappointing because the majority of Arsi Negelle herders did not dare to buy the land at this time.

In the political realm, Tafari/Haile Sellasie's land measurement policies and praxis, like those of Menilek, sprang from the government's sentient, albeit subtle, desire to curtail the noticeably voracious activities of the prewar politico-military elite who moved to constantly amass more and more land in the form of *siso* or *hudad* across the regions.⁸ In theory, therefore, *qalad* was meant for regulating elite activities by delineating land into tractable and distinct categories such as *gabbar* land, *malkagna* or *balabbat siso*, *samon*, and *madarya*.⁹

In the economic realm too, land measurement envisaged raising government revenue and propagating *gabbar maret* as its undeclared goal. The fact that land measurement promised the auctioning of the land to individual farmers is a clear indication of that desire. Direct evidence to the economic component of those policies comes from a major

edict the emperor promulgated in September 1930. Divided into nine parts, the 1930 edict laid new rules regarding existing and soon to be measured lands. Three of the articles (articles 1, 2, and 9) were particularly important with respect to the delimitation and appropriation of measured land. Article 1 declared that already developed (*lam*) lands should not be expropriated even if the holder is found to have possessed excess land. Article 2 specified that if undeveloped (*taf*), *terf* (extra) land should be divided into four equal parts: each going to the elite, the *cisagna*, the *balabbat*, and the land-seeker (*daj tagni*).

Perhaps the most interesting of all is Article 9 that pledged tax incentives to the cultivators with important geographic variations between north and south of the Awash. Accordingly, new cultivators acquiring land north of the River were to enjoy exemptions of $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the land tax for the first and second years respectively, starting to pay a full rate only in the third. Those to the south of the Awash were granted total exemptions in the first year, $\frac{3}{4}$ in the second, $\frac{1}{2}$ in the third year, and paid the full amount of the land tax only in the fourth year.¹⁰

In a follow up edict it promulgated in July 1934 Haile Sellasie's government further restricted elite ownership by restoring *gabbar* rights on so-called excess- (*terf*) land that may be recovered after each round of land (re-)measurement. In fact, the 1934 edict was bolder in stating that excess land signaled unlawful appropriation of property by the elite and those lands should be restored to the cultivators to shore up any diminution (presumably less than one *gasha*) of farmers' land.¹¹

From a policy perspective, therefore, the government's land measurement and sale, side by side with controlling elite land-grabbing activities, might as well have been aimed

at propagating *gabbar* land (within the bounds of *qalad*) and encouraging the expansion of crop agriculture. Surprisingly, very few scholars have seen those edicts and Haile Sellasie's land measurement policies from the vantage point of production. Mantel-Niecko, albeit looking at it characteristically from an unchanging and socially frozen standpoint, comes close. Her argument deserves a lengthy quotation.

Hayle Selasse's policies dating from the end of the 20's and beginning of the 30's...were an expression of the Emperor's attempts to extend his control over agricultural production [; and they resulted] ...from the need...to raise [agricultural] productivity...[His policies on] ground rent ..., attempts to make it uniform, control land surveys, orders to cultivate fallow and virgin land, introduction of tax relief for those who undertook the cultivation of virgin land, ...—all these moves can be interpreted as an expression of the tendency to enrich the rulers' estate and ensure a stable basis for his income. It is quite possible that this kind of reform...didn't change anything in the relation between the subordination of the population towards the higher authority [sic]. These moves of Hayle Sellasse, [though]...unprecedented, can be said to have grown out of earlier processes in agricultural policy and their novelty—a result of the necessity to deal with the economic needs of an central administration apparatus which was growing even more powerful.¹²

A closer examination of the edict itself and its meaning in tandem with the regent/emperor's previous and subsequent policy pronouncements suggest that Mantel-Niecko's conclusions were not far-fetched at all. The question remains, however, who was to benefit from the envisaged increase in crop production, the propagation of smallholder farms, and the changing power relations that accompanied them? More importantly, in what ways did social actors' interpretation and "use" of those edicts impact practice (or outcome) one way or another? This is important because developments on the ground resulted from complex entanglements than a policy-centered explanation could tell. The evidence from Arsi Negelle shows that land measurement did not result in the multiplication of taxable, smallholder units automatically, although it did succeed in limiting the size of land *balabbat* controlled directly. More than anything else,

what Shebo's land measurement did was in fact the maximization of government land at the expense of *gabbar* land. From a distance this imbalance appears to be the net effect of economics in that since buyers were not forthcoming then the government had to keep the land as its property. But in practice several factors ranging from the farmers own understanding of the equation to their immediate needs and ability impacted the outcome on the ground. Nonetheless land measurement did not settle the important question of property rights once and for all. Rather, as I will explain in some detail in Chapter Six, it paved the way for what proved to be intense competitions over agricultural resources among a range of social actors. If the final outcome was marked by rapid expansion of crop-agriculture, the force that made it happen was not land measurement itself but the intense competitions that followed in its wake.

Like on land, Tafari/Haile Sellasie's prewar policies on tribute and taxation were reflections of the existing power relations. It may not be by accident, therefore, that contrary to the postwar period when taxation stood center-stage in the monarch's centralization efforts, in the prewar period Tafari did not introduce major reforms regarding the land tax anytime during his regency. In fact, the first major attempt the government made to regulate the land tax came only in May 1935 in the form of an edict that aimed at fixing the land tax at *birr* 30 per *gasha* across the regions. Though not implemented due to the Italian invasion, the edict nonetheless foreshadowed the government's desire in regulating the regional elites' tax levying power by introducing a fixed land tax (*qurt-geber*) across the board.¹³

Unlike the land tax, Tafari/Haile Sellasie's prewar policies on the tithe and corvee labor arrangements were clear and bold. Tafari promulgated two key amendments

regarding the tithe. The first, promulgated in October 1921, chartered the manner in which the elite (mainly soldiers) could reap the tithe from the farmers. Accordingly the edict restricted the number of days the tithe-collectors were liable to visit the farmers' fields to only three (all limited to the harvesting season). The edict also outlawed soldiers' "rights" to request any kind of material (such as food) or labor obligation during those days, as was the practice before. Furthermore, Article 14 of the same edict explicitly stated that the proceeds from such marketed-crops as pepper, cotton, coffee, coriander and vegetables should not to be measured as *asrat* for the *malkagna* but were the government's reserve.¹⁴

The second edict, promulgated in October 1923, also included key amendments regarding tithe rates and its assessment. Consequently, the edict made in to law that a team composed of local elders and officials should assess the tithe rates according to the status of the land. Accordingly, individual farmers owning or cultivating *lam* land paid 10 *dawla*, those in the *lam-taf* and *taf* categories paid respectively 5 and 2 *dawla* of grain per *gasha* as tithe annually.¹⁵

Next to the tithe, it was the controversial corvee labor arrangement that caught Haile Sellasie's attention most. This was so not only because the mobilization of corvee labor and *cisagna* had intensified alongside with the forging of *qalad* tenure across the conquered regions, but also because labor has become a sensitive matter in the national political debate as well.

Scholars have underscored how the forging of *rist-gult*, *siso*, or *madarya* led to the intensification of corvee and sharecropping arrangements across the regions. In Kafa, Donham's study has shown that labor mobility between the different tenural categories

was perhaps the dominant feature that accompanied conquest and land measurement. He remarked that: "At first glance, such [*gult* or *madarya*] grants appear to be worthless in practice without control over labor. A number of ways existed [however for the elite]...to attract tenants... Holders of *gult* on unsettled lands attracted *gabbar* who fled oppressive conditions to nearby areas ...as tenants, *chisenya*." ¹⁶ McClellan's Gedeo study also shows that the competition over labor between *shalaqa* and the evolving *qalad* regions was intense, and led to inter-elite conflict in its wake. ¹⁷ Similarly, Brotto's Arsi study showed that *gult* and *madarya* holders, either unable or unwilling to attract *cisagna*, resorted to selling their land mainly to Oromo and Amhara immigrants from Shawa. Brotto argued that those land sales drastically altered Arsi traditional pastoral economy because without adequate land for their cattle, many were in fact forced into cultivation. ¹⁸

My informants from Zway, Mareqo, and Arsi Negelle did not report any such labor obligation practices for the region south of the Awash anytime before the Italian occupation. But those in Ada and Lume underscored that *cisagna* was the dominant form of labor recruitment on the *madarya* lands. They also noted of the prevalence of corvee labor in Ada's highlands where *rist-gult* holders demanded free labor from *gabbar* as part of the annual tribute obligation of the farmers. ¹⁹

Probably because of its magnitude, corvee labor also became an object of intense intellectual debate early in the 20th century. Among others, Afawarq, for example, harshly criticized the kind of corvee labor most *gabbar* were subjected to in the *malkagna* lands and held it responsible for low agricultural productivity, rural poverty and the country's backwardness. He remarked that: "Unable to attend their fields many [farmers] look on helplessly as their farms are being taken over by ...weeds and wild grasses." ²⁰

Afawarq argued that the only remedy to liberate the farmers from *malkagna* domination and boost agricultural production and productivity in Ethiopia is by relieving the *gabbar* from corvee labor.²¹

Likewise, the imperial government and a small but vocal group of the new generation of regional rulers (mainly in the southern parts of the country) also criticized the corvee labor arrangements openly. For example, in a 1918 memo Zawditu sent to her ex-husband Gugsu in Gondar, the empress underscored the increasing replacement of corvee labor on government land (*hudad*) in Shawa by payment in cash and urged him to follow suit.²² In Wallaga, the governor *Dajazmach* Berru Walda Gabriel condemned corvee labor (and related obligations *gabbar* had to fulfill) which he contended was responsible for stifling Wallaga economy. He reacted by introducing a legislation in 1917 that banned corvee labor and replace it with a fixed tax to be paid only in cash.²³ In Harar, the governor *Ras* Imru deprived the *malkagna* of the “right” to corvee labor both on the land set aside for their personal benefit (as *hudad*) as well as for the building of houses and mending of fences that had been the practice before.²⁴ In Charchar (a region that would become part of Harar later) the Russian educated and more radical Takla Hawaryat sought to abolish the *malkagna* institution altogether in the early-1920s. To that end, Takala wanted to convert all uncultivated land to freehold, against the backdrop of the old practice whereby the *malkagna* controlled the land which they exchanged for corvee labor and tributes.²⁵

All these developments and the contradictions evident on the ground must have convinced *Negus* Tafari’s government to promulgate, on November 29, 1928, the first major reformist edict regarding corvee labor. At its core, the edict sought to restrict

corvee by reducing the number of days tax-paying farmers (*gabbar* and *chisagna* alike) worked on the lands of local officials.²⁶ The edict also granted generous tax incentives to farmers who were willing to bring *taf* land into cultivation, relieving them of the bulk of both the land tax and tithe in the first several years of their cultivation.²⁷

Certainly the most radical edict Haile Sellasie's government promulgated regarding corvee labor, however, came on May 9 1935, right on the eve of the Italian invasion. The edict abolished all forms of corvee as well as produce-payments and, as I have mentioned before, fixed the land tax at an annual rate of 30 *birr* per *gasha*.²⁸ Commenting on the edict, Mantel-Niecko argued:

The imperial regulations...were dictated by the interest the Emperor had in the fullest possible utilization of the land in the individual peasant farms, who being obliged to fulfill services for the MELKENYA in accord with his limitless demands were not able to cultivate their own land and at the same time fulfill their individual obligations towards the state. ...the regulations...are the expression of the subordination of the local administration to the central authority which extended its control over the agricultural production of individual farmers.²⁹

Tekalign, however, argued that the "growing demands of the food market and the desperate need for cash revenue must have been the most compelling factors" that convinced the emperor to promulgate the May 1935 edict.³⁰ I would argue that the edict was consistent with, and in fact, marked the culmination of an ongoing attempt by the state to curb further the power of the landed-elite as well as to improve farmers' labor productivity (for the sole purpose of raising agricultural production and in doing so, maximizing the sources of government revenue).³¹

To what extent the two edicts on corvee labor got accepted and affected practice at the local level is difficult to tell even in areas where regional governors fully subscribed to

them. In Wallaga, for example, where *Dejazmach* Berru himself pioneered such a move, reports attest to the fact that forced labor services persisted up until the Italian occupation.³² In Chercher, Takala Hawaryat's attempt to regulate corvee labor by abolishing *hudad* earned him the wrong appellation Bolshevik before he was removed from power later.³³ If a small but relatively influential group of southern governors joined the battle against corvee labor directly or indirectly, their northern counterparts however remained ambivalent about it. According to one commentary written on Berhanena Salam regarding the implementation of the November 1928 edict, for example, "the regulations had not been extended to the entire country. In Tigre, Gondar, Gojjam and Wollo there is yet no regulation that says, you work two days for me and one day for yourself."³⁴ The writer might have described the situation in those provinces roughly accurately. Yet, if corvee labor still persisted in the north as it did in the south in the late-1920s and early-1930s, it was not simply because of the governments' inability to "extend" the regulations to the "entire country" but mainly because the practicability of those edicts, like those pertaining to land and tributes, depended on a range of contingent factors that were embedded in the intricacies of regional politics itself.

3.2 Beneath politics: roads and the infrastructural foundation of agricultural change

If the politics of land measurement, labor control, and tribute exaction were critically important in fashioning the nature and pace of agricultural transformation in the valley, the slow expansion of modern transportation also impacted that transformation in its own way. Historically, the valley had never been an isolated landscape. As I have shown in Chapter One, valley populations had transacted well with their close and distant

neighbors for most of the 19th century. Utta (Oromo) pastoral communities in present day Arsi Negelle traded with Sirka (in highland Arsi), Silti, Gurage, and Wolayta cultivators, exchanging livestock products for grains and clothing. In the north, Ada served as an important entrepot and transit point for the caravans that plied between Jimma, Gurage, Shawa, and beyond at least from the 1840s. With the founding of Addis Ababa in 1887 and its emergence as Ethiopia's largest market by the early-20th century, the direction and intensity of those trading networks began to change rather significantly.

Addis Ababa had already become the largest market center in the entire Ethiopian region by the time the railway reached its southern outskirts in 1917.³⁵ For two decades before that and one decade after, Addis Ababa obtained its marketed-food and other products from the regions mainly through what one contemporary observer noted, "droves of donkeys ...long strings of pack-mules [and] interminable files of camels" that arrived in the capital "laden with products of farm and forest."³⁶ Likewise Hermann Nordon, fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the American Geographical Society who visited the capital in 1928, also witnessed Addis Ababa's evolving market and its *modus operandi*. He reported:

Addis Ababa is a city of about eighty thousand inhabitants, and with a daily influx of forty thousand market and caravan visitors. The market place, where, until recent times, frequent hangings occurred and the bodies were left on view of waning to other offenders, is now an agreeable place to loiter in. It is the heart of the native life, the vantage ground for the stranger's observation. All roads into the town lead to this spot, and early in the morning they swarm with people in clean, white cloths. ...the market square where the animals are shown, and the bazaar at the back of the post-office, are filled early in the morning with buyers and sellers. Articles of food, dress, and ornaments are displayed in stalls and put the bargainners on their mettle... Among the food stuffs I saw *gesho*...I saw also much *shumnura* [sic]...which is a staple food as is the tef...Potatoes are conspicuously absent. The few that are grown in Abyssinia are as expensive as hothouse delicacies in other climates; they have been

painstakingly cultivated by a Frenchman and a Hungarian to meet the demands of the few resident Europeans in Addis Ababa.³⁷

Arguably an important turning point in Addis Ababa's eventual transformation as the nation's chief produce and consumer market and perhaps too, the way in which a portion of the valley (Ada-Lume) participated in that market was the 1917 completion of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway. For the valley, most notably its northern part through which a good 60 kilometers of the railroad traverses before reaching the capital, the locomotive's impact was incremental but multi-pronged. Among the railway's short-term impact probably the most important was the degree to which it influenced the incidence of medium-scale commercial agriculture along its parameters in Ada-Lume and further south near Zway. Commercial agriculture's first practitioners in Ada were a couple of Addis Ababa's own top politicians who, one can but surmise, must have foreseen the economics of scale the modern means of transportation provided in the context of the capital's expanding 1920s food market and Ada's growing place in it. The first was Ensign Babitchev, one of Menilek's most trusted and influential expatriate advisors who had come to Ethiopia long before the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.³⁸ For the Russian, Ada's proximity to the rail line and Addis Ababa must have been an ideal match to start commercial farming in Godina (in Ada), on a 5-6 *gasha* of land. There Babitchev improvised the old practice of parceling out plots of land for needy cultivators (the majority of whom came from Wolayta) in return for "free" labor on a farm earmarked for the production of potatoes, citrus, coffee, and other crops.³⁹

The second top politician to start commercial farming in Ada was the regent Tafari.⁴⁰ By the 1920s Tafari had convinced himself of the profitability of capitalistic investment

and its impact on domestic and international politics. Consequently the regent/emperor became directly involved in some business undertakings such as commerce but agriculture became one of his top priorities. Tafari started his commercial farming enterprise at Erer (further east in the Awash valley and along the rail line) just few years after his assumption of power in 1916.⁴¹ In the next decade and a half, Tafari/Haile Sellasie was running more than three such commercial farms one of which was located in Ada, in a short distance from the Bishoftu train station. Tafari's Ada farm utilized an estimated 10 *gasha* of land, 2 tractors, and three European agronomic experts, and specialized in the production of food- and cash-crops for the Addis Ababa market and for export.⁴²

According to contemporary European observers, the emperor's farm in Bishoftu "produced *tef* and other cereals, 1,000 sacks of which were packed in 1932." The farm also produced vines, tobacco, livestock, and poultry extracting water from Lake Hora through a network of canals.⁴³ Not very far from the railway terminus in Mojo, two German entrepreneurs also started commercial farming about the same time. Ehm focused on the production and supply to the Addis Ababa market of a range of fruits and vegetables such as tomato, mango and papaya as well as pork, butter, and milk. His fellow countryman "papa" Goetz ran another farm near Adami Tullu specializing in the production of coffee, cotton, fruits, and the raising of ostriches.⁴⁴

From informants' testimonies it appears that the two Ada farms (most notably that of Babitchev's about which relatively more information is available) quickly evolved as well-cultivated fields that supplied Addis Ababa with a short range of products such as citrus fruit, tomato, pig, and milk. My informants could not agree whether the farm was

responsible for the introduction of new crops. Some associated the arrival of potatoes to the area to the Babitchev farm while others disagreed emphasizing that the new crops (including peas and beans which came about the same time) followed their own course. However, none doubted their position that in terms of field technology the short-lived commercial farms differed from smallholder farms only in terms of scale rather than produce.⁴⁵

If, as I have argued, the railway contributed to an early incidence of medium-scale commercial farming in Ada, its most salient and durable contribution, however, relates to urban growth and the valley's growing integration into the national and international food markets. The valley's northern towns, most notably Nazareth and Mojo, owed their foundation to the railway. It took several decades and the convergence of several factors before Nazareth, Mojo, and Bishoftu emerged as key urban centers in the valley, to which the rail line provided a unique advantage only few of Ethiopia's urban centers had.⁴⁶ Equally important was the railway's special place in the country's import export trade. The railway continued to be the dominant in- and out-let for the country's import/export trade for over four decades, triggering in its wake the transformation of Nazareth, Mojo and Bishoftu into major urban centers. As we shall see later, the export trade (which was dominated by food crops for most of the 1941-55 period) and urban growth impacted postwar valley agricultural transformation in its own way.

Interestingly, for over a decade and a half the railway, much like the capital itself, depended on traditional caravan routes for its sustenance. By the time of the railway's completion in 1917 Addis Ababa hardly had a reliable motorable road, and no major road linked the capital with any of its regions. To be sure, Menilek is credited for initiating

road building in the capital and its vicinity, toward the north, and between Harar and the evolving railway town of Dire Dawa in the 1890s and early 1900s. But whatever roads existed at this time, they were in rudimentary state.

Motorable road-building entered a new phase in Ethiopia in 1924/25 with improvements made to Addis Ababa's roads to make them serviceable to motor cars, and the beginning of similar constructions to link the capital with Jimma, a major coffee producing region in the southwest. The slow-beginning of motorable road-building that had started in earnest only in the mid-1920s continued unabated even after the Great Depression that also impacted Ethiopia's import/export trade significantly. In all Tafari/Haile Sellasie's government succeeded in up-grading and building an estimated 2000 kilometers of road before the 1935 Italian invasion of the country, of which approximately half (1200 km) were useable all year round.⁴⁸

On the ground, the size (as could be seen from Figure 3 below) and quality of Ethiopia's prewar motorable roads was modest at best, but their symbolic significance was probably far-reaching. Marcus must have this in mind when he explained Italian colonization of Ethiopia in the context of "infrastructure" or Italian frustrations of Haile Sellasie's achievements in capitalistic development such as road building.⁴⁹ Marcus' was a valid preposition because in this, as in most of Tafari/Haile Sellasie's deeds in the first two to four decades of his tenure, the regent/emperor perceived the colonial threat as imminent in spite (or in the case of Mussolini's Italy because) of Adwa. For him therefore the daunting task of building roads almost from scratch and in a country of rugged topography was a matter of utmost priority which, if accomplished successfully could facilitate his nation-building enterprise (against the backdrop of political threats he

saw coming from his European rivals). Indeed his rhetoric regarding road-building accompanied the regent's unyielding quest for securing a sea port to Ethiopia so as to overcome his country's landlocked status and virtual dependence on the colonial powers.⁵⁰

In practice too, a closer look at the contours of Ethiopia's pre-1936 useable motorable roads further elucidate the fact that political and economic factors dictated the government's priority and investment. Hence, not only was Addis Ababa emerging as the nodal point for the new and projected network of roads, but also the bulk of the roads that have been constructed before the Italian invasion targeted either the politically sensitive (such as Wollo and Gojjam) or economically more useful (such as Jimma, Wallaga, and Sidamo) regions that have now come under Tafari/Haile Sellasie's control relatively firmly.⁵¹

Our region was among those that benefited from the government's road-construction activities in the prewar period. Two phases distinguished the roads that cut through the valley. The first phase of the road linked Addis Ababa with Mojo and Nazareth, the paved road often running parallel to the railline.⁵² Ada-Lume's growing importance in and potential for food production must have convinced the government to embark on road-building in a region that was already connected to the capital by rail.

The second phase of the road linked Mojo with Sidamo further south across the valley. We do not know for sure whether the construction of the southern road from Addis Ababa to Sidamo across the valley started following Haile Sellasie's 1930 five-year plan involving the building of some 3,700 miles of motorable roads in the country or the

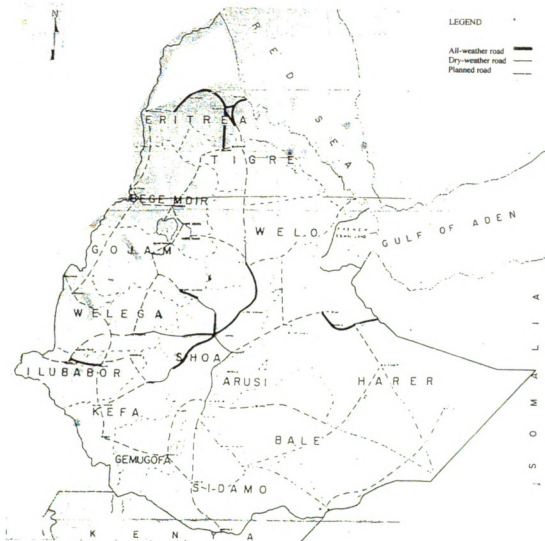


Figure 3 Ethiopia and Eritrea highways built before 1936
Adapted from Imperial Highways Authority, *Development of Highways in Ethiopia*, p. 4.

government's most immediate need to extract Sidamo's gold and coffee that have already gained national prominence by the 1920s.⁵³ We also know very little about the exact quality of the road as well as the size of the traffic. The evidence from travelers reports indicate that by 1932 construction of the southern road had gone beyond the valley and reached the neighborhood of Sidamo's capital at Yirgalem the following year.⁵⁴ Similar reports also reflected *Ras Dasta's* (Sidamo's governor) targeted road-building activities in the region, his utilization of trucks, and Sidamo's quick ascendance in the national coffee market.⁵⁵ Primarily the road that linked Sidamo with the railway town of Mojo through the valley remained vital for Sidamo's economy and its imperial dependents than for the majority of Arsi Negelle, Zway, or Mareqo herders who were just beginning or about to begin food crop production, a potentially useful but different kind of product from the coffee the trucks plying the roads transported to Addis Ababa from the south.⁵⁶

An important turning point in the history of the country's road-building was the Italian invasion and short-lived occupation (1936-41). For the Italians, even more than for Haile Sellasie, roads were of prime necessity, first to ensure rapid deployment of troops and transportation of supplies and then of course to execute effectively their "civilizing mission" once the conquest phase was over. Not surprisingly therefore Italian invasion of Ethiopia that started in earnest from two different directions, i.e. the Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somalia, was accompanied by road-building.⁵⁷

But more directed and meaningful road-building started only after the Italian seizure of Addis Ababa in May 1936. In fact, one of the first decrees the viceroy promulgated just two weeks after Italy's occupation of the city focused on road-building. The edict detailed the distance and targeted destination of the roads and the different phases in

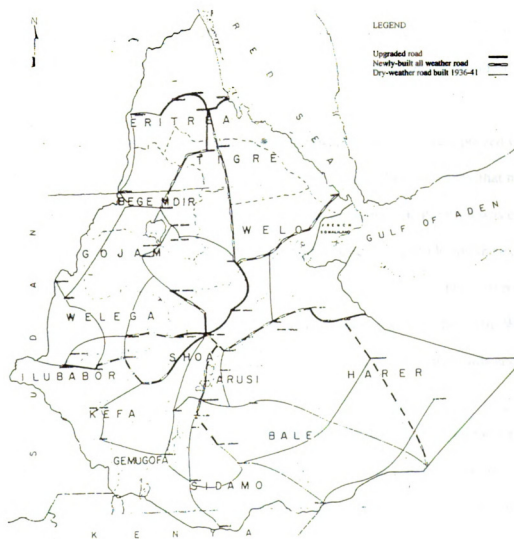


Figure 4 Italian built roads in Ethiopia and Eritrea (1935-41)
 Adapted from Imperial Highways Authority, *Development of Highways in Ethiopia*, p. 5.

which construction was to take place. Initially the Italians planned to build a total of 3900 kilometers of roads connecting Addis Ababa with Jimma, the Rift Valley Lakes, Negelle (Sidamo), and Italian Somaliland.⁵⁸ Shortly the Italians revamped their plan and its execution by 50 percent. As it turned out, putting the plan to action proved a daunting task for the Italians cost-wise. Yet for all the difficulties they faced, the Italians were successful in constructing a total of 6000 kilometers of roads during their occupation, in effect linking the different regions of Ethiopia with the capital and their oldest colonies in the Horn (see Figure 4).⁵⁹

For the majority of Ethiopia's regions and cities, Italian built roads proved to be the first ever access to modern transportation. Even for places like the valley that have seen some beginnings of road-building before the war, the Italian intervention was critical for the significant improvements it made to the quality of existing roads and the extension of the roads into new destinations virtually in all directions. Indeed Italian built roads made our region's mode of contact with the railway and Addis Ababa to the north, Wolayta (through the Addis Ababa Gamu Gofa road) to the west, the Arsi highlands and Harar to the east and beyond much simpler and faster.

When judged from the perspective of modern communications, what the Italians accomplished in a short-period amounted to a revolution in Ethiopia's infrastructure history. But for Ada in the northern part of the valley, Italian occupation also had relatively unique repercussions in terms of land and labor mobilization as well as agronomy.⁶⁰

The colonial government's unique engagement with Ada resulted from the exigencies of the military settlement scheme that was very much limited in time and space. The

scheme evolved as an alternative to the failed “demographic colonization” that had been the driving force of Italian colonization of Ethiopia in the first place. The person more directly responsible for championing the theory and practice of the military settlement scheme was the Duke of Aosta, the third and last viceroy of the colony.⁶¹

The Duke’s improvised settlement scheme differed from the demographic settlement scheme in two interrelated ways, in its targeted population as well as geographic locus. Geographically, the new scheme targeted selected sites particularly chosen for relative security and minimum operational and social costs. In regard to the targeted-settler-population, the new scheme zeroed in soldiers and ex-servicemen than civilians the demographic settlement sought to settle in the colony. Institutionally the obvious candidate for the military settlement scheme happened to be the *Opera Nazionale Combattenti* (ONC) the Italian government had created by the end of WWI to rehabilitate that country’s ex-servicemen back home earlier.⁶²

Consequently, two sites both in close proximity to Addis Ababa emerged as almost the obvious candidates for the ONC’s military settlement scheme. These were Holeta (40 km north) and Ada (50 km south) of Addis Ababa.⁶³ Initially the plan was to settle 1000 families on each farm, on 10 hectares of land for each settler family. In the long-term the aim was to develop otherwise large settlements comprising 100,000-120,000 hectares of land on both sites.⁶⁴ Undoubtedly a grand scheme, its implementation, however, proved untenable.

In Ada, Italian agricultural activity started in April 1937, first slowly with the utilization of 30 plow oxen and two tractors on Haile Sellasie’s confiscated farm.⁶⁵ However, the marshy fields of Ada, the acacia slumps which prewar Ada farmers had cut

down without removing the roots, and lack of seeds and manpower delayed agricultural work. With the importation of 20 more tractors and subsequently the decision made to use local seeds until the preferred Kenyan and Italian varieties arrived allowed the Italians to make a steady progress in farming. By July 1937 the Italians managed to cultivate a total of 2,700 hectares of land in Ada, of which 1,177 hectares have been cultivated by settlers and “natives” (see Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1 Italian agriculture in Ada by area and crop type (1937)

Crop	Area sown in hectares	
	By settlers	By “natives”
Wheat	642	76
Chickpea	184	66
<i>Tef</i>	105	32
Peas	-	37
Barley	10	16
Vegetables	12	1
Maize	4	5
Beans	-	2
Mixed herbs	2	-
Experimental	1	-

Source: Pankhurst, “A Page of Ethiopian History,” p. 148.

As the table above demonstrates, wheat, chickpea, *tef*, and peas dominated the farms, the same crops Ada farmers’ cultivated before. Yet average yield both in the settler and “native” farms more than doubled from prewar levels reportedly reaching over 30 quintals per hectare in 1939.⁶⁶

Total cultivated area in ONC jurisdiction grew moderately and reached 750 hectares by July 1940.⁶⁷ By contrast the number of Italian settlers remained numerically insignificant. In May 1939, one year after the onset of the scheme, the total number of Italian settlers in Ada totaled mere 21 farmers. When brought to an end in 1941, the ONC settlement program had only 95 families in Holeta and Bishoftu, in all numbering about

424 people.⁶⁸

According to official ONC reports, the disappointing figures in its settlement scheme resulted from financial stringency, and the colonial administrations' inability to provide sufficient land for settlement.⁶⁹ In a tactical move to address the land problem, the ONC crafted contingent schemes. Dubbed *accorpamento per permuta* (annexation through exchange) the new scheme aimed at acquiring uninterrupted tracts of land for settlers through a supposedly willful exchange of land and resettlement of Ethiopian farmers to a different location.⁷⁰ Once again the land exchange scheme faced severe criticisms from colonial experts themselves who cautioned the government that land expropriation, even with appropriate compensation, would transform the "native" farmers into a multitude of have-nots and could lead to local resistance.⁷¹ No evidence is available to pin-point to what extent, if at all, the ONC's land exchange policy succeeded in Ada. In Holeta, the other major ONC settlement site, a total of 1,406 farmer-households (with an estimated 5,115 population) had been displaced due to that scheme but to settle only 46 Italian families.⁷²

In the wake of the criticisms and difficulties the land exchange scheme encountered, the ONC came up with a second plan called "zones of influence." Unlike "annexation through exchange," "zones of influence" sought to expand settler influence by incorporating the labor and land of "native" farmers as an extension of the settlers' farm.⁷³ A contractual arrangement at its core, the new scheme worked by providing capital (mainly in the form of seed) to "native" farmers in return for a share of the product and/or labor, an arrangement which in practice improvised tenancy arrangements that characterized Ada's *madarya* farms before the war.⁷⁴ However, Ada farmers

remained reluctant to join the scheme because they suspected that behind the whole arrangement was settlers' motive to snatch the land itself. Not coincidentally, therefore, by the end of the Italian occupation in 1941 only 235 hectares of land had been incorporated into settlers' zones of influence, a far cry from what ONC must have anticipated first.⁷⁵

In general, the military-settlement scheme's achievement was anything but impressive.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, its impact on local society and ecology was not without any consequence. In areas where the Italians conducted their settlement and farming activities, they undertook extensive drainage and clearing of the land most of which had been used for pasture before. In the past cultivation of Ada's grazing lands had to cope with the couch grass that dominated the landscape, demanding continuous turning up of the soil before it could be converted into a productive crop field. The grass together with the acacia stumps seems to have slowed down the expansion of crop agriculture in Ada in its own way. Though limited in area, Italian machinery made those lands more accessible for crop agriculture later.⁷⁷

Though limited in extent at first, Italian introduction of improved wheat varieties to Ada also left an enduring legacy in local seed selection. The Italians introduced several improved wheat varieties known as *Mentana*, *Quaderna*, and B I Kenya. The first two varieties fall victim to *Puccinia graminis* (or *wag*) and their short- and long-term impact was negligible. The B I Kenyan variety, on the other hand, proved resistant to *wag* and soon evolved as one of the most preferred wheat varieties in Ada in the immediate postwar decades, until around the mid-1960s.⁷⁸

Conclusion

Two major developments distinguished the 1917-41 period from the three decades before that. The first is the slow yet unprecedented expansion of modern communication networks that laid the foundation for the region's integration into Addis Ababa's evolving niche economy. The second, and potentially more crucial factor, relates to the politics of resource control that accompanied the first and put the valley within the orbit of Ethiopia's postwar political economy in a manner no one could have predicted in 1935.

In this chapter I have outlined those developments to highlight the degree to which the slow expansion of modern means of communication and new sets of rules regarding resource use and control provided the context for agricultural change in the ensuing several decades. I have shown that the completion of the railway in 1917 and subsequent road-building laid the infrastructural foundation for agricultural change in the valley in its own way. Modern communication's most immediate and conspicuous impact on aspects of valley agriculture manifested itself in the incidence of medium-scale farms that specialized in commercial food production.

Even more important in shaping valley agricultural change at this time was the changing rules of access to agricultural resources and what the range of social actors (such as farmers and tribute-seekers alike) made of them. Crucial in that respect was the integration into the *qalad* tenure of most of the valley that has remained outside of it up until 1930. For the government *qalad* was first and foremost a political exercise, a mechanism by which it expropriated both land and the farmers from the local/regional elite and put them under its own grasp. Indeed such land measurement and sale practices had enabled the government to curb the territorial and economic base of its regional

power competitors while multiplying the size of land it controlled and/or taxed across the regions. In the valley, however, the government was only partially successful in that. In fact, contrary to Shebo's expectations, only few individuals showed interest in buying a fraction of the land he made available for sale in Arsi Negelle. For the majority of Ittu (Oromo) herders, Shebo's attempt at selling the land was both alien and irrational because individual ownership of the land implied net loss of grazing lands that was crucial to them.

Yet, as I will show later in greater detail, just in few years, the same herders moved with full force to own individual plots of land and begin crop-agriculture as a means to redefine and promote their resource entitlement rights against the backdrop of state policies and markets that fumed competitions over agricultural resources. The valley's otherwise impressive agricultural transformation took place as a result of those competitions and the contradictions and negotiations that resulted from them. To situate those changes in their proper context, I will detour in the next chapter to analyze Ethiopia's development history and the valley's place in it. My aim is to show how state appropriation of development as theory and practice added yet another dimension to the process of agricultural change and the nexus between rural society and the state in the postwar period distinctly differently from the past.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERVENTION PROJECTILES: LOCATING THE VALLEY IN ETHIOPIA'S DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY (1941-1975)

If, as I have shown in Chapter One, the valley's prewar agricultural landscape changed in slow progression, it was neither because the regions' herders and cultivators appeared to be resistant to change nor because the valley's predominantly pastoral environment was repulsive to Donham and Wendy's Amhara agents who were not attracted to settle there.¹ To the contrary, continuity and change in the valley's agricultural landscape took place in the context of rather than in the absence of state control and the kind of rivalry and power competition that characterized state-local elite-rural society nexus throughout the prewar period.

The burden of the preceding two chapters has been, therefore, to prove the dialectics between power relations and agrarian change by looking specifically at competitions over agricultural resources (most notably land, labor, and tribute) that resulted from it. Strikingly, the interface between the power politics and access to agricultural resources continued to be a crucial factor in the making of the valley's agricultural environment and society throughout the postwar period as well. But during this time the nature and complexity of that interface, the range of social actors involved as well as related ideologies that fed all these developments changed significantly differently from the past. From the perspective of access to agricultural resources, for example, the kind of success Haile Sellasie's government scored over its regional power contenders particularly since

the early-1930s and more so after the short-lived Italian occupation has led to the government's relaxation of its past restrictive policies on land. At one level, such relaxations symbolized the decline in importance of rural land and labor as a basis for regional power. At another level, however, Ethiopia's booming postwar food- and cash-crop market and capitalistic relations of production made land and labor valuable factors of production whose terms of accessibility was all the more embedded in rather than immune from the semblance of power relations and politics.

Also from a strictly agricultural point of view, the old notion of expanding production through maximizing area under crop-cultivation and harnessing labor also gave way to a different creed based on the principle of increasing productivity per unit area. The next five chapters focus on the above antecedents to explain to what extent farmers' actions in the context of changing rules of access to agricultural resources, the economics of a booming food market, and new thinking in agricultural development was responsible for shaping the valley's agricultural landscape in the postwar period.

In the present chapter I outline the shaping of Ethiopia's development theory and the valley's place in its practice. This is important to fill the void in the secondary literature and correct the obviously defective assertion that up until the promulgation of the Third Five Year Development Plan (TFYDP) in 1968 the imperial government showed no interest in "developing" Ethiopia's smallholder agriculture. More importantly it will help us locate the interface (indeed discrepancy) between discourse and practice so as to illuminate the fact that at the local level agricultural transformation resulted from competitions and negotiations over resources between a range of social actors and not simply by the will (or neglect) of the government as such.

4.1 Appropriating Development: the place of agriculture in building the postwar Ethiopian state

As much as Ethiopia's political fate in the postwar years was tied to the progress and outcome of the Second World War, its economy was not immune from global geopolitics. Upon liberation, the Allied powers designated Ethiopia as Occupied Enemy Territory, an arrangement that at once gave the British a special power as it restored Haile Sellasie's monarchy and the country's independence.² Among the sticking issues in the postwar arrangements was the disparities in policies between the British military administration in Ethiopia on the one hand and the British metropolitan government on the other. The former, led by Philip Mitchell, the man charged with overseeing the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA) in Ethiopia, envisaged the retention of Ethiopia as a quasi-protectorate. Mitchell strongly argued that Haile Sellasie's government lacked the capacity to administer the country, and instead insisted on British civilizing mission.³

By contrast, the metropolitan government and the War Office in London were far less committed, in fact they were opposed to, Mitchell's proposals. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself underscored that: "Ethiopia should be handed over to its rulers as a native state and we should not concern ourselves unduly how it is governed."⁴ In September 1941, Anthony Eden, the Foreign Minister, and Lord Moyne, the Minister of State in Cairo, also underscored that Ethiopia "should be treated...as an independent state, subject to necessary safeguards and provisions."⁵ For his part, Haile Sellasie adamantly opposed Mitchell's ideas. While he was willing to allow a short-term

British military administration for the Ogaden, as insisted by Mitchell, the emperor wanted it to be limited to the duration of the war. He also voiced opposition to British guidance “in all important matters” as envisioned by Mitchell, for the emperor saw it as “inconsistent with the re-establishment of a free and independent state.”⁶

The wrangling over Ethiopia’s political fate between the OETA, the metropolitan government, and Haile Sellasie was intense but short-lived and culminated in the signing of the 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian agreement. Yet the debate which seemed to have abated following the 1942 agreement flared up once again in 1944, with the termination of that agreement after three years.⁷ The successor agreement, signed on December 19, 1944, elevated the position of Ethiopia as an independent and sovereign state, and put the head of the British Military Mission under the authority of the Ethiopian Minister of War.⁸

A major outcome of the 1944 agreement, therefore, and one that often has caught the attention of historians has been Ethiopia’s re-emergence as a free and independent state. Far less appreciated by scholars, however, has been the agreement’s legacy in shaping the country’s engagement with postwar reconstruction and development.

At a global scale, one of the most enduring effects of the Second World War had been its impact on postwar international development thinking. Recent studies have shown how and why international visions of development and modernization changed in the postwar period. Linking development and colonialism, Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, for example, have shown how the era of colonial modernity gave way to colonial-developmentalism in the postwar period.⁹ In the colonies, the link between developmentalism and modernity was clear, and had been attended by shifting ideologies and practice in the part of the colonizers from direct colonialism to development.¹⁰

Ethiopia's engagement with postwar developmentalism resonated well with international trends, but it had been conditioned by the country's own peculiar history.

Perhaps the earliest manifestation of Ethiopia's engagement with postwar development ideology and practice was the 1942 report submitted by E. Talbot Smith, America's consul in Eritrea. Having visited Addis Ababa shortly after the emperor signed the first Anglo-Ethiopian agreement and relying much on the information he gathered from Ethiopian officials, but in consonance with what appeared to be America's new diplomatic priorities in the region, Smith criticized British economic policies in Ethiopia. He was particularly critical of British control over currency and "essentially colonial" import-export restrictions put in place by the OETA. Smith couched his criticism in the idealism of the "liberation of conquered peoples," emphasizing that the OETA had betrayed its trust to the Atlantic Charter by not undertaking an extensive rehabilitation program.¹¹ He fulminated:

Happily the Axis propaganda experts do not know this [British inaction], for they did, they would be shouting it to the heavens, and could make out a fine case proving that Allied promises to rehabilitate countries the subject of aggression were pure hypocrisy. Goebbels could now point to Ethiopia and say to the people of Norway, Belgium, Holland, France, Poland, and Greece, 'If the United Nations win, they will treat your country as enemy territory, just as Great Britain treated Ethiopia. Look at Ethiopia and be warned! When the British government got through with it, what was left?'"¹²

Smith's memo is interesting not so much for its criticism of what the British did or did not do but for what it proposed as an alternative. In the same memo he wrote to the Secretary of State in February 1943, Smith insisted that Ethiopia should be "developed" as an outstanding example of United Nations concern and assistance for "liberated" countries and as a useful "experimental station" for relief and rehabilitation.¹³

Consequently, he advocated a policy that would:

Send out a committee to study at first hand what the nation needs to put it on its feet. Send out agronomists, timber experts, agricultural experts in general, for Ethiopia is not sufficiently advanced to be an industrial country. So let this organization try out different forms of organization on Ethiopia, so that, when the time comes, it will know what the best form of organization will be for us to use in the conquered territories of Europe when they were freed.¹⁴

Smith's recommendations for sending a technical team seems not to have fallen on deaf ears as his government sent one in May 1944 (see below). Haile Sellasie's government, in its part, worked surreptitiously to foment such a relationship with America right from the outset. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1943 declaration of food and nutrition as a starting point for international postwar collaboration and, as we shall see later, the new kind of demand for food felt in the Allied-controlled Middle East, provided yet another context for building that relationship.

The circumstances that led Roosevelt to embark on what was to become a new pattern of international collaboration, one that departed radically from prewar trends, are beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to mention here that the Presidents' declaration opened a new chapter in postwar development history. Commenting on the significance of Roosevelt's speech, David H. Lumsdaine remarked that:

Roosevelt surprised many by choosing a conference on food and nutrition as a starting point for postwar collaboration. The League's attempt at cooperation in nutrition had always appealed to him, and...he saw in them an opportunity to launch postwar cooperation...an area in which conflicts would be less sharp than in the...difficult fields of trade and finance.¹⁵

An immediate outcome of Roosevelt's new doctrine had been the hosting by America of the first ever international Conference on Food and Agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, in May 1943. Attended by 45 delegates from different parts of the world (including

Ethiopia), the 1943 Hot Springs conference met to consider the goal of “freedom from want” in relation to food and agriculture. In their deliberations the delegates recognized that freedom from want meant a secure, adequate and suitable supply of food for the world’s poor, and concluded that, “freedom from hunger ... can be reached” by using the best methods in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.¹⁶

These discussions subsequently resulted in the creation of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in 1945, to which Ethiopia became a member in 1947. At its formation, FAO aimed at helping poor nations to raise the standard of living of their populations. To that end, FAO committed itself to work for improving levels of nutrition of the peoples of all countries; to increasing the efficiency of farming, forestry, and fisheries; and to better the condition of rural people in poor countries.¹⁷

Quickly labeled as the potential “bread basket” of the Middle East, a label attached to Ethiopia simply because of its successful exportation of food materials to the Middle East in the 1940s and early-1950s, from the outset Ethiopia became one of FAO’s focal points toward an envisaged international food regime and agricultural intervention. But for Haile Sellasie, the new international demand for food provided yet another opportunity to press for Ethiopia’s full sovereignty as well as to counter the evident threat from British imperial interests in the Horn. The emperor also seized the opportunity to garner international aid for postwar reconstruction and development.

Haile Sellasie pressed for his new desires when he met Roosevelt at Bitter Lake (Egypt) in February 1945. At this meeting the emperor expressed his pleasure in finding out that Roosevelt so fully recognized the possibilities of agricultural development in Ethiopia. Thus, the emperor remarked: “We are gratified that Ethiopia has been able to

contribute from her subsistence to the needy countries of the world even at a time when the Ethiopian people still suffer from the aftermath of occupation.”¹⁸ Haile Sellasie also insisted that Roosevelt offer military, financial and technical assistance to his country because, the emperor maintained, Ethiopia’s contribution to the war effort, in such ways as the furnishing of food materials to Allied troops operating in the Middle East, was contingent upon the restoration of law and order in the country.¹⁹

To be sure, it was this tactical argument--linking law and order to Allied demands for food material--that led to the signing of the Lend-Lease Agreement between Ethiopia and the U.S in August 1943.²⁰ And the task of securing the kind of material, technical, and financial aid that could be secured from the U.S. fell on the shoulders of the Vice-Minister of Finance Yilma Deressa. In a memo he wrote to the U.S. government in 1943, Yilma requested assistance in four different areas: agricultural development, mineral exploration, medical assistance, and highway construction. In regard to agriculture Yilma’s memo emphasized:

My government will appreciate it if the United States government will send out an agricultural mission to train Ethiopians in the use of agricultural machinery that has been left behind by the Italians. There are more than eight hundred tractors and other associated agricultural machines which, if put in action, will increase the productive capacity at least ten fold during the coming years. ...The mission could also advise in the improvement of the existing products and methods of marketing. It could help to open an agricultural institute which is included in the immediate Government Program. In choosing the members of the mission, emphasis should be laid on experts on cereal, animal husbandry, cultivation of cotton and mechanics to maintain our equipment.²¹

Interestingly, the imperial government based its argument on the premise that if agricultural methods can be improved with the help of American financial and expertise support, Ethiopia would contribute substantial quantities of food-material to the relief and

rehabilitation program of the UN worldwide. Yilma's appeal resonated well with America's wartime and postwar geopolitical interests. Consequently, the U.S. government dispatched a technical mission to Ethiopia in 1944 entrusting it to "make a genuine contribution to the economic rehabilitation, health and welfare of Ethiopia and its people."²²

One of the responsibilities of the American mission was to study the relations between Ethiopian rehabilitation and Middle Eastern food supply.²³ The U.S. technical mission that succeeded in compiling a multi-volume recommendation of projects worth ninety-one million dollars, however, was not successful in convincing its government, which rejected the proposal as "out of proportion to Ethiopia's capacity to finance."²⁴ Nonetheless, it was successful, in the words of Marcus, at least "in condition[ing] ...the emperor to think about economic development in terms of those infrastructural and capital projects which later characterized his regime."²⁵

If the Lend-Lease agreements foreshadowed postwar U.S.-Ethiopia relations, they were inconsequential in terms of affecting that country's agriculture and development in the 1940s. Rather a crucial turning point in that relationship and indeed the evolution of international developmentalism as a new form of postwar politics (the ultimate realization of Roosevelt's notion of postwar collaboration) had been President Truman's 1949 declaration of America's Point 4 Program. Named after the fourth point in the President's inaugural address to the U.S. Congress in January 1949, Truman's Point 4 called for a "bold new program" of economic and technical aid to poorer countries.²⁶

If Roosevelt's 1943 speech had opened a new chapter in international development thinking, Truman's Point Four marked the onset of the realization of that trajectory and

gave it new direction. Consequently, the years between 1949 and 1952 saw the setting up of four major programs specifically meant for spearheading international development in the postwar era. Those programs included America's Point Four (1949), the Colombo Plan (formally launched in 1951 having endorsed by the Commonwealth Foreign countries in a meeting in South Africa the previous year), the UN's Expanded Program of Technical Assistance (EPTA), and the re-orientation of World Bank lending from European reconstruction to Third World development with loans approved only days before Truman's speech in January 1949.²⁷

Reflecting on the importance of Truman's doctrine on international development aid, Lumsdaine remarked:

Foreign development aid, whatever form it took, was virtually non-existent before 1949. Strong states have seldom promoted outward flow of financial and technical resources. ...States often seek to prevent outflow of investment and technology even on commercial terms, since possession of capital and technology have been seen as advantageous for the state that possessed them. ...The free or near free provision of technology and finance to weaker states is an extremely anomalous and recent departure from all past practices.²⁸

Important as it was, Truman's doctrine marked the onset of a new chapter in international development. Departing from the ideology of the civilizing mission that in part justified colonialism in the past, development therefore became the *raison d'être* for international cooperation in the postwar period. Underlying the new concept of development in the late-1940s and 1950s was the urgency to eradicate hunger. Alarmed by rapid population growth in the Third World, it became imperative to join the "race" and "beat" population growth by increased production at all costs. And the fastest way to increase production for Third World countries was through the adoption of modern agricultural techniques.

The phenomenal progress of agriculture in the United States in the post-WW I period helped reassure that belief.²⁹

Therefore, contrary to prewar situations, eradicating hunger through agricultural modernization (which could be addressed by the transfer of technology and capital from the First to the Third world countries) became an international issue. Consequently, the new focus on eradicating hunger provided fresh momentum and capital to recently established organizations such as FAO with mandates to promoting agricultural development and food supply in the world. From the outset, Ethiopia became one of the few African countries to be identified by FAO for beginning its operational activities in poor countries.

Fighting pathogens and improving seeds: the valley in Ethiopia's nascent developmentalism

The FAO-Ethiopia accord in the late-1940s and early-1950s resulted from that country's growing involvement in the Middle East food market. As an organization created to ensure global food production and distribution, FAO saw in Ethiopia a potential ally. Ethiopia, in turn, found in FAO a crucial partner both in acquiring capital as well as new ideas rooted in international development thinking. Ethiopia signed its first agreement with FAO in December 1947, marking the beginning of what turned out to be a close and collaborative relationship between the two parties that continued throughout the postwar period (and more so until the mid-1970s).³⁰ In February 1951 the two parties signed a second agreement for technical assistance through the Expanded Technical Assistance Program (ETPA).³¹

As a result, FAO emerged as the pioneer international organization in shaping government policies on agriculture and food production in Ethiopia for nearly two decades (late-1940s to mid-1960s). FAO's involvement in Ethiopia's postwar development thinking and agriculture manifested itself most in the studies and recommendations its experts made on a host of issues ranging from animal husbandry to land tenure.³²

FAO dispatched its experts to Ethiopia at a regular basis. Starting from the late-1940s, a host of FAO experts visited the country and left their mark on virtually every aspect of Ethiopian agriculture. The focus of FAO's specialists in Ethiopia and indeed their level of engagement with Ethiopia's policy makers and agriculture matured over time, but remained considerable throughout the imperial era.³³

The FAO's impact on Ethiopia's agriculture was direct and meaningful. It involved FAO's active participation in the first organized and large-scale livestock immunization campaign ever conducted in that country. The campaigns' running cost covered by American grant money, FAO-led teams vaccinated a total of 3 million cattle against rinderpest in the first six years (1949-1954) of their operation.³⁴ In all, 24 FAO veterinarians and biologists participated in the immunization campaign, against rinderpest, Bovine Pleuron, Pneumonia, Anthrax, Black leg and other diseases.³⁵

The valley was among the regions that had been targeted by the FAO-led vaccination campaign in the 1948-1958 decade. No recorded evidence is available to measure the number of vaccinated livestock in the valley, but a number of my interviewees (from Mojo, Maqi, and Arsi Negelle) very well remembered the practice. One of them Nini Abino (from Arsi Negelle) described the situation the following way.

The vaccinators came and camped there up in the hill. Earlier the message had been communicated to us through the local officials. They came here at the market day and their spokesperson announced that vaccinators had come to immunize our cattle from rinderpest. He told us that they would stay in the area for one week and urged us to vaccinate the cattle. All kinds of rumors began to circulate immediately. Some said this was a tactic used by the government to count the number of cattle we owned, simply to raise taxes. Other said the injections would sterilize cattle, and dry the cows' milk producing capacity. Other said vaccination simply kills cattle. You know we were illiterate back then.

Q. So what did the overall outcome look like? Did the majority of the farmers fail to vaccinate their cattle?

A. Yes. The first year not many individuals dared to vaccinate their cattle. Some took only one or two, often bullocks and older ones. My father had more than 18. He took only three. Others decided to wait and see. But the situation changed later. When the vaccinators came here the second time, many were willing to vaccinate their cattle. Later we had to walk our cattle to the center in town. Next to the quinine, the rinderpest vaccination was the one good thing the emperor had done for us. Those of us who were begged to vaccinate our cattle lived longer to pay for it. I don't know how many of us could afford to pay for the vaccinations now had we still possessed as many livestock as before.³⁶

My interviewees from Maqi, Zway, and near Mojo, where FAO conducted a series of cattle vaccination campaigns in the 1950s, also told almost identical stories regarding their first experience with livestock vaccination.³⁷ They also stated that the vaccinations played a crucial role in mitigating livestock mortality due to disease which they inferred was quite rampant in the region in the past.³⁸ Indeed, as far as one can tell from interviewees testimonies and sporadic official reports, intermittent outbreak of rinderpest epidemic, like the one that occurred in 1917/18 around Lake Langano, did pose serious threats to valley cattle population in the prewar period.³⁹ The FAO-led immunization campaigns ushered in a new direction in combating livestock mortality in the postwar period.⁴⁰

Side by side with their livestock immunization program, promoting Ethiopia's crop agriculture had been the focus of FAO experts since the late-1940s. Compelled to work with undeveloped infrastructure, FAO experts' impact on Ethiopia's crop agriculture remained very limited when compared to the livestock vaccination program that reached reportedly much larger areas and populations. Nonetheless, their impact had been significant particularly in terms of shaping the governments' development agenda as well as in setting the stage for the course future intervention regimes took shape. The numerous surveys and studies FAO's agricultural experts conducted and the recommendations they made pointed the direction of Ethiopia's agricultural development while challenging established imperial wisdom on smallholder agriculture.

Strikingly, all the studies and recommendations FAO experts made in the late-1940s and early-1950s focused on two interrelated aspects of Ethiopia's smallholder agriculture, notably the need to revolutionize the "inefficient" plow technology and the urgency to improve the seed repertoire in the country.⁴¹ FAO experts strongly argued that the Ethiopian plow was a crude instrument, being mainly a digging tool that does not turn the soil but merely breaks it. According to them, the plow had been particularly inefficient in maximizing area under cultivation more because it competed against labor-efficiency by compelling farmers to plow the same field repeatedly (for up to three or four times) to prepare an adequate seedbed.⁴² Instead, they recommended its substitution by a light, simple and inexpensive moldboard-plow that could reduce the amount of labor and time farmers' spent by at least half, as well as maximize their capacity to cultivating twice or thrice as much land per unit of time than they were able to using the traditional plow. The experts also underscored that the moldboard-plow could perform much better under dry

conditions and in virgin and heavy soils so as to bring more land under cultivation than would have been possible under existing plow technology.⁴³

In addition to revolutionizing the plow technology, FAO experts also emphasized the supremacy of improved seed varieties as the key to raising agricultural production in the country. In fact, more than the fruitless efforts they made in introducing a “modern” plow technology, it was in the area of introducing improved seed varieties that FAO experts left one of their enduring legacies in the country’s (most particularly the valley’s) agriculture.

FAO commenced preliminary work on seed improvement in 1949 at an experimental station in Holeta (just north of Addis Ababa). The chief architect of what came to be Ethiopia’s pioneer seed experimentation station at Holeta was Carroll Deyoe (FAO principal representative in Ethiopia) who enjoyed MoA’s collaboration to start the propagation of improved seed varieties of “the most important economic crops” (notably wheat, maize, and cotton) at the station in 1949.⁴⁴

In just a few years Holeta emerged as the chief experimental station and a center of diffusion of improved seed varieties both along the meager extension networks that soon became functioning or outside of it through individual farmers’ own initiative and through exchange in the market (see below). Even more than Deyoe, a key figure in fashioning FAO’s seed improvement activities as well as in shaping the discourse on Ethiopia’s postwar agricultural development was W. Miller. Miller came to Ethiopia in 1952, following the request the Ethiopian government made to FAO specifically to enhance the seed improvement program initiated by Dayoe.⁴⁵

Miller visited Ethiopia from 15 June 1952 to 25 August 1953, in a mission to assess

the impact of the seed improvement trials already underway (since 1949) and “the general conditions of Ethiopian agriculture.” Having visited parts of the valley and several other provinces such as Sidamo, Arsi, Harar, and Shawa, Miller concurred that: “The production of bread crops in Ethiopia offers few serious difficulties as the fertile soils, normally ample rainfall, and absence of crop failures generally promise a reasonable, annual harvest.”⁴⁶ Specifically he found the production of *tef* to be in the region of 30 quintals per hectare in the highland regions (including Ada), and that of maize and *durrah* (sorghum) in the lowlands as “satisfactory” as well. However, Miller remarked that Ethiopia’s wheat production needed urgent intervention because “under prevailing conditions much, if not all, of the wheat offered for sale is highly impure [with an estimated 15% admixtures] and compares unfavorably with the uniform qualities entering world trade from countries in which grade standards are enforced.”⁴⁷

Consequently, Miller insisted that rather than focusing on the mechanics of cleaning and grading wheat, the “most urgent need appears to be the provision of adequate supplies of seeds, of commercial grades of purity, of all economic crops involved” so as to promote agricultural expansion in Ethiopia.⁴⁸ According to him, the quickest and cheapest way for obtaining higher yields from farmers’ fields and ensuring Ethiopia’s agricultural development depended on the diffusion of improved or selected seed varieties among the farming population.⁴⁹

As a representative of FAO, Miller’s findings and recommendations soon became the voice and focus of his organization in Ethiopia. Official FAO reports submitted to the host government in 1953 and 1954 underscored that for centuries Ethiopian farmers have been planting inferior seed, obtaining yields at least 20 per cent below what could be

obtained from improved seed varieties.⁵⁰ Consequently, while insisting that the government redirect its focus to the diffusion of improved seed varieties, FAO itself multiplied its research on both food and cash (mainly coffee) crops at the four stations it opened in different parts of the country (including Jimma, Bishoftu, Addis Ababa and Holeta) in the early 1950s. In regard to food crops, a large pool of seeds of the main crops such as barley, maize, sunflower, Niger seed, (*nug*), vetch, chickpea, wheat, linseed and peas had been imported and test-planted at the different experimental stations. In addition FAO specialists selected a range of disease-resistant and high-yielding *tef* varieties from different parts of country.⁵¹

In regard to coffee, FAO experts focused not on imported seed varieties but in setting up an extension program “with a view to gradually transforming the coffee forests into efficient plantations” by regulating shade and density of trees, removing competing underbrush, establishing seedling nurseries, and increasing the quality of coffee beans by improving picking and drying methods.⁵²

At a practical level, FAO’s Holeta-based seed improvement center managed to distribute 150 improved seed varieties to 37 farmer cooperatives selected by the Ministry of Agriculture from Arsi, Harar, Shawa, and Sidamo.⁵³ Reportedly, this became the first major attempt in distributing improved seed varieties in the country to date although we know very little about the impact it had on the ground.⁵⁴

Interestingly, the specific recommendations and experimentation FAO experts made regarding field technology and the utilization of high quality seed of superior varieties (both imported as well as selected domestic plant varieties) proved to be radical in the sense that they challenged established wisdom in the part of Haile Sellasie’s policy

makers. As indicated in the previous chapter, Haile Sellasie's government was not totally unaware of the need to increase agricultural production so as to ensure adequate food supply to the growing urban population. But up until the late-1940s, if the government moved to ensure such an increase in agricultural production by smallholder farmers, it did so within the rubric of either expanding the area under crop production (as enshrined in the old practice of *lam-taf*) or by regulating labor (as could be detected from the series of legislative measures the government introduced in the prewar period and the 1940s).⁵⁵ But since the late-1940s and indeed for the first time, FAO experts challenged that wisdom and made their case that if Ethiopia were to feed its growing population and export food it had to modernize its agriculture rather quickly.⁵⁶

To what extent FAO study-reports and recommendations fashioned government policies on agriculture and development is hard to pin point. What is clear is that in the wake of FAO's active involvement and the changing international environment, imperial positions regarding Ethiopian agriculture began to change as well. Perhaps the best expression of this change was the government's policy statement read by the leader of the Ethiopian delegation to the FAO conference held in Washington D.C. in November 1949. The statement was a rather long and detailed review of the Ethiopian economy with important facts and points carefully written to carry the support of international leaders and development organizations. I have reproduced a portion of the report below.

The goal of Ethiopia for the coming year is unchanged. It is the unswerving desire and purpose of the Imperial Government and, more directly, of the Ethiopian National FAO committee (established in 1948), to expand food and agricultural production with the two-fold objective of increasing contributions to world supplies and raising the standard of living of the Ethiopian people. Ethiopia, torn by years of war and enemy occupation, has by no means solved her own internal agricultural and nutritional problems; but, in the words of His Majesty Haile Selassie First,

'We are gratified that Ethiopia has been able to contribute from her subsistence to the needy countries of the world even at a time when the Ethiopian people still suffer from the aftermath of occupation.'

Following the return of His Majesty to his country in May 1941, the Ethiopian farmer willingly followed the suggestion of the Government and turned to the production of cereals for export. As a consequence, exports of cereals (chiefly wheat) and pulses, which had therefore been almost non-existent, rose from 67,143 tons in the year ended Sept. 10, 1945, to 120,575 tons in 1947 and amounted to 117,748 for the 9 months ended 7th June, 1948. Exports in the year which closed on September 10th [1949]...undoubtedly would have been considerably higher had it not been for the drastic cut in Ethiopia's fuel allocation, which impeded motor transport during the season of heaviest crop movement, and the sharp drop in prices which began about six months ago.

As the Fourth Annual Conference of the FAO convenes in Washington [in 1949] Ethiopian farmers are preparing to harvest what promises to be the largest wheat crop in the history of the country. The exact figures of the production are as yet unknown, but it is estimated that the exportable surplus will exceed 200,000 tons and may reach as high as 300,000 tons. In other words, Ethiopia is prepared to meet next year's bread grain requirements of about 2,000,000 people, if this wheat can be moved into export channels. The exportation of this quantity, however, presents serious problems, both of national and international character. On the one hand, transportation difficulties and cost within Ethiopia remain great. On the other hand, ...present world prices for wheat have reduced the possible return to the Ethiopian grower to a point that threatens to undermine the incentive to move his crop.

The position with regard to Ethiopian oilseeds-also newcomer to foreign trade-differs materially from that of wheat. Production has expanded phenomenally over the past few years, and exports have increased twelve-fold in three years. Thus, exports during the first nine months ended 10 Sept. last amounted to 12,000 tons as compared with 1,004 two years before.

The following resume by no means covers the entire range of Ethiopia's actual and potential contribution to world supplies of food and other agricultural products. Ethiopia has been and remains an important factor in world coffee supplies, exports having averaged more than 15,000 tons in the past three years.

Ethiopia is not only concerned with expanding production and exports of existing agricultural products but also with the development of new products for domestic consumption as well as exportation. Cotton and meat are two outstanding examples of commodities falling in both categories.

In closing, the Ethiopian delegation wishes to stress the fact that the Ethiopian empire is one of the few great reservoirs of food production which remains to realize its potential. For thousands of years the Ethiopian

sun, rain and soil have achieved truly remarkable results with a minimum of technical assistance. The time has now come, however, to combine our great natural resources with the financial and technical assistance of nations more skilled in modern agricultural methods in order that the world may have the fullest possible benefit from its great potentialities.⁵⁷

In addition to fashioning the discourses of agricultural development and the procedures of agronomic intervention, at the level of institution building too, FAO experts had been influential. It was under FAO experts' insistence and pressure that the MoA gained its autonomy and evolved from a small and totally bureaucratic institution (which it was until the late-1940s) into one that held a strong voice both in agricultural policy making and management of intervention schemes that became particularly important later (in the 1960s).⁵⁸

First created in 1907 by Menilek, the Ministry of Agriculture and Labor, as it was then known, remained as one of the weakest, poorly organized, and least-funded ministries for the entire prewar period. Its head and only office located in Addis Ababa, the Ministry had no branch offices in the provinces during this time. Even the Head Office had only 2 or 3 personnel, with limited budget and mandate geared to the collection of taxes.⁵⁹ The Italians organized an elaborate Ministry of Agriculture, perhaps one of the most efficient of all in their brief tenure.⁶⁰ Following liberation and Haile Sellasie's reorganization of his government in 1942, new mandates had been accorded to the Ministry, chief among which was the cultivation and development of government land, and the development of the livestock sector. Still the Ministry did not emerge as an autonomous unit yet as it remained part of the bigger Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. Except for the animal husbandry department (formed as a major section within the Ministry in 1944 and one that successfully collaborated with FAO in the vaccination campaigns) for most

of the 1940s, the Ministry still remained as a bureaucratic institution.⁶¹

It was in 1949 that the MoA emerged as a viable and autonomous institution, after intense debate and political wrangling between FAO and the Ethiopian government. The controversy escalated as FAO experts demanded the re-organization of the Ministry of Agriculture as a separate entity led by a more competent executive with more government money assigned to it.⁶² The government, on the other hand, seemed unconvinced and less-committed to accomplish both. Reflecting his frustrations on government recalcitrance, Deyoe wrote to the American embassy that it has become very difficulty for him to execute his work. In particular, Deyoe complained about the politics of Makonen Habta Wald (the minister) whom, he underscored had become “very suspicious of all Westerners.” Consequently, in a memo he wrote to the head office in Rome dated June 24, 1949, Deyoe insisted that FAO withdraw its support from Ethiopia.⁶³

Based on Deyoe’s recommendations FAO threatened to close its office and suspend its operations in the country unless the government took appropriate actions immediately.⁶⁴ In direct response to the request made by FAO, the Ethiopian government announced cabinet readjustments on July 2, 1949, whereby it announced the creation of an autonomous MoA under *Blatta* Ephrem Tewelde Medhin (Minister) and *Balambaras* Mahtama Sellasie Walda Masqal (Vice Minister). The government also submitted a new budget, allocating birr 1.8 million (of which 200,000 was earmarked for the continuation of the rinderpest campaign) to the new Ministry.⁶⁵

The government’s reformist measures pleased Deyoe who soon communicated the positive news to the American Embassy and FAO headquarters in Rome, pledging the

reversal of recommendations to withdraw FAO support from Ethiopia. However, according to a follow up letter the American Embassy wrote to the State Department, Deyoe still remained skeptical about the practicality of the measures and cautioned his superiors to wait and see how things would turn in the days and months ahead. The embassy letter emphasized:

While he [Deyoe] was encouraged by the sudden about-face in the Ministry of Agriculture, and particularly by the watering down of the influence of George Terchinov, a white Russian advisor who was an appointee of Makonen Abte Wold, he considers it wise to wait several months to ascertain whether these changes are more than skin-deep. For one thing, ...he has heard that Blatta Ephrem was recalled to Ethiopia [from London where he served as Ethiopian Ministry to England] because he had lived almost 20 years outside the country in the government service, and apparently the Emperor desired to reindoctrinate him in domestic conditions... He [Deyoe] was informed by the British charge d'Affairs, Ian BELL, that when the latter was chief of the African desk in the Foreign Office at London, Blatta Ephrem in his post as Ethiopian Minister was thought to be cordial but not vigorous, a man of many promises but little action, whose counsel was received but not heeded at home.⁶⁶

Contrary to Deyoe's skepticism, the new Ministry evolved as a viable institution in its own right. Shortly, FAO replaced Deyoe by Dr. E.S. Archibald, who happened to be more creative and flexible to work with the Ethiopian authorities. Working in close-collaboration with FAO, the MoA became active in Ethiopian agriculture, both at the study as well as experimentation levels. At the level of experimentation, FAO-MoA accord left its enduring legacies in two specific areas, notably in the livestock vaccination programs (often considered a success) and in organizing the Holeta farm as the chief center of seed trial and experimentation.

The vaccination campaigns (as we have seen above in some detail) certainly had an enduring impact on controlling livestock disease in places like the valley. The

experimentation farms had also been important on various grounds. On the one hand, Holeta--which evolved as a key crop experimentation farm since its establishment by the Italians in the late-1930s—became a key center for the diffusion of improved seed varieties in the country. The actual procedure of the diffusion of improved seed varieties across space and over time is hard to pin point. Nonetheless, a number of the improved maize (like the dents type) and wheat varieties that soon found their way to the valley (as in to other parts of Shawa and Arsi) originated from the several experimentation farms (such as Holeta, Debre Zeit, Jimma and Shashamane) that owed their existence to the Italian occupation period or the 1940s and early-1950s (see below).⁶⁷

On the other hand, right from the outset the MoA used the Holeta farm as a showcase to convey to farmers the superiority of new technologies (most notably improved seed varieties and fertilizer use) over traditional ones. To that effect the Ministry organized so-called farm days annually, whereby it summoned a large group of farmers from different parts of the country to come and visit the Holeta farm as a means to indoctrinate farmers on the superiority of modern farming techniques. Two of my interviewees (one from Ada and the other from Arsi Negelle) visited Holeta in the late-1950s, their transportation and per diem expenses covered by the MoA. One of them described his experience at length:

The *warada* officials informed me one day [in 1957 or 1958] to go and visit the Holeta farm, which, they underscored, would help me understand the importance of improved seed varieties and fertilizer to increase crop production. I do not know why they identified me. All I know is I was the first from this village to go and see the Holeta farm. But I had always been a hard working farmer. Also, I was an outspoken person regarding village social and political life. I served as a *qoro* under Ambachew Tuke's *balabatenat*, but I also tried to voice farmers' grievances particularly at the time when a growing number of land grantees "invaded" our *warada* in search of government land. I had a large following among the farmers and I took it for myself to defend the interests of fellow farmers as much as I could. My activist role was not secret to the officials. But that did not

make me the wrong candidate for the visitation they had arranged then. In fact, that must have been the reason why they chose me to go to Addis Ababa and then Holeta. In the orientation preceding the visitation of the farm, the Holeta officials told us we were invited because we have proven to be good farmers, and our understanding will be crucial for encouraging fellow-farmers to follow our lead in modernizing their farms. We stayed at Holeta for three days, visiting the farm and its activities. They showed us the difference between traditional methods of cultivation and modern ones cultivated with improved seed varieties and fertilizers (mainly in wheat and maize fields). I for one was very much impressed by the achievement and seriously thought about doing the same on my farm when I got home. If I am not mistaken more than 400 farmers participated in the visitation at that time. Up on our return home, we were given improved seed varieties of wheat and maize to test-plant in our respective farms. I did not practice the row planting but I used the seeds I got from Holeta on my farm after returning home. I still planted traditional maize seeds but only for home consumption. I used the new seed in most of my fields. I gave some of the seed after the first harvest to my relatives and closet friends, but they soon became available in the markets from which many farmers acquired the seeds to plant in their farms.⁶⁸

At the level of research too, FAO-MoA accord resulted in the publication of several reports and monographs on Ethiopian agriculture. Consequently, MoA published its first ever “Agriculture in Ethiopia” in 1954, appropriating data and language fed by FOA’s experts who had become conspicuous in Ethiopia’s agricultural development since the late-1940s. Likewise, in addition to the numerous study reports they compiled in the early-1950s, a new team of FAO experts published the first full-size study on “Agriculture in Ethiopia” (1961). Both monographs covered virtually every aspect of Ethiopian agriculture, its problems, potentials as well as prospects, but in the meantime revealed the ideologies and practices of the respective bodies they represented.⁶⁹

In the post-1957 period (marking the promulgation of the First Five Year Development Plan) FAO’s level of engagement with Ethiopian agriculture and its priorities changed noticeably. If livestock development (mainly through controlling

disease) and seed improvement shaped FAO activities in the late-1940s and 1950s, promoting soil fertility (mainly through the application of inorganic fertilizers) for the purpose of increasing agricultural production did so in the 1960s.⁷⁰ In both cases, FAO experts found in the Ethiopian government an ally that was quick to adopt agricultural development as a viable alternative to promote food production and bring about agricultural development for building the modern state.

Targeting farm productivity: early beginnings of agricultural research and extension in the valley

Ethiopia also joined the evolving international development ideology and practice through the Point Four agreement it signed with the U.S. Haile Sellasie's government signed the agreement on June 16, 1951, barely one year after the U.S. Congress passed (in June 1950) legislation authorizing such a program as proposed by President Truman on January 20, 1949.⁷¹ The specific circumstances that preceded Point 4 agreement were interesting. The agreement piggybacked on the recommendations made by the U.S. economic and technical assistance mission earlier. According to this report, Ethiopia's major economic difficulties resulted from low level of agricultural productivity which, in turn, had been caused by three key factors: lack of knowledge of modern agricultural techniques, lack of modern implements and improved seed varieties, and the prevalence of livestock disease and pests.⁷²

To that end, the American technical team recommended certain measures toward improvising Ethiopia's social and economic conditions singling out, among other things, the need for increasing agricultural productivity. Consequently, the U.S. signed the first

of two technical cooperation agreements with the Ethiopian government on June 16, 1951.⁷³

Pursuant to the general agreement signed in June 1951, the governments of Ethiopia and the U.S. signed the first program agreement at Addis Ababa on May 15, 1952. The agreement targeted the establishment of a cooperative agricultural education program, with a special Imperial Ethiopian College Fund jointly raised and supervised by representatives of both governments. The Fund established the Imperial Ethiopia College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts that opened in 1953. It took birr 600,000 of the first year's economic assistance appropriation with the Ethiopian government contributing an equal amount.⁷⁴ The College was meant to develop and carry out a national program for agricultural education, agricultural research, and agricultural extension work among Ethiopian farmers.⁷⁵ To expedite the College's opening and its agricultural extension program, the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA)--as the body created by the Ethiopian government and Point Four came to be known as--signed a contractual agreement with the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (later renamed Oklahoma State University) on May 16, 1952.⁷⁶ Over the course of the 1952-61 decade Point Four poured considerable amounts of capital earmarked for Ethiopia's agricultural development (see Table 4.1 below).

Oklahoma State's selection as a collaborative institution followed an official invitation accorded by the Ethiopian government in April 1950 to Henry G. Bennett, president of the College. At this official invitation the Ethiopian government requested that Bennett "evaluate the existing educational program in terms of effectiveness in meeting the needs of the nation and to suggest needed adjustments and changes which would provide

Ethiopia with a comprehensive, dynamic program.”⁷⁷

Table 4.1 Point Four Expenditure in Ethiopia, 1952-1961

Year	Expenditure (birr 000)
1952	1,985
1953	2,552
1954	3,892
1955	6,707
1956	7,915
1957	9,052
1958	12,410
1959	13,547
1969-61	55,158
Total	112,500

Source: Getachew, *The Role of United States Economic Assistance to Ethiopia*, pp. 133,147.

Bennett, who had some interest in international politics and Truman’s call for international development, accepted the invitation. Having traveled the country extensively Bennett outlined a proposal for an agricultural education fashioned after the U.S. land grant system. Therefore, when the TCA was looking for a collaborating institution for its envisioned agricultural college and extension system, Bennet’s earlier engagement qualified Oklahoma State as the best candidate. Bennett died in a plane accident in the Middle East but the TCA-Oklahoma State accord outlived him by a decade and a half. Bennett’s proposal laid the foundation as well as ideological direction of the future Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts and its nascent extension program in the country for nearly a decade.⁷⁸

In August 1952, Oklahoma A&M College sent an advance team to Ethiopia composed of six senior staff members, launching the collaboration of the two institutions that lasted until September 30, 1968. Oklahoma State’s pioneer staff members participated in identifying the best site for the future-College and in drafting its

curriculum. The experts recommended Bishoftu (in the valley) as the best alternative for the location of the college and its central experimental station as they saw in the region a promising agricultural environment. However, the emperor's interjection in favor of Alamaya (near Harar) finally settled the issue as to where the future site of the college should be.⁷⁹

Optimistic and up-beat, the Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts' education program contained three integral parts: (1) student training based on classroom instruction and practical field experience, (2) research in all of "the principal agricultural problems so that a body of scientific knowledge can be accumulated," and (3) executing an agricultural extension program to disseminate new findings and modern agriculture all over the country.⁸⁰

These were huge tasks for a college that just started, and required immense mobilization of resources that were not easy to come by. Yet, in all the three areas described above the College's activities proved to be promising.⁸¹ The College admitted its first 14 students in 1955, graduating its first batch in 1957. The number of graduates remained below 50 for the first 3 years, and grew to more than 210 in 1964.⁸²

The curriculum comprised physical, biological, and social science courses, and students majored in agricultural economics and business, agricultural education and extension, agricultural engineering, animal sciences, plant science, and a two year diploma program in Home Economics.⁸³ It may be difficult to measure accurately the short-term impact the training of agricultural experts had on the country's agriculture. In the long-term, however, the College's graduates became experts, advisers, bureaucrats and even entrepreneurs (most notably in the late-1960s and early-1970s) whose influence

in agricultural policy making and implementation, research, and practice could only be surmised.⁸⁴

In the two other areas as well, notably research and extension, the College's activities in the first one-decade of its operation also left a clear mark right from the outset. In regard to research, the College, in addition to its primary Alamaya station, opened four agricultural stations located at Jimma, Holeta, Bishoftu, and Shashamane (of which the last two were located in the valley). Altitude and existing/potential crop production dictated the selection of the four stations. Altitude wise, the sites varied from 5400 ft at Jimma to 8000 ft at Holeta. In terms of existing or potential crop production, Jimma was selected for its coffee and legume potential; Shashamane for its presumed suitability for maize, cotton, and legume; and Bishoftu and Holeta for cereal (most notably *tef* and wheat) and legume production.⁸⁵ Interestingly, operational and ideological considerations guided the activities of the researchers now stationed at the different research and experimentation stations. Given the virtual lack of recorded scientific data on crop varieties, yield, soil types and rainfall, initially the researchers focused on exploring and compiling such data with on-farm trials.⁸⁶

Ideologically, the researchers operated with a premise drawn from reports concurrently made by FAO experts and their own quick observations. Consequently, Alamaya's experts identified several key factors as responsible for Ethiopia's undeveloped agriculture. According to them, low-crop-yield comprised the single most important factor for the country's poor agricultural performance. They related this problem to poor seed varieties, poor methods of seed preparation, plant diseases and weeds.⁸⁷

They also found that small-field farming (as practiced by Ethiopian farmers) was responsible for low-crop-yield in the country. Alamaya's researchers reached at this conclusion not because the experts believed that large-scale farming was more productive than small-scale farming. To the contrary the experts underscored that small-field farming--as practiced in China, Western Europe, and many other countries--has proved to be more conducive to obtaining large yields than large-scale farms. In fact, the researchers underscored that smallholder farming generally militates against soil erosion, allows smallholder farmers to pay attention to soil fertility by adding crop residues, and permits intercropping practices that were vital for restoring soil fertility to cultivated fields. In Ethiopia, however, this is not the case because "year-round growing conditions invite double cropping and the removal of all crop residues." The result, the experts concluded, had been the exhaustion of the topsoil resulting in poor yields that had become symptomatic of Ethiopian small-field agriculture. According to them:

Sub-soil farming in any country even though the soil is deep will not produce the best crop yields. Rich topsoil laden with decaying organic matter and microscopic animal life is necessary for keeping crop yields at a high level. [However, in Ethiopia]...after the crops are harvested, the stubble residue is grazed until the bare soil is left. Instead of returning crop residues to the soil, it is hauled away and sold or used for fuel. The barnyard manure, in general, is also used for fuel instead of being applied to the soil. Such a system is exploitative and exhaustive farming and does cause land abandonment and new land to be cleared and plowed for crops.⁸⁸

Based on such observations, research activities at Bishoftu and Shashamane (as in the other sites as well) focused on field trials aimed at addressing the several problems the experts identified. At first, the focus was on determining appropriate planting dates, particularly for wheat and corn, as experts sought better planting and harvesting dates to

maximize labor and crop production and minimize crop loss due to environmental factors. The focus was also on variety testing, identification of disease resistant seed varieties, better methods of harvesting, threshing and cleaning, seedbed preparation, weed control, and promotion of crop rotation as a means to control the spread of plant diseases.⁸⁹

Both the Shashamane and Bishoftu research stations actively conducted numerous experiments in their fields. Opened in 1953, the Shashamane experiment station operated in close cooperation with the Seventh Day Adventist Mission School 10 km north of Shashamane. Two years' trials convinced experts that cotton was not a profitable crop in the lower Rift Valley, at least at the elevation of Shashamane (5700 ft).⁹⁰ Hence, experts recommended that other regions be found for cotton, and discouraged cotton cultivation in that part of the Rift Valley.⁹¹

To the contrary, they found corn as the most promising crop for the region. The first year the improved and native varieties of corn had been damaged by rust and stalk borers, but the row planted corn made rapid progress with its stalks much larger and its color "better" (darker) than the traditional ones.⁹² Subsequent trials also convinced the researchers that selected local varieties could be as much appropriate as long as adjustments have been made in terms of planting dates and row-planting. Most of all, experts at the Shashamane station forcibly argued the valley as the ideal site for the promotion of high-yielding corn varieties compared to any other part of the country.⁹³

Opened in 1954 (on 70 hectare of land donated by the government), the Bishoftu experimental station was meant to be an ideal site for promoting modern agricultural technology that could address the needs of highland cultivators.⁹⁴ Initially, the station

focused on experimentation of improved wheat (consisting of 21 varieties) and barley varieties, most of which had been imported from Kenya, USA, Canada, and Italy with some selected indigenous varieties.⁹⁵

Like most research stations, Bishoftu and Shashamane operated as experimental farms. Neither of the two research-stations established a coordinated and sustained relationship with the farmers. But they did not function as islands totally cut off from the farmers in both sub-regions. Rather the stations maintained close working relationships with unspecified number of farmers, either by providing daily labor opportunities to needy farmers or, more importantly, by identifying a group of farmers for demonstration work and distribution of improved seed varieties and fertilizers.

At Shashamane, the experiment station employed hundreds of farmers on a daily basis. The farmers participated in field preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting of the crops. For the farmers the fifty cent to one *birr* daily wage the station paid provided an attractive incentive, but in the meantime farmers also acquired some knowledge in regard to field technology (such as plant populations), planting dates, and soil conservation strategies which they experimented with their own farms. One of my interviewees, Kaba Gudina, who worked as a daily laborer at the station for two consecutive years in the late-1950s, explained his experience:

I was born and raised in Holeta. I came to Arsi Negelle in the late-1940s after the government took my farm for commercial farming. More than 400 households lost their land by this act of the government. In compensation, we were given land here [in Arsi Negelle]. Compared to the Arsi Oromo, we were experienced farmers. But since the land I was given here was virgin land, it took me several years to develop it. It was frustrating at first. When the Shashamane station started its experimental farm here [in 1953] and started hiring daily laborers, it was a good opportunity for many of us to earn some extra money. I was hired the second year of its operation and worked there for more than two years.

