

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**A HISTORY OF PARTIALLY MECHANIZED AND OTHER  
ARABLE FARMING ALONG THE ETHIO-SUDAN BORDER:  
THE CASE OF ABDÄRAFI AND MÄTTÄMA, 1950s-1980s.**

**BY  
ATAKILT REDDA**

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

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**BY**

**ATAKILT REDDA**

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Dedication

*In memory of my mother*

*wäizäro Täqäbatch Redda*

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## Acronyms

AAB = Addis Ababa Bank

AIDB = Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank

CADU= Chillalo Agricultural Development Unit

CBE = Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

DBE = Development Bank of Ethiopia

DDT = Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroe

EC= Ethiopian Calendar

EDU= Ethiopian People's Democratic Union

EGC= Ethiopian Grain Corporation

ELF = Eritrean Liberation Front

EOC= Ethiopian Orthodox Church

EPID= Extension Project Implementation Department

EPLF= Eritrean People's Liberation Front (*Jäbha*)

EPLF= Eritrean Popular Liberation Forces (*Shabiya*)

EPRDF= Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP= Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

FAO= Food and Agriculture Organization

GB= Grain Board

GC = Grain Corporation

GDP= Gross Domestic Product

HADP= Humära Agricultural Development Project

HIV = Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSIU= Haile Selassie I University (currently Addis Ababa University)

IAR = Institute of Agricultural Research

IBRD= International Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
IDA= International Development Association  
IEG= Imperial Ethiopian Government  
IES= Institute of Ethiopian Studies.  
IHA= Imperial Highway Authority  
ILRI= International Livestock Research Institute  
ITSO = International Technical Support Organization.  
MNCD= Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs  
MoARD= Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development  
MOENCO = Motor and Engineering Company of Ethiopia  
MSF= Médecins Sans Frontières  
NAMS = National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy.  
NCAM= National Committees on Agricultural Mechanization  
SGB= Sudan Gezira Board  
SIDA= Swedish International Development Agency  
SPLA= Sudanese People's Liberation Army  
SSA= Sub-Saharan Africa  
TAMS= Tippettes-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton Checchi and Company  
TPLF= Tigrayan People's Liberation Front  
UNIDO= United Nations Industrial Development Organization  
VL = Visceral Leishmaniasis  
WADU= Wällamo Agricultural Development Unit.  
WSHC= Wälqait-Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society

### Key to transliteration system

I. The seven sounds of the Ethiopic alphabet are represented as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup>	በ	= Bā
2 <sup>nd</sup>	ቡ	= Bu
3 <sup>rd</sup>	ቢ	= Bi
4 <sup>th</sup>	ባ	= Ba
5 <sup>th</sup>	ቤ	= Bé
6 <sup>th</sup>	ብ	= Bi
7 <sup>th</sup>	ቦ	= Bo

II. Palatalized sounds are represented as follows:

ሸ	= Sh
ቸ	= Ch
ኸ	= ña
ሸ	= Zh
ጸ	= j

III. Glottalized sounds are represented as follows:

ቀ	= q
ጠ	= ṭ
ጠጠ	= <u>ch</u>
ፀ/ጸ	= ṣ

But for well-known names (personal as well as geographical) I have used conventional European styles such as Menilek, Haile Selassie, Addis Ababa, Shoa, Begemeder and Simien, Wollo, Wollega, Tigray and other Ethiopian provinces, etc. Moreover, I have also given all personal names as the individuals themselves write or wrote their names in English such as Zewde G/ Sellassie, Bahru Zewde, etc.

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I am also profoundly grateful to all my informants who kindly gave time from their busy schedule for sharing their experiences and knowledge. I would also like to fully acknowledge fully the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the then Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, the Welde Mesqel Tariku Memorial Research Centre, the Kennedy Library, the National Library, the Central Statistical Office, the Federal Police Headquarters, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission (also known as *Tewahido* Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission), and above all North Gondar Administrative Office, Gondar Referral

Hospital, Mättäma Municipality, Mättäma Customs Office, Mättäma Yohannis Health Centre, Mahbärä Selassie Monastery, Mättäma Yohannis *Qäbälle* 01, Mättäma Police Station, Abdärafä Municipality, Abdärafä Health Centre, MSF-Holland Abdurafä Project, Abdärafä *Qäbälle* 01, and Abdärafä Police Station for allowing me to use their archival and other relevant sources.

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Words cannot sufficiently express, without exaggeration, the depth of my gratitude to my sister, Gelila G. Michael, my sons, Nahom Atakilt and Michael Atakilt, and especially my wife, Almaz Tesfay, whose patience and moral support contributed greatly to the completion of this intellectual journey.

## Preface

This dissertation is a study of the history of partially mechanized and other arable farming along the Ethio-Sudan border: The Case of Abdärafī and Mättäma, 1950s to 1980s. Its main aim is to reconstruct the agricultural development of Abdärafī and Mättäma, explore its contribution to the national economy, identify the role of commercial agriculture in Abdärafī and Mättäma in generating employment, and point out the major obstacles to commercial agriculture in the areas over the period.

Historians have made studies of the socio-cultural and political history of different parts of Ethiopia. However, less is still known about the economic history of the country. Some of the literature provides useful insights on the mechanized agricultural activities in the Awash basin. But, the issue of revolution in mechanized farming in Abdärafī and Mättäma (Sätit-Humära area) has not yet attracted historians, which my dissertation attempts to cover.

The hot areas of Abdärafī and Mättäma in the north westernmost regions of the then Begemeder and Simien Governorate General near the Sudan border were the scene of revolutionary agricultural development. Though developments were impressive and significant, they faced problems: inadequate infrastructure, particularly in communications, health and water supply, labour shortage, discouraging credit and marketing arrangements, absence of machinery repair facilities, security and border problems, and a variety of weeds, and pests among others. Some of these problems arose from the rapid, unplanned growth of farming in the two areas.

When I planned to undertake my research on Abdärafī and Mättäma, the title of my dissertation was “A History of Agricultural Mechanization and Other Arable Farming along the Ethio-Sudan Border: The Case of Abdärafī and Mättäma, 1950s-1970s.” In due course, I realized that the study areas were under the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) until 1983. This means the areas were not under the *Därg* and the mechanized farms were not affected by the sweeping land reform of 1975 and for this reason I extended my dissertation to the 1980s.

The term “mechanized farming” is used for arable farming, using mainly tractors, which began in Abdärafī and Mättäma in the 1960s. Some external agricultural experts even use the term

mechanization in a broader sense to include farming using all kinds of assistance “hand tools, animal powered and engine-powered equipment”. The term “mechanized” in this sense could be regarded as reasonable in the Ethiopian context, where traditional arable farming was and is carried on with oxen or as hoe cultivation but I prefer the traditional use of the term “mechanized” to mean using power-operated machinery, which in Abdärafī and Mättäma meant tractors. Abdärafī and Mättäma did not have fully mechanized farming as it would be understood in, for example, the USA or Canada. The mechanization in Abdärafī and Mättäma was referred to the use of tractors. Tractor-owning farmers still employed farm labourers on a large-scale for sowing, weeding and crop picking (harvesting). Many farmers used only oxen, though if and when they were able to do so, they acquired tractors. I have, therefore, used the term “Partially Mechanized” in my dissertation title to indicate that mechanization did not go very far, and yet some farmers in Abdärafī and Mättäma did employ some machines (mainly tractors) while traditional farmers did not. My dissertation also covers the farmers in Abdärafī and Mättäma who only used oxen, because I wished to describe the totality of arable farming in Abdärafī and Mättäma. Moreover oxen farming statistics are included in my data source and some oxen farmers progressed to using tractors. My dissertation title is rather long for the sake of precision.

Studying recent Ethiopian history poses serious difficulties. Chief among the problems that confronted the researcher is the question of sources. Archives tended to be the prime victims of the maelstrom of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution and disturbances that followed after 1974. However, an attempt was made to refer to the widest possible range of sources and to cross-check evidence in order to present a fair, correct and balanced picture.

The dissertation draws upon primary and secondary data. The primary data used are of two types: oral information and archival materials, which I obtained during my fieldwork. Informants in North Gondar, Abdärafī, and Mattama including in the different farm sites were selected for interview based on their knowledge and relation to the study areas. The archival materials were obtained from North Gondar Zone Administrative Office and the Municipality of Mättäma, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the then Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission, the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism National Archives and Library Agency, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, the Headquarters of the Federal Police, and the Welde

Mesqel Tariku Memorial Research Centre, which provided me with some documents that contain valuable information. Archival documents helped me to substantiate information obtained from the interviews. Moreover, I consulted literature and books available in the libraries of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and the Kennedy Library of Addis Ababa University. All the primary and secondary sources were valuable for my research. Archival sources were badly affected by the civil war between the *Därg* and the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) in the 1970s and at a later stage, the civil war between the *Därg* and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) all of which led to the destruction of archives.

Conducting research for this dissertation was not without other problems. One major problem was lack of adequate funding since Addis Ababa University does not allocate sufficient fund. Whatever provided was not even released on time. There were ups and downs to get the budget. Inflation has added to accommodation and transport cost in remote areas as much as in Addis Ababa, or even more. Archivists also declined to allow me access to archives unless I paid them substantial sums for their services. Extreme heat and uncertain health conditions also added to the problems of research in my areas.

The dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one is on the general survey of agricultural development in Africa and Ethiopia during the imperial period. Chapter two discusses the geographical and historical background of Abdärafi and Mättäma. Chapter three discusses the commencement and expansion of partially mechanized and other arable farming systems in the study areas. Chapter four sheds light on soils, farmers, tractors and crops, land tenure, the role of financial institutions in granting loans, and labour. Chapter five discusses infrastructural developments and demography. Chapter six deals with production, taxation, marketing and processing systems and export (1960s-1980s) and chapter seven describes boundary and political problems affecting agriculture in the North Western Ethiopian lowlands, between the 1950s and the 1980s.

*Abstract*

*A History of Partially Mechanized and Other Arable Farming Along the Ethio-Sudan Border:  
The Case of Abdärafī and Mättäma, 1950s-1980s*

*By*

*Atakilt Redda*

*Addis Ababa University, 2015*

*My dissertation studies the history of partially mechanized and other arable farming along the Ethio-Sudan border: the case of Abdärafī and Mättäma. The dissertation covers the period between 1950s and the 1980s. The entry point of the dissertation is the 1950s because the Ethiopian government sought to stimulate agricultural growth and promote changes in peasant agriculture through its successive Five Year Development Plans that started in 1957. The first tractor was also in the program area in 1957. The dissertation does not end in 1975 following the rural land proclamation. The land proclamation of 1975 was not implemented in the study areas because the study areas were under the control of the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) until the beginning of the 1980s.*

*The hot, dusty godforsaken areas of Abdärafī and Mättäma in the northernmost regions of the then Begemeder and Simien near the Sudan border were the scene of modern agricultural development. Agriculture was rain-fed. The three major crops that covered much of the cultivated area were cotton, sesame and sorghum. Though developments were impressive and significant, they faced problems characteristic of rapid unplanned growth in similar areas: inadequate infrastructure, particularly in communications, health and water supply, labour shortage, discouraging credit and marketing arrangements, absence of machinery repair facilities, and a variety of weeds, pests and other problems. My dissertation describes how mechanized and partially mechanized agriculture was introduced into Abdärafī and Mättäma and how the farmers coped, partially coped with, or failed to cope with, the problem of farming in the areas.*

*My dissertation also describes the security problems arising from a disputed boundary and then the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 which in the end resulted in the breakdown of cooperative farms in Abdärafī and Mättäma and the other lowland areas like Humära.*

*The issue of mechanized agriculture, even if it has not much attracted the attention of researchers in Ethiopia, is an important aspect of economic history. The study of such activity should enrich our knowledge. It will also hopefully provide material for the work of other researchers, economic planners and development policy makers. On the other hand, the studies on mechanized agriculture in these peripheral areas show the major obstacles to modern agriculture, indicating also both the challenges and the opportunities for development for potential investors both foreign and local.*

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION: GENERAL SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**IN AFRICA AND ETHIOPIA IN THE IMPERIAL PERIOD**

**INTRODUCTION**

Improving the performance of the agricultural sector became one of the most important challenges faced in the context of fighting malnutrition, illness, poverty, and unemployment. Furthermore, in recent years the situation has been aggravated by very high food commodity prices on the world market. This rise, for various reasons, has not usually given much benefit to African farmers producing for the market. Rather, high food prices have significantly increased the number of people under poverty in many countries. The population of Africa at present is about 350,000,000. In Africa 60 to 90 percent of the people are engaged in the agricultural sector.<sup>1</sup> In many parts of the developing world, like Africa, the use of increased levels of mechanization is already making a significant contribution to agricultural and rural development. In recent years governments of many African countries have been encouraging farmers to make increasing use of agricultural machinery.

This chapter will discuss the role that agricultural mechanization has played in African agricultural development in the post-independence period and in post-liberation Ethiopia. It will also review the constraints on agricultural mechanization in Africa and will indicate ways by which agricultural experts suggest these could be tackled in order to support sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

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<sup>1</sup> Carl K. Eicher and Doyle C. Baker, "Research on Agricultural Development in sub-Saharan Africa: A Critical Survey" (Michigan State University, Department of Agricultural Economics. East Lansing, Paper No. 1, 1982), p. 1

## 1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MECHANIZATION IN AFRICA

The evolution of agricultural mechanization in the world can be divided into three distinct periods: the period before 1920, the period between 1920 and 1945 and the post-Second World War period. This was because that new methods and developments in agricultural mechanization in the world occurred in these periods. However, the developments were not evenly distributed all over the world. Developments in agricultural mechanization were made possible by the industrial revolution which occurred in much of Europe and North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup>

The first tractor with the internal combustion engine that has revolutionized agriculture was produced in 1889 in the USA. The design and development of the tractor using an internal combustion engine in the 1930s and 1940s was a major breakthrough for agricultural mechanization technologies since agricultural mechanization has often been equated with tractorization. The tractor has had a profound effect on labour productivity and farming systems. This means that tractors and many of the other innovations introduced in agriculture by the scientific and industrial revolutions paved the way for a qualitative change in the nature of agricultural production particularly in advanced capitalist countries. This qualitative change became known as industrial agriculture.<sup>3</sup>

Agricultural mechanization is the shift from one source of power (human and animal) to another (non-animate). It is the application of mechanical technology and increased power to agriculture, as a means to raise the productivity of human and animal labour. This includes the use of tractors of various types, combustion engines, electric motors, solar power and other methods of energy conversion. Mechanization also includes

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<sup>2</sup>Geoffrey Mrema, "An Overview of Agricultural Mechanization in the World" In *Agricultural Mechanization, Policies and Strategies in Africa* (London: Marlborough, 1991), pp.4-5

irrigation systems using powered machinery, food processing and related technologies and equipment.<sup>4</sup> According to Green, an agricultural economist, "... all forms of mechanical assistance used at any level of sophistication in agricultural technology are considered to be aspects of agricultural mechanization."<sup>5</sup> This means that for some agricultural economists hand tools and animal-powered and engine-powered equipment are all going to be included, though in common usage "mechanization" excludes hand tools.<sup>6</sup> In fact, my dissertation intends to adopt the more normal usage of the term mechanization and apply it only to tractors and power-operated machinery and equipment, while I use the term partial mechanization for farmers who use tractors and oxen.

Important economic policy issues in the post-independence period concerned whether to adopt capitalist or socialist or semi-socialist policies, and in the post-independence period a number of African countries favoured a socialist approach with large government involvement in the economy, including agriculture.<sup>7</sup> State farms and mono-crop government plantations became part of African policies for agricultural development in the 1960s, as in Sierra Leone and Ghana. However, these state farms were failures because tenants were displaced by the land lords.<sup>8</sup> Agricultural failure was one of the Soviet bloc's many economic failures.<sup>9</sup> Since the collapse of European communism<sup>10</sup> and

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6-7

<sup>4</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Agricultural Mechanization in Africa: Time for Action* (Rome: United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2008), p. 1

<sup>5</sup> David Green, "Agricultural Mechanization in Ethiopia: An Economic Analysis of Four Case Studies." (Ph.D Thesis, Department of Economics, Michigan State University, 1971), p.1

<sup>6</sup> John Mellor, *The Economics of Agricultural Development* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 223 employs this limited usage which I have adopted.

<sup>7</sup> Carl K. Eicher and Doyle C. Baker, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Tony Judt, *Post War: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Vintage Books, 2010), pp. 169-170, 174, 194, 328, 423, 581. "Soviet bloc agriculture slipped further and further backwards, its occasionally surreal inefficiencies exemplified in the USSR [and similar examples could be found elsewhere in Soviet-bloc states] by the bureaucrats in Frunze who...encouraged local peasants to meet their (arbitrary and unattainable) butter delivery quotas by buying up stocks from local shops", p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 583-84, 585-633 for the collapse of European communism. There is of course a vast literature on this.

the decision of People's China to use capitalist-type incentives for farmers<sup>11</sup>, the socialist model in agriculture has been mostly abandoned. A shift back to capitalist, private profit incentive policies is now regarded as correct for Africa by international agencies and agricultural experts. These policies apply to mechanization also. It is now in fact accepted that the best way for Africa to mechanize is for farmers to own their machines, or for them to hire these from other farmers. Tractors need to be serviced, and repaired. A tractor or other machine without these services has no value; it has used a farmer's capital for nothing. Support services for mechanization are therefore vital. "The best way to supply machinery [and support services] is through the private sector, although this does not necessarily preclude public sector participation. However, this must be done in such a manner as to support the private sector."<sup>12</sup>

Mechanization, to be effective, does not mean just supplying the farmers with tractors, machinery and support services. Farmers must be able to farm profitably.<sup>13</sup> Since the colonial period African farmers have in fact been producing cash crops for sale, such as groundnuts, cotton, palm oil, coffee, tea, pyrethrum flowers and rubber.<sup>14</sup> The rise in world food prices has not benefited farmers who sell cash crops as much as it might have done, and ought to have done, considering that farmers are such a large percentage of Africa's population. This smaller benefit is because middlemen reap the largest share of

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<sup>11</sup>See Jonathan Fenby, *The Penguin History of Modern China: The Fall and Rise of a Great Power 1850-2009* (London: Penguin, 2009), pp. 551-52, 646 and for the whole of the new policies oriented to profit and efficiency chapter 27 "Getting Rich in No Sin" pp. 552-573. See also Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: OUP, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 2000), pp. 844-848.

<sup>12</sup>John E. Ashburner and Josef Kienzle (eds), *Investment in Agricultural Mechanization in Africa. Conclusions and Recommendations of a Round Table Meeting of Experts, Agricultural and Food Engineering Technical Report 8* (Rome: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2011), p. xii.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>Eicher and Baker, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Rosemary E. Galli, "The Food Crisis and the Socialist State in Lusophone Africa" in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 30, No.1 (African Studies Association, Mar. , 1987), pp. 19-20; Gavin Williams, "Marketing without and with Marketing Boards: The Origins of State Marketing Boards in Nigeria" in *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 34 Market Forces (Taylor and Francis, Dec. , 1985), pp. 5-6.

profits and state marketing boards often keep crop prices deliberately low to benefit the urban population from which dissatisfaction can be more politically dangerous.<sup>15</sup>

Development and modernization of Africa's agriculture will depend therefore on changes in state policy on modern agriculture and also better policies for farmers' education and entrepreneurship. For the growth of sustainable agricultural development and improvement of farmers' incomes it is important, through state policy, education and a rise in entrepreneurship, to develop mechanization that will make commercial farming really advantageous for African farmers.<sup>16</sup>

In order to understand the implications of agricultural development for the future development of the global food system, one has to understand the difference between traditional and modern agriculture. Traditional farmers often say that they seek to work effectively with resources at hand and produce what nature offers.

*Conventional processes are used to till the land, select and plant seeds, protect plants from competing plants and ... gather the harvest. Surpluses are marketed through nearby outlets. Such producers frequently report only limited capacity to change these processes-and some seek to avoid change.<sup>17</sup>*

Often farmers are correct in upholding a traditional approach because it works! Some suggestions by "experts" have not led to success but the opposite! Also, if a new approach fails, traditional farmers face disaster.<sup>18</sup> However; in modern agricultural systems farmers are eager to apply technology and information. In contrast to traditional farming, modern farmers try to get profitable success by utilizing innovations, research and scientific advances to produce safe, sustainable and affordable food.<sup>19</sup> As scholars now recognize,

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<sup>16</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Agricultural Mechanization in Africa...*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> William C. Motes, "Modern Agriculture and its Benefits, Trends, Implications and Outlook", (Global Harvest Initiative: Sustainability Meeting the World's Growing Needs, March, 2010), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

traditional methods of agriculture have a rationale and there is scope also for learning from traditional methods but appropriate modern agricultural technology, properly used, does bring advances and whatever the virtues of some traditional practices there is need for change.<sup>20</sup>

Fighting malnutrition, illness, poverty and unemployment are major challenges to human development in African countries. The economies of many African countries should continue to be strongly linked to the agricultural sector. This means much effort has to be given to this sector because the agricultural sector will continue to be the most important sector in the economy of most African countries.<sup>21</sup>

In some African countries, agriculture generates up to 50 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It contributes over 80 percent of trade in value. It also contributes more than 50 percent of raw materials to industries and provides employment for the majority of Africa's people. It is mechanization that has helped much of Asia and Latin America to succeed in their agricultural development. By contrast, because of the agricultural backwardness of small scale peasant agriculture with use of manpower alone, the use of tractors in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has not shown significant increase over the past 40 years because attention was not given to mechanized agriculture. "Compared with other world regions, tractor use in SSA today remains almost negligible. In Asia, tractor use over the same period has increased tenfold."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Karl K. Eicher and John M. Staaz (eds.) Second Edition, *Agricultural Development in the Third World* (John Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 44 cited in Tesema Ta'a "Bribing the Land: An Appraisal of the Farming System of the Maccaa Oromo in Wallagga" in *Northeast African Studies*, Volume 9, Number 3 (Michigan State University Press, 2002 (New Series)),

<sup>21</sup> Karim Houmy, "Agricultural Mechanization Strategies and their Role in Agricultural Sector Policy Development Strategies" in Ashburner and Kienzle (eds.) *Investment in Agricultural Mechanization...*, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> FAO and UNIDO, *Investment in Agricultural Mechanization in Africa, Executive Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations of a Round Table Meeting of Experts* (Rome: FAO and UNIDO, 3-5, June 2010), p. 1.

Sub-Saharan Africa is a vast part of the African continent. It comprised 41 countries in 1982 and now (2015) 55 independent African states.<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the 1980s, the poorest geographic area of the world's economy was sub-Saharan Africa. Citing the World Bank's World Development Report, 1981, Eicher and Baker noted "that 22 of the 36 of the low-income countries in the world are sub-Saharan African countries."<sup>24</sup>

The mechanization of farming in developing countries has been very uneven. In many parts of Africa, in Java, and in many hilly regions in other parts of the globe, farmers in the 1980s still tilled by animal power or by hand. Investment in the sector is still low in most African countries. In addition, the only region in the world where agricultural productivity is still largely static is Africa due to poor investment. "Yields of maize and other staple cereals have typically remained at about 1ton per hectare, which is about one-third of the average achieved in Asia and Latin America."<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning of the 1980s, Eicher and Baker stated that "the bulk of the land and labour in sub-Saharan Africa is still devoted to small scale farming and pastoral systems of livestock production."<sup>26</sup> Thus, the predominant farming system in sub-Saharan Africa was in the 1980s smallholding crop cultivation. It depended on family labour that ranged from 80 to 90 percent of total labour inputs. Adult male farmers in sub-Saharan Africa worked an average of 5 hours a day or 1,000 to 1,500 hours per year. Much time was devoted to off-farm activities. But in Egypt and in many Asian countries the case was different. Compared to sub-Saharan African countries, adult male farmers in Egypt and in many Asian countries worked 2,500 to 3,000 hours per year.

<sup>27</sup>In sub-Saharan African countries, women also participated in farming, processing and marketing. At the same time, children were used as important source of labour. They participated

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<sup>23</sup> Eicher and Baker, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Agricultural Mechanization in Africa...*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Eicher and Baker, p. 6.

in weeding, “collection of firewood, bird scaring, carrying water, and taking care of sheep, goats, and cattle.”<sup>28</sup> In many parts of Africa, farmers still till their fields with hand tools. Human muscle and animal power are the main sources of power for land preparation in Africa. For instance, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), about 80 percent of the cultivated land in central Africa is worked manually. But in eastern and southern Africa the cultivated land that is worked manually is equal to 50 percent. In sub-Saharan Africa, rural-urban migration makes manual labor sometimes a scarce and weak resource for agricultural production.<sup>29</sup>

*Improving the performance of the agriculture sector has become one of the important challenges to be faced in the context of fighting malnutrition, illness, poverty, and unemployment. Furthermore, in recent years, the situation has been aggravated by very high food commodity price on the world market. This has significantly increased the number of people in poverty in many countries. As a result, progress in human development has been slowed down, and the danger of failing to deliver the Millennium Development Goals (MDG),...*

*In Africa, particularly in those countries south of the Sahara (SSA), there is a great potential to increase agricultural production. However, the realization of this potential will require high levels of commitment and resources. At the same time, due consideration will have to be given to ecological and climatic conditions. This requires a rational and responsible approach to the choice of cropping systems and crop production inputs. One of the most important of these inputs is the development and use of increased levels of farm power and appropriate mechanization techniques.<sup>30</sup>*

In the Guinea Savannah there is an enormous expanse of potentially arable land with 600 million hectares. Of this, 400 million hectares could be used for crop agriculture. However, less than 10 percent of this area is now cultivated. This makes it one of the largest

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

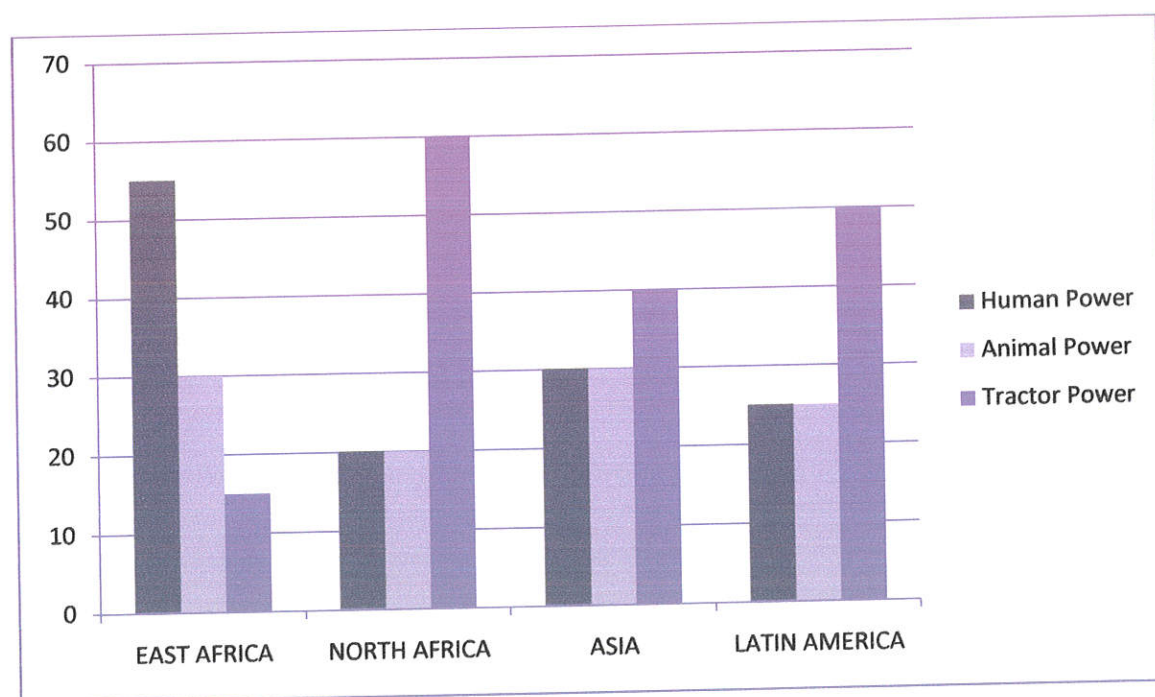
<sup>29</sup> FAO and UNIDO, *Investment in Agricultural Mechanization in Africa, Executive Summary...*, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Karim Houmy, Lawrence J. Clarke, John E. Ashburner and others, “Agricultural Mechanization In Sub Saharan Africa, Guidelines for preparing a Strategy, Integrated Crop Management” Vol. 22 (Rome: Plant Production Division, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2013), p. xi.

underused agricultural land reserves in the world. One major reason for this is that in many countries of SSA, there is a growing and ongoing rural-urban migration. On the other hand, two similarly underdeveloped and landlocked agricultural regions elsewhere in the developing world- the Brazilian Cerrado (the Brazil savanna, the largest savanna region in South America) and the north east region of Thailand have similar agro-climatic conditions to those of the Guinea Savannah. But the Brazilian Savanna has developed at a rapid pace over the past four decades and its production has conquered important world markets.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout Equatorial Africa, farmers use hand tools. The relationship between hand, animal and engine power sources in Africa compared with other developing regions at the end of 1960s and in the early 1970s is shown in graph 1 below.

*Bar Graph 1: Farm Power Sources (in percentages) in Africa, Asia and Latin America at the close of the 1960s*



Source: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Agricultural Mechanization in Africa...*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Hans P. Binswanger-Mkhize, Derek Byerlee, Alex McCalla and others, "The Growing Opportunities for African Agricultural Development, Conference Working Paper 16" (Accra, Ghana: Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI), December 5-7, 2011), p.1.

This was the situation at the end of the 1960s. The use of tractors in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has not shown significant increase over the past 40 years, compared with other world regions.<sup>32</sup> However, from among North African countries, Egyptian agriculture was transformed from its traditional level into a profitable commercial enterprise in 150 years because the government gave attention to it. It managed to feed a large and growing population. Most of its irrigation schemes and the extension of the cultivable area had been completed by 1914. Besides food, cotton growing for export and for an Egyptian textile industry became well developed.<sup>33</sup>

Mechanization has shown success when joined with large scale irrigation. Sudan, beginning with the 1924 Gezira scheme, is an outstanding example with the production of cotton, sugar cane, groundnuts and wheat. But Sudan has also large areas of mechanized rain-fed agriculture, producing sorghum as the main crop.<sup>34</sup> My dissertation will show that mechanization with entirely rain-fed agriculture was also successful in the Ethiopian lowlands.

One of the most important inputs for agricultural modernization and food production systems in Africa is engineering technology. Though African farmers have been encouraged by African governments to use agricultural machinery for different development programs the role of agricultural machinery is still below what was expected.<sup>35</sup> The constraints to mechanization have been identified for Nigeria as they affect large scale farms. These constraints are

*(1) access to credit, (2) setting up of manufacturing and repair services by entrepreneurs, (3) improving infrastructure, (4) affordable and secure access to complementary inputs (fuel, electricity, and larger consolidated plots of land), (5) better legal and regulatory capacity to protect the rights of owners of machinery, and (6) higher efficiency and capacity of public sector for implementing policy. Resolving these*

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<sup>32</sup>Ashburner and Kienzle, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup>P.J. Vatikiotis, *The Modern History of Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p. 332.

<sup>34</sup>P.M. Holt and M. Daly, *The History of the Sudan from the Coming of Islam to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), p. 211.

<sup>35</sup>Ashburner and Kienzle, p. 31.

*constraints should be the policy objectives of the government.*<sup>36</sup>

According to the FAO,

*...there are about 470000 tractors in Africa, but little is known about their age or working condition. The total number of working tractors would have to be about 3.5 million (7times more) to put Africa on a par with other regions. Assuming that the existing tractors are all functional, the annual replacement rate should now be about 47,000 units/year (assuming a ten-year life).*<sup>37</sup>

Developing countries need to develop agriculture. One of the problems is shortage of foreign exchange. It has been and still is a major constraint on importation of the inputs needed for rapid development. Also developing countries do not yet have a dynamic private sector that can support mechanization systems for rural development. Governments in developing countries therefore need to promote the introduction and use of mechanization inputs for development. These inputs require a strategy for the development of the government's national development plan.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, governments are not always efficient in carrying out this role.

Industry and agriculture could go together in mutual support in mechanization, but in Africa's human muscle and animal powered agriculture, "it is hardly surprising that very little industrial development has taken place to manufacture or even assemble machinery for agriculture. A few farm tool and implement factories have been established, mainly in South Africa, Zambia, Kenya and Zimbabwe."<sup>39</sup>

Agricultural experts advise Africans to establish National Committees on Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM). According to the experts, the national committees should comprise representatives of all major stakeholders, such as agriculture, finance, industry, trade and other

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<sup>36</sup> Hiroyuki Takeshima and Sheu, "Agricultural Mechanization and the Small Holder Farmers in Nigeria, Policy Note No.22" (Abuja, Nigeria: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2010), p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Agricultural Mechanization in Africa...*, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Mrema, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, *Agricultural Mechanization in Africa...*, p. 8.

ministries and farmers, together with financial, private sector, and research and development institutions. The main functions of the committees should be as follows:

*Assist the national government in reviewing national policy to include a strategy dealing with mechanization, develop and update the national agricultural mechanization strategy (NAMS), including regional strategies, an area where FAO and UNIDO can assist, coordinate efforts between different ministries and institutions, develop more efficient procurement systems, an area where FAO, UNIDO and World Bank can assist, ascertain compatibility of donations with national standards and plans, and prepare action plans for capacity building through formal education, research, extension and vocational training.*<sup>40</sup>

The strength of agricultural mechanization depends on the effective functioning of all components and the linkages between them. The end users are farmers.<sup>41</sup> Ashburner and Kienzle argued that the approach to agricultural mechanization should be “both holistic and participatory” and many stakeholders should be involved in a participatory approach. According to Ashburner and Kienzle, these stakeholders can be classified in three levels:

*At the demand level they include the smallholder farmers, commercial farmers, farming organizations, irrigation groups, crop processors and rural transporters. At the supply level they include the importers, manufacturers, blacksmiths, distributors, machinery support service providers and service contractors. And finally, at the institutional support level are the financiers and financial institutes, government and NGOs, extension workers, researchers, trainers and policy makers.*<sup>42</sup>

## 1.2 AN OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ETHIOPIA (1941-74)

Ethiopia in the period 1941-74 was a “land of vast opportunities.”<sup>43</sup> Her economy was primarily agricultural with a then generally favorable climate, good soil, sufficient rainfall, and in general, a

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<sup>40</sup> Ashburner and Kienzle, p. xiii.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> Eshetu Chole, “Economic Problems of Ethiopian Agricultural Development” in *Economic Journal* Vol. 1, No. 1 (1964), p. 25.

year-round growing season.<sup>44</sup> Her principal natural resource was her arable land. Agriculture accounted for about half of the country's Gross Domestic Product and supported about four-fifths of the population and supplied 90 percent by value of all exports, so that according to James Pickett, "of the country's agricultural Gross Domestic Product about one-fourth came from livestock and the rest from crops with roughly one-half of the crop value added coming from coffee, which accounted for some two-thirds of export earnings."<sup>45</sup> However, Ethiopia was considered as one of the most economically backward countries in spite of the fact that her potential for development was among the most promising.<sup>46</sup> This was because the country's agriculture remained basically traditional. The other factor that hindered agricultural development was inadequate infrastructure with the majority of peasants living in inaccessible areas far away from major roads and markets. Back in the 1950s, the use of chemical fertilizer, improved seed, credit and tractors remained almost unknown. In 1960, there were only 1,000 tractors throughout Ethiopia. In 1974, large-scale irrigation of land was less than 1 percent. Rain-fed agriculture remained almost the sole basis of agricultural production. As a result of these things trends in agricultural production showed little increase in the total cropped area and almost static production of grains.<sup>47</sup> According to Shiferaw Jammo, "...grain production in the early 1950s probably averaged about 4 million tons and the area under cultivation about 4.5 million hectares."<sup>48</sup> Mechanization could therefore have had a great impact on the Ethiopian economy in which the agricultural sector played so a dominant role.

A study of mechanized agricultural technology and the process of mechanization require understanding of both the mechanical components of agricultural activities and the new

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> James Pickett, *Economic Development in Ethiopia: Agriculture, the Market and the State* (Paris: Department Centre Studies, 1991), p. 14.

<sup>46</sup> John Michael Cohen, "Rural Change in Ethiopia: A Study of Land, Elites, Power and Values in Chillalo *Awraja*", (PhD Thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Colorado, 1973), p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Shiferaw Jammo, "An Overview of the Economy, 1941-74" in Shiferaw bekele (ed.) *An Economic History of Ethiopia, Vol. 1: The Imperial Era, 1941-74* (Senegal: Codesria Book Series, 1995), p. 20.

productive factors within the agricultural system.<sup>49</sup> Economic development based on agricultural improvement and improvements in rural welfare depend upon modernization of agriculture through technological and other change. The evidence for this is the development of nineteenth century Denmark and development in the United States and other high-income countries.<sup>50</sup>

In the first half of the 1960s Ethiopia's contribution to the world's export market consisted mainly of agricultural products, mainly coffee. In Ethiopia, the activity and income generated in many branches of the economy depended on the results achieved in the agricultural sector of the economy because agriculture supplied some of the basic raw materials for manufacturing industry while the volume of internal trade, export and transport was determined by the turnover of agricultural goods.<sup>51</sup> Thus, planning was an essential feature of economic development to ensure the utilization of national wealth. However, the result of the strategy for agricultural development seemed to be disappointing. It was only after the Second World War that numerous studies for the development of agriculture were conducted in Ethiopia.<sup>52</sup>

According to Shiferaw Jammo, though the First Five Year Plan was prepared to cover the period 1957-61. It only became effective in 1958 and the plan was extended up to 1962. The major objectives of the First Five Year Plan were to promote infrastructural development, develop social infrastructure and ensure the best possible utilization of the national wealth. Planning had become an accepted principle in all countries which strove to improve the living standard of their people. Modern economic and social development of Ethiopia came very late.<sup>53</sup> According to Cherian's optimistic view in the imperial period, they came mainly after the liberation of Ethiopia from

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Green, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> Mellor, p. 223.

<sup>51</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Agriculture, "Agriculture in Ethiopia" (1964), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974* (London: James Currey, 1991), p. 194.

<sup>53</sup> Shiferaw Jammo, p. 9.

Italian colonial rule in 1941.<sup>54</sup> Education, health and training of technical manpower were needed in order to make planning practical, raise industrial production and satisfy the domestic market, modernize agriculture, and focus on fiscal policy in order to mobilize financial and human resources for economic development. However, there were some shortcomings like low levels of savings and shortage of skilled manpower while the administrative machinery lacked the effective participation of concerned departments and agencies. The First Plan remained unpublished. According to its socio-economic aims the First Five Year Plan represented a first stage program in the development of a modern economy in Ethiopia. It was seen as a preparatory phase for future plans<sup>55</sup>

Table 1: Investment in Main Sectors during the First Five Year Plan in Millions of *Birr*

Sector	Plan	Fulfilled	Index of Fulfillment
Agriculture and Forestry	92.1	109.9	120
Mining, Power and Manufacturing	138.0	159.8	116
Transport and Communications	240.0	287.3	120
Social services	57.0	39.0	68
Housing	122,5	206.8	169
Other Activities	24.0	36.8	153
Total	673.6	839.6	124

Source: Imperial Ethiopian Government, *Second Five Year Development Plan* (Addis Ababa, October 1962), p. 43. Information given on First Five Year Plan in IEG *Second Five Year Plan*. Note: According to the government, the total anticipated investment was surpassed by 24 percent, if the figures can be trusted.

The Second Five Year Development Plan covered the period 1963-1967. It gave greater emphasis to directly productive undertakings, particularly manufacturing industry, mining, electricity, etc.

<sup>54</sup> K. A. Cherian (Prepared by and ed.) "Five Year Development Plans" in *Ethiopia Today, An Up-to-Date, Illustrated Review of Economic Development* (Addis Ababa: The Central Printing Press, June, 1969), p. 168.

<sup>55</sup> Shiferaw Jammo, pp. 9-10.

Certain basic problems in this plan were seen to be crucial. For instance, it considered agriculture to be the leading economic activity. Some of the basic problems that were later recognized as problems experienced in this plan were organization of agricultural research and experimentation, organization of various agricultural services, allocation of available material and human resources to different agricultural sectors and production areas and training and the organization for the implementation of the program.<sup>56</sup> Yet despite formal recognition of the importance of agriculture, according to Bahru, “budgetary allocation for agriculture was 2 % in 1967. This was attended by a correspondingly low growth rate of the agricultural sector.”<sup>57</sup>

However, towards the end of the Second Five Year Development Plan, the concept of modern cooperation was introduced in Ethiopia by the enactment of the Cooperative Proclamation No. 241/1958 in 1958 E.C (1966). Cooperation was intended to create a sense of participation in people in the course of socio-economic development. In order to help the cooperative movement the government established the Cooperative Department.<sup>58</sup> The functions of the Department included helping the formation, organization, promotion and proper management of cooperative societies in Ethiopia.<sup>59</sup> One major reason for the establishment of Cooperative Development was that the majority of peasant cultivators and people engaged in small scale cottage industries found it difficult to increase their income and improve their standard of living. They faced shortage of money and fell prey to village moneylenders who charged them exorbitant interest rates, as much as 100% or more. They could not obtain a rewarding and reasonable price for goods and services they produced. They could not make use of improved methods and practices. Thus, cooperation

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<sup>56</sup>Imperial Ethiopian government (IEG), Ministry of Agriculture, “Prospects of Agricultural Development in Ethiopia. An Aide Memoire on the Occasion of the Visit of Dr. A.H. Boerma, Director General Of the Food and Agricultural Organization” (Addis ababa: Ministry of Agriculture, February, 1971), pp. 8-9.

<sup>57</sup> Bahru, *A History of Modern...*, p. 194.

<sup>58</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, “Implementation Report 1962 E. C.” (Addis Ababa: Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, 1963 E.C.), pp. 50-51.

<sup>59</sup>Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of National Community development and Social Affairs, “Cooperative Development Department Annual Report 1964 E.C.” (Addis Ababa: Ministry of National community Development and Social Affairs, September 1965 E.C.), p. 1.

was seen as one of the devices to overcome most of these problems and raise the productivity, income and standard of living of farmers and other low income people who were engaged in various activities.<sup>60</sup> There were about ten different types of cooperative societies in Ethiopia as of June 1964 E.C. These cooperatives included Agricultural Multi -Purpose Cooperatives. There were 67 Agricultural Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies in Ethiopia with a total membership of 14,665 and a share capital of 1,519,975 *birr*. Of these, 40 were registered and 27 were at a promotional stage. Of these 67 societies, five, namely Qola Diba in Gondar *Awraja* in Dämbia *Wäräda*, Wälqait-Sätit-Humära in Wägära *Awraja* in Sätit *Wäräda*, Abdärafi in Gondar *Awraja* in Armachiho *Wäräda* and Mättäma and Mahbärä Sellasie in Chilga *Awraja* in Mättäma *Wäräda* were in the Governorate General of Begemeder and Simien<sup>61</sup> which is now called North Gondar Zone.

The Third Five Year Plan covered the period 1969-1973/74. “Since recommendations of the Administrative Reform Committee for the improvement of the administrative and inter-ministerial coordination were not acted upon until 1966, the government postponed the preparation of the third plan.”<sup>62</sup> A one year investment program was prepared for 1968. Thanks to the new administrative reforms, relevant government departments were involved in the preparation of the Third Five Year Plan. Experiences were gained from the evaluation of the First Five Year Plan and Second Five Year Plan.<sup>63</sup> It was only in this plan that the government gave proper attention to agriculture. Priority in this plan was given to extensive commercial and mechanized agriculture. The agents of this agricultural transformation were to be private Ethiopians, expatriate concessionaires and the government. The private Ethiopians were

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<sup>60</sup>Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, “Implementation Report 1963 E.C.” (Addis Ababa: Ministry of National Community Development and Social affairs, 1963 E.C.), pp. 50-51.

<sup>61</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, “Cooperative Development...”, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Shiferaw Jammo. p. 11.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

particularly active in southern Shoa. Private Ethiopians and private concessionaires were also active in Sätit-Humära in the then north western Begemeder and Simien, bordering the Sudan. Thus, commercialization and mechanization became much more extensive.<sup>64</sup>

Tractors and plant protection chemicals were exempted from import duties. Fuel tax exemptions aimed to stimulate mechanization. Large agrarian investments, above US \$ 200,000, were given three to five years income tax relief. Cheap credit was also made available through the establishment of agricultural development banks.<sup>65</sup>

Generally speaking, foreign investors were granted considerable benefits and facilities. All such facilities were also given to Ethiopian citizens and domestic firms. Many big agricultural farms were established. Examples are: the Wonji and Mätähara Sugar Estates, the Tändaho Cotton Plantation, the Elaberet Agricultural Farm, and the Cotton Plantation of Tässänäy. The first three estates were in the Awash valley while the last two were in Eritrea, the then northernmost province of Ethiopia. There were also many commercial farms of smaller size operated by Ethiopian nationals in different parts of the country which received benefits.<sup>66</sup>

Following the Third Five Year Plan, the Fourth Five Year Plan was prepared and its preparation was nearing completion. The Planning Office worked out a draft outline strategy. A large number of planning specialists and committees representing various government departments participated and did extensive work on alternative macro-economic growth paths and sectoral strategies and policies. It was designed to cover the period 1975-79 but it did not get the chance to live and see the light of day. Both the government and the plan were swept away by the events of 1974.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia...*, p. 194.

<sup>65</sup>John Michael Cohen and Dov Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), p. 8.

<sup>66</sup>K. A. Cherian (Prepared by and ed.) "Agricultural Plantations in Ethiopia" in *Ethiopia To-Day, An Up-To-Date, Illustrated Review of Economic Development* (Addis Ababa: The Central Printing Press, June 1969), p. 42.

<sup>67</sup>Shiferaw Jammo, p. 13.

What happened to employment and income distribution when these economic policies were adopted? When some mechanization and large-scale commercial farming were introduced in relatively uninhabited areas they had positive effects on both output and employment. This was particularly true of the Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma area in the north western part of Ethiopia close to the Sudanese border. In this area large scale cultivation of sesame seeds made it possible to increase exports. The government lands newly brought under cultivation created new jobs and a subsequent new job-creating capacity. Nevertheless, negative consequence of mechanized agriculture in Mättäma was the “eviction of the Gumuz people from their old villages at Kokit and Wärkamba”.<sup>68</sup> In the Awash basin, a large number of permanent and semi-permanent jobs were created, especially in the sugar plantation. But if one takes into account the number of pastoralists and their dependents dislodged from their land, the net increase in employment was rather negative. The total number of pastoralists who had to abandon their land was greater than the total number of people who found jobs. According to Duri Mohammed,

*The pastoralists with their cattle herds were forced to abandon their traditional grazing lands and seek new marginal lands because the new plantation economy had little to share with the pastoral economy: neither its technical spill-over nor its linkage effects could make an impact. These plantations are by definition capital-intensive; their manpower requirements are very much limited and relatively confined to semi-skilled workers, which a pastoral type of economy could hardly avail.*<sup>69</sup>

Though not really successful, and not the government’s first priority in agricultural policy, an attempt to promote peasant agriculture was made. The government set up a unit known as the Extension Project Implementation Department (EPID) to co-ordinate minimum package

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<sup>68</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, “A History of Matamma Town, 1936-1991” (Ma Thesis, Department of History, A.A.U., 2010), p. 39.

<sup>69</sup> Duri Mohammed, “Tractors Come Later. Improvements in Local Farm tools and Land Reform have Priority” in *Ceres*, Vol. 6, no. 4 (1973), p. 61.

programs. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) ran similar programs. A good example to this was the Chillalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU) of 1967 in Arsi. The objective of this program was to benefit the poor peasants. However, it ended up by enriching the already rich landlords.<sup>70</sup> According to Dessalegn Rahmato, “Measured against CADU’S goals and objectives, mechanization is also not to be welcomed because it tends to concentrate wealth and property in the hands of the few.”<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, the Wällamo Agricultural Development Unit (WADU) that was financed by the United Nations World Bank was relatively more successful than the CADU.<sup>72</sup>

An example of the traditional agriculture of highland Ethiopia under more favourable conditions of infrastructure than many others was the agriculture in Ada district in eastern Shoa that ranges from 1600 to 2400 meters above sea level. The district lies 40 kilometers from Addis Ababa. According to Ellis, the district had better infrastructures than most areas. The district was (and still is) noted for the high quality of its teff grain.<sup>73</sup> According to Ellis,

*It was found that the cost of seedbed preparation by oxen was less than the cost of seedbed preparation by tractor, but that threshing by oxen was more costly than threshing by standing thresher and tractor. The total costs of both operations, when tractors were assumed to be run 1000 hours a year at 67 percent efficiency, and labor in the traditional mode of production was costed [costing] at \$1.00 per day, and when improved yields were assumed, were virtually identical.<sup>74</sup>*

This case, if Ellis is correct in his costing, this would suggest that tractor farming might make no difference to costs.

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<sup>70</sup> Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia...*, p. 194.

<sup>71</sup> Dessalegn Rahmato, “Moral Crusaders and Incipient Capitalists: Mechanized Agriculture and its Critics in Ethiopia” in *Proceedings of the Third Annual Seminar of the Department of History* (Addis Ababa University, 1986), p. 71.

<sup>72</sup> Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia...*, p. 195.

<sup>73</sup> Gene Ellis, “The Economics of Tractorization and the Dynamics of Growth in Ada District Ethiopia, presented at the *Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association* (Philadelphia: Mount Saint Vincent University, 1972), pp. 2-3.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The areas that attracted both local and foreign investors were Arssi province, the Rift valley, and the Sätit-Humära area.<sup>75</sup>

Table 2: Total Land Area under Mechanization up to 1975

Region	Area in Hectares
Arssi province	32,000
Rift Valley	32,000
Awash Valley	52,000
Humära Area •	176,000
Others ( inc. Ada, Bale, Čheffa, Käffa, Harrär, Wälläga, etc)	25,000
Total	317,000
Rounded to	320,000

Source: Dessalegn Rahmato, *The Peasant and the State...*, p. 84.

Note: It is only for mechanized farming.

The following chapter of my dissertation describes the beginnings and history of the new farming at Abdärafi and Mättäma.

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<sup>75</sup> Dessalegn Rahmato, *The Peasant and the State: Studies in Agrarian Change in Ethiopia 1950s-2000s* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2009), p. 83.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREAS

#### INTRODUCTION

The areas of my dissertation research are Abdärafi and Mättäma. Geographically they are found in what is the extreme northwestern part of what was once the Governorate General of the Begemeder and Simien *qolla* (lowlands) bordering the Sudan.

This chapter will discuss the geographical and historical background of Abdärafi and Mättäma. Both areas that are found in the then Begemeder and Simien bordering the Sudan were suitable for mechanized farming. This chapter will briefly explain how these lowland areas were inaccessible and wild, uncultivated wastelands before the 1950s, with poor infrastructure, scarce resources and rampant malaria, leishmaniasis (kala-azar) and other dangerous diseases, little drinking water and in general hazardous to health.

#### 2.1 ABDÄRAFI

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture, Institute of Agricultural Research, ecologically, both Abdärafi and Mättäma are parts of the western lowlands extending from North Western Eritrea to the Gambélla area and further south.<sup>1</sup>

Abdärafi (also called Abdär-Rafi or Abdurafi) is found in what was once Begemeder and Simien Governorate General in Gondar *Zuria Awraja* (now North Gondar Zone). It is a *qolla* (lowland) area. During the imperial period 1961-67, Abdärafi was a village under Armachiho *Wäräda* in Tach Armachiho. The centre of administration of Armachiho was Tikil Dingay. Under Armachiho *Wäräda* there were 5 *mikitil wärädas*, namely, Galagär, Jani Fänkära, Ketch, Lay

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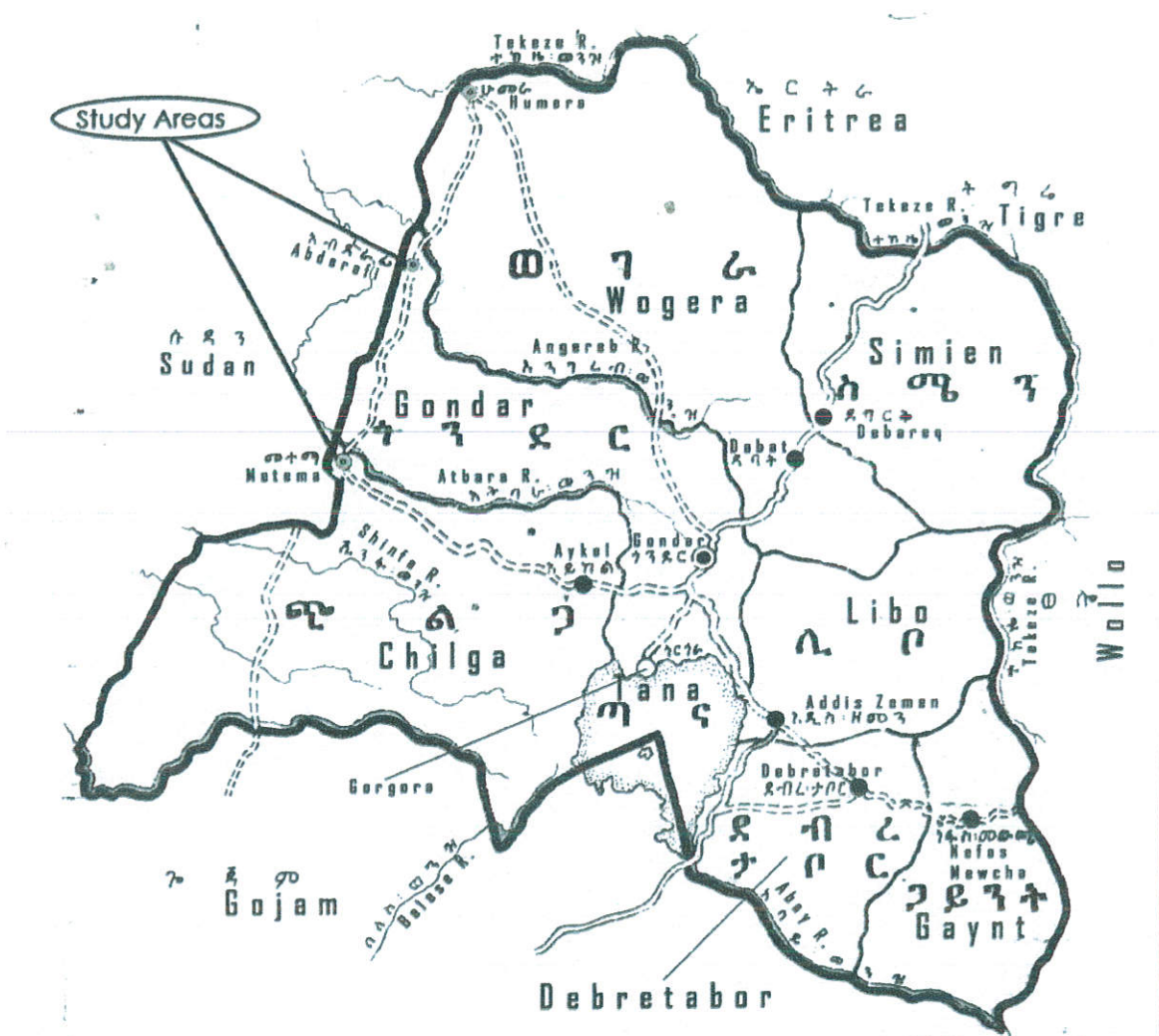
<sup>1</sup>Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), Ministry of Agriculture, , "Report of the Survey Mission on the Agricultural Development of Setit Humera Area" (Addis Ababa: Ministry of Agriculture, Institute of Agricultural Research, 31<sup>st</sup> October-3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1967), p. 9.

Map 1: Map of Ethiopia Showing National Boundaries and Provinces in the Imperial Period



Source: John M. Cohen and Dov. Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia. The Social Background to a Revolution* (Van Gorcum and Comp. B.V-Assen, the Netherlands, 1975), p. cover page.

Map 2: The Seven *Awrajas* of Begemeder and Simien, 1970s.



Source: "Bä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätañaw Yä Edgätna Limat Seminar, Kä Hidar 15 qän Eskä Hidar 21 qän 1964 E.C.", p. cover page.

Armachiho, and Tach Armachiho. The political centers of these *mikitil wärädas* were Wäynotch, Jankäw, Bäjänä Maryam, Chilquana, and Godobé respectively.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the 1960s, human settlement in Abdärafī was scarce. But after the establishment of modern and other agriculture in the area people started to come and more settlement began. In 1972, within one year of modern agricultural development, the total number of both permanent and seasonal peak population in the different villages and farm sites of Abdärafī, Abraha-Enjära, the Police Farm, Grar Wuha and Marzänäb were 6,700 (permanent) and 3,600 (seasonal) respectively. This brought the total number of the population to 10,300.<sup>3</sup> Population increase in Abdarafi and the other cooperative farms of the area was up by 130 per cent during the seasonal peak beginning in June and extending into October and November.<sup>4</sup>

Table 3: Projected Population (Estimates) for Selected Towns: 1984-1988 G. C

Warada/ Town	2007			1984			1985			1986			1987			1988		
	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F
Mirab Armahiho Town	15075	8081	6,994	5,976	3,198	2,768	6213	3330	2882	6469	3468	3001	6737	3611	3125	7015	3760	3254
Abraha- Jira Town	4244	2,268	1,976	1,680	898	782	1749	935	814	1821	973	848	1897	1013	883	1975	1055	919
Abdarafi Town	10831	5,813	5,018	4,287	2,301	1,986	4464	2396	2068	4648	2495	2153	4840	2598	2242	5040	2705	2335

Note: Backward Projection is made based on the 2007 PHC results. Note: The population term should I think be “estimated” but the PHC term is “projected” and I therefore use the PHC. Source: *Central Statistical Agency, Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia 2007*.

