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DISSERTATION

A HISTORY OF MINING IN WALLAGGA, WESTERN ETHIOPIA, 1899-1991.

By

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Table of Contents

Dedication

For those who became a tower of strength to my success

Acknowledgments

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ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF MINING IN WALLAGGA, WESTERN ETHIOPIA, 1899-1991.

In the 19th century the local people of Wallagga were engaged in the extraction of gold as well as iron and brought the items to some local markets in western Ethiopia. In the 20th century the local miners of Wallagga, however, began to see the coming of more organized and consolidated foreign and domestic mining agents which controlled and extracted gold and platinum ores found in Wallagga.

The dissertation explores the engagements and the activities of these mining agents including the local miners in gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga and the benefits they had obtained from these activities in the 20th century. To this end, it has relied on archival sources, British foreign office documents, travelers' accounts, oral sources, newspapers and secondary materials. I have analyzed the sources using qualitative and quantitative historical methods.

I argue that gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga in the 20th century were shaped maintaining continuity because of the engagements and the activities of both the disorganized and the consolidated mining agents which distributed the benefits of gold and platinum extraction among themselves.

It reveals that the undertakings of gold and platinum prospecting, exploration and extraction activities by these mining agents in Wallagga were for their own benefits and that it was the traditional mining industry with its methods and tools of extracting these precious metals which was maintained in Wallagga in the 20th century.

It also unravels that the foreign concessionaires and their companies like A.Ilg and the Mines d'Or du Wallaga, A.Prasso and the Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie, the Western Abyssinian Mining Syndicate, the Italian intruders and the S.A.P.I.E. and the central government of Ethiopia distributed the benefits of gold and platinum extraction in Wallagga disproportionately among themselves in which the local miners became less beneficiaries. But such distribution had made the central government of Ethiopia to win much of the gold extracted in Wallagga between 1899-1936 and the Mines d'Or du Wallaga, S.A.P.I.E. and S.M.I.T. to obtain thousands of grams of gold extracted there in the period before 1941. In the case of platinum, among the consolidated mining agents when Prasso and the Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie emerged as platinum tycoon in Wallagga and Ethiopia in the 1920s, the platinum miners in Yubdo and the Ethiopian government had remained spectators of the platinum capitalists. However, during the study period the local miners had limited access to their earlier goldfields and became the victims of cheap labor.

Between 1941-1991, although the government of Ethiopia had controlled the goldfields and their output in Wallagga, because of various factors, it had received reduced amount of gold as compared to the output of gold it received in pre-1936 period. During that time, the Ethiopian government, however, monopolized the Yubdo platinum mine and received all the platinum extracted in Yubdo. However, the efforts which the government of Ethiopia had made to solve some problems of the miners and the mining industry in Wallagga did not basically change the poor living standard which was noticed among the local miners in Wallagga. It also did not alter the slow change which the gold and the platinum mining industry in Wallagga had undergone particularly in the second half of the 20th century.

Key to Transliteration

The non-English words, names or phrases of *Afaan* Oromo and Amharic languages in this dissertation are written and read according to the phonetic systems of *Afaan* Oromo and Amharic languages.

I. *Afaan* Oromo

1. Vowels in *Afaan* Oromo

Short	Long	Long vowels English equivalent
a	aa	a -add
e	ee	e -egg
i	ii	i -it
o	oo	o -odd
u	uu	u -blue

Short sound is formed by any of the five single vowels. For example as in: *qoro, laga, harka* and others.

Long sound is formed by doubling the vowels. For example as in: Leeqaa, *raafuu, diimaa*, Dhaabaa (personal name) and others.

2. Gemmination is indicated by doubling the consonant. For example as in: Wallagga, *Obbo* (Mr) and others.

3. Phonemes of double consonant letters that are used in the dissertation include ch, dh, ny and sh. For example as in: *cirracha* (sand), *dhagaa* (stone), *nyaachu* (to eat) and Shawa (place

name). Phonemes of single consonant ejective letters that are used in the dissertation include c, q, x as in: Cawwaaqaa and Qabannaa (personal names) and *xummura* (at last).

II. Amharic

1. The seven sounds of Amharic alphabet used in the dissertation are designated in the following way:

በ=bä ቡ=bu ቢ=bi ባ=ba ቤ=be ብ=bi̲ ቦ=bo

The vowel 'i̲' in the case of the sixth sound will be added only when stressing is needed.

2. Palatalized sounds are designated in the following way:

ሸ=sh ቸ=ch ኘ=gn ጀ=j ዠ=zh

3. Glottalized sounds are designated in the following way:

ቀ=q ጠ=t̲ ጬ=c̲h̲ ፀ=ts

4. Gemmination is indicated by doubling the consonants. Example: *birr*, *anbässa*, Mäkonni̲n (personal name).

General Example: *wäqet, zäbägna, balläbat, mäkina, amrach, kiray, käntiba, azazh,* Särtsä Wäld (personal name) and others.

Acronyms

A.M.A.O.-*Azienda Miniere Africa Orientale*

CO.MI.NA.-*Compagna Mineraria Etiopia*

CPG-Crown Prince *Gebbi*

EPRDF-Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

EWAA- East Wallagga Administration Archives

GDP-Gross Domestic Product

IES-Institute of Ethiopian Studies

MF-Ministry of Finance

MI-Ministry of Interior

MM-Ministry of Mines

NALA-National Archive and Library Agency

OCC-Oromia Culture Center

OLF-Oromo Liberation Front

S.A.P.I.E.- *Societā Anonima per Imprese Etiopiche*

S.M.I.T.- *Societa Mineraria Italo-Tadesca*

UNDP-United Nations Development Program

UN-United Nations

WMA- Wallagga Museum Archives

WMAC- Wäldä Mäsqäl Archival Centre

WOC-Western Oromo Confederation

WWI-World War One

List of Tables

List of Graphs and Charts

List of Graphs

List of Charts

List of Maps

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Framing the Dissertation

In the 19th and the 20th centuries the need to control, extract and use precious metals such as gold, platinum and silver in places like Wallagga in western Ethiopia attracted various mining agents from different countries. Among these agents, there were concessionaires, miners, the state, merchants and individuals both from Ethiopia and abroad. In Wallagga, to fulfill their needs these agents were engaged in prospecting, exploration and extraction activities of particularly gold and platinum in the 20th century and left behind them their experiences, challenges and achievements.

Though this was the case, mining industry in Wallagga in the 20th century as one of the issues of historical studies both at regional and national levels has not received attention from many social and economic historians of Ethiopia. At the global level, however, the prospecting, exploration and extraction of mineral resources has a long history and great contribution for the advancement of the world society.[1] Similarly, mining activities have a long history in Ethiopia. Therefore, the social and economic historians of Ethiopia could have adequately investigated it.

Moreover, the subject under consideration is open to historians who rely on regional history to investigate the local historical development of mining industry and connect it with a history of mining industry at national level. This engagement is useful to write an inclusive socio-economic history of countries like Ethiopia which consists of historical developments which occurred in its

[1]Nebiyu Eyasu (columnist), "የስነ ምድር ጥናትና የማእድናት ፍለጋ ታሪክ በኢትዮጵያ፣ ክፍል 1"(The Study of Geology and the History of Mineral Resources Prospecting in Ethiopia) *Addis Zämän*, (March/*Mägabit* 8,1975E.C.), p.3 and Helmut Waszkis, *Mining in the Americas: Stories and History* (Cambridge: Wood Head Publishing Ltd,1993), pp.1-2.

specific regions. Writers suggest that such engagement avoids the problem of writing history of countries which have different regions based on limited facts.[2] In the case of Wallagga it also helps scholars to understand how local level historical development of mining industry in places like Wallagga is connected to historical development of mining industry at the global level. For this reason, this dissertation relies on such approach to examine the various issues of mining industry in Wallagga in the 20th century.

But the subject of inquiry of this dissertation is obtained through examining the existing literature on the history of Wallagga and its people as well as by taking into account the shortcomings of the literature. The investigation of pieces of literature firstly, tells us that historical studies conducted on Wallagga and its people have mainly dealt with political and socio-economic themes which happened on the surface of the earth in Wallagga.[3] Secondly, it indicates that there are a few historians who have mentioned the wealth of Wallagga below the surface of the earth while dealing with the issue of concession at the national level.[4] However,

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[2]William B. Heseltine, "The Value of Regional History," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 7, 1 (1948), pp.12,14 and Eric Van Young, "Doing Regional History : A Theoretical Discussion and Some Mexican Cases," *Yearbook* (*Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers)*, 20 (1994), p.22.

[3]To mention only a few authors who have dealt with these political and socio-economic themes on the surface of the earth in Wallagga: Daniel Ayana, "Land Tenure and Agriculture in Sayyoo-Afillo, Western Wallagga, Ethiopia, 1880-1974," PhD Dissertation (History, University of Illinois,1995); Tesema Ta'a, "The Political Economy of Western Central Ethiopia: From the Mid-16th to the Early-20th Centuries," PhD Dissertation (History, Michigan State University, 1986); Bahru Zewde, "*Dejazmach* Jote Tulu, 1855-1918," BA Senior Essay (History, Haile Sillassie I University, 1970); Terrefe Woldetsadik, "The Unification of Ethiopia (1880-1935) Wälläga," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 6, 1(1968); Etana Habte, "Administration of Wallagga Under the *Dergue*, 1974-1991," MA Thesis (History, Addis Ababa University, 2007).

[4]See Bahru Zewde, "Concessions and Concession-Hunters in Post-Adwa Ethiopia: The Case of Arnold Holz," *Africa*: *Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente*, 45, 3(1990) pp.365-383; Bairu Tafla, *Ethiopia and Germany: Cultural, Political and Economic Relations, 1871-1936* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1981), pp.160-181. But Bahru has very understudied some local developments of mining industry in western Ethiopia in his dissertation. See Bahru Zewde, "Relations Between Ethiopia and the Sudan on Western Ethiopian Frontier, 1898-1935," PhD Dissertation (History, University of London, 1976), pp.386-435.

these authors have made scanty assessment on the issue of the mineral wealth of Wallagga by connecting it with the activities of some foreign concessionaires, the diplomatic and the economic relations which Ethiopia had established with some European countries in the early 20th century. But such point of view excludes the exhaustive study of historical developments of mining activities at the local level across time. Thirdly, there are writings on mining activities which provide very general survey on this issue[5]conflating many specific gold and platinum mining issues which occurred in Wallagga throughout the 20th century.

Although these and other writings on Wallagga and its people contribute some ideas to this dissertation and receive acknowledgement for their contribution, many of them are limited in providing background information on mineral resources and mining industries in Wallagga. This has happened because of the writers points of view associated with issues they set out to address. The points of view of some authors have made them to approach the issue of mining activities in Wallagga as if it has no accounts of extraction or production and distribution of the gold and the platinum extracted. These writings also do not consider how powerful mining agents like the concessionaires, the central government and some foreign companies limited the benefits which the local miners had to obtain from gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga.

But this way of looking at gold and platinum mining activity in Wallagga has made this issue to remain unexplored exhaustively. Generally, it made the substantive and the interpretive discussions of many issues which are connected with gold and platinum mining activity in Wallagga to be obscured from historical studies in Ethiopia.

[5]For example, see Guluma Gemeda, “Political Domination and Exploitation of the Mineral Resources of Oromia: From Menilek to Meles,” *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, 5, 1 and 2(1998), pp.133-141.

For all these reasons, this dissertation identifies that treating the issue of gold and platinum mining activity in Wallagga in such a way has created a gap on the study of this issue and works towards filling the missing gap in the history of Wallagga and its people.

To this end, the dissertation by focusing on major mining issues to be assessed, it exhaustively explores these issues from the point of view of regional history of mining and provides the untold history of gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga. These issues are competition among the concessionaires over the mineral resources of Wallagga. It includes local miners, their activities and living conditions, the attraction of the Ethiopian central government to the mineral resources of Wallagga and the outflow of gold and platinum from Wallagga to the center. It also explains foreign companies and their activities, gold and platinum mining activity during the Italian occupation, Imperial mining activity, informal mining, problems of miners and mining industry as well as gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga under the socialist economic policy.

To address these issues, the thesis of this dissertation will examine how mining agents such as the concessionaires, the local miners, the central government of Ethiopia and the foreign companies participated and maintained the continuity of gold and platinum mining extraction in Wallagga in the 20th century. Besides, in what situations the gold and the platinum was extracted and their benefits were distributed among these mining agents and how the distribution affected the livelihood of the local miners is part of the thesis of this dissertation. Shortly, this is a thesis of mining agents' undertaking and maintaining the extraction of gold and platinum in Wallagga in the 20th century and sharing the benefits of extraction among themselves.

Framed in this way, the period of study of the above issues in this dissertation begins in 1899, the year in which gold mining concession was formally given to foreigners like Alfred Ilg to extract the gold wealth of Wallagga. This situation invited foreign influences in this activity and brought some impacts on a history of mining in Wallagga than the year before 1899. The year 1991 concludes the period of study of this dissertation. This was the year which signified the end of the *Därg* regime's economic policy. This change had an impact on mining activities in Wallagga as it brought an end to the socialist economic policy of the *Därg* government.

But the principal objective of this dissertation is exploring the major issues identified above and subsequently reconstructing a history of mining in Wallagga in the 20th century. Nevertheless, investigating issues like the technical aspects of mineralogy, taking samples of mineral soils and rocks as well as analyzing the soils and rocks which contain mineral ores are not the objective of this dissertation. This is because the study is not a geological dissertation.

With respect to research questions, this dissertation provides answers to the following major questions.

1. How did mining agents undertake and maintain gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga in the 20th century despite the fact that this mining industry was being encircled with multiple problems which could have halted its continuity in the study area?

2. In an issue connected with distributing the gold and the platinum extracted or the benefits obtained from gold and platinum among the mining agents which agents had obtained much more benefits? What were the mechanisms in which agents became victims of receiving much less benefits? How did benefits sharing affect the living condition of the victims?

Lastly, studying the issue of mining industry in Wallagga has several contributions to Ethiopian historiography. It is important to broaden our understanding of mining industry both at the local and the national levels. It contributes towards filling in the missing gap in the history of Wallagga. It reduces the marginalization of the issue of mining industry by non-mining themes in Ethiopian history**.** Since it is the study of the extraction of mineral resources and mining agents, it invites concerned parties to make practical intervention on how to accomplish further exploration and extraction activities in Wallagga in such a way that benefits both the local people and the country.

However, for clarifying whereabouts of mining localities and to identify the rocks and soils which have hosted gold, platinum and iron ores extracted in Wallagga in the 20th century, it is essential to provide an overview of the geological features of some mineral rich localities of Wallagga.

1.2 The Study Area and Some Aspects of the Geological Features of Its Mining Sites

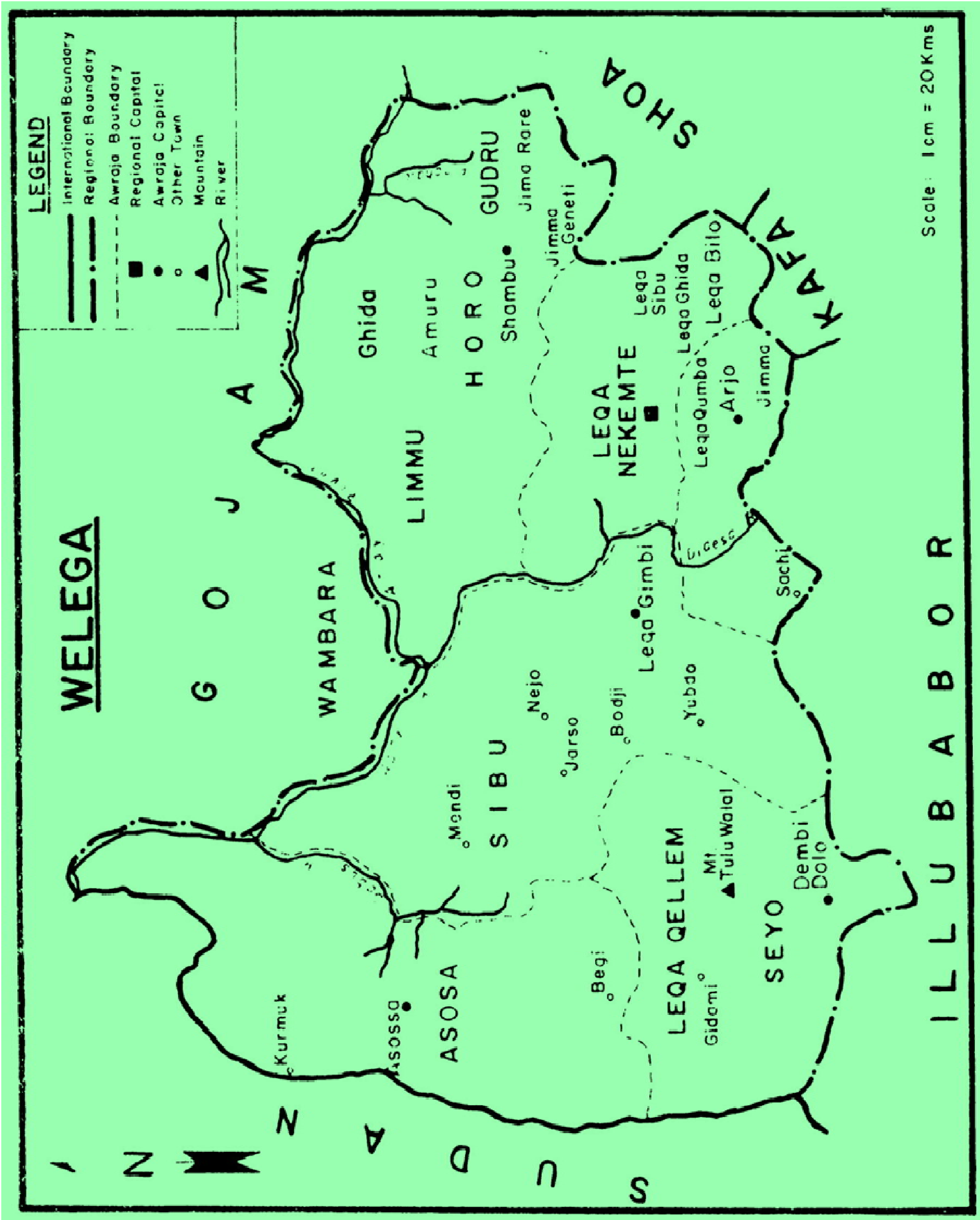
The study area, Wallagga, which is situated in western Ethiopia, has large territorial extents and shares boundaries with four other large administrative regions of Ethiopia and with one big African country and is endowed with some gifts of nature. It is bordered with Gojjam in the north, Ilubbaaboor and Jimmaa in the south, Shawa in the east and the Sudan in the west. Wallagga has also different valuable mineral resources, suitable climate and productive soil[6]

[6]For borders which Wallagga share with its neighbor, see Tesema, "The Political Economy…, p.2 and Etana, "Administration of…, p.1. For its different resources, soil type and climate or climatic zone, see Hailu Wolde Emanuel, "The Geographic Characteristic of Western Ethiopia: I Eastern Wollega and II Western Wollega," *Ethiopian Geographical Journal*, 1, 1 and 2(1963), pp.31-33 and pp.22-35 respectively; Bula Sirika Wayessa, "Toward a History of the Oromo of Wallaga in Southwestern Ethiopia: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Ceramic Technological Style and Tuber Crop Domestication," PhD Dissertation(Archaeology, University of Calgary, 2016), pp.11, 13-18, 19-21; Tesema, "The Political Economy…,"p.2.

which support the undertakings of different economic activities like the extraction of mineral resources, crop production, animal rearing and others.

Though during the imperial regime Wallagga entirely came to have six sub-provinces, this dissertation mainly focuses on the sub-provinces which are located in western Wallagga. Among the six sub-provinces, three of them namely Naqamtee, Arjoo and [Horroo] Guduru came under the eastern Wallagga division and the other three Gimbii, Qellam and Assosa-Beni Shangul became part of the western Wallagga administrative areas.[7] Thus, the dissertation mainly focuses on the mining activities which were undertaken in the provinces of Gimbii, Qellam and Assosa-Beni Shangul between1899-1991. In other words, it mainly focuses on the places at present day called Gimbii Zone, Qellam Wallagga Zone and Beni Shangul Regional National State since these areas had large deposits of precious metals like gold and platinum. Moreover, they were also the centers of mining activities undertaken in the study area in the 19th and the 20th centuries.

[7]Hailu, "The Geographic, I Eastern Wollega and II Western Wollega…," p.31 and p.22 respectively. For administrative division and re-division in the country in different periods and for Wallagga reflecting this division, see Daniel, "Land Tenure…," p.20.



Map 1: **The Study Area and Its Localities, Taken from Tesema Ta'a, "The Political Economy of West Central Ethiopia: From the Mid-16th Century to the Early 20th Century," PhD Dissertation, 1986, p.163**.

With respect to geological features, according to some writers localities found in Wallagga have rocks and deposits which contain valuable mineral resources. Authors like Danilo Jelenc from the point of view of geology suggest that the land of Wallagga possibly possesses the oldest Precambrian crystalline rock[8] also called the basement complex rock[9] which contains gold, platinum, iron, copper and other mineral resources in Ethiopia.[10] As a result, some gold producing localities in western Wallagga such as Degero, Waabaraa, Mexxi [and others] have Precambrian rock type.[11] In some localities of western Wallagga gold and platinum were extracted from alluvial [a deposit by water] as well as 'eluvial' deposits[12] [deposit by wind]. Besides, there were localities which had supported placer[13] gold work in Wallagga like south of Yubdo, Menghi, Gizen and Kurmuk.[14] Precambrian rock also led to the existence of

[8]Danilo A. Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences of Ethiopia (*Addis Ababa: Ministry of Mines and Energy, 1966),pp.55, 209.

[9]Paul Mohr, "The Geology of Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer*, 5, 3 (1961), p.186.

[10]Solomon Tadesse, *Mineral Resources Potential of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2009), p.27; Getaneh Assefa, "The Mineral Resources Potential of Ethiopia," *Bulle. Chem, Soc. Eth*iop 5, 2(1991), p.117; Robert Bussert, "Minerals," in Siegbert Uhlig (ed), *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Vol.III (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), p.972.

[11]For Degero having this type of rock layer, see Alemayehu W. Rufael, et. al., "Degero Valley Placer Gold Exploration, Note No.210," (1981-82), p.1. Similarly, for Waabaraa, and Mexxi see Ahmad Mohammed , "Placer Prospects of the Birbir Basin," [1976-1977], p.5.

[12]For example, in parts of the Birbir River valley gold and platinum were extracted from alluvial and 'eluvial' deposits, see Ahmad, "Placer Prospects…," p.1.

[13]Placer is defined as "A deposit by the action of water or wind." William H. Breeding, "Placer", in B.A. Kennedy (ed), *Surface Mining* (Colorado: Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration Inc, 2009), p.77. Placer is also defined as "a deposit of sand or gravel that contains particles of gold" and other mineral particles. See The US Bureau of Mines (ed and comp), *Dictionary of Mining, Mineral, and Other Related Terms* (Second Edition, 1996), p.2358. This deposit also contains mineral resources like diamonds, platinum and tin. For this, see Michael Allaby (ed), *A Dictionary of Geology and Earth Sciences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Fourth Edition, 2013), p.445.

[14]For south of Yubdo associated with placer platinum, see *Ibid*. For Menghi, Gizen and Kurmuk associated with placer gold, see R.F. Ball, "Ancient Gold Placer Mining at Sirqole" (1981), p.1.

primary[15]gold deposits in Wallagga in localities such as Mexxi, *Tulluu* Kami,[16] Dul and Odaa Godore.[17] But both primary and placer types of gold deposits is said to have existed not only in Wallagga but also in Adola goldmine, Akobo and Tigray.[18]

However, like the Ethiopian basement complex rock of the other regions, the Precambrian rock of Wallagga hosted other type of rocks and intruded by some of these rocks.[19] But among the rocks which intruded Precambrian, igneous is considered as a "primary source of gold."[20] Thus, it is from this type of source that mechanized gold extraction has been carried out in Adola and Laga Dambi goldfields in southern Ethiopia for many years.[21]

Like some other gold bearing localities of Wallagga, Yubdo, the platinum rich locality in western Wallagga is covered with the Precambrian type of rock. Yubdo's Precambrian also consists of sedimentary rock which has undergone metamorphism. But it is exposed to erosion because of the wearing away effect of the Birbir River and its tributaries.[22]

[15]Primary deposit which is also known as syngenetic deposit in geology is defined as "A deposit formed contemporaneously with the parent rock and enclosed by it" and it consists of the igneous and sedimentary kinds of deposits. The US Bureau of Mines (ed and comp), *Dictionary of Mining* …, pp.2458, 3214.

[16]For this occurrence in Mexxi and *Tulluu* Kami , see J.L. Evans, "Gold," in Senbeto Chawaqa and Maarten J. de Wit (eds), *Plate Tectonic and Metallogenesis : Some Guide Lines to Ethiopian Mineral Deposits* (Addis Ababa,1981), p.58; Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.209.

[17]Solomon, *Mineral Resources*…,p.33. For this occurrence in Odaa Godare, see also Evans, "Gold," in Senbeto…, p.60.

[18]Solomon, *Mineral Resources*…, p.37.

[19]Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.55.

[20]Solomon, *Mineral Resources*…, p.34.

[21]*Ibid.*, p.37.

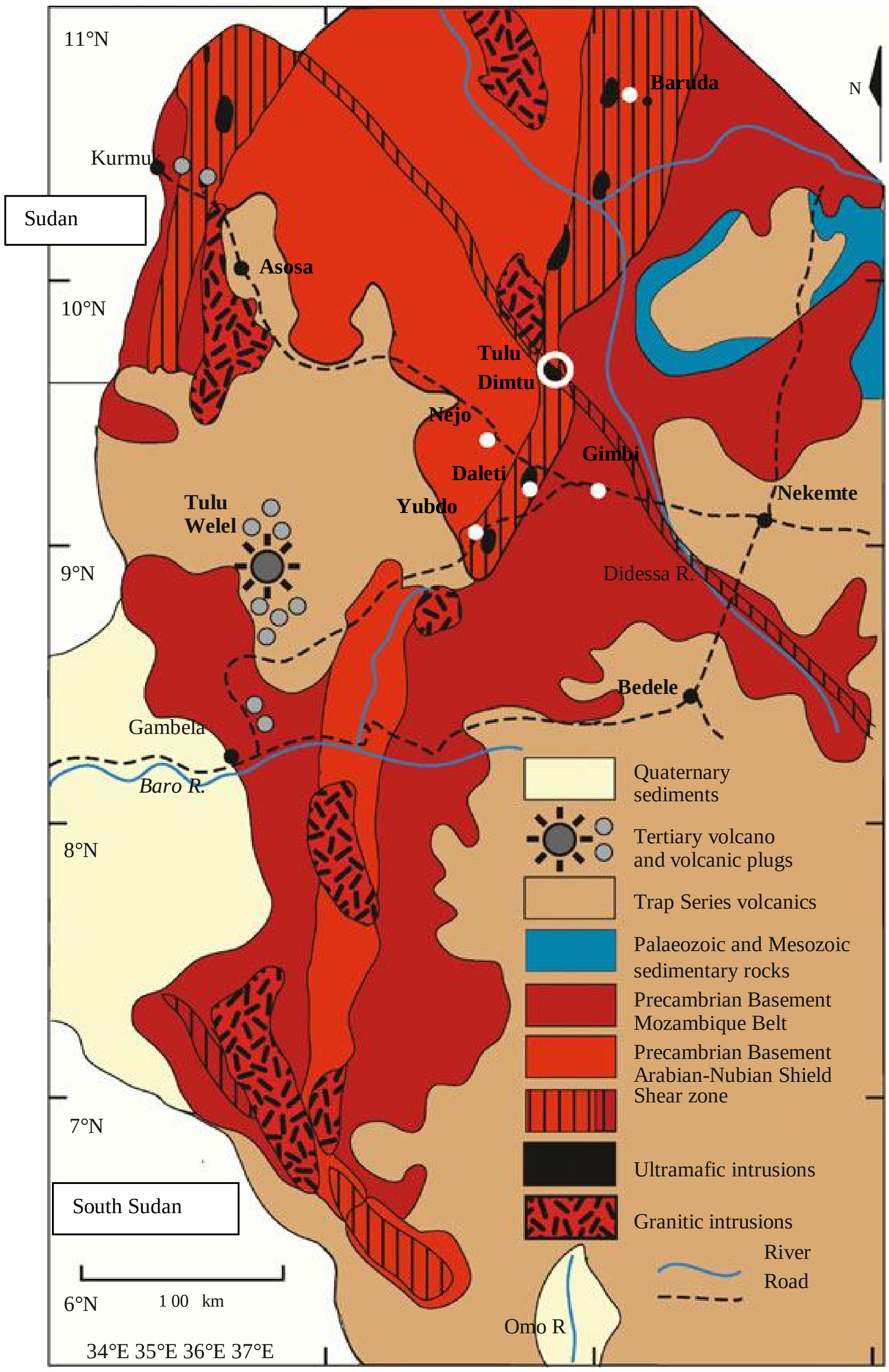
[22]Danilo A. Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum Deposit," *Ethiopian Geographical Journal*, 4, 1(1966), p.19.

With respect to types of deposits of gold and platinum found in Yubdo, according to a study conducted during the post liberation, Yubdo had large concentration of alluvial deposit in the 1960s.[23] This deposit became one of the sources of platinum extraction for local miners in Yubdo in the second half of 20th century. However, the existence of platinum in Yubdo in black sand was revealed in the early 20th century.[24]

On the whole, we can say that the gold and platinum prosperous localities of Wallagga which have different geological features have untold account of mining activities which this dissertation strives to unravel it in different chapters. However, before that providing historical background on what mining activities in Wallagga and Beni Shangul in the 19th century looked like is essential. This is because it enables us to lay the basis for the discussions of the different issues of gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga in the 20th century.

[23]Ahmad, “Placer Prospects…,” p.2.

[24]Jelenc, “Yubdo Platinum…,” p.17.



Map2. Geological Map of Western Ethiopia, Taken from Frances M. Williams, *Understanding Ethiopia: Geology and Scenery*, 2016, p.74.

1.3 Historical Setting: Mining Activities in Wallagga and Beni Shangul ca. 1820s-1890s

Historical and non-historical writings as well as a few primary sources mention the mining activities which were undertaken in Wallagga and Beni Shangul in the 19th century while dealing with issues like settlement history, annexation account, local governors history and incorporation thesis.[25] Thus, very broad account of the settlement but a very brief account of the engagement of the local people in mining activities in Wallagga can be obtained from the writings of some historians, anthropologists and travelers who have put much effort to understand the history of the people of Wallagga and Beni Shangul in different periods. Their writings, for instance, tell us that the Maccaa Oromo which consisted of the Leeqaa, the Sayyoo as well as the Sibuu[26], and other pre-Oromo peoples like the Agadi, Gabeto, Mao and others[27] were the people who settled in Wallagga and have been living there for centuries.

Nevertheless, it could be said that among the Maccaa Oromo and the pre-Oromo peoples who settled in Wallagga as well as among the people of Beni Shangul there were indigenous miners who had the knowledge and the skill of prospecting and extracting mineral resources in their expanses. Acclaiming their diligence in mining activity therefore we can say that these people

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[25]Among historical writings, for instance, we find settlement and annexation history in Tesema, "The Political Economy…" Alessandro Triulzi, *Salt, Gold and Legitimacy: Prelude to the History of a No-man's Land Bela Shangul, Wallaga, Ethiopia, ca.1800-1898*(Napoli, 1981); local governors history in Bahru, "*Dejazmach* Jote…." and Atieb Ahmed Dafalla, "Sheikh Khojele Al-Haasan and Bela-Shangul, 1825-1938," BA Senior Essay (History, Haile Sillassie I University, 1973);Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…; Tesema, "The Political Economy…"; incorporation thesis in Terrefe, "The Unification…".

[26]See Etana, "Administration…," p.1; Karl Eric Knutson, *Authority and Change: A Study of the Kallu Institution Among the Macha Galla of Ethiopia (*Goteborg, 1967), p.33.

[27]Tesema Ta'a, "The Oromo of Wollega: A Historical Survey to 1900," MA Thesis (History, Addis Ababa University, 1980), pp.14-15,18-19; Etana, "Administration…," pp.1-2; Lambert Bartels, *Oromo Religion : Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia-An Attempt to Understand* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag , 1983), p.20. Among these authors, however, Tesema has exhaustively dealt with the settlement and expansion history of the Maccaa Oromo in his MA thesis and PhD dissertation, in both cases, in chapter one and chapter two.

are not only miners but also traditional 'geologists'. As miners and traditional 'geologists', they obtained the knowledge and the skill of identifying the location of mineral deposits such as iron and gold and the wisdom of extracting these mineral ores from their forefathers.

Here, references to which specific groups these mineral extractors belonged to and the specific types of mineral resources which they extracted in the 19th century can be grasped from some European travelers who visited Wallagga in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. In this case, a European traveler Juan Schuver states that the Leeqaa, the Sibuu and other groups of the Oromo brought iron and cattle to the market of Beni Shangul in the 19th century.[28] Moreover, Alexander Bulatovich indicates that the Oromo used to extract good quality gold from the Tumaat valley.[29] He further states that the Leeqaa, [other groups in] Wallagga and Jimmaa were also engaged in the extraction of gold in the 19th century.[30]

Besides, among the different localities of Wallagga and Beni Shangul where these various groups settled on, there were localities notable for the supply of mineral wealth and other natural resources to the markets of western Ethiopia in the 19th century. As indicated above, commercial contacts were established between the localities of Wallagga and Beni Shangul, which in the 20th century the latter became one of the administrative areas of Wallagga. These contacts attest the concept of a region which Eric Young suggests in his study of regional history. In his study

[28]Wendy James, et al.(eds), *Juan Maria Schuver's Travels in North East Africa, 1880-1883, Second Series,No.184* (London: The Hakluyt Society,1996), pp. 33, 31 and 311. On this issue, see also Triulzi, *Salt, Gold…*, p.127. N.B. Wendy James et al have translated and annotated Schuver's travel account of the 19th century under the title indicated on fn.28.

[29]For the richness of Jootee's territory in gold in Wallagga and for the Oromo's extracting gold from the Tumaat valley, see Ambachew Kebede (trans.), *ከእንጦጦ እስከ ባሮ* (*From Entoto to Baro)* (Addis Ababa : Far East Trading,2005E.C. p.96, and p.269 respectively.

[30]*Ibid*, p.98.

Young states that a region has a distinguishing feature of economic linkages which exists between its interrelated parts.[31] Here, it can be said that the endowment of regions with different mineral resources could be taken as one of the factors which probably fostered the economic relation which existed between different localities of regions in the 19th and the 20th centuries.

Moreover, some travelers and writers considered the possession of marketable mineral wealth and other resources as criteria to measure the prosperity of Wallagga in the 19th century. In this case Bulatovich, a Russian traveler, mentions that in the 19th century one of the parts of Wallagga [Leeqaa Qellam] which came under the rule of Jootee[32] Tulluu [r.1855-1918] had plenty of gold as well as ivory. He also insists that Jootee had administered the wealthy as well as densely populated territory.[33]

Needless to say, the extraction of marketable mineral ores such as gold and iron could not be accomplished without the effort of miners and their methods of extraction. In connection with such an activity, both oral and written sources agree that the Oromo people in Wallagga as well as the Bertha and the Gumuz people in Beni Shangul carried out the extraction of mineral resources in the western frontier area in the 19th century.[34] In terms of gender, it could be suggested that men were the dominant group to participate in this activity. Even, some sources

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[31] Young, "Doing Regional…," pp.21-23.

[32] Jootee was also known as *Abbaa* Iggu in Qellam tradition. See Nagaso Gidada, "Oromo Historical Poems and Songs: Conquest and Exploitation in Western Wallaga, 1886-1927," *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*, 29 (1983), p328.

[33] Ambachew, *ከእንጦጦ...*(*From Entoto* …,) p.96.

[34] Informants: Dabalaa Simaa and *Abbaa* Almamun Babakir; For the Oromo's engagement in gold extraction, see H. Weld Blundell, "Exploration in the Abai Basin, Abyssinia," *The Geographical Journal*, 27, 6(1906), pp.544-545; Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935*(Addis Ababa: Haile Sillassie I University Press, 1968), p.232 and for the Bertha and the Gumuz people engaging in gold mining, see Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,p.2 and John Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers* (James Currey, 2011), p.84.

further state that women gave support to their counterparts. According to these sources, women were mainly needed to separate and refine gold from crude sand and gravel materials, found in alluvial deposits.[35] In terms of methods, Alessandro Triulzi, suggests that in the late 1870s the skilful digging of pits and shaft installations for the extraction of gold in traditional method were carried out in Dul area in Komosha and in Bomu area in Beni Shangul.[36] But he confined his account of gold mining activities largely to Beni Shangul and only to a few localities of Wallagga near Beni Shangul.

However, in the 19th century besides the mining industry, the people of Wallagga were engaged in other types of economic activities. Alexander Bulatovich, who travelled to Leeqaa, to other parts of Wallagga and Jimmaa in the 1890s, admired the prosperity of the local people who were living in these rich regions. He tells us that these were the richest people who were engaged in the cultivation of cereals and cotton, artisanal activity and the extraction of gold.[37] Similarly, other writers mention that the economic activities of Wallagga were diversified and included agriculture, commerce and handicrafts.[38] From this description, it follows that in the 19th and the 20th centuries the local economy of Wallagga accommodated people who had different occupations such as farmers, merchants, miners and artisans.

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[35]See the women portrait who were engaged in panning gold in Wallagga in Blundell, "Exploration…," p.549;. See also Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.232.

[36]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,p.134.

[37]Ambachew, ከእንጦጦ...(*From Entoto* …,) p.98.

[38]Hailu, "The Geographic, I Eastern Wollega…," p.41; Birhanu Dibaba, "A Historical Study of Trade in North Eastern Illubabor and South Western Wallaga," BA Senior Essay (History, Haile Sillassie I University,1973), p.3; Bartels, *Oromo Religion*…p.13.

From the above discussion, generally, we understand that in the 19th century mining as an economic activity and miners as extractors of mineral resources were recognized in the local economy of Wallagga and Beni Shangul.

Sources also suggest that gold extractors among the western frontier society such as the Bertha and the Gumuz came under foreign rule in the 19th century.[39] Such narrative of the foreign rule is also found in the account of the Dutch traveler, Schuver. However, Schuver did not travel further west to the goldfields of Laalo Qile and the iron localities of Gulliso and Ayraa in western Wallagga which perhaps made him to exclude the gold and iron mining activities of these localities in his account. Whatsoever, according to Schuver and Triulzi, the Bertha people of Beni Shangul along the Sudanese border became the victim of the Turco-Egyptian annexation and administration since the early 1820s.[40]

It is also the conviction of Triulzi and Tesema Ta'a that one of the causes for the Turco-Egyptian annexation of Beni Shangul in the 19th century was the need to own and obtain natural resources abundantly found in Beni Shangul[41]such as gold. Though the Turco-Egyptian came for this purpose, Triulzi informs us that following their coming, unexpectedly, the gold mining activities

[39]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,pp.2,94,96, 133, 137 and Tesema Ta'a, "Prologue to the Ethio-Sudanese Frontier," in *Kasa and Kasa : Papers on the Lives, Times and Images of Tewodros II and Yohanes IV,158-1889* (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies,1990), pp.273-275.

[40]Since the specific year of the Turco-Egyptian annexation of Beni Shangul varies from sources to sources, I used the date 1820s for this issue in this dissertation. For example, Schuver and Markakis state that the event took place in 1821 but Triulzi suggests that the Egyptian reached the Bertha land in 1822. For the variation in the date of this event, see James, et al., *Juan Maria Schuver's*…, p.27; Markakis, *Ethiopia: The Last*…, p. 84 and Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…, p.94.

[41]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…, p.94 and Tesema, "Prologue to…," p.273.

in Beni Shangul had seen some changes in the 19th century. However, these changes were realized at the expense of the local Bertha people and the gold miners.[42]

Here, Triulzi's elements of change included different aspects of a history of mining in western Ethiopia which indicates having rich mineral resource could result in subjugation of local people which also affected their means of living. Thus, Triulzi points out that the Turco-Egyptian government controlled the extraction of gold in Beni Shangul in the 19th century and it had made the Bertha to extract gold for that government.[43] According to Schuver, during that time one of the precious metal rich localities from which the Turco-Egyptian extracted gold was the Jebel-Dul goldfield.[44]

Triulzi also suggests that the period of Turco-Egyptian administration was a factor for the progress seen in Beni Shangul both in the "extraction and commercialization of gold."[45] But he concludes that gold extraction in the 19th century separated the Bertha people from farming and cattle rearing and made them gold miners in their localities.[46] Schuver adds that in the mid 19th century the Turco-Egyptian government established military camps at Kamamili, Dina and Fakamkum around the Dabus River and at Fanaoge away from the Dabus environs in order to safeguard the extraction of gold in Beni Shangul.[47] From this discussion, on the whole it can be

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[42]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,, pp.96, 133, 137. According to Schuver, the local people had lost their freedom and were exposed to taxation. See James, et al., *Juan Maria Schuver's*…, p.27.

[43]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,pp.96, 133, 137

[44]James, et al., *Juan Maria Schuver's*…, p.316.

[45]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,p.133.

[46]*Ibid.*, p.137.

[47]James, et al., *Juan Maria Schuver's*…,p.27

suggested that the period of the Turco-Egyptian administration combined both success and challenge particularly to gold miners and their actitivites in Beni Shangul in the 19th century.

But in the 19th century besides compelling the western frontier society to extract gold, the Turco-Egyptian administration collected gold tribute from the inhabitants of Beni Shangul, Komosha and Kehli. This administration used tribute system as a means of obtaining gold from these localities. Therefore, such system had made the governors of these localities to submit one thousand five hundred *wäqets* of gold tribute annually to the Turco-Egyptian administration in the 19th century.[48] On the whole, the situation among the Bertha [and the Gumuz] people in the 19th was worsened because of socio-economic factors such as increasing tribute and tax levied on them. Stories even described the Bertha people as devoid of alternatives other than extracting gold for their administrators in order to escape from enslavement. In the course of time, the gold extractors also fell under heavy pressure as they began to send tribute [in gold and other goods] to the central government of Ethiopia.[49]

During the incorporation of Wallagga into Ethiopia, though the descriptions of travelers like Bulatovich and Count Gleichen exclude the gold mining activities of some places of Wallagga located at far distance from Beni Shangul, places like Mexxi-Waabaraa in Laalo Qile in west Wallagga were among the centers for the extraction of gold in 1887/88. As a result, the *qoro* whom Gobana Daacce sent to Laalo Qile such as *Balambäras* Xiqu Ebichoo and *Fitawrari* Getanäh Qotaa were engaged in the extraction of gold in Mexxi-Waabaraa. From a document which is associated with these *qoros*, we understand that several events happened in connection

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[48] *Ibid.*, p.29.

[49] Tesema, "Prologue to…," pp.274-275.

with the traditional method of extraction of gold in Waabaraa in the last quarter of the 19th century. For instance, we understand that sand gravel became the source of obtaining red gold through traditional method of extraction of gold which involved the use of human labor to bring the sand gravel from Mexxi-Waabaraa to the village of the *qoros*, Xuqi. We also understand that the gold miners of this area had used bowl and pestle as tools of crushing and grinding the sand gravel local knowns as *cirracha* and finally they were engaged in the activity of refining gold traditionally.[50] In conclusion we realize that at the end of the 19th century some local governors of Wallagga on behalf of the central government of Ethiopia had developed the interest to own some goldfields located in west Wallagga and their output.

At the national level, the incorporation[51]of Wallagga and Beni Shangul into Ethiopia made the central government of Ethiopia to obtain gold from these territories continuously. For instance, following incorporation, the inhabitants of some localities of Wallagga like Leeqaa [Qellam], Leeqaa [Naqamtee] and Beni Shangul, altogether, through gold tribute system were used to provide upto one thousand five hundred ounces of gold to the central government of Ethiopia. Particularly, this was practiced during the reigns of local governors like Jootee Tulluu, Kumsaa Morodaa and Sheikh Khojale Al Hassan who were the rulers of these three rich localities

[50]Bäkurä Tsion Ṯilahun to Ministry of Interior, Report, 28.7.1963E.C., National Archive and Library Agency (Hereafter, NALA), Ministry of Interior, File no.17.1.10.22.06, Folder no.17.1.10.22.

[51]Pankhurst indicates that Menilek II controlled Wallagga in 1886 though Terrefe says large parts of Wallagga except Beni Shangul and places near to the River Abay came under Menilek II in 1889. But Tesema insists that Wallagga was incorporated into Ethiopia between 1880-1890. With respect to such event, however, the date 1886 is preferable since it is not too broad and too late as compared to the dates listed here. For the dates 1886, 1889 and 1880-1890 see Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.232; Terrefe, "The Unification…," p.81 and Tesema, "The Oromo of Wollega…," p.82 respectively. But the incorporation of Beni Shangul into the country was completed in 1898. See Atieb Ahmed, "*Sheikh* Khojele….," 1973), p.50 [49].

respectively.[52] Such practice also continued especially under the successors of Jootee and Kumsaa. Here, it appears that the local people of Wallagga, their governors and goldfields had made their own contributions to the central treasury in Addis Ababa not to run out of gold in the 19th and the 20th centuries.

But with respect to active goldfields found in Wallagga in the 19th century, Najjoo, Leeqaa Qellam, Dhidheessaa, Dabus, Mexxi-Waabaraa, Sirqole and Tumat areas could be mentioned. Specifically, Najjoo was renowned for its goldfield of Kattaa[53] in the 19th century. It was also stated that Leeqaa Qellam produced large amount of gold which went beyond its own consumption and sufficiently supported people's demand of gold in the center in the 19th century.[54] Moreover, Weld Blundell tells us that especially Dhidheessaa supported an impressive gold extraction activity and that gold work was undertaken around the Dabus and the Nile Rivers.[55] Another active goldfield in the 19th century, the Mexxi-Waabaraa, makes us to suggest that several other goldfields probably existed in Wallagga during that time.[56] Similarly, localities

[52]For local governors of Wallagga paying tribute in gold to the central government, see Ambachew, ከእንጦጦ...(*From Entoto* …,) p.224 and Bairu Tafla, "Four Ethiopian Biographies: *Däjjazmač* Gärmamé, *Däjjazmač* Gäbrä-Egzi'abehér Moroda, *Däjjazmač* Balča and *Käntiba* Gäbru Dästa," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 7, 2 (1969), p.13; Terrefe , "The Unification…," pp.80-83; Bahru , "*Dejazmach* Jote Tullu…," p.40 ; Atieb, "*Sheikh* Khojele…," p.61; Tesema Ta'a,"Administration of Leqa Neqemte Between 1850-1923," BA Senior Essay (History, Addis Ababa University, 1976), p.29; *Idem*., "The Oromo of Wollega …," pp.72-73,81, 87; *Idem.*, "The Political Economy…," pp.159-160, 170, 174 ; as cited in Triulzi, *Salt, Gold…*,p.173 and *Idem.*, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa…," pp.58-59.

[53]Almaz Taffesse, "History of Nedjo Town: Foundation, Growth and Development up to 1941," BA Senior Essay (History, Addis Ababa University,1987), p.6.

[54] Bahru , "*Dejazmach* Jote Tullu…," p.38; as cited in Birhanu, "A Historical Study of Trade…," p.27.

[55]Blundell, "Exploration …," p.544. See also Pankhurst, *Economic History…*,p.232.

[56]For Mexxi-Waabaraa gold mining site, see Bäkurä Tsion to Ministry of Interior, 28.7.1963E.C., NALA, File no.17.1.10.22.06, Folder no.17.1.10.22.

like Sirqole, the Tumat valley [and Kurmuk] could also be mentioned as notable sites for the extraction of gold[57] in Beni Shangul in the 19th century.

Other historical developments which took place in mining activities at the turn of the 19th century were Menilek's sending of mining engineers [like Camboul] to Wallagga and his predisposition towards the extraction of gold in Wallagga and other mineral resources in different parts of Ethiopia.[58] This situation also continued in the early 20th century perhaps because of the economic and social values which gold had provided to its accumulators. As sources indicate, it was to fulfill this interest of Menilek that Camboul, the French national, since 1896 devoted six years in prospecting and exploring precious metals in Wallagga and Enarya.[59] Besides, it emerges from the 1897 British traveler Count Gleichen that Menilek was very interested to obtain gold from west of Leeqaa [Naqamtee] and Beni Shangul.[60] In his account Gleichen also indentifies Harar as the market hub to sell rings made from gold and the buyers were the Hindus who bought these beads for a resell in "the Indian market."[61] Moreover, Gleichen tells us an account which historians like Harold Marcus[62] shared. Thus, he says that the Beni Shangul and

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[57]Triulzi, *Salt, Gold*…,p.2.

[58]Count Gleichen, *With Mission to Menelik, 1897*(London: Eduard Arnold, 1898), pp.170-171. See also Pankhurst, *Economic History*…,p.232. Here, during that time some people said that there was no ample gold in areas south of Leeqaa ad Bini Shangul. But Gleichen was very cynical of this statement claiming that people circulated this statement since they had [hidden] personal interest. See Gleichen, *With Mission*…,p.170.

[59]Pankhurst, *Economic History*…,p.232 and Ministry of Mines and Energy,"*የማእድንና ሀይል ምንጭ ሚኒስ{ር ታሪክ*"("History of the Ministry of Mines and Energy,") (1976E.C.), p.14. However, this unpublished document of the Ministry of Mines and Energy which inappropriately uses G.C. and E.C. states that Camboul started his gold prospecting and exploration activities in Wallagga and Enarya in 1898 [G.C.]. See Ministry of Mines and Energy"*የማእድን ታሪክ...*"("History of the Ministry…,") p.14.

[60]Gleichen, *With Mission*…, pp. 170-171.

[61]Gleichen further states that during that time, the price of an ounce of gold increased from sixteen dollars [Maria Theresa thalers] to twenty eight dollars. See *Ibid*, p.171.

[62]See Harold Marcus, "The Rodd Mission of 1897," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 3, 2(1965), p.29,fn.26.

Leeqaa goldfields came under the control of Menilek although the Mahdists were not happy by Menilek's control of these goldfields.[63] They were not happy because they wanted to control these goldfields, had they won the battle they fought against Gobana and his soldiers in Wallagga at the end of 19th century. Though we have looked at the historical setting briefly, some guiding principles, sources and methods which this dissertation relies on are provided as follows.

1.4 Concepts, Sources and Methodology

1.4.1 Concepts

This dissertation has used different concepts to support the analysis and interpretation of various issues closely related to mining industry at the local and national levels. Among these, to support the analysis of socio-economic and administrative issues of mining activities, I have used the concept of political economy. Writers like Masao Kiraha state that, "What political economy studies are the relations of production, distribution, exchange and consumption, and the laws of their development."[64] Political economy also holds the notion of progress which it takes from Enlightenment thinkers[65] to look at various issues which exist in modern society in line with such an idea. It is also for the advancement of society that natural resources like mineral ores are extracted although their extraction which leads to advancement requires considerable investment, the undertaking of prospecting and exploration activities scientifically and widely, suitable and applicable economic and mining policies and others.

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[63] Gleichen, *With Mission…*, p.171.

[64] Masao Kiraha, "Socialism and Political Economy," *Economic Review, The Kyoto University* XXXIV, 2(1964), p.36.

[65] Don Robotham, "Political Economy," In James Carrier(ed), *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2005), p.51.

However, since the scope of political economy is very wide, in this dissertation its idea is limited to the discussion of issues of mining activities connected with socio-economic, administrative and institutional variables influenced by mining agents like foreign concessionaires and their companies, government and miners. Particularly, in this dissertation issues like the presence of foreign companies in Wallagga, some issues of labor, production of gold and platinum, the extraction and administrative activities of government as well as mining agents' use of political economy instruments such as agreements, proclamations, regulations and policies to extract precious metals in the study area are the subject matters of political economy.

As issues of mining industry they require the concept of political economy because it is the major objective of political economy to analyze social, political and economic forces like them which affect "the state, economy and the ideology"[66] of society. Political economy also focuses on the "mode of production"[67]which is the combined result of the "relation of production and the forces of production."[68] Based on this statement, connecting the idea of "mode of production" with labor forces, i.e., the miners, the artisanal methods and tools of extracting gold and platinum can make us to understand such issues of the dissertation appropriately.

Besides, the extraction and use of mineral resources in the study area and in other parts of Ethiopia had invited foreign companies. Here, political economy also considers the engagement of international companies in the extraction of mineral resources outside the home countries of these companies. But critique on political economy suggests that its capitalization on the idea of

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[66]Suraj Gupta, "Why Political Economy?" *Indian Economic Review*, 27(1992), p.284.

[67]Robotham, "Political…," p.41.

[68]*Ibid*., pp.43-44.

production has compelled it to marginalize the discussion on course of actions of "exchange and accumulation of surplus value."[69] Though this is the case, foreign states have used to discharge capital to other places through [using their companies], establishing commercial relations and through providing aid to their partners in order to obtain valuable resources which are not found in their territories.[70]

From this discussion, it is clear that the concept of political economy benefits this dissertation. Because in this dissertation mining activity as the subject of inquiry is closely associated with socio-economic and political factors elaborated above. Hence, in this dissertation the concept of political economy supports my analysis of some issues of gold and platinum mining industry in chapters two, four and seven.

In addition to the concept of political economy, the different chapters of this dissertation have used the term concession which needs conceptual discussion that takes into account the global and the national context of granting and taking mining agreements.

At the global level, in the Caribbean region concessions to extract mineral wealth are very alluring and have invited foreign companies of states, like United Kingdom and USA, and the transnational companies or companies of several nations.[71] Similarly, these companies had been engaged in Africa to extract various mineral resources of the African states. Particularly, during the colonial period the foreign companies obtained the rights and privileges to work on mineral

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[69]*Ibid*., p.50.

[70]David B. Brooks and P. W. Andrews, "Mineral Resources, Economic Growth, and World Population," *Science*, 185, 4145 (1974), p.19.

[71]Jeb Sprague, "From International to Transnational Mining: The Industry's Shifting Political Economy and the Caribbean," *Caribbean Studies*, 43, 1 (2015), pp.73-75.

lands of Africa and concessions were given to them by local governors after these governors had obtained the goodwill of the colonial administrators to grant concessions for companies and individuals for long period of time.[72] In the case of Ethiopia, especially, in Wallagga as this dissertation indicates in chapters two, three, four and six, however, it was the responsibility of the rulers of the central government of Ethiopia to grant mining concessions to concessionaires and foreign companies.

Meanwhile, concession which ties the parties in agreement together could be understood as, "An act (grant, permission, license, clearance…) by a state which allows the citizens of that state, some other state or foreign subjects to carryout activities on its territory which are otherwise prohibited."[73] This concept of concession is broader and more inclusive. Under this concept, both the foreign nationals and members of the inhabitants of the concession granter country are invited to engage in some activities. The concept is also suitable to the discussion of concession as well as concession takers in chapters two, three, four and six of this dissertation. But the meaning of concession or agreement which authors, like Kenneth Carlston, has given or confines the idea of concession to a kind of mechanism which is used to arrive at some kind of arrangements between a state and foreign financier for mutual purpose.[74] Carlston also suggests that concession granting and taking developed as a result of an "International economic

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[72]Samuel K. Asante, "Restructuring Transnational Mineral Agreements," *The American Journal of International Law*, 73, 3(1979), p.338.

[73]Vilim Gorenc and Katarina Ivić-Doolan, "Concession Agreement," *Acta Turistica*, 1, 2(1989), p.179.

[74]Kenneth Carlston, "Concession Agreements and Nationalization," *The American Journal of International Law*, 52, 2 (1958), p.260.

development contract."[75] This and other factors perhaps had forced Ethiopia to open its door to the concessionaires in the 20th century in places like Wallagga.

Contrary to the idea of Carlston, authors who have studied concession at the global level in broader terms indicate that concession as an idea comprises political and economic types of agreements.[76]According to these authors, "political concession" was common in the 19th century during the colonial period and concluded between different states which, "Often contain[s] a limit on the sovereignty of the granting state, particularly over ports or military, naval and air force bases."[77] However, the type of concession experimented in Ethiopia in places like Wallagga in the 20th century was the economic one. This type of concession is "Granted in agreements between a state and a concessionaire which is not a state. If the concessionaire is [a] foreign[er], the concession grants him certain privileges that give him rights which are otherwise not applicable to foreigners according to the laws of the granting state."[78]

In contemporary period as a result of some changes which happened in concession the notion of a concessionaire is closely associated with an investor who participates in developmental activities. In relation to this, states in Africa which have extractable mineral wealth have invited foreign investors mainly because they do not have adequate financial, technological and professional personnel as well as market which the mining industry requires.[79] Besides, the

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[75]*Ibid*., p.260.

[76]Gorenc and Ivić-Doolan, "Concession Agree…," p.179.

[77]*Ibid.*, p.180.

[78]Gorenc and Ivić-Doolan, "Concession Agree…," p.181.

[79]Augustus A. Agyemang, "Protecting Natural Resource Contracts from National Measures in Africa: Some Comparisons with the Australian Experience," *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 25, 3(1992), pp.273, 276.

companies of the foreign financiers in contemporary period have become companies of several nations, i.e., some of them are changed, "To a globalized industry of transnational corporations, [with flexible] labor, and a host of sub-contractors and exploratory firms."[80]

At the national level, in the 20th century the government of Ethiopia had given various concessions to foreigners and foreign companies as well as to domestic concessionaires. Particularly, European companies had obtained concessions for railway, banking, dam building, plantation agriculture, road building and mineral resource extraction. Therefore, in the case of Ethiopia the concept of concession is mainly related to these various economic and infrastructural activities undertaken in the country in the 20th century.

To begin with, there was railway concession granted to Alfred Ilg and Léon Chefneux in 1894 in Ethiopia. The concessionaires later, began their activity of connecting Ethiopia with Djibouti through railway line under *the Compagnie Impériale des Chemins des Fer Ethiopiens*.[81] Thus, such railway agreement became one of the earliest types of accord to mention the idea of concession in Ethiopia. It connected the idea of concession with how much capital such an enterprise had raised from its financiers, how much money it spent to accomplish the railway work as well as how shares were distributed and redistributed among the shareholders of the company.[82]

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[80]Sprague, "From International…," p.73.

[81]Shiferaw Bekele, "The Ethiopian Railway and British Finance Capital, 1896-1902," *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente*, 46, 3 (1991), p.351.

[82]For the financial issue and the distribution of shares among the financiers, see *Ibid*., p. 352 and pp.370-374 respectively.

In another discussion Charles Schaefer has related the idea of concession in Ethiopia in the early 20th century to financial institution. Schaefer has connected the discussion of the concession associated with financial institution in the country with the Bank of Abyssinia which was established in 1905. He has analyzed how the Bank of Abyssinia promoted the British interest in the country particularly between 1906-1909 although later, the bank functioned as semi-independent financial institution between 1915-1930.[83]

Moreover, some historical writings have dealt with issues of mining concessions in Ethiopia in the 20th century. These writings have looked at gold and platinum concessions in relation to agreements given to extract metallic mineral ores in the country. However, in terms of depth Bahru's discussion of concession, making the German national Arnold Holtz the principal issue of "concession hunter" is as broader as the writings of James McCann and Schaefer who have written on dam building and banking concessions in Ethiopia in the early 20th century respectively. But Bahru provides us with an international context of the role of individual concessionaires, like Holtz, economic interests which European states had in Ethiopia and attempts which foreign mining agents had made to experiment the idea of neo-colonialism in mining concessions in the country in the early 20th century.[84] In his PhD dissertation Bahru has also raised the idea of mining concessions in the country. He has discussed the issue of mining

[83]For the establishment of the Bank of Abyssinia, for its functions connected with the British interest in the country and for its semi-independent status, see Charles Schaefer, "The Politics of Banking: The Bank of Abyssinia, 1905-1931," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 25, 2(1992), p.364, pp.369 and 388, and p.389 respectively. The bank obtained financial services, like "bullion" and money transfer, from the British Legation in Addis Ababa and equally it served the Foreign Office by giving pieces of information on, "the Ethiopian court, customs, and commercial sector." See *Ibid.*, p.369.

[84]Bahru,"Concessions and Concession-Hunters…," pp.365-383.

concessions in connection with the rubber and the coffee plantation as well as with respect to efforts which Ethiopia exerted to join the global economy in the early 20th century.[85]

But some deals for concessions between the government of Ethiopia and foreigners became complex in the 20th century. Complexities existed because of contradictory interests emerged between concession providers and concession takers. In such case, McCann provides us with the complex nature of implementing dam building concession which primarily involved the British financiers and subsequently the American financiers to build a dam on Lake Tana and factors why building the dam was prolonged and failed in the early 20th century.[86] Some of the factors which delayed building the dam were *Ras* Tafari's having his own reservation on the dam, [Tafari's becoming half-hearted on the matter] and his invitation of other contestants, the Americans, to build the dam.[87]

Similarly, the dissertation uses the concept of artisanal mining activity or small scale mining activity in different chapters. Indeed, this term has different contexts when it is used in different disciplines. But in this dissertation it is related to the following ideas taken from different authors who have used this concept for their study of economic activities such as mining and commerce in some African countries. In this instance, Crispin Kinabo characterizes artisanal mining or small scale mining with the activities of digging the surface of the earth, the use of ordinary tools for digging and the frequent use of activities such as crushing and fusing materials to obtain

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[85]*Idem*.,"Relations Between…," pp.386-435.