The pay was good. You know one *birr* then was worth more than twenty *birr* now. The work was intensive. Several hundred of us worked on the farm often for three to four hours a day, clearing the forest or grass, cultivating the field, planting maize, wheat, cotton, legume, everything. Some of the maize we planted in rows, others without rows just the way we did it in our own farm. In the wheat fields and some of the maize fields we applied fertilizers. That was my first experience with fertilizers. The harvest was good for wheat but the first year disease ruined the maize plant. The second year maize was good. Apart from the money, I got a lot of experience working with the Station. We also taught the researchers some good lessons. We knew first hand which places [soil types] were better suited for maize or wheat. They listened to us. They also gave us [corn] seed varieties for free and later, for sale. Even farmers who did not work on the station acquired the seeds through exchange or in the market. I for one took those seeds and planted them on my farm along with the traditional one. The yield was good but the Mission seeds did not taste as good as the traditional ones. Yet, merchants liked the white corn seeds and slowly the new varieties came to dominate the field.⁹⁶

At Bishoftu, the relationship between the station and the nearby farmers was more direct and relatively better coordinated. Like its Shashamane counterpart, the Bishoftu station also depended on farmers' daily labor for its day-to-day field-activities. Hundreds of farmers worked at the Station at various levels and, as far as one can tell from interviewees' descriptions, most comprised the relatively poor stratum of farmers who were ready to raise off-farm income by working in the farm as daily laborers. Unlike Shashamane, however, the Bishoftu station also worked closely with selected farmers whose farm plots were chosen as demonstration sites. On a small portion of the farmers plot, the station provided improved seed varieties, fertilizers, and technical advice so as to show a larger pool of Ada farmers the differences in yield between the modern and traditional field systems.⁹⁷

The Bishoftu station also used its own experimental farms to demonstrate to the farmers the advantages of modern farming, and made available improved seed varieties

and fertilizers for farmers on sale. In 1958 the station distributed three improved varieties of wheat: known as Kenya 5, Kenya 1, and Mido (that had been tested at Holeta, Alamaya and Bishoftu for their high-yielding potential) to unspecified number of Ada farmers. According to official reports, ten quintals of the improved wheat varieties had been distributed to farmers for which the latter paid current market prices or agreed to pay with the same amount of seed at harvest time.⁹⁸ In 1963, the Debre Zeit (as the Bishoftu station later came to be known as) research station managed to distribute 250 quintals of white (*magna tef*), 70 quintals of Kenya 1 and 5 wheat varieties, and 30 quintals of improved white chickpea to Ada farmers.⁹⁹

Given the paucity of data, it is difficult to measure the extent to which Ada and Arsi Negelle farmers received the new technologies and their actual impact on the ground. In areas closer to the stations, farmers maintained working relationships with the stations through labor and the acquisition of improved seed varieties that they, in turn, multiplied in their own fields for future use. The growing homogenization of seed (most notably wheat and corn) varieties in Ada and Arsi Negelle *warada* would take a couple of decades and more actors and institutions partook in the process. But it seems apparent that Shashamane and Bishoftu stations' role in initiating the growing homogenization of valley seed varieties had been important.¹⁰⁰

Alongside the experimental and research stations, extension—i.e. the dissemination of modern inputs to farmers—became the mantle of Point 4-Alamaya collaborative work right from the outset. And like the research stations, extension work in Ethiopia had to start from scratch. However, unlike the research stations that could be organized relatively quickly with the mobilization of capital, land, and a small pool of trained

personnel, mobilizing the human and infrastructural resources for extension required more time and a totally different approach. This was particularly true in Ethiopia where trained agricultural experts were almost non-existent.¹⁰¹

Therefore, when the Alamaya College started its extension program in 1954, it had larger visions but no precedents or human capital to build on. The College started its extension program by hiring two graduates of the Ambo Agricultural School who had worked as elementary school teachers for three years. The College stationed its two extension workers at Fiche (in Shawa) and Asela (in Arsi), locations identified for starting future extension work.¹⁰² In the first several years of their operation, the two extension agents directed their focus to forming agriculture Youth Clubs in aiming to kindle new interest among the youth to pursue agriculture training and, even more importantly, in the belief that the students (most notably those of rural background) could help disseminate new ideas to their farmer-parents.¹⁰³

As far as direct contact with farmers is concerned, the only notable experience the extension agents had took the form of sheep improvement program. In the first two years of their operation, the extension workers distributed for free a total of 500 Merino rams, and 1000 ewes in Fiche and near Asala and Kofale (in Arsi). By the end of 1955 local farmers owned more than 1,100 purebred and crossbreed sheep, reportedly the “largest total of wool type sheep ever in farm flocks in Ethiopia.”¹⁰⁴

Meaningful extension activities, however, were made only after 1958 with recruitment of more extension agents (graduates of Jimma or Ambo agricultural schools). In addition, a total of thirty six extension agents acquired advanced training in the Agricultural School at Beirut between 1957 and 1960 and joined the work force at home.¹⁰⁵ By 1960,

more than half of the entire field force comprised trained extension agents, who had been assigned at 47 extension posts in ten provinces (with the exception of Eritrea, Tigray and Gamu Gofa). Shawa had the largest concentration of the extension posts, 25 of the 47 located in that province alone. Of these, five were located in the valley-at Debre Zeit, Mojo, Nazareth, Shashamane, and Buta Jira.¹⁰⁶ Run by a total of 86 experts and administrators (51 Ethiopian agents, 26 Ethiopian trainees, 6 Ethiopian administrators, and 3 Americans) the extension stations functioned by mobilizing local advisory committees and working with community leaders.¹⁰⁷

Initially, extension agents tried to reach out to farmers and disseminate new technologies through what came to be known as “method demonstration” strategy. It involved the organization of field days and demonstration to farmers of the results of the experiment stations located at Bishoftu and Shashamane.¹⁰⁸ The available evidence is too sketchy to assess the impact that the demonstrations method had in the five locations described above. The reports were often convoluted and focused on the overall performance of the extension agents in terms of the frequency of demonstration and the number of farmers participating than on what farmers actually did with them. For example, a 1958 report indicated the participation of more than 10,000 farmers in 12 different provincial field- days conducted in as many locations but no mention was made what so ever as to the actual content or farmers’ responses.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, a 1959 report indicated that extension agents contacted a total of 100,136 farmers, and conducted 1,335 result-demonstrations, but made no specification regarding regional variations or farmers responses.¹¹⁰

In 1960, the college adopted the “pilot farmer” approach revising the demonstration

method it had adopted before. As the name implies, the new method worked by selecting participating-farmers whose farms would be designated as a pilot farm for the purpose of demonstrating to nearby farmers the superiority of improved technologies over traditional ones. Agronomically, emphasis was made to improved corn, wheat, *tef*, flax, and chickpea varieties, most of which had been imported and/or test-planted in the various experiment stations. In Ada, 50 pilot farmers participated in the scheme in 1959, and their numbers grew to 200 the following year.¹¹¹

By 1962 the number of extension posts in the country had grown to sixty-five.¹¹² But the following year (in 1963), the extension program of the college ceased, as extension became the responsibility of the MoA. The time coincided with Point 4's withdrawal of its support to Alamaya College. The latter, in turn, resulted from the 1961 creation by the American government of the new United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to oversee international development activities directed from the U.S.¹¹³

USAID's takeover of the economic and technical assistance programs in Ethiopia, and its changed policy mandate geared to strengthening the national economy and building the institutional framework for development decidedly reconfigured the kind of operation Point 4 had been conducting in the country since the early-1950s.¹¹⁴ Most of all, it meant the suspension of the kind of financial support Point 4 has made available to the College that had been crucial for running the nascent research and extension program in the country. That must have created financial problems leading to the takeover of the extension program by the MoA in 1963. The official explanation, however, described the "widespread" expansion of extension services and Youth Clubs in the country beyond the capacity of the College to manage.¹¹⁵ But it were financial constraints and Alamaya's

joining of the Haile Sellasie University system in 1963 that explains the College's withdrawal from managing the agricultural extension program in the country. Having laid the foundation for the country's nascent extension program, Alamaya bequeathed its extension program to the MoA, but it remained as the prime academic institution in the country whose graduates became a conspicuous force at all levels, ranging from policy making to implementation at the provincial level.¹¹⁶

4.2 Expanding crop-agriculture: the politics of planned growth in Ethiopia's agricultural development

As indicated above, the first decade and a half following the short-lived Italian occupation witnessed significant transformation in terms of government policy initiatives regarding agricultural development as well as the beginning of their implementation. In both regards, the contributions of FAO and the U.S. Point Four had been considerable.

Important shifts in articulating government policy regarding the national economy and agriculture began to take shape around the mid-1950s. An important development in this regard had been government promulgation of a series of five-year plans starting from 1957.

Scholars (mainly economists) have studied the contents of the three five-year-plans at various length.¹¹⁷ Almost always the focus had been to show the lack of emphasis in the part of the imperial government toward smallholder agriculture in the first two development plans. Basing their judgment on what appears to be a partial reading of the plans or simply on the amount of capital allocated to different sectors of the economy, most studies concluded that the government deliberately ignored smallholder agriculture

until the inauguration of the third-five-year-plan in 1968.¹¹⁸ Not only is this assertion inaccurate, but also it leaves out the complex history of planning at its peril. Critiques of Haile Sellasie's planning erroneously isolate the larger picture, i.e., the international context that lent one or another brand of planning global currency, and in doing so the same critiques tacitly or directly have come to reinforce the assumption that planning is the key to agricultural development.

In this section I look at the content of the plans more closely. My intent is to problematize planning as yet another discourse in development thinking, and show how planning was not necessarily the dominant or even necessary theory to fashion localized actions in the period under discussion.

The history of national economic planning is now well established.¹¹⁹ As the works of Heinz Arndt have shown, planning emerged as a viable ideology only after the Great Depression. In the post-WWII era, more and more governments (including Western European) adapted planning as a strategy to state-manage their economy. Having evolved with in the context of the polarized dictum (capitalist or socialist) regarding the role of the state in the economy, planning passed through a tumultuous history in its relatively short lifetime. It appealed most particularly to new states like India that gained independence from their colonial masters in the postwar period.¹²⁰

When the postwar Ethiopian government endorsed planning as a potentially viable tool for directing the national economy around the mid-1950s, Haile Sellasie was neither too late nor ambivalent about the importance and political ramifications of planned growth. Nor was he unaware of his country's limitations. Haile Sellasie's government took the idea of planning from its numerous advisers (both expatriate and national) as the

changing economic and political conditions in the country by 1955 made such a move all the more necessary. In the economic front, compared to the 1941-55 period, the post-1955 period witnessed sharp declines in the country's foreign currency earnings. As we shall see later in some detail, in the post-1955 period Ethiopia lost its foreign grain markets precipitously while the world's price of coffee began to fall as well. For example, the 37,000 tons of coffee shipped in 1954 (Ethiopian year ending in September 1954) earned birr 112 million (65 percent of all exports) whereas the same amount of coffee exported in the following year (1955) earned only birr 83 million (53 percent of all exports).¹²¹

The country's declining foreign trade was one of the reasons that convinced the imperial government to establish the Council of National Economy in 1955. The Council's primary task was the formulation and coordination of "a comprehensive national economic policy."¹²² That was subsequently followed by the formation of the Planning Board in 1957. An interesting aspect of the Board's activities leading up to the promulgation of the First Five Year Development Plan (FFYDP), had been the active role Yugoslav advisors played in writing the plan.¹²³

The coming of the Yugoslav economic advisors to Ethiopia resulted from the kind of close political friendship Haile Sellasie had built with President Tito of Yugoslavia. For the Yugoslavs this relationship paved the way for a forestry concession (for the development of lumber for domestic use) in Ethiopia. In return, Haile Sellasie garnered some financial loan from the Yugoslavs. But it was in masterminding the FFYDP (1957-62) that the Yugoslavs left their enduring legacy in Ethiopia's development history.¹²⁴

Theoretically the Yugoslav experts, like their FAO and Point Four counterparts, built

their development idea on the premise that potentially Ethiopia is a rich country and the realization of this potential required, most of all, the rapid expansion of crop-based agriculture. Interestingly, the coterie of agricultural experts, like Haile Sellasie's own policy makers, rooted their development thinking on the assumption that of the country's 55 million hectares productive land, Ethiopian farmers cultivated only a little over 5.8 million hectares of land, setting aside the rest as fallow or for pasture.¹²⁵

As we have seen before, Haile Sellasie's prewar land and agricultural policies radiated from the same belief. In fact virtually all land-related decrees Tafari/Haile Sellasie's government promulgated in the two decades before the Italian occupation built on the notion that there is plenty of unutilized/uncultivated land in Ethiopia that should be turned into "productive" use (mainly by converting *taf* lands into *lam*). For the regent/emperor such a seemingly production-oriented strategy was most of all a means to combat the voracious activities of the prewar politico-military elite who vied for land accumulation that he suspected could undermine centralizing creeds (see Chapter Three).

The danger coming from the regional elite ebbed in the immediate postwar decades but the assumptions that guided government land policies continued almost unchanged for at least another decade and a half after liberation. Even the generation of FAO experts that studied and reported on Ethiopian agriculture in the 1950s shared and reverberated the view that there is evident underutilization of land resources in the country. In several of their reports, FAO specialists insisted that cropped-land in the country is in fact proportionately low when compared to other forms of land use; comprising 30 percent pastoral, 9 percent arable, 22 percent bush and thorn bush, and the rest—almost one third—desert or unproductive.¹²⁶

A recurrent theme in the writings of those experts regarding the limited proportion of cropped land in Ethiopia revolved around the assumption that because of undeveloped farm implements and low population pressure, the small Ethiopian farmer had been unable to use vast parts of a potentially cultivable land for crop production. Consequently, they insisted that key in transforming Ethiopia's agriculture rested on reversing the pattern of land use in favor of expanding area of land under cultivation. Yet, contrary to the existing wisdom, the FAO specialists underscored the remarkable inefficiency of Ethiopia's smallholder agriculture, and emphasized that any such expansion of crop-land in particular or agricultural development in general required the promotion of new technologies geared to maximizing productivity per unit area and soil conservation.¹²⁷

The FAO reports, therefore, reinforced the emerging development ideology and gave new direction to the government's 1940s vague or generalized ideas regarding agricultural intervention and international aid. Equally importantly, the field-based study reports the same specialists submitted to the government also found its way to the desks of the Yugoslavs and Ethiopians then drafting the FFYDP in 1956/57.

When the plan was finally written, the planners explicitly stated that one of the major problems militating Ethiopia's agricultural development radiated from the fact that "large areas of the country with favorable climate conditions for agricultural production are only partially exploited and in the main by extensive farming, while the numerous livestock is not economically utilized."¹²⁸ It is this core assumption that guided the content of the first-five-year plan. Thus, expanding crop agriculture "outside of the highland country" and in to "vast areas of agricultural land," as well as the modernization of the livestock

sector became the centerpiece of the Plan.¹²⁹

As for the means, the one area the planners anticipated for transforming smallholder agriculture was through the introduction of modern tools and farm implements mainly as an alternative to maximize smallholder farmers' efficiency (both in terms of output as well cultivated area). According to the planners:

The most important implement, which should come gradually into general use, is an efficient iron plough. It is estimated that such a plough would last 15 or more years, and would have several advantages. It would till between 15 and 20 hectares a year or two to three times as much as the wooden plough now in general use. It could be used in virgin land that is difficult to work with a wooden plough. It would enable two out of every three pairs of oxen to be dispensed with and in their place more productive cattle be kept. The more efficient plough could claim a larger soil [land] area. Finally, by retaining a greater degree of moisture in the soil it would improve crop yields.¹³⁰

If the first major concern of the planners was to find a means to bring more land under cultivation (for the specific aim of maximizing crop production), they also anticipated increasing productivity per unit area, mainly by promoting the use of improved seed varieties and executing a nation-wide agricultural extension program.¹³¹ In addition, the planners also put emphasis on the campaign to eradicate livestock disease, the development of a livestock market, and the strengthening of the link between crop and livestock agriculture (through the production of fodder on arable land as opposed to the "irrational" use of open-pasture as practiced by Ethiopian farmers).¹³²

Obviously all this was an overly ambitious plan, but the planners did not stop there. In fact, the second major area in which the planners sought to bring about agricultural development focused on land settlement. Ethiopian history is chock-full of population mobility, conquest and settlement but rarely had settlement of large civilian (farming)

populations been a state prerogative before. The plan stipulated to standardize what had been a rare undertaking ostensibly as a means to “increase the area under cultivation and the volume of production” as well as “the modernization of agrarian techniques and land tenure” among smallholder farmers.¹³³ Aimed at settling farmers on an estimated 40,000 hectares of cultivable land (mainly alongside rivers and on unforested and unoccupied land by the end of the plan period in 1962), the planners envisaged that newly settled farms would serve as prototypes to demonstrate to other farmers the superiority of modern farm implements and better methods of production.¹³⁴

In addition to the two core areas of agricultural change and the intended methods that accompanied them, the authors of the first plan also emphasized community development programs as a viable alternative to bring about rural transformation in Ethiopia.

Accordingly, the planners stipulated that:

Community programs should play an important role in the overall development of the country and particularly in rural development...The experience of many underdeveloped countries suggest that full results in the economic sphere, public health, education and the standard of living can only be achieved if coordinated and overall efforts are undertaken in various local units, such as districts, community, etc. Community programs should also mobilize the local population and the abundant local resources for the process of economic development.¹³⁵

Willfully neglected by Ethiopian development scholars to date, in fact community development (which had already gotten wider currency at an international scale as well) had been an integral part of the first two-five-year development plans and one that appealed to Haile Sellasie particularly strongly.¹³⁶

Contrary to the accepted notion, the development of Ethiopia’s smallholder agriculture had been an integral part of the FFYDP. Practice of course is a totally different matter.

Whereas the government may have been successful in meeting its own goals in such areas as road building, little of what had been planned materialized regarding small-scale farm development. This does not mean that small-scale agriculture had stagnated. What it means is simply a scheme that built on several years of disjointed experimentation prior to the promulgation of the plan failed as the farmers did not buy the news that declared the new tools superior advantage MoA agents liked to talk about.¹³⁷

It also meant the inability of the government to implement its resettlement scheme to any meaningful degree and commensurate with what had been specified in the plan. To be sure, the government did indeed have begun the granting of portions of its “reserves” to landless or land-short farmers in different parts of the country. In one such move in May 1961, for example, the government granted land to 1342 farmers from Warahimano (Wollo) in Aminat (in Gondar’s Chilga *awraja*). According to Addis Zaman’s news reporter the said land was unmeasured and “undeveloped” forestland with a potential to grow sunflower, Niger seed, and safflower. The land had been granted to the farmers as *rist* (heritable property) exempt from the land tax for the first five years.¹³⁸ Similar land-grants were made to farmers and the “unemployed” in 1964 in Sidamo and Bale to a total of more than 2137 individuals although the report does not specify what percentage of the said land was actually received by landless farmers.¹³⁹ These were important beginnings although little is known to date about the settlements’ short- and long-term impacts on matters ranging from resource entitlement rights to ethnicity. As a policy prerogative, resettlement continued to preoccupy Haile Sellasie’s government up until its downfall in 1974. In practice, however, government-sponsored settlement does not seem to have attracted the tens of thousands of landless and land-short farmers as the plans’ architects

had thought. This is striking because the same period (and indeed the three-and-a-half decades after the Italian occupation witnessed increased mobility of farmers from one place to another either as farm laborers in cash-crop producing regions or as share-tenants in places like the valley.

To policy-makers the most important hurdle to the realization of the plan involved lack of financial and human capital. In fact, the plan itself was written on condition of the acquisition of foreign (most notably American) loan and aid, which soon proved not easily attainable.

Table 4.2 Budgetary expenditure in agriculture 1957-61 (excluding investment) in million birr

Extension service	8.4
Agricultural schools	3.1
Livestock breeding stations	1.3
Agencies for the promotion of coffee and cotton	1.5
Veterinary service	6.0
Locust control	2.5
Subsidies for introduction of better farm implements	3.0
Central administration of the MoA	4.3
Total	30.1

Source: Imperial Ethiopian Government, *First Five-Year Development Plan*, p. 79

Securing the necessary capital toward implementing his plans became one of the emperor's major preoccupations throughout the duration of the FFYDP. Haile Sellasie had long-realized that development was not only a matter of economic growth but also of a political and security imperative. If it were the "hidden" motives of the British that in part fashioned the monarch's thinking of economic development and international alliance in the 1940s, it was the rapidly changing political conditions in the Middle East and northeast Africa that solidified them in the late-1950s. What particularly disturbed

the emperor was the “deteriorating situation” in Yemen and the rapid changes that were taking place in Egypt following the coming to power of Gamal Abdal Nasser and his adherence to the Eastern Bloc. Consequently, the emperor and his economic advisers insisted that Ethiopia’s security was threatened by communist encroachment into the Arab world, and seriously complained about America’s reluctance in channeling the money that Ethiopia urgently needed to execute its development plan.¹⁴⁰

In light of this and commenting on his government’s indifference to channeling the money Ethiopia demanded from the U.S., Thomas M. Recknagel, the then second secretary of the American embassy in Addis Ababa, wrote to the State Department that:

The hard core of the situation is that the Emperor and his economic and military planners are anxious to go farther, faster. They consider more rapid economic development essential if they are to maintain the economic equilibrium of the country and to attain a military strength adequate to their needs. They want American aid but they want it with the fewest possible strings attached.¹⁴¹

Recknagel was particularly alarmed by Ethiopia’s participation in the Afro-Asian Congress at Cairo that took place between December 26, 1957 and January 1, 1958. A follow up to the first Bandung Conference (where representatives from 29 governments came to affirm their common will for peace and their independence from the rivalry of the two world powers), the second conference at Cairo focused on Third World economic development. But what worried Recknagel most was the declaration made by the Soviet delegation at the Cairo conference that made it clear that USSR would furnish economic aid to the needy nations without any conditions.¹⁴²

The Soviet declaration created increased consternation in Washington. The New York Times wrote that the Cairo conference was a success to the Eastern Bloc and suggested

that: "In order to meet the Soviet success the western Allies ought to make more than simple attempt to strengthen their friends and allies...with symbolic gifts of arms and projects for long-term development" ¹⁴³ Recknagel himself concluded his memo by arguing at length that:

Ethiopia is an ...agricultural country...[and] would be able to become the veritable granary for all of the Near and Middle East: developed rationally it would be able to furnish cereals, grain, coffee and cattle to the best possible market, to all of the neighboring countries.

But the development of this potential implies a very considerable financial effort. That effort, Ethiopia is forced, so to say, to accomplish with the least possible delay: any delay would be fatal...The government leaders in Ethiopia have recognized this thoroughly...this is why they have not spared themselves in their efforts to conceive and apply a reasonable plan for the agricultural, hydraulic and industrial development of the country.

Now this plan demands of Ethiopia ... expenditure in excess of \$300 million. ...But where will Ethiopia find that money? Who will advance it to her? There, then, is the problem which preoccupied at this moment the persons who lead Ethiopia. ¹⁴⁴

If the government wrote its FFYDP in the context of a rapidly changing regional and international environment, the second (covering the period 1963-67) was written in the wake of growing internal descent, and a new call for development. The decade dawned with the first major and coordinated coup attempt by the military, and Haile Sellasie's government, contrary its own claim as the bastion of Ethiopia's progress and modernity, was in fact seen as a menace and indeed a reason for the country's backwardness. The plotters (and subsequently the students) seized lack of development as a key ideological weapon to challenge the imperial government's competence and legitimacy. ¹⁴⁵

The aborted coup does not seem to have cautioned Haile Sellasie. The emperor failed to recognize that even if the kind of political challenges he once feared were coming from the traditional regional elite was gone, a new threat to his power may be coming from a

generation of nationalists that he himself had nurtured in his modern institutions like the army or the schools. Also, the fizzled coup did not cast any doubt in the monarch's mind that his "progressive" ideas were the best for the country although it (together with the rapidly changing international situation like the coming to an end of the colonial era in Africa and the declaration by the UN of the 1960s as the development decade) might have shaped (directly or indirectly) the direction and momentum of Ethiopia's developmentalism for the next five or six years.

The Second Five Year Development Plan (SFYDP), for the years 1962-67, was written in the background described above.¹⁴⁶ The planners saw the second plan as a continuation of the first that they argued had been largely a success. Measuring success in terms of growth in GNP, aggregate production vs. population growth, and, most importantly, in total investment, the predominantly Ethiopian authors of the plan insisted that rapid increase in production had been realized during the duration of the first-plan. According to them, during the first plan year (1957), total cereal production increased from 4.1 to 4.5 million tons, and export of coffee increased by more than one-fifth, hides and skins by more than half, and lentils by almost a multiple of three. In addition, they remarked that, rate of population growth for the duration of the first-five-year-plan period remained under 2 percent (below the 2.3 rate of growth in production of main food items) while significant growth in GNP had been attained.¹⁴⁷

In its content, the SFYDP, like the first underscored the key role agriculture could play in the country's development, and it ascertained that "full attention should be devoted to the improvement of peasant" farms.¹⁴⁸ It was particularly in two areas that the government sought to develop Ethiopia's smallholder agriculture. The first relates to

improving the “out-of-date traditional land relations and the land tenure system,” and the second, to changing the “inefficient methods of production because of primitive implements and tools and a lack of elementary know-how.” In regard to the first point described above, the plan stressed that any kind of land reform should be based on the principle that “the fruits of the farmers’ labour must be enjoyed by him whose toil has produced the crop.” And in regard to the second point, the aim was to introduce a range of modern tools—moldboard iron plows, harrows, rollers, scythes, simple drill, harvesting and threshing machines, carts, etc.—and new crops, and better seeds, to boost agricultural production by smallholder farmers in the country. The Plan also envisaged the establishment of farmers’ cooperatives (under the purview of community development programs) and commercial farms for the cultivation of “wasteland” along river valleys and across the lowland regions.¹⁴⁹ Once again the second plan proved to be ambitious not least because raising the stipulated birr 2.8 billion for running the proposed projects and interventions was not easy.¹⁵⁰

Haile Sellasie himself was aware of the challenges lack of capital posed to the nation he wanted to build. In his speech to the nation at the launching of the Plan, the emperor remarked:

In our study of the various social systems in the course of Our extensive tour [to friendly countries in 1959], We have found that the reason for their successful progress lies in the fact that they have accumulated enough capital, which in turn, made it possible for them to carry out better farming, financing various projects to develop their industries, harness their rivers, and in general exploit their natural resources.¹⁵¹

Reading at face value the remarks the then Prime Minister and Minister of Pen Aklilu Habta Wald made in his preface to the Third Five Year Development Plan (TFYDP)

where he commented that unlike the first two the new plan gives high priority to agriculture, economists have long-argued that the latest plan was the first to focus on agriculture in general or smallholder agriculture in particular.¹⁵² As could be seen from the discussion above this line of argument is not only inaccurate but also it insulates planning from the national political and international developmentalist contexts it belongs to.

Content-wise, the fact that smallholder agriculture had gotten special attention in international development thinking and practice since around the mid-1960s meant that Ethiopian development planners were ready and did indeed appropriate such language in their planning. Ideally, the TFYDP sought to deal with what it called “the two great problems” that beset contemporary Ethiopia, notably “the problem of production and the problem of the peasantry” mainly through land reform and agricultural development strategies.¹⁵³

Although the language used to describe the gravity of rural Ethiopia’s contradictions were new and to some extent even surprising, however, this was not the first time ever that the government had entertained land reform or agricultural development in its official policy pronouncements. If the new plan differed from the previous two, it was not so much because of its revolutionary outlook but mainly because of the degree of emphasis it placed on agricultural development and the strategies proposed to attain it.¹⁵⁴ In practice too, as I will show later by drawing examples from the valley, it is the manner in which a host of social actors (ranging from small-scale farmers to bureaucrats and politicians) interpreted and seized one or another aspect of the intervention regimes that followed the same plan that influenced change on the ground (see Chapter Nine).

For the planners the greatest challenge to agricultural development came from shortage of capital which they sought to overcome by securing international aid and loan as well as taxing the Ethiopian population itself. Externally, the government counted on “friendly countries,” international donor agencies, and private foreign investment.¹⁵⁵ Internally, it counted on what proved to be an increasingly controversial Income Tax the government introduced in 1967. Trying to sale his new tax code against the backdrop of growing internal dissatisfaction, the emperor, in his throne speech of September 30, 1968 (right on the commencement of the TFYDP) remarked that:

Times were when each farmer’s income taxes or his produce were paid to the Government through his landlord in the form of tithes. The recently enacted Income Tax Proclamation provides that the pay such taxes directly to the Treasury on the basis of estimates determined by local elders of his own choice. It must be clearly understood by all that this payment-as-you-produce system of taxation is meant to enable every Ethiopian to fulfill his obligation to the State and has no relevance whatever, contrary to opinion hold by some individuals misinformed on the matter, to land ownership.¹⁵⁶

The three consecutive five-year plans amplified, at least in theory, Ethiopia’s international stature as the country joined the rank of “modern” and “developing” nations the world has come to see in the era of declining empires. In the domestic scene too, nation planning coincided in time-scale with Haile Sellasie’s success in his nation-building and power-centralization projects both of which were capped in the 1955 constitution.

Yet Haile Sellasie’s own philosophy and action of economic development remained obscure and sometimes inconsistent, but always less-articulated. A consistent theme in the emperor’s inaugural speeches preceding the promulgation of the five-year plans was his insistence that development is needed but should not be simply superimposed from

without. Haile Sellasie often remarked, as he did, for example, in his throne speech of November 2, 1962 that: “We believe in the adaptation of modern economic and social theories to local conditions and customs rather than in their imposition on Ethiopia’s social and economic structure of systems which are largely alien to it and which is not equipped to absorb or cope with it.”¹⁵⁷ But never did he chart out what aspects of “local conditions and customs” he sought to preserve and promote while working for Ethiopia’s modernization. Of course Haile Sellasie was able politician rather than the sorts of a philosopher-king who seized development as the *raison d’etre* of the state and its legitimizing ideology in the wake of a rapidly changing international and national world.

Nonetheless development posed a challenge, in fact numerous challenges to the monarch. Not surprisingly, the time that saw the governments’ appropriation of development as a state ideology also saw the gaining momentum of alternative thinking and opposition. Foremost among the latter had been a school of thought that tried to explain Ethiopia’s backwardness in the context of farmers’ “unchanging tradition,” --that is the weight of tradition and strong cultural patterns holding back economic development and modernization. Proponents of this view argued that Ethiopia’s “conservative” religious institutions, “historical isolation,” and “feudal” structure had created an inward looking peasantry not open to agricultural innovation and development.¹⁵⁸ Far more pervasive than these sociological explanations rooted in the notion of static tradition was the rise of structural theories that rejected cultural and psychological explanations of underdevelopment or backwardness. Instead they offered a classist interpretation of Ethiopian society based on the Marxist notion of peasant agriculture and the state, the historical (exploitative) attitude of the feudal or feudo-capitalist state toward agrarian

production and land tenure. Proponents of this view argued that Ethiopian development had been constrained by a land based economy that supported the power and wealth of the emperor and the ruling class through the absorption of peasant output by means of tribute, taxation and rent. Consequently, the most radical of this group prescribed that change of government and a radical land reform would suffice to transform Ethiopia's backward agriculture and the economy and bring about rapid development.¹⁵⁹ Ethiopia's postwar development narrative is wrapped in the conflicting discourses described above. However, the outcome on the ground was far more complex than the binary extremes the theoretically grounded studies tend to posit.

Conclusion

Contrary to the dominant view that asserts that Haile Sellasie remained unmoved to adopting development to bring about smallholder agricultural change and transformation in the country up until the late-1960s, in this chapter I have argued that in fact development had attracted the emperor right from the outset. Initially development's appeal to the imperial government had been fashioned by politics, most notably as a means to offset what appeared to be a changing British imperial design in the Horn that could embrace Ethiopia as a protectorate. President Roosevelt and Truman's declaration of a new international order based on the granting of development aid to poorer countries appealed to Haile Sellasie best precisely because he sought to forge closer alliance with the U.S. both to counter British interest in the region as well as garner capital to finance his modernizing schemes.

Meanwhile, the changing postwar international food regime, most notably the acute

shortage of food materials Allied troops (and local populations) in the Middle East faced during and immediately following the Second World War brought Ethiopia in the spotlight of trans-continental grain marketing and the new international political order. Ethiopia's ability to supply marketed-food to the Middle East market showcased its importance to the Western powers several years before the onset of the Cold War. In the meantime Ethiopia also acquired the appellation the "bread basket" of the Middle East because of the actual (and potential) level of engagement with that region's food market at the time. Concerned and appreciative of Ethiopia's place in the evolving global food exchange network was FAO, the first organization created by the United Nations to combat the battle against hunger at an international scale. Ethiopia became a member of that organization in 1947, after which FAO opened its operation center in that country the following year. The FAO-Ethiopia accord led to the unleashing of crop-testing centers, and the launching of an effective nation-wide vaccination program against livestock diseases. Most of all FAO experts fashioned imperial development thinking through their writings and actions. The idea of revolutionizing Ethiopian smallholder agriculture by modernizing farm implements and disseminating improved seed varieties were the legacies of that accord. If the practicability of FAO's recommendations fall far short of the plans, nonetheless the organization's specialists were successful in challenging existing imperial wisdom regarding agriculture as they made their case that if Ethiopia were to feed its growing population and continue to export food it had to modernize its agriculture rather quickly.

Ethiopia also joined the evolving international development ideology and practice through the Point Four agreement it signed with the U.S. in 1951. An outcome of

Truman's declaration, Ethiopia became one of the first countries where Point Four capital got its way. An enduring legacy of Point Four had been the birth of the first major agricultural college in Ethiopia, the beginning of extension services (albeit at a limited scale), and the retrenchment of agricultural development as a means to increase food production and national growth.

If FAO and Point Four operations provided the grist for Ethiopia's agricultural development in the late-1940s and early-1950s, in the post-1957 period development became the template of government policy through the language of planned growth. Consequently, Haile Sellasie's government promulgated three five-year development plans between 1957 and 1974. In this chapter I have argued that all the three plans did envision to transforming smallholder agriculture much in line with internationally accepted strategies.

If development provided the *raison d'être* for the state and enhanced its modes operandi to intervene at the local level, the actual procedure of agricultural change on the ground involved a range of actors (such as farmers, development actors, state bureaucrats, and even the urban elite). Therefore, a clear understanding of valley agrarian transformation requires a closer understanding of what those social actors (most notably the farmers themselves) did or did not do in the context of the changing development regimes, politics, markets, and the environment throughout the postwar period. That will be the focus of the rest of the dissertation. The next chapter deals with the expansion of crop agriculture in the valley in the 1941-59 period.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTEGRATION, INTENSIFICATION, AND DIVERSIFICATION: CHANGING CONTOURS OF VALLEY AGRICULTURE (1941-59)

Compared to the prewar era valley agriculture underwent dramatic transformation in the post-1941 period. When, in 1941, the British-led OETA launched a survey team under Major F. de V. Joyce to assess the agricultural potential and food situation of Ethiopia, the Arsi Oromo along Lakes Zway, Langano and Shala still possessed “very large herds of cattle.” While “extensive Acacia forests,” dominated landscape.¹ In the next decade and a half, Arsi Negelle farmers turned a considerable proportion of their grazing land into crop fields so much so that by the mid-1950s the region had become one of Ethiopia’s major maize and beans production sites. The pace and direction of change was even more dramatic along the Mareqo ridge where Mareqo, Silti, and Gurage farmers ventured on the cultivation of a relatively long list of crops of which maize and chili pepper were the most important. The predominantly pastoral way of life that had characterized the two sub-regions in the past quickly lost its economic and social importance, and shrank in space as it confined itself to the most arid parts of the valley between Lakes Langano and Zway.

The same period also witnessed new developments in Ada-Lume’s smallholder agriculture. Here change took place not so much by way of radical shifts in terms of sectoral reconfiguration but more relating to land use and crop choice. The long-fallow field technology that characterized Ada-Lume agriculture in the early-20th century gave

way to intensive agriculture characterized most by the degree of its diversification and commercialization.

In this chapter I document the process of valley agricultural transformation by looking at the three sub-regions I have identified before. First, I document developments that took place in terms of field technology, crop choice, and land use to show the direction of change and its impact on such indices as labor calendar and ecology management. I demonstrate that marking this transformation was the dramatic expansion of crop-based agriculture with distinct localized variations in terms of crop choice and soil management techniques. In Ada-Lume the pace of transformation toward crop-based, small-scale commercialized farming was rapid and built on prewar antecedents. Here, what evolved was a relatively distinct form of agriculture based on crop-mixing strategies that came to distinguish this phase of Ada agriculture from early-20th century long-fallow techniques as well as the kind of specialized agriculture that followed later.

Even more dramatic was the transformation that took place south of the Awash. What is striking about the changes that took place in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo is not only the pace at which crop agriculture took place but also the innovative ways in which farmers' integrated crop and livestock agriculture. This is important because the balance between crops and livestock allowed the farmers to manage soil fertility (through the application of manure) and maximize crop yield. The sustainability of Ada's diversified agriculture as well as that of Arsi Negelle and Mareqo's integrated crop-livestock agriculture in the 1941-59 decades was contingent up on a range of factors of which the competitions over environmental resources was the most important.

5.1 Agricultural Production and the Farmer Experience: the entrenchment of crop-agriculture in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo

Surprisingly little recorded evidence is available to measure the specific aspects of valley agriculture in the 1941-59 period. Sample surveys on crop varieties, yield, soil fertility, human and cattle population, as conducted by the Central Statistics Authority and the MoA began only in the 1960s. Archival sources from the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and that of Agriculture which yield some useful historical data on land and taxation for the same period, provide very little if any information on such technical matters as field organization and productivity at household or even regional levels.²

Likewise, published and unpublished studies on Ethiopian agriculture remained rare for the first two decades of the postwar period. To be sure, those decades witnessed unprecedented documentation and publication of public history, manuals, and macroeconomics but little of that dwells on agriculture and virtually none on the specific subject of localized agronomic and/or herding practices in the country.³ From an individual crop perspective, only *chat* [*Catha edulis*] captured the attention of researchers at this time and got more than its fair share in the agricultural literature.⁴

Remarkably few accounts stand out as rare exceptions to this general dearth. The first is F. de Joyce's general survey of Ethiopian agriculture (1943). Appointed as temporary agricultural advisor to the OETA-Ethiopia in October 1941, Joyce had instructions to "tour the country for four months and report on agricultural problems, more particularly as they affected (a) food for the troops, (b) food for the civilian population, and (c) the future of Ethiopia."⁵

Joyce started his tour in October 1941, right after the end of the rainy season for Ethiopia's central and northern highlands. Unlike his prewar predecessors, Joyce had the advantage of motarable roads and a truck that facilitated his tour covering more than 5000 miles just in four months.⁶ At times the roads took him to places where some of his predecessors could hardly image going; at other times, because the roads followed past lines of communication, as may have been the case in the valley south of the Awash, Joyce followed roughly the same route Wellby had four decades earlier.⁷ In his observation too, Joyce, like several of his European predecessors, focused on the general rather than the specific. Like Cappucci before him, for example, Joyce was struck to see the intensity of cultivation in different parts of the country, with "crops...in all states of growth...often alongside each other..."⁸ Also like the British Rey who lived in the country early in the 20th century to reflect on, among other things, what he saw as the direct, in fact causative relationship between Ethiopia's low population and low agricultural production, Joyce also reflected on the nexus between demography and agriculture in his own way.⁹ Joyce estimated the country's total population at around 8 million. Consequently, he argued that with a density of population of only 20 people per square mile there is no shortage of land in the country and "there is in fact room for considerable expansion of human and animal population, in which respect Ethiopia can count herself fortunate."¹⁰

Aside from such general remarks, Joyce also provided some useful notes on soils, water and rainfall, grasses, forests and trees, and more specifically livestock and food and plantation crops in the country.¹¹ He also made some recommendations toward improving the productive capacity of the land. In particular Joyce argued that attention should be

directed to soil conservation strategies, specifically to educating the Ethiopian farmers so that they value that their cattle “should provide a daily harvest that is better for them and the land than the vast areas of cereals they now grow.”¹² Equally strikingly Joyce contended that reform has to be made to address what he stated as the two major problems besetting Ethiopia’s agricultural sector. The first relates to what Joyce called the exploitative relationship that tied the farmer to the soldier, i.e., not the “regular soldier of the Ethiopian army but ...the armed followers of the various governors and chiefs.”¹³

He lamented that:

This country will not prosper unless the peasant gets fair treatment and until the soldier ceases to look on the peasant as someone put into the world to provide for his [the soldiers’] comfort. I suggest that the best means of establishing good relations between peasant and soldier in this country would be the payment in cash of a good salary to all provincial governors and sub-governors; such as would enable them to pay at least a reasonable subsistence allowance (also in cash) to their followers. The money would be better spent in this way than in an expensive so-called “Agricultural Department” in the capital, whose only real activity, as far as I have been able to judge, is collecting the agricultural tithe tax.¹⁴

The second problem that Joyce wanted to see it addressed was what he referred to as the growing landlessness whose origins he traced to the Italian occupation period and its quick end that had left many (who in the past worked in Italian road projects and factories) unemployed and exiled (most of whom have returned now).¹⁵ Thus he wrote:

Those people cannot be absorbed in the labor market and I have seen too much good unused and unoccupied country in the course of my travels to believe there can be any insurmountable difficulty in putting these people back on the land. There they can at least support themselves and contribute, through their agricultural produce, to the revenues of the country. ... Some, no doubt, have been absorbed in the Army and Police services, but who can blame those who are left to shift for themselves if they become “shiftas”?¹⁶

In addition to Joyce’s thought-provoking report, the early- to mid-1950s saw the

publication of numerous useful reports and book-length accounts on Ethiopian agriculture. Chief among those have been the MoA's compiled volume on *Ethiopian Agriculture* (1953) and Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce's bilingual *Guide Book for Ethiopia* (1954). Both monographs deal with the country's agricultural sector at great length, and provide some useful statistics on crop-production and the relative position of the livestock sector at the national scale.¹⁷ The same period also witnessed the opening of the Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts' in Alamaya (near Harar) whose annual reports added a new dimension and breadth to the quality of documented data. Because the college compiled its reports based on general surveys and results collected from its experimental stations (such as Bishoftu and Shashamane), the annual reports offer some useful and reliable data on crop distribution, yield, animal husbandry, and agricultural extension particularly for the 1954-62 period.¹⁸

An important addition to that comes from W. Kuls' 1957/8 studies on Ethiopian agriculture.¹⁹ Written in German and still largely inaccessible to most students of Ethiopian agriculture, Kuls' studies nonetheless have been skillfully tapped by Ethiopia's first generation of agricultural and farming systems scholars (most notably E. Westphal) since. Kuls' studies and the sporadic pieces of recorded evidence available to us are useful to reinforce the rich oral data to reconstruct aspects of the valley's agricultural history in the 1941-59 period.

Relying heavily on Kuls' 1958 study, Westphal later made the following remarks on valley (south of the Awash) agriculture:

During the last [several] decades, the pastoral Arussi in the Rift Valley were forced to engage themselves in agriculture. They took the plough from the Amhara or Amharanized Galla [Oromo] and Gurage who had moved into their territory. These immigrants occupied land originally used

by the Arussi for grazing. In this region, at ca 1500 m or higher, the same crops are found as in Shoa (especially cereals and pulses, some oil crops) with sometimes sweet potatoes and potatoes, [but] *enset* and other crops are absent. Unlike the Galla in Shoa, the Arussi use manure. Between Lake Shala and Lake Awasa their main crop is maize; sorghum, tef, wheat, barley, common bean, horse bean, pea, chickpea, lentil and grass pea are also cultivated, but linseed, Niger seed and sunflower are important. Fields near the houses are well manured and used for maize, often for several subsequent years, until the yields drop, after which horse bean is planted followed again by maize. For other crops a rotation is practiced with 2-3 year's fallow during which the land is used as pasture.²⁰

Kuls/Westphal's description sums up nicely change in valley (south of the Awash) agriculture in the two decades following Italian occupation. Demonstrably, the most captivating part of the story relates to the shift the Arsi Oromo have made from livestock production to crop-centered agriculture in a short period of time. Westphal explained the sub-regions' latest agriculture in comparison, equating it with Shawa in terms of crop diversity while distinguishing Arsi Negelle farmers for their unique use of manure to enrich soil fertility. This is striking because except for the Gurage, Westphal's "Amhara or Amharanized Oromo who had moved" to the valley to "give the Arsi Oromo the plough" did not seem to have had similar experience with manure before.

What were the circumstances that "forced" the pastoral Arsi to "engage themselves in agriculture" as quickly as they did? Who were the "Amhara and Amharanized" Oromo and Gurage who had "moved into their territory" and why? In what concrete ways did change take place and what was the farmers' role in it? These are fundamental questions to understand the sub-regions' agricultural history.

Before I begin to answer any of the above questions directly let me reproduce the views of several of my informants from Arsi Negelle and Mareqo who reflected on the regions' agricultural history variously. The first informant (Nini Abino) was born in Arsi

Negelle several years after the Italians had left. He told his story based on his own childhood memories and what his now deceased father told him.

I told you my father was the first cultivator in the entire Arsi Negelle region. He got maize seeds from Wolayta and began growing corn in a small plot of land here only few years before or during the Italian occupation. When I grew up we had sufficient home grown maize, dozens of livestock (cows and goats), and barley flour my father bought in the market. Our kitchen was always full. We often ate goat meat, maize and barley flour with milk. In the farm we grew maize. But we also grew sweet potato, beans, and occasionally wheat and *tef*. Except for barley and *enset* (which we did not grow) my father planted every thing the earth could grow. I remember my father and I tried to grow lemon and orange but it did not hold. We also tried cotton, which was not a success either. But potatoes, *tef*, beans, chickpea, lentil, bell pepper, you name it, did take hold in our farm. The harvest was superb. The soil was rich and yield was good because we constantly applied manure to it. There was no shortage of livestock. My father at that time owned more than a dozen cows and bullocks and twice as many goats.²¹

The second informant, Tikishu Lechebo migrated to Arsi Negelle from Wolayta sometime in the late-1940s or early-1950s.

I came here on a sharecropping arrangement. I had been well accustomed to cultivation before. The four *temad* land I contracted here was *taf* [previously uncultivated]. I cleared the bushes and grass and planted sweet potato and maize on it. The yield was good. The following years I cultivated *tef*, lentils, beans and other cereals and pulses. The land belonged to one Kabada Gulema who lived in Addis Ababa and to whom I paid a fourth of my produce on a yearly basis before he commuted the payment to cash and increased it to what amounted to a third of my annual harvest.

Q. What about the Arsi Oromo here?

A. They too cultivated the land. Of course not every inch of the land had been cultivated before [when I arrived here]. In a short while crops filled the land everywhere except for the drier lands near [Lakes] Langano and Zway where the Arsi continued stock-raising for long.²²

Like their Arsi Negelle counterparts, two of my Mareqo informants offered a glimpse of the sub-regions' agricultural history in the 1940s and 1950s based on their own

experience. An ethnic Mareqo, Nureto Hameso explained the region's agricultural landscape and aspects of its transformation in the decade following the Italian occupation:

I was a kid when the Italians left and I can't tell you for sure when and how the Mareqo began cultivating the land. But from what I heard from our fathers and grandfathers I can tell you that Mareqo had been cattle herders before [the Italian occupation]. When I grew up my father had started cultivating maize, sorghum, and pepper on his farm (part of which I inherited later). Koshe was a bustling market town. It was fun for us as kids to go to the market. Addis Ababa merchants came here to buy pepper, wheat, maize, and whatever they wanted. When I acquired my own farm [around the mid-to late-1950s] I focused on the cultivation of maize and pepper. I needed the maize mainly for home consumption and the pepper for the attractive cash it reaped in the market. The problem then was not land or market but labor. If you had more people working for you, you could easily rent land and begin cultivation. I myself had periodically hired wandering laborers several times at harvest time to help me harvest pepper on time.²³

The second informant, Bashir Kadir, noted that his father was among the pioneer Silti farmers to migrate to the Mareqo ridge shortly before the Italians came. His father kept two wives and two houses, one in Mareqo and another in Masqan (in the highlands). Bashir was born from the Masqan wife and migrated to Mareqo sometime in the early-1940s. I have reproduced a piece of his long story below.

Following liberation [from Italian colonialism] many Silti settled in the entire lowland region. But the authorities had already apportioned the land for themselves [as *rist*]. But we didn't care much at first (what did we know). We thought as long as we paid *erbo* (one-fourth) to the *bala-rist* [*rist*-owner] everything else should be fine. In fact it seemed to work that way for many years to come. I for one rented a total of 5 hectares of land, one that belonged to a certain *Mato Alaqa* [Sergeant] Germa Basha. On it I grew maize, beans, pepper and wheat. The harvest had been good. I rented a-third of the land to another farmer (who happened to be my relative). Paying the *erbo* always annoyed me but I never had difficulty meeting the demands of the *bala-rist*. Later [in the late-1960s] Germa [through his local representative] up-graded the land to *lam* [developed] and the share was consequently raised to one-third. I paid my *siso* in whatever crops I harvested including maize, beans, wheat, sorghum, and pepper. Every year

Germa himself came (or sent one of his relatives) here with a truck to collect and transport the *siso* from the many farmers that cultivated his *rist*.²⁴

I chose the above stories mainly because of their relevance for opening new windows to begin to understand patterns of change in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture.

Piecemeal each story sheds light on one or another aspect of the sub-regions' agriculture in its own way. Nini's narrative is important not so much because it helps us understand the not so relevant point of who started cultivating the land first in the entire Arsi Negelle region but mainly for leading us to explore Wolayta's contribution to it. As we have seen before, Arsi Negelle and Wolayta had closer social and economic links at least going as far back as the late-19th century. In the 20th century this link between the two regions has been solidified through seed and crop exchange. According to Nini and several of my informants, Arsi Negelle's first maize seeds and virtually all of its root crops and vegetables such as sweet-potato, potato, tomato, and onions came from Wolayta. Arsi Negelle and Shashamane, in turn, provided a small fraction of Wolayta's farmers a feasible outlet for migration and settlement in the postwar decades.

Tikishu's migration and settlement, as I will show later, was part of a larger story that relates to the consolidation of sharecropping in the region. Bashir's story fits well in to that trajectory as well, but for him the descent from the highlands to the lowlands was a logical process quite distinct from what social scientists often tend to describe as migration. Nureto's recollection of Mareqo agriculture also reveals pepper's growing importance at the farm and in the market.

When pieced together too, my informants' testimonies offer reliable information that is useful to understand the changes more systematically. Several developments

characterized Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture in the 1941-59 decades. In terms of field crops, the evidence from informants' testimonies suggests that Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers showed specific interest in annual rather than perennial crops. As I have shown before, the farmers to the west and south of Arsi Negelle and Mareqo—those in the Gurage highlands, Wolayta, and Sidama and with whom the former had long-standing economic and cultural contacts—cultivated perennial (such as coffee and enset) and seasonal (such as maize) crops. In their selection and adaptation process, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers took only the seasonal crops that suited their environment and economic priorities better. In a short while Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers turned what was in the prewar period a predominantly pastoral landscape into a site for annual crop production.

None of the crops Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers came to cultivate traveled great lengths. As I have shown before, Ada-Lume farmers to the north had been cultivating all the cereals and legumes, some of which like tef and wheat and tef might have found their way to the Arsi highlands as early as the late-1920s or early-1930s.²⁵

Maize and chili pepper have been around in the Ethiopian region for long as well.²⁶ By the time maize and chili pepper found their way to the valley in the 1930s and 1940s, both crops seem to have lost most of their new world mark through mutation and cross-breeding. As far as one can tell from informants' testimonies, chili pepper seems to have found its niche among Silti farmers well before Menilek's 1870s campaigns. Pepper's "descent" to the valley (in Mareqo and Alaba) was very short in terms of distance but large in terms of the kind of impact it had on land use and farmers' income. Mareqo and Alaba's growing prominence in pepper production took place in the context of Ethiopia's

postwar urban food market.²⁷

Maize followed almost the same route to Mareqo. In Arsi Negelle, as far as we can rely on Nini's narrative, maize's "journey" was probably the longest. For maize, Wolayta and Kambata served as key points of seed dispersion at least for two decades in the 1930s and 1940s.²⁸ By the early- to mid-1950s the sources of Arsi Negelle corn germplasm included the Imperial College of Agriculture's research stations in Shashamane and Debre Zeit that had begun experimenting improved maize and wheat seed varieties in their own fields. The stations' released those varieties cautiously but the rate of diffusion was fast as farmers' themselves duplicated and shared those seeds on a seasonal basis.²⁹ As we shall see in some detail later, by the late-1960s and early-1970s the Arsi Negelle-Awasa region might have undergone a period of homogenization in terms of its maize germplasm distinct from the varieties that dominated the fields in 1955. Reflecting on the extent and quality of maize agriculture in the valley, a team of the Agriculture College's agronomists who surveyed the region in 1954 reported that:

the people who farm the general area stretching from Mojo to Dilla, within the Great Rift Valley, utilize corn as their basic grain for food and fermented beverage. The acreage planted to corn is quite large, but average yields are low. Although some fields contain good stands of upright, sturdy, dark-green, healthy-appearing corn, most plants are stunted, and yellow, and produce nubbins, shucks, and cob, and little or no grain.³⁰

The team's conclusion may be as much the result of careful observation as it was a call to justify the superiority of improved seed varieties their own research stations had begun to experiment. Indeed, as I have already mentioned before, the availability of improved seed varieties that filtered into the valley directly through the research stations or through the markets helped strengthen maize's relative position in valley agriculture. Yet for another

observer, FAO's Director General who visited the valley about the same time as the agronomist team mentioned above, the sub-regions' maize farms were impressive, which he did not hesitate to equate with America's corn-belt or Australia's queensland.³¹

The source of strength for Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture came from the advantages integrated crop-livestock agriculture provided. In fact, it was this integrated crop-livestock agriculture that rendered life to Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture and distinguished it from the rest of Ethiopia's cereal-based agriculture in the 1941-59 decades. That is, unlike Ada-Lume, highland Arsi or Shawa where farmers raised cattle mainly (though not exclusively) for securing a reliable pool of plow oxen, for Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers cattle were both a source of capital and manure.

From an otherwise social-Darwinian point of view, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo forms of integrated crop-livestock agriculture seemed rather a logical stage in the transition from cattle herding to crop-based agriculture. But for the farmers, both the cultivation of crops and, along side with it, the raising of livestock resulted from complex entanglements that took into consideration ecological, market, and political factors.

In agronomic terms, the cultivation of maize, beans, wheat, pepper or *tef*, in what was once grassland environment that was rich in nitrogen but deficient in other nutrients (such as phosphorus), required the application of organic fertilizer. Farmers did not explain the link between soil nutrients and crop yield in the vernacular of modern science but they soon learned through experience that soil fertility and crop yield could not coexist in isolation. Therefore, for Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers the raising of livestock alongside crops was not simply a matter of keeping tradition but a conscious move to maintain soil fertility to maximize yield.³²

The most important way in which Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers tapped manure from their cattle was through the organization of on-farm rotating pens. That is, in an attempt to preserve manure while not forcing themselves to transport this important resource to the crop-fields, the farmers developed a strategy whereby they cultivated the land that was once used as livestock pens. To maximize their chances of fertilizing larger areas, farmers rotated the location of the pens across the field constantly and according to future needs or the degree to which the portion of the land has been exploited in the past.³³

Itself an innovative transformation, the organization of pens marked a new phase in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agricultural history. On the one hand, the fertilized land became the locus of crop agriculture. That is, the long process of field preparation for crop production often started with the manuring of previously uncultivated pieces of land for up to three months before the first round of cultivation started. Then one or two rounds of plowing sufficed to prepare the land for crop production. Generally farmers preferred to plant maize for two or three consecutive seasons first before they switched to cereals or legumes, in the process making maize a garden crop as they maximized production of chili pepper or *tef* (in the Mareqo ridge) or wheat and beans (in Arsi Negelle).³⁴

If this transformation had been impressive, its overall impact on crop and livestock production, land use, and labor management had been considerable. At the conceptual level it is difficult to speak of two sectors of Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture because crop-agriculture's sustenance depended on the availability of manure (that came from cattle) and, as I will show later, the political viability of the farm unit itself depended on crop cultivation.

On the ground too, integrated crop-livestock agriculture symbolized not the parallel co-existence of a crop and livestock sector, but the forging of a new one that required fresh reconfiguration of environmental resources. Integrated crop-livestock agricultures' most visible impact involved land use, marked most by the progressive reversal of the ratio of cropland to pasture in favor of the former. With increasing interest in maize, beans, chili pepper, or wheat production Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers turned the extensive pasture lands into crop fields at a pace, according to one of my informants, never matched in Arsi Negelle history.³⁵ Or in the words of one octogenarian, "you could walk a great distance without noticing a single soul or cropped field just before Haile Sellasie's come back [in 1941]. Shortly after, however, a succession of crop fields dotted Mareqo [landscape]. The vast pasture fields we used to graze our livestock turned into crop-fields right before our eyes."³⁶

An immediate outcome of the kind of rearrangement farmers' made in regard to land use had been the re-entrenchment of a livestock sector in a totally new ground. On the one hand expanding crop fields and declining pasture required the farmers to make major readjustments in terms of herd size and labor allocation. On the other hand, compared to most of their neighboring farming communities both in the perennial and annual crop-producing regions, integrated crop-livestock agriculture permitted Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers to own on average up to a dozen or more heads of cattle per family, three to four times larger than the former.³⁷ My informants contrasted this "phase" with the prewar era when families possessed "large" number of livestock, but they were careful not to characterize it as a period marked by scarcity, shortage, or deprivation as they like to refer to the decades that followed.³⁸

Side by side with reconfiguring their land use practices, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers also altered radically their labor calendars and made some useful adjustments so as to address the demands of crop-livestock agriculture. Hence contrary to the kind of seasonal mobility and exploitation of vast grazing resources the prewar pastoral way of life required, the evolving crop-livestock agriculture depended on qualitatively different forms of social and labor organization. Just like the adjustments they made to past land use practices and because of it, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers made several key changes regarding labor of which probably the most important relates to their annual labor calendar. As Table 5.1 demonstrates, for Arsi Negelle farmers this meant the calibration of field days orderly, scheduled across time and space commensurate the kind of crop they cultivated. Consequently, in the months between April and October Arsi Negelle farmers became active in field preparation, planting and harvesting maize, sorghum and beans. Field preparation started in February or March after the beginning of the small rains. Sorghum was sown in March, maize in April, *tef*, barley, wheat, pea, and horse bean in July, and chickpea in September. The harvesting seasons for these crops varied as well. The major harvesting season for legumes and maize is October through November; November for wheat, December for *tef*, and January for sorghum.³⁹

Likewise, Mareqo labor calendar underwent significant transformation from the past. In Mareqo field preparation started in February and continued thorough March. Planting started in April, followed by regular weeding activities until October which is harvest month. Chili pepper required a different kind of organization that started with seedbed preparation in May. At the nurseries, the chili pepper plants required watering twice a day, early in the morning and around dusk that was often the duty of women. By late-

June to early-July farmers' transplanted the sprouting chili pepper plants into a field prepared in advance for at least two months. Here the plant will be carefully weeded and followed up regularly until harvested in December.⁴⁰

Table 5.1 Agricultural calendar of the Arsi in the Rift Valley (1958)

CROPS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Barley							X	X	X	X	X	
Maize				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Sorghum	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tef							X	X	X	X	X	X
Wheat							X	X	X	X	X	
Chickpea									X	X	X	X
Horse bean							X	X	X	X		
Pea							X	X	X	X		

Source: Kuls, 1958, reproduced in Westphal, p. 108

Because crop production required relatively intensive labor mobilization and regimentalization, cattle-tending, once the prerogative of Mareqo adults, now became the duty of younger boys. Village boys pooled their labor and cattle together and spent all day looking after the livestock (often traveling considerable distance in search of pasture and purgative water). This became a routine activity, with livestock and boys leaving the household every morning and coming back to it every evening. At night the livestock rested in the rotating pen that soon would be ready for cultivation the following season.⁴¹

Mareqo agriculture, like that of Arsi Negelle, depended on such carefully integrated crop-livestock regime during the 1941-59 decades. For the majority of Ethiopia's annual-crop producers, livestock had become an increasingly scarce resource about this time while no alternative technology seemed feasible in the production process than the now classic ox-plow.⁴² For 1940s and 1950s Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers, livestock were an integral part of the farm unit and contributed much more than traction power alone.

Intensification through diversification in Ada-Lume agriculture

Compared to its prewar patterns, Ada-Lume agriculture also underwent dramatic transformation in the 1941-59 period. Strikingly, here, like in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo, agricultural change manifested itself most in terms of land use and expanding crop-production. Yet Ada-Lume's own past history and, more importantly, the specific ways in which social actors responded pro-actively to changing circumstances shaped the sub-regions' postwar (1941-59) agriculture significantly differently from its own past as well as from that of Arsi Negelle and Mareqo.

Indeed the many farmers I talked to in Ada and Lume, some of whom came of age about this time, witnessed the changes first hand and offered their own explanations regarding these changes at various lengths. Badada Buta, born in Mojo in 1917, explained change in Lume agriculture in terms of the ratio of cropped-land to wooded-land:

I was born here in Mojo town at the time of the railway construction. From what I heard [from my elders] and what I saw, this area was endowed with pasture, wooded-land, and cultivated land [before the Italian period].

Q. Are you saying that there were trees in this region back then? If so what happened to the trees because I don't see that many trees now.

A. Yes! In fact east and northeast of Mojo town was endowed with forests, further west and south was grass and trees. Most cultivators lived further east and northeast. Some people came down here [around Mojo] following the railway. Many started wheat cultivation. There was little market for grains before the Italians. Right after the Italians left everybody started selling their produce in the market. That created the rush for cropped land. Wooded-land disappeared because of that.

Q. What is the oldest crop here?

A. *Tef*, barley, wheat, chickpea. Beans, peas, and lentils followed soon. But the two most important crops here had always been wheat and *tef*.⁴³

Badada belongs to the group of informants authorities introduced to me as experts in local history. The next two stories I cast here come from a different group of informants who I asked specific questions pertaining to their own farm experience—the type of crops they cultivated (when possible ever since they started farming), the number of livestock they raised, the manner in which they acquired farm land in the first place and so on. Among these I found Raya Talila's story interesting because it offers useful information regarding local politics as well as aspects of farm-level agriculture.

I started farming four or five years after the Italians had left. This was a *balabbat* land. The first *balabbat* was Talila Balcha who was succeeded by Badada Duga and then Dagafu Duga. These were Dire's *balabbat*. They were like governors. The land belonged to them and they taxed us [the farmers] *siso* [a third]. Like others, I grew *tef*, wheat, chickpea, beans, peas, all kinds of crops except *nug* [Niger seed]. I rotated chickpea, beans, peas, and lentils to maintain the health of the land [soil]. That is long gone. Now I can not rotate because I have a small plot of land which I have to save for *tef* year after year.⁴⁴

The two last stories I reproduce here come from two of my informants whom I talked to in group at Dibandiba (in Lume). Lagasa Ayala and Dichiso Tasama explained changed in terms of crop types and livestock availability than that of crop-land and wooded land as Dibaba did. Dichiso remarked:

Before the Italian [occupation] farmers' raised large [numbers of] cattle but *warandabse* [rinderpest] killed most. Many [farmers] could loose all the cattle they raised for many years just in one season. Later [many years after the Italians had left] the government conducted massive vaccination campaign in our region in each *chika-shum*. It is only after that that the poor acquired [their own] cattle. Now it is lack of pasture not disease that kills the animals and has forced us not to raise more than two or three.⁴⁵

Lagasa concurred with Dichiso but his own story also revealed some interesting trends in crop choice.

...I very well remember that there was more maize, beans, and peas here

than *tef* before the Italians came. After liberation, I and everybody here focused on *tef*, wheat, peas, beans, chickpea, and lentils [production]. [It took some time] for *tef* to dominate the fields, and that was only after Mengestu Neway's *gereger* [the 1960 coup]. [To the contrary] wheat disappeared from the farms for many years before it came back after the [1984/85] famine.⁴⁶

Several themes run through these and the various stories I gathered from my Ada-Lume informants. Demonstrably, 1941-59 Ada-Lume agriculture differed from its late-19th and early-19th century trends in certain major ways of which probably the most important was what I have termed here as intensification through diversification, i.e. the cultivation of a range of cereals and legumes in a given field for a number of years. To be sure, such a practice may not have been a totally new invention that transpired across Ada-Lume overnight in 1941 or 1942 but built on developments that might have started as early as the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, it was in the 1941-59 decades that it matured to give Ada-Lume agriculture its distinctive features from the rest of the valley.

Emblematic of the kind of transformation that took place in Ada-Lume agriculture during this time was the dramatic expansion of crop agriculture. Just like my Arsi Negelle and Mareqo informants described the 1941-59 period as a time of the entrenchment of crop-agriculture in their respective areas, those in Ada-Lume singled out the two decades as a period marked by the rapid conversion of wooded land and pasture into crop fields. According to them, what is unique about these decades was not the entrenchment of crop-agriculture (which they underscored was not new to the area) but its rate of expansion across the region.⁴⁷

More than their generalized accounts regarding the expansion in area of crop-land, my informants also offered useful information about certain specific aspects of the changes

that took place in Ada-Lume agriculture in those decades. From their description, it is clear that the most important change took place in terms of land use. As I have shown before, to the extent that Ada-Lume farmers had practiced crop agriculture in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, long-fallow agriculture had been an important component of local field management techniques. Starting from the 1920s and more so in the postwar period, Ada-Lume farmers abandoned long-fallow practices and developed relatively intensive methods of farming.⁴⁸

Characteristic of Ada-Lume's intensive agriculture as it took place in the 1941-59 decades has been both the cultivation of the same plot of land for long and a new field technology that built on crop-mixing.⁴⁹ That is, distinct from extended periods of "resting" of the land long-fallow agriculture permitted, postwar Ada-Lume farmers resorted to a short-fallow practice where they cultivated the longer by minimizing fallow intervals. In the meantime, they offset the agronomic challenges of short-fallow by developing a carefully calibrated crop-mixing strategy.

Mixed-cropping enabled Ada-Lume farmers to maintain soil fertility while maximizing their chances of exchange. Of particular importance in this regard was the systematic mixing of chickpea, lentils, peas, beans, Niger seed, linseed, safflower, and grass pea into the expanding grain (tef and wheat) fields. Certainly not all the legumes and oilseeds mentioned above were entirely new to the sub-region nor were all the farmers cultivating most at the same capacity and intensity. For example, chickpea and perhaps also lentils may have been around longer, but beans, peas, safflower, linseed, Niger seed, and grass pea were recent additions dating back only to the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, the suitability of microenvironments (most notably soil type and moisture)

also contributed in its own way to localized variations, as was the case, for example, for safflower that was common in Ada than in Lume.⁵⁰

Those secondary variations aside, intensified cereal-legume production as it took place in the 1941-59 periods, contributed to the relative virility of Ada-Lume agriculture. In their crop choices, timing, and space allocation, the farmers' weighed several factors before deciding when or where to grow *tef*, wheat, chickpea, safflower or grass pea in the short- or long-term. From the available evidence it seems apparent that through the 1940s and 1950s Ada-Lume farmers cultivated cereals only for two to four consecutive years before they switched to legumes the following year. Generally those variations in time were reflections of soil type, the duration increasing on black soils (for up to four years for *tef*), and decreasing on red soils (for two years for barley). The cycle can be repeated several times before the farmers set the land fallow at irregular intervals. Unlike in the past when farmers' adapted long-fallow practices (according to some estimates "resting" the land for as many as 10-15 years), now Ada-Lume farmers' reduced fallow-periods by more than a third (just to 3-5 years). During those short-fallow periods, farmers attempted to speed up soil rehabilitation by cultivating vetch or grass pea but relied on their crop-rotation strategies as the best mechanism for managing soil quality and increasing yield both in terms of quantity as well as variety.⁵¹

Change also took place in farm calendar and livestock management as well. Ada-Lume's annual agricultural calendar started in March and April, with field preparations and plowing, and continued throughout the year with remarkable regularity and intensive labor involvement. The major planting seasons started in April through June for pulses, sorghum and barley, and July through December for *tef* and wheat. Major harvesting of

cereals took place between January and February, and pulses, between July and December depending upon time of plantation (in April or end of September) and rainfall regularity.⁵²

Table 5.2 Agricultural calendars of selected crops in Yararena Karayu highlands (1958)

CROPS	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Barley				X	X	X	X	X	X			
Sorghum			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Tef						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wheat						X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chickpea				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Lentil				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Source: Kuls, 1958, reproduced in Westphal, p. 101

Apart from the not so unique but important adjustments they made to their annual labor calendars, Ada-Lume framers also redefined constantly livestock's place in the social organization of production. As I have mentioned before, Lagasa and Dichaso, two of my informants from Lume, underscored that the postwar governments' cattle vaccination campaigns helped farmers to cope with rinderpests' adverse impacts that they believed was severe before the war. According to them, perhaps a significant proportion of the farmers raised on average six to eight heads of cattle (3-4 oxen and as many cows) in the 1940s and 1950s.⁵³ Others (both from Ada and Lume) generally agreed on the numbers I gave them from my two Lume informants, acknowledged the positive effects of the immunization campaigns, and maintained the position that compared to their late-19th or early-20th century predecessors Ada-Lume's 1941-59 farmers owned significantly less number of cattle.⁵⁴ But all talked about change in such a way that it only in the last 30-35 years that Ada-Lume farmers encountered serious problems regarding livestock production.⁵⁵ This is intriguing because their own statistics tend to suggest a linear

trajectory marked by decline in per capita livestock population over time. Yet for my informants who tended to evaluate change in aggregate the 1941-59 decades were marked by transformation rather than crisis or decline.

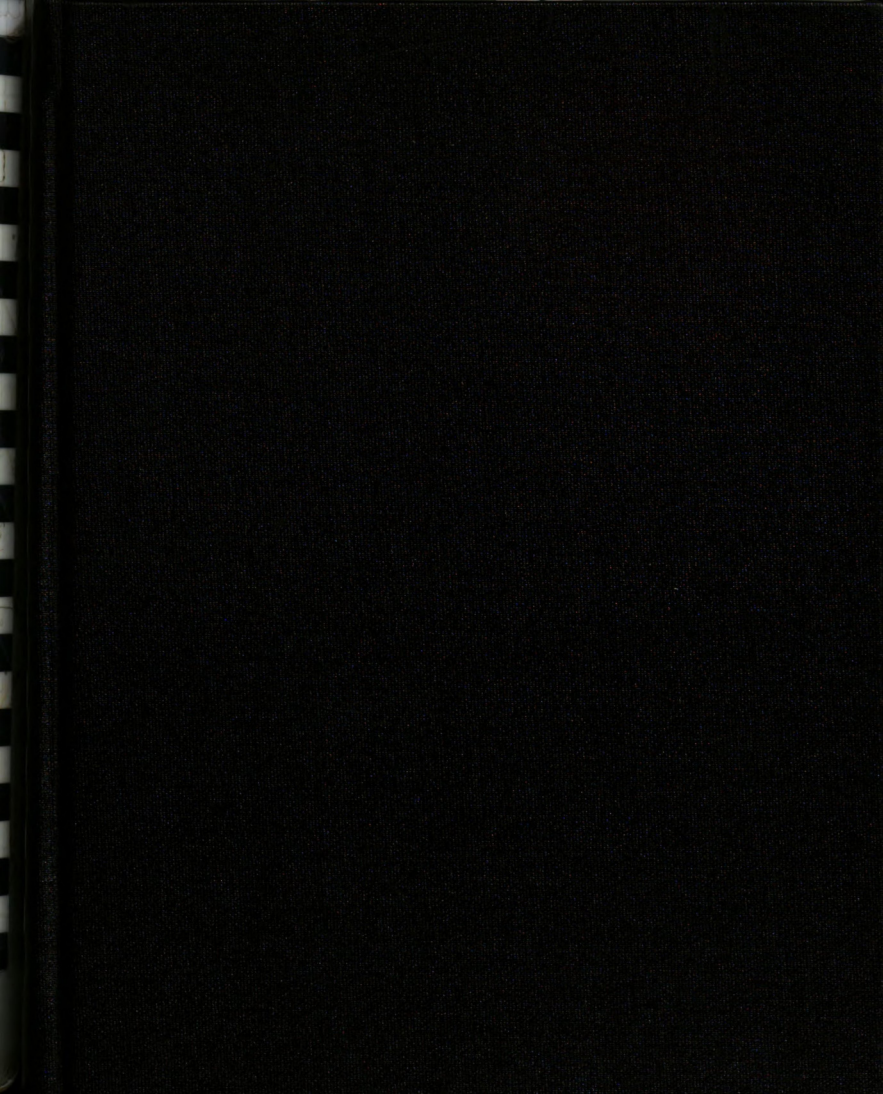
Conclusion

Valley agricultural environment underwent dramatic transformation in the 1941-59 period. In this chapter I have shown that in terms of field technology and land use valley agricultural transformation had been marked most by the expansion of crop agriculture and the reorganization of livestock production. I have also shown the local variation of this change by looking at Ada-Lume, Arsi Negelle, and Mareqo agriculture in the two decades following the Italian occupation. North of the Awash (in Ada-Lume) crop-mixing marked the course of agricultural change during this period. The farmers adapted crop-mixing as a means to manage soil fertility and maximize their chances of income vis-à-vis a booming food market. The result was a relatively intensified and diversified small-scale agriculture.

Unfortunately, no quantifiable data is available to measure the actual impact of this transformation on such indices as soil fertility, productivity per unit area, or farmers' real income for the entire postwar period. Nonetheless, the overall effect of Ada-Lume's intensified land use is hard to underestimate. It left one of its enduring legacies in the kind of inverse relationship that permeated between cropland and grazing land or crop and livestock production. Farmers' propensity to expanding the ratio of cropland to pasture resulted in the dominance of cereal-legume agriculture in areas between 1500 and 2000 meters. The demands of plow agriculture, in turn, led to the evolution of a kind of

targeted livestock agriculture whereby farmers' raised only limited number of livestock on their farm, while marginalizing the once dominant livestock sector to the relatively arid parts of Liben and Zequala (below 1500 meters).

Unlike Ada-Lume, agricultural transformation in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo (south of the Awash) took a distinct trajectory. In both sub-regions, the 1941-59 decades witnessed the integration of crop and livestock agriculture. Here the progressive expansion of crop agriculture required the dramatic reconfiguration of resources (most notably land and labor) commensurate changing farmers' needs. In terms of crops maize and beans had been important to Arsi Negelle farmers to which Mareqo farmers' added chili pepper that had become their trade mark since. For Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers livestock still comprised an important source of capital as well as a vital source of manure for soil enrichment and crop production. Strikingly, such transformations both north and south of the Awash interacted with broader developments in terms of the food market and politics. The forces of change will be the focus of the next chapter.



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**KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND A REGION: THE MAKING OF ETHIOPIA'S
SOUTH-CENTRAL RIFT VALLEY AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT AND
SOCIETY, 1892-1975**

VOLUME II

By

Getnet Bekele

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

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CHAPTER SIX

ACCESS TO RESOURCES: VALLEY AGRARIAN CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT OF A TRANSFORMING NATIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY (1941-59)

In the previous chapter I discussed the patterns of valley agricultural change in the 1941-59 period, specifically looking at such indices as crop choice, livestock management, and land use. Focusing on the same time period, in this chapter I analyze the forces that fed and shaped this transformation directly or indirectly. I will adapt a triple perspective: that of the farmers, that of the tribute/rent-seekers, and that of the state to show how divergent interests interacted and shaped valley agrarian transformation. First, I provide a schematic overview of the farmers' understanding of change and their and my own interpretation of the causes of change by examining the link between property rights and agricultural change. Second, because such changes resulted from contingent processes that were embedded in the regional and broader national political economy, I explore the social and economic contexts in which those changes took place. In particular I focus on the expansion of the food market and reflect on its impact on kindling urban interest in rural land.

Finally, I discuss how the waning prewar power contestations between the center and the regions and the shaping of new ones reminiscent of the postwar capitalist state led to government relaxation of its own restrictionist policies on rural land. Such growing liberalization of property entitlement rights, itself a reflection of state bureaucratization,

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sharpened competitions over agricultural resources and gave them new direction. The articulation of those processes with local practice, I argue, fashioned the course of valley agricultural transformation in the 1941-59 decades.

6.1 Farmers' actions: contested meanings of ownership and the use-value of land

Once we finished discussing agronomy, land use, and livestock's place in the farm economy in the 1941-59 period, I asked my informants what caused the changes they described to me in good detail. I asked several of my Ada-Lume informants why they had to "shift" to what seemed to me a reasonably busy work-schedule and intensive agriculture now than before? I also asked my Mareqo and Arsi subjects the same set of questions; why bother to cultivate crop and raise livestock if, I insisted, stock-raising had worked well for their early-20th century predecessors? Many at first wondered why I wanted to ask them the seemingly obvious implying, or so I thought, that change was inevitable. At one point one of my informants responded to my question by asking me why I wanted to go to school in the first place, travel all the way to America, and come back to study valley agriculture (rather than "studying it in America and Canada from where the relief food comes from"). Another commented that "it is *gize* [the time] that changes," and as it does "it changes the people."¹

Initially some of my informants' reactions left me to speculate that such a transformation was only natural. I probed further by reformulating my questions. Is it only a matter of coincidence that the beginning of crop agriculture and land measurement overlapped in Arsi Negelle in time and space? How did "time change" and in what particular ways did farmers respond to those changes? More specifically, what concrete

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factors convinced Ada-Lume farmers to move away from long-fallow agriculture and concentrate on intercropping at particular points in time? The multi-faceted answers I got from my informants to these and numerous other questions I raised revealed to me that valley agricultural transformation was anything but a natural process. Their responses and my own interpretation of the raw data available to me from informants' testimonies and recorded material convinced me to explore the interface between property rights and local agricultural change more closely. My findings suggest that the common thread that links the times and the changes that have taken place in our region in the 1940s and 1950s, much like before, has been competitions and negotiations over access to agricultural resources (most notably land, labor, and output).

For the valleys' different communities and individual farmers' access to land had been a crucial and historically contentious matter. A quick glimpse of the regions' past history suggests that the entire south-central Rift Valley may have been both a frontier and center of attraction for settlement and migration at least for the last two centuries. Almost all of its dominant communities seem to have controlled the land sometime between the early-18th (in case of the Oromo in Ada) to the early-19th (in the case of the Mareqo) centuries, often, as far as one can tell from oral tradition, by "chasing others out."² Such chasings reconfigured resource control and management practices in favor of those communities but they did not rule out completely the claims other may have had on the same resources. It may not be by accident therefore that Arsi, Ada, Lume, Mareqo, Silti, and Gurage 19th century history is full of tells related to inter-community tensions and conflict over access to environmental resources and/or territory control.³ State rule altered the texture of those community-based resource- and territory-control mechanism as it

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added new dimensions to the terms of access to environmental resources as well as patterns of population mobility and settlement within the valley. As I have sought to show in Chapters Two and Three, state expansionism and the political and social-economic changes that accompanied state-rule filtered insidiously into the fabric of local society as different groups of social actors invented strategies to cope with those changes and promote their own interests. The making of *balabbat/malkagna* land, *madbet/waraganu*, government land, and the labor and produce requirements that accompanied them presented social actors a range of challenges as well as alternatives. In particular it was the forging of government land—ostensibly land that was not directly controlled by the local elite and farmers or the state’s own dependent institutions such as the church or the royal court—that became the site for intense competition and negotiation in the wake of qalad measurements.

The ideological basis for so-called government land, I have noted, was the *lam-taf* construct. What made the *lam-taf* construct itself contentious was its bias to crop-agriculture. That is, the likelihood of a given land or territory to fall under the rubric of government property was greater if the area was ostensibly *taf* and vice versa. Also once the land has been classified as government property (often at the time of state expansionism and/or land measurement) it was only through purchase or the acquisition of such temporary rights as *madarya* that one can claim legal entitlements to it (see Chapter Two).

In the valley the forging of government land took place in several phases. Because of its relatively unique ties to Shawa, Ada had its *gasha maret* tenure well before Menilek’s ascendance to the imperial throne in 1889. Therefore it was the first and only part of the

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valley to experience the soon-to-be emperor's formative *qalad* measurements in the 1880s.⁴ *Qalad* measurement took place at a relatively slow pace in the valley south of the Awash. In fact not until 1930 was land measured in Arsi Negelle, in part owing to the kind of "protection" peaceful submission and the *balabbat* structure provided across the board under Menilek's government.⁵

Whenever and wherever it took place land measurement proved to be a potent force in redrawing (though not necessarily completely overhauling) traditional terms of access to agricultural resources at one level or another.⁶ In the valley, *qalad* impacted terms of access to agricultural resources in different ways. First, by interjecting fresh rules, *qalad* enabled a range of social actors to gain access to land in a way qualitatively different from the community-based laws that existed in the past. Second, *qalad* reconfigured, wittingly or unwittingly, the relationship between the individual and the land. When purchased by individual farmers at the time of land measurement (as had happened in Ada-Lume in the 1880s or in few cases in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo later in the 1930s), the piece of land could become individual property and its owner and cultivator a *gabbar* (tax paying farmer). When ceded to the state's own functionaries, the provision often remained temporary as the land itself belonged to the government.⁷ Yet despite the kind of definitions and clear boundaries the land measurements intended to foster, in practice social actors seized *qalad*'s ambiguities to promote their own interests.

From the farmers' perspective, the ambiguity in government land revolved around the fact that no other individual (certainly not the temporary *madarya* holder) claimed absolute ownership of it. Initially valley farmers vaguely understood *qalad*'s intricate provisions. Neither did they saw themselves as its hapless victims. Rather the fact that the

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use-value of the land could only be ascertained as long as the farmers' were able and willing to produce and pay tributes or rent on it meant that they had a better chance to negotiate terms of access than what is often assumed.

Therefore *qalad* and the forging of government land presented as much opportunities as challenges to the farmers who found themselves involved in the new wave of competition over agricultural resources. Their responses were equally diverse. The first and more dramatic response relates to the mechanisms valley cultivators and herders adapted to defend their entitlement rights to the land by "swimming with the tide." To the extent that the politics of *qalad* foreshadowed individually-based land entitlement rights, valley herders and cultivators were able to mold its procedure and outcome on the ground. If, as I have shown before, the majority of Arsi Negelle herders were reluctant to purchase individual pieces of land during Shebo's early-1930s auctioning of so-called government land, in the postwar period they responded to the kind of competitions over the same land by brokering share-tenancy arrangements primarily as a means to "defend" their rightful claims over the land. This was not a semantic distinction not was it a smooth process that satisfied all the contending parties. Particularly for the farmers who were not obligated to pay rent the new arrangement was exploitative and cumbersome.⁸ Farmers always resented the tenancy rates and employed numerous tactics to maximize their net share of the annual produce.⁹ Moreover, they remained focused on re-affirming their right of access to the land against the backdrop of *qalad*'s not so favorable terms. It is in the context described above that the transition of the majority of valley populations from herders to cultivators took place.¹⁰

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resource control is even more conspicuous if we look at two related developments in the valley. The first relates to a process I introduced early on in connection with highland farmers' (most notably Silti and Gurage) expansion and settlement in the Mareqo Ridge. As I have shown before this was a process that started early in the 20th century but grew rather dramatically in the 1940s.

The second relates to individual migrations. Like the first, the second also started early on (during late-19th to early-20th century) in Ada before it became common practice elsewhere in the valley after 1941. But unlike the first the second was individual- rather than group-based and the origins and destinations of the immigrants within the valley were equally diverse.

Historically, both Silti and Gurage farmers from Masqan and Soddo (in the Gurage highlands) had periodically exploited the valley's grassland environment for pasture, often competing with their Mareqo and Oromo neighbors in the valley. Starting from around the 1920s and more importantly from the early-1940s, Silti and Gurage farmers migrated into the area and permanently settled there as cultivators.¹¹

What makes this descent of Silti and Gurage farmers to the lowlands interesting is the scale in which it took place and the impact it had on ecological change in those regions. Individual life narratives, like those I have reproduced below, indicate that the early-1940s saw sharp increase in the magnitude of Silti and Gurage descent and settlement in the northwestern parts of the valley.

In addition to individual life narratives, local oral histories among the southern Wulbareg (now living just north of Alaba Qulito) or the communities in Dugda and the Mareqo Ridge, most of whom trace their origins to the Gurage highlands, strongly

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suggest that this mobility and settlement of predominantly Silti and Mareqo populations in the western parts of the valley must have been a slow process. From those histories it seems likely that the migration might have started early in the 20th century, and with the probable exception of the southern Wulbareg, the magnitude remained low up until the 1940s. In the two decades after the Italian occupation, perhaps record numbers of Silti and Gurage cultivators migrated to the valley. In 1972, probably the first time any reliable quantifiable estimate is available, both the total as well as density of Silti and Gurage population in the Mareqo Ridge (covering some 600 km²) was the highest compared to ethnic Mareqo or Oromo populations in the area. According to the British Land Survey team's sample-based study, 90 percent of the ridge's cultivated area had been settled by the Silti and Gurage (90 percent of whom were tenants) the same year.¹²

In the highlands the majority of the first generation Gurage and Silti immigrants were *gabbar* who paid tributes but owned the land they cultivated. When migrating to the valley, which they considered as the natural extension of their highland environment, however, Silti and Gurage farmers had to negotiate land entitlement rights afresh because as so-called government property the rules governing the terms of access to the land had changed already. What rendered this change meaning and force was the emergence of a new generation of land-seekers who mobilized their political capital to garner rural land specifically for extracting agricultural produce as rent (see below). The result was the forging of a land tenure that sustained two opposite yet interdependent social groups at the same time. The first were the farmers who had lost their ownership rights in official and legal terms but still were the key forces in production and rent payment. The second were a group of Ethiopia's postwar bureaucratic and military officials and servicemen

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Also, before they migrated to the valley Silti and Gurage were cultivators who specialized in, among other crops, *enset* growing and the livestock raising. In the valley Gurage and Silti farmers focused mainly on maize, peas, beans, and chili pepper production as they responded to climate, soil, and markets (see Chapters One and Eight).

The second dominant, albeit far less conspicuous, form of population mobility relates to the constant migration of individual farmers from nearby and distant place in search of land. As I have already mentioned before the history of such individual migrations goes back to the late-19th and early-20th century but remained significantly small in size and limited in geography up until the Italian occupation period.¹³ In the postwar period the scale of migration increased as the geographic origin of the immigrants diversified as well.

As far as one can tell from individual life narratives, the majority of the immigrants came from the highlands to the west (most notably from Wolayta and Kambata), east (the Arsi highlands), and north (Shawa) of the valley, often on voluntary basis and responding to social, economic or political reasons at points of origin.