Currently, the Sex Ratio (number of males/number of females) X 100 of Abdärafī is 121.8.<sup>5</sup>

According to informants, the first settlers in the area were the Amhara people of Armachiho.

Abdärafī is distant from Gondar, Mättäma, and Humära 230, 109 and 87 kilometers

<sup>2</sup> Yä Ethiopia Nigusä Nägäst Mängist, *Yagär Gizat Minister Mäshihét (1953-1959)*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> Tippetts-Abbott-McCarthy-Stratton Checchi and Company (TAMS), Humara Agricultural Development Project (HADP) Ministry of Agriculture, “The Humera Report: Resource and Development Planning” Volume 2 Surveys, Prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture, Addis Ababa and New York, 1974, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Aynalem Adugna, “Amhara demography and health” (July, 2014), p. 11.

respectively.<sup>6</sup> Rainfall that comes from May to October is between 500-1000 mm. The area is very hot with a mean annual temperature that ranges from 32<sup>0</sup>C to 44<sup>0</sup>C. Malaria was and still is rampant during the rainy season and early settlement was deterred by a high mortality rate. Malaria is a debilitating and often fatal disease that causes alternate fever and shivering (cold chills shaking the body). Malaria is transmitted by species of the genus anopheles mosquito.<sup>7</sup> This serious problem prevented neighboring highlanders from exploiting the land on a permanent settlement basis. But this did not mean that there was no farming at all. There was small scale farming in small areas of cultivated lands.<sup>8</sup> In Ethiopia three-fourths of land below 2000 meters is estimated to be malarious.<sup>9</sup> The highest prevalence of malaria in Humära is seen in the months of August to November and the lowest prevalence is seen in the months of March and April.<sup>10</sup> Symptoms of malaria consists of fever, malaise, weakness, gastrointestinal complaints, neurologic complaints, headache, back pain, chill and or/cough.<sup>11</sup> Ethiopia started to fight against malaria more than half a century ago. According to Aynalem,

*Initially malaria control began as pilot control projects in the 1950s and then it was launched as a national eradication campaign in the 60s followed by a control strategy in the 70s. The effort has seen alternating periods of success and failures. In 1976 the vertical organization known as the National Organization for the Control of Malaria and other Vector-borne Diseases (NOCMVD) evolved from the Malaria Eradication Service (MES). As in the case everywhere*

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<sup>6</sup> Girma Melese, "Begemeder and Simien Problems and Prospects for Development" (January 1976), pp.10-11.

<sup>7</sup> "Malaria," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia Ready Reference 15<sup>th</sup> ed.* 2005 Vol. 7, pp. 724-725.

<sup>8</sup> Informants: Yitbarek Mängistu and Yohannis Wändimu (Abdärafi Office of Agriculture, Development Agents) and Täsfayä Wärku.

<sup>9</sup> Aynalem Adugna, "Malaria in Ethiopia" in *Ethiopian Demography and Health*, (July 2014), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Tesfaye Mengesha, Yohannes Tsegaye and Hailu Yenenen, "The Epidemiology of Malaria in Humera, N.W Ethiopia" in *Ethiopian Journal Health Science*, Volume 10, No. 2 (July 2000), p. 137.

<sup>11</sup> "Treatment of Malaria (Guidelines for Clinicians)", in *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* (Atlanta, July 2013), p. 1.

*elsewhere malaria is endemic, the disease is far from being conquered.*<sup>12</sup>

According to informants, farmers in my dissertation areas in the 1960s and 1970s were using quinine against malaria. Quinine tablets were sometimes distributed free of charge to farmers by the Ministry of Health from Asmara. But the distribution was not consistent. The big farmers used to go to Asmara in order to buy quinine tablets with their own money. The informants said that the cost of the quinine was cheap. Seasonal labourers in the different farming sites did not in most cases have access to quinine. They used traditional methods of protection. They smeared their bodies with garlic and in rare cases with diesel fuel (if farmers gave it then) during the night time. They believed that the insects would not bite them due to the smell of the garlic and the diesel. In fact many seasonal labourers caught malaria, as noted below in chapter four. The informants also said that the malaria eradication workers sprayed DDT twice a year in their areas and gave anti-malaria education to them.<sup>13</sup>

Quinine has been used as a prophylactic for malaria since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was the first treatment for malaria.<sup>14</sup> However, “Quinine may cause side effects, such as nausea, restlessness, difficulty hearing or ringing in the ears, confusion and nervousness.”<sup>15</sup>

DDT was developed as a modern insecticide in the 1940s. At the beginning, it was used to combat malaria, typhus, and other insect-borne human diseases.<sup>16</sup> Spraying of DDT exposes people serious health effects. According to scientists, “it should only be used as a last resort in

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<sup>12</sup> Aynalem, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Informants: Zänäbä Bälay, Tibäbu Wärqu and Bärhun Gäbrämichaél.

<sup>14</sup> Michelle Bryner, “What is Quinine?” in *Live Science*, (April 14, 2014), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> “Quinine”, in *US National Library of Medicine, US Department of Health and Human Services National Institute of Health* (February 1, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> “DDT-A Brief History and States,” in *United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)* (August, 2015), p. 1.

combating malaria.”<sup>17</sup> The use of DDT was banned by the Stockholm Convention of the United Nations in 2001. However, since then, Ethiopia and nine other nations “notified the treaty’s Secretariat that they are using it.”<sup>18</sup> According to Environmental Health News, countries should combat malaria without DDT by using alternative methods, “such as controlling stagnant ponds...and using bed nets treated with parathyroid insecticides”<sup>19</sup> Good bed nets, properly used, are a secure protection against the bite of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Only one of my informants suggested that “a few rich farmers” in my research areas might have used nets bought from Sudan.<sup>20</sup> He was not certain about this information. It seems therefore, that at most only a few farmers used bed nets in the period of my dissertation and probably none at all. Migrant workers certainly had no nets.

Worldwide, after malaria and sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis or kala-azar is the third most important vector borne disease. In Ethiopia a serious outbreak of visceral leishmaniasis was reported among migrant agricultural labourers near the Sudanese border of Northwest Ethiopia in 1978.<sup>21</sup> Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) is in fact a growing problem in the area. It is carried from animals to people, or between people, through the bite of a parasitic sand-fly (see photograph 1). Without treatment, the disease is almost always fatal.<sup>22</sup> James McCann has also stressed that both

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<sup>17</sup> Environmental Health Science, “Should DDT be used to combat malaria?” in *Scientific American Marlo Cone and Environment Health News* (May 4, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Informant: Bärhun.

<sup>21</sup> Gétahun Mängistu and Bälätä Ayälä, “Visceral Leishmaniasis and HIV Co-infection in Patients Admitted to Gondar University Hospital, Northwest Ethiopia” (2007), p. 1 unpublished report to the hospital given to me by these two Doctors.

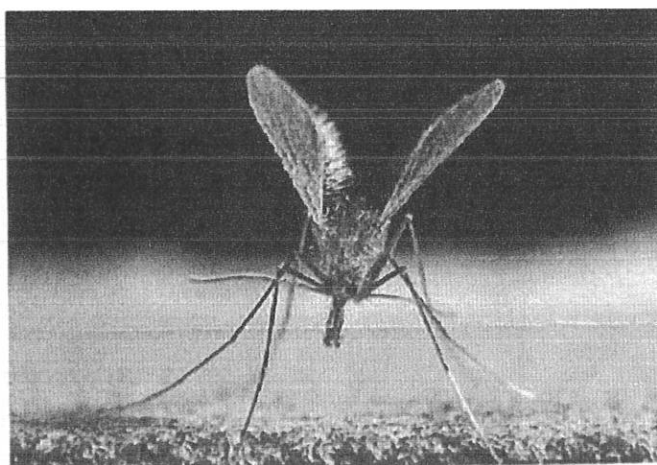
<sup>22</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF-USA), “Doctors without Borders, International Activity Report 2005: Ethiopia”, pp. 1-3.

humans and domestic animals are discouraged by this disease from year-round habitation.<sup>23</sup>

Leishmaniasis or kala-azar is

*Characterized by a range of symptoms, including fever, weight loss, weakness, hepatomegaly, lymphadenopathy and splenomegaly. VL..., translates to "black disease", because of the skin pigmentation that can be a symptom. The incubation period ranges from three to eight months. Infected individuals are therefore unlikely to develop symptoms for several months after infection.*<sup>24</sup>

Photograph 1: Sand-fly



Source: Malaria Consortium, "Leishmaniasis Control in Eastern Africa: Past and Present Efforts and Future Needs. Situation and Gap Analysis" (Funded by COMDIS, a Research Programme Consortium coordinated by the Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development, University of Leeds, supported by the Department for International Development, UK, November 2010), p. 17.

Leishmaniasis is transmitted by the female sand-fly. In Ethiopia, "cutaneous leishmaniasis is endemic in highland... and it is caused ...by *L. aethiopica* and occasionally by *L. tropica* and *L. major*. Visceral leishmaniasis (kala-azar) is mainly found in arid and semi-arid areas and is caused by *L. donovani*." <sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>James McCann, "A Durra Revolution and Frontier Agriculture in Northwest Ethiopia: 1898-1920" in *Journal of African History* (Volume 31, 1, 1990), p. 122.

<sup>24</sup> Malaria Consortium, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Kidist Zealiyas, "Anti-Promastigote and haemolytic activity of selected Ethiopian traditional plants used for treatment of leishmaniasis" in *Proceeding of the Scientific Review Workshop on the ongoing*

MSF- USA runs programs in northwestern Ethiopia to treat people who have this deadly disease, visceral leishmaniasis. The project is operated in Humära and Abdärafī.<sup>26</sup> The MSF is handling its project inside Abdärafī. The Abdärafī program also offers nutritional support for patients and treatment for malnourished children.<sup>27</sup> Anti-malaria prophylactic tablets were not available until after the 1970s<sup>28</sup> and there was nothing available to prevent kala-azar.

The natural vegetation of Abdärafī is composed of species of different acacia trees with much grass growing beneath them. Wild animals and birds that used to live in the forest included eland, elephant, giraffe, bushbuck, lion, ostrich, bush duiker, oribi (*ourebia ourebi*), klipspringer, leopard, partridge and guinea hen, but farming and hunting have almost eliminated them.<sup>29</sup>

According to informants, during the struggle of the Sudanese against the British colonialists, the Ethiopian officials of the time are said to have allowed some of what my informants called “freedom fighters” (but perhaps criminals in flight of bandits) to use Abdärafī as a shelter during their “struggle”, probably in the 1920s. *Däjazmach* Ayalew Birru (1892-1945) who was the *Shum* (head) of Wägära in 1916, *Shum* of Simien in 1928, and the commander-in-chief of the Imperial Army from 1917 to 1918, is also said to have given them some weapons.<sup>30</sup> Probably this local friendly relationship between Ethiopians and Sudanese helped to develop commercial contacts. Ethiopian cattle and coffee were exchanged against Sudanese rock salt, cooking oil, onions and *abujädi chärq* (calico-a type of heavy cotton cloth that is usually plain white). Such social interaction also induced Ethiopians to learn Arabic. In Abdärafī almost everybody can speak the

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*Efficacy and Safety Investigations of Traditionally used Medical Plants in Ethiopia, November 15-17, 2013* (Ambo, Ethiopia: Ethiopian Public Health Institute), p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “Doctors without Borders,” (MSF-USA)... p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> “MSF-Holland Abdurafi Project,” 2014, p.3, Informant: Täsfayä and Dämäqä.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Henri Lambert, “Malaria: Past and Present” in *Lists of Nobel Prizes and Laureates* (2014), pp. 4-5

<sup>29</sup> Informants: Sergeant Maru Bäqälä, *Basha* Adugña Wärqu, Colonel Tigabu Tädla and Nägädu Abätä.

<sup>30</sup> Informants: Sälämon Guadu, Gétu Alämu, Abay Sälämon, Abära Tšägayä, Aschaläw Ayalew, and Jäjaw Tšahayä.

Arabic language. Currently five languages are spoken in Abdärafī. These are Amharic, Tigriñña, Arabic, Agäw and *Afan* Oromo. Abdärafī (Abdär-Rafī or Abdurafī) means in Arabic “(where) Abder left.”<sup>31</sup>

The Angäräb River, also known as Bahr-as-Salam which in Arabic means “River of Peace”, is a river of Ethiopia and Eastern Sudan, and one of the tributaries of the Nile. It rises near Daqwa, north of Gondar in the present Amhara Region, flowing west to join the Atbarah River. The district of Armachiho is located along part of the flow. The primary drinking water source for the city of Gondar is the Angäräb Reservoir, fed by the Angäräb River. On the other hand, the Atbarah River, also known as the Guang River, is a river that rises in the Ethiopian highlands west of Gondar not far from Lake Tana.<sup>32</sup> The people in Abdärafī and its surrounding areas claim that the Guang River is the border line that separates Ethiopia from Sudan. This river flows northwest into Sudan, where it joins the larger Täkazé tributary of the Blue Nile. The Atbarah/Guang now Täkazé then joins the Nile at the town of Atbarah. North of the Angäräb River are found the mountainous regions of Simien, Şälämt, Wälqait, and Şägädé. South of the Angäräb River is found the large territory of Armachiho where Abdärafī is found. This area was the center of a very strong resistance movement of the Ethiopian patriots against the Italian Fascist occupation and its brutality, led by the prominent leaders of the patriots of Begemeder and Simien (later Gondar province) like *Fitawrari* (later *ras*) Wubnäh Tässäma (*Amoraw* Wubnäh or Wubnäh the Eagle) and *Bitwädäd* Adanä Mäkonän. Armachiho, owing to its position and its difficult terrain, was once covered with thick and inaccessible forest, was once beyond any outside control and remains up to today an area of instability and lawlessness. The

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<sup>31</sup>Informants: Aschaläw, Jäjaw, Sergeant Maru and Basha Adugña .

<sup>32</sup> Major Rivers of Ethiopia, *Photo Album, Ethiopia about Ethiopia* (2014), pp. 1-2; Informants: Sergeant Maru, Basha Adugña, and Colonel Tigabu.

population of Armachiho had a tradition and a practice of independence and inviolability of their territory, given that they had never been known to pay taxes to the *Nigus* (King), and his troops had never penetrated into the region to assert sovereignty. In the recent past Armachiho was considered not only as a safe asylum for outlaws and *shiftas* (bandits, rebels), but also was equally a storehouse of arms pillaged from passing caravans. It was known that a flourishing trade in illegal arms and other goods was carried on from Armachiho.<sup>33</sup>

In 1935 when the Italians came to invade Ethiopia, the path they followed was from Asmara to Om Hajär, from Om Hajär to Abdärafī, from Abdärafī to Godäbé, from Godäbé to Mättäma and from Mättäma to Gondar. The Italians built their military camps at Abdärafī and Godäbé. The Ethiopian patriots like *Fitawrari Zämu Mintasnot*, *Fitawrari Yilma Tägäñe*, *Fitawrari Bahta Sirat*, *Fitawrari Abära Ayälä*, *Fitawrari Abära Gidäy* and *Fitawrari Kidané Ayälä* courageously fought the Italians. On one occasion in 1935 they burned nine military trucks, and wiped out a Fascist force at a place called Abba Sämwäw Kumar (in Arabic, Kumar is the name of a tree (*tamaridvo indica*) in Abdärafī. Hence the major role Armachiho played in resisting the Fascist occupation was probably the background to the Fascist decision to modify the border of northern Gondar. On Feb. 5, 1939 Fascist officials in Asmara modified the border between Eritrea and Amhara, transferring the whole of northern Gondar, north of the Angäräb, to the Eritrean government.<sup>34</sup>

Abdärafī was an inaccessible and wild, almost uncultivated wasteland before the 1950s. It was only in the 1950s that the land started to be more cultivated. Copying the farmers in Sätit-Humära, different individuals from the surrounding area started farming with oxen in Abdärafī.

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<sup>33</sup> Informants: Sälämon Guadu, Gétu, Abay, Abära, Aschaläw and Jäjaw.

<sup>34</sup> Informants: Mängistu, Alänä, Fiseha Asräs, and Gäbrä Egziabher.

Among those individuals the most important figure to be mentioned here is *Ato* Waksum Nāwätä. He was the *ballabat* in Armachiho and *Qäbälle Shum* of Abdärafī. It was this man who laid the foundation for the development of Abdärafī to *wäräda* level after practicing farming first with oxen and later with tractors.<sup>35</sup> This will be discussed in greater depth in chapter three.

In both the Imperial and *Därg* Periods, Abdärafī was under Tach Armachiho *Wäräda*. According to informants, it became the seat of the *Wäräda* governor from 1971 onwards. The first *Wäräda* administrator was *Ato* Tägäññe Bitäw and his Deputy was *Ato* Yilma Zäläläw. *Ato* Yilma Zäläläw was once captured and sent to prison by the Sudanese government while visiting spring water at Korädäm, owing to the long-standing dispute over whether land along the Guang River was Ethiopian or Sudanese territory. It was through the intervention and diplomatic effort of Emperor Haile Selassie that he was released. It should also be remembered that the Ethiopian side of the border was kept by inefficient *ṭäräfäññoch* (border guards). A *ṭäräfäñña* was assigned every month to keep the border. Part of Semien Gondar Zone, Tach Armachiho was bordered on the south by Lay (upper) Armachiho and *Chilga*, on the southwest by *Mättäma*, on the west by *Mirab Armachiho*, on the north by *Şägädé*, on the east by *Dabat*, and on the south east by *Wägära*.<sup>36</sup> There will be more explanation on these *ṭäräfäññoch* in chapter 7 that discusses the problem of the border and disputed territory.

With the coming of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power new administrative arrangements were formed. The Amhara National Regional State on its part did the same thing. According to the new and still current administrative arrangement of the

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<sup>35</sup> Yä Begemederna Simien Taqlay Gizat Police, *Yä Begemederna Simien Taqlay Gizat Police Abalotch Yä Ersha Limat Mahbär Mäşihét* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1963 E.C), pp. 5-10; Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Alänä, Sälämon Hunäñaw.

<sup>36</sup> Liqū Ejigu, *Yä Kibur Bitwädäd Adanä Mäkonän Abba Däfar Yä Hiwät Tarik* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printing Press, 1977 E.C), pp. 237 & 246; Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Fiseha, Gétu, and Aschaläw.

*Wärädas* in North Gondar, the town of Abdärafī became part of Mirab Armachiho under Abräha-Enjära, which in Tigriñña language means “Abräha’s bread”, also known as Abräha-Jira which in *Afan* Oromo means “Abräha is present” or “Abräha is here.” The place is also called Abräha Jiraf, which in Amharic means “Abraha the plowman’s whip.” Abdärafī lost its *Wäräda* status and became a sub-*Wäräda*. This created dissatisfaction among the people of the area. Then Abdärafī became one among the newly organized urban centers with municipal status as of July 5, 2004. It became a sub-municipality under North Gondar Zone. A mayor was assigned to run the local government in December 2014. Located at the northwestern point of Semien Gondar Zone, Abdärafī is bordered on the north by the Tigray Regional State towns of Humära and Mai Khadra at 65 and 95 kilometers respectively, on the south by Mättäma Yohannis at 29 kms., on the east by Şägädé and its *Wäräda* town of Abräha-Enjära and on the west by neighboring Sudan at 28 kms. (See Map 2). There is a small Sudanese town on the border. The name of this small town is Assira. It is a commercial town under Gedarif. Friday is its market day. There is free movement of people. Ethiopians from Abdärafī can go to Assira and the Sudanese people can come from Assira to Abdärafī. It takes two hours on foot. There is smuggling. The smugglers are both Ethiopians and Sudanese. They smuggle especially weapons.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2 MÄTTÄMA

Mättäma (also known as Mättäma Yohannis) is found in what was once the Governorate General of Begemeder and Simien in *Chilga Awraja* on the border with Sudan. Across the border is Sudanese Gallabat. According to Hormuzd Rassam, the name “Mättäma” comes from the Arabic *Mutamm* for “the place of cutting, or termination-indicating the end of Muslim provinces”,

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<sup>37</sup>*Zikre-Hig* of the Council of the Amhara National Regional State in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, *The Amhara National Regional State Newly Organized Municipalities Revenue Tariff Determination, Council of the Regional Government Regulation Regulation No. 20/2004*; Ministry of Agriculture, “The Humära Report, Appendices”, p. 24; Informants: Gétu, Abay, Abära, Aschaläw, Jajaw, Nägädu, and Girma Mogäs.

although at the time the settlement was better known as “Suk ul-Gallabat” (“the market of Gallabat”).<sup>38</sup> Mättäma *wäräda* is located about 900 kms. northwest of Addis Ababa and about 180 kms. west of Gondar city. Currently it is one of the most remote *wärädas* of the Amhara Regional State. It has an international boundary of more than 60 kms. length between Ethiopia and Sudan. Part of North Gondar Zone, Mättäma is bordered on the south by Quara, on the west by Sudan, on the north by Mirab Armachiho, on the northeast by Tach Armachiho, on the east by Chilga, and on the southeast by Akusa. Towns in Mättäma include Shähdi, Mättäma Yohannis, and Shinfä.<sup>39</sup>

Before the 1960s no one lived in Mättäma outside Mättäma Yohannis except a few Gumuz in the Kokit area and probably some Qimant. It was inaccessible to human settlement. According to Dessalegn Bizuneh, in 1938, the population of Mättäma Yohannis was 3000. There were more Eritreans than any others.<sup>40</sup> Due to the development of modern agriculture in Mättäma *Wäräda*, other new towns like Shähdi, Shinfä, Kokit and Gända Wuha were established and grew with population settlement. Population increase in Mättäma and in the other agricultural development areas was 130 per cent during the seasonal peak beginning in June and extending into October and November.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Hormuzd Rassam, *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore King of Abyssinia* (London: John Murray, 1869), p.158.

<sup>39</sup> The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), “Metema Pilot Learning Site Diagnosis and Program Design” (July 2005), p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> TAMS, “The Humera Report: Resource ...”, p. 120.

According to Solomon, "... the Matamma-Humara towns attracted between 80,000 and 150,000 migrants. The city [Gondar] had almost tripled the size of its population. In 1960 the estimated population of Gondar was 29,700 and in 1964 it had grown to 44,508."<sup>42</sup>

Table 4: Projected Population (Estimates) for selected towns: 1984-1988 G.C

Wäräda/ Town	2007			1984			1985			1986			1987			1988		
	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F	Both sexes	M	F	Both Sexes	M	F
Mättäma Wäräda	29698	15128	14570	11754	5988	5767	12240	6235	6005	12745	6492	6253	13271	6760	6511	13819	7039	6780
Mättäma Yohannes Town	10171	5046	5125	4026	1997	2028	4192	2080	2112	4365	2165	2199	4545	2255	2290	4733	2348	2385
Shähdi Town	1537	834	703	608	330	278	633	344	290	660	358	302	687	373	314	715	388	327
Shinfä Town	3928	2005	1923	1555	794	761	1619	826	793	1686	860	825	1755	896	859	1828	933	895
Kokit Town	2720	1467	1253	1077	581	496	1121	605	516	1167	630	538	1215	656	560	1266	683	583
Gända Wuha Town	11342	5776	5566	4489	2286	2203	4674	2380	2294	4867	2479	2389	5068	2581	2487	5278	2688	2590

Note: Backward Projection is made based on the 2007 PHC results

Source: Central Statistical Agency, Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia 2007

Currently, the sex ratio of the two towns Mättäma Yohannis and Shähdi is 121.8 and 118.1 respectively.<sup>43</sup>

Lying on the main trade route from Sénnar (Sinnar) to Gondar, Mättäma/ Gallabat grew into a trade centre of some importance. This location not only made the settlement a major market place, but also a major slave market in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> According to Abdussamad,

*Ethiopian slaves under the name Habash (Abyssinian or Ethiopian) had a high demand in the markets of Arabia and the Middle East in the second half of the nineteenth century. Male slaves from Ethiopia served as bodyguards, servants and treasurers to rulers, Sheikhs and rich merchants of Arabia. The demand for female Ethiopian slaves who were bright-yellow or dark-brown was even higher, as the well-to-do made them wives and concubines.*

*The principal sources of slaves, all of whom passed through Matamma, the inland port on the Ethio-Sudanese border, and*

<sup>42</sup> Solomon, p. 248. Note: the rise of Gondar's population was not "tripled" as Solomon says but had grown very quickly.

<sup>43</sup> Aynalem, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Sellassie I University Press, 1968), pp. 97-98.

*Massawa and Tajura on the Red Sea, were the south-western parts of Ethiopia. Slaves came mainly from Kaffa, Maji, Gamu, Gimira, Gofa, Wallayta, Kullo and Konta. Most slaves, therefore, originated from the Oromo and Sidama country.*<sup>45</sup>

The altitude of Mättäma ranges from 550 to 1608 meters.<sup>46</sup> It is very hot. The average temperature of the warmest month is 40<sup>0</sup>C and the average annual temperature is 32<sup>0</sup>C.<sup>47</sup> The mean annual rainfall ranges from about 700 to around 1100 mm.<sup>48</sup> High temperature is an environmental problem which sometimes causes crop failures due to high evapotranspiration.<sup>49</sup> The risk of malaria was and still is very great since Mättäma is found in the extreme lowland. For instance, according to Simoons, writing on the 1950s situation,

*Metema is considered a punishment post for the police, civil officials, and school teachers who are assigned there by the government. Many of the Amhara sent to Metema leave their families safely behind in the highland and besiege their superiors with petitions requesting to return to the cool, pleasant, relatively healthy plateau.*<sup>50</sup>

The town of Mättäma traces its origins to the *Täkruri* settlers (Muslim pilgrims who remained in Mättäma and Humära) coming from central Africa mostly from Darfur.<sup>51</sup> Before the development of modern agriculture most of the land was covered with natural vegetation. The natural vegetation consisted of different acacia species with a lot of grass under them. Mättäma is one of the *wärädas* where gum and incense is collected. There is an extensive area that is

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<sup>45</sup> Abdussamad H. Ahmad, "Ethiopian Slave Exports at Matamma, Massawa and Tajura c. 1830 to 1885" in William Gervase Clarence-Smith, (ed.) *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), p. 93.

<sup>46</sup> Frederick J. Simoons, *Northwest Ethiopia: Peoples and Economy* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> Mamo Morka and Atnafu Molla, "Yä Mättäma Yohannis Kätäma Mäsärätawi Plan Riport" (Bahir Dar, *Nahasé* 2004), p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> ILRI and MoARD, p. 7 b.

<sup>49</sup> Kahsay Berhe and Ian Campbell, "Environmental Assessment and Screening Report on the Project of Improving Productivity and Market Success of Ethiopian Farmers, Pilot Learning Woreda: Metema" Presented to Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2006), p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Simoons, p. 58.

<sup>51</sup> Henry Dufton, *Narrative of a Journey through Abyssinia in 1862-3; with an Appendix on the Abyssinian Captives Question* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1867), pp. 40-41.

covered with incense trees and currently there are three private companies involved in harvesting incense with a capacity of about 500 quintals annually. The area is also known for growing bamboo. On the way from Gondar to Shähdi (or Gändä Wuha), the *wäräda* town since 1978, many of the houses were made of bamboo.<sup>52</sup>

The forests were used as grazing lands for livestock brought from other areas, especially from the Sudan. Wild animals that used to live in the forest included eland, elephant, lion, waterbuck, greater kudu, buffalo, bush buck, bush duiker, etc. There was also a wide variety of birds like partridge, guinea hen and ostrich. However, as for the Abdärafī area, these have nearly all disappeared.

The town of Mättäma Yohannis, which was the seat of the *wäräda* governor from its establishment in 1946, was a centre of interaction for more than a century for people who came from different parts of the country. Mättäma was also a *mikitil wäräda* and its centre of administration was Awatého. The six major languages spoken in the town are Amharic, Tigriñña, Gumuz, Qimant, *Afan* Oromo and Arabic. The majority of the inhabitants are Orthodox Christians while Muslims are the second largest group. Mättäma Yohannis and Sudanese Gallabat next to it are borderland towns. They are separated by a small normally dry river known as the Amira. There is a small bridge over the Amira dry river that connects the two. There are Customs offices and Immigration offices on both sides of the frontier but there is free movement of people during the daytime (12 hours), between these two towns, Mättäma and Gallabat. It should be remembered that Sudan has border controls to Ethiopia at Humära and Mättäma. The crossing

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<sup>52</sup> ILRI and MoARd, p. 9.

through Mättäma (Ethiopia) is the most popular and from there one can catch a bus to Gondar. In Sudan, one can travel to Gädaref and get an early morning start to the border town of Gallabat.<sup>53</sup>

*Photograph 2: The border line between Ethiopia and Sudan (or between Mättäma Yohannis and Gallabat) separated by the Amira River (or Amira Bridge). The Bridge is not allowed to be photographed.*



*Source: Photo, Atakilt, taken on Oct. 15, 2014*

The economy of Mättäma is predominantly agricultural. This *wäräda* has been a major centre of cotton production since the 1950s.<sup>54</sup> Livestock production was and still is an integral part of the production system. Agro-pastoralism is carried on in the lowland *wärädas* of Mättäma, Quara, Şägädé, Tach Armachiho, and Mirab Armachiho. It is the second most important production system next to arable farming. It involves seasonal mobility of livestock in search of pasture over a large area of land. This production system contributes to rural livelihoods through the cattle trade and related activities. Most of the farmers in the lowland areas of North Gondar Zone appear to have significant market orientation in their livestock production. In the highlands, most of the livestock producers are subsistence- oriented. Keeping of cattle, goats, and poultry is a common practice. Cattle are exported to the Sudan while goats are mainly sold in local markets. The cross-

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<sup>53</sup> Informants: *Märgéta Fréw Bisät*, Hailä Mariam Wäрку, Inspector Bihoneñ Elf Asägid, Sergeant Assäfa Fäläkä, Mandäfro Tässäma, and Kindie Chäkol; Yä Ethiopia Nigusä Nägäst Mangist Yä Ersha Minister Yä Begemederna Yä Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Kä Begemederna Kä Simien Täqlay Gizat Kä Ersha Yämigäñäw Yä Täfätro Habt Yämiamäläkit Rapor" *Yäkatit* 29, 1935 E.C, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> ILRI and MoARD, p. 9.

border cattle trade to Sudan was illegal until 2003. It was only in 2003 that a bilateral trade agreement was signed between Ethiopia and Sudan. However, both legal and illegal cattle trade is currently operating as it was in the past. The illegal cattle trade is now the movement of cattle from Ethiopia to Sudan which has not paid the export tax. There is smallholder milk and butter production mainly for the local market. On the other hand, transhumants cattle did and still do often move from highlands to lowlands. Highland cattle move to the lowlands during the rainy season from June to October for grazing. Honey production is another common practice in the *wäräda*, mainly in the forest areas.<sup>55</sup>

There was one particularly critical event at Mättäma in the history of Ethiopia. Emperor Yohannis IV was killed at the Battle of Mättäma (also called the Battle of Gallabat) which was fought 9-10 March 1889 between the Mahdist Sudanese and the Ethiopian forces. The fighting occurred at the twin settlements of Gallabat (in modern Sudan) and Mättäma (in modern Ethiopia), so both names are commonly used and either can be argued to be correct. When Yohannis was wounded, he is said to have prayed for water and said “*Maryam, Maryam Wuha*” (which means Mary, Mary [please] water) in the midst of the rocky and desert area below Yohannis Tärara (Yohannis Mountain) or Mandäfro Tärara (a mountain that could not be touched by invaders). According to the tradition told me by my informants, water came out as a spring and emperor Yohannis drank that water before his death. The spring still exists and Kidänä Mihret church was built there. The place became known as Maryam Wuha which means Water of Mary. People who have health problems usually come from different parts of Ethiopia to be immersed in the *tabl* (holy water). Yohannis was buried at Mättäma at a place called Yohannis Tärara (Yohannis Mountain) where he had built a fortification in the fight against the Mahdists. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, the *Därg*

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<sup>55</sup>Informants: Sisay Birhanu, Fäntahun Kidané, *Abba Gäbrä Tṣadiq Sahlä Maryam*, Fiseha Mäbratu, Habtamu Bililiñ, and Tadälä Mulé.

Chairman after visiting the area and rebuking the local officials for not commemorating a national hero, ordered the officials and people of Mättäma to build a monument in memory of the national hero who died defending Ethiopia against foreign invaders. The people of Mättäma organized by Mättäma Yohannis *Qäbälle* 01 built this monument on his tomb on the top of the mountain in 1981. There is also a cross, the symbol of Christianity, near the monument to show that the Emperor was a devoted Ethiopian Orthodox Christian.<sup>56</sup>

*Photograph 3: The monument that is dedicated to Emperor Yohannis IV*



Source: Photo, taken by Biadgiliññ Wäldié, Grade 8 student in Mättäma General Primary school on Oct. 15, 2014

*Note: The year 1882 E.C that is written on the monument is wrong for the death of Yohannis IV because Yohannis IV died in 1881 E.C. (Mar. 1889 G.C) not in 1882 E.C (1890 G.C). I think this was written by mistake.*

Mättäma Yohannis was the centre of administration and the seat of the *wäräda* governor for a long time. But now under the Amhara National Regional State it is a sub-*wäräda* like Abdärafi. Gända Wuha became a *wäräda* in 1978. Gända Wuha is 36 kms. from Mättäma Yohannis on the way to the city of Gondar.<sup>57</sup> Later on by the Regulation No. 20/2004 of the Amhara National Regional State Newly Organized Municipalities Revenue Tariff Determination,

<sup>56</sup>Informants: Habtä Wäld Gäbrä Hiwät and Colonel Wäрку Bogalä.

<sup>57</sup>Bä Amara Biherawi Kililawi Mängist Industrina Kätäma Limat Birro ,“Yä Kätämotch Plan institute Yä Mättäma Yohannis Kätäma Mäsärätawi Plan Riport” (Bahir Dar, *Nähasé* 2004 E.C), p. 8.

Council of the Regional Government Regulation, Mättäma Yohannis was raised to a sub-municipality status.<sup>58</sup> It has its own mayor and a Basic Plan (See Map Appendix i).

### 2.2.1 MAHBÄRÄ SELASSIE

The geographically isolated monastery of Mahbärä Selassie, one of the oldest and most renowned monasteries in Ethiopia, is found in what was at one time Begemeder and Simien Governorate General in the Amhara Regional State in North Gondar Zone along the Ethio-Sudan border in Chilga Awraja under the diocese of Mättäma *Wäräda*<sup>59</sup>.

The distance from Mättäma to Mahbärä Selassie monastery is about 70 kms. There is no road constructed. It is inaccessible to motor transport except tractors. Anyone who wants to visit this monastery must go by tractor or on foot or by horse or mule. It takes about seven hours on foot from the highway to reach there. Mahbärä Selassie Monastery is in a semi-desert area where malaria was and still is rampant. There is no health centre near the monastery. It is also very easy to get sunstroke particularly at midday. Water is scarce.<sup>60</sup>

There are different other monasteries surrounding Mahbärä Selassie. These are *Gädam* (monastery) Dimuh to the north, Ganucha monastery to the south and Emmama (Wattaho) monastery to the east. Sudan is to the west.<sup>61</sup>

The natural vegetation of the area consists of acacia trees with a lot of grass under them. It was and still is a dense bush area. The other plant species are *warka* (sycamore, *Ficus vasta* (fig tree), *meqer* (*Boswellia ogadenensis*), *yä bäräha shimäl* (*Oxytenanthera abyssinica*), *Senna* (*Senna*

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<sup>58</sup> *Zikre Hig* of the Council of the Amhara National Regional State ...*Regulation No. 20/2014*, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> *Diacon Merawi Enchalew Belay*, "A Brief History of Mahibere Selassie Monastery" (Senior Essay, Department of Theology, Addis Ababa Holy Trinity Theological College, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Informants: Sisay, Hailä Mariam, Kinde and *Abba Gäbrä Tṣadiq*; *Gäräma Tafärä*, *Gondäre Bägashaw* (Addis Ababa: Täṣfa Gäbrä Selassie Printing Press, 1949 E.C), p. 49.

<sup>61</sup> *Diacon Merawi*, p. 5

*alexandrina*) etc. The wild animals that used to live in the forest included lions, leopards, giraffes, greater kudu, hyenas, monkeys, wild pigs and other animals and different varieties of birds but the animals have mostly gone.<sup>62</sup>

According to Joachim Person,

*Local tradition ascribes its foundation to the kings Abraha and Asbaha, and links it with a vision of the Trinity that St. Frumentius (Abba Salama Kasate Berhan) is said to have had there. Historically, however, M.S. is associated with the 17<sup>th</sup>-cent. Holy monk Amda Sellase, who miraculously healed ase Susenyos. Subsequently, ase Fasiladas richly endowed the monastery. Administrative activities of M.S. included collecting tributes and taxation, administering justice and providing defense, all organized and directed from the town of Matbeya.*

*.... Although it never accumulated substantial wealth, M.S. was attacked and pillaged several times. One of the raids might have happened whilst leg Kasa was there in 1827, being one of the few children to survive. In 1889, the Mahdists attacked M.S., burnt the church and massacred the monks; the monastery is said to have also been raided by British soldiers, probably an expeditionary force that came from the Sudan. Finally, during the Italian occupation (some time in 1937), the church was destroyed and some 24 to 50 monks killed by Italian bombing. In August 1940, M.S. was the first place where Daniel Sandford, the head of the "Mission 101", looked for local contacts and support.<sup>63</sup>*

The monastery has been known by different names. Its first name was Miqwamé Selassie Gädam . Later on the name Miqwamé Selassie Gädam was changed to Mäkanä Selassie Gädam. Mäkanä Selassie Gädam was changed to Mahbärä Selassie Gedam and finally Mahbärä Selassie Gädam was changed to Mahbärä Selassie Andinät Gädam.<sup>64</sup> The monastery is now administered by seven

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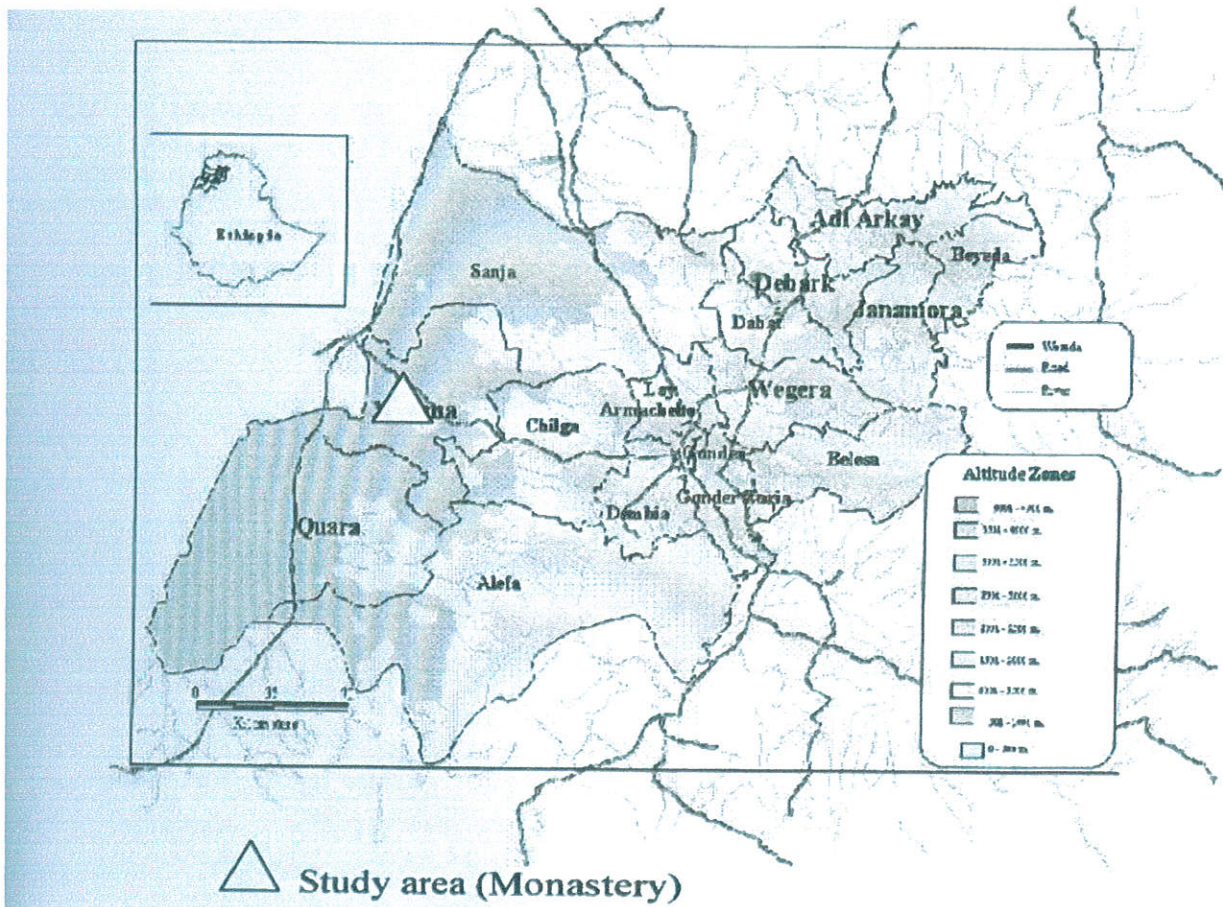
<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Joachim Person, "Mahbärä Sellase" in *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, Volume 3, He-N* (Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), p. 653.

<sup>64</sup> Mahbärä Selassie Andinät Gädam, "Yä Mahbärä Selassie Andinät Gädam Achir Tarik" (Bahir Dar: Tis Abay Printing Press, 2005 E.C.), p. 4.

monks whose titles are *Mamhir (Abämnet)*, *Mägabi*, *Liqä Radeie*, *Attañ*, *Eqa Bét*, *Liqä Abbäw* and *Egual Mägabit*.<sup>65</sup>(See Glossary).

Map 3: Map of Mahbärä Selassie Monastery area.



Source: Taken from Johann Sölkner, Maria Wurzinger, and Zewdu Wuletaw, “Genetic and Phenotypic Characterization and Design of a Breeding Strategy for an Indigenous Cattle Breed in North Western Ethiopia; A Contribution for Sustainable Genetic Resources Utilization” (2009), p. 2.

It is reported that

*M.S. had close relations with the rulers of Quara. Leg Kasa (the future ase Tewodros II) was sent to M.S. by his Mother Attettaggab, and stayed and learnt there for some seven years, leaving the monastery at the age of 16. Moreover, a few years*

<sup>65</sup>Märha Täbäbet Zä Gänätä Maryam, “Yä Mahbärä Selassie Gädam Tarik Bachiru” in *Tinsae Mäshét (Yä Nähasé Yä Mäskärämna yä Tiqimt Wärat 1982 E.C)*, p. 10.

*after his death at Maqdalla (13 April 1868), his son Masasa reportedly transferred Tewodros's remains to M.S.*<sup>66</sup>

The total area of the monastery land is now 19.186 hectares after the *Därg* expropriated a much larger area. There are four big mountains around the monastery. These are Karkamätch, Kukbi, Gurmas Diba and Amba where the monastery is found.<sup>67</sup> The major source of income of the monastery is crops supported by cattle raising. The monastery cattle are an indigenous breed which has existed for over three centuries. The breed was established from religious donations of breeding cattle. The cattle type in the monastery is different in many respects from the cattle population of the vicinity. For instance, the ear is big in size and the facial profile is always concave. No other breeding animals have been introduced into the herd for a long time. The monastery manages the cattle with very little or no technical support. It has only limited veterinary services. They either slaughter or sell the unwanted cattle selectively. In 2009 the herd were estimated to consist of 3000 animals. There has been no systematic recording of the output of the cattle but the monks or the herdsmen closely monitor the cows for good milking ability, regular calving and cool temperament. The herdsmen, who are all monks, have always been in charge of the day-to-day management of the herd.<sup>68</sup> Breeding bulls, breeding females and young stock are kept separately. There is no shortage of bulls.<sup>69</sup>

The size of the herd is declining due to the shrinking of land holdings of the monastery. The monastery is under pressure from expanding cultivation in the lowlands. The monastery's cattle are

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<sup>66</sup> *Persoon*, p. 653.

<sup>67</sup> *Diacon Merawi*, p. 41

<sup>68</sup> Johann Sölkner, Maria Wurzinger, and Zewdu Wuletaw, "Genetic and Phenotypic...", p. 64

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65

affected by contagious diseases transmitted from transhumant cattle herds that often trespass on grazing territories of the monastery.<sup>70</sup>

Table 5 : Major Disease and Parasites of the Monastery Herd.

Disease	Occurrence period	Treatment
Trypanosomiasis	July-September	Injection
Foot and Mouth disease	Any time	No treatment
Blackleg	September-October	Injection
Heart water	Any time	No treatment
Teat infection	Any time	Injection
Internal parasites	October-February	Tablets

Source: Taken from Johann Sölkner, Maria Wurzinger, and Zewdu Wuletaw, "Genetic and Phenotypic ....", p. 65.

Photograph 4: The cattle, the monks and an agricultural expert from North Gondar in Mahbärä Selassie Monastery



Source: Taken from Johann Sölkner, Maria Wurzinger, and Zewdu Wuletaw, "Genetic and Phenotypic....," p. 2.

The monastery has also practiced and still does practise irrigation from the Šinfa river, which is in a deep gorge, by using a water pump. The monks plant and grow bananas, onions, green peppers and tomatoes for their own consumption and sell the remainder to the surrounding communities for cash. Before plowing the land the bushes and grass are cleared. Shifting cultivation is practised. The monks are always busy in different activities. They plow the land and protect the domestic animals from any danger. They protect the crops from birds, wild pigs, and other destructive wildlife. They

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64

are also engaged in preparing food in the kitchen. No baked food is allowed to enter the monastery from outside. Everything is prepared in the monastery by the monks themselves.<sup>71</sup>

The monastery has its own rules and regulations. Based on Amda Sellase's Rules, the monastery follows strict discipline. All private property is forbidden. It is not also allowed to walk across the compound with shoes and wearing hats or armed with weapons or to ride across the compound on horseback.<sup>72</sup>

The monastery of Mahbärä Selassie maintains good relations with the nearby Gumuz people. Mahbärä Selassie is known as *Yeshi Mahbär* which means "the community of a thousand."<sup>73</sup> (See the seal in Appendix iii). The beginning and expansion of partially mechanized and other arable farming in Abdärafī and Mätämma will be discussed in chapter three.

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<sup>71</sup> *Diacon Merawi*, pp. 41-42; *Märha Täbäbet*, p. 23; Informants: *Abba Gäbrätšadiq*, Sisay, Kinde, Häilä Mariam and *Abba Gäbrä Medhin*.

<sup>72</sup> *Märha Täbäbet*, p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> *Persoon*, p. 653; See also Appendix 4.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE COMMENCEMENT AND EXPANSION OF PARTIALLY MECHANIZED AND OTHER ARABLE FARMING IN ABDÄRAFI AND MÄTTÄMMA

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the beginning of mechanized agriculture in Sätit-Humära and lessons for other areas like Abdärafī and Mättäma. It also discusses the establishment and development of Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafī Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, the Police Farm, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission in Abdärafī and Mättäma-Mahbärä Sellasie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society and other Farmers' Associations in Mättäma.

#### 3.1 THE INTRODUCTION OF PARTIALLY MECHANIZED AND OTHER ARABLE FARMING IN NORTH WEST ETHIOPIA

After the expulsion of the Italians in 1941, some Ethiopians who were in the Sudan as exiles or refugees during the Italian occupation and some Sudanese came to Sätit-Humära. They showed interest in introducing modern agriculture by applying modern agricultural techniques which they had observed in the Sudan, the country across the Ethiopian border, parts of which had been agriculturally fast growing under the British. According to Fitaye Assegu, in 1957 the late *Ato* Gettu Lāwätäh, (a man from Däbariq, Simien *Awraja*, who was later the first to open a gas station in the town of Humära), attempted to introduce tractor farming in Sätit-Humära on his own initiative. This man had seen some modern agricultural techniques in the Sudan while he was there during his days as a patriot against the Italians. But because of lack of capital and insufficient mechanical knowledge he was unable to fulfill his hopes and this first tractor was

soon abandoned and decayed there on his land. He also shared views of applying modern agriculture with *Bitwädäd* Andargachew Messai.<sup>1</sup>

*Bitwädäd* Andargachew Messai, the son-in-law (husband of Princess Tenagnework) of Emperor Haile Selassie, was the Governor General of Begemeder and Simien (1948-1952)<sup>2</sup> before he was appointed as the Representative of His Imperial Majesty to Eritrea (1952-1959).<sup>3</sup> *Bitwädäd* Andargachew on his part established contact with Dr. Dinko Cvitanovitch, a Yugoslav national whom he knew while Cvitanovitch was working at the Gondar hospital before he was transferred to Asmara. Andargachew persuaded this doctor and his brother-in-law, Marco (Mark) Sideris, a Greek national married to the doctor's sister, to invest in mechanized agriculture in Sätit-Humära.<sup>4</sup>

Both Dr.Cvitanovitch and Mr.Sideris were convinced and decided to start modern farming in Sätit-Humära. Dimitrios (Dimitri) Zervos, Sideris's uncle, also joined them.<sup>5</sup> Dimitrios Zervos was the son of Fokidides Zervos who was the brother of Dr. Jacovos (Jacob) Zervos.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Zervos (d.1956) came to Ethiopia in 1911 from the Greek island of Cephalonia and soon became a faithful and distinguished doctor and friend of Emperor Haile Selassie. He was known for playing a very important role in the cementing of Greek-Ethiopian relations.<sup>7</sup> During the imperial period, Dr.Zervos served Ethiopia as the "president of a commission that advised the

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<sup>1</sup> Fitaye Assegu, "The Traditional Usage of the Land in Satit-Humara" cited by Beide Melaku, "Land Tenure and Land Reform" (A section of his Term Paper, Department of Law, Haile Selassie I University, 1971), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Liqo Ejigu, pp. 208, 210.

<sup>3</sup> Zewde Reta, *Bä Qädamawi Haile Selassie Zämänä Mängist Yä Ertra Guday, 1941-1963, 4th ed.* (Addis Ababa: Central Printing Press, 1998 E. C.), p. 356.

<sup>4</sup> Fitaye, "The Traditional Usage...", p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Haile Selassie I Prize Trust, *Tenth Year Prize Trust Awards, 1964-1973* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers, 1973), p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> Informant: Rev. Chrysotomos Barberis.

<sup>7</sup> Anestis Ghanotakis, "The Greeks of Ethiopia, 1889-1970" (PhD Thesis Department of History, Boston University, 1979), p. 190.

Office of the Public Health...”<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Dr. Zervos was a small gold mine concession holder in Wollega with another Greek, P. Nittis, David Hall, “a government servant of German-Ethiopian origin, and Dr. Martin (*Hakim Wārqnäh*), who held a private concession at Näjo”.<sup>9</sup>

The two Greek nationals, Marco Sideris and Dimitri Zervos, and one Yugoslav national, Dr. Dinko Cvitanovitch, took government land in Sätit- Humära and formed the Al Khadra Agricultural Works Limited Company. It was a family organized project and a share company. The land of the Al Khadra Agricultural Works Company was located in the Sätit-Humära *Wäräda* of the then Governorate General of Begemeder and Simien adjacent to the Ethiopia-Sudan border just south of the Täkäzé (Sätit) River<sup>10</sup> about 18 kilometers south of Humära town.<sup>11</sup>

The size of the Al Khadra Farm (it means in Arabic the Green Farm) was 6000 hectares or 150 *gashas* (40 hectares = 1 *gasha*). The farm was established in 1958. The investors were from then on engaged in the production of sesame, sorghum and cotton. The initial capital that was invested in the farm was *Birr* 300,000 and that amount had in 1968 increased to *Birr* 850,000. The land was farmed under concession from the Ethiopian Government. It was a thirty-five year lease, renewable for 35 additional years. The Al Khadra Farm was awarded a gold medal and diploma with a sum of 7,000 Ethiopian dollars (the source uses the word dollars rather than *birr*) in 1968 from the Haile Selassie I Award for Agriculture for its pioneering activities.<sup>12</sup> A Concession Map of 440 hectares of the part of the concession land in the Rauian zone to the

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (Addis Ababa: H.S.I.U Press, 1968), p. 237.

<sup>10</sup> Haile Selassie I Prize Trust, *Tenth Year ...*, p. 85.

<sup>11</sup> Atakilt, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> Haile Selassie I Prize, *Tenth year...*, p. 85.

south of Humära town, under the signature of the government officials allocating the land and the above mentioned concessionaires, is available in the Welde Mesqel library's Agricultural Archival Section.<sup>13</sup> Of the total 6000 hectares of land, some 4,900 hectares were in the immediate vicinity of the farm headquarters, about 15 kms south of the town of Humära, and the other 1,100 hectares were in two separate locations. In 1958, the company had eight tractors and in 1968 the tractors increased to nineteen, of which ten were new. The major shareholder and manager of the Al Khadra Farm was Marco Sideris.<sup>14</sup> The local people in the area nicknamed him “*kwaja*” which in Arabic means “a wealthy or rich man”. Most of Sideris's life had been spent in Africa. Prior to moving to Sätit-Humära in Ethiopia in 1958, he had farmed in Egypt, growing primarily cotton. He left Egypt for Ethiopia due to his fear and hatred of what he called “communism” in Egypt under the Nasser regime.<sup>15</sup>

Photograph 5: Mr. Marco Sideris, Manager and major shareholder of Al Khadra Farm.



Source: Taken from Haile Selassie I Prize Trust, *Fifth Year Prize Trust Awards, 1964-1968* (A.A: Artistic Printers, 1968), p.69.

<sup>13</sup> Wäldä Mäsqäl Archive Folder 2፯፯ ቁ፻፲፭ 4 Gibrina Liyou, Concession Requested By Dimitri Zervos, Dinko Cvitanovitch and Marc Sideris , p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Haile Selassie I Prize Trust, *Fifth Year Prize Trust Awards, 1964-1968* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers, 1968), p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> Atakilt, pp. 34-35.

The major problems of farming in Sätit-Humära include poor transportation and unsatisfactory marketing systems. Malaria was also rampant. Efforts were being made to eradicate malaria in the area<sup>16</sup> without success.

When the Al Khadra Farm started its operations in Humära, nobody seemed to have faith in the efforts of the concessionaires except the concessionaires themselves. The area was considered as useless with no agricultural value.<sup>17</sup> The people of Wälqait and Şägadé stood against the government concession in Sätit-Humära. They alleged that the government had no right to make the land in Sätit-Humära the subject of a gift or lease, especially to foreigners. They believed that all hunting and seasonal grazing areas customarily belonged to the communities of adjacent areas who hunted and grazed their livestock on them.<sup>18</sup> Some of the people even threatened the foreign investors.<sup>19</sup> The Al Khadra camp at its initial stage was for some time protected by government policemen. The local people suspected that to obtain protection the investors had given some share of the profits to officials in Humära or the Begemeder and Simien Governorate General.<sup>20</sup> But this seems unreliable because I could not get any other information to justify this opinion. It seems to me that this protection was given as a matter of government policy to provide security for the foreign nationals engaged in development from any threat that might arise from the local people. The local people were not successful in their opposition to the lease of land because according to Article 130 a, b, c and d of the 1955 Revised Constitution of Ethiopia, the land including the natural forest in Sätit-Humära was state domain. For example according to Article 130 b, "The natural resources in the waters, forests, land, air, lakes, rivers and ports of the

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<sup>16</sup> Haile Sellasie I Prize Trust ...1964-1968, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> Haile Selassie I Prize Trust... 1964-1973, p. 86.

<sup>18</sup> Fitaye, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Atakilt, p. 35.

Empire are a sacred trust for the benefit of present and succeeding generations of the Ethiopian people".<sup>21</sup> Moreover, according to Article 1194 of the Civil Code of Ethiopia, "Immovables situate in Ethiopia which is [*sic* for are] vacant and without a master shall be the property of the state."<sup>22</sup> At the same time, according to Article 1168 (1) of the same Civil Code, to claim ownership, the occupier of land should at least pay land taxes for fifteen consecutive years.<sup>23</sup> However, the people of Wälqait and Şägadé could not satisfy this legal requirement because they had never paid any land tax on the land.<sup>24</sup> Thanks to their earlier experience in agriculture, the concessionaires fought hard against all difficulties and finally succeeded in turning Sätit-Humära into a profitable source of agricultural wealth. Following the example of the Al Khadra Farm, many people in Sätit-Humära converted the land, which they had previously thought to be useless, into highly productive areas.<sup>25</sup> Following the Al Khadra Farm, some people from Wälqait saw the advantage of organizing themselves into a share company in order to practice crop farming. But they were not able to buy tractors because they lacked the necessary capital.<sup>26</sup>

Around 1959, a group of about ten people from Wälqait formed what they called *Şhārika* Wälqait (Wälqait Share Company). It was a Flour Mill and Agriculture Share Company. The founders of this share company were important figures from Wälqait like Täsfayä Ansay, a man who spent much of his time in Asmara as a merchant, *Fitawrari* Säräbä Lämna, *Grazmach* Berhané Zänäbä and others. Täsfayä Ansay was elected to be the General Manager of the share

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<sup>21</sup> *Nägarit Gazeta*, 15<sup>th</sup> Year No. 2, *the Revised Constitution of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Birhanina Sälam Printing Press, November 4, 1955), pp. 32-33.