[86]James McCann, "Ethiopia, Britain and Negotiations for the Lake Tana Dam, 1922-1935," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 14, 4(1981), pp. 667-699.

[87]*Ibid*., pp.668, 679, 686-690.

precious metals like gold.[88] Artisanal mining is also connected with the use of less advanced tools and methods as well as unskilled labor in mining activity which leads to inefficient mineral resource returns.[89] Besides, its concept encompasses "informal labor" which requires caution while enrolling such workforces as lawful and formal.[90]

Moreover, literature on the concept of artisanal mining widely associates workforces of artisanal mining with experiencing several socio-economic and political problems. These have included becoming victims of various diseases, lacking social insecurity and legal protection to their property, having no link with financial institutions to obtain capital for their work, exposing land to environmental damages and engaging in different crimes.[91]

But the meanings and the ideas of other important terms and concepts taken from other related disciplines and used in this dissertation such as neo-colonialism, structural interdependence, compound system, enterprise of colonization, structural continuity, informal economy and others are provided in different chapters of the dissertation.

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[88]Crispin Kinabo, "A Socio-economic Study of Small-Scale Mining, Tanzania," In Gavin M. Hilson (ed.), *The Socio-Economic Impacts of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Developing Countries* (Taylor and Francis e-library, 2005), p.275.

[89]As cited in Showers Mawowa, "The Political Economy of Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining in Central Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 4(2013), p.922.

[90]Boris Verbrugge, et.al, "Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining: Protecting Those 'Doing the Dirty Work'" IIED Briefing, *International Institute for Environment and Development*, (2014), np.

[91]T. Zvarivadza, "Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining as a Challenge and Possible Contributor to Sustainable Development," *Resources Policy*, 56 (2018), pp.49-50.

1.4.2 Sources and Methodology

The idea of doing a study on mining activity came to my mind before 2015 or before I have enrolled as a PhD student in the department of History at Addis Ababa University. During that time, I thought to work on my PhD as "A History of Mining Activities in Ethiopia." I got this idea while reading secondary sources since 2011. While reading these sources, I realized that historical studies on Ethiopia do not address the issue of mining activities in-depth. Since then, I began to collect sources which have relevance to my study. After I have enrolled as a PhD student, however, I got the opportunity to rethink on the breadth of my topic and later, I made it specific discussing it with my advisor and instructors at the PhD level.

During the discussion of my topic with instructors, I began to collect primary sources from Addis Ababa. In Addis Ababa I collected primary sources from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) in July 2015. Among these, I collected some British Foreign Office documents which are available as microfilm records. They consist of diplomatic correspondences, reports, concession agreements and treaties. In this dissertation they give pictures to the issues of mining industry in Wallagga and Ethiopia which were connected with foreign concessionaires and companies during the period between the 1890s to the early 1940s. Particularly, these Foreign Office documents are very important to structure the ideas of this dissertation from chapter two to chapter six.

However, these documents have their own drawbacks. Most of them focused on the diplomatic and political activities during the period mentioned above and transmitted the voices of the Foreign Office. As a result, they are silent on some social issues and only a few of them deal with the output of precious metals in Wallagga. But the use of both written and oral primary sources which are collected from Wallagga and Addis Ababa make the dissertation to fill in this gap.

Next, I visited the present-day office of the Ministry of Mines in 2016. But I was told to search for the archival documents of the former Mines Office and the Ministry of Mines in the library of the Geological Survey Association of Ethiopia. In this library, however, what I obtained were not the archival documents of the Ministry of Mines. Rather, they were technical studies which both the foreign and the Ethiopian geologists have conducted on the geology and mineral resources of the different areas of Ethiopia including Wallagga. These studies deal with technical issues which are not within the scope of this dissertation like the technical aspects of mineralogy, analyzing samples of mineral soils and rocks. Nevertheless, some of the technical studies are used in this dissertation to provide information on the geological features of some mining localities in Wallagga. Some of them have also useful pieces of information on the mining activities which were undertaken in Wallagga in the period under study and can be used to support different issues in this dissertation.

Following this, I visited Wäldä Mäsqäl Archival Center in Addis Ababa in 2016. Many of the collections of this archival center focus on land tenure. Mixed with the folders of land tenure, however, I found some archival documents like letters and reports which consider a few issues of mining activities in Wallagga between 1941-1991. The problem of these documents is that they rarely mention issues such as gold extraction and its exchange by local people in Wallagga between 1941-1991. Therefore, to get further ideas on these and other issues of this dissertation between 1941-1991 and interpret them well, it became essential to use other primary sources collected from the National Archive and Library Agency of Ethiopia, located in Addis Ababa.

Next, from June to August 2016 and in some months of 2017 I searched for archival documents in this center. Finally, I was lucky to get the old archival documents of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Mines, the Ministry of Interior and documents of Crown Prince *Gebbi* in this center.

Particularly, the records of the Ministry of Mines consist of collections of archival documents which directly focused on mining activities undertaken in Wallagga between 1941-1991. Some of these documents are official letters, appeals of the Yubdo platinum workers, production of platinum and reports of the Ministry of Mines. These documents are very important to study gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga between 1941-1974 and 1974-1991 in chapter six and chapter seven respectively. Some of the issues which these documents consider in those years in general are prospecting for precious metals, exploration and extraction activities that the government of Ethiopia and other organizations had carried out in Wallagga, granting concessions, questions over who should own mines, the Yubdo platinum field, the problems of the miners and the mining industry as well as the illegal gold trade in Wallagga.

In this center I was also able to collect various archival documents like official letters and reports which focused on socio-economic and political issues of the former Province or Governorate General of Wallagga. These documents were part of the collections of documents of the former Ministry of Interior of Ethiopia. They deal with issues of concession, the activity of Yubdo platinum field and the informal gold extraction in Wallagga between 1974-1991. However, they provide fragmentary ideas on these issues since their major focus was on how the government could administer Wallagga and its people. Besides, they do not give attention to issues of gold and platinum mining activity in Wallagga in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. To fill in this gap, therefore collecting primary sources such as travelers' accounts and oral sources were mandatory.

Thus, in this dissertation, for historical developments of mining industry which occurred in Wallagga in the 19th and the early 20th centuries, travelers' accounts have been collected and used. These sources are collected from the libraries of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and the French Center for Ethiopian Studies. Thus, the dissertation uses the travelers' accounts of Europeans such as Schuver, Bulatovich, Gleichen, Blundell, Hayter and E.J. Bartleet who focused on Wallagga and its people in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Travelers' accounts on Wallagga in general provide bits of information on the prosperity of Wallagga in gold, methods of gold extraction, the situation of the miners, concessionaires and the central government of Ethiopia. But some of these accounts were digressed from the main issues they wanted to address in their reports. For example, Frank Hayter, the British traveler in the 1920s, in his report deals with hunting and leisure activities while he set out to address the issues of gold mining and concessions in Wallagga as his major themes.[92] It means some of these accounts lost their focus. They also tend to downplay the socio-economic, cultural and political beliefs of the people of Wallagga.

In addition to these travelers' accounts, the dissertation uses different newspapers which are found in the IES such as *Addis Zämän*, *Bi̱rhanina Sälam*, *Nägarit Gazeta* and the Ethiopian Herald. But to obtain more firsthand information and to deal with some social, economic and political issues which some written primary sources from the center overlooked and to obtain

[92]For instance, many chapters in his account entitled as Gold *of Ethiopia* (London: Stanley Paul and Co. Ltd, 1936), do not deal with the issue of gold.

local views on mining industry in Wallagga, it was indispensible to collect both written and oral primary sources from Wallagga and analyze them.

Moreover, I went to my study area to collect these written and oral sources after some delays, since my plans of getting there had failed several times due to the political unrest unleashed in the country and continued in 2017 and 2018. Thus, like some parts of the country, the political unrest has been very strong in Wallagga for a couple of years since Wallagga is one of the centers of the political movements during that time and afterwards. However, at the end I travelled to Wallagga in May 2018 and collected some written and oral primary sources from there at the moment when the unrest was slackened off for short period of time. On the whole, however, during that time and until now the insecurity which is noticed in Wallagga has made the data collectors not to move freely and gather the sources needed for their studies.

But to collect these archival documents and oral sources in Wallagga, I visited towns like Naqamtee, Gimbii, Ayraa, Laalo Qile, Yubdo and Najjoo. I also visited Assosa, the center of the present day Beni Shangul National Regional State. However, only a few of these towns have made archival documents available in their archival and repository centers.

Among these towns, first, I collected archival documents from Naqamtee, Wallagga museum. In this museum there are official letters and different receipts of revenue collection which were grouped into four folders. These documents were produced during the period of *Däjazmach* Kumsaa Morodaa (Gäbrä Egzi'abher) (r.1889-1923) and his son and successor Hambisaa Kumsaa (*Däjazmach* Habtä Mariam Gäbrä Egzi'abher) (r.1924-1936). Many of these documents are found in Triulzi's and Tesema's transcribed extracts of documents published in 1996 E.C.

(2003-2004)[93] and are also used in this dissertation. The archival documents in Wallagga museum raise the issues of sending gold from Wallagga to the center, the activity of foreign concessionaires, gold prospecting activity and the scarcity of gold in Wallagga in the early 20th century. Thus, these documents are important to deal with some socio-economic issues of the mining industry in Wallagga which the British foreign office documents have overlooked. They are important to deal with these issues in chapter two and three of this dissertation. Here, I was also successful to obtain some archival documents of the East Wallagga administration which provide understanding on a few issues of mining industry in Wallagga between 1941-1991. Part of these archival documents were brought to Addis Ababa by the current government officials and deposited at Oromia Cultural Center.

In Wallagga I also obtained a few documents from individuals in Yubdo. But in towns like Gimbii, Ayraa, Laalo Qile and Najjoo I could not find archival documents which deal with my study for the reason that these documents were either burned or lost as ‘unwanted’ papers.

Besides, I and my assistants collected oral histories from informants who have been living in gold, platinum and iron rich districts of Wallagga. These districts were Yubdo, Laalo Qile, Ayraa and Najjoo. Some informants from the town of Assosa were also interviewed. In all these places I got five data collectors and I worked with them. Above all, these data collectors assisted me to select informants who knew my issues well. They also assisted me to communicate easily with these informants since the data collectors and these informants knew each other and they have been living together for many years in those districts. But I carefully selected and interviewed

[93] For the details, see Tesema Ta’a and Alessandro Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ ሰነዶች ከ1880ዎቹ እስከ 1920ዎቹ እንደ አውሮፓ አቆጣጠር* (*Documents for Wallagga History, 1880s-1920s E.C.)* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1996E.C.

informants who participated in mining activities in Wallagga, who have better understanding on my study, who remember events connected with my study very well and informants who have participated in the transactions of gold or platinum in Wallagga. In all these districts I interviewed my informants in *Afaan* Oromo. But in Assosa I interviewed the Bertha informants in Amharic since these informants knew Amharic language.

Although they occasionally preferred to remain silent, these informants provided me with wide ideas on many issues of my dissertation which cover long period of time. Therefore, in this dissertation I use pieces of information collected from them to analyze and support the issues of miners and mining activities as well as the impacts that these activities had created on the ecosystem in Wallagga during the study period.

Particularly, they told me the socio-economic, political and environmental aspects of mining activities in Wallagga during the study period. Thus, many of them have better understanding on issues such as the lives of miners in Wallagga, the mineral resources of Wallagga and the engagement of the central government in extracting the precious metals of Wallagga, the platinum mines of Yubdo and the impacts of mining activities on the land and the people of Wallagga.

However, some informants were reluctant to provide information on mining activities which were undertaken in Wallagga in the 19th century. This is because of the loss of memory which impeded them to remember easily events which took place in the 19th century. Some informants also do not remember dates when exactly some mining events had happened in Wallagga. But to overcome the problem of dates, attempts are made in this dissertation to obtain the reliable dates of events from other written sources.

Field research, however, makes some PhD students to face various challenges. In this case I faced some challenges in Najjoo, Laalo Qile and Assosa in 2018. To begin with, in Najjoo with one of my assistant data collectors we went to the market hub of the town of Najjoo to find informants and know how gold miners sell gold to merchants in Najjoo. Incidentally, my research assistant saw some *qeerros* in the market hub and in the dialogue he held with them he informed them that we came to Najjoo to collect data on mining activities in Wallagga and he requested their cooperation to provide us with some names of gold miners in Najjoo. However, the *qeerros* were unhappy since they were cynical about us. They refused to give us the names of these miners suspecting that we went there to plunder their gold. An event which exacerbated this situation was the coming of some Chinese [foreigners] to Najjoo to prospect for the Degero goldfield before our arrival. But due to the suspicion of plundering gold, *qeerros* and some local people of Najjoo chased out these Chinese [foreigners] from Degero. After exchanging some dialogue with the *qeerros*, however, we left them in the market hub to search for other informants in other parts of Najjoo.

As I moved from district to district, new problems began to emerge. But I thought that the problem which I faced in Laalo Qile and Assosa was also shared by other PhD students of history. That problem was the refusal of reluctant informants to share their knowledge and experience to me. This problem probably emanated from mistrust created between the informants and the data collectors since some informants mistakenly associate academic data collectors with cadres and other secret agents of the government who collect pieces of information for the government for political purpose. The problem can also be associated with informants' lacking awareness on how valuable are the pieces of information collected from them to write their own history.

In addition to oral sources, some secondary sources[94] such as BA senior essays, MA theses, PhD dissertations, books, papers, journal and proceeding articles collected from the libraries of Institute of Ethiopian Studies, from the French Center for Ethiopian Studies and from National Archive and Library Agency of Ethiopia are also used in this dissertation. But the evaluation of these sources is presented in different chapters of this dissertation while analyzing and interpreting pieces of information which come from these sources.

In terms of methodology, what comes is analyzing and interpreting pieces of evidence obtained from the above primary and secondary sources, integrating them into the different issues of the dissertation and arriving at fresh conclusion on extractive industry in Wallaga. With respect to methodology, therefore the dissertation has used a combination of the conventional qualitative and quantitative historical methods of data analysis and interpretation. The qualitative method is used to analyze and interpret the qualitative data by associating them with the socio-economic and political realities which took place both at the local and national levels during the period of the study. Under quantitative method, in the dissertation descriptive statistical analysis such as tables, charts and graphs have been constructed and used to support the analysis and interpretation of some economic issues such as the production, the outflow and the purchase of gold and platinum.

Thus, I have analyzed and interpreted these pieces of information in ways that supported my arguments in different chapters of the dissertation and in ways that provided fresh conclusion on mining industry in Wallagga. Finally, all this is done to produce a local or a regional history of mining activities in Wallagga in the 20th century which has the following chapters.

[94]For some documents and books written in French and Italian languages and used in this dissertation, I relied on Google translate application on the internet to translate these writings into English language.

1.5 Organization of the Chapters

Generally, historical developments of mining industry which took place in Wallagga during the period of the study make this dissertation to have seven chronologically organized chapters. These chapters are divided based on timeline. Specific years which I used as time frame in each chapter are associated with major events which took place during those years which had impacts on mining activities in Wallagga.

As discussed earlier, Chapter one or the introductory chapter consists of the principal issues which the dissertation has to address and how it is going to address them. The general idea of these issues can be grasped from the introductory parts which have dealt with the major themes, objective and central thesis of this dissertation. This chapter also provides highlights of the geological and historical settings of the study area. But how this dissertation addresses its various issues is provided under the part which has dealt with concepts, sources and methodology.

Chapter two is connected with the broader ideas of the engagement of mining agents such as the state, miners, local governors and the concessionaires in the extraction and sharing of gold mineral wealth in Wallagga in the 1900s. It specifically examines how the intensifications of competition among the concessionaires were manifested in the goldfields of Wallagga. It also examines how local miners with their traditional methods of extraction carried out the extraction of gold in Wallagga without getting much progress in the method of extraction of gold. Moreover, the chapter treats issues like which mining agents obtained much more benefit and which one obtained much less benefit from the extraction of gold in Wallagga.

Chapter three discusses the issue of competition among the foreign concessionaires in Wallagga which is not concluded in chapter two. It also deals with the pre-occupation of the central government of Ethiopia with obtaining much more gold from Wallagga between 1910-1924.

Chapter four focuses on how platinum mining in Wallagga provided additional ground for the competitions of the concessionaires over the precious metals found there and how platinum wealth were extracted by Alberto Prasso's French centered company in the 1920s and the Western Abyssinian Mining Syndicate in the early 1930s. This chapter also examines how the local people and the rulers of Wallagga continued to send their gold to the centre in order to fulfill the ever growing gold demand of the central government.

Chapter five starts with providing the events which occurred in some gold and platinum mining sites in Wallagga immediately before the Italian occupation. Then, it investigates the various mining activities that the Italians undertook between 1936-1941 in order to get the gold and platinum wealth of Wallagga. It also looks into the ways which the Italians used to recruit miners from the local people, the roles which these local miners played to extract platinum and the working condition of these miners.

Chapter six considers historical developments which happened in the mining industry in Wallagga during the post liberation period until 1974. This chapter first, takes into consideration the revivals of interests which were seen among the foreign concessionaires to get gold mining concessions in Wallagga. Next, it makes an inquiry into the issues of prospecting, exploring, extracting and owning platinum and gold mining sites in Wallagga. Besides, it assesses the problems of miners and mining activities in Wallagga between 1941-1974.

Chapter seven attempts to shed light on mining activities and related issues which took place in Wallagga between 1974-1991. The chapter explores how the platinum mine of Yubdo continued to supply platinum to the government despite being encircled with many problems. It also examines the informal and the formal extraction of gold as well as the expansion of illegal gold trade in Wallagga. Besides, it looks at the socio-economic questions which platinum miners, daily laborers and the employees of Yubdo Platinum Office raised to the *Därg* government and the reaction of the government to this issue.

Chapter Two

Concessions, Local Miners and the State (1899-1910)

Introduction

As indicated in the introductory chapter, the presence of gold, platinum and other valuable mineral resources brought mining agents such as the foreign concessionaires, the local miners and the central government of Ethiopia together in Wallagga during the period under study. These mining agents mainly got together to extract the above mineral resources and earn benefits from them. Therefore, this chapter exhaustively looks into how mining concessions[1] were obtained in order to extract the mineral resources found in Wallagga. It will also examine the intensified competition among the foreign concessionaires and what mining activities were undertaken by the three mining agents i.e. the concessionaires, the local miners and the central government in Wallagga in the first decade of the 20th century. It also investigates the issues of sharing the benefits of extraction of gold among the three mining agents and mechanisms of getting these benefits.

With reference to the time framework used in this chapter, the year 1899 refers to the date central government of Ethiopia commenced the granting of formal mining concession to a foreigner over the mineral resources of Wallagga. Beginning from 1899 the situation had affected both the mining industry and miners in Wallagga. But the chapter concludes the discussion of the issues

[1]The meaning of concession varies from literature to literature. For example, one of the better definitions associates concession with, "Granting of exclusive rights and powers to foreign powers or companies." See Bahru, Zewde, "Concessions," in Siegbert Uhlig (ed), *Encyclopedia Aethiopica*, Vol. I (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), p.787.The other one associates it with,"A grant to a private firm of the right to operate a defined infrastructure service and to receive revenues deriving from it." See Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Policy Roundtables on Concessions, 2006," www.oecd.org, accessed on 14.2.2019, p.7.However, since there were a few Ethiopian concession takers in the study area, the privileges, rights and responsibilities connected with mining concession in the dissertation also apply to these domestic concessionaires.

of mining agents and mining activities in Wallagga in 1910, a year which signified the end of a mining company formed following the granting of concession to Ilg in 1899.

In this chapter the thesis is that the coming together of the above three mining agents in Wallagga had made the prospecting and the extraction activities of gold in Wallagga to continue in the 1900s. But specifically, I argue that in the prospect for and the extraction of the mineral resources of Wallagga mainly gold, the foreign concessionaires sometimes gave benefit to the second mining agent, the local miners, which were part of the system of benefit sharing. Besides, there were occasions in which the earnings of the local miners were severely limited because of the activities of the concessionaires. Nevertheless, in order to get mining concessions over the mineral resources of Wallagga these concessionaires were engaged in intensified competitions in the first decade of the 20th century. Moreover, between 1899-1910 the central government had used different mechanisms to increase the outflow of gold extracted in Wallagga to the center, Addis Ababa. Under the circumstances, this chapter attempts to shed light on the situation as follows.

2.1 Competition Among the Concessionaires, Gold Miners and the Outflow of Gold from Wallagga (1899-1910)

Mining concession as one of the issues of historical inquiry in Ethiopia has attracted the interest of a few historians in Ethiopia. These historians largely address concession from a perspective connected with the establishment of relationship between Ethiopia and some European countries. For example, Bahru looks at mining concession in Ethiopia as it had engaged foreign states of “concession hunters” like Britain, France and Italy. He is interested in indicating how these states were engaged in contesting diplomatic actions against each other that was reflected in establishing relations with Ethiopia.[2] Pankhurst also describes that the issue of mining concession had engaged both foreign individuals and the mining companies of the French, the British and the Germans in Ethiopia.[3]

Historians of Ethiopia also address mining concession from the economic and political points of view. In this case, Bahru considers the efforts of the German "concession hunter", Arnold Holz's concession as an indication of Europe's attempt of exerting its economic influences on Ethiopia which was built upon a failed colonial plan of Europe after the Battle of Adwa.[4] Like Bahru, Bairu also looks at concession from an economic point of view from the Germans side. He considers how the German concessionaires like Arnold Holz and others individually struggled to safeguard Germany's economic interest in Ethiopia.[5] But Guluma addresses the issue of mining and mineral resources like gold and platinum from the point of view of the coming of these resources under the control of the central government of Ethiopia throughout the 20th century.[6] However, this chapter mainly brings mining concession to the issues of mining activities at the local level in Wallagga, to the place where some foreign concessionaires were allowed to prospect for and extract mineral resources.

Nevertheless, exerting economic influences through commerce which European states like Britain, France and Italy used in the post Adwa period was part of the activities of

[2]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.402.

[3]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, pp.231-239.

[4]Bahru, "Concessions and Concession-Hunters…," pp.371, 382.

[5]Bairu, *Ethiopia and Germany*…, pp.166, 167.

[6]Guluma, "Political Domination…," pp.134-141.

neocolonialism, a strategy devised to penetrate and control Ethiopia after the Battle of Adwa.[7] To bring such economic influence, mining concession was also used as instrument of neocolonialism for the European states.[8] This brings the issue of mining concession at the local level, where the effort of implementing neocolonialism on the ground was noticeable. Here, Wallagga in western Ethiopia was one of the areas which became vulnerable to the economic influences of the Europeans through mining concessions in the early 20th century.

During that time, therefore Wallagga faced heightened competition among the foreign concessionaires to obtain mining concessions over its mineral resources. Aleme relates the competition and the European economic influences in the country with capitalistic competition. He believes that capitalistic competition led to the "Development [Inception] of commercial and industrial capitalism"[9] in some parts of the country.

But at the local level the competition to prospect for and extract the mineral resources of Wallagga formally began when Emperor Menilek II had given one of the earliest legally bounded gold mining concessions to a foreigner named Ilg, a citizen of Switzerland, in December 1899 in Najjoo.[10] It was also reported that George William Lane, a citizen of Britain

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[7]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.386; *Idem.*, *A History of Modern Ethiopia,1855-1991*(Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2002),pp.100-101; Aleme Eshete, "The Process of Peasant-Worker Transformation in the History of Ethiopian Proletariate,1900-1935," *Proceedings of the East Africa History Conference*(Nazareth: IES, 1982), p.68.

[8]Bahru, *A History of Modern…*, p.100.

[9]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.68.

[10]For Ilg obtaining mining concession in Wallagga, see FO1/37, J. L. Harrington to Marquis of Salisbury, 16.5.1900; "ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረ¹ቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd, pp.69-71.

and the representative of the British Syndicate obtained mining concession in Beni Shangul during that time.[11]

Among the two concessions, however, Ilg's mining agreement could be better remembered for practically commencing the extraction of gold in Najjoo. Thus, Ilg's gold mining concession has great relevance to a history of mining in Wallagga when it is analyzed from the point of view of affecting the benefits of the local miners as well as bringing the concessionaires and the local miners together to extract the gold wealth of Wallagga under the foreigners. In this agreement though Ilg had permission to prospect and extract mineral resources such as gold, silver and others found in Najjoo and its environs extending up to a distance of twenty kilometers,[12] he had capitalized on the extraction of gold in Wallagga.

The mining agreements of Ilg and Lane on the mineral resources of Wallagga consisted of ideas connected with time limit, economic issues and issues of providing protection to the concessionaires. On the one hand, the terms of reference associated with the time limit had made the central government very generous. Because the central government permitted the two concessionaires to run the activities of prospecting and extracting the mineral resources in Najjoo and Beni Shangul for a long time which was commonly half a century starting in 1899.[13]

[11]For Lane obtaining such concession, see FO1/36, Harrington to Marquis of Salisbury, 28.12.1899 ; "ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረጓቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd, pp.122-125; Bairu Tafla, *Ethiopian Records of the Menilek Era : Selected Amharic Documents from the Nachlab of Alfred Ilg, 1884-1900* (Weisbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2000), pp.320-322, 531-533.

[12]FO1/37, Harrington to Salisbury, 16.5.1900; "ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረጓቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd, pp.69-71.

[13]For Ilg and Lane Concessions, see "ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረጓቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd, pp.69-71and pp. 122-125 respectively For Lane's Concession, see also FO 371/3496, Enclosure in Blundell to Secretary, 30.7.1919 and Bairu, *Ethiopian Records*…, pp.320-322, 531-533.

Consequently, in terms of time limit, had this agreement could have been implemented without interruption for half a century, it could have greatly exhausted the gold wealth of Najjoo and Beni Shangul.

On the other hand, the clauses which dealt with economic, and protection issues which the central government had to provide to the concessionaires were the major issues of the concept of political economy which tied the concession taker and giver together. To provide examples, one of the economic issues included in the clauses of the concession takers was that they were allowed to make profit from the extraction of gold and other mineral resources which they prospected in Wallagga. But they were taxed 8% of the gold, silver and other mineral ores which they could extract from their concession sites to the central government every year.[14]

To the effectiveness of the prospecting and extraction works, the concessionaires demanded protection in Wallagga. To this end, the central government promised them to provide protection to the concessionaires, to their employees [miners] and to their property. The central government also promised the concessionaires to supply employees in case they demanded employees. But the government prohibited them to coerce the local people to work for them.[15]

The clauses of the agreements also concerned with infrastructural development which was vital to support the production of gold and other minerals in the concession localities in Najjoo and Beni Shangul. Therefore, to develop these mineral resources, the central government permitted

[14]FO 371/3496, Enclosure in Blundell to Secretary, 30.7.1919; "ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረ1ቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd, pp.69-71, 122-125 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233.

[15]*Ibid*.

the concessionaires to take different mining machineries and dynamites to their concession sites as well as to build roads, to dig canals, to establish railway and telephone lines.[16]

However, in relation to the foreign concessionaires, I argue that granting mining concessions to personalities like Ilg, his company and other concessionaires at times were accompanied with activities which limited the benefits which the local miners had to obtain from the extraction of gold and at times with sharing unequal benefits among these mining agents.

To begin with, eviction was one of the activities that came with the mining concession which removed some local miners from their previous gold mining sites in Wallagga. It was also one of the factors which limited the benefits that the local miners had to obtain from the extraction of gold. Here, the Najjoo gold site was a good example for the eviction of local miners in Wallagga. But the eviction in Najjoo gold site started with the coming of the French mining engineer to Najjoo to prospect for gold for the central government. This was because prior to the year 1896 the local miners of the Oromo, the Sibuu, were among the first to undertake the indigenous type of prospecting and gold development activities in Najjoo. However, after his arrival the French mining engineer, Camboul, to extract the gold wealth of Najjoo for six years after 1896[17] took their footstep. In this case Camboul's activities and deeds connected with mineral resources are well remembered in oral tradition in Wallagga as follows:

Oromo	***Gloss***
Faranjicha tokkoo	*One foreigner*
Dhagaa bittinnessaa	*Scatters a rock*
Kan firasaa jibbee	*Who has disliked his relative*
Alagaa leellisee	*By idolizing the non-relative*
Harkaan of xinneessaa	*Has degraded himself*[18]

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.232.

[18] Informants : Dhereessaa Amantii, Käbädä Qajeelaa, Birhanu Shonaa and Dabalaa Simaa.

Besides, although Bartleet wrongly considers Ilg as a French citizen[19], he clearly indicates that Camboul who was wandering in Wallagga and Enarya to search for gold between 1896-1902 had worked on Najjoo goldfield for a couple of years. Similarly, another source indicates that the district [of Najjoo] was once the enterprise of Camboul, the French mining engineer, who is said to have obtained most of the finance to run this activity [in Wallagga] from Duparchy, the "Contractor of the Djibouti Rail Way."[20] Bartleet and Dunlop also tell us that Camboul was at last successful to get alluvial and reef types of gold, iron, copper, nickel and lignite in Wallagga.[21]

However, the eviction seemed to cover large goldmine when Ilg was given the Najjoo mining concession in 1899 and when the local miners were expected to be evicted from one hundred twenty five thousand (125,000) hectares of [potential] gold land.[22] It was reported that Ilg had secured the Najjoo miming concession before he left Addis Ababa for Europe on 28th December, 1899.[23] But since these thousands of tracts of potential goldfield came under the control of Ilg and his men, it also meant that the local inhabitants did not extract gold from these large numbers of tracts of goldfield. Besides, Ilg, the chief advisor of Emperor Menilek, securing mining concession in the site where the earliest gold mining work was started in Wallagga[24] could make

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[19]E.J. Bartleet, *In the Land of Sheba* (Birmingham : Cornish Brothers Ltd, 1934) , p.110.

[20]FO1/37, Harrington to Salisbury, 16.5.1900.

[21]Bartleet, *In the Land*…, p.110; A. Dunlop, "The Dadessa Valley," *The Geographical Journal*, 89, 6 (1937), p.514. For Camboul's searching for mineral resources in Wallagga, see also Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.232.

[22]For the number of hectares, see Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.91 and Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.233.

[23]FO1/37, Harrington to Salisbury, 16.5.1900.

[24]As cited in Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.416.

the eviction of the local miners like the Sibuu Oromo inevitable. Kumsaa in writing a letter to Menilek also regretted with regard to the takeover of Najjoo by the concessionaires. In the letter he stated his regret saying *Janähoy* [Menilek II] agreed with the foreigners and took from us the goldmine we earlier used to extract gold and pay our tribute. Then, he gave the Najjoo goldmine to the foreigners to extract gold assisted with machine, in turn, these foreigners had to offer Menilek some percent of their gold output.[25]

Moreover, the mining agreements given to the concessionaires neither provided protection to the eviction of the local miners or inhabitants nor compelled the government or the concessionaires to compensate the evicted miners. However, in some agreements it was mentioned that the concessionaires had not to prohibit the local inhabitants or miners from extracting gold in traditional method[26] perhaps outside the mining sites of the concessionaires. But because of eviction the losers of benefits of gold extraction were the local miners. In this instance, Guluma believes that those who derived wealth because of mining in Wallagga were the concessionaires and the Ethiopian ruling elites. But the disadvantageous groups were the Oromo peasants who had to abandon their [gold] land to the mining companies without compensation and who worked for these companies for low salaries.[27] Here, it means the benefits of extraction which were reduced from the local miners or inhabitants went to the other mining agents like the concessionaires and the central government. The reduction in benefits was not only limited to the Oromo miners in Wallagga but also involved the Bertha and the Gumuz miners.

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[25]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, nd, Wallagga Museum Archives (hereafter WMA), File no. (Wa/Mu/1) ወ/ሙ/1/ 337, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[26]FO 371/3496, Enclosure in Blundell to Secretary, 30.7.1919; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, pp.232-233 and Neal Sobania, "Gold," in Siegbert Uhlig (ed), *Encyclopedia Aethiopica,* Vol.II (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), p.833.

[27]Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.134.

On the whole, eviction and the transfer of gold holdings from the inhabitants or miners to the concessionaires made the local miners to suffer generally in two ways. First, it made them get much less income which means much fewer benefits since the miners did not have the right to work on their previous holdings for more income. Second, it made the miners to lose their ownership rights. It means these rights were transferred from the local inhabitants to the concessionaires. In this regard, in studying the granting of concession to transnational corporations in the 20^{th} century Africa, writers like Samuel Asante, indicate that those corporations which received concessions in Africa became powerful in the 20^{th} century. He explains the reason for it saying, "The transnational corporation was given exclusive, extensive, and plenary rights to extract the particular natural resource and was in effect assured ownership of that resource at the point of extraction."[28]

From the onset, however, Ilg and Camboul as well as Camboul's gold project financier, Duparchy, began to face pressure from the British diplomats who argued for the British citizens and companies to obtain various concessions in Ethiopia. To this end, Sadler, the British diplomat to the Somali Coast, openly indicated that the British syndicates had to obtain concessions similar to the French companies in Ethiopia. Because he believes that the British syndicates were not secondary in status to the syndicates of other states.[29] Like Sadler, another British diplomat John Harrington, whose country was unhappy since the railway concession in Ethiopia was given to the French in 1894, appeared dejected to see the creation of another

[28]Asante, "Restructuring Transnational…," p.338.

[29]FO1/36, Enclosure No1 in Sadler to Creagh, 4.6.1898.

French company[30] which could make effective the extraction of mineral resources in the country. Even, Harrington began to cajole Ilg on the need to engage the British capitalists and the concessionaires in railway as well as mining concession in the country. Ilg responded to him saying that he was pleased if British companies could engage in concession. However, he preferred to remain loyal to his partner, [Léon] Chefneux, the French railway concessionaire in Ethiopia.[31]

Ilg also remained determined to work on his Najjoo concession and established a modern gold mining company to extract the gold of Najjoo. He did this partly with the support of Camboul. For instance, Camboul supported Ilg to complete the activity of obtaining partners to raise the capital needed for the extraction of the gold of Najjoo. To this end, a Belgian company known as the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* [The Gold Mines of Wallagga] was established on April 30, 1901, in Antwerp in Belgium. Ilg also established partnership with the Italians, the Belgians and the French financiers. In sum, Ilg's partners raised one million francs to start the extraction of gold in Najjoo nearly on one hundred twenty five thousand hectares of gold land anticipating collecting [thousands of ounces of gold] returns from such business.[32] The company had prepared forty thousand shares to distribute among its partners and each share was expected to cost two hundred fifty francs. Among the partners, the Italian investors had controlled 4/5th of the shares, the largest one. But the Belgian and the French investors together had possessed the

[30]FO1/37, Harrington to Salisbury, 16.5.1900 and for the railway concession, see Bahru, *A History of Modern*…, p.101.

[31]FO1/36, Extract of Letter from Harrington to R. Rodd, 15.4.1899.

[32]Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.233; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p. 91. For the establishment of such company and its initial capital, see also Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.416.

smallest or the remaining 1/5th of the share.[33] It looks like that the company had recruited employees who had the experience and knowledge of raising considerable capital and managing a number of shares which were unfamiliar to the most domestic business men in the country during that time.

In terms of gold production historians provide us with different figures on the amount of gold extracted in Najjoo when the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* was active in Najjoo. But it can be suggested that these figures indicate that the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*, as one of the benefit sharing mining agents in Wallagga, collected modest amount of gold although very limited benefits went to the miners or other gold suppliers in Najjoo and its environs since the company also worked with these mining agents. Hence, in terms of benefit that the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* obtained Bahru tells us that the amount of gold which the company produced in Najjoo was estimated to worth two hundred thousand dollars per year.[34] This figure represents the modest amount of gold which is already referred to in the above argument.

Moreover, Blundell who visited Najjoo and its surroundings at the beginning of 20th century reports that Najjoo used to export gold which expected to worth eighty thousand pounds each year.[35] He further insists that the gold that the king [Menilek] obtained was approximately half of this amount.[36] Pankhurst also suggests that Najjoo produced gold estimated to worth eight hundred thousand dollars [perhaps Maria Theresa thalers] in 1906.[37] But one of the producers of

[33]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233; For these shares, see also Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p. 91.

[34]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.416.

[35]Blundell, "Exploration …," p.544.

[36]*Ibid*.

[37]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233.

thousands of ounces of such gold could be the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* as suggested above and since this company was active in Wallagga until 1910.[38] Besides, it is important to note that the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* could not exist for one decade in Wallagga without making the profits that the Italians, the Belgian and the French partners expected to get from it. Nevertheless, it could be safe to say that the amount of gold extracted in Najjoo could be even larger than the amount that Blundell mentions given factors like the prosperity of Najjoo in gold, unrecorded figures of gold which the local people could produce covertly and Kumsaa's suspecting concessionaires' for hiding and secretly holding some amount of gold they produced in Najjoo.[39]

An indication for the argument which says limited benefits went to the miners or to other gold suppliers could be understood from the reports of travelers and historians. But these writers provide different ideas on the work forces of the company *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* in Najjoo. On this issue, Bartleet believes that Ilg [of the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*] had five hundred gold 'tributor' [gold collectors or suppliers] and Menilek used to charge royalty from Ilg for the concession he granted to him to extract gold in Najjoo.[40] Bahru in his dissertation shares what Bartleet says and states that the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* did not recruit wage laborers but it bought gold from the five hundred gold collectors whom Bartleet mentions.[41] Whatever the

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[38]*Ibid*.; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92.

[39]For such suspect of Kumsaa, see Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.12.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/መ/1/ 395, Folder no. ወ/መ/1; Tesema and Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ…*(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) p.63.

[40]Bartleet, *In the Land*…, p.110. The term "tributor" in Bartleet's account and in other sources is not clearly described. Because of this, it could have two meanings. Firstly, it could mean gold miners who directly supplied gold they extracted to the concessionaires. Secondly, it could refer to a chief who collected gold from a group of miners and supplied the gold collected to the concessionaires.

[41]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.416.

case, the company was expected to make payment or cover the expenses of the five hundred gold collectors or gold suppliers whom Bahru calls them tributaries.[42] This leads us to suggest that the gold collectors or suppliers had obtained some benefits from the gold they extracted in Najjoo. In line with this, it was reported that Camboul who was also identified as the administrator of the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*[43] earlier had made slaves and five hundred local inhabitants [Oromo miners] to work for him [extract gold] feeding them and giving *kiray* particularly to these local inhabitants every month.[44]

With respect to Ilg's company, one source further states the creation of wage laborers when this company was active in Najjo. This source considers Ilg's Najjoo gold project as the first "industrial concession," and it argues that Ilg's gold mining company in Najjoo recruited laborers. It also suggests that the company used modern gold extraction tools in addition to purchasing gold from gold 'tributors.'[45] This source goes on and adds that the creation of industries like gold mining in Najjoo and other industries in Ethiopia had made some peasants wage laborers.[46]

Similarly, outside Najjoo, there were many gold miners who could obtain limited benefit for the gold they extracted. But this does not mean that the miners in Wallagga had seen fundamental changes in their lives. Rather, it is to mean that they obtained some amount of money to lead

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[42]*Ibid.*

[43]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.91.

[44]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 21.12.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 396-395, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; See also Tesema and Triulzi, የወለጋ የታሪክ...(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) p.63.Such situation also existed for a brief time when the concessionaire 'Gelardi' was extracting gold in Wallagga, see *Ibid*.

[45]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," pp.91-92.

[46]*Ibid*., p.95.

their ordinary lives[47] and the numbers of these gold miners outside Najjoo were also large. Concerning their numbers, when the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* was active in Najjoo, Aleme and Pankhurst suggest that at least two thousand gold miners from the Dabus environs were producing gold at that time.[48]

However, in relation to the methods of gold extraction this dissertation argues as follows. In the time when the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* was active, foreigners like Camboul and his successors' attempted to use modern mining equipment of gold extraction. But the traditional method of extracting gold which the local miners were using continued as a familiar method of gold extraction in Najjoo, Dhidheessaa and the environs of Dabus.

Here, Camboul's and his successors' endeavor to use modern mining equipment to extract gold in Najjoo in the early 1900s was evident from the following letters. One of these letters, after providing attention to Camboul's journey to Wallagga from Addis Ababa, puts an emphasis on his obtaining authorization from Menilek to take with him the gold extraction equipment that he brought from abroad and sooner to start the extraction of gold in Wallagga.[49] Another letter tells us that in 1906 a foreigner named Mr. 'Gelardi' requested Kumsaa to retake hundred slaves who were given earlier to Camboul for the extraction of gold in Najjoo. But since in 1906 machineries were used to extract gold from Najjoo and only twenty gold miners were required to load the gold soil on these machines.[50] Moreover, this letter states that the concessionaires

[47] Informants: Bi̲rhanu, Ashänafi Khojale and Dhereessaa Amantii.

[48] Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233.

[49] Menilek to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 18.7.1894E.C., WMA, File no. (Wa/Mu/3) ወ/ሙ/3/ 025.171496361, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

[50] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 21.12.1898E.C; See also Tesema and Triulzi, የወለጋ የታሪክ... (*Documents for Wallagga* …,) p.63.

reduced the number of gold miners only to twenty saying that they incurred a loss.[51] In connection with gold machines, Aleme also indicates that the company of Ilg had used advanced tools to extract the gold of Najjoo.[52] However, both these letters and Aleme do not reveal the specific sets of tools which the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* had used for the extraction of gold in its time.

Despite the above efforts, the indication for the extraction of gold in Wallagga was not detached from the familiar traditional method was quite strong. This was because of the continuity of the use of traditional tools in the extraction of gold in many parts of Wallagga in pre and post-*Mines d'Or du Wallaga* Company. For example, in the pre-*Mines d'Or du Wallaga* Company, one of the tools which the local miners used in traditional method of gold mining for separating pure gold from the unrefined one in west Wallagga in Laalo Qile and Yubdo areas was *gabatee*.[53] Likewise, in Najjoo the local people also used this wooden container which had a length of almost sixty one centimeters and a width of almost forty six centimeters for panning the unrefined gold found in stream areas.[54] However, it was claimed that the *gabatee* was continuously in use not only in post-*Mines d'Or du Wallaga* Company but also throughout the 20th century.[55]

[51] *Ibid*.

[52] Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," pp.91-92.

[53] Informants: Namarraa Barkessaa and Gafarso Ahmad ; For miners using such tools, see also Bartleet, *In the Land*…, p.76 and Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.232.

[54] Bahru , "*Dejazmach* Jote Tullu…," p.38.

[55] Informants: Namarraa , Gafarso and Almamun.

Similarly, Blundell reports that local miners' in the Dhidheessaa, the Nile and the Dabus environs heavily relied on traditional method and its tools for the extraction of gold.[56] He describes the tools which these gold miners used as "Simple paraphernalia: an oblong shallow dish, a sharpened stake, a flat curved scoop like a hockey-stick, a small gourd with a string to fasten over their head and hang behind their ears, for carrying the gold nuggets."[57] Hence, looking at the continuity of the use of traditional tools in Wallagga's gold mining, we can safely suggest that the modern machineries of the concessionaires at that early stage did not entirely marginalize the indigenous method of gold extraction in Wallagga. Had the modern machineries been entirely marginalized the indigenous method of gold extraction, the concessionaires could have been detached from the use of traditional method for the extraction of gold in Wallagga in the 1900s.

Besides, the local miners' use of traditional tools in Wallagga led to artisanal practices of small scale mining like the gold mining activities of some other parts of Africa. To this end, studies indicate that small scale mining activities share some features in common which define their nature regardless of their location. Thus, one of the common features which define artisanal or small scale mining activity is its heavy dependence on ordinary or less advanced mining tools and methods.[58]

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[56] Blundell, "Exploration …," p.544.

[57] *Ibid*.; See also Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," fn.1, p.92.

[58] Kinabo, "A Socio-economic…," p.275 and Mawowa, "The Political Economy… ," p.922.

Nevertheless, the concern of one of the arguments of this chapter which says there were heightened competitions among the foreign concessionaires on the mineral wealth of Wallagga is also evident from the following discussion.

After the British citizen, Lane, obtained concession in Beni Shnagul, the gold wealth of Wallagga continued to attract other British citizens and syndicates in the early 1900s. The move which Britain made at that time, however, clearly indicated what Britain wanted to get in western Ethiopia. In this case Britain wanted to achieve her long stayed desires of controlling and extracting the gold wealth of Wallagga and Beni Shangul which Bahru describes it as: "Naturally, control of this legendary eldorado was a primary consideration in British policy after the fall of the Mahdist state."[59] Bahru also insists that during that time the issue of the extraction of gold in that part of western Ethiopia became one of the factors in smoothening boundary dealings between Menilek and the British diplomat like Harrington.[60] In one source it was stated that the Sennar Syndicate and Blundell who as the British traveler visited Wallagga had also obtained mining concession on 1 December 1901 in an area stretched as far as three kilometers south of Mandi and a bit below twenty five kilometers north of Najjoo in "The triangle formed by the Blue Nile, Didesa and Dabus Rivers."[61]

However, sources also suggest that after many years Blundell had claimed to have won mining concession alone or with the absence of the Sennar Syndicate in 1903. According to such sources, Blundell was a concessionaire between 1903-1906 who held concession rights over the

[59]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.415.

[60]*Ibid.*

[61]FO403/312, Enclosure in Harrington to Lansdowne, 6.4.1901.

rich and fertile land of Mandi, an enclave of the above three major rivers in western Ethiopia.[62] In terms of putting capital on mining concession, Blundell whom Pankhurst mentions him as "A prospector of the early twentieth century"[63] also claimed to have spent ten thousand pounds in mining adventure in Mandi between 1903-1906.[64] In the year Blundell claimed to have secured concession for himself it was also indicated that the Russian nationals Dargomirov and Kube reached Wallagga to prospect for gold.[65]

But the presence of Blundell himself and his engagement in gold mining activity in Wallagga in the 1900s was also mentioned in the archival documents of Wallagga. In one of these documents in connection with a controversy over paying tax therefore Kumsaa tells us that Mr. 'Bilandina' [Blundell] and Mr. Rose, men of Britain, were extracting gold at *Tulluu* Jaldeessaa in Dabus area in 1906.[66] In another letter Kumsaa further insists that 'Bilandi' [Blundell] got permission from *Janähoy* [Menilek] to extract gold in Wallagga and brought some equipment for the extraction of gold. However, he left the equipment to *Kägnazmach* Rufee, the vassal of Kumsaa and he did not return to Wallagga.[67] Nevertheless, it becomes difficult to know the total amount of gold that Blundell and his colleague extracted in Wallagga between 1903-1906 since these and other similar archival documents of Wallagga do not provide us with such figures.

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[62]FO371/3496, Enclosure in Director to Foreign Office, 3.7.1919; Wilfred Thesiger to Earl Curzon, 7.2.1919. See also Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.416.

[63]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.232.

[64]FO371/3496, Thesiger to Curzon, 7.2.1919.

[65]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[66]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.12.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 395-394, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Tesema and Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ…*(*Documents for Wallagga …,*) p.64.

[67]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 2.3.1914E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 172, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

However, when we shift to the issues of the outflow of gold and other, this part of the dissertation argues that in the early stage when there was foreigners' contest over obtaining gold mining concessions in Wallagga, on the one hand, there were historical developments which made thousands of ounces of gold to outflow from Wallagga to the centre. Such outflow of gold made the central government one of the largest benefit obtaining mining agents during that time. On the other hand, the central government was actively engaged in developing its own gold mines in Wallagga and facilitated some prospecting and exploration activities there. During that time, the activities of sending out gold from Wallagga to the center had also engaged gold merchants.

Therefore, concerning the outflow of gold, among the central government's machineries which assisted the sending out of a great deal of gold from Wallagga to the center during the period of Menilek and his successors, gold tribute collection was the most effective one. To provide examples, from one of the districts known as Assosa-Beni Shangul, during the period of Khojale a total of four hundred fifty eight (458) ounces of gold was annually poured into the center from three specific places. Among these places, Aqoldi or Assosa contributed the highest amount i.e. three hundred (300) ounces of gold, Khomasha provided one hundred(100) ounces, and Beni Shangul proper contributed the remaining fifty eight(58) ounces of gold.[68]

Locally, however, governors like Khojale, Jootee and Kumsaa heavily relied on the local tribute payers in Beni Shangul-Gumuz, Leeqaa Qellam and Leeqaa Naqamtee respectively as a source of obtaining hundreds of ounces of gold which they sent to the central government as their

[68]As cited in Abdussamad Ahmed, "Bela-Shangul: Letters as Source Materials to the History of the Frontier Zone of Imperial Ethiopia, 1898 – 1931," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 47(2014), p.76 and Atieb, Atieb, "*Sheikh* Khojele…," p.43.

annual tribute.[69] Indeed, both oral and written sources agree particularly on Khojale's use of slave labor to extract the gold which he used for himself and also sent to the central government.[70]

However, in the post Adwa period, when the local autonomy of Leeqaa Naqamtee [and other areas in Wallagga] was weakened since the centralization scheme under Menilek was becoming strong,[71] the amount of gold which was sent from Wallagga to the centre as tribute was expected to increase. Concerning this increment, Triulzi notices that gold tribute in Wallagga "Amounted to 300 *wekeṯ* [ounces] in 1903 and was pushed to 1,000 [ounces] by 1905."[72] Moreover, informants believe that every year through the tribute system and through other means the central government used to take a *qalqalloo* of gold extracted in west Wallagga and Beni Shangul during the period of Menilek.[73]

Here, while this outflow made the amount of gold which had to remain in Wallagga to decline, it increased the gold wealth of the central government and its rulers. As a result, the gold sent from different districts of Wallagga and other parts of the country had boosted the gold treasury of both the central government and its rulers like Emperor Menilek and Empress Taytu. This gold also became one of the sources of revenue for the central government. This issue was indicated in a report that MacGillivray, the British citizen who became the first governor of the

[69]For Khojale collecting and sending gold as tribute to the central government, see *Ibid.* Similarly, for Jootee's and Kumsaa's engagement in such activity, see Nagaso "Oromo Historical…," pp.328-329 and Triulzi, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa…," p.59 respectively.

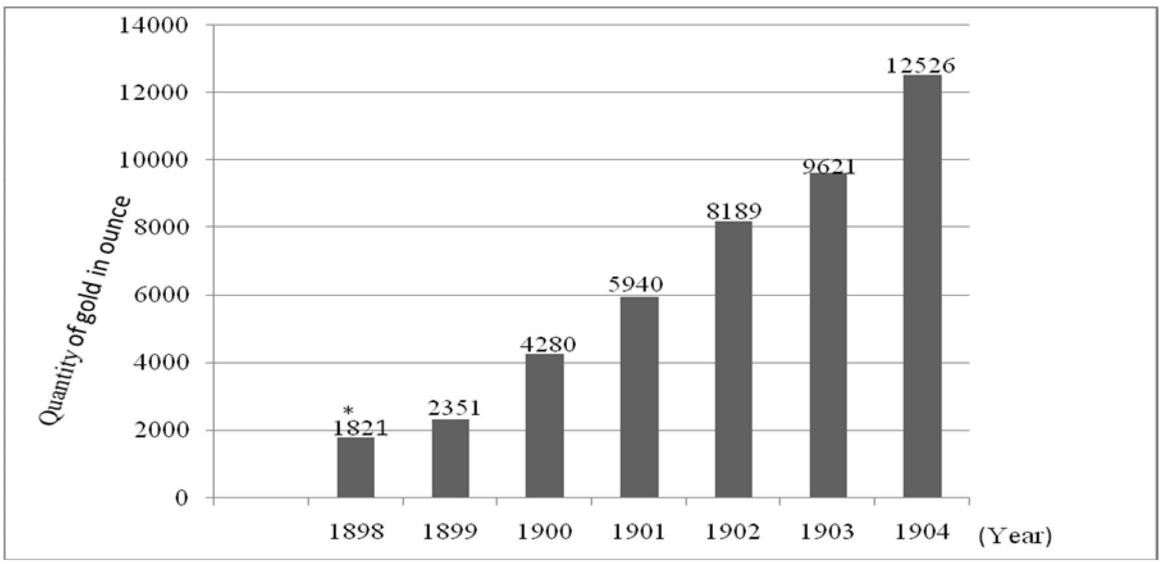
[70]Informant: Ashänafi; Abdussamad , "Bela-Shangul : Letters…," p.76.

[71]Tesema, "The Political Economy…," pp.160, 185.

[72]As cited in Triulzi, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa…," p.59.

[73]Informants: Dhereessaa Amantii, Biṟhanu, Almamun and Ashänafi.

Bank of Abyssinia in 1905, submitted to Elwin Palmer, the governor of the National Bank of Egypt. From such report, we understand that between 1898-1904 gold which amounted to forty four thousand seven hundred twenty eight (44,728) ounces were collected through tribute system [as well as other mechanisms] and had boosted the central government's "public treasury" and its rulers "private treasury."[74] As MacGillivray attests, the above gold which reached the center chiefly came from Wallagga and Beni Shangul.[75] The following graph illustrates this outflow of gold to the center for seven consecutive years between 1898-1904.



*Precise amount of gold in ounces in each year

Graph 1. Gold Outflow Mainly from Wallagga and Beni Shangul to the Center, 1898-1904.[76]

[74]FO401/8, MacGillivray's Report Presented to E. Palmer in Enclosure 3, no76, 14.3.1905; For pieces of information on MacGillivray and Palmer, see also Richard Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Monetary and Banking Innovations in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 1, 2(1963), pp.97,98.

[75]FO401/8, MacGillivray's Report Presented to Palmer in Enclosure 3, no76, 14.3.1905.

[76]A graph constructed based on FO401/8, MacGillivray's Report Presented to Palmer in Enclosure 3, no76, 14.3.1905; For the numbers used in the graph see also Guluma , "Political Domination…," p.136.

The above graph provides us with the advantage of comparing the outflow of gold from gold producing districts of Wallagga in different years starting from 1898. Thus, the graph indicates that the outflow of gold from the districts of Wallagga and other parts of the country was increasing from year to year in a good situation between 1898-1904. Moreover, in the graph the comparison of gold sent to the center at the beginning i.e., in 1898 and at the end i.e., in 1904 makes us realize that the amount of gold sent to the center increased significantly in 1904 as compared to the amount of gold sent to the center at the beginning i.e., in 1898. Hence, the amount of gold sent to the center in 1904 increased by ten thousand seven hundred and five ounces as compared to the amount of gold sent to the center at the beginning in 1898.

Overall, it means that such thousands of ounces of gold reached the center since there was sufficient production of gold in gold producing areas like Wallagga in the country during that time. It also means that it was not only political centralization which was strengthened in areas like Wallagga[77]during that time but the central government also effectively manipulated gold tribute system and other mechanisms, its political economy instruments of revenue collection, to accumulate a great deal of gold in the center in those years.

But the gold which reached the center through tribute system and other mechanisms had several economic and social values during the Menilek period. First, after it was confirmed that Menilek's gold reserve was sufficient, it was said that the Emperor wanted to establish a National Bank[78] though it was the Abyssinian Bank which was actually established in 1905

[77]Tesema, "The Political Economy…," pp.170-171

[78]Yonas Tarakegn(translator), *አማካሪው አልፍሬድ ኢልግ በአፄ ምኒልክ ቤተ መንግስት(Alfred Ilg, the Advisor, in the Court of Emperor Menilek* II) (Addis Ababa: Embassy of Switzerland,2008E.C.),p.127.

through concession.[79] Here, it means the Emperor wanted to use some ounces of the gold as a reserve in the bank and some other ounces as source of revenue by selling them both in domestic and foreign markets. Second, gold was also associated with more complex business like giving a loan to people through charging interest. It was reported that money lending became the lucrative business among the Ethiopians after the mid1900s[80] and that gold collected through tribute system and other mechanisms was also part of this lucrative business for the ruling elites.[81] Third, some ounces of gold extracted in Baro, Abay and Dabus after they reached Addis Ababa were taken to the minting workshop of Menilek in Addis Ababa to produce ingots and some other ounces were exported abroad.[82] But to establish the gold minting workshop, Menilek spent ten thousand pounds which made him very eager to see gold coin minted for him in the country.[83] Moreover, in society where having gold and silver were considered as having high social status for a long period of time, the ornamental and jewelry values of gold[84] could indicate for what other purposes gold was produced and sent to the center. Thus, gold was purchased by the private sector.

Concerning the private gold treasury, according MacGillivray, Taytu had her own independent treasury in Addis Ababa and her treasury was also filled with a considerable amount of gold

[79] Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Monetary…," p.97.

[80]FO401/12, Lord H. Hervey to Eduard Grey, "General Report on Abyssinia for the Years 1907 and 1908," 2.1.1909; See also Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.136.

[81]Guluma , "Political Domination…," p.136.

[82]FO401/12, C. Kelly to the Assistance Director of Intelligence in Khartoum, 10.2.1909. But it is difficult to provide detailed explanation on this workshop because of lack of sources.

[83]FO401/8, MacGillivray's Report Presented to Palmer in Enclosure 3, no76, 14.3.1905; Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Monetary…," p.96.

[84]Raymond Silverman and Neal Sobania, "Mining a Mother Lode : Early European Travel Literature and the History of Precious Metals Working in Highland Ethiopia," *History in Africa*,31(2004), pp. 341,345,347.

which came from the above gold producing areas of the country. Particularly, in three years between 1902-1904, Taytu had accumulated two thousand nine hundred sixty six ounces of gold in her gold treasury.[85] From the following table which presents the amount of gold which reached Taytu between 1902-1904, we realize that Taytu's gold share grew nearly by one and half folds between 1902-1904. It was also estimated that such gold could be worth four thousand pounds during that time.[86]

Year	Amount of gold in ounce
1902	873
1903	1018
1904	1075

Table1. Gold that Empress Taytu had Received and Accumulated in Her Treasury between 1902-1904.[87]

Besides, the numbers in Graph 1 (p.65) and Table 1 above which indicates how much gold reached the central government and its rulers also leads us to conclude that such gold had created significant amount of wealth for the central government and its rulers but not to the local miners. Therefore, there was no indication for a change in the lives of local miners who produced thousands of ounces of gold during those years. However, Captain Kelly who visited some of these gold producing areas during the period of Menilek suggested that some of the gold washers

[85]FO401/8, MacGillivray's Report Presented to Palmer in Enclosure 3, no76, 14.3.1905 and Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Monetary…," p.95.

[86]*Ibid*. But it can be suggested that thousands of ounces of gold which Taytu collected between 1902-1904 could be worth more than four thousand pounds.

[87]*Ibid.;* For the numbers in the table, see also Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.136.

in Baro, Abay and Dabus areas sold a few ounces of gold in the market during that time.[88] Thus, based on his report and oral sources, it could be said that the income those miners had obtained from selling gold was probably used to support their ordinary lives rather than thinking that gold extraction and its sale brought luxury lives to the gold miners. This is because informants suggest that they had not seen or heard of local miners who were leading luxury lives in the early 20th century in various districts of Wallagga.[89]

However, even after the highest amount of gold reached the center from Wallagga and from elsewhere, gold tribute system continued to be an effective instrument for such activity. Thus, through the gold tribute system governors like Kumsaa and Jootee allowed the gold of Wallagga to flow continuously to the center also after 1904. Here, in the time when Beni Shangul's governor, Khojale, was in jail in Addis Ababa, Kumsaa was administering Beni Shangul and he was also responsible to send the annual gold tribute of Beni Shangul to the central government. In one occasion, Menilek himself confirmed that he received one thousand and six hundred ounces of gold as annual tribute of Wallagga and 'Arab country'[90] [Beni Shangul] respectievly.

Another mechanism which assisted the outflow of hundreds of ounces of extracted gold from Wallagga to the center during the reign of Menilek was providing gold gifts to the ruling elites of the central government, to the families of the ruling elites as well as to the religious head of Orthodox Christianity. But gold which went to the center from the various districts of Wallagga through this system was not as large as the outflow of gold through tribute system. This was

[88]FO401/12, Kelly to the Assistance Director of Intelligence, 10.2.1909.

[89]Informants: Dabalaa Simaa, Ashänafi and Amantii Gammachiis.

[90]Menilek to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 17.7.1898E.C. and 20.12.1899E.C, WMA, ወ/መ/3/ nos7 and 8 , Folder no. ወ/መ/3; See also Triulzi, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa…," p.59.

because the amount of gold presented as gifts to different elites in the centre was often counted in tens ounces. But the amount of gold sent as tribute from Wallagga to the center was often counted in hundreds and thousands ounces.