Virtually all parts of the valley (with the exception of the semi-arid segment between Lake Langano and Adami Tullu) attracted those immigrants. In general, migrants from Wolayta, Kambata, and to some extent also Arsi tend to be dominant in Arsi Negelle while those from northern Shawa focused on Ada-Lume although some certainly have crisscrossed the sub-regions. Lack of any recorded data notwithstanding, it is probable that such individual migrations were important but not overwhelming in terms of

numbers. I have chosen the immigration histories of four of my informants to illustrate the similarities and differences in causation as well as aspects of their integration into valley communities. The first story relates to a migrant tenant who came to Arsi Negelle from Wolayta:

I came to Arsi Negelle in 1959 as a teenager. It was difficult to own my own land in Wolayta. We [I and many farmers from Wolayta] knew that Arsi Negelle's *rist* holders offered better tenancy terms and large parcels of land on sharecropping arrangements. I migrated here and contacted the representative of the *rist* holder. I took up farming here as a tenant, paying *siso* for the landowner in cash. I did not have any major problem in regard to the tenancy arrangement. The only problem I had was the landowners' disapproval of fertilizer use [later in the late-1960s]. He warned me several times that I would be evicted if I used fertilizers. He said fertilizers sterilize the soil. I ignored his warnings and applied them anyway. But I had to wake up before dawn so that nobody could see me. Also once, he threatened me that I would be evicted unless I paid the *birr* 30 rent on time. That year, I forgot exactly when it was (may be it was in the mid-1960s), I gave him only *birr* 17. It was a dry year and the harvest was not good. He did not buy my argument. But I did not lose the land and continued as a tenant until the revolution.¹⁴

The second immigrant was born in Tegulat (in Shawa). He came to a rural village north of Mojo town sometime in the early-1950s:

I was born and raised in Tegulat. I came here some ten years after the Italians had left. I was anxious to come here because I heard that more land could be obtained here. The *rist* I inherited from my father in Tegulat was not big enough... When I came here I contracted 4 *temad* from Wayzaro Tsedale who owned more than 2 *gasha* of land in the area. I was required to pay *siso* [one-third]. I was amazed by the speed at which undeveloped [*taf*] lands came under cultivation in those days. Others expanded their crop fields quickly. On my farm I planted wheat, *tef*, chickpea, beans, lentils and many other cereals and legumes depending up on the season and the land [soil]. The produce was good.¹⁵

The third case I have chosen to present here involves a Tigrayan immigrant who found his way to Kuyara around 1960. Unlike the others, he came here invited by the landowner to work as his farm representative (*waqil*).

I was born and raised in Endarta [Tigray]. The time was particularly difficult for us [farmers]. There was drought and constant invasion of locust. I did not know what to do until I got the message from a distant relative of mine, who happened to live in Addis Ababa, asking if I was willing to serve as his representative on a *rist* he acquired from the government [earlier]. I did not hesitate, although I have to tell you that it was not an easy decision at first. I left my family back home and came here [to Arsi Negelle]. Compared to Endarta, which was mountainous and stony, this region was flat and fertile. I was given four *temad* for my own use in return for my service [as waqil]. Two years later I brought my wife and two children. I liked it. Home is here.¹⁶

The fourth example I have chosen here comes from Tulture, in Lume. Ayu Dadi was born in Boka (near Shankora) around 1925. He migrated to Tulture in 1942/43. He noted:

The [Italian occupation] period was a difficult time for Boka because of the punishing activities of the patriots during the night and that of the banda during the day. As a young man I barely understood why one [group] was fighting the other. Soon after the Italians had left the patriots branded me and my father as banda. I decided to flee despite the wrong accusation thrown at me. That is how I came here. I leased the land from *Dajjach* Ababa. He had seven *gasha rist* here and Tsehafe Tezaa Walda Giyorgis had four *gasha*. Both *rist* holders were eager to lease the land to sharecroppers [because labor was short]. Ababa's land was not a very attractive one to sharecroppers because it was relatively dry. At one point Ababa decided to relinquish his *rist* [may be anticipating an exchange]. That gave us a chance to own the land. Later Ababa heard the news, that we have successfully developed the land. He wanted to get it [the land] back and appealed to the emperor [for the restoration of his *rist* rights over the land he had voluntarily ceded before]. The emperor discouraged him telling him to keep his word. That is my story. Do you want more?¹⁷

These are not-random selections. But they give us personalized versions that relate to the ways in which individual farmers responded to changing terms of access to land in the valley's postwar history. The individual migrations took place over a period of time and did not create isolated communities of settlers in the valley. Because the share-tenancy arrangements immigrants brokered to gain access to land was based on a deal they brokered with landowners the whole process took place in a disjointed (rather than

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organized) manner quite distinct from late-19th *katama* settlements. And in almost all **cases** the immigrants were capable of blending with the host community successfully, **learning** the local languages quickly and cultivating the same kind of crops.¹⁸ Together, **both** the “old” and “new” groups of farmers encountered the challenges as well as **alternatives** of a rapidly transforming political economy and shaped the course of the **region’s** postwar agricultural history in their deeds.

6.2 From tributes to rent: changing urban interest in rural land

Accompanying, in fact complicating the developments described above with respect to **the farmers’** experience in gaining access to agricultural resources has been the kind of **interest** a group of Ethiopia’s postwar military and civilian officials and servicemen **showed** in rural land. To be sure, “outside” interest in rural land and society had been **emblematic** of the modern Ethiopian state since its inception in the late-19th century. **With the** building of the bureaucratic state in the postwar period and its capitalistic **economy** both the nature and substance of that interest changed substantively. Several **factors** distinguished postwar urban interest in rural land from the past. First, if politics and **the** prospect of tributes fashioned those interests in the prewar period, the land-rush in **the** postwar period, at least as it took place in the valley and most coffee growing **regions**, had a clear economic motive behind it. Second, though inspired by economic **gain** still the primary object of the majority of those officials and servicemen was geared to **using** the land as a source of rent or produce exaction rather than as a site for **capitalistic** production.

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new demand for marketed-food items. The bulk of this demand, in turn, came from the **expanding** domestic and export food-market destined to the Middle East. It scarcely **needs** emphasizing that the grain market had been an important engine for valley agrarian **transformation** in the postwar period. In fact, never did the importance of Addis Ababa's **food** market in shaping such indices as crop choice and land use escape the narratives of **my** informants.¹⁹ There is also a strong correlation between the expansion of the food **market** and urban interest in rural land and output. If the food market provided the **economic** leitmotif to that interest, the methods the urban-based rural-land seekers **employed** to control agricultural land fall in the rubric of politics rather than economics.

Seen from a food supply point of view, the failure of Italy's colonial venture in **Ethiopia** (1935-1941) meant that the latter was not to be forcibly incorporated into the **dwindling** prewar international food regime that had been characterized by exports to **Europe** from the settler colonies.²⁰ Though not a closed economy and active, albeit at a **small** scale and intermittently, in cross-border trade in the first quarter of the 20th century, **Ethiopia** had never been a key player in international food markets in the prewar period.²¹ In **the** first decade of the 20th century, Ethiopia's grain enjoyed a growing demand from the **Italian** colony of Eritrea. According to official colonial statistics, for example, in one **year** alone (in 1907) Ethiopia exported to Eritrea grain products worth MTD 320,254.²² In **the** next decade and a half (1910-1924), Ethiopia's food exports both to Eritrea and the **British** colony of Aden (in Yemen) across the Red Sea grew significantly.²³ Official **statistics** of Ethiopia's principal exports via the Franco-Ethiopian railway in the same **period** indicated that next to coffee and hides, grain has become a significant export item, **with** quantities fluctuating between 768 metric tons in 1910 to 1,577 metric tons in

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What is striking about Ethiopia's prewar export food market is not its size (which was not considerable) but its mere existence particularly given the growing scarcity of marketed-food items in the country's capital Addis Ababa.²⁵ Not totally unaware of the intricate factors involved, some of the most informed residents of the capital quickly blamed the export market as partially responsible for the kind of grain shortages Addis Ababa faced in the 1920s. Consequently, they urged the government to intervene so as to divert the course of that market to the center.²⁶ The government responded not by doing what those "concerned" residents had wished but by importing in 1928 reportedly large quantities of wheat and sorghum flour to Addis Ababa.²⁷ Importation of food materials (most notably wheat) reached a new level under the Italians who, being unable to extract sufficient food material from within the colony resorted to shipping wheat from Italy in large quantities.²⁸

The defeat of the Italians and, even more importantly, continued Allied interest in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East changed the course of Ethiopia's engagement with international food markets significantly. Of particular importance in this regard was the consolidation of a vibrant yet regulated food market in the Allied controlled Middle East shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War. The market itself was the product of war time disruptions, drought, and British long-term imperial interest in the region.²⁹ To ensure adequate food supply to Allied troops in the Middle East and the region's civilian population, the British (together with the Americans) created what was to become a giant parastatal called the Middle East Supply center (MESC).³⁰ First conceived in 1940, the MESC became fully operational by mid-1941. Based in Cairo, the parastatal developed

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and administered a program of centralized overseas trade in the Middle East in the 1941-45 period.³¹ One of the most essential trade items the MESC sought after and controlled had been food originating from “areas within the reach of land transport or shorter sea routes of smaller sea exposure to the enemy.”³²

As a country officially embraced by the British with in the geographic and economic boundaries of the broader region commanded by the MESC, Ethiopia became one of the food purchasing centers of the parastatal. The fact that the MESC was ideologically committed to let independent governments continue to run their own import-export trade meant that Haile Sellasie’s government seized the opportunity to forestall its presence and authority by actively participating in grain trading with the MESC. It did so by ostensibly organizing a pseudo-private company known as the Ethiopian National Corporation (ENC).³³

Established in 1943 by Mekonen Habtawold, the ambitious, business-minded Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, ENC quickly emerged as an adventurous giant in the country’s grain trade. Officially registered as a private company, with a share capital of 1.3 million MTD, the ENC had its office at the MoA, and enlisted key government officials in its governing board. In its actions, the ENC not only facilitated the drifting of the Ethiopian food market into MESC’s orbit but also it fashioned the parameters of the domestic food market in its own way. It did so by organizing a network of grain purchasing centers throughout most of the grain producing regions of the country and by virtually monopolizing the textile import market that, as we shall see below, it skillfully used to execute its grain purchases.³⁴

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(though poorly organized) trading enterprise managed to run an elaborate network of grain purchasing and sale in the country. Quite distinctly from the caravans that dominated the long-distance trade and trade routes in the past, the ENC's purchasing squads infiltrated a growing number of major and minor market centers. The ENC's agents also worked with local merchants and state officials to buy the surplus grain that could be acquired from the producers one way or another. Whether it was the loads of grains and pulses farmers were willing to sale or a portion of the produce that they paid as tithe, ENC's many agents made sure that the bulk of the seasonal food surplus passed through their aegis. Obviously it is difficult to quantify the percentage of surplus food the ENC bought and sold in any given year. Nonetheless, the magnitude of its dominance in the country's food exchange and transfer was such that the corporation became the major supplier of food both to the MESC and the Ethiopian government that still needed the grains for payment to its own troops who were not still fully salaried.³⁵

The manner and degree to which ENC participated in the country's food market offer windows to begin to understand the importance of the markets in kindling a new kind of desire among Ethiopia's emerging bureaucratic elite. That desire manifested itself first in growing urban desire to control the food market and ultimately its production base as well. Based in Addis Ababa, the ENC purchased its food products from its primary and secondary purchasing centers (run by its own agents or local merchants) such as Debre Zeit, Mojo, Nazareth, Shashamane, Buta Jira, and many more market towns located in different parts of the country. ENC's agents collected information about yield and harvest, and they were able to purchase food items at relatively cheap farm-gate prices at times of harvest. In general ENC-Addis Ababa paid MTD 10.50 per quintal for

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cereals allowing its agents and/or partners to make up to four thalers profit per quintal. The ENC, in turn, sold the grains to MESC at MTD 12 reaping a 10 percent margin of profit per quintal. At its peak in 1944, the scale of ENC'S business amounted to around 3 million pound sterling, a considerable sum by any measure.³⁶

What gave the ENC the edge to dominate domestic and export food market in the early-1940s appear to be its relatively effective organization characterized most by building networks with individual traders. But most of all, it was the kind of political backing it got from the government that facilitated ENC's modus operandi. That was particularly true for the kind of monopoly the corporation enjoyed over the importation and wholesale of textiles that had been highly in demand in rural Ethiopia. Therefore, benefiting doubly from the buying of food materials and the selling of textiles, the corporation returned a profit amounting to 1.2 to 1.8 million pound sterling in its short lifespan.³⁷

However, this does not mean that the ENC enjoyed a protected political and economic field to operate and subsequently to monopolize the food market altogether. To the contrary, it functioned with a lot of difficulties and opposition from different corners. In part, the difficulties emanated from ENC's own structural organization. As a firm ran by private capital and with loose organizational structure, ENC's accounting system and trading networks were not anywhere comparable to what its activities demanded on the ground. Hence, the corporation lost money at various levels but perhaps most important was the government's own inability to pay its arrears for what the ENC claimed the former owed for the purchase it made for over two years in 1943-45.³⁸

But not all the difficulties the ENC encountered were of its own making. Likely the

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most important was the kind of competition it faced from small-scale grain merchants and local/regional politicians. The 1940s witnessed the emergence of numerous small-scale trading networks that effectively defied the kind of monopoly the ENC sought to establish and ultimately challenged its bid to control the food market successfully.³⁹

The ENC also encountered opposition from local government officials at different locations. Most of the documented resentment against the ENC came from local officials who aired their own concerns by arguing that the corporation (through its numerous agents) inhibited the smooth flow of food transaction across the regions. In one instance, for example, a Buta Jira official complained that ENC agents were blocking the shipping of grain from the region to Addis Ababa.⁴⁰ In a similar vein, another official from Shashamane complained that ENC agents have become too intrusive in the food market. In a letter he wrote to Arsi's governor general (*endarase*), the official emphasized that in their bid to control the food market, ENC agents sold the grains they had bought from the farmers in the local markets causing unbearable inflation to local producers and consumers.⁴¹

These may be legitimate claims, but underneath the tension was reminiscent of the power politics itself. Most local officials, who saw themselves as the power behind surplus appropriation, found ENC's activities and the markets as competing institutions. Most wanted ENC agents to buy only a limited proportion of the surplus grain available at the markets, limiting themselves to what the farmers had to pay as tithe at the same time the same officials might have seen farmers' propensity to sale surplus food in the markets to ENC agents that were not all under the jurisdiction of those offices as setting a dangerous trend that could jeopardize their bid to control the markets (as much as they

did tributes or taxation).

The ENC also faced “outside” opposition. The most serious opposition came from the British who found ENC’s monopolistic tendencies counter-productive to their own business interests in Ethiopia. From the outset OETA officials remained puzzled about who owned the ENC, the financial relationship the corporation had with the government, and how it distributed its profits among its stock holders.⁴² In one of its regular reports to the Foreign Office, for example, the British Legation in Addis Ababa wrote that: “Ever since the restoration of the Ethiopian government, the Makonen Habte Wold has been obsessed by the conviction that Ethiopia had always been held by foreign merchants, and that he must devise a means of diverting their profits into Ethiopian pockets.”⁴³ Aware of the political implications such an accusation could have, British officials always voiced their concerns carefully, invoking economic rather than political reasons. Often, they lamented that because the ENC hoarded its profits rather than circulating it, the situation has exacerbated currency shortages and inflation in the country.⁴⁴ But as we shall see later in some detail, at its core OETA’s interests were reflections of the political battle itself and its outcome would be decided in the political rather than economic front.

Not coincidentally the Allied powers dissolved the MESC in 1945.⁴⁵ With the conclusion of the War, the waning and eventual evaporation of the looming British threat over Ethiopia, and the rapid expansion of the domestic food market (the same reasons that justified the existence of the ENC in the eyes of Haile Sellasie in the first place), the government withdrew its support for the ENC. Instead it relaxed the kind of regulatory mechanisms it had put in place to date, thereby inviting individual trading companies to participate in the import-export trade freely.⁴⁶

Like the MESC, the ENC was as much a political as an economic enterprise. And the moment its political utility expired, the ENC had little options left but to cease its business the same year (1945)--many years before overseas demand for Ethiopia's food products evaporated. Though short-lived and bequeathed with its own management problems, the ENC had been a potent political weapon for Ethiopia's emerging bureaucratic elite to challenge effectively British interests in the country in the early 1940s. In the economic realm too, the ENC's impact may have been no less important. It is probable that the ENC's trading structures built on existing networks than necessarily inventing new ones. Yet the sheer volume of the market—with improved transportation and expanding export and domestic grain market—meant that both the nature and scale of the country's food market had changed rather dramatically in the postwar period.

Indeed a closer look at Ethiopia's export trade statistics for the 1941-55 period reveals interesting points. Certainly more relevant to us here is the volume of the export trade as well as the degree to which agricultural products predominated both in the regional and international market. In regard to the latter, substituting so-called extractive products (such as slaves, ivory, civet) that dominated Ethiopia's long-distance trade in the 19th and early-20th centuries, such products as coffee, cereals, pulses, skins, and hides came to dominate trade in the immediate postwar period. In terms of volume, Ethiopia's export increased exponentially from prewar levels where in the case of cereals and pulses, for example, it rose to more than sixteen times in 1944 from its 1920 level (see table 6.1 below).

As could be read from Table 6.1, coffee and hides, which became the major foreign currency earners for the country throughout the post-1950 period stood at par with food

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materials in 1944. In all, from the total amount of birr 18,148,181.28 the country earned in 1944, coffee and hides accounted for 51 percent while food items accounted for 49 percent.

Table 6.1 Selected export trade returns, 1st September 1943 to 31st August 1944

Article	Classifier	Quantity	Value (MTD)
Coffee	kg	11,882,908	7,052,521.99
Hides	kg	2,598,370	2,274,838.25
Vegetable fresh	kg	967,661	96,766.10
Potatoes	kg	593,849	59,384.90
Cereals and pulses	kg	32,992,287	4,757,207.26
Cereal husks	kg	291,157	5,823.28
Wheat flour	kg	6,869,600	3,349,080.00
Chilies	kg	455,688	214,759.50
Cattle live	head	5,630	337,800.00

Source: American Legation to Secretary of State, Addis Ababa, December 30, 1944.

Also, as could be read from Tables 6.2 below, export of cereals and pulses that stood over 45,000 tons in 1945 grew almost threefold in two years time, before stabilizing at double the 1945 level in the next eight years except for one year in 1951. Likewise, exports of oilseeds grew in leaps and bounds in the 1945-1954 decade when, in terms of volume and value ratio, it became in fact the most important foreign currency earner by 1951.⁴⁷

One other way to look at the extent and significance of the food market in the country's overall export trade may be to compare its performance with that of coffee—obviously Ethiopia's most important cash crop of the second half of the 20th century. Here too the figures from Table 6.2 clearly show that in terms of volume, Ethiopia exported more cereals and pulses than coffee for the entire 1945-53 period. In fact during those years the country exported on average three times more grains and pulses than

coffee per annum.

Table 6.2 Ethiopia's major agricultural exports (in tons), 1945-1953

	1945	1947	1949	1951	1953
Coffee	13,538	14,663	17,829	27,503	36,129
Cereals & pulses	45,216	120,575	90,486	53,037	94,670
Cereal husks	316	545	555	667	303
Wheat flour	13,872	14,670	4,353	1,100	2,194
Oilseeds	709	1,665	35,911	21,870	43,630
Vegetables & fruits	2,256	1,558	2,292	1,126	2,853
Chilies & peppers	914	842	1,381	803	933
Potatoes		212	63	215	
Onions & garlic			203	83	25
Chat or qat	15	81	186	470	1,161
Cattle live (head)	3,094	3,091	2,273	369	1,726

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Report on the External Trade of Ethiopia, pp. 13-15. There is some discrepancy in the sources regarding volume of the export trade for the various years. See, for example Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, p. 212. See also American Embassy to Department of State, December 15, 1950, SD 475.00/12-1550; American Embassy to Department of State, June 5, 1952 SD 475.00/6-552; American Embassy to Department of State, April 1, 1955, SD 475.00/4-155.

Table 6.3 Composition of Ethiopia's Merchandise Export (including re-exports, 1949-1953 (percent)

Commodity	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Coffee	24.0	49.0	51.1	52.1	54.9
Hides raw	12.2	10.2	18.2	9.1	5.0
Skins	14.8	13.0	9.6	6.0	7.0
Oilseeds	16.0	9.5	7.1	11.1	8.7
Cereals	9.6	4.3	5.4	7.2	3.0
Pulses	13.9	6.3	2.9	7.8	7.8
Other	9.5	7.7	5.7	6.2	13.6
Total value	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry, *Report on the External Trade of Ethiopia*, p.3

In terms of value as well, cereals, pulses, and oil seeds earned the country much needed foreign currency during the same period. A value-based statistics that shows the composition of Ethiopia's export earnings in the 1949-53 period suggest that together food crops comprised 40 percent of the export earnings in 1949. After 1950, the year coinciding with coffee's marked increase in value the percentage share of those food

crops declined considerably from its late-1940s levels but remained significant at over 22 percent on average for the next four to five years (see Table 6.3 above).

If the available recorded evidence provides useful data on the magnitude of the export market, however, only generalized information is available on the sources of its strength. Often the single most important reason local and foreign sources held responsible for the expanding and sustained availability of marketed-food materials relates to increased production. According to the U.S. Embassy's annual "Ethiopia's economic review," the late-1940s and early-1950s saw tremendous increase in Ethiopia's agricultural output. According to one such report, for example, in 1952 "harvests of cereals, pulses and oil seeds were abundant, with more than enough to feed the population and leaving a substantial surplus for export."⁴⁸ A follow up report for 1953 also underscored that the year was for Ethiopia a very successful one economically as agricultural production (of such crops as pulses, oilseeds, cereals, and coffee) increased significantly.⁴⁹

However, the Embassy Reports focused on the macro rather than the micro or even regional configuration of the export food market and its production base. Therefore it is difficult to explain which regions were contributing more to the export market and why, based entirely on the same sources. Does the 1940s and early-1950s "tremendous increase in Ethiopia's agricultural output," apply equally to Tigray, Gojjam, Shawa, Hararge, Ada, Shashamane and Mareqo? Or did the same period witness significant regional variation if not at production levels at least in terms of markets?

No quantifiable evidence is available to give a definitive answer to the first question. To date, the dominant view has been that Ethiopian agriculture entered a phase of productivity decline at least since the 1940s. Dessalegn, for example, upholds this view

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but provides no concrete evidence to reinforce his conclusions.⁵⁰ To the extent that the country's trade and the food price index could be relied up on to measure agriculture's performance in those decades, the macro-data and the evidence from the valley contradicts Dessalegn's assumptions. In the domestic market scene too, the remarkably stable price index of Addis Ababa's major marketed-food items shown in the table below cast shadow on the fatalistic view described above.

Table 6.4 Weekly grain prices in Addis Ababa, 100 kg (in *birr*)

	December 1949 [<i>Tahesas</i> 10, 1942 EC]	January 1952 [<i>Ter</i> 18 1944 E.C]	December 1953 [<i>Tahesas</i> 24, 1946 E.C.]
White <i>tef</i>	19	18.50	14.0
Mixed <i>tef</i>	17	-	-
Red <i>tef</i>	16	14.50	12.0
Wheat	15.50	14.00	12.50
Barley	10.75	9.0	10.0
Peas	9	11.0	10.0
Chickpea	8	13.50	10.0
Maize	7	10.0	8.50
Beans	-	10.0	9.50
Lentils	-	16.0	15.0
Haricot beans	-	27.50	19.0
Pepper (20kg)	-	4.0	5.50
<i>Telba</i>	-	15.0	14.0

Source: *Addis Zaman*, *Tahesas* 10, 1942; *Ter* 23, 1944 E.C.; *Tahesas* 24, 1946 E.C.

As the table above shows, in the early 1950s, the price for barley, peas, maize, beans, lentils, and red pepper remained stable in Addis Ababa. The price for *tef* (both white and red) and wheat in fact dropped considerably in 1953 compared to December 1949 levels.

Like the origin of the exported grain, our sources provide us very little information regarding the seemingly less complex question pertaining to trade and supply lines. One clear picture that emerges from the reports is the growing importance of several key grain storage and processing centers in the wake of Ethiopia's booming export food market.

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Interestingly, the majority of these grain storage and processing facilities were located in the valley, at Bishoftu, Mojo, and Nazareth. This may be in part due to the towns' location along the railway and the origin of the marketed-food items shipped from those facilities may have been diverse as well. Yet it appears very likely that among the farms' that contributed significantly to the same markets may have been those in the hinterlands of the storage stations, most notably Ada-Lume, Shashamane, the Mareqo Ridge, Arsi, and Menjar that had become important centers of food production in their own right during or shortly before the onset of the Middle East market in 1941.⁵¹

Table 6.5 Export trade returns from Addis Ababa, Bishoftu, Mojo and Nazareth for the period September 11, 1952 to March 9, 1953, in comparison with the same periods in 1950-1951 and 1951-1952.

Commodity	(metric tons)		
	1950-1	1951-2	1952-3
Barley	80	80	501
Beeswax	240	143	179
Castor seeds	585	955	1,401
Chickpea	4,406	160	5,441
Coffee	8,605	10,567	11,351
Durrah	—	—	1,040
Green peas	1,226	140	540
Haricot beans	1,793	2,300	5,585
Horse beans	3,844	4,574	7,165
Lentils	3,119	1,945	4,307
Linseed	3,412	6,335	3,654
Maize	20	2,148	3,130
Nug seed	2,772	1,005	1,058
Oil cake	1,160	1,890	3,051
Rape seed	2,947	977	2,263
Red pepper	303	407	123
Wheat	587	462	2,290
Wheat flour	617	308	123
Other	7,740	3,125	4,899
Total	42,456	40,521	58,204
Total value (<i>birr</i>)	37,627,563.62	34,879,208.17	33,204,046.85

Source: American Embassy (Addis Ababa) to the Department of State (Washington D.C.), "Quarterly Economic Survey" (January 1-March 31, 1953), SD 875.00/4-1653.

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As the export market for food and cash crops (notably coffee) remained attractive and expanded relatively steadily in the period under discussion, so also did the domestic food market that began to change both in texture and size. For most of the 1940s, the domestic food market (at least in Addis Ababa) showed elements of continuity from the past, but it was changing significantly as well. Continuity could be observed in the manner in which food items reached the city. Certainly the expansion of roads and truck services since the late-1920s has changed dramatically the mechanisms of food supply to Addis Ababa. But still in the 1940s and 1950s farmers from as far as Ada continued to supply agricultural produce to the capital in the traditional way such as by pack animals and human loads.⁵²

One striking feature of the postwar urban food market has been its expanding parameters. Scholars who studied one or another aspect of that market have shown its rapid growth and Addis Ababa's growing centrality in it throughout the postwar period. Tekalign, for example, showed how the city's booming population created huge demand for food which, in turn, impacted trade and politics in Addis Ababa's hinterlands.⁵³ Indeed, now as before the war, household demand for consumable food items provided the bulk of the marketed-food demand in Ethiopia's primate city. Nonetheless both in terms of magnitude and complexity the difference between the two periods was considerably large. To some extent, this was a manifestation of the difference in sheer population size before and after the war. Addis Ababa's population grew from an estimated 80-100,000 in the late-1920s to around 400,000 two decades later.⁵⁴

More important may have been the disparities in terms of the spending capacities of the city's postwar consumers as well as the changes in the mechanisms of food acquisition itself. Not surprisingly, there is no documented evidence to calculate the

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percentage of income the capital's early-20th century residents spend on food compared to the 1940s or 1950s to dwell on this subject at length. With respect to the means of food acquisition, however, there is sufficient evidence to show that in the postwar period even the institutions that depended on non-market channels to extract food in the past had now become dependent on the market. The best example to that comes from the imperial court itself which, as I have shown in Chapter Two, paid its army in kind from grains collected from the *madbet* territories. Following Haile Sellasie's attempts at bureaucratization of the administration and modernization of the army that started in the early-1930s and continued in earnest in the postwar period, payment of soldiers in kind and the institution that supported it ceased completely. The army still had to provide rations for its soldiers but the sources now become the market rather than the *madbet*. Several of government-run institutions and ministries also bought food in the market as they began to cater food for their clients.

The Imperial Guard (*Keber Zabagna* or *KeZa*) was one such body that bought its food in the market. In an ad it ran on *Addis Zaman*, in December 1953 (*Tahesas* 17, 1946), the *KeZa* listed different kinds of food materials and beverages for an open bid. Although the quantity needed was not specified, the list included 40 different items, ranging from *tef* to chocolate.⁵⁵

Likewise, the Ministry of Health conducted a major bid in December 1948 for the supply of, among other products *tef*, chickpea, lentils, and chili pepper for the hospitals it administered in the capital (see Table 6.6 below). The Ministry of Finance ran another bid for its Adola Gold Mine Project in January 1950 (*Ter* 7, 1942 E.C.) with interesting range of food items, beverages, and cigarette (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.6 Ministry of Health bid to caterers of food materials for December 23-30, 1948 (*Tahesas* 16-23 1941 E.C.)

Food item	Unit of measurement	Daily requirement
Bread	kg	500
Orange	kg	200
Banana	kg	200
Lemon	piece	150
Safflower	kg	200
Potato	kg	150
Carrot	kg	50
Red onions	kg	100
White onions	kg	50
Haricot beans	kg	100
Tomato	kg	30
Egg	piece	1200
Lentils	kg	300
White and red <i>tef</i>	quintal	500 (per month)
Peas (ground)	quintal	10
Beans	quintal	5
Chickpea	quintal	5
Pepper (processed)	kg	30
Meat	kg	500

P.S. The ad also included other kinds food items and firewood not listed in here.
Source: *Addis Zaman*, *Tahesas* 16, 1941.

Table 6.7 Ministry of Finance bid for caterers for its Adola mining project, January 1950.

Food item	Quantity (in quintals)
<i>Tef</i>	25,000
Wheat	1,000
Peas and beans	750
Lentils	150
Pepper	350
Maize	5000
Coffee	400
Barley	250
<i>Talba & sesame</i>	42

Source: *Addis Zaman*, *Ter* 7, 1942. The list also included a range of items not listed in here.

These were important developments that gave fresh impetus and complexity to the evolving domestic food market in the country. Quite distinct from the prewar period, where the magnitude of the urban food market grew in a seemingly sluggish way, the

booming export market and the expanding domestic food market in the postwar period created a totally new context for the functioning of the food chain at all levels and the politics that sustained it.

As I have shown before, one of the export market's early impacts was the kind of motivation and interest it kindled among Ethiopia's top politicians to participate in grain trading. If that impulse came from politics, profit was the engine that drove many to rally behind it. The ENC's demise came in 1945 primarily due to political rather than economic reasons. With it died, at least for a while, the market-based strategy the politicians employed to mediate food supply. In its place developed a new motive that seized rent perhaps as the best alternative to participate in the expanding food and cash crop market and politics. If by definition the kind of marketing monopoly the ENC sought to establish limited the size of its active players to only few (notably Haile Sellasie's top level politicians and bureaucrats), to the contrary the second strategy could have a much wider base. Potentially the candidates were many. From the old generation there were the *malkagna/balabbat*, *madarya* holders, and a paste of volunteers and new recruits who fought the Italians at one level or another (now collectively known as *arbagna* or patriots) that saw the war's end to see how the country would reward them. Then there were the new generation of civil servants, bureaucrats, soldiers, and politicians Haile Sellasie's bureaucratization has created. Obviously there was some overlap between the old and the new, as loyal and non-banda individuals joined the second group. They were absorbed in Haile Sellasie's bureaucracy and army. Those in uniform lived in the barracks located in the capital or close to the borders, while those in the civilian bureaucracy lived in Addis Ababa and the bustling provincial towns across

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the country. In the valley all the medium and small-scale towns (with the exception of Awasa which did not emerge as a major town up until 1962) became important administrative and market centers in the three decades following the Italian occupation.⁵⁶

The valley's new towns (most notably Debre Zeit, Mojo, Buta Jira, Shashamane, Maqi, and Nazareth) distinguished themselves from the old *katama* (garrison towns) in more than one way. Ecologically, they became distinct as most were founded in the middle or low elevation zones rather than the highlands and mountainous sites that attracted the pioneer *katama* settlers in the late-19th century. Economically, the new towns got their impetus and sustenance from trade or taxation rather than tribute that sustained garrison towns in the past. Socially too, the new towns, some of which (such as Nazareth and Shashamane) emerged at the crossroads of ecological and ethnic boundaries, became cosmopolitan. Most of these towns got their economic stimuli from regional trade, and quickly evolved as key centers of learning, culture, settlement, and politics.⁵⁷

From their vantage point in these towns or the capital Addis Ababa a growing number of the urban elite and non-elite populations witnessed first hand the extent and viability of the food market and moved to benefit from it. The major way in which they sought to participate in the expanding food (and cash-crop) market was through the acquisition of land for rent. The government's cautious relaxation of its own prewar restrictive land policies enabled a portion of the country's resourceful and business minded civilian and military personnel and subalterns alike to acquire land which they were ready to lease to cultivators on sharecropping basis. If the food market provided the context for agricultural change in the valley, it is the competitions over agricultural resources that

resulted from it that dictated its procedure and outcome.

6.3 The state and land and the state of land

The circumstances that enabled the urban land-seekers to enjoy access to agricultural resources in the valley in the postwar decades resulted from complex entanglements. Two interrelated ideologies drove Tafari/Haile Sellasie's prewar land policies. These were: (1) the need to propagate a tribute paying and food producing subject population, and (2) the need to maximize the governments' land-fund mainly as a means to curb the resource base of the regional elite (see Chapter Three). On both grounds the regent/monarch registered only partial successes. In fact in regard to taxation, the autonomous and semi-autonomous status the regional governors, *malkagna*, and *balabbat* enjoyed up until the Italian occupation meant that the central government had virtually no power in regulating the land tax that remained the prerogative of local and regional rulers. The government did receive a portion of those taxes in the form of tributes but in practice it had no jurisdiction over the amount of taxes individual farmers paid or the manner of its collection. As I have shown before the first serious attempt in the part of the government to reverse that and promote its own position in regulating the land tax came only in 1935 right at the eve of the Italian invasion though it was not put in to effect in any shape or form.

Up on resumption of his power in 1941, Haile Sellasie seem to have come with vengeance in restructuring the land tax and make sure that the bulk, if not all, of it went to the central treasury. To that end, the emperor reorganized a new Ministry of Finance, responsible for the collection of the land tax. In effect the monarch's action initiated the

pattern in which the ministry responsible for collecting the land tax became a separate entity from the administrative body at the district and provincial levels.⁵⁸

In all, the government proclaimed three key decrees regarding the land tax within just the first three years of liberation. Among the reformist decrees' major concern had been the restructuring of taxation and standardizing the rates according to the status (as per the old *lam/taf* definition) of the land and the evident tenural differences between measured (*qalad*) lands and the rest.⁵⁹

To that end, the government took prewar taxation levels and the different categories of land as a starting point, and introduced what could be termed as a simplified taxation regime. Consequently, it cut the amount of taxes by 50 percent of the prewar rate for all categories of land at first, and abolished all kinds of labor work and rudimentary exaction required from the farmers in the past.⁶⁰ Later (in 1944) the government adjusted the rates eight *birr* above the proposed 1935 rates on measured *rist* land while keeping the rates in the remaining tenural categories either at prewar level (as was the case for the northern provinces) or below 1935 levels for the rest of the provinces.⁶¹

Even more important was the degree to which the new taxation regimes simplified the intricate web of land-related tributes and obligations that existed in the past. A quick review of the tribute regimes that existed under Seyum Mangasha's Tigray, Ras Haylu's Gojjam, or Abba Jiffar's Jimma reveals how heavy and complex the rates were before.⁶² Haile Sellasie's aim was to simplify those complex land tax regimes and redirect them to the coffers of the central treasury.

For the government, standardizing the tax due from the farmers and redirecting it to the central treasury would not only simplify the complex prewar arrangements regarding

taxation but also could homogenize the tax paying farmers while bolstering government revenue in its wake.⁶³ Moreover, these changes in fiscal structure could empower the imperial government as the chief arbiter of taxation and taxable-land by disregarding the intermediary local officials (such as *bala-gult*, *balabbat*, and *malkagna*) who in the past were more directly involved in dictating those terms on the ground.⁶⁴ Their tax levying power limited, local officials in the postwar period were deemed to assess and extract taxation in nationally defined standards rather than that of their own as was the case before. In fact, in the process the regional rulers themselves had been converted from rulers to state functionaries whose respective territories became *taqlay gezat* or *awraja* (as opposed to *balabbat/malkagna* territory or *gult*), and their salary derived from state coffers.⁶⁵

The new tax codes therefore marked the highpoint in the national government's long-standing interest in detaching the tax-paying farmers (*gabbar*) from the regional elites' grasp. For the farmers, however, taxation was important not so much because the rates and standards were "better" now than the unregulated and often cumbersome tributes of the past but mainly because taxation mediated their land entitlement rights. This is important because in the context of changing rules to access to land, paying taxes and holding receipts (*karni*) became crucial than had been the case before. It is not surprising therefore that rather than opposing the new tax codes all together valley farmers, like most others, showed interest in paying them. In fact, unlike the relative apathy valley herders showed to land measurement and purchase in the early-1930s, in the postwar period they understood the relationship between taxes and land entitlement rights and actively moved to make sure that the land they cultivated went into the tax registers under

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their names.⁶⁶ But this was not a foregone subject because the range of claimants to the land had multiplied in the postwar period and securing access to land has become a serious matter that had to be contested and negotiated insistently.

Like taxation, the imperial governments' postwar land policies had been indelibly shaped by the power politics itself. Already by 1930, the year of his coronation, Haile Sellasie had come a long way to decidedly shift the power balance between the central government and the regions in favor of the monarchy which he sought to affirm in a constitution the following year. With the battlefield defeat of his arch rivals like *Ras* Gugsa of Gondar and the systematic dismantling of the autonomous status of such older regional powers as Jimma in the early-1930s, the road ahead looked less rocky to Haile Sellasie until the Italians challenged his power and direction by occupying the country for five years.⁶⁷ It is one of the ironies of Ethiopian history that Italian occupation damaged the monarch's state-building project little, and in fact may have facilitated it, albeit inadvertently, a great deal.

As much as Haile Sellasie liked Allied intervention in driving the Italians out, the protectorate the powers put in place was a serious concern to him. Like in the prewar decades it was European colonial presence in the Horn and the powers' unfading interest in Ethiopia that had its origins as far back as the 1906 Tripartite Treaty that had fashioned in part Haile Sellasie's domestic and international policies in the immediate postwar years.⁶⁸ It is not an overstatement to postulate that when the emperor returned from his self-imposed exile in 1941, he must have found Ethiopia much like he would have wished it. This was true on several grounds, most of all with respect to the roads the Italians had built, the elimination from the political scene of a number of his regional

power competitors, and above all, a brewing sense of pan-Ethiopian nationalism that manifested itself most among the urban populations and the majority of the patriots. Of course each of these had its own drawbacks that Haile Sellasie had to tap carefully. The roads had to be maintained and extended further; the regional power arrangement had to be restructured along new provincial lines; and the new generation of nationalists had to be co-opted and integrated into the bureaucracy and the army.

With respect to his long-held and unfading dream of building the bureaucratic state alone, Haile Sellasie continued to register important victories over his regional power contenders on several grounds. Already by the mid-1940s all the newly created twelve provinces had centrally appointed governors.⁶⁹ And by the late-1940s the Ministry of Finance's tax assessors and collectors had infiltrated successfully to the provincial and district level at various points.⁷⁰ It is this changing configuration of power relations, marked most by the central government's relative success in strengthening its own position vis-à-vis that of its prewar regional power contenders that gave new meaning to the important question of access to agricultural resources in the postwar period. Just as the power politics was a continuation of prewar trends, the government's land policies were not entirely new but built on prewar patterns. Like the prewar period the government's postwar land policy built on state appropriation of land (i.e. the forging of a distinct category of what came to be known as government land) and its distribution (on permanent or temporary basis) to individuals who served or supported it. In short, with some tweaking it was the same *qalad* principle that shaped government land policy in the postwar era as well.

Certainly the most dominant and equally intriguing land-related policy Haile

Sellase's government adapted in the postwar period was the land-grants. The land-grants refer to a series of legislation the government declared in a span of more than fifteen years allowing, at least in theory, a host of land-seekers to acquire a piece of landed property in rural Ethiopia.

Haile Sellase promulgated the first of what was to become a series of land-grant edicts on July 24, 1942. The edict entitled a range of candidates—patriots, exiles, and unemployed urban residents whose breadwinners had been martyred in the war—to acquire government land as *madarya* and/or *rist*. Specifically, the edict restored all prewar *madarya* rights as long as the noted individuals have served their country at one level or another during the Italian war and occupation. If the above provision was restorative, the edict also included two key addenda that had been rarely invoked in the past. The first fresh addition included the provision that entitled the same group of *madarya* holders (or their wives in case the *madarya* holder was not alive) to commute one *gasha* of their *madarya* land into *rist*. The second provision was even more generous in that it promised the granting of one *gasha rist* for those *bala-wulata* (as all patriots came to be known as) who did not have *madarya* rights in the past, or half a *gasha* of land in case the eligible person had died leaving behind a wife or daughter(s).⁷¹ Exactly two years later the government decreed its second land-grant edict whereby it specified that servicemen in duty can acquire half a *gasha* of *rist* as pension land.⁷² This was further augmented by a November 1952 edict that expanded the range of candidates to “each unemployed and landless Ethiopian,” thereby entitling by law all Ethiopians to acquire half a *gasha* of *rist*. The aim, according to the decree, was to help “the jobless...find employment in cultivating the soil, ... build a family and property,” as well

as to encourage “the expansion of agriculture in Ethiopia [toward] ...the elimination of dearth.”⁷³ The land grants continued throughout the late-1950s and 1960s with the proclamation of four additional edicts between 1956 and 1967. Three of the edicts (promulgated in 1956, 1966, and 1967) focused on the terms and rate of conversion of *madarya* land into *rist*. The other, promulgated in October 1959, entitled all active personnel in uniform to acquire one *gasha* of land as *rist*. That was extended to civil servants later, following a specific order the Ministry of Pen sent out in October 1965.⁷⁴

The imperial land grants had been the object of relatively intense scholarly investigation. Among the sticking issues that have led to heated debates in the literature has been the government’s motive in venturing in such unprecedented land grants and the tenural status of granted land both before and after the grants were made. The dominant explanation upholds the view that the land grants epitomized the class alliance between the government and the feudal class that had been on the making since the time of Menilek’s expansionism and conquest of the southern regions. A corollary to the above argument has been the portrayal of the land grants as the logical outcome of a land-privatization policy that had started early on.⁷⁵

Only recently have scholars begun to question the validity of such generalizations. Working from the perspective of urban food supply, Tekalign, for example, have successfully refuted such theoretically grounded interpretations. Instead, he explained that not only were the land grants made in the form of *rist* but also for the first two decades of the postwar period, Haile Sellasie was in fact opposed to the privatization of *rist* even in the form of sale or transfer to a third party.⁷⁶

Indeed a closer examination of the content of the edicts, the politics that underpinned

the land grants and the articulation of policy and practice reveal interesting trajectories. It is well too known that Haile Sellasie's government adapted land grant as a viable policy matter in the postwar era. But there is no indication that proves that granting land for free was to be the emperor's first and foremost priority from the outset. In fact, the available evidence suggests that on land, Haile Sellasie's intent was to continue imperial land policies in line with prewar beginnings than shift to new ones commensurate the land-grant policy and practice his government adapted shortly after. Perhaps the best indication to that comes from the monarch's own speech on October 30, 1941, marking the 11th inauguration of his coronation. Land was one of the key issues the emperor talked about at length in his speech. He remarked:

Pursuant to our [my] plan to enable all Ethiopians possess rist land, we [I] have ordered the Ministries of Interior and Agriculture to [complete the inventory of government land] so as to facilitate the sale of such lands [to the needy]. As soon as the inventory is complete, those who have long-served the government [at different capacities] will be accorded the priority to buy the land. In addition, those who have been disabled due to their [military] service as well as those of retirement age will be given land as pension.⁷⁷

It is evident from his speech that Haile Sellasie targeted certain group of people and certain type of land at this point. He targeted all Ethiopians (*"yaltyopya tawalaj hulu"*), but that most probably meant those around the court and the city who have began to show a growing appetite for land.⁷⁸ More interesting, however, is the emphasis the emperor made to the category of land that would be subject to the latest land-grants and sale the government was about to implement. According to the emperor's speech, the government, as it used to do in the past, was going to sale land, and the land to be sold was not *rist/gabbar* land but so-called government land. Whereas retirees and the

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disabled would be entitled to receive *madarya* land for free, all others (including the **patriots**) would only be given priority for buying the land and not as a free gift from the **state**.⁷⁹

We know virtually nothing about the findings of the body Haile Sellasie entrusted to **complete** inventory of government land. It seems apparent that as newly re-organized **institutions** both the Ministry of Interior and that of Agriculture and Commerce lacked the **resources** to do their job quickly and effectively. On his part, barely ten months after he **made** the speech, the emperor took a significant policy shift in July 1942 as he **dropped** the option of selling government land at cheaper prices and resorted to the free **granting** of government land to individual land-seekers.⁸⁰

While the shift the government made in terms of the manner of acquisition of granted **land** was important, still the land grants were made in the form of *rist* (not as private **property** or free land). That means unlike purchased land, government granted *rist* could not **be** sold or transferred to a third party. But unlike *madarya* land before, *rist* was **heritable** property just like any traditional *rist*. Furthermore, while *madarya* could only be **given to** “enlisted” individuals (i.e. individuals on active service or waiting to be called for **service**) in the past, the latest land grants entitled past *madarya* holders as well as **those in** active duty/service, the retirees (notably those who had fought the Italians at one **level or** another), and eventually almost every able Ethiopian willing to cultivate the land to **claim** a portion of rural land as *rist*.

The postwar land grants also differed significantly from the other major form of **property** transfer the imperial government had practiced in the past. As I have shown **before**, land sales had been one of the few mechanisms by which the government “ceded”

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land entitlement rights on measured land (*qalad*) to land-seeking individuals and *gabbar* **alike** throughout the prewar era. The land grants made such cash requirements **unnecessary** by enabling individual land-seekers to acquire land for free as long as they **qualified** for it.

Both of these undertakings—the granting of heritable *rist* instead of temporary *madarya* and the granting rather than sale of land—may appear as government **irrationality** in the economic and political sense of the term. However, a closer look at **developments** related to the land grants and national politics suggest that Haile Sellasie's **decisions** resulted from the fission and fusion of complex entanglements on the ground. At **one** level, the land grants appear to have been a calculated response in the part of the **government** to co-opt the politically active and potentially dangerous patriots then **roaming** in the streets of Addis Ababa and some of the provincial towns with their arms and *gadel* (heroic battlefield stories). Few questioned Haile Sellasie's authority but the **majority** were anxious to see how the country was to honor their service and sacrifice.

At another level and more importantly, the land grants fine-tuned with the emperor's **power** centralizing ethos and his postwar “developmentalist” ideology that was rooted in the **politically** guided philosophy of expanding food production by advancing crop-**agriculture** to its new frontiers. The early-1930s witnessed the relative success of the **imperial** government in maximizing, at least in theory, its land-fund at numerous sites. **Certainly** important in that regard was the dismantling of the autonomous status of such **regions** as Jimma, Gondar, and Wallaga from the late-1920s and early-1930s which **added** considerable proportion of land under government jurisdiction. The reorganization of **provincial** and local administration under imperial control in the postwar period meant

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that the state was capable of appropriating large tracts of land from those regions as **government** property. All these developments bolstered the amount of land the **government** actually or potentially owned. In Shawa alone, where the process of creating **government** land has been going on for over half a century, for example, the government **succeeded** in accumulation a considerable proportion of land as its property. By 1950, **approximately** 381,240 hectares (9531 *gasha*) of land has been officially registered as **government** property, the bulk of which (over 360,000 hectares or 9000 *gasha*) was in **areas** where land measurement had taken place.⁸¹

At the same time as the amount of land under government possession increased, the **power** balance between the central government and the regional/local elite shifted **decidedly** in favor of the former.⁸² Therefore, seen from the vantage point of power **relations** the granting of new *rist* rights or the conversion to *rist* of a portion of existing *madarya* land could not have had the same kind of political repercussion it did in the past. **With** no serious political fallout in sight, the government seemed willing to relax its own **prewar** restrictionist policies and reconfigure the manner in which subjects acquired **so-called** government land could be acquired as individual property (*rist*).

The valley, due to its past antecedents, had been one of the regions where the **government** had succeeded in appropriating a considerably large proportion of land as its **property**. In the meantime, the valley was also emerging as a viable crop-producing **region**, fed by and in turn feeding the expanding food market itself. The combination of **these** two factors made our region one of the best candidates for the kind of *rist-rush* **Haile** Sellasie's land-grant policy and practice encouraged in the postwar era. It is no **accident**, therefore, that severe competition the land grants facilitated in terms of access

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Only vague registries of government land existed by the time Haile Sellasie issued his land grant edicts in the 1940s. In fact, it was only in the late-1950s, and in a desperate move to account for government land, that the Ministry of State Domain initiated an inventory program in earnest. Consequently, between 1959 and 1962, the Ministry required each *warada* treasury office to fill out a document (so called model 218) detailing the "size" and "level of development" of government land in each sub-district, together with explanations as to how such lands became state property in the first place.⁸³ Working under duress and with inconclusive data (one that relied on the tax registry) only few of the *warada* offices from Hayqochena Buta Jira and Yararena Karayu *awraja* completed the report on time.⁸⁴

Notwithstanding the obvious gaps and limitations of the available data, a closer look at the reports provide a generalized but useful picture of the transfer of land ownership rights in portions of the valley over a limited period of time (see Tables 6.8 and 6.9 below).

Table 6.8 Government land transferred as *rist* since 1942 E.C. (1949/50)

<i>Awraja</i>	<i>Warada</i>	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount of government measured land transferred as freehold (<i>rist</i>)
HBJ	Adami Tullu	622	622
	Shashamane	n.a.	2157
YK	Boset	8	4

HBJ= Hayqochena Buta Jira; YK= Yararena Karayu; n.a.= not available

Source: Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration, Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province, 54

Table 6.9 *Madarya* land

<i>Awraja</i>	<i>Haraja</i>
HBJ	Adam Shash Soddu
YK	Ada Lume

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Source: Ministry of Land

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Table 6.9 *Madarya* land transferred as *rist* since 1945 E.C. (1952/53)

<i>Awraja</i>	<i>Warada</i>	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount of land transferred to individuals as <i>rist</i>
HBJ	Adami Tullu	9	9
	Shashamane	136	136
	Soddo	70	69.75
YK	Ada	153	153
	Lume	269	259.78

HBJ= Hayqochena Buta Jira; **YK**= Yararena Karayu

Source: Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*, 55

As could be read from the tables above, Shashamane *warada* saw by far the largest transfer of government land to *rist* compared to the other *warada*. The report did not specify how many individuals acquired the 2157 *gasha* of land in Shashamane *warada*. But from the other *warada* it seems that the largest size of land individual *rist* seekers obtained amounted to 1 *gasha*, while few acquired half a *gasha* of land as well.⁸⁵ The tables are also indicative of the relative magnitude with which such conversion of government and *madarya* land into *rist* took place in parts of the valley. Interestingly, south of the Awash (in Hayqochena Buta Jira) the proportion of government land appears to be much larger than *madarya* land, with parallel patterns in their conversion rates as well. In Ada-Lume, where the proportion of *madarya* land was greater, the rate of conversion of such lands to *rist* was considerable as well.

Unfortunately, the reports do not specify the origin of government land and, equally importantly, the social standing of the grantees that came to acquire *rist* in the valley. The most common response one gets from the informants' now is that most (if not all) of the *rist* holders had been city (most notably Addis Ababa) dwellers who occupied Haile Sellasie's military or civil bureaucracy.⁸⁶ Judging from the reports and informants

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testimonies, several factors converged to shape the relative intensity as well as apparent class configuration in the manner and pace in which the conversion of government land to *rist* took place in the valley.

One clear picture that emerges from the official MLRA report is the fact that the valley had become one of the most attractive regions to *rist* seekers in the period under discussion. For example, of Shawa's 15 *warada* who completed the model 218 report, none came anywhere close to Adami Tullu and Shashamane *warada* in the rate in which government land had been granted as *rist*. Between them the 12 *warada* from Jarra, Jebatena Mecha, Manzena Yifat, Managasha, Salale, and Tagulatena Bulga *awraja* reported the conversion of a mere 83 *gasha* of government land to *rist*.⁸⁷ Only in the case of *madarya* land had the conversion of *rist* from those *awraja* matched (and in some cases even excelled) similar transfers in the valley.⁸⁸

To be sure, this may be due to the actual size of available granted (*madarya*) not-yet-granted government land in the respective *warada*. Because, as in Ada and Lume, the ratio of *madarya* land to other forms of government land was greater in Shawa's western and northern districts compared to the southern districts where the latter was much greater than *madarya* land.⁸⁹ Moreover, even though so-called government land existed in different parts of the country, the new *rist* seekers flocked to places where, aside from relative proximity to Addis Ababa (the major food market), the prospects for crop-agriculture had been stronger and farmers' land ownership rights could be contested relatively easily. The valley fulfilled both criteria best for the urban land seekers.

The second, albeit far less pronounced picture that emerges from the postwar *rist*-rush relates to the class distinctions of the land seekers themselves. Here again the evidence is

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far too sketchy but it appears that the claimants' ability to acquire *rist* land in the valley seems to have been predicated by their social and political standing in the imperial power structure. Because of its relatively developed crop agriculture and its relatively firmly established prewar land categories, Ada-Lume became the focal point of a number of Haile Sellasie's top officials and officers who had their eye on the sub-region. A notable case in point is Walda Gyorgis Walda Yohanes, Haile Sellasie's Minister of Pen. Walda Gyorgis worked his way to inherit a farm formerly (in the prewar period) owned by Babitchev (a Russian advisor turned agriculturist) in Ada. Walda Gyorgis expanded and consolidated his *rist* (reportedly more than 8 *gasha* of land) in the district where he continued cereal production by contracting sharecroppers.⁹⁰

Similarly, according to a 1961 government survey, there were 18 *rist-gult* owners, holding a total of 10,040 hectares (251 *gasha*) of land in Ada. The maximum size of holding under individual *rist-gult* owners amounted to 1800 hectares (45 *gasha*), and the minimum was estimated at 80 hectares (2 *gasha*), with a mean size of ownership of 440 hectares (11 *gasha*).⁹¹ Also, according to the FAO-MLRA team that surveyed Ada's land tenure in 1970, most of Ada's large land owners were "important people who were in one way or another connected with the State Administration."⁹²

If Ada-Lume appears to be one of the strongholds of the politically powerful, the region south of the Awash attracted less powerful individual claimants of the land. As far as one can tell from the list of names and their military and civilian titles my informants remembered as *rist* holders in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo, most were low ranking army or police officers and civilians the majority of whom obtained 40 hectares (1 *gasha*) of

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Certainly one of the few exceptions to that had been the royal family itself. Interestingly, parallel to his land grant policies and the partial withdrawal of the government from land ownership, Haile Sellasie also carved out a sizable portion of valley land as the royal family's *rist*. Labeled as *beta-rist*, the royal estate evolved as an island complete with its own administration and security force.⁹⁴

The *beta-rist* in our region was carved out of land that was previously *waraganu*. The Italians showed some interest in starting a commercial wheat farm on portions of this land earlier but to no avail. After his comeback and alongside with his land grants, Haile Sellasie reserved more than 240 hectares (40 *gasha*) of land near the town of Arsi Negelle as *beta-rist*, in effect making it the first family's heritable property. Right before her death, empress Menen transferred her *rist* to Sahla Sellasie (her eldest son).⁹⁵

In terms of size, the *beta-rist* evolved as by far the largest family owned *rist* in the valley. The farm was also different in the manner in which it was administered and run. In contrast to other individually owned *rist*, *beta-rist* came under a well-organized tier of administration. The first appointed officials to administer the royal family's *rist* were Getachaw Mashasha and Walde Fayesa, respectively administrator of the farm and supervisor of agriculture. Complete with its own security guard (reportedly comprising 50-75 men) *beta-rist* had its main office in the newly founded Arsi Negelle town. The relationship between Getachew and the *warada* administrative structure (led by *Grazmach* Zawdu Takla Maryam-first appointee of the local administrative office in 1942/43) had never been clearly spelt out. According to Nini Abino, in many respects Getachaw functioned with virtual autonomy, deliberating on all legal and civil cases

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involving the farm and its tenant cultivators. *Beta-ris* farmers, like those on individual *ris*, paid one-fourths (*erbo*) of their produce to the royal family but they were exempted from paying the land tax or tithe. Also like the others, *beta-ris* farmers grew wheat, tef, and maize, but conducted their day-to-day activities under Walde's close supervision (whom Nini described as "the harshest official I ever saw in my life time").⁹⁶

In a span of two decades and a half, therefore, land entitlement rights underwent significant transformation in the valley. In the ruins of *madbet*, *waraganu* and old *madarya* and *balabbat* land, emerged an array of tenural categories with significant variations in terms of taxation and ownership rights. To the extent that the old categories of *madbet/waraganu* and *balabbat* land had kept most of the valley beyond the reach of individual *madarya* and *gult*-seekers in the prewar period, the dismantling of those categories and the land grants brought the valley within the grasp of the postwar *ris*-seekers firmly.

If the grantees comprised diverse and competing groups of urbanites, the manner of land acquisition itself had never been a smooth process. Complicating the situation on the ground was not so much the lack of a comprehensive registry of government land but the fact that ownership rights on the same lands had always been a contested matter. At another level, the inability of the government to prove or disprove eligibility of the candidates (whose actual numbers continued to grow and their status keep changing) also contributed to the problem in its own way. As a war characterized by defection and shifting sides, one of the legacies of the Italian colonial war and occupation had been the accusation and self-incrimination that followed its quick end. Some were later branded as collaborators while many others remained disappointed for not getting what they thought

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the country owed them leading one of the patriots turned writer lament: “Oh my country how full you are; you reward your grave diggers instead of your saviors.”⁹⁷ We don’t know for sure what percentage of the prewar *madarya* holders lost their land entitlement “rights” due to their alleged or proven collaboration with the Italians. But we do know that the governments’ follow up land-grant edicts multiplied the number of claimants and complicated the situation further.

Certainly one of the most profound impacts of the land grants had been the conversion of a considerably large proportion of valley land to *rist* (heritable property) of absentee holders. This was so not simply because the government already possessed a significant proportion of valley land as its property, but also because the contradictory situation on the ground provided ample opportunities for the grantees to skillfully manipulate the laws to their own advantages.⁹⁸ As we have seen before in some detail, the authorities delineated government land based on circumstances and information that existed at the time of state expansionism and subsequent land measurement practices that followed in its wake. Politics aside, the one-time forging of so-called government land did not take into account existing as well as future needs of local communities. For example, the designation of *balabbat* land failed to account Arsi Negelle and Mareqo herders’ transhumant practices that depended on the seasonal exploitation of large territory far greater than the sorts of local reserves the government put in place at the onset of state rule. Nor did it take into account changing demographic shifts that resulted from the kind of group migrations I discussed before. For the majority of Arsi Negelle, Mareqo, and Ada-Lume farmers these were crucial matters whose effects became even clearer after the land grants and the competitions over agricultural resources that followed their

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What made those competitions severe, therefore, was the sharp discrepancy between politics and practice, i.e., the governments regimented understanding of landed categories and farmers' action. Hence, countercurrent to its own definitions of government and *balabbat* land, individual farmers had in fact been utilizing the land according to their changing needs. Therefore, by the time the government unleashed its land grants, the bulk of the ostensibly *taf* land had increasingly been used by individual farmers.⁹⁹ In practice, therefore, what the land grants did was not the ceding of government land to all individuals (including farmers) who qualified for it (as the edicts purported) but the conversion of those lands as fields where property rights were fought and negotiated.

I will offer some individualized examples in the next chapter to highlight the particular ways in which those rights have been contested and negotiated. Here I will explain briefly some of the most common strategies the party's' (most notably the land-seekers) employed to acquire rural land before moving on to discussing the state of land during the same period.

As I have already inferred, proving eligibility for the urban-based rural-land-seekers was not a smooth process but one that required the presentation of convincing evidence (of patriotism during the war for example) and perseverance of the bureaucratic hurdle in Addis Ababa. Even more challenging was the identification and successful acquisition of a piece of land in rural Ethiopia that suited their interest best. Obviously those who had *madarya* rights in the past stood a better chance of choosing than those who did not.¹⁰⁰

In light of those considerations, even though there seemed to be ample (at least in theory) land to be claimed, in reality the land-seekers zoomed in areas like the valley

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where the prospect of relatively high return (in the form of rent) and chances of securing *rist* was greater. If the valley's evolving crop-agriculture was attractive to them, the fact that only a small proportion of valley land (south of the Awash) had been actually purchased by local farmers at the time of land measurement in the early-1930s meant that the grantees had the legal backing to challenge the farmers' land-ownership rights. By labeling those lands as "illegally" occupied, urban land seekers began to challenge the rights of those farmers in the political and legal corridors.¹⁰¹

In addition to so-called "illegally occupied" land, the offensive the various groups of land seekers launched in the valley also targeted *balabbat* land. The kind of offensive the land-seekers launched on *balabbat siso* took a new trend whereby some prominent politicians worked out a plan to "convince" *balabbat* to cede a portion of their *siso* or the title itself as a gift (*wers*).¹⁰² Those politicians knew first hand that if endorsed by the government, *balabbat siso*, unlike individual *madarya* or *rist*, quickly came off the hands of the government and was immune from the land tax. Therefore, side by side with their *rist*-seeking enterprise some showed keen interest in getting hold of *balabbat* land in the 1940s. Their move prompted the government to intervene directly, reiterating rather strongly that such titles and prerogatives were not for transfer or sale by any means.¹⁰³ A memorandum sent by the Ministry of Pen to the High Court in 1951 emphasized that: "it has been the law of the land that no one can sell or approve the sale of *balabatenat* or *malkagnenat* lands nor pass such lands [to a third party] by way of gift without the express permission of the government"¹⁰⁴ This, against the backdrop of the insistence of the Ministry of Interior's top officials who argued that *balabbat siso* is private land that should be made available for sale or transfer should the *balabbat* wanted. For the

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In short, government changing policies on land and, even more directly, the manner in which the urban elite and non-elite populations seized and interpreted the land grants reconfigured access to agricultural resources significantly differently from the prewar period. Such competitions over agricultural land, in turn, created fresh impetus for the kind of labor mobilization and sharecropping arrangements that fed directly the transforming market-gearred crop-based agriculture in the valley in the 1941-59 period.

If state policies augmented competitions over land, the state of valley land also underwent significant transformation at this time. Due to the dearth of recorded historical data, measuring the degree to which valley land shifted category in terms of the level of development/fertility (*lam-taf*) over time is difficult. For example, we don't know what percentage of valley land had been classified under *taf*, *lam-taf*, or *lam* for the entire prewar period. This is true even for Ada-Lume where crop-agriculture (the yardstick used to measure the status or grade of land) had existed before the war. For the postwar period, a quick look at the land tax registry from the two *awraja* we are directly concerned with here offer generalized pictures on the making of *lam-taf* lands in the valley.

As could be read from the tables below the category of so-called fertile land comprised more than 50 percent of the total measured land in both *awraja*. Between them *lam* and *lam-taf* comprised more than two-thirds of the measured land in two sub-districts. Because these categories have been changing (almost always in a linear fashion from poor to fertile than the other way round) the percentage composition of the tax categories may be indicative of the movement of land in the *lam-taf* trajectory.

Table 6.10 Distribution of
tenure land tax class

Land category
Gabbar
Siso
Samon
Madarya
Risi-gult
Mangest
Gebratal
Total
Percentage

Source: Ministry of Land
Shoa Province, p. 17

Table 6.11 Distribution of
Tax classification

Land category	Fertile
Gabbar	324
Samon	400
Madarya	150
Risi-gult	854
Mangest	20
Waragamu	19
Total	5186
Percentage	5

Source: Ministry of Land
Survey of Shoa Province

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Table 6.10 Distribution of measured land in Hayqochena Buta Jira *awraja* by system of land tenure/land tax classification, 1967

Land category	Areas in <i>gasha</i>				Percent
	Fertile	Semi-fertile	Poor	Total	
<i>Gabbar</i>	4102.05	16988.89	2072.45	7873.39	47.0
<i>Siso</i>	635.32	232.00	378.50	1245.82	7.4
<i>Samon</i>	395.15	176.04	166.50	737.69	4.4
<i>Madarya</i>	180.98	143.60	270.19	594.77	3.6
<i>Rist-gult</i>	682.25	367.75	749.50	1799.50	10.7
<i>Mangest</i>	2383.25	272.25	1753.50	4409.00	26.3
<i>Gebratal</i>	21.00	52.00	18.50	91.50	0.6
Total	8400.00	2942.53	5409.14	16751.67	100
Percentage	50.10	17.60	32.30	100	

Source: Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*, p. 17.

Table 6.11 Distribution of measured land in Yararena Karayu *awraja* by system of taxation/land Tax classification

Land category	Areas in <i>gasha</i>				Percent
	Fertile	Semi-fertile	Poor	Total	
<i>Gabbar</i>	3240.91	1038.26	719.80	4996.97	50.1
<i>Samon</i>	400.70	588.28	262.23	2249.19	22.6
<i>Madarya</i>	150.80	47.14	54.75	252.69	2.5
<i>Rist-gult</i>	854.23	214.15	355.54	923.92	9.3
<i>Mangest</i>	20.77	4.13	1482.75	1487.65	14.9
<i>Waragamu</i>	19.19	29.00	7.50	55.89	0.6
Total	5186.60	1918.94	2862.57	9966.11	100
Percentage	52.0	19.3	28.70	100	

Source: Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*, p. 33

As I will show later in some detail, the pace of this transformation had been quite impressive in Ada where fertile (*lam*) land comprised 75 percent of the cultivated area by 1969. South of the Awash, where any such classification of *taf-lam* lands seemed anachronistic as late as 1930, the transformation of two-thirds of the land into the

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Conclusion

Incidentally, the 1941-59 period witnessed the dramatic expansion of the food market, engendered by new demands in Ethiopia's growing urban centers as well as one coming from the Middle East. The magnitude of the food market had been considerable and created in its wake a new kind of interest particularly among the country's top politicians to engage in grain marketing. In the meantime, the booming food market also sparked a new kind of interest among the postwar bureaucratic as well as military officials and subalterns to vie for rural land and rent. The first manifested itself in the formation of the Ethiopian National Corporation (ENC) as the best alternative to tap rural produce by controlling trade.

The second development mentioned above took a much less organized but far more enduring trend as a growing number of the urban elite and non-elite populations showed interest in rural land mainly as a means to extract produce in the form of rent. As much as economics underpinned their interests, the urban-based rural-land-seekers employed political rather than market structures to gain access to agricultural land. Specifically it was the government's relaxation of its prewar restrictionist land policies and the land grants that opened new opportunities for this group of land seekers to grab a considerably large proportion of valley land in the 1941-59 decades. But in the meantime the challenges they posed to farmers' rights of access to agricultural resources became a catalyst for valley agrarian change in the same period.

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The most dramatic impact of the new round of competition over land had been the entrenchment of crop-agriculture. The latter resulted from the farmers' conscious move to protect their land entitlement rights by resorting to or expanding crop-agriculture. For the majority of the land-seekers based in the urban centers, however, land was simply a source of rent (in the form of produce). Only few participated in production directly while the majority was content with leasing their *rist* to cultivators on sharecropping arrangements. Refashioning the terms of access to land and multiplying sharecropping arrangements based on the payment of a portion (often ranging from one-third to one-fourth) of the produce, share tenancy induced the expansion of crop agriculture in the valley directly. The intensification of sharecropping and its impact on valley agrarian transformation will be the thrust of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

LABOR AND OUTPUT: SHARECROPPING AND THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOOD MARKET IN VALLEY AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION (1960-75)

In the previous chapter I showed how the consummation of political and economic factors led to intense competitions over valley's agricultural resources in the two decades following the defeat and withdrawal of the Italians in 1941. The intensity of the competitions could be seen from two different but interrelated developments epitomized by the increased incidence of migration of cultivators to the valley and the arrival of a third group of land-seekers coming mainly from Addis Ababa and the valley's own urban centers. Numerically both groups were significantly strong and competed over the same space. No statistics is available to measure the magnitude of those individualized migrations or expansion of highland farmers into the valley landscape but the regions' quilt of ethnicity or individual life narratives attest to the fact that indeed this had been a dominant phenomenon for most of the 20th century. The statistics on the numerical strength of the urbanites who acquired land in the valley is incomplete. In four key *warada* in Hayqochena Buta Jera and Yararena Karayu districts alone, for example, this group of land-seekers managed to acquire approximately 133,400 hectares (3335 *gasha*) of so-called government land as individual property between 1948 -63.¹ If, as I have argued, it was the changing terms of access to land that fashioned the nature and outcome of the competitions over cultivated land, it was the expansion of the food market itself

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Building on those points and anticipating the two chapters that follow, in this chapter I examine the link between land ownership and labor control by looking at share-tenancy arrangements in the 1960-75 period. This is important because the use-value of the land had been predicated by availability of labor. For absentee landowners sharecropping arrangements provided the best alternative to reap agricultural produce in the form of rent. For the tenants, however, such arrangements provided a compromise to guarantee their presence on the land (as rightful possessors or contenders) and increase their chance of “land accumulation” (without actually owning the land in legal terms).

I have already argued that the food market had been particularly responsible for inspiring urban interest in rural land and agriculture in the postwar period. Building on that argument, in the second half of this chapter, I discuss the changing dynamics of the food market and its’ regional configuration at some length. My intent here is to show the degree to which the food market informed the competitions and negotiations over agricultural resources. Seen from the perspective of land-use, the outcome was striking. Compared to the 1910s or 1920s when the bulk of the valley could easily be defined as *taf*, by 1970 official government statistics put more than two-thirds of the land in the category of “fertile” (*lam*) or “semi-fertile” (*lam-taf*). The forces that undergird this change are the focus of this chapter.

7.1 Tenants, absentee landowners, and the state: sharecropping and its ramifications on the social organization of crop production in the valley

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notably his readiness to grant heritable (*rist*) rights on portions of government land proved to be a relatively new development with far reaching consequences on the ground. Most of all, such granting of *rist* rights to urban claimants of land paved the way for the maturation of share-tenancy in the valley.

It must be noted from the outset that tenancy arrangements in the valley were not entirely new developments that followed the land grants. On the contrary *cisagna* had been *gasha maret* and *qalad*'s trade mark in Shawa and its dependent territories since at least the late-19th century. Yet in both cases, so long as the other party's rights on the land remained temporary and geared to exacting tributes, as was the case in *madarya* land for example, *chisagna* stood a better chance in enjoying perpetual usufruct rights and sometimes even owning the land itself as *rist* whenever circumstances permitted.

The land grants or the conversion of so-called government land into *rist* and private land reconfigured past landowner-tenant relationship decidedly. Obviously the beneficiaries of the postwar land-grants were the landowners who have come to claim the land as their individual property, a radically new development compared to the tribute collecting rights they enjoyed in the past. For tenant farmers any such state-sanctioned shift in terms of land entitlement rights jeopardized any claim they might have had on the land itself and made them full-blown tenants. This was not a semantic distinction nor was it, as we shall see below, tacitly endorsed by the tenants who used every possible avenue to fight back so as to ensure their entitlement rights on the land they cultivated. Rather it was an important development that marked the mutation of land ownership rights and the share-tenancy arrangement itself. In terms of product appropriation alone, for example, it marked the shift from tribute to rent that characterized landlord-tenant relationship in the

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In the post-1955 period, Haile Sellasie's government introduced two major legislative acts regarding land that had far-reaching implications on land ownership and transfer rights in the valley. The first legislation focused on land ownership and the basis on which such rights could be legally sanctioned. Article 130 (d) of the 1955 revised constitution specified that all land not held or possessed in the name of any person, natural or juridical, "all forests and grazing lands" to be state domain, and any legal possession of land would be determined by the payment of land taxes. Conversely, all land on which land taxes were not paid belonged to the government.²

The second key legislation Haile Sellasie introduced relates to the sale of *rist* (i.e., land granted to elite and non-elite individuals as per the government's land grant policy) and *balabbat siso*. Haile Sellasie had been particularly adamant to legalize the sale of granted-*rist* and *balabbat siso* throughout the 1940s and 1950s. He was, as Tekalign has rightly pointed out, particularly alarmed by the impact such land transfers could have on the ground. Haile Sellasie feared that by accumulating land through purchase and inheritance the powerful elite might use the opportunity to regain their eroding political power.³ The emperor therefore seems to have waited until his bureaucratic stride held firm on the ground before he legalized the selling of granted-*rist* lands.⁴ Consequently, in 1958 and 1959 the government cautiously lifted its ban on the sale of *rist* and *siso*.⁵

The implication these legislative acts had on resource control in the valley was far-reaching and augmented developments that had been taking place since at least 1930. The conversion of all uncultivated land to government property simply put a legal façade on what has been going on in practice since the late-19th century. As I have already

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discussed, government policy on land since conquest had been based on the simple logic of cultivated/uncultivated (*lam/taf*) land. In part that had been responsible for government seizure of a considerable proportion of valley land as state domain. Likewise, land sales, though undertaken solely by the government itself, had been an old practice in the valley. As I have shown in Chapter Two, though not particularly attractive to individual buyers, valley land had been auctioned for sale since the 1880s (north of the Awash) and 1930 (south of the Awash).

The government did not resume its land sale practice in the valley in the postwar period but valley herders and farmers took it on their own to clear the land and start cultivation anyway. Therefore, by the time the government enacted the 1955 legislation, its 1940s and 1950s land grant orders, or lifted its ban on the sale and transfer of *rist* and *balabbat siso* in 1958/9, a growing number of farmers had already been cultivating an increasing proportion of valley land for several decades. But now, unlike in the past, it is not the act of cultivating the land or belonging to a given community that guaranteed ownership rights but a receipt (*karni* or *darasagne*). The receipt was a piece of paper the legal owners of the land obtained as a proof of ownership and in return for paying the land taxes under their own names. For example, in Arsi Negelle, as I have shown before, the fact that only the “enlightened” few were willing and able to pay for the land in the early-1930s meant that the majority were simply unable to produce any such receipts when confronted by the urban-land-seekers in the postwar decades. In short, the legalization of land ownership rights lent legitimacy to government land and kept the farmers at the defensive.⁶

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valley, none the less the exploitation of those lands required negotiating labor and produce with farmers. And if, as I have mentioned before, tenancy arrangements had been prevalent in the valley before (albeit with significant localized variations), now they became the dominant form of labor mobilization both north and south of the Awash. For valley farmers, negotiating tenancy arrangements provided a workable alternative for acquiring and in some cases even accumulating agricultural land within the context of changing rules to resource control. Farmers knew that the terms of tenancy (which required them to pay a fourth or a third of their annual harvests to the landlord) were exploitative. Yet the majority still wanted to enter into those agreements than leave the area all together.⁷ Loss of legal entitlements to the land had been crucial to tenant farmers, but labor provided them a bargaining chip for maintaining usufruct rights on the land. In fact, in most cases tenants perceived sharecropping arrangements not as a matter of last resort in all on-going battles for land but a means to re-assert their entitlement rights to the land which many thought could be reversed sooner or later.⁸ Some even saw sharecropping arrangements mainly as a time buying mechanism before they could take their cases to the courts. Others, most notably individual migrants found in the tenancy arrangement a viable outlet to secure access to land in a new environment far removed from home.⁹

Two useful, but by no means necessarily accurate, reports are available to begin to understand the relative magnitude of share-tenancy and its *modus operandi* in the valley. The Ministry of Land Reform and Administration compiled the first report based on information obtained from *warada* government offices (most notably that of the Ministry of Finance). The report, as it pertains to different parts of the country, has been cautiously

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tapped and severely criticized by students and scholars of Ethiopian land tenure and agriculture. Most of the criticism holds water but does not warrant the virtual discarding of the reports altogether as worthless for academic research. On the contrary, the combing of those resources with knowledge of their pitfalls yield some useful information on such indices as land categories, taxation, and landlord tenant relationship at district and provincial levels that is difficult to find elsewhere.¹⁰

The second, which had been the result of some collaborative work between FAO and MLRA, is unique to Ada and sheds light on landlord-tenant relationship at a county level in 1970.¹¹

Perhaps the best way to begin to understand the magnitude of share-tenancy in our region may be to see the degree of prevalence of absentee ownership on the one hand, and to what extent tenancy rates in the valley differed from other regions such as northern Shawa. According to the first MLRA report mentioned above, by 1967 nearly a third (34 percent) of all landowners in Shawa was absentee, the highest for the whole country. The same data also shows that the ratio of absentee to resident owners varied significantly between unmeasured and measured land. In unmeasured lands, that ratio stood at 1:4 in favor of resident owners, but came almost at par in measured lands (where absentee owners comprised close to 45 percent).¹²

Table 7.1 Relative composition of absentee landownership in Shawa, 1967

Type of Land owner	Land owners		Measured Area		Unmeasured Area	
	No.	%	<i>gasha</i>	%	<i>quter gabbar</i> units	%
Resident	3041	65.51	1524.92	55.42	1646.00	79.68
Absentee	1601	34.49	1226.52	44.58	446.00	21.32
Total	4642	100.00	2751.44	100.00	2092.00	100.00

Source: Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province, p. 38.

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When broken down further by district (*awraja*), the same MLRA data indicates the degree to which the historical processes of regulating land impinged on the evolution of tenural practices in Shawa. Hence, in 9 of Shawa's 11 districts where land measurement had taken place, the total size of measured land under owner cultivators had been significantly greater than the size of land under absentee owners in all but 2 of the provinces.¹³

Also, whereas the ratio of total number of owner cultivators to absentee owners depended on the status of the land (i.e., whether the land had been measured or not, the balance shifting to absentee owners in measured lands), nonetheless absentee owners also existed in unmeasured lands as well though at a significantly lower rate than in the former category. According to the same report, of Shawa's 10 districts where unmeasured lands existed, absentee ownership existed in all except for Chebo and Gurage where it remained statistically insignificant.¹⁴

Most of all, the MLRA data shows that contrary to popular wisdom, even northern Shawa was not immune from the crystallization of absentee land ownership and tenancy arrangements. Thus, while Managasha and Yararena Karayu districts had a high percentage of absentee landownership, respectively at 56 percent and 48 percent, Hayqochena Buta Jira (in the south) had 39 percent, and Salale, Tegulatena Bulga, and Manzena Yifat (in northern Shawa) had 37, 26, and 27.54 percent absentee ownership.¹⁵

In addition to the district and provincial survey MLRA conducted in 1967, the Ministry in collaboration with FAO land tenure experts, also conducted survey of landlord-tenancy relationships at *warada* level for Ada. Ada's selection for this survey presaged the development intervention scheme stipulated by the third-five-year

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Table 7.2 Distr
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development plan (see Chapter Nine). Designed and conducted by T.C. Varghese, FAO's land tenure expert, the survey team comprised seven experts selected from FAO and MLRA.¹⁶ The team obtained its data based on a questionnaire the experts conducted among tenants and landowners on a range of issues including sharecropping rates and duration, tenant eviction and the reasons thereof, population, land size, and land use.¹⁷ The survey, conducted in June and July of 1970, canvassed 111 households from 14 different villages scattered in the *warada*. In determining the extent of Ada land (in terms of measured-unmeasured) as well as the grades (as per the *lam-taf* classification), the survey team relied on the tax registry obtained from the Ministry of Treasury's district office in Nazareth.¹⁸

Table 7.2 Distribution of land according to broad types of tenure and classification for land tax in Ada measured land, 1969/70

Broad tenure type	Fertile	Semi-fertile	Poor	Total
<i>Gabbar</i>	1202	212	62	1476
<i>Samon</i>	852	339	173	1364
<i>Madarya</i>	11	-	1	12
<i>Rist-gult</i>	211	31	9	251
<i>Mangest</i>	17	2	-	19
<i>Waragamu</i>	8	18	4	30
Total	2301	602	249	3152

P.S. By the time the team conducted its survey the category of *rist-gult* had been abolished indicating that the team reproduced data at least several years old (see above).

Source: Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration, *A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda*, p. 6.

As could be read from the Table 7.2 above Ada's measured land amounted to 3152 *gasha*, of which around 90 percent was equally shared between *gabbar* and *samon*. Unfortunately, because the survey team relied on taxation categories rather than ownership titles, the study did not distinguish between independent smallholder farmers

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and tenants, which they simply lumped together in the same category of *gabbar*. The team did, however, note that: “It was the opinion of all the chika-shums that the cultivation in their-respective areas was undertaken in the majority of cases by tenants.”¹⁹ Otherwise the survey does not provide any specific data on the ratio of tenant farmers to smallholder farmers in the *warada*. Yet it leaves the impression that probably the majority of the farmers may have been tenants.

If the above reports are not useful for understanding categories of land ownership, they are nonetheless useful for understanding two key aspects of Ada agriculture. The first relates to the evolution of Ada’s cultivated land in the quintessential trajectory of *lam*, *lam-taf*, and *taf* that had been in the making since the late-19th century and had always been important for taxation purposes. The MLRA data indicates that by 1970 the bulk of Ada land had become “fertile” (*lam*). As the following table demonstrates, the proportion of “fertile” land in three of Ada’s five sub- (*meketel*-) *warada* has reached the 75 percent mark by 1969. Only in the semi-arid (*qolla*) regions of Zequala and Liben was the percentage of “fertile” land relatively small, comprising, respectively, 27.8 and 57.6 percent (see Table 7.3 below).

Table 7.3 Percentage distribution of land according to land-tax classification, 1969/70

<i>Meketel-warada</i>	Fertile	Semi-fertile	Poor
Garbicha	90.2	7.7	2.1
Kajima	97.4	2.3	0.3
Tulludimtu	93.1	6.7	0.2
Liben	57.6	31.4	11.0
Zequala	27.8	44.5	27.7
Total	73.5	18.7	7.8

Source: Ministry of Land Tenure and Administration, “A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda,” p. 9.

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The second type of useful information that could be tapped from the FAO-MLRA survey is the workings of the tenancy system and its impact on agricultural production. One interesting, albeit commonly known, facet of the sharecropping arrangement relates to the fact that a significant majority (about 70 percent) of the landlords were absentee (most of whom resided in Addis Ababa).²⁰ Even more interestingly, the report shows that the majority of the tenants had leased the land for a long period of time (ranging from 5 to 40 years).²¹ In addition, the survey indicated that tenants leased land from up to 2-3 landlords at the same time, while few leased from as many as six.²² The average size of tenant holdings stood at 6.45 hectares, while a significant proportion (one-third) of the surveyed tenants cultivated 2.5 to 5 hectares of land (see Table 7.4 below).

Table 7.4 Distribution of tenant holdings in Ada (in hectares), 1969/70

Size level	Number of holdings	As percent of the total
Less than 1	1	2
1.0 – 2.5	11	22
2.5 – 5.0	15	30
5.0 – 7.5	7	14
7.5 – 10.0	6	12
10.0 – 15.0	6	12
15 – 25	3	6
25 – above	1	2
Total	50	100

Source, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, A preliminary study of Landlord – Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda, p. 12.

According to the same report, the dominant type of sharecropping in the 1960s had been *siso* (one-third) before, for reasons I will explain later, it increased to *equil* (50 percent) in 1969/70.²³

An equally important feature of Ada's tenancy regime had been the preponderance of sharecropping arrangements based on produce than cash. As the following table

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demonstrates, 90 percent of the leases were made on a sharecropping basis and only in few cases had there been cash or fixed rate arrangements (see table below).

Table 7.5 Mode of rent payment in Ada, 1969/70

<i>Meketel warada</i>	Service center	As reported by tenants		
		Rent as a share of produce	Rent fixed in kind	Cash rent
Garbicha	Dankaka	88	12	-
	Godina	100	-	-
Tulludimtu	Koftu	75	6	19
	Tulludimtu	100	-	-
	Dukam	100	-	-
Kajima	Dire	100	-	-
	Buti	100	-	-
Zequala	Wonber	100	-	-
	Bekojo	88	12	-
Liben	Adulala	72	-	18

Source: Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *A preliminary study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda*, p. 15. In addition to the rent MLRA survey found that in a growing number of cases tenants were paying the tithe and land tax. See *ibid*, p. 18.

If the two reports mentioned above provide useful data regarding the extent of absentee landownership and tenancy rates, however they are silent on two key aspects of the sharecropping arrangement as it worked in the valley. First, both studies failed to reflect on how, for example, “legal” land entitlement rights impinged on a range of indices such as land size, land use, and farmers’ productivity. Often those reports focused mainly on the dominant crops tenants cultivated included, such as *tef*, wheat, and chickpea, and the degree to which absentee owners interfered in the production process itself. From their reports it is clear that except for few cases where tenants obtained seed and plow-oxen from the landowners, in the majority of cases it was the responsibility of the tenant themselves to raise capital (in the form of seed or plow-oxen) for each production season.²⁴ Because sharecropping rates were calculated per the size of capital

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each party contributed to the production process and the reported “fertility” of the land (lam, lam-taf, taf), absentee landowners’ minimal intervention gave tenants a leverage to work out strategies to maximize their share. It also gave them the upper hand in deciding on matters pertaining to crop choice, land use, and labor management. On the flip side of the equation, however, was the probable loss that could occur as a result of crop failure (due of drought) in which case the burden would be entirely on the farmers.²⁵

The second important aspect of the sharecropping arrangement the report did not address relates to the social and political contradictions the tenancy system accentuated in the valley. This is important because to valley farmers (both tenants and independent farmers) agriculture was a political, economic, and social undertaking. In fact, owning a piece of land and growing food on it mattered a great deal to tenants and independent farmers alike not only because their livelihood depended on it but also because their political and social standing radiated from it as well.