<sup>22</sup> *Nägarit Gazeta*, 19<sup>th</sup> Year No. 2, *the Civil Code of the Empire of Ethiopia. Proclamation No. 165 of 1960* (Birhanina Sälam Printing Press, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1960), p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> Fitaye, "The Traditional Usage of the Land in Satit-Humara" ..., p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> The Municipality of Sätit-Humära, "Mäbäl 100 Amät Misräta Kätäma Humära: *Läkatit* 1890-1990 E.C" (*Läkatit*, 1990 E.C), p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Informants: Gäbäyähu Eshetié, Muhammäd Mäkonän, Sharäw Woldä Tinsie and Alämu Näga.

company. These shareholders brought their oxen from the highlands of Wälqait. They cleared the empty government land in the west of Kabtya in Humära and ploughed it with their oxen. They grew mainly sesame. Within a period of two or three years, their income grew. They were rewarded with large gains and bought tractors in the name of their share company.<sup>27</sup>

Some other rich individuals outside the *Shārika* Wälqait also bought their own tractors and started mechanized farming. Among these, the most prominent were Haji Muhammad Mäkonnän and Haji Hasänätom Salih, a Sudanese national who chose to live in Ethiopia, and Salvatore Iddo, whose father and mother were Italian and Ethiopian respectively.<sup>28</sup> From day to day, the number of tractor-owning and tractor-renting farmers grew. The tractor owners rented out their tractors, after using them for their own farm work, at a rent of *Birr* 20 an hour. For instance, in July 1967, 158 tractor farmers with their 229 tractors were registered in Humära *Wäräda*. The number of tractors constantly increased. Thus, by November of the same year, there were more than 400 tractors in the *Wäräda*.<sup>29</sup> A tremendous growth was registered by the individual farmers' own initiative without any governmental or non-governmental agency support. Though impressive and significant, the agricultural development in Sätit-Humära had been spontaneous. Its growth was rapid but it was unplanned.<sup>30</sup> People from Begemeder, Eritrea, Tigray and other areas came and settled in Sätit-Humära. The government had only provided them with land. This led to the development of over 100,000 hectares of land in Sätit-Humära by large commercial

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<sup>27</sup> Informants: Yirsäw Dämis, Zäwdu Bitäw and Zänäbä Bälay.

<sup>28</sup> Informants: Muhammäd, Sharäw, Zänabä and Alämu.

<sup>29</sup> Informants: Sharäw, Zänäbä, Zäwdu and Muhammäd .

<sup>30</sup> Informants: Zäwdu, Muhammäd, Yirsaw and Zänäbä.

farmers as was observed by Boerma, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the occasion of his official visit to Ethiopia from February 20-25, 1971.<sup>31</sup>

According to the report of the Institute of Agricultural Research, on the agricultural development of Sätit-Humära, impressive developments had been registered in Sätit-Humära in the face of inadequate infrastructure, especially in communications, health and water supply, the absence of machinery maintenance facilities, discouraging credit and marketing arrangements and labour shortage etc.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the question of land tenure was not clear. The system of land allocation did not specify the period of allocation. At the same time, no conditions were imposed on the allotted land other than payment of production tax. No land tax was charged so that the farmers might not claim land ownership on the basis of such payments.<sup>33</sup>

Above all other problems, the bottleneck for the development of mechanized agriculture in Humära was the credit system. Usually the farmers were short of cash especially at weeding and harvesting times. For instance, sesame had to be cut before the seed pods began to crack in order to avoid shattering. Labour took advantage of this problem by raising its wage demands and by demanding immediate payments. Farmers, therefore, had to have ready cash for this purpose.<sup>34</sup> Financial institutions did not exist in Sätiti-Humära until 1968. The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), a wholly state owned bank, began its operations in Humära office in May 1968. The Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (AIDB), a semi-autonomous government credit institution, and the Addis Ababa Bank (AAB) opened their branch offices in Humära in 1969 and in 1972 respectively. Therefore, before these years, farmers had to move to Asmara

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<sup>31</sup> IEG, Ministry of Agriculture, "Prospects of Agricultural Development in Ethiopia. An Aide Memoire...", p. 21

<sup>32</sup> Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR), Ministry of Agriculture, "Report of the Survey Mission ...", p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Informants: Muhammäd, Zäwdu, Yirsaw, Zänäbä, Sharäw and Gäbäyähü.

<sup>34</sup> Fitaye, "The Traditional Usage...", p. 5.

and Addis Ababa to seek credit.<sup>35</sup> However, the financial institutions in Asmara and Addis Ababa refrained from lending money to Sätit-Humära farmers because the farmers could not present their holdings as collateral. Personal guarantors were the only form of security that was accepted by most lenders.<sup>36</sup> The banks also refused to give credit to Sätit-Humära farmers unless they had a guarantor because they were not sure that there was a reliable profit from land in the area. The banks lent money to businessmen who provided them with urban real estate securities. But most of the farmers in Sätit-Humära did not have urban real estate to pledge. Thus, they were forced to depend on the traditional merchant moneylenders. Many big businessmen from Asmara, Arabs in particular, who had large urban real estate, borrowed money from the banks claiming the loans to be for other purposes but diverted it to Humära and lent it indirectly to the needy farmers at a higher rate of interest without the knowledge of the banks. They also bought sesame for cash from farmers in advance for 1 or 2 months delivery of sesame.<sup>37</sup> There was no fixed interest rate. The traditional moneylenders demanded that the farmers pay an interest rate that reached 100 percent or more.<sup>38</sup> The farmers in Sätit-Humära faced a traditional credit system known as “*shell*”.<sup>39</sup>

According to the Humära report,

*Under the shell system the local merchant advances the farmer a certain sum at planting time. The farmer agrees to repay the merchant in kind at harvest time. Repayment value of the harvested crop is set at the time of the loan and is usually 30 to 50 percent below the expected market price of the crop.*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Informants: Yirsaw, Muhammäd, Sharäw, Zänäbä and Alämu.

<sup>36</sup> TAMS, “The Humera Report: Resource ...”, p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> Fitaye, “The Traditional Usage...”, pp. 5-6.

<sup>38</sup> TAMS, “The Humera Report: Resource ...”, p. 131.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

Though the shell system by its very nature was extremely exploitive, the Humära farmers were forced to depend on it because they did not have any other alternative to carry out their pressing agricultural work.<sup>41</sup>

In course of time, however, the farmers were unable to carry the whole debt burden on an individual basis. They came together and discussed their pressing problems. The only solution which they thought as a means of solving their problems was to organize themselves into farmers' co-operative. They believed that organizing themselves to co-operate would enable them to get government credit support.<sup>42</sup>

In the spring of 1969 a group of members of the *Shärika* Wälqait and others led by *Qäñzmach* Hailämariam Dässé, the then Deputy Customs Officer of the province of Gondar, came to Addis Ababa and visited the Co-operative Department of the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (MNCD), told the whole story and asked advice from the department on how to deal with their pressing problems.<sup>43</sup>

The Cooperative Development Department was established when the Imperial Ethiopian Government issued the Co-operative Societies Proclamation No. 241 of 1966. Its functions as were specified in the proclamation included helping the formation, organization, promotion and proper management of co-operative societies in Ethiopia.<sup>44</sup> Thus, this department responded to the Humära farmers' requests by sending a team of experts to Sätit-Humära immediately. The

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<sup>41</sup> Fitaye, "The Traditional Usage...", " p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Informants: Zänäbä, Yirsaw, Zäwdu, Alämu and Shäräw.

<sup>43</sup> Fitaye Assegu, "Organization of the Setit-Humera Cooperative Society" (HSIU, Public Law II. Term Paper, 1971), p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of National Community Development, " Cooperative Development Department Annual Report", 1964 E.C., p. 1.

team was able to investigate all the background and was convinced that the only means to deal with the pressing problems was to organize the farmers into a cooperative society<sup>45</sup> in order to help them reduce the cost of credit, reduce the cost of goods and services for production and consumption, minimize and reduce the impact on individuals of risks and uncertainties and spread knowledge of technical improvements.<sup>46</sup> Having this in mind, the team of experts submitted its proposal to the Registrar of the Co-operative Development Department in the MNCD. The Co-operative Development Department on its part invited experts from the AIDB to visit the Humära farms on the spot. The experts from the AIDB visited the farms, saw that their economic potential was very good and agreed with the proposal of organizing the farmers into a co-operative society.<sup>47</sup>

The cooperative was established in December 1968 as Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (WSHC). It received its legal certificate on July 4, 1969.<sup>48</sup> Membership was limited to Sätit-Humära farmers only. It did not encompass farmers from Tach Armachiho and Mättäma. The registration fee for farmers joining the cooperative society was decided to be *Birr* 10 each equity share was *Birr* 100. Each member had to buy at least one share. No member was allowed to buy more than 20 per cent of the total equity shares issued.<sup>49</sup>

The cooperative could only borrow money from financial institutions when two-thirds of the General Assembly agreed to it. A member had the right to borrow up to ten times of the total value of the equity shares he had purchased from the cooperative. To run its activities, the

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<sup>45</sup>Fitaye, "Organization of the Setit-Humera...", p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Nagarit Gazeta*, 25<sup>th</sup> Year, No.4, *Purposes and Objects of Societies* (Addis Ababa: Birhanina Sälam Printing Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1966), pp. 149-150.

<sup>47</sup>Fitaye, "Organization of The Setit-Humera...", p. 6.

<sup>48</sup>Yä Begemeder and Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Bä Begemeder and Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw Yä Edgätina Limat Seminar", Gondar Begemeder and Simien Täqlay Gizat, *Kä Hidar* 15 - 21 E.C. ...,p. 120.

<sup>49</sup> Fitaye, "The Traditional Usage...", p. 8.

cooperative depended on the revenue that was collected from registration fees, commission and interest. All of the cooperative's incomes were put in a bank account. At least 25 percent of the share capital was reserved. Dividends were to be distributed with the approval of the General Assembly.<sup>50</sup>

The WSHC had an Executive committee of seven men. The founding Executive members of the WSHC were

1. <i>Ato</i> Getachäw Yirga	President
2. <i>Qes</i> Sisay Ayälä	Vice President
3. <i>Grazmach</i> Abay Wäräta	Secretary
4. <i>Grazmach</i> Birhané Zänäbä	Cashier
5. <i>Ato</i> Zänäbä Bälay	Member
6. <i>Fitawrari</i> Säräbä Lämna	Member
7. <i>Ato</i> Abdurahman Siraj	Member <sup>51</sup>

The WSHC attached a management fee to its lending rate. Generally speaking, this management fee amounted to about 4 percent.<sup>52</sup>

Thanks to the loan provision of the AIDB and its creditors, the WSHC showed a tremendous growth in membership; capital and turnovers (see the following table)

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> Archive North Gondar Zone, Folder *ጎክ 28/ጠ ልማት*, Application letter from the people of Şägäde amd Wälqait Sätit-Humära and Members of the WSHC to the Military *Därg*, *Mäskäräm* 10, 1967 E.C, p.1.

<sup>52</sup> Informants: Zäwdu, Zänäbä, Yirsaw, Alämu and Shäräw.

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4. <i>Grazmach</i> Birhané Zänäbä	Cashier
5. <i>Ato</i> Zänäbä Bälay	Member
6. <i>Fitawrari</i> Säräbä Lämna	Member
7. <i>Ato</i> Abdurahman Siraj	Member <sup>51</sup>

The WSHC attached a management fee to its lending rate. Generally speaking, this management fee amounted to about 4 percent.<sup>52</sup>

Thanks to the loan provision of the AIDB and its creditors, the WSHC showed a tremendous growth in membership; capital and turnovers (see the following table)

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> Archive North Gondar Zone, Folder 'ከ 28/ጠ ልማት', Application letter from the people of Şägäde amd Wälqait Sätit-Humära and Members of the WSHC to the Military *Därg*, *Mäskäräm* 10, 1967 E.C, p.1.

<sup>52</sup> Informants: Zäwdu, Zänäbä, Yirsaw, Alämu and Shäräw.

Table 6: Membership, Working Capital, Turnover and Loan Grant (1969-1972) all in *Birr*

R.No	Year	Members	Capital ( <i>Birr</i> )	Turnover in <i>Birr</i>	Loan Received in <i>Birr</i>
1	1969/70	250	106,700	n.a	512,000
2	1970/71	779	404,800	2,541,000	3,230,148
3	1971/72	914	700,000	13,279,542.35	7,000,000
4	1972/73	950	839,300	5,331,862	7,500,000

Sources: 1. IEG, MNCD, Implementation Report, 1961 E.C (A.A, 1962 E.C), p.38.

2. \_\_\_\_\_, Implementation Report, 1962 E.C (A.A, 1963 E.C), p.60.

3. \_\_\_\_\_, Implementation Report, 1963 E.C (A.A, 1964 E.C), p. 36.

4. \_\_\_\_\_, Cooperative Development Department Annual Report 1964 E.C (A.A, 1965 E.C), p.18.

n.a: not available. There is no information why there was a big drop in turnover in 1972/73.

The Humära agricultural activities inspired other *awrajas* and *wärädas* in Begemedder and Simien Governorate General. Good examples of this were Abdärafī and Mättäma. In terms of mechanized agricultural development coverage and years of establishment, Sätit-Humära, Abdärafī, and Mättäma and Mahbärä Sellasie were first, second and third respectively.<sup>53</sup> The cases of Abdärafī and Mättäma and Mahbärä Sellasie are discussed below.

It should be emphasized that the WSHC and later agricultural cooperatives were not the same as the cooperatives of later socialist Ethiopia in the *Därg* period. In the cooperatives of the imperial period the individual members of the cooperative held their land and farmed it for their individual profit. A cooperative was formed by a number of farmers coming together and buying

<sup>53</sup> Bā Begemederna Simien Taqlay Gizat," Hülätägñaw ...", p. 122.

shares in the cooperative, which provided the capital of the cooperative. When the cooperative made profits, the profits were either retained, or partly retained, as reserve or distributed among the cooperative members according to their number of shares. When a cooperative had been approved by the MNCD and formally registered, it could borrow money at a much lower interest rate than was possible for individuals. The cooperative then lent the money it borrowed from financial institutions to individual members of the cooperative. The cooperative also marketed the crops produced by members of the cooperative and paid the money received to members according to the crops they had contributed, with deductions from loans made to the members at 4 % from the cooperative. All original members, and new members, of a cooperative had to pay a joining / registration/ membership fee and buy at least one share.<sup>54</sup> We should also note that the name “multi-purpose” was added to the cooperatives for legal reasons, so that the cooperatives were empowered to engage in different activities if they wanted to, besides agriculture.

### **3.2 PARTIALLY MECHANIZED AND OTHER ARABLE FARMING IN ABDÄRAFI AND MÄTTÄMA**

#### **3.2.1 ABDÄRAFI**

There were three different farms in Abdärafi. These were Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Ltd, the Police Farm and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission. According to the rules and regulations of the Cooperative Development Department of the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (MNCD), members of the Executive Committee shall be appointed for a term of 3 years. Membership of the Executive Committee shall not exceed seven and majority of the Executive

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<sup>54</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Täka, Mängistu, and Aläna.

Committee members shall constitute a quorum.<sup>55</sup> The President, Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected by the General Assembly. The powers of the Executive Committee included raising funds, sanctioning investment of the funds of the society, admitting members, allotting and transferring shares, examining and checking the accounts of the society, placing auditing and reporting to the General Assembly, preparing annual budgets, appointing regular or ad-hoc committees, framing sub-rules and appointing or removing employees of the society.<sup>56</sup> The land was held and farmed by individual members of the cooperative. The cooperative raised credit for members (i.e members got credit obtained by the cooperative and then allocated as loans among members) and marketed members' crops. The profits of the marketing went to the individual members based on their shares. The establishment and expansion of the Farmers Cooperatives is discussed below.

### 3.2.1.1 ARMACHIHO- GODÄBÉ-ABDÄRAFI FARMERS MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

Inspired by the agricultural revolution in Sätit-Humära, different *ballabats* from Armachiho, Şägäde, and Wälqait met at the locally famous *Jan Täkäl warka* (sycamore tree planted by His Majesty (unknown)) in the city of Gondar in about 1958 E.C (1966) and discussed how to begin agriculture in the uncultivated, unused and inaccessible forest and bush lowland (*qolla*) areas of the borderland of Abdärafî. Those who had guns decided to sell them and buy oxen and necessary agricultural equipment.<sup>57</sup> Thus the *Jan Täkäl warka* meeting was the first step in the introduction and expansion of modern agriculture in Abdärafî. One of the special features of

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<sup>55</sup>Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs, "Cooperative Development Department, Cooperative Societies Manual" (July 1968), p. 6.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>57</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér and Alänä.

Gondar is the presence of many sycamore trees in and around the city. The folk verse *ሃንደር እሽርፍ የዋርካሽ መስፋፋት የግንብሽ ማማፍ* can be roughly translated as, “Oh, dear Gondar, and the expanse of your sycamores and the beauty of your walls.” It is not just a song of praise, but rather tells visitors a fact about the numerous sycamores. To this very day, some of the same sycamores stand witness of the past tree splendor. Especially, the “*Jan Täkäl*” (His Majesty planted) sycamore is famous for its long service. This sycamore is a place where twelve kings held their open courts, religious debates were conducted, poetry competitions were held and social events like mourning and *Mäsqäl* (True Cross) celebrations took place. Generally, it has served as a stage for national and local events. Currently, it is much honored and cared for. The Amharic term “*Jan*” has the following meaning great, respected, and wise or majesty. Accordingly, the great old sycamore tree named “*Jan tākäl*” in the square in front of the Iyäsus church and the castle of Emperor Fasil is believed to be, as oral history relates, planted by one of the great people of Gondar who successively ruled or administered the place (see Appendix ii).<sup>58</sup>

At the *Jan Täkäl warka* meeting of more than 300 people, *Ato* Wakshum Näwätä, a *ballabat* (literally “one who has a father”, most commonly, a member of the local community who exercised authority under the imperial system, the *ballabat* provided the link between local communities and government bureaucracy) from Armachiho and the son of *Bitwädäd* Adänä Mäkonän’s elder sister, *Wäizäro* Yezäzäw Mäkonän, was elected with later government approval as Chairperson and first *Qäbälle Shum* (village headman) of Abdärafī. *Bitwädäd* Adänä Mäkonän is also said to have strongly urged Wakshum to go to Abdärafī and develop the area

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<sup>58</sup> Zäwdu Bälay, Semien Gondar Bahilina Turism Birro, “*Yä Gondar Warkawoch*” (Gondar: Gondar Bahilina Turism Birro, no date and year of publication), p. 1. For further information see Appendix 4.

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<sup>58</sup> Zäwdu Bälay, Semien Gondar Bahilina Turism Birro, “*Yä Gondar Warkawoch*” (Gondar: Gondar Bahilna Turism Birro, no date and year of publication), p. 1. For further information see Appendix 4.

through modern agriculture and protect the border.<sup>59</sup> *Bitwädäd* Adanä was a famous patriot, loyal and a good friend of Emperor Haile Selassie and *Awraja* governor of Dabat (Wägära). In 1974 after the collapse of the imperial regime, *Bitwädäd* Adanä Mäkonän together with *Ras* Mängäsha Seyoum, the then Governor General of Tigray (a member of the royal family) and General Nega Tegegn who was married to Princess Hirut Desta, the daughter of *Ras* Desta Damtew and the last Governor General of Begemder and Simien, formed the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) in opposition to the *Därg*.<sup>60</sup>

Waksum on his own initiative communicated with different people of the surrounding areas of *Armachiho*, *Şägädé* and *Wälqait* and called them to come together and engage in agriculture in *Abdärafī*. However, in 1966, Waksum went to *Abdärafī* alone, cleared the land with hired labour and started farming on his own with oxen. His age was in the 20s. Hearing of this bold and courageous man's call and initiative, people from the surrounding areas namely, *Qañazmach* *Abatä Sät Argäw*, *Grazmach* *Gäbrä Hiwät Sät Argäw*, *Ato* *Atanaw Gäbrä Hiwät*, *Ato* *Shigut Wändeménäh*, *Ato* *Alämu Mäläs*, *Ato* *Mogäs Yifa*, *Ato* *Asfaw Wärädä*, *Ato* *Abära Şägayä*, *Ato* *Fätänaw Chäkol*, *Ato* *Gärima Mängistu*, *Ato* *Dämläw Tädlaw* and *Ato* *Mängistu Zäwdu* followed him, took plots of lands and started individual farms with their oxen in *Abdärafī* after completing the land allotment bureaucracy regulations. *Admas Näwätä* also went to *Abdärafī* to help his brother *Waksum Näwätä*.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Informants: *Abära*, *Mängistu*, *Gäbrä Egziabhér*, *Alänä*, *Liuil Wakshum*, and *Nigist Wakshum*.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Informants: *Liuil*, *Nigist*, *Abära*, *Mängistu*, *Gäbrä Egziabhér* and *Alänä*.

Photograph 6: *Jan Tākäl warka*



Source: Photo Atakilt, taken on Oct.9, 2013

Photograph 7: The late Wakshum Nāwātā, a *ballabat* from Armachiho, the *qābälle Shum* (*rist alāka shum*) of Armachiho-Godābē and Abdārafi, and a pioneer in developing modern agriculture in Abdārafi.



Source: Begemederna Simien Ṭāqlay Gizat, *Yä Begemederna Simien Ṭāqlay Gizat Polis ...*, p. 20.

According to informants, the pioneer farmers who later became the founding members of the farmers' cooperative society (12 in number) played a major role in defending the Ethio-Sudan border under the leadership of Wakshum. According to informants, on one occasion, the emperor called Wakshum to Addis Ababa and discussed with him the agricultural development and the general situation of the area. After the discussion the emperor was very happy. He very much

appreciated Wakshum's initiative and gave him his own pistol and 12 guns and 500 bullets as a gift to him and to his 12 friends who had first moved to Abdärafi following him. This was purposely done to arm them in order to help them defend the borderland from bandits and incursions from the Sudan. The emperor did all these things because he might have also heard good things about the courage and initiative of Wakshum, probably through his uncle *Bitwädäd* Adanä Mäkonän. Such a gift was an electrifying encouragement to Wakshum and his friends to work and defend the border and intensify their work and develop it further. They produced three major crops, namely, sorghum, cotton and sesame.<sup>62</sup> As noted above, agriculture in the area was and still is rain-fed.

In 1967 this new agricultural activity was started. This paved the way for other people to move to the area and later begin modern agriculture.<sup>63</sup> As time went on the above mentioned farmers faced shortage of money and fell a prey to traditional moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest rates, as much as 100% or more until harvest time. This traditional system was known as "*shell*". Most of my informants confirmed that the word "*shell*" was derived from the English word "share". The non-literate people called the interest rate "*shell*" but meaning "share" to show that the traditional moneylenders were taking their own very large share through provision of credit.<sup>64</sup> Similarly agricultural credit in neighboring Sudan also fell into the traditional system of *shail/ shayl* until the modern credit system.<sup>65</sup>

The sources of the modern credit system were the commercial banks, the agricultural banks and in Sudan, quasi-public bodies such as the Sudan Gezira Board (SGB). Many farmers did not

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<sup>62</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fissiha, Alänä, Liuel, and Nigist.

<sup>63</sup> Informants: Leuel, Nigist, Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér and Alänä.

<sup>64</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Täka Bälay, Mängistu, Tibäbu Wäkinäh and Alänä.

<sup>65</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fissiha Mäbratu and Alänä.

have access to sources of credit from the modern sector. This was because they lacked assets to serve as collateral for loans. The *shail/ shayl* credit system in the Sudan was usually short term. There were three forms of *shail/ shayl* in the Sudan: 1) an advance of seed against a future crop, 2) a middleman service where the moneylender took over the whole crop at market price, 3) an advance of money against future crops. The crops that were used in *shail/shayl* transactions included cereals, oil crops, and groundnuts.<sup>66</sup> My informants assert that the Ethiopian shell system was basically the same as the *shail/shayl* system in Sudan.<sup>67</sup>

The Ethiopian cooperative farmers in Abdärafī hoped to get loans from modern lower interest credit institutions. In order to achieve this they needed to form a farmers' cooperative. Thus, following Marco's Farm and the Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (WSHC) experiences in Sätit-Humära, the farmers in Abdärafī organized themselves into a cooperative share company in order to get government support.<sup>68</sup> In early December 1970 they formed a farmers' cooperative of 24 members. Individuals contributed money in shares and the initial capital of the cooperative was *Birr* 4,000. Other farmers became interested and wished to join the cooperative and the number of farmer members increased to 45 and their capital was also raised to *Birr* 10,000. *Bitwädäd* Adänä Mäkonän was one of the members of the cooperative.<sup>69</sup> However, they were not yet registered as a farmers' cooperative by the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs (MNCD) because the Cooperative Development Department needed time to study the issue and train the members in the running of cooperatives. According to the cooperative laws of Ethiopia, a cooperative must be registered by the MNCD.

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<sup>66</sup> Francis A. Lees and Hugh C. Brooks, *The Economic and Political Development of the Sudan* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1977), pp. 94-95.

<sup>67</sup> Informants: Sisay, Birhanu Asräs, Kindé, Sergeant Assäfa, and Hailä Mariam.

<sup>68</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fissiha Asräs and Alänä.

<sup>69</sup> Informants: Täka, Mängistu, Tibäbu and Alänä.

The names, registration dates and approximate membership of the cooperatives should be listed. It was only in April 1971 that the Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative was legally registered by the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs under Registration Number 45. At that time the number of members increased to 115 and their capital was raised to *Birr* 28,900. As soon as the cooperative had gained legal existence, the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (AIDB) gave credit that amounted to *Birr* 139, 600 to Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative in order to solve its marketing and financial problems. The Ministry also employed and assigned an expert to the Farmers' Cooperative in order to help it in secretarial and auditing issues.<sup>70</sup>

In 1972, eight new members were registered and this brought the total number of members of the Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society to 123. The membership fee for joining was *Birr* 15 and the price per share was *Birr* 100. The total shares of these members became 314 and their capital also became *Birr* 31,400. The lowest shareholding and the highest shareholding of the members was *Birr* 100 and *Birr* 3000 respectively. On the other hand, the smallest and biggest land holding of the members was 5 hectares (1 hectare=10,000 square meters or 2.471 acres) and 600 hectares respectively. Wakshum Näwätä was the highest shareholder and the biggest land holder.<sup>71</sup>

*Ato* Wakshum Näwätä and *Ato* Abuhay Gäbrahiwät were the first President and Vice President of the cooperative respectively. The number of tractors of the cooperative members at the initial stage was about 30. The farm sites were areas like Godäbé, Korädäm, Gälanluba, Abräha-Enjära and Zämänat.

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<sup>70</sup>Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Hulätäñaw...", p. 122.

<sup>71</sup>TAMS, "The Humära Report: Resource ...", p. 119.

In the second round election the cooperative had an Executive Committee of seven men: a President, Vice President, Secretary, Cashier, and three members. The Executive Committee members in 1973 were:

1. <i>Ato</i> Abära Şägayä	President
2. <i>Ato</i> Mäsfın Mädhın	Vice President
3. <i>Ato</i> Alämayähu Molla	Secretary
4. <i>Ato</i> Dägu Alämé	Cashier
5. <i>Ato</i> Tilahun Mäshäsha	Member
6. <i>Ato</i> Kibäbaw Alämé	Member
7. <i>Ato</i> Alämeyä Mälese	Member

Two Sub-Committees, each with 3 men, were also formed especially in two promising farm villages namely, Girar Wiha and Abrahajira.

Sub-Committee members in Girar Wuha Village were

1. *Ato* Gärıma Mängıstu
2. *Ato* Tıgabıe EndıhNäwn and
3. *Ato* Mussıe Ambayä

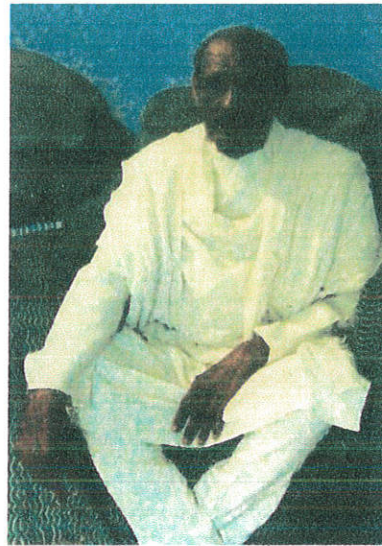
Sub-Committee members in Abrahajira Village were

1. *Ato* Ewaya Aläm Eshät
2. *Ato* Alämu Nurahu and
3. *Ato* Tıgabı Täsfehın.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängıstu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, and Alänä.

Photograph 8 & 9: Photographs of *Ato* Abära Şägayä, the 1973 President of the cooperative.



Source: Photo Atakilt, taken on Oct. 9, 2013. His youth photograph (left) was taken from *Ato* Abära Şägayä's Photo Album at his home in Gondar, *qäbälle* 14.

The introduction of mechanized farming rapidly increased the amount of land under cultivation. The number of the Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society members was also raised to 222 towards the end of 1973. In 1974, the Farmers' Cooperative elected a new President. This man was *Ato* Abuhay Gäbrä Hiwot. After the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, the area fell under the control of the EDU.<sup>73</sup> Abdärafi became a battleground between three opposing forces: *Därg*, EDU and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). But the farmers' cooperative continued to exist until the beginning of the 1980s. Most of the farmers joined the EDU but some of them left for the Sudan. Wakshum Näwätä and his brother Näga Näwätä were the founding members of the EDU. Both of them including their uncle *Bitwädäd* Adanä Mäkonän were killed in 1983 in different battles. Näga Näwätä was killed

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<sup>73</sup> Informants: Täka, Nägädu, Abära, Mängistu, Liuil, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fissiha and Alänä.

by the *Därg* forces and *Bitwädäd* Adanä and Wakshum Näwätä were strongly believed to have been killed by the EPRP forces. *Bitwädäd* Adana's two grandsons, Siläshi Iyassu and Mulu Iyassu who were his key supporters during his struggle, were also mercilessly killed by the *Därg* forces. This was really a family tragedy.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.2.1.2 THE POLICE FARM

The other modern farm that was established in Abdärafī was the Police Farm. The pioneer for the introduction and establishment of the Police Farm was Brigadier General Seyoum Gessese. Brigadier General Seyoum Gessese was the Commander-in-Chief of the Police Force of the then Governorate General of Begemeder and Simien in the 1950s and 1960s. In his appointment there it was his routine activity to visit Abdärafī, the borderland with Sudan. Though Begemeder and Simien was extensively farmed *rest* land, Abdärafī, as noted above, was bush and forest, an inaccessible and wild almost uncultivated, uncontrolled and unused wasteland before the 1950s. It was only in the 1950s that the land started to be cultivated. It was the home of wild animals and violent outlaw robbers (*shiftas*). It was not held and possessed in the name of any person. The people from the Sudan usually entered Ethiopia in this direction by crossing the border illegally. They benefited a lot by collecting honey, cutting the trees and using the land for agriculture.

The General knew that while other retired policemen in the other provinces of the country were given 1 *gasha* of land each to cultivate, the retired policemen in Begemeder and Simien were not, because Begemeder and Simien was all *rest* land where there was no unused land to

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<sup>74</sup> Liqo, See pages 242-243, 247-249 and 297-299 for further details.

allocate to the policemen which was not *rest*.<sup>75</sup> According to the report in a land tenure survey of Begemeder and Simien province, “Lands in which the rights are not enjoyed exclusively by individuals but shared collectively by a community are known as “rest”...family lands.”<sup>76</sup> Seyoum believed that the Abdärafī virgin and fertile lowland could be conducive for cooperative agricultural development because individual farming in the area would not be easy due to lack of transport and the harsh environment.<sup>77</sup> Thus, in about 1965, Seyoum raised the issue and requested the Emperor through Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, the Governor General of Begemeder and Simien, to allocate land in this uncultivated and unused area of Abdärafī to retired policemen for self-help cooperative farming. The General also confirmed that allotting land to the policemen in Abdarafi would enable control of the border from both internal anti-peace forces and the intruding Sudanese farmers, besides helping the retired policemen.<sup>78</sup>

The Emperor approved the request, realizing that Abdärafī was unused, uncultivated and nobody’s *rist* land so far. After approval, General Seyoum called to a meeting all retired police and all police still active in service including those who had been transferred to the province. Discussion was opened in the city of Gondar. An agreement was reached to form a self-help association and a decision was adopted to raise money. To this effect, the cost of one share was *Birr* 100. Each member was allowed to buy up to 15 shares in deduction month by month starting from the June 1966 salary and finishing the payment within 20 full months. The name

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<sup>75</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration Office, A letter from General Seyoum Gessese, Commander-in-Chief of the police force of Begemeder and Simien to Lieutenant Colonel Tamrat Yigezu, the Governor-General of Begemeder and Simien, Folder ጎክ 91 ስለ ገበሬዎች ልማት መሰረዳት Reference No. 4/125/4533, *Ginbot* 13, 1957 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government Ministry of Land Reform and Administration, “Report on Land Tenure Survey of Begemidir & Simien Province, the Department of Land Tenure, Addis Ababa (January 1970), p. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Informants: Sergeant Maru, *Basha* Adugna, Colonel Tigabu; *Polisna Ermijaw*, *Sene* 30, 1959 E.C, pp. 5-6.

<sup>78</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration Office, A letter from General Seyoum Gessese, ..., p. 1.

of the association was chosen as *Yä Begemederna Simien Täqalay Gizat Polis Abaloch Yä Ersha Limat Mahbär* (in short Police Farm). Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, the Governor General, was the patron. The Executive Committee members of the Association as stated in the 1971 report were:

1. Brigadier General Seyoum Gessese	President
2. Colonel Goitom Gäbra Egziabhér	Vice President
3. Major Gäbrä Nigus Asrat	Treasurer and Auditor (which is contradictory since the auditor should check the Treasurer's accounts. This later changed.
4. Captain Ayaléw Fitaläw	Lawyer
5. Second Lieutenant Retta Wakjira	Member
6. Second Lieutenant Tigabu Tädla	Vice Auditor
7. <i>Basha</i> Nigussié Fätänä	Member
8. <i>Basha</i> Berhé Jämbär	Member
9. Lieutenant Kiflé Welde Maryam	Member
10. Lieutenant Ayanaw Sharew	Member
11. Lieutenant Hailu Nigatu	Secretary

This Executive Committee was elected to replace some of the founding members who had been transferred to other provinces after serving for some years, who were

1. Colonel Dessalegn Tekle Mikael	Auditor
2. Captain Teshager Hailu	Vice President
3. Captain Gessesse Zewold	Member
4. Captain Alemu Yimer	Secretary
5. Captain Gebre Yohannis	Vice Auditor

There were two other policemen who were assigned as a sub-committee to follow up the day- to-day activity of the farm. These were:

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Major Beyene Gebre       | Executive Chairman and  |
| 2. Corporal Alemseged Ambaw | Secretary <sup>79</sup> |

Photograph 10: Brigadier General Seyoum Gessese, the founder of the Police Farm



Source: Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Polis, *Yä Polis Abaaloch* ... p. 16.

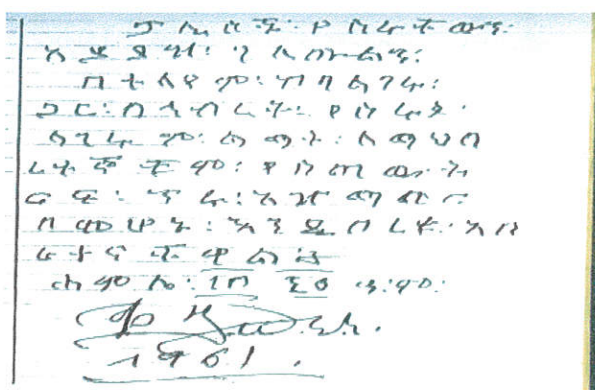
The association received 70 *Gashas* (40 hectares = 1 *gasha*) of land from *Ato* Waksum Näwätä, the *Qäbäle Shum*.<sup>80</sup> The agricultural activity was started in 1967. The initial capital was *Birr* 100,000. The amount of money that was collected from the members was *Birr* 79, 807. *Birr* 10,000 was added from Police Headquarters on credit. With this money they bought 2 tractors and 1 grinding mill that worked with engine power from a tractor engine. With these at hand they cleared the land by hired labour. In clearing the land they suffered from scorpions and snake bites. They tackled the problem with their own qualified doctor and medicine. The members of the association were 478.

<sup>79</sup> See Appendix 5a and b ; Yä Begémidirna Simén Täqlay Gizat Polis, *Yä Polis Abalotch* ... p. 5; *Polisna Ermijaw, Säné 30, 1959 E.C, p. 6.*

<sup>80</sup> *Polisna Ermijaw, Tir 15, 1963 E.C, p. 6 Polisna Ermijaw, Säné 30, 1959 E.C, p. 1.*

The three major crops they produced were cotton, sesame and sorghum. Agriculture was and still is rain-fed. In 1968 their capital was raised to *Birr* 255,889 and they bought 2 additional tractors. Their major problem was how to transport the product to the market. The General reported the whole activity of the association to the emperor and requested government help. The emperor was very happy when he heard the achievements of the policemen. He gave them 1 new truck with its trailer<sup>81</sup> and expressed his happiness in a letter. In his letter, reproduced in the *Police Gazette*, the emperor appreciated the role of the policemen in their contribution to economic development in cooperation with the people of the area and in gaining a good profit for themselves. He confirmed that this was a good start and advised them to go ahead in his letter in his own handwriting and with his signature. This is seen in the following photograph.

Photograph 11: Letter of the Emperor in his own handwriting.



Source: Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, *Yä Polis Abaloch ...*, p. 25.

Thanks to the donated truck, the association was able to transport its products to the Humära Market.

According to informants, rank distinction was observed within the Police Farm. Brigadier General Seyoum Gessese and two other top police officials , namely, Major General Dresé

<sup>81</sup> Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, *Yä Polis Abalotčh...*, pp. 8-9.

Dubale, the Commander in-Chief of the Ethiopian Police Force and Brigadier General Yimam Goshu the Commander-in-Chief of the Rapid Deployment Police Force on the Ethio-Sudan border, had a separate farm on the other side of the Police Farm. They had 3 tractors. Their farm was always guarded by the ordinary policemen from Gondar<sup>82</sup> probably without any extra pay. These policemen worked for the top officials for free probably in order to get help from their superiors when they needed it and because they dared not refuse, as in imperial days a superior's displeasure was, with good reason, feared.

In both Police Farm sites great progress was achieved. However there were security problems. There were misunderstandings between the *qäbälle Shum*, Waksum Näwätä, and the *Wäräda* Governor, *Grazmach* Mangistu Yayne. *Grazmach* Mängistu was probably on good terms with the top police officials. But the *qäbälle Shum* did not see the police in a good light. The other *ballabats* from Armachiho were also not pleased to see the new police investors. They saw them as outsiders. Due to this and probably other reasons, according to informants, Major Beyene Gebré, an old retired police officer was killed mercilessly in 1971 while at work by one of the *ballabats* from Armachiho, a gunman named Zäläkä Jämbär. The gunman was not captured. Major Beyene Gebre was replaced by Lieutenant Desta Cherinet. Lieutenant Desta Cherinet also became a victim and was murdered in 1972 while at work, probably by the same person. This man was still not captured. The Police Farm and the Generals' Farm continued up until the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. After the outbreak of the revolution, Abdärafä fell under the EDU and EPRP and the whole farm activity of the policemen collapsed.<sup>83</sup> Zäläkä

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<sup>82</sup> Informants: Sergeant Maru, *Basha* Adugña, Colonel Tigabu, Nägädu, and Mängistu.

<sup>83</sup> Begemedena Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw ...", p. 201; Informants: Sergeant Maru, *Basha* Adugña, Colonel Tigabu, Nägädu, and Mängistu.

Jämbär was not captured up to that time. He and his brother Abäbä Jambär joined the EDU and were finally killed in 1983 in their fight against the EPRP.<sup>84</sup>

### 3.2.1.3 THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (EOC) DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION IN *Zämānat*

By the Legal Notice No. 415 of 1972 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission as an autonomous body under the Church administration was established on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1972 under the leadership of the Patriarch, *Abba* Theophilos. The purpose was to 1) encourage and aid young people to get training in vocational education 2) help the poor; and 3) generally participate and aid in the national endeavour for educational, economic and cultural development. The sources of income of the Commission were expected to be from any donations, and an annual subsidy granted by the Ecclesiastical Council.<sup>85</sup>

The members of the Executive Committee of the Commission were:

1. *Nibureid* Ermias Kebede, General Manager of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Chairman
2. *Abuna* Samuel, the Bishop of Hossaina and Haikotchna Butajira *Awraja*, Member
3. *Ato* Belay Abay, Minister of Land Reform, Member
4. *Ato* Abera Jembere, State Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, Member
5. *Ato* Abebe Kebede, Qädamawi Haile Selassie Charity Organization, Administrator, Member (later on Vice Chairman)
6. *Ato* Debebe Habte Yohannis, General Manager and Director of the Bank of Addis Ababa, Member
7. Dr. Dagnachew Werku, Director, Ministry of Agriculture, Member
8. *Ato* Gena Desta, General Manager of Ethiopian Orthodox Church Property, Member

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<sup>84</sup> Liku, pp. 298-304.

<sup>85</sup> *Nagarit Gazeta*, 31<sup>st</sup> Year, No.6 (Addis Ababa, 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1972), pp. 32 and 34.

9. Dr Getachew Haile, Haile Selassie I University, Assistant Professor, Member

10. *Ato* Getahun Bogale, Director of the Commission, Member and Secretary (later on General Manager of the Commission).<sup>86</sup>

An early priority was the establishment of an agricultural project. The responsibility for this project was given to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Gondar Regional Ecclesiastical Office, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission started its agricultural development project in Gondar *Zuria Awraja* in Tach Armachiho in Godebe-Abdärafi *Wäräda* in a village called Zämänat in April 1973 (See Appendix v). Financial and material sources were to be obtained from Christian Churches of Europe and the United States of America.<sup>87</sup> The Zämänat Farm site was first visited by Mr. Laklis from Germany and the initial budget for the Zämänat agricultural project was donated from Germany probably from the Lutheran Church. Germany donated *Birr* 500,000 and medicines. Two Belarus (Russian) tractors with their trailers, one Land Rover and one grinding mill were bought in Addis Ababa for the agricultural project. Under the order of General Nega Tegegen, Governor General in Gondar, the commission received 150 *gashas* (40 hectares= 1 *gasha*) of land from *Ato* Wakshum Näwätä, the *rist aläka /shum*. The initial capital was *Birr* 120,000. *Ato* Zänäbä Nuriliñ was assigned as the General Manager of the Zämänat agricultural development. *Ato* Tibäbu Wärkinäh became Finance and Administrative Officer.

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<sup>86</sup> Yä Ethiopia Orthodox Täwahido Betä Kristian Yä Limat Komiission, "Ya Limat Wongél" (*Ginbot* 1, 1964 E.C), pp. 11-12.

<sup>87</sup> See Appendix 6a and 6b and Appendix 7a.

Photograph 12: Ato Zänäbä Nuriliñ, General Manager of the Zämānat Farm Project.



Source: His photograph on his duty-free distribution form (see Appendix viii.)

Things were not smooth for the Commission workers in the establishment period. The first problem came from *Grazmach* Mängistu Yayne, the *wärāda* governor. He did not regard the Commission in a favourable light. He was also not on good terms with the *ballabats* especially with Wakshum, the *rist aläka / shum*. Different criminals came to the development camp with their guns at different times and threatened the workers, set fire to the camp and burned some materials. However, despite all these problems the Commission workers, who were 10 in number, arranged for hired labour from as far as Gondar and Gojjam to clear the land, but the workers suffered from scorpions and snake bites. Finally they managed to grow cotton and sesame. All the rations that they had went bad and became inedible due to the hot climate. Thus, they were forced to hunt wild animals like oryx and guinea fowl for food and also ate *wad akr* the coarse variety of sorghum and *saфра* (*sorghum vulgare*). Water was also a problem. Tractors were used for hauling water from the Angäräb River. In 1973 they produced 400 quintals of cotton and 500 quintals of sesame. The sesame was sold in Abdärafä by inviting tenders. The

Commission gained *Birr* 120,000. Cotton was taken to Gondar and sold to the cotton ginning factory for *Birr* 180,000.<sup>88</sup>

When the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution broke out, there was no peace and stability in the area. Abdärafī fell under EDU control and the area became a battleground between the *Därg*, EDU and EPRP. There was chaos and no political stability at all. Ordinary criminals came from here and there. They fired bullets from their guns and burned the camp and the grinding mill. In this period of disaster, *Ato* Admassu Enyāw, a Commission worker, was killed. The Rapid Deployment Police Force came from their camp at Lugdi and things were improved for the time being. Anyway, 1974 was a year of confusion and frustration in Abdärafī and its surrounding areas.<sup>89</sup>

In 1975 *Ato* Getahun Bogale became Executive Secretary of the Commission and *Abba* Gäbrä Mädhin Gäbrä Yohannis (the late *Abuna* Paulos, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church 1992-2012), was assigned as Alternate General Manager of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission in place of *Ato* Getahun Bogale. In fact, at this time, the Chairman of the Ethiopian Orthodox Development Commission was *Ato* Mäkonän Zäwdé.<sup>90</sup>

In October 1975 *Ato* Zänäbä Nuriliñ, the General Manager of the Zämānat agricultural farm, was replaced by *Ato* Aläbachāw Kassie.<sup>91</sup> According to informants, *Ato* Zänäbä was removed from his position probably because he was a somewhat corrupt person. The political instability in the area might have helped him to be like that. He was not honest. He did not submit the profits of the project to the head office. He was also accused of using the Commission's tractors for his

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<sup>88</sup> Informants: Tibäbu and Liqä Seyuman Gäbrä Mäsqäl Zäru.

<sup>89</sup> Informants: Liqä Seyuman Gäbrä Mäsqäl and Tibäbu; see also Appendix 6a and 6b.

<sup>90</sup> See Appendix vi.

<sup>91</sup> See Appendix vii.

own farm that was given to him by the *Qaballe Shum*. With all these problems, the Zämānat project could not give benefit as had been expected. It was short-lived and finally collapsed in about 1975/1976.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.2.2 MÄTTÄMA

Mätämma was and is in Chilga *Awraja*. Mätämma Yohannis was the seat of administration. Matamma was a Mikitil *Wäräda* and its seat of administration was Awateho.<sup>93</sup> Malaria was rampant in Mättäma and early settlement had been deterred by a high mortality rate. This serious problem prevented neighboring highlanders from exploiting the land. But this did not mean that there was no farming at all. It should be remembered that the Mättäma area had been the most typical of the western plains cotton growing areas since ancient times. Sorghum, the staple food in the agrarian economy of the area, was also grown on a large scale by peasants. Cotton was the second most important crop. During the Italian occupation a cotton ginnery was established in Mättäma, but it was not in operation after the liberation.<sup>94</sup>

In the early 1960s, there were no policemen in Mättäma. The *ballabats* from Chilga usually assigned local border patrols. Their monthly salary was *Birr* 8 only. The *ballabats* simply gave the border patrols titles like *mäto aläqa* (lieutenant) or *shaläqa* (major). The *wäräda* governor of Mättäma at that time was *Kwaja* Hailu and the *Qäbälle Shum* was *Ato* Gälayä Gubaw. The chief of the border was *Mäto Aläka* Isaqa Abdulkarim. Isaqa was a Sudanese national by birth

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<sup>92</sup> Informants: Liqä Seyuman Gäbrä Mäskäl and Tibäbu.

<sup>93</sup> Ya Ethiopia Niguse Mengist, Yager Gizat Minister Masihet, ka 1953-1959, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Edward G. Nicholson, Cotton Expert, Food and Agriculture Organization Mission to Ethiopia, *Cotton in Ethiopia* (Published by Authority of H.E. *Balambaras* Mahteme Selassie Wolde Mascal, Minister of Agriculture, Chairman of the Development Bank, Addis Ababa: Ministry of Agriculture, November 1956), pp. 26-29.

but Ethiopian by citizenship. *Kwaja* Hailu governed Mättäma up to 1967. The *Wäräda* administrative centre was Mättäma Yohannis.<sup>95</sup>

Large scale cotton cultivation did not spread in Mättäma until the mid-1960s. According to Dessalegn Bizuneh,

*From 1941 to the mid-1960s, Matamma was a sleepy place with only a dozen police with their health station and telegram service, an elementary school, customs buildings, warada administration and the prostitutes with local talla and taji houses being the only signs of modernity in the village. It was as if it had not once been a busy and crowded place where items ranging from 'a needle to a camel' were found in large quantities..<sup>96</sup>*

According to informants, in about 1965 Sisay Birhanu and Abätä Shifäraw of Chaqo Michael in Chilga Awraja went to Kokit, a village in Mättäma *Wäräda*, to engage in agriculture. They had a pair of oxen each and one donkey. They took a *Birr* 100 loan from some individuals and agreed to return it by doubling the loan (*Birr* 200) based on the traditional credit system. At Kokit, they met the Gumuz *ballabats* like *Fitawrari* Hassän Liqu, Liyon and Tarab. *Fitawrari* Hassän Liqu was the *rist kifil shum* of the Gumuz land in Kokit. They introduced themselves to the Gumuz *ballabat* by giving him one porcelain cup of coffee beans because they knew that the Gumuz people in general liked coffee. They told *Fitawrari* Hassän that they needed land to farm. *Fitawrari* Hassan allowed them to choose the best land and start to clear and farm it. The Gumuz had originally no knowledge of oxen farming. They learned oxen farming after establishing contacts with the Amhara highlanders. Sisay and Abätä familiarized themselves with the Gumuz people and started farming. The major problem they faced was snakes and scorpions while clearing the land. Food shortage was also another problem. Sisay had his own gun and solved the

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<sup>95</sup> Informants: Sisay, Birhanu, Kinde, Sergeant Assäfa, and Hailä Mariam.

<sup>96</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, p. 34.

shortage of food by hunting wild animals. Abätä became seriously sick from malaria and returned to Chaqo Michael. Another friend who joined Sisay was Gétahun Mäkonän.<sup>97</sup>

Both started a settled life by constructing small cottage houses. They grew sorghum and sesame and sold them in Sudan and Humära markets. A quintal of sesame at that period of time was sold for 60 *Birr* only, but according to the informants this was a good sum of money for the farmers at that time.<sup>98</sup>

Around the mid 1960s some drought-affected people from Wärähimäno *Awraja* of the neighbouring Wollo Governorate General came and settled in a place called Yifag in Libo *Awraja* in Kämkäw *Wäräda* near Addis Zämän. Life in Yifag was not easy and simple for these people, so that these people then moved to Mätämma *Wäräda* in Chilga Awraja. Mätämma was a forest land. It was inaccessible to everyone before 1964 and 1965. No one lived in the area except very few Gumuz people here and there. These *Wolloye* (Wollo) people came and settled in the uncultivated area of Birshigñ around Gändä Wuha and started a new life by practicing agriculture on a small scale. They planted a cotton locally known as *qächäre* cotton. This type of cotton, according to my informants, was thin and its lint was also very short. It does not give results in the first year after planting. Its seeds could be reproduced and multiplied every year and could give good results for 7-8 years. This type of cotton was widely used in the area before 1967. Even now it is used by peasants in the countryside. The farmers depended on seeds from their own cotton plants, obtained every year, instead of seeds bought from off-farm outside sources. From 1968/69 onwards, modern types of cotton seeds known as Acala (USA) and Israel (Gedera) came to the area and replaced the *qochäre* cotton. Step by step more people started to

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<sup>97</sup>Informants: Kindie and Sisay.

<sup>98</sup>*ibid.*

come from Wollo and the number of the *Wolloyoch* (people of Wollo) increased. Their settlement area also increased. They occupied different localities like Agam Wuha, Das and Lämläm Tärara. Their life improved. This inspired the people of the surrounding highlands to come and start agricultural activities. Through time the Gumuz were replaced.<sup>99</sup>

Also in about 1966 some veteran soldiers from Azäzo came and were allotted land by the *Qäbälle Shum*, Ato Gälayä Gubaw, at Kumär. These veteran soldiers were the members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army Division. They are said to have participated in the Ethiopian force in the Korean War (1950-1953) and the Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo. They were organized in an agricultural association. Their association was called Mättäma *Wäräda* Agricultural Association, *Yä Mättäma Wäräda Gibrina Mahbär* (Civil *Mahbär*). The Chairman of the association was *Däjazmach* Taddäsä Läma who was the commander-in-chief of the *Näch Läbash* (a civilian police force during the imperial period) of Begemeder and Simien.<sup>100</sup> The Vice Chairman was *Grazmach* Hailu Abäbaw and the members of the association, according to the association minute, were 83. Brigadier General Nega Tegegn, the Governor General, was one of the members. *Wäizäro* Abäkyäläsh Yimär popularly known as Abäkyäläsh Gondar, the owner of a famous *täj bét* (*täj* selling house) in the city of Gondar and other well known figures like Gerima Tafere, a local historian of the Italian Period and the father of Professor Haile Gerima, were also members. The initial capital of the Mättäma *Wäräda* Agricultural Association was 100,000 *Birr*.<sup>101</sup>

In 1967 *kwaja* Hailu died and *Grazmach* (commander of the left) Mulugéta Mälkie was appointed as the new *Wäräda* Governor. *Grazmach* Mulugéta made a call to Ethiopian nationals

<sup>99</sup> Informants: Kindié, Sisay, Birtukan Čhane, Hailä Mariam and Sergeant Assäfa.

<sup>100</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration, Folder ንክ 19/ ጭ ጭልጋ አውራጃ ቦታና መራት. An Application letter from Mättäma *Wäräda* Agricultural Association to Gondar Province, 21/9/64 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>101</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone, Folder ንክ 19/ ጭ ጭልጋ አውራጃ ቦታና መራት. A Minute of Mättäma *Wäräda* Agricultural Association in 4 pages, *Tahsas* 27, 1965 E.C, pp. 1-4. For further information see Appendix 10a-d.

who were in the Sudan in search of work and to those who were in the surrounding highlands to come to Mättäma and develop the area through agriculture. Modern agricultural development in Humära and Abdärafī attracted the people in and around Mättäma. Thus, a large number of people came to Kokit and Wärkamba. For instance, two brothers, Fitaye Assegu and Getahun Assegu (General Manager of Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory), came to Kokit. They needed to hire a foreigner who was skilled in modern agricultural development. For this they approached *Ato* Gerima Tafere and asked him for help through his wife because his wife was a Greek national. *Ato* Gerima and his wife helped the two brothers by bringing a Greek national whose name was Atanasios. On the other hand, Seid and Umar Hassän recruited an Israeli national whose name was Shawil Zehabi. Such initiatives were the beginning of modern agriculture in Mättäma. Tractor-owning farmers, tractor-renting farmers, oxen farmers, oxen-renting farms and even *siluka* farmers (those who used a digging stick) started to come to Mättäma in increasing number. Most farmers joined farmers' cooperatives.<sup>102</sup>

The members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade who had served for a long period of time were also allotted land in Mättäma. They were organized in a farmers' association. Their association was called *Yä Simintägña Brigade Yä Räjim Agälgilot Yä Ersha Mahbär* (Eighth Brigade Long Service Farmers' Association) Other individual rich farmers who had tractors were also farming individually in competition. Some of these were Täfära Alämu, Mängistu Ṭirunäh, Colonel Berhe Hadgu, Dämoz Tässäma, Captain Sisay Tägäñ, Kidané Assäghägn, Haji Suleman Aräfä, Hailé Rädä and others.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Informants: Sisay, Kinde, Sergeant Assafa, and Haila Mariam.

<sup>103</sup>Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration, Folder ጎክ 19/ ጭ ጭ ልጋ አውራጃ ቦታና መራት An Application from 13 farmers to the Ethiopian Development Bank, *Hidar* 21, 1960 E.C, p. 1.

Another farmers' association in Mättäma that was established in the 1960s was *Yä Kokit Yä Ersha Sira Mahbär* (Kokit Farmers' Association). Most of the members in this *mahbär* (association) were government ministers and *ballabats*. The Chairperson was *Ato Birhanu Asräs* (Founding member and Board Member of Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory). We have no enough information on all these. In the archives there is nothing about their activities or achievements. The information from the archives is about the border disputes between the different farmers' associations. Good examples of these were disputes between *Yä Kokit Yä Ersha Sira Mahbär* (Kokit Farmers Association) and the *Mättäma Wäräda Agricultural Association* (Civil Mahbär).<sup>104</sup> There was no precise demarcation of land on the ground and measurement was only by pacing out land or by saying for example from this tree to that tree, or this river to that river, this hill to that hill. Therefore boundary disputes were very common and there were long-standing unresolved court cases over these boundaries.<sup>105</sup>

The difference between farmers' cooperatives and farmers' associations was that the farmers' associations were not registered by the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs like the farmers' cooperatives and were not able to take loans from the AIDB unless they had a guarantor. Their similarity was that if both had tractors they were able to take duty-free fuel from the government.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration, Folder *ጎክ 19/ጭ ጭልጋ አውራጃ ቦታና መራት*. An application letter from Kokit Farmers Association to Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, Governor General of Begemedar and Simien, *Ginbot* 18, 1964 E.C, pp. 1-2.

<sup>105</sup> See Appendix 17a and b and Appendix 18.

<sup>106</sup> Informants: Zänäbä, Yirsaw and Sisay.