By and large, gold tribute system and other mechanisms which assisted the outflow of gold from Wallagga led to two opposite historical developments. First, it accelerated the transfer of wealth from the places of production of gold i.e. from Wallagga and Beni Shangul to the center or to the place of accumulation and consumption of gold. Second, it made the tribute payers and the miners in places of gold production suffer a lot as the means of extraction did not benefit the producers. In this instance, Tesema precisely describes how worse and multifaceted were the sufferings in Wallagga in the early 20th century following the implementation of the centralization scheme of the central government there. Hence, he says that, "Increasing economic strains and hardships made more people destitute, inhibiting society's culture from flourishing-people did not have enough leisure to think of their religion and tradition." [91]

Meanwhile, in the time when tribute collection and other mechanisms assisted the outflow of thousands of ounces of gold from Wallagga, the central government was also actively engaged in developing its own goldfields in Wallagga and facilitated some prospecting and exploration activities there. In the process of developing goldfields for the central government Menilek was concerned with this activity. In 1903 when gold was discovered in Sayyoo he stated that he wanted the gold in Sayyoo to be extracted directly to him rather than being given to the foreigners or the concessionaires. As a result, he told Kumsaa to take his men who had the skills of washing and panning gold to Sayyoo in order to extract the gold of Sayyoo for the Emperor.

[91] Tesema, "The Political Economy…," p.173.

On the conveyance of the gold washers to Sayyoo, besides Kumsaa, Menilek also communicated *Däjach* Dämsäw and *Däjach* Jootee. Moreover, he instructed Kumsaa to pay *birr* five to each of the gold miners for an ounce of gold that each miner could wash or pan. The objective was that he wanted one thousand ounces of gold to be panned for him.[92] Here, Menilek wanted to use many gold washers to extract this precious metal in Sayyoo and he also wanted Kumsaa to provide support for Dämsäw and Jootee. That was why Menilek had made Kumsaa to shoulder such responsibility outside his domain.

Indeed, the income which these gold miners received was a benefit to them, but in addition to the central government the other beneficiary was the gold merchant. Lower profit margins for producers also related to the argument which says the merchants of gold were getting much more benefit from the transaction of gold collected from Wallagga. Hence, between 1899-1900, Wallagga excluding Beni Shangul had produced eight thousand ounces of gold which was exported abroad through Addis Ababa. However, before export, these large amounts of gold were sold by two hundred forty thousand Maria Theresa thalers at domestic market in Addis Ababa.[93] From such gold transaction, we can understand that in the year very near to the discovery of gold in Sayyoo an ounce of gold could be sold for thirty Maria Theresa thalers in Addis Ababa between 1899-1900. But as calculated based on the following table even after two years i.e., in 1903 the payment of a gold miner in Sayyoo who had to produce an ounce of gold was 1/6th of the selling price of an ounce of gold in Addis Ababa.

[92] Menilek to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 15.12.1895E.C., WMA, File no ወ/ሙ/3/025.171496328, Folder no ወ/ሙ/3.

[93] Richard Pankhurst, "The Trade of Central Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Aliu Amba and Adjacent Markets," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 2, 2(1964), p.57.

Locality	Gold sent to markets in ounce	Year	Calculated Gold price per ounce in Maria Theresa (in AA)	Total value of gold in Maria Theresa in domestic market	Total amount of gold exported via Addis Ababa in ounce
Wallagga	8,000	1899-1900	30	240,000	30,000
Beni Shangul	8,000		28	224,000	
[Gumuz]	4,000		28	112,000	

Table 2. **Gold Contribution of Wallagga, Beni Shangul and [Gumuz] for Its Export through Addis Ababa Abroad, 1899-1900**.[94]

The table also indicates that thousands of ounces of gold was sent out from Wallagga to the centre and abroad between 1899-1900. Moreover, from the table we can understand that in those years the largest amount of gold or 66.67 percent of gold which was exported through Addis Ababa abroad came from the three areas of western Ethiopia listed in the table. The percentage contribution of them namely Wallagga, Beni Shangul and [Gumuz] is illustrated as follows:

[94]The table is constructed based on the gold production and transaction figures taken from Pankhurst, "The Trade of Central Ethiopia…," p.57. The price of an ounce of gold in the table in each area is calculated dividing the total value of gold in Maria Theresa thalers by the total amount of gold produced between 1899-1900 in each area.

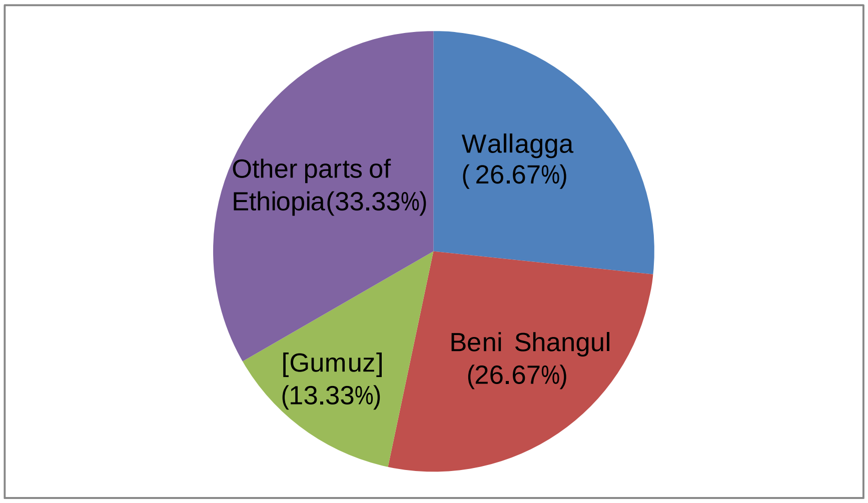


Chart 1. Percentage of Gold Contributed for Its Export through Addis Ababa Abroad from the Study Area and Other Parts of Ethiopia, 1899-1900.[95]

Apart from obtaining gold through different mechanisms, the central government as responsible mining agent also facilitated condition for finding and studying mineral resources in Wallagga. To this end, Menilek urged the Czarist Russian government to provide him with a group of mining engineers in order to prospect and explore the gold wealth of Wallagga.[96] Thus, as Pankhurst describes Kurmakov, the Russian mining expert, led a group which had three members to Wallagga and the group studied the gold potential of Wallagga between January[1903] to December 1904 in Metti[Mexxi] river area, in Birbir basin area and in other areas. Finally, the team leader arrived at the conclusion on the profitability of the deposits of

[95]Likewise, the chart is constructed based on the figures taken from Table 2 and the data taken from Pankhurst, "The Trade of Central Ethiopia…," p.57. The percentage is calculated taking into account the total amount of gold exported from Ethiopia abroad through Addis Ababa and the contribution of each of the above three areas in western Ethiopia between 1899-1900.

[96]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

mineral resources found in those areas and he proposed to the central government to establish mining sites, install machineries and workshops in those sites.[97]

Following that study, in 1904 in the year when the Italian citizen, Zappa, was in Wallagga for similar purpose[98] Kumsaa urged Menilek to send him a machine to the Laalo Qile [Mexxi-Waabaraa] goldfield. Kumsaa convinced Menilek by saying the miners were getting tired without a machine which could support them the extraction of gold at Laalo Qile goldfield. Indeed, Menilek decided to send the machine [probably grinder] but before he sent the machine he explained that he wanted to know the amount of gold produced until 1904 in Laalo Qile gold site.[99]

Here, mining engineers conducting a study on the gold deposits of Mexxi and other places in Wallagga could lead us to think that the central government wanted to advance the gold extraction activity in Mexxi and in other goldfields in Wallagga. However, what actually happened in Laalo Qile was different. Therefore, unexpectedly, in 1905 in the year an Italian citizen, Alberto Prasso obtained mining concession in Wallagga,[100] Kumsaa received a message from Menilek which urged him to deliver the unrefined extracted gold from Laalo Qile to *Ras (*formerly *Dajjach)* Damsaw, the lord of Beni Shangul, and to disband the local inhabitants who came to extract the gold of Laalo Qile.[101] Thus, in 1905 in one of the letters which Kumsaa

[97]As cited in Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[98]Bartleet, *In the Land*…, p.110 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[99]Menilek to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 7.4.1897E.C., File no ወ/ሙ/3/025.171496385, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

[100]FO 371/193 Enclosure II in T.B. Hohler's Dispatch no.45,7.9.1907; As cited in Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.417 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[101]Menilek to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 14.12.1897E.C., WMA, File no ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963108, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3. For *Ras* Damsaw becoming the lord of Beni Shangul, see Triulzi, "Nekemte and Addis Ababa…," p.63.

addressed to Menilek, he confirmed that he sent gold produced for the last two years to *Däjjach* Damsaw which was ninety and half *kubayya* of unrefined gold and almost eleven ounces of refined gold.[102]

However, the need to control gold sites and extract gold from goldfields in Wallagga had also engaged local governors in these activities and produced enmities among Kumsaa, *Däjjach* Abdruhaman and Khojale during the period of Menilek. An episode which happened in Laga Dhoqqee is an example of the intense competition created among these local governors. Laga Dhoqqee is a small area found in Mandi before crossing the Dabus River to Beni Shangul. Already, the central government had a strong interest over the custom of Mandi and its gold wealth. But particularly Laga Dhoqqee had engaged the above local governors in conflict for they wanted to control the gold and other valuable resources of it.[103] Hence, it became a bone of contention among the above local governors. In the time when competition was created among these local governors Laga Dhoqqee also made the functionaries of the central government to provide allegiance to the local governors they most affiliated with. As a result, when Särtsä Wäld, Menilek's custom officer in Wallagga and Beni Shangul, and [*Ras*] *Bitewädid* Täsäma [Nadäw] lined with Abdruhaman and Khojale, Taytu provided support to Kumsaa.[104] It was believed that the lineup of these state functionaries either with the governors of Leeqaa

[102]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek,4.4.1898E.C, WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/397, Folder no.ወ/ሙ/1. *Kubayya* is a small solid or liquid measuring jug which holds approximately more than 1/3rd of a kilogram of solid matter or more than 1/3*rd* of a liter of liquid matter.

[103]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 16.5.1901 E.C. and 4.6.1901 E.C WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/1/346-345 and ወ/ሙ/1/343 respectively, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[104]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 4.6.1901 E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/343, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 and Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Taytu, 9.6.[1901 E.C.]., WMA , File no. ወ/ሙ/1/341-340, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

Naqamtee or with the governors of Beni Shangul was associated with receiving gold gifts and other resources from them.[105]

Turning to the discussion of mining concession, concessionaires continued to limit the benefit of miners and the local people either through the practice of eviction or through developing new practices such as hiding the exact amount of gold they produced in Wallagga in the mid and the late 1900s.

Thus, in terms of competitions, events which occurred in concession in the year 1905 brought Wallagga into attention once again. This was the year which signified three foreign concession seekers such as the Syrian Hasseb Ydlibi, the German Arnold Holtz and the Italian Alberto Prasso obtaining various concessions from the central government in western and southwestern Ethiopia.[106] Similarly, following the arrival of the German diplomatic mission in Ethiopia in 1905,[107] Holtz who held double professions i.e., engineering and manufacturing, is said to have acquired a mining concession in western and southwestern Ethiopia. His concession covered a large tract of potential mining land which was forty two thousand square kilometers in Upper Nile, located between the Gonji, the Baro, the Birbir and the Gabu rivers in western Wallagga.[108]

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[105]Informants: Almamun and Dhereessaa Amantii.

[106]Bahru, "Concessions and Concession-Hunters …," p.367 and *Idem.*, *A History of Modern*…, p.101. But for Ydlib's non-mining concession activity, example, rubber plantation and his services in the government of Ethiopia, one of the important writings is May Ydlibi, *With Ethiopian Rulers: A Biography of Hassib Ydlibi* (Addis Ababa : Addis Ababa University Press, 2006).

[107]See Heinrich Scholler, "Aspects of German-Ethiopians Diplomatic Relations," *Proceedings of XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Hamburg, July 20-25,2003* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp.356, 359.

[108]Bairu, *Ethiopia and Germany*…,p.167. For the Germans obtaining such concession, see also Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.235.

Like Holtz's concession, the concession of an experienced Italian concessionaire, Prasso, who obtained mining concession in 1905 from the central government of Ethiopia for the mineral resources of western Ethiopia covered large tracts of land which also included parts of Wallagga. Prasso had experience in gold prospecting before he moved to western and southwestern Ethiopia, because he had been in California, Alaska, and South Africa for the purpose of prospecting and extracting gold prior to his coming to Ethiopia in the early 1900s.[109] On his concession, Bahru, Aleme and Pankhrsut agree that Prasso had obtained two mining concessions and these were the Baro and the Birbir mining concessions.[110] In 1905 Prasso's Baro concession allowed him for three years to prospect and extract gold found on very large tracts of land which the Baro-Gonji Rivers in the north and the Akobo-Juba Rivers in the south encompassed.[111]

However, historians and travelers suggest different ideas on what happened to Prasso's Baro concession. Aleme suggests that Prasso discarded his Baro concession and shifted to the Birbir concession.[112] But Bahru argues that Prasso's Baro concession was renewed several times in 1909, 1913 and 1918. He further elaborates that later the renewals enabled Prasso to obtain the rights to prospect and extract platinum, silver and other mineral ores in his concession area.[113] Bartleet, however, indicates that Prasso did not commence extracting mineral resources along the

[109]*Ibid*., p.368; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[110]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," pp.416-417; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, pp.234, 235.

[111]FO371/193, Enclosure II Hohler's Dispatch no.45, 7.9.1907; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*,pp.234-235 and Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p .92.

[112]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92.

[113]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…,"p.417; cf. Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.235.

Baro concession instead he sold it.[114] Bartleet, however, did not inform us to whom Prasso sold his concession and the amount of money that he received for selling it. Nevertheless, it could be said that the repeated renewals of Prasso's Baro concession had delayed Prasso's idea of selling his concession to some other company for some years.

But the document which deals with Zappa expounds that concessionaires prohibited the local miners in Wallagga from extracting gold from their previous holdings even in time when these concessionaires interrupted the extraction of gold in their sites. On this issue, Kumsaa stated that though these foreigners stopped extracting gold, they forbade the poor from extracting gold boasting that whether they extracted it or not the goldfields were already given to them.[115]

Foreigners' obtaining mining concessions in Wallagga even in the mid1900s looked like uninterrupted. Thus, in 1906 Fred Marquordtz, the German national received an agreement from Menilek to extract gold in Wallagga. The agreement declares that Marquordtz had to work on the extraction of gold in Wallagga for the government of Ethiopia for ten years and he had not to leave Ethiopia before ten years. He had also to engage carefully in the gold work in order to give benefit and profit to the government of Ethiopia.[116] But the arrangement looks like a joint undertaking venture which brought the concession giver and taker together to do a business in mining in Wallagga jointly.

However, under that agreement what made Marquordtz's role similar to the roles of his predecessors like Ilg and Camboul in gold mining activity in Wallagga was split loyalty i.e.,

[114]Bartleet, *In the land …*, p.111.

[115]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, nd., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 337, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[116]"ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረጓቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd, p.73.

working as a foreign concessionaire and also working for the central government of Ethiopia. Thus, one source suggests that Marquordtz was an employee of the Mines Department, established at the national level between 1906-1907. But later he was fired and deported from Ethiopia.[117] Marquordtz was also made to supervise the gold production work at Waabaraa, the goldfield in Laalo Qile in west Wallagga which was under the control of Menilek in 1906. However, later Paul Pogalji, an artisan who Menilek sent to Waabaraa replaced Marquordtz as a supervisor and led the supervision activity for some years.[118]

In 1906 those concessionaires who obtained mining concessions in Wallagga also began preliminary works such as surveying and excavating their mining sites before commencing the extraction of gold. During that time, therefore the concessionaires in Najjoo were busy in surveying and demarcating their gold mining sites and they put flags as markers to differentiate one mining site from the other.[119] Similarly, the British citizen, Blundell and his friend Rose who earlier competed to acquire mining concession in Wallagga were also busy in 1906 in excavating gold sites at the mountain of *Tulluu* Jaldeessa.[120]

However, while competitions among the foreign concessionaires were intensified in Ethiopia, some of the home countries of the concessionaires like Britain, France and Italy signed the Tripartite agreement in 1906. The agreement had eleven articles but it was signed without the recognition of Ethiopia. The three Powers signed the agreement partly to safeguard their

[117]Bairu, *Ethiopia and Germany*…,p.165.

[118]Ministry of Mines and Energy, "*የማእድን ታሪክ…*"("History of the Ministry…,") pp.14-15. However, this unpublished document has a problem of mixing the Ethiopian dates with the Gregorian dates.

[119]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.11.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/401-400, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[120]*Idem.*, 20.12.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/399, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

economic interest including their interest in mining industry in the country.[121] Among the eleven articles of the Tripartite agreement, article two explicitly states how they had to deal with different concessions in Ethiopia. It says, "As regards demands for agricultural, commercial, and industrial concessions in Ethiopia, the three Powers undertake to instruct their Representatives to act in such a way that concessions which may be accorded in the interest of one of the three States may not be injurious to the interests of the two others."[122] Thus, for the effective implementation of this clause in concessions, ideally, the three powers were expected to restrain themselves from obtaining concessions which jeopardize each other's interests, notifying each other on what they wanted to do and working together for realizing all this. In reality, however, to obtain different concessions in the country including the mining concessions, the citizens and the companies of the three European powers were engaged in accusing each other for breaching the various clauses of tripartite agreement.[123]

Among the foreign concessionaires, however, there was indication that some of them had hidden the actual amount of gold they extracted from Najjoo goldfield. The British foreign office documents and secondary sources are silent on this issue although a few archival documents collected from Wallagga disclose this hidden fact. But revealing the situation made the foreign concessionaires in Najjoo unhappy in time when first Kumsaa started to inspect the amount of gold they produced in Najjoo in 1906. Second, in time when he requested them to show him the

[121]Bahru, *A History of Modern…*, p.111 and Shiferaw Bekele, "Some Notes on the Genesis and Interpretation of the Tripartite Treaty," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 18(1985),p.63.

[122]"Agreement Between the United Kingdom, France, and Italy, Respecting Abyssinia, Signed at London, December 13, 1906,"*American Journal of International Law*, 1,2(1907),p.227; cf. Shiferaw, "Some Notes…," p.63.

[123]FO401/12, Hervey to Grey, "General Report on Abyssinia for the Years 1907 and 1908," 2.1.1909.

amount of gold they produced each day by taking it out of the machine they remained reluctant to do so telling him that they took the gold found in the machine once in a month not each day.[124] However, what properly explains the doubt that the foreign concessionaires in Najjoo were downplaying the amount of gold they produced in 1906 was the increment seen in the amount of gold which these concessionaires produced soon after Kumsaa started inspecting gold produced in Najjoo.[125] The following table clearly indicates how the production of gold increased in matters of months after Kumsaa started the work of inspection in Najjoo goldfield.

Precious metal produced	**Date**	**Gold extraction site**	**Amount of gold produced in ounce**	**Status of production**	**Average production in a month**
Gold (unrefined)	May to July 1906 (before inspection was started**)**	Najjoo	54	Understated	18
Gold (unrefined)	August 1906 (After inspection was started)	Najjoo	76	Real Production	76

Table 3. **Understated and Real Production of Gold by the Concessionaires in Najjoo in Some Months of the Year 1906.** [126]

From the table, we can understand that the average production of gold which the concessionaires produced in each month before Kumsaa started inspection was eighteen (18) ounces but after the inspection the amount of gold produced increased by four fold. Thus, based

[124]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.12.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 395, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[125]*Ibid.*

[126]Table created based on archival documents such as Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.12.1898E.C, WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 395, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 and Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Taytu ,11.1.1899E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 393, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 and Tesema and Triulzi, የወለጋ የታሪክ...(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) pp.63, 65. The average output of gold in the table is calculated dividing the total amount of gold produced by number of month(s).

on the table, we can safely suggest that the chance that the concessionaires were able to understate the gold produced at Najjoo in 1906 was very high. It was also stated that the concessionaires in Najjoo were carrying out the gold extraction activities day and night assisted with machine and in the night they used a generator which provided them light. Kumsaa termed the generator as *"Yäshi̱bo mäbrat."* [127]

However, understating gold output could also affect the benefit of the government of Ethiopia. This was because concessionaires' corruption means reducing the precise amount of gold given to the government. It was also breaching the agreement concluded between the two which compelled the concessionaires [without hiding] to provide eight percent of their gold output to the government after the concessionaires' began the extraction of gold.[128] But Kumsaa's suspicion that the concessionaires understated the amount of gold they produced in Najjoo in 1906 was very high. In order to become safe and obtain the precise amount of gold produced therefore he wanted the extracted gold to be weighed each day.[129] Thus, in the message he sent to Menilek in 1906 blatantly stated his deep suspicion against the concessionaires saying:

> *ከነጆ ካሉት ከፈረንጆቹ ጋራ የወርቁን ስራ ተጠባበቅ ያሉኝን የለት የለቱን ያንድ ያንድ ቀኑን አሳዩኝ ብዬ ብላቸው ከመኪናው ባንድ ወር የተሰራውን አንድ ቀን ይወጣል እንጂ የለት የለቱንስ አይወጣም አሉኝ ::… ዛሬ እለት የወጣውን እለቱን ይነጠርና ልየው ብላቸው ዛሬ አናነጥርም አይሆንም ይደር አሉኝ ::… ነገር ግን እለት የወጣውን የለቱን ብናነጥረው መልካም ነው ከነሱ እጅ አድሮ በማግሰቱ ብናነጥረው ቢሰርቁስ በምን ይታወቃል ::*

[127] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.11.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/401, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[128] For the agreement and royality in percentage, see FO 371/3496 Enclosure in Blundell to Secretary, 30.7.1919; MS 2201, "ዳግማዊ ምኒልክ ከተለያዩ አገሮች ጋር ያደረ¹ቸው ውሎች" ("Agreements Concluded Between Emperor Menilek II and Different States,") Mss. No 2201, IES, nd., pp.69-71; 122-125; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233.

[129] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.11.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/401, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

This roughly means:

> *As your majesty told me to look over the gold work of the foreigners in Najjoo, I have requested them to show me each day's extracted gold on a daily basis. Nonetheless, they told me that they took the extracted gold out of machine once in a month but not every day…When I requested them to see each day's extracted gold refined on a daily basis, they refused refining the gold and postponed it to the next day… However, it is good to refine each day's extracted gold every day. But if the extracted gold remains on their hand and will be refined the next day who knows if they steal it.*[130]

In the time when the foreign concessionaires were engaged in the practice which could affect the local miners and the country, local miners in Wallagga also suffered a lot not only because of leading ordinary lives but also because of lacking protection to their lives. The situation which clarifies this issue in 1906 was the death of thirty four gold miners in Wallagga. These miners were killed when they returned to their home after extracting gold in Dabus and the killers were termed as 'brigands' and belonged to the Fakosha group of the Gumuz people who used mountains and caves to dwell in. Besides, in the same year these 'brigands' also killed four guests who were crossing into Beni Shangul-Gumuz.[131] However, it could be said that Kumsaa had given great concern for the death of the miners since the death of the miners forced him to find a solution to the problem. As a remedy he planned to resettle the Fakosha group on plain land in the place where he could easily find them, follow up their activity and took measures against them when they were engaged in crimes.[132]

In the 20th century, however, the gold and platinum mining activities of the government, the concessionaires, the foreign companies and the local miners in Wallagga were carried out

[130] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 28.12.1898E.C. ,WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 395, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; See also Tesema and Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ...*(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) p.63.

[131] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 20.12.1898E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/400-399, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[132] *Ibid.*

without giving due consideration to the damages which occurred on the ecosystem. Thus, such neglect was noticed in the 1900s in Wallagga. During that time, to extract gold these mining agents used strange substances and heavily relied on gold extraction methods which affected the ecosystem in Wallagga. According to some archival documents, both the government and the concessionaires used mercury to extract gold in Wallagga. From the perspective of the government, we understand this from one of the letters of Kumsaa addressed to Menilek II in 1905 that Kumsaa had used mercury[133] to extract gold which the Emperor ordered him to submit gold extracted to *Däjjazmach* Damsaw.[134] Similarly, the concessionaires had also used mercury and extracted some amount of gold in Najjoo in 1906 when Kumsaa was inspecting the gold extraction activity of the concessionaires in Najjoo.[135] From this, we understand that mercury assisted these mining agents to extract some amount of gold in Wallagga.[136]

However, during that time these mining agents did not consider the damages that mercury could create on biodiversity. Mercury consists of poisonous substance and the use of increased amount

[133]Mercury is a substance which "Amalgamates with many metals" and it is also "A virulent poison and is readily absorbed through the respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, or unbroken skin." The US Bureau of Mines (ed and comp), *Dictionary of Mining* …, p.1949.

[134] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek, 4.4.1898E.C, File no. ወ/መ/1/397, Folder no.ወ/መ/1.

[135]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Menilek and Taytu, 28.12.1898E.C and 11.1.1899E.C., File nos. ወ/መ/1/ 395 and ወ/መ/1/ 393 respectively, Folder nos. ወ/መ/1.

[136]Elsewhere authors such as Gavin Hilson describes very well how mercury supported gold extraction activity in small scale gold mining in Africa in states like Ghana. He suggests that "Mercury is added to gold-aggregated sediments, and 'wets' and adheres to metallic gold, forming pasty amalgams. It is then panned, filtered and burned to produce the final gold product." Gavin Hilson, "The Environmental Impact of Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana: Identifying Problems and Possible Solutions," *The Geographical Journal,* 168, 1 (2002), p.59.

of it affects the health of human beings and animals.[137] As a result, it attacks the central nervous system of humans. It also harms important body parts of animals like birds i.e., their legs and wings.[138]

But with respect to foreigners and gold inspection, a concessionaire first name Gelardi after he produced a little more than twenty four ounces of refined gold between the ends of July to the beginning of September 1906, he took this gold to Menilek. During that time he went to Addis Ababa inorder to travel abroad.[139] However, among the concessionaires who were annoyed because of the activity of gold inspection in Najjoo, Gelardi could be one. Such activity forced him to uninstall his machine and halt in the extraction of gold in Najjoo.[140]

Next, in 1908 the Italian citizen, Zappa had already started gold extraction in Najjoo through traditional method.[141] But for such gold work Zappa had used the Oromo miners and their traditional method. Hence, one primary source suggests that Zappa paid wages to these miners and like them he used the *gabatee* to produce a little more than sixteen ounces of gold before Kumsaa interrupted him producing gold in Najjoo due to the order he received from Menilek.[142]

[137]For mercury consisting of poisonous substance and affecting the health of human beings, see The US Bureau of Mines (ed and comp), *Dictionary of Mining* …,p.1949 and Gavin Hilson, “The Environmental Impact…,” p.59; Gobana Huluqa, “Environmental Impacts of Gold Mining in Oromia,” *The Journal of Oromo Studies*, 6, 1 and 2 (1999) p.159. Besides, Hilson states that mercury damages the health of animals. See Hilson, “The Environmental Impact…,” pp.59-60.

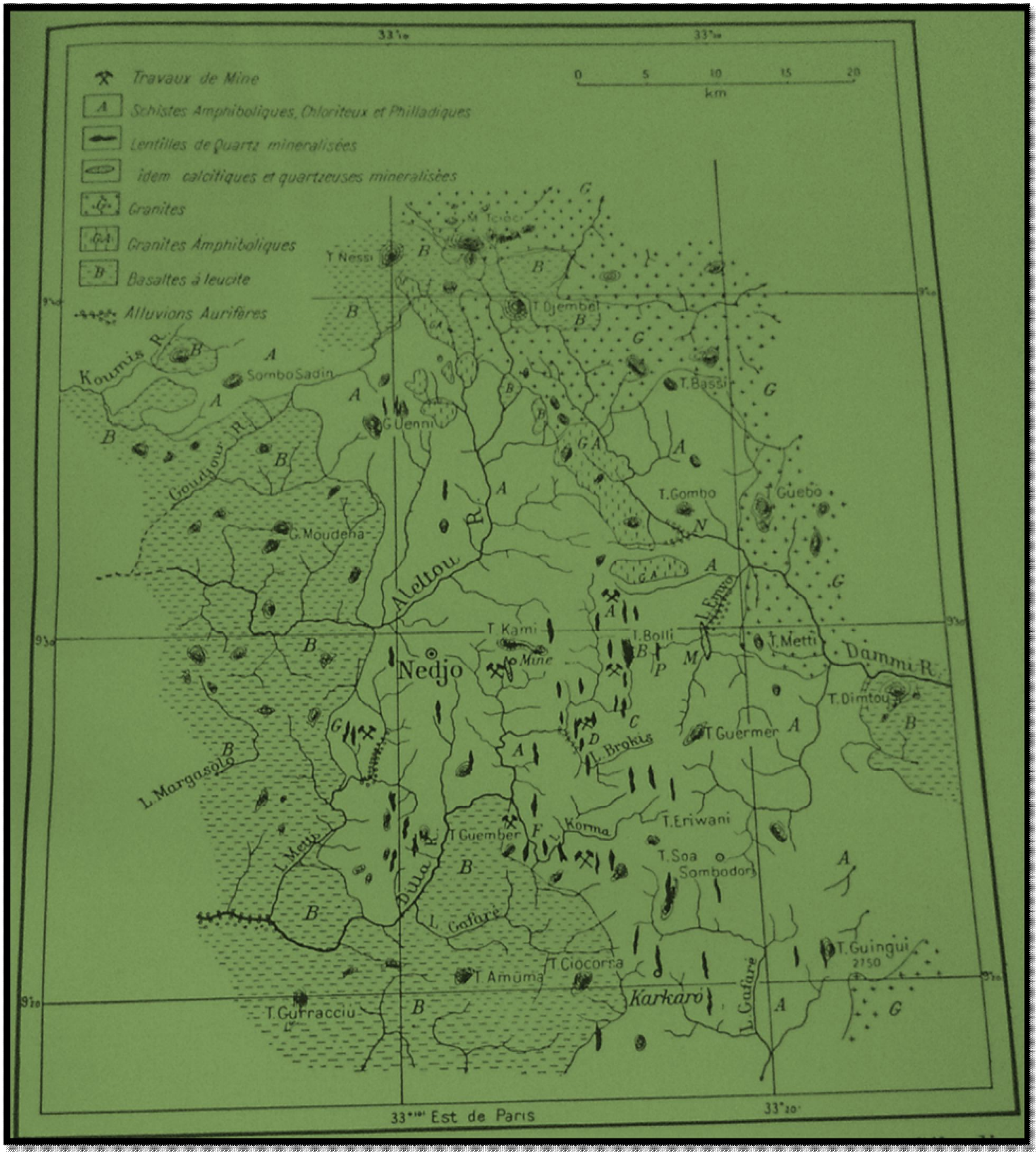
[138]Hilson, “The Environmental Impact…,” pp.59-60.

[139]Gäbrä Egzi’abher to Menilek, 28.1.1899E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/392-391, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[140]I*bid*.; Gäbrä Egzi’abher to Taytu ,11.1.1899E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 393, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[141] Gäbrä Egzi’abher to Menilek, 7.12.1900E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/353, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[142]*Ibid*.; Gabrä Egzi’abher to Menilek, 17.2.1901E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/350-349, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1. But Teseama and Truilzi put the date 24.1.1900 E.C. instead of 17.2.1901E.C.for this document, see Tesema and Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ…*(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) p.87.



Map3.Geological and Mining Map of Part of Wallagga[143] Taken from Luigi Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie Dell'Africa Orientale*, Roma, 1952, p.211.

[143] The map is mainly adopted to indicate active gold mines and places of alluvial gold deposits in Wallagga in the early 20th century which were provided in the list of key of the map as *Travaux de Mine* and *Alluvions Auriferes.*

A competition over securing mining concession in southwestern Ethiopia on 6 May 1909 made another Italian, Prasso, to stay longer in that a venture and extend his mining for a decade. There are consensuses among sources that Prasso had stayed long in the business of hunting for gold mines in Ethiopia.[144] But the paucity and unreliability of sources preclude us from dealing with the influences that Prasso had put on mining industry in western Ethiopia and the amount of gold he produced from his Baro mining concession before 1924.

On the whole, economic and other types of relationships which exist between financiers and their companies, the miners and the state in mining industry or similar types of relationships which would exist in other economic sectors can be summarized by using Tobias ten Brink's political economy concepts of "capital" and "structural interdependence" as indicated below:

> *In social terms, capital can now be defined as a societal relationship between the primary agents of capitalism, the owners of the means of production and wageworkers. The socio-economic content of this societal relationship is the production of surplus labour on the one hand, and the appropriation of surplus value on the other (although this surplus value can only be realised as 'profit' within the sphere of circulation.)*[145]

According to the concept of "structural interdependence", state is also an integral part of such development. Particularly, state makes its influences to prevail in the activities of companies by using its authority of enacting and implementing laws and by imposing taxation on companies.

By making this, state supports "corporations" to function continuously[146] and assures its presence in such activity as well as secure its benefit from such an activity.

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[144] FO371/1293, Oppenheimer Branford Co. to Secretary,13.2.1912; Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…,"pp.417, 418 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, pp.235, 236.

[145] Tobias ten Brink (Jeff Bale(translator)), *Global Political Economy and the Modern State System* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing and IDC Publishers, 2014), p.43.

[146] *Ibid.*, pp.59-60.

To conclude this chapter, the intensified competition to obtain mining concessions for the mineral resources of Wallagga made some foreign concessionaires and companies to commence and maintain the extraction of gold in Wallagga in the 1900s. Due to this, these concessionaires and companies on the one hand they became one of the benefit sharing mining agents in Wallagga and larger or smaller they obtained their own gold share in Wallagga. On the other hand, on some occasions they made the local miners or the local inhabitants to suffer more since they evicted them from their own gold sites. In some occasions these concessionaires made the local miners to obtain limited benefit from the extraction of gold because of the payment they gave to the local miners for providing labors to extract gold for them and for buying ounces of gold from the local miners or from local people.

Besides, the gold mining activity in Wallagga between 1899-1910 established gold providers' and recipients' chain. In this chain the main gold providers, the local miners fed gold to those mining agents who were found in a better economic position such as the concessionaires, the gold merchants, the local governors and the central government. In this chain, however, the main gold providers remained leading ordinary lives which could be an indication for them to obtain the least benefit from gold mining activity in Wallagga. In the chain the local miners and the local governors made the central government of Ethiopia to emerge as the largest recipients of gold and benefit from the extracted gold in Wallagga through using the gold tribute system, directly owning some goldfields and taking their output, through gold purchase and gold gifts.

Both the gold providers and the recipients supported the continuity of the extraction of gold in Wallagga in time when *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* was active in Wallagga. These mining agents were dependent on the method of extracting gold traditionally. Hence, it was the traditional method of gold mining activity which maintained its continuity in Wallagga during that time. It was also this traditional method which supported the largest amount of the outflow of gold from Wallagga to the center during that time. Moreover, between 1899-1910 major mining activities such as prospecting, exploration, quarrying, dredging, extraction and refining gold in traditional way were carried out.

Nonetheless, the extraction of gold in Wallagga did not only experience the coming of the concessionaires and the establishment of companies which had to extract this gold. It had also seen the close down of gold mining companies like the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* in 1910 since this company finally became unprofitable in 1910.[147] Although this company was closed down, mining activities with some additional features which had engaged the concessionaires, the miners and the central government of Ethiopia continued in Wallagga after 1910. This development will be explored in the next chapter.

[147] Pankhurst, *Economic History…*,p.233; For *Mines d'Or du Wallaga's close down,* see also Aleme, "The Process of Peasants…,"p.92 and Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…,"p.416.

Chapter Three

Development in Mining Industry of Wallagga in Post-*Mines d'Or du Wallaga* Company (1910-1924)

Introduction

This is a chapter which addresses developments closely related to mining concession and the pre-occupation of the central government of Ethiopia obtaining much more gold from Wallagga. These are issues continued from the previous chapter for further discussion. Thus, the chapter provides additional ideas on these issues which further strengthen the argument of the previous chapter on the mining activity of precious metals in Wallagga favorably engaging foreign concessionaires, local miners and the central government of Ethiopia and its repercussions.

The chapter looks at such mining developments since the close down of the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* Company in 1910 until another major mining event emerged in Wallagga in 1924. The 1924 mining event will be discussed in the next chapter. This account traces the inevitability of the extraction of another precious metal, platinum, in Yubdo.

This chapter is structured around the following arguments. First, the request to obtain mining concession in Wallagga to extract mainly gold had a history of ups and downs in the 1910s and in the early 1920s. But competition to acquire mining concessions over the mineral resources of Wallagga especially among the citizens and the companies of Britain, France and Italy once again was intensified after1918. Behind these competitions, however, among the diplomats of the above three powerful European states there were the intentions of safeguarding the national interest and the sphere of influences of their respective countries in western and other parts of Ethiopia. Second, in the 1910s and in the early 1920s the need to obtain much more gold from

Wallagga preoccupied the central government of Ethiopia with the activities of securing such precious metal from Wallagga. The discussion which enhances this argument will be presented in the following sections.

3.1. The Requisition for Mining Concession and Gold in Wallagga (1910-1918)

This section of the chapter treats two major issues. First, it discusses the ups and downs of the requests for obtaining mining concession in Wallagga between 1910-1918. Second, it deals with the pre-occupation of the rulers of central government of Ethiopia like *Lij* Iyasu and his successors to obtain much more gold from Wallagga.

To begin with, the closure of the Belgian company, *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* in Najjoo in 1910, however, does not mean an end to the competition among the foreign nationals and companies to obtain mining concessions in Wallagga. As a result, mining concessionaires from European states like Germany began to present their request to the central government of Ethiopia to obtain mining concessions in Wallagga. Though this was the case, Bairu who has dealt with the commercial activities of the Germans in Ethiopia does not focus on the account of the establishment of the German company in 1910. Albeit, in 1910 Herr Schmidt was the German concessionaire who represented the German company known as the *Deutches Syndikat für Abessinien* and grabbed the mining concession previously granted to the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*.[1] The company of the Germans, however, was active in Wallagga until the Italian

[1]See Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233; Aleme, "The Process of Peasants…," p.92 and Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.416.

occupation of Ethiopia and the Germans are said to have extracted gold from Mankush and Dale Rivers as well as from Ondonok in Beni Shangul.[2]

Besides, in 1910 the British citizens and companies endeavored to extract gold along the Ethio-Suddenness frontier and in several areas of Wallagga. Thus, in places like Beni Shangul and in the environs of *Tulluu* Jaldeessaa in Wallagga in 1910 the British companies were active in extracting gold. Nevertheless, later, they interrupted the extraction of gold in these areas because of the problem of insecurity. Similarly, [Gold] mining activity also continued in the Birbir areas and during that time sources suggest that the mining site known as '*Tulluu* Warqi' was notable for the extraction of gold in Wallagga.[3] At that time, it was also reported that Najjoo continued to attract the foreign concessionaires and in 1910 the Egyptian financiers, Messrs Zeroudacki was said to have secured big concession in Najjoo. It was anticipated that constructing a railway could increase the profit gained from the above mining sites. But at that time the British remained in panic and anxious for a while. Because they thought that the commercial line which was supposed to go through western Ethiopia to the Sudan could have been redirected and the French could have taken the trade of western areas, had they built the railway line in this area.[4]

Here, the presence of the citizens and the companies of Germany and Britain in Wallagga's mining industry therefore attests that in post *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* for a couple of years Wallagga kept its tradition of enticing foreign concessionaires into its mining industry.

[2]For the Germans extracting gold in those sites, see Bäkurä Tsion Ti̱lahun, "የአሶሳ አውራጃ ታሪክና የህዝብ ባህል" ("History and Culture of the People of Assosa Province,") Mss. No. 2259, IES, 1960E.C., p.8. For the above company of Germany working in Beni Shangul until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, see Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.233; Aleme, "The Process of Peasants…," p.92.

[3]FO371/1043, Enclosure in Thesiger to Grey, 10.2. 1911.

[4]*Ibid.*

Similarly, this enticement also invited rulers from the center who were mainly pre-occupied with collecting many ounces of gold from Wallagga's gold industry.

Therefore, a couple of years after *Lij* Iyasu was made heir to the throne and during his reign, what came to light was the continuity in the outflow of gold from Wallagga to Addis Ababa through the earlier mechanisms of tribute payment, gold gifts and purchase. For example, archival documents indicate that Kumsaa gave a total of one hundred ten ounces of gold as gift to *Lij* Iyasu in 1912 and in the last year of his reign as well as one hundred fifty one and half ounces of gold through purchase in 1913.[5] Likewise, in 1915 in Kumsaa's name *Azazh* Mätafäria[Mälkä Tsadiq], from *Gebbi* Minister (Minister of the Imperial Court) borrowed gold from the central treasury which Kumsaa had sent *birr* forty one thousand and one hundred for this gold. Then, the gold was submitted to the treasury of the central government.[6] Here, sources such as archival documents which tell us the outflow of gold from Wallagga to the centre in the early 20th century are abundant. But they are extremely inadequate on issues such as whether the recipients of such gold, the rulers of the central government of Ethiopia, like *Lij* Iyasu and his successors were engaged in the activity of improving the mining industry of Wallagga in the early 1920s or not.

In the time when the outflow of gold from Wallagga continued to reach the center, Kumsaa also continued to appeal to *Lij* Iyasu against the increment of gold tribute imposed on him during the time of Menilek. Thus, Kumsaa began to appeal to *Lij* Iyasu in 1913. In his appeal he stated that since he faced difficulty to pay tribute annually in gold, he was forced to collect tribute from the

[5] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to *Lij* Eyasu, 12.12.1904E.C., 29.9.1908E.C. and 22.8.1905E.C., WMA, File nos. ወ/መ/1/ 333, ወ/መ/1/ 312 and ወ/መ/1/ 327 respectively, Folder no. ወ/መ/1.

[6] Mätafäria to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 11.7.1907E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/መ/4/ 025.1714963233, Folder no. ወ/መ/4.

local people for two consecutive years and paid it as a one year tribute to the central government. Because of this, he owed three years accumulated and unpaid tribute in gold to the central government.[7] Kumsa faced difficulty to pay tribute annually in gold because of the fall in the production of gold in Wallagga steadily.

On this issue, in addition to the increment in tribute in gold, the dissertation therefore suggests that Kumsaa must have faced a decline in the production of gold in his domain during the period of *Lij* Iyasu. Because he did not regularly pay his annual tribute in gold and he also borrowed gold sent as an gift to *Lij* Iyasu from another person.[8] Even, in time when *Lij* Iyasu had cancelled three thousand four hundred ounces of gold of three years accumulated and unpaid gold tribute to the central government, Kumsaa owed another three years unpaid tribute in gold.[9] Here, however, what was important for Kumsaa and the rulers of central government of Ethiopia in order to deal with the shortage of gold output which Kumsaa had faced in Wallagga during that time was working on developing the gold mining industry of Wallagga. One of the ways to do this was giving Kumsaa the privilege to recruit and pay wages for gold miners who obtained some skills of gold mining when they worked with the foreign concessionaires in Wallagga in the 1900s.

But *Lij* Iyasu's cancelling unpaid gold tribute and other actions that he had taken in favor of Kumsaa encouraged Kumsaa and some local people of Wallagga to have good feelings for *Lij* Iyasu. Concerning this, Tesema tells us that Kumsaa was happy with the reign of *Lij* Iyasu and

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[7]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to *Lij* Eyasu, 2.7.1905E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/መ/1/ 329, Folder no. ወ/መ/1.

[8]*Ibid*., and Gäbrä Egzi'abher to *Lij* Eyasu, nd., WMA, File no. ወ/መ/1/ 319, Folder no. ወ/መ/1.

[9]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to *Lij* Iyasu, nd., File no. ወ/መ/1/ 319, Folder no. ወ/መ/1.

continued to have good relation with the center during that time.[10] Another indication for Kumsaa and other governors of Wallagga establishing good relation with *Lij* Iyasu was the visit which *Lij* Iyasu made in Dambi Dollo and Naqamtee in 1912. In the same year *Lij* Iyasu freed Jootee, the governor of Qellam, from jail in Addis Ababa and then *Lij* Iyasu made Askalä, Jootee's daughter, his spouse.[11] During that time, on his way to Naqamtee from Dambi Dollo, *Lij* Iyasu also visited gold extraction sites in Wallagga. While he was in Naqamtee, *Lij* Iyasu requested the local governors of Beni Shangul-Gumuz, like Khojale and *Däjazmach* Mustafa, to come to Naqamtee for discussions with them and in return these governors offered him many ounces of gold.[12] It was also reported that *Lij* Iyasu rejoiced with the local people of Qellam for reducing the tax imposed on them. Thus, poems which Negaso Gidada collected from Qellam precisely helps us remember how the people of Qellam expressed their happiness following *Lij* Iyasu's decision:

Oromo	***Gloss***
Iyaasu dofolooko,	*Iyassu, my handsome one,*
Siifan nyaadhe boqolooko.	*It is because of you that I ate my maize.*[13]

Though this dissertation suggests that Kumsaa had faced a fluctuation in the production of gold during the period of *Lij* Iyasu, it appears that local people were engaged in the extraction of gold in some parts of Wallagga during his time. As a result, this engagement supported the system which made export from Wallagga to the center almost without interruption. Concerning this

[10]Tesema, "The Political Economy…," p.180.

[11]Nagaso, "Oromo Historical Poems…," p.334 and Gobeze Tafate, አባ ጤና ኢያሱ (*The Peaceful Lij Iyasu*) (Addis Ababa and Paris: Maison des Etudes Ethiopiennes,1996), pp.70-71.

[12]Gobeze Tafate: *Abba Tena*…,p.71.

[13]Nagaso, "Oromo Historical Poems…," p.334.

issue, on the one hand, the extraction of gold can be noticed from Kumsaa's letter which was addressed to *Lij* Iyasu in 1915 which dealt with local people's refusal to sell in the markets of Wallagga the rubber that Ydlibi produced.[14] Thus, in 1915 the local people who were living in the vast gold rich area of Dhidheessaa breached the decree of Kumsaa which ordered them to sell the rubber which Ydlibi[15] produced. Instead, they preferred to extract gold seasonally i.e., in winter and engage in farming in summer in order to pay their tribute rather than engaging in the unprofitable business of rubber production and sale.[16] On the other hand, without the contribution of local extraction of gold it could be difficult for Kumsaa to pay his tribute in gold and to send his gold gift to Empress Zawditu and *Ras* Tafari in 1917 and in the subsequent years of the Dual rule.

But gold sent from Wallagga as gifts to the ruling elites in the center during the Dual rule began to increase slightly since Kumsaa was sending this gift to two rulers of the country. Sometimes, he was also forced to send gold gifts to two of them simultaneously. This happened, for instance, on 22 February 1917 in which Kumsaa offered one hundred ounces of gold and ten ounces of gold to Zawditu and Tafari respectively.[17] Governors of Wallagga also provided gold gifts to the

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[14]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to *Lij* Iyasu, 4.5.1907E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 317, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[15]While Ydlibi was in Ethiopia, he obtained gold and other mineral resources concession, "The rainproof goods monopoly, the monopoly for the import, export and cultivation of tobacco, and a concession of fertile land on both banks of the River Baro," see Ydlibi, *With Ethiopian Rulers*…,p.90. He obtained this land to produce rice, rubber, coffee, cotton and sugar cane. But he was discouraged because of the intervention made on his work from the Foreign Office and because he was compelled to deliver new items which he produced to British market. See *Ibid*.

[16]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to *Lij* Iyasu, 4.5.1907E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 317, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

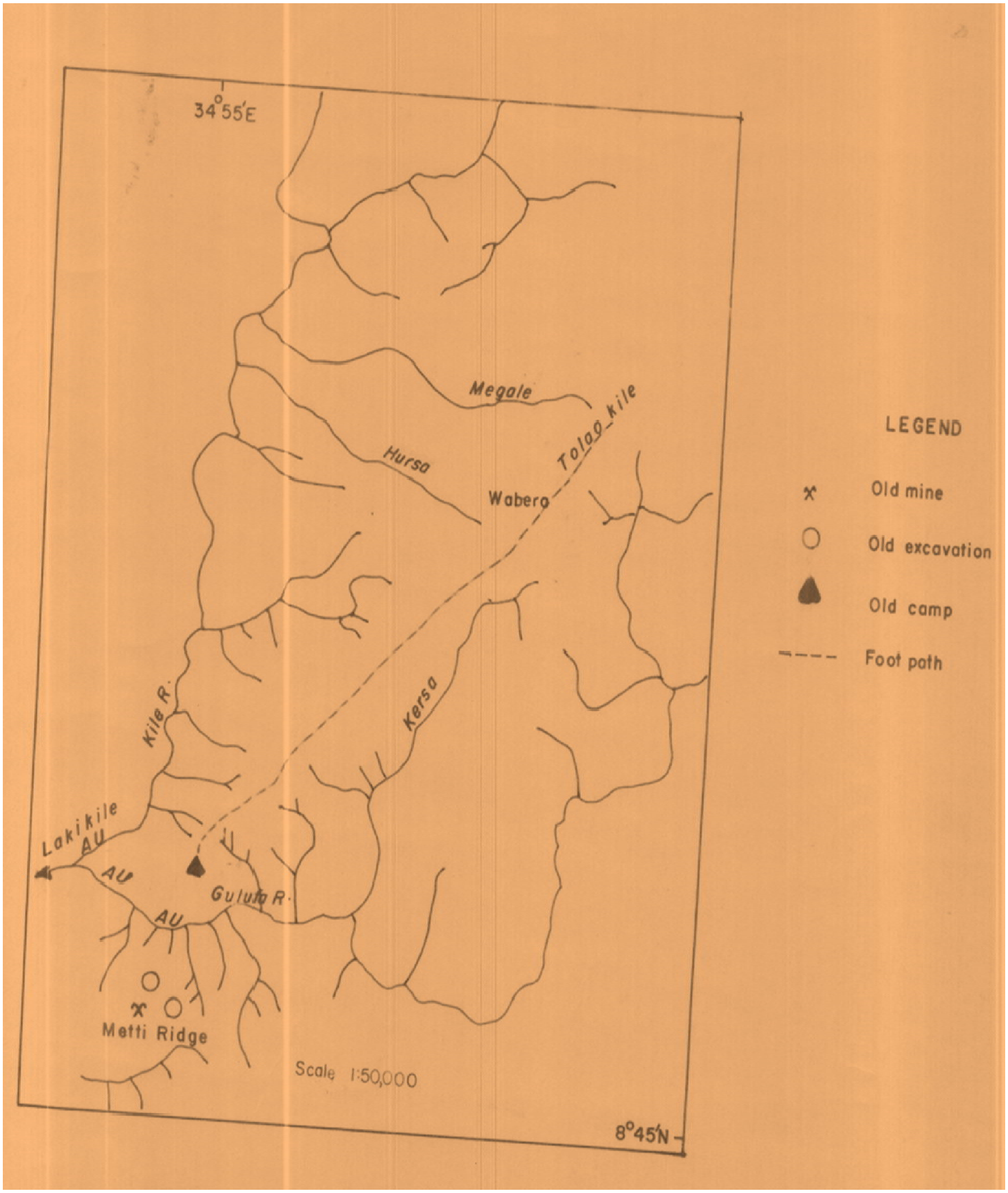
[17]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Zawditu and Tafari, 14.6.1909E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 297, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; For Zawditu receiving such amount of gold, see also Zawditu to Gäbrä Egzi'abher,4.8.1909E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/3/025.171496347, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

rulers of central government several times in a year. In such case, Kumsaa sent another ten ounces of gold as gifts to both Zawditu and Tafari on 2 August 1917.[18]

Another development in the gold industry of Wallagga in the 1910s was the continuity of gold work at Waabaraa goldfield by relying on the familiar traditional method of gold extraction. As indicated in chapter two, Waabaraa was a gold mine in Laalo Qile area which came under the control of Menilek II in the 1900s. A confirmation to the continuity of Waabaraa as a goldmine and the carrying out of some prospecting and exploration activities in this goldmine particularly between 1909-1918 comes from the writings of geologists like Jelenc and Ahmad Mohammad. These geologists also indicate that among some small rivers found in and around Laalo Qile which are believed to have limited amount of gold deposits River Qarsa was renowned for the extraction of gold.[19]

[18]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Zawditu and Tafari, 26.11.1909E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/መ/1/ 293, Folder no. ወ/መ/1.

[19]Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.400 ; Ahmad, "Placer Prospects …," pp.4-5.



Map4.The Waabaraa-Mexxi Goldmine, Adopted from Ahmad Mohammad, "Placer Prospects of the Birbir Basin,"[1976-1977], Fig. 5.

However, concerning concession between 1913-1918, Wallagga was not busy as it was previously. As a result, it lost its magnetic attraction of the concessionaires from Europe and elsewhere since WWI became a barrier for Europeans and the citizens of the other continents to obtain mining concessions in Ethiopia to extract the mineral resources of Wallagga. But as Bahru suggests there were a few British firms like Bull and Duncan, and the Backhouse group which attempted to join the competition to obtain mining concession in Ethiopia between 1913-1914 before the war was intensified.[20] Nevertheless, considering Wallagga's inactiveness on the issues of concessions and the concessionaires during WWI, it could be said that the competition to obtain mining concession in Ethiopia over the mineral resources of Wallagga probably declined during that time. Conversely, the end of WWI brought the revival in this competition as the next discussion will indicate.

3.2 Resurgence of Competition Among the Concessionaires and the Continuity in Outflow of Gold from Wallagga(1918-1924)

This part of the dissertation intends to strengthen the previous arguments on competition over obtaining mining concessions among the foreign concessionaires, benefit sharing and the outflow of gold from Wallagga to the center. Thus, it covers the issues of mining concessions, benefit sharing and the outflow of gold from Wallagga to the center between 1918-1924. It means it starts from the time in which competitions to obtain mining concessions to extract gold ore in Wallagga revived as of the end of WWI and extends to the beginning of obtaining mining concession to extract platinum ore in Wallagga.

[20]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.419.

Therefore, at the end of WWI, once again Wallagga and the areas adjacent to it became the centers of competitions among the foreign concessionaires in order to acquire mining sites for extraction of valuable mineral resources. Thus, as this part of the dissertation will indicate between 1918-1924 competition to acquire mining concessions over the mineral resources of Wallagga mainly to extract gold once again intensified among the citizens and the companies of Britain, France and Italy. Behind these competitions, however, among the diplomats of the three powerful states there were the intentions of safeguarding the national interest and the sphere of influences of their respective countries in western and other parts of Ethiopia. In short, this was a period which had largely seen the intensification of the politics of concessions particularly among the citizens and the companies of the three powerful European states instead of engaging in the real production of gold in Wallagga.

In this regard, in 1918 the politics of concessions began with a controversy created among the diplomats of the three powerful European states. Consequently, in 1918 it was claimed that the French Group under Messrs Achile Bayard had an interest to obtain mining concession in Wallagga in the time when *Käntiba* Wäsäne [Zamanuel][21] became head of the Mines Department of the country. At that time, Wäsäne was also responsible to decide on foreign applications concerning the granting of concession.[22] Later, however, the concession of Bayard created a dispute among the diplomats of Britain and Italy in Ethiopia when one rumor was heard. The

[21]*Käntiba* Wäsäne Zamanuel was born in Merhabite in the former province of Shawa. Then, he served as the postal service, telegraph and telephone officers as well as the mayor of Addis Ababa city during the period of Menilek II and his successors. He also served as the delegate of the government of Ethiopia in Asmara and later died in 1918. For this idea, see Mahtama Sillasie Wolde Masqal, *ቼ በለው (Let Its March)* (Addis Ababa, 1961E.C.), p.72.

[22]FO371/3495, Gerald Campbell to James Balfour, 5.11.1918. But domestic sources which I have seen do not provide information on an issue connected with Wasane’s becoming head of the Mines Department.

rumor which Wilfred Thesiger, the British diplomat, received said that Bayard whom the French government supported was ready to dispossess all other concessions and take every one's mines in the country because he had bought 'Wäsäne's mining concession.'[23]

The need to obtain mining concession in western and southwestern Ethiopia in 1918 also brought once again some British firms like the Ramsden-Backhouse group into action. As explained earlier, this group made an effort to join the competition to get mining concession in the country even before the beginning of WWI. Apart from mining activity, this and other British firms like the Fanti Syndicate Limited or the Villiers-Janson group had also expressed interest to participate in commercial activities in Ethiopia.[24] Though both of these groups had the interest to take up Prasso's Baro concession, it was the Ramsden-Backhouse group which actually provided twelve thousand pounds to purchase the Baro concession in 1918.[25]

Although these concessionaires were very eager to obtain mining concessions in western Ethiopia, they faced several difficulties while attempting to obtain concessions in 1918 and 1919. One of these difficulties was related to bribing higher officials of the central government. On this issue the British Legation in Addis Ababa strongly accused Wäsäne for receiving bribes from the French citizen known by the name Vorriere who worked for the French group to acquire mining

[23]FO371/3125 and FO371/3495, in Campbell's and Thesiger's Dispatches, 31.10.1918 and 24.2.1919 respectively.

[24]FO371/3125, Thesiger to Balfour, 10.6.1918.

[25]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p. 420.

concession in Harar in 1918. As stated earlier, the British Legation also feared that the French group could obtain similar concession in Wallagga.[26]

However, what became a headache to the British firms such as the Abyssinian Corporations which had engaged in safeguarding their interests in Ethiopia in 1918 was the fear that the French could hold monopoly rights over mining concession in the country.[27] The British fear also included Wallagga since Wallagga was the center of experimenting mining concessions and since the British interest over Wallagga was great and Britain did not want other power to take its interest in western Ethiopia. But the concession contract granted to Vorriere, who died because of influenza after a couple of months[28] did not suggest whether Vorriere or his company had obtained monopoly rights over the mining concession sites in Ethiopia or not.

According to Thesiger, particularly in 1919 the consideration of granting mining concession in the country to the French citizen, Vorriere and his group as a monopoly was strongly associated with Tafari's nominating Wäsäne in the Department Mines to handle issues related to mining.[29] Thus, after his nomination, it was said that Wäsäne had used his post and prepared mining agreements or papers for him as if monopoly rights in mining in the country were to be offered by him. It was also claimed that he sold these papers to Bayard's representative in the country, Vorriere, by receiving four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000). After this episode, the buyer of

[26]For such payoff in order to obtain mining concession in the country, see FO371/3495, Campbell to Balfour, 5.11.1918 and 11.12.1918 as well as FO371/3125, Thesiger to Balfour, 10.6.1918.

[27]FO371/3125, H. Villiers to Sperling, 27.12.1918.

[28]FO371/3495, Campbell to Balfour, 11.12.1918.It is reported that *Käntiba* Wäsäne also died due to influenza, see FO371/3496,Thesiger to Blundell,7.2.1919.

[29]FO371/3497, Thesiger to Curzon, 20.2.1919.

the papers began to disseminate the rumor which says he had obtained mining monopoly rights all over the country.[30]

But the British and the Italian diplomats responded to the claim of mining monopoly of the French citizen in two ways. In the first option, it was reported that both the British and the Italian diplomats in the country went against granting such kind of monopoly rights referring back to the Tripartite agreement and stating to Tafari that in case this was true, they also demanded their firms to have the same privileges in the country.[31] This idea is associated with the motive which Shiferaw Bekele suggests on the three European powers where he claims that they inserted article two in the Tripartite agreement for "opposing monopoly concessions"[32] in Ethiopia. Hence, the Italian and the British diplomats strongly opposed the implementation of monopoly concession and they needed verification whether such a concession was a monopoly or another type of concession. Particularly, the British men expressed their dissatisfaction saying that the action was against the notion of the Tripartite treaty.[33]

But it appears that two of the colonial powers which signed the Tripartite treaty, Britain and Italy, used the treaty as a shield to safeguard their economic and political interests in the country. Such interests included obtaining mining concession or creating a barrier when the French "concession hunters" wanted to obtain mining concessions in the places where the British or the Italian "concession hunters" had strong interests to obtain mining concessions. They also wanted

[30]*Ibid.*, and FO371/3495, "Italian Embassy," 25.2.1919 and see also FO371/3496, Thesiger to Blundell, 7.2.1919. But since domestic sources are unconcerned about this issue, it is difficult to verify from these sources whether Wäsäne had taken as bribe such large amount of money or not.

[31]FO371/3497, Thesiger to Curzon , 20.2.1919.

[32]Shiferaw, "Some Notes…," p.63.

[33]FO371/3495, Italian Embassy and Foreign Office, 9.1.1919 and 5.2.1919 respectively.

to use the treaty as a means of putting pressure on the government of Ethiopia to change, withhold or cancel granting mining concessions in different parts of the country when they assumed that concessions granted to the French citizens or companies could affect their interests. In the second option, however, the Italian and the British diplomats in Addis Ababa advised ["concession hunters"] to purchase the deceased '*Käntiba* Wäsäne's concession' but the excessively high selling price of the monopoly concession prohibited them from doing so.[34]

Besides, in the competition to obtain mining concession in 1919 the British citizen, Blundell, also contacted the British Legation in Addis Ababa in order to regain his earlier mining concession in Mandi in Wallagga. Concerning this, Blundell claimed that he got a prospecting permit in the early 1900s from Menilek and that he started some works there at that time.[35] The Legation advised him to send his agent to try to regain his mining concession though many concessionaires applied to obtain a concession similar to him in Wallagga after his time. Soon, however, the Legation informed him that it was not promising to invest in mineral extraction in the borderlands since the power of the central government over the local governors was declining during that time.[36]

In 1919 the competition to obtain mining concession in Wallagga also led to the emergence of conflicts among the British citizens and companies. This issue again became a headache to the representatives of British Legation in Addis Ababa.[37] This was because this conflict could erode

[34]FO371/3495, "Italian Embassy," 25.2.1919.