Share-tenancy’s social and political contradictions have been the focus of most studies on Ethiopian agriculture.²⁶ But few actually provided case-based factual analysis of the problem. A pace-setting attempt was made by Haile Sellassie University’s Law School in the mid-1960s although it was never pursued by scholars since. Based in Lume *warada*, the pilot study sought to investigate the nature and intensity of the battle between landowners and tenants in that *warada* and how the state court handled them.²⁷ According to this study the civil cases filed to Lume *warada* court in 1965-66 revealed that cases involving land dispute—including landlord-tenant disputes, trespass, inheritance, sale and/or transfer, ownership, boundary disputes and related matters--

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accounted for a third (56 of 172) of all the civil cases handled by the sub-district court in the same year. Of the 56 land-related cases, a slight majority (16) involved disputes over rent. That was followed by trespass (13 cases), inheritance (10 cases), land sale and/or transfer (7 cases), and related cases such as ownership and boundary dispute (10 cases). The main causes of disputes involving landlord-tenant relationship involved tenants alleged failure to pay rent on time (14 cases), tenants' mismanagement of the farm (1 case), and landlords' failure to pay appropriate compensation to farmers at time of termination of the sharecropping arrangement (1 case). Landlords filed the first two cases as a tenant did the third case.²⁸

It is striking to note that the majority (11 of the 16) of rent-related cases involved tenants who cultivated land in the *qolla* (semi-arid) part of the *warada* toward the Awash River. The plaintiffs accused the tenants of not paying the rent on time. The defendants pleaded not guilty claiming that their crops had failed due to the evident drought in the region in the 1965 production year but promised to do so as the conditions improved. The tenants also requested cancellation of the rent for the same year.²⁹

The other four cases involved tenants from non-*qolla* regions who also had failed to pay their rent for different reasons. One case, for example, involved an ongoing dispute between the landlord and the tenant. According to the plaintiff, the defendant had failed to pay his rent (amounting to one-third) for two consecutive years in 1964 and 1965. After the first year, the landlord made the tenant sign an agreement whereby the tenant agreed to pay a sum of birr 150.00 the next harvest season as penalty and compensation. As the tenant failed to pay the said amount, the landlord took the case to the court demanding additional 50 birr penalty for damage. The defendant took responsibility for

the claim made by the plaintiff and conceded to pay the 150 *birr*. But he requested the court to order the release of eight of his cattle (allegedly taken by the landlord) so that he could sell some and discharge his debt.³⁰

The one case involving mismanagement of the land involved two tenants. The first defendant was a tenant who had entered into an agreement with the plaintiff for cultivating and protecting the land in return for paying a third of the produce and the tithe. In 1966 the tenant pledged a reduction in his rent due implicating that his crops had been damaged by cattle that belonged to the second defendant (who happened to be his neighbor). The landlord charged both, the first for negligence (for not protecting the land) and the second for trespassing, and demanded compensation from both.³¹

The third case was made by the tenant who accused the landlord of evicting him without paying him due compensation for the kind of long-term improvements he had made on the farm by cultivating it, planting trees, and clearing forests.³²

An interesting aspect of the lawsuits and the courts' deliberations was the length of time they took (often ranging from 3 to 8 months), the preponderance of the judgments in favor of the plaintiffs, and the significant number of cases in which the lawsuits were dismissed because both parties failed to appear before the court. In 9 of the 16 cases related to rent-disputes, the court sustained the claims made by the plaintiffs and required the tenants to pay the rent due. The remaining 7 cases were struck out because both parties failed to appear at the court for two-consecutive hearings.³³

Likewise, the court dismissed the two cases involving mismanagement and compensations for the same reason, i.e., because the contending parties failed to appear to

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court on time. No explanation was given by either of the parties or the court itself as to why the plaintiffs and the defendants failed to appear before the court. But it is probable that they have settled the issue through negotiation with the intervention of local elders that in effect adjudicated on a number of similar cases at the local level.³⁴

The land-related cases, as handled by the Lume district court provide a window to begin to understand the nature and magnitude of the landlord-tenant disputes in the valley. Several of my interviewees also recounted their own personal experience regarding land and tenancy related disputes and the mechanisms of handling them at different points in time.

Most of the stories as told by my informants had a lot of similarities particularly in terms of the contested claims over land, the battles each tenant waged (and often lost) to regain ownership rights, and the mechanisms used by tenants to accumulate land (by contracting as many sharecropping deals as possible). I have chosen several of my informants' testimonies to show the similarities and differences between each case to further elucidate the nature of the contradictions that emanated from the tenancy arrangements and how authorities handled them.

The first story is by far the most mundane. It involved a tenant by the name of Galgalo Chura who battled and lost his land entitlement rights in the wake of the *rist*-rush that engulfed Arsi Negelle:

It [the battle] started in 1949 or 1950 when the claimant came to my home to inform me that the government has granted him the same land I cultivated. He showed me a piece of paper that was given to him by the administrators... I listened to him carefully, as he explained to me that the land I cultivated belonged to the government in the first place. He asked me to accompany him so that he can measure the land and assess its level of productivity. I was not sure what to do but watched him carefully. He

asked me a lot of questions, asking me when I started farming here, what my yields were, whether I have paid land tax to date... I knew from what has happened to others in the area and the information I have been gathering at the time that he was one of the *rist*-hunters. Like most I was thinking how I could challenge his claims. But for now I hesitantly agreed to pay the *siso* (one-third) he demanded from me. Once he left, I decided to take my case to the *warada* court. My point was plain and simple. This was a *wudma* [uncultivated] land I cleared for cultivation six or eight years ago. Thence started a long court battle that lasted more than three years but to ruin the meager financial resources I had. I lost my case at the *warada*, district and provincial court at Asala. In all the courts I went to the judges asked me if I had a proof that the land indeed belonged to me. I knew that they were asking for the *karni* [receipt]...But I replied the land, indeed the whole area, always had belonged to us [the Utta]. I, like all my contemporaries, had turned the pastureland into cropland. I also reiterated to the judges that I was ready to pay the land tax as long as my ownership right over the land is properly restored. My points did not appeal to the judges who ruled that indeed the land was government land that has been granted to the plaintiff according to the law. At all levels I was told to broker peace with the landlord or I should be entitled to acquire an equivalent amount of government land as compensation.³⁵

Another informant described his own experience:

What value does this [story] have now? Instead you educated people tell [the Prime Minister] Meles [Zenawi], if he listens [to you], not to repeat the same mistakes again. Have you seen the 20 [?] *gasha* or so land he has given to [Mohammed] Ala Mudi [the investor] here [near Awasa]? Go videotape that land and show to the world. Many farmers have lost their land as a result.

But if you want to hear my story I will tell you. Why should I care. You see back then [in the 1940s] I was young and energetic. I was rebellious too. I wanted to get married and have my own children. I wanted to become a farmer. I cleared the land, built a house and started farming. My father gave me four cows and oxen. All of the cows gave birth and I was rich.

One day as I was working the land a young *shambal basha* [officer] ...approached me and told me that he has been granted the land as *rist* by the government. I resented his claim and argued that the land in fact belonged to me. I told him that I for one cleared a *wudma* land and started cultivating it. He was accompanied by the *balabbat*. We argued a lot. But they explained to me that he is not here to take the land. All I needed to do was to pay him *erbo* once a year. I consented hesitantly only to regret it later. Exactly 20 years later, another young person came to my farm and told me that he has leased the land from the *shambal basha*. He warned me to pack and leave immediately because he said he was ready to begin

commercial farming in the area. I took the case to the *warada* court. The court asked me to bring any *karni* if indeed the land belonged to me. I lost the case and the land. The *warada* government gave me half a *gasha* of *qolla* land near Lake Langano. I stayed there for five years, until the revolution. I got my land back in 1975 and I still own it.³⁶

Galgalo and Buta's cases are not unique. A number of my informants reiterated somewhat identical stories regarding the new kind of competitions and contestations over land that followed Haile Sellasie's land grants. In almost all cases the outcome had been the same although in the majority of cases the tenants did not opt for leaving the land as But had later. In rare cases, however, farmers' had managed to defend their land entitlement rights. I found the following two cases interesting because they involved the intervention of a third or fourth party (this time, the emperor or his *zufan chilot*) in settling the disputes. The first of the two stories related to a certain Jillo who had deceased by the time of my interview. His story had long outlived him and local farmers were quick to tell his story and heroism. I heard about Jillo's story in one of the several group interviewees I conducted in a place just south of Shashamane.

How come you haven't heard Jillo's story yet? ... Here is what he did. News had been circulating in here that the emperor was in his way to visit Awasa. It was several years before the outbreak of the revolution. Jillo had heard about this [the emperors' coming]. He decided to meet the emperor in person. He came down to the highway. He had a rope [and according to one version a plow as well]. He tied one end of the rope on a tree on one side of the road, and tied the other end around his neck and stood on the other side of the road. When the emperor's motorcade arrived they were blocked by Jillo's rope. The security guards wanted to chase him but Jillo shouted Janhoy justice, justice! ... The emperor asked Jillo what his injustices were. He explained that the landlord threatened his and his family's livelihood by forcing us to leave. The king asked Jillo several questions. Most of all he inquired as to why Jillo did not take his case to the court. Jillo replied he did but lost his case in the courts because he was not able to provide any receipts as a proof. He also indicated that, "my only proof is the land itself and my neighbors." After a short lull, the emperor decided to visit the farm itself. Once they reached at the farm the

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emperor ordered several of his people to assess the farm and make estimations of the crop value, the trees, and the house. The assessors came up with an estimation that amounted to well over 1000 birr. The emperor then deliberated that since you [Jillo] did not have any evidence to prove that the land belonged to you it is very difficult for us [me] to reverse the courts' verdict. However, if the landlord wants you to leave the land then obviously he should be able to compensate you [for the estimated amount] for all the efforts you have made to develop the land. In that case, you have the birthright to get an equivalent amount of government land in the *warada*. Since the compensation requested from the landlord was considerable, the latter had to quit his eviction demand. This was a victory for Jillo but it also set a new precedence in the region. This is the story that has made Jillo a local hero here.³⁷

Certainly fascinating, Jillo's case appears to be extraordinary both in the manner in which the farmer tried to defend his land entitlement rights and the way the emperor intervened in person. Yet it is informative about the complex and sometimes inconsistent ways in which land and tenancy related issues fashioned local politics. The last story I have chosen to recast here is also indicative of the chaotic situation on the ground and the multiple ways in which land-related disputes were mediated.

The story, as told by Nino Abino, relates to a land battle two *rist*-seekers (by the name of Shawl Gabra Sadeq and Sagaye Ababa) fought against Abino Wachifo (Nini's father) over half a *gahsa* of land:

Shalaga Asafa Denqu was a police officer here in Arsi Negelle. He was a good friend of my father. My father was a relatively rich farmer in the area. In 1961/62 Asafa got transferred to Harar or elsewhere, I am not sure. I don't know the details, but rather than retaining the *rist* he had acquired from the government in Arsi Negelle, the officer decided to give it to my father for free. The problem started almost six months after the officer had left. One morning my father received a court order. Shawl and Sagaye claimed that the land my father had inherited from Asafa belonged to them because, they claimed, Asafa purchased the land with money taken from them. Since the officer had left the area without paying them the money back, they insisted that the land should pass to them as collateral. It was a faulty case but the *warada*, *awraja*, and provincial courts adjudicated in favor of the plaintiffs. My dad was unyielding. He took his case all the way to Addis Ababa and appealed to the imperial

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court [*zufan chilot*]. I accompanied my father in all the courts including the imperial court. I will never forget that day [I saw the emperor]. *Janhoy* [the emperor] asked both the defendant and the plaintiffs a lot of questions. His verdict was indisputable. He told the plaintiffs that they could sue the officer for the money he owed them, but they have no legal basis to confiscate the land that rightly belongs to this poor farmer. My father was delighted. The litigation and counter litigation spanned for a total of seven years, and cost my father a lot of money. But it was worth it. My dad was among the few who beat the system always. May God bless his soul.³⁸

By no means necessarily representative, the stories summarized above nonetheless elucidate the complexities involved in the land-rush that followed Haile Sellasie's land-grant and land-sale policies in the postwar period. They are also indicative of the different mechanisms land-seekers employed to accumulate land as well as farmers' responses.

Notwithstanding the severe social and political contradictions it fueled, sharecropping had impacted land use and the pace of cerealization in the valley in a positive way. At times, as it has happened in Ada, this resulted from the landowners' stringent rules regarding livestock farming. According to the FAO/MLRA report mentioned above, Ada landowners were particularly uncompromising in instructing tenants to limit the number of livestock they raised on the farm, often to a pair of draught oxen, one or two cows, and few donkeys.³⁹ But more importantly it is the cereal culture that share-tenancy nurtured and the intense competitions between cropped land and pasture that followed from it that explains changing configurations of land use and crop agriculture's ascendance across the valley. If tenancy arrangements (as one means of labor mobilization and land accumulation) had been crucial to that change, the food market had played an important role in feeding those relationships directly or indirectly.

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7.2 The Food Market: broader antecedents and regional implications

A significant change in the nature and organization of the food market in the period under discussion was the dramatic decline of the export grain market. Compared to the 1941-55 period, the volume of Ethiopia's cereal export declined precipitously in the following two decades. To the contrary, the domestic food market expanded dramatically primarily engendered by growing demand for food particularly among the urban population. Yet this change took place in the context of a reportedly declining production base and drought that became particularly recurrent in the post-1960 period.⁴⁰ The government attempted to address the resultant crisis in food felt in some (notably northern and eastern) parts of the country by importing relief food from abroad. But in the meantime it became apparent that certain regions, such as Gojjam, Arsi, and parts of Shawa (most notably Ada, Arsi Negelle, Mareqo, Alaba, and Shashamane) had to bear the burden to produce and support the growing demand for marketed-food in the post-1960 period. The most direct evidence for that comes from mid-1980s designation of those regions as surplus producing (*terf-amrach*) after they had been so in fact at least for the past two decades.⁴¹

Several factors contributed to the decline in Ethiopia's export food market in the post-1955 period. The most immediate reason relates to the 1956 Suez crisis.⁴² If Middle East demand provided the grist for Ethiopia's food market in the 1941-55 period, the Suez stoppage had the reverse effect in blocking the exports and leading to freight hikes on Ethiopian traders. The Cape of Good Hope was one alternative. But given the nature of Ethiopia's exports--such as wheat, lentils, horse beans and haricot beans--which by

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nature were low value products such a long route could be severely expensive.⁴³

Alarmed by the kind of impact this could have on the country's foreign currency earnings as well as its domino effect on local production, Haile Sellasie's government thought of stepping in to support freight cost until the Suez crisis had been solved. The government contemplated, at least according to an American Embassy report, that: "if prices remain stable it is likely that farmers will plant these [the export] crops again for the coming year. ... it is rumored that the government may pay the difference in freight for some of these items to enable them to be shipped around the Cape, in order to maintain local prices and thus assure the sowing of next year's crops."⁴⁴

No evidence is available to ascertain whether the government did indeed intervene to offset the freight hikes in grain export. All we know is the continuous export of the same food items in 1956 worth an estimated birr 24 million. This proved to be a remarkably low quantity compared to the previous years, and remained even more so for the next decade (see table 7.7 below).

More enduring threats to Ethiopia's one time healthy export food trade, however, came from the United States, Australia, and Argentina who became leading suppliers of food to the international market at about the same time.⁴⁵ First to lose the battle was Ethiopian wheat, the one crop whose market-oriented production had increased since the mid-1930s.⁴⁶ Ethiopian wheat was not able to compete in the market successfully because admixtures found in the local varieties made it unpopular in the markets. On site assessments of the quality of Ethiopian wheat reported as high percentage of admixtures of bread grains, hard grains, and feed grains which simply was unacceptable by international standards.⁴⁷

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In the domestic front too, environmental factors began to menace productivity rather regularly. As far as one can tell from the available recorded evidence, the first of what was to become a series of major climatic stresses took place in 1956 caused not by drought, as would be the case later (in 1958/59, 1965-66, and 1972-73) but by excessive rain. Reporting on the damage the rains had caused in Addis Ababa's food market, a 1956 American Embassy report concluded:

The rains which normally are supposed to have ended by the first of October persisted a little longer than usual last autumn with the result that the teff crop, which is the most common bread-grain in Ethiopia and which is sown during the rains in August was partially ruined which in turn has given rise to a slight shortage of teff in Addis Ababa area.⁴⁸

Tef, of course, was not an export item but the report may be indicative of the vulnerability of Ethiopian smallholder grain production whose performance reflected rainfall variability. As the following table demonstrates, in 1955-56 the ratio of exported food items to estimated production dropped sharply compared to late-1940s and early-1950s figures.⁴⁹ In fact, it appears that only in the case of pulses were exports over 10% of estimated production during the same year (See Table 7.6 below).

Even much more serious than the kind of adverse impact the 1956 Suez stoppage and drought had on aspects of marketed-food production and trade was the 1958/59 drought.⁵⁰ The latter was severe and hit a much larger area, including Eritrea, Tigray, parts of northern and western Shawa, and Hararge, leading to decline in total crop production by an estimated 25 percent below normal.⁵¹ The situation was particularly severe in Eritrea where locust infestation in August-September 1958 led to virtual disaster. It was reported that an estimated 80 to 95 percent of the cereal crops might have been destroyed around Keren that normally supplied up to 50 percent of Eritrea's food

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grains.⁵² Combined with the shortage of seed stocks and abnormally low rainfall in Eritrea during June and July, the locust damage prompted increasing concern over the future grain supply situation in the area.⁵³

Table 7.6 Percentage of exported food items to estimated production, 1955

Crops	Estimated production (1955) (in thousand of tons)	Exports (1955) (in thousand of tons)
<i>Tef</i>	2,652	-
Pulses	530	61.5
Oilseeds	530	44.7
Barley	637	1.7
Maize and sorghum	424	14.9
Wheat	371	2.2
<i>Enset</i>	216	-
Total	5,360	125.0

Source: American Embassy to Department of State, "Economic Highlights from July to December 1956," December 12, 1956, SD 875.00/12-1256. These estimates were made based on 1952 figures as calculated by the MoA. Based on those estimates, the above estimate was made with an estimated 2% annual increase in population and production. The export figures were based on 1955 figures. For comparison of 1950 production and export see George R. Merrell to Department of State, November, 11 1949, SD 84.6131/11-1149. The figures show a considerably high (over 75%) proportion of export to production for wheat, durrah, maize and barley.

The condition in Eritrea, and to some extent also in Tigray and Hararge was so grave that it forced the Ethiopian government to sign the Title II of P.L. 480 agreement with the U.S. on March 5, 1959 for the provisioning of 10,000 metric tons of surplus grain.⁵⁴ Besides, in a desperate attempt to prevent scarcity at home, the government banned export of food materials (except for haricot beans) altogether.⁵⁵ Therefore, the convergence of localized production crisis (caused mainly by drought) and, even more importantly, declining overseas demand radically altered the country's export food market in the post-1955 period. As could be read from the tables below, Ethiopia's grain exports declined steadily during the same period, and the country in fact began to import

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Table 7.7 Major export commodities of Ethiopia, Quantity (tons)

	1954/55	1957/58	1958/59	1961*	1963**	1965**
Coffee	38,614	44,123	41,903	55,800	n.a	n.a
Hides	4,779	4,480	7,888	8,100	n.a	n.a
Goat skins	2,224	2,385	2,763	-	14,465	13,416
Sheep skins	1,831	1,548	2,642	-	-	-
Oilseeds & nuts	45,861	46,132	26,418	45,700	84,864	67,509
Pulses	61,433	43,297	40,559	79,500	68,075	55,171
Cereals	18,913	3,072	75	100	n.a	n.a
<i>Chat</i>	1,544	1,510	2,472	3,200	n.a	n.a
Cattle alive (No.)	19,992	98	48	-	-	-

Source: Ethiopian Economic Review, No. 2, 1960, p. 44; * Ethiopian Economic Review, No. 6 April 1963, p. 129. ** Ethiopian Economic Review, No. 9, 1966, pp. 9-10. Value figures for 1964 show earnings of birr 13.6 million for cereals and pulses and birr 5.1 million for chat. See Regional Projects, p. 3. n.a= not available in volume.

Table 7.8 Volume of major imported commodities to Ethiopia, 1955-59

	1955	1958	1959
Cereals (tons)	744	11,462	55,464
Flour (tons)	60	1,278	10,819
Raw cotton (tons)	2,913	3,376	2,513
Cotton piece goods (sq.m)	33.4	30.5	32.6
Cotton yarn (tons)	15,888	981	1,001
Petroleum products (tons)	67,119	105,693	120,323
Rubber tires, tubes, etc. (tons)	1,143	1,468	1,473

Source: Ethiopian Economic Review, No. 2, June 1960, p. 44.

The decline in cereal exports had been rather dramatic, and reached its lowest point in 1958/59 (during the drought year). Unlike cereals, boom and bust characterized export of pulses and oilseeds throughout the post-1955 period mainly responding to the fluctuations that characterized the international market. Whenever the production and supply of those products declined in the major producing countries such as Argentina (as it did in the late-1950s, mid-1960s and early-1970s), the demand from secondary and tertiary producers like Ethiopia increased accordingly. For example, in 1959 and 1961, the demand for Ethiopian lentils and white haricot beans increased dramatically, tempting

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Ethiopia's exporters to anticipate a similar trend for the coming years. In 1961 a record 79,500 tons of pulses had been exported while export of oilseeds stood at the 45,000 tons mark for the same year.⁵⁶

An enduring impact this relatively expanding export market for pulses and oilseeds had on localized agriculture could be seen in the kind of interest commercial farmers showed to the production of the same crops in the valley and elsewhere (most notably in Setit Humera with large scale farms specialized in the production of haricot beans and sesame). As I will show later in some detail, the attractive export market for haricot beans, for example, had been detrimental to fashioning crop choice in the valley in the early-1970s (see Chapter Nine).

If, in the post-1955 period, the export food market proved to be unstable, and in the case of cereals declining, to the contrary, the domestic food market expanded significantly and steadily. Contributing to this expansion had been a host of factors, including rapid population growth (both urban and rural), increase in aggregate as well as per capita food consumption by the urban and rural (most notably in cash crop producing regions) populations, and the expansion of a cash economy. Building on the trend that had started early in the 20th century and more so in the post-Italian occupation period, urbanization expanded in the country creating in its wake a consistent demand for food. In the metropolis, the population had passed the 400,000 mark by the mid-1950s, and well over half a million a decade later.⁵⁷

By 1960 (and indeed throughout the postwar period) the majority of the capital's urban population depended on the food market for its sustenance. Unfortunately, no recorded evidence is available to measure the size of Addis Ababa's food market any

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time before the late-1950s. Based on her own rough estimates, Sylvia Pankhurst, for example, put Addis Ababa's cereal and pulse consumption figures at around 100,000 tons in 1957. She also extrapolated that the coffee-producing areas consumed "probably more, and the provincial towns a further significant quantity according to official calculations."⁵⁸ Almost a decade later, in 1966, Willis G. Eichberger, relying on survey reports conducted by the Central Statistics Office and the Ministry of Agriculture in 1963/64, estimated urban food consumption in Ethiopia the following way.⁵⁹

Table 7.9 Urban Food Consumption in Ethiopia, 1966 (major items)

Food	Urban consumption (1000 tons)	Per capita (kg per year)
<i>Tef</i>	71.63	42.08
Wheat	20.02	11.76
Barley	39.68	23.31
Maize	52.16	30.64
Sorghum	64.12	37.67
<i>Enset</i>	22.50	1.32
Pulses	52.98	31.12
Fruits and vegetables	74.57	43.81
Chili pepper	6.76	3.97
Meat		32.18
Imported wheat flour	28.59	16.79

Source: Willis G. Eichberger, "Food Production and Utilization in Ethiopia EC 1958," (Addis Ababa, May 1968), 13. Eichberger estimated total urban population in 1968 at 1,702,300 people. He relied on Central Statistical Office data. See *ibid*, p. 1.

Urban population in valley towns also grew significantly in the post-1960 period. Founded in the early-1960s, Awasa quickly became a major urban center during this period. Likewise the total population in the other towns-- Shashamane, Buta Jira, Nazareth, Mojo, and Debre Zeit, Arsi Negelle, Bulbula, Adami Tullu, Zway, Maqi--also grew considerably. A 1967 sampled-census conducted by the Central Statistics Office showed that between them the numerous valley towns sheltered an urban population of around 95,907.⁶⁰ Aside from creating smaller niches to the food market, the towns

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emerged as key market centers frequented by grain traders who bought and shipped food to Addis Ababa.⁶¹

Also contributing to the expansion of the domestic food market, but one that does not often get the kind of attention it deserves, is the growing demand for marketed-food among rural producers themselves.⁶² The recorded evidence on the size of the rural food market is not satisfactory to measure its impact on the domestic food market with a degree of precision. Nevertheless it seems apparent that the expanding cash economy (such as in coffee growing areas or in Addis Ababa's immediate hinterlands) and changing dietary habits among certain rural populations must have impacted the rural food market at one level or another.⁶³

Available study reports on rural consumption patterns and cash expenditure in Shawa in the 1960s suggest such a trend. For example, according to a 1964 sample survey by the Central Statistics Office and the MoA, rural-Shawan households produced around 55 percent of their annual food requirements and purchased close to 30 percent of their food in the markets (see Table 7.10 below).

Table 7.10 Total annual food consumption by Shawan rural households in the mid-1960s

	Household expenditure (<i>birr</i>)	Per capita (<i>birr</i>)	Percent
Food (own production)	144	32	54
Food (purchased)	80	17	29
Other products (purchased)	42	9	15
Services and taxes	5	1	2
Total consumption	271	59	100

Source: Regional Developments, p. 81. See also Imperial Ethiopian Government Central Statistics Office and Ministry of Agriculture, "Report of a Sample Survey in Yererena Kereyu Awraja," (Addis Ababa, 1964). There is also some consumption data for other regions. See, for example, K.C. Mohamed, W.A. Wayt, "Farm Organization, Terre and Galmo Villages, Harar Province," (Dire Dawa: Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, 1965).

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The study does not provide any explanation as to why farmers resorted to the markets to acquire a portion of their annual food needs. It is not clear, for example, whether farmers' participation in the food market resulted from their need to diversify their cuisine, from lack of storage facilities, or from the obligations farmers had in paying taxes (which often compelled them to sale their product early in the harvest season but fall back to the markets to off set household demands later in the year). But there is some evidence indicating that farmers' engagement with the market (particularly in terms of products not produced at household level) did grow in the 1960s. According to the same CSO-MoA survey, average cash expenditure by Yararena Karayu rural households in 1964, for example, stood around 55 percent of their average annual cash income (see Table 7.11 below).

The available evidence strongly suggests that the texture as well as magnitude of the domestic food market had changed dramatically in the postwar period. As I have already indicated it may be difficult to pinpoint the actual impact the domestic food market had on farmers' crop choice, land use, labor allocation and income at the household level. At the regional and sub-regional level, however, transformation in valley agriculture--as could be seen from Ada's specialization in the production of white *tef*, Mareqo and Alaba's success in chili pepper production, and Arsi Negelle/Shashamane farmers focus on potato, green pepper and haricot beans, all of which were not important in the local cuisine--strongly testifies the link between markets and farmers crop choice.

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Table 7.11 Average reported cash expenditure per household in Yararena Karayu *awraja* (Shawa), 1964

	Annual expenditure Per family (in <i>birr</i>)	Adjusted figures (in <i>birr</i>)
Coffee	29	17
Salt	10	6
Sugar	5	3
Chili pepper	17	10
Onions	12	7
Oil	15	9
Butter	17	10
Meat	22	13
Total food	2	1
Tools	3	2
Transport	5	3
Medicine	3	2
Repairs	1	1
Tax (other than rent)	9	5
Total durable products And services	85	50
Total cash expenditure	218	130

P.S. The “adjusted figures” indicate adjustments made by a team of experts under the auspices of SIDA whose report was compiled as “Report No. I on the Establishment of a Regional Development Project in Ethiopia,” (Addis Ababa, October 1966), p. 81. According to this report the average household income of Yararena Karayu farmers was estimated at *birr* 134 (50% lower than the estimate earlier made by the Central Statistics Office and the MoA). See *ibid*, p. 81.

Source: Regional Developments, p. 81. See also Imperial Ethiopian Government Central Statistics Office and Ministry of Agriculture, “Report of a Sample Survey in Yararena Karayu Awraja,” (Addis Ababa, 1964).

Such a view is also strongly supported by informants’ testimonies and evidence from rent-statistics available mainly from Ada. Hence, according to a 1969 Ministry of Agriculture survey Ada farm households’ consumed on average 53 percent of the grain they produced and gave away the remaining 47 percent each year. Of the 53 percent they retained the farmers’ used 13 percent of the produce for seed (for the next production season) and consumed the remaining 40 percent at home. Of the 47 percent they gave away, almost half (23 percent) was paid as rent to the landowners, surprisingly 10 percent lower than the official *siso* rate.⁶⁴ Likewise, the generation of farming systems

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researchers that studied Ada's agriculture in the late-1960s also emphasized the importance of the grain market to the sub-regions' agriculture and vice versa. According to a 1968 Stanford University Research Institute report:

Crops are sold in the markets of Addis Ababa and Debre Zeit. The Saturday market in Debre Zeit is a familiar routine for many people in the area and provide both a business and social focal point. Some farmers transport their crops to Addis Ababa and Debre Zeit, but sales are also arranged with merchants who visit the farms and negotiate transactions.⁶⁵

An interesting aspect of the 1960s domestic grain market has been low inflation. The kind of media, public, and government apprehension that followed the 1958/59 drought mentioned above did not last long although the drought's impact did.⁶⁶ To be sure, the average price index for virtually all marketed-food items rose significantly in the wake of the droughts. As the following table demonstrates, except for haricot beans prices had risen significantly for all kinds of cereals and pulses in all the major urban centers in 1958.

Table 7.12 Percentage increase of prices for selected commodities between March and July 1958 from previous years

	Addis Ababa	Asmara	Dasse	Gondar	Nazareth
<i>Tef</i>	37	43	40	43	42
Wheat	18	37	29	-	-
Durrah	42	34	50	25	-
Maize	68	30	49	-	89
Barley	-	-	48	-	42
Chickpea	19	6	42	58	-
Lentils	39	40	49	-	-
Haricot beans	5	-	13	-	15
Horse beans	42	25	50	-	-
Linseeds	25	7	18	30	-
Niger seed	40	30	22	53	-

Source: American Embassy to Department of State, "Economic Survey, Ethiopia, July-September, 1958," November 13, 1958, SD 875.00/11-1358. For some comparison see also Ethiopian Economic Review, No. 1, 1959, p. 63.

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Yet prices stabilized shortly to adjustable inflation rates by 1962 as regular rainfall patterns enabled farmers to produce bumper crops and increase supply.⁶⁷ The time also coincided with Haile Sellasie's lifting of the ban on the sale of *granted-ris* but there is no evidence that proves that the monarch's decision was influenced by the drought or the volatile urban food market. If anything the drought may have been responsible in convincing the government to intervene in the supply chain of the food market by creating a grain trading enterprise called the Ethiopian Grain Corporation (EGC) in 1960.⁶⁸ Unlike the ENC whose relationship to the government and overt mandate remained unclear, the EGC had been created by a General Notice (no. 267 of 1960), officially proclaimed in the *Negarit Gazeta* (15th year No, 8, 5 May 1960).⁶⁹

When established in May 1960, the EGC was a "limited liability corporation," officially charged to "engage in the purchase, at prices to be fixed by the Ethiopian Grain Board, ...of cereals, grains, pulses and oilseed (hereafter 'agricultural production') and the resale of the same in the export market, and, whenever necessary, in the domestic market."⁷⁰ The EGC was also mandated to encourage "the cultivation of cereals, grains, pulses, oilseeds and similar agricultural produce," as well as "to assist the farmers in improving the qualities of their [the farmers'] produce by assuring to them their fair prices for the same."⁷¹

Projected to function with a capital of *birr* 15 million, the corporation was set to purchase agricultural products from purchasing centers located at different parts of the country for sale in the export and domestic market.⁷² The EGC became operational in 1961 with a bought up share capital of a sixth (2.5 million of the 15 million) which all its shareholders bought (albeit at a much reduced proportion than they were supposed to).⁷³

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The EGC encountered problems right from the outset. One of its major problems, as far as one can tell from the official reports by its caretakers, was lack of sufficient capitalization. The 2.5 million birr did not make the EGC a giant it wanted to become particularly given the fierce competition the corporation faced from small-scale grain traders.⁷⁴ To that was added the minimum price EGC had been obligated to pay to farmers as ceilings imposed by the Grain Board that put, as it often turned out, EGC prices a little more than the market price.⁷⁵ To some extent the EGC overcame those hurdles first by successfully working toward the lifting of the price fixes made by the Grain Board (in 1964), and then by winning the willingness of the Ethiopian Investment Corporation, the Ministry of Economic Planning, and a growing number of individuals to purchase its stock.⁷⁶ By the mid-1960s the EGC was working with a paid up capital of over 7 million birr.⁷⁷

The parastatal found its toughest resistance from landlords and small traders who loathed its monopolistic tendencies as well as its regulatory effects on the market. News reports by *Addis Zaman* attest that land lords and Addis Ababa's grain merchants petitioned to the Ministry of Trade and Industry calling the government to curtail EGC's activities which they alleged was damaging both the farmers and the food market. In one such petition dated Tekemt 8, 1960 E.C., for example, Addis Ababa's grain traders charged the EGC of monopolizing the market by buying grain from the farmers and selling it directly to the public and the city's bakeries. This, the grain traders lamented, was harmful to the farmers themselves who would not be able to sell their products in the competitive markets.⁷⁸ In the end it was through their actions and deeds, rather than through their appeals or government policy adjustments that the vocal or not-so-vocal

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critiques of the EGC successfully shunned the parastatal's envisioned dominance of the grain market. Unsurprisingly therefore, the EGC's overall market share for most grains (but for wheat) remained statistically insignificant for most of the 1960s (see Table 7.13 below).

Table 7.13 Overall market share of the EGC in 1969/70 (in 000 tons)

Commodity	Estimated market demand	EGC's domestic intake	EGC's imports	% total marketed supply
Wheat	94.8	5.4	32.1	40.5
Tef	174.9	1.0	-	0.5
Barley	132.2	-	-	-
Durrah	124.1	1.2	-	1.0
Corn	102.2	1.5	-	1.5
Pulses	101.2	1.5	-	1.5
Total	729.5	10.6	32.1	

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, *Findings of a Market Structure Survey*, Appendix 9.

Yet, at least in one area the EGC's impact may have been far reaching. That relates to its sponsoring of the construction of the modern granaries (*ehel baranda*) in the capital and major food purchasing sites in the provinces. By 1966 the EGC had sponsored the construction of 20 additional *ehel baranda* (there were 20 such *baranda* before) in Addis Ababa at Amanuel and *Gotara*—the latter at the total cost of 3 million birr.⁷⁹ In all the EGC operated warehouses and silos in Addis Ababa had a grain storage capacity of more than 20,000 metric tons in 1972.⁸⁰ In addition, the EGC also boasted of having similar granaries in thirteen different locations, including one in Nazareth (with a storage capacity of 2000 tons of grain) and Debre Zeit (1500 tons).⁸¹

The granaries reconfigured national grain storage and marketing significantly.⁸² But the facilities also became the talk of the city. One cautious observer, in an article he wrote

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in *Addis Zaman* in November 1965, for example, remarked that the government should give priority to the farmers as much as it did to building the granaries. In his article entitled “Filling the Granaries,” the writer remarked that the storage houses need 3 million tons of grain to fill, and it is none other than the farmers that were responsible to make that happen. He insisted that the focus had to shift to enabling the farmers to produce more. According to the same writer, enabling the cultivators to produce more required the granting of *rist* rights as well as credits and modern education so that they will be able to purchase modern farm implements and improved seed varieties.⁸³ His was a different kind of call congruent with the internationally acknowledged green revolution strategy that found its way into the valley after the mid-1960s (see Chapter Nine).

By far the best documented evidence for the extent and functioning of the domestic food market comes from a 1973 MoA survey conducted in eighty *awraja* across the country. A comprehensive survey by any account, the MoA report showed the intricate patterns of interregional grain flows and counter-flows with particular emphasis on major marketed-food crops and pulses. It did so by interviewing grain traders in the principal marketing areas of the country, farmers in the major grain producing areas, government officials, army officers, schoolteachers, businessmen, and commercial farmers from “late summer of 1971 through the end of 1972.”⁸⁴ Reporting on the agricultural marketing systems at work in the country in the early-1970s, the surveyors concluded that:

Ethiopia does not have, per se, a national grain market with, inter alia, clearly defined price movements, uniform grades and standards, but rather two large regional grain markets which are geographically separated. Asmara is the center of the northern market region and Addis Ababa is the “hub” of the southern market.⁸⁵

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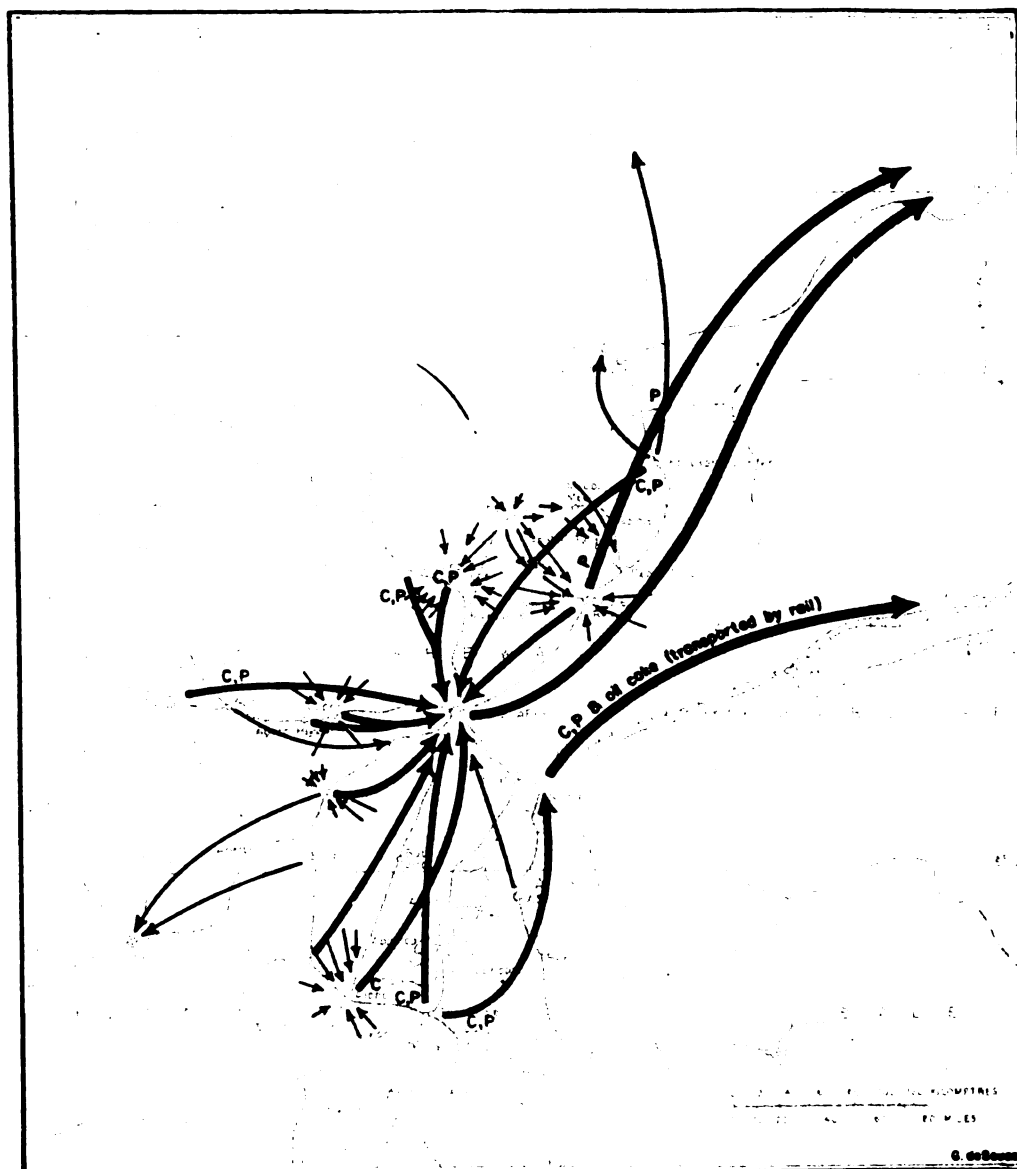
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Yet Asmara and Addis Ababa were nowhere comparable in terms of the size of their markets or the radius from which each acquired their marketed-food. Asmara depended on a couple of its own outlying districts, Gondar, Tigray and Wollo for food. But Addis Ababa was by far the largest terminal food market in the country. The metropolis obtained its food supply from the remaining ten provinces (and some from Wollo as well).⁸⁶

The valley had been one of Addis Ababa's major food supply regions, with Alaba, Shashamane, Nazareth, and Ada being among the chief suppliers of the major food grains, pulses, and vegetables to the city (see map below). Reflecting on the Alaba market, the report emphasized that the estimated 80,000 farmers and "eight or more large commercial farms" supplied the urban market with large quantities of chili pepper and haricot beans, an estimated 1000 metric tons of maize, and 2-3000 metric tons of grains annually.⁸⁷ The report also indicated that the volume of grain shipped from Shashamane *warada* to Addis Ababa (including a small quantity exported south to Negelle Borana) amounted to more than 70,000 metric tons per annum.⁸⁸

Nazareth was certainly the largest market in the region. The town obtained *tef* from Walanchiti and Fora, wheat and barley from Arsi, and maize, pulses, and vegetables from Shashamane that were, in turn, destined to markets in Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Djibouti, and south to Sidamo.⁸⁹ "Several hundred" individual dealers bought the grain and pulse directly from the farmers and transported it to Nazareth (by pack animals and rented tracks) which had a grain storage capacity of more than 80,500 metric tons in 1972.⁹⁰ Reflecting on the volume of food shipped out from Nazareth annually between October 1970 and August 1971, the MoA report underscored:



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- Pack animal and small truck movements.....
- Major export routes.....
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- All pulses including lentils, haricot beans,
chick peas, field peas, horse beans, etc..... P P

Figure 5 Grain and pulse movements in central Ethiopia (1971-73)
Adapted from Ministry of Agriculture *Findings of a Market Structure*, p. 203.

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...the Nazareth market officially exported ...102,600 metric tons of grain. This grain was subject to a local 10 cent per quintal municipal tax and to evade this grain was shipped out at night. Considerable effort was made to determine the magnitude of these night shipments and based on the best evidence available it appeared that the amount was two or three times the amount officially reported. This meant that the Nazareth market was exporting somewhere in the magnitude of three hundred metric tons per season.⁹¹

In regard to the manner in which the valley's farmers participated in the food market, a British land survey team also reported:

[valley] farmers deal with merchants directly at the farm gate and those products for which there is a wider demand (such as pulses and peppers) are bought by merchants who transport them for sale in a secondary or major market, e.g., Awasa, Alaba Qolito, Soddo or Shashamane. From thence, produce is forwarded to the more important trading centers, Addis Ababa and Nazareth, where the produce is bought by exporters or distributed among retailers. Produce may change hands up to five times before it reaches the retail outlets.⁹²

Even without accounting for the grain "shipped out at night" the officially quoted figures from Nazareth and Alaba show not only the significantly large size of the market but also strength of the production base that sustained it.

Conclusion

Building on developments outlined in the previous chapter, in this chapter I have shown the degree to which the changing configuration of the terms of access to land impacted the expansion and entrenchment of share-tenancy in the valley. The saliency of the sharecropping arrangements could be studied from different vantage points. For the purpose of this dissertation I have focused mainly on the degree to which sharecropping arrangements mediated access to agricultural resources. I also showed how, by fulfilling the growing demand for labor and fueling intense competition over land, tenancy

arrangements ensured the rapid entrenchment of crop-based agriculture in the valley and accelerated the pace with which so-called “undeveloped” (*taf*) lands became “semi-developed” (*lam-taf*) or “developed” (*lam*).

Continuing my discussion on the potency of the food market in kindling new kind of interest among elite and non-elite urban land-seekers in the 1941-59 period, in this chapter I have also shown the parameters of the food market in the ensuing decade and a half. Side by side with the food market one of the things that links the previous period to this one is the kind of unique interest the urban land-seekers showed in valley land and the political rather than economic framework they used to promote their own advantages. For the first two and a half decades of the postwar period, the grantees seemed satisfied with rent setting aside production decisions to the farmers themselves. The situation began to change after the mid-1960s following the arrival of a new generation of commercial farmers who were more interested in output than rent.

From an agronomic point of view, commercial agriculture joined the process of transformation toward specialized agriculture that had already started around 1960. Unlike the 1940s and 1950s generation of urban land-seekers, the commercial farmers counted on the power of money to gain access to rural land. And their ability to pay handsomely for rural land and semi-mechanize agriculture had its own bearing on aspects of valley agrarian transformation. Specialized and commercial agriculture’s overlapping history and the new set of contradictions the latter accentuated particularly in regard to small-scale farmers’ rights of access to land constitute the locus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AGRONOMY AND ECOLOGY: SMALL FARMERS, BIG FARMERS, AND DYNAMICS OF SPECIALIZED AGRICULTURE IN THE VALLEY (1960-1975)

In Chapter Five I showed that the two decades following the Italian occupation witnessed unprecedented change in valley agriculture and ecology. Indeed Ada farmers' crop-mixing strategies as well as Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers' integrated crop-livestock agriculture constituted a distinct chapter in the region's agricultural history. In the 1960-75 period both the pace as well as pattern of agricultural transformation accelerated. The result was the growing homogenization of the entire valley region as a site for specialized agriculture that was even more integrated into the urban food market directly. Only in a small segment of the valley in the middle (roughly between Lakes Zway in the north and Langano in the South) did cattle herding continue to be a dominant activity primarily because acute moisture deficiency kept the forces and processes at work elsewhere in the valley at bay for most of the 20th century.

In this chapter, I discuss specialized agriculture's agronomic features, its localized variations, as well as its impact on farmers' labor calendar, land use, and crop-livestock management practices. If specialized agriculture happened to be the valley's dominant feature in the post-1960 period, an equally striking development during this period involved the rapid expansion of medium- to large-scale commercialized agriculture. Its promoters were a new generation of urban farmers who, contrary to their predecessors that seized land as a source of political power or economic rent, exploited land for

capitalistic production by employing modern agricultural machines and inputs. In the early-1970s they numbered around three hundred, cultivated hundreds of *gasha* of land, and produced a range of commercial crops such as wheat, pepper and haricot beans.

As their arrival was a new development, their actions accentuated change in several fronts. Often competing for land, commercial farming impacted the ever changing configuration of crop-livestock agriculture in the valley in its own way. But most of all it were the tenants that felt the brunt of medium- and large-scale commercial agriculture first. In its worst form, large-scale farming contributed to the kind of abrupt rent-hikes (from one-third to one-half) that took place across the valley since around 1969, and eviction in localized places. Tenant eviction started the same year and soon evolved as a factor that increased farmers' sense of insecurity regarding access to land. In terms of magnitude, however, the evidence from the valley indicates that eviction was not as widespread as it is often portrayed in the secondary literature.

8.1 Specialized agriculture and the shifting configuration of crop-livestock agriculture in the valley

From an agronomic point of view what has come to distinguish valley agricultural transformation in the 1960-75 period was specialization.¹ The term, as applied here, refers to the growing dominance of few selected field crops, the degree to which production of such crops impinge on and in fact dictate overall farm-level decisions such as land use or labor and capital allocation, and aspects of commercialization or level of engagement with markets. It is the interplay between these factors rather than the fulfillment of any measurable threshold that mediates the nature and outcome of

specialized agriculture over time and across space. In light of the above considerations, a closer look at Arsi Negelle, Mareqo, and Ada-Lume agriculture in the 1960-75 period reveals not only the preponderance of respectively, maize, chili pepper, and *tef* as field crops but also the manner in which the production of such crops impacted overarching decisions regarding farm management or markets.

All the three sub-regions selected for this study, namely Ada-Lume, Arsi Negelle, and Mareqo underwent change during this time both in terms of field specialization as well as land use. From his agricultural systems vantage point Kuls, the German agronomist who studied the heterogeneity of Ethiopian agriculture in the late-1950s, described the Yarar-Karayu highlands (to which Ada-Lume is part) the following way:

The Yerer-Kereyu Highlands of Shoa, east of Addis Abeba, with extremely swelling and shrinking soils, are for a large part under cultivation (especially between 1500 and 2200 m) and they form a very important grain region. The main cereals are *t'ef*, wheat and barley; maize and sorghum are less important. In addition, many pulses are grown: chickpea, pea, lentil, grasspea, horse bean; also niger seed, safflower and linseed. Field preparations start in March or April with ploughing. Burning of fallow land is often practised. In general, fields are ploughed three times, and after the removal of weeds and the sowing of the crop a last ploughing is performed, except for *t'ef*. Barley and sorghum are sown, during the small rains (March-April), followed by chickpea and horse bean, and in July quite often by some wheat. In the beginning of August again wheat is sown on black soils; chickpea or lentil follow end September on red soils. *T'ef* is planted mid-July on black soils. Pulses such as chickpea and lentil sometimes give two crops a year. On fields sown with chickpea and lentil in April, a second crop of grasspea or chickpea will be sown. Grasspea is usually cultivated on land that is fallow that season. Pulses sown in April or end September are harvested end July or end December. Barley and sorghum, sown in April, are harvested mid-September and December respectively; wheat, sown mid-June or begin August, is reaped mid-November or December. *T'ef* is harvested early in January.²

What Kuls observed in those highlands was the works of different groups of farmers who

had developed a field strategy whereby they grew a range of crops in part maintaining soil fertility. In part too, intercropping and crop-rotation provided workable advantages for those farmers to fulfill their consumption and market needs better. Borton, who studied Ada agriculture almost a decade later, offered a contrasting view:

The general tendency in the area [Ada] is to increase the *teff* and wheat hectareage wherever possible. No new crops have been introduced into the area in the last few years, although red pepper could become increasingly significant in the near future. An increase in maize production is also possible if and when the hybrid maize development program proves successful, and damage by wild animals can be controlled.⁴

Ada farmers' "general tendency" to allocate more land and, by implication, more capital to tef and wheat caught Borton's attention but it did not surprise him. According to him it was the food market that encouraged Ada farmers to specialize in those crops.⁵ Like Ada's growing specialization, Borton was also uneasy about the sub-region's evolving land use practices particularly with respect to its declining livestock sector. Once again he saw this decline as the net result of the reduction of grazing land in the district.

According to him:

Livestock and livestock grazing in Ada has been reduced significantly in the last decade or so, as indicated by the limited number of stock in the greater part of Ada and the scarcity of land available for grazing. The population explosion in Ada—caused by improved health facilities and the migration of tenant farmers into the area—in conjunction with a significant trend towards putting every available piece of land under the plough, has resulted in very little land being left for grazing purposes.⁶

With some qualification this is a plausible observation that resonates well with evidence from informants and similar studies conducted by different institutions at the time. Likely the first such study comes from the MoA's in 1960/61 sample surveys. Its' findings, as shown in Table 8.1 indicate that the size of Ada's grazing land and aggregate livestock

population were inversely proportional to the extent of crop-agriculture. Hence, Ada's lowest cattle population was registered in the Garbicha area which had the highest total area under cultivation. Conversely, Liben, Ada's relatively dry zone, accounted for 65 percent of the *warada's* total cattle population in 1961, five times the average.⁷

Table 8.1 Ada's estimated livestock population (1961)

Area	Cattle	Horses, Mules, Donkeys	Sheep & Goats
Garbicha	4,851	1,516	3,720
Kajima	6,370	2,165	2,198
Liban	60,024	3,468	10,754
Tulludimtu	10,347	2,652	3,588
Zequala	11,049	765	3,037

Source: Bohl, "The Ada warada Sample Survey," 1961; Borton, p.86.

Likewise, a 1970 government study found that Ada highland farmers limited their livestock to only a pair of oxen, one or two dairy cows, one or two donkeys, and a few sheep and goats. According to the same study this was "because all livestock must be carefully herded to prevent crop damage, [as] most farmers consider livestock production uneconomical and keep a few head only because of necessity."⁸

Both testimonies, coming from specialists' farm level observation provide first hand accounts on the link between availability of pasture and farmers' propensity to control size of herds. Yet, the causes that precipitated such a decline certainly go far beyond population explosion. Neither was it caused by farmers' lack of interest in livestock production for sheer economic reasons. In fact, a careful look at the same 1970 government report reveals that even in the wake of the difficulties they were facing, farmers in places of high crop-land ratio were still interested in raising livestock by improving a strategy of straw and stubble feeding.³³ Such a practice of stubble feeding

became particularly strong in places like Dinkaka, but farmers in other parts of Ada were also trying to cope with the challenges of declining pasturage by renting grazing land from the landowners.¹⁰

These were important developments that enabled Ada farmers to keep on average three to four oxen for plow per family but the adjustments were not cheap. For example, in a span of thirty years, the retail prices of grazing land in Ada rose dramatically, from around *birr* 10 in the 1940s to as high as *birr* 30-80 in southern Zequala to *birr* 240-400 in Garbicha (where grazing land was acutely scarce) per *gasha* per annum in the late-1960s.¹¹ Thus, according to Borton:

Every available hilltop, gorge, or the non-arable land is rested out by the landlord on a communal or individual basis. The landlord estimates the amount of grass on the patch of land and charges a rental per animal, per "kirt," or per *gasha*—whatever happens to be appropriate in the area. Landlords...are fully aware of the lack of land in the Ada area and rents have risen steeply as a consequence. Very often, farmers rent a patch of land to obtain an exercise and feed area rather than the grass on it.¹²

If the shifting size of grazing land was an important barometer for studying Ada's livestock population dynamics over time, change in the sub-regions' agriculture took place in a much more intricate and integrated way than a single sectoral analysis could reveal. That is, even though the evidently downward trend in Ada's total grazing area or per capita livestock population is clear and important, it can not be studied in isolation from crop agriculture, markets or the complex question of terms of access to agricultural resources.

Ada's relatively diverse crop reportire and its attendant field technology entered yet another phase of transformation around 1960. Marking this transformation is not only the "over-cerealization" (i.e. in terms of the ratio of grazing land to crop land in favor of the

latter) of the sub-region, but also the dominance of only few crops in the post-1960 period.

In terms of land use, the post-1960 period witnessed the conversion of grazing lands, hillsides and even fallow land into crop fields so much so that by 1969, close to 90 percent of Ada land had been cultivated on a regular basis, 75 percent of which government tax assessors had already classified as “fertile” (*lam*).¹³

Agronomically too, compared to Ada’s past history of crop mixing that spanned several decades before, the post-1960 period witnessed *tef*’s undisputed dominance. A diagnostic view of the available data for the 1960-70 decade suggests that *tef*’s share in Ada’s crop-land ratio grew from 22 percent in 1960 to 63 percent ten years later. Second in importance was chickpea that rivaled wheat. Wheat, whose percentage land-share remained relatively constant throughout the decade at around 15 percent on average, lost its second position to chickpea by a small margin during the same period. However, compared to *tef* wheat’s relative position had fallen rather dramatically, from around 60 percent in 1960 to less than 20 percent in 1970 (see Table 8.2 below).

What is striking about *tef*’s evolving importance in the sub-region is its responsiveness to the urban food market and, equally importantly, the degree to which its production as a primary crop impacted farmers’ field management and investment strategies. *Tef* is almost certainly among Ada’s first cultivated crops but its importance in terms of area as well as output grew noticeably only after the late-19th century and in the context of Addis Ababa’s emergence and transformation both as a political and economic capital of the nation. Therefore, *tef*’s dominance in Ada was a reflection of the farmers’ ability to respond to Addis Ababa’s growing demand for the grain that became even more

pronounced in the postwar period.

Table 8.2 Estimates of land use in Ada *warada* (1960-70)

Crop	Percentage given to crop		
	1960	1968	1970
<i>Tef</i>	21.95	36.96	62.5
Wheat	14.93	19.39	12.0
Barley	8.45	10.87	2.6
Corn	15.20	4.35	1.7
Sorghum	2.13	2.17	2.6
Chickpea	8.10	19.56	13.6
Peas	7.43	2.17	2.4
Horse bean	7.64	6.53	3.4

Source: Ellis, "Man or Machine," p. 17. Ellis compiled the figures based on J.E. Gholl, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Ada District Sample Survey," (Addis Ababa: I.E.G. Ministry of Agriculture, 1961), Table XXI, p. 58; "An Application to the United States Agency for International Development for Ethiopia: The Ada Agricultural Development Project (Addis Ababa: I.E.G. Ministry of Agriculture, 1970).

Because of its superior market potential, *tef* also became a "referent crop" for Ada farmers who would make their long-term decisions on field management and capital investment based on the cereal. This is particularly true in regard to allocating cash or land-based resources, the relative position of livestock in the farm economy, and labor management.

The most reliable evidence for understanding *tef*'s relative position in Ada farms comes from a 1967 Stanford Research Institute (SRI) study. The SRI study is important because it provides useful quantifiable crop data from farms located in the *warada*'s high, middle, and low altitudes.¹⁴ Its findings, as shown in Table 8.3 below, resonates well with the *warada*-wide land use statistics discussed above. It shows *tef*, chickpea, and wheat as the most widely cultivated crops in the district, with some variations in terms of crop-land ratio at a sub-county level and congruent with soil type and climate. While Bokan's

red soils disadvantaged *tef* where the plant grows poorly compared, for example, to wheat, the latter in turn could not tolerate Kajima's black soils that are susceptible to water logging.

Table 8.3 Ada crop mix, 1967

Crop	Sub-district [<i>meketel warada</i>]		
	Kajima (%)	Liben (%)	Bokan (%)
<i>Tef</i>	52	33	16
Wheat	10	8	58
Barley	10	20	10
Maize	-	9	-
Chickpea	20	21	11
Broad beans	7	7	2
Lentils	1	2	1
Sorghum	-	-	2

Source: Miller *et al*, *Systems Analysis Methods*, p. 81.

As could be read from Table 8.3, only a short-list of grains and legumes constituted up to two-thirds of the cultivated area in three of Ada's sub-districts mentioned above. In Kajima and Bokan, *tef* and chickpea accounted for 72 percent of the cultivated area; and in Liben *tef*, chickpeas, and barley accounted for 74 percent of the cultivated area, a dramatic turn around from past trends where crop mixtures (including such oil seeds as linseed, safflower, and sunflower) were a common practice in the district.¹⁵ Borton's 1967 survey found only limited such practices in Ada, with some safflower intermixed in *tef* and wheat fields, rape seed in the Godino area, and maize and sunflower in the lowland regions. Consequently, Borton did not hesitate to pronounce intercropping dead in Ada by 1967.¹⁶ According to Borton the culprit was again the market. He noted: "The original idea of growing crop mixtures dates back to times when crops were used entirely for home consumption. However, the gradual change from a purely subsistence economy

to a partial cash economy is slowly eliminating the need for mixed cropping.”¹⁷

Certainly the casual explanation deserves careful scrutiny before jumping to any conclusion. But there is little doubt that by the late-1960s Ada has already entered into a new phase of specialization marked by specialized agriculture and short fallow. Table 8.4 indicates the pattern of change during 1960-89, the epitome of a long process of the entrenchment of a *tef* regime. The table shows *tef*'s growing field dominance, both at the expense of intercropping (such as a decline in oil seeds) as well as crop-land ratio (such as in terms of barley or wheat cultivation) quite distinctly from past trends.

Table 8.4 Percentage distribution of *tef* compared to other crops on Ada's cultivated land, 1960-89

Crop	1960	1973	1975	1978	1979	1980	1985-89
<i>Tef</i>	37	37	44	49	56	50	55
Wheat	18	15	15	6	7	7	23
Other cereals	17	23	10	5	5	4	6
Pulses	28	24	30	37	31	36	15
Others	-	1	1	3	1	3	1

Source: McCann, *People of the Plow*, p. 223. See also Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity*, p.12.

Perhaps the best illustration for *tef*'s elevated position as what I have termed as a referent crop comes from chickpea production. From Table 8.3 and 8.4 above, it is clear that chickpea was still one of Ada's important crops in the 1960s. The legume had always enjoyed a place in the market but farmers' primary interest hinged more on matters related to soil quality than exchange. Earlier in the century Ada farmers cultivated chickpea to "tame" unkempt land as they started the long-fallow cycles in already cultivated fields. In the postwar period and alongside with shortening fallow periods farmers planted the legume more regularly for its nitrogen fixing quality.

A typical rotation included *tef* (or wheat) production for two or even three consecutive years followed by chickpea for one season.¹⁸ *Tef*'s new attraction to farmers, as I will show later, had decidedly altered fallow or intercropping, putting chickpea once again at the center in the crop-soil-land interface the farmers' have developed over time.

Among the adjustments Ada farmers have made to long-term pressures on access to land as well as *tef*'s seasonal production cycles and year round marketability is reduction in fallow. From the available evidence it is clear that the trend that was once common in Ada, with farmers letting their farms to rest regularly after several rounds of cultivation become a much less frequent enterprise in the 1960s. Hence, the resting of the land which sometimes spanned for up to 15 years has been shortened to just 4-5 years by 1969.¹⁹

Borton who witnessed Ada's agriculture at this juncture remarked that:

Now [as distinct from the past] ... with the scarcity of land, fallowing is slowly being eliminated, no doubt under pressure from the landlords. In the Godina area, land fallowing is permitted, provided that one obtains permission from the landlord. In Kajima village, the tenant can be evicted for fallowing his land.²⁰

No quantifiable information is available to measure the impact declining fallow practices, crop mixtures, and growing specialization had on such indices as soil fertility and crop yield although such reasons run strong in official government and specialist reports as causes for agricultural decline.²¹ A 1970 government study, for example, concluded that Ada's land was "badly depleted" because "cattle manure is not used as fertilizer but rather as fuel[due to] the scarcity of wood, ... no crop aftermath is turned under, [and] it [the soils] erodes easily..."²² Another study complemented declining soil fertility with land fragmentation to explain Ada's (and indeed highland Ethiopia's) agricultural problems.²³ To the government, any such problem relating to declining farm productivity,

land fragmentation, and the vagaries of smallholder agriculture could only be addressed through modernization. As I will show later in some detail, the Ada District Development Program (ADDP), that was conceived and implemented at this time was meant just for that.

Like Ada, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agricultural landscape underwent dramatic transformation in the post-1960 period. The forces of change for the region both north and south of the Awash were the same though the size and depth of the written sources available to us may not be comparable to that of Ada. Unlike the northern part of the valley, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo did not capture the attention of the class of farming systems researchers mentioned above. None the less, the evidentiary imbalance between the three sub-regions considered in this study is to so extent offset by a couple of development-oriented studies that focused on the valley south of the Awash.²⁴ Together with informant's testimonies those studies provide useful information to study change in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture in the 1960-75 period.

As I have shown in Chapter Five, the 1941-59 decades witnessed Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers' growing attraction to crop-agriculture and the entrenchment of integrated crop-livestock agriculture, with distinct patterns in terms of land use, crop choice, and labor management. Just like in Ada-Lume to the north where post-1960 developments led to the consolidation of field management techniques that departed from the kind of regulated fallow and crop-mixing that has been important for several decades before, in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo the same period witnessed a move away from integrated crop-livestock agriculture to concentrated agriculture. Several of my informants from both districts related this change to the kind of pressure expanding

cultivation put on the commons that had been exploited by the farmers before for only minimal annual payments to the landowners.

With growing demand for crop production that fed a new round of competition over land-based resources it became difficult for the farmers to maintain relatively large (one to two dozens) herds of cattle in the post-1960 period. The result had been the replacement of integrated crop-livestock agriculture by concentrated agriculture that resonated well with declining grazing resources and increased marketed-crop production. Further complicating the process were such factors as the use of improved seed varieties (that had already begun to trickle from the research stations), the slow expansion of fertilizer use (mainly from the 1960s), new configurations of existing field crops (such as the planting of maize as a field rather than garden crop), and growing utilization of peas and beans as rotational crops, all of which had become integral parts of the valley's agronomic history starting from the early 1950s. In Mareqo one of my informants talked about the traditional role of peas and manure almost the same way as my Ada-Lume informants talked about chickpea as a "pioneer" crop in the process of field reclamation and the conversion of *taf* land into crop land. In the wake of diminishing sources of manure, which had been going on in Mareqo for the "past thirty years," the farmer applied manure only to the pepper nurseries and almost never used it on the actual farm since the early-1960s.²⁵

In Arsi Negelle, Nini Abino, like several others, underscored that large-scale manure use stopped around the early 1960s, several years before chemical fertilizers became available to many. He added, to his knowledge, only one farmer had persisted in using manure for so long to the "envy of many who had abandoned it [manure] a long time

ago.”²⁶

The documented evidence for Arsi Negelle and Mareqo livestock population as well as patterns of change along the lines outlined above is extremely sketchy. Almost all the survey reports on the country's livestock resources in the postwar decades provide only national and provincial figures with virtually no specification at regional, local or household levels.²⁷ The kind of farm level survey Borton or the SRI research team compiled for Ada is simply unavailable for both Mareqo and Arsi Negelle. I came across with only few first hand reports on the state of the livestock sector in the valley south of the Awash that may be of some relevance. The first was reported by the German anthropologist Eike Haberland who was studying Oromo ethnogenesis in the Arsi region in the early-1960s. From his vantage point in Zway, Haberland observed an agricultural landscape that has changed rather dramatically from what his fellow countryman Max Gruhl witnessed nearly four decades ago. According to Haberland:

The islands of Lake Ziwai are inhabited by the Lak'i, culturally distinct from the Galla and speaking a Semitic language. Their intensive agriculture on terraced fields includes finger millet, sorghum and cotton, manured with dung and ashes of burnt crop residues. Under the Pax Amharica many Lak'i settled on the lake shores, changed to ploughing, and now cultivate mainly maize, t'ef, wheat, finger millet, barley and horse bean. Fallow land, and areas unsuitable for agriculture are used as pasture for the large cattle herds. The mode of life of the Lak'i strongly resembles that of the settled lowland Arusi.²⁸

Haberland's 1963 observation offers a tidbit of information regarding land use and the type of land Zai (or Laki) and Oromo cultivators utilized for pasture around the Lake. Additional evidence for the changing contours of crop and livestock agriculture in Arsi Negelle and Zway comes from a government-sponsored team that surveyed the two

warada in 1970. Not fully aware of the regions' past history the team, reporting on

"cultural patterns of land utilization," remarked:

Used for grazing throughout most of History, the land [south of Lake Zway] has been increasingly cultivated during the past thirty years. Most of the farmers practice extensive stockbreeding combined with cropping, but without the two being truly integrated except to the extent that draft oxen are sometimes used for ploughing and tilling. Grazing land is being overtaken by farmed crops, mainly due to the establishment of large farming estates whose number has not yet been counted but which are becoming increasingly prominent. ...The remaining grazing land is showing clear signs of exhaustion due to overgrazing (invasion by aristide weeds).

Livestock is very prominent as an activity. No proper census has yet been made but previous observations ...show that only few farms maintain only 1 or no head of cattle, those with at least 4 head, and usually between 8 and 20, are very numerous. It can be estimated that 10 percent of the farms fall within the first of these categories, and 30 percent in the second.

The cattle are stunted in size and suffer considerably from the feed shortage occurring at the end of each dry season.²⁹

The remarks the government survey team provide some interesting clues to reconstruct aspects of Arsi Negelle livestock agriculture around 1970. To be sure, because the survey team relied on rough estimates, without accounting for localized variations, its reports may not be necessarily accurate. Moreover, the team focused only on 40 percent of the regions' farmers, leaving at its peril the majority 60 percent. Notwithstanding its pitfalls, the report may be useful on several grounds. First, it is indicative of the fact that livestock production was still a living practice in the area as late as 1970, with approximately a third of the farmer-households raising, on average, half a dozen of cattle each. This is not surprising because in the semi-arid part of the valley around the lakes the pace of cerealization was not as strong as the rest of the valley. Even if one disregards such important localized variations for the sake of convenience, the same numbers indicate that compared to 1940s per capita livestock population had declined by 85-100 percent.³⁰

Second, contrary to the observations made earlier by travelers and reporters indicating that the valley had been endowed with the best grass type and best-fed livestock, the 1970 government report found Arsi Negelle and Zway livestock stunted and suffering from feed-shortage while the sub-regions' pastorage was overgrazed.³¹

Equally interestingly, the once conspicuous integrated crop-livestock agriculture that characterized Arsi Negelle agriculture in the 1940s and 1950s did not avail itself to the survey team in 1970. Little did the surveyors know that Arsi Negelle farmers in fact had been practicing integrated crop-livestock agriculture (specifically meant for maintaining soil fertility and raising cattle as capital) just a decade before.³² If a significant proportion of Zway and Arsi Negelle farmers still raised livestock in 1970, however, both the size of their herds and grazing lands had diminished significantly when compared to pre-1960 figures.

The best evidence for that comes from yet another survey conducted by a British Land Resource Study in 1973. According to the British survey the largest livestock population in the valley existed only around Lake Zway where the average herd size had been 10 cattle per household. To the contrary, north and south of the lakes, the British survey team found that the per capita as well as aggregate livestock figures had declined noticeably across space "as the area of cultivation increased."³³

Several of my informants in Arsi Negelle also indicated that already by the late-1960s the maximum number of livestock an average household could raise had declined below eight at best. According to the same report only few (mainly the semi-pastoralists around the Lakes Langano and Shala where the pace of crop-agriculture had been significantly slow) have managed to raise twice as many livestock during this time.³⁴

If the decline in livestock production in the valley resulted from the convergence of changing rights of access to agricultural resources, markets, and farmers' responses to both, the same processes impacted the course and pattern of crop-agriculture in the region. Maize consolidated its dominant position in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo but the range of secondary crops valley farmers cultivated showed localized variation based on soil type, moisture and availability of labor. Mareqo's equivalent of Ada's *tef* is chili pepper for which the sub-region, together with Alaba further south, had already become the nation's major producer and supplier of the crop to the urban market. According to a 1973 study farmers in the eastern parts of the Mareqo Ridge (around Maqi town) allocated up to a fourth of the total cultivated land for chili pepper, and the remaining three-fourth for maize, peas, beans, *tef* or wheat production.³⁵ And evidence from my informants suggest that in the western part of the district near Koshe town, the percentage could be reversed, with pepper accounting for up to 75 percent of the field during its production season.³⁶

Table 8.5 Cropping patterns among mid-Maqui farmers (1972)

	Percentage of farm area	Reported average yields (q/ha)
Maize	47	7.2
Peas and beans	22	3.8 (dried)
Pepper	16	2.8
<i>Tef</i>	6	5.2
Other	9	-

Source: Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, p. 118.

South of the Mareqo Ridge, in the area extending between Lakes Shala and Awasa, the British land survey found maize as the dominant crop supplemented by wheat and potato.³⁷ Likewise a preliminary sample survey conducted by USAID (in 1970) in the vicinity of Shashamane, showed that maize was the dominant crop, occupying over half

of the cultivated area, while *tef*, beans, potato, wheat and barley accounting for a further 30 percent.³⁸

None of the major cultivated cereals and legumes was new to the region. The major change that took place during the post-1960 period relates to the changing configuration of land use (in terms of the relative balance of cultivated crops), the introduction of new seed varieties (most notably maize and wheat varieties that had been tested at the experimental stations), and the mechanisms of soil management that differed from the application of manure that was common in the 1941-59 decades.

The post-1960 period also witnessed the introduction of the Irish potato as a new field crop and its rapid expansion in the sub-region. No recorded evidence is available to pinpoint the origin and relatively fast expansion of potato cultivation in Arsi Negelle and Shashamane. Several of my informants traced its origin to Wolayta where migrant (tenant) farmers introduced the crop as they contracted land in the area for share-tenancy. First cultivated by a small group of farmers in the early-1960s, the Irish potato became an attractive marketed-food crop highly demanded by Addis Ababa merchants. Just in few years the crop found its niche in the Shashamane area where, by the mid-1970s, it comprised on average up to a third of the cultivated area in farmers' fields.³⁹

Another new introduction to the sub-region's crop repertoire had been haricot beans. Like the Irish potato, haricot beans got its way to the south from outside, in this case probably from the capital as introduced by commercial farmers who had been active in the area since the mid-1960s.⁴⁰ As the impetus for Irish potato cultivation came from Addis Ababa's food market, that of haricot beans came from the European export market. Specifically it was the dramatic upsurge in prices caused by worldwide shortages of

pulses and increasing demand in Europe in the early-1970s that stimulated haricot beans production in the valley. With price tags more than doubling from \$400/ton in 1969/70 to more than \$1000/ton by the end of 1972, large- and small-scale farmers in Zway, Arsi Negelle, Alaba, and Shashamane responded quickly by allocating more land and time for haricot beans production.⁴¹

Reflecting on the extent to which valley farmers cultivated haricot beans, the British land survey team remarked:

The Galla [Oromo] Plains around Zwai was formerly rangeland used by the Arissi tribe to graze cattle during the rainy season. Increasing settlement has effectively confined the pastoral remnants of the tribe to areas in the vicinity of the Mareqo Ridge, a considerable distance from water...

The basic pattern of agriculture is similar throughout the Zwai area. The natural conditions favour the culture of haricot beans, and this crop has become the main source of cash income for many farmers. The proportion of farm area under beans tends to increase with farm size. Among smallholders, maize occupies about 55% of the cropped area, and beans 35%, the remainder being under other cereals, lentils and peppers. Average smallholder farm size is 1.9 ha, made up of 2 plot. Crop yield may be poor even in years with adequate rain (beans 8q/ha; maize 6-9 q/ha; in other years cropping is extremely uncertain.⁴²

According to the same report, in 1972, in the Awasa-Alaba area allocated an estimated **145,000** hectares of land for haricot bean production alone (see Table 8.6 below). Further **north**, around Zway haricot beans production in fact radically altered the landscape that **seemed** to have been lagging behind in the on-going cerealization process of the valley. **According** to the British land survey team, in 1973 farmers around Lake Zway were **allocating** more than a third of their fields for the new legume, as the region evolved as a **major** center of crop production.⁴³ The description of the British land survey team **summarizes** the overall pattern of change in Zway agriculture nicely:

Nearly half of the arable land [in the area surrounding Lake Zway] is

cultivated by farmers. Tenancy agreements are usually contracted verbally and last for a year... Rents may be paid in cash (birr 20-40/ha), or landowners may devolve land and other taxes to their tenants. Many tenants have cultivated their land for a number of years, although some do more from time to time...⁴⁴

Table 8.6 Estimated total cultivated area under haricot beans production in Awasa-Alaba (1972)

Area	Estimated area (ha)
Around Shashamane	25,000
Shashamane/Alaba Qolito area	100,000
West shore of Lake Awasa	20,000
Total	145,000

Source: Makin *et al.*, Development Prospects, p. 58.

Around Maqi and Bulbula Rivers too, where there had already been strong propensity *for tef* and wheat production among smallholder and tenant farmers, haricot beans made *significant* presence and quickly evolved as a major cash crop at this time.⁴⁵ As it turned *out, however*, following the rapid-stabilization of prices and demand by the mid-1970s, *haricot* beans production also declined in the valley leaving its brief but penchant legacy *in the* memories of the farmers and probably also of the landscape itself.⁴⁶

The introduction of new crops and the consummate reconfiguration of old crops *resulted* in significant adjustment in terms of land use, soil management, and farmers' *annual* labor calendar. To be sure, farmers carefully calibrated land use and crop choice *by practicing* crop rotation, which was also vital to maintaining soil fertility. Beans *helped* fix nitrogen to the soil, an advantage evident to the farmers in yield increase in *other* crops following the cultivation of the legume almost on annual basis. The shift

between maize and wheat or pepper (depending up on suitability of climate and soil) also helped farmers to maintain average yield while maximizing household income.⁴⁶

Table 8.7 Farming calendar in Arsi Negelle, Shashamane, and Alaba Qolito (early-1970s)

Month	Maize	Beans	Sunflower	Red pepper	Wheat
January					
February	P				
March	S				
April				N	
May			P	P	
June		P/S	S		P
July					S
August	R				
September	H	H			
October					
November			H	H	H
December					

P.S. P= Plowing; S= Sowing; R= Ripening; H= Harvesting; N= Nursery planting; p= planting out

Source: Ministry of Community Development et al, SORADEP (Southern Regional Agricultural Development Programme) Phase II: A Feasibility Study of the Five Year Development Programme (1975-1979: Appendixes (Addis Ababa, 1974), p. 2.

Like land use, farming calendar had to be adjusted according to the specific demands of the crops and farmers own priorities. Nonetheless aside from the probable impact concentrated agriculture had on labor intensification, no significant change took place in terms of farmers' annual labor cycle from the decade and a half before. As could be read from Table 8.7 maize production in Arsi Negelle and Shashamane took place from February (beginning of field preparation) to mid-November (harvest time). Beans production took less than four months, generally confined to the rainy season between June and mid-September. Wheat, sunflower, and chili pepper production took more than six months, which generally followed the sowing and harvesting seasons for maize by

two to five weeks.

Undoubtedly the greatest challenge to the range of valley farmers--but more directly to the numerous tenant cultivators—came from a new generation of commercial farmers who saw in the region the potential for large-scale food production and mechanized agriculture.

8.3 Big farmers and new rounds of competition over access to agricultural resources

The genesis of commercialized farming in the valley is intertwined with Ethiopia's postwar developmentalism. In fact, symptomatic of Ethiopia's three five-year-development plans had been both the desire to modernize smallholder agriculture and encourage medium- and large-scale mechanized agriculture.⁴⁷ If the government devised *the* community and package intervention schemes to modernize smallholder agriculture, *it also* encouraged the taking shape of medium- and large-scale commercial farming *through* concessions, credit, and tax exemptions specifically meant for the importation of agricultural machinery and fuel.⁴⁸

Two key developments beg special treatment to begin to understand the interface between government policy and individual action in the process of the articulation of commercial agriculture and valley agrarian transformation that became particularly evident in the 1966-74 period. These were: (1) the establishment of the Agricultural and Industry Development Bank (AIDB) in 1951, and (2) the tax exemptions the government accorded to the importation of fuel and agricultural machinery in 1968.⁴⁹

The history of an organized (institutionalized) agricultural credit system in Ethiopia goes back to 1945 when the government established the Agricultural Bank (later

expanded and renamed as the Agricultural and Commercial Bank or ACB in 1949).⁵⁰ The ACB's main activity was the granting of small agricultural loans to farmers who had lost their cattle during the Italian occupation. According to the bank's rules, farmers who could provide evidence for loss of cattle due to the adverse effects of colonial Italy's policies or actions were entitled for a loan ranging from *birr* 500 to 1500, which they had to pay back in three years time. Statistics regarding the number of farmers who did qualify and benefit from such bank loans is not readily available, but sources indicated that farmers in parts of the expanding province of Shawa were among the first to benefit from the agricultural credit system the bank has put in place.⁵¹ This was particularly so after the incorporation of the ACB into the newly established Development Bank of Ethiopia in 1951. Established with an authorized capital of 13 million *birr* (more than a third of which was obtained in the form of a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in 1951), the bank scaled up the granting of small agricultural loans to farmers from its main office in Addis Ababa and the three branch offices it opened in the coffee growing regions of Jimma (1953), Gore (1956), and Yirgalem (1958).⁵²

The bank released its first major agricultural loan in 1957/58 to an Ethiopian-Greek company that started plantation agriculture over 8,000 hectares of land near Matahara in the Awash Valley for the production of rice, peanuts, and sugar.⁵³ The bank also granted loans to several medium-scale coffee, cereal, and vegetable growers from Harar, Sidamo, Shawa, Arsi and Gondar. But almost always the creditors were urban-based commercial farmers who were able to provide the required collateral in the form of fixed capital (such as urban property).⁵⁴

As Table 8.8 demonstrates, the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), as it came to be known, provided considerable amounts of cash in the form of loans to an emerging urban-based group of farmers who have come to own and/or lease rural land for the production of cash or marketed-food crops.⁵⁵

Table 8.8 Loan granted by the Development Bank of Ethiopia to agriculture, 1951-69

Type of agriculture	No. of loans	amount in <i>birr</i> (millions)	percent	average size of loan
General	657	10.8	54.4	16,180
Coffee	1527	7.6	38.2	4,980
Small	1285	1.5	7.5	1,168
Total	3468	19.9	100*	5,740

* Does not total 100% due to rounding off.

Source: Development Banking in Ethiopia, "The Ethiopian Economy: Selected Topics," (AA: CBE, 1970), p. 101; see also "Table 15: Loan statement of the Development Bank of Ethiopia, 1954-1958" in *Ethiopian Economic Review*, No. 1, 1959, p. 83, *ibid*, No. 3 (1960), 45-46.

In August 1970 the government re-organized the ADB as the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank S.C. (AIDB). Led by prominent and high-ranking government officials like Mamo Tadasa (Minister of Finance), Ababa Ratta (MoA) and Menasse Lemma (Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia), the AIDB received significant grants from the government and garnered credit from the International Development Association. Consequently, the AIDB revamped its credit to individual and corporate venture capitalists the majority of whom invested in agriculture.⁵⁶

As the shown in Tables 8.8 and 8.9 the AIDB disbursed credit amounting to over *birr* 45 million for agricultural development in two decades (1951-1972) alone. Even though the categories used fail short of the exact composition of the farmers involved, they are indicative of the fact that those in the "general category" (comprising medium-scale farms) appropriated the lions' share of the available credit.

Table 8.9 Loans approved and disbursed by AIDB between August 1970 and July 1972

Sector	Approved		Disbursed		Disbursed against approvals of prior institutions birr
	birr	%	birr	%	
Agriculture	34,464,252	63	25,092,477	58	440,060
Industry	12,605,946	23	10,845,246	25	1,681,710
Service & others	7,318,846	14	7,164,712	17	310,706

Source: AIDB, Annual Report, 30th Sane 1964 (7 July 1972), p. 28.

To be sure, smallholder farmers also got access to the credit mainly by forming farmers' cooperatives although such cooperatives fetched only a small portion of the loan that went to the agricultural sector. For example, the Alamaya Farmers Cooperative was among the first farmers' cooperatives organized in the country with the close supervision of the Alamaya Agricultural College. Established in May 1963 by 400 co-operating farmers, who raised 15 *birr* each for membership dues, the cooperative sought to promote livestock and vegetable production for the domestic and foreign market. Several such farmers' cooperatives sprang up in the late-1960s and most took loan from the AIDB.⁵⁷

Nonetheless, AIDB's data strongly suggests that venture-agriculturists (mainly based in the urban centers) appropriated the bulk of the available credit earmarked for agricultural development. By organizing co-operatives (the often cited case being the Walkayit/Setit Humera Co-operative Society) or working individually, urban venture agriculturists benefited from the credit system more than their rural based smallholder counterparts.⁵⁸ As such, institutionalized credit provided yet another opportunity for urban-based farmers to raise seed money which they needed to lease or buy rural land and start commercial farming in the 1960s and early-1970s.

To the availability of agricultural loans must be added the kind of duty exemptions the

government introduced in 1968 for the specific purpose of “encouraging” modern agriculturalists and food production. Earlier, imports of such items faced a transaction tax of 12 percent *ad volorem*, an Addis Ababa municipal tax of 1 percent, a chamber of commerce fee, specific excise taxes, and import duties.⁵⁹ Following the promulgation of the Third Five Year Development Plan in 1968, however, the government permitted the importation of agricultural machinery, spare parts, and fuel duty and tax free as a means to encourage agricultural development. By significantly ameliorating the start up costs, the tax exemptions made investment in commercial farming a feasible undertaking for the country’s new venture agriculturists. Not coincidentally, therefore, the late-1960s witnessed the sprouting of mechanized farms in the valley and other parts of the country.

So far little appreciated by scholars, it is in the broader context outlined above that we need to situate the emergence of the new generation of commercial farmers and the expansion of mechanized agriculture in Ethiopia. Indeed, as a 1969 Ministry of Agriculture report on Ethiopia’s mechanized farms revealed, commercial /mechanized farming rose rapidly with tractor-operated-farms operating in a total of four-dozen locations and with major concentrations in Setit Humera (in Gondar), southern Wollo, Chilalo (in Arsi), Jijjiga (in Harar), and the Rift Valley (see figure below).

Like its origins, commercial agriculture’s social composition is marred with quick generalizations. The existing social science literature does not distinguish the commercial farmers from the absentee landlords, and posit the landed class as a monolithic group that did not change from Menilek’s time.⁶⁰ However, a closer look at the evidence reveals that the commercial farmers were distinctly different from the absentee owners in their social composition and interest and the groups of individuals

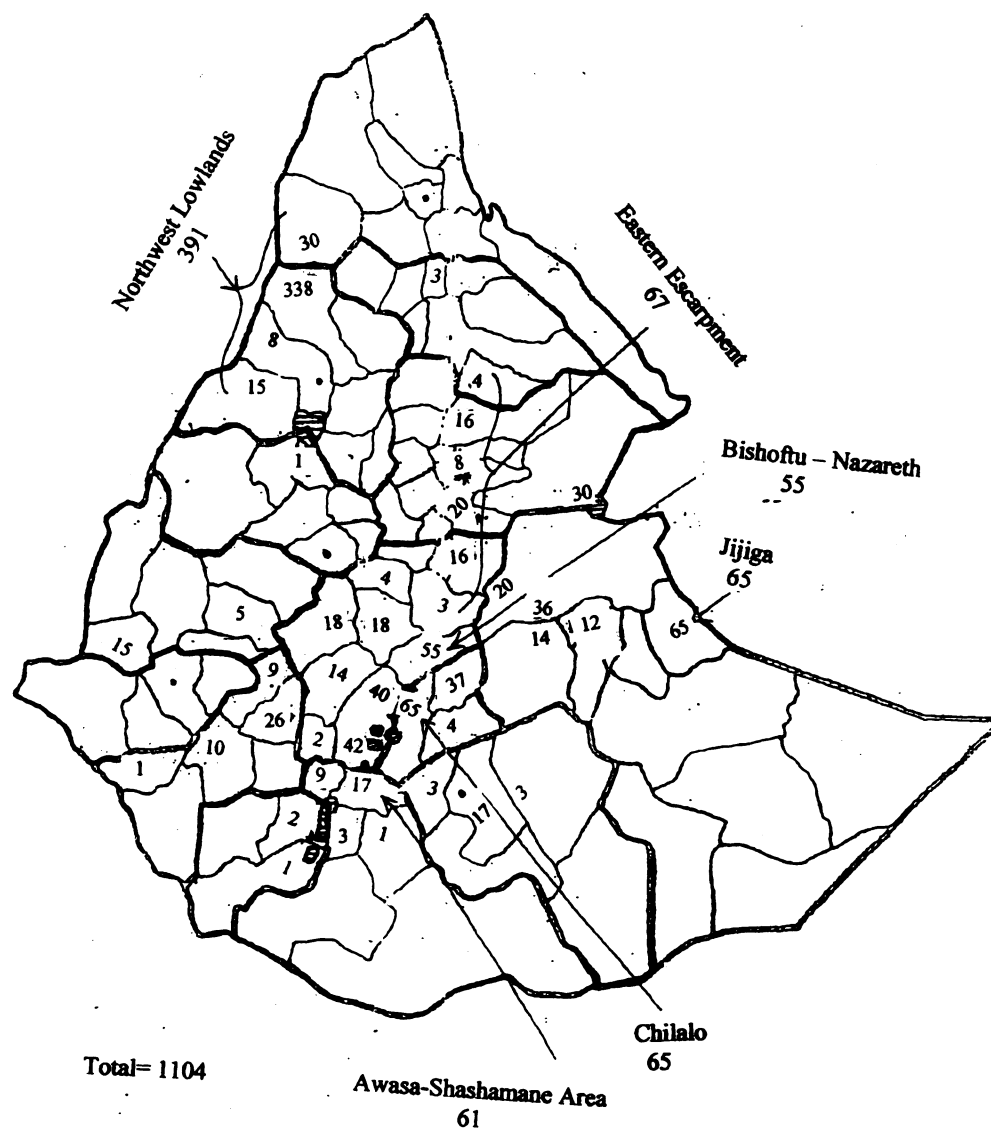


Figure 6 Privately owned tractors and machine operated farms, May 1969
Adapted from Ministry of Agriculture, "Major Activities in 1961 E.C.," p. 33a

that had a stake on rural land had been constantly changing throughout Ethiopia's modern history.