### 3.2.2.1 MÄTTÄMA AND MAHBÄRÄ SELASSIE FARMERS MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY AND OTHER FARMERS' ASSOCIATIONS

Mättäma-Mahbärä Selassie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative was registered by the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs. It was established in 1971. There were 800-1000 farmers.<sup>107</sup> Farmers were allocated land from both Mättäma *Wäräda* and Mahbärä Selassie Monastery. The land from Kokit as far as the frontier post of Mättäma Yohannis was under Mättäma and the land from Mahbärä Selassie Monastery as far as Kokit belonged to the monastery. The border of the monastery and Mättäma administration within the Mättäma *Wäräda* were Gänätä Maryam, Jäjäbit and Šinfa river. The farmers who were allotted land from Mättäma got their association membership identification cards from *Ato Gälayä Gubaw*, the *Qäbälle Shum* of Mättäma *Wäräda*. Those farmers who were allotted land from Mahbärä Selassie got their association membership identification cards from the monastery. Mättäma farmers paid the production tax to Mättäma *Wäräda*. On the other hand, Mahbärä Selassie farmers paid their production tax to the monastery.<sup>108</sup> Farmers who were allotted land by the monastery were expected to give free labour to the monastery in time of harvest. Allotment of land was on an individual basis like in Humära and Abdärafī. This means farmers paid their production tax individually. The farmers saw the formation of farmers' cooperative as an advantage because they faced so many problems prior to the formation of a cooperative. These were lack of money and the traditional credit system (*shell* system) also demanded a very high interest rate. They were forced to get money immediately by selling their products to the surrounding merchants at a lower price. It was this and other problems that led the farmers to form a cooperative in order to get loans from modern credit institutions. The Executive members of the cooperative were:

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<sup>107</sup> Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Hulätäñaw...", p.122.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

1. <i>Ato</i> Kābādä Chäköl	President
2. <i>Ato</i> Alämu Tässäma	Vice President
3. <i>Ato</i> Gäbré Tächanāw	Secretary
4. <i>Ato</i> Atanaw Wassié	Treasurer
5. <i>Ato</i> Sisay Birhanu	Member <sup>109</sup>

*Ato* Kābādä Chäköl was from Gojjam. *Ato* Alämu Tässäma was from Wollo and *Ato* Gäbré Tächanāw, *Ato* Atanaw Wassé and *Ato* Sisay Birhanu were all from Chilga Awraja (Gondar).

The number of the tractor farmers at the formative stage was about 300. This does not include oxen farmers. Oxen farmers were more than 500. There were later about 400 tractors. The total area of land that was under Mättäma-Mahbärä Selassie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society was according to informants, more than 1000 *gashas*.<sup>110</sup>

Some of the farming villages were:

1. Gända Wuha
2. Kumär
3. Das
4. Kokit
5. Shinfa
6. Märmiya
7. Aftit
8. Shimälä Gara
9. Mättäma Yohannis
10. Dälollo
11. Mäqa
12. Achära
13. Akushara
14. Lencha
15. Gubay
16. Awasa Lasta
17. Shasige
18. Kämächala
19. Shimäl Tarara
20. Tumät
21. Wädä Gämzo
22. Agam Wuha
23. Nägade Bahir
24. Awlala
25. Wärkamba, and there were others.

The farmers produced three major crops: cotton, sesame, and sorghum. Sorghum was usually used for local consumption. They sold the sesame product in the Humära Market and they took the cotton to Gondar and sold it in Gondar to the Cotton Ginning and Processing Factory.<sup>111</sup>

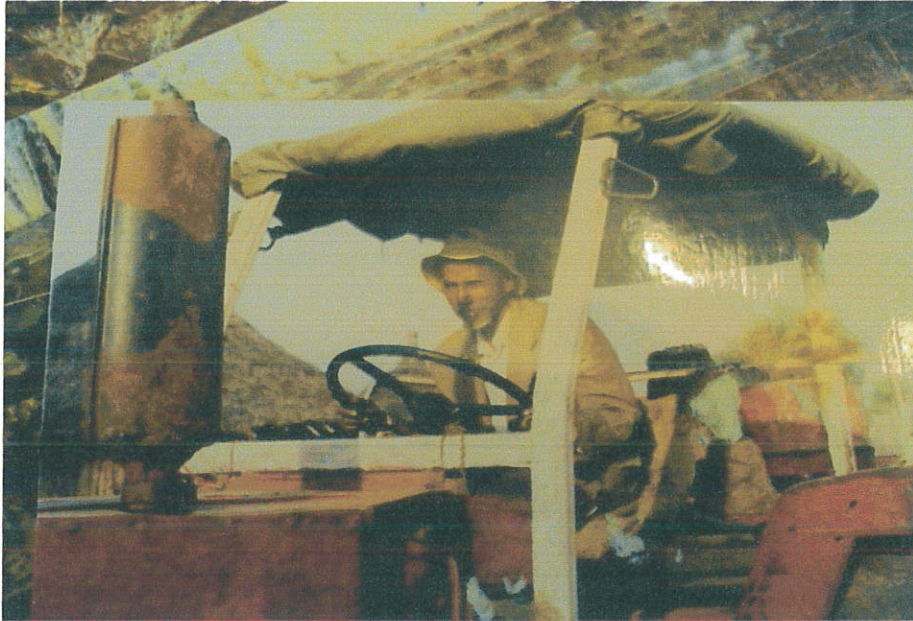
<sup>109</sup> Informants: Sisay, Kinde, Sergeant Assäfa, and Hailä Mariam.

<sup>110</sup> Informants: Sergeant Assäfa, Mandäfro, Sisay and Kindie.

<sup>111</sup> Informants: Hailä Mariam, Inspector Bihoneñ, Sergeant Assäfa, Mandäfro, and Sisay.

Before the establishment of the Gondar Ginning factory it is to be remembered that the cooperative farmers used to sell their cotton to the Sulmat Company in Asmāra.<sup>112</sup>

Photograph 13: *Ato* Sisay Birhanu one of the pioneers of modern agriculture in Mättäma.



Source: Taken from *Ato* Sisay's Photo Album at his home in Gondar, *Käbälle* 15.

Farmers were happy in gaining good profit. Their life was changed for the better. They also contributed a lot to the economic development of Ethiopia in general and to the development of the *wäräda* and Gondar in particular. Yirga Dubalä, a poet from Chilga, said the following in his Amharic poem regarding the significance of agricultural development.

የአበሻ መንግስት የኢትዮጵያ መንግስት ምክር ተሳስቶ  
 ማረሻን ባንድ ብር ጠመንጃ በመቶ  
 አሁን የማረሻ ያለበትን ለዛ  
 እህል ካልቀመሱ ከንፈር እኮ አይወዛ<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Solomon Addis, "A History of the City of Gondar 1934-1966 E.C" (M.A Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa University, June 1994), p. 239.

<sup>113</sup> Informant: Sisay.

The government of Habäsha [Ethiopia] is mistaken in not listening to advice.

It preferred to buy a gun for *Birr* 100 than buying an important plough for *Birr* 1.

A plough helps to till the land and produce crops for food.

The lip (mouth) can not have a lovely look without food.

Every farmer saw sesame as a *Näch Almaz* (white diamond, that is of great value for himself).

Based on this interpretation, Yirga again compared coffee with sesame. He said that harvesting sesame is more advantageous than coffee. According to the same poet Yirga,

ቡና ሰባት አመት እየተዳሰሰ

ሰለጥ በ 3 ወሩ ብድሩን መሰሰ<sup>114</sup>

It takes 7 years to harvest coffee

Sesame needs 3 months only to be harvested. Thus, a farmer could return his loans if he had loans within three months rather than

waiting for seven whole years.

One hot issue that disturbed the farmers and all the people of Mättäma Yohannis was the attempt to transfer the *Wäräda* centre of administration from Mättäma Yohannis to Tändalti, some 12 kms from Mättäma Yohannis. The then Mättäma *Wäräda* Governor, Major Maru Garäd, requested higher officials to approve the plan and allow him to make a change of location and a new town plan with the help of the government (See Appendix x). In his request he put forward as reasons for the transfer, shortage of water and security problems. He believed that Mättäma Yohannis was very near to neighboring Sudan (Gallabat) and was exposed to all kinds of danger.<sup>115</sup> This proposed move was not liked by the people of the town. They reacted with their four pages petition and appealed to Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat, the Governor

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration, Folder አውራጃ 19/ጭ ጭልጋ አውራጃ ቦታና መሬት a letter from Tariku Falaka, Engineer to Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, *Miazza* 17, 1960 E.C, p. 1

General (See Appendices ixa-d).<sup>116</sup> The case was presented to the central government. The central government saw the different reports and the people's reaction in the area and finally decided that Mättäma Yohannis should remain the *wäräda* centre.<sup>117</sup>

The other major problem became the political turmoil in the area. After the 1974 revolution, Mättäma was a battleground especially between the *Därg* and the EDU. The real battle between the *Därg* and the EDU started, according to Dessalegn, on November 21, 1976. The most serious fighting between the EDU and the *Därg* took place on April 5, 1977. EDU forces were supported by some soldiers of the Sudanese regular army and Mättäma town was burned down. Almost all houses, business premises and churches and mosques were totally destroyed in the course of the fighting. Many soldiers including civilians were killed and wounded. Lieutenant Isqa Abdulkarim, the well known police officer in Mättäma, was also killed. The people of Mättäma Yohannis and the *Därg* soldiers retreated and settled in what later became the new *wäräda* capital of Mättäma, Gändä Wuha (Shähdi), some 40 kms from Mättäma Yohannis. The EDU forces controlled areas like Mättäma, Kokit, Das and other areas for some time. It was only at the end of August 1977 that the *Därg*'s Red Army (*Näbälbal* (Flame)) under the leadership of Major Bäqällä Banjaw forced the EDU to flee to Sudan.<sup>118</sup>

Though the *Därg* controlled Mättäma, people could not lead a settled life in Mättäma Yohannis because the town was totally destroyed by the war. This led Mättäma Yohannis to lose its status as the *wäräda* capital to Gändä Wuha (Shähdi). A few people who did not want to abandon their settlement returned to Mättäma Yohannis. Some of them were prostitutes and others were

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<sup>116</sup> See Appendix ixa-d and Appendix i for further details.

<sup>117</sup> Archive of National Library, Folder 275 Ethio-Sudan border: Sätit-Humära 17.2.406.A, A letter from Ato Legesse Bezu, Ministry of Interior to Ministry of Education No. 18/10936 *Megabit* 3, 1964 E.C, p.1

<sup>118</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, pp. 49-50.

contraband merchants. Those who were afraid of the National Military Service of the *Därg* crossed the Mättäma border and fled to Sudan and then to Europe or America. Though the EDU forces left Mättäma for Sudan, other armed groups like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) came to the area. However, the *Därg* managed to control the area once again.<sup>119</sup>

The *Därg* seizure of power and its land policy was another problem especially for the big farmers. Most of them left for Sudan and others, like Atanaw Wasé, joined the EDU. The political instability was also seen as an advantage to the treasurers of the cooperatives. Most of them took the money that was in their hands. For instance, according to informants, Atanaw Wasé took *Birr* 90,000 and joined the EDU. The *Därg* saw Mahbärä Selassie Monastery as "Adhari Gadam" ( a reactionary monastery), took much of its land and gave it to new settlers from Chilga. The *Därg* tried to develop the Mättäma and Humära areas through mechanized agriculture. However, it was not successful due to health problems, unskilled manpower and lack of modern machinery.<sup>120</sup> According to Hammond,

*When the Derg overthrew Emperor Haile Sellasie, it placed all land under state ownership. The large landowners left the area and the Derg set up state farms. These farms were never very successful, largely due to heavy fighting in the area, inefficient management and lack of popular support for collectivized farming. Large stretches of land therefore sat idle for two decades.<sup>121</sup>*

The next chapter discusses soils, farmers, tractors and crops, land tenure and the role of financial institutions, in granting loans and labour.

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>120</sup> Informants: Abba Gäbrä Tṣadiq, Sisay, Kinde, Sergeant Assäfa, and Hailä Mariam.

<sup>121</sup> Laura C. Hammond, "Returnees, local farmers and big business: the politics of land allocation in Humera, Ethiopia" in Dessalegn Rahmato (ed.) *Land Tenure and Land Policy in Ethiopia after the Derg. Proceedings of the Second Workshop of Land Tenure Project* (Addis Ababa University: Land Tenure Project Institute of Development Research, 1994), p. 249.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOILS, FARMERS, TRACTORS AND CROPS, LAND TENURE, THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN GRANTING LOANS AND LABOUR

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss a number of different but related aspects of Abdārafi and Mättäma. I describe the soils and the problem of working them and how the land was used. The different types of farmers are explained and their use of a variety of tractors and agricultural implements. The valuable concession of duty-free fuel for tractors for agricultural use is described. I give an account of the credit to farmers provided especially by the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank. The chapter explains the land tenure of the area in the imperial period and how land was allocated to individuals seeking to farm it. There is a description of the most important crops in the area and how they were cultivated. The question of labour and labour costs concludes the chapter.

#### 4.1 SOILS

The soils of the study areas are predominantly vertisols, dark clay types of soils with little organic matter.<sup>1</sup> According to Thompson and Troeh, vertisols develop cracks at least 1 cm. wide and 50 cms. deep during the dry seasons. They contain at least 30 per cent clay. The soil is liable to shrink and swell. Vertisols have a unique “self-swallowing” action. The surface soil falls into the cracks during the dry seasons. Writers have confirmed that when there is rain the soil absorbs water through the cracks as well as the surface. Whenever the soil swells it shifts to accommodate the extra soil that has fallen down the cracks.<sup>2</sup> McCann also comments

*Vertisols are ill-suited to ox-plough agriculture, since they tend to smear and cake with the first moisture, to waterlog*

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<sup>1</sup>ILRI and MoARD, “Metema Pilot...”, p.7.

<sup>2</sup>Louis M. Thompson and Frederick R. Troeh, *Soils and Soil Fertility*, Fourth Edition, (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 377.

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*during the rains, and to dry and crack quickly when the rains cease. These considerations made the timing of cultivation critical-and hence labour –intensive –since only the period soon after the rains begin is suitable for the highland scratch plough to break the soil's heavy crust.*<sup>3</sup>

Kahsay and Campbell also wrote on the problem of waterlogging. According to them, waterlogging is an important environmental problem that comes as a result of the characteristics of the soil and the amount of rainfall.<sup>4</sup> Soils prone to waterlogging are also difficult for tractors to farm. Cultivation problems occur due to extreme stickiness of the soils when wet unless a specially designed tractor-drawn rotavator (also rotovator), a machine with rotating blades for breaking up the soil, is used.<sup>5</sup> However, rotavators were not used in my areas.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, conditions are otherwise excellent for growing some mechanized rain-fed crops mainly sesame, sorghum and cotton. This means only crops that do not really tolerate waterlogged conditions were and are grown on the soil.<sup>7</sup> Weeding is also a major expense for both large and small-scale farmers. There are many noxious weeds including parasitic weeds such as *striga* (commonly known as witchweed or witches'weed). This is a parasitic plant that occurs in parts of Africa, Asia, and Australia. In addition to these problems, clearing of forest and bush for settlement and for small /large-scale farms and for fuel requirements in charcoal making was required. Unfortunately valuable incense and gum plants were also cut and destroyed indiscriminately during this process. There was also a culture of setting fire to the

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<sup>3</sup> McCann, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Kahsay Berhé and Campbell, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Atakilt, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Kindie, Tibäbu, Mängistu and Alänä.

<sup>7</sup> Informants: Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa, Sisay, Abära, Kindie, Tibäbu, Mängistu, and Alänä.

forest and bush lands in order to kill ticks and to encourage the growth of new grass. During this process flora and fauna were destroyed and there was environmental destruction in loss of trees.<sup>8</sup>

Photograph 14: A tractor of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) getting stuck in mud in the wet season in Abdärafi



Source: Taken from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) MSF-Holland Abdurafi Project, 2014, p. 4.

## 4.2 LAND USE

### 4.2.1 ABDÄRAFI

Land use in Humära, Wälqait, Şägädé, Tach Armachiho (Abdärafi) and Müttäma in the early 1970s is shown in the following Table.

Table 7: Land Use of Sätit-Humära, Wälqait, Şägädé and Tach Armachiho (Abdärafi), early 1970s.

Zone/Area	Cultivated Land	Arable land	Non-arable land	Total Area	Remark
	ha.	ha.	ha.	ha.	
A	78,150	24,000	31,740	133,890	
B	85,220	8,000	41,280	134,500	
C	140,755	85,000	287,855	513,610	
Total	304,125	117,000	360.875	782,000	

A= Sätit-Humära

B= Wälqait and Şägädé

C= Tach Armachiho (Abdärafi)

Source: Adapted TAMS, “The Humera Report. Investment  
p. 8

Proposal” (February 1974),

According to the Humära report,

<sup>8</sup>Kahsay and Campbell, p.5.

*All of the cultivated land is used for dry land farming. Over 50 percent of this land is cultivated by tractor; the introduction of mechanized farming some 25 years ago rapidly increased the amount of land under cultivation....*

*...the cultivated area is planted to sesame and sorghum. Cotton is the principal remaining crop, others being millet, maize, and peppers. Trees of both the woodland savannah and the non-arable land are used for building material, charcoal production or firewood and tool making. These lands are also used for light grazing and serve for wildlife food and cover.<sup>9</sup>*

#### 4.2.2 MÄTTÄMA

According to Mättäma Wäradä Office of Agriculture, the total area of the wäradä is about 440 thousand ha. Much of the wäradä was acacia dominated forest and grasslands. Its land use is shown in the following Table.

Table 8: Land use of Mättäma Wäradä.

Land Use Type	Area (ha)
Cultivated Land	103, 908
Uncultivated Land which could be cultivated	23, 877
Forest + Grassland	312, 300
Total Area	440, 085

Source: Adapted from the ILRI and MoARD, p. 8.

**Note:** This is current data. I could not get sources for land use of Mättäma in the 1960s and 1970s due to lack of sources. I believe that the cultivated land was much less than the uncultivated and forest-grasslands of the 1960s and 1970s because according to a source, the cultivated lands of Mättäma in the 1970s were less than the cultivated lands of Humära and Abdärafä (Source: Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, “Bä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw...”, p. 122).

The Bänishangul-Gumuz, the home of the Gumuz people is located in the western part of the country, sharing an international border with Sudan in the west. Bänishangul-Gumuz shares borders with the Amhara, Oromia, and Gambélla regional states. The Gumuz people depended on a customary land tenure system of communal ownership. They have traditionally been shifting cultivators. The five largest ethnic groups reported in Mättäma are the Amhara, the

<sup>9</sup>TAMS, “The Humara Report. Investment Proposal” (February 1974), p. 8.

Qimant, the Tigrayan, the Gumuz and the Agäw Awi. Starting in the 1950s, the Amhara settlers moved to the area because of ‘distress push’ migration mainly from drought-affected areas of Wollo, and later through state-sponsored forced resettlement schemes by the *Därg* regime.<sup>10</sup> The original inhabitants of Mättäma *wäräda* (Kokit area in western Chilga) are the Gumuz. Until recently, the Gumuz practiced only a little slash and burn farming using only digging sticks. They also hunted wild animals. They produced sorghum. Sorghum was their staple crop and it still remains the major food crop in the *Wäräda*. The two other major crops in the area were sesame and cotton. Agriculture is rain-fed. Due to the pressure of newcomers from the highlands, the Gumuz are now concentrated in only a few areas and live close to each other. Now they are found in three areas, namely, Kumär Aftit, Tumät, and Şhinfä. Currently the total number of the indigenous Gumuz would be around 500 households.<sup>11</sup> They have been evicted from their former villages at Kokit and Wäraqamba. The Gumuz people do not cultivate their fields intensively. Rather, they cultivate a given plot of land for about 3 to 5 years then leave it to lie fallow when a decline in yield is perceived. Within their own clan territory, new land is then cleared and cultivated in the same way until the yield is again seen to deplete.<sup>12</sup>

There are three major rivers that drain the *wäräda*. These are the Shinfä, Guang, and Gända Wuha. They are not really adequate for irrigation owing to insufficient water at times because the rivers have a reduced volume of water during the dry season. Groundwater is available between 10m. and 16m. depth in the plains and valley bottoms.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Informants: *Abba Gäbrä Şadiq*, *Sisay*, *Abära*, *Kindié*, *Tibäbu*, *Mängistu*, and *Alänä*.

<sup>11</sup>ILRI and MoARD, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Dessalegn Bizuneh, p. 39.

<sup>13</sup>ILRI and MoArd, p. 20.

“Metema is one of the woredas where gum and incense is collected. The main species for incense production is *Boswellia papyrifera*, while *Acaia seyal* and *A. polyacantha* are used for gum production”<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.3 TYPES OF FARMERS

In the period of my dissertation the farmers in Abdārafī and Mättāma can be grouped into three types: 1) tractor-owning farmers 2) tractor-renting farmers and 3) oxen farmers. The tractor-owning farmers were farmers who owned tractors individually or in partnership. The tractor-renting farmers were of two categories. In the first category, tractor-renting was practiced in a fairly large area. Tractors were rented on a private basis by cash or payment in kind. Most of the farmers who rented tractors had animal power but wished to cultivate a larger area by using tractors. These farmers were those farmers who lacked capital to purchase tractors and expensive agricultural implements. The second category of tractor-renting farmers consisted of employees of the large farmers. They usually worked for the large farmers with the understanding of receiving all or part of their pay by using the tractor of large farmers to farm their own land after the owners' farms had been fully worked. The oxen farmers were again of two types. These were oxen-owning farmers and oxen-renting farmers.<sup>15</sup> The reasons given by farmers for renting oxen were 1) inability to raise capital for purchasing the animals; 2) absence of security from oxen theft during the off-season; and 3) loss of invested capital through death of the oxen (animal disease was prevalent). Most of the oxen farmers were not members of the cooperatives and were excluded from mechanization because they could not borrow money at reasonable interest rates.<sup>16</sup> The oxen farmers were the largest stratum of cultivators in the area. They practiced less

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> TAMS, “The Humara Report: resource...”, pp. 87-88.

<sup>16</sup> Atakilt, p. 54.

plowing or tillage of the lands than tractor farmers due mainly to the large distances from the towns of Abdärafī and Mättäma to their farms and because oxen cannot plough as much as tractors. Oxen farmers also came to Abdärafī and Mättäma with their oxen after they had finished their work in the highlands. Such movement is known as *Mofär Zämmät Ersha* (*Mofar* means the beam of a plough and *Mofär Zämät Ersha* means cultivating land far away from the farmer's house). Those who resided in Abdärafī and Mättäma bought oxen from merchants who brought oxen during the plowing season from the highland areas. The average price of a pair of oxen up to the mid-1970s was *Birr* 380. The majority of these farmers bought oxen during the plowing season and then sold them back to merchants when they finished plowing. The average useful life of an ox was seven years.<sup>17</sup>

Reports pointed out that cattle disease were endemic in the study areas. According to this report, diseases of major concern were rinderpest (local name: *Gulhai*), anthrax (most common local names: *lalish*, *hibbet*, *nephri*), "hoof (foot) and mouth disease" (local names: *aniso*, *etchaim*), brucellosis (local name: none), trypanosomiasis (local name: none), liver fluke (local name: none), and blackleg (local names: *hibbet*, *nephri*).<sup>18</sup> Anthrax and trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) are also fatal human diseases.

#### 4.4 TYPES OF TRACTORS

The Ethiopian government gave the following incentives to foreign investors to invest in agricultural machinery and to open tractor selling companies in Ethiopia:

- 1) Tax free to tractor suppliers, initially to bring in tractors without incurring Customs duty

<sup>17</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Kindié, Tibäbu, Mängistu and Alänä.

<sup>18</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report. Resources..." (1974), p. 169. According to the source, the local names for anthrax and Blackleg are the same.

2) Duty-free fuel, and

3) Bank credit.

With such incentives, foreign investors supplied tractors and opened their tractor selling companies in Ethiopia.

The tractor selling companies that entered Ethiopia during the 1960s and 1970s were:-

- 1) Ries Engineering
- 2) Tectra
- 3) Amiran
- 4) Seferian
- 5) Orbis
- 6) Motor and Engineering Company of Ethiopia (MOENCO) and
- 7) International Technical Support Organization (ITSO)

These companies played a very significant role for the development of modern agricultural development. During their initial stage, these companies committed themselves to

- 1) Supply agricultural implements and spare parts at a discount
- 2) Provide maintenance service at a lower price
- 3) Sell agricultural machinery on credit<sup>19</sup>

Due to these commitments, the number of imported tractors in Ethiopia grew up to 1979 but then fell sharply until a rise in 1982. For instance, from 1974-1982, the number of tractors that entered Ethiopia and their cost is seen in the following Table.

Table 9: Number of imported tractors to Ethiopia and their total cost by years from 1974. Unfortunately there are no similar figures available for before 1974.

Year	Number of Tractors	Cost (Birr)
1974	429	5,732,108
1976	473	6,032,712
1977	592	6,922,692
1978	530	7,237,137
1979	692	9,627,913
1980	409	8,641,714
1981	326	6,117,926
1982	499	10,098,819
Total	3950	60,411,819

<sup>19</sup>Fassil Gebre-Kiros, "Agricultural Mechanization Suited to Ethiopian Conditions a Report submitted to the National Revolutionary Development Campaign and Central Planning Supreme Council" (Addis Ababa University, Department of Economics, 1980), p. 101.

Source: Fassil Gebre Kiros, p. 102. Note: Many tractors were imported in 1979 compared to other years in the table. What made 1979 and 1982 special? No reason is given by the author.

Farm tractors were used for ploughing, cultivating, grading or cutting, for hauling water, fuel, seeds, general supplies and labour or for providing power to operate various agricultural machines.<sup>20</sup> The use of tractors has revolutionized agriculture. The power capability of the modern tractor has led to higher productivity with a significantly reduced work force, but in the Ethiopian borderlands a very large migrant labour force was required. Farm mechanization continues to advance through the use of power machines and attachments.<sup>21</sup> There were about fifteen different types of tractors in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafä and Mättäma. They came from at least ten different countries. Some of the tractor types most used were:

- 1) Massey Ferguson (Canadian)
- 2) Belarus (Russian)
- 3) Ford (English)
- 4) Deutz (German)
- 5) John Deere (USA), and
- 6) Zeter (Czech)

Numerically, Massey Ferguson was the dominant tractor in the study areas. This was probably because there was easier access to maintenance and spare parts for Massey Ferguson than for any other tractors in the nearby Sätit-Humära. All of the tractors had different horsepower. The tractors including their disc plow cost from *Birr* 10,000 to *Birr* 22,000. Tractor implements included disc plows, trailers, drills and harvesting equipment like sorghum combines and small sesame binders.<sup>22</sup> The harvesting equipment in the study areas and in Humära was of two types: 1) there were five self-propelled combines used for harvesting the grain sorghum. However, due to the absence on a large scale of combinable sorghum varieties, the self-propelled combine function was not utilized; that is, the sorghum was hand-cut and hand-fed into the combine; and 2) there were 14 small sesame binders which cut and tied sesame in bundles for later hand

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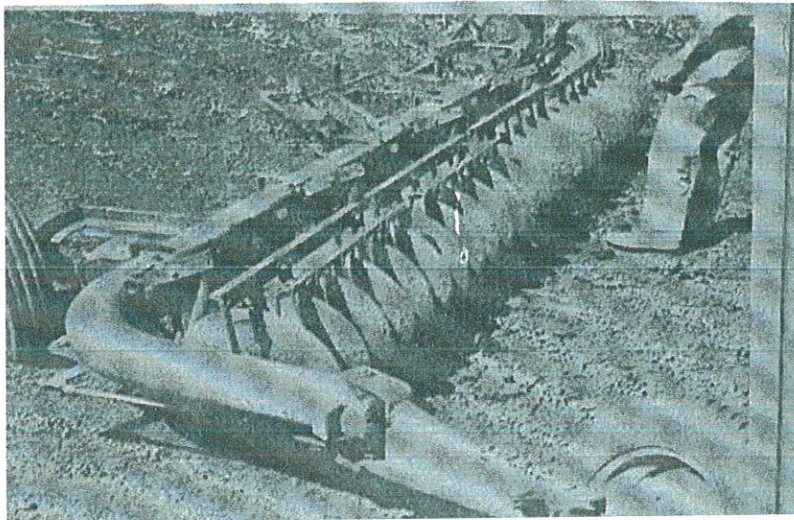
<sup>20</sup> Informants: Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa, Sisay, Abära, Kindié, Tibäbu, Mängistu, and Alänä.

<sup>21</sup> Atakilt, p. 55

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

threshing. Since the seeds of sesame shatter soon after maturity, the small sesame binders were not found to be practical. Most of them were found in Sätit-Humära. In fact, they were abandoned soon after trial.<sup>23</sup>

Photograph 15: One-way, wide-level disk harrow (British) used in Ethiopia and Sudan



Source: Taken from Kline, Green, Donahue, and Stout, *Agricultural Mechanization in Equatorial Africa*, p. 319.

According to Kline, Green, Donahue and Stout,

*This implement [disk harrow] is the only tillage implement used in northwest Ethiopia and in parts of Sudan for the production of sorghum, cotton, and sesame. The rich vertisols tend to be self-mulching as they crack when they dry out. Preparation for seeding the next crop at the beginning of the rainy season primarily requires that the cracks be filled and weeds killed. When used in a good system of cultivation practices, weeds can be controlled within the limits of a minimum tillage program. In Ethiopia, the seed is broadcast and this same disk used for covering as the final operation.*<sup>24</sup>

Various machinery prices were quoted in the study areas for the different makes and models of tractors and other farm implements. According to information of the 1970s, tractor price lists had

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, "The Humera Report. Resource ...", p. 99.

<sup>24</sup> Kline, Green, Donahue and Stout, p. 319

been increasing at an annual rate of 7 to 9 percent in recent years. The prices of the machinery supplied by Ries Engineering Share Company (RESCO) are considered as representative. These prices are shown in the following Table.

Table 10: Prices of Farm Machinery and Implements in the 1970s

Implement	HP rating or size	Price ( <i>Birr</i> )
Tractor	45 hp	10,000
Tractor	60-65 hp	13,500
Tractor	70-75 hp	15,000
Wide Level disc	9 ft.	5,500
Wide Level disc	12ft	6,000
Wide level disc	15 ft.	6,800
Drill box	12 ft.	1,800
Drill box	15 ft.	2,200
Grain drill	12 ft.	5,500
Sprayer	32 ft.	6,000
Slasher	6 ft.	2,800
Combine	16 ft.	48,000
Swather	16 ft,	5,500
Trailer	3ton	2,400

Source: Taken from TAMS, "The Humera Report. Resource..." p. 99.

Photograph 16: Belarus (Russian) type tractor of the Police Farm in Abdärafı



Source: Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Polis, "Yä Begemederna Simien Polis Abaaloch...", p. 8.

Note: The tall man who is standing on the left side of the driver on the tractor is the late Major Beyene Gebre, the General Manger of the Police Farm in Abdärafı who was killed by a gunman while he was at work..

There were no commercial banks in Gända Wuha (Shähdi) (a town in Mättäma *Wäräda*), Mättäma Yohannis, and Abdärafı that could finance tractor purchases. Branch Offices were only

opened in Gända Wuha, Mättäma Yohannis and Abdärafî on 26/02/2005, 14/06/2008 and 07/02/2012 respectively. There were tractor dealers in Asmara. All of the dealers required a personal guarantor in tractor financing. Some of them required titled urban land as collateral. The tractor dealers demanded for credit sales prices 10-15 per cent above cash prices. The Belarus (Russian) dealers at first were lenient. They charged only 25 per cent down payment and offered three seasons to cover the outstanding balance. The farmers therefore bought the Belarus more than other tractors though the Belarus consumed much more fuel than the other tractor types and was less efficient. However, the Belarus tractor dealers soon raised the down payment to 40 per cent like the other suppliers and farmers turned to other types.<sup>25</sup>

Delinquencies on tractor payments were very serious problems. Credit sales were therefore restricted to known good credit risks. The tractor dealers delivered tractors to farmers only if the farmers completed all the necessary arrangements beforehand with the dealers in Asmara. There were two opposite complaints. On one hand, the farmers complained that they could not buy tractors on reasonable credit terms. On the other hand, the dealers complained that they were not able to recover their money after giving credit to the farmers to purchase tractors. Spare parts were available in Humära only for five tractors namely, Massey Ferguson, Belarus, Deutz, John Deere and Ford at an additional price that ranged from 10 to 100 per cent above retail sale price in Asmara. Spare parts were not available in Humära for the lesser known makes of tractors. The owners were, therefore, forced to order spare parts either from Asmara or Addis Ababa. According to my informants, there were no garages in Abdärafî and Mättäma. Farmers depended

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<sup>25</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Kindie, Tibäbu, Mängistu, and Alänä.

on the Humära garages. However, the garages in Humära lacked quality, dependability, accessibility (bad road) and fast service.<sup>26</sup>

When we look at the tractor operating cost variables, direct inputs for farm machinery included diesel fuel, oil, and grease. Consumption of 100 liters of fuel per 10 working hours was the highest reported and 70 liters the lowest for the same horsepower rating. The amount of oil and fuel consumed per day by horsepower rating was divided by the daily working hours and averaged at the average consumption per hour. The results of such analysis are given in the following Table.

Table 11: Direct Operating Cost Variables for Tractors. 1970s

Horsepower Rating

Item	40-50	51-61	62-72	All tractor makes Averages
Fuel (liters/hour)	4.0	5.4	7.8	6.7
Oil (liters/hour)	0.15	0.15	0.16	0.16
Grease (kg/hour)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Field Capacity (ha/hour)	2.00	2.13	2.40	2.28

Source:TAMS, "The Humera Report , Resource...", p. 100.

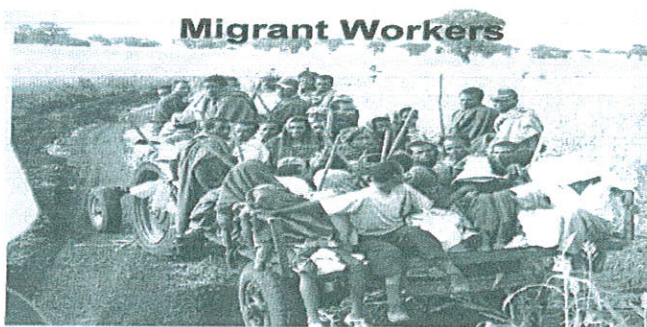
Tractors were and still are very useful in the study areas for uses besides cultivation work of the land. The transportation system for farm operations was almost entirely dependent on tractors and trailers. Very few farmers had their own trucks for bringing in supplies. They usually received their goods at the *wäräda* centers for further distribution to the farms by tractor. Hauling water, fuel, seeds, general supplies and labour were the primary needs. Meeting these needs by tractor was not easy. It was very expensive.<sup>27</sup> The skills of tractor operators were

<sup>26</sup> Informants: Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa , Sisay , Abära, Kindie, Tibäbu and Mängistu.

<sup>27</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Kindie and Tibäbu.

generally low. Some tractor operators were long-time employees, but at least 50 percent of the tractor drivers were first-year operators, who had received their training as drivers' helpers without any organized training. In the 1970s two tractor dealers had begun a training program for tractor drivers in Addis Ababa. However, no one from Humära area used this program. This resulted in decreased life of the tractor owing to higher depreciation costs and higher running expenses. The loss of time during the working season of the tractor was another very costly interruption. Many breakdowns during the working season could be attributed to the dry season use of the tractor for transportation. Wheel bearings, water pumps, and other moving parts were stressed because of high speed road transportation in the dry season. During the rainy season, two or more tractors were hooked together in order to get through mud holes. These holes and ditches created considerable structural and mechanical stresses. While large trucks could travel to the farms during the dry season to pick up cotton and grains, few farmers utilized this facility due to high rates charged because of poor road conditions.<sup>28</sup>

Photograph 17: Migrant (seasonal) workers on a tractor moving to farm sites in Abdärafi



Source: MSF-Holland Abdurafi Project, 2014, p. 11.

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<sup>28</sup> Informants: Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa, Sisay, Abära and, Kindie.

#### 4.5 DUTY-FREE FUEL DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of duty-free fuel to Ethiopian farmers was started in 1958. In that same year there were only 11 farmers throughout Ethiopia who took this duty-free fuel. Then the number of farmers who started to use tractors increased. In 1970 there were 278 tractor-owning farmers who took duty-free fuel in Shoa province alone. The number of tractors throughout Ethiopia started to grow by 40 percent every year. In 1971, 2,236 tractors were engaged in agriculture in the then 14 provinces of Ethiopia. With regard to the number of tractors, Shoa, Eritrea, Begemeder, Wollo, Hararge, Arussi, Sidamo, Keffa, Wolläga, Bale, Gemu Goffa, Tigray, Illubabor and Gojjam stood first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth respectively. For all these tractors, the Ministry of Agriculture distributed more than 35 million liters of duty-free fuel every year. It should be remembered that from 1958 up to 1967, duty-free fuel was distributed to farmers by the special order of the Emperor. From 1967 onwards the parliament approved the distribution of duty-free fuel to farmers.<sup>29</sup>

All tractor-owning farmers were entitled to duty-free fuel. The duty-free fuel was only allowed for farming operations. In order to get duty-free fuel, farmers in my areas had to register their tractors at Abdärafī and Mättäma offices of agriculture and obtain a certificate given by the offices of agriculture after the offices had seen the farmer's tractor sale certificate from the company selling the tractor. The price of duty-free diesel fuel in Asmara per liter was *Birr* 0.17. On the other hand, engine oil and grease were sold subject to duty. The Asmara price of engine oil per liter and the price of grease per kilogram were *Birr* 1.45 and *Birr* 1.75 respectively.<sup>30</sup> When bought in Humära (Abdärafī and Mättäma farmers used the Humära market), the prices of

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<sup>29</sup> *Addis Zämän, Yäkatit* 17, 1963 E.C, pp. 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> TAMS, "The Humara Report. Resource...", p. 112.

duty-free diesel fuel and engine oil with duty per liter and the price of grease per kilogram with duty were *Birr* 0.21, *Birr* 1.75 and *Birr* 2.25 respectively.<sup>31</sup> In the early 1970s, a man nicknamed *wādi* Shire (a man from Shire) opened a gas station in Humära which he later on transferred to *qes* Sisay Ayälä, the president of the Wälqait-Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society. Both *wādi* Shire and *qes* Sisay Ayälä were delegated by the tractor-owning farmers' cooperatives to bring duty-free fuel, for them from Asmara. The gas station in Humära sold the duty-free fuel, grease and engine oil to the tractor-owning farmers by adding transportation costs.<sup>32</sup> Duty-free fuel distributions to farmers were very helpful. Without this government aid the farmers would not have been farming profitably informants stated.<sup>33</sup>

In 1970, the government distributed 3,081,714 liters of diesel for 249 farmers who owned 438 tractors in Humära and Mättäma. The Humära farmers and the Mättäma farmers who owned tractors took 2,977,904 liters of diesel and 104, 810 liters of diesel respectively. In terms of money this meant *Birr* 554,702.72.<sup>34</sup> In 1970/71 the Ministry of Agriculture distributed 25,413,571 liters of free-duty diesel to 2,500 Ethiopian farmers. Of these, much of the fuel was for Eritrean and Begemeder tractor farmers.<sup>35</sup> In 1970, additional duty-free fuel was distributed to 44 tractor owners in Humära, Mättäma, Abdärafī, Dämbya and Dära. This amounted to 3,330,284 liters. Again in 1971, 5,085,035 liters of duty-free fuel were distributed for 552 tractor owners. In those two years Mättäma and Abdärafī farmers took 258,960 liters of duty-free fuel.<sup>36</sup> Fuel handling and storage of the cooperative farmers on farm was poor. Metal drums were used as containers and the fuel most of the time therefore contained large amounts rust and other fuel

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<sup>31</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Kindié, Tibäbu and Mängistu.

<sup>32</sup> Informants: Zänäbä, Yirsaw, Alämu and Sharäw.

<sup>33</sup> Informants: Abära, Kindié, Tibäbu, Mängistu, and Alänä.

<sup>34</sup> *Addis Zämän, Nähase* 14, 1962 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Addis Zämän, Tahsas* 22,63 E.C p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Addis Zämän, Hidar* 4, 1964 E.C., p. 1.

contaminates. Most of the farmers of the cooperatives “complained of dirty fuel and pump failure on tractors.”<sup>37</sup> The fuel storage of the tractor-owning farmers was also not safe because of their own bad storage.

Photograph 18: Fuel dangerously stored in a shed on *Ato Bärihun G. Michael*’s house compound in Abdärafi. Fuel had always been stored like this, or even in the open field.



Source: Photo Atakilt, taken on May 23, 2013.

Though government duty-free fuel distribution was to the advantage of the tractor-owning farmers for their farm operations, some farmers violated the regulation and started to sell fuel rather than using it themselves for agriculture. Realizing the problem, the Ministry of Agriculture ordered agricultural experts to study the problem and propose solutions. The experts studied the problems and submitted their proposed solutions that could enable fair duty-free distribution to tractor-owning farmers. With this understanding, the Ministry of Agriculture formulated the following rules:

1) A tractor that worked for eight hours daily could not operate for more than 200 days in a year.

<sup>37</sup>Ministry of Agriculture, “Report of the Survey Mission ...”, p. 26.

- 2) If the type of tractor and its horsepower were known it was simple for the Ministry of Agriculture to know its fuel consumption by referring to the certificate and explanation of the tractor factories.
- 3) Duty-free fuel was distributed to tractor-owning farmers once in a year.
- 4) Every tractor could only serve for a limited period of time and the duty-free fuel was also given for that limited period of time (i.e. rule number 1 above).
- 5) Some tractor-owning farmers did not report to the Ministry of Agriculture whenever their tractor was either broken down, lost, or had any accident. But the Ministry was anxious to make control mechanisms to stop the fuel distribution in cases where tractors were non-operational. (However such a mechanism was never found).
- 6) Any tractor could only farm 4 *gashas* (1 *gasha*= 40 hectares) within a year. Thus the quantity of duty-free fuel was also allowed to the farmer accordingly.<sup>38</sup>

In March 1972, the Ministry of Agriculture requested Begemeder and Simien Province Agricultural Office and Humära *Wäräda* administration to inform all tractor-owning farmers of Humära area to bring evidence that clearly told the total amount of their land holdings in *gasha* in order to distribute fuel fairly. However, this was not possible for both the officials and the farmers because the government lands in Begemeder and Simien were not measured in *gashas* at all. Measurement of land in Begemeder and Simien was simply done by the traditional way of pacing. Thus, both the officials and the farmers believed that land measurement in *gashas* needed

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<sup>38</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration, Folder ሰግ 44 /ጠ- ግብር a letter from Abäbä Rāta, Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture to Sätit-Humära Farmers , Reference Number 7495/61, *Tahsas* 11, 1961 E.C, pp. 1-2.

sufficient knowledge and much time.<sup>39</sup> Finally in 1973 the Ministry of Agriculture stopped distributing duty-free fuel to farmers. This measure would have had a devastating effect not only on the farmers but also on the economic development of the area in particular and on the economic development of the country in general, according to a protest by the Governor General.<sup>40</sup>

Table 12: Farmers' Cooperatives that were entitled to duty-free fuel distribution in the 1960s and 1970s.

Roll. No.	Name of the Cooperative	Folder No.	Remark
219	Asra Säwästu Sharikoch	ጅአ 19	Humära
309	Abdärafä	ጅአ309	Abdärafä
338	Al Khadra Yä Ersha Mahbär	ጅአ 38	Humära
412	Orthodox Church Limat Commission	ጅፊ 12	Abdärafä
62	Yä Mättäma Gäbärewoch Mahbär	ጅዩ 62	Mättäma
60	Simintägna Igrägña Brigade Mahbär	ጅሰ 60	Mättäma
83	Sätit-Humära Gäbärewoch	ጅሆ 83	Humära
88	Civil Mahbär	ጅሆ 88	Mättäma
5	Wälqayit Gäbärewoch Mahbär	ጅፀ 5	Humära
54	Begemederna Simien Polisooh Mahbär	ጅብ 54	Abdärafä
157	Ersha Limat Mahäar	ጅአ 57	Mättäma

Source: Adapted from Archive of Welde Mesqel Memorial Centre, Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Agriculture, File No. *Nädaj*, Name, *Ezee Kifil* (Täsfä Matämya Bét 1/550/64 E.C), No page Numbers.

<sup>39</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration, Folder ሰጎ 44/ጠ- ግብር a letter from the Imperial Ministry of Agriculture to Mr. D. C. Miyer, the General Manager of Humära Agricultural Development Organization, Reference No. ጅ0/32 *Mägabit* 8, 1965 E.C, pp. 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration, Folder ሰጎ 44/ጠ- ግብር a telegram from Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, Governor General of Begemed and Simien to *Tṣähafe Tizaz* Aklilu Habtewold, Reference No. 28/ቀ 41/1/39, *Ginbot* 23, 65 E.C, p. 1.

**Note:** The roll numbers are not in order because the list in the source material is arranged according to Amharic alphabetical order.

#### **4.6 THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN GRANTING LOANS TO ABDĀRAFI AND MĀTTĀMA COOPERATIVE FARMERS**

The Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) is one of the financial institutions engaged in providing short, medium and long term development credits. Since its establishment in 1909, the bank has been playing a significant role in promoting the overall economic development of the country. The history of the Development Bank of Ethiopia goes back to 1909 when the first attempt of this kind, known as “The Société Nationale D’ Ethiopie Pour Le Développement De L’ Agriculture Et Du Commerce Nationale (“The National Society of Ethiopia for the Promotion of National Agriculture and Trade”), was established in the Menelik II era. Since then the bank has taken different names at different times although its mission and business purpose have not undergone significant changes except for occasional adjustments that were necessitated by change in economic development policies of the country. The under- listed names and periods have been its successors since 1945.

- Agricultural Bank of Ethiopia from 1945-1949
- Agricultural and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia from 1949-1951
- Development Bank of Ethiopia from 1951-1963
- The Ethiopian Investment Corporation Share Company from 1963-1970
- Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank Share Company from 1970-1979
- Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank from 1979-1994
- Development Bank of Ethiopia from 1994-to the present.<sup>41</sup>

In the 1970s the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (AIDB), as its name indicated, was the best source for both agricultural and industrial loans. Its funds came from both the

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<sup>41</sup> Development Bank of Ethiopia, *Zéna Limat* Bank, Special Issue, No. 45 (Oct. 2009), pp. 59-60.

Imperial Ethiopian Government (IEG) budget appropriation and from loans from international financial institutions like the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA) and others.<sup>42</sup>

The AIDB made two kinds of agricultural loans. These were direct loans to individual farmers and loans to cooperatives who were engaged in mechanized agriculture. The loans were long term (three to five years) and short term (one year or less). Long term loans were secured by mortgages on titled urban property. The Development Bank never accepted rural real estate as collateral for the long term loans. Interest rates that were charged on the long term loans were about 9½ percent. Short term loans were given to individual farmers who had a personal guarantor. The interest rate on these short term loans was 10½ percent.<sup>43</sup> However, members of the cooperatives complained that such interest rates for both long term and short term loans for the infant cooperatives were too great<sup>44</sup> and they were indeed high for loans intended to promote development.

About 60 percent of the total agricultural loans of the AIDB went to cooperatives under special arrangements with the Ministry of National Community Development which fostered the establishment of cooperatives. Under these arrangements, the MNCD assumed responsibility for the collection of the loans taken by the cooperatives. This meant that cooperatives taking long or short term loans did not need to show titled urban property or have a guarantor. The loans were made on a seasonal basis (at seeding, weeding and harvesting seasons).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Atakilt, pp. 46-47.

<sup>43</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project Draft Final Report, (1973)," p. 8-4 (chapter 8, p. 4).

<sup>44</sup> Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Hulätäñaw..." , p. 124; Informants: Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa, Sisay, Abära, Kindié and Tibäbu.

<sup>45</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource..." , p. 125.

The Ceres Company, AIDB's own subsidiary, was also useful in regulating the stability of prices by buying the crops from the cooperatives and "in properly utilizing idle funds of the Development Bank."<sup>46</sup>

According to my informants, the most important source of direct loans to the members of the Godäbé-Abdärafī Farmers Cooperative and Mättäma and Mahbärä Selassie Farmers Cooperatives were the cooperatives themselves. The cooperatives took loans from financial institutions, especially from the AIDB, and lent to its members. The Ethiopian Grain Corporation (EGC), a government price stabilization agency, also provided some credit to both farmers' cooperatives. The cooperatives attached a management fee to loans to members which amounted to about 4 per cent. The lending interest rate to the members of the farmers' cooperatives depended on the AIDB's interest rate to the cooperative plus the management fee. Though this rate was very high for the cooperative members, it was much less than the extortionate rates demanded by traditional merchants under the *shell* system.<sup>47</sup>

The cooperatives could only borrow money from financial institutions when two-thirds of the General Assembly agreed to it. A member had the right to borrow up to ten times the total value of the equity shares he had purchased from the cooperative. To conduct its activities, the cooperatives depended on the revenue that was collected from entrance fees and interest on the 4% management fees charged on loans to members. All of the cooperatives' incomes were put in a bank account. At least 25 percent of the share capital was held as financial reserve. Dividends were to be distributed with the approval of the General Assembly. The members of

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<sup>46</sup>The Development Bank of Ethiopia, "The Development Bank of Ethiopia and its Services" (Sep. 1965), pp. 14-15.

<sup>47</sup> Informants: Colonel Tigabu, Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Mängistu and Gäbrä Egziabher.

the executive committee of the cooperatives were elected annually. The committee members of the cooperative gave service without salary payment.<sup>48</sup>

In 1972, the AIDB gave loans to Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society that amounted to *Birr* 139, 500.<sup>49</sup> Again in 1974, the AIDB gave *Birr* 116,500 loan to the same cooperative.<sup>50</sup> In addition to this, the Godäbé-Abdärafi Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society also took *Birr* 660,000 loans from the AIDB in 1975.<sup>51</sup>

In 1973, the AIDB gave loans to Mättäma and Mahbärä Silassie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative that amounted to *Birr* 340,000.<sup>52</sup>

Both Abdärafi and Mättäma Farmers' Cooperatives were not able to pay their debt to the AIDB on time because they were challenged by different problems:

1) Some of the members of the cooperatives sold their products to merchants without the knowledge of the executive committees of the cooperatives and refused to pay their debts. This means there was lack of membership loyalty in marketing through the cooperatives. The *wäräda* administrators and the *wäräda* police, unless they received a direct order from higher officials, did not help the cooperatives by taking measures against those members of the cooperatives who broke the rules and regulation of the cooperatives and refused to either hand over their crops for sale through the cooperatives or pay their debts to the executive committees of the cooperatives.

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<sup>48</sup>Informants:Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa , Sisay, Abära, Kindié and Tibäbu.

<sup>49</sup> *Addis Zaman, Tahsas* 23, 1964, p.1

<sup>50</sup>Archives of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ጎክ/ 91 ልማት ባንክ a letter from Balambaras Zärfu Wudu, Gondar Awraja Administrator to Grazmach Mängistu Yayne, Tach Armachiho Wäräda Gäze (Administrator) Reference Number 2247/19, *Yakatit* 14, 66 E.C., p. 1

<sup>51</sup>Archives of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ጠቅላላ 126 a letter Armachiho, Godebe-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society to Gondar Province, Reference Number 204/3/67, *Tir* 30, 1967 E.C., p. 1.

<sup>52</sup>Archives of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, A letter from Mättäma and Mahbärä Selassie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative to Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigzu, Governor-General of Begemedar and Simien, Reference Number 1/1/65, *Mäskaram* 6, 65 E.C., p. 1.

Without a direct order from above, the police said it was not their duty to intervene. According to the rule and regulation of the cooperatives the sale of crops was only done by the cooperatives.<sup>53</sup>

2) Among the principal crops of the cooperatives the prices of cotton and sorghum became very low at the Humära market. This was because according to Ethio-Sudan trade agreement merchants from the Gedarif (Sudan) were probably allowed by the Customs Office at Humära to come to Humära and sell their products there, whereas the Ethiopian farmers' cooperative or Ethiopian merchants in that area were not allowed to go to Sudan and sell their products. This one-sided agreement was really a danger to the Ethiopian farmers' cooperatives of the area. The cooperative farmers protested but no solution was given.<sup>54</sup> In my opinion the reasons for this situation might have been that the Sudanese were allowed to bring in agricultural commodities not produced in Ethiopia but the agreement did not allow bringing in other agricultural commodities such as sorghum and cotton which were produced in Ethiopia. Border guards who were not paid salary or paid very little may have been bribed to ignore this.

Another serious challenge to the Mättäma and Mahbärä Selassie Farmers' Cooperative was Colonel Amarä Dämessie, the *wäräda* governor of Mättäma. Colonel Amarä was a member of the Mättäma and Mahbärä Selassie Farmers' Cooperative. He had five shares (each share was *Birr* 100). He borrowed *Birr* 5000 from the cooperative with a personal guarantee of Lieutenant Isaqa Abdulkärim, the *wäräda* police commander. The source of this money was the AIDB. The colonel repaid *Birr* 2000 only. But he became a bad example and refused to pay the remaining *Birr* 3000. This resulted in misunderstandings between him and the executive committee

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<sup>53</sup> Informants: Hailä Mariam, Sergeant Assäfa, Sisay and Abära.

<sup>54</sup> Archive from North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder *m/125* a letter from *Fitawrari* Bäkälä Zäläläw Deputy Governor General of Begemedar and Simien to the Ministry of Interior, Reference No. 100/100/2-2/27 *Hidar* 6, 66 E.C, p. 1. I have discussed this with Prof. Shiferaw Bekele, who informed me that to his knowledge no agreement of this kind was even made by the I E G. I also tried to establish contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get information, but I was not successful.

members (especially between him and *Ato* Kābādā Chākol, the president of the cooperative). When he was asked to pay his debt he became very vindictive against the executive committee members, especially against *Ato* Kābādā Chākol, the president of the cooperative, and started verbally harassing the executive members and using his power as *wārāda* governor against the cooperative. He also incited divisions among the committee members. Thus the cooperative executive committee was not able to sell the crops and repay the cooperative's debts to the AIDB.<sup>55</sup> All these and other problems did not allow the cooperative to repay its debts to the AIDB on time.<sup>56</sup>

The AIDB announced that the three cooperatives namely, Sātīt-Humāra, Mättāma and Mahbārā Sellasie and Godābe Abdārafī could not be given additional loans unless they paid their debts.<sup>57</sup> The 1974 Ethiopian Revolution erupted and this was followed by political turmoil in the areas and I do not think the loans that were given to the cooperatives by the AIDB were ever repaid because the cooperatives almost collapsed after the revolution. One major problem for the cooperatives especially from 1975 onwards was lack of fuel and market. It was from Asmara that the fuel was coming. However, the commercial relation of the cooperatives with Asmara was totally destroyed. The road to Asmara was blocked. There was no peace and stability at all. At that period of time, in Humāra and Abdārafī alone there were more than about 700 tractors, 100 trucks, 100 Land Rovers and about 80 mills. All these needed fuel. It was not possible for the cooperative farmers to collect their crops from the farm sites and transport them to the store.

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<sup>55</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder *m/126*, a letter from Mättāma and Mahbārā-Sellasie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative to Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigāzu, the Governor-General of Begemeder and Simien, Reference Number 34/65, *Miazia* 18, 65 E.C, pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> Informants: Hailā Mariam, Sergeant Assāfa, Sisay, Abāra, Kindié, Tibābu, Māngistu, and Alānā.

<sup>57</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder *ሰጎ-91 ልግብ ባንክ*, a letter from Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank to Major General Nega Tegegn Governor General of Begemeder and Simien Reference Number *አደ/ሥአደ./1256/66*, *Sāné* 5, 66 E, C, pp. 1-2.

The price of fuel skyrocketed. To grind a quintal of sorghum the cooperatives were charged *Birr* 7. It was too much. But the cooperatives did not have any other alternative than pay what they were asked to pay in order to feed more than 80,000 seasonal labourers. Due to shortage of money the labourers were not paid because the cooperatives were not able to sell their crops on time.<sup>58</sup> It was not also possible for the cooperatives to haul drinking water from the rivers by tractor due to lack of fuel. These problems forced the labourers to abandon the area and return home. All the farmer cooperatives in the Humära area asked the Cotton Ginning Factory of Gondar to buy their cotton. But the factory could not buy the crop because it was bankrupt. It had *Birr* 1,900,000 unpaid loans from the AIDB in the 1974/1975 crop season.<sup>59</sup> I have not found any records that the loans were repaid. In fact I do not think they ever were repaid. In my view, the failure of AIDB and MNCD to provide sound guidance and strict supervision to the management of the infant cooperatives was a major factor in the difficulties. The IDA must also share the responsibility for the problems since in its credit to the AIDB no adequate supervisory mechanism was provided for. But above all, the problems following the 1974 revolution were the most serious.