[35]FO371/3496, Thesiger to Blundell and Curzon, 7.2.1919.

[36]FO371/3496, Thesiger to Blundell, 7.2.1919.

[37]FO371/3496, Campbell to Curzon, 22.6.1919.

the hope of ensuring British concessionaires' interest in the country including its interest to extract the mineral resources in west Wallagga and Beni Shangul.

The major source for this conflict was first the overlapping of interest between two British groups to obtain same mining sites in Wallagga. This situation had happened in 1919 between Blundell and the Abyssinian Development Syndicate since both of them held discussion with the government of Ethiopia to obtain mining concession in the same places which included the Blue Nile, the Dhidheessaa and the Dabus areas. There was also a conflict of interest between Blundell, who was the chairman of the North East African Exploration Company in 1919[38] and James Howlison of the Backhouse Ramsden group who just held a conversation with Tafari in order to get the Blue Nile, the Dhidheessaa and the Dabus areas for mining.[39] The situation made Howlison to express his disappointment against Blundell for he developed an interest in obtaining mining concessions in places which included the Blue Nile, the Dhidheessaa and the Dabus areas. Howlison also did not control his anger on Messrs Johns and Sons Company since it is said that the company had obtained prospecting permit on Dul area. For Howlison, however, Dul was part of the Blue Nile, Dhidheessaa and Dabus areas[40] which his company had already presented a request to obtain before Messrs Johns and Sons Company presented similar request to Tafari.

Second, the overlap of business activity which made the British firms like the Abyssinian Corporation and the Abyssinian Development Syndicate to engage in similar business and obtain

[38]FO371/3496, Blundell to Foreign Office, 30.7.1919.

[39]FO371/3496, Thesiger and Campbell to Curzon, 7.2.1919 and 22.6.1919 respectively.

[40]FO371/3496,Campbell to Curzon, 22.6.1919.

mining concession in Ethiopia was also the cause of the conflict. Indeed, the principal objective of the Abyssinian Corporation was engaging in industrial and engineering activities. But the main interest of the Abyssinian Development Syndicate was mining. The latter syndicate also held a conversation with the representative of central government of Ethiopia to obtain mining concession in the Blue Nile, the Dhidheessaa and the Dabus areas.[41] In addition to this, the Dul area attracted another British gold prospecting firm, the Sudan Goldfield Company, which had obtained the license to search for gold in Dul from Tafari in April 1919.[42]

To find solution to this conflict, Gerald Campbell, the representative of the British Legation in Addis Ababa proposed the amalgamation of different British companies.[43] Thus, in the meeting convened in the foreign office in August 1919, the foreign office advised those British companies which were in conflict "To combine or cooperate rather than compete."[44] Eventually, with the efforts of the foreign office the Abyssinian Development Syndicate and the Sudan Goldfield merged their needs. This situation prompted the Abyssinian Development Syndicate to get the support that Foreign Office had given to the British companies like the Abyssinian Corporation.[45] It was also reported that this syndicate had bought Prasso's [Baro] concession in "Adjouba-Ghandji-Baro region."[46]

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[41] *Ibid*.

[42] As cited in Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p. 423.

[43] FO371/3496, Campbell to Curzon, 22.6.1919.

[44] FO371/3496, Cypher Telegram to Campbell, 14.8.1919.

[45] Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…,"pp. 423-424.

[46] FO371/3496, Campbell to Curzon, 22.6.1919.

Apart from "concession hunters" from the above three European colonial powers, the competition to obtain mining concession over the mineral resources of Wallagga also attracted Russian citizens in 1919. As a result, a Russian citizen, Count Chrisoskoleo de Platen is said to have been granted mining concession around Mount Metchi [Mexxi] in Wallagga in 1919, in the place where the Russian engineers conducted a mineral resource study at the beginning of the 20th century.[47] Mount Mexxi was located in the northeast direction from the place where the Birbir and Baro rivers form a confluence. The center of this concession was Mount Mexxi but areas found up to fifty kilometers, were also part of this concession.[48]

Although the lack of reliable sources prohibited us from dealing with the amount of gold which some of these concessionaires produced between 1918-1924, the outflow of gold from Wallagga to the center continued without interruption during that time. At that time gold tribute collection also continued as an effective instrument of pouring thousands of ounces of gold from Wallagga to the center as it is indicated below:

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[47] FO371/3500, Campbell to Curzon, 17.6.1919.

[48] *Ibid*.

Year	Gold outflow to the center in ounce	Confirming body (either to send or receive gold)
1919	500	Kumsaa (sender)
1920	1000	Tafari (recipient)
1921	1000	Kumsaa (sender), Tafari and Zawditu (recipients)
1922	1000	Zawditu (recipient)
1923	1000	Kumsaa (sender) and Tafari (recipient)
1923-1924	1000	Kumsaa(sender)

Table 4.**The Outflow of Gold from Wallagga to the Center through Tribute System, 1919-1923**.[49]

The table clarifies how gold tribute system appropriately supported an interrupted outflow of gold from Wallagga to its destination and boosted the gold treasury of the central government at least by five thousand five hundred ounces of gold between 1919-1923. It is also evident from the table that in those years Wallagga had thousands of ounces of gold. But at times Kumsaa faced a problem to send his gold tribute to the central government at the time when there was decline in the production of gold in Wallagga which was associated with different factors. Unlike the period of *Lij* Iyasu, in those years Kumsaa did not get exemption for his gold tribute from Tafari and Zawditu even when there was a decline of the production of gold in Wallagga.

Like the previous time, between1918-1924 the outflow of gold from Beni Shangul to the center through the tribute system and gold gifts served as an additional input to boost the gold treasury

[49]The table is created based on letters exchanged between Gäbrä Egzi'abher, and *Ras* Tafari and Empress Zawditu between 1919-1924 such as Gäbrä Egzi'abher toTafari, 24.2.1912E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 251, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Tafari to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 4.8.1912E.C. and 28.6.1913E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963224 and ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963221 respectively, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Gäbrä Egzi'abher toTafari, 27.6.1913E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 196, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Zawditu to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 1.7.1913E.C. and 21.10.1914E.C. WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963213 and ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963214 Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Gäbrä Egzi'abher toTafari and Zawditu,14.9.1915E.C. WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/77, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Tafari to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 17.10.1915E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963226, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4 and Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Zawditu, 28.7.[1915E.C.]-1916E.C. WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/ 20, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/ 1. But in 1919 since there was scarcity of gold in Wallagga Gäbrä Egzi'abher paid his annual tribute partly in gold and partly in cash.

of the central government during the Dual rule. In this case, Abdussamad insists that" Khojale continued with the liberal donation of gold and slaves to the imperial centralizing government of Ethiopia at Addis Ababa."[50] It was also claimed that for a long time Khojale used to send not less than five hundred ounces of gold to the center as annual gold tribute of Beni Shangul.[51] However, looking at the way gold miners used to extract gold and the unsystematic way local governors used to collect gold extracted in Wallagga it could be said that ounces of gold had remained in Wallagga. But sources do not suggest us the exact amount of gold that remained there in the 20th century.

It was said that Khojale also collected many ounces of gold through gathering people locally known as *nehar*. It was also claimed that the local people who participated in this system had no payment but Khojale used to slaughter oxen and distribute meat to these gold miners.[52] Indeed, there was a tradition similar to *nehar* in Wallagga known as *jigi*. But our sources on Wallagga do not suggest whether Kumsaa's predecessors like Jootee, and Kumsaa himself had used *jigi* or not in Leeqaa Qellam and Leeqaa Naqamtee respectively to collect gold for their own use, for their annual tribute as well as for providing gifts to the ruling elites in the center.

But there was indication that the local governors of Beni Shangul and Wallagga had used gold extracted there to safeguard their authority through sending it as a gift and tribute to the central government. Thus, some informants suggest the rewards that the local governors like Khojale and Kumsaa had obtained through sending thousands of ounces of gold to the central

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[50]Abdussamad , "Bela-Shangul : Letters…," pp.76-77and see also Atieb, "*Sheikh* Khojele…," p.61.

[51]Informants: Abdurrahman Mohammad and Ashanafi.

[52]Informants: Abdruhaman and Almamun.

government was to guarantee their power as nominated local governors.[53] In this regard, it could be said that the gold extracted there had a political benefit which was related to governorship. It encouraged the senders to use gold as one of the sources for maintaining their power. Because as far as the senders provided gold to the recipients, they won the goodwill of the recipients which was an essential sign for the senders' to receive approval for their provincial governorship to last long.

As discussed in this chapter and in chapter two, looking at the amount of the extracted gold which got its way to the center through tribute system and gold gifts, it could be said that some of the benefits gained from gold extracted in Wallagga went to the center and it did not remain in the place where gold was produced. As explained earlier in chapter two under the uses of gold, some of the benefits of gold for the central government were obtaining gold bullion to both local and foreign currencies, to stow gold in bank for reserves and to increase the reputation it provided to the central government that Ethiopia was a sovereign country capable of maintaining its place in the world market.

Unfortunately, the extraction of gold in the early 20th century did not advance the wider local economy of these gold rich areas. But this is not to deny that gold extraction provided very limited benefits to the gold miners since gold miners used the money they got from selling gold to buy basic needs such as food, clothes, soap and salt. According to informants, these gold rich areas also sent their gold through commercial networks either to the Sudan or to Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, the money obtained from gold sale was only sufficient to buy the above simple

[53]*Ibid*., and Dhereessaa Amantii.

commodities which reached Beni Shangul and other parts of Wallagga from the Sudan and Addis Ababa.[54]

In addition to gold tribute system, the other means which assisted extracted gold to go out of Wallagga which also involved both the local governors and the gold merchants between 1918-1924 was gold purchase. In this case, local governors like Kumsaa and Khojale received orders from the rulers of the central government such as Tafari several times to buy gold for them although Kumsaa blamed Khojale for his lack of passion to do so.[55] During that time, however, with different prices Kumsaa was successful in buying fifty three ounces of gold in June 1920, one hundred sixty six ounces of gold in September 1921 and one hundred four ounces of gold in November 1923. Here, the gold trade in Wallagga involved arbitrage which encouraged the gold merchants to buy gold from one place and sale it in place where they could make big profit. Nonetheless, at times Kumsaa failed to buy gold since he was also facing fluctuation in gold supply and increase in the price of gold in Wallagga.[56]

However, gold purchase and sale in those years clearly made the issue of gold sales in Wallagga dependent upon demand, price and supply. As a result, during that time in Wallagga there were high demand for gold and escalation in its selling price but fluctuations in its supply. The cost of gold in Wallagga as an issue of price and the fluctuation in its supply could hinder local governors of Wallagga from obtaining the amount of gold they needed at the right time. But this

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[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Gäbrä Egzi'abher toTafari, 22.1.1914E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/178, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[56] Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 21.10.1912E.C., 22.1.1914E.C., 1.3.1916E.C. and 2, 20. 4.1914E.C.,WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/1/238, ወ/ሙ/1/178, no File no and ወ/ሙ/1/163 respectively, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 for all. From these archival documents, we also understand that an ounce of gold in Leeqaa Naqamtee was purchased in June1920 by twenty seven *birr*, in September 1921 by forty birr and in November 1923 by greater than thirty two birr. Such money could buy gold estimated to be two hundred eighty eight ounces.

situation did not entirely inhibit the outflow of gold from Wallagga in the early 1920s since tribute system and gold gifts compensated the inability of local governors of Wallagga to acquire gold through purchase. Sometimes, this inability, however, prevented them from fulfilling the high gold demand which the rulers of the central government had during the Dual rule. For instance, Tafari's having high demand for gold appeared in the letters that he sent to Kumsaa in December and January 1921. His letters state that Tafari had sent *birr* ten thousands in December 1921 and *birr* [perhaps Maria Theresa thalers] sixty six thousands in January 1921 to Kumsaa to buy for him many ounces of gold in December 1921 and two thousand ounces in January 1921.[57]

However, there was time in which Kumsaa was forced to send back the money sent to him or the money he was ordered to buy gold for the rulers of the central government without buying gold because of the supply factor mentioned above. For instance, in 1921 he was forced to send the money he collected from Leeqaa Qellam from the territory of *Däjjach* Birru to Tafari and Zawditu though earlier these rulers ordered him to buy gold from Wallagga. Kumsaa sent back the money because the increase in price of gold prevented him from obtaining gold.[58]

However, what Kumsaa faced at that time was not a problem that he created rather what he faced conforms to the general law of supply and demand which says, "The quantity demanded of a good or service varies inversely with its price. In other words, when the price goes up, quantity demanded goes down. Likewise, when the price goes down, quantity demanded goes up."[59] But

[57]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 2.4.1914E.C.,WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/163, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 and Tafari to Gabra Egzi'abher, 7.5.1913E.C, WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/3/ 025.1714963130, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

[58]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari and Zawditu, 1.3.1914E.C. and 2.3.1914E.C, WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/1/173 and ወ/ሙ/1/173-172 respectively, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 and see also Tesema and Triulzi, የወለጋ የታሪክ...(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) p.144.

[59]Gary E. Clayton, *Economics: Principles and Practices* (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies Inc., 2001), p.91.

this scarcity of gold and the escalation of the price of gold sometimes disturbed the relationship which existed between the local governors of Wallagga and the rulers of the central government of Ethiopia in the early 20th century.

Here, on the one hand, different factors could be mentioned for the escalation of the price of gold in Wallagga at that time. First, since foreign merchants like the Indians, the Arabs and other whites secretly began to purchase gold at high prices from gold suppliers,[60] gold became expensive. Second, it also became expensive because gold from Wallagga was taken to Addis Ababa covertly and sold there at higher prices than it was sold in Wallagga.[61] Local and Sudanese merchants taking gold from Beni Shangul to the Sudan could also exacerbate the escalation of the price of gold in western frontier areas.

On the other hand, the reasons for the fluctuation in supply of gold in Wallagga were connected with the gradual decline in its production because of the miners' or the local peoples' preference to engage in commerce rather than gold extraction since the latter was laborious and had no great rewards for them.[62] Miners fearing disease like malaria during the rainy seasons also delayed gold mining from rivers which could also result in the decline of the production of gold in Wallagga.[63] Local miners' prospecting and extraction methods did not use modern devices and techniques which could support them to identify places where there were large deposits of gold.

[60]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 8.12.1913E.C. and 28.11.1913E.C.,WMA, File nos.ወ/ሙ/1/183 and ወ/ሙ/1/184, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[61]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 2.4.1914E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/163, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[62]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Zawditu, 28.7.[1915E.C.]-1916E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/1/20, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[63]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari and Zawditu,14.9.1915E.C, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/77, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

Failure to use these modern devices and techniques means creating further problem on the production of gold in Wallagga.

Similar to gold purchase, though counted in hundred ounces, *mätäyaya* which Kumsaa provided to the political as well as religious elites also assisted the outflow of extracted gold from Wallagga to the center between 1919-1923. Among the political elites, Kumsaa repeatedly provided gold gifts to Tafari and Zawditu throughout 1919-1923. The Dual period also continued to increase the gold demand of Kumsaa since he simultaneously presented gold gifts to both Tafari and Zawditu in many occasions. During that time, among the religious elites he also made gold gifts to the patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, *Abunä* Matiwos. Unlike gold tribute, however, gold gift could be made several times in a year, when the governors of Wallagga wanted to steer decisions in favor of them on time, when there were Orthodox Christianity holidays, when these governors wanted to handle the ruling elites smoothly and also for other issues. A summary of gold gifts which Kumsaa provided to the ruling elites in the center is indicated in the next table.

Year	Gold gifts month	Gold gifts in ounce	Recipient of the gold gifts
1919	September	10	Empress Zawditu
1920	November	15	Empress Zawditu
	July	5	Queen Manan
1921	July	10	*Ras* Tafari
	August	10	*Ras* Tafari
	August	10	Empress Zawditu
1922	September	5	Empress Zawditu
	February	2	*Abunä* Matiwos
	March	10	*Ras* Tafari
	March	10	Empress Zawditu
	August	15	Empress Zawditu
1923	November	10	*Abunä* Matiwos
	December	10	*Ras* Tafari
	December	10	Empress Zawditu
1923-1924	October	25	Addis Ababa Treasury
	December	5	*Ras* Tafari
	December	5	Empress Zawditu
	Total	**167**	

Table 5. Outflow of Gold from Wallagga to the Center through Gold Gifts between 1919 to 1923.[64]

Returning to the issue of mining concessions in the early 1920s, the period also tells us that mining concessionaires in Wallagga after WWI had seen other problems apart from lack of

[64]Table 5 is created based on letters exchanged between Gäbrä Egzi'abher, and Tafari and Zewditu as well other elites between 1919-1924. These letters are Zawditu to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 11.1.1912E.C. and 20.3.1915E.C., File nos. ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963109 and ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963113, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3; Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 27.11.1913E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/185, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 ; Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Zawditu, 4.7.1914E.C. and 30.12.1914E.C. WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/1/[1]48 and ወ/ሙ/1/122, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 ; Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari and Zawditu, 29.12.1913E.C.,WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/[1]80, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Gabra Egzi'abher to Zawditu, September 1915E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/120, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Tafari and *Abunä* Matiwos to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 24.11.1912E.C. and 5.6.1914E.C., File nos. ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963146 and ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963145, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3; Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari and *Abunä* Matiwos,1.3.1916E.C. and 4.3.1916E.C.,WMA, No File nos., Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari and Zawditu, 2.4.1916E.C.,WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/1/46, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1 and Gold Gifts which the *Balläbats* of the Domain of the late Gäbrä Egzi'abher Provided and Made Available in Addis Ababa Treasury, 21.2.1917E.C., WMA, Number 20, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

capital. Thus, some local governors who emerged as protector of the mineral resources of their domains also restricted the activities of the concessionaires and some foreign companies in the study area. In this case, *Fitawrari* Mohammad Mahmud of Dul became a real challenge to the British men like Bethune Williams who were moving to Dul in 1920.[65]

On this issue, Kumsaa contacted Tafari stating to him that Mohammad forbade the British men who were moving to Dul to prospect for gold, copper and iron. Kumsaa also said that he sent a letter to Mohammad requesting him to permit these British men to carry out their activities. However, to make matters worse Mohammad resent a reply to him in Arabic language which compelled Kumsaa to search for a translator to understand the reply.[66] As a solution to the problem, with the pressure that the British men made on the central government, Tafari ordered Khojale to capture Mohammad. But it took time for Khojale to capture the resistor. Mohammad even continued to resist the British men in 1921.[67] Basically, this was a conflict over economic resources and political power in localities like Dul in western frontier areas.

Though there was such kind of resistance among the local governors, the request to prospect for gold through obtaining mining concessions continued in Wallagga particularly along the Dabus River between 1921-1923. What made the request to prospect for gold unique in the Dabus River in 1921 was that the requester was not a foreign concessionaire but was one of the ruling elites of Wallagga, Kumsaa. In his request Kumsaa explicitly told Tafari that he wanted to prospect for gold in big rivers like the Dabus. Hence, he wanted the goodwill of Tafari to buy a gold mining

[65]As cited in Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.424.

[66]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, WMA, nd and 18.10.1912E.C. , File nos. ወ/ሙ/1/235 and 239, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1; Tesema and Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ…*(*Documents for Wallagga* …,) pp.128-129.

[67]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," pp.424-425.

machine. Moreover, Kumsaa was very keen to get the machine and told Tafari that with this machine it would be easy to find small particles of gold in rivers like Dabus. He also discussed with Zappa how to get the machine. Zappa promised him to bring the machine from abroad for five hundred *birr* [Maria Theresa thalers] and to train the men of Kumsaa to operate the machine. In general for the training and the purchase of the machine Zappa requested Kumsaa to pay him a total of one thousand and fifty *birr*.[68] Kumsaa's attempt to use the mining skill of Zappa was useful to bring some changes in gold mining industry of Wallagga had it been successful.

In addition to the Dabus River, the Birbir River and its environs became the major focus of the concessionaires like the Italian citizen, Prasso between 1922-1924 and afterwards. As a result, in 1922 Prasso according to Pankhurst convinced Tafari and got the goodwill of Tafari to include Wallagga temporarily in the direction of the Birbir River as part of his mining concession.[69] Following this, in 1923 Tafari wrote a letter to Kumsaa stating that Prasso had obtained the permission to prospect for mineral resources in the River Birbir and in places which extended up to the Baro River covering fifty kilometers squares in the right and the left of Birbir River. In that letter Kumsaa was also requested to permit Prasso to carry out his activity, to provide security men to Prasso and to put one representative for the mining work of Prasso in each place where such activity was taking place.[70] As it will be discussed in the next chapter, Praso's concession on the Birbir River valley made him renowned in the country and abroad within a short period of time.

[68]Gäbrä Egzi'abher to Tafari, 22.1.1914E.C. and nd., WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/1/177 and ወ/ሙ/1/176-175, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/1.

[69]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.235.

[70]Tafari to Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 13.5.1915E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/3/025.171496327, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

However, environmental factors like digging and dredging large areas in Wallagga in the 20th century to extract initially gold and later platinum brought damages to land, people and animals. The extraction methods made land originally covered with vegetations and trees to be devoid of them and exposed this land to erosion. Similarly, these extraction methods created pits and boreholes which have remained open still now. In these open pits and boreholes some persons and animals fell and faced physical injuries. It is also claimed that cattle, sheep and horses which fell into these pits and boreholes at different times died and were buried there.[71] Thus, it can be suggested that gold and platinum extraction in Wallagga in the 20th century was one of the human activities which disturbed the mutual relationship that existed between the Oromo people and the environment. This relationship was previously maintained for many years for the reason that the Oromo, "Believe in the interdependence of people and their environment for harmonious symbiotic unity."[72]

Finally, in this chapter it can be concluded that on one level the competition over obtaining mining concessions from the central government of Ethiopia in Wallagga in the post-*Mines d'Or du Wallaga* period had experienced decline and resurgence as well as the lack of putting granted concessions into action. For example, between 1914-1918 or during the World War I (WWI) period, there was a significant decline in competition to obtain concession over the mineral resources of Wallagga among the foreign concessionaires because of the war. Thus, during that time Wallagga largely remained silent on the issues of mining concessions and concessionaires.

[71]Informants: Ashänafi, Dabalaa Simaa, Bi̱rhanu, and Kumaraa.

[72]Gobana, "Environmental Impacts of Gold …," p.160.

But with the end of WWI, Wallagga once again became the center of competition among foreign nationals and companies from European states like Britain, France and Italy. It was also at the end of WWI until 1924 that some foreign concessionaires and companies had remained idle since their mining agreements became paper tigers. During that time, these concessionaires and companies intensified the politics of obtaining mining concessions in the country without engaging in the extraction of the mineral resources of Wallagga although they exposed themselves to disputes in some occasions. At that time, however, the diplomats to whom these foreign concessionaires belonged, like Britain and Italy, were engaged in the activities of defending the national interests of their countries in Ethiopia.

On another level, like the pre-1910 period there was continuity in gold transfer from Wallagga to the center which also became a measure for the transfer of wealth from the extraction of gold to the central government rather than being used to improve the lives of the ordinary gold miners in Wallagga. The system also maintained the pre-1910 period gold providers' and recipients' supply-chains to continue by making the local miners and tribute payers to continue to supply gold to the major recipient, the central government of Ethiopia.

Like the pre-1910 period, though there were gold gifts and purchase as means of transferring gold produced in Wallagga to the center, no other mechanism was invented to replace the gold tribute system, the effective instrument which discharged thousands of ounces of gold from Wallagga to the center. Through this system, local governors of Wallagga were ordered to send gold to the central government even when there was shortage of gold in Wallagga. This is part of the findings of the dissertation in this chapter.

However, in the early 1920s the continuity of prospecting, exploration and extraction activities in the mining industry of Wallagga later made Alberto Prasso to be closely connected with the Yubdo platinum field. The Yubdo platinum field in turn created an opportunity for Prasso to associate himself with powerful mining companies which were engaged in the production of platinum found there. Thus, the next chapter will exhaustively examine the prospect for and the extraction of platinum, the methods of extraction and labor forces used as well as other mining developments related to platinum extraction in Wallagga between 1924-1936.

Chapter Four

Platinum Mines, Foreign Companies and the Quest for Gold (1924-1936)

Introduction

This chapter mainly provides an insight into the platinum[1]mining industry in Yubdo in the Birbir River valley in the first half of the 20th century, though it will also examine the uninterrupted issue of gold mining in Wallagga during the same period. But in relation to platinum, it specifically looks at the extraction account of this precious metal, the methods and the labor force used to extract it in Yubdo mine. Yubdo as a platinum mining center had engaged successful European concessionaires like the Italian, Alberto Prasso, and big foreign companies such as the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate since the mid 1920s until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. As indicated above, the chapter also deals with the different mining activities which happened in connection with gold. This was because the issue of gold mining in Wallagga was not over in the 1920s and in the early 1930s.

It principally argues that the foreign companies which had engaged in the extraction of platinum in Yubdo such as the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate collected thousands of grams of platinum which they wanted to collect with the methods of production and labor force they preferred to use on Yubdo platinum mine

[1]Platinum is a flexible rust-proof precious metal which has slivery-white color in its refined form. It can be used as ingredients both in light and heavy industries. For instance, it is used to make jewelry and other beautification objects in light industry, see The US Bureau of Mines, *Dictionary of Mining*…p.2376. In heavy industry it is used as reagents to regulate engines' emission, safeguard parts of ships from damages caused by cathode, used as ingredient to produce armaments, see Marten J. de Wit and Rick Berg, "Platinum," in Senbeto Chawaqa and Maarten J. de Wit (eds), *Plate Tectonic and Metallogenesis: Some Guide Lines to Ethiopian Mineral Deposits* (Addis Ababa, 1981), p.83. It is also used to produce nitric acid and fertilizers. See Solomon, *Mineral Resources*…, p.72.

between 1926-1936. Moreover, in its final part the chapter argues that cheap domestic labor supported by foreign staff had contributed a lot to the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate to collect such thousands of grams amounts of platinum from Wallagga. But the local miners and daily laborers were exposed to cheatings and several problems.

The chapter begins its discussion with the mining development that was closely associated with Wallagga which happened in 1924. It was in 1924 that Alberto Prasso confirmed his ownership of the Birbir mining concession which the central government of Ethiopia granted to him which at last enabled him to start the extraction of platinum in Yubdo in Wallagga. Thus, it was the year 1924 which had confirmed the takeover of the Yubdo platinum mine by foreigners such as Prasso just like the year 1899 which confirmed the takeover of the Najjoo goldmine by a foreigner named Alfred Ilg as discussed in chapter two. But the chapter concludes its discussion on gold and platinum in the year 1936. In that year Wallagga including the Yubdo platinum mine and the Yubdo town were occupied by the invading Italian forces which eventually gave the invaders control over all mining activities and mining centers in Wallagga. These mining developments which had happened in Wallagga between 1924-1936 will be analyzed under the following sub-headings.

4.1 Prospecting for *Warqee Sabbu* and Neocolonial Interests

The local platinum mining industry in Wallagga was closely associated with national and international historical developments. Its extraction and expropriation in Wallagga in particular and in Ethiopia in general was accomplished by the powerful European companies. Such extraction could explain how the powerful colonial powers through their companies had taken the mineral resources of many other African states in the first half of the 20th century. In this regard, authors like Clearance Munford suggest that in the early 20th century the developing world had contacts with the capitalist world. Subsequently, through capitalism connection was established between the African economy and the world economy though the western powerful states managed to exploit the African states with that kind of capitalism and the idea of neo-colonialism. According to Munford, the western powerful states had used mechanisms such as allowing the flow of capital to African states as an exchange for taking [unfairly] raw materials from Africa. They also intensified capitalist contests through establishing sphere of influences and economic ties with the developing world.[2] Indeed, these were issues of political economy. But the activities of European colonial powers also happened in Ethiopia in general and in Wallagga in particular and in connection with the extraction of platinum.

Moreover, as authors like Richard Brosio say capitalism, the system which the western powerful colonial states adhered to, focuses on the control of labor and then engaging in production of goods to make profit.[3] Similarly, Wallagga became proving ground for such activities of capitalism. This was due to the engagement of the European capitalist oriented companies of platinum extraction in the area such as the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate in the first half of the 20th century.

The financiers of these companies owned the Birbir mining concession and commenced the extraction of *Warqee Sabbu* (the later platinum) in Yubdo in the Birbir valley in the 1920s. This

[2]Clarence J. Munford, "Imperialism and Third World Economics: Part One of Two Parts," *The Black Scholar, Black Economics* (III), 6, 7 (1975), pp.15-16.

[3]Richard A. Brosio, "Chapter Four: The Regime of Capital: Myth and Reality," *Counterpoints, A Radical Democratic Critique of Capitalist Education*, 3(1994) p. 135.

was realized through establishing partnership with the French and the British financiers, though this defied the Anglo-Italian treaty of 1925.[4]

As an idea, generally, prospecting for valuable mineral resources like platinum in mining industry invites mining agents to undertake several mining activities since such agents were interested in obtaining maximum advantages from the extraction of platinum and other rare metals. Later, the extraction of platinum had made the above powerful mining agents to hope to profit from platinum mining in Wallagga in the first half of the 20th century.

Sources indicate that prospecting for mineral ores in Wallagga continued during the period of Menilek II at the beginning of the 20th century [1903-1905].[5] As Pankhurst states, therefore during that time the Russian mission under Kurmakov who went to Wallagga to conduct studies on the mineral resources of Wallagga returned with the collection of particles of gold and *gutichaa* which they had obtained from the local people and later the Russian laboratory indicated that the *gutichaa* taken from Wallagga consisted of particles of platinum.[6] Pankhurst also indicates that after Zappa reached Wallagga in 1904 he “Learnt of the presence of gold on the Birbir River.”[7] But Usoni argues that Kurmakov’s report of the existence of platinum in

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[4]For the signing of the treaty, see Antoinette Iadarola, “The Anglo-Italian Agreement of 1925: Mussolini's "Carte Blanche" for War Against Ethiopia,” *Northeast African Studies*, 1, 1(1979), pp.45,49; Council on Foreign Relations, “Abyssinia and the Powers,” *Foreign Affairs*, 5, 2(1927), p.325; Bahru, “Relations Between Ethiopia…,” p.429.

[5]Haile Kibret (contributor),“ሳይታወቅ ኑሮ ባለ ማስተዋል አወዳደቅ የተጣለ ማእድን”(“Unknowingly Thrown Mineral Ore,”) *Bi̱rhanina Sälam*, (November/*Hi̱dar* 6, 1921E.C.), p.361; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[6]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.234.

[7]*Ibid.*

Wallagga in 1904 does not refer to Yubdo.[8] But with respect to the extraction of platinum historical sources do not provide us with an explanation on how its extraction awaited another two decades had its prospecting activity been started either between [1903-1905] or in 1904. These were the dates when obtaining the gold wealth of Wallagga had led to the competition of both the foreign concessionaires and the central government of Ethiopia.

Contrary to the date which Pankhurst had put, some geologists, geographers as well as documents on the mineral resources and geology of Wallagga tend to associate the undertaking of prospecting activity for platinum in Wallagga in the early 1920s.[9] As stated earlier, it was in the early 1920s that the Birbir concession was also granted to a foreign concessionaire to extract platinum in Wallagga.

Besides, pertaining to prospecting for platinum the social and economic historians of Ethiopia do not indicate the contribution of some members of the local inhabitants to such activity in Wallagga. However, oral sources and one historical document provide more local views on the participation and the contribution of individuals among the Oromo people of Wallagga particularly from the districts of Ayraa-Gullisso and Yubdo in the activity of prospecting for platinum in the Birbir valley[10] in the 20th century. Consequently, two individuals namely *Obbo* Firdii Garbaa from Gullisso and *Obbo* Hordaa Sidaa from Ayraa were recognized as location

[8]Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, pp.245, 248. But according to same author, unlike Yubdo, there were also unconfirmed reports for the existence of small amount of platinum in places like *Tulluu* Gurrachaa, the small rivers of the Waabaraa goldmine, along the Dhidheessaa and the Abay Rivers, in Beni Shangul, on the frontier between Gimira and Moccia and in other places. For this issue, see *Idem*., *Risorse Minerarie…*,pp.246, 247 and 248.

[9]See Marten and Berg, "Platinum," in Senbeto…p.83; Masresha G. Sillasie and Wolf U. Reimold, "A Review of the Metallic Mineral Resource Potential of Ethiopia," *Chronicle of Mineral Research and Exploration*, 540(2000), p.24 and Solomon, *Mineral Resources*…, p .74. [14]Luigi Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie Dell'Africa Orientale* (Roma, 1952), p.248. See also J. Luna, et.al., "Ploy Metallic Prospection and Exploration Project," nd., p.22.

[10]Informants: Namarraa and Mäkuria; Haile, " "ሳይታወቅ ኑሮ ባለ ማስተዋል..."("Unknowingly Thrown…,") p.361.

indicators of Mr. Zappa in order to locate exactly the whereabouts[11] of the mineral ore locally known as *Warqee Sabbu*.[12] Similarly, Jelenc who gives credit to Prasso for sending an ore which is believed to have contained particles of platinum to Europe for experiment mentions an Oromo name Dibaabaa[13] in activities of prospecting and exploring platinum in Wallagga in the early 20th century. Jelenc said that the result of the experiment which was conducted in Europe proved that the particles consisted of "Platinum and other platinum group precious metals."[14]

Here, the dissertation believes that before conducting such an experiment some local people used to extract *Warqee Sabbu* in Wallagga in the Birbir valley. One source on this idea concisely says, "Platinum was first produced in Ethiopia in 1925, but platinum is known to have been purchased long before that date by itinerant traders who probably smuggled it through the Sudan into Egypt."[15]

The dissertation also argues that many secondary sources do not provide coverage to the local contribution which was made to the prospecting activity of platinum in Wallagga. Concerning such marginalization, a contributor to *Bi̱rhanina Sälam* Newspaper from Sayyoo taking Zappa as an example in the late 1920s commented that Europe was good in making trickery and becoming wealthy through the wisdom of others. This contributor states that diligent individuals like Zappa by giving new name, platinum, to the entity which Firdii used to call *Warqee 'Najaasaa'* had

[11]Haile, "ሳይታወቅ ኑሮ ባለ ማስተዋል..."("Unknowingly Thrown…,") p.361.

[12]Informants: Namarraa and Mäkuria; Haile, " "ሳይታወቅ ኑሮ ባለ ማስተዋል..."("Unknowingly Thrown…,") p.361.

[13]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.17; *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p .303.

[14]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.17.

[15]John B. Mertie, *Economic Geology of the Platinum Metals* (Washington: United Sates Government Printing Office,1969), p.49.

dispossessed the contribution of the wise man, Firdii[16], one of the location indicators of Zappa in Wallagga. It means Firdii was prohibited from obtaining recognition and other merits for the contribution he had made in prospecting for platinum in Wallagga. Lastly, the contributor concludes recommending the Imperial government of Ethiopia to promulgate a decree. The decree was to protect others not to take and marginalize one's effort through the act of trickery and in the future to handle the occurrence of atrocious act which could happen to other wise men[17] as it had happened to Firdii in the Birbir valley.

Following such prospecting activity, however, in July 1924 the Italian nationals Prasso and Zappa had confirmed that they were granted mining concession in the Birbir valley from the Imperial government of Ethiopia which eventually made another precious metal of Wallagga and the country, platinum[18], to come under the control of the foreigners. But the 1924 mining concession became the earliest type of mining concession to handover both the Yubdo platinum field and its extraction in Wallagga to foreigners like the 1899 mining concession which transferred the Najjoo goldfield and its extraction in Wallagga to a foreigner named Alfred Ilg and the Belgian company, the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*. Like the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*, the 1924 Birbir concession to Prasso had also covered large tracts of gold and platinum fields. But later it was reduced and made to have fifty five kilometers length and twelve kilometers width.[19]

[16]Haile, "ሳይታወቅ ኑሮ ባለ ማስተዋል..."("Unknowingly Thrown…,") p.362.

[17]*Ibid.*

[18]FO371/16993, Enclosure in G. Marshall to Mr. Mack, 23.6.1933; Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.248; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236, Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…,"p.17 ; *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p .303. The Foreign Office document cited here and Pankhurst mention only Prasso as the owner of the 1924 [mining] concession but Jelenc mentions Zappa as the co-owner of that concession. Besides, Usoni believes that Prasso eventually excluded Zappa from the 1924 concession. For this idea, see Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.248.

[19]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236.

Besides, the year 1924 laid down the basis for the establishment of big companies like the the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate which successfully had extracted the platinum wealth of Yubdo in the 1920s and in the early 1930s.

Soon after the occurrences of the above mining developments, however, two European states namely Britain and Italy in 1925 signed a bilateral agreement by excluding other decisive states like Ethiopia and France. The bilateral agreement was concluded in order to safeguard peacefully their respective neocolonial interests at different corners of Ethiopia. To this end, Britain needed to build a dam on Lake Tana to use its water for growing cotton in Gezira to continue feeding its Lancashire cotton industry in England.[20] Therefore, to secure her dream of building a dam on Lake Tana Britain accepted Italy's ambition of securing the railway concession in the country to link its northern colony, Eritrea, with Italian Somaliland. But it was the idea of putting western Ethiopia under the Italian sphere of influence[21] which explicitly exposed this region including Wallagga, the mineral rich area[22], to the neocolonial plan of Italy. Thus, we can safely suggest that the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1925 indicated the determination of European colonial powers to reach every corner of the country to achieve their economic and political needs through the idea of neocolonialism.

[20]Iadarola, "The Anglo-Italian…," p.47; Council on Foreign Relations, "Abyssinia…," p.325; See also Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.429.

[21]Iadarola, "The Anglo-Italian…," pp.49, 51; Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.428; Council on Foreign Relations, "Abyssinia…," p.325.

[22]The Birbir River valley could explain such case since Prasso's Birbir Concession was situated in the Italian sphere of influence. For this issue, see FO371/16993, Enclosure in G. Marshal to Mack, 23.6.1933.

Although France opposed the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1925, the citizens or the companies of both the non-signatory and the signatory powers of this treaty worked together in Wallagga. In opposing the agreement, however, France argued that the agreement could pave the way for Italy to colonize Ethiopia.[23] But as we will discuss it later in the circumstances of bringing together various foreign capitalists mainly the French capitalists to extract the platinum wealth of Wallagga overcoming the impact of the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1925, an Italian Prasso had played a great role. Therefore, looking at such engagement, it could also be said that the Anglo-Italian agreement probably did not prevent forming a business partnership with the citizens or the companies of the non-signatory powers of the 1925 agreement such as France. Similarly, putting western Ethiopia under the Italian sphere of influence did not entirely inhibit the British citizens or companies to request mining concessions in the country to extract either gold or platinum in Wallagga. But Bahru suggests that the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1925 almost brought an end to the British capitalist venture in western Ethiopia.[24]

Despite the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1925, once Prasso had obtained a laboratory's confirmation that *Warqee Sabbu* was synonymous with platinum and after he had also secured the ownership to the Birbir concession he was in need of large sums of capital to extract the platinum wealth of Yubdo. Therefore, in 1925 his search for capital led him to contact and request the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas* to lend its capital for the extraction of platinum in Yubdo.[25] As it will also be presented in the following discussion, Prasso's request for capital and

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[23]As cited in Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.431.

[24]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.428.

[25]Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*,p.249; Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.18 ; *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences…*, pp.303-304; Ministry of Mines and Energy, "*የማዕድን ታሪክ*…"("History of the Ministry…,") p.16.

the extraction of platinum in Wallagga then led to the emergence of powerful companies like the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* in platinum rich locality of Wallagga.

4.2 The Extraction of Platinum in Yubdo Under Foreign Companies and the Quest for Gold in Wallagga

As this part of the chapter argues, it was the engagement of several foreign companies in the extraction of platinum in Yubdo which allows us to suggest that especially the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate collected thousands of grams of platinum which they wanted to collect with the methods of production and the labor force they preferred to use on Yubdo platinum mine between 1926-1936. Basing itself on this argument, this sub-heading discusses the various efforts made to establish the foreign companies, the production of platinum in Yubdo, its extraction methods and labor force which the foreign companies had used to produce thousands of grams of platinum between 1926-1936.

Therefore, as stated in the previous part of this chapter, Prasso was seriously in search for partners and capital for the extraction of platinum in Wallagga and such relentless efforts of Prasso had made one British firm to respond quickly. But getting partners and capitals became complex for Prasso since the three neocolonial states namely Britain, Italy and France in one or another way wanted their citizens and companies to become the sole business partners of Prasso to extract the platinum wealth of Yubdo. Hearing such news, however, in the name of a British company known as John Mathew and Co. Limited a letter was addressed to the Foreign Office to convince the Foreign Office of the advantage of both the discovery of platinum and winning its concession to Britain. The company states that, “We might mention that, due to the discovery of platinum, the acquisition of this concession is of vital importance to ourselves and we believe to the country, as it would liberate us from dependence on Russia for our main supplies of this metal."[26]

The company's men also expressed their intention of becoming co-partner with Prasso but they wanted the matter to remain confidential. For the success of such partnership and to obtain part of the Birbir concession for the extraction of platinum, the company's men also wanted to establish a branch syndicate in Ethiopia while contemplating the lion's share of the concession to remain under Prasso himself. Nevertheless, they wanted this issue to remain secret and hidden from Count Colli, the Italian diplomat in Addis Ababa.[27] They wanted such an issue to remain confidential perhaps for the reason that the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1925 did not allow Britain to interfere directly in business and other related activities in western Ethiopia. Theoretically, the agreement could favor more Italy than Britain to participate in the extraction of platinum in Wallagga since western Ethiopia was classified as part of the Italian sphere of influence as indicated previously.

On his part, Prasso had an interest to work with the British firms though the Italian diplomats on their side disliked such partnership and gradually the British diplomats began to make a very careful move concerning the involvement of their firms in western Ethiopia. In the case of Prasso therefore it was his interest of working with the British firms which made him ready to collaborate with the British firms to extract platinum in Wallagga and accumulate the profit gained from the sale of platinum. Even, as a sample Prasso had sold twelve kilograms of

[26]FO 371/11570, John Mathew and Co. Limited to the Secretary (Foreign Office), 6.1.1926.

[27]*Ibid*.

platinum which was extracted from Birbir valley in Wallagga to a British capitalist. Nonetheless, the Italian diplomat in Ethiopia, Count Colli, preferred the participation of Italian companies and the exclusion of non-Italian companies ahead of the formation of the syndicate which could engage in the extraction of platinum in Wallagga.[28] Moreover, the Italian government had explicitly opposed the business interest of British firms in western Ethiopia in the region which was considered as part of the Italian sphere of influence.[29]

But forming a partnership with Prasso became a success for the French capitalists rather than the British capitalists in the mid 1920s since the British capitalists had to wait for many years to become business partner with Prasso to extract the platinum wealth of Wallagga. With the French capitalists, Prasso was able to realize his effort of establishing one big and powerful company in 1926 which extracted the platinum wealth of Wallagga as a monopoly until 1932.[30] As a result, the French company which was established in Paris in 1926 came to be known as the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie*.[31] As mentioned in one of the arguments of this chapter, it was Prasso's Paris company which extracted thousands of grams of the platinum ore of Yubdo in Wallagga between 1926-1932.

Though Prasso's decision hurt the representatives of the Italian government in Ethiopia, Prasso continued to engage in various activities before and during the establishment of the *Societiè*

[28]FO371/11570, John Murray to Charles M. Bentinck, 11.1.1926. For Prasso's contacting the British industrialists, see FO 371/11570, Cypher Telegram to Bentinck, 7.1.1926.

[29]FO 371/11570, Minutes, 30.4.1926.

[30]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.18 ; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences*…, p.304.

[31]As cited in Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.417; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92; Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p.236; Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie*…,p.249; Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…,"p.18 ; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences*…, p.304.

Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie. For instance, according to Usoni and Jelenc, after Prasso had extracted platinum in small quantities in Yubdo in 1925, he had taken the extracted platinum grains to the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas* to obtain the large capital required to run his project through founding the *Syndacat d'etudes des mines en Ethiopie* and finally he established the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie*.[32] As mentioned above, however, Prasso's having connection with the French capitalists had irritated the diplomats of the Italian legation in Addis Ababa.[33]

Nevertheless, mining activity which had occurred in Wallagga between 1924-1936 was not limited to the prospect for and the extraction of platinum exclusively. But as this portion of the dissertation also argues this activity manifested the continuity of the interest to prospect for gold and realize its extraction there. The major mining actors in the quest for gold in Wallagga as discussed in chapter two and as it will be discussed in this chapter were the central government of Ethiopia and the foreign concessionaires. In this regard, it seems that Tafari had dual intentions in granting mining concessions to foreigners. Such intentions were like killing two birds with one stone. Thus it was stated that, "By permitting concessions to foreigners the Regent was in a position to raise capital and cultivate powerful friends."[34] But in the 1920s many domestic concessionaires largely the ruling elites emerged as additional mining actors in the quest for gold in Wallagga. This historical development will be elaborated as follows.

[32]Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.249; Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…,"p.18; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences…*, p.306.

[33]FO371/11570, Minutes, 5.4.1926.

[34]A. J. Barker, The *Civilizing Mission: A History of the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-1936* (New York: The Dial Press Inc., 1968), p.49.

In the quest for gold throughout the 1920s and in the early 1930s the central government of Ethiopia as one of the mining actors in Wallagga manifested a double agenda: to obtain part of the extracted gold for itself and make successful the quest for gold in Wallagga mainly through granting mining concessions to both the foreign and the domestic concessionaires as well as providing protection to precious metals before and after their extraction. In the first role, through the quest for gold the central government of Ethiopia had continued to work hard to fulfill the high demand it had for gold. Thus, as in the pre-1924 period, in the 1920s and in the early 1930s the central government had demanded the local governors of Wallagga to continue supply gold mainly through the gold tribute system.[35]

Because of such high demand, the local governors of Wallagga were also asked to provide gold to the central government even when there were scarcities of gold as well as social crisis there. For example, through expressing its sympathy the central government continued to demand its tribute in gold in time when Hambisaa Kumsaa (Habtä Mariam Kumsaa, r.1924-1936), the son and the successor of Kumsaa Morodaa, and his people had faced hardships. Such demand also continued in time when Hambisaa did not obtain sufficient amount of gold in his territory because of the high increase in price of gold.[36] Similarly, Hambisaa maintained his father's tradition of making gold gifts to some ruling elites in the center. As a result, he continued to supply some ounces of gold to the ruling elites in the center since the mid 1920s.[37] The table

[35]Among such local governors in the mid 1920s and in the early 1930s, *Däjazmach* Hambisaa Kumsaa (Habtä Mariam Kumsaa) and *Sheikh* Khojale Al-Hassan could be mentioned.

[36]Haile Silassie I to Habtä Mariam, 2.5.1925E.C., WMA, File no. (Wa/Mu/4) ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963266, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4.

[37]See for example, archival document on gold gifts like Wäldä Mäsqäl to Habtä Mariam, 28.12.1918E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/3/,025.1714963173, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

presented below gives a summary of the transfer of gold from Wallagga to the centre through tribute system and gold gifts during the reign of Hambisaa.

Year	**Months when gold Gift was made**	**Amount of gold in ounce**	**Means of gold transfer**	**Recipients**
1924		1000	Tribute system	Central Government
1925		1000		
1926		1000		
	June	5	Gold gifts	Anonymous
		10		Wäldä Mäsqäl (Minister of Pen)
	August	10		Empress Zawditu
1927		1000	Tribute system	Central Government
1928		1000		
	September	15	Gold gifts	*Ras* Tafari
	October	5		Empress Zawditu
	December	10		*Ras* Tafari
1929		1000	Tribute system	Central Government
	October	15	Gold gifts	*Ras* Tafari
1930		1000	Tribute system	Central Government
	Aggregate	**7,070**		

Table 6. Gold Transferred from Wallagga to the Central Government and the Ruling Elites through Gold Tribute System and Gold Gifts Between 1924-1930.[38]

[38]The table is created based on archival documents such as Habtä Mariam's One Thousand Ounces of Gold Tribute Submitted to Addis Ababa Treasury in 1917E.C., 30.8.1917E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963285, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Zawditu to Habtä Mariam, 10.9.1917E.C. and 23.9.1918E.C. WMA, File nos. ወ/ሙ/4/ no.10 and ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963218 , Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Tafari to Habä Mariam, 8.10.1918E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963231, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Anonymous to Habtä Mariam,10.10.1918E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/3/ 025.171496329, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3; Wäldä Mäsqäl to Habtä Mariam, 28.12.1918E.C.,File no. ወ/ሙ/3/,025.1714963173, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3; Tafari to Habtä Mariam, 15.8.1919E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963232, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Zawditu to Habtä Mariam, 24.6.1922E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963238, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Habtä Mariam's One Thousand Ounces of Gold Tribute Submitted to Addis Ababa Treasury in 1922E.C., 18.3.1922E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963239, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Tafari to Habtä Mariam, 19.1.1921E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963252, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4 ; Zawditu to Habtä Mariam, 2.2.1921E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963251, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Tafari to Habtä Mariam, 16.4.1921E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963250, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Zäläqä Agidäw(*Bäjrond,* Financial Officer) to Habtä Mariam, 5.4.1922E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963255, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4; Tafari to Habtä Mariam, 6.2.1922E.C., File no. ወ/ሙ/4/ 025.1714963253, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/4 and also based on Tesema and Triulzi, *የወለጋ የታሪክ…*(*Documents for Wallagga …,*) pp.237-241, 243-244, 246-247.

From the table, we can understand that in the 1920s governors of Wallagga like Hambisaa had maintained the continuity of sending many ounces of gold to the central government and to some ruling elites in the center after the death of his father. But sending such large amount of gold particularly in time when there was the scarcity of gold in Wallagga which Hambisaa had experienced it in his time had created heavy pressure on the senders. But the gold sent could be one of the sources of joy and happiness for the recipients.

Similarly, Khojale, the governor of Beni Shangul had maintained his tasks of sending gold to the center for different purposes. In this regard, in one occasion Khojale had received a decent gratitude from Emperor Haile Sillassie I for sending hundreds of ounces of gold in 1931 when the Emperor was in dear need of gold for banking purpose.[39] The Emperor wanted gold during that time to use it perhaps partly for the newly inaugurated Bank of Ethiopia. Pankhurst insists that the Bank of Ethiopia was founded after the former Bank of Abyssinia was closed down in 1931. He further states that such institution made the Ethiopian government to feel comfortable since it had possessed 60% of the shares and controlled some business activities of the bank.[40]

As additional issue of gold and platinum, mining developments which had taken place in Wallagga and in the center made the central government to promulgate several decrees on precious metals and other mineral resources between 1929-1931. These developments were like the request for mining concessions, central government's need to own and supervise the prospecting, extraction as well as the export of gold and platinum, illegal gold and platinum

[39]Haile Silassie I to Khojale, 4.6.1923E.C., Assosa Chi̠lot Adärash, File no. No, Folder no. No; See also Abdussamad, "Bela-Shangul: Letters…," Letter Number 7, p.92.

[40]Pankhurst, "Ethiopian Monetary…," pp.114-115.

trade, giving protection to gold and platinum wealth before their extraction and after their extraction.[41]

Pertinent to this issue at the local level, in the 1920s Hayter had seen the existence of an illegal gold and platinum trade in Yubdo where he noticed a certain Greek merchant had engaged in the illegal gold and platinum trade.[42] These and other developments in 1929 made the central government of Ethiopia to prohibit explicitly the extraction and the export of gold and platinum without getting official permit from the Department of Mines. The central government also believed that such activities could seriously damage lawful concessionaires and the development of the country.[43]

But in the quest for gold in Wallagga the second role of the central government had led it to have direct contact with both the domestic and the foreign concessionaires in the 1920s and in the early 1930s. During that time, some domestic and foreign concessionaires were able to obtain mining concessions from the central government mainly to extract the gold wealth found there.

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[41]Ministry of Interior, "Imperial Decree to Maintain the Prosperity of the Mineral Resource of the Country and to Control Strictly the Export of Mineral Resource,26.3.1922E.C.(5.12.1929)," *Bi̱rhanina Sälam*, (*Hi̱dar* 26,1922E.C.), pp.399-400; "Imperial Decree that Prohibits the Extraction of Any Precious Mineral Resource Without Having the License of Mines Office and a Decree to Control the Smuggling of Precious Mineral Resource,27.2.1924E.C.(7.11.1931)," *Bi̱rhanina Sälam* (*Hi̱dar*16,1924E.C.), pp.381-382; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236.

[42]Frank Hayter, *Gold of Ethiopia*(London: Stanley Paul and Co. Ltd, 1936), p.236; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.239.

[43]Ministry of Interior, "Imperial Decree to Maintain….," p.399; "Imperial Decree that Prohibits…," p.381; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236.

In the mid 1920s in several occasions therefore like Prasso and Zappa, the interest of extracting gold in Wallagga enrolled a few members of the Ethiopian ruling echelons to receive mining concessions from the Imperial government of Ethiopia.[44]

Generally, this indicates the participation of the domestic concessionaires in the contest to win mining concession in Wallagga. For the domestic concessionaires, this participation created the chance to possess the rights, privileges and responsibilities connected with gold mining in Beni Shangul, Najjoo and in the Birbir valley. In this regard, many sources state that Ethiopians such as *Blatta* Dhereessaa Amantee, one of the ruling elites of Wallagga and *Hakim* Wärqenäh (Doctor Charles Martin), one of the educated elites in the early 20th century, were the earliest domestic concessionaires to get mining concessions from the central government to extract gold[45] in Wallagga.

Having secured their concessions, some of these domestic concessionaires also started to extract gold in Kope. For example, according to E.W. Molly, Dhereessaa in collaboration with Zappa continued to extract [gold] in small scale in Kope in 1927.[46] Moreover, it was stated that in the mining site of Dhereessaa and Wärqenäh [in Kope] each year eight hundred seventy five ounces

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[44]See Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236; Guluma, "Political Domination…,"p.137; Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.18 ; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences*…, p .306; E.W. Molly, " Rapport Sur La Concession Daressa Et Les Gisement Platinifères Du Birbir (Ethiopie)" (1937), p.2 ; Yä Ma'edin Plan Gi̱brä Hayl, (Mineral Resource Plan Team) "የማእድን ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ የአስር አመት መሪ እቅድ፤ ክፍል 1፤ጥራዝ ሁለት"("Mining Sector Ten Year Principal Plan,") (1975E.C.), p.4.

[45]*Ibid.*; Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.421; Nebiyu, "የስነ ምድር…"("The Study of Geology…,") *Addis Zämän*, (1975E. C.), p.8. But among the sources provided in fn.59 above, Jelenc in same article and book as well as the document produced by *Yä Ma'edi̱n Plan Gi̱brä Hayl* (Mineral Resource Plan Team) on the pages metioned claim that Dhereessa and Wärqenäh had obtained a concession to extract platinum in part of Biribir valley although they have suggested nothing with regard to the real production of platinum by these two ruling elites.

[46]Molly, "Rapport Sur La…," pp.6-7.

of gold were produced.[47] Here, it can be said that like the foreign concessionaires the domestic concessionaires became part of the profit seekers mining agents in the gold industry of Wallagga in the mid 1920s and in the early 1930s.

Besides, in Beni Shangul the central government of Ethiopia had supported the quest for gold appropriately and granted many mining concessions for the foreign companies and citizens as well as for domestic concessionaires in the late 1920s and in the early 1930s. Among these, the German company in Beni Shangul, the *Union Miniere d'Ethiopie* in Sirqole, and the ruling elites such as Khojale Al-Hassan, Prince Asfaw Wässän and *Fitawrari* Bi̱rru had obtained mining concessions from the central government mainly to extract gold in Jebel Dul area in Beni Shangul.[48] Besides, the German company known as *Deutsche Studien-Syndikat* fű̈r *Abessinien* with its principal concessionaire, K. E. Schmidt developed an interest in extracting gold and platinum in Wallagga. This company was active in Wallagga for a couple of years though later it was incapable of running its mining project because of a shortage of capital.[49] However, some foreigners in Beni Shangul even started to produce gold which the yearly extraction was estimated to be between one thousand four hundred (1400) ounces to one thousand five hundred (1500) ounces.[50]

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[47]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236.

[48]*Ibid*.,p.237; Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*,pp.192-193.

[49]Bairu, *Ethiopia and Germany…*, p.171.

[50]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.237.

According to a report which described the economic situation of Ethiopia between 1929-1931, the annual production of gold at the national level was roughly eight thousand (8,000) ounces.[51] However, as the table below presents, at continental and global levels many countries had registered an increase in the production of gold in the 1920s and the 1930s.

Country	Gold produced between 1920-1929 in metric tons	Gold produced between 1930-1939 in metric tons
South Africa	2620	3219
Southern Rhodesia	185	195
Gold Coast	62	131
Belgian-Congo (Exports)	39	105
Tanganyika	1 6	16 7
Kenya	0 1	9 6
Uganda	-	3 0
India	123	102
Philippines	27	155
Japan	86	180

Table 7. Output of Gold in Some Countries of Africa and Other Parts of the World in the 1920s and the 1930s.[52]

Turining to local issues, among the ruling elites, however, Hambisaa had appealed several times to the Emperor for the reason that he did not obtain mining concession from the central government to extract gold in Wallagga. He started requesting the central government to grant him mining concessions immediately after Prasso, Dhereessaa and Wärqenäh were granted

[51]G. Mackereth, *Economic Conditions in Ethiopia (Abyssinia),1929-1931* (London: Department of Overseas Trade, 1932), p.10. Another source, however, states that Ethiopia is said to have produced 621,100 troy ounces of gold between 1889-1945 and as different from Mackereth this source suggests that on average roughly 10,000 ounces of gold was produced in the country every year and during the post liberation period the amount of gold produced every year was even increased to 30,000-40,000 ounces. See George Lipsky, *Ethiopia: Its People, Its Society and Its Culture* (New Haven, Hraf Press, 1962), p.262.

[52]A. D. Roberts, "The Gold Boom of the 1930s in Eastern Africa," *African Affairs*, 85, 341(1986), p.548. N.B. 1 ton is equal to 1000 kilogram.

similar concessions in Wallagga in the mid 1920s.[53] Since then and particularly in the 1930s, Hambisaa was determined to obtain the Degero area in Najjoo, the Dicho River in Sibuu, the Dabus River and the environs of Godare in Wallagga as concessions to prospect for gold and commence its extraction.[54] Nevertheless, he was denied the chance to get such concession on his own territory when the foreign concessionaires from Europe as well as the domestic concessionaires from the center were granted mining concessions for the extraction of gold and platinum in Wallagga.

Returning to Prasso, establishing partnership with the French capitalists had made Prasso, his son and other French citizens to obtain some merits. It had made him to feel comfortable financially since he had obtained capital from the French financiers to start the extraction of platinum in Yubdo. Financially, therefore the company came to have twelve million francs at its establishment which made the company very strong and powerful. Prasso was also made to have the largest share in the company. Hence, he owned fifteen thousand shares out of twenty four thousand shares and the price of each share was five hundred francs.[55] Moreover, Prasso was given the highest post in the company, the Director General of the company. Even, the company recruited his son Adolphe Prasso as the supervisor of the Yubdo platinum mine.[56] But neither Prasso nor his Paris company had invited domestic concessionaires either from Wallagga or from the center although his Paris company had attached the name Abyssinia to itself.

[53]Häbtä Mariam to Haile Sillassie I, 26.3.1926E.C. and 4.7.1926E.C., WMA, File nos.(Wa/Mu/2) ወ/ሙ/2/ 56-57 and ወ/ሙ/2/ 60 respectively, Folder nos. ወ/ሙ/2.

[54]*Idem*., 4.7.1926E.C, File no. ወ/ሙ/2/ 60, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/2.

[55]FO371/16993, Enclosure in G. Marshal to Mack, 23.6.1933; Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.417.

[56]For Prasso's serving in such position, see Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," pp.417-418 and Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236. For Adolphe's position, see Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236.

After its establishment, however, the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* having support from the citizens of Italy and France did not want to waste time to begin the extraction of platinum in Yubdo. As this chapter argues, it was the engagement of this and other companies in the extraction of platinum in Yubdo which leads us to suggest that foreign companies collected thousands of grams of platinum from Yubdo in Wallagga which they wanted to collect with the methods of production and labor force they used there in the mid 1920s and in the early 1930s. An elaboration to this argument is presented as follows.