As I have shown before, one of the most profound developments that took place in the postwar period had been the dramatic enlargement of the food market. I have argued that one of the most enduring impacts of the postwar food market had been the kind of *rist*-rush and sharecropping arrangements it fed and depended up on for its sustenance. Valley agrarian transformation in the postwar period took place in the context of the food market and the competitions and contradictions it fueled in terms of access to resource control and product appropriation. The economic leitmotif for the *rist*-rush that accompanied imperial land grants came from the food market itself. But already by the mid-1960s the era of imperial land grant had entered into its final phase. Compared to the 1940s and 1950s when the government relaxed its land-grant policies and from which thousands of land-seekers (both rich and poor) benefited, in the post-1965 period only limited grants were made under the rubric of "special grants" that by law were the prerogative of the emperor himself and one which he implemented cautiously.⁶¹

By the mid-1960s the urban land seekers had already snatched virtually all valley land that could be taken as individual property. It is no accident therefore that amidst this growing saturation of *rist* or private land emerged a new demand for liberalizing the land market itself by legalizing the sell of granted land (*rist*) in the open market. Therefore, when the government sanctioned *rist*-sell in 1959, there was already a growing land market particularly in places known for production of cash (most notably coffee) and marketed-food crops.⁶²

It is in the context outlined above that we can begin to understand the changing

configuration of the land market in the post-1960 period. There is some evidence (mainly coming from individual life narratives) to suggest that the chief forces behind the new land-market were a distinct group of venture-agriculturalists who had developed a different kind of interest in rural-land in the post-1960 period. In their social composition and motivation, the new urban-based rural-land-seekers were different from the old-generation of *rist*-seeking absentee landowners on several grounds. Perhaps the most evident distinction between the two groups manifested itself most in the kind of divergent interests both had developed on agriculture. To the absentee landowners land had been both political and economic capital. As I have already shown before, most, if not all, absentee landowners acquired rural land through political channels. The sharecropping arrangements satisfied them precisely because it created a working balance in their quest for controlling land and appropriating agricultural produce in the form of rent.⁶³

For the new generation of venture capitalists, land was primarily economic capital. When possible they preferred to buy the land, but often times (as it happened in the valley) they were content with leasing the land from the absentee landowners because what they wanted was the produce not the land itself. At least as far as one can tell from the available oral evidence, in the valley the majority of the new generation of urban-farmers did not have *rist* or private land before. There is ample evidence to substantiate this point. The most elegant example comes from Tedla Desta, Ada's well-known commercial farmer. As I will show later in some detail, Tedla, who epitomized the new generation of mechanized farmers in the valley, did not belong to the old-generation of absentee landowners as he did not own any land in the region before.⁶⁴ Likewise, the majority of the commercial farmers around Shashamane and Arsi Negelle, as far as one

can tell from informants' testimonies, were recent arrivals to the region and did not own *rist* or private land in the area prior to the mid-1960s.⁶⁵

The evidence is also suggestive that the new-generation of commercial farmers also differed from the old in their social composition as well. As far as one can tell from the sporadic available evidence, it is highly probable that the new-generation of commercial farmers were educated or semi-educated and relatively young. In part they acquired seed money from AIDB loans, but some did indeed manage to mobilize capital from other (individual) sources as well. But all were capable of buying or leasing rural land at inflated prices, in which their growing interest for farming had contributed a great deal. If political and legal channels had been the sole mechanism through which the old-generation of landowners acquired rural land in the past, the market had been the domain of the new.

This does not mean that the old-generation of landowners withdrew from the game completely. Such a neat transformation did not take place. While a considerable number of the old-generation of absentee landowners were willing to lease (and in some cases sell) the land, others participated in the land market differently. While only few transmogrified to become venture agriculturists themselves, often by resorting to mechanized agriculture, the majority chose to withdraw from agriculture only temporarily by leasing their land to commercial farmers. Still others (both north and south of the Awash) maintained their position while hiking tenancy rates from *siso* to *equl* (as it happened in Ada) or from *birr* 20-40 to *birr* 30-50 per annum (south of the Awash).⁶⁶

In practice too the new-generation of commercial farmers distinguished themselves

from the old through their unique reorganization of factors of production. If land for the old- generation of *rist* seekers was fixed capital that could be exploited in perpetuity, for the new-generation of capitalist farmers, however, it was a resource that could be tapped intensively. Also, if most though not all, of the grantees owed their legitimacy to service to the government, the new venture capitalists brought economic capital (in the form of cash) to the game rather than political capital. True, some may have been politicians and/or key government figures in the bureaucracy or the army, but that had very little to do with the arrangements they now entered into. Most of all they were entrepreneurial individuals who saw in agriculture and the food and cash crop market a growing and lucrative business.

In regard to labor, the second key factor of production, at least theoretically, the commercial farmers showed little or no interest in sharecropping arrangements that has been the hallmark of absentee landlordism in the immediate postwar era. This was so because ideally the commercial farmers' could mobilize capital—the third factor of production—to buy or rent machinery that by its very nature militated dependence on a large pool of tenant labor.⁶⁷

Organization of commercial farms in the valley

The best evidence for the organization of the commercial farms and their impact on valley environment and society comes from farming systems research, government surveys, and development studies. For the region south of the Awash, the best-recorded evidence comes from the British land survey mentioned before. Particularly concerned with existing land use practices and the prospect of developing the entire southern Rift

Valley, the British team witnessed the expansion of medium- to large-scale agriculture in the region first hand. The teams' brief assessment of the contours of commercial agriculture is worth quoting:

Commercial farming is practiced [in the valley] in many localities north of 6°N, often on land formerly used by nomadic pastoralists. In the case of large holdings in populated areas, the landowner usually lets his land to tenant farmers. Recently, however, there has been a tendency for landlords to displace their tenants, so as to manage the amalgamated property as a commercial enterprise. On the Northern Plains, commercial farms specialize in the production of haricot beans. In the Awasa Caledra, maize is the most important crop... On the Central Plain there are numerous commercial farms producing haricot beans, maize and sunflower... Some farms have recently started to use brackish water... In several instances, especially near Lake Zwai, smaller farms employ pumps to irrigate plots adjacent to water supply.⁶⁸

The dominant, though seemingly obvious, theme that runs in the survey is the degree of dependence between the commercial farms and the national food market. Almost all the products the farms' specialized on such as *tef*, chili pepper, wheat, and a range of vegetable crops targeted the urban food market. The only exception to that was haricot beans which quickly became a dominant field crop in the 1970s owing to growing demand in the export market that fetched up to birr 200 net income per hectare compared to birr 50 for *tef*.⁶⁹ The team complemented its overall assessment of mechanized agriculture in the valley with specific interjections of the size of commercialized farms, field organization, aspects of tenant eviction, and markets. According to the same report, commercial farmers owned/cultivated on average 100-200 hectares of land while few managed to cultivate as large as 800-2400 hectares.⁷⁰ However, the survey offers very little on the inner workings of the commercial farms but did not fail to mention the link between mechanized farming and tenant eviction. Reflecting on this particular subject the

British land survey team remarked:

In the Central Plains [between Lakes Shala and Awasa] large estates of 100-200 ha ...occur. Many of the large-scale farmers, previously absentee landlords, are now farming themselves, thereby displacing their former tenants. [The evicted tenants have been] forced to marginal areas near the Mareqo Ridge... [Here, the commercial farms] grow haricot beans and little maize.⁷¹

In addition to the British land survey team, the Swedish political scientist Stahl also observed the taking root of commercial farming around Shashamane during his dissertation field research in 1973. From his "mode of production" vantage point, Stahl remarked:

This [the landlord-tenant] pattern is now in a process of change, a process which began in the mid 1960s and accelerated at the turn of the decade. The trend is towards large scale commercial farming. Shashamane and [Arsi] Negele Woredas have become centers in this process, which is a result of the Government's policy of encouraging large scale mechanized farms as a vehicle of development.

...The existence of a domestic market demand for cereals in the towns made a number of wealthy people respond to the Government sponsored credits and subventions and drew them into agricultural production. The cash crops grown have been wheat, maize, teff and, since 1973, haricot beans.⁷²

Specifically it was the on-going FAO/FFHC fertilizer scheme (which I will discuss in the next chapter) that Stahl held responsible for the new kind of interest urban entrepreneurs showed in valley commercial farming (see Chapter Nine).⁷³ Even though the causal explanations go far beyond Stahl's quick generalization, nonetheless his observations provide some useful data to reflect on the contours of mechanized agriculture in parts of the valley. Of particular relevance is his report on the size of individual commercial farms and the amount of machinery they in the 1968-74 period. Based on unofficial data he obtained from the Shashamane *warada* EPID office, Stahl reported that the largest

mechanized farm in Shashamane and Arsi Negelle comprised about 30 *gasha* while the median size was 2 to 5 *gasha*.⁷⁴ In regard to the amount of machinery commercial farmers utilized in the two *warada*, Stahl's findings indicated that just in less than seven years the total number of tractors in the two *warada* grew from three in 1968 to 150 in 1974 (see Table 8.10 below).

Table 8.10 Number of operating agricultural machines in Arsi Negelle *warada*, 1969-72

Year	tractors	harvesters
1968	3	1
1969	5	3
1970	19	5
1971	37	12
1972/73	150	n.a.

P.S. Number of harvesters for the 1972-74 is not available.

Source: Stahl, Ethiopia, p. 134.

Stahl's study also provides interesting clues regarding the social composition of Shashamane and Arsi Negelle commercial farmers. According to him, the "landed gentry" comprised two groups. In the first category he included what he called "descendants of Menelik's grantees or [those who] have received [land] grants from Haile Sellasie." The second group comprised of individuals who did not own land in the valley before the onset of mechanization. Mainly composed of "retired army generals and civil servants," the latter enjoyed access to rural land through purchase or lease, once, according to Stahl, "it became known that large scale commercial farming would pay off in Shashamane-[Arsi] Negelle."⁷⁵ Unfortunately Stahl did not pursue the subject in any depth or length, but he did mention that the second group, i.e. those who contracted land from "a large landlord or from the Government for a period of five to fifteen years," had been the catalyst in promoting mechanized agriculture in Arsi Negelle-Shashamane.⁷⁶

Yet Stahl lumps together both the first and second groups as feudal to which he added the royal family itself that in fact had joined the new trend by venturing on mechanized agriculture on *beta-rist* land.⁷⁷

As I have shown in Chapter Six, the *beta-rist* had been royal property carved out of what was in the prewar period *waraganu*. One of the heirs of a portion of the *beta-rist* land that belonged to empress Menen had been Prince Sahla Sellasie. Like all other individually owned *rist* (now converted to private land since 1959) *beta-rist* had been parceled out for tenants on sharecropping basis before. In 1971 the royal family began mechanized agriculture on three hundred hectares of *beta-rist* in Arsi Negelle geared to the production of wheat.⁷⁸

If mechanized farming found its niche south of the Awash, in Ada, its rate of expansion had been thwarted. Gene Ellis' (1972) study found that there were only 26 privately owned tractors, and 92 tractor-users who cultivated up to 2500 hectares of land (a mere 4 percent of the total cultivated land) in Ada in the four sub-regions his study covered.⁷⁹ It is striking to note that in consonance with the pattern I have outlined above regarding the social composition of the contract farmers south of the Awash, in Ada too Ellis found that the new generation of contract farmers were "better educated and often have been (and are) employed as civil servants, members of the Armed Forces, or merchants."⁸⁰

A notable case in point is Tedla Desta, who introduced a variation of the mechanized farm by initiating a machinery rental scheme that soon was named after him. Tedla worked as a manager of an imperial farm in Charchar (Hararge) and as a sales representative for International Harvester before setting foot on Ada in 1962.⁸¹ A

commercial farmer himself, Tedla entered the scene leasing 160 hectares (4 *gasha*) of land from a certain *Qagnazmach* Haile, a landowner belonging to the old generation, and buying 20 hectares (1/2 *gasha*) of land for *birr* 15,300 in the same neighborhood.⁸² Like the majority of Ada's commercial farmers Tedla allowed the existing tenants to stay on the land as long as they accepted tractor plowing (at a cost of *birr* 25 in cash or one quintal of *tef* per hectare). He also instructed the tenants to specialize on *tef* (except where drainage was so poor so as to make it impossible to *tef* production), and accept threshing services at the cost of *birr* 3 per quintal.⁸³ Others adapted a variation of Tedla's system, forcing farmers to resort to machinery for plowing and/or threshing (in which case they had to bear half the cost for gasoline, seed and fertilizer) and hiking sharecropping rates from 30-40 to up to 50-55 percent of the annual produce.⁸⁴

The Chamber of Commerce's "Directory of Agriculture (1973-74)" provides a comprehensive list of registered commercial farms and agri-business firms in the country by province, farm location, and product specialization. Such farms and firms existed virtually in all the 14 provinces, the majority located in Gondar, Wollo, Harar, Arsi, and Shawa (most notably the valley). Specifically, Zway and Dugda, Adami Tullu, Alaba, Buta Jira, Dallocha, Mareqo, Arsi Negelle, and Shashamane had the highest concentration of commercial farms in the valley in the early-1970s. According to the registry, Adami Tullu alone had 44 registered farms, and Arsi Negelle and Shashamane had a total of 115. The rest of the *warada* (including Zway and Dugda, Dallocha, Alaba, and Mareqo) had a total of 65 registered farms. In all, there were a total of 225 registered commercial farms in the valley south of the Awash in 1973-74. In contrast, Ada-Lume had only 35 farms in 1973-74.⁸⁵

The directory does not provide any specific information regarding the amount of land each commercial farmer owned, but it provides useful information regarding crop-specialization as well as names and home addresses of the commercial farmers. As far as one can tell from the registry, almost all the contract farmers were urbanites residing in Addis Ababa or the major provincial towns and some were foreign nationals. In terms of crops, those in Adami Tullu specialized in maize, haricot beans, and *tef*; those in Dallocha produced wheat, *tef*, maize, and haricot beans; those in Arsi Negelle focused on wheat, *tef*, maize, and haricot beans production; those in Shashamane concentrated on wheat, *tef*, maize, and haricot beans, while *tef* (followed by wheat and pulses) had been the primary preference of those in Ada.⁸⁶

Agronomic and social impacts of commercial farming

From an agronomic and ecological point of view, mechanization's impact had been significant but not revolutionary. Perhaps the most enduring impact growing mechanization (most notably in the region south of the Awash) had on local agriculture had been its role in accelerating the pace of specialized (crop) agriculture at the expense of livestock production. Commercial farmers' application of tractors, fertilizers and improved seed varieties have certainly pushed the bounds of crop agriculture to new frontiers in hitherto unprecedented scale. Tractor farming enabled the cultivation of vast so-called *taf* lands and the conversion of pasture into cereal fields quicker than what the old sharecropping arrangements could have achieved. Several of my informants in Arsi Negelle, Mareqo, and Adami Tullu underscored that mechanization epitomized the second major turning point in the long process of declining grazing land and livestock

production (the first being the land measurement and land grant practices and growing crop agriculture that accompanied it).⁸⁷ In this, mechanization joined rather than initiate or decidedly shape the pace of change that was already well underway in the valley. In fact, a set of complex process fashioned the long-term expansion of crop agriculture and the proportionate decline of livestock agriculture in the valley. Mechanized agriculture played only a complementary part in that trajectory and one that lasted only a relatively brief period in the modern history of valley agricultural history.

In terms of crop choice as well, mechanized farming accentuated a process of specialized agriculture that has been going on for several decades. As we have seen above, south of the Awash, production of wheat, maize, chili pepper and a range of vegetable crops predate commercial farming. In Ada too, *tef*'s growing prominence predates the limited expansion of commercial farming by several decades. Commercial farming impacted the pace of specialized agriculture mainly in terms of scale, most notably by sharpening the competition over access to land rather than by introducing new crop regimes. Only in the case of haricot beans did commercial farmers moved forcibly to introduce new crops but that was equally welcomed by small-scale farmers in the region though the legumes' life span turned out to be rather brief in the valley.⁸⁸

By contrast mechanizations' impact on the environment may have been more pronounced although the evidence is not satisfactory to pursue this to any satisfactory level. The evidence is suggestive (but not conclusive) that the commercial farmers' motto was profit and not any kind of environmental stewardship. Since most had leased the land at inflated prices and for a given period of time (ranging from 5-15 years) their primary concern appears to have been maximizing profit at any cost. It is not surprising therefore

that the majority in places like Arsi Negelle, Shashamane, and Dugda cared more for short-term gains than long-term sustainability of the land. Many may have taken each production cycle in and of itself with little room for such indices as fallowing, crop rotation, and the allocation of a portion of the land for grazing that characterized smallholder farms in the past.⁸⁹

Like the probable ecological impact mechanization might have had on valley landscape, the evidence on the productivity of the commercial farms is extremely sketchy. For example, no recorded evidence is available to measure disparities in terms of yield between commercial farms and small-scale farms. Nonetheless, my interviewees did not doubt that mechanized farmers harvested good yield and the farms must have been highly profitable, a claim that is not always easy to substantiate.⁹⁰

But at least Dabashe Kebrat's (one of the most successful mechanized farmers around Shashamane) own testimony resonates well with the claims of my farmer informants. Dabashe was only 36 when he ventured on commercial farming in Shashamane in 1968. One of the pioneers in the *warada*, he started with four *gasha* of land employing only one tractor. By 1974 Dabashe farmed 160 hectares (40 *gasha*) of land and owned 3 tractors and 1 harvester. On his farm Dabashe specialized in wheat, maize, and haricot beans production. Selling his produce in Addis Ababa he made "enormous profits." Of course he did not tell me the amount of profit he made but he proudly remarked to me that it was much more than "my expectations."⁹¹

A vehement critique of mechanized agriculture, Stahl also remarked:

One presumed effect of large-scale mechanization is the fast increase in food stuffs available for domestic consumption. The increase in production has reduced the import of wheat and wheat flour. But this increase in production has not benefited the population. Surplus

production has been bought by large merchants and stored for speculative reasons. The result has been increase in consumer prices.⁹²

Much more than the impact commercial farming had on the environment or food production, it was mechanization's impact on tenant eviction that had caught the attention of the reporters mentioned above most. In theory mechanization by its very nature demanded the mobilization of more land but less labor. In practice, however, a closer look at the evidence from the valley suggests that mechanization in fact depended as much on tenant labor as it did on machinery.

Without a doubt the accumulation of land in the hands of commercial farmers and the introduction of machines (most notably tractors and harvesters) gave the edge to the commercial farmers to refashion past tenancy arrangements. Nonetheless, commercial farmers' ability to dictate the terms of farm-labor relations depended up on a range of factors such as crop type and farmers' ability to defend their entitlement rights on the land.

As I have shown before, Tedla's scheme in Ada was machinery- and labor- intensive, one that reconfigured but did not dismantle completely the existing land-labor arrangement in the area in any drastic way. Likewise, in the southern shores of Lake Awasa, a certain commercial farmer devised a mechanism whereby he married machinery and tenant labor toward the commercialization of a 200 hectares (five *gasha*) land he contracted from the government in 1971. According to Kebede Tesema, who studied the land tenure of Loke *warada* (near Awasa), the contract farmer did so by parceling out half a *gasha* of the land to a group of ten collaborating tenants on a sharecropping arrangement based on a 60 percent (to the contract farmer) to 40 percent

(for the tenants) rate. According to the agreement the landlord maintained the power to decide on field preparation and crop choice while tenants would fulfill all the labor requirements of the farm. The farm depended on machinery for the first phase of land preparation and on tenant labor for weeding and harvesting.⁹³ Stahl's own study also have showed that around Arsi Negelle town, a number of "tenants [have joined] together and rent[ed] agricultural machine-service from their landlord," hence adapting to the process of mechanization in their own way.⁹⁴

In Dugda and the Maqi valley where chili pepper production was important the degree of dependence on tenant labor was by far greater than in places of wheat production. Likewise around Lake Zway, Maqi and Bulbula rivers, where commercial farmers engaged in irrigated agriculture (using small pumps to extract water) for the production of vegetable crops (such as tomatoes, onions, leeks, carrots, celery, green beans, red and sweet peppers, melons, and papaya) that required intensive care, tenants had a better chance negotiating access to land.⁹⁵

However, this is not to say that mechanization did not cause any kind of tenant eviction in the valley. In fact, my informants from Arsi Negelle and Shashamane strongly emphasized that the commercial farmers had practiced harsh evictions although none could be sure about its relative intensity. Many concurred that eviction started around 1969 but became common only in the last three to four years of imperial rule.⁹⁶ I interviewed two of the evicted tenants who told me that compelled to leave the land they had been cultivating for decades they were forced to wander around in the mountainous, rocky and dry parts of the *warada* that were beyond the reaches of the commercial farmers and their tractors. According to one of them in Arsi Negelle, the total number of

evicted tenants (or “squatters” as he preferred to call them) in Arsi Negelle and northern-Shashamane probably reached around 400 to 450 individuals by the onset of the revolution.⁹⁷ Another informant recalled that he and two of his farmer-neighbors were forcibly evicted by a commercial farmer who leased the land from the landowner in 1972. The said farmer who arrived there the same year gave all the three tenants only one year to relocate, and tractor-farmed the fields leaving out only a small plot of land near their house. Encumbered all the three tenants packed their belongings and left the land they have been cultivating for decades to start life afresh around Lake Langano.⁹⁸

Based on first hand information he acquired from a “number of interviewees and discussions [he had] with persons well acquainted with the Shashamane-[Arsi] Negelle area,” Stahl also inferred that: “In the agricultural area of [Arsi] Negele-Awassa the number of evicted tenant families was estimated at approximately 200 in the years 1971 and 1972.”⁹⁹ According to him:

[Evicted tenants]...move around the countryside with their livestock in the hope of finding land to rent. ...many tenants have built their homes in the hilly and stony places, which under no circumstances are suitable for mechanized agriculture. Even though the fields of these tenants have been taken over by tractors their houses are still intact and may be even some plots of land where they can cultivate subsistence crops. Under such circumstances the tenants have not been forced to leave the area. Instead they form a labourer reserve which is used by the commercial farmers during weeding and harvesting time. Thus, their status has changed from peasants to seasonally employed agricultural labourers.¹⁰⁰

North of the Awash, in Ada-Lume, as well mechanization was attended by eviction but at a much slower rate than the rest of the valley. As far as one can tell from Ellis’ findings, the size of land “cleared” due to eviction amounted only to 160 hectares (4 *gasha*) which, he cautioned, is “likely to rise in the future”¹⁰¹ Ellis also observed the ensuing

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mechanization threatening the fate of *magazo* tenants at the same time leading to the reduction in size of *chisagna* holdings. *Megazo* were tenants who did not live on their landlords' land, and who had no long-standing relationship with the landowner. They were easy prey to the contract farmers. *Chisagna*, on the other hand, lived on the land they cultivated permanently and stood a better chance to defend their positions.¹⁰²

According to Ellis, "underemployment of labor" (rather than eviction) had been one of mechanizations' impact on Ada tenant farmers. Admittedly reducing eviction to a number-game runs a risk of overlooking its social implications. Nonetheless, the evidence from the valley contradicts the dominant view that asserts that the land grants or commercialized agriculture had been attended by massive tenant eviction.¹⁰³ Rather it was by accelerating the competitions over land, and in doing so, leading to unprecedented rent hikes on tenants that commercial farming impacted Ada agrarian relations in the last decade of imperial rule.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown valley agricultural transformation by focusing on the specific trajectory of the consolidation of concentrated agriculture. I looked at small and big farmers' experience amidst a transforming regional political economy in the 1960-75 period. From a crop perspective, the result was the growing dominance of selected crops congruent with past practices, soil type, moisture content, and urban demand.

Consequently, maize emerged as the dominant field-crop in the region south of the Awash complemented by beans in Arsi Negelle and chili pepper in Mareqo. North of the Awash, *tef* emerged as the dominant cereal both in terms of acreage as well as

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production, accompanied by wheat and chickpea, the latter preferred by Ada farmers more for its nitrogen fixing quality than its market value.

Valley agriculture's new phase of specialization was attended by similar adjustments in terms of land use. If the 1941-60 decades had been characterized by on-farm integration of crop-livestock agriculture in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo, concentrated agriculture was attended by reduction in herd size and grazing resources. Cash accruing from marketed-food production successfully offset any loss of capital those farmers might have incurred as a result of the latest adjustments that have led to declining livestock resources. In the Mareqo Ridge (and Alaba-Qolito to the south) chili pepper production brought the farmers even more close to Ethiopia's evolving capitalistic economy. Likewise the expanding food market was responsible for the kind of sustained (in the case of maize and the Irish potato) and short-lived (in the case of haricot beans) production of the crops in Arsi Negelle-Shashamane and the farmers place in it.

Far less conspicuous, however, was concentrated agriculture's impact on soil quality. If development in the post-1960 period have led to the ascendancy of crop-based agriculture, its environmental implications were hard to pinpoint in the short-term. In the long-term, commercial fertilizers' feasibility may have been impacted by that process directly or indirectly.

Further north in Ada-Lume, the same period witnessed the transition from mixed-cropping to specialized agriculture. Ada-Lume farmers' specialization in tef and wheat production—the two crops that proved to be highly in demand but more volatile in the urban markets and politics might have kept the sub-regions in a more precarious situation than their Mareqo or Arsi Negelle compatriots. Yet, Ada's preferred magna (white) *tef*

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and its proximity to the biggest market in the nation gave the farmers the edge to shine out in the market scene more strongly than the majority of the madbet regions that too channeled food to Addis Ababa early in the 20th century.

For valley farmers both north and south of the Awash the greatest challenge came not from the markets but from a new generation of commercial farmers who, counting on the power of capital and modern inputs moved to the region to farm. In its brief (1966-74) history commercial agriculture impacted land use by accelerating the pace of specialized agriculture that had been going on in the valley for several decades. It also played a crucial role in re-configuring existing share-tenancy arrangements in its wake. The attractive prices commercial farmers paid for the land was responsible for the kind of rent-hikes absentee landowners posed on tenants from 33 to 50 percent of the total annual produce. Mechanization also affected labor mobilization and posed a growing threat of tenant eviction in localized places. Eviction got worse in a north-south direction, being limited in Ada and relatively widespread in Arsi Negelle and Shashamane.

An equally striking feature of valley agricultural transformation since around the mid-1960s had been farmers' encounter with input-based intervention regimes. The organization of intervention regimes and their impact on the ground will be the thrust of the final chapter.

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CHAPTER NINE

SOILS, SEEDS, AND FARM PRODUCTIVITY: INTERVENTION REGIMES IN VALLEY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (1966-75)

An important development in valley agricultural history in the last decade of imperial rule has been the relative magnitude with which a growing number of valley farmers encountered input-based intervention regimes. Such interventions, as perceived and implemented by the government, took two forms dubbed community and agricultural development. Though conceptually different, the two approaches were almost identical in terms of their objectives or the manner in which farmers responded to them.

Ethiopia's post-1966 agricultural intervention grew out of a new concern for economic development and the maximization of food production. Starting from 1966 a generation of expatriate as well as Ethiopian trained agriculturists strongly argued that the most responsible factor for the country's poor agricultural performance had been declining soil fertility caused by soil erosion and mineral deficiency. Such pronouncements led to the formulation of intervention regimes that focused mainly on improving farm productivity by combating degraded and degrading soils across the country. Both the diagnosis and the fertilizer-based prescription that accompanied it was an extension of a global trend that had its origin in the American Dust Bowl of the 1930s. The United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Food for Hunger Campaign (FFHC) advocated such fertilizer-based intervention in Ethiopia starting from 1966. The FAO/FFHC pilot project became the foundation for the launching of two overlapping

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Envisaged as a community development program, the first—known as the Southern Regions Development Program (SORADEP)—focused on the southern Rift Valley regions (south of the Awash). It got its financial and technical support from the French and became operational in 1970.

The second evolved out of the so-called integrated rural development (or maximum package) program already underway in Chilalo (Arsi) and Wolayta (Sidamo) in 1968 and 1970 respectively. Restructured as a minimum package program (MPP), the latest intervention was put into practice the following year. In their short life span both the community and agricultural (MPP) development programs focused on input (fertilizers and improved seed varieties) delivery but reached out only a small proportion of the farmers in fact. As output-enhancing technologies, the programs' most salient impact, however, has been the accentuation of on-going competitions over agricultural resources.

9.1 Soil degradation as the scientific explanation for agricultural intervention

By the mid-1950s, the debate on Ethiopia's agricultural development took a new direction. If expanding the ratio of cropped land to so-called *taf* land, improving the "antiquated" plow technology, and finally introducing improved seed varieties dominated the discourse in the past, in the post-1955 period a new call for altering soil quality began to dominate the debate. Very little scientific data existed by the mid-20th century to reinforce the emerging debate on soil fertility. Yet based on road-side observations and limited sample-based studies, specialists began to emphasize soil quality responsible for what they saw as Ethiopia's declining agricultural base.¹ Specifically, it was soil erosion

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that caught the attention of those specialists starting from around 1954.² Agronomic and soil experts from the nascent Ethiopian College of Agriculture stood at the forefront in rendering the debate scientific basis.³ The college's first Annual Report identified a range of problems that contributed to Ethiopia's backward agriculture. While most of the issues (such as disease and undeveloped farm technology) the report's authors raised were not news to many concerned with Ethiopia's agricultural development, the section on soil erosion was. In fact, the report itself sheds some light on the degree to which soil erosion had been absent in the debate prior to 1954.

Some say, there is no erosion in Ethiopia or, at least, very little erosion. One only has to observe the silt load carried by the large streams, such as Awash, the Gibbie, and the Nile. The torrential type of rainfall during the wet season, the farming of very steep mountain slopes and hill sides which were farmed many years ago and abandoned and the many gullies caused by donkey and human trails are all signs of severe erosion. These are so clearly marked that the very casual observer could see there is tremendous erosion.⁴

The college's report appears to be probably the first documented case to focus on the actual or presumed severity of soil erosion and its impact on agriculture in Ethiopia to date. Nonetheless their views did not attract wider audience until the mid-1960s. Even the 1960 FAO-sponsored research team that studied the country's agriculture relatively intensively made only a passing remark on soil erosion. According to them: "The major soil problems in the Central Highlands are soil erosion on slopes and lack of drainage in lower parts, a too high acidity and, therefore, a lack of available phosphorus."⁵ Only Alamaya Colleges' own annual reports that came out regularly since 1954 continued to emphasize at one level or another the important question of soil quality for the next several years.

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The situation began to change in 1966 and became a factor in conceptualizing intervention strategies. A quick look at some of the widely upheld views may help us grasp those changes better. The first view comes from 1968/69 FAO report.

The highlands of Ethiopia have been cultivated for thousands of years. Low population density allowed shifting cultivation and 10-20 years of fallow between crops. As the population increased, farming became more intensive, the soils became exhausted and yields dropped to very low levels.⁷

The second view was expressed by Ethiopia's Minister of Agriculture Ababa Ratta who, while addressing the Third Conference on Fertility and Fertilizer Use in Africa hosted by Haile Sellasie University in November 1970, portrayed a grim picture. His remark deserves a lengthy quotation not so much for its accuracy but to grasp the extent to which soil erosion had become a key issue in government lexicon. The Minister exclaimed:

The advantage of fertilizer application might well be offset if widespread losses are sought about erosion. I have been alarmed by a figure quoted in this country, which estimates losses through soil erosion to be about 1,000,000,000 tons of soil per annum. I am told that this amount of top soil would contain about 1,000,000 tons of Nitrogen. Since a portion of these losses originates from the Ethiopian plateau, the Nitrogen deficiencies must be attributed to it, at least partially. Such deficiencies here and there can be effectively and rapidly remedied by the application of fertilizers. Shifting cultivation, the most extravagant method of land use, might be considered as the most suitable for the traditional type of agriculture. However, shifting agriculture is low-yield agriculture. Therefore, any attempt to improve agricultural production should include work which aims at making areas of shifting cultivation more productive. It is apparent that fertilizer use, soil conservation, and changes in shifting cultivation are closely interconnected.⁸

The same year a more localized feasibility study (one responsible for the launching of SORADEP) focused on the valley strongly argued that the cropping system both in the large and small farms has failed to preserve soil fertility. According to this report, valley farmers made no attempt to plow back organic crop waste, and "erosion was spreading in

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The last case I present here, unlike the first two, was the result of a more focused study a British land survey team conducted in the southern Rift Valley in 1973. The team noted:

Even to the casual visitor, the extent of soil erosion within the Rift Valley must leave a lasting impression; the erosion evident in the Bilate Basin is some of the worst in Ethiopia, but in contrast with more northerly areas of Ethiopia, the southern Rift Valley has not been subject to intensive cultivation over a long historical time scale. Consequently, in many areas erosion is still only in its early stages but sheet erosion is gradually removing relatively fertile top soil. Harberd Estimates of water erosion potential (a function of total annual rainfall and of rainfall distribution) indicate a generally moderate erosion hazard. However, the lack of correlation between the erosion potential index and the actual degree of erosion is indicative of the overriding importance of soil erodibility. This is due to the inherently weak structure, lack of cohesion and low bulk density of the volcanic materials commonly occurring in the Rift Valley. While erosion by wind is of relatively minor importance, the prevalence between Koka and Adamitulu of strong north-easterly winds throughout the dry season does lead to localized losses of topsoil. ...Nonetheless, human agencies are often responsible for initiating erosion, and with increasing pressure on both arable and grazing land, man is accelerating natural erosion.¹⁰

The views described above show the changes in emphasis among specialists and politicians regarding soil. But what did the state of soil research look like in the country? How did such changing discourses impact intervention? Incidentally, more directed scientific studies on the chemical characteristics of Ethiopian soils and their impact on plant growth started in earnest only after the opening of Ethiopian College of Agriculture at Alamaya, and the arrival of its first soil scientist by the name of H.F. Murphy in 1955. Aside from teaching soil classes at the college, Murphy established Ethiopia's first soil survey and classification program at the same university. In five years Murphy collected nearly 6,000 soil samples from different parts of the country and published his findings in

a series of volumes.¹¹

In his countrywide study, Murphy divided our region into two distinct categories based on the pH character of the soil. According to him, north of the Awash—comprising the Addis Ababa-Dukam-Debre Zeit-Mojo area--the soil range from slightly acidic to neutral (pH 6.1 to 7.3), with acidity increasing on the black rather than the gray soils. He concluded that the lighter colored gray soils were higher in organic matter and total nitrogen than the black soils, but found most soils in this part of the valley endowed with relatively high potassium, calcium, and magnesium.¹²

South of the Awash, specifically between Maqi and Shashamane, the soil showed significant variation from place to place. Between Maqi and Adami Tullu, the soils ranged from a sandy loam to sandy clay loam. Murphy's study found that the surface soil in this part of the valley were generally neutral (pH 6.6 to 7.3) in reaction, but contain very little (less than 2 percent) organic matter (with the exception of the soils in "scattered areas" with large trees and vegetation where the organic matter was considerably high).¹³

In the vicinity of Adami Tullu, Murphy found the soils ranging from sandy loam to loam in texture and most of the soils being neutral (pH 6.6 to 7.3). Since acacia—the dominant tree in the region--is a legume, it appears that nitrogen fixation has been instrumental in building good nitrogen content in the soils. Thus, 58 percent of the surface soils Murphy examined in Adami Tullu contained more than 3 percent organic matter, with total phosphorus content on the low side.¹⁴ Murphy's study provided the ground work for future soil research in the country, but in the meantime his findings shaped the emerging debate on soil fertility and agricultural development in Ethiopia

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An underlying theme that connects all the studies mentioned above has been the almost identical conclusion the specialists reached at regarding both the texture and fertility (organic matter) of the soils, their current status, and the strategies required to improve the quality of the soils. In terms of texture, most studies found that sandy soils characterized the lowlands whereas vertisols (black) and rerisols (brown) dominated the plateaus in constant succession.¹⁶ In terms of acidity and organic matter too, the same studies underscored the commonality of deficiencies in nitrogen and potassium and the relatively “high” availability of phosphorus in most intensively cultivated regions of the country.¹⁷

In regard to overall soil quality and its impact on plant growth the scientific studies mentioned above posited a grossly generalized picture. In fact, with respect to soil fertility their findings reinforced the traditional view that most Ethiopian soils (particularly in the plateaus) were rich in organic matter and suitable for crop production. But contrary to the dominant belief, the soil specialists also underscored that both the black and reddish brown soils were rich only in potassium (K) and poor in nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) that are key to plant growth.¹⁸ At times, the specialists explained those deficiencies (most notably that of phosphorus) in terms of the nature of the parent rock (basalt) commonly found in Ethiopia.¹⁹ But often times the specialists explained the deficiencies in terms of human action which soon became a staple in academic and policy circles since then.²⁰ Emmanuel Kidane Mariam, head of the MoA’s agronomy department, for example, contended that: “The soils of Ethiopia and especially the highland soils have been continuously cultivated for thousands of years. ... Continuous

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cultivation and little or no effort to replenish plant nutrients [have] led to a depletion of the soils and subsequent depression of yields.”²¹

But in the meantime, a new call for improving soil fertility and, by doing so increasing crop production and yield began to dominate the national development debate. The best alternative to achieving both, the soil specialists and policy makers alike conceded, rested on the use of chemical fertilizers on both small and large-scale farms.²² Similarly, the Stanford Research team emphasized that “increased fertilizer use offers the greatest single opportunity for large immediate improvement for farm production” in Ethiopia.²³ The FAO/NORAD team also insisted that fertilizer use, with its “quick visual results on the fields,” could provide not only excellent basis for extension work, but also it could pave the way toward replacing shifting cultivation by permanent and more productive forms of land use.”²⁴

Consequently, the findings and recommendations of the soil specialists and development experts provided justification for the launching of what came to be the first ever consolidated fertilizer trial program in the country in 1967.²⁵ The experiment followed the request made by the Ethiopian government to FAO for “assistance in the field of soil fertility and fertilizer use.”²⁶ The Danish government responded to that call positively and began funding the FAO/FHCC fertilizer trial program.²⁷ The Ethiopian government also contributed a revolving fund earmarked for fertilizer distribution to small farmers in those regions.²⁸

Dubbed the Pilot Credit Scheme, the program established a total of nine marketing centers in three provinces.²⁹ Interestingly the valley happened to be one of the chosen sites for the FAO/FHCC trial program, as Shashamane, Nazareth, and Debre Zeit became

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major fertilizer experimentation and marketing centers in 1968.³⁰ The first year a total of 77 farmers (cultivating 126 hectares of land) participated in the program, applying 189 quintals of fertilizer on their farm.³¹ With three more distribution centers added to the first three, the number of participating farmers in the valley grew to 839 and fertilized area increased by more than thirteen-fold in 1970 (see Table 9.1 below).

Table 9.1 FAO/NORAD pilot credit scheme operations in the valley, 1968-70

Center	1968		1969		1970	
	Hectare	Participants	Hectare	Participants	Hectare	Participants
Shashamane	71	45	287	148	697.5	305
Debre Zeit	29	16	89	58	227.0	109
Nazareth	26	16	36	17	71	26
Arsi Negelle			88	51	510	297
Buta Jira					36	31
Mojo					143	71
Total	126	77	500	274	1684.5	839

Source: FAO, "Report on the FAO/NORA, pp. 81-82.

FAO experts justified fertilizer-use in terms of maximizing crop yield per unit area. Almost always the field specialists reiterated that modern inputs were detrimental to increasing yield and decreasing unit costs. According to one report, for example, for major crops—including *tef*, wheat, barley, and maize—a "100% increase in yield was not uncommon, and value/cost ratio was usually above 2."³² Consequently, encouraged by the "impressive yield increases," FAO/FFHC specialists campaigned for the enlargement of the fertilizer-based intervention in far greater scale and beyond the demonstration sites scattered across the country.

9.2 Community development: the case of SORADEP

The FAO/NORAD experimentation lent continuity to the Ethiopian College of

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Agriculture's nascent extension service that had ceased to function in 1963 after nearly a decade of slow beginning. As we have seen in Chapter Four, up to the mid-1960s, valley farmers' encounter with extension services remained episodic. Only a small proportion of valley farmers, notably those around the research stations, came in direct contact with the demonstrative activities of the agricultural research and experimentation stations, often on trial basis although modern inputs sometimes reached a growing number of farmers in non-regulated channels. The situation began to change starting from around 1957, but the delivery of inputs, extension advice, and credit intensified only after the mid-1960s.

Underlying those changes at the structural level is the organization of development institutions by the state geared to bringing about "enhanced rural development" in Ethiopia. In line with the developmental and nation building agenda Haile Sellasie's postwar government had adapted, community development had become the foci of government intervention since 1957. The notion of community development seems to have attracted the emperor more as he consistently insisted in adopting modernity to suit to local conditions. Haile Sellasie had long considered himself as a modernizer, and had used modernity as a legitimizing philosophy to his state-building initiatives that had to compete with both internal as well as external (real or perceived) competitors. But the emperor also believed that modernization appealed to the general public as well. Haile Sellasie once remarked:

Ethiopia has awakened. Ethiopians now demand more for themselves than their forefathers possessed. They have acquired the desire to improve their lot and that of their children. They are willing and anxious to change. This is what we have laboured throughout our lifetime to accomplish: to bring our people to the point of awareness of the demands of modern life, to arouse in them the ambition to progress, to stimulate their latent desire for advancement and improvement.³³

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Aware of its Western origins, the emperor insistently envisioned to “culture” modernity, to make it congruent with Ethiopian traditions and reality. Community development appealed to him most precisely because it resonated well with his reformist modernist creed. It may not be by accident therefore that the three successive development plans the government promulgated gave special emphasis to community development.³⁴

One of the first measures the government took to bring about rural transformation relates to the establishment of the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (NCDSA) in January 1957. Meant to operate with a pledged capital of *birr* 25 million (of which only *birr* 1 million was ultimately made available to it), the Ministry started its work by opening the Majete (in northern Shawa) Community Training Institute the same year.³⁵

The valley was one of the major areas the government’s rural development schemes had been implemented. It became so first due to the transfer from Majete to Awasa of the Community Training Center following the destruction of the former by a 1961 earthquake.³⁶ The Awasa community-training center developed one-year to two-years training programs. By the time the government restructured the NCDSA in 1966, the Awasa community training center had trained more than 150 community workers (thirty of whom were women) who were given a one-year training at the institute.³⁷ After graduation the Ministry assigned the students at different Community Development Centers (CDCs) as village level development workers (VLWs). Their task was mainly to assist rural folks form cooperative societies geared to rural development.³⁸

Secondly, apart from relocating the Community Training Center to Awasa, the NCDSA also established in 1962 two of its first eighteen CDCs in the valley, one in Ada

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Both Ada and Awasa symbolized the Ministry's two divergent strategies of community development. The first was the promotion of CDCS whereby citizens (both urban and rural) would be encouraged to participate in the development activities of their region. The plan involved the establishment of CDCs in different parts of the country so as to educate farmers on a range of key issues such as sanitation, markets, and modern agricultural techniques. The aim was also to mobilize local resources, civil society (like *eder*), and traditional power structures toward facilitating community development. Starting with selected regions, the Ministry anticipated of organizing 1000 CDCs throughout the country over a ten-year period.⁴⁰

The Ada CDC was among the first batch to be established in 1959/60.⁴¹ Based in Debre Zeit, the major goal of the Ada CDC was to hasten and coordinate the district's development efforts that may be initiated by different agencies and government bodies, specifically, but not exclusively, geared to agricultural development by distributing better seeds and poultry, introducing new vegetable crops, promoting veterinary services, and promoting rural cooperative societies.⁴² To that end the Ada CDC established its operational centers in five different places (known as sub-districts) in the *warada* and assigned two VLWs in each.⁴³

The second strategy differed from the first in that it involved relatively heavy government investment and intervention toward promoting agricultural development. Essentially a community development scheme, the second strategy targeted settlement of veteran soldiers as a means to promote large-scale cooperative farms.⁴⁴ Consequently, the Ministry established two cooperative farms at Botar (in Kafa) and Awasa (northern

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Established in May 1960 the Awasa Agricultural Cooperative Farm possessed a total of 579 *gasha* (4008 ha) of land of which 90 *gasha* was in Shawa and the remaining 469 *gasha* in Sidamo province. It started operation by settling 427 veteran soldiers and their families and putting 3200 hectares of land under cultivation.⁴⁶ In 1962 the settled farmers cultivated a wide range of crops, including sunflower, red pepper, *tef*, and other crops (see Table 8.2 below).

Table 9.2 Production of Awasa Farm, 1962 (1954/55 E.C.)

Crop	Quantity (in metric tons)
Sunflower	1,285
Red pepper	315
<i>Tef</i>	85
Maize	49
Safflower	48
Potatoes	27
Haricot bean	21
Wheat	20
Other*	36

* Other included kenaf, rapeseed, groundnuts, and lentils.

Source: "A Brief Review, p. 11

As the table above demonstrates the major focus of the farm in the first four years of its operation had been sunflower and chili pepper production. Two years later the focus shifted dramatically with maize and wheat emerging as the two dominant cultivated crops. According to *Addis Zaman's* news reporter, in 1964/65 (1957 E.C) the farm harvested 11,526 quintals of maize, 5,766 quintals of wheat, 686 quintals of *tef*, 1,700 quintals of rape seed, 1,395 quintals of sunflower, and 1621 quintals of haricot beans.⁴⁷

Equally strikingly, the farm maintained a working relationship with nearby small and medium scale farmers mainly by providing improved seed varieties and machinery

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(tractor) rental services to farmers who could afford it. In addition, the Awasa farm also opened off-farm job opportunities for the nearby farmers. According to the same *Addis Zaman* news reporter, an estimated 1,300 to 2500 laborers worked in the farm on a daily basis, the majority being farmers who also cultivated their own farms in the area.⁴⁸ No recorded evidence is available to measure the amount of improved seed varieties the farm distributed to nearby farmers or the extent to which it rented out machinery to medium scale farmers who had began to compete with smallholder farmers in the region starting from 1967/68. Nonetheless, the Awasa farm became the first reportedly “successful” farm in the region. Many urbanites saw the farm from afar and wanted to emulate it (see Chapter Eight).

By 1967 (following the promulgation of the second five year development plan) the Ministry of Community Development in its part, also envisaged a third alternative to its two community development programs described above. The third strategy aimed at launching an organized agricultural development scheme radically different from the CDCs and cooperative farms outlined above. It grew out of a changing desire in the part of the government to ensure a community development as part and parcel of a more directed need to bolster the production of marketed-food both for the domestic and international markets.⁴⁹ This, according to the plan, could be achieved by launching organized intervention schemes with the provision of modern inputs, credit, and extension services to farmers in selected development regions.⁵⁰ The southern part of the valley (including a much larger area to the south extending as far as north of Lake Abaya) was again one of the development regions identified for that purpose.⁵¹

Several factors contributed to this shift in strategy and for the selection of our region

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(and indeed the entire southern Rift Valley region) as one of the best candidates for the implementation of the new approach to community development. At the theoretical level, the 1960s dawned with a shift in international development thinking from the once (1950s) dominant community development to so-called green revolution strategy.⁵³

Ethiopia's policy makers might have opted for integrating community development and agricultural development in writing the SFYDP. Indeed when implemented, as we shall see below, the new approach entailed an element of both.

Internally too, the debate on Ethiopia's agricultural problems and the mechanisms to deal with them also changed in the 1960s. If the need to bring more land under cultivation and raising the productivity of the smallholder farmer by revolutionizing the "backward" farm implements dominated the discourse in the 1940s and 1950s, in the 1960s a growing concern for soil degradation (specifically caused by soil erosion) and rapid growth in population (with its implication on availability of food) began to dominate the debate.⁵³

From a more practical point of view, the Southern Rift Valley's candidacy for community development resulted from its presumed potential for the production of marketed-food and cash crops by smallholder farmers. The Sidamo region was known for its coffee production. The Awasa-Shashamane region was chosen for its potential for maize, wheat, and sunflower production; Alaba-Qolito for its pepper; Arsi Negelle for maize and cattle; and the Mareqo ridge for its maize, pepper and *tef*.⁵⁴

The presumed availability of both labor and land reinforced the choice of the southern Rift Valley as the best candidate for the envisioned community development program. The survey team that spearheaded the new approach to community development reported

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that labor is “sufficiently available” in the region (particularly when compared to the most sparsely populated regions in the lowlands). According to this survey, the challenge was not lack of labor but how to make it “more productive.”⁵⁵

The survey team also found that the extent of land and land holding practices in the southern Rift Valley was conducive to the proposed community development program. According to them the density of population, which was estimated at 79 inhabitants per square km, has been considered optimum for the kind of labor-intensive program on shelf (see below). At the same time, the prevalence of small holdings (with average land size of 1.5 to 2 hectares under cultivation) and the presence of relatively few large estates (each cultivating over 40 hectares comprising a total of 6 percent of the available arable land area) resonated well with the kind of community development scheme that targeted small farmers.⁵⁶

Such was the background for the launching in 1969 of the Southern Regions Agricultural Development Project, better known among the regions’ farmers by its acronym SORADEP.⁵⁷

Essentially an agricultural development scheme SORADEP however was attached to the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (NCDSA) and not to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) as were all similar schemes that had been launched almost simultaneously.⁵⁸ SORADEP got its initial operating capital from the government of Ethiopia and French development aid, an outpost of the French *Societe d'Aide Technique et de Cooperation* (SATEC).⁵⁹ And unlike similar development projects (most notably CADU and WADU) that poured in tens of millions of *birr* to expedite the intervention regimes, SORADEP worked out a plan whereby the bulk of the

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credit (for fertilizers and improved seed varieties) would be covered by the Awasa Agro-industrial Share Company (AAISC).⁶⁰ In other words, the government organized SORADEP as a self-financing project whereby a commercial estate generates the funds for regional extension in return for local farmers' labor services the farm needed to employ.⁶¹

The AAISC is the successor of the Awasa Cooperative Farm. Having functioned as a cooperative farm for almost a decade, the Awasa farm evolved as a commercial farm in 1968. Up on its reorganization, the AAISC was meant to work closely with the Awasa Agricultural Research Station (AARS) and provide a market outlet for the regions' smallholder farmers maize output.⁶² The AAISC specialized in the production of sisal (on more than half of the cultivated area) and maize (on a third of the farm area) (see Table 9.3 below).

Table 9.3 Cropping pattern on the Awasa Agro-Industrial Share Company estate, 1972

	Area (ha)	% of estate area	yield range (q/ha)
Sisal	2,200	52.4	15-20
Maize	1,450	34.5	45-60
Peppers	400	9.5	12-22
Haricot beans	200	4.8	12-17
Sunflower	120	2.8	11-15
Tomatoes	40	0.9	0-300

P.S. An estimated 4.9 percent of the area was double-cropped; and a small amount of wheat and *tef* has also been produced in the farm.

Source: Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, p. 181

Cognizant of the farm's growing labor demand leading SORADEP officials (the majority of whom were French) envisioned to forge a single farming community at the nucleus of which would be the Awasa commercial farm which will be surrounded by willing farmers that could benefit from it both by selling labor and produce in return for

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modern inputs which the farm would supply. While modern inputs could help raise farm productivity, the off-peak labor demand in the farm could help maximize smallholders' labor productivity.⁶³

Promoting the labor market became one of SORADEP's major concerns because its French experts believed that side by side with combating declining soil fertility, the best alternative to increase production in the region should rest on maximizing labor productivity. The specialists strongly insisted that Ethiopia's poor agricultural performance resulted as much from underutilization of farmers' labor as from undeveloped soil management and field organization techniques.⁶⁴ Consequently, they worked out a plan whereby farmers' could work on AAISC's farm so as to undercut underutilization of labor as well as enable farmers to earn off-farm income they needed to buy modern inputs.⁶⁵

In order to convince the farmers to participate in the labor and input schemes, SORADEP supplied fertilizers at below cost. Farmers also obtained improved seed varieties from AAISC on credit, which could be paid in the form of labor service to the farm or in cash before or after harvest.⁶⁶ As a rule, SORADEP targeted tenants and smallholder farmers cultivating less than 5 hectare of land. Eligibility required farmers' willingness to raise 8 percent of the down payment required for the purchase of modern inputs (improved seed varieties and fertilizers) on credit the project provided.⁶⁷

Itself an innovative approach to agricultural development (compared to the comprehensive programs already underway in Arsi and Wolayta), SORADEP also developed an effective extension program based on the principle that local farmers trained locally and returning to their villages as development agents would best

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Consequently, SORADEP built a fairly extensive extension network in the region by recruiting farmer-instructors as its village level development agents. Trained in Awasa (in the auspices of the AARS) the farmer-instructors, upon their assignment as extension agents in their respective villages, were responsible for advising farmers on the application of modern inputs.

Table 9.4 SORADEP extension personnel build-up, 1970-73

Year	total establishments	
	Instructors	district supervisors
1970	48	2
1971	85	10
1972	93	10
1973	100	10

Source: SORADEP, P. 21

Geographically, the project covered the area stretching from just south of Lake Langano to north of Lake Abbaya farther south, covering a total of 7,000 square km and an estimated total population of 75,000 to 60,00 farmer households.⁶⁹ Agronomic ally, the project targeted three key crops, namely maize, beans and sunflower. Farmers' existing field technology (with maize as the dominant cultivated crop in the region) and AAISC special interest in producing and processing corn and corn flour made the choice almost automatic.⁷⁰

Based on an earlier study made in 1968 (for agro-industrial development of Awasa region) and a follow up survey conducted by SORADEP in 1970, the experts estimated average area cultivated by small farmers in the region between 1.5 to 2.5 hectares. Of

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these, maize alone contributed 0.5 to 1.5 hectare in each farm, but yield remained “low” amounting to only 10 quintals per hectare, roughly equivalent to the 12 quintals for wheat and beans, and half (i.e. 6 quintals) for red pepper per hectare per annum.⁷¹ SORADEP experts explained poor yield in terms of soil exhaustion and the “difficulty of finding additional cropping areas (shortage of free land, high cost of farm rents, and grazing land requirements).”⁷²

Table 9.5 Relation of project area to the Administrative Divisions

Province	<i>Awraja</i>	<i>Warada</i>	approximate % of the <i>warada</i> entering the project area (land area)
Shawa	Zway	A-Negelle	35
		Shashamane	65
		Adji	65
		Alaba	50
Sidamo	Sidama	Awasa	60
		Shabadino	50
		Dale	50
		Alata Wondo	50

Source: Ministry of Community Development, SORADEP, p. 7.

Consequently, SORADEP developed a fairly elaborate intervention regime to maximize output per unit area. Accordingly, it organized up to five intervention stages (classified alphabetically A through E in terms of complexity) to promote maize production. Taken as a whole, these stages constituted an extension series, farmers joining the scheme being required to stay in each stage for one growing season before “graduating” to the next.⁷³

Stage A, also known as “primitive stage of cultivation,” involved the use of local maize varieties through broadcasting but no fertilization. Stage B, known as first improvement stage, involved the use of improved varieties (H-511, C-2, and H-632) with

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5-6 months growing cycle, and close extension service but no fertilization or row planting required. Stage C added row planting to the procedures described for Stage B. Stage D, in addition to the technologies used in stages B and C, involved the application of chemical fertilizers, notably diammonium phosphate (DAP) at 1 quintal per hectare, and Urea at 0.5 quintal per hectare. Stage E, the final improvement stage, though never implemented, anticipated application of manure at 300 quintals per hectare before plowing while repeating the inputs used at Stage D.⁷⁴

In the first year of SORADEP activity, a total of 1650 farmers (covering an estimated area of 1210 hectare) participated in Stage A. In 1972, more than 6,000 farmers participated in the program, applying the improved H-511 and C-2 varieties. In 1973 more than 13,000 farmers were participating in the program, mainly through the application of the improved maize varieties, with a proportionately small percentage of the land (630 hectare of the total 6300) chemically fertilized (see Table 9.6 below).

Table 9.6 Rate of farmers' participation in SORADEP intervention scheme, 1971-73

Number of farmers participating in credit for	1971	1972	1973
Maize	1,650	6,021	13,127
Fertilizer	-	942	2,127

Source: Borderson, "Introduction to SORADEP," p. 14. See also Ministry of Community Development, SORADEP, pp. 27-28, 46; Stahl, *Ethiopia*, p. 143.

In terms of yield, the intervention scheme showed promising results for all stages but for stage A. As the following table demonstrates, maize yields per hectare declined slightly for Stage A by one quintal for each year since 1970, but increased marginally for Stage B and significantly for stages C and D for the same period (see Table 9.7 below).

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Table 9.7 Maize yields in quintals per hectare, 1968-73

Stage	1968-70	1971	1972	1973
A	10	9	9	8
B		13	11	15
C		21	19	28
D			32	38

P.S. According to official SORADEP reports yield under stage A declined due to soil exhaustion, further aggravated in 1973 by draught which reportedly affected traditional crop varieties more than improved ones owing to the fact that the latter were sown at more appropriate dates and using short-cycle varieties. See SORADEP, p. 28.

Source: Ministry of Community Development, SORDEP, p. 28, 46.

Next to maize, SORADEP also targeted beans and sunflower production. Unlike sunflower, which was a relatively recent introduction to the region, white and pearl-grained beans had been a co-staple and an important cash crop in the region since the 1940s. According to SORADEP experts, the kind of “unlimited demand” for beans in the market, and the “keen interest the merchants” have shown to beans had been a compelling reason to focus on the production of the legume in the region that had been known for its production.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the development of improved Ethiopia Ten (E-10) bean variety by AARS in 1968 convinced SORADEP to extend its extension and input procurement to bean production rigorously as well.⁷⁶

Table 9.8 Beans improvement stages by area, 1968-73

Stage	Area cultivated in hectares					
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
A	10,000	10,200	10,400	10,600	10,635	10,170
B+C					165	830
Total	10,000	10,200	10,400	10,600	10,800	11,000

Source: Ministry of Community Development, SORADEP, p. 32.

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Replicating the three (A, B, and C) stages developed for maize, SORADEP intervention anticipated of promoting bean production in the region. At Stage A, employing local varieties, broadcast sowing and no fertilization, farmers produced an average 6 quintals of beans per hectare. At Stage B, participating farmers applied the E-10 improved beans followed by fertilizer application at Stage C.⁷⁷

Table 9.9 Estimated productions of beans, 1968-73 (000 quintals)

Stage	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
A	60	61.2	62.2	63.6	63.8	61
B & C					1.6	10
Total	60	61.2	62.4	63.6	65.4	71

P.S. B and C used E-10 variety. Average yield for stages A and C amounted to 10 quintals per hectare in 1972 and 12 quintals per hectare in 1973.

Source: Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*, p. 33.

Sunflower was the third crop SORADEP promoted in the project area. Unlike maize or beans, sunflower was little known to the farmers in the area prior to SORADEP intervention. Sunflower production started in 1972 with only 100 participating farmers but that number grew to 1000 the following year. With an average yield of less than 6 quintals per hectare, participating farmers harvested a total of 500 quintals the first year. The next two years average yield declined to 3 quintals per hectare resulting in a total production of 3,000 quintals per annum. In all, farmers' response to sunflower production remained significantly low compared to beans and maize mentioned above (see Table 9.11 below).

SORADEP officials found overall farmers' response to their intervention programs encouraging.⁷⁸ Others, notably the British land survey team that visited the region in 1973 also found SORADEP intervention as remarkably successful and advocated its

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replication in other parts of the country.⁷⁹ Stahl, who went out to study the impact of green revolution-based interventions in the valley and elsewhere also remarked, albeit briefly, that SORADEP strategy was working. According to him, the best explanation to the project's relative success could be found in its innovative approach to recruiting farmer-instructors and its unbinding credit regulations that did not require tenants to submit any written contractual agreements from the landowners as the package programs did.⁸⁰

Table 9.10 Sunflower-production, 1972-74

Year	No. of farms	Hectares	Quintals
1972	100	85	500
1973	4,000	1,000	3,000
1974	4,000	1,000	3,000

Source: Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*, p. 53.

Table 9.11 SORADEP procurement/credit facilities, 1971-73

Year	No. of beneficiaries	Amount		Purpose
		Total (000 birr)	Average per head (birr)	
1971	1,650	19.2	11.6	maize seed only
1972	6,020	91.0	15.1	
				<u>in 000 birr</u>
				maize seed 45.5
				bean seed 5.5
				fertilizer 30.0
				equipment 10.0
1973	13,130	194.1	15.6	maize seed 96.0
				bean seed 19.5
				fertilizer: DAP 58.2
				Urea 20.4

Source: Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*, p. 35

Indeed, given its relatively short tenure (before the project terminated its activities in

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1975 following the revolution), SORADEP's extension program and technology seemed attractive to a growing number of the valley's southern farmers. As shown in the table above, having started with 1650 farmers in 1971, SORADEP's procurement/credit facilities reached more than 17,000 households in 1974.⁸¹ Yet perhaps the most enduring legacy of SORADEP rests on its relatively successful popularization of intervention regimes--the use-value of modern inputs and fertilizers to increasing agricultural production--among a portion of the farmers in the Arsi Negelle-Awasa corridor and in Alaba. A number of farmers I talked to in the Arsi-Negelle-Awasa region recalled SORADEP by name and almost all provided a positive assessment of its intervention program. Few insisted that they had some exposure to improved seed varieties and fertilizer before but the majority underscored that SORADEP was their first experience with organized input and extension delivery service ever.

I was also able to interview two of the farmer-instructors and several more farmers that participated in the program in the early-1970s. Of the farmer-instructors one worked as a registrar at the Arsi Negelle MoA office and the other was a farmer at the time of the interview. The latter described:

I was a farmer here [just south of Shashamane town] in 1969/70 when SORADEP [specialists] began recruiting farmer-instructors. Among half a dozen applicants who applied to join SORADEP I was the only one selected from our village. I was a drop out from grade four but I think that gave me the edge to qualify for the position. ... they [SORADEP people] trained us [me] at Awasa. We spend most of the day learning about field preparation, row planting, fertilizer use, and methods of communicating the lesson we acquired in the field to the farmers... I became the chief instructor in my home village shortly. My task was to recruit participating farmers, to facilitate [with the area supervisor] the procurement of credit, and most of all, to instruct farmers how to organize the farm. From the start tenants and smallholder farmers showed interest in the program. In this village alone more than forty farmers joined the project the first year. My job was to instruct farmers with field preparation, row planting,

fertilizer use, weeding, appropriate plant-land ratio, all kinds of lessons I learned [in Awasa]. The job was not so much overwhelming because farmers quickly learned the skills. Without a doubt SORADEP benefited farmers. I for one did not face any difficulty in convincing farmers to pay their credit on time as well as in encouraging them to adopt [the technologies]. Farmers' enthusiasm was great. It always puzzled me why the *Derg* decided to shut it down [after the revolution].⁸²

The view from the four farmers who had participated in SORADEP'S credit scheme resonated well with the above remark except for the slightly different assessment they provided regarding the project's impact on the regions' smallholder agriculture. In regard to yield, the farmers I talked to were quick to testify that SORADEP's technology helped maximize production by approximately 25-30 percent from late-1960s levels. If my informants had any reservation on SORADEP it was not because they disapproved the utility of the program, but rather its "inability" to reach out the majority of the farmers who were simply not embraced in the program.

The testimonies from my informants also revealed certain key points not found in the official reports discussed above. For example, according to several of my informants even though the farmers were generally attracted to SORADEP's technology, nonetheless the majority were more inclined to adapt the fertilizers and improved seed varieties without necessarily complying to row planting or plant density the extension experts insisted. Because qualifying for the credits required adoption of the technologies in toto, farmers' improvised a scheme whereby they practiced row planting and fertilizer application only in a small portion of the land while maintaining traditional techniques in the rest. But always farmers remained puzzled about the link between improved seed varieties and fertilizers as yield from the improved seed varieties (planted without fertilizers) often declined progressively after the first harvest season and culminated in

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the sprouting of new weeds whenever farmers continued usage of those seed varieties (particularly wheat) for several consecutive seasons.⁸³

More importantly, to the majority of my informants the most damaging impact of the intervention regimes that started with the FAO/NORAD trials was the kind of interest they generated among commercial farmers to mechanize agriculture against the backdrop of rent-farming that had existed for long. As I will show later in some detail, several of my informants believed that it was the farmers' success in maximizing production (that was possible because of the modern inputs) that invited, albeit inadvertently, the commercial farmers (whose activities I have discussed in the previous chapter).

The valley's southern farmers sized the latest intervention sponsored by SORADEP to maximize yield. Little, if any, quantifiable evidence is available to measure the extent to which individual farmers planted the H-511, C-2, or E-10 improved seed varieties compared to the "traditional" ones at the household level or how much chemical fertilizer each used in 1974 compared to 1970 or 1960. Excepting the commercial farms where input use had been reportedly high, the rate of application of chemical fertilizer in smallholder and tenant farms appears to be an increasingly erratic activity. If a growing number of cultivators were aware of the productive-value of fertilizers, still application had been mediated by access and knowledge, that is the farmers' ability to acquire the inputs and their knowledge of the balance between plant density and amount of fertilizer required. Compared to inorganic fertilizer, the farmers seem to have worked out an appropriate strategy in utilizing improved seed varieties of virtually all the crops mentioned above. This was particularly true for the H-511 or "*lemañ*" (lit. project) improved maize variety that became the dominant field crop in the region by the mid- to

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If farmers, the projects own specialists, and outside observers provided a positive assessment of the SORADEP-led intervention regime, nonetheless the project was not successful in forging a single farming community at the nucleus of which was the Awasa farm. On the contrary, having collaborated with the project for nearly three years, the AAISC pulled itself out in 1973. The project itself continued its operation for another two years before France withdrew its financial and expertise support following the 1974 revolution.⁸⁵

9.3 Agricultural development: the package alternative

If community development remained the prerogative of NCDSA, agricultural development became that of the MoA. As I have already discussed, when the MoA inherited the nascent extension program in 1963, the development debate had begun to shift to fertilizer use as a means of coping with declining soil fertility and increasing crop production. One of the initial impacts of MoA takeover of the extension service had been the establishment of the Ministry's *awraja* and *warada* offices in the valley for the first time ever.⁸⁶

Entrusted with a mandate to lead the country's agricultural development through extension services, the same year the Ministry organized a Field Services Department and 120 extension sites in different parts of the country. In their lexicon MoA officials called the latest extension scheme "conventional extension" to distinguish it from the so-called integrated extension program that had been attempted by the Ethiopian College of Agriculture before. In terms of methodology, however, MoA inherited much of the

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college's activities. Notable among these were the 4-T students clubs and the "demonstration" strategy used before.⁸⁷

Starting from 1967 the Ministry of Agriculture launched a series of plans and projects geared to agricultural development. Theoretically, all the programs built on two core values—the urgent need to modernize Ethiopian agriculture and, as an offshoot of that principle, the provision of modern inputs (most notably fertilizers) to boost production (by combating declining soil fertility). Ideally, as could be seen from MoA's own 1968 policy statement, the aim was to reach out a quarter (one million) of the estimated four million farming households in the country over a ten-year period.⁸⁸

Institutionally, two developments symbolized the new phase of MoA-led intervention in Ethiopia's agricultural development. The first relates to the formation of the Institution of Agricultural Research (IAR) as the sole body responsible for coordinating crop research and fertilizer use in the country. Established in February 1966 (with assistance from a UN Special Fund), IAR's main objectives were the formulation of a national policy for agricultural research and its implementation through coordinated programs of applied research.⁸⁹ To that end, the Institute established the National Crop Improvement Committee (later renamed the National Crop Improvement Conference-NCIC) in 1967. IAR also established numerous primary and secondary experimental stations in different parts of the country. The primary stations included the Holeta station (located at 2,390 m with mean annual rainfall of about 1200 mm) serving the highlands, the Malka Warar station (located at 750m with mean annual rainfall of about 540 mm) serving the middle and lower Awash, and the Jimma station (located at 1700 m with mean annual rainfall of 1369 mm) serving the southern provinces. IAR later added three more primary research

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Figure 7 Loc
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stations at Gambella (1970), Nazareth (1970) and Gode (1971).⁹⁰

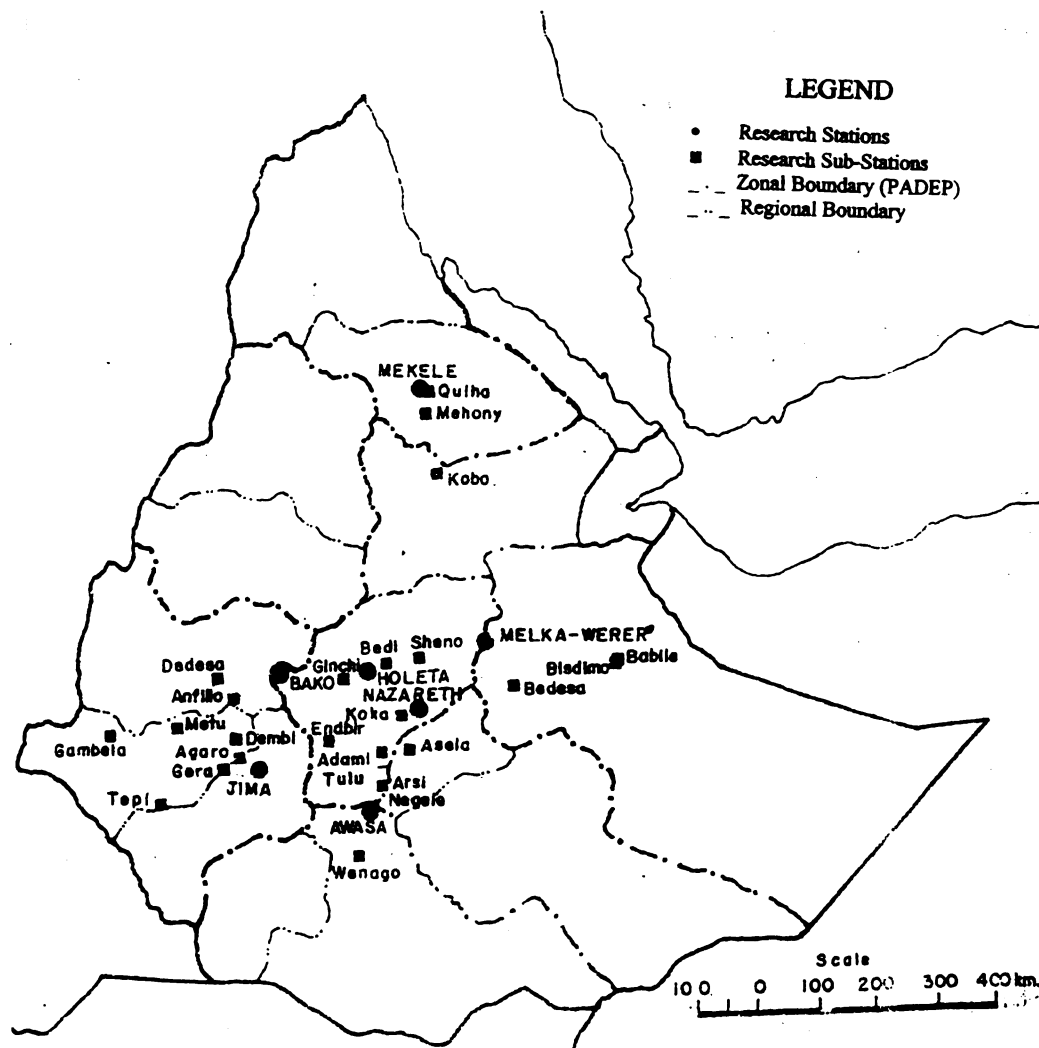


Figure 7 Locations of agricultural research stations (1984)

Adapted from Nichola, "Agricultural Research and Extension in Ethiopia," p. 18.

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From the outset and for most of its early history (until the late-1970s) IAR focused on the production of improved seed varieties of *tef*, wheat, and maize. But it also focused on pasture improvement trials and surveys of plant diseases in the country.⁹¹

The second important institutional innovation of the MoA relates to the creation of the Ethiopian Project Implementation Department (EPID) in 1971, the body that became responsible for the launching and supervision of nation-wide so-called package intervention regimes in the country.⁹²

The history of package-based intervention in Ethiopia goes back to 1966, the same year the strategy itself kicked off in India following the Ford Foundations' recommendations responding to the 1966 Indian famine.⁹³ It followed a November 1965 Ethiopian government proposal for launching agricultural development projects in the country fashioned after the Comilla Project in Bangladesh. The government submitted its proposal to the Swedish government that has shown interest in financing similar projects in poor countries.⁹⁴ Consequently, in accordance with its declared policy of financing development programs "in a few carefully selected countries ..[so as to] promote area specific small-holder projects" SIDA selected Chilalo (in Arsi) as the best candidate for its development aid out of a total of five different regions the MoA proposed.⁹⁵ Of the remaining four regions the Ministry identified, Soddo and Bolloso *warada* (in Wolayta) also attracted the attention of the World Bank that financed the Wollamo Agricultural Development Unit (WADU) between 1969-75.⁹⁶

Distinct in terms of their approach and intensity (measured by capital investment), Chilalo and Wolayta bore the name "comprehensive (or maximum) package program" and adopted the internationally popular Integrated Rural Development scheme.⁹⁷

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Criticisms began to mount against the comprehensive package programs just few years into their operation. Specifically it were the high running cost of the projects and, because of that, the difficulty of replicating such programs at a national scale that convinced experts and policy makers alike (including those leading CADU and WADU) to opt for an alternative strategy that called for abandoning the geographic locus and high capital investment that characterized the comprehensive package programs.⁹⁸ In the meantime, the package programs, most notably that of CADU, also became increasingly controversial in Sweden. In the political realm, the 1960s saw growing popular criticism of CADU among the Swedish public. Fueling this criticism was not the running cost of the program but the kind of sympathy the Swedish public developed to national liberation movements in Africa (most notably in Eritrea) and popular endorsement of Tanzania's African Socialism by the end of the decade. This put increasing pressure on SIDA to reduce Swedish aid to Ethiopia and refrain from initiating new development projects in that country.⁹⁹

From a more pragmatic stance too, the growing eviction threat Chilalo tenants faced reinforced the consternation of top CADU officials who became particularly skeptical of Swedish development activity in Ethiopia.¹⁰⁰ Instead, they advocated an alternative intervention strategy--called minimum package program (MPP)--that diverged from CADU significantly. But it took several exchanges of letters and a threat of resignation by CADU's top Swedish officials to convince SIDA and the Swedish government to accept the new proposal. Consequently, on June 28, 1968, the Ethiopian government and SIDA signed an agreement on technical cooperation to re-organize the MoA specifically to oversee the proposed MPPs. That provided the basis for the creation of EPID and the

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launching of MPP-based intervention in Ethiopia in January 1971.¹⁰¹

The MPPs were meant to re-orient the focus of green revolution technology to larger populations throughout the country based on input delivery. Organizationally, unlike the maximum package projects that were run by discrete autonomous bodies, the MPPs became the domain of EPID, and became different from CADU and WADU in their operation as well as method. In fact, contrary to the comprehensive programs, the MPPs targeted farmers cultivating less than twenty hectares of land provided each farmer paid 25 percent down payment toward the total cost of the inputs, and, more importantly, submitted a written proof of land ownership or lease.¹⁰⁴ The proposed MPP technology also targeted credit provisioning and delivery of extension and marketing services and advise—a scaled down and more focused intervention strategy to the integrated rural development alternative CADU and WADU sought to implement.¹⁰³

Table 9.12 Expansion of MPP (1971-75)

Year	MPPA	EA (extension areas)	Estimated Percentage of nations' Population reached*
1971	9	112	5.6
1972	18	154	7.5
1973	28	207	9.9
1974	48	347	16.1
1975	53	375	17.0

*Calculated on the assumption that there were a total of 4 million farm households in the country in 1970. Source: EPID, "EPID-Phase II: Proposal for the Expansion of EPID during the 1975-1980 period," August 1974; EPID, "Extension Areas/Centers by Province 1970-74," p. 2.

In 1971 EPID established its project areas in all parts of the country except for Arsi and Eritrea. As the following table demonstrates, the number of extension areas (EAs) in

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the country grew from 112 in 1971 to 375 in 1975, and reached an estimated 17 percent of the total farming population by the end of our period.

At the national scale and compared to the ten-year 25 percent coverage MoA stipulated, EPID's activities in the first five years of its activities were satisfactory. However, at the local level farmers' responses and EPID intervention reveal the often complex and contradictory outcomes on the ground. Those outcomes, at least as far as one can tell from the evidence from the valley, resulted as much (if not more) from social and political entanglements as from the physical properties of the environment (such as soil type or climate).

Arsi Negelle-Shashamane farmers short-lived experience with package intervention

The valley was one of the regions that saw relatively intensive EPID activities at the outset. In 1971, four of Shawa's 12 minimum package program areas (MPPA) were located in the valley, at Debre Zeit, Nazareth, Buta Jira, and Shashamene.¹¹⁴ Here, I will focus only on Shashamane and Ada to further illustrate how each MPPA operated and the degree to which the interventions impacted local production and politics.¹⁰⁶

At the time of its establishment in 1971, the Shashamane MPP had extension and marketing (credit) centers at four locations-Arsi Negelle, Shashamane, Leku and Yirgalem of which the last two were outside of our region and will not be discussed here. In terms of area the Shashamane EA comprised a radius of 18 km around that town, and that of Arsi Negelle an area of 10-km width by 20-km length along the main road to Addis Ababa. Both EA had one extension agent and one credit supervisor in 1971. In addition to the projects' two demonstration fields located near the towns of Shashamane

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and Arsi Negelle, a total of 11 “model farms” (7 in Shashamane and 4 in Arsi Negelle) served as demonstration sites. According to official EPID data, in 1971 approximately one in fifteen of the farmers in the two locations were participating in EPID’s fertilizer/credit program, and that number grew to one in 12 in 1972.¹⁰⁷

The statistics conveys a reasonably impressive enrollment number among targeted farmers although from the outset EPID’s intervention had been taunted by contradictions that culminated in the termination of the project itself just in two years. Several themes run in the letters and reports of local EAs and the Shashamane MPPA office regarding their activities in the district. These included tenant-farmers’ inability to obtain signed lease agreements from the landowners, farmers’ inability to raise the required 25% down payments, and farmers’ failure to payback credit after each production cycle.¹⁰⁸ These may be accurate descriptions of the situation on the ground by specialists engaged in project activity. Yet, what is even more striking about the reports and indeed the MPPs rather unimpressive and short-lived experience in this part of the valley is why its activities brew fresh contradictions compared to, for example, SORADEP that was active in the district at exactly the same time.

A careful reading of the oral evidence suggest that the difference between SORADEP and EPID rested not on the technology or even the means of delivering it but on the kind of emphasis each gave to land entitlement rights as a means to regulate credit.¹⁰⁹ For SORADEP, to the extent that land ownership or lease mattered, the tax papers or the signed lease agreements were far less important than the three friends or relatives farmers’ presented as testimony to their commitment to pay back the credit owed. EPID reversed the priorities and required farmers to provide collateral not in the form of social

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capital as SORADEP did but in the form of owned- or leased-land. In doing so EPID's policies inflamed further the battles over the legality of land entitlement that had been going on for several decades. If the volatility of land entitlement rights had been quite obvious to many by the time of EPID's formation, it is not clear from the sources whether the evidently defective policy was a deliberate move in the part of the MoA to effect some sort of "order" in land categories or it resulted from the World Bank's (the sole source of the money for the programs) strict credit-finance policy that entrusted property as the best form of insurance for re-payment.

At the local level, EAs and MPPA site representatives insisted that something had to be done regarding the document evidence farmers' were required to present which, together with the 25 percent down payment was keeping away the cultivators from participating in the extension program. Yet none of their requests got immediate response from the authorities in Addis Ababa.

More than the characteristically brief description of the underlying problems discussed above, MPP quarterly and annual reports focused on credit and input delivery, credit repayment, and average yield on "model" and participating farmers' plot. I have chosen official yield data for the second year of EPID's operation in the Arsi Negelle-Shashamane area to demonstrate the extent of its activities and reported differentials between fertilized and non-fertilized farms in the two categories mentioned above.

As shown in Table 9.13, on model farms fertilizer application resulted in average yield increase of 45-80 percent, with an increase of 5 quintals per hectare for barley, *tef*, and wheat (with application of 100 kg DAP per hectare), 9 quintal per hectare for sorghum, and 14 quintal per hectare for maize (with application of 100 kg of DAP and 50 kg of

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Urea per hectare). On participating farmers' fields, the same table shows that yield increase was important but not so dramatic.¹¹⁰

Table 9.13 Average crop yields from MPP Areas, 1973

Crop	Farmers' Fields			Model Farmers' Plots			Percent of trials with better yield than local varieties
	Mean yield improvement of local Varieties due to fertilizer (Quintals per hectare)			Mean yield improvement of improved over local varieties (Quintals per hectare)			
	Fertilized	Unfertilized	Difference	Improved	Local	Difference	
Tef	10.9	8.0	2.9	11.5	8.0	3.5	64.4
Wheat	14.9	10.6	4.3	18.5	10.6	7.9	81.7
Barley	13.3	10.1	3.2	17.5	10.1	7.4	48.9
Sorghum	23.0	19.0	4.0	-	19.0	-	-
Maize	64.8	43.8	21.0	66.8	43.8	23.0	92.1

Source: EPID, "Annual Report for 1973/74 Financial Year," Publication No. 24, October 1974, p. 8; EPID, "EPID Phase II: Proposal for the Expansion of EPID during the 1975-1980 period," August 1974.

In regard to farmers' participation or their ability to pay credit back, however, the reports generally cast a far less positive picture. All the reporters admitted that rate of participation was "far below expectation," which they noted was the result of farmers' difficulty either to raise the necessary down payment or in the case of tenants, the difficulty in obtaining signed-lease-agreements from the landowners for qualifying to the credits.¹¹¹ Equally disconcerting to the EAs and MPPAs was the fact those who did manage to raise the required down payment found it difficult to pay back their arrears. For example, from a total of 681 farmers who took credit in 1971, 120 failed to pay back their credit on time, although a majority (but only 46) did several months after the due date in September. In 1973 nearly a third (314 of the 929 farmers who took credit) failed to re-pay their credits on time. Consequently, the AIDB over-reacted by forcing EPID to cease its credit-provisioning program in the region the same year.¹¹²

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Ada's experience with package intervention

Like Arsi Negelle-Shashamane, Ada had been one of the first-batch of MPPAs EPID established in 1971. During the first year, a total of 363 farmers (cultivating approximately 2,672 hectares of land) participated in the EPID-led intervention.¹¹³ However, unlike Shashamane where farmers' inability to pay credit arrears led to the abrupt abortion of the scheme in 1973, in Ada the program itself mutated and farmers' rate of participation as well as their ability to pay back the credits remained strong. Ada participated in EPID's intervention scheme only for one year (in 1971) before the new body took over oversight of the intervention program in 1972 (see below).

Ada's candidacy for the new kind of intervention scheme goes back to 1967. Up on the drafting of the TFYDP, the government emphasized that efforts should be redirected to the use of the "package approach" to "develop" smallholder agriculture in selected regions.¹¹⁴ Consequently the MoA, in collaboration with the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), conducted a "systems analysis study" in 1967-68 to evaluate Ada's agricultural potential and suitability for the proposed package project. The SRI report reinforced Ada's candidacy by suggesting that there is a favorable rate of return for investment in the district.¹¹⁵

During his visit to Washington in July 1969, the emperor requested that President Nixon consider U.S. assistance for financing a development project for Ada. His request was subsequently endorsed for USAID assistance in 1971.¹¹⁶ And both in its planning and execution the Ada scheme evolved as a retreat from the costly and so-called integrated package programs being experimented in Chilalo. In fact, as it came to rely on

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existing government infrastructure and organization, and focused primarily on input delivery than marketing or social issues, the Ada scheme resembled the MPPs than the comprehensive package programs.¹¹⁷

Named the Ada District Development Program (ADDP), the new project took oversight of Ada's package program in 1972. Established as a semi-autonomous body by a Ministerial Order of the MoA, the ADDP intended to cover 47,000 hectares so as to reach out to 80 percent of the estimated 12,000 farming households in Ada in ten years time. To that end ADDP started its operation by establishing ten so-called "multi-purpose development centers" whose purpose involved, among other things, the provisioning of credit, inputs (such as improved seed and fertilizer), machinery rental service, as well as brokering a landlord-tenant lease agreement in Ada.¹¹⁸

According to proponents of the new scheme, modernizing Ada agriculture had become all the more crucial for two reasons. First, they argued that Ada had been adversely affected by "rapidly increasing population, rising land rents, low level of productivity, rising unemployment, and a high-rate of rural urban migration. Second, the MoA-SRI specialists reiterated that because large percentage Ada farmers still rely on "primitive" technologies and employ "old un-improved inputs," the potential of Ada's agriculture could not be fully realized commensurate the challenges the district is now facing.¹¹⁹

To be sure, Ada's population had risen dramatically in the 1960s.¹²⁰ Yet there is no evidence to substantiate the claim that Ada had been particularly severely affected by this growth or out-migration. Neither was Ada's average crop yield significantly lower than the national average, to justify "low level of productivity" as purported by the planners.