#### 4.7 LAND TENURE, LAND ISSUANCE, LAND ALLOCATION AND TAXATION

The status of land tenure in the area in the imperial period was complex and uncertain. Two broad categories of tenure existed in Begemeder and Simien province: 1) Government-owned land; 2) Communally-owned lands. Any land that was not held and possessed in the name of any person or group (i.e. *rist* land) was known as Government land. Any land that was regarded as belonging

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<sup>58</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ሰጎ 91 Limat Bank, A Petition from Humära and Abdärafi members of the cooperatives to Begemeder and Simien Administrator, *Yäkatit* 7, 67 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ሰጎ 91 Limat Bank, An Application letter from Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory Board members namely, Abdu Adäm, Tirunäh Zärihun, Ayaléw Bäzabih, Atanaw Wassé and Fiteh Ayä Assägu to the Public Enterprises Trustee Board and to the Ethiopian Commercial Bank, *Miazia* 7, 1967 E.C, p. 1.

to a group of persons, each with rights limited only to the use of this land. was known as communally-owned land. Government lands were under direct control of the District Governor in most *wäräda*. The local *ballabat* was also responsible in Tach Armachiho *Wäräda*. The same system of land allotment existed throughout the lowland areas of Begemeder and Simien.<sup>60</sup> The system of land allotment to individuals from government land was known as the *Qäbälle* System:

*A person wishing the land applies to either the provincial or District Governor's office. Applications submitted to the Provincial Governor are forwarded to the District Governor. The District Governor calls in the Deputy District Governor and Kebele Shum to determine available land in their area. After identifying the plot of land to be allotted, the applicant puts his request, in writing, to the District Governor. After this, the District Governor orders the Kebele Shum to issue the land.*

*A Kebele Shum is nominated by the land holders to serve for an unlimited period of time. Apart from allotting land to farmers on the basis of the District Governor's instructions, his duties and responsibilities are 1) to collect taxes; 2) to settle boundary disputes between neighbors; and 3) to serve as an administrator in the absence of a Government Official in his Kebele.<sup>61</sup>*

Every farmer was able to receive as much land as he wished according to his choice and his ability to cultivate it with either oxen or farm machinery. Land measurement was not known. The size of the land that was allotted to a farmer was only roughly known. The boundaries were fixed by pacing out the land or orally, i.e. from this river to that river or from this tree to that tree.<sup>62</sup>

Tractor farmers usually established contacts with the District Governor's office for land registration, taxes, and duty-free fuel registration. But the non-tractor farmers dealt with the

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<sup>60</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 91.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Informants: Colonel Tigabu, Sergeant Maru, Sisay and Abära.

*qäbälle Shum* for land registration and taxes. The *qäbälle shums* claimed labour service from the oxen farmers. The oxen farmers were thus forced to work three days a year for their *qäbälle-shums* in their respective areas. These personal services were one day for plowing, one day for weeding and one day for harvesting. The *qäbälle-shums* claimed labour payments from non-tractor farmers because they were not paid a salary for administering the lands under their jurisdiction. The *qäbälle-Shums* never claimed personal services from tractor-owning farmers because tractor farmers made direct payments to the government.<sup>63</sup>

The same system of land allotment existed throughout Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma. The average size of land that was allotted to tractor farmers ranged from 400 to 600 gross hectares per tractor. The average size of land that was allotted to oxen farmers ranged from 40 to 320. Oxen farmers with more land were those who also rented a tractor for extra cultivation from tractor owners, as explained above in chapter three, or had more than pair of oxen. In Tach Armachiho *wäräda* allocation of land was usually cleared by the *ballabat* before a request was made to the District Governor.<sup>64</sup>

Production taxes were the only form of taxation on farming in the study areas. In Sätit-Humära, Tach Armachiho, Şägädé, and Wälqait *Wärädas*, production taxes were paid according to an estimate of assumed production made by government representatives, *qäbälle Shums* and the farmers. Such estimate was made every five years. The taxes could be decreased or increased depending on the negotiations every five years between the farmer and the government assessment committee. According to the informants, the estimated yield of crop was converted into cash values. The farmers were charged at a rate of *Birr* 0.50 for each *Birr* 100 gross crop

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<sup>63</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabher, Fisseha and Alänä.

<sup>64</sup> Informants: Colonel Tigabu, Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Mängistu and Gäbrä Egziabher.

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<sup>63</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabher, Fisseha and Alänä.

<sup>64</sup> Informants: Colonel Tigabu, Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Mängistu and Gäbrä Egziabher.

value. The highest average production tax per hectare was paid by tractor-owning farmers, followed by tractor-renting, oxen and oxen renting farmers.<sup>65</sup> The tax could be more or less depending on those who were favoured or not favoured.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4.8 FARMING SYSTEMS OF THE PRINCIPAL CROPS, LABOUR REQUIREMENTS, SOURCES OF LABOUR AND ITS COSTS

The principal crops cultivated in Abdärafä and Mättäma area as in Humära, were sesame, sorghum and cotton. Sesame and sorghum accounted for about 80 percent of the area cultivated. Cotton accounted for twelve percent only. The remaining eight percent was planted with other crops, mainly millet, which was an important food crop among the oxen farmers.<sup>67</sup>

##### 4.8.1 CULTIVATING THE THREE MAIN CROPS

###### 4.8.1.1 SESAME

Sesame (*Sesamum indicum*) is a high value oilseed crop. It is probably the most ancient oil seed known and used by mankind. It accounts for over 90 percent of the value of oil seeds in Ethiopia that can be exported.<sup>68</sup> It is thought to be of African origin. Today it is cultivated in many parts of tropical Africa, Asia and the United States of America. Currently Nigeria is the second largest producer of sesame in Africa next to Sudan and fifth largest producer in the world.<sup>69</sup> There are fourteen leading sesame producing countries in the world. Seven of them are in Africa. These are Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, the Central African Republic; and

<sup>65</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft ..." (May 1973), pp. 15-16

<sup>66</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fisseha and Alänä.

<sup>67</sup> Informants: Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabher and Alänä.

<sup>68</sup> Kinde Aysheshum, "Sesame Market Chain Analysis: The Case of Metema Woreda, North Gondar Zone, Amhara National Regional State", (MSC Thesis, Haramaya University, Department of Agricultural Economics, 2007), p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> J.S.A Mshelia, A.A Sajo and D.T. Gungula, "Sesame Production as Panacea for Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria" in *Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences*, volume 4 (June 2012), p. 16.

Egypt.<sup>70</sup> Sesame seeds can only germinate at soil temperature  $> 20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The optimal temperature for growth is  $25\text{-}29^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Sesame is sensitive to frost and is therefore necessarily a lowland crop in Ethiopia. The crop is very susceptible to hail damage at all stages of growth. It needs a low to moderate air humidity. A high insolation is required at flowering. Shading (intercropping) reduces the yield. The soils that are suited for the production of sesame are deep, well-drained, loamy soils. When rainfall is heavy waterlogging becomes a problem of crop production. Sesame is rather intolerant of waterlogging.<sup>71</sup> Despite the problem of waterlogging soils, sesame was grown in Abdärafi and Mättäma. The optimal yield in rain-fed agriculture is 1.2-1.5 ton/ha and the average farm yield is 0.5-0.6 ton/ha., whereas the optimal yield in irrigated agriculture is 2.0-2.4 ton/ha and the average farm yield is 1.2-1.5 ton/ha.

Photograph 19: Sesame crop in Tach Armachiho.



Source: Taken from Tach Armachiho *Wäräda* Office of Agriculture and Gondar Agricultural Research Centre, “Field Days held in Tach Armachiho *Wäräda*” (Sep. 8, 2014), cover page.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>71</sup> Ir. C. Sys, E Van Ranst, Ir. J. Debaveye and Others, “Land Evaluation Part III Crop Requirements”, *Agricultural Publications No. 7* (Brussels: Belgium, 1993), p. 136.

Sesame is cultivated in many lowland parts of Ethiopia. The seeds are also exported.<sup>72</sup>

According to the International Livestock Research Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, oil was extracted from the sesame seed in my study areas.

*A traditional oil extractor, called Ansara, driven by camel is used to extract sesame oil. The camel is blindfolded in a shed and rotates the pestle after putting sesame seed in the mortar. About 45 liters is extracted from 100 kg of sesame seed. However, cleanliness during the extraction of the oil is not up to standard. The oil cake remains for the owner of the Ansara which could be sold at about Birr 150/qt and used as feed for very weak animals.*<sup>73</sup>

#### 4.8.1.2 SORGHUM

Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) is an important food and cash crop in Ethiopia. Many varieties of sorghum are cultivated in Ethiopia. It is grown in different forms as *mashilla* (white), *zāngada* (red) and *durra*.<sup>74</sup> According to the Ministry of Agriculture report,

*Durra sorghum is the most important grain crop in Ethiopia. The crop grows well in the lowlands and very well in the middle lands. Some of the best fertile sections of the country are sorghum producing areas.*

*Many kinds of sorghums, including the dual purpose, sirup [syrup] fiber and forage sorghums, and the grain sorghums (durra) are grown in Ethiopia. Dual purpose sorghums are used for forage and sirup [syrup] as well as for grain. Sweet-stalked sirup [syrup] sorghums are popular for their sugar content, while fiber sorghums provide broom-corn [broom corn]. Forage sorghums grow wild throughout the country.*<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>73</sup> ILRI and MoARD, p. 39.

<sup>74</sup> Donald Crummy, "Ethiopian plow Agriculture in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" in *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 16, vol. 16 (1983), p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, "Agriculture in Ethiopia" (1964), p. 4. Note that now (2015) maize in Ethiopia is the most important grain crop by crop sown, not sorghum.

The crop has little international importance. It is significant as a subsistence crop. It can withstand high temperature and long periods of drought. It does not have a high nutritional value compared with other cereals. Sorghum is grown in developed countries as a fodder crop, especially in the USA and southern Europe.<sup>76</sup> It is drought resistant. Its germination takes place at soil temperature above 10<sup>0</sup>C. It requires abundant sunshine. Sorghum is susceptible to bird damage and storage pests. It grows well on soils with vertisols. Sorghum tolerates a wide range of drainage conditions and short periods of waterlogging.<sup>77</sup> A good commercial yield in rain-fed agriculture is 2.5-3.5 ton/ha. Average farmer yield is 1.3-2.0 ton/ha and traditional smallholder yield is 0.2-0.8. On the other hand, a good commercial yield under irrigated agriculture is 3.5-5.0 ton/ha.<sup>78</sup> Sorghum is greatly affected by pests like army worm, *heliiothis* and *plusia* (a genus of moths).<sup>79</sup>

#### 4.8.1.3 COTTON

Cotton (*Gossypium*) is a multi-purpose crop. It has more than one single utility. Cotton is a source of raw material for the textile industry, cooking oil for human consumption and seed cakes for animal feed. Cotton is produced under both rain-fed and irrigated conditions in state farms, private commercial farms and small farms. The major growing areas in Ethiopia include

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<sup>76</sup>Goh Cheng Leong and Gillian C. Morgan, *Human and Economic Geography*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 181.

<sup>77</sup>Sys, Ranst, Debaveye and others, p. 139.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>79</sup>IEG, Ministry of Agriculture, IAR, "Report of The Survey Mission ...", p. 33.

the Awash River basin, Arbaminch, Abaya, Woito, Gambélla, and Mättäma, Humära and Abdärafi in the northwest.<sup>80</sup>

The largest cotton producers in the world are China, the USA, India, Pakistan and Brazil. Low income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa like Benin, Burkina Faso and Chad depend on cotton for earning foreign exchange. Ethiopia is also one of the African countries that produce cotton.<sup>81</sup>

According to Dessalegn Bizuneh,

*As part of the broader plan to transform the economy of the region, the Italians selected Matammā as one of the nine districts throughout their East African Empire for cotton cultivation. Cotton samples from Matammā had indicated that the region could yield promising results if cultivated well. However, the plan was not translated into action for unknown reasons. It was not until the mid-1960s that large-scale cotton cultivation spread in Matammā when a group of veteran soldiers and other entrepreneurs embarked on large scale farming in the Waradā.<sup>82</sup>*

The air temperature range for cotton growing is 18-40<sup>0</sup>C while below 18<sup>0</sup>C cotton will not grow. An air temperature of more than 40<sup>0</sup>C may cause damage. The annual precipitation range required for cotton is 900-1200mm. Rainfall during maturation is harmful. Vertisols are suitable if not waterlogged and cotton does not tolerate waterlogging. Good commercial yield of cotton seed in rain-fed agriculture is 1.5-2.0 ton/ha. and average farmer yield is 1.0-1.5 ton/ha whereas a good commercial yield of seed under irrigated agriculture is 4.0-5.0 ton/ha and average farmer

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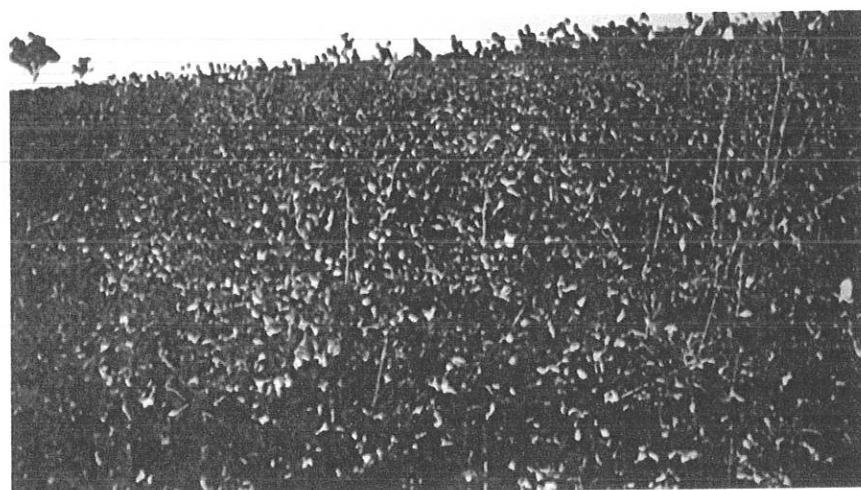
<sup>80</sup> Esayas Täna, Abräham G/hiwät, and Mashila Däjäne, "Quantitative and Qualitative Determination of Weeds in Cotton-Growing Areas of Humera and Metema, Northwestern Ethiopia" in *Ethiopian Journal of Applied Science Technology*, Vol.3 (1) (2012), p. 58.

<sup>81</sup> D.T. Bosenä, F. Bekabil, G. Berhanu and H. Dirk, "Factors Affecting Cotton Supply at the Farm Level in Metema District of Ethiopia", in *Journal of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Ecology*, 4 (1) (2011), p. 42. In my opinion Egypt should also be included in this category, unless excluded from the second category because no longer as low incomes as Burkina Faso etc.

<sup>82</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, p. 20.

yield is 2.0-3.0 ton/ha.<sup>83</sup> Despite the problem of waterlogging, cotton was grown in Abdärafi and Mättäma. When waterlogging happened, owing to excess rain, yields failed. Growing cotton and sesame was therefore, though profitable, a risk, because waterlogging could spoil the crops (as in the present year 2015). This happened on average about every 4-5 years.<sup>84</sup>

Photograph 20: Cotton crop in Abdärafi



Source: Yä Begemederna Simien Täqalay Gizat Polis, *Yä Begemederna Simien Täqalay Gizat Polis Abaloch ...*, p. 7.

The varieties and origins of the principal crops grown in the study areas (Sätit-Humära areas) are shown in the following Table.

Table 13: Varieties and Origins of the Principal Crops Grown in the Study Areas

Crop	Crop Variety	Origin
<b>Cotton</b>		
Gossypium	Acala	USA
Hirsitum	Israel (Gedera)	Israel

<sup>83</sup> Ir. C. Sys, E Van Ranst, Ir. J. Debaveye and Others, pp. 63-65.

<sup>84</sup> Informants: Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fisseha and Alänä.

<b>Sesame</b>		
Sesamum indicum	Jabrouk, Dalamit, Tegele, Kafife Alia, Abu Sandug, Azerege	Sudan
<b>Sorghum</b>		
Sorghum vulgare	Wad Akr, Dabur, Mugud, Wad Arba, Safra, Zerzera, Feterita, Wad Farage, Tejarebe, Fuke, Mesteh  Wanze, Zehala, Zenare, Bayane, Morebe, Agurebe, Wareta	Sudan  Ethiopia

Source: TAMS, "The Humara Report: Resource ...", p.79.

Acala cotton which was locally known as "American" was medium-tall and early maturing and gave more yields. It had large bolls and strong fibers. Its hairless variety was susceptible to *jasid* attack. It lacked resistance to bacterial blight (*Xanthomonas Malvacearum*).<sup>85</sup> Some other major pests of cotton in Mättämma were American bollworm (*Heliothis*) and Sudan bollworm.<sup>86</sup> The Israel cotton was of a minor importance.<sup>87</sup> The cotton was sold to different cotton ginning and processing factories in Ethiopia.<sup>88</sup>

#### 4.8.1.4 CROP OPERATIONS AND LABOUR

Sesame was well suited to Sätit-Humära, Abdarafī and Mättämma.<sup>89</sup> The major problem with sesame was the problem of shattering.<sup>90</sup> The three main varieties of sorghum namely, Wad Akr,

<sup>85</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Agriculture, IAR, "Report of the Survey Mission...", p. 22. *Jasid* means "any of a large cosmopolitan family (*jassidaae*) of small leaf hoppers that include many economically significant pests of cultivated plants", *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Massachusetts, G. and C. Merriam Company, 1977), p. 619.

<sup>86</sup> Archives of Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ጥልጋ 36-37, File No. አው 36/ጥልጋ A Collective Report from Ato Getachäw Mängäṣha (National Community Development), Ato Sisay Birhanu (Executive member of Mättämma-Mahbärä Selassie Farmers Cooperative), Ato Birhanu Asräs (Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory Board member), Ato Getahun Assägu (General Manager of Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory), Mr. Shawil Zähabe an Israeli agricultural expert, and Ato Wäldu Mäsfin an Agricultural expert to Begemedet and Simien Province, *Tikimt* 1, 65 E. C, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource...", p. 79.

<sup>88</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Mängistu and Gäbrä Egziabher.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

Dabur and Mugud were Sudanese in origin. They were higher yielding and drought resistant.<sup>91</sup> The white and better tasting Safra variety was widely used to prepare *injära* (Ethiopian bread). Wad Akr was used for making *tälla* (local beer) and as food for the labourers. The varieties such as Wanza and Zahala were mostly grown by oxen farmers and were consumed by people. It was affected by a plant parasite called *striga*, commonly known as witchweed or witches' weed, a genus of parasitic plants as noted above that occur naturally in parts of Africa, Asia and Australia.<sup>92</sup>

The cropping operations in particularly mechanized farming were clearing, cleaning, ploughing, seeding, weeding and harvesting. Clearing was cutting trees on the farmland. It was carried out by contract. Cleaning was preparing the land for seeding. It usually started in February. The small farmers did the work by themselves. The larger farmers usually contracted the work to crews on a unit area basis. Cotton stems, sesame and sorghum stalks from previously cultivated land were piled, dried, and burned. Ploughing was carried out by a tractor-drawn, 4 meters wide-level disk harrow (24-30 discs), and drawn one way across the land (See Photograph 15). It cultivated the surface to a depth of more than 8 centimeters. Ploughing operations for all the crops were not uniform. In most cases, first plowing was carried out in June when the ground had received sufficient moisture. This enabled the disc to penetrate the soil. Weeds started to grow usually after the second rain. Thus a second ploughing was needed to destroy the weeds. Regarding sesame, the seed was broadcast either before the second plowing or after the second ploughing.<sup>93</sup> Then a third harrowing was carried out to cover the seeds. Sorghum lands were also ploughed, seeded and again harrowed to cover the seed. This was done after the sesame and

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<sup>90</sup> IEG: Ministry of Agriculture, IAR, "Report of The Survey Mission...", p. 21.

<sup>91</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 79.

<sup>92</sup> IEG, Ministry of Agriculture, "Report of the Survey Mission...", p. 21.

<sup>93</sup> Atakilt, pp. 60-61.

cotton had been planted. Cotton lands followed the same process as sorghum. The only difference was that cotton seeding followed sesame seeding. Seeding was by hand broadcasting. Originally seeds of both sesame and sorghum were first brought from the Sudan. Then the farmers saved the best seeds from the best crops. But new cotton seed was later also purchased every year from Barratolo Cotton Plantation which was always insecticide treated. The Barratolo Plantation was located near Tässänäy in Eritrea. It was first started by the Italian government in 1932. From 1941 on until 1949 the plantation was run by the British. Then the Ethiopian government took it over. It was only from 1965 onwards that Doctor Barratolo started to be a concession holder. His farm manager was M. Socci.<sup>94</sup>

The seeding periods of sesame, cotton and sorghum were from June to July, end of June to end of July, and July to September respectively.<sup>95</sup> There was no irrigation in Abdärafī and Mättäma. The crops were rain-fed.<sup>96</sup> Cotton exhausts the soil. It needs fertilizer to maintain fertility. But fertilizer was not tried in the study areas because farmers were always afraid of possible increase of weeds.<sup>97</sup> The farmers I spoke to did not use even organic (natural) fertilizers. They were often not settled in the area at all and they said that the virgin land was fertile enough. When land became less fertile they took up new land –not a solution in the long term.<sup>98</sup> It could be argued that not using chemical fertilizers avoided problems for farmers, especially those farmers with smaller incomes and less available cash. By not using chemical fertilizers, farmers at least avoided the financial trap which Tesema has drawn attention to. Tesema's paper relates Wollega,

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>95</sup> Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Institute for Agricultural Research, "Report of the Survey Mission ...", p. 18.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Colonel Tigabu and Sergeant Maru

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

not the northwestern borderlands, but the problem he describes would also have been the problem of farmers in my area, had they used chemical fertilizer. Tesema writes...

*In recent years, farmers in Oromia and Ethiopia in general have complained that they get the highest crop yield only for one or two harvest years by using chemical fertilizers and selected seeds. Thereafter, they must apply more fertilizers and use selected seeds every year to obtain a sufficient harvest. With each passing year, farmers find themselves pushed to the verge of bankruptcy by the ever-rising cost of chemical fertilizers. In fact, the high cost of modern farm management practices has caused farmers in many parts of Wallagga to state that "the land has also started to demand chemical fertilizers as bribes to be productive, just like government bureaucrats, especially the courts, who are accustomed to taking bribes from peasants in order to make a ruling on certain cases." Owing to the ever-rising cost of chemical fertilizers, the Maccaa Oromo have come to regard traditional farming as cheaper and more sustainable than so-called modern farming. Above all, they assert that the food products from traditional farming are tastier and healthier than food items produced with the use of chemical fertilizers.<sup>99</sup>*

Though strict rotation did not exist farmers practiced a cotton-sorghum-sesame rotation on weedy fields and a cotton-sesame-sorghum rotation on the less weedy fields.<sup>100</sup> The weeding processes started with sesame. Then it continued to cotton and sorghum. On each of the three crops, an average of two weeding was carried out by hand. Labour crews were employed usually on a contract basis. About 50 to 100 labourers were assigned to work side by side across the assigned fields.<sup>101</sup>

All the three crops in Abdärafī and Mättäma were harvested by hand using seasonal contract labour. Harvesting periods of sesame, cotton and sorghum were from the end of September to

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<sup>99</sup>Tesema, pp. 106-107. This is a study on Wollega but Tesema has told me that the problem would not be confined to this area.

<sup>100</sup>Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Agriculture, IAR, "Report of the Survey Mission...", p. 18.

<sup>101</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 104.

November, December to February, and December to April respectively.<sup>102</sup> Sesame was cut into small sheaves of about 50 stalks each. Four sheaves were stacked together and 100 of these 4 sheaves stacks formed a “hila”. The *hilas* were allowed to dry for about 15 days. Then the seed was hand-shaken on canvas and finally placed in sacks. Sesame was cut before the seed pods began to crack in order to avoid shattering.<sup>103</sup> Cotton was picked twice. According to the report of the Humära survey mission, one man could pick 30-40 kilograms per day.<sup>104</sup> For sorghum, the heads were cut and piled in large stacks. The seeds were then threshed and winnowed in order to remove the husks.<sup>105</sup> Partially mechanized farming in Abdärafī and Mättäma demanded a great number of labourers in order to satisfy its annual labour needs.<sup>106</sup> Clearing and cleaning were carried out from January to May. During these five months, about 60 percent of the labourers were permanent employees of the land holders. Payment was on a piecework basis.<sup>107</sup> Additional labourers were hired from June to October. Some of the large farmers hired their entire crews in June in order to protect themselves from the probable labour shortage during the weeding and harvesting season.

Table 14: Estimated Monthly Distribution of Annual Seasonal Labour in the 1970s.

Month	Number of Labourers
January	8,000
February	6,500
March	6,500

<sup>102</sup> Informants: Colonel Tigabu, Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Gäbrä Egziabhér and Alänä.

<sup>103</sup> TAMS, “The Humera Report. Resource ...”, p. 104.

<sup>104</sup> IEG, Ministry of Agriculture, IAR, Report of ...”, p. 24.

<sup>105</sup> Informants: Colonel Tigabu,, Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Mängistu and Gäbrä Egziabhér.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Fitaye, “The Traditional...”, p.7.

April	6,500
May	7,500
June	39,500
July	55,000
August	65,000
September	65,000
October	40,000
November	15,000
December	8,000

Source: TAMS, "Humära Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...", p. 42.

About 85 percent of the seasonal labourers were rural people who came to Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma from the highlands of Tigray, Eritrea, and Begemeder and Simien provinces. The remaining 15 per cent of seasonal labourers came from the towns and cities and were generally not efficient farm labourers. About 25 percent of the labourers traveled to the study areas by trucks, buses and tractors during May and early June before the roads were closed by floods. The remaining 75 per cent came on foot from Tässänäy, Shäraro, Gondar and other places in the highlands. Large numbers of seasonal labourers were hired at harvest time. Most of them (about 70 percent) were Tigrian peasants who sought a cash income to supplement their precarious subsistence production. The majority of the labourers came to Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma after harvesting their own crops at home, usually after Christmas. They returned home for Easter and returned back to Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma in June and July and stayed there until

November. The harsh conditions of the plains, the poor health environment and lack of services all combined to ensure a completely male seasonal worker population.<sup>108</sup>

Regarding labour costs, payments were not uniform. There were different payments on the different farms. Sometimes disputes arose between labourers and employers over questions of pay. Labour did not have proper written contracts or guidance because there were no labour offices in the study areas.<sup>109</sup> The position of labour, however, was not entirely weak because at harvest time they were desperately needed and could threaten to refuse work unless they got more pay. This was especially the case for sesame which had to be harvested on time, or otherwise would be spoiled. On one occasion a women, Abäkyäläsh Yimär (also known as Abäkyäläsh Gondar), was in a problem of a labour shortage in Mättäma Wäräda in the Civil Association Agricultural Farm and got labourers by giving them good, attractive food not just sorghum powder. She was then accused by other farmers of breaking traditional custom “spoiling the labourers” and getting an unfair advantage in attracting labour.<sup>110</sup> However, the average unit costs for clearing, seeding, and weeding were estimated as shown in Table 13.

Table 15: Reported Average Clearing, Seeding and Weeding Costs per Man per Day in the 1970s.

Activity	Crop Types	Unit Cost (Birr/Man/Day)
Clearing	All crops	1.50
Seeding	All crops	4.81
Weeding	All crops	2.26
Weeding	Sesame	2.66
Weeding	Sorghum	2.14
	Cotton	

Source: Taken TAMS, “Humara Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...”, Chapter 7, p.50.

<sup>108</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fisseha and Alänä.

<sup>109</sup> Fitaye “The Traditional Usage...”, p. 7.

<sup>110</sup> Informants: Kindé, Sisay, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fisseha and Alänä.

The estimated unit labour costs for harvesting, management and other costs were also given as shown in the following Table.

Table 16: Estimated Harvesting, Management and Other Costs in the 1970s.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Unit Cost (Birr)</u>
Sesame cutting	<i>hila</i>	3.00-4.00
Sesame threshing and sacking	quintal	1.50
Sorghum harvesting	quintal	1.50
Cotton picking	kilogram	0.05
Food for a labourer	day	0.50-1.00
Manager's Salary	month	400.00
Foreman's Salary	month	200.00
Production taxes	hectare	0.80

Source: Taken TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...", Chapter 7, p. p.51.

According to my informants, the farm supplied sorghum powder, beans, salt, pepper and water to drink for both its permanent and seasonal labourers. The farmers hauled water for their labourers in the dry season and put it in a drum. In the rainy season the labourers themselves dug holes in the ground to collect flood water. The farms maintained small grass *tukul* huts for shelter but many labourers slept in the open fields because of the heat as they still do. The amount of sorghum grain consumed by one person per year was 300 kilograms. The people in the study areas suffered from anthrax, trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), visceral leishmaniasis (kala-azar) and malaria.<sup>111</sup> The labourers paid great sacrifices in deaths especially from malaria. Such tragedies were remembered by the labourers in their sayings:

<sup>111</sup> Informants: Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Mängistu, Gäbrä Egziabhér, Fisseha and Alänä.

ሁመራ የሄደ መተማ የሄደ

ደንጋይ ነው ትራሱ

አሞራ ነው ቁሱ

ቁጭ ብሎ ያየዋል እስከወጣ ነብሱ<sup>112</sup>

One who went to Humära or Mättäma,

His pillow is the stone.,

His priest is the vulture [for the funeral ceremony].

It waits and watches him until he dies.

The farm supplied the labourers with sugar, oil and onions whenever the labourers demanded them. But the cost was to be covered by the labourers themselves deducted from their pay.<sup>113</sup>

One might compare the conditions of seasonal migrant labour in neighbouring Sudan. Permanent and seasonal migrant labour was scarce in neighboring Sudan. The role of resident labour was increasing while that of short-term migrants from distant areas was decreasing. The labour shortage occurred as a result of the very low real wages. The precondition for the “very survival” of the labour force and its dependants in both mechanized rain-fed and large-scale irrigation system was housing, health, education, drinking-water and sanitation.<sup>114</sup>

Regarding farm management, different mechanisms were practiced. If a tractor farm was owned by a partnership, one of the partners was in charge of managing the farm work. The partner who was in charge of managing the farm work usually stayed in the town closest to the farm in order to

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<sup>112</sup> Informant: Sisay.

<sup>113</sup> Informants: Colonel Tigabu, Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära and Mängistu.

<sup>114</sup> Report of a Mission Financed by the United Nations, in *Employment and Economic Reform: Towards a Strategy for the Sudan* (Switzerland: International Labour Office, 1987), p. 71.

supervise the workers during the ploughing, seeding, weeding and harvesting seasons. In his absence, the *kobrari* (foreman) acted as a manager. He lived on or near the farm during most of the year. On the other hand, some of the individual tractor-owning farmers managed their farms by themselves. Some of them lived near their farms, but the majority lived in towns like Humära, Asmara, and Gondar engaged in some other commercial businesses. They visited their farms when necessary. Generally speaking, all farm operations were supervised by the foreman. But the tractor-renting farmers stayed close to their farms for the whole year. This greatly helped them to take care of their farm management together with their foremen. Most of the members of the different cooperatives in Abdärafī and Mättäma as in Humära, were government officials, judges, military generals, retired civil servants and policemen, teachers, merchants, farmers etc.<sup>115</sup> The following chapter discusses infrastructural developments.

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<sup>115</sup> Informants: Sergeant Maru, Sisay, Abära, Alänaä and Mängistu.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS**  
**INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the infrastructures of Abdärafī and Mättäma will be discussed. Assessments will be given of the services that were available to cooperative farmers. Information will be given on population, roads, transport and communications, educational facilities, governmental administrative issues, water supply, health and medical facilities, and housing and shopping.

**5.1 ABDÄRAFI**

**5.1.1 ROADS, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The availability of good transport services at reasonable cost is important for the viability of commercial farming. Farming in Abdärafī suffered from transport difficulties which were only slowly improved. The route between Gondar and Abdärafī via Humära, which was about 329 kilometers long, was originally an old mule track.<sup>1</sup> The route from Humära to Mättäma through Abdärafī (87 kilometers) was 196 kilometers. The route between Humära and Abdärafī was only a rough track and was impassable in the wet season and the route from Abdärafī to Mättäma was also rough and rocky.<sup>2</sup> During the wet season, transport of goods between Abdärafī and Humära was impossible because the goods could not cross the Angäräb River. The Angäräb, also known as Bahr as-Salam, is one of the sources of the Nile. Crossing the Angäräb River in the wet season was only possible by using a small boat. Anyone who wanted to use the boat was charged *Birr* 5. When there was too much rain and river volume was large and the current swift it was not even easy to use the boat and cross the river. Prior to the construction of the bridge, fording of the river was possible only in the dry season from mid-December to early June. When the river was

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<sup>1</sup> Informants: Mängistu, Alänä, Fiseha Asräs , and Gäbrä Egziabhér.

<sup>2</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 1

full, it took about 30 days for the volume to fall. To minimize the problem a new bridge was constructed in 1971 across the Angäräb River, six kilometers north of Abdärafı, by the Imperial Highway Authority. It was 150 meters long and 3.5 meters wide. There were 6 stone central pillars that carried the Angäräb Bailey Bridge. Each pillar was placed at a distance of 30 meters. The Angäräb Bailey Bridge was the longest in the history of Bailey Bridge construction in Ethiopia of that time. The construction of the bridge greatly helped the Sätit-Humära, Abdärafı and Mättäma Multi-Purpose Farmers' Cooperatives to transport their commercial crops to the market without any problem. The bridge served for about 500-600 tractors at that time.<sup>3</sup>

Photograph 21 and 22: Overhead view and side view of the Angäräb Bailey Bridge



Source: Photo Alänä Chäkol, taken on May 23, 2013.

As stated above, the road from Abdärafı to Gondar was via Humära. This was about 329 kilometers which was very long and time consuming. This was because there was no road that

<sup>3</sup> *Addis Zämän*, Säne 24, 63 E.C, p. 1; Ministry of Agriculture, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 181.

could directly connect Abdärafī with Gondar. Having this problem in mind, the farmers' cooperatives in Tach Armachiho and the *ballabats* of the area decided to contribute money and shorten the distance by constructing a 150 kilometers road through Armachiho and connecting it with the Sätit-Humära road. *Ato Zänäbä Nureliñ*, from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission in Zämānat, supported the road construction by bringing one tractor and one Land Rover. *Ato Waksum Näwätä*, the *Qäbälle Shum* and pioneer of the Godäbé-Abdärafī Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative, *Ato Abäbä Adissu*, *Ato Mäkonän Akalé*, *Ato Abäbä Lakäw*, and *Ato Ayäliñ Libän* gave their own support by bringing one tractor each. About 500 local people participated daily in the construction of the road without pay. *Birr* 7,000 was also paid for daily labourers. Finally the construction of the Abdärafī-Gondar road was completed successfully. The distance was 250 kilometers. It shortened the Abdärafī-Gondar route by 79 kilometers. The new road was a dry season road.<sup>4</sup>

The development of cooperative farms in the Sätit-Humära area and the establishment of the Gondar Cotton Ginning and Processing Plant necessitated the repair and construction of the Gondar-Humära-Tässänäy, and the Gondar-Chilga- Mättäma-Abdärafī tracks. The government promised to finance half of the total sum of the projects. The populace of the Governorate General was expected to cover the remaining half. The populace of Wägära *Awraja* contributed *Birr* 107,106.55. Every farmer of Wälqait and Şägädé was told to pay 10 *Birr* per *dawilla* (twenty *qunmas*), a grain measure of approximately 100 kilograms of grain harvested. The daily labourers had to contribute 2 *Birr* each. However, construction work was not started soon because of the misunderstandings that arose between officials of the Governorate General and the Highway Authority. The Highway Authority asked for pre-payment of the public's

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<sup>4</sup>"Yä Abdärafī Mängädina Ersha Yizota", in *Tiyintä Gondar Zena, Gondar Municipal Herald*, Year 1 No. 3 (December-January, 1973-1974), p. 5.

contribution before work began on the ground. It said that the government budget money was not available for the time being. On the other hand the government officials insisted on the Authority beginning work with the government money first. As a result of these misunderstandings construction work was delayed for some time and therefore the Highway Authority did not start the work. It was also reported that there was some misappropriation of the public contribution by officials because out of *Birr* 107,106.55 that was collected in 1971, the account showed a deficit of *Birr* 7,954.26. This was one major problem. The other problems when the work started were security problems from bandits on the Gondar-Humära road and the rainy season that hindered the construction work.<sup>5</sup>

Finally after the delay the engineering corps of the Ethiopian Ground Forces handled the project and built several bridges and culverts. A good example was the construction of a Bailey Bridge over the Guang (Atbara) river.<sup>6</sup> The Atbara River is located about seven kilometers northeast of Mättäma. The construction was completed in May 1971. It was a single span Bailey Bridge. It was 36.6 meters long with a curb width of 3.3 meters. The maximum load of the Atbara Bailey Bridge was 15 tons (short for metric ton, 907.19 kg) only. It was not used for heavier motorized traffic.<sup>7</sup> Finally a road that linked Mättäma-Abdärafī-Sätit-Humära was contemplated but not carried out.<sup>8</sup>

In 1971, the people of Godäbé-Abdärafī in Tach Armachiho decided to prepare an airfield in the town of Abdärafī. To make it practical, they contributed *Birr*1616 and elected a committee of seven men. *Ato* Yilma Zäläläw, the Deputy *Wäräda* Administrator, became Chairperson. *Ato*

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<sup>5</sup>Solomon, pp. 242-243.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 181.

<sup>8</sup>Solomon, pp. 243-244.

Wakshum Näwätä, the *Qäballe Shum*, became Vice Chairman and *Ato* Kahssay Woldä Mariam became the Secretary and Treasurer. There were also four other people who were members of the committee.<sup>9</sup> In 1972 the people of Armachiho again contributed 5,609.20 *Birr* and kept it in the bank for the cost of clearing the ground for the airfield.<sup>10</sup> According to my informants, the airfield was later used as a helicopter pad. The airfield was only leveled ground, usable only in the dry season, not a hard runway. The airfield first came into use for helicopters in 1972<sup>11</sup>

### 5.1.2 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

In collaboration with the Swedish Evangelical Mission the people of Abdärafī opened an elementary school in Abdärafī in 1971.<sup>12</sup> At first, its enrollment was 250.<sup>13</sup> The members of the Police Farm in Abdärafī contributed a lot in teaching the children in the already established elementary school until the Ministry of Education assigned teachers.<sup>14</sup> At present there is also a General Secondary School in Abdärafī, as I have observed during fieldwork.

### 5.1.3 GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY ISSUES

Initially, Abdärafī's administration depended on the *Qäballe*. The first official of the *Qäballe* was *Ato* Waksum Näwätä, the *Qäballe Shum*. The *Qäballe* grew to a *Wäräda* level because of the development of modern agriculture in the area. Abdärafī also had a police substation and a contingent of border police from 1971.<sup>15</sup> Its communications were through radio.<sup>16</sup> A court was not opened until 2001. It was only in 2001 that a sub-court was set up. Until then criminals were

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<sup>9</sup> *Addis Zämān, Yäkatit*, 20, 1963 E.C, p.5.

<sup>10</sup> Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Bä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw...", p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Informants: Mängistu, Alänä, Fiseha Asrä, and Gäbrä Egziabher.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project Draft...", p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Begemed and Simien Polis, "Yä Begemederna Simien Polis Abaloch...", p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project Draft...", p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Begemed and Simien Polis, "Yä Begemederna Simien Polis Abaloch...", p. 29.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project Draft...", p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Begemedes and Simien Polis, "Yä Begemederna Simien Polis Abaloch...", p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project Draft...", p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Begemedes and Simien Polis, "Yä Begemederna Simien Polis Abaloch...", p. 29.

judged in Sanja *Wäräda*. The majority of crimes that were committed in Abdärafī included killing and wounding each other in fights after alcoholic drinks, petty theft, larger pillage, smuggling (the border town of Assira in the Sudan was the source of contraband) mainly in firearms, different clothes, shoes and liquid soap, and quarreling and fighting with each other over prostitutes. Assira was and still is the famous livestock market of the surrounding area much of it brought in illegally from Ethiopia. Cattle supply to Abdärafī came mainly from the areas with large cattle populations: Şägädé, Tach Armachiho and Western Armachiho.<sup>17</sup>

#### 5.1.4 WATER SUPPLY

From the health point of view, a supply of clean water is critical for drinking and sanitation purposes, otherwise people suffer from dysentery, typhoid and other water-borne diseases. There was no pure water at all in Abdärafī. The major source of water was and still is the Angäräb River. Both the town dwellers and the seasonal labourers used the Angäräb River for drinking and other purposes. The tractor-owning cooperative farmers hauled water in drums from the river. They also caught rain in ponds during the rainy season. The town dwellers purchased water by the male Sinnar donkey load. The local people call these donkeys “Sinnar donkeys” because they are bigger and stronger than Ethiopian donkeys. These donkeys perhaps originally came from Sinnar. The people used Sinnar donkeys and hybrid Sinnar donkeys crossed with Ethiopian donkeys. All the Sinnar male donkeys were and still are used for transporting produce and water for the smallholder farmers and for the town dwellers from the river and wells. The other sources of water are the *qäbälle* wells. But these wells do not satisfy all the town dwellers. There is shortage of water. Queues of people at the wells with water containers were and are always observed. The town dwellers and seasonal labourers also drank

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<sup>17</sup> Informants: Girma and Inspector Mogäs Gétu.

water directly from the Angäräb River. Nothing has been changed in this respect since the 1960s and 1970s. Things are still the same.<sup>18</sup>

Photograph 23: Seasonal labourers drinking water from the Angäräb River as they still do



Source: Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), MSF-Holland Abdurafi Project, 2014, p. 11.

Photograph 24: Water sale by the donkey load to Abdärafı town dwellers



Source: Photo Atakilt, taken on May 23, 2013.

### 5.1.5 HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

There was no health centre in Abdärafı until 1998. The most prevalent diseases of the area were and still are malaria, leishmaniasis also known as kala-azar (Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF Holland Abdurafi Project is currently fighting against Kal-azar), anthrax, sleeping sickness, venereal diseases, tropical ulcers, dysentery, recurrent fever and elephantiasis. A malaria control centre was also not established. Both the farmers and the large migratory labour force suffered a

<sup>18</sup> Informants: Mängistu, Fiseha Asräs , and Gäbrä Egziabhér.

lot. People were dying here and there without any treatment especially because of malaria and other diseases.<sup>19</sup>

Medical doctors of the Police Farm were gratefully recognized for their medical support to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) Development Commission workers as well as to the town dweller of Abdärafī. It was free of charge.<sup>20</sup> The EOC Development Commission workers at Zämānat were also generous enough in giving medicine free of charge to both Commission workers and the town dwellers in collaboration with the Police Farm medical doctors. Though individual pharmacies were present in Abdärafī, their contribution to the population was minimal because they had few useful medicines and the medicines were expensive. Some of the pharmacy owners were also not trained. They simply opened their pharmacies illegally without any licence.<sup>21</sup>

#### 5.1.6 MILLS

Flour mills were available in Abdärafī, Abräha-Enjära, Grar Wuha and Marzänäb. Flour mills were only lacking in the smaller villages. In the 1960s and 1970s until the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution Abdärafī customers and the remote villages customers like Grar Wuha, Abräha-Enjara and Marzänäb were charged two cents and three cents respectively to have one kilogram of sorghum ground.<sup>22</sup> After the revolution the price for grinding sorghum rose sharply as noted in chapter 4.

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<sup>19</sup> Informants: Dämäkä Tilahun, Gäbrä Egziabhér Hagos and Mängistu.

<sup>20</sup> Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Yä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Polis Abaloch...", p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Informants: Liqä Seyuman Gäbrä Mäskäl and Tibäbu.

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, "The Humara Report: Resource ...", p. 120.

### 5.1.7 RELIGION

The majority of the populations in Abdärafī were Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and the Muslims were a minority. People were dying here and there due to the harsh climate and endemic diseases, but when people died there were no churches or mosques for burial. They were simply buried anywhere.<sup>23</sup> The people of Armachiho and the town dwellers of Abdärafī discussed the matter and decided to contribute money for the construction of churches and mosques in Abdärafī, Girar Wuha and Abräha-Enjära.<sup>24</sup> In about 1973 they became successful in constructing a church in Abdärafī. The church was dedicated to Däbrä Sälam Abdärafī Mädhane Aläm and was consecrated in 1972. Members of the Godäbé-Abdärafī Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative and members of the Police Farm took the lion's share in the contribution. *Ato* Abära □ägayä, the then President of Godäbé-Abdärafī Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative, personally bought liturgical books and gave them to the church freely. When people died during the night-time they were buried that same night because the area is very hot and corpses quickly decayed. One major problem for burial in the night-time was the absence of electric light (the town got its first electric power with the coming of the EPRDF to power). However, *Ato* Abära □ägayä, the President of the Abdärafī-Godäbé Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society and a former deacon, bought a generator and solved the problem by renting it to the church with some payment. The churchmen saw it as a big contribution and they gave credit to *Ato* Abära □ägayä because the generator enabled them to fulfill their religious obligations more easily in the night-time.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Informants: Mängistu, Alänä and Gäbrä Egziabher.

<sup>24</sup>Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Bä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw...", pp. 64-65.

<sup>25</sup>Informants: Sälämon Hunäñaw, Gétu, Abay, Abära, Aschaläw, Jäjaw, Nägädu and Girma.

The *ballabats* of Abdärafī in Tach Armachiho also gave 50,000 square meters of land for the construction of a mosque for the minority Muslim population.<sup>26</sup> The mosque was constructed in about 1975.<sup>27</sup>

#### 5.1.8 HOUSING AND SHOPPING

There were houses in Abdarafi with corrugated iron roofs and small grass roofed *tukul* huts with some more solidly constructed buildings. In the absence of a municipality, the residential houses and the roads of the town were constructed in a congested way by individuals and the *Qäballe* administrators without any plan. The *Qäballe* leaders had no engineering knowledge at all.<sup>28</sup>

There appeared in the period of my dissertation services like bars, shops, tea rooms, barber shops and different government offices, flour mills and others. There were therefore adequate simple retail and service facilities in Abdärafī. As a result of commercial farming Abdärafī is both a centre of administration and a centre of commerce.<sup>29</sup>

### 5.2 MÄTTÄMA

#### 5.2.1 ROADS AND COMMUNICATION

The Italians occupied Mättäma on April 12, 1936 and after two years and ten months of their stay they linked Mättäma with Gondar by a motor road by the end of 1938. In addition to this, the Italians opened up tracks between Mättäma and other posts. Mättäma was also connected with Shimälägära, Abdärafī, Tässänäy, Om Hajar and Gadabi in Eritrea. All these roads were built primarily for military purposes. It is also reported that the Italians built an airfield in Mättäma for their military aircraft.<sup>30</sup> After their expulsion, the roads and the airfield were not maintained. As noted above, the availability of good transport services at reasonable cost is

<sup>26</sup> Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Bä Begemerna Siméie Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw...", p. 255.

<sup>27</sup> Informants: Sälämon Guadu, Gétu, Abay, Abära, Aschäläw, Jäjaw, Nägädu and Girma .

<sup>28</sup> Informants: Gäbrä Egziabher, Mängistu and Alänä.

<sup>29</sup> Informants: Sälämon Guadu, Getu, Abay, Abära, Aschaläw, Jäjaw, Nägädu and Girma.

<sup>30</sup> Dessalegn, p. 19.

The *ballabats* of Abdärafī in Tach Armachiho also gave 50,000 square meters of land for the construction of a mosque for the minority Muslim population.<sup>26</sup> The mosque was constructed in about 1975.<sup>27</sup>

### 5.1.8 HOUSING AND SHOPPING

There were houses in Abdarafi with corrugated iron roofs and small grass roofed *tukul* huts with some more solidly constructed buildings. In the absence of a municipality, the residential houses and the roads of the town were constructed in a congested way by individuals and the *Qäballe* administrators without any plan. The *Qäballe* leaders had no engineering knowledge at all.<sup>28</sup> There appeared in the period of my dissertation services like bars, shops, tea rooms, barber shops and different government offices, flour mills and others. There were therefore adequate simple retail and service facilities in Abdärafī. As a result of commercial farming Abdärafī is both a centre of administration and a centre of commerce.<sup>29</sup>

## 5.2 MÄTTÄMA

### 5.2.1 ROADS AND COMMUNICATION

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<sup>26</sup> Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Bä Begemederna Siméie Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw...", p. 255.

<sup>27</sup> Informants: Sälämon Guadu, Gétu, Abay, Abära, Aschäläw, Jäjaw, Nägädu and Girma .

<sup>28</sup> Informants: Gäbrä Egziabher, Mängistu and Alänä.

<sup>29</sup> Informants: Sälämon Guadu, Getu, Abay, Abära, Aschaläw, Jäjaw, Nägädu and Girma.

<sup>30</sup> Dessalegn, p. 19.

important for the viability of commercial farming. Farming in Mättäma suffered from transport difficulties which were only slowly improved. The route between Gondar and Mättäma, which was about 180 kilometers long, was originally an old mule track.<sup>31</sup> In 1962, Police officials of Begémidir and Simén Governorate General ordered individual farmers from the highland population of Gondar *Zuria Awraja* to give support by lending their mules to take provisions for policemen who were assigned to the frontier of Mättäma. The people had to lend their mules (the total number of mules that were lent is not known). However, eight of the mules died on the way due to *nidad* (an acute animal fever). This must have been some unspecified animal disease. The death of the mules created controversy between the government officials and the owners of the mules. The owners of the mules appealed to officials to pay them the cost of their mules. But government officials did not respond on time because of different bureaucracies and the final result was not known (see appendix 13).<sup>32</sup>

As noted above in my description of the roads and communication in Abdarafi, the engineering corps of the Ethiopian Ground Forces constructed the Azäzo-Chilga and the Chilga- Mättäma- Abdärafî tracks and Bailey Bridge over the Guang (Atbara) river and Gända Wuha and Nägädé Bahir Bailey Bridge.

The Imperial Highway Authority confirmed that the Gondar-Mättäma road that was constructed by the engineering corps of the Ethiopian Ground Forces was not properly made. It served for the dry season only. During the wet season the road was impassable. Farmers were not able to transport seasonal labourers. People were transported by either truck or Land Rover. There was

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<sup>31</sup>Informants: *Märgéta Fréw*, Hailä Mariam, Inspector Bihonäñ, Sergeant Assäfa, Mandäfro, and Kindié.

<sup>32</sup>See appendix 13.

no bus service at all. There were no postal and telephone services. The only means of communication was radio communication in the police station.<sup>33</sup>

The road from Mättäma to Gondar was not at all in good condition even in the dry season. The Imperial Highway Authority promised its better construction.<sup>34</sup> But the road was not improved for unknown reasons. People were still being transported by either truck or Land Rover. There was still no bus service at all. There were no postal and telephone services. The only means of communication was radio communication in the police station. The road from Abdärafī and Humära to Gondar was also impassable in the wet season.<sup>35</sup>

In 1975, Begemeder and Simien Province organized a Rural Road Construction Study Group. According to this study group, the Gondar-Humära and Gondar-Mättäma roads were given first priority and the Abdärafī-Ashäre and the Humära-Abdärafī-Mättäma roads were given second priority.<sup>36</sup> However, the roads were not constructed and the plan was not implemented until 1981.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration office, Folder 2430-3432/275 a "Report on Mattama Warada from Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Interior Municipalities Department to Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Interior, Reference No. 5/003/13079, Folder 2432, Serial No. 3, *Mägabit* 21, 1964 E. C., p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, A letter from Imperial Highway Authority to Imperial Ethiopian Government, Road Transport Administration, Gojjam, Begemeder and Simien Regional Office, Folder መንገድና ቦታ Reference No. 397/66 *Nähase* 18, 66 E.C,

<sup>35</sup> Provisional Military Government, Ministry of National Community Development, Setit Humera Branch to Gondar Province Reference No. 17/3/67, *Mägabit* 1, 1967 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office Folder መ 486/221/44 የመንገድ ስራ ፕሮጀክት ስለገጠር መንገድ መንገድች Begemeder and Simien Province, "Rural Road Construction Study Group Report", *Hamleé* 29, 67 E. C, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ጭልጋ 32 File No. 69/126/42 a letter from Gondar Province Rural Road Construction Branch Office to Chilga Awraja Administration, Reference No. 134/62/73 *Tikimt* 7, 73 E.C, p. 1

## 5.2.2 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES,

In 1972, in collaboration with the Swedish Government the Ethiopian Government opened a primary school in the *wäräda* capital, Mättäma Yohannis.<sup>38</sup> There were 150 children learning in six classes. There was no school library at all.<sup>39</sup>

## 5.2.3 GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY ISSUES

During the Italian occupation period, most of the town administrators in Mattama Yohannis were Eritreans. They were more favoured than the Ethiopians.<sup>40</sup> This changed after the liberation.<sup>41</sup>

In 1972, there were different government offices in Mättäma Yohannis, the *Wäräda* capital, like *Wäräda* Administration Office, Police Station, Court, Jail, Treasury, Customs Office and Agricultural Office.<sup>42</sup>

In Mättäma Yohannis many crimes were committed. Farmers and traders suffered from outlaws and robbery. There were assassins both from the Sudan and Ethiopia. *Shiftas* (bandits) killed innocent people with guns or with small daggers. Those killers and those who refused to pay government taxes usually found sanctuary and hid themselves in Mahbära Silassie monastery by pretending they were devout Christians. Once they entered the monastery it was a problem for policemen to hunt and capture them because policemen could not enter the monastery without the permission of the monastery's monks, who refused to give this permission (See Appendix xii, xiii and xiiib). On the other hand, there were quarrels between individuals and among groups.

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<sup>38</sup> Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat, "Bä Begemederna Simien Täqlay Gizat Hulätäñaw....", p. 276.

<sup>39</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office Folder 2430-3432/275 a Report on Mättäma *Wäräda* from Imperial Ethiopian Government, ..., pp. 2-3.

<sup>40</sup> Dessalegn, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> Informants: *Märgéta Fréw*, Hailä Mariam, Inspector Bihonäñ, Sergeant Assäfa and Mandäfro.

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Interior, Municipalities Department to Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Interior, Reference No. 5/003/13079, ... *Mägabit* 21, 1964 E. C., p. 2.

Some of the major causes for the quarrels were over prostitutes and illegal business affairs. The prostitutes were on the border of the two towns, Mättäma and Gallabat, which was a very sensitive area. Ethiopian youngsters and Sudanese youngsters quarreled over the Ethiopian prostitutes in Mättäma Yohannis. The other causes for quarreling were theft and drunkenness. In Mättäma Yohannis people were also engaged in contraband. The contrabandists took skins of leopards and crocodiles, livestock, mercury, *silat* (tablets of wood or stone) used in Ethiopia for a *tabot* (ark of tabernacle) from Ethiopia to the Sudan for sale (for other purposes) in Sudan or to Sudan as an outlet beyond Sudan. The dominant items that were brought from the Sudan to Ethiopia along this illegal channel were pistols, rifles, hand grenades, different clothes, shoes, soft drinks and liquid soap. Great numbers of criminals were caught by policemen and were sent to prison. There was also illegal emigration of people from the different parts of Ethiopia especially from Eritrea.<sup>43</sup>

#### 5.2.4 WATER SUPPLY

Before the Italian occupation, water supply in Mättäma *Wäräda* was a major problem. The Italians extracted water from the ground by digging wells during the occupation period. After 1941 these wells continued to be the source of water supply to the town dwellers. In the 1970s however, there was only one well left in use. The other wells were inoperative because of lack of maintenance and were filled with dirt. The well that was in use was located on the Ethio-Sudan border near Gallabat. Its depth was 4 meters. As in Abdärafī, water retailers hauled water by donkeys and sold it to the town dwellers for cash. One *Gäräwäyna* (a metal container that holds 20 liters of water) of water cost 0.10 *Birr*. However, the single well also became out of use. Then the town dwellers had to use water from Gallabat. During the daytime there was and there still is

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<sup>43</sup> Informants: Inspector Bihonäñ, Mandäfro, Tateq Amänu, Birtukan and Colonel Wäрку.

free movement between Mättäma Yohannis and Gallabat. Water sellers directly went to Gallabat and bought one barrel of water for 30 *Birr* and transported it to Mättäma Yohannis by donkey cart for sale. The donkeys that drew the carts were Sinnar donkeys. The people of the area called them *Caro* (the donkey plus the cart). The *Caros* are also important to transport freight in Humära, Mättäma and Abdärafi towns. One *Jerrycan* (a cointainer for fuel or water. Many people in developing countries use it to haul and store their drinking water) of water cost 3 *Birr* as retail price.<sup>44</sup>The people still depend on water from Gallabat and it would be a serious problem if the Sudanese officials refused access.

Photograph 25: A retailer selling water from the *Caro* for the town dwellers in Mättäma Yohannis.



Source: Photo Atakilt, taken on October 2, 2013.

### 5.2.5 HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

Mättäma is a lowland area with a hot, harsh, unhealthy climate. The first health centre in MättämaYohannis was opened in 1972 but it had no doctor and only poor medical facilities. Both farmers and seasonal labourers suffered from malaria, visceral leishmaniasis otherwise known as kala-azar, sleeping sickness, elephantiasis, anthrax, diarrhea mixed with blood

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<sup>44</sup>Informants: Inspector Bihonän, Assäfa, Mandäfro, Tateq, Birtukan and Colonel Wärku.

indicating probably dysentery, skin disease, ear disease, throat disease, liver problems, rheumatism, fever and headaches.<sup>45</sup>

#### 5.2.6 RELIGION

It was estimated in 2004 that 83 percent of the population in Mättäma were Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The Muslims were 16 per cent and the remaining one percent was other religions.<sup>46</sup> Probably in the period of my dissertation the proportions were about the same. During the occupation period, the Italians had been more sympathetic to the minority Muslims, the Gumuz and the Qimant than to the Christians. The Italians, therefore, built a mosque in Mättäma Yohannis for the Muslims.<sup>47</sup> The Christians constructed a church in 1966. This oldest church was dedicated to Yohannis IV. It is, therefore, called Mättäma Yohannis Church. An earlier church had been burned by the Mahdists in their 1889 invasion and the 1966 church was a replacement for this lost church.<sup>48</sup> In the time of my research I have also seen other churches that were constructed since 1966. These churches are Täklä-Haymanot, Gäbriel and Kidanä Mihrät (the church in Maryam Wuha). In spite of the Italian attempt to sow divisions between Christians and Muslims in the occupation period, both the Christians and the Muslims lived together amicably in the period of my dissertation according to my informants. They were and still are very friendly at least on the surface. Religious antagonism did not appear and does not still manifest itself, according to my informants, though this seems surprising in view of the past

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<sup>45</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder 2430-3432/275 A Report On Mättäma *Wäräda* from Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Interior Municipalities Department to Imperial Ethiopian Government, Ministry of Interior, ..., p. 2; Mamo Morka and Atnafu Molla, "Ya Mättäma Yohannis Kätäma Mäsärätawi Plan Report", Bahir Dar (*Nahasé*, 2004), p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> Mamo and Atnafu, p. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, p. 19.