In terms of production of platinum, therefore between 1926-1932 during the presence of the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* in Yubdo finally, the amount of platinum produced was slightly greater than eight hundred thousand (more than 800,000) grams[57] and those seven years were the most productive for the production of platinum in Yubdo. On the whole, according to the computation of Jelenc, Yubdo's platinum production of one decade between 1926-1935 was one thousand three hundred nine and half kilograms[58] or it was equal to one million three hundred nine thousand and five hundred (1,309,500) grams. Concerning the extraction of platinum in Yubdo, the following graph indicates the yearly improvement made in the production of platinum in Yubdo between 1926-1932 during the presence of the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* in Yubdo.

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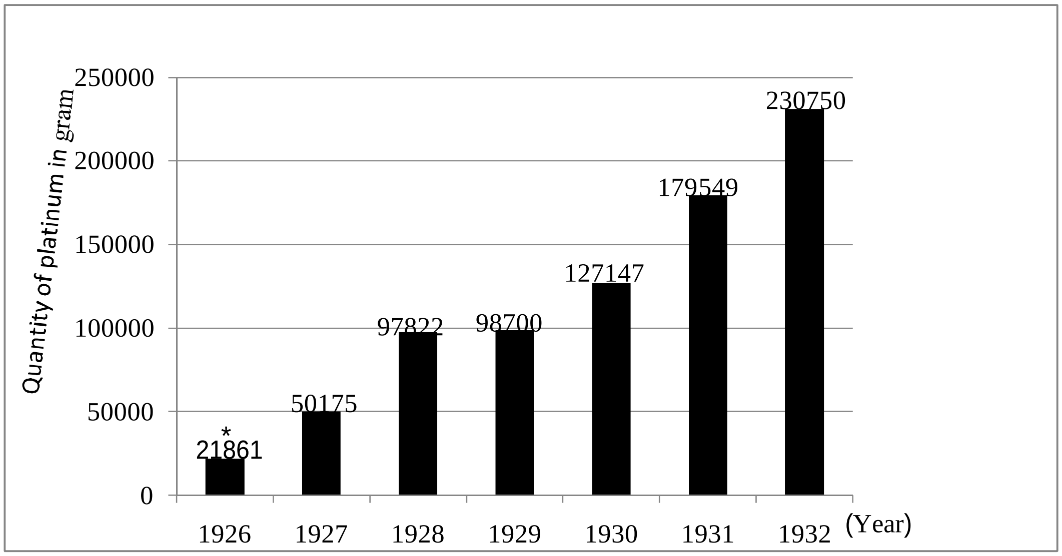
[57]The total amount of platinum produced in those years is computed from the platinum production diagram in Yubdo, provided by Usoni. See Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*,p.264.

[58]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.28; *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.304. For some years of production of platinum in Yubdo, see Hailu ,"The Geographic, II Western Wollega…," p.28; Getaneh, "The Mineral Resources…," p.124. Meanwhile, Pankhurst provides slightly different figures of platinum production between 1926-1932 in Yubdo which he says Prasso obtained significant amount of platinum grains in Wallagga and he produced seven hundred ounces in 1926, three thousand and five hundred ounces in 1928 as well as eight thousand and fifty ounces in 1932. See Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p. 236.



*Precise amount of platinum produced in grams in each year

Graph 2. Average Production of Platinum in Yubdo between 1926-1932.[59]

The above discussion and the graph confirm the presence of thousands of grams of platinum production in Yubdo as well as its progress from time to time between 1926-1932. Such large quantities of production of platinum in Yubdo could be a litmus test against writers who discount the history of mining concession in Wallagga gloomily suggesting that mining concession in the country as a whole lacked production. But such progress was seen probably for factors like the uses of cheap labor, some improved platinum washing and refining methods, some modern mining equipment and Prasso's personal effort.[60]

[59]A graph created based on figures taken from Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.264; For comparison, see also Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.95.

[60]These factors like the use of cheap and large number of labor force are frequently mentioned by informants and are also mentioned in relation to other issues of mining in the works of Bartleet, Pankhurst and Aleme. For such factors, consider Informants: Yaadataa, Jabeessaa Shunaa and Dhereessaa Alämu; Bartleet, *In the Land…*, pp.78-79 ; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.238-239; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92.

From the graph, we also understand that the production of platinum in Yubdo reached maximum in 1932 and in that year the amount of platinum extracted was two hundred thirty kilograms and seven hundred fifty grams or two hundred thirty thousand and seven hundred fifty (230,750) grams.[61] But this maximum amount represented the heyday of the production of platinum in Yubdo since platinum production did not go beyond such amount even during the period of Italian occupation. The production did not go beyond such amount perhaps for factors like difference in methods of producing platinum during the time of the Prasso company and the Italian occupation, lack of motivation among the miners and political insecurity during the Italian occupation. But on the average the increase in production of platinum in Yubdo in percentage from one year to another year between 1926-1932 was 29.96%.[62]

Therefore, the extraction of thousands of grams of platinum between 1926-1932 and 1933-1935[63] could be a confirmation to suggest that the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and other companies had obtained more than adequate benefit from precious metals mining in Yubdo when the inhabitants of Yubdo led and had been leading destitute lives. At the individual level, Hayter who visited the different mineral rich areas of Wallagga in the early 20th century confirms that he and his colleague returned with collecting plenty of gold from the Birbir valley and *Tulluu* Wallal, which is said to have been the ancient gold extraction site in Wallagga.

[61]Hailu, "The Geographic, II Western Wollega…," p.28; Chamber of Commerce, *Guide Book of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Birhanina Sälam Printing Press,1954), p.173.

[62]Average percentage of the increment in production of platinum between 1926-1932 is computed by dividing the summation of all percentages of a year to year increment by the total number of years which are used to calculate a year to year percentage increment of the production of platinum in Yubdo.

[63]In the years when the foreigners controlled the extraction of Yubdo platinum, the Ethiopian Government had also assigned a mining supervisor named *Näggadräs* Gäbrä Mädhin Wäldä Kidan. For this idea, see Shifäraw Baalchaa to Yämanä Gäbrä Egzi'abher, 11.3.1948E.C., NALA, Ministry of Interior, File No.17.1.10.20.13, Folder No.17.1.10.20.

Thus, he reports that they obtained an adequate collection of gold which could properly cover all their spending during their travel.[64]

Hayter also reflects on the major mining agents that were engaged in the extraction of gold and platinum in Wallagga to obtain adequate benefit stating that “Yet I do know that in a very few years, and by most primitive methods, over £100,000 worth of gold and platinum was taken from this particular mine.”[65] It is also suggested that Prasso and his company had extracted seven hundred kilograms of gold or nineteen thousand and six hundred (19,600) ounces of gold in 1931.[66] Obtaining such an amount of gold in addition to thousands of grams of platinum was a howling success for Prasso and his company. However, it was a fiasco for the inhabitants of Yubdo who had produced such thousands of grams of platinum for several foreign companies and remained destitute having given their gold and platinum wealth to them. They were also living in the deteriorated town of Yubdo, once globally renowned for its marvelous precious metal, platinum, in the 20th century.

In addition to the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie*, the extraction of the platinum wealth of Yubdo had also continued under two big British companies namely the Birbir Mines Limited and the Western Abyssinian Mining Syndicate in the early 1930s. Concerning the Birbir Mines Limited, Bahru and Pankhurst do not tell us whether these companies had obtained part of the Yubdo platinum mine through confiscation, gift or purchase. In a nutshell, they suggest that the companies had obtained part of the Birbir concession particularly the southern

[64] Hayter, *Gold of…*,p.218. In contemporary period a traveler named Tahir Shah has reported that he reached the eastern part of *Tulluu* Wallal. See Tahir Shah, *In Search of King Solomon's Mines*(New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), pp.228-229.

[65]Hayter, *Gold of…*, p.23.

[66]Aleme, “The Process of Peasant…,” p.95.

portion of Yubdo from the major share holder of the Birbir concession, Prasso.[67] Nonetheless, another source tells us that the Birbir Mines Limited obtained part of the Birbir concession through purchase from the Italian concessionaire, Prasso and that after making such arrangement Prasso had considered to extract gold in the Baro valley with the support he had anticipated to get from the Birbir Mines Limited.[68] It was reported that the Birbir Mines Limited was established in 1933 after making its initial capital of ten thousand pounds and immediately it opened its head office in London. Next, in Yubdo platinum mine the company had given higher posts to three British men. In such case Captain G. T. Eve and A. H. Heap became General Manager and General Assistant respectively and F. L. Howard was appointed as Chief Mechanical Engineer.[69]

However, several problems encircled both the mining and the investment activities of the Birbir Mines Limited in Wallagga. For example, while the company is said to have extracted the Yubdo platinum, it attempted to send different mining equipment to Yubdo through Gambella but it faced difficulty since the existing road was a dirt road and a motor road was unavailable to transport modern and heavy equipment to its mining site.[70] It was this difficulty of transporting the heavy mining equipment mainly to Yubdo which seriously worried E.N. Erskine, the British Consul at Gore in western Ethiopia, and finally compelled him to suggest that such an outlay of capital was "a loss of British capital."[71] Moreover, it was reported that the Birbir Mines Limited

[67]Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.417; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236

[68]FO 371/18028, Governor General of the Sudan to Arthur Yencken, 28.1.1934.

[69]FO371/18028, Enclosure in Barton to John Simon, 24.2.1934.

[70]*Ibid*.

[71]FO371/18028, British Legation in Addis Ababa to Egyptian Department, Foreign Office, 16.2.1934.

had incurred a loss estimated to reach twenty seven thousand pounds while extracting platinum in Yubdo.[72] However, it was surprising that when this company was active in Wallagga in one year alone i.e., in 1933 one hundred seventy eight thousand and six hundred ninety one (178,691) grams of platinum were produced in Yubdo.[73]

Next, when the Birbir Mines Limited ceased its operation in Yubdo another newly established British mining enterprise, the Western Abyssinian Syndicate, had replaced it. The Western Abyssinian Syndicate was established in 1934 having an initial capital of thirty thousand pounds. For the establishment of this company, the British national, Alexander H. Pickering who had a syndicate in England known as Alexander Pickering and Company Limited had made great effort.[74] The Western Abyssinian Syndicate wanted to work on both the former Baro and Birbir mining concessions of Prasso. But Pickering remarks that in the process of transferring these two concessions he had faced a contest from one Italian citizen. The Italian citizen made a move soon after Pickering concluded the accord which made the Western Abyssinian Syndicate to takeover of the two former mining concessions of Prasso.[75]

Following the takeover, the company had commenced the extraction of platinum in Yubdo[76] though its production was not stable. But as compared to the Birbir Mines Limited, sources do not suggest that the Western Abyssinian Syndicate had incurred a loss. Instead, what happened in the Birbir mining concession when both companies were active in Yubdo was the continuity in

[72]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.18 ; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences*…, p.306.

[73]Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.264.

[74]FO371/18028, Alex H. Pickering to Sydney Turner and Minutes, 23.8.1934 and27.8.1934 respectively.

[75]*Ibid.*

[76]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.18 ; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences*…, p.306.

production of platinum. Nonetheless, there was a fluctuation in the amount of platinum produced during the presence of these two British companies in Yubdo between 1933-1935. In general, the amount of platinum produced in Yubdo between 1933-1935 is provided in the table indicated below.

Year	**Amount of platinum in grams**
1933	178,691
1934	158,504
1935	166,444

Table 8. Production of Platinum in Yubdo Between 1933-1935.[77]

From the above table, we can notice that the fluctuation was small in number in those three years but such fluctuation in platinum production happened perhaps because of miners producing and supplying less amount of platinum in Yubdo which could also affect their earnings. However, in 1934 because of such factor the amount of platinum produced in Yubdo declined by thousands of grams. In that year the production of platinum declined by twenty thousand and one hundred eighty seven (20,187) grams as compared to the amount of platinum extracted in 1933 which was one hundred seventy eight thousand and six hundred ninety one (178,691) grams. In spite of this, there was the revival in the production of platinum in 1935 by some thousand grams. But the variation in production of platinum had an impact on the income that platinum miners were able to obtain since their payments were based on the amount of platinum they supplied to the companies.[78]

[77]A table created based on figures obtained from Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.264.

[78]Informants: Namarraa, Gafarso and Jabeessaa.

However, as argued in this chapter such thousands of grams of platinum were extracted through the indigenous method of platinum extraction which had undergone some progress. Thus, the following discussion will examine issues related to the methods of extraction and collection of platinum as well as the mining labors participated in the extraction and collection of mainly platinum in Yubdo.

To begin with, as several sources suggest, domestic concessionaires in Kope extracted gold as well as the foreign concessionaires in Yubdo had used the traditional gold extraction method.[79] This was an indigenous method which the local gold miners, the foreign concessionaires and companies like *Mines d'Or du Wallaga* had used it in Wallagga in the pre-1924 period as discussed in chapter two.

The concessionaires had made an effort to mix the traditional method with the modern one. However, the traditional method was not entirely abandoned. Indeed, Hayter, Bartleet and Pankhurst do not appreciate the traditional method which had supported prospecting for platinum and contributed a lot for the production of thousands of grams of platinum to the company of Prasso and to other enterprises. But they agree that the traditional method of the extraction of gold continued to be used for the extraction of gold both in Kope and Yubdo as well as for the extraction of platinum in Yubdo[80] in the mid 1920s and in the early 1930s.

Nevertheless, as indicated in the above argument, the method of extraction of gold and particularly platinum had seen some progress. This progress included the use of additional methods for the extraction of both gold and platinum which could be taken as modern methods

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[79] Hayter, *Gold of …*, p.185; Bartleet, *In the Land…*, p.76 ; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*,pp.238-239.

[80] *Ibid*.; Frank Hayter, *In Quest of Sheba's Mines*(London: Stanley Paul and Co. Limited, nd),pp.91-92,165.

and these were the "cradle and the tom"[81]systems. These blended methods contributed for thousands of grams of platinum extracted in Yubdo between 1926-1936. One historian explains such progress in method saying that the extraction method of precious metals in Kope and Yubdo had developed gradually into the modern one.[82] Besides, there were pieces of [unsophisticated] mining equipment in the Birbir valley which assisted the extraction of these precious metals. Bertleet confirms their existence saying, "There are seven men working the Long "Tom," four are excavating the earth and throwing it into the head of the "makina" (machine) as the [Oromos] call it, and three are stirring up the mud in it in order to free the Au [gold] and Pt [platinum]."[83] However, as it will be provided below the improvement made was mainly connected with gold and platinum washing and refining methods.

In fact, the old gold panning and washing systems remain central to separate the gold and platinum particles from its parental materials. As discussed in chapter two, the *gabatee* or the wooden container which the local people used to pan and obtain refined gold was still in use in the 1920s. The methods and their tools were fruitful and that was why the local miners and the concessionaires in Wallagga did not abandon them in the 1920s. Concerning this, in the 1920s in the Birbir valley and in the environs of *Tulluu* Walal, Hayter had seen that a large number of local miners who did not abandon the traditional method of gold mining carrying with them [the *gabatee*] wooden containers as well as calabashes and were effectively panning gold from the

[81]Bartleet, *In the Land…*, pp.78-79; See also Pankhurst, *Economic History…*,pp.238-239. According to Bartleet, a cradle in mining activity is the use of long narrow container fixed on curved wood which assists the swinging of the container, see his account *In the Land…*,p.78. Tom is a method in which a miner uses shovel and another tool which are important to load the gravel on the long wooden container. See Bartleet, *In the Land…*, p.79; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.238.

[82]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," pp.95, 96.

[83]Bartleet, *In the Land…*, p.94.

alluvial deposit and obtained a great deal of gold.[84] Hayter also suggests that such traditional method of gold mining resembled the gold mining method of the other part of the globe.[85] Bartleet who was contemporaneous with Hayter in visiting Wallagga sums up the traditional method which was not abandoned and its repercussion saying, "The gravel was being dug out of the river, put into the oval wooden pans, and immersed in a pool of water. By a peculiar twisting motion and the earth and rock were gradually washed over the sides of the *gabata* and the heavier iron, platinum and gold left behind in the pan."[86]

Bartleet had also seen that the local people in the Birbir valley were using time and energy consuming shaft system to bring out the gravel which contains particles of gold and platinum from the underground.[87] This could not be done without digging deep pits into the ground which required a group of people who had to dig the pits, who had to pull the shafts and the ropes of the shafts and finally miners who had to wash and filter the crude gravels to obtain gold and platinum grains in Yubdo as well as the gold grain in Kope. According to Lochmere Oertel, a retired Indian engineer who visited the Kope mine in the early 1930s and who is said to have been the colleague of *Häkim* Wärqenäh, a concessionaire in Kope, there were miners who carried out the gold mining activities in teams consisted of fifteen to twenty members which in some occasions included women as members, having a supervisor to their team.[88]

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[84]Hayter, *In Quest of…*pp.91-92.

[85]*Ibid*.,p.92.

[86]Bartleet, *In the Land…*, p.76.

[87]*Ibid*.

[88]FO371/15385, In a Dispatch from Barton to Henderson: A Copy of Report by L. Oertel on A Tour Through the Gold and Platinum Mines in Western Abyssinia, 3. 8. 1931.

Panning had also seen some improvement on it rather than abandonment and used as precious metals refining method in the 1920s and used to differentiate the gravel and sand from the required particles of gold or platinum. In this method the miners had to put the gravel and sand materials on the improved gravel and sand container i.e., the iron pan or the iron container which was different from the earlier *gabatee* or the wooden container of the traditional panning. Next, the iron pan which contained the gravel or sand materials had to be immersed into water, dunk and stirred up properly. Eventually, this process yields two different materials i.e., the heavier and the lighter materials. Here, the miners had to retain the heavier material which could contain particles of gold and platinum but they had to dump the lighter material as waste. Finally, rubbing the heavier material with particles of clay and then identifying the particles of gold and platinum through blowing and through the use of magnet made them to obtain the refined particles of gold and platinum.[89]

As stated above, however, the major mining sites where the local miners had used the indigenous method of extraction were the Yubdo and the Kope precious metals fields in the Birbir valley. These mining fields were well organized, had accommodation for their staff and also forced some miners to live in the nearby villages and towns. Gradually, they came to own large number of miners and the owners of the mines devised systems of collecting many grams of platinum from those miners. But in terms of having accommodation for some of their employees both the

[89]Bartleet, *In the Land…*, p.78; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.238.

owners of Yubdo and Kope mine built camps and compounds with many houses and outside the camps many houses of the miners in the nearby areas were also built.[90]

Although Yubdo's accommodation was more inclusive than Kope's mine camp in terms of holding together the miners, other staff and watchmen in one compound, as indicated earlier many miners were living in the town of Yubdo. Bartleet succinctly depicts the scene of the accommodation stating that, "We could see the camp of M. Prasso's mining concession on the far side of the river [Birbir], about half-way up the slope. It consisted of a large square compound with watchtowers at the gates, containing some hundreds of native tukhals for the labourers, and three or four stone built bungalows with galvanized roofs for the staff."[91] Besides, large numbers of miners were living in the town of Yubdo which was specifically known as Yubdo *Godaa* (the lower Yubdo) which served as the major center of platinum mining.

However, as the interest in obtaining a great deal of gold and platinum was intended, foreign concessionaires began to think to re-establish Yubdo in its present location in order to use the previous Yubdo *Godaa* for the expansion of gold and platinum mining. Thus, they re-established the town of Yubdo in its present location in the early 1930s, approximately twenty kilometers far from Yubdo *Godaa*.[92] One source clearly indicates the accomplishment of the re-establishment, although it ignores the problems that such displacement could create for the inhabitants of Yubdo *Godaa* saying "The whole of the mining village of Yubdo has now been [by 1934] transferred to

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[90]*Ibid*., p.72; FO371/15385, In a Dispatch from Barton to Henderson: A Copy of…3. 8. 1931.

[91]Bartleet, *In the Land*…, p.72.

[92]Informants: Mäkuria, Namarraa, Yaadataa.

a hill site out of the main valley."[93] Here, sources remark that the emergence and expansion of the town of Yubdo is closely associated with [the consolidation of] gold and platinum mining activities in Wallagga.[94]

Labor Force of Yubdo Platium Mines in the 1920s and in the Early 1930s

Turning to the work forces of mining industry in the Birbir valley in the 1920s and in the early 1930s, as its last argument, this chapter wants to indicate that the local miners and the daily laborers supported by foreign staff became the source of cheap labor for the concessionaires and their companies and contributed a lot for them to collect thousands of grams of platinum. But the local miners and the daily laborers were exposed to the cheatings of platinum buyers. This deception was also practiced by the British gold mining company in Wallagga and later needed strong reaction from the central government.

These miners and daily laborers who were living in Yubdo as well as Kope and who had served Prasso, his company as well as the domestic concessionaires were large in number and particularly Prasso and his company became advantageous for obtaining cheap labor for the extraction of platinum from these large crowds. Many of these miners were the Oromo farmers who were living in the vicinity of the Birbir valley and some other farmers came from the villages found at far distance from Yubdo and Kope.[95] As sources suggest, the number of miners in Kope in the concession of Dhereessaa and Wärqenäh increased steadily and reached three

[93]FO371/18028, Enclosure in Barton to Simon,24.2.1934. A message from Erskine in February 1934, British Consul at Gore was also enclosed in this dispatch.

[94]Informants: Mäkuria, Namarraa, Yaadataa ; Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92.

[95]Informants: Jabeessaa, Namarraa, Yaadataa and Dhereessaa Alämu; FO371/15385, In a Dispatch from Barton to Henderson: A Copy of…3. 8. 1931; For Kope's mine engaging the farmers, see also Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.421.

hundred in number in 1929.[96] Similarly, the miners in Yubdo platinum field were counted in hundreds and their numbers began to increase from time to time and were estimated to be between two thousand (2,000) to three thousand (3,000) in the early 1930s.[97]

These miners were accountable to the supervisors and the managers nominated by the concessionaires of the Birbir valley both in Yubdo and Kope. The supervisors nominated had to follow up strictly the activities of the miners. For this purpose, for example, ten supervisors were nominated in Kope goldfield in the late 1920s. Kope goldfield had also notable managers such as Bartleet and Zappa.[98] Occasionally, the mangers at Kope were engaged in recruiting miners and laborers from the local people. In this regard, Zappa was successful to recruit miners and laborers easily for the Kope goldfield since he was renowned among the local people.[99]

In addition to such recruitment, the Kope goldmine of Dhereessaa and Wärqenäh which Tafari himself is said to have been one of the share holders began to obtain cheap labor from emancipated ex-slaves. The owner of the ex-slaves was Dhereessaa. The ex-slaves who were three hundred in number provided cheap labor for the Kope goldfield.[100] According to one report, these ex-slaves were the sources of the 'best labor and hard work', attributes which the gold mining industry had been demanding at that time. The ex-slaves were enthusiastic to obtain

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[96]Bartleet, *In the Land…*, pp.96-97; FO371/15385, In a Dispatch from Barton to Henderson: A Copy of…3. 8. 1931; Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236.

[97]Molly, "Rapport Sur La…," pp.6-7; As cited in Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.92.

[98]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.236. For Bartleet serving as manger of Kope mine, see Bartleet, *In the Land…*, p. 113.

[99]FO371/15385, In a Dispatch from Barton to Henderson: A Copy of…3. 8. 1931.

[100]*Ibid.*; Bahru, "Relations Between Ethiopia…," p.421.

some income for their labor and willing to work hard in order to buy cattle and land[101]which they had envied in their earlier status in Wallagga and in many parts of the country.

Other than the miners, the daily laborers who were expected to engage in different activities with small payments became another source of the cheap labor for the concessionaires. But from the very beginning these daily laborers were recruited to carry out various mining and non-mining activities such as cleaning canals, pumps as well as pits, digging pits and repairing damaged dwellings both at the camp and in the village. The laborers were not paid good wages for their hard work. As a result, they received five dollars [Maria Theresa thalers] in a month which according to one report the payment was equal to five shillings and that was cheap.[102]

However, having understood that both the Yubdo and the Kope precious metals fields were the source of cheap labor, the concessionaires had worked hard on how to maximize their extraction and expropriation of platinum ignoring the sufferings of the local miners. Thus, it was also at the expense of the local miners that thousands of grams of platinum were collected in Yubdo between 1926-1935. For collecting such large quantities of platinum, therefore the concessionaires used to give mining tools to whom Bartleet calls “tributors”, who were platinum suppliers and like the gold suppliers who used to sell the platinum they had to the concessionaires.[103]

[101]FO371/15385, In a Dispatch from Barton to Henderson: A Copy of…3. 8. 1931.

[102]*Ibid.*

[103]Bartleet, *In the Land*…, pp. 80, 94; Pankhurst, *Economic History*…, p. 239.

In such arrangement therefore the concessionaires or the companies who supplied mining tools for platinum suppliers who had strong connection with the miners made the suppliers to sell the platinum they had collected for them.[104] This type of the transaction of platinum was used to boost the accumulation of platinum for the concessionaires. It also generated money for platinum suppliers and miners for the amount of platinum they submitted to the concessionaires or the companies. For platinum miners, payment could be made each day based on the amount of gold or platinum each miner submitted to the companies. [The gold and platinum transaction rule in Yubdo stated that] a miner could get one Maria Theresa thaler for a gram of gold or platinum he or she submitted to the companies.[105]

Practically, however, such type of platinum transaction was corrupt. One of the witnesses for this corruption was Bartleet himself. Thus, as Bartleet had seen some local platinum buyers who were the local representatives of the concessionaires even cheated the platinum miners and paid them less for platinum grains which needed much more payment. Cheating and other dishonest behaviors, however, did not advance the productivity of mining company and it had worsened the relationship that existed between the miners and the concessionaires.[106] The following quotation from the travel account of Bartleet recalls how one local treasurer of the concessionaires in the Birbir concession used to cheat and deceive platinum miners during the transaction:

> *When I [Bartleet] suspected that there was something very fishy about his [the accountant's] method of paying the natives for their concentrate, and that his weights*

[104]*Ibid.*

[105]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," p.95.

[106]*Ibid.*p.96; See also Bartleet, *In the Land*…, p.81.

and balances were all wrong. I made a complete record of the amounts of gold and platinum brought in by the tributors and the money paid for them, but it seemed no two natives ever received the same rate, nor did any of the weights approximate to what he put in the accounts.[107]

At advanced level, there was also the bigger picture of deception which foreign companies like the British Tamssh company for gold mining had committed while extracting gold in Sirqole in Beni Shangul between 1929-1930. The deception started with transporting large amount of the soils of gold from Sirqole to the Sudan in big trucks of this company under the pretext of laboratory test. It immediately developed into pushing Ethiopia's boundary to its inner side to include parts of the gold bearing Sirqole into the territory of the Sudan.[108] Dhaabaa Wase, from Wallagga, who was employed in Tamssh Company, earning three hundred Maria Theresa Thalers a month, however, secretly wrote a letter to the central government of Ethiopia. In his letter he revealed that Britain sought to include parts of the western frontier area to her Sudan colony ignoring the 1902 boundary agreement. Hearing the issue, Tafari and *Blattan Geta* Hiruy Wäldä Sillassie, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1931-1936),[109] formally requested the British Embassy to resolve the problem which made them to establish a team to study the case. The team decided the parties to comply with the 1902 boundary agreement and such verdict made Ethiopia to retain all its territory in the west according to the 1902 boundary agreement.[110]

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[107]Bartleet, *In the Land*…,p.116.

[108]Badassa Sima, "A Short Biography of *Fitawurari* Daba Wasse (1902 to the Present)," BA Senior Essay(History, Addis Ababa University,1980),pp.12-13.

[109]For Hiruy Wäldä Sillassie's work profile before the Italian occupation, see Bahru, *A History of Modern*…, pp.106-107.

[110] Badassa, "A Short Biography…," pp.12,14-16. Dhaabaa's salary became high perhaps for the reason that he bore double responsibilities in Tamssh company i.e., he served as "treasurer and secretary…in free lodgings", see *Ibid*.,p.12.

Turning to the issue of labor force, the concessionaires had also another work force whom Pankhurst calls “regular employees”[111] which probably consisted of watchmen, platinum purchasers and clerks. These workers, however, had a tight work time and they worked at least for eight hours a day. But like the cleaners, repairers and pit diggers they were paid five Maria Theresa thalers per month.[112]

Moreover, in the early 1930s the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* had a number of foreign staff who had the knowledge and skills of management, engineering, accounting, medical science and site supervision. These experienced employees were mainly the nationals of Italy although a few of them were France and Belgium nationals.[113] The following table provides some of the list of the foreign employees in the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* in Yubdo Platinum mine in the early 1930s.

[111]Pankhurst, *Economic History…*, p.239.

[112]*Ibid.*; See also Bartleet, *In the Land*…,p.81; Aleme, “The Process of Peasant…,” p.95.

[113]FO371/18028, Enclosure in Barton to Simon, 24.2.1934.

S. No	Name of Employee	Profession and Responsibility	Nationality
1	Adolfo Prasso [Son of A. Prasso]	Technical Manager	Italian
2	Adriano Bonalumi	Accountant	»
3	Angelo Nebbia	Electrical and Mechanical Foreman	»
4	Vincenzo Bussotti	General Assistant	»
5	Ugo Zanchi	Driver and Mechanic	»
6	Savino Paulicelli (Doctor)	Local Doctor	»
7	Pio Casalgrande	Foreman	»
8	Domenico Tarditi	Assistant	»
9	Oreste Viarengo	»	»
10	Paul Gasset	Foreman(moved to Bonga camp)	French
11	Leon Boulet	Miner	French
12	Josef Naus	General Supervisor of Road	Dutch
13	Germaine Prasso (Mrs)	Not revealed	Belgian

Table 9. Foreign Employees in the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* in Yubdo Mine in the Early 1930s.[114]

All these developments in connection with the concessionaires, the miners and the foreign employees in Yubdo gold and platinum fields as well as in Kope goldfield in Wallagga in the 1920s and in the early 1930s reminds us what Aleme strongly argued. He argued that mining concession and mining industry had led to the creation of [the crawling] 'industrial working class' in goldfields such as Najjoo which was based on converting the earlier local farmers into a new 'class' of miners[115] who faced different problems. Though this change demanded the concessionaires to respect the rights of the miners, there were occasions in which the concessionaires did not worry about in the time when the miners or the daily laborers suffered. The case in point here, was the death of many miners in the 1920s. According to Hayter, such death had happened because of the unwillingness of the concessionaires [like Prasso] to bring in

[114]*Ibid*.

[115]Aleme, "The Process of Peasant…," pp.69, 91, 95.

and use modern mining method in Wallagga which brought the death of fifty miners due to the collapse of tunnels which Hayter believes that tunnel digging by itself was the old mining method. [116]

With respect to environment, in the 1920s and the 1930s when the platinum mining industry in Wallagga came under the foreign companies such as the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate, disturbing Wallagga's ecological unit also continued. As discussed previously, these companies bought platinum from the local miners who extracted this precious metal. Thus, the local miners and the companies could not be considered as innocent group in connection with creating ecological imbalances in Wallagga. Particularly, the local miners while extracting platinum they dug the surface of the earth here and there and devastated the thick vegetations and trees which covered the Birbir River valley. Hayter noticed such devastation in the Birbir River valley in the 1920s which he describes it saying, "Before us stretched a winding maze of gold workings. Some attempt had made to clear the bush, and for about half mile the banks of the river resembled nothing so much as a shell-pocked battle area."[117]

To conclude, the granting of Birbir mining concession paved the way for European nationals and companies mainly from Italy, France and Britain to control both the Yubdo platinum mine and its extraction in the Birbir River valley since the mid 1920s until the Italian occupation of Ethiopia. This is among the findings of this dissertation in this chapter. But all these European

[116]Hayter, *Gold of* …, p.18; cf. as Cited in Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.134.

[117] Hayter, *In Quest of*…, p.91.

states had neocolonial interests which they wanted to execute in different parts of the country including Wallagga, the gold and platinum prosperous territory in western Ethiopia.

Eventually, such collaboration resulted in the establishment of big European companies like the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate which effectively extracted and accumulated thousands of grams of platinum from Yubdo mining center in Wallagga between 1926-1936. At an individual level, the Italian Alberto Prasso was a key figure for such partnership to happen and for the established companies to engage in the extraction of platinum in Yubdo as well as to return with thousands of grams of platinum from there.

However, the contribution of local miners and their traditional gold and platinum extraction method had to be appreciated rather than discredited since it was impossible to extract thousands of grams of platinum during that time without their labor and their means of production. During that time, local miners also became subordinate to foreign concessionaires and their companies. This situation is related to Robotham's idea of political economy which reads, "The key to understanding any economy and society, is to understand who (that is, which strata or classes) controls the means of production, by which every society makes provisions for its material existence and continuity."[118]

In such platinum mining industry in Wallagga, as another finding of this dissertation in this chapter, among the foreign concessionaires when Prasso emerged as giant and successful

[118]Robotham, "Political…," p.43.

concessionaire, the local miners and the inhabitants of Yubdo had remained a mere platinum feeders to Prasso and the foreign companies like the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate. Having given their platinum wealth, both the local miners and the inhabitants of Yubdo also remained economically powerless and continued to lead destitute lives even after Prasso and the foreign companies had left Yubdo.

Generally, the local miners and the people of Yubdo as well as the central government of Ethiopia had become very generous and remained spectators of the foreign capitalists when Prasso and those big European companies had extracted and expropriated as much platinum as they could from Wallagga. Nevertheless, in connection with gold, both the local governors of Wallagga and the central government of Ethiopia had renewed their former relations of the gold senders and recipients which forced the local governors of Wallagga to continue fulfilling the gold demand of the central government and some ruling elites in the center between 1924-1936.

However, between 1936-1941, the mining history of Wallagga had taken different picture because of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia which entirely brought the different gold and platinum mining fields and their extractions in Wallagga under the Italian rule. Thus, the next chapter will exhaustively examine the gold and the platinum mining activities which were carried out in Wallagga for half a decade during the Italian occupation.

Chapter Five

Mining Economy and Mine Laborers During the Italian Occupation (1936-1941)

Introduction

Having known some areas of Ethiopia through the neocolonial plans to obtain mining concessions and establish commercial ties, the right time came for the Italian government to complete its long established dream of colonizing Ethiopia since the Battle of Adwa. Thus, the Italian government had various principal objectives which caused it to engage in such difficult project of securing overseas empire in East Africa including Ethiopia. According to some historians, however, economic factor i.e., making the Italian economy self-sufficient through exploiting the agricultural and mineral resources as well as using the commercial products of states like Ethiopia in East Africa to the advantage of Italy[1] was part of the grand objectives of the dreamers. In the case of exploiting the agricultural and mineral resources in the country, however, the centrality of Wallagga is noticeable since it is adequately endowed with such resources.

Therefore, considering the importance of Wallagga to one of the principal objectives of the Italian colonization project, this chapter examines the efforts that the Italian government had made between 1936-1941 to obtain gold and platinum to achieve its objective of building the Italian economy. The chapter makes the year 1936 the beginning of its discussion, because it was at that date Wallagga as well as its mineral and other resources forcefully came under the control

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[1]For such Italian colonial plan, see Alberto Sbacchi, "Italian Colonization in Ethiopia: Plans and Projects, 1936-1940," *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente*, 32, 4 (1977), p.505; Ezekiel Gebissa, "The Italian Invasion, the Ethiopian Empire, and Oromo Nationalism: The Significance of the Western Oromo Confederation of 1936," *Northeast African Studies*, 9, 3(2002), p.86; Richard Pankhurst, "A Chapter in Ethiopia's Commercial History: Developments During the Fascist Occupation,1936-1941," *Ethiopia Observer*,14, 1 (1971),p.47.

of the Italian government which made the local people unwillingly to give their privileges of owning these resources to the invaders. Then, the chapter concludes its discussion in treating events which had happened in 1941 in some mining localities of Wallagga which forced the invading Italian government to retreat and leave the mining fields it had used to extract gold and platinum throughout the period of occupation.

The argument of this chapter reads that before Wallagga fell under the control of Italian forces, foreign nationals residing in Wallagga including some employees of the Yubdo mine were evacuated safely to another place. But with its occupation, the Italians gave special attention to extract gold and platinum since they wanted these precious metals badly. For this reason, they were engaged in wide spread prospecting and extraction activities in Wallagga and soon commenced the extraction of these precious metals and had obtained thousands of grams of gold and platinum. Besides, to produce these precious metals, the Italians had acquired mine laborers from the local people through different mechanisms and made them work on their mines in Wallagga on some occasions without payments and on some other occasions with payments. This argument is presented in the following sub-headings of this chapter.

5.1 Evacuation and the Occupation of Wallagga

This sub-heading elaborates the argument which says in the time when the invading forces of the Italians attempted to occupy Wallagga, foreign nationals living in Wallagga including some employees of the Yubdo mine were not left alone. Instead, many of them were made to move safely to other place before Wallagga had entirely come under the control of the Fascist Italian government.

As mentioned above, for the Italian government, acquiring an access to control the mineral resources of Wallagga was an opportunity for Italy to fulfill its objective of building its domestic economy by exploiting the resources of a colonized people. Pankhurst makes further remarks on the demands of the Italians in Ethiopia in relation to mining insisting that

> *Mining prospects in Ethiopia aroused considerable interest in Italy at the time of invasion and in the early stage of the occupation when it was hoped that the empire could contribute greatly towards solving Italy's economic problems. Fascist attention was therefore directed mainly to the rare metals, gold and platinum, which it was hoped, would assist meeting Italy's balance of payments deficit.*[2]

However, Wallagga and its people including the foreign nationals were disturbed because of seeing and hearing the intensified news of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in the mid 1930s which was not stopped with the fall of Addis Ababa under the invading Italian forces. Therefore, though the invading fascist forces under Marshal Pietro Badoglio had controlled Addis Ababa on 5 May, 1936[3] the Italian government sought to bring more land under its jurisdiction. Thus, it sent its invading forces to the south and western part of Ethiopia, where, Gore, the seat of the dispirited central government of Ethiopia under *Ras* Imru [Haile Sillasie], was located.[4] But it seems that Benito Mussolini, the Italian Prime Minister, became nervous until the south and western part of Ethiopia were brought under the control of the Fascist government of Italy. Thus, in a matter of month after the control of Addis Ababa Mussolini had sent a message to Rodolfo Graziani to bring the south and western part of Ethiopia under the control of the Italian forces[5] within a short period of time.

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[2]Richard Pankhurst, "Economic Verdict on the Italian Occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1941)," *Ethiopia Observer*,14, 1 (1971), p.75.

[3]Arthur Steiner, "The Government of Italian East Africa," *The American Political Science Review*, 30, 5(1936), p.884; Pankhurst, "Economic Verdict…," p.72.

[4]Amsalu Temesegen, "Italian Occupation and Response in and Around Naqamte,1936-1941," B.A. Senior Essay (History, Addis Ababa University,1983), p.11.

[5]*Ibid.*; Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion…," p.86.

Eventually, when the Italian government occupied Wallagga and other parts of western Ethiopia, foreign powers like Britain had determined to evacuate their nationals and other foreigners living there. They made the British Consulate at Gore and the government of the Sudan to bear the responsibility to move those foreign nationals safely. Thus, those governments co-operated in the evacuation of the foreign nationals living mainly in Naqamtee, Sayyoo, Gimbii, Yubdo and Ayraa who were from all walks of life. For instance, some of them were merchants and missionaries, some others were employees of the Prasso platinum mine at Yubdo.[6]

But in the meantime until law and order had to be established, the authority to safeguard the lives of these foreign nationals was vested in the local governors and the people of Wallagga. In this regard, in 1936 the British consul at Gore had politely begun to request Hambisaa, the governor of Wallagga, to give protection to the British-Indian merchants who resided in Naqamtee and to the Swedish missionaries living in other parts of Wallagga.[7]

Similarly, it was stated that Yohannes Jootee of Qellam and Osanaa Jootee of Gidaamii, the leaders of the Western Oromo Confederation (WOC), had co-operated by providing protection to the foreign nationals and the local people of Wallagga. During the evacuation, WOC was a newly founded organization in western Ethiopia and had the objectives of securing overarching autonomy for the Oromo land in western Ethiopia by advocating that the Oromo join the British mandate

[6]FO371/20207, Note on the Present Position with Regard to the Evacuation of British and Other Foreigners Resident in Abyssinia, 23. 7. 1936.

[7]British Consulate at Gore to Häbtä Mariam, 28.11.1928E.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963170, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

administration.[8] WOC members, the Oromo chiefs, who appointed Hambisaa as their representative also wanted to use the British mandate administration to safeguard their regions from Italian invasion primarily through peaceful means rather than engaging in fighting.[9] It looks like such co-operation of the leaders of WOC had focused on rescuing foreign civilians rather than attacking them which perhaps aimed at creating smooth relation with Britain and other states to achieve its objectives.

In an instance to avoid such attack with the assistance of the leaders of WOC Yubdo platinum mine could be mentioned. In Yubdo platinum mine these two leaders had made their armies to control their nerves not to put an assault on the platinum mine. Pertaining to this, Ezekiel Gebissa elaborates that while these two leaders were commanding their armies from Naqamtee to Sayyoo, "Turned their soldiers away from the French company properties at the Youbdo platinum mine, about 200 km west of Naqamtee, in order to show their good intentions and to avoid exposing their soldiers to the temptation of looting the mine and the settlement there."[10] It was also reported that the British delegate at Gore communicated one of these two leaders, viz., Yohannes, to protect the Yubdo mine from any attack by requesting Yohannes to send one hundred armies to Yubdo.[11]

In due course of time, the Yubdo platinum mine had seen flying visits from the Italian aircrafts several times though British delegates at Gore did not want any evacuee from Yubdo mine to use the

[8]Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion…," pp.77, 82. For whereabouts of these two leaders, see *Ibid*, p.79. For the local chiefs of different parts of Wallagga demanding the British mandate administration and autonomy, ck FO371/20206, Requests of Hereditary Chiefs of Leqa, Jima-Arjo, Sibbu-Chingi and Sibbu-Sire ,17.9.1928E.C.(25.5.1936) and G.T. Garratt, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1938), p.119.

[9]Tesema Ta'a, "The Bonayyaa Incident and the Italian Occupation of Naqamtee," *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Volume I* (Kyoto, 1997), p.269.

[10]Ezekiel, "The Italian Invasion…," p.82.

[11]FO371/20206, British Consulate at Gore, 24.6.1936.

Italian aircrafts in 1936. The Italian aircrafts had visited the mine most likely for the reason that the Italians wanted the Yubdo mine protected which could enable them to continue the extraction of platinum. Therefore, having given special attention to Yubdo mine the Italian government had made Yubdo's mine French manager, Mister A. Claude the focus of the visits of its aircrafts loaded with food, money and letters several times before the occupation of Wallagga.[12] But one of the British delegates at Gore who shouldered the responsibility to evacuate foreigners from Wallagga preferred the evacuees to use the port of Gambella instead of the Italian aircrafts to move abroad.[13]

Having made such efforts, a few months before the Italian forces occupied Naqamtee, the representatives of the British Consulate at Gore were successful in evacuating foreign nationals such as merchants, missionaries and some employees of the Yubdo platinum mine. As a result, in August 1936 some Greek merchants, the foreign employees of the Yubdo platinum mines as well as the platinum produced and stored there had reached Gambella having secured protection from some local governors of Wallagga in their journey to Gambella.[14] Next, in the same year members of the Swedish missionaries and the Germans living in Ayraa were fortunate to reach Gambella safely and some Sudanese Arabs residing in Gimbii and some British-Indians received order to reach Gambella through Gore.[15] However, in dealing with the process of evacuation and the evacuees themselves, several historians who have dealt with Wallagga during the occupation such as Amsalu Temesgen, Daniel Ayana and Ezekiel Gebissa have preferred to remain unconcerned about this issue and their

[12]I*bid*.; FO371/20207, Erskine to Eden, 5.8. 1936.

[13]FO371/20206, British Consulate at Gore, 24. 6. 1936.

[14]FO371/20207, Erskine to Eden, 5.8 1936; See also FO371/20934, Anonymous Report [on Security and Other Issues, 1936].

[15]British Consulate at Gore to Häbtä Mariam, 9.9.1936G.C., WMA, File no. ወ/ሙ/3/025.1714963172, Folder no. ወ/ሙ/3.

preference has created a gap on the issue which some primary sources that are used in this section of the chapter attempt to fill it.

While the task of rescuing foreign nationals was taking place in Wallagga, the Italian military expedition which made *Ras* Hailu[Täklä Haymanot] their companion of conquest had already started the journey to occupy south and western Ethiopia in September 1936.[16] This was a journey which eventually realized the fall of Naqamtee and Yubdo under such expedition. Subsequently, in a matter of a month, Naqamtee, the capital of Wallagga came under the Italian forces led by Colonel Malta in October 1936.[17] But before the fall of Naqamtee there was a military engagement between the *Tiqur Anbässa* Organization forces and the invading Italian forces at a place called Bonnayyaa in southeastern part of Naqamtee in June 1936.[18] According to Tesema, members of the *Tiqur Anbässa* Organization at the beginning consisted of three hundred graduates of the Hoolataa Military Academy who obtained support from [its prominent members like] Mathias Gammadaa and Bahru Kabaa initially who came from Leeqaa Naqamtee. These military graduates preferred the western region to resist the Italian invasion. After they arrived at Naqamtee, initially, they also obtained provision and wages from Hambisaa[19] who used collaboration and resistance as a strategy of dealing with the Italian invaders as a few African chiefs perfected on other European colonizers. In such military encounters members of the Black Lion Organization attacked the Italian forces at Bonayyaa on June 26, 1936 where they destroyed three Italian aircrafts and killed one Italian air force commander, Magliocco.

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[16]*Ibid*.

[17]FO371/20934, Anonymous Report [1936]; For the occupation of Naqamtee, see also Amsalu, "Italian Occupation…," pp.27,30.

[18]Tesema, "The Bonayyaa…," p.264.

[19]*Ibid*., p.268.

Here, Tesema strongly argues that in the Italo-Ethiopian encounter of the mid-1930s it was for the first time that the Italians aircrafts were changed into ash.[20] However, a few months after the incidence of Bonayyaa it was stated that the forces of Colonel Malta had taken control the Yubdo platinum mine and subsequently occupied the town of Gore in November 1936.[21]

Next, with the surrender of some local ruling elites such as Hambisaa,[22] Yohannes, Osanaa and Khojale, the Italian forces had occupied different parts of Wallagga such as the gold rich localities of Degero, Mexxi-Waabaraa, Kope, Dabus, Dhidheessaa and Beni Shangul, the iron ore center-Ayraa, the commercial hub-Sayyoo and other parts of Wallagga like Anno, Digaa, Saasigaa and so forth.[23] Particularly, the occupation of Sayyoo-Anfilloo was completed under Alberto di Prajano, the commander of the Italian expedition in November 1936.[24] Nevertheless, the occupation of Beni Shangul had shifted Assosa into large Italian military camp which accommodated four thousand Italian soldiers under the leadership of Colonel Giuseppe Cloza and Major Venturini.[25]

Moreover, after the occupation of Beni Shangul, Khojale had contacted the army commanders of the Italians and tried to appease them through different ways. For example, he told the Italian army

[20]For all this, see *Ibid*., p.272.

[21]FO371/20934, Anonymous Report [1936].

[22]Hambisaa, the governor of Wallagga, suddenly died during the Italian occupation in February 1937, see Amsalu, “Italian Occupation…,” p.28 ; As Cited in Tesema, “The Bonayyaa…,” p.277.

[23]See FO371/20934, Anonymous Report [1936]; Informants: Birhanu, Alamamun, Kasaye Karoorsaa, Dhereessaa Amantii; Amsalu, “Italian Occupation…”, p.29; Daniel, “Land Tenure…,” p.201.

[24]Daniel, “Land Tenure…,” p.201.

[25]Alfredo González-Ruibal, “Fascist Colonialism: The Archaeology of Italian Outposts in Western Ethiopia (1936-41),” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 14, 4 (2010), pp.554-555.

commanders that Beni Shangul was a treasury of mineral wealth mainly gold[26] which could be extracted by them. He also gave them some ounces of gold. Personally, however, all these efforts were worthless for Khojale, lost his life in 1938, the year when he was in serious conflict with the Italians.[27]

But as a whole the British plan of evacuating the foreigners from Wallagga could have failed, had it not been carried out with the co-operation of the local governors and the local people of Wallagga as well as the WOC leaders. For its completion, however, tribute had also to be given to the diplomatic activities of the British Consulate at Gore.

With respect to the Italians, although they faced resistance against their administration in Wallagga, after a while, they were engaged in the investigation and extraction of some mineral resources found there. Concerning resistance, in places like Sayyoo Oliqaa Dingel had waged strong opposition against them during the period of the occupation.[28] But as stated above overcoming this and other difficulties, employing different mining experts and local labor the Italians endeavored a lot to search for and extract gold as well as platinum in Wallagga. Such endeavors of the Italians in mining activities in Wallagga will be examined in the following section.

5.2 The Pursuit of Gold and Platinum in Wallagga by the Italians and Some Aspects of Mine Labor (1936-1941)

In this section the writer argues that in the mining economy of Wallagga the Italians had given special concern for gold and platinum since they wanted to obtain thousands of grams of these

[26]Sheikh Khojale's Welcoming the Italians in Assosa, nd, NALA, in Märse Hazän Collections, File no.63.1.47.11 ,Folder no.63.1.47.

[27]*Ibid*.; For Khojale's death, see also Abdussamad, "Bela-Shangul…," p.77; Atieb, "*Sheikh* Khojele…," p.69.

[28]Daniel, "Land Tenure…," p.202.

precious metals. Due to this, they had engaged in wide prospecting and extraction activities in Wallagga and soon commenced the extraction of these precious metals and obtained thousands of grams of gold and platinum. Besides, to produce gold and platinum, the Italians had obtained mine laborers from the local people through different mechanisms and made them work on their mines on some occasions without payments and on other occasions with payments. To this end, this section begins with the preparatory activities that the Italian government had made from the onset to extract these precious metals.

To colonize and extract resources like the mineral wealth of East African states including Ethiopia, the Italian government had made wide preparation which comprised the use of scientific knowledge. Thus, in order to realize this objective, the Italian government had invited different research and academic centers found in Italy. One of these centers which received such invitation made a call to various Italian scientists to support such colonization project with their knowledge was the Italian National Council for Research.[29] In mining economy the center also clarified that it wanted to start the prospecting and exploration of gold in Italian East Africa and in the territory which the Italian government sought to colonize next. For instance, the center wanted to engage in gold mining activity in northern Ethiopia in 1935 although it was delayed because of the war.[30] Similarly, the Italian Royal Academy had established scientific corps to study the mineral resources of the Italian East Africa including the newly controlled country of [Ethiopia].[31] In order to support such undertakings, the Italian government had also established

[29]Roberto Maiocchi, "Italian Scientists and the War in Ethiopia," *Memorie di Scienze Fisiche e Naturali, Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze detta dei XL,* XXXIX,133(2015), p.127.

[30]*Ibid*., p.134.

[31]FO371/20200, Eric Drummond to Anthony Eden, 25.6.1936.

an organ named the Scientific and Industrial Commission.[32] Thus, all these indicate the use of scientific knowledge to support the Italian government's idea of bringing not only Wallagga and its resources under its own control but also the whole part of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the Italian government had used the notion of developing Ethiopia[33] as a pretext to achieve its project of colonizing the country.

In addition to this, to obtain the required benefit from the mining economy of the territories brought under its control in East Africa, the Italian government had established different mineral prospecting and extracting enterprises. Thus, in 1936 it made formal the establishment of an enterprise known as the *Azienda Miniere Africa Orientale* (East African Mines Corporation). This enterprise was given the responsibilities of studying and extracting the mineral resources of Italian East Africa. It was also thought that this enterprise had to control the administration of the mining industry of Italian East Africa.[34] Likewise, in the same year another enterprise which was named *Compagnia Etiopica Ingeneried Industriali Minerari* (the Ethiopian Company of Mining Engineers and Industrialists) was established in Ethiopia with an initial capital of ten million lira.[35]

In fact, writers like Polson Newman, Fabio Granitzio and others who have examined a few issues of mining in Wallagga during the occupation do not tell us whether extracting the mineral resources of Italian East Africa was effective or not. But it was evident from its engagement that the Italian government wanted the extraction of the mineral resources of Italian East Africa to

[32]*Ibid*.

[33]*Ibid*.

[34]FO371/20199, Ingram to Eden, 22.5.1936.

[35]FO371/20203, Enclosure Number 1 in Minutes, 17.10.1936.

support its objective of building the Italian national economy. To this end, it established in Ethiopia the office known as the Colonial Mining Service[36] essentially to fulfill its expectation of finding and tapping out mineral resources such as metals and petroleum in Italian East Africa. Here, since Wallagga had rich deposits of gold,[37] platinum, iron and other ores it could become a plausible complement to the Italian colonial scheme. Most likely, it was for this reason that a certain Italian professor from Palermo University had been engaged in conducting a study on the gold mineral wealth of localities found in the vicinity of Sayyoo in Wallagga during the period of the occupation.[38]

To build the colonial economy, the mining economy in Wallagga came under the control of the Italian government. The Italian government's control of the mining economy was also seen in many other parts of Ethiopia and in territories of Italian East Africa.[39] In the mining economy especially to undertake effectively the prospecting, exploration and extraction of mineral resources in those territories in 1937, the Italian government had established the office known as *Ispettorato Generale Minerario* (General Mining Inspectorate) in Addis Ababa.[40]

One of the issues of mining economy granting mining concessions to non-Italians to work on gold and platinum fields in Wallagga was largely limited. But the case of one mining company was different. Thus, an enterprise known as the *Societa Mineraria Italo-Tadesca* (the Italo-

[36]Fabio Granitzio,et.al, "Tulu Kapi Gold Project: A History of Repeated Discoveries in Western Ethiopia," Kefi Minerals Plc, 2017, www.researchgate.netpublication, accessed on 14.8.2018, p.88.

[37]FO371/20199, Ingram to Eden, 22. 5. 1936.

[38]Polson Newman, *The New Abyssinia* (London: Rich and Cowan Lmtd,1938), p.170.

[39]Pankhurst, "Economic Verdict…," p.75.

[40]Ferdinando Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire in the Making* (London: P.S. King and & Son Ltd,1939),p.64.

German Mining Company) (S.M.I.T.) had used this narrow possibility of reclaiming mining concession in Beni Shangul and continued to carry out the prospecting and extraction of gold in Ondonok in Beni Shangul.[41] Here, this company continued to exist during the period of the occupation in the way which resembled a special situation. This was because soon after Italy had invaded Ethiopia it was reported that the Italian government was cognizant of the German concessions in Ethiopia which were obtained before October 1936, owing to Germany's quick response to recognize the Italian conquest of Ethiopia.[42]

After the occupation, the mining economy of Wallagga particularly the investigation and the extraction of gold and platinum came under the influence and control of the companies of the Italian government like *Societā Anonima per Imprese Etiopiche* (Limited Company of Ethiopia) (S.A.P.I.E.). As it will be discussed in this section, the whole mining activity which S.A.P.I.E had carried out in Wallagga in favor of the Italian government during the occupation makes us to call this company an "enterprise of colonization."[43] Therefore, to obtain the above precious metals during the period of the occupation this company began to engage actively in Wallagga mainly in Yubdo, Beni Shangul, *Tulluu* Kapi (Kope), Alaltu and Degero in Najjoo.[44]

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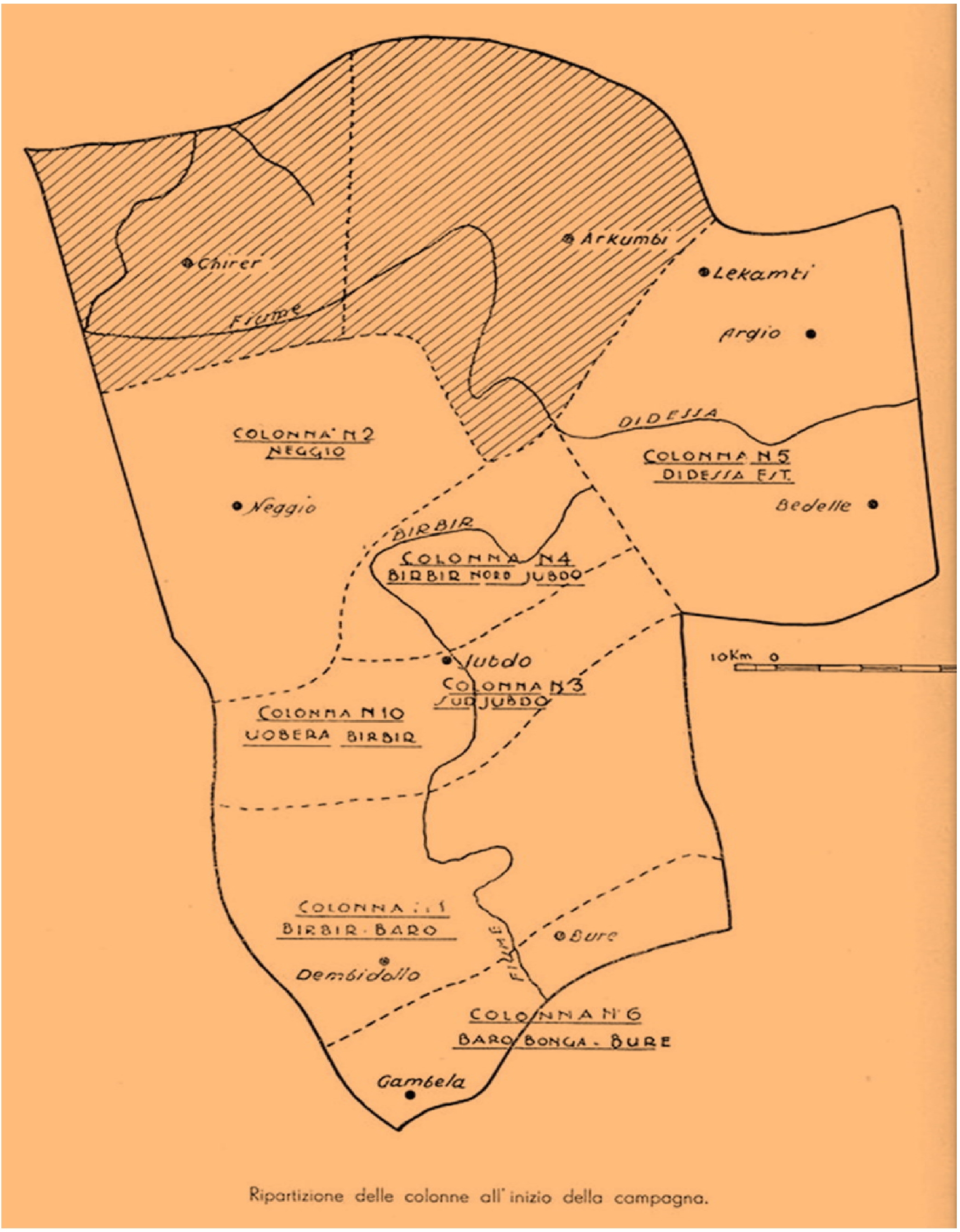
[41]*Ibid*., p.66; See also Pankhurst, "Economic Verdict…," p.75.

[42]FO371/20204 and 20203, Minutes, 2.11.1936 and 25.10.1936 respectively.

[43]This is a self-explanatory term that Todd Cleveland who has examined the account of the extraction of diamond in Angola during the colonial period (1917-1975) by a Portuguese company, the Diamond Company of Angola (Diamang), which had held large concession land and which was also engaged in forced labor has used. See, Todd Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917-1975*(Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2015), pp.1-2.

[44]For S.A.P.I.E.'s actively engaging in Yubdo and Beni Shangul, see FO371/23380, Enclosure in Stone Hewer-Bird to Viscount Halifax, 1.4.1939; For its engagement specifically in Yubdo, see Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire …*, p.68. Similarly, for its involvement in Alatu and Degero see Alemayehu ,et.al, "Degero Valley…," p.4 as well as Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, pp.222,224 and for its actively engaging in *Tulluu* Kapi, see Granitzio,et.al, "Tulu Kapi…," p.88.



Ripartizione delle colonne all' inizio della campagna.

Map 5.The Sketch of S.A.P.I.E.'s Exploration and Extraction Domains in Wallagga and in Other Parts of Western Ethiopia in the Late 1930s. Adopted from Fabio Granitzio,et.al, "Tulu Kapi Gold Project: A History of Repeated Discoveries in Western Ethiopia," Kefi Minerals Plc, 2017, www.researchgate.netpublication,p.87.