Table 9.14 Comparative crop production information for Ada *warada*

Crops	Percent of crop area		Yield (quintals per hectare)	
	Ada	Ethiopia	Ada	Ethiopia
<i>Tef</i>	37.0	26.0	6.9	6.1
Wheat	14	13	7.0	7.7
Barley	10	20	7.0	8.7
Corn	10	11	6.2	10.9
Sorghum	3	14	6.5	8.8
Chickpea	7	3	6.2	6.4
Horse beans	7	2	7.7	9.8
Field peas	6	2	6.5	9.5
Lentils	1	2	4.8	6.3
White pea beans	1	1	7.9	9.1
Linseed	0	1	n.a	5.3
Vegetable	1	5	n.a	n.a

P.S. n.a. indicates data not available. Data for Ethiopia is for 1970/71 crop year as reported by sample surveys by the Ethiopian Statistical Authority. See Central Statistics Authority, Statistical Abstract 1971.

Source: Charles Humphrey, "An Empirical Investigation of Factors Affecting Peasant Crop Production, Based on a Survey of Ada Wereda, Ethiopia," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, 1975), p. 17.

Contrary to the declared justification, it was government interest in showcasing modern agriculture's envisaged superiority to Ethiopia's traditional farmers elsewhere that convinced policy makers and experts to focus on Ada where they thought the chances of success were great. To some degree Ada's track record as feeder of Addis Ababa might have contributed to its selection for the new intervention regime although no explicit mention of this was made in any of the policy statements at all.

At an operational level, ADDP's successful activities rested on credit delivery specifically earmarked for the purchase of fertilizers and improved seed varieties.¹²¹ Like the MPPs, ADDP adopted the "model farmer" and 'demonstration" approach for extension and credit provisioning. Unlike the MPPs, however, ADDP targeted farmers cultivating less than 10 hectares of land, a pragmatic innovation that contributed to the

relatively high percentage tenant participation in the credit programs.¹²²

Table 9.15 ADDP distribution of credit to farmers in Ada, 1973/74

Year	Value of corn (<i>birr</i>)	Number of borrowers			
		total borrowers	landowners (%)	tenant owners (%)	tenants (%)
1973	43,660	412	31.55	10.2	58.25
1974	157,936	1,085	44.50	1.7	53.80

Source: ADDP: "Ada in Brief," September 1974.

As could be seen from the table above farmers' rate of participation had not been impacted by land entitlement rights. In fact the rate of participation was significantly high among tenants in both years followed by owner-farmers who comprised nearly a third and close to half of the number of farmers that obtained credit from ADDP in 1973 and 1974 respectively. Once again ADDP's success in involving more tenant-farmers than EPID in Arsi Negelle-Shashamane rested on its finding a way to negotiate land lease agreements between landowners and tenants. As I will show in some detail below, more challenging to ADDP's foot soldiers and the participating farmers, however, was the kind of opposition the fertilizer-based intervention encountered among a growing number of absentee landowners in the district. It is not surprising, therefore, that given the amount of time negotiating the land-lease agreements might have required and absentee landowners' opposition to fertilizer use, farmers' rate of participation remained modest but not unimpressive (see Table 9.16 below).

One clear picture that emerges from Tables 9.15 and 9.16 is the fact that just in one year total number of Ada farmers that took part in ADDP's credit program more than doubled from 412 in 1973 to 1085 in 1974. In terms of the ratio of individual farmers'

participation to Ada's estimated 12,000 farming households, the growth rate looked even more impressive, increasing from 1 in 30 in 1973 to 1 in 12 in 1974. Furthermore, ADDP'S enduring impact could be seen from the growing attraction the regions' farmers showed to fertilizer and improved seed use. As far as one can tell from informants' testimonies, though often unable to participate in the credit program, a reportedly large number of farmers had in fact been applying fertilizers to their farms in the early-1970s. And more than fertilizers that required significant cash investment, Ada farmers showed greater propensity to planting the improved seed varieties they were able to acquire from the market or from participating farmers on their farm.¹²³

Table 9.16 ADDP activities in 1973

	No. of farmers	Seeds Purchased (<i>birr</i>)	Average credit (<i>birr</i>)	Fertilizer purchased	Average area fertilized (ha)
Landowners	130	1,196.25	113.25	n.a.	2.91
Tenant owners	42	611.25	128.44	n.a.	3.02
Tenants	240	1,679.05	97.96	n.a.	2.54
Total	412	3,486.55	105.96	40,173.45	2.70

Source: IDR and MSU, "Plan of work for the IDR-MSU research program in the Ada district of Ethiopia," *working paper no.5*, November 1974.

Though the evidence is far from conclusive, it seems apparent that through their selection of seeds and application of limited (than what had been prescribed by agricultural extension agents) amount of fertilizers, Ada farmers managed to develop a new kind (or "hybrid") technology that was different from what was envisaged by ADDP as well as the "traditional" that a generation of agricultural and field systems specialists witnessed in the late-1950s. For example, according to one of my informants just south of Debre Zeit town, farmers in his village were quick to realize that the DAP fertilizer was not as good for *tēf* production as it was for wheat. According to him, DAP made the

tef plant to grow tall and beautiful, appealing to the eye but poor in yield and vulnerable to wind. Farmers also learnt that the DAP fertilizer was good in brown than black soils, and for wheat and maize production than *tef*, but they remained puzzled about the link between improved seed varieties and chemical fertilizers as were their Arsi Negelle-Shashamane counterparts discussed before.¹²⁴

Most of all, it is in the presumed link between fertilizers, growing productivity, and the changing interest of the absentee landowners toward rent that tenant farmers' memory of the ADDP-led intervention scheme is most alive and vivid. This link between fertilizers and landlord-tenant conflict manifested itself most at two levels. First, like those in Arsi Negelle and Shashamane, Ada's absentee landowners were generally opposed to fertilizer use. According to several of my informants, most absentee landowners vehemently opposed fertilizer use on the ground that chemical fertilizers would sterilize the soil. The majority of the landowners aired their opposition by passing verbal eviction threats if the tenants failed to comply, while some tried to enforce their restrictions by declining to negotiate the lease agreements or by monitoring the fields periodically through the farmer-representatives (*wakkil*) they had put in place earlier. The opposition coming from the absentee-landowners complicated matter on the ground but it did not hamper tenant activities completely. In response tenants improvised a mechanism by which they acquired fertilizers in the market without necessarily becoming dependent on the credit service ADDP made available. That also led many tenant farmers to apply fertilizers into their fields secretly, often during the evening hours or early in the morning to evade the controlling devices the absentee landowners may have put in place. As a result perhaps more farmers were engaged in a variation of the kind of farm technology

ADDP had launched and the number of farmers planting improved wheat or maize varieties or applying fertilizers to their fields may have been far greater than what the official statistics show.¹²⁵

If fertilizer use was the first source of conflict between landowners and tenant cultivators, the second and more important source of conflict relates to the rent-hikes that followed suit. It is striking to note that several of my informants explained the procedure and impact of fertilizer regimes not simply from a strictly production point of view but in the context of broader developments in the on-going battle over land-rent and land-entitlement rights. This is important because, as several of my interviewees contended, the kind of relative success farmers' registered in terms of raising agricultural production through the application of modern inputs had been responsible in part for the kind of rent-hikes (from one-third or *siso* to half or *equil*) absentee landlords demanded from Ada tenants. The rent-hike began around 1968 but became increasingly common after 1971.¹²⁶

A concomitant development at this time and one my informants held most responsible for the rent-hikes during this time relates to the kind of interest the new generation of commercial farmers showed in Ada (and indeed the rest of the valley) agriculture. Like my informants from Arsi Negelle, those in Ada also established direct link between the productive potential of modern inputs and commercial farmers' own interest in agriculture. The result was inflated land prices that reached birr 80,000 per gasha in Ada around 1970. If, as I have shown in the previous chapter, the commercial farmers' success rate had been low in Ada compared to the rest of the valley, nonetheless the absentee landowners were able to seize the moment to inflate the percentage of land-rent up to 50 percent of the individual tenants' annual yield.¹²⁷

Like SORADEP in Arsi Negelle-Shashamane, ADDP's intervention in Ada ceased shortly after the coming to national power of a committee of army officers (*Derg*) in 1974. In the wake of the *Derg*'s leftist tendencies that became even more evident with its policy initiative such as the March 1975 state nationalization of rural land, the U.S. and French subsidized interventions in the valley halted their operation completely. If the notion of rural development and agricultural modernization survived the revolutionary upheavals, both the guiding ideology as well as practice changed from the past substantially and substantively.

Conclusion

Farmers' encounter with modern intervention regimes had been relevant in coloring aspects of valley agricultural transformation in the last decade of imperial rule. In this chapter I have shown the origin as well as organization of the government-led intervention programs that had materialized in our region during the same period. My findings prove that from a technical point of view what actually shaped the nature of Ethiopia's first input-based intervention regime had been the new call for combating declining soil fertility as a means to maximize crop-production. The idea was relatively recent, traceable to the mid-1950s but it captured the focus of development planners and key policy makers quickly. Humphrey's findings and analysis of organic matter lent some evidence to the emerging debate that rallied behind the notion of declining soil fertility and its impact on crop growth. Particularly influential were reports that focused on soil erosion, the adverse impact centuries of cereal-grain production had on soil fertility across the highlands.

The debate on soil fertility was not important for inventing Ethiopia's development trajectory, but it was consequential in reorienting its direction in the post-1966 period. Just like the notions of increasing cropped land, modernizing the plow and hoe technology, and promoting improved seed varieties informed the articulation of development discourse and practice in the 1941-59 period, that of soil fertility became influential in the last decade of imperial rule (and even after). In fact the first ever pilot programs experimented in the country under the aegis of FAO/NORAD focused on fertilizers.

The FAO/NORAD pilot program gave some credence to the feasibility of input-based intervention in the valley and elsewhere in the country. The SORADEPS', EPIDs', and ADDPs' involvement in the valley is entwined in the developments described above. My findings show that on the ground farmers' encounter with green revolution technologies had been impacted variously by a range of factors such as land entitlement rights, farmers' ability to pay the required down payments to buy the inputs, the degree and effectiveness of landowners' opposition to fertilizer use and even crop type.

By the early 1970s valley agriculture stood at the crossroads and its position in Ethiopia's food production and exchange network has been firmly established. If it were those who saw its production potential that moved to exploit the valley for long, it were those who seized its (and indeed rural Ethiopia's) contradictions that succeeded in wielding national power in 1974/75 to embark on agricultural development programs that proved even more fateful to the farmers in the ensuing decades.

CONCLUSION

The study of environmental history had grown rapidly in the last two and a half decades. Against the backdrop of pre-1980 agrarian studies that focused on state politics and policies, environmental historians shifted the locus of analysis to micro-scales and took production seriously. Most recent studies have broadened environmental history's domains and look at regions so as to locate actors in complex social relations and analyze influences on them exerted by contingent variables such as agro-ecology, the nature of material resources, land ownership, politics, labor, and demography.

I have sought to write the valley's environmental history from the perspectives of the farmers' who had been central in shaping it. To account for the complex processes and divergent forces at work I have tried to integrate social actors' agency with the workings of macro economic and political forces, articulated around the multiple configurations of knowledge and power and of theories and praxis. Such an approach has enabled me to view agricultural change in the valley not simply as the logical outcome of imposing structural forces or a mere product of farmers' responses to innate physical properties such as climate, soil or disease, but as a process that resulted from constantly shifting encounters between a range of social actors such as rural producers, tribute/rent-seekers, and the state. It has also enabled me to interrogate several prepositions expounded by scholars regarding state-rural society relations and the causal explanations of agricultural change in modern Ethiopian history. However, the study does not reject everything that has been written about the nature of the Ethiopian state, the exploitative conditions of rural producers, and the interface between demographic or environmental factors and

agricultural change. On the contrary this dissertation has provided additional evidence to reinforce the findings and conclusions of several researchers on the complex subject of Ethiopian national political economy and local agricultural change over time and across space. My primary intent has been to render agency to the social actors (most notably the farmers themselves) so as to explore change and transformation in Ethiopia's south-central Rift Valley agricultural environment and society.

The sources available for this study vary significantly in quality, texture, and meaning but overlap in time. The heterogeneity of the sources manifested itself not only along the conventional genres such as between oral and recorded but also within each category as well. The evidence from informants varied from individual to individual based on age, experience, and level of participation in local politics. Likewise the extent and quality of the available recorded evidence hinged on the creators own diverse interests, their place in the administrative/research structure and their intended audience. For example, while working for the state in the district or provincial offices, not all government functionaries saw themselves as mere conduits of state power and policies. As much as they facilitated state rule in their capacity, some took a third (though not necessarily neutral) position in their action and correspondence. Intervention agents and researchers also worked from the perspective of a shared ideology but their reports and actions were often shaped by encounters at the local level. In all, the materials are variously compromised by individual interests, gaps, assumptions, and distortions. But with careful reading, dialogue, and analysis, it is possible to build a narrative that lends more emphasis to practice.

The region I define as Ethiopia's south-central Rift Valley and its farming

communities are products of history. The half-century prior to the onset of our period saw interesting configurations of local formulations of identity, power relations, and interactions and competitions with outside forces. The most enduring feature of valley landscape during this time was its grassland environment and the availability of purgative water. If such resources enabled the region's pastoral communities to nurture reportedly high livestock populations and formulate terms of access to environmental resources based on group (clan or inter-clan) interests, they did not keep the valley in virtual isolation. Rather, either because "others" also wanted to share the same resources or due to the valley populations' own interest in forging broader alliances and exchange, the same period has been characterized by growing contact and intense competitions across clan/ethnic as well as agro-ecological boundaries.

In Ada, the direction of contact was multi-pronged but it was that geared to Shawa which became more instrumental in shaping the sub-region's modern history. Ada's interaction with northern Shawa had a long history but it was in the 1840s that that interlinkage entered a new phase. The decade witnessed Shawa's own emergence as a relatively strong state in the Ethiopian region alongside with many others. If Ada's past interaction with Shawa led to, among other things, the growing Christianization of its population, Shawa's eventual emergence as the nucleus of a relatively strong national state altered the nature of that contact and relationship significantly. In the 1840s Ada became one of Shawa's dependent territories. Yet because Shawa itself entered into a period of relative weakness following Sahla Sellasie's death in 1848, Ada's dependence (like several others) was never a fait accompli up until the 1870s.

Like Ada, Arsi Negelle and Mareqo communities also built relationships with outside

communities to various degree. Mareqo oral tradition upheld the view that the community was an offshoot of what was once a larger Alaba (or Hadiya) political community that stretched from Shashamane in the south to Silti in the north. According to this view, the Mareqo in the valley settled in their present location sometime in the first half of the 19th century, but continued to have close relations with Silti and Hadiya cultivators in the highlands that once were part of that polity. Unlike highland Ada that resembled northern Shawa in terms of field organization and belief system, Mareqo continued as a pastoral landscape and none of its inhabitants embraced Islam which the Silti practiced loosely.

The Oromo in present day Arsi Negelle also interacted with their kin in the Arsi highlands intimately and with several farming communities in the highlands to the west. Despite the kind of limitation distance could pose, Ittu Oromo maintained close and peaceful relationship with Wolayta. Like the Mareqo, the Ittu Oromo were pastoralists, but unlike those in parts of highland Arsi who were in the process of becoming Muslim those in the valley practiced traditional religion well into the 20th century.

Yet not all contact was peaceful and mutually beneficiary. In fact, the same resources that undergird interaction at times fueled competition and conflict among those communities. Ada's on-going cultural transformation and its interaction with Shawa facilitated its conquest rather than delay it. South of the Awash, most notably in the Mareqo Ridge, competition and conflict over environmental resources built on past history. Here the most enduring competition manifested itself more in Silti and Gurage populations' interest in expanding settlement and agriculture in the valley which they considered as the natural extension of their highland environment. Ittu Oromo seemed to

have less of a problem not so much because they settled in uncontested territory but mainly because the kind of close relationship they had built with the relatively stronger highland Arsi enabled them to push back and contain the Sidama in the mountains to the southeast and south.

Menilek's late 19th century expansionism altered the nature and substance of those competitions over environmental resources and gave them new direction. The valley's incorporation into the transforming Ethiopian state was gradual and peaceful, but it presented several challenges to the region's farming populations. The most immediate pressure valley herders and cultivators felt following conquest and state rule came in the form of tributes. The governments' tribute regimes varied from place to place and changed over time. North of the Awash, most notably in Ada, the new tributes took a much more complex and direct form. Owing to its expanding cereal-based agriculture and its relative proximity to Addis Ababa, Ada joined the rank of *madbet* territories along with others both north and south of the capital. *Madbet* were imperial reserves carefully selected to supply the royal court with grains and pulses in the late-19th and the first third of the 20th century. Ada's *madbet* farmers took the brunt of feeding the royal court for one entire month every year. Roughly a third of Ada's land and a significant proportion of its cultivators were embraced in the *madbet* structure. The rest came under different tiers of tribute regimes as the government classified the land into different categories such as *hudad* (*gult*), *samon*, *madarya*, or *gabbar*.

South of the Awash, in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo late-19th and early-20th century pastoral communities encountered a far less complex tribute structures. Both formed distinct *balabbat* units that enjoyed semi-autonomous status in return for the payment of

annual tributes and the ceding of sizeable portions of the land as government property.

Even more than the tributes it is the competitions over resources that accompanied state rule that became more pervasive in valley agricultural change. Here too, what the state attempted to put in place was a tenural structure fashioned after Shawa's. The most important landed categories the government sought to forge were so-called government land and *gabbar* land, portions of land that came off the hands of the regional elite. And the major means the government tried to ensure that was through land measurement (*qalad*).

Land measurement proceeded at different pace within the valley. Ada was among the first regions to be subjected to state-sponsored land measurement and the forging of *gabbar* and government land in the 1880s. In Arsi Negelle, although the carving of government land accompanied conquest in the late-19th century, *qalad* was a post-1930 phenomenon.

From an ideological point of view both the tribute and land regimes the government attempted to put in place across the valley were conditioned by the national power politics. They were part of an ongoing move in the part of the state to curb the power of the regional elite. In practice, however, what transpired was more a product of social actors' responses than of government legislation. For example, contrary to government interest in forging *gabbar* land by selling portions of land in Arsi Negelle in the early-1930s, only few individual farmers were willing to pay for it. Also, despite government designation of tens of thousands of hectares of land as state property south of the Awash, individual farmers continued to exploit it almost unencumbered by those legislations.

Continuity and change in valley agriculture in the 1892-1930 period took place in the

context described above. From an agricultural point of view, the period witnessed the slow expansion of cereal-agriculture in Ada-Lume and continued livestock production in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo. Characteristic of Ada-Lume's early-20th century land use was long-fallow agriculture in crop fields and livestock farming that depended on distinct grazing lands in uncultivated zones.

In Arsi Negelle and Mareqo, peaceful submission and the resultant *balabbat* structure put in place offered those communities virtual autonomies and “protected” their herding populations from the brunt of heavy tribute regimes and/or the kind of relatively intense competitions *qalad* accentuated over agricultural resources in places like Ada. With only minor adjustments (such as in their ability to pay the annual tributes required) Arsi Negelle and Mareqo herders reaffirmed their rights of access to grazing resources that were essential to their livelihood.

Starting from around 1930 (and in the case of Ada-Lume perhaps a decade earlier) and more so from the early-1940s, valley agriculture underwent dramatic transformation. Change took place virtually in every respect, including land use, crop choice, labor organization, and the place of livestock in the farm economy. In Ada the most conspicuous transformation during this period was the shift from long-fallow to intensified agriculture characterized most by crop-mixing and expansion of area under cultivation. By the early 1940s Ada-Lume farmers had already developed sophisticated crop-mixing strategies whereby they cultivated a range of crops such as *tef*, wheat, barley, lentils, chickpea, safflower, and maize depending up on soil type and climate. This was an important development because crop-mixing enabled the farmers to maintain soil fertility in a new way from the kind of long-fallow agriculture they practiced before.

It also gave Ada-Lume farmers a better chance to diversify their output so as to participate in the expanding food markets meaningfully.

In the 1960s Ada-Lume agriculture entered into yet another phase of transformation marked by declining intercropping and the consolidation of specialized agriculture geared to *tef* production. *Tef* of course had been Ada's trade mark for most of the 20th century but it was only after the mid-1960s that it became the dominant field crop. In 1960 Ada farmers allocated a fifth of their cultivated fields to *tef*, a figure that grew to more than a third in 1968 and almost two-thirds by the turn of the decade.

The same time periods witnessed dramatic transformation in Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agriculture. In both sub-regions, the 1941-59 decades saw the taking shape of integrated crop-livestock agriculture, the balancing of a growing number of field crops such as maize, beans and peas with the raising of on average 8 to 10 heads of cattle on individual smallholder farms. Of growing importance to Mareqo farmers at this time was chili pepper whose production grew significantly in a short period of time. Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers acquired seed technology from their highland neighbors and gave it new meaning in their relatively dry and grassland environment. Key to their success in that regard was their careful selection of seed and manure use. Almost all the crops Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers adopted were seasonal that matured quickly. For "taming" the grassland environment and enhancing soil fertility on cultivated fields Arsi Negelle and Mareqo farmers maintained livestock production to extract manure and as a source of capital.

Just as Ada-Lume's agriculture shifted from crop-mixing to specialization in the post-1960 period that of Arsi Negelle and Mareqo transmogrified into a phase of rapid

intensification. In both sub-regions intensification was attended by concentrated agriculture—a move away from integrated crop-livestock agriculture and the maximization of crop production. The result has been the virtual cerealization of Arsi Negelle and Mareqo agro-ecology, a complete turn around from the pastoral landscape of the past.

Several factors converged to fashion valley agricultural transformation in the post-Italian occupation period. The most benign was the urban food market and the modern transportation networks that fed it. Addis Ababa's growth as Ethiopia's economic and political capital was crucial in that. The city's food market remained relatively small for the first three decades and a half of its foundation, expanded in progression the following two decades, and rose exponentially in the postwar period.

With the obvious exception of Ada's *madbet* farms, the valley's contribution to Addis Ababa's food supply may have been insignificant at first. The situation began to change as of the 1920s and became distinctly vital in the postwar period. Pointing the direction of change in the pre-Italian occupation period was the beginning of medium-scale commercial farming in Ada and near Zway. The pioneers were such entrepreneurial politicians as Tafari/Haile Sellasie and Babitchev and several of Ethiopia's early 20th century expatriate residents who saw in agriculture a potentially lucrative business. From an infrastructural point of view what convinced those adventurers to start farming there was the railway (completed in 1917) and the construction of motorable roads that started almost a decade later. By 1930 Ada, Mojo, and Nazareth were connected to Addis Ababa by a dry-weather road. By 1932 another extension of the road that cut through the eastern part of the valley linked Mojo with Shashamane further south. The Italians (1936-41)

upgraded those roads and made them serviceable all year round, just in time for the booming food and consumer market that followed their departure.

Ethiopia's postwar food market was monumental both in terms of its magnitude as well as its impact on local agriculture and politics. In the main, the food market was the product of the country's unprecedented urbanization and a cash economy that entered into a new level following the short-lived Italian occupation and heavy capital investment such as in road building. Indeed the postwar decades witnessed the consolidation and constant expansion of the domestic food market that depended for its sustenance on small producers. Accompanying those changes for the first one and a half decade of the postwar era was a fledgling export food market that found its niche in the Allied controlled Middle East. If the network of roads the Italians left behind facilitated the movement of grains and pulses from the sites of production to the points of shipment, for a growing number of Ada-Lume, Mareqo and Shashamane farmers—like their cohorts in different parts of the country--the 1940s and 1950s were agronomically the least stressed with no major moisture-loss reported. Many responded to the markets positively, in the meantime enabling Ethiopia to export large quantities of food overseas, garner much needed hard currency, and earn to itself the appellation the bread basket of the Middle East.

Ethiopia's active participation in the postwar international food regime was significant and gravitate her into the politics and practice of postwar developmentalism. For the newly founded Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, which was created to enhance global food production and exchange at the end of the Second World War, Ethiopia proved to be a viable ally. Ethiopia, in turn, found in that

partnership a fitting ideology and practice to combat the dangers of dependence (i.e. most directly coming from British interest in the Horn) and economic backwardness that Haile Sellasie always believed were responsible for his country's vulnerability to European aggression.

From an agricultural point of view, the FAO-Ethiopia accord unleashed a new era of agricultural development in that country's history. The cornerstone of that accord was the understanding that Ethiopian agriculture was traditional and needed to be modernized if it were to feed its growing population and continue to export food to the overseas market. Consequently, the Ethiopian government (in collaboration with FAO and other international donor agencies) launched a series of intervention programs in which valley farmers participated variously.

If the food market and intervention regimes integrated the valley with Addis Ababa's niche economy and international developmentalism, in turn fashioning aspects of field technology on the ground, their most profound impact, however, was the kind of fierce competition they kindled over agricultural resources. Among the protagonists was a generation of Ethiopia's postwar politico-military elite and non-elite groups who sought to partake in agriculture at one level or another. First there were those who, counting on their service to the country during the Italian occupation and after, mobilized their social and political capital to garner rural land as a reward. They found in the government's changing rural land policies and the land grants that followed a viable outlet to fulfill their demand. Building on prewar antecedents, the land-seekers targeted places like the valley where ostensibly large tracts of government land existed and where the prospect of marketed-food production was greater. In a span of just two decades time, several

thousands of those land-seekers managed to acquire agricultural land (often ranging from 20 to 40 hectares) first as *rist* and then (after 1959) as private property. Few took the land and began cultivation. The majority, however, were interested in rent rather than in agriculture. The result was the entrenchment of a share-tenancy arrangement based on a three/four to one appropriation of annual output between farmers and absentee landowners, respectively. The valley's unprecedented cerealization took place in that context.

Then followed a new generation of urban farmers who needed rural land not for rent but for commercial production. Unlike their predecessors who mobilized their social and political capital to gain access to agricultural land, the commercial farmers counted on the power of money to lease the land for 5-15 years. Also, unlike the rent-seekers who were content with twenty to forty hectares of land, the commercial farmers leased several hundred hectares of land and employed modern machines (like tractors) and inputs to maximize production. In time scale they became particularly active since the late-1960s. On the ground they were more successful in place like Arsi Negelle, Shashamane, and Dalocha than in Ada where their modern technology (such as improved wheat varieties and fertilizers) worked better. For the small-farmers across the valley the incidence of commercial farmers foreclosed the on-going fierce competition over agricultural resources. In the short term, such competitions led to rent hikes from a third to one-half across the valley, and made the cultivators full-blown tenants. In the meantime the whole process marked the high point of the on-going battle over environmental resources, labor, and output that have been the catalyst for ecological and social change in the valley for the period covered in this study.

EPILOGUE

**OF PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTION RELATIONS: VALLEY EXPERIENCE
IN THE ERAS OF COMMAND ECONOMY AND MARKET LIBERALIZATION
(1975-2000)**

The notion of declining soil fertility and mineral deficiency that provided the scientific justification for Ethiopia's intervention regimes in the last decade of imperial rule had been paralleled by intense debate on land reform. With the fall of Haile Sellasie's government and the coming to power of the military (*Derg*) in February 1974, land reform took prominence over soil fertility and any kind of production-oriented intervention already underway. The *Derg* considered that the country's agrarian problems, lack of development, and food shortages (leading up to the 1973-74 famine) were essentially the net result of political economy. As the changing discourses of international developmentalism informed Haile Sellasie's postwar agricultural policies, the alternative path to socialist development that found its vocal representation among Ethiopia's revolutionaries fashioned that of the *Derg*.

A central theme in the urban-based opposition that culminated in the downfall of Haile Sellasie's government had been the land question. To be sure, specialists engaged in Ethiopia's agricultural development (most notably those affiliated with FAO) and, though in a far less articulated fashion, the leaders of the fizzled 1960 coup had called for some sort of land reform earlier at various capacities and for various reasons.¹ But it were the students, through their writings, debates, and annual demonstrations that made "land to

the tiller” a rallying point for political dissent and opposition in the 1960s and early-1970s.² The *Derg*, which considered itself as the “natural” leader of the mainly urban-based and intellectual-led popular uprising, appropriated the land question as a legitimizing philosophy and its primary concern. In March 1975 the *Derg* proclaimed a major land reform decree, in effect codifying with all its nuances and fallacies the writings and discourses of Ethiopia’s most radical intellectuals and politicians of the 1960s and early-1970s. Unsurprisingly, the proclamation was both radical and ambitious. Among the edict’s most important provisions were the abolition of tenancy, absentee land ownership, and the cancellation of all outstanding debt farmers’ owed.³

In places like the valley where share-tenancy and competition over land entitlement rights had been severe the majority of small-scale farmers accepted the proclamation as an appropriate and liberating measure.⁴ Nonetheless, not all farmers benefited from the land reform equally. In fact, farmers’ own assessment of the land reform, particularly with respect to rights of access to agricultural resources, varied significantly depending up on social standing and political alliance with the *Derg*.

Certainly the most important beneficiaries of the land reform were tenants and a small number of daily laborers and poor urbanites (mainly from such towns as Shashamane and Zway) who gained quasi-ownership rights over portions of valley agricultural land. But for smallholder farmers in and outside of the valley, the edict also entailed certain potentially damaging provisions many came to understand later when their land came under a mundane practice of measurement and redistribution just few years into the revolution. And for all farmers (including the ex-tenants), the official designation of land as “public” property stood in stark contrast to their long-term interests because as much

as the proclamation affirmed their rights of access to the land, the edict also amplified the subjectivity of land ownership many wanted to overcome. To be sure, the provision itself did not concern the farmers at first not so much because they were ambivalent of its meanings but rather because they understood it well. That is, to the extent that the proclamation kept the ceiling for the maximum land-area cultivating farmers could obtain to an exaggerated 10 hectares, the provision itself was attractive to the majority of the farmers who saw in it a chance for land accumulation. Just like the imperial land grants, the *Derg*'s provision built on the assumption that there is ample undeveloped land out there that could be taken and utilized for crop production. If imperial land policies fueled intense competitions over resources mainly between urban and rural subjects, the *Derg*'s policies eliminated those contradictions and substituted them with a new and no less politically inspired round of competitions among farmers themselves. And if the modern (urban) courts handled the litigations that flared up during the imperial era, in the post-1975 period the rural courts (*ferd shango*) of the peasant associations (PAs) took center stage.

The PAs owed their existence to the same land reform proclamation the *Derg* promulgated in 1975. Just like the imperial government mediated state control and power relations through elite groups of local *balabbat* and *qoro*, elected PA officials (or the *komite* as they were referred to as by ordinary farmers) mediated state-rural society relationship in the post-imperial era. If the *balabbat* and their subordinates justified their local power through birth rights, nomination or inheritance of the title, the *komite* were elected members of the community whose term of office hinged on their political stance as well as their proven or presumed loyalty to the government. As the *balabbat* and *qorro*

were co-opted but at the same time used their prerogatives for personal and group advancement during the imperial era, so did the *komite* under the *Derg*.

Mandated by the law to oversee land distribution and redistribution presumably to address changing demographic needs, PA officials (themselves farmers), however, used and abused the system for reasons ranging from personal friendship or conflict to politics. But in the meantime, the practice itself impacted farmers' organization of production and long-term investment strategies to various degrees. From a strictly land use perspective, for example, the constant land measurement and redistribution the PA officials conducted accelerated the on-going conversion of grazing lands into crop fields in unprecedented scale. My informants who talked about previous (most notably pre-1959) land use patterns in the language of transformation were quick to criticize post-1978 trends rather sharply.⁵

The overall impact such declining grazing resources had on livestock production were equally deleterious. For example, a December 1982 Zway *warada* MoA survey found that a significant proportion of the farmers in that sub-district lacked a pair of oxen (see table below).

Table 10.1 Farm-oxen distribution among Zway farmers (1982)

PA	Membership	Farmers lacking a single ox	Farmers holding one ox	Farmers raising two or more oxen
Bulchana	415	315	70	30
Jillo Dida	313	108	103	102
Awash	570	279	200	91
Total	1298	702	373	523

Source: Zarihun G/Yohanes to Haykochena Buta Jira *Gebrena Tatari*, Zway, File No. 110.

Similarly, a February 1985 report by Arsi Negelle MoA office indicated that the

majority of the *warada* farmers possessed only a pair of oxen, and underscored that there were no cattle herders in the *warada* at all.⁶ In fact, by the late-1980s lack of pasture had become a serious concern to Shashamane and Arsi Negelle farmers so much so that a vibrant forage market evolved based on agro-industrial waste from Awasa.⁷

In Ada, the rapid decline of grazing lands and the consolidation of a *tef* regime had led to the emergence of stall feeding from around 1967, first in Dankaka and then across most of the highlands. According to McCann and Gryseels and Anderson Ada farmers' propensity to cope with declining pasture and concentrated agriculture led to a new kind of crop-livestock integrated agriculture since the late-1960s and more so in the post-1974 period.⁸

Equally consequential to valley farmers' productive activity during the revolution period was the structure and functioning of the food market. From a policy perspective, the time witnessed the government's heavy handed move in regulating trade in agricultural produce. The *Derg* attempted to command the food market by organizing a giant and highly obtrusive parastatal known as the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC), better known by its Amharic acronym *E. Sa. Ga. De*.⁹

First established in 1976, the parastatal went through several phases of reorganization before it emerged as a highly structured and centralized body in 1980. Backed by government allocated capital, large manpower, and relatively developed infrastructure (most notably the huge granaries it built in different parts of the country including one in Shashamane and Nazareth), the AMC expropriated agricultural produce from farmers under centrally regulated quota system and price throughout the 1980s. As it turned out, the price AMC offered to farmers often fall far short of the market price while the quota

proved to be cumbersome to farmers to fulfill.¹⁰

Scholars have studied the AMC's degree of involvement in the food market and, to some extent also, farmers coping mechanisms relatively rigorously. There is general consensus in the literature that the AMC's price-regulation and quota system proved to be one of the most damaging to grain producers in the 1980s.¹¹ Interestingly local farmers referred to the *E.Sa.Ga.De.* as *Ergetagna Saw Gaday Dereget* (the real man killing organization).¹²

Unsurprisingly, the *Derg's* conception of rural development and food production rested on the promotion of medium- to large-scale farms, either in the form of state farms or producer cooperatives.¹³ The government created its state farms by nationalizing the majority of large-scale commercial farms that dotted the rural landscape in the imperial days.¹⁴ Administered by the newly established State Farms Authority (later Ministry), the state farms were meant to be the bastion of socialist agriculture and a major source of food supply for urban populations, the army, and for export.¹⁵

No such state farms existed in the valley. The medium- to large-scale commercial farms that sprang up in the region since the mid-1960s were distributed to individual farmers following the March 1975 land reform.¹⁶ The only state-run farm in the valley during this time were the Adami Tullu and Abernosa livestock centers (south of Zway) and the seed experimentation field just north of Awasa.

The Adami Tullu ranch owed its existence to imperial interest in livestock development. First established in 1959 near the town of Adami Tullu on 1120 hectares (28 *gasha*) of land, and 363 cattle, the aim was to breed the Borana (southern Ethiopia) cattle for distribution to smallholder farmers across the country. The following year the

imperial government started a similar ranch in nearby Abernosa on 4160 hectares (104 *gasha*) of land. The two livestock development centers functioned as autonomous entities until the outbreak of the revolution. Yet in their decade and a half life span both ranches accomplished very little in terms of distributing Borana cattle to farmers. Rather because the centers' extensive reserves competed against the grazing rights of local farmers, the ranches turned out to be an island much resented by neighboring farming communities who saw the fences as inhibitive to their rights of access to resources. Hence on the outset of the 1974 revolution local farmers demolished the Adami Tullu ranch and distributed the land among themselves. The Abernosa ranch also lost 1280 hectares (32 *gasha*) of land to farmers but managed to retain some 2880 hectares (72 *gasha*) of land.¹⁷

In 1979 the MoA reorganized the two ranches in one body called Adami Tullu Abernosa Livestock Development Center and restored the center's extensive landholdings. By 1984-85 the ranch possessed a total of 5,000 hectares of land further alienating individual farmers' rights of access to the land. Consequently, just like the imperial days, local farmers detested the ranch, demolished its fences more frequently, cut down the acacia trees, and trespassed to graze their cattle in the protected areas. In practice too, the center's activities remained very modest at best. Between 1979 and 1987 the ranch managed to distribute a total of 1124 milk cows to small farmers in different parts of the country but failed to work with local communities in any meaningful way.¹⁸

The Awasa seed experimentation farm also owed its existence to pre-revolution AAISC activities. Under the *Derg*/WPE government the farm evolved as one of the major seed experimentation fields in the country. An important development in this regard had been the establishment of the Ethiopian Seed Enterprise in July 1978.¹⁹ Placed under the

Ministry of State Farms, the Seed Enterprise opened one of its four major seed preparation plants near Awasa. Importing hybrid seed varieties (mainly the TZSR-w1 maize variety) and multiplying improved seed varieties of maize, wheat, barley, and *tef*, the seed experimentation farms the enterprise run at different locations emerged as major seed-banks for the state farms.²⁰ I have reproduced the enterprises' sales figures for 1980 and 1986 to demonstrate the magnitude of its activities in providing high-quality seed to the state farms (see Table 10.2 below).

Table 10.2 Ethiopian Seed Enterprise delivery of improved seed varieties (1980 and 1986)

Seed Type	1980		1986	
	Quantity	Amount (birr)	Quantity	Amount (birr)
Haricot bean	383	n.a	2,108	219,443.00
Wheat	189,685.84	12,377,001.06	176,934	11,544,944.00
<i>Tef</i>	2,287.00	167,522.75	7,000	512,750.00
Barley	2,558.10	166,532.21	21,144	1,376,474.00
Maize	15,442.15	763,590.55	86,611	4,131,345.00
Sorghum	250.00	14,475.00	10,000	579,000.00

Source: *BaMangest Ersha Lemat Minister Yaltyopya Mert Zar Dereget*, pp. 11-12.

P.S The seed varieties the enterprise sold included a short range legumes and oilseeds such as rapeseed and soybeans (at much smaller quantities) than listed here. For a complete list see *ibid*. Total sales in 1980 and 1986 amounted to birr 13,489,121.57, and birr 20,005,430.00 respectively.

As could be read from the table above, wheat and maize production became the primary focus of the state farms. Barley, much on demand by the breweries, ranked third while *tef*, the most important marketed-cereal, stood at fourth. Yet despite the kind of preferential attention they received--appropriating the bulk of improved and hybrid seed varieties, fertilizers, and expertise--the state farms were a dismal failure in Ethiopia. According to Dessalegn, between 1980 and 1985 state farms contributed a meager 1-2 percent of the country's food requirements while absorbing nearly two-thirds of

government expenditure on agriculture.²¹

Like the state farms, the *Derg* envisioned producer cooperatives as the basis for building medium- to large-scale farms against the backdrop of the fragmented and “backward” smallholder farms that dominated Ethiopia’s agricultural landscape. The *Derg* contemplated forging producer cooperatives as early as December 1975 when it decreed its Peasant Association Organization and Consolidation Proclamation. Mainly aimed at establishing peasant associations, one of the provisions in the December 1975 proclamation emphasized the need for establishing producer cooperatives in order to “enable the peasantry to work collectively and to speed up social development by improving the quality of the instruments of production and the level of productivity.”²² But it was only after June 1979, following the proclamation of another edict by the government, that a concerted effort was made to organize producer cooperatives in the country.²³

By the time the government promulgated its June 1979 proclamation for the establishment of producer cooperatives, the *Derg* had already committed itself to building a socialist economy. Relying on the Stalinist assumption that smallholder agriculture is antithetical to socialist transformation, the 1979 proclamation underscored that the producer cooperatives, alongside with the state farms, would form the basis for transforming the Ethiopian economy along socialist lines. In particular the government envisaged the producer cooperatives as the best alternative to undo the “small and traditional peasant sector” by pooling together land, capital, and labor toward forging bigger and modern farms. Ideally the producer cooperatives would evolve as an economic and social community whereby farmers (particularly the poor) would

voluntarily assemble their farm resources and produce collectively to reap the produce based on the principle “from each according to his ability to each according to his work.”²⁴

From the outset government rate of success in organizing producer cooperatives depended up on farmers’ responses, the degree of state control, and even ecology.²⁵ As it turned out, the most successful producer cooperatives had been organized in regions that specialized in annual crops (as distinct from perennial crops like coffee and *enset*) such as Gojjam, Shawa and Arsi.²⁶

In the valley the evidence from Shashamane *warada* MoA office shows that by the mid-1980s only three producer cooperatives had been organized. The first to be organized was Shasha Qaqalle. Formed in August 1978 by 371 farmers, its membership however declined to 181 (with a total population of 320 men and 464 women) in 1980 having dismissed the rest on the basis of reported negligence in cooperative work and ideological differences.²⁷ In 1980 Shasha Qaqalle had 45 pair of oxen, 181 sickles and a total circulating capital of *birr* 4162.00. The second producer cooperative, known as Washana Soyoma, had 84 members (with a total population of 366 people), three of whom were women. Its balance sheet showed *birr* 3780.00 circulating capital (of which 2870.10 was reported missing allegedly taken by the chair person) and 25 pair of oxen. Organized by 65 men and 1 woman, the third producer cooperative at Gottuna Onama accumulated a total of *birr* 10,829.95 in its account in 1986 but its farm level activities remained bleak.²⁸

Yet as could be seen from Table 10.3, in terms of membership size and capital the producer cooperatives trailed far behind the service cooperatives the majority of the

Table 10.3 Distribution of PAs (service co-operatives) and Producer cooperatives in Shashamane *warada* (1986 or 3/23/79 E.C.)

	Total Number Of association	Total members	Capital	Tractors	Size of land (ha)
Service Cooperatives	81	21,092	1,161,259.81	1	n.a
Producer Cooperatives	3	521	313,104.97	1	597.98

Source: Atakalay Maraja-1. Shashamane *warada*'s total land area was estimated at 96,000 hectares in 1986.

warada farmers joined. Strikingly both MoA official reports and informants testimonies indicated that those who joined the producer cooperatives were generally poor farmers with relatively smaller land and capital (in the form of plow oxen) at their disposal.²⁹ Several of my informants even went so far as describing members of the producer cooperatives as “lazy” and the least successful who just wanted to seize the producer cooperatives as fresh avenues to personal advancement and land accumulation.³⁰ Not surprisingly therefore right from the outset producer cooperatives became a forum in which the discourses of poor versus better-off, lazy versus hardworking, conservative versus revolutionary, has been introduced and fought over against the backdrop of the discourse of the exploited peasant mass that emerged in the first several years of the revolution.

In practice too, several problems embroiled the producer cooperatives from within. A report by the Shashamane *warada* MoA office regarding the three producer cooperatives mentioned above is telling about the inner workings of the producer cooperatives. According to the same report, the major problem besetting the producer cooperatives relates to the fact that most members were more committed to working on their private holdings than on the collective farms. The report underscored that members were willing

to work on the collective farms only during mid-day, indicating that the timing was not appropriate for cultivation because of farmers' declining efficiency in the hottest hours of the day as well as the risks involved with evaporation during the same hours. On the contrary, the same farmers showed greater interest working on their own individual plots investing more time and labor than they did on the collective farms.³¹

As much as the inner workings of the producer cooperatives had been characterized by internal contradictions, relationships with members of service cooperatives were even tenser. Those contradictions were particularly acute with respect to access to land. Because as a rule producer cooperatives had to form a single uninterrupted bloc and to make them attractive to other farmers, MoA officials entitled producer cooperatives to possess the "best" land even if that meant partial or complete annexation of land from other farmers in the area.³² Producer cooperatives also received additional land (for collective farming) whether or not their actual number was growing while those who did not join the producer cooperatives could and did indeed lose a portion of the land they possessed following the constant measurement and redistribution the PA officials (often themselves members of the producer cooperatives) periodically conducted.³³

In addition to access to land, the distinct advantage producer cooperatives enjoyed in terms of access to credit and modern inputs sharpened those competitions and contradictions directly. Until the mid-1980s the producer cooperatives and the state farms became the primary (in fact, almost exclusive) recipients of modern inputs and agricultural extension in the country. In fact, the government (or to be more specific the MoA's Department of Agricultural Development) used extension services and modern inputs as the best mechanism to influence independent farmers to join the producer

cooperatives.³⁴

All these factors fueled tension between members of the producer and service cooperatives although none of the contradictions seem to have escalated into an all out confrontation as far as one can tell from the official reports. What is even more striking to note is the fact that even after all the incentives producer cooperatives enjoyed only a statistically insignificant proportion of valley farmers were willing to join them. Nor did the producer cooperatives evolve as islands of prosperity and a source of envy to independent farmers as the officials had anticipated first. Rather by the time the government showed some inkling to retreat from its command economy principles in the late-1980s, members rushed to dismantle their producer cooperatives and join the service cooperatives in increasing numbers.³⁵

The crisis in socialist agriculture (1985-91)

The kind of emphasis the *Derg* gave to production relations, state farms, and producer cooperatives for almost a decade began to change starting from 1985. Several factors contributed to this policy re-orientation in the part of the socialist government. The first relates to the so-called Ethiopia Highland Reclamation Studies (EHRS), and the second was a series of reports prepared by a team of the USSR's State Planning Commission in Ethiopia.

The EHRS were comprehensive studies conducted by a team of FAO and MoA specialists between 1983 and 1985. In contrast to the dominant explanation that linked Ethiopia's agricultural problems with production relations (as had been the case before), the FAO-MoA specialists insisted that climatic and agronomic reasons were responsible

for the country's agricultural malaise. In particular, the specialists singled out land degradation as the culprit to declining food production and rural poverty. According to those reports, land degradation in the country (both in the "low potential cereal zone and high-potential cereal zone") resulted from a combination of "natural phenomena and man's actions, such as the destruction of natural vegetation cover through deforestation, over-grazing and inappropriate agricultural practices that are not in harmony with the ecological environment."³⁶ At their core the EHRS not only replaced the dominant political economy rhetoric by a new round of discourse that emphasized land degradation, but the reports became the basis for the conceptualization of the so-called conservation based development the MoA adapted in 1985.³⁷ Indeed, Ethiopia's critically acclaimed afforestation, and soil and water conservation strategies that became so conspicuous in the late-1980s found their scientific justification from those reports.³⁸

The second and equally important factor in shaping government policy on Ethiopian agriculture and economic development was the reports the Soviet advisory group compiled. Starting from 1983, the Soviet team submitted a series of three reports to the government on an annual basis. The first two reports (prepared in 1982/83 and 1983/84) came under the title "strategic problems of Ethiopia's economic development during the ten-year period 1983/84 to 1992/93."³⁹ The third report, submitted in September 1985, bore the title GOSPLAN and happened to be more critical of government policies than the first two.⁴⁰ In particular the latest report criticized the kind of unwarranted emphasis the *Derg* gave to state farms and producer cooperatives at the expense of smallholder agriculture. While acknowledging the importance of state farms, the GOSPLAN underscored that since "private farmers produce 95 percent of all agricultural

output...they be given incentives and support to increase their production.”⁴¹ The report concluded by highlighting a range of reformist measures the government should take. Among the recommendations, perhaps the most interesting were: channeling agricultural investment into the most productive regions of the country; providing modern tools, seeds, and fertilizers to the small-farm sector, and liberalizing the domestic food market.⁴²

Though not officially endorsed by the government the GOSPLAN influenced national policy thinking directly or indirectly. According to the Rand’s Paul Henze, Mengistu in particular was disgruntled by the Soviet report which he considered it as harsh.⁴³ Nonetheless, some of the measures the government introduced shortly, such as the division of the country into “development regions” (as envisaged by the Soviet team) suggests that the Soviet report might have influenced government planning one way or another. More than the GOSPLAN, it was, however, the 1984-85 famine that exposed brutally the failure of the governments’ past policies and forced Mengistu’s government to revisit its own rural development programs once again.⁴⁴ The time coincided with the mutation of the *Derg* into the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) government and the introduction of an otherwise ambitious ten-year development plan. Consequently, while sticking to its past policies that focused on state farms and producer cooperatives, the government also adapted a new policy of rural development based on the trilogy of villagization, food self-sufficiency, and “peasant agricultural development” that became so pervasive in the post-famine years.

Villagization got its hitch only after July 1985, following its endorsement as a national policy by the second and third plenary meetings of the central committee of the WPE.

The plan was to re-house all (but the war torn regions of Eritrea and Tigray) rural populations in the country by the year 1994 (the target year, although in effect it was halted in 1990).⁴⁵ Just in one year, and by the time of the establishment of the National Villagization Coordination Committee (NVCC) in June 1986, approximately 15 percent of the country's estimated 5.5 million rural households had been villagized. The figure reportedly reached 40 percent in August 1989.⁴⁶

In the valley villagization proceeded haphazardly. In Arsi Negelle *warada*, for example, villagization started in 1985 with the establishment of 9 villages involving a total of 1659 households (1385 men and 274 women). In 1986/87, 16 more villages had been formed, and the following year 8 more were added. In all, thirty-three villages had been formed by 1988, involving 3597 households or a total population of 16,826 individuals.⁴⁷

In Shashamane *warada* too, villagization started in 1985 with 37 villages, involving a total of 1228 households (or 5513 people). By 1989, the total number of villages grew to 185, with 2931 households or 131,815 people moved to new homes.⁴⁸

Side by side with its villagization scheme, the government also moved forcibly to realize its program of food self-sufficiency in the post-famine years. The notion of food self-sufficiency focused on two interrelated concepts: raising the calorie intake and ensuring the availability and supply of food to the population.⁴⁹ Re-kindling the scientific notion of appropriate calorie intake which had been intermittently discussed among experts and policy makers since at least the early 1960s, the planners sought to increase average calorie intake to 2000/day (from a reported 1800/day before) per person by the end of the ten-year plan.⁵⁰

But more than the calorie intake, it was availability of food, particularly given the recurrent famine situation in the country, that the government gave high priority. Interestingly, the WPE government acknowledged that the problem of food in the country was the result of both declining production as well as undeveloped and underdeveloped food market. It sought to promote food supply mainly by expanding modern transportation infrastructure and granaries as well as re-organizing trade.⁵¹ It also sought to improve production mainly by expanding crop-agriculture (by cultivating hitherto uncultivated regions and through resettlement programs), strengthening producer cooperatives and state farms, and providing modern agricultural technology to targeted farmers (chosen by farmers' propensity to grow the major staple crops such as *tef*, wheat, maize, barley, and sorghum).⁵²

Consequently, the government carved out new "regions of development" (that run over the administrative regions) and introduced a new intervention scheme known as Peasant Agricultural Development Project (PADEP) in 1986.⁵³ To that end, the government divided the country into eight agro-ecological zones, of which our region became Southern Rift Valley and Lakes Region, stretching from Ada in the north to Lake Chamo in the south. The government also singled out 148 "food surplus" (*terf amrach*) *warada* to qualify for the new round of intervention and food extraction policies of which the valley's three crop producing *warada*--Shashamane, Arsi Negelle, and Ada--become part.⁵⁴ As an intervention scheme, PADEP was the latest creation that had been officially sanctioned by the government in 1986, but built on a modified version of the travel and visit (T&V) intervention and input delivery strategy.⁵⁵

Like the integrated rural development program of the late-1960 and early 1970s, T&V

was an international invention. It is particularly associated with Daniel Benor who crafted its organizational structure as well as its theoretical framework.⁵⁶ First tested in India, the T&V scheme was exported to a number of Asian and African countries since the late-1960s. Ethiopia adapted the strategy in June 1983. Out of the three selected regions T&V started as a pilot project—Arsi (Tiya and Hotesa), Ada/Lume, and Arsi Negelle/Shashamane—the last two were in our region.⁵⁷ The first, in Arsi, focused on the promotion of wheat and barley production, ARDU providing the technical base. That of Ada-Lume focused on *tef* and wheat, enjoying the technical support from the Debre Zeit agricultural experimentation station. The Arsi-Negelle-Shashamane pilot program focused on the transfer to smallholder farmers of modern technology in maize and sorghum production, the Awasa IAR research station providing the technology.⁵⁸

Theoretically, the T&V system envisaged to maximize farm productivity by facilitating the interlinkage between farmers, extension services, and research.⁵⁹ In practice, however, the evidence from Arsi Negelle-Shashamane indicate that the T&V (and its successor PADEP) had only modest success in terms of coordinating the link between farmers, development agents (DAs), and researchers. In fact, as far as one can tell from official reports, the DAs found it difficult to convince both so-called contact farmers (whose farms would be used as demonstration plots) as well as follower farmers to participate in the new round of technology that originated from the research stations at Awasa and Debre Zeit.⁶⁰ According to DA reports, “resistance” mainly came from some PA leaders and “certain anti-development” individuals in the region who reportedly “disseminated wrong information regarding government motives” in creating demonstration plots and pressing on maximizing production.⁶¹ In one of the reports to the

MoA headquarters in Addis Ababa, government provincial offices as well as *warada* police, Taye, the first co-coordinator of the region's T&V project, indicated that the majority of the farmers he talked to believed that T&V was a smart mechanism designed by the government to confiscate farm land. Instead the farmers suggested that such extension activities and lessons should be given on producer cooperative lands and not on individual farmer's plot.⁶²

Notwithstanding those difficulties, the project nonetheless managed to establish 34 so-called development centers (22 in Shashamane and 12 in Arsi Negelle) in the *warada* by 1988.⁶³ The Nano Wayo development center (just north of the town of Arsi Negelle), for example, was one of the 12 in Arsi Negelle with a total of 52 contact farmers and 676 follower-farmers participating in it.⁶⁴ According to MoA official reports, the Nano Wayo development center was among the most active in terms of frequent visits made by the DA, and farmers' growing interest in fertilizer and improved seed use. However, in Nano Wayo, as in the other centers, farmers' showed greater propensity to develop their own techniques and priorities regarding fertilizer use, seed choice, and crop selection than what had often been prescribed by the DAs. For example, according to a 1985 report, of both Arsi Negelle and Shashamane's 347 contact-farmers and 1847 follower-farmers who were given lessons on adjusting the timing of wheat planting and seed-land ratio, only 88 contact-farmers and 262 follower-farmers adapted the new technology as prescribed while the rest improvised several aspects of it according to their needs. In regard to *tef*, only 44 contact farmers and 1999 follower-farmers practiced the prescribed planting dates while only 61 contact-farmers and 127 follower-farmers experimented the suggested seed-land ratio.⁶⁵

From the reports it appears that yield almost doubled on farms applying modern inputs compared to those that did not, although the yield-differential was not as high when farmers opted for local seed varieties with the exception only of maize (see table below). But yield was not the only factor farmers calculated in their production equation. The presumed or real link between weeds and improved seed varieties, the unavoidable link between those seed varieties and optimum fertilizer application (particularly given farmers' own inability to raise sufficient cash on a seasonal and annual basis to pay for inputs) converged to convince the farmers to make pragmatic decisions from time to time.

Indeed farmers' growing indebtedness and, as a result, their inability to acquire new credits and the impact this could have on future extension activities became almost mundane in the DA's reports particularly starting from April 1984. According to one report, for example, just in the first year of T&V operation in Arsi Negelle and Shashamane, farmers owed a total of *birr* 159,045.65 credit on fertilizers and *birr* 12,357.17 on improved seed.⁶⁶

Table 10.4 Input distributions among T&V participating farmers in Shashamane-Arsi Negelle

Crop type	Improved seed and fertilizer	Improved seed (no fertilizer)	Local seed with fertilizer	Local seed (no fertilizer)	Local methods
Maize	42.35	21.50	24.25	15.14	11.66
Wheat	23.12	10.46	18.66	10.30	7.60
<i>Tef</i>	12.25	6.80	8.32	5.22	4.23
Potato	-	-	63.00	44.60	35.00

Source: Taye Shiferaw to Shashamane and Arsi Negelle MoA offices, 5/5/78, in T&V 1.

However, not all farmers were marred with indebtedness. A credit report Arsi Negelle *warada* MoA office submitted to the districts' Commercial Bank for the year

1988/89 indicated that farmers from the Qallo-Duro PA who have borrowed a total of *birr* 178,378.00 in the preceding cropping season paid all but *birr* 7766.27 in a timely fashion.⁶⁷ Likewise, a Commercial Bank balance sheet dated Miyazia 4/1982 (April 1990) indicated that of the total *birr* 2,619,984.70 disbursed to 42 PAs (in Alaba, Buta Jira, Hosaina, Shashamane and Zway), the bank collected more than two-thirds but for a total of *birr* 875,118.12 that was still outstanding at the time of the report.⁶⁸

Farmers used credit to buy fertilizers (DAP and Urea) and improved seed varieties (maize, wheat, and *tef*). By 1989/90 a growing number of valley farmers showed the propensity to apply modern inputs so much so that the focus of official reports shifted from farmers' reluctance to pay credit arrears to the acute imbalance between demand and supply and MoA inability to satisfy the cultivators' fertilizer requests on a timely fashion.⁶⁹

A tyranny of inorganic fertilizers in the valley (1991-2000)

Incidentally the rising demand for modern inputs among the region's farmers coincided with the fall of the WPE government in May 1991. The Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF)-led Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government that supplanted it moved away from the command economy principle the *Derg*/WPE pursued for more than a decade and a half. From a strictly agricultural point of view, EPRDF's rural policy focused on state ownership of land, market liberalization, and the provisioning of modern inputs to farmers. Heralding the latest round of input-based intervention in Ethiopia was Sasakawa-Global (SG) 2000. SG 2000 entered the Ethiopian scene in 1993 specifically to work toward increasing food production "through

an aggressive technology transfer program.”⁷⁰ To that end, SG-2000 established a total of 161 demonstration plots across the country of which two--one in Shashamane and the other in Ada *warada*--were located in our region. At their inception in 1993 both sites targeted a total of 60 farmers (30 from each site) so as to induce participating farmers to adapt fertilizers, improved seed varieties, and related farm technology as prescribed by SG-2000 agents.⁷¹ In Shashamane’s three demonstration plots (located at Maja, Karara 1, and Karara 2) SG delivered A-511 and *beletech* maize varieties (at 25 kg/ha), the Marshal pesticide, and DAP and Urea fertilizers (at the rate of 100 kg/ha) to participating farmers.⁷²

In Ada the focus was on *tef* with a seeding rate of 35 kg per hectare. The second year, the number of participating farmers in Ada doubled but farmers’ interest in adapting the new technologies showed significant variation from what SG-2000 experts prescribed. Strikingly, starting from 1994 Ada farmers abandoned the improved *magna* (white) *tef* seed variety SG supplied. A team of Michigan State University (MSU) agricultural economists who went out to study the impact of the latest intervention in Ada found that only 17 of the 60 participating farmers continued to use the recommended improved seed variety and the seeding rate mentioned above. In fact, according to their findings, farmers’ mean seeding rate stood at 69 kg/ha (almost double from what has been recommended by SG specialists). Instead of the improved *magna* seed variety, Ada farmers used “traditional” seed varieties saved from the previous harvests.

Interestingly, Ada farmers’ experimentation of fertilizers with traditional seed varieties yielded more than what they harvested using the *magna* seed variety the first year. Also, farmers’ decision to practice twice the prescribed seed density enabled them

to control weed growth by increasing plant density (something not considered by SG-2000's specialists).⁷³ Likewise, Ada farmers made their own selection of fertilizer types, applying only the DAP and relegating the Urea which they associated with plant lodging.⁷⁴

Building on SG's "success stories" the EPRDF launched its own so-called Participating, Demonstration and Training Extension System (PADETES) in 1995. From a technological point of view PADETES cobbled together ideas taken from SG and T&V while expanding the target population from demonstration plots and selected farmers to all willing farmers.⁷⁵

Valley farmers responded positively to the latest intervention program in an unprecedented scale. By the time of my fieldwork in 2000-01, extension had become a household name in virtually all parts of the valley, and the main focus of district MoA offices has been directed to administering input delivery and credit. Documented and oral evidence suggest that record numbers of farmers applied fertilizers on their farms for the first several years while showing far too less interest in improved seed varieties. High rate of farmer participation as well as increased yield led politicians and experts alike to talk with force about the taking root of green revolution strategies in places like Ada.⁷⁶

Farmers' own assessment of the latest round of input-based interventions is mixed and interwoven with a range of factors such as indebtedness, quality of life, local politics, and the environment than most sectoral studies focused on yield or farmers' rate of participation could tell. Farmers who were participating in PADETES or had "graduated" from it having participated for two consecutive years were ambivalent about interventions' short- and long-term impacts. Shaping this ambivalence is farmers'

cautious appreciation of the yield-boosting capacity of the inputs on the one hand the rising fertilizer cost and the governments' hard-nosed credit regimes that have forced a growing number of farmers to indebtedness on the other.⁷⁷ As much as the farmers (at least the majority I talked to) approved the yield-related benefits accruing from those technologies, the same farmers remained uneasy and concerned about fertilizer's long-term impact on their income as well as the soil. "Even the soil is corrupt" remarked one of my informants who added that those who have been heavily indebted have already leased their farm in part or in full to others who could afford to buy the inputs.⁷⁸

Although we know very little about its magnitude at this point, input-related indebtedness appears to be a potentially serious problem that could contribute adversely to growing social differentiation and rural misery. No less worrisome to the farmers I talked to was fertilizers' long-term impact on soil fertility. What seems to bother the farmers most is not so much fertilizer's mysterious ability to degrade the soil but the kind of dependence it has fostered to the extent that farmers now believe that the land has been "addicted" to chemical fertilizers. Contrary to manure which, most farmers south of the Awash knew, could fertilize the soil better and longer (sometimes for up to 5-10 years), commercial fertilizer is like seeds that has to be "added" at the onset of each production cycle. It is this dependence and the risk of crisis in the wake of deflating crop prices, the unpredictability of the rains, and the crucial question of durable entitlement rights over agricultural land that have come to shape valley farmers politics and practice at the dawn of the 21st century.

End Notes

Introduction

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5. Chamber of Commerce (Ethiopia), *Mari Mashaf Laltiyopya: Guide Book of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1954), 196.

6. Carl F. Miller, James D. Sartor, James L. Makin, and Peter O. Strom, *Systems Analysis Methods for Ethiopian Agriculture I* (Menlo Park, April 1968); Raymond E. Borton, Mammo Bahta, Almaz Wondimu, John Asfaw, *A Development Program for the Ada District, Based on a Socio-Economic Survey* (Menlo Park, 1969).

7. M.J. Makin, T.J. Kingham, A.E. Waddams, C.J. Birchall, and Tamene Teferra, *Development Prospects in the Southern Rift Valley, Ethiopia* (Surrey, 1975), 43-44.

8. My study makes clear distinctions between cattle herding as practiced by pastoral or semi-pastoral communities and livestock production most sedentary farmers practice in different parts of Ethiopia. The shift I discuss here took from the former to the latter but in a much more complex form than what mode of production scholarship posits.

9. The best-documented evidence for this comes from surveys conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Statistics Office. See, for example, Central Statistics Office, *Report of a Survey of Shoa Province* (Addis Ababa, May 1966); J.E. Gholl, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Ada District Sample Survey (Addis Ababa, 1961); Ministry of Agriculture, *Final Report of Crop Condition Survey for the 1972-73 Harvest* (Addis Ababa, 1973), 102-114; Ministry of Agriculture, *Findings of a Market Structure Survey and Analysis of those Grains that Provide the Basic Subsistence for the People of Ethiopia, a survey and analysis of eighty awrajas*, (Addis Ababa, 1973), 135-58.

10. For a useful discussion of the utility of a regional history approach see David Ludden, "Subalterns and Others in the Agricultural History of South Asia," in James C. Scott and Nina Bhatt (eds.), *Agrarian Studies at the Cutting Edge* (New Haven and London, 2001), 206-234.

11. Interview with Tulluro Abam (Mareqo), 12 June 2000; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Buta Qawati (Shashamane), 9 January 2001; *Azmach Dallu Yemanu* (Zway), 4 April 2001. The authoritative contemporary documented accounts on Menilek's expansion and state-building ventures are Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman ZaDagmawi Menilek Negusa Nagast Zaltiyopya* (Addis Ababa, 1966); Asma Gyorgis, "YaGalla Tarik," translated and annotated by Bairu Tafla as *Asma Giyorgis and His Work: History of the Galla and the Kingdom of Sawa*, (Stuttgart, 1987).

12. See Chapter Two, section 2.3 below.

13. As I will show later, this transformation did not take place uniformly within the valley itself. For example, Ada and Lume's emergence as centers of grain production was fast and took different form from that of the rest of the valley for the first half of the 20th century. To the contrary, in a small section of the relatively arid part of the valley, stretching roughly between Lakes Zway and Langanu, crop-agriculture proceeded at a remarkably slow pace while animal husbandry remained the dominant economic activity for the entire period covered in this study.

14. See Chapter Six below. The sole authoritative account on the Middle East market is Martin W. Wilmington, *The Middle East Supply Centre* (Albay, 1971).

15. On export/import figures see Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 212, 227, 233, 238-39, 301-307.

16. *Ibid.* See also Chapter Six below.

17. The best account on the evolution and implementation of integrated rural development programs in Ethiopia is John Cohen, *Integrated rural Development: the Ethiopian Experience and the Debate* (Uppsala, 1987). See also Sileshi Sisaye, "Development Aid to Rural Ethiopia, 1954-1977: The Political Economy of Swedish Rural Development Assistance Programs," (Ithaca, 1979). Michael Stahl, *Ethiopia: Political Contradictions in agricultural Development* (Stockholm, 1974).

18. David Anderson, *Eroding the Commons: The Politics of Ecology in Baringo, Kenya 1890s-1963*, (Oxford, 2002), 4. For an excellent utilization of the historical dimension for understanding pastoralist change in Africa see Ian Scoones and William Wolmer, "Paths of Change: crop-livestock integration in Africa," in Ian Scoones and William Wolmer (eds), *Pathways of Change in Africa: crops, livestock and livelihood in Mali, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe* (Oxford, 2002), 1-32.
19. *Ibid*; Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, 5, 6-8. A pioneering work in this field is Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History: the Case of Tanganyika 1850-1950* (London, 1977). For a useful review of the literature, see James McCann, "Agriculture in African History," *Journal of African History* 31 (1991), 507-13.
20. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, 5.
21. The list here is long but should include Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, 1990). J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000). David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens, 2000).
22. James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and ecology in a forest-savanna mosaic* (Cambridge, 1996), 11; Sara Berry, "Social Institutions and access to resources," *Africa* 59, 1 (1989), 41-55; Sara Berry, *No condition is Permanent: the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, 1993); Jane I. Guyer, "Female farming in anthropology and social history," in Micaela di Leonardo (ed), *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* (Berkeley, 1991).
23. Fairhead and Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape*, 11.
24. Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield, *Land Degradation and Society* (London, 1987).
25. James McCann, *People of the Plow: an agricultural history of Ethiopia, 1800-1990* (Madison, 1995), 84-108.
26. Gregory Maddox, James L. Gibling and Isaria N. Kimambo (eds), *Custodians of the Land: ecology & culture in the history of Tanzania* (Oxford, 1996), 1-27.
27. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, 5; Robert Chambers, *Rural Development: putting the last first* (London, 1983); Paul Richards, *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution: ecology and food production in west Africa* (London, 1985).
28. Fairhead and Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape*, 5.
29. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, 8.
30. *Ibid*, 8-9.
31. *Ibid*, 9, 11.
32. Pauline E. Peters (ed.), *Development Encounters: Sites of Participation and knowledge* (Harvard University, 2000), 4-6; Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India* (Durham, 1998), 172-181.
33. *Ibid*, viii.
34. Peters, *Development Encounters*, 2.
35. Arjun Appadurai, "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology," in Richard G. Fox (ed), *Recapturing Anthropology: working in the Present* (Santa Fe, 1991), 191-210; Amit S. Rai, "A Lying Virtue: Ruskin, Gandhi and the Simplicity of Use Value," *South Asia research* 13, 2 (1993), 132-53; Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*, 9, 84.
36. *Ibid*, 33.
37. For a geographic description of the valley see Mesfin Wolde Mariam, *An Atlas of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1970) 12, 33.
38. According to a Central Statistics Office 1967 survey, of the country's 248 towns, Shawa alone had the largest concentration of urban centers with 53 towns, distantly followed by Hararge (which had 27 towns). Of Shawa's 53 towns, 11 were located within the valley, the highest concentration for any region. See Central Statistics Office, *Survey of Major Towns in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1968), 1-4.
39. For a description of the valley that lends more emphasis to geology and scenery see G.H. Last, "The Geography of Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer* 6, 2 (1962), 82-134.
40. See Mesfin, *An Atlas of Ethiopia*, 3. Mesfin's 1962 map shows the region south of the Awash including Kambata as part of Arsi. His 1970 map shows the region as part of Shawa. The region joined Shawa in 1962/63.
41. Mesfin, *An Atlas of Ethiopia*, 3. For further discussions of Ada's relationship with Shawa see

Chapter Two below.

42. For a physiographic classification of the Ethiopian region see Mesfin, *An Atlas of Ethiopia*; David Phillips on, "The Antiquity of Cultivation and Herding in Ethiopia," in T. Shaw *et al* (eds.), *The Archaeology of Africa: Foods, Metals and Towns* (London, 1993), 344-45; for a "cultural ecology" based classification see Dessalegn Rahmato, "Resilience and Vulnerability: Enset Agriculture in Southern Ethiopia," in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 28, 1 (1995), 23-52.

43. Cited in E. Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia* (Wageningen, 1975), 81-83.

44. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 82.

45. *Ibid*.

46. For a useful discussion of agro-ecological zones in Africa see John McIntire, Daniel Bourzat, and Prabhu Pingal, *Crop-Livestock Interactions in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington D.C., 1990), 11-22. For a critical rejoinder see Ian Scoones and William Wolmer (eds.), *Pathways of Change: Crops, Livestock and Livelihoods in Mali, Ethiopia & Zimbabwe* (Oxford, 2002), 11-12.

47. Richard Pankhurst, "The Great Ethiopian Famine of 1889-92: a New Assessment", *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 21 (1966), 95-124, 271-94.

48. The government abolished the tithe in 1966. However, in practice the tithe continued to function in some parts of the country up until the 1974 revolution. On the introduction of the tithe see Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 196; see also Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar* (Addis Ababa, 1950) 332. For a critical summary of the divergent causative explanations on the tithe see Takalign Wolde-Mariam, "A City and its Hinterlands: The Political Economy of Land Tenure, Agriculture, and Food Supply for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1887-1974" (Ph. D dissertation, Boston University, 1995), 147-148.

49. There is a large body of literature on Menilek's conquests and the state but our region has rarely been discussed in the secondary literature. On Menilek's territorial expansion see Harold Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II* (Oxford, 1975); Charles McClellan, *State Transformation and National Integration: Gedeo and the Ethiopian Empire, 1895-1935* (East Lansing, 1988); Donald Donham and Wendy James (eds.), *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2002).

50. Scholars have studied the Derg/WPE era from different vantage points. For a useful general study see Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Cambridge, 1988).

51. Central Statistics Office, "Census of the Empire of Ethiopia," (n.d, n.p).

52. See Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, *Population and Housing Census 1984: Analytical Report for Shawa Region* (Addis Ababa, 1989). For numerical and percentage distribution of Shawan populations by language and ethnicity see *ibid*, 25-26. For comparisons see also, Central Statistics Office, "Population of Ethiopia: results from a national sample survey 1st round 1964-67," *Statistical Bulletin* 6 (Addis Ababa, November 1971), 7. It is difficult to ascertain the exact size of the two *awraja* or the *warada* in them because both had been constantly changing owing to government restructuring of local administration and provincial boundaries. By the mid-1980s, official statistics put the size of Yararena Karayu *awraja* in the neighborhood of 962,057 hectares (24,051 *gasha*), and that of Hayqochena Buta Jira around 117,3905 hectares (29,348 *gasha*). According to the same report, Lume *warada* comprised 78,737 hectares (1,968 *gasha*), Ada 92,569 hectares (2314 *gasha*), Masqanena Mareqo 76,432 hectares (1911 *gasha*), Zway 108,603 hectares (2715 *gasha*), Arsi Negelle 146,225 hectares (3656 *gasha*), and Shashamane 71,565 hectares (1,789 *gasha*). See Central Statistics Office, *Area by Region, Awraja, Wereda in Sq. Km., Gasha, Hectare* (Addis Ababa, 1986), 17.

53. For comparisons and late-20th century migration statistics see Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, *Population and Housing Census 1984: Analytical Report for Shawa*, 160-180.

54. The twelve villages I focused on included: Udasa and Koshe (Mareqo), Alii Wayoo and Qarsa Turge (Arsi Negelle), Toga and Chabi Dadagnata (Shashamane), Zway Zurya and Adami Tullu (Zway), Dabandiba and Mojo (Lume), Dire Qutir 1 and Ada Liban (Ada). In addition to those villages I have also conducted interviews on several locations within and outside of the valley, which I have acknowledge accordingly. On the geographic location of the villages see Map 4 below.

55. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*. Another official who, benefiting from his portfolio, wrote a useful account on Ethiopia's complex land tenure regimes is Gebre-Wold Ingida Worq, *Maretana Geber Sem* (Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C).

56. On the pitfalls of archival documents see David Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley, 1996).

57. Interviews with Telahun Duri (Shashamane), 13 January 2001; Abagaz Chore (Zway), 5 April 2001.
58. On the advantages of cross-checking of available sources for ethnographic research see W. Penn Handwerker and S.P. Borgatti, "Reasoning with Numbers," in H. Russell Bernard (ed.), *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology* (Walnut Creek, 1998), 549-594; see also Robert I. Levy and Douglass W. Hollan, "Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation," in *ibid*, 333-364.
59. John Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*; John Cohen and Dov Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution* (Assen, 1975); Allan Hoben, *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia* (Chicago, 1973); Mesfin Wolde Mariam, *Suffering under God's Environment* (Berne, 1991).
60. Christopher Ehret, "The Antiquity of Agriculture," in *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), 161-78; Merid Wolde Aregay, "Land Tenure and Agricultural Productivity, 1500-1850," *Proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar of the Department of History* (Addis Ababa, 1986), 115-30; Richard Pankhurst, "Notes for a History of Ethiopian Agriculture," *Ethiopia Observer* 7, 3 (1964), 210-240.
61. Bahru Zewde, "A Historical Outline of Famine in Ethiopia," in Abdul Mejid Hussein (ed.), *Rehab: Drought and Famine in Ethiopia* (London, 1976), 52-58.
62. James McCann, *From Poverty to Famine in Northeast Ethiopia: A Rural History* (Philadelphia, 1987); McCann, *People of the Plow*.
63. Adhana, "History of Selected Famines in Peasant Societies in Tigray and Wallo 1941-74," (Ph.D. dissertation, Addis Ababa University, 1996).
64. Guluma Gameda, "Land, Agriculture and Society in the Gibe Region: Southwestern Ethiopia, c. 1850-1974" (Ph. D dissertation, Michigan State University, 1996). Ezekiel Gebissa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: a history of *khat* in Harerge, Ethiopia, c. 1930-1991" (Ph. D dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997). For a study that builds on early-1990s ethno-nationalist views to explain centuries of agrarian change in south-western Ethiopia, see Daniel Ayana, "Land tenure and Agriculture in Sayyoo-Afillo, Western Wallagga, Ethiopia, 1880-1974" (Ph. D dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, 1995).
65. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands".
66. A notable case in point is Mekura Walda Sellasie *Akuri atar: yarshaw sera maglacha mashaf*, Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C.; Mekura, *Yabuna takel sera mamrya mashaf* (Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C). See also Mahtama Sellasie Walda Masqal, *Tebaba Gerahat* (Addis Ababa, 1944 E.C.).
67. Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole, *A Profile of the Ethiopian Economy* (Addis Ababa, 1969), 112.
68. H.P. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia* (Rome, 1961).
69. Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia* (Wageningen, 1975); E. Westphal, *Pulses in Ethiopia: their taxonomy and agricultural significance* (Wageningen, 1974). An enduring impact of these scholars had been the emergence of Wageningen University (the Netherlands) as an institutional base for a significantly large number of Ethiopian graduate students who went there to study agriculture in the post-1978 period.
70. See, for example, Tesfai Teclé, "An Economic Evaluation of Agricultural Package Programs in Ethiopia," (Ph. D dissertation, Cornell University, 1974); Bisrat Aklilu, "Technological Change in Subsistence Agriculture: The Adoption and Diffusion of Fertilizers in Ethiopia's Minimum Package Programs" (Ph. D dissertation, Boston University, 1976); Aregay Waktola, "Assessment of the development, diffusion, and adaptation of package of agricultural innovations in Chilalo, Ethiopia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1975); Gene Ellis, "Man or machine, beast or burden: a case study of the economics of agricultural mechanization in Ada District, Ethiopia" (Ph. D dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1972); Sileshi Sisaye, "Development aid to Rural Ethiopia;" Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*.
71. For a useful review of the literature see Donald Crummey, "Society, State and Nationality in the Recent Historiography of Ethiopia," *Journal of African History* 31, 1 (1990), 103-19.
72. See Siegfried Pausewang, Fantu Cheru, Stefan Brune, and Eshetu Chole (eds.), *Ethiopia: Rural Development Options* (London, 1990). Keith Griffin (ed.), *The Economy of Ethiopia* (New York, 1992), 38; Dessalegn Rahmato, "Peasant Agriculture under the Old Regime," in Shiferaw Bekele (ed.), *An Economic History of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1992), 144-182. See also Alemneh Dejene, *Peasants, Agrarian Socialism and Rural Development in Ethiopia*, (Boulder, 1987), 20.
73. The "tributary mode" relates non-European situations to the linear stages of human development as conceived by Karl Marx whose works focused on European society and economy. Dependency theorists

argued that underdevelopment resulted from the imposition by developed countries of capitalist relations of production on Third World countries, as mediated particularly by international exchange that “perpetuates” the gap between the rich and poor or the “center” and the “periphery.” See Michael Stahl, *Ethiopia: Political Contradictions in Agricultural Development* (New York, 1974). See also Lars Bondestam, “People and Capitalism in the Awash Valley, Ethiopia” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, 3 (1974), 472-439; Daniel Tefera, “The Phenomenon of Underdevelopment in Ethiopia,” (Ph. D dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1979).

74. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, “Introduction,” in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley, 1997), 3.

75. James Picket, *Economic Development in Ethiopia: Agriculture, the Market and the State* (Washington D.C., 1991), 9, 20.

76. Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: the making and unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, 1995); Wolfgang Sachs (ed.), *The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power* (London, 1992). See also Jonathan Crush (ed.), *Power of Development* (London, 1995).

77. Cooper and Packard, “Introduction,” 3, 6; Michael Watts, “Development I: Power, Knowledge, Discursive Practice,” *Progress in Human Geography* 17, 2 (1993), 257-72.

78. P. Pinstrip-Anderson et al, “World food prospects: critical issues for the early twenty-first century,” *2020 Vision Food Policy Report* (Washington, D.C., 1999).

79. McIntire et al, *Crop-Livestock Interaction*; H. Steinfeld, De Hann et al, *Livestock-environment Interaction: Issues and Options* (Brussels, 1997). For an alternative view see Scoones et al, *Pathways of Change*, 1-31.

80. Scoones et al, *Pathways of Change*, xv. For similar arguments on valley development see M. Nori and A. Hirpa. “Living with Uncertainty in the Ethiopian Rift Valley,” (Zway, 1997, unpublished), 59-84.

81. Scoones et al, *Pathways of Change*, 2.

82. *Ibid*, 20-31.

Chapter 1

1. Ehret, “On the Antiquity,” 161-78; Steven A. Brandt, Arita Spring, Clifton Hiebsch et al, *The “Tree Against Hunger:” Enset-Based Agricultural systems in Ethiopia* (Florida, 1997); R.E.D. Baker and N.W. Simmonds, “The genus *Ensete* in Africa,” *Kew Bulletin* 3 (1953), 405-16; Steven A. Brandt, “New Perspectives on the Origin of Food Production in Ethiopia,” in J.D. Clark, S.A. Brandt (eds.), *From Hunters to Farmers: The Causes and Consequences of Food Production in Africa* (Berkeley, 1984), 173-90; J. D. Clark, “A Review of the Archaeological Evidence for the Origins of Food Production in Ethiopia,” in Taddese Beyene (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, 1988); J.R. Harlan, “Ethiopia: A Center of Diversity,” *Economic Botany* 23 (1969), 309-14; Phillipson, “The Antiquity of Cultivation and Herding in Ethiopia,” F. Simmons, “Some Questions on the Economic Prehistory of Ethiopia,” in J.D. Fage and R. Oliver (eds.), *Papers in African Prehistory* (Cambridge, 1970), 124-29.

2. N.L. Vavilov, *The Origin, Variation, Immunity and Breeding of Cultivated Plants* (Waltham, 1951), 37-39.

3. Westphal, *Agricultural Systems*; Westphal, *Pulses in Ethiopia*; Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*.

4. McCann, *People of the Plow*; Donald Crummey, *Land and Society in the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia: From the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth Century* (Urbana, 2000).

5. McCann, *People of the Plow*, 4-5, 35-38, 87-97.

6. Donald Crummey, “Ethiopian Plow Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 16 (1983), 4.

7. McIntire et al, *Crop Livestock Interactions*.

8. Cited in Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 140. To the plow and the hoe farmers, N.W. Simmonds added pastoralists and increased the groups to three. See N.W. Simmonds, “Ensete cultivation in the southern highlands of Ethiopia: a review,” *Tropical Agriculture* 35 (1958), 302-07.

9. Westphal is probably the first to come up with such a classification. Others endorsed his classification with little or no modification. See Westphal, *Agricultural Systems*, 79-173.

10. The primary contributors to the burgeoning crop-livestock literature in Ethiopia were a host of specialists working for or in association with ILCA, the center working toward improving livestock production in sub-Saharan Africa. Established in 1974, ILCA started its work in 1976. See Guido Gryseels and Frank Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity in the Central Highlands: Initial Results, 1977-1980* (Addis Ababa, 1983), iii, 42.
11. For a useful summary of Amare Getahun's classification see Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity*, 3-5.
12. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 140.
13. Westphal, *Pulses in Ethiopia*, 21-46; Dessalegn's crop-centered analysis also emphasized the migratory nature of crops to highlight elements of change against the backdrop of the dominant grains cultivated in the three "complexes" he identified. See Dessalegn, "Resilience and Vulnerability."
14. See Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity*, 8-10, 21-23.
15. Simmonds, "Ensete cultivation"; F. Simmons, "Some questions on the economic prehistory of Ethiopia," *Journal of African History* 6 (1965), 1-13. J. Olmstead, "The versatile *enset* plant: its use in the Gemu highlands," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 12, 2 (1974), 147-58.
16. William Shack, *The Gurage: A People of the Ensete Culture* (London, 1966).
17. On *enset* cultivation see Taye Bizuneh, "Evaluation of some *Ensete ventricosum* clones by yield with emphasis on the effect of length of fermentation on carbohydrate and calcium content," *Tropical Agriculture* 61, 2 (1984). J.T. McCabe, "The Role of Livestock in the Enset Cultivation System: A Review of the Literature," (Awasa, 1986, unpublished).
18. Brandt *et al*, *The "Tree Against Hunger,"* 31-39.
19. Getnet Bekele, "Ecology and Society: The Dynamics of Social and Economic Development in Gurage History, 1880-1984" (M.A. thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1992), 55-82.
20. Cited in Charles McClellan, *State Transformation and National Integration: Gedeo and the Ethiopian Empire, 1895-1935* (East Lansing, 1988), 121.
21. *Ibid*.
22. Teketel Haile Mariam, "The Production, Marketing, and Economic Impact of Coffee in Ethiopia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1973).
23. Charles Ipcar, "The Gurage Cultural Landscape: A Systems Interpretation" (M.A. Thesis, Michigan State University, 1973).
24. Interview with Tajudi Umar (Addis Ababa), 17 July 1999. See also Getnet, "Ecology and Society," 65-77.
25. Wellby, 'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik, 140-43. C.H. Stigand, *To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land: An Account of a Journey through Unexplored Regions of British East Africa by Lake Rudolf to the Kingdom of Menelik* (London, 1910), 241, 251, 294-303.
26. See Brandt *et al*, *The "Tree Against Hunger,"* 4.
27. *Ibid*.
28. See William Shack, "Urban ethnicity and the cultural process of urbanization in Ethiopia," *Urban Anthropology* (1977), 251-85. Bjern Gunilla, *Migration to Shashemane: ethnicity, gender and occupation in urban Ethiopia* (Stockholm, 1965); Befekadu Degefe, "Migration and Urbanization in Ethiopia," (Debre Zeit, 1978, unpublished).
29. The best example for this kind of group migration and frontier colonization comes from the Silti and the Gurage. See Getnet Bekele, "The State, markets, and ethnic groups: migration and rural-urban integration," in Harold G. Marcus (ed), *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Proceedings of the Twelfth International Studies of Ethiopian Studies II* (1994), 710-23.
30. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 765.
31. Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 139.
32. Arnold Hudson, *Seven Years in Southern Abyssinia* (London, 1927), 89.
33. *Ibid*.
34. Cited in Westphal, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 106.
35. Enrico Broto, *Il regime delle terre nel GHR* (Addis Ababa, 1939).
36. *Ibid*.
37. Westphal, *Pulses in Ethiopia*, 21-30; Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity*, 4.
38. For a useful summary of the travel narratives see Richard Pankhurst, "Notes for History of Ethiopian

Agriculture," *Ethiopia Observer* 2 (1964), 216. For first hand accounts see, for example, Walter Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia and the Galla Country* (London, 1868), 152-59; Augustus Wylde, '83 to '87 in the *Soudan* I, (London, 1887), 238; Douglas Graham, "Report on the Agricultural and Land Produce of Shoa," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 13 (1844), 256.