<sup>48</sup> Informants: Mandäfro, *Märgéta Fréw*, Fäntahun and Hailämariam.

history of the area and the border incursions in my period from both sides, as described in chapter 7.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps we can say that between Christians and Muslims there was both cooperation and potential conflict. One or the other of these attitudes might come to the top at different times. The people of the Ethiopian borderland, living in a harsh area, needed each other and normally there was toleration and even friendship between Christians and Muslims, but a potential for conflict was there, which might surface.

#### 5.2.7 HOUSING, MILLS AND SHOPPING

Most of the houses in Mättäma Yohannis during the Italian occupation period were grass thatched houses. In the 1960s there were 2000 grass thatched houses and 20 houses with corrugated iron roofs. According to my informants, even today, people prefer grass roofed *tukuls* (huts) rather than corrugated iron roofs due mainly to climatic conditions because thatched roofs are cooler. Almost all of the administrative offices were also simple thatched houses. Good examples are the *wäräda* court and the *wäräda* jail (See Photographs 26 and 27). In the 1970s there were 15 *aräqi* (anise liquor/arrack) houses, 10 *täjj* (mead- traditional alcoholic drink made of honey and the leaves of an aromatic plant) houses, 500 *tälla* (local beer of the leaves of *gesho*, an aromatic plant, barley and corn flour) houses, 8 flour mills, seven small hotels and 10 butcher shops for the Christians and 5 for the Muslims.<sup>50</sup> All of the houses were constructed in a traditional and congested way. Construction in an improved way has not yet taken place. The

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<sup>49</sup>Informants: *Märgéta Fréw*, Hailämariam, Mandäfro, and Bärhun Gäbrä Michael

<sup>50</sup>Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder 2430-3432/275 "A Report On Mättäma *Wäräda* from Imperial Ethiopian Government ", ..., pp. 3-4., Mamo Morka and Atnafu Molla, "Yä Mättäma Yohannis Kätäma Mäsärätawi Plan Report", Baher Dar (*Nahase*, 2004 E.C), p. 23.

congested form without any plan exposed the town to fire hazard.<sup>51</sup> Before the 1974 revolution, the rich cooperative farmers did not contribute to the development of the town. They constructed modern villas either in Asmara, Gondar, Mekelle or in Addis Ababa for themselves or as an investment. The town was completely destroyed in 1977 due to the military engagements between the *Därg* and the EDU<sup>52</sup>

The poor condition of the jail and court in Mättäma Yohannis shows the lack of budget for administration purposes at the time. The Police complained that there was not even a budget to feed the prisoners<sup>53</sup>, who were properly fed only by friends or relatives as elsewhere in Ethiopia.

Photograph 26: Prisoners in Jail in Mättäma Yohannis, the *Wäräda* capital, 1971



Source: Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder መተማ ፖሊስ እስረኞች 17/2/406/01, 1971, no. page number.

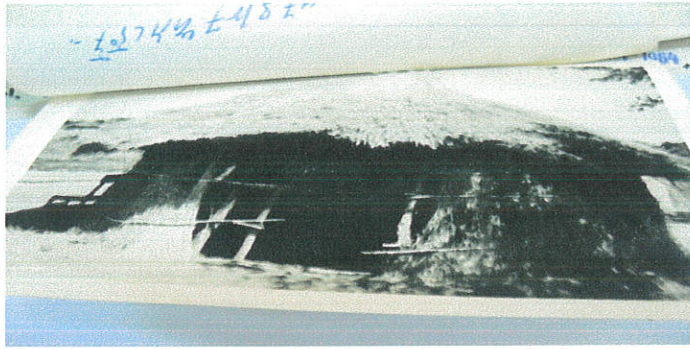
Note: This photo and the following are included to show backward conditions of even official buildings at the time.

<sup>51</sup>Taye Belay, "Mättäman Endäyähuat in *Teyinta Gondar Municipal Herald No. 6*. March – April 1974....", p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Informants: Inspector Bihonäñ, Mandäfro, Tateq, Birtukan and Colonel Wäрку.

<sup>53</sup> Informants: Inspector Bihonäñ, Assäfa, Mandäfro, Tatek Amänu, Birtukan and Colonel Wäрку Bogalä.

Photograph 27: Mätamma Wārāda Court, 1971



Source: Source: Archive of North Gondar Administration Office, Folder መተማን ፖሊስ አስረኞች 17/2/406/01, 1971, no. page number.

The following chapter deals with production, taxation, marketing, processing systems and export, between the 1960s and the 1980s.

## CHAPTER SIX

### PRODUCTION, TAXATION, MARKETING AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS AND

#### EXPORT, 1960s-1980s

##### INTRODUCTION

The unplanned agricultural development of the 1960s in Northwest Ethiopia along the Ethio-Sudan border in the Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma areas by independent farmers and fortune seekers was a great success for the Ethiopian economy because it generated valuable foreign currency through export of crops until the disturbances associated with the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974, the Eritrean separatist movement, the EDU and the EPRP.

The major crops that were produced in Abdärafi, Sätit-Humära and Mättäma were sorghum, sesame and cotton. Agriculture was rain-fed. In this chapter, production, taxation, marketing and processing systems, marketing characteristics and export will be discussed based on the available sources.

##### 6.1 PRODUCTION

###### 6.1.1 ABDÄRAFI

###### 6.1.1.1 ARMACHIHO-GODÄBÉ-ABDÄRAFI FARMERS MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

According to the 1974 audit report of the cooperative, the farmers were able to generate an income of *Birr* 75,698.66 in three years (1971-1974).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder *m*/ 125, Godäbe-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Audit Report, *Hamle*, 30, 66 E.C, p. 1.

The Farmers' Cooperative Society harvested 7, 000 quintals of sesame in 1975.<sup>2</sup> It was also reported that Abdärafî, Mättäma, Humära, Quara and other areas in Gondar Province harvested 70, 000 quintals of cotton in the same year.<sup>3</sup> Of this cotton, the Godäbé-Abdärafî Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society harvested 3,000 quintals.<sup>4</sup> Though the cooperative farmers continued to farm until 1977, we have no other information on production. During the period 1974-77 what we know is that there was political confusion and a problem of road communications whether to Gondar, Humära or Asmara. All these things resulted in marketing problems.

#### 6.1.1.2 THE POLICE FARM

The Police Farm cultivated the three major crops (sorghum, sesame, cotton) from its establishment. The farm generated an income of *Birr* 398,552.73 in the three years period 1967-1970. This increase covered the cost of two tractors, one Land Rover plus spare parts and other necessary expenses. It also refunded the money that the shareholders had contributed. They did not retain their shares for dividends. In 1967-70 the Farm made a net profit of *Birr* 35,105.10.<sup>5</sup> The Farm expected to get a good additional income from the use of the truck and its trailer which had been given as a gift from the emperor as described above in chapter 3. However, the truck did not generate good income as was expected. One major reason was that it could not travel as far as

<sup>2</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ጠቅላላ 126 a letter from Armachiho-Godäbe-Abdärafî Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society to Gondar Administration, Reference No. 204/3/67, *Tir* 30, 67 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ሰኅ 91 ልማት ባንክ a letter from Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory Board of Directors to the Provisional Military Government, Ministry of National Resources, no reference No. *Miazia* 7, 67 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ሰኅ 91 ልማት ባንክ a Minute of a meeting that was conducted in Gondar Administrative Office under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Administrator on the problem of marketing of the harvest of the major crops of Humära, Abdärafî, and Mättäma, no reference No., *Ginbot* 14, 1967 E.C, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Begemeder and Simien Polis, "Ya Begemederna Simien Polis Abalotch...", pp. 12-13.

Asmara, fearing the Eritrean separatists. Also the road was so rough that the manager of the Police Farm did not want to risk damage to the truck. The truck was rented out to individuals locally but this did not bring as much advantage as if the truck had gone to Asmara. It seems clear also that the decision of the executive committee to refund the shareholders' money was wrong because the Farm then faced financial difficulties from shortage of cash.<sup>6</sup> Though the Police Farm hoped to show some progress from 1970-1974, we are not able to discuss progress because of lack of sources. At the same time, the production years from 1971-1974 were not healthy because it was during this period of time that the general managers of the farm were killed by rebels. These political problems have been mentioned in chapter 3 and will be discussed in more detail also in chapter 7. After 1974 things became even worse for the Police Farm due to the outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution and the disturbances which followed.

#### **6.1.1.3 THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (EOC) DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION IN ZÄMÄNAT**

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission, which had started its agricultural operation at Zämänat in 1973, on the eve of the Ethiopian Revolution, harvested 400 quintals of cotton and 500 quintals of sesame. It sold these products and earned *Birr* 300,000. But the farmers were not able to collect their sorghum harvest due to the political disturbances that occurred during and after the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution.<sup>7</sup>

#### **6.1.2 MÄTTÄMA AND MAHBÄRÄ SELASSIE FARMERS MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY**

Mättäma-Mahbärä Selassie Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, which started its agricultural operations in 1971, was said to have contributed a lot to the development of the

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<sup>6</sup>Informants: Sergeant Maru, *Basha* Adugña and Colonel Tigabu.

<sup>7</sup>Informants: Liqä Seyuman Gabrä Mäsqäl and Tibabu..

national economy of the country in producing three major crops (sorghum, sesame, cotton) in 1972, 1973 and 1974. However we lack adequate sources to show details of its contribution or members' profits. According to one source, the cooperative harvested 20,000 quintals of cotton in 1975.<sup>8</sup> The following years were a time of political confusion and disturbances. The real battle between the EDU and the *Därg* started in 1976 and most of the cooperative members were active supporters of the EDU. The farming operations and the marketing of crops ceased.<sup>9</sup>

## 6.2 YIELDS AND PROBLEMS OF CULTIVATION

In Humära, Mättäma and Abdärafi all the cooperative farms' tractor-owning farmers consistently reported higher yields than tractor-renting and oxen-using farmers in the 1960s and early 1970s. For example, in the case of sesame, timeliness in planting was of the utmost importance and tractor owners could prepare the land in time. The differences in yields in sorghum were less marked than for cotton or sesame because sorghum was relatively drought resistant and timeliness in planting it was less critical. Regarding cotton, tractor-renting and oxen-farming yields were below those of tractor-owning farmers. This was because tractor-renters were late in planting it and oxen farmers also cleared the fields poorly and most of them depended on perennial cotton plants instead of new plantings each year.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Archive of North Gondar Administrative Office, Folder ሰኅ 91 ልማት ባንክ a Minute of a meeting that was conducted in Gondar Administrative Office under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Administrator on the problem of marketing of the harvest of the major crops of Humära, Abdärafi, and Mättäma, no reference No., *Ginbot* 14, 1967 E. C, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup>Informants: Sisay, Kindé, Sergeant Assäfa, and Hailä Mariam.

<sup>10</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report and Resource...", p. 106.

The major problems that contributed to low yields were the spread of *striga*, which seriously affected sorghum yields, and insect pests in the case of cotton. These problems were made worse by the absence of orderly systematized crop rotation. A few of the larger partially-mechanized farmers had started insecticide spraying on their cotton crops. Above all, the emperor was concerned about this problem. He ordered the Ministry of Agriculture to destroy the crop pests in the Sätit-Humära areas by all possible means by using a special government budget that he allotted for this purpose. Based on this imperial order, in October 1967, the Ministry of Agriculture bought 20,000 kilograms of insecticides from Asmara and Addis Ababa and sprayed from the air using four Piper spraying aircraft.<sup>11</sup> However, as far as I can discover this neither was a once only effort, nor is there evidence I have found which shows that many individual farmers used insecticide except that the cotton seeds they bought were insecticide treated.

Another problem of crop production was that many of the oxen farmers did not come to the study areas on time before the rains started; they did not come until they had finished their farming work in the highlands. Before the rains started, only about half of the farmers came to their holdings to clear additional areas and to clean the previous year's residue and grasses. Both oxen owning and oxen-renting farmers also did less ploughing or tillage than tractor farmers due mainly to the long distances from their homes to their farms and because ploughing with oxen was much slower than using a tractor. A major constraint that led to lower yields was lack of working capital. Oxen-farmers produced mainly sorghum for domestic use within Ethiopia not crops for export. Lateness in ploughing and seeding caused the oxen farmers to be again late in the first sesame weeding. Due to late weeding and dependence on family labour usually only one weeding operation was carried out on each crop grown. This partially accounted for the relatively

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<sup>11</sup> *Addis Zämän, Tikimt* 1, 1960 E.C, pp. 1 and 5.

low average yield.<sup>12</sup> When we look at the average estimated amount of seed required for the crops, the seed rates for sesame, sorghum and cotton were 4.0, 5.6 and 13.5 kilograms per hectare respectively.<sup>13</sup> The estimated average yields of the 1970s, by the type of farmers (type of power) are shown in the following Table.

Table 17: Estimated Average Crop Yields (Quintals per Hectare)

Zone	Type of Farmer	Sesame	Sorghum	Cotton
A	Tractor-owning	3.0	7.0	3.0
	Tractor-Renting	2.5	6.0	2.0
	Oxen	2.2	6.5	2.0
B	Tractor-owning	3.0	7.0	3.0
	Tractor-owning	2.5	6.0	2.0
	Oxen	2.2	6.5	2.0
C	Tractor-owning	3.1	6.0	6.5
	Tractor-owning	1.5	3.0	3.0
	Oxen	2.2	4.2	1.8

A= Sätit-Humära

B= Wälqait and Şägäde

C= Abdärafi and Mättäma

Source: TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 106.

*There are wide variations in yields in the area both by ecological zone and by type of power. Since rainfall increases from north to south, Yields are higher in zones B and C than in zone A. Tractor-owning farmers consistently report higher yields in all zones than do tractor-renting and oxen farmers. This is to be expected particularly in the case of sesame where timeliness in planting is of utmost importance. The differences in sorghum are less marked, [and oxen farmers even had higher yields] as this plant is relatively drought-resistant, and timeliness in planting is less critical. For cotton, tractor-renting and oxen farmer yields fall considerably below those of tractor owners. This is due primarily to late planting by tractor renters and for oxen*

<sup>12</sup> Atakilt, p. 103.

<sup>13</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource...", p. 108.

*farmers, poorly cleared fields and a large percentage who depend on perennial cooton trees [sic for cotton seeds].<sup>14</sup>*

The products that were harvested by all farmers in Sätit-Humära and the surrounding areas of Sätit-Humära were transported either to Humära, Gondar (cotton), Asmara or Addis Ababa for sale. According to available estimated data, the production of the three principal crops for the years 1968-1974 is shown in the following Table.

Table 18: Total production Estimates in Quintals, 1968/69-1974/75.

Roll.N	Crops				Remarks
	Year	Sorghum	Sesame	Cotton	
1	1968/69	240,000	135,000	75,000	
2	1969/70	119, 251	192,839	283,871	
3	1970/71	137, 826	233,475	264,899	
4	1971/72	311, 771	340,000	75,684	Farmers ploughed more land for sesame because of its price increase ( <i>Birr</i> 65.30/qu.)
5	1972/73	n/a	410,000	n/a	Farmers plughed more land for sesame because of its price increase ( <i>Birr</i> 76.30/qu.), 17% increases from 1971/72.
6	1973/74	n/a	550,000	n/a	Farmers produced more sesame, probably due to price increase.
7	1974/75	30,000	250,000	10,000	The production of sorghum and cotton decreased because of the incidence of crop pests and the fall of market price for these crops and then instability.

Sources: 1. *Addis Zämän, Ginbot* 19, 62 E.C, p.1 and 6  
2. *Addis Zämän, Tahsas* 22, 64 E.C, p. 2

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 2

4. *Ibid.*, p.2 (for sorghum and cotton), *Addis Zämän, Nähase* 16, 64 E.C, p.1 (for sesame)

5. *Addis Zämän, Nähase* 16, 64 E.C, p.1

6. *Addis Zämän, Säne* 15, 66 E.C, p.1

7. *Addis Zaman, Tikimt* 27, 66, p.1

Note 1: The big variations in crop yields from year to year can also most probably be explained by variations in rainfall and the incidence of crop pests and shortage of labour due to transportation problem because the road from Asmara to Humära was blocked due to the presence of the Eritrean freedom fighters in the area especially from 1974/75 onwards.

Note 2: n/a means not available.

### 6.3 TAXATION

As noted above in chapter 4 the only form of taxation of farming in the study areas was production tax. This tax was not also uniform. The farmers of Om Hajar paid *Birr* 2 per *fedan* (*fedan* is an area of approximately 4,000 square meters), per year. In Sätit-Humära, Tač Armachiho, □agadé, and Walqait *wärädas* production tax was paid annually according to an estimate of assumed production. It was made by government representatives, *qähäle shums* and the farmers. The estimate was made every five years and the taxes could increase or decrease.<sup>15</sup>

The average production tax by power type is seen in the following Table.

Table 19: Average Production Tax by power type

Type of Power	Sample size	Average Tax /Ha. ( <i>Birr</i> )
Tractor	45	1.10
Tractor-renting	54	0.76
Oxen (owner and renter)	90	0.67
All types	-	0.80

Source: TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project: Draft...", p. 15.

The taxation imposed in the borderland study areas cannot be described as heavy. Light, negotiable taxation, must have been a factor encouraging settlement for farming in the areas of my dissertation. On the other hand, since the farmer did not pay land tax they could not claim the land as their own private land. The land remained government land. It seems to me the land allocated to farmers in my borderland study areas was like land given on lease, terminable (since there were no formal statements of time) by the government at will. However, the government

<sup>15</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project: Draft...", p. 14

wanted to get the land settled and into production, so the farmers were not disturbed by the government in their occupation of the land.

#### 6.4 MARKETING AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS

The marketing and processing systems were designed to accommodate the movement of sesame, sorghum and cotton. These basic crops flowed from the farmers to consumers, exporters or processors. Humära and Om Hajär were the main marketing centers but crops transported to Om Hajär had to be sent on to Humära.<sup>16</sup> According to Green,

*Humera, with a population of 20,000 in 1967, is the local market and trading center as well as the center for administration, security and law enforcement. The town is the collection and storage point for agricultural produce to be transported to Asmera, the principal market, some 430 kilometers east. Since there is no local marketing organization, most farmers are obliged to sell their crops to local merchants to whom they are heavily indebted by harvest time. Larger and more progressive farmers sell in Asmera.<sup>17</sup>*

The records of Humära and Om Hajär do not indicate the volume of crops received from individuals, cooperatives or farms but only totals marketed. All the sesame and probably 75 to 85 percent of the sorghum marketed out of the area came to Humära first. But the percentage of cotton production that was marketed through Humära was not as high as sesame and sorghum. The largest domestic market customer outlet for cotton was the Gondar Cotton Ginning and Processing Factory. The factory bought 30 to 40 per cent of the cotton production of Sätit-Humära and its surrounding areas. The actual volume of crops that moved out of Humära and Om Hajär markets is not clearly known. The best indicator of marketing was obtained from the

<sup>16</sup>TAMS, "The Humara Report: Resource..." p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>Green, p. 313.

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<sup>16</sup>TAMS, "The Humara Report: Resource..." p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>Green, p. 313.

records at Humära and Om Hajär. The truck shipments were carefully recorded. The cooperative/farmer transported its/ his own crop from the farm to Humära. Transportation cost was high. Tractors and pack animals were used to transport the harvest to Humära. The crops were either sold directly in Humära or loaded for shipment to Asmara on the farmers' or cooperatives' own account. The crops could be sold to merchants, cooperatives, or to the Grain Corporation (GC), a price stabilization institution.<sup>18</sup>

Upon arrival in Asmara, sesame was sold to the exporters and cotton to the cotton ginning companies through local brokers.<sup>19</sup> Sorghum, the principal locally consumed grain, was sold to Asmara merchants. The Asmara merchants distributed it to Eritrea, Tigray and parts of Wollo.

Photograph 28: Humera Market, November 1967.



Source: TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p.151

In 1969, there was a sorghum deficit of about 35,000 tons in Eritrea and some 28,000 tons in Tigray. Thus the Humära area surplus became more important.<sup>20</sup> Some Humära merchants and

<sup>18</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource..." p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>20</sup> Negat Mangasha, "Commercial Agriculture in Ethiopia"; (A Term Paper Faculty of Law, HSIU, 1970), p. 77.

farmers who did not need immediate cash sent sorghum crops to Asmara and held them there for later sale. By holding crop sales until well after harvest a higher price could be obtained. That means waiting some time would give a better price. There were three cotton gins in Asmara that always purchased cotton that came from Humära and surrounding areas. Sesame was cleaned, re-bagged and finally shipped by rail to Massawa for export.<sup>21</sup>

Table 20: Summary of Quantities and Values (Asmara Prices) of Shipments Registered at the Humera and Om Hager Customs Office (1966/67 to 1971/72)

Crop Year	Sesame			Sorghum			Cotton		
	Quantity ('000 quintals)	Average price/qu ( <i>Birr</i> )	Value (in millions) Of <i>Birr</i>	Quantity ('000 quintals)	Average price/qu ( <i>Birr</i> )	Value (In millions) Of <i>Birr</i>	Quantity ('000 quintals)	Average Price/qu ( <i>Birr</i> )	Value (in millions) Of <i>Birr</i>
1966/67	134.0	50	6,700.0	65.4	24	1,569.6	87.9	n/a	n/a
1967/68	207.0	46	9,540.4	283.1	13	3,680.3	104.4	n/a	n/a
1968/69	220.5	45	9,922.5	138.0	14	1,932.0	146.0	57	8,322.0
1969/70	267.5	59	15,782.5	151.5	17	2,575.5	135.1	57	7,700.7
1970/71	225.0	63	14,175.0	350.5	15	5,257.5	38.6	57	2,200.2
1971/72	378.9	61	23,112.9	416.6	13	5,415.8	41.1	61	2,507.1

Source: Adapted from TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...", pp. 8-19.

Note: 1) Prices of cotton for the years 1966/67 and 1967/68 are not available. 2) The value figures shown in the Table have been estimated by using average prices for the crops sold in Asmara.

The cooperatives, the merchants, the exporters and processors were both money lenders to individual farmers and players of a significant role in the marketing system. The Asmara brokers negotiated the sale of crops in Asmara. They were the market intelligence men. They performed the important function of bringing the farmers, merchants, exporters and processors together in the market place. Another important participant in the system was the Grain Board (GB), a government regulatory agency that was responsible for the quality of Ethiopian grain exports.<sup>22</sup>

Another government institution, the Grain Corporation (GC), had the primary objective of

<sup>21</sup>TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...", pp. 19-20.

<sup>22</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource...", p. 137.

stabilizing market prices. Its function was to buy and sell in the market place so as to have a stabilizing effect on the market price. It was also authorized by the government to export, import and store commodities when necessary.<sup>23</sup>

#### 6.4.1 MARKETING CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPORT

##### 6.4.1.1 SESAME

Until it got to Asmara the marketing of sesame followed the same channels as sorghum and cotton. After the arrangement of sale by the broker in Asmara, sesame moved to the exporter's warehouse. In the warehouse it was inspected for cleanliness and classified by type as "white" or "mixed" (red and white) before the sale was finalized. Cleaning at the farm involved the removal of impurities that usually reached about three percent of the volume, leaving the exportable product 97 to 98 percent clean seed. The exporter then re-bagged and assembled shipments according to his export contracts. The railway transported the majority of the exportable items from Asmara to Massawa. Fumigation for pests and surveillance of the shipment were the responsibilities of the exporter if it was required by the sale contract. The importer took out insurance on the shipment when sesame was shipped from Massawa. An exporter paid from 7 to 9 dollars per quintal in the course of his export transaction depending on optional costs as surveillance, fumigation, etc.<sup>24</sup>

The principal crop, sesame, provided a solid economic foundation for the development of the Sätit-Humära areas. According to the Humära Agricultural Development Project Report, world

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>24</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...", pp. 24-25. (Note: in the imperial period official sources often said "dollars" rather than *birr* but meaning the Ethiopian currency. They also used the \$ sign.)

production and exports of sesame declined in the pre-World War II period. The source does not indicate what is meant by the pre-World War II period but I suspect that the decline was in the 1930s depression years and perhaps earlier. As is well known, prices of agricultural commodities on the world market were declining from about the end of 1925 to 1929 and then collapsed in the early 1930s, though some collapsed more than others (e.g wheat, coffee, sugar, corn).<sup>25</sup> In the years immediately after World War II, total sesame world exports were less than 100,000 tons. For the years 1959-61, average world exports of sesame were 140,679 tons. Then world export of sesame rose by about 5 per cent per year. Thus for the years 1968-70 exports reached 201,974 tons. During that period world production was also increasing at the rate of 2.4 per cent per year. As a result of this, at the turn of the decade world production was about 2 million tons. The price of sesame had also been rising during this period. Production and exports expanded. This was much to the benefit of Ethiopian foreign exchange earnings.<sup>26</sup>

According to Dessalegn Rahmato,

*At the end of the 1950s, Ethiopia was the fourth largest exporter of sesame in the world. With a total export of 10,000 metric tons, she stood behind-the league leader-Nigeria, and Tanzania. A decade later, she had overtaken all but the Sudan, and lay second in the league table thanks mainly to Setit Humera. Ethiopia exported in 1970, 40,000 metric tons, which enabled her to capture 20% of the world market in this crop; two years later, exports increased to 52,000 metric tons, and the country's share of the world market to 25%. Many planners and experts forecasted then that the country would successfully corner one-third of the world market in sesame by the latter half of the 1970s, and the major force in this expansion was expected to be Setit Humera which already supplied 75% of the total export.<sup>27</sup>*

<sup>25</sup> Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression 1929-1939*, (Harmondsworth: Perguin, 1987), pp. 70-94 "The Agricultural Depression".

<sup>26</sup> TAMS, "The Humara Report: Resource ...", p. 141.

<sup>27</sup> Dessalegn Rahmato, "Moral Crusaders ...", p. 81

Ethiopia's growing production and export of sesame played an important role in the world market. In the 1970s, the Humära (including its surrounding areas) sesame production accounted for 60 to 70 per cent of Ethiopian exports of sesame. This brought Ethiopia to second place among the world sesame exporters. From 1959-61 average Ethiopian sesame exports were valued at US \$ 1.5 million while exports from the Sudan earned US \$ 11 million. In 1968-70 average Ethiopian sesame export was US \$ 6.9 million compared to Sudanese sesame exports of US \$ 20 million. In 1972, Ethiopian sesame export was 54 thousand tons. This was valued at US \$ 16.1 million.<sup>28</sup> Clapham also commented on sesame and coffee export. According to him, sesame could be compared with coffee. Coffee consistently accounted for over 50 percent of Ethiopia's exports. Ethiopia, therefore, largely depended on a single export crop.<sup>29</sup> Sesame is an oil seed. In Ethiopia sesame was grown in the Humära area and surrounding lowlands. The Humära area was one of the boom areas of commercial agriculture in the pre-1974 Ethiopian Revolution period. Export of sesame in 1967 was 19, 800 tons. Export of sesame in 1974 was 84, 600 tons. The net export earning for Ethiopian sesame in the latter year was some 38 million US dollars. This made Ethiopia the second largest sesame exporter in the world though considerably below the production and export of Sudan.<sup>30</sup> The Humära area sesame production played the greatest role for the dramatic growth of Ethiopian export in the world market. This is illustrated in the following Table.

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<sup>28</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft...", p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 184-185. Though sesame export was enormous, Clapham's data of 1974 seem perhaps exaggerated.

Table 21: Ethiopian Sesame Exports and Humära Area's Contribution, 1967-1972

Year	Value <sup>1</sup> (millions of Birr)	Quantity('000 tons)	Humära Area Shipments('000 tons)	Humära as % of Total
1967/68	11.4	19.8	13.4	68
1968/69	14.0	27.0	20.7	77
1969/70	15.6	30.7	22.0	72
1970/71	23.3	40.0	26.8	67
1971/72	24.1	36.1	22.5	62
1972/73	37.0 <sup>2</sup>	54.0	37.9	70
Six years total	125.4	207.6	143.3	69%

1) Value figures are free on board (FOB) Ethiopia; 2) Value data for 1972 was not available. The figure reported was estimated by using an average price of US\$ per ton FOB, Ethiopia (Birr 678)

Source: Adapted from TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p.143

The major Ethiopian sesame seed importers were Japan, Italy and the USA. Sesame was used in three principal forms: whole, crushed and whole ground. Countries like the United States, Poland and Portugal used sesame in its whole form in bakery goods, confectionaries and other snack foods. In countries like Italy, Greece and Belgium, the sesame seed was a specialized source of oil. Japan and Russia also used the sesame seed in its whole form as a source of oil. One use that accounted for a large part of world sesame consumption was *tahina*. The *tahina* use first originated in the Middle East and then spread worldwide. *Tahina*, a Middle East savoury spread, was prepared by crushing and grinding the whole sesame seed. The oleaginous paste was prepared by crushing and grinding the whole sesame seed. The oleaginous paste that was produced was the basis for many

other types of sesame- flavored foods such as halva, a Middle East sweet composed of sesame seed mixed with honey. It was also consumed directly with breads and salad.<sup>31</sup>

There was a misconception about the use of the Ethiopian sesame. Some said that the Ethiopian sesame was used only in bakery and confectionary products. But this was not so. Japan, the most important importer of Ethiopian sesame, used its sesame imports for oil production. Italy and Greece also used Ethiopian sesame for oil. Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and others used it in the production of *tahina*. It was true that the Ethiopian whitish sesame was used in its whole form, but it would be a mistake to assume that the Ethiopian export market was limited to this use.<sup>32</sup>

About 500 tons of sesame was processed into oil for domestic use annually by two small sesame mills, one in Humära and the other in Om Hajär. The remaining sesame product was shipped to Asmara for export abroad.<sup>33</sup>

#### 6.4.1.2 SORGHUM

Sorghum was a staple grain in parts of the north in Ethiopia's agrarian economy. The sorghum market was extremely fragmented and its flow is very difficult to trace. Of the three principal crops that grew in the Humära areas, the amount of production of sorghum is difficult to estimate. There were numerous sorghum producers both large and small.

*One approximation which can be attempted is an estimate of total consumption. Based on population and per capita consumption figures, it is safe to say that about 20,000 tons of sorghum must have been consumed annually in recent years. The*

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<sup>31</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...," p. 143.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>33</sup> Atakilt, p. 113.

*estimate is, of course, subject to a significant margin of error due to the great ebb and flow of transient labor each year.*<sup>34</sup>

The Humära market was important in meeting the demand of local consumption. In the sorghum market, the merchants were the most important marketing agents. There were three principal varieties of sorghum in the market. These were *Safra* (preferred yield), *Debra* and *Wad Akar*. Each had its own price based on taste preference.<sup>35</sup> For example in March, 1972 prices for each variety were as follows.

Table 22: Prices for the three varieties of sorghum in *Birr* per quintal (March 1972)

Ro. No	Sorghum Varieties	Price Per 100 kg. ( <i>Birr</i> )	
		Humära	Asmara
1	Safra (Preferred type)	10-11	16-17
2	Debra	9-10	14-15
3	Wad Akar (highest yield)	7-8	12-13

Source: TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft ...," p. 31.

Taste preferences and transportation costs effectively limited the market area to the then northern provinces of Ethiopia namely Eritrea, Begemidir and Simien and Tigray.<sup>36</sup>

There were price fluctuations in sorghum. For example, in 1968, the annual average price for sorghum in Asmara fell to *Birr* 12.79 per quintal. In 1970, just two seasons later, the average price rose to *Birr* 26.34 per quintal. This was the highest price since 1960. On the other hand, the average price for 1960 to 1971 was about *Birr* 17 for all varieties. Prices were also slightly below this long run average in 1972. The problems that affected the market for sorghum and the

<sup>34</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...," P. 145.

<sup>35</sup> TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft...", p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: Resource ...", p. 145.

farmer's potential return were the seasonal price fluctuations. Prices were lowest at harvest time. The farmer sold all his sorghum products at that particular time because he needed the cash and also he did not have locally available storage facilities. During the rainy season, the price of sorghum in Humära climbed above the Asmara price. This was because only very few merchants had held stocks for the rainy season. When the farmer's own stock became low, the farmer himself was forced to buy from the merchants at that greater price increase. This could clearly show that many of the farmers sold their sorghum product when the market was low and bought it again when the market was high.<sup>37</sup>

Sorghum was not processed until it reached the final consumer. After it reached the final consumer, the housewife cleaned it herself and then ground it at the local mill to make *injara*<sup>38</sup> (the Ethiopian local bread).

#### 6.4.1.3 COTTON

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Humära report, most cotton that was produced in Ethiopia came from irrigated areas. The Acala with staple lengths of around 1<sup>1/16</sup> inches was good quality cotton. The shorter staple cotton was the type of cotton that grew in the rain-fed areas like Humära. The production of cotton from Humära was small. The spinning mills were, therefore, using mostly longer staples irrigated cotton. Since the combined production of rain-fed and irrigated cotton was insufficient to cover the needs of the spinning mills, the country was forced to import some short stapled and lower quality cotton.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>38</sup> TAMS, "Humara Agricultural Development Project, Draft...", p. 32.

<sup>39</sup> TAMS, "The Humara Report: Resource ...", p. 146.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>38</sup> TAMS, "Humara Agricultural Development Project, Draft...", p. 32.

<sup>39</sup> TAMS, "The Humara Report: Resource ...", p. 146.

The Imperial Ethiopian Government Awash Valley Authority in its letter to the Ministry of Agriculture on *Nähase* 29, 1962 E.C (September 4, 1970) complained that cotton companies in Ethiopia had decided to import cotton from outside without the knowledge of cotton producers and without knowing the amount of cotton production of Ethiopia in the year 1971. According to the Authority, the cotton companies should have opened discussions with the cotton producing farmers and the Ministry of Trade beforehand before importing cotton. This had been the tradition in recent years. But such understanding was violated repeatedly by the cotton companies. The Awash Valley Authority argued that it was intentionally done in order to reduce the price of cotton that was produced locally by importing a low quality of cotton and finally mixing it with the Ethiopian cotton which, according to the Awash Valley Authority, was the best in quality. The Awash Valley Authority also complained that the cultivated land of the cotton producing farmers in Eritrea, Sätit-Humära and Assayta was small and scattered and at the same time the quality was poor due to lack of control. The Authority recalled that there had been problems between cotton producing farmers and cotton factories in the previous years. In order to avoid such problems, the Awash Valley Authority believed in reaching a common understanding and a permanent solution, otherwise the cotton producing farmers would divert production to other crops and that would have a devastating effect on the country's cotton production.<sup>40</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, Ethiopia's domestic production of cotton was in fact close to the level of domestic consumption. For example, in 1971-72, Ethiopia produced about 24,000 tons of lint cotton that is, raw cotton fibre. In 1972-73, the production was estimated at about 26,000-27,000

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<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

tons.<sup>41</sup> The sources of supply that composed the total cotton available in Ethiopia are outlined in the following Table.

Table 23: Cotton Availability (Lint basis) in Metric Tons (66/67-71/72)

Sources of Production	Years					
	66/67	67/68	68/69	69/70	70/71	71/72
Humera areas	2,638	3,131	4,379	4,054	1,157	1,234
Other areas	5,992	n/a	n/a	11,645	18,138	22,667
Total Production	8,630	n/a	n/a	15,699	19,295	23,901
Imports	4,455	4,233	5,684	2,961	4,022	1,936
Total Availability (local and imported)	13,085	n/a	n/a	18,660	23,317	25,837

Source: TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft...", p. 34. (Note 1: No explanation is given in the source for the big drop in Humera cotton 1970-72 but in my opinion it was because farmers found sesame more profitable.)

Note 2: n/a: not available

The Table revealed how quickly Ethiopia was moving towards self-sufficiency in cotton. About 85 to 90 percent of the cotton produced in Ethiopia was from irrigated plantations, mainly from the Awash valley. The principal rain-fed cotton producing areas were areas like Sätit- Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma. The staple lengths from these rain-fed areas were shorter, generally about 1 inch.<sup>42</sup> Some modern ginneries for removing seeds from the raw cotton had been established in Asmara, Tändaho, Gondar and other places.<sup>43</sup>

#### 6.4.1.3.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND LAST DAYS OF THE COTTON GINNING AND PROCESSING FACTORIES IN GONDAR

In early days the Sätit-Humära farmers used to sell their cotton products to the Sulmat Company in Asmara. In 1970, a small cotton ginning factory was established at Dära Gända (Amba Jinni).

<sup>41</sup>TAMS, "Humera Agricultural Development Project, Draft...", p. 33.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>43</sup>Negat, p. 77.

(Amba Jinni is derived from the Jenyu Italia Road Construction company at Dära Gända).<sup>44</sup> Thus, the Humära cotton producing farmers became its major suppliers. *Ato Täyä Bälay* was the owner of this small cotton ginning factory. He invested *Birr* 24,000 to open the cotton ginning factory. According to Solomon Addis, the production capacity of the plant “was 30 quintals a day with a labour input of 30 employees”.<sup>45</sup>

The Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Ltd. was established in 1969. Its establishment as a cooperative enabled it to secure loans from AIDB. With such encouragement, it decided to have its own ginning plant in Gondar. An estimated *Birr* 300,000 was needed to open the plant. 30,000 shares were raised. The value of each share was *Birr* 10. A three-man committee was nominated under the chairmanship of the mayor of the city of Gondar to facilitate the sale of shares. The Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Cooperatives held 4,000 of the shares. *Signor* Salvatore Reza, the owner of the Awakut Cotton Ginning Factory of Addis Ababa, bought 13,000 shares. The various *edirs* (communal self-help organizations) of the city of Gondar and other individuals bought 3,700 shares. It was decided to sell the remaining 1,190 shares in Addis Ababa.<sup>46</sup>

Maraki / Samuna bar (Maraki Soap) area was selected as a site. However, this site was rejected by the authorities in the city of Gondar. The officials said that the site had already been chosen for the future construction of a university. The committee and the shareholders chose another site at Lidäta. Lidata is a parish which is located between Chä-chä-la and Samuna bar.<sup>47</sup> They bought

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<sup>44</sup> Informant Birhanu.

<sup>45</sup> Solomon, p. 240.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240. According to Birhanu Asres, one of the founders and shareholders of the Gondar Cotton Ginning and Processing factory, Awakut Cotton Ginning and Processing Factory was in Addis Ababa not in Asmara as Solomon p. 240 says.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

29,756 m<sup>2</sup> of land from a certain merchant, *Grazmach* Wändimagäñ Yimär. The factory began production towards the end of 1971 with 250 permanent employees. The first General Manager of the factory was *Ato* Getahun Assäge and members of the first Board of Directors were *Signor* Salvatore Reza, Mr Umar, *Ato* Birhanu Asräs and *Ato* Azanaw Alämé.<sup>48</sup> The founding members and owners of the factory who were major shareholders along with other shareholders were

1. *Signor* Salvatore Reza
2. Kärjamiz Farmers Association
3. *Ato* Birhanu Asres
4. Haji Mohammed Wondim
5. Haji Yäsuf Ahmääd
6. Lieutenant Colonel Molaligñ Bälay
7. *Ato* Yirga Dästa
8. *Ato* Agbaw Wubinäh
9. *Ato* Bälay Bizunäh
10. Saba Sewing Machine Company owners
11. *Ato* Dagñäw Mäkonän
12. *Ato* Däräje Alämu
13. *Ato* Fiseha Mäkonän
14. *Woizäro* Abäkyäläsh Yimär
15. Walqait-Säti-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society<sup>49</sup>

*One clear consequence of the organization of the farmers (Wälqait Sätit-Humära) into [a] cooperative society and their possession of a cotton ginning and processing plant was the fatal blow they dealt to Ato Tayä. Since the cooperative's factory came into existence, almost all raw cotton was channeled to it thereby draining Tayä's source [of cotton]. Moreover, Bahr Dar Textiles refused to purchase Tayä's produce. Even if it sometimes did, it was at lower prices.<sup>50</sup>*

The new Cotton Ginning and Processing Factory bought cotton mainly from the cooperative farmers of Humära, Mättäma and Abdärafī. According to Solomon,

*The manner of transaction between the factory and the farmers was that the latter would inform the management the amount of*

<sup>48</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለጾራ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 133, File No. 5-9 ስለመስርያቡ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, (A report from the Chairman of History Study Committee of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, *Hidar* 25, 1976 E.C ), p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለጾራ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርያቡ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, ("A report from the Chairman ..."), p. 1

<sup>50</sup> Solomon, p. 241

raw cotton they produced. Then the enterprise would send heavy trucks, usually around 40, to Matammä-Humarā areas.

The farmers often sold their harvest on loan basis, i.e., the factory paid them after it sold the processed cotton. At times, however, the cotton may not be sold instantly. Thus, the management would look for a loan from banks by offering the processed cotton as collateral.

The major customers of the Gondar ginning plant were the Bahr Dār Textile [factory] which bought about 1000 quintals of processed cotton monthly. The others were the Ethiofil textile and national oil industries of Asmarā. The latter was mainly interested in buying cotton-seeds.<sup>51</sup>

After Ato Getahun, Ato Bāzabih Gäbre, Ato Fitayä Assägu, Ato Solomon Jiraf and Ato Mulugeta Färädä served the plant as General Managers.<sup>52</sup>

In the course of time, the factory faced some problems. One of the problems was that the factory had 8,000 kg. of unsold processed cotton. Without selling this processed cotton the factory was unable to repay its bank loans. Also *Signor* Salvatore Reza, one of the major shareholders and a board member, sold the Awakut Cotton Ginning Factory to Bahir Dar Textile Factory. According to the majority of the founding members this act was undermining their own enterprise that cost the Gondar cotton enterprise a loss. *Signor* Salvatore Reza was persuaded to sell out his share, which the Mättäma Mahbärä Selassie Farmers Cooperative bought.<sup>53</sup> Additional shares were also sold to strengthen the economic potential of the factory. Finally the capital of the factory was raised from *Birr* 300,000 to *Birr* 450,000.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Archive of Public Enterprises Trustee Board, የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለደራ ጦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 133, File No. 5-9 ስለመስርያቡቱ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, (A report from the Chairman ...), p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Solomon, p. 250.

<sup>54</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprise Trustee Board, Folder አጣ-ጠ 2- ጥጥ ማዳመጫ, የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለደራ ጦርድ: "Pre and Post Nationalization of the Gondar Ginning and Processing Factory," *Hamle* 8, 1970 E.C, p. 1.

In the first two years of 1972 and 1973, the factory got profits and paid *Birr* 32.60 and *Birr* 46.20 respectively to shareholders.<sup>55</sup>

When the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution broke out most of the cooperative farmers fled to Sudan with their own tractors, trucks and vehicles or joined the EDU. The Gondar area also became a battleground between the *Därg*, EDU and EPRP. According to the audit report, the factory faced a deficit of *Birr* 1,118, 056. This included the still outstanding AIDB loan of *Birr* 114,000.<sup>56</sup> The Gondar Cotton Ginning and Processing factory that had been collecting 70,000-80,000 quintals of cotton yearly from the farmers' cooperative lacked raw cotton . Finally its whole activity collapsed in about 1979. The factory had been nationalized by the *Därg* in 1977.<sup>57</sup> Seven among the factory workers left for Sudan. The *Därg* killed four workers in the Red Terror accusing them of being EPRP members or supporters of EPRP.<sup>58</sup>

The factory that had profited 47.26% on its initial capital at its initial stage of development totally collapsed in or soon after 1979. The factory's income from 1974-1978 was *Birr* 15, 637, 501. This is seen in the following Table.

Table24: Gondar Cotton Ginning Factory's income in *Birr* (1974-1978)

	Years				
	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
<i>Birr</i>	5,393,610	2, 063, 408	3,259,147	3,138,386	1,782,950

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

<sup>57</sup> Informants: Sisay, Kinde, Sergeant Assafa, and Hailä Mariam.

<sup>58</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለደራ ቦርድ-ጎጂ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርያቡ፣ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, ("A report from the Chairman ..."), p. 2.

Source: Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለጊዜ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርዖቡ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, (“A report from the Chairman ...”), p. 9

Note: When the tractor farmers left for the Sudan or joined the EDU in 1977 much cotton was left in the fields. The *Därg* then mobilized labour, even bringing some from Wallo (many of whom died) to collect the cotton in the fields. The cotton was then given to the Gondar cotton ginning factory which explains why the factory was still getting income, though reduced, in 1978 (see A “report from the Chairman of History Study Committee of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board to Gondar Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE)”, *Hidar* 25, 1976 E.C), p. 1

Until the 1960s, the Humära cotton market had been monopolized by the Barattolo Cotton Mill in Asmara. But after the improvement of the Gondar-Humära road, Humära cotton was sold in Gondar and other places. It was also hoped that the improvement of transport facilities would enable the cotton to reach Bahr Dar textile centre.<sup>59</sup> When we look at the comparative prices of cotton lint (*Birr*/kilogram), the average domestic price given to farmers for the years 1968-1972 was *Birr* 1.78.<sup>60</sup>

A summary of transport and handling charges for the three crops and the effect of such charges taken together with production costs on profit margins in 1967 are given in the following Table.

Table 25: A Summary of Transport and Handling Costs for the Three Crops and the Net Profit (*Birr*/qu), 1967 (before the construction of the Tākazé Bridge)

Costs	Sorghum	Sesame	Cotton
Sacking	1.55	1.55	0.70
Local transport (Farm-Humera), average of 35 kms.	0.35	0.35	0.35
Tākaze River Crossing	0.35	1.00	1.00
Transport cost from Humära to Asmara	3.50	4.00	4.50
Labour	0.25	0.25	0.20
Total costs	6.00	7.15	6.75
Production costs	6.50	32.00	53.00
Total costs	12.50	39.15	59.75

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>60</sup> TAMS, “The Humara Report: Resource ...”, 148.

Prices in Asmara	14.00	47.00	62.00
Net profit	1.50	7.85	2.25

Source: My calculations are based on IEG, Ministry of Agriculture, Institute of Agricultural Research, "Report of the Survey Mission...", p.39 Note: The Takaze crossing cost was less for sorghum because sorghum was lighter.

#### 6.4.1.4 THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TÄKAZÉ BRIDGE, 1972: AN OUTLET TO ASMARA

This outlet from Humära helped Abdärafī and Mättäma farmers because these farmers brought their crops to Humära. The principal outlet from Humära to Asmara was the Täkäze-Om Hajär-Tässänäy road.<sup>61</sup> The River Täkäze was often totally impassable during the rainy season. Communication between Begemeder and Simien and Eritrea and between Begemeder and Simien and Tigray was therefore severed.<sup>62</sup> This was because the steel bridge over the Täkäze River that the Italians had started to build had not been completed.<sup>63</sup> During the rainy season, the Täkäze River rose and usually took away a number of tractors, Land Rovers and trucks in addition to human lives and property in attempts to cross it.<sup>64</sup> Passengers used boats to cross the Täkäze River. The usual transportation cost per passenger was *Birr* 0.50. When the river rose up the transportation cost was *Birr* 1. A Land Rover was transported for *Birr* 70. During the peak labour period up to 600 people crossed the river daily using boats. There was no security for life at all. For instance, in 1968, 32 people were drowned when a boat capsized<sup>65</sup>. Camels crossed the Täkäze River except during high water in the months of July, August and September. The transportation per passenger was *Birr* 0.50 and *Birr* 0.50-1.00 per quintal for sesame and sorghum. A camel could carry two quintals at once. Camels carried goods and passengers both ways at about the same price. Trucks could only cross the river in the dry season, usually from

<sup>61</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Humera Agricultural Development Project (HADP), Appendices" (1974), p. 337.

<sup>62</sup>Richard Pankhurst, "Transport and Communications in Ethiopia, 1835-1935" in *Journal of Transport History*, Volume 5, Number 2 (1961), p. 166.

<sup>63</sup>*Addis Zämän*, *Tahsas* 2, 1961 E.C, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup>*Addis Zämän*, *Mägabit* 1, 1963 E.C, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup>Carl Miller, James Sartor, James Mackin, and others, "Agricultural Survey Diary for Three Study Areas in Ethiopia: Middle Awash, Debre Zeit-Nazareth and Humera Setit" (Stanford Research Institute: Menlo Park California, April 1968), p. 273.

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<sup>61</sup>TAMS, "The Humera Report: Humera Agricultural Development Project (HADP), Appendices" (1974), p. 337.

<sup>62</sup>Richard Pankhurst, "Transport and Communications in Ethiopia, 1835-1935" in *Journal of Transport History*, Volume 5, Number 2 (1961), p. 166.

<sup>63</sup>*Addis Zämän*, *Tahsas* 2, 1961 E.C, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup>*Addis Zämän*, *Mägabit* 1, 1963 E.C, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup>Carl Miller, James Sartor, James Mackin, and others, "Agricultural Survey Diary for Three Study Areas in Ethiopia: Middle Awash, Debre Zeit-Nazareth and Humera Setit" (Stanford Research Institute: Menlo Park California, April 1968), p. 273.

the end of January to May. At this time, tractors were needed to assist the trucks in crossing the river. Tractors crossed the river with trailers from the end of January to May. They hauled different goods from the different farm sites to the town of Humära and from Humära to the different farm sites. The tractors usually traveled 30-40 kilometers from Humära and charged *Birr* 0.25 per quintal from farms to Humära. Land Rovers rarely crossed the Täkäze River. Swimmers were able to float 50 gallon drums across the river for *Birr* 0.50 per drum (1 gallon= 4.5435 liters in Britain and 3.785 in the USA). According to estimates, during the rainy season, 20,000-30,000 people crossed the Täkäze River.<sup>66</sup>

Emperor Haile Selassie flew from Asmara to Wägära *Awraja* and then to Humära *Warada* by helicopter on 11 January 1967. He was received by Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigäzu, the General-Governor of Begemidir and Simien and by *Däjazmatčh* Adanä Mäkonän, the governor of Wägära *Awraja* and by the people of Sätit-Humära with great honour. He saw and observed the agricultural economic activity of the area. He also listened to the explanations of the two government officials about the economic potentiality of the area and its problems. The farmers and the town dwellers also raised questions with the emperor and appealed to him for solutions to their pressing problems. In order to solve the problem of the Täkäze River the emperor formally ordered the Ministry of Public Works and Communication to deal with the construction of a bridge over the Täkäze River.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>67</sup>*Addis Zämän, Tir* 3, 1959 E.C, p. 5.

Photograph 29: The Tākāzé Bridge, Reconstructed in 1972<sup>7</sup>



Source: TAMS, “The Humera Report: Resource ...”, p. 200.

The Tākāzé River Bridge Construction Project Contract was signed on June 24, 1969 between the Imperial Highway Authority (IHA) and Dr. Engineer Aniello Raffane, an Italian. The construction period was agreed to be 365 calendar days starting 30 days from the date specified in the contract. The contract amount was *Birr* 402, 426. 48. The work to be covered in this contract was the construction of a new reinforced concrete deck steel girder bridge over the Tākāzé River, using the existing Italian piers and abutments. According to the notice, work should have started on October 1, 1969, but due to high flooding and due to the sudden illness of the contractor after he had been to the site in November, construction was delayed.<sup>68</sup>

The Tākāzé bridge construction was the first bridge construction in the work program of the IHA. It had the capacity of carrying a weight of more than ten tons (1 ton= 1000 kilograms). On each side of the bridge there were two footpaths. Each of the footpaths was 60 centimeters wide.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup>Imperial Highway Authority, “Quarterly Progress Report”, October 8, 1969-January 7, 1970, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup>*Addis Zāmān*, *Mägabit* 1, 1963 E.C, p. 3.

The Tākāzé Bridge was the longest bridge in Ethiopian bridge construction of that time. It was 232 meters long and 3.50 meters wide. The construction of the bridge was completed in August 1972. It became an economic lifeline especially to Eritrea, Tigray and Begemeder and Simien provinces.<sup>70</sup> After completion, according to government estimates, about *Birr* 186, 000 was to be collected every year from tolls for using the bridge.<sup>71</sup> Its construction was covered by a loan from the International Development Association (IDA).<sup>72</sup>

During the Italian period, Humära, Om Hajär, and Tässänäy were connected by a gravel road.<sup>73</sup> This road was still available in the imperial period so that after crossing the Tākāzé Bridge near Humära, Om Hajär was reached after 7 kilometers.<sup>74</sup>

The 95 kilometers long road from Om Hajär to Tässänäy was a rudimentary dry-weather road. It was passable by trucks, buses and Land Rovers only in the dry season from October to May. Tractors operated for a longer period but in June-September there was no traffic at all. Buses started in October.<sup>75</sup> From Tässänäy to Asmara (359 kms) there was already a first class standard road.<sup>76</sup>

The construction of a bridge across the Tākāzé River was very important for different reasons. It enabled free movement without any delay. Trucks and buses started to come from Asmara to Humära daily. Production moved to Asmara on time. Labourers also started to come to Humära on time. This prevented the shortage of labour that had been the case especially during the rainy

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<sup>70</sup> *Addis Zämän, Mäskäräm* 28, 1964 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> *Addis Zämän, Ginbot* 20, 1962 E.C, p.1.

<sup>72</sup> IEG, Ministry of Agriculture, "Major Activities in 1961 E.C and Current Status of Activities of the Ministry of Agriculture. Planning Manual" (Addis Ababa, December 1969), p. 40.

<sup>73</sup> Fitaye, "the Traditional Usage...", p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> TAMS, "The Humera Report: HADP, Appendices", p. 337.

<sup>75</sup> Miller and Others, p. 274; IEG, Ministry of Agriculture IAR, "Report of the Survey Mission...", p. 13.

<sup>76</sup> Fitaye "Traditional Usage...", p. 1.

season. The construction of the bridge also saved the farmers river crossing costs and additional labour costs for loading and unloading at the banks of the river.<sup>77</sup> All these improvements had their own positive impact on the net profit of the farmers. "Possible savings per quintal from a bridge would be of the order of 45 ¢ for sorghum, \$ 1.25 for sesame and cotton. A total charge of 20 ¢ a quintal (\$ per 10-ton truck load) would gladly be paid..."<sup>78</sup> After the construction of the bridge the farmers confirmed that their net profit increased. They said that the net profit per quintal, especially from sesame, mounted to *Birr* 10-11. However, the determining factor for the net profit was the market price for the crops and the political stability and peace of the area or lack of stability and peace. The use and economic importance of the bridge came to an end after 1974/75 due to the Eritrean separatist movement. This movement, resulting in blocking the use of the bridge and political disturbances of the area, affected the economy of the Sätit-Humära area farmers and the economy of the country.<sup>79</sup>

#### 6.4.1.5 THE HUMÄRA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER A STATE FARM: 1979/1980-

1980/1981

Though the Humära state farm is outside my study of farmers' cooperatives I thought it useful to show the agricultural activities of the Humära State Farms and their contribution to the national economy under the *Därg* regime. The state farms were producing sesame and sorghum like the farmers' cooperatives and can be compared to production under cooperatives. Moreover, the state farms replaced, or attempted to replace, production in Humära when the the revolution and

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<sup>77</sup>Informants: Sisay, Abära, Kindie, Tibäbu, Mängistu, and Alänä.

<sup>78</sup>Ministry of Agriculture, "Report of the Survey Mission...", p. 42.

<sup>79</sup>Informants: Sergeant Maru, *Basha* Adugña and Colonel Tigabu.

disturbances following the revolution dismantled the cooperatives. In fact the cooperative and the Al Khadra Farms were nationalized by the *Därg* and a state farm became their successor.

The *Därg* defeated the EDU forces in Humära in June 1977 (*Säne* 1969 E.C). Most of the cooperative farmers in Humära fled to Sudan with their own tractors.<sup>80</sup> The State Farms Authority was established in May 1977. In order to make the state farms more productive, the Ministry of State Farm Development was established in May 1979 by proclamation number 179. The Ministry was expected to exert maximum effort to boost production under the Centralized National Plan. The National Economic Campaign was also launched in 1979 with the objective to alleviate shortage of food and other basic commodities and raw materials.<sup>81</sup>

The Ministry of the State Farm Development had eight corporations. One among these corporations was the North-Western Agricultural Development Corporation. This corporation was expected to coordinate and administer state farms that were located in the western Administrative Regions of Wollega, Illubabor, and Keffa and the Northern Administrative Regions of Gojjam and Gondar. The North-Western Agricultural Development Corporation had an Enterprise, a Coordinating Office and a State Farm reporting to it. The Gojjam-Gondar Coordinating Office administered the Birr, Ayähu, Bäläs and Humära State Farms in Gojjam and Gondar Administrative Regions.<sup>82</sup>

The Al Khadra Farm and the Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society farm were nationalized by the *Därg* and were given to the Ministry of State Farm Development.

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<sup>80</sup>Informants: Sisay, Kinde, Sergeant Assafa, and Haila Mariam.