Besides S.A.P.I.E., in other places Italian mining companies such as *Compagna Mineraria Etiopia* (The Mining Company of Ethiopia) (CO.MI.NA.) and *Azienda Miniere Africa Orientale* (A.M.A.O.) were also involved in the investigation and extraction of precious metals like gold[45] during the occupation. In this case, CO.MI.NA. was devoted to prospect for and extract gold along the Sudanese border[46]and in areas which had extended from the frontier of Eritrea along the Amhara territory as far as localities found in southwestern Ethiopia.[47] A.M.A.O. was involved in the prospect for and the extraction of gold mainly in Eritrea[48] and also in some parts of the western and southwestern Ethiopia.[49] Because of its involvement in some localities of western Ethiopia, A.M.A.O. had conducted geological studies in Beni Shangul during the occupation and in its studies it appropriately distinguished the geological features of Beni Shangul and the types of deposits of gold in Beni Shangul.[50]

Nevertheless, as in the pre-war period, granting extensive mining sites in Wallagga to companies like S.A.P.I.E. and displacing local miners from their gold and platinum extraction fields continued as if these actions were the tradition of several foreign mining companies which operated in Wallagga. In addition to this situation, owing to the fact that Wallagga and other parts of the country were under the control of the Italian government, companies like S.A.P.I.E. had obtained extensive mining fields in western Ethiopia without difficulty from the Italian

[45]FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax, 1.4.1939 ; Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire* …,pp.65-66.

[46]FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax, 1.4.1939.

[47]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire* …,p.66.

[48]I*bid*.,p.65.

[49]FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax, 1.4.1939.

[50]Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie*…,p.194.

government for the investigation and the extraction of gold and platinum found there. Thus, in areas which principally included Wallagga from the Italian government S.A.P.I.E. was granted around thirty six thousand (36,000) square kilometers of land along the Birbir valley which run to the Baro River on one side and which also went along the Dhidheessaa to extend as far as the Blue Nile environs on another side.[51]

Having secured such vast land for mining activity, S.A.P.I.E. began to dominate the investigation and the extraction of gold and platinum in Wallagga. For example, including Wallagga S.A.P.I.E. had carried out surveys on mineral resources over land having a total area of thirty thousand (30,000) square kilometers and it explored 1/10th of this land. It also began the extraction of gold in some of the surveyed and explored areas.[52] In particular, in Alaltu area in Najjoo the investigation which S.A.P.I.E. had made at the beginning on eight kilometers of land indicated the presence of seven hundred kilograms of gold. Its other investigations in Alaltu had also indicated the presence of auriferous deposit which could yield one thousand six hundred kilograms of gold. Moreover, S.A.P.I.E. reported that it had got moderate output of gold at Degero in Najjoo area[53]during the occupation. Similarly, in the prospecting activity that S.A.P.I.E. had carried out in Bubaa and Sari areas in the vicinity of Yubdo, it confirmed that Bubaa and Sari could yield three thousand eighty three (3,083) kilograms of gold.[54]

[51]*Ibid.*, p.221; Kenneth Kirkness (trans), *Behold Our New Empire-Mussolini* (London: Hurst and Blackett Ltd,1939), p.238.

[52]Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, p.221.

[53]For S.A.P.I.E.'s mining activities and the presence of 700 kilograms and 1600 kilograms of gold in Alaltu and for this company obtaining moderate gold output in Degero, see Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*, pp.222 and 224.

[54]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire …*,p 68.

In another issue, for instance, in terms of administrating its human resources and running its mining offices in Wallagga, S.A.P.I.E. had arranged its system of administration in a manner which the Italian military organization had arranged its administrative operation. Thus, at the top of S.A.P.I.E.'s administrative system in Wallagga there was an administrator of the office of the General Directorate of Research at Yubdo. This administrator had the responsibility to receive prospecting reports and findings from a team of prospectors named *colonne* (corps) who had their own coordinator, an engineer by profession.[55] At the district level, a *colonne* consisted of thirty five to forty Italians as members and a few persons from the local people were also made to join this group. Members of a *colonne* used to obtain protection from the *Askaris*[56] (Eritreans recruited as Italian colonial soldiers).

Historians of Ethiopia have paid particular attention to issues like activities of the patriots and the resistance waged against the Italians rather than socio-economic issues. Reconstructing the socio-economic history of this period is difficult because the fragmented information is not easy to assess. In any case, re-examining the socio-economic themes like the extraction of mineral resources during the occupation would strengthen historical debates on the occupation period. Framed in this context, an attempt will be made to explain further debates on the Italian extraction of precious metals in Wallagga during the period of occupation as follows.

In relation to extracting the precious metals of Wallagga during the period of the occupation, it could be argued that although there was unrest, and resistance was also waged against their administration, the Italians did not return empty hand from Wallagga. In this case as indicated in

[55]Granitzio,et.al, "Tulu Kapi…," p.88.

[56]*Ibid*.

in the following discussion both qualitative and quantitative evidence suggest that western Wallagga where S.M.I.T. and S.A.P.I.E. were engaged in mining activities was very rich in gold and platinum. This goes against Pankhurst's idea which says gold produced in western Ethiopia did not support the Italian economy because gold was illegally taken to the Sudan.[57] But a very rigorous inspection which the Italian government had made on gold miners and merchants who held gold illegally and the harsh measures it took against them when they were found guilty in Wallagga[58] could make the issue of illegally taking large amount of gold to the Sudan during the occupation debatable.

But one of the examples which illustrates how the Italian government did not return empty hand from resource gifted land of Wallagga was the output sharing custom practiced among the share holders of one mining company and the continuity of describing Wallagga supplying gold and platinum ores during the occupation. In connection with this, a witness during the occupation, *Ato* Yared Wäldä Eyäsus, the vice-manager of a certain foreign company[59]which operated in Yubdo mine testified that his company used to prospect, extract and share refined gold and [platinum] among its share holders.[60] From this, it can be grasped that sharing the extracted gold and [platinum] in the mining field where the Italian company like S.A.P.I.E. was dominant

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[57]See Pankhurst, "Economic Verdict…," pp.75-76.

[58]Informants: Dabalaa Simaa, Dabalaa Unchoo and Namarraa.

[59]For Mr.Yared serving as a vice-manager of a certain foreign company in Wallagga, see a report entitled " በመላው ኢትዮጵያ በቂ የወርቅ ሀብት ለመኖሩ ማረጋገጫ አለኝ ይላሉ[አቶ ያሬድ ወልደ እየሱስ]"("[Mr.Yared Wäldä Eyäsus] Says He Has Evidence Which Confirms the Presence of Gold All Over Ethiopia,") *Addis Zämän*, (May/*Gi̱nbot* 3,1966E.C.), pp.1 and 7. But from Mr.Yared's interview with *Addis Zämän* in 1974 it can be suggested that the company which he had worked for and extracted precious metals in Yubdo could be the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie*. Because this company had existed during the occupation though it came under the control of S.A.P.I.E., ck. Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire* …, fn.1,p.67.

[60]"በመላው ኢትዮጵያ…"(All Over Ethiopia…,) *Addis Zämän*, (*Gi̱nbot* 3, 1966E.C.), p.7.

during the occupation could not be done without the recognition and the permission of that company. It means S.A.P.I.E. was also part of the system of sharing gold and platinum wealth in Yubdo during the occupation. Besides, Yared was a witness for Yubdo, Kope, Waabaraa and many other localities in Wallagga to have rich deposits of gold and that especially Yubdo was prosperous in platinum ore. Yared in his words says that, “የማዕድኑ ስራ በተቋቋመበት በወለጋ ጠቅላይ ግዛት ይብዶ በተባለው ቀበሌ በተለይ ኮፔ ማርያም በሚሰኘው ስፍራ በእረፍት ቀን በስውር ዋናተኛ ይዤ ወደ ጥልቅ ባህር ሄድኩ ዋናተኛው ረግረግ በሆነው ጥልቅ ባህር ውስጥ ገብቶ አሸዋውን ዝቆ ሲያወጣ ከነጭቃው ብዙ ወርቅና ፕላቲን ወጣ፡፡”

This roughly means:

> *In the Governorate of Wallagga in Yubdo particularly in the place called Kope Mary, in the place where mining work was established, in my leisure time I went to a deep river with a diver. The man dived deep into the swampy area of the river and with his hand carried the sand found in the river. When he took the sand out, plenty of gold and platinum mixed with mud came out.*[61]

In other locality S.M.I.T. was successful to prospect for gold in Beni Shangul in the late 1930s. In the prospect for gold there thus the company itself had confirmed that had it been extracted it had obtained auriferous deposit in Ondonok which could yield both the highest and the lowest amount of gold. Consequently, one part of Ondonok could yield as high as one thousand three hundred fifty (1,350) grams of gold per metric ton but its other part could yield as low as twelve grams of gold per metric ton.[62]

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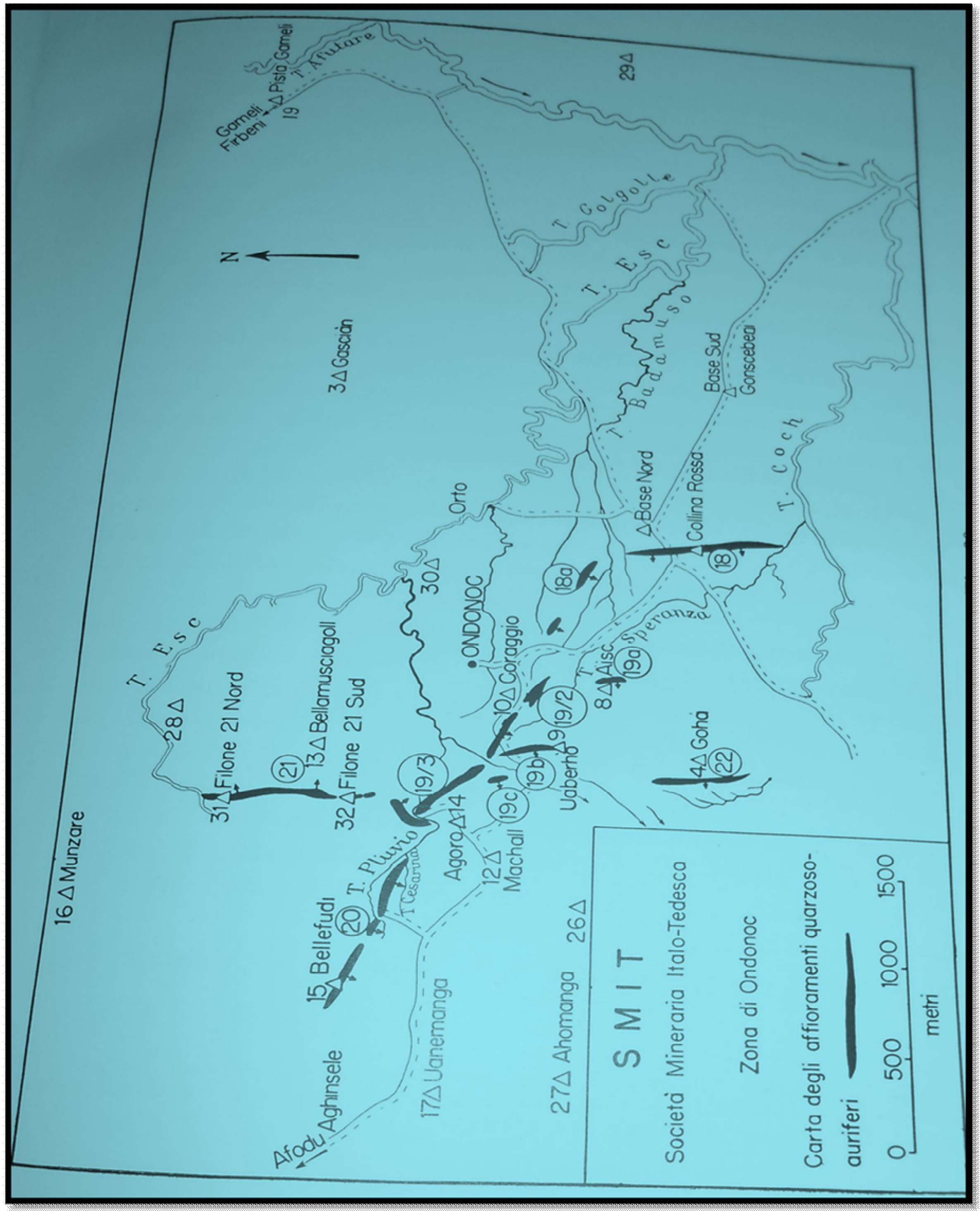
[61]“በመላው ኢትዮጵያ…”(“All Over Ethiopia…,”) *Addis Z*ä*m*ä*n*, (*Gi̱nbot* 3, 1966E.C.), p.7.

[62]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire* …,p.66.



Map 6. S.M.I.T.'s Gold Vein Areas in Ondonok.Taken from Luigi Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie Dell'Africa Orientale*, Roma, 1952, p.205.

Similarly, from Kope, the goldmine which Dhereessaa and Wärqenäh had controlled in pre-war period, it was a likely condition that S.A.P.I.E. had extracted thousands of grams of gold in the late 1930s. This was because next to Prasso and his rare metals mining company of the pre-war period S.A.P.I.E. was active in Kope[63] during the occupation. In relation to this, the following table clearly illustrates the Italian government had extracted gold from two different gold sites having different amounts in some years of the occupation.

Year	**Goldfield**	**Amount in grams**
1938	Beni Shangul	500,000
1939	Kapi [Kaabi] (Kope)	11,059
1940	Kapi (Kope)	2,760

Table 10. Gold Extraction in Wallagga between 1938-1940 in Goldfields where S.M.I.T. and S.A.P.I.E. were Active[64]

From the table, it can be said that it was unlikely for the Italians to come out of Wallagga without thousands of grams of gold which might have given them hope to carry out further gold prospecting activities in some other areas of Wallagga. But the table illustrates only a fraction of the Italian gold fields and their outputs in the study area during the occupation.

Nevertheless, during that time Wallagga had much untapped deposits of gold. In this regard, a quantitative forecast which was made in 1939 justified this situation. Thus, according to such forecast Beni Shangul and other parts of Wallagga had the potential to produce roughly nine thousand six hundred (9,600) kilograms of gold[65] during the last years of the occupation. During

[63]U.S. Technical Project in Ethiopia, "The Kappi Gold Mine," Mineral Investigation Memorandum No.41, [1945], pp. 1, 3.

[64]For the table and gold production in 1938, see FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax, 1.4.1939 and for gold production in 1939 and 1940 and for the same table see also U.S. Technical Project in Ethiopia, "The Kapi Gold…," p.3.

[65]For such figure, see FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax, 1.4.1939.

that time, it was also computed and suggested that [west] Wallagga excluding Beni Shangul had nearly thirty million cubic meters of auriferous deposits which had the potential to yield three thousand kilograms of gold.[66] Based on these figures, it can be said that during the last years of the occupation these untapped deposits of gold perhaps required that the Italian government invest more capital in the gold industry of Wallagga to extract additional ounces of gold for the benefit of the Italian economy.

Besides, during the occupation, S.A.P.I.E. and the mining office of western and southwestern Ethiopia[67] had made relentless efforts to extract the platinum wealth of Yubdo targeting to add values to the Italian economy. To this end, as mentioned earlier, during the occupation S.A.P.I.E. had entirely controlled the Yubdo mine. Besides, after it had brought the previous Prasso's Paris company under its control, S.A.P.I.E. founded the company termed as *Societā Miniere di Platino d'Etiopia* (Platinum Mining Company of Ethiopia).[68] S.A.P.I.E. was also successful to add plenty of platinum produced in Yubdo to the Italian mining economy. This can be comprehended from the table given below.

Year	**Amount of platinum in grams**
1936	50,324
1937	105,338
1938	120,000
1939	100,000

Table11. Production of Platinum in Yubdo During the Period of Occupation[69]

[66]*Ibid.*

[67]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire …*, p.67.

[68]*Ibid*.fn1.p.67; Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.18, *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.306.

[69]For the table and the production of platinum in Yubdo during the occupation, see the following book of Usoni and the foreign office documents. Thus, for the production of platinum in 1936 and 1937, see Usoni, *Risorse Minerarie…*,p.264. For platinum production in 1938 and 1939, see FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax and Minutes, 1.4.1939 and 20.3. 1939 respectively.

From the table, it can be suggested that from a single platinum field in Wallagga the Italian government had obtained fairly moderate platinum production from Yubdo between 1937-1939.[70] Therefore, during the occupation among the localities of Italian East Africa Yubdo was decisive in terms of feeding platinum to the Italian government. A further confirmation to this idea comes from what Maurizio Ravn, the head of S.A.P.I.E. and S.M.I.T. who had planned to get better output of platinum from Italian East Africa for ten consecutive years since 1939 anticipating that Italy could control its holdings in East Africa for ten more years. Thus, according to him obtaining one hundred eighty thousand (180,000) to two hundred thousand (200,000) grams of platinum [from Italian East Africa] in the coming ten years [1939-1948] was "more than sufficient for Italy's requirements."[71] From such strategy of boosting platinum output, it can be said that Yubdo which produced on the average more than hundred thousand grams of platinum annually to the Italian government between 1937-1939 was decisive to attain such plan.

Moreover, for someone who looks at the production of gold and platinum provided in Table 10 and 11 respectively, unlike Pankhurst and other authors, it is difficult for him or her either to disregard or entirely deny the precious metals that the Italian companies had extracted and added to the aggregates of gold and platinum produced in Italian East Africa for the Italian economy. Perceiving this idea, it would be possible to understand that the precious metals produced in Wallagga had also become ingredients in the process of building the economy of the Italian government between 1936-1941.

[70]In addition to this, it was stated that especially in 1937 fifteen thousand (15,000) grams of platinum as well as a high quality of gold having twenty four carats from Yubdo mine was accumulated and found in the Bank of Italy, for this idea, see Kirkness, *Behold Our*…, p.242.

[71]FO371/23380, Minutes, 29.6. 1939.

But such contribution was followed by environmental degradation in Wallagga. Thus, both in the early 1930s and during the Italian occupation the human intellect did not work towards reconciling the British and the Italian companies in Wallagga such as the Western Abyssinian Syndicate and the S.A.P.I.E. respectively and the local miners to establish amicable relation with the environment. As a result, no historical action emerged to halt the earlier devastation and similar damage which occurred on the environment and the biodiversity living in Wallagga during the Italian occupation.[72] Here, working towards reducing the damages that the mining activity had created on the biodiversity in Wallagga was important although mining activity by its nature damages environment and its biodiversity.

However, pertinent to the general situation of the mining industry in Italian East Africa, sources have suggested that the industry had made some improvements in the late 1930s.[73] These improvements also targeted the mining industry of Wallagga and other parts of Ethiopia. For instance, in the process of bringing such improvements the existence of gold in Beni Shangul, in parts of Wallagga and Gibe areas as well as the existence of iron, lignite and lead in Amhara area had been confirmed. During the time of the improvements, it was confirmed that the extraction of gold and platinum in Italian East Africa progressed. Specialized mining researchers and explorers in Beni Shangul and other parts of Wallagga were also pre-occupied[74] with conducting investigations on the mineral resources of these areas. Particularly, to improve further the

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[72]Informants: Namarraa, Dhereessaa and Kumaraa. Besides, for removing dense vegetations in Kope area in the early 1930s in the Birbir River valley see Bartleet, *In the Land*…,pp.75, 81.

[73]FO371/23378, Pamphlet on the Social and Economic Systems of Italian East Africa Enclosed in Minutes, 25 .10. 1939; Newman, *The New*…, p.160.

[74]FO371/23378, Pamphlet on the Social and Economic Systems of Italian East Africa, 25. 10. 1939.

production of platinum in Yubdo, the Italian government had begun to import additional mining machineries from the Sudan to Yubdo through the port of Gambella.[75]

The interest to improve the mining industry of Wallagga for the sake of benefitting the Italian economy could also be understood from S.A.P.I.E.'s engagement in extensive mining work to extract much more platinum in the Birbir valley in the late 1930s. During that time, without abandoning the earlier sluicing technique of platinum mining, S.A.P.I.E. had installed some modern mining equipment which had given support to extract and refine platinum outputs in Wallagga.[76] Furthermore, S.A.P.I.E. had built canals for the flow of water and brought the water needed for the extraction of platinum from Alfe, Bubaa and Diimaa Rivers. It also produced platinum from some platinum sites which had obtained their site names from the rivers which had fed them water. These platinum sites were Diimaa III South, Diimaa III Center, Diimaa III North, Diimaa II, Alfe North, Alfe South and Kope.[77]

However, the understanding of the mining economy of Wallagga during the occupation which was basically built on the way to feed gold and platinum to the Italian colonial economy would be incomplete without treating the account of the labor force which was engaged in the production of gold and platinum in Wallagga for the Italian government. To this end, in order to deal with some aspects of historical developments connected with mine laborers, the following discussion's focus will be given to how labor was supplied to the Italian gold and platinum fields in Wallagga and how these miners were made to work on these gold and platinum fields.

[75] FO371/23380, Stone Hewer-Bird to Halifax, 1.4.1939.

[76] Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," pp.26-27; *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.318.

[77] Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.26; *Idem.*, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.318.

With reference to the supply of labor to the Italian gold and platinum fields in Wallagga, though sources are scanty, oral sources and a few secondary sources suggest that one of the mechanisms in which labor was supplied to the Italian gold fields like Mexxi, Kope, Ondonok and to its platinum field like Yubdo was mainly through compulsion.[78] According to these sources, these mine laborers came from different districts and were forcefully brought together by mining offices and district chiefs.[79] Oral sources have further claimed that to bring labor forces to the Italian gold and platinum mines and make them work under difficult condition, some *qoros* and the *balläbats* in Wallagga had made direct participation in forced labor practices and for their participation they obtained some rewards from the Italian government.[80]

Concerning the origin of the miners, with the exception of some, many of them were indigenous to the localities from which the Italians used to get gold and platinum in Wallagga. As a result, the mine laborers in Beni Shangul had largely consisted of the Bertha people[81]whereas in Mexxi, Kope and Yubdo the mine laborers mainly comprised of the Oromo peasants who came from Laalo Qile, Kope, Ayraa and Yubdo. But some of them also came from Ilubbaaboor and Jimmaa.[82]

Another mechanism by which the Italians had got labor to work their gold and platinum fields was hiring the work forces through some payments. Thus, according to authors such as

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[78]Informants: Almamun, Gurmu Ayyanaa, Dabalaa Simaa, Namarraa and Mäkuria; For Italians obtaining mines labor at Yubdo through compulsion, see also Haile Larebo, "The Italian Background of Capitalist Farming in Ethiopia: The Case of Cotton," *Northeast African Studies*, 2, 1 (1995), p.45.

[79]*Ibid*.

[80]Informants Dabalaa Simaa, Namarraa , Dhereessaa Amantii and Mäkuria.

[81]Informants: Alamamun , Gurmu and Abdurrahman.

[82]Informants: Dabalaa Simaa,Namarraa, Dhereessaa Amantii and Mäkuria.

Ferdinando Quaranta and Polson Newman S.A.P.I.E. is said to have hired members of the local people in Wallagga who were familiar with the traditional method of gold and platinum extraction.[83] Although these authors do not mention the precise wages which the miners were entitled to receive, they suggest that the miners had taken some payments from their employers.[84] Haile Larebo, like Quaranta and Polson who had omitted the wages received by the miners, states that during the occupation the payment made to the miners particularly in Yubdo mine was insignificant.[85] Due to this, it was claimed that the miners at Mexxi, Kope and Yubdo were compelled to bring food from their homes.[86] It is safe to suggest that the wages of these miners during the occupation were unsatisfactory and had tied them up with their previous destitute life after providing both their labors and precious metals to the Italian companies like S.A.P.I.E.

In addition to the local labor discussed above, mining engineers, different experts and other personnel who had come with S.M.I.T. and S.A.P.I.E. were also part of the labor force of the gold and platinum fields of the Italians in Wallagga. Here, the coming of these employees were inevitable since moving, settling and employing these Italian nationals in Ethiopia as well as in other territories of Italian East Africa was also the other objective of the Italian government[87] during the occupation. In fact, in the late 1930s, the Italian government had announced a decree which privileged the Office of the Administration of Production and Work in Italian East Africa

[83]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire …*, p.68; Newman, *The New…*, p .153.

[84]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire …*, p.68; Newman, *The New…*, pp.153-154.

[85]Haile, “The Italian Background…,” p.45.

[86]Informants: Dhereessaa Amantii, Dabalaa Simaa, Namarraa.

[87]Sbacchi, “Italian Colonization…,”p.505.

to recruit work forces from Libya and Aegean Islands besides the Italian nationals in order to make them get job in Italian East Africa.[88]

Having obtained work forces through the above mechanisms, especially the platinum mine of Yubdo began to have large number of workers in the late 1930s which resulted in the expansion of Yubdo and its environs. Therefore, in 1938 it was indicated that the Yubdo mine and its different working sites managed to have two thousand three hundred and thirty seven (2,337) workers.[89] Haile claims that the large size of the work force was "Perhaps the largest number in any economic sector"[90]during the period of occupation. Based on this, therefore it is safe to conclude that settling these large numbers of workers probably demanded wider spaces in Yubdo and its environs. In this regard, Quaranta identifies that eight hundred houses were built in Yubdo alone and medical as well as water services were made available to those crowded expanses.[91]Informants also claim that the Italians had used the earlier accommodations which were built in Prasso's time in the pre-war period as dwellings for the Yubdo and Kope mines workers.[92]

This practice is closely associated with the concept of "compound system" which economic historians on African economy, like Ralph Austen, have used for describing the practice of keeping mines' workers in camps by the colonial officials while discussing this idea in connection with the gold and the diamond mines of the Rand and Kimberley respectively, in

[88]FO371/23380, British Consulate at Addis Ababa, 20.1.1939.

[89]Jelenc, "Yubdo Platinum…," p.26; *Idem., Mineral Occurrences…*, p.318.

[90]Haile, "The Italian Background…," p.45.

[91]Quaranta, *Ethiopia: An Empire …*, p.68; See also Newman, *The New…*, p.153.

[92]Informants: Yaadataa, Gafarso and Namarraa.

South Africa during the colonial period. In such system the financiers of mines provided dwelling services for the workers in order to easily command and control the mines workers as well as to protect the looting of extracted precious metals by the mines workers.[93]

But throughout the period of occupation the miners in the gold and platinum fields of the Italians in Wallagga came under serious inspection and control. Partly, this was done to extract their labor unreasonably and partly it was done since their recruiters suspected that the miners could take pieces of gold or platinum with them while they were at work.[94] Nonetheless, in obtaining unsatisfactory payments and in coming to the Italian plantations forcefully, those workers who were made to join the Italian cotton plantations in Naqamtee and Baro also shared similar working situation with the workforces supplied to the Yubdo mine.[95] However, the serious inspection which was made on the miners who had joined the Italians' gold and platinum mines in Wallagga had different features. To provide one example, informants from some gold and platinum mines in Wallagga summarized how odd the inspection was made on some miners who dressed in red clothes during the occupation. They state that, "Namoota huccuu diimaa uffatani warqee lommooxanirratti xummura hoji irratti Xaaliyaanin qullaa isaan dhaabdet sakkatta'a turte. Kunis kan ta'e, biyyoon warqee diimaa waan ta'ef nammoonni kun uffata diimaan walfakkessanii akka warqee lommooxan san fudhatanii hindemnefi."

This roughly means:

At the end of the work, making the workers to stand up naked, the Italians scrutinized those men who extracted gold dressed in red clothes. This was done since the soil

[93]Ralph Austen, *African Economic History* (London: James Currey Ltd ,1987),p.166.

[94]Informants: Namarraa and Dabalaa Simaa.

[95]Haile, "The Italian Background…,"pp.45-46.

which provided gold was red in color. The situation had also prompted the Italians to suspect the miners who dressed in red clothes claiming that they could take the gold extracted from the red soil by associating it with the red clothes they dressed. [96]

The punishment was also very severe on those miners who were found guilty. It included harshly beating them and sending them to jail for undefined time. Similarly, the local people who refused to work on the gold and platinum fields of the Italians in Wallagga became victims of cruel punishment. Some of them were even sentenced to death.[97] This was aimed at silencing the local people and made them mere servants of the Italian rule in Wallagga.

This and other kind of oppression, which the Italians had committed on the local people, caused the local people to bear the socio-economic hardships and other factors pushed the people of Wallagga to wage resistance for freedom against them.[98] At the end, in 1941 in the time when the Ethiopian forces were made to advance to Dambi Dollo, for a couple of days, the Italian forces fought the British army under the leadership of General Wizerol at Dhidheessaa but at the end the Italian forces retreated to Dambi Dollo.[99] In the meantime, along the Ethio-Sudanese border, Assosa, [the main town of the gold producing area of] Beni Shangul was made free from the Italian rule in March 1941.[100] In another instance an escaped Italian General named Gazera from Jimmaa was captured by the Belgian soldiers in Yubdo [in the platinum mine of the Italians] and was submitted to the British forces, an event which is said to have concluded the

[96]Informants: Dabalaa Simaa and Namarraa.

[97]*Ibid*., Yaadataa.

[98]Amsalu, "Italian Occupation…," p.42. See also Tesema, " The Bonayyaa…,"p.279.

[99]*Ibid*.,p.55. Besides, for the Italians withdrawal from Naqamtee in 1941 see also Tesema, "The Bonayyaa…," p.282.

[100]González-Ruibal, "Fascist Colonialism…," p.553.

confrontation between the Italian forces and the Ethio-British forces in Wallagga.[101] But the fighting which was made for liberation from the Italian rule in Wallagga and the unrest which followed the fighting could not be concluded without affecting the gold and platinum mines of Wallagga in 1941.

To conclude, having evacuated their foreign guests safely, the people of Wallagga were compelled to welcome the invading Italian forces, some tyrant administrators and members of the Italian mining company like S.A.P.I.E. The invaders had the ambitions of making the local people of Wallagga and their resources the instrument of achieving the Italian colonial policy to build the Italian national economy.

In order to accomplish this plan, therefore the Italian government in Wallagga had put a lot of efforts to unearth and use the gold and platinum mineral wealth of Wallagga. In this regard, the Italian government did not return empty hand from Wallagga. Smaller or larger, it had departed from Wallagga with gold and platinum which ensured Wallagga had its own imprint on the mining economy of the invaders.

This chapter also unravels that in the mining economy of Wallagga which focused on the production of gold and platinum to feed the economy of Italy, S.A.P.I.E. had shown that it had a free hand in several mining activities during the occupation. Due to this, S.A.P.I.E. had full authority to prospect, explore and extract these precious metals in Wallagga. S.A.P.I.E. had also a role of coercing the local people to supply labor for the gold and platinum fields of the Italians in Wallagga until 1941.

[101]Amsalu, "Italian Occupation…," p.55. The Belgian soldiers perhaps came with the British forces who accompanied Emperor Haile Sillassie I when he returned from exile.

However, specifically, with the termination of the fighting against the Italian rule in Wallagga in 1941 and the liberation of Ethiopia from the Italian rule as a whole, the issue of gold and platinum mining in Wallagga saw new developments during the Imperial regime between 1941-1974. Examining these new developments, will be the major concern of the next chapter.

Chapter Six

The Mining Industry in Wallagga During the Post-Liberation Period (1941-1974)

Introduction

The need to obtain precious metals such as gold and platinum once again brought the concessionaires, local inhabitants and the government of Ethiopia together in Wallagga during the post liberation period. This issue will be the major subject of investigation in this chapter. But such interest which mixed new mining development with the previously existing one had given another facet to precious metal mining activities in Wallagga between 1941-1974. Taking this idea into account, this chapter attempts to shed light on issues which shaped the mining industry of Wallagga during the post liberation period such as the revival of the request for concession, artisanal gold extraction activity and state mining activity in Wallagga.

The chapter starts the discussion of such issues with the mining development that occurred in Wallagga in 1941, the date which confirmed the transfer of mining fields previously held by the Italian government during the occupation period to the Imperial government of Ethiopia. It concludes the discussion of the above major issues of precious metal mining activities in Wallagga by considering the situation of concession granting and taking into account the platinum production activity of the state owned Yubdo mine in the early 1970s until 1974.

However, during the post liberation period secondary sources which deal with the issues of mining industry at local and national levels are not sufficient. Due to this, to discuss different mining issues during the post liberation period, the major argument of this chapter mainly relies on examining various primary sources such as archival documents, the British foreign office documents, oral sources, news papers and other writings.

6.1 Revitalization in Concession, Local Inhabitants and State Mining in Wallagga (1941-1974)

Coming to the argument of this chapter, the writer of this dissertation argues that on one hand, individuals' and private companies' interest to obtain mining concession from the Imperial government to prospect, explore and extract precious metals in Wallagga to some extent which revived during the post liberation period. On the other hand, while gold miners among the local inhabitants refused to abandon artisanal gold mining activity in Wallagga, the Imperial government exclusively owned the Yubdo platinum mine and made this centre to provide its output to itself or to its mining institutions during the post liberation period. Besides, particularly in the 1960s the Imperial government independently and in collaboration with other organizations had carried out some mineral prospecting and exploration activities in some gold and platinum endowed areas of Wallagga.

To begin with, the revival of interest to obtain mining concession in Ethiopia became one of the components of the accounts of mining industry in Wallagga in particular and the country in general during the post liberation period. But from the British foreign office documents which shed light on this issue, we understand that such revitalization in concession had occurred in two different phases. In the first phase, especially between 1941-1944 a few foreign concessionaires began to reclaim the old or the pre-Italian period concessions.[1] In this category some British nationals also expressed their eagerness to know the fate of the mining concessions which the Italian concessionaires had taken during the occupation period.[2] But the concern of the British nationals could be connected with making aware and ready, some British concessionaires to

[1]FO371/27544, Ayrton, Cohen and Co. Ltd to the Department of Overseas Trade, 8.10.1941.

[2]FO371/27544, Minutes, 10.9.1941.

obtain portions of the mineral concession sites in Wallagga and other parts of Ethiopia, hoping that the Imperial government of Ethiopia could redistribute the ex-concession sites. In the second phase between 1944-1974, however, some concessionaires began to request the Imperial government of Ethiopia to obtain concessions in the country in order to restart prospecting precious metals, exploration and extraction activities in Wallagga.[3] In both cases, however, the interest to obtain mining concession mainly for the sake of acquiring gold and platinum wealth from Wallagga was revitalized to some degree during the post liberation period.

To elaborate this issue further, in the first phase, for instance, a foreign enterprise, Ayrton, Cohen and Company, whose activity was related to dealing with precious metals, was very much interested to know the situation of platinum extraction in Yubdo in the post liberation period.[4] Officials of this company stated that in the pre-war period in 1935 this enterprise was strongly associated with the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* to obtain platinum from Yubdo mine. So as to regain such concession right over the Yubdo platinum mine, the company's official requested the British Office of the Over Sea Trade on the possibility of doing that in 1941.[5]

But according to one source the reply to questions connected with knowing the fate of the Italian mining concessions in Ethiopia during the post-liberation period was precise and crystal clear. Accordingly, it was stated that validating or invalidating the ex-concessions which the Italian government had granted to some concessionaires was an issue to be decided by law or decree by

[3]See FO371/46090, Jackson Craig to [Ernest] Bevin, 1. 11.1945.

[4]FO371/27544, Ayrton, Cohen and Co. Ltd to the Department of Overseas Trade, 8.10.1941 .

[5]*Ibid.*

the Imperial government of Ethiopia.[6] Such reply could provide precise information particularly to the British nationals who had given much attention for concessions granted during the Italian occupation.

Though this was the case, a few concessionaires are said to have faced challenges in Wallagga immediately after the period of liberation. According to one source, gold concessionaires in Wallagga interrupted their works in the season which was believed to be vital for the extraction of gold because one official halted their contracts and activities.[7] Dhaabaa Wase, as discussed in chapter four, the person who revealed the deceptive act of the British Thamssh gold company on the gold region of Wallagga in the pre-war period, was accused of creating problems on the concessionaires of gold in Wallagga in 1942. It was said that after liberation the Imperial government of Ethiopia appointed Dhaabaa as the supervisor of gold work in Wallagga. During that time, Colonel Abiy Abäbä, the governor of Wallagga province accused Dhaabaa of creating political problems in Wallagga.[8] Irrespective of the accusation, however, in Dhaabaa's biography it was indicated that Dhaabaa had cultivated a relationship with Emperor Haile Sillasie I and began to send plenty of gold and platinum extracted in Wallagga to the Ministry of Finance.[9]

Nevertheless, after liberation, since the Imperial government wanted to control and possess the gold and platinum wealth of the different parts of the country, it proclaimed different decrees. To

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[6]FO371/27544, G. Mackereth to Sylvia Pankhurst, 13 and 31.10. 1941.

[7]Enclosed in Colonel Abiy Abäbä, Governor of Wallagga Province to the Ministry of Interior, "A Report of Wallagga and Qellam Provinces," 27.9.1934E.C., National Archive and Library Agency (Hereafter, NALA), Ministry of Interior (Hereafter, MI), Folder no.17.1.10.27, File no.17.1.10.27.06.

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]Badassa , "A Short Biography…," p.34.

this end, in 1943 the Imperial government had proclaimed a decree which banned the export of gold, silver and platinum from Ethiopia without obtaining permit from the Ministry of Finance.[10]

Similarly, to maintain the continuity of production of gold at the local level, the provincial administration office of Wallagga was interested in allocating money for the extraction and purchase of gold in Wallagga in the 1940s.[11] To achieve this plan, as the table below indicates, a great deal of money was spent on this venture in the first six months of 1943 which in turn made Wallagga to obtain the following output of gold during that time.

<table>
<tr><th>Type of activity</th><th>Date</th><th>Budget allocated (in birr)</th><th>Quantity of gold produced or purchased in ounce</th></tr>
<tr><td>Mining [Gold and Platinum]</td><td rowspan="2">12 September 1943 to 9 March 1943</td><td>50,000</td><td rowspan="2">59.4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gold Purchase</td><td>1,200</td></tr>
</table>

Table 12. Money Allocated and Spent for the Extraction and Purchase of Precious Metals in the Province of Wallagga in 1943.[12]

Therefore, concerning gold it can be suggested that in the early 1940s both the provincial administration of Wallagga and the Imperial government of Ethiopia maintained the demand they had for gold like the pre-war period though the amount of gold they obtained was different from the pre-war period. Such differences can be understood from the above table. However, like

[10]"A Proclamation to Prohibit the Export of Gold, Silver and Platinum in Our Empire, No 43, 1943," *Nägarit Gazeta*, (December/*Tahsas*21, 1936E.C.), p.39. Under same heading, this proclamation is also indicated and found in FO371/41470, nd.

[11]Colonel Abiy Abäbä to the Ministry of Interior, "Three Months Report of the Province of Wallagga," 30.9.1935E.C., NALA , MI, Folder no.17.1.10.27, File no.17.1.10.27.06.

[12]*Ibid.* The table is constructed to indicate that there was continuity in the extraction of gold in Wallagga after the period of occupation.

the pre-war period, in 1943 ounces of gold obtained through extraction or purchase in Wallagga were sent to Addis Ababa[13] for the Imperial government of Ethiopia. But during the post liberation period it seemed that Wallagga's gold contribution to the government of Ethiopia was not as large as the pre-war period. The most likely factors for this situation could be the beginning of paying tax to the Imperial government by the governors of Wallagga mainly in cash instead of gold.[14] Imperial government's reluctance to reopen the old productive gold field of Najjoo could also affect the quantity of gold extracted in Wallagga and sent to the Imperial government during the post liberation period.

However, during the post liberation period since the exact amount of gold produced in Ethiopia[15] and its exact returns from sales abroad were obscured,[16] it was difficult to know the total amount of gold that Wallagga provided to the Imperial government of Ethiopia during that time. But it is suggested that, "Substantial amount of unrecorded gold mining"[17] [output] was put hidden from public accounting.[18]

Nevertheless, the mining industry in Wallagga during the early 1940s was exposed to different changes. One of these changes was the ownership of the foreign controlled platinum mine of

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]This replacement could be related to the land tax decrees of 1942 and 1944. Because after liberation the land tax decrees of 1942 and 1944 were issued to collect land tax in cash rather than in kind and the decrees decided on the amount of money to be paid in cash for different types of lands. Such change was also aimed to make the government of Ethiopia collect much revenue from land. For the land tax decrees of 1942 and 1944 and their explanation, see Bahru *A History of Modern…*, pp.192-193.

[15]Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Friedmann Publishers Ltd, 1975), p.138.

[16]Harold Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974: The Politics of Empire* (Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983), p.43.

[17]Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.141.

[18]*Ibid*.

Yubdo which was the reflection of the strong centralization project that the Imperial government of Ethiopia was engaged in. Thus, soon after liberation this platinum field came directly under the control of the Imperial government of Ethiopia and as usual it began to produce platinum.[19] In short, the Yubdo platinum field became a state mine in the post liberation period.

Similarly, at the national level the change which was connected with consolidating the control of precious metals like gold and platinum began to take shape. Therefore, to control the output of precious metals produced and transacted at the national level, further legal devices were prepared and announced to the public. As a result, an imperial decree which was issued in 1944 provided the Imperial government of Ethiopia the power to inspect and strictly regulate gold and platinum trade in the country declaring that such precious metals are, "The property of the Empire of Ethiopia."[20]

Returning to the issue of concession, in 1944 the Ethiopian government promulgated a decree to determine on the fate of the ex-concessions which the Italian government had distributed during the period of occupation.[21] Once and for all, this decree repealed and nullified concessions which the Italian government had granted to individuals and companies during the period of

[19]The activity of Yubdo's mine in 1943 was indicated in Colonel Abiy Abäbä to the Ministry of Interior, "A Visit Report on the Situation of the Province of Wallagga," 21.5.1935E.C., NALA , MI, Folder no.17.1.10.27, File no.17.1.10.27.06.

[20] "Proclamation for the Control of Transactions in and Concerning Gold and Platinum in Our Empire, No 67, 1944," *Nägarit Gazeta*,(July/*Hamle* 21,1936E.C.), p.103.

[21]"A Proclamation to Provide for the Revocation of Concessions Granted by the Italian Government, No.49, 1944," *Nägarit Gazeta*, (February/*Yäkatit* 21,1936E.C.), pp.54-55.

occupation. Previously, such concessions included the extraction of mineral resources, agricultural works, electric power, water, transport, hotel and others.[22]

This decision paved the way for new concession seekers who had the interest to obtain mining sites in Ethiopia and those requisitions had revitalized concession granting in the country in the 1940s. This development was part of the second phase of revitalization in concessions in the country which partly focused on requesting and obtaining mining concession sites in Wallagga. Because of this, beginning in 1945 foreign nationals and companies began to request the British Embassy in Ethiopia and the Imperial government of Ethiopia to obtain new mining concession sites in Wallagga and in other parts of the country. In 1945 foreign financiers like Jackson Craig had developed strong interest in obtaining concessions in Ethiopia to extract gold and platinum ores.[23] Similarly, it was reported that in 1946 an expatriate who came from the Mining and Finance Corporation of Johannesburg had discussed with Emperor Haile Sillassie I mining industry. This expatriate is also said to have carried out some mineral prospecting activities in the country during that time.[24] Nonetheless, during the post liberation period the numbers of concession requesters in Wallagga were not as numerous as they were during the pre-war period. This was because mining was risky business and concessionaires lacked confidence to invest in mining industry in Wallagga.

Parallel to the process of revitalization in concession, however, during the post liberation period there was continuity of the engagement of local inhabitants in some parts of Wallagga in

[22]*Ibid*.,p.55.

[23]FO371/46090, Jackson Craig to Bevin, 1.11.1945.

[24]FO 371/53496, Addis Ababa to Foreign Office, 19.7. 1946.

artisanal gold mining activity.[25] Notable gold extraction sites for such activity included Najjoo, Beni Shangul[26] and *Tulluu* Kapi.[27] Nonetheless, some governors held the view that this activity was carried out contrary to the Imperial decree of the 1944 which made gold and platinum the wealth of the Imperial government of Ethiopia.[28]

But during the 1940s gold and other metals miners among the local inhabitants in Wallagga wanted the government to support them rather than preventing them from extracting gold and iron ores found in their localities. Particularly, gold miners in Najjoo and Beni Shangul as well as iron miners and black smiths in Ayraa wanted the government to demonstrate how to move effectively to increase the output of gold and iron to them and sell their output for they and their families could lead better lives.[29]

In this regard, to reduce this and other grievances of the inhabitants and to maintain the interest of the Imperial government, what was better during that time and even after that time was establishing a system which could make these gold extractors and their supply of gold to the market permissible. But this solution was not forwarded and this made some local governors indecisive in the case of providing decisions either to stop or allow local inhabitants who had no licenses to engage in the extraction of gold in places like Assosa-Beni Shangul. This situation became a severe problem especially to the local governors of Assosa-Beni Shangul in the 1940s

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[25]Informants: Makonnin Nigatu and Birhanu.

[26]*Ibid*.

[27]Granitzio,et.al, "Tulu Kapi…," p.89.

[28]For the 1944 decree, see "Proclamation for the Control of Transactions…," *Nägarit Gazeta,* (*Hamle* 21,1936E.C.), pp.102-103.

[29]Informants: Ashänafi, Gurmu and Kumaraa Sanbato.

since the local people of that area, despite lacking the licenses to extract gold, considered this activity as one of the mainstays in their abode.[30] Moreover, banning the local inhabitants from such activity had created a fear among the local governors contemplating that some of them could move to other places and could also refuse to pay taxes to the government.[31]

Though this was the case from the side of the local inhabitants, the Imperial government's determination to start the extraction of gold in Wallagga declined during the post liberation period for different factors. The decline was indicated in the reports of some provincial governors of Wallagga in the 1940s and in the early 1950s. During that time provincial governors such as Colonel Abiy Abäbä and *Bitwädäd* Mängäsha Jämbäre reported to the Ministry of Interior that the Degero-Najjoo gold mine was closed. As a result, they requested the Imperial government to re-open it within a short period of time since it had gold deposit which could benefit the government.[32] Similarly, the Imperial government was requested to start the

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[30]The Governorate-General of Wallagga to *Tsehafe Tizaz*Wäldä Giyorgis, Ministry of Interior, "Three Months Report of the Governorate-General of Wallagga from 1.1.1940E.C. to 30.3.1940E.C.," 29.5.1940E.C., NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.27, File no. 17.1.10.27.01; Kidanä Mariam, Governor of the District of Assosa to *Bitwädäd* Mängäsha Jämbäre, Governor of the Province of Wallagga, 27.8.1939E.C., Wäldä Mäsqäl Archival Center (Hereafter, WMAC, Folder no-No, File no.2165(39). Here, due to the re-adjustment made on the administrative areas of Ethiopia during the post liberation period which promoted the *Awraja* into the *Täklay Gizat*, it was believed that in the mid1940s the province of Wallagga was promoted to Governorate-General administrative level and began to use this name after a while. For this and other administrative readjustments, see the Imperial decree on "Administrative Regulations (Amendment), No.6, 1946," *Nägarit Gazeta*,(June/*Säne* 21,1938E.C.),p.45.

[31]The people of Assosa-Beni Shangul used to pay tribute and tax to the government by extracting gold. For this and the previous idea, see Kidanä Mariam to Mäangäsha, 27.8.1939E.C, WMAC, Folder no-No, File no.2165(39).

[32]Abiy to the Ministry of Interior, "A Visit Report on the Situation of the Province of Wallagga," 21.5.1935E.C., NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.27, File no.17.1.10.27.06; A Report Enclosed in Principal Director of Ministry of Interior to Mängäsha, 27.2.1939E.C., WMAC., MI, Folder no.2175, File no.2165; A Report Enclosed in the Ministry of Pen to the Ministry of Interior, *Nähase* 1,1942E.C., WMAC, *Rist* Section, Folder no.4196, File no.2170.

extraction of gold in Beni Shangul in places which are believed to have good deposit of gold that would give benefit to the Imperial government such as Bomu, Sirqole, Ondonok and Gamele.[33]

However, the Ethiopian government had no interest to respond quickly to the requests connected with re-opening of gold extraction sites in Wallagga. Here, one of the possible reasons for such indifference was the diversion of the attention of the Imperial government to the most lucrative and profitable goldfields of Kibra Mangist and Adola in Sidamo province in the 1940s.[34]As reported in the mid-1940s, the productiveness of these goldfields was unquestionable. During that time, for instance, it was reported that the monthly gold output of Agare Selam and Adola goldfields is said to have reached twelve thousand (12, 000) ounces.[35] Factors such as inability to identify economically profitable gold deposit areas in Wallagga could also be another reason for the government of Ethiopia to feel unconcerned with regard to rejuvenating gold extraction sites in Wallagga during the post liberation period.

Although there were such problems, a few active goldfields and revenue generating offices in Wallagga in the 1940s were under the control of one of the institutions of the Imperial government, the Ministry of Finance. In this regard, specifically, the Laalo Qile and the Yubdo gold works as well as the revenue generating offices such as the custom offices in Wallagga were

[33]A Report Enclosed in Principal Director of Ministry of Interior to Mängäsha, 27.2.1939E.C., WMAC., MI, Folder no.2175, File no.2165.

[34]For decisiveness of Adola for the production of gold in Ethiopia during the post liberation period, see Gilkes, *The Dying Lion…* p.138; Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain*…,p.43.

[35]FO371/53489, F.A. Cook to [A.B] Iliff, 29.3.1946. For that volume of gold, see also Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain*…, p.43.

under the control of the Ministry of Finance.[36] But with respect to goldfields in Wallagga, the Kaabi commonly known as the Kapi goldmine in Ganji was also active in the 1940s and obtained an annual budget from the office or from the chief of the *misläne* estimated to be one thousand two hundred *birr* for the supervisor or the manager of the gold work.[37]

But the involvement of the Imperial government in the mining industry during the post liberation period had affected and reflected on mining issues which had both national and local levels importance. As explained earlier, one such issue was connected with defining who was allowed to possess precious metals in the country? In this regard, the 1944 decree of the Ethiopian government had made the government the sole authorized authority to possess all precious metals found in the country.[38] It follows that the government was the owner of the major and the most lucrative gold and platinum fields in southern and western part of the country. To this end, therefore during the post liberation period three precious metals fields such as the Kibra Mangist-Adola and the Akobo goldfields as well as the Yubdo platinum mine directly came under the control of the Imperial government and became the state mines during the post liberation period.[39] To pursue this and other interests in the mining industry, therefore the Imperial government had established institutions which could run the mining sector during the post

[36]The Governorate-General of Wallagga to Wäldä Giyorgis, Ministry of Interior, "Three Months Report of the Governorate-General of Wallagga from 1.1.1940E.C. to 30.3.1940E.C," 29.5.1940E.C., NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.27, File no. 17.1.10.27.01.

[37]Budget Breakdown of the Districts of Ganji, Yubdo, Beni Shangul and Najjoo, *circa* 1940E.C, NALA, Folder no.62.1.25, File no.62.1.25.9, However, since the reports of the local governors of Wallagga in the 1940s in several archival documents were not exhaustive, they excluded the Laalo Qile and the Kapi gold works from their reports by focusing largely on the Yubdo state mine.

[38]"Proclamation for the Control of Transactions…," *Nägarit Gazeta*, (*Hamle* 21,1936E.C.), p.103.

[39]"Mining Activities and Prospects in Ethiopia," in *Quarterly Bulletin of Commerce and Industry*, 4, 1(1955),pp.2-3,Enclosed in NALA, Folder no.21.12 (62.1.21), File no. 62.1.21.12; See also Atnafu Makonen (compilation), *Ethiopia Today*(Tokyo: Radio Press Inc,1960),pp.141-142.

liberation period such as the Department of Mines and the Ministry of Finance (1941-1953), the Imperial Mining Board (1953-1966)[40] and the Ministry of Mines (1966-1974).[41]

Among the three precious metals fields mentioned above, however, the Yubdo mine continued as the only source of supply of platinum to the government of Ethiopia during the post liberation period though it faced negligence from the government itself. In the 1940s the major cause of such negligence was related to government's involvement in the computation of the cost-benefit analysis of producing and selling either gold or platinum to the world market. This is discernable from what Gäbrä Mariam Amante, the Treasurer of the Ministry of Finance of Ethiopia[42] had disclosed concerning the status of the Yubdo platinum mine in the mid-1940s. According to him, the Ethiopian government's neglect of the Yubdo platinum mine in the 1940s was connected with obtaining higher returns from the sale of gold in the Egyptian market rather than obtaining lower returns [foreign currency] by producing and selling platinum which had lower prices on the international market in 1945.[43]

This and other factors which will be discussed in this chapter, however, largely affected the extraction of platinum at Yubdo and resulted in the fluctuation of its output. This became persisting trait of the Yubdo mine during the post liberation period. It also became the persisting trait of the national production of platinum during that time. In fact, this situation was began to

[40]For these institutions running the mining sector of the country in the period specified, see "Mining Activities and Prospects…," p.2; Atnafu, *Ethiopia*…, pp.140-141.

[41]For the establishment of the Ministry of Mines to function independently of the Ministry of Finance, see "An Order to Define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers, No.46, 1966," *Nägarit Gazeta*,(*Hamle* 20,1958E.C), p.131.

[42]For his contribution as the treasurer of the Ministry of Finance in the mid 1940s, see FO371/53489, Cook to Iliff, 29.3.1946.

[43]*Ibid*.

be noticed soon after the liberation of Ethiopia. During that time, there was a great decline in the national production of platinum. For instance, in 1944 platinum extracted and registered at national level was estimated to be 29.30 kilograms[44] or twenty nine thousand and three hundred (29,300) grams. Nonetheless, the platinum extracted and registered at national level in 1944 was better than the quantity of platinum produced at national level in some years of the 1950s and the 1960s. It means production of platinum in Yubdo was good in 1944 and began to decline in the 1950s and the 1960s.

However, had it received due consideration and worked appropriately, it can be said that the production of platinum in Yubdo mine could have increased in the 1940s. In this regard, one source reported that in 1947, the date when Mammo Corqaa, a person from Wallagga served as the head of the Yubdo mine, the extraction of platinum in Yubdo through the indigenous method had engaged ninety persons who received one Ethiopian *birr* for one gram of platinum they extracted.[45] This report adds that during that time the Yubdo mine used to produce nearly one thousand eight hundred (1,800) grams of platinum in a week and the recipient of the whole output was the Ministry of Finance.[46]

Nonetheless, government's negligence at that time as well as the problems related to market and transportation also made the Yubdo platinum miners to face hardship and forced them to borrow money from other people to feed their families in years when they did not receive payments on

[44]Chamber of Commerce, *Guide Book…*p.173; As Cited in Hailu, "The Geographic, II Western Wollega…," p.28.

[45]FO371/63155, Enclosed in Correspondence Between the British Legation at Addis Ababa and the Egyptian Department, 24.3. 1947.

[46]*Ibid*.

time.[47] The problem which was associated with the market had forced platinum miners in Yubdo to rely exclusively on the government to sell the platinum they extracted. Essentially, this was because during the post liberation period the government itself or its local agent, the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office, were the institutions which held the monopoly of purchasing platinum in Yubdo mine. Besides the lack of fast transportation system which could be used to supply the platinum they produced to the center on time, it is said poor transportation delayed their payments and exposed the platinum miners to hardship.[48]

Government's negligence which negatively affected the progress of the mining industry of Ethiopia also faced strong critique from Emmanuel Abraham, the Minster of the Ministry of Mines between 1969-1974. In his critique Emmanuel reveals that, "The Main function of the Office of the Mines was to see that gold and platinum obtained from the two areas [Adola and Yubdo] were sent to the Central Treasury, and so it was obvious that no serious attention had been given to the development of mining for 30 years"[49] after the liberation of the country.

All these problems had also negative impact on the production of platinum at the national level. Thus, for this and other problems connected with precious metals mining in Wallagga in particular and in the country in general, the production of platinum at local and national levels in

[47]For example, in 1947 payment delayed for nearly eight months which made the mine's manager, Mammo who went to the center to stay in Addis Ababa for many months because of not receiving the money that had to be paid for the Yubdo mine workers from the head office at Addis Ababa. Nonetheless, lastly he brought some thirty two thousand (32,000) *birr* to pay the mine workers, see *Ibid*. The story of delay in payment and Mammo's stay in Addis Ababa for many months were also narrated by informants from Yubdo who worked under him such as Namarraa Barkessaa.

[48]Informants: Namarraa and Yaadataa.

[49]Emmanuel Abraham, *Reminiscences of My Life*,(Oslo: Lunde Forlag,1995), p.215. But according to Teshome Gabre Mariam who holds antithetical view on Emmanuel's recollections, personally, Emperor Haile Sillasie I was positive and worked day and night to develop mineral resources including the prospect for natural gas. See Teshome Gabre Mariam, *ለአቶ አማኑኤል አብረሃም ዘበሄረ ቡጂ ክርክሮ የህይወቴ ትዝታ መፅሀፍ ማስተባበያ(Confuting Mr. Emmanuel Abraham's Reminiscences of My Life,)* (Addis Ababa,1994E.C.), p.18.

the 1940s and in the 1960s continued to be smaller than the amount of platinum produced in the pre-war period and during the Italian period. Thus, it was reported that between 1946-1955 the amount of platinum produced at the national level estimated to be 51.9 kilograms[50] or fifty one thousand and nine hundred (51,900) grams for one decade. This sharp decline in the output of platinum tells us that the major platinum producing center in the country, Yubdo, probably either ceased its operation for some years between the 1940s and the 1950s or faced very difficult problems other than mentioned previously.

In the 1940s during the period which the Yubdo mine did not get much attention from the Imperial government of Ethiopia, in contrast, some former gold producing localities of Wallagga were attracting a few concessionaires. Among them, the gold [mining] engineer, Mister Conseller, who is said to have received his concession agreement in Addis Ababa, visited Najjoo in the late 1940s.[51]Similarly, one enterprise, the Operation Gold Company had taken concession from the Imperial government of Ethiopia to prospect for and extract gold in Kapi and Sokoorru areas in Wallagga between the late 1940s to the late 1950s.[52] However, at the end, it was said that the Imperial government of Ethiopia had taken the activity of this company since the company reported that it incurred a loss.[53]

[50]Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.304; Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.139.

[51]Däräje Mekonni̱n, Director, Governorate–General of Wallagga to the Ministry of Interior, "A Weekly Report of the Governorate–General of Wallagga,"29.4.1940E.C., NALA, MI, Folder no.17.10.27, File no.17.10.27.01.

[52]For the activity of Operation Gold Company in Wallagga, see "የከርሰ ምድር ጥናትና የማእድን ፍለጋ ታሪክ በኢትዮጵያ፤ ክፍል3"("Geological Study and the History of Mineral Ore Prospecting in Ethiopia,Part3,") *Addis Zämän*, (April/*Miyazya* 6,1975E.C).,p.3; Yä Ma'edi̱n Plan Gibrä Hayl, "የማእድን ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ…"("Mining Sector…,") Appendix Part, p.156.

[53]"የከርሰ ምድር ጥናትና…"(Geological Study and…,) *Addis Zämän*, (*Miyazya* 6,1975E.C.), p.3.

With respect to concession companies, some of them like the Operation Gold Share Association which included some members of the royal family as its share holders obtained concession in Agare Mariam in the Governorate-General of Sidamo in 1958 and extracted gold from its concession field for a decade. It was reported that for the extraction of gold the Operation Gold enterprise had paid tax and other fees to the government of Ethiopia.[54] Apart from this, the Operation Gold enterprise had attracted some members of the royal families of Ethiopia. In this case in the 1950s Princesses Mariam Säna and Sehin Asfa Wäsän Haile Sillasie as well as their brother Prince Zärä Yacob Asfa Wäsän were the share holders of the Operation Gold Share Association who later appointed their agent and obtained hundreds of *birr* as profit from this gold company.[55]

In the 1950s, however, gold extracted from different parts of the country was not only used as sources[56] for generating revenue to some royal families and the Imperial government of Ethiopia. It was also used as major source of making jewelry presented as gifts to some members of the royal families[57]as well as to the leaders and families of some foreign counties while Emperor

[54]Tilahun Adugna, Principal Director of the Ministry of Mines to Mulatu Kasaye, Principal Inspector of the Ministry of Finance, 26.12.1959E.C., NALA, Ministry of Mines(hereafter, MM), Folder no.14.1.9, File no.14.1.9.2.

[55]For these royals families appointing their agent and for having shares in this gold association, see NALA Crown Prince *Gebbi(*Palace Compound*)* (hereafter, CPG), 8.5.1959G.C., Folder no.2.1.43, File no.2.1.43.04. Finally, each of them had obtained six hundred *birr* as a profit from this gold association in 1959. For this, see NALA, CPG, 14.4.1952E.C., Folder no.2.1.43, File no.2.1.43.04.

[56]During the post liberation period, the importance of gold in the State and the National Bank of Ethiopia as a reserve and the role it had in currency exchange also tell us for what other purposes gold was extracted in the country. For how gold was to be integrated into these purposes and used for these purposes at different times during the post liberation period, see Befekadu Degefe, "The Making of the Ethiopian National Currency,1941-45," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 26, 2(1993),pp.28, 30-31,44-45;Jan Warren Duggar, "The Development of Money Supply in Ethiopia," *Middle East Journal*, 21, 2 (1967), pp.257, 260.

[57]The present was made in the events of celebrating birth days, wedding and other ceremonies. For birth days gift related to gold, see for instance, Ministry of Finance to General Treasury, NALA, Ministry of Finance (hereafter, MF), 3.5.1947E.C., Folder no.15.1.2, File no.15.1.2.12 .