39. Graham, "Report," 259, 254.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Cited in Ronald Horvath, "Around Addis Ababa: A Geographical Study of the Impact of a City on Its Surroundings" (Ph. D dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1966), 131-32.

42. P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, *A Sporting Trip through Abyssinia: a narrative of a nine months' journey from the plains of the Hawash to the snows of Simen, with a description of the game, from elephant to ibex, and notes on the manners and customs of the natives* (London, 1902), 162, 185-86.

43. Wellby, 'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik, 53.

44. *Ibid.*

45. Interview with Alamu Tadasa (Sabata), 2 August 1999; Germa Tafara (Jirru), 6 August 1999; Asmamaw Balata (Menjar), 21 July 2001; Yasin Ahmad (Gina Agar), 23 July 2001. On Jirru cattle see also W. Cornwallis Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia*, II (London, 1844), 169.

46. A.T. Semple, "A Look at Ethiopia," *Soil Conservation* 10 (1945), 154-57. On arable-pasture rotation as practiced by farmers in the central and northern highlands, see Westphal, *Pulses in Ethiopia*, 21-22.

47. Graham, "Report," 262-63, quoted in McCann, *People of the Plow*, 57.

48. Graham, "Report," 284-85.

49. J.L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches and missionary Labours during an eighteen years' residence in Eastern Africa; together with journeys to Jagga, Usamana, Ulkambani, Shoa, Abyssinia and Khartoum, and a coasting voyage from Manbaza to Cape Delago* (London, 1860), 469; Harris, *The Highlands* II, 46-47.

50. Harris, *The Highlands* II, 52-53; C.W. Isenberg and J.L. Krapf. *The Journals of Rev. Mssrs. Isenberg and Krapf, Detailing Their Proceedings in the Kingdom of Shoa and Journeys in other Parts of Abyssinia* (London, 1968), 194, 197. See also Svein Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa: A Case Study of the Kingdom of Shawa (Ethiopia) about 1840* (Wiesbaden, 1996), 69.

51. Isenberg and Krapf, *The Journals*, 197; Harris, *The Highlands* III, 46-47. See also Ege, *Class, State and Power*, 69.

52. Alamanni E.Q. Marion, *La Colonia Eritrea E I Suoi Commerci* (Torino, 1891), 356, reproduced in Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa, 1968), 210.

53. For an excellent use of the travel narratives for explaining Shawan agriculture see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 109-46.

54. Quoted in McCann, *People of the Plow*, 51.

55. Graham counted 43 species of "grains and useful products." See Graham, "Report," 272-74. See also Vavilov, *The Origin*, 37-39; Ehret, "On the Antiquity"; Crummey, "Ethiopian Plow Agriculture," 8-10.

56. Graham, "Report," 287.

57. Pearce, *The Life and Adventures* II, 204; Charles Beke, "Abyssinia-Being a Continuation of Routes in That Country," *Journal of the Royal Geographic Society* 14, 3 (1844); Ferret and Galinier cited in Pankhurst, "Notes on the History of Ethiopian Agriculture," 216.

58. Cited in Westphal, *Agricultural Systems*, 71.

59. Graham, "Report," 264. For a useful comparison of yield-specific data based on travelers' reports see Crummey, "Ethiopian Plow Agriculture," 1-24; see also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 127.

60. Cited in Pankhurst, "Notes on the History of Ethiopian Agriculture," 216.

61. *Ibid.*, 263, 296. Pearce, *The Life and Adventures* II, 204. Others explained this in relation to shortage of timber, which, in turn, obligated farmers to use cow dung for fuel. See, for example, Harris, *The Highlands* II, 253. Graham, on the other hand, held undeveloped technology, notably the absence of wheeled carriage, responsible for that. Graham, "Report," 254.

62. Pearce, *The Life and Adventures* II, 204-43.

63. Cited in Pankhurst, "Notes on the History of Ethiopian Agriculture," 216.

64. Cited in *ibid.*

65. Augustus Wylde, '83 to '87 in the *Soudan, with an account of Sir William Hewitt's mission to King John of Abyssinia* (New York, 1887), 308; Graham, "Report," 261. See also Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 233-34.

66. McCann, *People of the Plow*, 84-108.
67. See *ibid*, Chapters 2 and 7.
68. For a brief note on the activities of the SGI in Ethiopia see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 16.
69. Traversi was a trained agronomist, and Cappucci an engineer. Wellby was a specialist in wireless telegraph and tropical diseases. But unlike the Italians, Wellby had several years of experience in travel and exploration in India, Central Asia, and Somaliland. For a brief note on Wellby's travel experience see his *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, xv-xix.
70. Quoted in McCann, *People of the Plow*, 191.
71. Cited in *ibid*, 202.
72. Cited in *ibid*, 204.
73. *Ibid*, 203.
74. Wellby, *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, xvi-xvii, 106, 109-13.
75. *Ibid*, 118.
76. *Ibid*. Wellby's escorts numbered 59 individuals, comprising 44 Ethiopians (30 Abyssinians and 14 Oromo), 5 Sudanese, and 9 Somali. See Wellby, *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, 122.
77. *Ibid*.
78. *Ibid*, 125.
79. *Ibid*.
80. *Ibid*.
81. *Ibid*, 126-27.
82. *Ibid*, 136.
83. *Ibid*, 136-37.
84. *Ibid*, 140. Stigand, who visited the region early in the 20th century noted, Wolayta "have reached a very advanced stage of civilization for an African tribe." He further noted that Wolayta farmers grew cotton and used the plow as well. See Stigand, *To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land*, 240.
85. Wellby, *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, 141-42. See also Stigand, *To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land*, 296, 304-5. *Dorma* is a thin piece of iron measuring about two feet long and one inch wide. *Ibid*.
86. McClellan, *State Transformation*, 114-6.
87. Hodson, *Seven Years*, 21-39, 85-102.
88. Gruhl visited the valley leading a three-person expeditionary team that went out to do some ethnographic research. The New Yorkers Fuertes and Osgood also visited the valley as part of their broader exploratory mission in the country. See Louis Agassiz Fuertes and Wilfred Hudson Osgood, *Artist and Naturalist in Ethiopia* (New York, 1936), 96-128. To these must be added Stigand who passed through the western part of the valley in his way to Gurage. Stigand, *To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land*.
89. Gruhl, *The Citadel of Ethiopia*, 34.
90. Fuertes and Osgood, *Artist and Naturalist in Ethiopia*, 96-124.
91. Gruhl, *The Citadel of Ethiopia*, 30-31.
92. *Ibid*, 46.
93. Stigand, *To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land*, 314.
94. On the extent of the valley's archival material and the organization of my interview see my introductory chapter above.
95. Interview with Azmach Damyo Toba (Mareqo), 13 June 2000; Daliso Enboro (Mareqo), 14 June 2000.
96. Interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Hadeta Wayiso (Arsi Negelle), 7 February 2001.
97. Interview with Badada Buta (Mojo), 15 May 2001; Ayu Dadi (Lume), 16 May 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.
98. Interview with Falaqa Gashaw (Ada), 16 June 2001; Ayala Asagedaw (Ada), 13 June 2001.
99. The plains between the Rivers Awash and Tekur Weha should be divided further into two sections, with the region north of Lake Zway forming one category, distinct from the relatively arid section that lies between Lakes Zway and Langano. Here I will provide what is no more than a schematic outline of agronomy and agrarian ecology based on the three sub-regions I have identified for the purpose of this dissertation.
100. According to McCann, "Ada's soil range between light, red loam soils in its sloped, upland area to its dominant, heavy vertisols, which farmers call *koticha* or *walka*. Ada's black soils share the vertic

properties of 'cotton soils': deep cracks in dry conditions and a tendency to smear and cake in wet conditions." See McCann, *People of the Plow*, 196.

101. Interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Bayu Gudata (Ada), 19 June 2001; Badaso Roba (Ada), 14 July 2001.

102. Hence, this kind of land was commonly referred to as chickpea land (*shimbra maret*). See McCann, *People of the Plow*, 129-37.

103. Interview with Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001; Falaqa Gashaw (Ada), 16 June 2001; Badaso Robe (Ada), 14 July 2001.

104. *Ibid.*

105. Cited in McCann, *People of the Plow*, 203.

106. Cited in *ibid.*, 282.

107. My conclusion here is based on interviewee testimonies. Interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Bayu Gudata (Ada), 19 June 2001.

108. *Ibid.* On Shewan soil conservation strategies see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 129-37.

109. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.

110. Cited in McCann, *People of the Plow*, 204.

111. Interview with Ayala Asagedaw (Ada), 13 June 2001; Ababu Neda (Ada), 22 June 2001; Falaqa Gashaw (Ada), 16 June 2001.

112. See *ibid.*; see also interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Bayu Gudata (Ada), 19 June 2001.

113. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; *Azmach* Daqaba Roba (Zway), 7 April 2001.

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. Interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Kadiro Idao (Arsi Negelle), 9 February 2001; Banato Agato (Arsi Negelle), 10 February 2001.

117. *Ibid.*

118. *Ibid.*

119. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Gamachu Ramato (Arsi Negelle), 12 February 2001.

120. *Ibid.*

121. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2000. My interviewees from Zway contended that maize cultivation in the region did not start before the 1940s. Interview with *Azmach* Daqba Roba (Zway), 7 April 2001.

122. On government changing policies on land see Chapter Two below. On the growing importance of maize and crop-livestock agriculture see Chapters Five and Nine below.

123. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2000. See also Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001.

124. Interview with *Azmach* Damyo Toba (Mareqo), 13 June 2000; Tulluro Abam (Mareqo), 12 June 2000; Dagale Maqiso (Mareqo), 16 June 2000.

125. Interview with *Imam* Wudo Aba (Mareqo), 17 June 2000; Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.

126. Interview with *Azmach* Damyo Toba (Mareqo), 13 June 2000; *Imam* Wudo Aba (Mareqo), 17 June 2000; Shibru Kasa (Arsi Negelle), 19 June 2000.

127. *Ibid.*

128. Interview with Abagaz Chore (Zway), 5 April 2001; *Azmach* Dallu Yemanu (Zway), 4 April 2001; Badaso Dachaso (Arsi Negelle), 18 February 2001.

129. Interview with Dagale Makiso (Mareqo), 16 June 2000; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Bune Batasa (Zway), 6 April 2001. Outside observers have also reported the outbreak of cattle epidemic in the Rift Valley Lakes region. For some useful narrative of cattle epidemic in the Ethiopian region since around the mid-19th century to 1935 see Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 213-20.

130. Interview with Lagasa Ayala (Lume), 17 May 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.

Chapter 2

1. Shawan tradition long uphold the view that the islands of Lake Zway sheltered church treasures hidden for safety from the plunder and destruction of Gran's forces in the 16th century. Recovering those treasures and incorporating the region into the Shawan body politic lingered constantly in the consciousness of its rulers. For a summary of this view see Kofi Darkwah, *Shawa, Menilek and the Ethiopian State 1813-1889* (London, 1975), 101-02.
2. Cited in Svein Ege, *Class, State, and Power in Africa*, 66.
3. Harris, *The Highlands II*, 65-66, 306, 380-81. See also Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa*, 200.
4. Harris, *The Highlands II*, 376, 381-82. See also Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa*, 200.
5. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 578; Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 47; see also Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa*, 200-01.
6. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 542.
7. For example, Bullo Jille, Ada's prominent chief during Sahla Sellasie's reign, is reported to have established "a working relationship" with Shawa. See McCann, *People of the Plow*, 198.
8. On the founding of churches in Ada, see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 199. See also interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.
9. See Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 53-54; Darkwah, *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire*, 102. The evidence from Gabra Sellasie refutes Darkwah's assertion that Menilek did not make it to the islands.
10. On Arsi conquest see Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 760-776.
11. For a biographic account on Gobana Daci see Bairu Tafla, "Three Portraits: Ato Asma Giyorgis, Ras Gobana Daci and Sahafi Tezaz Gabra Selasse," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, 2 (1967), 133-44.
12. My views here were shaped by Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 58-74, 229-30.
13. *Gada* is an age-based organization most (but not all) Oromo groups and some other communities in southern Ethiopia (like the Gedeo) practiced by the late-19th century. Unfortunately, no historical study has been made on this important institution to date. For anthropological studies see Asmerom Legesse, *Gada. Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York, 1973); John Hinnant, "The *Gada* System of the Guji of Southern Ethiopia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1977).
14. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Hadeta Wayiso (Arsi Negelle), 7 February 2001.
15. My discussion on the valley's (south of the Awash) conquest is almost entirely based on information acquired from interviewees. See *ibid.*
16. Surprisingly, no comprehensive study is available on the *balabbat* institution. For some useful case studies see Ui Almagor, "Institutionalizing a Fringe Periphery: Dassanetch-Amhara relations," in Donald Donham and Wendy James (eds.), *The Southern Marches of Imperial*, 6-118; Donald Donham, "From Ritual Kings to Ethiopian Landlords in Maale," in *ibid.*, 69-95. For some parallels to the *gult* system in the "north" see, Donald Donham, "Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian Empire: themes in social history," in *ibid.*, 8-10. For inferences to the *balabbat* system in Shawa in the 18th century see, Bairu Tafla, "Some Aspects of Land-Tenure and Taxation in Selale under Ras Darge, 1871-1900," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 12, 2 (1974) 1-15.
17. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Hadeta Wayiso (Arsi Negelle), 7 February 2001.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. See also Almagor, "Institutionalizing a Fringe Periphery," 96-118.
23. For some of king Menilek's appointments (made just few years before he became emperor) see Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 756. Asma writes: "in consultation with Ras Gobana, the king appointed governors over the Galla [Oromo] lands with many contingents of the royal army."
24. For a useful summary of the political arrangements put in place by Menilek's state in the newly incorporated regions in the south see Donham, "Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian Empire," 38-44. See also Peter Garretson, "Shaykh Hamadan Abu Shok (1889-1939) and the Administration of Gubba," in Joseph Tubiana (ed), *Modern Ethiopia from the Accession of Menilek II to the Present* (Rotterdam, 1980); Alessandro Triulzi, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa: Dilemmas of Provincial Rule," in Donham and James, *The*

Southern Marches, 51-68.

25. Donham, "Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian Empire," 42-43.

26. *Ibid.*, 42.

27. On Bacho, see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 91-125.

28. See Donham, "Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian Empire," 37-38; Triulzi, "Nekemte and Addis Abeba," 51-68.

29. The best account on Gedeo is C. McClellan, *State Transformation*.

30. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands".

31. On the *balabbat* institution in the "north" see, for example, Juanna Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure in the System of Ethiopian Imperial Government in Modern Times*, translated by Adam Robinski Krzysztow (Warsaw, 1980), 69; Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London, 1975), 105; Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 80-82.

32. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Hadeta Wayiso (Arsi Negelle), 7 February 2001.

33. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 40-43.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. For some useful theoretical analysis of state distribution see John Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (Chapel Hill, 1982), 191-95; Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, II (Berkeley, 1978), 1105-07.

37. Harold G. Marcus, "The Organization of Menilek II's Palace and Imperial Hospitality (After 1896)," *Rural Africana: Current Research in the Social Sciences* (Spring 1970), 57-62.

38. Teshale Tibebe, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia* (Lawrenceville, 1995), 90-99.

39. Takalign provides the most thorough investigation of the *madbet* arrangement, which he argues is a city-wide provisioning structure rather than a banquet system. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 155-63. My study renews Tekalign's argument, putting the *madbet* system in its proper context.

40. For references to mid-19th century royal granaries see Graham, "Report," 260-61; Harris, *The Highlands II*, 246-47. See also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 118.

41. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 34.

42. *Ibid.*, 42-43. See also Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 281-284.

43. Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 175-76. For a useful discussion regarding the courts' provisioning of relief food during the famine see Tekalign, "A city and its Hinterlands," 134-37.

44. By some estimates this may be a conservative figure. See, for example, Marcus, "The Organization," 61. It has to be remarked, however, that to cope with the provisioning demand the periodic arrival of regional lords to the city created, the emperor also granted provisionary *madbet* rights for the regional lords. Interestingly, such grants were made from the royal court's own *madbet* territories and not by carving out new ones. See Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 213.

45. P.H.G. Powell-Cotton, *A Sporting Trip through Abyssinia: A Narrative of a Nine Months' Journey from the Plains of the Hawash to the Snows of Simen, with a Description of the Game, from Elephant to Ibex, and Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Natives* (London, 1902), 121-32.

46. See Marcus, "The Organization," 61.

47. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 233-36. For some increments a decade later see *ibid.*, 240. For comparisons to 19th century payments in Shawa see Bairu Tafla, "Some Aspects of Land-Tenure".

48. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 156, 159.

49. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 68-69..

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*

52. No clear evidence is available to trace the origin of *hudad* and *ganagab* in time and space. Travelers such as Graham and Harris reported the prevalence of those categories of land in Shawa from the 1840s. See Graham, "Report," 260-61; Harris, *The Highlands III*, 221-23.

53. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 133-38. For some useful discussions of *hudad* see Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 92. See also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 152-63.

54. See Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 133-38.

55. For a comparative discussion of the *madbet* system see Takalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 155-163.

56. Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 92.
57. Some *meslane* obtained *madarya* land instead of cash payments. See Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 27.
58. See *ibid*, 27.
59. *Ibid*, 26. Gebre-Wold Ingida Worq, "Ethiopia's traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation," *Ethiopia Observer* 5, 4 (1962), 305.
60. *Ibid*. For a different interpretation of the data see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 157-158.
61. The only exception to that is Qaliti, which was scheduled for November. But Qaliti had the least number of *gabbar* and *cisagna* under the *madbet* structure.
62. For 19th century practices of *waraganu* in historic Shawa see Isenberg and Krapf, *The Journals*, 256. See also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 123.
63. On *waraganu* see Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 23; see also Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 120-21.
64. Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 120-21.
65. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 117-18.
66. However, it is not clear from the sources whether this directly translates into size of livestock as well although that may be generally the case.
67. See Table 2.2 above.
68. Interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; *Azmach Daqaba Roba* (Zway), 7 April 2001; Shibru Kasa (Mareqo), 19 June 2000; Danye Terfe (Shashamane), 10 January 2001.
69. I borrowed this expression from Sara Berry, "Property rights and rural resource management: the case of tree crops in West Africa," *Cahiers des sciences Humaines* (OSTROM) 24, 1 (1989), 3-16, cited in Fairhead and Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape*, 11.
70. For an excellent review of the literature and an alternative explanation see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 139-40.
71. See section 2.3 below.
72. On the founding of Addis Ababa see Peter Garretson, *A History of Addis Ababa from its Foundation in 1886 to 1910* (Wiesbaden, 2000).
73. Many market towns would grow in the 20th century to eclipse the garrison towns (*katama*) in their rates of population growth, urbanization, and trade. Agaro, Nazareth, Debre Zeit, Combolcha (Wollo), Shashamane, Dilla, Dambi Dollo, Bahir Dar, Shashamane, Debre Zeit, Nazareth, and Adigrat are good examples of the new generation of towns in Ethiopia. It is striking to note that out of 23 "Group A" towns the Central Statistics Office identified in its 1967 survey, only 7 owed their existence to *katama* establishments. See Central Statistics Office, *Survey of Major Towns*, 7-36.
74. For some useful information on the city's early activities see Garretson, *A History of Addis Ababa*, 101-70.
75. Richard Caulk, "Ethiopia and the Horn," in A.D. Roberts (ed), *Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 7 from 1905 to 1940* (Cambridge, 1986), 708. Garretson, *A History of Addis Ababa*, 114-15.
76. Quoted in Richard Pankhurst, "The Foundation and Growth of Addis Ababa to 1935," *Ethiopia Observer* 6, 1 (1962), 46.
77. Cited in *ibid*. Merab's estimates cut the figures by half, around 15-20,000. See *ibid*.
78. Wellby, *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*, 92-94.
79. Powell-Cotton, *A Sporting Trip*, 107-108.
80. *Ibid*.
81. Cited in Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 706.
82. Cited in *ibid*. For early-20th century estimates of Addis Ababa's population see Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 709.
83. See Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 50 (Table 5).
84. Augustus Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London, 1901), 413.
85. *Ibid*
86. Surprisingly, the extent of Addis Ababa's prewar food market has not yet enjoyed the kind of emphasis it deserves. For a brief description of Addis Ababa's prewar markets see Ronald Joseph Horvath, "Around Addis Ababa," 152-57. See also Kiros Adera, "A History of *Arada: From its Foundation to 1935*" (B.A. thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1983) for a useful narrative of the evolution of the city's chief prewar market.

87. Of a total of more than seven major edicts Menilek's government promulgated between 1889-1913, four dealt with rural land and tribute. For a compilation of Menilek's edicts see Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 89-98. Sara Berry's seminal work, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison, 1993) informed my analysis on the interface between access to resource control and agricultural change in the valley.

88. The best, albeit succinct, account on Shawa's mid-19th century land tenure is Ege, *Class, State and Power in Africa*, 34-48, 59-95. For a comprehensive analysis of the *rist* tenure based on Gojjam see Allan Hoben, *Land Tenure among the Amhara of Ethiopia* (Berkeley, 1973). See also Darkwah, *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire*, 141-79; Volker Stitz, "The Amhara Resettlement of Northern Shoa during the 18th and 19th centuries," *Rural Africana* 11 (1970), 70-78.

89. An often-cited study in this genre is Berhanou Abebe, *Evolution de la propriete fonciere au choa (Ethiopie) du regna de Menelik a la Constitution de 1931*, (Paris, 1971). Unfortunately, Berhanou's work has remained inaccessible for non-French readers. See also Bairu Tafla, "Some aspects of Land-Tenure;" Wolfgang Weissleder, "The Political Ecology of Amhara Domination" (Ph.D. dissertation University of Chicago, 1965), 99-288.

90. Ege, *Class, State, and Power in Africa*; see also Weissleder, "The Political Ecology".

91. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," Chapter One.

92. Ege, *Class, State, and Power in Africa*, 62.

93. *Ibid*, 63. However, as Ege has stated it correctly, because "ownership rights were vested in the independent kinship groups, individual peasants might lose some of their land to others who successfully pressed a new claim." *Ibid*, 62.

94. *Ibid*, 64. Brothers or more distant kin had no rights of inheritance.

95. Virtually all of the secondary literature builds on the notion of the centralized Shawan state. See, for example, Marcus, *The Life and Times*.

96. Farmers' land and elite land is my own characterization. For specific treatments of the land categories see below.

97. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 502, 504; see also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 48.

98. For some useful discussions of taxation regimes in Shawa see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 49.

99. I used the term elite land to designate property that fall outside of farmers' possession. It included government land (*yamangest maret*)—which, in effect, could be reserved as *hudad* or simply kept as state property awaiting future distribution—and *malkagna* land (most notably a portion of land over which *malkagna* enjoyed hereditary rights (which then would be termed as *malkagna hudad*). The label *mangest maret* may be a bit anachronistic here because we do not know for sure when exactly the term came to refer to landed property directly controlled by the government. It is highly probable that *mangest maret* may not have been used as a specific term until around 1930. In the postwar period, however, *mangest maret* evolved as a dominant form of tenure, distinct from all other categories of land. Probably the first explicit reference to *mangest maret* comes from Brotto, *Il regime*, 4, 19, 48-9. The church also acquired inalienable tribute exacting rights over a portion of land known as *samon*.

100. For the different groups of *malkagna* and their landed and tribute rights see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 50-51; Stitz, "The Amhara Resettlement," 79. For first hand accounts on *malkagna* motives on land and its impact on Shawan politics and local administration see Asma who explained the territorial completion among the Shawan *malkagna* with distaste. Asma explains the existence of twelve administrative regions ("balabatoch") in Shawa, including, among others, Efrata, Gedom, Geshe, Dobba, Marhabete, and Morat. Asma criticizes what he calls the despicable acts of the regional chiefs and the clergy whom he accused of caring for nothing but for personal political gains and land accumulation. See Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 490-92, 502, 522, 542, 554, 568, 570-72, 576, 584. See also Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 45, 47. For Salale, one of the strongest *malkagna* regions ruled by Ras Darge, Menilek's own cousin, see Bairu, "Some Aspects of Land-Tenure".

101. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 110-114, Gabra Wald, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 21-23; Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 49.

102. Hence, as Tekalign has rightly pointed out, a *cisagna*, "who may have purchased or obtained land from a lord who had permanent rights over the land could be just as secure in his tenure as would any *Gabbar*. If, however, the *cisagna* had acquired the land from a lord who had only temporary rights over the land, he could be forced to relinquish possession in the event of the latter replacement by the state unless he

could [and most of the time did] successfully negotiate new terms with the incoming lord." Tekalign, "A City and its hinterlands," 53; see also Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 118-19; Gabra Wald, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 35; Weissleder, "The political ecology," 131-32, Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*, 38.

103. It must be remembered from the outset that the *malkagna* institution did not necessarily evolve out of the political transformation of the Shawan state. In fact, as Weissleder's study has demonstrated well, *malkagna* were not always "imposed from above." According to him, "local seigniories [*malkagna*] were pre-existent and had to be taken into account through recognition [by the state]." Weissleder, "The Political Ecology," 133.

104. For a useful discussion of the economic organization of Shawa prior to the 1880s see Darkwah, *Shewa, Menilek and the Ethiopian Empire*, 141-79.

105. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 502, 504. See also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 45-46. Asma's description of the land as *wudma* or vacant/undeveloped is interesting. It reveals both the author's and indeed Shawan understanding of the use-value of a given land and its ownership rights. Traditionally Shawans judged the quality of a land and its proprietorship based on the degree to which it had been cultivated. Hence, the distinction between *lam* and *taf* that was important throughout the imperial era both to judge ownership rights as well as the status of tax paying farmers (or the land itself). In imperial lexicon, *lam* and *taf* referred to the condition of a piece of land whose level of cultivation predicated ownership as well. But, *lam/taf* also referred to the quality (or use-value) of a piece of land whose fertility was measured not necessarily by organic matter but by its existing capacity to grow crops. In short, *lam/taf* implied entitlement to as well as quality of the land. Cultivating a piece of land and paying tribute on it ensured, at least in theory, rights of use and/or ownership of a given land. At the same time, level of cultivation (i.e., the degree to which a given land had been cropped or not) determined the quality of land: the more intensively cultivated a land, the more fertile (or *lam*) it became, and conversely, the less or uncultivated a land the less *lam* it became and could be categorized as *lam-taf* or *taf*. As such, *lam/taf* became a means through which both the state of the land as well as the grade of the tribute paying *gabbar* would be measured. It is this dual nature of *lam/taf*, its' being a measure of ownership as well as that of level of fertility (for defining the tax paying potential of the *gabbar*) that rendered it a special place in modern Ethiopian history.

106. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 54-55. For contemporary accounts on the matter see Harris, *The Highlands* III, 33; Charles Johnston, *Travels in Southern Abyssinia* I (London, 1844), 210-12. The authoritative primary account on this subject is Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 178-9.

107. See, for example, Richard Caulk, "Armies as Predators: Soldiers and Peasants in Ethiopia c. 1850-1935," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 11 (1979), 457-93.

108. *Ibid.*

109. On Tewodros' reforms see Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1991*, 2nd ed., (Oxford, 2001), 32-33.

110. *Ibid.*

111. Caulk, "Armies as Predators," 457-93.

112. As Caulk explained it succinctly: "Assigning conquered land for cultivation in lieu of salary was possible only when there was vacant land and as long as soldiers were willing to farm themselves or could find tenants." Caulk, "Armies as Predators," 467.

113. See also Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 502, 504. Similar developments had been reported in Wollo as well as practiced by the ruling Oromo elite in the early-19th century. The discrete Oromo states in the southwest (conventionally known as Gibe states) also saw similar developments in that direction by the 19th century. See Mohammed Hasen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History 1570-1860*, (Cambridge, 1990), Chapter 4.

114. Cited in Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 106.

115. Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 334-336.

116. See *ibid.* For a different interpretation of the edicts see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 147-50.

117. Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 99.

118. Luigi Cappucci, "Condizioni dell'agricoltura nello Scioa" *Bolletino della Societa Africana d'Italia* 6 (1887), 94-95.

119. Cited in Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 72.

120. For a descriptive note on qalad see Mantel-Neike, *The Role of Land Temure*, pp.

121. Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 830. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 70. Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 179. For a different explanation on this, see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 133-43.
122. See Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 372; Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 196. Valley herders also paid a form of tithe or cattle tax amounting to 1 MTD per head per annum in the early 20th century. Though not strictly enforced across the region, individual farmers did not readily comply with *balabbat* enforcement of the cattle tax, where some chose to migrate to "distant" places (such as Bale) where they thought was beyond the government's reach. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001. In addition to the cattle tax, valley herders also paid a form of tithe from income they managed to generate by hunting. According to Wellby, "If they [the Utta] kill an elephant, one tusk is sent to Menelik, and the other they sell to men from Addis Ababa for forty or fifty dollars or a cow, according to the size." Wellby, *'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik*," 136.
123. Gabra Sellasie, *Tarik Zaman*, 312, 314.
124. *Ibid*, 312. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 109. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 164.
125. Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 701.
126. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 141-43; Bairu, *Asma Giyorgis*, 830.
127. Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 208-09.
128. Richard Pankhurst, "Tribute, Taxation and Government Revenues in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethiopia (part I)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 5, 2 (1967), 43.
129. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 147-48.
130. Aside from exclaiming it as a "generous" measure in the part of the emperor, Gabra Sellasie does not provide any convincing explanation to help us understand the politics behind Menilek's edict. Asma offers his own explanation, emphasizing the fact that it was incumbent up on the emperor to render the Shawan *gasha maret* farmers the same inalienable rights their cohorts in *asma-ris* regions enjoyed. But one wonders why Menilek waited until January 1891 if indeed, as Asma implies, what the emperor wanted was to encourage Shawans to flee to the newly incorporated regions. The scholars who relied on one or the other of the primary sources do not tell us why they chose to endorse one view over the other.
131. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 332.
132. As indicated above, Mantel-Niecko, for example, argued that political reasons prompted the emperor to promulgate the 1892 edict on tithe. According to her, it was Menilek's desire to control the army and thereby create a professional fighting force that convinced him to introduce the tithe. Still it is not clear from her explanation why the edict should be considered as a means to control the army and not the political elite. This is important because as much as the edict tried to regulate the extractive rights of the soldiery, it also had repositioned the state as the collector of tithe, snatching, at least in part, the tribute collecting rights of the *malkagna*.
133. Interview with Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001; Badada Buta (Mojo), 15 May 2001.
134. Interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001.)
135. Interview with Daliso Enboro (Mareqo), 14 June 2000.
136. For more on this see Chapter Six below.

Chapter 3

1. Cappucci, "Condizioni," 281-82, cited in McCann, *People of the Plow*, 205.
2. Interview with Lagasa Ayala (Lume), 17 May 2001; Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001.
3. On the MLRA data and its relevance and limitations see chapters Six and Seven below.
4. Interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.
5. Not all my interviewees narrated the story the same way and at the same length as I did here. Nevertheless, all concurred on the timing but differed slightly on the part of the story they emphasized. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle) 11 February 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001. On the use of *shebo* as a measuring device see Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 105.
6. For a useful discussion of qalad measurement in Gedeo see McClellan, *State Expansionism*, pp. 81-102.
7. On Haile Sellasie's postwar land policies see Chapter Six below.
8. On Haile Sellasie's own reflections on the key place land occupied in prewar imperial power politics see his, *Heywatena Yaltiyopya Ermeja* (Addis Ababa, 1965), 44. The role of land in imperial politics has

been the object of intense scholarly debate. For some useful yet divergent views see, for example, Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*. Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*; Bahru Zewde, "Economic Origins of the Absolutist State in Ethiopia (1916-1935)," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 17 (1984), 1-29.

9. It is not surprising, therefore, that the unit of measurement (*gasha*) varied from place to place and over time. *Gasha* was subject to fluctuation as a unit of land, in turn, has been defined by its "quality" rather than by sheer size. In other words, one *gasha* in *lam* regions was not equivalent in size to one *gasha* in *lam-taf* or *taf* regions. In *lam* regions, one *gasha* was equivalent to 7 *qalad* in width by 11 *qalad* in length (467m25cm by 74m25cm); in *taf-lam* area it amounted to 9x12 *qalad* (or 509m25cm by 781m); in *taf* areas, it amounted to 12x20 *qalad* (or 801m x 1,355cm). Mahtama Sellasie identified six different categories of *gasha* land. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 105-06. See also Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 30-03.

10. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 120-21.

11. *Ibid.* The edict promulgated earlier in 1930 governed all other "excess" land. See Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 130.

12. Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 217.

13. For a useful discussion of the sources of government revenue and the place taxation occupied in it in the prewar period (in contrast with the first few years of the postwar period) see Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 191-97. On the edict itself, see Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 130-31.

14. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 128-29.

15. But amendments to the 1892 edict also included periodically restoring the *asrat* collecting rights of the elite. This was what happened when, owing to a decline in the amount of tithe the farmers voluntarily turned in, Menilek's government entitled the elite to assess and reclaim *asrat* from the farmers directly. However, while periodically restoring tithe-collecting rights of the soldiery, the edict also restricted the extent to which the elite could intervene in the productive activities of the *gabbar* and "his" *geber*-paying obligations. See Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 331-40. Tafari's 1921 and 1923 edicts were meant to address the contradictions such restorations of elite "rights" had created on the ground.

16. Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 25-9.

17. McClellan, *State Transformation*, 81-100.

18. Brotto, *Il regime*, 92-97.

19. I was not able to substantiate this claim by talking to Ada's northernmost highland farmers.

Interview with Dachiso Tasama (Lume), 19 May 2001; Gamachu Kilole (Ada), 24 June 2001.

20. Cited in Addis Hiwet, *From Autocracy to Revolution* (London, 1975), 70-73.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Cited in Bahru, "Economic Origins," 14.

23. Cited in Caulk, "Armies as Predators," 489.

24. *Ibid.*, 489-90..

25. *Ibid.*

26. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 118. Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 13-38. But the November 1928 edict also permitted forcing what the government saw as "idle" labor of the *gabbar* for the purpose of promoting agricultural production "in return only for his [the laborers'] daily food." Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 118. For a different explanation of the content and meaning of the same edict see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 188-197.

27. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 118. Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 13-38.

28. Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 130-31.

29. Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 197.

30. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 207.

31. By making taxation the prerogative of the Ministry of Interior, the act also turned out to be a workable mechanism to ensure the state's upper hand in surplus appropriation as well as allocation of funds. See Mantel-Niecko, *The Role of Land Tenure*, 197-98.

32. Caulk, "Armies as Predators," 489-90.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Mahtama Warq Eshete, *Berhanena Salam* (27 Hedar 1921/5 December 1928), quoted in *ibid.*, 490.

35. On Addis Ababa's relative position as a market center in the early-20th century see Caulk, "Ethiopia and the Horn," 114-15. For a detailed description of the city's markets and trade routes as well as sources see Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 396-408.

36. Bentinck to Chamberlain, Addis Ababa, 18 December 1926, FO 371/12339, quoted in Marcus, Haile Sellassie: *The Formative Years*, 79.
37. Hermann Norden, *Africa's Last Empire: Through Abyssinia to Lake Tana and the Country of the Falasha* (London, 1930), 35-38.
38. See also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 208.
39. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001. See also Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 61-64.
40. See Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 208-9.
41. On Tafar's Erer farm see Marcus, *Haile Sellassie: The Formative Years*, 80.
42. See Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 208. See also interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.
43. See Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 208; Haile M. Larebo, *The Building of an Empire: Italian Land Policy and Practice in Ethiopia 1935-1941* (Oxford, 1994). For a pro-Italian perspective on colonial development initiatives see Ferdinando Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire in the Making* (London, 1929), 39-73.
44. See Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 209.
45. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001; Azmach Dallu Yemanu (Zway), 4 April 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001.
46. On Ada see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 2-13. On Nazareth see Gutema Imana. "A History of Adama (Nazret) Town: From its Foundation up to 1974." M.A. thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1996.
47. For a descriptive account of Ethiopia's modern road-building early in the 20th century see Richard Pankhurst, "Road Building during the Italian Fascist Occupation of Ethiopia, 1935-1941," *African Quarterly* 15,3 (1968), 21. But see Imperial Highway Authority, "The Development of Highways in Ethiopia," (Tokyo, April 1964).
48. *Ibid*, 1.
49. Harold Marcus, "The infrastructure of the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis: Haile Sellassie, the Solomonic Empire, and the World Economy, 1916-1936," *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Chicago, 1970), 559-68.
50. See also Marcus, *Haile Sellassie: The Formative Years*, 59-65.
51. See Pankhurst, "Road-Building," 50.
52. *Ibid*.
53. Imperial Highway Authority, "The Development."
54. See Marcus, *Haile Sellassie: The Formative Years*, 134.
55. See also Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 293-4.
56. On Sidamo coffee exports see Charles McClellan, "Land, Labor, and Coffee: The South's Role in Ethiopian Self-Reliance, 1889-1935" *African Economic History* 9 (1980), 426-40.
57. Pankhurst, "Road-Building," 30-34.
58. *Ibid*.
59. Imperial Highway Authority, "The Development," 1; Pankhurst, "Road-Building," 44-54.
60. For a useful discussion of Italian plans in Ada see Haile, *The Building*, 107-37. For their achievements on the ground see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 210-13.
61. On Italian colonization of Ethiopia see Alberto Sbacchi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini: Fascism and the Colonial Experience* (New Jersey, 1985), 1-31.
62. On the difference between the "demographic" and "military" settlement schemes see Haile, *The Building*, 82-176. The ONC had carried out a large number of settlement schemes throughout metropolitan Italy. Its most publicized accomplishment was in the Pontine Marshes, south of Rome, where ONC established 2,574 small farms, and distributed over 48,380 hectares of land to ex-servicemen. See Haile, *The Building*, 83.
63. Established in the 1920s, the two farms at Ada and Holeta were model farms owned by Emperor Haile Sellassie. The farms specialized on the production of cereals, milk and dairy products, chicken, tobacco, and grapes specifically geared to Addis Ababa's markets. See also Haile, *The Building*, 84. For a descriptive account on Ethiopia's economic transformation during the Italian occupation period see Richard Pankhurst, "Economic Verdict on the Italian Occupation of Ethiopia (1936-41), *Ethiopia Observer* 14, 1 (1971), 68-82.
64. Sbacchi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini*, 95-99.

65. Quaranta, *Ethiopia*, 40-48; Pankhurst, "A Page of Ethiopian History," 147-49.
66. *Ibid*, 148-9.
67. Quaranta, *Ethiopia*, 47.
68. Pankhurst, "A Page of Ethiopian History," 150. Haile puts the figure at 93 families or a total of 400 people. See Haile, *The Building*, 93-94, 131-134.
69. Haile, *The Building*, 93.
70. *Ibid*, 94-98.
71. *Ibid*, 104.
72. *Ibid*, 105.
73. Sbacchi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini*, 100-01.
74. *Ibid*. See also Haile, *The Building*, 99-100.
75. See Haile, *The Building*, 124.
76. For a useful note on this from the vantage point of the colonialists', see *ibid*, 120-37.
77. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001. See also Quaranta, *Ethiopia*, 42-47.
78. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001. See also Pankhurst, "A page of Ethiopian History," 149.

Chapter 4

1. Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 11-17, 37-44.
2. See Philip Mitchell, *Africa Afterthoughts* (London, 1954), 202; Harold G. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States, 1941-1974: The Politics of Empire* (Berkeley, 1983), 1-21, 89; Bahru Zewde, "Some Aspects of post-Liberation Ethiopia (1941-1950), *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies I* (Addis Ababa, 1988); Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 153-59.
3. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 9-10; Mitchell to Haile Sellasie, Addis Ababa, 30 June 1941, FO 371/31597.
4. Note to the Secretary of State and War, 16 October 1941, WO 32/9641, quoted in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 10.
5. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 11; see also Note to the Secretary of State and War, 16 October 1941, WO 32/9641.
6. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 10.
7. On the details of the 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian agreements see Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 11-12, 22-40; see also Bahru, "Some Aspects of post-Liberation Ethiopia," 179-80; Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 418ff.
8. See Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 22-41; see also Bahru, "Some Aspects of post-Liberation Ethiopia," 179-80.
9. Cooper and Packard, "Introduction," 1-41; see also Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*, 45-51.
10. See Van Beusekom and Hodgson, "Lessons Learned," 29-34.
11. See E. Talbot Smith memo on "Conditions in Ethiopia, Sept 1942," Asmara, 8 Oct 1942, SD 865 D. 01; see also Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 22-4, 12-15.
12. Smith to Secretary of State, Asmara 18 Feb 1943, SD 884.24/112 ½, quoted in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 15-16.
13. Smith to Secretary of State, Asmara 18 Feb 1943, SD 884.24/112 ½, quoted in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 16.
14. Smith to Secretary of State, Asmara, 18 Feb 1943, SD 884.24/112 ½, quoted in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 16.
15. Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision*, 211.
16. *Ibid*.
17. See R. Watson, "Food and Agricultural Organization in Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer* 2, 9 (1958), 293-95.
18. Quoted in David Talbot, *Contemporary Ethiopia* (New York, 1958), 107; see also Chamber of Commerce: *Mari Meshaf*, 196.
19. See Alling to Wilson, Washington, 24 March 1943, SD 884.24/110.

20. On the Lend-lease agreements see Getachew Belayneh, "The Role of United States Economic Assistance to Ethiopia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1971), 19-30, 127-30, 134-39.

21. Yilma Deressa to Secretary of State, June 24, 1943, in SD 884.24/111. Yilma's request specified the sending to Ethiopia of 8 agricultural experts and 20 agricultural mechanics. On acknowledgments made to the arrival of the mission and accommodations see Landis to Secretary of State, May 16 1944, in SD 884.01A/80; see also Paul H. Alling to W.G. Hayter, First Secretary of British Embassy, Washington D.C. December, 31, 1943, in SD 884.01A/62.

22. See Paul H. Alling to W.G. Hayter, December 31, 1943, in SD 884/01 A/62.

23. See *Ibid.*

24. Quoted in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 58-59. The signing of the second Lend-Lease agreement in May 1949 followed that.

25. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 58.

26. See Friedmann, "The Origins," 13-31.

27. For a useful discussion of the activities of these organizations see Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision*, 34, 230-40.

28. According to Lumsdaine: "Foreign aid was the largest financial flow to the Third World consistently through the postwar period, and was greater than all other financial flows combined, except in the period roughly from 1973 to 1985." See *ibid.*

29. Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*, 53-59. Mexico became the first Third World country to embark on the new strategy of agricultural development fashioned after the U.S. model. In 1941 the Mexican government invited the Rockefeller Foundation to provide technical assistance for raising yields in basic food crops. As Gupta has explained it in greater detail, the importance of this act lies in the fact that the Mexican government was "to serve as exemplar to Third World countries...as what could be achieved by the application of 'scientific method' and a top-down production-based strategy." Apart from its status as a model, the Mexican program had more concrete effects in that Mexico exported its improved seed varieties to other countries with similar agronomic conditions. India has been the other country that became a test case for the experimentation of green revolution-based strategies meant for bringing about agricultural development and eradicating food deficits in poor countries. See *ibid.*, 53-4. Ethiopia was one of the recipients of improved seed varieties from Mexico (see below).

30. See R. Watson, "Food and Agricultural Organization in Ethiopia," 293-95.

31. *Ibid.*

32. See M.W. Miller, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Seed Improvement," (Addis Ababa, November 1953), FAO report No. 191, 2. See also FAO, "Report on Seed Improvement to the Government of Ethiopia, Report No. 194" (Rome, October 1954).

33. See *ibid.* See also Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 1961; J.C.D. Lawrence and H.S. Man, "FAO Land Policy Project (Ethiopia)," *Ethiopia Observer* 9, 4 (1966), 287-336.

34. Luther, *Ethiopia Today*, 84-85.

35. At one such campaign in Borana in southern Ethiopia, a FAO-led team vaccinated 100,000 cattle in one year (1958) alone. See Watson, "Food and Agricultural Organization in Ethiopia," 294.

36. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001.

37. Interview with Badada Buta (Lume), 15 May 2001; Bune Batasa (Zway), 6 April 2001.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Cited in Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 220.

40. It is striking to note that decline in livestock population, both at the household and regional levels, permeates in farmers' discourses. But the single most important factor informants held responsible for that decline and/or the lack of pasturage relates to the expansion of crop agriculture and changing land tenure regimes throughout the postwar period, but most conspicuously in the 1968-1978 decade. For more on this see also Chapters Five, Nine, and the Epilogue below.

41. FAO, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Agricultural Development, Report No. 94," (Rome, February 1953).

42. *Ibid.* See also Luther, *Ethiopia Today*, 74.

43. Luther, *Ethiopia Today*, 74-75. In that respect FAO experts made note of the challenge in getting Ethiopian farmers used to the new equipment. According to one report, approximately *birr* 1million worth of plows and agricultural equipments donated by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation

Administration (UNRRA) in 1945 was “rusting away” in government sheds in the outskirts of Addis Ababa. The reporter loathed: “To leave unused, or use incorrectly, the UNRRA material stored by the government is to relinquish [sic], voluntarily, an opportunity of improving Ethiopian farming conditions.” The same report emphasized that, contrary to general opinion, the UNRRA plows were suitable for use under heavy soil conditions in Ethiopia, but it also acknowledged that the imported farm implements were more complicated than what the Ethiopian farmer has been used to. Consequently, FAO specialists suggested that a start be made with an experimental moldboard-plow that could be produced locally at very little cost. The experts also recommended introduction of the scythe to replace the sickle; the use of light, hand-operated threshers in place of the “obsolete” system of threshing by oxen; the use of the horse for traction as well as for drawing small carts; and the setting up of farmers’ training centers to facilitate the adoption of the improved farm implements by Ethiopian farmers. See FAO, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Agricultural Development, Report No. 194,” 75.

44. FAO, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Agricultural Development, Report No. 94”. According to Talbot, the government had established eight model farms in the 1940s. According to Talbot the model farms were equipped with “selection stations,” where “adequate seed storage is maintained to give information to farmers.” He also noted that: “In and around them [the model farms] several acres are prepared for the germination of seeds, and practical lessons are given in such subjects as rotation of crops, individual selection and storage of seeds, fertilizers, alteration of crops, resting of acreage, and, where necessary, irrigation and inundation to assist exhausted soil.” Talbot does not provide a complete list of the model farms, but he does mention Holeta, Gudar, Waliso, Bishoftu, and Taffi (all in Shawa), Kafa and Bonga (in Kafa), and Borocalla (in Gore). See Talbot, *Contemporary Ethiopia*, 105.

45. See FAO, “Supplemental Agreement No. TA-266/S/3” (Addis Ababa, 27 March 1952).

46. M.W. Miller, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Seed Improvement, FAO report No. 191” (Addis Ababa, November, 1953), 2.

47. *Ibid.* Miller’s figure on *tef* yield may be a bit exaggerated.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. See *ibid.* See also FAO, “Report on Seed Improvement to the Government of Ethiopia, Report No. 194”.

51. Miller, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Seed Improvement,” 5. FAO obtained the seeds from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Holland, France, Italy, Western Germany, Costa Rica, Kenya, Egypt and Puerto Rico. The samples consisted of numerous seed varieties including 98 cereals, 35 maize, 22 pulses, as well as 48 pasture and fodder legumes. Of the total of 304 varieties available, 179 were sown at Holeta, while the remaining were sown in MoA farms at Addis Ababa and Ambo, or distributed to “selected” farmers for trial and multiplication. See *ibid.*, 6.

52. *Ibid.*, 7-8.

53. FAO, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Agricultural Development, Report No. 94”.

54. The Italians have made similar attempts in distributing improved wheat varieties to farmers in Ada but with very little success. See Chapter Three above.

55. To be sure, modern agriculture had always attracted the emperor ever since his regency time. But up until the post-Italian occupation period, the emperor thought such ventures as exclusively the domain of large-scale commercial farms than smallholder agriculture. On Haile Sellasie’s prewar commercial farming initiatives see Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia*, 208-09.

56. Miller, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Seed Improvement, FAO report No. 191,” 2; FAO, “Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Agricultural Development, Report No. 94”.

57. *Addis Zaman*, Ter 21, 1941 E.C.; Talbot, *Contemporary Ethiopia*, 109-11.

58. For a useful account on the institutional history of the MoA see Gebrena Minister, “*Gebrena Baltyopya*,” (Addis Ababa, 1977 E.C., unpublished). See also Chapter Nine below.

59. See Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 90-91; See also Gebrena Minister, “*Gebrena Baltyopya*,” 1-24.

60. See Haile, *The Building*, 253-59.

61. See Gebrena Minister, “*Gebrena Baltyopya*,” 3-7.

62. Deyoe to FAO, Addis Ababa, 24 June 1949, in SD 884.01/8-849.

63. *Ibid.*

64. See George R. Merrell to Secretary of State, August 8, 1949, SD 884.01/8-849.

65. On the new mandate of the MoA, see Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 198-9.
66. *Ibid.* Deyoe explained his choice of Mahtama Sellasie in terms of the vice-minister's agricultural training in France, the appointees' personal interest in agriculture (exemplified most by Mahatma Sellasie's active involvement in the launching of the first agricultural school--the Ambo Agricultural School--in the country dating few years prior to the Italian occupation), and the fact that Mahtama Sellasie owned and operated "substantial *gashas* of high production farm" around Ambo in the postwar period. See *ibid.*
67. On the Holeta experimental station see Institute of Agricultural Research, *First Annual Report* (Addis Ababa, 1968), 1-3.
68. Interview with Hadeta Wayiso (Arsi Negelle), 7 February 2001.
69. Ministry of Agriculture, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*; Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*.
70. For more on this see Chapter Nine below.
71. See U.S.A. Operation Mission to Ethiopia, "Point 4 Agreements between the Imperial Ethiopian Government and the Government of the United States," (Addis Ababa, August 31, 1953), 1.
72. The report also canvassed social and security problems, that it explained in terms of underdeveloped educational facilities (that were held responsible for lack of public knowledge of sanitation), shortage of medical personnel (to check the spread of disease and death), and the threat of communism. See Getachew, "The Role of United States Economic Assistance in Ethiopia," 139-40.
73. The two parties signed the second agreement in 1957, preceded by another defense accord signed in 1953. For a useful interpretation of those agreements see Getachew, "The Role of United States Economic Assistance in Ethiopia, 139-43.
74. *New York Times*, May 16, 1952; U.S.A. Operation Mission to Ethiopia, "Point 4 Agreements".
75. See U.S.A. Operation Mission to Ethiopia, "Point 4 Agreements," 1-3.
76. See Oklahoma State University, *Oklahoma State University in Ethiopia: Terminal Report 1952-1968* (Stillwater, 1969), 6.
77. *Ibid.*, 4.
78. See *ibid.*, 4-6.
79. *Ibid.*, 20. It must be remarked that Haile Sellasie might as well be favoring his home region in his decision. The site at Alamaya, at elevation of about 6500 feet, comprised 11½ *gasha* (approximately 1150 acres) of land, donated to the college after settling the local population at a different location. See *ibid.*, 21-22.
80. U.S. Operation Mission in Ethiopia, *The Point 4 Program in Ethiopia: A Cooperative Program of the Ethiopian and United States Governments* (Addis Ababa, September 1954).
81. For a lucid description of the college's year-by-year activities see The Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 1-13 (1954-1968).
82. See Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 12 (1965), 1.
83. The Oklahoma State University, *Oklahoma State University in Ethiopia*, 30.
84. There is no concrete data to measure this. But by the 1980s and 1990s the majority of the MoA's leading officials and experts from the *warada* level to the ministerial level as well as specialists working for Ethiopia's pioneer agricultural research institution--The Institution of Agricultural Research (IAR)--were graduates of Alamaya or the other junior agricultural colleges (notably Awasa, Jimma, Ambo, and Debre Zeit).
85. My discussion here concerns the Bishoftu and Shashamane experiment stations. On the other stations see Imperial Ethiopian Agricultural College and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 3-12. See also *ibid.*, 3.
86. For a list of their findings and publications see The Oklahoma State University, *Oklahoma State University in Ethiopia*, 40-43.
87. See Imperial Ethiopian Agricultural College and Mechanical Arts, "First Annual Report of the Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts," (Addis Ababa, 1954, unpublished) 35-37. In addition to correlating poor yield to poor seed varieties, the specialists emphasized the prevalence of loose and covered smut that affected grain, sorghum and maize in the country.
88. *Ibid.*, 36-37.
89. See *ibid.*
90. In Shashamane (Seventh Day Adventist school--located 10 km north of the town), the specialists' test-planted nine varieties of cotton, Oklahoma's common alfalfa seed, and other crops such as pop-corn, grain, sorghum, soybeans, peanuts, castor beans, and mug beans. See *ibid.*, 41-42. For Addis Ababa and

Holeta see *ibid*, 2, 13.

91. Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 14. Hence one can emphasize their contribution in discouraging cotton-based cash crop production in the region.

92. *Ibid*, 44.

93. Their findings showed that (1) a selected "Great Rift Valley variety" out yielded twelve imported American corn varieties; (2) Dixie 11 and Watson 111 were the only American varieties that produced yields within 25 percent of the yield of the local Ethiopian variety; (3) a Kenya flint corn produced 43.3 bushels of corn per acre, and was high producer in the variety trial by 11 percent over the selected Ethiopian varieties; (4) the selected local corn varieties averaged 32.8 bushels of shelled corn per acre, which exceeded random sampling of nearby farmers' fields by 45%. See Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 14.

94. With the opening of the Bishoftu farm, the number of research and experiment stations in our region grew to two. Moreover, the Bishoftu station evolved as one of the major centers of research and experimentation for the entire country. According to the plan, the Bishoftu experimental station was meant for conducting "rigidly controlled tests of small grains, grasses, legumes, and general horticultural crops, [and] evaluation of the local Ethiopian wheat, barely, and *teff* varieties in comparison with introduced varieties" for the purpose of selecting and disseminating improved seed varieties to the farmers. See Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 12.

95. Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 3, 103. For results of barley see *ibid* 3, 13.

96. Interview with Kaba Gudina (Arsi Negelle) 12 May, 2000.

97. Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 40.

98. *Ibid*.

99. *Ibid* 11, 50.

100. This had been a totally neglected subject in the scientific literature. For some useful beginnings see Workneh Nigatu, Wilfred Mwangi, Tesfaye Tessema, "Cultural Practices and Varietal Preference for Durum Wheat by Farmers of Ada, Lume, and Gimbichu Weredas of Ethiopia," *Research Report Series* (Debre Zeit, 1994), 1.

101. The first agricultural school in the country opened at Ambo in 1933. Later, an "operational agreement" signed between ICA (International Co-operation Administration, formerly known as United States Operation Mission –USOM) and the Ethiopian government (June 24, 1952) provided the basis for the opening of an agricultural secondary school in Jimma in 1952. The first batch of 19 students graduated in October 1953. Between 1953 and 1966 (marking the elevation of the school to a college level) a total of 550 students graduated from the school. Fifty percent of the graduates continued their education at Alamaya. The school had been a major source of manpower supply for the extension services of the Ministry of Agriculture. See The Oklahoma State University, *Oklahoma State University in Ethiopia*, 9-15.

102. At Alamaya, similar extension work started by distributing to farmers vegetable seeds with some technical supervision coming from extension agents. See Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 105.

103. The Youth Clubs were fashioned after the U.S. 4-H. See The Oklahoma State University, *Oklahoma State University in Ethiopia*, 44. In Fiche, 71 students joined the club voluntarily. The club's activities comprised school gardening and poultry improvement with improved seeds and new breeds of poultry provided by the extension agent. It is difficult to assess the impact of the youth clubs in disseminating new ideas to the wider community. In terms of membership, however, the youth clubs continued to grow throughout the 1950s and 1960s. According to official statistics, by 1963, there were 140 such 4-T clubs (as the Youth Clubs later came to be known as) in the country (with over 9000 registered members). See Getachew, "The Role of United States Economic Assistance in Ethiopia," 220; see also Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 105; *ibid* 7, 80; *ibid* 9, 52.

104. Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 3, 81; see also Sylvia Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Agriculture in Retrospect and Prospect," *Ethiopia Observer* 1, 9 (1957), 282.

105. Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 8, 45.

106. *Ibid*.

107. *Ibid*, 47.

108. *Ibid*, 49.

109. *Ibid* 6, 41.
110. *Ibid* 7, 79.
111. *Ibid* 8, 47-50.
112. *Ibid* 9, 46.
113. In Washington the USAID replaced the three separate agencies: Point 4, ICA, and DLF formerly responsible for the various programs. The goal was to assist few key economic and social sectors in the developing nations. The general objective of the USAID in Ethiopia was to assist that country "to mobilize its resources and expand the monetary economy by: (a) increasing commercial agricultural and industrial production; (b) developing manpower training and education; and (c) improving organizational and administrative skills." By helping Ethiopia's economic effort, AID sought to promote economic and political development, and thereby safeguard important U.S. strategic interests in the region. See USAID, "Country Assistance Program," (Washington, D.C., October 1964), 91-92; see also Getachew, "The Role of United States Economic Assistance to Ethiopia, 157.
114. Getachew, "The Role of United States Economic Assistance to Ethiopia," 158.
115. See *ibid*, 217, 220-21.
116. When the college joined HSIU in 1963, the university's Board of Trustees decided to transfer the college's extension department to the MoA. See Gebrena Minister, "*Balyopya Yatakahedu gebrena sistamoch gemgama*," (Addis Ababa, 1986 E.C., unpublished), 12-16.
117. Quite many scholars and students of Ethiopian agriculture and the economy have nurtured and adapted this view. Among those who have made it their specialty include Dejene Aredo, "The Evolution of Rural Development Policies," in Siegfried Pausewang, Fantu Cheru, Stefan Brune and Eshetu Chole (eds), *Ethiopia: Options for Rural Development* (London, 1990), 49-57. See also Shiferaw Jammo, "An Overview of the Economy, 1841-74," in Shiferaw Bekele (ed), *An Economic History*, 6-15.
118. See Dejene, "The Evolution of Rural Development Policies," 49-57.
119. See H. W. Arndt, *Economic Development: The History of an Idea* (Chicago, 1987), 60-133.
120. *Ibid*, 58.
121. See American Embassy to Department of state, March 15, 1955, in SD 875.00/3-1555.
122. *Ibid*.
123. On the composition of the team drafting the first-five-year development plan (FFYDP) see Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Five Year Development Plan 1957-1961* (Addis Ababa, 1956), 157.
124. American Embassy to Department of State, June 29, 1959, SD 875.00/6-2959.
125. See Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Five Year Development Plan 1957-1961*, 61; see also American Embassy to Department of State, June 29, 1959, SD 875.00/6-2959.
126. Cited in Luther, *Ethiopia Today*, 8; see also Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 136.
127. See *ibid*, 138.
128. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Five Year Development Plan 1957-1961*, 3.
129. *Ibid*, 61.
130. *Ibid*, 64. After setting up a workshop at the Jimma Agricultural Technical School in 1952/53, ICA specialists surveyed the conditions of farm machinery available at the MoA storehouses which led to the signing of an agreement between ICA and the Ethiopian government for the establishment of a co-operative agricultural machinery pool (in June 1954) that soon became operational at Nefas Silk, south of Addis Ababa. See *ibid*, 165.
131. See *ibid*, 65-67, 71-79.
132. See *ibid*, 67-69.
133. *Ibid*, 70.
134. *Ibid*.
135. *Ibid*, 120.
136. To that effect the emperor created an autonomous Ministry of National Community Development in 1957. On the implementation of the community development programs see Chapter Nine below. On Community Based Development as the first variant of postwar development strategy and the evolution of the theories see, John M. Staatz and Carl K. Eicher, "Agricultural Development Ideas in Historical Perspective," in John M. Stats and Carl K. Eicher (eds.), *Agricultural Development in the Third World* (Baltimore, 1990), 3-41.
137. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Five Year Development Plan 1957-1961*, 61-64.
138. *Addis Zaman*, *Genbot* 2, 1955 E.C.

139. See *Addis Zaman*, *Yakatit* 13, 1958 E.C.; *Hamle* 6, 1958 E.C.
140. For a useful report on some communist activities in Ethiopia in the late-1950s, see American Embassy to State Department, March 20, 1958, SD 775.00/3-2058.
141. Recknagel to Secretary of State, February 19, 1958, Dispatch No. 285.
142. *Ibid.*
143. Quoted in *ibid.*
144. *Ibid.*
145. For a brief discussion of the coup see John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford, 1974), 254-59. On the student movement see R.R. Balsvik, *Haile Selassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1973* (East Lansing, 1985). To be sure, the international context for development was changing as well. While the 1960s witnessed the political liberation of the majority of African countries, the United Nations designated the decade itself as the "development decade," with emphasis on national economic and social development. It is striking to note that Addis Ababa hosted an international conference on development in 1961. See H.W. Singer, "Education and Economic Development," 1961, reprinted in *International Development: Growth and Change* (New York, 1964), 66.
146. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year Development Plan 1963-1967* (Addis Ababa, 1962), 9-11.
147. *Ibid.*, 44, 58, 77, 111.
148. *Ibid.*, 118.
149. *Ibid.*, 119-26.
150. *Ibid.*, 9-11.
151. "H.I.M. Haile Selassie I Address to the Nation, October, 11 1962," reprinted in Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year Development Plan 1963-1967*, 7-8.
152. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Third Five Year Development Plan 1968-1973* (Addis Ababa, 1968), 19.
153. *Ibid.*, 189-90.
154. Consequently, the government provided incentives (such as in the form of land grants and tax exemptions) to encourage the expansion of commercial agriculture in the country. It also moved to modernize smallholder agriculture in line with internationally developed green revolution strategies.¹⁵⁴ Important as it was, however, the TFYDP was not responsible for the inception of green revolution-based intervention programs in Ethiopia. In fact, by the time of the promulgation of the plan, the study and preparatory phase of the package programs that came to fruition in places like Arsi and Wolayta during the duration of the TFYDP had been almost complete. *Ibid.*, 193, 9-10.
155. *Ibid.*, 16.
156. *Ibid.*, 11.
157. *Ibid.*, 5.
158. Such themes are to be found in Luther, *Ethiopia Today*; David Korten, *Planned Change in a Traditional Society: Psychological problems of Modernization in Ethiopia* (New York, 1972). A functionalist analysis of these factors was set forth in Donald Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (Chicago, 1965).
159. See John Cohen, "Ethiopia: A Survey on the Existence of a Feudal Peasantry," *Journal of modern African studies*, xii, 4 (1974), 665-72; F.C. Gamst, "Peasantries and Elites without Urbanism: the Civilization of Ethiopia," *Comparative Study in Society and History*, xii, 44 (1970), 373-92. A critique of the notion as applied to Ethiopia is found in Gene Ellis, "The Feudal Paradigm as a Hindrance to Understanding Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 14, 2 (1976), 275-95. See also Donald Crummey, "Abyssinian Feudalism," *Past and Present* 89 (1980), 115-38; Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of Traditional Polity*; Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*; Stahl, *Ethiopia*. Haile Menkoriaos, "The Present System of Land Tenure in Ethiopia," *Challenge* 10, 2 (1970), 25-49.

Chapter 5

1. F. de V. Joyce, "Notes on Agriculture in Ethiopia," *East African Agricultural Journal*, IX, 1 (1943), 3-4.

2. The Ministry of Agriculture archives yield such key data but only for the post-1963 period since that ministry, as we have seen in Chapter Four, has not yet organized provincial offices throughout the country. The Ministry of Interior archives offer crucial information regarding local administration, politics, and matters related to land but only in conjunction with taxation and property relations.

3. The major works dealing with agriculture in general include: Walda Gyorgis Walda Yohanes, *Belsegena Bagebrena*, (Addis Ababa, 1949 E.C.); Yared Gabra Mikael, *Sela Ensesat Agalgetot* (Addis Ababa, 1947); Takala Hawaryat, *Tenesh Mafatagna Sela Ersha Temhert* (Addis Ababa, 1930 E.C.); Alamawarq Defaras Beyene, *Yakabt Marbatena Makam Zade* (Addis Ababa, 1944 E.C.); Mekura, *YaBuna Takel Sera Mamrya Mashaf*; Mekura, *Akuri Atar*; Mahtama Sellasie, *Beela Garahat*; Mahtama Sellasie Walda Masqal, *Tebaba Gerahat* (Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C.).

4. For earlier works on *chat* see, for example, P.R.D. Bally, "Catha edulis," *East African Medical Journal* 22 (1945), 2-3; P.J. Greenway, "Khat," *East African Agricultural Journal* 13 (1947), 98-102; D.W.A. Peters, "Khat, its history, botany, chemistry and toxicology," *Pharmaceutical Journal* 115 (1952), 17-18. Next to *chat*, *enset* is the other food plant that caught the attention of researchers early on. See for example, H. Smeds, "The enset planting culture of eastern Sidamo, Ethiopia," *Acta Geographica* 13, 4 (1955), 1-39. For related works dealing with one or another aspect of Ethiopian agriculture or natural resources, see, for example, A.T. Semple, "A Look at Ethiopia," 154-57; Zaphiro Tesfaye, *The Livestock of Ethiopia*, (n.p. 1951); F. Bazzi, *Fisheries of Ethiopia*, (Addis Ababa, 1955).

5. Joyce, "Notes on Agriculture in Ethiopia," 1. But when it was finally delivered Joyce's report focused on the future of Ethiopian agriculture, and offers very little on the other two areas emphasized at the beginning of the report.

6. See *ibid*.

7. On Wellby and his accounts see Chapter One above.

8. Joyce, "Notes on Agriculture in Ethiopia," 1.

9. C.F. Rey, *Unconquered Ethiopia as It Is Today* (London, 1923).

10. Joyce, "Notes on Agriculture in Ethiopia," 1.

11. See *ibid*, 3-13.

12. *Ibid*, 4.

13. *Ibid*, 14.

14. *Ibid*, 14.

15. *Ibid*.

16. *Ibid*.

17. See Ministry of Agriculture, *Agriculture in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1953); Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 196-277.

18. Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, "First Annual Report"; see also Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, "The Agriculture of Ethiopia," 2.

19. Kuls studied Ethiopian agriculture in the mid-1950s. He published his findings in the late-1950s. Of particular relevance to us here may be his, "*Agrargeographische Beobachtungen in der Umgebung von Addis Abeba*," (1957). I have relied entirely on E. Westphal's translation for the purpose of this dissertation..

20. Quoted in Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia*, 107.

21. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001.

22. Interview with Tikishu Lachebo (Arsi Negelle), 19 February 2001.

23. Interview with Nureto Hameso (Mareqo), 2 July 2000.

24. Interview with Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.

25. Interview with Gudina Bayisa (Arsi Negelle), 25 February 2001.

26. For a general account on maize cultivation in Ethiopia, see Abebe Gobezie, Belete Beyene, Bengt Jacobson, Elizabeth Wuhib, "Production and Utilization of Maize in Ethiopia" (Addis Ababa, 1975, unpublished).

27. Interview with Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.

28. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001.

29. *Ibid*.

30. Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, "The Agriculture of Ethiopia," 2, 14.

31. Quoted in Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 196.

32. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000; Nureto Hameso (Mareqo), 2 July 2000.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Interview with Tulluro Abam (Mareqo), 12 June 2000.
37. See, for example, Imperial College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, "First Annual Report," 1; see also Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 16-21.
38. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Nureto Hameso (Mareqo), 2 July, 2000; Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.
39. Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia*, 108.
40. Interview with Tulluro Abam (Mareqo), 12 June 2000.
41. *Ibid.*
42. On livestock's place in Ethiopia's highland agriculture see Getnet Bekele, "Contingent Variables and Discerning Farmers," *Northeast African Studies*, forthcoming.
43. Interview with Badada Buta (Mojo), 20 May 2001.
44. Interview with Raya Talila (Dire), 13 July 2001.
45. Interview with Dichiso Tasama (Lume), 24 May 2001.
46. Interview with Lagasa Ayala (Lume), 24 May 2001.
47. Interview with Badada Buta (Mojo), 20 May 2001; Raya Talila (Dire), 13 July 2001; Dichiso Tasama; Lagasa Ayala.
48. See *ibid.*
49. My summary here is based on information acquired from Badada Buta (Mojo), 20 May 2001; Raya Talila (Dire), 13 July 2001; Dichiso Tasama; Lagasa Ayala.
50. *Ibid.*
51. See Westphal, *Agricultural Systems*, 101.
52. Interview with Baqala Ababa Tamrat (Lume), 19 May 2001; Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001.
53. Interview with Lagasa Ayala (Lume), 24 May 2001; Dichiso Tasama (Lume), 24 May 2001.
54. Interview with Badaso Roba (Ada), 14 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001. For a useful discussion of Ada's livestock agriculture based on late-1960s observation see Borton *et al*, *A Development Program*, 86-94.
55. Interview with Lagasa Ayala (Lume), 24 May 2001; Dichiso Tasama (Lume), 24 May 2001; Badaso Roba (Ada), 14 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.

Chapter 6

1. Interview with Faranjo Ganato (Arsi Negelle), 20 February 2001.
2. My conclusion here is based on discussions I had with interviewees at different locations. See for example, interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001, Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.
3. See *Ibid.*
4. On Ada's qalad measurement see Cappucci, "Condizioni," 281-82 ; see also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 205.
5. On the absence of *qalad* measurement in *balabbat* regions, see Donham, "From Ritual Kings to Ethiopian Warlords in Maale," in Donham and James, *The Southern Marches*, 69-95.
6. For *qalad* measurement elsewhere in Gedeo see Charles McClellan, "Coffee in Center-Periphery Relations: Gedeo in the early twentieth century," in *ibid*, 175-95.
7. For a useful, though not necessarily exhaustive discussion of *qalad* see Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 127-30.
8. For more on this subject see Chapter Seven below.
9. The most common strategy the farmers' adapted to minimize rent was by negotiating the grade of land (in the *lam/taf* trajectory) or by reporting reduced yield often due to environmental shocks. Interview with Ayu Dada (Lume), 18 May 2001; Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.
10. For a discussion on valley agricultural change between 1941-59 see Chapter Five and Eight.

11. According to my Mareqo informants, the highlanders achieved this through a major battle they fought against the Oromo sometime in the early 1920s. Interview with Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2001. See also M. Nori and A. Hirpa, "Living with Uncertainty in the Ethiopian Rift Valley," (Zway, 1987, unpublished monograph), 11-12.
12. Makin, *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 118. See also Nori and Hirpa, "Living with Uncertainty," 12.
13. Most of the valley's prewar individual migrations (mainly but not exclusively resulting from cisagna arrangements) were largely confined to Ada. For some personal accounts of immigrants see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 205-06.
14. Interview with Tikishu Lachebo (Arsi Negelle), 19 February 2001.
15. Interview with Lagasa Ayala (Lume), 17 May 2001.
16. Interview with Haile Hadara (Arsi Negelle), 22 February 2001.
17. Interview with Ayu Dada (Lume), 18 May 2001.
18. My conclusion here is based on the testimonies of the four informants mentioned above.
19. See for example, interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001, Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000.
20. For a useful discussion of global food regimes see Friedmann, "The Origins of Third World Food Dependence," 13-31.
21. The best consolidated report on the extent of Ethiopia's prewar food exports is J. Loder Park, "Ethiopia: commercial and economic survey," 8.
22. See Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 389.
23. See Park, "Ethiopia: commercial and economic survey".
24. See *Ibid*, 8.
25. For a useful discussion of the extent of Addis Ababa's food scarcity in the late-1920s and its causes see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 172-186.
26. For strong arguments along this line see, for instance, *Berhanena Salam*, March 26, 1925.
27. See *Berhanena Salam* June 5, 1930; January 10, 1928; August 25, 1928.
28. Sbacchi, *Ethiopia under Mussolini*, 100-101.
29. The best book-length study on the subject is Wilmington, *The Middle East Supply Centre*. See also Alling to Wilson, Washington, 24 March 1943, SD 884.24/110; Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 17-18.
30. In addition to food, the re-opening of the Suez led to the convergence of the Middle East region as a huge market for consumer goods as well. Consequently, U.S. business quickly filled in (and in fact surpassed) declining British exports during the war. See Wilmington, *The Middle East Supply Centre*, 1, 4, 75, 104; see also Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 15-21.
31. Wilmington, *The Middle East Supply Centre*, 4.
32. *Ibid*. In practice, however, the MESC ended up importing food materials and consumer goods (totaling five million tons per annum) from a wide range of places than from what it first anticipated to buy. See *ibid*, 4, 18.
33. That reminds one of the manner in which Menilek's elite responded by forming a banking business to counter the kind of increasing threat they felt in raising cash early in the 20th century. A similarly profitable enterprise--the *Societe Ethiopienne de Commerce et d'Industrie* (SECI)--had been established late in 1928, in which the regent Ras Tafari was not directly involved. Nonetheless, Tafari decreed that, "the Ethiopian Government will favor with all its power the operation of this business without ever becoming responsible financially..." See Southard to Secretary of State, Addis Ababa, 16 Jan 1932, SD 884.6363.
34. Bahru, "Some Aspects of Post-Liberation Ethiopia," 281-83.
35. Of particular interest in this regard is the agreement the ENC signed with the government in 1943 for buying and selling grain in the country for which it collected an advance payment of 90,000 MTD.¹⁷ Among the institutions the ENC came to supply included the Minister of War which continued to pay its personnel partially in the form of foodstuffs. The ENC also became the sole buyer of grains from the government, that is, grains collected either as rent from government-owned lands or in the form of taxes from the farmers. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 370.
36. FO 571/46049, Bethell to Private Secretary of the Emperor, 30/1/45; see also Bahru, "Some Aspects of Post-Liberation Ethiopia," 282; Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 46.
37. As much as grains and coffee dominated the export market, textile dominated the import market,

accounting for up to 70 percent of Ethiopia's imports in the 1940s. In the domestic market the sale of grain or coffee for the purchase of textiles sometimes gave most rural markets a picture of a veritable barter. For a brief but useful discussion on ENC's involvement in the textile market see Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain, and the United States*, 46.

38. According to Tekalign, ENC's demand as payment of outstanding bills was so high that the Corporation ended up in legal dispute with the MoA. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 372, 45ff.

39. Interview with Shisama Birada (Addis Ababa), 17 July 1999.

40. See, for instance, KA/2/2: *Chebona Gurage warada gezi to Endarase of Shawa*, Hedar 13, 1935 E.C.

41. See, for instance, KA/1/2: *Arsi Negelle warada gezi to Endarase of Arusi*, Ter 22, 1936 E.C.

42. A.D. Bethell, "Commerce in Ethiopia." Addis Ababa, 18 July 1944, in Howe to Eden, Addis Ababa, 2 September, 1944, FO 371/41463. Bethell, the British commercial advisor, remarked that a striking feature of commerce in postwar Ethiopia had been the growing involvement of Ethiopians, particularly "many of the upper classes," who have now turned to trade. See *ibid*; see also Bahru, "Some Aspects of Post-Liberation Ethiopia," 282.

43. FO 371/46049, Howe to Eden, 12/2/45, quoted in Bahru, "Some Aspects of Post-Liberation Ethiopia," 282.

44. FO 371/41463, enclosure in Howe to Eden 2/9/44, cited in Bahru, "Some Aspects of Post-Liberation Ethiopia," 282-3.

45. On the dissolution of the MESC see Wilmington, *The Middle East Supply Centre*, 163-168.

46. In fact, the ENC's domestic operations reportedly cost the government a lot of money. The ENC-MoA accord (that seemed to have been well established at the time of the founding of the corporation) turned severe and ended up in a legal dispute. See MAA/238: "Grain Sales and Purchase, 1935-1937 E.C.; see also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 372. Around 1950 the Ministry of Commerce registered over 50 private trading firms, mostly owned by foreigners and engaged in grain export. See Ministry of Commerce, *Yaltyopya Ekonomi Yaj Mashaf* (Addis Ababa, 1946 E.C.), 9-40. See also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 372-3.

47. American Embassy to Department of State, June 5, 1952, enclosure, "Report on the External Trade of Ethiopia, SD 475.00/6-552. See also Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 227. The export market for chilies and pepper as well as fresh vegetables and fruits remained steady throughout this period. See *ibid*.

48. American Embassy to Department of State, "Ethiopian Economic Review, 1952, March 13 1953," SD 875.00/3-1353.

49. *Ibid*.

50. Dessalegn Rahmato, "Peasant Agriculture under the Old Regime." In Shiferaw Bekele, ed. *An Economic History of Ethiopia, Volume I: The Imperial Era, 1941-74*. Addis Ababa: CODESRIA Book Series, 1992, 144-182.

51. The phenomenon still begs further investigation. On the place of Debre Zeit, Mojo, and Nazareth as chief storage centers see American Embassy to Department of State, "Quarterly Economic Survey, January 1-March 31, 1953," SD 875.00/4-1653.

52. Interview with Shisama Birada (Addis Ababa), 17 July 1999. On the importance of pack animals for grain transportation in Ethiopia as late as the early-1970s see Ministry of Agriculture, *Findings of a Market Structure*, 158-59. For some useful list of the marketed-food items in the city's market in 1947/48 see *Addis Zaman*, Genbot 28, 1940 E.C.

53. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," Chapter Seven.

54. For a quick summary of Addis Ababa's population over time see *ibid*, 235.

55. *Addis Zaman*, Tahesas 17, 1946.

56. See Gunilla Bjern, *Migration to Shashamane: Ethnicity, Gender, and Occupation in Ethiopia* (Stockholm, 1985); Gutema Imana, "A History of Adama (Nazret) Town from its Foundation up to 1974," (M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1996); Borton *et al*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*. See also Mesfin Wolde Mariam, "Problems of Urbanization," *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, 1970); Mesfin Wolde Mariam, "The Rural Urban Split in Ethiopia," *Dialogue* 2, 1 (1968), 7-16; Banti Getahun, "A History of Shashemene," (M.A. Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1990).

57. See *ibid*.

58. Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 209. On the organization of the Ministries see Mitchell,

African Afterthoughts, 202.

59. The only exception to that had been the 5 *birr* reduction given to *lam* lands in the provinces of Wallaga, Sidamo, Illubabor, Gamu Gofa, and Kafa. For a useful description of the decrees see Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 41-57, 78-79, 102-3. See also Land Tax Proclamation, No. 70 of 1944.

A subsequent memo by the MoI explained that the status or grade of the land (*taf*, *lam-taf* and *lam*) had to be based on production levels. Productivity, in turn, was determined by standards put in place to measure the tithe (i.e., equivalent of 10% of the produce). Accordingly, *lam* (developed) referred to the farms of those who paid more than five *dawla* of grain as tithe; the farms of those who paid 2-5 *dawla* of grain came under the category of *lam-taf* (semi-developed); and the rest (paying between 10 *qunna* and 2 *dawla* of grain for tithe) formed a distinctly category called *taf* (undeveloped). As for the tithe, the 1942 proclamation made only minor, but important, amendments commensurate the commutation of tax payment from in kind to cash. Therefore, unlike the land tax the tithe was flexible, determined by current local grain prices (after yield assessment had been made by a team of representatives from the MoF, MoA, the local *malkagna*, and the local landowner). See “A Proclamation to Provide for a Tax on Land, No. 8 of 1942”; Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 82-88, 94-98; Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 140-41; Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 209; Tekalign, “A City and its Hinterlands,” 274-75.

60. See Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 78-79, 82-88, 94-98; Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 140-41.

61. The new tax code did not provide the basis for the grades. But it is highly probable that it did not change the standards used before. See also FO 371/41470/J594/16/1, enclosed in Howe to F.O. 29/1/44; Land Tax Proclamation No. 117/1943: A Proclamation to Amend the 1937 E.C. Land Tax Proclamation.

62. For prewar regional taxation structures see Mahtama Sellasie, *Zekra Nagar*, 131-64.

63. In monetary terms too, the new tax codes enabled the government to raise sizable revenue from producers. In fact, compared to the prewar years, in the immediate postwar years land-based taxes became the major source of government revenue that excelled in quantity any other single category.

Government revenue for 1943-4 and 1944-5

Revenue	September 1943-44	September 1944-5
Land revenue	8,553,078.21	12,465,315.43
Court fees and fines	1,037,101.83	1,373,121.52
Customs	7,779,536.12	7,807,641.90
Inland revenue	2,762,998.85	3,367,206.79
Tobacco monopoly	726,450.51	955,871.30
Licenses and fees	429,625.70	38,058.28
Mining revenue (gold & salt)	2,520,337.87	10,765,686.80
Receipts from government Departments	1,255,869.39	2,058,091.79
Other	29,379,429.12	41,542,270.23

Source: Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 202-03. See also “Digest of Memoranda Presented by the Imperial Ethiopian government to the Council of Foreign Ministers in London, September 1945,” Addis Ababa, April 1946, pp. 18-19. For 1955-72 figures see Gilkes, *The Dying Lion*, 67.

64. See Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 209.

65. Interestingly the phrase “*teklay gezat*” (often translated as province) connoted imperial territory. *Tekel* (the verb from which *teklay* is derived) is Haile Sellasie horse name. Literally *teklay gezat* means the territory or domain of *Tekel* (Haile Sellasie) as distinct from the *gult* or *balabbat* territories that dominated the scene in the prewar period.

66. Interview with Tulluro Abam (Mareqo), 12 June 2000; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; *Azmach* Daqaba Roba (Zway), 7 April 2001.

67. On Haile Sellasie’s prewar domestic achievements and the political rivalries see Marcus, *Haile Sellasie: The Formative Years*, 78-147.

68. On the Tripartite Treaty see *ibid*, 74-77.
69. The new provinces included Shawa, Harar, Wollo, Tigre, Begemder, Gojjam, Wallaga, Illubabor, Kafa, Gamu Gofa, Sidamo, and Arusi. Later Bale became a separate province in 1962; and with the collapse of the Eritrean federation, the number reached 14. The provinces were in turn divided into sixty-four sub-provinces (*awraja*), 321 districts and 1,221 districts (*warada*). See Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 346; *New Times and Ethiopia News*, 21 September 1946; Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 78.
70. See *ibid*.
71. Male siblings could join the army. See Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 92; see also Nigatu Lakew, "State and Land Grant System," in Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Seminar Proceedings on Agrarian Reform* (Addis Ababa, 1970), 207-17. As we have seen in Chapter Three, the Italians had confiscated different kinds of land, but mainly that belonging to the elite. Most of the land the colonial administration confiscated "belonged" to the imperial government (as *hudad*, *madarya*, or *gult*). But the Italians also confiscated individual land as well, particularly where such land belonged to the higher nobility (including the royal family), and notable leaders of the resistance movement (particularly in places like Shawa, Gojjam, Gondar, Harar, Sidamo, and Arsi). Therefore, the October 1942 edict was meant for restoring the old *madarya*, *gult*, and *rist* rights of the nobility and the soldiery but in a totally new political context. Most of the edict restored the imperial government's "right" as the ultimate holder and granter of *madarya* and *rist* land.
72. For a full text of the edict see Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 99.
73. See *ibid*. In addition, the emperor issued "special grants" specifically to high-ranking military officers, Eritreans, and Jamaicans. Interestingly, the majority of the land given to Eritreans and all of the land reserved for Jamaicans came from Shashamane *warada*.
74. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, A Policy Oriented Study of Land Settlement (Addis Ababa, 1969), Annex IV.
75. See, for example, Addis Hiwot, *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London, 1975), 45-46; Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 63-67; Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*, 59-61.
76. See also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 235-97.
77. Quoted in Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 79-80.
78. For a contemporary remark on the partial list of what latter came to comprise a distinct group of land claimants in postwar Ethiopia, see, for example, Joyce, "Agriculture in Ethiopia" 2-3.
79. See Gebre-Wold, *Maretena Geber Sem*, 79-81.
80. For a useful discussion of the extent and, more importantly, the disparities between legal possession of the land and farmers' entitlement rights see, for example, Shiferaw Wolde Michael, "The Possessionary and Ownership Rights of Nomads," (L.L.B thesis, Haile Sellassie I University, School of Law, 1971); Bililign Mandefro, "Agricultural Communities and the Civil Code," *Journal of Ethiopian Law* (1969), 3,2; see also Hans Watterhall, "Government Land in Ethiopia," (Draft Memorandum, Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, June 1972), 252-71.
81. MIA 2103/55: "Land in the Governor General of Shoa. A 1969 official statistics put land in government hands around 37.5 percent. Abebe Gebre, "Inaugural Address," in *Seminar Proceedings on Agrarian Reform, 25th November – 5th December 1969* (Addis Ababa, 1970, unpublished), 8. For a classification of government land by tenure and region see Hans Wetterhall, "Land Administration in Ethiopia," in *Seminar Proceedings in Agrarian Reform*, 267-69.
82. See Weissleder, "The Political Ecology," 288-321.
83. On the order see Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda," 53-54.
84. From Hayqochena Buta Jira's five *warada*, only Adami Tullu and Shashamane completed the Model 218. Similarly, only Boset *warada* of Yararena Karayu completed the inventory on government land ceded as *rist* during this time. In regard to *madarya* land, only Adami Tullu, Shashamane, and Soddo *warada* (from Hayqochena Buta Jira *awraja*) completed the inventory, as Ada and Lume did from Yararena Karayu. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on the Land Tenure Survey of Shoa*, 3.
85. This is not surprising because the land grant edicts have put the limit between half to one *gasha*. On the land grant edicts, see Chapter Six above. I was able to discover a copy of the Model 218 at the Ministry's district office in Nazareth. My attempt to discover the same report for Hayqochena Buta Jira *awraja* was not successful. Its office constantly moving (more than six times in our period) working on the

awraja archives proved difficult not least for getting the permission to access to some of the locked archives in places like Zway. I have relied on the MLRA report itself for Hayqochena Buta Jira *awraja*. For citation purposes I rely on the official MLRA report, which is more accessible.

86. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Imam Wudo Aba (Mareqo), 17 June 2000; Gamada Buriso (Shashamane), 16 January 2001; Bune Batasa (Zway), 6 April 2001; Germa Yehun (Lume), 23 May 2001; Ababu Liben (Ada), 1 July 2001.

87. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*, 54.

88. For the figures see *ibid*, 55.

89. *Ibid*.

90. McCann, *People of the Plow*, 212; see also interview with Bekele Nedo (Mojo), 3 April 2001.

91. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda," 7.

92. *Ibid*.

93. The only exception to that of course had been the *beta-rist*. See Chapter Six above. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

94. Interview with Nini Abino, (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

95. *Ibid*.

96. *Ibid*; see also interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 134-35. On mechanization see Chapter Nine below.

97. The saying in Amharic goes: "*Ityopya hagare mogn nash talala; yamotalesh qarto yagadalash bala*." Its literal translation goes: "Ethiopia my country you are full; those who killed you eat while those who saved you sit idle." Tadasa Zawalde, *Qarin Garamaw* (Addis Ababa, 1960 E.C.).

98. For a related study based on Bacho (western Shawa) see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 247-58.

99. The best evidence for that comes from individual testimonies. For a selection of some of the testimonies see Chapter Seven below. There is also plenty of evidence in the Mol archives and the courts. Certainly, not all cases ended up in the courts. But the evidence from farmers' testimonies indicated that this was a common problem in the 1950s and 1960s. See for example Hayqochena Buta Jira Astadader (Zway), *Yemeret Yezota Kereker*, File No, MaYe 1/55-64. For a related discussion on Bacho see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 241-47. Tekalign implicates the government as a deliberate actor in creating the "ambiguities" in favor of the grantees. The evidence from the valley does not support Tekalign's viewpoint.

100. Interview with Edo Danisa (Zway), 8 April 2001; Wayeso Saqaqo (Lume), 24 May 2001; Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Daliso Enboro (Mareqo), 14 June 2000; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001.

101. *Ibid*. Based on evidence from state archives Tekalign provides a detailed account of the mechanics of elite land appropriation in Bacho. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 239-58.

102. The notable case in point is empress Menen herself who inherited the title of *balabbat* south of Arsi Negelle. According to my interviewees the *balabbat* ceded his title to Menen in a desperate move to counter the *rist*-rush of the urban land-seekers in the area. Interview with Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001. The most notable example of such transfer of the title of *balabbat* comes from Gedeo, in Sidamo where the *balabbat* Chimburu inherited his title to empress Menen in the late-1940s or early-1950s. That gave the empress an oversight right over 500 *gasha* of coffee land in Gedeo. What convinced Chimburu to relegate his title to Menen and to what extent this had been the norm rather than the exception needs further investigation. On Gedeo see Getnet Bekele, "The 1960 Peasant Rising in Gedeo," (B.A thesis, Addis Ababa University, 1983), 83.

103. The government created the seven *balabbat* out of the large territory previously governed by Tuke. Interestingly, like Tuke, local communities elected the seven *balabbat* before the government sanctioned their appointment.

104. See MIA 44/4/2/2101: Ministry of Pen to Ministry of Interior, Megabit 14, 1946; Ministry of Interior to the 12 Governor. Generals, Nehase 12, 1947, cited in Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 261. The government also abrogated the kind of land tax exemption *balabbat siso* enjoyed in the past in an edict it promulgated in 1966.

105. It was only after several years of lobbying, however, that the emperor accepted the Mol's proposal. Consequently, in 1959, the government permitted the sell of *balabbat siso* as long as such sales

were not accorded to political officials from the same region. See Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 262. Interestingly, the permission to allow the sale and/or transfer of *balabbat* land came almost at the same time as the permission granted to selling granted land (*rist*).

Chapter 7

1. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*, 54-55.

2. See Revised Constitution of Ethiopia, *Negarit Gazeta*, 15th Year N0. 2 (Addis Ababa, November 4, 1955); see also Russel S. Berman, "Natural Resources," in *Journal of Ethiopian Law* 3, 2 (1966), 551-70. The specific reasons that prompted the government to introduce such legislation in 1955 are not clear in the constitution. But it is highly probable that it was Haile Sellasie's interest in encouraging large-scale commercial farming (mainly by foreign concessionaires) that led the government to address the matter as a constitutional imperative. Indeed, the rush for commercialized agriculture in the lower-Awash valley that became conspicuous in the late-1950s and 1960s received its legal foundation in the 1955 edict.

Whatever the declared or undeclared reasons behind the legislation, the most obvious victims were pastoralists whose grazing rights could be at stake with the implementation of the edict. Since pastoralists did not cultivate the land (and paid only cattle tax), their grazing lands now became the property of the government.⁴ But uncultivated land also existed interspersed throughout the crop growing regions as well. In legal terms, therefore, all these lands now became government property. The only feasible way individuals or communities could protect their grazing lands from government encroachment was by cultivating those lands and paying taxes on them.

On aspects of Ethiopia's postwar commercial agriculture see, for example, Bahru Zewde, "Environment and capital: Notes for the History of the Wonji-Shoa Sugar Estate, 1951-74," *Paper presented at the Sixth Eastern Africa History Conference* (Ambo, 1984); see also Lars Bondestam, "People and Capitalism in the Northeastern Lowlands of Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 12, 3 (1974); H. Kloos, "Farm Labor Migrations in the Awash Valley of Ethiopia," *International Migration Review* 16, 1 (1982), 133-69.

3. Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 259-62.

4. An interesting development in this regard is that following his lifting of the ban on the sale of *rist* or *balabbat siso*, Haile Sellasie moved forcibly to abolish *rist-gult* and the tax exemption privileges accorded on *balabbat siso*. On the abolition of *rist-gult* see Proclamation Number 230, March 1966. On the abolition of the tax exemption rights on *balabbat siso* see Chapter Six above.

5. For a useful discussion of this see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 258-63.

6. My conclusion here is derived from the discussions I had with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

7. According to several of my interviewees some individual farmers left the area altogether and migrated to Bale where there was "vacant" land to be exploited than enter into tenancy arrangements. See interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Mangestu Alamu (Mareqo), 1 August 2000; Gamado Bayana (Arsi Negelle), 23 February 2001; Danye Terfe (Shashamane), 10 January 2001; Tadewos Lechebo (Zway), 11 April 2001; Galata Wario (Lume), 1 June 2001; Ababu Neda (Ada), 22 June 2001.

8. Interview with Buta Qawate (Shashamane), 9 January 2001.

9. Interview with Banato Agato (Arsi Negelle), 10 February 2001.

10. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*.

11. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda".

12. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, *Report on Land Tenure Survey of Shoa Province*, 38.

13. See *ibid*, 40-41.

14. See *ibid*, 40-41. Salale and Jarra were the two districts where unmeasured land did not exist. To the contrary Managasha (38.46%), Jebatena Mecha (38%), Yararena Karayu (37.99%), Manzena Yifat (27.54%), had the highest percentage of absentee ownership in unmeasured land. Chebona Gurage (2.77%) had the lowest. See *ibid*.

15. See *ibid*, 38-41. For a brief interjection on Shawa's past land tenure regimes see, for example, Ahmad Hassan Omer, "Northern Shewa under the Derg," in Wendy James, Donald Donham, Eidei Kurimoto and Alessandro Triulzi (eds), *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After* (Oxford, 2002), 74-89.

16. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda," 1.
17. *Ibid*, 2.
18. *Ibid*, 4, 6.
19. *Ibid*, 10.
20. *Ibid*.
21. See *ibid*, 7 (Table 7).
22. *Ibid*, 11.
23. *Ibid*, 16, 17. On mechanized agriculture in the valley see Chapter Eight below.
24. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Preliminary Study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda," 19, 22.
25. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001.
26. The most elegant example to that comes from Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*.
27. Department of Land Tenure, "A pilot study of agricultural land disputes in Lume wereda and yerer & Kereyu awraja courts, Shoa province," (Addis Ababa, 1969).
28. *Ibid*.
29. *Ibid*.
30. *Ibid*.
31. *Ibid*.
32. *Ibid*.
33. *Ibid*.
34. *Ibid*.
35. Interview with Galgalo Chura (Arsi Negelle), 16 February, 2001.
36. Interview with Buta Qawato (Shashamane), 9 January 2001.
37. See group interview under Alamayahu Damese (Shashamane), 30 January 2001.
38. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.
39. MLRA, "A Preliminary Study," 19-20.
40. Mesfin Wolde Mariam, *Rural Vulnerability to Famine in Ethiopia, 1958-1977* (New Delhi, 1984), 35-36.
41. Gebrena Minister, "Terf Amrach Waradawoch," (Addis Ababa, 1980 E.C., unpublished).
42. For first hand accounts on the Suez crisis and the impact it had on the international food market see American Embassy to State Department, "Economic Highlights from July to December 12, 1956," SD 875.00/12-1256.
43. The country's poor storage facilities further compounded the problem by making it all the more difficult to store the perishable grains longer. See *ibid*.
44. *Ibid*.
45. See American Embassy to Department State, "Annual Economic Review, March 15, 1956," SD 875.00/3-15556.
46. See *ibid*.
47. See *ibid*. Other factors included the export duty of birr 20 (\$8.00) per ton imposed by the government and high freight rates on export cereals via the Franco Ethiopian railway. See George R. Merrell to Department of State, November 11, 1949, SD 884.6131/11-1149.
48. American Embassy to Department of State, "Annual Economic Review, March 15, 1956," SD 875.00/3-1556.
49. According to the American Embassy report, the ratio of export to production in the late-1940s and early-1950s stood at as high as 75% for wheat, durrah, maize and sorghum. Even considering a high margin of error on what appears to be an exceedingly exaggerated estimate, still the proportion of marketed grain remained significantly high. See George R. Merrell to Department of State November 11, 1949, SD 84.613/11-1149.
50. For a useful discussion on the drought and its impacts see Mesfin, *Rural Vulnerability*, 35-36.
51. American Embassy to Department of State, "Economic Survey, Ethiopia-April-June 1958," July 31, 1958, SD 875.00/11-1358.
52. American Embassy to Department of State, "Economic Survey, Ethiopia-July-Sept 1958," November 13, 1958, SD 875.00/11-1358.
53. *Ibid*.

54. Under the agreement, Eritrea received a total of 10,000 tons of wheat and sorghum. Tigray and Harar received additional 9,500 tons of grain (wheat and sorghum) as relief food. The reports described the situation in Eritrea, particularly in its Western province, as famine. See American Embassy to Department of State, "Economic Summary, Ethiopia January-March 1959," April 14, 1959, SD 875.00/4-1459.

55. American Embassy to Department of State, "Economic Summary, Ethiopia January-March 1959," April 14, 1959, SD 875.00/4-1459.

56. *Ibid.*

57. See C.K. Wang, "The population of Ethiopia's Metropolis," *Ethiopia Observer* 1, 2 (March 1957), 56-59. The city council's figure put the total population at 637,831, of which 316, 689 were women. See *Addis Zaman, Hedar* 1960 E.C.

58. Punkhurst, "Ethiopian Agriculture in Retrospect and Prospect," 278.

59. Wills G. Eichberger, "Food Production and Utilization in Ethiopia EC 1958," (Addis Ababa, 1968).

60. Central Statistics Office, *Survey of Major Towns*, 3, 66.

61. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Mangestu Alamu (Mareqo), 1 August 2000; Gamado Bayana (Arsi Negelle), 23 February 2001; Danye Terfe (Shashamane), 10 January 2001; Tadewos Lechebo (Zway), 11 April 2001; Galata Wario (Lume), 1 June 2001; Ababu Neda (Ada), 22 June 2001.

62. The only exceptions to that have been: Willis G. Eichberger, "Food Production in Ethiopia EC 1958," (Addis Ababa, May 1968, unpublished); Ian Watt, "Regional Patterns of Cereal Production and Consumption," in Zein Ahmed Zein and Helmut Kloos (eds.), *Ecology of Health and Disease in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1988), 94-135.

63. In fact, markets had been the most important means through which valley herders acquired grains in the prewar period as well. See Chapter One above.

64. Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application to the United States Agency for International Development for Ethiopia: The Ada Agricultural Development Project," (Addis Ababa, October 1970, unpublished), "12.

65. Miller *et al*, *Systems Analysis Methods for Ethiopian Agriculture*, 35-36.

66. *Addis Zaman, Magabit* 2, 1959 E.C; *Myazya* 13, 1958; *Sane* 17, 1958 E.C. Very little recorded evidence is available to measure the size and complexity of Ethiopia's domestic food market at this time, however. As most development theory measured growth in terms of balance of trade, official statistics focused just on that virtually leaving out the extent of the domestic food market altogether. *Ethiopian Economic Review* provides very little on internal trade or agricultural production. Even reports/studies that showed the unprecedented expansion of the grain and pulse markets do not deal with the sources of its strength. See, for example, T. James Georing, Aklilu Afework, Abate Tamasgan, "The Response of Ethiopian Farmers to Changes in Product Prices," *Ethiopia Observer* 15, 3 (1972), 154-62. The only exhaustive account on Ethiopia's grain markets is a survey conducted by the MoA in 1973. See Ministry of Agriculture, *Findings of a Market Structure*.

67. For a report on wholesale prices of selected food items see *Ethiopian Economic Review*, No. 2, June 1960, 9-10.

68. On the establishment of the Ethiopian Grain Corporation see *Ethiopian Economic Review* 3, November, 1960, 71.

69. To be sure, government interest in regulating the grain market goes back to 1950, when it organized the Grain Board for the purpose of overseeing the marketing of cereals, pulses, and oilseeds and regulating price. See Proclamation No. 113 of 1950, later amended by Decree No. 30 of 1957. Similar marketing boards had been established at this time as well. This included the Coffee Board and the Meat Board, although very little studies have been made on the organization and functioning of the various boards to date. See *Ethiopian Economic Review* 3, 71.

70. *Ibid.*

71. *Ibid.* For a different casual explanation on the formation of the EGC see Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 381-82.

72. See *Ethiopian Economic Review* 3, 71-72.

73. The 15 million *birr* was expected to come from the selling of stocks, each worth *birr* 100. Consequently, the Corporation slotted 20,000 shares for the Ministry of Finance, 50,000 for the State Bank of Ethiopia, 30,000 for the Development Bank of Ethiopia, and the remaining 50,000 for public subscription. See *Ethiopian Economic Review* 3, 71-72.

74. See Ethiopian Grain Corporation, *Experience Incorporated: The Ethiopian Grain Corporation: an*

Analysis of Past and Present Operations with Recommendations for Future Operations (Addis Ababa, 1966).

75. By law the EGC was required to offer price notice of agricultural products and advertise its purchasing prices well before the harvest season. For one such entry see graph on *Ethiopian Economic Review* 3, 75.

76. *Addis Zaman*, *Magabit* 2, 1959 E.C.

77. *Ibid.*

78. See *Addis Zaman*, *Teqemt* 9, 1960 E.C.

Chapter 8

1. Critically important for reconstructing the valley's agricultural history during this time is different kinds of sources: informants' testimonies, general statistical data organized by the Ethiopian Statistical Authority, and a wealth of farming systems and development research conducted by agronomists working for the government and/or international research institutions in the 1960s and early-1970s. Essentially developmentalist, those studies nonetheless provided useful information on a range of indices such as crop choice, land use, markets, and farmers' income that could not be obtained from state archives. Over the passage of time they have become useful historical sources critical to reconstructing aspects of valley agricultural transformation in the last decade of imperial rule. See for example: Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*; Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application;" Agency for International Development, "Proposal and Recommendation for the Review of the Development Loan Committee: Ethiopia-Ada Agricultural Development Project," (Washington, D.C., June 1971); Ellis, "Man or Machine;" Humphrey, "An Empirical Investigation."

2. Cited in Westphal, *Agricultural Systems*, 101.

3. Interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001.

4. Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 80-81.

5. *Ibid.*, 80.

6. *Ibid.*, 81.

7. Gholl, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia," Appendix.

8. Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application," 12. See also Getachew Tecle Medhin and Telahun Makonen, "Socio-economic Characteristics of Peasant Families in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia—Ada Wereda," (Debre Zeit, July 1974, unpublished), 25-27.

9. *Ibid.*; see also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 221-27.

10. Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 87-88; Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application," 12.

11. For some useful estimates see Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 87-88.

12. *Ibid.* A "*kirt*" is the amount of land a pair of oxen can plow in one day. One *kirt* is approximately equivalent to one-fourth of a hectare.

13. Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, "A Preliminary study of Landlord-Tenant Relationships in Ada Wereda," 9. See also Chapter Seven above.

14. Miller *et al.*, *Systems Analysis Methods* (Menlo Park, 1968).

15. Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 82.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, 83.

18. For more on this see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 207-10, 216-18. See also Getachew and Telahun, "Socio-economic Characteristics," 7-8.

19. Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program*, 83.

20. *Ibid.*

21. See, for example, Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application," 2-3; Makin *et al.*, *Development Prospects*, 214.

22. Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application," 3.

23. Gholl, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia," 49; Ministry of Agriculture, "An Application," 3.

24. Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*.

25. Interview with Imam Wudu Aba (Mareqo) 17 June 2000.

26. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001.
27. See, for example, Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, "*First Annual Report*," 55-66.
28. Cited in Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia*, 108.
29. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs and *Societe d'aide Technique et de Cooperation* (SATEC), *SORADEP*, 13.
30. On Arsi Negelle 1980s and 1990s livestock population figures see, Arsi Negelle Gebrena Biro, "*YaRub Amat Riport*," File No. Ri. 41.
31. See Joyce, "Agriculture in Ethiopia." See also Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, "*First Annual Report*," 55-66.
32. See Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia*, 106-108; see also Chapter Five above.
33. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 44-45.
34. Nonetheless, the same interviewees affirmed that the virtual marginalization of the livestock sector reached its high point only after 1978, following the distribution and redistribution of land as practiced by the Peasant Associations. See interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Badaso Dachaso (Arsi Negelle), 18 February 2001. See also the Epilogue below.
35. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 44.
36. Interview with Imam Wudu Aba (Mareqo) 17 June 2000.
37. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 88, 91.
38. USAID, "A Development Program for Shashemene Wereda," (Addis Ababa, 1970, unpublished), 4-5.
39. Interview with Gamado Buriso (Shashamane), 16 January 2001; Hirpo Batale (Shashamane), 27 January 2001; Gamachu Ramato (Arsi Negelle), 23 February 2001. The British survey team also found maize, wheat, and potato as the main crops in Shashamane and Arsi Negelle. See Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 91.
40. On mechanized farming see below.
41. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 57.
42. *Ibid*, 85.
43. *Ibid*. Other crops included red pepper, *tef*, and wheat. See *ibid*, 85, 199.
44. *Ibid*, 199.
45. *Ibid*, 200.
46. My conclusion here is based on farmers' testimonies. See Germa Beru (Arsi Negelle), 26 February 2001; Alamitu Lecheba (Shashamane), 25 February 2001; Getachaw Gabra Hana (Zway), 13 April 2001; Ensane Meta (Zway), 14 April 2001.
47. For more on this see Chapter Four above.
48. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Third Five Year Development Plan*, 44-45, 371-73.
49. The government lifted the fuel tax exemptions in 1973, following the international oil crisis.
50. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 460-63; Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Development Bank," *Ethiopia Observer* 3, 2 (1959), 40-45.
51. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 460-63. Talbot put the loan amount between *birr* 125 and 2000. See Talbot, *Contemporary Ethiopia*, 112.
52. *Yaltyopya YaLemat Bank, Ya1948 [1956] Rapor* (Addis Ababa, 1956 E.C.).
53. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 460-63.
54. See *Yaltyopya YaLemat Bank, Ya1948 [1956] Rapor*. See also Luther, *Ethiopia Today*, 131; Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 227.
55. This was so because the creditors required security rural small-farmers could hardly offer. See *Development Banking in Ethiopia*, 24. See also Ellis, "Man or Machine," 138; SIDA Project Preparation Team, "Regional Development Projects in Ethiopia," 110.
56. See AIDB, *Annual Report*, (Addis Ababa, 30 *Sane* 1964 E.C.), 28.
57. See *Addis Zaman*, *Ter* 17, 1957; see also *Addis Zaman*, *Myazya* 23, 1958 E.C.
58. For some useful discussion of this see SIDA Project Preparation Team, "Regional Development Projects in Ethiopia," 110; see also Ministry of Information, *Venture*, 81.
59. Eshetu Chole and Lawrence E. Leamer, *Government Tax and Expenditure Policies for Ethiopian Development* (Addis Ababa, 1971), 21-23.

60. See, for example, Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*, 11-15; see also Addis, *From Autocracy to Revolution*, 87-88.
61. For more on this see Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants*, " 59-61.
62. See Chapter Six above; see also Tekalign, "A City and its Hinterlands," 260-62. On the land market the literature is extremely meager. For some anecdotal inferences see Dessalegn Rahmato, "Moral Crusaders and Incipient Capitalists: Mechanized Agriculture and its Crisis in Ethiopia," in *Proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar of the Department of History* (Addis Ababa, 1986).
63. See Chapters Five and Six above.
64. See McCann, *People of the Plow*, 218-220, 227-28.
65. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Hussein Hameso (Shashamane), 22 January 2001; Tashoma Ture (Shashamane), 15 January 2001.
66. See Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 85-86; Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 89, 135-137. For tenancy rates in the late-1960s and early 1970s see Chapter Seven above.
67. One of the hot spots of the nascent mechanized agriculture was Chilalo in Arsi. In 1967, when CADU started its activities, there were only a few commercial farmers using mechanized technology in the *awraja*. In less than half a decade, however, there were 126 commercial farmers cultivating around 10% (23,000 hectares) of the district's cultivated land. Altogether, they employed 184 tractors and 37 combiners for wheat cultivation. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 103.
- Bako is another area where mechanized commercial agriculture got its way in Ethiopia. Stahl, who visited Bako in December 1971, described the region's landscape as: "low yielding smallholdings operated by tenants...[and] large tracts of land...used for grazing or [remaining]...idle [and] covered with bush." Strikingly, when Stahl visited Bako for the second time around in May 1972, he found the situation changing with "commercial agriculture entrepreneurs [having]...discovered the area." According to him, commercial farmers cultivated approximately 360 hectares of land that year, and further expanded to more than 1260 hectares (each commercial farmer cultivating 2-3 *gasha*) by November 1973. See Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 126.
68. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 45-46.
69. *Ibid*, 85, 199.
70. *Ibid*, 85, 91, 85, 199.
71. *Ibid*.
72. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 133.
73. *Ibid*, 133.
74. *Ibid*, 134.
75. *Ibid*, 134.
76. *Ibid*.
77. *Ibid*, 135.
78. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.
79. Ellis, "Man or Machine," 113-14.
80. *Ibid*, 118.
81. See McCann, *People of the Plow*, 228.
82. Borton *et al*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 74.
83. Ellis, "Man or Machine," 209; see also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 228 on Tedla's personal testimonies. Tedla also encouraged the use of chemical insecticides and fertilizers. See Borton *et al*, *A Development Program*, 74.
84. Ellis, "Man or Machine," 126-127; interview with Raya Talila (Ada), 23 July 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.
85. Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, *Directory of Agriculture: Commercial Farms and Agri-Business Firms, 1973-1974* (Addis Ababa, 1973), 17-18, 61-85.
86. *Ibid*.
87. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001.
88. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 199.
89. For a theoretically guided explanation of this see Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 138.
90. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Hussein Hameso (Shashamane), 22 January 2001; Tashoma Ture (Shashamane), 15

January 2001.

91. Interview with Dabashe Kebret (Shashamane), 26 February, 2001.

92. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 138.

93. See Kebede Tesema, "Land Use Study in Loke Wereda," (Addis Ababa, 1972, unpublished); see also Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 136.

94. See Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 136.

95. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 85.

96. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001; Abara Tafara Yadate (Arsi Negelle), 6 February 2001; Hussein Hameso (Shashamane), 22 January 2001; Tashoma Ture (Shashamane), 15 January 2001.

97. *Ibid*.

98. Interview with Gudina Baysa (Arsi Negelle), 25 February 2001.

99. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 135. (Stahl then extrapolated that this is equivalent to 500 and 1000 individuals but provided no explanation for that.) A comparative look at other regions where mechanization and tenant eviction had taken place gives similar pictures. In Chilalo, more than 465 tenants (approximately less than 12% of the total tenant population) had been evicted in 1968-69 alone. See Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 103. Lack of data notwithstanding, it is probable that eviction intensified in the early 1970s. Some of the evicted tenants moved to nearby areas but the majority left for Bale and Hararge provinces anticipating to find "unoccupied" land and to begin life from scratch. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

Elsewhere in Bako where mechanization had started, the evicted tenant households stood at 107 in 1972. The perpetrators were four contract farmers who leased 900 hectares of government land for commercial farming. As a result, some evicted tenants moved to distant places while the majority congested themselves into the fields that happened to be unsuitable for tractor use. In 1974 an additional one hundred tenant families in Sheboka had been threatened by eviction as they were told that their lease agreement would terminate by the end of the year. That led to violent clashes between commercial farmers and the tenants as agents of the former began to set fire on tenant domiciles. Tenants responded by hindering tractors from plowing the land. See Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 127.

100. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 136.

101. Ellis, "Man or Machine," 126.

102. *Ibid*, 127.

103. For a brief summary of the dominant views see Dessalegn, *Agrarian Reform*, 22-26.

Chapter 9

1. For a brief summary of the state of Ethiopian soils see Ministry of Agriculture, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 15-16; Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 185-86, 205-08. Both monographs indicated that no detailed soil survey had been conducted in Ethiopia by the mid-20th century. The short description on soils on both monographs is based on quick observations. See *Ibid*.

2. Population growth was the second factor that scholars begin to explore for explaining declining per capita food production in Ethiopia particularly in the post-1960 period. See, for example, USAID, "Agro-Industrial Sector Study: Agriculture," (Addis Ababa, June 17, 1968), 4. Another study speculated that the food supply in Ethiopia might hit crisis low by 1970-1972 because of the imbalance between rapid population growth and food production. See John L. Fischer, "An Approach to an Agricultural Development Program for Ethiopia," (Addis Ababa, 1967). Still another report suggested that urgent action needed to be taken if expansion of food production had to keep pace with rapidly growing population. According to this report, the improvement of maize production to twice its present (1967) level or an expansion of maize cultivated area from 11 to 20% would be necessary to address the potential food deficit in the country. See M.N. Harison, S.A. Eberhart and E.J.R. Hazeldon, "Maize improvement in Ethiopia: Report on a Visit October 23 to November 3, 1967," (Addis Ababa, 1967).

Yet, population growth as a factor in declining productivity or land diminution did not emerge as the dominant explanation for rural poverty anytime before the 1980s and 1990s. Only few scholars associated population growth with food scarcity, and argued that Ethiopia needs to modernize its agriculture to keep up with declining food availability. See for example, Mahtama Sellasie, *Beela Garahat*, 2-4; Borton *et al*, 4

Development Program for the Ada District, 96-98; Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*, (*Southern Regional Agricultural Development Programme*) *Phase II: A Feasibility Study of the Five Year Development Programmes, 1975-1979*, (Addis Ababa, 1974), 7. For a different view see Eichberger, "Food Production and Utilization in Ethiopia EC 1958," 2.

3. Junior Ethiopian College of Agriculture, "First Annual Report," 37, 153-55. For a peripheral treatment of soil erosion in the country see, for example, Joyce, "Notes on Agriculture in Ethiopia"; Ministry of Agriculture, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 15-16; Chamber of Commerce, *Mari Mashaf*, 185-186, 205-08.

4. Imperial Ethiopian Agricultural College and Mechanical Arts, "First Annual Report," 37.

5. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 38.

6. Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 11-43; Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 7, 72-74.

7. FAO and EPID, "Interim Report to the Government of Ethiopia on the Fertilizer Demonstration and Pilot Credit program Phase II 1971-1976," (Addis Ababa, 1970), 6.

8. Abebe Retta, "Opening Address," *Third Conference on Soil Fertility and Fertilizer Use in Africa* (Addis Ababa, November 1970, unpublished), 5.

9. Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*, 13.

10. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 214.

11. Henry F. Murphy, "A Report on the Fertility Status and Other Data on Some Soils of Ethiopia," *Experiment Station Bulletin* 44 (1968); Henry F. Murphy, *A Report on the Fertility Status of Some Soils of Ethiopia* (Dire Dawa, 1959).

12. Murphy, "A Report on the Fertility Status and Other Data on Some Soils of Ethiopia," 289.

13. *Ibid*, 293-94.

14. *Ibid*, 294. Between Lakes Langano, Abijata, and Shala, Murphy found that the soils were neutral (pH 6.6 to 7.3), with organic matter above 5% (relatively rich in nitrogen, and potassium, average in phosphorus, but low in calcium). See *ibid*, 295.

15. See Emmanuel Kidane Mariam, "Development of Fertilizer Use in Ethiopia," *Report on the FAO/NORAD Seminar on Fertilizer Use Development in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 8-17 September 1975* (Rome, 1978), 83-89; H.M. Benedict and S.A. Cogswell, "Potential Fertilizer Demand in Ethiopia," 1 (April 1968); FAO and EPID, "Interim Report to the Government of Ethiopia on the Fertilizer Demonstration and Pilot Credit program Phase II 1971-1976."

16. See *ibid*.

17. In regard to acidity and organic matter, the Stanford Research Institute Report mentioned above underscored the commonality of deficiencies in nitrogen and potassium but the relatively "high" availability of phosphorus. Benedict and Cogswell, "Potential Fertilizer Demand," 14.

18. Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report for the period February 1966 to March 1968," (Addis Ababa, 1968).

19. *Ibid*.

20. *Ibid*.

21. Emanuel Kidane Mariam, "Development of Fertilizer Use in Ethiopia," 83; see also Ministry of Community Development, *SORADEP*, 13.

22. See, for example, Benedict and Cogswell, "Potential Fertilizer Demand," 1. Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia* 2, 11-43; Imperial Ethiopian College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, *The Agriculture of Ethiopia*, 7, 72-74; see also Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Report on the FAO/NORAD Seminar on Fertilizer Use Development in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 8-17 September 1975" (Rome, 1978), 1.

23. Benedict and Cogswell, "Potential Fertilizer Demand in Ethiopia," 1.

24. FAO, "Fertilizers in Agricultural Development," in Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Report on the FAO/NORAD Seminar on Fertilizer Use Development in Ethiopia," 12.

25. Girma Balaine, "Possibility of Improving Marketing and Credit Systems for Fertilizers," in Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Report on the FAO/NORAD Seminar on Fertilizer Use Development in Ethiopia*, 76-80.

26. FAO and EPID, "Interim Report," iv; Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report for the period February 1966 to March 1968," 19.

27. FAO and EPID, "Interim Report," iv.

28. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Report on the FAO/NORAD Seminar," 83.

29. The number of marketing centers grew to 30 in 1970, scattered over seven provinces. See Girma Balaineh, "Possibility of Improving Marketing and Credit Systems for Fertilizers," 76. For the list of the places see Appendix I and II of the same report. More than 600 farmers participated in the fertilizer trials in 1968. See Gebrena Minister, "Gebrena Baltyopya," 76.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 77. Types of fertilizers included triple phosphate (sold for *birr* 36 per quintal), and Urea (sold for *birr* 35 per quintal). Of the total 850 quintals of fertilizer sold Urea comprised only a third (282.5 quintals). See *ibid.*, 78-79; see also Gebrena YaAkababi Tebaqana Lemat Minister, "YaGebrena Ekstenshen Ajemamarena YaEdgat Aqtacha," (Addis Ababa, 1984), 2-3.

32. FAO, "Fertilizers in Agricultural Development," 10-11.

33. Ministry of Information, *Venture: Rural Development in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1972), 82.

34. According to official declarations the government's community development aimed: (1) at mobilizing local (both material and human) resources to accelerate the socio-economic development of the community, (2) to bring to the local people the benefits of modern scientific knowledge in a form they can use to meet their own needs, (3) to make the people realize the benefits of substituting new methods of production for the traditional ones and thus transform the purely subsistence rural economy into a monetized one; (4) to encourage the creation of co-operative societies; (5) to promote cultural integration and integration of communities into the life of the nation; (6) to assist settlement and to encourage development of nomadic people. See SIDA Project Preparation Team, "Report No. I: on the establishment of a Regional Development Project in Ethiopia," (n.p., 1966, unpublished), 48.

35. See Ministry of National Community Development, *A Brief Review of Community Development in Ethiopia* (n.p., n.d.), 3-4.

36. The Majete center trained 75 community workers during its short life span. See *ibid.*, 5-6. See also "Awasa Community Development Training and Demonstration Centre," (Awasa, 1968).

37. Ministry of National Community Development, *A Brief Review*, 49-50. The 1966 order revamped the Ministry's prerogatives to: "(1) plan, coordinate and implement community development programs, including programs of self help and mutual aid, in rural and urban communities through research, training, demonstration and other appropriate means, and (2) foster and encourage, in co-operation with other ministries and concerned public authorities, the creation of co-operative societies and supervise and assist in the management itself." See *ibid.*, 46.

38. *Ibid.*

39. For a list of development centers in the country see Ministry of Community Development, *A Brief Review*, 3. See also *Addis Zaman*, *Yakatit* 10, 1957 E.C. By 1969 the number of community development centers grew to 34. See Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 23.

40. *Addis Zaman*, *Yakatit* 10. In 1966 there were a total of 23 CDCs, established in ten of the fourteen provinces. Each CDC represented one *warada* (of the total 450 in the country). By 1972, a total of 48 CDCs had been established, staffed with 291 VLWs all of whom were graduates of the Awasa training institute. See *Addis Zaman*, *Yakatit* 10, 1957 E.C.; *Addis Zaman*, *Sane* 6, 1955. One key area in which the CDCs attempted to influence rural development had been through the organization of farmers' cooperatives. Between 1966 and 1971, some 135 cooperative societies (composed of 16,537 registered members, and a circulating capital of *birr* 5,664, 537) had been formed in the country. Government loan advanced to the cooperatives rose from *birr* 140,000 in 1964 to *birr* 8,571,362.85 in 1971. See Ministry of Information, *Venture*, 80.

41. First established by a group of Debre Zeit residents, the Ada district community development center was originally an organization aimed at promoting education. The group, which included personnel from the air force and the air borne units permanently stationed in the city of Debre Zeit, became very active in mobilizing the city dwellers to building an elementary school and invited the emperor for its inauguration. Their efforts impressed Haile Sellasie who pledged the establishment of a district-wide development center as requested by the group. Subsequently the Ministry of Community Development opened one of its CDCs in Ada in 1962, staffed with 16 development workers (three of whom were women) who had been trained at the Awasa Community Training Center. For the Center's mainly urban-based activities see Borton *et al.*, *A Development Program for the Ada District*, 23-25.

42. For other activities see *ibid.*, 24-56.

43. The five districts were Garbicha, Kajima, Tulludimtu, Liben, Zequala. Unfortunately, my limited attempt to find evidence on the activities of the CDCs was not successful. My cursory discussion with farmers and city dwellers indicated that the community development program was active in Ada warada. The subject begs further investigation.

44. See Ministry of National Community Development, *A Brief Review*, 10.

45. Established in 1963, the Botar farm cultivated 485 hectare of the 485 donated to it by the government the first year. It settled 27 veteran soldiers, and started operation with 1 bulldozer, 7 crawler tractors, 4 wheel tractors, 1 combine harvester, 1 thresher, and adequate farmer implements for the farmers to use. The farm specialized in the production of sunflower and pepper and livestock development. See *ibid*, 11; *Addis Zaman*, Sane 7, 1955 E.C.

46. See *Addis Zaman*, Sane 6 1955; *Addis Zaman*, Hedar 17, 1959; Ministry of National Community Development, *A Brief Review*, 11. The farm utilized 107 engine- powered machines (tractors, bulldozers, combine harvesters, and lorries). See *ibid*, 12. In doing so it transformed what was once forested and pastureland into an intensively cultivated field, the implications of which is hard to overemphasize.

47. *Addis Zaman*, Hedar 17, 1955 E.C.

48. *Ibid*.

49. Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year Development Plan*, 303-14.

50. See *ibid*, 304-06, 310-11.

51. For a related discussion of similar activities in other regions see International Labor Office, "Report to the Government of Ethiopia on Integrated Rural Development," (Geneva, 1970, unpublished), 29-39, 55-76.

52. On the evolution of international development thinking see Staatz and Eicher, "Agricultural Development Ideas in Historical Perspective," 3-40.

53. For a more focused explanation on this see Chapter Nine below.

54. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 7-10.

55. See *ibid*, 11-12; see also interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

56. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, ii.

57. *Ibid*, I, 5.

58. On the organization and activities of similar intervention regimes in the valley see below.

59. For a detailed description of the projects finances see Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, Appendix 17, 20, 21.

60. See Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*, "Tesfai Teclé, "An Economic Evaluation".

61. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 49; Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 5.

62. International Labor Office, "Report," 47-28.

63. See Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, iii; see also interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

64. *Ibid*.

65. *Ibid*.

66. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 49.

67. A. Borderon, "Introduction to the Southern Region's Agricultural Development Project" (Addis Ababa, 1973, unpublished), 6 ff.

68. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 143.

69. The project covered a much larger area than I am concerned with here for the purpose of this dissertation. My discussion relates to the northern half of the project area. Although SORADEP theoretically covered a large area, Alaba-Qolito, the Arsi Negelle-Awasa corridor, and the region immediately south of it proved to be its most active zones of operation.

70. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, i-iii, 15, 25. For useful estimations of local maize consumption rates in the project area see Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP Phase II*, Appendix 5.

71. See Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 15.

72. *Ibid*, 24-25.

73. *Ibid*, 26-28.

74. *Ibid*. An elaborate scheme, the aim was to maximize production from 10 quintals per hectare at Stage A to 15, 28.9, 38, and 40 quintals per hectare, respectively for Stages B through E. See Ministry of

Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP, Phase II*, Appendix 4-11.

75. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 13.

76. *Ibid*, 31-33.

77. The Ethiopia 10 variety was small, round and white compared to the local variety. It had a relatively shorter growth cycle of 120 days, 15 days quicker than the traditional variety. See *ibid*, 13. Stages C and D were not implemented. For more on this see Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP, Phase II*, Appendix, 12-17.

78. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 21-36.

79. Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 49.

80. Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 143. Credit was given only to small farmers (cultivating a maximum of 5 hectares as opposed to 20 in the case of the MPP). But SORADEP did not require tenants to submit a signed tenancy agreement with landlords as the MPPs did. In addition, participating farmers in the SORADEP scheme only paid 8 percent (as opposed to the 25% for MPP) of the credit value as down payment. Also, SORADEP did not adapt the model-farmer system. Instead, SORADEP gave short courses (training) in agriculture for young villagers who have finished some formal schooling at grade level or above. See Borderon, "Introduction to the Southern Region's Agricultural Development Project," 3-5, 9-16.

81. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 37.

82. Interview with Telahun Duri (Shashamane), 13 January 2001.

83. *Ibid*.

84. *Ibid*; Dabashe Kebrat (Shashamane), 24 January 2001.

85. Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs, *SORADEP*, 11; Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 182; interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2001.

86. By the early 1960s the Ministry opened its local level offices in more than 123 locations throughout the country, staffed with 3 personnel in each office on average. The transfer of Ethiopia's nascent agricultural extension service from an educational and research institution to that of the MoA colored not only the way and manner in which extension services had been organized and run but it, in turn, recreated the MoA itself. In the process, the Ministry emerged as one of the most bureaucratic and interventionist institutions in modern Ethiopian history.

One of the oldest ministries to be formed, the MoA hardly found its niche up until the Italian occupation period. Nor was it an independent institution for that matter until 1948. In the prewar period the Ministry's main duty had been confined to collecting taxes. In budgetary allocation too, agriculture trailed almost all ministries. It also had the least number of professional personnel, and its office located in the capital, opened only for 2-3 hours a day. It was only in the post-1948 period, and even more so in the post-1963 period, that the Ministry became very active in agricultural development. Under the *Derg* (1974-91), the Ministry became among the top two or three ministries in terms of both budgetary allocation and trained personnel. By the late-1980s MoA boasted of constructing the best still structure in the capital (located in Addis Ababa's affluent Bole neighborhood). The beauty of the building became the talk of the city and many wondered why an institution concerned with agriculture would build such an elegant and reportedly expensive structure at the center of the city. Sarcastically, Addis Ababa's street kids labeled the building "*Adisaban Garamaw*" [Addis Ababa has been amazed], a double entendre that juxtaposed the office's beautiful steel structure with the name of the *Derg*'s long time minister of agriculture Garamaw Dabale. For a useful account on the history of the Ministry, see Gebrena Minister, "*Gebrena Baltyopya*."

87. Gebrena YaAkababi Tebaqana Lemat Minister, "*YaGebrena Ekstenshen Ajemamarena YaEdgat Aqtacha*," 1. On a rather unimpressive activity of one of the extension centers established in Ada, see Borton *et al*, *A Development Program for Ada District*, 58-62.

88. According to MoA official statement "Minimum Package" projects were meant to provide services to farmers of a defined geographic space. The services included improved seeds or breeds, chemical fertilizers, and organization of co-operatives and marketing services. Ministry of Agriculture, "Request for Technical Assistance for Chemical Fertilizers," (Addis Ababa, June 1970), 2; see also "*YaGebrena Ekstenshen Tenat Gebra Hayl*," "*Baltyopya Yatakahedu YaGebrena Ekstenshen Sistamoch Gemgama*," (Addis Ababa, 1986), 34-41.

89. The UNDP/FAO assistance came to an end in February 1983. The loan agreement between the World Bank and the Ethiopian government was approved in 1984. See Gebrena Minister, "*Gebrena Baltyopya*," 114-16; Tennaissie Nichola, "Agricultural Research and Extension in Ethiopia: The State of the Art," *IDR Research Report*, 22 (Addis Ababa, 1985), 15-16.

90. Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report for the Period February 1966 to March 1968"; Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report for the Period April 1969 to March 1970," (Addis Ababa, 1970); Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report for the Period April 1970 to March 1971," (Addis Ababa, 1971); Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report for the Period April 1971 to March 1972," (Addis Ababa, 1972).

91. See *ibid.* See also *YaGatar Lemat Deregetoch Atgni Komite*, "Yersha Lemat Deregetoch Yasera Wetet Gemgamana YaGatar Lemat Yawadafit Aqtacha: Tenatawi Riport," (Addis Ababa, 1971 E.C., unpublished), 9-13.

92. *YaGebrena Ekstenshen Tenat Gebra Hayl*, "Baltiyopya Yatakahedu YaGebrena Ekstenshen Sistamoch Gemgama," 34-41. The external funds initially came from SIDA and later mainly from IBRD. Positive fertilizer-responsive data from FAO/NORAD trial plots justified the feasibility of setting up EPID as a semi-autonomous body responsible for replicating package-based interventions throughout the country. In addition to fertilizer dissemination, EPID-led extension programs also focused on such practices as time of planting, weed control, and pest control as a means to maximize food production and ensure agricultural development in the country. See "Interim Report to the Government of Ethiopia on the Fertilizer Demonstration," iv. However, fertilizer demonstration, marketing and credit proved to be EPID's major concerns. For a useful account on fertilizer and fertilizer use in Ethiopia see Desta Hamito, "The Status of Fertilizers in Ethiopia," (Addis Ababa, 1982, unpublished).

93. See Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*, 13-14. On the general organization of the package programs in Ethiopia see *ibid.*, 70-109. For a useful theoretical treatment of the package approach see William F. Whyte, *Organization for Agricultural Development* (New Brunswick, 1975); see also Sileshi, "Development Aid to Rural Ethiopia," 18-20. Contrary to earlier (1950s to mid-1960s) strategies that emphasized community development, the package programs targeted agricultural development. Dubbed integrated rural development, the latest intervention scheme aimed at increasing agricultural (crop) production both to alleviate existing or imminent food shortages as well as create jobs for rural folks (so as to check presumed rural to urban migration). For a review of community development strategies see Lane E. Holdcroft, "The Rise and Fall of Community Development in Developing Countries, 1950-65: A Critical Analysis and Annotated Bibliography," *Rural Development Papers* 2, (East Lansing: Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University 1978).

94. To that effect the Swedes organized their new Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) in March 1966, which funded several similar projects in other countries as well. See Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*, 70; see also Bengt Nekby, *CADU: An Ethiopian Experiment in Developing Peasant Farming* (Stockholm, 1971).

95. Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*, 70. Hence the launching in September 1967 of the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU). Located in Ethiopia's eastern plateau, Chilalo was a highland agriculture predominantly settled by Oromo farmers. Its selection for a package-based development intervention made Chilalo one of the few areas where the so-called comprehensive package projects had been implemented in Ethiopia. For a comprehensive analysis of CADU, see *ibid.* See also Johan Holmberg, *The Credit Programme of the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1972); Aregay, "Assessment of the Development;" Sileshi, "Development Aid to Rural Ethiopia," 134-76.

96. The Bank found Wolayta *awraja* suitable for its financing "primarily because the local administration was ready to support the project without any reservations, and the target population was believed to be very enthusiastic about the proposed development project." Tesfai Tecle, "The Evolution of Alternative Rural Development Strategies in Ethiopia: Implications for Employment and Income Distribution," *African Rural Employment Paper*, 12, 25; Tesfai "An Economic Evaluation," 51-58.

97. Both focused on bringing about change in virtually all aspects of rural life, ranging from production to health and sanitation. The total amount of money poured into the projects was also high. In Chilalo, for example, CADU spent birr 37 million between 1967 and 1974 alone. See Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*, 72. On WADU see Wollamo Agricultural Development Unit, "WADU Work Plan Year 2 - 1964 E.C., Hamle 1, 1963- Sane 30, 1964 E.C.," (Addis Ababa, 1971).

98. Tesfai, "An Economic Evaluation," 44.

99. Sileshi, "Development Aid to Rural Ethiopia," 181.

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Ibid.*, 180-82.

102. After 1975 CADU became Arsi Rural Development Unit, expanding its activities to the entire Arsi region. WADU ceased its operation as the World Bank withdrew its financial support. The third package

project in Ada (ADDP) came to fruition with significant re-evaluation of CADU and WADU, and functioned distinctly differently from the two. On ADDP see below. On the fate of CADU after the revolution see Cohen, *Integrated Rural Development*, 147-226; See also Manfred Schultz, *Organizing Extension Services in Ethiopia before and after the Revolution* (Saarbrücken, 1976); YaGebrena Ekstenshen Tenat Gebra Hayl, "Baltyopya Yatakahedu."

103. Sileshi, "Development Aid to Ethiopia," 176-77.

104. On nation-wide credit participation see EPID, *Phase II*, 1974; Tesfai, "An Economic Evaluation," 52; Girma Balaineh, "Possibility of Improving Marketing," 76-78; Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 49.

105. See EPID, "EPID Extension Areas/Centers by Province 1970-74," (Addis Ababa, January 1974), 1-4.

106. EPID shut down its Debre Zeit center in 1972 as the MoA selected the district for a different kind of package intervention (See below). See also USAID, "Proposal and Recommendation for the Review of the Development Loan Committee: Ethiopia-Ada Agricultural Development Project," (Washington D.C., 1971).

107. EPID, "Annual Report," Publication No. 13, 34-35; see also EPID, *Annual Report*, No. 15, December, 1973, Appendix No. 5. For a detailed report on Shashamane MPPA input distribution (compared to other similar sites within the valley), see *ibid*. See also Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 139.

108. Interview with Telahun Duri (Shashamane), 13 January 2001; Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001.

109. *Ibid*.

110. EPID, "Annual Report," Publication No. 13, 6.

111. According to the plan, "an individual farmer gets 75% of the value of the fertilizer on credit and is required to pay 25% of the value of the latter in cash as down payment. For seeds, farmers were expected to pay 50% as down payment. The rationale for the 25% down payment is financial as AIDB, the Bank extending the credit, "has a liquidity problem." The other reason for the 25% down payment had been to induce farmers to "develop the habit of saving." Intervention practitioners on the ground, however, argued to the contrary, indicating that a substantial number of farmers were too poor to pay the down payment and that, to some extent, excluded them from participating in development activities at the same time militating EPID's activities to reach out the majority of farmers. See Girma Balaineh, "Possibility of Improving Marketing," 78; Makin *et al*, *Development Prospects*, 49.

112. See Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 139-41. The sole explanation given to farmers' (mainly tenants) inability to pay was the seasonal fluctuation of grain prices. In particular, the fact that maize prices remained low and constantly fluctuating in the early-1970s meant that the farmers found it difficult to pay back their debts on time. Because farmers (due to lack of storage facilities) had often been obliged to sell their crops shortly after harvest (i.e., when crop prices were at their lowest) they found themselves at the vagaries of the seasonal price fluctuations of the food market. See EPID, "Annual Report," Publication No. 13, 6-7; see also Stahl, *Ethiopia*, 140.

113. See EPID, "Annual Report," 13, 34-35; EPID, "Annual Report," 15, Appendix 5.

114. See Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Third Five Year Development Plan*, 1.

115. Miller *et al*, *Systems Analysis Methods for Ethiopian Agriculture*.

116. *Ibid*, 2; USAID, "Proposal and Recommendations," II, 1-2.

117. Huffnagel, *Agriculture in Ethiopia*, 7.

118. USAID, "Proposal and Recommendation," 3-4; see also Borton *et al*, *A Development Program*, 137-163.

119. Institute of Development Research, "Summaries of the Studies of the Ada District," I, (Addis Ababa, August 1972), 1.

120. For a useful discussion on Ada's population see McCann, *People of the Plow*, 216-22.

121. For more on the workings of the credit system see Tesfai, "An Economic Evaluation," 37-39. On the workings of non-institutionalized credit in Ada see Teshome Mulat, "Ada Baseline Survey Part IV: Credit and Indebtedness in Rural Ada Woreda," *IDR Research Documents* 10 (Addis Ababa, 1974).

122. ADDP, which worked in collaboration with the Debre Zeit agricultural research station, conducted its activities relying on its 22 professional staff (of which five were American advisors and the rest Ethiopian agricultural, monetary, and home economics experts) stationed in five major and two additional sites. The five development centers (1974) were Dankaka, Dukam, Godino, Dire and Bekejo. The Ada project also provided limited services to farmers through two additional centers at Hide and Adulala. See Ada

District Development Program, *Ada in Brief* (Addis Ababa, 1974).

123. Interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Alamu Gafarsa (Ada), 12 June 2001.

124. *Ibid.*

125. *Ibid.*

126. *Ibid.* For more on this see also Chapter Seven above.

127. Interview with Badada Jarre (Ada), 18 June 2001; Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Yerga Walda Gabrel (Lume), 22 May 2001; Bune Batasa (Zway), 6 April 2001; Tikishu Araka (Shashamane), 29 January 2001; Dagale Makiso (Mareqo), 16 June 2000.

Epilogue

1. For a useful discussion of the abortive coup and its long-term impact on urban-based political opposition in Ethiopia see Balsvik, *Haile Sellassie's Students*, 93-100; see also Clapham, *Haile Sellassie's Government*, 24-28, 67-69.

2. *Ibid.* See also Alem, "History of the Ethiopian Student Movement," 108-11.

3. See "Public Ownership of Rural Land Proclamation, No. 31 of 1975," *Negarit Gazeta* 34/26, 29 April 1975. See also Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia* (Trenton, 1984), 37-61.

4. Interview with Bashir Kadir (Mareqo), 6 August 2000; Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February 2001; Banato Agato (Arsi Negelle), 10 February 2001; Alamitu Lecheba (Shashamane), 25 January 2001; Tadewos Lechebo (Zway), 11 April 2001; Germa Yehun (Lume), 23 May 2001; Alamayahu Guda (Ada), 3 July 2001.

5. In already cultivated lands, the land reform's impact had been equally dramatic. As McCann has rightly observed, the land reform led to farm size reduction "requiring an intensification of production which the ox-plow complex had never demonstrated" before. McCann, *People of the Plow*, 249. Clapham also has argued convincingly that the land reform, by guarantying "all peasants" with in the PAs to land, "resulted in still greater pressure on often over cultivated areas, leading to reductions in size of plots, a lessening of the emigration which had previously helped to maintain a balance between local production and consumption, and an increase in agricultural and ecological degradation which was to culminate, under pressures of drought, in the catastrophe of 1984." Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity*, 164-65, 48.

6. See Haile Sellassie Abate to Hayqochena Buta Jira *Awraja Gebrena Tatari Sehfat Bet, Tekemt* 27, 1978 E.C., File Name *Kabt Arbiwoch*, No. 154/78.

7. On the extent of the market and the degree of farmers' involvement see Arsi Negelle *warada Gebrena Biro, YaRub Amat Riport*, File No. Ri41.

8. McCann, *People of the Plow*, 235-38; Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity in the Central Ethiopian Highlands: Initial Results, 1977-1980* (Addis Ababa, 1983), 13-21.

9. See "Proclamation to Provide for Establishment of the Ethiopian Grain Agency," *Negarit Gazeta*, No. 112, 1977. For a useful account on the history of the Agricultural Marketing Corporation see Mulumebet Mitiku, "Creation, Evolution and Impact of the Agricultural Marketing Corporation on Marketing Food Grains in Ethiopia," in Harold G. Marcus, *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Papers of the 12th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies II* (Trenton, 1994), 52-65.

10. For some useful data on price differentials between AMC and the markets see Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity*, 19.

12. Interview with Nino Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2000.

13. By 1983, ILCA's integrated crop-livestock experimentation in Ada and Bassona Warana *warada* was the only meaningful production-oriented intervention that came to fruition since the *Derg* took control of political power in Ethiopia. (The scheme aimed at "improving the overall productivity of mixed smallholder farms by increasing the technical and economic efficiency of livestock enterprises." For a useful discussion on ILCA activities in both *warada* see Gryseels and Anderson, *Research on Farm and Livestock Productivity*.) As I have already mentioned, CADU also continued its operation under the *Derg* re-organized as a region-wide intervention that took the name Arsi Rural Development Unit (ARDU).

14. For a succinct discussion of the organization and functioning of state farms see Dessalegn Rahmato, "Cooperatives, State Farms and Smallholder Production," in Siegfried Pausewang, Fantu Cheru *et al*, *Ethiopia*, 100-110.

15. Abebe Haile Gabriel, "Generating Marketed Surplus of Food through State Farms: A Critical

Evaluation of the Ethiopian Experience,” *Institute of Social Studies Working Paper Series No. 72* (The Hague, 1990).

16. Interview with Nini Abino (Arsi Negelle), 11 February, 2000.

17. Hizkias Tasama to Hayqochena Buta Jira *Awraja* WPE office, 30/6/80 E.C. No. 235/AtuA80.

18. *Ibid.* The Ministry of Agriculture put the figure at 2229. See Gebrena Minister, “*Gebrena Baltyopya*,” 208; for related discussions see *ibid.*, 209-11.

19. See *Yaltyopya Mert Zar Deregt, Atakalay YaSera Enkesekase Maglacha, 1972-1978* (Addis Ababa, Sane 1978 E.C.), 1.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Dessalegn, “Cooperatives, State Farms and Smallholder Production,” 106-07. Total land area under the state farms amounted to 210,000 hectares in 1990. See McCann, *People of the Plow*, 251.

22. Marina and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York, 1978), 178; see also Proclamation No. 71 of 1975, *Negarit Gazeta*, No. 15, December 14, 1975.

23. According to Ministry of Agriculture reports, several producer cooperatives had been formed prior to 1979. See Gebrena Minister, *Gebrena Baltyopya*, 188.

24. *Ibid.*, 237-39. Ideally, producer cooperatives were to pass through three distinct stages before they became full-fledged socialist communities. The first stage, which could be initiated by as few as three farmers, was called *malba*. It could be organized by pooling together individual farms without collectivizing their means of production (such as drought animals and farm tools). Theoretically, the size of land cultivated by each member was not to exceed 2000 m², but in reality members pooled only the land they cultivated in the past while keeping up to a fifth of the land as a family farm. However, because *malba* had to occupy a contiguous territory and in order to encourage others to join the producer cooperatives PA and MoA officials conducted land adjustments in which case the “best” land could be reserved for producer cooperatives.

The second stage was the advanced producers cooperatives called *walba*, in which members collectivized all the means of production and most of the land (but a tenth of it which individual farmers could still retain as family land). At this stage, the distribution of income was to be based on the quality and quantity of labor contributed by each member, calculated on the basis of an agreed system of work points.

The third stage, called *waland*, would be formed through the amalgamation of the different *walbas* in a given PA. Theoretically the typical *waland* was to form a large cooperative farm of 4000 hectares and 2000 households. On the etymology of the terms *malba*, *walba*, and *waland* see Tegegn Teka, “Agrarian Transformation,” (Addis Ababa, 1983, unpublished), 23.

25. Though far smaller in size than what the government anticipated first, by 1984 a total of 1275 producer cooperatives had been organized in the country, with a total membership of 77,118 men and 6414 women (total 83,532 farmers). Of these, 878 were *malba* and 397 *walba*, but only 141 cooperatives attained legal certification prior to that year. Put together the producer cooperatives possessed a total of 267,966 hectares of land (but cultivated only half of it, amounting to 139,261 hectares); owned 61,176 drought animals (oxen), 66 tractors; and commanded a total capital of *birr* 30,505,297.00 in cash. See Gebrena Minister, *Gebrena Baltyopya*, 240; see also Ottfried C. Kirsch, Fred V. Goricke, Johannes F. G. Worz, *Agricultural Revolution and peasant emancipation in Ethiopia: a missed opportunity* (1989), 65.

26. But they never reached above 10% in any one region by the mid-1980s.

27. On Arsi see Alemneh, *Peasants, Agrarian Socialism*, 73-89; on Yetnora (Gojjam), see Getie Gelaye, *Peasants and the Ethiopian State: Agricultural Cooperatives and their Reflections in Amharic Oral Poetry: A Case Study in Yetnora, East Gojjam, 1975-1991* (Hamburg, 2001).

27. See Shashamane *warada gebrena biro*, File: *Amrachoch/52*.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Interview with Azmach Damyo Toba (Mareqo), 13 June 2000; Yohanes Erdelo (Mareqo), 12 August 2000; Faranjo Ganato (Arsi Negelle), 20 February 2001; Tashoma Ture (Shashamane), 15 January 2001; Azmach Daqaba Roba (Zway), 7 April 2001; Baqala Ababa Tamrat (Lume), 19 May 2001. The *Warada's Atakalay Marajawoch*, File No. A125 describes members' previous status as tenant and laborer.

30. Interview with *ibid.*

31. See Shashamane *warada Gebrena Biro*, File: *Amrachoch/52*.

32. COPWE's central committee gave such directives in 1983. See Yusuf Indris to Shashamane *warada Gebrena Minister, Tekemt* 18, 1975 E.C., in *Amrachoch/52*.

33. The situation implicitly or explicitly favored the producer cooperatives because as a rule heads of

the producer cooperatives should assume the chairmanship of the broader PAs as well. Other than land and local political power, members of the producer cooperatives were also treated preferentially in terms of taxation. See also Alemneh, *Peasants, Agrarian Socialism*, 76.

34. See Dessalegn, "Cooperatives, State Farms, and Smallholder Production," 104; see also McCann, *People of the Plow*, 250.

35. On the dismantling of producer cooperatives as of 1989 see, for example, Zway Ministry of Agriculture, File Name *Amrachoch*.

36. W-Aggrey-Mensha, *Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study: Degradation of Ethiopian Highlands and Actions to Combat it: Social and Economic Implications, Costs and Benefits* (Addis Ababa, 1984), 7.

37. See *Ibid.* C. Wright, "An Assessment of the Causes, Severity, Extent and Probable Consequences of Degradation in the Ethiopian Highlands," *EHRS working paper 3* (Addis Ababa, 1984); M. Constable, "Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study: Development Strategies," *EHRS working paper 24* (Addis Ababa, 1985); R. Barber, "Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study: An Assessment of the Dominant Soil Degradation Processes in the Ethiopian Highlands: their impacts and hazards," *EHRS working paper 23* (Addis Ababa, 1984); Food and Agricultural Organization, *Ethiopian Highland Reclamation Study: Final Report* (Rome, 1986); Institute of Development Research, "Report on the Socialized Survey and Sociological Consideration in Preparing a Development Strategy," *EHRS working paper 4* (Addis Ababa 1983). See also World Bank, *Ethiopia: Peasant Agricultural Development Project 1: Staff Appraisal Report*, September 28, 1988, 17.

38. A lot has been written on Ethiopia's soil and water conservation and afforestation programs. See, for example, H. Hurni, "Degradation and Conservation of Resources in the Ethiopian Highlands," *Mountain Research and Development* 8, 2/3 (1988), 123-30.

39. Paul B. Henze, *Ethiopia: Crisis of a Marxist Economy: Analysis and Text of a Soviet Report* (Santa Monica, 1989), 19. Apparently these reports had a major impact on the Derg's ten-year plan (unleashed in 1983). For a brief summary of the two reports see *Ibid.*, Appendix 1, 57-62. On the Plan see National Committee for Central Planning, *YaAser Amat Mari Eked 1977-1986* (Addis Ababa, 1977 E.C.).

40. Henze, *Ethiopia*, 19-26.

41. *Ibid.*, 27.

42. *Ibid.*, 30-33. See also Grigori Polyakov, "Soviet-Ethiopian Cooperation in Agriculture," in Pausewang, Fantu *et al.*, *Ethiopia*, 79-88.

43. Henze, *Ethiopia*, 46-47.

44. For a general discussion of the performance of the Ethiopian economy in the 1974-94 period see Gote Hansson, *The Ethiopian Economy 1974-94: Ethiopia Tikdem and After* (London, 1995), 57-128. For a more focused report on the performance of the agricultural sector during the command economy era see, The World Bank, *Ethiopia: The Agricultural Sector-An Interim Report, II: Annexes 1-12* (Washington D.C., n.d.). For a summary of the socialist government's agrarian policies see Dessalegn Rahmato, "Land, Peasants, and the Drive for Collectivization in Ethiopia," in Thomas J. Bessett and Donald Crummey (eds), *Land in African Agrarian Systems* (Madison, 1993), 274-97.

45. It is striking to note that even as late as 1983, i.e. at the time of the promulgation of the ten-year plan, the socialist government did not yet envision villagization as a major policy initiative. The plan did mention villagization but only in passing. See National Committee for Central Planning, *YaAser Amat Mari Eked*, 170. For earlier villagization activities see John M. Cohen and Nils-Ivar Isaksson, *Villagization in the Arsi Region of Ethiopia* (Uppsala, 1987); see also Tesfaye Tafesse, "The agricultural, environmental, and social impacts of the villagization programme in northern Shewa, Ethiopia," *IDR Research report 44* (Addis Ababa, 1994), 34-35.

46. Henze, *Ethiopia*, 27.

47. See Arsi Negelle warada gebrena biro, *Tarik Nak Gudayoch*, File No. 221/76.

48. See *ka1978 eske1981 balaw gize bamandar mesrata yatadaraga kenewen*. In 1991, official reports put total rural population figures in the neighborhood of 157,757. See *Yawarada Atakalay Maraja*, 23/3/79. For a focused study on other parts of the country see Tesfaye Tafesse, "The agricultural," Cohen and Isaksson, *Villagization*.

49. National Committee for Central Planning, *YaAser Amat Mari Eked*, 36-37.

50. *Ibid.*, 75. For earlier reports on calorie intake see W. J. Darby *et al.*, *Nutrition Survey of Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C., 1959); Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia*, 199-200.

51. *Ibid.*, 36-37, 46, 385-429, 341-50.

52. *Ibid*, 175, 196-97. To that end the government also established the Agricultural Input Marketing Corporation (AIMCO) within the MoA to handle input supply to the smallholder sector. On AIMCO's input distribution see Deloitte Haskins and Sells Africa Ltd., *Appendices* (Addis Ababa, Agricultural Input supply corporation, September 1975).

53. Ministry of Agriculture, *Peasant Agriculture Development Program -PADEP* (Addis Ababa, March 1983); Shewa PADEP VI Project Coordination Office, *Status Report to December 31st 1991* (Addis Ababa, 1992); Ministry of Agriculture, *An Assessment of the Peasant Agricultural Development Policies, Plans, and Strategies and their Implications for Science and Technology Development of the Sector* (Addis Ababa, 1988); World Bank, *Ethiopia: Peasant Agricultural Development Project 1: Staff Appraisal Report* (Addis Ababa, 1988). Though envisioned by the government as early as 1983, PADEP did not come to fruition until 1986/87 because the World Bank, PADEP's presumed donor, remained dissatisfied with WPE's unwillingness to introduce key reforms (such as relaxation of the grain market) the bank thought would be necessary to transform the agricultural sector. See also Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity*, 166-67.

54. National Committee for Central Planning, *YaAser Amat Mari Eked*, 155-57; Getaneh Yiemene, "Agricultural Research and Delivery in the South-Eastern Highlands of Ethiopia: A Case Study of the SG-2000 Approach in Hitosa District," *African Technology Policy Studies Working Paper 27* (Addis Ababa, 2001), 11.

55. See Nichola Tennaissie, "Agricultural Research and Extension in Ethiopia: the state of the art," *IDR research report 22* (Addis Ababa, 1985), 61; Gebrena YaAkababi Tebekana Lemat Minister, *YaGebrena Ekstenshen Ajamamarena Edgat Aktacha* (Addis Ababa, 1984), 11-16.

56. Daniel Benor, James Q. Harrison, and Michael Baxter, *Agricultural Extension: The Training and Visit System* (Washington D.C., 1984).

57. For a preliminary investigation of the T&V pilot project in Arsi see Alemneh Dejene, "The Evaluation of the Training and Visit System: Lessons from a Recent Experience in Ethiopia," *Development discussion paper 178* (Boston, 1984). On the impact of T&V on other African countries see, for example, Vishva Bindlish and Robert E. Evanson, "The Impact of T&V Extension in Africa: The Experience of Kenya and Burkina Faso," *The World Bank Research Observer* 12, 2 (August 1997), 183-201.

58. Tennaissie, "Agricultural Research and Extension in Ethiopia," 61.

59. The most important component of the intervention scheme therefore lies in the regular (four days a week) travel and visit by the DA to farmers' fields, the results of which the DA had to communicate to *awraja* extension officer (AE0) once every two weeks. See Alemneh, "The Evaluation," 2-6.

60. See, for example, Taye Shiferaw to Shashamane *warada* PA office, 20/7/77, T&V file 698/552/77.

61. *Ibid*.

62. See Taye Shiferaw to Shashamane *warada* administration, public security, police and PA office, 2/8/76, in T&V 21 No. 727/552/76; see also Tesfaye Tilahun to Shashamane *warada* MoA office, *Megabit* 4/1976 E.C. in T&V No. 640/552/76.

63. See Gabra Yohanes Estifanos to Central Zone Agricultural Development Office, 4/4/81, in T&V No. 341/P1/81.

64. In Nano Wayo alone there were 5 PAs, with 828 household members and a total population of 4825 people. See File Name: *Taklala Marajawoch*.

65. Taye Shiferaw to Shashamane *warada* MoA office 17/12/77 in T&V 19.

66. Yusuf Indris to Shashamane *warada* MoA office, 17/7/77, T&V No.677/552/77.

67. See Ashanafi Makonen to Shashamane CBE branch, *Hamle* 15/1980 E.C., in Kabt Arbiwoch 1, No. 1020/80.

68. See Commercial Bank of Ethiopia to *Debub Shawa Astadadar Akababi Gebrena Mamrya Sehfat Bet*, Zway, Miasma 4, 1982 E.C., File No. *Ma3-39*.

69. For MoA additional requests of inputs see, for example, Kasahun Mamo to *Dabub Shawa Astadadar Akababi YeGebrena Lemat Mamrya*, Zway, *Mert Masadagyawoch*, No. 617/8/1/77. For national figures see Agricultural Input Supply Corporation, *Ya1980 YaMajamarya Gemash Amat Eked Afasasamena Gemgama* (Addis Ababa, 1980 E.C.).

70. Getaneh, "Agricultural Research," 8.

71. For national figures and the expansion of SG-2000 activities between 1993-97 see *ibid*, 10.

72. Mekonen Getaneh, Yaekob Mersha *et al*, *Project Sasakawa Global 2000: 1993 report warada Shashamane* (Addis Ababa, 1993), 5-10.

73. Julia Howard, Mulat Demeke, Valerie Kelly, Mywish Maredia, and Julia Stepanek, "Can the

Momentum be Sustained? An Economic Analysis of the Ministry of Agriculture/Sasakawa Global 2000's Experiment with Improved Cereals Technology in Ethiopia," *Michigan State University Department of Agricultural Economics Staff Report No. 98-25* (East Lansing, 1998), 11-13, 26-33.

74. *Ibid*, 33.

75. Ministry of Agriculture, *Balkonomi Mashashaya Gebra Hayl YaEkstenshen Selt Neus G/Hayl Tenat* (Addis Ababa, 1985); see also Getaneh, "Agricultural Research," 11; Habtemariam Abate, *Targeting Extension Service and the Extension Package Approach in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1997). For a comprehensive report on *warada*-level fertilizer data see Central Statistics Authority and National Fertilizer Industry Agency, *Report on National Fertilizer Benchmark Survey of 1996/97-1997/98: Private Peasant Holdings both Seasons Meher and Belg* (Addis Ababa, 1998).

76. Howard, Mulat et al, "Can the Momentum be Sustained," 3-10.

77. Interview with Shinbiro Kormango (Mareqo), 8 August 2000; Yohanes Erdelo (Mareqo), 12 August 2000; Faranjo Ganato (Arsi Negelle), 20 February 2001; Danye Terfe (Shashamane), 10 January 2001; Bune Batasa (Zway), 6 April 2001; Tufa Turu (Lume), 21 May 2001; Alamayahu Guda (Ada), 3 July 2001.

78. Interview with Bune Abab (Zway), 20 April 2001.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND PHRASES

<i>asrat</i>	one-tenth of harvest paid to the state in the form of produce tax; later (in 1967) replaced by the agricultural income tax.
<i>awraja</i>	district.
<i>balabbat</i>	local-chief appointed or re-appointed by the state. Often autonomous, <i>balabbat</i> provided the link between local communities and the central government. <i>Balabbats</i> ' main responsibility included collection of taxes, administration of justice, and distribution of land.
<i>beta-rist</i>	a specific type of land owned directly by the royal family (including the emperor and his extended family).
<i>cisagna</i>	tenant or quasi-landowner who pays tax or tribute to someone other than the state because the person's ownership rights were considered to be secondary.
<i>dajazmach</i>	literally commander of the front.
<i>dawla</i>	sack made out of skin or hide. 1 <i>dawla</i> = 1-1.2 quintals.
<i>dergo</i>	entitlements of food from the royal court to individuals staying in the capital until the imperial court adjudicated their cases. It also refers to any kind of food entitlements to a follower or guest.
<i>ekul</i>	one-half (relating to a 50 % share cropping arrangement).
<i>erbo</i>	share-cropping system based on one-fourth share for the landowner.
<i>gabbar</i>	tax or tribute paying farmer typically in <i>gasha maret</i> and <i>qalad</i> tenures (originally different from <i>cisagna</i> and <i>ristagna</i>).
<i>gada</i>	a social-political system of administration practiced by Gedeo, several Oromo communities, and others in southern Ethiopia.
<i>gana-gab</i>	literally valley. Same as <i>madbet</i> .
<i>gasha</i>	literally shield. Later used as a unit of land measurement ranging in size from place to place (as per the level of development of the land; one <i>gasha</i> of land usually about 40 hectares of land in <i>lam</i> regions).
<i>gasha maret</i>	literally "land of the shield." Conquered, measured, or regulated land (distinct from <i>rist</i> and not to be confused with <i>qalad</i>).

<i>geber</i>	land-tax. Also feast/banquet.
<i>gebratal</i>	land taken over by the state for failure to pay tax.
<i>gotara</i>	grain storage bin; granary.
<i>gult</i>	income and labor rights regional/local political elite retained due to previous political standing; similar rights acknowledged and/or granted by the state to prominent regional/local officials (civilian and/or military); implies autonomy in administrative matters by the local elite.
<i>gwaya</i>	vetch (rough pea).
<i>hudad</i>	land directly owned by the government (mainly geared to the production of food to the royal court). Also refers to land prominent regional elite owned or controlled; labor rendered on such land (by <i>gabbar</i> and <i>cisagna</i> farmers)
<i>komite</i>	committee
<i>lam</i>	developed or well-cultivated land; fertile (not necessarily referring to organic matter).
<i>lam-taf</i>	partially developed, partially cultivated; semi-fertile.
<i>madarya</i>	land temporarily held (by the soldiery or the civilian elite) in return for service to the state.
<i>madbet</i>	literally kitchen; land and farmers organized for the production and supply of food for the royal court. Same as <i>ganagab</i> .
<i>magazo</i>	land use practice in which cultivators obtained seasonal access to land they did not own in exchange for a percentage of the crop and/or labor. A variation of <i>cisagna</i> .
<i>malkagna</i>	local/regional ruler who got the power and legitimacy to the office either through dynastic (individual) military activity and/or through (re-) appointment by the state. Also refers to the institution or the office itself.
<i>maret</i>	generic term for land.
<i>meslane</i>	governor in charge of administering the <i>madbet</i> territories, and the provisioning of food to the royal court.
<i>negus</i>	king.

<i>nug</i>	niger seed.
<i>qalab</i>	salary, payment, upkeep (often in-kind).
<i>qalad</i>	generic term for measured land; refers to land measured and regulated by the state.
<i>qunna</i>	basket. 1 <i>qunna</i> = 5-6 kilograms.
<i>quter-gabbar</i>	farmers specifically assigned to provide labor services and pay tax to the soldiery (in lieu of salary); later all tax paying small-owner farmers.
<i>ras</i>	literally head. Military title (later conferred to civilians as well). Highest rank in the hierarchy.
<i>rim</i>	land owned by the state but assigned to individual farmers on a contract bases (as a reward or in return for a particular service).
<i>rist</i>	ancestral or partible land-ownership/use rights; heritable only through claim to descent.
<i>rist-gult</i>	land over which elite <i>malkagna</i> exercised ownership/control- rights as well as administrative authority (with no or limited state intervention).
<i>samon</i>	land under the control of the church or land over which the church exercised taxation rights.
<i>shimbra</i>	chickpea.
<i>siso</i>	literally “one-third,” a share-cropping arrangement in which the landowner obtains a third of the harvest; land left to the local chiefs (<i>balabbat</i> or <i>malkagna</i>) at times of land measurement (also known as <i>balabbat</i> or <i>malkagna siso</i>).
<i>taf</i>	undeveloped, uncultivated or poor land; unsettled land.
<i>talba</i>	linseed.
<i>temad</i>	an estimate of land often measured by the amount of land a pair of oxen can plow in a day. One <i>temad</i> equals roughly one-fourths of a hectare.
<i>terf</i>	literally “excess” land said to be “extra,” illegally grabbed by individuals to be “discovered” at times of land re-measurement.
<i>wakil</i>	representative.

walad interest.

walad-aggad a system of borrowing money by temporarily transferring land ownership rights to the creditor.

warada sub-district or county.

waraganu land reserved for raising royal cattle.

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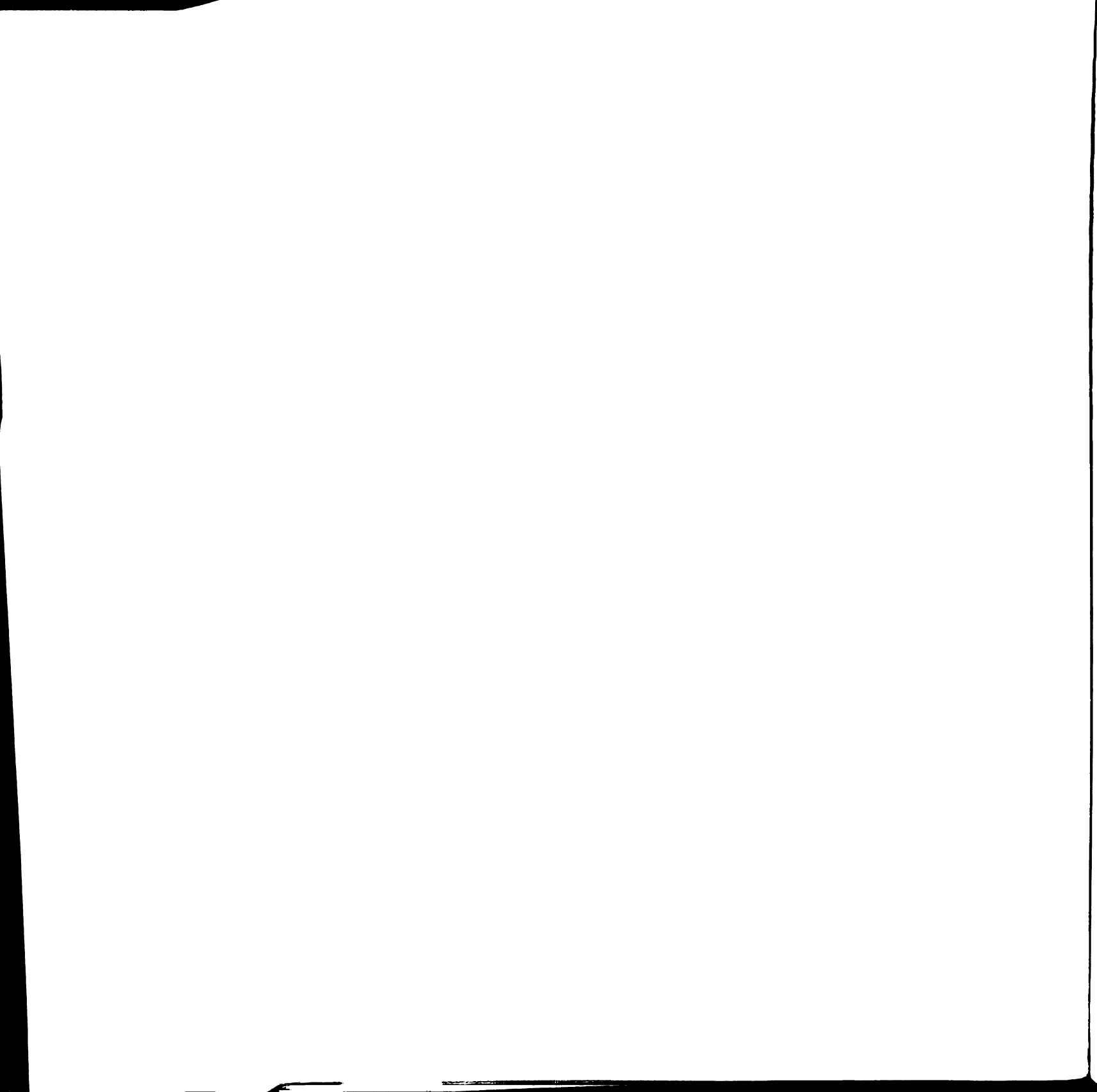
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Awasa: *MaMa* 6; *MaMa* 30; *AaErLe* 11; A 251.

Buta Jira: *Eta* 31; *E* 52; *Ma* 41; *Ri* 40; 71.

Debre Zeit: *PePe* 115/2; *LeTe* 16; *MaAt* 1-13, *Ma* 4; *AzLe* 22; *Mert Mabalsagya*, File NO. _ .

Mojo: *RaSa* 15; *Pa* 7; *YaYe* 51; *YaMa* 18.

Shashamane: *Amrachoch*/52; *Atakalay Marajawoch*, File No. A125; 154/78; 640/552/76; 341/P1/81; 698/552/77; 727/552/76.

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Buta Jira: 2/2; 2/3; 2/8; 2/9; 2/14.

Mojo: 440/58.

Nazareth: 1/2; 1/3; 1/4; 2/12; 2/13; 2/21; 3/52; 3/74; 3/151; 3/176.

Shashamane: 1/2.

Zway: *MaYe* 1/55-64; 3/1; 3/2; 3/6; 3/117; 3/118.

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884.6131; 884.6363.

Informants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Place and Date of Interview</u>
Abagaz Chure	61	Zway, 5 April 2001
Abara Tafara Yadate	72	Arsi Negelle, 6 February 2001
Ababu Liban	51	Dukam, 1 July 2001
Abbabu Neda (<i>W/ro</i>)	49	Ada Liban, 22 June 2001
Alamayahu Damese	31	Shashamane, 30 January 2001
Alamayahu Guda	40	Hidi, 3 July 2001
Alamitu Lecheba (<i>W/ro</i>)	58	Shashamane, 25 January 2001
Alamu Gafarsa	71	Dire, 12 June 2001
Alamu Tadasa	67	Sabata, 2 August 1999
Asmamaw Balata	71	Menjar, 21 July 2001
Ayala Asagedaw	56	Ada Liban, 13 June 2001
Ayo Dadi	70	Tulure, 16 May 2001
Badada Buta	84	Mojo, 15 May 2001
Badada Jare	52	Hidi, 18 June 2001
Badaso Dachaso	58	Qarsa Turge, 18 February 2001
Badaso Roba	64	Dire, 14 July 2001
Banata Agato	61	Turufe, 10 February 2001
Baqala Ababa Tamrat	76	Mojo, 19 May 2001
Bashir Kadir	64	Koshe, 6 August 2000
Bayissa Jalle	66	Adaba Tita, 14 February 2001.
Bayu Gudata	59	Dukam, 19 June 2001
Bekele Nedo	82	Mojo, 3 April 2001.
Buene Abab	57	Abosa, 20 April 2001
Bune Batasa	64	Adami Tullu, 6 April 2001
Buta Qaweti	76	Chabi Dadagnata, 9 January 2001
Dabashe Kebrat	72	Shashamane, 24 January 2001

Dagale Maqiso	71	Udasa, 16 June 2000
Daliso Enboro	78	Koshe, 14 June 2000
Dalu Yemanu (<i>Azmach</i>)	74	Zway, 4 April 2001
Damyo Toba (<i>Azmach</i>)	89	Koshe, 13 June 2000
Danye Terfe	59	Shashamane, 10 January 2001
Daqaba Roba (<i>Azmach</i>)	81	Zway, 7 April 2001
Dibaba Aletu	52	Turufe, 13 February, 2001
Dichiso Tasama	64	Dibandiba, 21 May 2001
Duchiso Tasama	64	Dibandiba, 19 May 2001
Edo Danisa	51	Bulbula, 8 April 2001
Ensane Meta	56	Abosa, 14 April 2001
Falaqa Gashaw	57	Debre Zeit, 16 June 2001
Faranjo Ganato	47	Turufe, 20 February 2001
Galata Wariso	61	Dakabora, 1 June 2001
Galgalo Chura	58	Adaba Tita, 16 February, 2001
Gamachu Kilole	54	Ada Liban, 24 June 2001
Gamachu Ramato	66	Turufe, 12 February 2001
Gamada Buriso	61	Toga, 16 January 2001
Gamado Bayana	54	Arsi Negelle, 23 February 2001
Ganaso Laqe	57	Zway Zuria, 9 April 2001
Germa Beru	29	Alii Wayo, 26 February 2001
Germa Tafara	56	Jirru, 6 August 1999
Germa Yehun	39	Mojo, 23 May 2001
Getachew Gabra Hana	58	Zway, 13 April 2001
Gudata Abamo	52	Dakabora, 24 May 2001
Gudina Bayisa	83	Qarsa Turge, 25 February 2001
Hadeta Wayiso	73	Adaba Tita, 7 February 2001
Haymanot Getahun	33	Mojo, 15 May 2001
Haile Hadara	71	Kuyara, 22 February 2001
Hirpo Batale	53	Chabi Dadagnata, 27 January 2001
Hussein Hameso	64	Hursa, 22 January 2001
Kaba Gudina	71	Adaba Tita, 12 May, 2000.
Kadiro Idao	59	Alii Wayoo, 9 February 2001
Ketsela G. Lante	69	Addis Ababa, 2 August 1999.
Lagasa Ayala	76	Dibandiba, 17 May 2001
Makonen Getahun	44	Arsi Negelle, 12 February 2001
Mamo Estifo	51	Shashamane 27 January 2001
Mangasha Tantu	72	Wolayta, 9 March 2001
Mangestu Alamu	65	Moderena Alibo, 1 August 2000
Nini Abino	63	Arsi Negelle, 11 February 2001
Nureto Hameso	61	Koshe, 2 July 2000
Raya Talila	66	Ada Liban, 23 July 2001
Salamon Yerga	42	Mojo, 15 May 2001
Shimaket Arga	67	Addis Ababa, 30 August 2001
Shibru Kasa (<i>Mamre</i>)	65	Udasa, 19 June 2000
Shimales Takalegn	44	Mojo, 15 May 2001

Shinbiro Kormango	45	Udasa, 8 August 2000
Shisama Birada	57	Addis Ababa, 17 July 1999
Tadewos Lachebo	59	Zway, 11 April 2001
Tadewos Shano	56	Zway Zuria, 11 April 2001
Tajudi Umer	46	Addis Ababa, 26 July 1999
Tashoma Ture	67	Toga, 15 January 2001
Telahun Duri	62	Hursa, 13 January 2001
Telahun Gadamu	50	Shashamane 16 January 2001
Tekeshu Areka	57	Shashamane, 29 January 2001
Tashoma Kasahun	36	Arsi Negelle, 12 February 2001
Tikishu Lachebo	57	Arsi Negelle, 19 February 2001
Tufa Turu	49	Dibandiba, 21 May 2001
Tulluro Abam	74	Moderena Alibo, 12 June 2000
Tomba Agato	58	Koshe, 20 June 2000
Yaqob Marsha	54	Shashamane, 27 January 2001
Yohanes Erdello	52	Koshe, 12 August 2000
Wayiso Saqaqo	58	Dibandiba, 26 May 2001
Wudu Aba (<i>Imam</i>)	62	Moderena Alibo, 17 June 2000
Yasin Ahmad	63	Gina Agar, 27 July 2001
Yerga Walda Gabrel	68	Dakabora, 22 May 2001