<sup>81</sup>Ministry of State Farm Development, *Its Role, Organization, Present and Future Activities* (Addis Ababa: The Public Relations Service, June 1984), p. 3.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

disturbances following the revolution dismantled the cooperatives. In fact the cooperative and the Al Khadra Farms were nationalized by the *Därg* and a state farm became their successor.

The *Därg* defeated the EDU forces in Humära in June 1977 (*Säne* 1969 E.C). Most of the cooperative farmers in Humära fled to Sudan with their own tractors.<sup>80</sup> The State Farms Authority was established in May 1977. In order to make the state farms more productive, the Ministry of State Farm Development was established in May 1979 by proclamation number 179. The Ministry was expected to exert maximum effort to boost production under the Centralized National Plan. The National Economic Campaign was also launched in 1979 with the objective to alleviate shortage of food and other basic commodities and raw materials.<sup>81</sup>

The Ministry of the State Farm Development had eight corporations. One among these corporations was the North-Western Agricultural Development Corporation. This corporation was expected to coordinate and administer state farms that were located in the western Administrative Regions of Wollega, Illubabor, and Keffa and the Northern Administrative Regions of Gojjam and Gondar. The North-Western Agricultural Development Corporation had an Enterprise, a Coordinating Office and a State Farm reporting to it. The Gojjam-Gondar Coordinating Office administered the Birr, Ayähu, Bäläs and Humära State Farms in Gojjam and Gondar Administrative Regions.<sup>82</sup>

The Al Khadra Farm and the Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society farm were nationalized by the *Därg* and were given to the Ministry of State Farm Development.

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<sup>80</sup>Informants: Sisay, Kinde, Sergeant Assafa, and Haila Mariam.

<sup>81</sup>Ministry of State Farm Development, *Its Role, Organization, Present and Future Activities* (Addis Ababa: The Public Relations Service, June 1984), p. 3.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

About 4,000 members of work forces from Wällo were trained and 1000 of them were sent to Humära in February 1979 to construct temporary shelters for the incoming state farm workers. The remaining 3000 workers were sent in March 1979 to clear the agricultural fields. Then surveyors went to demarcate the different farms. Shelters, offices, clinics, garages and stores were also constructed by the Building Construction Authority. The Water Resource Development Authority on its part also prepared 11 wells to serve the workers by providing water.<sup>83</sup>

Table 26: Humära State Farm cultivated areas for sesame and sorghum in hectares and production in quintals

Type of Work	1979/1980	1980/1981	1981/ 1982
Cultivated land for sesame and sorghum	21,340 ha.	28,165.22 ha.	
Sesame Production	29, 285 qu.	18,728.99 qu.	
Sorghum production	11, 853 qu.	79, 206.69 qu.	Up to March 9, 1982 (Yäkatit 30,74E.C)
Work Force	32, 000		

Source: Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለገራ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርያብቱ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, “A Report from the Chairman ...” p. 8. Note: 1) Cotton growing was not practiced. 2) Data was not available for 1981/82.

Table 27: List of Farm Implements that were used in Humära State Farm (1979-1981)

Type of Farm implement	Quantity
Tractors	306
Widelevel discs for ploughing	150
Trailers	99
Harrows	144
Seed broadcasting machines	27
Fertilizer Sprayers	6
Water Tankers	48
Vehicles	31
Weeding Ploughs	29
Ambulances	4
Mobile Garages	2

Source: Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለገራ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርያብቱ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, (“A Report from the Chairman ...”), p. 8.

<sup>83</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለገራ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርያብቱ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, (“A Report from the Chairman ...”), p. 8.

As we can see from the Table, there was very large investment on agricultural machinery and therefore obviously labour to use it. However, the result was disappointing due to lack of skilled manpower, lack of real incentives to produce and lack of administrative efficiency. Great numbers of people also died due to lack of a health centre, efficient clinics and adequate food and shelters which were not properly and timely constructed. In the end the state farm in Satit-Humara was a total loss.<sup>84</sup>

After 1982, the attempt of the *Därg* to run Humära as a state farm was abandoned and much of the area came under TPLF control. According to Clapham,

*Export production had slumped from 84,600 tons in 1974 to a mere 3,400 in 1979; the development campaign got it up to 7,400-7,500 tons in 1980-81, and to 16,400 in 1982. After which it collapsed back to the 1979 level, and Ethiopia effectively ceased to be a sesame exporter. The world price of sesame had doubled over the period during which Ethiopian Production was collapsing, and remained at a high level of over \$900 a ton throughout the first half of the 1980s.*<sup>85</sup>

In fact, just when the advance in world sesame price could have benefited the farmer and Ethiopia, the production and export of Ethiopian sesame collapsed. Of course this collapse was probably one of the major factors in the price rise of sesame on the world market as Ethiopia had been a major exporter, as noted above.

The Eritrean separatist movement and the political instability associated with the outbreak and progress of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 caused the collapse of commercial farming in 1974, as will be discussed in chapter 7.

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<sup>84</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለጋራ ቦርድ-ጎጂ መጋዘን Box File No. 222, File No. አጠ-ጠ 2 ጥጥ ማዳመጫ ስለመስርያቡቱ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, (“A Report from the Chairman ...”), p. 88

<sup>85</sup> Clapham, p.185.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### BOUNDARY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE NORTH-WESTERN ETHIOPIAN LOWLANDS, 1950s-1980s

#### INTRODUCTION

The present-day boundary between Ethiopia and the Sudan is principally the result of the 1902 and 1907 Anglo-Ethiopian delimitation treaties. The Gwynn line of 1903 became the source of friction and misunderstanding between Ethiopia and the Sudan and is so up to the present time. The boundary problem between Ethiopia and the Sudan and the political problems inside Ethiopia especially after the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution greatly affected the development of modern agriculture in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi, Mättäma and other lowland areas in north-west Ethiopia. This chapter explores the historical background of the boundary and internal political problems and shows how the boundary problem and internal political problems adversely affected agriculture in the area of my dissertation. Since boundary problems with the Sudan affected agriculture in the area of my dissertation, it seems necessary to begin with an overview of what these were and their origin.

#### 7.1 BOUNDARY PROBLEM WITH THE SUDAN AND ITS EFFECT ON AGRICULTURE

Ethiopia and states preceding colonial and then independent Sudan and sharing a long, poorly demarcated boundary of 1600 kilometers experienced both cooperation and conflict throughout history.<sup>1</sup> According to Regassa, the Ethiopian government after 1941 wanted brotherly relations with the Sudanese,

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<sup>1</sup>Regassa Bayissa, *War and Peace in the Sudan and its Impact on Ethiopia: The Case of Gambella (1955-2008)* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2010), p.62.

*According to a letter sent to Illubabor provincial Administration by the Director of the Public Security Headquarters, the 1944 proclamation No. 57 which was concerned with the registration and regulations of foreigners in Ethiopia were not to be applied to the Sudanese as long as the Sudanese in Ethiopia do not do harm to the public, interfere in the politics of the country, disturb the security, and pay tax to the government of Ethiopia. Thus, the Sudanese were granted especial status, which inaugurated new friendly relations with the newly independent Sudan.<sup>2</sup>*

During the *Zämänä Mäsafint* (Era of the Princes 1769-1855) most of the areas between Gallabat and Gedarif belonged to Ethiopia. The Chilga-Mättäma-Gedarif trade route was a great economic advantage for Ethiopia. The Scottish traveler, James Bruce, who visited the court of *Ras Mikael Sihul*, was appointed *wäräda* administrator of Ras el Feel which was located at the frontier eventhough he did not live there. At that period of time it was a common practice to appoint foreigners at the Customs offices of border lines. In addition to the tribute that was collected in kind, 400 *wäqet* (ounces) of gold were also collected annually by the Customs Office of Ras el Feel. Kar Kakamut was the capital of Ras el Feel. After Egypt occupied Sudan in 1821 Ras el Feel fell under the Egyptians and its name was changed to Gallabat.<sup>3</sup>

The situation in the first half of the nineteenth century and later was “an undefined and disturbed boundary”,<sup>4</sup> where “no de jure boundary delimits the respective possessions of Egypt and Ethiopia.”<sup>5</sup> The Egyptians generally pushed forward and Kassa Hailu (later emperor

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Mesfin Woldemariam, Worku Tefera, Tadesse Tamrat, Merid Wolde Aregay and others, “Yä Ethiopiana Sudan Wosen Tarik” *Kise 1 Tikimt 1975 E.C.*, IES, MS 1872, pp. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1991), p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* (Rubenson quoting G. Douin, *Histoire du règne du Khedive Ismail Tome III* pp. 37-38).

Tewodros) who was “a man of the western frontier”<sup>6</sup> before he became emperor, was defeated at Däbarqi in 1848 fighting the Egyptians on the western frontier.<sup>7</sup> (See Map Appendix xv)

Yohannis IV after his war with Egypt in 1875/76 wanted to regain all of what he regarded as Ethiopian border territories previously lost to Egypt in the 1830s and 1840s, using negotiation with Egypt (See Map Appendix 15). The military victories of Gundet (1875) and Gura (1876) were not rewarding for Ethiopia. The Egyptians remained in control of occupied regions and posts. Yohannis did not want to risk his victory by continuing his attack on the Egyptian troops with an exhausted army. He also wanted to avoid any adverse reaction of European powers to the crisis.<sup>8</sup> Thus he preferred avoiding or postponing further war to pushing his victory to its logical conclusion. Instead, he once again chose to try a peaceful resolution. In 1881 the Mahdist movement broke out in Sudan. The British occupied Egypt in 1882. In the following two or three years the Mahdists attacked and drove out Egyptian troops from occupied regions and encircled them on the Ethio-Sudanese border. Britain sought means to relieve the trapped Egyptian troops. Hence, Britain wanted to sign a peace treaty that would end the Ethio-Egyptian conflict. To this end the Hewett Treaty (also known as Adwa Treaty) was signed on 3 June 1884. It concluded the Ethio-Egyptian conflict through British diplomatic intervention.<sup>9</sup>

By the 3<sup>rd</sup> article of the treaty Ethiopia promised to facilitate the evacuation of the Egyptian army from its encircled position in eastern Sudan, through military help against the Mahdists. The treaty promised Ethiopia the restoration of Bogos (capital Keren, which is now in Eritrea) and giving Ethiopia a sea port as a sea outlet. In fulfillment of the terms of the Hewett Treaty,

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<sup>6</sup> Rubenson, p. 208.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140, p. 206.

<sup>8</sup> Bahru, *History of Modern Ethiopia...*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>9</sup> Rubenson, pp. 352-354.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140, p. 206.

<sup>8</sup> Bahru, *History of Modern Ethiopia...*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>9</sup> Rubenson, pp. 352-354.

Yohannis ordered his military general, *Ras Alula*, to rescue the Egyptian army trapped in the Sudan. *Ras Alula* accomplished his mission fighting with the Mahdist troops at the battle of Kufit in 23 September 1885.<sup>10</sup> Bogos was returned to Ethiopia, but Massawa was handed to Italy. The Italians, the watchdogs of the British, occupied Massawa on 5 February 1885.<sup>11</sup> So “as a result of the dishonesty of British diplomacy, he [Yohannis] turned out to have traded one weak enemy for two strong ones, the Mahdist state and Italy.” (See Map Appendix xvi)<sup>12</sup>

Sudan was conquered by a combined British and Egyptian force between 1896-1898 and became the ‘Anglo-Egyptian Condominium’.<sup>13</sup> Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Sudanese colonial authorities and the British Foreign Office were concerned with the delimitation of the Sudan’s eastern and south-eastern boundary with Ethiopia.<sup>14</sup> On 10 April 1891 (*Miazia* 14, 1883 E.C), Emperor Menelik II sent a circular letter to the European powers. In his circular letter Menelik defined what he considered the borders of Ethiopia to be.<sup>15</sup> According to Marcus, the western border that was claimed by Menelik

*followed a line which starts from Arafale on the sea, the Italian border, stretches across the plain of Jegra toward the west, and extends to Mahio, Halai, Digsu, and up to Gura Adibaro. Starting from Adibaro, it extends to the meeting point between the Mereb and Arated River and then extends farther south to the meeting point between the Rivers Atbara and Setit where is the town of Tomat [where the town of Tomat is] From Tomat, the boundary includes the province*

<sup>10</sup> Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia...*, p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>12</sup> Rubenson, p. 362.

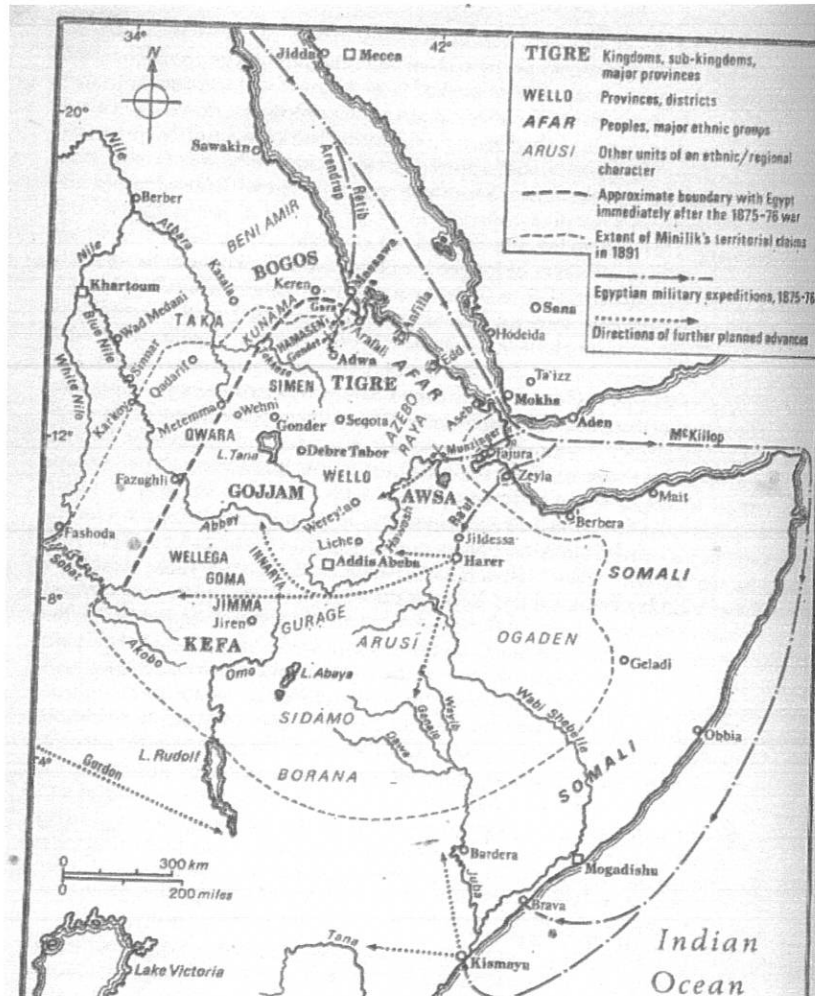
<sup>13</sup> Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia...*, p. 82.

<sup>14</sup> Bahru Zewde, “Relations between Ethiopia and the Sudan on the Western Ethiopian Border 1898-1935” (PhD Thesis University of London, 1976), p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Harold Marcus, “Ethio-British Negotiation Concerning the Western Border with Sudan, 1896-1902” in *Journal of African History*, Volume IV, No. 1 (1963), p. 82.

of Gedaref and extends to the meeting point between the White Nile and Sobat Rivers....<sup>16</sup> (See Map 2)

Map 4: Menelik's definition of Ethiopian territory in 1891



Source: Rubenson, p. 316.

The interest of Menelik was to restore what he called the ancient boundaries of Ethiopia up to Khartoum and Lake Nyanza. He believed that the westernmost limit of his empire was the White Nile-Sobat junction.<sup>17</sup> He made his largest claims probably as a future negotiating ploy

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> Bahru Zewde, "Relations Between Ethiopia and the Sudan ...", p. 66.

since as Rubenson comments he “showed little restraint when he drew the frontier in the west, south and east.”<sup>18</sup>

Following the victory of Adwa, which confirmed Ethiopian independence, the British government like other European governments thought that it was necessary to establish permanent diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. The British government thought that Ethiopia was important as a political factor in Africa. Thus in November 1897, the British Foreign Office appointed John Lane Harrington, the Consular Officer at Zeila, as the British Agent in Ethiopia. Concerning the western border, Harrington was instructed the line he should follow in negotiations between Egypt and Ethiopia.<sup>19</sup>

The fall of Omdurman to the British seemed to have changed the political situation for Ethiopia. Omdurman, the Mahdists’ capital, fell to the British in 1898 and Sudan became the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium.<sup>20</sup> After the battle of Omdurman, Kitchener dispatched a letter to Menelik announcing his victory over the “Dervishes” (i.e. the Mahdists), who according to him were common enemies of both Ethiopia and Great Britain, and the liberation of the Sudanese from the tyrannical rule of the *Khalifa*. Kitchener also mentioned “the liberation of the Ethiopian captives in Omdurman...Menelik, in replying to Kitchener’s letter, hailed what he regarded as a victory for all Christians.”<sup>21</sup>

Harrington was instructed by his government to open border negotiations with Menelik. He was instructed to tell Menelik that the British government had no intention of intruding on any

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<sup>18</sup> Rubenson, p. 393.

<sup>19</sup> Marcus, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> Bahru, “Relations Between Ethiopia and the Sudan...”, p. 64.

territory that belonged to “Abyssinia” (Ethiopia). Harrington was also instructed to tell Menelik that Great Britain claimed the territory between Ethiopia and the Nile which had formerly belonged to Egypt. The first round of negotiations began in early April of 1899. Menelik told Harrington that nothing had been changed. He stood on the claims of his 1891 declaration. Harrington on his part told Menelik that the British government did not accept Menelik’s 1891 declaration. Menelik claimed that the occupation Britain demanded of places like Gallabat and Gera was not correct. He argued that he had flags and garrisons in both Gallabat and Gera. Harrington replied that Menelik had flags and garrisons in places like Gallabat and Gera by taking advantage of the British involvement with the Mahdists. Though Menelik complained that Gallabat and Gera had always been Ethiopian, Harrington did not accept it. He argued that there was contrary evidence. Menelik then argued the ancient historical claims of Ethiopia to areas in the Sudan. To Harrington, ancient historical claim did not count for much in modern negotiations because it was open to doubt. According to Harrington, all these differences must be negotiated.<sup>22</sup>

The second conference took place on 22 April 1899. Harrington presented a map that showed in detail the area that Great Britain claimed as formerly occupied by Egypt. Harrington argued that the line which ran south from Todluc to Khor Yabus and areas like Hamran, Kedawi, Gallabat, Debaineh, Dares-Somati, Dar Gubba, Dar Gumuz and Beni Shangul were Egyptian territories. Menelik was interested only in Beni Shangul for different reasons. First, he wished to exploit the gold mines. Second, he wanted Beni Shangul for its strategic importance because it was near to the navigable portions of both the Blue and White Niles. Harrington promised that he might be prepared to make an arrangement to suit Menelik’s wishes. The third session of negotiation

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<sup>22</sup>Marcus, pp. 88-89.

was opened on 19 May 1899. The main issue in this session was the argument over the Beni Shangul area. According to Harrington's offer, Beni Shangul was to be given to Menelik if the concessions for gold mining in the area would be guaranteed to British capitalists. Menelik agreed. Then in principle, the border problem was solved.<sup>23</sup>

The only problem that remained without answer was the case of Mättäma, a town in Gallabat province which was important both strategically and commercially. The question was who was to have Mättäma? Menelik asked Harrington to tell his government that he did not wish to claim Mättäma as a right but he asked the British Government, for friendship's sake, to let him have Mättäma, on account of the Christians there. Menelik also stated that Emperor Yohannis IV had been killed in Mättäma, and many of his people who had previously lived in Mättäma had been scattered from there. It was for these reasons that Ethiopia wished to have it. Harrington in consultation with his government stated that Great Britain only needed the fort which was in the new town. It was decided to give Menelik the old town east of Khor Abnakara as a commercial enclave. Menelik did not like the arrangement, but Alfred Ilg convinced him to accept it. Finally the arrangement was agreed on 14 May 1900. Harrington on the whole was successful in obtaining a line more to the advantage of the Sudan. The British government was satisfied with the outcome of Harrington's negotiations.<sup>24</sup>

Treaties between Great Britain and Ethiopia, and between Great Britain, Italy and Ethiopia, relative to the frontiers between the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea were signed in Addis Ababa on 15 May 1902.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Marcus, p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> Sir E. Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, Volume II, Nos. 95 to 259 (London: Frank Cass, 1967), p.431.

The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902 was designed to determine the frontier between the Sudan and Ethiopia. In an annex to this treaty, the British, Ethiopian and Italian Governments included a number of agreed modifications to the frontier between the Sudan and Eritrea, and to the frontier between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The latter treaty survived until the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-36 and was re-established by the British Military Administration in 1941, remaining in force until the Ethiopian-Eritrean Federation in 1952. But the Sudan-Ethiopian border, the outcome of the previous Ethio-British negotiations concerning the western border with the Sudan between Emperor Menelik and the British Agent in Ethiopia, Lt. Col. Harrington, was defined by the 1902 Treaty. The treaty was written both in Amharic and English languages. It comprised Five Articles.<sup>26</sup>

According to Article I of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty,

*The frontier between the Soudan and Ethiopia agreed on between the two Governments shall be: the line which is marked in red on the map annexed to this treaty in duplicate and traced from Khor Um Hagar to Gallabat, to the Blue Nile, Baro, Pibor and Akobo Rivers, to Melile thence to the intersection of the 6<sup>th</sup> degree north latitude with 35<sup>th</sup> degree longitude East of Greenwich.*<sup>27</sup>

According to Article II of the Treaty,

*The boundary as defined in Art. I, shall be delimited and marked on the ground by a joint Boundary Commission, which shall be nominated by the two High Contracting Parties, who shall notify the same to their subjects after delimitation.*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Edward Ullendorff, "The Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London Fiftieth Anniversary, Volume XXX, part III (1967), p.641.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 643.

<sup>28</sup> Hertslet, p. 431.

The Tripartite annex to this treaty was designed to adjust and modify the Ethiopian-Eritrean and the Sudan-Eritrean frontiers and superseded a previous provisional agreement entered into by Britain and Italy in 1900-1.<sup>29</sup> The treaty was prepared in Amharic, Italian and English languages and signed by His Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik II, Major Ciccodicaola, the Italian Minister in Ethiopia, and Lieutenant Colonel Harrington, His Britannic Majesty's Agent in Ethiopia. The treaty was composed of two Articles.<sup>30</sup>

According to Article I of the treaty,

*The frontier Treaty between Ethiopia and Eritrea previously determined by the line Tomat-Todluc is mutually modified in the following manner:*

*Commencing from the junction of the Khor Um Hagar with the Setit, the new frontier follows this river to its junction with the Maietebe, following the latter's course so as to leave Mount Ala Tacura to Eritrea and joins the Mareb as its junction with the Mai Ambessa.*

*The line from the junction of the Setit and Maietebe to the junction of the Mareb and Mai Ambessa shall be delimited by Italian and Ethiopian delegates so that the Canama [Kunama] tribe belongs to Eritrea.<sup>31</sup>*

According to Article II of the treaty,

*The frontier between the Soudan and Eritrea instead of that delimited by the English and Italian delegates by the Convention of the 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1901, shall be the line which from Sabderat is traced via Abu Jamal [Abu Gamal] to the junction of the Khor Um Hagar with the Setit.<sup>32</sup>*

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<sup>29</sup> Ullendorff, p. 641.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 647.

<sup>31</sup> Hertslet, p. 433.

<sup>32</sup> Ullendorff, p. 649.

Great Britain's ratification of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty was presented to Emperor Menelik on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1902. In December 1902, Major Gwynn left Khartoum to act as Sudan Commissioner in the demarcation of the Sudan-Ethiopian border.<sup>33</sup>

Article II of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902 stated that the line delimited should be demarcated by officers of the two governments. But what happened was that Major Gwynn alone traveled the whole frontier from the Sätit to the Baro during the spring and early summer of 1903.<sup>34</sup> Major Gwynn, the British Boundary Commissioner, demarcated the line (with heaps of stones) and a General Description was constructed and signed by him, dated June 27, 1903.<sup>35</sup>

*In this demarcation, the line Gwynn actually marked out departed from that marked in red on the treaty map in several places for reasons which he alone thought adequate, and in a way which he thought roughly balanced out and was, thus, generally, fair to each state.<sup>36</sup> (See Map 5)*

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<sup>33</sup> Marcus, p. 94.

<sup>34</sup> David Hamilton, "Ethiopia's Frontiers: The Boundary Agreements and their Demarcation, 1896-1956," (PhD Thesis in Political Science, Oxford University, 1974), p. 303.

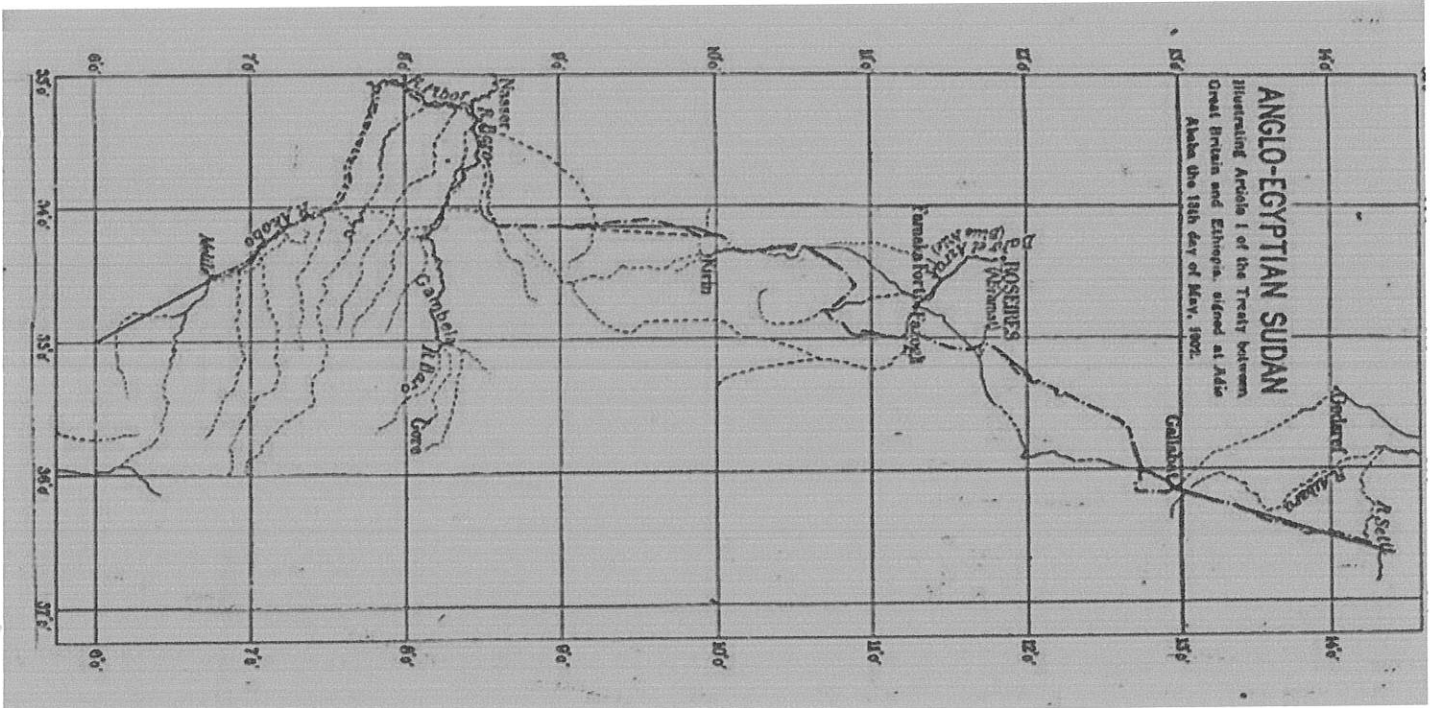
<sup>35</sup> Ian Brownlie, *African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopedia* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1970), p. 857.

<sup>36</sup> Hamilton, p. 303.

Map 5: Frontier Line on Treaty Map \_\_\_\_\_

Frontier Demarcated - - - - -

The Sudan-Ethiopia boundary as agreed on 1902, showing the deviations to this line incorporated in Gwynn's Demarcation of 1903



Source: Hertslet, p.437

In the middle of November 1902 Menelik, according to Gwynn, had told Harrington that he would allow Gwynn to represent Ethiopia's interests if he was appointed to represent Sudan's interests in the boundary demarcation. However, there is no official order or signed appointment emanating from the Ethiopian government which has ever been found to support Gwynn's claim.<sup>37</sup> It seems likely that Gwynn's claim was true because otherwise Menelik's officers on the borders would not have allowed Gwynn to work as he did. Those officials must have received some instructions from Menelik but these instructions have disappeared.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>38</sup> Archives of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder IES MS 1872, "Yä Gwynn Wikilna", *Qitse 3, Tikimt* 1975 E.C, p. 139.

Though the Gwynn line of 1903 was represented on official British maps of the Sudan, at various times Ethiopia later contested the demarcation by Gwynn and argued that the unilateral procedure did not bind her. However, the Ethiopian government did not contest the validity of the 1902 treaty. The areas that were affected by the difference of view were the El Fashaqa triangle and the region of Sätit-Humära.<sup>39</sup>

The Sudan became independent on January 1, 1956.<sup>40</sup> In February 1956 diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and independent Sudan began. When this relation was initiated the Ethiopian government was hoping to strengthen the historical and cultural ties between the two countries. Both countries soon raised their diplomatic representation from liaison officers to the level of embassies.<sup>41</sup> In order to promote cordial relations between the two sister countries a Sudanese-Ethiopian Society was established in November 1956 with members in both countries.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, Ethiopia faced border problems with Sudan because of the Gwynn line which Ethiopia challenged and in any case was not even clear on the ground. A newly independent Sudan was perhaps likely to be more strongly nationalist and intransigent about territory than a colonial British administration in the Sudan. Then the situation was worsened by other political antagonisms as described below.

The Nile waters question was at times contentious between Ethiopia and the Sudan, as when on Nov.8, 1959 Egypt and the Sudan signed an agreement for the full utilization of the Nile waters between them. This was a unilateral agreement without Ethiopia's participation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Brownlie, p. 857; *Addis Zämän, Hamlé* 1, 1959 E. C., p. 5.

<sup>40</sup>Brownlie, p. 856.

<sup>41</sup>*The Ethiopian Herald*, February 11, 1956, p.1

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>Teferi Mekonnen, "The Eastern Nile Water Issue: A History of Contradiction, Mistrust and Attempts at Cooperation, 1950s to 2002" (PhD Thesis, Department of History, Addis Ababa 2013), p.123.

The outbreak of civil wars in southern Sudan in 1955 as well as in Eritrea in 1962 became obstacles to the friendly diplomatic relations and the long standing frontier trade between Ethiopia and the Sudan. Then both neighboring countries began to support and encourage cross-border guerrilla forces from either side. Sudan adopted radical Arabism from 1964 onwards and actively encouraged and assisted Eritrean guerrilla fighters. This resulted in enmity between Ethiopia and Sudan.<sup>44</sup> Ethiopia officially denied any encouragement to South Sudanese rebels but official denials by governments often indicate that the truth is what is being denied. According to Regassa,

*In 1964 the Imperial Ethiopian government Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a note to the Ministry of the Interior indicated that the Sudanese government had complained of the lack of co-operation and assistance from Ethiopia to solve the problem of the Southern Sudan. The Foreign Ministry, however, claimed that the South Sudanese refugees were given refuge in Ethiopia as long as they never resorted to any subversive activity against the Sudanese government, and as much as possible Ethiopia had closed her borders to rebels who committed crimes in the Sudan.*<sup>45</sup>

On June 29, 1965 the Ethiopian Minister of Defense warned the Sudanese government to stop trafficking arms into Ethiopia and allowing the Eritrean fighters to open offices in Sudan, otherwise, Ethiopia would be forced to respond to such illegal acts. However, On July 28, 1965 the two countries agreed to stop activities harmful to each other's national interests like support for secessionist movements, transfer and traffic in arms and hostile propaganda. They also agreed to respect boundaries and stop incursions into each other's territories. Before the signing of the agreement, "Ethiopia had handed over many southern Sudanese

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<sup>44</sup> Regassa, p. 85.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

refugees from Gambella to the Sudan. ... the Sudan also repatriated ... Eritrean rebel leaders to the Ethiopian authorities who were later on hanged.<sup>46</sup>

On July 30, 1965 Ethiopian and Sudan goodwill mission met in Addis Ababa and issued a joint communiqué at the end of three-day talks. It stated a determination to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of each state. Both parties agreed to respect the boundaries based on the treaties, agreements or protocols. They also agreed to establish a Joint Consultative Committee that could give instructions to a Joint Boundary Commission.<sup>47</sup>

Despite attempts at resolving problems between governments, and the fact that both governments accepted the 1902 Treaty, during the imperial period the border problem greatly affected farming and trade in the area of my dissertation before and after the independence of Sudan. The border guards in Ethiopia were weak compared to Sudanese border guards. The Ethiopian border guards were simple farmers. While the border guards in Chilga had some monthly salary, about 160 border guards in Armachiho had no salary at all. All the border guards did not even have any identification card. But they had their own guns and were in most cases using their guns for looting. They had no knowledge of the border line. Generally speaking, they were described by the province Director as good for nothing.<sup>48</sup>

On 12 *Yäkatit* 1945 E.C (February 6, 1953) Sudanese soldiers crossed the border, came to Godäbé and took *Däjjazmach* Rashid to Sudan by force. They took his property and imprisoned him for 3 years. In the same year in April Sudanese soldiers came and took a gun

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90.

<sup>47</sup> *The Ethiopian Herald*, July 30, 1965, pp. 1 and 5.

<sup>48</sup> Archives of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Folder IES MS 2351 a letter from *Kaňazmatčh* Bäkälä Zäläläw, Begemeder and Simien Province Director to *Däjazmatčh* Kifle Ergätu, Ministry of Interior Acting Minister, Reference No. 35/1363/57 *Miazia* 6, 1957 E.C., p. 1-2.

from Sheik Abuskin, the *Chiqa Shum* (village chief) of Korädäm by force and went away. On *Mägabit* 28, 1948 E.C (April 6, 1956) Sudanese soldiers met priest Getu Bitäweligñ and Abdurähman Eshätu on the Guang River when they were travelling for trade. The soldiers looted their money and took their guns. They killed priest Gétu and took Abdurähman with them. Abdurahman was taken to prison. He was released after 3 years in prison. In March 1952 E.C. Sudanese soldiers crossed the border and entered Godäbé, Arafa and Bäräkät villages. They took away and imprisoned Tämäsgän Gäbrä Hiwät and five other people for 7 months.<sup>49</sup> On June 2, 1966 (*Ginbot* 26, 1958 E.C) Ethiopian nationals on the border were mistreated and harassed by Sudanese armed forces that had illegally entered the Ethiopian territory of Sätit-Humära. They invaded Ethiopian territories like Umbarakit and Lugdi. They even came as far as the Rauian River and detained 337 labourers as well as farmers. They also took 5 modern tractors and 5 wide-level disc harrows. At the beginning of 1959 E.C, the farmers in Sätit- Humära under the leadership of *Qägñazmach* Gäbrä-Hiwot Täsfay who was the “*leba adim*” (thief hunter) of the area at that time crossed the Sudanese border and occupied Sudanese land and started farming. They also decided to take up arms to confront Sudanese incursions if necessary. But Ethiopian government troops came and told the Ethiopian farmers not to confront the Sudanese invaders but to stay where they were.<sup>50</sup>

On 3 January 1967 Ethiopia and the Sudan agreed among other things to respect and recognize the status quo along the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. The two parties further agreed to allow farmers to farm as they used to along the Ethio-Sudanese frontier until a Joint Boundary Commission completed its task of either demarcation or re-demarcation as the case might be.

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<sup>49</sup> Mesfin, Werku, and Others, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Atakilt, p. 134.

The Sudan side also agreed to release all Ethiopian farmers who were detained by the authorities of the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and also to return all the tractors and all other confiscated properties and harvest of the Ethiopian farmers, if any.<sup>51</sup>

*The two parties, after reviewing the work of the Boundary Commission, have agreed that the treaty governing the Ethio-Sudanese Frontier from Khor Um Hagar to intersection of 6<sup>th</sup> degree of north latitude with the 35<sup>th</sup> degree longitude east of Greenwich is the treaty of 15 May 1902 and its annexed map.*<sup>52</sup>

Emperor Haile Sellasie during his visit to Sätit-Humära on 11 January 1967 told the Humära farmers not to take any acts of revenge against the Sudanese but to stay where they were. He stated that there was an understanding between the two countries to solve the border problem.<sup>53</sup>

According to the agreement of 3 January 1967 between Ethiopia and the Sudan, the Sudanese government released the Ethiopian farmers and returned all the tractors and the other confiscated properties in 1967.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, problems continued, and the Sudanese official forces seem to have been antagonistic and more aggressive in the lowland areas. On *Hidar* 17-19, 1960 E.C (Nov. 26-28, 1968) Sudanese soldiers crossed the border and entered Abdärafî repeatedly. They imprisoned farmers and looted their properties. Sudanese farmers entered Junit in Armachiho *Wäräda* and started to farm the land by claiming that the area belonged to Sudan. Ethiopian border soldiers then went to the area. They captured the Sudanese farmers and their tractors.

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<sup>51</sup> *The Ethiopian Herald*, January 4, 1967, p.1.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Addis Zämän*, Tir 3,59 E.C, p. 1

<sup>54</sup> Atakilt, p. 135.

Finally, however, fearing retaliation from the Sudan, the Sudanese farmers were released with their tractors, after being made to sign that they would pay fines, which in fact they were not really expected to pay.<sup>55</sup>

Sudanese soldiers also repeatedly harassed Ethiopian farmers in Sätit *wäräda* by crossing the border. Ethiopian officials in Gondar asked the central government to release a budget in order to recruit 300 more rapid deployment forces in addition to those 500 who were on the border. According to a diary of Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, the Governor General of Begemeder and Simien, Ethiopia had only a small police force along the border compared to Sudan which had inherited a strong army, better infrastructure and better local administration from the British colonial administration. The fertile Ethiopian northwest lowlands on the Sudanese border were therefore not secure.<sup>56</sup> We should remember, however, that Ethiopia could be aggressive across the border. In the southern Sudan (far to the south of my dissertation area) British administration and armed forces were not large in World War I and remained small for financial reasons in the interwar period. As a result the southern Sudan and Uganda had suffered heavily from well armed Ethiopian raiders who poached ivory, looted cattle and captured slaves.<sup>57</sup> A private traveler from Khartoum to Tanganyika in 1924 commented on things on the way. In Mongalla province in southern Sudan, “we had ample opportunity for deploring the efficiency of the Abyssinian raiders who come down...and return

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<sup>55</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration Office, a diary of Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, Governor-General of Begemeder and Simien on the issues that were presented to Emperor Haile Sellasie, date *Tahsas* 13, 1960 E.C, pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>57</sup> J.H.R. Yardley, *Parergon or Eddies in Equatoria* (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1931), pp. 14, 18 and 19.

leisurely with their ivory...enslaving a few hundred wretched Dobossa or Turkana to carry for them. Nothing is done about this. The local [British] officials are inadequately equipped".<sup>58</sup>

The Governor General requested the emperor to allow him to bring the lowland *wärädas* into one *Awraja* Administration. The *wärädas* he proposed to form into one *Awraja* were Mättäma *wäräda*, Quara *wäräda*, and Mahbärä Selassie Monastery from *Chilga Awraja*, Armačiho *wäräda* (only lowland area) from Gondar *Awraja* and Sätit *Wäräda* from Wägära *Awraja*. The Governor General argued that bringing these *wärädas* into one *awraja* was important for administrative, security and economic purposes. This issue was discussed in the parliament and finally the emperor approved the new administrative formation and its necessary budget to start as of 1969 (See Map Appendix xiv).<sup>59</sup> However, this administrative structure was not implemented for unknown reasons.

Relations between Ethiopian farmers and Sudanese farmers in the Humära area on the border were still not good. For instance, on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1969, the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, Kassala Province, Gedaref District Police Headquarters, complained that 800 head of cattle had been stolen in August 1969 by some Ethiopians residing at Abdärafī.<sup>60</sup> In 1970 the Sudanese government again complained that 1500 head of cattle had been stolen by some Ethiopians. The Ethiopian police station in Sätit-Humära studied the case and finally found some of the said heads of cattle in Wälqait. This looting was in fact by Ethiopian farmers who

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<sup>58</sup> Michael H. Mason, *Deserts Idle* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, no date of publication given but probably soon after 1924), p. 62.

<sup>59</sup> A Diary of Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat..., p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder 0/299/1/12, Seid Ahmed Hussien, Superintendent of Police, Gedaref Scheme to Imperial Ethiopian Government, Humära Governor, 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1969, pp. 1-2.

at times engaged in banditry<sup>61</sup> and were behaving in accordance with long-standing border tradition activities when opportunity offered.

On March 1971, the Ministerial Consultative Committee of Ethiopia and the Sudan met in Khartoum and agreed to strengthen their relations in all fields and to help the Ministerial Committee; a Commission from the two countries' regional Governor Generals would work in a new spirit. They also agreed to form the Boundary Commission of both countries as soon as possible. The head of the Ethiopian delegation to Khartoum was *Ato* Ketema Yifru, Minister of Foreign Affairs. A Joint Study Group of experts travelled by river transport on the Baro, Akobo and Sobat then met in Addis Ababa to work for the expansion of bilateral trade in the region.<sup>62</sup>

In 1972, President Nimeiri accepted negotiations for a peace process with the southern rebel group known as Anyanya or Anya-Nya I (1955-1972) (Anyanya took its name from a kind of poisonous snake). Ethiopia played a good role in negotiating the 1972 Addis Ababa peace process. However, a new separatist movement known as Anyanya II (1972-1987) started the second Sudanese civil war. Nevertheless, the Sudan peace agreement helped Ethiopia to create good relations for a time with Sudan. Following the peace process President Nimeiri of the Sudan tried to mediate between Ethiopia and the Eritrean rebels. However, this was in vain because Haile Selassie was reluctant to enter the peace process.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Archive of North Gondar Administration Office, Folder *ፀ*/299/1/12 *Wägära Awraja* Tsatita, *Humära Wārāda* Police to *Wägära Awraja* Police, No. *ፀ*2/1070/61, 4/1/62 E.C, p. 1; A letter from Begemidir and Simien Provincial Police to *Wälqait Wārāda* Governor, No. 3749/29/907, 29/1/62 E.C, p. 1; Begemededer and Simien Deputy Governor-General to *Wälqait Wārāda* Governor, No. 209/4206/12 *Tikimt* 3, 1962 E. C , p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Addis Zāmān, Mägabit* 18, 1963 E. C, pp.1 and 5.

<sup>63</sup> Regassa, p. 95.

On *Mägabit* 30, 1964 E.C (March 9, 1972), a meeting of high level government officials of Ethiopia was held. The principal participants were as follows:

1. *Ato* Getahun Tessema, Interior Minister, Chairman
2. Lieutenant General Kebede Gebre, Defence Minister, Member
3. Dr. Minase Haile, Foreign Minister, Member
4. Dr. Tesfaye Geberezgi, Information Minister, Member
5. *Däjazmach* Tsehayu Inquselassie, Governor-General of Keffa, Member and
6. Lieutenant Colonel Tamirat Yigezu, Governor General of Begemeder and Simien, Member.

Experts were also in the meeting to supply information to the meeting. These experts were:

1. *Wäizärit* Yodit Imiru, State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. *Ato* Legese Bezu, State Minister of Ministry of Interior
3. *Ato* Getachew Kibret, Legal Adviser of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. Dr. Bereketeab H/ Selassie, Legal Adviser of the Ministry of Interior
5. *Ato* Mengestie Desta, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. *Fitawrari* Kebede Desta, Governor General and Mayor of Bahir Dar *Awraja*
7. *Ato* Mohammad Hamid Ibrahim, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
8. *Ato* Getachew T/Mariam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and
9. Dr. Fitigu Tadesse, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
10. *Ato* Taye Reta, Ministry of Land Reform, Team Leader
11. *Ato* Seyoum Asgedom, Ministry of Water Resource, Member
12. Major, Shewaye Admassu, Ministry of Intelligence, Member
13. Major Tesfaye Wolde Selassie, Ministry of Defense, Member, and
14. *Ato* Wuhib Mulneh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Member.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Archive of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Folder IES MS 2351 Minute of a Meeting of High Level Government Officials in the Ministry of Interior, *Mägabit* 11, 1964 E.C, pp. 1-2.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss the Ethio-Sudan border in order to have a clear stand as ordered by the emperor.<sup>65</sup> In their final discussion, they decided to accept Major Gwynn's demarcation line after assessing the report of Ethiopian border experts. They realized that Ethiopia had gained more than 600 sq. kms. of land from the 1903 and 1909 demarcation of major Gwynn, the Border Commissioner.<sup>66</sup> (See the following Tables). It would have been better for the Ethiopian government to have accepted the Gwynn line earlier.

Table 28: Land Ethiopia gained or lost in sq. kms. based on the 1903 Demarcation

Area	Land left to Sudan (in Sq.kms)	Land left to Ethiopia (in sq. kms)
Humära-Mättäma	71	242
Mättäma South	264	_____
On Gojjam side	_____	7
On Assosa, Wälläga side	26	32
On Qellem, Wälläga side	_____	759
On Maji, Käffa side	585	_____
Total	946	1040
Difference		94

Table 29: Land gained in sq. kms based on 1909 demarcation

On Maji, Käffa side	66	582
Difference		516

Source for Tables 27, 28 and 29: Archives of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Minute of a Meeting of High Level Government Officials, Ministry of Interior IES MS 2351, *Mägabit* 11, 1964 E.C, p. 12

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Note: The 1909 demarcation based on the 1907 Treaty on the eastern border of Ethiopia was cited to show how much in total Ethiopia was gaining in border demarcations and therefore should accept both the 1903 (for my area) and the 1909 demarcation.

The Minute of the Meeting of the High Level Government Officials also showed the area of land in sq. kms. that was occupied by Ethiopian farmers. According to the officials the land that was occupied by Ethiopian farmers beyond the Gwynn line in the Sudan was 442 sq. kms. This is again shown on the following Table:

Table 30: Area of land that was occupied by the Ethiopian farmers in sq..kms.

Beyond the treaty line on Humära Side	640
Beyond the Gwynn line on Sätit side	435
Beyond the Gwynn line on Wälläga side	7
Total area of land occupied beyond Gwynn line (435+ 7)	442

Source: Archive of the IES, Minute of a Meeting of High Level Government Officials, Ministry of Interior IES MS 2351, *Mägabit* 11, 1964 E.C, p. 13.

In the southern part of Mättäma in Mähbärä Selassie Monastery, farmers had been allotted land from Märtrahad to Märfaïn that entered Sudan as far as 10 kms. This was in total violation of the Gwynn line. The Ethiopian government feared that this would raise a further serious border confrontation, like the Sätit problem.<sup>67</sup>

On the Sätit-Humära side, according to the Ethiopian government officials, Ethiopian farmers had occupied the following areas by crossing Gwynn's line: 1) Kormur (Kor Umar) 2) Däbälob 3) Miael Meda 4) Alkhadra 5) Rädäm 6) Lugdi 7) Gälae Zarafe 8) Kuma 9) Mäčhač 10) Banat 11) Gälae Nähal, and 12) Neguara.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The total number of farmers was 283. Of these, 133 were tractor-owning farmers and 150 were oxen farmers. In northern Abdärafi between the Angäräb River and Gelae Luban Mountain Ethiopian farmers occupied about 85 sq. kms. Among the farmers, 3 of them were tractor-owning farmers and more than 15 of them were either tractor-renting or oxen farmers. Generally speaking, the land that was occupied by the Ethiopian farmers from the Rauian River up to the Angäräb River was 767sq.kms. Of this land, the area that was conducive to farming was 726 sq.kms. The farmers on Sätit-Humära side had invested *Birr* 16, 487,000 in farming this land. The farmers on Abdärafi side had also invested *Birr* 17, 270, 100. The farmers in both areas had invested a total of *Birr* 33,757,100. In view of all this, the high level government officials proposed to accept Gwynn's 1903 demarcation line. They also suggested a compromise with the Sudanese government on the areas beyond the Gwynn line that were occupied by the Ethiopian farmers.<sup>68</sup>

Why did the Ethiopian farmers go beyond the Gwynn line? According to the Ethiopian Government high level officials, the Ethiopian farmers went beyond the Gwynn line for the following reasons: (1) The need of farmland; (2) the farmers, and also government officials, did not know where the Gwynn line was; and (3) It was so easy for the farmers to raise cash crops across the line.<sup>69</sup>

On 18 July 1972, Dr Minase Haile, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented proposals on the boundary issues to the Sudanese government on behalf of Ethiopia.

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-21.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

*In the proposals, Ethiopia declared the basic acceptance of Major Gwynn's demarcations on the basis of the 1902 and 1907 treaties ..., however, with doubts of the issues concerning the validity of Gwynn's demarcation. As regards the boundary north of the Sätit River, Ethiopia had accepted the Tablot/ Martinelli demarcation of February 1903 (as supplemented in 1916) as the boundary line as far as Jebel Abu Gamal, which is the present day boundary between the Sudan and Eritrea. For the purposes of re-demarcation, Ethiopia proposed the division of the boundary south of the Setit river into two parts, namely, the boundary south of Mount Denglish and north of it.<sup>70</sup>*

The Ethio-Sudan Ministerial Consultative Committee convened a meeting in Addis Ababa on July 25, 1972. The two sides settled the partially unsettled boundary problem between the two countries. The representatives of the two parties were led by the foreign ministers of the two states, namely, Dr Mansur Kalud, the Foreign Minister of the Sudan and Dr Minase Haile, the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia. The meeting was held in a friendly manner to find a peaceful solution to the long-standing problem. They also agreed to strengthen their trade relations. According to the joint communiqué, both governments also agreed to retain the Tablot-Martinelli demarcation lines of February 1903 from north of Sätit up to Abu Gamal. Basically they agreed to accept Gwynn's demarcation line north of the Sätit River. Concerning the frontier south of Denglish Mountain, the two parties decided to re-delimit in the future and when the time came both agreed to invite the Kenyan government to participate. As for Sätit, the two sides determined to respect and recognize the status quo and decided to organize a special committee to make a survey and study the cultivated areas of the nationals of the two parties. If any problem arose in the future the Governor Generals of the two border countries were told to meet, discuss

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<sup>70</sup> Regassa, pp. 110-111.

and solve problems.<sup>71</sup>The Kenyan government appreciated the Ethio-Sudan agreement and the invitation to Kenya to participate.<sup>72</sup>

Both Ethiopia and Sudan were ready to demarcate their border. The Technical Commissioners who were assigned by the Ethiopian government to demarcate the border together with the Sudanese Technical Commissioners were:

1. *Ato* Getachew Kibret, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chairman
2. *Ato* Taye Reta, Ministry of Interior, Member
3. *Ato* Admassu Gebre Hiwet, Ministry of Land Reform, Member
4. *Ato* Welde Mariam Gebre Hiwet, Ministry of Interior, Member
5. *Ato* Wuhib Muluneh, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Member
6. *Ato* Tesfaye Alemayehu, Ministry of Land Reform, Member
7. *Ato* Alemayehu Mekonnen, Ministry of Interior, Member
8. Major Tessema H/ Gebriel, Ministry of Defence, Member
9. Lieutenant Alebachew Wond Yirad, Begemedar and Simien Province, Sätit-Humära *Wäräda* Governor, Member<sup>73</sup>

In order to demarcate the border a budget that amounted to *Birr* 48,252,918.22 was needed. The share of the Ethiopian government was *Birr* 22,181,328.22 and the share of the Sudanese

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<sup>71</sup> *Addis Zämän, Hamle* 23, 1964 E.C, p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> *Addis Zämän, Hamle* 26, 1964 E.C, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Archive of the Ethiopian Institute, Folder IES MS 2351 an urgent secret letter from Getahun Tässäma, Minister of Interior to *TsahaT'ezaz* Aklilu Habtawold, Prime Minister, 22/21112, *Säne* 12, 1965 E.C, p. 1.

government was *Birr* 16,000,000. The remaining *Birr* 10,071,590 was to be covered by the technical assistance of the government of Finland.<sup>74</sup>

The cost of demarcation to the Ethiopian government was larger than the cost to the Sudanese government because of the following reasons.

(1) There was poor infrastructure on the Ethiopian side of the border compared to Sudan; (2) the Ethiopian roads in the border area were impassable for wheeled traffic for the Ethiopian Technical Commissioners. It was necessary to clear the roads with bulldozers and graders, doing which was costly; (3) Ethiopia did not have skilled surveyors and necessary machinery for surveying compared to Sudan and (4) the previous demarcation of the border area from Sätit River to Ras Casar between the Eritrean province and Sudan was not complete and it needed *Birr* 5,000,000.<sup>75</sup>

After the outbreak of the February 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, the relations between Ethiopia and Sudan became worse and the agreement on the border demarcation was also affected.<sup>76</sup> Egypt and the Sudan came together against Ethiopia, regarding it as vulnerable after the revolution and the adoption of Marxism-Leninism. In July 1976 President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and President Jaffar el Nimeiri of Sudan made a mutual defense agreement known as the 'Charter of Integration' and in it asserted "the vital role played by the Nile valley in protecting the entire Arab region and the African continent."<sup>77</sup> Their interests were of course their own, not

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<sup>74</sup> Archive of the Ethiopian Institute, Folder IES MS 2351, a letter from Getahun Tässäma, Minister of Interior to the Parliament about the Ethio-Sudan border demarcation, Reference No. 4566/22 *Hidar* 7, 1967 E.C., p.3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> A letter from Ato Getahun Tesema, Interior Minister to The Council of Ministers in North Gondar Zone Archive, IES, MS, 2352, *Hidar* 7, 1967 E.C., 12.

<sup>77</sup> Teferi, p. 209.

those of “the African continent” still less Ethiopia and its right to the Nile.<sup>78</sup> Relations became extremely poor in 1977. In fact with Sudanese troops massed along the Ethiopian Border, the two countries “reached the brink war in January 1977.”<sup>79</sup> In April 1977 with the support of the Sudanese government and other Arab countries the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) attacked Tässänäy, Om Hajär, Nakfa, Afabet, Sätit-Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma in northern and western Ethiopia. The Sudanese government under President Nimeiri, also offered every facility to the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) because the Sudanese government wanted to violate the unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia.<sup>80</sup>

The *Därg* authorities on their part gave all-round support to the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in order to weaken the Nimeiri regime by strengthening the military muscle of the opposition movement. The *Därg* Provided the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) with substantial military and logistic support in its struggle against the Khartoum government. In addition to military and logistical support, the *Därg* provided the SPLA with training facilities, a radio station and sites for refugee camps in Gambélla and Assosa regions. Such kinds of support continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. With this situation, the relations between Ethiopia and Sudan became bitterly antagonistic.<sup>81</sup> However, by the end of the 1970s period Sudanese soldiers did not come to the Ethiopian border and disturb farming<sup>82</sup> probably because the *Därg* had created large, well armed forces by the end of the 1970s, so that the border was more secure than previously, and the *Därg* would be likely to retaliate strongly against armed incursions.

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>80</sup> *Keesings Contemporary Archives Weekly Diary of World Events*, Volume XXIII, June 24, 1977, p. 28422.

<sup>81</sup> Regassa, p. 146.

<sup>82</sup> Informants: Sisay, Mängistu, and Mandäfro

## 7.2 INTERNAL POLITICAL AND SECURITY PROBLEMS

The first hostile reaction to the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution came from nobles and landlords whose political and social position had been swept away by the overthrow of the monarchy. The nobles and landlords also reacted against the *Därg* because their economic power was destroyed by the land reform of 1975. The aristocratic opposition was organized into the EDU. It was founded in March 1975 under the leadership of *Ras* Mängäsha Seyoum, General Näga Tägän and *Bitäwädäd* Adänä Mäkonän. The first two were northern noblemen who had married granddaughters of Emperor Haile Sellasie. The third leader was a former patriot, the *Awraja* governor of Dabat in Gondar, and a loyal and faithful friend of the emperor. The EDU gained tacit and sometimes open support from the Nimeiri government in the Sudan and during 1975 and 1976 it controlled much of Gondar, especially the Humära area bordering the Sudan.<sup>83</sup> Mättäma, Abdärafä, Humära and Dabat were under the EDU between February and April 1977 but the EDU forces were defeated by the Ethiopian militia force sent to Gondar in June-July 1977. The EDU remained active for a time in Tigray.<sup>84</sup>

Two other rebel groups were also operational in Tigray. The Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was set up in February 1975 by a group of left-wing students and peasants. It superseded the Tigray National Organization that had been created three years earlier. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) after its defeat in the urban Red Terror campaign retreated to a base in rural eastern Tigray in mid-1977. The EDU aristocratic leaders failed to gain popular support because of the divisions between them and because they were aristocrats and landlords and the TPLF became more attractive to the people. Finally the EDU

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<sup>83</sup> Clapham, p. 60.