Haile Silassie I and Queen Menen were travelling abroad for state visit. Particularly, during the state visit many ounces of gold was wasted because of the lavish gifts of objects made from gold was presented by the Emperor to the rulers and families of some foreign states. This happened, for example, when the Emperor travelled to America and Europe and presented jewelry made from gold for the leaders and families of those countries.[58]

In the case of Wallagga, individuals and some mining companies with enthusiasm continued to engage in the prospecting and other mining activities in the 1950s and the 1960s. In this regard, a few notable domestic concessionaires such as Daniel Mäsfin[59] and a certain Italian national who was an engineer by profession[60]should be mentioned. On the occasion, the Italian national and others are said to have engaged in mechanized gold extraction activity mainly in Odaa and Godare, localities situated to the north of Mandi.[61]

Coming to the other component of the mining industry in Wallagga, in the 1950s and the 1960s local inhabitants who lacked legal basis to engage in the extraction of gold did not relinquish their usual business of extracting and supplying gold to gold merchants and to some local

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[58]When the Emperor was set out to visit America in the 1950s, for instance, the Imperial Treasury was ordered to provide more than one thousand ounces of gold in order to make jewelries like bracelets, crosses, necklaces, earrings, pins, cigarette boxes and lady's purses for gifts, see Ministry of Finance to General Treasury, NALA, MF,18.7.1946E.C., Folder no.15.1.1, File no.15.1.1.45. Similarly, in the early 1950s at two different times the Imperial treasury was ordered to provide more than four hundred fifty ounces of gold in order to make jewelries which could be given as gifts to the rulers of European states like England during the time of the Imperial visit. For the sum of the quantity of gold, see Ministry of Finance to General Treasury, NALA, MF, 10.1.1947E.C.and 5.11.1947E.C., Folder no.15.1.2, File nos.15.1.2.8 and 15.1.2.23 respectively.

[59]Yä Ma'edin Plan Gibra Hayl, "የማእድን ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ..."("Mining Sector…,") Appendix Section Written in Amharic Language, p.141a.

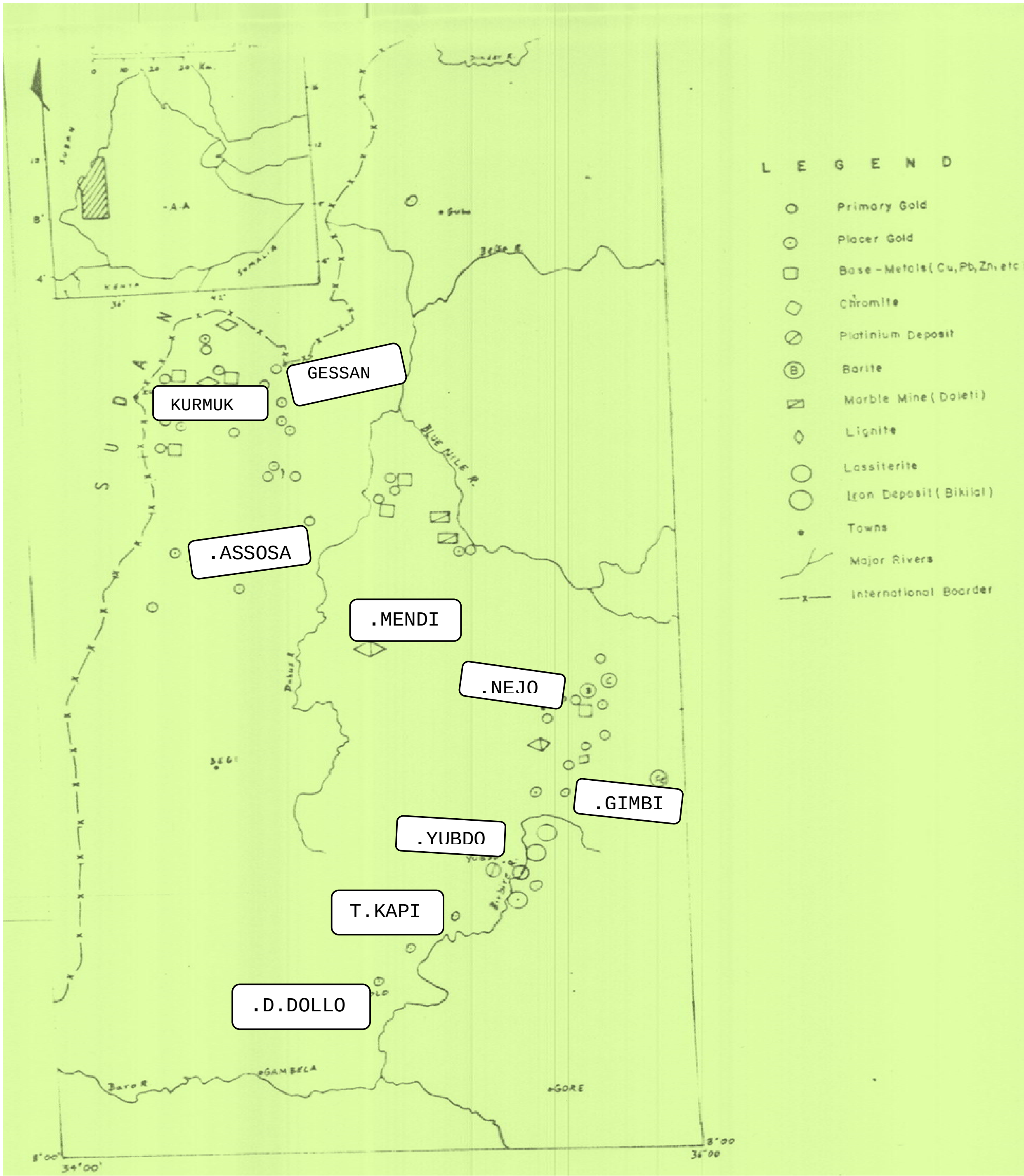
[60]For concessionaires engaging in Odaa and Godare in gold mining, for these areas location, physiographic and geologic information, see Alemayehu Guyasa, et.al, "Oda-Godare Welega-Reconnaissance Prospecting," (Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, Ethiopian Institute of Geological Survey, 1978), pp.2-4.

[61]Odaa, Godare and other localities nearby to them were identified "On the British war map as a mine." For this idea, see *Ibid*.,p.4.

governors in places such as Najjoo, Laalo Qile, Mandi and Beni Shangul.[62] Because of such activities, especially in the gold supply chain which was seen during that time, occasionally, there was the participation of some local governors in places like Beni Shangul. This happened in the time when these governors were ordered to buy gold for some officials of the Imperial government like the pre-war period. In this regard, in 1959 when *Fitawrari* Abdurrahman Khojale of Beni Shangul was ordered to buy many ounces of gold, he bought some ounces of gold and sent to the Crown Prince Asfa Wäsän Haile Sillasie.[63]

[62]Informants: Margaa Alämu, Kenne Tarfasaa, Dabalaa Uncho and Abdurahaman. But for the extraction of gold in the vicinity of Najjoo in places such as Alaltu, Kujur and Degero see also Chamber of Commerce, *Guide Book…*pp.170-171.

[63]*Fitawrari* Abdurrahman Khojale to Asfa Wäsän Haile Sillasie, 17.1.1952E.C., NALA, CPG, Folder No.2.1.43, File No.2.1.43.09.



Map 7. Mining Localities and Mineral Occurrences in Wallagga, Adopted from Marsha Jambere, et, al. "Dul Primary and Placer Gold Deposits: Exploration and Preliminary Evaluation," Volume I (Ethiopian Institute of Geological Surveys,1995), p.36C.

Nevertheless, during the post liberation period the artisanal gold miners and the Yubdo platinum miners in Wallagga share some common memory in connection with their engagement in precious metals mining activity. Both narrate that the need to obtain money to support their struggle of staying alive took them into this activity.[64] Thus, it can be concluded that their memory of these activities has endured to this date, partly since it has been closely associated with their existence and their means of survival.

However, their involvement in similar activity also became the source of losing or retaining privileges like access to health services. In this case when the artisanal gold miners were prohibited from obtaining free health service, the platinum miners were entitled to obtain this service without payment. Due to this, the Yubdo platinum miners and the employees of Yubdo Mine Office had enjoyed this privilege during the post liberation period. For them, therefore the government established a health service in the compound of the Yubdo Mine Office and provided medical treatments including dispensing drugs to them without payment.[65]

The town of Yubdo itself needed this health service since it was vulnerable to disease such as malaria for it was located in the inhospitable part of the Birbir River valley. This exposed the miners, the employees of the Yubdo Mine Office, the town dwellers and other government employees in the town to malaria. Such vulnerability even compelled the district governor of Yubdo, Shifäraw Baalchaa, to appeal to the governor of the province of Gimbii in 1957 to move

[64]Informants: Margaa , Namarraa, Yaadataa and Kenne.

[65]Informants: Namarraa, Gafarso and Yaadataa.

the main town of the district of Yubdo to a malaria free locality.[66]

Providing this health service to the miners, applying the gold and platinum buying-selling system as well as engaging in rigorous supervision of platinum, the Yubdo Mine Office continued to collect and purchase platinum from platinum miners and transferred it to the government or to its institutions like the Department of Mines and the Ministry of Finance in the 1950s.[67] But complaints connected with receiving lower price for the platinum they provided to the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office was common among the platinum miners. Besides, platinum miners complained that like the occupation period they came under rigorous supervision particularly in the time of extracting platinum and taking it to the mine office for selling. Such rigorous supervision was successful mainly for engaging many well-equipped security men known as *Yäma'edin Zäbägnoch* who escorted the miners while taking platinum to the mine office and for establishing several checkpoints inside the Yubdo mine to inspect platinum miners and other employees.[68] Therefore, it was platinum collected and purchased in this way in Yubdo which was registered and regarded as the national output of platinum in Ethiopia. Pertaining to this, the following table provides us with the national platinum production plan and the actual platinum produced in Ethiopia in the 1950s.

[66]Shifäraw Baalchaa, Governor of the District of Yubdo to Yämanä Gäbrä Egzi'abher, Governor of the Province of Gimbii, 11.3.1948E.C. NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.20, File no.17.1.10.20.13. Artisanal gold miners in places such as Laalo Qile were exposed to diseases like diarrhea and in Beni Shangul they were exposed to diarrhea and malaria. Informants: Kenne, Käbädä, Mäkonnin and Abdurrahman.

[67]For senders and recipients of platinum during that time, see Derek Norris, "Precious Metal Placers in Welega Province, Ethiopia," Report on Second Consultancy Assignment for United Nations to United Nations Project Eth-71/537 (1980), p.9.

[68]Informants: Namarraa,Yaadataa and Mäkuria.

Year	Plan for the amount of platinum to be produced in grams	Amount of platinum produced in grams (Estimation)
1955	10,000	7,600
1956	15,000	7,700
1957	15,000	5,600
1958	15,000	8,000
1959	15,000	7,500

Table 13.Pre-Platinum Production Plan and the Actual Amount of Platinum Produced at the National Level in the 1950s in Grams[69]

Therefore, the quantity of platinum provided in Table 13 with the presence or the absence of the national plan of platinum production could not be realized without the contribution made by the problem encircled Yubdo platinum mine. Because this platinum center like the pre-1940 period continued as the only source of platinum in the country during the post liberation period. But as indicated in the table above, there were some discrepancies between the amount of platinum planned to be produced and the actual amount of platinum produced at the national level which indicated inefficiencies in the production of platinum during that time. This happened probably because of problems connected with factors of production like lack of capital, and inability to

[69]For this plan, see Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year Development Plan, 1955-1959E.C.(1963-1967G.C.)* (Addis Ababa: Birhanena Sälam Printing Press,1962),p.163 and for the estimated amount of platinum, see Danelo Jelenc, "A Yearly Report of the Technical Department of the Ministry of Mines and State Domain," 22.9.1960G.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.9, File no.14.1.9.3. But all quantities of platinum indicated in the table are converted from kilograms into grams. Though written sources at my disposal do not give platinum miners' selling price of a gram of platinum during the Imperial regime, informants, like Namarraa and Yaadataa, claim that on average a gram of platinum was sold for 2.50 *birr* during that time.

identify new platinum deposit centers in the Birbir River valley as well as lack of using advanced platinum extraction method.[70]

Moreover, the table indicates that platinum produced in 1958 and 1959 was achieved during the period of the First Five Year Plan of the government of Ethiopia (1958-1962).[71] This plan also gave attention to carry out different mining activities to boost the production of precious metals in the country. Thus, in the First Five Year Plan attention was given to ascertain the reserves of gold and platinum deposits through prospecting and exploration activities. But at the end it was reported that with respect to the extraction of platinum the plan was not fully implemented for factors such as the lack of engagement in preliminary activity in Yubdo platinum mine to transform the method of platinum extraction from the traditional to the mechanized one and the inadequacy of the exploration activity which was carried out before the implementation of the plan.[72] Finally, all these factors contributed to the decline of the output of platinum produced during that time.

However, in the 1950s at the global level the extraction of platinum as the table below indicates was not only restricted to the developed countries. It was also extracted in the developing countries including Ethiopia.

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[70]For the problem connected with platinum extraction method at Yubdo mine, see Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year…*, p.160.

[71]In the First Five Year Plan since increasing the industrial output became one of the intentions of this plan, industrial sector which also included mining had obtained *birr* one hundred thirty eight (138,000,000) million or 26% from the total of *birr* five hundred twenty (520,000,000) million which was intended to be used for different economic sectors. Almost half of the budget i.e., *birr* two hundred forty (240,000,000) million or 46% of the money was allocated to infrastructural development. See Shiferaw Jammo, "An Overview of the Economy, 1941-74," in Shiferaw Bekele (ed.) *An Economic History of Modern Ethiopia:* Volume I*: The Imperial Era, 1941-1974* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1995), p.9.

[72]For the First Five Year Plan and factors which affected this plan, see Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year…*, pp.159-160. For its intention and for the results of the plan not influencing the extraction of gold and platinum, see Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.138.

Year	Countries of the world and their production of platinum in troy ounces								
	Canada	**USA**	**USSR**	**Japan**	**South Africa**	**Ethiopia**	**Australia**	**New Zealand**	**New Guinea**
1950	273, 312	37,855	100,000	210	151,131	641	64	-	-
1951	318, 388	36,951	100,000	268	197,257	266	41	8	7
1952	279, 724	34,409	100,000	569	238,662	100	51	4	7
1953	303, 563	26,072	100,000	1,058	306,143	566	59	2	6
1954	343, 706	24,235	200,000	1,595	344,428	230	39	1	9
1955	384,746	23,170	250,000	858	388,753	251	28	-	10

Table14. The Output of Platinum in Some Countries of the World in the Early 1950s.[73]

From Table 14, it can be concluded as follows. Among the developed countries as there were leading states in terms of the production of platinum in the 1950s, there were also developed nations which had the production of platinum below Ethiopia in the 1950s. These countries included for example, Australia and New Zealand.

Returning to the issue of concession, during the 1960s there was interest from a few companies and individuals to engage in the prospecting and the extraction of precious metals like gold in Wallagga although their engagement was concluded with the annulment of their agreements. Among such companies, the Dabus Gold Mining Association had obtained concession from the Imperial government and began its gold mining activity in Mandi at Fakusho-Odaa-Godare specifically in Furi area in the province of Gimbii. But since this enterprise had friction with the Ministry of Mines for breaching its agreement and for registering an incorrect address, it was

[73]For the production of platinum in some countries of the world in the 1950s, see Mertie, *Economic Geology of…*, p.6.

ordered to cease its gold mining activity in Mandi in 1966.[74] However, among individuals, one of the members of the royal family, Prince Zärä Yacob, who previously held a share in the Operation Gold enterprise, was also interested to obtain prospecting license from the Ministry of Mines in 1967 to prospect for and mine various mineral resources in the surroundings of Najjoo and Dambi Dollo.[75]

Moreover, one American mining company, the Duval Corporation, was interested in some mineral resources of Ethiopia and had obtained concession from the government in 15 June, 1969 to prospect and extract platinum in Yubdo and copper in Asmara.[76] In the case of developing platinum this company was granted a land covering four hundred eighty five square kilometers in the Birbir valley including parts of Yubdo.[77] However, after six months the Duval Corporation announced that it abandoned the concession it received from the government of Ethiopia to extract the platinum wealth in Yubdo and copper in Asmara for the reason that, "…its exploration efforts failed to develop a commercially feasible ore body in the areas subject to the Agreement."[78]

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[74]Mäkonnin Ewnätu, Principal Secretary of the Administration, Ministry of Mines and State Domain to the Office of the Governorate-General of Wallagga, 4.8.1958E.C., WMAC, MI, Folder no-No, File no.2167.

[75]Application (for) Zärä Yacob to the Ministry of Mines, 4.2.1958E.C., NALA, Folder no.2.2.102 (158.10), File no.2.2.102.07.

[76]See *Shaläqa* Assäfa Lämma, Ministry of Mines to Prime Minister and Minister of Ministry of Pen Aklilu Häbtä Wäld, 18.6.1961E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no. 14.1.20, File no.14.1.20.7; F.H. Howell, Vice President, Exploration of Duval Corporation to Täshomä Gäbrä Mariam, Chairman of the Board of Ethiopian Mineral Development Share Company, 10.12.1969G.C., NALA, MM, Folder no. 14.1.20, File no.14.1.20.7. For the concession rights and the engagement of this enterprise in its concession sites, see also Ministry of Mines and Energy, "*የማእድን ታሪክ…*"("History of the Ministry…,") p.71; Yä Ma'edin Plan Gibrä Hayl, "የማእድን ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ…"("Mining Sector…,") Appendices 141a.(Written in English Language) and p.155(Written in Amharic Language) and Teshome, *ለአቶ አማኑኤል አብረሃም…(Confuting (Mr. Emmanuel Abraham's…,)* p.44.

[77]Ministry of Mines, "Geological Survey Annual Report," (1969),p.16; Yä Ma'edin Plan Gibrä Hayl, "የማእድን ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ…"("Mining Sector…,") Appendix , 141a (Written in English Language).

[78] Howell to Täshomä, 10.12.1969G.C., NALA, MM, Folder no. 14.1.20, File no.14.1.20.7.

But the reason which the Duval Corporation used to discard its right over the Yubdo mine contradicts with the view of another prospector who was engaged in prospecting for the deposits of platinum in Yubdo a few years before the arrival of the Duval Corporation. According to this prospector, in the early 1960s in Yubdo "…there is an adequate reserve of gold and platinum which could make extraction economically feasible."[79] In this regard, the pessimistic justification of the Duval Corporation does not tell us how it repudiated such optimistic idea of the platinum prospector in Yubdo in the early 1960s. Because mining activities require long period of time to carry out very wide prospecting and exploration activities to determine that an ore is economically feasible. Therefore, six months which the Duval Corporation used to carry out prospecting and exploration activities in Yubdo were not sufficient to arrive at the conclusion given by this company.

In another issue of mining industry in Wallagga, although gold mining in the 1960s did not come under the influence of new mining development, local inhabitants had remained reluctant to abandon this activity. Consequently, artisanal miners among the local inhabitants in Najjoo and Beni Shangul had remained active in the extraction and sale of gold to some gold merchants in covert way. In this regard, when Degero, Yambal and Gabaa Kamisaa in Najjoo[80] as well as Sirqole and Kurmuk in Beni Shangul were identified as the active artisanal gold extraction centers in Wallagga, Sudan was identified as the destination of many ounces of gold extracted in such way and smuggled by some gold merchants in Wallagga.[81] However, carrying out the gold mining activity in unofficial and covert way in Wallagga during that time could make those

[79]Hailu, "The Geographic, II Western Wollega…," p.29.

[80]Informants: Gurmu, Amantii and Endalu Taasiisaa.

[81]Informants: Mäkonni̱n and Almamun.

miners who individually or collectively were engaged in such activity to be associated with the idea of finding themselves in different informal engagement structures in this activity.[82] Two of these informal engagement structures which contemporary writers on small scale gold mining in African countries like Sierra Leone have associated with the artisanal miners better describe the informal engagement structures of the artisanal miners in such activity in Wallagga. These are engaging in as "self-supported informal miners" and as "groups of miners"[83]and these informal engagements are noticed as the prominent features of the artisanal gold mining activity.

But specifically in connection with the covert transaction of gold[84] in Wallagga, one report confirms that occasionally there were persons in Najjoo and Mandi who were engaged in the covert transaction of gold in 1966.[85] In fact, the report does not indicate where merchants did finally transport gold purchased in such a way. However, taking into account the experience of some people[86] who participated in gold smuggling activity in some parts of Wallagga, it can be said that Addis Ababa was another center for depositing and selling gold extracted in Mandi, Najjoo and Beni Shangul during the post liberation period.

[82]For the informal engagement structures in artisanal gold mining in African states like Sierra Leone, see Laurent Cartier and Michael Bürge, "Agriculture and Artisanal Gold Mining in Sierra Leone: Alternatives or Complements?"*Journal of International Development*, 23, (2011), p.1087.

[83]*Ibid*.

[84]In west Wallagga in artisanal gold extraction places like Laalo Qile, Najjoo and others in addition to generating income gold was also used as dowry object during marriage and as material of gift presented to *abbaa ayyanaa* (a person who has a spirit in indigenous religion).Informants: Dhereessa Amantii, Kenne, Birhanu and Kasaye.

[85]Gäbäyähu Wäldä Silassie, Principal Secretary of Gimbii Provincial Administration to the Office of the Governorate-General of Wallagga, "Three Months Report of the Province of Gimbii, December 1 to February 30, 1948E.C.," 9.10.1958E.C., East Wallagga Administration Archive (Hereafter, EWAA), Deposited partly at Oromia Culture Center in Addis Ababa (Hereafter, OCC), Folder no-No, File no.10896.

[86]Some informants from several gold rich areas of Wallagga had good experiences in that activity.

In the case of platinum mining during the 1960s a slight increase in its production was even noticed at national level.[87] However, expecting rapid boost in the amount of platinum during that time without improving its means of production like the method of platinum extraction at Yubdo mine and without finding additional platinum deposits in the Birbir valley could be an illusion. For general understanding, the production of platinum at Yubdo and at national level for some years in the 1960s is indicated in the table below.

Year	Amount of platinum produced in grams
1964	10,000
1965	9,703.50
1966	9,542.80
1967	8,370.20
1968	10,622.10
1969	9,703.50

Table15. Platinum Output at the National Level in the 1960s.[88]

But in this chapter the comparison between Table 13 and Table 15 indicates the existence of a slight improvement in the production of platinum at national level in the 1960s rather than in the 1950s. Such improvement came because of different factors although during that time the outcomes of the Second Five Year Plan between 1963-1967 in the mining industry at the

[87]For the output of platinum registered at the national level between1965-1969, see Ministry of Mines, "Geological Survey Annual…," p.15 and for the output of same item in 1964 see Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, fn.1, p.304.

[88]For quantities of platinum indicated in the table from 1965-1969, see Ministry of Mines, "Geological Survey Annual…," p.15 and for the year 1964, see Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, fn.1, p.304. However, the 1963 platinum production is said to have been six thousand and three hundred (6,300) grams. For this information and also to compare the quantity of platinum provided in the table in 1964 and 1965 with the quantity of platinum given in other source, see Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, *Investment Guide to Ethiopia* (1967), p.25.

national level were reported to be generally unsatisfactory.[89] But the basic factors for such improvement were closely associated with the Yubdo platinum field. Therefore, factors such as the maintenance of the source of water for the Yubdo platinum mine[90] and increasing the number of labor force[91]could be the possible causes to bring a slight improvement in the production of platinum in the 1960s.

In the case of repairing the source of water for this mine major conduits which were used to supply large amount of water for Yubdo mine restarted their service in the 1960s. One of them was the Bubaa canal and this canal was used to provide ample amount of water for this platinum mine. But it was closed for years after the period of occupation and reopened in the early 1960s with an intention of improving the production of platinum at Yubdo mine.[92] Besides, there were canals built on Diimaa and Alfe Rivers which the Italians had used for the production of platinum during the period of occupation. These canals were also closed previously but they

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[89]Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Third Five Year Development Plan, 1961-1965E.C.(1968-1973G.C.)* , pp.250-251. Besides, it is stated that mining industry contributed less to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For example, in the "Gross Domestic Product at factor cost" computed in 1965 out of the total *birr* 3,275 million obtained when agriculture and service sectors contributed 65.6% and 25.2 %, respectively, mining, manufacturing and power contributed 3.6% and the remaining percentage was added by other sectors. See Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole, "A Profile of the Ethiopian Economy," (Haile Sillassie I University, Department of Economics, 1967), p.iii. But it is important to note that GDP does not recognize the social, cultural and other values of precious metals like gold which cannot be expressed numerically. For these values of gold, see chapter two and six of the dissertation. It also fails to recognize gold extracted in informal system and this could obscure the real GDP contribution which extracted mineral wealth had made to the national economy between 1899-1991.

[90]Informants: Gafarso, Dabalaa Unchoo and Kenne adequately remember the repairs of canals like Bubaa ; For the repairs of these and other canals, see also Planning Board of the Ministry of Mines and State Domain, "Ministry of Mines Brief Report of the Year 1955E.C.," 16.4.1956E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.9, File no.14.1.9.3 and Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.320.

[91]For the reopening of such canals, see Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.320.

[92]Informants: Gafarso, Dabalaa Unchoo and Kenne; Planning Board of the Ministry of Mines and State Domain, "Ministry of Mines Brief Report of the Year 1955E.C.," 16.4.1956E.C.,NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.9,File no.14.1.9.3 and Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.320.

were reopened and began to support the platinum extraction activity at Yubdo mine in the 1960s.[93]

In the case of labor force associated with the Yubdo mine in the 1960s a few sources which have dealt with this issue do not agree on the number of workers participated in the extraction of platinum in that centre during that time. Due to this, Hailu indicates that the labor force who were engaged in that activity were small in number in the early 1960s.[94] In contrast, Jelenc who served as a chief mining engineer in the Ministry of Mines in the 1960s reported that the Yubdo platinum mine had three hundred platinum producing workers and two hundred prospectors between 1961-1963.[95] But during that time associating the Yubdo mine with large number of platinum workers helps us to suggest that perhaps large number of platinum workers contributed to such slight improvement in the production of platinum in the 1960s. This is because as the number of platinum miners increases, grams of platinum collected from miners would also increase.

However, apart from the production of gold and platinum, the mining industry in Wallagga was also exposed to mineral prospecting and exploration activities during the post liberation period. These activities were systematically carried out after the mid-1960s and had engaged the Imperial government of Ethiopia and the International donor agencies like the United Nations although some donors came with luggage full of their own issue. But the prospecting and exploration activities on gold, platinum and iron which the Imperial government of Ethiopia

[93]The reopening of such canals was mentioned earlier. See Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.320.

[94]Hailu, "The Geographic, II Western Wollega…," p.28.

[95]Jelenc, *Mineral Occurrences*…, p.320.

undertook in Wallagga in the early 1960s were not intensive and advanced. Indeed, it had engaged individual prospectors[96] and some foreign mining enterprises such as Atkinson and Rudis mining companies.[97]

However, as stated above, it was after 1966 or after the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) had approved granting financial support to study mineral resources found "in two selected areas"[98] i.e., in Wallagga and Sidamo in western and southern Ethiopia which were broader and advanced mineral prospecting and exploration activities were undertaken. It was in 1966 that the Ministry of Mines, an institution which later closely worked with the UN, had also obtained its legal status to function as full-fledged Minister Office through the Imperial decree promulgated in the month of July. During that time, the Ministry of Mines was made to bear responsibilities like providing recommendation on mineral resources for enacting and implementing policies which could benefit the mineral prospecting, exploration, extraction and development activities in the country. It was also made to bear the responsibility of working with other institutions all the way safeguarding the interest of the Ethiopian government.[99] For such intensive mineral resource study, therefore finally the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP's) special fund decided to give a total of one million two hundred forty eight thousand and nine hundred (1,248,900) dollars to the Ethiopian government and it also forced the

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[96]One anonymous prospector was mentioned in the article of Hailu, "The Geographic, II Western Wollega…," pp.28-29.

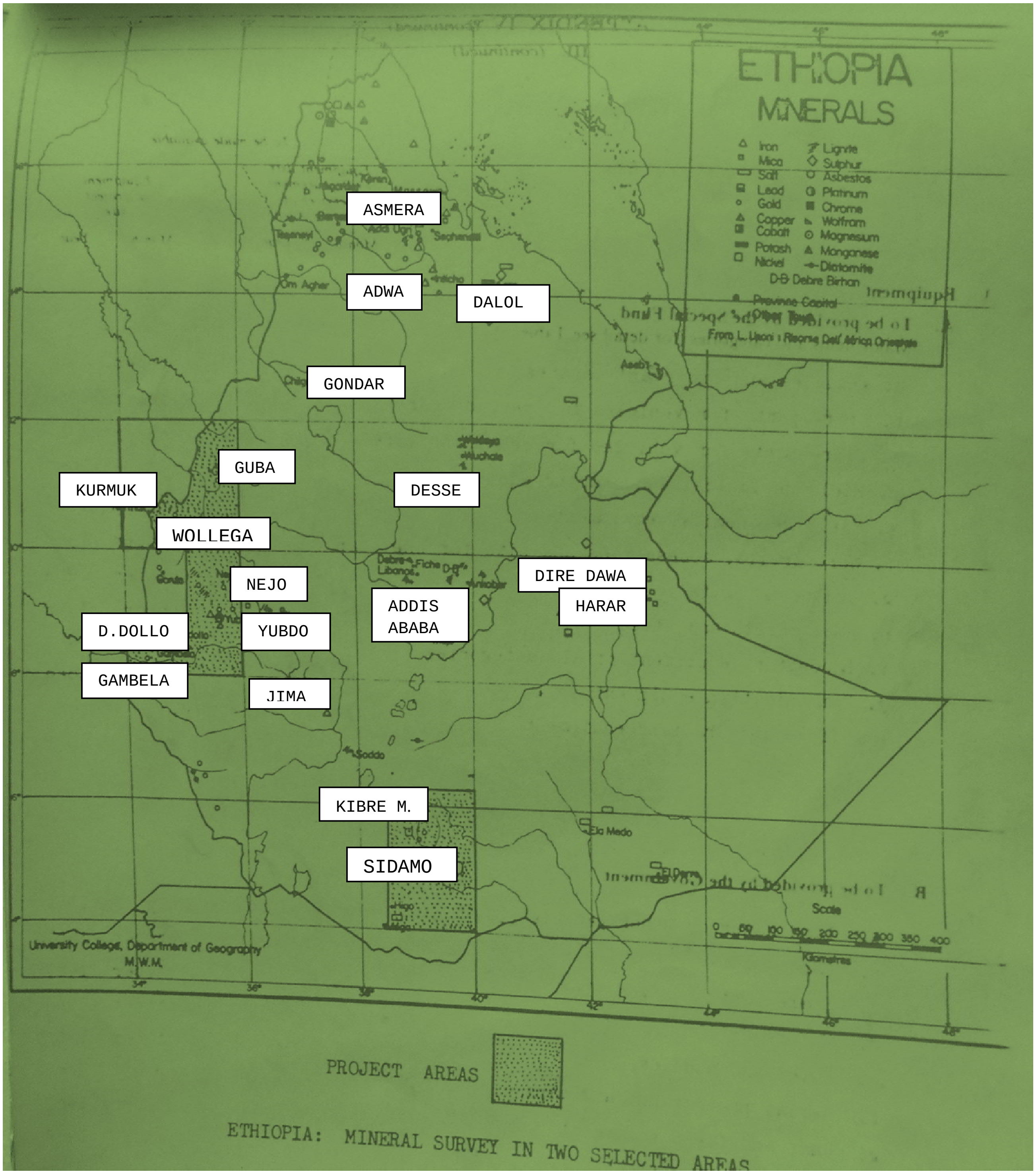
[97]Planning Board, "Ministry of Mines Brief Report of the Year 1955E.C," 16.4.1956E.C., NALA, Folder no.14.1.9, File no.14.1.9.3. Rudis was the company of Yugoslavia. See Ministry of Mines and Energy, "*የማዕድን ታሪክ...*"("History of the Ministry…,") p.69.

[98]M. J. Anstee, Resident Representative [of the UNDP in Ethiopia] to Assäfa Lämma, Ministry of Mines, 20.1.1966G.C.,NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.21, File no.14.1.21.1.

[99]For manifold responsibilities of the Ministry of Mines, see "An Order to Define the Power and Duties of Our Ministers, No.46 of 1966," *Nägarit Gazeta,* (*Hamle* 20,1958E.C.),p.136.

Ethiopian government to cover some expenses of the project. Accordingly, the Ethiopian government which was entitled to receive this large amount of foreign currency on its side was made to contribute a total of nine hundred thirty four thousand and three hundred seven (934,307) dollars for the implementation and completion of such grand mineral investigation project in Wallagga and Sidamo Governorate-Generals within four years.[100]

[100]UNDP (Special Fund) Plan of Operation, nd ,NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.21, File no.14.1.21.2, pp.1,19. For the total amount of money required for the program, see Ministry of Mines, "Geological Survey Annual…," pp.13,47. Moreover, for the financial support received from UN in *birr*, see "የተባበሩት መንግስታት ድርጅት ለኢትዮጵያ ልማት 3,355,900 ብር ረዳ"("The United Nations Has Supported *Birr* 3,355,900 for the Development of Ethiopia,") *Addis Zämän*, (January/*Tir*16, 1959E.C.), p.1. The UN support also continued in the 1970s. Here, although Emmanuel did not mention such financial support of the UNDP to Ethiopia, he described that the UNDP provided to the Ministry of Mines a few professionals who had the knowledge of the science of geology and "modern geological equipment of great value." See Emmanuel, *Reminiscences*…p.222.



Map 8. United Nations Mineral Survey Project Areas: Wallagga and Sidamo in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s.[101]

[101]The map is taken from NALA, MM, Enclosed in Folder No.14.1.21, File No. 14.1.21.2, Appendix V.

Such massive collaborative project of the UN and the government of Ethiopia was completed in the early 1970s and its completion prompted the mineral survey teams of the project to come up with some promising conclusions and recommendations concerning gold and platinum deposits in Wallagga. To mention only a few, the teams confirmed the existence of some deposits of gold at *Tulluu* Kapi and the presence of long-lived gold extraction activity in Ankore area in Wallagga. Currently, *Tulluu* Kapi is an active goldfield in Wallagga and it is worked by a private company which obtained the license to extract the gold of *Tulluu* Kapi from the present government. Concerning platinum, the teams confirmed the presence of platinum deposit in new area in the Abunaa valley to the east of Yubdo. But for this deposit they suggested the undertaking of further platinum investigation activities in Abunaa valley.[102]

Nevertheless, the enduring journeys of concession granting and taking as well as the state platinum mining activity of the Yubdo mine which became the major mining phenomena in the mining industry of Wallagga in the 1940s, 50s and 60s were accompanied in the early 1970s by different mining events which affected these and other issues of the mining industry. In the case of concession, however, the number of concession takers in Wallagga was drastically declined in the early 1970s irrespective of the promulgation of a comprehensive mining decree at the

[102]Yä Ma'edi̱n Plan Gi̱brä Hayl, "የማእድን ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ..."("Mining Sector…,") pp.44-46. For detailed activities which the UN teams carried out in the field works as well as in laboratories for gold and platinum and also for other mineral resources in Wallagga and their investigation results, see Ministry of Mines, "Geological Survey Annual…," pp.55-58, 60-69, 75. For other mining activities which UN completed in Wallagga and other parts of the country as well as mining activities which were done in collaboration with some foreign countries in the early 1970s, see Emmanuel, *Reminiscences*…pp.222-223. However, it is important to note that major activities accomplished in the Ministry of Mines and in mining industry in the country in the early 1970s were realized with the participation of many experts and higher officials although Emmanuel mostly associated that they were done by his personal talent.

national level in 1971.[103] This decree also defined the rights and responsibilities of the concession takers or the lessee.[104] Because of such decline, in the early 1970s the report of concession takers in Wallagga was limited to the Nippon Mining Company of Japan. This company undertook mineral prospecting activity and was lucky enough to find deposits of nickel and copper in Wallagga. However, in 1974 this company was forced to interrupt its activities and left Wallagga because of the outbreak of the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia.[105] Nevertheless, the decline in number of concession takers affected the mining activities in Wallagga. Similarly, problems like financial constraints in Wallagga and in other parts of the country could be barrier factors to achieve what was intended in the Third Five Year Plan (1968-1973) in the mining industry. For this and other factors, the plan of attaining highest improvement in the mining sector of Ethiopia[106] was not achieved during that time.

But in connection with the state owned platinum mine of Yubdo, in terms of platinum production, it could be said that for the Yubdo Mine Office the early 1970s until the outbreak of the 1974 revolution was a period of higher hopes. It was also a period of efficiency of traditional

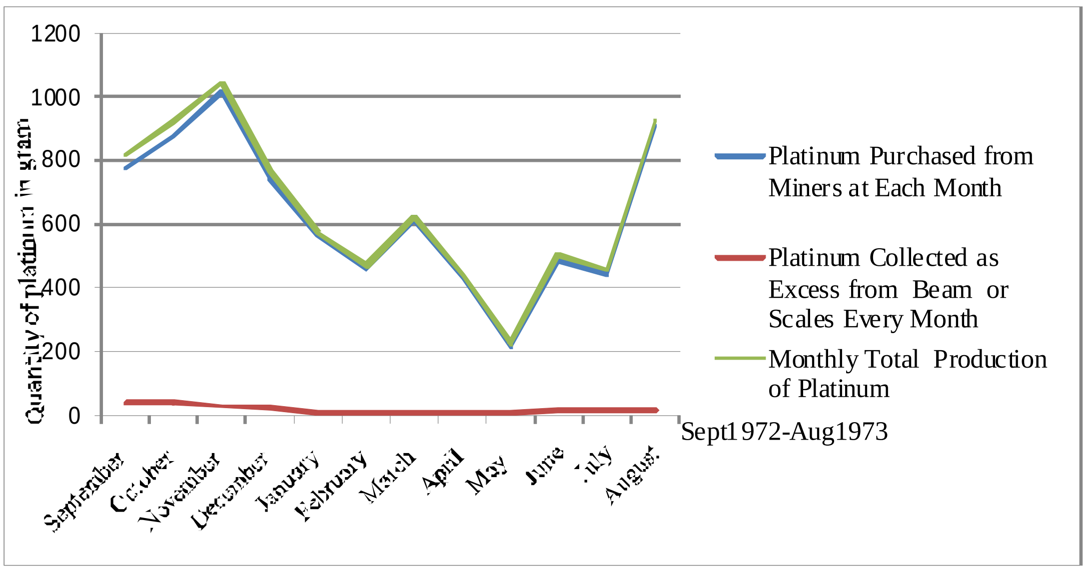
[103]For the 1971 mining decree, see "Mining Proclamation of the Empire of Ethiopia, No.282, 1971," *Nägarit Gazeta,* (*Mägabit* 3, 1963E.C.), p.65. This mining proclamation repealed the 1943 decree which forbade the export of gold and platinum from the country without having a license as well as the 1944 decree which proclaimed the control of the purchase and sale of gold and platinum in the country, *Ibid.*, p.65. Indeed, it allowed both the export and import of precious metals for merchants who had a license to buy and sale precious metals, *Ibid,* p.87.

[104]For the rights and responsibilities of the lessee, see *Ibid*, pp.73-80.

[105]Ma.P.B.Co.,"በኢትዮጵያና በጃፓን መንግስት መካከል ስላለው የኢኮኖሚ ትብብር የቀረበ ማስታወሻ" ("A Memo on the Economic Cooperation Between Ethiopia and the Government of Japan,") (1977E.C.), p.5; Besides, for the Japanese government agreeing with the Ministry of Mines to conduct mineral investigations in Wallagga in places such as Assosa-Kurmuk, Mandi-Tobo and Gordana-Billaa, see "የማእድን ምርመራ ጥናት ለመጀመር የሚያስችል ውል ተፈረመ" ("Agreement to Commence Mineral Ore Exploration was Signed," *Addis Zämän,* (*Yäkatit* 30,1965E.C.) pp.1, 7. According to Emmanuel, at government level to undertake these activities Japan was represented by its Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency which left Wallagga due to the 1974 revolution. See Emmanuel, *Reminiscences*…p.223.

[106]Such intention was explained in Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Third Five Year…*, p.251.

extraction methods. Because during that time the Yubdo Mine Office had obtained many hundreds and thousands of grams of platinum through the former platinum purchase system.[107] As explained in chapter four and also in this chapter, the platinum buying-selling system which existed between the platinum purchasers and the miners for many years in Wallagga made platinum miners, smaller or larger, to obtain some income. But concerning platinum production, the graph below provides us with how and how much platinum the Yubdo mine had collected for twelve consecutive months between September 1972 to August 1973.



Graph 3. Monthly Purchase, Collection and Production of Platinum in Yubdo, September 1972-August 1973.[108]

This graph illustrates how the activities of platinum purchase, production and supply were connected to each other during that time. Thus, from this graph it can be said that purchasing platinum from the miners was the major source of obtaining platinum for the Yubdo Platinum

[107] "Audit Report Result of Platinum and Gold Bought and Deposited by Däsalägn Abitäw, the Treasurer of Yubdo Platinum Mine Office, 1964E.C.-1968E.C.," 11.8.1968E.C., NALA, MM, Folder No.14.1.1,File No.14.1.1.3.

[108] *Ibid.*

Mine Office at the local level and the Ministry of Mines at the national level during that time. During the twelve months of 1972-1973, the total production of platinum fluctuated seasonally forming a zigzag between rise and fall in output. Moreover, the graph indicates that the monthly total production of platinum in Yubdo mine was positively associated with the monthly purchase of platinum from its miners during that time.[109]

In general, the discussion of the mining industry in Wallagga during the post liberation period which before 1941 came under the influence of some foreign nationals and companies of several European colonial powers had shared some features of the economy of African states. This could be recapped by using the concept of "structural continuity" which historian Ralph Austen has used to describe the idea which says some components of the colonial economy of Africa became integral elements in the economy of the decolonized African states after independence.[110] As a result, "A dominant position for the state; a weak role for indigenous entrepreneurs and organized labour; and a heavy dependence upon external markets and capital sources"[111] were key elements which the colonial economy passed on to the economy of the decolonized African states. In this sense therefore the mining industry in Wallagga during the post liberation period had also manifested these features of the economy of the decolonized African states.

[109]Dividing the total money paid to platinum miners each month by the total quantities of platinum purchased each month, tells us that during the twelve months of 1972-1973 the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office used to buy one gram of platinum by *birr* 3.46 from platinum miners. For instance, in September 1972 the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office used to pay a total of *birr* 2689.17 to platinum miners for purchasing a total of 776.80 grams of platinum. Therefore, the division of the former by the latter gives us *birr* 3.46. For platinum purchased each month by this office from platinum miners during that time and for the total amount of money paid to them each month, see *Ibid*.

[110]Austen, *African Economic*…,p.224.

[111]*Ibid.*

Particularly, the government having such great power as stated earlier brought the Yubdo platinum mine under its control, however, it made no attempt to include laws which could enforce the government itself, the local miners and the concessionaires to rehabilitate and protect the devastation of land and vegetation in Wallagga because of mining activities. Thus, like the pre-1941 period concession agreements which the Imperial government provided to the concessionaires and the proclamations which the Imperial government promulgated on mineral resources and mining activities did not include sorts of ideas and orders which could prohibit or reduce the use of poisonous substances in mining activities and the damages happened to Wallagga's ecological units. Instead, what happened in Wallagga in places such as Laloo Qile, Najjoo and Yubdo in the post liberation period according to informants was continued ecological degradation in the removal of vegetations and trees as well as exposing beehives, planted coffee and maize to flooding and erosion.[112] Such mining activity which Derek Norris calls, "Haphazard irrational mining disturbed the ground."[113] However, the disturbance was not confined only to the land and what was disturbed in Wallagga in general was an exceptionally biodiverse. Concerning this, informants believe that originally *Waaqa* gave to the Oromo people living in Wallagga undisturbed natural habitat. However, human activities like mining disturbed this unspoiled gift of *Waaqaa*.[114]

To conclude, in this chapter the discussion of the mining industry in Wallagga, between 1941-1974 mainly leads us to understand that the formal precious metals mining activities which had engaged both the concessionaires and the government in one category, and the informal gold

[112]Informants: Dabalaa Unchoo, Magarsaa Suuranaa, Amantii and Dhereessaa Alämu.

[113]Norris, "Precious Metal Placers…," p.9.

[114]Informants: Namarraa, Dheresssa Alämu and Kasaye.

mining activity which participated the hard-working artisanal miners in another category went side by side and shaped the precious metal mining activities in Wallagga during that time. In the case of artisanal mining literature suggests the importance of the ideas of "The formalization and entrepreneurialism of the poor."[115] It means giving legal basis to the possessions of artisanal miners and supporting artisanal miners to become investors. Such action facilitates condition for artisanal miners to change their possessions into wealth, to give legal basis for their possessions, to lessen poverty trap and manage artisanal mining activity properly.[116] Particularly, "Formalisation is viewed as a process with three basic elements: a right to land title, a right to minerals and a right to mine."[117]

In the case of concession, Imperial government's granting of mining concession sites in Wallagga revived during the post liberation period but thereafter declined rather than increasing. This leads us to conclude that during the post liberation period the gold and platinum wealth of Wallagga continued to have ties with private mining enterprises like the pre-war period. However, no private mining company emerged to have the success which some companies such as the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*, the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* and the Western Abyssinian Syndicate during the pre-war period and the S.A.P.I.E. during the Italian occupation had achieved in extracting and taking the gold and platinum wealth of Wallagga. Perhaps, one of the factors for such inefficiency was related to concessionaires fearing of

[115]These are ideas of Hernando De Soto, renowned author on informal mining, and his ideas are used in the writing of Keith Barney, "Reassembling Informal Gold‑Mining for Development and Sustainability? Opportunities and Limits to Formalisation in India, Indonesia and Laos," In Kuntala Lahiri- Dutt(ed.), *Between the Plough and the Pick: Informal, Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in the Contemporary World* (Australian National University Press, 2018), p.339.

[116]As Cited in *Ibid*.

[117]Barney, "Reassembling Informal…, p.339.

spending considerable capital which the gold and platinum mining industry required. Because concessionaires thought that it was unpromising to invest in mining industry which was a risky business. The other was lack of engaging in scientific and very wide prospecting and exploration activities in Wallagga.

But the extraction of gold which covertly participated predominantly the local inhabitants and the extraction of platinum which overtly became Imperial government's monopoly struggled against the problems connected with both miming and non-mining activities which became their stock-in-trade and affected both the gold and the platinum outputs obtained during the post liberation period. As findings, in such gold and platinum extraction activity, since both mining agents were in search for benefits, they returned with hundreds and thousands of grams of gold and platinum concentrates which rewarded them unevenly for their own affairs. However, the problems which encircled both gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga destabilized the production of this precious metal during the post liberation period.

The prospecting and exploration activities of precious metals in Wallagga during the post-liberation period, however, were largely carried out by engaging both governmental and non-governmental institutions such as the Imperial Mining Board, the Ministry of Mines, the UN and some private companies. But these activities were not frequently taken and their results were not seen while used to improve the gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga during that time.

Meanwhile, gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga as an activity was also practiced even after 1974. As it will be investigated in the next chapter, thus having given rise to different mining events, this activity came up with different historical scene during the *Därg* period.

Chapter Seven

Gold and Platinum Workings During the *Därg* Period (1974-1991)

This chapter directly focuses on how mining economy and mine workers in Wallagga functioned under the economic policy of the *Därg* government. Strictly speaking, with the collapse of the Imperial regime due to the 1974 revolution, the *Därg* government took power and began to take different socio-economic and political reforms in Ethiopia under the idea of socialism.[1] Such reforms affected the undertakings of various economic activities of the country including the mining industry as well as people from all walks of life. Considering this situation and the socialist economic policy which was implemented in the country during the *Därg* government, this chapter attempts to examine first, how gold and platinum mining activities were carried out in Wallagga under a planned socialist economy. Second, it looks at the reactions of the government or its representatives to the socio-economic questions which salaried workers of the Yubdo Mine Office, the daily laborers and the platinum miners in Yubdo requested between 1974-1991. Third, the chapter analyzes how gold smuggling activity perpetuated in Wallagga at the time the government was capable enough to call a halt to this activity in several aspects.

In this chapter these three issues will be discussed in the argument provided as follows. After the 1974 revolution, the socialist economic policy which the *Därg* government adopted and implemented mandated that the gold and platinum fields as well as their output in Wallagga come under the control and the ownership of the government or its representative. Besides, under the idea of socialism the government was engaged in gold and platinum prospecting, exploration

[1]Socialism is an elusive term to define either precisely or broadly. But socialism which the *Därg* government adopted was closer in meaning and spirit to Bolshevik Party socialism in USSR and the Bolshevik "conceived [it] as a society based on state property, administrative planning and the unity of power (one-party political system)." For its meaning, see B. Horvat, "What is a Socialist Market Economy?" *Acta Oeconomica*, 40, 3(4) (1989), p.233.

and extraction activities in Wallagga. Subsequently, in the 1970s and the 1980s, the government collected some gold and platinum concentrates in accordance with the effort it put to solve the problems of the mining industry in Wallagga as well as the effort it put into regain the output of gold and platinum. But the 1970s and the 1980s were also the times in which the mine workers of Yubdo raised questions connected with socio-economic issues and strongly struggled to get responses to their questions. However, neither the socialist economic policy of the government nor government's monopolization of the gold and platinum fields as well as their output had stopped the gold smuggling activity in Wallagga in the 1970s and the 1980s.

Having identified the argument of this chapter as stated above, to understand from its root how gold and platinum works were carried out in Wallagga between 1974-1991, it is essential to discuss briefly how socialism, the trademark of the *Därg* regime changed the economic policy which was also implemented in the mining industry in the country. Pertaining to this issue, it was from the onset that the *Därg* government began to use the idea of socialism to adopt its economic policy. Such attempt was reflected on December 20, 1974 when the military government announced a socialist program. But even before the *Därg* government came to power, the student movement which included groups such as the "radical intelligentsia" played great role in raising fundamental ideas like creating awareness among the society on the importance of "social revolution" and the notion of class and "class struggle" which the *Därg* government later, associated with the ideology of socialism.[2] Under its socialist program, however, the *Därg*

[2]For the socialist program of the *Därg* government, see Andargachew Tiruneh, *The Ethiopian Revolution, 1974-1987: A Transformation from an Aristocratic to a Totalitarian Autocracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.86-87; Gote Hansson, *The Ethiopian Economy, 1974-1994: Ethiopia Tikdem and After* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp.20-21; Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.45-46 as well as for the contribution of the student movement to the 1974 revolution and to the ideology of socialism, see John Markakis, "Garrison Socialism: The Case of Ethiopia," *MERIP Reports*, 79 (1979), p.7.

government also asserted that it wanted to bring the whole economy of the country under its own control.[3]

Similarly, the idea of socialism was explicitly reflected on the political and economic reforms of the *Därg* government, declared in February 1975[4] which also dealt with key issues of the mining industry in the country. In this case, Gote Hansson remarks that the 1975 political and economic reforms of the *Därg* government were basically, "The Declaration on Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia"[5] which intended to strengthen the government command over "the natural resources and key industrial, commercial and financial sectors of the economy."[6] From Hansson's perspective, we understand that the socialist economic policy of the *Därg* government encouraged it to control the mineral wealth of the country which was considered as natural endowment.

But the policies adopted and measures taken as issues of political economy were reflected on the institutions of mining industry both at national and local levels. Be it at the national or local level, according to Andargachew Tiruneh and Christopher Clapham, the idea of taking measures for the common good lead the *Därg* government to nationalize principal mining companies as well as other industrial, commercial and financial organizations which were functioning in the country. To this end, in 1975 it issued a decree known as "Government Ownership and Control

[3]Hansson, *The Ethiopian Economy* …, p.21. For the Declaration, see also John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 1986), p.128; Clapham, *Transformation*…, p.45.

[4]For the February 1975 socialist economic and political programs of the *Darg* government, see *Ibid.*p.22; Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*…,p.91; Georgi Galperin, *Ethiopia: Population, Resources, Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers,1981), p.135; Clapham, *Transformation*…, p.46.

[5]Hansson, *The Ethiopian Economy*…, p.22.

[6]As cited in Hansson, *The Ethiopian Economy*, p.22. Moreover, for the *Darg* government's wanting to control these economic sectors see Galperin, *Ethiopia*…, p.135 and Markakis and Nega, *Class*…, pp.128-129; Clapham, *Transformation*…, p.46.

of the Means of Production."[7] Whatsoever the determination, from the ideas of Hansson, Andargachew and Clapham it is clear that the economic programs and reforms of *Därg's* espousal of socialism gave birth to the socialist mining regulations, laws and orders which decided the destinies of who should own mineral wealth in the country, the mining industry and miners in Wallagga between 1974-1991.

Such situation was reflected, for instance, when decisions made by proclamations on the issue of owning mineral wealth in the country in the mid 1970s. In this case, two decrees which were issued in 1975 defined and determined the mineral resources which had to be entirely owned and extracted by the government, mutually by the government and individuals as well as by individuals and private companies.[8] Among these, the first was discussed previously under the heading of the "Government Ownership and Control of the Means of Production." But this decree was also applicable to several major economic activities.

The second was a decree issued in June 1975 which was specifically concerned with mineral resources which the different mining agents had to own, prospect, explore and extract the mineral wealth for the country. Under this decree, one of the mining agents, the government, was made to own and extract entirely the valuable and rare mineral resources found in the country

[7]Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*…, p.91 and Christopher Clapham, "Revolutionary Socialist Development in Ethiopia," *African Affairs*, 86,343(1987), p.152. On same page Clapham states that the decree was issued in March 1975.

[8]For this classification, see "A Proclamation to Provide for Government Control of Mineral Prospecting, Exploration and Mining Activities, No.39, 1975," *Nägarit Gazeta*,(*Säne*18,1967E.C.),pp.127-128 and Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*…, p.91. Such classification was also applicable for the government to own and command over the industrial and commercial institutions in the country. See Andargachew, *The Ethiopian Revolution*…, p.91.

such as gold, platinum, silver, uranium, radio-active minerals as well as thermal power.[9] However, the June 1975 decree like the Imperial government decree of 1944 on precious metals confirmed that, "All mineral wealth of the country basically belongs to the state."[10] The June 1975 decree also identified that the prospecting, exploration and extraction activities of mineral resources such as coal, petroleum, natural gas, carbons and hydro-carbons, potash, phosphate, iron, copper and other non-metallic ores had to be carried out mutually both by the government and individuals. Nevertheless, it closely associated the participation of the other mining agents such as the private companies and the individuals with the prospect to, explore and extract industrial mineral resources like marble, lime stone, sand, gravel and so forth.[11]

At the local level, therefore, these two proclamations by limiting the rights of other mining agents gave the government the authority to control and extract exclusively the gold and the platinum wealth of Wallagga between 1974-1991. Due to this, the Yubdo Mine Office having a new name "*Yä Yubdo Platiniyäm Lịmat Mukkära Tabịya*" in 1975 was decided to come under the administration of the government institution, the Office of the Mineral Resources Development, the bureau responsible to the Ministry of National Resource Development.[12] Besides, as it will be explained below the proclamations had the aim of prohibiting both local people as groups and individuals or private entity from having no right to control and extract the gold and the platinum wealth in their localities.

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[9]See "A Proclamation to Provide …," *Nägarit Gazeta*, (*Säne*18,1967E.C.),p.128; Galperin, *Ethiopia*…, p.208.

[10] "A Proclamation to Provide …," *Nägarit Gazeta*, (*Säne*18,1967E.C.), p.127.

[11]*Ibid*., p.128; Galperin, *Ethiopia*…, p.208.

[12]Shäbäle Tämtịme, Head of the Office of Mineral Resources Development to Yubdo Mine Office, 22. 9. 1967E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.2, File no.14.1.2.3.

Having confirmed such right and authority, like the Imperial regime, the *Därg* government prohibited the ordinary gold miners in Najjoo and Beni Shangul as well as iron miners in Ayraa-Gulliso from extracting and selling the mineral wealth and it began to hunt them seriously instead of giving the support they needed in this activity.[13] Similarly, elsewhere in southern Ethiopia in Adola and other goldfields the government pursued a similar activity of hunting for the ordinary gold miners. Particularly, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources had carried out a strict supervision in Sidamo gold rich areas in order to identify and take measures against these ordinary gold miners.[14]

But particularly, in the case of Wallagga such action was taken because of factors related to who had to own and extract mineral resources. Thus, it was taken in order to make unjustifiable the ownership claims of the local people or the artisanal miners on gold, platinum, iron or other mineral resources found in their localities. It was also taken to justify that the government legally had the right to use these mineral resources irrespective of any preconditions. As discussed above in connection with the June 1975 proclamation, this action was taken to justify that the government or its representative was the sole owner of precious metals in Wallagga. Such act was evident from one of the letters of Abiyyuu Galataa, the administrator of Wallagga in the late 1970s. Thus, in the letter addressed to the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, Abiyyuu defended the government ownership of mineral resources in Wallagga saying, “Basically mineral resources could not be owned privately or in group but they had to be owned

[13]The occurrence of such activity in Najjoo and Beni Shangul is recited by informants such as Amantii and Ashänafi respectively. Moreover, informants such as Getachäw Namarraa, Qabannaa Yadataa, Bicaaqa Yaadataa and Margaa narrate the occurrence of such activity in Yubdo and Ayraa.

[14]Informants: Getachäw S̠ishan and M̠in̠ishu Yimär.

by the government."[15]In this letter Abiyyuu gave support to the government by disregarding the interest that the artisanal miners had on mineral resources found in their localities and by identifying himself as one of the members of the ruling elites. Instead, had Abiyyuu and the government worked in good spirit with artisanal miners and provided them with the necessary ideological, technical and financial support, perhaps they could have transformed the artisanal miners into a better productive working group which the genuine ideas of socialism and socialist mining policy were calling for in the 20th century.

Nevertheless, the *Därg* government having publicized the right to monopolize the mining activities as well as the output of precious and rare metals in the country, it had also made Wallagga one of the centers of experimenting socialism in mining activities. Hence, after the revolution under the principle of socialism the government was engaged in gold and platinum prospecting, exploration and extraction activities in Wallagga. Subsequently, in the 1970s and the 1980s, the government collected many grams of platinum concentrate in accordance with the effort it put to regain this precious metal. During that time, however, the mine workers of Yubdo were determined to safeguard some of the rights connected with socio-economic issues and struggled to get responses to the questions they raised. However, as stated previously neither the socialist economic policy of the government nor government's monopolization of the mining activities as well as the output of gold and platinum had stopped the gold smuggling activity in Wallagga in the 1970s and the 1980s.

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[15]Abiyyuu Galataa, Principal Administrator of Wallagga *Kiflä Hagär* to Ministry of Mines and Energy, 26.9.1970E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03. But Abiyyuu's centralized administration of Wallagga came under pressure because of the discontent created among the local people. See Etana, "Administration of….,"p.81.

To begin with, in connection with gold works in the 1970s the government undertook some mining activities in Wallagga though it inherently discouraged the participation of private capital in the mining sector. To this end, between 1975-1980, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, representing the government and in collaboration with the United Nations mining team carried out some gold prospecting and exploration activities in places such as Degero, Sirqole, Ondonok and Odaa-Godare.[16] Throughout the *Därg* period, however, foreign capital and foreign support provided to the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to undertake these mining activities declined sharply. Guluma traces the decline to the socialist economic policy of the *Därg* government saying the economic policy did not attract foreign capital and the lack of foreign capital became one of the chronic problems which the government had faced in the mining sector between 1974-1991.[17] Despite the problem, both during the Imperial and the *Därg* periods, the government undertook the gold prospecting and exploration activities in Wallagga with the expectation of obtaining deposits of gold as a result of these investigations.

Such investigations brought some promising results and made the *Därg* to rejuvenate gold extraction activity at Degero. Pertaining to this, a mining engineer, Derek Norris, who conducted a study on the gold deposit of Degero and other localities in Wallagga in the late 1970s optimistically, concluded that, "Degero has now passed from the exploration and testing stage to a profitable small scale mining operation with a life of many years."[18]

[16]For carrying out such activity at Sirqole in 1975 and Degero in 1979, see "Gold Exploitation Projects Underway," *The Ethiopian Herald,* (13.4.1975G.C.) , p.1 and Derek Norris, " Precious Metal Placers in Welega Province, Ethiopia," 1980, pp. 3, 8 respectively. But for gold investigations conducted in the mid 1970s in Ondonok and Odaa-Godare, see Evans, "Gold," in Senbeto ….," p.63.

[17]Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.141.

[18]Norris, " Precious Metal Placers…," p.8.