<sup>84</sup> Mega Asatami Derijit, *Täraröchhin Yanqätäqätä Tewlid, Qitse 2* (Mega Publishers, A.A: 1990 E.C), pp.18- and 34

suffered defeat at the hands of the TPLF. The EPRP was also defeated by the TPLF and driven into Gondar.<sup>85</sup>

The EDU and the *Därg* fought each other in Mättäma in 1975, 1976 and 1977. The EDU forces were in control of Mättäma, Kokit, Das, and other areas along the border. In 1977, in its fight against the *Därg*, the EDU was supported by the elements of the Sudanese regular army. However, the *Därg* completely defeated the EDU forces at the end of August 1977. In the fighting almost all houses, business premises, and churches and mosques were destroyed.<sup>86</sup> Even after the defeat and collapse of the EDU forces, Gondar Province as a whole was not stable. The *Därg* continued its struggle with other armed groups like the EPRP, TPLF and EPLF.<sup>87</sup> The different Eritrean political groups “merged together in 1972 to form the Eritrean Liberation Front and Popular Liberation Forces (ELF-PLF), reconstituted as the Eritrean People’s Liberation Forces (EPLF) the following year.”<sup>88</sup> From the early 1970s two rival political organizations, The Eritrean Liberation Front or *Jabha* and the Eritrean Popular Liberation Forces or *Sha’biya* fought for supremacy. The “EPLF emerged as the dominant force in 1981.”<sup>89</sup>

After the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, Abdärafī became a battleground between three opposing forces: the *Därg*, the EDU and the Ethiopian EPRP. But the farmers’ cooperatives existed until the beginning of the 1980s. Most of the farmers had joined the EDU but some of them left in 1977 for the Sudan. Other cooperative farmers remained. Wakshum

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Dessalegn Bizuneh, pp. 49-50.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>88</sup> Bahru, *A History of Modern Ethiopia ...*, p. 220.

<sup>89</sup> Bahru, *The Quest for Socialist Utopia The Ethiopian Student Movement c. 1960-1974* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2014), p. 70.

Näwätä, his brother Näga Näwätä and their uncle *Bitwädäd* Adanä Mäkonän, prominent EDU members who were also cooperative farmers, were killed in 1983 at different battles. Näga Näwätä was killed by the *Därg* forces and *Bitwädäd* Adanä Mäkonän and Wakshum Näwätä were strongly believed to have been killed by the EPRP forces. *Bitwädäd* Adänä's two grandsons and his key supporters during his struggle, Siläshi Iyassu and Mulu Iyassu, were also killed by the *Därg* forces.<sup>90</sup>

In May 1975 the EPLF attacked Om Hajär and Sätit-Humära and robbed properties from the town and farmlands. The armed farmers in Sätit-Humära resisted this robbery.<sup>91</sup> Generally speaking, between 1975 and 1977 there was no peace and stability in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma areas. Farmers were insecure. They were not able to sell their crops owing to lack of markets and insecure roads. The marketing system suffered badly. The prices mainly for cotton and sorghum fell. On the other hand, the prices for different other commodities skyrocketed. For instance, fuel, sugar, onions, red peppers, wheat flour, soft drinks and other consumer goods were scarce and expensive. Eighty percent of the hotels, tea rooms and drinking houses in Humära and its surrounding areas were closed.<sup>92</sup>

Until 1976/77 the Wälqait Sätit-Humära Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative society, the Al-Khadra Farm, the Armachiho-Godäbé-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society and the Mättäma Mahbärä Sellasie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society and the other farmers' Associations were not affected by the 1975 Land Proclamation. They were all active

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<sup>90</sup> Liku, see pages 242-243, 247-249, and 297-299 for further information.

<sup>91</sup> Atakilt, p. 137.

<sup>92</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ሰግ 91-Limat Bank, A letter from Sätit-Humära Warada Community Development to Gondar Provincial Community Development, 17/3/67 E.C., p. 1.

and were functioning under private control.<sup>93</sup> It was in 1976 that Mark (the local people also used to call him Marco) Sideris, the Greek national and the General Manager of the Al Khadra Farm who had come to Ethiopia from Egypt disliking the Egyptian “socialist” revolution, again now fled through the Sudan disliking and hating Ethiopian “socialism”. His properties were confiscated by the *Därg*.<sup>94</sup> When the *Därg* defeated the EDU, the tractor owners of the Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma cooperative farmers left for the Sudan on *Säné* 5, 1969 E.C. (June 12, 1977) with all their tractors and other important and valuable properties to live there as political refugees leaving only the oxen farmers.<sup>95</sup> They also fled because unemployed people from the towns, which my informants called “lumpens”, were coming to the farming areas stealing and adding to the greatly disturbed condition.<sup>96</sup>

The Gondar Cotton Ginning and Processing Factory lacked raw material and became idle. (See further information in Chapter 6, 6.4.1.3.1). Finally, it was nationalized on *Säné* 1, 1969 (August 7, 1977) and given to Gondar State Farm on December 10, 1980. Factory workers who were dissatisfied with the *Därg* administration went to Sudan after the nationalization and four other factory workers in 1977 were denounced as counter-revolutionaries and were killed in the “Red Terror”.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office, Folder ሰጎ 91-Limat Bank, a letter from Agricultural and Development Bank to WSHC Reference No. Ersha/065/68 *Ginbot* 3, 68 E.C, p.1; Archive of North Gondar Zone Administration Office Folder ጎክ/ ሰጎ 28/ጠ-Limat, a letter from Sätit-Humära Farmers to Begemedar and Simien Provincial Administration, *Hamle* 24, 1968 E.C, pp.1-2.

<sup>94</sup> Application letter from Humära farmers namely, Adugña Ambaw, Mamay Bälay, Tadässä Kābādä and others (8 in number) to Major Nägash Täsfä Tsion, Representative of the *Därg* in Humära, *Tahsas* 10, 68 E.C., p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Atakilt, p.138.

<sup>96</sup> Informants: Sisay, Abära, Tibebe and Täka.

<sup>97</sup> Archive of the Public Enterprises Trustee Board, Folder የመንግስት ልማት ድርጅቶች ባለጸራ ቦርድ-ጎፋ መጋዘን Box File No. 133, File No. 5-9 ስለመስርያቡቱ የታሪክ ዝግጅትና የስራ ሪፖርት መግለጫ, ለጎንደር ክትማና ዙርያ አውራጃ አሠጋጅ (A report from the Chairman..., pp.2-3.

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The boom in private commercial agriculture in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma was abruptly halted. The large private estates of Sätit-Humära were taken over as state farms.<sup>98</sup> Though the state farm tried its best to practice modern agriculture in Humära from 1978-1982 the result was disappointing as was discussed in chapter 6.

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<sup>98</sup> Clapham, p. 104.

## FINAL CONCLUSION

Many African countries have economies strongly dominated by the agricultural sector. Agriculture generates a significant proportion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It still provides employment for the majority of Africa's people, but investment in the sector remains low. One of the key issues to successful development in Asia and Latin America has been mechanization. By contrast, the use of tractors in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) remains very limited. In most African countries there will be more urban dwellers than rural ones in the course of the next two to three decades. It is critical to ensure food security for the entire population but feeding the increasing urban population cannot be assured by an agricultural system that is largely dominated by animal power and hand tool technology. Mechanization was also slow to come in Ethiopian agriculture.

My study areas, both Abdärafī and Mättäma, are parts of the western lowlands extending from north western Eritrea to the Gambéla area and further south. Malaria was rampant during the rainy season and early settlement was deterred by high mortality rate from malaria and other diseases. This serious problem for a long time prevented neighboring highlanders from exploiting the land on a permanent settlement basis. In the Ethio-Sudan boundaries, the Al Khadra Farm, managed by Marco Sideris, began modern agriculture in Satit-Humara after the liberation.

Following the example of the Al Khadra Farm, many people came to Sätit-Humära and converted the land which they had previously thought to be useless to a highly productive area. Such agricultural activities also inspired other *Awrajas* and *Wärädas* in the then Begemeder and Simien province. Good examples of these were Abdärafī and Mättäma. Before the 1960s

human settlement in Abdärafi and Mättäma was scarce. After the 1960s, people started oxen farming in both areas.

The farmers saw the formation of farmers' cooperatives as an advantage because they faced lack of capital and the traditional credit system (*shell* system) demanded a very high interest rate. They were also forced to sell their products to the surrounding merchants at a lower price. It was this and other problems that led the farmers to turn to modern credit institutions.

With the help of the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs multi-purpose farmers' cooperatives were established in Abdärafi and Mättäma. In terms of modern agricultural coverage and years of establishment, Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi, and Mättäma-Mahbärä Sellasie were first, second and third respectively.

Three different farms were established in Abdärafi. These were Armačhiho-Godäbe-Abdärafi Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Ltd. the Police Farm and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission. On the other hand, different farmers' associations and Mättäma-Mahbärä Sellasie Farmers' Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society were formed in Mättäma. They used tractors and benefited very much from duty-free fuel.

Despite the soil problem of waterlogging and the problem of crop pests and animal diseases conditions were excellent for growing some rain-fed crops, mainly sesame, cotton and sorghum in years when rainfall was not excessive. Over 50 per cent of the land became cultivated by tractor. One major consequence of mechanized farming in Mättäma was the eviction of the Gumuz people from Kokit and Wärkamba due to the pressure of newcomers from the highlands. The land acquisition poses apparent threats to the economic, cultural, and ecological survival of the indigenous Gumuz communities. According to informants, the

Gumuz people do not cultivate their fields intensively. Rather, they cultivate a given plot of land for about 3 to 5 years then leave it to lie fallow when a decline in yield is perceived. Within their clan territory, new land is then cleared and cultivated in the same way until the yield is again seen to deplete. But the problem that seeks solution is that most of their previous lands have already been transferred to investors and the remaining will also inevitably be given away.

The Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) was one of the financial institutions engaged in providing short, medium and long term development credits. The AIDB made direct loans to individual farmers and loans to cooperatives. The loans were long term (3-5 years) and short term (1 year or less). Long term loans were secured by mortgages on titled urban property. Interest rates that were charged on long term loans were about 9 1/2 per cent. Short term loans were given to individual farmers with a personal guarantor. The interest rate on short term loans was 10 1/2 per cent. However the interest rates were too high. In most cases the cooperative farmers were not able to return their loans to the AIDB at the expected time for different reasons.

Government lands in the borderlands were under direct control of the District Governor in most *Wärädas*. The local *ballabat* was also responsible in Tach Armachiho *Wäräda*. The average size of land that was allotted to tractor farmers ranged from 400 to 600 gross hectares per tractor. The average size of land that was allotted to oxen farmers ranged from 40 to 320 hectares. In Tach Armachiho *wäräda* allocation of land was usually cleared by the *ballabat* before a request was made to the District Governor.

Tractor farmers usually established contacts with the District Governor's Office for land registration, taxes, and duty-free fuel distribution. But the non-tractor farmers dealt with the

*Qäbälle Shum* for land registration and taxes. The *Qäbälle Shum* claimed labour service from oxen farmers but not from tractor farmers.

Production taxes were the only form of taxation on farming in the study areas. In Sätit-Humära, Tach Armachiho, Şägäde, and Wälqait *Wärädas*, production taxes were paid according to an estimate of assumed production made by government representatives, *Qäbälle Shums* and the farmers every five years.

The cropping operations in particularly mechanized farming were clearing, cleaning, ploughing, seeding, weeding and harvesting. The seeding periods of sesame, cotton and sorghum were from June to July, and from June to the end of July and from July to September respectively. Sesame was exported. Cotton was bought by the different cotton ginning and processing factories and sorghum grain was used for domestic consumption in the north.

Large numbers of seasonal labourers were needed by the mechanized farmers. About 85 percent of the seasonal labourers were rural people who came to the study areas from the highlands of Tigray, Eritrea, and Begemeder and Simien provinces working under hard conditions.

Farming in Abdärafî and Mättäma suffered from transport difficulties which were only slowly improved. To minimize the problem a new Bailey Bridge was constructed across the Angärab River for the Imperial Highway Authority. The bridge served for about 500-600 tractors at that time. The farmer's cooperative in Tach Armachiho and the *ballabats* of the area constructed the Abdärafî-Gondar road through contribution.

The farming in Mättäma also suffered from transport difficulties which were only slowly improved. The engineering corps of the Ethiopian Ground Forces constructed a Bailey Bridge over the Guang (Atbara) River and it was completed in 1971. The engineering corps also constructed the Gända Wuha and Nägadé Bahir Bailey Bridge construction in 1974.

In producing the three major crops we saw that for various reasons there were wide variations in reported crop yields.

The production of sorghum and cotton decreased because of the incidence of crop pests and the fall of market price for these crops, but sesame production remained profitable and production rose. There were marketing and processing systems designed to accommodate the movement of sesame, sorghum and cotton. Humära and Om Hajär were the main marketing centres and crops went on from there.

The cooperatives, the merchants, the exporters and processors were both moneylenders and players of a significant role in the marketing system. The Asmara brokers were the market intelligence men. Another important participant in the system was the Grain Board (GB), a government regulatory agency that was responsible for the quality of Ethiopian grain exports. The Grain Corporation (GC) had the primary objective of stabilizing market prices.

Sesame provided the principal solid economic foundation for the development of Sätit-Humära and surrounding areas. Year to year production and exports of sesame expanded. This was much to the benefit of Ethiopian foreign exchange earnings. In the 1970s, the Humara area sesame production accounted for 60 to 70 percent of Ethiopian exports of sesame. Sesame, mainly grown in the Humära area lowlands, had dramatic growth in the world market, and was chiefly exported to Japan, Italy and the USA.

Sorghum was a staple food grain in parts of northern Ethiopia. Its market was extremely fragmented. There were price fluctuations in sorghum.

Until the 1960s, the Humära and surrounding areas cotton market was monopolized by the Barattolo Cotton Mill in Asmara. But after the improvement of the Gondar-Humära road (1972-1973), Humära area cotton was sold in Gondar. The reconstruction of a bridge across the Täkäze River was important, and greatly facilitated crop production as well as transport of the crops, until, as a result of the Eritrean separatist movement, the road was blocked.

Ethiopian partially mechanized farming in the area of my dissertation was adversely affected by poor relations for much of the time between Ethiopia and Sudan. These poor relations were the result of Sudanese and Ethiopian support for separatist movements in the neighbor country but the Nile water issue was also a factor. Moreover, the border was not effectively demarcated or controlled, despite the treaties and the Gwynn demarcation which in any case the Ethiopian government disputed. Cross-boundary incursions and retaliation raids were frequent. Real progress appeared possible when in 1972 the Ethiopian government accepted the 1903 Gwynn demarcation and a final agreed border demarcation. However, the 1974 Revolution in Ethiopia led to worse relations with the Sudan and the earlier hopes were not fulfilled.

The 1974 revolution led to worse internal instability and finally to the collapse of cooperative farming in the area. There was fighting in the area between the *Därg*, EDU and EPRP. Nevertheless, until 1980 some cooperative farming continued. The *Därg* proclaimed a sweeping land reform in early 1975. Until 1976/77 the Al Khadra Farm and the farmer

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cooperatives in the lowlands of north-west Ethiopia were not affected by the 1975 Land Proclamation. When the *Därg* defeated the EDU in June 1977, most of the Humära farmers left for the Sudan with all their properties. The properties of the Al Khadra Farm were confiscated by the *Därg*. The *Därg*'s Red Army forced the EDU to evacuate Mättäma at the end of 1977. The same thing happened in Abdärafī. The boom in private commercial agriculture in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma was abruptly halted. The large mechanized farms of Sätit-Humära were taken over as a state farm but the state farm finally collapsed.

Although the agricultural sector predominated in the imperial period and still does, the sector was mainly peasant farms using traditional methods for subsistence and with only small peasant surpluses for sale. Ethiopia lagged behind in developing commercial agriculture on a bigger scale and establishing even partially mechanized agriculture.

Among the areas where initiatives in establishing larger-scale and partially mechanized private commercial agriculture did take place were Sätit-Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma. These areas were suitable for such farming despite the problems of climate, health conditions, poor communications and availability of credit. Credit continued to be a problem for many farmers because of interest rates but some farmers did make good profits. Sätit-Humära and its surrounding areas contributed greatly, in its sesame production, to Ethiopia's agricultural exports and export earnings. Sätit-Humära, Abdärafī and Mättäma cotton moved Ethiopia towards self-sufficiency in cotton, though self-sufficiency was not complete. Sorghum production in Sätit-Humära areas added to food supply in the north.

In the Imperial period, the government encouraged private commercial agriculture in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma through credit (though this remained a problem), low taxation, malaria eradication (though this was too little and did not solve the problem), crop spraying and most effective of all, the new bridge over the Täkäze. Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi and Mättäma in the early 1970s were showing significant progress but mismanagement and political instability changed the promising situation for the worse and a legacy of relations between Ethiopia and the British colonial administration in Sudan was a disputed border.

The history of partially mechanized private commercial farming in Sätit-Humära, Abdärafi Mättäma and other areas like Quara and Qolla Diba shows the value of individual efforts and profit incentives even under difficulties and suggest what can be achieved in the agricultural sector as a whole, given continued stability and security and some official encouragement. The agricultural development in the northwestern part of Ethiopian lowlands could only be profitable if and only if a lasting solution is given to the Ethio-Sudan border problem.

In order to advance in prosperity Ethiopia needs to increase commercialization of agriculture by supporting massive investments in irrigation, careful use of fertilizer and high-yielding varieties like the green revolution from the late 1960s that benefited countries like Mexico, India and the Philippines. This should go hand in hand with increasing power inputs, mainly in the form of tractors for land preparation and diesel engine for irrigation.

Thus, development and modernization of Ethiopia's agriculture will depend to a large extent on the transformation of policies for education and entrepreneurship. It is argued that for sustainable agricultural growth to take place in the short to medium term there is the need to

develop urgently mechanization policies or adjustments that will set Ethiopia's farmers on a sure and sustainable path to commercial farming.

Recently large areas of Ethiopian land have been awarded to foreign private individuals or companies. This policy is supported by arguments that (like the cooperatives in my dissertation) mechanization on bigger farms can farm more productively. The post-1991 land awards have been criticized for the same reasons as the mechanized farming in the Awash and in the Ethio-Sudan region, and elsewhere, in the imperial period: the loss of land and rights by local peasants and pastoralists. Moreover, the present concessions of land to foreigners for mechanized farming, it has been argued; grow food only for foreign countries and the profits go to foreign countries. The mechanized farming in my dissertation grew food (sorghum) for local consumption, earned much foreign exchange for Ethiopia from sesame and provided raw cotton for an Ethiopian textile industry. In other words, the cooperative farming in my dissertation was real indigenous development whose benefit went to Ethiopia, whatever the other human costs. If land is to be conceded in large blocks for mechanized farms, should Ethiopia not make the concessions to its own nationals and ensure that the country reaps all the resulting economic benefits? The efforts made by individuals and cooperatives in the northwest borderlands in the imperial period should be an example and encouragement.

## Epilogue

Most of the Humära, Abdärafî and Mätamma farmers of the 1960s and 1970s who had been in the Sudan for almost two decades as political refugees have returned to Sätit-Humära, Abdärafî and Mätamma after the downfall of the *Därg* regime and are now again trying to practice agriculture. The tractor owners of the old days have now become oxen farmers and tractor renters. Some of them have bought second hand, reconditioned salvaged tractors. They are now reviving but they have not been able to compete with the new investors in the area so far. Their efforts could form the subject of further study on those lowland areas.

A very brief note on the current situation in the Abdärafî and Mättäma border area may be added. There is no unoccupied land now; all the land is taken up by farmers, all of whom are Ethiopian. As before, there is mechanized and partially mechanized farming and even Gumuz hoe cultivation. Now however, there are many more tractors.

With government efforts, the previously “rampant” malaria problem has been much diminished among the permanent residents. Anti- mosquito nets have been largely responsible for this. However, the migrant labourers from the highlands still suffer from malaria, as they are often not so aware of the cause of malaria and lack nets. It is hoped that continuing and highly commendable government anti-malaria education and provision of nets will tackle the problem.

## Glossary

*Abba* = literally ‘Father’; also title for priests. It is also a term of respect for an elder.

*Abujädi Chärq* = Calico—a type of heavy cotton cloth that is usually plain white.

*Amoraw* = eagle.

*Anisé* = a plant with seeds that are used in cooking and to flavor candies and alcoholic drinks.

*Aniso* (also known as *etchaim*) = local name of hoof (foot) and mouth disease (cattle disease)..

*Ansara* = a traditional oil extraction device.

*Aräqi* = liquor which is distilled locally.

*Ato* = title, the same as Mr.

*Attagñ* = one who fumigates.

*Awraja* = an administrative unit below province.

*Ballabat* = Literally “one who has a father”; most commonly, a member of the local community who exercised authority under the imperial system; the *ballabat* provided the link between local communities and government bureaucracy.

*Birr* = Ethiopian Currency.

*Bitwädäd* = most favoured courtier, highest title and imperial counselor.

*Caro* = a kind of cart that is pulled by a donkey to carry different items.

*Chiqa Shum* = village chief.

*Däjazmach* = ‘commander of the gate’ a politico-military title below *Ras*.

*Därg* = literally it means “committee”; the designation of the 1974-1991 military government. It signifies the Provisional Military Administrative Council, which deposed Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

*Dawilla* = twenty *qunnas*.

*Gädam* = monastery.

*Edirs* = communal self-help organizations.

*Egual Mägabit* = one who feeds, quartermaster.

*Eqa Bét* = 'storehouse, store room. In churches and monasteries the room with the same function, i.e. the sacristy, is also called *Eqa bét*.

*Ezee Kifil* = centre of command.

*Fédan* = an area of approximately 4,000 square meters.

*Fitawrari* = commander of the vanguard, a politico-military title below *Däjazmach*.

*Gäbüz* = the term *gäbüz* seems to be connected to the Geez word *gäbüz*, -means 'guard, protector, tutor, custodian, keeper' in both secular and religious contexts.

*Gäräwäyna* = a metal container that holds 20 liters of water.

*Gasha* = 40 hectares.

*Gésho* = aromatic sticks and stem flavor centuries old traditional brewing recipes for beer and Ethiopian honey wine.

Gondar *Zuria* = Gondar and its surroundings.

*Grazmach* = 'commander of the left'.

*Gulhai* = local name of rinderpest, an infectious viral disease of ruminants, especially cattle, characterized by fever and dysentery.

Haji = one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

*Hibät* = swelling.

*Hilla* = 4 sheaves-stacks of sesame.

*Injära* = Ethiopian bread

Jerrycan = a container for fuel or water. Many people in developing countries use it to haul and store their drinking water.

*Khalifa* = an Arabic name or title which means 'successor' or 'steward'. It most commonly refers to the leader of a caliphate.

*Kobrari* = foreman.

*Kwaja* = a title for a wealthy or rich man.

*Lalish* = local name of anthrax.

*Léba adim* = thief hunter.

*Liqä Abäw* = chief, senior, [church] scholar of the Holy Fathers of the monastery.

*Liqä Rede* = one who serves the monks before he himself becomes a monk.

*Liqä Seyuman* = the appointed one, chief, administrator.

*Mägabi* = one who feeds; quartermaster; administrator of a church or a monastery. He serves as the treasurer in a monastery. The *Mägabi* is usually responsible for the distribution of food and other financial matters and was usually chosen by the monks.

*Märigeta* = *märi* ‘leader’ and *geta* ‘master’, is an office and title within the Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwahido* Church given to a learned *däbtära*. The office can only be claimed by someone who has completed a full course of traditional education. He is chant leader.

*Mahbär* = association.

*Mäsqäl* = the True Cross.

*Mämhir* = a traditional title in the Ethiopian Orthodox (*Täwahido*) Church. From its original meaning of ‘teacher’ the term has come in the course of time to assume additionally the specific meaning of ‘abbot’, i.e. the head of a monastery or monastic community, the supreme teacher in spiritual, religious matters.

*Mäto Aläqa* = commander of 100; comparable to lieutenant.

*Mäshét* = Periodical.

*Mikitil Wäräda* = sub-district/sub-*wäräda*.

*Mofär Zamat* = non-resident share cropper.

*MofärZämät Ersha* = cultivated land far away from the farmer’s house.

*Moto aläqa* = lieutenant.

*Näbalbal* = flame.

*Näch Almaz* = white diamond.

*Nach Läbash* = a civilian police force during the imperial period.

*Nädaj* = fuel

*Nibureid* = the one on whom the hands are/ have been laid/ placed. A traditional Ethiopian ecclesiastical title usually said to refer to the senior administrator of Aksum.

*Nidad* = an acute animal fever.

*Niphri* = over cooked, over boiled, local name of blackleg (cattle disease).

*Nigus* = King.

*Qäbälle* = an administrative unit below *Wäräda*.

*Qäbälle Shum* = *Qäbällé* official.

*Qächäre* Cotton = This type of cotton, according to my informants, was thin and its lint was also very short. It does not give results in the first year after planting. Its seeds could be reproduced and multiplied every year and could give good results for 7-8 years. This type of cotton was widely used in the area before 1967. Even now it is used by peasants in the countryside.

*Qägñazmach* = 'commander of the right'.

*Qes* = priest

*Qolla* = lowland.

*Qunna* = grain measure (straw, holding about 10 kilos).

*Ras* = the high title below a king.

*Rist* = permanently held land; heritable property (in some cases conditional) belonging to a lineage.

*Rist aläqa/ shum* = head of *rist* land.

*Shail/Shayl* = traditional credit system in Sudan

*Shariqä Wälqait* = Wälqait Share Company

*Shell* = a traditional credit system in North-West Ethiopia

*Shifta* = bandit, rebel.

*Şilat* = tablets of wood or stone used in Ethiopia for a *tabot*.

*Shum* = official; superior, chief.

*Siluka* = digging stick.

*Sirate Abäw* = 'orders of the church and its grades established by the Holy Fathers' of the monastery.

*Shaläqa* = major.

*Tabl* = Holy Water.

*Tabot* = ark of tabernacle.

*Tahina* = a Middle Eastern paste or spread made from ground sesame seeds.

*Ṭāj* = mead; traditional alcoholic drink made of honey and the leaves of an aromatic plant.

*Ṭāj bét* = *Ṭāj* selling house.

*Täkruris* = Muslim pilgrims who remained in Mättäma and Humära after coming from central Africa mostly from Darfur

*Ṭälla* = local beer of the leaves of *gesho*, an aromatic plant, barley and corn flour

*Ṭäräfäñña* = border guard

*Ṭäräfäñnoch* = border guards

*Tärara* = Mountain

*Tukul* = A cone-shaped mud hut, usually with a thatched roof, found in eastern and northeastern Africa.

*Wäizärit* = Miss.

*Wäizäro* = Madam, Mrs.

*Wäqét* = ounces, a unit of weight of one sixteenth of a pound (approximately 28 grams).

*Woloyä* (singular) = a man from Wollo province.

*Woloyoch* (plural) = people from Wollo province.

*Wäräda* = an administrative unit below *Awraja*

*Warka* = sycamore tree

*Yä bäräha shimäl* = bamboo

*Zängada* = red sorghum.

*Zämännä Mäsafint* = Era of the princes.

*Zikre Hig* = Commemoration of Law

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### List of Informants

No.	Name and Title	Age	Interviews		Remarks
			Date	Place	
1	Abära Şägayä (Ato)	81	Oct.9, 2013	North Gondar. <i>Qäbälle</i> 14.	He was a farmer in Abdärafi for very many years. He was the founding member of Armachiho-Godäbe-Abdärafi-Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative. He was the 2 <sup>nd</sup> president up until the outbreak of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. Now he is retired.
2	Abay Sälämon (Ato)	67	May 23, 2013	Abdärafi <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He served as <i>Qäbälle</i> Chairperson in Abdärafi. He is a respected man among the town dwellers. He is a man with important information on the agricultural development of Abdärafi.
3	Adugña Wäрку (Basha)	68	Jan. 15, 2012	North Gondar.	He was a police officer in the imperial period. Now he is retired. He has good information on the Police Farm.
4	Alämu Näga (Ato)	68	May.6, 2006	North Gondar	He is a man from Şägädé. He was a member of the Ethiopian Air force from 1960-1969. In 1971 he became a member of the WSHC. From 1971-1977 he worked as a Vice President of the WSHC.
5	Alänä Chäkol (Ato)	65	May 23, 2013	Abdärafi, <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a farmer in Abdärafi. He knows Abdärafi very well.
6	Asäfa Fälläqä (Sergeant)	63	Oct. 5, 2013	Mättäma Yohannes <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He was a soldier in the imperial period. Now he is retired. He has good information on Mättäma and the surrounding areas. His information was crucial.
7	Aschaläw Ayalew (Ato)	55	May 23, 2013	Abdärafi <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He served as a manager in Abdärafi Sub-municipality and knows a lot about the area.
8	Barberis, Chrysotomos (Rev.)	63	Aug. 16, 2006.	Addis Ababa in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral.	He is a Greek national. He is a priest in the Addis Ababa Greek Orthodox cathedral. His information on the Greek nationals in Ethiopia is very useful.
9	Bärihun Gäbrä Michael (Ato)	70	Oct.20, 2014	North Gondar, Gondar City	Currently he is a tractor-owning farmer in Abdärafi. He came to the area in the 1960s as a seasonal labourer. He was a good informant on farming and also labour.

10	Bihonāñ Elef Asägid (Inspector)	69	Oct 15, 2014	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a police officer in Mättäma Yohannis. He has rich information on crimes in the area in my period.
11	Birhanu Asres ( <i>Ato</i> )	82	May 28, 2015	Addis Ababa, Bole <i>Qäbälle</i> 02	He was the founder and Board member of the Gondar Cotton Ginning and Processing Company. He was also a Chairman of the Kokit Farmers' Association in Mättäma.
12	Birtukan Chane ( <i>Wäizäro</i> )	50	Oct.18,2014	Gända Wuha, Mättäma	She was working in the Customs Office in Mättäma Yohannis. Now she is transferred to Gända Wuha. She has rich information on the Mättäma area.
13	Dämaqä Ṭilahun ( <i>Ato</i> )	50	May 23, 2013	Abäaraḫi, <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a Health Officer working in Abdäaraḫi Health Centre. He knows about health problems there.
14	Fäntahun Kidané ( <i>Ato</i> )	67	Oct. 15, 2014	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is both a farmer and a merchant. He lived in Mättäma for many years. He is a good informant.
15	Fiseha Asräs ( <i>Ato</i> )	72	May 23, 2013.	Abdäaraḫi, <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a tractor-owning farmer in Abdäaraḫi. He has lived in Abdäaraḫi since 1968.
16	Fiseha Mäbrahtu ( <i>Ato</i> )	50	Oct 15, 2014	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a Director of Mättäma Primary School. He has good information on Mättäma in my period.
17	Frew Bisät ( <i>Margeta</i> )	55	Oct. 15, 2014	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a priest and head of Yohannis church in Mättäma. He has good information on Mättäma.
18	Gabayahu Eshetie ( <i>Ato</i> )	70	Oct. 6, 2005	Mai Khadra, Sätit-Humära	He is a man from Wälqait. He worked as a guard in the Al Khadra Farm in the 1950s. From 1950s to the 1970s he worked as a farmer in Sätit-Humära. He lived in Mai Khadra.
19	Gäbrä Egziabhér Hagos ( <i>Ato</i> )	67	May 23, 2013	Abdäaraḫi <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a tractor-owning farmer in Abdäaraḫi. He was the Chairman of Abdäaraḫi <i>Qäbälle</i> 01.
20	Gäbrä Mäsḫl Zäru ( <i>Liqa Seyuman</i> )	60	Nov.4, 2013	Addis Ababa Kidist Maryam Church	He worked as the General Manager of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Gondar Province Ecclesiastical Office in Gondar. He has good knowledge on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission in Zämānat (Abdäaraḫi).

21	Gäbrä Şadiq Sahlä Mariam (Abba)	60	May28,2013	North Gondar, City of Gondar	He is a monk in Mahbärä Sellasie Monastery. He is a tractor driver in addition to his assigned duties in the monastery. He is very informative about the monastery.
22	Getu Alämu (Ato)	60	May 24, 2013	Abdärafi Qäbälle 01	He worked as an administrator in Abdärafi Qäbälle 01. He has good information on Abdärafi.
23	Girma Mogäs (Ato)	48	Oct. 20,2014	Abdärafi Qäbälle 01	He is a judge in Abdärafi sub Wäradä. He is a BA holder in Law. He has good information on crimes in the area in my period.
24	Habtamu Bililiñ (Ato)	50	Oct.15, 2014	Mättäma Yohannis Qäbälle 01	He is a teacher in Mättäma Primary School. He has rich information on the area.
25	Habtäwold Gäbrä Hiwät (Ato)	55	Oct 15, 2014	Mättäma Yohannis Qäbälle 01	He is the Manager of Mättäma Yohannis sub-Municipality. He has rich information on the area.
26	Hailä Mariam Wäрку (Ato)	65	Oct. 4, 2013	Mättäma Yohannis, Qäbälle 01	He is a driver. He served the Mättäma-Mahbärä Sellasie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative as a tractor driver at its establishment. His information on this cooperative farm was essential for me
27	Jäjaw Şahayä (Ato)	50	May 24, 2013	Abdärafi Qäbälle 01	He is a resident in Abdärafi.He has his own private business. His information on Abdärafi was crucial.
28	Kinde Chäkol (Ato)	55	Oct. 18, 2014	Gända Wuha	He is working in the Wäradä Agriculture Office. He has served this office for more than 30 years. in Mättäma. He knows important information about the Wäradä..
29	Liuil Waksum (Ato)	57	May 24, 2014.	Abdärafi Qäbälle 01	He is the son of Wakshum Näwätä, the then rist kifle rhum of Abdärafi. He is a farmer in Sanja.
30	Mandäfro Tässäma (Ato)	55	Oct. 5, 2013	Mättäma Yohannis, Qäbälle 01	He is a farmer in Mättäma. Now he is serving as an administrator of Mättäma Yohannis Qäbälle 01. He has rich information on Mättäma.
31	Mängistu Zäwdu (Ato)	80	May 23, 2013	Abdärafi Qäbälle 01	He is a man from Armachiho. He is a tractor-owning farmer. He has lived in Abdärafi since 1961. According to him, he served as border guard in Lugdi and Mättäma at different times on the border. His information was Very important for my research on the period.
32	Maru Bäkälä (Sergeant)	70	Jan. 15, 2012	North Gondar, Gondar city.	He was a police officer in Gondar in the imperial period. Now he is retired and is living in Gondar.

					His information on the Police Farm was important.
33	Mogäs Gétu (Inspector)	58	May 24, 2013	Abdärafī, <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a police officer in Abdärafī. He has rich information on security in Abdärafī.
34	Muhamäd Mäkonän (Haji)	95	Sep. 2, 2005	Sätit-Humära	He is a prominent figure in Sätit-Humära. He was the first private tractor-owning farmer in Sätit-Humära from the 1950s-1970s.
35	Nägädu Abatä ( <i>Ato</i> )	65	June 6, 2013	Addis Ababa , Mägänagna	He is a man from Armachiho. He worked in Highway Authority in Gondar branch for a long period of time in the imperial period.. Now he is retired. His information on Abdärafī was crucial.
36	Nigist Waksum ( <i>Wäizäro</i> )	50	Oct. 20, 2014	North Gondar, Gondar City	She is the daughter of <i>Ato</i> Wakshum Näwätä who was the <i>rist kifle shum</i> of Abdärafī. Now she is working in the Social Security Agency in North Gondar. She has good information on her father
37	Sälämon Guadu ( <i>Ato</i> )	55	May 24, 2013	Abdärafī, <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He served as manager of Abdärafī sub-Municipality for 6 years until 2012. He has rich information.
38	Sälämon Hunägñaw ( <i>Ato</i> )	57	May 24, 2013	Abdärafī <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a tractor-owning farmer in Abdärafī. He has good information.
39	Sharäw W/Tansaie ( <i>Ato</i> )	74	Sep. 2, 2005	Sätit- _Humära	He was a <i>Chiqa Shum</i> in Şägädé from 1962-1963. From 1970 on he became a member of the WSHC.
40	Sisay Birhanu ( <i>Ato</i> )	81	Oct. 10,2013	North Gondar, Gondar city <i>Qäbälle</i> 15	He is from <u>Chaqo</u> Michael in <u>Chilga</u> . He was the first man among others to start oxen farming in 1961 in Kokit. He lived with the Gumuz people. He is now a tractor-owning farmer. He was a key member of the Mättäma-Mahbärä Sellasie Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative. Now that he has become an old man, his

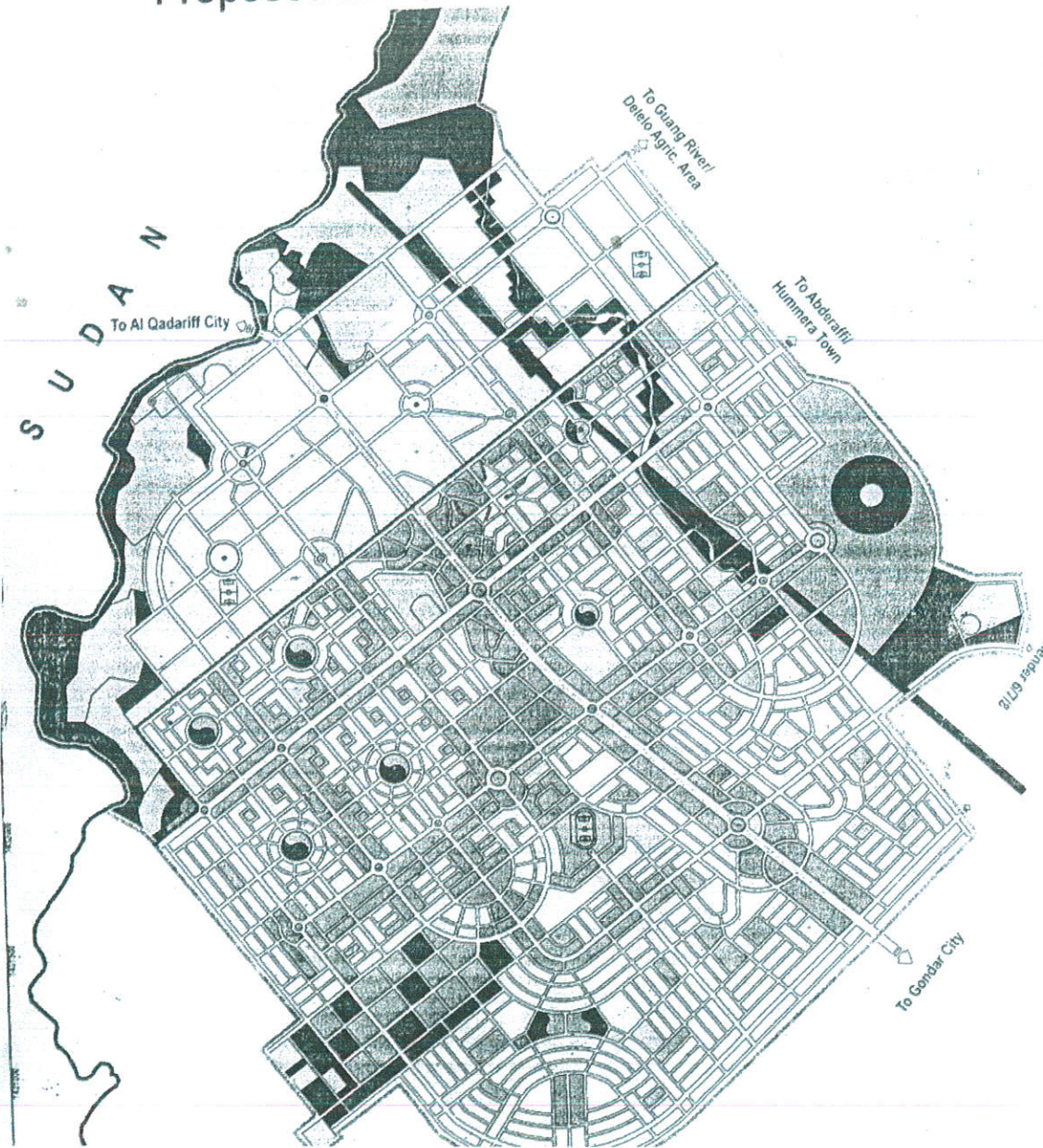
					farm is supervised by his sons.
41	Tadälä Mule ( <i>Ato</i> )	50	Oct. 16,2014	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a Health Officer in Mättäma Yohannis Health Centre. He is a good informant with regard to human and animal diseases in the lowland areas of my dissertation.
42	Täka Bälay ( <i>Ato</i> )	81	May23,2013	Abdärafı <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a tractor-owning farmer in Abdärafı. His information is important.
43	Täsfayä Wärku ( <i>Ato</i> )	60	May 24, 2013	Abdarafı <i>Qaballe</i> 01	He is serving in the MSF-Holland Abdurafı Project (Kala-azar) as a project assistant.
44	Tatäq Amanu ( <i>Ato</i> )	50	Oct, 17,2014	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He worked in the Customs Office in Mättäma Yohannis. His information is important for cross-border trade.
45	Ṭıbabu Wärkinäh ( <i>Ato</i> )	68	.Nov.20,201 3	Addis Ababa, Şhiro Meda, <i>Wäräda</i> 01 <i>Qäbälle</i> 02	He worked in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church at different levels especially in Gondar Administrative Ecclesiastical Office for 42 years. He also served as an auditor in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development Commission in Zämänat (Abdärafı) from 1973-1974. He is retired now. His information is very crucial for the Church Commission in Zämänat.
46	Ṭıgabı Tädla (Colonel)	77	Feb.10, 2012	A.A Bole Michael Church	He was a Police Officer in Gondar Province in the imperial period. Now he is retired. He was a member and auditor of the Police Farm. His information on the Police Farm was essential.
47	Wärku Bogalä (Colonel)	60	Oct 2, 2013	Mättäma Yohannis <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is working in the Customs Office in Mättäma Yohannis. He is a

					coordinator. His information on the border is crucial.
48	Yirsaw Dämäs ( <i>Ato</i> )	74	Sep. 2, 2005	Sätit-Humära	He is a man from Wälqait. He was the founding member of the the <i>Shärika Wälqait</i> (Walqait Share Company) and a founding member of the WSHC. He had his own tractor
49	Yitbaräk Mängistu ( <i>Ato</i> )	50	May 24, 2013	Abdärafī <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a Development Agent in Abdärafī Office of Agriculture.
50	Yohannis Wändimu ( <i>Ato</i> )	51	May 24, 2013	Abdärafī <i>Qäbälle</i> 01	He is a Development Agent in Abdärafī Office of Agriculture. He was a good informant on agricultural development.
51	Zänäbä Bälay ( <i>Ato</i> )	81	Sep. 2, 2005	Mai Khadra, Sätit-Humära	He is a man from Wälqait. He was an oxen farmer from 1965- 1972. From 1973 on he became a tractor-owning farmer. He is a very influential person in Sätit-Humära.
52	Zäwdu Bitäw ( <i>Ato</i> )	79	Sep. 2, 2005	North Gondar <i>Qäbälle</i> 14	He is a man from Wälqait. From 1974-1979 he worked in Humära Agricultural Development Project (HADP). He had the responsibility of preparing a form for the duty-free fuel distribution to the tractor-owning farmers in Sätit-Humära.

# Appendices

Appendix i: Basic Plan of Mättäma Yohannis

Proposed Land Use of the Basic Plan



Source: Mamo Morka and Atnafu Molla, "Yä Mättäma Yohannis Kätäma Mäsärätawi Plan Riport" Nahasé 2004 E.C., p. cover page.

**የጎንደር ዋርካዎች ፡**

ጎንደርን ልዩ ከሚያደርጓት አንዱ በርካታ ዋርካዎች የሚገኙበት መሆኗ ነው።

« ጎንደር እሽርሩ የዋርካሽ መስፋፋት የግንብሽ ማማሩ» የሚለው የአካባቢው ባህላዊ መዘቃ ስንኝ ሰውዳሴ ብቻ የተነገረ ሳይሆን እውነታውንና ትክክለኛውን ነገር ለማስጨበጥና ለማሳየት ማለትም ከተማውን ተዘዋውሮ ለሚመለከተው ሰው ብዛት ያለው ዋርካ መኖሩን ለመግለጽ የተሞከረ ነው። ዛሬም እነዚህ ዋርካዎች በሀያው ምስክርነታቸው የሚጠቁሱ ናቸው። በተለይም በዝናው የታወቀ አገልግሎት በመስጠትም ባለውለታ የሆነው የጃተክል ዋርካ ዋናውና በግንባር ቀደምትነት የሚጠቀሰው ነው። በዚህ ዋርካ አስራ ሁለት ሊቃነመናብርት/ወንበሮች/ ፍትህ ነገስት ገልጠው ሲያሟግቱበት ፣ የሀይማኖት ክርክር ጉባኤ የሚዘረጋበት ፣ ቅኔ የሚዘረፍበት ፣ ለቅሶ የሚረገድበት ፣ የመስቀል ደመራ የሚተኮስበት አጠቃላይ በየጊዜው የሀገር ጉዳይ የሚመክርበትና የሚዘከርበት አደባባይ በመሆን ያገለገለ ዋርካ ነው። አሁንም ዙሪያው ታጥሮ ተጠብቆለት እንክብካቤ ተደርጎለት ግርማ ሞገሱን ጠብቆ ይገኛል።

ምንጭ « ከአቶ ዘውዱ በላይ ጥንታዊ ጽሁፍ »

**ጎንደር ባህል ተሪዝም**

« ጃን » ማለት በተለያዩ የአመረኛ መዝገብ ቃላት የሚከተለውን ፍች ይሰጡታል

« ጃን» ትልቅ የተከበረ ብልህ ፣ አስተዋይ የሚል ፍች የተሰጠው ሲሆን ጎንደር ከተማ ውስጥ በተለያዩ አካባቢዎች የሚገኙ ትልልቅ ዋርካዎች ውስጥ በአደባባይ እየሰሰ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ፊት ለፊት እንዲሁም በአጼ ፋሲል ቤተ መንግስት ፊት ለፊት የሚገኘው የረጅም ዓመት ዕድሜ ጠገብ የሆነው « ጃንተክል » ዋርካ በአፈታሪክ ሲነገር እንደመጣው ዋርካውን የተከሉት በጎንደር ዘመነ መንግስት እየተፈራረቁ ሲያስተዳድሩ ከነበሩት ነገስታት መካከል አንዱ ስለሆኑ ጃንተክል ዋርካ ማለት ንጉስ ወይም ትልቁ ሰው የተከሉት ማለት እንደሆነ በአፈታሪክ ሲነገር እናዳምጣለን ይህም አፈታሪክ በተለያዩ የአመረኛ መዝገብ ቃላት ለ« ጃን» ከሰጡት ትርጉም ወይም ፍች ጋር ይመሳሰላል።

ምንጭ « ከአካባቢው ነዋሪዎች »

Source: Gondar Culture and Tourism Bureau.





የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የልማት ኮሚሽን  
ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

ንቡረ ዕድ ኤርምያስ ክብሩ ሰ  
ሊቀ መንበር  
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CELESTIAL MAN  
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አቶ ጌታኔህ ስጋላ  
ሥራ አስኪያጅ  
ATO GETANEH HOGLI  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
ጠባቢ መስሪያ 22 ቀን 1966 ዓ.ም  
Date  
ጥቅም ቁጥር: 22/66  
Ref. No.

ለክብር ሊ/ኮሎኔል ታምራት ደገዙ  
የባህሪ ምርመራና ሰዓገጥ ጠ/ገዛት አገደራሴ

ጉንደር፣

ክብር ሆይ፣

የኢትዮጵያ ስር ባይክስ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የልማት ኮሚሽን ታህሳስ 26 ቀን 1966 ዓ.ም በነገሪት ገዢዎች ታምራት ከተቋሙ ወይም ለጥንተ ክርስቲያን ለባህሪ ምርመራ ሀገራዊ ሰብስቦት ልማት ተቋሚያ በመስጠት በጉንደር-አገደራሴ ልዩ ስሙ ዘመናት በሚባል ሥፍራ የአርቫ ልማት ሥራ የጀመረ መሆኑን ክብር ነት ያዩ የሚያውቁት ነው።

በላዚህም በቀርቶ በክብር ነት ያዩ ጸ/ቤት ታላ ለታላ የተነጋገር ነውና የባህሪ ምርመራ ያዲስ በፀፀ ለጤነ አገደር ያሰጠ መስሪያ 18 ቀን 1966 ዓ.ም በልዩ ቁጥር 3/66 ለሀገራዊ ሰብስቦት ጸ/ቤት ባይክ ለጠ/ገዛት ጸ/ቤት የተደረገውን ገልጫ ለስታቲስቲካል።

የአርቫውን ልማት ሥራም አገደራሴን በተለይም በባይ ወር ሁለት ጊዜ በግክታት በሠራተኞች ላይ ሃያ ስድስት ጥይት የተከሰባቸውን ገብረትም የተቃዋሙት መሆኑን ሠራተኞችን ተርጎሞ በታላም በጸሎትም ለገዛት ለፖሊስም ባለሥልጣናቸው ያውለበት መሆኑን አየገለጸን።

ይህ የአርቫ ልማት የተጀመረው በልዩ ልዩ የአውሮፓና የአሜሪካ አገሮች ተወጣጥተው በዓለፍ አብያተ ክርስቲያናት ግህበር ለግክብይ ነት በተሰኘው የአርባታ ገንዘብ ስለሆነና ጥቅም ክብር ነት ያዩ አገደራሴው ለቤተ ክርስቲያናቸው ለአገራቸው ለሕዝባቸው ስለሆነ።

አገላለጹ ሰዎች በሚፈጸሙት የተከሰቱ የገብረት ግንባታ ወንጀል ምክንያት የተጀመረው የልማት ሥራ ባይክና ሌሎች የቤተ ክርስቲያናቸውን የሀገራቸውን ስም ይቃወሙ በጊዜው በሥራ ላይ ለሚሰሩ የሚያሰጡት ከመሆኑም በላይ ጉዳት የቤተ ክርስቲያንና የሀገሪ መሆኑን ክብር ነት ያዩ ተገንዝቦ።

(Russian)

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*[Handwritten signature]*

ቅ. በ. ማ. ቤ.





Appendix vi



የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ቤተ ክርስቲያን የልማት ኮሚሽን  
ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

ከቡር አቶ መኮንን ሙሉ \*  
አቶ መንበር  
H. E. METE MALKONNEN ZAWIDE  
CHIEF MAN  
አቶ አበበ ከበደ  
የንቅላላ አቶ መንበር  
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አቶ ጊዮርጊስ ደጋለ  
ዶ/ሪ አስኪያጅ  
ATO GEORGIUS DOGALE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
ቀን ፲፱፻፶፯ ዓ.ም. ፲፯ ቀን ፲፭ ሰዓት  
Date 1967/27/15  
ጥቅም ቤት ቁጥር PA5/1/67  
Ref. No.

ለአቶ አለባገሮስ ገብረ  
አባ አበበ

የአቶ ወልደ ሥላሴ ገብረመስቀል ደብረሰላሴ ስም የልማት ኮሚሽን ሰበሰብጦች  
በግንባታ ስራ ላይ የሚሰሩ ሰዎች የአሰሪዎች የተከሰቱ ጋራ ሆነው  
ለፍጆታ የሚሰሩ ጊዜ 3600 /ሰዓት ሙሉ በሰዓት/ የፍጆታ ደብዳቤ እየተከሰቱ  
ለጋራ ስራ ላይ የተሰሩ ሰዎች ስም ይጻፉ፡፡



የአቶ ወልደ ሥላሴ ገብረመስቀል  
የአሰሪዎች ጋራ ስም  
ዶ/ሪ አስኪያጅ

ገብረ

ለአቶ ዘነበ ገብረ  
ለአቶ ገብረ ገብረ  
ገብረ አበበ

ትንሹ ዘተ-ቤት ማተሚያ ቤት

Source: Informant Tibäbu Wärqinä.




















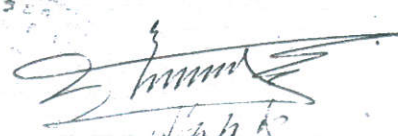



  
 ቁጥር 305/3/14055  
 5/11/65-0490

ለጥልጋ አወረጃ ገዛት ፖሊስ አዘዥ  
 ከገጠማ ጋር

ሰለን አቶ ብርሃኔ ለገሠ በጥይት ጉዳይ ከባታው ተገኘው ከገዛው ሠረተኛ  
 ጋር በተባበሩ ማረጋገጫ አዳርገው ወደ ገንዘብ ሰጠር 305/3/14055 /  
 22/10/65 ዓ.ም በላይኛው ሰጠር 974- ሠረተኛ የግንባታ ስራ ላይ  
 ባባሪ የግንባታ ስራ ላይ በገለጹ በጠር 12/26/2150/21/11/65 ዓ.ም የገ  
 ፈለገን ጸብሃቤ አኖረውታል።

ግንባታ የተፈጸመ በገዛው ወሰን ሆነ 974- ስራ ላይ የግንባታ ስራ  
 ስራ ላይ የሆነ ሆኖ ለገዛው ገዛ ግንባታ ስራ ላይ በግንባታ ስራ ላይ  
 የገለጹ በጠር 974- ስራ ላይ ለገዛው ገዛ ግንባታ ስራ ላይ  
 የሆነ ሆኖ ለገዛው ገዛ ግንባታ ስራ ላይ በግንባታ ስራ ላይ  
 በገ ጸብሃቤ ስራ ላይ የተፈጸመ ስራ ላይ ለገዛው ገዛ ግንባታ ስራ ላይ

  
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 ጸብሃቤ አኖረውታል ለገዛው ስራ ላይ ስራ ላይ ስራ ላይ

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Source: North Gondar Administration Archive, Folder No. ገክ 50 ሪፖርት

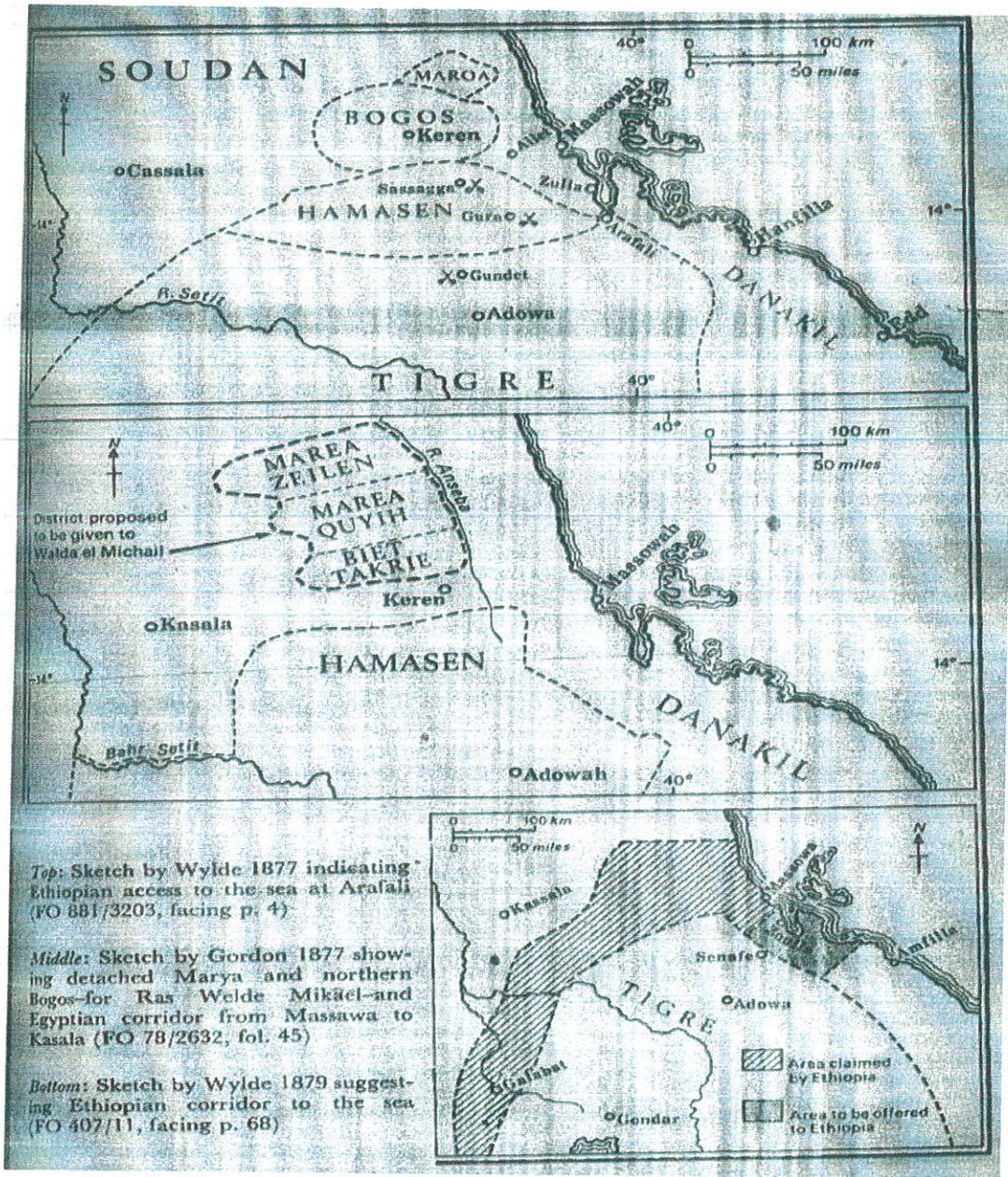
Appendix xv

Appendix xiv: Ethiopia under Tewodros (1855-1868)



Source: Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1991), p. 216.

Appendix xvi



Source: Source: Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (Addis Ababa: Kuraz Publishing Agency, 1991), p. 339.

### **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that the dissertation is my own work and that all the sources for the dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Atakilt Redda

Signature: 

Place: Addis Ababa University College of Social Sciences

Date of Submission 10 September 2015