Although the government supported such investigations at different times, some artisanal gold miners who survived the chasing act of the government, who failed to get support from it and who also failed to integrate into the formal system of gold extraction activity continued to extract gold in hidden ways in various parts of Wallagga. But in connection with the intervention that the government had made in mining activities in Wallagga, miners also sought to obtain some support from the government. Informants suggest that artisanal miners of gold in Najjoo and Laalo Qile, platinum miners in Yubdo as well as iron miners in Ayraa expected that the government could make some readjustment in favor of them like providing them capital and modern mining equipments as it redistributed land to the farmers and relieved the tenants as well as the peasants from grief.[19]

Like the informants, written primary sources also proposed different ideas on how the *Därg* government could support artisanal miners in Wallagga. In this regard, in one archival document it was suggested that gold miners living in Beni Shangul should get from the government devices that could easily identify gold particles in sand or soil. In this document it was also proposed that the government was expected to make the artisanal miners sell the gold they extracted at fair price in the formal market rather than selling it on the informal market to illegal gold merchants.[20]

[19]Informants: Dabalaa Unchoo, Margaa, Getachäw Namarraa and Bicaaqaa; For some details of rural land reforms of the *Darg* government, see Andargachew,*The Ethiopian Revolution*…,p.100; Desalegn Rahmato, *The Peasant and the State: Studies in Agrarian Change in Ethiopia,1950s-2000s* (Addis Ababa : Addis Ababa University Press, 2009), pp.139-140; Markakis and Nega, *Class*…, pp.129-141; Clapham, *Transformation*…, pp.47-48.

[20]Bäkurä Tsion Ṯilahun, "Report on Wallagga Presented to the Ministry of Mines and Energy," 28.8. 1968E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.37, File no. 14.1.37.5.

Besides, authorities on mining did not stop providing recommendation for the government saying it had to use the local labor in Wallagga in gold mining industry to obtain better gold output through giving them fair payments for the labor they provided to the gold mining industry rather than dislocating them from one of their means of living.[21] But all these sources do not provide critiques on the initiatives that the artisanal gold miners themselves had to take to engage in and work in a formal institution of gold extraction activity in Wallagga. However, had the government and the artisanal gold miners worked in cooperation rather than involving in the hunter-hunted action, they could have enrolled the gold extracted in Wallagga to circulate officially in both the local and the national economy.

But specifically with respect to platinum mining in Yubdo and its output during the *Därg* period, based on the various sources collected and examined, the writer of this dissertation holds the argument which says the *Därg* government had collected the amount of platinum which roughly corresponded to the efforts it put on Yubdo platinum mine. However, like the Imperial period during the *Därg* period the Yubdo platinum center supplied platinum to the government without employing modern platinum extraction method and being encircled with various problems which tested its existence. Besides, the extraction of platinum was also carried out hand in hand with Yubdo platinum mine workers demanding responses from the government for various socio-economic questions they raised. Therefore, the following discussion is made so as to provide clarification on this issue.

After the revolution, as discussed earlier, the *Därg* government came with the new socialist economic policy where it attempted to define the importance of precious metals to the national

[21] Evans, “Gold,” in Senbeto…, p.63.

economy though the government itself put less effort to increase the output of platinum in Yubdo. In relation to this, it was stated that under its socialist economic policy, the government had the interest to use some mineral resources such as precious metals for export to earn foreign currency and it also wanted to use the non-metallic minerals for domestic purposes.[22] Here, the importance of the platinum of Yubdo to generate foreign currency goes with one of those interests of the government. Thus, it was to fulfill the interest of the government that the Yubdo platinum field was made to continue supplying platinum to the *Därg* government or to its institution, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources in the 1970s and the 1980s. In this regard, the Yubdo platinum center faced different problems though it continued to produce platinum in the 1970s as the tables below indicates.

Year	**Month**	**Amount of platinum produced in grams**
1974	September	488.5
	October	599
	November	421.5
	December	715
1975	January	567.5
	February	420.5
	March	300.8
	April	206
	May	159
	June	498.5
	July	685
	August	519.6

Table 16. Monthly Production of Platinum at Yubdo between 1974-1975.[23]

[22]Galperin, *Ethiopia*…, p.213.

[23]In addition to the amount of platinum provided in the table, in *Pagume*, during the 13th month of 1967E.C.(1975) an additional 199.4 grams of platinum was produced in Yubdo. For this and the amount of platinum given in the table, see “Audit Report Result of Platinum and Gold Bought and Deposited by Däsalägn Abiṯäw, the Treasurer of Yubdo Platinum Mine Office, 1964E.C.-1968E.C.,” 11.8.1968E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.3.

Year	Amount of platinum produced in grams	Government's buying price of grams of platinum in *birr* in each year	Revenue obtained in *birr* from selling platinum at International Market in each year
1974	6,084.4	21,295.4	234,857.84
1977	5,016.5	17,557.75	193,636.9
1978	3,171.7	11,100.95	122,427.62
1979	1,213.5	4, 247.25	46,841.1

Table 17. Annual Production of Platinum at Yubdo and Revenue Obtained from Its Sale for Some Selected Years in the 1970s.[24]

As the above tables indicate, Yubdo's platinum wealth was not exhausted even after providing platinum to powerful mining agents like the foreign concessionaires, the Italian government during the occupation, the Imperial regime and the *Därg* government for five consecutive decades since 1920s. Particularly, Table 17 clearly shows that returning from Yubdo platinum mine without profit was a less likely condition for mining agents.

Accordingly, Yubdo had the potential to provide much more platinum had the socialist mining regulations and orders of the *Därg* government were given due consideration to the factors which affected the gold mining industry in Wallagga and other parts of the country. Among these factors, for example, the government could have worked to advance both the investigation and the extraction methods of platinum in Yubdo and its environs. It could have also worked for

[24]The total amount of platinum produced in 1974 which is given in this table also includes the amount of platinum produced in the month of *Pagume* 1966E.C.(1974). For this information and for the total amount of platinum produced in those dates, see *Ibid*. For the total amount of platinum produced between 1977-1979, see "Records for the Confirmation of Platinum Purchased and Submitted to the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office Between 17.4.1969E.C.-15.11.1971E.C," NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.3 ; For its production particularly in 1974 and 1978-1979 see also Getaneh, "The Mineral Resources…," p.120. But the amount of platinum given in the table for the year 1979 only included platinum produced in Yubdo in the first six and half months of 1979. In the late 1970s the government of Ethiopia used to buy a gram of platinum in Yubdo for 3.50 *birr* and it used to sell a gram of platinum at world market for 38.60 *birr* which I used to compute the buying and selling prices of platinum in Table 17. See Norris, "Precious Metals…," p.12.

platinum miners to make them get better benefits for their labor.[25] Besides, it had to put a lot of efforts to solve the problems which the Yubdo platinum field had faced in the 1970s and the 1980s. But in relation to the extraction method of platinum it seemed that the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources was satisfied with the old method of platinum extraction which the Yubdo platinum mine became much more familiar with. In this regard, in the late 1970s it was reported that the Yubdo platinum mine heavily relied on the extraction method of platinum which was used in Yubdo thirty years ago.[26] Besides, Yubdo as a mining center shared the problems which made the development of the mining industry of the country very sluggish. These problems were the use of obsolete mining tools, mal-administration noticed in the mining industry, government's inability to control artisanal miners entirely,[27] financial constraint and lack of infrastructure.[28]

Nonetheless, encouraging the government to control artisanal miners entirely before and during the *Därg* period was like encouraging it to eliminate them. But as explained in different chapters of the dissertation this mechanism became ineffective even to stop the artisanal miners from extracting the gold wealth found in their localities, let alone eliminating them. Therefore, it is better to think that how the government could have increased its ability to use these artisanal

[25]To increase the output of platinum produced in Yubdo, Norris, the mining engineer, recommended the government to improve the payment given to platinum miners in Yubdo between the late 1970s to the early 1980s. See Norris, "Precious Metal Placers…," p.12.

[26]Täkle Ayalew, Internal Auditor to Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, 5.13.1971E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.3.

[27]Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.141.

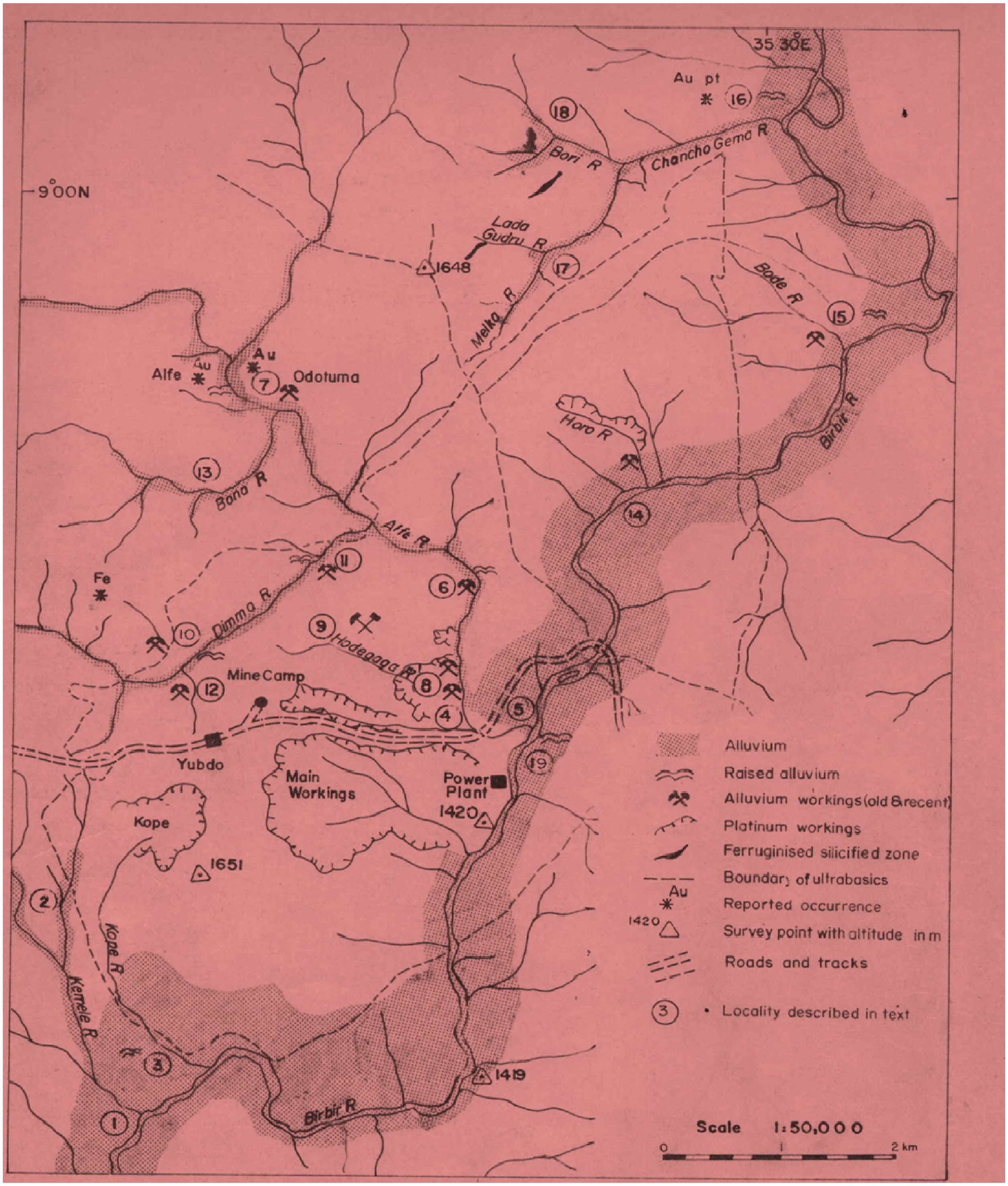
[28]Peter Schwab, *Ethiopia: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Pinter Publishers, 1985), p.84; Galperin, *Ethiopia*…, p.212.

miners in a formal way to achieve what it planned to get from the gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga.

Moreover, to obtain much more benefits continuously from platinum work, the government as well as the platinum miners in Yubdo had to put much effort to solve the problems of the Yubdo platinum industry. Because it was stated that platinum work at Yubdo was profitable to the government in the 1970s given that the Yubdo Mine Office used to purchase one gram of platinum from platinum miners in Yubdo for *birr* 3.50 and one gram of platinum was sold [by the government or by its representative] for *birr* 38.60 or one ounce of platinum was sold for five hundred eighty (580) dollars in the market in the late 1970s.[29] But obtaining much more benefits continuously from Yubdo platinum industry also required to solve at least the problems connected with production and labor. In such case, Norris suggests that increasing the output of platinum in Yubdo could make the government to obtain more benefit from Yubdo platinum mine. But to get increment in the output of platinum, platinum miners in Yubdo had to get increased payment and the amount of water for platinum work had also to be increased.[30] Similarly, making platinum miners work passionately and effectively could also enhance the amount of platinum produced in Yubdo.

[29]Norris, "Precious Metal Placers…," p.12.

[30]*Ibid.*, pp.,12, 21.



Map 9. Platinum Workings in Yubdo, Kope, and Gold Occurrences in Tributaries of Birbir River. Taken from J. Pisarski, "Gold Occurrences in Western Welega, [in the mid 1970s]," Illustrated between pp.1-2.

However, the Yubdo Platinum Pilot Development Center carried out its activity during the *Därg* regime not only facing the problems stated above but also accommodating different socio-economic questions which its working groups requested and sought appropriate responses to their questions. The working group who raised these socio-economic questions belonged to different categories such as the salaried Yubdo Mine Office workers, the daily laborers and the platinum miners. Among them, the temporarily recruited salaried workers of the Yubdo Mine Office such as the canal cleaners and repairers as well as the watchmen in 1975 initially requested their office at Yubdo and the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources that they wanted to become permanent employees of the Yubdo Mine Office.[31]

Here, it can be said that the workers who raised this question had limited exposure to the Marxist-Leninist[32] ideology which the government of Ethiopia had made its uncompromised ideology between 1974-1991. Perhaps government's overuse of this ideology as a mechanism of getting large supporters among the society exposed the workers to this ideology which made them stand together for their rights risking punitive measures that the *Därg* government could take against them. By standing together therefore in 1976 more than twenty of the temporarily recruited workers became permanent employees of the Yubdo Mine Office.[33]

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[31]"Committee Meeting Held to Provide Profiles of the Requesters of Permanent Employment Base at Yubdo Mine Office," 17.11.1967E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.5.

[32]African Marxism-Leninism was also named "Afro-Marxism" or regimes of "Rhetorical Marxists." Afro-Marxism was typically associated with African states of the 20th century such as the former Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Somalia, Benin, Madagascar and Mozambique. Afro-Marxists in these states "claimed that they ruled on behalf of peasants and workers, proclaiming the hegemony of the vanguard party." See Pablo Idahosa (contributor), "Afro-Marxism" in Paul Tiyambe and Dickson Eyoh (ed), *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century African History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p.493.

[33]Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Yubdo Platinum Pilot Development Center, 27.4.1969E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no. 14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.1.

But since the workers had additional unanswered questions they continued to put pressure on several government offices to obtain responses to their questions. Thus, once the workers confirmed that they became permanent employees of the Yubdo Mine Office, next, they requested their office and the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to make re-adjustment on their salaries. Once more, their voices were heard in the center by the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources for two factors. First, it was for the reason that the cost of living was high in Yubdo during that time. Second, it was due to the fact that the employees of the Adola gold mine who were of the same status with the employees of the Yubdo platinum Mine Office had got scale incremental increases to their salaries. For these two factors, in June 1976 the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources requested the Civil Servant Commission to become impartial and allow salary scale increment for some employees of the Yubdo Mine Office who requested this question.[34] However, after long delays and several appeals of the requesters in February 1979 it was decided that the requesters had to be informed that they could get payments associated with salary scale increment.[35]

Such dispute between the working group and the government officials in Yubdo also continued in the 1980s when some members of the working group were informed that they had to leave their jobs and when some others became the victims of forced transfer from Yubdo to other

[34]Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Civil Servant Commission, 25.10.1968E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.5.

[35]Wäldä Eyäsus Mäkuria, Head of the Budget Office, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Yubdo Platinum Pilot Development Center, 14.6.1971E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.1.

workplaces such as Addis Ababa.[36]

However, the high cost of living during the *Därg* regime which became an acute setback to the mine workers in Yubdo made them unable to purchase basic needs like food at fair prices[37]also became a triggering factor for the daily laborers and the platinum miners in Yubdo to demand wage improvements.[38] Eventually, some improvements were made on the wages of these daily laborers during the *Därg* regime[39]and platinum miners also began to sell their platinum with a re-adjusted price in the late 1970s.[40] But during that time it could be said that the selling price of platinum was better for the platinum miners than the dates between September1973-1974.[41] Nevertheless, the basic question of the working group which included the daily laborers such as cart drivers, pit and canal diggers, as well as the platinum miners was connected with obtaining

[36]For some employees hearing the decision of leaving their jobs and for forced transfer of some of them to other places, see "Appeal of Masonry Workers in Yubdo Mine Office Against Leaving their Jobs Presented to Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources," 15.5. 1972E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.5 and "Appeal of Täfäri Qereenso, Caalaa Lammuu and Wändi̱mu Abatä Against Forced Transfer from Yubdo to Addis Ababa," Document at Personal Possession of Wändi̱mu Abatä, 1981E.C. respectively.

[37]An eye witness for such impediment was Mulugeta Dämi̱se, a person who was sent from Addis Ababa to visit and provide a report on the housing condition of the Yubdo Mine Office in 1977 and who was also requested by workers to present the appeal of the workers of the Yubdo Mine Office on high cost of living to the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources. During that time, he visited the market of Yubdo and confirmed that cereals used for food such as maize and *teff* were scarce and sold in the market with high prices. See "A Memo by Mulelgeta Dämi̱se on the Housing Condition of the Yubdo Platinum Pilot Development Center," 22.7.1969E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1, File no.14.1.1.2.

[38]Informants: Wändi̱mu Abatä, Magarsaa, Namarraa and Getachäw Namarraa.

[39]*Ibid*.

[40]As indicated earlier, according to Norris platinum miners in Yubdo used to sell one gram of platinum for *birr* 3.50 and he stated that the government had to improve this price in order to increase the output of platinum produced in Yubdo. See Norris, "Precious Metal Placers…," p.12.

[41]But after September 1973 and in 1974 as well as during the revolution the Yubdo Mine Office began to buy platinum from miners with very low price i.e., it used to buy one gram of platinum with 0.29 cents. For computation of this price, see "Audit Report Result of Platinum and Gold Bought and Deposited by Däsalägn Abi̱täw, the Treasurer of Yubdo Platinum Mine Office, 1964E.C.-1968E.C.," 11.8.1968E.C., NALA, MM, Folder no.14.1.1,File no.14.1.1.3.

less benefit for the labor and platinum they delivered to some mining agents before and during the *Därg* period and this question did not get answer.

Thus, during the *Därg* period the fundamental problem of the working group and the local people had remained unsolved under the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the government and the improvements made on the income of the daily laborers and the platinum miners even failed to give long lasting solution to the high cost of living which occurred in gold, platinum and other natural resources endowed localities in Wallagga. Owing to this, particularly, some gold and platinum miners in Wallagga claimed that the socio-economic measures which the government had taken during the *Därg* regime could not transform their lives concisely stating that, "Nuti bara Dargu warqee gurgurret raafuu bitanne nyachaa turre." Roughly translated it means, "During the *Därg* regime, although we used to sell gold we bought and consumed cabbage."[42] This tells us the depth of the problem of the miners and the mining economy of Wallagga which rhetorically came under the influence of the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the government. Besides, it tells us the ineptness and gloominess of this ideology to solve the basic and difficult problem of the working group and the society, the engine of its mission.

To know the possible factors which basically led to the occurrence of these and other types of shortcomings in the Marxist-Leninist ideology in general, it is also important to look at the experiences of some socialist countries like China. In socialist states like China factors which clearly indicate that the adherents of Marxist-Leninist ideology overlooked the target of the engine of its mission is analyzed in Minqi Li's discussion of contradictions noticed in the Chinese socialism which he believes that these contradictions were also quite common in some

[42]Informants: Wändi̱mu Abatä, Namarraa, Yaadataa and Käbaädä.

other socialist countries in the 20th century.[43] Thus, the following quotation which is taken from the article of Li holds those possible factors:

> *To mobilize resources for capital accumulation, surplus product had to be extracted from the workers and peasants and concentrated in the hands of the state. This in turn created opportunities for the bureaucratic and technocratic elites to make use of their control over the surplus product to advance their individual power and interests rather than the collective interest of the working people.*[44]

Contradictions were also noticed in Ethiopia during the *Därg* regime between the working group and the ruling elite. On this issue, following the *Därg* government's control of the means of production John Markakis has noticed the existence of contradictions and differences in interest between the working group, and the educated elites who held various administrative posts in the public institutions.[45]

In an issue connected with gold mining, however, the socialist economic policy was not strong enough to protect the staggering gold mining industry in Wallagga from the extraction of gold in informal ways and from the expanding gold smuggling activity in the area in the 1970s and the 1980s. Because of these activities the gold wealth of Wallagga became a bone of contention between groups identified on the one hand as informal, i.e., the artisanal miners and the illegal gold merchants, and on the other hand as the conventional institutions of the government like the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, the Ministry of Interior, the Police Office and the Custom Office. The conventional institutions sought to safeguard the benefit that the government could obtain from the extraction and sale of gold in a formal way. Such disputes were, however, strong in Wallagga in the 1970s and the 1980s in places where the informal

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[43] Minqi Li, "Socialism, Capitalism, and Class Struggle: The Political Economy of Modern China," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43, 52 (Dec. 27, 2008 - Jan. 2, 2009), p.79.

[44] Li, "Socialism…," p.79.

[45] Markakis, "Garrison Socialism…," p.11.

extraction of gold and gold smuggling activity became prominent as well as in places which had better gold deposits such as Assosa-Beni Shangul and Degero-Najjoo.[46] But such dispute did not stop the illegal outflow of gold from Wallagga to the Sudan and to the center. Rather, it made some mining agents who were connected with the issue of gold to use gold smuggling activity as additional means of taking gold from goldfields found in the Oromo land to other areas. With reference to this, Guluma tells us that, "A considerable amount of gold was smuggled across the border, apparently, with tacit participation of government officials."[47]

Particularly, in Degero in the late 1970s the informal extraction of gold which involved the local government structures like the peasant associations infuriated the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources.[48]The reason for such annoyance of the latter was directly connected with some peasant associations providing informally the license of extraction of gold to some individuals without the recognition of the Minister's Office in the site where the Minister's Office was engaged in gold prospecting and exploration activities. Besides, the Minister's Office stated that

[46]When informants like Abdurrahman, Mäkonnin and Ashänafi recite very well the situation of the informal gold extraction activity in Wallagga during the *Darg* period, others like Käbädä, Endalu, Margaa and Wändimu Abatä also properly narrate the illegal gold trade activity undertaken in Wallagga in the same period. For individuals [members of the artisanal miners] informally extracting gold in Degero-Najjoo in 1978, see Yilma Sahle, Head of Coordinating Department and Ezedin Ali, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, 13.7.1970E.C. and 8.7.1970E.C. respectively, NALA MI, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13 .03 ; For gold smuggling activity becoming a serious illegal activity after the revolution in the 1970s in Assosa-Beni Shangul as well as Degero and Kujur in Najjoo in the early 1980s, see Hailu Yimänu, Office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers to Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, 15.9.1969E.C., NALA MI, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03 and Engineer Täkäzä Shawa Aytänfsu, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Ministry of Interior, 16.7.1973E.C., NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03 respectively.

[47]Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.141.

[48]Ezedin, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Principal Administrator of Wallagga Administrative Region, 8.7.1970E.C., NALA MI, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03.

this action directly opposed to and violated the rights [controlling, developing and extracting rights] it had on the mineral resources of the country.[49]

However, since the government knew that gold contraband trade had adverse effects on its economy and revenue as well as since it had the authority to control such activity it deployed its formal institutions to take harsh measures against gold smuggling activity in Wallagga in the 1970s and the 1980s. Such institutions included the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, the Ministry of Interior, the local Administration Office, the Police Office and the Custom Office. Thus, in areas like Assosa-Beni Shangul, to control the illegal outflow of gold from ore areas to the Sudan in the 1970s the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources was given the task of permanently purchasing gold from the gold miners and establishing shops to make the miners to buy different goods from government shops rather than [sacrificing gold] to buy goods which came from the Sudan.[50]

Similarly, it was stated that since the government wanted to make the controlling mechanism of gold smuggling activity much more intact and manageable it wanted to create new districts in the Assosa and Qellam provinces. To achieve this plan, in the late 1970s the Ministry of Interior and

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] Hailu, Office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers to Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources, 15.9.1969E.C., NALA, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03. These shops were part of *Maayi-Baasi* in other parts of Wallagga which used to sell goods such as salt, sugar, threads, fertilizers, dry cells, corrugated iron, sickles, nails, blankets, umbrella, clothes, shoes, soaps and pesticides. See Etana, "Administration of...," p.109.

the local administration offices in Wallagga were given the task to accomplish restructuring the administrative units in these two provinces.[51]

Moreover, the commonly known mechanisms of dealing with the informal gold extractors and illegal gold merchants were used. Such mechanisms included imprisoning and dispossessing the gold captured in this activity which involved the Police and the Custom Offices either at local or national level were also deployed both in Najjoo and Assosa-Beni Shangul.[52]

But concerning this historical development the concept of informal economy can properly explain the natures of both artisanal gold mining as well as gold smuggling activity which were undertaken in Wallagga during the *Därg* regime. For such explanation, this part of the dissertation shares ideas from authors like Ezekiel and Kristof Titeca for the reason that their use of the concept of informal economy can better fit into the discussion of the above activities in Wallagga. Ezekiel has used this concept in his dissertation while dealing with the social and economic history of *Khat* in Hararghe.[53] Similarly, Titeca has dealt very well with this concept while discussing trans-boundary contraband trade in northwestern Uganda.[54]

[51]Wäldä Mariam Gäbrä Hiwot, Head of Administration, Finance and Training Office, Ministry of Interior to Administration Office of Wallagga Administrative Region, 30.3.1972E.C., NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.04, File no. 17.1.10.04.04.

[52]Informants: Abdurhaman, Mäkonni̱n, Käbädä, Margaa and Wändi̱mu Abatä; Particularly, for the imprisonment of the informal gold extracters at Degero and Kujur in Najjoo in the early 1980s, see Täkäzä Shawa, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Ministry of Interior, 16.7.1973E.C., NALA, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03.

[53]Ezekiel Gebissa, "Consumption, Contraband and Commodification: A History of *Khat* in Hararghe, Ethiopia," PhD Dissertation (History, Michigan State University, 1997), pp.34-38; 161-194.

[54]Kristof Titeca, "Tycoons and Contraband: Informal Cross-Border Trade in West Nile, Northwestern Uganda," *Journal of Eastern African Studies,*6, 1(2012), pp.47-63.

Although Ezekiel and Titeca came with two different meanings of informal economy, they share one common view concerning what informal economy generally defies. Thus, for Ezekiel informal economy consists of the contraband trade which in his dissertation mainly connected with the "traders who evade market regulations."[55] But he suggests that basically the meaning of informal economy is, "Generally, designed more to characterize particular types of small firms or individuals in various markets, legal or illegal, who work at very low productivity, than to analyze market structures."[56] For Titeca, however, informal economy is, "Considered [as] the unmeasured and unrecorded economic activities which evade taxes."[57] But as indicated in the meanings of informal economy provided above, both Ezekiel and Titeca agree on the idea which says informal economy defies rules, laws or controls, imposed on it by formal system. However, when the two meanings of the informal economy are combined, they indicate that both artisanal gold work and gold smuggling activity in Wallagga during the *Därg* regime could be categorized under the informal economy.

In the case of these two activities which existed in Wallagga as informal economy during the *Därg* regime, however, Titeca's article is more significant to conceptualize and deal with agents who had strong association with these activities. Thus, the concepts of informal economy as the "Weapon of the weak and weapon of the strong"[58] which Titeca has used in his article can better explain those agents who had strong association with the two activities that existed in Wallagga during the *Därg* regime. According Titeca, those authors who argue that informal economy

[55]Ezekiel, "Consumption…," p.34.

[56]*Ibid.*

[57]Titeca, "Tycoons…," ft. no.1, p.59.

[58]*Ibid*., p.48.

applies to the “weapon of the weak” as an activity of existence identify agents like illegal traders as ‘peripheral’ and powerless segments of the society who were forced to involve in informal economy by factors such as getting less attention from the government, government’s inability to pay wages for them and the presence of corruption. But those who hold the idea which suggests informal economy is the “weapon of the strong” identify various ruling elites as agents who use informal economy to obtain individual advantages. They also suggest that their engagement in this activity could aggravate corruption and skirmish among the society.[59]

In fact, in the case of Wallagga the combination of the two concepts of informal economy could appropriately explain agents who were engaged in informal gold extraction activity and the illegal gold trade as well as their situations during the *Därg* period. Due to this, under the concept of informal economy as the “weapon of the weak” it is possible to suggest that agents like artisanal gold miners and gold racketeers were engaged in gold industry in Wallagga informally as ‘peripheral’ and powerless segments of the society during that time. Similarly, the concept of informal economy as the “weapon of the strong” best applies at least to local governors, custom and police officers who were involved in chasing artisanal gold miners and illegal gold merchants in different parts of Wallagga as government officials and who also used informal economy as a means to obtain some benefits during the *Därg* period.

But as Titeca suggests classifying informal economy as the “weapon of the weak” and the “weapon of the strong” should be flexible. Because associating informal economy only either with the ‘strong’ or with the ‘weak’ is problematic. Titeca explains this saying that agents in informal economy such as, “Traders do not only need to engage with political elites, but also

[59]*Ibid*.,pp.48-49.

with the wider population in order to guarantee the functioning of their informal trading activities. In doing so, the traders rely on a range of institutional resources which blend the ''weapon of the strong''/''weapon of the weak'' dichotomy."[60]

Returning to the formal mining activities which were connected with the gold industry in Wallagga, in the 1970s and the 1980s, besides, platinum mining, the *Därg* government made its institutions to engage in the prospect for, explore and extract gold. Due to this, during that time the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources conducted gold prospecting and exploration activities in Alaltu, Degero and Kujur areas in Najjoo[61] as well as in Gizen and Assosa areas.[62]Although these activities required well equipped mining experts and adequate capital, to get additional gold sites, the prospecting and exploration activities had to cover very wide localities in western Wallagga.

After undertaking the above prospecting and exploration activities, however, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources brought under its control the Degero goldfield and began to extract gold from this site in 1978-1979 and in the early 1980s. In terms of production, it was reported that this goldfield had a good start and there was the possibility to increase production by using improved gold extraction tools made from iron.[63]Though Degero had given such

[60]*Ibid.*,p.49.

[61]For these activities in Alaltu and Degero, see "የማእድን ሀብት በጥቅም ላይ እንዲውል ሰፊ ጥረት ይደረጋል"(To Obtain Benefits From Mineral Wealth, A Lot of Efforts Could Be Made,") *Addis Zämän,* (Miyazya 29, 1972E.C.), p.8; Similarly, for Kujur see "የወለጋ የወርቅ ማእድን ስራ የእድገት ተስፋው ብሩህ ነው" ("The Development of Gold Work of Wallagga is Optimistic,") *Addis Zämän,* (*Säne* 27,1973E.C.), p.1.

[62]In addition to the prospecting and exploration activities of gold at Gizen and Assosa, in 1980 investigations were also conducted at Kattaa in the vicinity of Najjoo for copper, Nickel and cobalt. For all this, see "Mineral Prospecting Underway in Wallagga," *The Ethiopian Herald,* (30.4.1980),p.1.

[63]In the 1978-1979 and in the early 1980s it was estimated that Degero had the capacity to produce twenty grams of gold everyday. See "የወለጋ የወርቅ ማእድን..."("The Development of Gold …,") *Addis Zämän,* (*Säne* 27,1973E.C.), p.1 .

optimism to its owner, it had remained labor intensive goldfield and heavily relied on the traditional gold washing methods and tools to produce and provide gold to the government in 1981.[64] Looking at what the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources had achieved at Degero and considering that much more effort was required in gold mining activities in Wallagga, Degero could be taken as a good example to discover or rediscover other gold endowed localities in Wallagga.

Such involvement could bring some changes in the gold mining industry in Wallagga though the engagement of the government in gold mining activities in Wallagga during that time could also be related to alleviating problems connected with foreign trade. The government was engaged therefore to obtain more foreign currency by exporting large quantity of gold abroad and it also wanted to heal the foreign trade which came under serious problem. Clapham puts the intensity of this problem in the late 1970s and in the early 1980s saying, "International coffee prices slowly declined and the balance of payments deficit steadily increased, from 309 million birr in 1979 to 977 million birr in 1983, by which time published exports covered only 46 percent of imports."[65] This condition was one aspect of political economy which clarified how a decline in the value of export items from the country in international market significantly affected its import-export trade and pushed the government to find solution to the problem in mining industry.

Although the government had devised strategies and although it was powerful and financially capable of controlling gold smuggling activity in the 1980s, gold investigation and extraction

[64]During that time, Degero goldfield had more than one hundred fifteen mine workers and the traditional gold washing tools at Degero included wooden box and sand trough. See *Ibid.*

[65]Clapham, "Revolutionary Socialist…," p.155.

activities were carried out in Wallagga parallel to this and other goods smuggling activities. Above all, it was amazing that in 1981 the smugglers had made Degero, the goldfield which the government had controlled and started to take gold, one of the centers of the source of gold which they used to sell it in informal markets.[66] In this case, in the 1980s Degero existed as a goldfield which bore the burden of supplying gold to the government, artisanal miners and the smugglers. Similarly, smuggling activity which also involved goods like coffee in Wallagga continued in Assosa-Beni Shangul in the 1980s. Here, it was reported that the political insecurity which existed in the Sudan became a factor for the survival of gold and other goods smuggling activity in this area even at the beginning of the 1990s.[67]

However, in the 1980s gold smuggling activity was not restricted to Wallagga alone. As a result, it also became the common feature of goldfields located in southwestern and southern Ethiopia such as Kaffa and Sidamo.[68] But what made similar the gold smuggling activity found in these areas including Wallagga was that such illegal activity emerged and developed as the common offspring of both the government controlled goldfields and goldfields worked by the local people and this activity continued to exist as long as these goldfields were active.

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[66] Täkäzä Shawa, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Resources to Ministry of Interior, 16.7.1973E.C., NALA, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03; Käfalä Tägägn, Chairperson of Regional Affairs Coordinating Office to Administration Office of Wallagga Administrative Region, 29.7.1973E.C.,NALA, MI, Folder no.17.1.10.13, File no. 17.1.10.13.03.

[67] *Shaläqa* Täshomä Haile, Finance Police Officer of Wallagga Administrative Region to Office of Finance, Wallagga Region, 29.2.1983E.C., EWAA,OCC, Folder and File Nos.656.

[68] Informants**:** Getachäw Sishan and Minishu; For gold smugglers and their activities in Kaffa, see also "የማጂ የወርቅ ማእድናችን ለግንባታ ይዋል" "The Gold Ore of Maji has to be Used for Development." *Addis Zämän*, (September/*Mäskäräm* 24,1973E.C.), p.2 and "[አንድ ሺህ ሰባት መቶ ዘጠና] (1790) ግራም ወርቅ በድብቅ ጅማ ከተማ ለማስገባት የሞከረ ተቀጣ"("Retribution Against a Person Who Attempted to Take 1790 Grams Gold in Covert Way to the Town of Jimmaa") *Addis Zämän,* (October/*Tikmt* 15,1977E.C.), p.4; For gold smuggling activity in Adola goldfield in Sidamo Administrative Region in the 1980s, see "A Visit Report on the Adola Gold Development Project," Unpublished Document, WMAC, C.l.1.13, (Addis Ababa, *Hamle* 1977E.C.),p.8.

Later, in 1984 when the government announced and implemented the development plan which could serve Ethiopia for one decade, it was expected that the gold and platinum mining industry in Wallagga could see improvement. Hansson calls it the "Ten Year Prospective Plan".[69] But Clapham states that this plan and socialist institutions established in Ethiopia in the early 1980s such as the National Committee for Central Planning and the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) made U.S.S.R.'s socialist development plan and institutions their archetype.[70] In fact, these authors have dealt well with the 1984 economic plan but they held themselves back in commenting on whether the plan had a positive impact on the mining economy which operated at the local level or not. However, as the amount of platinum produced in Yubdo in the 1980s tells us the plan was ineffective to bring change on the platinum mining industry in Wallagga.

Similarly, the attempt which the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office had made in the early 1980s to increase the production of platinum under the idea of socialism was ineffective. Under such idea, in the early 1980s platinum miners in Yubdo were forced to establish *Yä Platiniyäm Amrachoch Hi̱brät Si̱ra Mahbär*. But the association became unproductive and after awhile its members were disbanded.[71]

Therefore, these and other problems negatively affected the amount of platinum produced and registered at the national level in the 1980s. As the table below indicates, during that time the amount of platinum produced in the country was not better than the amount of platinum produced in the 1970s, a decade before the Ten Year Plan was adopted.

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[69]Hansson, *The Ethiopian Economy …*, p.23.

[70] Clapham, "Revolutionary Socialist…," pp.155-156.

[71]Informants: Wändi̱mu Abätä, Namarraa, Mäkuria and Bushuraa Assäfa.

Year	Quantity of platinum in grams
1982-1983	1,700
1985-1986	2,400
1987-1988	1,500

Table 18. Platinum Production at the National Level for Some Selected Years in the 1980s.[72]

Here, by comparing this Table with Table 17, it can be safe to suggest that the implementation of the 1984 economic plan of the government failed to move the Yubdo platinum mine forward. Even, after the implementation of this economic plan, as indicated in Table 18 the amount of platinum produced and registered at the national level between 1985-1986 and 1987-1988 was lower than the amount of platinum produced and registered at Yubdo in 1974, 1977 and 1978.[73]

As discussed in this chapter, many problems encircled the mining industry in Wallagga during the *Därg* period. But this industry like the pre-revolution time continued to create problems on the ecosystem in Wallagga. During the *Därg* period, both the government and the local miners had shown unwillingness to take responsibility for environmental devastations which occurred in Yubdo platinum extraction sites. As a result, the earlier activities of exposing beehives, planted coffees and maize to flooding and erosion did not get solution in Wallagga during the *Därg* period although the government began to plant some trees in some parts of Wallagga.[74]

Generally, the relationship which existed between gold and platinum extraction and the environment in Wallagga could be associated with the idea which says mining agents such as

[72]All the figures given in the table are converted from kilogram to gram. For these figures, see Getaneh, "The Mineral Resources…," p.120.

[73]For the amount of platinum produced at Yubdo between 1974-1975, in 1977 and in 1978, see Table 15.

[74]Informants: Mäkuria, Qabannaa, Wändi̱mu Cawwaaqaa and Bushuraa.

companies and the government worried more about obtaining prosperity from the extracted mineral resources. But they made the local people to worry more about removing and dealing with the leftovers of the mineral resources extracted in their localities for long period of time.[75]

But the problem which the Yubdo platinum mine had faced at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s was different in nature than the problems discussed previously. During that time, Yubdo had seen intense security problem which had an impact on the production of platinum. Such instability happened because of the outbreak of conflict between the soldiers of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the soldiers of the *Därg* government.[76] Even, after the collapse of the *Därg* government, the conflict was not over. As a result, the soldiers of OLF began to confront, a new force i.e., the soldiers of the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).[77]

Eventually, the severity of domestic socio-economic and political problems as well as external factors had forced the *Därg* government to loosen its centralized socialist economic policy in favor of adopting the mixed economic policy, which the government also intended to implement in the mining sector. As discussed earlier, parts of these domestic problems were reflected in the mining industry in Wallagga. According to Guluma, these domestic problems also forced the

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[75]As Cited in Guluma, "Political Domination…," p,p.133.

[76]For instance, the conflict which created intense instability among the people of Yubdo and which also devastated some offices of Yubdo district had occurred in Yubdo in October 1990. See Amarä Dägfe, Head of Finance Office, Wallagga to Executive Members of the Shängo, "Report of the Attack Made on the Finance Office of Laalo-Yubdo Province, 23.4.1983E.C., EWAA, OCC, Folder and File Nos, 656. However, for the security problem in gold producing areas such as Assosa and for OLF movements in west Wallagga in the 1980s, see Etana, "Administration…," pp.146-149.

[77]Informants: Wändi̱mu Cawwaaqaa and Wändi̱mu Abatä.

Därg government to loosen its previous mining policy in the late 1980s.[78] But Andargachew argues that the *Därg* government was compelled to revise its economic policy in the late 1980s because of both the domestic and the external factors like the pressure which came from the Russian leaders.[79]

Following the adoption of the mixed economic policy, however, one of the major mining developments which occurred in Wallagga in July 1990 was the rediscovery of platinum containing piece at the historic Kope goldfield. But it was reported that the piece was different from its previous category since it alone consisted of forty six grams of platinum.[80]This rediscovery could inspire those geologists and mining engineers who wanted to prospect and discover or rediscover additional platinum reserves and deposits in the Birbir River Valley.

Generally, in this chapter taking gold and platinum mining industry as a case in point it is discussed that how government intervened in the mining industry and how this and other types of economic activities were controlled by the government. This interwoven situation between government and economy reminds us the basic features of the concept of political economy which Gupta summarize them saying:

> *The economic factor affects the economy both directly as well as indirectly through affecting the structure of society and thereby the state. Similarly, the state also affects the economy directly by its policies and actions and indirectly by affecting the ideological factor, the class structure of society which, in turn, affect the political and the economic and, above all, by mediating all manner of struggle, economic and political, class and non-class.*[81]

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[78]Guluma, "Political Domination…," p.141.

[79]Andargachew,*The Ethiopian Revolution*…,pp.349-351.

[80]Colonel Bi̠rhanu Täsäma, Chairman of the Executive Members of the Assembly in Wallagga Administrative Region to Council of Ministers, 15.1.1983E.C., EWAA, OCC, Folder no.57, File no. አሰ.12.ኢ.

[81]Gupta ,"Why Political…," p.284.

To conclude, both informal and formal precious metals mining industry existed in Wallagga during the *Därg* period. In this mining industry what made the gold working in Wallagga during the *Därg* period similar to the pre-*Därg* period was the undertaking of its extraction under both informal and formal systems. However, platinum extraction in pre-*Därg* period and during the *Därg* regime was carried out under the formal mining industry. Besides, the government and its institutions in Wallagga were engaged in the formal gold and platinum mining industry. Indeed, some officials were implicitly engaged in the informal gold mining economy in Wallagga, however, the artisanal miners and the illegal gold merchants had remained its main actors.

Though the socialist economic policy did not integrate the ordinary artisanal miners into the formal mining industry during the *Därg* period, the government had used this policy, proclamations, mining regulations and orders to control and extract precious metals in Wallagga irrespective of the ownership claims of the artisanal gold and platinum miners or the local people. The government also used these political economy tools as devices to weaken both the informal mining economy and its agents in Wallagga though it failed to eliminate them from this activity. It failed since it was very difficult to disentangle both the artisanal miners and the illegal gold merchants from their means of living without providing them better formal ways of making money for their livelihood. However, since agents in the formal mining industry in Wallagga like the government and its representatives and the agents in informal mining and illegal gold trade desperately needed precious metals to obtain some benefits, they made the precious metals mining activities in Wallagga to survive during the *Därg* period. This is the major finding of the dissertation in this chapter.

Under socialism although the basic problem of unevenly sharing benefits obtained from precious metals could not get solution, some socio-economic questions raised by the working group at Yubdo platinum mine got answers. Thus, questions connected with becoming permanent employees of the mine center, salary and wage re-adjustment and alleviating the high cost of living in their localities were answered. But the grievances of workers on working and living conditions continued.

Between 1974-1991, however, to solve the problems of platinum mining industry in Wallagga what was required from the government was to exert high effort. However, the government put less effort to advance the gold and platinum exploration and extraction methods in Wallagga, to solve the problems connected with lack of foreign capital and infrastructure. In spite of this, heavily relying on the unchanged platinum extraction method, the Yubdo platinum mine continued to supply its platinum concentrate to the government which it had used the minerals to obtain foreign currency.

Conclusion and Findings

In the 20th century the activities of prospecting and extracting the mineral wealth of Wallagga below the surface of the earth such as gold and platinum had led the local people of Wallagga particularly the local miners i.e., the disorganized mining agents, to encounter more organized and consolidated mining agents. These agents were the foreign concessionaires and their companies like Ilg and the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*, Prasso and the *Societiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie,* the Western Abyssinian Mining Syndicate, the Italian intruders and the S.A.P.I.E., the central government of Ethiopia and some gold racketeers. The encounter had connected Wallagga and its people with different mechanism for the extraction of gold and platinum that led to the outflow of these precious metals to the center and abroad.

But since all the above mining agents passionately needed gold and platinum concentrates for their own benefits or advantage, they maintained the continuity of gold and platinum prospecting and extraction activities in Wallagga in the 20th century. However, it was the artisanal gold and platinum miming industry with its traditional methods and tools of extracting these precious metals that endured throughout this study period. Although this is one of the findings of this dissertation, it is argued that the gold and the platinum mining industry in Wallagga had also seen the introduction of some modern equipment which were brought by some foreign concessionaires and their companies as well as by the central government of Ethiopia.

In the 20th century the gold and the platinum fields in Wallagga faced legal and political economy instruments which the more organized and consolidated mining agents used to safeguard the control of these precious metals mines and the collection of the output of gold and platinum from these fields. For this purpose, the concessionaires, for example, used contractual agreements which were not practiced there in the 19th century. Besides, the imposition of the most effective gold collection instruments like the gold tribute system, owning goldfields and taking their output and government's engagement in gold purchase had compelled Wallagga to contribute an ample amount of gold to the central government in the early 20th century. To own these gold and platinum mines and collect their output, the central government also used legal, political and economic instruments such as proclamations, mining rules and national economic policies in the 20th century to discourage the ownership claims of some gold and platinum sites of the local people and the local miners.

In terms of distributing benefits of gold and platinum extraction, those organized and consolidated mining agents had exploited the disorganized local miners i.e., their principal gold and platinum feeders. For instance, they reduced overall income which local miners used to support their livelihood. They also put limitation on the earlier free sites of gold extraction which these miners used to extract it traditionally and sold it in different markets in Wallagga. Thus, this dissertation reveals that the benefits of the extraction of gold and platinum among mining agents in Wallagga in the 20th century were distributed disproportionately. Due to this, among the organized and consolidated mining agents, the central government of Ethiopia had won much of the gold extracted in Wallagga between 1899-1936. Similarly, among the foreign companies, the *Mines d'Or du Wallaga*, S.A.P.I.E. and S.M.I.T. obtained thousands of grams of gold extracted in Wallagga in the early 20th century.

Following the granting of Birbir mining concession, foreign concessionaires and their companies such as Prasso and the *Svocietiè Minière des Concessions Prasso en Abyssinie* commenced the extraction of platinum and took much of the platinum extracted in Yubdo in the early 20th century. As a result, Prasso and his company emerged as platinum tycoon in Wallagga and Ethiopia in the 1920s. Conversely, the platinum miners in Wallagga and the Ethiopian government had remained spectators of the platinum tycoon during that time. But such disparity had lead local miners to continue live destitute lives. These miners also fed much of the platinum produced in Yubdo in the 1930s to the Western Abyssinian Syndicate and S.A.P.I.E.

Nevertheless, between the 1940s to the 1980s the Ethiopian government monopolized the Yubdo platinum mine and received all the platinum which miners extracted in Yubdo through its buying-selling system. The income these miners received from the government supported their struggle to stay alive, however, it did not transform their lives.

With respect to goldfields and gold extraction in Wallagga between the 1940s to the 1980s, the Ethiopian government or its representative was the formal mining agent able own and receive gold extracted from goldfields found in Najjoo, Mandi and Assosa-Beni Shangul. But during that time the Ethiopian government received less quantity of gold as compared to the amount of gold it had received from Wallagga between 1899-1936. Such decline happened because of both mining and non-mining factors. However, in the 20th century gold extracted in Wallagga both by formal and informal local miners were also disseminated to the informal mining agents such as gold racketeers.

Between the 1940s to the 1980s, occasionally, the government of Ethiopia attempted to solve some problems of the miners as well as the gold and the platinum mining industry in Wallagga. As a result, platinum miners in Yubdo were privileged to free health services during the Imperial regime. Besides, during the *Därg* period, platinum miners, daily laborers and some employees of the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office obtained responses from the government to some of the socio-economic questions they raised.

However, the basic problems of the miners as well as the gold and the platinum mining industry in Wallagga had remained unresolved. In this case, local miners became victims of a declining industry and material benefits and the issue of informal gold extraction had remained unsettled. Similarly, financial, administrative and infrastructural constraints as well as government's indifference to put much effort on this mining industry in Wallagga persisted between the 1940s to the 1980s. Collectively, all these factors contributed to the poor living standard which was noticed among the local miners in Wallagga as well as to the slow change which the gold and the platinum mining industry in Wallagga had undergone particularly in the second half of the 20^{th} century.

Glossary of Local Terms and Phrases Used in the Dissertation

Aaddee	Mrs.
Abbaa	Father
Abunä	Bishop
Afaan	Language
Ato	Mister
Awraja	Province
Azazh	Commander
Balambäras	Title given to the leader of small locality
Balläbat	Landlord
Bitwädäd	Beloved Imperial companion and officer
Blatta	Enlightened chief
Blattan Geta	Enlightened chief executive
Cirracha	Sand
Däjazmach (Däjjach)	Commander of the gate
Fitawrari	Commander of the front fighter
Gabatee	Wooden container
Gebbi	Palace Compound
Gutichaa	Earring
Janähoy	Emperor
Jigii	*Afaan* Oromo word to mean the tradition of giving free labor as a way of supporting some other people.
Kägnazmach	Commander of the right
Käntiba	Mayor

Khat	Stimulant plant
Kiflä Hagär	Administrative region
Kiray	Rent or payment
Lij	Title connected with Royal status
Maayi-Baasi	Service Co-operatives
Mätäyaya	Gold gifts
Misläne	Sub-district
Näggadräs	The head of merchant
Nehar	Bertha word to mean the tradition of giving free labour as a way of supporting some other people
Obbo	Mister
Qalqalloo	Sack made of goat’s skin
Qeerro	Youth
Qes	Priest
Qoro	Local chief
Ras	Head
Ras Bitewädid	Imperial favorite head
Shaläqa	Major
Shängo	Assembly
Täklay Gi̱zat	Governorate-general
Teff	Staple food in Ethiopia
Tiqur Anbässa	Black Lion
Tsehafe Tizaz	Imperial Scribe
Tulluu	Mount or Mountain
Waaqa	God

Waqet	Ounce
Warqee	Gold
Warqee ‘Najaasaa’	‘Unwanted’ gold
Warqee Sabbu	Local name for platinum in Wallagga
Yä Platiniyäm Amrachoch Hi̲brät Si̲ra Mahbär	Platinum’s Producers Association
Yä Yubdo Platiniyäm Li̲mat Mukkära Tabi̲ya	Yubdo Platinum Development Pilot Center
Yäma’edin Zäbägnoch	Watchmen of the mine
Yäshi̲bo mäbrat	Dynamo

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Nebiyu Eyasu (columnist). “የስነ ምድር ጥናትና የማእድናት ፍለጋ ታሪክ በኢትዮጵያ፣ ክፍል 1፡፡”(The Study of Geology and the History of Mineral Resources Prospecting in Ethiopia.”) *Addis Zämän*. (*Mägabit* 8, 1975E.C.).

“[አንድ ሺህ ሰባት መቶ ዘጠና] (1790) ግራም ወርቅ በድብቅ ጅማ ከተማ ለማስገባት የሞከረ ተቀጣ፡፡”(“Retribution Against a Person Who Attempted to Take 1790 Grams Gold in Covert Way to the Town of Jimmaa.”) *Addis Zämän*.(*Ti̱kmt* 15,1977E.C.).

“የማእድን ምርመራ ጥናት ለመጀመር የሚያስችል ውል ተፈረመ፡፡” (“Agreement to Commence Mineral Ore Exploration was Signed.” *Addis Zämän*.(*Yäkatit* 30,1965E.C.).

“የማእድን ሀብት በጥቅም ላይ እንዲውል ሰፊ ጥረት ይደረጋል፡፡”(To Obtain Benefits From Mineral Wealth, A Lot of Efforts Could Be Made.”) *Addis Zämän*. (Miyazya 29, 1972E.C.).

“የማጂ የወርቅ ማእድናችን ለግንባታ ይዋል፡፡” “The Gold Ore of Maji has to be Used for Development.” *Addis Zämän*. (*Mäskäräm* 24,1973E.C.).

“የተባበሩት መንግስታት ድርጅት ለኢትዮጵያ ልማት 3,355,900 ብር ረዳ፡፡”(“The United Nations Has Supported *Birr* 3,355,900 for the Development of Ethiopia.”) *Addis Zämän*. (*Tir*16, 1959E.C.).

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“የወለጋ የወርቅ ማእድን ስራ የእድገት ተስፋው ብሩህ ነው፡፡” (“The Development of Gold Work of Wallagga is Optimistic.” *Addis Zämän*.(*Säne* 27,1973E.C.).

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III. List of Informants

No	Name	Age	Sex	Date of Interview	Place of Interview	Remark
1	Abdurhaman Mohammad (*Sheikh*)	68	M	2/6/2018	Assosa	Gold washer who later became gold merchant in Assosa in the 1970s and the 1980s and in the 1990s he became government employee.
2	Almamun Babikir (*Abbaa*)	72	M	3/6/2018	Assosa	He used to wash gold when he was young and he acquired this skill from his family. He was also merchants of gold and other goods in Assosa.
3	Amantii Gamachiis (*Obbo*)	49	M	29/5/2018	Najjoo	He was one of the inhabitants of the gold town of Najjoo. He obtained the opportunity to hear the problems of gold miners in Najjoo while he was working as the mayor of Najjoo town in the 1990s.
4	Ashänafi Khojale (*Abbaa*)	81	M	2/6/2018	Assosa	He was one of the notable elders and merchants in Assosa. He also used to purchase gold from the miners in Assosa and sold it in Addis Ababa in the 1970s.
5	Bicaaqaa Yaadataa *(Obbo)*	40	M	26/5/2018	Ayraa	Like other gold miners, he faced the hardship of becoming miners in Wallagga during the *Därg* period. His memory was good in narrating the living condition of miners in Wallagga during that time.
6	Bi̱rhanu Shonaa *(Obbo)*	74	M	30/6/2018	Najjoo	He was the merchant of gold and other goods in Najjoo who used to buy gold nuggets from gold miners of Degero and other places. He opened gold jewelry selling shop in Najjoo town during the *Därg* period.

7	Bushuraa Assäfa *(Obbo)*	46	M	31/5/2018	Najjoo	Artisanal gold miner in Najjoo town who used to get his earning from this activity during the *Därg* period.
8	Dabalaa Simaa (*Obbo)*	92	M	17/5/2018	Laalo Qile	Notable elder in Laalo Qile, who remembers very well the atrocious deeds that the Italian government had committed on gold miners and the local people of Wallagga during the occupation. His knowledge of the history of the people of Wallagga is vast.
9	Dabalaa Unchoo (*Obbo*)	47	M	14/5/2018	Laalo Qile	He was the son of gold miner. His father was forced to extract gold for the Italians between 1936-1941 in Laalo Qile. He remembers very well gold and platinum mining activities in Laalo Qile and Yubdo, respectively.
10	Dhereessaa Alämu (*Obbo*)	70	M	25/5/2018	Ayraa	He participated in extracting iron from Yubdo area and worked as blacksmith in Ayraa during the Imperial and the *Därg* regimes. He was a good storyteller on gold, iron and platinum mining activities during the Italian occupation and during the above two periods.
11	Dhereessaa Amantii (*Qes*)	76	M	16/5/2018	Laalo Qile	He was a clergy man and served the district of Laalo Qile as clerk in the 1960s. He properly narrates the situation of gold mining industry in Laalo Qile in the early 20th century, during the Italian occupation and the Imperial regime.
12	Endalu Taasisaa *(Obbo)*	46	M	29/6/2018	Najjoo	He established contacts with the gold miners in Degero and Yambal during the *Därg* period because he was gold merchant. Thus, he has good

						memory about their contacts.
13	Gafarso Ahmad (*Obbo*)	88	M	15/5/2018	Laalo Qile	He was one of the long serving employees of the Yubdo Platinum Mine Office. His experiences of labour supply and platinum extraction in Yubdo during the Italian occupation, the Imperial and the *Därg* periods were remarkable.
14	Getachäw Namarraa (*Obbo)*	40	M	22/5/2018	Yubdo	He worked as platinum extractor under his father during the *Därg* perod. His explanation of the impacts of platinum mining on the ecosystem of Yubdo was good.
15	Getachäw Sishan *(Ato)*	65	M	29/1/2018	Addis Ababa	He worked as gold miner in Adola in the 1980s and his ideas were important to make comparative analysis on gold mining activities in Wallagga and Sidama areas.
15	Gurmu Ayyaanaa (*Obbo)*	71	M	13/1/2018	Addis Ababa	Gold laborer who was also engaged in retail trade in Mandi and Assosa in the 1960s and the 1970s. He moved to Addis Ababa in the 1980s.
17	Jabeessaa Shunaa *(Obbo)*	75	M	25/5/2018	Ayraa	A miner who has been living in Ayraa. He has good living experience particularly on benefits that the mining agents had obtained from gold, platinum and iron mining between 1936-1991.

18	Kasaye Karoorsaa *(Aaddee*)	68	F	16/5/2018	Laalo Qile	She used to provide food and drinks for the daily laborers in Laalo Qile and for those who came from Yubdo including the platinum miners.Her contact with them made her to get information on the Italian occupation of Wallagga and the living condition of these miners in post liberation period.
19	Käbädä Qajeelaa *(Obbo*)	47	M	30/5/2018	Najjoo	Artisanal gold miner in Degero in Najjoo in the 1980s. He bcame the victim of *Därg* government's hunting of artisanal miners in Najjoo.
20	Kenne Tarfasaa (*Obbo)*	71	M	15/5/2018	Laalo Qile	A peasant and seasonally participated in extracting gold in Wallagga during the post liberation period by crossing into the district of Najjoo.
21	Kumaraa Sanbato *(Obbo)*	67	M	24/5/2018	Ayraa	One of the elders in Ayraa town who had participated in extracting iron from Yubdo area. He recalls very well miners and government's engagment to extract platinum and iron in Yubdo and Ayraa areas during the Imperial and the *Därg* regimes.
22	Magarsaa Suuranaa (*Obbo*)	42	M	24/5/2018	Ayraa	History teacher in Ayraa High School who shared me the knowledge he has on gold, platinum and iron working in Laalo Qile, Yubdo and Ayraa areas during the *Därg* period.
23	Mäkonnin̲ Ni̲gatu (*Obbo)*	59	M	14/1/2018	Addis Ababa	Laborer who participated in gold washing in Assosa and other similar activities in the 1980s. He came to Addis Ababa in the early 1990s.

24	Mäkuria Korjo (*Obbo*)	65	M	19/5/2018	Yubdo	He is one of the experienced teachers in Yubdo town.He has ample information and knowledge on the history of the local people of Wallagga and their economic activities inclduidng gold and platinum mining in the 20th century.
25	Margaa Alämu (*Obbo)*	61	M	31/5/2018	Najjoo	Artisanal gold miners in Najjoo areas in the 1970s and the 1980s.
26	Mi̱ni̱shu Yimär (*Obbo)*	68	M	20/1/2018	Adaamaa	He has good experience and knowledge on how laborers like miners and factory workers were working and attempted to lead their families with the income they got from these activities. Because as one of the factory workers since 1970s he has shouldered such responsibility
27	Namarraa Barkessaa (*Obbo)*	86	M	22/5/2018	Yubdo	Platinum miner in Yubdo since1950s who worked in Yubdo platinum mine under Yubdo Platinum Mine Office manager, Mammo Corqaa. He has accumulatd experience and knowledge on platinum extraction as well as its rewards and challenges.
28	Qabannaa Yaadataa *(Obbo)*	50	M	27/5/2018	Ayraa	As an artisanal miner, he became the victim of the hunting act of the *Därg* government. Thus, he is a witness for such deed and other hardships that miners had faced in Wallagga during the *Därg* time.
29	Wändi̱mu Abatä (*Obbo)*	65	M	19/5/2018	Yubdo	He served as canal watch man, masonry worker and the supervisor of platinum miners at Yubdo Platinum Mine Office in the 1970s and the 1980s.

30	Wändimu Cawwaaqaa (*Obbo)*	50	M	21/5/2018	Yubdo	He worked as platinum miner in the early 1980s in Yubdo. Next, he became the cashier and platinum buyer of Yubdo Platinum Mine Office between 1985/1986 to 1995/1996.
31	Yaadataa Machi (*Obbo)*	77	M	20/5/2018	Yubdo	Platinum miner in Yubdo since the late 1950s. He was also engaged in farming. He has a good experience on how to lead his family by the income he obtained from these activities.